

## The Worcester Collection of Canons

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Slowly, and not altogether steadily, over the last several hundred years scholars have been piecing together a picture of the role that England played in the development and spread of canon law collections in the early medieval period. The picture, as it currently stands, is far from finished, but the main contours have already taken shape and many interesting details are now beginning to be filled in. Beginning in the seventh and eighth centuries, and fuelled it seems by the early Anglo-Saxon church's strong ties to Roman models, we see in England the considerable influence of Italian canon law collections, most notably the *collectiones Dionysiana*, *Sanblasiana* and *Quesnelliana*. In the eighth century, imbued with the legal teachings of these collections, reform-minded Anglo-Saxon personnel descended on the Low Countries and the lands east of the Rhine, bringing with them the institutional frameworks and disciplinary teaching materials they had inherited from their Roman and Celtic mentors. These included both the collections already mentioned, and also copies of the *Hibernensis* and several different types of penitential handbooks. And during this time Anglo-Saxons also played an important role in the dissemination of the important *Collectio vetus Gallica*. This acme of Anglo-Saxon canonical scholarship—epitomized in such figures as Ecgberht and St Boniface—seems to have ended, however, sometime in the ninth century, probably as a result of the devastation of the Viking raids, which inflicted heavy losses upon England's material and intellectual culture. In England, interest in, and the manuscript resources necessary to carry out, the study of Continental canonical sources would never again under the Anglo-Saxons reach the level they had attained in the first two hundred years of the English church's existence. Consequently, for

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the duration of the Anglo-Saxon period Continental canon law collections played a smaller role in influencing the law and discipline of the Anglo-Saxon church. Nevertheless, new kinds of hybrid collections—which we might call canonico-penitential collections, and which had been gaining in gaining in popularity on the Continent since the ninth century—began crossing the Channel into England during the tenth century, and were well received by the Anglo-Saxon episcopacy. By the beginning of the eleventh century, study of the canon law had once again attained a degree of sophistication in England. The most direct evidence of this is a collection which has for nearly 400 years gone under the title *Excerptiones Ecgberhti*, though I prefer to call it the *Collectio canonum Wigorniensis*, or ‘Worcester collection of canons’. It is this collection—specifically its origins and development in the beginning of the eleventh century—that forms the subject of my paper.

Despite its traditional name, the *Wigorniensis* has no connection to Ecgberht, Archbishop of York from ca 732–766. Nevertheless, since Henry Spelman’s *editio princeps* in 1639, the collection has been edited or reprinted 11 times, and translated into modern English twice—and all but one of these has employed the title *Excerptiones Ecgberhti*. Nor does the collection have any connection to a supposed Cornish deacon named Hucarius, an erroneous attribution unfortunately endorsed by Lotte Kéry’s catalogue, which was published too early to benefit from the latest scholarship on the subject. The *Wigorniensis* was in fact rechristened twice at the end of the last century. The first time was by Patrick Wormald, who understood the nature of the collection better than most. He introduced the not entirely unacceptable title *Excerptiones de libris canonicis*, the rubric found in two of the three *Wigorniensis* manuscripts which contain the earliest recension of the collection. But for whatever reason, Wormald’s suggested title did not catch on. The collection was renamed again in 1999 with the publication of the most recent

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edition by James Cross and Andrew Hamer. The title of their edition, *Wulfstan's canon law collection*, implies at first glance that the author of the collection was Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester 1002–1016, and archbishop of York 1002–1023. In their introduction, however, the editors are cautious about making any claims about authorship. They show that Wulfstan used the collection, and they argue convincingly that he or someone close to him was involved in subsequent revisions of the collection; they even suggest that Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham played some sort of role in the creation of the collection, though they leave the exact nature of his contribution undefined. But, ultimately, the editors leave the question of authorship of the original collection unresolved, and this makes the title *Wulfstan's canon law collection*, ambiguous at best, at worst misleading. I prefer the neutral title *Collectio Wigorniensis*, which makes no claims as to authorship or origin, and merely indicates the place from which most of the manuscript witnesses originate.

The matter of Wulfstan's relationship to the collection is a complex one. All of the extant manuscript witnesses of the *Wigorniensis* are connected, either directly or indirectly, to him. While he certainly played a role in revising successive versions of the collection, it is by no means clear that he had a hand in compiling the *Wigorniensis* in its original form. I intend to argue, in fact, that he probably did not compile the original collection, but rather 'borrowed' it from someone else. Before delving further into the issue of authorship, however, it is necessary to understand something of the manuscript context that surrounds the collection.

Wulfstan was a figure of immense importance in both the ecclesiastical and political landscapes of late Anglo-Saxon England. His writings on religion, law, and politics reveal a man of wide ranging interests and powerful socio-political vision. But while his corpus of vernacular work

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has been studied with assiduity by linguists and Anglo-Saxonists alike, his corpus of Latin writings remains relatively unexplored. The largest repository of Latin Wulfstanian works is a collection of sermonic, liturgical, and canonical material which has come to be known as ‘Wulfstan’s Commonplace Book.’ This material is scattered across several manuscripts, all but one of which date from the eleventh century, most of which appear to have been produced at Worcester during Wulfstan’s lifetime, and several of which even bear corrections and annotations by Wulfstan’s own hand. The *Wigorniensis* is found in five Commonplace Book manuscripts, which I designate **CDIOR** [see **HANDOUT §1**].

In 1999, after decades of studying Wulfstan’s Latin output and the contents of the Commonplace Book manuscripts, James E. Cross, together with the help of Andrew Hamer, produced what is today the standard edition of the *Wigorniensis*. Cross and Hamer identified two recensions of the text, a shorter and earlier ‘Recension A’ (found in **CDR**), and a later, longer and much more disorganized ‘Recension B’ (found in **IO**). They quite rightly deduced that Recension B was a later reworking of the primitive Recension A, and further speculated that the composition of this later Recension took place under Wulfstan’s control. The editors did not speculate on the authorship of the primitive A recension, though they were able to demonstrate that it was compiled no earlier than 1002, which is at most only 6 years before Wulfstan is supposed to have compiled Recension B. While it could be argued that this short period of turn-over is *prima facie* evidence that Wulfstan was the author of both recensions, it may also simply mean that Wulfstan was close to, and working closely with, the individual who compiled the *recensio primitiva*. But more on this later.

Though a vast improvement over previous editions, Cross and Hamer's edition of the *Wigorniensis* is highly unsatisfactory. Its shortcomings are numerous, and include often inaccurate translations, inconsistency in their reporting of variant readings and corrections, a laconic historical commentary, lack of a synoptic source table and incipit list, and a confusing method of referencing canonical sources (for example, the author of the *Collectio Hispana* is named 'Pseudo-Isidore' and that of the *Hadriana* is 'Pseudo-Dionysius'). The lack of sufficient historical commentary is particularly unfortunate, as there remain several unexplored aspects of the *Wigorniensis*'s history. One would like to have read the editors' opinion on the significance of, for instance: the collection's rather restricted transmission in Worcester manuscripts; or the existence of a copy in **D**, an early thirteenth century English manuscript; or the fact that this copy was read and annotated heavily by an individual familiar with Gratian, the *Liber extra*, and the *Summa monacensis*; or the fact that an unknown canonist from the early fourteenth-century,<sup>1</sup> and the antiquary Robert Talbot in the sixteenth,<sup>2</sup> both added extensive commentary to the copy in **I**. More significantly, the editors failed to take into consideration several formal sources which prove crucial to an understanding of not only the text of the collection itself, but of canon law in Anglo-Saxon England generally. Some of the sources neglected by Cross and Hamer include the *Collectio vetus Gallica*—a major source for Recension A [see **HANDOUT §2**]<sup>3</sup>—the Isidorian

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<sup>1</sup> Loyn, *Wulfstan manuscript*, 35: 'This neat hand [Loyn's 'Hand VIII', of s. xiv<sup>1</sup>] makes extensive marginal notes, some of which have a direct and others an indirect bearing on the text. Whoever wrote them had a considerable interest in ecclesiastical law, especially in the penitential law, a practical interest in procedure, again especially in relation to penitential discipline, and a store of maxims, legal and poetic. ... The section on ecclesiastical ranks prompts him to reflect (127r) on the *laboratores, pugnatores et milites*, a half-echo of the familiar tripartite division of society into those who pray, those who work and those who fight, found elsewhere in the manuscript (71r15–17). ... He has read intelligently and purposefully, possibly seeking in [this section of **I**] material for his own writing and sermons.'

<sup>2</sup> Loyn, *Wulfstan manuscript*, 40: 'the *Excerptiones Ecgberti* ... occupied his close attention, nearly every folio containing either a marginal comment or a succession of marginal comments or a characteristic nota mark. ... [Talbot's] Marginal headings are inserted almost to the end of the manuscript. His interest was general. The main purpose of Talbot's work was clearly to provide a general working reader's guide to a volume whose statements on church law had been, and were likely to continue to be, immediately useful.'

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*Epistula ad Massonam*, Pseudo-Hormisdas, the *Paenitentiale Remense*, Halitgar's penitential, the enlarged *Rule* of Chrodegang, and (possibly) the *Collectio Dacheriana*. Most damningly in my opinion, however, is the editors' failure to edit, or really even to discuss, the over two dozen additional series of canons found in the five manuscript witnesses. Long series of canons literally fill **CDIOR**, and some of immediately precede and follow the A and B recensions of the *Wigorniensis*; yet, because Cross and Hamer had arbitrarily determined the extent of the B recension, they were able to consider these series as *outside* of the limits of the collection, and thus able to be omitted. In doing so, Cross and Hamer suppress about as much canonical material from these manuscripts as they print.<sup>3</sup> This is significant, for the suppressed material is not only important in its own right, but is in fact crucial to understanding the textual tradition of the *Wigorniensis* as a whole.

As mentioned, Cross and Hamer identified two main recensions of the collection, which they designated as 'Recension A' and 'Recension B', in **CDR** and **IO**, respectively. Recension A is, as Cross and Hamer noticed, the most primitive version of the collection, being more concise and better organized in terms of subject matter than the much longer Recension B. Moreover, many Recension B canons are clearly adaptations of material found in A. Further evidence of the anteriority of A can be also adduced. For instance, it has been noticed by Martin Brett that 'the A version follows the sequence of its sources more consistently than the B'. And, perhaps most importantly, while nearly every canon in the B recension has as its source texts found elsewhere

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<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, though Bernhard Fehr (*Die Hirtenbriefe*, cii) had considered the version in **I** to be the 'vollständigsten' version, he nevertheless recognized that the limits of this version had been artificially set by previous editors (this was also a favorite line of argument by Wormald); the *Excerptiones* actually extends past Thorpe's final chapter (= *Recension B* 166) to the (original) end of the manuscript on fol. 174v (several folios follow which were originally left blank, but now contain additions by various hands of s. xii<sup>1</sup>). Reflecting on the miscellaneous character of the material at the end of the **I** version, Fehr remarks (p. cii) that: 'whether an integral work or not, we must evaluate the *Excerptiones* in their complete manuscript tradition.'

in the Commonplace Book, the sources for Recension A cannot (with only one or two exceptions) be found elsewhere within that family of manuscripts. This proves the anteriority of Recension A to not only Recension B, but also all other related canonical material in the Commonplace Book manuscripts. It also suggests that Recension A was not shaped under the same conditions and within the same context as the rest of the Commonplace Book material—most of which we can literally see taking shape and undergoing various stages of revision *within* the context of these manuscripts. Patrick Wormald was on the whole correct when he remarked that ‘To one degree or another, and for one reason or another, everything that is extant [in Wulfstan’s manuscripts] has been, *or is being*, adapted. The original lies submerged beneath the tides of its authors further enterprises.’<sup>4</sup> Recension A, however, is an exception to this rule, for it stands out as uniform and textually stable. This is highly significant, for Wulfstan continually subjected his own works to continual revision, deriving subsequent versions of sermons, canons, and lawcodes by adapting, augmenting and cross-contaminating texts he had previously composed. This is a hallmark of Wulfstanian composition, and scarcely a Wulfstanian text survives—in either Latin or Old English—that does not exist in multiple versions in his manuscripts. That Recension A is uniform in three Commonplace Book manuscripts therefore strongly suggests that Wulfstan considered it not his own, but rather someone else’s work. We too, then, should look on Recension A as *non-Wulfstanian*, that is as representing a core of canonical material that took shape *outside* of Wulfstan’s control. Moreover, his reluctance to tinker with Recension A suggests that Wulfstan held in high regard the individual or source from whence he obtained this text. Here I should note, as many scholars have before me, that Wulfstan derived a good deal of canonical material from Abbot Ælfric of

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<sup>4</sup> Wormald, *Making of English law*, 335.

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Eynsham, a highly learned and orthodox man whom Wulfstan clearly regarded as an authority on Catholic doctrine and discipline. It was from Ælfric that Wulfstan commissioned, shortly after his appointment to his archbishopric, the writing of two letters on the subject of priestly duty and discipline. Wulfstan prized these letters, and, though he would soon translate them into English and adapt these translations for his own purpose, he nevertheless was careful to preserve multiple copies of Ælfric's Latin originals, each of which can be found *in toto* in three Commonplace Book manuscripts. Such is the way that Wulfstan treated his Latin source material when it came from a respected source—in distinct contrast to the way he treated textual material of his own creation, which is typically so textually unstable.

Cross and Hamer's Recension B *is* undoubtedly a Wulfstanian creation, and as such presents entirely more complex and interesting puzzles than does Recension A. To understand the nature and significance of these puzzles, one must consider the context of the Commonplace Book manuscripts as a whole. The Commonplace Book manuscripts **CDIOR** contain a rich trove of canonical material that escaped publication in the latest edition of the *Wigorniensis*. I have prepared transcriptions of the entire canonical contents of four of these five manuscripts; those who are interested may view them on my Web site—though I must warn you that the versions currently posted are due for revision in the coming months, so I advise you to use them with care.

As I attempt to illustrate in the handout [see **HANDOUT §3**], in the manuscripts of Recension B (**IO**), there are roughly 25 and 75 additional canonical or quasi-canonical chapters which were not included in Cross and Hamer's edition, while in two of the manuscripts of Recension A (**CD**), there are roughly 220 and 160 additional chapters (respectively) that were overlooked. In each manuscript, this additional material takes the form of sequences of canons keyed to general



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themes, like murder, marriage, or penance. Cross and Hamer's Recension B is merely one of these sequences, found only in **I**, with some significant overlap with a long series in **O**. So far as I can tell, there is nothing intrinsically special about this particular sequence, other than its length, and possibly the fact that it represents a relatively late stage in Wulfstan's revisions of the Recension A material.

As mentioned, Wulfstan's compositional method involved a high degree of revisionism, of adaptation-by-degrees, so that, throughout the Commonplace Books, Latin works authored by him typically exist in two three, sometimes even four or five different versions. Often, a cluster of different texts will share smaller, identical textual components. Such component represent favourite passages of Wulfstan's which he recycled over and over again, experimenting with them in different contexts, creating a veritable fleet of filiated texts to suit different spiritual, political and disciplinary circumstances. The result is an extremely high degree of cross-contamination across Wulfstan's corpus of legal and canonical writings. One would expect that this sort of 'textual promiscuity' would might make it difficult to determine which version of a text came first, and which later, that is which is an adaptation or expansion, and which an abbreviation or revision. But in fact this is not the case, and the reason is because Wulfstan very rarely said anything original. There are very few passages in his corpus of canonical writings for which a direct source cannot be found. When writing in Latin, Wulfstan always quoted his sources verbatim, at least at first; only afterwards in subsequent revisions would he adjust syntax, and make abbreviations or additions. Thus, if one peruses the Commonplace Book carefully, in most cases it is possible to deduce a relative chronology for a given series of related texts by comparing them to their original source, and then considering the degree of adaption that the

source text has undergone in subsequent stages of revision. I have attempted to do just this, and would like to present my findings to you today.

But before I do, we must consider one final problem that one encounters when attempting to reckon with the textual tradition of the *Commonplace Book*, one far more vexing than Wulfstan's habitual revisionism, but also far more interesting, and potentially far more important to the study of early medieval canon law collections. It has to do with the manuscript themselves, whose stemmatic relationship to each other has perplexed scholars for over a century. Most scholars who have studied the *Commonplace Book* manuscripts have presumed that each manuscript is (or represents) a monolithic whole.<sup>5</sup> As it turns out, this is not the case. In actual fact, they are component, and the components of each do not necessarily agree with each other in terms of overall textual tradition or relative chronology. Fortunately, the reason for this is now known. Several of the manuscripts produced in Wulfstanian scriptoria show clear signs of having been assembled piecemeal, that is by means of booklets, prepared individually by different groups of scribes, which were later bound together to produce the volumes we know today. Five Wulfstanian volumes assembled in this way are listed in the **HANDOUT** [§4]. **I** is one such volume, as was, possibly, manuscript **R** (though it is difficult to know for sure, as **R** is currently fragmentary). Moreover, there is strong evidence suggesting that the exemplars of manuscripts **CDO** were also composed of booklets, which I will briefly summarize here.

The booklet theory, originally proposed by Drew Jones of the Ohio State University, explains very well a characteristic of **CDIOR** to which I have already alluded: namely, the fact that they

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<sup>5</sup> In a paper delivered at Kalamazoo in 1996, Wormald speculated that 'the collections represented by Barlow and Rouen [**DR**] must precede Corpus 265 [**C**]' and that 'Corpus 265 [**C**] seems to improve even on the Nero/Corpus 190 [**IO**] arrangement'. For these conclusions, Wormald was relying mostly upon **C**'s penitential-liturgical block (cc. 109–15 by my reckoning), which happens to be one of the only sections in **C** which is *not* antecedent to the comparable sections in **DIOR**.

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contain sequences of material keyed to general themes. Hans Sauer noticed this phenomenon back in 1980 in a very important study of the contents of the Commonplace Book manuscripts, though he used the term 'block' instead of 'sequence' or 'booklet'. Sauer noticed that the same block, say the one on penance, seemed to jump around in relative position from manuscript to manuscript, being located in the middle of one volume, at the end of another, and at the beginning of another. He also noticed that each manifestation of the same block contained variations that actually made it unique; so, for example, in one manuscript the block on penance includes, over and above a stock complement of penitential canons, the penitential of Ecgberht, while in another manuscript it contains the penitential of Pseudo-Theodore, while in another it contains no penitential but rather a series of texts on liturgical penance. It was Jones who proposed an explanation for this phenomenon: the blocks which Sauer identified in the Commonplace Book tradition were in fact traces of a booklet method of manuscript assembly in Wulfstan's scriptorium. Each block in the tradition, Jones theorized, corresponded to an actual booklet used in the process of manuscript assembly. Over time, individual booklets were revised, reshaped, or added to, and recombined with other booklets to produce new volumes. This explains why in one Commonplace Book manuscript the block on penance will vary in content and placement as compared to the same block in another manuscript. In an article now in press, I have attempted to prove the validity of Jones's theory by focusing on the tradition of one block in particular, namely that keyed to the themes of pastoral privilege and responsibility. My conclusion is that the differences we see in this particular block as it manifests across the Commonplace Book tradition can best be explained as the result of a process of manuscript assembly by booklets, which themselves underwent revision and augmentation over time under Wulfstan's control.

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My recent work with the *Wigorniensis* has further convinced me of the veracity of the booklet model. The evidence for this is that each manuscript seems to contain material that is both antecedent to and derivative of material found in the other manuscripts. For an illustration of the complexities of the relationships between the various witnesses I refer you to the **HANDOUT** [§5], where I have attempted to chart the major, identifiable dependencies between the various sequences. Please note that this chart is the result of a preliminary analysis of the data I have collected; more analysis is needed before these results can be confirmed, but I am rather confident that the general outline of the chart is accurate. You can see from the chart that each sequence of canons follows a relative chronology that is independent of the other sequences in the same manuscript. Put another way, one cannot assume that, because the material in one part of **C** appears to be antecedent to that in **O**, that all of the material in **C** is also antecedent to **O**. Rather, the nature of the evidence demands that each manifestation of a sequence, block or booklet be compared with other versions of the same across the tradition, without prejudice towards its place in the grand scheme of things. Having done this for most of the canonical material in the Commonplace Book, I can say that, in fact, **C** generally appears to present versions of text which are antecedent to those found in **DIO**; however, in a particularly important sequence on liturgical penance (**C**, cc. 109–15), **C** presents texts that are posterior to versions found in **IO**. **D**, moreover, contains what is chronologically the latest version of this sequence, *and*, in another sequence, material that was used in the earlier versions of this sequence. Data such as this can only be explained, I think, as the result of Wulfstania manuscripts being assembled by booklets, where multiple versions of the same booklet were in circulation at the same time, allowing scribes (or their overseers) to include their choice of an early, late, or intermediate version of each booklet in the particular volume which they were assembling.

As Drew Jones has pointed out, ‘Wulfstan’s [Commonplace Book] probably never had a fixed form’.<sup>6</sup> The same must have been true of Wulfstan’s subsequent modifications of the *Wigorniensis*. While Wulfstan was apparently careful not to tamper with his file copy of Recension A, which he had copied into several of his manuscripts (namely the exemplars of **CDR**), he was clearly interested in mining it for material for his own use. Thus are we faced in the Commonplace Book with various versions of canonical sequences on a variety of subjects, nearly all of which go back ultimately to the primitive A recension of the *Wigorniensis*. In producing, reworking, and revising these various sequences, Wulfstan may have been attempting to produce a collection of his own. Perhaps he was working towards a final, official statement of canon law for the people of England, as Patrick Wormald once suggested. I am skeptical of this, however, for my impression of Wulfstan tells me that he did not think in terms of ‘final statements’. Rather, he seems to have viewed his own corpus as infinitely extensible. Everything he wrote was subject to reassessment, revision and overhaul. During the turbulent political events that engulfed England in the final decades of Wulfstan’s life, events in which he was often at the centre, it must have seemed as if moral corruption was mounting all around him. For Wulfstan, a natural response would have been to reprise yesterday’s spiritual and disciplinary discourses, intensifying their rhetorical impact and adapting their message to new political circumstances. As he set about producing ever more comprehensive statements of rules for good Christian conduct, his natural habits of composition led him to author and produce multiple versions of texts concerning law and discipline. As his output grew, so did the need to organize his works, along with his various research materials, into a useful format. Similar texts were grouped together to form small dossiers or booklets; and the extant Commonplace Book

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<sup>6</sup> Jones, “Liturgical Miscellany,” 105.

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manuscripts are each collections (or copies of collections) of many such booklets bundled together according to different organizational principles.

There remains a great deal of canonical material to be edited from the Commonplace Book manuscripts. Each sequence identified in the chart on the **HANDOUT** is an unprinted Wulfstanian mini-collection. Each represents the outpourings of one of the most powerful and influential archbishops from the Anglo-Saxon period, and thus has intrinsic importance to the study of Anglo-Saxon literature and history. Each sequence is also a crucial part of a larger puzzle, namely the development of the *Wigorniensis* tradition and of the Commonplace Book tradition as a whole. A new edition of the *Wigorniensis* therefore seems to be called for. Exactly what such an edition will look like is unknown to me, as current editorial methods seem insufficiently equipped to deal with this sort of a tradition in a coherent way, without undermining the complexity and richness of Wulfstan's overall project. I will leave the question of how we might capture the complex, organic and deeply intertwined tradition of the *Wigorniensis* in publishable form for another paper.

I would like to conclude by suggesting how all this might have implications for collections other than the *Wigorniensis*. Structurally speaking, canon law collections are essentially component organisms. It is in part their fundamentally granular nature that allowed them to be altered, broken down, and augmented with such ease and frequency in the early Middle Ages. It is well known that the mercurial nature of traditions of some canon law collections, like for instance the *Collectio Hibernensis* or the collection of Pseudo-Isidore, has presented great challenges to the traditional recensionist method of textual criticism, which requires at least the theoretical existence of a uniform ur-text. Clearly, in the editing of certain canon law collections,

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particularly those which admit of what textual critics call *Ursprungskontamination*, the recensionist approach is entirely unsuited. In such situations, a model of textual production like the one we see with the *Wigorniensis* may help us unravel some of the complexity of a tradition that seems to be ‘contaminated at the source’. To my knowledge, nothing like the booklet model has been used to explain the textual tradition of a canon law collection before; however, given the component nature of all canon law collections, I would expect that the *Wigorniensis* is not unique in this regard. Any canonical collection that was disseminated from a major central scriptorium might have undergone a similar process of construction. Such texts would allow a bishop to make systematic substitutions, swapping old parts out for new ones, or more general parts out for more locally relevant ones. I’m thinking in particular of collections like the *Collectio vetus Gallica*, with its mass of appended material—generally similar, yet never quite the same across the manuscript witnesses; or the *Collectio quadripartita*, ostensibly a collection in four books, though extant as such in only three of the nine witnesses—all others admitting some sort of substitution for one or several of its books; or even many of the penitential handbooks, to which various *ordines confessionis* were tacked on seemingly *ad libitum* by the scriptoria in charge of their production. Manuscript assembly by booklet could help explain a great deal in terms of the variation we see across traditions of early medieval canon law collections. Probably none of the traditions were as susceptible to the process as the *Wigorniensis*, but I would suggest other bishops besides Wulfstan, who had similar compositional habits and similar resources at their disposal, must have utilized this method in their scriptoria to some degree. Perhaps further examples of this sort of book production can be found, if we only look for them.