

‘Is Still Not the Blood of the Blessed Martyr Thomas Fully Avenged?’ Thomas Becket’s Cult at Canterbury under Henry III and Edward I

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Abstract

In July 1220, the boy king Henry III attended the Translation of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury, whereby the saint’s body was transferred from its original tomb in the crypt of Canterbury cathedral to a splendid new shrine in the main body of the church. This article explores the continuing appeal of Becket’s cult at Canterbury for elite ecclesiastical and lay circles in thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century England. It argues that the Englishmen, or holders of ecclesiastical office in England, who were canonised as saints in the thirteenth century were associated with St Thomas and his cult. Drawing on the records of the English royal household and wardrobe, alongside letters and charters, this article then examines the reception of Becket’s cult at the royal court. Although Henry III was more famous for his adult devotion to St Edward the Confessor, Henry and his wife, Eleanor of Provence, still paid their respects to Becket’s shrine at Canterbury. Royal interest in St Thomas of Canterbury, or St Thomas the Martyr, continued, but with added vigour, under Edward I, his wives and his children. Despite St Thomas’s appeal for opponents of the English crown, Becket’s cult remained firmly connected to the English ruling dynasty.

The cult of Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, was one of the most popular saints’ cults in western Europe in the Middle Ages. The stories of Becket’s murder at the hands of four knights in Canterbury cathedral on 29 December 1170 and of the posthumous miracles associated with him circulated widely at home and abroad. Their transmission was assisted by the many works of hagiography written by witnesses to the martyrdom and by men associated with Becket, as well as the reports carried away by visitors to Becket’s tomb.¹ Such was the damage to King Henry II’s prestige as the man who uttered the words that led to Becket’s death, especially after Becket was canonised

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¹ For discussion, see, for instance, R. C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 121–6; Rachel Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate: Miracle Stories and Miracle Collecting in High Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA, 2011), esp. chs 8–10. The Latin Lives of St Thomas are easily accessible in *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, Rolls Series, 7 vols (London, 1875–85), vols I–IV. For an excellent selection of extracts in translation from many of the *Lives*, see Michael Staunton (ed. and trans.), *The Lives of Thomas Becket* (Manchester, 2001).

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in February 1173, that the king performed penance at Canterbury in July 1174.² Henceforth Henry II and, after Henry's death, his surviving sons Richard I and John (until the death of Archbishop Hubert Walter), frequently visited Canterbury to pay their respects to St Thomas.³ This article investigates the fortunes of St Thomas Becket's cult in ecclesiastical and lay circles under King Henry III (r. 1216–72) and Edward I (r. 1272–1307). It argues, briefly, that the English churchmen who were canonised in the thirteenth century either had been personally associated with Becket in life, had expressed devotion to his cult, or had been encouraged to emulate him by their contemporaries. The main body of this article then turns to examine the patronage of St Thomas's cult at the English royal court, focusing on the gifts made to secure St Thomas's favour by members of the royal family and the English aristocracy. It demonstrates that, in spite of fluctuations in the attention paid to St Thomas's shrine at Canterbury and in spite of the cult's attraction for opponents of the crown, the cult of St Thomas of Canterbury, or St Thomas the Martyr, as it was known to contemporaries, remained harnessed to the medieval English monarchy.

First, a few words by way of background about the appeal of Becket's cult in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. In the years after Becket's martyrdom, the international dispersal of St Thomas of Canterbury's cult was assisted by the high-profile visits of the kings of France and other foreign potentates to Canterbury, and by the international marriages of Henry II's daughters, Matilda of Saxony, Leonor of Castile and Joan of Sicily, and that of his widowed daughter-in-law, Margaret of France, to King Béla III of Hungary.⁴ Canterbury cathedral's associations with Becket also helped it to become a place of spiritual significance for Scottish kings and aristocrats, including those of the Brus (or Bruce) dynasty between the late twelfth and fourteenth centuries.⁵ Canterbury became a location for meetings between

² On Henry II's penance, see A. J. Duggan, 'Diplomacy, status, and conscience: Henry II's penance for Becket's murder', in K. Borchardt and E. Bünz (eds), *Forschungen zur Reichs-, Papst- und Landesgeschichte*, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1998), I, pp. 265–90.

³ T. K. Keefe, 'Shrine time: King Henry II's visits to Thomas Becket's tomb', *Haskins Society Journal*, 11 (2003), pp. 115–22; N. Vincent, 'The pilgrimages of the Angevin kings of England, 1154–1272', in Colin Morris and Peter Roberts (eds), *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 12–45, at pp. 16–17; Paul Webster, *King John and Religion* (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 37–8.

⁴ György Györfy, 'Thomas à Becket and Hungary', *Angol Filológiai Tanulmányok/Hungarian Studies in English*, 4 (1969), pp. 45–52, at pp. 49–51; Kay Slocum, 'Angevin marriage diplomacy and the early dissemination of the cult of Thomas Becket', *Medieval Perspectives*, 14 (1999), pp. 214–28; Colette Bowie, *The Daughters of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Comparative Study of Twelfth-Century Royal Women* (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 151–68; Sara Luttan-Hassner, *Thomas Becket and the Plantagenets: Atonement through Art* (Leiden, 2015), chs 3–4; A. J. Duggan, 'Becket is dead! Long live St Thomas', in Paul Webster and Marie-Pierre Gelin (eds), *The Cult of St Thomas Becket in the Plantagenet World, c.1170–c.1220* (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 25–52, at pp. 42–6. See also the excellent chapters by Colette Bowie and José Manuel Cerda in *The Cult of St Thomas Becket*.

⁵ M. Penman, 'The Bruce dynasty, Becket and Scottish pilgrimage to Canterbury, c.1178–c.1404', *Journal of Medieval History*, 32/4 (2006), pp. 346–70.

the Angevin kings and their Scottish contemporaries. On 5 December 1189, for example, King Richard I issued the ‘Quitclaim of Canterbury’, which reversed many of the terms of the earlier Treaty of Falaise, in the presence of King William the Lion at Canterbury.⁶ Of the ten charters selected for inclusion in a section dedicated to ‘Charters concerning the Shrine of St Thomas the Martyr’ in Register E, the finest of Canterbury cathedral priory’s medieval registers, four alone were issued by Scottish lords in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.⁷ The grantors were Robert (IV) de Brus, lord of Annandale, Alan, steward of King William the Lion, Walter fitzAlan his son and successor, and Michael Scot, the first three of whom were associated with the Scottish royal court.⁸

Fifty years after Becket’s martyrdom, the saint’s body was translated from its tomb in the crypt to a splendid new shrine in the new gothic east end of Canterbury cathedral, at an elaborate service held on 7 July 1220 and presided over by Archbishop Stephen Langton. The Office of the Translation, written especially for this event, described how the saint’s body ‘was translated to | a house adorned with gems’ (‘Ingemmata | transfertur atria’).⁹ The office celebrated the restoration of peace to the kingdom after the First Barons’ War (1215–17), and promised that ‘After the Translation of Thomas | all prosperity follows’ (‘Translatō Thoma | succedunt prospera cuncta’).¹⁰ The ceremony initiated the Jubilee of St Thomas, which was subsequently celebrated every fifty years until 1470.¹¹ King Henry III, the papal legate Pandulf, the greatest lords of the realm (‘tout li haut baron d’Engleterre’) and a host of international guests, all attended the Translation.¹² Those who travelled from overseas for the event included the archbishop of Reims, a Hungarian archbishop, Richard I’s widow Berengaria of Navarre, Robert of Dreux and Guy de Châtillon, the son of Walter III, count of St Pol, ‘many other high men of France’ (‘moult autre haut home de France’), and representatives of the Scottish court.¹³ It was probably on this occasion that Robert (IV) de Brus gave one mark (13s. 4d) in annual rent to ‘God and the house of St Thomas the Martyr of Canterbury and the monks there’ (‘Deo et

⁶ E. L. G. Stones (ed.), *Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1174–1328* (London, 1965), pp. 6–8 no. 2.

⁷ Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library (hereafter CAA), DCc, Register E, fos 143r–144r.

⁸ CCA-DCc, Register E, fo. 143r.

⁹ Sherry L. Reames, ‘Reconstructing and interpreting a thirteenth-century office for the Translation of Thomas Becket’, *Speculum*, 80 (2005), pp. 118–70, at p. 126.

¹⁰ Kay Brainerd Slocum, *Liturgies in Honour of Thomas Becket* (Toronto, 2004), p. 242.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99. See also Raymonde Foreville, *Le jubilé de saint Thomas Becket du XIIIe au XVe siècle (1220–1470): Étude et documents* (Paris, 1958).

¹² Francisque Michel (ed.), *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d’Angleterre* (Paris, 1840), pp. 208–9; ‘The *Gesta Regum* with its continuation’, in William Stubbs (ed.), *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, II, Rolls Series (London, 1880), pp. 106–324, at p. 112.

¹³ Michel (ed.), *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, pp. 208–9; Richard Eales, ‘The political setting of the Becket Translation of 1220’, in Diana Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, Studies in Church History 30 (Oxford, 1993), pp. 127–39, at pp. 135–8; David Carpenter, *The Minority of Henry III* (London, 1990), pp. 200–1.

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domui Sancti Thome martiriis Cant' et monachis ibidem'), in the presence of Walter fitzAlan and Alan of Galloway.¹⁴

In the 1220s, there were still a handful of men and women alive in England who had known St Thomas personally and who benefited from an association with him. Cecily, widow of Roger fitzAlfred, whose dead husband was a former servant of 'the blessed Thomas the Marytr' ('Beati Thome Martiriis'), was exempted by the king in 1229 from paying tallage for her land in Otford, which St Thomas had bestowed upon her husband.¹⁵ Numerous gifts were made to Canterbury cathedral priory in honour of St Thomas the Martyr and in the hope of securing this saint's favour. Mary Berg discovered forty-one charters issued before 1221 among the cathedral's *Chartae Antiquae* and within the registers which invoked St Thomas's name on behalf of the donor.¹⁶ Some donors were local Kent landholders, like Ingelram Patrick, lord of the manor of Patricbourne, who granted 'to God and the blessed martyr Thomas and the monks of Canterbury' ('Deo et beato martyrii Thome at monachis Cant'') the annual rent he received from his mill 'to be rendered . . . on the tomb of St Thomas' ('reddendos . . . super tumbam Sancti Thome').¹⁷ Another, later lay donor of St Thomas's shrine, listed in Register E, was John, son of William de Quarrington, who gave three shillings in rent to the prior and convent of Christ Church in 1283–4 for maintaining a candle at the foot of the shrine, to be burned each day when mass was said for the soul of Lord William of Lenham in Kent.¹⁸

Just as local people felt drawn to Becket's cult, so too were many of Becket's successors as archbishops of Canterbury. The scene of Becket's martyrdom was depicted on the reverse of later archbishops' seals, including that of Langton.¹⁹ One of the last church services performed by Archbishop Langton, just two days before he died, was the celebration of the feast of the Translation of St Thomas on 7 July 1228.²⁰ Anne Duggan has argued, persuasively, that Becket's cult appealed to the thirteenth-century Church on three levels. Politically, it represented the Church's claims to freedom from secular authority. In ecclesiastical circles, Becket's life and his final sacrifice offered an example of 'supreme episcopal duty'.

¹⁴ CCA-DCc, Register E, fo. 143r. The visit is discussed in Ruth M. Blakely, *The Brus Family in England and Scotland, 1100–1295* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 71, 224–5.

¹⁵ *Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1227–31* (London, 1902), pp. 144–5.

¹⁶ Mary Berg, 'Twelfth- and early thirteenth-century charters containing pledges naming Thomas Becket', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 125 (2005), pp. 291–309, esp. pp. 308–9 (appendix).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 291, 297–9 (incl. plate).

¹⁸ CCA-DCc, Register E, fo. 144v.

¹⁹ See, for example, his seal attached to CCA-DCc, ChAnt/L/32. For discussion of the portrayal of the martyrdom on archiepiscopal seals: Kay Brainerd Slocum, 'Martir quod stillat primatis ab ore sigillat: sealed with the blood of Becket', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 165 (2012), pp. 61–88. For Archbishop Robert Winchelsey, who acknowledged Becket on his acceptance of his election to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury in 1273, see Anne Duggan, 'The cult of St Thomas Becket in the thirteenth century', in Meryl Jancey (ed.), *St Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford: Essays in his Honour* (Leominster, 1982), pp. 21–44, at p. 31 n. 62.

²⁰ 'The *Gesta Regum* with its continuation', p. 115; A. Hamilton Thompson (ed.), *William Thorne's Chronicle of Saint Augustine's Abbey Canterbury* (Oxford, 1934), p. 195.

Spiritually, St Thomas was a saint whose virtuous life and posthumous miracles attested to ongoing intercession which promised cures for bodily and other afflictions.²¹ In connection with this, it is therefore worth highlighting that all four of the ‘English’ saints canonised in the thirteenth century who died after Becket – St Gilbert of Sempringham (1202), Hugh of Lincoln (1220), St Edmund of Abingdon (1246) and St Richard of Chichester (1262)²² – were associates of Becket in life, devotees of St Thomas after his death, or seen by contemporaries to share similar values to him as champions of ecclesiastical liberties. St Gilbert of Sempringham (d. 1189) was a correspondent of Becket, albeit one who drew criticism from the archbishop in 1165 for his management of the Gilbertine Order, and was suspected by King Henry II of having aided the archbishop in his flight into exile.²³ According to his biographer Adam of Eynsham, St Hugh of Avalon (d. 1200), bishop of Lincoln, had visited Canterbury cathedral during his final illness, ‘where he prayed long and fervently, first at the altar of our Saviour, and then at each of the shrines of the saints who are buried there, but especially at the tomb of the glorious martyr Thomas’.²⁴ St Edmund of Abingdon (d. 1240) was a supporter of Becket’s cult who seems to have identified with St Thomas. Archbishop Edmund visited Pontigny abbey, where Becket spent much of his exile, twice, and was buried there. During his 1238 visit, Edmund added an increment of ten marks per year to an earlier gift by Archbishop Langton in Becket’s ‘memory’.²⁵ According to the *Life* of Edmund, written by a monk of Pontigny, the archbishop dispatched a Becket blood-relic to Ela Longespée, countess of Salisbury, when she fell ill, which wrought a miraculous cure.²⁶ Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253), bishop of Lincoln, advised the archbishop of his personal belief that St Thomas would aid Edmund in defending episcopal interests against the crown.²⁷ Ralph of Bocking’s *Life* of St Richard of Chichester (d. 1253) recalled the role model offered by ‘His most glorious champion and most renowned martyr the blessed Thomas’ (‘gloriosissimo beato Thoma, egregio martire’) in this bishop’s struggles with members of Henry III’s

²¹ Duggan, ‘The cult of St Thomas Becket in the thirteenth century’, pp. 41–2.

²² Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (London, 2000), p. 63.

²³ Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London, 1986), p. 112; Anne Duggan (ed.), *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1162–1170*, I (Oxford, 2000), no. 44.

²⁴ ‘in qua, primum ad Saluatoris aram, deinde ad singulas sanctorum in ea quiescentium memorias, maximeque ad gloriosi martiris Thome mausoleum diutissime’: Decima L. Douie and Hugh Farmer (eds), *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis: The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, 2 vols (London, 1962), II, p. 182.

²⁵ Philippa M. Hoskin (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta 13: Worcester, 1218–1268* (Oxford, 1997), no. 143. Langton himself had resided for six years at Pontigny during the Interdict, in a way that consciously recalled Becket’s time there: Joseph Creamer, ‘St Edmund of Canterbury and Henry III: in the shadow of Thomas Becket’, in Janet Burton, Philip Schofield and Björn Weiler (eds), *Thirteenth Century England XIV* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 129–39, at pp. 131–2.

²⁶ Margaret Wade Labarge, *Medieval Miscellany* (Carleton, Canada, 1997), pp. 70–1.

²⁷ Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England*, p. 63; Creamer, ‘St Edmund of Canterbury and Henry III: in the shadow of Thomas Becket’, p. 132.

royal court.²⁸ During his lifetime, St Richard had visited Canterbury, a place which Bocking described as being 'in some sense our Jerusalem because of the precious relics there of the glorious martyred archbishops Thomas and Ælphege'.²⁹ It was the uncle of Thomas Cantilupe, bishop of Hereford, another thirteenth-century English churchman who was canonised in 1320, who apparently foresaw his nephew's future greatness as a man who would battle 'for God and St Thomas of Canterbury' ('pro Deo et S. Thoma martyri').³⁰ Becket's cult was clearly one that retained currency in thirteenth-century ecclesiastical circles.

In addition to St Thomas's elaborate new shrine, there were several places in Canterbury cathedral in the thirteenth century which housed relics of St Thomas Becket or which were rendered holy by their association with the saint and his martyrdom. These were the altar of 'the martyrdom' or 'the sword point' in the north-west transept, and the 'corona' chapel in which a reliquary housed part of the head of St Thomas.³¹ Offerings were also made to the cloak of St Thomas.³² King Henry III, his sisters, Queen Eleanor his wife and other members of the royal family were among the more well-born, lay visitors and pilgrims who made gifts to honour St Thomas of Canterbury, and who left their own mark on the furnishings of the cathedral there. In 1234, the wedding train of Isabella of England, Henry III's sister, stopped at Canterbury to pray to St Thomas and make offerings there, shortly before Isabella departed from the English realm to join her groom Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen.³³ On 7 November 1243, King Henry commissioned three new golden images to be made for the shrine at a cost of 250 marks, or 300 if needed.³⁴ In January 1244, the keeper of the royal mint was instructed to make a golden garland worth £24 for St Thomas at the head of the shrine in order to remedy a 'defect'.³⁵

Additional expenditure was authorised by Henry III on new altar cloths and vestments for Canterbury cathedral during his reign. The 'king's mother', Isabella of Angoulême, who had been crowned at Canterbury in 1201, gave a cloth cope to the shrine of St Thomas.³⁶ When Henry III visited Canterbury in January 1244, the king spent twelve marks

²⁸ David Jones (ed.), *Saint Richard of Chichester: The Sources for his Life*, Sussex Record Society 79 (Lewes, 1995), pp. 99, 175.

²⁹ 'quodammodo Jerusalem propter gloriosorum martirum ac pontificum Thome necnon Elphegi': Jones (ed.), *Saint Richard of Chichester*, pp. 134, 211.

³⁰ Duggan, 'The cult of St Thomas Becket in the thirteenth century', pp. 43–4 & n. 120 (which gives the full quotation).

³¹ C. Everleigh Woodruff, 'The financial aspect of the cult of St Thomas of Canterbury as revealed by a study of the monastic records', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 44 (1932), pp. 13–32, at pp. 27–8.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 27–8.

³³ H. G. Hewlett (ed.), *The Flowers of History by Roger of Wendover*, Rolls Series, 3 vols (London, 1886–9), III, p. 110.

³⁴ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, 1240–5* (London, 1930), p. 196.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

³⁶ *Ibid.* For Isabella's coronation in 1201 at Canterbury, her second coronation, see 'Actus pontificum', in Stubbs (ed.), *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, II, pp. 325–414, at p. 410.

on two orphreys for Queen Isabella's cope and for another cope belonging to Westminster abbey.³⁷ A later Christ Church inventory of 1321 referred to 'a cope of King Henry III of red embroidered samite' ('Capa Regis H. terciij de samicto rubeo brudato'), which had been given to that house, possibly in honour of St Thomas or another saint venerated there.³⁸ On other occasions, Henry III arranged for tapers to be purchased to light St Thomas's shrine. On 26 December 1238, he instructed the sacristan of Canterbury cathedral priory to spend more than £7 on 300 tapers for St Thomas's shrine for the feast of Becket's martyrdom just a few days later.³⁹ On 21 February 1240, the king gave 100 marks for the maintenance of four candles to burn forever around Becket's shrine.⁴⁰ St Thomas's favour was also sought, specifically, by the king to aid the queen's childbearing. Early in the winter of 1244, Henry III ordered 1,000 tapers to be placed around St Thomas's shrine on his feast day to seek the saint's help in ensuring Queen Eleanor's safe delivery of a child, in this case her second son Edmund. On this and other occasions, the king also arranged for twelve gold dinars ('oboli de Musce') to be offered there, for the queen's *chevagiūm*, probably a special offering given as 'a commutation' of a personal visit to Becket's shrine.⁴¹

King Henry III visited Canterbury on twenty-two occasions during his reign (1216–72), but his personal devotion to Becket was a pale reflection of that which he exhibited for St Edward the Confessor at Westminster and coloured, perhaps, by a degree of 'ambivalence'.⁴² The quotation with which this article begins – "Is still not the blood of the blessed martyr Thomas fully avenged?" ("nonne adhuc penitus vindicatus est sanguis Thomæ martyris?") – was one that the St Albans chronicler Matthew Paris attributed to Henry III, when the king learned of the premature death of William Marshal junior, earl of Pembroke, in 1231.⁴³ Henry's

³⁷ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, 1240–5*, p. 212.

³⁸ J. Wickham Legg and W. H. St John Hope (eds), *Inventories of Christchurch Canterbury* (Westminster, 1902), p. 53.

³⁹ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, 1226–40* (London, 1916), pp. 356–7.

⁴⁰ This was a gift that cost the king little, since he essentially wrote off two outstanding debts that the monks owed him at the royal exchequer and ordered that the money they owed be used to fund the candles: *Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1237–42*, p. 175. See also *ibid.*, pp. 181, 208, 374; *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, 1240–5*, p. 307; *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, 1245–51* (London, 1937), p. 93.

⁴¹ Another 1,000 tapers were provided for the church of St Augustine's abbey: *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, 1240–5*, p. 275. For other similar offerings of 12 dinars to the shrine of St Thomas a few years later, see also B. L. Wild (ed.), *The Wardrobe Accounts of Henry III*, The Pipe Roll Society new series 58 (London, 2012), p. 68 (1249–50); The National Archives (henceforth TNA), E 372/95, rot. 7d, m. 3; *Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1247–51* (London, 1922), pp. 546–7. For the definition of 'chevagiūm', see J. Nichols (ed.), *Liber Quotidianus Contarotulatoris Garderobae Anno Regni Regis Edwardi Primi Vicesimo Octavo* (London, 1787), p. 363.

⁴² David Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207–1258: The Rise to Power and Personal Rule* (London and New Haven, 2020), pp. 316–17. For the royal marriage at Canterbury, see *Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1234–7* (London, 1908), p. 339. The royal couple celebrated the feast of the Translation there in 1262: 'The Gesta Regum with its continuation', p. 215. On Henry III and Westminster, see D. A. Carpenter, 'Henry III and the Cosmati work at Westminster abbey', in D. A. Carpenter (ed.), *The Reign of Henry III* (London, 1996), pp. 409–26.

⁴³ Henry Richards Luard (ed.), *Matthæi Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, Rolls Series, 7 vols (London, 1872–83), III, p. 201.

attitude towards St Thomas may have been mirrored by that of his wife Eleanor of Provence. Admittedly, the royal couple had celebrated their marriage at Canterbury cathedral in January 1236⁴⁴ and a year later Queen Eleanor had made a pilgrimage to Canterbury with her sister-in-law, Joan, queen of Scots, ostensibly to pray for children.⁴⁵ Yet, in the early 1250s, Queen Eleanor's personal offerings on St Thomas's individual feast days were less than those to her husband's preferred saint, St Edward the Confessor, on the latter's feast days. According to an extant roll of the queen's oblations, Eleanor of Provence spent 18d. on the feast of the Translation of St Thomas the Martyr (7 July)⁴⁶ and 2s. 1d. on the feast of St Thomas the Martyr (29 December) in 1252, compared with 21d. on the feast of the Translation of St Edward the Confessor (13 October) in 1252 and 3s. 9d. on the feast of St Edward (5 January) in 1253.⁴⁷

Intriguingly, Henry III and Eleanor's eldest son, King Edward I, his wives and his children appear to have been more constant in their devotion to St Thomas of Canterbury than Edward's parents.⁴⁸ On 14 August 1289, when the royal court was at Canterbury, King Edward, Eleanor of Castile his first wife, their son Edward, their five daughters and their niece Marie of Brittany all made offerings 'at the corona of the blessed Thomas' ('ad coronam Beati Thome') and 'at the sword tip by which he was killed' ('ad punctum gladii quo interfectus fuit'), while the king made a separate offering as well 'at the tomb' ('ad tumbam') of St Thomas and at the altar of the Virgin Mary. Each person offered 7s., so that £7 was spent in total.⁴⁹ Other saints with shrines in Canterbury were remembered too: similar offerings were made by the royal party at the shrines of St Adrian, St Mildred and the head ('capud') of St Augustine at St Augustine's abbey, and at the shrines of St Dunstan, St Blaise and St Ælphege in Canterbury cathedral priory.⁵⁰ Comparable gifts were made throughout Edward's reign. On 23 February 1300, for example, King Edward, Queen Margaret his second wife and Prince Edward each made gifts, by proxy, at the various places within Canterbury cathedral, with the king offering 7s. at the altar before the image of the Virgin Mary in the crypt, another 7s. 'at the tomb where St Thomas was first buried' ('ad tumbam ubi Sanctus Thomas primo sepeliebatur'), and identical sums at the corona, the sword

⁴⁴ Frederic Madden (ed.), *Matthæi Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani, Historia Anglorum*, Rolls Series, 3 vols (London, 1866–9), II, p. 386; *Chronica Majora*, III, p. 336.

⁴⁵ 'The Chronicle of Melrose', in Joseph Stephenson (ed. and trans.), *Medieval Chronicles of Scotland* (Felinfach, 1988), pp. 7–124, at pp. 63–4; Jessica Nelson, 'Scottish queenship in the thirteenth century', in Björn Weiler et al. (eds), *Thirteenth Century England XI* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 61–81, at p. 69.

⁴⁶ TNA, E 101/349/17 (roll of the queen's oblations).

⁴⁷ TNA, E 101/349/17; TNA, E 101/349/24 (roll of the queen's oblations).

⁴⁸ Michael Prestwich, 'The piety of Edward I', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Thirteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium* (Grantham, 1985), pp. 120–8, at pp. 123–4.

⁴⁹ B. F. Byerly and C. R. Byerly (eds), *Records of the Wardrobe and Household, 1286–9* (London, 1986), no. 2542.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 2542.

point, the cloak of St Thomas and the shrines of St Blaise, St Dunstan and St Ælthege. The same amount of money was given on behalf of Prince Edward to the image of the Virgin Mary, the sword point, the corona and the tomb.⁵¹ Later, on the same day, King Edward, Queen Margaret and Prince Edward each gave twelve ‘gold florins’ (‘florinis auri’) ‘nomine chevagii’ to St Thomas’s shrine.⁵²

An insight into the specific spiritual benefits which the monks of Canterbury cathedral priory promised King Edward, Queen Eleanor and Edward their son in return for their generosity are documented in letters issued by the chapter there on 16 July 1285, which contained the promise that three masses would be celebrated each day on their behalf, one in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, one for the Blessed Thomas the Martyr and one for St Dunstan, St Blaise, St Ælphege and All Saints.⁵³ One striking feature of the reverence shown by both King Henry III and King Edward I and their families to St Thomas of Canterbury is the way in which their veneration of Becket was included within their veneration of a larger body of saints. The routine inclusion of gifts made to the Canterbury shrine and relics associated with St Thomas within the records of the royal wardrobe and household creates the impression that King Edward’s offerings there were simply one cog in a well-oiled machine, which received little by way of personal direction from the king. Yet, the important thing was that Becket was prominently and repeatedly included in these practical expressions of the royal family’s piety.

Firm evidence for the king’s personal devotion to Becket can be found elsewhere. Charles Farris calculated that Edward I visited Canterbury in eighteen years of his thirty-five year reign, sometimes, quite deliberately, timing his stays so that he attended the feast of Becket’s Translation.⁵⁴ The king made some lavish gifts, the most notable of which were in 1285, when King Edward I, Eleanor of Castile and their children all went on pilgrimage to Canterbury for the Translation.⁵⁵ In this year, the king commissioned four richly adorned images for Becket’s shrine, of St Edward the Confessor and a pilgrim, perhaps St John the Evangelist, and St George and his horse, mounted on two bases.⁵⁶ The total amount

⁵¹ Gifts were also made, on the queen’s behalf, to St Blaise, St Dunstan and St Ælthege, and the image of the Virgin Mary: *Liber Quotidianus*, p. 29.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. R. Dodsworth et al., 6 vols in 8 (London, 1817–30), II, p. 104 no. 17. See also *ibid.*, p. 104 no. 18, for letters of King Edward, issued at Arundel on 25 July 1285, pardoning the prior and convent of Christ Church of trespasses, in which the king explained that he did this out of reverence for the body of St Thomas.

⁵⁴ Charles Farris, ‘The pious practices of Edward I, 1272–1307’ (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway College, University of London, 2013), pp. 273–4. Interestingly, Farris notes that King Edward gave nearly every *chevagium* of his reign to St Thomas’s shrine at Canterbury: *ibid.*, p. 179.

⁵⁵ A. J. Taylor, ‘Edward I and the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury’, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd s., 42 (1979), pp. 22–8.

⁵⁶ The first two images presumably referred to the legend of St Edward and the ring, which would mean the pilgrim was St John the Evangelist. I am grateful to Paul Webster for this point.

spent was more than £347.⁵⁷ King Edward I's belief in the efficacy of Becket's aid is also suggested by a royal order of 1285–6 to purchase wax, so that Calemare, the king's falconer, could make a special image of one of the royal gerfalcons, which had fallen ill, to be offered at St Thomas's shrine.⁵⁸ Later, in 1294, a year when Edward I celebrated Easter at Canterbury, the king instructed Adam of Shoreditch, his goldsmith, to make four large golden brooches for each of the shrines of St Thomas in Canterbury, St William of York, St Richard of Chichester and St Ætheldreda of Ely, from a gold vase found at Edinburgh castle.⁵⁹ Further offerings, including a silver censer, were made to Becket's shrine in 1297.⁶⁰ In 1299, the chronicler William Rishanger claimed that Edward I gave St Thomas's shrine the confiscated gold crown of John Balliol, when it was intercepted in the latter's baggage at Dover.⁶¹ Like his father before him, Edward gave vestments to the Canterbury cathedral clergy, possibly in honour of St Thomas. These included a cope 'of red embroidered samite of the story of Joseph' ('de rubeo samicto brudato de historia Joseph'), and another embroidered cope in the same cloth.⁶²

Among the splendid gifts made to St Thomas's shrine in 1285 was a golden cup given by King Edward's first wife, Eleanor of Castile.⁶³ Like her husband, Queen Eleanor forged a reasonably strong connection with Becket's cult. Ahead of her arrival in England from her native Castile in 1255, Edward's teenage bride had been furnished with two gold brooches for her to present to the shrines of St Thomas at Canterbury and St Edward the Confessor at Westminster.⁶⁴ Nine years later, the death of her firstborn daughter Katherine on 5 September 1264 was commemorated at Canterbury cathedral priory and entered into a list of obits compiled there.⁶⁵ An inventory of the archbishop's chapel at Canterbury, compiled in 1294, listed among its goods 'an embroidered alb of Queen Eleanor' ('Alba brudata Alianore Regine'), together with 'a stole with a maniple of Queen Eleanor' ('Stola cum manipulo Alianore Regine').⁶⁶ Another,

⁵⁷ Taylor, 'Edward I and the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury', pp. 24–5, 27–8 (Appendix: a transcription of TNA, E 101/372/11, m. 3).

⁵⁸ B. F. Byerly and C. R. Byerly (eds), *Records of the Wardrobe and Household, 1285–6* (London, 1977), no. 368. Another entry on the counter-roll of royal expenses incurred through falconry and hunting, referred to an offering of 4d. made for another gerfalcon at the same shrine: *ibid.*, no. 2239.

⁵⁹ W. H. Blaauw, 'The will of Richard de la Wych, bishop of Chichester, 1253', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 1 (1848), pp. 164–92, at pp. 188–9 n. 67. For Edward spending Easter at Canterbury in 1294, see Henry Thomas Riley (ed.), *Willelmi Rishanger Chronica et Annales*, Rolls Series (London, 1865), p. 141.

⁶⁰ Taylor, 'Edward I and the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury', p. 26; Prestwich, 'The piety of Edward I', p. 124.

⁶¹ Riley (ed.), *Willelmi Rishanger Chronica et Annales*, p. 391; Woodruff, 'The financial aspect of the cult of St Thomas of Canterbury', p. 29.

⁶² Legg and St John Hope (eds), *Inventories of Christchurch Canterbury*, pp. 14, 53.

⁶³ Taylor, 'Edward I and the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury', p. 26 (Appendix).

⁶⁴ *Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1254–6* (London, 1931), p. 128.

⁶⁵ British Library, Arundel MS 68, fo. 40v.

⁶⁶ Legg and St John Hope (eds), *Inventories of Christchurch Canterbury*, p. 5. Since the queen here is not described as the king's mother, it seems most likely that the 'Queen Eleanor' mentioned here was Edward I's recently deceased wife, rather than his recently deceased mother, Eleanor of Provence.

slightly later inventory of vestments produced for Prior Henry of Eastry in 1321 listed a ‘chasuble of red embroidered samite’ that had also been given by the same queen (‘Casula Elianore regine de rubeo samicto brudato’),⁶⁷ together with, perhaps, either the same alb mentioned in the earlier inventory or another one given by her (‘Alba Elianore Regine cum paruris albis brudatis cum ymaginibus stantibus’).⁶⁸

Although Eleanor of Castile did not choose Canterbury cathedral priory as her burial place, she engaged in business dealings with the prior and monks there during the final six months of her life. In June 1290, she granted the prior and convent of Canterbury cathedral priory her manors of West Farleigh and Teston in frank almoign. At around the same time, the queen also gave the cathedral priory an acre of land and the advowson of the church in Westerham, Kent, together with another acre in Westcliffe, near Dover, and the advowson of the church there too.⁶⁹ The queen’s grants functioned as an exchange which enabled her to acquire the priory’s customs duties and other rights in the port of Sandwich, as noted in a mandate issued by Prior Eastry on 28 June 1290.⁷⁰ Yet, the grant of the advowsons by Eleanor did not go entirely smoothly. On 19 November 1290, just nine days before her death, Eleanor dispatched a letter to the bishop of Rochester over one of them, which was in dispute.⁷¹ It was also the same queen who granted, or whose widower granted, thirteen tenements in the Canterbury Jewry to Canterbury cathedral priory.⁷²

Henry III had his two surviving sons named after St Edward the Confessor and St Edmund of East Anglia,⁷³ rather than drawing on or privileging St Thomas of Canterbury. Edward I’s oldest son by his second wife, Margaret of France, on the other hand, was named Thomas, and later known as Thomas of Brotherton. Thomas of Brotherton acquired his first name after the queen called upon St Thomas for assistance during a painful labour that culminated in her son’s safe birth on 1 June

⁶⁷ Legg and St John Hope (eds), *Inventories of Christchurch Canterbury*, p. 52.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁶⁹ CCA-DCc, Register E, fo. 55r; CCA-DCc, ChAnt/W/164. For King Edward I’s confirmation of the grant of West Farleigh and Teston, dated 20 June 1290, see CCA-DCc, ChAnt/L/299; *Calendar of the Charter Rolls, 1257–1300* (London, 2006), p. 357. See also John Carmi Parsons (ed.), *The Court and Household of Eleanor of Castile* (Toronto, 1977), p. 24 n. Frank almoign was a type of tenure which allowed a religious house to hold property in return for the performance of religious duties, and free from secular obligations.

⁷⁰ CCA-DCc, ChAnt/S/274; John Carmi Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 1998), p. 178 no. 120; J. Brigstocke Sheppard (ed.), *Literæ Cantuarienses: The Letter Books of the Monastery of Christ Church Canterbury*, Rolls Series, 3 vols (London, 1887–9), I, pp. lxx–lxxi. Westcliffe was later granted by Edward to Margaret his second wife, whereupon he gave the monks the manor of Borley in Essex: *Literæ Cantuarienses*, I, p. lxxi.

⁷¹ Parsons (ed.), *Court and Household*, p. 25.

⁷² Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, II, p. 98 no. 1; Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, p. 178 no. 121.

⁷³ Although, in the case of Edmund, Queen Eleanor of Provence used St Edmund of Abingdon’s cloak during her labour: Creamer, ‘St Edmund of Canterbury and Henry III’, p. 130.

1300.⁷⁴ Even before this crisis during childbirth, while she was pregnant, St Thomas had been identified as a potential saintly protector of the unborn child: three of the 'gold florins' offered to St Thomas's shrine on 23 February 1300 were given expressly on behalf of the 'foetus' in the queen's womb ('pro fetu adhuc existente in ventre regine').⁷⁵ Immediately after Thomas of Brotherton's birth, a whole host of royal offerings was made to various shrines, but that of St Thomas at Canterbury was among the first to be honoured. On 2 June 1300, the king dispatched one of his officials to Canterbury to make offerings of 7s. each in the name of the queen and Thomas his new son at Becket's shrine.⁷⁶

Queen Margaret may have had a special affinity for St Thomas's cult. Not only had she married Edward I in Canterbury cathedral in September 1299, when the nuptial mass was held at the altar of St Thomas's shrine, but other members of her natal family had expressed their devotion to St Thomas's cult.⁷⁷ Margaret's half-brother, King Philip IV of France, was a benefactor of Christ Church, who as recently as 1286 had confirmed the long-standing annual gift of 100 Parisian measures of wine which had in 1179 been granted by Louis VII to Christ Church in St Thomas's honour.⁷⁸ Although war between England and France in the mid to late 1290s disrupted the delivery of this wine, King Philip offered the Canterbury monks compensation in the form of 200 livres tournois in 1300.⁷⁹ King Philip IV was also the donor of some rather splendid vestments for the use of the cathedral clergy, which were sumptuously decorated with the fleur-de-lys, the royal arms of France.⁸⁰

St Thomas of Canterbury was a saint who had also found favour with other, earlier royal women of the Capetian dynasty, in addition to Queen Margaret. In 1232–3, Blanche of Castile's personal devotion to St Thomas was acknowledged in a grant made by the prior and monks of Christ Church which promised the French queen dowager and her kin inclusion in the prayers and masses celebrated at Canterbury.⁸¹ Preserved within the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (MS 300), is a beautifully illuminated Psalter-Hours, which was probably made for Isabella (d. 1270), sister

⁷⁴ Riley (ed.), *Willelmi Rishanger Chronica et Annales*, p. 438; 'Annales prioratus de Wigornia', in Henry Richards Luard (ed.), *Annales monastici*, Rolls Series, 5 vols (London, 1864–9), IV, p. 545; H. Geraud (ed.), *Chronique latine Guillaume de Nangiis, Tome Premier* (Paris, 1843), p. 307.

⁷⁵ Of the remaining nine florins, a further three were given for the queen and six for the king: *Liber Quotidianus*, pp. xxix, 29–30.

⁷⁶ *Liber Quotidianus*, p. 38.

⁷⁷ 'The *Gesta Regum* with its continuation', p. 317; Geraud (ed.), *Chronique latine Guillaume de Nangiis*, p. 307; Riley (ed.), *Willelmi Rishanger Chronica et Annales*, pp. 192, 395; T. Hogg (ed.), *F. Nicholai Triveti, De Ordine Frat. Prædicatorum, Annales* (London, 1840), p. 376; Taylor, 'Edward I and the Shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury', p. 26.

⁷⁸ CCA-DCc, ChAnt/F/112 (a late fourteenth-century document which recites 7 royal French charters). For the original grant by Louis VII, see CCA-DCc, ChAnt/F/90. The charters are printed in Nicholas Vincent (ed.), *Norman Charters from English Sources: Antiquaries, Archives and the Rediscovery of the Anglo-Norman Past*, Pipe Roll Society n.s. 59 (London, 2013), nos 77–82.

⁷⁹ Vincent (ed.), *Norman Charters from English Sources*, p. 103 no. 83.

⁸⁰ Legg and St John Hope (eds), *Inventories of Christchurch Canterbury*, p. 62.

⁸¹ Vincent (ed.), *Norman Charters from English Sources*, no. 81.

of King Louis IX, in Paris between 1265 and 1270. Included within its calendar is the octave of the feast of St Thomas of Canterbury.⁸² The Christ Church monks had promised King Louis IX ‘special obit celebrations’, which they subsequently observed, as well as granting the king, his wife Margaret of Provence and his children confraternity when he reconfirmed the long-established gift of wine in 1264.⁸³

Although Thomas of Brotherton may have had a close spiritual affiliation with his namesake St Thomas of Canterbury, Edward I’s other children from both his marriages were familiarised with the Becket cult. It was at Canterbury that Edward I and Eleanor of Castile were reunited with the children whom they had left in England when they returned from crusade in July 1274.⁸⁴ The English royal children visited Canterbury on pilgrimage, as well as other spiritual destinations, from an early age, thereby gaining exposure to, and knowledge of, the cult of St Thomas and other Canterbury saints. The wardrobe accounts for Henry, Edward I’s son, in 1273–4, the final year of his life, list a whole host of offerings made on young Henry’s behalf on saints’ days and religious festivals. These included 3d. on the feast of St Thomas the Martyr (29 December 1273), and 4d. on both the Sunday before and on the Sunday ‘in the feast’ of his Translation (‘in festo Translacionis sancti Thome martiris’) in July 1274.⁸⁵ On 24 July 1274, offerings of 2s. 2d. were made on Henry’s behalf at St Thomas’s shrine, during a visit to Canterbury that lasted sixteen days with his sister Eleanor and their cousin John of Brittany.⁸⁶ Henry’s poor health during the final months of his life prompted the young boy’s carers to seek St Thomas of Canterbury’s aid. Prior to this visit, on 25 May, for instance, a groom was paid three shillings to carry a ‘measure of Lord Henry’ (‘mensuram domini Henrici’), in the shape of a wax candle, from Marlborough, where Henry was then in residence, to Canterbury, presumably to burn before St Thomas’s shrine.⁸⁷ Later in the autumn, as Henry became increasingly ill, two further ‘measures’ were made of the prince, one of which was carried to London ‘to St Edward and King Henry’ (‘ad sanctum Edwardum et Regem Henricum’) and another to Canterbury, ‘to St Thomas’ (‘ad sanctum Thomam’).⁸⁸ Yet, ultimately, as his elder siblings, Joanna and John, had been, it was at Westminster, rather than Canterbury, that Henry was buried in the autumn of 1274.⁸⁹

⁸² S. C. Cockerell and H. Y. Thompson, *A Psalter and Hours executed before 1270 for a Lady connected with St Louis, probably his sister Isabelle of France* (London, 1905), p. 11.

⁸³ Vincent (ed.), *Norman Charters from English Sources*, p. 99 no. 81 & n.

⁸⁴ Hilda Johnstone, ‘The wardrobe and household of Henry, son of Edward I’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 7/3 (1923), pp. 384–420, at p. 398.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 418, 419.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 419.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 398, 406. A ‘measure’ was often a wax candle, whose wick had been measured against the height of a sick or ailing person, so that the candle might be burned at a shrine to invoke a saint’s aid: Michael Tavinor, *Shrines of the Saints in England and Wales* (Norwich, 2016), p. 3.

⁸⁸ Johnstone, ‘The wardrobe and household of Henry, son of Edward I’, p. 409.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 420.

Eleanor, Henry's younger sister, continued to visit the shrine of St Thomas the Martyr after his death; she was taken on pilgrimage to Canterbury, for instance, in November 1275, when she was six years old.⁹⁰ Such childhood pilgrimages may well have left an impression on the royal daughters and stimulated, perhaps, a lifelong interest in the Becket cult. It was as an adult that Eleanor's younger sister Elizabeth (d. 1316) gave vestments of red velvet to Christ Church, which were listed in the 1321 inventory. Elizabeth married, as her first husband, John (d. 1299), count of Holland, and as her second husband, Humphrey de Bohun (d. 1322), earl of Hereford. The vestments donated by Elizabeth to Canterbury included a chasuble, a tunic, a dalmatic with orphreys with the arms of the king of England and the earls of Hereford ('cum aurifrigijs de armis Regis Anglie et Comitum Herefordie operatis'), and three albs.⁹¹ The Alphonso Psalter, which passed into the hands of the Bohun family on Elizabeth's marriage, recorded on its calendar the obits of Elizabeth and her older sister Eleanor, together with the Translation of St Thomas the Martyr, which was entered in red ink as a saint's day of special note.⁹²

Other members of Edward I's wider royal family also visited St Thomas's shrine in Canterbury. Edmund of Lancaster, the younger brother of Edward I, came to Canterbury with his wife, Blanche of Artois, queen dowager of Navarre and countess of Champagne, on 9 June 1276.⁹³ Blanche was not the first member of her natal family to journey to the shrine. Theobald, king of Navarre and count of Champagne, had notified King Henry III of his intention to come to England on pilgrimage, so that he might pay his respects to St Thomas the Martyr at Canterbury in 1258.⁹⁴ In a similar vein, Lord Edmund de Mortimer reached an agreement with the prior and convent of Canterbury cathedral priory, recorded in a charter issued on 1 August 1290, that they would keep a candle burning day and night at the feet of St Thomas's shrine for so long as he and his successors honoured an annual payment of 50 shillings in rent from their manor of Stratfield Mortimer.⁹⁵ Edmund de Mortimer (d. 1331) was the son of the Marcher lord, Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, and the husband of Margaret de Fiennes, a kinswoman of Eleanor of Castile.⁹⁶ Individual members of the Clare family, the thirteenth-century earls of Gloucester and Hertford, and lords of Tonbridge castle in Kent, which they held from the archbishops of Canterbury, similarly showed their devotion to St Thomas. Among the early miracles attributed to St Thomas in 1170–3 was the recovery of James, the infant son of Roger de

⁹⁰ 'The *Gesta Regum* with its continuation', p. 282.

⁹¹ Legg and St John Hope (eds), *Inventories of Christchurch Canterbury*, p. 63.

⁹² BL, Add. MS 24686, fos 7r, 8v, 8r.

⁹³ 'The *Gesta Regum* with its continuation', p. 284.

⁹⁴ *Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1256–9* (London, 1932), p. 321.

⁹⁵ CCA-DCC, Register E, fo. 144r.

⁹⁶ J. J. Crump, 'Mortimer, Roger de, lord of Wigmore (1231–1282), magnate', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), <<https://doi-org.proxy.library.lincoln.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/19352>> [accessed 27 July 2020].

Clare, earl of Hertford, whose mother, Matilda of St Hilary, successfully appealed to St Thomas when the boy had stopped breathing. Countess Matilda placed relics of the saint, Becket's blood and a piece of cloth, on her son's neck, both of which she had acquired on a previous trip to Canterbury. Grateful for James's recovery, Matilda and her son both set out on pilgrimage to Canterbury, again.⁹⁷ Around ninety years later, the bowels of Richard de Clare, earl of Gloucester and Hertford, were interred at Canterbury cathedral priory, after Richard died near the city.⁹⁸

The cult of St Thomas of Canterbury enjoyed continued popularity more widely at Henry III's and Edward I's courts, thanks in part, one suspects, to the texts of Becket's life that circulated in elite circles, and which passed especially into the hands of noblewomen. A note written in the hand of the thirteenth-century chronicler Matthew Paris (d. 1259) recalled that Isabella de Warenne, countess of Arundel, had a copy of the decorated *Lives of St Thomas and St Edward*, which he had produced, and which he wanted the countess to send to 'G'.⁹⁹ Countess Isabella (d. 1282) was a pious lady, who founded the Cistercian abbey of Marham in Norfolk.¹⁰⁰ The nunnery of Campsey Ash possessed a copy of Countess Isabella's life of St Edmund, king and martyr, in a manuscript which contained other saints' lives, including that of St Thomas, and which was read during the nuns' meals.¹⁰¹ Sanchia of Provence, sister of Queen Eleanor and wife of Earl Richard of Cornwall, was described by Paris as borrowing a life of St Thomas, presumably for her own spiritual edification.¹⁰² The Queen Mary Psalter, which may well have been made in England between 1310 and 1320 for Isabella of France, wife of Edward I's son and heir Edward II, contained a reference to the feast of the Translation of St Thomas the Martyr in its calendar, originally written in gold, but erased later in its history.¹⁰³ It still incorporates no fewer than twenty-two marginal scenes illustrating the life of St Thomas (fos 288v–299) and romantically depicting him as the son of a Saracen princess.¹⁰⁴

Objects associated with St Thomas Becket were also occasionally bequeathed by aristocratic women. Among the personal items that Lady Margery, the widow and second wife of Nicholas de Crioll (d. 1271–2) of Croxton Kerrial in Leicestershire and Cherry Hinton in Cambridgeshire,

⁹⁷ *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, II, pp. 255–7.

⁹⁸ Brian Golding, 'Burials and benefactions: an aspect of monastic patronage in thirteenth-century England', in Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Thirteenth Century*, pp. 64–75, at p. 70.

⁹⁹ Janet Backhouse and Christopher de Hamel, *The Becket Leaves* (London, 1988), pp. 14–15; L. L. Gee, *Women, Art and Patronage from Henry III to Edward III: 1216–1377* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 14.

¹⁰⁰ Backhouse and de Hamel, *The Becket Leaves*, p. 19.

¹⁰¹ Gee, *Women, Art and Patronage*, p. 26.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁰³ BL, Royal MS B VII, fo. 77v. It was Edward II who promoted the use of 'St Thomas's oil' in the coronation of English kings: Duggan, 'The cult of St Thomas Becket in the thirteenth century', pp. 23, 32 & n. 72.

¹⁰⁴ For discussion, see A. R. Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter: A Study of Affect and Audience* (Philadelphia, 2001), pp. 53, 142–6. For the Saracen legend, see Anne Duggan, 'The Lyell version of the *Quadriologus* life of St Thomas of Canterbury', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 112 (1994), pp. 105–38, at pp. 107, 112–13.

disposed of in her testament of 1319 was 'an ivory comb' ('une pyne de evere'), which had belonged to St Thomas of Canterbury.¹⁰⁵ Lady Margery's personal devotion to St Thomas was further indicated by her bequest of 'an emerald with which I was betrothed' ('un ameraude dount ieo fu espusé'), to St Thomas's shrine in Canterbury.¹⁰⁶ Other noblewomen donated embroidered vestments to Christ Church, some of which may well have been worn during services connected with St Thomas and the cathedral priory's other saintly protectors. Lady Catherine Lovel donated vestments listed in Canterbury cathedral priory's 1321 inventory. The vestments included a chasuble decorated with various heraldic arms, as well as copes and albs.¹⁰⁷ Intriguingly, Catherine Lovel was among the creditors from whom Canterbury cathedral priory borrowed money in the late thirteenth century.¹⁰⁸

Glimpses of the spiritual benefits that accrued to benefactors of Becket's cult at Canterbury can be found in model letters which were entered into a register there in 1411. The model letters included a letter of confraternity, which referred to the 'glorious Thomas the Martyr' ('gloriosum Thomam Martirem'), whereby a benefactor became an honorary member of Canterbury's chapter and a beneficiary of the cathedral priory's pious works.¹⁰⁹ Another model letter of confraternity offered an alternative text which might be addressed to an aristocratic lady or lord – in this case, 'Lady M. C.' ('Domina M. C.'), the widow of an esquire and a knight – which expressly praised the recipient's devotion 'to the celebrated and precious martyr St Thomas' ('ad perinclitum et pretiosum Martirem Sanctum Thomam').¹¹⁰

Against the backdrop of troubled relations that emerged between the English king and his baronage in the thirteenth century, Becket's cult also appealed to the barons and knights who opposed Henry III and his son, or who experienced troubled relations with them. Isabella of Gloucester, the first wife of King John and widow of the rebel Geoffrey de Mandeville, who spent much of the First Barons' War of 1215–17 in the

¹⁰⁵ N. Bennett (ed.), *The Registers of Henry Burghersh, 1320–1342: III*, The Lincoln Record Society 101 (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. xx, 149–51 no. 1811.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 149–51 n. 1811. In the mid-1340s, another woman, Matilda de Kirkebird, similarly bequeathed an emerald to the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury: *Testamenta Eboracensia*, Surtees Society (London, 1836), p. 37 no. 29.

¹⁰⁷ Legg and Hope (eds), *Inventories of Christchurch Canterbury*, pp. 52, 53, 57, 59. For Catherine Lovel, see Louise J. Wilkinson (ed.), *The Household Roll of Eleanor de Montfort, Countess of Leicester and Pembroke*, Pipe Roll Society new series 63 (London, 2020), pp. lxxviii, cv.

¹⁰⁸ Robin R. Mundill, *England's Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion, 1262–90* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 117 n. 46.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11 no. 12.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12 no. 13. See also pp. 12–13 no. 14. BL, Arundel MS 68 includes material relating to admissions to the fraternity and obits from the fifteenth century. Although COVID-19 restrictions prevented the author from consulting this manuscript, an impression of some of the obits for January and September can be gleaned from the digitised images of fos 12r and 41v: <<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IIIID=2665>> and <<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMINBig.ASP?size=big&IIIID=2666>> [accessed 27 July 2020].

rebel stronghold of London, was buried in Canterbury cathedral when she died in the autumn of 1217, perhaps in deference to St Thomas.¹¹¹ Conan fitzEllis, a rebel knight who held lands in Holbeach in Lincolnshire, was another donor, who granted 4s. in rent to the monks in the early thirteenth century for the salvation of his own soul and the souls of his three wives, Emma, Sibyl and Ada.¹¹² Alice (d. 1246), *suo jure* countess of Eu, daughter of Count Henry II of Eu and Matilda de Warenne, and a descendant of Geoffrey of Anjou, was one of the benefactors whose gift was entered into Canterbury cathedral priory's Register E. She gave an annual rent of half a mark to make a candle to be burned at the shrine in honour of Becket.¹¹³ Alice was another woman whose loyalty to the English crown came under suspicion. Alice was the widow of Raoul de Lusignan (d. 1219) and an important cross-Channel landholder. She got into hot water with King Henry III over her support for Louis IX in 1243–4, and subsequently forfeited Tickhill castle in Yorkshire to the English crown.¹¹⁴

During the Second Barons' War of 1263–7, the cult of St Thomas the Martyr, as a former opponent of an earlier King Henry (II) had a resonance for the English rebels who opposed King Henry III. According to the author of the thirteenth-century Canterbury–Dover chronicle, St Thomas miraculously appeared at the battle of Lewes on 14 May 1264 to encourage the rebels led by Simon de Montfort to victory.¹¹⁵ It was to Canterbury that the Montfortians came with their captives after Lewes, staying there from 20 to 25 May 1264, before they proceeded to London.¹¹⁶ The Montfortian sympathies of Canterbury cathedral priory's monks is suggested by an annotation to *Chartae Antiquae*, K/2, a collection of documents relating to the battle of Lewes, which reads 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona', casting Simon de Montfort as a holy figure.¹¹⁷ The cult

¹¹¹ 'Annales prioratus de Dunstaplia', in *Annales monastici*, III, pp. 3–408, at p. 45. Isabella made a grant to Canterbury cathedral priory in or around 1217: CCA-DCC, Register B, fo. 404r. For a charter issued to the canons of Holy Trinity, London, by Isabella in or around 1216, recording a grant to them for the benefit of the soul of Geoffrey de Mandeville, her late husband, which was witnessed by other rebels, including William de Mandeville and Master Elias of Dereham, see TNA, E 40/2385.

¹¹² Berg, 'Twelfth- and early thirteenth-century charters', p. 309. For Conan as a rebel, who returned to the king's peace, see Thomas Duffus Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli de oblatis et finibus in turri Londinensi asservati* (London, 1835), pp. 593–4.

¹¹³ CCA-DCC, Register E, fo. 143r. Her grant was confirmed by Alfred de St Martin: *ibid.*, fo. 143r. The St Martin family were founders and benefactors of Robertsbridge abbey in Kent, a house patronised by the counts and countesses of Eu, including Alice: *Third Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London, 1872), p. 232.

¹¹⁴ For Alice and her lands, see G. E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, ed. V. Gibbs et al., 13 vols (n.p., 1910–59), V, pp. 160–6; William Farrer and Charles Travis Clay (eds), *Early Yorkshire Charters*, VIII: *The Honour of Warenne* (Cambridge, 2013 reprint), pp. 22–4; J. C. Holt, 'Politics and property in early medieval England', in *idem*, *Colonial England, 1066–1215* (London, 1997), p. 155.

¹¹⁵ This work was preserved as a continuation of Gervase of Canterbury's *Gesta Regum*: 'The Gesta Regum with its continuation', pp. 237–8; A. Gransden, *English Historical Writing, c.550–c.1307* (London, 1996), p. 423.

¹¹⁶ 'The Gesta Regum with its continuation', p. 238.

¹¹⁷ The manuscript is reproduced in J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 281 (pl. 13).

of St Thomas was one that appealed to former rebels in the years after their defeat at the battle of Evesham on 4 August 1265. In 1267, Hugh de Neville, a former Montfortian, drew up his testament when he was on crusade at Acre and arranged to leave his horse and armour 'to the house of St Thomas of Canterbury in Acre' ('À la maison seⁿ Thomas de Cantirbir en Acre').¹¹⁸ Isabella de Forz, countess of Aumale, a wealthy landholder with Montfortian sympathies during the Second Barons' War, who was later pressured by Edward I to relinquish her inheritance, was returning from a visit to Canterbury when she fell ill and died in 1293.¹¹⁹

In conclusion, the cult of St Thomas of Canterbury, or St Thomas the Martyr, continued to resonate with the spiritual interests of individual members of the English Church, royal family and aristocracy in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The continued concern, on the part of the monarchy, with harnessing Becket's cult to the ruling dynasty may well have served a potent spiritual and political purpose in eradicating perceptions of St Thomas as a champion of those who opposed the English kings. Although St Thomas's cult remained a magnet for some English rebels, its mainstream appeal ultimately triumphed and was fostered by the performance of public, royal pilgrimages, by the circulation of *Lives* of Becket and of objects associated with him in elite circles, especially by women, and by the offerings made by English aristocrats to St Thomas's shrine. For royal and elite visitors to Canterbury, Becket's cult was one of several saints' cults that was often venerated there in combination, but this did not detract from its sacred value or relevance for the men and women who sought St Thomas of Canterbury's favour or aid.

¹¹⁸ 'The will of Hugh de Nevill', in Louise M. Sylvester, Mark C. Chambers and Gale Owen-Crocker (eds), *Medieval Dress and Textiles: A Multilingual Sourcebook* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 26–9 no. 15.

¹¹⁹ Harriet Kersey, 'Isabella de Forz: a woman in the age of baronial reform and rebellion, 1237–93' (MA thesis, Canterbury Christ Church University, 2014), p. 37.