

Becket in Horae: the commemoration of the saint in private prayer books of the later Middle Ages¹

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This article examines the ways in which Thomas Becket was commemorated in books of hours (horae) of different Uses, and explores the nature and implications of the texts and images associated with such commemorations.

PROBABLY the best known fact relating to Thomas Becket and books of hours (horae) is that many of the images of, and references to, him in English copies were obliterated by order of King Henry VIII (Fig. 1).² What exactly was there to be removed is, paradoxically, rather less

¹The following abbreviations are used throughout. BL: London, British Library. BnF: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Bod: Oxford, Bodleian Library. CUL: Cambridge University Library. DUC: Durham, Ushaw College. DUL: Durham University Library. EUL: Edinburgh University Library. FM: Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum. JRUL: Manchester, John Rylands University Library. KB: The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek. TCC: Cambridge, Trinity College. WAM: Baltimore, Walters Art Museum.

²*Tudor Royal Proclamations I: The Early Tudors 1485-1553*, ed. P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin (New Haven and London 1964), no. 186 (270-6, esp. 275-6). In TCC B.11.7 (Use of Sarum, made in England), for example, all three of Becket's feasts were erased from the calendar (but subsequently very carefully reinstated); his entry in the litany (74r) was untouched; the place where his suffrage is likely to have been was entirely masked by a heavily-painted IHS plus a short prayer, set on thick blue and black grounds respectively (27v). In FM, 48 (Sarum, made in England) Becket's name was erased at his translation in the calendar (6r) but not from his octave

well known. Yet the material in question is potentially very revealing. The particular value of studying the commemoration of Becket in horae is that, as they were a class of books primarily designed for, and used by the laity, they complement other evidence that is predominantly ecclesiastical. Equally, because possession of horae spread to layfolk of middling as well as of high status, the witness of these books offers invaluable insight into the place of the martyred archbishop of Canterbury in the devotional life of classes of society whose patterns of observance and belief are poorly represented in other sources. We shall, accordingly, be paying more attention to horae of modest grades than to those of higher status, and shall be focusing above all on examples dating from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the period when such volumes achieved widespread popularity (at least in northern Europe).

We shall first consider the ways in which Thomas Becket could, in principle, be commemorated in horae and the extent to which, in practice, he actually was. We shall then examine the content of the texts and the nature of the imagery that might be associated with him in such books. We shall conclude by summarising what this evidence as a whole reveals.

PATTERNS OF COMMEMORATION

or martyrdom (the latter rather degraded anyway); his name alone was erased from the text of his suffrage (114r); his entry in the litany (170r) was untouched. In BL, Sloane 2683 (Sarum, made in Bruges) the entries for Becket's translation and martyrdom – though not that for his octave – were expunged from the calendar (6r, 8v); the miniature of his martyrdom was partly erased (16v), the text of his suffrage almost entirely so (17r); his entry in the litany, however, was untouched (78v); the erased texts were subsequently (?s. xvii) reinserted.

THOMAS Becket could be commemorated in three areas within a book of hours, namely the calendar, the litany (invocations to specified members of the company of heaven, listed by category – archangels, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins), and the suffrages (intercessory devotions addressed to individual members of the company of heaven). In the calendar he could potentially have three entries: his primary feast on 29 December (the day of his martyrdom); the octave of that feast (i.e. the eighth day thereafter, reckoning inclusively) on 5 January; and the feast of his translation on 7 July. A further variable is the grading afforded to the second and third of these occasions. In relation to litanies and suffrages, the simple fact of Becket's inclusion in or exclusion from them has to be judged in relation to the length and character of the sections in question, his precise placement when he does appear, the presence of other local figures, and whether he precedes or follows them. He was clearly of greater significance, for example, to the owners of a couple of Sarum horae whose sections of suffrages have a mere eleven entries and Becket is the only historical (as opposed to biblical or early christian) figure therein than he was to Philip the Good of Burgundy in whose book of hours Becket is but one of seventy-four figures (of all sorts) to be allotted a suffrage (Fig. 2).³ Arguably symptomatic of this distinction is the fact that the antiphon that heads his suffrage in Philip's book is the least personal of those that might be used for him.⁴

Table 1 presents an overview of the commemoration (or otherwise) of Thomas Becket in these respects in books of hours of more than thirty different non-English Uses (as defined by

³ Respectively: BL, Royal 2 A.viii; BL, Add. 17012; KB, 76.F.2 (all these suffrages part of its original stratum): A. M. W. As-Vijvers and A. S. Korteweg, *Splendour of the Burgundian Netherlands* (Zwolle 2019), no. 32; S. Rochmes, 'Philip the Good's Grisaille Book of Hours and the Origins of a New Court Style', *Simiolus* 38 (2015-16), 17-38.

⁴ Appendix, no. 7; discussed below.

the nature of the Office of the Virgin). Two complementary facts are immediately striking: on the one hand, every one of our sample features his principal feast (the martyrdom) in its calendar, the majority giving it the highest grading in their particular system; while, on the other, very few of them have any other form of commemoration for him. Less than a quarter of the sample mark his translation in their calendars – a preponderance of those that do so being Uses from Normandy or Brittany⁵ – while none includes his octave. Correspondingly, in only five cases (three of which are Uses from northern France⁶) was Becket named in the litany; and only one of these books, the aforementioned Hours of Philip the Bold, afforded him a suffrage.

Individual books of hours could be liturgically heterogeneous – containing between their covers offices of different Uses – and countless variations were possible within calendars and litanies of the same basic tradition. Even in our restricted sample, modest differences are sometimes apparent between examples whose Office of the Virgin is of same Use: one Amiens, one Rouen and three Paris cases, for instance, have Thomas Becket in their litanies,⁷ while the other witnesses from these traditions do not; equally, two Paris and two Rome examples include both the translation and the martyrdom in their calendars, while the other representatives of the same Uses have only the latter.⁸ If more examples of each Use were included – particularly those such as Paris and Rome which enjoyed considerable popularity well beyond their immediate

⁵ Avranches, Bayeux, Coutances, Le Mans, and Rouen. Also Bourges, Chartres, Tours.

⁶ Amiens, Paris, and Théroutanne. Also Besançon and Troyes.

⁷ Respectively BL, Add. 31835 (summary description: S. Nash, *Between France and Flanders*.

Manuscript Illumination in Amiens in the Fifteenth Century (London 1999), 311-14); FM, 105; TCC, B.11.31+32; KB, 76.F.2; BL, Add.18751 (the Creméaux Hours).

⁸ The MSS with both are: TCC, B.11.31+32; KB, 76.F.2; DUL, Add. 1993; DUL, SB0316.

geographical region – more such minor variations would undoubtedly appear, reflecting on the one hand the different exemplars drawn upon for the elements in question and, on the other, the particular interests of individual patrons. Nevertheless, the overall picture would almost certainly remain the same: in most horae of continental Uses, commemoration of Becket was restricted to including his principal feast in the calendar. Of the minority of examples that did more, a preponderance would have an association with Normandy or northern France – the heartlands of the English dominion in France during the second quarter of the fifteenth century and, in the case of the former, a core part of the old Angevin Empire.

In horae of the Use of Sarum, by contrast, all three of Becket's feasts are normally marked in the calendar, the Martyrdom invariably given the highest available grading, the translation sometimes afforded the same, other times a lesser weighting, the octave always a lower grading. Equally, the overwhelming majority of Sarum examples include a suffrage for Becket (a few have two), and most name him in their litany. The pattern is broadly the same whether the volumes were made in England (Table 2) or on the continent (Table 3) – with three distinctions. First, up to the middle of the fifteenth century English-made copies were more likely than were continental-made ones to give the highest weighting to the translation as well as to the martyrdom (thereafter both groups did so equally). Second, after the first quarter of the fifteenth century English-made copies were far less likely than were continental-made ones to include Becket in their litanies. Third and closely related, it was more common for continental-made examples than for English-made ones to feature all the possible Becket elements. The explanation for these last two differences is doubtless that Sarum horae produced in such places as Bruges, Paris and Rouen for export to England were, on the whole, more formulaic than those written in England herself. Not only are the specimens in the English-made corpus spread over a longer chronological period with accordingly greater potential for evolution as a class, but its members were also more susceptible to reflecting the regional and personal preferences of

purchasers who were often nearer to hand. Thus the English-made copy that was owned by Roger Walle (d. 1488), prebendary and canon of Lichfield Cathedral, gives greater prominence to Chad, founder and patron saint of Lichfield, than it does to Becket.⁹

Such minor variations notwithstanding, the contrast between all the Sarum examples and all the continental Uses with regard to Becket is stark: he was expansively commemorated in the former, minimally in the latter. (Horae of the Use of York vacillate between these extremes, invariably featuring the primary feast and the translation in their calendars but only occasionally the octave, often allotting Becket a suffrage but rarely including him in the litany: Table 4.) If at one level this is simply reporting one of the ways in which a Sarum book of hours differs from those of other Uses – well known to liturgists and those who catalogue manuscripts – at another level it highlights fundamental differences in interest in Thomas Becket among the laity of Europe. Although he was England's most celebrated and widely-recognised saint, whose martyrdom was a universal feature of the western Christian calendar, the evidence of horae suggests that personal devotion to him among lay-folk was largely confined to his homeland, above all its southern province; the occasional modest responses on the other side of the Channel were generally in the areas that were closest to southern England and which were under English domination for a couple of decades in the fifteenth century. A non-Sarum book of hours that includes fuller commemoration of Becket is thus worthy of note as, reciprocally, is a Sarum one that features lesser commemoration.

⁹ DUL, Moriarty 1. The suffrage for Chad precedes that of Becket; and while Becket is included in only one of the multiple litanies (his name in ordinary ink), Chad features in all five of them, always the first of the confessors, his name written in red. For Walle himself see A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, 3 vols. (Oxford 1957-9), III, 1966.

TEXTS

THE texts in horae most commonly associated with Thomas Becket take the form of a suffrage (or *memoria*) dedicated to him, invariably appearing as part of a sequence of such devotional appeals which address in turn divers members of the company of heaven. The devotion in question generally comprises an acclamation (in the form of an antiphon or a sequence) followed by a verse and a response, concluding with one or more prayer(s). The most common types are given in the Appendix. The ultimate purpose of these, as of other suffrages, is encapsulated in the pithy verse and response which plead, ‘Pray for us, pious Thomas’, ‘That we may be saved every day’.¹⁰ Correspondingly, the accompanying prayers typically request God to help the suppliant through the merits and sufferings of Archbishop Thomas. Thus one frequently-occurring example implores ‘O God ... make us, we beseech you, by [Thomas’s] merits and prayers so to pass thus through the miseries of this age that we are able to attain the joys of heaven’.¹¹

The extent to which such texts articulated the particularities of Becket’s mortal life, as opposed to asserting the generalities of saintly status, varied from case to case. The antiphon that opens the suffrage for him in the Hours of Philip the Bold (Fig. 2) – ‘The glorious friend of God, Thomas, grounded in the confession of the Lord Jesus, stands utterly fearless among the pains of tortures and, at length, distinguished by triumphal death, seeks the heavens, crowned with blood’¹² – was also used for other martyrs, including St Lawrence. Although the phrase ‘crowned with blood’ had obvious literal relevance to Becket, the celebration of fortitude in the

¹⁰ Appendix, no. 1. TCC, B.11.14, fol. 12r, appends to the phrase: ‘in hac vita’ (‘in this life’).

¹¹ Appendix, no. 1.

¹² Appendix, no. 7.

face of painful tortures hardly fitted the circumstances of an archbishop who, though intransigently at odds with and ‘oppressed’ by a king, met his end by being swiftly albeit brutally cut down.

Two other antiphons that sometimes begin suffrages for Becket, although broadly evocative of his circumstances, contain little that is specific to his case as opposed to that of many other martyrs: ‘You, O Christ, through the blood of Thomas that he expended for you, make us rise up to where Thomas ascended’; ‘Truly this man is a martyr who, for the name of Christ, poured out his blood, who did not fear the threats of judges, nor sought the glory of earthly dignity, but happily came to the celestial kingdoms’.¹³ On the contrary, they apotheosise his christian achievement in terms of general canons of martyrdom, and this was doubtless their point. The entry for Becket within the metrical litany in the Hours of Elizabeth the Queen – ‘O St Thomas, flower of pastors, premier bishop of the English, you fall by the sword of impious men for the virtues of the church ... and you are not afraid to be cut down by raging madmen’ – manages to embrace a little more detail that was particular to Becket while still broadcasting how he conformed to the universalities of christian martyrdom.¹⁴ Verbal play on the *corona* (‘crown’) of Becket’s head that was sliced off, and the *corona* of martyrdom that consequently adorned it would seem an obvious and appealing way to have linked a telling detail of the archbishop’s case to general canons of sanctity; however, none of the texts in our books availed themselves of this opportunity.

¹³ Appendix, nos. 2 and 3.

¹⁴ BL, Add. MS 50001 (K. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490*, 2 vols. (London 1996), I, no. 55), fols. 139v-140r: ‘Sancte thoma flos pastorum, presul primus anglicorum, ense cadis impiorum, ecclesie pro uiribus. Pro nobis pater dempseris qui libertatem -?-queris, et trucidar[i] non ueris a furiosis furibus’.

A fourth Becket antiphon celebrates its subject by assimilating him to Christ: ‘The Shepherd cut down in the middle of his flock has brought peace at the price of his blood ... the flock breathes again, the shepherd having died’.¹⁵ The imagery borrows purposefully from John 10.7-18 where Christ declares, ‘I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep’, continuing, ‘I lay down my life to receive it back again’. Like Christ before him, Becket is a willing victim for the sake of his flock, receiving eternal life through the surrender of his mortal frame. Mention of Becket’s mother as mourning yet applauding her son’s self-sacrifice – ‘the grieving mother rejoices in her son because he lives, a victor beneath the sword’ – fortifies the parallel with the crucifixion (depictions of which normally included a grief-stricken or swooning Mary), while articulating the paradox of simultaneous joys and sorrows that was often spelled out in relation to Mary herself in books of hours.

By contrast, the much longer sequence, *Gaude lux londoniarum, Thoma tutor animarum*, that heads many suffrages for Becket was highly specific to the life of its subject (Fig. 1).¹⁶ Its seven verses celebrate in turn Becket’s birth, his confrontation with the King of England, his exile, the divine prediction of his death, his return to England, his martyrdom, and his translation. Recurring in each stanza is the phrase *die martis*: Becket was born on that day, he was arraigned by the king and exiled then; it was on that day that he experienced a prophecy foretelling his death, that he re-crossed the Channel, that he was martyred, and that he was translated. *Dies martis* of course means ‘Tuesday’; these events did indeed occur on – or were credited to –

¹⁵ Appendix, no. 5. John 10.7-8 was also used in liturgies for his feast day and translation: K. B. Slocum, *Liturgies in Honour of Thomas Becket* (Toronto 2004), 200 and 316.

¹⁶ Appendix, no. 1; also U. Chevalier, *Repertorium hymnologicum*, 6 vols. (Louvain 1892-1921), no. 26999; *Analecta hymnica*, ed. G. M. Dreves, C. Blume et al., 55 vols. (Leipzig 1886-1922), XXIX, 89.

Tuesdays, and the association between Becket and that day was an early and enduring part of his mythology.¹⁷ Simultaneously, however, since the phrase literally means ‘the day of Mars’, god of war, this recurrent term is like a drum-beat pulsing through the hymn, advertising the cataclysm of impious violence that was to define Becket’s sanctity. The same phrase was used to similar effect in the first seven verses of *Gaude Thoma martir Christi*, a nine-verse sequence for Becket that likewise lauds in turn the most momentous events of his life.¹⁸

Reflecting the underlying purpose of all suffrages, *Gaude lux londoniarum* ends, after celebrating Becket’s translation in Canterbury on a Tuesday, with the claim that through him was granted God’s salvation; while *Gaude Thoma martir Christi* concludes by entreating Thomas, ‘Pray for us: request that we may enjoy eternal rest’. A prayer that often accompanies the former hymn echoes its use of *die martis* – ‘O God, you who have crowned with glory and honour, blessed Thomas your martyr and pontiff who on *die martis* was oppressed with various tribulations for your church’ – before going on to beg for salvation through him: ‘fit us, we beseech you, by his merits and prayers, so to pass through the miseries of this age that we can attain the joys of heaven’.

Other prayers that are intermittently used in suffrages for Becket start by highlighting alternative aspects of his life. One joins praise of ‘the father who sired him and the mother from whom he was born’ to that of Becket himself.¹⁹ Another singles out his exile and return,

¹⁷ Summarised by Slocum, *Liturgies*, 247-252, with 266-7.

¹⁸ Appendix, no. 4.

¹⁹ Appendix, no. 1. For the fables concerning Becket’s parents see note 74. For a prayer found in some horae that was intermittently attributed to Becket’s mother see C. Scott-Stokes, *Women’s Books of Hours in Medieval England* (Woodbridge 2006), no. 19.

beginning, ‘... O lord God Almighty, who willed that blessed Thomas the archbishop [be] recalled into the church from exile’.²⁰ Both go on to celebrate his martyrdom: ‘Blessed be the hour when Thomas ... suffered death for the love of God and for the rights of the church’; ‘[God] willed that blessed Thomas ... submit to swords for the church’. A third prayer calls upon Becket himself to intervene in the affairs of men – ‘Guide those who are active, raise up those who are laid low, reform our customs, deeds and life, and direct us in the way of peace’²¹ – while the pair summarised above both end by begging for spiritual benefits through the archbishop: ‘Through that most gracious conception, birth, election and glorious passion may my prayers be heard and my desire for good fulfilled’; ‘grant, we beseech, that by his merits and prayers we may wholly avoid peril of the soul, visible and invisible’.

Some horae include another text that was commonly associated with Thomas Becket (uncertainties surrounding the attribution will not have troubled medieval readers and are irrelevant in the present context).²² This was not a further devotion in honour of the martyred archbishop, but rather a hymn in praise of the Virgin Mary that Becket was credited with composing. The hymn in question is the famous *Gaude flore virginale que honore speciale* which, in seven verses, lauds its subject as surpassing in worthiness all angels and saints, as illuminating the world with the light of peace, as being able to secure from Christ whatever she requests, as being

²⁰ Appendix, no. 3.

²¹ Appendix, no. 6.

²² For contrasting modern views see F. J. E. Raby, *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Oxford 1934), II, 140; J. Szöveffy, *Die Annalen der lateinischen Hymnendichtung, ein Handbuch II. Die lateinischen Hymnen vom Ende des 11. Jahrhundert bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Berlin 1965), 147-8; and A. G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066-1422* (Cambridge 1992), 344 n. 38.

exulted on earth and in heaven by God, as sitting next to the Holy Trinity, and for the fact ‘that these seven joys shall always endure and shall never end’.²³

Sometimes the hymn appears without any rubric,²⁴ or with one that makes no mention of its putative author.²⁵ Other times, by contrast, it is introduced by a short rubric that attributes it to Becket: ‘These are the seven spiritual joys of the blessed Virgin Mary set forth by the blessed Thomas’;²⁶ ‘Here begin the seven joys which [Mary] now has in heaven, set forth by blessed

²³ Appendix, no. 7; *Analecta Hymnica*, ed. Dreves *et al.*, XXXI, 198-9; Chevalier, *Repertorium*, no. 6810; V. Leroquais, *Les Livres d’heures manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale*, 3 vols. (Paris-Macon 1927), I, xxvii; II, 343-4 (no. xxxii). A more common form of the first line is ‘Gaude flore virginali honoreque speciali’.

²⁴ E.g. DUL, SA 0011 (sheets from an otherwise unwitnessed, apparently abandoned Sarum horae printed by Richard Pynson, c. 1500).

²⁵ E.g. ‘De nostre Dame’ (BnF, lat. 1399, fol. 24r); ‘Septem gaudia beate marie virginis’ (JRUL, lat. 20, p. 154; Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, W082, fol. 305v; BL, Add. 17012, fol. 93r); ‘Les VII ioyes nostre Dame’ (JRUL, lat. 164, fol. 217r); ‘Alia gaudia beatissime marie uirginis spiritualia’ (DUL, Bamburgh Select 22, fol. liiii recto); ‘Oratio ad uirginem Mariam’ (BnF, lat. 1368, fol. 52v); ‘Oratio bona de Sancta Maria’ (BnF, lat. 13264, fol. 30r); ‘Sequuntur septem gaudia beate Marie uirginis spiritualia que modo habet in paradiso’ (BnF, lat. 1410, fol. 110v); ‘Devote oreison’ (BnF, lat. 13271, fol. 181v).

²⁶ ‘Hec sunt septem gaudia spiritualia beate Marie uirginis edita a beato Thomas’: BnF, lat. 1063, fol. 271r; Leroquais, *Livres d’heures* I, p. 47.

Thomas the bishop of Canterbury’;²⁷ ‘There follow the seven spiritual joys of blessed Mary the Virgin which she now has in Paradise, composed by the blessed Thomas martyr etc.’;²⁸ ‘A devoute prayer of the vij spirituall ioyes of oure blessyd lady shewed unto saint Thomas of Cantorberi’.²⁹

Occasionally, the rubric is considerably longer and describes the miraculous circumstances that led to the composition of the work:³⁰ ‘We read that the blessed Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, repeated the seven temporal joys of the most blessed Virgin Mary daily with great devotion. And on one occasion while he was saying those same joys in the oratory in his accustomed manner, the Virgin appeared to him and said, “Why do you rejoice and celebrate so much concerning the joys that were in the past; and concerning those joys in which I now rejoice in heaven and which endure forever you neither rejoice nor celebrate? Rejoice therefore and exult with me about the rest”. The Virgin goes on to enumerate the seven joys in question. She ends with the promise: ‘whoever will venerate me by rejoicing in these joys shall, at the departure of his soul from his body, obtain my immediate consoling. And I shall free his soul from malign enemies. And I shall present him in the sight of my son, that with me he

²⁷ ‘Incipiunt septem gaudia que nunc habet in celis edita a beato thoma cantuariensi episcopo’ (DUC, 31, fol. 173v). BL, Sloane 2321, fols. 123v-124r, has ‘Item quinque [sic] gaudia de gloriosa virgine Maria secundum Thomam Cantuariensem’.

²⁸ ‘Secuntur septem gaudia beate marie uirginis spiritualia q[ue] modo habet in paradiso, composita a beato thoma martire etc’ (EUL 43, fol. 25r).

²⁹ DUL, Bamburgh Select 20, fol. xxxix verso.

³⁰ Appendix, no. 7. For a version with slightly different wording see Leroquais, *Livres d’heures*, II, no. 212 (reporting Paris, BnF, lat. 13285 (Sarum), fol. 53r-v).

may possess the eternal joys of paradise'. Only then comes the more prosaic, 'There follow the seven joys composed by the aforementioned blessed Thomas the Martyr'.

This is an example of a type of rubric that appears intermittently but persistently in horae of all sorts, whose function was to buttress the authority and to promote the efficacy of a particular prayer or devotion by demonstrating its spiritual credentials, claiming that it had been miraculously inspired or that it was associated with someone of great holiness. What is of relevance in the present context is that the recipient of the supposed revelation in this case was Thomas Becket. In contradistinction to his portrayal elsewhere in horae – either as an august, high-ranking churchman or, more commonly, as a martyr – here a different aspect of his persona is highlighted. Insight is purportedly afforded into his own devotional fervour (shown by his daily recitation of the temporal joys of Mary), while his special spiritual grace in life (as opposed to in death) is signalled not only in that he was vouchsafed a personal audience with, or a miraculous vision of, the Virgin, but also by the fact that it was he who was chosen as the vessel to transmit to mankind an appropriate account of the heavenly joys that she herself described.³¹ Above all, he is credited with the inspired authorship of a widely-diffused and elegant verse meditation upon Mary and, by extension, with being a skilled hymnographer.

³¹ The widely-diffused *s. xiii*^{3/4} *Legenda Aurea* account of Becket indicated a special relationship between him and the Virgin via a tale in which the latter miraculously mended his hair shirt: Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. B. Häuptl, 2 vols. (Freiburg 2014), I, 254-62 at 258. This was repeated in the *Nova Legenda Anglie: Nova Legenda Anglie as collected by John of Tynemouth, John Capgrave and others ...*, ed. C. Horstman, 2 vols. (Oxford 1901), II, 373-402 at 396. The *s. xiii*^{2/2} 'Saga of Archbishop Thomas' claimed that Becket cultivated a particular devotion to Mary from his childhood: *Thómas Saga Erkebyskups*, ch. 4, ed. E. Magnússon, 2 vols. (London 1875-83), I, 18.

As it happens, the extended rubric to this hymn appears on the most celebrated opening of one of the most famous of all books of hours – that of Mary of Burgundy (Fig. 3).³² The first devotional text that the user of this magnificent book encountered was *Gaude flore virginale* and the very first text of all (after the calendar) was the account of how Thomas Becket, while performing his Marian devotions, was rewarded with an apparition of the Virgin herself who inspired him to compose this hymn.

IMAGERY

IN the Hours of Mary of Burgundy, the long rubric to *Gaude flore virginale* is headed by an historiated initial (Fig. 3). Corresponding to the text it precedes, this shows the Virgin holding the Christ-child and standing before Thomas Becket who, in full archiepiscopal garb, kneels at a lectern – doubtless performing his daily Marian devotions. The juxtaposition of this vignette with the famous ‘window’ miniature on the facing page was surely to imply that just as Becket was rewarded with this celestial encounter, so the young woman depicted there, by applying herself assiduously to her Marian devotions, may like the archbishop of Canterbury enjoy a personal encounter with the Mother of God; there is presumably the further hope that the

³² Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1857, fol. 15r-v. Facsimile: *Gebetbuch Karls des Kühnen vel potius Stundenbuch der Maria von Burgund*, ed. F. Unterkircher and A. de Schryver, 2 vols. (Graz 1969); also *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy*, ed. E. Inglis (London 1995).

woman herself, not to mention the secular figures shown worshipping the Virgin and Child behind her, will enjoy the salvation proclaimed at the end of Becket's hymn.³³

The imagery accompanying the suffrage for Becket in some horae depicts its subject as a serene archiepiscopal figure, be it in bust form (Fig. 1),³⁴ full-length holding a cross-staff or crosier,³⁵ thus beside an altar being blessed by the hand of God (Fig. 4),³⁶ standing placidly with a sword in his head,³⁷ even seated clutching a sword himself (redolent of St Paul)³⁸ or standing over some fallen personage (reminiscent of St Michael).³⁹ Those that feature sword, head wound or halo are manifestly showing their subject as a member of the company of heaven rather than in life. Examples without those attributes could conceivably be the latter; however, they are more

³³ Views about the identity of the patron and recipient of the book are conveniently summarised in T. Kren and S. McKendrick (ed.), *Illuminating the Renaissance: the triumph of Flemish manuscript painting in Europe* (Los Angeles and London 2003), no. 19.

³⁴ E.g. BL, Add. 50001, fol. 15v; Bod., Rawl.liturg.d.1, fol. 104v.

³⁵ E.g. DUL, Bamburgh Select 46, fol. li recto; Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Solger 4.4^o, fol. 17r: E. Simmons, *Les Heures de Nuremberg* (Paris 1994), pl. xiv.

³⁶ E.g. York Minster Library, Add. MS 2 (The Bolton Hours), fol. 38v: Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, II, no. 33.

³⁷ FM, McClean 90, fol. 10r; London, Sam Fogg, 'Beauchamp Hours'.

³⁸ BL, Add 50001, fol. 15v; Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, 70, fol. 179r. Facsimile: *Stephan Lochner Gebetbuch, 1451*, ed. E. König (Stuttgart 1989); also K. Staub (ed.), *Stephan Lochner Gebetbuch, 1451* (Wiesbaden 1996), 131.

³⁹ E.g. DUL, Bamburgh Select 20, fol. xix recto.

probably still the former (or were understood to embrace both states). And whatever the precise intention – and reception – of individual cases, the general significance of them all was plainly that, just as in life Becket had served the church and prayed for Christians, so now he did so with even greater efficacy in heaven.

The majority of depictions of Becket in horae, by contrast, show the moment of his martyrdom, as one might expect: for this was the event that defined his sanctity. Such images were produced by a multitude of artists who differed widely not only in talent but also in terms of the time and care they devoted to their work, reflecting the enormous range and very different financial resources of the clientele they served; inevitably, therefore, the results, judged on aesthetic grounds, vary from the fine to the jejune.⁴⁰ As devotional aids, however, the efficacy of these miniatures is linked more to iconographic content and emotive power than to technical finesse. Evaluated by these criteria, a version by a skilled practitioner such as the Boucicaut Master (a leading Parisian illuminator at the beginning of the fifteenth century) may be in no wise superior to one by a minor talent. Indeed, the customisation of the image of the martyrdom in the Boucicaut Master's eponymous book so as to have the patron's devices entirely covering not only the altar frontal but also the retable removes a detail that in many lesser versions adds to the resonance of the scene (as we shall see).⁴¹

⁴⁰ Compare Figs. 5-7 with 10.

⁴¹ Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André, 2, fol. 24v: A. Châtelet, *L'Âge d'or du manuscrit à peintures en France au temps de Charles VI et les heures du Maréchal Boucicaut* (Dijon 2000), 252. Retable and frontal are covered in a chequered pattern, the squares alternately green then white (Boucicaut's colours), each featuring a palm branch (a device associated with his wife, Antoinette de Turenne).

Among the visually most sophisticated portrayals of the scene are those in the Hastings and the Queen Mary Hours, both of which are distinguished by their artists' command of pictorial space, ecclesiastical architecture, and volumetric figures (Figs. 5-6).⁴² Adding to the illusion of verisimilitude, such aesthetic qualities make these interpretations seem all the more real and brutal, arguably inviting greater engagement and empathy from the viewer. Further aspects of the version in the Hastings Hours that are both atypical and powerful are the view from behind, which makes the beholder almost part of the company of murderous knights, and the fact that Becket is not merely murdered *at* an altar, he is apparently being cut down *onto* it, underscoring his status as a sacrifice in the likeness of Christ.⁴³

In most renderings (whatever their artistic quality) the contrast between the active postures of the knights and the stillness of the archbishop underlines the serenity of the latter, highlighting his status as a willing sacrifice. The point is particularly clear in a Flemish interpretation of c. 1500, where Becket in his mass robes is flanked by knights in heavy plate armour (Fig. 7).⁴⁴ Equally, the presence of a halo around Becket's head broadcasts his heavenly sanctity at, not just after, his slaughter (Fig. 5). Versions that show the action closer to the beholder, irrespective of their style and artistic merit, tend to increase the sense of threat,

⁴² BL, Add. 54782, fol. 55v: D. H. Turner, *The Hastings Hours* (London 1983); J. Backhouse, *The Hastings Hours* (London 1996), 16. Bod., Auct.D.inf.2.13, fol. 34v: L. M. J. Delaissé, *A Century of Dutch Manuscript Illumination* (Berkeley 1968), 78.

⁴³ The design was replicated in Oxford, The Queen's College, 349, fol. 14v (Sarum; made in Flanders, s. xv/xvi): P. Kidd, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of the Queen's College, Oxford* (Oxford, 2016), 203-11.

⁴⁴ BL, Add. 17012, fol. 28v: E. Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers 1240-1570* (New Haven and London 2006), ill. 103.

enhancing the dramatic impact of the spectacle. Thus in one English example which presents the four knights as a mass of figures crowding in on Becket, two of them simultaneously dealing blows to his head, an atmosphere of claustrophobia is added to the violence (Fig. 8).⁴⁵ It is, predictably, in an early sixteenth-century Flemish rendering that the scene is shown closest of all, the figures so large and cropped that their heads and torsos fill the frame to oppressive effect (Fig. 9).⁴⁶ Moreover, as *horae* were, by definition, books for private devotion, these (as all our images) will have been experienced close-to – held in the reader’s hand.

As with depictions of the martyrdom in other contexts and media, there was little concern for historical accuracy, even in relation to the number of knights. The canonical four are

⁴⁵ Boulogne, Bibliothèque municipale, 93, fol. 17v: Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, II, no. 7. Cf. WAM, W105, fol. 14r: R. S. Wieck, *The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (London 1988), fig. 95. Contrast the effect of compositions such as EUL 43, fol. 145v, which have a lot of empty space in the foreground and whose knights are distant figures.

⁴⁶ BL, King’s 9 (Hours of Anne Boleyn), fol. 38v: J. P. Carley, *The Books of King Henry VIII and his Wives* (London 2004), 105-7; S. Doran (ed.), *Henry VIII, Man and Monarch* (London 2009), no. 108.

sometimes shown⁴⁷ but more commonly it is three;⁴⁸ and cases of two⁴⁹ or even one⁵⁰ – the *non minus ultra!* – also appear (Fig. 10), despite the fact that the compositions in question almost always have room for more. Indeed conversely, there is at least one example that boasts six knights.⁵¹ Edward Grim holding a cross-staff may or may not be included, a cut to his arm rarely featuring outside the earlier English examples.⁵² The cowering figure he has sometimes become seems calculated to provide a dramatic contrast with the fearless prayerfulness of the archbishop,

⁴⁷ E.g. Boulogne 93, fol. 17v; BL, Add. 54782, fol. 55v; Harley 1251, fol. 48r; Yates Thompson 13, fol. 85v; New York, Morgan Library, M105, fol. 46r: R. S. Wieck, *Painted Prayers. The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York, 1997), no. 87.

⁴⁸ E.g. DUC 10, fol. 15v (M. Smeyers, *Vlaamse Miniaturen voor Van Eyck, Catalogus* (Leuven 1993), no. 5; J. Kelly (ed.), *Treasures of Ushaw College* (London 2015), 58-61); EUL 43, fol. 145v; BL, Add. 17012, fol. 28v; Harley 2900, fol. 56v; Harley 2985, fol. 29v; King's 9, fol. 38v; JRUL, lat. 20, p. 54; Bod., Auct.D.inf.2.13, 34v; WAM, W105, fol. 14r (Wieck, *Book of Hours*, fig. 95).

⁴⁹ E.g. CUL, Ii.6.14, fol. 22v (P. Binski and P. Zutshi, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts. A Catalogue of the Collection in Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge 2011), no. 374, pl. CXXXIV); EUL, 43, fol. 43r; KB, 76.F.2, fol. 259v; BL, Arundel 318, fol. 19v; Bod., Laud lat. 15, fol. 14v.

⁵⁰ E.g. DUC, 12, fol. 1v; BL, Stowe 22, fol. 25r.

⁵¹ BL, Harley 2846 (Sarum; Flanders, s. xv^{med}), fol. 33v: two are shown in full, helmet tops implying another four behind them.

⁵² Present: e.g. WAM, W105 (with cut to arm); Boulogne 93; BL, Add. 17012; Harley 1251 (?cut); Harley 2900; Stowe 22; Yates Thompson 13 (cut). Absent: e.g. DUC 10 and 12; JRUL, lat. 20; BL, Arundel 318; Harley 2846; Harley 2985; Kings 9; Bod., Laud lat. 15.

while conveying the horror and sacrilege of the event (Fig. 11).⁵³ Becket is often depicted receiving (or having received) a cut to his crown (Figs. 5-12),⁵⁴ however, sometimes a more generic blow to the head is shown, and in a few cases it is another part of his anatomy that is being stabbed.⁵⁵ The blood that flows from the archbishop's wounds (wherever they may be) illustrates his shedding of his life-blood for his church in imitation of Christ, and corresponds to the texts used in many suffrages (noted above) that allude to his blood – the substance which was also, of course, the primary relic liberally distributed from Canterbury. Yet even this detail is not invariable and there are examples that feature no blood.⁵⁶ Despite nestling within an antiphon that declares that Thomas 'seeks the heavens crowned with blood' the imagery in no less a book than the Hours of Philip the Good of Burgundy, though violent, shows no actual blow to the head (instead the archbishop is being stabbed twice in his back) and it fails to include any indication of blood (Fig. 2).⁵⁷

An element that is almost invariably present by the fifteenth century is a chalice on the altar, again underlining the parallel between the martyrdom of the archbishop and the

⁵³ E.g. EUL, 43, fol. 145v.

⁵⁴ E.g. BL, Add 54782, fol. 55v and Kings 9, fol. 38v show blood running from a slice across his crown; EUL, 43, fols. 43r and 145v and NY, Morgan Library, M 105, fol. 46r feature a sword penetrating deep into the crown.

⁵⁵ In BL, Arundel 318, fol. 19v he is stabbed in the arm, in KB, 76.F.2, fol. 259v in the back.

⁵⁶ E.g. BL, Harley 5312, fol. 28v.

⁵⁷ KB, 76.F.2, fol. 259v.

archetypal sacrifice of Christ.⁵⁸ A further overtone here is that, just as Christ's death brought the possibility of redemption for mankind, so through his execution Becket had become a more potent intercessor towards the same end. In one Flemish rendering of c. 1500 the link to the crucifixion is broadcast by the enormous cross that is prominently displayed on the archbishop's chasuble (fig. 7).⁵⁹

The retable, although occasionally left plain⁶⁰ or decorated with a simple cross,⁶¹ is commonly shown adorned with one of two subjects: the crucifixion (Figs. 6 and 11) or the Virgin and child (Figs. 5, 7, 9, 12).⁶² The former is an obvious complement to the chalice, further stressing the correlation between Becket and Christ. The latter evokes the archbishop's devotion to Mary as encapsulated in his presumed hymn to her and the story surrounding it, a reference that is particularly apt and resonant in the context of horae, books whose primary focus was the Virgin. Many ancillary prayers included in horae begged Mary to be present in person when the

⁵⁸ Pre-*s.* xv examples without a chalice include BL, Yates Thompson 13, fol. 85v and WAM, W105, fol. 14r.

⁵⁹ BL, Add. MS 17012, fol. 28v; Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, ill. 103.

⁶⁰ E.g. in BL, Harley 2982, Harley 5312; also R. S. Wieck, *Picturing Piety: The Book of Hours* (London 2007), no. 7 (Use of Sarum, S. Netherlands, xv¹). BL, Yates Thompson 13 and WAM, W105 have no retable.

⁶¹ E.g. in Bod., Laud lat.15, fol. 14v; WAM, W105, fol. 14r.

⁶² The retable depicted in New York, Morgan Library, M105, fol. 46r features Virgin and Child of the Sun and Moon: Wieck, *Painted Prayers*, no. 87.

user died.⁶³ Eliding distinctions between the historic past, the user's present, and their hoped-for future, this ideal is given venerable form in depictions that show the archbishop of Canterbury dying with an image of the Virgin immediately before his eyes.

These iconographies are, of course, akin to those of diverse representations in other media and settings, the parities and repetitions reinforcing their collective authority.⁶⁴ What is distinctive about images of Becket in horae is less their content than their context – within a book designed for private devotion, intimately associated with the texts and observances summarised above; an object that would be cradled in the reader's hands as it was used. Those depictions that incorporated Marian elements were particularly well integrated into the spiritual world of horae with its focus on the Virgin.

CONCLUSION

THE key points arising from our material may be summarised under four headings. First, lay devotion to Thomas Becket in the later Middle Ages was, the evidence of horae suggests, largely restricted to England. Although the archbishop's martyrdom was a universal church feast, his cult barely featured in the horae of continental Christians otherwise.

⁶³ Incipits of specimen examples: 'O gloriosissima mater et misericordissima virgo Maria, obsecro te ...'; 'Saluto te sancta Maria regina celorum domina angelorum ...'; 'Sancta Maria dei genitrix mitissima domina per amorem unigeniti filii ...'.

⁶⁴ Old but still standard repertories of Becket imagery are T. Borenius, 'The Iconography of St. Thomas of Canterbury', *Archaeologia* 79 (1929), 29-54; idem, 'Addenda to the Iconography of St. Thomas of Canterbury', *Archaeologia* 81 (1931), 19-32; idem, *St. Thomas Becket in Art* (London 1932).

As the central player in a clash that led to the public penance and humiliation of a king of England, Becket, it might be thought, could have appealed to French patrons during the Hundred Years War. However, the relevant horae do not suggest that such was the case. He has no prominence, for example, in the personal books of hours of Jean de Dunois or Prigent de Coëtivy, leading military figures on the French side during the climactic stages of the conflict in the mid-fifteenth century.⁶⁵ But then as a symbol of ecclesiastical resistance to the state, Becket could be taken to stand for the church as a whole in relation to predatory secular regimes in general rather than just for Canterbury in opposition to the King of England in particular.⁶⁶ And this persona (unlike that of the good shepherd) will hardly have endeared him to the many laymen, of whatever country or class, who had no more love for a rich and rapacious institutional church than for overbearing royalty. Becket was allotted a suffrage in the Hours of Jean II Le Meingre (known as Boucicaut) who, marshall of France from 1391, was captured by

⁶⁵ BL, Yates Thompson 3: A. Châtelet, 'Les Heures de Dunois', *Art de l'enluminure* 25 (2008), 12-73; R. Gameson, 'Sin and Salvation in the Dunois Hours' in *Illuminating the Middle Ages*, ed. L. Cleaver, A. Bovey and L. Donkin (Leiden, 2020), 369-94. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, W082: J. Unkel, *Miniature Masterpiece. The Coëtivy Hours* (Dublin 2018). TCC, B.11.31+32, produced around the period of Azincourt, is the Parisian example in our sample that gives Becket greatest prominence, featuring both his translation and his martyrdom in the calendar and including him in the litany (albeit as the 38th of 38 martyrs); nevertheless, despite having an exceptionally long series of suffrages (nearly 100), it does not allot him one.

⁶⁶ Henry VIII's view was unequivocally the latter: *Tudor Proclamations*, ed. Hughes and Larkin, 275.

the English at Azincourt in 1415.⁶⁷ However, the set of suffrages in this book is a very lengthy one and as, most unusually, the entry for Becket is immediately followed (in the midst of the suffrages) by a text of *Gaude flore virginali* plus an image of Marshall Boucicaut and his wife praying to a celestial Virgin Mary,⁶⁸ the presence of the archbishop of Canterbury arguably has more to do with devotion to Mary than with hostility to the king of England, let alone towards secular power more generally.

Second, the texts and the images associated with Becket's suffrage ranged in nature from the specific to the generic. Thomas Becket might, therefore, be contemplated by a fifteenth-century English layman or woman on account of the particular details of his life and death, or simply in generalised terms as a saintly martyr. The latter mode of contemplation should be considered, not as depersonalisation, but rather as appropriate reformulation, even apotheosis: whilst it was the martyrdom and the miracles wrought at his shrine and by his shirt- and blood-relics that had assured Becket's status as a saint, by the fifteenth century (the homogenised texts and images imply) he was a well-established member of the company of heaven, united with the rest in sanctity, purity and devotion to God, partaking of, and potentially helping to extend to the faithful, the spiritual potency that the communion of saints as a whole enjoyed.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Paris, Musée André-Jacquemart, 2. Châtelet, *L'Âge d'or*, 221-2, argues for the date-range 1412x16, E. Taburet-Delahaye (ed.), *Paris 1400. Les arts sous Charles VI* (Paris 2004), no. 172, for c. 1408.

⁶⁸ Fol. 26v: Châtelet, *L'Âge d'or*, 254.

⁶⁹ Clearly expressed, e.g., by the presentation of him amidst a panoply of saints arranged four to the page at the front of the Nuremberg Hours (see note 35).

Simultaneously, one is struck by the comparative sobriety of the texts and images that honour Thomas Becket in horae. In contrast to his many varied miracles of healing and reparation reported by the Canterbury monks Benedict then William,⁷⁰ depicted in the windows of Christ Church,⁷¹ and celebrated in the ecclesiastical liturgies,⁷² in contrast to the rather fanciful tales that make up over half of the account of him in the influential *Legenda Aurea*,⁷³ not to mention the fables related about his parents in its English equivalents,⁷⁴ and also in contrast to the outlandish happenings immortalised in the suffrages of other saints (who battle with devils, burst from dragons, free prisoners from their chains, and so on), he is simply immortalised in our books as an archbishop who was cut down for his faith. Whether this comparative sobriety was considered a recommendation or a demerit in a celestial advocate doubtless varied from one user to the next. It is, however, ironic that, as the authority of saints and the credibility of their

⁷⁰ *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. J. C. Robertson, 6 vols.

(London 1875 – 85), I, 1-546, and II, 1-281.

⁷¹ M. H. Caviness, *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral Canterbury*, *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*, Great Britain II (London 1981), 157-64, 176-214; G. Colson, *Every Window Tells a Story: Benedict's and William's Accounts of the Miracles of St Thomas Becket* (Canterbury 2018), *passim*.

⁷² Slocum, *Liturgies*, 92-7, 256-62.

⁷³ Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Häuptl, I, 255-63.

⁷⁴ E.g. *The South English Legendary*, ed. C. D'Evelyn and A. J. Mills, 3 vols., Early English Text Society 235, 236, 244 (Oxford 1956-9), II, 610-92, esp. 610-613; *Supplementary Lives in Some Manuscripts of the Gilte Legende*, ed. R. Hamer and V. Russell, EETS 315 (Oxford 2000), 283-319, esp. 285-7; *John Mirk's Festial*, ed. S. Powell, 2 vols., EETS 334-5 (Oxford, 2009-11), I, pp. 38-44, esp. 38.

legends were being increasingly questioned in reforming circles in the early sixteenth century, the first such casualty in English service books was not someone celebrated for spurious miracles but rather one who was memorialised simply for what had unquestionably happened to him.⁷⁵

Third, if Sarum horae show that Becket was by far the most prominent native saint in English lay devotion, his absence from the litanies and suffrages of some of the copies that were actually made in England indicates limitations in popular affection for him. The consistently fuller commemoration of him in horae that were produced on the continent for the English market than in those that were made in England herself then hints at discrepancies between outsiders' views of his place in the devotional practice of the laity and the realities of that place: *libraires* in Paris, Rouen, Bruges and elsewhere appear to have assumed that, as the most celebrated English saint, Becket was embraced more universally and whole-heartedly by his fellow countrymen than was in fact the case. The occasions in the sixteenth century when the wrong Thomas (i.e. the apostle) was expunged from a book of hours or only the first of Becket's feasts was deleted from a calendar and other, more important ones were left are also suggestive in this connection.⁷⁶ while some such occurrences may reflect resistance to Henry VIII's mandate, collectively their number suggests a degree of unfamiliarity with the saint's key feasts that is difficult to reconcile with a full engagement with his cult.

At a general level, such variations and inconsistencies sit comfortably alongside other evidence for fluctuations in the popularity of the cult of Becket (as of those of other saints) according to time and place.⁷⁷ At a more specific level, they surely reflect differing assessments of

⁷⁵ For the Henrician slant see note 2.

⁷⁶ See note 2.

⁷⁷ Contrast, e.g., E. Woodruff, 'The Financial Aspect of the Cult of St Thomas of Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 44 (1932), 13-32, esp. 16-18 and J. Sumption, *Pilgrimage: an image of medieval*

Becket's status and utility, judged in relation to the core purpose of books of hours. This was to help their users to forge fruitful relationships with influential members of the court of heaven who could help them both in the present world and (above all) on the extended and presumptively painful journey from the present world, via Purgatory, to the next. Such is, after all, what the texts of Becket suffrages sought to achieve. Yet judged by these testing criteria, the martyred archbishop of Canterbury was far from the most obvious or appealing saint to cultivate. Indeed, it is difficult to envisage circumstances in which he would seem preferable to many other members of the company of heaven for this purpose. Even individuals called Thomas had in premier place as their name-saint an apostle.

This leads to the fourth and final point, namely that, while not the most common of Becket texts in horae, yet certainly the most widely distributed across Europe as a whole was the hymn in honour of the Virgin that was intermittently attributed to him.⁷⁸ This, it will be remembered, is the text that begins the Hours of Mary of Burgundy and which immediately follows the suffrage for Becket in the Boucicaut Hours, in both cases associated with an image of the patrons praying to the Virgin. But then, in the greater spiritual and cosmological scheme of things – and horae were first and foremost, as just noted, vehicles to help layfolk negotiate the

religion (London 1975), 164-5, with R. Koopmans, 'Early Sixteenth-Century Stained Glass at St Michael-le-Belfrey and the Commemoration of Thomas Becket in Late Medieval York', *Speculum* 89 (2014), 1040-1100, esp. 1082-1100.

⁷⁸ Leroquais, *Livres d'heures*, reports it in twelve of his MSS (Uses of Meaux, Montiéramey, Orléans, Paris, Rome, Rouen, Troyes and Tournus). It enjoyed further currency in England as, e.g., the climax of *Speculum Christiani*, a popular manual of pastoral care: *Speculum Christiani. A Middle English Religious Treatise of the 14th Century*, ed. G. Holmstedt, EETS 182 (London 1933), cxcii-cxciii.

perils of life, afterlife, and the transition from one to the other – a martyred archbishop came very much lower in dignity and authority, and hence in potential usefulness, than the Queen of Heaven.

APPENDIX: BECKET TEXTS IN HORAE

The texts below are based on the versions in the manuscripts and prints cited; only major discrepancies in their readings are reported. Abbreviations have been silently expanded.

1.EUL 43, fols. 145v-146v; BL, Arundel 341; Harley 2900, fols. 56v-59r.

Gaude lux londoniarum [londiniarum], thoma tutor animarum, dei providencia, natus matris
martis die, sequens vitam vere vie, speciali gratia.

Gaude Thoma persecutus, et per regem allocutus, eius in consilio, dicens veritatem pie, pastor et
hoc fuit die martis sine dubio.

Gaude sine iure vero, primas exsul rege fero, Thoma flos ecclesie, hoc tunc fuit die martis, per
consensum vane partis, gentis regis anglie. [For this stanza EUL 43 has: Gaude pie digne uere
exul et a rege fere thoma flos ecclesie, hoc tunc fuit die martis per confensum [sic] in sane partis
gentis regis anglie.]

Gaude thoma, martis die, vocem audiens messie, cum esses in francia, Thoma thoma dixit deus,
sanguis tuus erit meus, honor in ecclesia.

Gaude trans fretum reversus, pacis [EUL: pacem] ad formam conversus, thoma primas anglie,
die martis transfretasti, tecum fidem comportasti, defensor ecclesie.

Gaude Thoma pastor vere, fide duce [EUL: duci] morti fere, collum subdens gladio, die martis hora nona, meruisti dei dona, diro mortis proelio.

Gaude thoma nominatus, pius [EUL: pie] martir et translatus, villa cantuarie, die martis ut vocatur [EUL: sic notatur] , per te multa [EUL: multis] salus datur, summi dei serie.

V. Ora pro nobis thoma pie [EUL: beate thoma]. R. Ut salvemur omni die. [EUL: Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.]

OR. [EUL; Arundel 341] Deus qui beatum thomam martirem tuum atque pontificem die martis pro ecclesia tua variis tribulacionibus oppressum gloria et honore coronasti, fac nos quesumus eius [suis] meritis et precibus, sic huius seculi [vite] miserias transire, ut ad celi gaudia possimus pervenire, per christum dominum nostrum amen.

[Harley 2900] Benedicatur hora qua thomas natus est et in episcopatum electus est ac pro dei amore et rectis ecclesie mortem passus est, et ille pater qui ipsum genuit, ac eciam illa mater de qua natus est, sint benedicti per illam gratiosam generacionem nativatem electionem et gloriosam passionem exaudiantur preces mee et impleatur desiderium meum in bonum auxiliante dei marieque [martireque] pro ecclesia. Amen.

Rejoice light of Londoners, Thomas guardian of souls, by the providence of God, born of his mother on a Tuesday [the day of Mars], following the life of the true way with special grace.

Rejoice Thomas persecuted and arraigned by the king in his council, speaking truth O pious pastor, and this was doubtless on a Tuesday.

Rejoice he who was indeed the foremost exile, most unlawfully by a savage king, Thomas flower of the church. This then was [done] on a Tuesday through the agreement of the worthless faction of the king of the nation of England. [Rejoice O pious and truly worthy one and an exile

by a savage king, Thomas flower of the church. This then was [done] on a Tuesday through the agreement of the insane faction of the king of the nation of England.]

Rejoice Thomas on this Tuesday, hearing the voice of the Messiah when you were in France:

Thomas, Thomas, said God, your blood will be my honour in the church.

Rejoice, having returned across the straight [Channel], having conversed for a form of peace, O Thomas primate of England, you have crossed over on a Tuesday and you have carried your faith with you, defender of the church.

Rejoice, Thomas true pastor, led by faith to savage death, yielding your neck to the sword at the ninth hour on a Tuesday, you have merited the gifts of God, in the terrible battle of death.

Rejoice Thomas chosen one, pious martyr and translated in the town of Canterbury. On a Tuesday as it is called, the salvation of God on high was given in earnest through you to many [much salvation was given through you in succession from highest God].

Versè. Pray for us, pious Thomas. *Response.* That we may be saved every day. [That we may be made worthy for the promises of Christ.]

Prayer. O God, you who have crowned with glory and honour, blessed Thomas your martyr and pontiff who on a Tuesday for your church was oppressed with various tribulations, make us, we beseech you by his merits and prayers, so to pass through the miseries of this age [life] that we can attain the joys of heaven. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Blessed be the hour when Thomas was born and was elected to the episcopacy and suffered death for love of God and for the rules of the church; may the father who sired him and also the mother from whom he was born be blessed; through that most gracious conception, birth, election and glorious passion may my prayers be heard and my desire for good be fulfilled with the help of God and of Mary [and the martyr] for the church.

2. Bod., Liturg. 104, fols. 43v-44r; Bod., lat.lit.e.41, fols. 31v-32r; BL, Arundel 318, fol. 50v; DUL, Bam. Sel. 22; EUL 43, fol. 43r; EUL 308, fol. 24r; TCC, B.11.14, fol. 23v. (The antiphon and prayer featured in ecclesiastical liturgies: Slocum, *Liturgies*, 95, 206, 211.)

ANT. Tu per thome sanguinem quem pro te impendit fac nos christe scandere quo [EUL 308: quod] thomas ascendit. [TCC, B.11.14, fol. 23v: ... fac nos christe scandere quo celos ascendit.]

V. Ora pro nobis beate thoma. [thoma pie. / pontifex martir thoma. Not in EUL 43]. Gloria et honore coronasti eum domine, et constituisti eum super opera manuum tuarum. [This, not what follows, is the Response in EUL 43; it is not in EUL 308.] *R.* Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus christi. Ut saluemur omni die. [Not in EUL 308.]

Oremus. Deus pro cuius ecclesia gloriosus pontifex [Bam Sel. 22: martyr et pontifex] thomas [EUL 308 adds: et martir] gladiis impiorum occubuit, presta quesumus ut omnes qui eius implorant auxilium [Bam Sel 22, EUL 43, and Arundel 318 add: pie] petitionis sue salutarem consequantur effectum, Per.

Antiphon. You, O Christ, through the blood of Thomas that he expended for you, make us rise up [to] where Thomas ascended [because Thomas ascended] [... rise up where he ascended the heavens].

Vers. Pray for us blessed/pious Thomas. With glory and honour have you crowned him, O Lord, and you have established him over the works of your hands. *Response.* So that we may be made worthy for the promises of Christ. So that we may be saved every day.

Let us pray. O God, for whose church the glorious pontif [martyr] Thomas fell dead by the swords of impious men, make haste, we beseech you, that all who implore his aid may obtain a beneficial outcome of their [pious] petition.

3. Bod., Douce 231, fol. 45r-v. FM 61, fols. 18v-19r

[FM 61: *Memoire de saint thomas martyr*]

ANT. Hic est uere martyr qui pro christi nomine sanguinem suum fudit qui minuas iudicum non timuit nec terrene dignitatis gloriam quesuiuit sed ad celestia regna feliciter peruenire.

V. Posuisti domine super caput eius. *R.* Coronam de lapide precioso.

OR. Da nobis quesumus domine omnipotens deus ut qui beatum thomam archipresulem ab exilio reuocatum in ecclesia pro ecclesia gladiis subcumbere uoluisti presta quesumus ut eius meritis et precibus uisibilium nimis et inuisibilium periculum anime deuiitemus.

Memorial of St Thomas martyr

Antiphon. This man is truly a martyr who, for Christ's name, poured out his blood, who did not fear the threats of judges nor sought the glory of earthly dignity but [sought] to come blessedly to the celestial kingdoms.

Vers. You have placed on his head, O Lord. *Response.* A crown of precious stone.

Prayer. O Lord God almighty, who willed that blessed Thomas archbishop, recalled into the church from exile, submit to swords for the church, grant we beseech that by his merits and prayers we may wholly avoid peril of the soul visible and invisible.

4. York Minster, Add. 2, fol. 196r-v.

[No rubric]

Gaude thoma martir christi, die martis qui finisti, natus gemma cansie [for 'Cantie'].

Gaude contra quem loquentes, die martis sunt sedentes, optimates anglie.

Gaude fidem dum seruasti, die martis exulasti, cedendo malicie.

Gaude tibi martis die, personabat uox messie, causam dans leticie.

Gaude quod tu es reuersus, die martis non aduersus, pro causa iust\ic/ie.

Gaude pugil preelecte, die martis interfecte, per arma malicie.

Gaude quod tu es translatus, die martis per quem status, redditus ecclesie.

Iuste pater tinor [sic for 'tutor'] qui es, tue septem martis dies, comendamus glorie.

Nobis ergo prece tui, posce quod possumus frui, sempiterna requie.

A [sic for 'V']. Ora pro nobis beate thoma [R] Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

OR. Deus pro cuius ecclesia gloriosus pontifex et martir thomas gladiis impiorum occubuit presta quesumus, ut omnes qui eius implorant auxilium petitionis sue salutarem consequentur effectum per. Amen.

Rejoice Thomas martyr of Christ who met your end on a Tuesday, born the jewel of Kent.

Rejoice you against whom are speaking the nobles of England who are assembled on a Tuesday.

Rejoice: while you served your faith, you were exiled on a Tuesday by the striking of malice.

Rejoice: the voice of the Messiah called to you on a Tuesday, giving cause for joy.

Rejoice that you returned, not deflected, on a Tuesday for the cause of justice.

Rejoice predestined champion, killed on a Tuesday through weapons of malice.

Rejoice that you were translated on a Tuesday, through that status returned to the church.

O just father who are our protector, we commend the seven Tuesdays of your glory.

Therefore pray for us: request that we may enjoy eternal rest.

Versè. Pray for us blessed Thomas. *Response.* That we may be made worthy for the promises of Christ.

Prayer. O God for whose church the glorious pontiff and martyr Thomas was laid low by the swords of the impious, make haste, we beseech you, so that all who implore the help of his intercession may obtain a beneficial outcome.

5. Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, 93, fol.17v. (The antiphon was used in ecclesiastical offices: Slocum, 146.)

Ant. Pastor caesus in gregis medio pacem emit cruoris precio, laetus dolor in tristi gaudio, grex respirat pastore mortuo plangens plaudit mater in filio quia uiuit uictor sub gladio.

V. Gloria et honore [cf. no. 2].

Oratio. Deus pro cuius ecclesia gloriosus martyr ... [as no. 2].

Antiphon. The shepherd cut down in the midst of his flock has bought peace at the price of his blood. O happy sorrow in sad rejoicing: the flock breathes again, the shepherd having died; the grieving mother rejoices in her son because he lives, a victor beneath the sword.

6. York Minster Library, Add. MS 67, fol. 123r-v; TCC, B.11.20, fol. 35r; EUL 39, fols. 23v-24r.

(The antiphon was used in ecclesiastical offices: Slocum, 207.)

De sancto Thoma Cantuariens' archiepiscopo et martire memoria.

Opem nobis o thoma porriga, rege stantes, iacentes erige, mores, actus, et uitam corrige et in pacis nos uiam dirige.

V. Posuisti domine super caput eius. [R]. Corona de lapide precioso [cf. no. 3; EUL 39 is as no. 2].

OR. Deus pro cuius ecclesia ... [as no. 2].

Memorial for St Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury and martyr.

Offer succour to us, O Thomas; guide those who are active, raise up those who are laid low, reform our customs, deeds and life, and direct us in the way of peace.

7. KB, 76.F.2, fol. 259v. (The antiphon was also used for other martyrs.)

De Saint Thomas martir

Gloriosus Dei amicus Thomas ihesu domini confessione fundatus inter tormentorum supplicia stetit imperteritus: ac demum triumphali morte insignis caelos petiuit sanguine laureatus.

V. Gloria et honore ... [as no. 2].

Oremus. Deus pro cuius ecclesia ... [as no. 2].

Of St Thomas martyr. The glorious friend of God, Thomas, grounded in the confession of the Lord Jesus, stands utterly fearless among the pains of tortures and, at length, distinguished by triumphal death, seeks the heavens, crowned with blood.

8. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 1857, fol. 15r-v. (Alternative readings from *Analecta hymnica*, ed. Dreves *et al.*, XXIX, 89.)

Legitur quod beatus Thomas Cantuariensis archiepiscopus septem gaudia temporalia beatissime uirginis marie cotidie cum magna deuocione repetebat. Et eadem gaudia in oratorio suo more solito dicens, beata uirgo Maria semel apparuit ei et dixit, Cur de gaudiis que preterierunt tantum gaudes et letaris et de presentibus quibus in celo nunc gaudeo que durant perpetuo potius non gaudes nec letaris. Gaude ergo et exulta mecum de cetero. Primo quia gloria mea excellit iocunditatem omnium sanctorum. Secundo quia sicut sol illuminat diem sic claritas mea illuminat totam curiam celestem. Tercio quia tota militia celi obedit mihi et semper me veneratur. Quarto quia filio meo et mihi est semper una uoluntas et semper exaudit cunctas preces meas. Quinto quia deus ad placitum meum remunerat omnes seruitores meos nunc et in futuro. Sexto quia proxima sancte trinitati sedeo et uestita sum corpore glorificato. Septimo quia certa sum et securam quod hec vii gaudia semper durabunt et numquam finientur. Et quicumque in hiis gaudiis letando me venerabitur in exitu anime ipsius a corpore presentem consolacionem meam obtinebit. Et animam suam ab hostibus malignis liberabo. Et in conspectu filii mei ut mecum gaudia paradysi perpetua possideat presentabo. Que vii gaudia a beato Thoma martire superpredicta composita sequuntur in hac forma.

Gaude flore virginale, que honore speciale, transcendes splendiferum, angelorum principatum, et sanctorum decoratum, dignitate munerum [numerum].

Gaude sponsa cara dei, nam ut lux clara diei, solis datur lumine, sic tu facis orbem vere, [tuam] pacis resplendere – omitted in Vienna], lucis plenitudine.

Gaude splendens vas virtutum, cui sedes [cuius pendens] est ad nutum, Tota celi curia, te benignam et felicem, ihesu dignam genitricem, veneratur [in] gloria.

Gaude nexu voluntatis, et amplexu caritatis, iuncta sic altissimo, de auditum [Vienna sic for 'auditu'] consequaris, quicquid uirgo postularis, a ihesu dulcissimo.

Gaude mater miserorum, quia pater premiorum [saeculorum], dabit te colentibus, congruentem hic mercedem, et felicem poli sedem, sursum [regnis] in caelestibus.

Gaude humilis beata, corpore glorificata, meruisti maxima, forte tante dignitatis, Ut scis [Vienna sic for 'sis'] sancte trinitatis, sescionis proxima.

Gaude virgo mater pura, certa manens et segura, quot hec tua gaudia, non cessabunt nec decressunt, sed durabunt et florescunt, in perhenne gloria. Amen.

We read that the blessed Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, repeated the seven temporal joys of the most blessed Virgin Mary daily with great devotion. And on one occasion while he was saying those same joys in the oratory in his accustomed manner, the Virgin appeared to him and said, 'Why do you rejoice and celebrate so much concerning the joys that were in the past; and concerning those joys in which I now rejoice in heaven and which endure forever you neither rejoice nor celebrate?. Rejoice therefore and exult with me about the rest. First because my glory surpasses the enjoyment of all the saints. Second because just as the sun illuminates the day, so my splendour illuminates the entire celestial court. Third because the entire host of heaven obeys me and always venerates me. Fourth because my son and I always have the same desire and he always heeds all my prayers. Fifth because, at my pleasure, God rewards all my servants now and in the future. Sixth because I sit next to the Holy Trinity and am clothed in a glorified body. Seventh because I am certain and sure that these seven joys shall always endure and shall never end. And whoever shall venerate me by rejoicing in these joys shall, at the departure of his soul from his body, obtain my immediate consoling. And I shall free his soul from malign enemies. And I shall present him in the sight of my son, that with me he may possess the eternal joys of

paradise'. The seven joys composed by the aforementioned blessed Thomas the martyr follow in this form.

Rejoice, who in the flower of your virginity and in special honour transcend the shining company of angels and the decorated office [company] of saints.

Rejoice beloved spouse of God, for as the clear light of day is furnished by the rays of the sun so you truly make the earth [to be resplendent] with a plenitude of [the] light [of your peace].

Rejoice illustrious vessel of virtues at whose pleasure is a seat [in heaven]; the whole court of heaven venerates you, kind and fortunate, worthy mother of Jesus with glory. [Rejoice illustrious vessel of virtues at whose command is the whole court of heaven [which] venerates you, kind and fortunate, the worthy mother of Jesus in glory.]

Rejoice you are so united in joining of will and embrace of love with the Most High that, at your prayer, you get whatever, virgin, you ask from dearest Jesus.

Rejoice mother of the poor because the father of recompenses [the Ages], will grant to those who cherish you, a suitable reward here, and a favourable celestial abode, above in the heavens [in the heavenly realms].

Rejoice humble blessed one, glorified in your body, you have deservedly the greatest good fortune of such great dignity that you are nearest in seating to the Holy Trinity.

Rejoice, pure virgin mother, remaining sure and serene because these your joys will not cease or decrease, but will endure and flourish in eternal glory. Amen.