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At some point after 1020 a compilation of over ninety monastic, liturgical, educational and other texts was put together at Christ Church Canterbury (Canterbury cathedral). Several items in the compilation concern pastoral care and one is a set of guidelines for the examination of a new bishop before his consecration; some items are charms, highlighting the miscellaneous nature of the collection. Unsurprisingly, the manuscript (now British Library, Cotton Tiberius A xiii) has proved hard to define and hitherto there has been no assumption that there was an agenda behind the process of selection of materials. The task of analysing the collection has been undertaken by Tracey-Anne Cooper, who sets out in this monograph to explain the manuscript as the product of the third generation of the tenth-century English Benedictine reform movement and in particular to interpret it as a vade mecum for an archbishop faced with the diverse duties of coping with a monastic cathedral community and training men about to become bishops in the supervision of pastoral care. A prominent part of Cooper’s argument is that by the reign of Cnut (1016–1635) »almost the entire episcopate was monastic« and that these monastically-trained bishops had received no experience of pastoral care before their elevation. Cooper begins by describing and contextualising the manuscript (chapter 1), and then proceeds to survey the aims of the Benedictine reform movement from the 960s to the 1030s (chapter 2), and then, text by text, to detail what the manuscript can tell us about the internal functioning of monastic communities headed by bishops (chapter 3), about pastoral care (chapter 4) and about learning (chapter 5).

As an in-depth study of a particular manuscript this study has a number of strengths. It supplies a plausible context for the compilation of Tiberius A iii, seeking this in Canterbury soon after the accession of Archbishop Æthelnoth (1020–1038), who had been a pupil of Ælfric at Cerne before becoming a monk at Glastonbury. Cooper also supplies a full description of the very varied contents of the manuscript, and manages to point out how charms and a lapidary might well have been relevant to bishops (a cattle-theft charm had overtones of binding and loosing, while the lapidary would have helped bishops identify precious stones used in reliquaries and other sacred objects). The discussion of the individual items is supported by a fairly full grounding in the secondary literature, though this is almost always approached in a descriptive manner and is not used as a springboard from which to launch further ideas. What needs more depth, however, is the prosopographical analysis, necessary
to allow the reader to study the educational backgrounds and careers of the English episcopate in the first half of the eleventh century. Brief notes about bishops and their careers are supplied in an appendix, but without sufficient discussion: there was more cross-over between clerical and monastic milieu than Cooper allows for, and it is also difficult to be sure of the backgrounds of most of the bishops in this period. It was not uncommon for clerics to become monks in adulthood and after they had received much of their education, and Æthelnoth’s mixture of texts may be a response to this situation quite as much as to Benedictine monks arriving at the episcopate without much idea of how to advise clergy on pastoral care. The book as a whole is let down by many points where Cooper has been careless with detail. Her choice of bibliography is not always sure-footed: she consistently favours David Dales over Mechthild Gretsch on the question of the authorship of »Regularis Concordia« (p. 52, 63); she has not used recent work by Alex Rumble or Tom Licence on Stigand (p. 45); she has failed to note Catherine Cubitt’s work on Æthelred the Unready’s penitential observances (p. 75–76) or Jesse Billett’s work on the clerical office (p. 78 and elsewhere); she uses William Stubbs’ edition of B’s »Life of Dunstan« rather than the new edition by Michael Lapidge (p. 61). She has not read widely enough (p. 60–61) about the supposed papal privilege supporting the introduction of monks into Winchester in 964 (if genuine, more probably to be attributed to John XIII than to John XII, but more likely still to be a much later forgery); she thinks that the Council of Aachen in 816 insisted that episcopal clergy should live according to the Rule of Chrodegang (p. 63); she thinks that Roskilde lay outside Cnut’s kingdom (p. 98–99) and that Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester died in 996 rather than 984; the diocese of Dorchester occurs as the diocese of Leicester on p. 320. Lucia Kornexl appears as Kornexel throughout (p. 31, 115, 341) and Kidderminster, Chertsey and Sherborne appear as Kederminster, Chertsy and Sherbourne (p. 41, 318, 319). These flaws, often small in themselves but too numerous to be overlooked, suggest that this is the work of an author who has not completely mastered her topic.