Shepard, Dorothy Mayher: *Introducing the Lambeth Bible. a study of text and imagery*, Turnhout: Brepols Publishers 2007
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The Lambeth Bible has long been known as one of the masterpieces of English Romanesque Art. It was written and illuminated around the mid- twelfth century in a Canterbury scriptorium. The large-format two volume manuscript is today kept in London, Lambeth Palace Library, Ms. 3 (volume one) and the Maidstone Museum, Ms. P.5 (volume two). The volume in Lambeth Palace formed part of the founding collection of the Library, bequeathed by archbishop Bancroft in 1600; its text runs from Genesis to Job. The second volume in the Maidstone Museum has been badly mutilated, and has lost most of its illumination. The Lambeth Bible is one of the lavishly illustrated giant bibles characteristic for the twelfth century, an ambitious artistic undertaking and of outstanding quality in its layout, script and decoration. In its present state, the Lambeth Bible contains in its first volume six full or part page framed illuminations, and twenty-four historiated initials, while in the second volume seven historiated initials are preserved; moreover, both volumes still contain a great number of highly decorative ornamental initials. Dorothy M. Shepard's excellent publication on this manuscript presents the results of her research on the textual makeup of the manuscript as well as of its decoration. All miniatures and historiated initials are reproduced on colour plates, thus, for the first time a publication is available that presents this splendid manuscript in reproductions of apt quality, augmented by rich comparative material on 89 black and white figures in the body of the text.

In an introductory chapter, Shepard briefly discusses the state of scholarship on the Lambeth-Bible. A provenance from Canterbury, already suggested by Eric Millar (1924) and M. R. James (1930), was supported by Charles R. Dodwell [1], who discussed the Lambeth Bible in his great study on the Canterbury scriptorium in 1954, followed by a first small monograph on the manuscript in 1959. Of great importance also is the entry on the Bible in C. Michael Kaufmann's volume on Romanesque manuscripts forming part of the series "Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles" [2]. It is regrettable that Shepard, while acknowledging the work of these earlier scholars, almost entirely neglects Josef Riedmaier's monograph [3]. It is not mentioned in the text, only referred to in one of the footnotes. Given that until now it had been the most substantial study on the Lambeth Bible, and was published more than a decade before Shepard's book appeared, this gives a strange impression. Even more so, since in that footnote [note 2] Shepard states "In 1993 I submitted my dissertation and in 1994 Josef Riedmaier's dissertation was published." While this suggests the primacy of her own work, the fact is that both dissertations were submitted in the same year, but while Riedmaier's book was already published in 1994, Shepard's thesis was made available on microfilm only in 1996 [4], and finally published in the present book in 2007. This neglect is particularly unfortunate since both studies on the manuscript, Riedmaier's and Shepard's book, are of outstanding scholarly quality. They also complement each other very

well: Riedmaier treats the iconography in greater depth, Shepard pays attention to the choice and arrangement of the texts. Even though they arrive at slightly different conclusions (Riedmaier had proposed an origin from Christ Church, Canterbury, and had dated the manuscript to shortly after 1150; Shepard suggests Canterbury, St Augustine, and expands the date to 1150/1170), the origin from Canterbury is beyond doubt, and the manuscript's artwork has received the thorough analysis it deserves in two books that in their value for scholarship go far beyond the exploration of a single manuscript.

In the first part of her analysis, Shepard provides a thorough examination of the Lambeth Bible's physical structure, its codicology and palaeography, assessing how it was made and how the illustrations were planned. This is followed by a chapter on the "Lambeth Master", in which she analyses the style of the main illuminator and compares it with the style of Master Hugo, the main artist of the Bury Bible (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Ms. 2), generally dated to 1130/1140, and rightfully considered the direct forerunner of the style of the Lambeth Master. Of the other works which have been attributed to this illuminator, a Gospel Book (formerly Metz, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 1151), is of particular significance, because it is datable to ca. 1146/1147. This raises the question of whether it is really plausible that "the Lambeth Bible was produced over a twenty year period, between about 1150 and 1170" (p. 5). From the colophon in the giant Bible of Stavelot (London, British Library, Add. Ms. 28106), to name a prominent example, we know that it was produced by the scribes Goderannus and Ernestus within four years. A period of twenty years for the Lambeth Bible would be quite extraordinary for the production of a manuscript, particularly since its style is quite homogenous. This part concludes with a chapter on the losses in text and decoration in both parts of the manuscript, which at the same time provides an extremely thorough and well- presented assessment of the hierarchy of decoration in the Bible.

One of the most intriguing chapters of Shepard's study is the outstanding and methodologically innovative examination of the texts of the Lambeth Bible. As she rightfully points out, the prefatory texts of Bible manuscripts is not a field that has attracted a lot of interest, let alone a field that art-historians tend to consider in their research on manuscripts. In fact, the comparative study of the prologues and capitula (chapter lists) and other miscellaneous material in a range of Bible manuscripts originating from Northern France and England reveals fascinating insights into the peculiarities and characteristics of different scriptoria. The study of this material is established as a valuable aid to determine places of production. Based on the evidence gathered from the comparison of these miscellaneous texts, Shepard argues that the scriptorium that produced the Lambeth Bible was St Augustine, Canterbury, and not, as had been suggested by other scholars, St Albans (near London) or Christ Church, Canterbury. In their textual arrangement two codices correspond very closely to the Lambeth Bible: the so-called Wingham Bible (London, Lambeth Palace Library, Ms. 4), and the Bible in Cambridge, Trinity College, Ms. B.5.1. Neither of these two manuscripts can be dated or attributed to a scriptorium on the basis of firm evidence: Other scholars ascribed the Wingham Bible to St Albans, while for the Trinity Bible, an origin from Canterbury, Christ Church, has been suggested [5], in both cases, based on palaeographic and/or stylistic evidence. Since no complete Bible manuscript produced at St Augustine, Canterbury is available for a comparison of the textual content, Shepard's attribution to St Augustine's rests primarily on two arguments: First, she assesses the textual characteristics of Bible manuscripts known to have been produced in Canterbury, Christ Church, which in fact differ from those in the Lambeth group (Lambeth Bible, Wingham Bible, Trinity Bible). Secondly, she refers to the similarity of the prefaces

to the gospels contained in these Bible manuscripts to those in a Gospel book in London (British Library, Royal 1.B.XI); unfortunately, no evidence nor bibliography is given for her attribution of this manuscript to St Augustine's (p. 90, note 129). However, that these three Bible manuscripts are convincingly shown to have been produced in the same scriptorium, demonstrates how tremendously useful Shepard's method is to the scholar of medieval book illumination. Also, there can be no doubt that the scriptorium must have been located in Canterbury, and an attribution to St Augustine's is - at the very least - likely.

The examination of the prefatory material is followed by a thorough analysis of the manuscripts illustrations on the basis of their visual and textual sources. In particular, the relationship between the iconography and the texts of the prologues prefacing the Biblical books is explored, and Shepard convincingly demonstrates that these prologues provided an important source of inspiration for the artists illuminating the Lambeth Bible. The second textual source was, according to Shepard, the 'Glossa Ordinaria'. This comprehensive gloss on the Bible was compiled in Laon and Paris in the course of the first half of the twelfth century, and spread rapidly throughout Europe in the second half of the century. Many uncertainties remain about its history [6]. The question of whether the Lambeth Bible artists used the Gloss for inspiration has two important implications: One is the date of the manuscript. If the Lambeth Bible is to be dated as late as Shepard suggests (1150/1170), the assumption is plausible. If one assumes an earlier date around the mid-twelfth century, however, it would appear more likely that the illuminators or the person responsible for the theological content of the pictorial program drew directly on patristic and more recent theological sources (as Riedmaier had argued). Dodwell has shown that this was the case for example with the highly complex image of the Tree of Jesse, which is based on St Jerome and St Bernard's exegetical writings [7]. The Lambeth Bible has come down to us in an imperfect state: the miniature and initial illustrating the Song of Songs, and the initials introducing the Books of Judith and Tobit are lost. In a truly fascinating chapter, Shepard discusses the missing illustrations based on a description in the diary of the eighteenth-century antiquarian Joseph James, who saw the Lambeth Bible in 1752, when it was still complete. These descriptions - although short - name some of the relevant iconographic features and transcribe the inscriptions. Taking them as a point of departure, and drawing on twelfth century images of related topics, Shepard reconstructs the iconography of these lost elements of the Bible's pictorial program in a convincing and intellectually captivating way.

In conclusion, Shepard's publication on the Lambeth Bible sheds light on one of the most beautiful works of medieval book illumination. Her analysis is of great interest not only for our understanding of the Lambeth Bible, but also for our idea of Romanesque Bible illumination in general. She demonstrates that only a "holistic" methodological approach towards the medieval manuscript regarding its textual content, layout, script and imagery really leads to a comprehensive understanding. Shepard's book is a valuable contribution to scholarship on medieval manuscripts and opens up new and exciting perspectives for further research.

Anmerkungen: [1] Charles R. Dodwell, The Canterbury School of Illumination 1066-1200. Cambridge 1954, 48-59; Charles R. Dodwell, The Great Lambeth Bible, London 1959.

[2] Kauffmann, C. Michael, Romanesque Manuscripts 1066-1190 (A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, vol. III), London 1975, 99-100, Nr. 70.

[3] Josef Riedmaier, Die Lambeth Bibel: Struktur und Bildaussage einer englischen Bibelhandschrift des 12. Jahrhunderts (Diss. München, Ludwig Maximilians-Universität 1993). Frankfurt am Main 1994.

[4] Dorothy M. Shepard, The Lambeth Bible. A Textual and Iconographic Study (Diss. Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania 1993).

[5] R. M. Thomson, Manuscripts from St Albans Abbey, 2 vols. Woodbridge, Suffolk 1982, vol. I: p. 30; M. Gibson, T.A. Heslop, et al. The Eadwine Psalter. Text, Image and Monastic Culture in Twelfth- Century Canterbury. London 1992, 23, note 24.

[6] Cf. Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages. Notre Dame, Indiana 31978, on the Glossa Ordinaria see pp. 46-66.

[7] Dodwell 1954, pp. 89-90.

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