

„The Christina of Markyate Psalter“

A Modern Legend: On the Purpose of the St. Albans Psalter

by

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The early 12th century psalter manuscript of St. Albans in Hertfordshire (Fig. 1), which is currently in the possession of the church parish of St. Godehard in Hildesheim, Germany, has attracted much attention due to the richness of its illustration.¹ The book is generally regarded as the earliest surviving masterpiece of Anglo-Norman painting. As to the book's intended purpose, scholars have agreed that what we are dealing with is a „personal“, rather than a communal book, and „not a choir-book for the Divine Office“.² The manuscript as a whole has mainly been associated with the anchoress Christina, later the prioress of Markyate, who during the psalter's time of creation worked in the vicinity of St. Albans. This woman's importance for the book was estimated so highly that it was even named after her the „Psalter of Christina of Markyate“,³ „Christina of

¹ „... a new genre of religious illuminated manuscripts“. BERNHARD BISCHOFF, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press) 1989, p. 223.

² „Whoever the book's destine, it is a ‚personal‘ not communal book, made for a member of a religious community certainly, but not a liturgical bo in the full sense, that is not a choir-book for the Divine Office.“ RODNEY M. THOMSON, *The St. Albans Psalter. Abbot Geoffrey's book?*, in: JOCHEN BEPLER, CHRISTIAN HEITZMANN (eds.), *Der Albani-Psalter. Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung/The St. Albans Psalter. Current Research and Perspectives* (Hildesheimer Forschungen 4), 2013, p. 57–68, here p. 58.

³ MORGAN POWELL, *Making the Psalter of Christina of Markyate* (The St. Albans Psalter), in: *Viator* 36 (2005) p. 293–335.

Markyate's Psalter",⁴ and recently „The Christina of Markyate Psalter".⁵

Everything we know about this woman has been related to us in the „Life of Christina of Markyate“, which was discovered in the British Library by Charles H. Talbot and published in 1959.⁶ In the preface Talbot already drew a connection with the St. Albans Psalter: „The conclusion seems to be that the psalter, if not originally destined for Christina, eventually found its way into her hands and was altered perhaps and completed during the course of its preparation to conform to her interests".⁷ In the complete overview of the St. Albans Psalter, published the year after, Otto Pächt and Charles Dodwell established the idea of a work commissioned for Christina by abbot Geoffrey of St. Albans (1119–1146).⁸ From thereon, all research has regarded Christina as the undisputed addressee, owner, or inspiration for the book. And if this argument was ever questioned, then only partially.⁹ In the psalter itself, however, her name only appears in the calendar among the obituaries of other deceased. But then what is the synopsis with the biography of this woman based on?

⁴ MAGDALENA ELIZABETH CARRASCO, The Imagery of the Magdalen in Christina of Markyate's Psalter (The St. Albans Psalter), in: *Gesta* 38 (1999) p. 67–80.

⁵ KRISTEN COLLINS, Pictures and the Devotional imagination in making of the St. Albans Psalter, in: *The St. Albans Psalter: Painting and Prayer in Medieval England*, ed. by KRISTEN COLLINS, PETER KIDD, NANCY K. TURNER, 2013, p. 9–63, here p. 19.

⁶ CHARLES H. TALBOT, *The Life of Christina of Markyate – a Twelfth-Century Recluse*, 1959 (revised 1997, reprint 1998 and 2002).

⁷ TALBOT, *Life* (like note 6) p. 26f.

⁸ OTTO PÄCHT, CHARLES R DODWELL, FRANCIS WORMALD, *The St. Albans Psalter (Albani Psalter) (Studies of the Warburg Institute 25)* 1960, p. 125–146.

⁹ „However there is the possibility that the psalter now in Hildesheim was copied from a Canterbury prototype for Christina, or at the very least adapted for her use. Since this is the case, how she would have responded to these initials is an important issue“, Kristine E. Haney, *The St. Albans Psalter. An Anglo-Norman song of faith (Studies in the humanities. Literature, politics, society 60)* 2002, p. 339. „It was neither made for, nor possessed by Christina or her community; rather those features in it which definitely refer to her and Geoffrey, viewed from the abbot's position.“ THOMSON, *Geoffrey's book* (like note 2), p. 57; cf. *ibid.* p. 59–61. „I will propose an understanding of the current state of the manuscript that reconciles the accretive nature of the book, the Alexis material, and the Christina references.“ KATHRYN GERRY, *Cult and Codex: Alexis, Christina and the Saint Albans Psalter*, in: *Der Albani-Psalter. Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung* (like note 2), p. 69–95, here p. 68.

The main reasons for this assumption were certain parallels of the St. Alexius' legend and narrative accounts of Christina's life.¹⁰ The quire preceding the actual psalm part includes, among other things, the text of the legend of St. Alexius (Fig. 2).¹¹ Just like this saint from 5th century Syria, Christina had decided against marriage and instead chosen to lead a spiritual life. Pächt therefore deduced that she was the reason Geoffrey had the Alexius legend included. The spiritual friendship between the abbot and the Prioress related in the „Life of Christina of Markyate“, which was regarded as suspicious by the confrères, furthermore led to the attribution of the book's picture contents to such biographical connections. Circular reasoning further solidified the image of Christina as the female *spiritus rector* of the psalter manuscript.

In this manuscript, the Alexius legend appears for the first time in its Old French as poem in strophic form („Chanson de Saint Alexis“). The son of a wealthy Roman patrician, Alexius left his bride and his home behind in order to go to Edessa, where he lived as a beggar in front of the holy *sudarium* of Christ, sharing his alms with the poor. After returning to Rome many years later, he lived unrecognized in his parents' house. After his death, he was recognized by his family and subsequently celebrated by the pope, as well as the citizens of Rome.

¹⁰ „It should also be said that the idea of association between Alexis and Christina has been influential in both general and specific studies. Then it is simply assumed that the Psalter was designed and made for Christina.“ THEA MARY TODD, *Christina of Markyate's Biographer and his Work*, 2004, p. 24.

¹¹ The signs of usage lead Gerry to conclude that the Alexis quire predates other parts of the Psalter. „In the Alexis Quire holes marking the sewing stations of an earlier binding can be seen.“ KATHRYN GERRY, *The Alexis Quire and the Cult of Saints at St Albans*, in: *Historical Research* 82 (2009), p. S. 593–612, p. 602; cf. *ibidem*, p. 599f. Peter Kidd, on whose observations of additional punctures in the binding of the Alexis Quire Gerry had based his thesis, later rectified his view: „more recent detailed investigations by conservators have shown this to be untrue.“ PETER KIDD, *Addenda and Corrigenda to Peter Kidd, Contents and Codicology*, in: JOCHEN BEPLER, PETER KIDD, JANE GEDDES, *The St Albans Psalter (Albani Psalter)*. English-language edition of commentary volume, 2008, p. 41–156, here p. 42, section VI.3. <http://www.manuscripts.org.uk/albani/CommentaryCorrections.htm> [15.09.2013]. „Die bisher vertretene These, dass einzelne Teile der Handschrift zu einem früheren Zeitpunkt einmal separat gebunden waren, kann aus diesem Befund der Heftlöcher nicht abgeleitet werden.“ ALMUT CORBACH, HEINRICH GRAU, *Kodikologische Befunde und konservatorische Überlegungen zur Neubindung des Albani-Psalters*, in: *Der Albani-Psalter. Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung* (like note 2) p. 200–223, here p. 213 note 10. With this, the main evidence for Gerry's argument, „that the Alexis Quire was originally produced as a separate book“, disappears. GERRY, *Alexis Quire* (like above) p. 602.

The „Life of Christina of Markyate“ is handed down to us in a manuscript from the 14th century. Christina had taken a vow of chastity when she was a girl and her parents were looking to choose a husband for her. She secretly fled to the hermitage of Markyate to the hermit Roger, a monk and subdeacon at the abbey of St. Albans. After two years in hiding, her betrothed released her from the promise of marriage. When her saintly life and her visionary gifts became public, other women came to Markyate to live with her. Before his death (approx. 1121 or 1122), Roger handed over the leadership of the cell to her. Christina took her formal vows. The canons regulars of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London gave the new priory the lease of some lands, while abbot Geoffrey provided pecuniary resources and assumed patronage.

Her decision against parents and the groom they had chosen is the actual parallel to the life of Alexius. Pächt saw this narrative theme emphasized in a depiction of the farewell of Alexius and his bride and the beginning of the manuscript’s text. However, back in 2004 Louk Engels, a scholar of the Alexius legend already stated the crucial counter-argument: „The idea was developed by C. H. Talbot ... with reference to the passage in the vita where Christina tries to persuade her husband, who had been smuggled into her bedroom, to follow her example. But aside from the situation, which is simply stereotypical, there is no indication that the author was thinking specifically of Alexius when writing this. He in fact mentions a different example much more applicable to the case of Christina, namely Saint Cecilia.“¹²

In her study on Christina from the same year, Christina Todd negated the comparability altogether from a gender perspective: „One must collapse these events in Christina’s story to bring them into line with the Alexis poem; there are no further parallels between them. Moreover it must be acknowledged that the Alexis chanson, as a masculine tale, does not really capture Christina’s experience. Alexis is able to wait until he is alone with his bride and takes the initiative. She has no real recourse except to accept his decision, although she mourns for him when he is gone. On the other hand, Christina cannot afford to go

¹² LOUK J. ENGELS, *The West European Alexius Legend with an appendix presenting the medieval Latin text corpus in its context*, in: *The Invention of Saintliness*, ed. by ANNEKE BEITSKE MULDER-BAKKER (Routledge studies in medieval religion and culture 2) 2002, p. 93–144, here p. 117 note 40.

through with a wedding night. If she can preempt the event, good, but it would have been unwise to allow events to overtake her."¹³

Therefore, the question remains why the legend of St. Alexius has been included in the psalter. What was the significance of Alexius at St. Albans? Goldschmidt,¹⁴ who published the psalter for the first time, already referred to the note in the cloister chronicle mentioning a *capella S. Alexii* in the abbey church.¹⁵ The chapel was consecrated under abbot Richard (1097–1119) by the bishop of Durham, Ranulf Flambard, probably in the context of the consecration of the abbey church's new building on 28 December 1114 (Fig. 3).¹⁶ This new building dates from a time of the abbey's expansion and transformation in the spirit of the Rome oriented reform of Cluny. Alexius was mainly worshipped in Rome, in the monastery SS Bonifacio e Alessio, which was known as the centre of the Cluniac reform. The Alexius patrocinium at St. Albans only appears on record this one time.¹⁷ However, in one copy of the chronicle, a 13th century scribe made a note in the margin that this was the altar where the mass of the Virgin Mary was now „sung after notes“.¹⁸ We can therefore assume that

¹³ TODD, Christina (like note 10) p. 123.

¹⁴ ADOLPH GOLDSCHMIDT, *Der Albanipsalter in Hildesheim und seine Beziehung zur symbolischen Kirchensculptur des 12. Jahrhunderts*, 1895, p. 34.

¹⁵ *Ranulphus Episcopus Dunelmensis, dedicavit Capellam Ricardi Abbatis, in honorem Sancti Alexii*. Thomas Walsingham, *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, a Thoma Walsingham, regnante Ricardo Secundo, ejusdem ecclesiae præcentore, compilata, 3 vol., here 1, ed. by HENRY THOMAS RILEY (*Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores* 28,4,1) 1867, p. 148. With a dedication in honorem Sancti Blasii bishop Gilbert of Limerick (1106–1138), too, seems to have had a part in the chapel's consecration.

¹⁶ Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 70f.; cf. GERRY, Alexis Quire (like note 11) p. 606.

¹⁷ „Other versions of the Life of this saint are found in St. Albans manuscripts, including a Roman version, and one thought to have been composed at Montecassino, which was used in the monastery by the eleven-thirties. The Montecassino text would eventually become widespread in England but two of the oldest English manuscripts containing this version, both dating from the second quarter of the twelfth century, are associated with St. Albans. One was produced at the monastery and was used at a cell of St. Albans at Tynemouth. Although it is not clear where the second manuscript was made, it was used at Wymondham, another St. Albans cell. In addition to being included in the litany found in the St. Albans Psalter, Alexis is mentioned in another St. Albans calendar, indicating that his feast was celebrated there.“ GERRY, Alexis Quire (like note 11) p. 605.

¹⁸ *Vel altare, ubi nunc cantatur ad notam de Sancta Maria cotidie*, Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 148, Marginalnote in MS Nero D. 7. Under abbot Robert bishop Godefridus of St. Asaph consecrated an *altare ... in honorem Sanctae Mariae*,

Alexius was not known at the monastery anymore at that point.¹⁹ But is that really all that can be determined about him?

The chronicle tells us some more about the place of his worship in the monastery, but under a new name. The chapel which was sometimes named after St. Blaise was situated not far from the choir in the southern nave aisle, next to the door to the eastern cloister.²⁰ Abbot Ranulf (1146–1151) endowed the chapel with a daily mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary with a procession.²¹ Abbot William Trumpington (1214–1235) introduced the „sung“ mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who the chapel was henceforth named after.²² In 1274, abbot Roger (1260–1290) endowed it with an additional daily mass „to his soul and the souls of all brothers of the church of St. Alban, the brothers in the cells, and for the souls of all believers, daily at the altar of the Virgin Mary“. ²³ Abbot Hugh (1309–1326), who reconstructed the entire southern nave after its collapse,²⁴ confirmed the daily mass for the

Sanctique Blasii Episcopi et Martyris in the year 1164. Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 159.

¹⁹ PÄCHT et al, *St. Albans* (like note 8) p. 135.

²⁰ *In ala vero Australi versus coemeterium, sive Capitulum monachorum*. John Amundesham, *Chronica monasterii S. Albani* 5: *Annales monasterii S. Albani a Johanne Amundesham monacho, ut videtur conscripti* (A. D. 1421–1440), ed. by HENRY THOMAS RILEY (*Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores* 28,5,1–2) 1870/1871, p. 436.

²¹ Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 107.

²² *Hic etiam felicitis memoriae Abbas Willelmus, videns quod in omnibus nobiles ecclesiis Angliae Missa de Beata Virgine ad notam solemniter cotidiana decantatur .constituit etiam ex consensu, et, beneplacito totius conventus, in perpetuis temporibus sancivit perduraturum, ut cotidie Missa de Beata Virgine solemniter ad notam celebretur; sex ad hoc singulis diebus monachis per ordinem, ad ministrandum, nunc hiis, nunc illis, indeficienter assignatis, et in tabula scriptis nominatim.... Ad quod convenienter peragendum, elegit locum satis idoneum, videlicet, ubi constructum est altare Sancti Blasii, Australi scilicet, ala ecclesiae nostrae.... Veruntamen dedicate altari in honorem sanctae Dei Genitricis, Mariae, ab Episcopo Artfertensi, Johanne, Abbas ipse, pontificalibus redimitus, primo Missam illam solemniter celebravit*. Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 285f.

²³ Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 449f.

²⁴ „We come now to the reconstruction of the five easternmost bays on the south side of the nave. This was begun by abbot Hugh of Eversden (1308–1326), toward the end of whose time, in 1323, we are told that ‚while the mass of the Virgin was in celebration, many men and women being present, suddenly two great columns on the south side of the church fell to the ground with a great noise and crash. In an hour after, all the roof and the beams of the south part, and nearly all the cloister fell.‘ The restoration of this part of the church and of the cloister was completed by abbot Michael of Mentmore (1335–1349). Although we must certainly understand by the ‚two great columns‘ two of the main piers of the nave, it would seem that the others remained firm, and that the tiles in those that fell were used again in the building of the new piers, since it is evident that, to some extent at least, the same method of

deceased and endowed the chapel with yet another mass of the Blessed Virgin.²⁵ Not only those two, as well as other abbots had commemorations in the chapel, but also some merited laymen, who were laid to rest there.²⁶ The „book of the benefactors of the monastery“ records the altar as a donation by abbots Geoffrey and William.²⁷ Geoffrey’s death is noted in the psalter’s calendar on the 26 February.

Through the measures of abbot William, who had the altar consecrated anew to the name of the Blessed Mother by bishop John of Ardfert (1217–1224), we indirectly learn more about the chapel’s function. Besides extending and abundantly furnishing the chapel, he also commissioned a „new“ picture of the Virgin Mary (Mariola). The „old“ picture, which had been standing on the altar before, was relocated to the northern transept, for the „edification of the laity and all those who come here and for the consolation of the secular“.²⁸ The Alexius chapel had therefore apparently been a popular place of devotion for the

construction was adopted here that had been used for Trumpington’s work, that is, the Norman core was cased with stone. At any rate, the ruin led to the rebuilding of these five bays.“ R. J. KING, *Handbook to the cathedrals of England. Southern division 2*, 1876, p. 722.

²⁵ ... *capellamque mortuorum plumbo fecit operiri suis sumptibus. Et statuit ut Missa pro Defunctis, quae ab antiquo celebrari solebat, in eodem loco perpetuis temporibus cotidie celebretur ibidem*, Walsingham, *Gesta 2* (like note 15) 126–137.

²⁶ Walsingham, *Gesta 1* (like note 15) p. 327, 467.

²⁷ *Est praeterea ibidem, super poliandrium ossium, juxta coemeterium, Capella lignea, in qua olim fuerat altare, et ibidem aliquotiens super illud, ut dicitur, celebrabatur olim Missa pro Defunctis; nunc totaliter aboletur, et deletur ... Fuerat etiam, uti comperuimus per scripturas sacras et picturas, olim ante constructionem praedicti altaris et Capellae, ad gradus ibidem, ubi introitus ostii ad coemeterium, quaedam Capella, cujus altare fuerat in honore Sancti Blasii consecrata, ubi olim celebrata Missa cotidiana Sanctae Mariae, ex devotione et institutione Galfridi et Willelmi, et caeterorum Abbatum, ut in eorum gestis comperimus. Annales Appendix (d), p. 445f.; cf. *Chronica monasterii S. Albani 3: Johannes de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blaneforde Chronica et annales: regnantibus Henrico tertio, Edwardo primo, Edwardo secundo, Ricardo secundo, et Henrico quarto, A. D. 1259–1296, 1307–1324, 1392–1406. Appendix: Liber de benefactoribus Monasterii Sanctio Albani*, ed. by HENRY THOMAS RILEY (*Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores 28,3*) 1866, p. 429; cf. Walsingham, *Gesta 2* (like note 15) p. 126f.; Amundesham, *Annales* (like note 20) Appendix (d), p. 445f.*

²⁸ *Hic etiam Abbas Willelmus, sicut, transposita veteri Mariola, novam substituit, et veterem alibi in ecclesia salvo collocavit...et Mariolam anteriorem, quae supra altare Beati Blasii stabat, substitutis novis, in ecclesiae nostrae parte Aquilonari, ad laicorum et omnium illuc adventantium aedificationem* (cf. *First Letter on The Corinthians 14,3*), *et consolationem saecularium, duxit collocandum*. Walsingham, *Gesta 1* (like note 15) p. 287.

laity.²⁹ In another decree William deemed it unworthy for the monks to keep participating in the processions commemorating the Virgin Mary, starting at this chapel, „in view of the public and in front of a crowd of both sexes“.³⁰ With this same wording („in view of the public“), Pope Innocent III had prohibited the customary liturgical drama as part of mass in 1207.³¹ Here it is interesting to note at this point that references to liturgical drama have been identified in the St. Albans Psalter,³² especially in the Alexius quire.³³ Abbot William might have even had the pope’s very same words echoing in his ear. At the beginning of his abbacy he had taken part in the Fourth Council of the Lateran in Rome. As spokesman for the English prelates with Innocent III, he obtained the resolution that churches with the tomb of a significant saint were allowed to mention him in the canon of the mass (this referred particularly to St. Alban). According to the monastery’s chronicle, the pope had otherwise arranged for „several things to be abolished that had been custom for a long time“.³⁴ This is the context in which to place

²⁹ *certis temporibus limitatis. Laudibus insuper ipsius Abbatis Willelmi adjiciendum est, quod unam elegantissimam Mariolam... ecclesiae nostrae praesentavit; quam quidem fecit ab Episcopo saepe praememorato, Johanne consecrari. Mariolam autem, quae prius ibi erat, ubi novam decenter collocaverat, in loco ubi Missa Beatae Mariae ad notam cotidie celebratur, supra altare evidenter collocavit. Cereum quoque, quem floribus consuevimus redimire, constituit accendi ante nobilem Mariolam, diebus ac noctibus festorum praecipuorum, et in processione quae fit in commemoratione ejusdem* (MS. Spelman: *Mariolam autem, quae prius ibi erat, in loco ubi Missa Beatae Mariae ad notam celebratur, super altare evidenter collocavit*). Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 286.

³⁰ *Statuit quoque idem Abbas Willelmus, non sine honestatis consideratione, quod Servitium privatum de Omnibus Sanctis, videlicet, quod est cotidianum, nisi praecipuo festo in capis impediatur, in choro dicatur; nec pro processione quae solet in Commemoratione Beatae Mariae fieri, vel ante magnam crucem in ecclesia, vel ante aliquod altarium, impediatur. Quod primitus solet fieri, ubi processio conventum trahebat in conspectu populi, et collateraliter juxta vulgus utriusque sexus. Quod videbatur ipsi inhonestum.* Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 293.

³¹ *... per insolentiam eorundem interdum ludi fiunt in eisdem ecclesiis theatrales, et non solum ad ludibriorum spectacula introducuntur in eas monstra larvarum ..., verum etiam in tribus anni festivitatis que continue Natalem Christi sequuntur, diaconi, presbyteri ac subdiaconi vicissim insanie sue ludibria exercentes, per gesticulationum suarum debacchationes obscenas in conspectu populi decus faciunt clericale vilescere.* Pope Innocent III., 1207 January 8, *Codex diplomaticus maioris Poloniae. Kodeks dyplomatyczny wielkopolski* 1, 1877, No 55 p. 57f.

³² PÄCHT et al., *St. Albans* (like note 8) p. 74–78, 120–122, 143f.

³³ RUDOLF BAEHR, *Das Alexiuslied als Vortragsdichtung*, in: *Serta Romanica. Festschrift für Gerhard Rohlfs zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. by RUDOLF BAEHR, KURT WAIS, 1968, p. 175–199; RACHEL BULLINGTON, *The Alexis in the Saint Albans Psalter: a Look into the Heart of the Matter* (*Studies in Medieval Literature* 4) 1991.

³⁴ *... et praeceptum est abradi quaedam, quae diu ante fuerant usitata.* Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 261f.

William's changes at St. Albans. Canon 62 of the council, with its centralizing regulations concerning the misuse of relics and indulgences, signified the end for many a local cult.³⁵

This is presumably also the reason why shortly afterwards, the Alexius patrocini^{um} was only known about in the monastery's archive. In 1114, when abbot Richard had an altar dedicated to Alexius, the saint's bones were located on the Aventine Hill at the cloister of St. Boniface of Tarsus.³⁶ It was there in the late 10th century that the Latin version of the saint's legend was composed, which is the basis for the psalter's „Vie de Saint Alexis“.³⁷ The worship of Alexius quickly spread beyond the Alps.³⁸

Immediately after the Fourth Council of the Lateran (1215), the chapter of St. Peter's in the Vatican³⁹ made the claim to the possession of Alexius' bones, whereupon excavations with the aim of finding the remains were carried out in both churches. In the year 1217 Honorius III, the successor of Innocent III, consecrated the abbey church on the Aventine Hill anew.⁴⁰ In the transept of St. Peter however, they showed an „altar of St. Alexius, where they say his body

³⁵ Fordham University, New York, Medieval Sourcebook: Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215. The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215. Canon 62 <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/lateran4.asp> [28.02.2014]. cf. THOMAS HEAD, Postscript. The ambiguous bishop, in: *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal power and culture in the central middle ages*, ed. by JOHN S. OTT, ANNA TRUMBORE JONES, 2007, p. 250–264, here p. 257.

³⁶ LOUIS DUCHESNE, Notes sur la topographie de Rome au moyen âge 7: Aventin, in: *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* 10 (1890) p. 225–250; BERNHARD F. HAMILTON, The Monastery of S. Alessio and the religious and intellectual Renaissance in tenth Century Rome, in: *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 2 (1965) p. 265–310.

³⁷ Arthur Amaud, *La légende Syriaque de saint Alexis, l'homme de Dieu*, 1889, p. 49–55; cf. LINDA COOPER, The Old French Life of Saint Alexis and the Shroud of Turin, in: *Modern philology* 84 (1986) p. 1–17; BERNHARD GALLISTL, Der St. Albans Psalter und seine liturgische Verwendung, in: *Concilium medii aevi* 15 (2012) p. 213–254, here p. 224 (<http://cma.gbv.de/dr,cma,015,2012,a,07.pdf> [28.02.2014]).

³⁸ ENGELS, Alexius (like note 12) p. 126–129.

³⁹ JOCHEN JOHRENDT. Die Diener des Apostelfürsten. Das Kapitel von St. Peter im Vatikan (11.–13. Jahrhundert) (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 122) 2011. „Lateran/Vatican rivalry“, see: DEBRA J. BIRCH, Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages, in: *Continuity and Change* (1998) p. 111–115.

⁴⁰ The monastery's later biased account claims that it had prevailed over St. Peter. FELICE MARIO NERINI, *De templo et coenobio sanctorum Bonifacii et Alexii historica monumenta*, 1752, p. 201.

lies underneath a lamp that hangs there, whereas the saint's own church holds merely his head".⁴¹

The sanctuary of Alexius in the cloister of St. Boniface of Tarsus on the Aventine Hill was therefore devalued. This was presumably due to St. Veronica's image of Christ, for which Innocent III had installed a procession. Following a miracle that happened during this procession in 1216, the pope granted an indulgence for those who worshipped the Veil of Veronica.⁴² „In value far exceeding all other relics in the world, its presence raised the basilica of St. Peter above all churches on earth".⁴³ The claim to the original must have outshone all the other idols, above all the image that Christ himself was said to have sent to king Abgar of Edessa, which was famous throughout the Christian world. „However, the Western relevance of the Byzantine imprint relics disappears completely in the light of the prominence of the *sudarium*, which was promoted by Pope Innocent III, and had been verifiable at St. Peter in Rome since the tenth century. This cloth with the image of the *Vera Icon* is by legend connected to the bleeding woman in the gospel or St. Veronica, the latter being the reason why the *sudarium* is frequently referred to as ‚Veronica“".⁴⁴

⁴¹ Pilgrim guide of 1375, Vat. Lat. 4265, fols. 209–216; GUSTAV PARTHEY (ed.), *Mirabilia Romae. E codicibus vaticanis emendata*, 1869, p. 47–62; HANS BELTING, *Bild und Kult. Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst*, 1990, p. 598. The side chapel with the Alexius altar was located near the Cathedra Petri: SIBLE DE BLAAUW, *Cultus et décor. Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale. Basilica Salvatoris Sanctae Mariae Sancti Petri (Studi e testi 356)* 1994, fig. 20. GALLISTL, *St. Albans Psalter* (like note 37) p. 239. Cf. Tiberio Alfarano (1582): *In quinto tabernaculo ... de Reliquijs sancti Alexij Confessoris cuius transitus sanctissimus mirabiliter fuit revelatus in hac sacrosancta Basilica*. Tiberius Alpharanus, *De basilicae Vaticanae antiquissima et nova structura*, ed. by Michele Cerrati, 1914, p. 100 (cf. 43, 44).

⁴² „Im Westen geriet das Mandylion bald in den Schatten der berühmten Bildreliquie aus St. Peter in Rom ... Der wahre Grund bestand aber offenbar darin, dass die ‚Veronica‘ in Rom inzwischen den Anspruch des ‚wahren Porträts‘ allein vertrat. Deswegen konnte sich auch das ... Mandylion aus San Silvestro in Rom nicht durchsetzen“. BELTING, *Bild und Kult* (like note 41) p. 246.

⁴³ „Alle anderen Reliquien an Wert weit überragend, erhob es durch seine Anwesenheit die Basilika Sankt Peters über alle Kirchen der Erde.“ ERNST VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 18)* 1899, p. 221.

⁴⁴ „Doch schwindet die Bedeutung der byzantinischen Abdruck-Bilder im Westen völlig angesichts der neuen, durch Papst Innozenz III. geförderten Prominenz des in St. Peter zu Rom schon seit dem 10. Jahrhundert nachweisbaren *sudariums*, des Tuchbildes der *Vera Icon*, das von der Legende mit der blutflüssigen Frau des Evangeliums beziehungsweise der hl. Veronika in Verbindung gebracht wird und von

It was most likely on the grounds of Alexius' close relation to this image of Christ that St. Peter became the centre of his cult around that time. In an older version of his legend, Alexius' piety stemmed from his worship of said image.⁴⁵ „The Roman church then abandoned the story of the image of Christ that was sent to king Abgar, and instead focused more on the cult of Mary“.⁴⁶ In the St. Albans Psalter, Alexius still repairs to Edessa „because of an image, which he had heard had been created on God's commission“.⁴⁷ Perhaps the „old Mariola“ on the Alexius altar used to be such an image of Christ.⁴⁸

Let us then assess that the cult around St. Alexius occupied an important space in the abbey. The psalter was therefore most likely intended for divine service at the abbey's church. This Lady chapel with the Alexius altar was situated alongside the passageway leading from the monks' choir to the cloister, and served both the Office of the Dead, as well as congregational worship.⁴⁹ In any case, the obituaries

ihr auch seinen populären Namen ‚Veronika‘ erhält.“ URSULA NILGEN, review of: Gerhard Wolf, *Schleier und Spiegel. Traditionen des Christusbildes und die Bildkonzepte der Renaissance*, in: *sehepunkte* 4 (2004), Nr. 12, <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2004/12/1882.html> [20.12.2013].

⁴⁵ Three of the four Latin prose vitae of the standard legend mention the image of Christ's face venerated in Edessa at an earlier point of the story – immediately after Alexius' arrival in Edessa. ENGELS, *Alexius* (like note 12) p. 108.

⁴⁶ „Die römische Kirche verwarf dann die Erzählung vom Bilde Christi, das an König Abgar geschickt worden war, und ließ statt dessen den Marienkultus mehr hervortreten.“ MARGARETE RÖSLER, *Die Fassungen der Alexiuslegende mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der mitttelenglischen Versionen*, 1905, p. 28.

⁴⁷ *D'iloc alat an alsis la ciptet · pur une imagine dunt il oit parler, qued angeles firent par cumandement deu* (Stanza 18); cf. RÖSLER, *Fassungen* (like note 46) p. 86.

⁴⁸ The reflection of an unknown icon of Christ can be found in the two Veronica images of Matthew Paris (ca 1200–1258), who was a monk at St. Albans: „The Veronica bust in the MS Arundel 157 is an anomaly within the manuscript ... Paris' extraordinary Byzantine head of Christ strikes us with the spiritual force of a genuine cult image. Its deliberately archaizing design lifts the representation from the ordinary sphere of a religious painting to the realm of Eastern icons as an exemplification of the most rarified type of holy acheiropoieton ... While it is impossible to know what the Vatican relic actually looked in Paris' time, his iconic bust differs in several significant ways from roman representations ... The image of the holy Face known as the Edessa mandylion, which was among the relics sold by Baldwin II to Louis IX in 1241, adheres to the same masklike type.“ SUZANNE LEWIS, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica majora* (California studies in the history of art 21) 1987, p. 126; cf. GALLISTL, *St. Albans Psalter* (like note 37) p. 237.

⁴⁹ According to Cluny's regulations, the Lady chapel was the abbey's meeting place for the *Processio per officinas claustrii* the procession after morning mass, which led through the cloister and the adjacent living quarters and workshops of the convent and subsequently returned to the choir for the *Missa Maior*, *Udalricus*, *Antiquiores consuetudines cluniacensis monasterii collectore S. Udalrico monacho benedictino* c. 12, ed. by JACQUES P. MIGNE, *Patrologia latina* 149, 1853, col. 656B; cf. FELIX HEINZER,

that were inserted into the calendar not much later, served the commemoration of the dead. These names of the deceased can be attributed to the abbey and its surroundings at the time, which Christina and her relatives were of course part of.⁵⁰ The earliest entry on 12 September mentions the monk and hermit Roger, the founder of the cell of Markyate and Christina's mentor.⁵¹ A priori, Roger's annotation receives a special emphasis: „Death of Roger hermit and monk of Saint Albans. With whomever this psalter will be: May he be remembered most especially, this day“.⁵² The priest on duty, who, psalter in hand, led the weekly changing Divine Office,⁵³ was therefore obliged to on this day hold Roger's anniversary.⁵⁴ The entry therefore ensured that Roger received a „first class“ commemoration.⁵⁵ Roger's tomb was located in close vicinity to the Alexis Chapel,⁵⁶ in the wall of

Die Inszenierung des Evangelienbuchs in der Liturgie, in: Codex und Raum, ed. by STEPHAN MÜLLER, LIESELOTTE E. SAURMA-JELTSCH, PETER STROHSCHNEIDER (Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien 21) 2009, p. 43–58, here p. 54.

⁵⁰ The link that Wormald draws between all these obituaries and Christina's family and friends (p. 26), results from their mutual connection with the abbey. „Wormald's opinions were based on the calendar and litany of the manuscript and particularly on a number of obits added to the calendar several decades after it was made. Some of these obits do show a link to Christina: the date of her death, and the deaths of her mentor Roger the Hermit and several of her family members are recorded. Christina and her kin account for five of the nineteen obits; of the remaining fourteen, some might be associated with Christina, but with many there is no clear connection, and none of them would seem inappropriate in a calendar made for use at St. Albans abbey.“ GERRY, Alexis Quire (like note 11) p. 598

⁵¹ For more about the scribe, see cf. RODNEY M. THOMSON, Manuscripts from St. Albans Abbey, 1066–1235, 1982, p. 25, 119–120.

⁵² *Obitus Rogeri heremite monachi sancti albani, apud quemcumque fuerit hoc psalterium, fiat eius memoria maxime hac die* (p. 11).

⁵³ ... *sex ad hoc singulis diebus monachis per ordinem, ad ministrandum, nunc hiis, nunc illis, indeficienter assignatis, et in tabula scriptis nominatim.* Walsingham, Gesta 1 (like note 15) p. 285.

⁵⁴ The biblican phrase *Apud quemcumque fuerit* (Genesis 44,8) further emphasizes the obligation.

⁵⁵ A mention in the calendar guaranteed a personalized commemoration. Cf. Testament of Guy de Lusignan (4 June 1309): *tali modo quod qualibet die dicti Fratres unam missam pro salute mea et parentum meorum celebrabunt et celebrare promittent ac eciam tenebuntur, et scribere premissa in missalibus dicti conventus, ubi fit et debet fieri memoria pro defunctis; tenebuntur eciam nominatim recommendacionem facere pro me et predecessores meis in omnibus suis capitulis, et scribere diem obitus mei in calendario et in eorum capitulo, sicut moris est, recitare.* Recueil des documents concernant le Poitou contenus dans les registres de la chancellerie de France 1: (1302–1333), ed. by PAUL GUERIN (Archives historiques de Poitou 11) 1881, nr. XXIX, p. 45.

⁵⁶ „West of the doorway, in the second bay of the aisle, is a thirteenth-century tomb recess in the south wall, with a beautifully moulded and cusped arch and jambs with engaged shafts. Above it, in letters of sixteenth-century character, is the inscription:

the abbey's southern nave, where it was combined with the tomb of Sigar, a contemporary of Roger, who had lived as a hermit in the cell of Northaw.⁵⁷ Roger and Sigar's tombs were a place of pilgrimage for the people and were as such, as the chronicler proudly notes, even visited by the kings of England.⁵⁸ Maybe the prioress Christina had arranged for her and her relatives to be buried close to the founder of her cell. The entry in the calendar suggests that she left behind a donation that ensured her anniversary celebrations.⁵⁹

Seen in the context of the liturgy of the Alexius chapel, the particularities in the illustrations that were heretofore interpreted as associated with Christina can now be explained.

What was considered to be the key evidence for the „Christina connection“ was the illustrated initial (Fig. 4) at the beginning of psalm 105 (p. 285). A woman in clerical dress stands pleading before Christ, with several monks behind her. Here, the heading in its hexametric form differs from the headings of the other psalms: *Parce tuis queso monachis clementia IHY* („O Clemency of Jesus, spare Your monks, I pray“). The initial shows another abnormality, in that its painter cannot

Vir Domini verus jacet hic heremita Rogerus Et sub eo clarus meritis heremita Sigarus“, WILLIAM PAGE, *The Victoria History of the County of Hertford* 2, 1908, p. 488–507.

⁵⁷ *Hic, sepultus in nostra ecclesia, jacet in eodem arcu quo Rogerus Eremita, quorum sepultura non solum vulgares frequentare solebant, sed etiam ipsi reges Angliae; offerentes illis pretiosos bandekinos, quibus voluerunt cooperiri tumbas eorum*, Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 105f.

⁵⁸ „On the third March in this year (1257), the king (Henry III.) went to St. Albans, and at the great altar there made an offering of a most handsome necklace with two clasps and a cross as also of some costly rings ; at the altar of St. Amphibalus at the same place, he also made offering of a silver-gilt cup to hold the dust lately found in the tomb mentioned above; also of six silken cloths, one of which he assigned to cover the aforesaid tomb, and another to cover the tombs of the hermits Roger and Sigard; and he, also gave some money to repair the bier.“ Matthew Paris, *English history from the year 1235 to 1273* 3, translated by JOHN A. GILES, 1854, p. 220; cf. *Liber de benefactoribus monasterii Sancti Albani. Chronica monasterii Sancti Albani* ed. by HENRY THOMAS RILEY (*Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores* 28,3) 1869, Appendix p. 433.

⁵⁹ „Wormald's other arguments for an association with Christina had to do with the saints mentioned in the litany and in the calendar, and particularly with the saints whose names were added to the calendar shortly after 1155. However, none of these saints points directly to Christina, and of the fourteen added to the calendar, thirteen are included in other St. Albans calendars, none of which is thought to have been associated with Christina or with Markyate priory.“ GERRY, *The Alexis Quire* (like note 11) p. 598.

be verified at any other point in the Codex.⁶⁰ Furthermore, it is not applied directly onto the page, but was subsequently affixed on a separate piece of parchment. Dodwell identified the female figure to be Christina. The initial, however, had in his opinion been „pasted into the manuscript long after it had been produced, at a time, it would seem, when the psalter was being adapted for Christina’s use“.⁶¹ This interpretation has subsequently been adopted almost uniformly throughout following studies.⁶²

Kirsten Collins recently summarized: „The image, which shows Christina standing in the earthly green zone of the initial and reaching with one hand into the celestial blue space occupied by Christ space is usually interpreted as a reflection of her active role as a holy woman and conduit to the divine. As one who experienced visions, which she shared with the abbot, Christina mediated between the earthly and heavenly realms. The gestures of the monk closest to her could support an interpretation of the picture as a posthumous addition, however. He rests one hand on her back and raises another in the gesture of speech to Christ, as if commending Christina – her hands raised in a gesture of prayer – into his care. It is possible, then, that the pasted-in initial was added as a way of memorializing Christina after her death, sometime after 1155.“⁶³ Dodwell’s dating is albeit put into perspective: „Close physical examination of the manuscript has revealed little evidence to shed light on when – either during the production process or long after – the initial was added.“⁶⁴

⁶⁰ PÄCHT et al, *St. Albans* (like note 8) p. 68; THOMSON, *Manuscripts* (like note 51) p. 116.

⁶¹ Charles R. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West, 800–1200*, 1993, p. 328.

⁶² Only in Kristine Haney’s study of the initials do we find the neutral assessment that this is simple a woman guiding several monks to Christ. KRISTINE HANEY, *The St. Albans Psalter, an Anglo-Norman Song of Faith* (Studies in the Humanities 60) 2002, p. 572. Even Thomson, who otherwise regarded the „Christine connection“ with distance, talks about a „Christina initial“: „Why was the ‚Christina‘ initial added to Psalm 105 in particular? The hexametric rubric calls upon Christ to protect the monks of St Albans, while the psalm itself asks for a return to the Lord. Perhaps the context was the monks’ murmuring about and dissatisfaction with abbot Geoffrey’s relationship with Christina and his expenditure of the convent’s resources on the foundation of Markyate, done, says the *Gesta Abbatum*, without consultation.“ THOMSON, *Geoffrey’s book* (like note 2) p. 67.

⁶³ COLLINS, *Pictures* (like note 5) p. 18f.

⁶⁴ COLLINS, *Pictures* (like note 5) p. 18, cf. *ibid.* p. 72f.

The whole reasoning is based on a passage in the „Life of Christina“: „All he asked was her intercession with God.“⁶⁵ Let us have a look at the passage in context.⁶⁶ After Roger’s passing, abbot Geoffrey put up significant funds from monastery assets, in order to give the cell a financial basis. Alongside he promises, „that he would himself be the patron of the hermitage“. The only reward Geoffrey expects in return for all this is „her intercession with God“. What the benefactor and patron asks for here is not a private prayer from his spiritual friend, but an inclusion by name in the „Intercessions“ of the canon missae at Markyate. In the „intercessions for the clerical and secular authority“ the abbot of St. Albans’ name was supposed to be mentioned after the pope and the local bishop. The cell’s dependence on the abbey was therefore liturgically anchored.⁶⁷

A direct connection with the woman in the initial is not evident. However, a reading as allegory of the *Clementia Jhesu* („Clemency of Jesus“), which is invoked at that point, seems more plausible. The concept of the image was possibly influenced by allegorical depictions of the *CLEMENTIA TEMP[orum]* („Clemency of the time“), or *CLEMENTIA AVG[usti]* („Clemency of Augustus“) on ancient emperor’s coins (Fig. 5).⁶⁸

⁶⁵ JANE GEDDES, *The Alexis Quire. The Dove and Geoffrey*, in: *The St Albans Psalter Project*, University of Aberdeen (2003), understanding the initials. The ‚Christina‘ Initial: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/essays/initials.shtml#christina> (06.3.2014).

⁶⁶ ... *loci illius se futurum adjutorium, tantum illam apud Deum mereatur interventricem ... Abhinc enim vero virgo tua per abbatem ab exteriorum attenuatione, abbas jam tuus per virginem ab interiorum aggravatione levatur.* *Vie de Christina de Markyate 1*, ed. and translated by PAULETTE L’HERMITE-LECLERCQ, ANNE-MARIE LEGRAS (*Sources d’histoire médiévale* 35) 2007, p. 160; „that he would himself be the patron of her hermitage. All he asked was her intercession with God ... In this way, your virgin was relieved of anxiety about material concerns, while the abbot through the virgin was freed from spiritual anguish.“ TALBOT, *Life* (like note 6), p. 59; cf. *Walsingham, Gesta 1* (like note 15) p. 102.

⁶⁷ „In Benediktinerklöstern, besonders in Monte Cassino und seiner Observanz, vereinzelt auch in andern Klöstern, fügte man auch mitunter den Namen des Klosteroberen bei ‚et abbate (priore) nostro tuo‘ sowie eine Fürbitte für das Kloster ‚et abbate nostro Desiderio cum omni congregatiane S. Benedicti conf. tuo illi commissa““. ADALBERT EBNER, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kunstgeschichte des Missale Romanum im Mittelalter. Iter Italicum*, 1896, p. 399.

⁶⁸ MELISSA BARDEN DOWLING, *Clemency and Cruelty in the Roman World*, 2009, p. 158f.; SETH W. STEVENSON, CHARLES R. SMITH, FREDERICK MADDEN, *A dictionary of roman coins, republican and imperial*, 1889 (repr. 1967), p. 215. For more about the

Here, too, the liturgical custom offers a definite explanation. The heading, which reads *Parce tuis queso monachis clementia IHY*, is a paraphrase of the oration *Deus veniae largitor*.⁶⁹ This plea for the „clemency“ of the gracious God to lead the attendant congregation and their dead into the eternal „Communion of Saints“, is also found at a crucial point of the Cluniac funeral ceremony.

During the *Deus veniae largitor* prayer, the decedent was initially brought to the Lady altar. Subsequently, after being laid out at the main altar during early mass and missa maior, he was then – again by the way of the Lady chapel – solemnly escorted to the cemetery.⁷⁰ The oration was also part of the morning liturgy of the hours for the dead, as well as the „Memento“ antiphon from the very same psalm 105.⁷¹ The *Clementia Jesu* that was asked for in intercession on behalf of the late confrères, appears in the illustration of the initial as an allegorical female figure, who leads the monks on the way to Christ.

Conforming to Cluniac tradition, at St. Albans, too, the Lady Chapel (which also bore the name of Alexius) was at the centre of the Office of

ancient elements in medieval art of St. Albans, see cf. BIRTHE KJØLBYE-BIDDLE, *The Alban Cross*, in: *St Alban and St Albans. Roman and medieval architecture, art and archaeology*, eds. MARTIN HENIG, PHILLIP G. LINDLEY (Conference Transactions. The British Archaeological Association 24) 2001, p. 85–110.

⁶⁹ *Deus veniae largitor et humanae salutis auctor quaesumus clementiam tuam ut nostrae congregationis fratres et sorores qui ex hoc saeculo transierunt beata maria semperque uirgine intercedente cum omnibus sanctis tuis ad perpetuae beatitudinis consortium peruenire concedas.* (God, forgiver of sins and author of our salvation, we seek your clemency, so that through the intercession of blessed Mary ever virgin you may allow the brothers and sisters of our congregation who have passed over from this world to obtain perpetual blessedness with all your saints.), translation by FREDERIC S. PAXTON, *The Cluniac Death Ritual in the High Middle Ages. A Reconstructive Edition* (August 2002) p. 16. <http://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/fruehmittelalter/cluny/biblclun/clunyrteeng.pdf> (06.03.2014).

⁷⁰ „In the procession the boys follow the cross, then come the choir monks, then the conversi, and finally the bearers of the deceased. The body is then placed in front of the altar of Our Lady until this prayer has been said for him: *Deus veniae largitor ...*“, PAXTON, *Cluniac Death Ritual* (like note 69) p. 16; *Consuetudines Udalrici* 3,28, in: MIGNE, PL 149 (like note 49) col. 773f.

⁷¹ *Primo ante nocturnos dicuntur sola quindecim cantica graduum; dicitur prima quinque pro fratribus nostris et omnibus fidelibus defunctis ... Ad secundam versus, Memento nostri, Domine, in beneplacito populi tui* (Psalm 105) ... *Ad defunctorum matut. Dicuntur haec, collectae ... Deus, veniae largitor.* *Consuetudines Udalrici* 1,5, in: Migne, PL 149 (like note 49) col. 648. The *memento nostri Domine* from Psalm 105 is a very old requiescat. Cf. *Vita S. Juliani Monachi* (*Acta sanctorum Junii*, vol. 2), ed. by NICHOLAS RAY, 1698, p. 176.

the Dead. The connection to liturgical practices suggests that the initial of psalm 105 was already pasted into the unrubricated and unpainted manuscript during the production of the book. Holding the divine service at its destined location demanded specific content, while all the other initials could be copied from the unspecific template and painted directly onto parchment. Similarly, the scriptorium seems to have amended a pre-existing concept with the inclusion of the Alexius quire.⁷² The Alexius quire ends with the initial of the first psalm. The replacement of the subsequent first bifolium of the psalms on the hands of a new scribe⁷³ presumably happened during the editing process at the final compilation of the separate parts.

It can therefore be said that there is generally no definite reason to draw an a priori connection between every female figure depicted, and Christina. Whereas the presence of Mary Magdalene in the Christ cycle (p. 51) on the other hand is already sufficiently motivated as a story from the Bible.⁷⁴ On the other hand, the women beside a larger depicted monk, praying to the Holy Trinity (p. 403), are generally associated with the fellowship of Markyate, since their church had the

⁷² A similar approach in the assemblage of image and text quires can be seen in the Pericopes of Wolfenbüttel from the Reichenau school. PATRICIA ENGEL, BERNHARD GALLISTL, *Die Reichenauer Handschriften der Dombibliothek Hildesheim und der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel im Vergleich*, in: *Wolfenbütteler Beiträge* 15 (2009) p. 129–178.

⁷³ „It is reported for the first time that the outer bifolium of the first quire of the Psalms text is by a different scribe than the rest of the Psalms text. The likely reason is that the original opening of Psalm 1 was not elaborate enough, and so it was redone to produce the opening that we have today. The bifolium is written in a style of script that has been believed to have developed at St Albans c. 1140, and it is decorated by the same artists as the rest of the Psalms. The implication is that the Psalms section of the Psalter was still being produced c. 1140, a decade or more later than many scholars had previously thought. This also means that the pasted-in initial to Psalm 105, previously dated to c. 1135 or later, could be contemporary with the manuscript, rather than a subsequent addition.“ PETER KIDD, *A reassessment of the scribes of the St Alban's Psalter: art historical and other implications* (paper presented at the London Medieval Manuscripts Seminar, in the Palaeography, Room, Senate House, November 5, 1997, <http://www.manuscripts.org.uk/albani/Albanipaper1997.htm> (10.03.2014).

⁷⁴ CARRASCO, *Imagery* (like note 5) p. 67–80; cf. TODD, *Christina* (like note 10) p. 21. The image of Mary Magdalene proclaiming Christ's resurrection to the apostles was widely popular at the time, due to the text on the worship of St. Mary Magdalene by abbot Odo of Cluny. Mary Magdalene is the female allegory for the faithful soul. Odo Cluniacensis. *Sermo in veneratione S. Mariae Magdalenaee*, in: JACQUES P. MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina* 133, 1881, col. 713–721.

patrocinium of the Trinity.⁷⁵ The Trinitarian orientation of the texts, which the picture interlinks, certainly suffices as explanation. In the preceding Athanasian confession (p. 399–403), faith is rooted in the worship of the Holy Trinity.⁷⁶ Likewise, the nuns in the picture are presenting books with a call to the Holy Trinity.⁷⁷ This is the preface to the following Litany of the Saints. The depiction of the Trinity here already results out of the sequence of the liturgy of the hours.⁷⁸ Regarding the female prayers, there is no need to necessarily individualize, but when pressed to do so, then there were also nuns in the abbey itself.⁷⁹

„What monks did everywhere – prayer for the dead and feeding of the poor – for the preservation of their memory and of their souls – was done in Cluny more intensively on a broader scale.“⁸⁰ Likewise, a thematic irregularity in the New Testament picture cycle at the beginning of the psalter manuscript can be explained with the help of this liturgical backdrop. In these over 40 pages, the life, passion, and resurrection of Christ are depicted. However, the biblical chronology is

⁷⁵ „Clearly this episode (Talbot 1987, 156–7) had an enormous spiritual impact on both Geoffrey and Christina, for it was used to illustrate the initial to the litany p. 403. Geoffrey is the largest and most active figure in this initial, almost overshadowing in his bustling brightness the key motionless figures of Christina and the Trinity.“ GEDDES, Alexis Quire (like note 65) <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/essays/initials.shtml#christina>; cf. COLLINS, Pictures (like note 5) p. 51.

⁷⁶ *Quicumque vult salvus esse, ante omnia opus est, ut teneat catholicam fidem: Quam nisi quisque integram inviolatamque servaverit, absque dubio in aeternum peribit. Fides autem catholica haec est: ut unum Deum in Trinitate, et Trinitatem in unitate veneremur ...*

⁷⁷ On the left hand book: *pater de celis deus. Miserere nobis fili redemptor mundi deus miserere nobis.* On the right hand book: *Spiritus sancte deus. miserere nobis Sancta trinitas unus deus miserere nobis.* <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/translation/trans403.shtml> (10.03.2014).

⁷⁸ Cf. AMBROS ODERMATT, *Ein Rituale in beneventanischer Schrift: Roma, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, Cod. C 32, Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts (Spicilegium Friburgense 26) 1980, p. 285.*

⁷⁹ Walsingham, *Gesta 1* (like note 15) p. 59. „When Christina visited St. Albans, then, in abbot Richard’s time, she would have seen both monks and nuns in the Church and, being impressed by what she saw, she expressed a wish to join them one day, a wish that would not have seemed unreasonable except.“ TODD, *Christina* (like note 10) p. 40; cf. GISELA MUSCHIOL, *Famula Dei. Zur Liturgie in merowingischen Frauenklöster (Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinertums 41) 1994, p. 178–191.*

⁸⁰ JOACHIM WOLLASCH, *Monasticism: the first wave of reform*, in: *The New Cambridge Medieval History 3, c. 900–c. 1024*, ed. by TIMOTHY REUTER, ROSAMOND MCKITTERICK, 2000, p. 163–185, here p. 183.

interrupted after the illustration of the apostle Thomas, who, touching Christ's wound, recognizes the Resurrected (Fig. 6).⁸¹ The facing page shows two scenes from the legend of St. Martin of Tours: the saint gives half his cloak to a naked beggar and subsequently beholds Jesus Christ in a dream, wearing the half-cloak that he had given away (Fig. 7).⁸² The following pages conclude the Christ events with the Ascent into Heaven and Pentecost. Why did the illuminator insert this saint from the 4th century?⁸³ Let's have a look at the apocryphal tradition in which Thomas went from biblical figure to saint. The gospel does not only let Thomas experience the divinity of the resurrected Christ physically but also spiritually („My Lord and my God“). The touch had been absorbed in a vision of the invisible.⁸⁴ In legend, Christ appeared to his apostle a second time in a dream and told him to travel to India in order to be the architect of the king's new palace. The latter provided Thomas with the means for the

⁸¹ „The St Albans representation of this scene is not a straight illustration of the Gospel text, but a condensation of two episodes into one, namely a fusion of the first appearance of the Lord to the Apostles when He showed them His wounds, Thomas being absent, and the scene eight days later, when he invited Thomas to test the wound of His side. This Thomas scene follows directly after the Magdalen scene, just as it does in the Peregrinus play. In the gospel of Luke 24:13–31, the scenes of Christ's appearance on the road to Emmaus precede the showing of wounds. In the St Albans Psalter the Emmaus episode is transferred to the end of the Alexis quire.“ PÄCHT et al., St. Albans (like note 8) p. 481.

⁸² *Vere memor Dominus dictorum suorum, qui ante praedixerat: quamdiu fecistis uni ex minimis istis, mihi fecistis, (Mt 25,40) se in paupere professus est fuisse vestitum ... Vidit Christum ... quo viso vir beatissimus non in gloriam est elatus humanam, sed bonitatem Dei in suo opere cognoscens.* Sulpicius Severus, *De Vita Sancti Martini* c. 2,4, in: JACQUES P. MIGNE, *Patrologia latina* 20, 1845, col. 163; PÄCHT et al., St. Albans (like note 8) p. 50.

⁸³ PÄCHT et al., St. Albans (like note 8) p. 50.

⁸⁴ *Videbat tangebaturque hominem et confitebatur Deum quem non videbat neque tangebatur.* Aurelius Augustinus, *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV. Tract. 24, cap. I.*, ed. by RADBOD WILLEMS (*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 36, VIII) 1954, p. 667; *Nec dubitandum est quod sic nobis orantibus pius Conditor auditum accommodare, et Spiritus sui gratiam nostris quoque cordibus infundere dignabitur, quod nostros quoque beatos faciet oculos, etsi non ut apostolorum, qui commorantem in mundo Dominum, qui docentem et miracula facientem, qui post triumphum mortis resurrexisse atque ad coelos redeuntem videre meruerunt; certe ut eorum de quibus Thomae apostolo dicit: Quia vidisti me, credidisti; beati qui non viderunt et crediderunt (John 28). Cunctis etenim credentibus, sive illis qui incarnationis ejus tempora nascendo praecesserunt, sive his qui eum in carne viderunt, sive nobis qui post ejus ascensionem credimus, communis est illa piissima ejus repromissio qua dicit: Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt (Matthew 5,8).* Beda Venerabilis, *Opera homiletica. Opera rhythmica*, ed. by DAVID HURST (*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 122) 1955: *In ascensione Domini homilia II,15,285*, pp. 280, 283.

construction, which he in turn gave away to the poor. The king was initially furious, until it was revealed to him in a dream that Thomas' offerings had done nothing less but erect him a 'Palace in the Heavens'.⁸⁵ The legend thus establishes the worship of the apostle as a prominent patron of poor relief.⁸⁶

Through the juxtaposition of Thomas and Martin, there arises already in the prefatory cycle of scenes the equation of offerings to the poor and beatific vision as it appears in the gospel (Matthew 25). The connection between charity and Vision of God, as conveyed in the story of St. Martin of Tours is therefore also present in the legend of the apostle Thomas.

The spirit of a „charity towards God“⁸⁷ is palpable in the following Alexius quire, where the Alexius legend⁸⁸ is followed by three full-page drawings (Fig. 8) of the disciples' experience in Emmaus (Luke 24). Here, too, there is a thematic connection between the saint's legend and biblical events. Alexius left his home in order to repair to Edessa with its famous image of Christ (Mandylion) and distributed his belongings among the poor in order to henceforth live on alms himself before the

⁸⁵ BERNHARD PICK (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul, Peter, John, Andrew and Thomas*, 1909, p. 238–249; cf. LOURENS D. VAN DEN BOSCH, *India and The Apostolate of St Thomas*, in: IAN N. BREMMER (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Thomas (Studies on the apocryphal acts of the apostles 6)* 2001, p. 125–148, here p. 128 (<http://theol.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/2001/590/c10.pdf> [10.03.2014]).

⁸⁶ A miracle legend about the apostle Thomas borrows directly from the legend of St Martin. *Miles quidam ... nomine Gerardus ... sanctum Thomam Apostolum tam ardentem diligebat, tam specialiter prae ceteris sanctis honorabat, ut nulli pauperi in illius nomine petenti eleemosynam negaret multa praeterea privata servitia, ut sunt orationes, ieiunia et missarum celebrations illi impendere consuevit. Die quadam ... diabolus ante ostium militis pulsans, sub forma et habitu peregrini, in nomine sancti Thomae hospitium petivit. Quo sub omni festinatione intromisso, cum esset frigus, et ille se algere simularet, Gerardus cappam suam furratam bonam satis, qua se tegeter iens cubitum, transmisit.* Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* 8, c. 59, ed. by JOSEPH STRANGE, 1851, p. 131.

⁸⁷ *Amate ergo et tenete charitatem, fratres charissimi, sine qua nullus unquam Deum videbit.* Augustinus, *Exhortatio ad tenendam vel custodiendam charitatem*, Sermo 269. Augustini Hipponensis Opera Omnia, 1838, col. 3060.

⁸⁸ „The miniature placed in front of the chanson of Alexis in the St. Albans Psalter is unique in that it represents the beginning of the Saint's wanderings and not the end“, PÄCHT et al., *St. Albans* (like note 8) p. 139.

Holy Face.⁸⁹ As with the feeding of the poor,⁹⁰ there is a Eucharistic emphasis on the ideal of the Vision of God“.⁹¹

The disciples at Emmaus, in turn, invited the poor pilgrim to join them for supper, where he eventually revealed himself to them as the resurrected Christ.⁹² In medieval readings, the Emmaus story predominantly served as a model for an act of charity.⁹³ The person in need who is shown hospitality in the end reveals himself as Christ (in the sense of Matthew 25).⁹⁴ „The act of invitation was a major focus for sermons on the story as a moral lesson intended to spur the audience to charity toward strangers. Augustine highlights the benefits of

⁸⁹ „The reply of holy Gregory to Secundinus the hermit when he asked for a reason for pictures” which follows the Alexius legend in the Psalter emphasizes the theme of the Holy vision of God.“ Cf. BERNHARD GALLISTL, Codex and room, in: Men and Books conference, St. Pölten (Austria) 28th April–1st May 2014, ed. by PATRICIA ENGEL, JEDERT VODOPIVEC, 2014, notes 32 and 33 (in print).

⁹⁰ „... an dem heiligen ostertage gibet sente thomas selber mit siner hant den liuten gotis licham.“ Hermann of Fritzlar, Der Heiligen Leben, in: FRANZ PFEIFFER, Deutsche Mystiker des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts 1, 1845 (repr 1962), p. 25; „... das eucharistische Verständnis durch das Berühren von Jesu Herzwunde und dem daraus geflossenen Blut. Denn das eucharistisch verstandene heilige Blut erhob Thomas zum Spender des Sakraments. Deshalb bildet das Verteilen des Brotes an die Gemeinde eine logische Fortsetzung seiner Legende.“ HORST APPUHN, Der Auferstandene und das Heilige Blut zu Wienhausen, in: Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte 1 (1961) p. 75–138, here p. 96.

⁹¹ With reference to the Augustine *crede et manducasti*, in Johannis evangelium 35,12. Cf. JOSEPH A. JUNGMANN, Missarum sollemnia, 5th edition 1962, 1: p. 158–160; 2: p. 257–261; ROBERT DESHMAN, Another Look at the Disappearing Christ: Corporeal and Spiritual in Early Medieval Images, in: ADAM COHEN, ROBERT DESHMAN (ed.), Eye and Mind. Collected Essays in Anglo-Saxon and Early Medieval Art, 2010, p. 242–276, here passim; GERHARD WOLF, Schleier und Spiegel, Traditionen des Christusbildes und die Bildkonzepte der Renaissance, 2002, p. 65–85.

⁹² The meal scene is followed by a second image of the two disciples at the table with the feet of the disappearing Christ. <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/translation/trans071.shtml> (10.03.2014).

⁹³ „The St Albans representation of this scene is not a straight illustration of the Gospel text, but a condensation of two episodes into one, namely a fusion of the first appearance of the Lord to the Apostles when He showed them His wounds, Thomas being absent, and the scene eight days later, when he invited Thomas to test the wound of His side. This Thomas scene follows directly after the Magdalen scene, just as it does in the Peregrinus play. In the gospel of Luke 24:13–31, the scenes of Christ’s appearance on the road to Emmaus precede the showing of wounds. In the St Albans Psalter the Emmaus episode is transferred to the end of the Alexis quire.“ PÄCHT et al, St. Albans (like note 8) p. 481.

⁹⁴ Augustine, Sermo 235/236 *In diebus paschalibus* 6/7, in: JAQUES P. MIGNE, Sancti Aurelii Augustini, Hipponensis Episcopi, Opera omnia, tomus quintus, pars prior (Patrologia Latina 38) 1863, col. 1117–1123. „Augustine cites the text of Matthew 25 as further demonstration that the virtue of the disciples’ hospitality at Emmaus is replicable by his audience when they offer hospitality ,to the least of my people“. Cf. DESHMAN, Another Look (like note 91) p. 263f.

hospitality offered by the disciples in two of his Easter sermons“.⁹⁵ This thought, which was articulated by both Augustine as well as Pope Gregory, was passed on in Easter Monday sermons throughout the Middle Ages.⁹⁶ A possible correlation between the themes of the Emmaus disciples and St. Martin, under the aspect of charity, has already been assumed by Geddes, who looked for the origin of this element in the personal biographies of abbot Geoffrey and Christina of Markyate.⁹⁷ Even before that, Pächt had drawn a similar connection between Alexius and the Emmaus disciples. But he, too, had seen this against the backdrop of Christina’s biography.⁹⁸ But should such a connection indeed exist, then more likely the other way round, in that Christina of Markyate’s biography would be a derivative of the monastery’s spirituality, which was rooted in the abbey’s commemoration of the dead and the feedings of the poor in the *curia sancti Albani*.

Even in the emphasis on the feeding of the poor, a Cluniac tendency comes into effect. „Since the beginning of the 11th century, it has been attested by Cluniacs that they performed not only liturgical, but also

⁹⁵ MAJORIE HALL, Narrative strategies in the medieval images of the journey to Emmaus, in: *Arte Medievale* 2,14 (2000) p. 1–13, here p. 9.

⁹⁶ An example is Gregory the Great’s homily for Easter Monday: „But because they could not be strangers to charity, those with whom the Truth walked called him as a stranger to the inn ... They set the table, offered food, and he whom they did not know in expounding on sacred scripture they did recognize in the breaking of the bread ... Behold the Lord who was not recognized while when he was speaking, and was recognized while at the meal. Therefore, beloved brothers esteem hospitality, love charitable works ... and the Truth himself said ‚I was stranger and you took me in ... Think, brothers, what a virtue hospitality is, accept Christ at your table, in order that you will received by him at the eternal table; offer hospitality to Christ in the form of a stranger‘.“ JACQUES P. MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina* 76, 1845, col. 1182–1183, translated by Majorie Hall.

⁹⁷ „St Martin, a soldier who became a monk and later a bishop, has ostensibly little connection with Christina, but his life provided more of a model for Geoffrey. Like St Martin, he therefore gave these copes to Christ. His own clothes were also given to the poor, through the intervention of Christ: Christina made him special under garments to comfort him on an arduous mission, but when journey was cancelled she was advised in a vision to give them to the poor, ‚because Christ will obtain for him more gracious comfort on his journey‘ (Talbot, 160–3).“ GEDDES, *St Albans Psalter, Understanding the miniatures*. <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/essays/miniatures.shtml> (03.04.2014).

⁹⁸ „As a kind of imitatio Christi Peregrini the peregrination of Alexius, the homo dei associates itself forcibly with the Emmaus story which is meant as its prefiguration.“ PÄCHT et al, *St. Albans* (like note 8) p. 78.

charitable services for their deceased confreres.⁹⁹ In the monasteries of the reform, the custom of the commemoration of the dead was given outstanding importance. And although the commemoration of the dead had been associated with the feeding of the poor since the Early Christian church,¹⁰⁰ the number and scope of those donations now increased rapidly (which brought Cluny to the brink of economic ruin).

Abbot Geoffrey endowed St. Albans with an extensive donation of the poor.¹⁰¹ On 2 August 1129, St. Alban's relics received a resplendent new shrine. This was the beginning of the double feast celebrating the invention and translation of St. Alban, for which numerous pilgrims gathered afterwards every year. Those who attended mass on both days of the feast, as well as the following week, were granted an indulgence. During the four occasions of mass that every monk priest had to sing for those seeking indulgence, the individual lay monks each read 50 psalms. In order to „augment devotion“, the abbot dined 300 paupers in the *curia Sancti Albani*.¹⁰²

We know about St. Albans that the cloister with its courtyard, the *curia Sancti Albani*, was intended to hold crowds of people gathered on

⁹⁹ „Denn seit dem Anfang des 11. Jahrhunderts ist von den Cluniacensern bezeugt, daß diese ihren verstorbenen Mitbrüdern neben liturgischen auch sozialcaritative Leistungen zuwandten.“ JOACHIM WOLLASCH, *Konventstärke und Armensorge in mittelalterlichen Klöstern. Zeugnisse und Fragen*, in: *Saeculum* 39,2 (1988) p. 184–199, here p. 193.

¹⁰⁰ „Das Mahl ... wurde die Grundlage aller Memoria“. OTTO GERHARD OEXLE, *Memoria in der Gesellschaft und in der Kultur des Mittelalters*, in: JOACHIM HEINZLE (ed.), *Modernes Mittelalter. Neue Bilder einer populären Epoche*, 1999, p. 297–323, here p. 303; cf. *ibidem* 306. The aspects of care of the poor and commemoration of the dead also coincide in the figure of St. Martin of Tours. For more on the significance of St. Martin for the Benedictine commemoration of the dead, see: BERNHARD GALLISTL, *Die Kreuzreliquie Ottos III. und die Patrozinien an St. Michael*, in: ANGELA WEYER, GERHARD LUTZ (ed.), *1000 Jahre St. Michael in Hildesheim. Kirche – Kloster – Stifter* (Schriften des Hornemann Instituts 14) 2012, p. 128–141, here p. 136.

¹⁰¹ During the first mass in the chapel of St. Alexius, there were two candles burning, which came out of the fund of a donation destined for care of the poor, as well as two candles endowed for the giver of alms, as well as the head cook. Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 284. For more on Geoffrey's care of the poor cf. Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 76.

¹⁰² *Praedictus Alexander Episcopus Lincolnensis, omnibus qui ad illam, vel Inventionis, vel Translationis, festivitatem, infra Octavas, venerint, quadraginta dies relaxationis concessit. Et ut libentius et devotius illuc occurrerent, consilio et assensu Abbatis, trecentos pauperes in ipsa festivitate statuit idem Episcopus ut reficerentur in curia Sancti Albani, Et unusquisque sacerdotum quatuor Missas pro poenitentibus cantaret; caeteri vero Psalmos, scilicet, pro unaquaque Missa quinquaginta Psalmos.* Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 92.

juridical or political occasions.¹⁰³ The monks of St. Albans held their Office of the Dead in the Lady Chapel with the Alexius altar, which, due to its position alongside the cloister, was also close to the abbey's graveyard. Both the new shrine for the abbey's patron, as well as the emphasized psalm prayer on a feast of translation, presumably were specific reasons for the commission of the psalter. At least it has been reported that among the liturgical books that abbot Geoffrey of Gorham (1119–1146) presented his monastery's patron with, there was a lavishly decorated psalter".¹⁰⁴

An examination of the respective parts of the St. Albans Psalter has shown that there is little that actually supports the „Christina connection“. The inclusion of the „Chanson de Saint Alexis“, the iconographic particularities and the notes in the calendar, however, all find a counterpart in the abbey's liturgy, especially in the liturgy of the mass held in the chapel of the passageway in the Eastern cloister. Regarding the „Life of Christina of Markyate“, the only and moreover late copy that exists gives us little information about the history of the text.¹⁰⁵ It is definitely no biography in the modern sense. We should therefore for a moment forget about historical fantasies of the likes of Walter Scott or Dan Brown. Then the narrative of abbot Geoffrey's spiritual friendship could very well be determined by the *causa scribendi* to reinforce the jurisdiction of St. Albans Abbey over the priory of Markyate.

¹⁰³ Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 71, 371, 445, cf. p. 371. On 13 July 1381, the male inhabitants of Hertfordshire gathered together *in magna curia abbathie apud Sanctum Albanum* in order to revere king Richard II. Thomas Walsingham, *The St. Albans Chronicle. The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, ed. by JOHN TAYLOR, WENDY R. CHILDS, LESLIE WATKISS, 2003, p. 558. Cf. GALLISTL, *St. Albans Psalter* (like note 37) p. 215–222.

¹⁰⁴ *Psalterium pretiosum, totum ... auro illuminatum*, Walsingham, *Gesta* 1 (like note 15) p. 94.

¹⁰⁵ „The Life of Christina of Markyate exists in only one manuscript copy, the fourteenth-century Cotton Tiberius E I.'... Excerpts copied from her Life are also found in Section I of the *Gesta Abbatum* of Saint Albans Abbey, perhaps added by the anonymous compiler of Section II or by Thomas Walsingham, These extracts would thus be thirteenth or fourteenth century additions to the *Gesta Abbatum*.“ TODD, *Christina* (like note 10) p. 1 note; cf. RACHEL M. KOOPMANS, *The Conclusion of Christina of Markyate's Vita*, in: *Journal of Ecclesiastical history* 51,4 (2000) p. 663–698; JOANNA MARIE ROYLE, *Transitional holiness in the twelfth century: the social and spiritual identity of Domina Christina of Markyate*, 2008, p. 45 (<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/891/> [10.03.2014]).

The spiritual encounter between abbot and prioress establishes the transpersonal connection that usually tied an abbey to its nuns to form a community of prayer.¹⁰⁶ This must have seemed all the more necessary because „in reality Markyate was not dependent on St. Albans“. The priory was under the patronage of the dean and chapter of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, and was not exempt from episcopal jurisdiction.¹⁰⁷ It is therefore altogether very possible that what we are dealing with here is a later piece of fiction from a monastic chronicler.

„The Benedictine nunnery of St. Mary of Sopwell, near St. Albans, is said by Matthew Paris to have owed its foundation to the building by Geoffrey, sixteenth abbot of St. Albans, of a cell and houses for two holy women who had settled near Eywood about 1140 in rough shelters made of branches of trees wattled together (Gesta 1, p. 80–82). His account cannot be altogether correct, for the cell first occupied by the convent was an ankerhold repaired or rebuilt by a recluse named Roger. It would almost seem that in the *Gesta Abbatum* the origins of Markyate and Sopwell have been confused. There Markyate Priory (ibid., p. 98–193) is said to have arisen through the occupation of the hermitage of Roger, a former monk of St. Albans, by a saintly recluse called Christina, for whom abbot Geoffrey built a house. But in reality Markyate was not dependent on St. Albans, as it would have been if founded by the abbot, and as Sopwell was.“¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ „Une attention particulière mérite d’être portée à la prière d’intercession pour les vivants et les morts, qui apparaît comme l’une des spécialités du monachisme féminin des origines. A l’époque pré-carolienne, la prière es moniales passait plus efficace que celle des hommes en raison de la pureté angélique des vierges.“ ANNE-MARIE HELVÉTIUS, L’organisation des monastères féminins à l’époque mérovingienne, in: GERT MELVILLE, ANNE MÜLLER (ed.), *Female ‚vita religiosa‘ between Late Antiquity and the High Middle Ages. Structures, developments and spatial contexts (Vita regularis. Abhandlungen 47)* 2011, p. 151–172, here p. 168. cf. Note 60, 73.

¹⁰⁷ MARION GIBBS, *Early charters of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London*, (Camden third series 58) 1939, p. 119–122, nr. 154–156, 161, 236; cf. PAULETTE L’HERMITE-LELERQ, *De l’ermitage au Monastère, genese d’une Institution. Un exemple anglais de la Première moitié du XIIe siècle*, in: *Histoire et société. Mélanges offerts à Georges Duby 3: Le moine, le clerc et le prince*, 1992, p. 49–59; TODD, *Christina* (like note 10) p. 101, note 98.

¹⁰⁸ WILLIAM PAGE (ed.), *The Victoria history of the county of Hertford 4*, 1914, p. 422. „Still, the house apparently arose in Geoffrey’s time, (note: Henry de Albini’s gift was made for the souls of the Conqueror and his sons, so that it was probably not earlier than 1135, while the wording of the grant ‚to the work of the cell and the nuns‘ suggests that the house had just been established. The gift of Henry’s son

Overall, the book itself appears to be too precious for private use.¹⁰⁹ Instead, everything points to it being intended for choral duty in the abbey church as a „communal book“. As the Bible’s prayer book, the Book of Psalms has its place in any form of church service. While the St Albans Psalter is not a Book of Gospels, it nevertheless narratively renders the Gospel in the prefatory cycle of Christological scenes.¹¹⁰ It insofar ticks all the boxes of a Book of Gospels.¹¹¹

This psalter was suited for both prayers of the hours, as well as divine service. Since vellum was a precious material and only used sparingly, is it likely that the book was used in many different ways.

Robert to Sopwell was witnessed by abbot Geoffrey [DuDugdale, Mon. p. iii, 365, no. iii]) and as very early in its history it became dependent on St. Albans, the abbot was probably concerned in its foundation, with the object no doubt of accommodating the nuns who existed at St. Albans Abbey through the Saxon period down to about this date.“ (ibidem); cf. KOOPMANS, *The Conclusion* (like note 105) p. 684f., 695f.

¹⁰⁹ „A priori one would expect a book as splendid as expensive as the Albani Psalter to have commissioned by a great prelate“, THOMSON, *Geoffrey’s book* (like note 2) p. 58.

¹¹⁰ The fact that two scenes from the Book of Genesis precede the life of Christ in the prefatory cycle of scenes indicates that there was a liturgical connection. The Fall of Man and the Expulsion from Paradise were understood to be the prerequisite for the salvation of men by Christ. Correspondingly, the Book of Genesis was read continually for the liturgy of hours during Lent. „On Septuagesima Sunday the Office focuses on the first chapters of Genesis.“ „Septuagesima is the ninth Sunday before Easter, the third before Lent known ... The lessons of the first Nocturn are taken from Genesis, relating the fall and subsequent misery of man and thus giving a fit preparation for the Lenten season.“ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s. v. Septuagesima. The images of the Fall and the Expulsion from Paradise in the St Albans Psalter are followed by the actual beginning of the Christ cycle with the Annunciation as the moment of the true incarnation of God. The annunciation on the 25 March marks the highest feast during Lent. It is also the Christian spring feast. For this reason, the year of the breviary in a way begins with the Sunday Septuagesima leading up to the feast of Annunciation. Cf. KLAUS SCHREINER, *Marienverehrung, Lesekultur, Schriftlichkeit. Bildungs- und frömmigkeitsgeschichtliche Studien zur Auslegung und Darstellung von „Mariä Verkündigung“*, in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 24 (1990), p. 314–368. The liturgical connection to the Office of Lent could explain why motives from the Old Testament found in the christological prefatory cycles of scenes in other Psalters show almost exclusively scenes from the Book of Genesis, cf. PHILIPPE BÜTTNER, *Bilderzyklen in englischen und französischen Psalterhandschriften des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts: Visuelle Realisationen persönlich gefärbter Heilsgeschichte?*, in: HANS-RUDOLF MEIER, CAROLA JÄGGI, PHILIPPE BÜTTNER (eds.), *Für irdischen Ruhm und himmlischen Lohn. Stifter und Auftraggeber in der mittelalterlichen Kunst*, 1995, p. 131–154, here p. 131.

¹¹¹ „Das Buch der Psalmen wird ... mit Hilfe der Ikonographie zum veritablen Evangelium erhoben.“ THOMAS LENTES, *Text des Kanons und heiliger Text. Der Psalter im Mittelalter*, in: *Der Psalter in Judentum und Christentum*, ed. by ERICH ZENGER, 1988, p. 323–354, here p. 332; cf. FELIX HEINZER, ‚Wondrous Machine‘. Rollen und Funktionen des Psalters in der mittelalterlichen Kultur, in: *Der Albani-Psalter. Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung* (like note 2) p. 15–32, here p. 24.

Its use during the commemoration of the dead by monks and benefactors of the monastery built on top of the tomb of England's first martyr is presumably also the reason why the book has been preserved at all. As insignia of the English Benedictine community and symbol for their continued existence, it was taken into exile on the continent during a time of persecution. It might seem sad to say goodbye to the romantic tale surrounding an abbot, a nun and their love for each other.¹¹² But on the other hand, the history of the English church after the Norman Conquest has gained a new document.

(Translation by Laura Tenschert)

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Fig. 3: RICHARD J. KING, Handbook to the cathedrals of England, Southern division 2, 1876, p. 696f.

Fig. 5: RIC V, Part II, 927 <http://www.beastcoins.com/RomanImperial/V-II/Probus/Tripolis/Probus-RICV-927-lowerwreath-XXI.jpg> (10.03.2014).

<http://www.w3.org/Consortium/Legal/2002/copyright-documents-20021231.html>;
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¹¹² PETER DYCKHOFF, Albani. Das unerhörte Abenteuer. Historischer Roman, 1998.

Pictures



Fig. 1: St. Albans Abbey before dissolution painting in the nave of St. Albans Cathedral. From Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository.

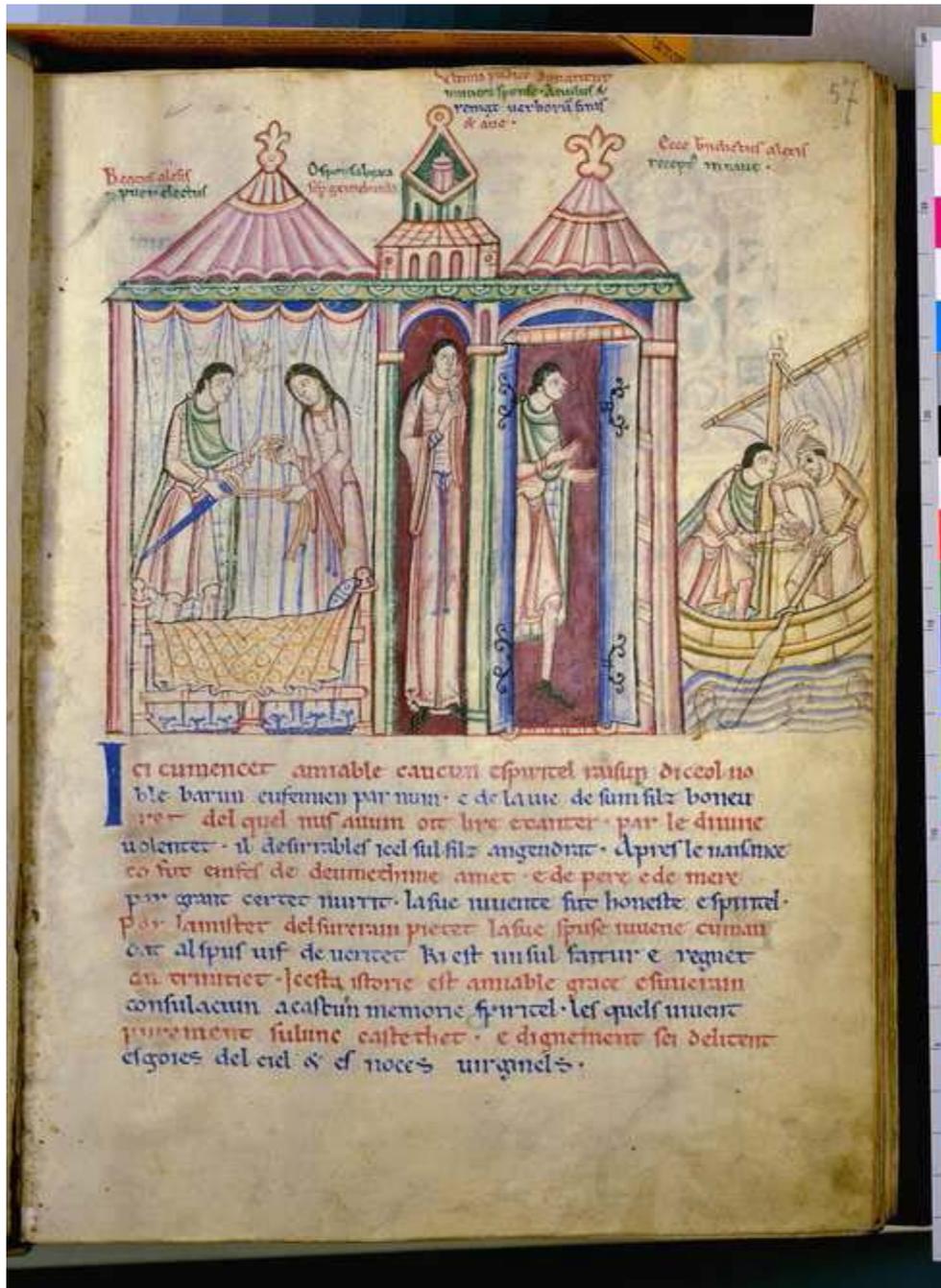


Fig. 2: St. Albans Psalter, p. 57: Life of St. Alexis, prologue.

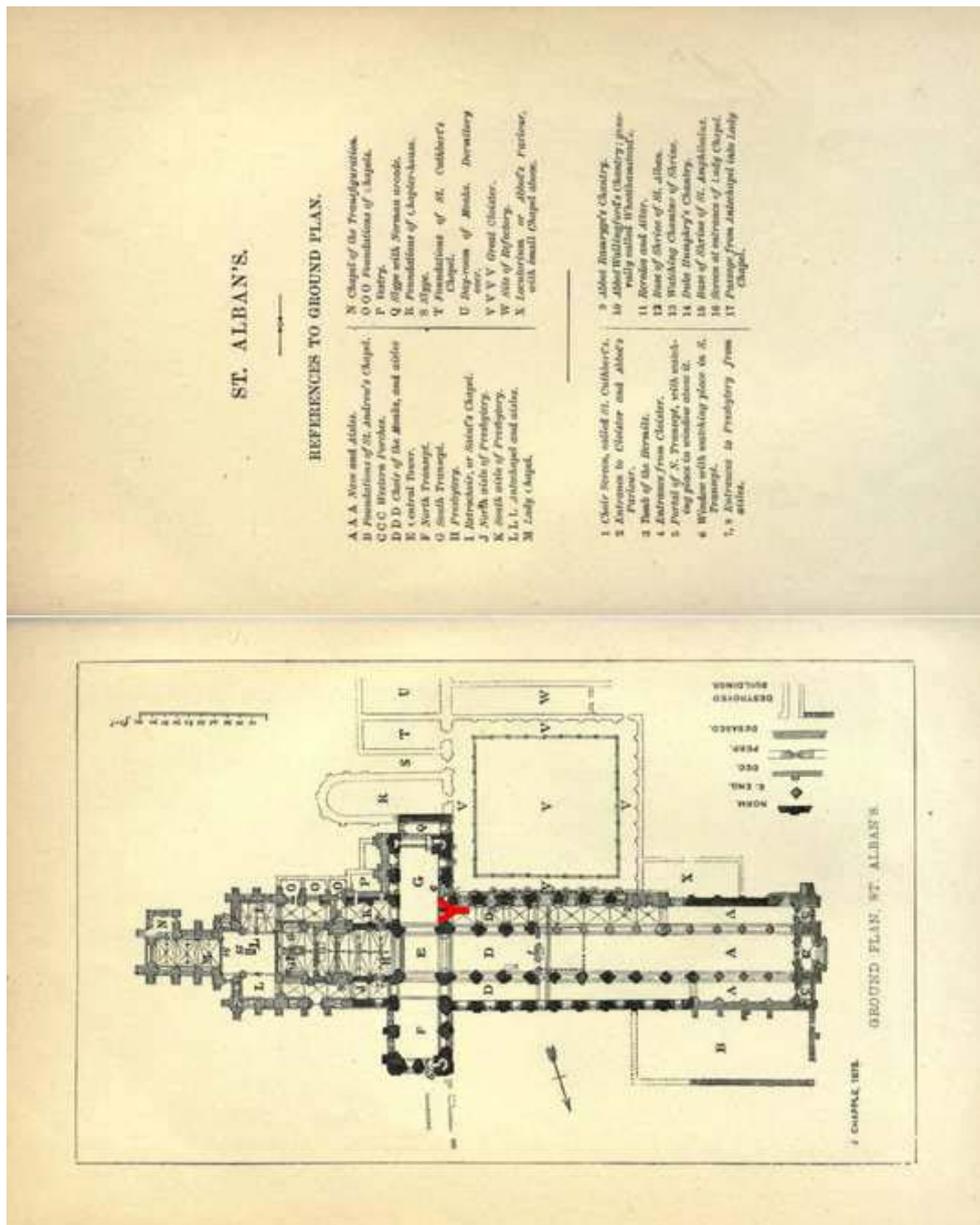


Fig. 3: St. Albans Abbey before dissolution, Ground plan.

Positioning of Alexius altar: Bernhard Gallistl.

Y: *Ecclesia, ubi prius solebat Missa Sanctae Mariae ad notam decantari.* Lady Chapel including the Alexius altar.



Fig. 4: St. Albans Psalter, p. 285: Psalm 105, beginning.



Fig. 5: CLEMENTIA TEMPORUM, Denar of Emperor Probus Antonianus (280 AD).

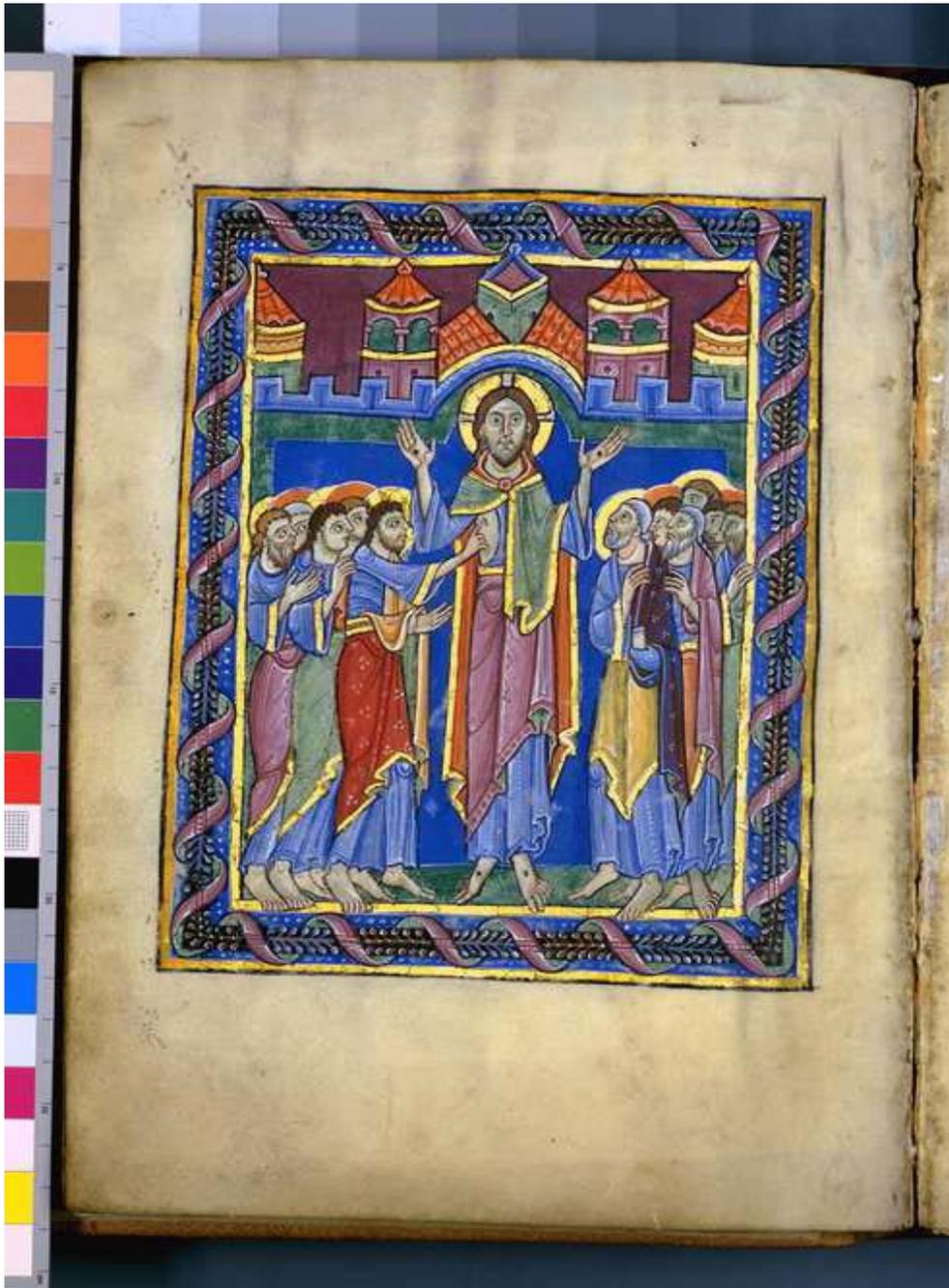


Fig. 6: St. Albans Psalter, p. 52: St. Thomas touching Christ's wound.

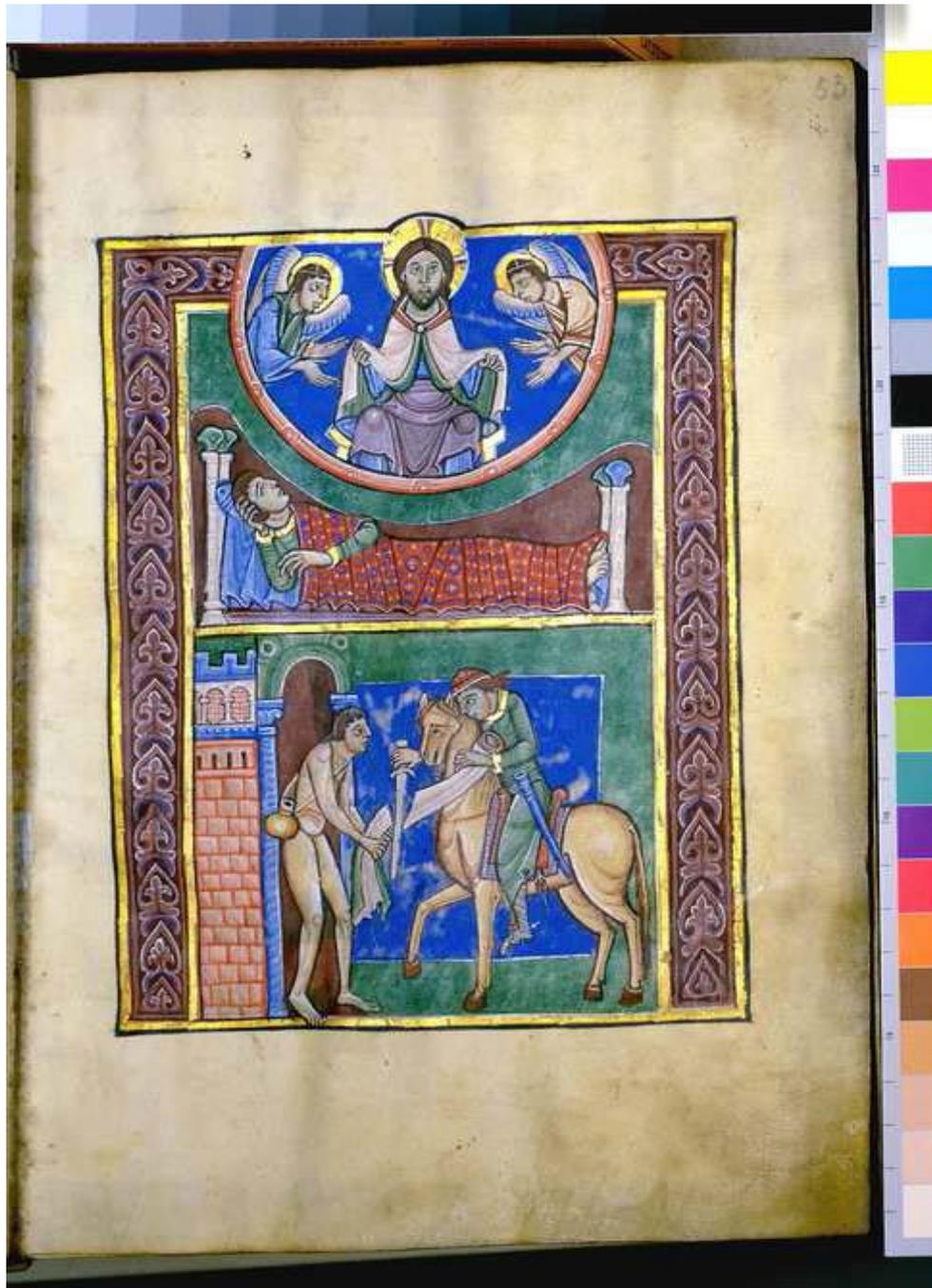


Fig. 7: St. Albans Psalter, p. 53: St. Martin gives half his cloak to a naked beggar and subsequently beholds Jesus Christ in a dream.

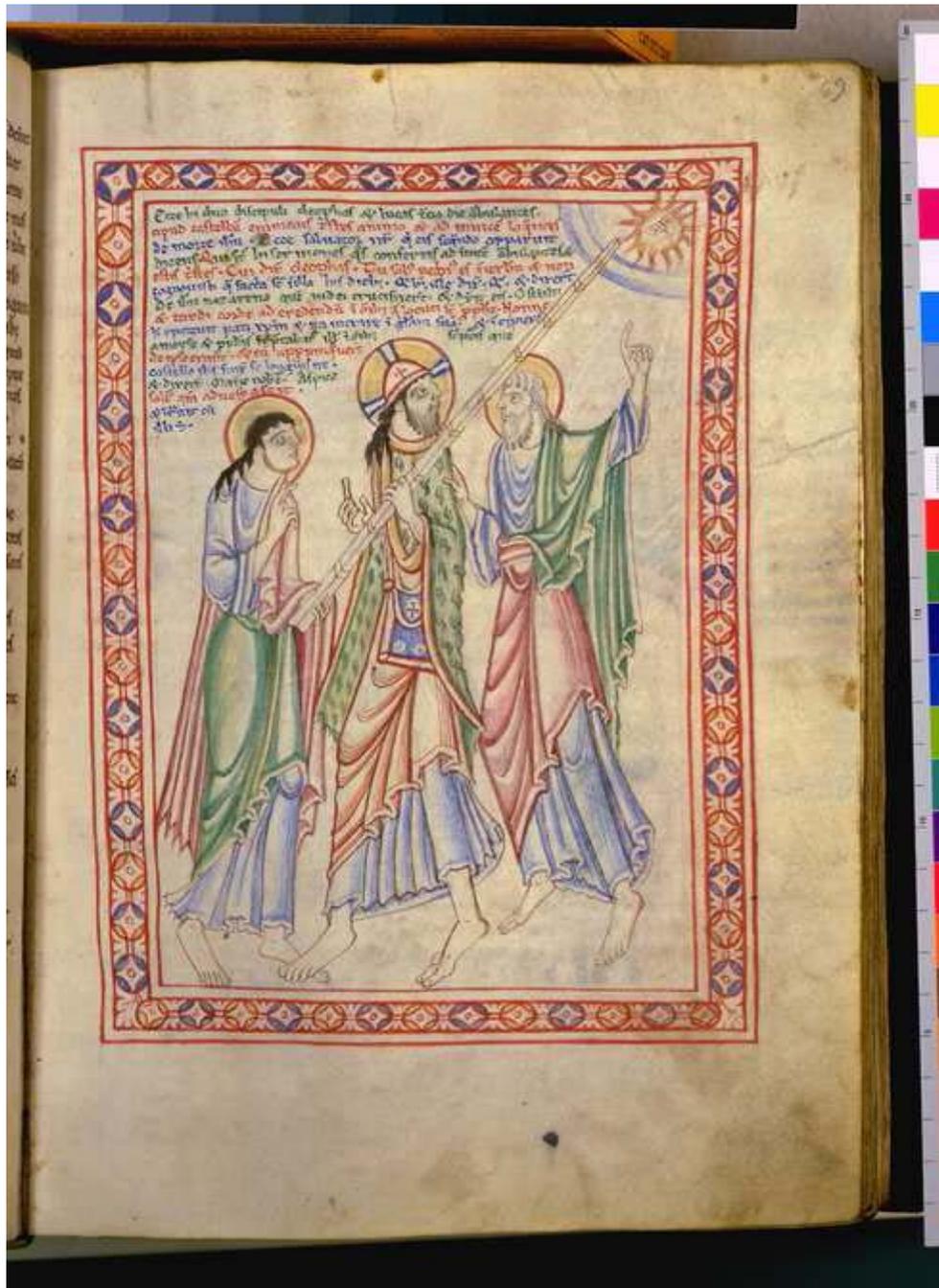


Fig 8: St. Albans Psalter, p. 69: Christ and the disciples on the road to Emmaus.