

INTRODUCTION

THE DETAILS OF Thomas Becket's life and of the first fifty years or so of his cult are so well-known that they hardly bear retelling.¹ For the fifteenth-century monks who acted as custodians of his shrine there was a handy mnemonic for the most significant events of his path to sainthood—the Seven Wonderful Tuesdays—which they duly copied into the instructions written for their successors in the role.² According to this, Thomas Becket was born on Tuesday, December 21, 1120, the feast day of St. Thomas the Apostle, at a house on London's Cheapside. Passing over his chancellorship (1155–1162) and institution as archbishop of Canterbury in 1162, the next Wonderful Tuesday took place at the Council of Northampton in 1164, when Becket was condemned by the king and barons; and it was a Tuesday when, following this, he went into exile. During his exile in France, at the abbey of Pontigny, it was on a Tuesday when he received a heavenly vision informing him that he would suffer martyrdom for the Church. He returned to England on a Tuesday in 1170, landing at Sandwich on December 1, and less than a month later he was murdered in the north transept of Canterbury Cathedral on Tuesday, December 29. Finally, fifty years later, on Tuesday, July 7, 1220 he was translated from his original resting-place in the crypt to a glorious golden shrine in the chapel now known as the Trinity Chapel.³

For the next three centuries the shrine was to be the epicentre of the most important and resorted-to cult in England, with pilgrims regularly travelling to it from all over Europe.⁴ It was also the focal point of the monastic liturgy of the cathedral priory of Christ Church, one of the largest Benedictine houses in Christendom. Balancing these two functions was a delicate and difficult task.⁵ We are extremely fortunate in that in 1428 the monastic custodians of the shrine felt it necessary to record for their successors the precise manner in which they and their predecessors in the role had found it best to achieve this balancing act. The document they produced, now British Library,

1 The best modern biographies are Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986); Anne Duggan, *Thomas Becket* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004).

2 For the development of the Wonderful Tuesdays in the cult, Kay Brainerd Slocum, *Liturgies in Honour of Thomas Becket* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004), 247–52.

3 For the early cult see Paul Webster and Marie-Pierre Gelin, eds., *The Cult of St. Thomas Becket in the Plantagenet World, c. 1170–c. 1220* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016); Rachel Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate: Miracle Stories and Miracle Collecting in High Medieval England* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 139–200; Kay Brainerd Slocum, *The Cult of Thomas Becket: History and Historiography through Eight Centuries* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 15–140; John Jenkins, "Replication or Rivalry? The 'Becketization' of Pilgrimage in English Cathedrals," *Religion* 49, no. 1 (2019): 24–47 at 27–34; and for the cult in London see John Jenkins, "St. Thomas Becket and Medieval London," *History* 105, no. 367 (2020): 652–72.

4 Ben Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), 128–34.

5 Barrie Dobson, "The Monks of Canterbury in the Later Middle Ages, 1220–1540," in *A History of Canterbury Cathedral*, ed. P. Collinson, N. Ramsay and M. Sparks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 69–153.

Add. MS 59616, is over nine thousand words long and full of unique information about the shrine and the cathedral. It offers an unparalleled window into the management and daily routine at one of Europe's premier medieval cult centres, one of its most important monasteries, and one of its most important cathedrals. For modern scholars wishing to understand the nature and experience of pilgrimage, the use of church space, or the daily monastic life at England's mother church, an understanding of how all these functions interacted with and affected each other must be the key to creating an accurate picture of the medieval experience in Canterbury Cathedral.⁶ The "Customary of the Shrine of St. Thomas," as it is known, helps us to form such a holistic understanding as a snapshot of activities which took place around a major shrine in the early fifteenth century.

The Manuscript

Although the authors, the monastic shrine-keepers John Vyel and Edmund Kyngston, referred to their text as a "processus," historians have settled on the name of the "Customary of the Shrine" and this current edition follows that designation. It is a document of eleven folios measuring 35.5cm by 25cm (14 by 10 inches), with ruled margins of 5.5cm (2 inches) to the left, 4cm (1.5 inches) to the top, and 2.5cm (1 inch) to the right. There are around thirty-six lines of Latin text to each page, in one hand throughout, excepting occasional later corrections, in a neat Anglicana script of the first half of the fifteenth century. Blue ink is used for the initial capitals on the first and last pages, and red ink throughout for numerals, capitals, rubrics, and marginal headings. Decoration is limited to a tasselled manicule on fol. 4r pointing to the stipulation that the clerks should render all offerings to the shrine-keepers, and to a small face, possibly of a monk, drawn in the capital N of "Nunc" on fol. 5r. The document is now bound with two late-thirteenth century copies of French verse *Lives* of Thomas Becket by Beneit de St. Albans and Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence.⁷ These were probably also held at the shrine, as some of the binding material at the end of the volume is a damaged account of plate and vestments lent to Oxford colleges by the shrine-keepers in 1380.⁸

Following purchase of the Customary by the British Library (hereafter BL) from the long-running sale of the Phillipps Collection in 1975, its contents were précised by D. H. Turner in a brief but largely accurate article in the *Canterbury Cathedral Chronicle*, the

6 Simon Coleman and John Jenkins, "The Multivalent Cathedral," in *Pilgrimage and England's Cathedrals: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Dee Dyas and John Jenkins (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020), 147–68.

7 *A Life of Thomas Becket in Verse*, ed. and trans. Ian Short (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2013); *La Vie de Thomas Becket par Beneit, poème anglo-normand du XIIe siècle*, ed. Börje Schlyter (Lund: Gleerup, 1941).

8 The British Library online catalogue <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8363> (accessed February 2, 2021) suggests that a line in this particular MS of Guernes' *Life* points to the document having been recited to pilgrims at the shrine. This is based on a line which is common to all of the copies of the *Life*, not only that bound with the Customary, and as such is no evidence of use.

annual periodical of the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral.⁹ Turner was only concerned with giving a taster of the contents, picking out the broad outlines of the shrine-keepers' duties and some of the more interesting passages, and passing over almost the entire ritual year to focus on the Customary's description of the Feast of the Translation as indicative of the level of detail provided for the rest. It was never his intention to provide a subsequent edition or fuller study, although he hoped that one would appear soon. Nonetheless for many subsequent historians interested in pilgrimage and shrine management his short article has provided the main point of access to the contents of the Customary.

The only edition of the Customary prior to this current work was produced in 1990 by Peter Rowe as a dissertation for the MA in Medieval Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London.¹⁰ This comprised a full transcription of the text, an abbreviated translation, and ten thousand word introduction. Despite efforts to work it up the dissertation was never published, although Peter Rowe has been generous in sharing his work with historians, including the editor of this edition. For this current edition, however, it was necessary to prepare an entirely new transcription from the original manuscript, forming the basis for a new and complete translation, supporting apparatus, and introductory analysis.

The Nature of the Customary

The authors of the Customary tell us much about the circumstances of its creation. They were monks of Christ Church Cathedral Priory, John Vyel and Edmund Kyngston, who were serving as the two shrine-keepers (*feretrarii*) in 1428. Both were monks of some seniority, Vyel having been professed in 1399 and Kyngston in 1401, indicating that both would have been in their mid-forties at the time they were writing.¹¹ Little is known of Kyngston's career apart from his tenure as shrine-keeper. Vyel, on the other hand, went on to hold the important position of sacrist for around ten years, indicating that he had a talent for administration. Indeed, we may pinpoint the finalization of the Customary to the first half of 1428, as at one point it names Prior Wodnesbergh, who died February 28, 1428, in terms which indicate he was still alive, and John Vyel can be seen operating as sacrist from June 1428. The Customary may have been planned by Vyel to set down his accumulated knowledge in anticipation of his change of office. The office of the shrine-keepers was itself one of considerable importance, responsible for overseeing a substantial and highly variable budget, supervising and performing a complex annual sequence of liturgical activities peculiar to the Shrine Chapel, and acting in many ways as the "outward-facing" link between the devotional life of the monks and that of visiting

⁹ D. H. Turner, "The Customary of the Shrine of St. Thomas Becket," *Canterbury Cathedral Chronicle* 70 (1976): 16–22. The post-Reformation history of the Customary MS is detailed below, pp. 44–45.

¹⁰ Peter A. Rowe, "The Customary of the Shrine of St. Thomas Becket" (master's thesis, University of London, 1990).

¹¹ For all known details of Vyel and Kyngston, Joan Greatrex, *Biographical Register of the English Cathedral Priors of the Province of Canterbury c.1066–1540* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 214–15, 310.

laity and pilgrims. This was reflected in the fact that, along with the Treasurership and Chancellorship, it was one of the very few offices with two monks concurrently serving as “obedientiaris,” the term for the monks who had administrative roles within the community.¹²

The authors are seemingly transparent about the creative process, stating that they went through the year chronologically and wrote things down as they came to mind. This excuse is given at a few points in the text for the mispositioning of particular instructions, such as that towards the end of the section on the Mass of St. Thomas at the shrine, where we are belatedly told how the candles should be lit at the start of the Mass. However, the lack of additions and deletions indicate a more polished process than just jotting down from memory, although there are a few points where Vyel and Kingston did slip up. The wrong antiphon is given for Christmas night, although as both start “O beata” and were both Christmas antiphons the mistake is understandable as a slip of memory.¹³ Similarly understandable in this fashion is the confusion of Archbishop Arundel’s sisters, one of whom gave the hangings to be arranged over the shrine cover during the double octave of the Translation feast, attaching the title of one to the name of the other.¹⁴ In the sections on payments for the carriage of wax and the gifts of the servants there are a number of errors including “unda” for “unde,” and “ut” and “ex” where “et” is clearly meant. These are surely transcription errors from a rough draft in secretary hand, of the same kind as the surviving draft of a chamberlain’s customary from the cathedral.¹⁵ The prevalence of transcription errors in the sections on payments, compared to their relative absence from the section on the daily routine and the liturgical year, may point to these two parts having been drawn up by the two shrine-keepers individually, and the copyist having more difficulty reading one of the hands.¹⁶ It would have been appropriate for the liturgical sections to have been compiled by the shrine-keeper which the Customary designates as the “*spiritual*” and the administrative and accounting sections by the “*temporal*.”

Vyel and Kingston address their audience directly, greeting all the current and future monks of the cathedral in a somewhat florid preamble. They state that they wrote this “*processus*” to resolve disputes over the management and observances of the shrine and its chapel, the customary payments due from its revenues, and the duties of the shrine-keepers both within the chapel and to the wider community. The layout and the side-headings act as finding aids, so that the Customary can be used as a quick reference work in resolving any uncertainties. The layout is intended to be as familiar as possible to the readership, starting with an account of daily activities, then running through the liturgical calendar from the day after Michaelmas, mirroring the year as rendered in the financial returns of all the cathedral’s obedientiaris, and ending with a list of regular

¹² R. A. L. Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral: A Study In Monastic Administration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 48.

¹³ See below, pp. 72–73.

¹⁴ See below, pp. 86–87.

¹⁵ CCA DCc–MSSB/C/112.

¹⁶ The Latin of the expenditure section.

payments and expenses. In a postscript they once again address this readership directly, asking them to supply corrections and matters wanting, but imploring them, through a sequence of Scriptural quotations and precedents, not to think ill of them, and to avoid deceitful or spiteful talk.

In form it has elements in common with customaries or “consuetudinaries” from other medieval monasteries. Many of these have survived from monasteries across Europe, dealing with the overall ritual and organizational practices of a particular house, or more particularly with the practices of an individual obedientiary within the house. They were partly intended to flesh out the bare bones of the order’s foundational Rule, and partly to reflect necessary adaptations of practice to local conditions.¹⁷ Around ten house customaries from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries survive from English Benedictine foundations.¹⁸ While many of these describe the general duties of the various obedientiaries, the more detailed responsibilities of each office were often the subject for specific customaries. Very few of these appear to have survived from England, and the fourteenth-century refectorian’s consuetudinary from Winchester Cathedral may be the only one to have yet received a modern printed edition.¹⁹

In the late eleventh century Archbishop Lanfranc drew up a set of statutory customs for the monastic community at Canterbury Cathedral, although it may also have been aimed at a wider Benedictine audience in England.²⁰ He dealt in turn with the ritual year beginning on October 1, the obedientiaries and their offices, and the daily lives of the monks. Parts of Lanfranc’s statutes were stated to still be in use at the cathedral at the turn of the fourteenth century, and at many points in the Customary of the Shrine it is possible to correlate the description of the ritual year in the fifteenth century with that stipulated by Lanfranc in the late-eleventh century.²¹ A copy of instructions for novices at Christ Church from the mid-thirteenth century, itself further explicating Lanfranc’s injunctions to new monks, is of interest in that in contrast with the plainly descriptive or prescriptive tone of the other documents considered here it shares with the Customary of the Shrine an explanatory and didactic approach to its subject.²²

17 For a recent overview of the historiography see Krijn Pansters, “Medieval Rules and Customaries Reconsidered,” in *A Companion to Medieval Rules and Customaries*, ed. Krijn Pansters (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 1–36.

18 Abingdon, Barking, Bury St. Edmund’s, Canterbury St. Augustine’s, Chester, Evesham, Eynsham, Norwich, Westminster, and York St. Mary. Bibliographic details in Christopher A. Jones, “Monastic Custom in Early Norman England: The Significance of Bodleian MS. Wood Empt. 4. Part I: Introduction,” *Revue Bénédictine* 113, no. 1 (2003): 143–46.

19 *A Consuetudinary of the Fourteenth Century for the Refectory of the House of St. Swithun in Winchester*, ed. George W. Kitchin (London: Stock, 1886).

20 Lanfranc, *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. David Knowles and Christopher Brooke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Points of correlation are referred to in the notes to the text and translation.

21 *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi AD 1294–1313*, ed. Rose Graham, Canterbury and York Society 51–52, 2 vols. (1952–1956), 2:820, 2:822; BL, MS Galba E.iv, fol. 28r.

22 Lanfranc, *The Monastic Constitutions*, ed. Knowles and Brooke, 197–221.

Of particular contextual relevance to the creation of the Customary of the Shrine is the draft of a chamberlain's customary from Christ Church written in the late 1420s by the then-chamberlain Thomas Herne, a senior monk who had held a number of important obedientiary positions.²³ On the reverse and foot of a draft of the chamberlain's financial account for 1426/7, and in the same crabbed secretary hand, are a series of instructions for subsequent chamberlains as to the rules for washing and changing the monks' clothes and bedding at various times and points of the year, the ordering of beer and other victuals, and payments to servants. It is quite possible that this chamberlain's customary was composed at the same time as that of the shrine, and thus points to a general trend in the administrative record keeping of the priory at this time. Furthermore, eighty years later the *custos* of the Martyrdom Chapel, William Ingram, prefaced his account book with a brief description of the "burden of the office throughout the year."²⁴ These are no more than a couple of lines, discussed below, on the responsibility to celebrate a Mass on Tuesday mornings, the candles which must be kept lit, and a list of payments owed to those who assisted at the Mass in the chapel on the morning of the Feast of the Martyrdom. In this they replicate, in extreme miniature, many of the concerns as well as the general layout of the Customary. They are also prefaced by the oath sworn by the clerks of the Martyrdom, which is almost exactly the same as that sworn by the clerks of the shrine.²⁵

The Customary of the Shrine is a hybrid of the concerns of monastic customaries and of the obediential consuetudinaries. It is, as the authors state, a *processus*, an ordered account of some of the liturgical and para-liturgical rites of the chapel (which it notes are "not in all respects as in the choir") and a guide to the often fairly mundane duties of the shrine-keepers. It is a combination of the overriding concerns of Benedictine life: the *Opus Dei* and the *Opus manuum*—the service of God and the necessary administration, labour, and monastic life which underpinned it.²⁶ This is reflected as well in the division of labour between the two shrine-keepers, one of whom was to be the *spiritual* in charge of the religious services and the other the *temporal* in charge of administration.

The frequent use of rhetorical devices and framing material, unusual for a "customary" but similar in tone to the "Instructions for Novices" from the cathedral, indicates that it was intended to be read in its entirety as an instructional text. It not only explains how the cult operates within the chapel, and how the shrine-keepers must manage it, but also makes a case for the importance of the office and builds a picture of the mindset which should be brought to it. Pilgrims are presented in a generally positive light as pious and eager to learn, and negative elements such as their dirtiness or irritability are unavoidable by-products of their long journey. At many points the Customary explains

²³ CCA DCc-MSSB/C/112; Greatrex, *Biographical Register*, 197–98.

²⁴ CCA DCc-LitMS/C/11, fol. 37r–v; an overview of the contents is given in G. H. Rooke, "Dom William Ingram and his Account Book, 1504–1533," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 7, no. 1 (1956): 30–44.

²⁵ This may be found on p. 62 of the Latin text of this edition of the Customary.

²⁶ James G. Clark, "Introduction: The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism," in *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, ed. James G. Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), 1–18 at 6.

not just what must be done, but why it is done, and how the practice came to be. There are explanations of the Seven Wonderful Tuesdays and the four teachings of St. Thomas, and an exhortation about the importance of the Feast of the Return. The Customary is more than a tool for dispute-resolution, or an orderly laying-out of rules and regulations: it is a guide for the conduct of future shrine-keepers.

The Customary perhaps invites comparisons with the well-known *Rites of Durham*, written 1593–1597, although the two documents are separated by almost two centuries and vast differences in terms of the context and purpose of their creation. The *Rites* was recreating (perhaps more accurately reimagining) the layout and practices in Durham Cathedral of a different time and space, ones that had been prohibited and destroyed. It may in part have been based on written sources similar to the Customary, or memories of them, but as these activities were no longer current it was necessary to describe the setting as well. Indeed, the most recent editors of the *Rites* convincingly show that the document was intended as a polemic directed against the Protestant desecration of the cathedral, seeking primarily to remember the lost fittings and ornamentation and then to set the proscribed Roman Catholic practices within the space.²⁷ By contrast, the Customary of the Shrine of St. Thomas was describing practices within the existing furnished space where it was designed to be read, and with reference to other monastic practices with which the audience would not only be familiar but which they would be performing on a daily basis. The Customary is primarily concerned with how things should be used or interacted with; there was no need to describe how those things looked or how they worked. Yet like the *Rites*, the Customary is also concerned with re-presenting, and occasionally inventing, past practice as part of a communal memory.²⁸

Reorganization and Recording in the Fifteenth-Century Cathedral

The Customary was drawn up at the very end of the priorate of John Wodnesbergh (1411–1428), following a period of great change at Canterbury Cathedral. Internal chronicles and obits describe Wodnesbergh's priorate as a time of much-needed and admirable governance, settling the vast debts accrued by his predecessors through the rebuilding of nave and cloister, and correcting administrative abuses.²⁹ As noted above, the concurrent creation of customs by both the shrine-keepers and the chamberlain points to a more general trend of setting down the practices and duties of the obedientiaries at this time, fitting with the eulogists' picture of Wodnesburgh as a prior deeply concerned with restoring and maintaining order. Yet the desire to record may also have come from a new appreciation of the mutability of even the most permanent-seeming structures, born out of the major renovation of the cathedral church and the "revolution"

²⁷ William Claxton, *Rites of Durham*, ed. Margaret Harvey and Lynda Rollason, Surtees Society 228 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020), 2–4, 64–69.

²⁸ Pansters, "Medieval Rules," 23–24.

²⁹ C. E. Woodruff, A Monastic Chronicle Lately Discovered at Christ Church Canterbury," *Archaeologia Cantiana* 29 (1911), 80–82.

in its administrative governance of the past forty years to which the most senior monks of the community could stand witness.³⁰

A highly-developed system of cathedral administration, and particularly of the financial organization of the individual offices around a central treasury or exchequer, had been established at Canterbury since the early-thirteenth century.³¹ From 1391 the successive priorates of Thomas Chillenden (1391–1411) and Wodnesbergh saw thorough reorganization of the monastic finances and in the central system of accounting.³² Previously the treasury of the cathedral had received all the priory's income and then paid it out again, with all incoming and outgoing expenses meticulously recorded by obedientiaries and rendered to the monastic exchequer. However, around the turn of the fifteenth century, as R. A. L. Smith argued, the prior and an inner circle of senior monks took control of the central financial system. The distribution of funds to the obedientiaries for the functioning of their office, amongst other key financial responsibilities, was removed from the treasurers and placed directly in the power of the prior's council. This period also witnessed the routinization, if not the introduction, of cross-payments between obediential offices which avoided any central accounting system, and of the acquisition by obedientiaries of endowments and assigned payments partially freeing them from dependence on centralized disbursements. In financial and administrative terms, the obedientiaries of the cathedral during Wodnesbergh's priorate had both a greater degree of independence than before, and, more than ever, were involved in a complex web of customary payments and dues for which they were personally responsible.

In part this aggregation of financial control into the hands of the prior and his select circle had been necessitated by the ambitious building programmes undertaken at the cathedral in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. From 1377 the nave, cloister, crossing and western transept, chapter house, dormitory, and various other claustral buildings and passages had been either entirely rebuilt or thoroughly renovated.³³ Also in that time the Shrine Chapel had seen the insertion of the tombs of the Black Prince (d. 1376), Henry IV (d. 1413) and his son Thomas, Duke of Clarence (d. 1421), John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset (d. 1410) and Archbishop Courtenay (d. 1396), where previously

30 The description of the changes in financial administration as a "revolution" is from Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral*, 191.

31 R. A. L. Smith, "The Central Financial System of Christ Church, Canterbury, 1186–1512," *English Historical Review* 55, no. 219 (1940), 353–69; R. A. L. Smith, "The Financial System of Rochester Cathedral Priory," *English Historical Review* 56, no. 224 (1941): 586–95; R. A. L. Smith, "The Regimen Scaccarii in English Monasteries," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser. 24 (1942): 73–94; Barrie Dobson, "The English Monastic Cathedral in the Fifteenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser. 1 (1991): 153–55; Alisdair Dobie, *Accounting at Durham Cathedral Priory: Management and Control of a Major Ecclesiastical Corporation 1083–1540* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 47–75.

32 Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral*, 190–96; Smith, "Central Financial System," 367–69; Dobson, "Monks of Canterbury," 127–28.

33 Kevin Blockley, Margaret Sparks and Tim Tatton-Brown, *Canterbury Cathedral Nave* (Canterbury: Canterbury Archaeological Trust, 1997), 124–46; Francis Woodman, *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral*, 151–69, 171–73, 180.

no tombs had been allowed to crowd the shrine.³⁴ At the time the Customary was being written the southwest tower of the cathedral church was being rebuilt, and plans must have been afoot for the construction of a new massive central tower, now known as Bell Harry, of which the first stone was laid in 1433.

Some of these changes, such as the insertion of a crossing tunnel leading to the Martyrdom Chapel or the tombs around the shrine, may have had profound implications for how pilgrims moved around or experienced the cathedral, necessitating new thinking about the use of space. Others, such as the disappearance of a nave and cloister which had belonged to Lanfranc's eleventh-century church, and had thus witnessed Becket's martyrdom, may have provoked a desire to record both the present and the past for posterity. This desire is readily apparent in the contemporaneous writings coming from the cathedral at this time, most prominently in the chronicles of the Christ Church monks John Stone and William Glastynbury.³⁵ For Barrie Dobson these slim, inward-looking chronicles, dealing almost entirely with the affairs of the house and obits of its monks, were rather dismal evidence of an "obsessive...antiquarian curiosity" among the monks about the cathedral and its community at this time.³⁶ Antonia Gransden argued that the wider trend of monastic writing and recording of community history in the later Middle Ages were acts of pious remembrance by fellow-monks, in keeping with prevailing trends of memorialization, as well as attempts to bolster the reputation of the monastery partly in response to external criticisms of monasticism in general.³⁷ Gransden notes that the Christ Church chronicles were "unusual" for the time in that they were concerned with the liturgical life and monastic observances of the cathedral, rather than its external administrative affairs.³⁸ In the case of John Stone's chronicle, Gransden's suggestion that this was intended as a "precedent-book," even if just for private use, indicates something of the motives for the creation of written records at the cathedral at this time.³⁹ This is taken to its fullest degree in the account of the 1420 Jubilee of St.

34 Christopher Wilson, "The Medieval Monuments," in *A History of Canterbury Cathedral*, ed. Collinson, Ramsay, and Sparks, 472–75, 494–505. The tombs of Clarence and Somerset were moved from the Shrine Chapel in ca. 1440 to a triple tomb in St. Michael's Chapel with Lady Margaret Holland who was widow to them both.

35 Meriel Connor, "Reading, Writing and the Culture of Books at Canterbury Cathedral Priory in the Fifteenth Century," in *Kentish Book Culture: Writers, Archives, Libraries and Sociability 1400–1660*, ed. Claire Bartram (Oxford: Lang, 2020), 32–42; C. E. Woodruff, "The Chronicle of William Glastynbury, Monk of the Priory of Christ Church, Canterbury, 1419–1448," *Archaeologia Cantiana* 37 (1925): 121–51; ed., *Christ Church, Canterbury. I. The Chronicle of John Stone, Monk of Christ Church 1415–1471. II. Lists of the Deans, Priors, and Monks of Christ Church Monastery*, ed. William G. Searle (Cambridge: Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 1902); Joan Greatrex, "Culture at Canterbury in the Fifteenth Century: Some Indications of the Cultural Environment of a Monk of Christ Church," in *Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, ed. Clark, 169–77.

36 Dobson, "Monks of Canterbury," 112–13.

37 Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1974–1982), 2:342–424.

38 Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 2:415.

39 Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 2:417.

Thomas written by a monk of the cathedral, which not only describes the build-up and events of the day but sets down at length a justification of the indulgences on offer and the decisions taken on the part of Prior Wodnesbergh and the senior monks to act as a precedent for future Jubilees.⁴⁰

This was the administrative, architectural, and literary context of the creation of the Customary of the Shrine. The possible writing process has been discussed above, but we can interrogate further the authors' claim that they wrote things down as they came to mind. In some places there is clear evidence of compilation from other documentary sources. The most obvious example of this is in the oath sworn by the shrine clerks, which is separately preserved in almost identical wording.⁴¹ The final section on customary payments can be compared with the single surviving shrine-keepers' account roll from 1397/8, and it is clear that not only the sums but the order in which many of the payments are listed corresponds closely to that given in the roll.⁴² Other than this, however, there is no indication that the shrine-keepers were drawing on a pre-existing written shrine customary.

In referring to the general practices of the monastery, or liturgical customs specific to the cathedral, the Customary often remarks that decisions were made by "our fathers." Here the shrine-keepers were ultimately drawing on written testimony in the form of chapter acts. In the Customary these are hinted at, for example in the movement of the Feast of the Return of St. Thomas from December 1 to 2 to avoid clashes with the first Sunday in Advent and St. Andrew's Day, which "after sufficient deliberation our fathers formerly established and revised." While some acts of the medieval chapter survive with regard to these kinds of liturgical deliberations, particularly from the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth century, it has not been possible to find, and thus specifically date, those referred to in the Customary.⁴³ As such it is not clear as to the extent to which the shrine-keepers were compiling the Customary with these documents to hand. However, the evidence of the multiplicity of practices instituted by the chapter acts of the early fourteenth century, or referred to in the voluminous correspondence of Prior Eastry, and the many changes in the numbers and rankings of the year's liturgical feasts made clear by a comparison between the cathedral calendars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, should alert us to the fact that "customary" practices may often not have had much antiquity from the document in which they are recorded.⁴⁴

At other points they appeal to the traditions of the monastery and observed practice, and in these instances the Customary was then to become the written record. A good example of this is in the distribution of spice money at the end of Pentecost. This had previously involved the provision of spices to the convent by the shrine-keepers but now

40 Raymonde Foreville, *La Jubilé de Saint Thomas Becket du XIII^e au XV^e siècle (1220–1470): Étude et documents* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1958), 101–55.

41 CCA DCc–LitMS/C/11, fol. 37r, and see discussion on pp. 16–17 below.

42 CCA DCc–Feretrar/1.

43 For example CCA DCc–Register/A, fols. 389r–403v; BL MS Galba E.iv, fols. 71v–75r.

44 The early-thirteenth century calendar is BL MS Cotton Tiberius B III, fols. 2r–7v, the fourteenth century calendar partly survives in CCA DCc–Add. MS/6. The differences are discussed below.

the provision was in cash, and the process of commutation is laid out in the Customary presumably because it was recorded nowhere else. As Joan Greatrex notes, these sort of small gifts and payments were a common feature at all the English Benedictine cathedral priories, and in all cases they predate the earliest surviving account rolls of the late thirteenth century so it is by no means simple to trace their origin or development.⁴⁵ The Customary states that it was “supposed” that the spices had been provided in past times, but through expert counsel and unanimous agreement this had, at some point, been commuted to a monetary payment. In this as in many other places the Customary does not merely lay out practice, but presents an argument that the practice is legitimate. That the junior shrine-keeper should be the one who distributes this money was known to Vyel and Kingston because they “have often experienced it” (*frequenter sumus experti*), pointing to a purely oral or experiential source for this practice, albeit one that they had personally experienced for long enough to be sure that it was a customary practice. Similarly, the provision of tapers for the burial of paupers who died within the city of Canterbury was a custom that “we remember” of the actions of previous shrine-keepers.

Indeed, the shrine-keepers’ memories and handed-down traditions are stated to be the basis for most of the practices involving the shrine itself, as opposed to those involving interactions with the other obedientiaries or departments of the cathedral. There would have been several generations of shrine-keepers still in the monastic community, as the post was not often held for more than a few years. For example, the vastly-experienced Thomas Herne, author of the immediately contemporary chamberlain’s customary, had been shrine-keeper as long ago as 1396/7 and would have been on hand to consult on matters of tradition.⁴⁶ The very act of writing the Customary may have forced the shrine-keepers to engage with or solve long-standing disputes among the monks and between the past holders of the office over best practice. To this extent the Customary was creating the shrine’s “customary” practices, not only through the necessarily selective process of codification. The end of the chronological section of the Customary returns to the theme of memory, noting the importance of carrying out the Michaelmas processional preparations at the shrine “from memory” in honour of the saint and all the saints in heaven. The presence of the written account at the shrine was, as the preamble stated, to solve disputes when they arose, not to act as a substitute for the shrine-keepers’ responsibilities to commit their sacred duties to memory.

The Customary and the Management of the Shrine

I have attempted below to present a picture of various aspects of the management of the shrine of Thomas Becket at the time it was written, using the Customary and other contemporary evidence. I will deal in turn with the appearance and layout of the shrine and its chapel, the staffing arrangements, the daily and yearly routines, the management of pilgrims, and the regular outgoings and expenditure. Further explanations and expli-

⁴⁵ Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priories*, 247.

⁴⁶ Greatrex, *Biographical Register*, 197–98.

cations of specific points are included as notes to the text and translation. It has only been possible in many places to scrape the surface of the Customary, forming as it does a micro-study of monastic devotion and life within Canterbury Cathedral, always with the awareness that “a great church is like a small universe, capable of absorbing any amount of study.”⁴⁷

The Appearance of the Shrine

While Canterbury Cathedral had undergone major architectural changes in the fifty years from 1377, the Shrine Chapel and the shrine in particular had changed little in the two centuries preceding the writing of the Customary. The marble base, golden feretory, and painted wooden cover of the shrine were essentially the same as they had been at the 1220 translation, as were the surrounding marble pavements and pillars, and the early-thirteenth century stained glass depicting Thomas Becket’s life and miracles. The recent digital reconstructions of the Shrine Chapel (see p. vi, above) show it in ca. 1408, and the only substantial change to the area would have been the insertion of the tomb of Henry IV in the first bay of the north ambulatory arcade, and the tombs of his son and the Earl of Somerset in the bays to the east.⁴⁸ The area for which the shrine-keepers were responsible extended from the grille on the west known as “le Hake,” which was between the Shrine Chapel and the top of the presbytery steps, to the entrance of the Corona Chapel to the east, as well as on both north and south sides to the gates at the bottom of the steps leading up to the Shrine Chapel from the choir aisles. These grilles clearly demarcated the shrine-keepers’ responsibilities, and the Customary refers to the keys that they alone held for the gates.

In terms of the more mundane spaces of the Shrine Chapel, the upper chamber on the south side of the shrine almost certainly served as the shrine-keepers’ living quarters, particularly if we are to take literally the statement that the spiritual shrine-keeper will wake and go down (*descendet*) to prepare himself for Mass at the shrine each morning. As Toby Huitson has shown, this room was converted for use as living quarters in around 1400. It included a watching gallery over both the shrine and the choir which would have allowed the shrine-keepers, and perhaps one of the clerks of the shrine who may have slept there too, to monitor activity on the floor of the cathedral.⁴⁹

47 Richard Morris, *Cathedrals and Abbeys of England and Wales* (London: Dent, 1979), 56, quoted in Dobson, “The English Monastic Cathedral,” 160.

48 For the shrine models, discussion and the relevant historiography, John Jenkins, “Modelling the Cult of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral,” *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 173 (2020): 100–123. On the inserted medieval tombs, Wilson, “The Medieval Monuments,” 494–505.

49 Toby Huitson, “The Mystery of the So-Called ‘Old Bakery’ Chamber above St. Anselm’s Chapel, Canterbury Cathedral,” in *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology at Canterbury*, ed. Alixe Bovey, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 35 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 204–16; Toby Huitson, *Stairway to Heaven: The Functions of Medieval Upper Spaces* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2014), 184–86.

The chamber serving as the sacristy for the shrine was probably that now known as the “wax chamber” underneath the retrochoir platform and entered from the base of the steps to the shrine at the east end of the north choir aisle. That the door to this chamber is eastwards of the iron gate at the foot of the steps indicates that it was within the purview of the shrine, and it would have been an appropriate place for the storage of vestments, plate, and wax, and for robing. Multiple functions may be suggested by the differences in both the flooring and the carving on the rib vaults between the north and south halves of the room. It may also have been a room where the shrine-keepers could show items from the relic collections to higher-status pilgrims. The small, heavily-barred window on the east wall of the chamber which provides a view of the Tomb Chapel below has given rise to the suggestion that this was a watching-chamber for that site.⁵⁰ As the Tomb Chapel had its own custodian, it is perhaps more likely that this window allowed the shrine-keepers and their clerks to gauge the progress of processions and services at the Tomb, giving them time to prepare the shrine before the monks moved upstairs.

The shrine would have possessed a vast array of vestments, ornaments, and furnishings, and it is unfortunate that no inventory of the medieval shrine survives from Canterbury.⁵¹ In the early fifteenth century Prior Chillenden’s rule saw the acquisition of a full set of vestments of watered red silk (the colour appropriate for a martyr), with two copes, and five albs, stoles and maniples for the use of those celebrating the Thomas Mass, as well as a matching set of the total “apparatus” of liturgical vessels and ornaments for the shrine altar.⁵² Candles, torches, and tapers for lighting the shrine would also have been stored in the sacristy, and the lighting and extinguishing of candles occupies a considerable proportion of the Customary. In part this is a reflection of the importance and difficulty in illuminating such a large space in the era before gas or electric lighting, the expense of doing so, and the concomitant significance attached to the patterns and layouts of candles. The consuetudinary of the Winchester refectory shows a similar concern with the placing and lighting of candles, and who was responsible for their provision.⁵³ This aspect of the Customary has been comprehensively dealt with recently by Tom Nickson, including the tabulation of times at which various candles on and around the shrine were lit.⁵⁴

We can give some idea of how both monks and pilgrims approached and saw the Shrine Chapel. Unlike some other medieval churches, the walls and vaulting of later

50 Tim Tatton-Brown, “Canterbury and the Architecture of Pilgrimage Shrines in England,” in *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan*, ed. Colin Morris and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 90–107 at 103.

51 For the claim in Dobson, “Monks of Canterbury,” 131 that an inventory survives on the dorse of an Anniversarian’s roll see n132 below.

52 CCA DCc–Cart.Ant/C/166. List of Prior Chillenden’s “works” printed in *Litterae Cantuarienses*, ed. Sheppard, 3:112–13 and J. Wickham Legg and W. H. St. John Hope, *Inventories of Christchurch Canterbury* (Westminster: Constable 1902), 106 but both containing errors.

53 *A Consuetudinary*, ed. Kitchin, 20–22.

54 Tom Nickson, “Light, Canterbury, and the Cult of St. Thomas,” *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 173 (2020), 78–99 at 88–93.

medieval Canterbury Cathedral were largely whitewashed, with the exceptions of some standalone figurative paintings.⁵⁵ For the monks in choir, the shrine formed a reredos to the High Altar to the east. The High Altar platform was raised from the choir pavement by eight broad steps, behind which at the top of a further eight steps was the stone archiepiscopal throne known as St. Augustine's Chair. Somewhere between the High Altar and the Chair was a beam on which stood the relics of St. Blaise and twenty large candles, and to the east of the chair was the iron grille known as "le Hake," also surmounted with candles. Through this mass of lights, ironwork, and furniture would be glimpsed the golden shrine, and processions to it would file either side of the High Altar and Chair through two small doors set into "le Hake." The Shrine Chapel, depending on the hour of the day and the time of the year, could blaze with lights on beams, in the triforium walks, and on the shrine itself.

Pilgrims at this time would enter the cathedral precincts through the Christ Church gate, passing through the alleyway of shops just inside the gate to the late-fourteenth century porch which stands at the southwest corner of the nave, or perhaps to the door in the south wall of the southwest transept. They did not, as is popularly supposed, go on a tour of the other Becket sites of the cathedral before reaching the shrine, but instead went directly up the south choir aisle to the shrine as their first port of call.⁵⁶ They would have passed the tombs of archbishops Robert Winchelsey and Simon Sudbury, which were provided with prayer-niches and where minor cults had flourished among pilgrims waiting their turn to get to the shrine.⁵⁷ Passing through the gate at the foot of the south choir stairs pilgrims would ascend to the Shrine Chapel which, again, may have been flooded with light. Arriving in the morning, as most pilgrims did, the shrine cover would be raised and the golden feretory on view.⁵⁸ From the ambulatories the shrine could only be glimpsed through the grilles and around the royal and archiepiscopal tombs, although if the shrine gates were open pilgrims would have been able to approach it. Turning round, the cathedral choir and the monastic liturgy would be laid out before them.

The Shrine Staff

In the later Middle Ages the number of monks at Canterbury varied between seventy and ninety and there were around twenty-five obedientiary positions, so at any time about a third of the monastic community was engaged in an administrative role.⁵⁹ As the

55 The most detailed contemporary description of the internal decoration and layout of fifteenth-century Canterbury is in Eugenio Sidoli, Margherita Palumbo, and Stephen Parkin, "A Florentine Merchant's Visit to Canterbury Cathedral in 1444," *Journal of Medieval History* 46, no. 5 (2020): 572–95 at 594–96. As noted on p. 39 below, the itinerary of this visit was unusual because of the status of the pilgrim and the time of the year.

56 Jenkins, "Modelling the Cult," 101–14.

57 Jenkins, "Replication or Rivalry," 34–38.

58 The daily variations in pilgrim activity are discussed on pp. 37–38 below.

59 Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priors*, 35; Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral*, 36–48.

Middle Ages progressed at all monastic houses the obedientiaries tended to find individual expression in their offices, establishing something of a private life within the monastery, particularly in the case of those with more secular-facing burdens such as the cellarer.⁶⁰ The Customary points to the heavy administrative and liturgical burdens of the shrine-keepers' office, and the need for skilled and patient office-holders. From at least 1312 two monks served as shrine-keepers, reflecting the amount of work involved.⁶¹ Archbishop Sudbury had ruled in 1377 that the shrine-keepers "should not be changed too often," although it is difficult to tell how far this was followed.⁶² Notably, by comparison both with the other major obedientiaries at Canterbury and shrine-keepers at other cathedrals, Becket's shrine-keepers were appointed by the prior and chapter. At Worcester Cathedral, for example, the bishop and chapter appointed one each of the two shrine-keepers of St. Wulfstan's shrine and split the revenues accordingly.⁶³ That the monks of Canterbury had control over the appointment of the shrine-keepers, unlike the sacrist, subprior, cellarer, chamberlain, and precentor, all of which were appointed by the archbishop, indicates that they were able to maintain a level of control over Becket's shrine commensurate with their self-identification as the curators of his cult.⁶⁴

Both the importance of the office and its breadth, dealing with a large and varied budget while also being the focal point of a complex liturgical calendar, as well as being the most famous and popular pilgrimage destination in England, is reflected in the complexities of the staffing arrangements.⁶⁵ One of the shrine-keepers was in charge of the more religious or "spiritual" aspects of the shrine's affairs, while the other one was responsible for the more mundane "temporal" administration, and their daily duties are set out in detail below. As noted above, both shrine-keepers slept in the upper chamber on the south side of the Shrine Chapel each night, although it is worth noting that as this chamber was only renovated for this purpose in ca. 1400 this may have been a fairly recent innovation at the time of the Customary.⁶⁶ Despite the burdens of their office, requiring them both to sleep away from the communal dormitory, they were required to maintain a presence in the central elements of monastic life. Apart from the four weeks of the year following Easter, Pentecost, the Translation of St. Thomas, and Michaelmas, when, as we shall see, the numbers of laity visiting the shrine were at their highest, one or other of the shrine-keepers was expected to be present with the other monks of the house in the choir during service times, in the refectory at mealtimes, and in the chapter house for the daily meeting. In this sense the opening statement of the Customary that the shrine-keepers were connected like brothers and quick to anticipate each other's

60 Dobson, "The English Monastic Cathedral," 171.

61 The financial accounts for Michaelmas 1312 are the first to state that there were two shrine-keepers, CCA DCc-MA/2.

62 *The Register of Simon Sudbury: Archbishop of Canterbury 1375–138*, ed. F. Donald Logan (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020), 42.

63 Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priors*, 14–16.

64 Jenkins, "Replication or Rivalry," 29–38.

65 Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 128–34.

66 Huitson, "The Mystery of the So-Called "Old Bakery," 213–15.

actions points to the high degree of communication necessary to balance their obligations to the shrine and to the monastery. For occasions when neither shrine-keeper could be present in choir, two monks each year were nominated to do so in their stead. For this they were each paid 13s 6d annually, and at Christmas each was given a gift of a further 12d in person by the shrine-keeper who they were shadowing.

The Customary also touches on the duties of the Coronarian, the monk-custodian of the Corona Chapel to the east of the shrine which held the head reliquary of St. Thomas. He was “assistant, counsel, and aid” to the shrine-keepers, by virtue of both the proximity of his chapel and the similarity of his position as custodian of the second-most important relic of St. Thomas in the cathedral. As the Corona Chapel was only accessible through the Shrine Chapel, he was the only monk besides the shrine-keepers to possess a key to the area. He usually slept in the Corona Chapel, although it is not clear where, and if he was away from the cathedral overnight he had to leave his key with the shrine-keepers. It was thus the Coronarian who was to be the first choice of substitute if either of the shrine-keepers were incapacitated or absent, and if he was unable it was his responsibility to find someone to act in his place. In this capacity it might be expected that he, as the shrine-keepers, would have read the Customary on his entry to the position. It may be that this was also a position filled by former shrine-keepers in their old age who could then dispense advice to their successors, as was the case with John Vyel, author of the Customary, who was Coronarian in 1444 at a point when he would have been in his sixties, only a year before his death in 1445.⁶⁷

In common with all the custodians of altars and chapels in the cathedral, the shrine-keepers had stipendiary secular clergy to assist them in the daily running of the shrine and at its religious services. There were two shrine clerks, namely a first clerk with slightly more exalted duties and a higher wage who probably slept with the shrine-keepers in the Shrine Chapel, and a subclerk who slept in the crypt each night with the clerks of the chapels of the Tomb and Our Lady Undercroft. The clerks were paid weekly, every Sunday after the first Mass at the shrine, receiving 12d and 8d respectively, and each year were also given 20s and 6s 8d respectively for a clothing allowance. This was more than the clerks of the other chapels in the cathedral, whose wages were set at 7d per week, and reflected their higher status.⁶⁸ All stipendiary clerks serving chapels and altars in the cathedral church had to swear on entry to the position and were bound to particular duties. The oath and duties for these clerks were copied into the early-sixteenth century notebook of the *custos* of the Martyrdom.⁶⁹ The clerks swore to act faithfully and preserve the secrets of the monastery. They were not to be away from their station without the knowledge of the monk-custodian. They were to collect offerings and give them to the custodian. They were to instruct and aid pilgrims “with every gentleness, kindness, and deliberation” during the opening hours of the cathedral. At times when the church or chapels were closed, particularly in the morning and the din-

⁶⁷ Greatrex, *Biographical Register*, 310.

⁶⁸ CCA DCc-Register/K, fol. 207v.

⁶⁹ CCA DCc-LitMS/C/11, fol. 37r. The text of this oath is given in a note on p. 62 of the text of the Customary below.

ner hour, they were expected to deal with pilgrims seeking entry, alerting the monks to their presence and letting them know to open the chapel as soon as possible.

The oath and duties of the clerks of the shrine chapel were copied into the Customary. It is clear that the text was closely based on that pertaining to the other chapel clerks, albeit with some additions and emendations to reflect the more important status of the shrine. The shrine chapel was the one most sought by pilgrims, and the shrine-keepers appear to have had some responsibility over the opening and closing of the main doors of the cathedral church to admit them. As such, as part of their extra duties the shrine clerks were also instructed that if they came across pilgrims in the churchyard when the cathedral was closed then they were to beat on the front doors of the church to alert the shrine-keepers to open them as soon as possible. It may be that in the morning the clerks checked if there were any laity waiting to attend the first Mass while the shrine-keepers were rising. They laid out the vestments and altar furnishings for the day. They assisted at the daily Thomas Mass, where the first clerk censed the altar and shrine and carried the *pax* among the people, and it was the subclerk's role to cense the celebrant and carry away the altar furnishings at the close of the Mass. They were torchbearers in solemn Masses at the shrine, and at Matins in the choir on major feast days. The first clerk was the attendant at the shrine during the diocesan processions in Pentecost, and had to clear a path through the laity for the monastic processions on major feast days. The subclerk was responsible for the lighting and extinguishing of all the candles at the shrine. In general they assisted the shrine-keepers in the daily running of the shrine, in cleaning and maintaining it as much as in dealing with pilgrims.

The Daily Routine

The first section of the Customary provides an outline of the daily tasks of the shrine-keepers, and allows us to reconstruct how the activities at the shrine fitted in with the all-important monastic liturgy in the choir and elsewhere in the cathedral church.⁷⁰ The monastic *horarium* of the Benedictines prescribed the daily recitation in choir of eight offices: the midnight hour of Matins followed by Lauds and a return to sleep; then from daybreak Prime, Terce, Sext and Nones, their names reflecting the hours from dawn at which they were meant to be said; finishing with Vespers and Compline in the evening. The offices were of varying degrees of length, complexity, and expectation of attendance by the entire monastic community, from the lengthy sequences of early-morning readings and chants of a feast-day Matins to the more perfunctory daytime hours of Prime to Nones and the often semi-private night hour of Compline.⁷¹ While these hours

70 The standard works on the later medieval liturgy, and more particularly on that of the Benedictines, are John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of the Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, eds., *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, TEAMS, 2nd ed. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2005); Richard W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Sally Roper, *Medieval English Benedictine Liturgy: Studies in the Formation, Structure, and Content of the Monastic Votive Office, c. 950–1540* (New York: Garland, 1993).

71 The monastic *cursum* reconstructed for late-eleventh century Canterbury largely applies for

were set for all Benedictine monasteries, their timings, and those of meals, Masses, and other devotional and recreational activities were largely dependent on the custom of individual houses, and whether it was “summer” or “winter.” The Benedictine summer ran from Easter until September 30, with the rest of the year being designated as winter. On Wednesdays and Fridays after Pentecost and for the whole of the period between September 14 and Easter dinner was the only meal of the day and was taken after Nones. On fast days a light collation was allowed in the evening after Vespers instead of supper. These relatively straightforward regulations were complicated by the feast days of saints, dispensations for blood-letting, infirmity, or recreation, and various other irregular dishes and pittances which were accreted into the customs of individual Benedictine houses over the centuries.⁷² With these complexities in mind, the “standard” routine of the shrine-keepers will be set out below, followed by variations throughout the week, the practices laid out for major feasts, and some of the dispensations and pittances which applied at the cathedral in the fifteenth century.

The shrine-keepers were instructed to rise at 5 a.m. in summer and 6 a.m. in winter, perhaps an hour before their brethren in the communal dormitory had to rise to prepare themselves for Prime.⁷³ On every day except Tuesday they were to celebrate an early Mass of St. Thomas at the shrine. The Mass itself would not have taken place until at least an hour after the shrine-keepers had risen, not least because they would have needed the time to dress and prepare the altar. The Customary notes the popularity of this Mass with the laity, indicated not only by the ringing of a bell explicitly to summon them to this service, but also by the statement that it was the *temporal* shrine-keeper’s duty to open the doors of the cathedral church to visitors in the morning. The Thomas Mass was thus the first “public” religious service of the day. The cathedral and its precincts were closed to the laity overnight, and the Christ Church gate from the main square of the city only opened in the morning at the sounding of the “vigil” (“awake!”) for the dormitory monks.⁷⁴ In the nineteenth century the end of the curfew for the cathedral precinct was sounded at 5.45 in summer and 6.45 in winter, which may represent a continuity of the late medieval practice.⁷⁵ The early hour of the Thomas Mass may also

the central liturgy of the choir in the fifteenth century: Lanfranc, *The Monastic Constitutions*, ed. Knowles and Brooke, xxiii–xxiv. See also Roger Bowers, “The Liturgy of the Cathedral and its Music c. 1075–1642,” in *A History of Canterbury Cathedral*, ed. Collinson, Ramsay, and Sparks, 409–10; Dobson “The Monks of Canterbury” 124; C. S. Phillips, *Canterbury Cathedral in the Middle Ages* (London: SPCK, 1949), 13; James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), 93–102.

72 Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 38–46, 157–58; Clark, *Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, 118–20; David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, 3 vols. (1948; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1:280–85.

73 A 7 a.m. rising time was the practice at Westminster Abbey, Durham Cathedral, and Ramsay Abbey in the fifteenth century, Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 156–58.

74 CCA DCc–Register/K, fol. 223v.

75 J. C. L. Stahlschmidt, *The Church Bells of Kent: Their Inscriptions, Founders, Uses, and Traditions* (London: Stock, 1887), 125.

have made it popular with servants and workmen of the cathedral and city, who could attend before the start of their working day. It might be supposed that it was particularly popular with pilgrims who had stayed overnight in the cathedral's lodgings. Queen Margaret attended this Mass on a Monday morning in October 1454 when staying at the cathedral.⁷⁶ Yet, as discussed below, most pilgrims would have been staying outside the precincts.

The two clerks of the shrine prepared the altar. The Mass of St. Thomas would always be celebrated in the red vestments appropriate for a martyr, but it would be necessary for the vestments appropriate to the day's celebrations in choir to be prepared as well, so that the shrine-keepers could change into them for their choir duties later on. Furthermore, on feast days when the monks in the choir wore albs or copes during the celebration of High Mass, of which there were many, the shrine-keeper remaining at the shrine had to be vested in the same fashion. Having checked the solemnity and liturgical colour of the day with the shrine-keepers, they laid out the vestments in the shrine sacristy, and took out the liturgical vessels and implements, altar dressings, and candles for the Mass.⁷⁷ The subclerk lit four of the red and green gilded candles on the shrine along with various others including six of the twelve great square candles which stood on the beam to the east of the shrine, and the taper on the great wheel sent every three years by the barons of Dover. The spiritual feretrarian, as celebrant at the Mass, washed himself, and confessed his sins in the form of the private recitation of the *Confiteor* ("I confess," the penitential prayer) said while putting on his vestments in the shrine sacristy. After vesting, the spiritual shrine-keeper as celebrant and the temporal as deacon, together with the two shrine clerks as altar-servers vested in surplices, went to the altar and began the Mass.⁷⁸ This was a low Mass, without music or choir. Following the offertory prayers the first clerk censed the altar and the shrine, going along the north side and into each of the prayer niches, then returning along the south side and doing the same, then censing the subclerk who in turn censed the celebrant. The first clerk then took the *pax*, a small tablet with a Christological image, to be kissed by the gathered laity while the celebrant consumed the host. At the end of the Mass while the celebrant recited the opening verses of the Gospel of John the temporal shrine-keeper and one of the clerks gathered up the altar cloths and the ornaments and took them back to the shrine sacristy so that the laity could make their offerings on the altar, presumably watched over by the other clerk and the spiritual shrine-keeper.

One of the shrine-keepers was to be in the Shrine Chapel at all times, excepting certain meal times. As such, following Mass the temporal shrine-keeper stayed at the shrine receiving pilgrims while the spiritual shrine-keeper went to Prime in the choir. On Sundays the temporal shrine-keeper used this time to tally up the week's offerings and pay wages and dues from them, and it is likely that on other days the previous day's offerings

⁷⁶ The Mass was "without music" (*sine nota*), *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 61.

⁷⁷ See p. 13 above for the "wax chamber" as the location of the shrine sacristy.

⁷⁸ For a standard late medieval Mass see Harper, *Forms and Orders*, 121–25.

were tallied at this time.⁷⁹ The two then swapped over, with the temporal shrine-keeper going to the Morrow Mass in the choir and then to the daily chapter meeting. On solemn feast days the spiritual shrine-keeper was expected to attend Terce, and he was also to be present at the conventual High Mass in the choir. There does not appear to have been any requirement to attend Sext or Nones, and following High Mass the Customary ceases to distinguish between the spiritual and temporal shrine-keepers and instead duties were alternated between the two daily.

Dinner in summertime followed Sext, while in winter it followed Nones. At the end of the relevant hour one of the shrine-keepers by turn supervised the locking-up of the Shrine Chapel. The chapel was cleared of laity and the first clerk searched the shrine for any potential thieves or stray animals. The shrine-keeper guarded the door, then locked up and went to eat in the communal refectory. By papal decree all Benedictine monasteries had to ensure that at least half the community were present in the refectory at mealtimes, and so to ensure this was the case every day one of the two shrine-keepers had to eat their meal there. The other shrine-keeper may also have eaten in the refectory, or in one of the places where dietary restrictions were relaxed, such as the Prior's Hall and the *Mensa Magistrorum* in the infirmary complex.⁸⁰ On certain major pilgrimage feasts, however, the shrine-keeper not eating in the refectory was instructed to stay behind at the shrine, and it was his companion's duty to save some food for him.

Following dinner in summer there was a communal siesta, and the cathedral precincts as well as the church would be cleared and shut during this time until the bell for "levee" ("rising") had been rung.⁸¹ When the monks had risen and sung Nones in the choir, the shrine-keeper who had closed the shrine before dinner personally opened the doors of the church and the shrine, in the same way as the temporal shrine-keeper had in the morning, then supervised the shrine throughout the afternoon. In winter the sequence was the same except, as Nones was before dinner and there was no siesta, the shrine was opened after the dinner hour. The other shrine-keeper was free until the evening Vespers in the choir and the subsequent processions, in which he was expected to be a participant.

After Vespers the shrine-keeper who had opened up the chapel after dinner went to supper, or to collation if it was winter or a fast day, while the other stayed behind to search and lock up the chapel once again before his own supper. The cathedral and its precincts were cleared of laity and locked up each evening at this time.⁸² Following Compline there was usually some kind of convivial drink with the other monks: a frequent target of visitation injunctions as it had a tendency to lead to drunkenness, late bedtimes, and subsequent non-attendance at midnight Matins.⁸³ The Customary alludes to these issues, instructing the shrine-keepers to return to the Shrine Chapel before the

⁷⁹ The sixteenth-century account-books of the Martyrdom and Our Lady Undercroft show daily reckonings of offerings, CCA DCc-MS Lit/C/11, fols. 38r-41r; CCA DCc-MA/36.

⁸⁰ Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 40-42; Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priories*, 240-43, 255-65.

⁸¹ CCA DCc-Register/K, fol. 223v.

⁸² CCA DCc-Register/K, fol. 223v.

⁸³ Knowles, *Religious Orders*, 1:283; Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 158.

Table 1: Outline of the shrine-keepers' daily duties

Spiritual	Temporal
Matins and Lauds (midnight)	
Bed (depending on feast/season)	
Rise (5 a.m. summer, 6 a.m. winter)	
Confession	Open doors
Wash hands	Ring bell
Instruct clerks about vestments etc. for the day	
Vest while altar is dressed	
Celebrate Mass	Assist at Mass
	Clear altar
Prime (Choir)	Calculate offerings
	Pay wages (Sunday)
At the shrine	Morrow Mass (Choir)
	Chapter (Chapter House)
Terce (Choir, if a solemn feast day)	At the shrine
High Mass (Choir)	
Alternating duties	
	Close shrine
Dinner	Dinner (Refectory)
Siesta (summer only)	
	Open shrine
Vespers (Choir)	
Close shrine	Supper/Collation
Supper/Collation	
Compline	
Communal drink (optional)	
Bed	

curfew was sounded so that they would be “more fitting and worthy to God” in the mid-night and following day’s services. The curfew was probably sounded at around 8 p.m. in winter and 9 p.m. in summer.⁸⁴ On entering the Shrine Chapel both shrine-keepers had to offer a prayer to God and St. Thomas. If one was back to the shrine earlier than the other following Compline then he had to place his key to the chapel door in an agreed place so that his companion would know that he had already come in, and, presumably, that he should lock up after himself (Table 1).

⁸⁴ Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 158.

Tuesdays

Tuesdays differed in a number of respects from this standard day, as it had long been held sacred to St. Thomas both in the cathedral and, more recently, in the wider English church.⁸⁵ The Tuesday commemorations began on Monday evening with a weekly procession to the shrine after Vespers.⁸⁶ One shrine-keeper (presumably the one supervising the shrine that afternoon) stood at the shrine until the procession arrived there, when he handed a breviary to the celebrant of the day's High Mass, who would then sing the collects (prayers) proper to St. Thomas. The early-sixteenth century account-book of the Martyrdom Chapel states that the *custos* of that place was responsible for ensuring that there were candles burning at the altar there from Vespers on Monday evening until the end of the Mass of St. Thomas at the shrine on Tuesday morning.⁸⁷ In the morning the shrine-keepers rose as usual, opened the doors and rang the bell for the assembled pilgrims. The first low Mass of St. Thomas, however, was said in the Corona Chapel by the Coronarian. In the early sixteenth century there was also a dawn Mass in the Martyrdom Chapel.⁸⁸ The *custos* of the Martyrdom had to arrange for two candles at the High Altar and three before "the image of St. Thomas' in the Martyrdom Chapel to burn throughout every Mass on Tuesdays."⁸⁹

Following the daily solemn Mass of the Virgin in the Lady Chapel at the east end of the north nave aisle, on Tuesdays the monks and clerks who had celebrated that Mass were to go to the shrine and celebrate another solemn Mass.⁹⁰ They would have to go either to the vestry or the shrine sacristy to change from the white or blue vestments proper to the Mass of the Virgin into the red ones of a martyr's Mass. It is not easy to get a sense of when in the morning this took place, and the timing relative to other services

85 The commemoration of St. Thomas on Tuesdays in the cathedral is mentioned in a chapter act of 1304, so was already in place by then, CCA DCc-Register/A, fol. 389v. In 1398 the Convocation of Canterbury had decreed that St. Thomas was to be remembered in a weekly commemoration on Tuesdays throughout the archdiocese, David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae a Synodo Verolamensi anno 446 ad Londinensem 1717* (London: Gosling, 1737), 3:234.

86 This procession is mentioned in 1418, and was noted as having not taken place during a visit of Cardinal Beaufort in 1438, *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 9, 23.

87 CCA DCc-MS Lit/C/11, fol. 37r.

88 Despite this Tuesday Mass, the daily takings of the Martyrdom Chapel in the *custos'* notebook from 1504 to 1507 offer no indication that Tuesdays brought in more income than any other day, CCA DCc-MS Lit/C/11, fols. 37r, 38r-43v. It is worth noting that there would have been a number of other Thomas Masses in the cathedral throughout the week, as in 1285 the monks granted a large series of regular Masses to Edward I, namely that a daily Lady Mass was to be said by the *custos* of Our Lady Undercroft at his altar; also a daily Mass of St. Thomas, three per week by the Coronarian and the remaining four by the *custos* of the Martyrdom; and a daily mass to Saints Alphege, Blaise, Dunstan and all saints, three by the *custos* of the Tomb and four by the custodian of the relics, BL MS Galba E.iv, fol. 75r.

89 An iron bar was bought for the tabernacle of the image of St. Thomas in the Martyrdom in 1510, CCA DCc-MS Lit/C/11, fols. 37r, 51v.

90 There was also a Lady Chapel in the crypt. From 1455 the nave Lady Chapel was moved to the rebuilt chapel of St. Benedict adjoining the Martyrdom, Blockley, Sparks, and Tatton-Brown, *Canterbury Cathedral Nave*, 33-35.

may have fluctuated depending on the season.⁹¹ We have a much clearer idea of the composition of the attendance at the Mass of the Virgin, and consequently of the Tuesday Mass of St. Thomas. For thirty-seven weeks of the year the eight monks taking *deportum*⁹² that week, four from the lower and four from the upper stalls, were to celebrate these Masses.⁹³ Outside of the time when *deportum* was taken the celebrants were two monks, one from each side of the choir, specially attached to the Mass of the Virgin for that week together with the six hebdomadary monks on the rota for High Mass.⁹⁴ They were assisted by four secular clergy, named as the clerks of the Lady Chapels in the nave and the crypt, and those of the Martyrdom and Tomb of St. Thomas. As they were to be the cantors at the Mass, the clerks had to be examined by the Precentor for their competence in singing before being admitted to office.⁹⁵

At the shrine they were joined by the monks appointed as Gospeller and Epistoller for the week, who chanted the relevant texts during solemn Masses on major feast days and Sundays, and the Succentor who directed the singing vested in a cope.⁹⁶ Together with the shrine-keepers and the two shrine clerks, there would have been at least thirteen monks and six secular cantors celebrating the solemn sung Mass at the shrine every Tuesday. Twice as many candles were lit on the shrine as for the daily low Mass, and the shrine-keepers bore lit torches on either side of the altar from the end of the preface until the host had been consecrated. The audio-visual experience of this solemn Mass at the shrine was carefully curated, and it appears to have been popular with visiting dignitaries. The chronicler John Stone notes Queen Margaret's attendance at the Thomas Mass in September 1446, where it was said to be celebrated "with singing by the monks." The bishop of Ravenna attended the Mass while acting as papal legate in December 1454, and Stone also noted the presence of the archbishop of Narbonne with Charles "the Bastard" of Bourbon at the Mass in June 1467. The suffragan "bishop of the Isle" acted as celebrant at this Mass while staying at the cathedral in April 1465.⁹⁷

91 That it was a morning service is stated in CCA DCc-MS Lit/C/11, fol. 37r.

92 A period of blood-letting and absence from the choir, discussed below.

93 *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey*, ed. Graham, 2:820–81.

94 BL MS Galba E.iv, fol. 71v; CCA DCc-Register/A, fol. 290r. It is also stated that the weekly Mass rota was drawn up by the Precentor on Sunday morning after the night offices. CCA DCc-MSSB/A/125 is an early-sixteenth century Mass rota-book of 46 folios, and together with CCA DCc-DE/69 (12 folios) and CCA DCc-DE/75 (22 folios), showing the daily rotas of monks saying Mass within the cathedral for ca. 1525 may have originally all been part of the same document. Bowers, "Liturgy of the Cathedral," 444 incorrectly states that the Lady Mass was celebrated daily by the Precentor and seven monks.

95 BL MS Galba E.iv, fol. 75r.

96 A chapter ordinance of 1305 allowed substitutes to be nominated as Gospeller and Epistoller at solemn Masses if the monks who had been assigned these positions in the rota did not have "solemn" enough voices, BL MS Galba E.iv, fols. 71v–72r.

97 *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 39–40, 62, 91, 100.

Feasts and Fasts

The concept of the “standard” Benedictine day is complicated by the liturgical calendar, with its regular cycles of feast and fast, and a proliferation of greater and lesser celebrations of saints’ days. Beside the universal Christian commemorations around Christmas and Easter, important traditions had coalesced at Pentecost/Whitweek, and various other points in the lives of Christ and the Virgin Mary were accorded increasing significance in the Church year. There were the universally-recognized feasts of the saints of the early Christian Church as well as a proliferation of local feasts at each individual church for saints of local or regional importance to them. The early thirteenth-century liturgical calendar from the cathedral and the fourteenth-century “Burnt Breviary” of the cathedral show the vast numbers of feast days of varying magnitude throughout the year, as well as their increasing proliferation.⁹⁸ At Canterbury, beside the several feasts of their most important sainted archbishops—Saints Thomas Becket, Dunstan, Alphege and Edmund of Abingdon—a further fourteen archbishops of Canterbury were recognized as saints and of these Saints Anselm (April 21), Odo (June 2), Theodore of Tarsus (September 19), and Aelfric (November 16) had feast days in the cathedral liturgy.⁹⁹ At least another fifty saints of regional or national importance, or of which the cathedral owned significant relics, had feasts celebrated by the monks of Canterbury with greater or lesser solemnity each year. The relics themselves had a feast, which the Customary stated was on St. Anselm’s day.¹⁰⁰ The most important of all these feasts were also observed for the seven following days, the “octave” of the feast. With such a vast number of feasts to be marked, most with their own office and according to particular rubrics about the colour of vestments, processional routes, and the lighting and positioning of candles it is no surprise that the Customary particularly enjoins the shrine-keepers and clerks to carefully ascertain the details of the day’s liturgical arrangements each morning. It also accounts for the large section of the Customary dealing with the duties of the shrine-keepers at these set points throughout the year, and how the shrine was incorporated into the cathedral’s liturgical calendar.

At Canterbury, as elsewhere, there was a set hierarchy of feast days, although the feasts themselves could be upgraded or downgraded.¹⁰¹ The lowest were feasts marked

98 The “Burnt Breviary” is CCA DCc–Add. MS/6, and partial transcriptions and notes at CCA DCc–Add. MS/6A; CCA–U530/3/1; CCA–U543/E/7. Phillips, *Canterbury Cathedral*, 20–26 gives an overview of the contents, and see also Neil Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969–2002), 4:303–5. The pre-1220 liturgical calendar is BL MS Cotton Tiberius B III, fols. 2r–7v, printed in Francis Wormald, *English Benedictine Kalendars after AD 1100*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1939–1946), 1:63–79, and see Rowe, “Customary” 19–21 for discussion.

99 Philips, *Canterbury Cathedral*, 23–24. St. Aelfric only had a commemoration, as his feast day fell on the more important Ordination of St. Alphege.

100 John Stone’s chronicle for 1458 gives the Sarum dating for the feast of relics—the Sunday after the Translation of St. Thomas. It is unclear whether he was just using a common dating system or this indicates a change in the festal arrangements at the cathedral, *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 74.

101 Phillips, *Canterbury Cathedral*, 26n1; Harper, *Forms and Orders*, 53–54.

by three lessons of the saint's office at Matins; all the more solemn feasts were marked with twelve lessons at Matins.¹⁰² For these lower feasts the monks in choir would be dressed in their normal habits, and higher feasts were marked by the wearing of long white albs or, for the highest grades, copes in the appropriate liturgical colour. The very highest grades at Canterbury were "secondary" (with or without a procession) and "principal" feasts. The Customary lists thirteen principal feasts: All Saints (November 1); Christmas (December 25); the Passion of St. Thomas (December 29); Epiphany (January 6); the Annunciation of the Virgin (March 25) on the rare occasions it fell after Easter Sunday; the Martyrdom of St. Alphege (April 19);¹⁰³ the Deposition of St. Dunstan (May 19); Ascension; Pentecost; Trinity Sunday; Corpus Christi; the Translation of St. Thomas (July 7); and the Assumption of the Virgin (August 15). Although Easter was not listed by the Customary, it was naturally a feast of the highest rank.

The difficulty of squeezing so many solemn celebrations into the calendar was a perennial problem, as evidenced by the efforts of successive chapters to resolve the clashes and alter the grading of feasts to ensure a balance within the year.¹⁰⁴ For example, as the Customary explains, the feast of the Return of St. Thomas had been moved from the date of his landing at Sandwich (December 1) to that of his arrival at the cathedral (December 2). After deliberation by chapter and in order that the Return might be celebrated with appropriate solemnity, the feast had been moved in order to avoid clashes with the first Sunday in Advent and St. Andrew's Day (November 30). By long-established custom when these two fell on the same day, St. Andrew's was displaced to the following day (December 1), so by permanently moving the Return to December 2 this occasional complication could be avoided.¹⁰⁵

Some of these feasts affected the shrine-keepers more than others. For all principal and secondary feasts the shrine was arranged with richly-decorated carpets, or *tapets*, which were placed before altars for the celebrants to stand on, and along the paths of solemn processions.¹⁰⁶ The lighting of the shrine played an important role in the staging of the festal office. At the start of Matins it was the subclerk's duty to light ten of the twenty candles which stood on the beam between the High Altar and the shrine, probably on top of the grille known as "le Hake." At the end of the responsory following the eighth lesson, and marking the end of the second and start of the third nocturn, the subclerk was to light the other ten candles, doubling the illumination of altar and shrine for the climactic part of the office. Also on these days the twelve painted and gilded can-

102 For a description of the form of lessons on feast days at medieval Benedictine Matins, see Thomas Heffernan, "The Liturgy and Literature of Saints' Lives," in Heffernan and Matter, eds., *Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, 65–94.

103 As the octave of this feast would usually coincide with Easter it was attached instead to the secondary feast of the Translation of St. Alphege (June 8), but only if there was no clash with Whitweek, CCA DCc–Add. MS/6a [Sanctorale transcription], 43–45.

104 CCA DCc–Register/A, fols. 389r–398r; BL MS Galba E.iv, fol. 71r–v; *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey*, ed. Graham, 2:813–15.

105 Lanfranc, *The Monastic Constitutions*, ed. Knowles and Brooke, 9.

106 See Wickham Legg and St. John Hope, *Inventories*, 330.

dles, four on the altar and eight on the shrine, were lit through the celebration of High Mass and through both of the evening Vespers, with their procession to the shrine, acting as an opulent backdrop to the liturgy of the choir. The shrine-keeper remaining at the shrine during High Mass nonetheless had to be vested as if he were in attendance. In such ways the links between the shrine and the liturgical rounds of its monastic custodians were made explicit to the visiting laity and pilgrims during the major feasts at which their attendance was most expected.

Processions played a similar function to the corporate liturgy of the house in showing the centrality of the shrine and the cult of St. Thomas. As no processional survives from the cathedral the Customary provides one of the best sources for understanding this important aspect of the medieval religious activity there. As noted above there was a procession from the choir to the shrine on Monday after Vespers, as well as one from the choir to Our Lady Undercroft on Fridays. These processions may have been simple point-to-point matters, while on Sundays before High Mass and on feast days they were marked with more complex routes and with decorated carpets arranged around the shrine.¹⁰⁷ Most festal processions seem to have taken roughly the same path around the cathedral but with variations depending on the solemnity of the feast, the saint in whose honour it was, some other meaningful consideration, or temporary limitations caused by building works, weather, or the participants. It is possible to garner an idea of the “normal” route from descriptions of occasions on which it was not possible to follow it. The account of the 1420 Jubilee states that “all requirements which pertain to procession were observed” as the monks went from the choir to the nave, through the cloister and up to the shrine of St. Thomas, then back to the nave where they heard a sermon, then finally returning to the choir.¹⁰⁸ The basic structure of processing through nave and cloister as well as to one or more altars, hearing a sermon, and then returning to the choir, holds for other descriptions which survive from the cathedral. In 1464 the procession after first Mass on Christmas Day went from the choir to the shrine through “le Hake” (the gated grille behind the high altar), then to the nave, but was unable to go through the cloister because of a great snowfall, so instead went back to the choir.¹⁰⁹ The procession on Rogation Tuesday in 1439 went from the choir to the shrine, down the south choir aisle to the nave, into the cloister and then, because it was raining, the monks went to the Infirmary Chapel for Mass while a friar preached a sermon to the people in the cathedral church. Following the Mass the procession went through the crypt and back up to the choir.¹¹⁰ On Rogation Monday in 1458 the procession took a

107 Margaret Sparks has suggested a route for Sunday processions at Canterbury based on comparable processions at Durham and taking in all of the cathedral’s principal altars, Blockley, Sparks, and Tatton-Brown, *Canterbury Cathedral Nave*, 127.

108 Foreville, *Jubilé*, 142. Another route taken on this day by some of the monks with invited dignitaries straddles the boundary between procession and pilgrimage.

109 *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 90.

110 Woodruff, “Chronicle of William Glastynbury,” 134; Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 256, fol. 119r. Woodruff incorrectly transcribes this as the procession going from the shrine “per latus chori ex parte orientali [*recte australi*],” although gives the correct translation “the south choir aisle.”

similar route, albeit unimpeded by weather, first going down from the choir to the nave, then through the cloister, past St. Thomas' well in the infirmary cloister, and into the Infirmary Chapel where Mass was celebrated and a sermon heard by the door to the *deportum*, then it returned back past St. Thomas' well, to the doors of the chapter house, then the shrine, and then back to the nave.¹¹¹

Turning now to some of the feast days dealt with at length in the Customary, the feast of the Return of St. Thomas was apparently only marked in the liturgy of two houses—the cathedral and Arbroath Abbey—but it had a great deal of significance for the monks.¹¹² As noted above, the date of the feast had been moved to commemorate the date of Thomas' arrival at the cathedral in 1170 rather than his arrival in England. This later date had also been the occasion of a great deal of ecclesiastical pomp and circumstance in and around the church, meaning that the liturgical and processional activities of the feast could potentially mirror the historic use of space.¹¹³ The Customary notes the importance of the day in both the story of St. Thomas and its relevance for the universal Church in its fight for liberty. It was the day when, in effect, through Thomas returning to his church, the Church publicly and demonstratively took possession of its own. The Feast of the Return would also have been given renewed significance by the actions of Archbishop Arundel (1395–1397, 1399–1414), at a time within memory of the authors of the Customary. According to the anonymous chronicle of a Canterbury monk, compiled around a decade before the Customary, Arundel, on his own return from exile in France in 1399, had first set foot in his cathedral church on the Feast of the Return of St. Thomas. To mark the occasion he appropriated the church of Godmersham to the monks, and ordained that every year on that day each monk of the cathedral should receive one gold noble (6s 8d) from the revenue of the church, in memory of him.¹¹⁴ The importance of the establishment of a perpetual financial memorial on the Feast of the Return to this archbishop (and also former chancellor), a prominent and generous benefactor of the cathedral whose own vision of the relationship between king and state owed much to the “Becket model,” should not be understated. It may have resulted in an increase in the status and a renewed appreciation of the feast at the Cathedral. In the calendar of the fourteenth century “Burnt Breviary,” compiled prior to Arundel's actions, the Feast

111 *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 73.

112 Arbroath was a Tironian house founded in 1178 in honour of St. Thomas by William I the Lion, king of Scots, which seems to have adopted the feasts of its patron saint directly from Canterbury Cathedral, Slocum, *Liturgies*, 248. An early-sixteenth century printed breviary which belonged to one of the monks of Arbroath has handwritten insertions including the feast of the Return on December 2 and a double octave for the feast of the Translation, J. B. L. Tolhurst, “Notes on a Printed Monastic Breviary Used at Arbroath Abbey,” *Innes Review* 5, no. 2 (1954): 104–18 at 113–14.

113 William Urry, *Thomas Becket: His Last Days* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 42–48.

114 Woodruff, “Monastic Chronicle,” 74. The chronicle incorrectly dates this event to 1400 when it must have occurred in 1399, as Arundel was frequently at the cathedral in early 1400, Richard G. Davies, “Thomas Arundel as Archbishop of Canterbury 1399–1414,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 24, no. 1 (1973): 9–21 at 16. The appropriation of the church and the perpetual memorial of a gold noble to each monk on the Feast of the Return were noted in all the obits of Arundel produced at Canterbury, e.g., BL MS Arundel 68, fol. 57r; Lambeth Palace Library, MS 20, fol. 165v.

of the Return was graded as a feast “in copes,” yet in the 1428 Customary the relevant preparations at the shrine were to be in keeping with a secondary feast.¹¹⁵ It was also around the turn of the fifteenth century that the Feast of the Return was inserted into the Cathedral’s early-thirteenth century liturgical calendar.¹¹⁶ In the use of the liturgy to form links with past communities and sacred spaces the Feast of the Return was highly significant to the monks of Canterbury, and to the Church as a whole in its struggle for ecclesiastical liberty, perhaps more so in the early-fifteenth century than before.¹¹⁷

For the vigil and day of the Feast of the Return the Customary stipulates that the candles on the beam above the High Altar would be lit as for principal and secondary feasts. The eight painted and gilded candles on the shrine were also lit from the end of Nones on December 1 through to the end of Compline on the feast, illuminating the refectory throughout the night. There were processions to the shrine after Vespers on both the vigil and the feast day, signalling the beginning and end of the celebrations. Before Matins seven substantial candles were arranged before the relics in the choir to represent Becket’s seven years of struggle for the Church, and along with those on the High Altar beam these were lit at first alternately then fully at the end of the second nocturn.¹¹⁸ A solemn Mass at the shrine followed the Lady Mass in the nave in the manner described for the weekly Tuesday Masses above. After Vespers on the feast day it was the shrine-keepers’ responsibility to provide the community with “pittances” of food and drink in the Refectory, the bestowing of which was intended to mirror Becket’s own (supposed) conduct to the monks of Canterbury on returning to his cathedral.¹¹⁹

As Christmastide was focused on the High Altar and the chapels of the Virgin, the shrine mainly functioned as a backdrop to the liturgy throughout this period. Indeed, on Christmas Eve the shrine was closed all day from Lauds until the Thomas Mass at dawn on Christmas Day, to allow the shrine-keepers to participate in the important Christmas liturgy and to emphasize the importance of the day itself. It may also have given them time to decorate the shrine chapel, if not for Christmas then in preparation for one of the high points of their liturgical year on December 29: the feast of the Martyrdom.

The Martyrdom feast was the occasion for an elaborate liturgy linking together the sites in the cathedral of particular significance to St. Thomas. Pilgrims were expected to attend, and the shrine-keepers laid in bread, beer, cheese, and charcoal for their sustenance and warmth through the winter night’s ceremony. As on the feast of the Return the candles on the shrine were lit after Nones in the choir and seven candles were placed

115 CCA DCc-Add. MS/6a [Sanctorale transcription], 2.

116 BL Cotton MS Tiberius B III, fol. 7v.

117 For the links forged between the liturgy and architectural space in the early years of Becket’s cult at Canterbury see Katherine Emery, “Architecture, Space, and Memory: Liturgical Representation of Thomas Becket 1170–1220,” *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 173 (2020): 61–77.

118 Seven candles were also provided to burn before the relics on the feasts of the Martyrdom and St. Anselm. The practice was later noted in the mid-fifteenth century, Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 256, fol. 117v; Woodruff, “Chronicle of William Glastynbury,” 130.

119 For discussion of pittances and other gifts see pp. 41–42 below.

to burn before the relics in the choir, on this instance in memory of the Seven Wonderful Tuesdays of St. Thomas. Only for this feast were the 28 candles in the triforium wall-walk around the Shrine Chapel lit, from Vespers on the vigil, probably indicating two in each of the arcades, along with nine over the entrances to the shrine, perhaps referring to those on beams over the north and south gates to the inner shrine area. As with the candles on other principal feasts during Matins these were lit alternately until the end of the second nocturn when all would be lit, flooding the Shrine Chapel with light in the dead of winter.

At the start of Matins in the middle of the night the laity were admitted to the cathedral by the shrine-keepers. It is difficult to gauge an idea of their numbers, although the 56 pints of beer, around 14lbs of bread, and 7lbs of cheese provided for their refreshments and the inherent difficulties of travelling in winter suggests a small but committed attendance. The lessons of the first two nocturns at Matins told the story of Becket's life from his birth to his exile, while the third nocturn was comprised of a homily on martyrdom.¹²⁰ It is likely that the laity listened to this service from the nave, as, while there was a lectern in the choir, on major feast days the lessons were read from the great pulpit at the east end of the nave.¹²¹ The Customary's statement that "the life and development of the glorious martyr Thomas...customarily in that place is openly read in the mother tongue" points at least to a sermon delivered to the laity at this point, or perhaps to the lessons being given in English either parallel to, or even instead of, the Latin of the liturgy.¹²² In the absence of other evidence this may be too bold an interpretation, but at a time when the provision of vernacular religious instruction and the dangers of translating scripture were a subject of much controversy, offering English versions of the life of a saint in such a controlled and resolutely orthodox atmosphere may have been attempted as a potentially happy medium.¹²³ As vernacular translations of English saints' lives were themselves something of a fifteenth-century phenomenon, this custom on the Martyrdom feast at Canterbury may not have had a great deal of antiquity.¹²⁴ At the end of Matins the shrine clerks took the laity to one of the chambers of the monastic precinct where they had kindled a fire and laid out the refreshments, leaving the monks

120 Sherry Reames, "Liturgical Offices for the Cult of St. Thomas Becket," in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (London: Routledge, 2001), 565–78; Slocum, *Liturgies*, 135–238; Anne Duggan, "Becket is Dead! Long Live St. Thomas," in *Cult of St. Thomas Becket*, ed. Webster and Gelin, 28–36; Emery, "Architecture, Space, and Memory," 63–68.

121 At Christmas Matins in 1295 Archbishop Winchelsey had read the final lesson from the great pulpit at the east end of the nave, "where the lessons are read," CCA DCC–Register/Q, fol. 40v.

122 My thanks to Helen Gittos for this suggestion.

123 For thoughts on the use of the vernacular in religious texts at this time, see Theresa D. Kemp, "The *Lingua Materna* and the Conflict over Vernacular Religious Discourse in Fifteenth-Century England," *Philological Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (1999): 233–57; Nicholas Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409," *Speculum* 70 (1995): 822–64.

124 Cynthia Turner Camp, *Anglo-Saxon Saints' Lives as History Writing in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2015); Catherine Sanok, *New Legends of England: Forms of Community in Late Medieval Saints' Lives* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia, 2019).

to complete Lauds. As is discussed below, on feasts of “solemn pilgrimage” such as this “noble and distinguished” pilgrims and laity were allowed greater access to the claustral buildings including the Refectory. However, in this instance, given the probable lower status of the lay attendees, it is more likely that one of the guest halls around the Green Court to the north of the cathedral would have been used for the event.¹²⁵

After Lauds on the Feast of the Martyrdom the shrine-keepers locked the Shrine Chapel in preparation for a series of Masses at the sites of major significance to the cult of Becket in the cathedral. Following a didactic pattern around the cathedral (often erroneously identified as the “standard” pilgrim route) the first Mass of the day was celebrated at the Martyrdom Chapel, followed by one at the Tomb Chapel, and a culminating Mass at the shrine. It is not clear whether the laity were also attendant at these Masses, although separate evidence from the Martyrdom Chapel indicates that they were lavish affairs and surely designed to be seen and heard.¹²⁶ In the early-sixteenth century notebook of the *custos* of the Martyrdom one of his chief duties of the year was to arrange this Mass on the morning of the Martyrdom feast, for which the celebrant was paid 4d, the Epistoller and Gospeller 2d each, the Third Cantor 2d for bringing the cope, the bellringers 4d, and the choristers given 2d for their breakfast.¹²⁷ A similar Mass took place at the Tomb, the progress of which could be monitored by the shrine-keepers through the window in the shrine sacristy, and the laity were finally invited to the most solemn Mass of all, celebrated at the shrine by the Subprior in person. This would have been accompanied by the most skilful singing and organ playing that the cathedral could offer, for which the shrine-keepers paid 4s per year for the services around the Martyrdom and Translation.¹²⁸ The shrine-keepers also paid 40s annually, divided between the Succentor and Third Cantor, for the provision of music at the shrine for solemn Masses throughout the year, but an extra 10s for music on the feasts of the Martyrdom, Translation, and Return, and on the Tuesdays in their octaves.¹²⁹

125 Such as that next to the kitchen renovated in the 1390s, Margaret Sparks, *Canterbury Cathedral Precincts: A Historical Survey* (Canterbury: Dean and Chapter, 2007), 28–29.

126 However, the weekly takings from the Martyrdom Chapel for 1504–1506 show only a miniscule increase in offerings around the time of the Feast of the Martyrdom, up to ten to fourteen pence (10d–14d) from previous weeks’ totals of 2d to 4d, CCA DCC–LitMS/C/11, fols. 38r–42r.

127 CCA DCC–LitMS/C/11, fol. 37v.

128 Stipulated in the Customary, but also seen in the shrine-keepers’ account roll of 1397/8 in the payment of 4s to “W. Bonynton and his companions,” a monk particularly noted for his skill at both, at the Translation and Martyrdom feasts, Greatrex, *Biographical Register*, 94; Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priors*, 265–70.

129 The 1298 injunctions of Archbishop Winchelsey instructed that the shrine-keepers render 40s annually as full payment for singers at the shrine on solemn occasions throughout the year, excepting the feast days of St. Thomas and the Tuesdays in the octaves of the feasts. Two-thirds of this sum was to be paid to the Succentor and the remaining third to the Third Cantor, *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey*, ed. Graham, 2:815. These payments occur in both the 1397/8 shrine-keepers account roll and the Customary, albeit with the sum increased to 50s to include the payments during the feasts.

Not only the occasion, but the fully-lit shrine with candles in the triforium, the organs, the music, and the attending monks in red copes must have presented an amazing spectacle to the assembled pilgrims. On every day of the octave of the Martyrdom a solemn Mass was to be said at the shrine, and by great fortune the account of a lay witness to one of these has survived. In the recently-discovered journal of the Florentine merchant Mariano Ughi, he describes coming to Canterbury on December 31, 1444, the Thursday after the feast of the Martyrdom. He was led through the monastic choir, as was allowed to “distinguished and noble” visitors during the more important feasts, just as the solemn Mass at the shrine began: “And in fact we arrived just when Mass was being said at the altar of St. Thomas which, with the candles and those jewels and so great a quantity of gold it seemed as if Paradise was opening up.”¹³⁰

Moving forward in the year, although it is not mentioned in the Customary, perhaps because it was a general instruction, from the first Monday of Lent the shrine would have been veiled along with all the images and reliquaries in the cathedral.¹³¹ The shrine-keepers apparently used this time each year to perform stock-taking and maintenance. A thorough annual shrine inventory was to be compiled, and the twelve great square candles on one of the beams near the shrine were taken down, replenished with hot wax, and left to slowly cool on the shrine pavement until Maundy Thursday, in order to ensure that they set firmly.¹³² For the floor of the Shrine Chapel to be used in such a way indicates that very few laity were expected to visit at this time.

On Holy Saturday the shrine was part of the same ritual as the choir in the blessing of the year’s new fire. As with the choir, after Nones all the candles were extinguished. The monks processed to the cloister where a newly-kindled fire was blessed, and returned to the choir bearing a candle, lamp, and thurible lit from this. During the preface of the Mass in the choir, to musical accompaniment the cantors loudly sung “Light!” (*Accendite*) three times, following which the candles all around the choir and around the shrine were lit with the new fire.¹³³ In the middle of the night before Matins on Easter Sunday the community processed from the choir to the shrine, past the Easter Sepulchre which was sited behind the High Altar.¹³⁴ In Lanfranc’s *Constitutions* the procession on this

130 Sidoli, Palumbo, and Parkin, “A Florentine Merchant’s Visit,” 594.

131 Lanfranc, *The Monastic Constitutions*, ed. Knowles and Brooke, 19.

132 Dobson, “Monks of Canterbury” 131 states that an inventory of the shrine was incorporated into the 1447 anniversarian’s account roll. While there is a jotted heading for such an inventory from 1441 on the dorse of CCA DCc-Anniversarian/8 beginning “Registrum sui inventarium ad feretrum” it is, strangely, only a heading and never preceded an actual inventory. Some shrine inventories from St. Cuthbert’s shrine at late medieval Durham Cathedral survive and give an idea of the possessions of a major shrine chapel at this time, Durham, Dean and Chapter Library, Feretrar Status 1397, 1401, 1418.

133 The service for this ceremony is preserved in the late-fourteenth century Missal of Westminster Abbey, *Missale ad usum Ecclesie Westmonasteriensis*, ed. J. Wickham Legg, 2 vols. (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1891–1896), 2:cols. 574–83, 598, and in Lanfranc’s *Constitutions*: Lanfranc, *The Monastic Constitutions*, ed. Knowles and Brooke, 43–46.

134 In 1448 the Easter Sepulchre (*Corpus Dominicum*) was mentioned as situated between the High Altar and the shrine of St. Thomas, *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 44.

occasion was to be made to the great rood, as it was at most other houses.¹³⁵ The inclusion of the shrine of St. Thomas at the start of the festivities for the holiest day in the monastic year is striking, as would be the lighting and extinguishing of the candles as the procession passed through the chapel. On Easter morning, as on Christmas Day, the *spiritual* shrine-keeper celebrated the normal low Thomas Mass at the shrine before the *temporal* celebrated the Mass appropriate to the day in white vestments at the shrine.

The period between Easter and Michaelmas was the “summer” liturgical season at the cathedral. From “Aprille with his shours soote” it was also the season of pilgrimage, when the shrine-keepers would spend most time dealing with the laity. While pilgrimage is dealt with below, it is worth noting here that this was also a period during which communal and corporate pilgrimages, of other religious houses and of the parishes of the diocese, were made to the cathedral. The Rogationtide processions brought the city and other religious houses of Canterbury into the ambit of the cathedral. The two other houses of regular religious in Canterbury, the Augustinian canons of St. Gregory’s Priory to the north of the city and the Benedictines of St. Augustine’s Abbey to the east, came to the cathedral in procession on Tuesday and Wednesday of Rogationtide respectively. They celebrated Mass in the choir then processed to the shrine, with greater pomp and circumstance on Wednesday to reflect the higher status of the monks of the Abbey. John Stone’s chronicle gives details, from various years, of some of the routes. On Rogation Wednesday in 1438, 1450, 1458, and 1465 the monks are recorded as going in procession to St. Augustine’s Abbey, although the reciprocal visit to the cathedral indicated by the Customary is not mentioned.¹³⁶ Some other processions around the cathedral during Rogationtide have been noted above.¹³⁷

Straddling the boundary between pilgrimage and yearly commemoration, Pentecost or Whitweek at medieval English cathedrals was a time when representatives of all the parishes in the diocese were enjoined to come to the cathedral in their deaneries, process through the church, pay their annual dues to the bishop, and collect the oil and chrism for use in the year.¹³⁸ This may have had additional resonance at Canterbury as Becket was consecrated as Archbishop in the octave of Pentecost 1162. The practice had been instituted in the twelfth century in England, and while there is some debate over the extent to which it was observed in the later Middle Ages there is evidence, through

135 Lanfranc, *The Monastic Constitutions*, ed. Knowles and Brooke, 46; *Customary of the Benedictine Monasteries of St. Augustine, Canterbury, and Saint Peter, Westminster*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson, 2 vols. (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1902–1904), 1:381.

136 *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 22, 73, 91.

137 There is no independent evidence of the Rogation Tuesday procession to the cathedral of the small community of St. Gregory’s Priory just outside the north gate of the city, although Stone’s chronicle shows the monks of Christ Church processing to the priory on St. Gregory’s Day (March 12), *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 85–86.

138 David Lepine, “And alle oure pairesshens’: Secular Cathedrals and Parish Churches in Late Medieval England,” in *The Parish In Medieval England*, ed. Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy (Donington: Tyas, 2006), 29–53 at 43–44; Margaret Harvey, *Lay Religious Life in Late Medieval Durham* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 33–35; Christopher Brooke, *Churches and Churchmen in Medieval Europe* (London: Hambledon, 1999), 186–87.

renewed attempts at enforcement and disputes over precedence in processions, that there may have been a revival in the fifteenth century.¹³⁹ Including Canterbury itself there were eleven deaneries in the diocese, most of around twenty-five parishes but the largest (Lympne) of around forty and the smallest (Elham) of sixteen. Each parish was meant to be represented in person by their priest and a selection of the parishioners carrying the parish banner. The relatively small size of the diocese made this practicable, with none of the deanery churches, where the parishes might be expected to assemble, more than sixteen miles (25 km), and thus one day's journey, from the cathedral. The Customary suggests that each deanery had its own service at the cathedral during the week, of which either the whole or the final part took place at the shrine where the first clerk handed the breviary to the dean in order to say the collect. As well as the deaneries there were other cohorts. A charter of St. Martin's Priory, Dover, from the late thirteenth century established that, "during the week of Pentecost when all the churches of the diocese must visit the Cathedral" its dependent chapelries in Dover had to process in its section, rather than in their deaneries.¹⁴⁰ An archiepiscopal ordinance of 1350 stated that the Dover churches were to go to the Cathedral on Tuesday of Whitweek.¹⁴¹ The logistics of accommodating all the services must have meant that they were staggered throughout the week, offering an impressive spectacle of people, pageantry, processions, and song.

More impressive still was the feast of the Translation on July 7 and its succeeding double octave, which was one of the most important and well-attended pilgrimage festivals in Christendom.¹⁴² On July 5 following High Mass the Shrine Chapel was closed in order to perform the difficult task of removing the heavy wooden shrine cover, an operation which required six or seven men. The cover does not appear to have been detached from its pulleys, but drawn over to the gate on the north side of the inner chapel, to the west of the tomb of Henry IV, where it was anchored and would hang until July 21. The wooden cover was itself then covered in an embroidered cloth canopy, donated by Archbishop Arundel's sister and thus at the time of the Customary twenty years old at most.¹⁴³ The shrine-keepers alone were responsible for cleaning the shrine and the altar, scaling the marble base with ladders to get to the golden feretory and its valuable treasures. The Customary implies that this was done by the shrine-keepers rather than the clerks not for security reasons but because only the monks, with their contemplative and pure life, were worthy of the task.

As on the Feast of the Martyrdom the shrine-keepers laid in bread, beer, and cheese in the same quantities, although rather than as an early-morning repast this was intended to sustain the shrine-keepers and their assistants at their work through the days, and

139 Coleman and Jenkins, "The Multivalent Cathedral," 158–59.

140 Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 59, fol. 195v.

141 *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1348–1350* (London: HMSO, 1905), 508.

142 Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage c.700-c.1500* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 24, 117, 126.

143 In common with others, in my previous work I erroneously read this passage as meaning that this cloth canopy was placed over the shrine, not the cover, Jenkins "Modelling the Cult," 110.

for the sustenance of pilgrims particularly weakened by the journey, the weather, or the crush of the crowds. Pilgrims were mainly expected on the vigil and the feast day, when the doors of the church were to be fully open from dawn to dusk, and through the dinner hour as well if it was particularly busy. The shrine was to be attended throughout the day by the two clerks and at least one of the shrine-keepers. In addition to their normal duties the clerks also had to pay close attention to the cleanliness of the pavements around the shrine, sweeping them regularly to prevent clouds of dust, brought in on pilgrims' feet, being kicked up.

The liturgy of the feast began just before dinner on July 6, when the eight painted and gilded candles on the shrine were lit. There was a procession to the shrine after Vespers, and one following Vespers on every day of the succeeding double octave. Unlike the Feast of the Martyrdom, the cathedral does not appear to have admitted pilgrims to the midnight Matins, and there is no suggestion that the cycle of Masses at the various Thomas "stations" was a feature of the Translation.¹⁴⁴ As on the feast of the Martyrdom there was a solemn Mass at the shrine on the day of the Translation, celebrated by the Subprior and accompanied by paid singers and organists. Furthermore, this was repeated every day for the succeeding octave according to a rota prepared by the Succentor, the monk who assisted the Precentor in the organization of the liturgy. By comparison with the feast of the Martyrdom, the feast of the Translation as described in the Customary appears much less focused on providing a planned and didactic experience for the visiting pilgrims, and far more concerned with crowd management. Throughout the day, and for the succeeding days, the shrine would be the centrepiece of both the monastic liturgy and the devotions of pilgrims, and the first shrine clerk would almost certainly be made to work hard clearing a path for the monastic processions to the shrine. The press of pilgrims would have made for an experience quite particular to this annual feast, part of a varied ritual year at the cathedral which the Customary helps us to reconstruct.

Pilgrimage

The Customary only uses "pilgrim" or "pilgrimage" nine times in over nine thousand words, which serves to emphasize the monastic nature of the document. The Customary as a whole should stand as something of a corrective to the idea that Canterbury Cathedral, and even Thomas Becket's Shrine Chapel within it, was managed as a "pilgrimage church," or that pilgrims' needs were prioritized by the monks.¹⁴⁵ Yet the lack

144 For the feast-day liturgy see Slocum, *Liturgies*, 239–317; Sherry L. Reames, "Reconstructing and Interpreting a Thirteenth-Century Office for the Translation of Thomas Becket," *Speculum* 80 (2005): 118–70; Reames, "Liturgical Offices," 578–91; Emery, "Architecture, Space, and Memory," 68–73.

145 For instance, Tatton-Brown, "Canterbury and the Architecture of Pilgrimage Shrines," 90–107; M. F. Hearn, "Canterbury Cathedral and the Cult of Becket," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 1 (1994): 19–52 at 43–47; Emma J. Wells, "Making 'Sense' of the Pilgrimage Experience of the Medieval Church," *Peregrinations* 3, no. 2 (2011): 122–46; Conrad Rudolph, "The Tour Guide in the Middle Ages: Guide Culture and the Mediation of Public Art," *Art Bulletin* 100, no. 1 (2018): 36–67 at 41–43.

of attention to pilgrims outside of the feast of the Translation, when they were always expected in great crowds, also reflects the fact that the numbers and types of pilgrims arriving throughout the year were subject to a great deal of variation. As such they did not fit easily into the ordered layout of the Customary. The sections dealing with the needs of pilgrims are notable for the shift from prescriptive to suggestive language. The daily routine can be interrupted if “it is an occasion when a great crowd of people have come.” The altar should be cleared after the first Mass “lest people are staying behind,” and the shrine kept open through dinner on the feast of the Translation only “if a great crowd of people have gathered.” As noted, one of the key functions of the shrine clerks was to deal with and aid pilgrims both inside the cathedral and outside waiting to enter, and as such their role in this regard would have been largely a responsive one. The needs, and the neediness, of pilgrims is hinted at in the Customary. Where they do appear in the text, they are often weary or impatient, “wishing and desiring quickly to offer their penny to God and the blessed martyr.”

Recently, historians have begun to move away from an understanding of medieval pilgrimage as some form of “*communitas*” binding disparate actors in a shared experience, to embrace the diversity of behaviours and experiences that can fall under the heading of “pilgrimage.” Those visiting the shrine of Thomas Becket, and thus classed under the heading of “pilgrim,” might have traversed Europe to do so, or they may have lived within a couple of hours’ walk. Their journey might have been direct to the shrine, or via a series of other holy places, or they may have been travelling through Canterbury for entirely secular reasons before deciding to visit the cathedral. They may have come to ask St. Thomas for a favour, or to give thanks for a benefit received, or as the travelling-companion of a friend or relative on such a pilgrimage. They may have arrived with thousands of others during the Feast of the Translation, or be one of a handful at the shrine in the middle of winter. A royal or noble personage, or a distinguished visitor with a letter of introduction from the archbishop, such as Desiderius Erasmus in the early sixteenth-century, could expect a far higher level of personal attendance from the monks, and greater access to the sacred treasures of the cathedral, than a London shopkeeper. Those with more to offer, whether in terms of the value of their donation or the worthiness of their cause, could demand more from their experience. As such the pilgrim experience in Canterbury Cathedral, as at all such sites, was a process of negotiation between pilgrims and the custodians of the sacred space. The cathedral was both a “landscape of pilgrimage” and a “realm of competing discourse” where expectations of behaviour and experience combined to individualize as much as homogenize the Customary’s generic “pilgrim.”¹⁴⁶

As I have discussed elsewhere, there was a vast difference between the pilgrim experience within the cathedral indicated by the hundreds of miracle stories from the earliest years of the cult in the 1170s, and that of the later Middle Ages at the Shrine Chapel of

146 Dee Dyas and John Jenkins, “Introduction,” in *Pilgrimage and England’s Cathedrals*, ed. Dyas and Jenkins, 6–14; Simon Coleman and John Elsner, *Pilgrimage Past and Present in the World Religions* (London: British Museum, 1995), 202–30; John Eade and Michael Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London: Routledge, 1991), 3–5.

the 1420s.¹⁴⁷ The picture portrayed by the miracle stories of pilgrims staying overnight, often for weeks on end, at the tomb of the saint, wailing and even vomiting copiously, does not fit easily with, and in fact appears to be precluded by, the rules and regulations laid down in the Customary. Robyn Malo has argued that these rules were introduced at most important English shrines from the end of the twelfth century to circumscribe this more tactile, present, and potentially disgusting pilgrim behaviour.¹⁴⁸ More recently, Anne Bailey has convincingly argued that this picture of unconstrained pilgrimage is not actually representative of the normal atmosphere of twelfth century English cathedral shrines, but even then would be found only in the earliest stages of cult formation, or on a couple of allotted festivals throughout the year.¹⁴⁹ Certainly by the later Middle Ages at Canterbury, if not before, strict opening hours meant that pilgrims were excluded from the shrine, and the cathedral church as a whole, during the night and through the monks' dinner hour. Pilgrims still came to seek cures, such as Alexander Stephenson of Aberdeen, who came to Becket's shrine in 1445 in hope of a cure for his feet. From the description of his miraculous cure, wringing shrieks from him at the shrine on one day and restoring his ability to walk on the next, he may have been allowed to stay overnight in the Shrine Chapel, but it is more likely that he returned on successive days.¹⁵⁰ Given the close relationship between the shrine and the liturgy in the choir, to which it formed a backdrop, disruptive healing of this kind could not have been tolerated for long.

As pilgrims could not stay at the shrine, they had to find other accommodation. Pilgrims to later-medieval Canterbury could stay in one of the many inns, hostels, or hospitals in the city, including the famous cathedral-owned "Cheker of the Hope" near the Christ Church gate to the precincts.¹⁵¹ Within the precincts there were several halls and chambers available for guests and travellers, although it is not at all clear how many pilgrims and lay visitors were accommodated in-house, and what the criteria for accommodation would be.¹⁵² All monasteries had sizeable guest accommodation for the itinerant poor, for short-term visitors on business or social visits, and longer-term corrodians. As both one of the largest monasteries and the mother-church of England the cathedral could expect to have to accommodate a sizeable number of laity even before factoring in the lure of Becket's shrine. One apparent piece of evidence, Prior Eastray's complaint

147 Jenkins "Replication or Rivalry," 27–34. For a discussion of the pilgrimage experience at Canterbury in the fifteenth century in the context of the medieval city see Sheila Sweetinburgh, "Pilgrimage in 'An Age of Plague': Seeking Canterbury's "hooly blisful martir" in 1420 and 1470," in *The Fifteenth Century XII: Society in an Age of Plague*, ed. Linda Clark and Carole Rawcliffe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), 56–77.

148 Robyn Malo, *Relics and Writing in Late Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2013), 27–100.

149 Anne Bailey, "Reconsidering the Experience at the Shrine in High Medieval England," *Journal of Medieval History* 47, no. 2 (2021): 203–29.

150 *Litterae Cantuarienses: The Letter Books of the Monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Joseph Brigstocke Sheppard, Rolls Series 85, 3 vols. (London: HMSO, 1887–1889), 3:191–92.

151 Sweetinburgh, "Pilgrimage in 'An Age of Plague,'" 71–73.

152 Dobson, "Monks of Canterbury," 139–41.

in 1318 that the chapter faced considerable expenses from their many visitors, is such a commonplace of late medieval monastic responses to royal impositions that it tells us nothing about the realities of how and why laity were housed in the precinct.¹⁵³ The 1298 injunctions of Archbishop Winchelsey command the monks to give at least one day and night's hospitality to men in religious orders and distinguished laity ("viri religiosi" and "seculares honesti") who asked for it, together with their servants and horses. This implied status, and the statement that by doing so the monks could expect their guests to confer benefits on them in return, indicate that, as others have also suggested, only the most important pilgrims, along with visitors on business, could expect to be lodged within the cathedral precincts.¹⁵⁴

As noted above, the earliest that pilgrims could enter the precincts, and the cathedral, was at around 5.45 a.m. in summer and 6.45 a.m. in winter, with the cathedral closing again at the end of Vespers.¹⁵⁵ The morning and afternoon opening hours of the shrine, divided by the period around midday when the cathedral closed at dinner, may have served different pilgrim needs. They would certainly have provided different sensory experiences. It was more usual for pilgrims to arrive in the morning, as it was expected that they would fast overnight before seeking the saint at the shrine.¹⁵⁶ As I have argued elsewhere, the supposed "pilgrim route" around the cathedral taking in the other Becket sites before the shrine is largely the creation of Victorian historians, and was certainly not the "normal" pilgrim path to the shrine.¹⁵⁷ Instead pilgrims entering the cathedral through the southwest nave porch or perhaps the southwest transept door went fairly directly to the shrine up the south choir aisle, offering their penny there before seeking out other sacred sites and relics.

Pilgrims visiting the shrine in the morning could expect to witness a religious service, and as such they could also expect that the shrine cover would be raised, as it probably was during services in the choir.¹⁵⁸ The first through the door each day probably came specifically to attend the Thomas Mass, while on Tuesdays the solemn Mass at the shrine which so impressed Ughi, as noted above, was probably an attractive weekly event.¹⁵⁹ As the shrine was open through High Mass each day it would also have provided a desirable vantage-point from which to be present at the Eucharistic celebrations. Outside of these times throughout the morning the pilgrim experience would have occurred at the same time as the hours of Prime, Terce, and Sext taking place in the adjacent choir. Visually and sonically there would have been a "discourse" between these acts of corporate monastic worship and the lay expectation and understanding of the

153 *Literae Cantuarienses*, ed. Sheppard, 1:44–45; Dobson, "Monks of Canterbury," 139.

154 *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey*, ed. Graham, 2:822–23; Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 2000), 225; Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 183–86.

155 CCA DCC-Register/K, fol. 223v.

156 Jenkins, "Replication or Rivalry," 33–35.

157 Jenkins, "Modelling the Cult," 102–3.

158 Jenkins, "Modelling the Cult," 110.

159 See pp. 22–23 above.

space: the “landscape of pilgrimage” in the cathedral was heavily mediated both actively and passively by the monastic presence.¹⁶⁰

For the afternoon hours at the shrine, which always fell between the end of Nones and the start of Vespers, there would have been very few corporate acts of worship taking place in the cathedral. This probably also meant that the shrine cover would be down and the golden feretory no longer on view, unless it was a major feast day or during the double octave of the Translation. This may have been the time when more disruptive pilgrims such as Alexander Stephenson were brought to the shrine by their carers in search of a cure. This can only be conjectural for the shrine at Canterbury, although a 1446 miracle from Durham Cathedral indicates that the afternoon hours of the shrine there, between Nones and Vespers when there was no liturgical activity in the choir, was the appropriate time for cure-seekers who wanted to spend a longer period in supplication to the saint.¹⁶¹ According to this miracle, a gentleman from Devon, distraught in his mind and sick in his body, was brought to St. Cuthbert’s shrine at 8 a.m. on February 2 to give his penny, and then was taken away again as he “continued in his madness.” He was brought back at 2 p.m., the hour following Nones and the communal dinner, and was allowed to sleep at the shrine until 4 p.m. when he left, apparently cured. There was still a limit on behaviour during this time, as when he cried out too loudly in his sleep the shrine-keepers threw holy water on him. The picture of shrine management which can be gleaned from the Customary perhaps suggests a similar division of activity between morning and afternoon, when those with more complex problems, or perhaps those willing to pay for it, could get to spend more time in supplication at the shrine.

The time of year was also key to the pilgrim experience at the shrine. Pilgrimage was highly seasonal, as the Customary indicates in its suspension of the shrine-keepers’ usual monastic duties in the weeks following Easter, Pentecost, the Translation, and Michaelmas, in order for them to deal with the increased numbers of pilgrims.¹⁶² This increase was not merely a matter of seasonal travelling-weather, as a greatly-enhanced package of spiritual benefits in the form of indulgences was granted to pilgrims coming to the cathedral and offering at one or more of Becket’s shrines during these weeks. Pilgrims could also expect a particularly spectacular sensory experience at these times, when, as shown above, special attention was paid to the music, lighting, and, decoration of the cathedral church, and the shrine and other relics would be put on display.¹⁶³ By the late thirteenth century at the latest these, together with the feast of the Martyrdom, were

160 For the role of the senses in the medieval pilgrim experience see Dee Dyas, *The Dynamics of Pilgrimage: Christianity, Holy Places, and Sensory Experience* (London: Routledge, 2020).

161 Durham, Dean and Chapter Library, Misc. Chart 7159*; Jenkins, “Replication or Rivalry,” 41; transcribed and discussed in John Jenkins, “Time, Space, and Mass: The Lay Experience of Medieval Cathedrals,” in *The Lay Experience of the Medieval Cathedral: Proceedings of the 2021 Ecclesiological Society Conference*, ed. Mark Kirby (forthcoming).

162 Coleman and Jenkins, “The Multivalent Cathedral,” 157–60.

163 For the seasonality of pilgrimage in the twelfth century, and the clustering of miracles around times when relics would be on display in cathedrals and great churches, see Bailey, “Reconsidering the Experience.”

established as “feasts of solemn pilgrimage.”¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, from 1383 nine-day fairs were permitted in the precincts of the cathedral on the vigils and octaves of Pentecost, the Translation, Michaelmas, and the Martyrdom.¹⁶⁵ This would have radically changed the atmosphere around the cathedral at these important points in the year. As noted above the Customary takes a generally benevolent attitude to pilgrims, but there may have been some ambivalence amongst the monks over the inevitable disruption these fêtes and festivities caused to the monastic life. This is suggested by the verses written by the monk William Glastynbury in the mid-fifteenth century complaining of the noise and disturbance to the choir made by the festal activity outside the cathedral around these major feasts, as well as the profanation of the cemetery by merchants’ stalls.¹⁶⁶

Particularly important pilgrims were permitted a greater degree of access to some of the monastic claustral range, and especially so on these “feasts of solemn pilgrimage.” Seculars were not allowed to wander about the cloister, but “serious and distinguished men, and especially pilgrims’ were permitted to use the cloister walks appropriately. These pilgrims were also allowed to see the refectory, dormitory, and other private chambers, outside of meal and sleeping times and in silence, if they had received licence from the prior and were accompanied by two monks. “Noble and distinguished female pilgrims” were also allowed into the refectory under the same constraints, but only during the feasts of solemn pilgrimage.¹⁶⁷ In practice this would have applied only to high status pilgrims, especially those who might be guests of the prior or the monks during the major pilgrim festivals. It is notable that the wealthy Florentine merchant Ughi, who arrived at the cathedral during the octave of the Martyrdom feast, was a beneficiary of this relaxation, being shown through the choir, then around the refectory, dormitory, and even the chapter house by a monastic escort.¹⁶⁸ Ughi’s tour of the claustral buildings is a reminder that most eye-witness accounts of pilgrimage were written by those of such status as to afford them a particularly privileged experience, and also of the necessity of arriving at the right time.

Expenditure

The final section of the Customary deals with the dues of the shrine to the obedientiaries and officials of the Cathedral, and the apportioning of revenue to expenses. As noted above, the financial and administrative systems of the cathedral priory had been undergoing considerable change in the decades before the writing of the Customary.

164 *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey*, ed. Graham, 2:817.

165 DCC-CCA-Register/A, fols. 102v, 110v; printed in Foreville, *Jubilé*, 175–76. In the early sixteenth century on the vigils of the Translation and Martyrdom there were also civic pageants in Canterbury telling the story of Becket’s life and death, Sheila Sweetinburgh, “Looking to the Past: The St. Thomas Pageant in Early Tudor Canterbury,” *Archaeologia Cantiana* 137 (2016): 163–83.

166 Woodruff, “Chronicle of William Glastynbury,” 137–38.

167 *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey*, ed. Graham, 2:816–18. The wider prevalence of feasts of solemn pilgrimage and the greater access allowed to those of high status at cathedrals during these times is discussed in Jenkins, “Time, Space, and Mass.”

168 Sidoli, Palumbo, and Parkin, “A Florentine Merchant’s Visit,” 595.

There is clear evidence from the Customary of the characteristic features of the later medieval obedientiary system: cross-payments between offices to pay for running costs, and detailed prescriptions for the provision of gifts and pittances to the community on particular occasions. In terms of income, offerings at the shrine have been examined in some detail by Ben Nilson, although some revisions to his interpretation are offered below.¹⁶⁹ Some properties and rents had been gifted to the shrine, although the annual revenue from these does not seem to have exceeded £9, and a substantial portion of that was allocated to the maintenance of lights.¹⁷⁰ In 1427 a rare glimpse of the management of these rents indicates that they had a net revenue of only £3 6s 8d and were not administered by the shrine-keepers but by a monk-proxy.¹⁷¹

As noted above, the turn of the fifteenth century saw a change in the methods of financial accounting at the priory from a central treasury system to one controlled by the prior.¹⁷² As part of this the shrine keepers' gross annual income was no longer entered in the central financial accounts, with their expenditure also dealt with centrally, but instead the shrine-keepers and other obedientiaries administered both income and expenditure for the year and the central accounts only recorded the net surplus which was rendered to the treasury. As such, and as Nilson and others have noted, the income of the shrine as traced through the priors' account rolls appears to decline dramatically almost to nothing in the fifteenth century.¹⁷³ Once we see the vast undercurrent of regular payments between obediential offices at the cathedral in the later Middle Ages, however, it is possible to account for the otherwise startling drop in shrine revenue.¹⁷⁴

It is worth looking first at the only surviving shrine-keepers account roll from Canterbury, of 1397/8.¹⁷⁵ This only shows details of outgoings, with the income stated as a lump sum. By far the most important source of income for the shrine was the offerings of pilgrims and devotees. Although the total from these would have been subject to notable annual fluctuations based on a range of factors, in the late fourteenth and

169 Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 144–54.

170 CCA DCc-Register/E, fols. 143r–144v.

171 Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 256, fol. 91r, printed in Woodruff, "Chronicle of William Glastynbury," 128.

172 See pp. 7–8 above.

173 Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 147–52. Nilson's account of this is rather confused in places, not helped by a misreading of "de annuo" (yearly) on the shrine account roll as "de anima" (of the soul), which he then took as the basis for a curious division of income between oblations at Masses and those received otherwise.

174 There were four "term-days" (*termini*) at Canterbury when payments were made by the shrine-keepers to the various obedientiaries and to the rest of the community. These broadly map to the more general "quarter days" of medieval England, although here they were Easter, Pentecost, the Feast of the Translation of St. Thomas, and Michaelmas. These local term-days were adopted in all the later medieval accounting of the rents and dues of the Cathedral, although in dealing with secular rents the Easter term-day was exchanged with Christmas to give a more even spread throughout the year (e.g., *Litterae Cantuarienses*, ed. Sheppard, 3:233–34). Christmas was also considered to be a "term-day" for gifts or oblations to other obedientiaries and monks of the house.

175 CCA DCc-Feretrar/1.

early fifteenth century they could be relied upon to cover almost £250 in yearly outgoings, of which perhaps only £20 in miscellaneous expenditure and for special Masses might not be regarded as “customary.” The total of the named regular expenses outlined in the Customary, including the price of wax but not of numerous irregular payments noted throughout, comes to almost £300 annually, albeit the Customary tells us that almost £200 of that owed to the Cellarer had recently (and probably permanently) been reallocated to the Warden of the Manors. The ability of the prior to reallocate these cross-payments, as he had done in the case of the shrine-keepers’ dues to the cellarer, in response to fluctuations in obediendary income, also mean that it is impossible to have any degree of certainty about the continuance of all these payments for any length of time. It seems likely that by the mid-fifteenth century income from offerings returned to the levels seen in the mid-thirteenth century, of between £50 to £100 per year, all of which was distributed in customary payments.¹⁷⁶

For some of the regular or irregular expenditures listed in the Customary it is probably a pointless exercise to try to reason why they were considered to fall within the duties of the shrine-keepers. The cost of repairing the maple-wood and gilt communal bowls at the monks’ dining tables when they were broken, or the provision of lights to the Prior’s Chapel, are most likely to have been allotted to the shrine-keepers by chapter act, and perhaps only because it was felt they were most able to bear the expense at the time. While some of the cross-payments to other obediendaries such as the wax for the sacrist or the payments to the Succentor and Third Cantor for their musical services through the year have clear reasonings, others appear to have been largely arbitrary based on ability to pay. In this latter category is the £20 annually paid to the Chamberlain, seen in both the account roll and the Customary, which was stipulated in a 1376 ordinance for no other likely reason than the high level of shrine income at that time.¹⁷⁷ The Customary implies that the shrine-keepers’ responsibility to provide food to those in the Infirmary on Thursdays in Advent and Lent was the result of a similar ordinance. Other gifts and payments formed a regular part of the late-medieval Benedictine obediendary system, such as the presents of money or wax to all the members of the community at Christmas, Purification, Easter, Pentecost, and Michaelmas.¹⁷⁸

The treatment of some other small expenditures by the Customary points to their not having been enjoined by chapter but adopted by the shrine-keepers as a way of affirming the centrality of the cult of St. Thomas to the communal life of the monks. The monks of Canterbury were aware of their prestigious situation as custodians of the shrine of the most renowned and important English saint, and the Customary shows how the shrine-keepers helped to instil this sense of the relationship between the monks and their saint from the earliest opportunity. The shrine-keepers treated each

176 Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, 212–15 for tabulated offerings from the shrine. These cross-payments would also have affected the reported incomes of other chapels within the cathedral. For example, from 1376, £10 was allocated to the anniversarian each year from the offerings at the Tomb Chapel: *Litterae Cantuarienses*, ed. Sheppard, 3:5.

177 *Litterae Cantuarienses*, ed. Sheppard, 3:6.

178 Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priors*, 247–51.

new cohort of novices to a meal at their expense, with the stated purpose that it would bind them in obligation to the shrine. Similarly, the brothers who went up to study at Canterbury College, Oxford were given a present of 5s by the shrine-keepers along with the blessing of St. Thomas. The cathedral priories of Canterbury and Durham had their own collegiate foundations at Oxford separate and pointedly distinct from the general Benedictine Gloucester College. As Barrie Dobson has argued, the special status of the monks of Canterbury as custodians of the shrine of St. Thomas (and similarly that of St. Cuthbert for the monks of Durham) was a key mark of that distinctness and of the communities' "inalienable immunities and prestige," even within the University.¹⁷⁹ By the time of the Customary there were normally only two or three monks besides the Warden at the College, and as the 5s was only given to those going up for the first time this was not a substantial annual expenditure.¹⁸⁰ The token sum and the blessing of St. Thomas, however, would have served to remind the monks of their connection to the mother house and the distinct status it conferred on them.

The Customary does make justifications for some of the annual provisions of food or "pittances" to their fellow monks during particular feasts or fasts. Unlike some of the other major Benedictine houses, Canterbury appears never to have had a "communar" or "pittancer" in charge of the distribution of special dishes on particular feast days and during Lent and Advent. This duty was instead divided between the anniversarian who organized the memorials and charitable legacies of deceased monks and patrons, the almoner who otherwise distributed alms, and, as the Customary shows, the shrine-keepers on the feasts of St. Thomas.¹⁸¹ On the feast of the Return it was the responsibility of the shrine-keepers to provide the "last pittance" after Vespers. This was the third dish at the conventual supper, which on major feast days would be both substantial and lavish.¹⁸² It was also of some significance in the overall commemoration of the feast itself, replicating in both form and intent the supposed benevolence of St. Thomas on that day in 1170.

The shrine-keepers had accumulated a number of responsibilities in providing for the *deportum* of the monks. This was a term seemingly local to Canterbury but which appears to have been another name for the usual Benedictine allowance for monks to undergo periods of blood-letting during which normal dietary rules were relaxed and they could eat meat taken in the infirmary or another allotted hall.¹⁸³ The Customary makes clear that *deportum* could be taken by the monks in the periods between the Feast of the Martyrdom and Ash Wednesday, and between Easter Monday and Mich-

179 Barrie Dobson, "The Black Monks of Durham and Canterbury Colleges: Comparisons and Contrasts," in *Benedictines in Oxford*, ed. Henry Wandsborough and Anthony Maret-Crosby (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997), 61–78 at 65; Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priories*, 126–45.

180 Dobson, "Monks of Canterbury" 104–5. The 1397/8 shrine-keepers' roll shows it was paid to six monks that year.

181 Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priories*, 258–59.

182 Barbara Harvey, "Monastic Pittances in the Middle Ages," in *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, ed. Christopher M. Woolgar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 215–27.

183 Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priories*, 281–88.

aelmas. The picture is complicated by the use of *deportum* to mean both the period of relaxation and the chamber set aside for that purpose. The injunctions to the monks in the registers of Archbishop Winchelsey in 1298 make it clear that this was a room within the precincts where eight monks each week, four from the upper and four from the lower choir stalls, might avail themselves of similar dietary freedoms as found in the infirmary. As noted above, these monks were also the celebrants and assistants at the daily Lady Mass in the nave and the solemn Thomas Mass on Tuesdays at times when the *deportum* was open, and they were also enjoined to be present at all processions, at Terce, High Mass, and Vespers.¹⁸⁴ In a community of ninety monks this meant that each monk might expect to spend either three or four weeks each year in *deportum*.

Historians have had some difficulty in locating the later medieval *deportum*, although the Customary and other fifteenth-century sources give some clue.¹⁸⁵ During the rule of Prior Chillenden (1390–1411) “a new place for *deportum* with, underneath, a cellar” was constructed in the precincts.¹⁸⁶ It is not obvious where in the precincts this new place for *deportum* was sited, although given the context of the list of buildings in which it appears, which has something of a spatial arrangement, it was perhaps in one of the now-lost chambers to the north of the Infirmary Chapel. In 1458 the Rogation Monday procession heard a sermon near the door to the *deportum* following a Mass in the Infirmary Chapel, further pointing to its position within the infirmary complex.¹⁸⁷ As the infirmarian had long overseen the provision of *deportum* it would have made good sense to re-site it there.¹⁸⁸ The chamber would only have needed to be big enough to provide sleeping, eating, and sitting quarters for eight monks. The monks in the *deportum* had their own chaplain, who was weekly supplied with candles by the shrine-keepers to light the brothers as they recited Matins in the night. As the monks were sleeping out of the communal dormitory they would not be able to take the night stairs to the choir to celebrate Matins, but would still be expected to recite the liturgy, presumably in the Infirmary Chapel. When the sacrist or his subordinates was present at the *deportum* the shrine-keepers were exempt from providing these candles as these would have been the officials with a readier supply of wax. As a convivial note, when one of the shrine-keepers was taking *deportum* in his turn, he took with him a gallon of wine to share with the others for the week so that they would “be glad that he is present among them.”

184 *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey*, ed. Graham, 2:820–21; *Literae Cantuarienses*, ed. Sheppard, 3:5.

185 Willis suggested that it may have been joined to the western side of the Refectory in order to be close to the kitchen, and most subsequent historians have accepted this for lack of other evidence, Robert Willis, “The Architectural History of the Conventual Buildings of the Monastery of Christ Church in Canterbury,” *Archaeologica Cantiana* 7 (1868): 59–61.

186 *Literae Cantuarienses*, ed. Sheppard, 3:115. Margaret Sparks says this must have been abandoned because in the 1430s the Infirmary’s *Mensa Magistrorum* was described as the place where the monks ate when they were not in the Refectory. There were, however, many places outside Refectory where the monks took their food, most commonly the prior’s *camera*, and in the 1430s the *Mensa Magistrorum* was demonstrably not the only other place, Sparks, *Canterbury Cathedral Precincts*, 42; Greatrex, *English Benedictine Cathedral Priors*, 241.

187 *Christ Church, Canterbury*, ed. Searle, 73.

188 *Registrum Roberti Winchelsey*, ed. Graham, 2:819–20.

The Afterlife of the Customary

The manuscript of the Customary bears witness to the Reformation, as the name and titles of St. Thomas have been carefully erased from the first page and all the marginal headings. It may seem curious that the Customary to the shrine was kept, being dutifully amended according to the Henrician statute, when the shrine itself was destroyed. It may be that it was preserved on the chance that the shrine would be restored in future, and the erasures carried out to disguise its function from a cursory and poorly-Latinate inspector. After the Dissolution of Christ Church Priory and the destruction of the shrine to which it belonged, the manuscript, along with the French *Lives* of Becket with which it is bound, was in the library of the recusant Roman Catholic Hawkins family of Nash Court near Faversham in Kent.¹⁸⁹ It was presumably Thomas Hawkins (1487–1588) who acquired the documents, whose epitaph in nearby Boughton-under-Blean church states that he had served Henry VIII well and had been generously rewarded by the king, living to the ripe age of 101.¹⁹⁰ The document may have served a similar fashion to that posited for the *Rites of Durham*: “a source of nostalgia” and a reminder of the pre-Reformation forms of religious practice.¹⁹¹ It may also have allowed the owners a route into an imagined pilgrimage to the lost shrine of St. Thomas. It is possible that the family had a particular devotion to Becket, as their eldest sons were invariably called Thomas until the extinction of the male line in 1800, and many younger sons left to become Jesuit priests or Benedictine monks on the Continent.¹⁹² The Hawkins family remained at Nash Court until the nineteenth century, although the house was attacked by a Protestant mob during the Jacobite uprisings of 1715, and their library burnt.¹⁹³ Although Hasted claims the entire library was lost, some books were saved, perhaps indicating their particular value to the family. Notably these included the volume of the Customary with the two verse lives, and BL Add. MS 11307, a fifteenth-century manuscript containing three English verse meditations.¹⁹⁴ After the death of Thomas Hawkins in 1800 the estate was split amongst his daughters.¹⁹⁵ The remaining library was sold in 1806 and several books, including the pre-Reformation manuscripts, purchased by the antiquarian and bibliophile Joseph Haslewood (1769–1833). He gives the first notice of the Customary as a text, identifying in the volume “a Latin introduction [to the verse life of Guernes] enumerating the festivals and ceremonies to be kept in honour of the Saint.”¹⁹⁶ Haslewood put up many of his early books and manuscripts for auction in May 1809, where the

189 Turner, “Customary,” 16.

190 J. A. Boodle, “Boughton Under The Blean,” *Archaeologia Cantiana* 21 (1895): 331.

191 Claxton, *Rites of Durham*, ed. Harvey and Rollason, 69–74.

192 Christopher Buckingham, “The Hawkins of Boughton-Under-Blean: Some Genealogical Notes on a Kentish Recusant Family,” *The London Recusant* 2 (1971): 1–8.

193 Edward Hasted, *The Historical and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 12 vols. (Canterbury: Bristow, 1798), 7:10.

194 Samuel Egerton Brydges, *Censura Literaria*, 10 vols. (London: Bensley, 1805–1810), 4:393.

195 Kew, The National Archives, PROB 11/1351/24.

196 Brydges, *Censura Literaria*, 4:394.

Customary manuscript was purchased by his friend and fellow Roxburghe Club member Richard Heber (1773–1833) for £3 6s. Following Heber’s death the manuscript was purchased at auction by Thomas Phillipps (1792–1872), “the greatest collector of manuscripts ever,” and catalogued in his library as MS 8113.¹⁹⁷

Note on Text and Translation

The Latin text has a number of later medieval characteristics, many of them common including the rendering of -ae as -e and the interchangeability of “t” and “c.” The scribe writes the enclitic conjunctive -que (and) as a separate word, sometimes abbreviated and at other times written out. At some points in the text this makes it difficult to distinguish from the pronoun quae, which the scribe also renders either as que or with the same abbreviated form as used for -que. I have distinguished between these by attaching -que enclitics to their preceding words in the text. Otherwise, throughout I have rendered the Latin as it appears in the manuscript, retaining original spellings and offering corrections to errors in footnotes. Deleted and damaged text has been restored within square brackets where it has been possible to reconstruct the original text, or with ellipses in square brackets where this has not been possible. Punctuation and capitalization are retained as closely as possible. Marginal headings from the manuscript are placed within the Latin text as closely as possible to their positions, and indicated in bold italic font, but paragraph spacing has been retained. In the translation each side heading forms the start of a new section.

Given the official and technical nature of the document, and in order that the text and translation might be compared for accuracy, I have attempted as closely literal a translation as possible. Some of the larger sentences have been broken up for the purposes of readability in the translation. Individual technical terms relating to the liturgy or monastic life are glossed in footnotes, while for more complex concepts or practices readers are pointed to relevant sections of the introduction.

197 *The British Library Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts, New Series 1971–1975*, 3 vols. (London: British Library, 2001), 1:539–40; Turner, “Customary of the Shrine,” 17; Cathleen Hayhurst Wheat, “Joseph Haslewood and the Roxburghe Club,” *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1947): 37–49 at 40. Phillipps’ catalogue correctly identifies the three constituent parts of the manuscript, and the Customary is described as “De Officiis Feretrariorum B. Thomae Cantuariae Johem. Vyel & Edmd. Kyngston 1428,” *Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum in Bibliotheca D. Thomae Phillipps Bart. A.D. 1837* (Middle Hill: [n. pub.], 1837), 122).