



*The  
Schartz–Metterklume  
Method*

*A Memoir of Patrick Wormald  
(1947–2004)*

*David Ganz*



## Charles Patrick Wormald

(1947–2004)

**Figure 1.** Patrick seated at a table by a window, with papers, books, pipe, and satchel, at one of Wendy Davies's charter weekends of the Bucknell group at Bucknell, Shropshire, in the late 1980s. The red-covered book is Peter Sawyer's *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (1968). Photograph by Rosemary Morris.

# *The Schartz–Metterklume Method* *(A Memoir)*

*David Ganz*

The hundreds of medievalists who assembled in Oxford for the Requiem Mass for Patrick Wormald were attesting the end of an era.<sup>1</sup> His generation of students, who came to university around 1968, had ideals and expectations which are no longer possible today. They thought of themselves as a meritocracy, sustained by glittering prizes, whether the luxury of sharing the life of intelligent and reflective people, or the freedom from having to work to fund their degree course, and even from having to make their own beds. Tutors found time to hone the prose style of students, and to treat them as colleagues in the making. Research was funded, and was not yet simply a closely monitored preparation for the delivery of conference papers. Imaginativeness, critical power and compelling style were treasured: publications were not required. Such rewards are now thought to establish an 'elite' but this was rarely how they perceived themselves. They had the comforts of a leisure class, but those comforts were the reward for three bursts of eight weeks of intensive essay writing, and for vacations spent reading thick books in languages other than English.

Any evaluation of this generation must take account of their special circumstances. It was in 1960 that Military Service ended, and so students came to Oxford with little experience of a world whose values were not those of the sixth form. From 1962 College scholarships were supplemented by State funding of Higher Education. Most men's colleges took a liberal view of sexual activity, and all colleges had a bar. Oxford retained a language examination except for scientists, and was in one of those energetic moods of reform which was to produce the many volumes of the Franks Report,<sup>2</sup> discussing improved graduate education and even the possibility of a School of Advanced Study.

The generation of 1968 had often spent time in France, or even Germany, and though this may now seem absurdly dull to those backpacking around Asia, it did result in some knowledge of foreign languages. And England still felt intellectually inferior to France. On arrival in Paris an English student would soon realize that he was among contemporaries who had read Karl Marx, and often also Sigmund Freud, and had benefited from being taught by future university professors in their *Classe de Philo*, so imbibing Cartesian rationalism from teachers aspiring to form intellectuals, rather than gentlemen. What could Oxford offer such people?

It supplied the curious conjuncture of a moment of tremendous intellectual excitement and a generation who assumed that they were at least as clever as their teachers. Though most Oxford dons had experience of the 1939–45 war, or at least of military service, that often confirmed their reluctance to engage with theory. In a famous essay 'Components of the National Culture' Perry Anderson asserted that the ideas in British intellectual life were all the result of 'White immigration': the legacy of Lewis Namier, Isaiah Berlin, E.H. Gombrich, and Bronislaw Malinowski, Karl Popper, Melanie Klein, and indeed Isaac Deutscher.<sup>3</sup> The list was somewhat eclectic, but the message was correct. The great Oxford medieval historian K.B. McFarlane wrote in 1963: 'Ideas. Some historians, worthy fellows, have them. They borrow them, when they can.'<sup>4</sup> In general they were imported into English intellectual life from across the Channel.

The Oxford History course began with a term of Bede the Venerable, Niccolò Machiavelli, Edward Gibbon, Alexis de Tocqueville and Jacob Burckhardt, installing an aristocratic liberalism, but also an enthusiasm for the 'big questions' from the pedantic narrowness of vision which was all too often the product of Oxford's training in reading the sources. Tocqueville and Burckhardt especially are too rarely given credit by those who were forced to read them.

The sort of history which was taught to medievalists in Oxford had changed dramatically after 1945 at the latest. The constitutional history which had been the staple of William Stubbs and still of V.H. Galbraith was replaced by a form of intellectual and cultural history. For English historians of the Middle Ages the task of understanding the past had been resolved by an intuitive empathy. That tradition goes back at least to Helen Waddell's *The Wandering Scholars* of 1927 and her concern with Peter Abelard's 'truth beyond dreaming far.'<sup>5</sup> It was very much in the air in the age of R.G. Collingwood. As Gilbert Murray said in his presidential address to the Classical Association in 1918, 'The Scholar . . . must so understand as to relive'.<sup>6</sup>

Mastery of Latinity, in all of its complexity, was the key to what Sir Richard Southern sought to understand: 'more secret and momentous changes in thought and feeling and in the direction of society.' Those who carpeted the floors of Southern's and Peter Brown's lecture rooms witnessed the Middle Ages presented as central to narratives of human experience: what Peter Brown called 'the joining of Heaven and Earth, and the role in this joining, of dead human beings.'<sup>7</sup> Saki, in a wicked story, called this 'the Schartz-Metterklume Method', intended 'to make people understand history by acting it themselves.'<sup>8</sup>

The key thinker for historians, not cited by Perry Anderson, was Arnaldo Momigliano, Professor of Ancient History at University College London, director of a famous seminar at the Warburg Institute, and, after his retirement an associate member of All Souls College, Oxford, from 1975 to 1982. Momigliano's lectures were an introduction to the history of historiography from antiquity to the present day; his immense learning and sound judgement made him the acknowledged creator and master of a new area of study for a generation. A refugee from Fascist Anti-Semitism he brought the aura of the European intellectual to the potentially nostalgic country-house prosopography which was regarded as the proper mastery of evidence by the committed empiricist. Momigliano saw theory as created by the historian, not by the facts; it was this emphasis on the role of the observer in the interpretation of history which was one of his most distinctive contributions to the study of history. Another was his insistence that methodology (as opposed to ideology) was the central theme of the history of historiography. But it was Momigliano's conviction that historians must be educated about their subject which was his most powerful legacy: 'It is one of the grotesque faults of our specialized culture that one is disgraced if one ignores the latest dissertation, but one can easily get away without knowledge of St. Augustine or Machiavelli.'<sup>9</sup>

In this endeavour a particular part was played by Catholic historians. Dom David Knowles, in Cambridge, was the first to be appointed to a professorial chair: he was followed at Cambridge by Walter Ullmann. Oxford's Catholics were led by Maurice Keen, Alexander Murray, Patrick Wormald, and Henry Mayr-Harting. This was a reaction to the High Anglicanism of Sir Richard Southern, and perhaps also to the agnosticism of Karl Leyser and K.B. McFarlane. How far these Christians were able to view the Middle Ages as the age of faith would merit investigation.

It is too soon to sketch the comparison between Wormald and Frederic William Maitland which obsessed him, but Maitland had hated Greek and Latin at Eton, had lost his faith, was the friend of Henry Sidgwick and Leslie Stephen, and was inspired by Otto von Gierke and Lord Acton. Wormald had a greater respect for Eton and for his university, and was inspired not by philosophers but by the remarkable assembly of historians in Oxford, of whom Momigliano, Peter Brown, and Southern were the brightest stars. And in the aftermath of A.J.P. Taylor and Hugh Trevor-Roper historians were considered as stars, appearing on the BBC Third Programme and the television to talk, with a healthy absence of scenery and skirmish. Wormald's methodology was at bottom a form of empathy: like Maitland he wanted 'the thoughts of our forefathers' to 'become thinkable once more'.<sup>10</sup>

His intellectual odyssey was a debate with Maitland, and in a moving article he explores Maitland's continuing status as 'a contemporary colleague,' praising his common sense, his intuition and especially 'his sense of his place in European scholarship.'<sup>11</sup> That sense of place was Wormald's constant nemesis:



I have never met a scholar who so consistently and sometimes lethally compared himself daily, not just to his own contemporaries, but to his mentors, his father, and (in Wormald's case) Sir Frank Stenton and Stubbs and Maitland himself. (There is a revealing reference to 'the great scholar's sickening ability to have observed what one thought oneself the first to notice'.<sup>12</sup>) But while Maitland was concerned at 'the failure of his fellow-countrymen to measure up to the standards of scholars overseas.'<sup>13</sup> Wormald embodied a conviction that English history, and English historians, stood in a direct and a privileged line of descent from Bede, and were enriched by being engaged in the study of a benign and virtually sacred state.

For Wormald, Maitland stood at the start of a tradition, but the nature of that tradition reposed on a respect for evidence. Wormald was reluctant to follow method rather than evidence alone, and in that he fitted into the Oxonian imaginative mould or the Schartz-Metterklume method. F.M. Powicke confessed: 'sometimes, as I work at a series of patent and close rolls, I have a queer sensation; the dead entries begin to be alive. It is rather like the experience of sitting down in one's chair and finding that one has sat on the cat. These are real people.'<sup>14</sup> Such analytical history as was tolerated was as likely to come from Augustine of Hippo or Thomas Hobbes as from Marx. Friedrich Nietzsche, Wilhelm Dilthey and Max Weber were ignored and no one ever noted Marc Bloch's 1939 review of Friedrich Meinecke on Historicism, with its plea for '*une science humaine plus vaste*.'<sup>15</sup> Oxford historians mistrusted sociology and economics but some did embrace anthropology: Brown's quip that the best book about the Anglo-Saxons was called 'Custom and Conflict in Africa'<sup>16</sup> sent students to Evans Pritchard and Mary Douglas.

In addition Wormald was saved from much insularity by his concern with law. All Souls' offered him a superb Law library and daily contact with both lawyers and legal scholars formed in a European tradition. His too-early death closes an age of charismatic historians.

Patrick was always aware that his work on English law required detailed knowledge of the manuscripts. In 1977 he spoke on 'The Uses of literacy in Anglo Saxon England' to the Royal Historical Society,<sup>17</sup> though he would later reject much of what he had said there. He and Malcolm Parkes had discussed the Parker manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* before Parkes published his revelatory article about it in 1976.<sup>18</sup> In the same year Patrick published an essay on "Bede and Benedict Biscop" which shows detailed knowledge of the textual transmission of early monastic Rules and is one of the rare occasions when a historian references *Codices Latini Antiquiores*.<sup>19</sup> His paper on 'Aethelred the Lawmaker' takes on Neil Ker's work on Wulfstan's autograph and the different manuscript versions of Aethelred's lawcodes, and argues for Carolingian influence while arguing that 'Aethelred's legislation is not a pretty sight . . . because the disciplines of written law were not reestablished until long after our period.'<sup>20</sup> With Eric John and James Campbell he published a volume *The Anglo-Saxons* with picture essays and plates of charters and manuscripts, including a colour plate of London, British Library MS Royal I E.VI.<sup>21</sup>

He was invited to the first meetings of the Research Group on Manuscript Evidence held with manuscripts in the Parker Library and spoke there 1) on legal manuscripts (1989) after having moved from Glasgow to Oxford, 2) on sixteenth-century transcripts of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts (1991), and 3) on Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 383 and the Lambarde transcripts (1991). In 1992 he was scheduled to speak about the Saint Bertin Prudentius (Corpus MS 223) and he did speak, in Oxford, for the Research Group about Bodleian Library Hatton MS 42, a Breton manuscript of the *Collectio Hibernensis* with material from the *Breviary* of Alaric, the *Dionysio-Hadriana*, and Ansegis's collection of Carolingian capitularies, annotated by Archbishop Wulfstan. In 1993, in hospital, he spoke to Mildred Budny about Corpus MS 201, a collection of legal and other texts, so she could present his ideas to a meeting.

Patrick's volumes on the *Making of English Law* discuss manuscripts in meticulous detail, teasing from them evidence about textual readings, textual circulation, and the function of written law.<sup>22</sup>

He died too young.

## End Notes

- [1] Charles Patrick Wormald (1947–2004):  
1) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick\\_Wormald](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Wormald)  
2) <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2004/oct/13/guardianobituaries.obituaries> (by Henry Mayr–Harting)  
3) <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/patrick-wormald-27257.html> (by James Campbell)  
4) <http://www.oenewsletter.org/OEN/print.php/memorials/wormald/Array> (by Nicholas Brooks)  
5) Stuart Airlie, ‘Patrick Wormald the Teacher’, and Jenny Wormald, ‘Living with Patrick Wormald’ in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, edited by Stephen Baxter, Catherine Karkov, Jinty Nelson, and David Pelteret (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), at pp. 29–35 and 37–43, via <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315257259>.
- [2] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franks\\_Report\\_\(1957\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franks_Report_(1957)).
- [3] *New Left Review*, 1/50 (July/August 1968), 3–57, at pp. 18–19, via <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i50/articles/perry-anderson-components-of-the-national-culture>.
- [4] K.B. McFarlane, *Letters to Friends 1940–1966*, ed. by Gerald Harris (Oxford: Magdalen College, 1997), p. 210 (to Norman Scarfe).
- [5] Helen Wadell, *The Wandering Scholars* (Oxford: Constable & Co., 1927): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Wandering\\_Scholars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wandering_Scholars), via [https://archive.org/details/wanderingscholar00wadd\\_0](https://archive.org/details/wanderingscholar00wadd_0).
- [6] Gilbert Murray, “*Religio Grammatici*: The Religion of a Man of Letters” [Presidential Address to the Classical Association January 8, 1918], via [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Religio\\_Grammatici/MMcVAAAAYAAJ?hl=en](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Religio_Grammatici/MMcVAAAAYAAJ?hl=en).
- [7] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. The Haskell Lectures on History of Religions (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 1.
- [8] [H.H. Munro], ‘The Schartz–Metterklume Method’, *The Westminster Gazette* (14 October 1911), reprinted in *Beasts and Super Beasts* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1914), via <https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/SchaMeth804.shtml> or <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/269/269-h/269-h.htm>.
- [9] Peter Brown, “Arnaldo Dante Momigliano, 1908–1987,” *Proceedings of the British Academy*, no. 74 (1988), 405–442, via <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/1285/74p405.pdf>, at p. 418.
- Peter Brown has described his teaching in Oxford from 1958 to 1974 and the legacy of Momigliano in his *Journeys of the Mind: A Life in History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023).
- [10] Patrick Wormald, ‘Frederic William Maitland and the Earliest English Law’, *Law and History Review*, 16:1 (Spring 1998), 1–25, at p. 14, via <https://www.jstor.org/stable/744319>; reprinted in his *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London: Hambledon Press, 1999), pp. 45–69.
- Cf. Frederic William Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), p. 520 (scan number 517), via <https://archive.org/details/domesdaybookand02maitgoog/page/n10/mode/2up?view=theater> (“A century hence . . . by slow degrees the thoughts of our forefathers, their common thoughts about common things, will become thinkable once more”). Also, <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/frederick-w-maitland/>.
- [11] Wormald, “Maitland and the Earliest English Law”, pp. 1 and 8 / pp. 45 and 52.
- [12] *Ibid.*, p. 18 / p. 62.
- [13] *Ibid.*, p. 9 / p. 53.
- [14] F.M. Powicke, *Ways of Medieval Life and Thought: Essays and Addresses* (London: Odhams Press Limited, 1949), p. 68.
- [15] [https://www.persee.fr/doc/ahess\\_1243-2563\\_1939\\_num\\_1\\_4\\_3016](https://www.persee.fr/doc/ahess_1243-2563_1939_num_1_4_3016) at p. 430.
- [16] Max Gluckman, *Conflict and Conflict in Africa* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955); [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Custom\\_and\\_Conflict\\_in\\_Africa/8LbUfxaTcE0C?hl=en](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Custom_and_Conflict_in_Africa/8LbUfxaTcE0C?hl=en).
- [17] ‘The Uses of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and its Neighbours’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 27 (1977), 95–114, via <https://doi.org/10.2307/3679189>.



**Figures 2–3.** Patrick Wormald during walks at Bucknell charter weekends in Shropshire in the late 1980s. Photographs by Rosemary Morris.

**Figure 2** (*left*). With pipe and jacket at Offa’s Dyke. **Figure 3** (*right*). With short-sleeved shirt and sunglasses by a copse.

- [18] Malcolm Parkes, ‘The Palaeography of the Parker Manuscript of the Chronicle, Laws and Sedulius, and Historiography at Winchester in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, v (1976), pp. 149–171, via <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0263675100000831>; reprinted in Malcolm Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), pp. 143–169.
- [19] ‘Bede and Benedict Biscop’, *Famulus Christi: Essays for the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of Bede*, ed. by Gerald Bonner (London: S.P.C.K., 1976), pp. 141–170; reprinted in Patrick Wormald, *The Times of Bede: Studies in the Early English Christian Society and its Historian*, ed. Stephen Baxter (Maldon, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), pp. 3–29, via <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470693377.ch1>.
- Cf. E.A. Lowe, ed., *Codices Latini Antiquiores: A Paleographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 11 vols. plus Supplement, 1934–1971).
- [20] ‘Æthelred the Lawmaker’, *Æthelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference held in Oxford*. British Archaeological Reports (1978), pp. 47–80, at p. 76.
- [21] *The Anglo-Saxons* (London: Phaidon, 1982).
- [22] Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*, Vol. 1: *Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford and Maldon, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1999); and the posthumously published *Papers Preparatory to The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*, Volume II: *From God’s Law to Common Law*, ed. by Stephen Baxter and John Hudson (London: University of London, Early English Laws, 2014), via <http://www.law.harvard.edu/faculty/cdonahue/courses/lhsemelh/materials/Papers%20Preparatory%20to%20MEL2.pdf> and [http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/media/cms\\_page\\_media/49/Papers%20Preparatory%20to%20MEL2.pdf](http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/media/cms_page_media/49/Papers%20Preparatory%20to%20MEL2.pdf).

Some of Patrick’s insights are incorporated in the entries for manuscripts with legal texts and Archbishop Wulfstan’s works in Mildred Budny, *Insular and Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications in association with the Research Group on Manuscript Evidence, 2 vols., 1997). Information via <https://manuscriptevidence.org/wpme/news/insular-anglo-saxon-and-early-anglo-norman-manuscript-art-at-corpus-christi-college-cambridge-1997/>.



## *Afterword* *Mildred Budny*

In its 2024 Anniversary Year, the Research Group on Manuscript Evidence (RGME) offers recollections of people who have contributed to its origins, history, and development since its formation in 1989 as part of a funded major Research Project on selected medieval Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and related materials at The Parker Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Following the conclusion of that project in 1994, the RGME moved its principal base to the United States, to become established in 1999 as a non-profit educational corporation based at Princeton, New Jersey, with sponsored and co-sponsored events also in England on occasion.

Throughout its history, the Research Group has held scholarly events in various centers on a multiplicity of subjects, medieval and more. They range from seminars and workshops, through lectures, interviews, masterclasses, and conference sessions, to colloquia and symposia. Our interest in the transmission of written materials across the ages embraces not only their evidence but also the people behind them: people creating, using, studying, and seeking to preserve and understand them, then and now.

This RGME Publication honors one of our earliest Honorary Invited Associates, the late Patrick Wormald, in a Memoir written by another, David Ganz, who has served as Trustee of our Corporation since its creation. Both scholars contributed frequently to seminars and workshops in our years at Corpus Christi College and continued to contribute to events after our move. For example, both spoke for our co-sponsored Colloquium at the British Museum in 2002 on “Shaping Understanding: Form and Order in the Anglo-Saxon World (400–1100)”; Patrick delivered the memorable closing keynote lecture on Anglo-Saxon law.

These deeds are reported on our website:

<https://manuscriptevidence.org/wpme/seminars-on-the-evidence-of-manuscripts/>

<https://manuscriptevidence.org/wpme/symposia-on-the-transmission-of-the-bible/>

<https://manuscriptevidence.org/wpme/2002-colloquium-on-form-and-order-in-the-anglo-saxon-world/>.

<https://manuscriptevidence.org/wpme/memoirs/>

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