The hagiography of St Alban and St Amphibalus in the twelfth century

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SYNOPSIS

This study is based on the fact that hagiographical texts can be used as historical sources. It examines texts produced at St Albans Abbey in the second half of the twelfth century which record the lives and miracles of St Alban and St Amphibalus, some of which were written by the monk William of St Albans. These texts were a stage in the development of the legend of St Alban which had its origins in Roman Britain. Textual and historical evidence suggests that they were written to provide both literary back-up for the discovery of the relics of St Amphibalus in June 1177, at Redbourn, near St Albans, and to document the emergent cult of that saint. The text can also be used to show that a principal motive for the initiation of the cult of St Amphibalus was the success of the cult of St Thomas of Canterbury, although there is also other evidence to suggest that St Albans Abbey was in debt and needed a new source of income. The invention-account and the miracle-accounts of St Amphibalus have not been studied before, and provide much information about the mechanics of cult-initiation and the spread of a 'new' saint's reputation for healing power.

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ABBREVIATIONS

M: Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 53
N: London, British Library Cotton MS Nero C.vii
F: London, British Library Cotton MS Faustina B.iv

ASS : *Acta Sanctorum Iunii*, iv, 149-59 (The *Life* of St Alban and St Amphibalus)

CM : Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, 7v, RS (London 1872-83

FH : Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, ed. H.G. Hewlett, 3v, RS (London 1886-89)

GASA : *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, ed. H.T. Riley, 3v, RS (London 1867-69)

HE : Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1969)

MGH : Monumenta Germaniæ Historica

MO : D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England 940-1216*, 2nd edition (Cambridge 1963)

MRH : *Medieval Religious Houses England and Wales*, second edition, ed. D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock (London 1971)

RS : Rolls Series

SS : Surtees Society

VCH : Victoria County History

INTRODUCTION

The corpus of scholarly literature on the cult of the saints in all its manifestations, especially in the middle ages, continues to expand as interest in this fascinating and instructive aspect of history increases.[1] Much has been done, but there is much still to do. The fact that historians have only comparatively recently begun to mine the riches of hagiographical texts really results from a change in attitude towards these texts. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries they tended to be regarded with derision. Miracle-stories, for example, were dismissed by Wright in the 1860s as "the most ridiculous and disgusting portions of the religious belief of the Middle Ages".[2] Thomas Heffernan has recently summed up this attitude as follows: "Historical truth from their perspective had to conform to a probability grounded in common sense. Such a procedure of discovery places a premium on events and tends to downplay other types of evidence, such as what the text might reveal about the circumstances of its production".[3] This is the crux of modern historical study of hagiography. As far as historians are concerned, it is in many ways beside the point whether or not the events related in the *Lives* of the saints are true: there is something to be learnt either way. The Bollandists, who by their editing and examination of hagiographical texts laid the foundations for modern study of the subject, were primarily concerned with the 'truth' about saints. Thus Heffernan accuses the great Hippolyte Delehaye of "scorn for those texts [concerning the early martyrs] which included apocryphal material".[4] However, just as much can be learnt from the fact that such apocryphal

material was included. Susan Ridyard, in a recent study of the royal saints of Anglo-Saxon England, is fairer to Delehaye in this respect, pointing out that he nevertheless believed that hagiographers were of the opinion that if someone was venerated as a saint, then they must have possessed certain saintly characteristics, and thus it was normal to invent detail or borrow it from some other *Life*.[5] Indeed, another Bollandist scholar, de Gaiffier, saw such interpolations as being done in good faith - the writer regarded his insertions as enrichment, not abuse.[6] It was through the resulting bias that hagiography came to represent the interests of the community in which it was written, and in terms of the cult of a saint, the bias "relates the development of that cult to the history of the house in which it was centred and it permits some analysis of the function of the cult within the framework of monastic history".[7] Therefore hagiography can be the key to much wider historical implications, and can be seen to provide a new angle on monastic history and its impact on society at large. The task of the historian seeking to use the texts in this way was perhaps best summed up by de Gaiffier: "nous sommes constamment préoccupé d'interroger les productions hagiographiques pour voir dans quelle mesure elles sont susceptibles de fournir des données valables pour réconstruire le passé".[8]

In view of the comparatively recent change in attitude with regard to the usefulness of hagiography as a historical source, there are understandably many texts which have not yet received the full attention they deserve. One such text forms the basis of this study, the *Life* of St Alban and St Amphibalus written by the monk William of St Albans in the second half of the twelfth century, and other hagiographical

material associated with it. This investigation in many ways springs from the seminal paper by Wilhelm Levison entitled 'St Alban and St Albans', which appeared in 1941, and which remains the best treatment of the origins and development of the cult of St Alban.[9] As we shall see, Levison suggests that the writing of the *Life* had much to do with the discovery in June 1177 near St Albans of the relics of St Amphibalus, the name given by Geoffrey of Monmouth to the priest or clerk in whose place, according to the legend, Alban was executed. Levison's argument centres on the notion that the *Life* laid the literary foundations for the invention of 1177, and therefore that its main focus was intended to be Amphibalus and not Alban. It is my aim to show that this hypothesis is correct, and that it is supported by the evidence of the text of the *Life* and by the other hagiographical material associated with it, such as the miracles of St Amphibalus. It seems that St Albans Abbey wished to initiate the cult of St Amphibalus, and this study is also concerned with asking what motives may have prompted this action. Finally, some attention will be given to the cult of St Amphibalus, how it began and how it progressed, as reflected in the hagiographical sources. This necessitates the close examination of the account of the invention and of the series of miracles of St Amphibalus. First of all however, to place the twelfth-century *Life* in context, it will be useful and informative to survey the origins and development of the legend of St Alban, and it is with this that the first chapter is concerned. I have deliberately refrained from discussing the history of St Albans Abbey in this introduction, as it understandably features largely in the main body of the discussion, and will make much more sense in that context.

CHAPTER 1

St Alban and St Amphibalus in History and in Legend

This study is about the *Life* of St Alban and St Amphibalus produced by William of St Albans and other twelfth-century hagiographical material associated with it, but although we can discuss the circumstances in which it was produced, the motives which lay behind it, and its relationship to the contemporary history of the abbey, it would be wrong to view it in isolation. Rather, we should see William's work as an episode in the continuing development of the legend of St Alban, which began almost as soon as the martyrdom itself had occurred. This has been recognised by J.E. van der Westhuizen, who remarks in his edition of the fifteenth-century *Life of St Alban and Saint Amphibal* by John Lydgate that "From the point of view of the development of the legend William's work is important because he is the first to give Amphibal a 'life' of his own".[1] Before investigating this importance and other aspects of William's *Life*, we must look at the legend of Alban, its historical basis and its literary expression up to the time that William wrote.[2]

The story of St Alban is one which stretches right back to the beginnings of Christianity in these islands. Historically, the man who in the high middle ages was universally known as *Prothomartyr anglorum*[3] is something of an enigma, although perhaps more is known about him than many other martyrs of the Roman Empire. The earliest account of his martyrdom appears in a *Passio* of c. 500, surviving in a late eighth century manuscript at Turin (D.v.3). This was discovered by Wilhelm

Meyer at the beginning of the twentieth century along with a later version (Paris, Bibliothéque Nationale MS no. 11748), and another, much shorter text which appears in several manuscripts, for example London, British Library Add. MS 11880, 9th century[3]. The latter is an epitome of the Turin text, and the Paris text is an expansion of the epitome.[4] It is clear from Meyer's parallel text edition[5] that the essential details of the martyrdom as related by the Turin text passed via the epitome and the Paris text to Bede,[6] whose account has certainly been the most durable, probably owing to the stature of his *Historia Ecclesiastica* in the middle ages and today. The Turin text describes how in the time of the persecution of the emperor Severus (ruled 193-211), a cleric fleeing from it was given hospitality by Alban, who put on the cloak ("caracalla") of the priest, offering himself in his place. After a speech committing himself to the cause of Christ, Alban was brought before a judge, and a dialogue ensued in which, predictably, the judge attempted to persuade Alban to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, but was unsuccessful. After this showdown, the judge ordered that Alban be tortured, but it had no effect, and the judge commanded his execution. As Alban was being led out of the city, the waters of a river he had to cross to reach the hill of execution divided to allow him to pass. The executioner, witnessing this miracle, asked to die in the place of Alban, throwing himself at his feet. Alban paused to pray for him, and the other executioners hesitated to pick up the sword that their colleague had thrown down. Alban continued up the hill, the appearance of which is described in detail, and worked his second miracle, whereby a stream bubbled up at his feet. After the beheading of Alban, the reluctant headsman was also executed.[7] This is the basic story that is

reworked in the Paris text and contained in Bede. The latter has the persecution of Diocletian instead of that of Severus. This is because the Paris text which Bede used (see Meyer's parallel text) does not mention during which persecution the martyrdom of Alban took place. Bede thus followed the supposition of Gildas, who had written his account of the martyrdom in the mid-sixth century. Gildas was not sure which persecution was the correct one, which suggests that he was using the Paris text, although he may have been writing from memory without it in front of him,[8] and so he supposed ("ut conicimus") that it had been the persecution of Diocletian.[9] Fixing the date of the martyrdom depends, of course, on which persecution it was, a question which is still not entirely settled. Morris argues for Severus and 209,[10] but his complex hypotheses have not been universally accepted, although neither have the rejections always been convincing. For example, Thomas argues, remarking on the absence of any contemporary mention of the martyrdom, that "it seems scarcely conceivable that news of it would not have reached Christian circles in Rome and Alexandria within a year, and that someone would not have seized upon it."[11] This is a rather unhistorical argument, and I do not think it proves anything. In time of persecution, communications between groups of Christians would surely have been extremely difficult. Doubt is also cast on Morris' date by Levison's view that the Turin text was itself based on an even earlier original which did not give the name of the emperor, as Martin Biddle has pointed out.[12] On the other hand, Frend asserts that "The martyrdom...can hardly have occurred as Bede suggests in the Great Persecution under Diocletian and his associates (303-12), for contemporaries were unanimous that Constantius I in whose dominions Britain lay, took practically no part

in the persecution".[13] The 'date of St Alban' debate, then, is by no means closed. As to the actual day of the year, Bede adds to the Turin text's details that the martyrdom took place on 22nd June. It is difficult to say where he got this date from, but it is highly likely that he was 'reading back' the date on which Alban's feast was celebrated in his own day. The earliest English kalendar evidence for June 22nd is to be found in Oxford, Bodleian Library Digby MS 63, a ninth-century kalendar of northern provenance. June 22nd has "Natale Apostolorum Iacobi et Albini".[14] A West Country kalendar of c969-978, Salisbury Cathedral MS 150, has "Sancti Iacobi apostoli et Sancti Albani martiris".[15] The misspelling of Albanus in the Digby 63 kalendar is probably a result of the Frankish influence which it displays,[16] Some of this influence may have been the seventh-century Gaulish second recension of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, which under 22nd June has "In Brittania Albini martyris".[17]

Bede adds another important detail to the early accounts by saying that the martyrdom took place at Verulamium. Before him, Gildas had said that Alban was from Verulamium, but not that he had died there.[18] Bede may merely have assumed it, but it is far more likely that he was drawing on the evidence of his own day, for he says that after Alban's martyrdom, and after the persecution had ceased, a church was built on the site, and miracles had been worked there ever since. Thus it must have seemed pretty clear to Bede that Verulamium was the place. Indeed, it is difficult to disagree with him, if only on the basis that the description of the place given in the Turin text corresponds almost exactly to the relationship between Roman city and hilltop *martyrium* we see today at St Albans.[19] There have been a few attempts to suggest that

Alban did not suffer at Verulamium, notably that of Wade-Evans, who argued in favour of Caerleon-on-Usk, associating him with two other martyrs mentioned by Gildas, Aaron and Julius.[20] However, as Levison points out, Wade-Evans did not draw on the evidence of any of the accounts of Alban's martyrdom written before Gildas: "The name of the river...is not given in the Passions; Gildas wrongly calls it the Thames (c. 11). This instance proves that he cannot have seen Verulamium and its river Ver, the small brook which separates the Roman town from St Albans; nor could he have inserted the name of the Thames, if he had known Caerleon and the river Usk and believed that Alban also suffered there".[21] The probability that Verulamium is the place is strengthened by further literary and archæological evidence. As well as the accounts of Alban's martyrdom, there are other early sources in which Alban is mentioned. Constantius of Lyons, in his *Vita sancti Germani*, describes how the fifth century Bishop of Auxerre visited Britain to eradicate the heresy of Pelagius. While there he visited the tomb of St Alban, who as Levison supposes "evidently could be presumed to be known to the reader",[22] as no account of his martyrdom is given. Bede later included details of German's to Britain and elaborated his visit to Alban's tomb,[23] which elaborations were in turn incorporated into a post-Bedan *Life* of German.[24] Nevertheless, the earlier version points to a very early cult of St Alban. Professor Charles Thomas remarks that Alban was "already surely to be discerned in the fifth century as the equivalent of a national martyr-hero, partly a corollary of Britannia's lack of any other, or earlier, named Christian pioneer".[25] How far this cult can be pushed back is uncertain, although Bede believed it to have originated soon after the ending of the persecutions. Peter Salway, in agreeing

with Morris' date of the martyrdom, argues against a pre-existing Christian community in Verulamium: "Verulamium may have been unusual - it is, after all, the first recorded British martyrdom and need not reflect the presence of a community founded any appreciable time before. Its members could well have arrived from abroad in the wake of the Severan victory over Clodius Albinus rather that represent an indigenous movement".[26] This would certainly fit in with the impression in all the accounts of the martyrdom that the priest sheltered by Alban very definitely came from outside Verulamium. The evidence for an early post-martyrdom cult of St Alban is scanty. Levison, in mentioning German's visit to the tomb in 429, asks "How many generations of Christians had already paid their devotion to his [Alban's] memory?".[27] He follows this with a discussion of the date of the martyrdom, but even if it were known for certain it would not necessarily establish the date of the beginning of the cult of St Alban. Later in his paper, he focusses more closely by examining possible archæological evidence, although he relies perhaps rather unwisely on a thirteenth-century account of the discovery in 1257 of a tomb near the shrine, which was thought at the time to be the original tomb of Alban. However, Levison's comparison with the archæological and historical evidence of Bonn, which suggests some degree of continuity, is a useful one which reveals some tempting parallels.[28] Wallace-Hadrill, in his masterly historical commentary on Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, summarises recent opinions on this subject, notably those of Campbell, who also makes use of continental parallels. Campbell makes the essential link between the topographical and the historical evidence: "The case for continuity is strengthened by the situation of the later abbey of St Alban's - outside Roman

Verulamium, where an extra-mural cemetery, and so St Alban's tomb, could well have been".[29] Recent excavations at St Albans Abbey have appeared to confirm this, as they have revealed a Roman cemetery. The early cult is less convincingly suggested by evidence of a gravelled area beside the present abbey church which may have been used as a market-place - this seems a rather long shot.[30] Nevertheless, it is possible to see how topographically, at least, the sources for St Alban are useful.

The historicity of the rest of the story of his martyrdom is another matter: Meyer shows how the author of the Turin text borrowed from other *Passiones* and sources, and a clear summary of this may be found in Levison's paper.[31] The point is made especially clear in Levison's own copy of Meyer, inscribed to him by the author, and which I have been privileged to use, in which he has annotated Meyer's parallel texts with details of allusions and quotations.[32] This is not the place for an examination of the complexities of this, but suffice it to say that such borrowing is no more than we would expect from the writer of a hagiographical text at any time from late Antiquity right through the middle ages. Indeed, the legend of St Alban is founded on the action of successive authors in borrowing material from earlier writers as well as adding their own. Nevertheless, in view of the apparent topographical accuracy of the very earliest accounts of the martyrdom, the history and archæology of Verulamium and the abbey, and the existence of continental parallels, it seems likely that these earliest accounts were based on some kind of historical truth, perhaps oral tradition, and that the martyrdom of Alban was a historical event that received completely unsurprising hagiographical treatment, and became the undying legend of St Alban.

After Bede, the legend of the martyrdom appears to have been neglected for several centuries, the reasons for which I shall discuss in a later chapter. However, there is evidence to suggest that early hagiographical material may have existed on the subject of the alleged invention of the relics of St Alban by Offa of Mercia, probably as part of a tract recording the reputed foundation of the Benedictine Abbey of St Albans.[33] Such a tract probably lay behind Roger of Wendover's account of these events, because the invention is mentioned by the earlier William of Malmesbury, which in turn suggests that William got the details from an existing text, almost certainly of St Albans provenance.[34] Henry of Huntingdon also contains information later found in the *Vitæ duarum Offarum* by Matthew Paris.[35] The *Vitæ Offarum* was probably designed to describe and account for the foundation of St Albans - the evidence suggests that it was a development of an earlier tract on the subject, the existence of which would account for the absence of any reference to the foundation of St Albans in William's *Life*.

However, the matter of Alban's martyrdom was not dealt with again until the twelfth century. We can probably regard this lack of activity partly as evidence for the esteem in which Bede was held, at least at St Albans, but the next account of the martyrdom of Alban to appear was, perhaps oddly, derived almost wholly from Gildas. This was contained in the remarkable *Historia Regum Britanniæ* by Geoffrey of Monmouth, finished in c1136.[36] Geoffrey's work has become well-known not so much for its accuracy as for its dependence on the legendary history of Britain, the Britain of King Arthur and his knights. Thus it is not generally regarded as a useful historical source, for, as Dr Gransden

remarks, Geoffrey was essentially "a romance writer masquerading as a historian".[37] However, this distinction would not have been so apparent in the twelfth century when his work first appeared - in fact, his work was received with overwhelming enthusiasm. Geoffrey finished his history in about 1136,[38] and it became the medieval equivalent of a bestseller. Nearly 200 medieval manuscripts of it survive, of which fifty date from the twelfth century.[39] The earliest extant St Albans manuscript of Geoffrey dates from the first quarter of the thirteenth century, certainly after 1206, and was used by Matthew Paris,[40] but we can safely assume that St Albans had either possessed a copy much earlier or at the very least had had access the contents of Geoffrey's work. The popularity of the work points to this, but so does the absolutely critical relevance of it to the continuing development of the legend of St Alban, for it is here for the first time that the priest for whom Alban laid down his own life is given a name. Geoffrey calls him 'Amphibalus', and it is ironic that the name which was to feature prominently along with that of Alban in the rest of the middle ages, not least in the work which forms the main subject of this study, should appear to have arisen out of a combination of mistake and assumption by Geoffrey in his reading of Gildas. The relevant section of Geoffrey reads: "Albanus caritatis gratia feruens confessorem suum Amphibalum a persecutoribus insectatum".[41] The word 'amphibalus' was used in the middle ages to mean a cloak. Du Cange gives an early example of this use, from Fortunatus,[42] and also a second meaning: "Casula indumentum sacerdotale", that is to say a chasuble, the vestment worn by the priest at Mass. Du Cange's example of this usage comes from from an exposition of the Gallican liturgy: "Casula quam Amphibalum vocant, quod Sacerdos

induetur".[43] In medieval British sources, its meaning seems exclusively to have been in the sense of a cloak, and the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* gives three pre-Conquest examples of its use, including one from Gildas.[44] It is from the latter that Geoffrey's use may have originated. Clearly the matter has something to do with Alban putting on the clothes of the priest. While Gildas does not use 'amphibalus' in describing this action, later on in his history he writes about Constantine of Damnonia, who killed two boys of royal blood in a church while disguised in an abbot's cloak ("sub sancti abbatis amphibalo").[45] Mommsen describes Geoffrey's use of 'amphibalus' for the companion of Alban as resulting from a corruption or misunderstanding of "sub sancti abbatis amphibalo".[46] Consequently, Loth and van der Westhuizen both suggest that Geoffrey mistook 'amphibalo' for 'amphibali', and thus thought that 'amphibalus' was a person.[47] This would certainly explain his reference to a church of St Amphibalus in Winchester.[48] How he connected this new person with Alban's companion is not clear however, and Tatlock's reference to his "customary enterprise" is not at all satisfactory.[49] Levison suggests that Geoffrey's use of 'amphibalus' arises either from a wrong variant reading of Gildas' "ac mutatis dein mutuo vestibus",[50] or from a misunderstood gloss to Bede's text, "ipsius habitu, id est caracalla",[51] which is implied by Plummer,[52] although the 'variant reading' or the gloss do not appear to be extant. Levison's next suggestion is more promising: "Geoffrey in reading of *vestibus* or *caracalla* of the confessor might have got the idea of the name immediately".[53] Thus he seems to be suggesting that the name was a deliberate invention by Geoffrey, and not necessarily as much of a mistake as other scholars make out, but it depends on twelfth-

century usage of the word, which is difficult if not impossible to establish: the examples in the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin* all come from the pre-Conquest period. Indeed, it seems strange that the name given to the saint was not "Caracalla", already extant in readily available texts of the martyrdom and with a well-known precedent for its use as a personal name - the Roman emperor, the son of Septimus Severus.[54]

Despite the difficulties with this, it nevertheless remains a fact that once Geoffrey had named Alban's confessor 'Amphibalus', the name stuck. McLeod comments that "Once the cloak became a saint, he was inevitably bracketed with Alban",[55] and this was to be reflected in the next major stage in the development of the legend, the production of William's *Life* in the second half of the twelfth century. When this happened, it is clear that the 'legend of St Alban' had become 'the legend of St Alban and St Amphibalus', and it is with this stage in the development of the legend that we are most concerned.

CHAPTER 2

The Manuscripts

The *Life* of St Alban and St Amphibalus by William of St Albans is known to have existed at St Albans from some time in the abbacy of Simon (1167-83). We know this from the dedicatory letter, addressed to Simon, which appears at the beginning of what is probably the earliest manuscript of the *Life*,[1] and from the fact that the *Life* is mentioned in the uniquely sophisticated St Albans library catalogue known as the *Indiculus* of Walter the Chanter, which dates from this period, but of which, unfortunately, only excerpts survive, copied by the antiquary John Bale from material in the possession of John Leland.[2] However, it seems certain that none of the surviving manuscripts of the *Life* is an autograph, and a St Albans provenance cannot be firmly ascribed to any of them. Nevertheless, the text of the *Life* is virtually the same in all, which strongly suggests that they are reasonably accurate copies of the original. The purpose of this chapter is the description of the three earliest manuscripts, used in this study, and some discussion of their date and provenance.

The manuscripts are:

1. Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 53, pp. 19-50 [M]
2. London, British Library Cotton MS Nero C.vii, ff. 1-8 [N]
3. London, British Library Cotton MS Faustina B.iv, ff. 1-64a [F]

Of these, M is probably the oldest. F is definitely the latest, as it contains miracles of Alban and Amphibalus and an account of the discovery of Amphibalus' relics, in addition to the text of the *Life*.

OXFORD, MAGDALEN COLLEGE MS LAT. 53 [M]

This book is a miscellaneous collection of material, widely differing in date, subject and provenance. The presence of blank pages and the great variety of hands testify to the late date of the book, but some items did exist together previous to their being bound into it. For example, items 2 and 3 appear on the same gathering of 6.[3] However, the direct association of adjacent items is mostly either uncertain or completely impossible.

Apart from the *Life*, there are several other items in the book with a St Albans connection. The first item comprises a list of the names of the kings of England up to the reign of Edward I (1272-1307), and in the adjacent column, a list of the names of the abbots of St Albans up to the time of John III (1290-1301).[4] The same gathering then includes a memorandum concerning the death in 1303 of Adam Puleyn, prior of Wymondham, a cell of St Albans, and there is a list of the priors from Nigel , who occurs 1121x31,[5] to John of Stevenage, who occurs in 1304.[6] The date of the royal and abbatial list must be before 1301, and that of the memorandum c1303 - the appearance of the hand would fit in with this. The contents of all this material make a Wymondham provenance clear.[7]

It has been argued by Bernard Meehan that pp. 145-68 of M, a text known as *De primo Saxonum adventu*, may have been written in Tynemouth, another cell of St Albans,[8] and that "it is perhaps possible that Magdalen 53 pp. 7-18 can also be ascribed to Tynemouth (or St Albans), since they are in a hand similar to pp. 145-68".[9] Pp. 7-18 make up a gathering of six, and comprise a list of "duodecim scriptores" by Jerome

in a twelfth-century hand, and a *Vita Alexii*, in a later but probably still twelfth-century hand. The latter has also been ascribed to Wymondham.[10] These items have no apparent connection with the *Life* of St Alban and St Amphibalus which follows in M.[11]

The *Life* comprises two new gatherings of eight. Also, the ink is darker than that of the preceding items, the parchment stiffer and shinier, and the pricking more obvious. The hand is not later than the end of the twelfth century. Apart from its general appearance, the script begins 'above top line', suggesting the twelfth rather than the thirteenth century,[12] and it is written in a single column. By the end of the twelfth century it was becoming more usual to write in double columns, partly in order to make the text easier to read, as hands were becoming smaller and more intricate.[13]

The provenance of this manuscript of the *Life* is difficult to estblish precisely. Its contents make a St Albans connection almost certain. The possibility that all the preceding items in M also have such a connection may support this - perhaps the compiler of the book had a miscellaneous array of material connected with St Albans in his possession, and chose to group it together, in spite of the diversity of content.

This manuscript of the *Life* is unlikely to be the autograph, but rather a copy of the original. Each section of the text is begun by a large coloured initial, but only one of these is decorated, and even then not the first one - it occurs at the point where the acts of St Amphibalus after the martyrdom of St Alban begin.[14] The general lack of decoration suggests a lack of importance, and hence that it is a copy. This is also indicated by certain instances of clumsiness on the part of

the scribe. Some lines are extended into the margin, which suggests omissions that were later noticed by or pointed out to the scribe. An example of this occurs where the words "Mira res" are written in the margin, rather than in the main body of the text, but in the same hand.[15] Unfortunately, it is not possible to confirm this hypothesis by comparison with something else written by William of St Albans, as he is not known to have written anything else.

Even if the M version is not the original manuscript of the text, the palæographical evidence for its date makes it possible that it is at least near-contemporary. Rodney Thomson believes it to be "not much later than the composition of the *Passio* [i.e. the *Life*] itself".[16] On the whole therefore, I think it likely that M contains the earliest surviving manuscript of the *Life*.

LONDON, BRITISH LIBRARY COTTON MS NERO C.vii [N]

This manuscript, containing 224 folios, is mostly a collection of saints' *lives*, of which the first is the *Life* of Alban and Amphibalus by William of St Albans. All the *Lives* are probably twelfth-century manuscripts, but several different hands appear in the book as a whole as well as varying degrees of decoration, from the very simple red and green initials of William's *Life* to full-scale illuminated, page-height initials in some of the other *Lives*. The variations in hand and decoration suggest that like M, N is a late compilation from various sources, although its contents are clearly far more consistent than those of M. The *Lives* concern a mixture of English and Continental saints. The order is as follows:

Alban and Amphibalus
Augustine of Canterbury
Guthlac of Crowland
Godberta, virgin
Frontonius, abbot
Eleutherius and Anthia his mother
Alphege, by Osbern of Canterbury
Ursmari [?], bishop and confessor
Boniface
Symphora [fragment]
Dunstan, by Adlard Blandiniensis of Ghent
Anselm of Canterbury in hexameters

These are followed by some annals of Thorney Abbey to 1421, a further long fifteenth-century item and a twelfth-century chronicle to 1141.

The *Life* of Alban and Amphibalus occupies ff. 1-8 of N, a gathering of eight. The date is probably late twelfth or early thirteenth century - the text begins 'above top line', but it is in double columns, more typical of the thirteenth century.'[17] Thus this manuscript of the *Life* is probably later than pp. 19-50 of M. Hardy comments that "This [the text] is the work of William of St Albans, and the text is similar to that in the Magdalen College MS".'[18] This is so, except that the dedicatory letter addressed by William to Abbot Simon which is in the M text does not appear in N. The first item in the N text is the prologue, preceded by a rubric and having a red initial Q with green decoration, and the text continues in double columns. The *Life* itself begins after a rubric with a large green C decorated in red. Thereafter all paragraphs are begun with initials either red with green decoration or green with red decoration. Only six lines of first column of f. 8a are used. The rest of the page is blank except for the words "In principio creauit deus celum et terram", about a third of the way down, possibly by the same scribe, across both columns. The reason for the appearance of this, Genesis i.1, is not clear, unless it is a pen-trial. There are also some

other marks on f. 8a, in the centre of the page, near the top. F. 8b is blank, except for some faded marks which may have been pen-trials.

The collation confirms that ff. 1-8 once existed apart from the rest of the contents - the hand and relative lack of decoration also suggest this. Indeed, the late compilation of the whole book is beyond doubt: it can be seen from the inclusion of the fifteenth-century Thorney annals, the provenance of ff. 80-4,[19] and the fact that ff. 29-79 in N are from a Canterbury *Passionale*, fragments of which also appear in London, British Library Harley MS 315, ff.1-39, and Harley MS 624, ff. 84-143.[20]

The fact that the dedicatory epistle to Abbot Simon is missing in N probably points not only to this being a copy of William's original text, but also one which was not made at or for the use of St Albans Abbey or one of its cells, for which the information contained in the dedication would surely have been most relevant.

LONDON, BRITISH LIBRARY COTTON MS FAUSTINA B.iv [F]

The Alban and Amphibalus material occupies ff. 1-64a of the MS,[21] and it is immediately clear that it consists of far more than just the text of William's *Life* of Alban and Amphibalus, but also miracles of both saints, and an account of the discovery of the relics of St Amphibalus and his companions.

The section which most concerns us is that from the beginning of the MS up to and including the *Life* of St John of Beverley, ff. 1-177b. The arrangement of the group of saints' *Lives* which make up this section of F is uniform throughout: 28 ruled lines with the text in double columns, with rubrics and alternately red and green initials, some of which are

decorated a little, usually in the same colour, although there is some variation from this basic pattern in the *life* of St John of Beverley. The hand is very similar throughout, although there may have been more than one scribe involved.

For example, the hand appears to change on the page-turn from f. 9a to f. 9b. This is suggested by the appearance of column 2 of f. 9a. The bottom line reads "aliquod mortis in se proferentes", with the *-rentes* of *proferentes* inserted below the bottom line of f. 9a (col. 2). This suggests that here was the change-over point, and that scribe 1 was avoiding using any of f. 9b. The proposed scribe 2 begins a new sentence on f. 9b: "Tunc miles ille qui Albanum trahebat ad supplicia" &c. Do the events described in the text suggest that this was a convenient place to change? Scribe 1 describes a miracle whereby Alban causes water to flow from the ground, while the proposed scribe 2 continues with the information that the soldier who was to have cut off Alban's head refused to do so when he saw the various miracles performed by the saint on the way to his execution ("Tunc miles" &c.). This is not much of a break, but they are two separate episodes. Moreover, there is more palæographical evidence that a change of scribe has taken place. On f. 11b col. 1, a hyphen indicating a word carried over to the next line appears for the first time, in the word "descen-dentes". We must be careful here, for the compiler of F, or another late corrector has been through the manuscript inserting just such marks and other punctuation, usually for reasons of clarity. Nevertheless, his ink is a definite brown, whereas that of the original scribe(s) is black, and the hyphen in question is definitely black. After the first use of the hyphen by the original scribe on f. 11b, they become fairly frequent, requiring

less of the attentions of the late corrector, suggesting that by f. 11b, the scribe has changed. Furthermore, but perhaps less convincingly, the symbol used to indicate contractions changes somewhat, such that the proposed scribe 1 tends to use "~", whereas the proposed scribe 2 tends to use "ᵕ" and "ꝛ", reserving "~" for "p̄". If there was a change of scribe within the text of William's *Life* in F, then, f. 9a - 9b seems the most likely place for it to have occurred.

That all the *Lives* belong together is shown by the uniformity of hand, decoration and arrangement. The miracles of Amphibalus and the *life* of Wulfric of Haselbury respectively end and begin on the same membrane (f. 63a), thus proving that the Alban, Amphibalus and Wulfric material was copied at the same time. The *Life* of Bega which follows begins on a fresh page (f. 122a), and displays some differences from what has gone before: there are no coloured initials except at the very start, and there is a change of hand at f. 130b. On f. 131a, the miracles begin with the large red and green B of "beata", and thereafter each miracle has its own rubric (absent in the previous material), and the alternating red and green initials once again. In spite of these differences, however, the style is too similar for the Bega material not to be associated with that occurring before it in the manuscript. Indeed, the *Life* of Aldhelm follows the pattern established by the Alban, Amphibalus and Wulfric material. The *Life* of John of Beverley and the *Life* of Aldhelm begin and end on the same membrane (f. 156a). The miracles of John begin in another hand, and end suddenly on f. 177b, in the middle of a sentence, clearly indicating that the *Lives* form part of what was once a much larger manuscript.

F. 178 is blank, except for the inscription "Liber sanctæ Marie De Beallanda", a Byland *ex libris* which refers to the material following it, thus confirming that the section of F with which we are concerned ends at f. 177b.

The provenance of ff. 1-177b is established at the head of f. 1a, which has "Liber sanctæ Marie de Holm Coltram". The abbey of Holm Cultram was a Cistercian house in Cumberland, founded in December 1150 by Henry, the son of King David I of Scotland, who ruled Cumberland at that time. Because of its location in what was very much a frontier zone, the abbey and its lands were attacked many times, and over the years its revenue dropped considerably.[22] In view of this it is perhaps fortuitous that this MS has survived, incomplete though it is. There is no evidence that the MS was kept anywhere else before its arrival at Holm Cultram; certainly there are no signs of a previous *ex libris* being erased, assuming that the present f. 1a was always the first page. It could conceivably have been produced at some other house, and only arrived at Holm Cultram later on, but there is no evidence for this either. Indeed, its contents bear out the association with Holm Cultram. Wulfric, for example, was an extremely popular saint with the Cistercian order, and John, who wrote the *Life* of which the text is contained in F was himself of that order, being Abbot of Ford in Dorset from 1191-1214.[23] Wulfric's cult was slow to get off the ground, no miracles occurring at his grave until 1169, although from 1185-1235 there were many reported. Such was the high regard in which he was held by the Cistercians that they apparently tried to make out that Wulfric had been a member of their order, which in fact he never had been, although "his first loyalty was unquestionably to the Cistercians".[24] Of the other

Devon

saints in the collection, Bega was very much a local saint to the abbey of Holm Cultram, as she was the co-patroness (with our Lady) of the Benedictine priory of St Bees, a few miles down the coast.[25] Thus the inclusion of her *life* in this collection makes sense.[26] The others do not have such clear-cut associations with Holm Cultram or the Cistercian order. It may be significant that Alban and Amphibalus appear first, in that Alban was venerated as the protomartyr of Britain - this position in the manuscript may be a recognition of his status, and possibly also of the popularity of his cult. Furthermore, it is interesting that other 'national' saints such as Edmund or Thomas Becket do not appear in this collection, although admittedly they may have been contained in the portion that is lost.

The date of ff. 1-177b is difficult to establish precisely. It must date from some time after 1177 when the relics of St Amphibalus were discovered,[27] but we know that the *Life* of Wulfric was written by John of Ford, who ruled that house 1191-1214,[28] which mustput the manuscript at a date after 1191. Palæographically, the manuscript has a slightly more typically twelfth-century than thirteenth-century appearance. The text on each page begins 'above top line', which according to Ker's rule suggests the twelfth century.[29] There is exclusive use of '&' for 'et', which is another rough indication of a twelfth-century manuscript.[30] However, the text is written in double columns, which is more typical of the thirteenth century,[31] and so a date of c1200 is probably a reasonable estimate.

The sophistication of the Alban and Amphibalus material contained in F in comparison with that in M and N calls for detailed discussion. In this respect we are not so much concerned with the text of William's

life, which is virtually identical in all three, and which will be discussed in the next chapter, as with the additional material in F: the miracles of Alban, and the invention and miracles of Amphibalus. What is the origin of these additional texts? The text of the invention and miracles of Amphibalus will be discussed in later chapters, as they call for more detailed consideration than can be given within the parameters of the present chapter. This leaves the group of miracles of St Alban, which occupy ff. 19a-39b of F.

The Alban miracles refer to events occurring as far back as the reign of Edward the Confessor.[32] Thomson remarks that "their compilation must have been the work of more than one man, for a miracle from Richard's abbacy [1097-1119] is described as 'nostris temporibus', and another from Abbot Geoffrey's time [1119-46] was seen by the writer".[33] I cannot see how this is evidence for multiple authorship - for example, one miracle could have occurred in 1118, the other in 1120, or both in 1119. What the dates of the miracles does indicate, however, is that it was not William of St Albans who wrote them, as he was active in the abbacy of Simon (1167-83). I suggest that the miracle-collection existed separately. There must have been a record kept of the miracles worked at the shrine of St Alban, although it is now lost. The miracles in F almost certainly originated in and are selections from this source. It is unlikely that a separate set of miracles would have been specially composed if a ready source existed already. The last Alban miracle in F is dated to the second year of the passion of St Thomas of Canterbury, which as he was murdered in 1170, must mean 1172,[34] and the prologue to the account of the invention of St Amphibalus immediately follows it. The invention occurred in 1177, leaving a gap of at least five years in

between the writing of the last miracle-account and the writing of the invention-account. This may suggest that that William's *Life* and the Alban miracles existed separately before the invention. The compilation of material may have taken place some years after this, as the *terminus ante quem non* of ff. 1-177b (i.e. 1191) implies, although if a copy, the putting-together of a possible previous version which has not survived may have been earlier.

CHAPTER 3

The *Life* of St Alban and St Amphibalus

Having surveyed the development of the legend of St Alban and St Amphibalus up to the time that William wrote the *Life*, and having described the manuscripts in which the latter is to be found, we move on to examine the text of the *Life* itself in detail. Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 53 [M] pp. 19-50 seems to be the earliest surviving copy of the original. The *Life* was printed in the *Acta Sanctorum*,[1] having been "communicated to the Bollandists by Usher, through Stephen White, an Irishman", as Hardy remarks. He also points out that this edition is based on London, British Library Cotton MS Faustina B.iv [F], and another Cottonian manuscript, Claudius E.iv, ff.34-47.[2] The latter manuscript is, however, fourteenth-century, and it is in fact the same manuscript which contains Thomas Walsingham's version of the *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*. In view of the late date of this MS and the fact that F is the latest of the three described in the previous chapter, I shall cite M as it is the closest in date to the original text, but I shall also give references to the *Acta Sanctorum* edition for ease of access to the text. Any future edition of this *Life* must surely take M, and indeed London, British Library Cotton MS Nero C.vii [N] into account.

The main text of the *Life* is preceded by a prefatory epistle which is one of the most important parts of the text.[3] It begins "Reuerendo patri et domino karissimo Symoni, Willelmus in domino salutem", thus revealing the identity of author and dedicatee. Simon was abbot of St Albans 1167-83, and thus we may reasonably date the *Life* to that period.

However, as the invention of Amphibalus is not mentioned, at least not directly, we may shorten this period to 1167-77, which is favoured by Thomson.[4] Hardy thought that "he performed his task between 1166 and the year when the relics of Amphibalus were discovered",[5] but this reflects an inaccuracy in the dates of Simon's abbacy; it is now accepted that he began to rule in 1167.[6] Gransden, however, believes that William may have written it before Simon became abbot, in the period 1155-68, following Lowe and Jacob in their edition of Matthew Paris' illustrations of the life of Alban and Amphibalus in Dublin, Trinity College MS 177 (olim E.i.40), a possibility with which Baring-Gould and Fisher concur, saying that it was "apparently written before Simon was promoted to the Abbacy".[7] I cannot see what evidence there is for this, especially as William addresses Simon as "Reverendus pater" and "dominus karissimus", terms which suggest that he was certainly the spiritual father of the house when the prefatory epistle was written. Williams, in his history of the abbey, thinks that William began to write towards the end of the abbacy of Robert de Gorham (1151-67).[8] It is perhaps possible that William began in Robert's reign and finished in Simon's, dedicating the finished product to the latter abbot. However, I much prefer the notion that the whole work was started and finished in Simon's reign. Simon was a keen patron of the arts who encouraged the production of books.[9] Six books specifically produced at his command survive, some of which describe him as "scripturarum et librorum amator specialis".[10] Thus he seems to have been a likely person to encourage the writing-up of the St Albans saints, especially in the light of Geoffrey of Monmouth's provision of the name 'Amphibalus' and of the fact that St Albans was lagging behind other houses in getting its hagiography up to

date, although I shall discuss more fully below whether this was enough of a reason to produce the *Life*. For the moment however, let us say that it is fairly certain that the *Life* was finished in Simon's reign and dedicated to him.

As regards the author himself, about the only definite thing which is known about William of St Albans is that he wrote this *Life*. Archbishop Ussher, who printed extracts from it, had the following to say about him: "Interpres autem Guilielmus ille Martellus sacrista Albaniensis fuisse videatur, quem post Simonis mortem abbatis dignitatem frustra ambivisse, in historia abbatum S. Albani refert Matthæus Parisiensis".[11] The *Gesta abbatum*, called the *Vitæ abbatum* in Matthew Paris' version, describes in detail the intrigue surrounding the election in 1183 of a successor to Abbot Simon. It states that Prior Warin was duly elected, "in cujus electionem totus conventus consensit unanimiter, præter Dominum Willelmum Martel, Sacristam, ad eandem dignitatem, secus quam deceret, aspirantem".[12] It seems then that this William Martel felt that the abbacy should be his. If he is the same William who wrote the *Life*, perhaps the dedication of the work to Simon was an attempt to curry favour with him and come to be regarded as his obvious successor. If so, the unanimous election of Warin by his brethren confounded his scheme. While the chronology is right for the identification of William the author with William Martel, I am nevertheless inclined to agree with Thomson that "there is no warrant for this identification",[13] aside from circumstantial evidence. The *Indiculus* of Walter the Chanter does not help, as it only refers to "Guilhelmus monachus".[14] The absence of the surname Martel and of the title of sacristan in the context of the *Life* suggests that there were

Syntax!

two Williams - perhaps Matthew Paris deliberately used the surname to distinguish the power-hungry William of the 1183 abbatial election from William the author.

Moving on in the dedicatory epistle, we read that what follows is not in fact an original composition by William, but a translation of a much earlier book, written in English ("liber anglico sermone conscriptus"). This immediately makes one suspect that William is trying to establish the truth of what he describes by claiming to discover it in an ancient source. Certainly much of his work is a radical departure from what had been written about St Alban up to this time, for example by Bede. The most obvious additions are the name and acts of Amphibalus. William admits that he got Amphibalus' name from Geoffrey of Monmouth, as it was not in the book from which he translated: "Sciendum autem quod huic operi beati clerici nomen adiecerim, quod non in libro quem transfero. sed in historia quam Gaufridus arturus de britannico in latinum se uertisse testatur inueni". It is certain that he indeed got the name Amphibalus from Geoffrey, but it may well be that he also got the idea of an ancient source from Geoffrey as well. Geoffrey too claims to make use of an old book ("liber vetustissimum"), this time in British, given him by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford.[15] The fact that William says his old book was written in English is in itself suspicious, because in the prologue to the *Life*, the alleged original writer refuses to reveal his name (also suspicious) for fear of persecution, "Quauis igitur insidiantium laqueis plena sint omnia".[16] This suggests that William is trying to present a source dating from a time when the persecution of Christians was still common in Britain, perhaps before the Germanic invasions. If so, the book would surely have

been, like Geoffrey's, written in British. In the *Vitæ abbatum*, Matthew Paris speaks of an old book discovered in a wall in the time of Abbot Eadmer (? occurs 1012[17]), containing a *Passio Sancti Albani*, which was deciphered by a priest named Unwona, whereupon it conveniently disintegrated.[18] There are several problems with this. First, if it collapsed, how could William translate it in the twelfth century? The book described by Matthew was written in British, and so if Unwona had translated it into his own native tongue, English, the collapse of the original would not have mattered, and we could have assumed that William was using Unwona's translation into English as a basis for his own translation into Latin. However, Matthew specifically says that the book wasm translated into *Latin* in Eadmer's reign, and so this explanation does not work. If Matthew's story is true, it is curious that William does not mention the existence of this other translation. Baring-Gould and Fisher explained the confusion by implying that both Matthew and William were engaging in subterfuge: "[the monks of St Albans] pretended to have found an ancient book of the Martyrdom composed by an eyewitness, whilst still a pagan. William had not the wit to make this author write in British, but makes him a Saxon. Matthew Paris knew better".[19] It is difficult to perceive whether one or both are inventing things. Levison comments charitably "if an English text has existed at all, it cannot have been anything but a first draft as base of the 'translation'",[20] and indeed this is as far as we can go without introducing external motives to see whether it is likely that William was enlarging what was already known about Alban. Historians who have noticed William's work have been really quite scathing about it. Baring-Gould and Fisher called it an "impudent forgery", based on Bede with

much additional invention.[21] Williams refers to it as being "among the most tiresome and clumsy of monastic forgeries".[22] So it may have been, but before asking what particular motives lie behind the production of this text at this particular time, we must establish why St Albans took so long to "write up" its saints.

This is closely related to the general history of the cult of the saints and of hagiographical output in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. From the period of the tenth-century reformation into the early twelfth century there was something of a hagiography boom.[23] Many houses were producing records of the lives of their patron saints, and the foremost English example is Canterbury, which had more saints associated with it than any other house, most of them former archbishops. Professional hagiographers were often employed, such as Osbern, who wrote the *Life* of St Dunstan found in MS N, and the Flemish writer Goscelin.[24] This literary output was complemented by the great new churches built by the Normans around the shrines of the English saints, necessitating elaborate, high-profile translations of their relics, occasions which are often recorded in hagiographical texts. The overall impression is that the cult of saints was becoming more popular, and that it was being used in conjunction with more secular means to increase the prestige of individual houses, although there was probably also a corresponding increase in the genuinely devotional aspect.

How did St Albans Abbey fit into this general trend? Economically, culturally and politically the late eleventh and twelfth centuries were a formative period for St Albans, and it is worth giving a brief outline of its development.[25] The pace was effectively set during the abbacy of Paul de Caen, the first Norman abbot (1077-93), who began the

replacement of the Saxon abbey church with a new one on a much grander scale,[26] which was not consecrated until 1115. This happened in the presence of the Archbishop of Rouen, the Bishops of London, Durham, Lincoln and Salisbury, and Henry I and Matilda, as well as many abbots, other bishops, earls, barons, magnates, archdeacons, deans, and priests.[27] In 1129, the relics of St Alban were translated with great ceremony into a new shrine which had been constructed at the command of Abbot Geoffrey de Gorham (1119-46),[28] admittedly not without delays, for at one stage he had to dismantle the incomplete shrine in order to raise money from its rich adornments to feed the poor.[29] This may explain why the period between the construction of the new church and the translation of the relics of the patron saint into the new church was somewhat longer at St Albans than elsewhere. The translation of 1129 was attended by several notable ecclesiastics, among them Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln and Abbot Walter of Eynsham (a former prior of St Albans), Abbot Robert of Thorney, and even the Abbot of Holy Trinity, Rouen.[30] It must have drawn considerable attention to St Albans and to the cult of the protomartyr, perhaps especially as it happened quite a time after other major houses had translated their relics. It seems that the 1120s were a fairly slack period in terms of the translation of relics: only four translations appear to have occured in that period, those of Saints Bregwine (Canterbury), Bega (Hackness to Whitby), Ælfflæd (Whitby) and Alban. In Wales, St Dyfrig was translated at Llandaff. This hardly compares with the 1090s, which saw the translation of the relics of many of the Canterbury saints as well as of Earl Waltheof (Crowland), Swithun (Winchester), Edmund (Bury), Jurmin (Blythburgh to Bury St Edmunds), Werburga (Chester), and possibly Ithamar (Rochester).[31]

After the translation, the Bishop of Lincoln, within whose diocesan jurisdiction the abbey lay, decreed that whoever came to St Albans on the feast or within the octave of the Invention or Translation of St Alban, would be granted an indulgence of 400 days,[32] thus giving the abbey an added attraction for pilgrims. Whatever prestige St Albans may have gained by the event of 1129, however, was probably eclipsed in the 1150s by the vast array of papal privileges amassed by the abbey.[33] This undoubtedly had much to do with the fact that the pope who granted them, Adrian IV (1154-9), was English, the only Englishman to date to have been pope. Luckily for St Albans, he was a Hertfordshire man, born at Abbots Langley a few miles from the abbey.[34] Among the privileges he granted was full exemption from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Lincoln for the abbey, its lands and its churches. This meant in practice that the abbot exercised quasi-episcopal powers, and had his own archdeacon. He could wear the *pontificalia*, the mitre, gloves and ring of a bishop, and carry a pastoral staff. But in terms of the cult of St Alban it was a part of the bull 'Religiosam vitam' in 1157 which was the real prize. This stated that because St Alban was the first martyr, the Abbot of St Albans had the first place among the English abbots.[35] Thus the cult of the patron saint was linked by papal decree to the status of his community in relation to that of other communities, and it must have made the abbots of such proud institutions as Bury seethe. At the Council of Tours in 1163, Abbot Hugh of Bury appears to have resented it so much that "primam sedem cum suis apparitoribus arripuit: necnon et famulum Abbatis Sancti Albani ab illo loco violenter expulit".[36] Such childish behaviour apart (if indeed it is true), it is clear that the status and privileges of the abbey were founded upon the

status of its patron saint. Moreover, it was probably partly because the cult of Alban was being expressed so forcefully in these other ways that a *Life* was not produced earlier. To answer the question properly, however, we must consider what it was that hagiographers were trying to achieve. The motives for the production of saints' *Lives* have been much discussed, but let us briefly examine here a few of the 'standard' aims of hagiographical texts in terms of the situation at St Albans, as a further step towards the heart of William's *Life*.

A continuous theme of hagiographical texts tends to be the emphasizing of the sanctity of the person whose life is being described. This is especially true if the sanctity of that person was not well-attested, perhaps because they had never existed anyway, or because nothing was known about about them save their name. With Alban, this was not the case. Since before the Norman Conquest, the circumstances of Alban's martyrdom had been readily available in the highly-respected works of Bede and Gildas, and it may have been felt that Alban's sanctity was not in doubt, and that the tradition was safe enough. An objection to this, but one which can probably be dismissed, is that Bede also goes to great lengths to establish the sanctity of Oswine, king of Deira, murdered in 651, and yet a *Life* of Oswine was written in the early twelfth century. However, the motives for the production of this text were partly to establish the cult-centre at Tynemouth Priory, a place not mentioned as having any connection with Oswine by Bede or any other pre-Conquest source.[97] Bede very definitely connects Alban with Verulamium.

Proving an ancient pedigree for a cult was another common hagiographical aim, but again St Albans did not need to. Bede

specifically talks about a church on the site of Alban's martyrdom where miracles were worked, existing from the time "redeunte temporum Christianorum serenitate".[38]

Saints often came to be seen as presiding over the land and property of the monasteries of which they were the patrons, and this was particularly the case with St Cuthbert, the eternal protector of the lands of the church of Durham.[39] In hagiographical terms, however, this protection was best emphasized by miracle-stories which described the saint's vengeance on any who usurped the possessions of the monastery, rather than by a *Life* of the saint. St Albans had been acquiring lands since before the Conquest - King Offa of Mercia is supposed to have founded the abbey in the 790s and made substantial grants to it and obtained several privileges for it.[40] According to Matthew Paris, "Offa, Rex Anglorum, dedit Deo et Sancto Albano has terras; scilicet, Edelmetunam, Wittelseia, Cagesho, Stanmere, Henhamstude, Wyneshlauia, Bissopescote, Cadenduna, Mildentune".[41] Paris says he gave the lands "to God and St Alban". The *Gesta abbatum* is preoccupied with land transactions up until the end of its account of the abbacy of Robert (1151-67),[42] and yet St Alban is hardly ever invoked, despite the occurrence of many disputes. The only real exception in this early section is the description of the punishment of William Rufus after his confiscation and deprivation of the abbey in the period 1093-7, "quod non permisit inultum Beatus Albanus". Archbishop Anselm has a vision of the fate of William at the hands of Alban: "Vindica te, et omnes Sanctos Angliæ, læsos a tyranno...Accipe, Satan, potestatem in ipsum Willelmum tyrannum...Trahe, diabole".[43] However, this section was written by

Matthew Paris, as Vaughan asserts,[44] and so without it, very little evidence of the protection of St Alban remains in the *Gesta abbatum*.

However, the miracles of St Alban contained in manuscript F tell a different story. Given their chronological span, these are probably extracts from a much larger miracle-collection, now lost, predating the work of William of St Albans.[45] The accounts which were incorporated into F include a few which concern the possessions of the abbey in the time of Edward the Confessor, and which display the common hagiographical themes of protection and revenge.[46] As well as miracles concerned with land under the protection of Alban,[47] there is a story of how the people of the area around the abbey entrusted "res suas" to the protection of the monks, for fear of robbers and despoilers. A certain *vicecomes* named Hubert, hearing of this, was filled with greed and rushed to St Albans hoping for booty. However, he fell ill as he was entering the town, and was compelled to confess his sins before leaving without any spoils at all. Those who had entrusted their goods to the abbey's protection heard about this, and came to the church to give thanks.[48] This is a miracle of protection, and a clear warning to others who might be tempted to tamper with or steal anything under the sway of St Alban. Once he has emphasized the power of St Alban in this way, the writer feels able to record miracles which reflect Alban's favour towards those who are devoted to him: "quia igitur beati martyris distinccionem in sibi aduersos adiuimus, nunc eius benignissimum miserationem in sibi deuotos et sua patrocinia requirentes audiamus".[49]

Thus it was principally by the miracle-story and not by the *Life* of a saint *per se* that the protection of the lands and people of a

monastery by the patron saint was emphasized, and so evidently, St Albans would not have needed to produce a *Life* for this purpose.

Thus it seems that on the whole St Albans did not need to produce a new *Life* of Alban, partly because certain aims often fulfilled by hagiographical texts were satisfied in other ways. Also, the protection of lands was not so much dependent on the *Life*, but rather on the miracle-account. The distinction between a *Life* and a collection of miracles needs to be noted. Although the two are often found together, the existence of William's *Life* on its own in manuscripts M and N shows that such an association was not always the case. It follows that the motives behind the production of *Lives* and miracle-collections need not have been the same - at least, they were not necessarily produced in conjunction with one another.

The foregoing discussion shows that there are clearly strong reasons why St Albans abbey would not have found it necessary to produce a *Life* before the one by William. Even the claims of Ely to possess the relics of St Alban did not prompt the writing of a *Life*. The circumstances by which the dispute arose occurred before the Conquest, and as Knowles, Brooke and London remark, the whole affair "has led, not unnaturally, to great confusion in the sources".[50] Whatever the truth behind these stories, the claim of Ely to possess the relics of Alban was in the background throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries. However, the account of the translation of St Alban in 1129 contained in the *Gesta abbatum* goes a long way towards throwing Ely's claim out of court. It establishes careful proofs that the relics examined in 1129 were indeed those of the protomartyr, for example the gold circlet on his head with "SANCTUS ALBANUS" on it, the appearance of Alban to some of the monks,

and the presence of notable ecclesiastics who would testify to the authenticity of the relics discovered.[51] But it is through miracles that this authenticity is most forcefully asserted. In his *Vitæ abbatum* Matthew Paris "amplified the existing account of Abbot Geoffrey's translation of St Alban in 1129",[52] this earlier account presumably being a part of the pre-existing 'Cellarer's roll' on which Matthew drew,[53] and so at least some of the miraculous events described may have originated with Paris. This uncertainty of origin is unfortunate, as one of the miracles describes how an assistant of Anketil, the goldsmith ("aurifaber incomparibilis") who built the new shrine, doubted the authenticity of the relics. The name of this assistant is Solomon of Ely, and so if this account is contemporary with the translation and not the work of Paris, we are seeing direct challenge and rebuttal of the rival claims of Ely, as Anketil assures the boy that the relics are genuine, wherupon Alban appears to Anketil, saying "Ego, inquam, Anglorum Protomartyr, Albanus...Ego usque ad diem magni judicii generalis in hac tua fabrica requiescam".[54] This is clearly intended to remove all doubt that the relics of St Alban did in fact rest at his abbey church, and the disproving of Solomon represents the rejection of the rival claim. If this story is contemporary, it can be seen that Ely's claims could be rejected without recourse to a full-scale *Life* of Alban. Indeed, we should not assume that a *Life* was necessary for the promotion and operation of a cult. An example of a cult functioning without a *Life* is the early cult of Swithun in Winchester. He died in the 860s, and was probably venerated as a saint from that time, and yet no *Life* was written until the second half of the tenth century.[55] St Albans had Bede, and probably also a growing miracle-collection, and so

in spite of potential setbacks, it was not necessary to produce a *Life* for the benefit of the cult, as the needs of the cult were being fulfilled in other ways.

In view of this, why was a *Life* eventually written? Previous discussions of the abbey in the twelfth century have, with one exception, failed adequately to tackle this. Williams concluded that the abbey, "dissatisfied with the brevity of existing accounts of their patron, deliberately set about the fabrication of a longer and more circumstantial narrative",[56] clearly echoing the opinions of Baring-Gould and Fisher, that "the monks of St Albans were dissatisfied with the brief story of the death of their Saint, as given by Bede, and set one of their number to compose a fuller story".[57] They made no attempt to say why St Albans may have been dissatisfied, choosing instead, as we have seen, to condemn the *Life* as a clumsy forgery, implying that it is of no historical value. So why produce the *Life*?

We know that Abbot Simon was "scripturarum et librorum amator specialis", and that he encouraged book production,[58] but this is not enough of a motive for the writing of the *Life*, although it may have provided favourable conditions for its production. After all, Abbot Paul had also been keen to produce and acquire books, and was responsible for beginning the post-Conquest library at St Albans,[59] but he had not, so far as we know, commanded a new *Life* of Alban to be produced.

Having identified so many reasons why a *Life* of St Alban was unnecessary, a more radical approach to William's work is needed. I therefore suggest that the *Life* was in fact not written primarily for the glorification of Alban, but of Amphibalus. This possibility was identified but not properly tested by Levison fifty years ago. He linked

the writing of the *Life* with the discovery of the relics of St Amphibalus in 1177, and asked "Was it William's aim to prepare the discovery by laying the literary foundations?".[60] We shall examine the invention of St Amphibalus itself and the written accounts of it in a later chapter, but we must first examine the *Life* itself for evidence of an 'Amphibalus' motive and a connection between the *Life* and the invention as suggested by Levison.

We can relate a possible such a motive to a common aim of hagiographers - to establish, confirm and enhance the sanctity of 'dubious' saints. The acts and sanctity of Alban were not in doubt, but the sanctity and acts of Amphibalus most certainly were in need of burnishing, especially since his name, completely by chance, had been supplied by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 1130s, as we have seen.

The overall structure of the *Life* provides evidence for an 'Amphibalus' motive. Levison alluded to this: "Alban is not a lone hero in the forefront, but Amphibalus gets a great share of the glory of a martyr".[61] However, his enhanced sanctity is evident throughout the text of William's work. While it is clear that William relied on Bede for the basic outline of events up to and including the martyrdom of Alban,[62] he elaborated the earlier writer's account considerably. Bede only vaguely identified the priest who was sheltered by Alban as "clericus quendam",[63] but William expands this to "vir quidam meritis et doctrina clarus, nomine Amphibalus". He also makes the circumstances of Amphibalus' arrival in Verulamium much clearer, replacing Bede's "persecutores fugientem" with "Verolamium Domino ducente pervenit". Instead of arriving by chance in flight from his persecutors, as Bede implies, Amphibalus was led there by God, by implication in order to

convert Alban. Strangely, however, William does not initially, like Bede, make Amphibalus a direct victim of the persecution, but only says that he arrived while it was going on. This suggests that William is at this point more concerned to establish the divine will behind the coming together of Alban and Amphibalus than to emphasize the persecution as a result of which both later perish. William is at pains to present Amphibalus as instrumental in the story of Alban. This is why he makes so much of Amphibal's conversion of Alban to Christianity. The divine will behind the whole affair is once again apparent in William's account when Alban asks Amphibalus why, as a Christian, he has 'crossed the boundaries of the Gentiles' and come to Verulamium.[54] Amphibalus replies: "Dominus meus Iesus Christus filius Dei uiui iter meum iugiter prosecutus, securum me inter discrimina custodiuit. Hic pro multorum salute me misit ad istam prouintiam, ut uidelicet fidem que in Christo est gentibus annuntians, ei populum acceptabilem prepararem".[55] This prompts Alban to enquire further "Et quis est...iste filius Dei?". William makes much more of Alban's conversion than Bede. The latter has "ac salutaribus eius exhortationibus paulatim edoctus relictis idolatriæ tenebris Christianus integro ex corde factus est", the sense being that Alban is converted more or less passively by the priest's example at prayer. In contrast, William gives Amphibalus a much more positive role, and devotes a lengthy passage to Amphibalus' speech to Alban, expounding the Christian faith.[56] His portrayal as the teacher of Alban is important, for it not only emphasizes his role in Alban's martyrdom, but also relates to the account of the discovery of Amphibalus' relics contained in manuscript F, which will be fully discussed in a later chapter. Here, when Alban appears to a citizen of St Albans and and

shows him the location of the relics, he refers to Amphibalus as "magister meus".[67] This is evidence for a connection between the composition of William's *Life* and the discovery of Amphibalus' relics, as suggested by Levison, although it does not necessarily imply that William himself wrote the account of the *inventio*.

Another major indication that the focus of William's *Life* is as much if not more on Amphibalus as on Alban is the account of what Amphibalus did after Alban had been executed. This forms a remarkably large part of the text: in M, for example, the whole *Life* occupies pp. 19-50, of which pp. 38-50 are the subsequent acts of Amphibalus. These acts are not based on Bede, although William has followed the sequence of events in the latter up to this point: Amphibal's arrival, the conversion of Alban, the exchange of clothing, the arrest and trial of Alban, the miracles of Alban on the way to his execution, and the actual beheading of Alban. This section is admittedly exclusively concerned with Alban, but we would not expect him to be totally neglected as he was still the more important saint, the *protomartyr*. As William says, "Albani merita nequeunt obscurari". Nevertheless, the acts of Amphibalus must be explained: "Eamus et inquiramus uirum Dei qui...Albanum predicando conuertit ad Christum". Moreover, William is anxious to assert the truth of his acts: "Opera que fiunt per discipulum, magistri procul dubio sermonibus attestantur".[68] William describes how Amphibalus went into Wales, making many converts, and how eventually many of these were executed, as was Amphibalus himself, by this time back in the area of Verulamium. The details of the acts of Amphibalus are historically not that useful. Levison put forward a convincing argument for the origin of the additional martyrs described in the text, in that they resulted from

a mistake in the Hieronymian Martyrology for 22 June,[69] but the significance of such large numbers of converts is surely that they serve to enhance Amphibalus' status as a saint. Indeed, throughout the *life* Amphibalus is referred to as either *sanctus* or *beatus*. Thus near the beginning in the context of Alban's hospitality: "Hic sanctum uirum hospicio benigne suscipiens, uite necessaria ministrauit".[70] In other places in the text he is referred to more directly as *beatus* or *sanctus Amphibalus*.[71]

I suggested above how the emphasis on Amphibalus' role as a teacher is reflected in the *inventio*, thus appearing to confirm Levison's view of William's work as preparing the ground for the discovery of the relics of Amphibalus in 1177. There is some still more convincing evidence for this right at the end of the *Life*. William describes the martyrdom of Amphibalus, how the pagans strive to 'drive out his blessed spirit', which they succeed in doing by stoning him. His soul is borne up into heaven by angels: "Igitur angeli beati uiri animam niueo candore fulgentem secum assumptes, in celum cum ymnis et laudibus detulerunt". The pagans do not stop throwing stones at the body bound in chains. Eventually an argument breaks out among them, and "usque ad conflictum gladiorum contentio nefanda procedit".[72] While this is going on, and apparently under cover of it, "quidam fidelis in Christo", presumably one of those converted by Amphibalus, secretly buries the body. The last phrase of this section is the most critical: the body is buried "quandoque ut confidimus diuino munere in lucem proferendum".[73] This clearly allows for the rediscovery of the body, as Levison suggests,[74] and thus is strongly indicative of a connection between the *Life* and the invention. Levison does not, however, mention another piece of evidence

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in favour of this, albeit more tentative. The crowd about to witness Amphibalus' martyrdom are decribed as "Tendentes ergo per uiam que de ciuitate uergit ad aquilonem, urbem [Verulamium] uacuam reliquerunt".[75] This could be an oblique reference to Redbourn, where the relics were supposedly discovered in 1177, as the direction is indeed roughly north of Verulamium, the two places being connected by the Watling Street.

Thus there is plenty of evidence from the text of William's *Life* that the main motive behind its composition was to polish up the sanctity of Amphibalus by attributing some acts to him and generally emphasizing his instrumentality in the martyrdom of Alban. The whole is given a ring of authenticity by the claim that the work is in fact a translation of an ancient text. An Amphibalus motive fits in with the fact that St Albans did not need to do anything to enhance the status of Alban - his cult functioned perfectly well in other ways and was well-attested. It is thus clear that Amphibalus was the motive, and that William sought to prepare the ground for the discovery of his relics.

The conclusion of this chapter is thus that St Albans Abbey found it necessary to initiate the cult of St Amphibalus, and we must now investigate the motives behind this initiation.

CHAPTER 4

The Motives for the Cult of St Amphibalus

In the previous chapter it was argued that the major reason behind the production of William's *Life* was the desire to initiate the cult of St Amphibalus in conjunction with the discovery of his relics at Redbourn in 1177. This chapter is concerned with the possible motives for doing so - why did St Albans Abbey need to start a new cult in addition to that of the *protomartyr*?

The evidence suggests the decision to do so arose out of a mixture of financial need and tarnished prestige. In the second half of the twelfth century many English Benedictine monasteries found themselves increasingly in debt for a number of reasons. Throughout the middle ages a major source of funds for those houses which possessed the relics of one or more saints was the donations of pilgrims who visited the shrines, usually to take advantage of their thaumaturgical properties. However, after 1170, it is likely that the extremely rapid, well-nigh explosive development of the cult of St Thomas of Canterbury had a profound effect both on the reputations of other, well-established saints as miracle-workers and on pilgrim-traffic at their shrines, in that the power of St Thomas rapidly became apparent through copious miracles, which in turn attracted to his shrine at Canterbury pilgrims who might otherwise have visited a shrine closer to home or made a long journey elsewhere, although the effect on local pilgrimage was probably the most severe. In consequence, several houses seem to have taken action to combat the

challenge of Becket's cult, and the cult of St Amphibalus may be one of this action. However, the cult of Becket was not necessarily the only or even the chief reason that St Albans was in debt: a number of other factors were involved which may also have increased the desirability of elevating the status of Amphibalus, the legendary 'teacher' of St Alban.

The financial predicament in which many of the great abbeys found themselves has been surveyed by Dom David Knowles in his masterly *Monastic Order in England*, in which he identified the following sources of debt: the disarray of Stephen's reign, litigation on a scale varying from the private land-dispute to more elaborate processes involving Rome, building projects, general maladministration, extravagance and waste, and an uneconomical, inefficient and over-complex system of financial organization within each house (the 'obedientiary' system).[1]

Knowles attributed debt arising in the troubled reign of Stephen to the "warfare and brigandage of the times",[2] and yet he failed to point out that debts built up during this period may have been carried over into the relative peace of Henry II's reign and compounded by some of the other causes he lists. Of these, litigation took the greater part. At Battle Abbey, for example, "Quite apart from the great exemption suit, we read of an almost unbroken chain of claims and suits regarding manors and churches".[3] Of course, as Knowles remarked, while the profits of such actions were overshadowed by the cost of litigation, "to abandon one claim as not worth the cost of a struggle would have invited other rivals to seize what they willed".[4] Apart from these relatively small-scale legal actions there were also the long-running disputes which became international in their pursuit, in the sense that the papal curia in Rome

was often the scene of appeals, which can only have increased expense enormously.

There were other more domestic and yet still significant sources of debt. Funds for building work placed a great strain on monastic finances, especially when extravagance was allowed to take precedence over prudence. The release of funds for work of this type must inevitably have been made more difficult by the increasingly complex system of acquiring money, let alone spending it. The principle of the 'obedientiary' system was that the revenues from a particular manor or group of manors belonging to the monastery were allocated to a particular 'department' of the monastery. Each was headed by an obedientiary, for example the Cellarer, whose department saw to the satisfaction of the everyday needs of the convent. Thus at St Albans in the reign of Abbot Geoffrey (1119-46) the supply of the kitchen required from the manor of Rykemarwurthe (Rickmansworth, Herts.) at Christmas 48 hens and one pig, and at Easter 1000 eggs and one pig. Similarly from Kayso were required at Christmas two shillings and 24 hens, at Easter two shillings and 600 eggs and at the feast of St Alban two shillings and 24 cheeses.[5] These are only two examples of the many manors which supplied the kitchen at St Albans with specific amounts of money or more usually produce of a specific kind at specific times.[6] No attempt was made at standardization, and the sheer complexity of the supply of one department alone is clear. Thus we can infer considerable inefficiency which can only have worsened the financial position of many houses.

It follows that the monasteries were becoming less and less the cohesive spiritual units they had perhaps been in the days of the tenth-century reformation and later in the time of Lanfranc, and more the ramshackle, jealous

pseudo-fraternities that continuing retreat from the letter of the Rule of St Benedict made inevitable and which the new, severe Orders of Tiron and Cîteaux were determined not to be. Inefficiency and waste were effectively a corollary of this slackness, and the situation was made worse by the increasing separation of the abbot from the domestic affairs of the house, seeing to his own finances and perhaps frequently absent on diplomatic business or residing for much of the year on one or more of his abbey's manors. Devolution of this nature led to much unregulated selling-off of assets and reckless spending. As Knowles asserted, "a state of chaos was swiftly reached such as prevailed at Bury immediately before the election of Abbot Samson",[7] who succeeded to the abbacy after it had remained vacant for two years and three months.[8]

How did St Albans fit in with the pattern thus identified by Knowles? Certainly in the twelfth century it suffered far less than some other houses in the quality of its abbots, most of whom exercised a notable presence at the abbey itself. However, this did not mean that there was no debt, because even if they were resident there was much scope for overspending, abuse and waste, and several factors were indeed at work in worsening the abbey's financial position.

The 'anarchy' of the reign of Stephen has often been seen as a period of universal unrest and destruction, perhaps mainly because of gloomy accounts of it suchas that given by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* under the year 1137, in which, in a famous phrase, it is asserted that in Stephen's reign "they said openly that Christ and his saints were asleep. Such things, too much for us to describe, we suffered nineteen years for our sins".[9] In reality, the anarchy was a very 'regional' affair, and the focus of the main action was continually shifting. There were unscrupulous nobles who took advantage of the situation,

but many places emerged from the reign relatively unscathed. Edmund King has written "Was the reign anarchic? As you define your terms, so you provide your answer",[10] and indeed, 'Christ and his saints' appear only to have slept in certain places at particular times in specific contexts, and ironically Peterborough was one abbey which suffered far less than the tone of this section of the *Chronicle*, written there, might suggest.[11] Nevertheless, St Albans was threatened variously by Earl Warenne, William of Ypres, the earl of Arundel and William Martel *temporibus regis Stephani*, and in order to prevent the burning down of the abbey church, Abbot Geoffrey was forced to take action to buy them off: "Tabulam...ex auro et argento et gemmis...constructam...abbas in igne conflavit et in massam confregit".[12] However, such a disposal of valuable assets, though necessary, may indicate that the abbey was already in a less than satisfactory financial position, although of course it depends on how much the potential arsonists at the gate were demanding and how quickly. Geoffrey's action reads like panic - a less demoralizing course of action would have been to give away some property, but it seems that the situation was too urgent for that. Over and above this particular crisis, however, Abbot Geoffrey was guilty of some degree of irresposibility with regard to the possessions of the convent, as the *Gesta abbatum* points out: "Sed quia non est homo qui bonum faciet, et non peccet, neglegentias et ignorantias eiusdem huic opusculo interserere dignum duximus".[13] These were, it seems, "praeter voluntatem conventus" and "solo suo impetu".[14] While the *Gesta abbatum* does not state directly that the problems of Stephen's reign and Geoffrey's 'negligences and ignorances' led to debt, the actions of his successor in the abbacy of Ralph Gubion (1146-51) suggest that they did. The *Gesta abbatum* tells us that Ralph

dismantled the precious exterior of the shrine of St Alban in order to purchase the vill of Brantfield, and defines this as one of Ralph's own *ignorantiæ*.[15] However, earlier we have been told that Ralph "a debitorum oneribus immunem reddidit, ut in obitu suo nullis creditoribus fuerit in aliquo obligata",[16] and it is tempting to conclude that the stripping of the shrine to buy another manor was the means (or perhaps one of them) by which Ralph arrived at the debt-free situation of 1151, because he felt that more income would thus be generated. Relations between abbots and their convents were often strained at the best of times, and so the monks may well have interpreted Ralph's admittedly dramatic action as yet another abuse by an autocratic abbot and recorded it as such in the *Gesta abbatum*, clearly written from the convent's point of view, when in fact it seems likely to have been a prudent move to alleviate financial difficulty. If this interpretation is placed upon Ralph's shrine-stripping exercise, however, it would suggest that the cult of St Alban was not providing the abbey with much income. If it was, why dismantle the major visible sign of the *protomartyr*? It thus seems reasonable to conclude that the pilgrims were simply not coming in sufficient numbers, and that the financial situation necessitated firm action. In any case, the *Gesta abbatum* admits that Ralph made provision for the subsequent repair of the shrine ("Porro, comparatam conventui dedit, et ad fabricam thecæ spoliatæ"), and concludes that Ralph's action was, in the words of Ovid, "Facto pius et sceleratus eodem".[17] Therefore it seems that Ralph's abbacy ended with the abbey free of debt, but with the shrine dismantled and a possible 'hidden agenda' of a lack of pilgrim-traffic, to which the sources do not admit.

The reign of Ralph's successor, Robert de Gorham (1151-67), the nephew of Abbot Geoffrey, while apparently characterized by careful conservation of resources,[18] nevertheless contained the single most important legal battle ever undertaken in the history of St Albans Abbey, namely the struggle for exemption from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Lincoln.[19] St Albans came out of this extremely well, managing to procure a spectacular array of privileges from the Hertfordshire-born and only English pope, Adrian IV (1154-9), as well as confirmations and some further privileges from his successors. The content and full significance of these bulls, which culminated in the great 'Religiosam vitam' of 1157,[20] is discussed by Jane Sayers,[21] who does not however attempt to assess the financial outlay involved in the protracted litigation that lay behind them. The *Gesta abbatum*, however, tells us that at the end of Robert's reign "Inventa quoque est ecclesia tot debitis gravata", in the sum of six hundred marks.[22] A large part of this sum, a far cry from the debt-free last days of Abbot Ralph, must have arisen out of the litigation against Lincoln, and probably also, as Knowles points out, in suits against Robert de Valoines and the Earl of Arundel,[23] both of which appear to have occurred after the dispute with Lincoln had been more or less settled, and after the death of Adrian IV, although the understandable tendency of the *Gesta abbatum* to group together all the material relating to one subject allows for the possibility that all three were going on at the same time, thus placing an even greater strain on the abbey's finances. There was also litigation concerning Luton, apparently early in Robert's reign.[24] The expense of all these actions is never directly referred to, the emphasis being placed on the upholding of the abbey's rights and claims, and in the case of the Lincoln dispute, with its general status and what it saw

as the right to direct its own affairs free from episcopal interference. Nevertheless, in spite of these requirements, the debt of six hundred marks shows that gains in status and privilege were probably offset by the huge cost of obtaining them.[25]

There was probably a significant amount of embarrassment and humiliation involved because of who the creditors were. In this period much money was owed to Jewish financiers and moneylenders, not just by monasteries. However, for the monks, to owe money to a Jew must have been the source of much anger and frustration, given the general anti-Semitic feeling of the times. This was made starkly and viciously apparent by the promotion of the cult of St William of Norwich, supposedly a child martyr, whose murder warranted inclusion in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: "the Jews of Norwich bought a Christian child before Easter and tortured him with all the torture that our Lord was tortured with; and on Good Friday hanged him on a cross on account of our Lord and then buried him".[26] This gave rise to his cult, vigourously promoted in the 1150s by a monk of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth.[27] Jewish creditors appear to have done their best to press home their claims. At Bury in 1180, for example, the abbey's Jewish creditors fixed themselves up within the convent walls.[28] St Albans had Jewish creditors, and did not escape this kind of behaviour. The *Gesta abbatum* states that "multa enim Christianis, sed plura debebat Judæis", in connection with the debt of six hundred marks accrued in the abbacy of Robert.[29] Later, at the end of Abbot Simon's reign (1167-83), a similar situation existed as at Bury, in that one Aaron, clearly a principal creditor, not only took up residence in the abbey but also asserted that it was he who had constructed the shrine of St Alban.[30] The potential for humiliation and anger in the convent is clear,

especially as during Simon's abbacy the debt increased from six hundred marks *contra Judæos* to eight hundred.[91]

This increase indicates that Abbot Simon not only failed to relieve the debts arising from Robert's abbacy but also added to them. A major cause of this was almost certainly his enrichment of the shrine of St Alban. Abbot Ralph's dismemberment of it had probably been made good in Robert's reign, as we know that Ralph had made provision for this to happen, but this probably amounted to restoring it to the condition in which Ralph had found it, that is in which it had been since its construction by Abbot Geoffrey for the translation of 1129. Simon added to the original structure, by constructing a "theca exteriora" of gold, silver and precious stones, made by one Master John, "præcellentissimus artifex". This was placed around the existing chest which contained the relics of St Alban, and on its exterior scenes from the life and martyrdom of Alban were depicted in relief ("levatura"). On the end facing east was depicted the Crucifixion of Christ, with St Mary and St John, decorated with various gems. The west-facing end of the new *theca* showed the Blessed Virgin Mary again, this time "puerum suum tenentis in gremio" and sitting on a throne ("in throno sedentem incathedravit"). The shrine was raised further above the high Altar, "ut in facie et in corde habeat quilibet celebrans missam super idem altare martyris memoriam". Facing the celebrant was a representation of the actual beheading of St Alban, although it is not clear how this was placed in relation to the depiction of the Virgin and Child, apparently also on the western end of the shrine.[92] Simon apparently began the work soon after the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket in December 1170,[93] and the description given suggests huge expense. Simon also gave what appears to have been a

portable sacrament-house or tabernacle in the form of a shrine ("per modum scrinii compositum"), although the *Gesta abbatum* also describes it as a "vas", for use in procession on Palm Sunday.[34] In addition he had made a gold cross containing a relic of the True Cross.[35] The extent to which Simon funded these undoubtedly costly projects from his own pocket is uncertain. That he had money set aside for his own use is not in doubt; the increasing separation of abbot and convent in terms of financial administration and the development of the 'obedientiary' system would have meant that the income from particular manors was reserved to him.[36] However, it is unlikely that this would have been sufficient to support what must have been the enormous cost of the shrine-work, although he may have donated the sacrament shrine, depending on the interpretation of "vas mirificum...contulit fabricatum",[37] and the reliquary cross, although in the latter case the verb *dedit* is omitted in all the surviving versions of the *Gesta abbatum*, although it is clearly required to make sense of the passage.[38] The shrine at least, therefore, is likely to have been funded by the convent as a whole.

Simon must also have spent money on his literary enthusiasms, being *vir litteratus*. He caused books to be copied on a permanent basis,[39] as well as ordering new books to be made, of which William's *Life* of Alban and Amphibalus was an example. Here again, however, it is not clear how far this activity was paid for from his own funds, although it is reasonable to suggest that anything to do with the cult of St Alban and its promotion would have been funded by the convent.

Far more serious than any expenditure on book production, however, was the fact that, according to the *Gesta abbatum*, Simon enriched his relatives at the abbey's expense ("multa bona...omisit"), rather than giving money to the poor.[40]

Thus it is likely that Simon's failure to reduce the debt left by Abbot Robert and the increase of it to eight hundred marks was largely due to his sumptuous enrichment of the shrine and his irresponsibility in giving away property and goods to relatives, the latter implying a diminution of income.

Such is the evidence for the financial state of St Albans Abbey in the latter half of the twelfth century and the possible sources of the debt which undoubtedly existed. Reading between the lines still further, however, it may be that Simon's work on the shrine of St Alban was an attempt to draw attention to St Albans as a place of pilgrimage, to encourage pilgrims to visit it and make donations. Whilst there is no direct evidence either for the level of pilgrim-traffic to St Albans[41] or the proportion of the abbey's income it was expected to and actually did comprise, Abbot Ralph's dismantling of the shrine may suggest a slack period during his abbacy, as suggested above. Perhaps the troubles of Stephen's reign discouraged pilgrimage, although it is difficult to see medieval travel as being significantly more dangerous in that period, as it was bad enough in times of peace. However, Simon's enriching of Abbot Geoffrey's original structure once it had been repaired by Abbot Robert also suggests that pilgrim-traffic was low, and that Simon's work was an attempt to revitalise pilgrimage income. If so, it was a gamble which did not pay off, as the increased debt at the end of his reign suggests. Nevertheless, it is possible that the initiation of the cult of St Amphibalus was another attempt in the same direction, to increase the attraction of St Albans to potential pilgrims by

offering two saints on the same site. The evidence of the *life* by William of St Albans in support of an 'Amphibalus motive' for its production places the accent heavily on establishing Amphibalus' own sanctity and his role in the martyrdom of St Alban, as well as his own subsequent deeds. This information would surely have been attractive to potential pilgrims?

By initiating the cult of St Amphibalus, was Simon trying to achieve success where his work on the shrine had failed? Chronologically this is possible in that the description of the scenes depicted on the new exterior of the shrine does not mention Amphibalus, and thus we may take it that the exterior was completed before the appearance of William's *life* and before the invention of 1177. If however, as suggested by the order of events in the *Gesta abbatum* and by Ridgway Lloyd,[42] the shrine work was begun after the death of Thomas Becket, we may be seeing a very short period indeed in which these events are all supposed to have occurred, that is 1171-77, although the *life* may not have been completed until after the invention. It is unlikely that the shrine work could have been completed very quickly, given its complexity, and it would surely have taken some time for the results of the proposed strategy to become apparent. Nevertheless, we must remember the tendency of the *Gesta abbatum* to group material 'like with like',[43] and so its relative chronology may not be accurate. On this basis the shrine work may have been started before Becket's death, were it not for the notion that the pilgrim shortfall existing from Ralph's reign was exacerbated by the incipient cult of St Thomas of Canterbury himself. If so, it is possible that Simon's shrine enrichment and the initiation of the cult of St Amphibalus were prompted by the general debt of the abbey and by the challenge of the cult of Becket, with the latter probably

contributing to the former. There must also have been an element of vying for prestige.

Before examining the evidence for the cult of St Amphibalus as a reaction to the cult of St Thomas, something must be said about the success of the latter and reactions to it elsewhere. The rapid development and almost instantaneous success of the cult of the murdered archbishop from the time of his death at the end of December 1170 is not in doubt, as contemporary accounts and the copious miracle collections which have survived testify.[44] The cult was quite markedly different from most other English cults in that it came to assume a much more national, indeed international, character. Ronald Finucane, by studying the miracle-accounts, has found that of the 700 or so pilgrims to St Thomas's shrine in the twelfth century listed by Benedict and William of Canterbury (a remarkable number in itself over such a short time, which no other English shrine even came near), 99 have no place of origin given, and 71 came from places which, although named, cannot now be identified. Of the remaining 531, 171 came from abroad. Of the 360 left, 56 per cent came from south-east England, the rest from further afield. A quarter of the 360 English pilgrims came from Kent or Canterbury itself, showing that the 'local' character of other cults was not absent from that of St Thomas. The place of origin with the largest number of pilgrims is London, followed by Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Sussex, Essex, Norfolk, and so on.[45] There were shrines in most of these areas, for example London (St Edward, St Erkenwald), Oxfordshire (St Frideswide), Norfolk (St William of Norwich), and it is easy to see how pilgrims who may otherwise have visited their own 'local' shrine could have been diverted to Canterbury. To determine as far as possible the full extent of this, detailed

study and comparison needs to be made of surviving miracle-collections, but Finucane's statistics strongly suggest that Canterbury acted as a significant counter-attraction. This conclusion is supported by the attempts made by certain cult-centres to combat the challenge of Becket.[46]

St Frideswide's, Oxford, is a case in point. In 1180, Prior Philip translated the relics of St Frideswide into a new shrine, which, as Mayr-Harting comments, "galvanized her into many miracles of healing",[47] presumably because it drew attention to the shrine and gave it a higher profile. The success of the translation in attracting pilgrims is clear from the rapid accretion of miracle-accounts after 1180, a period which was "the busiest, the most spectacular and the best documented of her whole posthumous career".[48] The people who came were almost all local, mostly from no more than forty miles away.[49] If the translation in 1180 led to an upturn in the number of pilgrims to St Frideswide's, are we necessarily seeing the results of a successful attempt to counter the effects of Becket's cult? The chronology is right, for sure: by 1180 Canterbury's success as a destination for pilgrims and as a centre and its reputation for miracles were already phenomenal and the effects must have been felt elsewhere by then, but this in itself is too circumstantial. More convincing are the premonitions of Frideswide's future success and visions suggesting that her relics be moved to a more high-profile position which apparently occurred in 1172, two years at most after Becket's death and even before his official canonization in 1173.[50] Moreover, Philip's predecessor as prior, Robert of Cricklade, features in a miracle of St Thomas sometime after Easter 1171. Twelve years before, he had begun to experience pain in his foot while in Sicily, and so far nothing had cured it. However, upon praying to St

Thomas, the foot was healed.[51] Preceding this story in Benedict's collection of miracles of St Thomas is an account concerning a canon of St Frideswide's called Robert.[52] Mayr-Harting assumes that he is Robert of Cricklade the prior, but the evidence suggests that this was not the case. The fact that this account occurs before the one mentioning Prior Robert does not mean that it concerns Robert of Cricklade before he became prior. The latter appears to have succeeded to that office long before the death of Becket, possibly as early as c.1140-1, and was in any case a canon of Cirencester, not of St Frideswide's, previous to this.[53] Ward correctly treats Canon Robert as a separate person, but places the miracle in which he is cured by drinking the water of St Thomas after that concerning Robert of Cricklade, probably because when Canon Robert had been cured, Cricklade, as Ward says, "asked the brethren who had seen the cure if they still doubted the power of St Thomas, indicating that up to that time they had not been convinced".[54] These two miracles show Robert of Cricklade as very much a partisan of St Thomas rather than as the custodian of a rival shrine jealous of the success of the Canterbury cult, but they occur in the Canterbury miracle-collection which, typical of its genre, is biased in favour of the house in which it was produced. Mayr-Harting, confusing Prior Robert with Canon Robert, argues that the cure by St Thomas of the latter's constipation shows that Cricklade was "very interested" in the shrine of Becket,[55] and indeed he wrote a *Life* of St Thomas,[56] presumably in gratitude for his cure. Nevertheless, if Robert of Cricklade was interested in the cult of St Thomas, his successor Philip was worried by it, and the miracles of St Frideswide suggest that in his time and especially after the translation of 1180, the attitude of the priory was one of opposition. Especially suggestive

here is the story of a knight from Brittany failing to be cured at Canterbury but achieving success after spending the night at the Oxford shrine.[57] The *Miracles of St Frideswide* also contain a type of story common to several of the shrines which probably felt the effects of the cult of St Thomas, in which St Thomas himself tells a pilgrim to seek a cure at another shrine. In the case of St Frideswide's, it is a woman named Adelicia who is sent to Oxford by St Thomas to have her hearing restored,[58] but whoever the subject and whatever the affliction, the propaganda value of stories of this type is clear, and they are convincing evidence for the effect of the cult of Becket on other shrines, and the action taken in response. Indeed, the success of the venture at St Frideswide's is suggested by the large number of local pilgrims who visited and were cured at the shrine after the translation of 1180.

Another example of a reaction to the cult of St Thomas, although less obvious, is Glastonbury. This house has acquired a reputation for making audacious claims to possess relics which it almost certainly did not in fact possess, and for elaborating its early history to furnish itself with a foundation-date earlier than any other monastery by claiming a connection with St Joseph of Arimethea. By the end of the twelfth century its claims thus embraced, among others, the relics of Gildas, St Patrick, St Dunstan, and perhaps most incredibly, of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere.[59] The reason for such claims was mainly that it did not have a definite and well-established founder or patron, unlike, say, Bury (St Edmund), St Albans (St Alban), or Durham (St Cuthbert). The nearest it came was with St Dunstan, but even then Canterbury had a stronger claim to possess his relics.[60] It is clear in this respect that there was no love lost between Glastonbury and Canterbury. Good

evidence for this is the letter written by Eadmer of Canterbury to Glastonbury in about 1120 protesting against an alleged translation of Dunstan's relics from Canterbury after the Danish attacks, and saying that Glastonbury had no written evidence to prove its claims,[61] which at that time it certainly did not. William of Malmesbury was engaged by the monks of Glastonbury to write up the *Lives* of several saints in order to support its claims and enhance its prestige, and yet as Scott argues, his resulting *De Antiquitate Glastoniensis Ecclesie* in its original version not only failed to say the right thing about Dunstan, but hardly mentioned him at all. Scott remarks that "it is difficult to believe that the Glastonbury monks, conscious of the attraction to pilgrims of the relics of St Dunstan, would have been satisfied with an account of his life or the history of their monastery which did not provide written proof of his translation to their abbey." William did not include this information because of "his own close contacts with Canterbury".[62] Thus the *De Antiquitate* was revised later and came to include a full account of the alleged translation of St Dunstan's relics from Canterbury to Glastonbury in 1012 on the authority of King Edmund.[63] The date of the revision is significant, for it was done after a serious fire at Glastonbury in 1184[64] which necessitated a large amount of building and repair work. Clearly this would have placed a severe strain on the financial resources of the house and made the need to attract pilgrims more pressing, but the fire also provided an opportunity to make 'discoveries' in the wreckage, such as the relics of St Dunstan.[65] Once this had occurred, it was imperative that the history of the house should include information as to how they came to be there, hence the translation-account in the revised *De Antiquitate*. Moreover, it is likely that Glastonbury's desire to make the most out of the fire was the

result a general wish to use cult of a saint to make money for rebuilding the church, as Canterbury had done with the cult of St Thomas after its own disastrous fire in 1174. Also, the fact that the revision of the *De Antiquitate* arose out of dissatisfaction with William of Malmesbury's original version is given more weight if we assume, with Scott, that "their dissatisfaction must have become more pressing after the canonisations of King Edward [the Confessor]...and Becket, whose martyrdom at once made Canterbury the most popular destination of pilgrims",[66] making it easy for Canterbury to rebuild the damaged east end.[67]

Thus Glastonbury emerges as a house which particularly resented the success of the cult of St Thomas, especially as it already had reason to dislike Canterbury for its rival claims with regard to the relics of St Dunstan. Even then, revision of the *De Antiquitate* was not enough, for Glastonbury also contrived to discover in the smouldering remains of its church some "relics whose possession would be unchallenged and whose appeal would be widespread",[68] namely those of Arthur and Guinevere. Platt calls the discovery "a cruel and cynical deception", and Gransden similarly "a spectacle put on for the credulous public".[69] There is an air of desperation about this fantastic discovery which suggests that Glastonbury's attempts to match Canterbury's success by embroidering the claim to possess St Dunstan's relics had not so far been successful. If so, then it was firstly because of Canterbury's own strong claim, and secondly because Thomas Becket was probably a more 'interesting' saint in the eyes of pilgrims - they could probably relate far more to the violent death of a contemporary archbishop of Canterbury than to the reforming activities of

an Anglo-Saxon one - and was continually proving himself worth the journey to Canterbury by his rapidly accumulating miracles.

A third example of a reaction to the cult of Becket is the *Life and Miracles of St Godric*, Hermit of Finchale near Durham, by Reginald of Durham, identified by Sister Benedicta Ward and Victoria Tudor.[70] Dr. Tudor draws attention to the clear intent of Reginald to associate Godric, who also died in 1170, with the events leading up to and the actual martyrdom of Thomas Becket. For example, according to Reginald, Godric prophesied the exile and return of Becket,[71] and in March 1170, Becket asked Godric to tell him what the final stages of the squabble with Henry II would be.[72] Tudor comments "It might be argued that these details are a fabrication, as the temptation to prove some connection between hermit and archbishop, bringing prestige to both Godric and Durham, would be too great to resist", but she suggests that Godric probably did send messages to Becket as he had done "to another persecuted bishop".[73] Maybe so, but comments elsewhere in Reginald's works nevertheless suggest that he was attempting to prove not only Godric's but also Cuthbert's status in the face of the burgeoning fame of St Thomas, as Ward shows. For example, in his *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus*, Reginald speaks of a man from Rudby who prayed to Godric and Thomas, who both duly appeared to him at Canterbury and Finchale, instructing him to pray at Durham.[74] There are many more examples among the miracles of Godric, identified by Ward, but to which Tudor does not draw enough attention in an otherwise excellent study. All serve to suggest the effect the cult of St Thomas was having, and the way in which Reginald sought to combat it, although not really to the detriment of the Canterbury saint,

instead being concerned to establish Godric's partnership with and equality to Thomas.[75]

From the evidence of St Frideswide's, Glastonbury and the work of Reginald of Durham, then, it seems certain that the cult of St Thomas had a profound effect on the pattern of pilgrimage and the relative status of the various English shrines, provoking cult-centres to take action of various kinds in order to maintain and enhance their prestige and stem the apparent decrease in pilgrim-traffic. It is the concern of the final part of this chapter to establish that St Albans fell into this category, and to suggest that its reaction took the form of the initiation of the cult of St Amphibalus, bearing in mind that we have already established that the abbey was in severe debt, and that the cult of Becket may itself have contributed to this.

Is there any evidence that pilgrims were going to Canterbury from Hertfordshire and surrounding counties? The miracles of St Thomas as collected by William and Benedict contain a few accounts concerning such people, but of course such evidence is only of limited interest as we have no way of telling how many people made the journey to Canterbury but were either not cured or whose cures did not get recorded, a factor which restricts any attempt to assess pilgrimage levels. However, collections of miracles of Alban and Amphibalus do exist as part of London, British Library Cotton MS Faustina B.iv. Those of Amphibalus, while bearing especially on the results of the instigation of his cult,[76] may also suggest the pre-existing state of affairs in terms of pilgrimage to St Alban, because the majority of pilgrims to Amphibalus come from Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and the surrounding area. This may parallel the case of pilgrimage to St Frideswide's shrine after the translation of 1180 in

that it implies that local pilgrimage previous to this was at a low level. Certainly it is not as marked in the Alban miracles, although they end in 1172, and there are not as many.

Chronologically, the invention of Amphibalus and his companions and the likely date of the composition of the *Life* by William of St Albans fit very well with the beginning of the cult of St Thomas, and this contemporaneity makes it very tempting to place the precise date of William's work definitely post-1170 and very probably either just before or just after the invention in 1177. An objection that could be made to the evidence of the chronology is that the debt of the abbey for other reasons was enough to render such action necessary and that the chronological association with the cult of St Thomas is coincidental, but the miracle-accounts of Alban and Amphibalus suggest otherwise. The last Alban miracle-account before the invention is highly significant in its date and its content.[77] It begins with the phrase "Cum miraculorum fama quæ per beatum Thomam dominus operabantur ubique crebresceret et multi de uillis et ciuitatibus properarent ad eum". This sentence may well sum up the situation in which St Albans and other shrines found themselves, as it testifies to the growing fame of St Thomas's miracles and to the fact that people were visiting his tomb in great numbers. In this the writer is absolutely correct, but it is the position of this statement very shortly before the account of the discovery of St Amphibalus' relics that cannot be ignored. Still more interesting is the slick way in which the writer goes on to take a sly feather out of Canterbury's cap, after graciously acknowledging its success. Among the hordes of pilgrims to Canterbury, we are told, was one Silvester, a priest from Cornwall ("ex Cornubie"), who had been blind for some time. When he had been at Canterbury

for several days, he received a vision of St Thomas, who asked him why he was remaining there ("Quid hic moraris?"), and informed him that a cure would not be forthcoming. The archbishop then advised him to go to St Alban for assistance ("ad beatissimum tocius Anglie prothomartyrem Albanum"), as a martyr of equal stature ("quia illic meritis eiusdem preciosi martyris conualebis"). Silvester did as he was told and promptly received his sight. Finally we are told that this took place 'in the second year of the passion of blessed Thomas the bishop and martyr', which dates the story to 1172. The first thing to be said about this story is that it forms part of a genre of similar accounts occurring at shrines which, as has been suggested, reacted to the cult of St Thomas. It does this in two ways. Firstly, Thomas advised the pilgrim to seek help from another saint, and secondly, he spoke of another saint as being of equal status (Compare the miracles of St Frideswide, St Cuthbert and St Godric, as discussed above). This seems to be clear evidence that St Albans was concerned about the cult of St Thomas, even before his canonization in 1173, and wanted to emphasize the continuing status and power of its own patron, in common with other shrines.

It seems therefore that there are good grounds for believing that the writing of the *life* and the discovery of the relics must be linked to a desire to initiate the cult of St Amphibalus, for the reasons discussed in this chapter. It remains to examine the substance of the initiation and the cult itself within the framework of the account of the discovery of the relics and the miracles of St Amphibalus in manuscript F. These texts have not been studied before, and so as well as seeking to confirm the conclusions we have drawn so far and to increase our knowledge of the circumstances of the

initiation of the cult of St Amphibalus, it will be worth giving a general survey of what the texts reveal about the operation of the cult and about its devotees, which information can be added to what is already known about other cults.

CHAPTER 5

The Invention of St Amphibalus

It is perhaps curious that what is probably the earliest account of the invention is contained within a chronicle which had no connection whatever with St Albans. This is the so-called *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi*, formerly attributed to Benedict of Peterborough.[1] Lady Stenton was the first to suggest, and David Corner has given fresh impetus to her views, that this was not the work of Benedict, who was Prior of Christ Church, Canterbury 1175-7 and Abbot of Peterborough 1177-1193, and who made a large contribution to the writing down of the miracles of St Thomas Becket while still at Canterbury. She argued that it was in fact by Roger of Howden, because it contains a fresh account of the crusade of Richard I, and Roger of Howden appears to have been present on that crusade. Lady Stenton based her case on information supplied by the Revd John Dickinson regarding a fragment of a North Ferriby cartulary. In it there is a copy of a charter recording a gift by John of Hessle of land at Hessle to the Temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, witnessed by Roger, "persona de Howden, in obsidione Acre".[2] Roger, then, is a likely person to have provided an account of the crusade, especially as he was also known to be the author of another historical work, his *Chronica*. Dr Gransden, while agreeing that the *Gesta* is not the work of Benedict of Peterborough, believes that it is a compilation on the grounds that events are recorded virtually contemporarily in 1171-77, 1177-80 is very brief, and 1180-92 contains contemporary notes which were revised in or after 1192. Indeed, she draws attention to Bishop Stubbs' notes in the introduction to his edition, in which he

suggests that the author changed in 1180, and that the chronicle up to 1177 is an edited version of Richard Fitz Neal's *Tricolumnis*.[3] However, Corner's arguments in Stenton's favour seem to be the most convincing. He compares the *Gesta* with Roger's *Chronica*, contending that the similarities between the two "unmistakably indicate that they were produced by the same author." For example, he shows "common use of less popular written sources." Corner also argues that as Roger was a royal clerk from 1174-1189/90, the *Gesta* takes the form of a journal of events reported or occurring there, "entered more or less in the order in which they occurred".[4] Thus it seems likely that the account of the discovery of the relics of St Amphibalus contained in the *Gesta* is contemporary with that event. Roger's lack of connection with St Albans is shown by the marked differences between this and the St Albans version of the invention, and also implies a lack of bias on his part. Roger's account seems very rough and ready, and indeed gives the impression that it was written when very few details of what had happened were known. This is suggested by the lack of proper names, and the gaps left in the text for them, presumably with the intention of filling them in later. Roger's account describes how an angel appeared to a certain man (whose name is left out) and told him that God willed that the body of St Amphibalus be moved from its burial-place and enclosed within the church of St Alban. The angel also said that the body of the soldier sent to kill Alban by the 'perfidissimus rex', but who converted Alban *de pagano errore* to the Christian faith, should be given the same treatment. A gap is left for the name of this second martyr. The angel then went on to tell the man to go to the abbot and convent of St Albans and get them to dig in the place where the bodies were buried. Roger leaves a gap for the name of

the place, although 'Redburne' appears in the margin of the Vitellius MS of Howden's work in a late hand.[5] Once the angel had disappeared, the man wondered whether or not to do as he had been told and go to the abbey. After thinking about it for several days, he decided that he would not go. However, a second and a third angel appeared to him, giving him the same instructions as before, this time adding threats that would be carried out if he did not go to the abbot quickly. The man, frightened of the threats (we are not told precisely what they were), promptly got up from his bed and went to the abbot and convent to tell them about his vision. The abbot and convent, it seems, had read the names of these two martyrs of Christ in their annals, "sed ignotum eis erat in quo loco eorum corpora sepelirentur." Proceeding to the place, they began to dig. Crowds began to flock to the site, "muti, cæci et claudi, causa recuperandæ sanitatis, et multi alii qui a diversis languoribus detinebantur", and many of them were cured. After digging for eight days without result, "ecce odor suavissimus e tumulis martyrum prorumpens eos ad ibi fodiendum provocavit".[6] In due course a coffin was discovered, containing the bodies. The *elevatio* took place on 25 June ("crastino scilicet Sancti Iohannis Baptistæ Nativitatis, et septimo kalendas Julii") and the relics were duly translated to St Albans to the accompaniment of hymns and canticles.[7]

Roger probably based his account on sketchy details filtering through to the royal court. The omission of some of the names suggests that he got his information by word of mouth, but it is clear from the gaps left in the text that he intended to insert the names later when they became known to him. Roger's reliance on inaccurate oral reports is perhaps also suggested by a comparison of his account of the discovery

of the relics with the much more detailed record which emerged from St Albans itself, and which is found in manuscript F. Roger has a series of angels appearing to the man, but in the F text it is St Alban himself. Roger also says that the relics of the headsman who had refused to cut off Alban's head were discovered. The F text does not mention this man, but instead refers to the discovery of the 'companions' of St Amphibalus, who had been martyred at the same time as he. Roger says that the abbot and convent of St Albans had read the names of Amphibalus and this other martyr "in annalibus suis, ubi miracula et passio beati martyris Albani scribebantur", but that these same annals did not contain the location of the relics. The order of words, "miracula et passio" as opposed to "passio et miracula" suggests that an account of the death of Alban and the events leading up to it is meant, rather than something also containing later miracles. This is not a reference to Bede's account of the martyrdom of St Alban, but is much more likely to be further evidence for the existence of William's *Life* at St Albans at the time of the invention. There are three reasons why this should be so. First, the phrase "in annalibus suis" seems to imply that a domestic production is meant. Second, Roger says that the location of the relics is not contained in these annals, as indeed it is not in William's *Life*. Third, Roger says that the name Amphibalus is contained in the account to which he refers and that he is described as a martyr. Of course, Roger also says that the other martyr, the reluctant headsman, is named in the same source. William's *Life*, while describing this man, does not give his name,[8] but we can probably put this confusion down to the poor quality of Roger's information. He had clearly not seen William's *Life* himself, even though the information he received testifies to its

existence. However, he doubtless had access to Bede, and may have attempted to make assumptions based on what he read there. In Bede's account, the headsman is mentioned, but the martyrs who suffered with Amphibalus are not.

It is much more difficult to say if the St Albans account of the invention was in existence when Roger of Howden wrote his short passage, although the fact that a vision and a command to inform the abbot are common to both accounts may suggest that it was. Even so, the detail differences already mentioned show that Roger cannot have had direct access to the text.

The existence of Roger's account provides a useful, and interesting prelude to the discussion of the invention itself and the St Albans account of it. The fact that Roger's chronicle was written at the time the events it describes occurred shows that the invention did occur, whatever the truth of its miraculous initiation. We can begin to form a picture of the process which surrounded the preparations for the invention and the subsequent production of an official account. Once the decision had been taken to initiate the cult of St Amphibalus, the first step was the establishment of his sanctity and his role in the martyrdom of Alban, hence the writing of William's *Life*. Having thus prepared the ground for the discovery of his relics, the invention was staged, and an account written at St Albans. At some point after William wrote the *Life*, and possibly after the writing of the 'official' invention-account, sketchy details filtered through to the royal court, where Roger recorded them and to a limited extent added assumptions of his own. Whether or not the presence of the invention in Roger's chronicle indicates royal interest in the proceedings is uncertain, but in spite

of the incompleteness of Roger's account, it would surely have been of excellent propaganda value to St Albans because of the suggestion of such interest and the approval which it implied.

We now turn in detail to the St Albans account of the invention. When historians have commented on or drawn attention to the invention of St Amphibalus, they have referred to the accounts given by the thirteenth-century St Albans historians Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris.[9] It is well-attested that Matthew incorporated Wendover's *Flores Historiarum* into his *Chronica Majora*,[10] but to date no editor of or commentator on these texts has established the origin of the account of the invention of Amphibalus which appeared first in Wendover and which was thence copied and slightly altered by Paris. Perhaps this is because it was assumed that Wendover or an earlier compiler on which he drew had written it himself. The sources of Roger of Wendover have long been the subject of much debate, and it is my purpose here to make a small contribution to this debate by arguing that the text found in manuscript F is the earliest version of the invention of St Amphibalus,[11] on which that found in Wendover is based.

It has been suggested that Wendover is at least partly based on an earlier 'St Albans Compilation', possibly by Abbot John de Cella (r. 1195-1214).[12] The various arguments with regard to Wendover's sources have been surveyed by Vaughan in his excellent study of the life and work of Matthew Paris.[13] Madden believed Roger of Wendover to have been the first St Albans historian, but this view was later challenged in many quarters. Those first in favour of an earlier 'St Albans Compilation' lying behind Roger were two doyens of the Rolls Series: Hardy, who attributed this earlier work to one Walter of St Albans,

taking events up to either 1154 or 1188, and Luard, who advanced the theory that Abbot John de Cella had assembled it up to 1188. Representing the German school, Liebermann argued that it was possible that Roger had used an earlier work, because up to the annal for 1188 in the *Flores*, the compiler refers to himself in the plural, thereafter in the singular, an argument which Vaughan shows to be inaccurate, having discovered at least two references in the first person before Liebermann's 1188 division. However, Vaughan does seem to accept Liebermann's other proposal that a compilation lying behind the *Flores* was probably not written until after c1204, John de Cella thus being a likely candidate for its collation. Well into the twentieth century, Claude Jenkins (in an extremely idiosyncratic and whimsical study) once again came down in favour of a compilation, suggesting that it originally ended in 1154, but was continued thereafter by John de Cella. Finally, Powicke and Galbraith argued that there is no evidence for a 'St Albans Compilation'. Vaughan, in an attempt to draw some conclusion from these differing possibilities, commented that "it should be remarked that, in spite of the statements of Powicke and Galbraith, the possibility remains that he [Roger of Wendover] may have used an earlier compilation of some kind", and sounds a final note of exasperation: "nobody has yet proved that he did not make use of a historical compilation written by some unknown monk of the twelfth or early thirteenth century".[14] Such is the present, somewhat confused and uncertain state of scholarship as regards the antecedents of Roger of Wendover's work. However, even if we cannot say for sure if a previous compilation lies behind it, or if it does, who amassed it, we do know that it is made up of borrowings from other sources. Hewlett, the editor

of Wendover for the Rolls Series, identified many of these sources, but not the invention-account. Luard thought that it was written by Abbot John or by Wendover, commenting that "many of the additions are accounts of facts which would be likely to be well known and preserved at St Alban's, and for which this chronicle must be considered as first hand authority", placing "the legend of the discovery of the body of S. Amphibalus" in this category.[15] Clearly, neither Hewlett or Luard were aware of the significance of the F text.

The text in Wendover, whether or not it is a copy of an earlier 'St Albans Compilation', is but an abridgement of the much fuller original text of which F is a copy. Earlier editors of Wendover and Paris have failed to appreciate a clue to the existence of a more sophisticated account which is given by both writers: "Si quis autem miraculorum, quæ per sanctos suos divina operatur clementia, notitia habere desiderat, libellum legat, qui de signis ejus et virtutibus clarus habetur, et nos ad alia festinantes a lectore veniam postulamus".[16] It seems highly probable that the book referred to was something either identical or very similar to the F text, which contains many more miracles of Amphibalus than are given by Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris.

The order of events in F and Wendover is the same, but F contains much more detail. For example, Wendover does not contain the prologue or a lengthy digression which are present in F.[17] He excludes most of the many miracles of St Amphibalus that occur in F,[18] which treats the vision of Robert, the confirmatory miracles, the actual invention, and subsequent miracles as one text, each section begun by a large coloured initial but with no intervening rubrics. It seems evident that Wendover only used such miracles as were essential for proving the authenticity

of the events, that is those occurring before the elevation and translation of the relics took place (see the next chapter). In any case, as he himself says, further miracles could be found in another book. It was Wendover's purpose to tailor the material he presumably found in this other book to fit in with his continuous chronicle, and thus abridgement was necessary.

It is very unlikely that a substantially different text lies behind F and Wendover. He did not use F itself, as it was a Holm Cultram and not a St Albans manuscript, but the text in F is almost certainly identical to that in the original. The text in F of William's *Life*, extant in the earlier manuscripts M and N as we have seen, is retained unchanged in F. By implication, if the scribe(s) of F did not see the need to alter the text of the *Life* when copying it, he is unlikely to have changed the other material in F either. Whether the copy was made at St Albans or Holm Cultram, there would have been no obvious reason to make any changes. Thus I think it highly likely that F is an unabridged copy of the proposed earlier, more correct version, but that scribal errors have crept in during the copying process, which was after all a common phenomenon. There are even signs of the presence of a corrector in F. For example, in the *Inventio Amphibali* section of F, the phrase "iterata in crastinum / restauratur" has been altered by a corrector's addition in the margin of the word "processio", originally omitted, so that the whole phrase now reads "iterata in crastinum processio restauratur".[19] Wendover reads "iterata in crastinum processio instauratur",[20] which shows that "processio" appeared in the version he was copying. "Instauratur" as opposed to "restauratur" may indeed be

evidence that Wendover was not copying F, suggesting as it does minor variant readings between the original and subsequent copies.

Therefore, we can conclude so far that the text of the invention-account in Wendover (and therefore Paris) is an abridgement of an earlier, fuller version, with which the book containing miracles to which Wendover and Paris refer is probably to be identified. F is likely to be an unabridged copy of this book, but with errors, some of which have received the attention of a corrector, and variant readings. If accurate, this hypothesis throws new light on the sources of Roger of Wendover or if he existed, a previous compiler of a 'St Albans Compilation', and incidentally seems to confirm the presence of an original from which F was copied.

From the foregoing it is clear that any discussion of the invention of St Amphibalus must be based on the text in F, and not on the heavily abridged accounts in Wendover and Paris.

In view of this discussion, and of my remarks in the previous chapters, what is the status of the text contained in ff. 1-64a of F? Bearing in mind that F also contains the *Life* by William of St Albans, was the latter also the author of the sections concerning the invention of Amphibalus? The *Life* is extant on its own in M and N, but these are probably both copies of the original. However, the evidence of Roger of Howden's account of the invention, as we have seen, suggests that the *Life* predates the invention. Suzanne Lewis believes F to have been a more elaborate version of the basic *Life* produced later in the twelfth century by William himself,[21] but she does not support this statement. There is in fact no convincing evidence that William was the author of the later sections. Far easier to establish and more important is the

likelihood that the original from which the F text was copied was intended as a sophisticated document of the initiation of the cult of St Amphibalus. The motives for the composition of William's *Life* first suggested by Levison fifty years ago, which I have supported in previous chapters, are confirmed by the combination and arrangement of material in F. Essential in this respect is the view of the F text as a coherent whole rather than as a random collection of items relating to St Alban and St Amphibalus. It is worth setting out once again the order in which these items appear: *Life* of Alban and Amphibalus, miracles of Alban, Invention of Amphibalus, miracles of Amphibalus. The significance of the text as a whole hinges upon the date of what appears to be the final recorded Alban miracle, 1172.[22] It is followed in the text by the invention and miracles of Amphibalus. We may ask why the Alban miracles seem to end at this point - are we to assume that St Alban ceased to perform them in 1172? In actual fact, the 1172 miracle is not the last miracle of Alban recorded in the F text, for the invention of Amphibalus which follows is itself a miracle of St Alban, although it is preceded by a prologue. It is Alban who appears to the man Robert of St Albans in a vision (ff. 42b-43a), and Alban who shows him where Amphibalus and his companions are buried (f. 43a-b). Once this has been described, the text goes on to concentrate on the miracles of Amphibalus, and Alban fades into the background. Thus the purpose of the F text compilation becomes clear. The idea seems to be to present the *Life* of Alban and Amphibalus and the miracles of the protomartyr as leading up to the supreme miracle of St Alban, the triumphant rediscovery of the body of his teacher in the faith, not a separate event but the culmination of a legend. The subsequent concentration on the miracles of Amphibalus indicates that

the F text is a document of the initiation of his cult. Furthermore, no mention is made of the Translation of the relics of St Alban in 1129,[23] which surely would have appeared if the primary aim of the text as a whole was the glorification of St Alban. This interpretation of the F text is the only one which takes full account of its contents and the order in which they appear, and is especially convincing in view of the nature of William's *Life*. Thus Levison was right: William's *Life* laid the literary foundations for the invention of St Amphibalus. The evidence of F confirms this and shows how the cult of St Amphibalus was established.

The use of hagiography to underpin and establish a new cult was not a new idea in the late twelfth century. At Saint-Wandrille, the account of the invention of the relics of Vulfran, written 1053-4, is, as Elisabeth van Houts has argued, "a fabrication which was part of a campaign to launch the cult of Saint Vulfran".[24] In view of this parallel, it would doubtless be rewarding to make a wider study of *inventio* texts composed as, to use a modern term, 'promotional literature' for a new cult.

Having established the status of the F text, we must examine its contents. The miracles of St Amphibalus I will deal with separately in the next chapter. Here, we will examine the discovery of the relics of St Amphibalus as described by the F text.

The first major event, from which the active cult was held to spring, was the vision of St Alban experienced by Robert, a citizen of the town of St Albans. Alban led him to the place where the relics of Amphibalus and his companions were buried, specifically named as Redbourn. Alban opened the ground with the end of his staff and a light

was emitted which, we are told, illuminated the whole world. Then, the saint and Robert went back to St Albans, where Alban returned inside his church and Robert to his house. Robert then spent a long time pondering the matter, deciding not to tell the abbot as he had been commanded. Eventually, his conscience compelled him to disclose what he had seen to his servants, whereupon "Illi autem, quod dicebatur in tenebris, in lumine proferebant, et que in aure audierant, super tecta predicabant" (f. 44a).[25] The implication of this is surely that something that has been proclaimed as the will of God should not be kept secret, but 'proclaimed from the housetops', as the Gospel reference says. The association of the news given to Robert by Alban with the Gospel is probably intended to lend weight to its importance in the eyes of the reader or hearer of the invention-account. Nevertheless, the account of the vision suggests that the abbey was keen to dissuade or pre-empt any murmurs of skulduggery or fabrication by disassociating itself from the first, critical event in the initiation of the cult. Robert was a layman and not a monk or even an employee of the abbey. The text plays up his worry about whether to tell anyone. It was two years before word reached the abbot,[26] and even then it was by way of gossiping servants. He almost seems to have been the last to know.[27] However, once he did know, no time was lost in taking action. By this apparent disassociation from the part of the cult-initiation that was most likely to be doubted, the abbey could press ahead with its plans and dig up the relics, appearing not to have had anything whatever to do with the original discovery, and to have found out about it almost by chance. Now, Abbot Simon "statim in primis sermonis initiis gratie Dei laudes egit" (f. 44a). The whole is made to seem like an unexpected blessing from God, and indeed, it may

genuinely have been seen that way, although perhaps the bones were discovered first, and the rest of the story slotted in later.

The location of the relics, as identified by Alban in the vision, was Redbourn, a village lying on Watling Street a few miles north-west of St Albans, and "sequentes ductorem suum fratres uidere sepulchra martyrum properabant" (f. 44a). The day on which they went was "feria sexta uidelicet quinto die ante beati prothomartyris Anglorum Albani sollennitatem" (f. 44a).[28] This seems highly approriate, and as we shall see, the feast of St Alban was to provide a background to the invention. The significance of this place is that it is likely to have been an ancient burial ground, and thus it seems very likely that bones were actually removed from the ground there in June 1177. The evidence suggests that a pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery existed at Redbourn. In the invention-account, St Alban shows Robert of St Albans two small hills (described as "colliculi" and "tumuli") (f. 43a), which may have really existed as burial mounds. As Levison remarks, these must have been known at St Albans,[29] and indeed, their local status is suggested by their description as "colles vexillorum", where, "ex antiqua consuetudine", processions were marshalled before going to the abbey (f. 43a) That these hills formed part of an Anglo-Saxon burial site was argued by Thomas Wright, who believed that so-called relics were often taken from the graves of earlier residents of the area: "When the earlier Christian missionaries, and the later monks of Western Europe, wished to consecrate a site, their imagination easily converted the tenant of the lonely mound into a primitive saint".[30] Wright thought he could point to fifty or a hundred cases "in which barrows were opened for the sake of finding the bones of saints". In the case of Redbourn, referring to the

"colles vexillorum", he held that the "custom of holding assemblies or wakes about ancient barrows was common among our Anglo-Saxon forefathers". Moreover, the appearance of the relics of St Amphibalus and his companions as described by the text suggests an Anglo-Saxon burial, especially as regards two knives ("cultelli") that were found among the bones (f. 46b). Smith remarked that "it was acutely observed by Mr. Wright that the head of the spear usually placed beside a deceased warrior might be easily mistaken for a large knife by the monkish barrow diggers while a knife at the waist is constantly found with unburnt burials of the pagan Saxons".[31] The fact that some of the bones discovered were broken and others unbroken (f. 46b) may point to earlier (pre-1177) disturbance of the site.[32] These hypotheses by Wright and Smith are tempting, and are supported by Levison. In a note to Levison's comments, Crawford supported the idea that the invention represented the excavation of an earlier burial ground, but held that the Anglo-Saxon remains were "secondary burials in a pre-existing (Roman or earlier) barrow", because "primary Saxon barrows were normally either very small - in which case they occurred not singly or in pairs but in large groups set close together, as in many Kentish cemeteries - or else they covered primary cremations. The fact that Redbourn stands right on Watling Street makes it probable that the barrow was of the Roman period".[33] Whatever the precise status of the site, it seems from the above that a plausible archæological context for the discovery of the relics can be established, although the site has not been identified in modern times, and so unfortunately no excavation has taken place to test these hypotheses.

The monks did not, however, dig up the bones as soon as they arrived at Redbourn. The actual elevation was the culmination of several days of festivity and miracle, attended by large crowds. The miracles and their significance will be discussed in the next chapter, but let us dwell for a moment on other aspects of the proceedings.

Many people started to arrive at Redbourn, presumably once news of the discovery began to get around - we have already been told that the servants' gossip about the vision "disseminaretur per totam prouinciam" (f. 44a), and the writer ensures that the divine will is clear, in that crowds came "quos Spiritus Sanctus de diuersis prouinciis in unum collegerat, ut inventioni martyrum interessunt" (f. 44a). There is also an element of penitence, in that the convent adopted a stricter way of life (f. 44a). Solemn masses were said in the church of St Mary, presumably the present parish church at Redbourn, which has this dedication. The atmosphere conveyed by the writer is one of preparation and expectation.

A prominent feature of this preparatory period was the celebration of the feast of St Alban on the 22nd June 1177, three days before the bones were dug up and translated to St Albans. This was undoubtedly part of the preparation, but it is probably also true that the invention was deliberately timed to coincide with the octave of St Alban, in order convincingly to graft the new cult of St Amphibalus and his companions onto that of St Alban. At the celebration of the feast of St Alban, his miracles were read out, and "quibus recitatis, clerus cum populo in commune gaudebat et inter pias lacrimas laudes ecclesia resonabat" (f. 45a). The reading out of the miracles is further evidence for the independent, earlier existence of a St Alban miracle-collection, from

which those in manuscript F were obtained. Once the reading and the rejoicing had ended, however, the abbey was keen to remind the faithful of their obligations: "post hec admonentur fideles ad elemosinas largiores" (f. 45a). It seems from this that larger donations were seen as an equally necessary form of preparation, and that the invention of St Amphibalus was not going to be allowed to interfere with the established custom of making an annual procession to St Albans to present required donations. This annual procession appears several times in St Albans sources, and in privileges granted to the abbey by various popes. For example, a bull of Eugenius III, 'Ex parte filii' of 2nd August 1147, held that the sum payable on the occasion of the procession was "nummus unus".[34] It would seem likely that the procession referred to in the context of the "colles vexillorum" (f. 43a) was this same annual event.

In spite of the celebrations surrounding the feast of St Alban, the faithful were not allowed to forget the task for which they had come to Redbourn: "Preces enim eorum et uota respexit tandem miserator et misericors Dominus, et celerem instare martyrum inuentionem, signis crescentibus persuasit" (f. 45a). This is undoubtedly a reference to the miracles which were held to be occurring, some of which are described in the text. The substance of these miracles will be discussed in the next chapter, but it is worth noting here how the writer conveys the tension of expectation among those present by mentioning these tantalising 'signs' that the hour had almost come when the relics were to be unearthed. In addition, by juxtaposing this comment with the feast of St Alban, the writer underlines the authenticity both of the relics and of the events leading up to their enshrining.

The elevation itself, on 25th June 1177, is described in detail. The possible archæological significance of the appearance of the bones of St Amphibalus and of the knives found with them has already been discussed, but the writer's interpretation of the same things is also important. His concern is to relate them to the account of the sufferings of Amphibalus in William's *Life*. He explains the presence of the knives by saying that they were used to disembowel Amphibalus: "Ut enim habet passionis ipsius textus, alii cesi gladiis occubuerunt ipse uero primo uisceribus eiectis" (f. 46b). This corresponds with the *Life*: "...visceraque eius ferro patefacta...".[35] The writer also explains why the bones of Amphibalus were all broken, and those of his companions intact, by referring to the stoning of Amphibalus which appears in William's *Life*.[36]

It is clear from this that William's *Life* was in existence at the time that the invention-account was written. Indeed, the problem of the date of the *Life* may be solved by this passage in the invention-account, because of the ease with which the writer relates the appearance of the relics to the description of the martyrdom of St Amphibalus. This suggests that the *Life* was written after the relics had been discovered, and in accordance with their appearance. The hint of future discovery which the *Life* contains would fit in with this. Therefore, it now seems more likely than ever that the invention of Amphibalus was a premeditated scheme to initiate a new cult in response to the circumstances described in the previous chapter. It is also surely significant that no senior ecclesiastics appear to have been present at the invention, although they had been at the translation of St Alban in

1129,[37] which suggests that St Albans did not desire the close attentions of potentially critical authority.

Once the relics had been unearthed, they were wrapped in cloths, and it was decided that for reasons of greater security, they would be translated to St Albans Abbey (f. 47a). It would not have made sense to enshrine the relics at Redbourn, because this would have involved the building of a costly church fit to house the relics, and in any case, a function of the cult of Amphibalus was probably to draw pilgrims to St Albans. The miracles show that this was mostly the case, although they also indicate that the site at Redbourn, made holy by the invention, remained important.[38] The concentration of the relics at St Albans is not really surprising, as it seems to have been customary for large mother-houses to gather in relics from their daughter-houses and from elsewhere, as at Durham or Ely.

CHAPTER 6

The Miracles of St Amphibalus

"This Place has been very famous, and many People have resorted hither in Respect of the Bones and Relicts of a certain Clerk, called by some Amphibalus"

Redbourn was thus described in 1700 by Sir Henry Chauncy in his *Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire*,[1] and the contents of manuscript F indeed show that the discovery of the relics at Redbourn attracted a good deal of interest. The writer is careful to emphasize this: even before the relics were lifted out of the ground and translated to St Albans, crowds flocked to the site "de diuersis prouinciis" (f. 44a), and miracles began to occur, which continued at both Redbourn and St Albans after the translation on 25th June 1177. It is the purpose of this chapter to give a general impression of the cult as it emerged, using the miracles as our chief source of information, as such material often reveals much about the geographical extent of the cult, the day to day operation of the shrine, and the types of persons who sought cures from the saint. This is of value as this miracle collection has not been studied in detail before, and these are standard factors which can be drawn out and compared with the 'vital statistics' of other shrines.[2] In the specific context of the cult of St Amphibalus, however, we must also address the role of the miracles in the initiation of the cult, and the question as to whether or not the miracles confirm the motives for the initiation suggested by the rest of the hagiographical material with which this study is concerned.

A preliminary consideration is that we should not necessarily take the number of miracles recorded in any collection as an accurate indication of the success of the cult. It was the purpose of every recorder of miracles to convey the impression that large numbers of people were both visiting particular shrines and benefitting from the miracle-working power of the saints. The propaganda function of this is clear, but even so they may not have written down every miracle that took place, even if they had the opportunity to do so. Greater propaganda value could probably be derived from the implication that so many miracles occurred that they could not all be written down. The writer of the Amphibalus collection emphasizes great numbers of the sick and pilgrims by such phrases as "inter concursum popularem" (f. 55b) and "inter alias egritudinum" (f. 51b), and as will be seen, sometimes chooses to give examples only of particular types of cure.

The miracles can be divided into three groups according to their arrangement in F. The first (ff. 44b-46b) comprises those miracles which occurred after the location of the relics had become known to the abbot and monks of St Albans, but before they were actually dug up and translated to St Albans, a period of about eight days from 17-25 June 1177. These miracles all occured at Redbourn. The second group (ff. 48a-50a) consists of miracles which probably occurred shortly after the translation to St Albans, and they all occur at the abbey. The third group (ff. 50a-64a) is separated from the second by a short preface (f. 50a), and forms the main body of the collection. It is made up of miracles of various types occurring at both Redbourn and St Albans, and displays some attempt at systematic arrangement.

Rodney Thomson thought that it was not possible to assign a date to any of the miracles,[3] and individually this is mostly true, but in fact the space of time in which the Amphibalus miracles in F took place can be determined quite accurately. As we have seen, group 1 is confined to an eight-day period in 1177. Group 2 looks as if it was intended to underpin the translation of the relics to St Albans, as all the miracles in it occur there, which suggests a relatively short period after 25 June 1177. The chronological extent of group 3 cannot be deduced from anything contained in the text, but rather by something which is absent from it. On 24 June 1186, in the time of Abbot Warin (1183-95), a second translation of the relics of St Amphibalus took place at St Albans, involving a new and sumptuous shrine embellished with gold and silver.[4] This does not appear in F. It seems most unlikely that the writer would not have made something of this if it had already occurred while he was compiling the collection, because it implies a calling of attention to the relics of Amphibalus, the effects of which in terms of pilgrimage and miracles it would have been expeditious to record. Thus the collection must have been put together before this second translation, and the miracles must cover the period 1177-86 at the most. It may be that this period was even shorter, because the *Gesta abbatum* also contains a miracle of Amphibalus that does not appear in the F text. It is not dated specifically, but is recorded as having occurred in the reign of Warin, who began to rule the abbey in 1183, and so the period covered by the miracle collection may be as short as 1177-83. The *Gesta* miracle concerns the foundation of the leper hospital of St Mary de Pré at the spot where the relics of St Amphibalus, being translated to St Albans, met the relics of St Alban being carried in the opposite

direction. This meeting is described in the F text (f. 47a), but the potential was not realised until later: the *Gesta* describes how Amphibalus appeared in a vision and commanded that the spot be marked.[5]

These chronological conclusions render the problem of the date of F less important as far as this study is concerned, because the original from which it was copied was clearly written no later than 1186 and may have been as early as 1183. This compression of chronology gives the impression of a finely controlled documentation of the emerging cult.

Having established the likely chronological extent of the miracles, we now move on to examine each group in detail. The miracles in group 1 all occur at Redbourn before the elevation of the relics and the first translation. As we have seen, the chronology can be defined accurately for this group, because we know that Abbot Simon arrived in Redbourn on about 17th June 1177 but did not carry out the translation until the 25th.[6] These miracles are a mixture of healing and punishment, and they perform specific hagiographical functions with regard to the initiation of the cult. The text implies that they are representative of many miracles occurring in this very early, pre-translation period. We are told that a lot of people were converging on Redbourn: "recedentibus aliis quos...feruor deuocionis adduxerat, alii cotidie succedebant" (f. 44b). Moreover, miracles were beginning to happen, as the writer says, "Que quia gesta sunt publice, multorum potuerunt testimonio confirmari" (f. 44b). Having thus assured the reader of the truth of these, he describes the first one, concerning a woman from Gaddesden (Herts.) called Matilda, who had been suffering from complaints of the shoulder-blades and the kidneys for ten years. She was cured after coming to Redbourn and lying down "iuxta sanctorum martyrum loca" (f. 44b). The

next two miracles recorded also concern female subjects, a woman from Dunstable (Beds.) and a girl from Chesham (Bucks.) (f. 44b). The former place is close by, a few miles to the north-west directly up the Watling Street. The latter, however, is some distance away, although still probably less than a day's journey, and shows (indeed, may have been included to show) how fast the news of the discovery spread.

These three miracles introduce the main function of the cult of St Amphibalus, healing. The vast majority of the rest of the accounts testify to this. That the first ones should feature exclusively female subjects is interesting - the next three feature men, but are miracles of punishment and warning rather than of healing, thus showing the other side of the 'new' saint's power, and performing an important hagiographical function. Before they begin, the writer includes a description of the celebration of the feast of St Alban on 22nd June 1177 (see previous chapter). Towards the end of this interlude, the writer tells us that "Nempe in detractores aut irrisores ultio diuina manifeste processit" (f. 45a), and uses the next three miracle-accounts to show what happened to those who made light or doubted the the authenticity of the proceedings. This plainly fulfils the common hagiographical purpose of discouraging potential "detractores aut irrisores" in the future by including a clear warning in the official record of the cult.

The first such 'warning' miracle concerns a man from a place called Kingsbury, who made fun of those digging for the bones. He arrived at the place one night with others "una quidem uia, set uoluntate diuersa" (f. 45a). He was suddenly possessed by a demon and tore off his clothes in front of those looking on, until God caused the fit to cease: "sicque

demum dimissus, incolumis et castigatus ad propria remeauit" (f. 45a). The warning in this is clear, but the fact that the man was from Kingsbury also requires comment. Kingsbury was a royal stronghold very close to St Albans Abbey, its south-eastern extremity lying only a hundred yards from the abbey gate. The earthwork which surrounded it enclosed a considerable area, bounded by the present Verulam Road, Branch Road and Fishpool Street. Within these limits the ground rises very steeply to a plateau, and the proportions of the fortified enclosure are still evident in spite of modern road-making and housing construction.[7] The date of the foundation of Kingsbury is unknown, but it was possibly established by Offa of Mercia in the late eighth century,[8] if we are to believe the assertions of William of Malmesbury and later St Albans sources that he 'invented' the relics of St Alban and founded the Benedictine abbey.[9] Whatever the precise date of its foundation, however, it was certainly pre-Conquest in origin, and seems to have threatened the integrity and local power of the abbots from an early date. The proximity of Kingsbury to the abbey would make this seem likely, and it is confirmed by the actions of sucessive abbots. Wulsin enlarged the town of St Albans probably about the middle of the tenth century, establishing a market and founding the three ancient parish churches of St Michael, St Stephen and St Peter.[10] However, "it is curious to notice that there was apparently no provision for the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants of Kingsbury",[11] although the church of St Michael and indeed the abbey itself to which the laity may have had limited access are close by. Better evidence for tension between Kingsbury and the abbey is the action of Abbot Alfric in buying and draining the fishpool upon which Kingsbury depended in the latter

tenth century.[13] Even this does not seem to have achieved the desired effect, for the second Abbot Alfric levelled Kingsbury (but obviously not the entire earthwork), except for a small portion retained by royal command.[13] In spite of this, the tension seems to have continued, for in about 1152 Abbot Robert prostrated himself before King Stephen, who was visiting the abbey, and pleaded with him to remove what remained of Kingsbury, because it was the haunt of enemies of the abbey ("Abbathiæ nocivi et damnosi"). While it seems rather odd that Stephen should have acquiesced to the destruction of a tangible sign of royal power, he apparently agreed.[14] In view of all this, the memory of the problem of Kingsbury was probably still very much alive in the 1170s, and was clearly associated with those who worked against the interests of the abbey.

The other two 'warning' and 'punishment' miracles concern a certain Algar of Dunstable, and an unnamed man (f. 45a-b). Both serve to push home the point that the relics discovered and the power of St Amphibalus were genuine and effective.

Having thus sounded a note of warning, the writer then records a series of healing miracles which occurred before the elevation of the relics. Of a total of five paragraphs in F (ff. 45b-46b), the first, third and fifth are accounts of single miracles, but the second and fourth each concern three different people, some of whom are only mentioned in a single sentence. Compression of this sort probably does not originate with the scribe who copied F, as there is none elsewhere in F. It is far more likely that the compression was in the original text, as it reflects the necessity to emphasize the large number of miracles that were taking place, as another way of underlining the

validity of the proceedings, the power of the saint and the initial success of his cult even before the elevation of the relics has taken place. Indeed, at the beginning of the description of the elevation, which follows immediately after this group of miracles, the writer refers to the large number of miracles and the undesirability of writing each of them down: "Multa quoque et alia signa fecit Iesus ibidem ad gloria sanctorum suorum in conspectu fidelium que si per singula scriberentur, fastidium lectoribus generarent" (f. 46b). Thus he neatly implies success without having to provide more written evidence, and manages to use abbreviation as a hagiographical device.

The second reason why the compression probably existed in the original is that the text is continuous and not disjointed or awkward in style, which would indicate arbitrary abridgement. For example, the cures of Arnild, wife of Adam of Luton, and the unnamed wife of Gilbert of Oakhurst (f. 45b).[15] Arnild's cure, from "membrorum infirmitate", is described: "Que perducta ad eundem locum [i.e. Redbourn] fusaque oratione bibens ex fonte mox omni languore se sensit esse liberatam". The brief reference to Gilbert's wife is linked by referring to the similarity of ailment: "Similem perpessa languorem per annos aliquot sponsa Gilleberti de Okersca sanatur ibidem".

The fourth paragraph also displays the juxtaposition of similar afflictions to form logical links between miracle-subjects. A boy called Walter, the son of Beatrice of St Albans, was "per menses aliquot renum dolore detentus". The description of his cure is followed by: "Consimili decem mensibus incommodo laborabat Estrildis". Her cure is followed in turn by another: "in crastinum sana recedens, consimile beneficium reportauit. Intestinorum incisione per annos plures uexatus Rogerus de

Wlsintuna". In this way, then, the three subjects are connected in the same paragraph by the similarity of their ailments (the digestive system - kidneys and intestines), and in the case of the last two, by time ("in crastinum") (f. 46a).

The miracles in group 1, which all occurred at Redbourn before the translation of the relics to St Albans, can be used to gain some idea of the diffusion of the cult at this still very early stage of its development, by analysing the places of origin of the subjects of the miracles, although this information is not always given.[16] The ones given in group 1 are, in order of appearance: Gaddesden (Herts.), Dunstable (Beds.), Chesham (Bucks.), Kingsbury (Herts.), Dunstable, Caddington (Beds.), Luton (Beds.), Oakhurst (Herts.), St Albans, Dunstable, St Albans, Dagnall (Bucks.), "Wlsintuna", St Albans. From this list it is abundantly clear that the cult was a local one at this early stage. Of these places, it will be seen that three miracle-subjects each came from Dunstable and St Albans. This is hardly surprising, as both places are connected with Redbourn by Watling Street; Redbourn is roughly a third of the way between St Albans and Dunstable. It is indeed very likely that Watling Street played a significant role in the diffusion of the cult in that several other places from which pilgrims came lie on or near it - in group 1, Gaddesden, Caddington, Oakhurst, Dagnall and Kingsbury could conceivably fall into this category, although for those places which do not lie directly on the Watling Street we cannot be certain of the precise route taken to Redbourn. However, we can say that once the relics had been translated to St Albans, Watling Street provided an easy means of passage between the two cult-centres. There seems little doubt that

major Roman roads remained in use, although probably not maintained, throughout the Anglo-Saxon and later periods. The survival of many of them as modern trunk roads is surely enough evidence for this. Watling Street is no exception, and was one of the 'Four Roads' often referred to in medieval sources, the others being Foss Way, Icknield Way and Ermine Street.[17] Moreover, these roads recieved royal protection.[18] It seems, therefore, that the cult of St Amphibalus provides useful evidence for the use of major roads by pilgrims, and suggests that the level of success of a cult and the nature of its catchment area depended on ease of access.

Furthermore, in view of the accepted arterial nature of Watling Street in the middle ages, its importance for the cult of St Amphibalus is more than just a useful local means of access. It extended from Chester to Dover, via London, and it therefore seems certain that pilgrims from the west Midlands, north and west of England would have travelled on it on their way to the shrine of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury. The centres of the cult of St Amphibalus were thus superbly placed to intercept this traffic, although there are no specific examples of this happening in the miracle-accounts.

It will be noticed that one of the place-names given above remains in its twelfth-century form. I have not been able to identify "Wlsintuna", but given the overwhelmingly local character of the cult at this early stage it is unlikely to have been far from the Dunstable-St Albans axis which formed the heartland of the cult's influence. Moreover, the element *Wlsin* suggests a connection with the tenth-century abbot of that name.[19] As we have seen, he enlarged the town of St Albans

and founded three parish churches - perhaps "Wlsintuna" was the name given to a part of the enlarged town.

As to the social status of these early miracle-subjects, it is immediately striking that the recorded miracles all concern lay people, and no monks of St Albans. As we have seen in the previous chapter, even the initial vision of St Alban revealing the location of the relics was experienced by a layman of the town of St Albans and not by a monk of the abbey. This emphasis on the laity, which as we shall see is maintained throughout the collection, supports the notion that I advanced in the context of the vision,[20] that the abbey deliberately associated the inception of the cult with the laity in order to pre-empt or dispel any suggestions of forgery. As we saw in the previous chapter, the news of the revelation seems to have reached Abbot Simon almost by accident, in spite of Alban's instructions that the abbot should be told and act accordingly.[21]

Apart from their non-ecclesiastical character, the social status of the subjects is difficult to establish, but where they are introduced as relatives of other named individuals, and perhaps not named themselves (For example Arnild, wife of Adam of Luton, and the wife of Gilbert of Oakhurst), it may be that the named persons were well-known in the local area, and therefore were persons of status. This would have made the cult much more credible to the local population. There are no subjects of obvious lowly status, although this is implied in the case of the "detractores aut irrisores" from Kingsbury, from the recent history of that place.[22]

The first group of miracles, which we have examined from various angles, shows that even before the translation of the relics to St

Albans, word was beginning to spread in the local area about the events occurring at Redbourn, and we can see a St Albans-Dunstable axis emerging as the centre of the cult, and the probability that Watling Street facilitated access to Redbourn and St Albans. The reputation of the cult, however, had not yet penetrated further afield. The writer is keen to emphasize that many more miracles occurred than have been recorded, and we must not forget the impression of crowds flocking to the site. Having thus formed a picture of the earliest stage of the cult, and we now move on to the next part of our investigation, to see what the second group of miracles reveals about its development immediately after the translation of the relics to St Albans.

The second group of miracles in F (ff. 48a-50a) all occur at St Albans and are all associated directly with the relics of St Amphibalus and his companions. The account of the translation ends very enthusiastically; St Albans is described as "Ubi per sanctorum merita innumera miracula demonstrantur, ad laudem et gloriam omnipotentis Dei" (f. 47b). As well as this expected hyperbole about the number of miracles, we are specifically told that people were cured at both Redbourn and St Albans: "Nam et in presentia sanctarum reliquiarum et in loco ubi quodam iacuerunt sepulti sancti, a diuersis infirmitatibus curantur egroti" (f. 47b). It is certainly true that not many cults had more than one place to visit in search of a cure, certainly not as close to one another. The writer plays up the success of what had been started still more by listing the types of infirmity that were cured: "membra paralitica solidantur, mutorum ora referantur in uerba, cecis uisus tribuitur, surdis auditus, claudis gressus firmatur, et arrepti a demonio liberantur". Although this is more rhetoric than strict fact, it

would have performed a useful function in attracting those suffering from various conditions by implying that nothing was outside the curative capabilities of St Amphibalus. It also shows that Amphibalus was regarded exclusively as a healing saint.

Group 2 concerns a total of nine miracle-subjects, of whom six are female and three male, including one little girl ("puellula") and one young man ("iuuenis"). Their places of origin, of which two are not given, reflect a broadening of the cult's area of influence. In order of appearance they are: St Albans, St Albans, Ayot (Herts.), Mimms (Herts.), "Meritona", Hertford, London. I have not identified "Meritona", but Merton (Surrey) would seem a sensible suggestion. It will be seen that pilgrims were now beginning to come from places very definitely away from the St Albans-Dunstable axis (Hertford, Ayot), although of course London also lies on Watling Street. In spite of this widening, however, the cult had not yet, on the whole, penetrated beyond Hertfordshire and the counties immediately surrounding it. The subjects themselves are again all lay.

The miracle account in this group which attracts the most attention to itself is that which begins "Quid de Willelmo Hertfordensi dicet" (f. 49b). In it a man from Hertford with two bad feet is said to have gone to Canterbury to seek a cure from St Thomas Becket. However, only one foot was healed by St Thomas. After returning to Hertford, the man went to the relics of St Amphibalus, and his other foot was cured. He duly "erupit in laudes Deum magnificans, et sanctissimum [sic] martyris potenciam reddita sospitate protestans". The writer is clearly presenting Amphibalus as the equal of Becket by recording a 'joint' miracle: "Miraculum...sanctus Thomas incepit, sanctus Amphibalus

why not translate?

consummauit". This can be added with conviction to the body of evidence already discussed which points to St Albans regarding the cult of Thomas Becket as a challenge, and attempting to meet that challenge by initiating the cult of St Amphibalus. Another miracle featuring Becket occurs in group 3, and I shall discuss it here for the sake of clarity. It is a long account concerning several people, but the critical section describes a soldier suffering from a quartan fever (malaria), who slept by the relics and received a vision in a dream: "tres persona [sic] uenerandi uultus et habitus per ostium ecclesie cernebat introgredi...quasi collaterales transeuntes" (f. 54a-b). These three figures were identified by the soldier as Amphibalus, Alban and Thomas Becket. The propaganda here is unmistakeable: Amphibalus is specifically said to be in the middle, between Alban and Thomas. The implication is that Alban and Thomas 'approve' of the sanctity of Amphibalus and confirm it by their presence. The proving of Amphibalus' sanctity was essential to the success of the cult, and could be done to good effect by associating him with two whose sanctity was not in doubt. It is fitting, says the writer, that Amphibalus "inter primum et ultimum Anglorum martyrem incedere decuit" (f. 54b). Also implicit in this vision is the equality of Amphibalus with Becket, and the whole is more evidence for a 'Becket motive' lying behind the cult of Amphibalus.

The third group of miracles in the collection, which includes the one just discussed, is the largest of the three (ff. 50a-64a). Group 3 is separated from group 2 by a short preface which refers to the continuing importance of Redbourn once the translation to St Albans had taken place: "Porro eleuati martyres de sepulchris, locum sepulture sue non reliquirunt [sic] inglorium, sed exhibitione miraculorum celebrem

reddiderunt" (f. 50a), and whereas group 1 contained only miracles which occurred at Redbourn, and group 2 only miracles which occurred at St Albans, group 3 contains a great diversity of cures which were obtained at both cult-centres, and also elsewhere. In connection with this, the concept of going to the relics to give thanks for a cure is apparent. Sometimes this involved only a short distance: Christina of Flamstead (Herts.) was taken to Redbourn first, and after receiving her cure, she went to the relics of Amphibalus at St Albans to give thanks for it (ff. 50b-51a). An example involving greater distance, concerns a soldier called Simon, in the employ of Robert, earl of Leicester, who was cured by Amphibalus at Leicester and then gave thanks at St Albans (ff. 54b-55a).

An important feature of group 3 is that it shows the many different ways in which cures could be effected, even though all were attributed to one saint. The most obvious way is straightforward prayer, but most miracle-accounts record some action on the part of the pilgrim by which a cure is obtained. Of course, the most obvious is pilgrimage itself, but once the person had arrived at the cult-centre, great variation was possible. Simply getting as close to the relics as possible was one way, but many pilgrims employed greater sophistication.[23] They often made use of votive candles as a means of entreating the saint and as an accompaniment to prayer (ff. 56b-57a), and also of secondary relics, objects or substances which had been in contact with the bones of the saint. Dust from the tombs of St Amphibalus and his companions ("ex tumulis collectum") was frequently used, and it was commonly mixed with water and drunk by the person seeking a cure (f. 51b). Sometimes the water and dust mixture was taken away by someone to effect a cure away

from the shrine: a clerk of St Paul's Cathedral, London, is recorded as having done this (f. 52a).

Other secondary relics used at the shrine of St Amphibalus were the knives ("cultelli") which had been discovered among the bones, and which were held to have been used to disembowel Amphibalus (f. 46b). A monk of Winchester came to venerate the relics, and while doing so was stricken with a violent nose-bleed. Seeing this, the keeper of the relics ("custos reliquiarum") placed one of the knives against the monk's nostrils, whereupon the bleeding immediately stopped (f. 62a-b). As well as showing a secondary relic in action, this story would also serve as further confirmation to the reader of the authenticity of the discovery in 1177 - if the knives could have this effect, they and the bones must be genuine. The presence of the keeper of the relics also deserves comment. He appears in several accounts in group 3, and seems to have been a general supervisor of the shrines and the precious relics. It is clear that the use of secondary relics had to be authorized by him: a clerk from St Albans with an eye problem was cured by contact with a stone that had been among the bones of St Amphibalus (ff. 55b-56a), with the assistance of the keeper. The identity of the keeper is unknown, as he does not appear in any other contemporary source, but he would have been a monk of the abbey.

The obtaining of cures by contact with something that had itself touched the relics also extended to immovable objects, such as the empty tomb at Redbourn. A girl from Rickmansworth (Herts.) was taken to Redbourn by her parents and placed in the grave ("in sepulcro sancti Amphibali collocatur"), whereupon her defective sight was cured (f. 58a-b).

Most of the miracles in the collection took place in England, but there is one exception in group 3, and incidentally it underlines the continuing importance of Redbourn even after the relics had been translated to St Albans. Amphibalus came to the aid of some pilgrims on their way to England by ship - the text does not make it clear which saint or saints they were originally intending to visit, but when they had been saved from shipwreck by Amphibalus, the place chosen at which to give thanks was Redbourn, and not St Albans (f. 58a). The importance of Redbourn was recognized by the foundation there of a priory cell in the abbacy of Simon or of Warin.[244]

Geographically, the miracles in group 3 show that the reputation of St Amphibalus was spreading far beyond the local area suggested by group 1 and group 2, although this remained the heartland of the cult, with 11 people from St Albans, 2 from Dunstable, 6 from London, and one each from Kensworth (Beds.), Flamstead (Herts.), Waltham (Herts.), Rickmansworth (Herts.), Codicote (Herts.) and Wheathampstead (Herts.). The first person from a great distance to appear in the collection is a woman from Gloucester (f. 53a), and thereafter people from Hastings, Leicester, Dereham (Norf.), Tilbury, Carlisle, Lincoln, Winchester and Reading. The only place-name in group 3 which I have not been able to identify is "Auringe" (f. 61b), and there are several accounts which do not contain a place-name. If however a date of before 1186 or even 1183 is correct for the compilation of this miracle-collection,[245] then this distribution represents quite a wide diffusion of the cult of a nationally obscure saint in the space of nine years or less. Moreover, quite a wide cross-section of society seems to have been represented, once the group 3 miracles are added, although the recipients of the

cures are still mainly lay. The exceptions to this all occur in group 3: the clerk from St Albans, and the one from St Paul's Cathedral in London, the monk of Winchester, and three monks of St Albans. The small number of the latter (and one of these is not a healing miracle), and the overwhelmingly lay character of the whole collection indicates, as I have suggested above,[26] that the abbey was trying to distance itself from accusations of forgery or deception that the initiation of the cult of St Amphibalus, not witnessed by any senior ecclesiastics, may have prompted. As we have seen,[27] the collection includes accounts of the fate of those that may have been tempted to do so.

This survey of the miracles of St Amphibalus (and his companions, although they are somewhat neglected), shows how the cult evolved over a period of less than nine years. The text shows how the writer sought to use miracle-accounts to perform propagandist functions, such as warning potential mockers and doubters, testifying to the authenticity of the relics, and continuing to present the sanctity of Amphibalus that is a main theme of William's *Life*. Perhaps most importantly, he uses miracle-accounts to present St Amphibalus as the equal of Thomas Becket.

Aside from these hagiographical aspects of the miracles, however, we can see the way in which the reputation of the cult gradually spread from the local area to encompass the whole country. This phenomenon is much easier to see because the cult of St Amphibalus was fully documented from its very start, and we thus have a written record of the stages by which the cult developed. Even so, while we can form a picture of the mechanics of the cult's development, we can only ever see its popularity in general terms, because the selectivity and motives of the

miracle-recorder, while enormously suggestive in many ways, also means that accurate statistics cannot be derived.

Finally, the miracles show how the business of obtaining a cure was carried out, and the part played in this by relics and places and objects associated with them - thus we are left with an image of medieval pilgrimage and devotion to the saints which we can add to our knowledge of other shrines.

CONCLUSION

The first and very general conclusion that can be drawn from this study stems from what was said right at the beginning, that hagiography is indeed enormously useful as a historical source, as the texts under scrutiny have implications for a wide historical spectrum extending outside the walls of St Albans Abbey itself. The texts suggest that the *Life* was written for the express purpose of underlining the sanctity of St Amphibalus and establishing him as an authentic saint, with the ultimate aim of initiating his cult. The motives for this initiation had their roots in the financial affairs of the abbey, as well as in more political aspects of prestige and the attraction of pilgrims. Once the cult had been initiated, it remained essentially local. This may have been beneficial to the abbey in that it maintained local loyalty to local saints, and may have prevented interest being too seriously deflected to Canterbury. The cult of St Amphibalus also reveals something about the geography of pilgrimage, and its implications for medieval communications.

These conclusions have chiefly been set out in the preceding chapters, but it should be one of the functions of original research to stimulate further investigations and suggest new directions on the basis of the findings of that research. It seems to me that there are two main strands which might be followed.

Firstly, the study indicates that there is scope for further work on the phenomenon of initiating new cults. The cult of St Amphibalus and

his companions is unique in late twelfth-century England in this respect in that we are seeing a cult beginning almost from scratch. The invention-account shows the actual physical process of discovery, preparation, elevation and translation at work, set out in the way the abbey wished the reader to hear it. By the analysis of the miracle-accounts, it has been possible to see the stages by which the cult evolved subsequent to the initiation, especially in terms of geographical influence. We have been able to pin down actual days on which certain events occurred, which is impossible with cults which were 'written-up' perhaps hundreds of years after their initiation. Clearly, any future research in this area would need to take into account the motives lying behind such initiations, the wider historical implications, and to effect a comparison between initiations. In an English context cases worth studying might include St Ivo of Ramsey and St Ithamar of Rochester.

The second avenue for further research is the effect of the cult of St Thomas Becket. Judging by the evidence of the Amphibalus texts, and of other religious houses, as we have seen, the 1170s may well have been a turning point in the history of the cult of the saints in England. Competetition between shrines had always existed, but never before had a cult on such an enormous scale developed in so short a time. There may well be problems of approach here, but once again, the usefulness of hagiographical texts as historical sources can be exploited. Many miracle-accounts, including some of those in the Amphibalus collection, feature St Thomas, usually as a means of emphasizing the importance of another saint. Thus, a starting point might be a gathering-together and analysis of all the miracle accounts of this type. Indeed, the

appearance of other saints in miracle-collections is in itself an area of investigation which has much promise.

This study began with the legend of St Alban, the *Protomartyr Anglorum*, and it is perhaps fitting that it is with him it should end. The hagiography of St Alban and St Amphibalus has turned out to be far more the hagiography of St Amphibalus than of St Alban, and it almost seems that the patron saint of the abbey was eclipsed by the new cult. However, it is likely that the arguments which can be used to say why no new *Life* of Alban was produced for so long also hold good in this respect. Alban was established and unchallenged as the first martyr of Britain, his martyrdom and therefore his sanctity were not in doubt and were never questioned, and his shrine still held centre-stage at St Albans Abbey. It was he who in the invention-account appeared to Robert and revealed the location of the relics of St Amphibalus, his greatest miracle, and it was he who appeared with St Thomas as a supporter of Amphibalus in the miracle-accounts. This association with St Alban was vital for the survival of the cult and ultimately it was what made the initiation successful. Just as in legend Alban had ensured the survival of Amphibalus the man, in history the cult of St Alban ensured the survival of Amphibalus the saint.

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CHAPTER 1: St Alban and St Amphibalus in History and in Legend

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7. Meyer, *Legende*, pp. 48-58.

8. Levison, 'St Alban', 348 and note 18.

9. Gildas, *De excidio Britanniæ*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH Auctorum Antiquissimorum, xiii, Chronica Minora, v3, 25-85, c. 10 (p. 31); J. Morris, 'The Date of St Alban', *Hertfordshire Archæology* 9 (1983/86), 15-19 (p. 15) [reprinted from *Herts. Archæol.*, 1 (1968), 1-8]; van der Westhuizen, *Life*, p. 39.

10. Morris, 'Date of St Alban', 16.

11. C. Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500* (London 1981), p. 44.

12. Levison, 'St Alban', 349; M. Biddle, 'Alban and the Anglo-Saxon Church', in *Cathedral and City: St Albans Ancient and Modern*, ed. R. Runcie (London 1977), p. 26. The name of Severus may have been added to the Turin text from a *Passio Irenæi*: see Levison, 'St Alban', 349.

13. W.H.C. Frend, 'The Christianization of Roman Britain', in *Christianity in Britain 300-700*, ed. M.W. Barley and R.P.C. Hanson (Leicester 1968), 37-49 (p. 38 and note 13).

14. *English Kalendars Before AD 1100*, ed. F. Wormald, Henry Bradshaw Society 72 (1934), p. 7.

15. *Before 1100*, ed. Wormald, pp. 15, 21.

16. D.W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford 1989), p. 73 and note 50.

17. *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, ii, 330; Levison, 'St Alban', 355.

18. Gildas, *De exc.*, ed. Mommsen, cc. 10-11.

19. Levison, 'St Alban', 347; Frend, 'Christianization of Roman Britain', 38.

20. A.W. Wade-Evans, 'The Site of St Alban's Martyrdom', *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 6th series, 5 (1905), 256-9.

21. Levison, 'St Alban', 340.

22. *Vita Sancti Germani*, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum, 7 (1920), 225-83, c. 16, pp. 262-63; Levison, 'St Alban', 337. For a study of German's associations with Britain, see E.A. Thompson, *Saint Germanus of Auxerre and the End of Roman Britain*, Studies in Celtic History VI (Woodbridge 1984). German's visit to Alban's tomb probably gave rise to the continental cult of St Alban, although he was often known abroad as St Albinus. See E.P. Baker, 'The Cult of St Alban at Cologne', *Archæological Journal*, 94 (1937), 207-56; H.J.B. Nicholson, 'Some Account of the Relics preserved in a Church at Cologne considered to be part of the body of St Alban, Protomartyr of Britain', St Albans Architectural and Archæological Society, *Proceedings* (1915), 1ff.; *Bædæ Opera Historica*, ed. Plummer, ii, 17-18.

23. *HE*, i.18.

24. Levison, 'St Alban', 337; *Vita Germani*; van der Westhuizen, *Life*, p. 30 note 1.

25. Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain*, p. 42.

26. P. Salway, *Roman Britain* (Oxford 1981), p. 721.

27. Levison, 'St Alban', 344.

28. Levison, 'St Alban', 338-9, 357-8.

29. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People': A Historical Commentary*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford 1988), pp. 12-13; J. Campbell, 'The First Christian Kings', in *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. Campbell (Oxford 1982), p. 51.

30. M. Biddle, 'Archæology, Architecture, and the Cult of Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture and Archæology in Honour of Dr. H.M. Taylor*, ed. L.A.S. Butler and R.K. Morris, Council for British Archæology, Research Report 60 (London 1986), 1-31 (pp. 13-14).

31. Levison, 'St Alban', 345-6.

32. Meyer, *Legende*, in Durham University Library.

33. For a discussion of the foundation see L.F.R. Williams, *History of the Abbey of St Alban* (London 1917), pp. 10-16.

34. *CM*, i, 356-7 (invention), 360-1 (foundation); William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum Libri Quinque*, ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton, RS (London 1870), 316; Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum Libri Quinque*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2v, RS (London 1887-89), i, 85; R. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge 1958, rev. 1979), p. 191.

35. Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. T. Arnold, RS (London 1879), 123-4; Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 191.

36. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniæ*, ed. A. Griscom (London 1929), v.5, p. 337.

37. A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c550-c1307* (London 1974), p. 202.

38. Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 201; *Historia Reg. Brit.*, ed. Griscom, pp. 42-98 for a full discussion.

39. Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 201.

40. London, British Library Royal MS 13.D.v, ff. 1-37v; see R.M. Thomson, *Manuscripts from St Albans Abbey 1066-1235*, 2v (Woodbridge 1982), i, 98-9; R. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge 1958, revised 1979), p. 129.

41. *Historia Reg. Brit.*, ed. Griscom, v.5, p. 337.

42. D. Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis*, 10v (Niort 1883-87), i, 232.

43. Du Cange, *Glossarium*, i, 233.

44. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, under supervision of R.E. Latham (Oxford 1975-, in progress by fascicules), i (A-B), 79.

45. Gildas, *De exc.*, ed. Mommsen, c. 28, p. 42.

46. Gildas, *De exc.*, ed. Mommsen, c. 28, p. 31 note.

47. J. Loth, 'Saint Amphibalus', *Revue Celtique*, 11 (1890), 348ff.; cited by van der Westhuizen, *Life*, pp. 34-5.

48. *Historia Reg. Brit.*, ed. Griscom, vi.5, p. 360 and xi.4, p. 502; see *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques*, vol. 2 (Paris 1914), under 'Amphibalus'; J.S.P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain* (California 1950), pp. 235-6.

49. Tatlock, *Legendary History*, pp. 235-6.

50. Levison, 'St Alban', 353.

51. *HE*, i.7.

52. *Bædæ Opera Historica*, ed. Plummer, ii, 17.

53. Levison, 'St Alban', 353.

54. I am grateful to Dr. David Rollason for reminding me of this.

55. McLeod, 'Alban and Amphibal', 408.

CHAPTER 2: The Manuscripts

1. Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 53 [M], p. 19.

2. R.W. Hunt, 'The Library of the Abbey of St Albans', in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M.B. Parkes and A.G. Watson (London 1978), pp. 251-77 (pp. 251-54, 270); R.M. Thomson, *Manuscripts from St Albans Abbey 1066-1235*, 2v (Woodbridge 1982), i, pp. 6, 68.

3. M, pp. 7-18. I am indebted to Dr. David Rollason for his assistance in establishing the collation of this manuscript.

4. M, p. 1.

5. *Heads of Religious Houses England and Wales*, ed. D. Knowles, C.N.L. Brooke and V.C.M. London (Cambridge 1972), p. 98.

6. *VCH Norfolk*, ii, 342; *GASA*, ii, 86; The memorandum and list appear on pp. 2-5 of M.

7. See also N.R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, 2nd edition (London 1964).

8. B. Meehan, 'A reconsideration of the historical works associated with Symeon of Durham: manuscripts, texts and influences', unpublished Ph. D. thesis (University of Edinburgh 1979), pp. 158-59. Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 168, tentatively attributed these pages to St Albans, but this was later rejected: *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: Supplement* (London 1987), p. 60.

9. Meehan, 'Symeon', p. 159 note 2.

10. *The St Albans Psalter*, ed. C.R. Dodwell, F. Wormald and O. Pächt (London 1960), p. 134.

11. M, pp. 19-50.

12. N.R. Ker, 'From "Above Top Line" to "Below Top Line": A Change in Scribal Practice', in his *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in the Medieval Heritage*, ed. A.G. Watson (London and Ronceverte 1985), pp. 71-74. I am grateful to Mr. A. J. Piper for several comments on this part of the manuscript.

13. N.R. Ker, *English Manuscripts in the Century after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford 1960), p. 42.

14. M, p. 38.

15. M, p. 32.

16. Thomson, *MSS from St Albans*, i, 67.

17. Ker, 'Above Top Line'; *English MSS*, p. 42.

18. T.D. Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain*, 3v, RS (London 1862), i, 8 (no. 12).

19. Thorney: Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 189.

20. Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 36 note 1.

21. Hardy, *Materials*, i, 6, has 1-63b, which is incorrect.

22. *MRH*, pp. 113, 120.

23. The *Life* of Wulfric is edited by M. Bell, *Wulfric of Haselbury by John, Abbot of Ford*, Somerset Record Society, 47 (1933); See also H.M.R.A. Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a twelfth-century recluse', *History*, 60 (1975), 337-52.

24. D.H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 2nd edition (Oxford 1987), p. 446; Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-century Recluse', 345.

25. *MRH*, p. 75.

26. The *Life* of Bega is edited form this MS in *Registrum Prioratus de Sancta Bega*, ed. J. Wilson, SS 126 (1915), 497-520.

27. F, f. 47b. See chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of the invention and the texts which describe it.

28. *Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 132.

29. Ker, 'Above Top Line'.

30. I am grateful to Mr. A.J. Piper also for suggesting this to me.

31. Ker, *English MSS*, p. 42.

32. For example, see F, ff. 20-21.

33. Thomson, *MSS from St Albans*, i, 67.

34. F, f. 39b

CHAPTER 3: The *Life* of St Alban and St Amphibalus

1. *ASS*, 149-59 (*BHL* 213).

2. Hardy, *Materials*, i, p. 4 (no. 8) and p. 9 (no. 14).

3. M, p. 19; *ASS*, 149 §1.

4. Thomson, *MSS from St Albans*, i, 67.

5. Hardy, *Materials*, i, 6.

6. *Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 67.

7. W.R.L. Lowe and E.F. Jacob (eds.), *Illustrations to the Life of St Alban* (Oxford 1924), p. 13; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 357 note 16; S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, 4v (London 1907), i, 143.

8. Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, p. 77.

9. *GASA*, i, 92; Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, p. 79.

10. Hunt, 'Library of the Abbey of St Albans', p. 263.

11. J. Ussher, Archbishop of Dublin, *The whole works, with a life of the author and an account of his writings*, by C.R. Elrington, 17v (Dublin 1847-64), v, 185.

12. *GASA*, i, 195; Matthew Paris, *Vitæ duorum Offarum...et viginti trium abbatum Sancti Albani*, ed. W. Wats (London 1639), p. 61b.

13. Thomson, *MSS from St Albans*, i, 67.

14. Hunt, 'Library of the Abbey of St Albans', p. 270.

15. *Historia Reg. Brit.*, ed. Griscom, p. 219.

16. M, pp. 19-20; *ASS*, 149 §2.

17. *Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 65.

18. *GASA*, i, 26-7.

19. Baring-Gould and Fisher, *Lives*, i, 144.

20. Levison, 'St Alban', 354.

21. Baring-Gould and Fisher, *Lives*, i, 144.

22. Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, p. 77.

23. See for example Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 174-6, 228-9.

24. For a good account of Goscelin and his work, see T. J. Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury: a critical study of his life, works and accomplishments', 2v, unpublished Ph. D. thesis (University of Virginia 1973).

25. For a general history of St Albans Abbey in this period, see Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, chapters 3-5, and *GASA*, i.

26. *GASA*, i, 53-4.

27. *GASA*, i, 70-1; Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, p. 48, has the consecration taking place in 1116, it being "Erroneously given as in 1115 in the "Gesta". Cf. Nero D.i fol. 154b.". This is Matthew Paris' MS of the *Vitæ abbatum* [London, British Library Cotton MS Nero D.i], earlier than Thomas Walsingham's version, *GASA*, as printed by Riley. Thus Paris' date may be more accurate.

28. *GASA*, i, 85; Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, pp. 60-62.

29. *GASA*, i, 82-3; Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, pp. 60-61.

30. *GASA*, i, 85; Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, p. 61.

31. For source references, see Farmer, *Dictionary of Saints*, under names of saints.

32. *GASA*, i, 92. The translation took place on 2nd August 1129, because the day before was occupied by the feast of St Peter's Chains. Thus it was agreed that the translation would take place on the following day, August 2nd, which was also the date of the feast of the Invention of St Alban supposedly established by Offa of Mercia (*GASA*, i, 5-6). The date of this feast had been fixed on August 2nd, "ne Principis Apostolorum festivitas in aliquo videretur mutilari". However, a St Albans kalendar of the early second half of the 13th century, Oxford, New College MS 358, has only "Inuentio sancti Albani" in gold letters for August 2nd (see *English Benedictine Kalendars After 1100*, ed. F. Wormald, Henry Bradshaw Society, 77 (1939), p. 41), so the two feast of St Alban, very similar in nature, were probably celebrated as one.

33. See J.E. Sayers, 'Papal Privileges for St Albans Abbey and its Dependencies', in *The Study of Medieval Records: Essays in Honour of Kathleen Major*, ed. D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (oxford 1971), pp. 57-84, especially pp. 57-65. The texts of the bulls themselves may be found in *Papsturkunden in England*, ed. W. Holtzmann, 3v (Berlin and Göttingen 1930-52), iii. See also *GASA*, i, 128-58, and chapter 4 below.

34. *GASA*, i, 124-5. For the career of Adrian IV, see W. Ullmann, 'The Pontificate of Adrian IV', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 11 (1953-5), 233-52, although Ullmann does not deal with his early life or his later dealings with England when Pope, which in themselves would make an interesting study.

35. *Papsturkunden*, iii, 258-61; *GASA*, i, 177.

36. *GASA*, i, 178.

37. *HE*, iii.14; *Vita Oswini Regis Deirorum*, in *Miscellanea Biographica*, ed. J. Raine, SS 2 (1838), 1-59.

38. *HE*, i.7.

39. See Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 205-6; E. Craster, 'The Patrimony of St Cuthbert', *English Historical Review*, 69 (1954), 177-99. The connection between the cults of saints and the possessions of communities is discussed in contexts by B. de Gaiffier, 'Les revendications de biens dans quelques documents hagiographiques du XIe siècle', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 50 (1932), 123-38, and W. Davies, 'Property rights and property claims in Welsh *Vitæ* of the eleventh century', in *Hagiographie, Cultures et Sociétés*, Actes du Colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris (2-5 mai 1979), Centre de Recherches sur l'Antiquité Tardive et le Haut Moyen Âge, Université de Paris X (Paris 1981), 515-33.

40. *GASA*, i, 4-6.

41. Matthew Paris, *Vitæ abbatum*, London, British Library Cotton MS Nero D.i, f. 63a, printed in *GASA*, i, appendix D, p. 507.

42. The status of this first section of the *Gesta* is problematical. It may have a twelfth-century core written by Adam the Cellarer, thus predating Matthew's *Vitæ abbatum*. The evidence for this is partly discussed by Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, pp. 182-89.

43. *GASA*, i, 65.

44. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 185.

45. Chapter 2, pp. 28-29.

46. F, ff. 20a-25a.

47. For example F, f. 20a-b.

48. F, ff. 24b-25a.

49. F, f. 25a-b.

50. *Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 66. The editors do their best to make sense of the confusion, pp. 65-66, as does Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, pp. 198-204. The main source-accounts are *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E.O. Blake, Camden 3rd series, 92 (London 1962), 176-7; *GASA*, i, pp. 34-8, 51.

51. *GASA*, i, 85-7; Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, p. 61.

52. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 195.

53. See note 42 above.

54. *GASA*, i, 86-7; Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, p. 61.

55. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 175.

56. Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, p. 78.

57. Baring-Gould and Fisher, *Lives*, i, 144.

58. Hunt, 'Library of the Abbey of St Albans', p. 263.

59. *GASA*, i, 58. In spite of this, Thomson, *MSS from St Albans*, i, 11 remarks that Paul was probably responsible for the survival of so few pre-Conquest books from St Albans, because of his Normanizing zeal.

60. Levison, 'St Alban', 356.

61. Levison, 'St Alban', 354.

62. William says the persecution was that of Diocletian, thus suggesting that he used Bede rather than an earlier account.

63. *HE*, i.7

64. M, p. 20; *ASS*, 149 §3.

65. M, pp. 20-1; *ASS*, 149 §3.

66. M, pp. 21-2; *ASS*, 149-50, §§3-4.

67. F, f. 43a.

68. M, pp. 37-8; *ASS*, 155 §26.

69. Levison, 'St Alban', 355.

70. M, p. 20; *ASS*, 149 §3.

71. Both of these appear at M, p. 47.

72. M, p. 49; *ASS*, 159 §§43-44.

73. M, p. 49; *ASS*, 159 §44.

74. Levison, 'St Alban', 356.

75. M, p. 46; *ASS*, 158 §38

CHAPTER 4: The Motives for the Cult of St Amphibalus

1. *MO*, 302-4.

2. *MO*, 302.

3. *MO*, 303.

4. *MO*, 303.

5. *GASA*, i, 75.

6. *GASA*, i, 73-75.

7. *MO*, 304.

8. *Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 32.

9. *ASC* E s.a. 1137, in *English Historical Documents*, ii, ed. D.C. Douglas and G.W. Greenaway, second edition (London 1981), p. 211.

10. E. King, 'The Anarchy of Stephen's Reign', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 34 (1984), 133-53 (p. 152). For the reign of Stephen in general, see R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen*, 3rd. edition (London 1990).

11. *MO*, 271-2.

12. *GASA*, i, 93-4; Williams, *Abbey of St Alban*, pp. 62-63.

13. *GASA*, i, 94-5.

14. *GASA*, i, 95.

15. *GASA*, i, 109; Williams calls Ralph a man of "rare financial ability", *Abbey of St Alban*, p. 63.

16. *GASA*, i, 107.

17. *GASA*, i, 109. The quotation from Ovid is probably an addition by Matthew Paris, as he was fond of inserting phrases from Classical authors: see Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 184 and note 4.

18. *GASA*, i, 112.

19. *GASA*, i, 128-58.

20. The text of these privileges is in *Papsturkunden*, iii. For 'Religiosam uitam', see iii, 258-61.

21. Sayers, 'Papal Privileges', especially 57-65. See also chapter 3 of the present study, p. 37 and notes 34-36.

22. *GASA*, i, 183.

23. *GASA*, i, 159-75; *MO*, 303. Knowles erroneously says the suit was against Peter de Valoines. In fact it was against his brother and heir Robert: see *GASA*, i, 160.

24. *GASA*, i, 113-18, 122-24.

25. See note 4.

26. *ASC* E s.a. 1137, in *English Historical Documents*, ii, 212.

27. For the cult of St William, see for example R.C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims* (London 1977), pp. 118-21; B. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind* (Aldershot 1987), pp. 68-76. For the text of the hagiography and some discussion, *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich by Thomas of Monmouth*, ed. A. Jessopp and M.R. James (Cambridge 1896).

28. *MO*, 305 and note 2.

29. *GASA*, i, 183.

30. *GASA*, i, 193-94; *MO*, 305.

31. *GASA*, i, 193.

32. *GASA*, i, 189.

33. *GASA*, i, 188; Ridgway Lloyd, *An Architectural and Historical Account of the Shrines of St Alban and St Amphibalus in St Albans Abbey* (St Albans 1873), p. 10. This is one of two useful booklets by Lloyd, the other being *An Account of the Altars, Monuments and Tombs, existing in A.D. 1428 in St Albans Abbey* (St Albans 1873).

34. *GASA*, i, 191-92.

35. *GASA*, i, 191.

36. See *MO*, 433, 435-36.

37. *GASA*, i, 191.

38. *GASA*, i, 191 and note 2.

39. *GASA*, i, 184, 192.

40. *GASA*, i, 194.

41. The Alban miracles in F may not be complete, but such collections are inaccurate measurements of pilgrimage levels anyway - was every pilgrim who visited a shrine cured?

42. i.e., the shrine work is described after the death of Becket: *GASA*, i, 188-89; Lloyd, *Shrines*, p. 10.

43. For example, the struggle for independence from the bishop of Lincoln: *GASA*, i, 128-58.

44. The literature concerning Becket is understandably copious, but the most important sources for his career may be found in *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. J.C. Robertson and J.B. Sheppard, 7v, RS (London 1875-85). A good recent biography is F. Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London 1986).

45. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 164.

46. A good summary of the evidence with regard to St William of Norwich, St Cuthbert, St Godric and St Frideswide is Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, pp. 104-8.

47. H.M.R.A. Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Shrine: The Miracles of St Frideswide', in *Studies in Medieval History presented to R.H.C. Davis*, ed. Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore (London and Ronceverte 1985), p. 195.

48. Mayr-Harting, 'Miracles of St Frideswide', 194-95.

49. Mayr-Harting, 'Miracles of St Frideswide', 195; Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 169.

50. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, p. 83; Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 128.

51. *Materials for Thomas Becket*, ii, 97-101.

52. *Materials for Thomas Becket*, ii, 96-7.

53. *Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 180.

54. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, p. 107-8.

55. Mayr-Harting, 'Miracles of St Frideswide', 195.

56. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 128.

57. *Miracles of St Frideswide*, *ASS* Oct. 8, pp. 567-90 (p. 570).

58. *Miracles of St Frideswide*, p. 587.

59. For the manner in which Glastonbury elaborated its history, see A. Gransden, 'The Growth of the Glastonbury Traditions and Legends in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 27 (1976), 337-58. Earlier treatment of the Glastonbury legends was provided by Dean Robinson: J. Armitage Robinson, *Somerset Historical Essays* (London 1921), and *Two Glastonbury Legends: King Arthur and St Joseph of Arimethea* (Cambridge 1926).

60. Gransden, 'Glastonbury Traditions', 338.

61. *Memorials of St Dunstan*, ed. W. Stubbs, RS (London 1874), 412-22. See also J. Scott, *The Early History of Glastonbury: An Edition,*

Translation and Study of William of Malmesbury's 'De Antiquitate Glastoniensis Ecclesie' (Woodbridge 1981), pp. 4-5.

62. Scott, *De Ant.*, p. 5 and note 41. See also Scott's proposed original text of the *De Antiquitate* on pp. 168-72.

63. Scott, *De Ant.*, pp. 72-5.

64. Scott, *De Ant.*, p. 5 and n. 62.

65. Scott, *De Ant.*, p. 29.

66. Scott, *De Ant.*, p. 29.

67. For the income of the shrine of St Thomas, see C.E. Woodruff, 'The Financial Aspect of the Cult of St Thomas of Canterbury', *Archæologia Cantiana*, 44 (1932), 13-32. The income would have been very useful in rebuilding the east end of the cathedral after the fire of 1174. C.R. Cheney, 'Church-building in the Middle Ages', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 34 (1951-52), 20-36 (p. 25), rightly points out that the greater churches were often extended eastwards to provide more shrine-space, to encourage and to accommodate more pilgrims. Income from the shrine could be used for this building-work, but in the case of Canterbury in the 1170s it would have been the fire that necessitated the rebuilding - the cult of Becket was hugely successful anyway.

68. Scott, *De Ant.*, p. 29.

69. C. Platt, *The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England* (London 1984), p. 77; Gransden, 'Glastonbury Traditions', 352.

70. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, pp. 105-7; V.M. Tudor, 'Reginald of Durham and St Godric of Finchale: a study of a twelfth-century hagiographer and his major subject', unpublished Ph. D. thesis (University of Reading 1979), pp. 296 and notes, 300. The *Life* by Reginald is edited as *Libellus de Vita et Miraculis S. Godrici, Heremitæ de Finchale; appendix miraculorum*, ed. J. Stevenson, SS 20 (1847).

71. Reginald, *Vita Godrici*, 236-39; Tudor, 'Reginald', p. 296 and notes 1, 2.

72. Reginald, *Vita Godrici*, 293-97; Tudor, 'Reginald', p. 296.

73. Tudor, 'Reginald', p. 296 note 4.

74. Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus*, ed. J. Raine, SS 1 (1835), 271-72, cited by Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, p. 106.

75. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, p. 107.

76. See chapter 6 for a full discussion of these miracles.

77. F, f. 39b.

CHAPTER 5: The Invention of St Amphibalus

1. *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2v, RS (London 1867), i, 175-77.

2. D.M. Stenton, 'Roger of Howden and "Benedict"', *English Historical Review* 48 (1953), 574-82; D.J. Corner, 'The *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi* and *Chronica* of Roger, Parson of Howden', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 56 (1983), 126-44 (p. 126).

3. Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 222-23.

4. Corner, '*Gesta Regis Henrici*', 126-32.

5. *Gesta Regis Henrici*, ed. Stubbs, i, 175.

6. *Gesta Regis Henrici*, ed. Stubbs, i, 176.

7. *Gesta Regis Henrici*, ed. Stubbs, i, 177.

8. The headsman was not in fact named until Matthew Paris called him 'Aracle' (Heraclius), in his Anglo-Norman *Life* of Alban, Dublin, Trinity College MS 177 (olim E.i.40), ff. 29-50, ed. as *La Vie de Seint Auban*, by R. Atkinson (London 1876), and A.R. Harden, Anglo-Norman Text Society (Oxford 1968), in which 'Aracle' first appears at line 936, p. 26.

9. *FH*, i, 109-17; *CM*, ii, 301-9.

10. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 21.

11. F, ff. 41b-47b.

12. *CM*, ii, Luard's introduction, p. x.

13. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 22; Matthew Paris, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. F. Madden, 3v, RS (London 1866-69), i, p. xiii; Hardy, *Materials*, iii, p. xxxvi and note 3; *CM*, ii, pp. x-xii, and vii, pp. ix-xi; Roger of Wendover, Excerpts from *Flores Historiarum*, ed. F. Liebermann, *Ex rerum Anglicarum scriptoribus sæculi XIII*, MGH scriptores, xxviii (Hannover 1888), p. 8; *CM*, i, 270 note 2, 509; C. Jenkins, *The Monastic Chronicler and the Early School of St Albans* (London 1922), pp. 32ff., 40-1.

14. F.M. Powicke, 'The compilation of the *Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 30 (1944), 148-9; V.H. Galbraith, *Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris*, University of Glasgow, David Murray Lectures, 11 (Glasgow 1944), p. 16 and note 1; Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 23.

15. *CM*, ii, introduction, xvi-xvii.

16. *FH*, i, 116; *CM*, ii, 308.

17. F, ff. 40b-41b, 42a-b.

18. He omits everything after the actual elevation and translation up to the end of the MS (f. 64a).

19. F, f. 45a.

20. *FH*, i, 113.

21. S. Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the* Chronica Majora (Aldershot 1987), 113.

22. F, f. 39b.

23. *GASA*, i, 85-6.

24. E.M.C. van Houts, 'Historiography and Hagiography at Saint-Wandrille: the "Inventio et Miracula Sancti Vulfrani"', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 12, Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1989, ed. M. Chibnall (Woodbridge 1990), 233-51.

25. A reference to St Matthew x.27, "Quod dico vobis in tenebris, dicite in lumine; et quod in aure auditis, praedicate super tecta".

26. F, f. 44a: "post annorum duorum curricula, scilicet anno incarnate 1177".

27. F, f. 44a: "Denique ad dominum Symonem abbatem dulcis rumor fidelis sermo et omni acceptione dignissimus quibusdam fratribus perferentibus penetrauit".

28. As the feast of St Alban was on June 22nd in the middle ages, this must mean about June 17th.

29. Levison, 'St Alban', 356.

30. T. Wright, 'On some early Notices relating to the Antiquities of St Albans', *Archæologia*, 33 (1849), 262-68 for much of what follows.

31. R.A. Smith, 'Anglo-Saxon Remains', in *VCH Herts*, i, 251-61 (p. 257).

32. Smith, 'Remains', 258.

33. Levsion, 'St Alban', 356, references therein, and note by O.G.S. Crawford; See also A. Meaney, *Gazetteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* (London 1964), pp. 104-5.

34. *Papsturkunden*, iii, 200-1.

35. M, p.46; *ASS*, 158 §39

36. M, p. 48; *ASS*, 158-59, §43.

37. *GASA*, i, 85.

38. See the next chapter. In the late twelfth century, possibly in Abbot Warin's time (1183-95), a cell was founded at Redbourn, and dedicated to St Amphibalus. It was used as a place of convalescence for St Albans monks: *GASA*, i, 211; Knowles, *MRH*, p. 74, thought it a "place of relaxation" for the monks.

CHAPTER 6: The Miracles of St Amphibalus

1. Sir Henry Chauncy, *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire*, 2v (London 1700, reprinted Bishops Stortford 1826, facsimile reissue Dorking 1975), ii, 397. From this statement it would seem likely that Chauncy had seen manuscript F.

2. The use of miracle-accounts in this way is best explained by Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, chapters 8 and 9.

3. Thomson, *MSS form St Albans*, i, 67.

4. *GASA*, i, 205-6.

5. *GASA*, i, 199-202.

6. See chapter 5, p. 87.

7. *VCH Herts*, ii, 123-24 for a description and plan of the earthwork.

8. *VCH Herts*, ii, 475-76.

9. William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum Libri Quinque*, ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton, RS (London 1870), 316-17, and *De Gestis Regum Anglorum Libri Quinque*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2v, RS (London 1887-89), i, 85; *GASA*, i, 5-6, 8.

10. *GASA*, i, 22.

11. *VCH Herts*, ii, 476.

12. *GASA*, i, 23-4; *VCH Herts*, ii, 476.

13. *GASA*, i, 32; *VCH Herts*, ii, 476 and note 46.

14. *GASA*, i, 121-22; *VCH Herts*, ii, 476.

15. The text has "Okersca": Oakhurst, near Colney Street (Herts.), on Watling Street, seems to be the most likely identification; see *Index to the Charters and Rolls in the Department of Manuscripts of the British Museum*, ed. H.J. Ellis and F.B. Bickley, 2v (London 1900, 1912), i, 560.

16. For the usefulness of this method, see Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, chapter 9.

17. See for example Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. T. Arnold, RS (London 1879), 7.

18. O. Roucoux, *The Roman Watling Street from Dunstable to High Cross* (Dunstable 1984), p. 61.

19. *GASA*, i, 22-3.

20. See previous chapter, p. 84.

21. See p. 84 above.

22. See pp. 95-97 above.

23. For a complete discussion of the cult of relics, see N. Herrmann-Mascard, *Les Reliques des Saints: Formation coutumière d'un droit*, Société d'Histoire du Droit: Collection d'Histoire Institutionelle et Sociale 6 (Paris 1975). In an English context for this period see Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, and Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*.

24. *MRH*, p. 74.

25. Pp. 93-94 above.

26. P. 84 above.

27. Pp. 95-97.

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