

Dombibliothek Hildesheim

# The Albani Psalter

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*Jochen Bepler*

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*Jane Geddes*

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## CONTENTS AND CODICOLOGY

### I Introduction

#### I.1 The Albani Psalter

The Albani Psalter,<sup>1</sup> also known as the St Albans Psalter<sup>2</sup> and the Psalter of Christina of Markyate,<sup>3</sup> has been described as ‘one of the key manuscripts of the English twelfth century’,<sup>4</sup> and ‘the most complete and magnificent expression of a new movement in English taste’.<sup>5</sup> Its ‘unparalleled outburst of pictorial narrative is one of the most astonishing phenomena in the history of medieval art.’<sup>6</sup>

It contains a prefatory cycle of forty full-page miniatures, which is one of the most extensive of such English cycles and the earliest to survive since the tenth century. It contains a unique and extraordinary series of well over two hundred large historiated initials. For art historians it is of yet further interest because the work of the main artist has been recognised in a number of other manuscripts, and has been seen as the founder of an important ‘school’ of manuscript illumination, which lasted for well over a century. For students of French language and literature it is of fundamental importance because it contains the earliest surviving example of a substantial piece of French literature and a unique prologue; scores of publications have been devoted to this single feature of the volume. The manuscript contains two versions (in Latin and in a unique French translation) of Pope Gregory the Great’s famous dictum on the use of images, which raises issues about textual and visual literacy. For the large and ever-growing number of people interested in the role of women in the Middle Ages the Psalter is a prime document because it can be confidently associated with the earliest female recluse about whom we know a substantial amount. It represents a remarkable series of superlatives and ‘firsts’, embodying the first surviving examples of features that would persist through the twelfth century and beyond.

The Psalter also holds a unique position in terms of its immensely rich historical, artistic, and scribal context. The historical context includes a copy of a contemporary ‘biography’ of the probable recipient of the Psalter, Christina of Markyate, some of whose facts are corroborated by chronicles of St Albans Abbey and other documents relating to St Albans Abbey, to Christina’s priory at Markyate, and to her indirect associations with contemporary figures as eminent as the archbishops of Canterbury and York, the king, and the pope. These same sources also tell us a great deal about the Psalter’s probable patron, Geoffrey, Abbot of St Albans. The surviving artistic context includes at least two other manuscripts painted by the main artist of the Psalter, and several others that are closely related to it in style and iconography. The scribal context consists of scores of surviving manuscripts from St Albans Abbey, some of them written by scribes who contributed to the Psalter.

But despite this wealth of evidence – an embarrassment of riches compared to most other medieval manuscripts – the Psalter still presents an extraordinary array of historical, stylistic, iconographic, and liturgical puzzles, many of which have never been solved after more than a century of close scholarly attention. While all scholars now agree that the Albani Psalter was made during the abbacy (1119–1146) of Geoffrey de Gorron, Abbot of St Albans, and involved scribes and artists who worked on other books made for St Albans Abbey, there is little agreement about three matters in particular. As we shall see, there is no disputing the fact that the manuscript was in some way associated with a woman known as Christina, who lived as a recluse at Markyate, near St Albans, and later became prioress of her own nunnery on the same site, but there is disagreement about what this association was: some think that the book was intended for her from the very beginning, others say that it was originally intended for use at St Albans, and only adapted for Christina



after it was substantially complete. Second, there is the question of whether all the parts of the manuscript were planned from the beginning, as a unified whole, or whether the volume as it exists today is the result of a series of accretions, substitutions, and other alterations. The third area of deep controversy, intricately related to the first two, is the date of the manuscript: various scholars have presented arguments in favour of dates ranging from c.1115 to after 1155.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, the evidence can be interpreted in a variety of ways and, this being the case, one might question the value of attempting to refine the date of the manuscript more closely than, say, ‘within 20 years of 1135’. But as one authority has put it ‘The style of the St Albans Psalter is of such significance for English art of the first half of the twelfth century, that anything that may help to determine its date is of importance’.<sup>8</sup>

### I.1.1 Arrangement of this Commentary

The Albani Psalter is a wonderfully intriguing and complex manuscript, and the pieces of evidence that can be used to deduce when, where, by whom, and for whom it was made, intertwine in convoluted ways. For this reason, there is no entirely logical linear way to describe and discuss it: many features can only be understood by reference to other features. Attention to detail and the minute examination of small features are essential to finding the clues that will raise larger questions and lead to a full understanding of the manuscript, but there is a risk of getting mired in small details and losing sight of the overall picture. The approach taken here is therefore to first introduce the reader to manuscript psalters in general, and English ones in particular (Chapter I.2), and then guide the reader through the Albani Psalter in stages. Each section of the manuscript will be described in turn, in terms both of its contents, and in terms of its codicology (Chapter II.1–II.8). Codicology is the study of books as physical objects.<sup>10</sup> It is concerned with their materials (parchment, ink, etc.), their preparation (quality, size, etc.), and their arrangement (the sequence of the parts, their binding, etc.); it is thus different from the study of the *contents* of the books (texts, illustrations, etc.): the parchment, ink, and handwriting are physical characteristics of the book, but are not the same as the actual words or their meaning.

After the whole manuscript has been described in this way, Chapters III and IV will look more closely at the styles of handwriting and decoration, and assess all the evidence concerning the date of its manufacture (Chapter IV). The texts by Jane Geddes consist of scene-by-scene descriptions and interpretations of the imagery.

Before getting involved in details, it may be useful to present a brief outline of what the manuscript contains. Physically, the Albani Psalter consists of five main parts each with its own independent integrity. They are:

- a Latin calendar and related computistical tables (pp. 1–16 of the manuscript)
- a cycle of forty full-page miniatures (pp. 17–56)
- the Old French *Chanson de St Alexis* and various other texts and images (pp. 57–72)
- the usual Latin psalms, canticles, litany, and collects (pp. 73–414, and a separated leaf, now in Cologne)
- two more full-page miniatures (pp. 415–418)

The first medieval parchment page is blank except for post-medieval inscriptions. On the other side of the leaf one encounters calendrical material, such as memoranda concerning the number of days in each month. The next 12 pages (pp. 3–14) are occupied by a calendar, written in various colours and decorated with figures set within roundels, and zodiac signs set against the bare parchment. This is followed by another page of computistical tables and another blank page (pp. 15–16). This first section of the manuscript is discussed in Chapter II.1, and its images in Chapter IV.5.

Next comes the start of the prefatory series of full-page miniatures, painted in full-colour with details in gold. This section is discussed in Chapter II.2, and the images in Chapter IV.3. Each page has a single scene enframed by a decorative border. The series begins with two Old Testament images, The Fall and The Expulsion, which set the scene for the New Testament series that follows: it was because of the actions of Adam and Eve that Christ had to redeem mankind. The majority of the images depict events from the life and Passion of Christ, followed by a final image of King David, the supposed author of the psalms. Details of the main scene frequently overlap the frame, especially figures' feet, creating some sense of three-dimensionality, and occasionally details extend beyond the frame into the margin, either partially, such as the sword at the left of The Massacre of the Innocents (p. 30), or fully, such as the star of Bethlehem in the upper margin of The Magi Before Herod (p. 23).

One scene in this series is exceptional in two ways. The Dream and Charity of St Martin is different from the other miniatures because it presents two scenes in two horizontal registers (p. 53). It is also the only scene whose frame does not surround the miniature on all four sides. No satisfactory explanation has ever been proposed for the presence of this image here.

The next section of the manuscript is discussed in Chapters II.3 and IV.2. It starts with a half-page miniature depicting episodes from the life of St Alexis. Unlike the preceding miniatures it is not in full-colour, and uses no gold; instead it is more like a coloured drawing, with large amounts of the underlying parchment visible. Above the miniature are inscriptions, and below it is a prologue to the *Chanson*. The alternating red and blue lines of the prologue continue for two more pages, and then the script reverts to ordinary brown ink for the remainder of the *Chanson*. On the last page of the *Chanson* most of the available space is occupied by a paraphrase of a famous defence of the use of images, written by St Gregory the Great, first in Latin, and then in French translation. Each of these two short passages has an 'arabesque' initial, unlike any other found in the manuscript.

The next three pages each have a full-page miniature, they are again coloured drawings rather than fully-painted, depicting the gospel Emmaus story. The first has a summary of the story rather awkwardly squeezed within the frame; the second and third have no text. The third miniature, however, has its outer and lower margin filled by an apparently unrelated text, which continues on the next page, where it again occupies the outer and lower margins. It relates to the two images on this second page: in the upper margin is a drawing of two battling knights on horseback, and the middle of the page is occupied by a large fully-painted and gilded initial 'B' of Psalm 1 (which begins 'Beatus vir', Blessed is the man) depicting King David harping. This image of David as author of the Psalms faces a page of enframed large foliate letters spelling out the first words of Psalm 1, and the psalm text continues in normal script on the following pages.

Most of the rest of the volume consists of the psalms and prayers, each introduced by a large fully painted and gilded historiated initial. These are discussed in Chapters II.4 and IV.6. With few exceptions, these initials take their subject matter directly from the psalm they accompany, and with few exceptions the psalm text that is illustrated is written as a rubric either alongside it, or within the composition of the initial on an open book. The most interesting exception to the normal pattern, the subject of much debate, is the initial to Psalm 105 (p. 285), discussed in Chapter II.5 and IV.7.

Canticles and related prayers follow immediately after the psalms (pp. 372–402), but one initial has been cut out (p. 386). Next comes the litany, headed by a large miniature (p. 403), discussed in Chapter II.4.3 and II.6.

Following the litany and associated petitions and prayers (which end on a leaf that is now separated from the volume, and owned by the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne), is a double leaf with two full-page miniatures depicting the Martyrdom of St Alban, and King David and his musicians (pp. 415–418). This is discussed in Chapter II.7.

Much of the debate among scholars in recent years has concerned the question of the probable patron and the probable first owner of the manuscript; it will therefore be useful to introduce these interesting characters at this early stage.

### 1.1.2 Christina of Markyate

Although the Psalter is certainly ‘connected’ with Christina in some way, and there is evidence that parts of it were specifically made for her use, it would probably be incorrect to say that she ‘owned’ it as a personal possession. The *Rule of St Benedict*, which governed the way of life of Benedictine monks such as Geoffrey, is quite clear on the subject of personal property, specifically mentioning books and writing-implements. Chapter XXXIII, on *Whether Monks Ought to Have Anything of Their Own*, states:

‘The vice of personal ownership must by all means be cut out in the monastery by the very root, so that no one may presume to give or receive anything without the command of the Abbot; nor to have anything whatever as his own, neither a book, nor a writing tablet, nor a pen, nor anything else whatsoever ...’.

An abridged version of *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, which was composed during her lifetime, survives in a single fourteenth-century manuscript, which was damaged in a fire in 1731 before entering the collections of the British Library.<sup>11</sup> Most of the text is legible, however, and many of the damaged areas have been read with the aid of an ultra-violet lamp. A brief summary of the text was published in 1901; it was fully edited and translated in 1959; revised in 1987; reprinted in 1998 and 2001; a second translation was published in 1997; and yet another new translation is due to be published in 2008.<sup>12</sup> These multiple publications give some idea of the interest that has been aroused by Christina’s story, especially among historians of medieval women’s social and religious life. Recent scholarship has emphasised that *The Life of Christina of Markyate* must, like all biographies, be treated with some scepticism, and the biases of the author must be taken into account; therefore even those parts that do not refer to miraculous events cannot necessarily be taken as historically accurate.<sup>13</sup> Despite these reservations about its value as a ‘true’ historical record, its accuracy can sometimes be confirmed by other sources, and it is an entertaining story worth summarising in some detail, because many aspects of her life have been used to explain various features of the Albani Psalter.

In the final years of the eleventh century, we can deduce from her *Life*, about thirty years after the Norman Conquest of England and about a decade after the compilation of the Domesday Book, a baby girl was born between 6pm and 9pm on the Feast of St Leonard (6 November). The *Life*’s opening lines are:

‘In the town of Huntingdon there was born into a family of noble rank a maiden of uncommon holiness and beauty. Her father’s name was Autti, her mother’s Beatrix. The name which she herself had been given in baptism was Theodora, but later on, through force of circumstance, she later changed it to Christina.’

This sets the scene for all that follows: we learn immediately that the child was born into a noble Huntingdon family, that she was unusually holy and beautiful, and that ‘through force of circumstance’ – hinting at troubles ahead – she changed her name.

About fourteen or fifteen years later Autti and Beatrix took her to visit the Abbey of St Albans, on her birthday. It was at that time the largest building in England, so it is perhaps not surprising that the visit made a deep impact on the teenager: before leaving St Albans she decided to devote her life to god, and made a private vow of virginity. On the journey home the family made an overnight stop, and the next morning, after attending mass, she made a silent prayer repeating her intention to remain a virgin, and offered a coin to the priest at the altar as confirmation of her private vow. Two or three years later, when she was aged about seventeen, a friend of her

father, Ranulf Flambard, who was Bishop of Durham and an extremely powerful royal official, and whose mistress was Christina's aunt, tried to seduce her. While everyone else in the house was drunk, Ranulf got Christina alone in his bedroom and seized her. Thinking quickly, she persuaded him to let go of her so that she could lock the door, and when he released her to do so, she ran out and locked the door from the outside. Having been tricked and humiliated by the young girl, Ranulf was determined to ensure that her virginity would not remain intact much longer. He therefore persuaded a local youth called Burthred to obtain permission from Christina's parents to marry her. She objected strongly to the arrangement, and for a year she was kept in close custody by her parents, who eventually persuaded her, unwillingly, to accept Burthred as her husband. But despite being married, she was still determined to keep her earlier vow of virginity. After many months and after using many means to try to persuade her to submit to her husband, her parents let Burthred into her bedroom in the hope that he could take her by surprise. Instead, he found her awake and fully dressed; she welcomed him in to the room and spent the whole night encouraging him to lead a chaste life. But this was not the end of her troubles, and everyone continued to try to force her to change her mind and perform the duties of a normal wife.

A hermit who lived nearby, called Edwin, heard of her troubles and helped her to escape from her parents disguised in men's clothing, and take refuge with a female recluse called Alfwen, at Flamstead, about 10 km north-west of St Albans, a short distance from Edwin's cousin Roger, another hermit. Roger lived in some woods at Markyate, close to Watling Street, an important Roman road, part of which runs from London to Dunstable, past St Albans (see Map p. 156). Christina remained hidden with Alfwen for about two years, during which time, the *Life* tells us:

'her reading and singing of the psalms by day and night were a torment to [the devil] ... toads invaded her cell ... they squatted here and there, arrogating the middle of the psalter which lay open on her lap at all hours of the day for her use'.<sup>15</sup>

She later had to move, and settled with the hermit Roger at Markyate. She and Roger became devoted to one another, but she lived in extreme discomfort: to remain hidden she lived in a tiny space, freezing in winter and stifling hot in summer, the door being blocked by Roger from the outside by a heavy log, and she could only come out after nightfall for fear of being discovered and sent back to her parents and husband. During this time, however, Burthred came to Roger and released Christina from her wedding vows, and Christina obtained a formal annulment from Thurstan, Archbishop of York (d. 1140). Roger died in 1121 or 1122, leaving his hermitage to Christina, but she had to live elsewhere for a year or two before she was able to return to Markyate to make it her home. After another year or two had passed she met Geoffrey, Abbot of St Albans, and although he was initially contemptuous of her, he soon came to respect her for her deep spirituality and her apparent ability to experience visions:

'He had a very deep respect for the maiden and saw in her something divine and extraordinary. From that time forward he sought her company with great assiduity, thinking little of the fatigue of travelling in comparison with the profit gained from the journey'.<sup>16</sup>

The hermitage in Markyate was built on land owned by St Paul's Cathedral, London, and despite her increasingly close relationship with Geoffrey, Christina initially had no formal affiliation with St Albans Abbey. Perhaps on Sunday, 21 September 1130, or on the same date in 1131,<sup>17</sup> she made a formal monastic profession at St Albans in the presence of Alexander (d. 1148), Bishop of Lincoln, within whose diocese St Albans lay. The relationship between Geoffrey and Christina became ever closer:

'Henceforth the man devoted to good works visited the place even more: he enjoyed the virgin's company, provided for the house, and became the supervisor of its material affairs. Whilst he centred his attention on providing the virgin with material assistance, she strove to enrich the man in virtue ...'.<sup>18</sup>

In the remaining pages of Christina's *Life* we read several more examples of Geoffrey and Christina's devotion to one another, including some that may be particularly relevant to an understanding the Albani Psalter. We read of gossips who suggested that their relationship was more than just platonic. We read of several visions experienced by Christina, in one of which a dove seemed to rest on the shoulders of two white-clad men who were each other's equal in height and beauty. One of the last events in the *Life* (which apparently only extends to the early 1140s, perhaps about twenty years before Christina's death) concerns three visits of a mysterious pilgrim, who, after the third visit, seemed to vanish into thin air.

The unique surviving manuscript of *Life* ends incomplete,<sup>19</sup> but her story can be continued a little, based on other sources. In 1145 the canons of St Paul's Cathedral, who owned the land, formally granted Markyate and some surrounding land to be used for the foundation of a priory of nuns, with Christina as the first prioress. She lived with a community of women who had congregated around her in the preceding years as her fame and reputation for holiness had spread. In the same year Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, consecrated the church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Two records suggest that she was still alive in 1155 (see Chapter VI.1).

The evidence in the manuscript that serves to associate it with Christina of Markyate takes various forms and will be examined in detail in due course, but we may mention at this point that it includes:

- a number of distinctive liturgical features that can be associated with the area where she was born and grew up
- added records of the deaths of a number of her friends, family, and herself
- an image of nuns
- an image depicting a woman, probably representing Christina herself, apparently interceding with Christ on behalf of some monks

### 1.1.3 Geoffrey de Gorrion

We know a lot about the abbots of the Benedictine Abbey of St Albans, which was the proud owner of the bones of St Alban, England's first martyr, from a chronicle known as the *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani* (*The Deeds of the Abbots of St Albans*) or simply the *Gesta Abbatum*. From this we learn that Geoffrey came from Gorrion, about 90 km north-west of Le Mans in northern France, and that he was offered the job of schoolmaster at St Albans by Richard, Abbot of St Albans (1097–1119), but he arrived too late and someone else had filled the post, so he found work at Dunstable instead (see Map, p. 156). While there he put on a play about St Catherine, but some choir vestments from St Albans Abbey that he had borrowed for the purpose were destroyed in a fire in his house, as a result of which he offered himself to the Abbey and became a monk. This was presumably at least a few years before 1119, because in that year he was elected Abbot, and before he was elected Abbot he had been Prior. The *Gesta* reveals that he paid for rebuilding Christina's priory twice, after fires destroyed it, and that some of the monks were very unhappy about the amount of Abbey revenue that was being diverted to Markyate. Among the exactly datable events that occur in the *Life* of Christina are three occasions on which Geoffrey was instructed to go on hazardous missions to Rome, in 1136 and 1139, but in each case the trip was cancelled.

**Plate 1: Geoffrey de Gorrion, Abbot of St Albans, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius E iv, fol. 108r; detail**  
 (© British Library Board. All Rights Reserved)



The evidence associating the Albani Psalter with St Albans Abbey and Abbot Geoffrey includes:

- a number of distinctive liturgical features in the calendar and litany
- the *Chanson de St Alexis*, which probably relates in some way to the fact that there was a chapel dedicated to St Alexis at the abbey
- the presence of handwriting of scribes who wrote in other manuscripts from the abbey
- a number of images depicting monks and priests
- a full-page miniature depicting the Martyrdom of St Alban
- records of the deaths of a number of St Albans monks, including Abbot Geoffrey, added to the calendar

### I.1.4 Previous Scholarship

There are literally hundreds of publications that discuss aspects of the Albani Psalter. A few have influenced later scholarship so deeply that they are worth summarising at the outset.

The earliest known publication of the Psalter is an edition by Wilhelm Müller in 1845 of the *Vie de St Alexis* (pp. 57–68 of the manuscript; see Chapter V.2).<sup>20</sup> Subsequent publications in the nineteenth century all concentrated on the same part of the manuscript, and even reproduced this text photographically.<sup>21</sup>

In 1895 Adolph Goldschmidt produced the first detailed study of the manuscript in its entirety.<sup>22</sup> He certainly deserves credit as the founder of all serious study of the manuscript as a whole and, indeed, was a pioneer of manuscript Psalter studies.

In 1959 C. H. Talbot published an edition of the only surviving manuscript of the *Life* of Christina, a manuscript in the British Library that was damaged by fire in 1731.<sup>23</sup> His Latin edition is accompanied by an English translation and an introduction in which he discusses the Psalter in relation to Christina's life. Whereas Goldschmidt had emphasized the connection between the Albani Psalter and the hermit Roger, Talbot showed that several features of the Albani Psalter exhibit even closer links with Christina.

The first truly comprehensive study of the manuscript – perhaps the most exhaustive study of any single manuscript ever published up to that date – appeared in 1960, written jointly by Otto Pächt, C. R. Dodwell, and Francis Wormald.<sup>24</sup> The three authors, based respectively in Oxford, Cambridge, and London, worked collaboratively on different aspects of the manuscript, but they did not always agree in their conclusions, and even seem to contradict themselves in some places. Pächt wrote nine chapters on the full-page miniatures, and doubtless made full use of the Princeton Index of Christian Art while at Princeton for the academic year 1956–57. Dodwell wrote three chapters on the initials, and a note on the date of the manuscript. Wormald wrote the preface, a description of the manuscript, commentary on the calendar and litany, and a chapter on the palaeography. The discovery of the Schnütgen Museum leaf (see Chapter II.4.9) came too late to be fully considered: although it is mentioned in the preface and reproduced among the plates,<sup>25</sup> it is otherwise entirely absent from the descriptions of the manuscript and the initials.<sup>26</sup>

C. J. Holdsworth took a fresh view of the manuscript in 1978, sparking renewed debate by offering radically new opinions on matters such as the date of the manuscript.<sup>27</sup> Another refreshingly new perspective was offered by Ursula Nilgen a decade later in the catalogue of an exhibition held in 1988 in Hildesheim,<sup>28</sup> and this was followed in the 1990s and early 2000s by a series of scholarly publications, each presenting new ways of looking at the Psalter and interpreting the evidence it provides.<sup>29</sup>

Although the Psalter had been a standard component of university courses in medieval art history for many decades, it first achieved a truly mass audience in 2003, thanks to a website, based at the University of Aberdeen, launched in that year. This

website, in English and German parallel versions, includes colour reproductions, accompanied by descriptions, transcriptions, translations, and interpretative essays.<sup>30</sup> The images allow the entire text and all the decoration to be studied outside Germany for the first time since the seventeenth century. The website summarises previous scholarship and presents new observations and hypotheses, based on the work of various scholars in different fields. The Project Manager and main contributor, Jane Geddes, went on to write an engaging narrative version of the website in printed book format, published in 2005 which, like the website, is available in both English and German.<sup>31</sup>

The present facsimile publication allows two new ‘firsts’. The facsimile is the first time that the Albani Psalter has been made available as a book in its entirety, in colour. The 1960 monograph was almost entirely in black and white, and most of the images were cropped details; the website is in colour, but the images are reduced in size, and despite the fact that computer monitors are wider than they are tall, they are usually presented as single-page images rather than as double-page openings, so the effect of the book as a codex is largely lost. Most previous studies have approached the manuscript from an artistic/iconographic viewpoint (Goldschmidt, Pächt, Dodwell, and others), from a historical viewpoint (Talbot, Holdsworth, and others), or have concentrated only on particular sections of the manuscript (Bullington, Gerry, and others). This is perhaps the first detailed study to consider the entire manuscript as a physical object.<sup>32</sup> Each generation has its own perspectives and biases, and these are reflected in the previous publications on the Psalter; it is therefore perhaps not entirely coincidental that the present publication appears at a time when some of the most popular television series and films concern the work of pathologists, who reveal past events and past lives by autopsy and the minute examination of physical evidence.

## 1.2 Manuscript Psalters

### 1.2.1 The Psalms

The primary content of a psalter is the Old Testament Book of Psalms. The psalms are a collection of hymns and prayers of various origins and dates, probably intended to be sung with the accompaniment of stringed instruments, composed and later written down in Hebrew over a period of time probably from the tenth to the third century before Christ. They are composed in verses employing ‘parallelism’, in which each verse is made up of two parts, the second paralleling the first, e.g.

‘O Lord, rebuke me not in thy indignation,  
nor chastise me in thy wrath.  
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak:  
heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.’ (Psalm 6:2–3)

The psalms vary in length from just two verses (Psalm 116) to 176 verses divided into 22 sections each of eight verses (Psalm 118). Many have titles that suggest their origins, often mentioning King David (e.g. Psalm 26 ‘The Psalm of David before he was anointed’). As a result medieval illuminated psalters often depict David playing a stringed instrument, usually a harp: the Old Testament tell us that he was a skillful harp player.<sup>33</sup>

The psalms were second in importance only to the Gospels as biblical texts in medieval religious life. No single book of the Bible was copied by scribes more frequently, or quoted more often in Church services. There is considerable evidence that the psalter was the text used when people learned to read, so the majority of those who were literate would have known parts of the psalms by heart.<sup>34</sup> Monks had to say all the psalms every week, and would therefore have learned them all by heart within a few years; Abbot John of St Albans (1195–1214) was even reputed to be able to recite the



psalms backwards or forwards in any order.<sup>35</sup> There is a vast literature on the psalms and their use; this introduction is therefore necessarily very limited and very simplified.<sup>36</sup>

### 1.2.2 Different Versions of the Psalms

Readers of this volume will be aware that every book produced in the West before Johannes Gutenberg perfected the art of printing in the mid fifteenth century was written by hand, but some may not have considered the implications of this. Each time a manuscript is copied a scribe can introduce accidental or deliberate changes in his copy. When that scribe's manuscripts are themselves copied, further changes can be introduced, and with each subsequent copy the process repeats itself, producing greater and greater variety, and greater divergence from the text of the original manuscript. This is rather like the successive generations of a family, which multiply in numbers while becoming progressively less like their shared ancestors, and indeed textual scholars often draw 'family trees' to represent the relationship between copies of a text. The Hebrew text of the Psalms was subject to this sort of variation until the second century A.D., when a conscious effort was made to edit and standardise the text. At about the same date a Greek translation of the Hebrew text was made, known as the Septuagint, and within a few centuries after the life of Christ various Latin translations had been made.

By the late fourth century there were a variety of Latin versions in circulation; the great scholar St Jerome (d. 419) stated that there were almost as many versions of the Bible as there were manuscripts. This was true in the sense that no two manuscripts are identical, but often the differences are very slight. From the fifth century three versions of the Psalms predominated. The version that is now known as the 'Romanum' was traditionally thought to be the work of St Jerome, but this is now doubted. He was certainly responsible for three versions of the Psalms, but the first only survives as snippets quoted in other works. After this he produced what is now known as the 'Gallicanum' version, which he based on Greek texts (which had themselves been derived from Hebrew). And finally he produced a translation based directly on Hebrew manuscripts, the 'Hebraicum' version.

The Romanum version of the Psalms was widely used in Europe until the ninth century, and continued in use in Italy until the sixteenth century; it is still used in the basilicas of the Vatican and San Marco, Venice. It was also used in English churches until the late tenth or early eleventh century. The Gallicanum version of the Psalms became especially popular in Gaul (hence the name), and was adopted for liturgical use, superseding the Romanum version in most places from the ninth century onwards. This is the version that appears in the 'Vulgate' version of the whole Bible, found in most manuscript and printed Latin Bibles from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. The Hebraicum version of the Psalms never found very wide favour, because it was too different from the versions which were already very well known and well established, but it is occasionally found in manuscripts with double or triple versions laid out in parallel columns alongside one or both of the other versions for comparative purposes.

The sort of variants found between the three versions can be demonstrated by comparing the end of verse 1 and the start of verse 2 of Psalm 1:

Rom. '... in cathedra pestilentie non sedit; Sed in lege Domini **fuit** voluntas eius ...'

Gall. '... in cathedra pestilentie non sedit; Sed in lege Domini voluntas eius ...'

Hebr. '... in cathedra **derisorum** non sedit; Sed in lege Domini voluntas eius ...'

Sometimes the differences are much more substantial, with whole verses present or absent in different versions.

### 1.2.3 Numbering of the Psalms

Medieval and modern Bibles and psalters usually contain 150 Psalms, but the way in which they are divided and numbered varies. The Latin Vulgate and Greek Septuagint numbering and divisions (found in the vast majority of medieval



manuscripts) differs from the Hebrew and most modern Protestant numbering. This is because Vulgate Psalm 9 is divided into two, with the modern Psalm 10 starting at Vulgate Psalm 9:22. From this point onwards each modern number is one greater than the medieval Vulgate number (Vulgate Psalm 10 = modern Psalm 11, etc.) until Vulgate Psalm 113, which is equivalent to modern Psalms 114 and 115 combined. Likewise, modern Psalm 147 is equivalent to Vulgate Psalms 146 and 147 combined. Often medieval and modern numbers are different by one.

In both medieval and modern systems the long Psalm 118 is divided into twenty-two parts, of eight verses each. The original Hebrew text of each part began with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the names of the Hebrew letters of the alphabet are often used as headings to the sections (Aleph, Beth, Gimel, etc.), which are usually indicated in medieval manuscripts.

Throughout the present volume references to psalm numbers will refer to the medieval Latin arrangement, as found in manuscript psalters, rather than the numbering found in many modern printed translations.

#### **1.2.4 The Titles of the Psalms**

Part of the textual tradition of the Psalms is their titles. The standard title for Psalm 76, for example, is ‘Unto the end, for Idithun, a psalm of Asaph’.<sup>37</sup> Some psalms have longer titles, e.g. Psalm 70: ‘A psalm for David, of the sons of Jonadab, and the former captives’<sup>38</sup> and some have shorter ones, e.g. Psalm 77: ‘Understanding for Asaph’.<sup>39</sup> These titles provide the modern biblical scholar with clues as to the origins of the psalms.

#### **1.2.5 What is a Manuscript Psalter?**

When referring to medieval manuscripts the word ‘psalter’ can be used in various different ways. It can be used to refer to the biblical Book of psalms within a more extensive book such as a Bible or an Old Testament. It can be used to mean a separate volume consisting only of the 150 psalms, but such manuscripts are very uncommon. Also rare are examples in each which psalm is followed by a short summarising prayer, a collect; it can be helpful to refer to these as ‘monastic collects’, to distinguish them from the very common groups of collects that also appear in psalters and other devotional books owned by laymen and women.

Much more common are manuscripts arranged primarily for the purposes of study, usually containing extra apparatus intended to make the theological meaning of the text clearer. This extra material often takes the form of marginal and interlinear glosses, which explain the meaning of individual words and expound the general meaning of longer passages; these volumes are more accurately called Glossed psalters.

Manuscripts that arrange the psalms not in numerical order, but in the order in which they are recited liturgically, usually with other liturgical material interspersed, are called by various names such as ‘Choir psalter’ and ‘Ferial psalter’, because they represent the order in which the psalms are chanted in the choir of a church, arranged according to the feria (days of the week).

Alternatively, a psalter may be designed primarily for private devotional use; this is the sense in which the term ‘psalter’ will be used throughout the present book. The ultimate liturgical origin of such psalters is manifest in two ways. First, the presence of divisions of the text reflect liturgical practice; and second, the presence of certain kinds of supplementary matter: psalters are usually preceded by a calendar, and followed by canticles, a litany of saints, petitions, collects, and often other prayers. In addition to these common texts, a wide diversity of other material can be found in manuscript psalters; for these one has to devise hybrid names such as ‘Psalter-Hours’, ‘Psalter-Hymnary’, ‘Psalter-Collectar’, and ‘Psalter-Antiphoner’.

### 1.2.6 The Divisions of the Text in Manuscript Psalters

There were various ways of dividing the 150 psalms of a medieval psalter. A two-part division at Psalm 77 divides the 150 psalms more-or-less in the middle (this is found, for example, in the famous ‘Utrecht Psalter’);<sup>40</sup> a three-part division at Psalms 1, 51, and 101 divides it into three groups of 50 psalms each (this perhaps originated in early Irish psalters); the Hebrew text was divided into five sections, starting at Psalms 1, 41, 72, 89, and 106, which can be found in printed Vulgate Bibles. None of these systems seem to have a liturgical origin, although the reciting of two or three ‘fifties’ of psalms (suggesting the three-part division) was used as a form of penance in Ireland and England.

An eight-part division, at Psalms 1, 26, 38, 52, 68, 80, 97, and 109, was common throughout Europe; this corresponds to liturgical practice, as will be explained below. This could be combined in manuscripts with one or more of the non-liturgical systems of division: for example, in English psalters from the twelfth century onwards it is normal to find the three- and eight-part divisions combined, giving a total of ten sections (not eleven, because Psalm 1 is common to both systems): Psalms 1, 26, 38, 51, 52, 68, 80, 97, 101, and 109.

Apart from local geographical variations and changes due to development over time, there were two main forms of daily liturgical worship, separate from the performance of mass. One was the Roman secular system, as used at the Vatican, and adopted widely by parish churches, collegiate and private chapels and, in England, in secular cathedrals such as Chichester, Exeter, and Lincoln. The other was monastic, performed by monks and nuns who adhered to a Rule and lived apart from the world in an enclosed community (notably Benedictines, Cistercians, and Carthusians); but despite using a different system, they generally marked the Roman secular divisions in their psalters.

By the ninth century the Divine Office, the daily cycle of worship, was structured around eight ‘canonical hours’ throughout the day and night, whose basis is found in various biblical passages, including Psalm 118:62: ‘I rose at midnight to give praise to thee’, and Psalm 118:164: ‘Seven times a day have I given praise to thee’. The office performed during the night was called Matins, that at dawn Lauds, and throughout the day at intervals Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and finally Compline at about dusk.

Numerous psalms were sung on various days, at various times, and in various groupings (including the Seven Penitential Psalms and the Fifteen Gradual Psalms) but the entire series of 150 were sung in sequence from beginning to end in the secular Divine Office, divided among the days and hours as follows:

**Table 1: Psalms sung among the Days and Hours**

Day	Matins	Lauds	Prime	Vespers
Sunday	<b>1–20</b>	<b>148–150</b>	<b>21–25</b>	<b>109–113</b>
Monday	<b>26–37</b>			114–120
Tuesday	<b>38–51</b>			121–125
Wednesday	<b>52–67</b>			126–130
Thursday	<b>68–79</b>			131–136
Friday	<b>80–96</b>			137–142
Saturday	<b>97–108</b>			143–147

The psalms presented in bold in this table are those of the normal eight-part division of the psalter mentioned above. The above table is very simplified, however: in addition to this recitation of the 150 psalms more-or-less in sequence, many psalms were also repeated at various other times in the Divine Office. To give just two examples, Psalm 94 was recited before the other psalms at Matins every day of the week, and Psalms 148–150 were recited at Lauds every day, not just on Sundays.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to such divisions deriving from secular usage, manuscripts made for Benedictine use often have another fourteen sub-divisions relating to their own liturgical practice. In St Benedict’s *Rule* for monks, he advocated the division of longer psalms into shorter parts; for example, in Chapter 18 he says:

‘... at Prime until Sunday let three psalms be said in numerical order, to Psalm 19, but with Psalms 9 and 17 each divided into two parts. ...  
 ... And since there are three psalms too few, let the longer ones of the above number be divided, namely Psalms 138, 143 and 144.’

The normal Benedictine sub-divisions of psalms, along with the other normal English ten-part divisions (marked in this table with bold numbers) are all signalled in the Albani Psalter:

**Table 2: Sub-divisions of Psalms**

Three-part	Eight-part	Benedictine sub-divisions	Incipit	Albani Psalter page number
1	1		Beatus vir ...	<b>72</b>
		9:20	Exurge domine ...	86
		17:26	Cum sancto sanctis eris ...	101
	26		Dominus illuminatio mea ...	<b>119</b>
		36:27	Declina a malo ...	143
	38		Dixi custodiam ...	<b>147</b>
51			Quid gloriaris ...	<b>173</b>
	52		Dixit insipiens ...	<b>175</b>
		67:20	Benedictus dominus die cotidie ...	200
	68		Salvum me fac ...	<b>202</b>
		68:17	Exaudi me domine ...	204
		77.36	Et dilexerunt eum in ore suo ...	227
	80		Exultate deo ...	<b>235</b>
		88:20	Tunc locutus es ...	250
	97		Cantate domino canticum novum ...	[missing]
101			Domine exaudi orationem meam ...	<b>270</b>
		103.25	Hoc mare magnum ...	279
		104.23	Et intravit Israel in Egyptum ...	282
		105.32	Et irritaverunt ...	288
		106.25	Dixit et stetit spiritus ...	292
	109		Dixit dominus domino meo ...	<b>299</b>
		118 (with 15 sub-divisions)	Memor esto verbi ...	317–331
		138.11	Et dixi forsitan tenebrae ...	353
		143.9	Deus canticum novum ...	362
		144.10	Confiteantur tibi ...	364

### I.2.7 Calendars

Calendars in medieval manuscripts are complex collections of numerical and textual data. Before one can begin to understand them, one must first be aware of two fundamental ways in which medieval manuscript calendars are different from modern printed ones.

First, the medieval calendar followed the now-unfamiliar ‘Julian’ system, named after the Roman emperor Julius Caesar, in which the days were not counted *from* the beginning of each month to its end in a single numerical sequence (e.g. 1 January – 31 January, 1 February – 28 February, etc.), but by counting *towards* days in each month known as the Nones, Ides, and Kalends: the 5<sup>th</sup> day

before Nones is followed by the 4<sup>th</sup> day, the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, and so on. More than half of each month is spent counting down to the kalends on the first day of the next month.

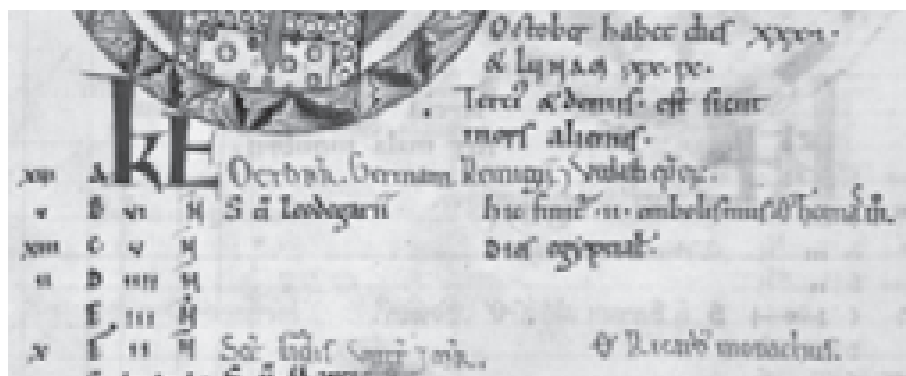
Second, today as in the medieval period, there are two kinds of date in the Church year: some dates are fixed (e.g. Christmas is always on 25 December, and St Valentine’s day is always on 14 February), while others are movable (e.g. the start of Advent can vary in date from 27 November to 3 December, and Easter can vary from 22 March to 25 April). It is now practical to buy a new calendar each year with both sorts of date already filled-in, but before the invention of cheap printing people had to use a ‘perpetual’ calendar that was not specific to any particular year, and could be re-used repeatedly, year after year. This means that changeable aspects of the calendar, such as the names of the days of the week (Monday, Tuesday, etc.), and the date of Easter, could not be filled-in.

It may help the following decipherment and discussion of the various parts of each page of the calendar to present the first few lines of the month of October from the Albani Psalter (p. 12 of the manuscript), laid out in table form as an example:

**Table 3: First Lines of the Month of October from the Albani Psalter**

				October habet dies xxx.i. & lunam .xx.ix. Terci' & denus. est sicut mors alienus.
		KL		
xvi	A			OCTOB'R. Germani. Remigij. ⁊ Vedasti ep'or.
v	B	vi	Ñ	Sci leodegarii Hic finit' .ii. embolismus. Ø. Thoma' m°.
xiii	C	v	Ñ	Dies egyptial.
ii	D	iiii	Ñ	
	E	iii	Ñ	
x	F	ii	Ñ	Sce Fidis virg' ⁊ m'r Ø. Ricard' monachus.
	G	Non.		Sci Marci [pape]

The first column on the left contains the ‘Golden Number’; together with the ‘Dominical Letter’, which occupies the second column, this is needed in order to calculate the date of Easter. In the second column all the days of the year are given one of seven letters of the alphabet, from ‘A’ to ‘G’, in repetition, representing the seven days of the week. If the first ‘A’ of a particular year is a Sunday, it follows that every other ‘A’ will also be a Sunday, every ‘B’ will be a Monday, and so on. In the following year – due to the fact a regular year has 365 days, but 52 weeks each of seven days add up to only 364 days – the day on which any date occurs will shift forward one step: each ‘A’ will now represent a Monday, each ‘B’ a Tuesday, and so on. This cycle would repeat itself after 7 years, except that a leap-year occurs every fourth year, so the cycle does not start again every 7 years, but every 28 years (7 x 4 = 28).



**Plate 2: Albani Psalter, p. 12; detail**

The Julian calendar is represented in the third and fourth columns from the left. The Kalends were always the first day of the month (often marked in manuscripts with a large ‘KL’ monogram), but the Nones fall either on the fifth day of the month (in January, February, April, etc.) or the seventh day (in March, May, July, etc.). The Nones are often marked by an abbreviation such as ‘NON’ or just ‘N.’, the Ides may be abbreviated to ‘Id.’, and the Kalends to ‘KL.’.<sup>42</sup> In the third column in the table above the days to the Nones are counted down: ‘vi’, ‘v’, ‘iiii’, ‘iii’, and ‘ii’.

Most of the movable Church feast-days (apart from Advent) are dependent on the date of Easter, either occurring before it (e.g. Septuagesima and Lent) or after it (e.g. Ascension and Pentecost). Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon that occurs on or after 21 March, so the date of Easter depends on the phases of moon. Then, as now, the procedure for calculating the lunar months and from these the date on which Easter would fall in any particular year was very complicated, and it is not necessary to go into any details here. The entry to the right-hand side of the page at 2 October in the diagram above (‘Hic finit[ur] .ii. embolismus’) relates to the lunar month.

At the top or bottom of the page in medieval calendars it is common to find a note on the length of the solar and lunar month (e.g. ‘October has 31 days, and the moon has 29’); this is in the first row in the table above. There is often also a mnemonic verse indicating the ‘Egyptian Days’ (as in the second row of the table above: ‘The third [counting forward from the beginning] and the tenth [counting back from the end] day of the month are like another death’): these were two days in each month on which it was considered unlucky to perform various activities such as medicinal bleeding. These days are usually marked in the calendar by an abbreviation such as ‘Dies Eg.’ or just the letter ‘D’.

The entries for the feasts themselves are usually made up of three parts: an abbreviation of the masculine or feminine word for ‘Saint’, followed by the saint’s name, followed by their class (e.g. martyr, virgin, bishop, king, etc.). In the table above we have:

2 October. ‘S[an]c[t]i leodegarii’ ([Of] St Leodegar)

6 October. ‘S[an]c[t]e Fidis virg[inis] & m[artyr]r[is]’ ([Of] St Faith, virgin and martyr)

In the table above there are also two entries beginning with ‘Ø’. This is the letter ‘O’, with an abbreviation mark drawn through it, indicating the word ‘Obiit’ meaning ‘[he or she] died’. Such entries, known as obits, are records of the deaths of people who were not saints, but whose memory someone wanted to preserve, usually relatives, but sometimes friends or respected authorities such as kings or bishops. In the example above we have:

2 October. ‘O[biit] Thomas m[onachus]’ (Thomas the monk died [on this day])

5 October. ‘O[biit] Ricard[us] monachus’ (Richard the monk died [on this day])

### 1.2.8 Canticles

A canticle is a song of praise. Psalter canticles come mainly from the Old and New Testaments, and formed part of the early liturgy of the mass and Divine Office. In psalters the first six listed below are always found first, in the same order, because they were sung in this order at Lauds from Monday to Saturday. In psalters they are usually accompanied by other prayers and one or more statements of faith, or ‘creeds’; after the first six some or all of others are found in various combinations and in various sequences, with the Athanasian Creed almost always coming last.

In twelfth- and thirteenth-century English psalters the following eleven canticles are common:

1. ‘Confitebor tibi ...’: the Canticle of Isaiah (Isaiah 12:1–6)
2. ‘Ego dixi ...’: the Canticle of Ezekiel (Isaiah 38:10–20)
3. ‘Exultavit cor meum ...’: the Canticle of Anna (I Samuel 2:1–10)
4. ‘Cantemus domino ...’: the First Canticle of Moses (Exodus 15:1–19)

5. ‘Domine audiui ...’: the Cantic of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:2–19)
6. ‘Audite celi ...’: the Second Cantic of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1–43)
7. ‘Te deum ...’: the Ambrosian Hymn
8. ‘Benedicite ...’: the Cantic of the Three Hebrew Boys (Daniel 3:57–88)
9. ‘Benedictus ...’: the Cantic of Zachariah (Luke 1:68–79)
10. ‘Magnificat ...’: the Cantic of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:46–55)
11. ‘Nunc dimittis ...’: the Cantic of Simeon (Luke 2:29–32)

These may be followed by one or more of the following:

12. ‘Pater noster ...’: the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13)
13. ‘Credo in deum patrem ...’: the Apostles’ Creed
14. ‘Gloria in excelsis ...’: the Angelic Hymn
15. ‘Credo in unum deum ...’: the Nicene Creed

The series almost always ends with:

16. ‘Quicumque vult ...’: the so-called Athanasian Creed.

### 1.2.9 Litany of Saints

By the twelfth century litanies in psalters had developed a fairly regular form. They consist of three main parts that usually run together without obvious break: a litany of saints, petitions, and concluding prayers. Litanies were used in a variety of special church services: as part of the visitation for the sick and dying, as part of processions, such as at the dedication of a church, and at the ordination of a monk; they also formed an important part of the Divine Office: the *Rule* of St Benedict stipulates that a litany should be said at the end of Matins, Lauds, and Vespers daily,<sup>43</sup> and the *Regularis Concordia*, drawn up in the late tenth century, states that a litany should also be said at Prime and after Sext. A litany could also be used for private devotion, and this is doubtless its purpose in a volume such as the Albani Psalter.

The litany of saints usually begins with the words ‘Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison’, Greek for ‘Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy’. This is followed by a series of appeals to the three persons of the Trinity, individually and collectively, the Virgin Mary, angels, evangelists, disciples, and other apostles, followed by martyrs, confessors, and virgins, in that order. There is therefore an overall hierarchy, and also some internal hierarchy within each group so that, for example, St Stephen, the very first martyr, usually occurs first among the martyrs, and other very important saints are often placed at or near the top of their respective category. Occasionally saints are invoked in pairs (e.g. Sts Cosmas & Damian, Sts John & Paul), and often some saints’ names are followed by an abbreviation such as ‘c.s.t.’, which stands for ‘cum sociis tuis’ (with your companions) for saints who were martyred with others. Each individual name is followed by the repetitive appeal ‘Ora pro nobis’ (or in the plural form ‘Orate pro nobis’ – Pray for us), and each group of names is usually followed by a collective appeal after the end of the appeals to named individuals, such as ‘Omnes sancte virgines orate pro nobis’ (All holy virgins, pray for us). If a saint is especially important in the place where the litany was to be used it might have a double invocation – usually marked by a roman numeral ‘II’ or ‘ii’ – to indicate that the appeal to this saint should be said twice.

### 1.2.10 Petitions

The petitions continue straight on from the litany of saints, but instead of appealing to saints for help, they consist of a series of appeals to God to save the supplicant *from* things, such as *from* perpetual damnation (these begin with the word ‘A’ or ‘Ab’); appeals to save the supplicant *through* things, such as *through* the grace of the Holy Spirit (these begin with the word ‘Per’); and finally appeals beseeching god *that* certain things may happen, such as *that* he may give us peace (these begin with the word ‘Ur’). Each of the ‘A’/‘Ab’ and ‘Per’ petitions usually end with ‘libera nos

domine' (free us, Lord), or an abbreviation such as 'lib.' or just 'l.', while each of the 'Ut' petitions end with 'te Rogamus' (we beseech you), or an abbreviation such as 'Te rog.' or 'TR'.

### 1.2.11 Prayers

The petitions are followed by a series of concluding prayers, which may be heavily abbreviated. For example the ten words, 'Pater noster. Et ne nos. Sed libera nos a malo' (Our Father. And [lead] us not [into temptation]. But deliver us from evil) indicate the beginning and end of the Lord's Prayer, which was to be recited in full, despite being written in this abbreviated form.

### 1.2.12 Collects

Collects are prayers that were originally part of the mass and/or Divine Office, but were also later often used in other contexts, or on their own. They vary in number and selection, but in English psalters there are typically between three and six of them, usually drawn from a fairly small standard group.

### 1.2.13 How to Localise a Manuscript Psalter

Most medieval manuscripts do not include an overt indication of the date when, or the place where, they were made. Even after the provision of such information became common in printed books from the fifteenth century onwards, it was still the exception rather than the norm in manuscripts. The dating and localising of a manuscript is not only of importance for a better understanding of the manuscript itself, but also for placing other similar manuscripts in a chronological, geographical, and cultural context.

Two of the most useful sources of evidence for ascertaining the place from which a manuscript such as a psalter or book of hours comes are its calendar and litany. This is because they both include saints' names, and different saints were venerated in different places and at different dates. As mentioned above, calendars record saints' feast-days (e.g. St Valentine on 14 February), while litanies include a list of invocations to saints (e.g. 'St Peter, pray for us'). Some saints were popular throughout Christendom ('universal' saints), while others were only venerated in a limited geographical area or diocese ('regional' saints), or a limited number of smaller places ('local' saints). St Thomas Becket, for example, was venerated throughout Europe, while St Amphibalus (the supposed companion of St Alban) was probably only venerated in places connected with St Albans Abbey, which claimed to have his relics. Thus if a calendar or litany includes St Thomas this does not help localise it, but if St Amphibalus is included one can be confident of a connection with St Albans. Some caution is needed, however, because the place *for which* a manuscript was written was not necessarily the same as the place *where* it was written. This is especially the case when the calendar is not by the same scribe as the rest of the volume, as the calendar could have been added somewhere else. Likewise, if a particular saint is in a calendar or litany but was not written by the original scribe, it may reflect the devotional interests of a subsequent user, rather than the original one.

Usually most of the saints in a calendar or litany are universal or regional ones, but there are often a few that are local and can be associated with one particular area: it is likely that the manuscript was intended to be used in that area, or that it was copied from another manuscript that was written for use in that area. St Guthlac was a sixth- to seventh-century hermit of Crowland in Lincolnshire (see Map p. 156). He was venerated over a wide area of England however, so his presence in a calendar or litany is not enough, on its own, to suggest a link with Crowland or



Lincolnshire. If, however, the calendar or litany also includes his sister St Pega and his fellow-hermit St Tatwin, neither of whom were venerated widely, a connection with the area of Crowland is very likely.

### 1.2.13a Calendars

Manuscripts intended for use in a particular church may have a specific reference to the church in its calendar, such as an entry commemorating its dedication (in the case of St Albans, this was on 29 December), or an entry referring to the most important relics of saints owned by the church: in the case of St Albans there were potentially four such feasts: the day of St Alban's death, on 22 June; the 'Invention' (finding) of his relics, celebrated on 2 August, which was also the date on which was celebrated the 'translation' (moving) of his relics into a new shrine in 1129;<sup>44</sup> and the Invention of the relics of St Amphibalus, which occurred on 25 June 1178. St Albans Abbey had a dependent priory at Tynemouth, in north-east England, which had the relics of St Oswin, so the presence of Oswin's feasts on 11 March and 20 August in a calendar may therefore indicate a connection with St Albans or Tynemouth. St Oswin was also highly venerated at Durham, however, so a calendar containing Oswin must be examined to see whether its other saints link it with Durham, or with Tynemouth and St Albans.

Feasts in calendars could be given extra emphasis in various ways, which allows the modern researcher to assess how important a feast-day was to the original user. If a manuscript was written for a church or monastery that performed a formal liturgy, its calendar may reflect this. In Benedictine monasteries a feast could involve a maximum of twelve readings (or 'lections') at Matins; could be performed wearing copes ('in cappis') or in albs ('in albis'); and could be a double feast ('duplex'); their celebration could also last a whole week, until the eighth day ('octave') after the main feast day. A feast day could also be anticipated by observing a 'vigil' the preceding day. Secular churches, however, had a maximum of nine lessons. If a calendar has liturgical gradings of twelve lections (usually abbreviated to 'xii lc.'), therefore, it must have been written for a Benedictine monastery, but if it has a maximum of nine lections ('ix lc.') it must have been written for a secular church or chapel.

Most medieval psalter calendars do not include such precise gradings, but the relative importance, or rank, of the feasts is usually indicated by the use of coloured inks and sometimes gold: feasts of lower importance are written in ordinary brown ink, while those of higher importance are written in capital letters and/or colour. Sometimes a hierarchy of several levels of importance are indicated in this way. One might, for example, find four levels of increasing importance indicated by (i) brown ink, (ii) red ink, (iii) blue ink, and (iv) gold lettering. Gold always indicates a higher rank than other colours, as one would expect (except from the thirteenth century onwards, when gold and colours were sometimes used in strict alternation for purely decorative effect, with no indication of the relative importance of the feasts). Many calendars only used brown and red inks, but when blue was also used, blue almost always indicates an equal or higher rank than red. Green is used less often, but is encountered especially in twelfth- and fifteenth-century English manuscripts. It is not uncommon for two colours to be used for feasts of equal importance: it is common, for example, for the consecutive feasts clustered around Christmas day to alternate in colour. Despite this, the use of colour in a calendar can help one deduce the place for which it was written: if, hypothetically, a calendar has the feasts of St Alban in gold, and of St Oswin in red, it is likely to have been written for St Albans, but if St Oswin were in gold and St Alban in red, then one might expect it to have been written for Tynemouth. Unfortunately for the modern researcher, medieval scribes were not always consistent. In the Albani Psalter, for example, the original scribe did not write any feasts in colour in January, February, and the first half of March, but from that point onwards he used red and blue inks in addition to



brown; this was probably an oversight, because January and February both include feasts of high importance, such as Epiphany on 6 January, which probably should be in red or blue.

### 1.2.13b Litanies

The easiest way to utilise litanies when trying to localise a manuscript is to look for the most unusual, local saints, who may or may not also appear in the calendar. Universal or regional saints should not be ignored, however, as any that are emphasised by a double invocation may be the patron saints of a church or a religious order: St Peter is likely to have a double invocation in litanies made for a church dedicated to him, St Dominic may have a double invocation in litanies made for a

Dominican owner, and St Benedict with a double invocation in a manuscript may indicate that it was made for a Benedictine community, for example.

The petitions that follow the litany of saints can occasionally be useful in localising a manuscript. In very rare cases a petition mentions a specific place or person, such as the patron saint of a church. The petitions in a lavishly illuminated English thirteenth-century psalter mention Sts Mary and Edith, indicating that the manuscript was written for a place associated

with these saints. Even without the corroborating evidence of the calendar and litany, this suggests the nunnery at Wilton, in Wiltshire, which was dedicated to Sts Mary, Bartholomew, and Edith.<sup>45</sup> The petitions in an illuminated psalter with all three versions of the psalms in parallel columns mention Sts Mary and Remigius (Remi) written in capital letters,<sup>46</sup> suggesting that the psalter was written for use in Rheims, of which St Remi was the principal patron; the saints in the litany confirm this.<sup>47</sup>

Less rare than the mention of the patron saints of a church are indications of the rank of a senior ecclesiastic. There is often a petition on behalf of ‘our bishops and abbots’. In the Wilton Psalter there is instead a reference to ‘our abbess’, confirming that it was written for a nunnery. In other cases one finds either a bishop or an abbot mentioned, but not both, suggesting either a cathedral or an abbey, respectively. This could be very useful when examining a manuscript from a city like Winchester, which had both a cathedral and an abbey. In some manuscripts one finds that a petition has a reference to an archbishop instead of a bishop; those with predominantly northern English saints in the calendar and litany were probably made in York or its environs, those with predominantly southern English saints were probably made in Canterbury or its environs, because England has only two archbishops, based in these cities. The twelfth-century *Melisende Psalter*, made in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, includes a petition that mentions ‘patriarcham nostrum’ (our Patriarch). Such distinctions can be found in Continental Europe and at later dates as well, with, for example, the Doge of Venice being mentioned in a fifteenth-century book of hours from the Veneto. Similarly, when an uncommon collect is found following the litany and petitions, it sometimes has a local significance and can be a useful clue towards localising the manuscript; the presence of a collect for the safety of sailors is most likely to be included in manuscripts made for use in a port town, for example.

Even if a litany or series of petitions do not include any direct indications of the place for which they were written, comparison with other texts can be illuminating. For example, the series of ‘Ut’ petitions of the Wilton Psalter is extremely like that of the twelfth-century *Shaftesbury Psalter*, including several that are very uncommon. Shaftesbury and Wilton were both nunneries, and only about 25 km apart. Such comparisons can be especially useful when the calendar and/or litany of saints a manuscript have been revised or removed, leaving the original petitions intact.

Manuscripts used in the formal liturgy of a particular church will usually include features that reveal the general area or diocese, even if not the specific church, for which it was written. But manuscripts used outside the formal liturgy – including

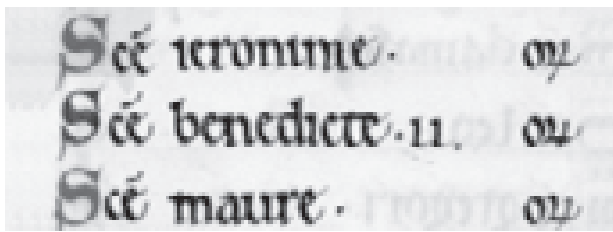


Plate 3: Albani Psalter, p. 406; detail

psalters and books of hours written for the private devotions of laypeople – are much less likely to include such specific characteristics, and are more likely to include eclectic features based on the personal circumstances, interests, or taste of the owner. A book written for an owner called Christopher might give St Christopher some sort of emphasis, and a book written for a soldier might include special veneration for St Adrian, patron saint of soldiers.

The evidence provided by the calendar can only safely be applied to the rest of the volume if the rest of the volume is written by the same scribe. Unlike a missal or breviary, for example, each of which contains texts specific to the place and type of church in which it was to be used, the main text of a psalter was comparatively standard, and could thus be fairly easily adapted for use in another place simply by substituting a different calendar, or adapting the existing one, and perhaps making minor amendments to the litany. Sometimes one finds that the calendar and litany are not written by the same scribe, and were apparently written for use in different places. In such cases, the litany is likely to be original, and the calendar added: unlike the calendar, which is almost always written on a physically separate quire, the litany is usually written on integral leaves of the volume; it therefore ought to be a more reliable guide as to where the main text of the psalter was intended to be used, but unfortunately it is often not as informative as a calendar.

### **1.2.14 How to Date a Manuscript Psalter**

Few manuscripts before the thirteenth century contain explicit indications of their date of origin. Sometimes one can rely on indirect evidence to date them: for example, if a manuscript contains a text that is known to have been composed in 1140, and has the ownership inscription of someone who is known to have died in 1160, then it must have been written between these dates. Such situations, however, are very rare: far more common is the situation that one such date or the other is known, but not both; one might know that a manuscript was written after 1140, but not know how much later, or one might know that a manuscript was written before 1160, but not know how much earlier.

Calendars and litanies can again be very helpful. If a calendar includes the 25 June feast of St Amphibalus written by the original scribe, one can not only assume some connection with St Albans, but one can also know that it must have been written after 1178, because the feast commemorates the finding of the saint's relics in that year. Some saints that are not helpful for the purposes of localisation are nonetheless useful for dating purposes. If a calendar includes the universal feast of St Thomas Becket on 29 December written by the original scribe, this does not help localise it, but does indicate that it cannot have been written before 1173, the year Thomas was canonised. If the calendar also includes the feast of the Translation of Becket's relics on 7 July, it must post-date 1220, the year in which the translation took place. If the manuscript is from England (where his cult was strongest) and includes the 29 December feast, but the 7 July feast is absent, then there is a good chance that it was written between 1173 and 1220 (as long as there is no other evidence to contradict this hypothesis). It is always dangerous to make assumptions based on the absence of a feast, however, because a feast may be omitted for a variety of reasons, including a simple mistake.

Obits in calendar can be particularly informative because they not only refer to precisely datable events, but they may also reflect the concerns of a single individual, rather than a whole institution or locale. The eleventh-century Crowland Psalter contains several obits of Anglo-Saxon kings and princes written by the original scribe;<sup>48</sup> one of them refers to a prince who died in 1057, so the calendar must have been written after this date, probably either for someone connected to the royal family or a royal foundation. Further obits added in the twelfth century, which relate to Lewes Priory, in Sussex, allow scholars to speculate about who owned the manuscript, because

there are very few individuals whose biographies provide the necessary link between the royal family in the eleventh century and Lewes Priory in the twelfth century.

### **1.2.15 The Decoration of Manuscript Psalters**

The majority of ordinary medieval manuscripts probably had very little or no decoration. Higher-quality books, which are more likely to have been looked after carefully and preserved until the present day, might have enlarged initial letters at the beginning, and at various divisions of the text (e.g. the beginning of new chapters). Generally speaking decoration executed in ink with a pen (perhaps by the scribe) is a lower form of decoration than when executed with pigment and a paintbrush (perhaps by a specially commissioned artist). Representational decoration, as opposed to vegetal or abstract ornament, is usually only found in the highest quality manuscripts and is typically found in three places within manuscript psalters.

First, the calendar might have a series of twelve signs of the Zodiac (Aquarius, Pisces, Aries, etc.). In addition, or instead, a calendar may have a series of the twelve 'Occupations of the months', images representing typical activities of the months, such as harvesting wheat and picking grapes.

Second, in the most luxurious psalters, particularly French and English ones of the twelfth and especially the thirteenth century, there might be a series of full-page miniatures before the psalms. These can vary in number from a single image to more than a hundred; each page may have a single scene, or may be divided into two or more scenes. The subject matter is usually biblical, representing episodes from the life of King David (especially before the twelfth century), Christ (especially from the twelfth century onwards), and in the most lavish examples from the twelfth century onwards, other Old Testament figures such as Joseph.

Third, the psalms themselves may have historiated initials at the main divisions; occasionally full-page miniatures are found at some or all of the divisions; and occasionally some of the 'ordinary' psalms also have elaborate initials. It is very rare that every psalm has a historiated initial. The way in which verse initials are treated varied: for example, in England it was always normal for each verse to start on a new line, while in Germany the text was often written continuously, like prose; this produces a radically different overall appearance of the page. In England and France it was normal to put a black edge around areas of gold, while in Germany a red outline was common. Whether or not the verse and psalm initials were indented into the text area in English and French psalters, or placed slightly to the left in the margin, changed over time.

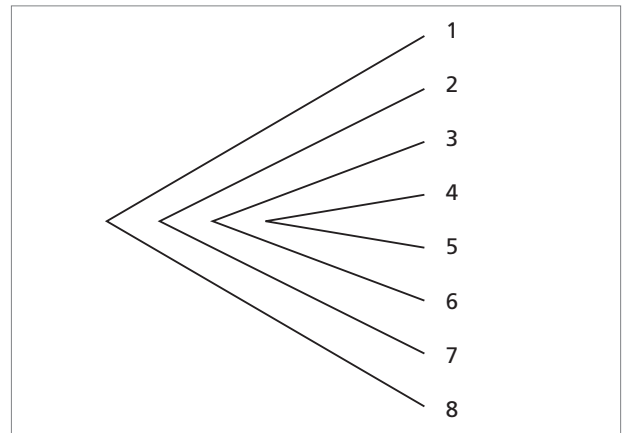
### **1.2.16 Collation**

Books made in the West until relatively recent times are almost always composed of folded sheets of parchment or paper. Usually a sheet was folded in half (to produce one 'bifolium', two leaves, four pages), and in half again (two 'bifolia', four leaves, eight pages), and in half at least once more (four bifolia, eight leaves, sixteen pages) to produce a sort of booklet called a 'quire'.<sup>49</sup> A series of quires were arranged one after another, sewn together with a thread which went through the fold in the 'gutter'; when all the quires are sewn together their folded edges form the spine of the book.

Knowing the 'collation' of a volume – the arrangement of the folded sheets of parchment into quires – is crucial to a full understanding of many medieval codices, including the Albani Psalter. The collation allows one to see whether the physical make-up is regular (suggesting well organised plan) or irregular (suggesting the possibility of disorganisation or a change of plan), how the parts relate to one another, whether leaves are added or missing, and whether the divisions between the various scribes and artists correspond with the physical divisions between quires.

A typical medieval northern European quire from about the year 1000 onwards is made up of eight leaves, which may have originally been a single larger folded sheet; the Albani Psalter rather unusual among twelfth-century manuscripts in having most of its quires composed of ten leaves (five bifolia, twenty pages). It is conventional to illustrate a quire as in the diagram below, with the first leaf at the top and the last at the bottom.

Each side of a piece of parchment often looks slightly different: the side of the animal skin that was originally on the outside is often darker and has visible hair follicles, while the inside is often paler and has patterns like the veins of the animal. The pattern of horizontal and vertical lines to guide the scribe and delineate the writing area on each page were usually made, until about 1100, by making prick-marks in the outer margins of the bifolia, and then scoring lines between them with a hard pointed stylus, to create furrows on one side of each leaf, usually the hair-side, and corresponding ridges on the other side. Medieval book-makers usually ensured that the facing pages of an open book matched one another by ruling on the hair-side of each leaf and arranging the leaves in each quire in alternating fashion, so that a hair-side with furrows faced another hair-side with furrows, and a flesh-side with ridges faced another flesh-side with ridges. When this regular pattern is interrupted, it is usually a sign that something has been added or removed from the volume at this point.



When referring to quires in collations it is conventional to indicate the number of leaves in each quire by a superscript number: '1<sup>8</sup>' means that the first quire has 8 leaves, 16 pages, made up of four folded bifolia, as in the diagram above. When leaves are added to or missing from the original quire this is indicated by '+' or '-' signs.

When referring to quires in collations it is conventional to indicate the number of leaves in each quire by a superscript number: '1<sup>8</sup>' means that the first quire has 8 leaves, 16 pages, made up of four folded bifolia, as in the diagram above. When leaves are added to or missing from the original quire this is indicated by '+' or '-' signs.

### 1.2.17 Determining the Sequence of Production

When more than one scribe or artist was involved in making a book, it is common to find that they divided their work between different quires. For example, one scribe might write quires 1–5 and another scribe quires 6–10. If quire 6 in this example begins in the middle of a sentence, one can be confident that quire 6 was written after quire 5, and that the scribe of quire 6 worked after the scribe of quire 5. If quire 5 contains a complete text and 6 begins with a new text, however, it is not necessarily true that quire 6 was written after quire 5, or that its scribe worked later than the other scribe. The order in which quires appear in a volume does not necessarily relate to the order in which they were written. For example, the calendar of a psalter is a self-contained text that was usually written on a separate quire, and one usually cannot be sure if it was written before or after the rest of the volume. Thus the ways in which the work of different scribes relates to one another can provide evidence about the order in which parts of a book were made.

Similar evidence can be derived from the way the decoration is divided between different artists. The natural assumption is that the scribe passed the quires to the artist as he finished them, and that the decoration therefore proceeded in the same order as the writing. If quires 1–7 of a book are decorated by one artist, and quires 8–10 by another, one cannot be sure which artist worked first: it may be that the entire text was written first, and then one artist started by decorating quires 8–10. But if one artist decorated quires 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, and the other artist decorated quires 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, however, it is very likely that they were working simultaneously, leap-frogging each other as they progressed through the book.

If the work of one artist only appears on pages written by a particular scribe, it is possible that the scribe was also the artist of those pages, or that the scribe and artist were somehow separate from the other scribes and artists of the volume – either separate in time, or in place.

The Albani Psalter has some complex patterns of correspondences between at least four different artists and at least seven different scribes. Study of these patterns can potentially be very revealing about the way in which the book was written and decorated, but such study is complicated by the fact that scholars do not agree about which scribes were responsible for which text, or which artists were responsible for which decoration. These matters will therefore be examined in some detail in Chapters III and IV.

The following table summarises the sequence of quires and the main contents of the Albani Psalter.

**Table 4: Sequence of Quires and the Main Contents of the Albani Psalter**

	Quires	Pages	Main textual contents	Main decorative contents
I	1 <sup>8</sup>	1–16	Calendar	12 roundels with Occupations of the months and 12 signs of the zodiac
II	2 <sup>8</sup>	17–32		16 full-page miniatures
	3 <sup>10</sup>	33–52		20 full-page miniatures
	4 <sup>2</sup>	53–56		4 full-page miniatures
III	5 <sup>8</sup>	57–72	<i>Chanson de St Alexis</i> ;	1 large Alexis image
			Commentaries on the Emmaus and other images	3 full-page Emmaus scenes 1 drawing of knights fighting 1 large Beatus initial
IV	6 <sup>10</sup> –22 <sup>10</sup>	73–410	Psalms, Litany, Prayers	214 historiated initials
	23 <sup>8-4</sup>	411–414	End of prayers	
		416–417		2 full-page miniatures

This table is slightly simplified to give a clearer idea of the medieval arrangement of the volume; in fact one leaf is missing from Quire 15 (its present whereabouts are unknown). In the final quire four leaves are missing: the third leaf, which belongs between pages 414 and 415, is now in the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne; and the last three leaves were probably blank and have been removed (see Chapter II.7). Diagrams of quires will be given in the following chapters as part of the description and discussion of each section.

## II The Parts of the Manuscript

### II.1 Calendar and Computistical Material

#### II.1.1 Contents

At least four scribes contributed entries to the calendar. Their identity, relative chronology, and likely dates will be discussed in more detail below, but for now it is enough to say that one scribe wrote most of the calendar; another added a record of the death of Roger the hermit (see Chapter II.1.5); a third added just two feasts, one of which is the Dedication of Christina’s priory at Markyate; and the fourth a large number of feasts and records of the deaths of a considerable number of people, including Christina, most of whom were closely associated with her and/or St Albans Abbey.

The calendrical material commences with six memoranda concerning the differing lengths, and the arrangements according to the Roman calendar, of the twelve months of the year (p. 2); below this are tables relating to solar and lunar cycles. Another table lists the limits of the date of Easter for each year of the 19-year lunar cycle (p. 15); the presence of this sort of computistical material is commonly found with twelfth-century and earlier calendars.

p. 1	Blank; added inscriptions
p. 2	Computistical memoranda
p. 3	January
p. 4	February
p. 5	March
p. 6	April
p. 7	May
p. 8	June
p. 9	July
p. 10	August
p. 11	September
p. 12	October
p. 13	November
p. 14	December
p. 15	Computistical tables
p. 16	Blank

The calendar itself occupies the intervening twelve pages. The first day of each of the twelve months was originally left blank by the scribe, presumably deliberately, when he wrote the rest of the calendar. It is likely that he intended to treat these feasts differently in some way, perhaps by using a different ink or style of handwriting, but these days remained blank for an extended period, presumably accidentally.

The calendar as we have it today is the result of a series of accretions, added at uncertain dates. They will be dealt with in their probable chronological order.

### II.1.2 The Original Feast Days

The great majority of the original saints' feasts are written in plain brown ink, but the high importance of sixteen feasts is emphasised by the use of coloured inks and/or capital letters. The scribe seems to have begun to write, starting from January, using plain brown ink even for major feasts such as Epiphany and the Conversion of St Paul (6 and 25 January, p. 3), the Purification of the Virgin Mary (2 February; her name is, however, in capitals), and so on, until he reached St Benedict on 21 March, who is entered in blue ink. From this point onwards he used colours and/or capital letters for the most important feasts.

- The Purification of the Virgin Mary, in capitals (2 February, p. 4)
- St Benedict, in blue (21 March, p. 5)
- The Invention of St Ives, in red, with his name in capitals (24 April, p. 6)
- St Alban, in red (22 June, p. 8)
- The Nativity of St John the Baptist, in red (24 June, p. 8)
- The Passion (martyrdom) of Sts Peter and Paul, in red (29 June, p. 8)
- The Commemoration of St Paul, in green (30 June, p. 8)
- The Translation of St Benedict, in red (11 July, p. 9)
- The Invention of St Alban, in red (2 August, p. 10)
- St Andrew the Apostle, in capitals (30 November, p. 13)
- The 'Tumulatio' (burial) of St Benedict, in red (4 December, p. 14)

- The Conception of the Virgin Mary, in red, with her name in capitals (8 December, p. 14)
- The Nativity of Christ, in red (25 December, p. 14)
- St Stephen, in green (26 December, p. 14)
- St John the Apostle and Evangelist, in red (December, p. 14)
- The Holy Innocents, in green (December, p. 14)

Of these sixteen feasts at least ten can be considered ‘universal’, and would be expected in any English calendar of this date, but at least five are much less common and therefore likely to have some local significance. They are the presence of (i) St Felix on 8 March; (ii) the ‘Inventio’ (discovery) of the relics of St Ives on 24 April; (iii) the Inventio of St Alban on 2 August; (iv) the burial of St Benedict on 4 December, referred to as his ‘Tumulatio’; and (v) St Romanus on 9 August, described as a soldier (‘militis’), rather than as a martyr (‘martyris’).<sup>51</sup>

St Felix of Dunwich was a seventh-century apostle of East Anglia, whose relics were at Ramsey Abbey. His cult seems not to have extended beyond East Anglia, and his feast appears in the calendars of Crowland, Ely, and Ramsey (see Map p. 156).

The bodies of St Ives (or St Ivo), a Persian bishop, and three companions are said to have been discovered on 24 April 1001, at a village called Slepe, about 8 km east of Huntingdon, Christina’s home town. Within two months the bodies were translated to Ramsey Abbey (about 13 km to the north), and in 1017 a priory dependent on Ramsey Abbey was founded at Slepe, which became known as St Ives. About a century later the relics of St Ives’s companions were translated back to the Priory of St Ives, but the relics of St Ives himself remained at Ramsey. St Ives’s feast does not appear in any surviving Anglo-Saxon calendar, but it does feature in the later calendars of Crowland (as a minor feast) and Ramsey. His feast day, not noted as the ‘inventio’, was also celebrated at Ely (as a minor feast), and at St Albans, which in the fourteenth century claimed to have a relic of his clothing. His feasts were without doubt in the calendar of St Ives Priory itself, but no such calendar is known to survive.

The feast of St Benedict on 4 December was not especially rare – it appears in more than half of the surviving Anglo-Saxon calendars, for example – but among surviving calendars only that of Ramsey Abbey seems to have called it his ‘tumulatio’ instead of the normal word ‘translatio’.<sup>52</sup> St Romanus on 9 August designated as ‘militis’ is another example of a relatively common feast recorded in a very uncommon way.

Four of the five most distinctive features of the Albani Psalter calendar are thus found in the earliest surviving calendar of Ramsey Abbey, which is thirteenth-century. The presence of St Alban’s feast on 22 June would not, by itself, conclusively suggest a connection with St Albans, but the last of the five most distinctive feasts confirms the association: the Invention of St Alban on 2 August. This is not found in any of the surviving Anglo-Saxon calendars, and perhaps only at St Albans and its dependent cells among post-Conquest ones; almost every calendar has the important feast of St Stephen on this date. An odd feature of the Albani Psalter is that his name is spelled correctly, ‘Albani’, on 22 June (p. 8), but misspelled as ‘Albini’ on 2 August (p. 10). It has been suggested that this slip might have been due to the fact that a familiar name at St Albans was that of Geoffrey’s predecessor, Abbot Richard d’Aubigny / d’Albeni / de Albini,<sup>53</sup> and his relatives, such as Henry d’Albini and his son Robert d’Albini, who made various benefactions to St Albans.<sup>54</sup>

Whether the calendar most closely represents a calendar of St Albans or of Ramsey, or of somewhere else such as Huntingdon, will be considered in Chapter VI.

### II.1.3 The ‘O Sapientia’ Neumes

An unusual feature of the Albani Psalter calendar is the presence on 16 December of the words ‘O sapientia’ (‘O Wisdom’) with staveless neumes immediately above them (p. 14).



‘O sapientia’ are the opening words of the first of a series of antiphons that were sung in the days leading up to Christmas Eve, each beginning with the word ‘O’, the first of which was sung (in England) on 16 December.<sup>55</sup> ‘O sapientia’ accompanied by neumes on 16 December is found in very few medieval calendars other than the Albani Psalter, at least two of which were probably written at St Albans.<sup>56</sup> ‘O sapientia’ with neumes also appears in the twelfth-century calendar of St Werburgh’s, Chester:<sup>57</sup> Chester, like St Albans, came under the liturgical influence of Bec in Normandy,<sup>58</sup> and this would therefore seem to be one possible source of the feature, even though it seems not to have been used in French calendars.

In the Albani Psalter the words ‘O sapientia’ are by the original scribe, but it is not possible to state with confidence whether the neumes were written when the calendar was originally written, or whether they were added to the Psalter later to make it conform more closely to other St Albans calendars (see below): the ink of the word ‘O’ appears to be a slightly different shade of red than the neumes above, which suggests that the neumes may be a later addition.

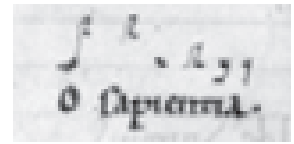


Plate 4: Albani Psalter, p. 14; detail

### II.1.4 The Verses on the Egyptian Days

One feature of the Albani calendar that has apparently never been analysed before is the verses on the Egyptian Days at the head of each page. The potential for using these verses for localising manuscripts is suggested, for example, by the London Winchester Psalter<sup>59</sup> and the Madrid Winchester Psalter:<sup>60</sup> both are mid-twelfth century psalters from Winchester, and both have the same textual variants in their February and December verses.<sup>61</sup>

There were several series of such verses, dating from the eighth century or even earlier.<sup>62</sup> The series found in the Albani Psalter seems to have been composed in England in the late eleventh or early twelfth century and remained standard in England for the next few centuries. In the Albani Psalter, these verses are found in the right-hand column at the top of the page, in red or green ink, immediately below the note of the length of the month.

The standard November verse is ‘Scorpius est quintus et tercius est nece cinctus’, but in the Albani Psalter the verse reads ‘Scorpius est quintus et tercius **ad mala** cinctus’. I have found this ‘ad mala’ variant in only four other calendars, three of them from St Albans:

- preceding the ‘Littlemore Anselm’ (c.1140)<sup>63</sup>
- preceding the St Petersburg computus (mid twelfth century)<sup>64</sup>
- preceding the New College Psalter (c.1260–70)<sup>65</sup>

The fourth is fifteenth-century, and apparently from Croyland Abbey, at Crowland, Lincolnshire.<sup>66</sup> If this textual variant can be considered a characteristic St Albans feature, its presence in a calendar made for Croyland Abbey can perhaps be explained by the fact that its abbot from 1138/9 to 1143 was Godfrey, who had previously been prior of St Albans.<sup>67</sup>

The ‘Littlemore Anselm’ calendar is not only close in date to the Albani Psalter, but is intimately related to the Albani Psalter in at least two other ways: by its iconography, and by the fact that it may have been written at St Albans for a nun. The St Petersburg calendar, also written for a nun, is the only known St Albans calendar that includes Sts Alexis and Christina. The New College Psalter can be linked in various other ways with the Albani Psalter, including the text of its psalms (see Chapter II.4.1).

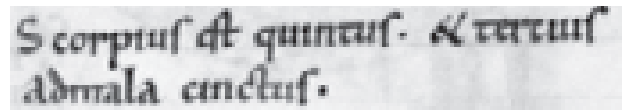


Plate 5: Albani Psalter, p. 13; detail



### II.1.5 The Added Obit of Roger the Hermit

At some point after the main scribe had written the majority of the calendar, another scribe added the most detailed entry in the entire calendar:

12 Sep. ‘O[bitus] Rogeri heremite monaci s[an]c[t]i Albani. Ap[ud] que[m]c[um]q[ue] fuerit h[oc] psalt[er]iu[m], fiat ei[us] memoria maxime hac die.’

(The death of Roger the hermit monk of St Albans. Whosoever shall have this Psalter, keep his memory especially on this day).

Plate 6: Albani Psalter, p. 11; detail



It has been established from other sources that Roger the Hermit died in 1121 or 1122:<sup>68</sup> we therefore know that the earliest possible date for this inscription is 1121, but it could have been written many years after his death.<sup>69</sup> This inscription has been central to many discussions of the date, origin, and later ownership of the Albani Psalter, so it will be worth examining it closely.

The inscription appears to have been written in two stages: the scribe wrote the first six words almost in full (using only two very common abbreviations, and not using the common abbreviation for the letters ‘er’ in the words ‘Rogeri’ and ‘heremite’), at the end of which he was trailing off below the horizontal ruled line, and he then put a punctuation-mark like those that mark the end of all of the other entries on the page. The entry would have seemed complete if he had left it like that. Instead he added the second part of the inscription, presumably after some short pause or longer interval, starting again on the horizontal ruled line. He started writing this second part of the inscription using lots of abbreviations (he used four abbreviations in the first two words, and three more in the next three words), perhaps because he knew that he would have trouble fitting the whole inscription in the space that remained available on the line. He then perhaps decided that it would not be possible to complete his inscription without spilling over onto the line below, so he stopped using abbreviations, and did indeed write the last two words (‘hac die’) on the next line down, marked by a typical ‘run-over’ symbol. If he had used more abbreviations from the beginning of the inscription, he could have got the entire entry on a single line; the fact that he did not suggests that he originally did not plan to write the second part of the inscription.

As was pointed out by Goldschmidt,<sup>70</sup> the scribe of this inscription misspelled the word ‘monachi’ by omitting the letter ‘h’, and the ‘h’ was later added above the line, in green ink that appears identical to the green used immediately below for the inscription recording, in red and green, the obit of Ailwin the canon. Therefore the red-and-green entry must post-date the obit of Roger, which itself has to be later than 1120.

### II.1.6 Two Further Additions

Another scribe added two entries in plain brown ink:

- 27 May. ‘Dedicatio eccl[esi]e s[an]c[t]e T[r]initatis’ (the Dedication of the church of the Holy Trinity, i.e. Markyate Priory)
- 20 July. ‘S[an]c[t]e margarete vi[r]ginis’ (St Margaret, virgin)

The foundation and consecration charters of Markyate survive, both dated 1145; the first of these two entries therefore cannot have been written earlier than this date, and it is likely that both entries were added at the same time. In 1145, 27 May was the Sunday between Ascension Day and Pentecost.

It is not clear why the scribe of the Dedication entry (obviously a very important day at Markyate) also added St Margaret, but it may be significant that Christina’s sister took the name Margaret when she became a nun of Markyate. It is curious that the

scribe of these entries did not add any other feasts, such as those discussed below. We may speculate that these entries may either have been entered in the nine months between 27 May 1145 and 25 Feb 1146, when Abbot Geoffrey died, or several years later, because we might expect his death to be commemorated if it were a recent event.

### II.1.7 The Main Group of Added Feast Days

A scribe with idiosyncratic writing used alternating red and green inks for most of a large number of added entries, which can be considered in three groups. The first group consists of all the names of the months next to the ‘KL’ monograms, and the entries for the first day of each month on the same line:

- 1 Jan. ‘Jan[uaru]. Circumcisio d[omi]ni.’ (The Circumcision of the Lord)
- 1 Feb. ‘Febr[uaru]. Sancte Brigide virginis.’ (St Bridget, virgin)
- 1 Mar. ‘Martii.’
- 1 Apr. ‘April[is].’
- 1 May. ‘Mai[is]. Ap[osto]lorum Phil[ippi] & Iacobi.’ (The Apostles Philip and James)
- 1 Jun. ‘Junii.’
- 1 Jul. ‘Iulii. Octau[a]e s[an]c[t]i Ioh[ann]is’ (The Octave of St John)
- 1 Aug. ‘Aug[usti]. Ad vinc[ula] s[an]c[t]i Petri. Machabeor[um] m[arty]r[um]’ (St Peter’s chains. Maccabees, martyrs)
- 1 Sep. ‘Sept[embris]. S[an]c[t]i Egidii abb[at]is’ (St Giles, abbot)
- 1 Oct. ‘Octobr[is]. Germani. Remigii. & Vedasti ep[iscop]or[um]’ ([Sts] Germanus, Remigius & Vedast, bishops)
- 1 Nov. ‘Nov[embris]. Festiuitas om[n]ium s[an]c[t]or[um]’ (Feast of All Saints)
- 1 Dec. ‘Dece[m]br[is].’

The main original scribe had omitted these entries; he also apparently forgot to write some of the names of the months after the Ides, about half-way down the page in July, August, October, and December; these were all added in red. In most months, such as February, the first line of writing is well below the roundel depicting the Occupation of the month, and there was no shortage of space; this suggests the possibility that he intended to write the first lines in large letters, perhaps two or three lines high.

The second group of additions by this scribe consists of fourteen entries on other days of the months, half of them referring to women:

- 16 Feb. ‘S[an]c[t]e Iuliane virginis.’ (St Juliana, virgin)
- 10 Jul. ‘S[an]c[t]e Amalburge virginis.’ (St Amalburga, virgin)
- 6 Oct. ‘S[an]c[t]e Fidis virg[inis] & m[arty]r[is]’ (St Faith, virgin & martyr)
- 17 Oct. ‘S[an]c[t]e Etheldrithæ uirginis’ (St Etheldritha, virgin)
- 19 Oct. ‘S[an]c[t]æ Fritheswithæ uirg[inis].’ (St Frideswide, virgin)
- 17 Nov. ‘S[an]c[t]e Hildæ virginis.’ (St Hilda, virgin)
- 23 Nov. ‘S[an]c[t]e Felicitatis m[arty]r[is].’ (St Felicitas, martyr)

and half referring to men:

- 11 Apr. ‘S[an]c[t]i Guthlaci conf[essoris]’ (St Guthlac, confessor)
- 19 May. ‘S[an]c[t]i Dunstani archiep[iscop]i’ (St Dunstan, archbishop)
- 26 May. ‘S[an]c[t]i Augustini ep[iscop]i’ (St Augustine, bishop)
- 18 Jul. ‘Octau[e] S[an]c[t]i Benedicti.’ (Octave of [the translation of] St Benedict)
- 25 Jul. ‘Christofori & Cucufatis m[arty]r[um]’ (Christopher and Cucuphas, martyrs)
- 20 Aug. ‘S[an]c[t]i Oswini Regis & m[arty]r[is]’ (St Oswin, king & martyr)
- 17 Sep. ‘S[an]c[t]i Lamb[er]ti ep[iscop]i & m[arty]r[is]’ (St Lambert, bishop & martyr)

All these male saints are included in other near-contemporary calendars from St Albans, and two of these feasts were of special significance there:

- St Benedict's translation (11 July) was a common feast in England but its octave (18 July) was comparatively rare, and was perhaps only celebrated in Benedictine communities.
- St Oswin (d. 651) was buried at Tynemouth, at the mouth of the River Tyne in Northumbria. Miracles were reported at the site of his grave, and a monastery was founded there, but later destroyed during Danish invasions. The monastery was re-founded in 1085, and populated by monks from St Albans, as a dependent cell, and St Oswin's feast-day was therefore of some importance at St Albans from the late eleventh century.

It therefore seems possible that the male saints were added to make the calendar of the Albani Psalter conform more closely to that of St Albans. The female saints may have been added because they held a special significance for Christina or the women of Markyate (a comparable situation exists in the litany, see Chapter II.4.3), among whom two are especially rare and therefore unexpected:

- St Frideswide (d. 735) was venerated primarily in Oxford in the earlier Middle Ages, but her cult may have received some wider stimulus c.1122 when St Frideswide's Priory, Oxford, was established as a house of Augustinian canons.
- St Hilda (d. 680) was an abbess at Whitby in Yorkshire, on the northeast English coast; she was venerated mainly in Yorkshire and the north of England.

### II.1.8 The Main Group of Added Obits

In addition to the entries on the first day of each month and the other extra feasts of saints the scribe who usually used a mixture of red and green inks also added a large number of obits. He usually wrote the saints' feasts to the left, like the original saints' entries, but he usually wrote the obits as far to the right as was possible without overlapping other text or decoration; the only exception is the obit of Geoffrey, Abbot of St Albans (25 February, p. 4), which he aligned to the left.

The obits can be divided into three groups. One group consists of Christina of Markyate and her immediate family:

- 11 Jan. 'O[biit] Auti pater do[mi]næ Cristinae.' (Autti, father of mistress Christina)
- 7 Jun. 'O[biit] Beatrix mat[er] do[mi]næ Cristinae' (Beatrix, mother of mistress Christina)
- 12 Feb. 'O[biit] Gregori[us] mo[nachus] f[rate]r do[mi]ne Cristine.' (Gregory, monk, brother of mistress Christina)
- 2 Nov. 'O[biit] Symon f[rate]r do[mi]ne Cristinae.' (Symon, brother of mistress Christina)
- 8 Dec. 'O[biit] Cristina p[ri]ma p[ri]orissa de Bosco.' (Christina, first prioress of the Wood, i.e. Markyate Priory, which was situated in a wood)

Autti, Beatrix, and Gregory are all mentioned in the *Life* of Christina, and her brother Simon is very possibly the 'Simon of Huntingdon' who witnessed the foundation charter of Markyate Priory.<sup>71</sup> Christina's sister Margaret is not mentioned, so she was perhaps still alive when these obits were entered in the calendar.

Another group of obits consists of memorials to Abbot Geoffrey and other male and female religious, at least some of who were connected to St Albans and would doubtless have been known by Christina:

- 19 Jan. 'O[biit] Rob[ertus] monachus.' (Robert the monk)
- 11 Feb. 'O[biit] Adelaisa monialis.' (Adelaisa the nun)

- 25 Feb. ‘O[biit] Gaufrid[us] abbas æcel[es]iæ s[an]c[t]i Albani.’ (Geoffrey, Abbot of the church of St Alban)<sup>72</sup>
- 20 Mar. ‘O[biit] Auicia p[r]iorissa de Sop[well]’ (Auicia, prioress of Sopwell)
- 31 Mar. ‘O[biit] Azo heremita.’ (Azo the hermit)
- 4 Jun. ‘O[biit] Alured[us] monachus.’ (Alvered the monk)
- 12 Jul. ‘O[biit] Matildis monialis de Marzellis.’ (Matilda, nun of Marzellis)
- 28 Jul. ‘O[biit] Ailward[us] heremita.’ (Ailward the hermit)
- 13 Sep. ‘O[biit] Ailwin[us] canonicus.’ (Ailwin the canon)
- 2 Oct. ‘O[biit] Thomas mo[nachus].’ (Thomas the monk)
- 6 Oct. ‘O[biit] Ricard[us] monachus.’ (Richard the monk)

Abbot Geoffrey is of course Geoffrey de Gorron, who died in 1146. Robert, Alvered, Thomas, and Richard were probably monks of St Albans. Sopwell priory was founded by Geoffrey perhaps c.1140, a short distance from St Albans Abbey, for two nuns who had been living in a house near the Abbey. Auicia was perhaps the first prioress; Adela and Matilda were presumably among the first nuns. Ailward and Azo were presumably local hermits, possibly among those who had lived with Roger the Hermit at Markyate, who is known to have had a companion called Azo. The *Life* of Christina relates that ‘there were in our community [St Albans abbey] certain souls whom she cherished more than those of other places, some of whom she had made monks’,<sup>73</sup> so it is likely that some of these are commemorated by the obits added to the Albani Psalter.

The remaining two entries are for people who were doubtless connected with Christina and/or St Albans, but we do not know how:

- 16 Jan. ‘O[biit] Ailiva mat[er] Mich[aelis].’ (Ailiva, mother of Michael)
- 5 Sep. ‘O[biit] Godwinus.’ (Godwin)

It is impossible to know who Godwin was, although he was possibly a layman, as he is not described as a monk, canon, hermit, etc. Ailiva is perhaps to be identified with Alveva, Christina’s aunt, in which case it is initially surprising that she is described in relation to Michael rather than Christina. If Michael was indeed Christina’s cousin, he may have been an illegitimate son of Ranulf Flambard (d. 1128), the hated bishop of Durham who had tried to seduce Christina as a teenager, and thus begun all her troubles (see Chapter 1.1.2).

### II.1.9 The Codicology of the Calendar

A normal calendar of the twelve months requires six leaves. The calendar in the Albani Psalter is written on a quire of six leaves, but around the outside of this is an extra bifolium, making a quire of eight leaves, the outer pages of which were originally left blank. The bifolium (pp. 1–2 and 15–16) that encloses the calendar (pp. 3–14) could in theory have been written before, after, or at the same time as main part of the calendar, but it is clear that they are contemporary because surviving prickings, most easily visible at the top edge of p. 2 above the word ‘Monasterij’, match prickings at the top of pp. 9–12, and the pencil ruling of the bifolium (most clearly visible on p. 15) matches that of the calendar. The circular shapes within which short texts are laid out on p. 2 were drawn, like the large roundels in the calendar, with a compass.

There are numerous distinct elements on each page of the calendar, added in different stages: the decorated roundels; the signs of the zodiac; the verses at the head of each month; the ‘KL’ monograms marking the kalends; the left-hand columns of golden numbers, dominical letters, and the Roman calendar; the church feasts; the names of the zodiac signs; seasonal and computistical entries (relating, for example,

to phases of the moon) and miscellaneous non-feast entries such as the Creation of Adam on 23 March. As we have seen, once the calendar was substantially complete, there was an interval of uncertain length, and then a series of additions were made over a period probably of a few decades: entries which had been accidentally omitted were supplied, as were records of recent events of interest to the users of the volume, such as the foundation of Markyate priory and the deaths of various individuals.

The sequence of the production of the calendar cannot be determined with absolute certainty, but there are enough clues to enable us to propose the order of some of the different stages. The scribe would certainly have had at least one exemplar, and possibly more, in front of him as a basis for this calendar.

First, the layout would have been established: prickings were made at the upper, lower, and outer edges of the leaves, and these were used to guide the ruling of a grid of horizontal and vertical lines for the various columns of letters, numbers, and texts. A circle was drawn next at the top left of each page, using a compass, to mark the position of the large illustrated roundels. In the original manuscript the mark of the compass-point is still visible on most pages.

Perhaps before doing anything else, the scribe marked each leaf to ensure that the leaves (which at this point were still loose bifolia) would each receive the correct writing and decoration, and could be assembled in the correct order. Alphabetical letters were written at the top edge of several pages: just above and to the left of the June roundel one can clearly see a letter 'b' with a stroke through the ascender, slightly trimmed at the top, and one can see more severely trimmed remnants of similar marks on the preceding and following pages. The actual sequence of letters is very puzzling: pp. 7–9 appear to have the letters 'a'–'c', pp. 11–12 appear to have 'j'–'k', and pp. 4, 6, and 10 have uncertain letters.

Such 'leaf-signatures' are especially common from the thirteenth century, but it is certain that these ones pre-date the decoration of the calendar, because the decoration overlaps and largely obscures that on p. 12.

It is probable that the left-hand columns of letters and numbers were added next; because without these it would be very difficult to place any other entries in their correct places.

The scribe probably wrote the column of dominical letters first, as this was the simplest task: he just had to write the letters A B C D E F G repeatedly in red ink fifty-two times, for the fifty-two weeks of the year, without having to change his pen or colour of ink. This provided a basic skeleton around which

the rest of the calendar could be built up. Either with four pens available simultaneously, or else one after another, he filled in the other parts of the roman calendar using red, green, blue, and plain brown inks, but he accidentally left out the names of several months in the middle of some pages (pp. 8, 9, 12, and 14). He may also have added most of the initial letters with which the church feasts start, such as the green 'E' of 'Epiphania d[omi]ni' (6 January), but he also omitted some deliberately (those on the first day of each month) or perhaps accidentally (such as the letter 'O' with which the entries on 2, 3, and 4 January begin).<sup>74</sup>

Still with his red and green inks, the scribe perhaps entered the lines of text at the top of each page: a note on the length of the solar and lunar month, and a short verse about the so-called 'Egyptian Days'. The circle may already have been drawn for the roundel, and he usually wrote the verse further to the left than the lines above (e.g. pp. 3, 5, 7, 10) to follow the shape of the roundel.

The main entries for saints' days were probably added next, though probably in more than one stage. The scribe was perhaps copying an exemplar that did not use



**Plate 7:** Alhani Psalter, various details of different pages (first row: p. 7, 8, 9, second row: p. 11, 12, third row: p. 4, 6, 10)

different colours, otherwise he might have realised sooner that some feasts should be in colour in his copy; as has been pointed out above, he did not start entering any feasts in colour until half-way down the page for March. The red ink used for most of the coloured saints' days is not as deep as the red ink used for the non-saint entries (compare 24 and 25 April, p. 6; or the two entries at 24 June, p. 8). The only two exceptions to this are the Invention of St Alban (2 August, p. 10), which is in dark red ink (unlike the feasts of St Laurence and the Virgin Mary, a little further down the same page, at 10 and 15 August), and the entries in December, the first of which is the 'Tumulatio' of St Benedict (4 December, p. 14). As has been discussed above, the first of these connects the calendar with St Albans or one of its dependent cells, while the second seems to be peculiar, among surviving calendars, to Ramsey.

Some KL monograms have been written below the horizontal line on which they should sit (e.g. pp. 6, 7, 10, 14), with the 'L' usually much shorter than the 'K' in order to avoid the roundel, suggesting that the roundel was drawn first and the KL monogram had to be squeezed into available space afterwards. This sequence of production seems to be confirmed in September (p. 11) where the top of the 'K' overlaps the roundel. But on other pages, including January (p. 3), the roundels seem to overlap the KL monograms slightly, suggesting the opposite sequence of production.

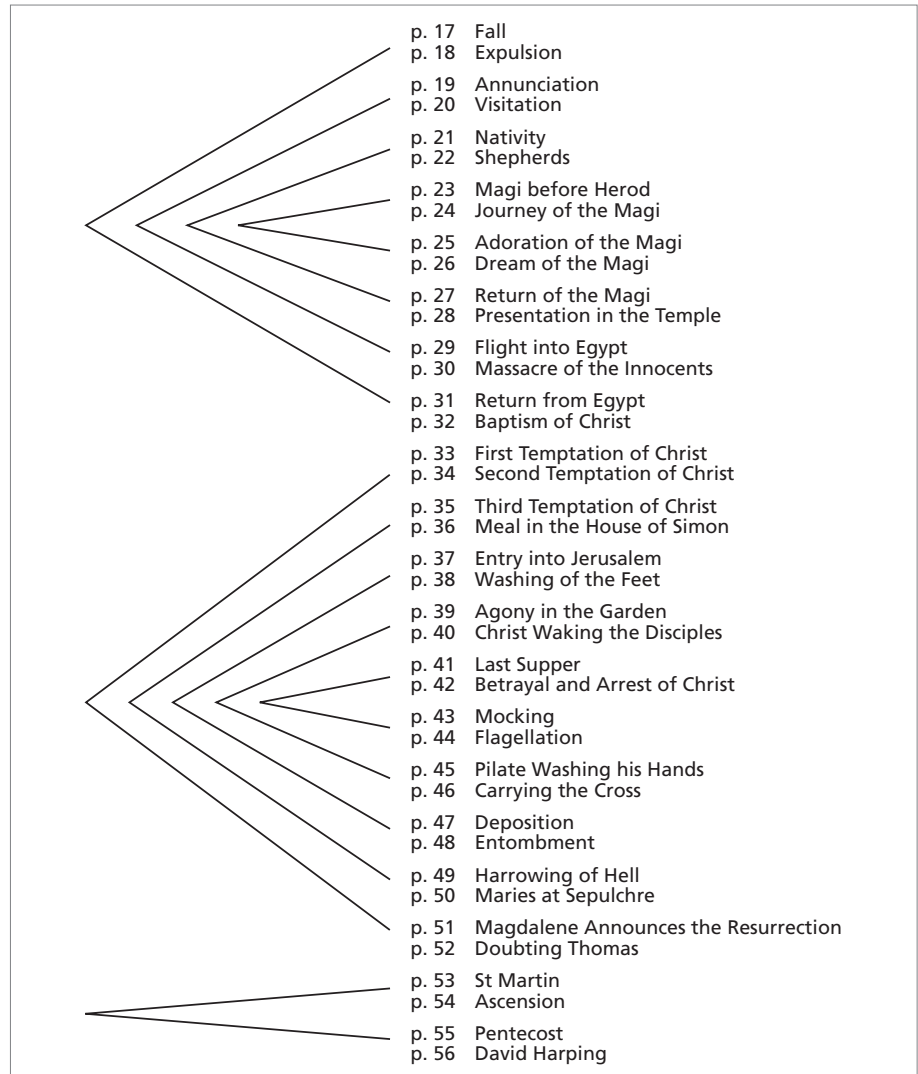
It is apparent that the names of the zodiac signs were written before the signs themselves were drawn: one can clearly see, for example, that Libra's scales are interrupted by the pre-existing letter 'A' in the word 'LIBRA' (p. 11). The names of the signs may have been executed in two stages, because the first two are in green (pp. 3, 4) while all the others are in red. They appear to be written in the same dark red and dark green inks used for the verses at the top of each month, and for the seasonal/computistical entries, but it is unclear whether the seasonal/computistical entries were added before or after the zodiac signs were drawn: one can see, for example, that the toes of Aquarius are overlapped by the 'g' of 'Dies egypt.' (p. 3), suggesting that the drawings were done first, but this is contradicted by the fact that a small part of the back hoof of Aries was omitted arguably because it would have overlapped the 'ct' ligature in the word 'noctiu[m]' (p. 5). It may be that the different sorts of seasonal/computistical entries were made in different stages, or it may be that the artist of the drawings and scribe of these entries were working simultaneously on different leaves, so that on some pages the drawings were done first, and on other pages the writing was done first.

One can however be confident that the seasonal/computistical information was added after the main saints' feasts etc.: in some cases it is clear that the notes of 'Egyptian Days' have been written further than usual to the right, because of the pre-existing text to the left (e.g. 3 May and 22 July, pp. 7 and 9; compare with 25 May and 13 July), and even clearer evidence is the note of embolisms to the right of the feasts of Sts Stephen and Alban (2 August, p. 10).

## II.2 The Prefatory Miniature-Cycle

It is worth remarking that the prefatory cycle has no text. This sets it apart from picture-cycles that include captions (or spaces for captions), and makes it clear that the intended user of the manuscript was not expected to 'need' any written guide to the images. Most of the images represent well-known biblical events but, to judge by surviving manuscripts, some of them would have been very unusual when the Psalter was made, and it is not uncommon for other twelfth-century miniatures and picture-cycles to have explanatory inscriptions added by later owners. With no text to consider, this chapter will primarily discuss the codicology of the full-page miniature-cycle, followed by a brief discussion of possible iconographic sources.

A diagram will show most clearly how the images and bifolia relate to one another:



This diagram makes several things clear. First, the irregular sizes of the quires suggests the possibility that the whole cycle was not fully planned in advance, or that there was a change of plan during its execution. The cycle consists of twenty leaves divided between three quires, consisting respectively of eight leaves, ten leaves, and two leaves. If he had known in advance that he would require twenty leaves, it might have been natural for the designer to have used two quires of ten leaves each.<sup>75</sup> The irregularity, and the fact that the first quire is of eight leaves, suggest the possibility that his original intention was to produce a cycle on two or three quires of eight leaves each (assuming that he started with the first quire). Thus it is possible that the cycle as originally conceived was intended to have either two quires of eight leaves (i.e. 16 leaves, 32 pages), and therefore eight fewer scenes; or three quires of eight leaves (i.e. 24 leaves, 48 pages), and therefore eight more scenes.

Second, it is difficult to imagine where any hypothetical missing bifolia might once have been. It is tempting to speculate that a miniature of the Crucifixion is missing, but for this to be possible one would not only need a leaf with two scenes between



The Carrying the Cross and The Deposition (perhaps The Nailing to the Cross and The Crucifixion?), but one would also need two scenes for the other half of the bifolium, which would be between The Washing of the Feet and The Agony in the Garden: it is much harder to imagine which scenes might have occupied this position, so we must assume that a Crucifixion was never part of the series.<sup>76</sup> According to the gospel sequence of events The Last Supper (p. 41) ought to occur before the two scenes in the Garden of Gethsemane (pp. 39–40), its placement after them may be evidence of a change of plan.

Third, one sees clearly that the St Martin miniature is the first miniature of the most ‘irregular’ quire, and that the other image on the same side of the bifolium is the other non-gospel image: King David.<sup>77</sup> One possibility is that the position of the St Martin miniature in the cycle relates in some way to a hypothetical ‘model’ being followed, at least in part, by the Alexis Master. In the Albani Psalter St Martin immediately precedes the Ascension. A comparable situation exists in the stylistically and iconographically related miniatures in the Pembroke New Testament:<sup>78</sup> a scene not involving Christ, the Death of John the Baptist, immediately follows the Ascension, out of narrative sequence.<sup>79</sup>

## II.2.1 Planning and Layout

It has been observed that the quality of the parchment in each section of the manuscript (calendar, prefatory miniatures, Alexis Quire, etc.) differs, and that this may suggest that the manuscript as a whole was made in a series of stages, rather than as a single unified plan.<sup>80</sup> This may be true to some extent, but two notes of caution should be expressed before reading too much significance into such features: first, it is normal for different parts of a manuscript to use different qualities of parchment (cycles of full-page miniatures are typically on thicker parchment, for example), and second there is considerable variety within some sections,<sup>81</sup> so it is difficult to generalise meaningfully. It has also been suggested that some parts of the manuscript such as the prefatory miniature-cycle may have been made for another manuscript, and later incorporated into what is now the Albani Psalter.<sup>82</sup> It is very unlikely that the prefatory miniatures and psalms sections were made completely independently of one another, however, because their dimensions correspond so precisely to one another: the miniatures, excluding their decorative frames, are usually c.107 mm wide, the same as the ruled space for the psalms text, while the miniatures, including their decorative frames, are usually c.182mm high, the same as the ruled space for the psalms text. It therefore appears that both sections were laid out using the same grid.

Prickings survive in the first quire of the prefatory cycle that do not correspond to the layout of the miniatures. Below The Fall miniature (p. 17), for example, there are two pairs of prickings at the extreme lower edge of the leaf, and three of the four corresponding prickings survive at the upper edge of the leaf. One might expect each pair to correspond to the inner and outer edges of the frames that enclose the miniatures, but they do not. If the artist had followed these prickings when designing his pages he would have produced considerably narrower miniatures. The miniatures have further sets of prickings at their corners, however, usually invisible in reproductions, and it is these prickings rather than the ones in the margins that were apparently used when laying out the miniatures.

Sometimes multiple pencil rulings can be seen, as for example at the top left-hand corner of the Annunciation miniature (p. 19): these suggest that the layout included not only the outer edges of the frame, but also guidelines for the narrow lines of gilding. In other cases, however, it seems that the artist was not following lines drawn with a ruler and guided by prickings: The Adoration of the Magi and the Dream of the Magi (pp. 25 and 26), for example, have show-through from the other side of the leaf which reveals that these two miniatures are not fully registered with



one another, which suggests a degree of freehand layout. Many of the leaves are cockled and not entirely flat, which makes judgement on this matter difficult, but it also seems that many of the vertical and horizontal lines of the miniatures are not straight.

## II.2.2 Sequence of Production

An artist could work on a series of images in any sequence, as long as it had been planned in advance. Having decided upon the overall plans for a quire (choice of scenes, size of miniatures, etc.) he would presumably usually design the scenes as pencil sketches, and then ink drawings, to guide the application of gold and colours.<sup>33</sup> After this he could work in strict narrative sequence if he wanted, but it would have been much more practical to work on both pages of an open bifolium at once, applying gold and each colour in turn to more than one miniature: thus, for example, he might have worked on *The Fall and The Baptism of Christ* first (pp. 17 and 32), as they face each other across an open bifolium, with *The Expulsion from Paradise and The Return from Egypt* on their reverse (pp. 18 and 31). This method of working is suggested in the *Albani Psalter* by several kinds of evidence.

The blue backgrounds of *The Expulsion from Eden and The Return from Egypt* (pp. 18 and 31) which face each other across an open bifolium have worn away, perhaps due to poor preparation or application of the pigment. On the other side of this bifolium, however, the blue backgrounds of *The Fall and The Baptism of Christ* (pp. 17 and 32) have not suffered the same degree of deterioration. Similarly, the blue background is worn in *The Massacre of the Innocents and The Annunciation* miniatures (pp. 30 and 19) but not on the other side of this bifolium, *The Visitation and The Flight into Egypt* (pp. 20 and 29). These examples may, however, be due to the fact that all the pages with worn blue pigment are on the shinier side of the parchment, so it may just be that some pigments adhered better to the flesh-side better than the hair-side. This is probably not a factor in two other situations, however: the green background panels are patterned on only one bifolium, including *The Journey of the Magi and The Adoration of the Magi* (pp. 24–25), suggesting that the patterning was applied bifolium-by-bifolium. Something similar occurs in the gilding. An unusual feature of the gilding in two miniatures is the use of impressed designs: in Christ's halo and outermost garment in *The Entry into Jerusalem* (p. 37), and the angel's halo in *The Maries at the Sepulchre* (p. 50). Page 37 forms a bifolium with pp. 38 and 47–48, while p. 50 is on a bifolium with pp. 49 and 35–36. In other words, gold is only treated in this way on these two physically consecutive bifolia, so it is likely that gold was applied to them consecutively.<sup>34</sup>

Recognising this bifolium-by-bifolium working method allows some other features of the cycle to be seen as potentially significant. For example, the deep red colour of the outer garment of *Mary Magdalene Announcing the Resurrection* (p. 51) is not used for *The Second Temptation of Christ* on the facing half of this bifolium (p. 34), which suggests the possibility that this colour was reserved for particular uses, perhaps to emphasise *Mary Magdalene*. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that on the bifolium with *The Washing of the Feet and The Deposition* (pp. 38 and 47) this colour is again only used for *Mary Magdalene*. The only other use of this particular colour in the picture-cycle seems to be *Doubting Thomas's* outermost garment (p. 52). Colour-symbolism is a complex subject about which it is dangerous to speculate, but it is clear that some colours had particular meanings in some contexts in twelfth-century art.<sup>35</sup>

The most unusual miniature in terms of layout is the one depicting the two *St Martin* scenes (p. 53). No convincing reason has ever been proposed for the presence of this two-tier miniature depicting a saint's life in the midst of the gospel narrative. Just as the presence of the miniature in the picture-cycle itself

cannot at present be satisfactorily explained, the lack of a lower border and the interrupted upper border have no parallel elsewhere in the picture-cycle, and defy easy explanation.

One final feature of the layout of the miniatures is worth noting. If the Alexis Quire were not in its present position, the final miniature of the picture-cycle, representing King David, would face the start of the psalms, an arrangement that seems ‘natural’ in light of the fact that images of David often immediately precede the psalms. But it has apparently not been considered in the literature on the Psalter whether the page with the David miniature was originally *itself* originally intended to be the Beatus page.

### II.2.3 Textile Curtains

Every leaf of the prefatory miniature-cycle has patterns of small holes in the outer margin, sometimes in pairs, and sometime in larger clusters, which were almost certainly caused by textile ‘curtains’ sewn in to protect the gold and pigments of miniatures from rubbing against one another. In some places traces of the sewing-thread survives (e.g. the outer edge of pp. 31–32, 33–34, 53–54). Such curtains were common in luxury illuminated manuscripts until at least the thirteenth century.<sup>86</sup> An account written in the twelfth century, describing a Gospel book owned by St Margaret of Scotland in the eleventh century, mentions ‘the little sheets of silk that had covered the golden letters [i.e. illuminated initials] to prevent their being dimmed by contact with the leaves’,<sup>87</sup> and numerous surviving examples make it clear that such curtains were used specifically to protect areas of paint or gold.<sup>88</sup> There was little risk of damage when the decoration consisted only of ink and thin colour-washes, however, which is why curtains were not needed in either the calendar or the Alexis Quire of the Albani Psalter, and sewing-holes are not evident in those two quires.

We cannot tell from the holes themselves whether the curtains were sewn in when the Psalter was first made, or at some later date. The multiple patterns of holes suggest that the curtains were renewed or replaced at least once, and it is likely that the first set dated from the twelfth century. The holes are in the outer margin, so we can deduce that the curtain had to be drawn outwards, sideways, to reveal the miniatures; in some manuscripts the curtains were attached along the upper edge of the leaf, so that the curtain had to be lifted upward. If we wish to imagine how the book would have appeared to medieval eyes, therefore, we must imagine turning over a leaf of the picture-cycle to be presented not with two visible miniatures, but probably by one miniature only, the other being hidden by a curtain: a single curtain would have been sufficient to protect the miniature underneath it as well as the miniature on the facing page. The hidden miniature would only be revealed when the curtain was drawn aside. Since the makers of the book would presumably wish the images to be revealed in correct narrative sequence, it is likely that if only one curtain were supplied per pair of miniatures, the curtains would be sewn to the recto pages, leaving the verso images uncovered.

### II.2.4 Iconographic Sources

Some of these features of the Albani Psalter’s iconography may have seemed startlingly novel in England when it was made, such as the way the Virgin Mary is depicted in The Annunciation (p. 10) (see Geddes Chapter II.3). It is therefore natural to want to know where the Alexis Master got such ideas from, or whether they were entirely ‘new’ inventions. A study of the sources of the imagery in the Psalter could be a book-length project in itself, so this section will have to be more modest in its intentions.

It has long been recognised that various miniatures in several early and mid twelfth-century English manuscripts are so similar to one another in some of their details that they must have some sort of relationship: either they were copied from one another (perhaps with intermediaries, now lost) or their identical features are

due to the fact that they were all dependent in some way on a ‘common ancestor’. Very close comparisons can be seen between scenes in the Albani Psalter and images in three other manuscripts in particular: the Shaftesbury Psalter,<sup>89</sup> The Pembroke New Testament, from Bury St Edmunds,<sup>90</sup> and the leaves that originally preceded the Eadwine Psalter, from Canterbury.<sup>91</sup>

**Plate 8:** BL Lansdowne MS 383, ‘The Shaftesbury Psalter’, fol. 13r, fol. 13v  
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One such comparison, which we will have reason to return to in the Chapter on the Alexis Quire, concerns the Emmaus scenes in each manuscript. If we look at the scene in which Christ breaks bread and the disciples recognise him in each manuscript (plates 9 and 10), we see that they are all remarkably similar: Christ sits at a table with the two apostles to either side of him, having broken a circular loaf in half he places one half in the hand of each disciple, and as he does so they each raise their other hand, presumably in recognition. Presented with just these three images one would not be able to tell whether all three were simply conforming to well-established tradition, or whether they were related to one another in some other way. If the latter, it would be difficult to decide what the exact nature of the relationship was: for example, the Albani Psalter image is closest to the Pembroke one as regards Christ’s frontal position, his shaggy cloak, his crossed nimbus, and the triple arch under which the figures sit. But the Albani Psalter image is closest to the Eadwine Psalter image as regards the fact that the disciples do not wear shaggy cloaks, and they each raise their hand that is furthest away from the viewer.

The relationship perhaps becomes clearer if we compare the same Emmaus scene in Pembroke and Eadwine with the final scene in the Albani Psalter. In the Albani Psalter we see the two disciples alone at the table while Christ’s feet are seen disappearing vertically towards heaven, but in both the Pembroke and the Eadwine images we see Christ and the two disciples all seated together at the table and, simultaneously depicting a subsequent moment in the story, we additionally see Christ leaving by a side exit, to the right of the scene. Clearly in this scene the Pembroke and Eadwine representations are more closely related to one another, than either of them is to the Albani Psalter. The same relationship between the three manuscripts is found in some other scenes, such as The Last Supper, The Washing of the Disciples’ Feet, and The Flagellation.<sup>92</sup>

The situation is complicated, however, if we compare *The Entry into Jerusalem* in each manuscript: here the Albani Psalter and *Pembroke* have a nearly identical figure of Zacchaeus up in the palm-tree, while the *Eadwine Psalter* omits Zacchaeus and the tree altogether. The same relationship is found (with the Albani Psalter being close to *Pembroke* but not to *Eadwine*) if one compares *The Mocking of Christ* and *Pentecost* scenes. In addition the *Eadwine* depictions are only closer to the Albani Psalter than *Pembroke* in the case of *Pentecost*.

In summary: *Pembroke* and *Eadwine* are usually closer to one another than to the Albani Psalter, but occasionally *Pembroke* is closer to the Albani Psalter than to *Eadwine*, and in one case *Eadwine* is closer to the Albani Psalter than to *Pembroke*. Assuming that *Eadwine* was made later than *Pembroke*, as scholars agree, we must assume either that they both derived imagery from the same (or a similar) source, or that a series of cross-fertilisations took place, perhaps involving lost intermediaries.

Previous work has shown that one of the most important iconographic sources for some scenes, or the details of some scenes, are Ottonian manuscripts.<sup>93</sup> One small example must suffice. If the overall sequence of events and compositions in different artworks depicting the story of the Good Samaritan are similar, this could have resulted simply from different artists independently illustrating the same text in similar ways.<sup>94</sup> But in both *Pembroke* 120 and the *Golden Gospels of Henry III* (?*Echternach*, circa 1035),<sup>95</sup> the Good Samaritan does not cover the nakedness of the wounded man, as might have been expected, but only bandages his wounds, with one bandage knotted around his head and the other knotted around his waist in remarkably similar ways, even though the gospel text does not say which parts of his body were wounded, it just says that he ‘bound his wounds’. It is almost inconceivable that such a close correspondence of details, not dependent on the text, could result in any way except through the knowledge of the artist of the *Pembroke* cycle of a visual model exactly like (in some details at least) that represented by the Ottonian manuscript.

To explain the set of circumstances outlined above we would ideally want to be able to identify a context in which several different artists, at different times in the second and third quarters of the twelfth century, could have had access to an extensive series of biblical illustrations which incorporated Ottonian iconographic features.

The most important ecclesiastical building in the British Isles at this time was Christ Church, Canterbury, seat of the archbishop of Canterbury, primate of England. From 1109–26 the Prior of Christ Church was Conrad who, to judge by his name, was not a native Englishman, but more likely to be of Germanic origin. Contemporary and later writers credited Conrad with having completed the work on the new choir of the cathedral. Writing in the first half of the twelfth century William of Malmesbury marvels at ‘such splendour that nothing like it could be seen in England for the luminosity of the glass windows, the glistening marble pavement, the multi-coloured pictures’. Writing in about 1200, about twenty-five years after the choir had been destroyed by fire, Gervase of Canterbury remembered ‘that glorious choir which had been so magnificently completed by the care and industry of Prior Conrad’, and three times he mentions ‘the ceiling decorated with outstanding painting’.<sup>96</sup> We do not know in detail what the ceiling looked like, but to have attracted this lavish praise its ‘outstanding painting’ is unlikely to have simply been geometric or vegetal designs, and was presumably covered with the ‘multi-coloured pictures’ mentioned by William of Malmesbury. Some idea of the effect of a mid twelfth-century wooden painted ceiling covered with dozens of narrative biblical scenes can still be seen at St Martin’s church, Zillis, in Switzerland,<sup>97</sup> and, more famously, at St Michael’s, Hildesheim, although the latter is thirteenth-century.

A painted ceiling in the choir of a cathedral is not as publicly visible as, for example, the sculpture on the exterior of a cathedral, but it could probably have been seen and studied closely by many more people than a semi-private work of art such as an

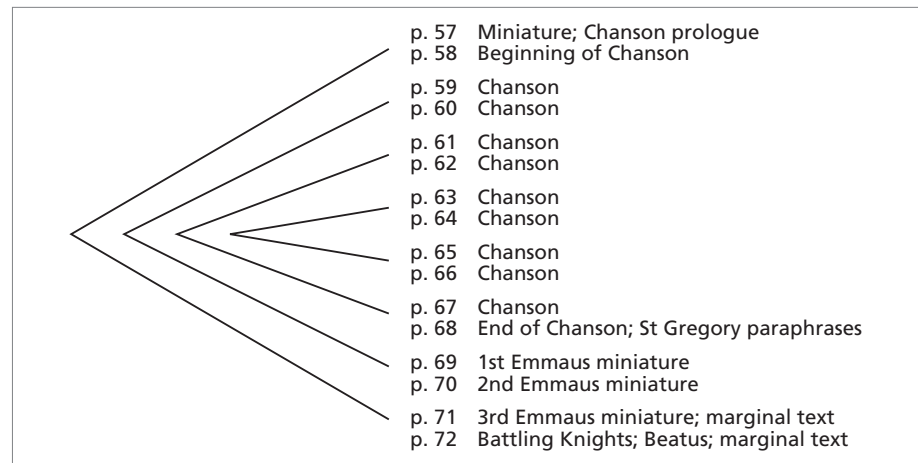
illuminated manuscript in a monastic library. Presumably a nun's psalter used for her private devotions, such as the Albani Psalter, would have been available to be examined by even fewer people. Something like the Canterbury ceiling, therefore, is one possible source of an extensive cycle of biblical imagery such as that found in the Albani Psalter, especially as the ceiling had such a reputation, and would doubtless have been visited and examined by many potential patrons and artists. The fact that Prior Conrad may have been German suggests that he could have employed German artists or provided his English artists with German manuscripts as a source of inspiration.

### II.3 The Alexis Quire

The so-called Alexis Quire (pp. 57–72) contains some of the most puzzling and important texts in the entire manuscript. It is seen as so fundamental that two Ph.D. theses and a book have been devoted to the quire as a whole, and scores of shorter articles have been devoted to individual parts of it.<sup>98</sup> The contents of the quire are:

- a miniature depicting St Alexis taking leave of his bride
- a unique prologue to the *Chanson de St Alexis* in Anglo-Norman French
- a version of the *Chanson de St Alexis*, in Old French
- a paraphrase of St Gregory the Great's letter concerning the use of images, in Latin and in a unique French translation
- three miniatures depicting the New Testament Emmaus story; the first with a related text inside the frame
- a drawing of two battling knights on horseback and a related marginal text, starting in the margins of the previous page
- a historiated Beatus initial enclosing an image of King David.

They are arranged as in this diagram:



#### II.3.1 The Alexis *Chanson*

The Alexis *Chanson* has a huge literature devoted to it as a text; so big indeed, that a bibliography devoted to it contains several hundred items, not including the publications of the last twenty years.<sup>99</sup> An attempt can therefore only be made in this chapter to summarise some of the main points and offer some new observations. The text is usually known by textual scholars as the '*Vie de St Alexis*', often abbreviated to '*VSA*', but the prologue to the Albani Psalter version starts '*Ici cumencet amiable cancon [chanson in modern French]*' ('Here begins the pleasant song'), so we refer to it as the *Chanson*.

In short, the story recounts how a Roman noble called Eufemian and his wife had only one child, a son called Alexis ('Alexius' in the older Latin version). When Alexis grew up, Eufemian arranged a suitable bride for him, and he was married. On the wedding-night however, Alexis tells his new bride (whose name is not mentioned) that he wishes to serve God instead of leading a normal married life; he gives her a ring and sword-belt as parting gifts, then leaves. He boards a boat that takes him to Laodicea, and from there he goes to Edessa, where he gives away all his possessions, and lives on alms with the poor, sitting outside a church that contains a statue that is said to have been made by angels. Alexis's parents send servants to search for him, and two of them even give alms to him without recognising him. For seventeen years his parents grieve, while he remains begging in Edessa. Then the statue in the church reveals Alexis to be a holy man, and he becomes well-known, so he flees again, back to Laodicea, where he boards a ship, intending to go to Tarsus, but the wind takes the boat back towards Rome. Arriving in Rome, Alexis meets his father, who does not recognise him, but out of charity agrees to let Alexis live under the stairs in his house. There Alexis lives for another seventeen years, unrecognised, observing his parents and wife who are still grieving over him. Then, realising that his death is near, he writes down his life's story in a letter. In the final week before his death a voice is heard in Rome, which says that the people must find the Holy Man in the house of Eufemian and beg him that Rome should not be destroyed. No one is able to find the Holy Man. Alexis dies and his soul goes to heaven; Eufemian sees his body, and sees the letter in his hand, but cannot take it from Alexis's grasp. Eufemian tells the pope that he has found the Holy Man whom the city seeks, and when the pope goes to the body, Alexis releases the letter from his hand and his secret life-story is revealed. Eufemian, his wife, and Alexis's wife, each lament in turn. The body is taken to the church of San Bonifazio and, after seven days, is buried.

Unlike every other manuscript, the *Chanson* is prefaced in the Albani Psalter by a half-page miniature depicting three consecutive moments from near the beginning of the story. Above the figures of Alexis and his wife are four inscriptions in Latin (even though the *Chanson* itself is in French), each line written in alternating lines of red, green, or blue ink, and below the miniature is a prologue in alternating lines of blue or red, introducing the main text, which begins overleaf. The longest Latin inscription is placed highest on the page, written as a verse couplet, and seems intended to be an overall 'heading':

'Ultima pudice donantur / munera sponse. Anulus & / remge verboru[m] finis / & ave.' ('Final gifts are given to the chaste bride. A ring and a sword-belt, the end of words, and Godspeed!')

The first two of the other three inscriptions, describing Alexis and his bride, are written in leonine verse (the middle and end of each line rhymes); all three seem intended as 'captions' to individual parts of the miniature:

'Beatus Alesis / puer electus' (Blessed Alexis, chosen youth)

'O sponsa beata / se[m]p[er] gemebunda' (O blessed bride, ever-sighing)

'Ecce b[e]n[e]dictus Alexis / recept[us] in naue' (Behold blessed Alexis received into the boat)

In all three captions Alexis and his bride are described as 'blessed' (beatus / beata / benedictus).

A chapel was dedicated to St Alexis at St Albans abbey in the two decades before 1119, perhaps after 1115,<sup>100</sup> so we know that he was venerated in the monastic community in the early twelfth century, but his cult was otherwise very rare in England.<sup>101</sup> His name is included in the litany of saints in the Albani Psalter, so we can be confident that the particular patron and/or owner of this manuscript also venerated him (or was being encouraged to venerate him). These would arguably be sufficient reasons for including his *Chanson* in a volume owned by Christina, but it has additionally been suggested that the story and the miniature were included in

the Albani Psalter because they closely paralleled Christina's own life: on her wedding-night she did not consummate the marriage, and she left her husband and the comforts of a wealthy family life to seek a spiritual life, part of it spent in hiding.

Against this, it has been pointed out that there were many other saint's lives, and many other ways of depicting the Alexis story, that would have been even more pertinent to Christina's own life; this arguably suggests that the quire was not produced with Christina in mind. The sorrowful parting of a chaste bridegroom from a chaste bride, involving the giving of two gifts, in order that the bride could go on an overseas trip, has an even closer parallel in Geoffrey's chaste relationship with Christina, and his request for two undergarments from her before setting off on a journey to Rome in 1136.<sup>102</sup> Arguably, therefore, Geoffrey is more likely than Christina to have been the first owner of the quire: it was not only Alexis and Christina who left the secular world for a life of celibacy dedicated to God – Geoffrey did so as well when he gave up his worldly career at Dunstable to become a monk of St Albans.

Several authors, wishing to emphasise the connections between the life of Christina and the miniature, have exaggerated the significance of the fact that the miniature shows an episode that takes place near the beginning of the *Chanson*, rather than from its climax, towards the end. While it is true that most representations of saints and saints' lives concentrate on their death and the end of their story, this is largely because the manner of their martyrdom is often the most individual and memorable feature of their tale, and because their attribute is usually related to the manner of their death. Thus, St Leonard is depicted being grilled, or else holding the grid-iron; St Bartholomew is depicted being flayed, or else holding a flaying-knife; and so on. When the manner of a saint's death is comparatively unremarkable another moment may be shown: St Catherine of Alexandria, for example, is depicted being tortured or holding the instrument of her torture, a 'Catherine wheel', even though this did not kill her and she was later beheaded. But St Alexis was not martyred dramatically: although the location of his death (under the stairs in his parents' house) was unusual, the manner of his death was not: he seems to have died from old age, ill-health, and malnourishment (the *Chanson* simply relates that 'And meanwhile as they have been sitting there / The soul of Saint Alexis leaves his body'; lines 331–32). It is normal in twelfth-century manuscripts with historiated initials that the artist illustrates the start of a text, even if it is not very dramatic. Many examples are found in Bibles, for example, because the primary function of an initial is to mark the beginning of the text, not to summarise its entire contents.<sup>103</sup>

Other evidence, discussed below, suggests that the Alexis Quire was indeed made with Christina in mind, for while it is true that other more 'appropriate' saints could have been chosen for their relevance to Christina, the production of the Alexis miniature, prologue, and *Chanson* should probably be viewed in the context of an active attempt to strengthen a local cult, and the reflected glory that this would bring to St Albans.<sup>104</sup>

### II.3.2 The Prologue to the *Chanson*

Scholars agree that the prologue was composed specifically for this manuscript, and no other copy is known.<sup>105</sup> It has been suggested that differences in style, spelling, and vocabulary indicate that while the main text of the *Chanson* is written in the Old French of northern France, the Prologue is written in Anglo-Norman French, the version of French current in England following the Norman Conquest:<sup>106</sup> this would support the idea that the *Chanson* is a copy of an older text composed in France, or at least composed by a native French-speaker, but the prologue was a more recent local English composition. The reference in the final line to those who live purely in chastity ('les quels vivent purement sulunc castethet') could be intended as a reference to the monks of St Albans. But it is probably significant that the very last



words of the prologue refer to virginal marriage ('noces virginals'), which is a particularly apt description of Christina of Markyate, in two different ways: first, in the literal sense that she was married but remained a virgin; and second in the sense that she was a 'bride of Christ'. If the prologue was composed with Christina in mind as the intended recipient of the Alexis Quire, then this could explain, and receive support from, the fact that the female figure in the miniature above plays such a pivotal role, both in the composition of the image, and in the Latin inscriptions above.

The prologue says that the story is about Euphemian and his son 'about whom we have heard readings and song'; the main text of the poem says 'For that reason he is honoured on this day' (line 542); and the final line is a cue for the saying of the Lord's Prayer; all of which have been taken to suggest that the poem was composed for use in church on the feast-day (17 July) of St Alexis.

### II.3.3 Main Text

The Albani Psalter has 'the finest version of the poem in French' and 'undoubtedly the best of all the manuscripts of the 11<sup>th</sup>-century *VSA*'.<sup>107</sup> The full text of the poem, as reconstructed by comparing all the different manuscripts, consists of 125 stanzas each of five lines, a total of 625 lines, although the version of the text as it appears in the Albani Psalter omits five lines (lines 255, 274–5, 349 and 472 of the printed editions). Debates have concerned the authorship and date of the poem, with suggestions varying from the first half of the eleventh century to the early twelfth century, and from France to England; the identity of the author remains unknown, but the general opinion is now that it was composed in northern France in the second half of the eleventh century. The origins of the poem therefore do not relate directly to the key questions of the date and origin of the Albani Psalter; indeed the majority of the scholarship until recent years on the *Chanson* ignored the rest of the Psalter in which it is found.<sup>108</sup>

### II.3.4 St Gregory's Dictum on the Use of Images

The end of the Alexis *Chanson* occupies the first five and a half lines on p. 68. The rest of the sixth line and most of the rest of the page is occupied by a paraphrase of a letter written by St Gregory (Pope Gregory I) in Latin, followed by the same passage in French translation.<sup>109</sup> St Gregory's ruling was that although the worship of images is forbidden by the second of the Ten Commandments, they have a role to play in teaching the illiterate about the saints, whom they should venerate.

The text is not taken directly from the Register of St Gregory's letters, but from a collection of decretals (a collection of papal decisions, useful for arbitrating in matters of Church law).<sup>110</sup> This is demonstrated by the fact that the heading incorrectly says that the letter was written to a recluse called Secundinus, rather than to a bishop of Marseilles called Serenus, a mistake that derives from the decretals. It has usually been suggested that this would have been the decretal collection compiled by Burchard of Worms (d. 1025), but at St Albans it is probably more likely have been based on a copy of the more recent collection of Ivo of Chartres (d. c.1116).<sup>111</sup> It is probably significant that the text is not simply St Gregory's words, but that it is taken from a context of authorised Church rulings,<sup>112</sup> so instead of simply being a quotation extracted from a pope's writings, it is the official ruling on the subject of the use of pictures.

The text of the Latin version differs slightly from the modern printed editions and from those manuscripts that I have been able to consult. This may simply be because it was copied from an exemplar with different readings, or it may be due to deliberate or accidental changes made by the person responsible for the inclusion in the Albani Psalter. For example, where most printed editions and manuscripts<sup>113</sup> have: 'Nam quod legentibus scripturam hoc **idiotis** patet picturam cernentibus ...'

the Albani Psalter has:

'Nam quod legentibus scriptura hoc **ignotis** prestat pictura ...'



The meaning is nearly the same (that what writing conveys to those who can read, a picture shows to the illiterate) but it may be that the writer of the version in the Psalter has deliberately replaced ‘idiota’, meaning an illiterate/uneducated/ignorant person generally; with ‘ignotus’, which is less strong and perhaps implies someone who is unaware or ignorant of something in particular.<sup>114</sup>

The purpose of the dual Latin and French versions has prompted much discussion about the literacy of the reader(s) of the manuscript: presumably the French translation would only have been considered necessary if the anticipated user(s) could not easily understand the Latin version. This seems odd in the context of the Psalter as a whole, because the book is mainly in Latin, but less odd in the context of the Alexis Quire, which is dominated by a text in French, the Alexis *Chanson*. However, whoever added the St Gregory paraphrase in French must have been absolutely confident of the user’s ability to read Latin: by far the most difficult text to understand in the entire volume is the discourse on Spiritual Battle (pp. 71–72; described below) which is written in Latin, not French.

A close reading of the St Gregory letter in full, and its original context, shows that St Gregory was not writing about static images of Christ or the saints, but narratives of saints’ lives depicted on church walls.<sup>115</sup> If the Alexis Quire was originally a separate booklet,<sup>116</sup> perhaps intended for use in the Chapel of St Alexis at St Albans, or a partial copy of such a booklet, and if the walls of this chapel were decorated with scenes illustrating the saint’s life,<sup>117</sup> then the short St Gregory excerpts were conceivably used in the chapel to explain to pilgrims and other visitors the value and purpose of the wall-paintings. If these non-monastic visitors could not understand Latin, and therefore needed to hear the *Chanson* read to them in French, this could explain the need for a version of St Gregory’s letter in French. An instance of a copy of a saint’s *Life* being kept close to their relics in St Albans Abbey is provided by the hermits Sigar and Roger: it is recorded ‘that there was a tablet hanging over their tomb in which their miraculous life is written’,<sup>118</sup> so that anyone visiting the tomb could read of their life while there.<sup>119</sup>

### II.3.5 The Emmaus Miniatures

The Emmaus miniatures incorporate one piece of text, but its awkward placement strongly suggests that it was not originally planned when the miniature was designed. In the upper left-hand corner of the first scene is a paraphrase of the gospel account from Luke 24:13–31. It is usually stated in the published literature that both the image and the text are derived from liturgical drama.<sup>120</sup> It is worth analysing whether this widely accepted hypothesis has a firm twelfth-century foundation, or is in fact no more than a product of twentieth-century academic ingenuity.

The hypothesis rests on two points: one is that the first Emmaus image shows Christ dressed as a pilgrim (wearing cap and furry cloak, and carrying a satchel and a staff), and the other is that one of the disciples points at the sun, rather than at a town representing Emmaus, as had been normal in earlier representations of the scene. The argument is that pilgrims’ clothes are specified in the ‘stage directions’ of *Peregrinus* liturgical dramas that enact the Emmaus events, and that the sun is also referred to directly in these texts, while neither the costume nor the sun are directly mentioned in the gospel account. This argument is extremely weak. The gospel account states that when Christ met the disciples on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus they did not recognise him and one of them, Cleophas, refers to him as ‘peregrinus’ (Luke 24:18), which in biblical Latin usually implies a stranger or foreigner, someone who has travelled from another place, but by the twelfth century was commonly used more specifically to mean ‘pilgrim’. Thus it is entirely appropriate that the artist should depict Christ in the (dis)guise of a twelfth-century pilgrim, with no need to draw any inspiration from the costumes worn by actors pretending to be pilgrims in liturgical drama.

Similarly, the gospel text says that the disciples persuaded Christ to join them for a meal saying ‘it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent’ (‘advesperascit et inclita est iam dies’, Luke 24:29), so although the text does not directly mention the sun by name, the text alludes to the sun indirectly, by saying that evening was approaching. Considering that there was no other practical way for an artist to represent dusk, it is perfectly natural that he should represent the time of day in exactly the way that he did; again, there is no reason to suppose that he derived inspiration from liturgical drama. In fact, one could argue the opposite: an actor in a drama could refer to dusk directly in words and quote the gospel text and therefore did not need to mention the sun; an image without text however (like the Albani Psalter Emmaus scenes, before the unplanned text was added) needed some way to indicate the end of the day, and therefore had to show it using visual means. It is even possible that *Peregrinus* plays incorporated a mention of the sun because the sun was already being included in visual representations.

So much for the miniature’s iconography; in terms of the miniature’s inscription, two pieces of evidence have been put forward to prove its dependence on the *Peregrinus* plays. One is, again, the direct mention of the sun; the other is the omission of verses 19–24 of Luke’s account, in both the Psalter’s inscription, and the surviving *Peregrinus* texts. Neither argument is persuasive. Although the *Peregrinus* plays mention the sun, they consistently use only the phrase ‘sol vergens ad occasum’, and do *not* use the words ‘aspice solem’ found in the Albani inscription. As suggested above, the direct reference to the sun could have been prompted by another image: in the Pembroke New Testament the drawing of the sun is labelled with its name ‘sol’ (plate 9, left scene).



**Plate 9:** Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 120, Pembroke New Testament, fol. 4v (By permission of the Master and Fellows of Pembroke College, Cambridge)

The verses of the gospel account omitted from the Albani inscription consist entirely of Cleophas’s spoken report of recent events in Jerusalem, which there was no practical way for the artist to represent, nor good reason for him to do so; likewise, there was no reason why the scribe, very short of space in which to write a summary of the story, should have included these verses. And it is surely relevant that on the page facing the Emmaus inscription the St Gregory texts are not accurate, full, copies of St Gregory’s words, but are somewhat loose *paraphrases*: so we certainly have no justification in assuming that divergences from the full gospel Emmaus account are due to influence from liturgical drama. Physical lack of space for the inscription is a far more probable reason for the omission of the superfluous verses. Add to this the fact that the Albani Psalter pre-dates the oldest surviving version of the *Peregrinus* play by several decades, and the reasons for imagining a dependence of the Psalter on the plays becomes even weaker.

Two additional features of the miniatures in the Albani Psalter suggest that they are not derived from liturgical drama. The only really unusual feature of Christ's representation as a pilgrim, as compared to other representations of twelfth-century pilgrims, is the staff that he carries,<sup>121</sup> because we would expect an ordinary walking-stick. If the image were reflecting the practice of liturgical drama, we might hope to find the staff specified in the stage directions of at least one version of the *Peregrinus* play. We do not: instead, the various texts specifically mention Christ carrying a palm branch or a cross, either of which the artist could easily have included if he had been following such stage-directions, or representing a play that used such props. The surviving *Peregrinus* plays also contain a variety of other stage-directions which are not represented in the Albani Psalter miniatures: in the late twelfth-century Norman-French version the disciples wear copes; in the thirteenth-century Rouen and Fleury versions they are dressed as pilgrims; and in the Rouen version Christ wears liturgical vestments, for example. None of these features appears in the Albani miniatures.

The third miniature contains an even clearer indication that the artist was not being directly influenced by liturgical drama. Some other near-contemporary representations of the Emmaus story show Christ disappearing from the table at Emmaus not by miraculous means, but simply by departing to one side of the scene (see plates 9 and 10);<sup>122</sup> the biblical text says that 'he vanished out of their sight' ('evanuit ex oculis eorum', Luke 24:31). This is presumably how an actor would have 'vanished' from the table in a liturgical drama. But in the Albani Psalter miniature, Christ does not exit the 'stage' by this method; instead he ascends vertically to heaven, something that cannot have been performed as part of a *Peregrinus* play. Thus, although artist had here the opportunity to represent the performance of a liturgical drama rather than a biblical event, as other contemporary English artists seem to have done, he did not: he specifically depicted the biblical text instead of the liturgical drama.

**Plate 10:** Victoria & Albert Museum, MS 661, verso (detail)



In summary, while one could argue that other manuscripts, such as the Eadwine Psalter leaf, reflect the performance of liturgical drama in some of their features, there is no feature of the Albani Psalter Emmaus miniatures or text that can be persuasively shown to derive from liturgical drama, rather than from the gospel text and from observation of twelfth-century pilgrims.

### II.3.6 The Discourse on Spiritual Battle

Above the *Beatus* initial is a drawing of two knights on horseback battling with one another (p. 72). The colour of their horses differs, but they are otherwise almost identical mirror-images of one another, so if one were supposed to personify Good

and the other Evil (or some other pair of concepts such as Chastity and Lust) there is no way to tell which is which. Neither knight is visibly winning the combat; both are seriously wounded. On their own, therefore, it is almost impossible to know what they might represent, other than an evenly matched battle between two knights. This suggests that they were always intended to accompany, or to be accompanied by, an explanatory text. Their significance is indeed described at length in a text that is too long to fit entirely on the same page, so the scribe had to start it in the outer and lower margins of the preceding page (p. 71) and continue it in the outer and lower margins of the page with the drawing of the knights. This text explains that they are earthly warriors with earthly traits, who can be contrasted with heavenly ones; the knights are both ‘puffed up with pride and malice ... given over in body to anger and visible madness’ and so on; the reader should strive to be the opposite: humble, wise, and so on.

No other version of this discourse about the Spiritual Battle is known to exist, and it is presumably unique, perhaps composed specifically for the Psalter, and intended to accompany a drawing of Battling Knights:<sup>123</sup> it refers, for example, to ‘these visible arms’. If it was written for Christina, it may seem odd to a modern reader how often it refers to manliness or virility as a desirable quality (‘And therefore the holy figures, armed in a *manly* spirit ... Just as those who are *manly* and prudent in the pursuit of equal justice, so too we must be *manly* and perfect ... yet we shall not fall to the ground in vain, if we prove *manly*; ... good people of the cloister and *manly* hearts that are temperate and chaste ...’), but perhaps it is precisely because it was composed for a woman that it emphasises the need to be man-like. In his transcription of the text Goldschmidt emphasised the repeated contrasting references to ‘bodily’ (corporaliter) and ‘spiritually’ (spiritualiter),<sup>124</sup> a theme taken up by more recent scholars.<sup>125</sup> References to a queen on a white horse, and a war that will end with great toil and with ten thousand bucketfuls of blood, sound reminiscent of the Apocalypse, but there is no direct quotation from the Book of Revelation.

The over-riding theme of the text is one of battle and conflict, with phrases including ‘holy war’, ‘human slaughter’, ‘established in war’, ‘armed with faith’, ‘our adversary who is constantly lying in wait to ambush us’, ‘each must destroy his visible adversary or himself be killed’, ‘divine battle’, and others. As in all Benedictine monasteries, a chapter of the *Rule* of St Benedict was read out each day in the chapter-house of St Albans Abbey. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that the description of spiritual battle in the Psalter so strongly resonates with St Benedict’s definition of a hermit or anchorite from Chapter 1 of the *Rule*:

‘The second kind [of four kinds of monks] is that of Anchorites, or Hermits, that is, of those who, no longer in the first fervour of their conversion, but taught by long monastic practice and the help of many brethren, have already learned to *fight against the devil; and going forth from the rank*<sup>126</sup> *of their brethren well trained for single combat* in the desert, they are able, with the help of God, to cope single-handed without the help of others, against the vices of the flesh and evil thoughts.’<sup>127</sup>

This definition describes Roger the Hermit’s biography perfectly – he was a monk of St Albans before going to live as a hermit at Markyate – and could have served as both inspiration and aspiration for Christina.

### II.3.7 The Beatus Initial

By the beginning of the twelfth century it was not uncommon for Psalm 1 in a psalter or Bible to begin with an enlarged historiated initial B depicting King David as harpist and/or as defeater of Goliath.<sup>128</sup> In this case the adjacent inscription informs us what the designer intended to convey.

Following straight on without a break from the discourse on Spiritual Battle, on the last six lines of the page, is a short text written in a much more personal style. It

starts ‘You [singular] recently heard our word ...’ and goes on ‘... lest any of those prying chatterers should reproach us’. This passage must, it seems, be directly related to Christina and Geoffrey, because we know that their special relationship caused ‘the wagging of spiteful tongues’.<sup>129</sup> The text continues in a personal vein, and suggests that the composer of the text was responsible for the design of the Beatus initial: ‘It seemed to me right that the psalmist himself ... should be drawn in the guise of a king, and honourably placed in the middle of this B ...’. This is therefore an almost unique example of a medieval description of the intended meaning of an artwork, written by its designer.

The choice of words written on the book held by David was doubtless the result of careful consideration, and the use of the verb ‘eructavit’ is therefore probably significant. The verb is used very rarely in the psalms: only five times in the Gallican version, and of those, only once in this form, where it is the opening word of Psalm 44.<sup>130</sup> Wherever it appears in the psalms the context suggests that the meaning should be closer to ‘outpouring’ or ‘overflowing’ rather than the standard dictionary definitions, which suggest ‘bring up noisily’, ‘discharge violently’, etc. In the Middle Ages, especially in a monastic environment, the psalms were not referred to by their number, but by their opening words; thus Psalm 44 would have been known as ‘Eructavit cor meum’ or, as no other psalm starts with the same word, just ‘Eructavit’, and it is therefore probable that the words on David’s book in the Beatus initial would have had this association.

### II.3.8 The Sequence of Production

Almost every scholar who has written about the Albani Psalter has had difficulty accounting for the Alexis Quire: its texts, its pictures, and its physical position. In trying to understand the quire, and its place in the production of the Albani Psalter, both physically and temporally, it will be worth trying to ascertain the order in which its various parts were executed.

First, the structure of the quire makes clear that the Alexis *Chanson* was written before the Emmaus-Battling Knights-Beatus material.<sup>131</sup> It is worth noting, however, that the main text of the Alexis *Chanson* could easily have been written first, starting on p. 58, and that the miniature and prologue on p. 57 could have been added afterwards. If the Alexis Quire was originally planned as a separate booklet, probably sewn but unbound, then it would have been quite natural for the scribe to have left the first page blank, to preserve the text within from abrasion. (It is not uncommon even for bound volumes of the twelfth century and earlier to begin on a verso, apparently for the same reason). The outermost pages of the quire exhibit more dirt and signs of handling, which supports the hypothesis that the quire existed as a separate entity for a period of time before being bound into the Psalter.

Crucially, it has recently been observed that the quire has sewing-stations that do not correspond to other parts of the book, which strongly suggests that the quire was either previously bound in another volume, or as an isolated self-contained entity.<sup>132</sup>

Such booklets containing saints’ lives, miracles, and other related material such as prayers and mass texts are a well-known class of manuscript,<sup>133</sup> one of which may have been worked on by the Alexis Master.

#### II.3.8a The Prologue and Alexis *Chanson*

The *Chanson* seems to have been written in at least three phases, though not necessarily with a significant interval between them. The first would have been the pages written in alternating lines of blue and red (pp. 57–59).<sup>134</sup> This phase probably included the prologue, as suggested by the fact that the prologue and the start of the main text have their enlarged initials in blue or red, but after the first ten lines of the poem the enlarged stanza initials are all green. The colour initials in this first phase were perhaps executed before the rest of the main text was written, because

green is not used in the remainder. Because the inscriptions above the Alexis miniature are in red, blue, and green inks, it is possible that they were written at this point, while the scribe still had all three colours available; but a more likely alternative hypothesis will be proposed below.

The second phase follows, starting at p. 60, with the main text of the *Chanson* in plain brown ink, and the stanza initials alternately red or blue. Two-thirds of the way down p. 62 the scribe left most of a line blank, probably because two lines of his verse exemplar were either blank or illegible, and he wanted to signal the omission, and perhaps also wanted to allow space for their subsequent insertion. The writing from the next line onwards has a different appearance, partly because the scribe seems to have re-cut the nib of his pen, and partly because the ink is not as dark; this therefore seems to be a third phase in the writing of the *Chanson*. We can see that the colour stanza initials were executed using a pen rather than a brush because some of the initials show the characteristic traces of a split-nib pen (e.g. p. 59, especially the third 'Q' and the 'T'). We can also see that the stanza initials were added by the scribe himself (rather than by an assistant scribe or 'artist') by the fact that he made a textual insertion when he was holding the pen loaded with blue ink ('voiz' on p. 66, 11 lines from the bottom of the page).

A scribe always copied a text from an exemplar, except in the very rare cases when he was either authoring a text for the first time, knew it by heart, or was taking dictation: it is extremely unlikely that the scribe of the Alexis *Chanson* was not copying from an exemplar. The exemplar of any text would usually give the scribe a fairly good idea of how many leaves he would require for his copy; this was less true, however, when the copy was to have a layout very different from the exemplar. It is possible that the exemplar of the Alexis *Chanson* was laid out as verse, with each line of the five-line stanzas starting on a new line, on pages ruled for thirty-five lines per page: thirty-five lines per page would allow seven five-line stanzas to fit neatly onto each page, or else six five-line stanzas with a blank line between each. This would explain why the scribe of the Alexis Quire ruled his pages for thirty-five lines of text per page.<sup>135</sup> Perhaps because the layout of the text is like prose, rather than as shorter lines of verse, the scribe usually marked the end of each verse with a point.

Before moving on, we should mention a feature of the inscriptions above the Alexis miniature. It has sometimes been suggested that the Alexis Quire could not originally have been produced for inclusion in the Albani Psalter because it was on leaves that were too big, and had to be cut down to size:<sup>136</sup> the text and decoration are slightly cropped at the top and outer edges of p. 72. But the awkward placing of the longest inscription above the Alexis miniature suggests, on the contrary, that even if some cropping of the leaf has occurred there was not originally a significant amount of space higher up on the page. The more extreme cropping visible elsewhere in the volume, especially at the bottom of p. 245 and the outer edge of pp. 268 and 304, clearly shows that the whole book has been cropped in its successive rebindings, not just the Alexis Quire.<sup>137</sup>

### II.3.8b The Emmaus Miniatures

The likelihood is that the Emmaus miniatures were executed next after the *Chanson*, for reasons mentioned below.

Much has been made in the published literature of the fact that the Albani Psalter supposedly has the earliest known example of a manuscript with the Emmaus story represented in more than two scenes. But probably not much importance should be attached to this; the picture cycle in Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 120, close in date to the Albani Psalter and related to it stylistically, devotes three scenes to the Emmaus story; likewise, the description of the Psalters of Sigardus and Leobertus, of the first half of the twelfth century, also devotes three scenes to the Emmaus

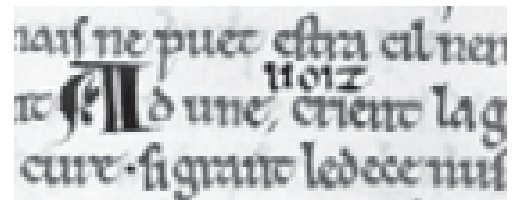


Plate 11: Albani Psalter, p. 66; detail

story, and shares some distinctive features in common with the Albani Psalter, such as the way in which Christ disappears heavenwards in the third scene.<sup>138</sup>

The fact that the artist of the Alexis Quire had four blank pages available to him following the end of the Alexis *Chanson* may be the simple main reason that he treated the Emmaus story at such length. Most writers agree that Ottonian iconographic types were known to the artists of the Albani Psalter and Pembroke 120 miniatures, and it is quite likely that such models had more than two Emmaus scenes.

Returning to the Emmaus miniatures and the question of their place in the sequence of production, one may note that the outer dimensions of the first miniature (including its frame) is similar to the dimensions of the Alexis *Chanson* text, but the third miniature, however, is considerably smaller than the other two, both in height and width. It has been suggested that this was done deliberately to allow space for the text that now surrounds the miniature on two sides,<sup>139</sup> which would mean that the artist, when he did the Emmaus miniatures, already knew that he would have to accommodate this text, the Beatus initial, and the Battling Knights into the rest of the quire. This hypothesis is compelling: there is no other apparent reason for the third Emmaus scene to be so much narrower than the first two. But it is somewhat undermined by other observations. For example, the second Emmaus miniature is significantly less tall than the first miniature, for no apparent reason, especially at the right-hand side where the frame has been drawn crooked. If it were only the third miniature that were smaller than the first two this might seem to be a deliberate decision, made in order to provide more space around the third miniature, but if this were the intention there would be no obvious reason to make the second miniature smaller than the first. Thus the smaller size of the third miniature may simply be the result of unintentional irregularity.<sup>140</sup>

### II.3.8c The St Gregory Texts

The two versions of the short text by St Gregory (p. 68) were certainly added after the Alexis *Chanson* was written. They were probably also added after the first Emmaus miniature was executed, because of the way in which the scribe wrote them, careful not to take up unnecessary space: he started his first (Latin) heading on the same line that the Alexis *Chanson* finishes, and he wrote his second (French) heading on the same line that the Latin text finishes. By writing his lines closer together, the scribe fitted 28 lines of St Gregory text into the space occupied by only 25 of the Alexis *Chanson* text.<sup>141</sup>

It may be that the St Gregory texts were added precisely because of, and in relation to, the series of images that begin on the facing page.<sup>142</sup> Beyond this, it is difficult to determine whether the St Gregory texts were added before or after the Beatus initial and the Battling Knights. The fact that the coloured initials were never added for the two headings (the 'E's of 'Ecce' in line 6 and 'Este' in line 19) could be taken to suggest that the St Gregory texts were the very last texts to be added to the quire and that no later writing was added to it, otherwise the omission might have been rectified. The style of arabesque initials, being different from anything else in the volume, also probably suggests that the St Gregory texts were added later than any other text in the volume (excepting perhaps the additions to the calendar and the historiated initial rubrics).

### II.3.8d The Beatus Initial

The positioning of the Battling Knights at the top of p. 72 strongly suggests that the Beatus initial was executed (or at least planned) first on this page, because if the Beatus initial were not already there, the Knights would presumably have been placed more centrally on the page, and perhaps larger. The Beatus initial was certainly in place before the marginal text was written, and as this text refers to the Battling Knights, it is likely that the Beatus initial was executed first, the Battling Knights second (perhaps after a significant interval), and the text last.



It has always been assumed that the *Beatus* initial was not executed until a decision was taken to incorporate the Alexis Quire in a psalter (either the Albani Psalter or another psalter), but it is conceivable that the *Beatus* initial was not originally intended to commence the full text of the psalms. It is possible that the Alexis Quire was originally a separate booklet of miscellaneous devotional material, and in this context the historiated initial and the words ‘*Beatus vir*’ were intended to function as a self-contained iconic representation of the entirety of the psalms, in the same way that an image of the Crucifixion ‘stands for’ the whole passion story and the whole Christian message, without the need for an accompanying gospel text.<sup>143</sup>

If the Alexis Quire had an independent existence before being incorporated in a psalter, as seems probable, the *Beatus* initial, Battling Knights, and the marginal text that refers to them could have been relatively late additions to the quire. Unless these three components of the quire and the Emmaus scenes were all planned and executed as a group, then it is difficult to accept that the final Emmaus is smaller in order to allow more space for the marginal text.

### II.3.8e Foliate Lettering

The initial ‘*B*’ is followed by letters that make up the rest of the first two words of the psalm: ‘*Beatus vir*’, written in red ink foliate display capitals, of a type not found elsewhere in the manuscript, but very similar to initials in the Leiden Priscian, which contains two figure drawings attributed to the Alexis Master.<sup>144</sup> It is possible that the Alexis Master did the figures and the foliate initials in the Leiden manuscript, and on the *Beatus* page of the Albani Psalter.

The ‘*B*’ seems to have been executed first; then light pencil lines were apparently drawn to guide the layout of the ‘*EATUS VIR*’ letters; these letters were next drawn in red ink; then pale yellow horizontal lines were drawn to mark the tops and bottoms of these letters, in some places overlapping them (e.g. the bottom of the letters ‘*US*’) and in some places deliberately avoiding such overlap (e.g. the upper trefoils of the ‘*V*’ of ‘*VIR*’).

It is possible that the pale yellow horizontal lines were intended to guide the painting of horizontal bands of background colours, similar to the effect seen on what is now the opposite page (p. 73) and above the litany image (p. 403); pale yellow may also have been added to the ‘*E*’ and ‘*R*’ at this point; the blue and green background and filler was probably added next; and finally the gold was added to the ‘*B*’, slightly overlapping the ‘*R*’ and especially the top left edge of the ‘*T*’.

The gold of the initial ‘*B*’ seems to be applied on top of coloured pigments (green on the left-hand side, red-brown on the right-hand side), with the result that it has not adhered properly, and has a pronounced craquelure. The likelihood is that the initial was not originally intended to have any gold, and that it was ‘upgraded’ by the application of gold over coloured pigments at a later stage. This would therefore relate to the ‘upgrading’ of the start of the psalms that occasioned the replacement of the first bifolium of the text (see Chapter II.8).

Many writers have tried to explain the mistaken repetition on the facing pages of the letters ‘*EATUS VIR*’ (pp. 72–73), but no complicated hypothesis is necessary: it could just be a simple mistake. At the beginning of Psalm 98 (p. 267) we can observe a comparable mistake. When the scribe wrote the text of Psalm 98, he left a space, as usual, for the initial, and extra space for the coloured display capitals with which each psalm starts. He intended that the historiated initial and display capitals would spell out the first word of the psalm ‘*Dominus*’ (The Lord), and so he wrote the text, starting at the second word: ‘*regnavit irascant[ur] populi*’ (hath reigned, let the people be angry). But when the person responsible for the display capitals reached this psalm, he did not write ‘*Dominus*’ in full, but abbreviated it to a very common abbreviated form,



Plate 12: Albani Psalter, p. 72; details



Plate 13: Albani Psalter, p. 72; detail



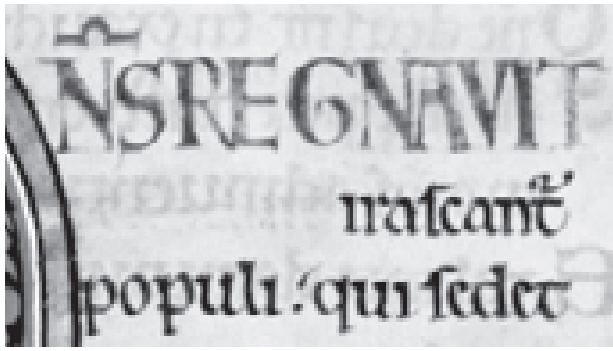


Plate 14: Albani Psalter, p. 267; detail

‘[D]ÑS’, and wrote the second word as well ‘REGNAVIT’, despite the fact that the word ‘regnavit’ was already written on the next line. At some later moment the mistake was noticed, and the repeated word erased, resulting in a blank space before the word ‘irascant[ur]’.

Thus, when we observe the mistakenly repeated opening words ‘Beatus vir’ on facing pages (pp. 72–73), we do not need to propose that the designer of each page did not have access to the other page. Mistaken repetitions such as this are not uncommon in psalters.

### II.3.8f The Battling Knights and Their Text

The main puzzle concerning the Battling Knights is why this drawing and the accompanying text were added to the quire at all. If the Alexis Quire was already destined for inclusion in the Albani Psalter, they could have been included in a blank space elsewhere in the volume; for example the image and text concerning the Spiritual Battle might have been appropriate on the blank page (p. 16) opposite the image of Adam and Eve’s Temptation (p. 17). If the St Gregory texts (p. 68) had not yet been written, the drawing of the Battling Knights (but not its accompanying text) could have gone in the space that those texts now occupy. Or the Battling Knights could have been added on a separate leaf, and bound in to the Albani Psalter in some other location (e.g. between the full-page miniature-cycle and the Alexis Quire, or at the very end of the volume), but such an extra leaf could comfortably be inserted neither immediately before the Beatus initial (this have meant interrupting the Emmaus series) nor immediately after it (this would have meant interrupting the text of the psalms. The fact that the Battling Knights were not added on a separate leaf suggests that the Alexis Quire was already bound in to the Albani Psalter and that (for whatever reason) the person responsible for it wanted it next to the Beatus initial, or at least next to the beginning of the psalms text.

The marginal text on pp. 71–72 shares at least three distinctive features with both the Emmaus text (p. 69) and the inscriptions above the Alexis *Chanson* Prologue miniature (p. 57):

- they are all written in script of the same size and quality, in rather uneven lines alternately red, green, and blue
- they all serve the same function: to elucidate an adjacent image
- they have all been squeezed very awkwardly into insufficient spaces; this strongly suggests that none of them were originally planned, and that all of them were afterthoughts

The implication is that all the images in the quire existed first, and that it was later decided that they needed explication, so all of them were given accompanying texts at one time, rather than in three separate stages.

### II.3.9 The Incorporation of the Alexis Quire in the Albani Psalter

Goldschmidt thought that the Alexis Quire was created to supplement an existing calendar and psalms section, Wormald thought that the Alexis Quire was created more-or-less at the same time as the rest of the manuscript, and more recent writers have suggested that the Alexis Quire pre-dates the rest of the manuscript and was originally independent of it. Two pieces of physical evidence, in particular, seem to indicate which of these three hypotheses is correct.

Although the dimensions of the prefatory miniatures and the ruled space for the calendar and psalms texts are not identical, they are very similar to one another, and it is likely that they were planned to match one another. The area occupied by the

text of the Alexis *Chanson*, however, is significantly taller,<sup>145</sup> suggesting that they were not made to match each other, and thus that it had a separate existence before being bound with them.

When a medieval manuscript was ready for binding the quires would be sewn together using a thread that goes through holes ('sewing-stations') in the central fold of the bifolia. When a book was re-bound, the sewing-stations could be re-used, or new holes made. The Alexis Quire has at least two sewing-stations that do not occur in the other parts of the book,<sup>146</sup> proving that it was sewn at least once prior to being bound with the other sections, and thus proving that it pre-dates the assembly with the other sections into a bound volume.

### II.3.10 Summary

Although there is much uncertainty of the details, a possible sequence of production of the Alexis Quire is:

Alexis miniature (p. 57)

Alexis Prologue (p. 57)

Alexis *Chanson* (pp. 58–59)

Alexis *Chanson* (pp. 59–62)

Alexis *Chanson* (pp. 62–68)

Emmaus miniatures (pp. 69–71)

Beatus initial (p. 72)

Battling Knights drawing (p. 72)

Marginal texts and inscriptions (pp. 57, 69, and 71–72)

St Gregory texts and initials (p. 68)

## II.4 Psalms, Litany, and Other Prayers

The central text of medieval manuscript psalter is the psalms, and they are usually preceded by a calendar and followed by canticles, a litany of saints, petitions, and other prayers. The calendar has been examined in Chapter II.1; this chapter will examine each of these other standard texts.

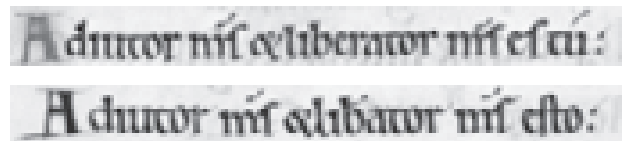
### II.4.1 Psalms

The main text of the Albani Psalter is the Gallican version of the Psalms in Latin (see Chapter I.2.2). As has been described above, texts transmitted through manuscripts vary from one copy to another, due to deliberate and accidental changes made by the scribe. One example of textual variation can be seen in two slightly different versions of Psalm 69 within the Albani Psalter. The first occurs as part of the main sequence of psalms (p. 207), and the second as part of the usual prayers that follow the litany and petitions (pp. 409–410). In the first version the final verse has the words 'es tu' (thou art: present tense, active) while in the second version the place of these words is taken by 'esto' (be thou: future tense, imperative).

This mistake in the second version possibly occurred because the scribe was half-remembering a different psalm verse: when he wrote 'Adiutor m[eu]s & liberator m[eu]s esto' (Be thou my helper and my deliverer) he may have been recalling Psalm 26:9, which has: 'Adiutor meus esto' (Be thou my helper).

It would in theory be possible to make a 'family tree' based on the textual variants in psalters, showing how each copy was related to other copies. In practice, the texts of psalters written later than about the year 1000 have received comparatively little attention, despite the absolutely fundamental importance of the psalms to medieval religious and literary life, mainly because the vast quantity of data to be analysed is simply too daunting.

**Plate 15:** Albani Psalter, details (upper: p. 207, lower: p. 410)



One remarkable study was made, however, by James Golob, a Cambridge University student who in 1981 wrote a PhD focussing on a group of early thirteenth-century illuminated psalters. By comparing every word of the psalms in one French and seventeen English illuminated psalters, ranging in date from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century, against a standard printed edition, he identified about 1,600 variants (not including insignificant alternative spellings).<sup>147</sup> With very few exceptions, he found that for any variant there were only two possible readings: thus if a particular word or phrase was not variant A it would be variant B, and vice versa. For example, Psalm 19:8 will include the words ‘nostri invocabimus’ (as it does in the Albani Psalter; they are the last two words on p. 106) or else ‘nostri magnificabimus’: these were the only two alternatives in the manuscripts he examined. From this it follows that when a variant has been subject to erasure and emendation (usually discernable by a difference in script, ink, and signs of erasure) one can be confident about what the uncorrected text was, even though it is no longer visible: if a manuscript has variant B written over an erasure, one can be confident that variant A has been erased. Most manuscript psalters have a number of such corrections, so Golob was able to collect data not only of the texts as they survive today, but also the texts as they were first written, before correction.

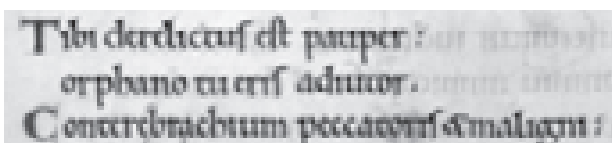
Golob examined another eighteen psalters, mostly English, including the Albani Psalter, for his 1,600 variants. This gave him a much larger sample and a safer basis for ascertaining which variants are likely to be significant. He was able to exclude all the variants that occurred in every manuscript (in other words all the manuscripts shared some variants that were not in the printed edition), and those that occurred in only a single manuscript (in other words, those that were most likely to be aberrant); this left about 350 variants. From this reduced list he also excluded those that were most likely to be the result of insignificant scribal error, leaving about 250 variants. He went on to record the readings of these 250 variants in over 180 twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts of the psalms, in Bibles as well as psalters, French as well as English. This produced 45,000 readings which he analysed with a computer in order to discover the statistical percentage agreement of the text of every manuscript with the text of every other manuscript. For relationships between two manuscripts to be significant, however, it is not just a matter of having similar texts: for a Manuscript A that has mostly ‘common’ readings, a higher percentage of agreement would be necessary with a Manuscript B in order for it to be significant, than between a manuscript C with lots of unusual readings, and Manuscript D, where a lower overall percentage of agreement could be significant.

Some conclusions seem clear. Of all the manuscripts studied, the Albani Psalter agreed in its uncorrected state most closely with the New College Psalter, written at St Albans c.1260–70,<sup>148</sup> and a psalter probably written for Tynemouth (a cell of St Albans) in the third quarter of the twelfth century.<sup>149</sup> In its corrected state, the text of the Albani Psalter psalms agree most closely with the corrected state of a psalter written for Canterbury c.1200,<sup>150</sup> and three St Albans manuscripts: a mid twelfth-century Bible,<sup>151</sup> a psalter of c.1250,<sup>152</sup> and the New College Psalter. Statistics can be interpreted in various ways,<sup>153</sup> but it does seem significant that despite being made more than a century later than the Albani Psalter, the New College Psalter, the calendar of which has Abbot Geoffrey’s obit marked as a principal feast,<sup>154</sup> has one of the most closely related psalms texts, both before and after each manuscript was corrected.

#### II.4.1a Versification

**Plate 16:** Albani Psalter, p. 88; detail

It is normal in English psalters for the text to be laid out as verse with each verse starting on a new line, as on most pages of the Psalter.<sup>155</sup> But what is also a very unusual aspect of the Psalter is the extent to which the scribe divided some verses across separate lines. Psalm 9:35 (p. 88), for example, was divided at the punctuation mark, even though the scribe could have written at least one more word on the first of the two lines.



Similarly, the second half of Psalm 17:7 has been divided into three lines at the two punctuation marks, even though the first line is rather crowded, and more text could easily have been fitted onto the second line (p. 99).

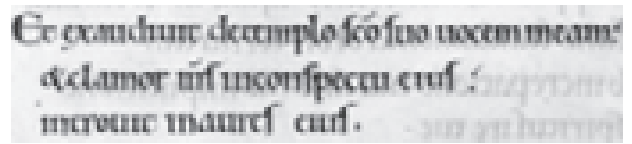


Plate 17: Albani Psalter, p. 99; detail

In some cases it appears that the scribe calculated that there would not be sufficient space to have the next historiated initial on the same page, and therefore spread out his text over multiple lines in order not to leave a big gap at the bottom of a page (e.g. p. 93). But as in the two cases described above it often seems that he was either consciously making his layout reflect the sense units of the meaning of the text, or else he was following the layout of his exemplar.

#### II.4.1b Scribal Planning for the Initials

The size and placement of decorated initials was determined by the scribe, who left spaces for them when he wrote the text. He had to allow spaces for several different types of initials: for the major liturgical divisions; for ordinary psalms beginning with an ordinary-shaped letter; and for ordinary psalms beginning with a special-shaped letter.

The normal English ten-part division of the psalms (discussed in Chapter I.2.6) are, as usual, emphasised more than the other psalms in the Albani Psalter. The scribe left a roughly square space for most of the Psalm initials, usually about as high as 10 to 13 lines of text, and usually a little more than half the width of the space ruled for the text. The ten-part divisions, however, are treated differently: for these the scribe allowed the full width of the ruled space for the historiated initials and their large coloured display capitals (pp. 119, 147, 173, 175, 202, 235, 270, 299).<sup>156</sup> This meant that the display capitals could be written vertically to the right of the initial (pp. 119, 175, 202, 235, 270, 299) as well as, or instead of, below it.

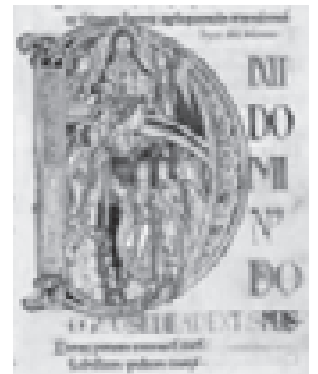


Plate 18: Albani Psalter, p. 299; detail

There is no obvious reason why the display capitals to Psalm 51 omit the first two words '[Q]VID GLORIARIS', which should be written to the right of the initial (p. 173), nor why all the display capitals are squashed below the initial to Psalm 38 (p. 147) instead of spread out with some words to the right of the initial.

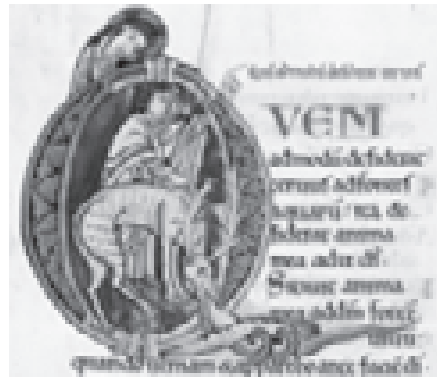
The presence of a historiated initial at every psalm and Benedictine psalm-division has very few surviving precedents; their very large size is also truly exceptional; and the way in which some of them are integrated with the text on the page is perhaps unique. Most letters of the alphabet with which any psalm starts do not have ascenders or descenders when written as majuscules (B, C, D, E, H, M, N, O, R, S, and U), and they can therefore be enclosed in a roughly square space, but others could have tailor-made spaces.

A few letter-shapes are significantly narrower at the top (A) or bottom (V). For these initials, the scribe usually made some allowances and left a space that was tapered at the right-hand side.<sup>157</sup>



Plate 19: Albani Psalter, details (left: p. 331, right: p. 358)

**Plate 20:** Albani Psalter, p. 154; detail



In the case of the letter ‘Q’ he left a roughly square space, with extra space for the tail of the letter.<sup>158</sup>

The letter ‘I’ is uniquely narrow and regular in shape: for these the scribe simply indented some preceding and/or following lines, as appropriate.

Some letter-shapes are more complicated, with pronounced ascenders (L) or descenders (F and P).

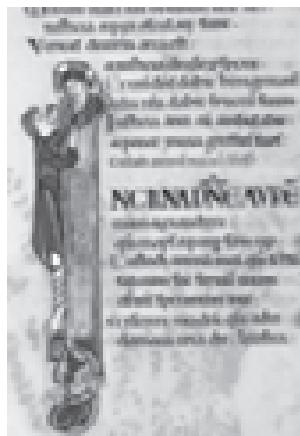
The letter ‘T’ caused the biggest potential problem of all: to allow space for these our scribe divided the following text into two columns. At the start of

Psalm 64 (p. 193) we can additionally see that the scribe envisioned that the historiated initial would have a splayed vertical limb.

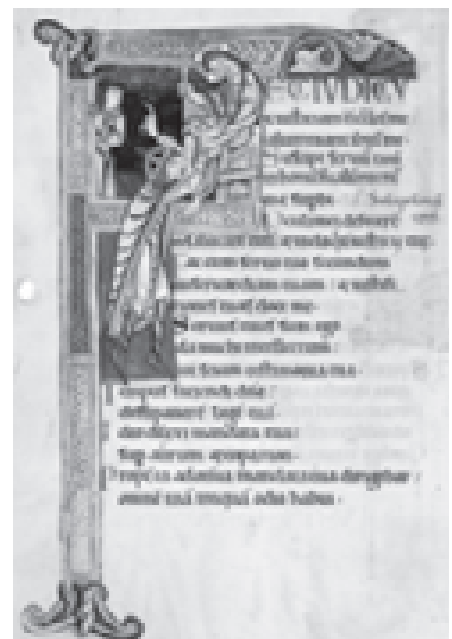
Three particular initials, a Q, D, and a U, have tailor-made spaces (pp. 74, 91, 92), for reasons explored in Chapter II.8.

### II.4.1c Psalm Titles and Incipits

Leaving these less common cases to one side, let us look at how the scribe approached the ordinary initials. The start of Psalm 76 (p. 221, see plate 25) is typical of an ‘ordinary’ initial: the scribe finished writing Psalm 75 on the sixth line of the page; he left the seventh and eighth lines blank and mentally or physically marked out a space eight lines deep and equally wide for the decorated initial; he calculated that he could fit the first two words of Psalm 76 into the first half-line to the right of this space, so leaving this half-line blank he then omitted the first two words of the psalm and wrote the start of Psalm 76 on the next seven lines, still with a space reserved to their left for the initial. When he reached the end of the space reserved for the initial he continued the text of the psalm using the full width of the ruled area for the last six lines of the page. At some point after the scribe had finished writing the page, he or another person supplied the coloured verse initials to the left of the text and the previously omitted first words of the psalm in coloured display capitals; in this case they read ‘OCE MEA’. These display capitals were executed before the historiated initials were painted, as can be seen by the fact that the initials frequently overlap and



**Plate 21:** Albani Psalter, p. 243; detail



**Plate 22:** Albani Psalter, letter details (left: p. 303, right: p. 326)



partially obscure the capitals (e.g. pp. 188, 235). The most dramatic example of this is Psalm 88:20 (p. 250), where the display capitals were written in green, then the first five letters were obliterated by the artist of the initial (they can be partially seen showing through the row of figures on the right), so the five letters were re-written, higher up, in red.

When the artist came to execute the historiated initial on a page like this he would have been faced with six full lines of text, followed by two blank lines, followed by a half-line of coloured capitals and seven more half-lines to the right of the page, and finally six more full lines at the bottom of the page.

Instead of leaving two full blank lines above the initial, as the scribe had probably intended, which would have provided a space approximately 7 x 7 cm for the initial, the artist designed his initial taller than it is wide, approximately 9 x 7 cm.<sup>159</sup>

Whether or not the scribe expected the artist to leave two full lines blank above his initial, or two half-lines, he very probably expected *something* to go in the space apart from the initial. Many twelfth-century and earlier psalters have the psalm number and the standard biblical title at the head of each psalm (see Chapters I.2.3, I.2.4), sometimes preceded by a blank line to visually separate one psalm from the next. It is quite possible that the exemplar from which the scribe was copying had such titles, and he therefore deliberately left space for them in the Albani Psalter. Presumably he expected them to be added later as rubrics, but they were not, perhaps partly because the artist encroached on their allotted spaces. Instead of using the available spaces left by the scribe and artist for the biblical psalm titles written as formal rubrics, another scribe subsequently used many of these spaces for short, rather informally written, non-standard rubrics.

**II.4.1d The Added Rubrics: Placement**

The placement of the added rubrics is usually either (i) in the half-line spaces next to the initial and above the start of the psalm text (e.g. pp. 76, 77), (ii) incorporated into the initial, on the pages of an open book (e.g. pp. 78, 91); (iii) written on similar books, but outside the body of the initial (e.g. pp. 306, 322); or (iv) in another available space.<sup>160</sup> The rubrics were added after the historiated initials were painted: this is clear from examples where the rubricator has been forced to write the rubric in the margin, due to the fact that the initial painter left no other convenient space (e.g. pp. 198, 200).<sup>161</sup>

This is important. It means that in the cases where an initial incorporates a figure that is pointing to one of these rubrics (e.g. pp. 318, see plate 27, 319, 321, 323), the figure was pointing at a blank space until the rubric was inserted.



Some psalms do not have a rubric at all (e.g. pp. 86, 162); some have more than one rubric (e.g. pp. 353, 358); and some have a rubric on a book in the initial as well as one outside the initial (e.g. pp. 309, 317). There is even an initial with four blank books and no rubric (p. 389).

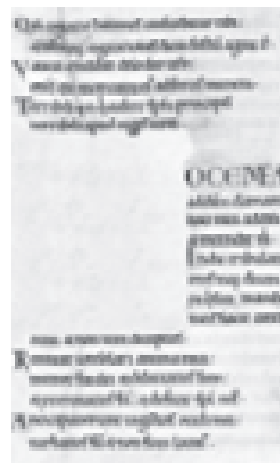
It is probable that when the initials were designed, the books were not intended to have these rubrics,



**Plate 23:** Albani Psalter, p. 193; detail



**Plate 24:** Albani Psalter, p. 250; detail



**Plate 25:** Albani Psalter, p. 221 (approximate appearance, before the execution of the historiated initial)

**Plate 26:** Albani Psalter, p. 198; detail



Plate 27: Albani Psalter, p. 318; detail

adjacent rubrics only occur from Psalm 114 (p. 306) onwards, in quires 17-20.<sup>163</sup> This suggests that the artist did not know until a relatively late stage that anything would be added in the blank spaces above the display capitals. It also suggests that the designer of the initials was developing his compositions as he progressed towards the end of the volume. This suggestion receives support from the appearance towards the end of the volume of figures with particular gestures, such as arms and hands pointing in different directions, one pointing backwards above the head,<sup>164</sup> and compositions in which figures have dramatically crossed arms;<sup>165</sup> these may be a development from compositions in which figures point with one hand at parts of their own head.<sup>166</sup>

#### II.4.1e The Added Rubrics: Content

The majority of the rubrics consist of a short quotation from the following psalm, and usually indicate which part of the psalm is illustrated in the initial. Psalm 20 (p. 107), for example, has an initial depicting Christ placing a crown on the head of a kneeling figure, and the rubric quotes from verse 4: ‘Thou hast set on his head a crown of precious stones’.<sup>167</sup>

Other rubrics, by contrast, quote passages of the adjacent psalm that are not directly illustrated in the initial. In the Psalm 132 initial (p. 345), for example, the figure at the lower right is apparently telling the tonsured figure to ‘Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity’ (verse 1) while pointing up to the scene above which is presumably intended to represent Christ and those who dwell together in unity. Christ and the tonsured figure are both blessing, because ‘the Lord hath commanded blessing’ (verse 3). As an illustration of the psalm, the initial works perfectly well, but the added rubric refers to a verse that is not illustrated: ‘Like the precious ointment on the head’<sup>168</sup> (verse 2). But by drawing attention to this verse, however, which continues ‘that ran down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron’, the reader is led to realise that the tonsured figure, the only figure in the initial that is bearded, is probably meant to represent Aaron.

Some rubrics do not indicate the psalm text that is illustrated. The initial to Psalm 22, for example, directly illustrates verses 2 and 3: ‘He hath brought me up, on the water of refreshment: he hath converted my soul’, but the rubric quotes verse 1, which is not directly illustrated: ‘The Lord ruleth me’.<sup>169</sup>

Sometimes the historiated initial illustrates a verse from the near the middle or end of a psalm, and in such cases the text can occur on the other side of the leaf, or on a subsequent page. One can imagine that in such cases the rubric helped a reader of the Psalter to make sense of the illustration in the initial, allowing him or her to know what is being represented without reading the entire text. Very often the artist drew inspiration from the opening verse of the psalm, however, and in these cases the rubrics seem redundant. For example, the initial to Psalm 24 (p. 115) shows a half-kneeling figure whose soul (depicted in the usual medieval way as a small naked figure) is coming out of his mouth and being received by Christ: the rubric ‘Ad te d[omi]ne leuavi anima[m] mea[m]’ (To thee, O Lord, I have lifted up my soul) is exactly the same as the opening words of the psalm. In such cases it is difficult to understand the purpose of the rubric; unless we imagine that the reader could read the handwriting of the rubric more easily than the display capitals and main



psalms text; the rubrics do not seem to make it any easier for the reader to understand the subject of the initial. It is as if these rubrics were intended for someone who would look at the pictures in the initials, but was not expected to read the psalm text itself. If this was the case, the initials were effectively being treated as subjects of devotional contemplation independent of the adjacent text.

This might help explain the initials to Psalms 103 and 138. These are two of the long psalms that are divided into two parts in Benedictine liturgy, and in the Albani Psalter the start of the second parts each have a historiated initial. Surprisingly, the rubric for the second half of each is taken from the text of the first half of the divided psalm. Psalm 103 has an initial apparently depicting Psalm 103:3-4.<sup>170</sup> The division at Psalm 103:25 has an initial depicting Psalm 103:22-23, and a rubric quoting the first parts of the same verses, for which there is no obvious explanation (p. 276). Psalm 138 has an initial apparently depicting Psalm 138:7, which is quoted in the rubric. The initial marking the start of Psalm 138:11, however, seems to depict Psalm 138:8-9, which are written as rubrics on the two books in the initial (p. 353).

A similar situation occurs in the Psalm 141 initial, where part of the iconography and the three rubrics are from Psalm 140:5; the rest of the iconography could derive either from Psalm 140 or 141. It is very hard to see how this could be an 'accident', as the texts illustrated appear on the other side of the leaf (p. 357), so they would not even have been visible to the artist while he was working on the initial (p. 358).

An exceptional case is the litany, whose rubric does not quote from the text, nor describe the image in any way, it simply states that this is the beginning of the litany (p. 403).<sup>171</sup>

It is hard to draw an all-encompassing explanation for the variety of rubrics just discussed. The conclusion to be reached from these examples is perhaps that we should not expect complete consistency, as we understand it in the twenty-first century. Coherent extensive iconographic programs such as are found in the sculpture of early Gothic cathedrals are mostly later in date than the Albani Psalter. The use of an extensive series of historiated initials was still a relatively experimental way of decorating a manuscript; it is one of the many features that make the Psalter so innovative and remarkable among surviving manuscripts.

## II.4.2 Canticles, Creeds, and Other Prayers

There is nothing very remarkable about the Albani Psalter series of canticles and related prayers (cf. Chapters 1.2.8, 1.2.11 ). All but the Nicene Creed are found, for example, in the Arundel Psalter<sup>172</sup> and the Crowland Psalter,<sup>173</sup> and the first twelve are also in the Stowe Psalter,<sup>174</sup> which is imperfect at the end and probably originally had more.

1. The Canticle of Isaiah (pp. 372-373)
2. The Canticle of Ezekiel (pp. 373-375).
3. The Canticle of Anna (pp. 375-376).
4. The First Canticle of Moses (pp. 377-379)
5. The Canticle of Habakkuk (pp. 379-382)
6. The Second Canticle of Moses (pp. 383-389)
7. The Ambrosian Hymn (pp. 389-391)
8. The Canticle of the Hebrew Boys (pp. 391-393)
9. The Canticle of Zachariah (pp. 393-394)
10. The Canticle of the Virgin Mary (pp. 394-395)
11. The Canticle of Simeon (pp. 395-396)
12. The Lord's Prayer (p. 396)
13. The Apostles' Creed (pp. 396-397)
14. The Angelic Hymn (pp. 397-398)
15. The Nicene Creed (pp. 398-399)
16. The Athanasian Creed (pp. 399-403)



The normal Benedictine division of the sixth canticle,<sup>175</sup> at the words ‘Ignis succensus’, was originally marked in the Albani Psalter by a historiated initial that has been excised (p. 386).

Several of the canticles and other prayers, including the first four, have two rubrics. The title (e.g. ‘The canticle of Isaiah the prophet’) is in dark red ink, and a quotation from the text (comparable to the psalm rubrics) is in paler red ink, which suggests that they were written at different times. In some cases there is only a quotation from the adjacent text (e.g. pp. 391, 409), in one case there is only a title (p. 379), and in one there is neither (p. 389). The rubric for the ninth canticle is neither a title nor a quotation from the text, it acts more like a ‘caption’, explaining what is happening in the initial: ‘The apparition of the archangel Gabriel of Zachariah’ (p. 393). As with the psalm rubrics, we find variety rather than uniformity.

### II.4.3 Litany of Saints

The litany of saints is crucial for our understanding of the original patron and owner of the Albani Psalter. Although the calendar provides valuable liturgical evidence, it is written on a separate quire and its relationship to the rest of the volume is not certain.<sup>176</sup> The Alexis Quire and the main full-page miniature-cycle are likewise separable parts of the volume, whose place in the chronology of the making of the manuscript is uncertain and controversial. The historiated initials potentially provide a wealth of evidence about the concerns of the original patron, but this evidence is very difficult to interpret with confidence. The litany, however, is structurally integrated with the psalms text that precedes it, and with the prayers that follow, and thus any deductions that can be drawn from it may be applied to the majority of the volume.

The litany of saints can best be understood by comparison with other litanies in St Albans manuscripts, and with the litany from the abbey of Bec, in Normandy.<sup>177</sup> Liturgical reforms were introduced into England by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury (1070–89), who had previously been Prior of Bec, as part of the general imposition of Norman rule in England in the wake of the Norman Conquest in 1066. The acceptance of ‘foreign’ Bec liturgy in England becomes easier to understand when one realises how many of the new Norman archbishops, bishops, abbots, and priors had come not just from Normandy, but from Bec itself: in addition to Lanfranc there were Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1093–1109), four bishops and several priors of Rochester, an Abbot of Westminster, and so on, not to mention a considerable number of the monks themselves.<sup>178</sup>

The evidence is not as complete as one might wish, but Nicholas Orchard has reconstructed the outlines of the Bec litany as it was used in England, and the Albani Psalter plays a pivotal role in this exercise.<sup>179</sup> The earliest surviving Bec litany dates from the thirteenth century, so in order to know what it looked like in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries one has to try to extrapolate from the litanies of manuscripts from monasteries dependent on Bec, such as Lyre Abbey, also in Normandy. This can be tabulated against the litanies of St Albans and its dependent priories, and a fairly clear pattern emerges.

As was realised by Wormald, a number of saints in the Albani Psalter are interpolations to the ‘normal’ St Albans-Bec litany, and were therefore presumably added to meet the particular needs of the person for whom the Albani Psalter was written.<sup>180</sup> The most notable are the inclusion of St Alexius at the end of the list of confessors (p. 406), and about a dozen female saints at the end of the list of virgins. Alexius may of course be explained by the local cult which resulted in, or was inspired by, the dedication of a chapel to Alexi(u)s at St Albans. Two of the female saints that are not normally found in St Albans-Bec litanies, Florentia and Consortia, were especially venerated by the Cluniac order. It may be that Christina developed a devotion to the two Cluniac virgin saints in the litany through her association

with monks of Bermondsey. The *Life* of Christina tells us about Simon, Sacrist of Bermondsey Priory (near the Tower of London), which was Cluniac, who ‘cultivated her friendship’ and was ‘accepted into her familiar circle’;<sup>181</sup> and the foundation charter of Markyate Priory was witnessed by Gervase, another monk of Bermondsey.

#### II.4.4 Petitions and the Following Prayers

Petitions are discussed in Chapter I.2.10. The series in the Albani Psalter is essentially the same as the Bec series, and correspond to those in the mid twelfth-century St Albans ‘Breviary’.<sup>182</sup>

Immediately following the ‘A’/‘Ab’, ‘Per’, and ‘Ut’ petitions is an appeal to the Son of God, marked ‘II’ to indicate that it should be said twice;<sup>183</sup> three slightly different appeals to the Lamb of God;<sup>184</sup> concluding with an appeal to Christ to be heard;<sup>185</sup> the Kyrie eleison; and the Lord’s Prayer. This is followed by another appeal in the form of Psalm 69 ‘O God, come to my assistance ...’ (pp. 409–410),<sup>186</sup> followed by the Gloria and other short prayers. In most manuscripts Psalm 69 is abbreviated to just its opening words in the prayers that follow the litany; the Albani Psalter is very unusual in writing the full psalm text and giving it a large initial.<sup>187</sup>

##### II.4.4a Collects

The collects of the Albani Psalter are as follows:

1. ‘Deus cui proprium est ...’ (pp. 411–412)
2. ‘Omnipotens sempiternus deus qui facis mirabilia ...’ (p. 412)
3. ‘Pretende domine famulis & famulabus tuis ...’ (pp. 412–413)
4. ‘Deus a quo sancta desideria recta consilia ...’ (p. 413)
5. ‘Ure igne sancti spiritus ...’ (p. 413)
6. ‘Actiones nostras ...’ (p. 413)
7. ‘A domo tua ...’ (p. 413)
8. ‘Æcclesiæ tuæ domine ...’ (p. 413)
9. ‘Hostium nostrorum ...’ (Schnütgen Museum leaf, recto)
10. ‘Animabus quesumus domine ...’ (Schnütgen Museum leaf, recto)
11. ‘Deus qui es sanctorum tuorum ...’ (Schnütgen Museum leaf, recto and verso)

As a comparison with the section on collects in Chapter I.2.12 reveals, only one or two of those in the Albani Psalter are unusual.<sup>188</sup>

The collect beginning ‘Hostium nostrorum’ is not common in any context, but is sometimes found in missals as the collect for a mass For Time of War.<sup>189</sup> I have encountered it in only one other English psalter, the eleventh-century Crowland Psalter, whose series of collects is unusual in several other ways.<sup>190</sup> Perhaps its inclusion in the Albani Psalter should be seen in relation to the theme of the Discourse on Spiritual Battle (pp. 71–72).<sup>191</sup>

##### II.4.4b Adaptations for Male or Female Readers

It has been claimed that ‘all the prayers in the [Albani] psalter are written in the masculine as if the text was meant to be read by a man’,<sup>192</sup> presumably referring to prayers such as the second collect, which mentions ‘famulos tuos’ (your [male] servants). This statement has been challenged with the counter-claim that some prayers refer to both males and females, such as the third collect, which mentions ‘famulis & famulabus tuis’ (your [male] servants and your [female] handmaids), and could therefore have equally been intended for a mixed or a female reader/audience.<sup>193</sup> It is worth trying to clear up the confusion.

In the vast majority of manuscripts the collect that comes second in the Albani Psalter has the generic masculine form (‘famulos tuos’), as in the Albani Psalter. In manuscripts written specifically for a woman, however, the feminine form of the Latin words, ‘famule tue’ (your handmaid), may be used instead, as in the Iona Psalter, which was probably made for the nunnery of Iona in Scotland.<sup>194</sup> In the sense

that female forms were not used, it is therefore correct to say that the use of masculine forms implies the expectation of a male reader/audience. Prayers referring to both men and women, such as the third collect in the Albani Psalter, are standard even in manuscripts that were demonstrably written for male monastic houses: one cannot assume that prayers asking God to look kindly on men and women were necessarily intended for a mixed-gender or a female reader/audience. Just as prayers asking God to look after the king or pope did not have to be said in the presence of those individuals, so too it is not surprising to find prayers said for the benefit of women as well as men, even if no women were present.

In summary, while masculine forms do not necessarily *prevent* a prayer such as the second collect of the Albani Psalter being used by a female reader, the use of masculine forms in places where feminine forms could have been employed, show that in at least one respect it was not deliberately tailored for one. In this regard it may also be significant that the illustrations to the collects in the Albani Psalter show numerous laymen and monks, but no women or nuns.

#### II.4.5 The Mid-Point of the Psalms?

A very curious feature of the text of the psalms is the cross near the end of Psalm 74, almost exactly in the centre of page 219, within the phrase ‘Et inclinavit ex hoc † in hoc’ (And he poured it out from this to that).

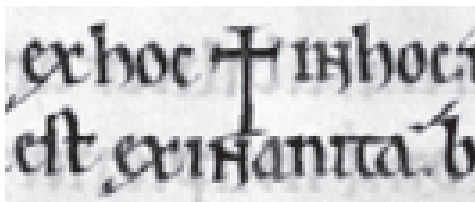


Plate 28: Albani Psalter, p. 219; detail

In some liturgical manuscripts a cross similar to this one is drawn between or above words of text to indicate to the reader where he should make the Sign of the Cross, but a psalter such as this is not a true liturgical manuscript, and it has not been possible to discover any other manuscript, psalter or otherwise, in which the Sign of the Cross is indicated at this point in the text.<sup>195</sup> The only possible explanation that I have been able to find comes from a book of riddles written by a sixteenth-century humanist, in which the verse with ‘ex hoc in hoc’ is said to be the mid-point of the psalms.<sup>196</sup> A word-count using an electronic copy of the Gallican version of the psalms shows that this is indeed approximately the mid-point, with about 15,150 words both before and after it.

If further psalters with this feature could be found, it might be possible to establish a textual connection between them, but if none can be found, then this is yet another unique feature of the Albani Psalter.

#### II.4.6 Parchment and Ruling

The Psalter has been described as ‘one of the most expensive artefacts made in twelfth-century England’,<sup>197</sup> and this is doubtless the impression that it was intended to give. But this impression is probably misleading. As we will see in Chapter III.2.1, the psalms section would probably not have taken long to write; the calendar and Alexis Quire would doubtless have taken much less time. It is very difficult to know how long it would have taken to decorate the Psalter, but one could envisage a competent artist executing a historiated initial in a matter of hours, not days. Labour was therefore probably not a very large expense especially, as we shall see, considering that some of the scribes and artists were not very highly skilled.

But it is the gold and colours, not the script, which give the impression of richness and opulence, so we must try to assess if the materials used for the Psalter were a major expense. For comparative purposes we should bear in mind that Abbot Geoffrey’s other commissions included seven copes ‘one of them covered all over with gold and gems, another ... with gold and pearls ... five chasubles, one all gold, no less than six and a half marks’ weight ... a chalice and paten, made from eight marks’ weight of gold [i.e. more than 2kg] ... a frontal of gold, silver and selected gems’.<sup>198</sup> According to thirteenth-century sources he also commissioned a lay craftsman



has a similar vertical ruled line a few centimetres to one side of what is now the gutter fold. These lines are particularly clearly visible on the bifolium with the ‘Christina Initial’ to Psalm 105 (p. 285).<sup>200</sup> There are also prickings corresponding to the horizontal lines, which suggests that these rulings were the early stages in the preparation of these sheets for another purpose.

The bifolium with the ‘Christina Initial’ provides further information about the preparation of the parchment, because it preserves its prickings at all four edges. At the fore-edge of p. 285 are twenty-two prickings, corresponding to the twenty-two lines of text. In the upper and lower margins are single prickings for the vertical rulings that mark the left- and right-hand limits of the written space. The preceding quire has at least one leaf that preserves a line of twenty-five prickings at the outer edge (pp. 269–270), and single prickings in the middle of the upper and lower margins: it seems as if this leaf was pricked with the intention of ruling two columns of twenty-five lines, like Quires 19 to 22.

There is a risk of getting lost in the minutiae of prickings and rulings, so rather than go into further detail, let us simply conclude that several quires of the psalms section, perhaps as many as a third of them, seem to be written on parchment left-over from another project. The use of parchment that was already marked with inappropriate rulings suggests that the scribe of the psalms either could not afford to acquire more suitable sheets or did not have time to wait for such sheets to become available: this suggests that he was working to a very limited budget, or in considerable haste, or both.

#### II.4.7 Coloured Lettering

It is difficult to know whether the coloured verse initials should be treated as ‘text’ or ‘decoration’ for the purposes of our analysis. Generally the letters of the incipit words are in a single colour, and any abbreviation marks are in one or more of the other colours. In some places (e.g. pp. 173, 175, 202) it is clear that the coloured initials were executed with a pen, not a brush, and we may therefore think of them as the work of a scribe rather than an ‘artist’.<sup>201</sup>

In places where a verse begins with the word ‘Et’ (And) one almost always finds that the scribe has omitted the ‘E’ (leaving it to be added in colour later) and written the ‘t’ in normal brown ink. But in two places one finds a verse that begins with the word ‘Et’ written like a coloured ligature.

It is possible that the scribe made a mistake, and omitted the ‘t’ by accident, but it is also possible that he intended the ‘Et’ to be written this way.<sup>202</sup> This suggests, but does not prove, that the scribe was responsible for the verse initials. It is likely that the person who wrote the verse initials also wrote the display capitals with which each verse and collect begins.

The proposal that the scribe was responsible for his own verse initials and display capitals gains support from an examination of one bifolium that was written by a different scribe (discussed in Chapter II.8.1). This bifolium has the only page where one can see a light pencil guide for the lettering of the display capitals and a verse initial with an untypical flourish (p. 74), and has the only leaf on which all the coloured lettering is executed in red or green (pp. 91–92), without blue or purple.

It is possible to suggest the order in which the coloured verse initials were executed. On the vast majority of pages, the first verse initial is in red, regardless of the colour of the preceding verse initial. It is therefore probable that the red initials were executed before the other colours, starting at the top of each page. After the first initial on each page, usually every alternate verse initial is red, with other colours alternating irregularly in between; therefore it is probable that the person responsible for the verse initials entered all the red ones first, and then the other colours fairly randomly, as no clear pattern is apparent.

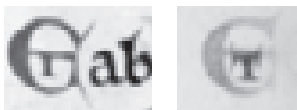


Plate 29: Albani Psalter, details (left: p. 103, right: p. 150)

### II.4.8 Curtains

The use of textile curtains to protect areas of paint and gold decoration has been discussed in Chapter II.2.3. For the prefatory miniature-cycle, the curtains would probably have been almost as large as the leaves, but in the psalms section, they would have been smaller: they only needed to cover the areas of illumination, not the whole pages. When one curtain could protect two illuminated initials, only one was used, so, for example, there are sewing-holes to the left of the initial to Psalm 14 (p. 94), but there are no holes for an equivalent curtain next to the initial to Psalm 15 on the facing page (p. 95).<sup>203</sup> The Psalm 14 initial would have been protected from rubbing against the Psalm 15 initial by the curtain covering the former, and therefore the latter did not need its own curtain.

As in the prefatory cycle of full-page miniatures, it is clear that there were two series of curtains at different times. From the places where fragments of sewing-thread survive we can deduce that the first set was typically placed further away from the initials and attached with white thread (e.g. p. 235), and the later set was typically placed closer to the initials and attached with red thread (e.g. pp. 78, 81). The red threads to the right of the initial on p. 73, for example, are very close to the written text, while another set of sewing holes (without traces of thread) are in the middle of the outer margin. Sometimes the outer, earlier, set of sewing-holes are at the extreme edge of the page, for example at Psalm 10 (p. 89), where some sewing holes survive to the right of the green display capitals, but the corresponding holes lower down have apparently been trimmed away. The fact that some sewing holes now occur at the very edge of the leaf proves that the leaves have been trimmed since these curtains were inserted. The trimming of the leaves may be the reason why new curtains were needed, and part of the reason why the later ones were usually positioned closer to the initials.

It seems that by the time of the second set of curtains was sewn in the book was perhaps no longer being used for reading, and was therefore perhaps used instead as a display item, or treasure, or 'relic' of Christina. This is suggested by the fact that the second set of curtains often obscured parts of the text, rendering it difficult or impossible to read: at the Benedictine division at Psalm 17:26 (p. 101), for example, the sewing holes occur in the middle of the text area, just above the green display capitals, just below and to the left of the '&' in the fourth line of the psalms, and just above the 's' of 'tenebras' in the third line from the bottom of the page. A similar situation occurs in numerous other places,<sup>204</sup> including a few leaves later, at Psalm 21 (p. 109) where pairs of sewing holes are visible above the middle 'S' of the green display capitals, above the 'o' of 'delictorum' in the sixth line of brown ink script, and below the full-stop after the word 'Israel' six lines lower down. Ironically, in some cases the insertion of protective curtains resulted in the sewing damaging the pigment of an initial on the other side of a leaf, such as Psalm 28 (p. 123), where the sewing holes puncture the blue background immediately to the left of Christ's halo of Psalm 29 on the other side of the leaf; and Psalm 120 (p. 333), where the upper sewing holes and their thread perforate the book held by the figure on the other side of the leaf.

Because sewing-holes have presumably been trimmed away during rebinding it is not possible to be sure if the first set of curtains extended throughout the psalms. The second set of curtains seem to have been sewn in to protect the initials from the beginning of the psalms to Psalm 52 (p. 175), and thereafter only sporadically, especially large initials (pp. 193, 198, 202, 210, etc.). The absence of sewing holes at any particular psalm after Psalm 52 (such as at the 'Christina Initial', p. 285), therefore, is probably not significant.

### II.4.9 Missing Leaves and Cuttings

The leaf that would have had the major liturgical division of the psalms at Psalm 97 is missing; it would originally have been between pages 266 and 267. In theory it could have become accidentally damaged, and removed for that reason; but the

initial at the Benedictine division of the canticle ‘Audite celi’ at the words ‘Ignis succensus est’ (p. 386) has also been cut out. This proves that at some point someone deliberately cut decoration from the volume. The practice of cutting decoration out of illuminated manuscripts goes back to the Middle Ages, became fairly common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and still occasionally happens today.<sup>205</sup> Interestingly, someone carefully cut out the figure of Christ in the upper part of the initial to Psalm 149 (p. 370), but later re-inserted it, using a piece of parchment from another manuscript to affix it from the other side of the leaf. There are documented examples of people cutting decoration from a volume and then, prompted by guilt, returning the stolen cuttings.<sup>206</sup>

The single leaf now in the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne, which belongs between pages 414 and 415 of the manuscript, became separated from the volume perhaps in the first half of the nineteenth century (see Chapter V.2). It was probably a single leaf rather than one half of a bifolium, and for this reason it would probably have been relatively easy to remove. If it was removed deliberately, its loss would have been made harder to detect by the fact that the pages were not foliated or paginated, and by the fact that it contains just three short self-contained texts that are not always found in a psalter, so after its removal there would have been no reason to assume that anything was missing from the volume.

## II.5 The Initial to Psalm 105

The initial ‘C’ at Psalm 105 (p. 285), popularly known as ‘the Christina initial’, has always been a puzzle, and has assumed ever-greater importance in publications about the Albani Psalter in recent years. It depicts Christ and a woman apparently reaching out their hands to touch one another; behind the woman is a group of four tonsured clerics, the foremost of which has gold trimming to his cuffs and hood, perhaps suggesting a higher rank; he has one hand on the back of the woman’s shoulder, and the other points towards Christ, as if he is encouraging the woman to move towards Christ. This image has nearly always been accepted, since Goldschmidt’s identification in 1895,<sup>208</sup> as depicting Christina interceding with Christ on behalf of the abbot and the other monks of St Albans; or as the monks encouraging her to do so. The inscription above the initial supports such interpretations: ‘O Jesus, in your mercy, spare your monks, I pray’ (‘Parce tuis queso monachis clementia lh[es]u’).

### II.5.1 The Problem

This initial differs from all the others in the Psalter in three main ways:

1. It is by an artist who does not appear anywhere else in the volume.
2. It is executed on a separate piece of parchment, stuck on to the page. While not an uncommon practice in twelfth-century England,<sup>209</sup> this is the only example in the Albani Psalter.
3. The inscription accompanying this psalm initial is different from all the others: it is the only one composed in verse; it is the only one written in words alternately red or green; and it is the only one written by this scribe, who does not appear anywhere else in the volume.<sup>210</sup>

### II.5.2 Possible Explanations

There are four possible ways to explain the unusual features of the Psalm 105 initial:

1. It was executed before the other psalm initials, perhaps originally for another book. This is unlikely on the grounds that the initial appears, on stylistic grounds, to be later than the rest of the initials, and even if this were not the case, it would be extremely unusual for an initial to be executed before the book into

which it would be inserted. It is very unlikely to have been cut from another book, as there is no text on the reverse of the piece of parchment.

2. It was executed at about the same time as the other psalm initials, as part of the intended decoration of the volume. This is possible (as the stylistic evidence is not definitive), but inexplicable: no good reason presents itself for this initial to be treated so differently from all the others.
3. It was executed after the other initials, and occupies a space accidentally left blank by the other artists. This is possible, but like the previous scenario, would be very difficult to explain. The initial is on the same side of the same bifolium as the Psalm 103 initial (p. 276), so it is hard to imagine how the artists could have designed and painted the Psalm 103 initial and somehow overlooked the blank space on the same sheet.
4. It was executed after the other initials, and occupies a space deliberately created by erasing another initial. This explanation is not inherently implausible, and seems to be the only one left open to us. Most scholars who have written about the Albani Psalter have been reluctant to accept it, however, because they saw no clear evidence of an erased initial underneath the stuck-in piece of parchment.

### II.5.3 Physical Evidence

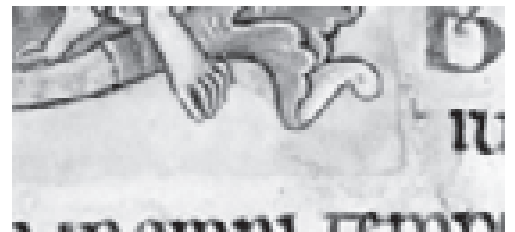
In 2003 it was observed that the parchment around the pasted-in piece of parchment is thinner because it has been abraded, and this abrasion requiring some of the adjacent lettering to be re-inked.<sup>211</sup> This was interpreted as the result of scarfing, a common technique for sticking two pieces of parchment together by paring down the edge of one or both,<sup>212</sup> which is found elsewhere in the Albani Psalter (e.g. the outer margin of pp. 123–124). Morgan Powell, however, has recently more plausibly re-interpreted this evidence as the result of the erasure of a former initial.<sup>213</sup>

The lettering immediately adjacent to the stuck-in piece of parchment does indeed show signs of having been re-inked: in the line of text immediately below the initial, for example, the upper part of many letters is darker than the lower part; and to the right of the stuck-in piece of parchment the left-hand edge of some lettering is also darker. One explanation for this re-inking could be that the insertion of the stuck-in piece of parchment caused some seepage of moisture from the glue to the lettering. The parchment in the small space between the stuck-in piece of parchment and the writing shows signs of discolouration, which could also be interpreted as moisture-seepage from the glue. The moisture-seepage hypothesis has to be abandoned, however, since to the left of the piece of stuck-in parchment, where there is no script, there is also no discolouration or ‘seepage’; it is therefore probable that the discolouration was caused by the abrasion of the parchment where a former initial was erased. It is also probable that the original initial came right up to the text, possibly even overlapping it slightly, as is the case with many other initials, and thus some of the lettering was erased when the previous initial was erased, requiring it to be re-inked.

A recent re-examination of the manuscript confirmed this hypothesis.<sup>214</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned features, close scrutiny under magnification and using back-lighting revealed two further pieces of physical evidence. There are minute traces of gold and green pigment below and to the right of the lower right corner of the pasted-in parchment: these may be vestiges of the original initial.

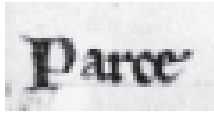
But more conclusively, one can see that there is an area of erasure, with a few minute traces of red ink, above the purple display-capitals. This must be where the original initial’s rubric was written and later erased.

Close inspection also proves that the inscription above the initial was executed after the piece of parchment was stuck onto the page, not before. The scribe ruled



**Plate 30:** Albani Psalter, p. 285; detail





**Plate 31:** Albani Psalter, p. 285; detail

two lines in pencil to guide his writing. Between the ‘P’ and ‘a’ of the first word, ‘Parce’, there is a small hole in the piece of parchment, and the pencil ruling has gone through the hole onto the page behind it. Therefore, the piece of parchment was already stuck to the page before the line was ruled, which in turn must have been done before the inscription was written.

The fact that the inscription was not written by the Chanson Scribe, who wrote all the other psalm initial inscriptions, suggests that this initial post-dates the Chanson Scribe’s work, and thus post-dates the other initials.<sup>215</sup> The green ink used by this scribe was apparently somewhat mordant: it has penetrated the surface and is visible through two layers of parchment on p. 286.<sup>216</sup>

#### II.5.4 Decorative Evidence

One further detail is that, in one respect, the green verse initial ‘B’ to the right of the stuck-in initial is almost unique in the manuscript. The middle of the letter, at the point where the two bows of the letter meet, has very simple flourishes, like minimal foliate ornament. No other initial in the entire volume has this sort of decoration except one: the green verse initial in Psalm 1, the ‘N’ on the replacement bifolium (p. 74).

As the replacement bifolium was (by definition) produced later than the original bifolium it replaces, this suggests that this green ‘B’ post-dates the other verse initials. This would be explicable if the original ‘B’ were partially erased when the adjacent original historiated initial was being erased, and then re-painted when the text was being re-inked. Like the inscription above the Psalm 105 initial, the green pigment used for this initial was apparently also mordant: from the other side of the leaf, this initial is far more clearly visible than the verse initials painted in other colours.

It is probable that the entire historiated initial was executed after the piece of parchment was stuck into the volume, rather than painted on a loose piece of parchment and stuck in afterwards. Other examples of stuck-in pieces of parchment in other manuscripts demonstrate that this was common: frequently the painting overlaps from the stuck-in piece of parchment to main leaf behind.<sup>217</sup> In the Albani Psalter one can see that the pale yellow wash that surrounds the initial (most clearly visible to the right-hand side), overlaps from the piece of parchment to the main page at the extreme left-hand side, and was therefore executed after the parchment was stuck in. If this colour-wash lies underneath other colours, as it appears to, this proves that these other colours were also executed after the piece of parchment was stuck in.

The sequence of production of the psalm initials would thus have been as follows:

- the historiated initials were executed, including one for Psalm 105
- the outer bifolium of the first quire removed and replaced (see Chapter II.8)
- the rubrics were added by the Chanson Scribe (see Chapter III.3)
- the Psalm 105 initial and its rubric were erased, with the adjacent text and verse initial also being slightly affected
- a piece of parchment was stuck over the erasure, to provide a clean, even, surface
- the present initial to Psalm 105 was painted onto this piece of parchment, and the erased adjacent text and verse initial re-inked/re-painted
- the Psalm 105 Scribe ruled two lines in pencil above the initial and wrote the inscription.

#### II.5.5 The Initial to Psalm 105 as a Turning-Point

The Psalm 105 initial is seen by most writers as proof that the manuscript was connected in some way with Christina of Markyate, and its insertion is also seen by some as marking the moment in the production of the Psalter when she became its intended recipient.<sup>218</sup> To assess this hypothesis, one must examine both the likelihood that

the last section of the Albani Psalter (the psalms, canticles, litany, etc.) was originally being written for someone else, and that it began to be adapted for Christina's use only when the artists reached the Psalm 105 initial.

We suggest below (Chapter III.2.1) that the text of the psalms section of the manuscript might have taken as little as two weeks to write. Even if we suppose that the scribe took four times as long as this, eight weeks, this represents an average of about one and a half quires per week. It seems probable that the Psalms Scribe could write a typical quire of the Albani Psalter more quickly than the artist could design and execute the initials of a quire: each one has between eight and thirteen historiated initials, typically ten. It is also self-evident that the artist could not execute the initials before the text on the page had been written;<sup>219</sup> and the decoration of the initials often overlaps the adjacent writing, confirming that they were executed in the normal sequence. It follows from these facts that, assuming that the artists worked from the first quires of the book to the last ones, the scribe would have completed writing the text before the artist reached the space allotted for the initial to Psalm 105. The fact that the litany was apparently written for Christina (no other more probable recipient has ever been suggested) rather than for a member of St Albans abbey,<sup>220</sup> effectively proves that the decision to customise the book for her ownership was made significantly before the initial at Psalm 105 was inserted, and was very probably known from the outset.

Even if the Psalm 105 initial does not mark the point at which the book became destined for Christina, might it mark some other sort of turning-point? It has also been observed that after Psalm 105 figures in the initials point more often to the added rubrics within or adjacent to the initials. This is true to some extent, but immediately after Psalm 105 only one of the next twenty initials has a figure unambiguously pointing to a rubric. Initials with figures pointing directly at rubrics do not become common until Psalm 118, so if this feature of the initials can be directly associated with a change of plan, or turning-point, the change would appear to have occurred when the designer of the initials was designing the initials of Psalm 118, rather than when he was at Psalm 105.

It has been suggested that initials depict women in a more positive way after Psalm 105, which could hypothetically be explained if the intended destination changed from a male recipient to a female one. Women appear in seven of the initials before Psalm 105, and in seven of the remaining seventy-one psalm initials, however, which does not suggest that the designer of the initials was making a conscious effort to include a larger number of women: after Psalm 105 women only appear in the initials to Psalm 109 (as a member of a crowd, p. 299), Psalm 118:33 (apparently being seduced, p. 315), Psalm 122 (as a member of a crowd, p. 335), Psalm 130 (as a mother weaning an infant, p. 342), Psalm 136 (two women as members of a crowd, p. 350), Psalm 148 (three women and two men appealing to the psalmist or Christ, p. 369), and Psalm 149 (a crowd of women apparently being protected from two demons by three male soldiers, p. 370). Most of these images are neutral, presenting the women in neither a positive nor a negative light, though one could interpret the Psalm 130 image of motherhood as 'positive', and if the woman is resisting rather than submitting to seduction in Psalm 118:33, then this would be a second 'positive' image. Women are depicted more frequently in the canticles, but this is to be expected from their texts or the contexts in which they were first composed (e.g. Anna's canticle giving thanks for the birth of Samuel).

In conclusion, there does not seem to be any evidence that the Psalm 105 initial marks a turning-point in the writing or decoration of the volume. If, instead, it was inserted at a relatively late stage and required the erasure of an existing initial, as has been suggested above, this poses the question of why it was inserted at this particular point in the book. If the initial 'C' is a deliberate reference to Christina's name, then there are several other places in the psalms where this initial could have been inserted. Perhaps all the available options were considered, and the existing

initial to Psalm 105 was considered to be the one that would be the least significant loss of all the available initial ‘C’s. Or perhaps the content of Psalm 105 was considered to be the most appropriate of the available psalms. Without knowing what the original Psalm 105 initial looked like, this question may never be definitively answered.

### II.5.6 A Memorial to Christina?

The Psalm 105 initial still might, however, represent a ‘turning-point’ in another sense. There must have been some particular reason, or some particular occasion, to warrant the erasure of an existing initial and the inclusion of the new initial. Hanns Swarzenski suggested that the Alexis Quire and the Psalm 105 initial were inserted into the volume either when Christina took her vow of monastic profession, c.1131, or when she became prioress of Markyate in 1145.<sup>221</sup> These could indeed be seen as appropriate moments for including in the volume an image of Christina actively interceding with Christ on behalf of the monks: by these points she had apparently already had visionary encounters with the Virgin Mary and Christ, and yet before these points she had no formal affiliation with the monks of St Albans.

Larry Ayres argued that the initial was stuck into the volume even later, in the 1150s, soon after Christina’s death, and that the image represents her transition from the earthly sphere of the monks, on the left-hand side, to the heavenly sphere of Christ, on the right-hand side.<sup>222</sup> He based this on an analysis of the style of the initial, which he felt belonged after c.1150, and on Wormald’s identification of the scribe of the inscription with the Obits Scribe, who wrote Christina’s obit, and was therefore making entries in the volume after her death. Wormald’s scribal identification cannot be sustained, but Ayres’s hypothesis itself remains theoretically possible. The Psalm 105 initial might be seen, therefore, to represent the moment in time when the Albani Psalter passed from being effectively a book for Christina’s personal use, to being a possession of her community and a relic of their foundress. Christina must have had quasi-saintly status in her lifetime if the content of the *Life* of Christina is a reliable guide, and even if she was not accepted as such by everyone, this idea cannot have completely died, as shown by the fact that her *Life* was copied into a volume of saints’ lives in the fourteenth century.<sup>223</sup>

## II.6 The Litany Image

Plate 33: Albani Psalter, p. 403; detail



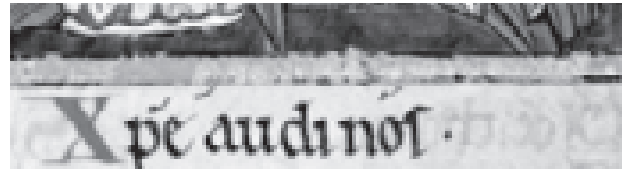
Most writers since Talbot have attached special importance to the image that stands at the head of the litany (p. 403) because, like the Psalm 105 initial, it appears to show a specific reference to the patronage of the manuscript.<sup>224</sup> It shows the Trinity to the left, in the area that the scribe left for the upright of the ‘K’ of the opening word ‘Kyrie’. To the right, in the area that was intended for the diagonal limbs of the initial ‘K’, is a standing monk, pointing at two open books being held above their heads by two groups of kneeling women. The interpretation of the image is discussed in Chapter VI.4.

The text of the litany should begin ‘Kyrie eleison’, but on this page these words are not visible because they have been over-painted. They were written by the original scribe in the second column of text,<sup>225</sup> on the line above ‘Xpe [i.e. Christe] audi nos’: the descenders of the two ‘y’s are visible below the frame of the miniature, above the ‘a’ and ‘o’ of ‘audi nos’.

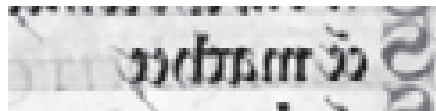
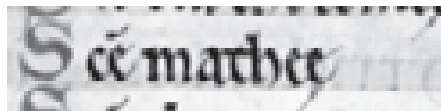
From the other side of the page the first word, ‘[K]yrric’ (sic), is visible back-to-front, on the fifteenth line of the first column, immediately after ‘S[an]c[t]e mathee’ (see plate 35.)

Thus in order to make his miniature one line taller than would otherwise have been possible, the artist simply painted over the first words of the litany, and made his image more like a rectangular miniature than an initial ‘K’.

As I have noted elsewhere,<sup>226</sup> the ink-drawn design for the wings of the Dove that stands upon the heads of the Father and Son was partly erased, so that the Dove



**Plate 34:** Albani Psalter, p. 403; detail



**Plate 35:** Albani Psalter, details (left: p. 404, right: p. 404, detail reversed)

could be painted with its wings close to its body, instead of outspread (see plate 36). This arguably relates to a recorded vision experienced by Christina, but it is impossible to know whether the details of the vision were influenced by the image, or vice versa, and therefore does not help in dating the manuscript.

The dedication of Markyate Priory to the Trinity was probably the same as the dedication of Roger the Hermit’s oratory chapel,<sup>227</sup> which in turn probably owed its dedication to his personal devotion to the Trinity (according to legend he settled at Markyate because a trio of angels led him there),<sup>228</sup> but a curious feature of the Latin language has recently been mentioned in relation to a manuscript owned by a woman,<sup>229</sup> which makes it a particularly appropriate dedication for a nunnery. While the Latin words for God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all individually masculine, as one would expect, the word for the Trinity, ‘Trinitas’, is feminine.



**Plate 36:** Albani Psalter, p. 403; detail

## II.7 Miniatures of St Alban and King David

Like every other part of the Albani Psalter there have been scholarly theories and counter-theories about the double-page ‘diptych’ of full-page miniatures depicting the Martyrdom of St Alban, and King David with his musicians, which occurs at the end (pp. 416–417). Wormald stated that:









‘The position of these two miniatures is remarkable and it is highly probable that they were intended originally to come before the Psalter. When the full-page miniatures and the life of St Alexis were introduced they were put at the end.’<sup>230</sup>

This proposition has much to commend it, and most recent writers have accordingly accepted it.<sup>231</sup> First, it is unusual to find major decoration, especially full-page miniatures, at the end of any manuscript; the relatively tiny proportion of manuscripts that have full-page miniatures usually have them at or near the beginning, or else marking major textual divisions, such as books of the Bible.<sup>232</sup> Second, images of King David and his musicians occur in other psalters before, not after, the psalms. The presence of two other large images of King David as a musician in the Albani Psalter strongly suggests that at least one of them is an addition to the original scheme: it is not difficult to imagine, for example, that the Albani Psalter

originally had just images of St Alban and King David at the beginning of the book, and that the David image became somewhat redundant when another full-page image of David was included at the end of the main picture-cycle (p. 56), before the psalms. And third, the physical condition of the bifolium on which the miniatures are painted suggests that it has not always been in its present position in the manuscript: its edges are trimmed more crudely and more extensively than most other leaves. The parchment itself also seems to be of a very different quality to the rest of the volume.

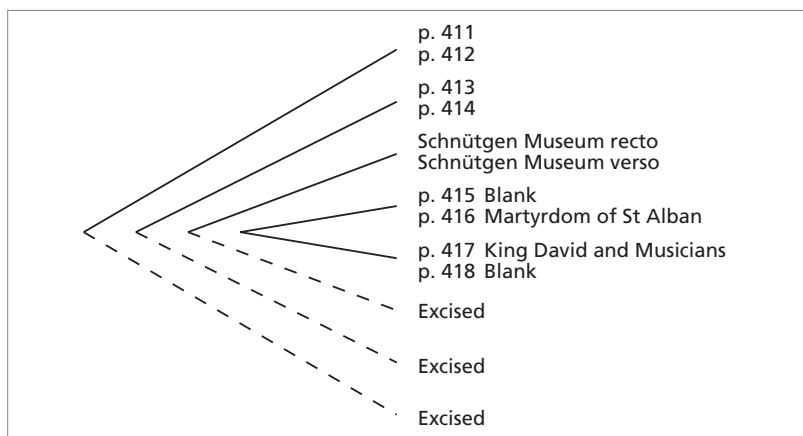
Despite this, there is physical evidence that the bifolium on which the two miniatures are painted originated at the end of the volume. Not only does the worn background of the St Alban miniature show clear signs of having been ruled as if for writing, but the prickings, made in the bifolium to allow the vertical rulings to be drawn, precisely match those in the preceding leaves. This is most clearly demonstrated by comparison between the reverse of the St Alban miniature (p. 415) and the leaf that originally faced it, now in the Schnütgen Museum.

**Table 5: Comparison of the Prickings in the Albani Psalter, p. 415, and the Schnütgen Museum leaf**

	Psalter, p. 415	Schnütgen Museum
<b>Top left:</b> a nearly vertical slit, leaning slightly to the left		
<b>Top right:</b> a vertical slit, wider in the middle		
<b>Bottom left:</b> a wedge-shaped slit at an oblique angle		
<b>Bottom right:</b> a puncture that looks like it was made with a 'v'- or 'L'-shaped point		

The evidence of these prickings suggests that the diptych bifolium was pricked and ruled as part of the last quire of the manuscript, but this does not necessarily mean that the bifolium, once painted, was intended to stay at the end of the volume. When the final quire was written it would probably have consisted of eight leaves, of which only the first three were needed for text (pp. 411–414 and the Schnütgen leaf), so

the remaining five leaves would have been blank. It would have been quite natural to use one of the two blank central bifolia for another purpose, in this case, for painting a pair of miniatures. The three other blank leaves could have been excised immediately or at any time thereafter. Every previous writer thought that the final leaves of the volume consisted of two single leaves and the Schnütgen leaf, followed by a bifolium,<sup>233</sup> but we may now confidently propose instead that the structure of the final quire was as can be seen left.



### II.7.1 The Original Arrangement of the Diptych

A possibility that has not been proposed before is that the present order of the miniatures is reversed, and their arrangement inverted. At present the miniatures face one another across the fold of the bifolium, whose outer pages are blank, with St Alban on the left and King David on the right. The ‘diptych’ form is so familiar in medieval art that no-one seems to have questioned that this was their original arrangement. But there is no obvious reason why the bifolium could not originally have been turned over and folded the other way, with the miniatures on the outside, instead of the inside, of the bifolium: with the blank pages glued together, one would have a double-sided miniature, with the David miniature on the recto and St Alban on the verso:

There is physical evidence to support this hypothesis, namely the presence of glue-like marks on the blank reverse of the miniatures, especially the King David scene. In the long full-page picture-cycles of the thirteenth century, it was not unusual for miniatures to be painted on one side only of bifolia, and for the blank sides to be glued together, and it is very common for these leaves to have come unstuck in the intervening centuries. It may be significant that the practice of sticking leaves with full-page miniatures back-to-back was also used for the picture-cycle of the *Passion and Miracles of St Edmund*, which most scholars believe to have been drawn by the Alexis Master (on whom see Chapter IV.4).<sup>234</sup> This back-to-back arrangement provides a stiffer support for the miniatures, and reduces the likelihood of pigments showing through from one side of a leaf to interfere with an image on the other side. Considerable amounts of the St Alban and King David miniatures do indeed show through to the other side of their leaves.

Iconographic evidence suggests that the bifolium was always intended to be at the back of the volume: alone of the three full-page images of King David in the Albani Psalter, the David of the ‘diptych’ is looking towards his right (our left) rather than to our right. It is normal in medieval manuscripts for depictions of authors and scribes to face towards the text that they wrote; in the vast majority of cases they are represented at the beginning of a text and they therefore face to our right, but when they appear at the end of a text, they usually face towards our left; in other words, they face back towards their preceding work.<sup>235</sup> The most famous example is the full-page miniature of the scribe Eadwine in the twelfth-century English Eadwine Psalter,<sup>236</sup> but this example of the phenomenon is by no means unique; the artist who signed himself ‘Hugo Pictor’ faces towards our left when he depicts himself at the end of a text.<sup>237</sup> Although not conclusive, this feature of the iconography suggests that the diptych was always intended to be placed after the psalms, not before. Worm-holes in the bifolium suggest that it was placed at the very end of the volume in their present arrangement (with the miniatures facing each other) at an early date. Book-worms usually burrow from the boards of a binding towards the inside of a volume, and several worm-holes in the David miniature do not have a corresponding hole in the Alban miniature, demonstrating that the David miniature was closer to the outside of the volume than the Alban miniature when these worms were at work.<sup>238</sup> The only significant worm-hole that continues from the David miniature into the Alban one appears immediately to the right of Alban’s knees.



## II.8 The Replaced Psalms Bifolium

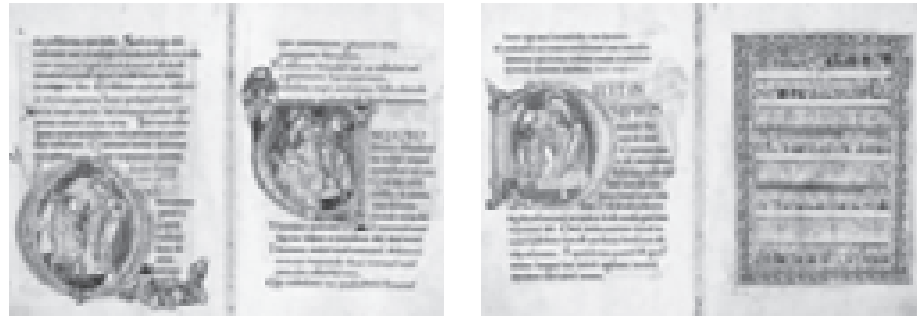
Many ideas about the Albani Psalter have depended on the hypothesis that the Alexis Quire is in some sense an addition to the original scheme: some have proposed that it was made earlier than the rest of the book, and was incorporated while the book

was being made, others have proposed that it was made a decade or more after the book, and thus added later. Numerous scholars have addressed this problem, starting with Goldschmidt in 1895, without reaching a consensus of opinion. Intricately associated with these hypotheses are several other features of the manuscript, especially the fact that the last page of the Alexis Quire (p. 72), and the first page of the main psalms text (p. 73), repeat the lettering ‘EATUS VIR’ in the opening two words of Psalm 1.

Much therefore depends on the relatively chronology of these two pages – was the Alexis Quire added to a text that already had ‘EATUS VIR’, for example, or was the second ‘EATUS VIR’ written by someone who did not know that these letters were on the Alexis Quire? Anything that can elucidate the point at which it was decided to add this quire will be of interest.

For the past ten years it has been known that the outer bifolium of the first quire of the psalms text, including the crucial p. 73, was written by a different scribe from the rest of the psalms text (see Chapter III.6), and therefore this bifolium was some sort of afterthought or replacement of the original bifolium.

**Plate 37:** Each side of the bifolium: pp. 74 and 91, pp. 92 and 73



But apparently no one has fully pursued the implications of this observation. This re-written bifolium not only provides the point of transition from the Alexis Quire to the text of the psalms, but it is also possible that the inclusion of the Alexis Quire is the reason *why* the bifolium was re-written. We will therefore try to examine the evidence step-by-step, to see what conclusions can safely be drawn.

### II.8.1 The Text of the Bifolium

The first quire of the psalms text is a regular quire of 10 leaves, like those that follow. The innermost 8 leaves (i.e. four bifolia, pp. 75–90) were written by the main scribe of the Psalms, who wrote all the following quires. The outer bifolium of the quire (pp. 73–74 and 91–92), however, was written by a different scribe (see Chapter III.6).

The text written by the two scribes runs together seamlessly without omission or repetition at the juncture of pp. 74 and 75, and at the juncture of pp. 90 and 91. For this to be achieved one of two things must have happened.

One possibility is that the main scribe (the ‘Psalms Scribe’) allowed another scribe (the ‘Bifolium Scribe’) to write the first leaf of the bifolium (p. 74); then the Psalms Scribe wrote the next four bifolia (pp. 75–90), before handing back to the Bifolium Scribe, to write the other half of the bifolium (pp. 91–92) that he had already partly written; and then he in turn handed the work back to the Psalms Scribe, to continue the rest of the Psalms text from there (p. 93 to the end). There is no obvious reason for scribes to work in this way; it is inherently illogical and unlikely. The alternative and much simpler explanation is that the Psalms Scribe wrote the whole of the first quire (pp. 73–92), as well as the following quires, but for some reason it was subsequently decided to replace the outer bifolium of the first

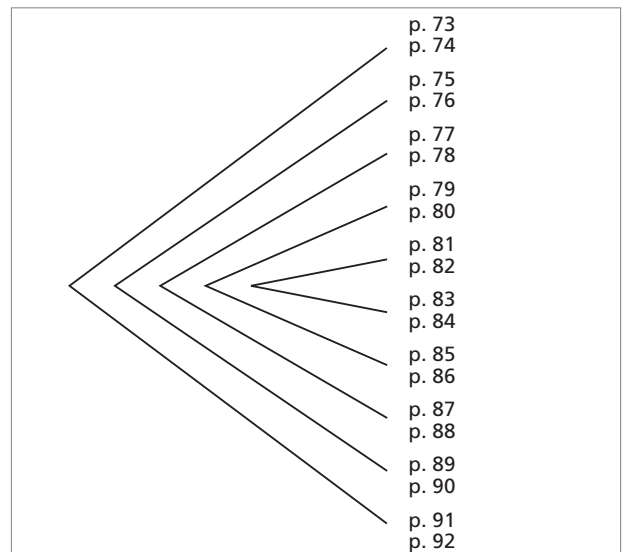


quire, and this was done by the Bifolium Scribe. This begs the question of *why* it was decided to replace the outer bifolium of the first quire, but reasons are not hard to find.

There are examples of English illuminated Psalters of the eleventh and thirteenth centuries in which the outer bifolium of the first quire was written by a scribe different from the rest of the text, and in both cases the evidence strongly suggests that this was done in order to replace the original opening of the psalms text with a new opening that is more lavish than the original one;<sup>239</sup> it therefore seems very likely that the same reason applies in the case of the Albani Psalter.

An examination of the bifolium in the Albani Psalter will help clarify what has happened. The Bifolium Scribe starting writing with the last syllable ('-dra') of the word 'cathedra' in verse 1 of Psalm 1 (p. 74). The other side of this leaf (p. 73), was reserved for a page of decoration, including the text of the Psalm up to and including 'cathe-', the first part of the word 'cathedra'.

The table below represents the last page of the Alexis Quire, and the first and last pages of the first quire of the main psalms text, with the outer bifolium marked in bold, listing in columns the page numbers, the text covered, and the beginning and ending words of the pages:



**Table 6: Pages 72–75 and 90–92 of the Albani Psalter**

Page	Psalm:verse:word	Text begins ... and ends
<b>p. 72</b>	Psalm 1:1:1–2	BEATUS VIR
<b>p. 73</b>	Psalm 1:1:1–17	EATUS VIR ... ET IN CATH
<b>p. 74</b>	Psalms 1:1:17–2:2:3	dra pestilentę ... reges terrę
<b>p. 75</b>	Psalms 2:2:4–2:12:10	& principes ... uia iusta.
...		
<b>p. 90</b>	Psalms 10:8:9–11:7:5	uidit uultus ... casta argentums
<b>p. 91</b>	Psalms 11:7:6–12:5:10	igne examinatum ... si motus
<b>p. 92</b>	Psalms 12:5:11–13:3:29	fuero ego ... labiis eorum.

The Bifolium Scribe may have started at the syllable '-dra' because the page that he was replacing also started at this syllable, and he was copying exactly the text on the pages he was replacing. This is unlikely, however, partly because the Psalms Scribe never divided a word between one page and the next anywhere else in the Psalter. In addition, it is likely that the Bifolium Scribe was trying to fit *more* text on this page than had been on the page he was replacing. We can deduce this from the fact that, unlike the Psalms Scribe, who laid out his text as verse, with each verse starting on a new line, the Bifolium Scribe wrote his text continuously, like prose. We can therefore fairly safely assume that the Bifolium Scribe was squashing up his text on p. 74 to allow space for a more lavish incipit on p. 73 than there had been on the original bifolium. At the same time he had to ensure that his text ended precisely at the right point at the bottom of p. 74, so that the text would continue without omission or repetition at the top of the pre-existing p. 75. To achieve this, he probably lightly sketched the letters for p. 73, and got as far as 'cathe-', so that he would know where to start his text on p. 74. Due to a very minor miscalculation or mistake, the person who in due course supplied the ornamental lettering on p. 73 only got as far as 'cath-' instead of 'cathe-'. Although modern scholars have drawn a lot of attention to this apparent mistake, it is unlikely that it would have attracted much, if any, attention in the Middle Ages.



We have therefore proposed a likely explanation for the production of the replacement bifolium, and outlined how it would have been achieved in practical terms. It is now worth considering what might have been on the discarded bifolium. The second half of the bifolium, the last leaf of the quire (pp. 91–92), must have had exactly the same textual contents as the replacement, and as long as the leaf started and ended at the right words, it would not have mattered exactly how the text was arranged on the two pages. But the arrangement of the text on the first half of the bifolium, the first leaf of the quire, is very important for an understanding of the Psalter as a whole.

If the Alexis Quire were not yet destined for inclusion in the volume when the original first bifolium of the psalms was written, then the first page (p. 73) would have had to include the Beatus initial. If we imagine that it was on the same scale as the largest of the other major Psalter divisions (Ps. 109, at p 299) there would have been space on the page for the ‘B’, plus several words of the text in coloured display capitals, maybe something like ‘EAT[US] VIR QUI N[ON]’ written vertically to the right of the ‘B’ and ‘ABIIT I[N] C[ON]SILIO I[M]PIOR[UM]’ written horizontally below it, plus four more lines of text written in ordinary script and ink. These four lines, with each verse stating on a new line, would be enough to accommodate the rest of the text of verses 1 and 2:

‘Et in via peccatorum non stetit,  
Et in cathedra pestilentie non sedit;  
Sed in lege domini voluntas eius,  
Et in lege eius meditabitur die ac nocte’

**Plate 38:**

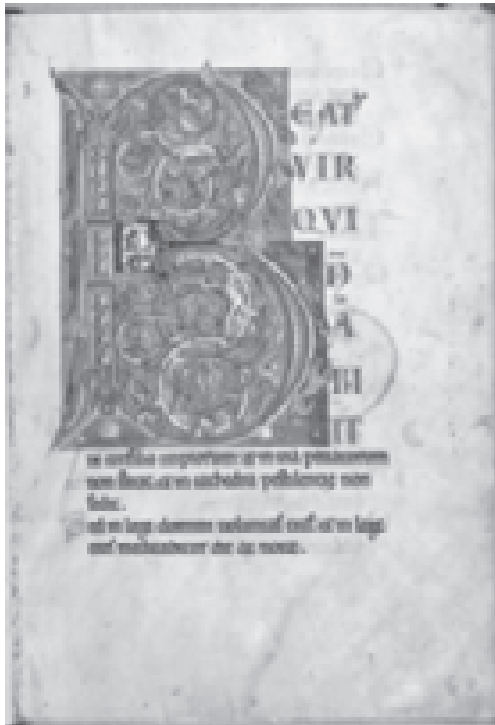
The Copenhagen Psalter,  
Beatus page;  
Copenhagen, Kongelige  
Bibliotek, Thott 143 2<sup>o</sup>,  
fol. 17r

This text (Psalm 1:1–2) is precisely the text that appears on the first page of the Psalms in the later twelfth-century English ‘Copenhagen Psalter’.<sup>240</sup>

A closely comparable situation is found in earlier Crowland Psalter (a manuscript that has been mentioned several times above for its points of similarity with the Albani Psalter): its Beatus page consists of a large initial ‘B’ plus the whole text of verse 1 (as far as the word ‘sedit’) in display capitals.<sup>241</sup> If verses 1–2 were indeed included with the Beatus initial on the original p. 73 of the Albani Psalter, this would mean that p. 74 would have had to accommodate 17½ words (equivalent to two lines) fewer than it does today. These extra two lines of space would have been enough for the text on the original p. 74 to have started each verse on a new line, as happens on p. 75 and the rest of the quire as it was originally written.

We may therefore propose as a working hypothesis that the Albani Psalter’s original Beatus initial was on the page that was later replaced by the present p. 73, and that there would have been no need for such an initial on the last leaf of the Alexis Quire, which in turn suggests that the Alexis Quire did not yet exist, or that it belonged to another manuscript, or, the most likely of the three options, that it did not yet have a Beatus initial on its final verso.

Some support for the hypothesis that there was a Beatus initial on the original p. 73, is provided by an offset of gold on the full-page miniature of David Harping (p. 56), in the foliage above and to the left of the dove at David’s ear. There is no gold on the first page of the Alexis Quire (p. 57) that now faces the David miniature, nor gold on the present p. 73. Before the insertion of the Alexis Quire, however, this David miniature would have faced the start of the psalms text, and this gold offset is therefore perhaps a vestige of the original Beatus initial (see Plate 39).<sup>242</sup>



It is possible that the Bifolium Scribe was working at some point after the Psalms Scribe had completed his work. We can surmise this both from the stylistically later script of the replacement (see Chapter III.6) and from the likelihood that the Psalms Scribe was perhaps no longer available to replace his own first bifolium. This potentially makes it possible that the first bifolium of the psalms text was replaced significantly later than the main psalms text was written. If this were so, and if the re-writing of the bifolium had something to do with the insertion of the Alexis Quire, as seems likely, then this would make it possible for the Alexis Quire to be a significantly later insertion.



**Plate 39:** Albani Psalter, p. 56; detail

### III The Scribes

In the previous chapters we have deliberately avoided writing much about the identities of the various artists and scribes, but it is now necessary to tackle these fundamental issues, starting with the scribes.

Palaeography is the study of handwriting and the development of script. It may seem to many people to be a somewhat arcane art, but it enables specialists not only to decipher and read difficult handwriting, but also to understand the different parts of a manuscript such as the Albani Psalter, in rather the same way that distinguishing between the subtly different styles of tracery windows of a gothic cathedral can allow one to comprehend the sequence of its construction and its subsequent alterations.

Most medieval scribes would probably have been able to write more than one style of handwriting, and they would surely have been capable of writing with varying amounts of care or carelessness. It is therefore usually difficult to state with absolute certainty that two different samples of handwriting of similar date and place of origin were, or were not, written by a single individual, but with experience palaeographers may make confident judgements on such matters. Some centres of manuscript production developed a ‘house-style’, either through a conscious attempt at uniformity, or through a less-conscious tendency of scribes and artists to be influenced by and emulate the work of others, especially those they worked alongside. A distinctive ‘house-style’ is especially likely to develop in cases where one ‘master scribe’ is responsible for the training of one or more other workers, or ‘setting a standard’ for them to follow, and where there is a lot of work being done over a relatively short period.

St Albans is an interesting case: not only have a series of house-styles been discerned for successive periods of the twelfth century, but there is also considerable evidence that the abbey hired professional scribes for extended periods. Abbot Paul (1077–1093) ‘had noble volumes copied for the church by expert scribes, sought from afar’.<sup>243</sup> His successor, Abbot Richard (1097–1119), augmented the church revenues assigned to the scriptorium,<sup>244</sup> and unless all the extra money was going on materials, we may assume that some of it was being used to pay wages to professionals. Abbot Geoffrey (1119–1146) reorganised the scriptorium finances to include three meal-allowances, which suggests that three non-monks were being given meals as part of the terms of their employment;<sup>245</sup> among the manuscripts commissioned by Geoffrey were ‘a missal, adorned with gold, and another in two volumes, decorated throughout with the finest gold, written in large, well-spaced letters; and a precious psalter, similarly illuminated throughout with gold.’<sup>246</sup>

Professional scribes were employed to copy books for the library and deluxe copies of texts such as the Bible, but it is probable that even when professional scribes were available, members of the monastic community would often write the liturgical books for daily use, because a scribe needed an understanding of the liturgy in order

to write such a book properly.<sup>247</sup> This is certainly the impression given in the Chronicle of the Benedictine abbey of Abingdon, not far from Oxford, a decade or two before the Albani Psalter was produced. This tells us that in addition to the cloistered scribes, who wrote missals, graduals, antiphonals, and other liturgical books, Abbot Faricius (1110–1117) hired six scribes to write library texts (works by Sts Augustine and Gregory, commentaries, etc.).<sup>248</sup>

Six different scribes have previously been identified as contributors to the Albani Psalter, possibly over an extended period, but there is some disagreement about which scribe was responsible for some pieces of writing, and about which other books they wrote in. In the past the scribes have sometimes been numbered 1–6, but such numbering is perhaps unhelpful to the ordinary reader, both because it is difficult to remember which number relates to which visual characteristics and which textual contents, and because numerals imply a chronology from earliest to latest, which has not been definitively established for the Albani Psalter. I have therefore here adopted more evocative names, that make no implications about their absolute date or relative sequence, but in order to facilitate comparison with the previous literature I also provide the numerical names in brackets.

### III.1 The Calendar Scribe (Scribe 1)

One scribe wrote most of the Calendar. The simplest way to distinguish the handwriting of the Calendar Scribe from the others in the Psalter is that he frequently used a form of abbreviation mark somewhat like a sideways angular ‘s’, or a reversed and rotated ‘z’; the normal shape at this date was a more-or-less horizontal, curved, or wavy line, as found elsewhere in the work of this scribe.

This zig-zag abbreviation mark is by no means exclusive to this scribe, but when used by other scribes it is usually used specifically as an abbreviation for the letters **er** (e.g. ‘t<sup>z</sup>cia’ for ‘tercia’ and ‘litt<sup>z</sup>a’ for ‘littera’) rather than for other letters.

Other features of his script, such as the letters **r**, **f**, and tall **s**, in all of which the vertical stroke descends below the line of writing, are more typical of eleventh- than twelfth-century handwriting. The general proportions and aspect are also closer to those of late eleventh-century script than the other handwriting in the volume. This could be interpreted to suggest that the Calendar is older than the other parts of the manuscript, or that the Calendar Scribe

was trained in an older tradition than the other scribes.

This scribe’s handwriting has been compared to the script of the marginalia in a copy of Cicero’s *Rhetorica* that was at St Albans by the thirteenth century,<sup>249</sup> but it is easy to argue that there are more differences than similarities. The Cicero marginalia scribe almost always uses a normal form of abbreviation mark instead of the Calendar Scribe’s characteristic zig-zag shape; his letter **r** does not descend below the line; unlike the Calendar Scribe’s work, the bowl of the letter **p** is usually not closed; his script has an angular aspect, especially in rounded letters such as **d**; his **d** has a diagonal ascender, while the Calendar Scribe usually writes **d** with a vertical ascender; and the letter **a** in the marginalia usually does not have a head – quite unlike the **a** of the Calendar Scribe.

### III.2 The Psalms Scribe (Scribe 2)

Another scribe wrote most of the text of the psalms, litany, and the following prayers. The most important thing about the Psalms Scribe for the study of the Albani Psalter is that his handwriting has not been identified in any other manuscript

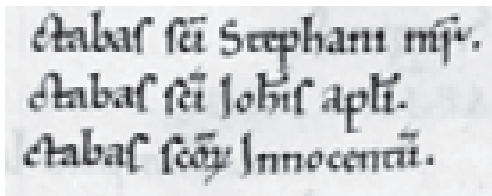


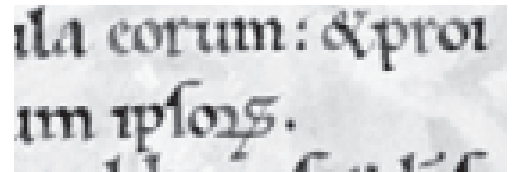
Plate 40: Albani Psalter, p. 3; detail

associated with St Albans (of which there are many), and he may not even be English.<sup>250</sup> This strongly suggests that if he was a St Albans monk he learnt to write before he joined the monastic community, or perhaps that he was a lay professional (not necessarily English) rather than a permanent member of the community. Despite this, it must be admitted that his handwriting is not particularly fine or regular, especially when compared to the work of a really good scribe such as some of the work by the Obits Scribe (discussed below). His comparative mediocrity may support the suggestion, raised above (Chapter III.2.1), that the Psalter was not originally an expensive commission: perhaps the use of inferior parchment and an inexpert scribe indicate that the work was being undertaken with a close eye on the cost.

His script can be distinguished from the others in the Albani Psalter by the following features: **f** and tall **s** have substantial wedges to the left; the lower-right stroke of the ampersand often descends below the line, and curves upward to the right; the abbreviation-symbol for **orum** at the ends of words is like an 's' with an oblique line through it, a bit like a sloping '\$' sign; the letter **a** has a rather small insignificant head; and the letter **e** usually has an upward sloping serif.

He can also be distinguished by the use of a particular form of the 'punctus elevatus' punctuation-mark, which was rarely if ever used at St Albans in the twelfth century. In English and northern French manuscripts this is usually shaped like a tick above a dot (see e.g. p. 92, lines 1, 2, 3, etc.), but when written by the Psalms Scribe it is shaped instead more like an oblique stroke or a shallow arch above a dot (see e.g. p. 93, lines 2, 4, 5, etc.), a shape that can perhaps be associated with manuscripts from further east, in the Low Countries and Rhineland.<sup>251</sup>

There are numerous instances in which this scribe divided words in a way that was more typical of the eleventh than twelfth century, such as 'superuacue' written as 'super uacue' (p. 115, immediately below the initial) and 'exurge' written as 'ex urge' (p. 182, middle of line 15).<sup>252</sup> Conversely, it was also very common for this scribe to write two words too closely together, as if they were one word, and often he or another scribe has had to clarify the text by putting an accent over the first word and indicating the word-break with a stroke below the line.<sup>253</sup>



**Plate 41:** Albani Psalter, p. 75; detail

### III.2.1 How Long Did it Take the Psalms Scribe to Write the Psalter?

It is sometimes said that it would take a medieval monk a lifetime to write a single book. This may perhaps be true in a few cases, but what evidence we have suggests that this was not typical. We have already noted that eleventh- and twelfth-century books might be written by professionals, rather than monks, and it is likely that a professional would be capable of writing more quickly than an 'amateur' such as a monk, both because he was more practised, and because he was not having to stop work at frequent intervals for mass, the Divine Office, and other monastic duties. As the Psalms Scribe of the Psalter has not been found in any other manuscript from St Albans, it is quite possible that he was a professional, hired for a limited period of time.<sup>254</sup> It would be interesting to know how long it took him to write the Albani Psalter, and although no definite answer can be expected, we may make an educated estimate.

Occasionally a scribe made notes in a manuscript indicating how long it took him to write it. A particularly pertinent comparison for the Albani Psalter can be made with a manuscript of a collection of four works including Lanfranc's *The Body and Blood of the Lord*, which was probably written in about the middle of the first half of the twelfth century at Worcester.<sup>255</sup> A note by the scribe, 'Labor unius mensis',

records that it took him one month to write. From studying this and other examples, Michael Gullick has calculated that an ‘average’ rate of work for a twelfth-century scribe would be about 200 lines of writing per day.<sup>256</sup>

It seems clear from very rough calculations that, all things being approximately equal (words per hour, hours per day, days per month, etc.), the Albani Psalter should have taken a lot less time to write than the Lanfranc manuscript; perhaps as little as two or three weeks.<sup>257</sup> Even if the results of our calculations are not very accurate, it seems likely that the Albani Psalter text could have been written in a period considerably shorter than a few months, because in the twelfth century an entire Bible could be written in six months.<sup>258</sup> It could be that the Psalms Scribe was commissioned to write the psalms precisely because he was known for his speed. The use of wrongly ruled parchment for several quires (see Chapter II.4.6) could certainly be a symptom of rapid production: one possible interpretation is that the scribe could not wait for a new supply of appropriately ruled parchment to become available. This is significant for assessing any hypothesis about the Psalter that depends on a ‘change of plan’ during the course of its production, as it is harder to imagine a ‘change of plan’ occurring during a short space of time, than, for example, during the course of several months or a year.

### III.3 The Chanson Scribe (Scribe 3)

The whole Alexis Quire and the rubrics associated with the historiated initials were written by a third scribe, whom we may call the ‘Chanson Scribe’. The main characteristics of his script are the form of his ampersand, whose lower right-hand stroke does not turn up towards the right as normal, but usually turns down towards the left;<sup>259</sup> the letter **g** in which the lower bowl is usually somewhat to the right of, and about the same size as, the upper one; the ‘forking’ at the top of ascenders in the letters **l**, **k**, **h**, etc.; and the bottoms of descenders, that sometimes turn down to the left and sometimes turn up to the right. Apart from the Alexis *Chanson* itself, the contributions to the manuscript by this scribe are either on unruled pages, or do not follow the ruling very well.

The Latin version of the paraphrase of St Gregory (p. 68) is written in smaller script than the preceding *Chanson*, with much smaller spaces between words. The French version starts off a bit larger and more spread out, but after five lines or so it becomes more erratic, and the lines are not straight. It has therefore been suggested that the Gregory texts were added by another scribe, and that this ‘is especially evident from the way the text does not follow the ruled space, and in that the arabesque initials differ from other initials in the quire.’<sup>260</sup> It is indeed true that the script does not follow the ruling of the page, but the ruling on this page is very faint – invisible in most reproductions – and it is possible that some of the irregularity of the script is due to the fact that the scribe could not see the ruling. This would suggest he was writing in poor lighting conditions, or, more likely, his eyesight was worse than when he wrote the *Chanson*. Adequate light must always have been a problem for medieval scribes, especially in winter when there are fewer daylight hours, so scribes doubtless knew that they should not attempt to write when there was insufficient light. If the scribe’s eyesight had deteriorated, this suggests that a significant period of time had elapsed between the writing of the *Chanson* and the writing of the paraphrases of St Gregory, and such an elapse of time could also explain the different style of painted initials. It may alternatively, or additionally, be that the scribe had become somewhat infirm, which would again suggest the passage of time between the writing of the *Chanson* and the Gregory texts.

Wormald compared the Chanson Scribe’s handwriting to that of a St Albans calendar in another manuscript,<sup>261</sup> and the marginalia of the Cicero mentioned above,<sup>262</sup> while Thomson said it was ‘very like’ the main text in the Cicero manuscript. While the overall appearance of the scripts in these other manuscripts is similar, neither is especially close, in the present writer’s opinion.

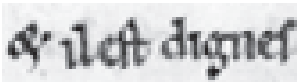


Plate 42: Albani Psalter, p. 61; detail

There has been some disagreement about whether the Chanson Scribe wrote the obit of Roger the Hermit (p. 11), because some of his most distinctive features, such as the ampersand, do not appear in the obit, making judgement more difficult.<sup>263</sup> But the overall appearance, as well as details such as the forked ascender to the **l** and **h**, and especially the shape of the **g**, are so very similar that there seems no reason to doubt that Roger's obit was written by the Chanson Scribe.

The Chanson Scribe's spelling sometimes differs from that of the other scribes. To take just a few examples, the psalms text (and their incipits in display capitals) usually use the normal early twelfth-century 'e-caudata' or 'tagged e' *ē* to represent the diphthong *æ* in Latin, but the Chanson Scribe regularly uses plain *e* in his rubrics, as was normal by the end of the twelfth century; and on p. 312 the incipit reads 'BEATI IMMACULATI', but the rubric in the initial reads 'beati **in**maculati ...', a common medieval variant.

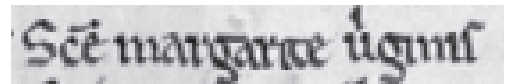
Several factors, including the personal nature of the text on p. 72 ('It has seemed to me ...', 'You recently heard our word ...', 'It has seemed to me that ...'), have suggested to many investigators that the scribe of these lines was also their author, and that their author is most likely to have been Abbot Geoffrey.<sup>264</sup> It seems plausible that only someone in a position of authority such as Geoffrey would have added the two versions of St Gregory's dictum on the use of images (p. 68). While attractive, this hypothesis must remain unproven, because even if Geoffrey were the composer of these texts, it does not necessarily follow that he was their scribe.

### III.4 The Markyate Dedication Scribe (Scribe 5)

Two feasts added to the calendar are by another scribe, the most significant of which is the entry for the Dedication of Markyate Priory. The 'Markyate Dedication Scribe' does not seem to have contributed anything to the Albani Psalter apart from the entries at 27 May (p. 7) and 20 July (p. 9), and his handwriting has not been recognised in any other manuscript. This scribe's abbreviation mark (used in the words 's[an]c[t]e' in both entries) rises from left to right, then dips at the right; the lower bowl of his **g** is set well to the right; and he uses no coloured ink.

This scribe was apparently somewhat careless or hasty, because he did not wait for the ink to dry before turning the page or closing the book: his wet ink has offset onto the facing page (pp. 6 and 7).

Plate 43: Albani Psalter, p. 9; detail

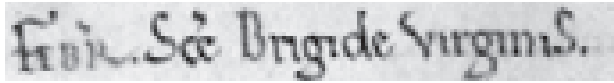


### III.5 The Obits Scribe (Scribe 4)

Two further scribes made additions to the calendar. One was responsible for the great majority of the additions, including most of the obits. The 'Obits Scribe' has long been recognised as having handwriting 'very similar' to that of a prolific St Albans scribe who was active from about 1130 until at least 1151, named 'Scribe B' by Thomson,<sup>265</sup> and more evocatively called 'the St Albans Calligrapher' by Christopher Hohler;<sup>266</sup> in my opinion they are not just 'very similar', but the same person.<sup>267</sup> It is tempting to assume that he was responsible for the abbey library, because he seems not just to have been a copyist of books and charters, but also took a special interest in facilitating use of the books: he added tables of contents, rubrics, and running titles to books written by other scribes. In other words, he added material that would make it easier to find specific texts within multi-part or multi-text volumes.

The characteristic features of this scribe in the Albani Psalter are his tendency to write using multi-coloured inks, especially red and green; an overall wobbly and uneven appearance; descenders that trail off towards the left, especially on the second **i** of **ii**; a **g** whose lower bowl has a sharp serif, like a fishinghook;

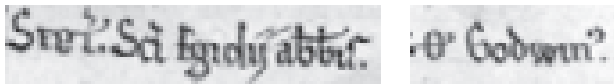
a large *s* at the ends of words; a capital *A* with a very low cross-stroke; and the use of a wavy abbreviation-mark, somewhat similar in shape to an *s*.



**Plate 44:** Alhani Psalter, p. 4; detail

Surprisingly, some palaeographers have identified this scribe as the Scribe of the Initial to Psalm 105 (discussed below); they were presumably misled by the similar use of alternating coloured inks.<sup>268</sup>

There seems to be an underlying assumption in much that has been written about the scribes of the Psalter that if a scribe made more than one contribution to the volume they were made at the same time. Thus, for example, it is implied that the Chanson Scribe made his additions to the psalms section and to the calendar at the same time as he wrote the Alexis Quire. But this is a false assumption: if a scribe made two contributions to the same page a decade or more apart, we might not be able to see any significant difference in the two examples of his handwriting. To look at the matter another way, it might perhaps be more logical to assume that whenever there is a difference of style, or ink, or some other feature, that the difference is likely to represent a different moment in time. This may be the case with the Obits Scribe, for practical and visual reasons. The practical reason is that if Christina owned the book, she would logically want the obits of her relations added while she was still alive, and there would perhaps be less reason for someone to add them after her death.



**Plate 45:** Alhani Psalter, p. 11; details

One kind of visual evidence relates to the use of different colours in his calendar entries. If all the entries were made at the same time, one might expect them all to exhibit the same combination of red and green inks, but they do not. The entries for Sts Amalburga, Christopher and Cucuphas (10 and 25 July), the Maccabees, Oswin (1 and 20 August), and Etheldreda (17 October) are entirely in plain brown ink; Sts Lambert (17 September), Faith (6 October), Hilda, and Felicitas (17 and 23 November) are entirely in red ink; the Circumcision (1 January) is entirely in green ink; St Frideswide (19 October) is in brown and red; and Sts Marcelline and Peter (2 June), the Octave of St John (1 July), Sts Germanus, Remigius, and Vedastus (1 October), and All Saints (1 November), are in green and brown. No obvious pattern emerges from this, but the fact that a single month, October, contains several different combinations of colours, in addition to the 'normal' combination of red and green, suggests that they were not all written at the same time. The other visual evidence is that some of the Obit Scribe's work appears firm and controlled, and other parts seems very shaky and uneven: compare the entry for St Giles with the obit of Godwin (1 and 5 September, p. 11): the first is very uneven, while the other is comparatively neat.<sup>269</sup> It is tempting to conclude that the most uneven entries were written by the scribe when he was older, when his hand was less steady and his eyesight less sharp but, as with the similar comments about the Chanson Scribe, this can only be speculation.

One further potential contribution by the Obits Scribe may be suggested. The incipit to Psalm 10 (p. 89) in green display capitals has a mark of abbreviation in red over the letters 'DÑO' (i.e. d[omi]no). The form of the ornament to the right-hand side of this abbreviation mark is characteristic of the Obits Scribe's work in other manuscripts,<sup>270</sup> but does not occur in any other incipit in the Alhani Psalter.<sup>271</sup>

**Plate 46:** Alhani Psalter, p. 89; detail





### III.6 The Bifolium Scribe (Scribe 6)

Until recently palaeographers had always stated that there was just one scribe responsible for the text of the psalms, litany, and following prayers.<sup>272</sup> In 1997 I revealed that a different scribe wrote the outer bifolium of the first quire of the psalms.<sup>273</sup> This observation may seem trivial, but is of fundamental significance for several reasons. First, unlike the Psalms Scribe this scribe writes a style of script similar to that of other manuscripts from St Albans.<sup>274</sup> Second, the bifolium written by this scribe has historiated initials painted by the main artists of the rest of the psalms, proving that this bifolium is contemporary with the decoration of the rest of the psalms, and is therefore unlikely to be a significantly later addition.<sup>275</sup> Third, this style of script is not thought to have been in use at St Albans before about 1130, suggesting that the psalms section of the manuscript is unlikely to have been produced much earlier than this.<sup>276</sup> Fourth, the fact that this bifolium was written by a different scribe from the rest of the quire suggests that (i) the Psalms Scribe was no longer available and it was therefore perhaps an itinerant professional, and (ii) it was written to replace another bifolium that was, for some reason, no longer acceptable: the most likely explanation of this is that a decision had been taken to change the opening page of the Psalms. The latter observation should radically influence the ways scholars think about the placement of the Alexis Quire immediately preceding the Psalms, as examined in Chapter II.3.9.

The writing of the ‘Bifolium Scribe’ may be distinguished from that of the script of rest of the psalms by the following features: his script is much more regular and graceful; its proportions are more squat, with ascenders and descenders extending less high or low than those of the Psalms Scribe; there is often a slight lean to the left, while the Psalms Scribe’s writing is more upright; the lower bowl of his **g** may be almost closed, and have a shape more like a tilted ‘D’ than the wide-open reversed ‘C’-shape of Psalms Scribe; minims have rounded left shoulders, unlike the sharp angular serifs of the Psalms Scribe; the bottoms of minims turn up to the right in a more graceful gentle curve; tops of ascenders such as **d** do not have sharp serifs; and **orum** at the end of words is always written out in full instead of using an abbreviation. The Bifolium Scribe also carefully left curved spaces for curved initials (pp. 74, 92), unlike the Psalms scribe, who most often left a straight-sided space for normal-shaped initials (see Chapter II.4.1b).

The same sort of word-division used by the Psalms Scribe is also made by the Bifolium Scribe (e.g. ‘abominabiles’ written as ‘ab ominabiles’, p. 92), which raises the possibility that both these scribes were copying these word-divisions from the exemplar. If so, it suggests that the exemplar was relatively old, or had been written by a relatively old scribe: such word-division was not common in the twelfth century, and indeed a later scribe, perhaps the Psalms Corrector (see below) found it troublesome enough that he inserted connecting-lines to join-up the divided words.

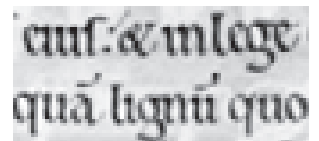


Plate 47: Albani Psalter, p. 74; detail



Plate 48: Albani Psalter, p. 92; detail

### III.7 The Scribe of the Psalm 105 Initial

It has been suggested that the writing immediately above the stuck-in initial of Psalm 105 (p. 285; see Chapter II.5), is the same as (or at least very similar to) the script of the main scribe of the calendar (Scribe 1),<sup>277</sup> or the same as to the main group of additions to the calendar (Scribe 4),<sup>278</sup> but such attributions have not found general acceptance. The sample of writing by the ‘Scribe of the Psalm 105 Initial’ is small – just six words – but it is enough from which to draw some confident general conclusions.

One could say that the single main development in the script used for writing books, from the ‘Caroline minuscule’ of the ninth century through to the ‘Gothic’ of the late Middle Ages, is from roundness to angularity: the letter **o** and the bows of letters such as **b** and **d** evolve from circles to ovals to parallelograms. The degree of roundness or



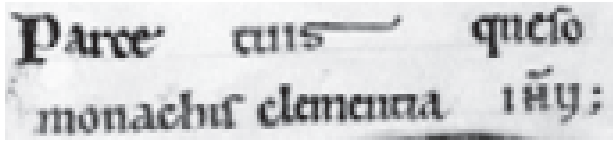


Plate 49: Alhani Psalter, p. 285; detail

angle at the top (compare this to the **e** of the Calendar Scribe, such as those in the first two green lines at the top of p. 3); and in 'monachus' the bow of the **a** has a very pronounced angularity (compare it to the **a** of the Calendar Scribe, such as the top line on p. 3, or with the two rounded **as** in the word 'adiutas' in line 5 of the adjacent psalm text on p. 285).



Plate 50: Alhani Psalter, p. 3; detail, top line

The proportions of the letters are also different: the ascenders by the Calendar Scribe tend to be tall, sometimes more than the height of the minims (e.g. the **d** in 'dies' on the top line of p. 3), whereas the ascenders of tall **s**, **h**, and **l** in the Psalm 105 inscription are very short and squat by comparison. All this suggests that the Psalm 105 inscription is stylistically later in date than the calendar and main text of the psalms; this suggestion gains support from the fact that the style of the Psalm 105 initial is also stylistically later than the rest of the illumination in the manuscript.

### III.8 The Psalms Corrector

Study of the manuscript for the purposes of this facsimile commentary has revealed the presence of another previously unnoticed scribe.<sup>279</sup> Most students of the Alhani Psalter have studied it for its images, or for its Alexis *Chanson*, and a few have studied it for its calendar; but few have looked closely at what was originally its probable *raison d'être*: the text of the psalms. This has meant that approximately half the volume has not been scrutinised closely before.<sup>280</sup>

One main hand corrected the text of the psalms in the twelfth century.<sup>281</sup> Sometimes it was to make a minor spelling alteration,<sup>282</sup> but more often it was to make a more substantial correction or addition. Corrections were made, as usual, by scraping away the incorrect text with a pen-knife, and then writing the correct text in its place; corrections are therefore often most easily noticed due to the different appearance of the scraped parchment, and the different ink of the correction. Among the more substantial corrections, involving more than three consecutive words, are: 'a me ad defensionem meam conspice' (p. 111, line 7) 'erunt nominis tui d[omi]ne in om[n]i' (p. 162, line 1), 'Sitiuit in te anima' and '[I]n t[er]ra deserta & in uia' (p. 190, lines 7 and 4 from the bottom).<sup>283</sup>

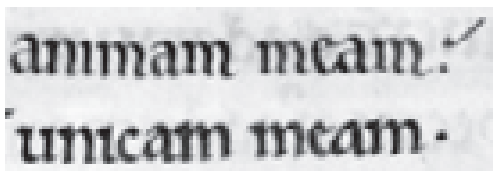


Plate 51: Alhani Psalter, p. 111; detail: the upper line is by the Psalms Corrector, the lower line is by the main Psalms Scribe

The script of this scribe tends to be relatively rounded and is comparable to that of the Bifolium Scribe; on this purely stylistic basis one might expect it to have been written before the Psalm 105 initial was inserted into the volume. Appropriate moments for the text of the psalms to have been corrected might be immediately after it had been written, or when the Psalter moved from being used only by Christina (when conformity would perhaps have been less important) to being a corporate possession of Markyate Priory, when it would have been desirable for the Psalter to conform to the text in other communally-chanted copies of the psalms.

## IV The Artists

In Wormald's words, 'The significance of the Albani Psalter style in the history of English illumination of the twelfth century is that it was the first continental style for about 150 years to lay hold of the national style and to modify it profoundly'.<sup>284</sup>

### IV.1 Previous Opinions

In 1895 Adolph Goldschmidt thought that the illustration of the prefatory full-page miniatures, the Alexis Quire, and the Psalm 105 initial were the work of a single artist, and that these were added to an existing manuscript (calendar, psalms, etc.) decorated by another artist.

Writing sixty years later, T. S. R. Boase thought, in essence, that one artist was responsible for the miniatures; another for the initials and the 'diptych' at the end; and that the calendar was shared between them. It is not clear whether or not he had seen the manuscript, but he acknowledged his use of the black-and-white photographs that were taken by Mr Fein of the Warburg Institute in 1949, and concluded:

'Certainly the calendar scenes of the months ... are in some cases by the artist of the full-page gospel scenes, though the psalter [i.e. the psalms section] hand predominates. Even in the initials to the psalms there are various hands employed, and some of the drawing is again close to that of the full-page scenes. The artist of these scenes is the dominant personality of the book. ... The Beatus page ... is also by his hand. ... The main artist of the initials seems to have been responsible also for the two full-page paintings that conclude the book'.<sup>285</sup>

Margaret Rickert discerned three artists.<sup>286</sup> The calendar, psalm initials except the Beatus initial, and the diptych 'are certainly all by one hand';<sup>287</sup> the prefatory picture-cycle is by 'a very different hand'; while the Beatus initial, Battling Knights, Alexis and Emmaus miniatures (i.e. everything in the Alexis Quire) 'seem to be in a style which falls between that of the biblical miniatures and the Psalter initials'. She explained in some detail why she thought that the Alexis Quire is not by the artist of the picture cycle.<sup>288</sup>

Otto Pächt thought that the prefatory miniature-cycle and the Alexis Quire, and the design of the majority of the other historiated initials, were the work of one artist, whom he christened 'The Alexis Master'.<sup>289</sup>

C. R. Dodwell thought that four artists painted the historiated initials.<sup>290</sup> The Alexis Master painted the Beatus initial and another artist painted the Psalm 105 initial. A third artist painted the initials on pp. 73–93, 134–155, and 193–284, plus the calendar and the full-page miniatures forming the final 'diptych' (pp. 416–417); and a fourth artist painted the remaining psalm initials: pp. 94–133, 156–192, and 288 to the end. Haney agreed with Dodwell's division of hands.<sup>291</sup> Given the opportunity to revise his ideas after an interval of more than 30 years, he did not change his division of artists, but stated that the Psalm 105 initial and the Alexis Quire were added to the manuscript 'long after it had been produced'.<sup>292</sup> In his view the Alexis Quire illustrations (which he dates about 1135) are by the artist of the prefatory picture cycle (which he dates about 1120–1123).

Jane Geddes disagreed with Dodwell and Haney's analysis of division of work between the two artists of the historiated initials, and proposed an alternative view.<sup>293</sup> Her analyses were the first to be supported in print by colour reproductions. Both Geddes's and Dodwell's analyses propose that on several occasions both artists worked on a single bifolium; this is not impossible, but not what one would expect.

From this brief summary of some of the published opinions, it is clear that the issue has been controversial since the manuscript began to be studied by art historians, and a fresh look at the question may therefore be warranted. Since we will be

assessing images of varying scale and technique, ranging from fairly small lightly coloured line-drawings (e.g. the Signs of the Zodiac in the calendar), to fully painted full-page miniatures, any conclusions must make allowances for the differences that different techniques, materials, and scale may make on style, because the different properties of brush-and-pigment and pen-and-ink are likely to cause a single artist to work in somewhat different ways.

We will attempt to analyse the miniatures both using techniques of Morellian connoisseurship (looking closely at small details such as eyes, ears, drapery folds, etc.) to find each artists' habitual distinguishing traits, and also by looking at the overall design and conception of the scenes, such as the use of architecture to articulate the scene, narrative techniques, and methods of expressing hierarchy. On finding differences, we must also attempt to assess whether they are the result of a single artist taking different amounts of care, or perhaps working at different stages of his career and stylistic development, or whether we are justified in proposing the involvement of two different individuals. Conversely, if we consider that two miniatures are very similar in style, we should consider the possibility that they may be by two different artists, one of them emulating the style of the other closely.

## IV.2 The Alexis Quire

### IV.2.1 The Alexis Miniature

If we are to call any artist 'the Alexis Master', a name that has been in use for half a century, it has to be the artist of the Alexis miniature itself (p. 57), so this is where our examination must start. Starting with the way in which faces in the Alexis miniature are constructed, we see that eyes are made up of two curved lines that meet above the cheek-bone. The eyebrow is drawn as a shallow curve, which usually joins, or nearly joins, the line that delineates the juncture of the nose and the cheek. Faces shown in three-quarter view show both eyebrows, the further of which joins the line that delineates the ridge of the nose. Nostrils are depicted, as is the vertical line between the nose and the upper lip. Mouths shown in profile are usually down-turned. Jaw-lines are drawn as regular curves: as a result of this the three-quarter faces have an oval outline.<sup>294</sup>



**Plate 52:** Almani Psalter, p. 57; details, some reversed

A series of approximately parallel curved lines indicate drapery-folds, or perhaps shadows, on upper arms and upper bodies; on upper bodies these lines look like (and may be intended as) rib-cages. Hair is depicted as a solid brown or black mass, over which black modelling may be applied, or light-coloured head-gear; in all cases ears are shown or hinted at. Hands are disproportionately large, being roughly the same length as the height of the face. Body proportions are very tall and thin, rather like the sculptures flanking the west doorways of Chartres cathedral, with legs that are more than half the height of the figure. The legs of each figure are shown as separate masses under their clothes, with dark vertical folds between them. The men wear knee-length tunics, whose hems fall in a variety of patterns; the Bride wears an ankle-length dress that has a sideways 'S'-fold to indicate the level of her knees. The hem of the dress falls in a series of pleats, as does the lower edge of the wall-hanging and the bedspread in the bedroom.

Costume is shown consistently: each figure wears the same clothes even if depicted several times – this is by no means standard in Anglo-Saxon and Romanesque art.

Alexis wears a vair-lined cape clasped at his right shoulder. The Bride's dress has fashionable long trailing sleeves, and a belt with long trailing tassels. She wears a sort of hair-net, which allows her hair to fall both in front of and behind her shoulders.

Architecture is used to separate and articulate three or four different moments in the narrative, but it is not clear if the two central figures are supposed to represent one moment or two; they are separated by architecture but unified by their deep red background.

One can see that the layout of the architecture was designed with the help of a pencil and ruler (e.g. the vertical door-posts either side of the central figure). Under-drawing was executed in fairly pale brown ink (e.g. the bird next to Alexis's head at the left of the scene), over which the artist usually (but not always) later drew in pale red ink. Thick colour is only used for backgrounds and the sword. Blue and yellow are used together for Alexis's cape and for architectural details; pale red and ochre are used together for numerous other details. Various details are outlined in dark black (the bed-spread, the door-jamb, parts of the boat, etc.)

We cannot know if the artist decided which episodes from the Life of St Alexis to depict, or whether he was following instructions. Nonetheless, it is notable that he has depicted events that relate to the Bride, from near the beginning of the text of the *Chanson*, and that he has included details not mentioned in the text, such as the bird flying towards Alexis in the scene at the left. Our examination of the prefatory picture-cycle will suggest that three-quarter views, here used for the Bride, are used almost exclusively for the most important people.

The representation of the left-most figure of the Bride has one particularly close analogy in the prefatory picture-cycle: the right-hand attendant in the Visitation miniature (p. 20) has the same overall proportions; her upper body has the same very high breasts and 'rib-cage' pattern on her chest; the costume is also very close, with a gold disc at the middle of the dress's neck-line, very long trailing sleeves edged with gold, and hair tied with ribbons(?).

#### IV.2.2 The Alexis *Chanson* Initial

The next major decoration in the Alexis Quire is the initial 'B' that begins the *Chanson*. Drawn in red, it consists of three main features: interlace patterns at the top and bottom of the vertical stem; a reserved foliate repeat-pattern against a blue and green background within the thickness of the initial; and reserved coiling foliage against a predominantly red and blue background within the letter itself. The foliage includes trefoil leaves with one or more of the leaf-ends folding inwards, and at the bottom-left a triangular or conical leaf. Closely comparable trefoil leaves are found in at least two other St Albans manuscripts,<sup>295</sup> the cone-like leaf and other motifs are found in a third,<sup>296</sup> but the closest comparison with both kinds of foliage is in the upper right-hand corner of the first David miniature (p. 56), suggesting that the initial may be by the artist of the full-page prefatory cycle.

**Plate 53:** Albani Psalter, details (left: p. 20, right: p. 57)



**Plate 54:** Albani Psalter, details (left: p. 56, right: p. 58 detail rotated)



### IV.2.3 The Emmaus Miniatures

Having looked closely at the Alexis miniature, we should compare it with the Emmaus scenes, both because they are in the same quire of the manuscript and because their technique is similar, so if they were executed at the same time we would not expect any significant differences. Here pigments are never used as opaquely as in the Alexis miniature, allowing us to see the under-drawing more easily. The delineation of eyes is similar, but the eyebrow does not meet the nose-line. Noses are much more angular, with an indentation at the forehead. Drapery is depicted with much greater subtlety, and the folds fall in much more complex patterns, except along the lower edge of the tablecloth, which is much more simply rendered than the edges of the Alexis bedroom textiles. The proportions of the figures are more naturalistic. If the colouring of each scene (as opposed to the brown ink drawing) was the work of the same artist as the Alexis miniature we can say that he uses colour very differently: in the Emmaus scene he supplies facial shadows in the eye-sockets and under the chin with a green wash. In the Emmaus scene he indicates the joints of the fingers and toes with touches of red. Unlike the Alexis miniature, he leaves a large area of blank parchment as the background in the interior scenes. Similar observations can be made about the first of the Emmaus scenes. If we compare the standing figures with those in the Alexis miniature we find much subtler handling of draperies, much more varied hem-lines, including both a pleated effect, and, at the extreme lower left, two rows of sharp spiky-looking folds. The middle Emmaus scene repeats what we have seen in the other two: draperies on figures are more subtle than in the Alexis miniature although the table-cloth is rendered more simply; colour-washes are used to suggest shadows in faces; attention is given to anatomical details such as ankles and toes; and there is a sharp spiky-looking hemline at the extreme lower left.

The Alexis miniature shows the Bride in three-quarter view twice, suggesting that she is intended to be the understood as most important person in the miniature, while the Emmaus artist does not use the three-quarter view even once for the eight figures in his scenes: he even draws Christ in profile in the first scene.

While the artist of the Alexis miniature shows some rudimentary understanding of perspective in the way he represents the roofline, the open doors of the building, and the diagonal appearance of the boat's horizontal yard from which the sail hangs, the Emmaus artist's only faltering attempts at perspective are Christ's footstool under the table in the second and last scenes, and the three crenellations in the top right corner of the third scene. The lop-sided architecture and decorative frame suggest that this artist did not make much use of a ruler when laying-out his preliminary design.

To sum up, it seems that if the Alexis miniature and the Emmaus miniatures are by the same artist, he is for some reason displaying significantly different characteristics both in terms of small stylistic traits, and in terms of fundamental aspects of overall design. We should next compare these two personae with those that executed the two other figurative aspects of the Alexis Quire, the Beatus initial and the Battling Knights drawing.

### IV.2.4 The Battling Knights

It is difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the knights and the other miniatures of the Alexis Quire, because they do not have much drapery visible, their faces are partially obscured by their shields, their seated positions make it harder to compare their bodily proportions, and it is clear from comparison with the prefatory cycle and with other manuscripts such as the *Life and Miracles of St Edmund* and the St Albans *Psychomachia*, that the depiction of the horses follows a standard repetitive formula.<sup>297</sup> Perhaps the best we can say is that the use of colour seems closer to the Alexis miniature than to the Emmaus scenes.

### IV.2.5 The Beatus Initial

The figure of David stands out from all the others in the Alexis Quire. He is the only one that is fully painted; his face, shown in three-quarter view, is far more carefully modelled than any of the other figures in the Alexis Quire, though it is closest to the frontal Christ in the second Emmaus scene. Modelling is achieved both with a brown-green shading to indicate shadow areas, but also with white to indicate highlights. The lips are more carefully represented, as are the creases in the cheeks to either side of the mouth. The ear is depicted disproportionately large, but this may be because it is an important feature of the composition.<sup>298</sup> The joints of the thumb on the right hand are indicated with touches of red, but the fingers are curved, as though they are not made of a series of straight joints. Drapery is depicted very differently from the other images in the quire, but this may be a result of the different technique, rather than due to a fundamentally different style.

Overall, the David is in many ways unlike the other figures in the quire, but this may be a matter of the amount of care taken: his face is about twice the size of those in the Alexis miniature, for example, allowing much greater scope for careful delineation of fine features.

In conclusion, the Alexis Quire displays differing techniques and styles, but the differences are not so radical that we cannot accept all the decoration as being by a single artist, especially if the three main components (Alexis, Emmaus, Beatus) were executed at different times, perhaps spread over more than a decade.

## IV.3 The Prefatory Miniature-Cycle

Most writers have maintained that the prefatory miniatures are by 'the' artist of the Alexis Quire, 'the' Alexis Master. We will therefore next examine the style of the prefatory miniatures to see if their style is the same as, or different from, the images in the Alexis Quire.

Before looking at small details we may consider two broad conceptual hallmarks of the artist of the prefatory miniatures. The artist's preference for depicting heads in profile has long been noted. For the prefatory cycle the statistics (excluding half-hidden figures in crowd scenes) are: over 200 profile heads (not including animals, whose heads are also shown in profile); fourteen three-quarter heads (Christ nine times; apostles twice; the Virgin Mary, King David, and a seraph once each);<sup>299</sup> and three frontal heads (Christ twice; the Virgin Mary once). From these figures it is apparent that less than one-in-twenty figures are depicted in three-quarter or frontal view, and that these views are reserved for Christ and his mother in thirteen out of seventeen cases. Mary is shown in profile nine times, and Christ twelve times. Thus, while Mary is shown in profile in the majority of cases, Christ is shown non-profile in almost half the occasions on which he is depicted. We may probably be confident to deduce from this that non-profile views are usually used only for the most important figures in a narrative. It lends weight to the idea that, according to the visual vocabulary of the Albani Psalter, the Bride should to be considered as the key figure in the Alexis miniature, a proposal supported by her exaggerated height and position at the centre of the scene.

The use of the background, especially trees, architecture, and panels of colour, are used to articulate scenes in various ways. As noted by Andreas Petzold,<sup>300</sup> background trees are often used to contrast with and emphasise movement: when figures are travelling from one place to another they tend to pass directly in front of trees,<sup>301</sup> but when they are stationary the trees are usually not directly behind them.<sup>302</sup> Architecture is often used to reflect the articulation of figures or groups of figures.<sup>303</sup> Likewise the blue, green, and purple background panels, with blue usually being used behind the most important figure(s) in each scene.

The figure and facial types in the prefatory miniatures are broadly similar to those of the Calendar artist (and very like those of the Alexis Quire). The main differences

are that that the prefatory miniatures maintain a better sense of bodily proportions (legs are unnaturally long, but hands are not as excessively large as some of those by the Calendar Artist), and that surface textures are treated very differently. Most features in the prefatory cycle are made up of three tones: each garment, for example, will typically be made up of a base colour such as pale green, a darker green for shadows, and white for highlights. The white highlights have been singled out as particularly characteristic of this artist. The Carrying of the Cross (p. 46) may be taken as an example. Christ's lower garment is modelled in light and dark blue, with white highlights, and black outlines. His outer garment is modelled in pale and dark purple, with a pattern of highlights on his thigh that have been compared to cobwebs, a not very evocative image, but one that is hard to improve upon. The figures to his left and right both have similar 'cobweb' highlights, and patterns that emphasise the shape of their rib-cages and calf-muscles. Faces can be perfect ovals when in three-quarter view (e.g. p. 19), but more often the jaw-line curves forward to make space for the ear. Hemlines tend to be higher at the right than at the left, regardless of which way the figure is facing (e.g. pp. 23, 51, 45). Draperies occasionally have zig-zag pleats like an accordion (e.g. pp. 31, 57), but very rarely have sharp, spiky edges like the Calendar Artist's.

On balance, despite some differences, it seems reasonable to agree with the widely held belief that the prefatory miniatures were by the same artist as the Alexis miniature, and that we may safely refer to him as the Alexis Master. As within the Alexis Quire, differences can probably be attributed to the fact that the prefatory cycle was executed at a different moment from the other work by the artist.

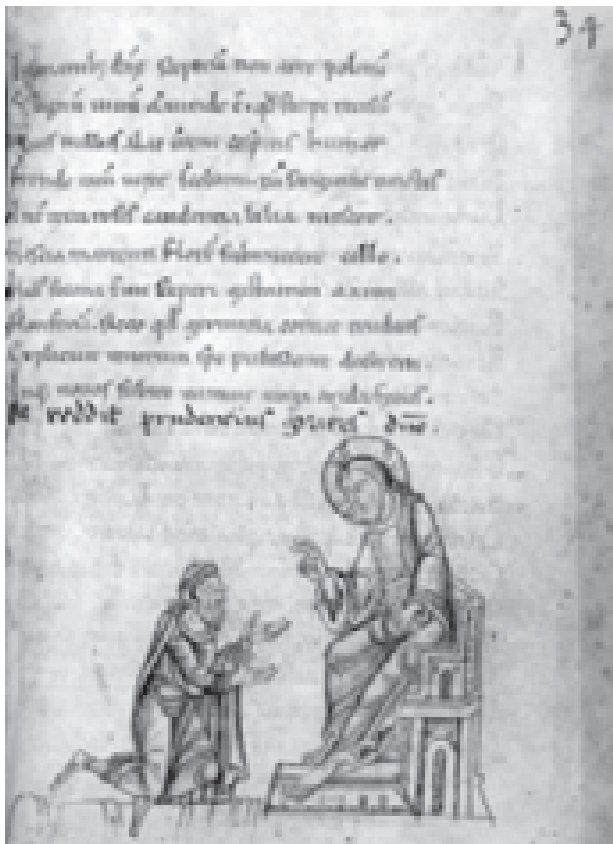
#### IV.4 The Alexis Master

The Alexis Master's style can be found in other St Albans manuscripts that probably predate the Albani Psalter, notably in a *Psychomachia*, whose drawings may well be by the Master himself. Its script and the dry-point ruling suggest that it was produced in the first decade or two of the twelfth century, or at any rate at an earlier date than the Psalter.<sup>304</sup>

If the drawings in the *Psychomachia* are not by the Master himself, then there must have been at least two artists working at St Albans in styles very similar to one another, probably over a period of at least a decade, and perhaps twenty years or more.<sup>305</sup> The decoration of some manuscripts, such as a *Josephus*, is all 'the work of a close assistant of the Alexis Master' despite differences of technique, according to Pächt,<sup>306</sup> but presents as many as eight stylistic groupings according to Thomson.<sup>307</sup> Even if we assume that a single artist was responsible for the decoration in this volume, the implication is that there was at least one

other artist working at St Albans at the same time as the Alexis Master.

Perhaps because we unconsciously assume that lavishly illuminated manuscripts took a long time to produce, and perhaps because we know that a large proportion of medieval manuscripts do not survive, the question is rarely asked: what did the illuminators do when they were not painting the surviving books? Part of the answer may lie in thinking of them not as 'illuminators', who only worked on



**Plate 55:** BL, Cotton MS Titus D. xvi (*Psychomachia*), fol. 34r (© British Library Board. All Rights Reserved)



manuscripts, but as ‘artists’, who were capable of working in several media. The practical treatise *On Divers Arts* was written c.1125 by Theophilus, who clearly knew how to work in several media and expected at least some of his readers to as well. The first part deals with painting (including the preparation of inks and pigments, and the painting of walls and manuscripts), the second part deals with stained glass, and the third part with metalwork. Master Hugo of Bury St Edmunds is the most famous English example of a multi-talented artist approximately contemporary with the Albani Psalter: we know from chronicles that he not only painted the Bury Bible (c.1135), but also cast a bell and bronze doors, and sculpted a crucifix with figures of the Virgin Mary and St John.<sup>308</sup> In the following century the sacrist of St Albans, Walter of Colchester, was so renowned as a painter and sculptor that he was asked to contribute to the shrine of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury.

So, if the Alexis Master was based at St Albans for a period of a decade or more, was he producing large numbers of illuminated manuscripts, most of which do not survive, or was he doing something else? Three kinds of ‘something else’ present themselves. If he was a professional book-maker, he may have been a scribe (and binder?) as well as an illuminator; in this case it is quite possible that he is one of the scribes of the Albani Psalter. If he was a multi-talented artist, he may have been responsible for other artworks, now lost or not attributed to him. Finally, if he was a member of the community of St Albans, he would probably have spent most of his time engaged in non-artistic activities.

Each of these three possibilities is worth exploring. If he were a scribe as well as an illuminator, and he wrote in the Albani Psalter, then the Alexis Master is perhaps most likely to be the Chanson Scribe. The Chanson scribe was not an especially accomplished penman, but he did seem keen to make sure that the illustrations in the Alexis Quire would be understood properly, so he added various captions and explanations in the Alexis Quire and the psalms section of the manuscript. Goldschmidt and Pächt both thought that the artist and scribe of the Alexis Quire was the same man. This is an attractive hypothesis, but it is difficult to reconcile it with the popular hypothesis that Abbot Geoffrey was the scribe of the Alexis Quire (see Chapter III.3), because this would mean that he was also the Alexis Master.

The possibility of the Alexis Master working in other media is hard to assess, but we do have some documentary records of artistic patronage during Geoffrey’s abbacy, including the new shrine of St Alban, which seems to have been in production from 1124 until at least 1129, and a dossal with images of the Invention of St Alban. In the older literature a number of ivory carvings are attributed to St Albans on the strength of the perceived similarity of their styles to that of the Alexis Master.

Finally, the Alexis Master has usually been described as an itinerant professional, partly because his style seems to suggest prior knowledge of art from across Europe, and partly because, once in England, his work has been credited with having had a direct influence on manuscripts apparently made for places as far afield as Shaftesbury Abbey in Dorset (150 km south-west of St Albans) and Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk (60 km north-east of St Albans).<sup>309</sup> But is it possible that he was a permanent member of the St Albans community?

The two manuscripts with drawings most closely related in style to the Alexis Master, the Leiden Priscian<sup>310</sup> and the London *Psychomachia*,<sup>311</sup> very possibly by the Alexis Master himself, are St Albans manuscripts. The two other manuscripts with painted illumination confidently attributed to the Alexis Master can also be confidently attributed to St Albans: the Verdun Anselm<sup>312</sup> and the Hereford Gospels<sup>313</sup> are mostly or partly written by scribes who wrote other St Albans manuscripts.

Scholarly opinion is more divided on the attribution of the miniatures in the *Life and Miracles of St Edmund*, but the consensus seems to be that the Alexis Master designed them, even if he did not paint them.<sup>314</sup> If we assume that the Alexis Master had some involvement, how do we account for this, if he was a monk based at



St Albans? First, St Albans and Bury were both Benedictine abbeys in the southeast of England. Second, we have seen that Walter of Colchester, the St Albans sacristan (an important Abbey post with many responsibilities), had time and was allowed or perhaps encouraged to contribute to a project more than 150 km away, at Canterbury. Third, the miniatures in the *Life and Miracles of St Edmund* are on separate quires from the rest of the manuscript: it is therefore possible that these miniatures were executed at St Albans and the manuscript was completed at Bury. In other words, the artist did not necessarily have to leave St Albans in order to contribute to a 'Bury' manuscript.

In the first half of the thirteenth century Matthew Paris, who knew more about the history of St Albans Abbey than anyone else, wrote about a monk and 'incomparable goldsmith' called Anketil, who worked on the shrine of St Alban in the 1120s, and who had previously worked for the king of Denmark as the royal moneyer and as head of a goldsmith's workshop. Even though some important details of Paris's account are untrue, what matters for the present purpose is not so much the historical accuracy of Paris's account of Anketil, but that Paris thought his account would be believable. In other words, Matthew Paris did not think it inherently improbable that a craftsman/artist from a foreign country could have come to St Albans for several years in the 1120s. Pächt believed that Anketil was the Alexis Master.<sup>315</sup>

It is perhaps significant, however, that Paris says that Anketil became a monk of St Albans after working on the shrine, not earlier: this possibly suggests that his work on the shrine would have been incompatible with full involvement in the Divine Office. Perhaps the best evidence for whether or not the Alexis Master was a monk will be found among his representations of monks and their activities: a lay artist would not necessarily know about details of ecclesiastical clothing and regalia, for example, while an artist who was also a monk could be expected to depict such things more accurately. Although some features of ecclesiastical costume seem to be understood by the artist, such as the use of a pallium to indicate a high-ranking priest, the comparative lack care given to the depiction of monks' clothing tends to suggest that the artist was not a monk himself.

#### IV.5 The Calendar

**Plate 56:** Albani Psalter, p. 7; detail

Having looked at the Alexis miniature and the other miniatures usually attributed to the Alexis Master, we may now look at the other artists in the manuscript. The zodiac signs in the calendar are drawn in brown ink, with details of anatomy sometimes in red ink; with a blue-purple, green, and an orange-brown colour used for hair; plus much paler versions of these colours to supply modelling. The Occupations of the months use essentially the same palette, but the colours are usually applied more thickly, giving a richer effect, and the orange-brown is also used for shoes. All but four of the figures are set against a fully- or partially-painted background, as too is the zodiac sign for Virgo.



The Gemini figures (p. 7) will be examined below in relation to the Psalm initials, so they will be a good starting-point. Both have now-familiar profile heads, the lips represented by a single line, above deeply recessed 90°-angle chins that start as a line very nearly parallel to the lip-line. Hands range in size from exceptionally large to relatively naturalistic; in two of the hands the ball at the base of the thumb is depicted. The musculature of the human body is rudimentary; the only muscles depicted being the calves. The two

feet shown in profile have slender big toes, but the other two have large wedge-shaped big toes. The main colours and colour-combinations are green with yellow for draperies, blue against a very pale wash, and orange-brown for hair and shoes.

The same features are visible throughout the calendar: the lips and deeply recessed chins (except where obscured by a beard); the hands varying in size, with the ball of the thumb frequently indicated; the wedge-toes (Aquarius and the Occupations for February); and so on. Unlike the Occupations, most zodiac signs have a contraposto, with their body facing in one direction and their head facing in the opposite direction. The cloaks that the Gemini figures wear have a scalloped lower hem and series of sharp projections: the hem looks a bit like the edge of the canopy of an open umbrella. This hem-line is reminiscent of one of those in the first Emmaus miniature, and closer to one of those in the second Emmaus miniature.

#### IV.6 The Psalm Initials

It is generally agreed that there are at least two styles of illumination in the psalm initials, but there is less agreement about precisely where the boundaries between the two styles lie.<sup>316</sup> It seems to me that the use of the words ‘artists’ and ‘painters’ when discussing the historiated initials of the Psalter have caused some confusion; I see a clear distinction between the person who drew the initials with a pen and brown ink (an ‘artist’) and the people who painted over those designs with brushes and pigments (‘painters’). The original drawing is frequently visible,<sup>317</sup> and has often been attributed in part, but without giving many details of his involvement, to the Alexis Master.<sup>318</sup>

A good place to explore the identity to the artist and painters of the psalm initials is at Psalm 26 (p. 119) because it includes two full-length angels that have not been over-painted, leaving the original drawing and colouring completely visible. As has been observed before,<sup>319</sup> these angels are so similar to the Gemini figures in the calendar (p. 7) that they must be by the same artist.

Unless two different artists worked on the Psalm 26 initial, using different styles and techniques, one for the angels and one for the rest, it seems that the entire ensemble was drawn and coloured by the Calendar artist, and then the initial and the scene it contains, but not the angels above which are outside the initial, were over-painted by another. Despite the over-painting one may judge from features such as the huge hands and the profile of the faces that the painter was following in its main outlines a drawing by the Calendar artist.

A comparable situation is found at Psalm 21 (p. 109), where the Hand of God outside the initial is an ink drawing with colour washes, but everything inside the initial is fully painted; and in the initial to Psalm 126 (p. 338) the largest figure has one hand inside the initial, painted, and one hand outside it, unpainted. Sometimes parts of the main scene inside the initial are treated the same way: curiously, most representations of birds (and some other animals) are left unpainted, which raises the possibility that the painters were not confident to paint them.<sup>320</sup> There are also examples of initials that are mostly painted in washes



**Plate 57:** Albari Psalter, p. 119; detail



**Plate 58:** Albari Psalter, p. 119; detail

**Plate 59:** Albani Psalter, details (left: p. 86, right: p. 412)



rather than thick colours: the figures in the initial to Psalm 106:25 (p. 292), for example, are essentially painted the same way as in the calendar roundels.

Pächt and others have discussed some of the places where it is clear that the painter has deviated significantly from the drawings.<sup>321</sup> In some places, especially where the paint of the backgrounds has worn thin, one can clearly see that the painter has ignored and obliterated human or demonic figures (e.g. pp. 81, 86, 412, and the Schnütgen Museum leaf).

In many other cases one can see that the painter has reduced sometimes complex and subtle draperies to much simpler forms (e.g. pp. 76, 78, 80, 84). Particularly common is that a jagged hemline such as those found in the calendar and at Psalm 107 (p. 294), are simplified to a straight line (e.g. pp. 91, 119; see Plate 60).

In a few places we can see that the painters did not just overpaint a drawing, but erased it and replaced it with a much simpler design, including the upper terminals of some initials near the beginning of the psalms (e.g. on pp. 76, 81, 83; see Plate 61).

In all the cases like these it is hard to imagine that the painter was obliterating and simplifying his own careful drawings, which leads us to conclude that the painters were rarely, if ever, responsible for the design of the initials. It is possible that the Alexis Master contributed to the initial designs, but there is no clear evidence that he did so: in all the places where under-drawing is visible, it corresponds more closely with the stylistic traits of the Calendar artist, and we may therefore tentatively propose that he was the person responsible for the design of all the initials in the psalms section of the manuscript.<sup>322</sup>

In addition to correspondences between the style and the technique of the calendar and the psalms sections of the Psalter, there are also a number of design correspondences. For example, several initials show agricultural labours, similar in a general way to Occupations of the months. An even closer conceptual correspondence can be seen by comparing the Psalm 82 initial (p. 238) with the calendar roundels: the initial depicts a figure seated frontally but with his face in profile,<sup>323</sup> with vegetation; in addition the red and green ornament within the outer gold framing is the same as that in the January calendar roundel (see Plate 62).

It does not necessarily follow that the calendar and psalms sections of the manuscript are of the same date, but the presence of the same artist-designer in both makes it more likely that they are. The psalms section would have needed a calendar to accompany it, so unless one proposes that the calendar pre-existed, perhaps attached to a different psalter, then it seems probable that the psalms and calendar were produced at the same time. The height of their ruled areas is the same (c.18cm), even though the psalms have only twenty-two lines of text per page, and the calendar has up to thirty-five lines,<sup>324</sup> and the width of the calendar text area, minus the columns of dominical letters etc. at the left, is also nearly the same as the psalms text width (c.107 mm).

#### IV.6.1 Were the Initials Originally Intended to be Fully Painted?

We can probably conclude, from the fact that the angels above the Psalm 26 initial (p. 119), and many other details outside and inside other initials, were executed as drawings with colour-washes, as in the calendar, that this is how the psalms originally looked before the painters over-painted much of the Calendar Artist's work. This presents the possibility that all the psalm initials were not originally intended to be fully painted. If so, the Psalter (with the exception of the full-page prefatory miniatures and the two miniatures at the very end) would have looked much more like a 'normal' manuscript of its period: English and Norman manuscripts with extensive series of historiated initials are usually unpainted, or painted in colour-washes, not



**Plate 60:** Albani Psalter, p. 91; detail



**Plate 61:** Albani Psalter, p. 81; detail



**Plate 62:** Albi Psalter, details (left: p. 238, right: p. 3)

painted in full colours with gold. One of the few surviving early twelfth-century English precedents for a manuscript decorated with a very extensive series of narrative historiated initials is a volume of saints' lives from Canterbury in which the initials are, as one would expect at this date, executed in colour-washed drawings.<sup>325</sup> Often these initials have solid purple backgrounds reminiscent of the Alexis miniature and Alexis Quire's Beatus initial.<sup>326</sup>

In this respect it may be worth remembering that a number of the other works attributed to the Alexis Master and his followers are not fully-painted: apart from the drawings in the Alexis Quire of the Albi Psalter itself, there are the tinted drawing of the Bride and Bridegroom in the *Song of Songs*,<sup>327</sup> the London *Psychomachia* and the Leiden Priscian.

#### IV.6.2 The Painters' Attitude to the Meaning of the Initials

We have seen above how the painters frequently rode roughshod over the more careful and detailed drawings by the Calendar Artist, but in these cases they did not alter the way in which the initial would be 'read'. It does seem, however, that the painter(s) (assuming that they, rather than the rubricator, were responsible for applying the white background for the books) did sometimes intentionally alter the meaning of the initials from that which had been intended by the designer.

The rubric to Psalm 53 is written on a book with a plain parchment background (p. 176). The other book in the initial appears to have blank pages painted white, but it is clear from the other side of the leaf (p. 175), that this blank book was originally inscribed in the under-drawing with the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, Alpha and Omega ('Α' and 'ω').

The fact that these letters were deliberately obscured with white paint suggests an attempt to alter the way in which the initial would be read. The first verse of the psalm reads 'Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me in thy strength': the mention of God in the role of judge is probably relevant, because the Last Judgement was often depicted in medieval art with God holding an open book inscribed with Alpha and Omega. Why the painter of this initial wanted to suppress this interpretation of the image is a mystery.



**Plate 63:** London, British Library, Arundel MS 91, fol. 107r; detail (© British Library Board. All Rights Reserved)



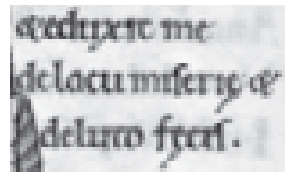
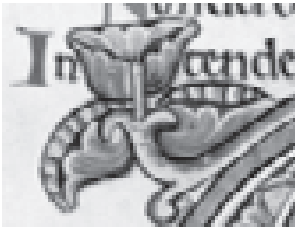
**Plate 64:** Albi Psalter, details (left: p. 175, reversed, right: p. 176)

### IV.6.3 The Painters' Attitude to the Legibility of the Text

The painters of the initials frequently overlapped the text, partly obscuring it: they must have thought that their decoration was more important than the text, or must have been following instructions to make the initials as large as possible, even at the expense of the text. In several places we can see that this meant that parts of the text had to be re-written. One obvious example is at the top left extremity of the initial to Psalm 38 (p. 147), which covered the first two letters of the word 'Intende', meaning that they had to be re-written further to the left. One of the less obvious examples can be seen on the last line of p. 149, where the lower-right extremity of the initial completely obscured an ampersand, '&', and another ampersand was therefore written at the end of the previous line, to replace it.

One cannot be sure whether or not this was done 'by agreement', but since the painter could easily have avoided covering the text in cases such as this, one gets the impression that the artist simply disregarded the integrity and legibility of the text.

Plate 65: Albani Psalter, details (left: p. 147, right: p. 149)



### IV.6.4 The Decoration of the Replacement Bifolium

The initials in the replacement bifolium (pp. 74, 91, 92) appear, like the other psalm initials, to have been designed by the Calendar Artist. In the initial to Psalm 2 (p. 74), at the forward lower hem of Christ's tunic, which is a straight line typical of the initial painters, one can discern the spiky hemline characteristic of the Calendar Artist's under-drawings. One can also see divergences from the under-drawing in the foliage extension of the initial to the right of Christ's feet. In the initial to Psalm 12 (p. 91) the spiky hemline of the standing figure is clearer. In the initial to Psalm 13 (p. 92), also on the replaced bifolium, the divergences between the brown ink under-drawing and the over-painting are even clearer.

If the Calendar Artist knew what would be done to his work by the painters, it is questionable whether he would have taken the trouble to draw details that he could assume would later be obliterated. This suggests that the artist of the under-drawings completed all his designs, including those on the replacement bifolium, before the painters began to over-paint his work, which in turn suggests that the bifolium was replaced before the painters started their work.

We could therefore imagine the following scenario. Perhaps the psalms and calendar were written by their respective scribes, and decorated by the Calendar Artist throughout in colour-washed ink drawings. This would have been a 'normal' psalter in terms of its contents, unusual only in the extent of its decoration. It would have been relatively quick to write and decorate, with no expensive pigments being used, and gold only used for the Beatus initial. A 'curtain' was perhaps sewn to the blank p. 16 to protect the Beatus initial on the facing page. Somewhat later the psalter was 'upgraded' by the insertion of the prefatory miniature-cycle, and some gold from the recto Beatus initial offset onto the verso full-page David Harping miniature because protective curtains were sewn in the prefatory cycle over the rectos, not versos (see Chapter II.4.8). A decision was subsequently taken to insert the Alexis Quire. Either it already had a free-standing Beatus initial on its final page, or the person responsible for composing the text beneath the Beatus initial, who had strong opinions about how it should be represented, had it drawn and painted. By this time the Psalms Scribe was perhaps no longer available, so another scribe re-wrote the first bifolium of the psalms text, and the Calendar Artist produced three new initials for this new bifolium. Later still, the psalm initials were painted, apparently at speed or in haste, presumably to give the Psalter a more dazzling and opulent overall appearance, and the first set of textile curtains was sewn in to the psalms section.

This hypothetical sequence of events may not be correct, but it seems to fit the facts of the physical evidence. The main problem is that it sounds unnecessarily complicated, and cannot be verified.

#### IV.6.5 The Division of Work Between the Psalm Initial Painters

As mentioned above, there have been two main attempts to distinguish between the painters of the initials, one put forward by Dodwell and endorsed by Haney, the other proposed by Geddes. In the present writer's opinion both are flawed by a fundamental misconception: they attempt to divide the work between two artists, although there are in fact probably three (if not more).<sup>323</sup>

One artist, identified above as the Calendar Artist, seems to be in present in all the initials, as the designer-draughtsman; the other two paint over his work, following the under-drawing to varying degrees, and leaving varying amounts of the original coloured drawing visible. Thus there are at least three styles that shade into one another in at least five combinations: one style is that of the Calendar Artist with no over-painting (e.g. the angels above Psalm 26 on p. 119); two more styles represent the painters' own styles, with the work of the Calendar Artist almost entirely obliterated by their over-painting; but two more intermediate states result when the work of the Calendar Artist remains visible in initials that are only partially over-painted by each of the painters.

The initial to Psalm 8 (p. 83), for example, is a case where the over-painting is thick and there seems to have been no intention for any under-drawing to remain visible. Likewise Psalm 16 (p. 96), where the over-painting is in a plainly different style from Psalm 8. In the latter case the faces, hands, and feet have an overall application of white paint, and thick black outlines. But just a few pages before this, Psalm 14 (p. 94), combines the thick over-painting style of Psalm 16 with a very different treatment of faces, hands, and feet: here they are coloured with washes of a flesh-tone, with restrained use of white highlights; and while outlines are drawn in black, inner features such as eyes and nostrils remain in the brown ink of the under-drawing.<sup>329</sup>

In the large initial to Psalm 51 (p. 173) one can compare Christ's face, over-painted in white and therefore looking expressionless and two-dimensional, with the faces of the other figures, which have subtle modelling using light washes, and barely any white except for the eye-balls. The initial to Psalms 77:1 and 94 (pp. 223, 263) are examples where it is easy to see that the figures were drawn in brown ink, and that some of the brown ink lines were subsequently traced over in black; many more examples could be given.

#### IV.7 The Initial to Psalm 105

The initial to Psalm 105 (on which see Chapter II.5) is almost universally agreed to be in a more recent style than the rest of the illumination in the volume. It is most often compared to the figure of Isaiah in a copy of Haimo's *Commentary on Isaiah*,<sup>330</sup> but also with the illustrations in the St Albans calendar prefixed to the Littlemore Anselm;<sup>331</sup> neither of which is likely to be earlier than c.1140 and may be of the 1150s.

#### IV.8 The Final 'Diptych'

On the basis of the foregoing analyses the two miniatures that occur at the end of the volume can probably be attributed to one of the painters of the psalm initials, working over designs by the Calendar Artist (though comparison is made more difficult by the fact that he is working on a much larger scale here than elsewhere).

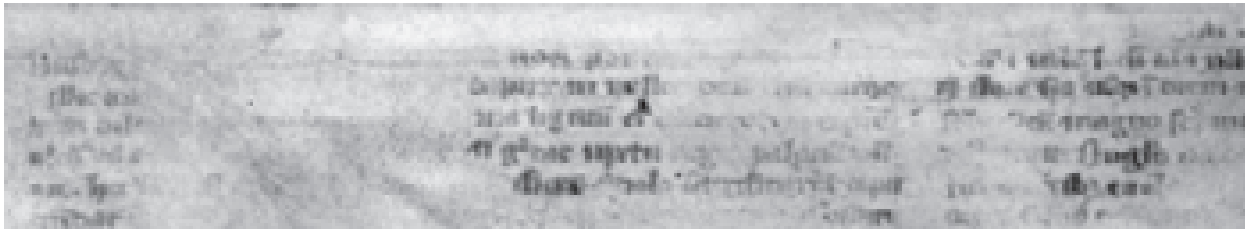
## V Binding and Provenance

### V.1 Binding

We do not know what the original binding of the Psalter looked like, but surviving twelfth-century English bindings almost invariably consist of oak boards covered with cream-coloured alum-tawed animal skin, often dyed red.<sup>332</sup> The boards would probably have been flush with the edges of the leaves, rather than protecting beyond them, as they do in books from the thirteenth century to the present day. It may have been enclosed in a protective chemise, with loose flaps which could be wrapped around the edges to the leaves to protect them.

The manuscript has been rebound at least three times in the past nine centuries, most recently in 1936.<sup>333</sup> This re-binding used brown leather over paste-boards, on the outer covers of which were preserved the much paler pigskin covering material from the previous binding.<sup>334</sup> Pigskin like this is typical of medieval and later German bindings, but untypical of England and most other countries.<sup>335</sup> It is probably impossible to determine the precise date of this previous binding, but it was almost certainly after 1535 (when the volume was presumably still in England; see below), and probably also after 1643, as there is no evidence that the manuscript was in Germany before this date (see below).

The final parchment flyleaf, originally a separate leaf but joined to pp. 411–412 to form a bifolium by 1936, has the offset of English(?) fourteenth(?) -century script, doubtless from a piece of manuscript binding-waste used in a former binding, now missing.



**Plate 66:** Albani Psalter, offset, reversed and digitally enhanced detail

This piece of binding-waste was apparently a bifolium, written in two columns, placed at a right-angle to the spine of the volume.<sup>336</sup> If the script is fourteenth-century English it suggests that the volume was re-bound in England between the beginning of the fourteenth century and its arrival in Germany in the seventeenth century.

Thus the volume was apparently bound in the twelfth century, re-bound in England in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, re-bound again in Germany in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, and finally repaired and re-bound in Germany in 1936. It is likely that the flyleaves of one of the earlier bindings had inscriptions that would have provided further information about the history of the volume. Below and to the left of the ‘S I’ shelfmark (p. 1) there are several black ink splodges, presumably offsets from a now-missing page that once faced it.<sup>337</sup>

### V.2 Provenance

‘Provenance’ is used to mean various things, but in manuscript studies it should be used to refer to the history of the manuscript, as far as it can be ascertained, from its origin to the present day. It encompasses much more than just a list of named owners and their dates: if an anonymous person writes a comment in a margin, the style of his or her handwriting may allow a palaeographer to deduce various facts about a manuscript’s provenance, for example that it was read in the thirteenth century by someone who was familiar with Arabic numerals (if the annotator uses



them), or that it was read in the early fifteenth century by an Italian humanist who had read Horace (if the annotator quotes from him).

The origins of the Psalter during the time of Abbot Geoffrey of St Albans is well established. It is possible, though unproveable, that the Psalter may have been examined by at least one later abbot of St Albans: it seems that Abbot William of Trumpington (1214–1236) bought an ancient Coptic cross in London believing it to be a relic of the Roman standard, or *signum*, held by St Alban when he was martyred,<sup>338</sup> possibly because it reminded him of the signum held by the bystander in the miniature on the Martyrdom of St Alban (p. 416),<sup>339</sup> or it may be that Abbot William thought he recognised the cross from another depiction of St Alban's martyrdom.

It is not known what happened to the Psalter from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. We can be confident that it was still in England in 1535 because references to popes have been erased in the calendar, in accordance with an order of King Henry VIII on 9 June in that year, which stated that:

‘all manner prayers, orisons, rubrics, canons in mass-books and all other books used in churches, wherein the said bishop of Rome is named or his presumptuous and proud pomp and authority preferred, utterly to be abolished, eradicated and erased out.’<sup>340</sup>

In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it is natural to imagine that the manuscript remained at Markyate until the priory was dissolved at the Reformation. If so, then it may have become the personal property of Joan Zouche, the last prioress, who was elected in 1508 and surrendered the house in 1536 or early 1537.

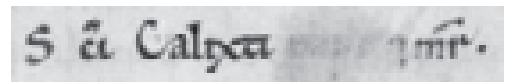
The first two parchment pages provide evidence for the ownership of the volume since the mid-seventeenth century. On the first page there is a partially-erased inscription ‘Lib[er] Mon[asterii] Lamspring. 1657’ (top right corner); similar inscriptions are found in other books from the library at Lamspringe.

Below this, in much larger eighteenth(?) -century script, is an abbreviated inscription ‘Liber Monast. Lam/spring. OSB Cong. Angl.’;<sup>341</sup> and the same words are written out without abbreviations on the other side of the leaf: ‘Liber Monasterij Lamspringensis / Ordini Sancti Benedicti, / Congregationis Anglicanae’ (The book of Lamspringe Monastery, of the Anglican Communion of the Order of St Benedict) (p. 2). The monastery of Sts Adrian and Denis at Lamspringe, about 20 km south of Hildesheim, was secularised by the Lutherans and given to the English Benedictines in 1643.

We know from the inscription dated 1657 that the manuscript was at Lamspringe within about fifteen years of the mid-1640s, when the monastery was first occupied by the English Benedictines, so it is likely that it was taken there from England by one of the first monks; it may have been his personal property, and then given or bequeathed to his monastery.<sup>342</sup> Alternatively, the Psalter could have been owned by Henry Mordaunt (d. 1697), second Earl of Peterborough, who was the previous owner of many Lamspringe books, including at least one English medieval manuscript,<sup>343</sup> and some of whose English estates were close to St Albans.<sup>344</sup>

Another inscription, ‘Fr: Ben:’ (p. 1, lower left corner) has been interpreted as an abbreviation of ‘Fr[ater] Ben[edictus]’, brother Benedict, perhaps the unidentified monk who took the book to Lamspringe.<sup>345</sup> An equally, or more, likely interpretation of ‘Fr. Ben.’ is that it is simply an abbreviation of ‘Fr[atrum] Ben[edictinorum]’ (i.e. belonging to the Benedictine brothers), a fairly common way of expressing community ownership.<sup>346</sup>

A shelf-mark ‘A 5’ has been largely obliterated by the later, larger, shelf-mark ‘S I’. The same shelf-mark ‘A 5’, also obliterated and replaced with another shelf-mark in much larger writing, is found in a number of printed Bibles from Lamspringe of similar size to the Albani Psalter: it is therefore likely that this shelf at Lamspringe housed Bibles and biblical books of octavo size (see Plate 69, 70).



**Plate 67:** Albani Psalter, p. 12; detail

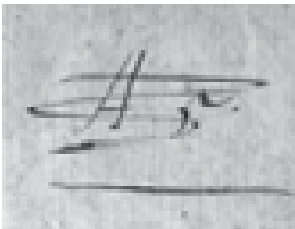


**Plate 68:** Hildesheim Dombibliothek, 2Ja2825 b1, title-page; detail





**Plate 69:** Albani Psalter,  
p. 1; detail



**Plate 70:** Hildesheim  
Dombibliothek,  
2Ja2825 b1, front paste-  
down; detail

Lamspringe monastery was suppressed in the secularisation in 1803, some books found their way to London where they were auctioned in 1830, and about 1100 books were confiscated and given to Hildesheim.<sup>347</sup> Most are now owned by the Dombibliothek, but the Albani Psalter found its way instead into the possession of the church of St Godehard,<sup>348</sup> probably through the hands of Hermann Held (d. 1828), one of the last monks of St Godehard's, which was also a Benedictine monastery until 1803. In a catalogue of the St Godehard's library completed in 1831, the Psalter is described under the call-number 'S I' (as inscribed on p. 1 of the manuscript) as 'A magnificent manuscript on parchment, decorated with numerous illuminated illustrations, containing Psalms and Cantica, undated'.<sup>349</sup> The catalogue has a column for the name of the donor, in which the initial 'H' is next to the description of the Psalter, indicating that it was part of the gift to the library from Held.

It was perhaps at about this point in the manuscript's history that the final leaf (now in the Schnütgen Museum), and a leaf that should be between pp. 266 and 267, became separated (see Chapter II.4.9). They were no longer in the volume c.1890 when Goldschmidt began working on it. The Cologne leaf was, however, in the collection of Hermann Joseph Lückger (1864–1951), a textile manufacturer and merchant, of Sürth, a few km south of Cologne, fairly soon thereafter.<sup>350</sup> Lückger may have acquired it in March 1918,<sup>351</sup> although it was not recognised as a leaf from the Albani Psalter until the late 1950s.

At an undetermined date the manuscript was paginated on the rectos only ('1', '3', '5', etc.). This was probably in the early twentieth century, because the leaves were still unpaginated when the Alexis text was photographed for a publication of 1886,<sup>352</sup> and Goldschmidt used notional folio numbers in 1895.<sup>353</sup> The fact that the book is paginated, rather than foliated, suggests that it was done by someone who was not very familiar with medieval manuscripts: the parish priest of St Godehard's, perhaps, rather than a librarian. From '1' to '7' the page numbers are in ink, and from '9' to '417' in pencil. There is also faint foliation in pencil on folios 1–4, probably twentieth-century. The full-page miniatures are also numbered in pencil, in the lower left corner of each page; this was probably done at the time of the 1936 re-binding, to ensure that the leaves were rebound in the correct order.

It is not known how the manuscript came to the attention of Wilhelm Müller, who first published the *Vie de St Alexis* in 1845,<sup>354</sup> but we do know approximately when Adolph Goldschmidt began working on it, because it was the subject of his *Habilitationsschrift* in 1892. In his memoirs he writes about his discovery of the Albani-Psalter as follows:

"I also knew too little about Germany itself, and during a visit in Hildesheim, in the house of the chaplain of St. Godehard Cathedral, my eye fell on a copiously illustrated manuscript of the 12<sup>th</sup> century that interested me much in the context of one of Springer's writings on a Psalter kept in Russia and that was entirely unknown at the time. I immediately decided to have a closer look at it and thus stayed a while in Hildesheim. The chaplain, who kept the book in his flat which is why I could not permanently use it there, kindly allowed me to study it in my hotel room, albeit under the permanent supervision of a subaltern who brought it to me in the morning and took it back during interruptions, and who by the way made himself comfortable in my room and smoked my cigars, since his tobacco smelt appalling and I had to keep his spirits high so that he would leave me alone while working. I also had to pay him by the hour. In this way I was able to produce a great number of tracings which were later reproduced in the publication, taking all necessary notes and making excerpts of the contents. My interest grew while working on the book, and I successfully determined the origin, the exact time of its making, as well as the scribe and the artist who designed it, and it later became my postdoctoral thesis, which was published in book form in 1895, under the title *Der Albanipsalter in Hildesheim und seine Beziehungen zur symbolischen Kirchenskulptur des XII. Jahrhunderts*" (The Albani Psalter in Hildesheim and its associations with symbolic ecclesiastical sculpture of the 12th century).<sup>4355</sup>

It is interesting to note that just a few years after Goldschmidt's monograph was published, the Psalter was included in the 1899 edition of Baedeker's guide *Nordwestdeutschland*, 'ist nur durch den Hrn Pastor zugängliche (Codehardi-Platz 2)'.<sup>356</sup> It was briefly moved to a Hildesheim bank vault at the beginning of the Second World War, but the bank caught fire during an air raid in March 1945, so the manuscript was rapidly moved back to the priest's house, where it remained until at least the 1960s.<sup>357</sup>

## VI Conclusions: the Date and Place of Origin

In this concluding chapter we will look again at the four main parts of the manuscript and try to form a coherent mosaic from the multitude of tesserae we have encountered in the preceding chapters. But this will surely be not be the last word on the subject: further observations will be made and further ideas developed in future.

In 1895 Goldschmidt suggested that Roger the hermit was the main scribe of the Psalter, which is why his obit refers to 'this psalter', and that Michael the Cantor, a documented official of St Albans, was the Obits Scribe, which is why there is an obit for 'Ailiva, mother of Michael' (16 January). These hypotheses are no longer accepted, but Goldschmidt, who did not know the year of Roger's death, correctly assigned the manuscript to the abbacy of Geoffrey (1119–1146), a date-range that was still the accepted by Wormald in 1943.<sup>358</sup> In 1953 Boase came close to dating Roger's death when he proposed that it must have been c.1125.<sup>359</sup> In 1960 Dodwell took Boase's clues further and was the first to establish that Roger the Hermit died between 30 January 1121 and 10 January 1123, but was cautious about whether this could provide a reliable date for the Psalter.<sup>360</sup> Wormald took Dodwell's evidence, and categorically dated the Albani Psalter to 'before A.D. 1123'.<sup>361</sup> This was a dramatic pronouncement by a respected manuscript specialist, because for sixty-five years art historians had believed that the manuscript could date from as late as the early 1140's. Kauffmann's surprise was probably typical: 'Who would have thought, until the documentary evidence was produced, that the St Albans Psalter could be dated 'before 1123'?<sup>362</sup>

### VI.1 The Calendar

In assessing the evidence of the calendar, we must keep clear a distinction between the calendar as it survives today, with its numerous additions, and the calendar as it was originally written. The most distinctive features of the original calendar can be paralleled in the calendar of Ramsey Abbey, not far from Huntingdon, Christina's home town. Other features suggest a St Albans bias. It has been suggested that the Ramsey and St Albans features are explicable if the calendar is a copy, made by someone at St Albans, of a calendar owned by Christina before she fled from her home in Huntingdon.

One problem with this proposal is the fact that the calendar lacks a number of important feasts that one would expect in a calendar made at St Albans, especially if at least some feasts were being copied from a St Albans exemplar, by a St Albans scribe, at the expense of St Albans Abbey, for Christina, who owed her former safety to a St Albans monk, Roger, and her current independence to a St Albans abbot, Geoffrey.

Equally, the calendar lacks a number of feasts that one might expect to find in a calendar directly based on that of Ramsey Abbey,<sup>363</sup> and it would therefore be rash to say that it is essentially a Ramsey calendar with some St Albans modifications.

Another problem is why Christina would have had a Ramsey calendar to begin with. In the *Life* of Christina as it survives the Benedictine abbey at Ramsey is not mentioned once, while visits by Christina to the Augustinian monastery of Our Lady at Huntingdon are mentioned numerous times,<sup>364</sup> even though one might expect a St Albans biographer to play down the role of an Augustinian house and emphasise the role of a Benedictine one, if she had an association with both Huntingdon and Ramsey. In her *Life* we learn that when trying to force her into her marriage her parents ‘stopped her going to the monastery of Our Lady because it became apparent that whenever she paid a visit there she came back confirmed and strengthened in her resolution’,<sup>365</sup> and ‘They forbade her access to the chapel which was most dear to her’.<sup>366</sup> She visited the monastery on the day of her escape,<sup>367</sup> and as she was beginning to make her escape she pretended to be going towards the monastery,<sup>368</sup> presumably because no one would think that this was unusual. Once they realised she was missing, her parents’ first thought was to look for her at the monastery.<sup>369</sup> The monastery of Our Lady at Huntingdon was within easy walking distance of her parents’ home, but Ramsey Abbey was about 15 km away. Yet another piece of evidence suggestive of Christina’s religious affiliations beyond St Albans is that when Markyate Priory was founded, the foundation charter was witnessed by a number of Augustinian Canons, and by Simon of Huntingdon, but by no one from Ramsey.

If Christina owned a calendar resembling that of Ramsey Abbey, it is perhaps more likely that it was a calendar of St Ives, a cell of Ramsey, about half the distance from Huntingdon. No calendar of St Ives is known to survive, but it would have been very similar to that of its parent-house, and would of course have included the distinctive feast of St Ives on 24 April that is in the Psalter. But this still does not deal with the problem that, as a girl, Christina seems to have been most devoted to her local Augustinian church in Huntingdon.

An alternative explanation for the Ramsey/St Ives features combined with the St Albans ones, is that Christina had a calendar whose entries were selected for her by the hermit Roger. The *Life* of Christina tells us that he was a cousin of a younger hermit called Edwine, who helped Christina escape from her parents. This is very probably the anchorite Edwine of Higney, who is documented in the Ramsey Cartulary. Higney is about 12 km to the west of Ramsey Abbey, and from 1134 belonged to it.<sup>370</sup> Thus it is at least possible that Roger himself came from the area north of Huntingdon,<sup>371</sup> within the parish of Ramsey (the largest parish in Huntingdonshire), and would have grown up venerating the saints of Ramsey Abbey. It would not be surprising if, as a native of the Ramsey area but a hermit affiliated with St Albans, he would have used a composite calendar like that in the Albani Psalter for his private devotions. And from what we know of Christina’s devotion to Roger, it would not be surprising if after his death she continued to remember in her devotions the saints that he had taught her to venerate.

The final state of calendar, with all its additions, is closer to the St Albans calendar than it had been before the additions were made, but even in its most complete state it lacks a number of other features that one would expect in a calendar made for St Albans, such as the dedication feast of the Abbey on 29 December. No one now seriously thinks that the calendar, even in its final supplemented form, was made for St Albans: because it is not a proper St Albans calendar it must have been made for use somewhere else, such as Markyate, which was not bound to follow the same cycle of church feasts. One might even expect a calendar made for use at Markyate to show closer affinities with the calendar of St Paul’s Cathedral, London, than St Albans, because they owned the land on which Markyate stood.

Nothing in the calendar allows it to be dated with any precision. The main scribe of the calendar writes the most ‘old-fashioned’ style of script, and there is no internal evidence to suggest that it was made later than any other part of the manuscript. The use of the obit of Roger the Hermit as a means for dating the Albani Psalter was

discredited almost as soon as reviews of the 1960 monograph began to appear,<sup>372</sup> yet it was still being cited as reliable dating evidence more than thirty-five years later.<sup>373</sup> Perhaps the best we can say is that the style of script looks as if it might have been written earlier than the rest of the volume, and the discrepancies between the calendar and the litany might support this hypothesis: if the litany and Alexis Quire both indicate veneration of Alexis, his absence from the calendar might possibly indicate that the calendar (or at least its textual model) pre-dates the dedication of his chapel (which we know to have been pre-1119) at St Albans. The presence of the same artist in the calendar and psalms sections of the manuscript might lead one to assume that they are contemporary with one another, but this is an unsafe assumption: the artist could have decorated the two sections many years apart, or the calendar could have been written many years before its decoration was added. It is theoretically possible that the calendar was originally written before 1119, perhaps by or for Roger, and that the psalms were subsequently produced to match its dimensions.<sup>374</sup>

The relative chronology of some of the scribes within the calendar is secure: the Calendar Scribe had to be the first, possibly, though not necessarily, before Roger the hermit's death, and therefore possibly before January 1123; Roger's obit by the *Chanson* Scribe had to be written after January 1121 and after the work of the Calendar Scribe; the Markyate Dedication Scribe had to be active after the dedication in 1145; the Obits Scribe may have worked over a long period of time, but the obit of Abbot Geoffrey had to be written after his death in February 1146. The obit of Christina was probably written after 1155, because two documents suggest that she was still alive in that year: in that year King Henry II made a grant to Christina,<sup>375</sup> and Abbot Robert de Gorron (1151–66) gave 'three mitres and sandals of wonderful workmanship, which Christina, Prioress of Markyate, had most carefully made', to Nicholas Brakespeare, the son of one of the monks of St Albans, after he became Pope Adrian IV in December 1154. Neither record is a completely safe guide that she was still alive,<sup>376</sup> as the King's gift of corn to Markyate may have been made posthumously and/or recorded retrospectively, and the needlework may have been made many years earlier. On balance, the fact that two independent records suggest that she was alive in 1155, and the fact that she would probably have been younger than 60 years old in that year, makes it probable that she was indeed still alive.

Clearly the person who had the main series of obits added was closely connected to Christina; one possibility is her sister, Margaret, who is known to have joined the nunnery at Markyate, and is more likely than anyone else to have both had access to the Psalter and had an interest in Christina's immediate family. As her own death is not recorded, she presumably outlived those family members whose deaths appear in the calendar, including Christina.<sup>377</sup>

## VI.2 Prefatory Miniatures

One hypothesis is that the prefatory miniatures omit the Emmaus story because it was already known that this story would be included in the Psalter in the Alexis Quire, in which case we could assume that the prefatory miniatures post-date the Alexis Quire. But as we do not know the date of the latter, this does not help. In any case, the Alexis Master did not need any such logical 'reason' for omitting the Emmaus story from his cycle – he omitted many other gospel episodes that he could have included, had he wished (or been instructed) to. The closely related Pembroke 120 miniatures, for example, not only includes Christ's post-Resurrection appearances to Mary Magdalene, the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus, and Doubting Thomas, as in the Psalter, but also scenes not found in the Psalter, such as Christ appearing to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias for the Miraculous Draught of Fishes (John 21:1–8).<sup>378</sup>

Similarities between the miniatures and other works of art do not help us, because we cannot know for certain if one was influenced by the other, or vice versa, or neither.

### VI.3 Alexis Quire

With the Alexis Quire we at last reach a piece of solid physical evidence that allows us to propose some relative chronology for the production of the manuscript. The sewing-holes at the gutter fold demonstrate that the Quire was sewn at least once before being incorporated into the volume. This is supported by the extra dirt and wear on the Quire's first and last pages, and these two forms of evidence allow us to propose with confidence that the Quire pre-dates, not post-dates, other parts of the volume. If we can accept, as I believe we can, that the miniature and the prologue to the Alexis *Chanson* indicate that the quire was made for Christina, we are probably safe also to assume that it dates from no earlier than the time when she and Geoffrey became friends, in the mid-1120s.

The relative date(s) of the rest of the material in the Alexis Quire is a real puzzle. There are several possibilities, and there is potentially contradictory evidence for all of them. One possibility is that the Emmaus scenes, Beatus initial, Battling Knights, and Discourse on Spiritual Warfare were all added at the same time, before the Quire was bound into the volume. Against this is the fact that it would have been a simple matter to add another leaf or leaves to produce the required amount of space, instead of having to squash the text and images so untidily on the last two pages. A second possibility is that the Emmaus miniatures were added first, and the other material later. Against this is the fact that the third Emmaus miniature seems to be deliberately narrower, for no reason unless it was in order to allow more space for the marginal text of the Discourse. A third possibility is that the Emmaus scenes and Beatus initial were added before the Quire was bound into the volume, and the Battling Knights and marginal text were added afterwards, because there was no other space for these items in the Quire, and it was not easy to insert an extra leaf. Against this is the fact that there are other blank leaves in the volume (e.g. p. 16) that could have been used for the Battling Knights and Discourse, without upsetting the appearance of the start of the psalms.

Perhaps all that one can say is that it is hard to imagine the Quire being bound into the volume before the Emmaus miniatures were executed; that the addition of the Discourse on Spiritual Warfare must post-date the execution of the Emmaus miniatures, Battling Knights drawing, and Beatus initial; and it is almost certain that the Beatus initial had been added before it was bound into the volume at the start of the psalms.

### VI.4 Psalms Section

Several scholars have interpreted the litany image (p. 403) as an indication that a community of women existed, with a male religious overseer, by the time this part of the manuscript was made. This does not necessarily mean that the women were nuns or that the psalms section must post-date the formal foundation of Holy Trinity Priory, Markyate, in May 1145, however, because Christina's *Life* suggests that a community of woman had congregated around her there at a much earlier date. Art-historical and palaeographical grounds prevent one from dating the manuscript as a whole as late as 1145, but c.1131, when Christina formally became a nun, certainly seems to be plausible in the present state of our knowledge. The presence of 'Style II' script<sup>379</sup> written by the Bifolium Scribe suggests that the book was not completely written and decorated before c. 1130.

Aspects of the writing and the decoration of the psalms section suggests that it was produced in haste, which could be interpreted to suggest that an effort was being made to complete the original writing of the psalms, and the subsequent painting of the initials, in time for a particular occasion. There may have been only a short period of time between Christina's decision to take the veil, and the event itself.

## VI.5 General Considerations

One possible historical circumstance may support the idea that the manuscript was not made before 1129. If the *Gesta Abbatum* is to be believed, Abbot Geoffrey commissioned a new shrine for the relics of St Alban in 1124, about the same year (if the *Life* of Christina is to be believed) in which he met Christina. The shrine was still not complete five years later when St Alban's relics were transferred to the new shrine on 1 August 1129, and in the intervening years Geoffrey had even stripped some of the precious materials from the incomplete shrine to raise funds to help the poor during a period of famine. We do not know whether Christina instigated this act of charity, but it seems inherently unlikely that Geoffrey would be spending even small amounts of money on the making of the Albani Psalter at the same time that he was despoiling the new shrine of St Alban to raise funds. On this basis, therefore, it would be possible to argue that the Psalter is unlikely to have been commissioned between 1124 and 1129. Conversely, this financial climate could explain the use of relatively cheap materials and relatively mediocre scribes for the making of the book.

## VI.6 Conclusion

Readers who have been hoping for a tidy conclusion and neat answers to questions that have perplexed scholars for more than a century will be disappointed. Examining the Psalter as it survives today might be compared to encountering a chessboard on which a game of chess has been halted. The more one looks at it, the more one sees complexities. If one knows the rules of the game, and especially if one is familiar with the styles of the players, one may be able to work backwards to reconstruct the previous moves that resulted in the present configuration of the pieces. One can propose a sequence of previous moves that is theoretically perfectly possible, but this does not necessarily mean that the reconstruction is correct. For any arrangement of pieces on the board, there is more than one possible way of getting there, and it may be impossible to deduce, from the available information, which one represents the historical 'truth'.

**Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> The manuscript belongs to the parish Zum Heiligen Kreuz, Hildesheim, and is preserved in the state-of-the-art conditions of the Dombibliothek nearby (see Chapter V.2).
- <sup>2</sup> This name should be avoided, as there are several surviving medieval psalters from St Albans, some of which will be discussed in the chapters that follow. Liturgically, a more accurate name might be the Markyate Psalter.
- <sup>3</sup> Preferable to ‘The St Albans Psalter’, this name has been used, for example, by Heslop, 1988, p. 164, and Nilgen, 1988, p. 152.
- <sup>4</sup> Kauffmann, 1975, p. 69.
- <sup>5</sup> Boase, 1953, pp. 101–02.
- <sup>6</sup> Pächt, 1962, p. 13.
- <sup>7</sup> Goldschmidt, 1895, p. 35; Boase, 1953, p. 104; Talbot, 1959, p. 26; Wormald, 1960, pp. 3, 5, 277–80; Thomson, 1982, pp. 25, 119–20; Nilgen, 1988, p. 152; Holdsworth, 1978, p. 195.
- <sup>8</sup> Dodwell, 1960, p. 278.
- <sup>9</sup> The huge number of writings devoted to the manuscript makes it impossible to comprehensively cite every source used in this commentary. Probably no one could claim to have read every publication on the Psalter, and therefore I may unintentionally present a previously published observation or idea as my own. It is also sometimes difficult to ascertain who first published a particular idea that has since become common currency, but readers familiar with the published literature on the Psalter will realise my extensive debt to the work of Jane Geddes, Kristine Haney, Ursula Nilgen, and Morgan Powell, among others, even when they are not directly cited in the footnotes. I have also benefited especially from frequent discussions with Nicholas Orchard.
- <sup>10</sup> The Latin word for books is ‘codices’; ‘codex’ is the singular form.
- <sup>11</sup> London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius E.i, volume II.
- <sup>12</sup> Horstman, 1901, II, pp. 532–37; Talbot, 1959; Furlong, 1997; Fanous and Leyser, 2008.
- <sup>13</sup> This question is addressed by several essays in Fanous and Leyser, 2005.
- <sup>14</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 34–35; here, and elsewhere unless otherwise stated, I follow Talbot’s translation.
- <sup>15</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 98–99.
- <sup>16</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 142–43.
- <sup>17</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 15, 146–47.
- <sup>18</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 154–55.
- <sup>19</sup> It was long thought that the end of the manuscript must have been damaged in the 1731 fire or otherwise lost, but Koopmans, 2000, has argued convincingly that there is probably no more than a single leaf lost from the present manuscript; it does, however, contain an abbreviated version of a longer original text.
- <sup>20</sup> Müller, 1845.
- <sup>21</sup> Stengel, 1886.
- <sup>22</sup> Goldschmidt, 1895.
- <sup>23</sup> Talbot, 1959.
- <sup>24</sup> Dodwell, 1960, Pächt, 1960, Wormald, 1960. Biographies of all three authors may be found at <<http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org>>.
- <sup>25</sup> Wormald, 1960, p. viii and two unnumbered supplementary pls.
- <sup>26</sup> Wormald, 1960, pp. 5, 22; Dodwell, 1960, p. 272.
- <sup>27</sup> Holdsworth, 1978.
- <sup>28</sup> Nilgen, 1988.
- <sup>29</sup> Haney, 1995; Carrasco, 1999; Haney, 2002; Powell, 2005, 2006.
- <sup>30</sup> The binding and flyleaves are not reproduced.
- <sup>31</sup> Geddes, 2005b.
- <sup>32</sup> Haney, 1995, took the same approach and made valuable observations but her physical description and analysis are relatively summary compared to the present work.
- <sup>33</sup> 1 Kings 16:18 and 16:23
- <sup>34</sup> The standard general study of the rise of literacy in medieval England is Clanchy, 1993.
- <sup>35</sup> *Gesta Abbatum*, I, pp. 232, 217; cited by Clanchy, 1993, p. 178.
- <sup>36</sup> A recent detailed introduction to psalters in German is Büttner, 2004, pp. 1–106; an introduction in French is in Leroquais, 1940–41, vol. I; and in English is van der Horst, 1996.
- <sup>37</sup> ‘In finem pro Idithun psalmus Asaph’.
- <sup>38</sup> ‘David psalmus filiorum Ionadab et priorum captivorum’.
- <sup>39</sup> ‘Intellectus Asaph’.
- <sup>40</sup> van der Horst, 1996.
- <sup>41</sup> It is probably for this reason that Psalm 148 sometimes has an emphasised initial, and Psalms 149 and 150 sometimes have small initials, as if Psalms 148–150 were treated as a single text.
- <sup>42</sup> There were always seven days leading up to the Ides, which meant that the number of days leading up to the Kalends varied from month to month depending on the Nones: in January the



Nones were on the fifth day of the month, so the Ides were on the thirteenth day, and there were nineteen more days leading up to the Kalends of February; but in March the Nones were on the seventh day of the month, so the Ides were on the fifteenth day, and there were only sixteen days leading up to the Kalends of April.

<sup>43</sup> Chapters 9, 12–13, 17.

<sup>44</sup> In fact, both the original invention and the 1129 translation took place on 1 August, but this date clashed with the important feast of St Peter's Chains, so Alban's feasts were observed on the following day. A curious legacy of this adjustment is that the octave remains on 8 August in St Albans calendars that include the octave, not 9 August.

<sup>45</sup> Morgan, 1988, no. 99 pp. 55–57.

<sup>46</sup> 'Ut cunctam plebem S. MARIAE et S. REMIGII conseruare digneris.'

<sup>47</sup> Cambridge, St John's College, MS B. 18. A description and images are available via <http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/>

<sup>48</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 296; Pächt and Alexander, 1973, no. 43.

<sup>49</sup> Quires are sometimes called 'gatherings' (a term which should be avoided because it is less precise), and when referring to printed books they are often called 'signatures' (a word that unfortunately has very different meanings when referring to manuscripts).

<sup>50</sup> These tables and the computistical material in the calendar is discussed in detail by Pickering, 1980, pp. 15–30.

<sup>51</sup> The present work (as well as the Aberdeen website, 2003, and Geddes, 2005), are indebted to Nicholas Orchard for sharing his expertise on the Albani Psalter calendar.

<sup>52</sup> Pace Haney, 1995, p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> Legge, 1961, p. 113.

<sup>54</sup> Robert d'Aubigny was a patron of the nunnery at Sopwell and his sister entered the community, which perhaps makes it possible that the family also patronised Markyate, founded less than a decade later. For d'Aubigny family patronage of St Albans and its cells see Cownie, 1998, especially pp. 91–95.

<sup>55</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Hughes, 1982, p. 73, and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O\\_Sapientia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_Sapientia) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O\\_Sapientia#Alternative\\_English\\_Usage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_Sapientia#Alternative_English_Usage) <accessed 28 April 2007>

<sup>56</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D. 2. 6, on which see see Nicholson, 1913, I, pp. lxxxix–lxxxix and pl. XLVIII, and London, British Library, Royal MS 2 A.x.

<sup>57</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 169\*; see Nicholson, 1913, I, p. xv. It also appears in Cambridge, St John's College, MS B. 20, which can be dated to 1140, but whose place of origin is unknown.

<sup>58</sup> Its first abbot, Richard (1092/3–1117) was formerly a monk of Bec.

<sup>59</sup> London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C. iv; Kauffmann, 1975, no. 78.

<sup>60</sup> Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Vitr. 23-8; Kauffmann, no. 77.

<sup>61</sup> The standard series is published by Hennig, 1955, p. 85, his series 'IV'.

<sup>62</sup> The various series are discussed by Steele, 1919, and Hennig 1955.

<sup>63</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Auct D. 2. 6; Thomson, 1982, p. 101 no. 40.

<sup>64</sup> National Library of Russia, MS. Q. V. 1. 62; Thomson, 1982, p. 123 no. 77.

<sup>65</sup> Oxford, New College, MS 358; Morgan, 1988, no. 174; the calendar is edited by Wormald, 1939–46, I, pp. 31–45.

<sup>66</sup> London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 873; the calendar is edited by Wormald, 1939–46, I, pp. 113–28; this was brought to my attention by Nicholas Orchard.

<sup>67</sup> This was also brought to my attention by Nicholas Orchard.

<sup>68</sup> Dodwell, 1960, pp. 279–80.

<sup>69</sup> This was first pointed out by Powick, 1961, p. 49.

<sup>70</sup> Goldschmidt, 1895, p. 32.

<sup>71</sup> The charter is reproduced by Wormald, 1960, pl. 172, and discussed by Talbot, 1959, p. 30.

<sup>72</sup> Geoffrey's obit also appears as a principal feast on 25 February in the calendar of Oxford, New College, MS 358, a St Albans Psalter of c.1270–80, on which see Morgan, 1988, no. 174.

<sup>73</sup> Talbot, 1959, p. 126.

<sup>74</sup> Most of the time these initials are alternately red or green, so it may be worth looking closely at those places where this regular alternation is disturbed, as in January and August, in each of which there are two feasts with a blue initial; in October and November, where blue is used instead of green; and in June, where two consecutive feasts have red initials. In some cases explanations are easy to determine: for example, the use of a green initial at 11 July (following another green one at 10 July) was probably because it was less important to continue the regular alternation with a red initial than to have an initial different from the red ink of the feast itself. The same principle doubtless explains the two consecutive green initials near the end of September. On the other hand, in late December the colour of the initials in four consecutive entries is the same as colour of the rest of the feast. People examining medieval manuscripts often expect to find neat

patterns and regularity, and assume that any irregularity such as these must be significant: while this is certainly sometimes be true, and the possibility is always worth considering, many irregularities are simply due to simple mistakes or lapses of concentration by a scribe or artist, and are meaningless.

<sup>75</sup> Eight leaves is the most common size for quires in twelfth-century England, but it is notable that the text of the psalms in the Albani Psalter is written on quires of ten leaves each.

<sup>76</sup> The usual alternation of hair- and flesh-sides of the leaves is observed in the first quire, with one side of each bifolium being noticeably smoother and shinier than the other. This is continued through the second quire, but with one exception: the third and fourth leaves of the quire both appear to have a shiny side on the recto (pp. 37 and 39), so one of these bifolia upsets the regular alternation. It may therefore be that one or the other was not envisaged when the quire was first planned, but it is extremely difficult to imagine the narrative cycle without the scenes of either of these bifolia.

<sup>77</sup> If the other side of the bifolium were blank we would have a bifolium conceptually very similar to that found at the end of the volume: a bifolium with two full-page miniatures, one depicting a saint, the other depicting King David as a musician.

<sup>78</sup> Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 120; see Chapter II.2.4.

<sup>79</sup> Following The Incredulity of Thomas, the Pembroke manuscript has six scenes involving Christ and the Apostles, The Ascension, John the Baptist, God the Father and Son Enthroned, Pentecost, and The Last Judgement: eleven scenes. Add to these David Harping and one would have the right number of miniatures to fill a quire of six leaves. Or add three Emmaus scenes and one would have enough for a quire of seven leaves: an awkward number that might prompt a change of plan. These scenarios are pure speculation, but if the original intention (subsequently abandoned or modified) was to have several more scenes after The Incredulity of Thomas, this might explain some of the odd features of the final quire of the picture cycle.

<sup>80</sup> Hancý, 1995, p. 1 nn. 2–4, p. 2 nn. 5–6. Nilgen, 2004, agrees with this general hypothesis.

<sup>81</sup> The bifolia which include pp. 33–34 and 37–38 are rather waxy, semi-transparent parchment, for example, while the bifolium which includes pp. 39–40 is made of especially thick parchment.

<sup>82</sup> Nilgen, 2004.

<sup>83</sup> For normal practices see Alexander, 1993.

<sup>84</sup> By contrast, the gilding of Christ's halo in The Flagellation (p. 44), which occurs between these bifolia, was omitted altogether, perhaps accidentally.

<sup>85</sup> Petzold, 1986, discusses the use of colour and colour-symbolism in the Albani Psalter and related manuscripts in detail.

<sup>86</sup> The first detailed study of such curtains is Sciacca, 2007. A modern equivalent is the insertion of tissue-paper between the leaves, either as loose sheets, or, as in the Albani Psalter, glued in; traces of these glued-in sheets, which have now been removed, can be seen in the inner margins of many leaves, e.g. pp. 53, 55, 57, 73, 83.

<sup>87</sup> See Rushforth, 2007, pp. 11–14, 51–52; and Sciacca, 2007.

<sup>88</sup> Sciacca, 2007, p. 181.

<sup>89</sup> London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 383; Kauffmann (1975), no. 48

<sup>90</sup> Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 120; Kauffmann (1975), no. 35

<sup>91</sup> New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.724 and MS M.551; London, British Library, Additional MS 37472; London, Victoria & Albert Museum, MS 661 (Inv. No. 816-1894); Kauffmann (1975), no. 66; *Eadwine Psalter*, 1992.

<sup>92</sup> The Flagellation is particularly interesting, because although the Pembroke and Eadwine compositions are closest to each other, the three standing figures have simply been rotated horizontally to produce the Albani Psalter composition.

<sup>93</sup> Pächt, 1960, pp. 49–79.

<sup>94</sup> Luke 10:30–37.

<sup>95</sup> Madrid, Escorial, Vitr. 17.

<sup>96</sup> Lehmann-Brockhaus, 1955–60, nos. 721, 730, 800, 804, 822.

<sup>97</sup> See Murbach, 1967; Dodwell, 1993, pls. 290–91.

<sup>98</sup> The book and theses are Bullington, 1991, based on her Ph.D., and Gerry, 2008b.

<sup>99</sup> Storey, 1987; more recent bibliography is supplied by the Aberdeen website, 2003, which in turn is supplemented at <<http://www.manuscripts.org.uk/albani/>>

<sup>100</sup> The chapel was dedicated by Ranulf Flambard, Bishop of Durham (1099–1128) while Richard de Albini was Abbot (1097–1119), so the dedication must have taken place between 1099 and 1119; it is often assumed to have been after the Abbey was consecrated in 1115.

<sup>101</sup> The abbey also owned at least one other copy of his *Life*, now New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.926; see Thomson, 1983, pp. 115–15 no. 64, cf. no. 66.

<sup>102</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 160–61.

<sup>103</sup> Cahn, 1982, p. 173.

<sup>104</sup> I am grateful to Nicholas Orchard for discussion of this point.

<sup>105</sup> It has been edited by Mölk, 1977, pp. 289–97.

- <sup>106</sup> Bullington, 1991, p. 226.
- <sup>107</sup> Storey, 1987, pp. 7–8, 15.
- <sup>108</sup> It is impossible to do justice here to a century and a half of work by the leading philologists and other specialists of French language and literature. Studies, and translations into most modern European languages, are readily available from libraries and academic bookstores, and the interested reader is advised to refer to one of these for a detailed account of the text.
- <sup>109</sup> Edited by Molk, 1977, pp. 297–99 and 299–303 respectively.
- <sup>110</sup> Pächt, 1960, p. 138.
- <sup>111</sup> Decretal III, chapter 41. Ivo had been at Bec Abbey in Normandy under Abbots Lanfranc and Anselm, who each later became archbishops of Canterbury, and brought aspects of the Bec liturgy to England (see the discussion of the litany, Chapter II.4.3).
- <sup>112</sup> This unpublished observation was made by the late Christopher Hohler.
- <sup>113</sup> Including Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 19, which was at Canterbury by 1119; MGH *Epp.*, II, 1899, p. 270, PL, 140, col. 679
- <sup>114</sup> I am grateful to Michael Clanchy for sharing his thoughts on this matter.
- <sup>115</sup> Chazelle, 1990, p. 141.
- <sup>116</sup> As suggested by Legge, 1956, p. 228, and explored most recently by Gerry, 2008a, b.
- <sup>117</sup> Wormald, 1952, p. 251, comments that ‘With the growth of large churches on the sites of burial places of the saints, it is most likely that the walls were decorated with scenes from the life of the patron’.
- <sup>118</sup> Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3041, fol. 386r; printed by Horstman, 1901, II, p. 535; the original spelling is ‘that there was a table (sic) hanginge (sic) over their tomb in which their miraculous lif (sic) is written’.
- <sup>119</sup> Clay, 1914, pl. XXX (opposite p. 113) shows the tomb of Sigar and Roger in its recess, with a memorial inscription painted on the wall above.
- <sup>120</sup> Pächt, 1960, pp. 74–78; this idea apparently originated with Mâle, 1922, p. 138.
- <sup>121</sup> It seems to me that the artist has attempted to depict a staff with a square cross-section, not a ‘double-staff’ as it has usually been described. A ‘double-staff’ is not only illogical, but the chevron-like bands are straight rather than curved: they therefore suggest lines on flat surfaces, and are deliberately different from the curved lines drawn around the bamboo-like staffs in the Flagellation miniature (p. 43). It appears that the converging chevron-like lines are the artist’s attempt at depicting a right-angle edge in perspective, similar to the architecture in green immediately above the disciples’ heads on p. 70–71, and the architecture on the right of the initials on pp. 231, 245, 294, and to each side of the initial on p. 375.
- <sup>122</sup> Another example is London, Victoria & Albert Museum, MS 661, verso; Kauffmann, 1975, no. 66 and pl. 130.
- <sup>123</sup> Another English psalter of similar date has two images of battling knights each accompanied by a cryptic inscription: Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS Vir. 23-8, fol. 81v; see Kauffmann, 1975, pp. 105–06 no. 77 and ill. 219.
- <sup>124</sup> Goldschmidt, 1895, pp. 47–49.
- <sup>125</sup> Powell, 2005, pp. 315–19.
- <sup>126</sup> The word translated here as ‘rank’ is ‘acie’, which is often used in a military context to mean a line of soldiers in battle.
- <sup>127</sup> St Benedict, *Rule*, I.3–5: ‘Deinde secundum genus est anachoritarum, id est eremitarum, horum qui non conversationis fervore novicio, sed monasterii probatione diuturna, qui didicerunt contra diabolum multorum solacio iam docti pugnare, et bene exstructi fraterna ex acie ad singularem pugnam eremi, securi iam sine consolatione alterius, sola manu vel brachio contra vitia carnis vel cogitationum, Deo auxiliante, pugnare sufficiunt.’
- <sup>128</sup> For reproductions of two English examples see Kauffmann, 1975, figs 1 and 11.
- <sup>129</sup> E.g. Talbot, 1959, pp. 148–49, 172–73, 176–77. It is perhaps unlikely that Christina and Geoffrey are alluded to in a phrase in the preceding section whose meaning is opaque, which refers to ‘two members of the human race alive in heaven who will pour forth their blood and bring that war to its conclusion’.
- <sup>130</sup> The others are Psalms 18:3, 118:171, 143:13, 144:7.
- <sup>131</sup> Although it is technically possible that the quire originally began with the Emmaus scenes, followed by blank leaves (with the bifolia folded the other way), there is no reason to suppose that this was so.
- <sup>132</sup> Knapp, 1999, p. 112. Knapp’s observation, made before the book was disbound, has to be somewhat modified now that the sewing-stations are more easily visible: the only quire that is definitely different from the others is the Alexis quire.
- <sup>133</sup> Wormald, 1952a; he does not, however, include the Albani Psalter or Alexis quire in his account of such *libelli*.
- <sup>134</sup> The practice of writing more than a few lines of text in lines of alternating colours is very unusual. The closest parallel of which I am aware is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 293, a twelfth-century (northern?) English Psalter whose main text is written in lines alternately red, green, and blue. Kauffmann, 1975, no. 94.

<sup>135</sup> If the Alexis *Chanson* in the Albani Psalter had been written out with each verse starting on a new line, it would have required eighteen pages to accommodate the text, as compared to the sixteen pages available in a standard quire of eight leaves. If the scribe for some reason was limited to using a quire of eight leaves, this might explain why he decided not to start each line of verse on a new line.

<sup>136</sup> Legge, 1956, p. 228; Powell, 2005, p. 301.

<sup>137</sup> On the rebindings see Chapter V.1. Some of the roundels in the calendar are very close to the edge of the leaf, which suggests that this quire too has been significantly cropped; likewise some of the psalm initials such as those on pp. 350, 366, 371, 412.

<sup>138</sup> Wormald, 1952b, p. 24.

<sup>139</sup> Aberdeen website, 2003, Geddes, 2005, p. 74.

<sup>140</sup> It is difficult to know which dimensions are the most significant: for example, the inner dimensions of the miniatures, or the outer dimensions, including the decorative frames? In the following list I give (i) the size of the miniature with its frame, (ii) the size of the miniature without its frame, (iii) the width of the inner margin, and (iv) the width of the outer margin:

p. 69: 212 x 145 mm; 186 x 120 mm; 17mm; 24 mm

p. 70: 205 x 145 mm; 173 x 117 mm; 17 mm; 23 mm

p. 71: 202 x 130 mm; 165 x 95 mm; 21 mm; 37 mm.

All measurements should be treated as approximate, but it is clear that p. 71 has a significantly smaller miniature, and significantly wider margins on both sides than the other two miniatures. The third, smallest, Emmaus miniature is closest in size to the dimensions of the text area of the psalms that follow (from p. 74 to the end), so if the psalms section was already in production or complete when the Emmaus miniatures were designed, one possibility is that the artist was deliberately trying to make a graduated transition from the larger dimensions of the Alexis *Chanson* text dimensions to the smaller psalms text dimensions.

<sup>141</sup> It is also proposed in Chapter II.4.6 that he was unable to see the ruling of the page.

<sup>142</sup> Powell, 2005, pp. 305–09.

<sup>143</sup> The possibility that the Beatus initial was not produced for the Albani Psalter is perhaps supported by the unusual nature of its gilding, described below.

<sup>144</sup> Pächt, 1960, pp. 167–68; Thomson, 1982, I pp. 113–14, no. 62, II, pls. 17–25.

<sup>145</sup> The *Chanson* ruling is c.215 x 140 mm, the miniatures, including their frames, are c.185 x 140 mm.

<sup>146</sup> They are about 113 and 135 mm, and perhaps also about 35mm from the top edge of the leaf. They are narrow vertical slits, unlike the larger, rounder holes caused by the thicker threads necessary to sew the whole Psalter.

<sup>147</sup> He admits, however, that ‘the initial selection of variants was drawn from a more limited range of manuscripts ... than I would now select. There may well be variants which I have not included, that would allow for more subtle comparisons of late 13<sup>th</sup> century texts, or for those before the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century. I am confident that my selection of variants does allow for valid comparisons earlier and later than the period of the manuscripts from which they were drawn.’, Golob, 1981, vol. I, p. 299.

<sup>148</sup> Oxford, New College, MS 358; Morgan, 1988, no. 174.

<sup>149</sup> Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 280; Wormald and Giles, 1982, I, pp. 237–42.

<sup>150</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. n.a.l. 1670; not in Avril and Stirnemann, 1987.

<sup>151</sup> Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.5.1; Thomson, 1982, pp. 86–87 no. 11.

<sup>152</sup> London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B.vi; Morgan, 1988, no. 86.

<sup>153</sup> Haney, 2002, pp. 19–21, used Golob’s data to support her hypothesis of a Canterbury origin for the Albani Psalter or its model, concluding that ‘This is clear evidence that the St. Albans Psalter is closely related to Rouen 231 (A.44), a Gallican psalter from St Augustine’s Canterbury, which in turn is close to the c.1100 corrections to the Christ Church [Canterbury] Royal Bible.’

<sup>154</sup> The calendar includes a large number of obits of St Albans abbots, many of them marked as major feasts, but presumably they were not celebrated like saints’ feasts in the formal liturgy of St Albans; the calendar would repay further study which is beyond the scope of the present work.

<sup>155</sup> The layout of pp. 74 and 92 is different for reasons to be discussed in Chapter II.8.

<sup>156</sup> The original Psalm 1 initial is probably no longer in the volume (see Chapter II.8.1), and the Psalm 97 initial is missing (see Chapter II.4.9).

<sup>157</sup> Pp. 115, 121, 123, 166, 223, 315, 331, 332, 335, 358, 383, 413

<sup>158</sup> Pp. 154, 213, 233, 240, 256, 323, 337.

<sup>159</sup> The artist did *not* encroach upon the two blank lines on p. 104.

<sup>160</sup> Almost all the rubrics are in red ink but one exception, written in blue ink (p. 94), suggests the possibility that the rubrics were not all written at the same time.

<sup>161</sup> Other examples are pp. 202, 227, 250, 279, 288, 309, 326, and 370.

<sup>162</sup> Pp. 94, 96, 119, 133, 135, 147, 149, 157, 162, 164, 166, 190, 193, and 218; and pp. 313, 316, and 320.

<sup>163</sup> Pp. 306, 318–319, 321, 323–325, 328, 330–334, 336, 338–339, 343, 345, 351, 352, 355, 364, and 367. There is one exception, on p. 154.

<sup>164</sup> E.g. pp. 323, 326, 332, 341, 351, 352, 355.

- <sup>165</sup> E.g. pp. 366, 364, 366, 391, 394, 409.
- <sup>166</sup> E.g. pp. 316, 321, 329, 343, 373.
- <sup>167</sup> 'Posuisti in capite eius corona[m] de lapide p[re]cioso'
- <sup>168</sup> 'Sicut unguentu[m] in capite'.
- <sup>169</sup> 'D[omi]n[u]s regit me'.
- <sup>170</sup> Christ clearly 'walkest upon the wings of the wind', and under-drawing visible under the red paint around the upper part of the naked figure looks as if it was intended to represent 'burning fire', cf. p. 391.
- <sup>171</sup> 'Incipit letania'; no such rubric introduces other sections of the text, such as the canticles or collects.
- <sup>172</sup> London, British Library, Arundel MS. 60; Winchester, c.1073.
- <sup>173</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 296; Crowland, eleventh century.
- <sup>174</sup> London, British Library, Stowe MS 12; Winchester, c.1075.
- <sup>175</sup> See the *Rule* of St Benedict, Chapter 13.
- <sup>176</sup> Cf. Haney, 1995; Nilgen, 2004.
- <sup>177</sup> This was known to the late Christopher Hohler, who did not publish his views, and has recently been studied by Nicholas Orchard, who is preparing a publication on the subject.
- <sup>178</sup> I am grateful to Nicholas Orchard for this point. For a discussion of the influence of Bec liturgy on Canterbury and other religious houses after the Conquest, see Heslop, 1995.
- <sup>179</sup> I am grateful to Nick Orchard for discussing this and other aspects of the Psalter with me.
- <sup>180</sup> The litany as printed by Wormald, 1960, pp. 31–32, contains a number of mistakes (John the Baptist is omitted, for example); Haney, 2004, pp. 24–26, rectifies this omission but reproduces some of Wormald's other inaccuracies and adds some new ones.
- <sup>181</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 30, 174–77. It is doubtless just a coincidence that Bermondsey was dependent on the French monastery of La Charité-sur-Loire, and that the twelfth-century psalter that most closely resembles the Albani Psalter in its use of a series of large historiated initials throughout the psalms was apparently written for a nunnery associated with La Charité (London, British Library, Harley MS 2895).
- <sup>182</sup> London, British Library, Royal MS 2 A.x; this has one extra (common) petition, asking that the Lord will visit 'this place' and console those who live in it. It is worth noting in passing that a common petition referring to the pope, 'That thou wouldst deign to preserve the Apostolic lord, and all levels of the church in holy religion, we beseech you' (p. 408), which was erased in many manuscripts at the Reformation in England, has been left untouched in the Albani Psalter.
- <sup>183</sup> 'Fili dei. Te rogamus audi nos. II'.
- <sup>184</sup> 'Agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi ...'.
- <sup>185</sup> '[Chris]te audi nos'.
- <sup>186</sup> 'Deus in adiutorium meum intende ... Domine ne moreris'.
- <sup>187</sup> Haney, 2004, pp. 28, 652, described this as a 'Utany', a term not found in English dictionaries, and apparently derived from a typographical error for the word 'Litany' in Dodwell, 1960, p. 271; Wormald, 1960, p. 21, calls it the 'Second part of the litany'.
- <sup>188</sup> All except nos. 8–9 are present, for example, in the early twelfth-century additions to London, British Library, Arundel MS 60 (Winchester, c.1073).
- <sup>189</sup> Bruylants, 1952, no. 628; Deshusses, 1979–88, I, 442, no. 1335; II, 162, no. 2542.
- <sup>190</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 296. It is also found in an early twelfth-century triple psalter from Rheims, Cambridge, St John's College, MS B. 18, fol. 213v, of which a description and images are available via <[http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special\\_collections/manuscripts/](http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special_collections/manuscripts/)>, and after the litany in the printed Hereford Breviary, Frere & Brown, 1904, I, p. 28
- <sup>191</sup> I owe this idea to Nicholas Orchard.
- <sup>192</sup> Talbot, 1959, p. 22.
- <sup>193</sup> 'The Collects or Prayers', Aberdeen website, 2003; Geddes, 2005a, p. 201.
- <sup>194</sup> Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 10,000, fol. 138v; Morgan, 1982, no. 29.
- <sup>195</sup> I am grateful to Felix Heinzer, who looked at several medieval commentaries on the psalms on my behalf, but was also unable to find a relevant source.
- <sup>196</sup> Johannes Lorichius, *Aenigmatum libri III*, Frankfurt, 1545, p. 17: 'Versiculus quidam est ubi hæc uerba habentur, Ex hoc in hoc, ubi totu[m] Psalterium in duas partes diuiditur'.
- <sup>197</sup> Clanchy, 1993, p. 194.
- <sup>198</sup> *Gesta Abbatum*, quoted in English by Thomson, 1982, p. 21.
- <sup>199</sup> Porter, 1995, comes to the remarkable conclusion that without scientific analysis it is often not possible to be sure if the blue used in a medieval manuscript is extremely expensive lapis lazuli, or a cheap alternative.
- <sup>200</sup> The horizontal line runs just above the verse that has a blue initial 'A'; the vertical line runs near the gutter of p. 276.
- <sup>201</sup> The individual parallel pen-strokes are frequently clear in the green initials, because the ink has not adhered well. Even where multiple pen-strokes are not visible, it is natural to imagine that the fine serifs on many letters would be easier to achieve with a pen than a brush.

- <sup>202</sup> The word ‘Et’ written as a ligature is also found in another St Albans manuscript decorated by the Alexis Master: Cambridge, King’s College, MS 19, e.g. fols. 5v, 6v, 136v.
- <sup>203</sup> There are sewing-holes lower on p. 95, but these are clearly associated with the initial on the other side, p. 96.
- <sup>204</sup> E.g. pp. 115, 117, 123, 131, 133, 135, 139.
- <sup>205</sup> de Hamel, 1996.
- <sup>206</sup> E.g. Oxford, Queen’s College, MS 349, had cuttings removed and taken to Ireland before being returned with a note that reads ‘Repentance desires these may be put in their proper places in ye book from whence they were taken; Dublin, Novemb, 5, 1727’.
- <sup>207</sup> The leaf is slightly smaller compared to the others, which shows that it has been trimmed by approximately 5mm in height and about 1cm in width. This trimming was probably done to tidy-up the edges, for the purposes of mounting and framing the leaf for display.
- <sup>208</sup> Goldschmidt, 1895, pp. 118–19.
- <sup>209</sup> See Alexander, 1993, p. 35, to which many more examples could be added.
- <sup>210</sup> See Chapter III.7.
- <sup>211</sup> Aberdeen website, 2003, p. 285 commentary.
- <sup>212</sup> *Eadwine Psalter*, 1992, p. 4, states that the Eadwine Psalter has eighty or more scarfed repairs.
- <sup>213</sup> Powell, 2006, p. 361 n. 83.
- <sup>214</sup> I am very grateful to Jochen Beppler for making my examination possible in September 2007.
- <sup>215</sup> If the initial and inscription pre-dated the Chanson Scribe’s work, then it would originally have been the only initial in the volume with an inscription.
- <sup>216</sup> This is common in medieval manuscripts; pp. 415 and 418 of the Albani Psalter, for example, clearly demonstrate that green pigment was often more mordant than other colours.
- <sup>217</sup> Alexander, 1993, p. 36, discusses and illustrates one example.
- <sup>218</sup> Aberdeen website, 2003, ‘The Initials’; Geddes, 2005a, p. 200; Geddes, 2005b, p. 95.
- <sup>219</sup> This is true of almost all medieval manuscripts, because the placement and size of the initials is dependent on the space that has been left by the scribe.
- <sup>220</sup> The possibility cannot be completely dismissed that the manuscript was originally written for someone else connected to St Albans Abbey but various hypothetical candidates, such as Roger the hermit or Abbot Geoffrey, do not have a stronger claim than Christina. If Geoffrey commissioned it for his own personal use, for example, one might expect the divergences from the standard St Albans litany to reflect his own devotional interests, such as the inclusion of St Julian, patron of Le Mans. If the manuscript had been written for institutional rather than personal use, it would have a ‘standard’ St Albans litany.
- <sup>221</sup> Swarzenski, 1963, p. 80.
- <sup>222</sup> Ayres, 1974, pp. 215–17.
- <sup>223</sup> I.e. the sole surviving copy of her *Life*, London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius E.i. The surviving manuscript (a gift from the abbot of St Albans to the cell of St Albans at Redbourn) was doubtless copied from a St Albans exemplar, and there is a record of another copy of the *Life* kept at Markyate; see Koopmans, 2000.
- <sup>224</sup> Talbot, 1959, p. 26.
- <sup>225</sup> It is notable that the original artist apparently did not intend the opening word(s) of the litany to be written in display capitals, as for the psalms and canticles that precede it, and the collects that follow it.
- <sup>226</sup> <<http://www.manuscripts.org.uk/albani/>>
- <sup>227</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 100–103.
- <sup>228</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 80–81. The angels, like Abraham’s three angels in the Old Testament, would without doubt have been interpreted as a symbol or personification of the Trinity.
- <sup>229</sup> Rushforth, 2007, p. 79.
- <sup>230</sup> Wormald, 1960, p. 9.
- <sup>231</sup> E.g. Haney, 1995, p. 19; Aberdeen website, 2003.
- <sup>232</sup> The Bury Bible (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 2) and Winchester Bible (Winchester, Cathedral Library), for example, each have full-page miniatures interspersed within the text.
- <sup>233</sup> Wormald, 1960, p. 3; Thomson, 1982, p. 119; Haney, 2002, p. 3; et al.
- <sup>234</sup> New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.736; Kauffmann, 1975, no. 34 pp. 72–74, ills. 79–83; a full description, exhaustive bibliography, and images of all the miniatures are available on the Pierpont Morgan Library’s online catalogue: <<http://corsair.morganlibrary.org/>>
- <sup>235</sup> I think that it was Sandy Heslop who pointed this out to me, many years ago; he is probably also responsible for sowing the seeds of other ideas that have been developed in this volume.
- <sup>236</sup> Cambridge, Trinity College, MS. R. 17. 1.
- <sup>237</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodl. 717, fol. 287v.
- <sup>238</sup> The holes in the David miniature appear in the upper gold framing-line; above the horn of the upper left horn-player; to the right of the foot of the harpist; in the lower left corner of the gold frame; at the ends of the left-hand bell-player’s shoes; and in the background to the left of the right-hand bell-player.



- <sup>239</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Lat. 8846, and London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 431; I intend to publish a detailed discussion of these psalters in due course.
- <sup>240</sup> Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Thott 143 2<sup>o</sup>, fol. 17r; Kauffmann, 1975, no. 96; images of the manuscript in colour are available online; the Beatus page is at <<http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/242/eng/17+recto/>>
- <sup>241</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 296; Pächt and Alexander, 1973, pl. V no. 43a.
- <sup>242</sup> If, when the first bifolium of the Albani Psalter was being replaced, the insertion of the Alexis quire was still not yet planned *and* the prefatory miniatures were not yet finished, it is possible that it was the intention for the final full-page miniature of David at the end of the prefatory cycle to be a Beatus initial, facing the lettering on p. 73.
- <sup>243</sup> Thomson, 1982, p. 13.
- <sup>244</sup> Thomson, 1982, p. 15.
- <sup>245</sup> Thomson, 1982, p. 22. The Abingdon Customary states that if there is a scribe from outside the abbey working under the direction of the abbot or precentor, the abbot was to be responsible for his food and the precentor for his wages; Gullick, 1998, p. 5, citing Stevenson, 1858, II, p. 371.
- <sup>246</sup> Thomson, 1982, pp. 21–22. The ‘precious psalter’ has sometimes been associated with the Albani Psalter or with the Cron Psalter now at the British Library, Additional MS 81084.
- <sup>247</sup> I am grateful to Nicholas Orchard for discussion of this point.
- <sup>248</sup> Stevenson, 1858, II, p. 289 provides a mangled text, see instead Ker, 1960, p. 11 n. 1.
- <sup>249</sup> London, British Library, Harley MS 2624, fols. 3v–46v. Thomson, 1982, pp. 93 and 119, states that the Calendar Scribe’s hand is ‘very like’ the marginalia in the Cicero; this opinion has been repeated uncritically by others; I agree with Haney, 1995, p. 23 n. 52, who suggests that the hands are not the same.
- <sup>250</sup> Rodney Thomson suggested (personal email dated 19 March 2007) that the scribe may have been French, and offered Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. lat. 116 (see Cahn, 1996, no. 27, ills. 46–47) as a comparison.
- <sup>251</sup> Stevens, 2004.
- <sup>252</sup> Other examples are ‘ex ecrebant[ur]’ (p. 180, l. 2), ‘ex urgam’ (p. 182, l. 6), ‘ex urgeret’ (p. 220, l. 9), ‘si [new line:] cut’ (p. 259, ll. 8–9), ‘ex urgens’ (p. 272, l. 5), ‘quas satio’ (p. 288, l. 2), ‘super speraui’ (p. 320, l. 19), and ‘super speraui’ (p. 321, l. 16).
- <sup>253</sup> Examples are ‘in paupertate’ written as ‘inpaupertate’, ‘a me’ written as ‘ame’, and ‘a persequentibus’ written as ‘apersequentibus’ (p. 127, lines 6, 10, and 19).
- <sup>254</sup> Potential support for this hypothesis comes from the fact that the Psalms Scribe may not have been available when the Bifolium Scribe (see below) was at work.
- <sup>255</sup> London, British Library, Royal MS 5 F.xii.
- <sup>256</sup> Gullick, 1995.
- <sup>257</sup> The style of script and the care with which the Lanfranc manuscript is written are similar to the Albani Psalter, and thus would probably have been written at a similar speed. It has 92 leaves (184 pages) and 29 lines per page, so it has a total of approximately 5,330 lines of text. Assuming that he did not work on Sundays, he wrote the text in about 26 working days, which is equivalent to a rate of approximately 200 lines of text per working day, or about 1,200 lines per working week. The Albani Psalter psalms, canticles, etc., occupy about 340 pages (pp. 74–114) and have 22 lines per page, a total of 7480 lines. At a rate of 200 lines per day, this works out at about 37 working days, or 42 days including Sundays: less than six weeks. But we should perhaps treat six weeks as an absolute maximum, because unlike the Lanfranc manuscript, a very large proportion of the pages in the Albani Psalter either have lots of space left blank at the ends of the lines (because they are written as verse), or are occupied by large historiated initials (sometimes occupying more than half the page); the true amount of text is therefore probably closer to 250 pages than 340 pages. If we re-do our calculations, based on 250 pages each of 22 lines, this produces a figure very similar to that of the Lanfranc manuscript: approximately 5,500 lines of text in total. But this figure is probably still too high, because the Lanfranc manuscript has an average of about 9–10 words per line, while the Albani Psalter has an average of only about 5–6 words per full line.
- <sup>258</sup> Spain, León, Colegiata San Isidoro, Cod. I. 3, has an inscription stating that it was finished in March 1162, having been written in six months and illuminated in a seventh: *Colophons*, 1965–82, IV, p. 197 no. 13645; for an extremely well documented example, of a Bible written in fifteen months, from 4 April 1452 to 9 July 1453, see Christopher de Hamel, ‘Dates in the Giant Bible of Mainz’, in *Tributes in Honor of James H. Marrow*, edited by Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne S. Korteweg (London and Turnhout, 2006), pp. 173–83.
- <sup>259</sup> In the psalm rubrics, however, the ampersand often has a straight limb, turning neither to the left nor right.
- <sup>260</sup> Haney, 1995, p. 2.
- <sup>261</sup> London, British Library, Egerton MS 3721, fols. 1v–7v; Wormald, 1960, p. 276; Thomson, 1982, p. 119.
- <sup>262</sup> London, British Library, Harley MS 2624; Wormald, 1960, p. 276.



- <sup>263</sup> Holdsworth, 1978, p. 194, was the first to raise a note of caution.
- <sup>264</sup> This view has received support from an opinion that the script is typical of north French schools, because Geoffrey was apparently trained at Le Mans before coming to England; see Nilgen, 1988, p. 162.
- <sup>265</sup> Thomson, 1982, 28–30.
- <sup>266</sup> The late Christopher Hohler used this epithet in private correspondence.
- <sup>267</sup> It is my opinion that in attempting to classify the St Albans manuscripts as precisely as possible, a laudable exercise, Thomson often divides the work of a single scribe into more than one ‘Hand’. A good example is London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B.iv, in which he attributes some, but not all, of the rubrics to his Scribe B; there are undoubted variations in the style of script used in this manuscript, but I am confident that the entire book (main text as well as all rubrics) was written by this single scribe.
- <sup>268</sup> Wormald, 1960, p. 6 and Thomson, 1982, p. 119
- <sup>269</sup> Although this may be because the horizontal ruling is more visible in some places than others.
- <sup>270</sup> See the running titles reproduced in Thomson, 1982, pls. 47, 86.
- <sup>271</sup> The closest equivalents, though not the same, are those on pp. 197 and 218.
- <sup>272</sup> Wormald, 1960, pp. 6, 275; Thomson, 1982, p. 119.
- <sup>273</sup> The lecture, entitled ‘A Reassessment of the Scribes of the St Alban’s Psalter: Art Historical and Other Implications’ was delivered on 6 November in the Palaeography Room of the Library of the University of London; a slightly shorter version was delivered at the university at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on 20 October 1999.
- <sup>274</sup> I am grateful to Rod Thomson who confirmed that it is ‘Style II’ St Albans script.
- <sup>275</sup> Nicholas Orchard first emphasised the importance of this fact to me.
- <sup>276</sup> Thomson 1982, p. 30, dates all the manuscripts containing Style II script to after c.1140; he has subsequently suggested that Style II script was being written a decade earlier than this (Thomson, 2007).
- <sup>277</sup> Aberdeen website, 2003, ‘The Scribes’; Geddes, 2005, p. 95.
- <sup>278</sup> Wormald, 1960, p. 6; Thomson, 1982, p. 119.
- <sup>279</sup> Stevens, 2004, p. 6, discusses corrections on the added bifolium, but considers them to be by the person responsible for the coloured verse initials.
- <sup>280</sup> Some comments on the text and its variants are made in Chapter 1.2.2.
- <sup>281</sup> Sometimes the corrections are so small that it is not possible to say which scribe was responsible.
- <sup>282</sup> E.g. ‘veruntamen’ changed to ‘veruntamen’, pp. 189, 190), ‘habundant[er]’ to ‘abundant[er]’ (p. 128), ‘habundantia’ to ‘abundantia’ (p. 132), ‘habundab[un]t’ to ‘abundab[un]t’ (p. 194, second line from bottom), ‘habundantes’ to ‘abundantes’ (p. 363, l.5), ‘habundantiæ’ to ‘abundantiæ’ (p. 365, l.7), ‘hierusalem’ to ‘ierusalem’ (p. 367, l.9), ‘da[m]pnatione’ to ‘da[m]natione’ (p. 407, l.18), and ‘do[m]pnu[m]’ to ‘do[m]nu[m]’ (p. 408, l.9).
- <sup>283</sup> Other corrections by the Psalms Corrector include: ‘qui in habitare facit’ (p. 198, line 17), ‘aqua[ue] usq[ue] ad anima[m] mea[m]’ (p. 202, line 1), ‘[acce]ndit omnem iram suam’ (p. 228, line 2), ‘om[n]is laboris eor[um] in tabernaculis cham’ (p. 229, line 8), ‘[Buc]cinat in neomenia tuba’ (p. 236, line 4), ‘[bened]ictione dabit legis lator’ (p. 241, line 4), ‘[qui]a c[on]uersus es ret[ro]rsu[m]’ (p. 304, line 10), ‘me d[omi]ne a desiderio meo peccatori’ (p. 356, line 8), and ‘[absor]pti sunt iuxta petra[m]’ (p. 357, line 3 from the bottom); ‘d[eu]s animam meam’ (p. 111, line 8; compare the ‘meam’ with the word immediately below), ‘d[eu]s animam meam’ (p. 118), ‘in te[m]pore opportune’ (p. 129, last line), ‘untamen in diluuiio’ (p. 130, line 1), ‘ad p[re]ces eor[um]’ (p. 134, line 3 from bottom), ‘/o meo’ (p. 138, line 5), ‘non collidetur’ (p. 143, line 3), ‘admirati s[un]t conturbati sunt’ (p. 165, line 3), ‘templi tui’ (p. 165, line 10), ‘in unum’ (p. 166, line 7), ‘nomini tuo’ (p. 195, line 8), ‘[E]xist[imabam]’ (p. 214), ‘uirtute sua affricum’ (p. 226, line 15), ‘impediuit’ (p. 227, line 3), ‘in inaquosuo’ (p. 228, line 6), ‘cuiti’ (p. 232, line 3), ‘[uine]am istam’ (p. 234, last words), ‘[ab]s te’ (p. 241, line 1), ‘sunt fines terræ’ (p. 263, line 11), ‘deus noster’ (p. 263, line 17), ‘[pasc]uæ eius’ (p. 268, line 12), ‘[P]sallam et’ (p. 269, line 2), ‘om[n]e[s] ang[e]li ei[us]’ (p. 276, line 3), ‘generationes’ (281, line 5), ‘in crepauit’ (p. 286, line 2), ‘ad iustitia[m]’ (p. 288, line 3), ‘est misericordia tua’ (p. 298, line 4), ‘a[stitit]’ (p. 299, line 1), ‘iusti intrabunt in ea[m]’ (p. 310, penultimate line), ‘de’ (p. 317, line 8), ‘aduers[us]itibus’ (p. 414, line 13).
- <sup>284</sup> Wormald, 1943, p. 37.
- <sup>285</sup> Boase, 1953, pp. 104–07.
- <sup>286</sup> Rickert, 1954, pp. 78–79.
- <sup>287</sup> In the second edition of her book published in 1965, after the publication of Pächt, 1960, and various reviews such as Swarzenski, 1960, she revised this opinion to ‘two very similar ungifted hands, probably St Albans illuminators’.
- <sup>288</sup> Pächt, 1960, p. 142 n. 1, thought that the differences of style detected by Rickert were due to differences of technique.
- <sup>289</sup> Pächt, 1960, p. 49.
- <sup>290</sup> Dodwell, 1960, p. 199–200.
- <sup>291</sup> Haney, 2002, p. 33.

- <sup>292</sup> Dodwell, 1993, p. 328.
- <sup>293</sup> Aberdeen website, 2003, 'The Artists'; Geddes, 2005, pp. 81–86.
- <sup>294</sup> Pächt, 1960, p. 174, evocatively says 'a strongly sagging jaw seems to draw the face down, giving it an elongated shape'.
- <sup>295</sup> London, British Library, Royal MS 13 D. vi (Thomson, 1982, II, pl. 41), Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 290 (Thomson, 1982, II, pl. 49).
- <sup>296</sup> Hereford, Cathedral Library, MS O. I. 8; see Thomson, 1982, II, pl. 71, and Mynors and Thomson, 1993, colour pls. 3a–d.
- <sup>297</sup> New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.736 (Thomson, 1982, p. 124 no. 80), e.g. fol. 7v; London, British Library, Cotton MS Titus D. xvi (Thomson, 1982, pp. 91–92 no. 19), e.g. fols. 2v, 12r, 14r; Albani Psalter pp. 24, 27.
- <sup>298</sup> The large bird whose beak is in his ear has prompted comparison with an initial in a manuscript of unknown origin: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Latin 10341; Avril & Stirnemann, 1987, p. 24 no. 35, and pl. IX, attributed there to the Alexis Master.
- <sup>299</sup> The seraph's face is drawn somewhere between a full-frontal and a three-quarter view; the truly frontal views have symmetrical features (pp. 52, 53, 55).
- <sup>300</sup> Petzold, 1986.
- <sup>301</sup> Pp. 24, 27, 29, 31, 37.
- <sup>302</sup> Pp. 17, 30, 33, 35, 39, 40.
- <sup>303</sup> Pp. 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 36, 38, 41, 43–45, 50–51, 52, 55.
- <sup>304</sup> The script is of an angular 'spiky'/'prickly' type that is epitomised in manuscripts written at Canterbury and Rochester in the early twelfth century, thought to be based on script from Normandy, especially Bec (Thomson, 1982, pp. 17, 91; Ker, 1960), and the ruling is executed with a stylus, rather than a pencil; the use of pencil ruling started to become common in the late eleventh century and was standard by the mid-twelfth.
- <sup>305</sup> Thomson, 1982, pp. 24–25.
- <sup>306</sup> Pächt, 1960, pp. 156–57 n. 3, 168.
- <sup>307</sup> London, British Library, Royal MS 13 D.vi–vii; Kauffmann, 1975, pp. 71–72 no. 32; Thomson, pp. 99–100 nos. 36–37.
- <sup>308</sup> Thomson, 2001 is the most recent study.
- <sup>309</sup> The Shaftesbury Psalter (London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 383) and Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 120.
- <sup>310</sup> Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Codices Bibliothecae Publicae Latini 144B; Pächt, 1960, pp. 167–8; Thomson, 1982, pp. 113–14.
- <sup>311</sup> London, British Library Cotton MS Titus D. xvi; Pächt, 1960, p. 168; Kauffmann, 1975, pp. 70–71 no. 30; Thomson, 1982, pp. 91–92 no. 19.
- <sup>312</sup> Verdun, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 70; Pächt, 1960, p. 165; Thomson, 1982, p. 124 no. 79.
- <sup>313</sup> Hereford, Cathedral Library, MS O. I. 8; Pächt, 1960, pp. 165–66; Thomson, 1982, p. 124 no. 78; Mynors and Thomson, 1993, pp. 8–9, observing a standard St Albans binding feature.
- <sup>314</sup> Pächt, 1960, p. 167; Kauffmann, 1975, pp. 72–74 no. 34; Petzold, 1986.
- <sup>315</sup> Pächt, 1960, pp. 172–77. Pächt also suggests the possibility (pp. 173–74 n. 1) that Christina had tried her hand at illumination.
- <sup>316</sup> The most detailed analyses are Dodwell, 1960, pp. 199–205, Aberdeen website, 'The Artists: Style of the Psalter Initials: Artists 1 and 2'; and Geddes, 2005b, pp. 81–86.
- <sup>317</sup> Pace Haney, 1995, pp. 4–5 and n. 19.
- <sup>318</sup> Pächt, 1960, pp. 155–58, 160.
- <sup>319</sup> Aberdeen website, 'Style of the Psalter Initials: Artists 1 and 2'; Geddes, 2005b, p. 85.
- <sup>320</sup> Pp. 227, 233, 240, 246, 248, 274, 327, 352, 366, 368, 369, 395, 412, 414; birds that are fully painted appear on pp. 177, 223, 315, 403, and 416.
- <sup>321</sup> Pächt, 1960, p. 158.
- <sup>322</sup> Heslop, 1988, p. 170, reached the same conclusion using a different approach: 'We have in these initials the work of an artist of a very different temper from the one who designed and executed the full-page narratives. ... it is a salutary reminder that the persuasion of two artistic personalities might be poles apart, even when they were working together on a single project.'
- <sup>323</sup> Cf. pp. 3, 5, 6, 8–15.
- <sup>324</sup> Up to thirty-one days of the month, plus four lines of verses at the head of each month.
- <sup>325</sup> London, British Library, Arundel MS 91; Kauffmann, 1975, no. 17.
- <sup>326</sup> Numerous colour images are available online via <www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/> and <www.collectbritain.com>
- <sup>327</sup> Cambridge, King's College, MS 19, fol. 21v; Pächt, 1960, pl. 154a; Thomson, 1982, II, pl. 51.
- <sup>328</sup> Geddes, 2005b, p. 84, seems nearly to have realised this, but not taken the observation to its logical conclusion: she writes 'Typically he [i.e. the painter labelled 'Artist 1'] simplifies the complex zigzag folds ... He also omits essential parts of the iconography ... This suggests that he was not entirely responsible for the drawings, which are somewhat finer than his painting'.

For the present purposes I assume that the work of each artist varies somewhat within the Psalter, and I therefore do not attempt to divide each broader style into a greater number of possible sub-styles, but it is theoretically possible that more than one draughtsman and more than two painters contributed to the historiated initials.

<sup>329</sup> There is not space in the present volume for a full re-analysis of the division of work in the psalms section; I intend to undertake this exercise on another occasion.

<sup>330</sup> Princeton, University Library, MS Garrett 73. Among the publications that reproduce the Princeton manuscript are Pächt, 1960, pls. 156a, 156b; Thomson, 1982, II, pl. 60; and Geddes, 2005, p. 86.

<sup>331</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D. 2. 6; Ayres, 1974, pp. 215–16 fig. 36.

<sup>332</sup> Pollard, 1962; Szirmai, 1999.

<sup>333</sup> For the 1936 date see Knapp, 1999, p. 91. The manuscript was dis-bound in 2006 by Heinrich Grau of Wolfenbüttel, and currently exists as a series of loose bifolia in archival sleeves and boxes.

<sup>334</sup> Contrary to what has been published on several occasions (e.g. Wormald, 1960, p. 3; Thomson, 1982, p. 119; Haney, 2002, p. 7; Geddes, 2005, p. 129) the boards were pasteboard, not wood, and contrary to what has been published on a number of occasions there is no obvious reason to believe that any part of the binding is medieval.

<sup>335</sup> Pigskin was also used in other German-speaking areas such as Austria.

<sup>336</sup> Digital images can be reversed (because the offset appears as a mirror image) and enhanced to make some of the text legible; it has not yet been possible to identify the original text from most easily legible words and syllables, which include '[...]nis ligatu[m]', '& [...]e[n]sis usq[ue] i[n] diem [...]' 'cu[m] magno s[...]'.  
<sup>337</sup> There are similar black ink splodges at the end of the volume, and near the outer edge of p. 1 is a splodge of bright blue pigment.

<sup>338</sup> Kjøbye-Biddle, 2001.

<sup>339</sup> Wormald, 1960, pp. 8–9; this hypothesis is supported by McCulloch, 1981, pp. 779–80.

<sup>340</sup> Hughes and Larkin, 1964, no. 158 p. 231.

<sup>341</sup> Cf. Cramer, 2004, reproductions on p. 243.

<sup>342</sup> A list of the early Lamspringe monks is printed by Cramer, 2004, in an Appendix.

It may be relevant that one of the five 'founding fathers' of the house was Hilarion (né John) Wake, who was professed in 1639 and died in 1657, the year that the inscription was written, but he was associated with Douai Abbey, and died in Rome, which makes his connection with the Psalter seem tenuous.

<sup>343</sup> Cramer, 2004, p. 73.

<sup>344</sup> Scott, 2004, p. 50.

<sup>345</sup> Wormald, 1960, p. 6, suggests Robert Meering who, perhaps coincidentally, was clothed in 1657, professed in 1658, and died in 1664/7.

<sup>346</sup> See Cramer, 2004, p. 76: 'The least likely explanation is the traditional one, that the Psalter was brought to Lamspringe by a retired pirate (or perhaps one may say explorer) associated with the activities of Sir Walter Raleigh, Robert Mering (or Meeryng)'. 'The signature is unlike that of Benedict Meering's own found in the Lamspring Profession Book', Scott, 2004, p. 50.

<sup>347</sup> Sotheby's, 1830, included about 600 books; lots 507–545 were manuscripts, including twelve items called 'Psalmi et Precationes', some of them illuminated.

<sup>348</sup> The manuscript is now preserved at the Dombibliothek. I am grateful to Jochen Beppler for facilitating my examination of the manuscript in his care in 1994, 1997 and 2007.

<sup>349</sup> See the entry by Bernhard Gallistl in Brandt, 1988, pp. 67–68, with a plate showing the catalogue entry.

<sup>350</sup> For biographical details of Lückger and his family see Brill, 1964.

<sup>351</sup> von Euw, 1997, p. 65.

<sup>352</sup> Stengel, 1886.

<sup>353</sup> Goldschmidt, 1895, e.g. p. 27.

<sup>354</sup> Müller, 1845.

<sup>355</sup> See Roosen-Runge-Mollwo, 1989, pp. 89–90; see also Brush, 1996, pp. 93–94. I am grateful to Stefan Trinks of the Adolph-Goldschmidt-Zentrum zur Erforschung der Romanischen Skulptur der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for these references.

<sup>356</sup> Baedeker, 1899, p. 97.

<sup>357</sup> Cramer, 2004, p. 80 n. 18.

<sup>358</sup> During World War II Wormald wrote 'I hope to be able to discuss the calendar with its obits at a more peaceful moment'; Wormald, 1943, p. 35.

<sup>359</sup> Boase, 1953, p. 103.

<sup>360</sup> Dodwell, 1960, p. 280: 'So, if the writing of his obit in the calendar of the St. Albans Psalter ... does indicate that the manuscript itself was written before his death, then one can say that it was written before 1123'.

<sup>361</sup> Wormald, 1960, pp. 3, 5.

<sup>362</sup> Kauffmann, 1960, p. 66.

- <sup>363</sup> Such as Sts Ethelred and Ethelbricht, 17 October, whose relics were at the Abbey.
- <sup>364</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 34-37, 40-41, 46-49, etc.
- <sup>365</sup> Talbot, 1959, p. 47.
- <sup>366</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 10-11.
- <sup>367</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 88-89.
- <sup>368</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 90-91.
- <sup>369</sup> Talbot, 1959, pp. 94-95.
- <sup>370</sup> VCH Ramsey, 1932.
- <sup>371</sup> I owe this idea to the unpublished notes of the late Christopher Hohler.
- <sup>372</sup> Powick, 1961, p. 49.
- <sup>373</sup> E.g. Mölk, 1997, p. 5.
- <sup>374</sup> Roger must have had the use of a psalter, even if he did not 'own' it as personal property (see Chapter I.1.2), and it must have passed to someone else after his death. Who better to receive it than the inheritor of his hermitage?
- <sup>375</sup> The grant was of 50 shillings from the Exchequer was to be paid in corn not cash: 'Et in blado q[uo]d rex ded[it] d[omi]næ Cristinæ de Bosco L. s[olidi]'; Hunter, 1844, p. 22
- <sup>376</sup> As first noted by Thompson, 1991, p. 18.
- <sup>377</sup> Even if the 1155 date is not completely reliable, the additions to the calendar were almost certainly made before 1173 because the feast of Thomas Becket (canonised in that year) was not added, and nor was the Invention of the relics of St Amphibalus, which took place in 1178, and was thereafter an important local and St Albans feast. Possibly relevant is that the octave of the translation of St Edward (in 1163) is absent (it is added, highly graded 'in albis', to the mid twelfth-century St Albans 'breviary', London, British Library, Royal MS 2 A.x) as is the obit of Abbot Robert de Gorham (d. 1166).
- <sup>378</sup> Coincidentally, Christ's injunction to Peter on this occasion, 'Feed my sheep' (John 21:15) is combined with Christ giving Peter the keys of heaven (Matthew 16:19), in the only surviving miniature by the Alexis Master in the Verdun Anselm.
- <sup>379</sup> For 'Style II' script see note 274 and Thomson, 1985, pp. 28-29.



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