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# THE FINANCIAL ASPECT OF THE CULT OF ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.

AS REVEALED BY A STUDY OF THE MONASTIC  
RECORDS.

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A FEW years ago Mr. Elliston Erwood contributed to *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. XXXVII, an able and interesting article on the so-called Pilgrims' Way in which—as I think—he produces conclusive evidence to show that, contrary to the general belief, this ancient track-way could never have been used extensively by pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas.

Towards the end of his article, however, Mr. Erwood makes a general statement, to the effect that mediaeval pilgrimage has been grossly exaggerated in the past, to substantiate which he quotes certain figures, taken—for the most part—from an article published by Scott Robertson in *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. XIII, and from Sheppard's Preface to *Litterae Cantuarienses*; but here he is less successful, and indeed seems to be conscious that the material at his disposal is insufficient to enable him to prove his point, since he concludes by expressing the hope that at some future time the gifts and offerings at the shrine and other centres of devotion in the Cathedral church may be fully published in tabular form.

The present article is an attempt to supply this want by publishing the result of a careful examination of the monastic records, and especially of the Treasurers' books, in which, year by year, the exact sum received in offerings is methodically entered.

Considerations of space make it impossible, or at any rate undesirable, to give particulars of the amount received

every year at each altar, or holy place at which offerings were wont to be made; generally averages must suffice, though, of course, to obtain these it has been necessary to note every entry relating to the offerings; but full details are given in certain years, and especially in those which marked the fiftieth anniversaries of the martyrdom and were called the years of jubilee.

Before giving particulars relating to the offerings, some account must be given of the sources from which our information is drawn. Only a few of the original Treasurers' rolls are preserved at Canterbury, but contemporary, though somewhat abbreviated, copies in book form are extant—covering a long series of years.

For the following periods the Treasurers' accounts are more or less complete :

- 1198-1206. In the latter year the monks were expelled from their Priory by King John and took refuge in France, where they remained in exile until 1213, when the king was constrained to reinstate them.
- 1213-1337. (With the exception of the account for 1269, which is missing.) After 1337 there is a gap of thirty-three years, with the exception that the account for the year 1350 is preserved.
- 1370-1383. During Thomas Chillenden's priorate (1391-1411), the offerings (*oblaciones*) were transferred from the Treasurers' office to that of the Prior. Only a few of the Prior's rolls are extant; but from this source some further details of the offerings in the fifteenth century are recoverable. For the sixteenth century we are dependent on a single note made by the Sacrist in the year 1532.

From 1198 to 1383 the Treasurers received all offerings made at the following altars, or holy places :

- (1) The Tomb of St. Thomas, in the crypt.
- (2) The Altar of the Martyrdom, in the NW. transept.

- (3) The Corona at the eastern extremity of the church.<sup>1</sup>
- (4) The Shrine of St. Thomas (after 1220).
- (5) The High Altar.
- (6) The Altar of St. Mary, in the nave.<sup>2</sup>
- (7) The Altar of the Holy Cross, in the nave.<sup>2</sup>
- (8) The Altar of St. Michael, in the SW. transept.

To these were added later :

- (9) The Altar of St. Mary, in the crypt (1262), and
- (10) The Tomb of Archbishop Winchelsey (1313).

The earliest account relating to the Treasurers' office, now extant at Canterbury, is headed: "*Receptus Thesaurariorum in anno quo Gaufridus prior perrexit ad curiam Romanam*," or, in English, "The receipts of the Treasurers in the year in which Prior Geoffrey went to the court of Rome." This was in the year 1198, as we learn from Gervase, who tells us that the Prior's object in going was to appeal against the demand of King Richard that the treasure of the church of Canterbury should be inspected, and inventoried, by his commissioners, and placed in safe custody,<sup>3</sup> precautions which the monks interpreted, and probably correctly, to be merely preliminary steps to confiscation.

The Prior remained in Rome until the death of King Richard (April 6th, 1199) when he returned to Canterbury. He was destined, however, to endure a much longer exile, from which he did not return, since, in 1206, King John, in revenge for the opposition that the monks had offered to his wishes in the matter of the primacy, expelled them from their convent and compelled them to take refuge in France.

<sup>1</sup> Willis inclined to the belief that the round chapel at the eastern end of the church was called the *Corona* because it formed the Crown of the edifice; but Boniface IX in his bull of Indulgence granted in 1395 mentions expressly the Chapel called the Crown "in which is preserved a part of the head of St. Thomas the martyr."

<sup>2</sup> After 1255 the offerings from these altars were transferred to the Sacrist's Office.

<sup>3</sup> *Chron. Gervasii* in *Decem Scriptores*, c. 1615.

Seven years later (1213), under pressure from Rome, the king was constrained to reinstate them, but Prior Geoffrey died on the journey to England.

During the pre-exile years (1198-1213) the offerings average £426 3s. 7d. per annum, of which the Tomb contributed £309 5s. 0d., Corona £39 17s. 6d., High Altar £39 19s. 10d., St. Mary's Altar £8 9s. 0d., Holy Cross Altar £1 2s. 0d., St. Michael's Altar 16s. 3d. During the same period the Treasurers' receipts from all sources average £1,406 1s. 8d., and their expenditure £1,314 19s. 2d. The offerings were highest in the year 1200-1, when they amounted to £620 4s. 0d. Probably the yield was affected by the fact that in this year King John and Queen Isabella were crowned in Canterbury Cathedral by Archbishop Hubert. The offerings were lowest in the year 1203, viz. £248 18s. 0d.

It may be of interest to record here that in 1204, John, a nephew of St. Thomas, received from the prior and convent a pension of ten marcs. He was a son of Agnes, a sister of the murdered archbishop, by her husband Theobald de Helles, and later was vicar of Lower Halstow, Kent.

The first year after the exile (1213) was naturally a lean one. But, though the offerings amounted to only £76, the Prior of Dover, who, in the absence of the Christ Church monks had been appointed sequestrator of the receipts from the altars, was able to hand over to the Treasurers a sum of £245 10s. 0d. as the proceeds of offerings made during the years of exile.

In the following year there was a marked improvement in the financial position of the Priory: the offerings rose to £380 19s. 2d. Moreover, King John paid to the Christ Church monks £1,000 as compensation for the losses they had sustained by his high-handed action.<sup>1</sup>

But the political ferment in which the country was now plunged caused the tide of pilgrimage to slacken. Thus in 1215 (*Magna Carta* year) the offerings amounted to no more than £123 12s. 0d., and in the following year to only about half that sum.

<sup>1</sup> The entry in the original is *De restitutione ablatorum* M<sup>11</sup>.

Two entries in the account for the year 1216 are of special interest, viz. one relating to the sale of a gold chalice in aid of funds for the construction of the splendid shrine to which the saint's relics were to be translated four years later.<sup>1</sup> And a payment to Elias of Dereham who (with Walter of Colchester) was one of the two artists, or craftsmen, who were employed upon the work. The payment, however, was not for work done in connection with the shrine, but merely the repayment of a loan (*Magistro Helie de Deram X marcas quas nobis commodaverat*); but it is of interest as showing that at least one of the designers of the shrine was already in Canterbury, and probably engaged upon his task.

When we examine the account for the year 1220 (the fiftieth anniversary of the murder of the archbishop, and the year in which his relics were translated to the shrine) it is disappointing to find no entry which can be connected directly with the construction of the shrine. Possibly some part of the cost may be included in a sum of £465 2s. 8d., which is set down under the unsatisfactory heading *ad diversa negocia*, though more probably this represents money spent in the papal curia for the bull of indulgence which the prior and convent obtained from Pope Honorius III.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the greater part of the cost was defrayed by the archbishop, since Matthew Paris states that Stephen Langton, deeming the tomb in the crypt too lowly a resting place for the body of so great a saint, provided a coffer (*theca*) covered with gold and adorned with jewels, within which it might repose more honourably.<sup>3</sup>

The offerings at this first Jubilee amounted to no less than £1,142 5s. 0d., the receipts of the individual altars being as follows: High Altar £54 15s. 8d., St. Mary £13 4s. 9d., St. Cross £2 9s. 8d., St. Michael 14s. 5d., Shrine £702 11s. 4d.,

<sup>1</sup> *De calice aureo vendito ad feretrum S. Thome XV<sup>m</sup> et dim Marc'*. (£15.6.8.)

<sup>2</sup> The bull is printed by Sheppard in *Christ Church Letters* XLV, VI. It is worthy of note that the indulgence extended only over fifteen days.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Ang.*, R.S. ii, 242.

Martyrdom £93 0s. 2d. It is remarkable that nothing was received this year from the Corona. In the following year, however, the Corona contributed £71 10s. 0d. and the next year £80 10s. 0d., both of which sums were specially earmarked for expenditure on the shrine, from which we may infer that it was not altogether complete at the time of the translation.

But although the offerings were so large, it would be a mistake to imagine that the money received was all net profit, since the monastic expenditure on entertainment this year was abnormally high. Thus the allowance made to the cellarer (the officer responsible for the entertainment of pilgrims) which in the previous year was no more than £442 8s. 0d. was raised in the Jubilee year to £1,154 16s. 5d.!

Resuming the ten-yearly averages we get the figures tabulated on the opposite page.

In 1314, £115 12s. 0d. was spent on gold and precious stones for adorning the Crown of St. Thomas. This seems to mean that some portion of the saint's skull was now enclosed in a reliquary shaped like a human head, and became an additional object of devotion, since the royal wardrobe accounts mention occasionally offerings *ad caput Thomae*, as well as *ad Coronam*.

It is remarkable that in the year 1318, when the offerings amounted to £577, the Treasurers enter amongst their receipts a further sum of £432 11s. 11d. which is described as the proceeds of certain testamentary bequests made by pilgrims, and collected by the shrine-keepers.<sup>1</sup> Why this should be placed under the heading *obvenciones*, and not under *oblaciones*, is difficult to explain, especially as no similar entry occurs in any previous or subsequent account.

In 1320, the year of the third Jubilee, £670 13s. 4d. was received in offerings, viz. Shrine £500, Corona £50, Martyrdom £9, Tomb £12 5s. 0d., St. Mary in the Crypt £6 13s. 4d., High Altar £3, Winchelsey's Tomb £90. At the end of the year, however, there was an adverse balance of £83 for

<sup>1</sup> "Item de obvencionibus peregrinorum provenientibus de testamentis et votis fidelium collectis per diversos feretarios ccccxxij<sup>l</sup>xj<sup>s</sup> xj<sup>d</sup>."

Years.	Offerings.	Best Year.	Amount.	Worst Year.	Amount.	Receipts All Sources.	Expenditure.
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1213—1222	383 5 0	1220	1142 5 0	1216	88 14 8	2604 1 0	2492 14 2
1223—1232	372 14 9	1223	626 1 10	1231	276 18 2	1830 18 0	1617 5 7
1233—1242	211 10 3	1236	312 17 0	1240	156 18 10	2009 5 1	2058 6 3
1243—1252	160 14 3	1246	211 13 8	1250	109 0 0	1841 13 10	1743 15 0
1253—1262	102 14 7	1255	155 2 10	1258	72 14 10	2129 9 8	2117 10 8
1263—1273	127 3 5	1270	204 2 10	1264	95 11 3	1948 2 5	1919 1 9
[The account for 1269 is missing. In 1270, the second Jubilee Year, the offerings amounted to no more than £204 2s. 6d.; and, in 1265, when the King, Queen, Prince Edward and his wife, Princess Eleanor, were in Canterbury and were entertained by Archbishop Boniface, the offerings were only £104 5s. 6d.]							
1274—1283	177 17 3	1279	235 19 6	1283	150 14 0	2606 14 11	2323 9 3
1284—1293	257 4 5	1289	313 17 8	1284	185 6 0	2153 5 10	2126 14 11
[1284 was the first year of Henry of Eastry's long priorate. In the following year £10 was spent <i>pro nova capsâ feretri</i> , which probably means that a new cover was provided for the shrine, to be let up or down by cords passing over pulleys.]							
1294—1303	281 11 0	1298	340 5 0	1294	203 12 0	2265 10 6	2153 19 8
1304—1313	359 13 0	1312	489 10 0	1304	274 5 0	2317 16 10	2588 12 6
1314—1323	462 17 3	1319	670 13 4	1315	241 0 0	2419 2 3	2551 17 2



which, no doubt, the entertainment of pilgrims was responsible, since the cellarer's expenditure this year amounted to no less than £996.

After 1337 a wide gap exists in the Treasurers' accounts. It will be convenient, therefore, to give the average sum received in offerings during the fourteen years which lie between 1324 to 1337. The figures are as follows : Offerings £407 12s. 3d.—highest year 1335, viz. £461 ; lowest year 1329, viz. £351. Receipts, total £2,188 18s. 0d. Expenditure, total £2,158 18s. 0d.

As a regular series the accounts do not recommence until 1370, with the exception that the account for the year 1350 is preserved. It was the year following that in which the Black Death had attained its greatest virulence, and it may be that an exceptional number of pilgrims made their way to Canterbury, either to return thanks for their deliverance from the scourge, or to invoke the aid of St. Thomas to protect them from it. At any rate the offerings were exceptionally large. Thus £667 was received at the Shrine, £55 at the Corona, £10 at the Martyrdom, and £14 at the Tomb. Moreover, the offerings at the altar of St. Mary in the crypt show an extraordinary increase ; in 1336 they were no more than £5, in 1350 they amounted to £60. On the other hand the offerings at the tomb of Archbishop Winchelsey had dwindled to 11s., and those at the High Altar to nil. But although the offerings came to no less than £801 11s. 0d., there was an adverse balance at the end of the year of £256 8s. 3d.

The Treasurers' accounts recommence in 1370 and run on in a regular series until 1383, after which we get no more information about the offerings from this source.

In 1370, which was the year of the fourth Jubilee, the offerings amounted to £643—made up by the following figures : High Altar £7, St. Mary in the Crypt £50, Tomb £20, Martyrdom £5, Corona £73, Shrine £466, Tomb of Archbishop Winchelsey nil ; but again at the end of the year there was a heavy adverse balance of £990 18s. 4d.

For the fourteen years which lie between 1370 to 1383 the average of the offerings is £545 8s. 10d.; they were highest in 1376 (the year of the funeral of the Black Prince) viz. £692 4s. 7d.,<sup>1</sup> and lowest in 1381, viz. £362 10s. 0d. It was at this period—the era of Chaucer and the *Canterbury Tales*—that the cult of St. Thomas seems to have attained to its apogee; later, as we shall see presently, there was an extraordinary decline.

In view of the large sums of money received in these years from the offerings of pilgrims, it is strange to find evidence that the prior and chapter were often in want of money and that they resorted to extraordinary methods in order to raise it. Prior Gillingham (1370-1376) even went to the length of passing through the fire a cope and two chasubles which had once belonged to Archbishop Lanfranc, for the sake of the bullion recoverable from their gold thread; nor did he scruple to melt down images and plate taken from the shrine of the holy martyr himself, and sell the precious metal to a London goldsmith!<sup>2</sup> The wanton destruction of vestments which had come down to them from the venerable reviver of their Order shows how completely devoid the monks were of sentiment in regard to such things; but that they should have ventured to despoil the shrine of their most notable saint is astounding. The only excuse which can be found for this gross vandalism is that already the prior and convent were conscious that a vast sum of money would shortly have to be raised for the

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the large amount received this year in offerings there was an adverse balance at the end of the year of £486 18s. 9d.

<sup>2</sup> 1371-2. De una capa Venerabilis Lanfranci cremata et diversis jocalibus fucis (*sic*) venditis cxvj<sup>li</sup> vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup>.

1372-3. De duobus casulis Ven. Lanfranci crematis cum aliis diversis jocalibus fucis cxxxvij<sup>li</sup> xij<sup>s</sup>.

Item recept' per manus Ricardi prioris c<sup>li</sup> de diversis ymaginibus feretri beati Thome martyris fucis venditis.

Item de R. Lyonis in parte solucionis diversarum petrarum et jocalium feretri beati Thome martyris sibi venditis iij<sup>li</sup> = £80.

1373-4. Item de Stephano Monyngham pro solucione diversarum petrarum feretri beate Thome Martyris venditis Richardo, Lyonis xx<sup>li</sup>.

Item de parvis annulis venditis London' per dom. Stephanum Monyngham V<sup>li</sup>. *Treasurers' Accounts*.

rebuilding of the nave of their church. Indeed, as early as 1369 a subscription list had been opened for this purpose, though the work was not actually commenced until eight years later.<sup>1</sup>

Although, as has been already stated, the Treasurers' account books are no longer extant after the year 1383, some of the original rolls of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are preserved both at Canterbury and at Lambeth, but they make no mention of the *oblaciones*, which, as has been stated already, were transferred during Chillenden's priorate (1391-1411) from the Treasurers' office to that of the Prior. Fortunately a few of the prior's rolls are extant, and from this source we are able to follow, more or less, the decline of the cult as the fifteenth century advanced.

#### PRIOR'S ACCOUNT ROLLS :

1396. Shrine £393 2s. 10d., Corona £75 13s. 0d., Tomb £6, Martyrdom £13, High Altar £11, St. Mary £2 5s. 0d., Money box (*pix*) in nave £2. Total £503 0s. 10d.
1410. Shrine £255 1s. 8d., Corona nil, Tomb £2, Martyrdom 10s., High Altar nil, St. Mary £8 6s. 8d. Total £265 18s. 4d.
1420. (The year of the fifth Jubilee.) Shrine £360, Corona £151, Martyrdom £35, Tomb £23, St. Mary £55, Keeper of the Relics £20. Total £644.

Of which sum £100 was allotted to the cellarer in compensation, no doubt, for extra expenditure on hospitality ; £60 2s. 0d. was set aside for providing lights at the shrine ; £200 for repairs to the fabric of the church ; and £224 12s. 0d. was left in the prior's hands.

That this Jubilee attracted to Canterbury an enormous number of pilgrims is definitely stated in a certificate—preserved amongst the city archives—in which the bailiffs testify that 100,000 persons assembled to take advantage of

<sup>1</sup> The list contains thirty-four names, and the subscriptions range from £20 to 2s.

the privileges accorded to the faithful, and that this great multitude by the foresight of the magistrates and the generosity of the citizens was lodged and fed at a reasonable cost to themselves.<sup>1</sup> The number of the pilgrims, of course, is a mere guess and probably an exaggeration, but the very fact that the bailiffs put it so high is evidence of the abnormal character of the gathering.

But though the Jubilee of 1420 was largely attended and was entirely successful from the financial point of view, by some strange oversight the arrangements for holding it had been made without any reference to the Pope. When at length it came to the ears of Martin V that Archbishop Chicheley and Prior John of Wodensburg had presumed to proclaim indulgences and appoint penitenciers on their own initiative his indignation was unbounded. Their action, he alleged, was a gross infringement of the privileges of the Apostolic See, concerning which instant enquiry must be made. Accordingly the Pope appointed Jacobus de Balardi, Bishop of Trieste, and Simon de Teremo, the papal receiver in England, to enquire into the facts, and if need be pronounce ecclesiastical censure on the offenders. The result was a humiliating snub to the archbishop; but since Prior John was not called upon to remit to the papal treasury any part of the money which had flowed into the coffers of the monastery through his irregular action he may not have been greatly disturbed by the fulminations of his Holiness.<sup>2</sup>

Reverting now to the prior's rolls we get the following figures :

1436. Shrine £30 15s. 0d., Tomb £2, Corona £20, High Altar £14, St. Mary in Crypt nil, Great Pix nil.  
Total £66 15s. 0d.
1444. (Particulars not given.) Total £25 6s. 8d.
1453. Shrine £10, Tomb nil, Corona £20, High Altar nil, St. Mary in Crypt £1, Great Pix 1s. Total £31 1s. 0d.

<sup>1</sup> The certificate is printed in full in Somner's *Antiquities of Canterbury*, Appendix, No. XLII.

<sup>2</sup> Raynaldus, *Annales Eccles.*, viii. 573. A summary of the incident is given in Creighton's *History of the Papacy*, vol. ii.

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1455. Shrine £7 6s. 8d., Tomb nil, Corona £18, High Altar nil, St. Mary in Crypt nil, Great Pix nil. Total £25 6s. 8d.
1467. The only sum entered is 23s. from the Corona ; there was an adverse balance this year of upwards of £600.
1469. This year brothers William Selling and Reginald Goldstone were sent to Rome to obtain from Pope Paul II the bull of plenary remission which they duly received.
1470. The year of the sixth Jubilee ; no roll for this year is extant.
1472. (Prior Selling's first year.) Only £1 6s. 8d. was received at the Shrine, and £6 13s. 4d. at the Corona. The prior, however, enters amongst his receipts a sum of £85 8s. 1d. which is described as "part of the offerings made in the year of indulgence."
1473. The only sum set down is £7 received from the Corona ; but the prior still has in his hands £13 6s. 8d. remaining over from the offerings made at the Jubilee of 1470.

No more Priors' rolls are extant after 1473.

It is doubtful whether the seventh Jubilee, which was due in 1520, was celebrated. The only information the monastic records afford is that there was much difficulty in getting the pardon from Rome. Leo X, who wanted money for rebuilding St. Peter's, demanded a moiety of all offerings made during the festival, a price which the prior and convent of Canterbury considered too high. There was much correspondence on the matter, and this is printed in Battely's edition of Somner's *Antiquities*, Appendix XXI. If the Jubilee was held, any revival it may have brought of the cult of St. Thomas was short lived, for twelve years later, that is to say in 1532, a note in one of the Sacrists' books records that the offerings at all the altars (excluding those made at the High Altar and at that of the Holy Cross, which

were paid into a separate account), amounted to no more than £13 13s. 3d.<sup>1</sup>

This note—made within six years of the destruction of the shrine of St. Thomas—is of great importance as a testimony to the waning popularity of the cult before Henry VIII's attempt to stamp it out entirely. To what causes, then, is the decline to be attributed? The primary cause, probably, was the disturbed state of the country during the Wars of the Roses, which made pilgrimage difficult if not impossible. But other influences were at work; Lollard-teaching, though driven underground by persecution, was undermining the whole fabric of church authority, and the New Learning was producing in men's minds doubts as to the religious value of relics and pilgrimage—as exemplified in the attitude of Erasmus and Colet towards the cult of St. Thomas.<sup>2</sup>

It has often been asserted that no attempt was made to revive the cult during the Marian reaction but this is not altogether correct; the office was restored to the service-books of the Cathedral church in 1555-6.<sup>3</sup> It is true that no attempt was made to re-erect the shrine of the saint, and this is not without significance with reference to the vexed question, "What became of the bones of St. Thomas?" Were they burned or were they buried? The discovery, in 1888, of a stone coffin containing bones near the site of St. Thomas' tomb inclined some people to the latter alternative, and to the belief that the bones were the veritable relics of the murdered archbishop. On the other hand, since the discovery was made in that part of the crypt which

<sup>1</sup> The entry in the original is as follows: Et de oblatis ad diversa altaria in ecclesia, videlicet. ad altare feretri, coronam s̄ci Thome, in privata capella ex parte boriali, ad altare beate Marie in criptis, ad tumbam s̄ci Thome, ad martyrium s̄ci Thome, et ibidem in capella beate Marie, et in omnibus aliis altaribus in ecclesia preter summum altare, et in altari s̄cæ crucis in navi ecclesie que pertinent ad custodem summi altaris, summa xiiij<sup>li</sup> xiiij<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Peregrinatio Religionis ergo*. Nicholls' ed.

<sup>3</sup> "To Sir George Frevell for writing St. Thomas Legends xij<sup>d</sup>." "Item to Jo. Marden for pricking of St. Thomas storye, and for mendyng of dyvers other books in the quere xiiij<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup>."—*Treasurer's Accounts* sub anno.

in 1546 was allotted as a cellar to the house of the first prebendary—one Richard Thornden, who had held high office in the monastery—it is inconceivable that the bones could have been placed where they were found without his knowledge, or that, if he knew of their hiding place, he should have refrained from any endeavour to get them restored to a more honourable resting place when, as we have seen, a definite attempt was being made to revive the cult. Therefore it seems more reasonable to believe that no such relics were in existence.

Our review of the cult in the light of the monastic accounts leads, I think, to the conclusion that, although for the first two hundred years or so vast numbers of pilgrims were attracted to the shrine of St. Thomas, it would be easy to exaggerate the pecuniary advantage which the monks enjoyed thereby. The offerings certainly were large, but so, too, was the expenditure, especially in the Jubilee years, on hospitality, so that even in a year when the offerings were exceptionally good there was not infrequently an adverse balance at the end of the year, e.g. in 1376, when the offerings amounted to no less than £692 4s. 7d., expenditure exceeded income by £486 18s. 0d., a result which was largely due to the abnormal demands made upon the cellarer's office.

The statement has often been made that Canterbury Cathedral was built by the offerings of pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas, but there is little evidence that this was so. Certainly Lanfranc's great Norman church, together with its eastward extension carried out by Priors Ernulf and Conrad, was erected without any subsidy from this source. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that the rebuilding of the Choir after the great fire of 1174 could have received much assistance from the offerings of pilgrims, seeing that the work was practically finished by the year 1185, at which date it is unlikely that pilgrimage to the saint's tomb can have become fashionable, though we know that almost immediately after the murder sick folk made their way thither.

With regard to the rebuilding of the nave in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, the case is somewhat different. The monastic accounts inform us that between the years 1377 to 1383 the Treasurers paid to the overseers of the work £386 3s. 4d., and during the first five years of Thomas Chillenden's priorate (1391-1396) £2,384 7s. 6d. more; but even if we credit the whole amount to the offerings it was less than that received from subscriptions, since it is recorded that Archbishop Simon of Sudbury gave 3,000 marcs (=£2,250) to the work during his lifetime, and his executors, after his death, paid in a further sum of 130 marcs (=£97 10s. 0d.).<sup>1</sup> Sudbury's successor—William Courtenay—also was a generous contributor to the building fund<sup>2</sup>; so that between them the two archbishops subscribed nearly £3,000, without taking into account the gifts of humbler folk, some of which are set down in the list to which reference has been made above.

Another misconception which a careful examination of the monastic accounts dissipates is that the visits of royal persons brought much pecuniary profit to the monks of Canterbury; on the contrary, the Treasurers' books show that they were very expensive luxuries. The actual sum offered by king or prince is not stated in the above books; but occasionally it can be ascertained from the accounts of the Royal Wardrobe. Thus, when King Edward I with Queen Margaret and Prince Edward came to Canterbury on February 23rd, 1300-1, their offerings—as we learn from the Wardrobe accounts—were as follows :

The King gave 7s. at the altar of St. Mary in the crypt, and a like sum at the Corona, the Martyrdom (here called the Sword Point), the Cloak of St. Thomas, and the Shrines of SS. Blaise, Dunstan and Elphege	=£2 9 0
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<sup>1</sup> Ashmole MS. Bodleian 794, Pt. V.

<sup>2</sup> Register S records amongst Courtenay's benefactions the gift of 1000 marcs (=£750), for the rebuilding of the nave.



## 28 THE CULT OF ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.

The Queen gave 7s. at the Shrines of SS.

Blaise, Dunstan and Elphege, and at the  
image of St. Mary in the crypt =£1 8 0

Prince Edward gave 7s. at the image of St.

Mary, the Sword Point, the Corona, and the  
Tomb of St. Thomas =£1 8 0

It is strange that so far no offering had been made

at the Shrine of St. Thomas ; but later, on the  
same day, the Queen and the Prince offered  
12 golden florins (worth 3s. 3d. each) at the  
Shrine (*nomine chevagii*) =£1 19 0

These sums amount to a total of £7 4 0

On the other hand, the Treasurers' books show that the  
convent gave the King £100 and the Prince £66 13s. 4d. !

More commonly, however, the convent's gifts took the  
form of plate ; as an example of the lavish scale on which  
these complimentary gifts were made it may be worth while  
to give full details of what was done in this way when  
King Edward came to Canterbury in 1333. On this  
occasion Prior Richard Oxenden and the convent presented  
to the King :

2 bowls of silver, having enamelled plaques in <i>fundo</i> , valued at	£9 3 0
2 Water-ewers of silver	£2 13 6
1 Silver cup, ornamented with shields of arms in enamel, which had been given to Prior Richard by Henry Chikwell, citizen of London	£5 0 0
1 Silver ewer for wine, formerly belonging to Prior Henry of Eastray	£2 13 0
1 Palfrey	£20 0 0

In addition handsome gifts of money were made to  
the Earls of Arundel and Lancaster, and gratuities  
were given to their households. Nor was this all,  
for on the following day Queen Philippa arrived,  
*causa peregrinacionis*, accompanied by her little  
son Prince Edward, then scarcely three years old.

To the Queen the convent gave 2 silver bowls valued at	£7 10 11
2 buckles (which were placed inside the bowls)	£3 10 0
2 Wine-ewers of silver	£5 7 4
1 Pony ( <i>parvum equum</i> ), value not stated.	

The little Prince was not forgotten, but he had to be content with an alabaster mug. In all, this royal visit cost the convent £109 16 0

Forty years later Prince Edward on his return from Gascony, now broken in health, again made his way to the shrine of Thomas; his offering was doubtless a liberal one, but there is no record of its amount. On the other hand the Treasurers' books show that he received from the convent two silver bowls, and £94 13s. 4d. in money. But although the visits of royalty tended to deplete rather than to fill the coffers of the Christ Church monks, it was no uncommon thing for monarchs to make very valuable gifts for the adornment of the shrine. Thus Edward I gave four images and two ships of pure gold, and a number of gold brooches and other pieces of jewellery set with precious stones;<sup>1</sup> and, in 1299, the royal crown of Scotland, which had been discovered amongst the baggage of John Baliol as the latter was about to embark from Dover. The most splendid gift of all was, of course, the great ruby, known as the *regal* of France, which Louis VII offered at the shrine in 1179, and which remained its chief ornament until the end; but it was not deemed incongruous to place the gifts of humbler folk in close proximity to this splendid jewel, for when John Brown, in 1434, the convent plumber, offered at the shrine a pair of beads of the purest gold, worth ten pounds, his gift was placed *prope regalem Francie*,<sup>2</sup> an honour which the said John no doubt much appreciated.

<sup>1</sup> Quatuor imaginibus & duabus navibus de puro auro, ac etiam firmaculis et inestimabilibus aureis et lapidibus preciosis ornatis . . . egregie decoravit. *Lansdown MSS.*, B.M.

<sup>2</sup> Item optulit (Johannes Brun) ad feretrum sēi Thome Martyr' unum par p'cum ad valorem x<sup>li</sup> de auro purissimo. Vide in australi parte prope regalem francie. Note in *Treasurers' Accounts*.

For the upkeep of the shrine and the maintenance of its lights there were endowments, generally in the form of rent charges on houses and lands, the grants of which are copied into the charter book (Reg. E, fo. 127<sup>a</sup> *et sqq.*). None are earlier than the thirteenth century, and the latest is dated July 20th, 10 Richard II (1387). A brief epitome of these charters must here suffice.

Robert de Brus grants to God and the house of St. Thomas the martyr, of Canterbury, and to the monks serving God therein one marc payable annually by grantor and his heirs. Witnesses Walter FitzAlan, steward of the King of Scotland, Richard de Bosco, Thomas de Kencia, clerk, Hamond, clerk, Sir Alan Galwachre, Thomas, clerk.

[The grantor was probably Robert Bruce of Annandale, who married Isabel da. and heir of David Earl of Huntingdon, younger brother of William the Lion.]

Alan, steward of the King of Scotland grants to the church of the Holy Trinity in Cambridge an annual rent charge of half a marc, issuing out of land in Cnockebenoc which is part of grantor's burg of Renifruir (*Renfrew*), for the soul of David, King of Scotland, and his heirs, and for the health of the soul of the grantor, his wife and parents. Witnesses Master Ralph of St. Martins, Theobald of Twyt-ham, Alan and Nicholas his son, Thomas son of John of Burgate.

A confirmation by Walter FitzAlan of the above grant. Witnesses : Robert de Brus, Adam son of Henry of Dunfries, *Thomas, nephew of St. Thomas*, Hamo his clerk.

[Marjory da. of Walter the steward of Scotland married Nigel 2nd Earl of Carrick, whose daughter was the mother of Robert de Bruce, King of Scotland (b. 1274).]

Michael Scott of the Kingdom of Scotland grants to God and blessed Thomas, the martyr, for finding a light before the shrine of the same, an annual payment (*censum*) of 20s. sterling issuing out of the fee of Radmagnal. Witnesses: Sir Geoffrey, Abbot of Dunfermline, Sir Tho. of Kylmarori, Sir Bernard of Beckery, Philip of Lothor, Patrick of Perglassy, Dunethan Scot, John of Bladboth and Adam of Kenbath.

Alice countess of Eu, sometime wife of the Earl of Yssoundun grants to the prior and convent of the Church of Christ in Canterbury an annual rent of one silver marc, issuing out of her manor of Elham, and charged on the land of William of Botting and his heirs, to find a wax taper in honour of blessed Thomas, the martyr. Date c. 1240.

Richard, sometime clerk of the Exchange in Canterbury, gives to Andrew of Bregge (*Bridge*) clerk of the shrine of St. Thomas 50s. in return for which the said Andrew undertakes to maintain two wax tapers, each weighing 8 lbs., to burn continually at the shrine of the glorious martyr Thomas "as the other lights around the said shrine do," in default of such maintenance the prior and convent may distrain on a house in the parish of St. Mary de Castro, which is situated at the corner of St. John's lane, and "abbutteth to the King's street towards the south and west and to the house of the said Andrew towards the east." Dated 12 Edw. I (1284).

John son of William of Quetherinton grants to the P. & C. of Ch. Ch. Cant. a rent charge of 3s. on a tenement in the manor of Mersham, for the maintenance of a wax taper (*cereum*) to be kept burning at the foot of the shrine of St. Thomas when mass is said there. Date 1284.

The prior and convent undertake to find a light (*cereum*) to be kept burning at the foot of the shrine of blessed Thomas as long as Sir Edmund de Mortimer shall pay to the said P. & C., at the altar of the said martyr an annual rent of 50s. chargeable on grantor's manor of Stratfeud (*Strathfieldsay*) Reading. Date 1290.

John de Vantort (? Vautort), citizen and fishmonger of the city of London, leaves by will to the prior and convent of Ch. Ch. Cant. an annual rent charge of 50s. issuing out of testator's brewhouse in Aldgate street in the city of London, called "le Potte on the hope," to maintain a light (*cereum*) to be kept burning day and night about (*circa*) the shrine of St. Thomas. Date 1387.

Sir Robert de Arcey, knight, grants to God, blessed Mary and St. Thomas formerly Archbishop of Canterbury *ad opus*

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*feretri sui*, an annual rent of 10s., chargeable on grantor's lands in Dunston near Lincoln. Witnesses : Sir Robert of Tateshale, Sir John Beke, Sir William of Leyburn, Sir Guncelin of Badelesmer, knights. Peter of Thornhawe, and Stephen of Stanham. Dated at Stalingborough, Monday in Easter week 29 Edw. I (1301).

In all, the revenue from endowments amounted to no more than £8 9s. 4d., but a sum doubtless sufficient for the maintenance of the lights that were kept burning around the shrine.