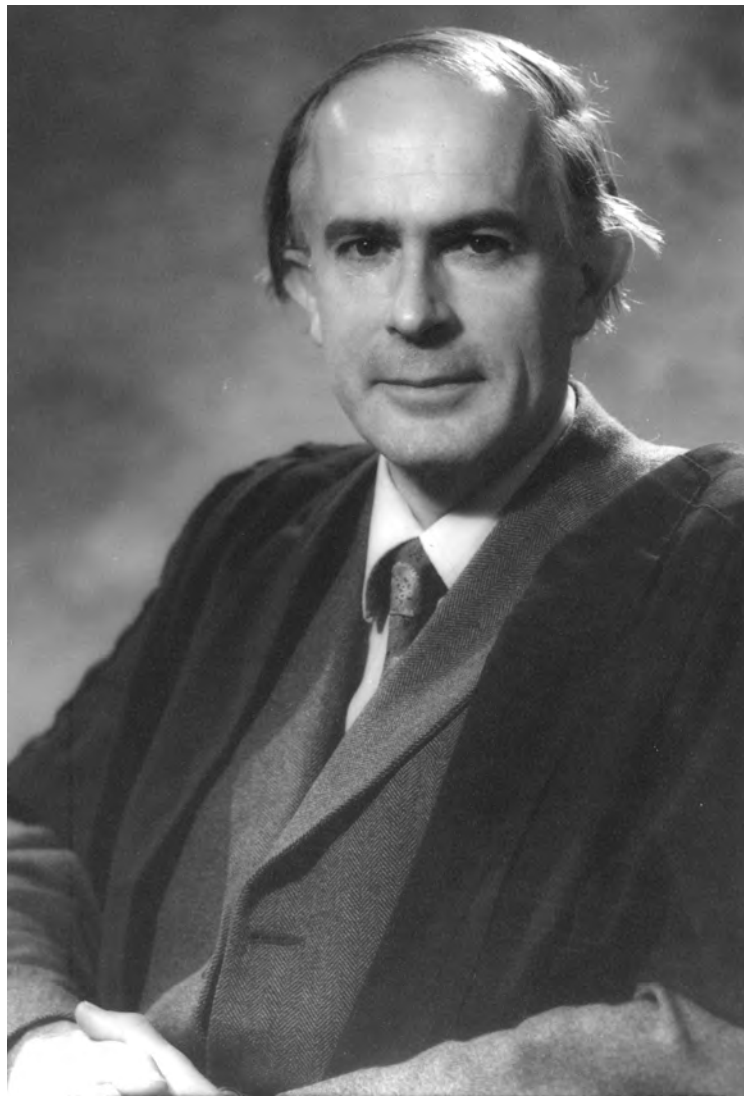

CHRISTOPHER NUGENT LAWRENCE BROOKE

Christopher Nugent Lawrence Brooke 1927–2015[1]

I: Introduction

Professor Christopher Brooke, who died on 27 December 2015 aged eighty-eight, was one of the most prolific and influential medieval historians of the past seventy years. He held the title of professor for nearly sixty years, which may well be a record: he obtained his first Chair at the age of twenty-nine, at Liverpool, and later taught at Westfield College, London, and at Cambridge. The time-span of his publications was even longer, for he published his first article (jointly with his father) in 1944, and he remained active in scholarship to the end. At a time when the writing of medieval history has increasingly become dominated by ever more specialised monographs, Christopher Brooke demonstrated the importance of reaching out to a wider audience by way of well-illustrated surveys and much-used textbooks, although he was also a master of exact scholarship, with an especial penchant for the editing of Latin texts. His very successful *From Alfred to Henry III*, published when he was thirty-two years old, had the great virtue of looking at England both before and after 1066.[2] *Europe in the Central Middle Ages* displaced a standard account of the same period written by his own father; but it amply reflected a broadening in the study of the period beyond the popes and emperors who had dominated earlier

[1] Parts I, II and V of this memoir were written by David Abulafia, Part III by Henry Mayr-Harting and Part IV by David Luscombe.

[2] References to all the works written or edited by Christopher Brooke that are mentioned in the text can be found at the end of this memoir; the footnotes mainly concern items by other authors, although some specific references to pages in works by CNLB are included.

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writing to take in the social and economic history of Europe. In *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* he made sensitive use of literary texts, dwelling with obvious approval on the tolerant world view of the great German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach, author of *Parzival*.

He wrote elegantly and clearly, resisting the invasion of jargon; and he was not much interested in what is grandly called 'theory', recognising much of it as the recycling of old ideas in highly ornamented new clothes. Sometimes, indeed, he wanted to tell a story, for example about Héloise and Abelard; but the analysis that accompanied the story was beautifully expressed and rich in insights. Yet he was perfectly open to new developments in the writing about the Middle Ages pioneered by such historians as Georges Duby in France, as can be seen in his book *The Medieval Idea of Marriage*; and he was greatly respected in Italy. His profound sense of place was expressed not just in his writings about Cambridge but in the history of medieval London he co-authored with Gillian Keir during his Westfield days.

He also demonstrated that medieval historians need not be confined, as has so often been the case, either to British or to European history, and that they have to take into account visual evidence as well as the texts of which he himself was so fond: illuminated manuscripts, architecture, archaeological remains. This might sound obvious today, but was much less so when the stern tradition of German medieval scholarship guided students towards the technicalities of charters and chronicles, sometimes barely moving beyond the intricacies of the documents themselves. Yet he was also an outstanding editor of texts, serving as one of the editors of *Nelson's* (later, *Oxford*) *Medieval Texts*; his own editions of the letters of Gilbert Foliot (a famous figure in the Becket controversy) and of the great scholar John of Salisbury established standards that were rightly hard to follow.

To cap all this, he was a prolific historian of other periods as well, with a book about Jane Austen and her era to his credit, as well as a series of studies of the medieval and modern history of Cambridge University, which was his first and his last home. When he was elected Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge in 1977 he was aware that his was one of the few Cambridge chairs tied to a college Fellowship, in this case at Emmanuel; but he was also entitled to return to his beloved Caius as an ex-Fellow, which he did. He greatly softened the blow to Emmanuel by graciously offering to write a new history of that college, which followed on from a perceptive history of Gonville and Caius that navigated diplomatically through some of the crises and conflicts of the twentieth-century college. He was also an active Fellow of the British Academy, having been

elected in 1970, and he served as President of the Society of Antiquaries in 1981–4; he was awarded the CBE in 1995. He was particularly proud of the innovation he introduced as President of the Ecclesiastical History Society: that each annual conference should have a particular theme, so that out of them came not random miscellanies but volumes of proceedings that possessed overall unity.

He was a handsome man, with a rather slight figure and an intense stare that, far from being intimidating, was inquisitive and welcoming. His care for his students and younger colleagues at the three universities where he taught was legendary; he was generous with books and advice, but he also knew when to stand back and let younger historians do things their own way. He kept an eye on them during their careers, and, if their children should happen to come up to Cambridge, he welcomed the next generation too to his sixteenth-century room in Gonville and Caius College, plying them with generous glasses of amontillado. Although he was deeply immersed in the three universities where he taught, he enjoyed escaping to his house at Ulpha in the Lake District. There he and his wife Rosalind could find the time, space and peace to write and to take delight in one another's company.

This memoir is built around his early life in Cambridge, his period at Liverpool, his output as a scholar and his return to Cambridge via London. The account of Cambridge necessarily lays emphasis on his sense of belonging to his college and to the university, which was such an important part of his identity—one might almost say his birthright. Moreover, this memoir can only attempt to capture some aspects of the life and career of a historian who had an extraordinary range of interests and, correspondingly, exercised enormous influence on the world of scholarship.

II: The Cambridge years, 1927–56

Fortunately Christopher Brooke's early life can be traced in some detail, since when he was about eighty years old he wrote an account of it for the college annual record, *The Caian*, entitled 'Memories of Caius'. There he admitted that his memory might sometimes be at fault ('I must emphasise at the outset, as a historian the fallibility of human memory'); but it is the best source that we have, and will be used extensively here.[3] Christopher

[3] C. N. L. Brooke, 'Memories of Caius', *The Caian: the Annual Record of Gonville and Caius College Cambridge*, 1 October 2007–30 September 2008, 123–39.

Nugent Lawrence Brooke was born on 23 June 1927; his father, Zachary Nugent Brooke (1883–1946), was himself a Lecturer in, and later Professor of, Medieval History at Cambridge and a Fellow of Caius.[4] Zachary Brooke had been educated at St John's College, Cambridge, and in 1908, at the start of his own career, he had had doubts about the offer of a Fellowship at a college that did not, at that time, have the special reputation in History that was to develop very much later. In fact, the Brooke family had longstanding family links with St John's: an earlier Zachary Brooke, Z. N.'s great-great-grandfather, had been born in 1715 or 1716, became Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and served as a chaplain to King George II. The entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* notes that this Zachary 'delivered sermons of remarkable complacency' before his royal patron; then, when he became Lady Margaret Professor he gave no lectures, although this was considered the normal way to profess (or not to profess)—the painfully frank author of the entry being none other than C. N. L. Brooke.[5]

Z. N. Brooke became a pillar of his new college. The impression he leaves is of a serious-minded, somewhat stern individual, and his sense of dedication to his work was certainly inherited by all three sons, Michael (born in 1921), Nicholas (1924) and finally Christopher.[6] Z. N. Brooke had married the daughter of A. H. Stanton, rector of Hambleden, Henley-on-Thames, in 1919; she had nursed him through a bout of trench fever during the Great War, in which he served for four years, rising to the rank of captain. On her mother's side she was a Cripps; and her cousin rose to fame as Sir Stafford Cripps, the Labour politician. Christopher was baptised in Caius chapel on 2 August 1927; since there was no font in what had been for centuries a celibate community, the priest who officiated, his grandfather Herbert Stanton, made use of the Master's rosebowl. With such a background, Christopher possessed a sense of his connection to the college, of belonging, that none of its other alumni could match.

[4] M. D. Knowles and H. C. G. Matthew, 'Brooke, Zachary Nugent (1886–1946)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32095 (accessed 20 January 2017); H. Cam, 'Zachary Nugent Brooke, 1883–1946', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 32 (1946), 381–93.

[5] C. N. L. Brooke, 'Brooke, Zachary (1715/16-1788)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3557 (accessed 20 January 2017).

[6] C. W. Previté-Orton, 'Zachary Nugent Brooke 1883–1946', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 32 (1946), 381–93.

When he was very young, he naturally did not quite understand what the college and university were all about. Sir Noel Malcolm remembers being told this story by Christopher:

> When he saw his father going off to some college feast wearing an all-scarlet gown, he asked why he was dressed like that, and his father said 'It's because I'm a Doctor of Letters.' Since the colour was (more or less) pillar-box red, little Christopher became convinced that his father had a part-time job in the evenings, going off to the Post Office and kindly sealing up all the letters that had got opened or damaged in the post.[7]

In his college memoir he described the parties the Master's wife organised for the children of Fellows, and had fond memories of the asparagus sandwiches. There was also the Christmas party that was mainly attended by college bedmakers, during which the Fellows' children would put on a pantomime, which was a challenge for a shy child. Christopher also enjoyed several months that his family spent in a Queen Anne house at Heacham, on the Wash, when he was seven years old. The house had been presented to his successors as Masters of Caius by Dr Davy, who died in 1839. Later, it became a country house for the use of Fellows, and the Brooke family was able to stay there while their new house in Wilberforce Road, Cambridge, was being built. The house at Heacham is no longer a college property, but in those days it was staffed by servants; there was a private bathing machine on the beach nearby.[8]

Brooke was educated at Winchester College, where he was a scholar and was inspired by excellent 'dons', as the masters were called; like another distinguished medieval historian, Nicholas Brooks FBA, he benefited particularly from the teaching of Harold Walker, a talented amateur archaeologist.[9] Walker could be severe even with his favourite pupils. Once, when he had apparently confused possession and proprietary law cases in an essay on the reign of Henry II, Walker wrote in the margin: 'I see, Brooke, that you are still capable of gamma'. He remained loyal to his old school, sending his own sons there and taking an interest in its fortunes. By the age of fifteen his schoolteachers and his father had helped to propel him down the path of historical research. While still at school, he collaborated with his father, who already allowed him free use of his fine library, in writing an article on Hereford Cathedral dignitaries; and in

[7] Personal communication from Sir Noel Malcolm FBA.
[8] Brooke, 'Memories of Caius', 125–6.
[9] B. Crawford, S. Keynes and J. Nelson, 'Nicholas Peter Brooks, 1941–2014', *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy*, 15 (2016), pp. 23, 28–9.

1945, aware that some of the printed texts they had used were seriously defective, ZN took CNL along on a research visit to Aberystwyth, where the archives of Hereford Cathedral had been deposited during the war, leading to a second joint article. The ultimate aim of their research was to produce a new edition of the letters of Gilbert Foliot, which Christopher eventually achieved (with Dom Adrian Morey), and which is discussed later in this memoir.

From Winchester Christopher won another scholarship which took him back to Caius in October of the same year. Caius was part of his identity, but the college also posed challenges. Christopher pondered his religious beliefs, and found himself increasingly attracted by Roman Catholicism. He became fascinated by the work of Jacques Maritain and ideas of natural law, seen from a Catholic perspective; one of the impulses was his overwhelming sense of horror at the end of the Second World War when he discovered the fate of Europe's Jews; and this led him to deeper philosophical and theological reflection.[10] He had barely arrived at the college when he found himself closeted with Eric Heaton, the college chaplain (Heaton would later become Dean of Christ Church, Oxford). Christopher admitted that he did not intend to attend the college chapel, since he was interested in becoming a Catholic. Not disconcerted, Heaton reproved Christopher with the words 'I think God is a sufficiently large person to be worshipped in Caius chapel.' Thereafter he and Heaton spent much time studying the New Testament (and attending Caius chapel) together. The words he used to describe his religious path are revealing:

> Guided through many evening talks by his incisive mind and insight into the nature and fruit of New Testament criticism I became a convert to the Anglican Church in which I had been reared, and found in the quiet daily routine of Caius chapel a new spiritual home.[11]

He also found a different sort of peacefulness in the gramophone evenings arranged by his father's younger colleague, Philip Grierson, another future FBA, who had no time for chapel. Grierson held open house on many evenings after Hall (in later years he would switch from records to tapes of rather dreadful science fiction films); but Christopher took no part in college sport and was definitely a 'reading man'.

[10] I owe this point to Professor Miri Rubin, who kindly sent me a copy of her eloquent and moving address at the Memorial Service for Christopher in Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge, on 5 November 2016.

[11] Brooke, 'Memories of Caius', 127.

His attachment to Caius became all the greater because his father died suddenly while he was an undergraduate and the college, worried that his mother had been left with limited means, carried most of the responsibility of paying for his education. Otherwise he felt that he quite simply might not have been able to stay at Caius.[12] In any case, Christopher now depended upon his college entrance scholarship and his leaving scholarship from Winchester. Beyond Caius, he benefited from the protection of his father's friends, notably Dom David Knowles, who had forgiven him for leaving a precious pile of his research notes on a bus at the age of fifteen. He was recruited by Knowles and his father to join their project of drawing up an inventory of the heads of religious houses in medieval England and Wales. This, like the edition of Foliot's letters, was a research project that he saw to completion a number of years later. Although what has been said so far might make the trajectory of his academic career seem obvious, the lecturers who impressed him most in his first and second years were two future FBAs of great distinction: Michael Oakeshott, then a History Fellow of Caius, who taught papers in political thought, and M. M. Postan, the imaginative, enthusiastic and colourful Professor of Economic History, who was a colleague of Knowles at Peterhouse.[13] Indeed, he was to collaborate later with Postan in the production of an edition of two important documents in medieval English economic history.

Despite his strong interest in what both Postan and Oakeshott had been teaching him, the decisive move towards the topics that dominated his career took place in his third undergraduate year, when he took David Knowles's Special Subject on St Francis and the friars. He was introduced to Knowles's research student, Rosalind Clark, and tea in Caius and Girton was eventually followed by their engagement, their marriage and their lifelong devotion to one another: 'I have been Rosalind's research assistant from those days till now.'[14] Still, straitened resources meant that they could not marry until he had finished his military service, where he

[12] Brooke, 'Memories of Caius', 129. On the other hand, the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* notes with commendable exactitude that his father had left £10,012 9*s* 1*d* after probate (Knowles and Matthew, 'Brooke, Zachary Nugent (1886–1946)'), which was quite a sizeable sum in those days, the equivalent of nearly £400,000 when Christopher died in 2015. This would include the value of the architect-designed house in Wilberforce Road, Cambridge; but even so it is possible Christopher had a romantic view of how he had been kept going by the college, when he already held the necessary scholarships and his mother had some money in the bank.

[13] N. Johnson, 'Michael Joseph Oakeshott, 1901–1990', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 80 (1991), 403–23; E. Miller, 'Michael Moissey Postan, 1899–1981', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 69 (1984), 543–57.

[14] Brooke, 'Memories of Caius', 131.

eventually became a captain in the Royal Army Educational Corps. Even before he received his commission, in 1949, he was elected to a Research Fellowship at Caius. He returned to his mess from a rather tricky encounter with his commanding officer to find a letter from Sir James Chadwick, the Master of Caius, offering him a Fellowship out of the blue. This was before the elaborate system of formal applications, submission of a dissertation and probing interviews for Research Fellowships had come into being; and it was before the days when a PhD degree was the sole passport to an academic career—he did not have one, and when he was lecturing in the History Faculty at Cambridge only one of his medieval colleagues, the crusade historian R. C. Smail, had actually completed a PhD in History.

Just about able to afford getting married (on a stipend of £300 per annum), Christopher was enchanted by the opportunity to dine with the other Fellows, even if he and most Research Fellows found the cost of port at dessert beyond their means. He was excited to have free access to the Senior Combination Rooms where his father had preceded him, and to be able to mix on equal terms with Sir Ronald Fisher, Joseph Needham and other luminaries who were then Fellows. But he also witnessed the irritation of the younger, and some more senior, Fellows at the existence of a closed inner circle that ran the college through the Council of thirteen members whose origin could be traced all the way back to Dr Caius's sixteenth-century statutes. Although the agenda of what became known as the Peasants' Revolt (named after Peter Bauer, the eminent economist) is often said to have been the provision of a proper bathroom for Bauer, who lived in college, Christopher recognised that the real division lay between those who saw the college as primarily a place of teaching and those who gave priority to their research, while being well aware that good research fuels good teaching.[15] Beyond that, the rebels sought to make the government of the college more democratic, by denying Council members what were in effect permanent places on the Council, and by rotating membership among the Fellows instead; and the four-year Research Fellowships were opened up to candidates from outside the college. The peasants won, and all Fellows of Caius are peasants now—something of which Christopher approved. On the other hand, he was clearly uneasy about the lack of access for, or interest in, the Fellows' families. Even when he returned to Caius in 1977 wives were only permitted to attend one dinner at the start of the calendar year, gorgeously entitled Bishop Shaxton's Solace, and even then a College Order decreed that it should be

[15] Brooke, 'Memories of Caius', 134.

no better than an ordinary High Table dinner—an order that was, however, consistently ignored.

Christopher's career seemed to be heading in a predictable direction. Before long he had swapped his Research Fellowship for the post of College Lecturer (that is, Teaching Fellow), and had been appointed to an Assistant Lectureship in the History Faculty. At a time when there was no very strong pressure to publish anything (one of his colleagues produced four articles in a forty-year career), he set a different example, producing volume one of *The Letters of John of Salisbury* in 1955. Like many of his other works, this was a product of collaboration, even though again and again Christopher took on the major burden right through to proof-reading without, however, complaining or claiming special credit. As the rising medieval historian of his generation, he was, not surprisingly, seen as good professorial material, even though he was still in his twenties. And the fact was that professors were paid better; with a growing family Christopher had to think of such considerations. He was also aware that openings for his wife in Cambridge were virtually non-existent in those days, even though she had written an excellent PhD thesis on early Franciscan government which was accepted for publication by Cambridge University Press.[16] So the call from Liverpool proved powerful enough to tear him away from the college that he loved. He had to break the news to the Master, the eminent physicist Sir James Chadwick, a man of few words. He found Chadwick in the Master's study puzzling over a scrap of paper, and announced that he was leaving. Chadwick's response was 'Well, that's a relief!' for, rather than paying attention to Christopher, he had been deciphering a note about something quite different.

III: The Liverpool years, 1956–67

Christopher Brooke arrived in Liverpool as Professor of Medieval History at the extraordinarily young age of just twenty-nine, but with a remarkable scholarly achievement already behind him. The previous Professors of Medieval and Modern History had been at daggers drawn; they had to use separate staircases in the School of History. They both departed at the same time, so that Christopher, to whom feuding was totally alien, was joined by the charming and genial Northern Irishman, David Quinn, as Professor of Modern History, and peace at once descended on the School.

[16] R. B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure* (Cambridge, 1959).

As one might have imagined, there was a small 'old guard' at Liverpool who resented a brilliant young man from Cambridge being brought in over the heads of established locals (not that the scholarly and saintly Alec Myers, the senior member of the department and an established local, was like this at all); and one of them once said to me disparagingly that there would always be something of the innocent choirboy about Christopher. Colour was given to this idea by a true story with a wide currency in the university. Early in his time at Liverpool, there was an overhauling of the History syllabus, and new letters were attached to the courses. Christopher had suddenly exclaimed in the midst of his colleagues of both departments, 'we haven't got a French Letter!' David Quinn slapped his thighs and snorted with laughter, though he was not backed up by his modernist colleagues who all kept straight faces.

When it came to academic politics, however, Christopher was far from innocent. The 1960s were a period of university expansion, and whenever David Quinn came forward with figures to show that Modern History needed another one or two lecturers, Christopher was ready with figures to show that Medieval History needed the same. With his perfect Wykehamist manners, Christopher could run rings round practically all the other Arts professors when it came to any matters of university politics. For eleven years, the Department of Medieval History benefited from his inspired leadership. His methods were in no way dirigiste. He did it all by scrupulous fair-mindedness, by taking an interest in his colleagues and listening to them, and by his own general sense of direction. He never treated departmental meetings as occasions to dictate to his colleagues; one could say what one liked provided one spoke responsibly; he was remarkably open to criticism himself, if it were stated dispassionately. In the Senior Common Room of the School, a sizeable room and a wonderful institution for bringing medievalists and modernists together, he would be regularly at tea, which he liked very weak, and would participate in any conversation going, whether about history or about life; but he never gossiped, and still less did he engage in character detraction. His own ears were always close to the ground, but if he ever gave way to an apparent indiscretion, it was something everyone else had known for at least six months. His humanity and skill in dealing with personal matters was shown in high degree when he saw that he would have to obtain a Senior Lectureship for Robert Markus, and also saw how hurt Dorothea Oschinsky, who had until then published very little, would be if she were left behind. So he coaxed out of her—there is no other word for it than coaxed—her fine and important edition of Walter of Henley's *Husbandry*.[17]

[17] D. Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley and other Treatises on Estate Management* (Oxford, 1971).

For myself, an early example of how Christopher treated his colleagues came on the day I was interviewed and appointed. My appointment sent me into transports of delight, not least because I had already read much of what he had written, and had even acquired his then recently published *Letters of John of Salisbury*, volume one, as part of a college book prize. He drove me down to Lime Street Station, and—what was this!—my professor-to-be had seized my case, and having sent me to buy a ticket (for which the university would pay), rushed off to find me a good place in the train. The following June I returned to Liverpool to make arrangements about lectures and so on, and I stayed with him and his family at their beautiful seventeenth-century manor house at Willaston on the Wirral. I took to Rosalind at once. She was amusing; she was hugely intelligent and perceptive in a slightly wacky sort of way; and while I was to meet some professors' wives who spoke as if they were the oracles of their awesome husbands, what one got from her was pure unadulterated Rosalind. Their three boys were lively but delightful. The oldest, Francis (who was tragically to be carried off by a rare blood disease when he was only about forty) was then four. Christopher cycled to Willaston Station every day, and came to Liverpool by train via the Mersey Tunnel. Distinguished professors, particularly youthful ones, did not grow on every tree in Willaston, and it was said that if Christopher arrived slightly late on his bicycle, the Willaston stationmaster would hold up the train.

The Brookes, including Francis, Phil and Patrick, were a very hospitable family. I had a chance sometimes to repay their hospitality in an unusual way. Rosalind's parents lived in south Cornwall, and when the family went on holiday there, they would pack the sleeping children into their estate car, together with two large dogs, at three in the morning, and stop for breakfast at the house of my mother in Bristol, where I would make huge quantities of scrambled egg and toast (I was still a bachelor while at Liverpool). After breakfast, Christopher would take the dogs for a walk, accompanied by whichever of the boys wanted to go; while Rosalind, who was not as discreet as her husband, and I would stay in and chat. My mother always enjoyed these occasions.

His eleven years at Liverpool (1956–67) were among the happiest and most creative periods of Christopher's life. They were also one of the most fruitful for his scholarship; they included his magnum opus, *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, together with its companion book, *Gilbert Foliot and his Letters*, which had appeared four years earlier. Both were co-authored with Dom Adrian Morey, a former pupil of and collaborator with Christopher's father. But it was clear (anyhow to myself) that the lion's share of both works was Christopher's. He was an empiricist rather

than a philosopher as an historian, at least in his time at Liverpool. The first chapter of the earlier book is entitled 'The Problem'. This is not an attempt to establish a conceptual framework, nor to justify a methodology; it raises a human problem: how to reconcile the golden opinions of Foliot, expressed by contemporaries, with the personal nastiness of his opposition to Thomas Becket. The second chapter is about the genre of letters, and about how much personal responsibility Foliot had for his own letters. There follow chapters which give a wealth of original insight into the development of the twelfth-century English Church. A later chapter concerns the forgeries of Gloucester Abbey while Foliot was abbot there (1139–48). Sir Richard Southern said of Vivian Galbraith (one of the assessors for the Liverpool chair in 1956), that he 'ignited at the sight of a charter'. Christopher ignited at the smell of a forgery. Yet together with this sniffing-out went an interest in, and a large degree of sympathy for, those responsible for forgeries. It is that understanding which makes this chapter a classic discussion of forgery. The next chapter is about Foliot's opposition to Becket, a masterpiece of empathy. It shows incidentally that Christopher was by no means inclined to avoid political theory when it was relevant.

The edition of *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot* appeared in Christopher's last year in Liverpool; it had dominated his work during his whole time there. Christopher would later be involved, from its start (1973), in the British Academy project for the publication of the English Episcopal *Acta*, diocese by diocese; he became chairman of the project after Christopher Cheney's death in 1987. His and Morey's large volume had appeared six years before 1973, and was a major force in kick-starting the Academy project. Twelfth- and early thirteenth-century episcopal charters have to be laboriously collected from the various sources of the beneficiaries—their archives, monastic and other cartularies, later copies made by antiquaries and so on. Before bishops had copies of their own documents kept in episcopal registers, mostly from around the late thirteenth century onwards, collecting their *acta* is the principal way of shedding light on important areas of the English and Welsh Churches after the Norman Conquest, such as who controlled appointments to benefices, who were their patrons lay and ecclesiastical, who constituted the personnel of its higher clergy, who formed the dynamic groups in the fast-growing diocesan administration and what were the economic foundations of its churches. Fundamental to handling episcopal *acta* was dating them as closely as possible, for they rarely carried a date. Here Christopher excelled. As the edition of both the *acta* (or formal documents)

and the letters (the latter giving the volume an almost unique importance) of a peculiarly interesting and long-lived bishop (abbot of Gloucester, 1139–48; bishop of Hereford, 1148–63; bishop of London, 1163–87), this edition of a bishop's documents is easily the most important for the twelfth century.

In the introduction, one sees immediately the relish for palaeographical, codicological and diplomatic technicalities. But these are no mere technicalities; there is not a scrap of pedantry in this introduction, nor in any of Christopher's scholarship. They concern the manuscripts of the letters and some of the charters made for Foliot himself, which enables us to peer into the most intimate world of Foliot and his circle. As to the texts themselves, with their English running-titles and notes, all one can say of this superb edition is that one could almost write a history of the English Church for fifty years, vividly and in fascinating detail, from this volume alone. The notes, often about matters of dating, are never forced in where not strictly necessary.

Gilbert Foliot was the main, but not the only, focus of Christopher's scholarly attention while he was at Liverpool. In 1960 the Northamptonshire Record Society brought out M. M. Postan's and his edition of the *Carte Nativorum* of Peterborough Abbey, a volume very interestingly discussed by Edmund King in his fine obituary of Christopher.[18] These documents give an exceptional insight into fourteenth-century peasant land transactions through the abbey's attempt to record and control them. Postan originally transcribed the (Latin) texts and wrote a magisterial account of their evidence in the Introduction. Christopher analysed the manuscript, checked the texts, provided the English running-titles (or abstracts) and the notes, mainly about dating and identifications of places and individuals mentioned in the texts. He did all this within a matter of weeks at the end of 'a hectic first year in Liverpool' in 1957. As he explained in a letter to Joan Wake, General Editor of the Society, he did not wish to overwhelm the text with notes, but nonetheless to make the meaning of the documents as plain as was compatible 'with reasonable economy of editing'. This may be taken as the leitmotif of everything that Christopher edited.

From about 1960 until the late 1980s he was one of the General Editors, at first with Vivian Galbraith and Roger Mynors, of the *Nelson's* (later *Oxford*) *Medieval Texts*, perhaps the most distinguished and important British series of scholarly texts (with English translation) from

[18] E. King, 'Professor Christopher Nugent Lawrence Brooke, CBE FBA', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 69 (2016), 89–91.

the Middle Ages. Christopher was a hands-on General Editor, sometimes necessarily so; and his diplomatic skills were occasionally very much required, as I remember, and as can be seen, for instance, in the acknowledgements at the beginning of the *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*.[19]

During his years at Liverpool, Christopher wrote a number of more popular books: *From Alfred to Henry III*; *The Saxon and Norman Kings*; and *Europe in the Central Middle Ages*; followed not long after his departure by *The Twelfth Century Renaissance.* There were those who thought that he was publishing too many of this sort of book for his own good; but he probably saw it as his duty as a professor to spread the understanding and enjoyment of medieval history as widely as possible. In the 1960s the University of Liverpool was much more closely related to the local community than was the case with Oxford or Cambridge, and Christopher would go here, there and everywhere giving talks, which were very popular. None of these books was what one could call a pot-boiler. For instance, the first chapter of *The Saxon and Norman Kings*, on king-making, made a lasting impression on me, as did much of *Europe in the Central Middle Ages*, such as the wonderful pages on Gerbert of Aurillac's letters. All these books are attractively written and with a fresh slant, even on well-known topics. Christopher once said to me in conversation that it was important to learn to write quickly when one was in one's twenties, adding that his father had not so learnt and thus had never written as much as a scholar of his calibre should have done. To my horror I heard myself say that if I had written just one book as original and marvellous as his father's *The English Church and the Papacy*, I would be well content.[20] He was embarrassed by what may have seemed an implicit criticism of himself, though totally unintended; but he did not take umbrage and answered me (unconvincingly) that what one should understand was that that book was the fortunate breakthrough of one year rather than the result of many years of cumulative scholarship.

During his time in Liverpool, Christopher was working on other projects which would only come to fruition in later publications—on London, on the heads of religious houses (an outstandingly useful compendium covering the period of Knowles's *Monastic Order*), and on the revision of Wilkins's *Concilia*.[21] It is impossible to discuss in detail all his important

[19] D. L. Douie and H. Farmer (eds.), *The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1961), p. vi.
[20] Z. N. Brooke, *The English Church and the Papacy from the Conquest to the Reign of John* (Cambridge, 1931).
[21] D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: a History of its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 943–1216* (Cambridge, 1940; D. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae*

articles. He was drawn into some of the fictions, chronicle and documentary, concerning Welsh churches, through his work on Gilbert Foliot and the involvement of Gloucester Abbey in the story. Two witty articles on all this appeared in *Studies in the Early British Church* and in *Celt and Saxon: Studies in the Early British Border*. They represent his unwillingness to rest, where there was skulduggery in the case, until he had got to the bottom of it. His contribution to one of these books, in which he argued that the *Book of Llandaf* was a forgery, drew the fire of an irate Welsh reviewer. Christopher used to enjoy quoting one sentence of this review: 'Wrong again, Mr Brooke!'[22] He rarely took umbrage at criticism; he once said to me that one of the advantages of publishing a book was that you thereby often elicited useful criticism. He asked me to read an early draft of his article on the Wix Charters, distinguishing the forgeries from the probably genuine. My response was that it was fascinating, but rather inchoate as an article; only three weeks later, in his busy schedule, he showed me the final version. It was the utterly coherent article, with everything lucidly explained, which went into the Doris Stenton Festschrift, published by the Pipe Roll Society.

Perhaps of all his articles, the one that most moved me had nothing to do with forgeries, 'St Dominic and his first biographer', reprinted in his *Medieval Church and Society*. During his time in Liverpool, Christopher held a seminar on Saints Francis and Dominic. This owed its inspiration in good part to the work of Rosalind on the friars. Of the three principal forms of university teaching in the arts, lectures, tutorials and seminars, Christopher was an excellent lecturer; the reports of the few tutorials he was able to give were glowing; but as the taker of a seminar, he was one of the two or three best that I have ever encountered. Of the three forms, it is the hardest to bring off successfully. He did it not by being magisterial, but by creating an atmosphere in which it was possible for anyone to say what they thought; a rather smoke-filled atmosphere, it may be added, in which he stubbed out his cigarettes into an ashtray which had the shape of a rotund friar. His article is about the contrast between Francis and Dominic, and how Francis's personality was the reference point for the early development of his order, whereas Dominic and his biographer, Jordan of Saxony, sank his personality in the order and its General

Britanniae et Hiberniae (London, 1737); see also his co-edited *Councils and Synods* listed at the end of this memoir.

[22] J. W. James, 'The *Book of Llandav*: the Church and See of Llandav and their critics', *Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales*, 9 (1959), 5–22.

Chapter. The climax of the article is especially poignant, on how, by a sudden inspiration and act of courage, Dominic turned his back on preaching to the Cathars (against whom he had not had much success) and dispersed his order from Toulouse to the whole of Europe, particularly to such university cities as Paris and Bologna, with the implication that the profoundest possible study of theology was the surest way to counteract heresy.

One of the qualities which Rosalind and Christopher shared was this capacity for deep human insight—in life as well as history. Rosalind's interpretation of how Brother Elias should have been so trusted by Francis, and yet later, in his own way of life, should have so abandoned Francis's ideal of poverty, is an example. She explained this by Elias needing someone like Francis to hold up his personality and spirituality, and, lacking Francis's sustaining power after the saint's death, collapsed morally. Rosalind and Christopher were ideally suited to each other, both by complementarity and by like-mindedness.[23] The only time anyone witnessed anything approaching acrimony in their dealings with each other was over a route to be taken by car on one of our annual study weeks for the second-year undergraduates at Attingham Park in Shropshire. The students in the car wittily noted that during the argument there was an especially large number of 'darlings' flying around.

In his inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Liverpool in 1957, the unfortunately entitled 'Dullness of the Past', Christopher made a plea for combining the specialism of amassing and analysing evidence, 'which gains for the historian an uneasy respectability from the kindlier logical positivists', with the enlargement of human understanding.[24] One may stand in awe of his spectacular gifts as a diplomaticist, or documentary critic; but what made him a great historian, as it made his mentor and teacher David Knowles, was above all the breadth of his human understanding.

IV: Christopher Brooke as scholar and author

Christopher Brooke's prodigious output of scholarly publications, firmly and accurately rooted in documentary evidence and supported by a rare level of skills in palaeography and diplomatic and the study of art, archaeology and literature, began early. His work was always enlightened by

[23] R. B. Brooke, *Early Franciscan Government*; also her *The Coming of the Friars* (London, 1975).
[24] C. N. L. Brooke, *The Dullness of the Past; an Inaugural Lecture* (Liverpool, 1957).

human and religious understanding and sometimes beautifully illustrated with photographs, some of them taken by Christopher himself. It came to embrace best-selling outline histories and new editions with new English translations of medieval Latin texts of the highest interest, and he rarely made a mistake.

He was a precocious child. Even at the age of ten he helped his father, Z. N. Brooke, with the proofs and index of his *History of Europe, 911–1198*, published in Methuen's 'History of Medieval and Modern Europe' series in 1938. He was, he said, his father's apprentice who at the age of fourteen or so gave up collecting engine numbers and began collecting archdeacons instead. He was early interested in problems of chronology but had a scare in 1942 at the age fifteen or so when he left on the top of a bus irreplaceable notebooks containing years of enquiries made by the distinguished monastic historian and family friend Dom David Knowles into the careers of the heads of medieval religious houses, and which the young Brooke was meant to transcribe. Fortunately a swift pursuit on foot led to their recovery and eventual publication. Years later in 1972 these lists, much extended and largely by Christopher himself and also by Vera London, appeared in *Heads of Religious Houses, England and Wales, 940–1216* and a second edition followed in 2001 with further new material. With his father he had published two papers before he reached his twentieth birthday, one in the *Cambridge Historical Journal* (1944; supplement in 1946) on Hereford Cathedral dignitaries in the twelfth century, the other in the *English Historical Review* (1946) on Henry II, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine.[25] His first solo publication, on the Canterbury forgeries, appeared in the *Downside Review* (1950–1).[26]

His interest in the history of medieval religious life was developed in his final year as an undergraduate student of history at Cambridge when he took the Special Subject on St Francis of Assisi taught by Professor David Knowles. While still in his twenties he joined M. M. (later Sir Michael) Postan in the publication of an edition, made by W. T. Mellows and P. I. King for the Northamptonshire Record Society, of *The Book of William Morton, Almoner of Peterborough Monastery, 1448–1467* (1954).[27] William Morton's Book, which is found in the British Library MS Cotton,

[25] Z. N. Brooke and C. N. L. Brooke, 'Henry II, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine', *English Historical Review*, 61 (1946), 81–9.

[26] C. N. L. Brooke, 'The Canterbury forgeries and their author', *Downside Review*, 68 (1950), 462–71 and 69 (1951), 210–51.

[27] M. M. Postan, C. N. L. Brooke, W. T. Mellows and P. I. King, *The Book of William Morton, Almoner of Peterborough Monastery, 1448–1467* (Northampton, 1954).

Vespasian A XXIV, is a rare private account book of the almoner (or land-agent) of Peterborough Abbey in the mid-fifteenth century who managed the abbey's properties and its two homes (or hospitals) for old people. Christopher provided the notes and a fine Latin and Middle English glossary, had a share in the making of the indexes and also wrote a substantial introduction on which Postan gave advice as well as making a contribution (pp. xxxi–xxxvii). The introduction includes a detailed description of the Cotton MS and brings the reader close to William Morton 'in the intimacy of office and counting house, wrestling with addition and subtraction and petty cash in the regular humdrum of affairs' (p. xi). It gives many a glimpse also into the relations of the monks of Peterborough with their neighbours, tenants and servants. A 'meticulous man in a meticulous age' (p. xliv), William Morton comes out well from a penetrating assessment. Continuing work on the history of Peterborough Abbey in collaboration with Postan resulted in the publication in 1960 by the Northamptonshire Record Society of an edition of the *Carte Nativorum: a Peterborough Abbey Cartulary of the Fourteenth Century.* The *nativi* were the villein tenants of the abbey and there was much work to be done in dating the charters, carefully identifying persons and properties and, for Christopher in particular, the writing of a detailed description of the MS (Peterborough, Dean and Chapter 39), the compilation of the abstracts and notes, and the preparation of a glossary.[28]

An edition of the letters and charters of Gilbert Foliot had been planned by his father, Z. N. Brooke, and independently by Dom Adrian Morey, OSB. Zachary Brooke died, however, in 1946 and the edition was made by Dom Adrian, monk of Downside Abbey and Headmaster of the Oratory School, in collaboration with Christopher. It was published in 1967 as *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot, Abbot of Gloucester (1139–48), Bishop of Hereford (1148–63) and London (1163–87)*, but the work was preceded by a book, jointly written by Christopher and Dom Adrian, on *Gilbert Foliot and his Letters* (1965). The two had collaborated earlier on an article which appeared in the *English Historical Review* in 1948 when Christopher was only twenty-one or so and which was on letters which Gilbert Foliot wrote as abbot of Gloucester and concerning the troubles in Cerne Abbey in the 1140s and the exasperating complications which they stirred.[29] Morey was the older man: in 1937 he had

[28] Christopher, who was a member of the Society's Publications Committee until 1974, gave considerable help in the production of other volumes in the series.

[29] C. N. L. Brooke and A. Morey, 'The Cerne letters of Gilbert Foliot and the Legation of Imar of Tusculum', *English Historical Review*, 63 (1948), 433–52.

produced a landmark book on one of Foliot's contemporaries, Bartholomew, bishop of Exeter. In Foliot Morey and Brooke both found a man who 'combined in himself to an exceptional degree the ideals, the prejudices and the paradoxes of his age': an ascetic monk, an abbot, a capable bishop, a scholar, an inspiring preacher, but a highly controversial figure who attracted a stream of golden opinions but was held by others to be a scheming Pharisee and a harsh controversialist who 'was involved in forgery and practised unashamed nepotism' (p. 1). Foliot's letters are a valuable source for the anarchy of Stephen's reign and the bitter conflicts which saw Foliot forcefully opposing Becket and loyally supporting Henry II. The book is absorbing to read and no reader can fail to see the wealth of original enquiries which went into its making, especially into an exceptional number of episcopal charters, often unprinted and often spurious, out of which historical detail is squeezed and the framework of administrative activity made visible. The various branches of Foliot families in twelfth-century England are established, and the personnel who ran Foliot's chapters and household in Hereford and London—the deans, precentors, archdeacons, canons, schoolmasters, clerks, chaplains and others—are listed and thoroughly documented.

This book, invaluable as it is on its own for Gilbert and his letters, serves as a companion to the edition of 283 letters and 193 charters which aimed to print the letters and charters, 'as nearly as possible, as they left the hands of Gilbert Foliot or his clerks and passed into those of their recipients' (p. 29). A single manuscript, Bodleian E Musaeo 249 (27835), contains most of the letters but many letters and charters had to be uncovered in scattered libraries and archives. The texts are supported with a wealth of analysis of their scribes, their dating and diplomatic, their authenticity and circulation, as well as of the people who figure in them and of the papal letters that were addressed to Foliot. Gilbert's writing-office is miraculously brought to light: 'it was a school for church government as well as an administrative headquarters' (p. 28).

For twenty-eight years from 1959 to 1987 Christopher was one of the General Editors of the flagship series *Nelson's Medieval Texts* (NMT) which in 1966 became *Oxford Medieval Texts* (OMT). The other General Editors of NMT were V. H. Galbraith and Sir Roger Mynors. After this became OMT Galbraith and Mynors retired and the future of the series was precarious. But Christopher was joined as General Editors by Diana Greenway and Michael Winterbottom; they did well to ensure that it kept going, maintained standards and, by the time of Christopher's own retirement in 1987, had reached smooth waters. Christopher left a very

considerable mark on both series through editions and translations he made himself, through the reworking of editions published earlier and through his selfless dedication to the review of other editions accepted for publication. He saw through to publication forty-seven volumes, by which stage the series had established itself as one of the essential landmarks of medieval studies, a new Rolls Series but with translations facing pages of Latin text. His own crowning personal achievement in the OMT series is his completion, in two volumes with over 1,100 pages, of an edition and translation of *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, John being the very well-connected, highly cultured and witty diplomat who served two archbishops of Canterbury, Theobald and Becket, and who tirelessly shuttled between Canterbury and the papal curia. The letters introduce us to the great personalities of the day and to the great crisis that resulted in Becket's death. *The Early Letters (1153–1161)*, edited by W. J. Millor, SJ, and H. E. Butler and revised by Brooke, were published in NMT in 1955. The work had begun as a thesis by Fr Millor under the supervision of Butler. The General Editors of the series, Galbraith and Mynors, explained that the foundation of this volume was 'a text of John of Salisbury's letters with very full collations of the manuscripts and short notes, the work of Dr W. J. Millor, S. J. ... the credit of producing this entirely new and reliable text is his ... The translation was undertaken by the late Harold Edgeworth Butler, professor of Latin in University College, London, until his lamented death suspended the enterprise' (p. vii). Christopher, they continued, expertly and unselfishly checked and completed the translation, worked out afresh the dates and order of the letters (the letters themselves being undated) and provided introduction, notes and appendices. Mynors described the manuscripts and the previous editions. For Christopher this was a wonderful opportunity which led to his becoming a third General Editor of NMT in 1959. In 1986 the volume was reprinted by the Clarendon Press in the OMT series with *corrigenda* supplied by himself. These include a courteous acceptance of the sweeping away by R. W. Southern of Christopher's 'attractive theory' that the first collection of John's letters (the letters from 1153–61; letters 1–135) formed a packet which John sent sometime in 1161 or 1162 to his close friend Peter of Celle, abbot of Montier-la-Celle near Troyes.[30] *The Later Letters (1163–1180)*,

[30] See Southern's review in the *English Historical Review*, 72 (1957), 495: 'My own impression is that both the manuscripts which form the basis of this edition go back to rough drafts of the letters, preserved on separate sheets of parchment with one or more ... letters on each.' For Brooke's response see *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, I (1955), pp. ix–xii, and the *corrigenda* in the reissue of vol. I in 1986 on pp. 297–8. This was not the only occasion on which 'nemesis

bearing the names of Millor and Brooke (letters 132–325), were published in OMT in 1979. A story which circulated, that Brooke translated a letter a day before breakfast, has about it the ring of truth.

Of Christopher's work for OMT three further volumes are particularly memorable. He contributed a new introduction and revised notes to a new edition and translation by Sir Roger Mynors of M. R. James's edition of Walter Map, *De nugis curialium – Courtiers' Trifles* (originally published in 1914). This book is an extraordinary conglomeration of stories of different kinds that was written in the late twelfth century by an archdeacon of Oxford whose brilliant and amusing reworking of earlier materials found in writers as far apart from each other as Cicero and Geoffrey of Monmouth was read at the time by almost no one. In 1990, in collaboration with Martin Brett and Michael Winterbottom, Christopher also produced for OMT a revision of Charles Johnson's edition (NMT, 1961) of Hugh the Chanter's *History of the Church of York, 1066–1127*. In an introduction Christopher outlined the passions aroused by the primacy dispute between Canterbury and York and the fascination and importance of the largely hidden world of the cathedral chapters of England and France in the early twelfth century, a time when family life faded away from there, clerical celibacy became the norm, and most canons became absentees. Third, some fifty years after first being published by David Knowles (Nelson Medieval Classics, 1951) Christopher published a revision of Knowles's edition of *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc* (2002). For this he collated a MS not used by Knowles (Hereford Cathedral Library, P.V.1) and also wrote a new chapter on the audience for the work, its date and the sources used.

Christopher's exceptionally energetic dedication to the discovery, study and publication of the records of the medieval English Church focused especially on the period to which his father had devoted most attention in his celebrated book on *The English Church and the Papacy from the Conquest to the Reign of John*, of 1931. In an edition of this book issued in 1989 Christopher provided a new Foreword in which he wrote about the transformation of studies of the English Church in the twelfth

struck' in the pages of the *English Historical Review*: in the following year Southern showed that the Canterbury forgeries of a series of papal privileges which were intended to boost the primatial authority of the see of Canterbury over the see of York, and which Christopher had believed to date from Lanfranc's time, belonged to the 1120s. See R. W. Southern, 'The Canterbury forgeries', *English Historical Review*, 73 (1958), 193–226, Brooke, 'Canterbury Forgeries', and also Brooke, Foreword to the 1989 edition of Z. N. Brooke, *The English Church and the Papacy from the Conquest to the Reign of John*, p. xv.

century brought about largely by the study of papal decretals. But Christopher himself gave most attention to the documents of the English Church itself. With Martin Brett and Dorothy Whitelock he cooperated in the preparation of *Councils and Synods with other Documents relating to the English Church, I, 871–1204* (1981). He was primarily responsible for documents, especially canons of councils, from the period 1135 to 1204, a period when Henry I, Stephen and Henry II all issued charters of liberties, when the Constitutions of Clarendon were issued, when many councils were presided over by papal legates and when the primatial claims of Canterbury and York were in dispute. Most of this material, which fills over 300 pages, was edited from manuscripts.

More substantial still was Brooke's vigorous work on the English Episcopal *Acta* project of the British Academy (EEA) which collects and publishes the records of English bishops from the late eleventh to the thirteenth century, thereby projecting light into hidden corners of medieval history and revealing the Church at work on its ordinary routines and preoccupations. Forty-four volumes have been published so far, and nearly twenty editors have been at work bringing the original materials and later copies of these together from many scattered libraries and archives. The initial impulse sprang from Sir Frank Stenton in the late 1920s. Christopher Cheney gave indispensable leadership until 1986, but when Christopher Brooke became chairman of the British Academy's EEA Committee a very great burst of activity was to follow. The General Editorship of the project, now in the hands of Philippa Hoskin of the University of Lincoln, was from 1973 to 2005 in those of David Smith of York, and Christopher's deep attachment to the project is particularly shown in the warm appreciation of David Smith's work which he expressed in a volume of studies presented to him by friends in 2005.[31] Here Christopher outlined the development of the EEA project: fashionable monographs, he wrote (pp. 3–4), eventually bite the dust but documents reclaimed provide the bone structure of the past and its chronology and are the crucial foundation for the work of a historian. In return in 2012 the editors of EEA volumes paid their tribute to Christopher for the tireless energy and extraordinary care he had spent on drafts of almost every volume by presenting him with a token of their collective gratitude and affection. This took the form of a sumptuous volume of *Facsimiles of English Episcopal Acta*, a collection of plates intended to illustrate the most

[31] C. N. L. Brooke, P. Hoskin and B. Dobson (eds.), *The Foundations of Medieval Ecclesiastical History: Studies Presented to David Smith* (Woodbridge, 2005).

characteristic features of the surviving original acts of the bishops of the English sees edited in EEA.[32]

Running almost in parallel with EEA was the *Le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae* project for the period 1066–1300. Nine volumes listing officials of the English dioceses were published by the Institute of Historical Research, London, between 1968 and 2003. Christopher took a constant and active interest in the project from its first days, contributing to its editors copious draft lists and notes of documentary references of his own. As Diana Greenway FBA, the editor of several volumes, wrote, Christopher was one of the 'early Fathers' of the project, always responding speedily, helpfully, patiently and encouragingly to her pleas for information and advice and also devoting much time to reading and commenting on volumes to their great benefit.[33] For volume 1 (1968) at least, which lists the early dignitaries and prebendaries of St Paul's Cathedral, London, Christopher's contribution was a continuation of the work of his father, Z. N. Brooke.

Christopher was far more than an antiquarian producing lists and indexes. He wrote a number of very successful outline histories and monographs to serve the purposes of students and a wider public. These include *From Alfred to Henry III, 871–1272* in 1961 and *The Saxon and Norman Kings* in 1963. The central place among these histories is surely the volume *Europe in the Central Middle Ages 962–1154* in Longman's *General History of Europe*, which came out a year later and was translated into French and Spanish. Here, as in his other books, he was unabashed in seeing political history and written documentary evidence as only a tiny part of the rich historical deposit of these creative centuries. For a full and coherent narrative of these centuries he referred readers to his father's *History of Europe from 911 to 1198* for which some decades earlier he had helped with the proofs and index. But Christopher set out 'to sketch the life of the age under every aspect which can now be viewed' and in his preface to the second edition he faced down critics of the first: 'to make the politics of the central Middle Ages the core of this book would run counter to all my convictions of what is most worth studying' (pp. xiv–xv). To this end he brought alive the cultural movements of the time—city life, the schools, learning and theology, Latin and vernacular literature, courtly romances, law, architecture and art.

[32] M. Brett, P. Hoskin and D. Smith (eds.), *Facsimiles of English Episcopal Acta, 1085–1305* (London, 2012).

[33] *Le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066–1300*, vol. 4 (London, 1991), Acknowledgements.

Almost all these elements are to be found in a book written in his London years with Gillian Keir, *London, 800–1216: the Shaping of a City*. This points clearly to an approach to history that attaches less importance to political events, which are briefly summarised, and more to other features such as markets, crafts, streets and churches with many comparisons made with other European towns and much use of evidence from archaeology, topography and numismatics. In *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Thames and Hudson's *Library of European Civilization*, 1969), he combined copious pictures, quotations from written sources and the evidence of archaeology to raise questions, open windows and propose interpretations of cultural changes in the twelfth century and to reveal the achievements of a selection of creative thinkers, writers and artists. At the time of publication the copious display of colour photographs in a historical work was still unusual but Thames and Hudson were changing that and *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* has a high ratio of illustrations (132) to pages of text (192). The questions raised were general ones but fundamental: was the civilisation of the twelfth century derivative or creative?; what did the different parts of Christendom contribute to it?; and so on. The book relies on key figures around whom discussion is constructed. These were favourites with Christopher: the parodist Geoffrey of Monmouth, the satirist Walter Map, the philosopher Peter Abelard, the lawyer Master Gratian, the sculptor Gislebertus, the poet Wolfram von Eschenbach and others. And the discussions centred on the schools and theology, literature and humanism, canon law and the church, architecture and art, and literature both vernacular and Latin. The book is rich in humorous dismissals. Of Geoffrey's *History of the Kings of Britain* Brooke writes that 'what appeared to be serious history, and was intended (perhaps not very seriously intended) to be read as serious history, was in fact a substantial work of fiction' (p. 10).[34] And of Thomas Becket's biographer William FitzStephen he writes that he combined 'genuine appreciation of the past, pagan and Christian' with 'an astonishing wealth of ignorance' (p. 10). Not every reader of the book takes to its sometimes flowery style. The movement we call the twelfth-century renaissance, he wrote (no doubt with one of his hikes in the Lakeland fells in mind), 'is as if we stood on the slopes above a valley between lofty hills: across the valley is a road

[34] The dismissal was in part also directed against R. W. Southern. See C. N. L. Brooke, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth as a historian', in C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe, G. H. Martin and D. Owen (eds.), *Church and Government in the Middle Ages. Essays Presented to C. R. Cheney on his 70th Birthday* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 77–91, and R. W. Southern, 'Aspects of the European tradition of historical writing, 1', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 20 (1970), 173–96.

running up the further slope and over the hills opposite to us. We cannot see clearly where it comes from, nor the route it takes when it has crossed the hill and gone out of our sight'—and so on for several more lines on p. 192. But the book is most successful when it opens the windows which C. H. Haskins had left untouched in his classic book on *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (1927): vernacular literature, art and architecture.

In the foreword to *The Structure of Medieval Society* (1971)—in its format similar to the earlier *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* and produced by the same publisher[35]—Christopher reflected on the changing preoccupations of historians as they came to dwell less on wars, political alliances, constitutional developments and written documents, and more on the presentation of visual background, 'a change'—there is a touch of exaggeration in what follows—'that can only be paralleled in the second half of the nineteenth century when trains and steamers made it easy to travel and everyone began to know their Europe' (p. 8), but now 'a new wave of travel by air and plane has been accompanied by incredible [sic] developments in photography and reproduction' (p. 9). Historians have 'tried to make the Christian civilisation of Europe in the Middle Ages more significant and more comprehensible to the readers of today. The keyword to our conception of history is civilisation' (p. 10). As Christopher wrote this his thoughts may have turned to Kenneth Clark's outstandingly successful and lavishly illustrated BBC television series *Civilisation* (1969)—and also to summer holidays and sightseeing on the Continent with family, car and camera.

In his and his wife's *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages. Western Europe 1000–1300* (1984) they explored together the wide spectrum of popular religion by which they meant the religious aspirations of lay people and of the groupings they formed, their attachment to relics, pilgrimages, saints, the sacraments, churches and their ornament, preachers, the Bible and belief in the life to come. The Brookes stopped short of folklore, superstition and witchcraft; they also in this book kept the religious orders and the papacy at arm's length. Rosalind Brooke's own book on *The Coming of the Friars* (1975) had in any case said much about the religious orders, especially in the twelfth century. On the other hand, the religious outlooks and practices of largely illiterate lay people,

[35] The content of *The Structure of Medieval Society* was taken from Christopher's contribution to J. Evans, *The Flowering of the Middle Ages* (London, 1966), another book with attractive photographs published by Thames and Hudson. Joan Evans' interests in medieval art closely matched Christopher's own.

although they could rarely be studied through their own writings, could be reconstructed from other sources, often physical, and also often of great beauty, provided that these are approached critically and are seen with medieval eyes, and provided that the 'unlearned' and the 'learned' elements in society are seen to overlap each other and to be themselves divided into many different layers. The Brookes's outlook on medieval religion was a sympathetic one: medieval religion seemed like a dark force sometimes, but at others like a great shaft of light. Much of it was unpopular in the sense that it provoked dissent, repression and persecution, but this did not provide the Brookes with their main narrative. As in so many other books of theirs, the repertory of examples on which they drew to illustrate an argument is extraordinarily wide in type, time and place. They had favourites, nonetheless, to which they turned with especial enthusiasm and wove into a rich and lively tapestry, among them the anchoress Christina of Markyate, the poet Wolfram von Eschenbach and the churches which they themselves visited (and photographed) in Rome and Assisi, Winchester and Conques.

The Medieval Idea of Marriage (1989) is one of the best of the many contributions Christopher made to social and cultural history and to the reconciliation which he desired between the two. Social history fuelled by imaginative literature—by the stories of Lancelot and Guinevere or Tristan and Isolde or the Wife of Bath or Romeo and Juliet—would not do. To be used as historical evidence literature must first be treated as literature, but although literature's factual basis is often elusive, unlike Peter Laslett, the leader of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, he did not see 'drama and the novel [as] red herrings set across the track which leads to the actual history of human societies' (p. 173). Nor art, for all works of art are themselves historical documents no less than the parish registers which provided the foundations for the work of the Cambridge Group. He had had the idea of writing a history of medieval marriage for more than a quarter of a century, during which time an enormous 'industry' had grown up, attracting experts who, Brooke thought, did not always understand each other. Hence *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* emerged as a smaller book than was originally envisaged, but one that brought together a series of vignettes and case studies as a means to harmonise different approaches with a focus on the period from 1100. Inheritance and family structure were not his main concern, nor is there much in the way of statistical evidence to which a historian of the central Middle Ages may usefully turn. The note of warning struck firmly here against a trend in social science history

arose from a passionate belief that a deeper knowledge of the inwardness of human nature was needed to understand the variety of motives that lead a man and a woman to choose to enter or to leave marriage, and that for this a historian must use his or her imagination and gain fluency in other disciplines such as literature, art, theology and law. He wrote: 'when we are served statistics deliciously cooked we are wise to scatter over them the herbs and spices of imaginative literature very finely ground and sieved' (p. 22). For literature Brooke turned to the correspondence of Héloise and Abelard, Chrétien de Troyes, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Chaucer and Shakespeare; for art to paintings and church porches; for theology to the Bible, Augustine, Jerome and Peter Damian; and for law to Gratian and Pope Alexander III. For case studies he went in many directions, to Christina of Markyate, Richard of Anstey, the canons of St Paul's Cathedral in London, the Capetian kings, Henry VIII and elsewhere, including the early-fourteenth century Register of the Inquisition for Montaillou, which gave Christopher the opportunity to reply to a distinguished contemporary French historian, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, whose book on *Montaillou* he admired but found too credulous of records of marriages which, although authentic, were not lacking in gossip or exaggeration.[36] In the course of the book Brooke also took on Georges Duby whose two books on medieval marriage—*Medieval Marriage* (1978) and *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest* (1984)—were proving popular and influential, largely on account of the two 'models' of marriage which Duby had constructed and which Brooke sought to corrode.[37] The first of the two sets of attitudes to marriage outlined by Duby was that of the kings of France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries who sought marriage to provide themselves with male heirs and for personal satisfaction, and who changed their wives if they were unsatisfactory. The second was that of the clergy of the early medieval church. Duby saw the two models as opposites; Brooke did not. For Brooke a central fact of this period was the willingness of the lay aristocracy to allow the Church and the papacy to take over jurisdiction of the law of marriage and to act as umpires when difficulties arose.

Collaboration with the photographer Wim Swaan resulted in a number of books which presented numerous new photographs of high quality accompanied by texts written by Christopher. The earliest of these is

[36] E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou* (Paris, 1975; English transl. by B. Bray, London, 1978).
[37] G. Duby, *Medieval Marriage* (London, 1978) and *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest* (London, 1984).

The Gothic Cathedral, published in 1969, a weighty book to which he contributed a short historical introduction on the cathedral in medieval society. The golden age of coffee-table books was opening; but for students of history such books often offered visual perspectives on the past that had hitherto been far less accessible to them. Swaan's sumptuous photographs, nearly 400 of them, also fill *The Monastic World 1000–1300*, published by Elek in 1974 with a fairly conventional but quite substantial outline history written by Christopher and tracing the remote origins of monasticism in early Christian Egypt, the establishment of Benedictine monasticism in Western Europe and the orders of friars that followed, with a relatively brief assessment of monasticism since the Reformation bringing the book to a conclusion. Here plates and text dance together. As Christopher rightly observed, 'the dialogue between the literature and the buildings of medieval monastic communities was a theme too little developed by historians' (p. 7). It is not obvious why the reissue of this book in 1982 by Omega Books was given a new title, *Monasteries of the World: the Rise and Development of the Monastic Tradition*, as the book is not concerned with world history.

Further collaboration with Swaan resulted in *A History of Gonville and Caius College* (1985) with a detailed historical outline from the fourteenth century to 1984 written by Christopher. It also resulted in *Oxford and Cambridge* (1988, with Roger Highfield). This book sets buildings at the forefront of the history of Oxford and Cambridge as prime expressions of changing aspirations and tastes. Christopher's contributions to the history of these two cities and universities and to the history of his own college went far beyond the making of glossy books or fascination with historic medieval buildings. Most of *Oxford and Cambridge* is concerned with post-Reformation history down to the mid-twentieth century, and eleven out of the twenty-one chapters of the *History of Emmanuel College, Cambridge* (1999, with Sarah Bendall and Patrick Collinson) are by Christopher and cover a wide span from the medieval proto-history of the College as a Dominican friary to the College in the 1990s. Christopher was also the prime mover and the General Editor of *A History of the University of Cambridge* (1988–2004). He called that *History* a modest, serviceable frigate beside a great battleship, *The History of the University of Oxford*, which had been launched by Oxford University Press and enjoyed the support of paid staff. The Cambridge *History* has only four volumes, four contributors and received no support from the Cambridge History Faculty—Christopher found this 'painful'. He supplied each volume with a new preface and remarkably himself wrote volume 4 (1993)

which was devoted to the university between 1870 and 1990 and ran to more than 600 pages. The preface to this volume seems to anticipate criticism which duly came: 'I have dwelt at length on some seminal figures ... and on some crucial buildings and institutions ... Perhaps their share is disproportionate; but if we are to understand anything of a very complex subject we need from time to time to go deeply into this or that person or institution.' The preface to volume 2, the last volume to appear, includes a particular riposte to John Prest who, in a review, gave his opinion that the volume had concentrated on the heights and ignored the rank and file.[38] Here Brooke settled scores with other reviewers too who thought that in his own volume there was more narrative and exposition than analysis: 'the truth is', he wrote, 'that my closely woven analyses of student backgrounds ... were less readable than my vignettes of the men and women who have made Cambridge internationally famous.' Brooke firmly restated his belief in the importance of reflection in the work of a historian, writing that his own studies of major figures reveal 'the element of reflection which I thought and think the chief mark of my volume'. And he went further to defend his 'frequent references to my own memories and experiences' which 'generously gave the reviewers ... some amusement ... though with less generosity none gave me credit for my purpose—which was precisely to underpin a broad survey of an enormous subject with as much authentic evidence as possible.' He took a swipe too against Lord Annan who 'failing to use the index ... was astounded to find no mention of Lord Adrian'.

Christopher had an inexhaustible ability to collaborate with others whose work he reviewed and also inspired. He always generously acknowledged his debts, above all to his father, his wife and David Knowles.[39] But these were his contemporaries. He also had an intimate understanding of the figures of the past on whom he reflected most, and he had a detailed knowledge of the places in which they once lived and worked and of the sights they saw. If transported in time he would have found his way round the buildings of medieval Cambridge, Gloucester or London with ease, and he would have swiftly recognised and struck up conversation with

[38] J. Prest, review of Brooke (1993) in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 46 (1995), 344–6.

[39] Examples of this *pietas* include C. N. L. Brooke, B. H. I. H. Stewart, J. G. Pollard and T. R. Volk (eds.), *Studies in Numismatic Method Presented to Philip Grierson* (Cambridge, 1983), the revised edition (with D. E. Luscombe) of D. Knowles, *Evolution of Medieval Thought* (London, 1988), and (with R. Lovatt, D. E. Luscombe and A. Silem) *David Knowles Remembered* (Cambridge, 1991).

some of the people he met.[40] Had he been cornered awkwardly with Foliot or Becket or Geoffrey of Monmouth he would have parted from them on the best of terms. Had he the chance to talk with John of Salisbury about the times they lived in and the books they had read or with Pope Alexander III about changing attitudes to marriage, they would have gained as much from their conversations with him as would he with them.

V: In London and back in Cambridge, 1967–2015

Liverpool did not offer the opportunities for Rosalind that the Brookes might have hoped; the idea that husband and wife might be employed in the same department was, in those days, unthinkable. The chance to take up a chair at London University was bound to be attractive; it would bring the Brookes much closer to the great libraries and enable them to become involved in the lively seminars of the Institute of Historical Research. Rosalind might even be able to pick up some teaching at other colleges, though in the event this only happened here and there.

Christopher deployed all the skills he had displayed at Liverpool once he was at Westfield. Determination combined with diplomacy won the day at staff meetings, which were fuelled by his sherry bottles. Brenda Bolton overlapped with Christopher during her first two years as a Lecturer at Westfield, and she has testified to the energy and enthusiasm that he brought to the college. Westfield was undergoing significant changes: the college began to admit men three years before he arrived, and Christopher thoroughly approved of mixed institutions. He was less sure that the introduction of science courses at the college was a good thing, but he pressed hard for the teaching of art history, in support of his close colleague Nicolai Rubinstein FBA, the eminent scholar of Renaissance Florence. There was a general policy that students should study something in their first year different from what they knew already, and this drew many to medieval history; exciting lectures by Christopher and his colleagues convinced a good many that it was worth taking medieval papers in later years as well. But perhaps the most memorable episodes were the frequent trips—to Wells, to Chichester or indeed his famous walk around medieval London, conducted at so fast a pace that some student

[40] See, for the abbey of Gloucester, Brooke, *Gilbert Foliot and his Letters*, p. 82, and for medieval churches inside and outside the City Walls of London, Brooke and Keir, *London, 800–1216. The Shaping of a City* (London, 1975), pp. 143–8.

stragglers were almost left behind. Their loyalty to him, and his affection for them, did not fade even when he had left London for Cambridge, and he was always glad to see them and to hear from them.[41]

My first, indirect, contact with Christopher occurred at the age of thirteen when I received a school prize on leaving my prep school, and found in a small Richmond bookshop his *From Alfred to Henry III.* My great passion in those days was archaeology, but that embraced Anglo-Saxons and Vikings, and I liked the idea of a book that examined what happened both before and after the Norman Conquest. Then, at my next school, St Paul's, I discovered that this, along with his *Europe in the Central Middle Ages*, was to be one of our A-level textbooks; my own introduction to medieval history, and my turn away from ancient to medieval history, thus owed much to his books, as well as to inspired teachers who invited him to come and speak at the school. I remember that I button-holed Christopher after his lecture and accused him of misunderstanding some points made by R. W. Southern (which I had probably misunderstood, in fact); he remained very civil. Indeed, he invited a group of us, all Oxbridge candidates, to visit Westfield College so we could see what a university was like, even if we had no intention of applying for a place there. Typically, he took enormous care to make sure that we were well looked after, and invited some of us to sit in on his tutorials.

Much later, when I was a graduate student, he discovered that we had a common interest in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily—he was studying a remarkable ivory reliquary put together in Sicily and preserved in Cornwall—and invited me to lunch in London at one of his favourite restaurants, Bertorelli's, in Charlotte Street. In an extensive article, 'The Reliquary of St Petroc and the ivories of Norman Sicily', Christopher traced the story of the relics, which involved a not uncommon tale of theft and restitution, and his collaborator Ralph Pinder-Wilson, a specialist in Islamic art from the British Museum, concentrated on the ivory casket in which the bones of St Petroc lay. His genial generosity towards a doctoral student who was not from his own university was entirely typical; so was his awareness that the sort of research that needed to be done on the ivory casket crossed the traditional boundaries between disciplines—and a good opportunity to make use of evidence from what would now be called 'material culture' was worth seizing.

Christopher remained a frequent visitor to Caius all the time he was at Westfield. Indeed, he was a candidate for the Mastership in 1976, when

[41] I am grateful to Dr Brenda Bolton for information about Christopher's time at Westfield.

Professor H. W. R. (later Sir William) Wade FBA was elected by the Fellows. His lack of success did not induce rancour. That he hoped to return to Cambridge eventually was clear. He might well have succeeded Christopher Cheney as Professor of Medieval History in 1972; but one of the electors, Walter Ullmann, suddenly threw his hat into the ring—one did not easily gainsay Walter. By the time the chair fell vacant again, Christopher was safely installed as Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Professorial Fellow of his old college. That was when I came to know him best, as first a Fellow of Caius and then as a colleague in the History Faculty. Christopher had arrived back in Cambridge a year before Jim Holt FBA was elected to the Chair of Medieval History. Christopher and Jim were very different personalities. Holt was energetic and determined, but he could be brusque, and had spent his career in universities where the word of the Professor (with a capital P) was law. His predecessors, Walter Ullmann FBA and Christopher Cheney FBA, had rather opted out of Faculty affairs, and Holt was determined to raise the profile of medieval history; but it is doubtful whether he ever understood the egalitarian principles that made it difficult for the senior figures in the Faculty (even G. R. Elton) to pull rank. Christopher had more subtle ways of achieving his aims. There was steel beneath the velvet exterior, as Eamon Duffy has noted: he could be obstinate in defence of his subject area and principles, but he was also a diplomat who deplored aggressive talk at the Faculty Board (which for a time he chaired) or other meetings. After Sir James Holt was succeeded by Barrie Dobson FBA in 1988, he found himself in a different role—not just as wise counsellor to Holt's successor, but as a force for peace among the rather fractious group of medieval historians, for Dobson was unhappy in Cambridge and was disappointed to find that the first loyalty of his colleagues tended to be their college rather than an amorphous Faculty housed in one of Cambridge's ugliest and least usable modern buildings. There was a visible contrast between Dobson the outsider and Brooke the insider, accentuated by the fact that by then most or all of the other medieval historians could also be described as insiders. Christopher was rather more effective than Barrie in dealing with the tensions and rivalries that existed among the medieval historians.[42] In particular, Christopher took an interest in the College Teaching Officers, a group peculiar to Cambridge: Teaching Fellows of

[42] W. M. Ormrod, 'Richard Barrie Dobson, 1931–2013', *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy*, 13 (2014), pp. 121–42, which on pp. 134–5 rather underestimates Dobson's discontent with Cambridge.

colleges (often with tenure) who did not hold a university post, despite the great distinction of several of them. Unlike some senior historians, he did not treat them as second-class citizens.

As a Professorial Fellow of Caius, Christopher was not involved in college teaching; but he more than made up for that in taking on a horde of graduate students from every college. Miri Rubin has described the experience:

> To a doctoral student just arrived from Jerusalem in the summer of 1981, Christopher Brooke offered the perfect welcome. Even before we got down to the supervision of my research in medieval history, Christopher imparted a great deal of local knowledge to make me comfortable in my new world: how to pronounce Norwich or Gonville and Caius; how best to address those who held sway over college archives and libraries and on whom my research would depend; how to drink sherry and nibble a Bath Oliver biscuit with decorum. In short, Christopher made a stranger into a neighbour, and ultimately into a friend.[43]

On the other hand, his administrative duties were heavier than most other professors in the Humanities, since he was expected to be active in the Divinity Faculty as well as the History Faculty—indeed, his predecessor as Dixie, Gordon Rupp, had spent most of his time in Divinity rather than History. He was co-convenor, with P. N. Brooks, of the Church History seminar that took place in the old Divinity School opposite St John's. Eamon Duffy has described what very often used to happen there:

> Good humour and courtesy were the hallmarks of his chairmanship of the Church History seminar, the humour greatly enhanced by the fact that invariably, as soon as Christopher had introduced the speaker, a benign and temporary narcolepsy descended upon him. His eyelids would droop, his head would descend slowly towards the table before him, and he would fall deeply asleep. Equally invariably, he would wake shortly before the end of the paper, and would be ready with an apposite, pointed and well-informed question to start the discussion.[44]

Whether or not he was really asleep, he had good reason to feel tired: anyone trying to make an appointment with him would see him take out a *Cambridge Pocket Diary* so thick with densely scrawled engagements that it was a miracle he could work out what he was doing on any particular day, however excellent his manuscript reading skills—but this was the

[43] Quoted with kind permission from Miri Rubin's address at the Memorial Service for Christopher.
[44] From Eamon Duffy's address at the Memorial Service for Christopher, with Professor Duffy's kind permission.

workaholic Christopher who took his typewriter or sets of proofs on holiday, while still finding plenty of time for the family; and this was the Christopher who rose every morning at five o'clock, which helps to explain his prodigious achievement in publication.[45]

Christopher's hospitality was constantly on view in his college. After his return to Caius he occasionally dined on High Table, though he tended to be rather silent, almost shy, and did not take a prominent part in the sometimes colourful and provocative banter among the Fellows. He did not really form part of any of the social circles within the college. On the other hand, I doubt whether any other Fellow has ever invited so many guests to lunch, which was, of course, a tribute to the fact that so many people wanted to consult him, and that he was involved in so many research projects. (I was a particular beneficiary, since this enabled me to know scores of medieval historians from all over the world whom I would not otherwise have met.) Rosalind often came along as well, not so much as a college wife as in her capacity as a distinguished scholar in her own right—even so, there was never an official position for her in any of the colleges, although she did a certain amount of college teaching. Christopher took great pride in her writings and was especially delighted when she received the degree of Doctor of Letters. His short memoir in the college annual carries a colour illustration of Christopher and Rosalind in their scarlet festive gowns (one of which may well be the gown Z. N. Brooke had worn and that young Christopher thought proved he was a part-time postman, while the other is almost certainly David Knowles's gown); they can be seen disporting themselves in Caius Court, against the backdrop of the sixteenth-century Gate of Honour, close to where Christopher had his college room.

Christopher worked hard behind the scenes on behalf of those in whom he believed, and his patronage was extremely valuable to those in search of academic positions, since his opinions were trusted. He also extended his kindness to scholars who were competent rather than exciting, because he valued their presence and willingness to work hard; and he was constantly busy raising funds for worthwhile research projects —to give an example from the realms of excellence, he argued powerfully and persuasively to obtain funding from the British Academy and Caius for the late Mark Blackburn's position as assistant to Philip Grierson, which led to the publication of the first volumes of the massive study of

[45] Information from Philip and Patrick Brooke.

Medieval European Coinage based on the Grierson collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Christopher loved Caius with passion; and yet there was an undeniable ambiguity in his thoughts about the college. In his memoir he wrote:

> Caius has Life Fellows, and they have (in principle) as much say in the running of the college as their younger colleagues. They have long experience – so they tend to think they know better. Some of them, however, also remember what it was like to be young, and try to keep quiet and leave it to those who are closer to the students, closer to the coal-face of learning and research, more in tune with the needs of the present, to take the initiatives.[46]

In this spirit, he could be quite acerbic about some Fellows who held political views, or views about the college and university, of which he did not approve. The admission of women to the college soon after his arrival brought him (and it must be said, just about all the Fellows) great pleasure. He did not share Elton's bizarre doubts about the intellectual capacity of all female historians apart from Helen Cam, which the Regius Professor of History enjoyed expressing. His egalitarian attitude to women also comes across in his book on Jane Austen, published in 1999, which provides a historian's perspective on the social mores of the eighteenth century: attitudes to love, marriage and social status then and further back in time. (His aim was not to compete with the large body of literary criticism that already existed, but he had firm views about how a historian might and indeed should make use of works of literature.) This work was further stimulated by the fact that three of his colleagues in Caius, the social and economic historians Neil McKendrick, Brian Outhwaite and Vic Gatrell, were also interested in using this type of source material in their studies of seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain. Even more, his interest in Jane Austen was aroused by the knowledge that hers was the world with which his ancestors the Johnian divines would have been perfectly familiar.

Christopher's love for his college was very distinctive: Caius was part of his identity in a way that it could never be part of the identity of those who were not hereditary Caius historians brought up around its courts and keeping-rooms—by the 1970s relatively few Fellows had been Caius undergraduates, most having arrived from other colleges or universities. Christopher's attachment to Caius was reflected in his rather romantic vision of the early history of the college that was built on the interpretations offered by two previous historians of Gonville and Caius, John Venn

[46] Brooke, 'Memories of Caius', p. 134.

and Dr Caius himself: a small community of poor scholars who inhabited Gonville Hall, the original institution, in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, dependent for all the many improvements to the early college on generous benefactors, and lucky to survive the turmoil of the late Middle Ages.[47] This was probably to underestimate the esteem in which Gonville Hall was held as far away as Avignon and Rome, and it does not explain why the early Fellows were able to accumulate maybe 700 manuscripts (of which up to half still survive), a larger library than the university itself; but his reverence for a community of poor scholars reflected his interest in medieval monks and friars who had sacrificed material wealth for a life of learning—his view of the early college was a way of connecting with medieval religious values he deeply admired. He was, as Eamon Duffy has pointed out, in many ways a traditionalist. His traditionalism extended beyond the college. Duffy recalls how Christopher considered that 2.15pm was the sacred time at which Faculty Board meetings would begin, and even when a radically minded Chairman of the Divinity Faculty moved meetings to 2.00pm Christopher would still arrive not a moment before 2.15. He was not the sort of Oxbridge don who fashionably proposes to throw all ceremony to the winds; but he understood that ceremony works when it has meaning. Indeed, he injected additional meaning into the party held in the University Combination Room in Cambridge to celebrate the publication of the first Festschrift in his honour, in 1993: he had somehow managed to filch a set of proofs, goodness knows from where, and was able to comment graciously on all the contributions, as a return tribute to all the authors (every one of whom was present at the event, even at the cost of crossing the Atlantic to attend).[48] Not surprisingly he was presented with yet another Festschrift to celebrate his eightieth birthday, as well as being honoured with the fine collection of facsimiles mentioned already.[49]

The premature death of their son Francis on 15 March 1996 was a great shock to the Brookes, but they were sustained by their devotion to one another and to a growing brood of grandchildren, as well as by their religious faith. For both Christopher and Rosalind, their last years were troublesome in other ways, with stays in hospital caused by Christopher's

[47] J. Venn, *Caius College* (Cambridge, 1901), one of a series of histories of all the colleges in Oxford and Cambridge.

[48] D. Abulafia, M. Franklin and M. Rubin (eds.), *Church and City: 1000–1500: Essays in Honour of Christopher Brooke* (Cambridge, 1992).

[49] M. Rubin (ed.), *European Religious Cultures: Essays Offered to Christopher Brooke on his Eightieth Birthday* (London, 2008).

circulation problems and Rosalind's blood disorders. But they remained remarkably cheerful, and when Rosalind died late in 2014 Christopher insisted on saying a few words at her funeral in Caius chapel, even though he was by now wheelchair-bound. Nonetheless, he continued to work on the charters of Archbishop Theobald into the very last months of his life. He saw his own death as the path to reunion with his beloved wife, and passed away on 27 December 2015 surrounded by his family. Although it could barely contain those who had come to show their respects, his own funeral took place, as he had always wished, in the chapel of the college that he had always seen as his second home.

DAVID ABULAFIA
Fellow of the Academy

DAVID LUSCOMBE
Fellow of the Academy

HENRY MAYR-HARTING
Fellow of the Academy

Note. We should like to thank Philip and Patrick Brooke, Professor Anna Sapir Abulafia, Dr Brenda Bolton, Dr Martin Brett, Professor Eamon Duffy FBA, Dr Diana Greenway FBA, Sir Noel Malcolm FBA, Dr Nigel Ramsay, Professor Miri Rubin, Professor Peter Spufford FBA and Professor E. M. C. van Houts for the information they have very kindly supplied.

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This does not pretend to be a full bibliography of Christopher Brooke's writings. For a bibliography up to 1991 see D. Abulafia, M. Franklin and M. Rubin (eds.), *Church and City, 1000–1500: Essays in Honour of Christopher Brooke* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 333–9; more recent publications have not yet found a bibliographer. Rather, the list is confined to books, text editions and articles mentioned in this memoir, listed alphabetically. Where CNLB was a co-author his name has been placed first.

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Christopher and Rosalind Brooke, arrayed in their Doctor of Letters gowns, in Gonville and Caius College,Cambridge (see p.273).