ANGLO-SAXON MONASTIC SIGN LANGUAGE
AT CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY

DAVID SHERLOCK

Organised sign language as a means of communication is to be found at various times and places where oral communication is either impossible or forbidden. A form of semaphore for long-distance signalling was invented by the Romans, if not earlier. In the English cotton mills of the nineteenth century women workers evolved their own sign language because of the deafening noise of the machinery, while today the most obvious example is the sign language of the deaf-mute where each letter of the alphabet is represented by a single sign with some signs for the more common words and phrases. In religious institutions it is generally agreed that silence is indispensable for contemplation and the regulation of religious life, so that the use of a sign language was, and still is, encouraged to further those ends. St. Pachomius (c. 290–346), who compiled the earliest surviving rule for a Christian community, warned against speaking at mealtimes: ‘If something necessary is lacking at table you shall not speak but shall make a sign [pulsabis]’ (PG XL, 247). Following him St. Benedict (c. 480–547) stated in chapter 6 De Taciturnitate of his own Rule that silence should be observed at all times wherever possible; but for mealtimes he wrote: ‘If however there shall be any need, let the thing be asked for by means of a sign [signum] rather than by speech’ (RSB ch. 38). Neither, however, had in mind here a formal sign language. The ordered tabulation and standardisation of such a language was a part of the reforming work of the Cluniac monks of the tenth century (Gougaud 1930, 16). From Cluny the system spread to all the other religious orders where there was a need to communicate in silence. Today a sign language is still used by, amongst others, the Cistercians, a member of whose order has recently up-dated their ‘vocabulary’ in a book which contains signs for aeroplane, typewriter, refrigerator and a great many other indispensable modern needs (Barakat 1975).
DAVID SHERLOCK

In England the Venerable Bede (673–735) wrote a treatise *De loquela per gestum, sive De indigitatione* (PL XC, 685–698) using a now lost classical treatise on the subject (Rieche 1986, 168) but the system is restricted to the signing of numbers and letters of the alphabet. The earliest surviving list of verbal signs in England and indeed Europe seems to be the mid-eleventh-century Old English manuscript from Christ Church, Canterbury, now part of British Library MS Cotton Tiberius A iii, which is published here. This list of *indicia monasterialia* is bound with a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and Old English. Other Anglo-Saxon copies of the Rule but without the signs survive from Bury St. Edmund's, Durham, Winchester, Worcester and elsewhere. All the greater English monastic houses probably had their own copies of it by the eleventh century. As is the case at Canterbury, they may have also each had a list of signs as a part of their particular customary for the better ordering of their own daily activities according to the principles of St. Benedict’s Rule itself.

By the time of the Dissolution of the monasteries most other religious houses also had customaries, some of which refer to a sign language, though few of the actual lists of signs survive. Bury St. Edmund’s Abbey is unique in having two such lists. There is one from Ely Cathedral Priory, one from the Victorine Canons of St. Thomas’ Abbey, Dublin, and one in fifteenth-century English from the Bridgettine Nunnery at Syon (for references see names in list of abbreviations at end). While each list has its idiosyncracies, the majority of the signs were by the later Middle Ages virtually identical throughout western Christendom (see Jarecki 1981 to compare those from Bury St. Edmund’s, Cluny, Monte Cassino and Paris) providing in effect a silent *lingua franca* to augment the use of Latin where silence was ordained. The longest medieval list is that of the twelfth-century Cluniac abbot, William of Hirsaü (Germany), which contains 359 words including a great many more varieties of food than are found in any of the others.

Medieval monastic signs were taught by the novice master (*magister puerorum*; see here sign 5). Henry Kirkstead, who held this office at Bury St. Edmund’s Abbey in the fourteenth century, produced a sign list which he addressed to a fellow monk as follows: ‘Seeing, dearest brother, that dull wits, sluggish carelessness and futile activity allow novices to become acquainted with very few signs, and that in the religious life they acquire years sooner than understanding, and less the Foundress of Knowledge [presumably he means Eve], antagonistic and faithless, should constantly by forgetfulness drive them from memory . . . I have produced this book . . . to be handed over eventually to the novices, but first to you whom I know to be
master at sending monks' signs most perfectly' (CUL Add. MS 6006, f.IVr; Sherlock and Zajac 1988, 252).

Monastic sign lists generally consist of simple nouns, adjectives and a few verbs, but clearly the more signs that were invented the more fully one monk could communicate with another. The language of silence was thus open to abuse, completely overturning its original purpose. The scene at the Syon nuns' dinner table has been described by one modern historian as 'dumb pandemonium' (Power 1922, 287) although their own customary, following ch. 34 of the Rule of St. Benedict, cautioned that signs were not to be used without some good reason 'for ofte tyme more hurtethe an evel sygne than an euel worde, and more offence it may be to God' (Aungier 1840, 287). Herbert de Losinga, Bishop of Norwich 1091–1121, praised one of his own monks for avoiding the dangers of immoderate locutio per signa: 'You sit in the cloister and curbing your tongue you keep also your fingers from unprofitable signs' (Epistola ad Felicem, Anstruther 1846, 45). The unnecessary use of signs was also criticised by the historian, Giraldus Cambrensis, when, in c. 1180, he dined at the high table of Christ Church with his uncle the prior. After criticising the excessive number of courses served and the lavish food he wrote: 'There were the monks . . . all of them gesticulating with fingers, hands and arms, and whistling one to another in lieu of speaking, all extravagant in a manner more free and frivolous than was seemly; so that Giraldus seemed to be seated at a stage play or among actors and jesters' (Butler 1937, 71).

British Library MS Cotton Tiberius A iii is one of the most famous surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and one of the most important in the history of English monasticism. It is dated to c. 1050 and was written at Christ Church, Canterbury (Temple 1976, no. 100; GAASA no. 28). It is a composite volume containing besides the list of monastic signs and some miscellaneous prayers and other matters, two works which are fundamental for our understanding of early Christianity in England: a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict (RSB; see p. 1) which is a set of regulations in seventy-three chapters, written c. 526 and which became the basis of practically the whole of later monasticism in Western Europe; and one of only two surviving copies of the Regularis Concordia, the 'Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation' which is the charter of the revival of the religious life in tenth-century England and which was issued at Winchester c. 970 by a council of bishops, abbots and abbesses summoned there under the patronage of King Edgar (Temple 1976, no. 100; Symons 1953; GAASA no. 28). The manuscript is illustrated with two full-page miniatures. In the first of these, preceding the Concordia, Edgar appears seated between St. Dunstan
and St. Aethelwold with a monk kneeling before them. The second miniature which comes before the RSB shows St. Benedict and monks. The list of *Indicia monasterialia* is sandwiched between these two great works and just as the *Concordia* expands on the practical application of the Rule for the revival of monasticism in England, so too the signs, written in the language which the monks at Christ Church would have all understood, provide a yet more detailed and practical aid for the better ordering of their monastic life. The list was first transcribed and translated by F. Kluge (1885). Although it has been studied since (see, for example, Barley 1974, 1977; Jarecki 1981, fn. 212), it has been overshadowed by the importance of the other two works. An English translation of this unique list is long overdue.

The signs themselves are mainly for common nouns of both persons and everyday objects which a monk was likely to encounter, with a few signs for actions such as standing up and accepting or refusing something. The contents of the list can be grouped as follows (there are no numbers in the actual manuscript):

1–7  the chief monastic officials (abbot, etc.);
8–28  books, vestments and other items for Mass;
29–43  other books and items for church; directions for service;
44–48  chapter house;
49–86  refectory, utensils, food and drink;
87–110  dormitory, clothing and personal items;
111–117  cloister including writing implements;
118–127  persons outside the community including king, queen and bishop.

There are a few other instructions in the form of exhortatory headings before nos. 1, 8 and 29 and the list ends with three words of Latin. Various words in the manuscript are defective or missing, and it was evidently copied from an earlier version. A number of the words are *hapax legomena* and cannot be confidently translated though some can be corrected (e.g. ‘wicelre’ in 81) or inferred from those in later sign lists (e.g. 94).

Most of the actions signified are very simple and fall into the category of mime. They lack the sophistication of the later medieval lists, as for example in the sign for psalter at Bury St. Edmund’s (47) where you add to the sign for book the sign for a king because King David wrote the psalms. Less tangible objects are signified by the more concrete: thus, the sign for a ruler (46) is the same as that for the Rule of St. Benedict (115) when made in the chapter house. The
actions generally require the fingers of the hand, sometimes placed on the face or another part of the body. The same sign using the little finger instead of the thumb denotes small instead of large (e.g. 35 and 36).

Unlike the Bury St. Edmund’s list, which has signs specifically needed there (Sherlock and Zajac 1988, 252), the Christ Church list has no evident relevance to Christ Church Priory and the copyist has not tried to adapt it. If he had, he would surely have substituted a sign for archbishop in place of abbot at the beginning (see note 1). But the words which are signed can in many instances be found referred to in the RSB and the Regularis Concordia. Parts of a monastery can, for example, be compared as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSB</th>
<th>Concordia</th>
<th>Sign List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>church</td>
<td>(7, etc.)</td>
<td>church (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[implied in 38, 43]</td>
<td>refectory (29)</td>
<td>refectory (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dormitory</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>dormitory (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[implied in 47]</td>
<td>[implied in 87–110]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cloister (29)</td>
<td>reredorter (?) (94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>chapter house (31)</td>
<td>wash house (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>warming house (29)</td>
<td>[implied in 112–117]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kitchen</td>
<td>(35, etc.)</td>
<td>chapter house (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bakehouse</td>
<td>(46, 66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guesthouse</td>
<td>(53)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infirmary</td>
<td>(36)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>storeroom</td>
<td>(46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library</td>
<td>(48)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gatehouse</td>
<td>(66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mill</td>
<td>(66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bakery (64)</td>
<td>bakehouse (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guesthouse (62)</td>
<td>guesthouse (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parlour (56)</td>
<td>parlour (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>infirmary (65)</td>
<td>infirmary (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bakehouse (111)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We know very little about the buildings of the monastery of Christ Church before their destruction in the great fire of 1067 (Gem 1970) and these few signs can hardly be said to fill out the picture. On the other hand, some of the ordinary objects which are signed in the list are also mentioned in the Regularis Concordia and the RSB, providing an unusual glimpse of the daily life in a great Benedictine monastery such as Christ Church in the late Saxon period. In the notes which follow the translation I have tried to refer to these connections as well as to actual examples of contemporary or near-contemporary objects where they survive.
[Incipiant monasteriales indicia] (f.97v)

These are the signs which one shall observe in the monastery and with God's help shall ardently obey where according to the Rule silence is to be observed.

1. abbud abbot
Firstly the sign for the abbot is that, one places the two fingers on the head and therewith takes hold of the hair.

2. diacan deacon
The sign for deacon is that one lets the hand hang down as if one is ringing a small bell.

3. profost prior
If one wants to signify something to do with the prior then you raise your forefinger above your head since that is his sign.

4. bordable cellarier
Then is the cellarier's sign, where one turns the hand as when one wants to open a lock.

5. magister master
The sign for the master who is in charge of the children is that one puts the two fingers on the two eyes and raises the little finger up.

6. crikewerd sacrist
The sign for the sacrist is that one places the two fingers on the two eyes and then with one's hands pretends to ring a hanging bell.

7. cycean church
If you want to signify something to do with the church then pretend to ring a bell with both hands and place your forefinger to your mouth and then raise it up.

These are the signs for the books which one should use in church for Divine Service:

8. antiphonaria antiphoner
If you want to have an antiphoner then move your right hand and crook your thumb, for this is the manner in which it is observed.

9. maesse boc missal
If you want to have a missal then move your hand as if you are blessing.

10. pistorboc, Cristesboc epistolary, gospel
The sign for the epistolary is that one moves one's hand and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead with the thumb since one reads the word of God ['godspel'] therein, and likewise in the gospel.

11. troper troper
If you want to have a troper then move your right hand and turn your right forefinger forward on your chest as if you want to use [it].

12. langwyrpe boc oblong book (?)
If you want to have any oblong book then stroke the left hand and move it and place the right hand over the left arm according to the length of the book.

13. superumerale vestment
If you want to have a vestment then stroke with two index fingers from the parting on the head downwards over your cheeks to the arm's length.

14. halba alb (f.98r)
If you want to have an alb then move your garment a little with your hands.

15. gyrder girdle
If you want to have a girdle then put your hands in front towards your navel and move [them] out towards your two hips.

16. stola stole
If you want to have a stole place your two hands about your neck and stroke downwards.

17. maessanhacele chasuble
If you want to have a chasuble then stroke down over your chest with outspread hand. 
handlin
maniple

If you want to have a maniple then stroke with your right hand edgeways over your left.
offrung
offertory

If you want to have the offertory then move your garment and raise up your two hands.
calic and disc
chalice and paten
The sign for the chalice and the paten is that one raises up the two hands and blesses.
ofaet
Mass bread

If you want to have the Mass bread then bend your forefinger to your thumb.
win
wine

If you want to have wine then do with your two fingers as if you want to turn on the tap 
of a barrel.
winhorn
wine flask

If you want to have a wine flask then do with your right forefinger in your left hand as if 
you would draw the stopper and raise up your forefinger to your head.
storfaet
censer

If you want to have a censer then turn your hand downwards and swing it as if you are 
censing.
tapers
tapers

If you need tapers then blow on your forefinger and lift up your thumb.
candelsticca
candlestick

If you want to have a candlestick then blow on your forefinger and hold your hand half 
closed as if you are holding a candlestick.
smael candel
small candle

If you need a small candle then blow on your forefinger.
candelbryd
lamp

If you want to have a lamp then stretch out your left hand and place it edgeways onto 
the right.

These are the signs for books which one shall use at Matins:
bibliodece
bible

If you want to have a bible then move your hand and raise up your thumb and lay your 
hand flat on your cheek.
martirlogium
martyrology
(f.98v)

If you need the martyrology you move your hand and place your right forefinger over 
your hand and lay your hand flat on your cheek.
oper boc
another book

If you want another [religious] book which contains the gospels then place your right 
hand below your cheek and make the sign of the cross on your forehead.
salter
psalter

If you need a psalter then stroke on your left hand with your right forefinger as if you 
want to write ("biewytan") a lot.
hymner
hymnal

The sign for a hymnal is that one moves the outspread hand and raises up the little 
finger.
leoftaet
candle dish

If you want to have a candle dish then raise your right hand with outspread fingers and 
blow on your forefinger.
miceel rod
large cross

If you want to have a large cross then place your finger on your right forefinger and 
raise up your thumb.
litel rod
small cross

The sign for a small cross is the same: [except you] raise up your little finger.
DAVID SHERLOCK

37. gewaed candidsticca  small candlestick
If you want to have anywhere a small (?) candlestick then do as we said above and raise up your little finger.
38. inne cyricean sittan  to sit in church
If you want to sit down in church because of some indisposition then motion the hand downwards and ask for permission with bowed head and place the hand on the chest.
39. sittendra manna up arise  standing up
If you want someone sitting down to stand up then turn your hand and slightly raise it up.
40. sytte  sitting
If you want him to sit then turn [your hand] downwards and let it fall slightly.
41. genoh habben  having enough
If one offers to some brother something of which he has enough, then turn his outspread hand downwards and tap slightly with yours.
42. gebodene habban  to accept the offering
If he wants to have something that is offered then he will turn his hand downwards on edge and move it slightly towards himself.
43. nellan  to refuse
If he does not want it he moves it away from him slightly.

44. capitelhus  chapter house
If you want to signify something to do with the chapter house then place your hand on your forehead and bow a little as if you were asking for forgiveness.
45. gehwaedne martylogium  little martyrology
If you want to have the little martyrology then move your hand and place your forefinger over your throat and raise up your little finger.
46. regol  rule
The sign for the rule is that you move your hand and draw your forefinger along your left hand as if you were ruling [a line].
47. gyrd  staff
(f.99r)
If you want to have a staff then move your fist as if you want to strike.
48. swyppa  scourge
If you want to have a scourge then move your fist as we said before and raise your two fingers up.

[REFECTORY]

49. beoddern  refectory
If you want to make any sign to do with the refectory then place your three fingers as if you were taking food to your mouth.
50. setraegel  chair cushion
If you want a chair cushion then you touch your own clothing with two fingers, spread your two hands out and move them as if you wanted to arrange a chair.
51. fyldstol  folding stool
If you want to have a folding stool for the reader at table or for someone else then press your hands together and move them as if you wanted to fold them.
52. sceat ðode wape  cloth or napkin
If you want to have a cloth or napkin then place your two hands over your lap and spread them out as if you were spreading out a cloth.
53. disc  dish
If you need a dish then hold your left hand up and spread your fingers out.

8
ANGLO-SAXON MONASTIC SIGN LANGUAGE

54. laf
If you want to have a bread roll then place your two thumbs together and the tips of your two forefingers together.

55. syx
knife

56. sticca
fork

57. gesodenra wyrtta
boiled vegetables

The sign for boiled vegetables is that you put your left hand downwards by your side as if you want to cut [them] up.

58. grene wyrtta
green vegetables

If you want to have green vegetables place your finger on your left hand.

59. laeaces
leeks

If you desire leeks then make a drilling motion with your finger in your hand and hold your hand out flat to your nose as if you were smelling them.

60. briw
pottage

The sign for pottage is that you move your fist as if you were stirring pottage.

61. pipor
pepper

If you want to have pepper then shake your right forefinger over the other.

62. beana
beans

If you want to have beans then place the tip of your forefinger over the first joint of your thumb.

63. cesena
cresses

The sign for cresses is that one places the thumb on the tip of the little finger.

64. cyse
cheese

If you want to have cheese then place both hands flat together as if you want to press.

65. butere oddo smeoru
butter or lard

If you want to have butter or lard then stroke the palm of the hand with three fingers.

66. meolc
milk

If you desire milk then stroke your left finger with your right hand as if you are milking.

67. aergera
eggs

If you need eggs then scrape on your left thumb with your finger.

68. scealt
salt

If you want to have salt then shake your hand with your three fingers together as if you want to salt something.

69. hunig
honey

The sign for honey is that you place your finger on your tongue.

70. fisc
fish

If you want to have fish then move your hand in the way that a fish moves its tail when it swims.

71. ael
eel

The sign for eel is that one moves the right hand, places it over the left arm, stretches out the left hand and strikes across it with your right hand as you do when you cut it in pieces, as one slices the eel when one sticks it on a spit.

72. ostre
oyster

If you want to have an oyster then fold your left hand in the way you would if you were holding an oyster in your hand, and with a knife or a finger pretend to open an oyster.

73. aeppele
apple

If you desire apple then stick your right thumb in the middle of your hand, surround it with your fingers and raise your fist up.

74. peru
pear

If you want a pear then do as we have just mentioned with your fist and then gather your fingers together lengthwise.
75. plyme  
plum
If you want to have plums then fold your left hand just as before and with your forefinger stroke along your fist.
76. cyrse  
cherry
The sign for cherries is that you put your left thumb onto the joint of your little finger and then pinch it with your right hand.
77. slan  
sloe
If you desire sloes then hold your thumb likewise and screw your forefinger in your left hand as a sign of the thorn on which they grow.
78. sealtflaesc  
salted meat
If you have any need for salted meat then with your right hand you force the left one down to where your calf is fattest and with your three fingers do as if you were salting something.
79. cuppe odoe institia  
cup or measure (f.100r)
If you want a cup or measure then hold your hand downwards and spread out your fingers.
80. hlid  
lid
If you want to have a lid then hold your left hand half closed and do likewise with the right and curve it over the left one as if you [were putting] lid on cup.
81. wicelre [sic] bled  
larger bowl
The sign for a larger bowl is that you raise up your right hand and spread out your fingers and then place your forefinger on your lips and raise up your thumb.
82. lytel drencefaet  
little drinking vessel
If you want to have a little drinking vessel then raise your three fingers and place your right forefinger on your lip and raise up your little finger.
83. drincan  
to drink
If you want to drink then place your forefinger along your mouth.
84. gedrypt win  
strained wine
If you desire strained wine then do with your right forefinger in your left hand as if you wanted to tap [a cask] and turn your forefinger downwards and pinch it with two fingers as if you wanted to wipe the drip.
85. beor  
beer
The sign for beer is that you rub your hand in the other.
86. burhrest  
beer dregs
If you want to have beer dregs then move your fist as if you were pounding vegetables and place your forefinger to your lip.

[DORMITORY]

87. slaepern  
sleeping
If you want to indicate the sign for sleeping then you place your right hand under your right cheek.
88. blacern  
lamp
If you have need of a lamp then draw your forefinger on the ground – if you have nothing else – and moisten it with your forefinger in the middle as if you were setting a wick.
89. bedref  
bed clothes
If you want to have bed clothes then move your clothing and place your hand to your cheek.
90. pyle  
pillow
The sign for a pillow is that you pretend to stroke a feather with your forefinger in your left hand and then place it to your ear.
91. swyftlera slippers
If you want to have slippers then place your forefinger on your foot and stroke both sides of your foot in the manner in which they are fashioned.
92. socca socks
The sign for socks is that you place your forefinger [likewise] and raise your thumb up.
93. sceona shoes
Then is the sign for shoes that you place the forefinger directly onto the foot without further signs.
94. ?..yna privy (f.100v)
The sign for privy is that you place your right hand spread out over your belly and with this sign you should ask your elders if you want to go there.
95. baðern wash house
If you want to make the sign for the wash house then with your right hand spread out stroke over your chest and belly as if you were washing yourself.
96. haefod ðwean head washing
If you want a sign to ask permission to wash your head then with the palm of your hand stroke over your hair as if you are washing it.
97. waeter water
If you have need of water then do as if you are washing your hands.
98. sape soap
If you want to have soap you rub your hands together.
99. naegelsaex nail knife
The sign for nail knife is that you go with your forefinger over the others as if you wanted to cut; and then stroke your cheek with your forefinger as if you would shave.
100. camb comb
If you want to have a comb then stroke your hair downwards with your fingers as if combing yourself.
101. hemepe shirt
If you want to have a shirt then take your sleeve in your hand and move it.
102. brec breeches
The sign for breeches is that you stroke upwards with both hands over your thighs.
103. wynynga garters
If you want to have garters then place both hands over your shins.
104. hosa stockings
If you want to have stockings then stroke upwards over your shins with your two hands.
105. gyleca tunic
The sign for a tunic is that you stretch out your right sleeve and pull inside it with your left hand.
106. cugle cowl
If you want to have a cowl then move your sleeve and take hold of your hood.
107. scapular scapular
If you need to have a scapular for any purpose then you stroke with each hand edgeways over the other arm outwards to the point where the sleeves of the scapular stop.
108. glofa gloves
If you want to have gloves stroke one hand flat with the other.
109. sceara shears
The sign for shears is that you bring your forefinger and middle finger of the right hand to some cloth as if you want to cut it with shears, or around your head as if you wanted to shorten [your hair].
110. naedle needle (f.101r)
If you need a needle then fold with your right hand the hem of your left sleeve over the left forefinger and go over it with three fingers as if you want to sew.
DAVID SHERLOCK

[CLOISTER]

111. baecern bakehouse
The sign for the bakehouse is that one [puts] both hands half closed together as if you
want to knead dough.

112. graef stylus
If you want to have a stylus then put your three fingers together as if holding a stylus
and move your fingers as if writing and then make a sign with your forefinger.

113. gehwaede waxbreda small writing tablets
If you want small writing tablets then stretch out both hands and place them together
one on top of the other and fold them together as if you were folding writing tablets.

114. micel waxbred large writing tablet
If you want to have a large writing tablet then move your two fingers over your chest as
if you were erasing something and stretch out your arm and place your hand in your
left elbow.

115. reogolsticca ruler
If you do not have a ruler then stretch your hand upwards and with your forefinger
stroke along your left hand as if drawing a line.

116. blechorn inkwell
If you want to have an inkwell then raise three fingers as if you want to dip [a pen]
and turn your hand downwards and position your fingers as if taking hold of an
inkwell.

117. fiper pen
The sign for a pen is that you place together the three fingers as if holding a pen and
dipping it, and then move the fingers as if you want to write.

118. cyning king
The sign for a king is that you hold your hand downwards and go round your head with
all your fingers as the sign of a royal crown.

119. cyninges wife queen
The sign for a queen is that you stretch your hand around your head and place your
hand above your head.

120. bisceop bishop
The sign for a bishop is that you stroke downwards with your hands over each shoulder
and across your chest in the sign of a cross.

121. munec monk
If you want to indicate something to do with a monk whose sign you do not know then
take hold of your hood.

122. myneceunu nuns
The sign for nuns is that you place your two forefingers [towards one another] over the
forehead and then move them out and down as the sign for the holy veil.

123. maessepreost mass priest
(f.101v)
If you want to have a mass priest who is not a monk then with your forefinger draw a
circle and stretch out your hand as if you were blessing.

124. diacon deacon
If you want to have a deacon then do the same again with your forefinger and make the
sign of the cross on your forehead as a sign for the holy gospel.

125. maedenneshad preost unmarried priest
The sign for an unmarried priest is that you stroke your cheek with your forefinger, as
we said before.

126. laede mann layman
The sign for a layman is that you take hold of your chin with your whole hand as if you
wanted to take hold of your beard.
127. ungehadod wif lay woman
The sign for a lay woman is that with your finger tips you stroke the fringe of your hair from one ear to the other for the sign for the head band.

Explicitunt monasteriales indicia.

NOTES

1. The sign is similar to that in the Ely sign list (Jarecki 1981, 243, no. 73): *capillum super aurem pendentem cum duobus digitis apprehende*. An abbot was the head of an abbey. The word is derived from the Aramaic abba, meaning ‘father’ as used in Mark xiv, 36. If the monastery was also the seat of a bishop (e.g. Rochester, Ely, etc.) or as at Canterbury, an archbishop, then there was no office of abbot and the monks were ruled by a prior (sign 3). ‘What kind of a man’ an abbot should be and his appointment are laid down in RSB chs. 2 and 64.

2. See 124 for another sign for deacon. At Bury St. Edmund’s the pretend ringing of a bell was the sign for the sacrist (Bury 112; see also below no. 6). The office of deacon originated in Acts vi, 1–6 and came to be used for the official who assisted the priest at Mass. One of his duties was evidently the ringing of a small bell during the service and the reading of the gospel. The sign for gospel and deacon is the same in Bury sign no. 24. See RSB chs. 21 and 65 for the appointment and various duties ofdeacons under the direction of the abbot.

3. This word means prior, not provost. The prior was the abbot’s deputy or head of the community where there was no abbot (see note 1 above). RSB ch. 65 discusses the appointment of the prior.

4. The duties of the cellarer are laid down in RSB ch. 31 where besides those of storekeeper they include the care of the sick, children and guests. For the turning of a key cf. the Ely sign (Jarecki 1981, 245, no. 86): *simila in manu clavem tenere et quasi sese infixam evertere*. Keys are the emblem of a cellarer in several medieval MSS (see e.g. Hartley and Elliot 1925, pl. 9c).

5. The first part of this sign is for one who is in charge of anything (cf. the next sign). The second part is explained in the Bury sign for boy (129): *minimum digitum labiis inpinge pro eo quod ita sugit infans*. See also here sign 66 for milk. The Ely list also has a sign for *magister puorum* (Jarecki 1981, 245, no. 84). The official is referred to in the *Concordia*, ch. 8.

6. Literally, ‘churchwarden’; cf. *custos ecclesie* in the Ely sign for sacrist (Jarecki 1981, 244, no. 81). The sacrist was primarily
responsible for the care and running of the church, including
the fabric, decoration, ordering of services, lighting, etc. One
of his particular duties was the ringing of the bells for services –
hence this sign.

7. This sign is peculiar to Christ Church. Other sign lists have a
sign for church combining 'building' and 'blessing'. The first
part of it is related to 'sacrist' in the previous sign. The second
part may signify the praying or singing which takes place in a
church.

8. A short book of verses sung by one choir in response to
another. The significance of this sign is explained by an Ely
sign (Jarecki 1981, 233, no. 12): . . . pollicem inflectas propter
incurvationes notularum neumas que sunt ita inflexe. For a
reproduction of eleventh-century music see GAASA, 157. The
antiphoner is mentioned in the Concordia, ch. 34.

9. The book containing the Ordinary and Proper (i.e. the fixed
and the changeable) parts of the service of Mass.

10. Two separate signs have been confused here. At Bury the sign
of the cross was made on the forehead for the gospel (no. 24)
and on the mouth for the epistle (25). (This indeed is still the
general practice of the Church today before the readings at
Mass). The gospels are also mentioned in Christ Church sign
31. Several magnificently illuminated gospel books of the
eleventh century survive from the Christ Church scriptorium:
see GAASA, nos. 54, 55, 58 and no. 56 whose scribe is named
as Eadui, a monk at Christ Church.

11. A troper was a liturgical service book containing musical
interpolations (from Latin tropus, a figure of speech). A troper
in Anglo-Saxon and Latin dating from the mid-eleventh
century may have once belonged to Christ Church (BL Cotton
MS Caligula A.XIV; GAASA, no. 71).

12. The meaning of this sign is obscure. It might be an alter-
ative sign for 'tract, duration and anything of a fixed length'
which at Bury St. Edmund's was 'extending the hand, draw
the palm above the chest from left shoulder to right' (Bury list
no. 33).

13. Here presumably, although this is a Canterbury manuscript, a
priest's Mass vestment and not the archbishop's pall which
superumerale can also mean.

14. This sign is very imprecise. The alb was (and is) a long-sleeved
white garment that reached to the feet. A priest celebrating
Mass wore it under the chasuble (see sign 17), leaving the
sleeves and shirt visible. The method of fixing it with the girdle
(15) is described in the Regularis Concordia, ch. 33.
15. A white or coloured belt or cord worn over the alb at the waist. See Owen-Crocker 1986, 161. The sign is very similar to Bury sign no. 8.

16. A strip of material often highly decorated and worn over the alb as for example, the early tenth-century stole amongst St. Cuthbert's relics, which was probably made at Winchester (AASE, pl. IV).

17. A sleeveless tent-shaped garment with a hole in the centre, the outermost of a priest's Mass vestments. There was a silk chasuble in the tomb of Archbishop Hubert Walter (1193–1205) (Stratford et al. 1982, 81). The wearing of the chasuble is discussed in the *Regularis Concordia*, ch. 34.

18. Literally 'hand towel' which originally it was. As a Mass vestment it was a narrow strip of decorated material hung over the priest's left forearm. Archbishop Stigand is shown holding his maniple in his hand in the Bayeux Tapestry. The Bury list has separate signs for maniple (7) and for hand towel (12, *manutergium*): 'join all the fingers of the right hand and move them obliquely'. The tenth-century maniple amongst St. Cuthbert's relics was probably made at Winchester.

19. The formal offering of the bread and wine for consecration at Mass.

20. The two sacred vessels made of precious metal and used at Mass. At Canterbury nearest in date to this MS are the silver-gilt chalice and paten from the tomb of Archbishop Hubert Walter (1193–1205), dated to the mid-twelfth century (Stratford et al. 1982, 90).

21. Literally 'offering' (cf. 19), but the action suggests the holding of the bread at Mass.

22. This sign is very different from the later medieval ones which ask you to move the tips of thumb and forefinger slightly in front of the eye or to touch the lips. Wine was imported in barrels from the Rhineland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Thereafter, there appears to have been a preference for French wine which was imported in red amphorae. For references to late Anglo-Saxon barrels from York and Durham, see Carver 1986, 135, and for an illustration of one in a St. Augustine's Abbey manuscript of c. 1000, *ibid.*, 141. For strained wine see sign 84.

23. Literally, a drinking horn (as from Sutton Hoo or Taplow) though the motions for the sign suggest drawing the stopper of a flask or cruet. No other lists consulted have this sign.

24. A thurible or vessel suspended by chains in which incense was burned. A tenth-century bronze censer cover with silver and
niello inlay was found in Palace Street, Canterbury, c. 1867 (GAASA, no. 73 and pl. XXII).

25–28, 34, 37 and 88 are all to do with lighting but their meanings and differences are not always clear.

26. The end of the candlestick had a spike for holding the candle. Cf. ‘sticca’ in 56.


29. A sign for bible occurs in only one other medieval sign list, that of William of Hirsauc (Jarecki 1981, 205). ‘Matins’ (see previous line) was the first service of the monks’ day, sung at sometime between midnight and dawn.

30. A list of martyrs of the Christian church with brief accounts of their lives read daily. According to the Regularis Concordia, ch. 21, it was read ‘at a sign from the prior’. The significance of the sign is obscure. For ‘little martyrology’, see 45 where death is signified by pointing to the throat. Cf. the Bury sign for martyr, no. 59 ‘... collum percut ex quasi secans’.

31. See 10 above.

32. The sense is clear enough, but later in the Middle Ages the sign for psalter referred to the sign for a king because King David wrote the psalms. Several illuminated psalters of the eleventh century survive from the Christ Church scriptorium – see GAASA, nos. 36 (Bosworth Psalter), 57 (Eadui Psalter – see Plate I) and 59 (Harley Psalter).

33. The raising of the little finger in the second part of the sign suggests the hymnal signified is a small one. The singing of hymns was encouraged in the RSB ch. 20, having been introduced into the liturgy of the church at an early date. See Wieland’s introduction to the Canterbury Hymnal, a collection of 100 hymns written in the second half of the tenth century, probably at Christ Church (BL Add. MS 37517; Wieland 1982).

34. See 25. The outspread fingers in this sign might suggest the chains of a hanging lamp.

35. The Winchester Liber Vitae, written c. 1031, shows a splendid altar cross being presented to the New Minister by King Cnut and Queen Ethelgifu (BL Stowe MS 944. See Plate II). For eleventh-century ivory crosses in the style of Canterbury MSS, see GAASA, nos. 120–1.

36. A small ninth-century silver pendent cross, now in the British Museum (39, 3–19, 1), was found at Gravesend, and a bronze cross from Canterbury is in the Heritage Centre there.

37. See 26.

40. RSB ch. 43 ordained that latecomers to church services were to stand until told by the abbot to sit.
St. Benedict and the monks of Christchurch, Canterbury, the foremost of whom holds a book with the opening words of his Rule. The monk beneath him is probably Eadui. About 1012-42. (British Library Arundel MS 155, the Eadui Psalter, f.133. Crown Copyright).
King Knut and Queen Emma present a cross to the New Minster, Winchester, with a group of monks below. About 1031. (British Library Stowe MS 944, The New Minster Liber Vitae, t.6. Crown copyright).
44. This was the room in which the monks met daily to discuss business, so called because the meeting began with a reading of a chapter from the RSB. During the meeting faults were confessed and punishments decreed, hence the element of forgiveness in this sign.

45. See 30.

46. Literally, a ruler, but here clearly a rule or the Rule of St. Benedict. For a ruler for drawing lines see 115.

47-48. On corporal punishment, see RSB chs. 23, 28 and 30. RSB ch. 45 ordains whipping for those who recite psalms, etc., wrongly.

48. Literally, a whip but probably a scourge, the two fingers suggesting two tails. The ninth-century scourge from Trew-hiddle (Cornwall) has four tails and is a unique survival though a number are illustrated in manuscripts (see Carver 1986).

49. The dining hall or ‘frater’ generally occupying the south side of a medieval cloister. See RSB ch. 39–41 for the regulation of meals and diet.

51. St. Matthew is depicted sitting on a folding stool in a Canterbury manuscript of the eleventh century (Temple 1976, no. 68).

52. Table linen was to be washed weekly according to RSB ch. 35.

53. From Latin *discus*. The same word is used for the paten in sign 20. In the refectory it would have been made of wood or metal at this date, not pottery. For examples of Late Saxon bowls and dishes, see Carver 1979, 26, and for reference to an Anglo-Saxon monk who made metal vessels for the refectory, see AASE 205 and 250n.

54. This sign is standard throughout monastic sign lists. The bread was evidently served as individual rolls as can be seen in pictorial representations of refectory meals. Syon monastery had separate signs for brown and white bread (Aungier 1840, 405) while Ely also had signs for bread cooked with water and for a half-loaf which was served during seasons of abstinence (Jarecki 1981, 234, 16–19). See RSB ch. 39 for the daily amounts of bread and other foods allowed.

55. Iron table knives with bone handles are known from Anglo-Saxon England (AASE 260). There is a tenth-century example in the Canterbury Heritage Centre. The same word is also used to mean the larger knives used for hunting or fighting, as, for example, the tenth-century decorated knife from Sittingbourne (GAASA, no. 95).

56. Literally, a stick. A one-pronged ‘fork’ is depicted with knife and spoon in BL Harl. MS 603, f.66v (reproduced in Carver
1986, 128, fig. 12). No early medieval ‘sticca’ appears to survive, but an early eleventh-century decorated bone spoon from Winchester may have had a two-pronged fork on the other end of it (Collis and Kjølbye-Biddle 1979, 379). This is one of a number of surviving pre-Conquest spoons, some of them with ecclesiastical associations, and it is surprising that there is no sign for spoon as there is in most later medieval lists, though the sign for a large spoon or ladle is implied in sign 60. No other sign list has a sign for a fork.

57. The daily round of manual labour including gardening and cooking was considered as much a part of a monk’s life as the Opus Dei.

59. The Ely list has signs for both raw leek (porrum crudum) and garlic or raddish (alium seu rasus), the latter with a reference to their smell (Jarecki 1981, 238, nos. 41–2).

60. A vegetable dish generally with herbs but not made with oats as porridge. The Bury sign for this (76) involves pretending to chop up vegetables as at Canterbury in no. 57.

61. Pepper was an oriental spice and must have been a rare commodity at Canterbury in the eleventh century. No other English list has this sign but William of Hirsau’s reads ‘having made the general sign [for spices] lift up the fist’ (Jarecki 1981, 176).

62. Beans were a staple part of the monastic diet and occur in all the known lists although their presence in Anglo-Saxon archaeology has not yet been attested (AASE 24).

63. The meaning of ‘cesena’ (singular, ‘ces’?) is not certain. It may simply denote any fresh greens or herbs.

64. All the monastic sign lists have a sign for cheese describing this motion.

65. The use of lard (pinguedo) in cooking was prohibited during Advent and Lent, according to the Regularis Concordia chs. 30 and 34.

66. The sign for milk in the Syon nunnery list is closest to this: ‘Draw thy left little fynger in maner of mylkyng’ (Aungier 1840, 408; cf. William of Hirsau no. 31, Jarecki 1981, 169). Other signs for milk involve sucking the little finger as an infant suckles (see also note on sign 5).

68. Numerous salt-houses (salinae) are recorded in Domesday Book as belonging to the archbishop or his monks. For a use for salt see sign 78.

69. Honey was an essential ingredient in the diet of the Anglo-Saxons until the introduction of cane sugar. The tenth-century Welsh laws of Howell the Good give six different values for bee swarms depending on the time of year (AASE 389).
70. This is the general sign for fish which in other lists is followed by a sign to denote the particular type. Bury and Ely signs include herring, salmon, dried fish, sturgeon, pike and trout (Sherlock and Zajac 1988, 258). Numerous fisheries (piscaria) for fish and eels in various parts of Kent are listed in Domesday Book as belonging to either the archbishop or his monks, including eight fisheries in Canterbury itself (DB Kent 3, 10), but the only species specifically mentioned are the 40,000 herring at Sandwich (DB Kent 2, 2).

71. See 70.

72. The sign for oysters, which were as popular with the Anglo-Saxons as they were before and after this period, occurs in no other list.

73-76. All the English lists have signs for apple and pear. Ely also has cherry, but plum only occurs here.

77. The sloe, the fruit of the blackthorn, occurs only in the Christ Church sign list. Various medicinal and other uses for sloes are given in Culpeper's Complete Herbal. See also Hartley 1979, 440-1.

78. For salt itself see sign 68. RSB chs. 36 and 39 forbade the eating of red meat except by the sick. It would have been salted to preserve it.

79. This was the daily amount of wine a monk was allowed (also given in the Cluny sign, Jarecki 1981, 127, no. 33): cyphus qui cepit cotidianam vini mensuram. The cups would have been of wood (maplewood at Sutton Hoo) or leather, less likely pottery or metal, and held a hemina of wine (about half a pint) which was the measure which St. Benedict ordained in RSB ch. 40, although he preferred that monks should abstain from intoxicating drink altogether.

80. Lids of wood or stone for cooking-pots are known (though very rare) and may be intended here because a lid for a cup seems improbable.

81. For the reading 'micelre', meaning larger, for 'wicelre', a word otherwise unknown, see Barley 1977, 326. The thumb in the second part of the sign indicates that something large is signified as elsewhere in the sign list.

84. For a sign involving turning a tap see also 22. This curious sign makes no reference to actual wine strainers which are known from Roman times (e.g. Strong 1966, pls. 46B and 67A). They also had a liturgical purpose (Watts 1988, 62f) and their method of manufacture is described in De Diversis Artibus) (Bk. 3, ch. 57) by the monk Theophilus (fl. c. 1100).

85. Possibly this sign signifies mashing barley in the making of
beer. Giraldus Cambrensis in his comments on the meals at Christ Church (see introduction, above) described beer which the monks eschewed in favour of more exotic drinks as ‘at its best in England and above all in Kent’ (Butler 1937, 71).

86. The reading ‘beordraest’, meaning dregs of beer, is supplied by Barley (1977, 327) in place of ‘burhreste’ which is otherwise unknown. He points out that the other signs that involve pointing at the lips are all concerned with drinking. Kluge (1885, 125) placed this sign in the succeeding section on dormitory signs but did not attempt to translate it.

87. The sleeping arrangements of the monks are laid out in RSB ch. 22.

88. For forms of lighting see note on sign 25. RSB ch. 22 ordained that there should be a lamp burning throughout the night in the dormitory. Such a lamp might have been made of pottery or stone (AASE 323).

91. ‘Swiftlere’ is a loan-word from the Latin, *subtalaris*, (Owen-Crocker 1986, 207). For the signal for monks to change from night to day shoes see note on 93 below.

92. ‘A bag-like foot covering easily slipped on’ (Owen-Crocker 1986, 206).

93. The *Regularis Concordia*, ch. 20, ordained that no-one except the ministers (i.e. the various officials) was to put on his day shoes until the signal was given after Prime.

94. The MS is incomplete but the sign is reasonably certain. The Syon nuns’ sign for ‘priuay or reredortour’ was ‘Make the signe of a house and stryke downe thy right hand by thy clothes’. At Bury St. Edmund’s the building was called the *domus necessario rum* (sign 198). RSB ch. 8 refers to the *necessaria nature* which the OE translates ‘neodbeheofe gecyndes’ (EETS 1888, 37). No monastic latrines survive from the Anglo-Saxon period but a latrine building in the royal palace complex at Cheddar (Som.) has been excavated (AASE 91).

95–96. No other sign list has these signs.

96. The washing of the face before the Morrow Mass is mentioned in the *Regularis Concordia*, ch. 20.

99. This sign clearly denotes some kind of razor for shaving and not for manicure. Bronze and iron razors are known from classical times (e.g., Boon 1974, 133, fig. 16), but not from Anglo-Saxon England.

100. Combs in bone, horn and occasionally wood are known from medieval England (AASE 254, 260). Bone examples of the ninth century may be seen in the Royal Museum and in the Heritage Centre, Canterbury.
101. A linen shirt with sleeves worn as an undergarment. It was the same as the *camisia* (Ely sign 52) (Owen-Crocker 1986, 206). In *Domesday Book* the revenues of properties in Sandwich, Farningham and elsewhere are recorded as being for the payment of the clothing of the monks of Christ Church.

102. Breeches were worn by monks under their habits (Owen-Crocker 1986, 157 and fig. 160).

103. Garters were made of cloth or leather (Owen-Crocker 1986, 167).

104. The clothing required by monks is given in RSB ch. 55. It includes shoes and stockings though there is no sign here for the former.

105. Kluge (1885, 127) did not translate this word which occurs nowhere else, but the sign is sufficiently close to the Bury sign for *tunica* (182) to suggest 'tunic' may here be intended.

107. The scapular was (and is) a short cloak covering the shoulders, as the name implies. The sign occurs in no other list and the garment seems to have been replaced in later centuries by the full-length frock (*froccus* or *floccus*, e.g., Bury sign 190).

108. Pre-Conquest gloves found at York were made of leather. See AASE 274.

109. The motion for this sign might also suggest scissors but Wilson (AASE 274) notes that, while Anglo-Saxon shears are ubiquitous, scissors have not been recorded in England, although found in Viking contexts in Sweden. Early twelfth-century iron shears found near the Cathedral in 1977 are in the Canterbury Heritage Centre.

110. Anglo-Saxon needles of iron, bronze and bone have been found (AASE 273–4).

111. This is the first of the signs for use in the cloister. It presumably denotes an actual bakehouse and not simply the oven for the Mass bread, as survives, for example in the south transept of Peterborough Cathedral. A bakehouse is one of the buildings specifically referred to in the *Regularis Concordia*, ch. 64, and in RSB ch. 46, but no monastic bakehouse is known to survive except possibly a mid eleventh-century example at Fladbury (Worc.) (AASE 76 and 419). Silence in the bakehouse was ordained in the fourth-century rule of St. Pachomius (PG XL, col. 951; see page 1).

112. From Latin, *graphium*, an implement with a point at one end for writing on wax tablets (see next sign) and blunt at the other end for erasing. RSB ch. 33 urged that the abbot should supply his monks with *graphium et tabulas* (see 113–4). Anglo-Saxon styli have been found at St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury.
DAVID SHERLOCK

In 878 a monk of Malmesbury Abbey was set upon and killed with these implements by the boys he was teaching (Hughes 1897, 263).

113 and 114. Waxed boards for writing with a stylus (see last) are known from Roman times. They were used for making temporary records. Eadmer, a monk at Christ Church, records how Archbishop Anselm (1093–1109) wrote down on wooden writing tablets thoughts which came to him in a moment of inspiration during matins and which he later ordered to be copied out on parchment after the tablets were broken (Southern 1962, 30–31). The smaller tablets were hinged in pairs (hence plural ‘waexbreda’ in 113): see for example part of a seventh-century decorated bone tablet from Blythburgh (VCH Suffolk I, 351). For an illustration of a large one see Zacharias recording the name of John the Baptist (as told in Luke i, 63) in a detail from the Benedictional of St. Ethelwold (BL Add. MS 49598, f.92v; GAASA, front cover).

115. See sign 45 for transferred meaning of rule.

117. There is no sign for parchment as in Bury St. Edmund’s sign 134.

118 and 119. See Introduction for the importance of royal patronage in the monastic reformation in Late Saxon England and Plate II for a representation of King Cnut and his queen in a monastery where according to the Regularis Concordia, ch. 25, prayers were to be said daily for the king and queen. This custom has survived into our own time in the Book of Common Prayer. In Old English ‘çwen’ meant ‘wife’ or ‘woman’ generally, not only ‘queen’. Owen-Crocker (1986, 144) suggests the sign for the queen implies some kind of veil worn in conjunction with her crown.

120. The first part of this sign may be indicating the infulae or twin tabs of a bishop’s mitre.

121. RSB ch. 60 deals with the application by priests to join a monastery and celebrate Mass. In the Anglo-Saxon version of the RSB (EETS 1888) mass priest is translated ‘presbyter’. For a picture of the monks of Christ Church, see Plate I.

123. Application by these priests to join a monastery and celebrate Mass is discussed in RSB ch. 60.

124. See above, sign 2. The deacon here is presumably secular as nos. 123 and 125.

125. These priests may be the clerici also mentioned in RSB ch. 60 (see note 123).

126. This is the same as the sign in William of Hirsau’s list (Jarecki 1981, 214, no. 263) and the Ely list (Ibid. 244, no. 77).
127. The head-band was a characteristic feature of a secular or married woman’s appearance (Owen-Crocker 1986, 142–3 and fig. 124).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was begun during the research for the Bury St. Edmund’s sign list, which I published with William Zajac in 1988. I should like to thank Steven Plunkett for help with the translation of the text, and a number of other friends for advice on various topics, in particular, Debbie Banham on Anglo-Saxon food, Karen Baclawski on Anglo-Saxon dress and my colleague James Lang on Anglo-Saxon archaeology generally.

ABBREVIATIONS

BL British Library.
Bury sign list Cambridge University Library Add. MS 6006, 76v. Published in Sherlock and Zajac 1988.
EETS Early English Texts Society.
Syon sign list British Library MS Arundel 146, printed as ‘A Table of Signs used in the Monastery of Syon’ in Aungier 1840, 405–9.
VCH The Victoria County History.
REFERENCES


Hartley and Elliot 1925 D. Hartley and M.M. Elliot, *Life and
ANGLO-SAXON MONASTIC SIGN LANGUAGE

Hughes 1897
T. M’Kenny Hughes, ‘On some Wax Tablets said to have been found at Cambridge’, Archaeologia, lv (1897), 257–82.

Jarecki 1981

Kluge 1885

Owen-Crocker 1986

Power 1922

Rieche 1986

Sherlock and Zajac 1988

Southern 1962

Strong 1966

Stratford et al. 1982

Symons 1953

Temple 1976

Watts 1988

Wieland 1982
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, chronological account of events in Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, a compilation of seven surviving interrelated manuscript records that is the primary source for the early history of England. The narrative was first assembled in the reign of King Alfred (871–899) from a monk at Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, crouched beneath, embracing his right foot, are painted in rich pigments, enhanced with substantial areas of gilding; the monks who approach bearing gifts (to be considered further later), are drawn in brown ink and touched frugally with tints of colour. It is drawings from this latter category, finished drawings, which were produced in all the major monastic centres of Anglo-Saxon manuscript production, which will concern us today. Winchcombe Abbey was not an Anglo-Saxon monastic house famed for the production of books, manuscript production there may have been sporadic and a continuous supply of high quality parchment therefore unavailable. In the seventh century the pagan Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity mainly by missionaries sent from Rome. Irish missionaries from Iona, who were proponents of Insular Christianity, were influential in the conversion of Northumbria, but after the Synod of Whitby in 664 the English church gave its allegiance to the Pope. Christianity was present in Roman Britain from at least the third century, introduced by tradesman, immigrants and legionaries, although most of the latter probably followed