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Seeing Faith:

Art and the Cult of Sainte Foy c. 800 – c. 1450

Katherine Toussaint-Jackson

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Medieval and Early Modern Studies

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COVID Statement

The completion of this thesis has unfortunately been hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One major impact of the pandemic was that I was unable to conduct a site visit to Westminster Abbey and examine the wall paintings in person. This also prevented me from taking advantage of the Abbey's recently changed rules regarding photography. I had also hoped to visit Horsham St Faith a second time in order to rephotograph some areas and to take more accurate measurements.

It also meant that I was unable to pay another visit to the Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles at the Courtauld Institute in London. This meant I was unable to double check their material on Horsham St Faith, used in my second chapter, and was unable to access their material on Westminster Abbey, the focus of the third chapter, at all. I have endeavoured to fill these gaps to the best of my ability given the material available in the circumstances.

Access to libraries and material within them has obviously been impacted. This is most notable in reference to the Latin editions of the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*. Due to the nature of access to material during to the pandemic, two different editions are referred to – Bouillet's 1897 edition and Robertini's 1994 edition. Where possible the 1994 edition is used.

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“Sainte Foy” and the terminology used in this thesis

The topic of this thesis is one specific saint – Sainte Foy – or, more accurately, the visual depictions of her. Foy is a saint of many names – “Fides” in Latin, “Foi” or “Foy” in French, “Faith” in English, “Fe” in Spanish. This thesis will refer to her as Foy in order to emphasise that, even once present in England, Foy remained, to a certain extent, a French figure.

It has been argued that the cult of Sainte Foy was “Englished” when transplanted to England, in particular the lack of references to France in fifteenth-century manuscripts and the development of the imagery of the bronze bed in preference over the depiction of a grill in her *Passio*.¹ However, it was still an imported cult, rather than a native one, and it is this aspect which this thesis highlights. The name “Faith” will not be used given its multiple meanings – as a given name, a system of belief, a cardinal virtue, a pledge of trust, and more. It also serves to distinguish the fact that Foy was her *name*. However, the naming conventions used in previous scholarship and regarding place names, such as Sainte-Foy in Normandy and Santa Fe, New Mexico in the United States of America, will be kept the same when quoted.

¹ This trend has been identified by previously scholars such as Kathleen Ashley but is beyond the scope of this thesis. Kathleen Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), p. 67.

1. Introduction

And this is the reason that few people are left in this whole region who have a precious ring or brooch or armbands or hairpins, or anything of this kind, because Sainte Foy, either with simple entreaty or with bold threats, wrested away these same things for the work of the frontal. She appeared to each of them in a dream just as if she were a beggar, in the form of a very beautiful not yet adult girl. She demanded no less from the pilgrims who pour in from every direction.

Bernard of Angers, *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*²

This thesis examines the changing nature of the cult of Sainte Foy and the artwork associated with it. The topic of individual female saints has been a fruitful area of research over recent decades to which this thesis is indebted. These works range from focusing on the Virgin Mary, such as Miri Rubin's *Mother of God* and Marina Warner's *Alone of All Her Sex*, to works on Margaret of Antioch, such as Julia Dresvina's *A Maid with a Dragon*, and Katherine of Alexandria, such as Katherine J. Lewis's *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria*.³ Scholarship such as these monographs have successfully shown that the close examination of a specific saintly cult can provide a deeper understanding about a wide variety of aspects of medieval devotional culture. This thesis will add to the existing scholarship by including another saintly figure in the discussion, particularly one who has

² "Cum ergo, ut diximus, curtes magna prediorumque possessiones multas multi concessissent, nihilominus etiam a pagensibus quam a religiosis peregrinis auri vel argenti necnon pretiosorum lapidum innumera dona impensius sunt collate et idcirco animos seniorum ad novam precipui altaris tabulam componendum congesta auri copia excitavit. Verum quia coepti operis pergrandis extitit materialis disposition, consumpto priore auro, maiore etiam auri sive lapidum supplemento opus fuit. Et relictis sunt, a quibus sancta Fides vel facili prece vel instant improbitate hec eadem ad opus tabule, ceu mendicans non extorqueret, apparens singulis per somnium, in pulcherrime necdum adulte puelle specie. Nec minus idem et peregrinis undique confluentibus instans faciebat. Unde tam speciosa tamque spatiosa auro et lapidibus conflata est tabula, ut raro meliorem conspicari forte habentur multa studio meliore facta. Superfuit auri plurimum, quod sacris usibus post hec fuit accomodatum" Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.) (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto medioevo, 1994), p. 118.

³ Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, new edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Juliana Dresvina, *A Maid with a Dragon: The Cult of St Margaret of Antioch in Medieval England* (Oxford, 2016); Katherine J. Lewis, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2000).

such a wealth of surviving material as Sainte Foy. It brings together a variety of visual and literary evidence to demonstrate the variety of ways saintly power could be used across the period of c. 800 to c. 1450.

By looking at three religious communities which nourished devotion to Sainte Foy, this thesis details how different people in different locations used the cult of Sainte Foy, to suit many purposes, and how it was changed and manipulated to reflect those needs. It also considers how these different communities shaped the cult of Sainte Foy and the impact they had on its development, as well as exploring what attracted each of the communities to this specific saint. The individual case studies have been chosen due to their monumental nature. All three can be considered as part of a community engaged in devotion, rather than a single individual's private, personal devotion. In turn, Foy's position at Conques, Horsham St Faith, and Westminster Abbey are examined, focusing on the visual culture of Sainte Foy at each of these locations. These particular case studies benefit from the wealth of surviving primary material associated with them, particularly in the case of Conques. Some, but not all, of this material has been considered before, but by examining them in context and together, we can gain a fuller understanding of the cult of Sainte Foy. By examining these case studies in turn, it is possible to trace the development of the cult of Sainte Foy from its original cult site in France across the Channel to England, as well as how the cult was manipulated by different individuals and institutions who had a vested interest in it.

1.1 Previous Scholarship

These case studies also mean that there is a wealth of secondary literature which can be drawn upon, including archaeological and art historical research, as well as conservation literature. As part of their *Acta Sanctorum*, the Bollandists published a variety of material relating to Sainte Foy in their third volume on October, first published in 1868.⁴ This included a wealth of information on Foy in various martyrologies, as well as the Latin

⁴ *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius quo dies quintus, sextus et septimus continentur* (Paris and Rome: Victorem Palmé, 1868), pp. 263-329.

text of several works associated with her cult, including her passion and translation. The first major modern monograph to focus solely on Sainte Foy was written by Auguste Bouillet and Louis Servières, *Sainte Foy: Vierge et Martyre*, published in 1900.⁵ This extensive antiquarian text by two priests includes information about Conques, the abbey church, Foy's life, and her relics, as well as the material of her miracle texts translated into French. While extensive, the source material used for this work is not always obvious and some editorialising was done regarding the translation of materials into French. As such, wherever possible, more recent, scholarly editions of medieval material in the original language are used throughout this thesis. This work can be seen as part of a nineteenth-century revival of interest in the cult of Sainte Foy at Conques which culminated in the installation of the relics in a new *sacrarium* in 1911.⁶

Luca Robertini's 1994 edition of *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* represented the first time a critical edition of the text used all known manuscript versions of the text.⁷ In *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Pamela Sheingorn has translated the various miracle texts as well as some supplementary material such as the *Passio*, *Translatio* and the Provençal *Cançó de Santa Fe*.⁸ Different editions and translations of the miracle stories have divided them differently and given some different titles based on the manuscripts from which they work. This discrepancy can be seen between Ashley's translation and Robertini's edition. While Robertini includes a miracle found in the Sélestat manuscript entitled "About Men Who Came from Different Regions to Lay Waste to Sainte Foy's Land, and About a Wondrous Vision" in book four, Sheingorn instead follows the Conques manuscript, separating this miracle from the rest of the book.⁹ This serves to create two different ideas of the cult of Sainte Foy – one based in Conques and one based in Sélestat. This division of the cult into

⁵ Auguste Bouillet and L. Servières, *Sainte Foy: vierge & martyre* (Rodez: E. Carrère, 1900).

⁶ *Le trésor de Conques*, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin and Élisabeth Traburet-Delahaye (eds.) (Paris: Monum, 2001), p. 10.

⁷ Robertini (ed.), Luca Robertini (ed.) (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto medioevo, 1994)

⁸ *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Pamela Sheingorn (trans.) (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995)

⁹ "De his qui ex diversis partibus terram sancte Fidis devastare certabant et de mirabilia visione", Anonymous, in Robertini (ed.), pp. 261-2; Pamela Sheingorn (trans.), pp. 224-6.

two separate entities is not always helpful when considering the broader nature of the cult, as the Sélestat and Conques branches of the cult were not completely isolated and did in fact influence each other.

More recent scholarship includes *Writing Faith: Text, Sign and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy* by Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, which examines the miracle stories in greater depth, focusing on the ways that the different authors of the texts shaped the miracle stories and how they reflected their own agenda, through a method they describe as “post-disciplinary.”¹⁰ This work can be seen as a move towards a more academic interest in the cult of Sainte Foy. Their reading of the miracles is that there is a noticeable shift between the first two books, penned by Bernard of Angers, and the latter two, by the anonymous monk continuator(s). They argue that Foy transforms from a trickster-child under Bernard to a celestial virgin-martyr under the anonymous monk, reflecting her move from a local to a universal saint.¹¹ These arguments are examined in further detail in chapter one. Most recently, Kathleen Ashley has looked at the broader cult (or cults) of Sainte Foy in her 2021 monograph *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints*.¹² This work broadens out from the focus of *Writing Faith* to take into consideration other surviving artefacts associated with Sainte Foy, including wall paintings, stained glass and written material at a variety of different cult sites. Ashley’s focus is on the “cultural work” done by different artefacts and texts in different contexts and examines how the “cultural cache of the saint” could be appropriated and transformed.¹³ It is this line of argument that this thesis follows, particularly regarding how the “cultural cache” of Sainte Foy was used in different ways at Conques, Horsham St Faith and Westminster.

Sainte Foy has also been the focus of several graduate theses in the past. This popularity reflects the wealth of material associated with her cult which survives and the

¹⁰ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 2.

¹¹ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 85.

¹² Kathleen Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).

¹³ Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints*, p. 2.

value in examining these materials using a variety of different approaches and methodologies. These works include Rosemary Van Lare's *The Cult of St Foy at Conques* which examined the parallels between the depiction of Sainte Foy and the Virgin Mary, and claimed that it was this association which led to the popularity of Foy.¹⁴ Elsewhere, Marianne Sinram's *Faith and Bondage* looked at the use of chains within imagery associated with Sainte Foy, both as a means to be released from sin and from physical capture, and how this imagery was particularly potent for those fighting in the *Reconquista*.¹⁵ Conques and Sainte Foy also formed one of two case studies in Faye Taylor's Ph.D. thesis *Miracula, Saints' Cults and Socio-Political Landscapes*.¹⁶ This comparative work focuses on political and economic issues, in particular how these sources can further our understanding of feudal transformation and monastic reform. These works have shown how valuable the material associated with Sainte Foy's cult can be when examining a variety of aspects of medieval culture, particularly within the eleventh century. However, most of these works focus solely on the cult of Sainte Foy within France, with little research centring her cult in England, or the later medieval period. This thesis aims to fill that gap and take into consideration the spread of the cult to England and how it developed there within a different social and cultural context.

The reliquary statue of Sainte Foy has also been the focus of significant scholarship because of its remarkable survival as an early example of a piece of statuary of a full figure depicted in the round. It is the subject of a lengthy article about its restoration in 1954-5 by Jean Taralon, which remains the foundational text for understanding the construction of the statue. The reliquary also features heavily in works like Beate Fricke's *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints* which traces the development of three-dimensional sculpture in medieval art, and the

¹⁴ Rosemary Van Lare, 'The cult of St. Foy at Conques' (MA thesis, San Jose State University, 1997)

¹⁵ Marianne Sinram, 'Faith and Bondage: The Spiritual and Political Meaning of Chains at Sainte-Foy de Conques' (MA thesis, University of Arizona, 1993).

¹⁶ Faye Taylor, 'Miracula, Saints' Cults and Socio-Political Landscapes: Bobbio, Conques and Post-Carolingian Society' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nottingham, 2012).

role the statue reliquary played within it.¹⁷ The reliquary's role in this development, and issues of idolatry, turns up repeatedly regarding Sainte Foy, and more broadly religious art within the medieval period of Christian Europe. This is a result of the Commandment which states "thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them."¹⁸ This created an uneasy balance between what constituted idolatry, and what was considered an acceptable "reminder" of a saint, which both the Church as an institution and individuals had to navigate. It is against the background of this discussion about the validity of images that not only the reliquary, but also other depictions of Sainte Foy are considered.

More broadly, this thesis draws on the extensive scholarship surrounding virgin martyrs and gender. A great deal of this work has been focused within the literary realm, but can, and should, also be applied to works of art. By including visual media, this close attention provides another perspective to conversations surrounding virgin martyrs and gender, as well as the broader discussion about female saints' lives.¹⁹ During this period, "women saints [...] were doubly transgressors – first by their nature as saints and, second, by their nature as women."²⁰ As such, Sainte Foy will be considered in this context as a transgressive and powerful figure.

¹⁷ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', and Beate Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints: Sainte Foy of Conques and the Revival of Monumental Sculpture in Medieval Art*, Andrew Griebeler (trans.) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

¹⁸ "Non facies tibi sculptile, neque omnem similitudinem quae est in caelo desuper, et quae in terra deorsum, nec eorum quae sunt in aquis sub terra. Non adorabis ea, neque coles" Exodus 20. 4-5.

¹⁹ This scholarship includes works such as Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500-1100* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Samantha J.E. Riches, and Sarah Salih (eds.), *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 2011); Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (London: Cornell University Press, 1997); Jane Cartwright, 'Dead Virgins: Feminine Sanctity in Medieval Wales', *Medium Ævum* 71.1 (2002), pp. 1-28; Virginia Blanton-Whetsell, 'St Æthelthryth's Cult: Literary, Historical, and Pictorial Constructions of Gendered Sanctity' (Ph.D. thesis, University of New York at Binghamton, 1998); Jo Ann McNamara, 'Sexual Equality and the Cult of Virginity in Early Christian Thought', *Feminist studies* 3.3/4 (Spring-Summer 1976), pp. 145-158.

²⁰ Elizabeth Alvida Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 161.

The existing literature treats Sainte Foy and her cult in France and England as largely separate entities. However, this was not the case, particularly during the Anglo-Norman period. This work will fill that gap by considering the cult in the two regions together, thereby attempting to analyse the ways different groups in different locations used the figure of Sainte Foy. There was dialogue and exchange across the Anglo-Norman realm and the cult of Sainte Foy reflects that. This thesis will consider these different elements of Sainte Foy's cult together rather than in isolation. While the focus of this thesis will be visual art, it will also attempt to take into consideration other extant textual material, including Foy's *Passio*, *Translatio*, miracles, and calendar entries. By doing so, this thesis will provide a more complete overview of the cult of Sainte Foy, even while focusing on specific artefacts associated with her cult.

Before considering the visual depictions of Sainte Foy, who exactly was this saint? There is certainly a wealth of surviving evidence for her cult – from the aforementioned reliquary statue, to the four books of miracles, to the depiction of Foy on the tympanum at the abbey church of Conques. However, all of this cult material had to be constructed at Conques as Foy's cult did not originate there, but rather in Agen.

1.2 The *Passio* of Foy at Agen

Before addressing each of the case studies which form the bulk of this thesis, it is important to understand the origins, development, and perception of Sainte Foy, the virgin martyr of Agen. The first known reference to Sainte Foy is in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, a list of martyrs in calendar order which dates from the late sixth century. The earliest extant manuscripts of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* which contain reference to Sainte Foy are Bern MS 289 and Wissenberg 81, both from the eighth century.²¹ The two entries are the same, apart from the spelling of Sainte Foy's name: the

²¹ *Acta Sanctorum Novembris Tomi Secundi Pars Prior* (Brussels: Society of Bollandists, 1894), p. 129.

Bern manuscript reads “Fedis” whereas the Wissenberg manuscript reads “Fidis.”²² These two entries state where Foy was from, “in Gallia civitate Agenno natele” and list her as “martyris.”²³ Interestingly, the Bern and Wissenberg manuscripts do not distinguish Foy as a virgin, only a martyr. However, other early martyrologies do distinguish her as a virgin – for example, Wandelbert’s (c. 813-c. 850) martyrology states “Virgo Fides pridie hinc felici morte triumphat,” while Ado’s (c. 800-875) reads “In Galliis, civitate Agenno natalis sanctae Fidis virginis et martyris, cuius exemplo beatus Caprasius ad agonem martyria animates est.”²⁴ While this may potentially be indicative of a change in how Sainte Foy was perceived between the eighth and ninth centuries, suggesting that virgin and martyr were no longer synonymous, it could also be a matter of authorial choice.

The earliest full account of Foy’s passion is extant in two tenth-century manuscripts, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Lat. 5301 (fol. 238^r–fol. 329^v) and Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Médecine de Montpellier H 152 (fol. 231^v–fol. 237^r).²⁵ This text relates that she was a young girl who was born of noble parents in Agen.²⁶ It relates how a prefect named Dacian arrived in the city, summoned Foy and interrogated her about her religion.²⁷ Unusually for a virgin martyr legend, he does not threaten her with marriage or rape, instead suggesting Foy devote herself to a pagan deity, Diana – an appropriate deity for a professed

²² *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, p. 129.

²³ *Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, p. 129.

²⁴ *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius quo dies quintus, sextus et septimus continentur* (Paris and Rome: Victorem Palmé, 1868), p. 267.

²⁵ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Lat. 5301 is a collection of decorated saints’ lives which was copied at Saint-Martial in Limoges c.990-1020. See Mathew Kuefler, ‘Dating and Authorship of the Writings about Saint Gerald of Aurillac’, *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 44.1 (2013), p. 73. Bibliothèque de l’École de médecine de Montpellier H 152 is a tenth-century manuscript containing sermons, passions, the rule of Saint Benedict and an extensive gloss, compiled at Troyes. See Gérard Cames, ‘Un trésor manuscrit carolingien à la bibliothèque de la Faculté de Médecine de Montpellier’, *Études Héraultaises* 35 (2004-2005), pp. 19-20.

²⁶ ‘Ex clarissimis orta parentibus’ Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*, p. 285. Anonymous, ‘Passio’, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Pamela Sheingorn (trans.) (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 33-38.

²⁷ On the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire in the third and fourth centuries, see G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, ‘Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?’, *Past and Present*, 26 (Nov. 1963), pp. 6-38 and Simon Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government, AD 284-324* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000)

virgin given her position as goddess of chastity.²⁸ At her refusal, Dacian had a grill, a *craticulam*, brought forth, upon which Foy was stretched across and a fire lit beneath.²⁹ At this point, the *Passio* shifts from Foy to focus on Caprais, another Christian, who acts as a witness to Foy's martyrdom. He is then tortured as well, before both of their heads were cut off. This text was revised at Conques multiple times, including an eleventh-century leonine verse version, and later versions survive elsewhere such as part of a larger manuscript written in a Germanic hand in Bibliothèque Humaniste MS lat. 22 from Sélestat which dates from the end of the eleventh century.³⁰ Given that many martyrs are beheaded, it is her particular torment, the subjection to the grill, which is unique and became her identifying emblem.

According to Luca Robertini, this *Passio* is derived from the writings of a different saint with this same name.³¹ This Fides along with her sisters Spes and Karitas (Hope and Charity) went to Rome with their mother Sophia (Wisdom) in search of martyrdom.³² There

²⁸ "Hanc Dacianus blanditiis primum, postea minis a veri Dei cultu tentavit abducere Dianam proponens cui sacra faceret." *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*, p. 285. Another example of a saint being offered the opportunity to devote themselves to a pagan god can be seen in the martyrdom of Agnes, who was told she should sacrifice to the virgin goddess Vesta "since your virginity means so much to you." See Robert Mills, 'Can the Virgin Martyr Speak?', in Ruth Evans, Sarah Salih and Anke Bernau (eds.), *Medieval Virginites* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 187-213. On the topic of the threat of rape in virgin martyr legends, see Brigitte Cazelles, *The Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania, 1991). On Diana, see Deborah Lesko Baker, 'The Goddess Re-described: Louise Labé's "Diana" and its Intertexts', *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 8 (2013), 149-180.

²⁹ "Itaque candentem craticulam sanctissima Virgo ultro conscendens divaricatis membris per quatuor partes exteuditur lorisque ferreis coarctata per flammeam cratem provolvitur cui impii ministri ferreis bacillis ardentes prumas subjiciunt adipe flammis injecto ad latera torrida incendia subvolare cogunt" *Craticulam* can be translated variously as grill, gridiron, griddle or grating. *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*, p. 288.

³⁰ Luca Robertini (ed.), *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto medioevo, 1994), p. 5. Alternatively, Sébastien Fray contends that the manuscript was not made in Sélestat, but rather a different Germanic institution, on the basis that annotations to the two manuscripts were done in the same hand. As such, he argues that the manuscript was written at a Germanic institution before spending time at Conques and finally ending up at Sélestat at some point after the end of the twelfth century. See Sébastien Fray, 'L'aristocratie laïque au miroir des récits hagiographiques des pays d'Olt et de Dordogne (Xe-XIe siècles)' (Ph.D. diss, Université Paris-Sorbonne – Paris IV, 2011), pp. 366-371.

³¹ Robertini states that this legend was born in the Eastern tradition in the seventh century, and entered Italy in either the second half of the seventh century or the first half of the eighth. Luca Robertini, 'Il "Sapientia" di Rosvita e le fonti agiografiche', *Studi Medievali* 30 (1989), pp. 649-659.

³² Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 4.

Fides was beaten, had her breasts cut off, and was then burned on a grill.³³ There are clear parallels between the stories of the two figures, namely the use of a grill as a form of torture, as well as the young age of Fides.³⁴ This, combined with the lack of any early evidence for Foy of Agen's *Passio*, suggests that Foy's hagiography developed in the Carolingian period, potentially in response to developments regarding the legitimacy of saints' cults.³⁵

1.3 *Furta Sacra* and the reinvention of Foy at Conques

While Foy may have lived and died in Agen, her cult has – since the ninth century – centred around Conques in the Aveyron *département* of southern France. The monastery claimed that the area had originally been settled by Christians in 371 and that the monastery itself was founded by a religious man called Dado and had been patronised by Charlemagne.³⁶ Conques acquired the relics of Sainte Foy through a famous, and well documented, case of *furta sacra*, or holy theft.³⁷ As noted by Julia M. H. Smith when discussing the dispersal of saintly relics from Rome in the eighth and ninth centuries, this act of translation could work to transform sacred authority.³⁸ Relics such as these were defined

³³ The word for grill used in the passion of this Fides is “graticulam.” However, not all versions of the legend have Fides tortured in this fashion, some state she was instead thrown into boiling liquid. See Adele Simonetti, ‘Le fonti agiografiche di due drammi di Rosvita – Appendix’, *Studi Medievali* 30 (1989), 681-688, p. 674 and p. 684.

³⁴ Sapientia's daughters are stated to be twelve, ten, and nine. See Adele Simonetta, ‘Le fonti agiografiche di due drammi di Rosvita’, *Studi Medievali* 30 (1989), p. 671.

³⁵ For example, the *Admonitio generalis* issued by Charlemagne in 789. See Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, pp. 4-5.

³⁶ However, the date of the composition of this manuscript is unclear. Amy G. Remensnyder argues that it dates to “the decades around 1100” and suggests that it may have been reworked at some point towards the end of the twelfth century. As noted by Remensnyder, the only known manuscript is a seventeenth-century copy, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 5456. Remensnyder, Amy G., ‘Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory’, *Speculum* 71.4 (October 1996), p. 891. For the prologue of the *Chronique du Monastère de Conques* see Marc Antoine F. Baron de Gaujal (ed.), *Études historiques sur le Rouergue* (Paris: P. Dupont, 1858-9), vol. 4., pp. 391-4. For the rest of the *Chronique*, see *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum* vol. 3, Edmund Martène and Ursin Durand (eds.) (Paris, 1717), pp. 1387-1388.

³⁷ See for example Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics In the Central Middle Ages*, rev. edn., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the medieval mind: theory, record, and event 1000-1215* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), p. 37, Cynthia Hahn, ‘What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?’, *Numen* 57.3/4 (2010), pp. 284-316; Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* 2nd edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 88-94.

³⁸ Julia M. H. Smith, ‘Old Saints, New Cults: Roman Relics in Carolingian Francia’, in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, Julia M. H. Smith (ed.) (Leiden, Brill, 2000), p. 324.

not by “material worth”, but rather as “the result of complex social, cultural, and religious interactions.”³⁹ As such, texts about this kind of *furta sacra* thereby needed to validate and authorise the translation of relics. Patrick Geary has examined the case of *furta sacra* at Conques in depth, including how such theft separates the relic object from the context which gave it meaning, resulting in the need for its symbolism to be reconstructed in its new cultural and social context.⁴⁰ The act of *furta sacra*, along with the written account of the event, radically transformed the sacred authority of the monks at Conques.

An account of the transfer of Foy’s relics from Agen to Conques survives in an eleventh-century text and there are extant prose and poem versions.⁴¹ The *Translatio* relates how a monk of Conques named Arinisdus infiltrated the monastic community at Agen until one day when he was left alone to guard the church. He seized this opportunity, opened the stone tomb which was sealed with metal bars and took Foy’s body.⁴² Through miraculous intervention, Arinisdus was able to take the relics back to Conques, where they became “immobile like a mountain”.⁴³ The relics were then installed in a golden reliquary and this act of installation is significant. The reliquary, to use the language of Cynthia Hahn, was an “enclosure and *representation*” of the relic within.⁴⁴ It shows “the relic as powerful, holy and sacred, part of the larger institution of the Church” while also making visible “its power and association” and obscuring the relic contained from view.⁴⁵ The reliquary acted “as an object of continuing power” and allowed “mediation between relics and audiences.”⁴⁶ And it was

³⁹ Holger A. Klein, ‘Eastern Objects and Western Desires: Relics and Reliquaries Between Byzantium and the West’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 58 (2004), p. 283.

⁴⁰ Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 7-8.

⁴¹ Sheingorn, ‘Introduction’, *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 26.

⁴² “Sed quia lapis coopertorins prae sigillis ferreis, quibus ad subteriore firmiter se tenuit, immobilis mansit, et parte pedum collisus est, timuloque partim aperto sacratissimum corpus diligen tissime collegit”, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*, p. 296.

⁴³ “Ut ad montis eujusdam modum immobile persisteret”, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*, p. 298.

⁴⁴ Cynthia Hahn, ‘What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?’, *Numen* 57.3/4 (2010), p. 286.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 289-290.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

through this reliquary, at this place, Conques, which Foy had seemingly chosen through her relics, that she worked her miracles.

These miracles were then recorded in the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*. This eleventh-century work consists of four books – the first two written by Bernard of Angers (d. 1020s), and the latter two by an anonymous monk (or monks) at Conques. Bernard, a monk at Chartres, relates in a prefatory letter to Fulbert, bishop of Chartres (d. 1028), that he had heard of Foy’s miracles but initially rejected them as “so much worthless fiction.”⁴⁷ However, due to how these miracles spread across Europe, he later vowed to go to Conques himself and “inquire diligently about Sainte Foy’s miracles.”⁴⁸ Bernard completed two books of miracles but was unable to continue due to his death, after which an anonymous continuator(s) added a further two books.⁴⁹ These miracle texts can provide a wealth of insight not just into the cult of Sainte Foy, but more broadly into medieval religion, culture, and society. They have been used to study everything from the fortresses of the region, social groups in the Rouergue, to the role of marriage.⁵⁰ As such, they form a central part of understanding the cult of Foy, her identity, and her legacy in visual culture.

⁴⁷ “Quam inanis fabule”, Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.) (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto medioevo, 1994), p. 73; and Bernard of Angers, ‘Letter to Bishop Fulbert’, in Pamela Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 39.

⁴⁸ “Solicite coepi inquirere”, Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 74 and Bernard of Angers, ‘Letter to Bishop Fulbert’, in Pamela Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 40.

⁴⁹ “Post discessum Barnardi”, Anonymous in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 181. and Anonymous, ‘Liber miraculorum sancte Fidis’, in Pamela Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 142. For discussion on the anonymous continuator(s), and how many there were, see *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), pp. 65-68; Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: Text, Sign and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 83-85; Sébastien Fray, ‘L’aristocratie laïque au miroir des récits hagiographiques des pays d’Olt et de Dordogne (Xe-XIe siècles)’ (Ph.D. diss., Université Paris-Sorbonne – Paris IV, 2011), pp. 380-384.

⁵⁰ Pierre Bonnassie, *Bonnassie, Pierre, From Slavery to Feudalism in South-Western Europe*, Jean Birrell (trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Christiane Caitucoli, ‘Nobles et chevaliers dans le Livre des miracles de Sainte Foy’, *Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale* 107.112 (1995).; and Elizabeth Van Houts, ‘The Portrayal of Marriage in Miracula in France, c. 1000-1200’, *Gender & History* 29.3 (2017).

1.4 Methodology

This thesis will make use of a variety of different interdisciplinary methodologies in order to assess Sainte Foy, her cult, and her artwork. Key to this exploration will be an art historical approach, shaped by the approaches of those such as Hans Belting, Michael Camille, and David Freedberg.⁵¹ As such, this thesis will make extensive use of visual analysis and close looking – each piece of artwork considered will be examined and evaluated in detail. Comparative analysis will then be used to place each artwork in its artistic context. It will also engage with ideas of *spolia*, *varietas* and *bricolage* through the works of Dale Kinney, Mary Carruthers and others.⁵² These ideas will help shed further light on the construction of the cult of Sainte Foy from various disparate elements. In doing so, this thesis will attempt to engage with the entirety of the artworks and situate them in artistic, historical, social and cultural contexts.

A key premise of the intellectual approach of this thesis is that images have power and the cases studies considered within reiterate this finding. This has been expressed repeatedly by art historians such as David Freedberg and Hans Belting.⁵³ To talk of the power of images is to talk of the response people have to them and relationship which forms between image and beholder, whether that be an individual or a community. To quote David

⁵¹ Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, Edmund Jephcott (trans.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); Michael Camille, *Gothic Art: Visions and Revelations of the Medieval World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996); David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

⁵² *Spolia* here refers to the reuse of materials or artefacts, while the terms *varietas* and *bricolage* indicate the use of varied and diverse materials or artifacts within one piece of art. These terms are of particular importance regarding my examination of the reliquary statue in chapter one, but also feature throughout this thesis. Dale Kinney, 'Ancient Gems in the Middle Ages: Riches and Ready-mades', in *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney (eds.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 97-120; Dale Kinney, 'The Concept of Spolia', in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, 2nd edn., Conrad Rudolph (ed.) (Hoboken: Wiley, 2006), pp. 331-356; Mary J. Carruthers, "'Varietas': A Word of Many Colours", *Poetica* 41 (2009), pp. 11-32; Ilene Forsyth, 'Art with History: the role of spolia in the cumulative work of art', in *Byzantine East, Latin West: art-historical studies in honor of Kurt Weitzmann* Doula Mariki (ed.) (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, 1995), pp. 153-162.

⁵³ David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, Edmund Jephcott (trans.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Freedberg, “we must consider not only beholders’ symptoms and behavior, but also the effectiveness, efficacy, and vitality of images themselves; not only what people do as a result of their relationship with imaged form, but also what they expect imaged form to achieve, and why they have such expectations at all.”⁵⁴ This thesis will contend with similar ideas regarding images of Sainte Foy, examining how and why depictions of her have power and how that power is harnessed.

Semiotics also forms a key part of this thesis. Semiotics can be defined in its simplest form as the study of signs, and this field of study addresses “how meanings are made and how reality is represented (and indeed constructed) through signs and sign systems.”⁵⁵ This forms part of what Umberto Eco described in the medieval period as “a mode of understanding which looked upon the relations between things not as casual connections, but as a web of meanings and ends.”⁵⁶ This is particularly relevant for the study of saints, who are often identified by their instrument of martyrdom, which becomes an emblem or sign for the saint as a whole. This thesis will examine the creation of signs regarding saints and the ways in which they can be used to express power and authority in different locations.

To quote Bynum, as saints are “fashioned and authenticated in a complex relationship between clerical authorities and adherents who spread the holy person’s reputation for virtues and miracles, the saint herself or himself is lost to view almost from the beginning.”⁵⁷ The relationship has been described as “dialogic” by Peter Brown, who expressed that “many groups asked for different things of the saints.”⁵⁸ As such, this thesis will endeavour to look not so much at the figure of Sainte Foy herself, but rather the

⁵⁴ David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. xxii.

⁵⁵ Daniel Sandler, *Semiotics: the basics*, 3rd edn. (London, 2017), pp. 1-2.

⁵⁶ Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, Hugh Bredin (trans.) (London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 54.

⁵⁷ Caroline Walker Bynum, ‘Foreword’, in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, Catherine M. Mooney (ed.) (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. ix.

⁵⁸ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, 2nd edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. xix.

perception and construction of both her and her cult which took place later, and the ways in which it differed from place to place, community to community.

This thesis will also build on long-standing, as well as more recent, innovative scholarship, associated with wall paintings, as two of the three cases studies feature murals. E. W. Tristram's survey of medieval wall paintings in England remains a foundational text on the topic. More recent scholarship includes that of M. A. Michael, Paul Binski, and Roger Rosewell.⁵⁹ This thesis will also consider the more technical aspects of wall painting, such as pigment analysis, drawing from a number of art historians and restorers, such as Helen Howard, Emily Howe, and Marie Louise Sauerberg.⁶⁰ As such, this thesis benefits from a wealth of scholarship based on both visual and technical analysis of wall paintings. By drawing on these intertwined traditions, this work presents a nuanced assessment of the wall paintings under consideration, as well as placing them within the history of devotion to Sainte Foy.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

As Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn state in their introduction to *Writing Faith* "the medieval authors of the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* wrote faith (pun intended) as they created their portraits of Sainte Foy out of materials available in their cultural milieu and in response to specific, often local, needs and agendas."⁶¹ This thesis takes this idea further, not only looking at writing Foy, but also sculpting and painting Foy, broadly how people made and saw Sainte Foy. It will also look at the development of these issues once

⁵⁹ M. A. Michael, *St Albans Cathedral Wall Paintings* (London: Scala, 2019); Paul Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster* (London: The Society of Antiquaries of London, 1986); Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power, 1200-1400* (London: Yale University Press, 1995); Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2014).

⁶⁰ Helen Howard, *The Pigments of English Medieval Wall Painting* (London: Archetype, 2003); Emily Howe, 'Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey: The Murals in the South Transept and St Faith's Chapel', *The Burlington Magazine* 148 (January 2006), 4-14; Helen Howard, and Marie-Louise Sauerberg, 'Polychrome techniques at Westminster 1250-1350', in *The Westminster Retable: History, Techniques, Conservation* Paul Binski and Ann Massing (eds.) (Cambridge: Harvey Miller, 2009), pp. 290-318.

⁶¹ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 1.

removed from the specific cultural milieux in which they were created, taking into account the cultural landscape into which they were supplanted and how that changed the shape of the cult and devotion to Sainte Foy. While, as Ashley and Sheingorn note, no new miracle texts were added to the *Liber*, this does not necessarily mean the cult was entirely static.⁶² Miracle stories could be revised, edited, or even omitted. As stated by Felice Lifshitz, there has been a shift in hagiographical studies whereby “all extant versions” are studied, leading scholars to see “transformation in a saint’s character as crucial indicators of many different sorts of changes over time.”⁶³ In the same way that textual sources could be changed, so too could artistic ones. This thesis aims to consider the different extant visual versions of Foy which survive in order to understand a variety of changes relating to her cult over the medieval period.

This thesis will trace the development of the cult of Sainte Foy, focusing particularly on its associated visual culture, through three key case studies that chart and explain its arrival from Conques around the start of the twelfth century and development in southern England until the mid-fifteenth century. Each case study will focus on one piece of artwork associated with the cult. These case studies are the reliquary statue at Conques, the wall paintings at the former priory of Horsham St Faith, and the wall painting in the chapel dedicated to her at Westminster Abbey. These three case studies have in part been chosen due to the survival of material, but also because the focus on this thesis is monumental art. Additionally, the relationships between these works of art also provide a valuable opportunity to examine the way in which they influenced each other. While each of these examples have been studied to some extent in the past, they have not been examined together. By looking at the visual culture of Sainte Foy across France and England, these individual artworks can be placed in a broader context, one which will provide a deeper and fuller understanding of them.

⁶² Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 8.

⁶³ Felice Lifshitz, ‘Beyond Positivism and Genre: “Hagiographical” Texts as Historical Narrative’, *Viator* 25 (1994), p. 95.

Firstly, the reliquary statue and the cult's initial establishment at its new cult site at Conques will be assessed. This case study will consider the extensive literature on the reliquary statue and its place within the development of figural sculpture in Christian Europe. This case study has been chosen not only for its wealth of extant material, but also for its central role in the development of the cult. No later facets of the cult of Sainte Foy can be fully understood without considering its origins and development in Conques. This chapter will examine the influence of the reliquary statue on the perception of Sainte Foy. This chapter attempts to situate Sainte Foy and her reliquary statue within a broader conversation about virgin martyrs and gendered holiness. This contextualisation is done by examining the work of literary scholars such as Samantha Riches, Sarah Salih, and Jane Tibbetts Schulenberg through the lens of art history. It also draws heavily on previous technical surveys of the reliquary statue, most importantly the report produced by Jean Taralon and his team following the restoration of the reliquary statue in the 1950s. The reused fifth-century head of the reliquary statue is also examined in detail, in particular its gendered associations, as well as the role it played in enabling the reliquary statue to access power and the impact it had on the development of the surrounding cult and personality of the saint. It will also consider written material from Conques and the nearby areas, such as the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (c. 1010-1050) and the Provençal *Cançó de Santa Fe* (c. 1054–1076). This written material helps provide valuable context for the reliquary statue and enables us to understand how the figure of Sainte Foy was perceived in the area around Conques by different lay and clerical audiences.

The focus of the second chapter shifts to Norfolk in England, looking at the foundation of a priory dedicated to Sainte Foy in Norfolk in 1106 by Robert and Sybil Fitzwalter. This site was in many ways the focus of devotion of Sainte Foy in England and as such any consideration of her cult in England needs to examine it. It focuses on three distinct periods in time, all of which were key in the development and use of the cult in Norfolk – the priory's foundation in the twelfth century, the execution of the wall painting programme in the

thirteenth, and the modification of the wall paintings in the fifteenth. The initial foundation is examined within the context of the Norman Conquest and placed within a wider context of ecclesiastical patronage and aristocratic networks, looking at how the cult was established in England. The focus then moves to the thirteenth century and the execution of the wall paintings which relate the foundation of the priory, exploring the potential reasons behind commemorating these events in the thirteenth century, as well as how the paintings act to intimately connect Horsham St Faith with both their mother abbey at Conques and specifically the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy, and why the priory would be interested in doing so at this point in time. The fifteenth-century modifications and repainting of the scheme are then scrutinised in light of the economic and political pressures faced by the priory. Again, the question of why there was this renewed interest in the cult of Foy at this point in time is considered. Overall, this chapter serves to show the varying ways Sainte Foy's cult could be used in one specific location by different people, such as the members of the priory and the descendants of the founding family, at different points in history.

The third and final chapter shifts from Norfolk to London, where another mural of Sainte Foy survives on the walls of Westminster Abbey. This wall painting has been chosen for detailed examination because of its position at the heart of the important political and ecclesiastical location of Westminster Abbey. This chapter attempts to provide a date for this painting, a topic which has received a great deal of attention within existing literature, but which has not yet been sufficiently answered. It also aims to elucidate the significance of its iconography and devotional function through the use of technical and stylistic analysis, as well as considering the context at the Abbey. By considering the painting within a broader context, the patronage of the painting is examined, focusing on the differences between monastic and royal patronage in particular. It will consider the role the painting, and more broadly Sainte Foy, played at the Abbey as a figure of protection and security for the monastic community, and the reasons behind the choice for this particular saint.

This thesis brings together disparate information about Sainte Foy and her cult from a variety of different disciplines and regions. While the focus will be broadly artistic, it will endeavour to place these works in a broader historical and literary context. It will additionally connect the devotion to Sainte Foy across the Channel, taking within its scope both French and English contexts. By doing so, this thesis will provide a more complete view of the cult of Sainte Foy and the means by which her representation was developed, manipulated, and used. It seeks to show the different ways Sainte Foy developed in different locations, and the site-specific nature she took on as a result. It considers how the visual language of Sainte Foy was developed, and how it was used, deployed, and manipulated, in different places across different periods of time.

2. Conques - The Beginning of a Cult

This chapter addresses the beginnings of the cult of Sainte Foy in France. It examines how Sainte Foy came to be venerated at Conques, the initial establishment of her cult, and its site-specific nature. It addresses in detail the statue reliquary, with a particular focus on the reuse of a fifth-century head. Through comparative analysis, the claim that the head was originally a death mask is examined. Additionally, it considers the way this act of reuse served to tie the abbey with the sacred past. Given that this head is assumed to have originally been male, the gendered implications of this appropriation are also considered. This work is done through the use of scientific research on externally perceived gender identification, as well as by engaging with the existing literature on the nature of virginity and gender. Literary material is also considered, focusing on the extant miracle collection and the Provençal *Cançó de Santa Fe*. These materials are used to assess the personality and perception of Sainte Foy and her cult, as well as how it was used, adapted, and augmented by the monastic community at Conques. Overall, this chapter provides an overview of the early cult of Sainte Foy at Conques, focusing particularly on the implications of her gendered depiction.

Foy's body was originally enshrined in Agen, the city where she was born, located on the banks of the River Garonne in the southeast of the modern department of Lot-et-Garonne in France. Both Foy's *Passio* and her *Translatio* provide some information about what early veneration of her may have looked like in Agen. The *Passio* describes how Dulcidius, bishop of Agen, built a "beautiful basilica" to house her relics.⁶⁴ The site of the present-day Church of Sainte Foy in Agen has been in use since at least the Merovingian period and as such may have been the site of said basilica.⁶⁵ The *Translatio* adds that the

⁶⁴ "Pulchram ecclesiam", Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*, p. 271. Anonymous, 'Passio,' in Pamela Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, 1995), p. 37.

⁶⁵ Frances Terpak Wands, 'The Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture of Saint Caprais in Agen', (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1982), p. 54. See also C. Barrière-Flavy, *Etudes sur les sépultures barbares du Midi et de l'Ouest de la France* (Toulouse: Privat, 1892), pp. 168-170 on the burials

church was “consecrated to the heavenly Bridegroom and secondarily to the veneration of the holy virgin” and that Foy’s relics were placed in “a precious mausoleum, carved from marble, inside the basilica.”⁶⁶ At this point, Foy was already performing miracles, such as giving sight to the blind and because of them, people were visiting her tomb to be cured of various afflictions, all of whom “had their health restored.”⁶⁷

However, the relics of Foy were not to remain at Agen. The monks of the abbey of Conques acquired her relics through an act of *furta sacra*, or holy theft, in 866.⁶⁸ Foy’s *Translatio* specifically names the monk responsible for bringing Foy’s body to Conques as Arinisdus.⁶⁹ It relates how he infiltrated Agen and the community there, gaining their trust, until he was trusted enough to guard the church and relics while all the other monks were celebrating Epiphany (6 January). The stone covering Foy’s tomb was held in place by iron seals, however the tomb partially opened when Arinisdus kicked it, which enabled him to remove Foy’s body. Under cover of night, Arinisdus left Agen. Citizens of Agen pursued him, but they went in “completely the wrong direction” through God’s intervention.⁷⁰ Despite this mishap, they did not give up in their search for Foy. More pursuers followed Arinisdus and caught up with him at Lalbenque, over fifty miles away from Agen. However, again through God’s intervention, they were unable to recognise Arinisdus and spoke to him “as if he were a stranger.”⁷¹ Arinisdus was then able to continue his journey to Conques, the relics

discovered there, and Georges Tholin, *Études sur l’architecture religieuse de l’Agenais* (Agen: Librarire J. Michel, 1874), pp. 262-264 for the medieval structure.

⁶⁶ “Sub sacrae Virginis veneration caelesti Sponso consecravit” and “in basilicam eadem cum maxima honorificentia mausoleo precioso marmore excis”, Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*, p. 273. Anonymous, ‘Translatio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 265.

⁶⁷ “Omnes sanitate recepta”, Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*. p. 295. Anonymous, ‘Translatio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 265.

⁶⁸ Sheingorn, ‘Introduction’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 10.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁷⁰ “Relicta ab ipsis insequentibus recta itineris linea”, Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*, p. 297; Anonymous, ‘Translatio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 268.

⁷¹ “Si talis formae homo”, Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris Tomus Tertius*, p. 297; ‘Translatio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 269.

performing several miracles along the way. He was greeted at Conques by a procession before installing the relics “in the most fitting place.”⁷²

Throughout the *Translatio* justification for the removal of Foy’s relics from Agen to Conques is given. The removal of Foy’s relics is considered to be “for the salvation of the country and redemption of many people,” while Arinisdus, the thief, is described as “prudent in council, quick-witted, and outstanding in every aspect of his character.”⁷³ The whole story is couched in the language of fate’s (and Foy’s) assent.⁷⁴ The theme that Foy’s body is only able to be moved when she chooses is established in the *Passio* as well, when the first church to house her relics was built by Dulcidius. The *Passio* relates how Dulcidius was initially hesitant to move Foy’s body but when he did eventually move the relics, he was miraculously able to lift the tomb with only one hand.⁷⁵ This theme is repeated in the *Translatio* when the monks attempted to move Foy’s relics to a new basilica, but they were unable to do so because “it had such great weight that it remained fixed in place, staying as steadfastly immobile as a mountain.”⁷⁶ Thinking they had been unworthy to lift the relics, the monks proceeded to fast and pray before attempting to move the relics for both a second and third time. After this they realised that they had been unable to move the relics as it was “unlawful and forbidden to them by God’s command.”⁷⁷ This repeated motif justifies Foy’s presence in Conques – if she did not wish to be there, she would not be.

The acquisition of Sainte Foy’s relics by Conques can be better understood by looking at the context in which the abbey existed – both historically and geographically.

⁷² “In loco decentissimo”, Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, p. 298; ‘Translatio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 271.

⁷³ “Salutem patriae et in redemptionem multorum” and “in prudentia strenuus et in omni morum habitudine erat praeclarus”, Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, p. 296; ‘Translatio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 266.

⁷⁴ “Territus”, Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, p. 27.; Anonymous, ‘Translatio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 267.

⁷⁵ Anonymous, ‘Passio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 37.

⁷⁶ “Tanto pondere fixum permausit ut ad montis eujusdam modum immobile persisteret”, Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, p. 298; ‘Translatio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p.272.

⁷⁷ “Deiuceps videlicet incoeptum suum illicitum et a Dei nutu vetitum sibi cognoscentes”, Anonymous in *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, p. 298; ‘Translatio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 272.

According to Auguste Bouillet and Louis Servières, the abbey at Conques was founded between 790 and 795 by Louis the Pious (770–840).⁷⁸ The earliest charter regarding an abbey at Conques dates from 801.⁷⁹ The abbey had been involved in a longstanding dispute with the nearby monastery at Figeac.⁸⁰ This stemmed from an incident in 838 when Pippin I (787–838) granted the monks at Conques an area of more accessible land to the northwest which was to be called New Conques. However, not all the monks were happy with this plan and some refused to relocate, leading to a rivalry as Figeac grew on the new site and prospered.⁸¹ This dispute led Figeac to forge a document, supposedly issued by Pippin the Short (c. 714–768) in 755, which granted them control over Conques.⁸² As such, the theft of Foy's relics needs to be considered in this context, where the abbey is struggling to assert its own identity and independence from their rivals at Figeac. The saintly relics brought the abbey greater power and influence. After Conques had gained fame for the *furta sacra* of Sainte Foy, Figeac, not to be outdone, wrote their own *Translatio*, detailing their acquisition of the relics of Saint Bibianus.⁸³ A bull issued by Pope Urban II (c. 1035–1099) in 1084 attempted to resolve the dispute, but it was not fully resolved until 1096 when the Council of Nîmes officially separated the two monasteries from each other.⁸⁴ The acquisition of Foy's relics was therefore a fundamental component of the abbey gaining its independence and authority. It was through Foy that such a thing was possible.

⁷⁸ Eugène Chatel, 'Sainte Foy, vierge et martyre (review)', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 63.1 (1902), p. 399.

⁷⁹ No.1 in *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques*, Gustave Desjardins (ed.) (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1879), p. 1.

⁸⁰ See Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics In the Central Middle Ages*, rev. edn., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 58-63; Amy G. Remensnyder, 'Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory', *Speculum*, 71.4 (October 1996), pp. 884-906 and Amy G. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 271-276.

⁸¹ Sheingorn, 'Introduction', in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 8.

⁸² Amy G. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 274.

⁸³ Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 62. For more on Bibianus, see *Acta Sanctorum Augusti Tomus Sextus* (Paris and Rome: Palmé, 1868), pp. 461-467 and 'Translatio Sancti Viviani episcopi in coenobium Figiacense', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 8 (1889), pp. 256-277.

⁸⁴ Sheingorn, 'Introduction', in Sheingorn (trans.), p. 8.

Even after the dispute was officially resolved, there was still a rivalry between the two monasteries as they were in direct competition for pilgrims who passed through the region. The geographical position of Conques was significant as it was on one of the major routes to the shrine of Saint James in Santiago de Compostela, called the *Via Podiensis*, which went through Conques and brought people and wealth to the region.⁸⁵ This became particularly important by the eleventh and twelfth centuries when pilgrimage to Compostela increased and these pilgrims became the primary source of income for monasteries situated en route.⁸⁶ Conques acted both as a stopping point for pilgrims on their way to Santiago as well as a destination in its own right. Rosemary Van Lare has argued that the relationship between the cults of Foy and James were “particularly close.”⁸⁷ This claim is based on three capitals, part of the decorative scheme at Compostela, which depict the martyrdom of Saint Foy, the fact that in 1105 there was an altar in the ambulatory at the cathedral of St James and that from 1077 to 1114 a monk from Conques, Pierre d’Andouque, was bishop of Pamplona.⁸⁸ The capitals are of particular significance as the chapel of Foy is the only chapel in the Romanesque choir whose dedication is reflected within its decorative scheme.⁸⁹ Van Lare claims that “no other saints venerated on the pilgrimage roads was honoured in this way at Compostela.”⁹⁰ This highlights the importance of Conques and the cult of Sainte Foy within

⁸⁵ See for example Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999); Esther Cohen, ‘In the name of God and of profit: pilgrimage in southern France in the late middle ages’, (Ph.D. diss, Brown university, 1976); O. K Werckmeister, ‘Cluny III and the Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela’, *Gesta*, 27.1/2 (1988), pp. 103-12; Marco Papsidero, “‘O Sancta Haera’ Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Sanctuary of Sainte Foy at Conques”, *Almatourism – Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development* 8.16 (2017), pp. 119-138.

⁸⁶ Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 86.

⁸⁷ Rosemary Van Lare, ‘The Cult of St Foy at Conques’ (MA Thesis, San Jose State University, 1997), p. 5.

⁸⁸ Van Lare, ‘The Cult of St Foy at Conques’, p. 5. See also Paul Deschamps, ‘Études sur les Sculptures de Sainte-Foy de Conques et de Saint-Sernin de Toulouse et leurs relations avec celles de Saint-Isidore de Léon et de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle’, *Bulletin Monumental* 100.3/3 (1941), pp. 239-264.

⁸⁹ These capitals show Foy being led to her execution as well as Foy conversing with Caprais, Prime and Felician. It has been suggested that the capitals were “inspired” by the depiction of Foy’s martyrdom on capitals dating to c. 1070 at Conques. See Manuel Castiñeiras, ‘The Topography of Images in Santiago Cathedral: Monks, Pilgrims, Bishops and the Road to Paradise’, in *Culture and Society in Medieval Galicia: A Cultural Crossroads at the Edge of Europe*, James D’Emilio (ed. and trans.) (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p. 638.

⁹⁰ Van Lare, ‘The Cult of St Foy at Conques’, p. 5.

the broader context of pilgrimage in the medieval period. It also highlights how the cult spread through networks of pilgrimage, enabling devotion to Sainte Foy to develop at places outside of Conques. Foy was intrinsic not just to the establishment of the abbey at Conques, but to its continued survival, authority, and independence.

The cult at Conques did not remain static; it changed over time, shifting from a local to a more international cult. This widening scope of influence is also reflected in the miracles attributed to Foy; Ashley and Sheingorn have noted that twelve of the fifteen later miracle stories take place outside of Conques.⁹¹ This increasing geographic reach illustrates the cult's growing popularity and change in status, as well as broader changes regarding pilgrimage. Despite Conques' popularity as a pilgrimage destination, one of the notable absences regarding evidence of the cult of Sainte Foy is the lack of pilgrimage badges, either for Conques or Saint Foy more broadly.⁹² This is likely because by the time pilgrimage badges gained popularity in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, the cult of Saint Foy was already in decline.⁹³

The iconic (in more ways than one), and earliest surviving, image of Sainte Foy which survives at Conques is a three-dimensional golden reliquary (figs. 1.1 and 1.2). This reliquary has a complex history – it was refashioned at multiple points in time. In addition to its resplendent fifth-century *spolia*, the earliest parts of the statue date from the ninth to tenth century and numerous modifications and additions were made to it throughout the Gothic period, and even later. Additionally, it was restored multiple times in both the nineteenth and

⁹¹ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 102.

⁹² By comparing Conques to Saint-Gilles, Cohen has suggested that the lack of pilgrimage badges at Conques cannot solely be explained due to the decline in pilgrimage trade in the region as badges appear from Saint-Gilles despite this. Esther Cohen, 'In the name of God and of profit: pilgrimage in southern France in the late middle ages', (Ph.D. diss, Brown university, 1976), p. 189.

⁹³ The majority of extant pilgrim badges date from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries. See J. Stopford, 'Some Approaches to the Archaeology of Christian Pilgrimage', *World Archaeology*, 26.1 (June 1994), 57-73.

twentieth centuries.⁹⁴ As the central material vessel for the cult of Sainte Foy, this reliquary statue – and its iconographic legacy – will be considered in further detail later in this chapter.

As for what relics were at Conques, a list survives from the seventeenth century and documented numerous relics.⁹⁵ A new list was made by Bouillet in the late nineteenth century as he felt that the treasures of Conques needed to be reassessed to take into account the “violent assault” on the relics and treasures during the Wars of Religion and Revolution.⁹⁶ The treasury at Conques had escaped vandalism during the Revolution due to a complex plot whereby local residents forced open the treasury and divided the treasure amongst themselves before sounding alarm of the theft the next day so that the Convention could not seize the abbey’s treasure.⁹⁷ After the Revolution, the treasures were safely returned to the abbey, where they remain to this day. To quote Bouillet, writing in the nineteenth century, “aujourd’hui encore les habitants de Conques sont fiers de leur trésor.”⁹⁸

However, while the reliquary was rediscovered, the body of Sainte Foy had been lost in the sixteenth century and was not rediscovered until 1875, after which both the body and the reliquary were sent to Paris for investigation and restoration.⁹⁹ In 1878, two doctors, Lala and Viala, examined the bones inside a different reliquary and concluded that they were part of the skull of a thirteen- to fifteen-year-old girl.¹⁰⁰ Then on the 5 October 1878, the day before Sainte Foy’s feast day, the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy was taken to Rodez

⁹⁴ *Le trésor de Conques*, Danièle Gaborit-Chopin and Élisabeth Traburet-Delahaye (eds.) (Paris: Monum, 2001), p. 18.

⁹⁵ A version of this list is printed in A. Bouillet, *L’Église et le Trésor de Conques (Aveyron): Notice Descriptive* (Paris: Macon, 1892), pp. 111-113.

⁹⁶ A. Bouillet, *L’Église et le Trésor de Conques (Aveyron)*, p. xii.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁹⁹ A. Bouillet and L. Servièrès, *Sainte Foy: Vierge et Martyre* (Rodez: E. Carrère, 1900), p. 163.

¹⁰⁰ This reliquary had also been lost after Protestants attempted to burn down the church in 1561, which resulted in part of the church being reinforced with additional walls between columns. When this wall was demolished in 1875, two chests were found within, one of which contained the bones of St Faith. It is also worth noting here that there is a discrepancy about the supposed age of the skeletons the two doctors gave between different accounts. While in *L’Église et le Trésor de Conques*, Bouillet says they belong to a thirteen- to fifteen-year-old girl, in Bouillet and Servièrès’s *Sainte Foy: Vierge et Martyre* (p. 189.), the age is given as between twelve and sixteen. As far as I am aware, the skull fragments have not been examined since. A. Bouillet, *L’Église et le Trésor de Conques (Aveyron): Notice Descriptive* (Paris: Macon, 1892), pp. 73-76.

Cathedral where it was displayed for pilgrims for a period of eight days.¹⁰¹ After this, on the 12 October, the reliquary was processed to the Abbey at Conques.¹⁰² These investigations into the relics and the restoration of multiple reliquaries in the second half of the nineteenth century, serve to suggest that there was a renewed interest in Sainte Foy in this period and an attempt to re-establish her position at Conques. This renewed interest was spearheaded by Joseph-Christian-Ernest Bourret, bishop of Rodez from 1871 and cardinal from 1893.¹⁰³

The reliquary statue remained in Conques until it was exhibited in Paris at the *Expositions universelles* in 1900.¹⁰⁴ A new *sacrarium* was constructed at Conques in 1910 and the treasures of Conques were moved there in 1911.¹⁰⁵ More recently an exhibition in Paris in 2001, *Le trésor de Conques*, including the reliquary statue.¹⁰⁶ This exhibition was described in *Le Soir* as “quasi mythique, le trésor de l'abbaye rouergate regroupe de manière unique en France des objets du haut Moyen Age de première qualité.”¹⁰⁷ Today, the reliquary is on display in the Treasury at Conques, where you are able to come face to face (through plastic glass) with the statue.

2.1 Written Material

In addition to the surviving statue reliquary at Conques, extensive written material about Foy also survives. The wealth of documentary evidence is a boon to studying the cult of Sainte Foy. It can provide insight into how the cult was constructed and spread. However, it is worth noting that our perception of the cult may in fact be influenced by this survival. In the same way that the survival of the reliquary influences our perception of the cult and

¹⁰¹ A. Bouillet, *L'Église et le Trésor de Conques (Aveyron)*, pp. xii-xiii.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pxiii.

¹⁰³ Bouillet's 1892 *L'église et le trésor de Conques* was dedicated to Bourret. See Ashley, *The Cultural Work of Saints*, pp. 22-26

¹⁰⁴ Gaborit-Chopin and Traburet-Delahaye (eds.), *Le trésor de Conques*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁵ Gaborit-Chopin and Traburet-Delahaye (eds.), *Le trésor de Conques*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ This exhibition ran from November 2nd 2001 to March 11th 2002 and was accompanied by the publication of *Le trésor de Conques*, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, and Élisabeth Traburet-Delahaye (eds.) (Paris: Monum, 2001).

¹⁰⁷ Dominique Legrand, 'Orfèvrerie Le trésor de Conques brille au Louvre Par sainte Foy!', *Le Soir*, 6 December 2001 < <https://plus.lesoir.be/art/orfevrerie-le-tresor-de-conques-brille-au-louvre-par-sa-t-20011206-Z0L8J4.html>>

three-dimensional sculpture, it is possible that the survival of documentary evidence could do the same. However, by considering these materials alongside her reliquary statue, we can gain a fuller understanding of Sainte Foy and her cult.

It has been suggested that Foy's *Passio* may have been written down as early as the fifth century.¹⁰⁸ Her *Passio* survives in its earliest form in two tenth-century manuscripts: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 5301, fols. 328^r–329^v, and Montpellier, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Médecine, MS H 152, fols. 231^v–237^r.¹⁰⁹ Another version of her passion was written in the mid-eleventh century in leonine verse.¹¹⁰ Bouillet and Servières attributed this manuscript to Hildebert, bishop of Le Mans and later archbishop of Tours, while Sheingorn argues it was made at Conques.¹¹¹ The survival of Foy's *Passio* attests to the continued interest in the saint's life and not just her posthumous miracles.

The earliest extant text of Foy's *Translatio* to Conques dates from between 1020 and 1060, and was also rewritten in verse after 1060.¹¹² The text of the *Translatio* survives in a manuscript from the Conques scriptorium from 1070/80.¹¹³ Both Ferdinand Lot and Léon Levillain dated the act of translation to January 865 or 866 (although for different reasons), while J. Angély has argued that the entire story is a fabrication, in part based on the similarities between the *Translatio* of Foy and Fausta, thereby revealing its inherent literary nature.¹¹⁴ As Geary himself notes, whether or not the *Translatio* was a fabrication is irrelevant, the fact of the matter is that Foy performed her miracles at Conques and it was there people visited on pilgrimage.¹¹⁵ The *Translatio*, alongside the miracle stories, acts to

¹⁰⁸ Sheingorn, *Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ On Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 5301, see Mathew Kuefler, 'Dating and Authorship of the Writings about Saint Gerald of Aurillac', *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 44.1 (2013), 49-97. On Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Médecine, MS H 152, see Gérard Cames, 'Un trésor manuscrit carolingien à la bibliothèque de la Faculté de Médecine de Montpellier', *Études Héraultaises* 35 (2004-2005), pp. 19-20

¹¹⁰ Sheingorn, 'Introduction' in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 22.

¹¹¹ A. Bouillet and L. Servières, *Sainte Foy: Vierge et Martyre*, p. 714 and Sheingorn, *Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 21.

¹¹² Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 7.

¹¹³ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 7.

¹¹⁴ Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 138-140.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

authorise Foy's residency in Conques. This was the place where the cult of Sainte Foy was developed and constructed.

The cartulary of Conques, which contains over five hundred documents written between 801 and 1180, also survives,¹¹⁶ This can provide valuable insight into the cult of Sainte Foy, particularly regarding the relationships the abbey formed with devotees of Foy who gifted the saint land. The cartulary records how in the eleventh century Raymond III (d. 1008), count of the Rouergue went to fight with the king of Aragon against the Moors under the banner of Sainte Foy.¹¹⁷ This serves to highlight the role Foy played as a protector of Conques and those in its surroundings. It also provides extensive evidence for priories and holdings across Europe, from Roncevalles in Spain to Sélestat in the Alsace, although most of their holdings were closer to Conques, perhaps indicating that the abbey's authority was strongest in its immediate environment.¹¹⁸ Another foundation is that at Conches in Normandy which was founded by Roger de Tosny, after his wife was a recipient of a miracle from Foy.¹¹⁹ The place name itself was changed in deliberate imitation and emulation of Conques.¹²⁰ Clearly by this point, Conques was sufficiently important to warrant imitation in Normandy. According to Cohen, Conches itself became a pilgrimage destination for those unwilling to brave the dangers of the Rouergue.¹²¹ This serves to highlight the prestige which undertaking the difficult journey to Conques carried. These instances show how the cult of Sainte Foy was able to spread across France, and into Spain as well, from the tenth century onwards, largely as a result of miracles and pilgrimage.

A fragmentary chronicle of Conques also survives, likely written around 1100 and then possibly reworked later in the twelfth century.¹²² The prologue of this text proclaims

¹¹⁶ *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques*, Gustave Desjardins (ed.) (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1879),

¹¹⁷ Gustave Desjardins, 'Introduction', in *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques*, Gustave Desjardins (ed.) (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1879), p. xv.

¹¹⁸ No. 472, pp. 432-3; no. 575, pp. 405-6, in *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques*.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), pp. 144-5.

¹²⁰ Cohen, 'In the name of God and of profit', p. 89.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89

¹²² 'Chronique du Monastère de Conques' in *Études historiques sur le Rouergue* vol. 4., Marc Antoine F. Baron de Gaujal (ed.) (Paris: P. Dupont, 1858-9), pp. 391-4. For a discussion of this prologue, see

Charlemagne as the founder of the monastery.¹²³ As shown by Remensnyder, this aligning of the monastery with the figure of Charlemagne, as numerous monasteries did in the south of France in late eleventh century, served to provide the monastery with prestige, power, and charismatic authority through his legendary status.¹²⁴ This highlights how the monks at Conques were willing to manipulate aspects of their own history, and the cult of Sainte Foy, for their own benefit.

2.2 Miracles

There is also a wealth of hagiographical material concerning Foy that survives and can provide valuable insight into the personality of the saint, as well as the saintly persona projected by the monastery. The key source for Sainte Foy's miracles is the *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, comprised of four books and an introduction. The introduction and the first two books were written by Bernard of Angers, whilst the last two were continuations of Bernard's work by an unknown monk (or monks) at Conques. Bernard of Angers wrote his two books during a number of visits to Conques between 1013 and 1020.¹²⁵ The third book was written between 1020 and 1050 while the fourth book was written around the mid-eleventh century.¹²⁶ Ashley and Sheingorn, in their monograph *Writing Faith: Text, Sign and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy*, emphasise the differences between the first and second halves of the text. Their argument is that Bernard of Angers was writing from the perspective of an educated, northern outsider, which gave him the ability to play with hagiographical convention and insert himself into the narrative.¹²⁷ In contrast, they argue that the anonymous continuator(s) "subordinates his personality to the glorification of Foy, powerful patron of the Conques monastery."¹²⁸ This shift results in "replacing Bernard's

Amy G. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), in particular pp. 148-149.

¹²³ 'Chronique du Monastère de Conques', pp. 391-4.

¹²⁴ Amy G. Remensnyder, 'Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory', *Speculum* 71.4 (Oct. 1996), p. 891.

¹²⁵ Sheingorn, 'Introduction' in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 25.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹²⁷ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 23.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[characterisation of a] trickster-child with a celestial virgin-martyr.”¹²⁹ This section will examine the miracle texts and argue that the trickster-child and virgin-martyr are able to coexist within a literary mode but that such multivalency becomes increasingly difficult to represent when shifted into the visual realm.

Previous statistical studies have divided Foy’s miracles into examples of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ or ‘punitive’ intercession.¹³⁰ ‘Positive’ miracles can be defined as those which aid the beneficiary in some way, while ‘negative’ or ‘punitive’ ones punish wrongdoing and sinful behaviour. Taylor argues that seventy-three percent of Foy’s miracles fall into the ‘positive’ category, with the remainder classified as ‘negative.’¹³¹ When compared with Sigal’s broader statistical analysis of miracles, this shows that Foy performed over twice the average of punishment miracles and less than the average of healing miracles.¹³² Already this suggests that Foy has a distinct personality – someone more likely to enact punishment and to be feared, rather than a healer and intercessor. However, the division of miracles into ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ can be overly simplistic as within the miracle collection there are stories which could fall under both categories. For example, in the first miracle of the first book, thereby setting the tone for the entire miracle collection, Guibert has his eyes healed by Foy, making this a ‘positive’ miracle. Yet later in the same story, Guibert is punished for falling into sin and has his eyesight removed, so it could also be considered a ‘negative’ miracle.¹³³ Within one miracle, Foy is able to embody both positive and negative aspects because of the space afforded by the narrative – she is able to be two things at once.

Taylor, like Ashley and Sheingorn, argues that “after Bernard of Angers’ works the degree of institutionalisation of monastic socio-political policy in the Books increased,

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 85.

¹³⁰ On statistical studies of saints, see Pierre-Andre Sigal, *L’homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XIe-XIIe siècle)* (Paris: Cerf, 1985) and Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).

¹³¹ Taylor, *Miracula*, ‘Saints’ Cults and Socio-Political Landscapes’, p. 119.

¹³² Ibid., p. 119.

¹³³ “Que uno oculorum hominem cecator, non tamen penitus eradicato”. Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 14; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 50.

resulting in a more purposeful and typically hagiographic text and a decidedly more corporate tone.”¹³⁴ Despite this, atypical miracles remain, suggesting that even when Foy was mediated through the monastic institution of the abbey, she remained an unusual figure. For example, the miracle of how Sainte Foy healed a man’s scrotum, often cited as one of Foy’s joking miracles, occurs in Book Four. This is referred to within the text itself as “a remarkable joke” which caused Foy to “clap her hands with delight.”¹³⁵ The trickster nature of Foy is able to coexist with her role as a wise physician. The inclusion of these atypical miracles suggests that, to a certain extent, they were met with monastic institutional approval – the monks considered this kind of behaviour appropriate for the saintly figure who was patron of their abbey,

As well as acting in different roles within the miracles, Foy’s appearance is also malleable. When she appeared to Guibert following the removal of his eyeballs, Foy is described as “a little girl of indescribable grace” whose “appearance was angelic and quite serene, her countenance was a dazzling white, besprinkled drop by drop with a rosy blush.”¹³⁶ Bernard notes her size, stating that she had “the stature of a young girl, not yet advanced in age,” as she had been at the time of her Passion.¹³⁷ Elsewhere, she is described as “a ten-year-old girl,” “a very beautiful not yet adult girl,” and as having a “maidenly shape.”¹³⁸ These descriptions emphasise Foy’s status as a child, someone who exists outside the rigid hierarchy imposed in adulthood. And yet elsewhere in the miracle texts she is described as “a lady of terrifying authority” and acting with “imperious

¹³⁴ Taylor, ‘Miracula, Saints’ Cults and Socio-Political Landscapes’, p. 138.

¹³⁵ “Quod insigni dignata est ludere facto” and “et plausu dignas signat quandoque medelas”, Anonymous in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 263; Anonymous, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 215.

¹³⁶ “Inenarrabilis elegante visa est puella, aspectu angelico atque serenissimo, facie candida, roseoque rubore guttatim respersa”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 9.; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 46.

¹³⁷ “Id est statura puellaris”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 9; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 46.

¹³⁸ “Decennem apparere virginem”, “pulcherrime necdum adulte puelle”, “virginea species”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 18., p. 54. p. 55.; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 54., p. 83., p. 84.

authority.”¹³⁹ She is described as appearing as “a despondent woman” and “in the shape of a woman.”¹⁴⁰ These descriptions suggest she is a fully grown powerful woman. Within the miracle texts, because they relate multiple different stories of different people’s encounters with Foy, she can be depicted as both. She can be both young and old, modest and terrifying – again a dichotomy which can be more difficult to represent in a visual medium.

Foy’s clothing is given a similar treatment within the miracles. In one vision, Foy wearing “flowing” clothing which was “interwoven with the most elegant gold throughout, and delicate, colored embroidery encircled it.”¹⁴¹ Similarly, in another she is clothed in “attire adorned with gold and embellished with embroidery made with inestimable skill.”¹⁴² These descriptors highlight Foy’s status, but also serve to draw parallels between the saint and her reliquary. However, elsewhere she is described as “just as if she were a beggar.”¹⁴³ Again, Foy’s appearance can change and she is capable of being both ruler and beggar.

Foy’s physical appearance in the miracles can also be seen as reflecting her reliquary statue. The head in particular is notable because it is made from a different gold than the rest of the statue – one which has a more reddish tint. In one miracle text, Foy is described as “shining with the indescribable glow of red gold.”¹⁴⁴ In a more direct example, Foy literally appears in a vision as her reliquary statue. In a vision to Gerbert, Foy appeared “not in the form of a girl, but contrary to her usual custom, in the form of her sacred image”

¹³⁹ “Terrentis auctoritatis visa est hera” and “imperiosa auctoritate”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 48; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 84.

¹⁴⁰ “Abiecte mulieris” and “mox quedam mulieris forma obvia fuit”, Bernard of Angers and Anonymous, *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 16 and p. 236; Anonymous, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 126 and p. 194.

¹⁴¹ “Vestes erant amplissime aurosane”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p.55; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 46.

¹⁴² “In vestitu deaurato atque inestimabilis artificii varietate circumdato” Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 18; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 54.

¹⁴³ “Ceum mendicans”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 54; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 83. Foy’s appearance as a beggar draws interesting parallels with Edward the Confessor and the Miracle of the Ring and the equation of holiness with humility.

¹⁴⁴ “Indicibili rutilans fulgore”, Anonymous, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 232; Anonymous, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 191.

which is described as “terrifying.”¹⁴⁵ This highlights the authority associated with the statue, as well as emphasising that the reliquary was unusual (and terrifying), even to contemporaries. This serves to emphasise the malleability of Foy’s appearance within the dream realm, which has to become more fixed and rigid when a real physical object, in this case the reliquary statue, enters the equation.

The miracle stories also provide insight into how the reliquary statue of Foy was used in rituals by the monks at Conques. In one miracle, during a procession which included “an enormous crowd of both sexes”, people “rushed out of their houses and fell prostrate before the image” as was “custom.”¹⁴⁶ In another, a farm’s ownership is disputed between the abbey at Conques and a local landowner and “for this reason, the monks decided that the holy virgin’s venerable effigy should go to that farm, as is the custom, carried in a procession of the people, so that through divine intervention they might recover from the hand of that violent marauder what was rightfully theirs.”¹⁴⁷ Another instance which shows how the reliquary statue was used is when in response to a famine, “the revered image in which the holy martyr’s head is preserved was carried out-of-doors in a huge procession.”¹⁴⁸ This highlights how the reliquary’s physical presence had power, able to intercede in both land disputes and end famine, and was viewed as a complete stand-in for Foy herself. Sainte Foy owned the land which the monastery held. It can also be considered an example of Foy

¹⁴⁵ Foy is not the only saint to appear in the form of a reliquary within dreams or visions. Saint Privatus also appeared in a dream as a reliquary, see *Les miracles de Saint Privat, suivis des Opuscules d’Aldebert III, évêque de Mende* (Paris: Picard et fils, 1912), p. 106.

¹⁴⁶ “Interea namque, cum in quodam indite afflictionis jejunio venerabilis imago cum enormi constipatione promiscui sexus processionaliter foras quoque eveheretur, cunctique de more, de propriis ediculis prosilientes, obviam ei prociderent, necnon e vicino plerique in occursum ejus convolarent”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 51; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 80.

¹⁴⁷ “Quapropter monachi, ut per divinum adjutorium jus suum de manu violentissimi predonis recuperarent, venerabilem, ut mos est, sancte virginis effigiem eo bajulatam ire cum populari processione statuerunt”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 40; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 72.

¹⁴⁸ “Venerabilis illa imago, in qua sanctum martyris caput venerabiliter conditum est, foras cum ingenti processione efferretur”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 49; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 79.

acting as a lord, exercising secular, as well as sacred, power over the lands which she owned.

2.3 Transactional and Reciprocal Miracles

Foy can also be seen to take back the miracles she bestows on people as a form of punishment. In the miracle of Guibert, after the restoration of his eyeballs, Guibert “found a likeminded and unchaste woman, and immediately he forgot the greatness of the miracle done for him.”¹⁴⁹ To punish him for this, Foy blinded him in one eye, but did not utterly destroy it.¹⁵⁰ Foy then “led him [Guibert] back to the cure of repentance and healed him for the second time with renewed sight.”¹⁵¹ This pattern of Guibert falling into sin, losing the sight in one eye and then repenting to have his eyesight restored repeated several times. Likewise, a girl who had “been crippled in all her joints” was cured so that “no trace of her illness remained.”¹⁵² However, when the girl ignored a procession of the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy,

immediately in that very hour, the destroying fury of heaven acted. The girl began to be made pathetically deformed throughout her whole body. She became so misshapen that it was just as if she had never been healed but had remained bent and crooked, wholly deprived of the function of her muscles. Her body was completely drawn together and she didn't have the strength to let go of the tools of her loom – the very shuttle was held fast in her clenched hand.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ “Nactusque sui animi incestam mulierem”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 14; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 50.

¹⁵⁰ “Que uno oculorum hominem cecator, non tamen penitus eradicato”, Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 14; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 50.

¹⁵¹ “Ad penitentiae reduxit remedium, lumini dehinc cum integro restituens”, Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 14; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 50.

¹⁵² “Ideo dicamus de quadam paupere puella, que omnium membrorum compage debilitata in monasterium sancte Fidis fuerat allata. Ubi ita integritate artuum soliditatem receperat, ut in ea penitus nullum contractionis vestigium remaneret”, Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 50; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 80.

¹⁵³ “Statimque in ipsa hora celesti feriente indignatione, per omnia membrorum spacia distortueri femina miserabiliter cepit, adeo ut sicut residens complicata erat et incurva, tota penitus contraheretur nervorum officii destituta, nec tele utensilia abicere valens, cui ipse stricto pugno radiolus

Sainte Foy does deign to return her healing gift, after the girl “kept holy vigil for several nights” she was healed again and “transformed a second time to a person who could stand upright.”¹⁵⁴ These examples suggest that Foy’s miracles are dependent on full and continued repentance. Her miracles can be seen almost as a contract between the saint and the recipient. As well as illustrating Foy’s power and vengeful nature, this also shows how the statue reliquary and the saint were considered one and the same – an insult to the reliquary was an insult to the saint herself.

The impermanence of Sainte Foy’s gifts can also be seen in a miracle about how a man named William went blind, but after appealing to Sainte Foy “he found eye salves effective and regained his sight.”¹⁵⁵ This initial stage of the miracle highlights Foy’s role as a physician and healer. However, several days later, William was blinded again when he stood in between two members of his household who were engaged in a brawl and was stabbed in the eye, causing “streams of blood” to pour from the wound.¹⁵⁶ His sight partially returned when he “moistened his eyes with water blessed and consecrated by the majesty of Sainte Foy.”¹⁵⁷ His eyesight was not fully restored until he visited Conques and spent seven nights at the abbey and on Foy’s feast day “returned to the altar and fell prostrate at the feet of the sacred majesty.”¹⁵⁸ This shows how Foy’s miracles could be rescinded through means other than the recipient returning to sin as seen in the case of Guibert. Its inclusion in the miracle collection is notable because it initially seems to undermine Foy’s power. Her miracle is

inherebat”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 51; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 80.

¹⁵⁴ “Ubi aliquot noctibus sacris excubiis invigilans, gloriose martiris suffragantibus meritis, meruit iterato de contracta fieri erecta”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 51; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 81.

¹⁵⁵ “Sed per sancte Fidis invocationem reparancia lucem colliria promeretur”, Anonymous, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 199; Anonymous, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 201.

¹⁵⁶ “Vulnere erumpente cruore”, Anonymous, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 199; Anonymous, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 201.

¹⁵⁷ “Quam aqua benedicta et sancte Fidis majestate sacrata possit oculos madere”, Anonymous, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 199; Anonymous, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 201.

¹⁵⁸ “Inde regressus ante altare, procidit ad pedes sacre majestatis”, Anonymous in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 200; in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 201.

undone not by divine intervention, but through more mundane means – a brawl. However, the return of William’s sight when he prostrated himself before the reliquary underlines how Foy’s power is enhanced by the presence of her relics and reliquary. Foy’s power is at its strongest when her relics and reliquary are present in her abbey at Conques.

This sort of transactional healing miracle was not unique to Sainte Foy, other saints have been known to take back their miracles as well. One example of rescinded miracles are some performed by Our Lady of Rocamadour, such as one where a knight named Raymond was punished for not keeping his vow with the reappearance of a fistula the Virgin had previously healed.¹⁵⁹ Another can be found within the miracles of Saint Katherine which were performed by her relics at Rouen, which have some striking similarities with that of Sainte Foy. Of the four cures for blindness which Katherine grants, two are only temporary, with their failure attributed to their “failure to honour their vows to Katherine.”¹⁶⁰ Walsh describes the relationship between devotee and saint as “reciprocal.”¹⁶¹ Transactional may be another appropriate term for these miracles. It is also interesting to note that Katherine and Foy both “take back” their miracle of sight. This may simply be because the ability to see is easier to undo than say, healing a broken bone, but it may also be a commentary on how the recipient has lost sight of the real point of the miracle – faith in God. These examples serve to highlight that while such miracles may be unusual, they are not entirely unique to Sainte Foy.

The transactional nature of Sainte Foy’s miracles is presented in a different way in some miracles regarding the donation of specific goods to the monastery. For example, in one miracle, Foy wants a woman’s golden bracelets, but “the prudent woman wouldn’t allow such a great gift to leave her hands without some advantage for herself” and as such

¹⁵⁹ The miracle texts were written in 1172–1173 and survive in Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 16565. The Latin version of this text was published as *Les Miracles de Notre-Dame de Rocamadour au XIIe siècle: Texte et traduction*, Edmond Albe (ed.) (Paris: Champion, 1907), and is also available in translation in *The Miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour: Analysis and Translation*, Marcus Bull (ed.) (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), pp. 190-91.

¹⁶⁰ Christine Walsh, ‘The Role of the Normans in the Development of the Cult of St Katherine’, in *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe*, Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis (eds.) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 26-7.

¹⁶¹ Walsh, ‘The Role of the Normans in the Development of the Cult of St Katherine’, p. 27.

extracts a promise that Foy will intercede with God so that the woman may have a male child.¹⁶² This is shown again in another miracle where a man named William promised Foy “his best ring” when he was “worried about a distressing situation.”¹⁶³ Once the situation improved, William travelled to Conques to fulfil this promise. However, he decided to present Foy with three gold coins, rather than the ring he had promised as “he calculated that he should be able to redeem the promised gift with one that was larger even though it was different.”¹⁶⁴ This was not successful. After he had left Conques, he fell asleep and when he awoke again his ring was missing. This led him to plea with Sainte Foy, which resulted in the ring being miraculously found nearby on the pavement which William then returned to Foy at Conques. Bernard of Angers comments that his companions “marvelled at the sight, for they saw Saint Foy’s power even in trifling matters.”¹⁶⁵ These examples clearly highlight how miracles could act as a contract between saint and recipient, with expected actions from both involved parties, both then and in the future. They also establish that Foy has a specific interest in gold and jewellery, a theme which recurs throughout the miracle texts. This unusual element, a saint displaying the sin of greed, suggests that Foy’s behaviour is not necessarily an example for ordinary people to follow. Her special status as a saint allows her to transgress and desire gold and jewellery because it is not necessarily for herself, but rather for the glory of a virgin martyr who died for God.

2.4 Miracles as Punishment

Foy is also depicted as a saint who punishes others. In a number of miracles, people die because they have wronged Sainte Foy in some way. For example, after a man named

¹⁶² “Ad hec prudens matrona, non tantum munus absque fenore passa abire”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 56; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), pp. 84-5.

¹⁶³ “Quadam necessitudine anxius intolerabilique sollicitudine plenus, anulum optimum”, Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 121; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 86.

¹⁶⁴ “Cui cum de eadem re plus spe evenisset prospere cunctaque sibi ex sententia succederent, Conchas petiit, ex debito sollicitus voto”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 121; in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 86.

¹⁶⁵ “Qui virtutem sancte Fidis etiam in vilibus rebus viderent”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 122; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 87.

Rainon threatened a monk called Bergand and his escort, his horse threw him, killing them both.¹⁶⁶ When after hearing of these events, Rainon's brother Hector threatened "to tear the monk to pieces limb from limb, just as if he were seeking to punish a murderer."¹⁶⁷ However, this was not to be, as "heavenly vengeance prevented this and Hector died suddenly in a war."¹⁶⁸ In another miracle a man named Hugh ordered two of his servants to steal wine which belonged to the monks at Conques. The first of these servants, Benedict, suffered muscle paralysis and then died two days later.¹⁶⁹ The second servant, Hildebert, suffered a variety of tortures including his neck swelling so it was wider than his head and his suffering "dragged out his worthless life no more than three days."¹⁷⁰ Elsewhere, Foy killed a man who had taken a farm from the monastery, along with his wife and five of their servants. These examples can be seen as Foy punishing those who wronged her – or in some cases, wronged her monks. These punishment miracles are indicative of both Foy's power and her personality.

Foy also enacted punishment other than death. In the aforementioned wine miracle, Hugh, the instigator of the theft, was not killed. After his servants failed to get the wine, "he threatened to go out and seize the wine himself."¹⁷¹ His wife, Senegund, tried to prevent him from doing this "for fear that the condemnation of death would come suddenly, and that he would perish, struck down by the holy virgin's wrath."¹⁷² While Hugh was injured, his body

¹⁶⁶ Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 59.

¹⁶⁷ "Tanquam homicidii reum ulcisci querebat, membratimque discernere inexorabilis minitabatur", Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 26; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 60.

¹⁶⁸ "Sed celesti preventus vindicta repente bello occubuit", Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 29; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 60.

¹⁶⁹ Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 61.

¹⁷⁰ "Et non plus triduo vitam protraxit inanem", Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 28; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 62.

¹⁷¹ "Sed temerum rapere furibundos abire minatur", Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 29; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 62.

¹⁷² "Nec se preveniat subite dampnatio mortis nec pereat dive percussus virginis ira", Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 29; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 62.

began to rot and he spent three months unconscious, until his wife persuaded him to travel to Conques.¹⁷³ This kind of miracle reveals a more merciful facet to Foy's vengeful nature.

Another example can be seen in when a woman, Stephana, promised a ring to Sainte Foy before she died, but her husband did not heed this promise and used the ring to marry another woman, Avigerna.¹⁷⁴ For this, as well as wearing the ring "ostentatiously," Avigerna was punished by Foy. Avigerna's finger became greatly swollen and a pustule formed over the ring, so that "an implement could not be inserted nor the ring cut off without damage to the finger."¹⁷⁵ This punishment however was not permanent. Avigerna spent several days in "constant vigil" at Conques, when on the third day her pain increased so that the "pitiable sound of her screams did not cease all night long."¹⁷⁶ At this point, Avigerna blew her nose and the ring "flew off without hurting her fingers."¹⁷⁷ This miracle highlights not only how Foy punished people, but also how her miracles could also be temporary and dependent on the appropriate behaviour by the miracle's recipient.

Punishment miracles, while unusual, were not unique to Foy. Other saints who performed miracles which punished those who had wronged them. These included Henry VI, who blinded John Robins after he had insulted the memory of the deceased king and supposed saint. Robins was then cured after he promised to visit Henry's tomb.¹⁷⁸ Thomas Becket was also known to punish people from a variety of crimes, including having different

¹⁷³ "Sed tandem valuit meritis uxoris honeste atque virum mulier injustem, ut credo, fidelis reddidit ad vitam, que sacram virginis aedem admonet ut reppetat. Mox credulus idem prodiit ad sanctam grates acturus opimas, et rediens post hec non extitit ipse rebellis", Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 29; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 63.

¹⁷⁴ Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 87.

¹⁷⁵ "Ita videlicet ut anulus adacto ferro non posset secari sine digiti detrimento", Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 122; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 87.

¹⁷⁶ "Excubiis continuat", "in qua vis doloris ita sevir dolentum vexavit, ut vociferate femine miserrima vox per totum noctis spatium non cessaret", Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), pp. 122-3; Bernard of Angers in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 87.

¹⁷⁷ "Nam cum forte luctuosa matrona nares emunxisset, anulus, quem supra diximus, inviolata digitorum salute", Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 123; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 87.

¹⁷⁸ John M. Theilmann, 'English Peasants and Medieval Miracle Lists', *The Historian* 52.2 (February 1990), pp. 286-303, pp. 295-296.

attitudes to him.¹⁷⁹ Becket also, in one miracle depicted in the windows of the Trinity Chapel at Canterbury, brings back a boy from the dead only to kill him, along with another son, when his parents failed to fulfil their vows to the saint.¹⁸⁰ Theilmann interpreted these punishment miracles as a sign that popular belief in saints viewed them as “temperamental beings who could dispense both good and harm.”¹⁸¹ Punishments in miracle collections could operate both as literary devices and signs of the saint’s power, as noted by Thielmann in regard to a punishment miracle recorded by Orderic Vitalis.¹⁸² These punishment miracles serve to highlight the power of the saints, while also acting as a reminder of their role as capricious and temperamental individuals. These examples of punishment miracles by other saints suggest that while unusual, this behaviour was not unique to Foy. Again, this reflects how the behaviour of a saint can exist outside the norms of what is acceptable for an ordinary person because of their valued position as part of the company of heaven.

It is also worth noting, as Taylor has observed, that the geographic spread of Foy’s punishment miracles is more limited than those of other types. While other recorded miracles include ones from places as far afield as Normandy and the Holy Land, Foy’s punishment miracles are more closely focused around Conques itself.¹⁸³ Taylor suggested that this might reflect the different “cultic and socio-political spheres of the monastery.”¹⁸⁴ This does suggest that the monastery had greater socio-political control within their immediate environs, but it is also indicative of where such miracles were considered acceptable. They needed to be closer to the cult site to be legitimate, as well as occurring in a region where such miracles were acceptable. The miracle stories serve to cement Foy’s position at Conques and tighten the relationship between saint and monastery, whereby her power and authority became that of the monastery. These types of miracles were site specific – they, more than any other

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 296

¹⁸⁰ Sherry L. Reames, ‘Reconstructing and Interpreting a Thirteenth-Century Office for the Translation of Thomas Becket’, *Speculum* 80.1 (Jan. 2005), pp. 154-155.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 296

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 296

¹⁸³ Taylor, ‘Miracula, Saints’ Cults and Socio-Political Landscapes’, p. 168.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 168.

type, tied Foy to the landscape around Conques, only in a landscape shaped and controlled socially, geographically and economically by Foy and her monks were such miracles acceptable.

2.5 Foy's *Joca*

Another aspect worth looking at regarding Sainte Foy's miracle stories are those considered "jokes" or *joca* because they portray Foy as a trickster – an aspect Pierre-Andre Sigal considered unique to Foy's miracle collection.¹⁸⁵ These are usually considered to be the twenty-third to twenty-eighth stories in the first book of miracles.¹⁸⁶ Some of these texts explicitly refer to the miracles as Foy's jokes.¹⁸⁷ However, Ashley and Sheingorn suggest that the prior seven miracle stories should also be considered part of this grouping, as although they are not explicitly identified as jokes within the text, they do "demonstrate the saint's trickery and violation of decorum."¹⁸⁸ Within the text itself, Bernard of Angers justifies these miracles as being how the local peasants understood such things.¹⁸⁹ For Remensnyder, Sainte Foy's unusual identity as a child, a girl, and a member of the laity, provides the reason for these trickster elements in her character as she exists outside the norms for saints of the period, so it is not surprising that her miracle stories also exist outside hagiographic norms.¹⁹⁰ Even within her miracle collection, Foy defies categorisation.

There has been some debate over exactly why Sainte Foy displays these trickster elements. Sigal views these miracles as the result of tension between popular, folkloric understanding of saints on the one hand, and a more intellectual understanding on the

¹⁸⁵ Pierre-Andre Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XIe-XIIe siècle)* (Paris: Cerf, 1985), p. 271.

¹⁸⁶ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, pp. 33-34. See also Pierre-Andre, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XIe-XIIe siècle)* (Paris: Cerf, 1985), p. 312.

¹⁸⁷ "Ioca sancta Fidis", in Robertini (ed.), p. 123.

¹⁸⁸ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 33.

¹⁸⁹ "Quas incole loci ut est rusticus intellectus joca sancte Fidis appellant", Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 60; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 93.

¹⁹⁰ Amy G. Remensnyder, 'Un problème de cultures ou de culture? La statue-reliquaire et les *joca* de sainte Foy de Conques dans le *Liber miraculorum* de Bernard d'Angers', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 33.132 (October-December 1990), p. 377.

other.¹⁹¹ This interpretation however fails to take into account that any popular or folkloric understanding of Sainte Foy would have to be mediated through the monastic scribe, someone who should have a more “intellectual” understanding and in effect “know better.” Alternatively Remensnyder interpreted the *joca* as a way they clerics and laity, literate and illiterate, were able to coexist.¹⁹² This argument is more compelling as it takes into account why the monks would be willing to record such unusual miracles.

Ashley and Sheingorn take a different approach and argue that Foy is not the trickster, but rather Bernard of Angers himself fulfils that role on the basis that the *joca* “primarily appear in Bernard’s two books” and that his writing “both is and is not an example of a saint’s *Liber Miraculorum* and must be read with attention to its complex textual dynamics.”¹⁹³ However, the *joca* are not entirely absent from the third and fourth books of the miracle stories – only less prevalent. While the majority of the miracles associated with the trickster Foy are in books one and two, and as such were authored by Bernard of Angers, there are some examples of trickster behaviour in the third and fourth books, and as such this statement needs to be interrogated further. One of the most notable joking miracles actually occurs in the fourth book of miracles – that of how Foy tricked a man into asking a blacksmith to hit his scrotum with his hammer, which caused him to fall in terror and his herniated intestines to return to their usual place. The anonymous monk continuator specifically describes this miracle as “a remarkable joke” and Foy as someone who “claps her hands with delight” at such things.¹⁹⁴ This clearly shows how, even if the joking elements were established by Bernard of Angers, they were still present in the later books written by the anonymous monk continuator(s).

¹⁹¹ Sigal, p. 271.

¹⁹² Amy. G. Remensnyder, ‘Un problème de cultures ou de culture? La statue-reliquaire et les *joca* de sainte Foy de Conques dans le *Liber miraculorum* de Bernard d’Angers’, *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 33.132 (October-December 1990),

¹⁹³ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 23 and p. 33.

¹⁹⁴ “Quod insigni dignata est ludere facto” and “et plausu dignas signat quandoque medelas”, Anonymous in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Robertini (ed.), p. 263; in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 215.

The language which describes Foy does shift, focusing on her role as physician and patron with the use of terms such as “medicabile” and “patronam”, as noted by Ashley and Sheingorn.¹⁹⁵ However, despite being addressed as “lady” in one miracle in book three, she is also described as looking like a “girl” in a vision.¹⁹⁶ There is a shift in the descriptors used for Foy, but some of the language from the first two books persists. This suggests that at least some of the trickster nature is inherent to Foy herself and it is not Bernard of Angers who is responsible for, or is himself, the trickster in the text.

Ashley and Sheingorn have also looked at how the figure of the trickster, in this case Foy, can play with liminal space – showing its contradictions, possibilities and paradoxes.¹⁹⁷ This is particularly interesting when considered alongside paradox of learned and unlearned which is exhibited throughout the cult of Sainte Foy. She is not explicitly described as educated, and is in fact one of only two saints, along with Eulalia, in whose early Gallo-Romance lives where this is the case.¹⁹⁸ This has interesting consequences for the juxtaposition of learned and unlearned, clerical and lay, which influences her cult, and speaks to the mediation between different groups which can be seen throughout the miracle texts. As Ashley and Sheingorn state, trickster figures often combine traits and characteristics from different categories, such as wise and foolish, or funny and violent.¹⁹⁹ For Foy, they argue that this can be seen in her dual role as a murderer and as a model of exemplary behaviour.²⁰⁰ This is particularly interesting when considered alongside BL Arundel 91, an extant version of Foy’s miracles made in Canterbury in the last quarter of the twelfth century which removes references to any joking miracles.²⁰¹ This strips Foy of her identity as a trickster who enjoyed being funny, leaving behind only a vengeful and violent figure. This has ramifications for when and where it is appropriate for a saint to act as a

¹⁹⁵ Robertini, p. 184 and p. 208. Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith* p. 85.

¹⁹⁶ Anonymous, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 150.

¹⁹⁷ Ashley and Sheingorn, *Writing Faith*, p. 23.

¹⁹⁸ Elisabeth P. Work, ‘The Eleventh-Century *Song of Saint Fides*: An Experiment in Vernacular Eloquence’, *Romance Philology* 36.3 (Feb. 1983), p. 377.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 37-8.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

trickster, and suggests that twelfth century England, in contrast with the eleventh century Rouergue, was not such a place. For Ashley and Sheingorn, something similar can also be seen in books three and four of Foy's *Liber* where the monk continuator(s) did not mention any further joking miracles. However, instead of leaving behind a frightening figure, in Ashley and Sheingorn's view, the monks moulded her instead to fit the pattern of a celestial virgin and bride of Christ.²⁰² The later medieval period did see virgin martyrs develop into "refined gentlewomen rather than triumphant viragos."²⁰³ However, as Sanok notes, "the plots of late medieval legends reproduce those of earlier ones, and the virgin martyrs they depict – however elegant their manners – still challenge the dignity and value of established social hierarchies."²⁰⁴ This did not necessarily present a problem – if one aspect of a virgin martyr's legend was unsuitable, the emphasis could be placed on other aspects of her legend which were more appropriate. To quote Sanok, "exemplarity could be a surprisingly complicated and flexible mode of interpretation."²⁰⁵ Even with some of the original content removed or emphasis placed on different aspects of Sainte Foy, she remained an unruly figure.

Like punishment miracles, saints' jokes were not unique to Sainte Foy, and neither was the use of the term *joca*. Jones has noted the use of "witty miracles" by Thomas Becket, specifically one whereby the saint emptied a pyx of water to prove that a man was defrauding his father. The pyx in question was then hung in the local church "as a joke, and in laughter, to the glory of the martyr."²⁰⁶ Jones posits that the joke or amusement was not from the pyx itself, but rather the "act of revelation itself."²⁰⁷ Jones also notes that Gerald of Wales also used the term *joca* to describe miracles which "equally involved shock and

²⁰² Ibid., p. 69.

²⁰³ Karen Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 113

²⁰⁴ Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 3.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁰⁶ "in jocum et risum et martyris gloriam" Benedict of Peterborough, 'Miracula Sancti Thoma Cantuariensis, Auctore Benedicto, Abbate Petriburgensi,' in J. Robertson (ed.), *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury (Canonized by Pope Alexander III, AD 1173)* volume 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 96.

²⁰⁷ Peter J. A. Jones, *Laughter and Power in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 136

revelation,” adding that their purpose is to act as a “titillating type of scandalous revelation.”

²⁰⁸ This can also be seen in Foy’s miracles, especially in the miracle of the healed scrotum, described above. Another notable instance of a joking saint is that of Lawrence of Rome, famously known for quipping “I am cooked, now flip me and eat me” while, like Foy, being burned on a grill.²⁰⁹ These instances of other saints performing joking miracles highlight how while these kinds of miracles were unusual, they were not unique to Foy. They serve to highlight the defiant nature of laughter within the miraculous realm and how saints could act as disruptive figures.

2.6 The *Cançó de Santa Fe*

Another piece of material relating to the cult of Sainte Foy is the *Cançó de Santa Fe* (c. 1030-1070) which relates Foy’s passion in Provençal verse. In this account, Foy is burned on a grill but remains unharmed and is eventually killed by beheading, while the last eight *laissez* relate the downfall of her tormentors.²¹⁰ This work is particularly notable as it can be viewed through the lens of *chanson de geste* but predates the earliest known example of that genre by twenty or thirty years.²¹¹ The poem itself consists of 593 octosyllabic lines divided into stanzas of varying length and survives in one manuscript which was rediscovered in 1902.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 136.

²⁰⁹ See Pio Franchi de’ Cavalieri, “Assum est, versa et Manduca,” Note agiografiche, no. 3, *Studi e Testi* (Rome, 1915), pp. 66–82.

²¹⁰ Anonymous, *La Chanson de Sainte Foy d’Agen: poème provençal du XI siècle*, Antoine Thomas (ed.) (Paris, 1974),

<<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k819b.image.r=chanson+sainte+foy.f43.langEN.pagination>>

²¹¹ Sheingorn, ‘Introduction’, in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 26.

²¹² Armin Schwegler, ‘The Chanson de Sainte Foy: Etymology of Cabdorn (with Cursory Comments on the Localization of the Poem)’, *Romance Philology* 39.3 (Feb. 1986), p. 285. See also Frédéric de Gournay, ‘Relire la *Chanson de sainte Foy*’, *Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale* 107.212 (1995), pp. 385-399 and Anthony P. Espòsito, ‘The Language of the Chanson de Sainte Foy: Why the Hispanic Manner Matters’, *Romance Quarterly* 56.1 (2009), pp. 21-32.

A great deal has been written about the *Cançó*, largely centring around where the poem was written, but there remains no scholarly consensus on this topic.²¹³ While identifying a specific location the *Cançó* was written therefore seems highly unlikely, it is potentially possible to identify a broad area in which it was composed by looking at the contents of the poem itself – specifically who the poem considers part of the “in group,” part of the “land of Faith”, and the outgroup.

The *Cançó* describes itself as “on a Spanish subject” (“que fo de razo Espanesca”) (v. 15) but also that it is performed in “the French style” (“a lei Francesca”) (v. 20).²¹⁴ This immediately locates the poem within southern France or even further south in the Iberian Peninsula. Additionally, the author also says that “all the Basque country and Aragon and the country of the Gascons know what song this is” (“Tota Basconn’ et Aragons / E l’encontrada delz Gascons / Sabon quals es aqist canczons”) (vv. 23–25). This in turn suggests that the poet is not writing from within those communities, but rather that those groups have heard about the story of Sainte Foy through its spread rather than knowing it as a local story. The poet initially situates the poem by stating “you have long and quite often heard it said that Agen was a very rich city” (“Totz temps avez audid asaz / Q’Agenz fo molt rica ciutaz”) (vv. 34–35). This reference to the “hearing of” Agen suggests that the audience were not personally familiar with the city, thereby ruling it out as a possible source for the poem. Additionally, as Agen had suffered from *furta sacra* when Conques stole the relics of Foy, it seems highly unlikely that the city would celebrate this in any way. In the last eight stanzas, the fate of those who persecuted Foy is elaborated on, providing further information about where was considered not part of the “land of Faith” – Marseille features prominently

²¹³ These hypotheses, based on the dialect used within the poem range from Toulouse, as proposed by Gröber, to the department of Aude, suggested independently by both Hoepffner and Thomas, to the Rouergue, as posited by Soutou, as well as numerous others. See Schwegler, p. 299.

²¹⁴ English translations are taken from Robert L. A. Clark’s translation in *The Book of Sainte Foy*,) and original language from Anonymous, *La Chanson de Sainte Foy d’Agen: poème provençal du XI siècle*, Antoine Thomas (ed.) (Paris, 1974), <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k819b.image.r=chanson+sainte+foy.f43.langEN.pagination>> [accessed 11 December 2020].

in this, and Rome is also mentioned.²¹⁵ All of this serves to illustrate how the “land of Faith” is a specific region of southern France. Within the poem, a regional identity is constructed centring around Foy and her cult centre at Conques.

Some of the imagery in the miracle stories, as well as the Latin *Passio*, is also repeated in the *Cançó de Santa Fe*. For example, the angel that appeared for Saint Caprais above Sainte Foy is described as “white as a dove” (“Auiaz qual deintad l aduz”) (v. 365), mirroring the dove that placed the crown on Foy’s head in the *Passio*, the snow-white dove which appeared during the miracle of Guibert, and the golden doves which Foy received through another miracle.²¹⁶ Another similarity is the crown and clothing which Foy is wearing at the point of her martyrdom. In the *Cançó*, Foy is described as being given “a gold crown that shone more than does the sun when it is at its zenith” (“Corona d’aur, qe plus reluz / Non fal soleilz wuand es creguz”) (vv. 366–367) and an angel covered her body with “a cloth of beaten gold” (“D’un pali q’es ab aur batuz”) (v. 369). This reflects the “crown, decorated with bright, glittering gems and celestial pearls” and “snow-white garment radiant with bright light” from the *Passio*.²¹⁷ However the description in the *Cançó* also specifically recalls the imagery of Saint Foy’s statue – both the reliquary and the saint in the song are draped in beaten gold. These instances highlight the consistent nature of the imagery associated with Sainte Foy, potentially suggesting a degree of clerical involvement with the poem’s construction and control over the development of the cult.

As well as the language of the song providing useful information, its contents can also tell us more about Sainte Foy and her cult. The song highlights the violence encountered by Foy. She is “beaten and struck” (“batre e ferir”) (v. 218) and “dragged” (“tir”) (v. 220) into “the harshest prison” (“le plus carcer”) (v. 219) before her trial has even officially

²¹⁵ Anonymous, ‘The Song of Sainte Foy’, Robert L. A. Clark (trans.), in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 284.

²¹⁶ Anonymous, ‘Passio’, Bernard of Angers, ‘How Guibert’s Eyes Were Restored by Sainte Foy After They Had Been Torn Out by the Roots’, and Bernard of Angers, ‘The Miracle of the Golden Doves’, in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 35, p. 45, and p. 81.

²¹⁷ Anonymous, ‘Passio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 35.

begun.²¹⁸ The song also makes explicit the similarity in method of martyrdom between Foy and Saint Lawrence, with Dacian threatening Foy by stating that “the fiery flame will burn you, as you have heard it did Saint Lawrence.” (“Ous cremara la flamm’ ardentz / Con audistz qe fez saint Laurentz”) (vv. 289–290).²¹⁹ How Foy miraculously survived the fiery grill is also expanded on in the *Cançó*. The narrator states that “a winged angel came there from heaven, white as a dove in the year of its birth; when the angel fluttered over the fire, the blaze went cold” (Angels I veng de Cel, pennaz, / Blancs qon columns q’eiss l’an foss naz”) (vv. 359–360).²²⁰ The angel then goes on to cover Foy in gold: “this angel that came there, hear what a treasure he there brought: a gold crown that shone more than does the sun when it is at its zenith. He covered her body, which was completely naked, with a cloth of beaten gold” (“Aqell angels qe I es vengus, / Auiaz qual deintad I aduz / Corona d’aur, qe plus reluz / Non fal soleilz quand es cregus / Cuberg lil corps, q’era totz nuz / D’un pali q’es ab aur batuz”) (vv. 364–369).²²¹ This description of a body covered in gold wearing a gold crown bears at least a passing resemblance to the reliquary statue of Foy at Conques, in particular given the descriptor of “beaten gold.” This shows how the saint and the reliquary statue were considered one and the same by c. 1030-50. It also suggests that the reliquary was understood to be Foy after her martyrdom, in her glory in heaven, rather than as she had appeared on earth during her mortal life.

One interesting aspect of the *Cançó de Santa Fe* is that it acknowledges that it is a retelling of the story. The narrator of the poem states that “I heard a Latin book about the old times read under a pine. I listened to it in its entirety, to the end” (“Legir audi sotz eiss un pin / Del vell temps un libre Latin / Tot l’escoltei tro a la fin”) (vv. 1–3) and says that “if our melody is pleasing to you, as the first tone guides it, so will I freely sing it to you” (“E si vos plaz est nostre sons / Aisi conl guidal primers tons / Eu la vos cantarei en dons”) (vv. 31-

²¹⁸ Anonymous, ‘The Song of Sainte Foy’, Robert L. A. Clark (trans.), in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 279.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 280.

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 281.

²²¹ Anonymous, ‘The Song of Sainte Foy’, Robert L. A. Clark (trans.), in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 281.

33).²²² This immediately makes clear the medium in which the poem was delivered and how it spread. As Work has pointed out, the narrator of the song establishes himself as an individual who is “far more interested in capturing our attention and pleasing us with his song than in soberly instructing us.”²²³ This highlights a different function of the story of Sainte Foy than one of simple moralising instruction. It could also be a source of entertainment, as many saints’ lives were. The *Cançó de Santa Fe* adds a “personal dimension” to the narrative, in part due to the use of the vernacular as well as oral storytelling tradition.²²⁴ It also acts as means of blending clerical and lay interpretations of Sainte Foy.

The *Cançó de Santa Fe* also serves to illustrate how different groups of society interacted with the story of Foy. This is a poem intended for a wide audience and written in the vernacular. The narrator inserts references to everyday life into his work, and thereby into Foy’s life. For example, when Foy chastises those for putting up idols, she states that “simple beams of a winepress cut with an adze in the thickets would have been worth more” (“Quan los levestz e nest cabdoill/ E lur mesestz aital escoill / Aiczo fevestz tot orgoill / Mais valgran single trau de troill / Qe l’om aggest dolaz enz broill”) (vv. 269–273).²²⁵ Through these comments the narrator provides a glimpse of everyday life, but also directly equates this sort of living with Foy.²²⁶ This in turn makes her a more accessible figure to those who worship her. The song is “accessible to the lowest common denominator” due to its use of both the vernacular and song form.²²⁷ As such, it can provide evidence for how the cult of Sainte Foy may have spread among those who only spoke the vernacular language, thereby entering into the broader imaginative memory beyond that of the monastic community.

²²² Ibid., p. 275.

²²³ Work, ‘The Eleventh-Century *Song of Saint Fides*: An Experiment in Vernacular Eloquence’, p. 372.

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 375.

²²⁵ Translation from Work, p. 377. Clark’s translation differs slightly: “Each of the supports of a wine press, fashioned with an axed in the forest, would be worth more.” ‘The Song of Sainte Foy’, Robert. L. A. Clark (trans), in Pamela Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 279.

²²⁶ Work, ‘The Eleventh-Century *Song of Saint Fides*: An Experiment in Vernacular Eloquence’, p. 377.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 384.

2.7 Sainte Foy in the Decorative Scheme at Conques

Depictions of Sainte Foy can be found throughout the abbey at Conques. She is also included in the central portal of the tympanum on the west façade of the abbey which depicts the Last Judgement (fig. 1.12). The date of this tympanum has caused great debate, with historians dating it between 1080 and 1150.²²⁸ The focus of the tympanum is Christ in judgement, to his right are the saved and to his left, the damned. Here Foy is shown on Christ's right, interceding on the behalf of prisoners with her hands clasped before her in prayer (fig. 1.13). Above her, the hand of God reaches down to bestow his favour. Behind her are the shackles of the prisoners Foy has helped to free, likely mirroring the interior of the actual church. Kirk Ambrose has linked other aspects of the tympanum back to Foy as well – namely the depiction of those in hell as paralysed which he relates to miracles performed by Foy which rendered people paralysed as punishment.²²⁹ This depiction of Foy stands in stark contrast to the reliquary inside the abbey. Here Foy is veiled and bent forward in supplication, not staring forwards and demanding gifts.

Other sculptural depictions include a relief known as the Tomb of Bego III (fig. 1.14), who was abbot of Conques from 1087 to 1107.²³⁰ This depicts Christ, flanked by Abbot Bego and Sainte Foy. Two angels are also shown, one of whom is crowning Foy, echoing other depictions of her both crowned in martyrdom and as a secular overlord.²³¹ Other sculpture depicting Foy can be found on the nave arcade capitals from the first half of the twelfth century which show the saint before Dacian, highlighting the story of her *Passio*.²³²

²²⁸ The dating of the tympanum has been the source of much debate, along with its role in the development of the Romanesque in Spain and the Auvergne. For a survey of the scholarship, see Lei Huang, 'Le Maître du tympan de l'abbatiale Sainte-Foy de Conques: état de la question et perspectives', *Études aveyronnaises: Recueil des travaux de la Société des lettres, sciences et arts de l'Aveyron* (2014), pp. 87-100.

²²⁹ Kirk Ambrose, 'Attunement to the Damned of the Conques Tympanum', *Gesta* 50.1 (2011), pp. 9-10.

²³⁰ Walter Cahn, 'Observations of the "A of Charlemagne" in the Treasury of the Abbey of Conques', *Gesta* 45.2 (2006), p. 95

²³¹ Abbey Church of Sainte Foy, Conques, The Tomb of Bego, 1100-1120.

²³² Abbey Church of Sainte Foy, Conques, Capital (nave arcade, fourth column of north side), 1100-1149.

Foy is also depicted on the portable altar of abbot Bégo (fig. 1.15) which dates to c. 1100 along with a wide variety of other saints including the Virgin, Paul, Vincent, and Cecilia. Foy is placed in a position of honour on Christ's left hand while the Virgin Mary stands on his left.²³³ Another portable reliquary (fig. 1.16) also from around 1100 survives.²³⁴ The focus of this reliquary, decorated with gold and cloisonné enamel, is more clearly Saint Foy as the only labelled figures on the reliquary are Foy and Mary, with Christ labelled with an alpha and omega. Mary and Foy are also further elevated by the depiction of them with tilted square halos containing five smaller circles. The reliquary also depicts the four evangelists, the lamb of God, and two unidentified saints who it has been suggested are Caprais and Vincent.²³⁵ These depictions of Foy highlight her importance, not just at Conques but in comparison with the other denizens of heaven, even going so far as to elevate her to the level of the Virgin Mary for the community at Conques. However, in contrast with the reliquary statue, they depict her as veiled, thereby conforming with the traditional early medieval image of the virgin martyr.²³⁶

Later depictions of Foy also survive at Conques, including murals in the sacristy which date to the fifteenth century and depict scenes from the martyrdom of Foy.²³⁷ Bouillet says that these images are "accompagnées d'inscription très incomplètes" and were made "par ne main douée d'une certaine habileté."²³⁸ Given the date of the wall paintings, it is likely that this space was built shortly after the secularisation of the abbey in 1424.²³⁹ A reliquary from a similar period also survives in the treasury at Conques – a statuette of Foy made from silver and gold holding a sword, grill, and martyr's palm.²⁴⁰ This reliquary shows a

²³³ Gaborit-Chopin and Traburet-Delahaye (eds.), *Les trésors de Conques*, p pp. 56-59.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 62.

²³⁵ Ibid., pp. 62-64.

²³⁶ In the later medieval period, uncovered hair was instead seen as an indication of an unmarried woman, and therefore, virginity.

²³⁷ A. Bouillet, *L'Église et le Trésor de Conques (Aveyron)*, p. 31.

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

²³⁹ The use of this space as a sacristy is a fairly recent development. Marcel Deyres, 'Le local à usage de sacristie à Sainte-Foy de Conques', *Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale* 83.103 (1971), pp. 337-339.

²⁴⁰ Gaborit-Chopin and Traburet-Delahaye (eds.), *Le trésor de Conques*, p pp. 74-75.

move away from the type of grill from earlier depictions; the grill Foy is holding more closely resembles a five pronged fork. These survivals indicate that there may have been a renewed interest in Foy's cult at Conques in the fifteenth century, even after the secularisation of the abbey.

2.8 The Reliquary Statue

While there is a plethora of documentary evidence for the cult of Sainte Foy, the golden reliquary of Sainte Foy stands at its centre. It is the oldest surviving figural reliquary.²⁴¹ It depicts a seated golden figure with arms outstretched and stands 85 cm tall (figs. 1.1 and 1.2).²⁴² It is covered with embellishments, apart from the blank, staring face. It is mentioned frequently in introductions to medieval art history, and art history more broadly. The reliquary is used to illustrate a number of different points in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, and it is used to introduce a section on the veneration of reliquaries in *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*.²⁴³ And yet, the precise make up of this remarkable object is rarely discussed at length, and as such warrants a close and detailed examination. Additionally, as the image at the centre of the cult of Sainte Foy, any examination of her cult and depictions needs to consider this important object.

The reliquary statue is made from gilded silver and copper, and decorated with enamel, rock crystal, gems, and cameos; the core is made from yew wood which was originally covered in gold leaf.²⁴⁴ The head was not originally made for this statue and, it has been claimed, actually depicts an adult male which further complicates the depiction of the virgin martyr. It dates from approximately the fifth century but was not made in Conques.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann and James Robinson (eds.) (London: British Museum, 2011), p. 25.

²⁴² Gaborit-Chopin and Traburet-Delahaye (eds.), *Le trésor de Conques*, p. 18.

²⁴³ Conrad Rudolph (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Global History*, 16th edn. (Boston: Cengage, 2020), p. 349.

²⁴⁴ Seeta Chaganti, *The Medieval Poetics of the Reliquary: Enshrinement, Inscription, Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 107. And Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', pp. 18-19.

²⁴⁵ Sheingorn, 'Introduction', in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 16.

The head has large white eyes with deep black irises which stare outward, dominating the head against the rest of the monochrome gold face. Foy's mouth is slightly downturned, a feature which is emphasised by the angle at which the head is positioned. Foy also wears an imperial crown which, like the rest of the reliquary, has undergone several transformations.²⁴⁶ The statue is embellished with a variety of precious materials including emeralds, carnelians, sapphires, amethysts, pearls, cameos, antique intaglios, and cloisonné enamel.²⁴⁷ According to Bouillet, since 1878 the reliquary has contained the cranium of the saint and other fragments of her skull, along with cloth soaked in the virgin's blood.²⁴⁸ The location of the head relics reinforces the fact that Conques is the centre of Foy's cult. These relics are inside a cavity in the reliquary statue which can be accessed from behind.²⁴⁹ An examination of the bone fragments from this reliquary, along with ones from another reliquary, was conducted in 1878 and the contents of the reliquary have not been re-examined since.

The central core of the statue is made from carved yew wood.²⁵⁰ Yew wood is known for its long-term durability as well as its suitability for making bows and other weapons, and there is a longstanding association between yews and churches.²⁵¹ Symbolically, the tree is associated with both life and death due to its long lifespan and high toxicity.²⁵² It was not, however, a common wood for sculpture.²⁵³ Yew was certainly available relatively locally as there is archaeobotanical evidence for yew trees at thirty-two different sites in northern

²⁴⁶ During the restoration of the 1950s, the crown was disassembled which showed that the crown had to be sized down to fit the head of the statue. See Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', pp. 59-64.

²⁴⁷ A. Bouillet, *L'Église et le Trésor de Conques (Aveyron)*, p. 52.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-4.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁵⁰ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', p. 19.

²⁵¹ Paloma Uzquiano, Ethel Allué, Ferran Antolín, Francesc Burjachs, Llorenç Picornel, Raquel Piqué and Lydia Zapata, 'All about yew: on the trail of *Taxus baccata* in southwest Europe by means of integrated palaeobotanical and archaeobotanical studies', in *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 24.1 (January 2015), p. 230.

²⁵² Uzquiano, Allué, Antolín, Burjachs, Picornel, Piqué and Zapata, 'All about yew', p. 230.

²⁵³ In her assessment of wooden Madonnas in Majesty from the twelfth century and earlier, Forsyth does not mention any which make use of yew. She notes that walnut, oak and birch are the most popular in different regions across France. However, as Forsyth herself notes, this is a small sample size and may not be indicative of broader preferences. Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom*, p. 16.

Catalonia.²⁵⁴ However, it is worth noting that the majority of these sites pre-date the construction of the reliquary statue by some considerable time. Regardless, there is sufficient evidence that yew could grow in the conditions near Conques. As such, this suggests that the construction of the statue was made using available, local resources, instead of imported materials. This in turn suggests that at the time of the initial construction of the reliquary, the monastery was not as wealthy as it later became.

In addition to being headless, the original core is seated in a slightly different position than the one we see today. Instead of having arms reaching forward, the wooden core has her arms by her sides. This is potentially indicative of a sculptor who is less confident working fully in the round, and Fricke has even suggested that the statue was originally a bust reliquary which was expanded into a full figure c. 1000 given that the torso and legs are sculpted from different tree trunks.²⁵⁵ The original wooden core was covered in strips of gold, decorated with repoussé fleurettes.²⁵⁶ Taralon considered all the wooden pieces of the core to be contemporaneous as they are all yew and the tool markings on the wood suggest that the same tools were used throughout.²⁵⁷ It is these tool marks, evident on the top of the neck of the statue, which lead Taralon to conclude that the statue was made without a head.²⁵⁸ This deliberate choice not to make a head for the reliquary suggests that it was made specifically with an existing, separate head in mind.

²⁵⁴ Uzquiano, Allué, Antolín, Burjachs, Picornel, Piqué and Zapata, 'All about yew', p. 233.

²⁵⁵ Fricke argues that the reworking which occurred in the tenth century refashioned the reliquary from a bust to a seated figure, thereby explaining the disproportion between the head and body size as "the torso of a reliquary bust is often executed with little attention to anatomy: it need only support the saintly head." This argument is also partly based on the fact that the lower part of the wooden core is "more coarsely finished." Unfortunately, the quality of the photographs of the wooden core mean I am unable to comment on this aspect. Given the lack of dendrochronological data, it seems this issue is impossible to resolve for certain and remains open to individual scholarly interpretation. See Beate Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints: Sainte Foy of Conques and the Revival of Monumental Sculpture in Medieval Art*, Andrew Griebeler (trans.) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 26-45 on the development of three-dimensional sculpture and the reforming of the reliquary statue.

²⁵⁶ Gaborit-Chopin and Traburet-Delahaye (eds.), *L'Église et le Trésor de Conques (Aveyron)*, p. 18.

²⁵⁷ No dendrochronological dating has been undertaken on the wood as yew does not form annual growth rings. Additionally, as observed by Beate Fricke, it is possible that these tool marks date to an Ottonian reworking, rather than the original period of construction (See Beate Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, p. 118.). I tend to think they were made all at the same time but this is impossible to prove conclusively. Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', p. 21.

²⁵⁸ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', p. 23.

Taralon put forward the idea that the head was originally that of an emperor, based in part on holes which were found above the rolls of hair which he suggested would have held a laurel crown.²⁵⁹ He also argues that the statue was made specifically to go with the pre-existing head.²⁶⁰ The head itself is made of two plates of gold, which are joined by rivets and welding. Taralon described the gold of the head as having a distinct reddish tone, possibly suggesting gold from a different location.²⁶¹ The fact that the head was made separately accounts for its slightly strange positioning on the neck, leading to an upwards looking face, and the larger proportions of the head compared to the rest of the body.²⁶² An earlier date for the head of the statue has also been suggested by both Émile Molinier, who identified a Byzantine influence, and Ferdinand de Lasteyrie, who dated it to the Romanesque period.²⁶³ As Taralon says, “elle ne pouvait être située qu'à une époque et dans un milieu où la représentation de la figure humaine dans ses trois dimensions et l'art du métal repoussé avaient atteint une parfaite maîtrise.”²⁶⁴

Taralon identified the eyes as being made of glass, not enamel, and held in place by wax which had been poured into the hollow head.²⁶⁵ He also considered the eyes to be made at same time as, and for, the head.²⁶⁶ The pupils of the eyes are wide apart and set high in the eye, which Taralon believed to be the reason why the statue has such an intimidating and penetrating gaze.²⁶⁷ The importance of the gaze has been highlighted by scholars such as Michael Camille who linked Foy's “glaring eyes” with a tradition of imperial portraiture and related it to medieval optics whereby *spiritus* emanated from the eyes, “illuminating the world around so that the beholders could literally be trapped by the gaze of

²⁵⁹ Taralon does not provide any other examples of laurel wreaths used on statues in this way. There are extant examples of statuary with holes on the head which are theorised to have held laurel wreaths, such as the Statue of Antinous at Delphi of c. 130 AD at the Delphi Archaeological Museum in Greece. Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 24.

²⁶⁰ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 18.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁶² Ibid., p. 24.

²⁶³ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

the image.²⁶⁸ In contrast, Taralon describes the eyes of later statues such as the Golden Madonna of Essen (c. 980) as reminiscent of a frightened bird (fig. 1.3).²⁶⁹ The inclusion of a coloured iris in the Essen Madonna serves to break up the eye and soften the gaze, particularly in combination with the slightly downturned tilt of the head. The twist and turn of the Virgin's body also serves to soften the statue, creating a more approachable figure. Forsyth describes the Essen Madonna as having "an illusion of warm and delicate femininity."²⁷⁰ These are not descriptions which could be applied to the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy with its stark frontality and outstretched arms which seem to reach out to take from the viewer.²⁷¹

The reliquary statue of Sainte Foy has been modified greatly over the course of its existence. As well as the surviving visual evidence for these changes, the miracle stories relate how, after the miracle of Guibert the Illuminated ("Vuitberti illuminati"), the reliquary was remade: "the most outstanding of the ornaments then was this splendid image, which was made long ago. Today it would be considered one of the poorer ornaments if it had not been reshaped anew and renovated into a better figure."²⁷² Taralon identified various modifications to the reliquary which he believes were made in the tenth century: the addition of the crown; the removal of some of the tunic at the lower hem; the addition of ornamental borders with filigree patterns.²⁷³ These additions likely reflect the growing wealth of the monastery, but also the development of Foy as a secular lord through the use of the reliquary in processions relating to land disputes.²⁷⁴ As Hahn notes, with figural reliquaries,

²⁶⁸ Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 223.

²⁶⁹ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', p. 30.

²⁷⁰ Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom*, p. 11.

²⁷¹ It is worth noting here that the arms are part of sixteenth-century reworking so it is unclear when precisely the positioning of the arms, and therefore the gesture, shifted.

²⁷² "Quod autem erat precipuum ornati, hoc est decus imaginis, que ab antiquo fabricata nunc reputaretur inter minima, nisi de integro reformata in meliorem renovaretur figuram", Bernard of Angers, *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 53; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 82.

²⁷³ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', p. 35.

²⁷⁴ For more on the use of the statue reliquary in processions, see Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, 'An Unsentimental View of Ritual in the Middle Ages Or, Sainte Foy was no Snow White', *Journal of Ritual Studies* 6.1 (Winter 1992), 63-85.

“because the image is one of a person, issues of social relations of power become central and immediate.”²⁷⁵ Both the form of the statue and its use embed Foy not just in, but at the top of, the existing social hierarchy.

The long, golden, sleeves were likely also not originally made for the reliquary statue, as they have been cut at both ends and are partially concealed by the armrests of the throne.²⁷⁶ The crystal balls, lower sleeves and arms date from another later period of additional decoration.²⁷⁷ The quadrilobed which covers the saint’s breast was added in the thirteenth century.²⁷⁸ This is potentially indicative of a change in where the relics of the saint were kept within the statue, possibly suggesting a change in the liturgical use of the statue, enabling the relics and reliquary to more easily be included in processions, both within and outside the monastery. As well as adding further adornments to the reliquary, parts of it have also been removed. At some point sections of gold were removed and covered with lower value gems, which can clearly be seen on the saint’s knees which are adorned with carbuncles to cover up areas on the knees where gold has been removed.²⁷⁹ The reliquary has also undergone more changes in the modern period which culminated in 1954 when, under the direction of Jean Taralon, the reliquary statue underwent restoration work by Lucien and Jean-Claude Toulouse.²⁸⁰ This restoration was part of a national movement to develop ecclesiastical treasures which eventually culminated in the 1965 exhibition *Trésors*

²⁷⁵ Cynthia Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400-circa 1204* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), p. 120.

²⁷⁶ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 36.

²⁷⁷ Ellert Dahl, ‘Heavenly Images: The cult of St. Foy of Conques and the signification of the Medieval “Cult-Image” in the West’, *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Pertinentia* (1978), p. 176.

²⁷⁸ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 21.

²⁷⁹ This was likely done during a period when the monastery had limited funds as, to quote Forsyth, “despite its sacred purpose, the gold was, of course, still gold.” Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom*, p. 14.

²⁸⁰ Taralon joined the *Corps de l’Inspection des Monuments Historiques* in 1946 and was named Inspector General in 1968. He also founded the *Laboratoire de Recherche des Monuments Historiques* at Champs-sur-Marne, of which he was also director until 1982. He died in 1996. See ‘In Memoriam: Jean Taralon (1909-1996)’, *Bulletin Monumental*, 155.1 (1997), pp. 7-9. Lucien and Jean-Claude Toulouse appear to have worked on multiple restorations with Taralon. Taralon credits their knowledge of “l’art et des techniques d’orfèvrerie” for the conclusions he was able to present in his 1997 article on the reliquary. See Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 53 and Jean Taralon, ‘La châsse de Saint-Taurin d’Évreux’, *Bulletin Monumental*, 140.1 (1982), pp. 41-56.

des églises de France.²⁸¹ These changes and modifications to the reliquary statue reflect the changing financial and social status of the monastery, which in turn were dependent on the popularity of their saint.

The Sainte Foy reliquary is adorned with numerous gems and intaglios which decorate Foy's clothing, throne, and crown. At the collar and hem of Foy dress, as well as in the large draping sleeves, these gems are set within thick bands of filigree. There is great variety amongst the gems and intaglios used on the reliquary. For example, one intaglio at the bottom hem of Foy's dress depicts the Roman Emperor Caracalla (also known as Antoninus) (r. 198-217), while the back of the throne is adorned with an engraved rock from the Carolingian period, which depicts the Crucifixion.²⁸² This serves to highlight the composite nature of the reliquary, likely as a result of both *spolia* and donation. Foy, in the form of her reliquary, is both a watcher and protector of treasure, but also a treasure herself.

The head is also adorned with earrings which are formed from hanging golden cylinders decorated with embedded stones. A number of chains dangle from the bottom, some with pearls and others with gold loops in the shape of quatrefoils. These are likely a later addition which required significant intervention, given the large, traumatic holes in the ears, combined with the later motif of the quatrefoil. The addition of earrings, particularly of this style, has imperial connotations.²⁸³ This is particularly interesting as reliquary statues are rarely depicted with earrings.²⁸⁴ This may be a reflection of Foy's noted desire for gifts of

²⁸¹ Isabelle Jacqueline, 'L'exposition *Trésors des églises de France*, 5 février - 24 mai 1965: quelle avancée?', *Histoire de l'art*, 73 (2013), pp. 75-84.

²⁸² Gaborit-Chopin and Traburet-Delahaye (eds.), *Le trésor de Conques*, pp. 24-5.

²⁸³ See for example Lynda Garland, "'The Eye of the Beholder": Byzantine Imperial Women and their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosyne Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028-1203)', in *Byzantion*, 64.2 (1994), pp. 261-313.

²⁸⁴ I have been unable to find any other extant examples, although some may exist. Some depictions of saints adorned with earrings are depicted in other media, such as an icon of Saint Catherine from Mount Sinai dating to the thirteenth century <<http://vrc.princeton.edu/sinai/items/show/7653>> and a fresco of Saint Barbara at Monagri, Panagia Amasgou. There is little scholarship on this topic for the medieval period, although some biblical scholars have addressed the topic of idols wearing earrings given that in Genesis 35, in response to Jacob telling his family to "remove the foreign gods which are amongst you, purify yourselves, and change your clothes," they gave him "the earrings which were in their ears." It has been suggested that rather than these earrings belonging to Jacob's family, they were in fact worn by the idols themselves. See William H. Hallo, 'Cult Statue and Divine Image: A Preliminary Study', in *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method*, William W.

jewellery within her miracle collection.²⁸⁵ When combined with the intervention required to wear them, this suggests that they were a notable donation, one which the monastery were keen to display prominently to warrant such intervention.

The throne on which Sainte Foy sits is also luxuriously decorated. The original statue sat on a wooden throne, which was later replaced by one of gold.²⁸⁶ This, again, reflects the changing financial and social status of the monastery. The structure of the throne consists of a wrought iron frame covered in silver plates and decorated with golden filigree and cabochons.²⁸⁷ The bottom half of the flat sides are perforated with a pattern of crosses with equal length branches, whilst the top half is perforated with trefoils. Taralon considered the throne to be an imperial or episcopal throne which was in use from the sixth to eleventh century.²⁸⁸ Bouillet describes these as “rappellent des motifs employés à l'époque carolingienne.”²⁸⁹ As such, moving Foy from a wooden throne to this golden one reinforces her position as an imperial figure, one who specifically drew on the language of power from the Carolingian empire. The frame of the chair is also decorated with both cut and uncut stones, most of which Bouillet labelled as “antique.”²⁹⁰ The frame is further embellished with filigree. On the uppermost part of the frame of the chair at the back, an intaglio depicting Christ on the cross flanked by the Virgin Mary and Saint John has been inserted, which Bouillet considered to be of Byzantine origin.²⁹¹ A large spherical crystal protrudes from both the beginning and end of each armrest. According to Bouillet, two of these symbolise the golden doves from Foy's *Liber*.²⁹² However, these crystals were a fifteenth-century addition,

Hallo, James C. Moyer and Leo G. Perdue (eds.) (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1983), pp. 1-18, and Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, 'Who Lost an Earring? Genesis 35:4 Reconsidered', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 62.1 (January 2000), pp. 28-32.

²⁸⁵ For examples of Foy's affinity for jewellery, see miracles 1.18, 1.19 and 2.10 in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.) (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto medioevo, 1994).

²⁸⁶ Gaborit-Chopin and Traburet-Delahaye (eds.), p. 18.

²⁸⁷ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', p. 38.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁸⁹ A. Bouillet, *L'Église et le Trésor de Conques (Aveyron)*, p. 51.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁹¹ A. Bouillet, *L'Église et le Trésor de Conques (Aveyron)*, p. 51.

²⁹² It is not entirely clear why Bouillet came to this conclusion, and why only two of the four should be symbolic. As such, this particular piece of symbolism should be taken with a grain of salt. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

with further modifications in the nineteenth century, and as such do not reflect the medieval state of the statue.

To sum up the current state of scholarship surrounding the reliquary – there were two major periods of construction. The first, which made use of the fifth-century head, was made of yew wood and covered in gold foil. The second was the “*integro reformata*” which Bernard of Angers described happening after the miracle of Guibert. Following these two key moments of construction, the reliquary continued to be reworked and added to, but not to the same degree whereby it was entirely reformed. The reliquary as we see it today is as a result of cumulative artistic work taking place over the course of over a thousand years.

Bouillet argues that because Bernard of Angers’ description of the statue of Sainte Foy is so detailed and as it resembles the still extant reliquary statue, the reliquary must predate Bernard’s first visit to Conques in 1010 and in fact dates from the period of 942 to 984, when Etienne was abbot of Conques given the surviving records of the reliquary being “transformed”.²⁹³ However, as Bouillet himself acknowledges, the reliquary statue had probably undergone some changes by this point, as well as during the subsequent passage of time. Louis Bréhier and others following him, such as Keller and Schrade, have dated the reliquary statue to the late tenth century.²⁹⁴ Taralon has argued for an earlier date in the ninth century, placing the date of its creation much closer to when the relics of Foy first came to Conques.²⁹⁵ Some objections to this earlier date have been made, based primarily on the prescriptions against statues during the Carolingian period, largely found in the *Libri Carolini*.²⁹⁶ However, as Forsyth has shown, there was an interest in religious statues during this periods, citing literary references to “freestanding images” in locations ranging from Charlemagne’s court to Wessex; as well as the decision of the Second Council of Nicaea (787) to restore the use of icons and the fact that the *Libri Carolini* actually admits the

²⁹³ Ibid., p. 50.

²⁹⁴ Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom*, p. 68.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 68-9.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 69.

usefulness of images for the purpose of education.²⁹⁷ As such, a ninth-century date for the reliquary statue cannot be completely ruled out based on the evidence of the *Libri Carolini* and would make logical sense given the ninth-century arrival of Foy's relics in Conques. On acquiring these sacred relics, the community at Conques would wish to provide them with a suitable home, both the buildings of the abbey itself and an appropriate reliquary.

When Bernard of Angers first saw the reliquary c. 1010, it was on display in the crypt, but was later moved to the high altar.²⁹⁸ This ensured that the reliquary was visible to pilgrims, thereby reinforcing Foy's position at Conques and ensuring the abbey and saint were perceived as one entity. This position high above visiting pilgrims may have influenced the depiction of Sainte Foy elsewhere, with Foy depicted looking down on the viewer. Pilgrims also had an opportunity to see the reliquary statue on Foy's feast day, October 6th, when it was paraded with monks and accompanying music.²⁹⁹

As Caroline Walker Bynum and Paula Gerson have pointed out, "the head and arms are the most expressive and communicative parts of our bodies."³⁰⁰ Both these parts feature prominently on the reliquary statue of Foy. Her arms reach out toward you, but this gesture is not fully articulated. The arms seem short and cut off, so the gesture seems almost abortive. The reliquary, and the saint herself, are out of reach. This is reaffirmed by her gaze as the positioning of the head and the eyes make direct eye contact difficult. This is in contrast with the Essen Madonna (fig. 1.3), who, while making eye contact with the viewer, the severity of it is diminished by the angled tilt of the head, the less prominent brow ridge, and the mediating object of the orb. Foy does not so much look at you as look down upon

²⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 70-1.

²⁹⁸ This interpretation of the location of the reliquary appears to be based on miracle 1.26, which relates that Gimon, who was guardian of the sanctuary ("erat et custos sanctuarii") Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom*, p. 39. For the keeping of relics and reliquaries in an elevated position, specifically on a "high beam" ("sublimi trabe"), see Gervase of Canterbury, 'Incipit tractatus de combustion et reparation Cantuariensis ecclesiae', in *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, William Stubbs (ed.) (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 3-5.

²⁹⁹ Päivi Pahta, 'The Middle English Prose Legend of St Faith in MS Southwell Minister 7', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 94.2 (1993), p. 149.

³⁰⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum and Paula Gerson, 'Body Part Reliquaries and Body Parts in the Middle Ages', *Gesta*, 36.1 (1997), p. 5.

you. The overall aura of the reliquary statue is of someone who is inaccessible and quite possibly someone to be feared.

Ilene Forsyth describes the reliquary as “quite unlike the other early examples we know.”³⁰¹ This is in large part due to the fact that the wooden core of the Sainte Foy is not a fully moulded sculpture in its own right. Rather the core of Foy consists of a cylindrical trunk and shafts for legs, the wood itself is unworked and not carved with detail and drapery folds like other extant examples.³⁰² Forsyth argues that this lack of detail is not because it was to be covered in gold, as other extant examples, such as the Paderborn and Hildesheim Madonnas, were sheathed in metal and were also fully sculpted. Instead, Forsyth suggests that the artist was attempting something new and did not have “the benefit of tradition for conceiving and executing a three-dimensional figure.”³⁰³ As such, she goes on to say, the reliquary was made at a time when sculpture “in the round” was only just beginning to develop.³⁰⁴

A great deal has been written on the topic of reliquaries, their history, and the interplay between their design and sacred contents. Taralon stated that the reliquary statue exists where two worlds meet – that of the pagan adoration of idols and the Christian veneration of holy bodies which are exalted and elevated by the reliquaries in which they are contained.³⁰⁵ This tension can clearly be seen regarding Sainte Foy when Bernard of Angers initially considers the reliquary statue a pagan idol.³⁰⁶ Also, as Boehm said, “medieval reliquaries often survive in near isolation from other works of art that would have clarified the larger artistic context in which they were created.”³⁰⁷ This lack of context makes

³⁰¹ Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom*, p. 67.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁰⁵ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, pp. 52-3.

³⁰⁶ See Bernard of Angers, ‘Liber sanctorum sancte Fidis’, in Pamela Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, pp. 77-79.

³⁰⁷ Bagnoli, Klein, Mann and Robinson (eds.), *Treasures of Heaven*, p. 149.

understanding how they functioned, both as works of art and as a religious object, difficult. Part of what makes analysis of the Foy reliquary statue difficult is its uniqueness.

As Hahn and Klein state in the introduction to their edited volume *Saints and Sacred Matter*, “relics and reliquaries are so strongly bonded to one another that one might call them inseparable.”³⁰⁸ As such, visual reproductions of the reliquary can also be seen as reproductions of the relics contained within them and thereby the saints themselves. Reliquaries themselves could also acquire the status of relics.³⁰⁹ For Taralon too, the reliquary statue itself had become holy.³¹⁰ As Belting stated, “images assumed the appearance of relics and in turn gained power from their coexistence with relics.”³¹¹ Whilst Belting is discussing sculpture here, it is possible to take this notion further and apply it to images in two dimensions, such as icons, as well. Images, whether in three dimensions or two, represented the holy and the heavenly body of the saint. It is arguable that there was no distinction between the relic housed in the reliquary and the reliquary statue itself. Relics and reliquaries can “collapse time and space “as the heavenly and the earthly touch each other.”³¹² They become one inseparable entity. For Hahn and Klein, “the reliquary *defines* the relic.”³¹³ Because the reliquary of Saint Foy holds her relics, the reliquary in effect becomes the saint. Once a young girl, through the depiction of her reliquary, and specifically the reuse of the existing head, Sainte Foy has now become an intimidating golden statue.

2.9 Spolia, reuse and the head of the Sainte Foy reliquary

As noted above, the head predates the creation of the reliquary statue. Numerous theories have been posited about its original date, style, and function. Darcel stated that the statue had “quelque chose de la solennité et du mystère des figures égyptiennes,”³¹⁴ while

³⁰⁸ Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein, ‘Introduction’ in *Saints and Sacred Matter*, p. 6.

³⁰⁹ Bagnoli, Klein, Mann and Robinson (eds.), *Treasures of Heaven*, p. 212.

³¹⁰ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 12.

³¹¹ Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, Edmund Jephcott (trans.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 301.

³¹² Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein, ‘Introduction’ in *Saints and Sacred Matter*, p. 8.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³¹⁴ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 13.

Molinier said that “à l'apparence toute païenne.”³¹⁵ Belting stated “perhaps it is a late antique or Celtic head of the kind (gold foil over a wooden core) that was to have a lasting influence, both technically and aesthetically, on medieval sculpture.”³¹⁶ The head of the statue is of central importance because, to quote Taralon, “c’est la statue qui a été faite pour la tête.”³¹⁷

As Taralon observed, the head is made of two plates of metal – one circular and one formed into the shape of a cylinder.³¹⁸ Taralon notes that this process of making a three-dimensional head would have been incredibly difficult and this is the only extant example of it being done.³¹⁹ In contrast, the majority of antique metal heads were formed out of two pieces, split vertically to create a front and back which could then be joined.³²⁰ This seemingly unique construction method is partially responsible for the difficulties in locating the origins of the head; we have no surviving objects with which to make direct comparisons. However, by looking at other surviving head sculptures, even if they are not constructed in the exact same way, we can more securely locate the reliquary statue head in time and space.

While Taralon considered the mystery of the head “impossible à résoudre”, he does posit several possibilities about its origins.³²¹ Taralon specifically dated the head to the fourth or fifth century based on the twisted roll hairstyle used on the head, which he claims was typical of that period around the Mediterranean basin, in both the east and west.³²² He has suggested that it could potentially have originally been meant to represent Euric, king of Toulouse (r. 466-484), due to the known wealth of his court and relationships with both

³¹⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

³¹⁶ Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. 301.

³¹⁷ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 18.

³¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 24-5.

³¹⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

³²⁰ François Braemer, ‘Sculptures en Métal Battu et Repoussé de la Gaule Romaine et des Régions Limitrophes’, in *Revue Archéologique*, Nouvelle Série, Fasc. 2 (1968), p. 328.

³²¹ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 55.

³²² Taralon cites Hans Peter L’Orange, *Apotheosis in ancient portraiture* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1947) but does not mention specifics. He provides one comparison for this hairstyle, seen in a Byzantine cameo of Honorius. However, he does not provide a date or more information for this artefact. Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 24.

Rome and Byzantium.³²³ Zadoks-Jitta in contrast believed it to be an imperial head from the time of Theodosius (347-395) or his sons.³²⁴ Regardless of its origins, Taralon considered it a gift from the imperial dynasty of the Carolingians.³²⁵ Fricke mostly concurred, stating that “it had most likely adorned a statue of a noble or ruler in third- or fourth-century Gaul.”³²⁶ While its precise origin remains unclear, it clearly predates the construction of the reliquary but somehow found its way into the hands of monks at Conques by the ninth century in time for the construction of the reliquary statue.

The head of the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy has repeatedly been described as a golden death mask.³²⁷ However, this claim needs to be interrogated as the reasoning behind this classification is rarely explained. It has been noted that gold funerary masks “appear only in limited periods and at a few specific places.”³²⁸ Despini has identified three periods during which gold death masks occur – Thracian, Archaic and Late Hellenistic or Roman.³²⁹ Given the dating of the head to the fourth century, it is possible that the head could be a late Roman death mask. However, the surviving examples of death masks are not executed fully in the round, marking them as different to the head of Foy.³³⁰ Additionally, Roman wax death

³²³ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 55.

³²⁴ Despite extensive searching, I have been unable to find the original source for this claim. Presumably the Theodosius in question is Theodosius I, Roman Emperor from 379 to 395, but the reasoning behind this is unclear. Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 55.

³²⁵ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘La Majesté d’or de Sainte Foy de Conques’, p. 55.

³²⁶ Beate Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints: Sainte Foy of Conques and the Revival of Monumental Sculpture in Medieval Art*, Andrew Griebeler (trans.) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), p. 149.

³²⁷ See for example, Rosemary Van Lare, ‘The Cult of St Foy at Conques’ (MA diss., San Jose State University, 1997); Hoving, T., ‘Letters: La Tête du Roi’, *Harper's Magazine* (May 2009), 4-5. Others have described it as a Roman mask without denoting it specifically as a death mask. See Bruce Cole and Adelheid M. Gealt, *Art of the Western World: From Ancient Greece to Post Modernism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), p. 46; Barbara Drake Boehm, ‘Body-Part Reliquaries: The State of Research’, in *Gesta*, 36.1 (1997), p. 11; Holger A. Klein, ‘Brighter than the Sun: Saints, Relics, and the Power of Art in Byzantium’, in *Knotenpunkt Byzanz: Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen*, Andreas Spear and Philipp Steinkrüger (eds.) (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012); Kenneth Clark, *Civilisation: A Personal View* (London: British Broadcasting Company, 1969), p. 41.

³²⁸ Probably the most well-known golden funerary mask is the mask of Agamemnon. This mask looks considerably different from the head of Foy, as it is not fully three dimensional and the features, particularly the ears, are considerably more stylised. Dating of this mask varies, but it does predate the head of Sainte Foy by approximately two thousand years. Aikaterini Despini, ‘Gold Funerary Masks’, *Antike Kunst* 52 (2009), p. 21.

³²⁹ Despini, Schürmann and Gisler, ‘Gold Funerary Masks’, pp. 21-25.

³³⁰ Detailed investigation on the technical aspects of a golden mask from the necropolis of Trebeniste was undertaken by Pavlina Ilieva and Petia Penkova. They have shown that the mask was

masks were intended to look like the deceased.³³¹ It is difficult to suggest that the head of Foy was intended to reflect the features of a specific individual – the features are smooth and symmetrical, lacking in any sense of individuality or personality.

Comparisons to other funerary or death masks can also help shed further light on the head's origins. A potential example of a funerary mask of a close date to the head of Sainte Foy can be found at the Hermitage Museum in Russia (fig. 1.4). This golden mask dates from the third century AD based on associated finds and was found at the Panticapeum necropolis in Crimea in 1837.³³² The mask depicts the face seemingly emerging out of a flat sheet of gold and shows the face from the underside of the chin to midway up the forehead and does not include ears. The eyes are open, and the eyeballs are constructed from the same sheet of gold. The eyebrows are positioned quite low and close to the eyes. It is believed that the mask was made by using a plaster death mask.³³³ This technique clearly gives the mask a greater sense of three dimensionality than other mask examples, the metal it is formed from continues past where the face ends, almost as if the face is protruding through a sheet of metal. This mask also has a greater sense of realism to it than that of the statue head of Sainte Foy, likely due to the use of a plaster mould to create it.

Another potentially contemporary mask can be found in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (fig. 1.5). This golden mask is made of hammered gold and has been dated to the

constructed from a thin sheet of gold, approximately 0.03mm in width. Various techniques were used in the manufacturing process, including repoussé, punching, and chiselling, as well as potentially utilising a mould or press. This mask is significantly different from the head of Foy as it is not executed in the round and is instead a sheet of metal with relief elements worked into it. See Pavlina Ilieva and Petia Penkova, 'Funeral golden mask and hand with a ring – the necropolis of Trebeniste', *ArcheoSciences* 33 (2009), pp. 195-199.

³³¹ John Pollini, 'Ritualizing Death in Republican Rome: Memory, Religion, Class Struggle, and the Wax Ancestral mask Tradition's Origin and Influence on Veristic Portraiture', in *Performing Death: Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, Nicola Laneri (ed.) (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007), p. 237.

³³² Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, P.-1, 'Funerary Mask', third century <<https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/25.+archaeological+artifacts/837465>>. This is the dating given by the Hermitage Museum. However, there are difficulties in dating this object due to lack of information regarding its discovery in the nineteenth century. See Despini, 'Gold Funerary Masks', p. 25.

³³³ Despini, 'Gold Funerary Masks', p. 25.

second to fourth century AD.³³⁴ This specific mask has pairs of small holes around the edge of the head, which were potentially used to attach it to a cloth or inner covering.³³⁵ In contrast to the head of Foy, this mask is depicted with eyes nearly closed, visible only as narrow slits through the metal and the overall appearance is considerably more textured. Both of these masks look significantly different to the head of Saint Foy: they lack the fully formed three dimensionality which the head of Foy has, and they can only be viewed correctly from one perspective, which is also the case for other examples of funerary masks from different periods. Additionally, these two masks, while roughly contemporary with the Foy head, were not made in the same geographical area, and therefore likely belong to different artistic and social traditions. While these are only two points of comparison, it does suggest that the head was not originally a funerary mask, and instead likely belongs to a tradition more closely related to sculpture and portraiture than to death masks.

Thomas Hoving proposed a completely different theory about the origin of the head of the Foy statue – that the head was originally a portrait or death mask of Charlemagne.³³⁶ This claim is based on “traces of the distinctive crown of Charlemagne,” which Hoving claimed are visible when the head is removed from the body.³³⁷ What precisely these distinctive traces are remains unclear. Taralon does mention in his extensive restoration work that the crown has been modified from its original state, and even notes the imperial type of crown, but he makes no mention of Charlemagne.³³⁸ While the crown may be imperial, that does not necessarily mean that the head was as well. After all, they are two separate objects which could have been gifted to the monastery at different times.

³³⁴ Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 65.1310, Funerary mask (?), A.D. 200-400? <<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/260901/funerary-mask-?ctx=ed3ae76b-60e7-4f21-85a7-0220b7fc58a0&idx=2>>

³³⁵ Cornelius C. Vermeule III, 'Greek, Etruscan, Roman Gold and Silver-II: Hellenistic to Late Antique Gold and Silver', *The Burlington Magazine* 113.820 (July 1971), p. 399.

³³⁶ Hoving was the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York from 1967 to 1977 (See Randy Kennedy, 'Thomas Hoving, Bold Remaker of the Met in the '70s, Dies at 78', *The New York Times*, 11 December 2009, p. 1. <<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/11/arts/design/11hoving.html>>, Hoving, T., 'Letters: La Tête du Roi', *Harper's Magazine* (May 2009), pp. 4-5

³³⁷ Hoving, T., 'Letters: La Tête du Roi', *Harper's Magazine* (May 2009), pp. 4-5

³³⁸ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', pp. 66-67.

Additionally, if the dating of the head to the fourth or fifth century is correct, this completely rules out any possibility that the head could have been intended to represent Charlemagne, and as such evidence to support this theory seems slim at best.

Moving away from death masks, another avenue for potential comparisons can be found within Celtic art as there are some similarities between the head of Sainte Foy and examples of masks from that artistic tradition, such as a mask in the Louvre from Notre-Dame-de-Allençon now in the Louvre (c. 200–250) (fig. 1.6). This mask is executed in the repoussé technique, and the eyes are overly large, positioned at an oblique angle.³³⁹ It is believed to be a piece of Gallo-Roman sculpture from the third century which would have originally been fully three dimensional, although the back is now lost.³⁴⁰ The gender and identity of the head remain unknown, although it has been posited that it was supposed to depict Minerva.³⁴¹ One distinctive feature of the head of Sainte Foy is the prominent philtrum, which can also be seen on a number of Celtic and Gallo-Roman heads. Heavy eyebrows also seem to be a feature of Celtic masks, regardless of gender. Additionally, the Celtic heads are also made of multiple pieces of metal like the head of Sainte Foy. While in most cases, only the fronts of the heads survive, an example from Dieppe does preserve the back of the head, suggesting that these were originally full three dimensional.³⁴² As such we have clear evidence of fully three-dimensional head sculpture being made during the Gallo-

³³⁹ The Louvre, Paris, Bj 2103, MN 1479, statue, AD 200-250 <<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010256350>>

³⁴⁰ Marie-Bénédicte Astier, 'Front of a Male Head' <<https://web.archive.org/web/20180312164450/https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/front-section-male-head>> [accessed 15 December 2020].

³⁴¹ Marie-Bénédicte Astier, 'Front of a Male Head' <<https://web.archive.org/web/20180312164450/https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/front-section-male-head>> [accessed 15 December 2020]. See also François Baratte, *Le trésor d'argenterie gallo-romaine de Notre-Dame d'Allençon (Maine-et-Loire)* (Prais: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1981)

³⁴² Frustratingly, Lantier does not provide a date for this mask. It was held in the Musée des Antiquités nationales, now known as the Musée d'Archéologie nationale et domaine national de Saint-Germain-en-Lay, but I have been unable to find it in their current collection, Lantier, 'Masques Celtiques en Métal', p. 113.

Roman period. These observations, drawing on the work of Lantier, were what would lead to Taralon saying that Foy's head "est l'héritière d'un long passé."³⁴³

One notable feature of the head of Sainte Foy is the way the eye sockets tilt downwards from the nose. An example of eyes worked in metal depicted in this way from the fourth century can be found on the *Missorium* of Theodosius (fig. 1.7), which was made in 388 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of his ascension to the imperial throne.³⁴⁴ This is potentially indicative of a Byzantine origin or influence and provides a potential explanation for Zadoks-Jitta's theory about the origin of the head. However, examples of similarly positioned eyes can also be found elsewhere, for example on the *masque du Vieil-Évreux* (end of the first century AD), although the angle is less extreme.³⁴⁵ Lantier considered this, along with other details such as the more extensive modelling and better proportions, as an indicator that this mask formed an "intermediate stage" between the Tarbes masks and others found within Gaul.³⁴⁶ Other examples of similar eyes can be seen on an articulated ivory doll in the Museu Nacional Arqueològic de Tarragona (third to fourth century AD) (fig. 1.8), as well as on a copper-alloy head believed to depict Marcus Aurelius which was initially found in Northamptonshire in 1976, now in the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology.³⁴⁷ The eyes on the Marcus Aurelius head are inlaid with discs of blue glass, just as the Foy head is.³⁴⁸ Again, this eye positioning can be seen on the Felmingham Jupiter (first or second century AD) (fig. 1.9), which also has empty eye sockets, which likely would have been inlaid.³⁴⁹ These features have been described as showing "a provincial

³⁴³ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', p. 52.

³⁴⁴ Rose Walker, *Art in Spain and Portugal from the Romans to the Early Middle Ages: Routes and Myths* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), p. 66.

³⁴⁵ Lantier, 'Masques Celtiques en Métal', p. 107.

³⁴⁶ Lantier, 'Masques Celtiques en Métal', pp. 107-8.

³⁴⁷ Museu Nacional Arqueològic de Tarragona, MNAT P-12906, Articulate Ivory Doll, third to fourth century AD <<https://www.mnat.cat/en/artwork/24/articulated-ivory-doll/>> [accessed 15/12/20] and Susan Walker and Jane Smallridge, 'Emperors and Deities in Rural Britain: A Copper-Alloy Head of Marcus Aurelius from Steane, near Brackley (Northants.)', *Britannia* 45 (2014), p. 223.

³⁴⁸ Walker and Smallridge, p. 225.

³⁴⁹ Walker and Smallridge, p. 226.

style.”³⁵⁰ All of these examples illustrate that the eye positioning of the Sainte Foy head was not unusual, and rather than suggesting an eastern origin, suggest instead that it was constructed in a peripheral region of the former Roman empire, likely within Gaul itself at some point in the fourth or fifth century.

As Lantier noted, scholars have attempted to link sculpture from Provence and Languedoc with the Greco-Alexandrine tradition, despite there being only indirect connections.³⁵¹ Rather than trying to connect the head of Sainte Foy to the artistic traditions of the Greco-Alexandrine or the Byzantine world, it is my suggestion that we look closer to home for artistic connections. The head of Sainte Foy belongs to a Celtic and Gallo-Roman tradition of sculpture. It is however worth noting that the majority of Gallo-Roman artifacts have been discovered further to the north than Conques. Given that they survive within more isolated regions, such as those which are forested and mountainous, it is not outside the realm of possibility that such a head could have survived closer to Conques.³⁵² And of course, it need not have been made near Conques for it to end up there in the ninth or tenth century.

Moving away from the origins of the head to its use as part of the reliquary statue raises further questions. Regardless of origin, why was this head considered appropriate for use on the reliquary? The reuse of the head can be considered an example of *spolia*. There are two main competing theories about *spolia*: that it was used to save money or to provide a connection to the past. However, as Gerry notes, these two lines of thought are not necessarily contradictory and can in fact work together.³⁵³ To quote Gerry: “it was the act of reusing older materials that conveyed their value [...] it is not only the inherent nature of the materials that was valued, but the fact that they had been created and manipulated by a

³⁵⁰ S. Worrell, ‘Roman Britain in 2009 II. Finds reported under the Portable Antiquities Scheme’, *Britannia* 41, p. 421.

³⁵¹ Lantier, ‘Masques Celtiques en Métal’, p. 118.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³⁵³ Kathryn B. Gerry, ‘Tam Forma Quam Materia Mirabili: Workmanship, Material, and Value in a Twelfth-Century Portable Altar’, *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 68/69 (2010/2011), p. 53.

goldsmith at an earlier point.”³⁵⁴ Regarding the potential lack of materials, while late antique metallurgy has been described as “comparatively neglected,” there has been some research in this area.³⁵⁵ For Enrico Giannichedda, the smithing of precious metals, despite being “functionally useless” did not go through any crisis.”³⁵⁶ However, it is worth noting that extraction of metals decreased during this period, leading to greater reuse and recycling, and technical knowledge likely became more limited.³⁵⁷ For the reliquary of Sainte Foy, this means it is possible that the head was used to provide a connection with the past and lend the reliquary power and authority, but also because the monastic community at Conques were working with limited resources and materials which necessitated the use of the head.

It is important to note that using disparate materials and objects to create a single object was not seen as unwanted, but rather created a desirable effect. Mary Carruthers has written on the concept of *varietas* and how visual diversity and discord prevent *taedium*.³⁵⁸ Carruthers associates this thinking behind *varietas* with two movements – Cluniac monasticism and thirteenth-century Gothic.³⁵⁹ As such, Cluniac ideas stemming from their reforms which began in the early tenth-century may have influenced the use of *spolia* in the Foy reliquary.

The reliquary of Sainte Foy is not the only example of a medieval artwork which reuses a head of a different gender. Herimann’s Cross (fig. 1.10), made in Werden in the eleventh century, reuses an antique cameo for the face of Christ.³⁶⁰ The original identity of the female figure has been much debated, with suggestions that it is Livia, Livilla, or Antonia the Younger.³⁶¹ For Forsyth, the use of a “youthful, feminine” head suggests “the beardless

³⁵⁴ Gerry, p. 60.

³⁵⁵ Enrico Giannichedda, ‘Metal Production in Late Antiquity: From Continuity of Knowledge to Changes in Consumption’, *Late Antique Archaeology* 4.1 (2008), p. 190.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

³⁵⁸ Mary J. Carruthers, “‘Varietas’: A Word of Many Colours”, *Poetica* 41 (2009), p. 17.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁶⁰ Dale Kinney, ‘Ancient Gems in the Middle Ages: Riches and Ready-mades’, in *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney (eds.) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 100.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Christ of Early Christian art.”³⁶² Kinney concurred, but stated that this “made its placement on the crucifix justifiable but did not fully explain it.”³⁶³ This example serves to highlight how holy individuals could blur the gender binary. In addition, through the reused head, “the cross is transformed into a memorial of a treasured possession, which was also an imperial heirloom” and acts as “a self-representation of the donors, without whose participation the presence of the ancient gem is inexplicable.”³⁶⁴ As Forsyth states, “the use of spolia in the cross thus indicates a whole range of references, one building on the other, none limited to Rome alone, and the whole depending for its ultimate meaning on the contemporary as well as the cumulative effect of those associations.”³⁶⁵ The Herimann Cross highlights how *spolia* operates within a complex matrix of references, and it is in this context that we might situate the head of the Foy reliquary.

Ilene Forsyth has posited that the use of spolia in Ottonian art “reveal[s] a particular perception of history, a history that is Christian but cumulative, in the sense that earlier cultures, both pagan and Christian, are subsumed within it.”³⁶⁶ She argued that

these remains, or spolia, are held together in the matrix of the resultant new work in programmatic designs that indicate that the fusion, although a conglomerate, is also an artistic statement expressing a triumph of the whole over its own component parts, the present over its varied past. The spolia are visible witnesses of a rich past, yet they are also vital contributors to the meaning of the present. They make the work of art an art with history, a tangible history that is presumed to have reached a culminating height.³⁶⁷

³⁶² Ilene Forsyth, ‘Art with History: the role of spolia in the cumulative work of art’, in *Byzantine East, Latin West: art-historical studies in honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, Doula Mariki (ed.) (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, 1995), p. 154.

³⁶³ Kinney, ‘Ancient Gems in the Middle Ages’, p. 100.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³⁶⁵ Forsyth, ‘Art with History’, p. 153.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

While Carolingian (and not Ottonian), it seems possible that the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy may be attempting something similar with its use of spolia. The head provides the reliquary with a sense of continuity – connecting the pagan past in which the saint lived with the Christian present. In addition, by connecting with the past, the abbey reaffirmed Foy's place in Conques. As well as her bones being physically present, the head provided a visual connection to the period Foy had lived in, further legitimising the presence of her cult. The head provided Foy with authority in a variety of ways, making her reliquary uniquely charged, and is thus part of the conscious construction of Foy's meaning at Conques.

Then there is the problem about why, exactly, the head of Sainte Foy is so captivating. Why is this the reliquary that convinced Bernard of Angers that three-dimensional reliquary statues were acceptable? It is not the first example of such a statue he had seen, but it is the one which changed his mind. In his book *Enchantment: On Charisma and the Sublime in the Arts of the West*, Stephen Jaeger explored why certain works of art are able to have a strong, charismatic effect on the viewer. Part of the difficulty with studying this charismatic aspect of art is, to quote Jaeger, that it “does not derive from objectively definable qualities of the artwork.”³⁶⁸ It is this lack of definable qualities which makes discussing Foy's effect on the viewer so difficult.

One significant aspect that Jaeger highlights is that of “reciprocal gazing” and how it acts as “the life-giving moment in charismatic experiences.”³⁶⁹ Prior to being made into a reliquary, the eye sockets of the head were empty and unable to return the viewers' gaze. To quote Jaeger, “a common belief had it that life enters the work of art once eyes are set in it.”³⁷⁰ With the addition of the glass eyes, working in conjunction with the positioning of the head, Foy's reliquary became alive and able to look back. For Caviness, maintained eye

³⁶⁸ C. Stephen Jaeger, *Enchantment: On Charisma and the Sublime in the Arts of the West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 26.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

contact “achieved a kind of conquest.”³⁷¹ Despite this, eyes are only mentioned in the miracle texts when criticising the custom of figural reliquaries, specifically regarding the reliquary of Saint Gerald, does Bernard of Angers mentions eyes - when discussing this image, Bernard stated that “it seemed to see with its attentive, observant gaze.”³⁷² There is a tension which exists between the reliquary object being sufficiently alive to have charisma, while not being alive enough to be considered an idol. For Jaeger, there is “some tendency for the reliquaries, the shrines made to hold the relic, to assimilate to icons,” and he cites Foy’s reliquary as a specific example.³⁷³

Jaeger states that Bernard’s comment

den[ies] the statueness of the statue [...] it is less a statue than a container. It makes no claims of producing the authentic presence or even appearance of the saint. [...] it reminds us of the saint, it doesn’t represent her. The sensibility at work here is iconophobic, certainly idolophobic. Bernard is willing to accept the shrine in human form, only on terms other than its icon-ness.³⁷⁴

In icon veneration, the icon is invested with meaning through “conventional signs and postures” while “the zone of the face is freed from semiotic function.”³⁷⁵ However, as a reminder of the saint, rather than a representation of her, the same cannot be said of Foy. Her face, while capturing some of that charismatic nature evident in icons, instead becomes a sign and a symbol in itself.

The reliquary of Sainte Foy, and her head specifically, have always been unique. It is not just unique today because of its survival – this was the reliquary which convinced Bernard of Angers of the acceptability of three-dimensional sculpture, not that of Gerald or

³⁷¹ Madeline H. Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle, and Scopic Economy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 18.

³⁷² “Videntes se perspicati intuitu videatur videre”, the passage then continues, noting the statue’s “reflecting eyes” (“oculisque reverberantibus”). Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.), p. 112; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 77.

³⁷³ Jaeger, p. 128.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 130.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

any other saint. The head of Foy has a unique ability to have a variety of emotions projected onto it. Foy's face is charismatic, but it is an imagined charisma. It is this ability to be multiple things, sometimes all at once, which makes the reliquary statue so captivating.

2.10 'Some monstrosity with a head of its own' – the problems of the reuse of a male head for a female saint in the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy

In addition to the reuse of an earlier head creating an interesting dialogue about *spolia*, it also creates one regarding gender as the head is considered to originally have been male, despite its use for a female virgin martyr. While it is impossible to know how the makers of the reliquary gendered the head, the perception of gender regarding the reliquary as a whole deserves consideration. The construction of gender, including in the medieval period, has received a great deal of scholarly attention. It is worth noting here that said constructs varied across both the time span and geographical regions covered in this thesis. As such, any interrogation of the gendered perception of Sainte Foy needs to take these into consideration.

Gender, and its role within hierarchies, is discussed in the Bible. In I Corinthians 3, Paul states “that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” and “therefore ought the woman to have a power over her head, because of the angels.”³⁷⁶ Power within this context refers to a veiled or covered head, indicating the woman is under the power of her husband, must endure the pains of child birth, and must show that she is submissive to man.³⁷⁷ Interpretations of this passage varied

³⁷⁶ “Quod omnis viri caput, Christus est : caput autem mulieris, vir : caput vero Christi, Deus”, I Corinthians 3 and “Ideo debet mulier potestatem habere supra caput propter angelos”, I Corinthians 10. It is worth noting that this passage has been greatly discussed by biblical scholars regarding its intended meaning and its authorship. For example, see Wm. O. Walker Jr, ‘I Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul's Views regarding Women’, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94.1 (March 1975), 94-110; Jerome Murphy O'Connor, ‘The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16?’, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95.4 (December 1976), 615-621; Troy W. Martin, ‘Paul's Argument from Nature for the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11:13-15: A Testicle Instead of a Head Covering’, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123.1 (Spring 2004), 75-84; and G. W. Trompf, ‘On Attitudes Toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and Its Context’ *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42.2 (April 1980), 196-215.

³⁷⁷ Kristina Watkins Mormino, ‘Behind the Veil: Envisioning Virginitly in Old French Hagiography’ (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2003), p. 34.

across both time and geography, but also due to personal philosophical interpretation.

Tertullian (c. 155–c. 220 AD) built on this when he wrote in his *On the Veiling of Virgins* that “if ‘the man is head of the woman,’ of course (he is) of the virgin too, from whom comes the woman who has married; unless the virgin is a third generic class, some monstrosity with a head of its own.”³⁷⁸ This quote, however, does need to be considered carefully and placed in context. As Kristina Watkins Mormino noted, while Tertullian was an early writer, his impact on later theological thought was limited and he broke from the mainstream church due to his belief in the Montanist heresy.³⁷⁹ The crux of the matter is, for Tertullian, whether a virgin can be considered a woman, and whether a virgin “is subject to the laws that regulate that class.”³⁸⁰ Other thinkers disagreed with Tertullian in his interpretation of this passage. For example, Tertullian’s former student Cyprian stated that a virgin’s “Lord and Head is Christ, after the likeness and in the place of the man; with that of men your lot and your condition is equal,” and later Jerome stated that through living a virginal life a woman “will cease to be a woman and will be called a man.”³⁸¹ The question being debated in the interpretation of this Biblical passage is in fact whether virgins, like Foy, have acquired the authority of a man – the authority he holds because he was “created in the image of God.”

But what if a virgin’s head was not only uncovered, but literally the head of a man on a female body? What implications would this have? If a female figure is given a male head, does she become fully “made in the image of God”? In the case of the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy, it is likely that the head from a male statue or death mask was reused as the head for the figural reliquary of the virgin martyr. Whilst this was likely an act of *spolia*, an attempt to access the power associated with an ancient item and indicate the prestige of the saint through associating her with an older, prosperous society, it had broader implications for the development of the cult of Sainte Foy. I will argue that the reuse of a masculine head

³⁷⁸ Tertullian, ‘On The Veiling of Virgins’, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4: *Tertullian*, A Cleveland Coxe (ed.) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), p. 31.

³⁷⁹ Mormino, ‘Behind the Veil’, p. 18.

³⁸⁰ Mormino, ‘Behind the Veil’, p. 24.

³⁸¹ Mormino, ‘Behind the Veil’, p. 36. And Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500-1100* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 128.

which remained unveiled, combined with details about the age of Sainte Foy at her martyrdom, enabled the saint to access power which would normally be considered part of the masculine realm, as well as to play with earthly gender identity and perception. I will also argue that this masculine head, working in conjunction with other aspects of her cult, had an impact on the development of the depiction of Sainte Foy in art.

The use of an older, male head for the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy has been noted many times before, but the gendered implications of its use have not been fully considered.³⁸² While Fricke does state that “the portrait of a worldly man could be reused as the head of a young female Christian martyr in the late ninth century which suggests a fundamental shift in how venerable persons were depicted in three dimensions,” she does not fully explore the gendered implications of the head of a “worldly man” being used for a virgin martyr, focusing instead on the implications for three-dimensional sculpture.³⁸³ Was it acceptable to use the head of a “worldly man” for a virgin martyr, and if so why? Or alternatively, did the original gender of the head no longer matter once it was used as Foy’s?

The choice to reuse this head may not have been based on gender. Its reuse may have been an act of *spolia*, an attempt to access the power of a valuable object from a past civilisation. Fricke argues that the reuse of the head was not due to the cost of the material it was made from, but rather because of the effect it had on viewers, that it provided a divine aura which enabled dialogue between the faithful and divine.³⁸⁴ For Belting, the reused head “increased the desired authenticity” of the reliquary by incorporating an older head which tied the reliquary to the early days of the Church.³⁸⁵ However, regardless of intent, its use had gender implications both for the statue and the development of the cult of Sainte Foy,

³⁸² Precisely who put forward this theory first remains unclear. Bouillet and Servières make no mention of the head originally being male in their 1901 work. More recent scholars have described it variably as “the head of an emperor” (Taralon, Hubert and Hubert, Dahl), while others have described it as “male” (Sheingorn, Forsyth, Fricke). The earliest mention I have found of the head as male is from Taralon following his 1954-5 restoration of the reliquary (See Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, ‘Le trésor de Conques’, pp. 47-54).

³⁸³ Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, p. 149.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-9.

³⁸⁵ Belting, p. 301.

including the visual iconography associated with it. This ambiguous gender may have encouraged the viewer to look for longer and engage with the reliquary statue more deeply.

Before delving deeper into the implications of the use of a male head, we must interrogate why we consider this to be a male, or masculine, head in the first place. According to scientific research on eye tracking and gender attribution, the most time spent looking at parts of the body when attempting to attribute gender to an individual were the head, chest and genital area.³⁸⁶ Identification is often based on indirect cues such as “facial structure, voice, dress, assumedly gendered behavior or social context.”³⁸⁷ Notably, the head has been shown to have specific importance for gender attribution.³⁸⁸ In one study, when attempting to attribute gender, the most time was spent looking at the head (26%), as opposed to other physical areas.³⁸⁹ Other scientific research has looked at the attribution of gender based on internal facial structure. It has also been shown that people, particularly adults, find it more difficult to apply the correct gender to an individual if they are a child.³⁹⁰ This has particular relevance for the reliquary of Sainte Foy, as the saint may have still been considered a child at the time of her death, and it has been posited that the original head was that of a young boy.³⁹¹ However, it is worth noting that research suggests there is a bias towards male gender identification, particularly when gender identity is not immediately apparent.³⁹² It is also worth noting that all these scientific experiments reflect modern day

³⁸⁶ Frederike Wenzlaff, Peer Briken and Arne Dekker, ‘If there’s a penis, it’s most likely a man: Investigating the social construction of gender using eye tracking’, *PLoS ONE* 13.3 (March 2018), p. 1.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁹⁰ Anne Hillairet de Boisferon, Eve Dupierrix, Lesly Uttley, Lisa M DeBruine, Benedict C Jones and Olivier Pascalis, ‘Sex Categorization of Faces: The Effects of Age and Experience’, *Iperception* 10.1 (Jan-Feb 2019); H A Wild, S E Barrett, M J Spence, A J O’Toole, Y D Cheng and J Brooke, ‘Recognition and sex categorization of adults’ and children’s faces: examining performance in the absence of sex-stereotype cues’, *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 77.4 (December 2000).

³⁹¹ The topic of childhood within the medieval period has been heavily debated, spurred largely by Ariès statement that “in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist.” (Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, Jonathan Cape (trans.) (London: Pimlico, 1962), p. 128.). Lett’s analysis of language which is used to describe children suggests this may not have been the case (Didier Lett, *L’enfant des miracles: Enfances et société au Moyen Âge (XIIe-XIIIe siècle)* (Paris: Aubier, 1997), pp. 362-63.).

³⁹² Kerri L. Johnson, Masumi Iida and Louis G. Tassinari, ‘Person (mis)perception: functionally biased sex categorization of bodies’, *Proceedings Biological Sciences* 279.1749 (December 2012), p. 4982.

cultural norms and therefore should not be used as conclusive evidence regarding the medieval period. As such, any identification of the original head as male needs to be treated with caution.

However, how does one identify the gender of a disembodied head? Many secondary sex characteristics, such as the breasts and Adam's apple, are not visible on the head. This question is complicated further by the fact that the head, as viewed as part of Sainte Foy, is that of a child and as such many secondary sex characteristics, for example facial hair, would not have developed yet. Any conclusions about the gender of the head are therefore tenuous at best. Gender is likely only assumed from more difficult to define characteristics, such as bone structure or societal indicators representative of gender. One of these societal indicators used to identify the head is the presence of holes around the top of the head, assumed to be for the positioning of a laurel wreath.³⁹³

It is also worth noting that images of people in the medieval period were identified not through "naturalistic facial renderings" but rather "through a shared matrix of symbols, physiognomy, dress, and, often, textual accompaniment."³⁹⁴ One example Grayson gives is that of Saint Catherine, saying that "the wheel would work in conjunction with the youthful beauty associated with virgin martyrs and the regal status to secure her "likeness."³⁹⁵ As such, gender was likely inferred by similar signs, the most obvious of these being the veil. Foy is clearly not veiled. In contrast, a sign which the modern viewer might infer as gendered would be the presence of earrings. However, it is not entirely clear if this would have acted as a gendered signifier in the medieval period. While considered a predominantly female accessory, there is some evidence, particularly from the Byzantine world, that men also wore

³⁹³ Taralon and Taralon-Carlino, 'La Majesté d'or de Sainte Foy de Conques', p. 24.

³⁹⁴ Saisha Grayson, 'Disruptive Disguises: The Problem of Transvestite Saints for Medieval Art, Identity, and Identification', *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality* 45.2, p. 139.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

earrings.³⁹⁶ In the case of Foy's reliquary, the earrings would likely have been understood as a signifier of femininity, as well as imperial authority.

This raises the question of how one defines a virgin martyr. Riches has observed that "the term 'virgin martyr' invariably carries the tacit implication of femininity."³⁹⁷ Yet, as Riches has shown with her study of Saint George, the attributes we associate with the virgin martyr are not necessarily feminine. Riches has characterised a virgin martyr as being explicitly defined as "a beautiful, virginal creature, a trope which seems to encode ideas of nobility – moral, as well as social – and innocence."³⁹⁸ She goes on to add that they are "also defined as a Christian, in opposition to a non-Christian environment."³⁹⁹ They experience a "dramatic encounter" which "encodes opposition to the martyr's religious beliefs in a human antagonist [...] who threatens the saint's virginity."⁴⁰⁰ The saint refuses and is brought to trial by the "heathen ruler," which "culminates in a litany of physical tortures."⁴⁰¹ These tortures are endured by the saint before they are ultimately executed by beheading and the martyr's soul is received into heaven.⁴⁰² By showing how a masculine saint can also be considered a virgin martyr, Riches has highlighted how the figure of the virgin martyr does not have to be feminine or even female.

Additionally, within the existing literature there is debate as to whether or not typical gender roles applied to saints. According to Allen Smith, expectations of the "proper roles" of men and women were "extended to the saints as well as ordinary Christians."⁴⁰³ In her analysis of Mary and Michael, Allen Smith concludes that "the behaviour of saints in

³⁹⁶ Maria G. Parani, 'Optional extras or necessary elements? Middle and late Byzantine male dress accessories' in *Δασκάλα. Απόδοση τιμής στην Καθηγήτρια Μαίρη Παναγιωτίδη-Κεσίσσογλου*, ed. Pl. Petridis and V. Foskolou (Athens: Panepistēmio, 2015), p. 414.

³⁹⁷ Samantha Riches, 'St George as a Virgin Martyr', in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 65-85, p. 66.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁴⁰³ Katherine Allen Smith, 'Mary or Michael? Saint-Switching, Gender, and Sanctity in a Medieval Miracle of Childbirth', *Church History* 74.4 (December 2005), p. 780.

medieval miracle stories remained inexorably constrained by medieval Christian mores” even for figures such as the Archangel Michael, who is “technically neither human nor male”, and Mary, “who was commonly believed to have surpassed the ordinary constraints of her mortality and sex.”⁴⁰⁴ It has been previously suggested that there are two types of saints – masculine and androgynous to use the terms of Weinstein and Bell, or masculine and feminine to use the terminology of Bynum.⁴⁰⁵ It is possible for a female saint to exist within the male model, or to combine both. Through both her reliquary statue and her actions, Foy can be seen as a saint of this combined model.

However, this binary system is not accepted by all scholars. The idea of virginity as a third gender has been suggested before, with Salih asking “if a medieval woman is a person subject to the curse of Eve, [...] are virgins, who avoid both heterosexuality and childbirth, necessarily included in the category of women?” before continuing that “theoretically, in a period which acknowledges gender to be a social category, virginity can quite easily be described as a third gender, and occasionally is.”⁴⁰⁶ Riches has continued this line of argument, stating that this third gender of virginity can be “marked as separate from maleness and femaleness by an insistence on spiritual purity as well as physical chastity.”⁴⁰⁷ The notion of a third gender has been considered in the medieval period not just in regards to the holy. Caviness has argued that within the Bayeux Embroidery, Anglo-Saxon men are constructed as “a “third sex” through culturally determined signifiers such as hair, clothing,

⁴⁰⁴ Smith, ‘Mary or Michael?’, p. 781.

⁴⁰⁵ Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih, ‘Introduction: Gender and Holiness: Performance and representation in the later Middle Ages’, in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 5

⁴⁰⁶ Sarah Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰⁷ Samantha Riches, ‘St George as a Virgin Martyr’, in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe* Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 71.

position, and posture.”⁴⁰⁸ Taken in this context, one where there is not a rigidly imposed gender binary, Foy could potentially be seen as neither male nor female.

Authors such as Martha Easton have discussed the idea of women who were particularly devout Christians ‘becoming male’; Easton noted that female martyrs “who had cast off the constructed characteristics of their gender ‘progressed’ towards an advanced spiritual state that was described as masculine.”⁴⁰⁹ Easton notes how many of the female saints are “‘masculinised’ through either physical or social metamorphosis” such as the act of cutting off the breasts.⁴¹⁰ This can also be seen regarding transvestite saints such as Pelagia, Eugenia, and Marina, who Grayson described as having “actively modelled themselves as holy figures of the opposite sex.”⁴¹¹ By using the head of a male statue, the reliquary of Sainte Foy takes this further. In the same way transvestite saints become male through dressing as such, so too does Foy, by literally taking the head of a man and making it her own. In the same way some female martyrs become male through removing the signifiers, such as the breasts, of their gender, Foy does this through addition rather than removal.

Grayson has previously explored how the depiction of transvestite saints within art was difficult, as shown by an illumination of Eugenia in Bibliothèque National de France Français 185, fol. 254^v, where Eugenia is indistinguishable from her male companions (fig. 1.11).⁴¹² As such, Grayson argues that such figures posed a “disruptive threat [...] to medieval visual representation and the stability of the symbolic order.”⁴¹³ Foy can potentially be placed in a similar category, whereby the depiction of her more masculine elements was

⁴⁰⁸ Madeline Caviness, ‘Anglo-Saxon Women, Norman Knights and a ‘Third Sex’ in the Bayeux Embroidery’, in Martin K. Foys, Karen Eileen Overbey, and Dan Terkla (eds), *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2009), p. 114.

⁴⁰⁹ Martha Easton, ‘Pain, Torture and Death in the Huntington Library Legenda aurea’, in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 52.

⁴¹⁰ Easton, ‘Pain, Torture and Death in the Huntington Library Legenda aurea’, p. 52.

⁴¹¹ Grayson, ‘Disruptive Disguises’, p. 141.

⁴¹² Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 185, ‘La Legende des Saints’, fol. 254^v.

⁴¹³ Grayson, ‘Disruptive Disguises’, p. 138.

difficult within the artistic realm. Grayson argues that “visual images of female saints who had achieved maleness in appearance and behaviour would have forcefully demonstrated a level of constructed identity that was already latent in medieval theology, but which had uncomfortable implications for gender divisions that Church and secular authorities did not wish to illustrate.”⁴¹⁴ The choice of a masculine head for the reliquary of Sainte Foy can be seen as another element within this constructed identity.

Evidence for a potentially disruptive gendered perception of Sainte Foy can also be seen in written material. A change in the perception of Sainte Foy is evident within her Book of Miracles, most notably between the two books written by Bernard of Angers and the other anonymous continuator(s). As Taylor noted, Bernard’s descriptions of Foy show her as a child, whereas this aspect is deemphasised in Books III and IV, citing the move from addressing Foy by her name to simply “lady” (“domina”).⁴¹⁵ Taylor describes this as a move “towards a more lord-like image.”⁴¹⁶ However, this interpretation fails to take into account the context when Foy is called her name in the first two books. Repeatedly, those addressing the saint by name, rather than by title, are doing so in a derogatory manner. This can be seen when Benedict exclaims “Does Sainte Foy drink wine? What foolishness! Don’t you know that whoever doesn’t drink doesn’t need wine?” and again when a man whom Bernard of Angers describes as “impious and heretical” states “how many lies about Sainte Foy he [Bernard] wrote down there!”⁴¹⁷ There are also instances of Foy being addressed as “lady” (“femine” and “domine”) in the first two books and her name being used in the latter two.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., p. 144.

⁴¹⁵ Faye Taylor, ‘Miracula, Saints’ Cults and Socio-Political Landscapes: Bobbio, Conques and Post-Carolingian Society’ (Ph. D. diss., University of Nottingham, 2012), p. 174.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., p. 174.

⁴¹⁷ “Numquid sancte Fidis vinum bibit? Eo inepte! An ignores quia qui non bibit indiget vini?” Bernard of Angers in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 27; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 60 and ‘profanum hereticum’ and ‘quot medacia ibi de S. Fide scripta reliquit?’ Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 31; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 64.

⁴¹⁸ Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 60 and p. 167; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 87 and p. 126. ‘O sancte Fides’ and ‘Fides sancte’, Anonymous, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 149 and p. 161. Anonymous, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 161 and p. 170.

As such, this change in address reflects the differing levels of respect Foy was afforded – those who saw her a genuine, powerful saint addressed her as “lady” while those who doubted her powers used the more informal “Foy.”

Taylor also cites the use of the reliquary statue in legal disputes as a move towards this more lordly image.⁴¹⁹ The reliquary was regularly processed around areas of disputed land, as well as in times of crisis and to confirm (or reconfirm) donated lands.⁴²⁰ The use of the reliquary in this way, according to Fricke, allowed Foy to “act as a ruler and pronounce judgements”, while her position on a throne enabled her to access power “usually reserved for representations of secular male authorities.”⁴²¹ Additionally, Fricke believes that the position of the doves on her reliquary, whether on the throne or in her hands, “underscored how Ste Foy’s appearance approximates that of a ruler.”⁴²² While the throne does enable this, alongside her use of a rod to enforce discipline in her miracle stories, it is aided by the use of a crowned, male head which reinforces the idea that Foy wields power and authority.

During the early medieval period according to Jane Tibbets Schulenburg, “access to sainthood essentially came through worldly power, high status, public office, and social and economic prominence.”⁴²³ Foy belonged to more than one of those groups. She had social and economic prominence from the high status of her family and her status is represented in her reliquary through her position on a throne. Wan-Chuan Kao argues that the “frontally seated position that recalls the “throne of wisdom” image was commonly used to represent kings in medieval illuminated manuscripts.”⁴²⁴ The throne of wisdom also recalls the Virgin Mary, and her power as the mother of God and the “seat of Logos incarnate.”⁴²⁵ As such,

⁴¹⁹ Taylor, ‘Miracula, Saints’ Cults and Socio-Political Landscapes’, p. 174.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., p. 159.

⁴²¹ Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, p. 367.

⁴²² Ibid., p. 156.

⁴²³ Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex*, p. 60.

⁴²⁴ Wan-Chuan Kao, ‘The Tomboyism of Faith: Spiritual Tomboyism in the Cult of Sainte Foy’, *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 15.4 (2011), p. 421.

⁴²⁵ Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom*, p. 1. See also Jaroslav Folda, ‘Icon to Altarpiece in the Frankish East: Images of the Virgin and Child Enthroned’, *Studies in the History of Art* 61 (2002), pp. 122-145 and Aina Trotzig, ‘The Iconography of the Enthroned Virgin with the Christ Child Standing in Her Lap’,

Foy's depiction on a throne in a manner usually reserved for kings and the mother of Christ is notable. Her gender here could be considered unimportant, rather the key point is that Foy is depicted as a ruler. Another relevant aspect here is the gaze of the statue itself. Caviness has argued that there is a "long cultural tradition" which has "denied the women the right to stare."⁴²⁶ She has also argued that staring is "not primarily erotic or sexual, but political in the sense that they establish, maintain, or acknowledge hierarchies of power."⁴²⁷ As such, Foy's returned gaze can be seen as a subversion of existing hierarchies and a further statement on her power and authority.

Queer theory and methodology can also provide a valuable lens with which to examine Sainte Foy. Queer can be defined as "whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant [...] it demarcates not a positivity but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative."⁴²⁸ This is certainly a definition which fits Sainte Foy, given her position on the cusp of adulthood and childhood, her unusual miracles, and the use of male gendered head for her reliquary statue. Wan-Chuan Kao argues that Foy is "forever suspended in her gender development."⁴²⁹ She is a virgin in the sense that she has not yet developed into a woman who has the potential to *not* be a virgin. Foy exists, instead, in stasis as a child. This can be seen within the miracle texts beyond just her appearance, but also in her behaviour. For example, Bernard attributes Foy's love of gold and jewellery to her "girlish mind".⁴³⁰ Kao considered the implications of a male head on Foy's reliquary, stating that it "affirms her identity as a holy warrior of Christ who fights to uphold the Peace of God."⁴³¹ This also has an impact on the conception of her virginity. For Kao, Foy acts "as trickster-tomboy and warrior-patronus, [she] hovers at and crosses over boundaries of both gender- and age-

in *Images of Cult and devotion: Function and reception of Christian Images in medieval and Post-medieval Europe* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2004), pp. 245-254.

⁴²⁶ Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages*, p. 19.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴²⁸ Karl Whittington, 'Queer', *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012), pp. 157-168, p. 158.

⁴²⁹ Kao, 'The Tomboyism of Faith', p. 415.

⁴³⁰ "Puellaris animus", Bernard of Angers, in Robertini (ed.), *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, p. 174; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 136.

⁴³¹ Kao, 'The Tomboyism of Faith', p. 416.

based identities and practices.”⁴³² Further, “rather than being one or the other – the spiritual adult or the holy jester-child – Sainte Foy, because of her suspended gender development, simultaneously embodies both the paradigms of the *puer senex* and the sacred trickster-tomboy.”⁴³³ Kao argues that only by understanding the “two differently gendered and aged figures of sanctity in Sainte Foy’s representation” can her reliquary, its meaning and function, be fully understood.⁴³⁴ My analysis of the reliquary statue will attempt to reconcile these differently gendered aspects and understand how they worked together to shape the cult of Sainte Foy from the moment of the creation of her statue.

Kao also notes Foy’s appearance within the miracle stories, observing that “in almost all of them, she appears as a beautiful young girl.”⁴³⁵ She is described variously as “a little girl of indescribable grace,” “a ten-year-old girl,” and “an elegant young girl.”⁴³⁶ However, this is not the only form she takes within her miracles. In one miracle, she is described as appearing as a “lady of terrifying authority.”⁴³⁷ In another, she appeared as “a despondent woman, very thin and wan.”⁴³⁸ She appeared in a vision to Gerbert “not in the form of a girl, but contrary to her usual custom, in the form of her sacred image.”⁴³⁹ This particular form of Sainte Foy is described as “terrifying,” and when she appears in the same form again, Foy is described “the same vision, but far more terrifying.”⁴⁴⁰ This highlights how saint and reliquary

⁴³² Ibid., p. 416.

⁴³³ Ibid., p. 421.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., p. 421.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., p. 418.

⁴³⁶ “Inenarrabilis elegante visa est puella” (p. 80), “decennem apparere virginem” (p. 89), “forma puellari et eleganti” (p. 169), Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.) (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’Alto medioevo, 1994); Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 46, 54 and 131.

⁴³⁷ “Terrentis auctoritatis visa est hera”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 48; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 78.

⁴³⁸ “Sancte Fides apparuit, sub persona abjecte mulieris multa macie pallens”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 107; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 126.

⁴³⁹ “Huic per visum sancte Fides, non in puelle quidem sed preter solitum in sacre imaginis specie visa fuit apparere”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 65; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 92.

⁴⁴⁰ “Terribiliter eodem modo apparere” and “eadem visio multo terribilius”, Bernard of Angers, in *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis* (Paris, 1897), p. 65; Bernard of Angers, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 92+93.

had become one. It also serves to show that the visual identifiers associated with Foy were variable and fluid from the beginning of the promotion of her cult.

It was standard practice in medieval drama for men to play all roles, both male and female.⁴⁴¹ There is also a variety of evidence to support the fact that nuns were also involved in medieval drama, including performing male roles.⁴⁴² Crossdressing on the medieval stage was “standard and, therefore, unproblematic.”⁴⁴³ As such, medieval viewers, whether of plays or reliquary statues, would have been familiar with the concept of gender play. This raises the possibility that the use of a male head for a female gendered saint would not have seemed extraordinary to the medieval mind – after all, people who were gendered male depicted female saints in saints plays all the time. While the contexts are different, the reliquary statue took this gender play beyond the realm of the stage, this example does serve to remind us of the difficulty of constructing “stable binary categories of oppositional difference” regarding gender.⁴⁴⁴

As Fricke states, the reliquary statue is not “‘similar’ to Sainte Foy, nor does it represent her as particularly alive, nor does it give the saint an individual expression or a specific mood due to the “smooth, lifeless, and impassive” depiction of facial features which can, on living human beings, move.”⁴⁴⁵ And yet, following Belting’s line of thinking, the “statue represented this body of the saint and, as it were, was itself the saint’s new body.”⁴⁴⁶ Foy’s statue reliquary shows her not on earth as a young girl, but rather in heaven, where she has transcended her gender. She is no longer female, she is displayed as a mixture of

⁴⁴¹ Robert L. A. Clark and Claire Sponsler, ‘Queer Play: The Cultural Work of Crossdressing in Medieval Drama’, *New Literary History* Spring 1997 (28.2), pp. 319-344, p. 319.

⁴⁴² See Olivia Robinson and Elisabeth Dutton, ‘Drama, Performance and Touch in the Medieval Convent and Beyond’, in David Carrillo-Rangel, Delfi I. Nieto-Isabel and Pablo Acosta-Garcia (eds.), *Touching, Devotional Practices, and Visionary Experience in the Late Middle Ages* (Palgrave Macmillan: Cham, 2019), pp. 43-68.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁴⁴⁵ Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, p. 154.

⁴⁴⁶ Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. 299.

male and female, so in effect she is both, or even neither. This is her “new body.” But how does one represent that in the earthly realm, where gender constraints are still in play?

Consistently, scholars have shown that there is “a very fine line separating contemporary notions of “sanctity” from perceptions of aberrant or deviant modes of behaviour.”⁴⁴⁷ For Bernau “the representation of a ‘pure’ virgin body is intricately bound up with the possibility of the grotesque and the abject, because it tries to keep the abject at bay.”⁴⁴⁸ This can be seen through Sainte Foy’s reliquary, which was not only close to being unacceptable due to its closeness to a “foul idol” (“spurcissimum ydolum”) to quote Bernard of Angers, but also because of the disruptive gendered elements of the different parts of her body.⁴⁴⁹

It is also worth noting that the idea of gender and its fluidity changed over the medieval period. Sainte Foy lived during a period when women were able to have a more active role within Christianity. During the sixth to eighth centuries, women were recruited by the church to aid in missionary work and able to found their own religious communities.⁴⁵⁰ And yet her cult developed and took off within a more restrictive period for religious women as the reforms of the tenth and eleventh centuries led to a greater preference for male leadership within the church, along with a greater emphasis on hierarchies.⁴⁵¹ To quote Schulenburg, “actions which had once won the approbation of the Church and society came to be perceived as extreme and dangerous” and as a result “such women were seen as the dangerous “other”; they needed to be contained, marginalized or punished.”⁴⁵² As such, over time, the idea of Foy with a male head became less acceptable, and was downplayed in other visual media. Instead, she was subsumed into the broader ideal of what a female virgin

⁴⁴⁷ Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex*, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁸ Anke Bernau, ‘Virginal Effects: Text and Identity in “Ancrene Wisse”’, in Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (eds.), *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 41.

⁴⁴⁹ Bernard of Angers, *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.) (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto medioevo, 1994), p. 114.

⁴⁵⁰ Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex*, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

martyr should look like – young, beautiful, and feminine. This left little space for the more masculine and terrifying facets of Foy.

Within a text Sainte Foy can appear as many things – a young girl, a terrifying lady, a despondent woman, her golden reliquary statue – but when presented in the visual realm she is limited to only one of these depictions. This can lead to a sense of conflict in that any visual representation is incapable of representing her fully. Some parts of her identity end up subsumed or flattened into one. As posited by Kao, the use of a male head may in fact be an attempt “to reveal the multiple contradictions of her [Foy’s] feminine masculinity.”⁴⁵³ However, this attempt to convey Foy’s multivalent gender was not always possible within different artistic media. This fits in with Bynum’s argument about ‘dissimilar similitude,’ whereby objects can contain paradoxical meanings.⁴⁵⁴ For Bynum, objects can contain “simultaneously an unlikeness as well as a likeness, both presence and absence.”⁴⁵⁵ This can be seen reflected in both Foy’s reliquary, which is both like and unlike, the actual saint. The reliquary can be considered both to be the saint, and not be the saint, both absent and present, and it is from this that its power derives.

While there is a difficulty to depicting multivalency through images, it is worth noting that “images convey ideas differently than words do. Figures can visualize notions that may not be possible to express in words, and often reach a different kind of audience as well.”⁴⁵⁶ As such, the examination of Sainte Foy in the visual realm is vital for fully understanding the complex nature of how the saint’s gender was perceived. Taking into account only written sources drastically limits our understanding of Foy’s gender. Not only does it limit our understanding to how her gender was perceived by the literate, it also shackles us to the limits of language itself which art can be used to overcome.

⁴⁵³ Kao, ‘The Tomboyism of Faith’, p. 434.

⁴⁵⁴ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Dissimilar Similitudes: Devotional Objects in Late Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), p. 41.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁴⁵⁶ Sherry C. M. Lindquist, ‘Gender’, *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012), pp. 113-130, p. 126.

The development of the image of Sainte Foy from a child into that of a grown adult woman was influenced by the unsettled nature of Foy as a saint. She did not conform perfectly with the developing idea of an adult female virgin martyr and so her depiction in art changed. However, this idea of what a virgin martyr should be was not the only influence acting on this artistic change. The impact of the use of a fifth-century adult male head for her reliquary was profound. As such, the image of Sainte Foy which developed was more masculine, and therefore still remained outside the traditional image of a virgin martyr. Even whilst adapting to fit an existing norm, the image of Sainte Foy resisted complete manipulation, and she remained a figure which failed to conform. Whilst her childlike state was denied so that she would conform with the stereotypical virgin martyr image, her reliquary's influence meant she could never fully fit this mould, retaining elements of masculinity.

This chapter has endeavoured to provide an overview of the beginning of the cult of Sainte Foy in France, centred around her cult site at Conques. It has taken in the various examples of early evidence from the region – namely the famous reliquary statue, her *Passio*, *Translatio*, miracle stories and the *Cançó de Santa Fe* – in order to gain an understanding of what the cult was like within France and how it had developed. It has looked at how the reliquary statue influenced the development of the cult, and why the specific circumstances at Conques allowed the reliquary to not only be acceptable, but also to flourish. It has considered what can be learned about Foy from her miracle stories which while written at Conques were used to spread the cult further afield. Only by understanding who Sainte Foy was in France can any meaningful conclusions be drawn about who Sainte Foy was in England, which will be the focus of the rest of this thesis.

3. Sainte Foy in England - The Priory of Horsham St Faith

Some five miles outside Norwich in Norfolk sits the village of Horsham St Faith. This village, which has almost been incorporated into the suburbs of Norwich itself, may initially appear unremarkable. However, one of the homes in the village is in fact a former priory and contains a unique surviving scheme of medieval wall paintings which remarkably contains evidence of repainting in the medieval period. In this chapter, an in-depth visual analysis of the wall paintings at Horsham St Faith will be undertaken, using both stylistic and technical analysis. This will be combined with documentary evidence to contextualise the wall paintings and place them in a broader historic and geographic context.

The foundation story of the priory of Horsham St Faith survives in the *Monasticon Anglicanum* by the seventeenth-century antiquarian William Dugdale (1605–1686).⁴⁵⁷ This work contained a history of the monastic orders in England, as well as information about each of the individual monasteries, including surviving charters relating to their history and development printed in full.⁴⁵⁸ Here, a brief history of the priory is given alongside a number of charters, including the genealogy of the founders, the foundation charter and the extent of the lands of the priory under Edward II, all in the original Latin.⁴⁵⁹ Dugdale takes the story of the foundation of the priory from a now lost manuscript which he states was owned by Sampson Lennard and was made in 1598.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁷ Parry, Graham, 'Dugdale, Sir William', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/8186>>

⁴⁵⁸ The first volume was published in 1655, while the second was published in 1661. The third volume, in which the priory of Horsham St Faith first appears, was not published until 1673. Parry, Graham, 'Dugdale, Sir William', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/8186>> and David C. Douglas, *English Scholars* (London, 1939), p. 38.

⁴⁵⁹ William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum: a history of the abbies and other monasteries, hospitals, frieries, and cathedral and collegiate churches, with their dependencies, in England and Wales; also of all such Scotch, Irish and French monasteries, as were in any manner connected with religious houses in England. Together with a particular account of their respective foundations grants, and donations, and a full statement of their possessions, as well temporal as spiritual*, vol. III (London: Bohn, 1846), pp. 636-638.

⁴⁶⁰ Sampson Lennard (d. 1633) was an antiquary and was likely the husband of Margaret Fiennes, Baroness Dacre, who, though indirectly, was descended from the founding family of the priory. Lennard also served as an MP for a variety of constituencies in the late sixteenth century, into the early seventeenth, and was Sheriff of Kent in 1590-91. He was recorded in Norfolk in the late

This account relates that, in 1106, Robert Fitzwalter and his wife Sybilla

with one assent, moved with godly charitie, purposed them to visit the places of Peter and Paul, that by them and other holy saints ther, which they were disposed to visiten with a great devout mind, that they, by there merits might have remission of their sins, and after that they might deserven to come to the blisse of heaven; it befell that ther pilgrimages so done, as they turned home againe, it came to there minds, by counsell, that they should visit an holy place of saint Giles in France with other holy saints in the way

St Giles is one of the pilgrimage sites on one of the main routes to Santiago de Compostela which starts at Arles.⁴⁶¹ The story of St Giles is recorded in the *Vita Sancti Aegidii*, the earliest versions of which date to the tenth century, which recounts how Giles was from Greece.⁴⁶² He was associated with Arles because he lived there for two years, during which he “chased away the sterility and barrenness that was in that country, and caused great plenty of goods.”⁴⁶³ In the *Codex Calixtinus* (c. 1130–1150), he is given special mention as one of only four saints whose bodies are complete.⁴⁶⁴

The account continues, discussing the Fitzwalters’ return journey

and so they, joyfull and merrie, by the helpe of God and of the saints, as they turned home againe into ther owne countrith, it befell upon a day by an infortune, when they should come from the said holy place of saint Giles, they were espied of brigants, and theeves that layne in caves and dens with strength, and waited upon them; and

sixteenth and early seventeenth century specifically involved in discussions about the dissolved lands of the priory so the question of how he came to be in possession of a manuscript relating to the priory is easily solved. See Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, NRS 18313, 33B3, ‘Deposition of witnesses re. site of dissolved priory of Horsham St Faith’, 20 March 1614; Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 636; and Jan Broadway, ‘Lennard, Sampson’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/16446>>

⁴⁶¹ Brian and Marcus Tate, *The Pilgrimage Route to Santiago* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1987), p. 49.

⁴⁶² For multiple redactions of the *Vita Sancti Aegidii*, see E-C Jones (ed.), *Saint Gilles: Essai D’Histoire Littérature* (Paris, H. Champion, 1914).

⁴⁶³ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints*, vol. V, pp. 44-6.

⁴⁶⁴ Tate and Tate, *The Pilgrimage Route to Santiago*, p. 49.

forasmuch as they were stronger than the said pilgrims, they fell upon them and robbed them and put them in prison, and fettered them with strong irons⁴⁶⁵

Pilgrimages in this region were notoriously dangerous, as shown by the fact that Richell wrote her will in 1067 before going on pilgrimage to Le Puy and Conques.⁴⁶⁶ Also the *Codex Calixtinus* (twelfth century) stated that “every wickedness and every deceit is in great abundance along the pilgrimage routes.”⁴⁶⁷ Following their imprisonment, the Fitzwalters prayed to God and Sainte Foy for help escaping their prison,

and anone after by a vision Saint Faith appeared unto them and through helpe of God loosed there fetters, and brought them out of prison and there fetters with them, which remaine within this place at this day, and with set them in the right way to the abbey of Couches⁴⁶⁸ in Fraunce, where Saint Faith lieth shrined: and when the abbot of Couches hard of this greate miracle, and that they were cominge towards the place, he and his bretheren with procession and greate solemnities received them into the said place, and ther thye made ther praiers, and offered up there fetters with greate devotion to God and to Saint Faith, and weare had into the place, and the said abbot and his bretheren refreshed them with greate cheare, and there they rested by the space of twelve days and reade the life of Saint Faith and the miracles that God shered for her ther daily and hourelly.⁴⁶⁹

Following their miraculous release, the Fitzwalters then vowed that when they returned to England, they would set up a monastery in “there owne manner of Horsford” which would be

⁴⁶⁵ Language and spelling have been preserved as found in Dugdale. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol. III, p. 636.

⁴⁶⁶ *Cartulario de Sant Cugat del Vallés*, vol. 2, José Rius Serra (ed.) (Barcelona, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1946), no. 656, pp. 321-22.

⁴⁶⁷ Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 487.

⁴⁶⁸ This misspelling caused a number of people, mainly antiquaries, to believe that the priory had been a daughter cell of Conches in Normandy, rather than one of Conques. This mishap likely arose from the fact that there was a foundation dedicated to Saint Faith at Conches which had been founded by Roger I de Tosny and his wife Gotehildis. The story of this foundation can be found in the miracle texts see *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.), pp. 183-184.

⁴⁶⁹ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 636.

a cell of the abbey at Conques. Robert Fitzwalter “brought with him twayne monkes of the said house, of which one was cleped Barnard, and the other was cleped Girard.”⁴⁷⁰ The deployment of monks from the mother abbey to newly founded priories seems to have been the norm for Conques, who also sent a monk to Sélestat following the foundation of the priory there.⁴⁷¹ However, in Norfolk, the construction of the priory did not go as planned.

And soone after that they were come home they began there first foundation upon a certaine ground called at this day Kirkescrofte, and the worke that was made on the day fell down on the night, and then it was though God and Saint Faith were not pleased it should stand there; wherefore they thought, by there better advise to edifie the said monastery upon the ground and place where it is now at this day.⁴⁷²

This initial difficulty of building the priory and having to relocate it adds a sense of authenticity to the foundation story. These complications, the lack of a neat linear foundation story, help reinforce the idea that this story was based on fact. It also signifies that the final location of the priory was divinely approved by Sainte Foy herself. This narrative can therefore be seen to mirror that of Foy’s *Translatio*, whereby the saint is only physically present at places she chooses.

Information about the priory can be gleaned from the work of Francis Blomefield who was an eighteenth-century antiquarian and author of *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of Norfolk*.⁴⁷³ The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography states that “there has as yet been no other history of Norfolk on a comparable scale, and it remains the standard work.”⁴⁷⁴ Blomefield, in his *History*, recorded that the foundation of the priory was not

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 636.

⁴⁷¹ Michele Luigi Vescovi, ‘Transregional Dynamics, Monastic Networks: Santa Fede in Cavagnolo, Conques, and the Geography of Romanesque Art’, in John McNeil and Richard Plant (eds.), *The Regional and Transregional in Romanesque Europe* (Routledge: Abingdon, 2021), 103-118

⁴⁷² Ibid., p. 636.

⁴⁷³ Blomefield completed twenty-three parts of the *Essay* before his death in 1752. The work was completed by Charles Parkin between 1755 and 1764.

⁴⁷⁴ David Stoker, ‘Blomefield, Francis’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/2663>>

confirmed until over fifty years later in 1163 by Pope Alexander III (r. 1159–1181).⁴⁷⁵ This manuscript survives as British Library Cotton MS Augustus II 136 and is dated the 26 May 1163 at Tours.⁴⁷⁶

3.1 The Site of the Priory

Today, most of the priory has been destroyed. The refectory range, after the priory was dissolved in 1536, was converted into a farmhouse by Sir Richard Southwell (1502/3–1564), the king's receiver for Norfolk.⁴⁷⁷ At this point, the cloister was demolished and a first floor, central chimney and staircase were added.⁴⁷⁸ Since then it has mostly been used as a private home, although the building was vacant and abandoned for a period in the twentieth century, leading to the Ministry of Works boarding up the doors and windows to protect the building from “the elements and vandals” in 1964.⁴⁷⁹ In addition to the refectory range, the cloister walls survive to a height of twelve feet, forming the walls around the present day garden.⁴⁸⁰ The accompanying priory church only partially survives above ground now, with the north wall of the nave and the west wall of the north transept remaining.⁴⁸¹ Using these walls, David Sherlock measured the length of the nave during his investigations in the early 1970s to be 102 feet, with the length of the north transept at 38 feet.⁴⁸²

The building is considered grade one listed.⁴⁸³ It describes the building as “flint and brick with some limestone dressings; roofs plain-tiled and pantiled” and “L'-shaped plan, two

⁴⁷⁵ Francis Blomefield, *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, volume X (London, 1809), pp. 439-441.

⁴⁷⁶ The text of this bull is printed as Appendix B in H. J. Dukinfield Astley, ‘Two Norfolk Villages’, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 17.2 (1901), pp. 128-129.

⁴⁷⁷ David Sherlock, ‘Discoveries at Horsham St Faith Priory, 1970-1973’, *Norfolk Archaeology*, 36 (1976-7), pp. 203-4.

⁴⁷⁸ Sherlock, ‘Discoveries at Horsham St Faith Priory, 1970-1973’, p. 210.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁴⁸³ The official listing of the building describes it as a “house, built on the site of, and incorporating elements of the refectory range of the Benedictine Priory of St. Faith” with “fabric dating from C12 with remodelling c. 1600 and later to form the present farmhouse.” The Priory, *National Heritage List for England*

storeys.⁴⁸⁴ It also highlights “some windows set in chamfered stone reveals,” as well as two windows on the south façade which date from the fifteenth century “with trefoiled heads, now partially blocked by massive staged buttresses of brick, flint and limestone.”⁴⁸⁵ One detail of particular interest in the listing record is that of other surviving wall painting fragments throughout the building, “including some reputedly earlier work at the south-west corner, now masked by later casing of the wall.”⁴⁸⁶ This tantalising detail may provide a clue about the decoration of the refectory before the execution of the thirteenth-century wall paintings.

The site received some antiquarian interest, particularly from two vicars of Horsford and Horsham, the Rev. Octavius Matthias and the Rev. Josiah Descarrieres Ballance.⁴⁸⁷ Matthias exhibited a floor tile from the priory to the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society, whilst Ballance travelled to Conches, Normandy to investigate the links between Horsham and that priory.⁴⁸⁸ Ballance also excavated the site, discovering ten two colour decorative floor tiles, and a stone coffin, probably belonging to a former prior, in the area which had been the chapter house.⁴⁸⁹

More recently, David Sherlock completed an archaeological excavation on behalf of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works in 1970 over a period of two weeks prior to the relaying of the floors.⁴⁹⁰ Work was concentrated in the three rooms which form the western part of the north range of the former cloister.⁴⁹¹ This work was undertaken prior to the relaying of the floor in this part of the building, aided by a grant from the Historic Buildings Council.⁴⁹² Sherlock concluded that “the architecture and history of Horsham St Faith

⁴⁸⁴ The Priory, *National Heritage List for England*

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Mathias was vicar of Horsford from 1829 to 1851 when he emigrated to New Zealand where he went on to become Archdeacon of Akaroa until his death in 1864. Ballance held the position of vicar from 1863 to 1897. Sherlock, ‘Discoveries at Horsham St Faith Priory, 1970-1973’, p. 204.

⁴⁸⁸ As mentioned above, this was due to the misspelling of Conques as Conches in the foundation story recorded in Dugdale’s *Monasticon Anglicanum*.

⁴⁸⁹ Sherlock notes that there are parallels between the Horsham tiles and some from both Waltham Abbey and Campsey Ash Priory. Sherlock, p. 204 and p. 215.

⁴⁹⁰ Sherlock, ‘Discoveries at Horsham St Faith Priory, 1970-1973’, p. 202.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., p. 202.

⁴⁹² Sherlock, ‘Discoveries at Horsham St Faith Priory, 1970-1973’, p. 202.

illustrate the plan and development of a normal conventional priory of the Benedictine order."⁴⁹³ He also notes that Binham has "a priory plan of practically identical size and shape, except for the church which is on the more usual north side of the cloister, and the positions of the sacristy and chapter house are reversed."⁴⁹⁴ The majority of Binham Priory is in ruins today, but the priory church survives as the church of St Mary and Holy Cross and is important for the development of the Gothic style, particularly regarding tracery.⁴⁹⁵ The present church consists of seven original Romanesque bays which form the nave and the west-front which was rebuilt in the thirteenth century, constructed from local flint, Caen stone and Barnack limestone from Lincolnshire.⁴⁹⁶ Johanna Luise Margerum described Binham's seven bays as "the typical number for a medium-sized priory in the middle of the last quarter of the eleventh century."⁴⁹⁷ In comparison, the priory church of Horsham St Faith had only six bays. Binham can be considered part of a group of Romanesque churches in East Anglia which also include Wymondham, Thetford, and Castle Rising. As such, the architectural layout of the site can be considered unexceptional for its time.

In February 2018, I visited the former priory of Horsham St Faith with my colleague Sophie Kelly with the generous permission from the current owners, Richard and Helen Benton. The primary purpose of this visit was to examine the wall paintings in person and to photograph them. Few photographs of the wall paintings were available to me prior to this visit, and when they were available, were often poor quality. Up until this point, I had been relying on written descriptions of the paintings which had presented a number of challenges. As such, after this visit, I was able to make my own judgments on the paintings, instead of being influenced by the descriptions of others. Also, there were a number of small details which I had not realised were present prior to my visit. This really deepened my understanding of the paintings and what they were attempting to portray. The visit also

⁴⁹³ Ibid., p. 220.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 220.

⁴⁹⁵ Johanna Luise Margerum, *An Edition of the Cartulary of Binham Priory* (PhD thesis, University of East Anglia, 2005), p. 205.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 205-6.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 206.

provided insight into how the wall paintings functioned within the space of the refectory and a sense of scale which had been difficult to ascertain from the available photographs and measurements. Rudimentary measurements of the paintings were also taken using a tape measure. Ideally, I would have revisited the site to examine the paintings in person again, take more photographs, particularly for the areas which were taken during periods of bad light, and to take more accurate measurements, but the COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately prevented this.

3.2 The Wall Paintings

The refectory, and more specifically the wall paintings that survive in it, are the focus of this chapter. Some decorative painting survives on multiple walls in this building, but it is the scheme on the eastern wall which is the most complete and dominates the room. This scheme consists of a monumental Crucifixion with the figures of Mary and John, flanked by an additional saint on each side and below the Crucifixion is narrative sequence. The Crucifixion will be considered first, before moving on to the additional saints, and finally the narrative portion of the painting.

The first part of this scheme was uncovered in 1924 when part of the building caught fire when it was struck by lightning.⁴⁹⁸ A newspaper article at the time described the “complete character of the havoc caused.”⁴⁹⁹ During restoration work following the fire, a monumental crucifixion was revealed, with Christ on the cross flanked by the Virgin Mary and John mourning on either side (figs. 2.1 and 2.2). The location of the Crucifixion within the refectory at Horsham St Faith can be seen as part of a long tradition which benefited

⁴⁹⁸ Sherlock, 'Discoveries at Horsham St Faith Priory, 1970-1973', p. 204.

⁴⁹⁹ This article survives as a clipping in the Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. However, which newspaper this clipping is from and the precise date is not recorded. The Survey of Historic Wall Paintings contains a wealth of material about the Horsham St Faith wall paintings, both published and unpublished. Unfortunately, a significant amount of the material consists of unattributed notes. For the sake of correct attribution, I have attempted to only use material where the authorship is clear, such as official reports and unpublished lecture transcripts. Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'Newspaper clipping', 1924.

from Eucharistic associations and the parallels in decoration between church and refectory.⁵⁰⁰

Sadly, the heads of Mary and John were destroyed in the fire, and Christ only survives from the waist down, as the painting is cut off by the current ceiling level of the room. The perizonium, the type of loincloth Jesus wears, is white and given depth and folds in blue, whilst the outline is done in a thick black. Part of the inside of the perizonium is also visible at Christ's hip – this is distinguished from the outside of the cloth in that it is given depth and folds with a pale pink or red colour, rather than blue. One of his knees and part of his thigh are revealed by the perizonium, a characteristic Paul Thoby identified as being present in the first two thirds of the thirteenth century, such as the one seen on fol. 152^r of The John Rylands Library Latin MS 24 (fig. 2.3).⁵⁰¹ Thoby's *Le Crucifix: des Origines au Concile de Trente*, published in 1959, remains the most comprehensive guide to depictions of the crucifixion and its changes during the medieval period. The cross at Horsham St Faith is fairly broad and green, the colour typically used for the cross in the thirteenth century; it can be seen behind Christ's feet and a small amount of the cross can be seen behind the curve of Christ's waist.⁵⁰² Christ's feet are crossed, one of the characteristic innovations of depiction of the crucifixion in the thirteenth century, and secured to the cross with one nail.⁵⁰³ His feet are angled outwards, but only slightly.

Mary wears a dress of terracotta red, covered by a green mantle. In her right hand, she holds a small book and her mantle. Her elbow protrudes outside of her main silhouette, forming a distinctive triangle. John is wearing a white robe covered by a green mantle. Like Mary, he is destroyed from the neck up; his head does not survive. John's hands are held together in front of his torso and his arms are shaded with a light blue. John appears to be

⁵⁰⁰ See Irene Kabala, 'Medieval Decorated Refectories in France, Italy and England Until 1250' (Ph.D. diss., John Hopkins University, 2001).

⁵⁰¹ The John Rylands Library Latin MS 24, fol. 152^r, mid-thirteenth century; Thoby, *Le Crucifix des Origines au Concile de Trente* (Nantes: Bellanger, 1959), p. 134 and pp. 155-6.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

clasping a small, brown book, between his left arm and his body. Part of one of John's feet survives, which is angled slightly outwards and has long toes with toenails picked out with black lines. After their discovery in 1924, these paintings were repaired and then covered with canvas on wooden framing.⁵⁰⁴

Work has been written on these paintings by authors such as David Park, E. W. Tristram, and others. Tristram was the first to publish on the Horsham St Faith wall paintings in *Norfolk Archaeology* in 1926. "In its original condition" Tristram stated, "the painting was undoubtedly a magnificent work on a heroic scale, in no respect surpassed by any others of its period, and evidently from the brush of a master of the first rank."⁵⁰⁵ The paintings were described by Tristram as being painted on "an exceptionally large scale," and he estimated that in their complete state the figures would have been at least sixteen feet tall (or in metric, four metres and eighty seven centimetres).⁵⁰⁶ At the time Tristram saw the paintings, he theorised that there might have been a representation of the Last Supper in the space beneath, like that found at St Thomas's Hospital in Canterbury and St Martin's Priory in Dover.⁵⁰⁷ Stylistically, Tristram drew comparisons between the Horsham paintings and work produced at St Albans and Westminster. He particularly highlights the similarities with the illuminations in the *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* (c. 1250–1260) and the drapery found on St Christopher in the Westminster Psalter.⁵⁰⁸ Tristram dated the St Christopher to c. 1200, in line with the dating of the overall manuscript. However, the tinted drawings of ff. 219v-221v are now considered to the mid-thirteenth century.⁵⁰⁹ The "quality of line" he compared to the work on the ceiling of the chapel of the Guardian Angels at Winchester (c.

⁵⁰⁴ Sherlock, p. 204.

⁵⁰⁵ E. W. Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, vol 2: *The thirteenth century* (London: Oxford University Press for the Pilgrim Trust, 1950), p. 360.

⁵⁰⁶ In comparison, the figures of Saint Thomas and Saint Christopher in the transept at Westminster Abbey are nine feet (or 2.7 metres) tall. Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, vol 2, p. 360.

⁵⁰⁷ The wall painting at St Martin's, Dover is now destroyed and is usually dated to the twelfth or early thirteenth century. Kabala however assigns it a later date in the fourteenth century. See Irene Kabala, 'Medieval Decorated Refectories in France, Italy and England Until 1250' (Ph.D. diss., John Hopkins University, 2001). Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, vol 2, p. 360.

⁵⁰⁸ Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, vol 2, p. 360.

⁵⁰⁹ See Nigel Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts*, 2 vols, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, 4 (London Harvey Miller, 1982-1988), I: 1190-1250, no. 95.

1230–1240), in particular the “marked partiality in both for the delineation of large knots in the drapery.”⁵¹⁰ He also considered there to be a “general resemblance” to miniatures in books of a Salisbury provenance.⁵¹¹ Given this wealth of stylistic comparisons, spread quite far apart geographically, they deserve further attention, in particular to see if these comparisons hold up in light of the new areas of paintings found after Tristram examined them.

In 1969, during renovations to the building following its purchase by new owners in 1968, additional figurative wall paintings were discovered in the space beneath the crucifixion. However, they do not show a Last Supper as posited by Tristram; instead, they show a series of images which depict the story of the priory’s foundation (figs. 2.9 to 2.11). This band of images survives in varying condition, and, moving from left to right, the narrative of the priory’s foundation unfolds, and shows the Fitzwalters travelling on a boat (fig. 2.12), then on horseback (fig. 2.15), followed by their capture by bandits (fig. 2.16). They are then shown praying to Sainte Foy (fig. 2.17), and being rescued by her (fig. 2.19), followed by their visit to Conques to give thanks for their release (fig. 2.20), their return home via boat (fig. 2.22), and finally the actual construction of the priory (fig. 2.23). In the fifteenth century, parts of the painting were touched up and brought up to date, mainly details of armour, masonry and individual faces which will be discussed later in this chapter. Multiple scholars have noted the over painting, including Park who dated them to the mid-fifteenth century, presumably on the basis of style.⁵¹² Above the foundation narrative, there is a decorative band filled with floral motifs (figs. 2.9 and 2.10) which acts as a barrier separating the foundation story from the Crucifixion above. Below the foundation narrative, further polychromy survives in the form of a series of decorative arches which have clearly show multiple layers of paint (see figs. 2.9, 2.10 and 2.41). To the right of the foundation narrative,

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., p. 360.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., p. 361.

⁵¹² Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, ‘The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory – David Park’, 1979.

on the abutting wall, is another decorative piece, this time a canopy decorated with crockets (fig. 2.40). Elsewhere, moved masonry provides tantalising hints at a further decorative scheme, including some text and drapery (fig. 2.38).⁵¹³ As of yet, no one has provided a comprehensive study of which parts of the painting have been over painted, and why these alterations were made, which this chapter will endeavour to rectify.

The execution of the thirteenth-century paintings was praised by David Park, who stated that they are a “paradigm of the style at this period, comparable yet superior to that of the illumination of Matthew Paris.”⁵¹⁴ As Park notes, “that relatively provincial wall paintings can surpass contemporary manuscripts produced at a leading English abbey with close Court connections, reminds us that the relative importance and innovation of wall paintings is consistently undervalued.”⁵¹⁵ As well as praising the stylistic achievement of the scheme at Horsham, Park has also commented on the sophisticated techniques used there. He points out the “elaborate incised drawing and final gilding of details” as well as the “unlooked-for complexities such as a lead white ground, and layers of glazes added to the secco painting.”⁵¹⁶ He compares these aspects of the painting to the refined technique of a roundel containing the Virgin and Child in the Bishop’s Palace at Chichester, which he dates as slightly later than the Horsham work, having been executed c. 1260.⁵¹⁷ In addition to these technical similarities noted by Park, some stylistic ones are evident as well – namely in the use of heavy black lines.

Writing on this section of the paintings, Kathleen Ashley argued that the “foundation narrative brings the priory’s various patrons together to define the space in which the monks ate daily.”⁵¹⁸ She also addresses the relationship between saintly and secular patrons, and

⁵¹³ This is an area which certainly merits further research, particularly palaeographical, to aid with dating, however I have been unable to consider it as part of this thesis due to restrictions on space.

⁵¹⁴ David Park, ‘Wall Painting’ in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, in Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (eds.) (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987), p. 127.

⁵¹⁵ Park, ‘Wall Painting’ in *Age of Chivalry*, pp. 125-130, p. 127.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-8.

⁵¹⁸ Kathleen Ashley, ‘The Mural Paintings of Horsham Saint Faith, Norfolk: Secular Patronage and Monastic Memory’, in Luís Urbano Afonso and Vítor Serrão (eds.), *Out of the Stream: Studies in*

the relationships between patrons and ecclesiastical institutions, and how they were “encoded in visual representation.”⁵¹⁹ The role of patrons throughout the priory’s history will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter, in order to place the wall paintings within a broader historical context.

During the same period of renovation in the twentieth century, the northern wall was moved and revealed a crowned figure (figs. 2.4 to 2.8), likely Sainte Foy, in remarkably well-preserved condition. Writing in the 1970s, Donovan Purcell disregarded the figure as that of Foy due to fact that she was not holding her instrument of martyrdom, a grill, which he claims was present “in virtually every other recorded representation of her.”⁵²⁰ Instead he suggested that the figure was Saint Margaret of Scotland (c. 1045–1093, canonised 1250), wife of Malcolm III of Scotland (r. 1058–1093), who endeavoured to introduce non-Celtic monasticism to Scotland.⁵²¹ This line of argument was taken up by Arthur Whittingham, Audrey Baker and Clive Rouse when they wrote on the priory in 1979, as well as by David Sherlock in 1976.⁵²² This argument is based on the fact that Margaret of Scotland died in 1093 shortly before the construction of the priory and her son-in-law Henry I (r. 1100–1135) conferred special privileges on the priory.⁵²³ Purcell also argued that the figure is holding a sceptre and a book, which corresponds to the symbols associated with the Prior of Pluscardine.⁵²⁴ Purcell himself admitted that there was “no more particular connection” between Margaret of Scotland and Horsham St Faith, other than “perhaps, the “special privileges” conferred upon the priory by her son-in-law, Henry I.”⁵²⁵

Medieval and Renaissance Mural Painting (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), p.321.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.321.

⁵²⁰ Donovan Purcell, ‘The Priory of Horsham St Faith and Its Wall Paintings’, *Norfolk Archaeology, or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to the Antiquities of the County of Norfolk* 35 (1973), p. 472.

⁵²¹ Sangdong Lee, ‘The Miracles and Cult of St Margaret of Scotland’, *The Scottish Historical Review* 97.1 (2018), p. 1.

⁵²² Audrey Baker, Clive Rouse and Arthur Whittingham, ‘Horsham St Faith’s Priory’, *Archaeological Journal* 137.1 (1980), pp. 323-326 and David Sherlock, ‘Discoveries at Horsham St Faith Priory, 1970-1973’, *Norfolk Archaeology*, 36 (1976-7), p. 207.

⁵²³ Purcell, ‘The Priory of Horsham St Faith and Its Wall Paintings’, p. 473.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 473.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 473.

Unfortunately, there are several holes in this argument. Sainte Foy is depicted without a grill in a number of representations. Instead of depicting her with a grill, the British Library MS Royal 2 B VII depicts Sainte Foy being beheaded with a sword (fig. 2.24), where she is also labelled “Beata Fides.”⁵²⁶ Elsewhere the thirteenth-century seal of the priory of Horsham St Faith shows Foy holding a sceptre and book.⁵²⁷ Symbols such as a sceptre and a book are common and flexible ones associated with a number of saints, suggesting their miraculous deeds and divine authority, or acting as an emblem of their faith. and as such are a flimsy basis for identification of the figure. It is also worth noting that the sceptre the figure holds is topped by a bird (fig. 2.6), and birds, particularly doves, are a recurring motif in Sainte Foy’s miracles. During her passion, Saint Caprais witnessed “a dove descending from the clouds [to place] the crown on Sainte Foy’s head.”⁵²⁸ A dove also returned a man’s ripped out eyeballs in one miracle, whilst in another miracle of healed blindness, the blind man experienced a vision of two birds thrusting candles into his eyes whilst praying at the abbey of Saint Foy in Conques.⁵²⁹ Another miracle tells of how Sainte Foy was promised two golden doves and did not rest until she had them, and how these doves were then incorporated into her statue reliquary.⁵³⁰ Additionally, research by Sangdong Lee has shown that Margaret’s cult was primarily a local one, “with limited influence up to 100 miles away in Aberdeen, Galloway and Northumbria” despite the distribution of her relics to Durham, Huntingdon and Westminster.⁵³¹ As such, given its location in Norfolk, identification of the figure as Margaret of Scotland is unlikely.

The choice of a sceptre, specifically a bird topped one, for Sainte Foy deserves further examination given that she is not a royal saint. From the reign of Henry III (r. 1216-

⁵²⁶ British Library, London, Royal MS 2 B VII, fols. 269v-270r, ‘The Queen Mary Psalter’, n.d. For more on Royal MS 2 B VII, see Anne Rudloff Stanton, ‘The Queen Mary Psalter: A Study of Affect and Audience’, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 91.6 (2001), 1-287.

⁵²⁷ Ashley, ‘The Mural Paintings of Horsham Saint Faith, Norfolk’, p. 323.

⁵²⁸ Anonymous, ‘Passio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 35.

⁵²⁹ Bernard of Angers, in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 45 and Anonymous, ‘Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis’, in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 151.

⁵³⁰ Bernard of Angers, in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, pp. 81-2.

⁵³¹ Lee, ‘The Miracles and Cult of St Margaret of Scotland’, pp. 4-5.

72) onwards, kings of England used a sceptre topper with a dove, a symbol of peace and mercy, which was understood to be Edward the Confessor's Rod of Virtue.⁵³² Depictions of a number of English kings holding a dove topped sceptre can be found in copies of the *Flores Historiarum* such as Edward I in Eton College MS 123, Edward the Confessor in Manchester, Chetham Library MS 6712, and King John, also in the Eton manuscript.⁵³³ This choice serves to tie Foy to the established regime in England – acting as another way to Anglicise the saint and embed her within the surrounding political landscape. It connects Foy with an established figure of authority, not just the monarchy in England, but specifically to a saint king who was actively involved in the consecration of the current king.

For Ashley, the inclusion of patron saints in refectories was part of a “well-established tradition,” an argument Parks agrees with, citing the example of Thomas Becket at Eastbridge Hospital in Canterbury.⁵³⁴ It can also be seen as part of a tradition, established by Cluny, of depicting founders, patrons, and donors in refectories, as can be seen at St Bénigne in Dijon, Saint-Jean-des-Vignes in Soissons and in Marienburg.⁵³⁵ Ashley states that the “present consensus” on the identity of the female figure is that she is Foy, and it is this line of argument the present chapter follows. Given the similarities between the monumental Foy and the Foy in the foundation narrative, as well as other extant examples of Foy not holding a grill, and the tradition of depicting patron saints in refectories, the monumental female saint can be confidently identified as Foy.

David Sherlock theorised that the northern wall that partially blocks the image of Sainte Foy (fig. 2.5) was rebuilt multiple times because of the natural slope the priory is built on, which resulted in the wall requiring additional buttressing.⁵³⁶ This may provide an

⁵³² Joan A. Holladay, 'Royal and imperial iconography', in Colum Hourihane (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 358.

⁵³³ Judith Collard, 'Flores Historiarum Manuscripts: The Illumination of a Late Thirteenth-Century Chronicle Series', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 71 (2008), 441-466 (pp. 453-4).

⁵³⁴ Ashley, 'The Mural Paintings of Horsham Saint Faith, Norfolk', p. 324; David Park, 'Refectory Murals' in Alexander and Binski (eds.), *Age of Chivalry*, p. 313.

⁵³⁵ Irene Kabala, *Medieval Decorated Refectories in France, Italy and England Until 1250* (Ph.D. thesis, John Hopkins University, 2001), pp. 200-1.

⁵³⁶ Sherlock, 'The Priory of Horsham St Faith and Its Wall Paintings', p. 213.

explanation for why the wall was brought forward by approximately three feet in the fourteenth century, resulting in the painting being covered up.⁵³⁷ This would have provided the wall with greater stability. In order to fully expose the figure, the wall had to be bored into.

The figure of Sainte Foy measures over two and a half metres tall from the top of the head to the lowest visible part of her legs. From straight on, her head looks overly wide and short. However, when viewed from below (fig. 2.4), this impression is considerably reduced, and, due to the angle at which the painting is viewed, the face seems of normal proportions. This suggests that the viewing perspective of Sainte Foy was taken into consideration when the painting was executed. Foy stares straight out of the wall, her eyes all black, a pupil only distinguishable by a small amount of white (fig. 2.6). Her eyes are almond shaped and taper to a point at the outside. A further line is added both above and below the eye, creating the sense of eyelids. The areas around the eyes and underneath the eyebrows are shaded, creating a sense that her eyes are slightly set back. Her eyebrows are fine and consist of a single swooping reddish brown line. Her right eyebrow curves down to form her nose, which is very straight; she also has quite wide nostrils. Her cheeks are lightly shaded, with two small circles of colour in the centre of her cheeks; the colour today looks slightly purple or grey.

Her mouth is also a distinctive shape and follows a noticeable downwards curve. Her upper lip has a very prominent cupid's bow, which then descends to a sharp point at the edge. The lower lip – although deep – is not very wide, and takes up about a third of the space that the upper lip does. This shape of mouth is particularly distinctive, and can be seen in some other medieval examples, such as those seen at Norwich cathedral. One of the censuring angels in the Ante-Reliquary Chapel at Norwich Cathedral (fig. 2.25) has a similar mouth shape with an exaggerated bow on the upper lip and a much narrower bottom lip. Howard and Park identify this angel as part of the “earlier paintings” in the ante-reliquary

⁵³⁷ Baker, Rouse and Whittingham, ‘Horsham St Faith’s Priory’, p. 325.

chapel and date them to c. 1250–60.⁵³⁸ They also compare the “tiny pursed mouth” to those in the Carrow Psalter (fig. 2.26).⁵³⁹ Whilst these illuminations frequently feature the narrower bottom lip, they do not have such a prominent cupid’s bow on the upper lip. Another similarly shaped mouth can be seen on the figures which are part of the wheel of fortune wall painting at Rochester Cathedral (fig. 2.27). Tristram dated this painting to “not later than c. 1250” based on technique, and that stylistically it conforms “with work of about this period”.⁵⁴⁰ More recently, Rosewell has dated the painting to c. 1245–1250.⁵⁴¹ At the bottom of her lower lip, there is a small downward curve done in light grey, which suggests a chin. Further shading adds to this effect, creating a rounded chin out of the rather flat jawline. The cords of Foy’s neck are picked out in a slightly darker flesh colour, more prominently on the right than the left, which adds shape to what is a very broad neck.

Foy wears a golden crown, where faint traces of gold leaf remain. Howard identified that egg tempera was used as an adhesive for the gold leaf.⁵⁴² The design of the crown is a combination of details inspired by foliage, fleur-de-lis, and crosses. There are also details drawn on the band of the crown, these include diamond shapes and circles done in black. This creates the sense that the crown was further embellished with other decoration such as jewels or filigree. In her *Passio*, she is described by Caprais during her martyrdom as wearing a crown “decorated with bright, glittering gems and celestial pearls,” which showed “she had already attained the palm of triumph and the prize of victory, which was eternal salvation.”⁵⁴³ The depiction of Foy at Horsham St Faith can therefore clearly be considered an image of the virgin Foy crowned in her martyrdom.

⁵³⁸ David Park and Helen Howard, ‘The Medieval Polychromy’, in Ian Atherton, Eric Fernie, Christopher Harper-Bill and Hassell Smith (eds.), *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese 1096-1996* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996), pp. 379-409, p. 391-2.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

⁵⁴⁰ Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, vol 2, p. 287.

⁵⁴¹ Unfortunately, Rosewell does not provide any references within this text so it is difficult to assess on what evidence he based this claim. It is however likely that he takes this date from David Park’s work from *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England*. Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings* (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2014), pp. 52-53.

⁵⁴² Helen Howard, *The Pigments of English Medieval Wall Painting* (London: Archetype, 2003), p. 7.

⁵⁴³ Anonymous, ‘Passio’, in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 35.

Foy is also wearing a veil, which cascades down either side of her face, with some of her blonde hair visible. Drapery folds are done in a mixture of black lines and blue shading. This blue shading is particularly prominent in the part of the veil visible at the centre of her forehead and at the bottom of her neck, where the veil pools, creating a sense of depth. She also wears a golden necklace, part of which is visible behind her veil. This is decorated with a pattern of overlapping triangles and simplistic flower motifs, evoking the imagery of her reliquary statue, executed in thin lines of black paint. At the centre of the necklace, there is a large circle, decorated with four quatrefoils (fig. 2.7), evoking the language of reliquaries. These were potentially connected by a cross, as there appear to be black lines connecting them, however this is difficult to discern due to the deterioration of the painting. This additional embellishment further establishes Foy as a woman of high status. It also creates a link with Foy as she is portrayed in her miracle stories, as a woman who is eager for, and a protector of, treasure. This dichotomy between Foy as a saintly figure to be emulated, and a covetous girlchild reflects the difficult nature of saints in general. To quote Amy G. Ogden, “from a terrestrial, political standpoint, [saints’] behavior relegates them to the edges of society, while from a spiritual perspective, it locates their identity in the overlap between the human and the divine.”⁵⁴⁴

Foy is wearing a red dress and a green mantle, most of which was destroyed by the insertion of a door to the left. Howard identified the pigment used as verdigris, applied over white lime plaster “to provide translucency and enrich the green appearance.”⁵⁴⁵ Foy’s dress is belted with a black tie, which has metal detailing on it, and hangs down the centre of her skirts. The drapery is done in a darker shade of red and consists of a mixture of u and v shaped curves, all positioned very close together.

In her left hand, Foy holds a small book, bound in black with a golden clasp (fig. 2.7). This likely indicates her *vita* or book of miracles – Foy is carrying proof of her deeds and

⁵⁴⁴ Amy G. Ogden, ‘The Centrality of Margins: Medieval French Genders and Genres Reconfigured’, *French Forum* 30.1 (Winter 2005), pp. 1-23, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁴⁵ Howard, *The Pigments of English Medieval Wall Painting*, p. 88.

passion. Another example of a saint holding their book of deeds can be found in a mid-thirteenth-century wall painting in the church of St Mary and All Saints in Willingham, Cambridgeshire where Etheldreda is shown holding a book.⁵⁴⁶ Particular detail has been paid to the nails, which as well as being outlined in black, have an additional black line, suggesting that the nails are slightly reflective. Foy is also wearing a golden bangle on her left wrist, which is decorated with fine black lines in a crosshatched pattern and thicker black lines which suggest the curve of the bangle. In Foy's right hand, she holds a sceptre. Whilst her hand is destroyed, the position of the sceptre makes it clear she is holding it. The main shaft of the sceptre is clearly metallic, but of a darker shade than Foy's golden jewellery. However at the top of the sceptre, the colours change to green and red as it unfurls into shapes reminiscent of foliage. At the very top of the sceptre, a bird is perched, done in shades of brown and with details done in white to indicate feathers (fig. 2.6). The bottom of the sceptre is also decorated with a small pommel and some curling details (fig. 2.7). However, this part of the painting is damaged, so it is difficult to make out the precise shapes. It is very thin and extends from just above her waist to the bottom of her crown.

Overall, this image of Foy conveys a formidable individual with a great deal of power, and aspects of the iconography might refer back to the renowned design of her miracle-working cult statue in Conques. The combination of Foy's uncompromising frontality and grim expression make this depiction of Foy a formidable figure. This uncompromising frontality is one of the most notable aspects of the wall painting. Very few female saints in wall paintings stare directly out at the viewer, with most of their heads turned slightly away from their audience; and even when they do, their bodies still flow in a more sinuous manner than the stark uprightness of Sainte Foy. Figures such as the fourteenth-century Margaret at South Newington, Oxfordshire (fig. 2.28), and early fourteenth-century Catherine at Old

⁵⁴⁶ C. E. Keyser, 'On Recently Discovered Mural Paintings at Willingham Church, Cambridge, and Elsewhere in the South of England', *Archaeological Journal*, 53.1 (1896), pp. 160-191.

Weston, Huntingdonshire (fig. 2.29), avert their gaze from the viewer.⁵⁴⁷ In contrast, male figures such as the Saint Thomas at Hauxton, Cambridgeshire (fig. 2.30) and at Stow Minster, Lincolnshire, stand more rigidly and maintain eye contact with the viewer. These two figures were both associated with altars, and may suggest that the frontality is connected to the specific form of devotion experienced at an altar. Elsewhere outside the realm of monumental wall paintings, this type of frontality can be found in female saints, such as the figures of Catherine and Margaret in both the Carrow Psalter (fig. 2.26) and the Lambeth Apocalypse (figs. 2.31 and 2.32).

This frontality can also be seen as an element of the gender blurring discussed earlier in Chapter One. This outward facing position which maintains eye contact can be seen as part of a masculine, lordly image. In wall paintings, unlike manuscripts, this positioning seems to have normally been restricted to male saints associated with altars. This may potentially be because the visual conquest of a wall painting is greater than that of a manuscript illumination, therefore enabling female figures to access a reduced version of this power. The frontality of Foy in the wall painting suggests that this aspect of gender blurring within Foy's cult was maintained when it was imported to England. Despite being far away from her seat of power in Conques, Foy is still a figure of power and importance.

In the corresponding position to Foy, on the southern end of the east wall, is an unidentified male saint (fig. 2.31). Most of this figure has been destroyed, with only part of one arm, the upper part of his head and a pair of feet surviving. The eyes and eyebrows have been handled in a manner similar to Foy's, with thin curving brows, suggesting that they were executed by the same workshop. However, it is impossible to tell if either of the eyebrows descended to form the nose as that part of the painting has been destroyed. One of the figure's ears is visible, which is formed of two black lines, and reminiscent of a handle.

⁵⁴⁷ See E. W. Tristram, 'The Wall Paintings at South Newington', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 62.369 (Mar. 1933), pp. 114-115+117-119+122-125+129, and Ethel Carleton Williams, 'Mural Paintings of St Catherine in England', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 19.1 (1956), pp. 20-33.

The crown appears to be of a similar design to Foy's, with crosses and foliate motifs, however it is thinner band and less decorated. Park and Howard compared the "severely frontal" head of a bishop in the Ante-Reliquary Chapel at Norwich Cathedral with the head of the male saint at Horsham St Faith.⁵⁴⁸ What remains of the saint's right arm, shows that he wears a green of a similar shade to that seen on the rest of the figures. He holds in his hand what is either a sword, banner, or lance. It has a handle, with a small pommel, and is long and thin in a similar manner to Foy's sceptre. At the top, there is a small flag or banner, which is white and divided by a red cross.

Although the majority of the figure's body is destroyed, a pair of feet are visible at the very bottom (fig. 2.32). These feet are grey, with a criss-crossing pattern down the centre in black which suggests laces or chainmail. These feet have a distinct flipper-like shape, are pointed at the toe, and are angled slightly outwards. Most notably, the feet are resting on a yellow beast. Most of this creature has been destroyed, but its legs survive and intrude on the space occupied by the foundation story. The beast's feet consist of three front claws and one rear claw, with long and distinct black nails. I would posit that this beast is a dragon trampled either by Saint Michael or Saint George.⁵⁴⁹ There is some evidence of local devotion to Saint George, such as the creation of the Gild of St George in Norwich in 1385.⁵⁵⁰ The red cross on the flag held by the figure may also suggest Saint George. Saint George was certainly known in England by the thirteenth century, as shown by the wall paintings at Hardham, from c. 1080-1120, which shows the saint in Antioch, and his inclusion in the tympanum of c. 1100 at Fordington.⁵⁵¹ However, neither saint has any particular connection with Sainte Foy, and as such the precise identity of the male figure remains a mystery, with George and Michael being the most likely candidates.

⁵⁴⁸ Park and Howard, 'The Medieval Polychromy', p. 392.

⁵⁴⁹ See Louise W. Lippincott, 'The Unnatural History of Dragons', *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin* 77.334 (Winter 1981), pp. 2-24.

⁵⁵⁰ Ben R. McRee, 'Religious Gilds and Civil Order: The Case of Norwich in the Late Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 67.1 (Jan. 1992), p. 74.

⁵⁵¹ Samantha Riches, *St George: Hero, Martyr and Myth* (Sutton: Thrupp, 2005), p. 19 and p. 22.

While the identity of the male saint remains unclear, the female saint can confidently be identified as Sainte Foy and not Saint Margaret of Scotland. The depiction of Foy in the refectory recalls the reliquary statue, both in its frontal nature and its adornment with golden jewellery. Additionally, this was likely the first part of the decorative programme on the eastern wall which was executed. Logistically, the Crucifixion and monumental saints would need to be completed first so that the pigments would not drip on the lower narrative scenes.

3.3 The Foundation Story Wall Paintings

Across the east wall, at approximately eye level, is a band of images which illustrates the story of the foundation of the priory, in a manner reminiscent of works like the Bayeux tapestry that show historical events in a long, thin register. Due to the width of the painting, the narrative design and iconographic details of the foundation story are very difficult to photograph all in one image. As such, I have digitally stitched the images together so it can be viewed as one image (fig. 2.11), thus enabling the consideration of the image as whole rather than through falsely imposed panels.

Some of the narrative portion of the painting has been damaged. In his 1989 report on the environmental causes of the deterioration of the paintings, Julian James stated that the majority of damage was condensed moisture from the air “due to high thermal inertia, and hygroscopic salts.”⁵⁵² James added that there was also a small amount of rising damp.⁵⁵³ James concluded that in addition to “providing moisture for microbiological growth, the very high relative humidity and periodic condensation cause the soluble salts in the wall to go through frequent cycles of hydration and crystallisation, with resultant damage to the complex paint layer.”⁵⁵⁴ Babington and Rickerby concluded in 1989 that “preservation of the paintings is dependent on implementation of a comprehensive, long-term programme of

⁵⁵² Julian James, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory: Environmental Causes of Deterioration and their Treatment', in *Science, Technology and European Cultural Heritage: Proceedings of the European Symposium, Bologna, Italy, 13-16 June 1989*, N.S. Baer, C. Sabbioni and A.I. Sors (eds.) (Oxford: Elsevier Science, 1991), p. 920.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 920.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 920.

conservation and correction of the environmental conditions which are causing the deterioration.”⁵⁵⁵ As it remains unclear which, if any, of the report’s suggestions were adopted, any consideration of the foundation narrative needs to account for deterioration, including flaking and powdering.

In her examination of the pigments used at Horsham St Faith, Helen Howard ascertained that the scheme was executed in a lime-based ground, which also contained lead white.⁵⁵⁶ She also identified the use of white lakes at Horsham St Faith.⁵⁵⁷ Additionally, linseed oil was used in combination with green and reddish brown paint.⁵⁵⁸ Howard explains that linseed oil was used increasingly as a binding media in the Gothic period to “achieve translucent effects.”⁵⁵⁹ In contrast, she identified that the fifteenth-century repainting used heat-bodied or pre-polymerised linseed oil.⁵⁶⁰

The first surviving image in this pictorial narrative of the priory’s foundation is the most damaged. It shows the hull of a *mora* ship (figs. 2.12 to 2.14), with some detailing of the sea, mast and sail. As such, this scene can be interpreted as the Fitzwalters embarking on their pilgrimage. Here, Howard identified that rabbit skin glue was used to bind the azurite.⁵⁶¹ She also identified that the azurite was “adulterated with its cheaper, synthetic equivalent” and used “over a local ground of verdigris.”⁵⁶² As Howard notes, this would have the effect of “bulking out the more expensive pigment” therefore reducing the overall cost.⁵⁶³ In 2003, Howard stated that this was “the only confirmed example of a synthetic copper carbonate in English medieval wall painting.”⁵⁶⁴ This could possibly suggest that whilst the painting would have appeared lavish and expensive, it had actually been completed using

⁵⁵⁵ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, ‘Horsham St Faith Priory: Report on the Condition of the Wall Paintings and on Fixing Tests’, C. Babington and S. Rickerby, 1989.

⁵⁵⁶ Howard, *The Pigments of English Medieval Wall Painting*, p. 6 and p. 178.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

slightly cheaper materials. However, as this is the first known example of this pigment in English medieval wall painting, it could also be interpreted as an innovative and new technique, adding to its prestige rather than lowering it. This scene of a ship was not originally the first in this sequence of images, as evidenced by the empty space to the left, whereas in comparison the right hand of the band of images extends underneath the male saint and right up to the southern wall. Therefore, it is likely that the images originally extended below the figure of Sainte Foy. Purcell stated that one picture “is now hidden in the thickness of [the] wall,” whereas Baker and Rouse argue that two scenes are concealed by the wall alterations.⁵⁶⁵ These scenes may have made the reason for the Fitzwalters’ journey – a pilgrimage to Rome and that this was their return journey before it was interrupted – more explicit.

The second visible image shows a group of eight, including the Fitzwalters, travelling on horseback alongside one figure standing on the ground (fig. 2.15). The majority of the background is green, with brown at the bottom to represent a road. The horses are a mixture of white and grey, and the horse at the rear appears to be caparisoned in grey fabric. Some of a pattern is visible on the caparison, drawn on in black – a diamond which has at each corner a circle with a dot inside. A number of the horses have golden bridles, reins, and other tack. Most of the figures are carrying weapons, including swords and spears. Ashley identified this scene as the Fitzwalters being captured by bandits on horseback.⁵⁶⁶ This would fit with the number of armed men in the scene, although it could also depict their travel before their capture and indicate the dangerous nature of travelling in the Rouergue. The faces and armour of some of the figures, particularly those not in the foreground, appear to have been overpainted, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The figures carry a variety of weapons, including swords and a variety of pole arms. Two of the mounted figures have striped red and gold sleeves, a feature used consistently throughout

⁵⁶⁵ Purcell, ‘The Priory of Horsham St Faith and Its Wall Paintings’, p. 472. And Baker, Rouse and Whittingham, ‘Horsham St Faith’s Priory’, p. 326.

⁵⁶⁶ Ashley, ‘The Mural Paintings of Horsham Saint Faith, Norfolk’, p. 324.

the images to identify the Fitzwalters. This colour scheme reflects the Chesney coat of arms – gules, fess ermine between two chevrons or.⁵⁶⁷ These two figures are at the front and centre of the image, signifying their importance as the protagonists of the foundation narrative.

The third image shows two people being forced into a fortified building by two figures with swords (fig. 2.16). The building is large and grey with a yellow pitched roof and grey crenellations, the front of which is dominated by two open doors. The door to the left is shaped like a pointed arch, evoking a Gothic church, with a pair of wooden double doors reinforced and decorated with black cast iron. In this open doorway stands a figure carrying a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left. The field of the shield is comprised of gold and white (or possibly very faded red) vertical stripes and is decorated with a motif in black. What exactly this motif represents is no longer easily discernible due to deterioration of the painting, combined with later repainting, but it is possible that it was supposed to represent a coat of arms. As such, this shield could serve to reinforce the identity of those travelling – the Fitzwalters.

The second door is rectangular in shape and also open, made of wood, reinforced, and decorated with black cast iron. A figure dressed in blue, holding a sword in the right hand, stands in front of the door. The drapery on this figure's clothing is delicately handled. Two figures appear in the open doorway, both smaller than the figure in blue. These figures have been damaged, but the face of the figure in the rear has remained intact, and consists of a small mouth, two round widely placed eyes and a large button nose. This face is likely the work of later overpainting however. This figure appears to be wearing a white veil, suggesting she is possibly a woman. Some of their clothing also survives – with sleeves made of red with golden bands, as seen on the Fitzwalters throughout the series of images. As such, it is likely that these figures are Robert and Sybilla Fitzwalter. A further figure

⁵⁶⁷ See Blomefield, p. 439.

stands to the right who is in the process of drawing his sword, suggesting that he is joining his two companions in intimidating their captives. His sword intrudes into the space of the building which indicates the next scene. These figures serve to interrupt the momentum of the narrative. It is unclear who precisely these figures are supposed to represent, if anyone specific at all, but they are most likely the “brigants and theeves” who captured the Fitzwalters.⁵⁶⁸ Behind these two figures, there is a suggestion of an outdoor landscape, with waves of green which likely represent hills. This scene therefore shows the capture of the Fitzwalters while travelling through France on pilgrimage.

The fourth extant scene in this narrative sequence shows two figures, likely the Fitzwalters, again identifiable by their red and gold striped sleeves, kneeling inside a chapel, with their hands raised in prayer (fig. 2.17). This building is painted in a reddish grey colour for the walls, with a bluer grey used for the roofing. The outside of the building is perforated by two large arches, each of which contains a kneeling figure. At the top of the pillar which separates the two arches, there is a figure carved into the stone. Their head appears to be covered by a headscarf or wrap, and the figure wears a long flowing garment, with one hand splayed across her stomach. It is not entirely clear who this statue is supposed to represent, but it is possible that it is Sainte Foy, an echoing of her display on the tympanum at Conques as a veiled virgin. Over the figure’s left shoulder, there is a gargoyle whose face in particular suggests that this area was part of the repainting in the fifteenth century.

At the end of the building is an altar with a golden statue on it (fig. 2.18). Details on the statue are picked out in a darker red; small remnants of gilding can also be seen here. The statue appears to be sitting, and as such is likely a depiction of the figural reliquary statue of Sainte Foy. As such, in this instance, the reliquary of Sainte Foy is present in the form of a vision given that the Fitzwalters have yet to reach the physical location of her reliquary. Whilst the presence of the reliquary may be to reinforce who they are praying to,

⁵⁶⁸ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 636.

rather than appearing in a vision, having Sainte Foy appear in the form of her reliquary would not be without precedent. In her miracles, Sainte Foy appears in dreams in a variety of forms – she appears as a “lady of terrifying authority,” “as if she were a beggar, in the form of a very beautiful not yet adult girl,” “a maidenly shape,” “with the face of an angel,” and “in the form of a despondent woman, very thin and wan and supporting herself with a pilgrim’s staff as if she were utterly exhausted.”⁵⁶⁹ Given this fluidity of Sainte Foy’s physical appearance in visions, for the sake of ease of recognition, and, as Hahn and Klein state, “relics and reliquaries are so strongly bonded to one another that one might call them inseparable,” it is distinctly possible that a visionary Sainte Foy would be represented here – in this wall paintings – as her statue reliquary.⁵⁷⁰ To quote Van Lare, “it seems that later images of Foy need to include some reference to the reliquary in order to identify her, almost as if her reliquary were her only attribute.”⁵⁷¹

The fifth image shows the fortified building where the Fitzwalters were captured (fig. 2.19). White lines have been used to create the sense of masonry or stone work. This time the building is depicted with only one door – the rectangular shaped one which is open and the majority of the image within the open doorway has been destroyed. However, the outlines of two heads survive, along with one eye and part of a mouth. Two bands of gold also survive, like those seen on the figures in the previous depiction of this building. These can therefore be considered the red and gold sleeves seen previously, making the two figures Robert and Sybilla Fitzwalter again. Outside the building, a figure much larger than the doorway, is shown leading the Fitzwalters out of captivity. This is Sainte Foy, crowned and haloed.

⁵⁶⁹ “Terrentis auctoritatis visa est hera”, “in pulcherrime necdum adulte puelle specie”, “virginea species”, “in vultu angelico”, “sub persona abiecte mulieris, multa macie pallens”, Bernard of Angers and Anonymous, *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.), p. 114, p. 118, p. 119, p. 228, p. 164; Bernard of Angers and Anonymous, in *The Book of Sainte Foy*, Sheingorn (trans.), p. 78, p. 83, p. 84, p. 187, p. 126.

⁵⁷⁰ Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein, ‘Introduction’, in *Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein (eds.), (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2015), p. 6.

⁵⁷¹ Van Lare, ‘The Cult of St Foy at Conques’, pp. 11-12.

The centre of the crown appears to be a protruding trifoliate design, with further foliate protrusions at the sides and smaller protrusions in between. This crown bears a notable similarity with the crown worn by the monumental Sainte Foy which reinforces the idea that these figures are one and the same. Foy is also depicted with a halo – executed in concentric rings of the same dark brownish red used for some of the buildings and a light sky blue, used elsewhere to pick out drapery folds on white cloth. The face is completely destroyed, and no features remain. Her head is framed by golden yellow hair with waves picked out in red, which is also similar to the monumental Foy elsewhere in the decorative scheme. She is wearing a white dress which cascades downwards with some of the edge of the fabric picked out with dots, suggesting the possibility of fur and as such high status. She stands almost as tall as the building with her head turned slightly to the right and tilted downwards to look at the figures in the doorway. Her size indicates her greater power and importance within the scene. Another example of a saint appearing larger than a building can be seen in the *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* when St Peter consecrates the abbey of Westminster (fig. 2.35). This increased size shows their status and authority, as well as suggesting a mark of divine approval.

Foy's right arm is extended and bent at the elbow to take the hand of one of the smaller figures. This creates a sense of direct connection between the Fitzwalters and Sainte Foy. In her left hand, she appears to hold a black book with a golden clasp similar to the one the monumental Foy holds. Again, Foy is bearing the evidence of her martyrdom in the form of her *vita*. Foy creates a sense of forward motion due to the curve of her body, indicating that she is acting to propel the narrative, and the Fitzwalters, forward. This is in direct contrast with the Fitzwalters' captors who served to break off and temporarily stop the narrative from progressing.

The sixth image in this series shows another church, which is visible through four bays (fig. 2.20). The arches are trefoiled and the stone is a reddish brown, with details and shadows added in a darker shade to create a sense of depth in the masonry. The building

has been further embellished by the addition of turrets and windows at roof level. In the first two bays, four people in are depicted kneeling and in prayer (fig. 2.21). The first and second arch each contains two people kneeling, their arms raised and clasped in prayer. One of these figures is wearing a veil, likely part of the fifteenth-century repainting. This act of repainting may explain why the faces of these figures are so damaged. In the third bay, an abbot stands, identifiable by his crozier and cope. His face is highly detailed, with a slightly hooked nose and deep set almond shaped eyes, likely fifteenth-century overpainting. He is wearing a red cloak with golden edging and in his right hand holds a gold crozier. This repetition of the red and gold colour scheme serves to create a sense of unity between the Fitzwalters and the monastic community at Conques. Next to him, sitting on an altar draped with a golden cloth, is the same golden reliquary statue which was seen earlier in the narrative. The final archway contains five monks, all of whom are tonsured. Their faces are a result of the fifteenth-century over painting, and the monks are all shown to have pronounced, straight noses, some of which have distinct nostrils. They are all facing the previous archway, with their pupils to the side, emphasising the fact that they are looking at the abbot and reliquary. One of the monks holds a golden object, likely a censer dangling from a chain held over his arm, and also a brown book – possibly a service book or Sainte Foy's *vita*. The presence of an abbot, monks, and the reliquary statue of Foy, suggests that this is the abbey church of Conques. This would fit with the surviving textual narrative which recorded the Fitzwalters visiting Conques to offer their thanks to Sainte Foy for their freedom. It also serves to highlight the important liturgical role the monks at Conques fulfilled.

The seventh image features a boat (fig. 2.22), in a mirror of the first surviving image. The transition between the abbey and the sea is achieved by the inclusion of a cliff before the sea. This boat is considerably better preserved than the earlier one and as such more details are still visible, and it is apparently one of the earliest known depictions of sails with

reef-points.⁵⁷² At the rear of the boat stand two figures which have largely been destroyed and only their white silhouettes remain, apart from a few small details such as hair. To the left and partially behind the central mast stand two further figures who are embracing. Slightly more of these figures survive, details of their faces can be made out and one of them has golden hair and a red head band, indicating that it is one of the figures from the previous scene at Conques. To the right of the mast stands another couple, their faces now largely destroyed, one of whom is wearing a coat in a pale pastel pink, with sleeves which are striped in a red and gold pattern. Again, this design has been seen earlier in the narrative scheme, and is used to indicate the Fitzwalters. Finally, another pair of figures stands in the prow of the boat who are dressed all in black with hoods covering their heads, identifying them as Benedictines, likely the monks Barnard and Girard who were sent to England with the Fitzwalters. The figure in the foreground holds a brown book, possibly Sainte Foy's *vita* or *liber*, representing how the monks are taking Sainte Foy and the stories of her deeds to a new land. At least part of this image has been repainted, with Howard having identified that the "area above the boat" was part of the fifteenth-century repainting, and contained the presence of prepolymerised linseed oil.⁵⁷³

The eighth and final image in the sequence shows the construction of the priory in Norfolk (fig. 2.23). One figure oversees the building work, their size indicating their status and importance. In this instance, the patron is taking an active role in directing the work, as indicated by their gesture towards the priory building. This figure is not, in my opinion, Sainte Foy. Unlike the earlier depiction of Foy, this figure is not crowned or haloed. The figure in the final scene is wearing a buff dress with red and gold striped sleeves, a colour scheme has been seen previously – worn by the Fitzwalters. These distinctive striped sleeves can be seen at multiple points earlier in the depiction of the foundation story. As such, it can be

⁵⁷² Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'Horsham St Faith Boat – Valerie Fenwick', 1974

⁵⁷³ Howard, *The Pigments of English Medieval Wall Painting*, p. 89.

argued that this figure is a Fitzwalter directing the construction of the priory founded on their land.

Heslop has previously posited that the foundation story from Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* was extrapolated from the wall painting, rather than being recorded from a separate oral or written version of the legend. As such, he has theorised that the paintings at Horsham depict a story which is subtly different.⁵⁷⁴ Heslop contends that the wall paintings show the pilgrimage of not just the Fitzwalters, but another couple as well. He has suggested that when the Fitzwalters are captured, this second couple go directly to Conques and pray for the release of their fellow travellers, and this is what is depicted in the first scene featuring the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy. He goes on to suggest that the Fitzwalters were then miraculously freed and joined their companions at Conques to give their thanks, before vowing to found a priory and returning home.⁵⁷⁵ This interpretation is at least partly based on the fact that there are four secular figures are depicted in prayer at Conques who are then also depicted in the return to England scene. Two of them are depicted with the aforementioned red and gold sleeves, whilst another has the same golden hair and red bandana as one of the figures on the ship, suggesting that they are the same group of people and there has been a conscious choice throughout the narrative to indicate that they are the same.

Following Heslop's theory, it is possible that the couples in the 'Capture' and 'Prayer for Release' scenes are in different places given the architectural details. The building in the 'Prayer for Release' scene is religious one – a chapel or a church. It also clearly shows the reliquary of Sainte Foy on a raised altar. In many ways, this building is similar to the later depiction of Conques, however the turrets and windows on the roof level should be disregarded in any initial comparison as they are a later addition. There are architectural similarities that could suggest they are the same location such as the pitched roof, painted in

⁵⁷⁴ T.A. Heslop, personal interview, 23 November 2019. I am grateful to Professor Heslop for discussing his ideas with me and being so generous with both his time and insight.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

blue and white, and the position of the reliquary on a raised altar. However, there are also differences, namely the details of the sculpture. Given the presence of the physical or imagined (and visionary) reliquary statue, I would argue that while the Fitzwalters are represented as captive through the power of prayer they have been transported to an imagined Conques. However, there are details from the literary version of the foundation which cannot be extrapolated from the wall paintings, such as the detail about the first construction at Kirkescroft collapsing. As such, this suggests that there was a separate tradition of the priory's history from which the version in Dugdale *Monasticon Anglicanum* derives. While the wall paintings may have influenced this record, it is clear that the wall paintings were not the only source material the author had access to as there are details included in the written account which are impossible to extrapolate from the wall paintings.

Heslop has also suggested that there is a narrative break within the wall paintings due to the direction in which the figures in the 'Capture' scene are facing.⁵⁷⁶ Two captors are facing the left, or backwards, whereas at all other times the figures are facing the right or forwards. This creates a visual distinction between this scene and the rest, suggesting it may be separate. It interrupts the forward motion of the narrative. Heslop argues that this interruption shows that the figures in the next scene, 'Prayer for Release', are different. However, I would argue that this interruption suggests not that they are different people, but rather that the brigands, the villains of the narrative, are pushing the travellers away from their ultimate destination – Conques. The presence of the captors on either side, both facing inwards towards the Fitzwalters, almost marks off and separates this piece of the action. This change in direction highlights that they are the antagonists of this story, stopping it from progressing until the intervention of Sainte Foy.

The narrative programme shows the Fitzwalters on their pilgrimage through France, including their capture and miraculous release, as well as the construction of the very priory

⁵⁷⁶ T.A. Heslop, personal interview, 23 November 2019.

on whose walls the story is painted. The Fitzwalters are highlighted throughout the narrative, picked out by their red and gold striped sleeves, and are clearly the protagonists of the foundation narrative.

3.4 Implications of the Decorative Scheme

Now that the whole of the decorative scheme – the Crucifixion, the standing figures of Sainte Foy and Saint George or Michael, and the narrative showing the history of the priory's foundation – seen in the refectory at Horsham St Faith has been taken into consideration, it is possible to dwell on the implications of this deliberate act of memorialisation. Firstly, the relationship between the priory and its mother house at Conques will be considered. By depicting the Fitzwalters at Conques, the priory is reaffirming its ties with its mother abbey. This relationship can be seen in the scene that depicts the Fitzwalters in prayer at Conques with the abbot, monks, and reliquary statue. This can also be seen in the depiction of the two Benedictine monks who travel back to England with the Fitzwalters. These depictions make the relationship between the priory and the mother abbey explicit and emphasise that it was an ongoing one.

The audience of the wall painting, positioned as it was in the refectory of the priory, has a significant bearing on its implications. Those who would see the paintings the most often were the monks of the priory. It can be seen as a means of educating the monks about the priory's history. Previous scholarship, including that by Miriam Gill, has shown the important role of wall paintings in education.⁵⁷⁷ This wall painting could act both as a means of theological education due to the Crucifixion and saintly figures, but also for the historical aspects depicted in the foundation story. It could complement any reading in the refectory, both theological and historical. Delbert Russell has shown how readings which were begun

⁵⁷⁷ Miriam Gill, 'The role of images in monastic education: the evidence from wall painting in late medieval England', in *Medieval Monastic Education* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (eds.), pp. 117-135.

in liturgical offices could be continued in the refectory.⁵⁷⁸ As such, the refectory could act as a transitional space, where aspects of the liturgy could be brought out of celebration of mass. The refectory would also have been the place where guests of the priory, including descendants of the founding family and any other important visitors, would be hosted. In fact, Gill has also argued that in the late medieval period, monastic communities created art specifically for lay visitors, based in part on murals at Bradwell Abbey.⁵⁷⁹ As such, the refectory wall was an ideal place to advertise the priory's importance and significance, as part of both ecclesiastical and lay networks.

The narrative serves to connect the priory and its history with more than just the abbey of Conques, but specifically tying the priory to the golden reliquary statue of Sainte Foy, the object at the centre of Foy's cult and power. This reliquary statue appears not only when they visit Conques to give their thanks for their rescue, but also whilst they are captured when they are praying for divine help. This repetition serves to underline the reliquary's central role in the cult. The reliquary statue was only physically present at Conques, in the 'Prayer for Release' scene, the reliquary statue is either imagined or a vision. This would also agree with the surviving literary version of the foundation story that records the Fitzwalters praying for their safe release whilst in captivity and in her miracle stories, Sainte Foy has been known to appear in visions in the guise of her reliquary statue. These depictions show how intimately tied the cult of Sainte Foy, Conques, and the statue reliquary were. They were inextricably connected. Combined with evidence from the miracle stories, the depiction of the envisioned reliquary shows that the reliquary did not have to be physically present to exert its power and authority. In fact, these visual depictions allowed those at Horsham to access the power of the reliquary statue without the need for the reliquary, or the relics it contained, to be physically present.

⁵⁷⁸ Russell, Delbert W., 'The Campsey Collection of Old French Saints' Lives: A Re-examination of its Structure and Provenance', *The Scriptorium* 67.1 (2003), pp. 51-83, p. 67.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

The foundation story of the priory also serves to reinforce the power and importance of Sainte Foy herself. She features in the sequence both as a vision that appeared to the Fitzwalters and helped to free them, but also in the form of her golden reliquary statue (and therefore, it is implied, her physical relics which were contained within it). This layering of depictions of Sainte Foy in multiple forms serves to reinforce her power and presence. Sainte Foy is present in multiple ways – as a miraculous founder, in the *liber* held by the priory, and in the multiple depictions of her in different forms in the wall paintings. All of this serves to remind the viewer that this priory is dedicated in honour of Sainte Foy and exists because of her. Again, Foy is present because she chooses to be, and it is through this divinely approved choice that her power can be accessed.

The narrative paintings also make the relationship between the founding family, the Fitzwalters, and the priory explicit. The story of the foundation of the priory cannot be told without them after all. Evidence of this relationship can be found in a variety of sources such as land confirmations, grants, and quitclaims. Robert and Sybilla's son John (d. pre-1149) "gave by deed without date sixty acres of land in Horsford and Horsham to the said priory, and confirmed the grant of his father and mother."⁵⁸⁰ Their second son, William (d. 1174), did something similar during the reign of King Stephen (r. 1135–1154) when he "confirmed all the donations of the churches and tithes of his father and mother."⁵⁸¹ The descendants of the Fitzwalters were still involved in the priory in the second half of the thirteenth century, roughly the period when the paintings were executed. For example, Stephen de Cressy (d. 1263), the great-great-grandson of the two founders of the priory, "confirmed the grants of his ancestors, and gave them his wood, called Southwood, in Horsham, and pasture for their cattle in his park at Horsford," at some point before his death in 1263.⁵⁸² Stephen de

⁵⁸⁰ Precisely which manuscript Dugdale is referring to here is unclear as no deed attributed to John survives in any national or local archive. It is possible that it is one of the manuscripts held privately as part of the Townshend Collection at Raynham Hall in Norfolk. However I have been unable to check this due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 635.

⁵⁸¹ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 635. Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, MC3/1/I-II, 466X1, 'Grant and confirmation in form of a write by William de Kayneto to the monks of Horsham', n.d. [? mid-thirteenth century]

⁵⁸² Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 635.

Cressy's heir, Robert Fitz Roger (d. 1310), a relative descended from his grandmother's other marriage (see fig. 2.35), "confirmed also the same" in a deed dated 1279.⁵⁸³ This deed is a quitclaim that Robert Fitz Roger issued following a dispute with the priory over an area of common meadow in Horsham. These dates show that the family were still involved with the priory at roughly the time the wall painting scheme was executed in the mid thirteenth century. As such, it makes sense that the priory would be interested in retelling their foundation narrative, particularly following a dispute between the family and the priory when they would have wanted to mend and strengthen their relationship. Such grants of land would also have provided money to the priory, enabling them to execute such a lavish scheme of wall paintings. As the place where guests such as the descendants of the Fitzwalters would be hosted, the refectory would be the logical place for the priory to display and advertise their relationship with the family.

Evidence also survives to suggest that the original founders, and their family, were still remembered at the priory well into the sixteenth century. As Thompson has noted, in 1534 obits were performed at Horsham St Faith for both Robert and Sybilla Fitzwalter, despite the fact that the foundation charter only specifically provides for them for Sybilla.⁵⁸⁴ In addition to this, obits were read for two of the Fitzwalters' sons, both of whom acted as patrons of the priory, and one of their wives.⁵⁸⁵ This highlights the continued interest in the founders and their family by the priory, as well as the particular importance of Sybilla at the time of foundation. It shows that there was an active attempt at remembering the founding family long after their deaths.

A specific moment may have been responsible for the execution of these wall paintings. In 1277, Edward I (r. 1272–1307) visited Horsham St Faith's on Good Friday

⁵⁸³ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 635. See Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, MC3/1/I-II, 466X1, 'Grant and confirmation in form of a write by William de Kayneto to the monks of Horsham', n.d. [? mid-thirteenth century]

⁵⁸⁴ B.J. Thompson, 'The Church and the aristocracy: lay and ecclesiastical landowning society in fourteenth-century Norfolk', (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1989), p. 95.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-9.

before spending the rest of Easter in Norwich.⁵⁸⁶ A royal visit would certainly provide the impetus for the priory to create a lavish wall painting scheme, wanting to appear their best to the visiting monarch. As such, I would suggest that the paintings were completed by Easter 1277, in order to show the king the history and validity of the priory he was visiting. It presented an opportunity for both the priory and the founding family to promote themselves, and their local importance, to the king. However, it is worth noting that hosting the king came with a number of downsides, it often caused disruption to local markets and payment was often made on credit.⁵⁸⁷ But there were other less obvious benefits to a visit by the king, particularly one who was motivated to visit religious sites on his travels – Edward I visited St Albans nineteen times during his reign and Durham eighteen.⁵⁸⁸ He also frequently made donations to the sites he visited, for example he donated almost five pounds when he visited Ely on his way north to Scotland in 1300.⁵⁸⁹ By establishing, or even cementing, a relationship with a king who was known to have a keen interest in devotion, and was known to give donations to the sites he visited, would have seemed appealing to the priory of Horsham St Faith. And while the priory may not boast any major relics, it could, through its wall paintings, offer a reflection of the power of the mighty relics at Conques.

Overall, the narrative scheme reaffirmed the priory's history, both with their mother abbey of Conques and the founding family of the Fitzwalters. The continued involvement of the descendants of the original founders of the priory, Robert and Sybilla Fitzwalter, in the form of gifts of land, provides ample reason for why the priory would want to celebrate their founders' story over a hundred years after the fact. The priory still benefited from the descendants of the founders, and in turn, these descendants would likely have wanted something in return – most likely prayers for their souls. The disputes between the

⁵⁸⁶ Gough takes his information from the Wardrobe Accounts. *Itinerary of King Edward the First, Vol I: 1272-1285*, Henry Gough (ed.) (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1900), p. 69.

⁵⁸⁷ Michael Prestwick, 'The royal itinerary and roads in England under Edward I', in *Roadworks*, Valerie Allen and Ruth Evans (eds.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 177-197 (p. 180).

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 181

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

descendants' family and the priory in the 1270s could also potentially serve as a reason for including the foundation story in the painting scheme, acting as a means to re-establish the previous good relationships between the two groups. This scheme would serve to remind the family of their responsibilities to the priory and remind the members of the priory that they benefited from the family's generosity. It was a mutually beneficial relationship which both groups would be served to remember. In addition to this, showcasing the close relationship between the family and the priory to the king would act as an incentive for both groups to maintain the relationship.

3.5 The Role of Sybilla Fitzwalter

One notable aspect of the foundation story, and its depiction at Horsham St Faith, is the prominence given to Sybilla Fitzwalter. In the final scene of the narrative, a Fitzwalter is shown overseeing the construction of the priory (fig. 2.23), represented as a directly involved patron. The figure points at the building with their right hand, indicating their intervention in its construction. The left-hand gestures at the building, taking in its entirety, encouraging the viewer to look upon their works. They are physically larger than the other people in the scene who are building the priory, highlighting their importance. A visual comparison can be drawn between this narrative scene and the depiction of St Peter consecrating Westminster Abbey on f. 18^r in the *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* (fig. 2.35).⁵⁹⁰ Like Sybilla, Saint Peter is larger than the other figures in the illumination; he is almost as tall as the building. This also highlights the miraculous nature of the event – just as Saint Peter's consecration of the abbey was a miracle, so too was the foundation and construction of Horsham St Faith's – both the impetus of the Fitzwalters' miraculous rescue, but also the collapse of the initial priory and then successful rebuilding of it at a new location. Another similar scene can be seen in a work of Matthew Paris which shows Offa as patron directing workmen to construct

⁵⁹⁰ Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, folio 18, 'Life of St Edward the Confessor', c. 1250-60.

a church dedicated to St Alban to house his relics.⁵⁹¹ This example in an illumination from the same era confirms that oversized figures do not need to be saintly – they can be important and powerful patrons of art and architecture. The only other oversized figure in the narrative sequence at Horsham St Faith is Sainte Foy herself. This therefore can be seen as equating the Fitzwalters' role in the foundation of Horsham, at least partially, with that of Sainte Foy herself. Both were important and necessary for the foundation of the priory.

David Park has argued that this figure is Robert Fitzwalter.⁵⁹² The figure directing the construction work is shown wearing red and gold striped sleeves – clothing previously worn by the Fitzwalters earlier in the cycle. However, Park does not elaborate on why he identifies Robert and not Sybilla here. Sybilla is depicted elsewhere in the wall painting as physically closer to Foy; when the couple are praying for their safe release, she is the one kneeling closer to Foy's reliquary. Although it is difficult to tell due to damage, she appears to be the figure exiting their prison first and reaching out to Sainte Foy. The one veiled figure depicted giving thanks at Conques is further away from the high altar. However, the veil is part of the fifteenth-century repainting, so may not reflect the original arrangement. In fact, all of the veils seen in the wall painting appear to date to the later phase of repainting and should not necessarily be taken to be indicative of the original identities of the various figures.

Additionally, it would not be entirely surprising to find women further away within the male dominated space of the abbey, as opposed to outside it where the gender divide was less strictly enforced. The face of this larger figure is nearly destroyed, so it is difficult to tell if it was veiled or otherwise. The evidence from the wall paintings as to which Fitzwalter is overseeing the construction of the priory is inconclusive. However, given the prominence throughout the rest of the wall paintings of Sybilla, she remains a possibility and one which deserves further consideration.

⁵⁹¹ Dublin, Trinity College MS 177, fols. 59^v and 60^r, c. 1257. Florence McCulloch, 'Saints Alban and Amphibalus in the Works of Matthew Paris: Dublin, Trinity College MS 177,' *Speculum* 56.4 (October 1981), p. 773.

⁵⁹² Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory – David Park', 1979.

When considering the identity of the figure in the wall paintings, it is worth noting the prominence Sybilla is given in documentary evidence pertaining to the priory. In the genealogy of the founding family which Dugdale includes in his *Monasticon Anglicanum*, which he says is from an old manuscript owned by Sampson Lennard – Sybilla and her familial relations are listed first, before that of her husband.

Domina Sibilla soror Johannis de Cayneto, filia Radulfi de Cayneto, qui venit ad conquestum Angliae, maritata fuit domino Roberto filio Walteri fundatori domus sanctae Fidis de Horsham, qui genuit ex ea filium nomine Rogerum, et Johannem vicecomitem, et Willielmum de Caineto.⁵⁹³

[Lady Sibilla, sister of John de Cayneto, daughter of Ralph de Cayneto, who came at the Conquest of England, who was married to Robert Fitzwalter, founder of the House of St Faith of Horsham, who had a son called Roger, and John the sheriff, and William de Cayneto.]

The genealogy of the founders of Sibton abbey, which was established by William de Cayneto (d. 1174), son of Sybilla and Robert Fitzwalter, begins in a similar fashion.

Domina Sibilla soror Johannis de Cayneto filia Radulfi de cayneto qui venit ad conquestum Anglie maritata fuit domino Roberto filio Walteri fundatori domus Sancte Fidis de Horsham qui genuit ex ea filium nomine Rogerum et Johannem vicecomitem et Willemum de Cayneto fundatorem abbatie de Sybeton.⁵⁹⁴

[Lady Sibilla, sister of John de Cayneto, daughter of Ralph de Cayneto, who came at the Conquest, was married to Sir Robert Fitzwalter, founder of the house of Horsham St Faith, who had sons by the name of Roger and John the Sheriff and William de Cayneto founder of the Abbey of Sibton.]

⁵⁹³ Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 637.

⁵⁹⁴ *Sibton Abbey Cartularies and Charters: Part Two*, Philippa Brown (ed.) (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986), pp. 8-10.

This foregrounding of Sybilla in the genealogical documents indicates that she, and by association her family, were of higher status and greater importance than that of her husband. This interpretation is reinforced by the choice of her sons to use her surname. Robert and Sybilla's sons were mostly known as "de Chesney." This name was derived from de Caisneto, which in turn derived from Le Quesnay, where Sybilla's father hailed from. In contrast, Robert Fitzwalter was sometimes known by the surname de Cadomo. This name derived from de Caen, where Robert's father, Walter fitz Alberic, hailed from. They are deliberately choosing to be identified as and associated with their maternal, rather than their paternal, family. This suggests that the Chesney family was of greater importance, potentially wielding greater political influence, were of higher social status, or perhaps were the wealthier of the two families.

In contrast, the foundation document itself reads "quod ego Robertus Walteri filius, et uxor mea, nomine Sibilla, edificavimus ecclesiam de Horsham, in propria terra nostra, in honore Dei et sanctae Fidis virginis et martyris."⁵⁹⁵ Whilst this does put Robert before Sybilla, the use of "terra nostra" ("our land") shows that this was an endeavour that involved both of them. Additionally, Sybilla's importance is shown elsewhere in the foundation charter, as it only specified the provision for an obit for Sybilla, and not for her husband.⁵⁹⁶ It states that "ad faciendum anniversarium Sibillae uxoris meae."⁵⁹⁷ While this does frame Sybilla through her relationship with her husband, it also serves to highlight her importance as an individual and role as co-founder.

The foundation documents also make it clear that land which was endowed to the priory of at Horsham came from Sybilla's dowry – "sciatis insuper quod praedicta Sibilla eisdem concessit terram suam de Rudham, quam pater suus dedit in liberum maritagium."⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁵ "I, Robert Fitzwalter, and my wife, called Sibilla, have built a church in Horsham, in honour of God and Sainte Foy, virgin and martyr", Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 637.

⁵⁹⁶ B.J. Thompson, p. 95.

⁵⁹⁷ "To make on the anniversary of my wife." Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 637.

⁵⁹⁸ "You should also know that the aforementioned Sybilla gave them her land 'of Rudham', which her father had given her as her marriage portion." Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 637.

As Clare de Trafford has pointed out, the word “maritagium” was used in English custom for the marriage portion or dowry which was given by the bride’s family on the occasion of a marriage, and even was used as a term for marriage itself.⁵⁹⁹ This use of land which had come from Sybilla is repeated again in the papal charter (1163) which confirmed the foundation – “Terram de Ruddaham cum omnibus pertinentiis suis, quam Sibilla uxor praefati Roberti vobis dedit.”⁶⁰⁰ The land on which the priory stood was given from Sybilla’s family. It was because of her that the priory could be built.

A great deal of the existing literature on medieval dowry concerns the wife’s right to those lands once she was widowed.⁶⁰¹ Attempting to find out how much control a woman had over those lands, and what was done with them, before the death of her husband has proven more difficult. Hanna Ilona Kilpi has shown that women had some agency of their own whilst their husbands were alive. In fact, one of the examples she uses to highlight this point, is a relative of Sybilla Fitzwalter, Margaret de Chesney (d. 1230). The charter of confirmation Margaret issued Sibton Abbey was written before her husband Hugh de Cressy’s death in 1189. However, the charter makes no mention of Hugh, or even the fact that Margaret was a married woman. Kilpi took this, along with other charter evidence, to suggest “that married women had personal agency.”⁶⁰² As such, it is possible that Sybilla’s gift of her land at Horsham to the priory of Saint Faith was as a result of personal agency, and not just a donation from her husband.

⁵⁹⁹ Clare de Trafford, ‘Share and share alike? The marriage portion, inheritance and family politics’, in Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (eds.), *Studies on medieval and early modern women: Pawns or Players?* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003), p. 36.

⁶⁰⁰ “Land ‘of Rudham,’ with all that pertains to it, which Sybilla, wife of the aforementioned Robert, had given you.” Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* vol. III, p. 637.

⁶⁰¹ See Claire de Trafford, ‘The Contract of Marriage: The *Maritagium* from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century’, Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1999, and Susan M. Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power in the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman realm* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

⁶⁰² See no. 475, *Sibton Abbey Cartularies and Charters*, vol 3, Philippa Brown (ed.) (Suffolk Record Society: Suffolk, 1987). Hanna Ilona Kilpi, ‘Non-comital women of twelfth-century England: a charter based analysis’ (Ph.D. diss, University of Glasgow, 2015), pp. 32-3.

Additionally, one of the seals of Horsham St Faith depicts the crowning of the Virgin and dates from the mid-twelfth century.⁶⁰³ To the right of the Virgin is a small shield showing the Chesney arms. This reveals how Sybilla and her family connections were still important to the priory in the thirteenth century. The seal is damaged, and it has been theorised that in the corresponding space to the left, which is now destroyed, there would have been a depiction of Robert Fitzwalter's arms as well.⁶⁰⁴ This could potentially suggest that the priory was remembering both of the founders as co-patrons. At the very least, it shows a continued connection to and remembrance of the Fitzwalters and their descendants at the priory.

Another seal has survived attached to the deed of acknowledgement of supremacy.⁶⁰⁵ This seal is oval and divided into two sections - the top section shows a figure, canopied, holding a sceptre and a book, flanked by two monks kneeling in prayer, with two censuring angels.⁶⁰⁶ An inscription on the rim dates it to either 1246 or 1256.⁶⁰⁷ The central figure has been described as "apparently female" suggesting that it may be Sainte Foy, however, it has also been noted that it bears a strong resemblance to the depiction of Christ on the early seals of the bishop of Chichester.⁶⁰⁸ However, the lack of nimbus, cruciform or otherwise, puts the suggestion that the figure is Christ in some doubt. The lower section shows a crowned figure standing within a crenelated building, reaching down to a smaller figure. The Victoria County History identified both these figures as female.⁶⁰⁹ The central, crowned figure is therefore likely Foy – as the patron saint of the priory rescuing the prisoners who would later found the priory. She is crowned, rather than with a nimbus, in the same manner she is in the larger wall painting. Unlike in other depictions, this seal depicts only one of Robert and Sybilla, rather than both. If this figure is female, as has previously been suggested, it is likely Sybilla. This would suggest a deliberate choice to only include the

⁶⁰³ Seal 36 in Gale Pedrick, *Monastic Seals of the XIIIth Century* (London, 1902), p. 91.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁶⁰⁵ *A History of the County of Norfolk*, vol II, William Page (ed.) (London: Victoria County History, 1906), pp. 346-349.

⁶⁰⁶ Seal 35 in Gale Pedrick, *Monastic Seals of the XIIIth Century* (London, 1902), p. 90.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁶⁰⁸ *A History of the County of Norfolk*, vol II, pp. 346-349.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-349.

female founder on the seal, reflecting her importance within the institutional memory of the priory. Representing Sybilla alone, without her husband, on the seal, suggests that she was the chief patron to Sainte Foy at their priory in Horsham. As such, given Sybilla's prominence in documentary material and other surviving artistic representations, I would argue that the larger, dominant figure directing the construction work in the wall paintings is Sybilla Fitzwalter.

The position of Sybilla as patron is not entirely surprising given the "rich feminine devotional culture" in East Anglia.⁶¹⁰ The majority of existing scholarship regarding feminine devotion to Sainte Foy in East Anglia focuses on the later medieval period, drawing on the works of authors such as Osbern of Bokenham. Bokenham wrote a Middle English *Life of Sainte Foy* in his *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* in the fifteenth century.⁶¹¹ An earlier *Life* had also been penned in East Anglia at Bury St Edmunds by Simon of Walsingham who wrote his Anglo-Norman *La vie sainte Fey, virgine e martire* in the early thirteenth century.⁶¹² Female patrons were key to Bokenham's success, within his *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, Bokenham mentions at least six women who were members of the gentry or nobility in East Anglia, two of whom are explicitly stated to have commissioned his work.⁶¹³ Sybilla played a central role both at the time of the priory's foundation, and afterwards throughout the thirteenth century when these narrative paintings were designed and executed. She played a role as co-founder with her husband Robert, but she was also seen as a significant figure within her own right.

⁶¹⁰ Alice Spencer, *Language, Lineage and Location in the Works of Osbern Bokenham* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013), p. 6.

⁶¹¹ Horobin, Simon, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern of Bokenham', *Speculum* 82.4 (October 2007), 932-949 (p. 932).

⁶¹² Delbert W. Russell, *Verse Saints' Lives Written in the French of England* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), p. 50.; Sheila Delaney, 'Matronage or patronage: The case of Osbern Bokenham's women patrons', *Florilegium* 16.1 (1999), 97-105 (p. 97).

⁶¹³ Sheila Delaney, 'Matronage or patronage: The case of Osbern Bokenham's women patrons', *Florilegium* 16.1 (1999), 97-105 (p. 97).

3.6 Cult Awareness and Aristocratic Networks

So, how and why did an Anglo-Norman family from East Anglia know of Sainte Foy, whose cult was based in the south of France at Conques? Firstly, I will examine the possibility that there was an existing pre-Conquest cult to Sainte Foy in England which the Fitzwalters adopted. Beech has discussed how, during the eleventh century, a number of new saints were introduced into English monastic liturgies, noting that “among these the most important were saints of Aquitanian origin.”⁶¹⁴ He lists these “in order of importance” as “St Hilary of Poitiers, St Leonard of St Leonard-de-Noblat, St Foi of Conques in the Rouergue, St Martial of Limoges and St Radegund of Poitiers.”⁶¹⁵ He also mentioned St Gilles as “not Aquitanian but coming from the neighbouring southern region of Provence.”⁶¹⁶ Beech also specifically mentions that “the case of St Faith [...] provides the only clearly documented glimpse of an eleventh-century Englishman honouring the shrine of an Aquitanian saint in Aquitaine, and this in 1060, six years before the Conquest.”⁶¹⁷ Beech is referencing two specific entries within the Cartulary of Conques.⁶¹⁸ These two entries record the visit to Conques of an “Alboynus Anglorum”, whose father was “Heroldus rex fuit Anglorum terre” and Alvena. Stevenson identified this Alboynus as Aelfwine, his mother as a woman named Aelgifu, and his father as Harold Harefoot (r. 1035–1040).⁶¹⁹ Alboynus is described as having rebuilt an abandoned church that had been dedicated to Saint Peter which he then donated to the abbey of Conques.⁶²⁰ He is from then on referred to as the prior of this foundation.⁶²¹ This is one of the few pieces of evidence for the cult of Sainte Foy,

⁶¹⁴ George Beech, ‘England and Aquitaine in the century before the Norman Conquest’, *Anglo-Saxon England* 19 (1990), p. 89.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁶¹⁸ Nos. 14 and 15 in *Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Conques*, Desjardins Gustave (ed.), (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1879), pp. 16-19.

⁶¹⁹ W. H. Stevenson, ‘An Alleged Son of King Harold Harefoot’, *The English Historical Review* 28.109 (Jan. 1913), p. 114.

⁶²⁰ Beech, ‘England and Aquitaine in the century before the Norman Conquest’, p. 94.

⁶²¹ Stevenson, ‘An Alleged Son of King Harold Harefoot’, p. 113

or at least an awareness of her – albeit a tenuous one – in England prior to the Norman Conquest.

Further information about a potential pre-Conquest cult can be gleaned by looking at the saints included in English calendars from within this period. Of the nineteen English calendars that predate 1100 examined by Wormald, Sainte Foy is included in none of the original calendar entries, although her feast day has been added in as a later addition in seven of the manuscripts: Bodl. MS. 579 (Sancte Fidis uirginis . martiri (xi)), Cambridge University Library MS KK. V. 32 (Sancte Fidis uirginis et martiris (xi-xii)), Cotton MS Vitellius A xviii (Sancte Fidis uirginis et martiris), Cotton MS Vitellius E xviii (Sancte Fidis uirginis et martiris (xii)), Arundel MS 155 (Sancte Fidis uirginis et martiris (xiii)), Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 391 (Sancte Fidis . uirginis et martiris, xiic (xii)), Oxford Bodl. Douce MS 296 (Sancte Fidis uirginis et martiris (xii) in green).⁶²² These manuscripts, respectively, came from Glastonbury Abbey, the West Country, Wells Cathedral, Winchester, Christ Church Cathedral Priory, and Croyland Abbey. The earliest of these additions, according to Wormald, is that to Bodl. MS. 579 which he dates to the eleventh century.⁶²³ The majority of the additions of Sainte Foy Wormald was able to date occur in the twelfth century, rather than the eleventh.⁶²⁴ Additionally, Sainte Foy is not included in the Old English Martyrology.⁶²⁵ As such, the evidence from early English calendars suggests that it was unlikely that there was a significant cult of Sainte Foy in England prior to the Conquest. Heslop did consider that Foy's addition to the calendar in the Christ Church manuscript "not to have been long delayed" following the Conquest.⁶²⁶ While the cult of Sainte Foy may not

⁶²² Wormald uses roman numerals in brackets to refer to the century of the addition or emendation, so (xi) indicated a modification made in the eleventh century. *English Kalendars Before 1100*, Francis Wormald (ed.) (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1934), p. 53, p. 81, p. 109, p. 165, p. 179, p. 221 and p. 263.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶²⁴ See *English Kalendars Before 1100*, Francis Wormald (ed.) (London, 1934),

⁶²⁵ See *The Old English Martyrology: Edition, Translation and Commentary*, Christine Rauer (ed.) (Cambridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2013).

⁶²⁶ T. A. Heslop, 'The Canterbury Calendars and the Norman Conquest', in *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars, 1066-1109*, Richard Eales and Richard Sharpe (Eds.) (London: Hambledon Press, 1995), p. 66.

have been present prior to the Conquest, it was imported fairly quickly from the Continent thereafter.

Given that knowledge of the cult of Sainte Foy was limited in England prior to the Conquest, it seems feasible that instead the cult was brought across the Channel with the Normans. It is likely that the Fitzwalters were aware of Sainte Foy because of the aristocratic networks they were a part of, in particular due to the nature of tenant-lord relations. Robert Fitzwalter's father, Walter de Cadomo (d. aft. 1065–76), had come to England at the Conquest with Robert Malet (d. by 1130) and held the barony of Horsford from him as part of Malet's honour of Eye.⁶²⁷ Walter de Cadomo and Robert Malet likely knew each other because the Malets held land near Caen, where Walter hailed from, "a connexion which frequently recurs in consideration of their family and tenurial relationships."⁶²⁸ As Keats-Rohan and Roffe have shown, "it is clear that Robert Malet belonged to a circle [...] in which pilgrimages to Aquitaine or to Spain were either highly fashionable or deeply meaningful."⁶²⁹ These pilgrimages may have included ones went to, or passed through, Conques. The Fitzwalters may be considered part of this aristocratic circle, not just because of their connection to the Malets, but to other elite Norman families as well.

Another family in this group was the Giffards. Like the Chesneys, the Giffards also came over to Buckinghamshire at the Conquest, and were in fact Malet's overlords in Normandy.⁶³⁰ The family evidently had some connection with the south of France and Spain as well, as Walter Giffard (d. 1084) is recorded as having fought in the War of Barbastro.⁶³¹ Keats-Rohan has also claimed that the Giffard family founded priories dedicated to Sainte Foy at Longueville-sur-Scie in Normandy (not that far away from Le Quesnay where Sybilla

⁶²⁷ K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People: A Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents 1066-1166*, vol I: *Domesday Book* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), p. 449.

⁶²⁸ Keats-Rohan, 'Domesday Book and the Malets: patrimony and the private histories of public lives', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 41 (1997), p. 13.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Fitzwalter's family originated) and at Newington, Berkshire.⁶³² While the Giffards did found a priory at Longueville in Normandy there is, however, no Newington in Berkshire.⁶³³ It is potentially possible that this was confused with Newton Longville in Buckinghamshire, where the Giffards founded a priory which was a cell of Sainte Foy's in Longueville, France.⁶³⁴ Later in the 1150s, Walter III Giffard (d. 1164), along with his mother Agnes de Ribemont, granted Taverham to the Priory of Horsham St Faith.⁶³⁵ Given that the priory was located within the hundred of Taverham, the donation to the Horsham priory, rather than one of their own family's foundations, makes a certain amount of logical sense. However, it also suggests some form of relationship between the two families which the Giffards had an interest in maintaining, even if it was just one of cordial neighbourship.

Another family that may have belonged to this group was the Tosnys. Roger of Tosny (d. 1040), who was known as "the Spaniard," also fought in the county of Barcelona.⁶³⁶ Ralph de Tosny gave donations to religious foundations in Caen, where Robert Fitzwalter's father had been based, and held lands in England, including considerable land in Norfolk.⁶³⁷ As such, the families may have known each other. Additionally, the monastery of Conches, a daughter house of Conques, was founded by Roger I de Tosny and his wife Goteline.⁶³⁸ This particular foundation is recorded in the third book of the miracles of Sainte Foy.⁶³⁹ The miracle relates how Goteline, wife of a warrior from Normandy called Roger, recovered from

⁶³² K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Domesday Book and the Malets: patrimony and the private histories of public lives', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 41 (1997), p. 21.

⁶³³ Bouillet and Servières, p. 320.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., p. 351 and William Page (ed.) *A History of the County of Buckingham* vol I (London: Victoria County History, 1905), pp. 395-396.

⁶³⁵ Keats-Rohan, 'Domesday Book and the Malets', p. 50.

⁶³⁶ James Moore, 'The Norman Aristocracy in the Long Eleventh Century: Three Case Studies' (Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 2017), p. 67.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., p. 83 and p. 115.

⁶³⁸ The monastery at Conches took its name from Conques, and in fact the place names are the same in Latin, which has resulted in a certain amount of confusion among antiquarians studying this in the past. Keats-Rohan, 'Domesday Book and the Malets', p. 50

⁶³⁹ Anonymous, *Liber Miraculorum sancta Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.), pp. 183-4.

near death.⁶⁴⁰ It is also notable the emphasis the miracle puts on Goteline's role in the foundation of the church: the miracle relates that

they were not able to go to Sainte Foy's shrine because Roger feared that he would be ambushed and captured by his enemies. Because of Roger's evil deeds many people had been driven from his realm and they thirsted for his blood. Therefore Goteline built a church in honor of the holy martyr Foy. In this way she gave eternal renown to the saint's holy and healing name.⁶⁴¹

This, alongside other miracles such as the donation of golden bracelets by Arsinde, wife of the Count of Toulouse, provides precedent for women acting as patrons within the cult of Sainte Foy.⁶⁴² As such, the role of Sybilla as a potential patron to Sainte Foy may not have been notable and instead part of an established trend of devotion.

As well as being an important family with a connection to Sainte Foy, the Tosnys were also pioneers in using monastic foundations to entrench their family within the local landscape.⁶⁴³ The foundation of Horsham St Faith served a similar function for the Fitzwalters. There has been some research into the close geographical relationship between castles and monasteries. Tim Pestell described the priory of Horsham St Faith as having a castle nearby or adjacent.⁶⁴⁴ However, M. W. Thompson does not include Horsham St Faith in his "tentative list" of associated monasteries and castles.⁶⁴⁵ This close relationship between castle and monastery served to express the "duality of temporal and spiritual

⁶⁴⁰ 'Normannie quidem in partibus, miles quidam et nobilitatis stemmate cluens et honoris dignitate prepotens, Rogerius nomine, tunc temporis aderat, cuius Gotselina nomine, infirmitate gravi vexata, pene ad ultima vite iam ducebat prosapiam', Anonymous, *Liber Miraculorum sancta Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.), p. 183.

⁶⁴¹ 'Ad cuius propitiatorium insidiatorum verens captentulas accedere non valens pro malefactis enim viri sui multi a regno suo propulsi eius sanguinem sitiabant ecclesiam in honore sancte martyris Fidis construxit sanctumque ac medicabile nomen eius eterne celebritati commendavit', Anonymous, 'Liber Anonymous, *Liber Miraculorum sancta Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.), p. 184; and in Sheingorn (trans.), *The Book of Sainte Foy*, p. 145.

⁶⁴² Bernard of Angers, *Liber Miraculorum sancta Fidis*, Luca Robertini (ed.), pp. 119-20.

⁶⁴³ Moore, 'The Norman Aristocracy in the Long Eleventh Century', p. 69.

⁶⁴⁴ Tim Pestell, 'An Analysis of Monastic Foundation in East Anglia c. 650-1200' (Ph.D. diss., University of East Anglia, 1999), table 5.4, p. 259.

⁶⁴⁵ M. W. Thompson, 'Associated Monasteries and Castles in the Middle Ages: A Tentative List', *Archaeological Journal* 143.1 (1986), 305-321.

power, mediated through the family.”⁶⁴⁶ However it is worth noting that it is unclear if Fitzwalter himself, or his overlord Robert Malet, raised the castle.⁶⁴⁷ Pestell also notes how close the priory and parish church were in Horsham St Faith, stating that “they must have originally appeared to be almost together.”⁶⁴⁸ Robert Liddiard notes that the castle and priory were 600 metres apart, a greater distance than usual between such sites.⁶⁴⁹ He suggests that this may have been done to ensure the use of a virgin site, as well as to make the most use of the available high ground, which could be “some attempt to enhance Fitzwalter domination of the landscape.”⁶⁵⁰ All of this served to entrench the Fitzwalters visibly in the Norfolk landscape and tie their secular family to the local religious community.

The Fitzwalters’ foundation of Horsham can also be seen as part of what Margerum described as “a specific trend of fashionable foundation and endowment of dependent priories in Norfolk by the new social hierarchy [...] in the period 1080-1113 immediately after William de Warenne’s successful foundation of Lewes.”⁶⁵¹ It is worth noting that the lordship of Rudham was held under William Warenne by Ralph de Caisneto, father of Sybilla Fitzwalter.⁶⁵² As such, the foundation of Horsham St Faith can be considered part of this trend.

It is also of note that the bandits who are seen attacking the Fitzwalters are depicted in a knightly fashion, mounted on caparisoned horses and wearing a variety of armour. These figures are not ordinary bandits. The depiction of their attackers in this fashion suggests that they are also members of the nobility. This is in distinct contrast to the written foundation story which describes them as “brigants, and theeves that layne in caves and

⁶⁴⁶ Pestell, ‘An Analysis of Monastic Foundation in East Anglia’, p. 262.

⁶⁴⁷ Robert Liddiard, “‘Landscapes of Lordship’: Norman Castles and the Countryside in Medieval Norfolk’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of East Anglia, 2000), p. 110.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁶⁵⁰ Liddiard, p. 283.

⁶⁵¹ Lewes was founded by William de Warenne as a cell of Cluny in 1077. Johanna Luise Margerum, ‘An Edition of the Cartulary of Binham Priory’, (PhD thesis, University of East Anglia, 2005), p. 22.

⁶⁵² H. J. Dukinfield Astley, ‘Two Norfolk Villages’, in *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 1901, p. 106.

dens with strength.”⁶⁵³ In fact, in the written account, where “the lords and barons of the said countrith [...] raised a certaine people, and went with strength to the castell, and laid siege thereto, and made a promise that they should not goe thence unto time they had taken the said theeves, and that the said pilgrims were restored againe to all there goods.”⁶⁵⁴ The enemies of the Fitzwalters depicted in the wall painting at Horsham St Faith come from their own social class. This may potentially reflect political power struggles that the Fitzwalters were involved in back in Norfolk, or even in France.⁶⁵⁵ The exact role the family played within the broader Norfolk community is unclear, but they did enjoy at least some prosperity as two Chesney brothers, John and William, were sheriffs of Norfolk.⁶⁵⁶ Their holding of this position, following on from their father, resulted in the family wielding “unprecedented power” as royal representatives within Norfolk for some fifty years.⁶⁵⁷ During his tenure as sheriff, John developed a certain notoriety for his involvement in the protection of the Jewish community in Norwich following the death of William of Norwich.⁶⁵⁸ It also serves to remind people that enemies of the Fitzwalters are also enemies of Sainte Foy.

The example of Horsham St Faith can also tell us about how elite Anglo-Norman families thought of their own identities in post-Conquest England. Despite being based in England, they still held own to their identity as Normans. They did this through their names, tying themselves to the placed they came from in Normandy. They did this by maintaining the aristocratic networks they had been part of in Normandy – even once they had been

⁶⁵³ Dugdale, *Monasticon*, p. 636.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 636

⁶⁵⁵ The precise location of where the Fitzwalters were captured in France remains unknown so sadly it is impossible to examine the political relationship between the Fitzwalters and the landholders in the area where they were seized.

⁶⁵⁶ Part of the difficulty of assessing the Chesney family’s importance stems from the fact that there was an Oxfordshire family who also went by the name of Chesney, many of whom shared the same names as the unrelated Chesneys of Norfolk. For scholarship on the confusing nature of the Chesney families, see for example L. F. Salzman, ‘Sussex Domesday Tenants IV. The Family of Chesney of Cheyney’, *Sussex Archaeological Society*, LXV (1924), pp. 20-53, J. H. Round, ‘The Origin of the Stewarts and Their Chesney Connection’, *The Genealogist*, XVIII (1901), pp. 1-16, J. H. Round, ‘The Early Sheriffs of Norfolk’, *English Historical Review*, 35 (1920), pp. 481-496 and K. S. B Keats-Rohan, *Domesday descendants: a prosopography of persons occurring in English documents, 1066-1166*, vol. II *Pipe rolls to Cartae baronum* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press 2002).

⁶⁵⁷ E. M. Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich: The origins of the Blood Libel in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 21.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

supplanted to England. They remained devoted to French, although not always Norman, saints, who they then introduced to their new landscape.

Rather than serving as an attempt to continue local traditions from Norfolk prior to the Norman Conquest, the foundation of Horsham St Faith Priory can instead be seen as an importation of Norman devotion and an attempt to ground that devotion within a new environment and in the broader context of Norman aristocratic networks. Monastic foundations, such as Horsham St Faith, served to cement the founders in their new landscape, both physical and social. The role of Sainte Foy in aristocratic identity formation in England sheds light on how the Norman nobility attempted to establish and consolidate their power in a new landscape while maintaining connections to their ancestral homeland. Clearly establishing a sense of continuity for the imported nobility with the use of continental cults was more important than continuity for the native inhabitants and their existing Anglo-Saxon saints. This suggests a more top-down approach to governance by the Anglo-Normans in their new kingdom.

3.7 Devotion Beyond the Priory

Given that this was a cult imported by the Anglo-Norman aristocratic elite, it raises the question of whether devotion to the cult of Sainte Foy remained centred around the priory and its immediate noble patrons, or if it was adopted more broadly by other members of society.

One way to examine this is to look for miracles performed by Sainte Foy in England. Only one such miracle survives, recorded in a collection of miracles of William of Norwich by Thomas of Monmouth of c. 1173.⁶⁵⁹ The miracle relates how a woman, when she went to make candles from wax she had promised to the Holy Trinity, Saint William and Sainte Foy,

⁶⁵⁹ *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich by Thomas of Monmouth*, Augustus Jessop and M. R. James (trans. and eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 267-8.

“the wax appeared to bleed.”⁶⁶⁰ The survival of only one miracle does not exactly suggest a thriving cult dedicated to Sainte Foy. It is also worth noting, as touched on earlier, the interconnectedness of the cult of William of Norwich and the Chesney family. Heather Blurton has written on the relationship between the two cults, describing the “friendly competition” between them.⁶⁶¹ Both were cults for child martyrs and likely would have been competing for the same patronage.

Church dedications can also provide further insight into broader devotion to Sainte Foy. Arnold-Forster’s study of church dedications in England lists twenty-one pre-reformation churches dedicated solely to Sainte Foy.⁶⁶² A further three included Foy as a co-dedicatee.⁶⁶³ C. L. S. Linnell lists five churches dedicated to Foy in Norfolk, roughly a quarter of the number in England.⁶⁶⁴ As Linnell notes, the original dedication for the parish church in Horsham St Faith was St Mary and St Andrew, but it was commonly referred to in medieval wills as St Faith’s.⁶⁶⁵ Additionally, there used to be a parish church in London called St Faith’s, which was incorporated into St Paul’s Cathedral when that building was rebuilt and expanded.⁶⁶⁶ It is always difficult to assess when precisely churches acquired their dedication, but the fabric of the churches dedicated to Saint Faith in Bacton, Herefordshire and Little Witchingham, Norfolk, both date to the medieval period.⁶⁶⁷ The level of broader devotion associated with these churches is difficult to assess, particularly with the case of Little Witchingham given that Walter Giffard, noted earlier for his connection with members

⁶⁶⁰ “quasi sanguineis scaturientibus guttis cruentata paruit”, in *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich by Thomas of Monmouth*, Augustus Jessop and M. R. James (trans. and eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 268.

⁶⁶¹ Heather Blurton, *Inventing William of Norwich: Thomas of Monmouth, Antisemitism, and Literary Culture, 1150-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022), p. 97.

⁶⁶² Frances Arnold-Foster, *Studies in Church Dedications or England’s Patron Saints*, vol. III (London: Skeffington & Son, 1899), p.14

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

⁶⁶⁴ C. L. S. Linnell, *Norfolk Church Dedications* (St Anthony’s Press: York, 1962), p. 43

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43

⁶⁶⁶ William Dugdale, *The history of St. Paul’s cathedral in London, from its foundation until these times* (London: Thomas Warren, 1658), p. 13.

⁶⁶⁷ See *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Herefordshire* vol. 1: *South west* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1931), pp. 18-21 and Niklaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *Norfolk 1: Norwich and North-East* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 601.

of the Anglo-Norman nobility including the Fitzwalters, granted the manor of Witchingham to the monks of Sainte Foy in Longueville.⁶⁶⁸

However, how do the number of dedications compare with the popularity of other saints? For example, Arnold-Foster records that Saint Catherine had fifty-seven pre-Reformation churches solely dedicated to her, while Saint Helena had one hundred and thirteen.⁶⁶⁹ This figure puts Sainte Foy, who had twenty-one dedications, in the area of Saint Bridget (nineteen), Saint Gregory (twenty-eight), and the Holy Rood (twenty) for sole dedications.⁶⁷⁰ However, to quote Van Dam, “particular cults went through phases of prominence and obscurity” and “cults differed and cults changed over time.”⁶⁷¹ This statistical analysis fails to take that into account as it places all pre-reformation dedications together, and therefore may not reflect earlier dedications which have since been lost. While these figures may not be able to express the waxing and waning of Sainte Foy’s popularity, this analysis does still provide a useful comparison between her and other dedicatees and offer a snapshot of devotion to Foy prior to the Reformation. To quote Schulenberg, “the fame of sanctity and cults of the holy dead were frequently precarious and ephemeral,” and this covers all aspects of devotion, including church dedications.⁶⁷²

As for altar dedications, one was dedicated to Sainte Foy at Durham Cathedral. At some point under Prior Wessington in 1416–1445, the altar of Sainte Foy was one of a number of altars which the cathedral paid £71 2s 4d for the “building and repairing” of.⁶⁷³ Blurton has also suggested that there may have been an altar dedicated to Sainte Foy in Norwich Cathedral.⁶⁷⁴ There was also a chapel dedicated to Foy at the abbey in Bury St

⁶⁶⁸ Francis Blomefield, *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* vol. 8, (London: W. Miller, 1808), pp. 297-311.

⁶⁶⁹ Arnold-Foster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, p. 5 and p. 16.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2, p. 4, and p. 15.

⁶⁷¹ Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their miracles in late antique Gaul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 13.

⁶⁷² Schulenberg, p. 59.

⁶⁷³ Charles Eyre, *The History of St. Cuthbert*, 3rd edn. (London: Burns & Oates, 1887), p. 223.

⁶⁷⁴ Blurton, p. 98.

Edmunds.⁶⁷⁵ Another chapel at Rochester Cathedral was dedicated to Sainte Foy before 1137 by Bishop John of Rochester.⁶⁷⁶

There was clearly some attempt to stimulate broader devotion to the cult of Sainte Foy in England. Herbert, bishop of Norwich offered indulgences to those who visited the church on Sainte Foy's feast day or day of the translation of her relics.⁶⁷⁷ Images of Sainte Foy were also made in locations which were more accessible to the laity, such as the painted pulpit at the parish church in Horsham St Faith (c. 1480) and the stained glass (fifteenth century) at St Peter Mancroft in Norwich.⁶⁷⁸ However, these examples are well into the late medieval period. Overall, the evidence suggests that the cult of Sainte Foy in high medieval England, specifically centred around Norfolk and East Anglia, was one patronised by the elite.

3.8 The Later Medieval Priory

While the cult of Sainte Foy in Norfolk flourished in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the fortunes of the priory changed in the fourteenth and collapsed entirely in the fifteenth. It was during this period of decline in the fifteenth century that many details in the murals were repainted or 'touched up' in some way. This retouching – which is an extraordinary case study for scholars of wall paintings – has been highlighted by experts as “most unusual” and as such deserves careful consideration.⁶⁷⁹ To fully understand this repainting – its motivations and its importance to the cult of Sainte Foy in England – the history and transformation of the priory after its foundation needs to be considered.

⁶⁷⁵ Delbert W. Russell (trans. and ed.), *Verse Saints' Lives Written in the French of England* (Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), p. 174.

⁶⁷⁶ Rodney M. Thomson, 'Early Romanesque Book-Illustration in England: the Dates of the Pierpont Morgan *Vitae Sancti Edmundi* and the Bury Bible', *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 2 (1971), pp. 211-225, p. 222.

⁶⁷⁷ Bouillet and Servières, p. 352.

⁶⁷⁸ Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints*, p. 67.

⁶⁷⁹ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'Horsham St Faith Priory: Report on the Condition of the Wall Paintings and on Fixing Tests', 1989.

Until 1390, Horsham St Faith remained a daughter house of the abbey at Conques, and, as such, was considered an alien priory. Alien priories were subject to seizure by the crown or the imposition of fines, largely to pay for the war effort.⁶⁸⁰ As a result of the ongoing political instability, the priory of Horsham St Faith was taken into the hands of the English crown on several occasions. King Edward III (r. 1327–1377) granted custody of the priory to the prior in exchange for one hundred pounds a year, although in 1337 this was remitted for half that amount and in 1338 the prior was pardoned eighty pounds of the total fee.⁶⁸¹ The 1338 remittance was as a result of a request by the cardinals of St Praxed's and St Mary's in Aquiro, suggesting that the priory still had some international connections.⁶⁸² This was not the only difficulty the priory faced, additionally, in 1307, a gang of twenty seven people occupied the priory for four months, "living off its food, removing goods in the standard manner, and disrupting the prior's manor and market."⁶⁸³ In 1345, the priory was unable to sufficiently gather its rents, so this right was granted to Sir John Ufford, a descendant of the founding family, for a year.⁶⁸⁴ All of this shows that the fourteenth century was not an easy one for the priory.

In 1303, William (d. 1313), the prior of Horsham St Faith, appointed two attorneys to act for him for two years whilst he was abroad and "obtained simple protection for a like period during his absence," and then did the same again in 1307.⁶⁸⁵ In 1344, Prior Pontius de Cerveria travelled "beyond the seas for causes concerning him."⁶⁸⁶ This suggests that by

⁶⁸⁰ See B. J. Thompson, 'The Church and the aristocracy: lay and ecclesiastical landowning society in fourteenth-century Norfolk' (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1989) and Marjorie M. Morgan, 'Historical Revision No. XCIX: The Suppression of the Alien Priories', *History* 26.103 (December 1941), pp. 204-212.

⁶⁸¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward III, A.D. 1338-1340* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1895), p. 5.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁸³ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward II, A.D. 1307-1313* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1894), p. 41.

⁶⁸⁴ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward III, A.D. 1343-1345* (London: Mackie and Co., 1902), p. 546.

⁶⁸⁵ See *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, A.D. 1301-1307* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898), p. 131 and *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward II, A.D. 1307-1313* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1894), p. 41.

⁶⁸⁶ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward III, A.D. 1343-1345* (London: Mackie and Co., 1902), p. 334.

the mid-fourteenth century, there had not been a complete breakdown of relations between Horsham St Faith and its mother abbey as their priors were still travelling to visit Conques. Relations between the mother abbey of Conques and Horsham St Faith still appear to have been strong in 1372, when Pope Gregory XI (r. 1370–1378) sent a letter with four monks from the abbey of Conques to the bishop of Norwich so they could live at the priory of Horsham.⁶⁸⁷

In 1390 however, the priory submitted a petition to become denizen – in effect, to become an English priory:

1390. December 17. Westminster

Grant – at the request of the king's uncle, the duke of Lancaster, and the king's brother, the earl of Huntingdon, upon the petition of the Benedictine prior and monks of St Faith's, Norfolk, cell to the abbey of Conches and founded by the ancestors of Robert de Ufford, knight, alleging that the priory is almost ruined, divine services nearly abandoned, and where used to be a prior and twelve monks to celebrate three masses daily and give every poor beggar a loaf and two herrings, besides performing other charities and paying in sign of their subjection two marks a year to the said abbey, at present but one prior and eight monks can scarcely find subsistence when they have paid 50*l.* a year into the Exchequer, as they are bound to do during the war with France – that the prior and monks be henceforth denizen (*indigene*) and so reputed, their possessions, franchises and liberties never hereafter being taken into the king's hand on account of the war with France or any war, no aid exacted from them as aliens, and they are wholly discharged from all fines, subsidies and imposts required of aliens, no prior to be placed over them but a true Englishman, and they are in all points to be as free as the prior and monks of Thetford; on condition that they pay to the king the two marks a year paid as aforesaid to the abbey of Conches,

⁶⁸⁷ *Calendar of Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 4, 1362-1404* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1902), p. 584.

and that they pray for the king and queen, for the good estate of the realm and for the souls of the king's parents, heirs and successors, saving to the king and his heirs, during the present wars, knights' fees and advowsons belonging to the priory.

By p.s.⁶⁸⁸

As such, the repaintings at Horsham St Faith must be considered in the context of a community in a moment of transition and transformation – as a priory which had recently severed ties with its mother abbey in France and, in effect, become 'English.' Recent scholarship by Michele Vescovi has suggested that Conques maintained a close connection with its dependent priories, possibly even to the extent which influenced their material design.⁶⁸⁹ To quote Vescovi, "the institution itself, through its network of priories, topographically diffuse but institutionally linked, constructs its own geography."⁶⁹⁰ As such, it was only once freed from their position in this monastic network, the priory was able to explore new and different options in its decorative scheme.

3.9 The Priors

A study of the backgrounds of the priors of Horsham St Faith can also provide information about the priory, its wall paintings and their later modifications. It is possible to trace where the priors of Horsham St Faith were monks before they joined the monastic community at Horsham which can provide an insight into how close the relationship between Horsham St Faith and Conques was throughout the fourteenth century. At least four of the priors of Horsham St Faith were originally monks from Conques: Hugh Targe (1313–?), Pontius de Serveria (1338-1349), Hugh de Pardines (1349–1351) and Berengar Natas (1357–?).⁶⁹¹ Another prior, Bernard Jori, was also a monk from a French abbey, but not from

⁶⁸⁸ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Richard II, vol IV: ad. 1388-1392* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1902), p. 366.

⁶⁸⁹ See Michele Luigi Vescovi, 'Transregional Dynamics, Monastic Networks: Santa Fede in Cavagnolo, Conques, and the Geography of Romanesque Art', in John McNeil and Richard Plant (eds.), *The Regional and Transregional in Romanesque Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), pp. 103-118

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁶⁹¹ *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales vol II: 1216-1377*, David M. Smith and Vera C. M. London (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 169-170.

Conques, as he came from the monastery of Souillac.⁶⁹² This shows how, even well into the fourteenth century, there was a close, nurturing, and protective relationship between the priory and Conques and that the priory continued to have French connections.

After denization in 1390, the next two priors (Thomas Bertelot and Geoffrey Langley) were not only English, they were monks of Horsham.⁶⁹³ Bertelot may even have been appointed by the monks themselves in 1389, before the priory was granted denization.⁶⁹⁴ The name Langley may also be connected with Langley Abbey, also in Norfolk, again suggesting a local connection. Although, as F. C. Elliston Erwood notes when discussing written material possibly connected to Langley abbey, there were multiple other foundations called Langley in the country – Langley in Leicester, Langley in Guildford, Surrey, and Langley in Hertford.⁶⁹⁵ However, the Norfolk option seems the most likely. Later, the prior until 1470 was one Ralph Norwich, which suggests that not only was he English, but also a local man.⁶⁹⁶ This shows a shift in the networks the priory was part of – while it had been part of a French monastic network, it was now part of an English, and particularly East Anglian, one.

Geoffrey Langley is of particular interest here. Not only does his name suggest some sort of connection with Langley, an abbey founded by descendants of the Fitzwalters elsewhere in Norfolk, but additionally, a monumental brass of him survives from after his death in 1437, which can help shed further light on the state of the priory in the first half of the fifteenth century. When Mill Stephenson recorded this brass in 1926, it had been moved to St Lawrence's in Norwich.⁶⁹⁷ According to Pevsner, the brass was then moved back to the

⁶⁹² Ibid., p. 169.

⁶⁹³ *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales vol III: 1377-1540*, David M. Smith (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 183.

⁶⁹⁴ *A History of the County of Norfolk*, vol II, pp. 346-349.

⁶⁹⁵ F.C. Elliston Erwood, *The Premonstratensian Abbey of Langley, Co. Norfolk* (London: British Archaeologies Association, 1922), p. 60.

⁶⁹⁶ *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales vol III: 1377-1540*, p. 183.

⁶⁹⁷ Mill Stephenson, *A List of Monumental Brasses in the British Isles* (London: Headley Brothers, 1926), pp. 354-355.

church in Horsham St Faith in c. 1970.⁶⁹⁸ Stephenson described it as inscribed with the phrase “prior istius loci” and wrote that it depicted a man in monastic dress, positioned underneath a single canopy that had been “much mutilated.”⁶⁹⁹ He noted that John Sell Cotman observed a figure of Sainte Foy above Langley, although this part of the brass was now lost.⁷⁰⁰ Cotman however had made a copy of the brass as he saw it in 1815 (fig. 2.40), thus preserving a record of the brass in a more complete form.⁷⁰¹ This copy shows that a scroll emanates from Langley’s hands, clasped together in a position of prayer, which reads “virgo fidis.”⁷⁰² Above the figure of Langley, Foy stands underneath a complicated, decorated canopy, an architectural feature that was perhaps once present at the priory. The main arch forms a simple half circle, the band of which is decorated with a pattern of quatrefoils. Tracery extends below this part of the arch, creating a cinquefoil arch. Above, the arch extends into an ogee, the edges of which are further embellished in flowing lines more reminiscent of fire than foliage. The blank space underneath the apex of the ogee is decorated with a quatrefoil surrounded by a circle, as well as three trefoils, taking up and embellishing all the possible space. The canopy extends to the top of the arch, and is pierced by a number of narrow, trefoiled lancets. Spires abut each end of the canopy, topped with decorated pinnacles with crockets. In contrast, only part of the microarchitectural detail that surrounded Langley was extant in 1815, with only the base and the sides up to his waist surviving. Despite this, it is possible to tell that the canopy enclosing Langley was different to the one around Foy, as the pillars to either side of Langley are finished with bases which are reminiscent of the bases of stone columns. This impression is emphasised by the dividing of the bases into three parts, suggesting they are made of multiple pieces of stones and hinting at three dimensionality.

⁶⁹⁸ Nikolaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *Norfolk 1: Norwich and North-East* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 566.

⁶⁹⁹ “Prior of that place” Stephenson, *A List of Monumental Brasses*, pp. 354-355

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 354-355.

⁷⁰¹ John Sell Cotman, *Engravings of the most remarkable of the sepulchral brasses in Norfolk* Vol. II (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1819), pl. 97, p. 48.

⁷⁰² “Faith Virgin” *Brass of Geoffrey Langley*, brass, fifteenth century, St Mary and St Andrew, Horsham St Faith, Norfolk.

Foy carries in her left hand a grill, the instrument of her martyrdom, as well as a book with a clasp in her right. She is both crowned and haloed. She is covered only by what appears to be a single piece of long cloth, draped over and around her body, which leaves the majority of her torso bare. This partial nudity enables the viewer to enter into a voyeuristic relationship with the saint.⁷⁰³ This Foy is no longer the woman who stares directly out of the wall as within the priory. Instead this Foy is softer and more closely aligned with the classic virgin martyr mould.

This memorial shows a continued devotion to Sainte Foy at the priory into the fifteenth century, as well as a shift towards closer relationships with local networks. It also raises the possibility that Geoffrey Langley may have been a patron who helped fund the repainting inside the priory which are discussed in greater detail below. He was clearly devoted to Sainte Foy and had the funds available to express this devotion through the memorial brass.

3.10 The Wall Painting Modifications

Moving on to the wall paintings themselves, there are a variety of methods we can use to identify and examine areas of fifteenth-century repainting, such as differences between the two phases evident through technical analysis. As the cult portrait of Sainte Foy and the first of the foundation scenes were covered by the thickening of the north wall in the fourteenth century, it is possible to distinguish between pigments used in the thirteenth-century scheme and those used in the fifteenth-century repainting.⁷⁰⁴ Close examination of the overpainting can provide insight into the changing priorities of the priory between the

⁷⁰³ On voyeurism and virgin martyrs, see Brigitte Cazelles, *The Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991); Madeline Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle, and Scopic Economy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); and Emma Campbell, 'Sacrificial Spectacle and Interpassive Vision in the Anglo-Norman Life of Saint Faith', in *Troubled Vision: Gender, Sexuality and Sight in Medieval Text and Image*, Emma Campbell and Robert Mills (eds.) (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 97-116.

⁷⁰⁴ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory: Their Technique, Discovery and Conservation – Julian James and Caroline Babington', 1988.

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It also serves as a reminder that wall paintings were not seen as static works of art – they could be altered.

In the 1989 report on the condition of the wall paintings produced by English Heritage, Caroline Babington and Stephen Rickerby identified that “a wide range of costly pigments” such as azurite, verdigris, vermilion, and gold were used in the thirteenth-century scheme.⁷⁰⁵ In contrast, the fifteenth-century repainting only used cheaper ochres and verdigris.⁷⁰⁶ The difference in these types of pigments potentially suggests that the priory did not have access to colours of a higher quality in the fifteenth century, likely due to financial constraints. This, in turn, might reflect the financial difficulties encountered at Horsham in the later medieval period. The relationship between England and France, including the Hundred Years War, had a notable impact on French dependent priories in England. Even before the complete suppression of alien priories in 1414 during the reign of Henry V, things had not been easy for such foundations. Alien priories were seized four times by the crown between 1295 and 1378, supposedly because they presented a security threat, but in actuality as a means of gaining the patronage and land they possessed.⁷⁰⁷ Against this backdrop of tension, the priory of Horsham St Faith also faced some specific difficulties. In 1307 a commission was appointed to investigate an incident whereby twenty-seven people broke into the priory and prevented any entry or exit by the monks or prior for four months.⁷⁰⁸

The repainting also led to further deterioration of the original murals and assessing this deterioration can provide insight into the motivation for repainting. When assessing the paintings in 1989, C. Babington and S. Rickerby noted that “the detachment of ‘macro-flakes’ can sometimes be associated with the thickly applied fifteenth-century repainting.”⁷⁰⁹ They

⁷⁰⁵ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, ‘Horsham St Faith Priory: Report on the Condition of the Wall Paintings and on Fixing Tests – C. Babington and S. Rickerby’, 1989.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ A. K. McHardy, ‘The Alien Priories and the Expulsion of Aliens from England in 1378’, *Studies in Church History* 12 (1975), 133-141 (p. 133)

⁷⁰⁸ William Page (ed.), *A History of the County of Norfolk*, vol II (London: Victoria County History, 1906), pp. 346-349.

⁷⁰⁹ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, ‘Horsham St Faith Priory: Report on the Condition of the Wall Paintings and on Fixing Tests – C. Babington and S. Rickerby’, 1989.

define 'macro-flakes' as detachment of paint flakes wider than one centimetre.⁷¹⁰ In some places, fifteenth-century paint layers have been lost due to interaction with the powdering in the base layer of the thirteenth-century paint.⁷¹¹ This type of deterioration varies from pigment to pigment, but it can nevertheless offer insight into the location of repainting. For example, the multiple areas of macro-flaking in the micro-architectural dado arcading, suggests that it was repainted. As such the fifteenth-century paintings evidently 'updated' the architectural details in their foundation story, bringing the physical surroundings of the foundation story into the present. Additional technical differences include the brushwork, which is 'less fine' in the fifteenth century; moreover, the fifteenth-century paint is also more viscous and the overall tonality darker than the earlier painting.⁷¹² Different levels of degradation have resulted in some slightly confusing images, such as a woman with additional eyes seen kneeling in prayer before the reliquary of Sainte Foy and figures wearing multiple types of armour.

As well as these technical differences, there are also clear distinctions in style, dress, facial types, and other instances of 'modernizing.' This can clearly be seen regarding the armour and weaponry in the 'Travel by Land' (fig. 2.15), which depicts a group travelling on horseback. These alterations to the armour could potentially be used to date the repainting. However, as Alan Borg cautions, relying on 'armour iconography' is rarely chronologically precise, in large part because fashion did not change quickly; armour varied between regions, and it was often kept in use even after it had become unfashionable.⁷¹³ Nevertheless, as Helen Nicholson states in her history of medieval warfare, "complexity and strength of armour increased rapidly" from the twelfth century onwards.⁷¹⁴ As such, it can

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹¹ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'Horsham St Faith Priory: Report on the Condition of the Wall Paintings and on Fixing Tests – C. Babington and S. Rickerby', 1989.

⁷¹² Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory: Their Technique, Discovery and Conservation – Julian James and Caroline Babington', 1988.

⁷¹³ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'The Representation of Arms and Armour – Alan Borg', 1986.

⁷¹⁴ Helen Nicholson, *Medieval Warfare: theory and practice of war in Europe, 300-1500* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 107.

provide another helpful guide for dating the overpainting. Borg suggested that the armour was originally chainmail, before it was repainted as plate armour, which he considered “certainly fifteenth century” – specifically, the second quarter of the fifteenth century, due to the shape of the breastplate, as well as the presence of overlapping plates in both the pauldrons and the fauld.⁷¹⁵ Park also intuited that this repainting could not have occurred before 1420 as the armour is not textile-covered; it also includes large, laminated pauldrons and discs covering the armpits.⁷¹⁶ As such, the armour details suggest that the repainting occurred in the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

The weapons can also be used to date the repainting. Nicholson states that “in the fourteenth century, the battle-axe was reborn as the poleaxe, the halberd and other ‘staff’ weapons – that is, weapons consisting basically of a blade on a long staff.”⁷¹⁷ Numerous weapons of this type can be seen in the scene of the pilgrims travelling on horseback. As such, these modifications probably post-date the thirteenth century, reflecting contemporary military technology in the fifteenth century.

According to Borg, “by the 15th century there was a widespread movement to portray what were clearly historical scenes in what was thought to be historical dress” and “the reverse of this process, the conscious alteration of a historical scene to make it appear contemporary, is unusual.”⁷¹⁸ The ways in which the repainting ‘updates’ or ‘modernises’ armour is therefore significant. However, this claim seems to be based solely on an article from 1932 by J. G. Mann. Whilst Mann does state that “as the fifteenth century advances one notes an increasing awareness of the fact that the personages of the past should be shown in something different from the dress of the day,” the majority of his examples come

⁷¹⁵ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, ‘The Representation of Arms and Armour – Alan Borg’, 1986.

⁷¹⁶ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, ‘The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory – David Park’, 1979.

⁷¹⁷ Helen Nicholson, *Medieval Warfare: theory and practice of war in Europe, 300-1500* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 101.

⁷¹⁸ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, ‘The Representation of Arms and Armour – Alan Borg’, 1986.

from the sixteenth century and later, such as the brass of Thomas Beale in Maidstone from 1593 which depicts previous generations of his family in a variety of historic clothing.⁷¹⁹ More recently, Madeline Caviness has written on the topic of 'nostalgic historicization', and observed that there was a "reverence for the art forms of earlier periods which was felt in England, France and Austria" and has found "numerous examples of preserving and repairing ancient works" including the reuse of stained glass at Notre-Dame and the reused sarcophagus of St Guilhem.⁷²⁰ She even goes as far to state that "not only were older works highly prized, but it was also recognized that any repairs or additions should harmonize as well as possible with the original."⁷²¹ As such, this repainting and modernisation can be seen as unusual and noteworthy.

Other details can also provide insight into dating as well. In a 1979 lecture, David Park examined many of the foreground details, in the 'Return to England' scene (fig. 2.21), including plants, the bear-pole lookout and large rock, and concluded that these are all instances of fifteenth-century repainting.⁷²² Caroline Babington and Julian James agreed and suggested a date of the first half of the fifteenth century, which would fit Borg's dating.⁷²³ Park also observed that the feet of the male saint standing to the right of John the Evangelist, as well as the creature he is standing on, also seem to have been repainted (fig. 2.32).⁷²⁴ He claims that there is a decorative pattern of reticulated tracery here, which first appeared in the early fourteenth century and then continued to be used into the fifteenth century.⁷²⁵ All of this led him to claim that, in the case of this particular figure, the feet are "at

⁷¹⁹ J.G. Mann, 'Instance of Antiquarian Feeling in Medieval and Renaissance Art', *Archaeological Journal* 89:1 (1932), p. 264 and p. 270.

⁷²⁰ Madeleine Caviness, "De convenientia et cohaerentia antique et novi operis:" Medieval conservation, restoration, pastiche and forgery', in *Intuition, und Kunstwissenschaft: Festschrift für Hanns Swarzenski*, Tilmann Buddensieg (ed.) (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1973), p. 208, 213, 218.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁷²² Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory – David Park', 1979.

⁷²³ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory: Their Technique, Discovery and Conservation – Julian James and Caroline Babington', 1988.

⁷²⁴ Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, London, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory – David Park', 1979.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*

least 50 years later than the head.⁷²⁶ The feet do contain details which suggest a later date, so this may be another area which was significantly repainted and altered.

Park also claimed that the two depictions of the reliquary of Sainte Foy at Conques appear to have been retouched, although he does not elaborate on how he reached this conclusion.⁷²⁷ The scenes with the reliquary statue have certainly been repainted, specifically the architectural details and some of the faces, but I am not convinced that the reliquary statue itself was modified. Traces of gold are still evident on the depictions of the reliquary today, which suggests that they were part of the earlier, more lavish, phase of painting in the thirteenth century.

Park has also suggested that the paintings were retouched at some point before the fifteenth century, indicating multiple phases of artistic work. He makes this argument on the basis that the ironwork on the door of the building where Sybilla and Robert are held captive is of an early fourteenth-century type. He compared the fictive ironwork to surviving ironwork from Reepham in a door of c. 1300 and a door in the cathedral school in Norwich of c. 1330–35.⁷²⁸ Park also considered some of the masonry patterns and decorative borders in what is referred to as the prior's bedroom – the opposite side of the wall where the Crucifixion is painted – are of a fourteenth-century date.⁷²⁹ Babington and James found that in some samples there were up to six layers of paint, which could certainly support the idea that there were multiple instances of repainting, although this is not conclusive.⁷³⁰

The surviving technical evidence strongly suggests that the repainting occurred in the early fifteenth century, most likely during the second quarter. There are a variety of contextual reasons that might account for the systematic and targeted efforts of repainting at

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ These comparisons were noted to Park by a Doctor Geddes. *Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles*, London, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory – David Park', 1979.

⁷²⁹ *Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles*, London, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory – David Park', 1979.

⁷³⁰ *Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles*, London, 'The Wall Paintings of Horsham St Faith Priory: Their Technique, Discovery and Conservation – Julian James and Caroline Babington', 1988.

Horsham St Faith. It might reflect the monks' care for damaged, older wall paintings which needed upkeep to remain in an appropriate condition for a religious building. They also might indicate an impulse to 'update' as they preserve; to provide Sainte Foy with fashionable and up-to-date visual narratives for her priory. While this may suggest an interest in providing the saint with 'the best' given her position as martyr of heaven, this also shows a preoccupation with how the priory was perceived. The priory needed to appear as if it were wealthy and successful in order to maintain its position of power and authority within the local landscape.

3.11 Comparisons to Fifteenth-Century Art

Comparing the Horsham St Faith wall paintings with contemporary artworks from a similar period can help provide further evidence for a more precise date for the repainting. However, finding written work on fifteenth-century wall paintings in England presents some difficulties as, according to Helen Howard, Tracy Manning, and Sophie Stewart, "little systematic analysis has been undertaken" regarding wall paintings in the period.⁷³¹ A number of wall paintings from the fifteenth century do survive, even if there is limited literature on them, and they provide useful points of comparison, both technically and stylistically. Through such comparisons it should be possible to narrow down a date for the Horsham repainting. It is also worth noting that it may have taken some time for techniques and styles to spread from the more central, urban locations of London and Norwich to the more remote and rural priory in Horsham.

One scheme of wall paintings that can be compared to the Horsham one, is the that of the Westminster Abbey Chapter House. Two main areas of painting in the chapter house were rediscovered in 1801 and 1841.⁷³² The scheme in the Chapter House consists of a *Judicium* (Judgement scene), a collection of Old Testament figures, an apocalypse cycle,

⁷³¹ Helen Howard, Tracy Manning and Sophie Stewart, 'Late Medieval Wall Painting Techniques at Farleigh Hungerford Castle and their Context', *Studies in Conservation* 43.sup1, p. 59.

⁷³² Paul Binski and Helen Howard, 'Wall paintings in the chapter house', in *Westminster Abbey Chapter House: the history, art and architecture of 'a chapter house beyond compare'*, Warwick Rodwell and Richard Mortimer (eds.) (London: The Society of Antiquaries of London, 2010), p. 196.

angel musicians, and a decorative design of roses over which a selection of beasts were later painted.⁷³³ The majority of the surviving wall paintings can be attributed to the patronage of John of Northampton, a monk at Westminster from 1375 and 1404.⁷³⁴ The record of his patronage survives in the *Liber Niger Quarternus* in the abbey muniments records, which states that John of Northampton had made the paintings in the Chapter House, including a picture of the apocalypse at a cost of £4 10s, as well as other paintings in the church.⁷³⁵ This record of patronage means that the Westminster Chapter House paintings can be dated within a tight period. As Paul Binski noted, John of Northampton may have had to save his money in order to pay for the paintings, and as such suggests that his patronage occurred towards the end of his time as a monk at Westminster.⁷³⁶ This would put the date of the Westminster paintings closer to the 1404 date. This is backed up by stylistic examination of the paintings, with Binski saying that “nothing in the style of these pictures militates against a date towards c. 1400 or in the first decade of the fifteenth century.”⁷³⁷

One of the most noticeable similarities between the style of the Horsham paintings and Westminster Chapter House is the broad shape of the noses within the Judgement scenes (fig. 2.41). This can be seen on both the monks at Conques and the figures in the Judgement scenes on the south-east wall in the Chapter House. These noses, whilst all prominent, are not entirely the same. There are differences in width and breadth, as well as size of the nostrils. These differences, in both the Horsham and Westminster paintings, serve to create a sense of individuality. This is further heightened by the fact that the figures' lines of sight varies and they are not all focused on the same spot. This individuality is taken further in the Westminster paintings, as shown by the figures' differing hair styles. In contrast, the monks at Horsham are all tonsured. This depiction of individuality can be considered as part of the movement known as International Gothic, a term coined by

⁷³³ Ibid., p. 184.

⁷³⁴ S. E. Rigold, *The Chapter House and the Pyx Chamber: Westminster Abbey* (London: Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, 1976), p. 22.

⁷³⁵ Binski and Howard, 'Wall paintings in the chapter house', p. 192.

⁷³⁶ Ibid., p. 195.

⁷³⁷ Ibid., p. 195.

Coujarad to describe “the new spirit which animated Gothic art about the year 1390.”⁷³⁸ A key factor within this movement was the depiction of people as neither abstract, idealised models, nor realistic portraits, but instead as something “smoothed out and idealised, while still conveying a recognisable likeness.”⁷³⁹ Both the figures in the Westminster Chapter House and at Horsham St Faith should be considered in this context – as part of a movement towards representing individuality while also maintaining an idealised nature.

The wall paintings at Farleigh Hungerford (1426–1429) in Somerset can also provide a technical comparison with those at Horsham. Howard, Manning and Stewart noted that the technique at Farleigh Hungerford consisted of “a highly sophisticated use of translucent glazes over gold and silver leaf, a wide range of pigments including orpiment and lead-tin yellow, and oil as a medium.”⁷⁴⁰ Both schemes make use of red lake, vermilion, red lead and red earth, but Hungerford used orpiment and lead-tin yellow whereas Horsham St Faith used yellow earth.⁷⁴¹ However, such comparisons can prove dangerous as it is not always clear where exactly the pigment samples were taken from the Horsham paintings – the original thirteenth-century painting or the fifteenth-century retouching. As such, the similarities between the pigments are not significant enough to draw any major conclusions.

The Farleigh Hungerford paintings (1426–1429) also provide an interesting point of comparison for early fifteenth-century armour, which both Saint George and the kneeling knight wear (fig. 2.42). This kneeling figure likely shows the patron of the work, Sir Walter Hungerford, in a donor portrait. He is dressed as a soldier with a sword and the Hungerford arms next to him. Sir Walter Hungerford (1378–1449) was a veteran of Agincourt, made a knight of the garter c. 1421, and had the chapel at Farleigh Hungerford remodelled between 1426 and 1429.⁷⁴² The figure of Saint George also offers some points of comparisons. His

⁷³⁸ Kenneth Clark, ‘International Gothic and Italian Painting: Selwyn Brinton Lecture’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 95.4753 (October 10th, 1947), pp. 757-770, p. 758.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 761.

⁷⁴⁰ Howard, Manning and Stewart, ‘Late Medieval Wall Painting Techniques’, p. 59.

⁷⁴¹ Howard, *The Pigments of English Medieval Wall Painting*, pp. 241-252.

⁷⁴² Howard, Manning and Stewart, ‘Late Medieval Wall Painting Techniques’, p. 63.

helmet is curved and ends in a point. This strange shape is echoed in some of the helmets depicted at Horsham St Faith. Additionally, Saint George is also wearing gauntlets, which again can be seen at Horsham. Whilst George's gauntlets are decorated with a band of gold, they do not have any finger definition and are shaped like pointed mitts. In comparison, the gauntlets at Horsham have clearly defined digits. The wall paintings at Farleigh Hungerford provide a compelling parallel with those at Horsham St Faith in that they are both concerned with the depiction of contemporary battle wear. Details of the armour, in particular the gauntlets, suggest that the Horsham paintings may have been executed slightly later.⁷⁴³

Another comparison from a slightly later date in the fifteenth century, are the wall paintings at Pickering, North Yorkshire and provide an extensive, expansive cycle of paintings, albeit one which is well published and heavily restored.⁷⁴⁴ While the Pickering wall paintings have been traditionally dated to the 1450s, new work by Kate Giles alongside the Leeds Armoury indicates a later date in the 1470s.⁷⁴⁵ Giles has conducted extensive research into the wall paintings, including investigating which aspects are medieval originals and which are Victorian inventions, using drawings and watercolours made after the paintings' rediscovery in the 1850s.⁷⁴⁶ While certain aspects like the armour of St George are a fiction of the Victorian era, this research has shown that aspects of the iconography were maintained during the restoration. Given this Victorian fiction, analysis of the armour and weapons at Pickering needs to be treated with caution. The men in the martyrdom of Edmund scene (fig. 2.43) carry bows and arrows, a weapon not shown in the Horsham paintings. However, they also carry knives which provide a potential comparison. The hilts and cross-guards of the knives at Pickering are more highly decorated and elaborate than

⁷⁴³ On the development of gauntlets, see Paul F. Walker, *The History of Armour 1100-1700* (Marlborough: Crowood, 2013).

⁷⁴⁴ For a nineteenth-century account of the works, see G. H. Lightfoot, 'The Murals of Pickering Church', *The Antiquary* 21 (April 1890), pp. 149-152. For a comprehensive rundown of the paintings and their restoration, see Kate Giles, 'Seeing and believing: visibility and space in pre-modern England', *World Archaeology* 39.1 (2007), pp. 105-121.

⁷⁴⁵ Kate Giles, 'The Medieval Wall Paintings of Pickering Parish Church', *Studies in Church Architecture Lecture Series*, 6 January 2022 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAVWiCPMrRU>>

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid.

those at Horsham. Some of the swords and polearms at Horsham do have some embellishment, most noticeably the sword of the figure holding the shield in the scene in which the Fitzwalters are taken captive. The pommel of this sword is golden, in contrast with the grey silver of the sword's blade, and consists of three rounded scallops. The limited ornamentation on the weapons serves to create a sense that the weapons depicted at Horsham were not merely decorative, and were instead meant to convey a sense of force and power.

A number of the figures in the 'Travel by Land' scene are wearing peculiar helmets. A comparison for this can be found at Pickering, not in the form of a helmet, but in the form of a hat. As such, it is possible that during the over painting at Horsham, the helmet was adapted from a cloth hat which was originally depicted. Both Saint George and the Horsham figures are depicted wearing pauldrons as part of their armour, although Saint George's are comparatively bigger than those worn by the Horsham riders, potentially indicative of a later date.⁷⁴⁷ The wall paintings at Pickering serve to highlight that the repainted arms and armour at Horsham St Faith are typical of the fifteenth century.

These comparisons with other wall paintings serve to show that the Horsham repainting dates to the fifteenth century. Comparison has shown that the pigments used at Horsham are typical of the period, although possibly not of high quality. The style also suggests the fifteenth century, specifically c. 1440–c. 1450. This is confirmed by the analysis of the armour depicted

3.12 Other Examples of Repainting

To fully understand the repainting at Horsham St Faith, not only do the specific instances of repainting need to be examined, but they also need to be put into a broader context of repainting and attitudes towards it during the medieval period.

⁷⁴⁷ James Mann, 'Six Armours of the Fifteenth Century', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 72.420 (March 1938), p. 131.

Some other extant examples of repainting modify the whole painting, often creating a new image entirely, rather than changing small details as is the case at Horsham St Faith. One such example can be seen in the Dauntsey Doom (fig. 2.44) (fourteenth and fifteenth century) which was modified multiple times.⁷⁴⁸ The second scheme at Dauntsey was executed on a preparatory layer of red lead painted over the original scheme.⁷⁴⁹ However, when a third scheme was executed over the two prior schemes, no intermediary preparatory layer was applied, and instead the painting was executed directly on top of the second scheme.⁷⁵⁰ This highlights a different method of repainting than the one at Horsham St Faith, whereby an existing decorative scheme was completely replaced rather than partially modified.

Repainting also occurred at the Holy Sepulchre at Winchester Cathedral after it had been damaged in the thirteenth century due to architectural renovations.⁷⁵¹ However, at Winchester it was decided not to modify the damaged areas and “apply cosmetic work,” but rather to have it repainted, largely following the iconography of the original twelfth-century scheme.⁷⁵² Winchester serves to highlight that during the medieval period, people were aware of the upkeep paintings required and suggests a possible desire to ‘restore.’

⁷⁴⁸ James Plumtree, ‘The earlier paint schemes and possible contexts of the Dauntsey Doom’, *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine* 107 (2014). For a comparison with another Doom painting, see Ruth Bubb, ‘The Penn Doom: The re-examination and conservation of an important medieval painting on wood’, *The Conservator* 27.1 (2003), pp. 64-80. On the form of chancel screens themselves, see Helen E. Lunnon, ‘Observations on the Changing Form of Chancel Screens in Late Medieval Norfolk,’ *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 163 (2010), pp. 110-131.

⁷⁴⁹ James Plumtree, ‘The earlier paint schemes and possible contexts of the Dauntsey Doom’, *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine* 107 (2014), p. 159.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁷⁵¹ The original wall paintings date to the twelfth century. For literature on the wall paintings, see Larry M Ayres, ‘The Work of the Morgan Master at Winchester and English Painting of the Early Gothic Period’, *The Art Bulletin* 56.2 (June 1974), pp. 212-213; Helen Howard, ‘Techniques of the Romanesque and gothic wall paintings in the Holy Sepulchre Chapel, Winchester Cathedral’, in *Historical Painting Techniques, Materials, and studio Practice: Preprints of a Symposium, University of Leiden, the Netherlands, 26-29 June 1995*, Arie Wallert, Erma Hermens and Marja Peek (eds.) (Marine Del Ray: Getty Conservation Institute, 1995), pp. 91-104; and David Park, ‘The Wall Paintings of the Holy sepulchre Chapel’, *Medieval Art and Architecture at Winchester Cathedral: The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions for the year 1980*, V. Sekules and T. A. Heslop (eds.) (Routledge, 1982).

⁷⁵² Larry M Ayres, ‘The Work of the Morgan Master at Winchester and English Painting of the Early Gothic Period’, *The Art Bulletin* 56.2 (June 1974), pp. 212-213.

There also is evidence for multiple types of repainting at the cathedral of St Albans, recently published by M. A. Michael, from which this study immensely benefits.⁷⁵³ A notable instance of repainting is on the figure of Saint William of York (fig. 2.45). This painting originally depicted a bishop but was modified in the fifteenth century – the crozier was repainted to depict a cross headed crozier of the type a bishop would hold.⁷⁵⁴ At the same time an inscription reading “Scs William” and the Fitzwilliam shield were also added beneath the painting. As such the original image of Saint Hugh of Lincoln was transformed into one of Saint William of York. Michael has suggested that this may have happened after the first battle of St Albans in 1455 where Richard of York was victorious.⁷⁵⁵ If this suggestion is correct, this repainting was spurred by a specific incident and was motivated by political circumstances. This instance also shows that the repainting had a specific purpose – to make an image of one saint identifiable as a different one, specifically a politically appropriate saint. Beyond that, the image was not modified further. Such a clear and obvious change is not identifiable at Horsham St Faith, with various minor details being changed, rather than one major one. Although it may also have had a political motivation, albeit one on a much smaller scale, relating to a local patron rather than the dynastic house of the royal family.

Elsewhere, the side of the south ambulatory arch at St Albans may also have been repainted. The style of the face suggests a thirteenth-century date, whilst the three-dimensional scroll on the underside of the arch is in keeping with a fifteenth-century date.⁷⁵⁶ This at the very least suggests two distinct phases of painting, but Michael has suggested that the wings of the angel may have specifically been repainted due to the large amount of green paint which survives there.⁷⁵⁷ This provides another example where part, but not all, of a wall painting has been modified at a later date. This targeted repainting, potentially for

⁷⁵³ M.A. Michael, *St Albans Cathedral Wall Paintings* (London: Scala, 2019)

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

purely aesthetic purposes, to make the angels seem fashionable or up-to-date can also be seen at Horsham where only specific areas of the painting were modified and updated.

Another area of repainting can be found on the west presbytery wall at St Albans. This originally depicted a Christ in Majesty but was overpainted in the fifteenth century with a different scheme consisting of an inscription, the shields of Alban and Amphibalus, and an eagle to represent John Weathampstead.⁷⁵⁸ The positioning of this overpainting is of particular interest as the new images are arranged around, rather than over the top of, the face of Christ. Michael has suggested that the face of Christ was “incorporated into the repainting of the wall in order to preserve it.”⁷⁵⁹ This hypothesis seems to be correct as the later painting does not make full use of the available space. Such reverence for an existing painting would fit in with the ideas of ‘historic reverence’ which Caviness has previously discussed. However, it is worth noting that only Christ’s head is treated this way. The heads of the saints flanking Christ under two pinnacles, likely Peter and Paul, were painted over with shields. This would suggest that, at least at St Albans, that there was a limit to this historic reverence, and possibly a hierarchy about what could and could not be painted over. It is a possibility that this hierarchy may have been based devotional reverence. This deliberate choice not to repaint a holy image can also be seen at Horsham where the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy was preserved.

There are also multiple instances at St Albans where the original painted scheme of an imitation ashlar mortar pattern can be seen through layers of later painting. One such example is a decorative band in the south-west wall of the presbytery which has clearly been painted over an existing design. A similar instance can be seen underneath the sixteenth-century depiction of King Offa, which was originally decorated with a masonry pattern which was then replaced by a cinquefoil pattern in the fourteenth century.⁷⁶⁰ This highlights a

⁷⁵⁸ M.A. Michael, *St Albans Cathedral Wall Paintings*, p. 63.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

different motivation for repainting – the changing of a decorative scheme from a pattern to a figurative scheme.

Examining the pigments used in these extant examples of repainting also allows us to consider whether Horsham's use of lower cost pigments was typical of the period, suggesting a potential broader issue with supply, or whether it was a local issue more closely related to this specific priory's finances in the fifteenth century. For example, lead-tin yellow has been found in the fifteenth-century repainting in the presbytery at St Albans.⁷⁶¹ This was an expensive pigment as shown by the slightly later Westminster Palace accounts of 1532 which record that lead-tin yellow cost 2s 8d per pound, while verdigris and vermilion only cost 1s and 1s 2d per pound respectively.⁷⁶² In contrast, within the same instance of repainting at St Albans, cheaper indigo (18d per pound in 1350 compared to 6s 8d for azure) was used to repaint St William's dalmatic which had initially been executed in azurite.⁷⁶³ This combination of cheap and expensive pigments can also be seen in the second scheme of the Dauntsey Doom.⁷⁶⁴ These examples show that there was a willingness to use a combination of cheap and expensive pigments when repainting, perhaps suggesting that having a complete painting was more important than having a fine quality painting in a state of disrepair. This in turn sheds light on the choice not to repaint specific areas of wall paintings such as the reliquary at Horsham St Faith and Christ's head at St Albans. The significance of these paintings clearly outweighed an otherwise apparent desire to maintain wall paintings in a good condition. These paintings occupied a special position whereby their originality and authenticity were chosen to be preserved.

As well as finding evidence for repainting in visual sources, documentary accounts can also be examined, which may include directions and payments for repainting.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶¹ Howard, *The Pigments of Medieval Wall Paintings*, p. 161

⁷⁶² L. F. Salzman, *Building in England Down To 1540: A Documentary History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), p. 168.

⁷⁶³ Howard, *The Pigments of Medieval Wall Paintings*, p. 59 and p. 62.

⁷⁶⁴ Plumtree, 'The earlier paint schemes and possible contexts of the Dauntsey Doom', p. 159.

⁷⁶⁵ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol I: A.D. 1226-1240* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1916), *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the*

Examining such sources can provide a fuller picture of repainting in medieval England given the sparsity of surviving wall paintings and the difficulty identifying repainting due to deterioration, often made worse by the interaction of the different pigments used in repainting. One particularly rich source for this kind of information is the Liberate Rolls of Henry III which contain numerous instructions to various people to undertake repainting. One example is the queen's chamber in the Tower of London. On the 23 November 1238, Henry III directed the constable of the Tower that the room should "be whitewashed and painted with points, and to cause flowers to be painted below the points."⁷⁶⁶ The keepers of works at the Tower are instructed again to have the room whitewashed and "painted with roses" on 24 February 1240. This directive goes on to add that the king's great chamber should be "painted anew."⁷⁶⁷ This shows that the king had an interest in keeping his surroundings freshly painted and updated them at least somewhat regularly. However, this specific example focuses on patterned decorative wall paintings, rather than pictorial or narrative ones. It is also an instance of repainting from an entirely different context – that of a private, domestic setting. However certain similarities can be observed between the two locations – namely that of filtering access according to status.⁷⁶⁸ In a similar way that access to different parts of a monastery or priory was filtered, so too was the queen's chamber. Both areas were restricted, but not entirely closed off, and presented an opportunity to portray a constructed identity within a space which, to an extent, seemed private and personal, but was at least partially public.

An example of a narrative being repainted can be seen in a directive issued which requested the "chamber in Winchester castle to be painted with the same stories and

Public Record Office, Henry III, vol II: A.D. 1240-1245 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), and *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol III: A.D. 1245-1251* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930).

⁷⁶⁶ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol I: A.D. 1226-1240* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1916), p. 352.

⁷⁶⁷ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol I: A.D. 1226-1240* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1916), p. 453.

⁷⁶⁸ On the filtering of space according to status and gender, see Roberta Gilchrist, 'Medieval bodies in the material world: gender, stigma and the body', in *Framing Medieval Bodies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 43-61.

pictures wherewith they were previously painted.”⁷⁶⁹ Another is addressed to the sheriff of Kent, requesting that “the king’s chapel within Rochester castle to be plastered and whitewashed anew, and to cause the chapel itself to be painted and to cause [God’s] majesty to be re-painted in the place where it was before.”⁷⁷⁰ These examples show that it was also considered acceptable for narrative sequences to be repainted, although it is not made clear what prompted this act of repainting. This also suggests that whilst repainting occurred, no major changes to the overall scheme were made in these instances, keeping it essentially the same in theme if not necessarily in style.

Other directives provide hints as to why repainting may have been undertaken. An order to G. de Craucumbe on 7 January 1233, states that the king wishes “to cause the painting of the chamber that has become darkened in places to be restored.”⁷⁷¹ Another directs the sheriff of Southampton to “cause the dais of the hall to be repaired both in the colours where necessary and in other things.”⁷⁷² This shows an interest in keeping the colours and pigments used in wall paintings appropriately vivid and again suggests a desire to ‘restore’ and maintain existing works.

The king also ordered the paintings at Woodstock to be “renewed where necessary.”⁷⁷³ The use of the word *emendari*, meaning to correct, emend, repair, improve or free from errors, suggests that the paintings were in some way damaged, necessitating the work. Another, dated 10 April 1241, states that “the walls of the king’s court of Geitinton to be repaired, the paintings in the king’s chamber over his bed, which are darkened with rain to be repainted.”⁷⁷⁴ Another, dated 17 March 1233 to the keeper of Keninton, states that “those things that need repair in the king’s other houses there to be repaired.”⁷⁷⁵ Whilst this

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 218.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 365.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid., p. 194.

⁷⁷² Ibid., p. 305.

⁷⁷³ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol II: A.D. 1240-1245* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1930), p. 35.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 43.

⁷⁷⁵ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol I: A.D. 1226-1240* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1916), p. 206.

instance does not specify that the repairs are to any paintings, the execution of painted stories in the king's chamber is mentioned immediately afterward. Another dated 7 February 1245 directs the sheriff of Hampshire "to find for Master Nigel the painter the necessary colours which he will name, to renew the paintings in the king's buildings at Winchester where necessary."⁷⁷⁶ These examples show that people, or at least the king, were not happy being surrounded by damaged wall paintings, and viewed their upkeep and repair as a necessary undertaking.

Examples from the Liberate Rolls also show that sometimes the renewal or repairing of wall paintings was conducted in tandem with the creation of new paintings. In an instruction to the sheriff of Wiltshire regarding buildings at Clarendon, the king directs him to "renew the old paintings" there as well as paint other "new" ones.⁷⁷⁷ This may have been a measure to keep costs down, limiting the number of times a painter would need to be hired, but it also suggests potentially that repairing and renewing wall paintings was considered part of the artist's job.

It also possible to consider how repainting and renewing wall paintings was considered by comparing the instructions for that type of work with examples for the execution of entirely new wall paintings. For example, a directive to Odo, keeper of the king's works at Westminster, in 1240, instructs him

to cause the chimney of the said [queen's] chamber to be painted, and to be pourtrayed (protrahi) in it the figure (imagine) of winter, which by its sad look and other miserable portrayals (protractionibus) of the body may be justly (merito) likened (assimilari) to winter.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁶ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol II: A.D. 1240-1245* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), p. 289.

⁷⁷⁷ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol III: A.D. 1245-1251* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930), p. 67.

⁷⁷⁸ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol I: A.D. 1226-1240* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1916), p. 444.

Another to the bailiff of Woodstock in 1238 directs a “chamber to be whitewashed (dealbari) and lined (lineari), and to cause a curtain (cortinam) to be painted at the head of the king’s queen in the same chamber.”⁷⁷⁹ Another example which provides more detail of the subject of the painting is an order of 1252 to John de Henneberg and Peter de Lega to “paint the old chapel” at Wodestoke. This order specifies that the walls should be painted

with the story of the woman condemned for adultery, and how the Lord wrote on the ground, and how the Lord gave a stroke (alaph’) to St Paul, and something about St Paul, and in the upper part of the chapel the story of the evangelists in like manner.⁷⁸⁰

Whilst these directions do leave some details up to the executor of the order or the artist, there is still more direction than found in the examples where the directive is to repair or amend an existing painting. This level of detailed instruction is not present in the instances of repair and renewal. This suggests that either repairs and amendments followed the existing scheme, or that no major changes were made during repainting. However, one example from 1260 to Richard de Freitmantell requests him to “amend where absolutely necessary the king’s hall of Kenyton and the paintings in his chapel there.”⁷⁸¹ The use of the word “amend” does potentially suggest that some part of the paintings were changed, the later use of the phrase “where absolutely necessary” suggests that this repainting has been precipitated by a specific instance and that the paintings are likely in need of repair. Noppen commented that these acts of repainting were a result of it being “an age of experiment and adventure in all branches of art” and suggests that this shows “an anxiety to take advantage of every advance to improve the beauty of his [Henry III’s] surroundings.”⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 344.

⁷⁸⁰ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol IV: A.D. 1251-1260* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1959), pp. 24-25.

⁷⁸¹ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry III, vol IV: A.D. 1251-1260* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1959), p. 526.

⁷⁸² J. G. Noppen, ‘Early Westminster and London Painting’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 54.313 (April 1929), p. 202.

There are also examples of repainting from continental Europe, a notable one being the majesty portal at the collegiate church of Santa María Mayor in Toro which was repainted at multiple points between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷⁸³ This particular example of repainting is particularly notable because of the fact that four layers of paint can be precisely dated due to surviving inscriptions.⁷⁸⁴ The first act of repainting at Toro was precipitated by a change in function as the doorway became an altarpiece after the instalment of roofing in 1405.⁷⁸⁵ Melissa R. Katz described the repainting as “intended to maintain the appearance of the portal while adjusting the color scheme to changing taste.”⁷⁸⁶ Additionally, she argues that “the periodic renewal of polychromy on the Toro portal was due chiefly to its transformation from outdoor sculpture to indoor retable.”⁷⁸⁷ Katz states that the layers of polychrome coincide with “significant moments in Toro’s history.”⁷⁸⁸ A notable example of this is the Virgin’s gown in the Dormition scene which was originally red but was repainted blue in the fifteenth century, a colour it maintained through other successive repaintings.⁷⁸⁹ This serves to highlight how repainting could be deployed when the usage of a space changed. While we do not know if how the refectory was used had changed by this point, it has been previously observed by Roberta Gilchrist that from the thirteenth century and culminating in the fifteenth, monastic spaces moved towards “households which replaced the communal patterns of dormitory and refectory.”⁷⁹⁰

There is also evidence of sculptural polychromy being repainted. Raffaella Rossi-Manaresi and Antonella Tucci found evidence of overpainting on the sculpture at Bourges

⁷⁸³ Melissa R. Katz, ‘Architectural Polychromy and the Painters’ Trade in Medieval Spain’, *Gesta* 41.1 (2002), p. 3.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷⁸⁸ Melissa R. Katz, ‘The Medieval polychromy of the Majestic West Portal of Toro, Spain: insight into workshop activities of late mediaeval painters and polychromers’, *Studies in Conservation* 43.sup1 (1998), p. 29.

⁷⁸⁹ Melissa R. Katz, ‘The Medieval polychromy of the Majestic West Portal of Toro, Spain’, p. 27.

⁷⁹⁰ Gilchrist, ‘Medieval bodies in the material world’, p. 58.

cathedral where the south lateral portal was painted three times.⁷⁹¹ The second layer of paint reproduced the existing colour scheme in some areas, but also deviated from it in others, for example some blue clothing was repainted in red.⁷⁹² They theorise that the first layer of paint may have been “provisional.”⁷⁹³ Katz also noted other instances of repainting on portals elsewhere, such as at Ferrara, Ghent, Lausanne, Parma and Poitiers.⁷⁹⁴ This suggests that the repainting of portal sculpture was widespread and accepted across Europe.

We can also look beyond the art of wall painting for instances of repainting and restoration to gain insight into how these concepts were more broadly conceived. One such area to consider is the repainting of memorial shields, such as the Behaim shields, a group of seven wooden shields decorated with the Behaim coat of arms originally from Germany and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁷⁹⁵ These were x-rayed in 1985 and were shown to be covered in multiple layers of paint.⁷⁹⁶ The original fifteenth-century designs were, in fact, painted over multiple times.⁷⁹⁷ One example of multiple layers of repainting is Shield 25.26.1, which Christel Faltermeier and Rudolf Meyer theorise was first repainted and restored “early on” due to the “great pains” taken to fill losses and match the original green pigment. Conversely, the majority of the designs on these shields paid no mind to previous designs.⁷⁹⁸ Helmut Nickel noted that, regarding medieval shields, overpainting was not “uncommon.”⁷⁹⁹ Nickel suggests that “the shield [25.26.5] was repainted at least three times during the second half of the fifteenth century, an indication that it may have changed

⁷⁹¹ Rossi-Manareis and Tucci, ‘The Polychromy of the Portals of the Gothic Cathedral of Bourges’, in *ICOM Committee for Conservation, 7th Triennial Meeting, Copenhagen, 10-14 September 1984* (Paris: ICOM in association with the J. Paul Gerry Trust, 1984), 84.5.1-84.5.4, p. 84.5.1.

⁷⁹² Rossi-Manareis and Tucci, ‘The Polychromy of the Portals of the Gothic Cathedral of Bourges’, p. 84.5.2.

⁷⁹³ Rossi-Manareis and Tucci, ‘The Polychromy of the Portals of the Gothic Cathedral of Bourges’, p. 84.5.4.

⁷⁹⁴ Katz, ‘The Medieval polychromy of the Majestic West Portal of Toro, Spain’, p. 30.

⁷⁹⁵ Helmut Nickel, ‘The Seven Shields of Behaim: New Evidence’, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 30 (1995), p. 29.

⁷⁹⁶ Christel Faltermeier and Rudolf Meyer, ‘Appendix: Notes of the Restoration of the Behaim Shields’, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 30 (1995), p. 53.

⁷⁹⁷ Faltermeier and Meyer, p. 53.

⁷⁹⁸ Faltermeier and Meyer, p. 53.

⁷⁹⁹ Helmut Nickel, ‘The Seven Shields of Behaim: New Evidence’, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 30 (1995), p. 29.

ownership, perhaps through forfeiture in a tournament.”⁸⁰⁰ Whilst wall paintings are not portable and able to change ownership in quite the same way as shields, this example does provide insight into why an act of repainting might occur. This may provide an explanation for why the heraldry at Horsham was painted over.⁸⁰¹ Whether it be a shield or a wall, repainting could be used to signal ownership.

All of this suggests that repainting in the medieval period was not as uncommon as initially perceived. However, repainting normally encompassed the decorative scheme, not just specific individual details as at Horsham St Faith. It also suggests that new painting and repainting were often considered together, likely to reduce the number of times it was necessary to hire a painter. It is also worth noting that the majority of these examples are taken from the king’s accounts. The buildings for which we have records of being repainted are high status, royal buildings. As such, caution should be taken when applying these findings to any instances of repainting elsewhere.

The medieval repainting of the murals at Horsham St Faith represents a thoughtful attempt to reconstruct the sacred memory of the priory by drawing attention to and clarifying the narrative content of their foundation story, which was miraculously approved by their titular saint, Foy. This approval was not rescinded just because they had broken ties with their mother abbey. By this point in time, the priory’s sacred authority was sufficiently well established to act independently. It might also be seen as an attempt to forge an identity separate from that of their former mother abbey at Conques following their denization. While the process of Anglicisation had already begun at Horsham, as shown by the election of their own prior by the monks at Horsham St Faith in 1389, their official independence was granted in 1390 and then cemented in the following years by the repainting. The specific and

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 42.

⁸⁰¹ David King has theorised that the heraldry may have originally been meant to depict the arms of Provence, and the overpainting could be that of Richard II’s queen. However, these are unpublished notes of a phone call which do not elaborate on how this conclusion was reached. The repainting of the shield also creates further confusion about which phase of painting from which each heraldic motif may date. See *Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles*, London, ‘Unpublished Notes’, October 1987.

targeted intervention regarding faces and architecture, suggests an attempt to reinvent institutional memory – to modify and reimagine an established tradition. This suggests a very specific motivation, one deeply intertwined with the priory's identity. The repainting serves to highlight both individuals and place. The new faces, armour, and architecture connects the priory's history more securely with its present – it shifts the focus of the painting to the English in France, and their construction of a priory in England, rather than the importance of a French abbey, an Anglo-Norman family, and their position in England. Other examples of repainting show that while this practice was not unusual, the specific execution at Horsham St Faith was. It highlights how parts, but not all, of these paintings had become synonymous with the priory's established identity and authority. In order to maintain this authority while establishing a new identity, only parts of the scheme could be changed. Additionally, the cheaper materials used at this later date might reveal that the priory was less wealthy than it had been in the thirteenth century, likely due to the taxation it had experienced as an alien priory. Following their denization and with the money that freed up, they were able to redecorate the priory wall paintings, using this opportunity to re-establish and reorient their position within local hierarchies, although they were limited to cheaper materials and could not afford a completely new or lavish scheme. The wall paintings at Horsham St Faith offer us a fascinating window into how people in the medieval period interacted and engaged with art. They also provide significant insight into how medieval people and institutes considered, constructed, and represented their own past.

3.13 Later Medieval Patronage

The specific impetus, however, for the execution of this repainting remains uncertain. Given the priory's financial status in the late fourteenth and fifteenth century, it seems likely that they would have turned to networks of aristocratic patronage. Information about the priory's later medieval patronage and influence can be gleaned by looking at the denization petition of 1390. One person mentioned in the petition is Robert Ufford (d. c. 1380–90?). The

priory is described as being “founded by the ancestors of Robert de Ufford, knight.”⁸⁰² Robert Ufford was related to the original founders of the priory through his father’s mother, Eve de Clavering (d. 1369) (figs. 2.46 and 2.47). She was the heiress of John de Clavering (d. 1332) and was married four times, respectively to Thomas de Audley (d. 1307/8), James de Audley (d. 1338), Robert of Benhale (d. 1404), and Thomas de Ufford (d. 1314) (the aforementioned Robert’s grandfather). However, she may not have married James Audley due to difficulties associated with obtaining a license.⁸⁰³ John of Clavering was directly descended from Margaret de Cheney (d. c. 1160), the granddaughter of Robert and Sybilla Fitzwalter. This relationship highlights the importance of women in their roles as heiresses and continuing family lines, both through Eve de Clavering and Margaret de Cheney. The Uffords had been involved with the priory for some time before the petition of denization. In 1345, the king appointed “Sir John Dufford, knight, patron of Horsham Priory” to collect all rents, tithes, etc due to the priory.⁸⁰⁴ Whilst this provides an explanation of who was acting as a benefactor to the priory in the 1390s, it does not explain who fulfilled this role in the fifteenth century, as Robert Ufford died before 1393, when his widow Eleanor was “granted by deed as femme sole,” showing another potential female patron of the priory.⁸⁰⁵

Also mentioned as putting forward the petition in support of Horsham St Faith is “the king’s uncle, the duke of Lancaster,” John of Gaunt (1340–1399), who was connected to Horsham St Faith in a variety of ways.⁸⁰⁶ John of Gaunt was connected to the family of Robert Ufford via a larger Lancastrian network – Ufford’s father had been part of Henry de

⁸⁰² *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Richard II, vol IV: A.D. 1388-1392* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1902), p. 366.

⁸⁰³ Through her relationship with James Audley, she was mother of James Audley, knight, who fought at Poitiers. See Vicary Vicary (ed.), *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom: extant, extinct, or dormant*, vol. III *Canonteign-Cutts* (London: Allan Sutton, 1913), pp. 275-6.

⁸⁰⁴ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward III, vol. VI: A.D. 1343-135* (London: Mackie & Co., 1902), p. 546.

⁸⁰⁵ Robert Edmond Chester Waters, *Genealogical Memoirs of the Extinct Family of Chester of Chicheley: Their Ancestors and Descendants* vol I (London: Robson and Sons, 1878), p. 337.

⁸⁰⁶ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Richard II, vol IV: 1388-1392* (London: His Majesty’ Stationery Office, 1902), p. 366.

Grosmont's company.⁸⁰⁷ John of Gaunt was also connected geographically with Horsham St Faith as he was granted the Norfolk manor of Aylsham in 1371.⁸⁰⁸ This manor was in the hundred of South Erpingham which bordered that of Taverham where the priory of Horsham St Faith was located.⁸⁰⁹ Taken together, these factors explain why John of Gaunt may potentially have lent his name to the petition of denization. Ashley has previously posited that the repainting may have been undertaken "with resources probably supplied by noble patrons like John of Gaunt."⁸¹⁰ However, John of Gaunt died in 1399, and given the assigning of the date of the repainting to the second quarter of the fifteenth century, it is unlikely that he could have been a major patron of the work.

The priory of Horsham St Faith also had connections to other religious houses in Norfolk through their founding family. Descendants and relatives of Robert and Sybilla Fitzwalter established a number of other houses in Norfolk, and the wider East Anglian region. Sibton Abbey in Suffolk was founded c. 1150 by William de Chesney, whilst the abbey of Langley was founded by Chesney's son-in-law, Robert Fitz Roger.⁸¹¹ The priory was also connected to Campsey Priory in Suffolk (founded c. 1195) and Binham Priory in Norfolk (founded 1091), which were both founded by the de Valognes family, who married the descendants of the Fitzwalters, the Uffords.⁸¹² The connection to Campsey Priory, also known as Campsey Ash, is of particular significance here as a *Life of Sainte Foy* by Simon of Walsingham, written in the early thirteenth century, survives in a late thirteenth or early fourteenth-century manuscript from the priory, British Library MS Additional 70513.⁸¹³

⁸⁰⁷ B.J. Thompson, p. 280.

⁸⁰⁸ Blomefield, *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, volume VI (London: W. Miller, 1807), pp. 268-285.

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241.

⁸¹⁰ Kathleen Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), p. 125.

⁸¹¹ *A History of the County of Suffolk*, vol. II, William Page (ed.) (London: Victoria County History, 1975), pp. 89-91 and *A History of the County of Norfolk*, vol II, pp. 418-421.

⁸¹² *A History of the County of Suffolk* vol. II, pp. 112-115 and *A History of the County of Norfolk*, pp. 343-346.

⁸¹³ Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Powers of record, powers of example: hagiography and women's history' in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (eds.) (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 76.

Whether this manuscript was written for Campsey Ash has been the subject to much debate, given the use of “deviser,” which can be translated variously as “plan, devise, arrange” or “bequeath,” as part of the inscription on the last folio.⁸¹⁴ The majority of the sources used in the Campsey Ash manuscript are from an East Anglian context, with various cult centres for the included saints and the authors of the texts based in that region.⁸¹⁵ Foy’s inclusion in this manuscript ties her more broadly to networks of patronage, potentially female patronage, in East Anglia. Additionally, Sara Gorman has argued that through this manuscript, hagiography became institutional history – like the repainting at Horsham St Faith’s, she argues that this manuscript “consciously resituates” itself within the institution of the priory.⁸¹⁶ These connections to other foundations clearly persisted among the descendants of the founding family – Eve de Clavering specifically claimed to be “patroness of the houses of Sibton, Langley, St Faith and Blythburgh by inheritance.”⁸¹⁷ And it is as part of this interconnected network of religious houses and noble families that the priory of Horsham St Faith and its patronage needs to be considered, especially in terms of understanding the context of its c. 1430–50s repainting scheme.

When considering these aristocratic networks, there unfortunately seems to have been some confusion in previous literature over exactly how the descendants of the Fitzwalters married into the de Valognes family.⁸¹⁸ It has been stated before that Robert

⁸¹⁴ Sara Gorman, ‘Anglo-Norman Hagiography as Institutional Historiography: Saints’ Lives in Late Medieval Campsey Ash Priory’, *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 37.2 (2011), pp. 110-128, p. 113. For more on this topic see Delbert Russell, ‘The Campsey Collection of Old French Saints’ Lives: A Re-examination of its Structure and Provenance’, *The Scriptorium* 67.1 (2003), pp. 51-83; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, ‘Powers of record, powers of example: hagiography and women’s history’ in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (eds.) (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 71-93; and M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 275.

⁸¹⁵ Wogan-Browne, ‘Gendering the Master Narrative’, p. 83.

⁸¹⁶ Sara Gorman, ‘Anglo-Norman Hagiography as Institutional Historiography: Saints’ Lives in Late Medieval Campsey Ash Priory’, *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 37.2 (2011), pp. 110-128, p. 112.

⁸¹⁷ “Euam que nunc se clamat advocatam domus de Sybeton’, de Langele, Sancte Fidis et de Bliburg’ et hoc iure hereditario”, in *Sibton Abbey Cartularies and Charters: Part Two*, Philippa Brown (ed.) (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986), pp. 8-10.

⁸¹⁸ The De Valognes were a notable East Anglian family, with Peter de Valognes founding Binham Priory in 1091. For a full run down of the family and their patronage of the priory, see ‘Introduction’, in *An Edition of the Cartulary of Binham Priory*, Johanna Luise Margerum (ed.) (Ph.D. diss., University of East Anglia, 2005),

Fitzwalter, founder of Horsham St Faith, married Gunnora de Valognes, heiress of Robert de Valognes, as his second wife. However, his second wife was actually named Aveline.⁸¹⁹ Gunnora instead married another Robert Fitzwalter in the late twelfth century. This Robert Fitzwalter was the one involved in the opposition to King John and was one of the twenty-five sureties of Magna Carta.⁸²⁰ The descendants of the Robert Fitzwalter of Horsham married into the de Valognes family later in the thirteenth century. Robert Ufford married Cecily de Valognes, and his brother Thomas married Eve Clavering, heiress of John Clavering, who was descended from the Fitzwalters of Horsham St Faith.⁸²¹ This appears to be the only direct connection between the de Valognes and the descendants of the Fitzwalters of Horsham St Faith.

One intriguing potential patron who has not been considered previously is Henry Inglose (d. 1451). In his will of 1451, he requested that he should be buried at Horsham St Faith beside his wife Anne – “iuxta Annam nuper uxorem meam.”⁸²² She had died c. 1437.⁸²³ Neither his, nor his wife’s, tomb survives, although a near contemporary monumental brass from 1437 does survive. He left bequests to numerous religious houses in Norfolk, including Horsham St Faith, of both money and vestments.⁸²⁴ Inglose also left a sum of six marks to the priory of Horsham St Faith to pay for masses for his soul.⁸²⁵ A comparatively small sum when compared to the fact that his lands were assessed at £66 per annum in February

⁸¹⁹ K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday descendants: a prosopography of persons occurring in English documents, 1066-1166. II Pipe rolls to Cartae baronum* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 364.

⁸²⁰ Christopher Starr, ‘Fitzwalter family’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/54522>> [accessed 21 July 2021]

⁸²¹ *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom: extant, extinct, or dormant* vol. XII part 2 *Tracton to Zouche*, G. H. White and R. S. Lea (eds.) (London: Allan Sutton, 1953), p. 150 and *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom: extant, extinct, or dormant* vol. III *Canonteign to Cutts*, Vicary Gibbs (ed.) (London: Allan Sutton, 1913), pp. 275-276.

⁸²² See Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, NCC. Will register Betyns 62, ‘Will – Inglose, Henry, miles, of Norwich’, fol. 62, 1451.

⁸²³ Colin Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century: the first phase* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 218.

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

1451, and yet double that he left to Dilham church.⁸²⁶ The Dilham bequest is of particular interest here because it specifies that the money is “ad emendacionem” – a word previously noted in the discussion about documentary evidence for repainting. Furthermore, his will also stated that his confessor was one Master Peter of Horsham St Faith.⁸²⁷ As such, he clearly had nourished important connections to the priory in the fifteenth century.

His death is also recorded in the Paston letters, in a letter from Margaret Paston to John Paston

Ser Herry Inglose is passyd to God this nygth, hoys sowle God asoyll, and was caryid forþ this day at ix of þe clok to Seynt Feypis and there shall be beryid. If ye desyer to bey any of hys stuff I pray you send me word þer-of in hast, and I shall speke to Robert Inglose and to Wychyngham þer-of. I suppose þei ben executorys. The blyssyd Trinyté have you in his kepyng. Wretyn att Norwyche in hast on þe Thursday next after Seynt Peter.⁸²⁸

This was clearly a man who was known within certain circles of the Norfolk gentry, but who was he, what was his connection to the priory of Horsham St Faith and why did he choose to be buried there?

Henry Inglose was a soldier who had fought in the wars in France, and it has been argued that he was the ‘Henry Ynglish’ who fought at Agincourt in 1415.⁸²⁹ Inglose came from a family from Loddon in south-east Norfolk, and inherited land there and in Suffolk from his father, also called Henry Inglose.⁸³⁰ He was appointed as an executor of Sir Hugh Fastolf in 1417 and in 1418 he was appointed as a Commissioner to “take musters and renew the

⁸²⁶ Moreton and Richmond considered this figure to be an underestimate. Moreton and Richmond, ‘Henry Inglose: A Hard Man To Please’, p. 43 and Colin Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century: the first phase*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 211

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁸²⁸ Paston Family, *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century Part I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 243.

⁸²⁹ Moreton and Richmond, ‘Henry Inglose: A Hard Man To Please’, p. 40.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

garrison of Dangeul St. Remy, Beauvant, St. Anyan, and Tanys in France.⁸³¹ Inglose was captured at Baugé in 1421, after which he took service with Bedford and by 1421 was his Deputy-Admiral and was responsible for the east coast of England.⁸³² In 1437 he was Deputy-Commander of Calais under Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham and Inglose represented Norfolk in parliament in both 1436 and 1449.⁸³³ Colin Richmond described Henry Inglose as “even among hard men, [...] he] was a hard man.”⁸³⁴ Further details about Inglose’s character can be gleaned elsewhere. For example, he pursued thirty-nine suits in the court of the King’s bench between 1422 and 1442, making him the most active plaintiff at the time. Thirty-three of these suits were about property in some form.⁸³⁵ According to Charles Moreton and Colin Richmond, he “mostly [...] sued his social inferiors.”⁸³⁶ Richmond described him as “overwhelming a personality and as overpowering as a stepfather as was his friend and neighbour Sir John Fastolf.”⁸³⁷ At the time of his death in 1451, he owned around fifteen manors in East Anglia, as well as one in Rutland.⁸³⁸

Inglose also had connections with other members of the court – most notably Sir John Fastolf. He is described as both his “kinsman” and “one of Fastolf’s closest friends.”⁸³⁹ In fact, Inglose even acted as Fastolf’s proxy when he was inducted into the Order of the Garter.⁸⁴⁰ Fastolf referred to Inglose in letters twice as his “ryght welbelovyd cosyn.”⁸⁴¹ Henry Inglose was considered a “kinsman” of John Fastolf.⁸⁴² He was also one the attorneys Sir John Fastolf appointed in 1426 to pursue the executors of Henry V and Thomas, Duke of

⁸³¹ Brittain, ‘Dilham “Castle”’, p. 192.

⁸³² Anthony Robert Smith, ‘Aspects of the Career of John Fastolf’ (Ph.D. diss., Pembroke College, Oxford, 1982), p. 108.

⁸³³ Ibid., pp. 108-9.

⁸³⁴ Richmond, *The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century*, vol I, p. 221.

⁸³⁵ Moreton and Richmond, ‘Henry Inglose: A Hard Man To Please’, p. 46.

⁸³⁶ Ibid., p. 46.

⁸³⁷ Colin Richmond, ‘How the first Paston letter came to be written in Suffolk’, *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History* 41 (2005/8), p. 462.

⁸³⁸ Smith, ‘Aspects of the Career of John Fastolf’, p. 109.

⁸³⁹ K. B. McFarlane, ‘The Investment of Sir John Fastolf’s Profits of War’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 7 (1957), p. 99. And K. B. McFarlane, ‘A Business-Partnership in War and Administration, 1421-1445’, in *The English Historical Review* 78.307 (April 1963), p. 307.

⁸⁴⁰ Richmond, *The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century*, vol I, p. 208.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 207-8.

⁸⁴² McFarlane, ‘The Investment of Sir John Fastolf’s Profits of War’, p. 99.

Exeter for “sums owing to him for military service.”⁸⁴³ Additionally, Inglose lent Fastolf 100 marks in the 1430s for the building of Caister, and as a result a room was always kept for him there in the 1440s.⁸⁴⁴ Inglose was also a feoffee at least ten times for Fastolf; and along with Sir William Oldhall, Sir Henry has been described as the knight who was “closest to Fastolf, though neither was a member of his council.”⁸⁴⁵ All of this highlights Sir Henry Inglose and Sir John Fastolf’s close relationship, as well as suggesting Inglose’s connections with a variety of important men in England.

The connection between Henry Inglose and the priory of Horsham St Faith, despite his desire to be buried there, is rather circuitous. Sir William Bowet was connected to Horsham St Faith through his first wife, Joan Ufford, a descendant of the founding family. Following Joan’s death, William Bowet remarried a woman named Anne. Following Bowet’s death in 1422/3, Anne then remarried Henry Inglose and brought to her marriage her stepdaughter, Elizabeth Bowet, the Ufford heir (see fig. 2.48).⁸⁴⁶ Both Inglose and Bowet, before his death, can be considered possible patrons given the dating of the repainting to the second quarter of the fifteenth century. As men who had fought in the wars in France, depictions of people in armour reflected their status and position in society. However, Inglose’s arms survived in the priory church until at least the eighteenth century, when they were recorded by Blomefield, so there is clear additional evidence of Inglose’s involvement with the priory.⁸⁴⁷ Given that there is no mention of commissioning the arms in Inglose’s will, it is likely that they were commissioned and executed prior to his death. As such, we can see a clear involvement with the priory by Inglose during his lifetime. This, combined with the date of Bowet’s death, suggest that Inglose is the more likely patron of the repainting

⁸⁴³ Richmond, *The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century*, vol I, p. 123.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁸⁴⁵ Smith, ‘Aspects of the Career of John Fastolf’, p. 108 and p. 112.

⁸⁴⁶ Anne is sometimes referred to as Amy within the sources. Colin Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century: the first phase* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 214.

⁸⁴⁷ Francis Blomefield, *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, volume X, pp. 439-441.

scheme. This shows an attempt to insert himself into the priory's history and traditions before his death, and as such a compelling potential patron for the wall paintings.

Sir Henry Inglose's decision to be buried alongside his wife at Horsham, which Richmond describes as "not a fashionable house," is interesting.⁸⁴⁸ Richmond suggests that this decision is indicative of his "regard for Ann."⁸⁴⁹ However, this needs to be taken in the broader context of what Anne brought to Sir Henry in their marriage – land, wealth and connections, specifically to the Uffords. It is also worth noting that he chose to be buried at Horsham St Faith, and not Langley Abbey. Langley was founded by another one of Joan Ufford's ancestor's - Robert Fitz Roger (also known as Robert Helke or de Clavinging), who was lord of Horsford through his marriage to Margaret Cheney, the granddaughter of the founders of Horsham St Faith.⁸⁵⁰ Langley was certainly, at the time, a more popular choice for aristocratic patronage. Numerous Uffords and their ancestors were buried there, including John de Calvering and Sir Thomas de Ufford.⁸⁵¹ Furthermore, Langley was also the burial ground of Richard II for thirteen years before his body was reburied at Westminster Abbey.⁸⁵² This suggests that Langley was the favoured abbey of the Uffords and their wider family, not Horsham St Faith. As such, given Horsham's lack of active patrons, it would have been easier for Henry Inglose to insert himself into the history of Horsham St Faith than that of Langley.

Despite this attempt to insert himself into a long lineage and history which was not his own, Inglose failed to provide for his children both before and after his death. He promised both Elizabeth, the daughter of Joan Ufford and William Bowet, and Sybil, daughter of William Bowet and Anne Bowet (later Anne Inglose), the manor of Great

⁸⁴⁸ Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century: the first phase*, p. 211.

⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁸⁵⁰ Erwood, *The Premonstratensian Abbey of Langley*, p. 54.

⁸⁵¹ Blomefield, *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, volume X, pp. 147-152.

⁸⁵² Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2006), p. 101.

Hautbois.⁸⁵³ The dispute this caused between Joan and Sybil eventually resulted in the death of Henry Bowet.⁸⁵⁴ Additionally, in his will of 1451, Inglose left his eldest son five manors (four in Norfolk and one in Suffolk) and his younger son one manor as well as land elsewhere.⁸⁵⁵ He ordered a further ten manors to be sold, along with his town house in Norwich and two other properties.⁸⁵⁶ His will also stated that should his eldest son, Henry, impede the will at all, all of his inheritance would be forfeit, which Moreton and Richmond say may be “an indication that relations between father and son were not as cordial as they might have been.”⁸⁵⁷

As Richmond has noted, Elizabeth, Inglose’s wife’s stepdaughter, should have inherited her mother Joan Ufford’s heritage, along with half of her father’s manors in Cumbria.⁸⁵⁸ According to Moreton and Richmond, the claims Inglose made on land in Norfolk which was rightfully Elizabeth Dacre’s (the manors of Great Hautbois, Horsford and Burgh St Margaret’s, all of which were part of her Ufford inheritance), were “preposterous.”⁸⁵⁹ Through a variety of means, he kept most of Elizabeth’s heritage from her for approximately twenty five years:

So by his myght havynge alle thvidences in his hand kept the seid manor [of Great Hautbois] and the manors of Horsford and Burgh [St Margaret] and toke the profites thereof claymyng to have them duryng the lyve of the seid dame Amye and never wold shewe non evidences to the seid Elisabeth but words and wold not suffer the seid Elisabeth to have nor take ne profites of the seid manoirs but only the profites of the seid manoir of Hautbois.⁸⁶⁰

⁸⁵³ Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century: the first phase*, p. 44.

⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁸⁵⁵ Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, NCC. Will register Betyns 62, ‘Will – Inglose, Henry, miles, of Norwich’, fol. 62, 1451

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁷ Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century: the first phase*, p. 43.

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 217.

⁸⁵⁹ Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, NCC. Will register Betyns 62, ‘Will – Inglose, Henry, miles, of Norwich’, fol. 62, 1451 and Moreton and Richmond, ‘Henry Inglose: A Hard Man To Please’, p. 44.

⁸⁶⁰ Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century: the first phase*, pp. 217-218.

Following his wife's death, he claimed them in simple fee and stated that he might give or sell them as he wished, which resulted in Elizabeth allowing Inglose to have Horsford and Burgh St Margaret for an annual rent of forty marks, considerably less than what they were worth.⁸⁶¹

The repainting at Horsham St Faith could be linked to the patronage of Henry Inglose, and seen as part of his deliberate attempts to take lands belonging to his wife's stepdaughter, Elizabeth, for himself. Inglose had no right to Horsham St Faith without his wife or her family. His patronage and association came through his wife. As such, he would have needed to deliberately insert himself into the history of the priory. This can be seen as part of a broader context in which, as B. J. Thompson put it, religious foundations were seen as part of a family's greatness and antiquity.⁸⁶² He notes that "this was even more important for new families inheriting from older ones, because they needed to associate themselves with ancient lineages in order to reinforce their own greatness" and specifically "the enthusiasm with which new families adopted the old alien conventual priories," including Horsham St Faith.⁸⁶³ Inglose can be seen as part of a similar pattern, but taken further – an adoption of an older, formerly alien priory as his own, despite his at best tenuous claims to it.

Given Inglose's position as a soldier, the focus on the repainting of the armour and weapons within the wall painting takes on a new dimension. The targeted nature of the repainting serves to underline that this aspect was the most important to the patron. By putting the figures in the wall painting in similar dress to his own, Inglose drew a clear line between himself and the founders of the priory. The depiction of modern armour and weaponry served to solidify Inglose's own martial prowess and reminded the viewer of the positions he had held within the army. The depiction of up-to-date armour, rather than older or more outdated models, serves to remind the viewer that this was a man at the forefront of technological innovation, a man wealthy enough to invest in new armour and weapons, and

⁸⁶¹ Richmond, *The Paston family in the fifteenth century: the first phase*, p. 217

⁸⁶² B. J. Thompson, 'The Church and the aristocracy', p. 105.

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

one who knew how to use them. The repainting acts to underline Inglose's power and his position as patron of the priory.

This chapter has endeavoured to show the variety of ways Sainte Foy was used at the priory in Horsham St Faith, over several centuries. From its foundation at the start of the twelfth century by the Fitzwalters to its co-option by Henry Inglose in the 1440s, Sainte Foy was used to establish legitimacy in Norfolk. In the twelfth century, this was following the Fitzwalter's installation as landowners in Norfolk following the Norman Conquest and subjugation of local East Anglians. In the thirteenth century, the Chesneys used Sainte Foy to reinforce their role as patrons and benefactors of the priory, following a deterioration of their relationship with the monastic community. In the fifteenth century, it seems that Henry Inglose used Sainte Foy to insert himself into the history of an established monastic community and noble family, thereby elevating his own status. In the following chapter, the focus will shift from Norfolk to London, and examine how Sainte Foy was used in a very different context – Westminster Abbey.

4. Sainte Foy at Westminster

This chapter will examine the surviving wall painting of Sainte Foy at Westminster Abbey. It will consider the stylistic, iconographic, and technical details of the painting, and attempt to assign it a more secure date. The painting, which depicts Foy on a pedestal underneath a microarchitectural canopy alongside a monk offering her words of thanks (fig. 3.1), will also be considered within the context of the Abbey, to examine why this painting may have been executed at this location.⁸⁶⁴ Unlike at Horsham St Faith, there is no record of how the cult of Sainte Foy came to Westminster Abbey, and how it developed major significance to the monastic community around c. 1300, a period of difficulty for the abbey which would reach its climax in 1303 when items were stolen from the royal treasury in the abbey.

The first surviving accounts that record the foundation of Westminster Abbey date from 1076 and 1085; they state that Aethelberht, king of Kent (d. 616), had founded St Paul's Cathedral in 604, and he wished to found another church dedicated to St Peter.⁸⁶⁵ Gem states that the abbey's creation likely occurred sometime after the mid-seventh century as a result of patronage by Mercian or East Saxon kings, the bishops of London, or at the behest of a member of the local community.⁸⁶⁶ A refounding occurred under St Dunstan (d. 988) while he was bishop of London (c. 958–959), during which time the Benedictine rule was adopted by the abbey.⁸⁶⁷ A rebuilding of the abbey was undertaken during the reign of King Edward (r. 1042–1066) which was completed in 1065.⁸⁶⁸ Further new buildings were

⁸⁶⁴ For a floor plan of the abbey, see fig. 3.2.

⁸⁶⁵ Christopher Wilson, Pamela Tudor-Craig, John Physick and Richard Gem, *Westminster Abbey* (London: Bell & Hyman, 1986), p. 9. There is extensive scholarship on Westminster Abbey, such as Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton-Brown (eds.), *Westminster: The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey*, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions XXXIX Part I (Leeds: Routledge, 2015); Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power, 1200-1400* (London: Yale University Press, 1995); *Westminster Abbey: The Cosmati Pavements*, Lindy Grant and Richard Mortimer (eds.) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); and Robert Branner, 'Westminster Abbey and the French Court Style', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 23.1 (Mar. 1964), pp. 3-18.

⁸⁶⁶ Wilson, Tudor-Craig, Physick and Gem, *Westminster Abbey*, p. 9.

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

completed during the reign of William the Conqueror (r. 1066–087).⁸⁶⁹ Additional buildings, including the cloister and reredorter, were constructed during the eleventh century.⁸⁷⁰ A major period of rebuilding began under King Henry III (r. 1216–1272) in 1220 with the start of work on the Lady Chapel.⁸⁷¹ This later expanded to include the rebuilding of the entire church, again at the king's expense.⁸⁷² As well as construction being largely funded by the monarchy, the abbey also served a variety of royal functions – it was a coronation church, royal necropolis, space for meetings of the king's council, and even home to part of the king's wardrobe in the thirteenth century.⁸⁷³

Royal patronage at the abbey centred on the cult of Saint Edward the Confessor. Osbert of Clare (d. in or after 1158), monk and prior of Westminster, wrote a Life of Edward in the 1138, but Edward was not officially canonised until 1161 with the support of Henry II.⁸⁷⁴ Edward's *vita* was reworked by Aelred of Rievaulx to coincide with the translation of the Confessor in 1163, a copy was given to the king and it has been viewed as an attempt to transform the *vita* into a fitting "mirror for kings."⁸⁷⁵ Edward can be seen as standing for "the defence and sustenance of an ancient peaceful past, and for a conciliatory vision of the monarchy."⁸⁷⁶ Edward features repeatedly in the Gothic decorative programme at Westminster Abbey, from the miracle of the ring depicted in sculptural form in the south

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

⁸⁷⁰ Wilson, Tudor-Craig, Physick and Gem, p. 17. For more on the Romanesque abbey, see Stuart Harrison and John McNeil, 'The Romanesque Monastic Buildings at Westminster Abbey', in *Westminster: The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey* Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton-Brown (eds.) (Leeds: Routledge, 2015), pp. 69-103.

⁸⁷¹ The Lady Chapel, according to Paul Binski, was initially not as a direct result of royal patronage, but an attempt by the monastery to create a closer relationship with their local community, see Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power, 1200-1400* (London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 10 and Suzanne Lewis, 'Henry III and the Gothic Rebuilding of Westminster Abbey: The Problematics of Context', *Traditio* 50 (1995), p. 132.

⁸⁷² Wilson, Tudor-Craig, Physick and Gem, *Westminster Abbey*, p. 23.

⁸⁷³ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 7.

⁸⁷⁴ Kyly Walker, 'Westminster Abbey, King Stephen and the Failure to Canonize King Edward in 1139', *Royal Studies Journal* 5.2 (2018), pp. 27-48. The *vita* survives in British Library Additional MS 36737, fols. 139^v-157^v. For a thorough study of Osbert of Clare, see Brian Briggs, 'The Life and Works of Osbert of Clare' (Ph.D. diss., University of St Andrews, 2004)

⁸⁷⁵ Katherine Yohe, 'Aelred's recrafting of the Life of Edward the Confessor', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 38.2 (2003), pp. 177-8. The *vita* survives in British Library Harley MS 526, fols. 58^r-67^v.

⁸⁷⁶ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 7.

transept gallery beneath the rose window to the new shrine for him begun in 1245 by Henry III.⁸⁷⁷

But Westminster Abbey was not just a royal site; it was also a monastic one. One key focus for the Benedictine community was that of Saint Peter, who had miraculously consecrated the abbey.⁸⁷⁸ This miracle can be seen on folio 18^r of Cambridge University Library MS Ee.3.59, c. 1255 (fig. 2.35).⁸⁷⁹ Binski has described the monks at Westminster as having a “special relationship” with Saint Peter.⁸⁸⁰ The abbey had some relics of Saint Peter, including incense used by the apostle in the dedication of the church and hair from his beard, highlighting the intimate relationship between the Benedictine community and the apostle.⁸⁸¹

The Cosmati pavement acted as a “universal sign of St Peter’s eternal presence at the church.”⁸⁸² Not only did the style of pavement associate the abbey with Rome, emphasizing its autonomy, it also specifically tied the church to Saint Peter as Cosmati floors were linked with the dedication of churches – a role Peter had fulfilled at Westminster.⁸⁸³ This is not to suggest, however, that the monastery and monarch were completely opposed when it came to the promotion of saints’ cults. Both Peter and Edward the Confessor

⁸⁷⁷ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 49 and p. 52. See also Suzanne Lewis, ‘Henry III and the Gothic Rebuilding of Westminster Abbey: The Problematics of Context’, *Traditio* 50 (1995), 129-172; Paul Binski and Emily Guerry, ‘Seats, Relics and the Rationale of images in Westminster Abbey, Henry III to Edward II’, in Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton-Brown (eds.), *Westminster: The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey*, (Leeds: Routledge, 2015), 180-204; and Matthew Payne and Warwick Rodwell, ‘Edward the Confessor’s Shrine in Westminster Abbey: Its Date of Construction Reconsidered’, *The Antiquaries Journal* 97 (2017), pp. 187-204.

⁸⁷⁸ This story of a miraculous consecration can be traced back to Sulcard’s history of Westminster Abbey from the 1070s which is extant in two manuscripts, British Library Cotton MS Faustina A III, fols. 11^r-16^v and British Library Cotton MS Titus A VIII, fols. 2^r-5^v. See Bernhard W. Scholz, ‘Sulcard of Westminster: ‘Prologus de Construccione Westmonasterii’, *Traditio* 20 (1964), pp. 59-91.

⁸⁷⁹ Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ee.3.59, fol. 18, ‘Life of St Edward the Confessor’, c. 1250-60, fol. 18^r.

⁸⁸⁰ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 53.

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 140. For further scholarship on the cosmati pavement, see Lindy Grant and Richard Mortimer (eds.) *Westminster Abbey: The Cosmati Pavements*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) and David S. Neal and Warwick Rodwell, *The Cosmatesque Mosaics of Westminster Abbey: The Pavements and Royal Tombs: history, archaeology, architecture and conservation* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2019)

⁸⁸³ Paul Binski, ‘The Cosmati at Westminster and the English Court Style’, *The Art Bulletin* 72.1 (March 1990), p. 30.

appeared on the grand seal of the abbey of c. 1200, both the same size but on different sides of the seal, suggesting that the two saints, despite their different focuses, could coexist.⁸⁸⁴ While the cult of Edward the Confessor was largely promoted by the monarchy, the monastic community was still involved. Binski describes the monks of Westminster as having “a formal, but not especially warm” relationship with Edward the Confessor.⁸⁸⁵ This all serves to highlight how the relationship between the saints, and those who patronised them, at Westminster Abbey, was a complex one, characterised by tension and competition.

It is against this backdrop of royal patronage, monastic community and competing needs regarding the space of the abbey, that we must position the surviving mural of Sainte Foy at Westminster. At the end of the south transept, in the liminal space abutting the chapter house, is a chapel now known as Saint Faith’s Chapel.⁸⁸⁶ The chapel is divided into three parts, with a gallery at the western end that linked the monks’ dormitory to the night stair.⁸⁸⁷ This space acted as a thoroughfare for the monks and should not be viewed as a static space. The chapel itself is 58 ft (17.67 m) long and 15 ft (4.57 m) wide, with walls which are 4 ft (1.2 m) thick.⁸⁸⁸ It has been suggested that the chapel acted as a combined vestry and sacristy, on the basis of Abbot Ware’s (d. 1283) *Customary* and the secure location of the chapel.⁸⁸⁹ However, this has been disputed, based in part on later evidence which indicates that relics were kept in the Chapel of Edward the Confessor at an altar dedicated to the Holy Trinity.⁸⁹⁰ This is not to suggest that some relics and precious items were not kept elsewhere as well, for example, in Saint Faith’s Chapel. Poole also mentions a

⁸⁸⁴ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 67.

⁸⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁸⁸⁶ It has previously been known as both the Chapel of St Blaise and Henry VIII’s Chapel. For further details on why this confusion arose, see Henry Poole, ‘Westminster Abbey: The Lost Chapel of St Blaise’, *The Antiquary* 3 (Jun. 1881).

⁸⁸⁷ Lesley Milner, ‘St Faith’s Chapel at Westminster Abbey: The Significance of its Design, Decoration and Location’, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 169.1 (2016), p. 74.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-74.

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁸⁹⁰ Julian Luxford, ‘Recording and Curating Relics at Westminster Abbey in the late Middle Ages’, in *Journal of Medieval History* 45.2 (2019), pp. 206-7.

“cope rack” in the chapel.⁸⁹¹ This is likely the “set of cranes of wood, swinging as if in a rack, on which formerly the copes and vestments in common use were hung” observed by Dart.⁸⁹² Dart dated this contraption to the thirteenth century, a dating St John Hope (1854–1919) agreed with in 1901.⁸⁹³ While the rack is no longer extant, and therefore its dating cannot be confirmed, it does suggest that Saint Faith’s Chapel was used as some sort of vestry. Payne and Foster have suggested that it served as an intermediary location between the sacristy and the high altar, in part due to lack of running water which would be needed for significant amounts of laundry, and as a space where vestments could be sanctified and ritual dressing could take place.⁸⁹⁴ It may have also acted as a safe space to store the vestments – they were likely highly decorated and expensive in their own right.⁸⁹⁵ As such, a dark chapel with thick walls which only the monastic community were permitted to access would be a logical storage place.

John Flete (d. 1465), who wrote the *History of Westminster*, makes no mention of Sainte Foy in his work.⁸⁹⁶ Numerous other saints are mentioned, whether it be for their relics or their altars. Sainte Foy is conspicuous by her absence in Flete’s comprehensive work. In the list of relics of virgins, “et aliarum” [“and others”] is used twice – at the end of the relics gifted to the by Athelstan and those gifted by Aethelred.⁸⁹⁷ It is possible that relics of Sainte Foy were amongst these “others,” but it seems unlikely, marking the abbey as an unusual

⁸⁹¹ Henry Poole, ‘Westminster Abbey: The Lost Chapel of St Blaize’, *The Antiquary* 3 (Jun. 1881), p. 242.

⁸⁹² John Dart, *Westmonasterium Or the History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St Peters Westminster*, vol. I (London: J. Cole, 1723), p. 64.

⁸⁹³ Milner, ‘St Faith’s Chapel at Westminster Abbey’, p. 74.

⁸⁹⁴ Matthew Payne and Richard Foster, ‘The Medieval Sacristy of Westminster Abbey’, in *The Antiquaries Journal* 100 (2020), p. 248.

⁸⁹⁵ On the vestments at Westminster Abbey, see J. Wickham Legg, ‘On an Inventory of the Vestry in Westminster Abbey, taken in 1388’, *Archaeologia* 52.1 (1890), pp.195-286. Legg notes that cloth of gold is “frequently spoken of.”

⁸⁹⁶ John Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, J. Armitage Robinson (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). On Flete, see the introduction to *The History of Westminster Abbey*, J. Armitage Robinson (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and Richard Mortimer, ‘History and Chronicles at Westminster Abbey’, in *Westminster: The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey*, Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton-Brown (eds.) (Leeds: Routledge, 2015), pp. 291-300.

⁸⁹⁷ John Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, J. Armitage Robinson (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 72.

instance of having an altar dedicated to a saint with no associated relics. There is evidence of a connection between England and Sainte Foy recorded in the eleventh century, when Albuin (also known as Aelfwine), allegedly a son of Harold Harefoot (r. 1035–1040), during a pilgrimage in the Rouergue, visited the shrine of Sainte Foy at Conques.⁸⁹⁸ While this is a royal connection, one instance is not necessarily enough to establish a pre-Conquest cult of Foy, with relics, at Westminster or, let alone, the rest of England. Regardless, the omission of Sainte Foy raises several interesting possibilities. For example, this may suggest that Foy was not considered an important figure at Westminster Abbey, or that her relevance and importance to the monks had dwindled by the fifteenth century. Furthermore, the lack of relics has interesting implications for the function and significance of her monumental wall painting which will be discussed in greater detail below.

However, the explicit use of the space is not the focus of this section, but rather the decorative scheme.⁸⁹⁹ Within this chapel, in an arched recess on the east wall, a courtly Gothic mural of Sainte Foy survives (fig. 3.1), which has been dated to various points between 1250 and the 1310s. Foy stands on a pedestal underneath a microarchitectural, gabled, canopy. According to Belting, the picture of Sainte Foy is depicted “unmistakably as a statue by the socle with a capital that supports her,” potentially referencing a cult statue.⁹⁰⁰ She is dressed in a green gown with a red mantle with modelling created by adding white to create variations in tone, rather than relying on outlines to create a sense of depth.⁹⁰¹ Her mantle is also lined with fur, suggesting her high status and authority. She clutches a book in her right hand, a symbol of her piety and deeds, and in her left hand a grid iron, the instrument of her martyrdom. She is also pointing at the grid iron with her right hand to draw

⁸⁹⁸ *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Conques*, Gustave Desjardins (ed.) (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1879), p. 19.

⁸⁹⁹ The implications the decoration may have regarding the use of the space, and vice versa, will be discussed later.

⁹⁰⁰ Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, Edmund Jephcott (trans.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 446.

⁹⁰¹ Emily Howe, ‘Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey: The Murals in the South Transept and St Faith’s Chapel’ *The Burlington Magazine*, 148 (January 2006), p. 13.

attention to it. This serves to remind the viewer of Foy's status in heaven as a virgin martyr who suffered torments for her faith.

Her body is long and sinuous, while in contrast her face stern and gaze directly forward. Foy's body has adopted some of the courtly manner often seen in wall paintings of the Gothic period, but her face and gaze remain reminiscent of her reliquary statue. Despite her courtly manner and refined appearance, Foy remains a ferocious protector. Her position and authority is reinforced by her crown, which serves to both show that she is crowned in martyrdom, but that she is also a queen and empress as seen at Conques.

The underside of the recess is decorated with a chevron pattern in red and white. At the bottom left of the mural is a kneeling Benedictine monk, tonsured and in a black habit, kneeling with his hands raised and pressed together in prayer (fig. 3.3). He is contained within a barbed quatrefoil decorative frame that is cut off at the bottom, leaving his legs out of frame. From him a Latin inscription emerges which reads "me quem culpa gravis permitte erige virgo suavis / Fac mihi placatum Christum delasque reatum," which Binski translates as "raise me, oh sweet virgin, whom grave sin burdens, render unto me Christ's pleasure and blot out my iniquity." Binski has shown that this text recalls psalm 51 which is a penitential psalm begging for forgiveness for a sin.⁹⁰² This text bridges the space between the monk and the central figure of Sainte Foy, connecting the two figures through a devotional relationship.

Underneath Foy is a fictive retable containing panels in the shape of four eight-pointed stars, arranged to either side of a depiction of Christ on the cross flanked by the Virgin and John. The crucifixion scene has been "much defaced" according to an inventory conducted in 1924.⁹⁰³ Since then, the painting has been cleaned, and, given the current

⁹⁰² Milner, 'St Faith's Chapel at Westminster Abbey', p. 89.

⁹⁰³ *An Inventory of the Historical monuments in London*, vol. 1 (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1924), pp. 76-93. *British History Online* <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/london/vol1/pp76-93>> [accessed 3 May 2021].

state of the crucifixion, it seems likely that any defacement was in fact dirt.⁹⁰⁴ The painting underwent rigorous scientific analysis for the first time in 2004.⁹⁰⁵ The shape of the medallions distinctly echoes those on the Westminster Retable, which contains images of the miracles of Christ.⁹⁰⁶ Emily Howe has shown that no trace of additional polychromy has been found within these medallions.⁹⁰⁷ One watercolour by J. Schnebbelie from 1790 held by the Society of Antiquaries does suggest that the stars in the retable were decorated, although specific details are unclear.⁹⁰⁸ However, an engraving also by J. Schnebbelie depicts the stars as empty (fig. 3.4).⁹⁰⁹ There are notable discrepancies between the engraving, water colour and the mural as it survives today. Most notably the engraving repositioned the central figure of Foy so that her canopy is at the centre of the arch, rather than slightly off-centre as she is in both reality and the water colour. As such, it is possible that the filled stars were a case of antiquarian imagination, rather than reflective of the wall painting in the late eighteenth century. Given the technical evidence as shown by Howe, it seems likely that the medallions were empty. This leads to the question of whether the medallions were intended to remain empty, or if the painting was left unfinished. Given the lack of any traces of images within the medallions, combined with the state of preservation of the painting, it seems likely that they were intended to remain empty. One potential explanation for this could be restricted funds, as evidenced by the usage of an expensive pigment, ultramarine, but only sparingly. If they were ever painted, or intended to be, it is likely that they would have been filled with images of Foy's life or passion, as similar stone

⁹⁰⁴ Unlike the transept paintings, Tristram never waxed the Sainte Foy painting. It was cleaned in the 1970s by Robert and Eve Baker, although precisely what this entailed was not documented. See Emily Howe, 'Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey: The Murals in the South Transept and St Faith's Chapel', *The Burlington Magazine*, 148 (January 2006), 4-14.

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁶ Westminster Abbey, London, The Westminster Retable, c. 1270s.

⁹⁰⁷ Emily Howe, Emily, 'Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey: The Murals in the South Transept and St Faith's Chapel', *The Burlington Magazine*, 148 (January 2006), p. 10.

⁹⁰⁸ Plate XXII A in Pamela Tudor-Craig, 'The Painted Chamber at Westminster', in *Archaeological Journal* 114.1 (1957), p. 103.

⁹⁰⁹ The Wellcome Collection, London, Saint Faith, under a canopy; crucifixion scene below her, etching by J. Schnebbelie, 1821. <<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/euxta8xc>> [accessed 24 May 2021].

retables were in France.⁹¹⁰ These empty medallions, however, are likely a deliberate choice, given that such details were used as part of other works of art from the Westminster school such as the Westminster Retable. This decision to leave the medallions blank on such a high status work of art suggests that this was a deliberate stylistic choice and not due to a lack of funds.

Foy is positioned slightly to the right of the centre of the arch. The centre of the fictive retable is also further off centre. It is possible that this has been done to compensate for the space taken up on the left-hand side by the depiction of a Benedictine monk, which makes the arch seem narrower. This may be an attempt to create the optical illusion of symmetry.

The Saint Foy wall painting has undergone a significant amount of technical analysis. It was painted directly on the ashlar building blocks made of Reigate stone which were prepared to the same extent as the adjacent unpainted areas.⁹¹¹ Vertical, linear marks, indicative of the use of a two inch chisel to shape the blocks, are noticeable – this is in distinct contrast with other examples of polychromy at Westminster Abbey, such as the tombs of Eleanor of Castille and Edward Crouchback, which were prepared to a finer finish.⁹¹² There is evidence that an initial unpigmented sealing layer of drying oil was used on some sections of the Sainte Foy painting.⁹¹³ The priming layer used contains some red lead, lending it a slight pinkish hue.⁹¹⁴ The amount of primer applied to the wall varied, with more substantial amounts applied to some areas, such as Foy's head.⁹¹⁵ In some areas of the painting, another sealing layer was applied on top of this priming layer.⁹¹⁶ Some parts of the image were incised before painting, namely the architectural canopy framing Foy and the

⁹¹⁰ Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. 466.

⁹¹¹ Helen Howard and Marie Louise Sauerberg, 'The Polychromy at Westminster Abbey, 1250-1350', in *Westminster: The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey*, Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton-Brown (eds.), British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions XXXIX Part I (Leeds: Routledge, 2015), p. 247 and Howard and Sauerberg, 'The Polychromy at Westminster Abbey, 1250-1350', p. 213.

⁹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

quatrefoil surrounding the Benedictine monk.⁹¹⁷ For this instruments such as a ruler, plumb line or compass were likely used.⁹¹⁸ The majority of the underdrawing was executed in red, although the crucifixion section was in black instead with some red visible underneath; this suggests that the original drawing was in red and then reinforced with black.⁹¹⁹

A technical analysis will help us to understand the date range assigned to the painting. Helen Howard and Marie Louise Sauerberg consider the colour palette used at Westminster Abbey, which Foy fits into between 1250 and 1350 to be “absolutely typical of the finest contemporary Gothic painting and polychrome sculpture in northern Europe.”⁹²⁰ Lac lake was used in “copious amounts” to paint Sainte Foy.⁹²¹ It was also combined with lead white “over a layer of translucent red-lake glaze paint” on Foy’s undermantle and combined with azurite to create a purple colour which was used on the drapery.⁹²² Lac was also used extensively elsewhere at Westminster Abbey on the Westminster Retable and Sedilia.⁹²³ Ultramarine, which was as costly as gold, is also used in the Sainte Foy painting, one of only three instances where it was used at Westminster.⁹²⁴ Its use is limited to small areas and in combination with lead white, which suggests a limited amount of funds – even if they did stretch to include some ultramarine.⁹²⁵ This is in contrast with the Westminster Retable where it was “lavishly employed,” both on its own and mixed with lead white.⁹²⁶ This suggests that the Retable was a higher status endeavour and as such had greater funds available for its completion. However, in the Foy painting, ultramarine is used in surprising areas – namely for the highlights on the moulding of the canopy, an area which is hardly the

⁹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 219.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 219.

⁹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 219.

⁹²⁰ Ibid., p. 221.

⁹²¹ Ibid., pp. 222-3.

⁹²² Ibid., p. 223.

⁹²³ Howe, ‘Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey’, p. 14.

⁹²⁴ Howard and Sauerberg, ‘The Polychromy at Westminster Abbey, 1250-1350’, p. 224.

⁹²⁵ Howard and Sauerberg, ‘The Polychromy at Westminster Abbey, 1250-1350’, p. 226. See also Emily Howe, ‘Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey: The Murals in the South Transept and St Faith’s Chapel’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 148 (January 2006), p. 13. On the use of ultramarine and its cost, see Spike Bucklow, *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets from the Middle Ages* (London: Marion Boyars, 2009), pp. 43-74.

⁹²⁶ Howard and Sauerberg, ‘The Polychromy at Westminster Abbey, 1250-1350’, p. 224-6.

central focus of the painting.⁹²⁷ This suggests that funds were available to the artist and also, perhaps, that there was less oversight over how the pigments were used.

Linseed oil, the most commonly used oil for a binding medium in this period, is evident in the Sainte Foy painting, and as such the painting technique can be considered typical.⁹²⁸ It has been proposed by Howe that stencils were used to create the repeating motif of fleur-de-lis in the background of the Foy painting.⁹²⁹ Evidence for the use of stencils in wall paintings has been found at sites such as Meaux Abbey, however evidence from Westminster Abbey is inconclusive.⁹³⁰ The metal leaf used on Foy was a mixture of gold leaf, part-gold and gilded tin.⁹³¹ This tin relief, thought to be one of the earliest surviving examples of this technique in England, was also used in the Crucifixion panel on the Virgin's mantle and the halos, as well as on Foy's gridiron.⁹³²

The Sainte Foy painting directly engages the viewer, staring straight out of the wall. This look is almost defiant and challenging, and forces the viewer to directly engage with the painting. In contrast the Saint Thomas and Saint Christopher wall paintings, located in the southern arcade of the transept, use the line of sight to engage with other figures within the painting, rather than the viewer outside it. As part of the development of the intromission theory of vision, "the object as well as the viewer [had] a dynamic role in perception."⁹³³ This enables the "active power of vision," to use the language of Camille, to act both ways – both the viewer and the figure in the painting are engaged in looking.⁹³⁴

There is also something sceptical about Foy's gaze – one almost feels as if you are not worthy to look upon her image. Sainte Foy's pupils are enlarged, and the irises are white,

⁹²⁷ Howe, 'Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey', p. 13.

⁹²⁸ Howard and Sauerberg, 'The Polychromy at Westminster Abbey, 1250-1350', p. 228.

⁹²⁹ Ibid., pp. 232-3.

⁹³⁰ London, British Museum, 1994, 1012.42, *Stencil*, lead, 13th-14th century
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1994-1012-42>

⁹³¹ Ibid., p. 247.

⁹³² Howe, 'Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey', p. 13.

⁹³³ Camille, Michael, *Gothic Art: Visions and Revelations of the Medieval World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), p. 23.

⁹³⁴ Camille, Michael, *Gothic Art: Visions and Revelations of the Medieval World*, p. 19

only discernible from the rest of the eye by a black line. This heightens the effect of her dispassionate, watchful gaze. These elements combined reinforce the idea of supplication before the saintly figure – as mentioned earlier, Caviness has argued that maintained eye contact “achieved a kind of conquest.”⁹³⁵ By breaking eye contact with Sainte Foy, the viewer gave in and accepted this conquest and her position of power over them.

Both Foy’s book and grill are small. The book likely represents Foy’s life and deeds, so she can be seen to be carrying proof of her sainthood. Whilst it is possible that the book represents a small and easily portable book, the artist has deliberately chosen to shrink the grill. In the original martyrdom story, Foy was grilled on a bed of bronze – the grill she is holding in the Westminster painting is neither large enough to be a bed, or to grill a person on. The artist has transformed the grill from an instrument of torture into an emblem of Foy’s martyrdom, and as a result, her place in heaven. It serves as her attribute and is the primary feature for identifying the figure as Foy. Interestingly she carries the same objects, a book and a grill, as seen on the c. 1437 memorial brass of Geoffrey Langley. This suggests both artists were more interested in depicting an easily identifiable figure than accurately reflecting Foy’s martyrdom story.

The curves of the drapery are long and refined, with depth created through the use of both highlights and shadow. For Binski, the “flaccid figure and looser fold-forms” are “of a type only common in English painting by the 1290s or 1300s.”⁹³⁶ These details can be seen in works such as the Peterborough Psalter (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9961-2) from c. 1300.⁹³⁷ Binski also describes the drapery on Sainte Foy as “increasingly sinuous.”⁹³⁸ The bottom of Foy’s dress spills over the front of the pinnacle she stands on, enhancing the three-dimensional nature of the figure. This serves to create the impression that Foy is not a

⁹³⁵ Madeline H. Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle, and Scopic Economy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 18.

⁹³⁶ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 170.

⁹³⁷ On the Peterborough Psalter, see Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Peterborough Psalter and Other Fenland Manuscripts* (London: Harvey Miller, 1974)

⁹³⁸ Paul Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster* (London: The Society of Antiquaries of London, 1986), p. 78.

statue confined to a pedestal, but rather a real figure able to break out of the confines of her assigned space.

Foy stands under a microarchitectural canopy. The underside of this canopy is formed of a pointed trefoil arch. The top of the canopy is luxuriously decorated with crockets which curl out of the main body of the microarchitecture. These crockets are not overly decorated and relatively simple. The sides of the canopy are supported by a pair of deep red columns topped with creamy white capitals in a bulbous, three-part shape. The columns imitate red porphyry, while the creamy white colour is reminiscent of marble.⁹³⁹ Further miniature canopies rest on top of these capitals which are pierced by two lancets and a circle above them. These canopies are embellished with the same crockets as the main canopy, but on a smaller scale. The microarchitecture of the canopy, socle and fictive retable all blend together, painted in the same creamy colour against a background of orange. This helps to tie the disparate parts of the painting together, serving to unite the figure of Foy with the fictive altar with its depiction of the crucifixion. The enclosure of the Benedictine monk is also outlined in this creamy, stone like colour. This helps to unite the image and create a sense of cohesion within the painting.

The crucifixion below provides a valuable opportunity for cross-examination of both style and form, one that has not been undertaken before, given both the proliferation of extant examples and the innovations in the depiction of the crucifixion which reflected evolving religious ideology. The crucifixion below the figure of Sainte Foy is depicted against a pale blue background, Christ is flanked by the Virgin Mary and Saint John. The figures stand on uneven ground. The cross protrudes from a mound on the ground and is constructed from two wooden planks. The ends of these planks are cut diagonally and parallel to each other. The horizontal plank is placed quite high up on the vertical plank. Christ is affixed to the cross with three nails: one each in his hands and one pinning both his

⁹³⁹ Helen Howard and Marie-Louise Sauerberg, 'Polychrome techniques at Westminster 1250-1350', in Paul Binski and Ann Massing (eds.), *The Westminster Retable: History, Techniques, Conservation* (Cambridge: Harvey Miller, 2009), p. 292.

feet to the cross. His legs are crossed with his left leg in front of his right. A white mantle is draped around his waist and sags slightly around the middle. The vertical plank is visible behind Christ's curving stomach. Gravity exerts some effect on Christ's body as he sags from his arms. His arms are long and thin, with some definition of muscle and sinew under the skin. Blood can be seen running from Christ's side and his eyes are closed, indicating that this depiction is of the dead Christ. Christ is also haloed. Due to the deterioration of the painting, it is difficult to state whether Christ is bearded or clean shaven.

Mary stands to Christ's right and John to his left. Mary gestures with her left hand at her dead son. She is wearing a green dress and pink mantle which is lined with white. She clasps the edge of her mantle in her right hand, her fingers splayed out. This is in contrast with her left hand which shows her fingers flat and pressed together with her thumb jutting awkwardly out of her palm. Her hair is long, curly, and partially drawn back, she is also haloed. She has heavy brows, a downturned mouth and is frowning. Mary does not look at her son but rather out at the viewer, almost challenging the viewer to confront what they have done to her son. The chief emotion Mary expresses is anger, rather than sadness.

John stands on Christ's left. He wears the same colours as Mary – a green tunic covered by a pink mantle lined with white. Less of the lining is visible on John however due to the different way that John clasps his mantle. John cradles his head in his right hand. The fingers of this hand are also curled elegantly in a manner which highlights their length but would be awkward in real life. John's hair is curly, and he is also haloed. His brows are less heavy than Mary's and display a greater arch. His mouth is downturned, and his expression conveys a deep sadness. His left-hand clasps his mantle, drawing it closed around him. This hand is rendered far more clumsily, the fingers are barely defined as separate appendages. He looks sideways, eyes focusing on the dead body of Christ. There are clear similarities between the crucifixion and the Foy figure, including the drapery and poses, suggesting that they were executed at the same time and by the same artist or workshop, and as such any dating applied to the Crucifixion may also be applied to the rest of the wall painting.

The painting of Sainte Foy is not the only surviving part of the Gothic decorative programme found within the chapel. A number of sculpted vault bosses and corbel heads also survive.⁹⁴⁰ The corbel heads, which had been planned from the beginning and, according to Lesley Milner, fulfilled an important apotropaic role. These corbel heads convey a sense of foreboding, with Milner describing them as follows: “the faces include one whose open mouth shows jagged teeth, and one whose smile is forbidding, coupled as it is with narrowed eyes, overarching brows and a pugilist’s damaged nose.”⁹⁴¹ This fits with Milner’s argument that the chapel of Saint Faith was originally used as a sacristy, based in part on the decorative scheme which features apotropaic corbel heads, as well as the location, thick walls, strong door, and that in the late thirteenth century the altar in the chapel of Saint Faith was the responsibility of the sacristan.⁹⁴² It is perhaps significant that Sainte Foy was considered a guardian of treasure, so her image in a sacristy would not be entirely out of place.⁹⁴³ However, it is worth noting that even if the mural of Foy was intended from the time of the chapel’s construction, that does not mean the painting was immediately executed.

As well as this, some of the floor tiles are decorated with fleur-de-lys.⁹⁴⁴ These are slip tiles and mostly decorated with foliage, some however have other motifs, including heraldic designs representing England and the Clare family.⁹⁴⁵ These tiles have been variously dated to the thirteenth or early fourteenth century.⁹⁴⁶ One tile depicts a mounted knight, a type which also occurs in the Pyx Chamber.⁹⁴⁷ These details serve to highlight that

⁹⁴⁰ Milner, ‘St Faith’s Chapel at Westminster Abbey’, p. 71.

⁹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 81.

⁹⁴² Ibid., p. 91.

⁹⁴³ On Foy as both treasure collector and protector, see Kathleen Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), pp. 9-13 and Wan-Chuan Kao, ‘The Tomboyism of Faith: Spiritual Tomboyism in the Cult of Sainte Foy’, *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 15.4 (2011), pp. 412-449.

⁹⁴⁴ Milner, ‘St Faith’s Chapel at Westminster Abbey’, p. 71.

⁹⁴⁵ *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in London*, Vol. 1 *Westminster Abbey* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1924), *British History Online* <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/london/vol1>> [accessed 3 August 2017].

⁹⁴⁶ Milner, ‘St Faith’s Chapel at Westminster Abbey’, p. 71 and Park, ‘Altar recess in east wall: St Faith, Crucifixion and praying Benedictine’ in *Age of Chivalry*, p. 444.

⁹⁴⁷ Rev. P. B. Clayton, ‘The Inlaid Tiles of Westminster Abbey’, in *Archaeological Journal* 69.1 (1912), pp. 41-2.

the Foy painting is not an isolated work of art, but rather forms part of a broader decorative scheme both within the chapel and the abbey as a whole.

Williamson positioned the Sainte Foy mural in the context of the development of altarpieces as a means to advertise altar dedication and focus veneration. In this context, Williamson sees the saint as advertising herself as the dedicatee of the altar and explicitly encouraging her veneration at Westminster Abbey.⁹⁴⁸ Williamson also discusses altarpieces in connection to their role in the celebration of the eucharist. This is reflected in the Foy painting by the inclusion of the crucifixion scene in the central medallion underneath the main figure. The painting was, in Williamson's view, able to serve this dual function of an altar dedicated to a saint and the place where the eucharist was celebrated in part due to the differing scale of the Foy and the crucifixion. The size of Sainte Foy meant that it would be visible from a greater distance, such as from the gallery the monks used to move between the dormitory and the choir. The positioning of Foy and the angle which she was viewed by from the gallery meant that the painting could maintain eye contact with the monks passing through the night passage. As such, Foy drew in those who were only passing through the space, reminding them of her presence and protection. Indeed, this would have been a regular occurrence as the monks moved between their sleeping quarters and the abbey. In contrast, the smaller nature of the crucifixion scene would have made it most visible and the focal point of the image when the viewer was considerably closer, such as when they were performing the eucharist at the altar.⁹⁴⁹ As Williamson states, "different aspects of the imagery over this particular altar would come to the fore at different times."⁹⁵⁰ However, it is worth noting that these two aspects of the painting do not exist in isolation. The images cannot be divorced from each other. Both would have still been visible, to a certain extent, no matter the distance from the painting. This is particularly notable during the celebration of the liturgy, when Sainte Foy would have seemed to almost tower above the monks below.

⁹⁴⁸ Beth Williamson, 'Altarpiece, Liturgy and Devotion', *Speculum*, 79.2 (2004), p. 365.

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

Also, the inclusion of the crucifixion serves to bring Christ into the veneration of the saint, as it was through the power of God that saints held any meaning. The design of the Sainte Foy mural clearly invokes the power and protection of the saint, which works in combination with the rest of the decorative scheme of the chapel. The style of the painting will now be assessed in order to date its execution.

4.1 Dating Sainte Foy at Westminster

Scholars have extensively debated the dating of the Westminster Sainte Foy. The painting has a clear *terminus post quem*, given that the chapel was erected around 1250, and as such this provides the earliest possible date for the painting.⁹⁵¹ As noted by Milner, the chapel would have enabled the monks to perform the daily liturgy despite the ongoing building works.⁹⁵² Athene Reis dates the Sainte Foy painting to c. 1250, although provides no reasoning or any specific evidence for such an early date.⁹⁵³ W. G. Constable expressed doubt that the Sainte Foy painting post-dated the Westminster Retable (c. 1270s) and suggested instead that any “similarities might well be due to similar influences coming from France,” but this does not provide sufficient explanation for such an early date.⁹⁵⁴

Numerous architectural historians have considered the date of Sainte Foy, including Wilson who dates the Foy painting to the 1260s as “the most distinctive traits of the saint’s image find close analogues in works firmly datable to around 1260 – the hanging tubular folds of the mantle in the St Louis Psalter and the heavy rounded chin in the voussoir figures of the Judgement Portal of the Angel Choir at Lincoln.”⁹⁵⁵ However, there are also analogous works from later on, such as the Westminster Sedilia of c. 1307 (fig. 3.5) and the works of

⁹⁵¹ Howe, ‘Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey’, p. 8.

⁹⁵² Milner, ‘St Faith’s Chapel at Westminster’, p. 72.

⁹⁵³ Athene Reiss, ‘Beyond ‘Books for the Illiterate’: Understanding English Medieval wall paintings’, *The British Art Journal* 9.1 (2008), p. 8.

⁹⁵⁴ W. G. Constable, ‘Medieval Paintings at Westminster by W. R. Lethaby [review]’, *The English Historical Review* 44.173 (January 1929), p. 152.

⁹⁵⁵ Christopher Wilson, ‘The architecture of the Westminster Retable as evidence of dating and origin’ in *The Westminster Retable: History, Techniques, Conservation*, Paul Binski and Ann Massing (eds.) (Cambridge: Harvey Miller, 2009), p. 90.

the Madonna Master in the c. 1310 Psalter of Robert de Lisle (fig. 3.6).⁹⁵⁶ These features can be seen in many works of Gothic art across a long period of time. Wilson argues for a date closer to that of the Saint Thomas and Saint Christopher wall paintings in the transept (fig. 3.7), which he dates to the period after May 1259, when a writ was issued ordering the altars at Westminster to be established in the newly completed transept.⁹⁵⁷ There are some differences in style however – mainly that the Sainte Foy figure is considerably more elongated, particularly in the face, than the transept paintings.

In this instance, pigment analysis provides further information about the Sainte Foy mural. Howe has, as Wilson himself admits, “compellingly demonstrated” the differences in technique between the transept paintings and the Sainte Foy.⁹⁵⁸ Wilson then goes on to state that Howe however has not shown a difference in date.⁹⁵⁹ Technical differences do not necessarily mean a difference in date, as the wall paintings at St Albans show. However, given the specific context at Westminster Abbey where two groups of painters were working on two high class wall paintings in such close proximity at the same time, it is likely that they would have shared pigments. As such, it is doubtful that the paintings were made at a similar date, they would have been worked on by two different groups of people. These technical differences seem to place some distance between the south transept paintings and the Sainte Foy mural, suggesting a difference in date.

Part of Wilson’s stylistic dating is based on the microarchitectural tabernacle under which Sainte Foy stands. He argues that the artist based his design on the central aedicules of the Westminster Retable (fig. 3.8).⁹⁶⁰ Thanks to dendrochronology work undertaken on the Westminster Retable, the date for the felling of the trees used to make the Retable can

⁹⁵⁶ London, British Library, MS Arundel 83, ‘The De Lisle Psalter’ and Westminster Abbey, London, The Westminster Sedilia, c. 1307.

⁹⁵⁷ Wilson, ‘The architecture of the Westminster Retable as evidence of dating and origin’, p. 90.

⁹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁹⁵⁹ Wilson does not provide any explanation for this. Wilson, ‘The architecture of the Westminster Retable as evidence of dating and origin’, p. 95.

⁹⁶⁰ Wilson, ‘The architecture of the Westminster Retable as evidence of dating and origin’, p. 90.

be placed between 1232 and c. 1270, and its execution is usually dated to the 1270s.⁹⁶¹

Whilst Wilson's hypothesis seems plausible, it does not necessarily follow that the Sainte Foy mural was completed immediately after the creation of the Westminster Retable. He also argues that the Sainte Foy artist shows a failure to understand the architectural implications of the tabernacle depicted. However, the same could be said for the artist of the Westminster Retable who, as Wilson states, "for all his knowledge of [the architecture at] Amiens, was not an architect" and shows "the designer's lack of understanding of a key aspect of Gothic architecture."⁹⁶²

Wilson's focus on architectural connections led him to overlook other stylistic comparisons. The form of Sainte Foy is considerably more elongated than that displayed in the figures of Saint Thomas and Saint Christopher (fig. 3.7). This is particularly noticeable in the facial region – Saint Thomas and Saint Christopher's heads are rounder and less stylised. Sainte Foy's body is also more sinuous, she stands with her body in a gracious curve, her hands are also treated with greater delicacy and are more clearly posed in a highly stylised manner. There are some similarities between the wall paintings, such as the downturned mouths, however the differences are significant enough in my opinion to state that these paintings were executed at different times, with the Saint Foy being executed later. Additionally, a date in the 1260s would place the execution of the painting against a very different backdrop of patronage at Westminster, one of Henrician patronage and intense involvement with the abbey. As such, if a date in the 1260s was correct, it is worth examining extant evidence for any devotion to Saint Foy by Henry III. Given his well-publicised patronage of Edward, Christopher, Thomas, and the Holy Blood Relic at Westminster, surely, if the painting was executed in the 1260s, there would be evidence for Henry's involvement, not just with the painting, but with the cult of Sainte Foy more

⁹⁶¹ Ian Tyers, 'Tree-ring analysis of the Westminster Retable', in *The Westminster Retable: History, Techniques, Conservation*, Paul Binski and Ann Massing (eds.) (Cambridge: Harvey Miller, 2009), p. 215.

⁹⁶² Wilson, 'The architecture of the Westminster Retable as evidence of dating and origin', p. 83.

broadly.⁹⁶³ However, there is none. Henry III had no particular reason to express devotion to a fourth-century virgin martyr from France who was most well-known for freeing prisoners and standing for clerical autonomy. Foy's feast is however marked in the Westminster Psalter of c. 1250 which was used in the abbey.⁹⁶⁴

Tudor-Craig, in contrast, dates the painting to c. 1270 and considers it to be contemporary with the Westminster Retable, based on similarities between the "little windows on the pinnacles" of the canopy, the comma-shaped crockets and the "exaggeration and elongation" of Sainte Foy's figure.⁹⁶⁵ Regarding the perforated pinnacles, there is a distinct similarity between those found on the Westminster Retable and the Sainte Foy painting. Both are pierced by two lancets that are topped with a quatrefoil. However, there are some differences here as well. Whilst the perforations in the Westminster Retable are true quatrefoils, the ones on the Sainte Foy canopy are not. Instead, additional faux tracery is added, joining the lobes of the quatrefoil internally. The Westminster Retable also has additional "little windows," with an additional lancet underneath the ones discussed and a trefoil inside the point of the arch of the canopy. Additionally, the crockets display subtle differences. The bulbous ends of the crockets on the Westminster Retable are more clearly defined. However, this may be due to the different media used, particularly the differences between working in two and three dimensions. It is also worth noting that the similarities between the Retable and the Sainte Foy do not necessarily mean they were contemporaneous. Sainte Foy could have been created after the Westminster Retable and the Gothic artist could have drawn stylistic inspiration from it.

⁹⁶³ See Emily Davenport Guerry, 'Failure and Invention: King Henry III, the Holy Blood, and Gothic Art at Westminster Abbey', in *Visualising a Sacred City: London, Art and Religion*, Ben Quash, Aaron Rosen and Chloe Reddaway (eds.) (London: I. B. Taurus, 2017), pp. 47-88.

⁹⁶⁴ British Library, MS Royal 2 A XXII, 'The Westminster Psalter', c. 1200-c. 1250, fol. 9v <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_2_a_xxii> [accessed 26 May 2021].

⁹⁶⁵ Wilson, Tudor-Craig, Physick and Gem, *Westminster Abbey*, p. 112.

Lethaby dated the painting to c. 1270–75, although he did remark that “the figure seems advanced in some respects for such a date.”⁹⁶⁶ Other aspects, such as the painted niche and chevron pattern, he stated “might well be a generation earlier.”⁹⁶⁷ For Lethaby, any advanced features could be “accounted for by the influence of the Retable.”⁹⁶⁸ This then highlights the difficulty of dating the Sainte Foy painting – for whatever date it is assigned, some features will seem outdated or overly advanced. Interestingly, Lethaby theorised that the monk figure was Master William, both a monk and a painter at Westminster abbey until c. 1275.⁹⁶⁹ Lethaby argued that, were the figure an abbot, he would have been given a distinguishing feature, such as a mitre or ring.⁹⁷⁰ However, such an argument could be made if the figure was supposed to represent any individual. If this was supposed to be a specific monk, why was he not identified as such? If this was Master William, would he not also have been identified in some visual manner? Additionally, as Lethaby himself notes, Master William would have been at an advanced age c. 1270, and would likely have had white hair, unlike the brown-haired monk depicted. Given these factors, it seems more likely that the figure is meant to be representative of the monastic community as a whole rather than as a specific individual.

Binski favours a later date and dates the painting from 1290 to 1310 on the basis of style due to the “flaccid figure,” “looser fold-forms” and “ground sewn with fleur-de-lys.”⁹⁷¹ Similar long and elegant figures with loose, cascading folds can be seen on the Westminster Retable. Wrapson draws comparisons between the chevrons and hatched patterns of the sedilia with Sainte Foy and suggests a date c. 1310.⁹⁷² Wrapson also notes that the modelling on the *Annunciation* panels of the Westminster Sedilia follows the same method as that of Sainte Foy whereby “lights and darks are applied to an overall mid-tone base

⁹⁶⁶ W. R. Lethaby, ‘English Primitives-IV: The Westminster and Chertsey Tiles and Romance Paintings’ in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 30.169 (April 1917), p. 137.

⁹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁹⁷¹ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 170.

⁹⁷² Wrapson, ‘The materials and techniques of the c. 1307 Westminster Abbey Sedilia’, p. 132.

colour.⁹⁷³ As she states, “these technical similarities fortify the stylistic argument of the proximity of the sedilia and St Faith paintings, but more specifically suggest a tie between the *Annunciation* artist(s) and the mural.”⁹⁷⁴

Tristram dated the painting to c. 1300 as it is “closely allied in style” to both the Psalter of Robert de Lisle and London work of c. 1300.⁹⁷⁵ For Tristram, the Sainte Foy painting belongs to the “same phase” of artwork as the Sedilia, albeit of a slightly earlier date.⁹⁷⁶ Noppen argued that the Sainte Foy should not be assigned such a late date because “things were not too good at the Abbey from c. 1290 to c. 1310,” “Abbot Wenlock [d. 1307] was not likely a man to inaugurate a costly decorative work,” and “the royal painters were busy at the Palace.”⁹⁷⁷ He also argued that the 1298 fire which resulted in a long period of repairs made it unlikely that the monks “could afford costly decorative work” at this time.⁹⁷⁸ However, this does not necessarily rule out such a date. As suggested earlier, the Sainte Foy may have been executed by a less experienced artist, and as such potentially not one of the royal painters. There is also evidence that being a royal painter was not an exclusive contract, as Thomas of Westminster worked at Peterborough at roughly the same time as when he worked at the Palace.⁹⁷⁹ Additionally, the commission of the c. 1307 sedilia clearly shows there was money available at the abbey for artistic endeavours during this period. Noppen also provides no justification for this assessment of Wenlock’s character, and as such, his reasoning against a later date fail to hold up. Given this wide array of proposed dates, this chapter will date the painting through the use of stylistic, technical and historical evidence, as well as through comparisons with other works of art.

⁹⁷³ Ibid., p. 132.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 132.

⁹⁷⁵ E. W. Tristram, ‘A Recent Discovery of Wall-Paintings in Westminster Abbey’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 70.410 (May 1937), p. 230.

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 230.

⁹⁷⁷ J. G. Noppen, ‘A Recent Discovery of Wall-Paintings in Westminster Abbey’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 70.411 (June 1937), p. 303.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 303.

⁹⁷⁹ Thomas was master painter at Westminster from 1307. On Thomas of Westminster, see Paul Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster*, pp. 21-2 and pp. 107-8. Howe, ‘Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey’, p. 14.

Dates for the Sainte Foy painting have ranged across a time span of sixty years. This wide date range shows that there remains no scholarly consensus on the date of the painting, either from stylistic or technical comparisons. Through further comparative study, in particular focusing on the crucifixion image, an approach which has not been considered before, this thesis will more precisely date the Sainte Foy wall painting.

4.2 Comparisons

A number of other wall paintings also survive at Westminster Abbey that can provide useful points of comparison. To the left of the entrance to Saint Faith's Chapel in the south transept, wall paintings of Saint Christopher and Saint Thomas were rediscovered in 1934–6.⁹⁸⁰ These monumental wall paintings are over fifteen feet tall and are oil based.⁹⁸¹ The abbey possessed relics of both these saints – the arm of Thomas and the head of Christopher.⁹⁸² The images themselves highlight these parts of the saints' bodies through gesture and their physical (as well as spiritual) contact with Christ, as identified by Paul Binski and Emily Guerry.⁹⁸³ As such, the decorative scheme in the south transept is clearly linked to the relics held by Westminster Abbey. This raises the question: why include Sainte Foy, who had no known relics at Westminster, in the decorative scheme?

Both the Saint Christopher and Saint Thomas portray the idea of physical contact with the divine. Christ thrusts Thomas's arm into his wound and Christ embraces Christopher's head. These paintings emphasise the ability to touch and physically interact with the divine. This aspect is not included in the painting of Sainte Foy, instead of allowing interaction with the saint, the depiction is intimidating and forces a sense of space and separation between the viewer and the image. It is however worth noting that the relationships depicted in the Christopher and Thomas are between Christ and a saint, not a

⁹⁸⁰ Paul Binski and Emily Guerry, 'Seats, Relics and the Rationale of Images in Westminster Abbey, Henry III to Edward II', in Warwick Rodwell and Tim Tatton-Brown (eds.), *Westminster: The Art, Architecture and Archaeology of the Royal Abbey*, (Leeds: Routledge, 2015), p. 185.

⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

saint and another person. However, it is through this relationship with Christ that both Thomas and Christopher became holy. This notion of physical contact is understandable given Westminster's possession of their relics, and this may in fact explain the absence of this element from the Sainte Foy painting. In contrast, the monk figure in the Sainte Foy painting is physically separated from the saint, framed within a quatrefoil and occupying a separate space. He is asking the saint for help, through the intermediary of a painting, rather than directly interacting with the saint herself.

The inclusion of Saint Thomas and Saint Christopher within the Gothic decorative programme of Westminster Abbey is entirely understandable as Henry III had strong personal links with both saints. In John Flete's *History of Westminster Abbey*, the author records that Henry III donated parts of Christopher's head to the abbey at an unspecified date.⁹⁸⁴ Henry III also commissioned images of Christopher for the Chapel of Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London and the Queen's Chapel at Winchester Castle.⁹⁸⁵ Henry III's patronage of St Thomas can be seen in his donation of a ring made of gold and sapphire for the arm reliquary of Thomas at Westminster. This ring was to be inscribed with 'Is bene benedictionem dare debet qui omnibus benedictionem adquisivit dum ei dicebatur "Beati qui non viderunt"' which translates as 'He who gained blessing for all when it was said to him "Blessed are those who have not seen" must surely give blessing' (Binski and Guerry's translation).⁹⁸⁶ This donation was celebrated on Thomas' feast day in 1244 with a procession of Thomas' arm.⁹⁸⁷

Given Henry III's likely involvement in the wall paintings of the south transept, it again raises the question of why was Sainte Foy included in the decorative programme? It is possible that the execution of the Sainte Foy mural occurred after the death of Henry III, and as such his personal religious tastes and beliefs had no impact on its execution. Perhaps the

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 189.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 189.

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 191.

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 191.

more private location of the chapel might explain the seemingly unusual inclusion of Sainte Foy. This was an area of the abbey available to a select few and only members of the monastery, and as such of less interest to the king for displaying his patronage and aims. This is shown in de Ware's Customary (compiled c. 1266) which states that while the ritual dressing of the abbot or prior is taking place in St Faith's Chapel "no lay person is to be allowed entry."⁹⁸⁸ Payne and Foster have even suggested that this prohibition "may have extended to St Faith's Chapel at all times."⁹⁸⁹ This highlights how it was a restricted, mainly monastic, space and therefore not an area for royal artistic commissions. Additionally, given the positioning at the east end of the chapel of a gallery which went from the monks' dormitory to the transept, Sainte Foy was "deep at the heart of the monastic routine."⁹⁹⁰ This was true at Horsham as well, given Foy's positioning in the refectory, but unlike at Horsham, Foy occupied a solely monastic space – not one which was sometimes opened to members of the laity. The wall painting, therefore, would have been visible to the monks every time they got up to perform the canonical hours during the night and would have acted as a powerful image that was often gazed upon by the monastic community, and not anyone else. In this context, devotion to Sainte Foy was wholly monastic and not connected to the broader community in the same way it was at Horsham. It also suggests that the impetus for the wall painting was not related to spreading, sharing and preaching of the cult of Sainte Foy. The monks, therefore, can be considered the intended audience and beneficiaries of the painting and its powers of protection. The constructed identity of this monastic community regarding Sainte Foy was an inward facing one, rather than outward. It was about an attempt to maintain internal cohesion, but not necessarily one which was broadcast to outsiders.

⁹⁸⁸ "et maxime quando abbas vel prior ibidem se induit nulli laicae personae annuetur ingressus", *Customary of the Benedictine Monasteries of Saint Augustine, Canterbury and Saint Peter Westminster*, vol. 2, Edward Maunde Thompson (ed.) (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1904), p. 57.

⁹⁸⁹ Payne and Foster, 'The Medieval Sacristy of Westminster Abbey', p. 248.

⁹⁹⁰ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 167.

Howe considers the Sainte Foy painting to be “increasingly removed” from the Thomas and Christopher paintings, due to the stylistic differences, and suggests that these paintings were not part of the same decorative phase.⁹⁹¹ She also highlights how the paintings likely stem from different sources of patronage, with the Thomas and Christopher paintings attributed to Henry III’s patronage, whilst the Foy was a result of monastic patronage.⁹⁹² Howe suggested that the paintings in the transept were executed by “a more experienced court artist” because of the lack of preparatory techniques and “fluid, confident execution.”⁹⁹³ These observations fit well with the theory that the transept paintings were royal commissions, whereas the Sainte Foy was a monastic one.

Both the Westminster Retable and the Sainte Foy painting show a deliberate elongation of the human form, however in the Sainte Foy painting it seems to have been taken further; Foy’s figure is stretched vertically and is even slimmer than those on the Retable. There are also similarities in the treatment of hands and gesture, with a distinct curve of the finger evident in both the Saint Peter on the Westminster Retable and Sainte Foy. This treatment of hands can be seen in other works associated with Westminster such as the gesturing figures on the Sedilia. The long slender fingers, each of which are clear, separate entities which bend in different ways, are evident on the kings on the sedilia and the Sainte Foy mural. This type of treatment of hands can also be seen in the de Lisle Psalter, with one such example occurring on fol. 125^r where Christ is depicted holding a sceptre (fig. 3.9).⁹⁹⁴ Despite the object being held, the artist has taken great care to show and articulate all of the fingers, resulting in a slightly unrealistic looking hand position, much

⁹⁹¹ Howe, ‘Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey’, p. 12.

⁹⁹² Ibid., p. 12.

⁹⁹³ Ibid., p. 12.

⁹⁹⁴ British Library MS Arundel 83, ‘The De Lisle Psalter’, fol. 25^r c. 1308-c. 1340.

<http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Arundel_MS_83> [accessed 1 July 2021]. On the de Lisle Psalter, see Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Psalter of Robert de Lisle in the British Library* (London: Harvey Miller, 1983); Nigel Morgan, ‘Texts and Images of Marian Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England’, in *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium*, Nicholas Rogers (ed.) (Stamford: Watkins, 1993) and M. A. Michael, ‘Oxford, Cambridge and London: Towards a Theory for ‘Grouping’ Gothic Manuscripts’, *The Burlington Magazine* 130.1019 (Feb. 1988), pp. 107-115.

like Foy's hand holding her grill. Similar hand treatment can be seen throughout the de Lisle Psalter, British Library MS Arundel 83, such as the hand Saint Catherine uses to hold her wheel and the hand the Virgin Mary uses to hold a sprig of foliage, both on fol. 131^v (fig. 3.6).⁹⁹⁵ These comparisons suggest a later date for the Sainte Foy painting, likely post 1300.

Comparisons can also be drawn between the Westminster Sedilia and the Sainte Foy mural. There are some technical similarities between the Sedilia and the Sainte Foy painting, however there are also differences. Whilst neither make use of lead white priming over the underdrawing, these works make use of different types of ground layer.⁹⁹⁶ The Sedilia also uses the same kind of lake pigment as in the Sainte Foy painting, although this kind of lake can be found in numerous works, including the Westminster Retable (c. 1260), the Westminster transept paintings (c. 1260–70), and the Thornham Parva Retable (c. 1330s) (fig. 3.10).⁹⁹⁷ As already noted, Wrapson observed that the method of modelling used in both the Sainte Foy painting and the Annunciation on the Sedilia are similar, with both lights and darks applied to an overall mid-tone base colour.⁹⁹⁸ These stylistic similarities were first noted by Lucy Freeman Sandler who connected the Robert de Lisle Psalter, the Sedilia, and a group of manuscripts from the Fenlands of East Anglia.⁹⁹⁹ Wrapson has also drawn attention to the similarities between the chevron and hatched patterns on the Retable with those in the Sainte Foy painting and the tomb of Crouchback (c. 1290s) (fig 3.11).¹⁰⁰⁰ The Sedilia makes an interesting point of comparison to the Sainte Foy mural not just for stylistic and technical reasons, but also because they were likely both monastic commissions, rather than royal ones.¹⁰⁰¹ The Sedilia shows that not only was there clear interest in commissioning works of art for the abbey at the beginning of the fourteenth

⁹⁹⁵ MS Arundel 83, fol. 131^v.

⁹⁹⁶ Howard and Sauerberg, 'Polychrome techniques at Westminster 1250-1350', p. 305.

⁹⁹⁷ Wrapson, 'The materials and techniques of the c. 1307 Westminster Abbey Sedilia', p. 128.

⁹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁹⁹⁹ Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Psalter of Robert de Lisle in the British Library* (London: Harvey Miller, 1983), pp. 15-16

¹⁰⁰⁰ Wrapson, 'The materials and techniques of the c. 1307 Westminster Abbey Sedilia', p. 128.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

century, but that there were also funds available to do so, and to make use of expensive pigments as well.

Sainte Foy has also been compared to a variety of works from the thirteenth and fourteenth century outside of the immediate orbit of Westminster Abbey. For example, technical similarities can also be seen in the Thornham Parva Retable (c. 1330s), which also has two campaigns of underdrawing, one in black and one in vermilion.¹⁰⁰² Stylistic similarities can also be seen in the use of long fingers on expressive hands, the drapery fold and the positioning of Christ's feet. Another example of a wall painting with a fictive retable can be seen at Brent Eleigh, Suffolk (c. 1325–30) (fig. 3.12), whose crucifixion looks similar to the Sainte Foy one.¹⁰⁰³ The slightly later date of these works may suggest a later date for the Sainte Foy painting, or conversely that it took some time for the ideas expressed in the Sainte Foy mural to disseminate more widely.

Howe has drawn comparisons between the Sainte Foy painting and the murals seen in the Ante-Reliquary Chapel at Norwich Cathedral (c. 1300) and the feretory at St Albans Abbey (c. 1302–08).¹⁰⁰⁴ This may suggest an East Anglian, and even Norfolk, stylistic connection. The Saint William of York wall painting at St Albans Abbey, like the Sainte Foy painting, has details which suggest a conflicting date. As Michael has shown, the face suggests a date in the mid-thirteenth century as it is reminiscent of the Westminster Psalter (c. 1250), whereas the drapery suggests a later thirteenth-century date.¹⁰⁰⁵ This highlights the problem with dating paintings using their earliest features. The drapery in the Saint William painting bears a strong similarity with Sainte Foy, both figures wear an overgarment which falls in stepped, cascading waves from their raised arms, which suggests a late thirteenth or early fourteenth century date.¹⁰⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰² Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁰⁰³ Howe, 'Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey', p. 10

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁰⁰⁵ M. A. Michael, *St Albans Cathedral Wall Paintings* (London: Scala, 2019), p. 67.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Howe, 'Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey', p. 10.

Howe also has pointed out the “startlingly” similar image of a monk in prayer in the Peterborough Psalter on fol. 13^v.¹⁰⁰⁷ Both figures are kneeling with their hands clasped in prayer and are positioned to the bottom left of the image. From both figures, words of prayer emanate in a diagonal line upwards. The words in the Peterborough Psalter emerge directly from the hands in a scroll, whereas in the Sainte Foy painting they start outside the canopy he is under. The monk’s habit hangs in a similar fashion in both images, particularly the hood. As Howe points out, both are depicted against “richly diapered grounds.”¹⁰⁰⁸ There are small differences in the head shape, most notably the bald part of the head in the Peterborough Psalter is more bulbous. Overall, the figures are incredibly similar, suggesting they were near contemporaneous (the Psalter dates from c. 1299–1318). This also provides further evidence for an East Anglian influence on the style of Sainte Foy. Walter of Durham and Thomas of Westminster, two of Edward I’s painters, lived at St Albans for a time, and Thomas was also employed at Peterborough at the same time he was working on the Palace.¹⁰⁰⁹ In fact, after royal funds ran out for the decoration of the Painted Chamber at Westminster, the artists disbanded and relocated to Kent and East Anglia.¹⁰¹⁰ Artistic ties between East Anglia and London were clearly close at this time.

Additionally, there were clearly other members of the monastic community who had ties to East Anglia. For example, the names Willielmus de Huntingdon (d. 1305), Thomas de Woburne (d. after 1310), Robertus de Bures (d. after 1307), and several others are all included in the list of those imprisoned in the Tower of London following the 1303 robbery.¹⁰¹¹ While these names associated with places in East Anglia do not necessarily

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 10-12.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 10-12.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Howe, ‘Painting and Patronage at Westminster Abbey’, p. 14.

¹⁰¹⁰ Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster*, p 108. See also Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Peterborough Psalter and Other Fenland Manuscripts* (London: Harvey Miller, 1974) on East Anglian artistic traditions.

¹⁰¹¹ Details of this event are discussed below. *Fœdera : conventiones, litteræ, et cujuscunque generis acta publica, inter reges Angliæ et alios quosuis imperatores, reges, pontifices, principes, vel communitates, ab ingressu Gulielmi I. in Angliam, A.D. 1066, ad nostra usque tempora habita aut tractata : ex autographis, infra secretiores archivorum regionum thesaurarias, asservatis, aliisque summæ vetustatis instrumentis, ad historiam anglicanam spectantibus, fideliter exscripta*, vol. 1 pt. 2, Thomas Rymer (ed.) (London: Per J. Tonson, 1726-1735), p. 959.

indicate the origins of these people, it does suggest that there were existing connections between Westminster Abbey and the region and may provide a potential avenue for how, precisely, devotion to Sainte Foy reached Westminster.

4.3 Microarchitecture

In addition to the stylistic comparisons made above, the microarchitectural canopy under which Sainte Foy stands can also suggest a possible date for the painting by looking at the architectural features it uses. Christopher Wilson has previously used this technique regarding the Sainte Foy mural as part of his survey of the architecture and ornament on the Westminster Retable. In this he contests that the painting does not date to the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century, but rather to the 1260s.¹⁰¹² He states that “the architecture of the tabernacle sheltering Sainte Foy’s image, which reads like the work of an artist who was directly basing his design on the central aedicules of the Retable and had no independent knowledge of the latter’s models which would have enabled him to ensure that his own adaptations of the Retable were idiomatically correct.”¹⁰¹³ As Wilson states, the Foy painting can be seen as a “response” to the Retable, but this does not necessarily dictate a date in the 1260s, merely one after the creation of the Retable. As Binski notes, “dating paintings by their earliest, not their latest, motifs is hazardous.”¹⁰¹⁴ There are examples within Westminster of older forms being used in paintings executed around 1300, with Binski stating that “gables with comma-shaped crockets and trefoil arches retained their popularity,” and as such may not be useful in precisely dating the painting.¹⁰¹⁵

Wilson also argued that the canopy is “naïve” which “would be extremely hard to understand if the painting did belong to the closing years of the thirteenth century”¹⁰¹⁶ This argument has several flaws. To quote Binski, “painters are not, and do not think like,

¹⁰¹² Wilson, ‘The architecture of the Westminster Retable as evidence of dating and origin’, p. 90.

¹⁰¹³ Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁰¹⁴ Paul Binski, ‘The Painted Chamber at Westminster, the Fall of Tyrants and the English Literary Model of Governance’, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 74 (2011), p. 150.

¹⁰¹⁵ Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster*, pp. 61-2.

¹⁰¹⁶ Howard and Sauerberg, ‘Polychrome techniques at Westminster 1250-1350’, p. 95.

architects.”¹⁰¹⁷ However, this is not to suggest that painting was an isolated medium. There is evidence to suggest that painters responded to other artworks, one of example of which can be seen in the Painted Chamber at Westminster’s responsiveness to court ceremonial equipment.¹⁰¹⁸ It is distinctly possible that the simplicity of the canopy could stem from the medium in which it was executed as a painter may not necessarily understand the potential architectural complexities of a canopy and, within the three dimensional realm, its need to bear weight.

The micro-architectural canopy under which Sainte Foy stands is best described as simplistic and not overly ornamented. While it is embellished with crockets along the top, these are simple curved shapes, rather than embellished or foliate. The same can also be said for the pointed trefoil arch of the canopy. The space between the trefoil and triangular arch are left blank and undecorated, which is in contrast to other examples of micro-architecture at Westminster Abbey, such as that which appears on the tomb of Edmund Crouchback, where empty space is filled with trefoils and foliate designs.¹⁰¹⁹ The blank space is not, however, without precedent within micro-architectural detailing. For example, in the de Lisle Psalter, the canopies which shelter the two angels, Catherine of Alexandria, and Margaret of Antioch on fol. 131^v (fig. 3.6) are trefoil pointed arches resting inside a pointed arch which is itself under a triangular gable.¹⁰²⁰ Some of these arches are decorated with simple designs in the gaps between the tracery, but not all of them, making them reminiscent of the Sainte Foy mural and, again, suggestive of a date post 1300.

There are extensive similarities between the Westminster Retable (fig. 3.8) and the Sainte Foy painting. Most notably the eight-pointed star shapes are seen on both the Westminster Retable and the fictive Sainte Foy retable. However, unlike on the Westminster Retable, the Sainte Foy fictive retable only has one horizontal line of four stars. As such, the

¹⁰¹⁷ Paul Binski, ‘The Painted Chamber at Westminster, the Fall of Tyrants and the English Literary Model of Governance’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 74 (2011), p. 150.

¹⁰¹⁸ Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster*, p. 74.

¹⁰¹⁹ Westminster Abbey, Tomb of Edmund Crouchback, c. 1296-1300.

¹⁰²⁰ London, British Library, MS Arundel 83, ‘The De Lisle Psalter’, c. 1308-c. 1340. fol. 131^v.

cross shape which is formed in between the stars from the empty space is not present on the Sainte Foy fictive retable. In contrast, the pillars supporting the tabernacles on the Westminster Retable are considerably wider than those in the Sainte Foy mural. As such, they seem more capable of holding the imagined weight of the tabernacle than the Sainte Foy one. This also creates the illusion that Foy is even taller and more slender.

The Sedilia makes another interesting point of comparison to the Sainte Foy mural as they were both likely non-royal commissions. This shows that not only was there interest in commissioning works of art for the abbey at this time, but that there were also funds available to do so and to make use of expensive pigments. Like Sainte Foy, the figures on the back of the Westminster Sedilia stand under a pointed trefoil arch, although the profile of the Sainte Foy arch is wider, resulting in less severely pointed lancets. However, on the sedilia, these arches are broken up into further foils as well with an additional, narrower piece of tracery. Unlike the Foy canopy, the empty space between the canopy and the arch is pierced by a quatrefoil on the sedilia and the top of the canopy on the is not embellished further with crockets. There are distinct similarities between the two canopies, but there are also noticeable differences.

The link between the Sainte Foy mural, the Westminster Sedilia, and the de Lisle Psalter, suggests a strong East Anglian influence.¹⁰²¹ To quote Sandler, the work of the Madonna Master “recalls the East Anglian style in the sharpness of details.”¹⁰²² Potentially, it is possible to be even more specific with this geographical similarity, linking the style of the Sainte Foy painting not just broadly to East Anglia, but more specifically to the Benedictines in the Fenlands who produced manuscripts such as the Brussels Psalter, the Ramsey Psalter, and the Gough Psalter.¹⁰²³ This is particularly interesting as these manuscripts were

¹⁰²¹ Wrapson, ‘The materials and techniques of the c. 1307 Westminster Abbey Sedilia’, p. 118.

¹⁰²² Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Psalter of Robert de Lisle in the British Library* (London: Harvey Miller, 1983), p. 15.

¹⁰²³ On the problems of the broad term East Anglian and its synonymity with ‘English’ styles, see Lucy Freeman, *The Peterborough Psalter and Other Fenland Manuscripts* (London: Harvey Miller, 1974), p. 12-13

primarily made for use in the diocese of Lincoln, not Norwich or Ely, both of which were closer to the primary location of Sainte Foy's cult in Norfolk.¹⁰²⁴ These East Anglian elements suggest that the cult of Sainte Foy came to Westminster Abbey via the established cult in that region, centred around Horsham St Faith, rather than being imported from the primary cult site at Conques. This suggests that the East Anglian cult had developed to a point where it was important enough to influence devotion at Westminster Abbey – or rather, important to specific people who were able to influence devotion there. In conclusion, the microarchitectural details in the Sainte Foy painting are relatively simplistic and not overly ornamented. While this could possibly point to an earlier date for the execution of the painting, when other factors are considered, it is argued a date after 1300 is most likely.

4.4 The Crucifixion

One aspect that has impeded comparative dating of the Sainte Foy mural is the lack of other surviving depictions of Sainte Foy. However, the painting also depicts a crucifixion, for which we have many extant examples, and as such can be used for comparative stylistic analysis. Given the small size of the crucifixion, I will mainly focus on miniatures in manuscripts created between 1250 and 1350 in England to draw stylistic comparisons with, as well as examples from some other media. By undertaking this stylistic comparison, I hope to be able to date the crucifixion more securely. Whilst the crucifixion differs slightly in style to the figure of Sainte Foy above it, and may have been painted by a different hand, the painting was completed in one stage so by dating the crucifixion, it should be possible to date the entire painting.

This section benefits greatly from Paul Thoby's *Le crucifix des origines au concile de Trente* which remains the most definitive work on the development of the depiction of the crucifixion.¹⁰²⁵ It traces the iconographic changes depictions of the crucifixion underwent in the medieval period, taking in both Latin and Byzantine art in different media, and as such

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid., p. 13

¹⁰²⁵ Thoby, *Le Crucifixion des origines au concile de Trente*.

provides a useful framework for dating the Sainte Foy crucifixion. There are a number of key features in the Sainte Foy crucifixion, some of which are particularly unusual, which can be used to date the crucifixion: the eyebrows which become part of the nose; the pronounced frowns; the angle of the thumb and the distinct way it protrudes from the palm; Christ's emaciated arms with a gap between the arm and the shoulder; the curve of Christ's abdomen to reveal the cross behind him; the crossing of the legs with the left foot in front; and the thinness of the cross itself. By examining these and comparing them to other surviving depictions of the crucifixion, we can attempt to more securely date the crucifixion, and thereby, the entire Sainte Foy painting.

Firstly, the eyebrows that curve round and become the nose. This can be seen on the Virgin's face in the depiction of the crucifixion in BL Additional 28681, known as the Map Psalter which dates to c. 1265 on fol. 6^r (fig. 3.13).¹⁰²⁶ This illumination is part of a number of miniatures which were added to the manuscript. The main part of the Psalter, and the added miniatures, date from the third quarter of the thirteenth century and was produced in the south of England, possibly London or Westminster.¹⁰²⁷ In the Map Psalter miniature, both Jesus and John's eyebrows continue to become the nose but not in the smooth curve which is found in the Sainte Foy crucifixion. Instead, their eyebrows rise to a point before descending into the nose, creating an expression of greater distress. In the de Lisle Psalter, the eyebrows also descend to form the nose, however they do not employ the curve used in the Sainte Foy crucifixion, but are instead more angled.¹⁰²⁸

Another feature which can be used to date the painting is the positioning of Christ's feet which are nailed to the cross only one nail. The ankles are tilted outwards, but not exaggeratedly so. This placement of the feet developed due to the narrowing of the width of the cross, and according to Thoby, this slight rotation of the ankles suggests a date at the

¹⁰²⁶ British Library, MS Additional 28681, 'The Map Psalter', fol. 6^r, c. 1265 <<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6775&CollID=27&NStart=28681>> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁰²⁷ MS Additional 28681, fol. 6^v.

¹⁰²⁸ MS Arundel 83, fol. 132^r.

end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth century.¹⁰²⁹ The arrangement of Christ's legs, with the left foot in front and affixed to the cross with one nail, can also be seen in the Howard Psalter and Hours (fig. 3.14), which dates from c. 1310–c. 1320.¹⁰³⁰ A similar arrangement can also be seen in British Library MS 28681 (fig. 3.13), which dates from the last quarter of the thirteenth century, and British Library MS Egerton 2781 (fig. 3.15) which dates from the second quarter of the fourteenth century.¹⁰³¹ As such, the positioning of Christ's feet suggests a date at the very end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth.

In the Foy painting, Christ's arms are not pulled taut and there is a relaxation evident in the muscles, a feature which Thoby identified as occurring at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries.¹⁰³² This treatment of the arms serves to heighten the cruelty of the crucifixion, suggesting that Christ's shoulders have been wrenched from their sockets due to the weight of his body hanging from the cross. This can also be seen in the crucifixion on fol. 7 of British Library MS Additional 49622 (fig. 3.16), made in Norwich between 1320 and 1325.¹⁰³³ It can be seen again in the Howard Psalter and Hours on fol. 116^r (fig. 3.14) which was made between 1310 and 1320 in England.¹⁰³⁴ The separation of the arm muscles and the gap between arm and shoulder can also be seen in British Library MS Egerton 2781 on fol. 162^v (fig. 3.15), which was made in the south east of England, possibly in London, in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.¹⁰³⁵ The emaciated arms and the distinct separation between the arm and the shoulder can also be seen in the De

¹⁰²⁹ Paul Thoby, *Le crucifix des origines au Concile du Trente* (Nantes: Bellanger, 1959), p. 156.

¹⁰³⁰ British Library MS Arundel 83, 'The Howard Psalter', fol. 116^v, c. 1308-c. 1340.

<http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Arundel_MS_83> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁰³¹ MS Additional 28681, fol. 6^v and British Library, MS Egerton 2781, 'The Neville of Hornby Hours', fol. 161^v, c. 1325-c. 1350

<<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8838&CollID=28&NStart=2781>> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁰³² Thoby, *Le crucifix des origines au Concile du Trente*, p. 159.

¹⁰³³ British Library, MS Additional 49622, 'The Gorleston Psalter', fol. 7, 1310-1324

<<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6462&CollID=27&NStart=49622>> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁰³⁴ MS Arundel 83, fol. 116,

¹⁰³⁵ MS Egerton 2781, fol. 162^v.

Lisle Psalter.¹⁰³⁶ Within wall paintings, in those at Peakirk (fourteenth century), like at Westminster, Christ has noticeable weight, pulling him down from the arms.¹⁰³⁷ This weight, including a tilted forward head, can also be seen in wall paintings at Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire (fourteenth century) (fig. 3.17).¹⁰³⁸ This provides a particularly interesting comparison as the context is more similar to that at Westminster Abbey – a single image which forms part of the decoration of an altar, not a scene in a narrative cycle. As such, the positioning of the arms, and the noticeable weight exerted on them, suggest a date at the beginning of the fourteenth century for the Sainte Foy painting.

Also in the Foy painting, Christ's body curves to reveal part of the cross behind his stomach. The curve of the abdomen to reveal the crucifix behind Christ's dead body can also be seen on fol. 166^v (fig. 3.18) of British Library MS Arundel 68. This manuscript hails from Christ Church, Canterbury and was made in the second half of the thirteenth century.¹⁰³⁹ The cross can also be seen behind Christ's stomach in the crucifixion on fol. 2 of Harley 3601 (fig. 3.19) and on fol. 132^r (fig. 3.20) of the de Lisle Psalter.¹⁰⁴⁰ Given these comparisons, the reveal of the cross behind Christ's stomach suggests a date in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

The treatment of hands also provides a useful point of comparison. Christ's hands are open, displaying his palms and the nails piercing them. The hands are not horizontal with the cross but instead are tilted upwards. Similarities in the treatment of hands can be seen

¹⁰³⁶ MS Arundel 83, fol. 132^r.

¹⁰³⁷ E. Clive Rouse, 'Wall Paintings in the Church of St. Pega, Peakirk, Northamptonshire', *Archeological Journal* 110.1 (11953), pp. 135-149.

¹⁰³⁸ Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire, *Crucifixion*, wall painting, fourteenth century. However, parts of this image were repainted in the nineteenth century and it may have been moved to align it with the Victorian altar diocese. For more on this, see Warwick Rodwell, *Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire: The Archaeology and Architecture of a Cathedral, Monastery and Parish Church* (Oxbow: Oxford, 2009).

¹⁰³⁹ British Library, MS Arundel 68, 'Registrum Prioratus Ecclesiae Christi Cantuariensis', second half of the thirteenth century

<<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7308&CollID=20&NStart=68>> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁰⁴⁰ London, British Library, MS Harley 3601, 'Liber memorandum prioratus de Barnwell', fol. 2, c. 1295-1296

<<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7369&CollID=8&NStart=3601>> [accessed 20 July 2021] and MS Arundel 83, fol. 132^r.

between the Sainte Foy crucifixion and the crucifixion on fol. 4^v (fig. 3.21) of The Bible of William of Devon which dates from the third quarter of the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁴¹ In particular, the treatment of John and Mary's thumbs which are prominent and emerge distinctly from the palm, is notable. Christ's hands also display similarities regarding the thumbs in the way they are flush against the cross. Additionally, Mary's splayed, bent fingers can also be seen in the Howard Psalter and Hours.¹⁰⁴² While in this illumination she is not holding her dress as in the Sainte Foy crucifixion, the delicate treatment of the bending hand is similar. The gesture of Mary's left hand also bears a striking similarity with John's left hand on fol. 4^v (fig. 3.22) of BL Royal 1 D I which dates from 1250 to 1275.¹⁰⁴³ These examples serve to corroborate the date range of c. 1250 to c. 1310 for the Sainte Foy painting, but do not assist in narrowing that range.

The position of the perizonium, the type of loincloth which Christ is wearing, can also provide helpful insight into dating the crucifixion. There are distinct similarities between the perizonium in the crucifixion in the De Lisle Psalter and the Sainte Foy crucifixion – namely the reveal of the left knee and the folding of the cloth.¹⁰⁴⁴ A similar positioning and drapery of the perizonium can be seen in BL MS Sloane 346 (fig. 3.23).¹⁰⁴⁵ While Thoby identified this position of the perizonium as a feature of the thirteenth century, these examples show that this positioning persisted into the fourteenth century.

The width of the cross can also help date the crucifixion given the cross is fairly narrow in the Sainte Foy crucifixion. Thoby has identified that the width of the cross narrows

¹⁰⁴¹ British Library, MS Royal 1 D I, 'Bible of William of Devon', fol. 4^v, third quarter of the thirteenth century
<<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8746&CollID=16&NStart=10401>> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁰⁴² MS Arundel 83, fol. 116^v.

¹⁰⁴³ British Library, MS Royal 1 D I, 'Bible of William of Devon', fol. 4^v., 3rd quarter of the 13th century
<<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8746&CollID=16&NStart=10401>>

¹⁰⁴⁴ MS Arundel 83, fol. 132^r.

¹⁰⁴⁵ British Library, MS Sloane 346, 'Speculum humanae salvationis', c. 1330-1340., fol. 15.,
<<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6511&CollID=9&NStart=346>> [accessed 1 July 2021].

over the course of the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁴⁶ The ends of the cross are also bevelled and it is coloured green, features also associated with the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁴⁷ Height, narrowness and bevelled ends also persist into the fourteenth century, as seen in Sloane 346 (fig. 3.23) and British Library MS Egerton 2781 (fig. 3.15).¹⁰⁴⁸ It is also worth noting that the cross is brown rather than green and painted as a “faux wood,” a feature Thoby identified as belonging to as belonging to the fourteenth century.¹⁰⁴⁹ The cross, while remaining flat, is clearly made from two separate pieces of wood, examples of which can be seen in British Library MS Egerton 2781 (fig. 3.15) from the second quarter of the fourteenth century, British Library MS Additional 49622 (fig. 3.16) from c. 1320-25, and in the fourteenth-century Hastière Bible (fig. 3.21).¹⁰⁵⁰ As such, these comparisons of the cross suggest a date in the early fourteenth century.

Based on stylistic comparisons with other crucifixions, the Sainte Foy crucifixion therefore likely dates to the early fourteenth century. As such, it is possible to date the whole of the painting to this date as it was all executed at the same time. Additionally, as noted earlier new floor tiles depicting a number of motifs including the Clare family heraldry were laid in Saint Faith’s Chapel in the early fourteenth century, and it has been suggested that the painting may belong to the same period of renovation.¹⁰⁵¹ This would suggest a renewed interest in Saint Faith’s Chapel, and its decorative programme, at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The painting serves as a devotional focal point within the space, with the depiction of Foy on a pedestal recalling the idea of a cult statue. It also expresses thanks for

¹⁰⁴⁶ Thoby, *Le crucifix des origines au Concile du Trente*, p. 155.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁰⁴⁸ MS Sloane 346, fol. 15 and MS Egerton 2781, fol. 49.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Thoby, *Le crucifix des origines au Concile du Trente*, pp. 182-3.

¹⁰⁵⁰ MS Egerton 2781, fol. 162^v; MS Additional 49622, fol. 7^r; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, ‘Cutting from the Hastière Bible’, fourteenth century
<<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1026780/manuscript/cutting-from-the-hasti%C3%A8re-bible-manuscript-cutting/>> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁰⁵¹ David Park, ‘Altar recess in east wall: St Faith, Crucifixion and praying Benedictine’ in *Age of Chivalry: art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987), p. 444.

saintly intervention as shown by the kneeling Benedictine – the precise details of this intervention will be addressed below.

4.4 The Painting as *ex voto*

In light of the above synthesis of technical studies and stylistic analysis, the execution of the painting also needs to be considered within the historical context – between 1290 and 1310 – and the pressures faced by the Benedictine monastic community at Westminster Abbey. Binski previously suggested that the painting was commissioned after the exoneration monks who had been arrested following a theft from the Royal Treasury at the abbey in 1303.¹⁰⁵² This is in part due to the “formal and intercessory character” he observed in the painting.¹⁰⁵³ As the patron saint of prisoners, protector of the wrongfully accused, and, among other things, treasure, the execution of a monumental wall painting of Saint Foy to celebrate the exoneration of the monks from their imprisonment in the wake of the theft is a possibility. In order to examine Binski’s hypothesis, the events surrounding the robbery will be examined in greater detail to see if they could provide a possible impetus for the execution of the painting.

The robbery itself was a successful heist in that the thieves managed to gain entry to the royal treasury and steal numerous goods, but was a failure in that the monks were deeply implicated and several were arrested. The majority of the surviving sources related to the robbery pertain to the subsequent investigation, including the confessions of some of those involved, and clearly implicate the monastic community.¹⁰⁵⁴ The robbery occurred in April of 1303, following which various precious items, including gems, gold and silverwork,

¹⁰⁵² Paul Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1986), p. 68.

¹⁰⁵³ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁵⁴ On the investigation, see *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, A.D. 1301-1307* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898). The confessions can be found in *The Antient calendars and inventories of the treasury of His Majesty’s Exchequer*, vol. 1. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1836).

were sold to goldsmiths in the city of London, thereby alerting the authorities.¹⁰⁵⁵ Edward I (r. 1272–1307) was on campaign in Scotland at the time and was unable to appoint an inquiry into the robbery until 6 June.¹⁰⁵⁶ This inquiry appointed Ralph de Sandwich (d. 1308), Walter de Gloucester (d. after 1307), John de Banquelle (d. 1308), and Roger de Suthcotes (d. after 1303) to investigate and were tasked with finding the perpetrators of the crime.¹⁰⁵⁷ The value of the stolen treasure given later in 1303 was £100,000.¹⁰⁵⁸ Edward I later ordered two further inquiries and as a result of the investigation several laymen were hanged and the convicted monks were imprisoned for more than two years.¹⁰⁵⁹ To quote Luke Owen Pike, “it was not disputed that access had been gained to the Treasury from within the walls of the Abbey.”¹⁰⁶⁰ The evidence shows how deeply implicated the monks of Westminster, and other associated individuals, were in the crime.

During the initial investigation the abbot, forty-eight of the monks of Westminster, and thirty-two non-monastic members of their household were imprisoned.¹⁰⁶¹ While the abbot and some servants were released on bail, a number of the monks remained in the Tower of

¹⁰⁵⁵ Luke Owen Pike, *A History of Crime in England Illustrating the Changes of the Laws in the Progress of Civilisation*, vol. 1: *From the Roman invasion to the accession of Henry VII* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1873). p. 199.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Rymer (ed.), *Fœdera* vol. 1 pt. 2, p. 956. See also *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, A.D. 1301-1307* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898), p. 192.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Sandwich was a justiciar and administrator originally from Kent. He was appointed constable of the Tower of London in 1285, a position he held until shortly before his death. He sat as a justice every year between 1286 and 1307 at Newgate. Not much is known of Walter de Gloucester – a Walter de Gloucester is listed in the Close Rolls of Edward I as both “escheator beyond Trent” and “escheator this side of Trent.” It is unclear if either of these are the men in question. John de Banquelle was a merchant and alderman in London until 1298. He was active as a justice from 1297 onwards and was seneschal of Ponthieu in 1299 to 1305. A Roger de Suthcote is listed in an assize roll of 1303 and as a “merchant of London” in a 1322 writ. See Christopher Whittick, ‘Sandwich, Sir Ralph’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/24646>>; *Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward I, vol. 5 1302-1307* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Officer, 1908); Matthew Davies, ‘Banquell [Bankwell], Sir John,’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/1305>>; The National Archives, JUST 4/2/66, 1303, and The National Archives, C 131/1/39, 1322 Rymer (ed.), *Fœdera* vol. 1 pt. 2, p. 956.

¹⁰⁵⁸ “Centum milium librarum” in *Fœdera* vol. 1 pt. 2, Rymer (ed.), p. 959 and p. 960.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Pike, *A History of Crime in England*, p. 202.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

¹⁰⁶¹ Pearce notes that there were forty-nine monks at Westminster in 1303 so it seems likely that this was most, if not all, of the monastic community at the time. See Pearce, *The Monks of Westminster*, p. 11. Rymer (ed.), *Fœdera* vol. 1 pt. 2, p. 959.

London.¹⁰⁶² Ten monks in total were indicted in January 1304, one of whom, Adam de Warefeld (d. 1306) the Sacristan was indicted eight times.¹⁰⁶³ De Warefeld is further implicated in William of the Palace's confession, in which he said "they say Adam de Warfeld, Sacristan, knew of the burglary, in that he concealed part of the treasure from the ministers of the king."¹⁰⁶⁴ Two further monks are also particularly notable, Alexander de Persore and Roger de Bures. De Persore is singled out for his "special guilt" regarding the robbery while de Bures was detained in the Tower even "after the release of the rest."¹⁰⁶⁵ At the time, they were to be imprisoned in the Tower – some were released soon after, while others remained imprisoned until 1305 when they were freed by the king.¹⁰⁶⁶ Taken in this context, the painting of Sainte Foy can be seen not just as an *ex voto* offering in thanks for the monks' release from prisoner; she also serves as a statement of intent and commitment to protect the treasure with which they had been entrusted, while the praying Benedictine offers a mirror for appropriate behaviour for the monks.

In addition to the legal records that survive concerning the case, it was recorded in several contemporary chronicles. In William Rishanger's (d. after 1312) *Chronicle of St Albans*, the imprisonment of the monks is described as "unjust," and the judges involved as "corrupt."¹⁰⁶⁷ In the *Flores Historiarum*, the imprisonment of the monks is compared to the attack on Pope Boniface VIII (r. 1294–1303) by those working for Philip IV of France (1285–

¹⁰⁶² Paul Doherty, *The Great Crown Jewels Robbery of 1303* (London: Constable, 2013), p. 108.

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 125-7.

¹⁰⁶⁴ "E dient ausige Adam de Warfeld sacrestyn savoit de la burger n enchseon qil conceal ptie du tresor ge estoit trevelee countre les misitris nost Seigneur le Roy" in Francis Palgrave (ed.), *The Antient calendars and inventories of the treasury of His Majesty's Exchequer*, vol. 1. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1836), p. 284.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Pearce cites Scott for this information, however Scott does not record where got this from, stating only that "Alexander de Persore threatened to kill him [John Albon] if he revealed the design [used to break into the treasury]. E. H. Pearce, *The monks of Westminster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), p. 62 and p. 65.

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Flores Historiarum*, vol. III, Henry Richards Luard (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 321.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Rishanger was a monk at St Albans, born 1249/50. Rishanger wrote several chronicles and has been misattributed several more. To quote Carley, "he certainly did not have any kind of position as official historiographer at St Albans in the way that nineteenth-century historians assumed." See James P. Carley, 'Rishanger, William', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/23669>>. "Injusta" and "perversorum iudicium" in *Willelmi Rishangeri Quondam Monachi S. Albani, et quorundam anonymorum chronica et annales regnantibus Henrico Tertio et Edwardo Primo*, Rymer (ed.) (London, 1865), p. 222 and p. 225.

1314).¹⁰⁶⁸ Additionally, a near contemporary depiction of the robbery survives in British Library MS Cotton Nero D II.¹⁰⁶⁹ This manuscript contains the Chronicle of Rochester Cathedral Priory, a modified version of the *Flores Historiarum* with additions relating to Rochester, and on fol. 194^r there is a simple image in black ink which depicts a single figure filling a cup with money from a treasury (fig. 3.24).¹⁰⁷⁰ This figure is clearly not tonsured, implying that the blame for the robbery lay outside the monastic community of Westminster Abbey – an unsurprising viewpoint for a fellow monastic community. These examples show that the theft and subsequent imprisonment of numerous monks had left a mark on the broader monastic community. The extant evidence suggests that at least some of the monks of Westminster were guilty, the robbery was an ‘inside job,’ and the monastic community shifted the blame to fall more squarely on the shoulders of members of the laity.

In the original context of her cult in Conques, Sainte Foy can be seen as standing for clerical autonomy against secular powers – a fitting patron for a monastic community who had recently been subject to a secular criminal investigation. However, it is possible that this aspect of the saint had not made the journey across the channel to England. There is evidence that some aspects of Sainte Foy and her legend were modified during this part of the transmission – most notably the removal of joking miracles from a twelfth century *passionale* from Canterbury, British Library MS Arundel 91.¹⁰⁷¹ If this was the case, who was the Sainte Foy the monks of Westminster knew c. 1310?

While Foy has vestiges of an earlier cult in and around London, which will now be examined, her utility to the monks at Westminster seems to reflect the tension the community face just following the robbery of 1303. It is worth noting that Sainte Foy’s feast

¹⁰⁶⁸ Matthew Paris, *Flores Historiarum*, vol. III, Henry Richards Luard (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 115-7.

¹⁰⁶⁹ British Library, MS Cotton Nero D II, ‘Chronicle of Rochester Cathedral Priory to 1377’, fols. 2-214, c. 1100–c. 1650.

¹⁰⁷⁰ British Library, Cotton MS Nero D II, ‘Chronicle of Rochester Cathedral Priory’, fol. 194^r, c. 1100–c. 1650, <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_nero_d_ii_f002r> [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹⁰⁷¹ British Library, MS Arundel 91, 1st quarter of the twelfth century.

was marked at Westminster prior to the robbery, as her feast is included on fol. 9^v (fig. 3.25) of the Westminster Psalter, c. 1200–1250.¹⁰⁷² While it is included in the calendar, it is not marked as a major feast for the abbey, which suggests that Foy did not have any great significance at the abbey. Binski has even suggested that the cult at Westminster may date back to “the first Norman abbots.”¹⁰⁷³ It has even been suggested by Borenius that Foy was a patron saint of London, although it is unclear on what evidence this is based.¹⁰⁷⁴ Arcoid, a canon of St Paul’s in London, in his miracles of Erkenwald (c. 1140s), implies that there was an altar dedicated to Sainte Foy in the crypt at St Paul’s by the time of Saint Erkenwald’s translation before 1107.¹⁰⁷⁵ Erkenwald’s sepulchre is described as being “on the right side of the altar of St Faith, virgin and martyr.”¹⁰⁷⁶ Thacker notes that in the liturgical calendar, Sainte Foy was “entered in black,” likely indicating that it was not a major feast.¹⁰⁷⁷ Additionally, a parish church dedicated to Sainte Foy was founded during the tenth or eleventh century near Saint Paul’s Cathedral, which was later demolished c. 1255 due to the expansion of the cathedral.¹⁰⁷⁸ Combined with the evidence for devotion to Sainte Foy

¹⁰⁷² British Library, MS Royal 2 A XXII, ‘The Westminster Psalter’, c. 1200-c. 1250, fol. 9^v <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_2_a_xxii> [accessed 26 May 2021].

¹⁰⁷³ Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, p. 168.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Tancred Borenius, ‘The Murders of St Thomas Becket in Popular Tradition’, *Folklore* 43.2 (1932), p. 176.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Alan Thacker, ‘The Cult of Saints and the Liturgy’, in in *St Paul’s: the cathedral church of London 604-2004*, Derek Keene, Arthur Burns and Andrew Saint (eds.) (London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 117.

¹⁰⁷⁶ “In dextro latere altaris sancta fidis uirginis et martyris”, *The Saint of London: The Life and Miracles of St. Erkenwald – Text and Translation*, E. Gordon Whatley (ed. and trans.) (Binghampton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1989), p. 158.

¹⁰⁷⁷ This calendar is the earliest surviving one from St Paul’s and was copied into a twelfth century manuscript, BNF lat. 10433. Thacker, ‘The Cult of Saints and the Liturgy’, p. 117.

¹⁰⁷⁸ The fire of 1087 would have provided a potential opportunity for the introduction of new saints’ cults in London. After the demolition of the parish church, a chapel in the crypt of the rebuilt Saint Paul’s was dedicated to Saint Faith and used by the parishioners. This became known as Saint Faith under Saint Paul’s. It was demolished after the Great Fire of London in 1666 and was joined with the nearby parish of Saint Augustine’s, Watling Street. Limited information regarding this foundation survives unfortunately, however it is worth noting that Saint Faith, the patron saint of prisoners, had a church dedicated to her so close to Newgate Prison. Additionally, at least some processions occurred between St Paul’s and Westminster Abbey, such as that of Edward I’s body which stopped for one night at St Paul’s before being taken to Westminster and the procession of the Holy Blood relic when it was acquired by Henry III. See <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/new-history-london/pp614-639>> [accessed 1 July 2021]; W. H. St. John Hope, ‘On the Funeral Effigies of the Kings and Queens of England’, *Archaeologia* 60.2 (1907) 517-570; and Derek Keene, ‘From Conquest to Capital: St Paul’s c. 1100-1300’, in Derek Keene, Arthur Burns and Andrew Saint (eds.), *St Paul’s: the cathedral church of London 604-2004* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 31.

among a certain group of Anglo-Norman elites as discussed in the previous chapter, it is quite likely that there was some form of established devotion to Sainte Foy in London, potentially focused specifically around St Paul's, at the time. However, evidence of an existing cult to Sainte Foy in London does not necessarily preclude the robbery being the impetus behind the execution of the wall painting. It merely provides evidence that the monks of Westminster were – most likely – aware of Sainte Foy prior to 1303 and would have called on her as patron of captives during their hour of need.

Walter de Wenlok's abbacy was marred by two major incidents – the theft from the treasury in 1303 and a dispute with his prior in 1307.¹⁰⁷⁹ It has been previously argued that Abbot Wenlock (r. 1283–1307) “was not likely a man to inaugurate a costly decorative work.”¹⁰⁸⁰ There is limited extant evidence about his involvement with the decorative scheme at Westminster, and as E. H. Pearce noted “the records of his doings take little account of the fabric of the Abbey, its church and its extensive buildings.”¹⁰⁸¹ However, some evidence does survive, including evidence of his involvement with building work in St Margaret's Churchyard.¹⁰⁸² The strongest evidence, however, is the positioning of his tomb. Wenlok is buried, as recorded by Flete, “iuxta magnum altare versus austrum.”¹⁰⁸³ This positioning mirrors that of Abbot Ware (1258–1283) who is buried on the north side of the *cosmati* pavement. Ware's burial epitaph states “Abbas Richardus de Wara qui requiescit hic portat lapides quos hue portavit ab urbe.”¹⁰⁸⁴ Wenlok's burial position shows that he was willing to insert himself into a similar position as his predecessor, the man who carried the stones for

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Documents Illustrating the Rule of Walter de Wenlok, Abbot of Westminster, 1283-1307*, Barbara Harvey (ed.) (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society 1965), p. 1. For more on the dispute with Prior Hadham, see the same volume, pp. 17-24.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Noppen, ‘A Recent Discovery of Wall-Paintings in Westminster Abbey’, p. 303.

¹⁰⁸¹ Ernest Harold Pearce, *Walter de Wenlok, abbot of Westminster* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920), p. 81. See also *Documents Illustrating the Rule of Walter de Wenlok, Abbot of Westminster, 1283-1307*, Barbara Harvey (ed.) (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society 1965).

¹⁰⁸² Pearce, *Walter de Wenlok, abbot of Westminster*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁸³ “Next to the great altar on the southern side”, John Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, J. Armitage Robinson (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 119.

¹⁰⁸⁴ “Abbot Richard de Ware, who rests here, now bears those stones which he himself bore hither from the City [Rome]”, Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, p. 115

the pavement. Additionally, scientific analysis of the mortar used in the cosmati pavement by Siddal has shown that the “primary mix mortar,” which was used during the initial construction and early repairs, was used for Wenlok’s tomb.¹⁰⁸⁵ This suggests that Wenlok was interested in the decorative scheme, at least when it came to himself. And what would be a more fitting tribute to his abbacy than a wall painting of Sainte Foy, patron saint of prisoners, to provide thanks for the time he and his monks were wrongfully imprisoned?

Tension lingered even after the death of Abbot Wenlok on 25 December 1307. Evidence for this can be seen in the fact that when Kedynton (d. 1315) was elected as abbot in 1308, his temporalities were not restored until 1311 and a letter from Edward II 1310 chastised the behaviour of the monks.¹⁰⁸⁶ In addition to this, it is worth noting that the Sainte Foy mural is in a restricted area of the abbey, accessible only to the monks of the abbey, so would likely have been an area outside royal control. While money appears to have been tight during his abbacy, as evidence by the need for a loan to pay for his own confirmation at Avignon in 1310, there was a brief period between 1311 and 1313 when Kedynton had the right to distribute residue profits from Queen Eleanor’s manors to the brethren at Westminster.¹⁰⁸⁷ Also, given the context of the abbey at the time, specifically the theft from the treasury, a message of clerical autonomy would make sense. Regardless of any implication in the robbery they may have had, the monks of Westminster still existed outside the world of the lay authorities, and the painting of Sainte Foy could serve as a reminder of that. This shows why the monastic community might continue to be interested in proclaiming

¹⁰⁸⁵ Ruth Siddall, ‘Medieval Mortars and the Gothic Revival: The Cosmati Pavement at Westminster Abbey’, 3rd Historic Mortars Conference, Glasgow, 11-14th September 2013, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Richard Newcourt, *Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense: an Ecclesiastical Parochial History of the Diocese of London*, vol. 1 (London: B. Mott, 1708), p. 715 and William Page (ed.), *A History of the County of London*, vol. 1: *London Within the Bars, Westminster and Southwark* (London: Victoria County History, 1909), pp. 433-457. *British History Online* <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/london/vol1/pp433-457>> [accessed 23 May 2021].

¹⁰⁸⁷ E. H. Pearce, *The monks of Westminster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916), p. 74. Pearce cites the muniments collection for this information, specifically Mun. 5672, which I have unfortunately been unable to consult due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Information on the loan can be found in *Calendar of Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol 2 1305-1342 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1895), p. 70, while details on the papal order for the money from the manors to be redirected in 1313, see p. 118 in the same volume.

their clerical autonomy, even after the official proceedings surrounding the 1303 theft had been resolved. This was a terrible time in the history of Westminster Abbey – perhaps even one of the lowest points for its medieval community.

None of Richard de Kedynton's household accounts survive, and to quote Harvey, "even minister's accounts for the abbot of Westminster' manors are scarce between 1307 and 1320."¹⁰⁸⁸ This could provide a potential explanation for why no written records of the painting's execution survive. Kedynton seems to have held his predecessor Walter in some esteem, as the *Flores Historiarum* states "in omnibus actibus suis palam acquisivit et exhibuit suo praedecessori laudis titulum et honoris."¹⁰⁸⁹ As such, it would make sense that he would want to commemorate Wenlok and the release of him and his monks from wrongful imprisonment. As such, I would suggest that the wall painting of Sainte Foy was initially commissioned, and potentially paid for, by Walter de Wenlok, but executed during the abbacy of Richard de Kedynton.

4.5 Relics and the Reciprocal Gaze

One of the problems raised repeatedly regarding the Sainte Foy wall painting is that the corresponding altar has no relics. In fact, there is no record that Westminster Abbey had any relics of Sainte Foy at all. However, this does not necessarily mean that the image was without power, an idea which will now be explored in greater depth. To quote Bynum, "medieval devotional objects [...] are *themselves* powerful exactly because they are a presence that holds absence within itself, a dissimilitude that is, *as what it is*, similar to what it represents."¹⁰⁹⁰ This section will argue that by using Foy's face as a signifier, the wall painting is able to tap into the power of the reciprocal gaze evident in the Foy reliquary, and as such is able to access the power and authority of the saint without the need for relics.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Documents Illustrating the Rule of Walter de Wenlok, Abbot of Westminster, 1283-1307*, Barbara Harvey (ed.) (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society 1965), p. 15.

¹⁰⁸⁹ "In all his actions he openly gained and presented his predecessor's praise distinction and honour", Paris, *Flores Historiarum*, vol. III, p. 140.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Dissimilar Similitudes: Devotional Objects in Late Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), p. 44.

The lack of relics was a hurdle for Sainte Foy at Westminster, but also within Christianity more broadly when it came to figures such as the Virgin Mary and Christ who left behind no bodily relics due to their ascension to heaven. In response, contact relics were used, such as Mary's clothing, and bodily parts and fluids collected during their lifetime, such as Mary's breast milk.¹⁰⁹¹ Lack of conventional relics was clearly not an impediment to devotion. Another useful comparison here is the discovery of relics within a statue of the Virgin at Vézelay between 1160 and 1165. As Freedberg notes, prior to the statue's damage in a fire and the subsequent restoration, its function as a reliquary, and thereby the relics within it, had been forgotten.¹⁰⁹² Elsewhere, there were other *Sedes Sapientiae*, wooden statues of the Madonna in majesty, which contained no relics at all.¹⁰⁹³ And yet, these images, still had power.

Another saint who lacked relics, not just at a specific site but anywhere, was the late antique cult of Demetrios in Thessaloniki.¹⁰⁹⁴ Skedros has previously suggested that this lack of relics enabled Demetrios "to become more than a witness of the faith – to become a civic and religious symbol for the city and the people of Thessaloniki."¹⁰⁹⁵ For Skedros, the lack of relics which could be dispersed elsewhere kept veneration of the saint within the city.¹⁰⁹⁶ Instead of veneration which was centred around a relic, veneration to Demetrios instead focused on a ciborium in the nave of the basilica in Thessaloniki dedicated to Demetrios.¹⁰⁹⁷ Miracles could also be granted by the saint through his appearance in visions, or simply being present in his church.¹⁰⁹⁸ Demetrios was also depicted in mosaics, which, according to

¹⁰⁹¹ Jan M. Ziolkowski, *The Juggler of Notre Dame and the Medievalizing of Modernity*, vol. 4 *Picture That: Making a Show of the Jongleur* (Cambridge: OpenBook Publishers, 2018), p. 175.

¹⁰⁹² David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 94.

¹⁰⁹³ Freedberg, p. 96. For more on *sedes sapientiae*, see Forsyth, *Throne of Wisdom*.

¹⁰⁹⁴ See James Constantine Skedros, 'St. Demetrios of Thessaloniki: Civic Patron and Divine Protectos (4th-7th c. CE)' (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1996), and Laura Veneskey, 'Truth and Mimesis in Byzantium: A Speaking Reliquary of St. Demetrios in Thessaloniki', *Art History* 42.1 (2019), pp. 16-39

¹⁰⁹⁵ James Constantine Skedros, 'St. Demetrios of Thessaloniki: Civic Patron and Divine Protectos (4th-7th c. CE)' (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1996), p. 109.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 'St. Demetrios of Thessaloniki', p. 113.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

Skedros, “having now become an object of holiness itself, the icon stands in place of other objects as the intermediary of the holy.”¹⁰⁹⁹ It was “the absence of relics [that] provided the opportunity to create substitute avenues through which the saint could become present.”¹¹⁰⁰ While this example is within a vastly different context to that of Sainte Foy at Westminster, it serves to show once more that the lack of relics was not necessarily an impediment to devotion and veneration.

Closer both temporally and geographically is the veneration of Cuthbert (d. 687). Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167) recorded two miracles in Lothian at a church dedicated to the saint.¹¹⁰¹ To quote Crumplin, “it seems in the absence of relics, the feast day was increasingly becoming a suitable focus for miracles.”¹¹⁰² Another instance is that of Katherine of Alexandria, who had no relics in England before c. 1100, and only secondary ones after that.¹¹⁰³ As such, the dispersal of the cult was instead dependent on hagiography, liturgy and artistic representation. For Christine Walsh, this emphasised the “local nature of each point of veneration.”¹¹⁰⁴ This in some ways led to an “anglicisation” of Katherine, an argument Ashley has also made regarding Sainte Foy.¹¹⁰⁵ Clearly, relics were not always necessary for saintly power to be accessed.

As previously shown, relics and reliquaries can “collapse time and space”, and through this they can become one.¹¹⁰⁶ The “objects and the devotions that accrue around them both collapse and maintain the distinction between earth and heaven.”¹¹⁰⁷ Is it possible for this collapse to go further? For visual representations of the relic and the reliquary to

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 131.

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 134.

¹¹⁰¹ Sally Crumplin, ‘Modernizing St Cuthbert: Reginald of Durham’s Miracle Collection’, *Studies in Church History* 41 (2005), p. 190

¹¹⁰² Ibid., p. 190.

¹¹⁰³ Christine Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe* (London: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 97-8.

¹¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 98.

¹¹⁰⁵ Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe*, p. 99. and Kathleen Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints* (Routledge, 2021), p. 67

¹¹⁰⁶ Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein, ‘Introduction’ in *Saints and Sacred Matter*, p. 8.

¹¹⁰⁷ Bynum, *Dissimilar Similitudes*, p. 43.

become one with them? As the relic and the reliquary become one, they both become imbued with power and authority. A painting that echoes the reliquary, and therefore also the relic, can also take on some of that power and authority. As has been shown previously, Foy as a virgin martyr was physically present on earth within her relics. The golden reliquary statue at Conques visually transformed these bones, allowing people to see the glorious matter which they truly were. This reliquary, in particular the face and its gaze, therefore became a sign to indicate the saint. By invoking this face, one of terrifying blankness, the wall painting at Westminster (and others at Horsham) are able to tap into the power and authority of the saint herself, without the need for relics. The painting reminds us of the reliquary, which in turn is a reminder of the saint herself.

As had been shown previously, part of what makes the reliquary of Sainte Foy unique, powerful, and memorable is her reused head, and specifically the gaze which emanates from it. This gaze is made present in the Westminster wall painting of Sainte Foy as well. Like the reliquary statue, the wall painting stares back at the viewer, positioned at an angle above. Like the reliquary statue, she has a small severe mouth, square jaw, and strong brows. While the painting does not *represent* the reliquary, it acts to *remind* us of it. And through this dispersal, the image retains its power, because as part of a relic-based system of meanings and signs, “unity is forged rather than lost in dispersal.”¹¹⁰⁸

Within the wall painting, Foy’s gaze also acts as a warning, or even a security system. As Jaeger states, “gazing creates being.”¹¹⁰⁹ By looking at the Westminster wall painting, Sainte Foy is in a sense activated. Vision, in the medieval period, was a “supremely active power” according to Michael Camille.¹¹¹⁰ Foy becomes, but only through being viewed. Once seen, the painting becomes Foy, protector of treasure. In this sense, the wall

¹¹⁰⁸ Cynthia Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect: enshrining the sacred object* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017), p. 47.

¹¹⁰⁹ C. Stephen Jaeger, *Enchantment: On Charisma and the Sublime in the Arts of the West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 202.

¹¹¹⁰ Michael Camille, *Gothic Art: Visions and Revelations of the Medieval World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), p. 19.

painting acts as a final defence against theft. For Cynthia Hahn, “gaze [is] a generative process, one that creates self through its apprehension of the other” – and within this context, the self created is one of a potential thief who is reminded of why becoming such a thing would not be in their best interests.¹¹¹¹ The wall painting can therefore be seen to work in tandem with the corbel heads’ watchful gaze, as noted by Milner.¹¹¹² The two gazes could work together to “consolidate the warning” against theft.¹¹¹³ As such, the painting can be seen not just as an *ex voto* which thanks the saint for her intervention in the past; it is also an image which operates in the present and the future as well. It serves to warn those in the present away from theft, and also to provide insurance that the abbey is a suitable place to keep treasure in the future. The painting looks forward, as well as back.

It is also worth noting the significance of Sainte Foy’s depiction on a pedestal – in the manner of a cult statue – at Westminster. As Belting noted, there was an “assimilation of statue and reliquary.”¹¹¹⁴ To quote Belting further,

the statue represented this body of the saint and, as it were, was itself the saint’s new body, which, like a living body, could also be set into motion in a procession.

The bodylike sculpture made the saint physically present, while the golden surface made the saint appear as a supernatural person with a heavenly aura.¹¹¹⁵

As a painting of a statue, the wall painting could not be used in processions, but it could still act within the most important liturgical ceremonies performed at the altar. Additionally, the gilding on the painting would have, in turn, reflect Foy’s heavenly aura. The canopy also serves to act as a frame for the saintly figure, not unlike her depiction on the tomb of Prior Geoffrey Langley at Horsham. This frame serves to create both an interior and exterior, to confine the power of the painting, in the same way that a reliquary encloses and defines the

¹¹¹¹ Cynthia Hahn, ‘Vision’, in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, Conrad Rudolph (ed.) (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 48.

¹¹¹² Milner, ‘St Faith’s Chapel at Westminster Abbey’. p. 82.

¹¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹¹¹⁴ Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, p. 299.

¹¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

space of a relic. As Hahn has stated, “the Greek word for frame, *synthesis*, suggests a transformative process for the relic that transcends mere encirclement.”¹¹¹⁶ The Westminster wall painting of Sainte Foy can almost be seen as a reliquary statue, flattened into two dimensions. And yet, the image of Sainte Foy has also transcended beyond that of her reliquary. Sainte Foy’s power is no longer wedded solely to her statue; in England, it is reactivated through her gaze in at least two Gothic wall paintings. And through this gaze, Sainte Foy has acquired a transmittable power.

This chapter has endeavoured to provide a more secure date for the wall painting of Sainte Foy at Westminster Abbey. It has done so by examining the stylistic and technical details of the painting in comparison with other works of the same period, or those from the same area. Stylistic comparisons have focused on the Crucifixion, because the wealth of surviving images provide greater points of comparison. I would assign the painting a date of c. 1310, given the stylistic comparisons and technical analysis. I have also attempted to situate the wall painting more closely within its context at Westminster Abbey, following Binski’s hypothesis and looking in greater detail at the circumstances surrounding the robbery of 1303, its pretext and aftermath. Through this, I have attempted to explain why the choice of Sainte Foy for a monumental wall painting in this space – the sacristy guarded by the Westminster monks – is not unusual but was instead a logical choice for her role as a rescuer of captives, protector of treasure and as a figure of clerical autonomy. Finally, I have attempted to show how the painting could function without relics due to its role as a reminder of the reliquary statue of Sainte Foy and the transmission of her saintly power from her reliquary statue to her gaze.

¹¹¹⁶ Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect*, p. 78.

5. Conclusion

After the initial outpouring of hagiographic material at Conques, which admittedly spanned a century, production halted.¹¹¹⁷ Her position as an intercessor for those on campaign in Spain had shifted to the Virgin of Rocamadour.¹¹¹⁸ Conques' geographic position made it increasingly unviable as a pilgrimage site as the pilgrimage industry became increasingly urban. The abbey's importance diminished and in 1346 there were only 36 monks present.¹¹¹⁹ During the Wars of Religion, the abbey was repeatedly raided and even set on fire in 1568. It was not until the nineteenth century that a renewed interest in Sainte Foy occurred, firstly from a purely architectural perspective under Inspector General of Historical Monuments Prosper Mérimée, and then from a religious perspective following the intervention of Ernest Bourret, Bishop of Rodez.

At Horsham St Faith, during the suppression of the monasteries, the priory was valued at £163 13s annually, with four priests living at the priory and a total of eighteen others who were dependent on the house.¹¹²⁰ Following its suppression, the priory building along with its lands and the manors of Horsham and West Rudham were granted to Richard Southwell, one of the suppression commissioners for Norfolk.¹¹²¹ His grandson, the poet Richard Southwell, inherited the property and was later executed in 1595 for his religious beliefs, and canonized in the Catholic Church as one of the forty English martyrs in 1970.¹¹²² The wall paintings were covered by panelling, probably during the Jacobean period, and not rediscovered until lightning hit the house in 1924 and further restoration work was undertaken in 1971.¹¹²³

¹¹¹⁷ Esther Cohen, 'In the name of God and of profit: pilgrimage in southern France in the late middle ages' (Ph.D. diss, Brown university, 1976), p. 185.

¹¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 187.

¹¹¹⁹ Ashley, *The Cults of Sainte Foy and the Cultural Work of Saints*, p. 18.

¹¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 346-349.

¹¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 346-349.

¹¹²² Nancy Pollard Brown, 'Southwell, Robert [St Robert Southwell]', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* < <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/26064> > [accessed 1 July 2021].

¹¹²³ Donovan Purcell, 'The Priory of Horsham St Faith and Its Wall Paintings', *Norfolk Archaeology, or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to the Antiquities of the County of Norfolk* 35 (1973), p. 470.

At Westminster Abbey, even the dedication of Sainte Foy's altar was forgotten. It became conflated with the Chapel of Saint Blaise which had been erected in the transept across the entrance to St Faith's Chapel.¹¹²⁴ John Dart (d. 1730) makes no reference to any chapel or altar dedicated to Foy in his list of those he could "find [evidence] formerly of them."¹¹²⁵ The space itself was at some point transformed into a lumber room and the window blocked up.¹¹²⁶ The wall painting was first reidentified as that of Sainte Foy, on the basis of the grill, in 1812 by John Milner, although the chapel itself was still called St Blaise's.¹¹²⁷ Gone were the days when Sainte Foy was a powerful protector of the abbey and its monks.

This thesis has attempted to trace the visual development of the cult of Sainte Foy from its origins in Agen to its cult centre in Conques, France, to Foy's inclusion in the decorative scheme at the royal abbey of Westminster. It has done so by addressing three key case studies related to her material culture – the reliquary statue at Conques, the wall paintings at the Priory of Horsham St Faith, and the wall painting at Westminster Abbey, as well as the contexts which surrounded these specific outbursts of devotion. In doing so it has attempted to connect the often separate scholarship on the material in France and England. This thesis has attempted to show that there was continuity and connection across the Channel, as well as, particularly in the later period, differences between the two.

This thesis has consistently argued for the importance of considering individual saints' cults and how they still act as a fruitful area for research. Only three case studies have been considered, and yet, these scant examples have revealed a great deal. Interrogation of a cult on a micro level, as shown in this thesis, can have broader macro implications. Study of saints' cults, in this case Foy's, can shed further light on a wide range

¹¹²⁴ The chapel was erected at some point before 1386. See Howe, 'Painting and Patronage', p. 6.

¹¹²⁵ John Dart, *Westmonasterium Or the History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St Peters Westminster*, vol. I (London: J. Cole, 1723), pp. 39-42.

¹¹²⁶ Henry Poole, 'Westminster Abbey: The Lost Chapel of St Blaize', *The Antiquary* 3 (Jun. 1881), p. 244.

¹¹²⁷ Jacob Schnebbelie, 'Antient Painting of St Faith in Westminster Abbey', in *The Gentleman's Magazine* 91.2 (1821), p. 497.

of topics, from the development of artistic styles to perceptions of gender to the ritual performance of faith in different geographical regions.

Sainte Foy was deeply connected to the identity of those who patronised her images or prayed at her reliquary. Her cult and image were used to construct and maintain the identity of the patron, whether that be an aristocratic family such as the Fitzwalters or a monastic community such as the priory of Horsham St Faith or Westminster Abbey. By using Sainte Foy, patrons were able to establish their own legitimacy within their broader communities – Foy became the means by which people could assert their identity and authority. In addition, they were also able to manipulate Foy's image to best suit their own needs. These manipulations however remained connected to the original Foy developed at Conques – one who was a saviour of prisoners and protector of treasure. Such elements reaffirmed the legitimacy of those who patronised Foy. Through her, her patrons were able to show that their freedom and possession of treasure were legitimate, and even divinely approved. This work has therefore highlighted the importance of examining different saints' cults individually. The choice of saint and their deployment can shed light on what different religious patrons were hoping to achieve and what they wished to convey about their identity.

Not only has this thesis shown how Sainte Foy was used to project identity to others, it has also shown how Sainte Foy was used to develop a sense of internal identity. This can be most clearly seen at Westminster Abbey, where the inclusion of Foy in the decorative scheme acted as unifying force for the monastic community. This internal identity then in turn influenced the external identity they projected to others. A similar theme can be identified at both Conques and Horsham St Faith. At Conques, Foy was the very basis of the abbey's identity, power and authority, while at Horsham St Faith this construction of identity included not just the monks of the priory, but the founding family and their descendants as well. The role of Foy has shown how people in the medieval period used saints to define themselves both internally and externally, both to themselves and to others.

This study has also shown the value in examining saints' cults which may have been smaller, less important, or not universal. By examining religious devotion to a specific saint, in specific locations, we can gain further insight into all aspects of medieval devotion, including how devotion was used for different means, to create different perceptions, and to influence others. It also shows the value of considering the same saint in different locations. What is true of a saint in one place is not necessarily true in another. As such, cult devotion needs to be examined in its site-specific context. It is only through considering the site around which cult activity was based can it be fully understood. The development of the cult of Foy at Conques can only be fully understood within the socio-political context of the Rouergue during the ninth and tenth centuries. The cult's place at Horsham St Faith can only be understood when considered alongside the founding family of the priory, their desires, and the intersection of their interests with the monks of the priory. At Westminster, we see the most compelling argument that understanding site-specific circumstances are necessary to interrogate cult devotion – without the specific events of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the choice of devotion to Foy by the monastic community, and the wall painting itself, seem inexplicable. However, once the full social, political, and economic backdrop of the monastic community is considered, Foy's presence is not only explained, but Foy also becomes the logical choice for devotion at this time and in this place.

Furthermore, this thesis has considered the gendered element of the cult of Sainte Foy. This stems in part from her unique position as a young prepubescent girl at the time of her martyrdom, but also from the specific depiction of Foy in her reliquary. As these elements were established early on in the development of Foy's visual iconography, they can be seen reflected through later depictions. The role of the gaze, established with the reuse of an antique head for the reliquary, allowed Foy to access the power of visual conquest, a typically masculine form of power. This impacted later depictions of the saint and accounts for the frontal positioning of the saint seen at both Horsham St Faith and Westminster. The example of Sainte Foy shows that while there was a move towards the

depicted as decorous gentlewomen, there was still some variety in how precisely that was depicted. This can be seen elsewhere in the treatment of virgin martyrs in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* who are depicted not as examples for the laity, but rather as representations of God's power.¹¹²⁸ The role of the visual depictions of Sainte Foy discussed from Conques, Horsham St Faith, and Westminster can be seen as something similar. The positioning of the images makes them representations of power rather than examples of behaviour. At Conques, the reliquary's role as the public face of the abbey meant that Foy had to be a figure of power and authority. If she was not, the abbey had no power or authority itself. At Horsham St Faith, the positioning of the painting inside the refectory points towards how this was not a figure for lay emulation. The restricted area limits those who could see, and therefore choose to emulate, the figure depicted on the wall. Instead, the location acts as a filter, limiting those who could see her and choose to emulate her to the monks and specific people they allowed within their refectory. This selectiveness served to underline the priory's power and limit those who had access to the power of Sainte Foy. This can be seen extended even further at Westminster Abbey. Instead of being in an area where guests were welcomed, Foy was instead positioned in a purely monastic area. The power of Foy was limited to the monks and only they were appropriate people to emulate her.

Given this thesis's focus on monumental art, there are several elements of the cult of Sainte Foy which would benefit from further study. The examples considered within this thesis have all been, to a certain extent, public given this thesis's focus on monumental artwork. Examination of the difference between depiction of Foy in the public and private realms, such as wall paintings compared to private, individually owned manuscripts, could therefore shed further light on this topic. While depictions of Sainte Foy in manuscripts are not overly abundant, their examination would add a further dimension to our understanding of how Foy and her cult were perceived. Such study would help shed further light on the

¹¹²⁸ For more on this topic, see Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), particularly pp. 66-71

different way Foy was depicted to different audiences – lay, clerical, noble. Such research could be combined with study on the later written material about Sainte Foy, including Simon of Walsingham's work.

This thesis has attempted to trace the visual development of the cult of Sainte Foy from its origins in Agen to its cult centre in Conques, France, to Foy's inclusion in the decorative scheme at the royal abbey of Westminster. It has done so by addressing three key case studies related to her material culture – the reliquary statue at Conques, the wall paintings at the Priory of Horsham St Faith, and the wall painting at Westminster Abbey, as well as the contexts which surrounded these specific outbursts of devotion. In doing so it has attempted to connect the often separate scholarship on the material in France and England. This thesis has attempted to show that there was continuity and connection across the Channel, as well as, particularly in the later period, differences between the two. It has also shown how Foy can be a multivalent saintly figure, capable of meaning different things at once, and to different people. It has also explored the difficulty of representing this multifaceted nature within the visual realm.

As a whole, this thesis has shown how surviving examples of artwork need to be put into historical context to be fully understood. Wall paintings are not free standing, independent works of art devoid of context. After all, they are on walls, which are part of a building, which in turn served a function. It is only through examining the spaces and context which artworks were made in, and continue to exist in, that we can fully understand them. This approach has shown that the motivations behind devotion to a particular saint could vary across time and space. Different people at different times had different reasons why they placed their faith in Sainte Foy.

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Appendix 1



Fig. 1.1 Reliquary of Sainte Foy, c. 1000 with Gothic additions, Sainte-Foy-de-Conques, Conques



Fig. 1.2 Reliquary of Sainte Foy, side view, c. 1000 with Gothic additions, Sainte-Foy-de-Conques, Conques



Fig. 1.3 Essen Madonna, c. 980, Essen Cathedral

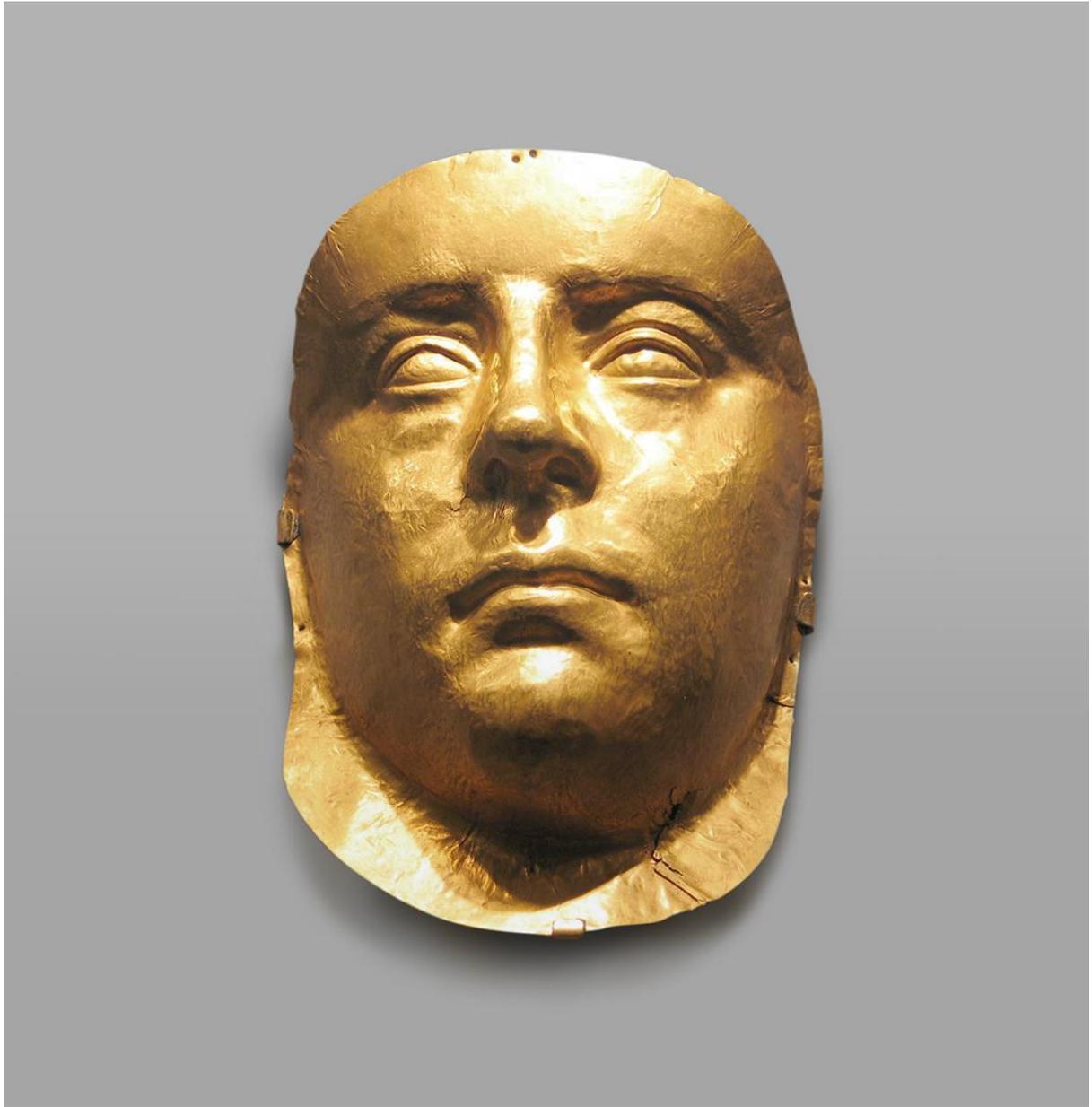


Fig. 1.4 Funerary Mask, 3rd Century, Saint Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, P.-1,



Fig. 1.5 Funerary mask (?), A.D. 200-400?, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 65.1310



Fig. 1.6 Mask, Trésor de Notre-Dame d'Alençon, 200-250, Louvre, Paris



Fig. 1.7 *Missorium* of Theodosius, 4th to 5th centuries, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid



Fig. 1.8 Articulate Ivory Doll, 3rd-4th century AD, Tarragona, Museu Nacional Arqueològic de Tarragona, MNAT P-12906



Fig. 1.9 The Felmingham Jupiter, Asset number 839198001, copper alloy sculpture, 2nd to 3rd centuries



Fig. 1.10 Herimann Cross, 11th century with Roman head, Kolumba Museum, Cologne

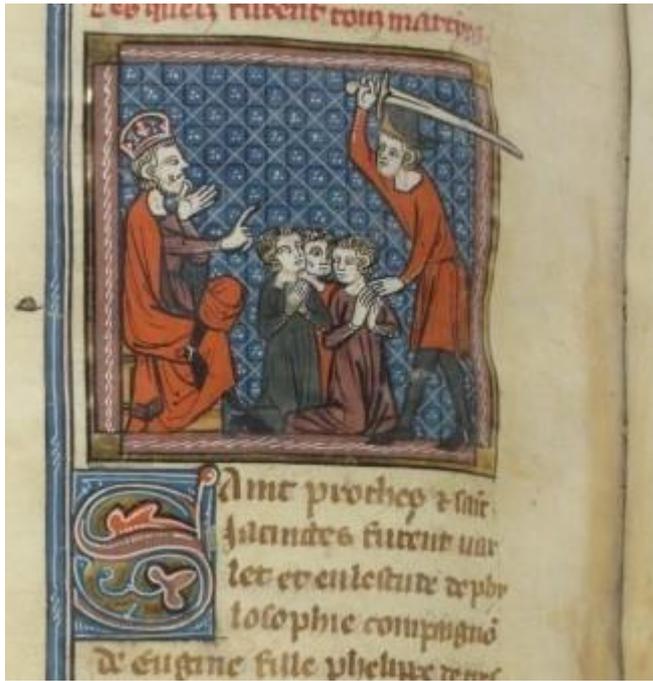


Fig. 1.11 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 185, 'La Legende des Saints', fol. 254^v, 14th century



Fig. 1.12 Tympanum, Last Judgement, c. 1124-1135, Sainte-Foy-de-Conques, Conques



Fig. 1.13 Tympanum, Last Judgement, bottom left, Sainte-Foy-de-Conques, Conques



Fig. 1.14 Tomb of Bego, c. 1031-1060, Sainte-Foy-de-Conques, Conques



Fig. 1.15 Portable Altar of Bego, c. 1100, Sainte-Foy-de-Conques, Conques



Fig. 1.16 Portable Altar, c. 1100, Sainte-Foy-de-Conques, Conques

Appendix 2



Fig. 2.1 Wall Painting, crucifixion from the ground level with decorative roundels below, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.2 Wall painting, crucifixion from the mezzanine level, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.3 manuscript illumination, Crucifixion, The John Rylands Library Latin MS 24, fol. 152^r, mid-thirteenth century



Fig. 2.4 Wall painting, Sainte Foy and crucifixion from ground level, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.5 Wall painting, Sainte Foy showing inset door and wall, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.6 Wall painting, detail of Foy's face and top of sceptre, showing details partially blocked by the later wall, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.7 Wall painting detail of Foy's torso, featuring hand and book, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.8 Wall painting, detail of Foy' legs, partially obscured by later masonry, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.9 Wall painting, foundation story, taken from mezzanine level, showing decorative roundels above and decorative arches below, c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.10 Wall painting, foundation story, taken from ground level, c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.11 Digitally stitched image of the entire foundation story, c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.12 Wall painting, first image of foundation story, 'Travel by Sea', c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.13 Colour edited image of fig. 2.11 showing detail of hull and sails, c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory

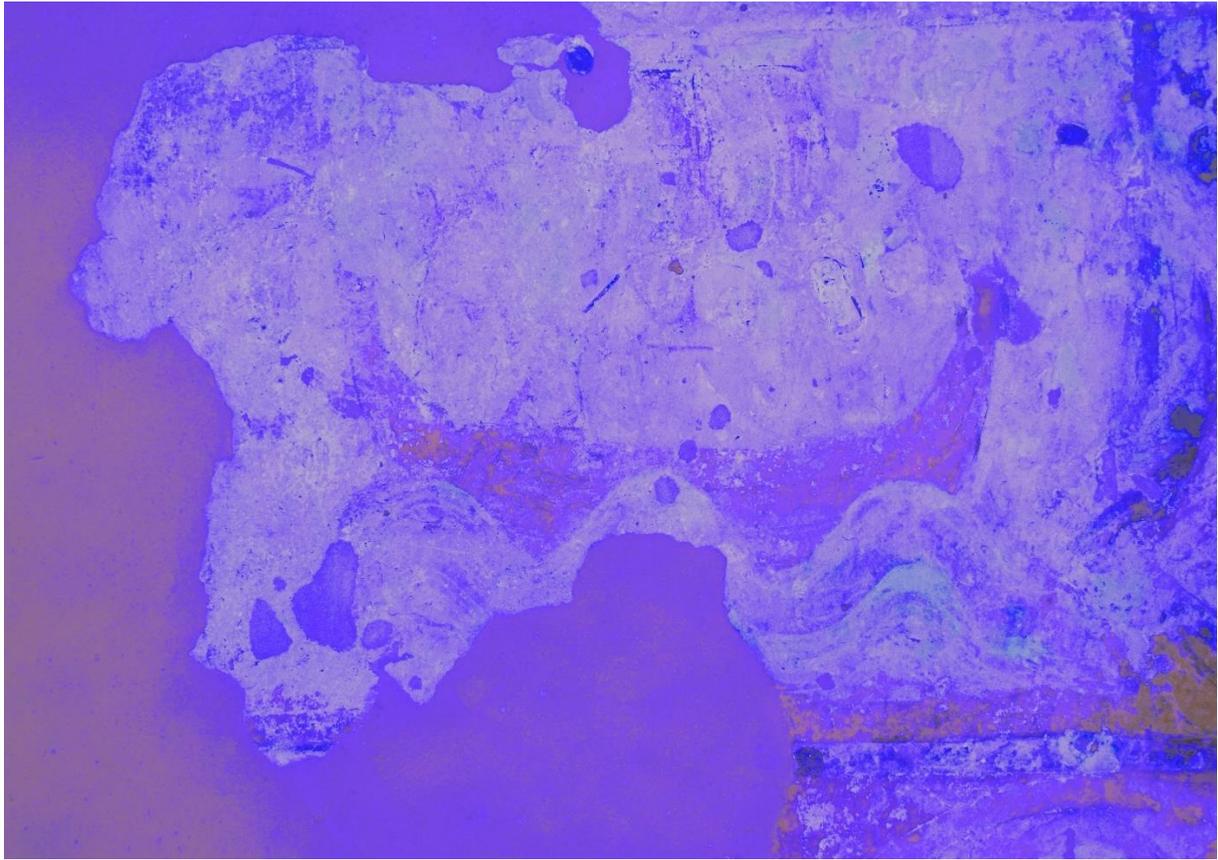


Fig. 2.14 Colour edited image of fig. 2.11, showing detail of faces visible on the boat, c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.15 Wall painting, second extant image in foundation sequence, 'Travel by Land', c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.16 Wall painting, continuation of the foundation story, 'Capture', c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.17 Wall painting, continuation of foundation story, 'Prayer for Release', c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory

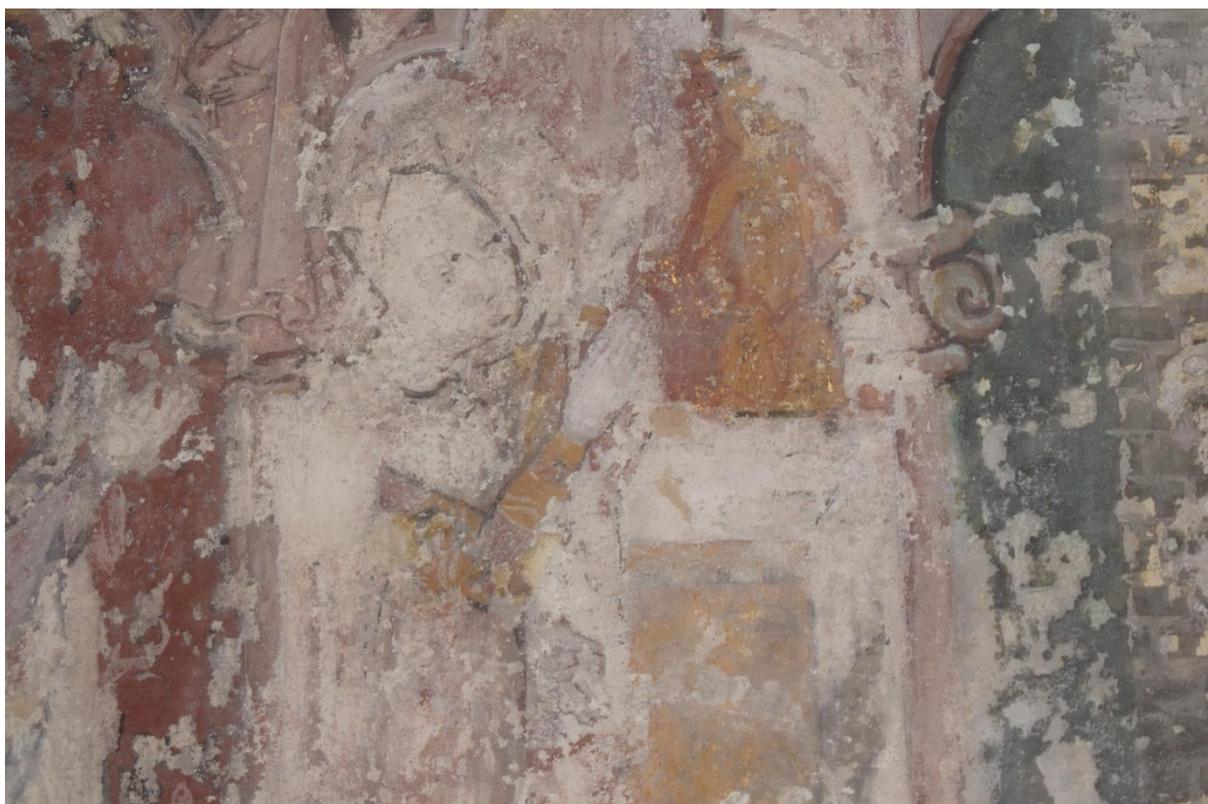


Fig. 2.18 Wall painting, detail of fig. 2.16 featuring golden reliquary statue, c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.19 Wall painting, continuation of foundation story, 'Rescue', c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.20 Wall painting, continuation of foundation story, 'Giving Thanks', c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.21 Wall painting, detail of fig. 2.19 featuring statue reliquary, c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.22 Wall painting, continuation of foundation scene, 'Return Journey', c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.23 Wall painting, continuation of the foundation story, 'Construction of the Priory', c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.24 manuscript illumination, detail of bas-de-page scene of Faith being beheaded, British Library Royal 2 B VII, 'The Queen Mary Psalter', fol. 270, 1310-1320, England



Fig. 2.25 wall painting, censing angel, c. 1250-1260, Ante-Reliquary Chapel, Norwich Cathedral

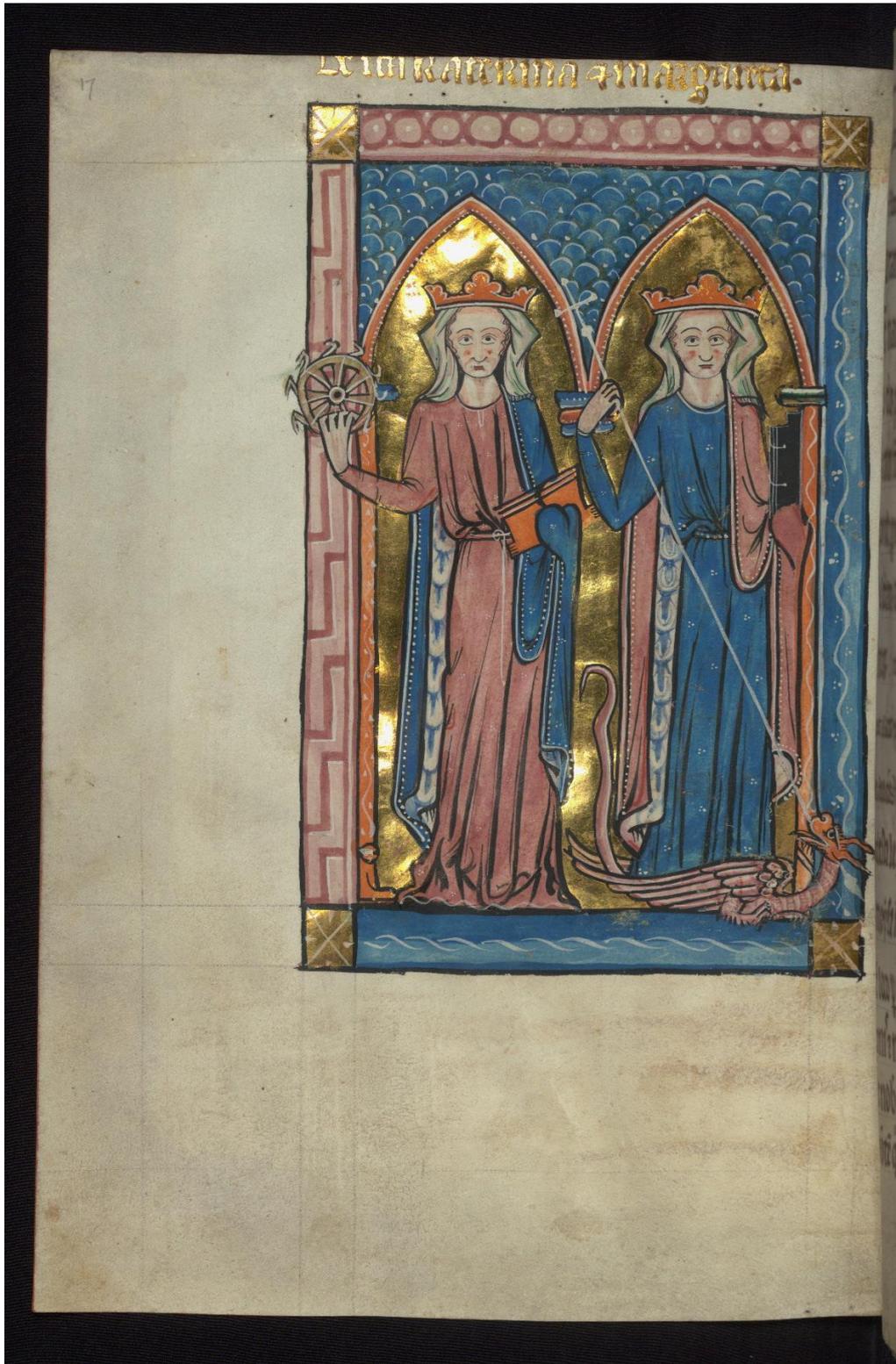


Fig. 2.26 manuscript illumination, Walters MS W.34, 'The Carrow Psalter', fol. 17r, Saints Catherine and Margaret, mid-thirteenth century



Fig. 2.27, *Wheel of Fortune*, wall painting, Rochester Cathedral, Kent, c. 1250.



Fig. 2.28 *Saint Margaret and the Dragon*, wall painting, South Newington, Oxfordshire, fourteenth century



Fig. 2.29, *Saint Catherine*, wall painting, Old Weston, Huntingdonshire, fourteenth century



Fig. 2.30 *St Thomas Becket*, wall painting, St Edmund's Church, Hauxton, Cambridgeshire, 13th century

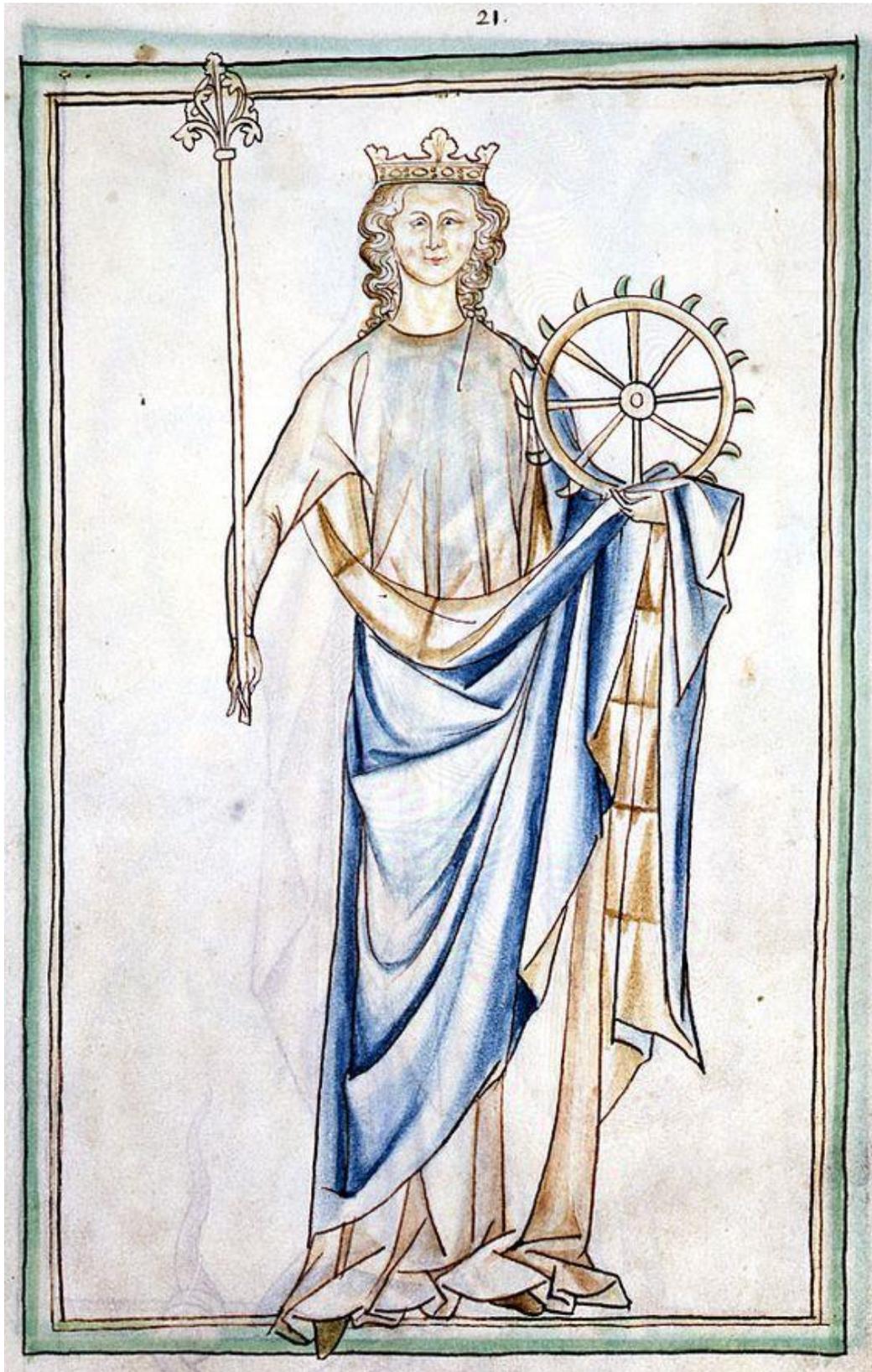


Fig. 2.31 manuscript illumination, Lambeth Palace Library MS 209, fol. 50r., St Katherine of Alexandria, late thirteenth century



Fig. 2.32 manuscript illumination, Lambeth Palace Library MS 209, fol. 50r., St Margaret of Antioch, late thirteenth century



Fig. 2.33 wall painting, unidentified male saint, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.34 wall painting, unidentified creature with feet of male saint, c. 1270s with later additions, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.35 *Figure in the Weighing of the Souls*, wall painting, Barton, Cambridgeshire, earlier fourteenth century



Fig. 2.36 *Saint George*, wall painting, Little Kimble, Buckinghamshire, fourteenth century

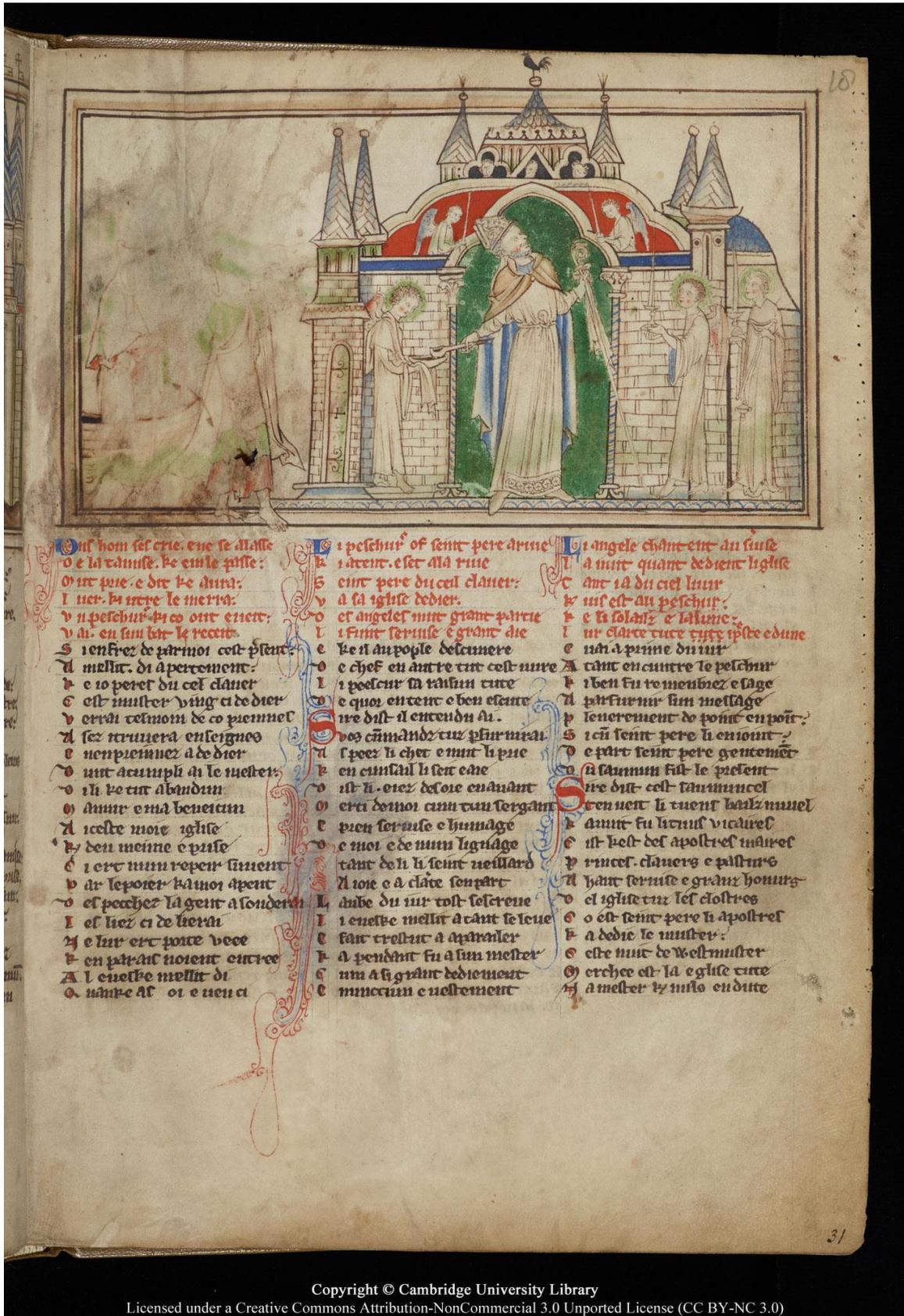


Fig. 2.37 St Peter consecrates the Abbey at Westminster, Cambridge University Library
Ee.3.59, fol. 18r



Fig. 2.38 example of moved masonry with decoration, unknown date, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.39 wall painting, decorative work on the opposite side of the wall with the crucifixion, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.40 wall painting, decorative painting abutting end of foundation story, unknown date, Horsham St Faith Priory



Fig. 2.41 wall painting, decorative arch underneath foundation story, c. 1270s, Horsham St Faith Priory

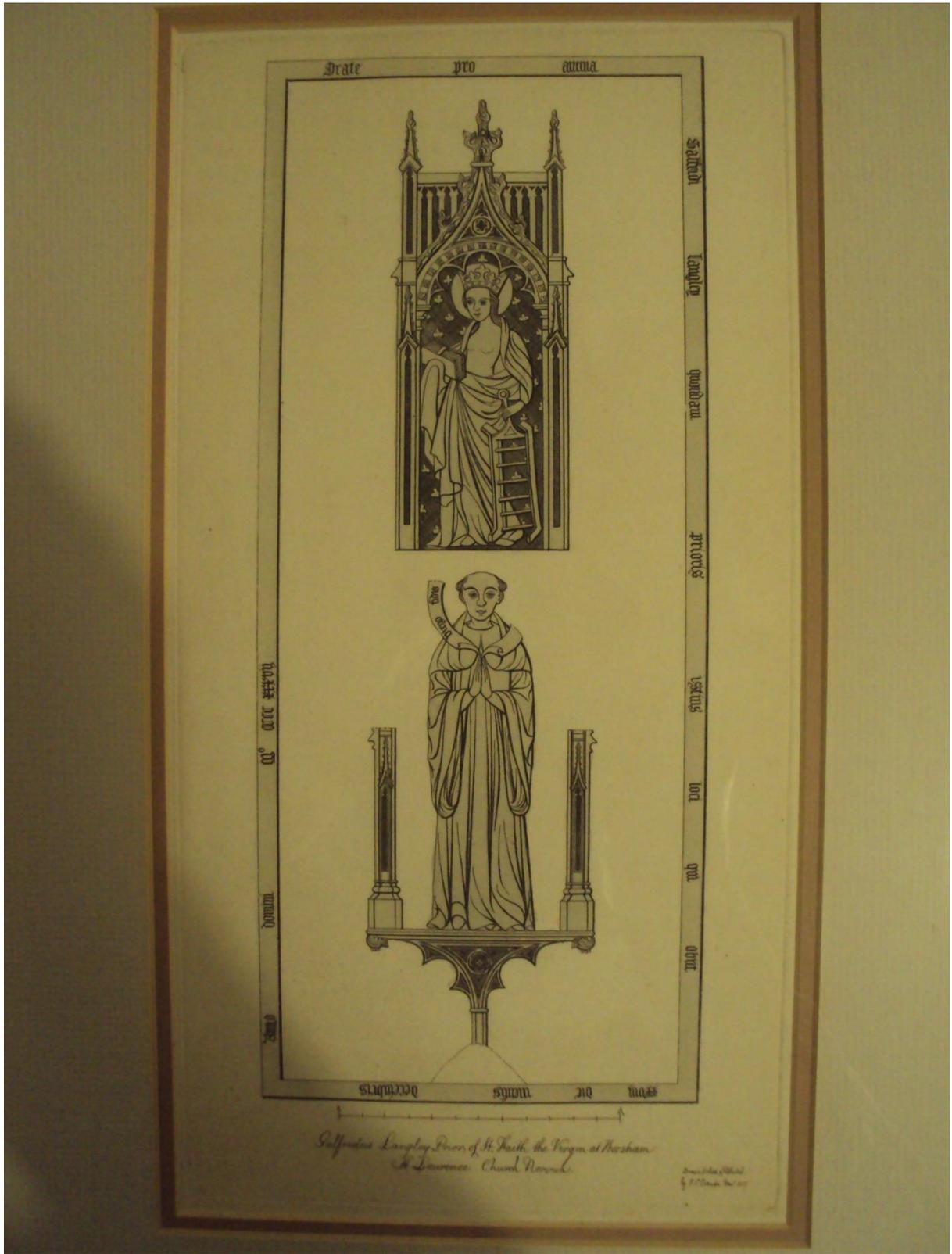


Fig. 2.42 An engraving of the funerary brass of Geoffrey Langley, John Sell Cotman, 1819



Fig. 2.43 *Judgement Scene*, Westminster Abbey Chapter House, c. 1400

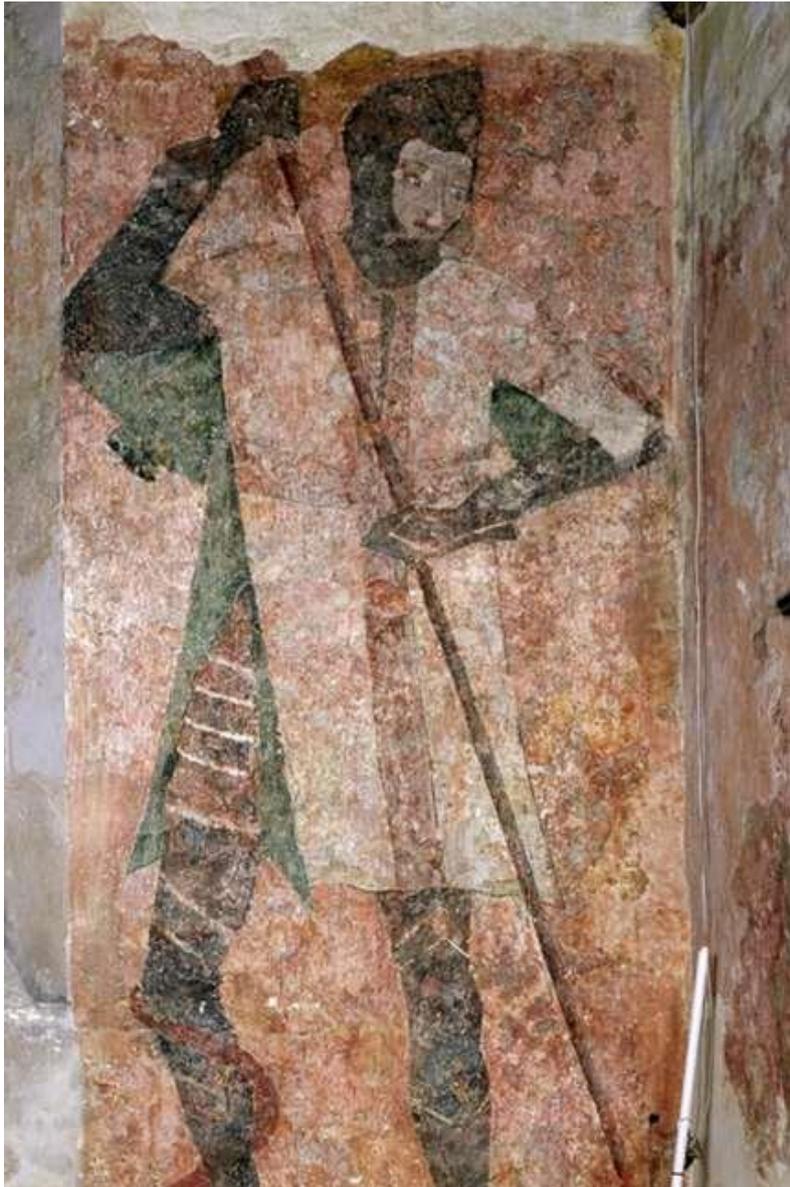


Fig. 2.44 wall painting, Saint George, Chapel of St Leonard, Farleigh Hungerford Castle, Somerset, 1426–1429



Fig. 2.45 wall painting, the martyrdom of St Edmund, c. 1450, St Peter and St Paul's Church, Pickering, North Yorkshire



Fig. 2.46 *Doom*, painting on panels, Dauntsey, Wiltshire, fourteenth and fifteenth century



Fig. 2.47 *Saint William of York*, wall painting, St Albans Cathedral, Hertfordshire, thirteenth century with fifteenth century modifications

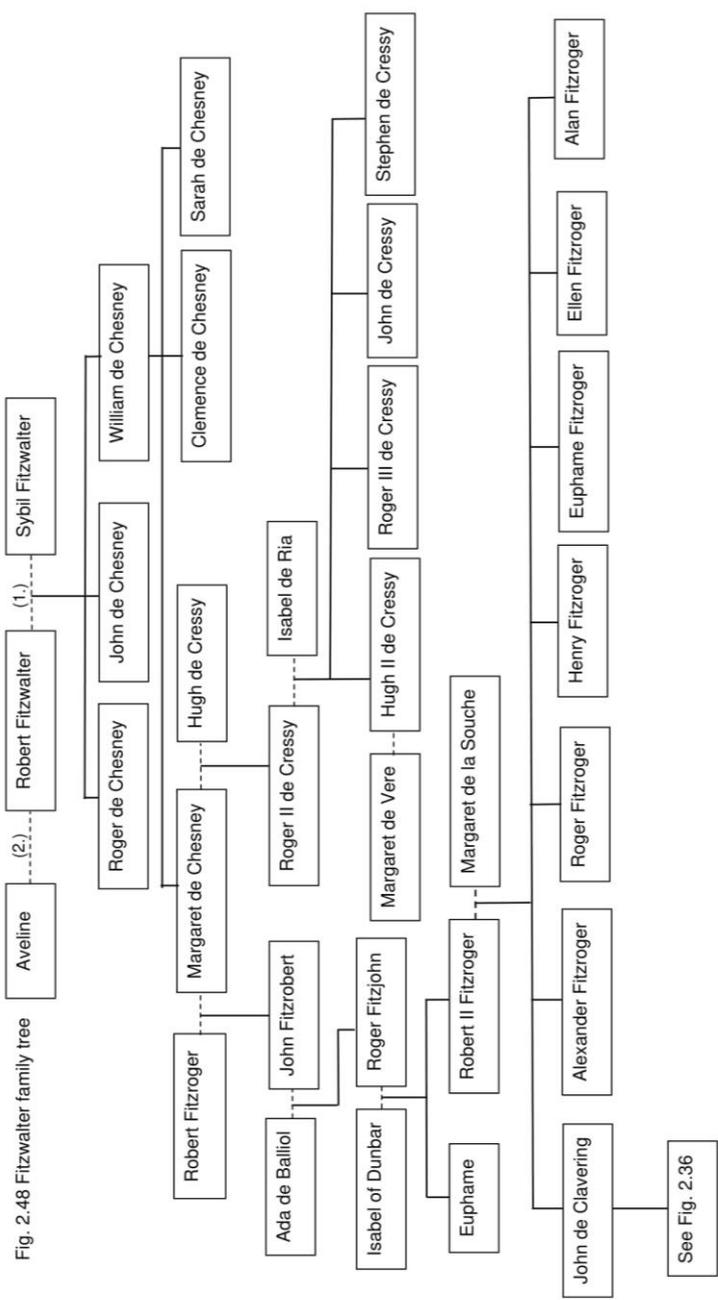
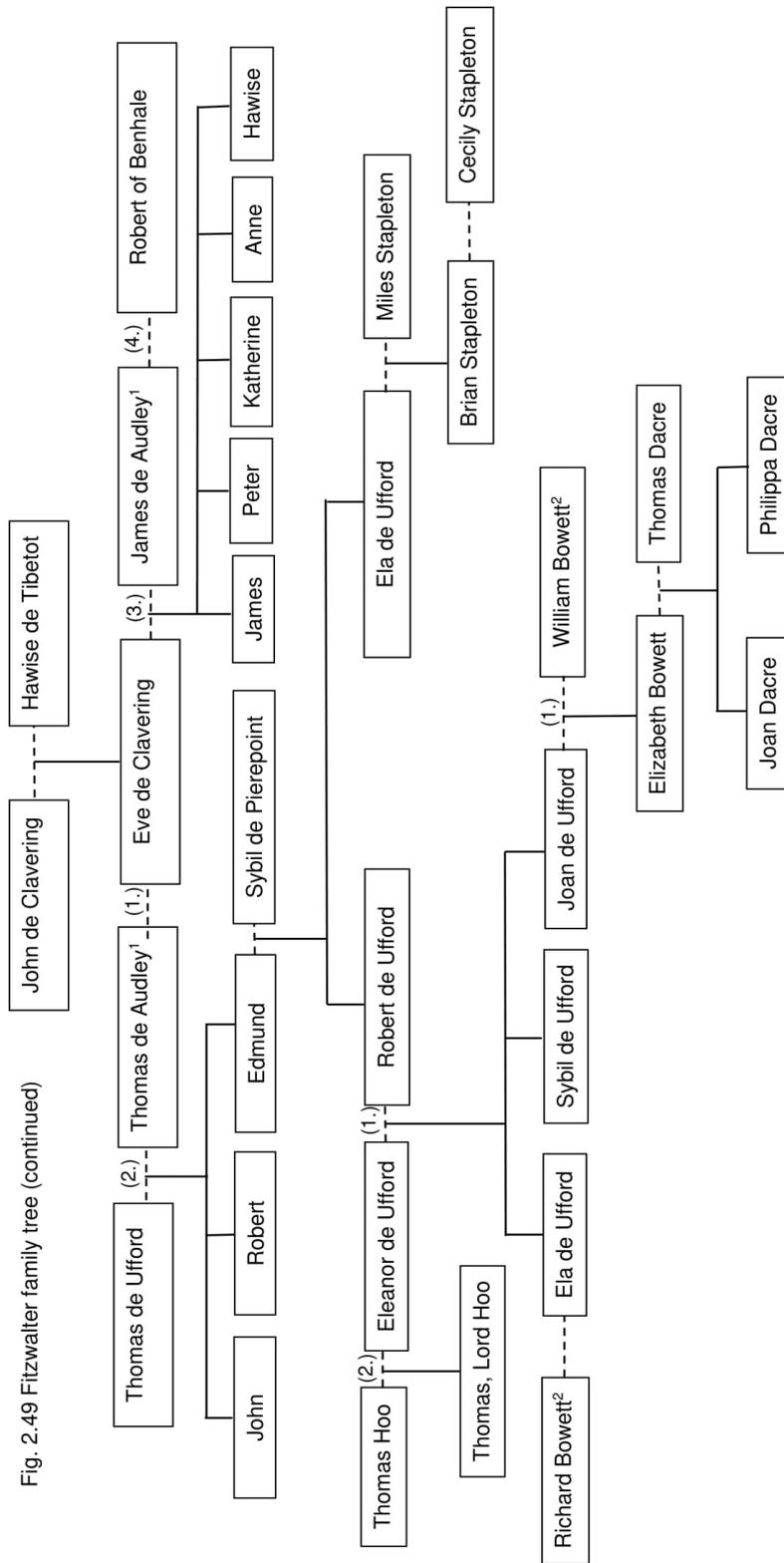


Fig. 2.48 Fitzwater family tree

See Fig. 2.36

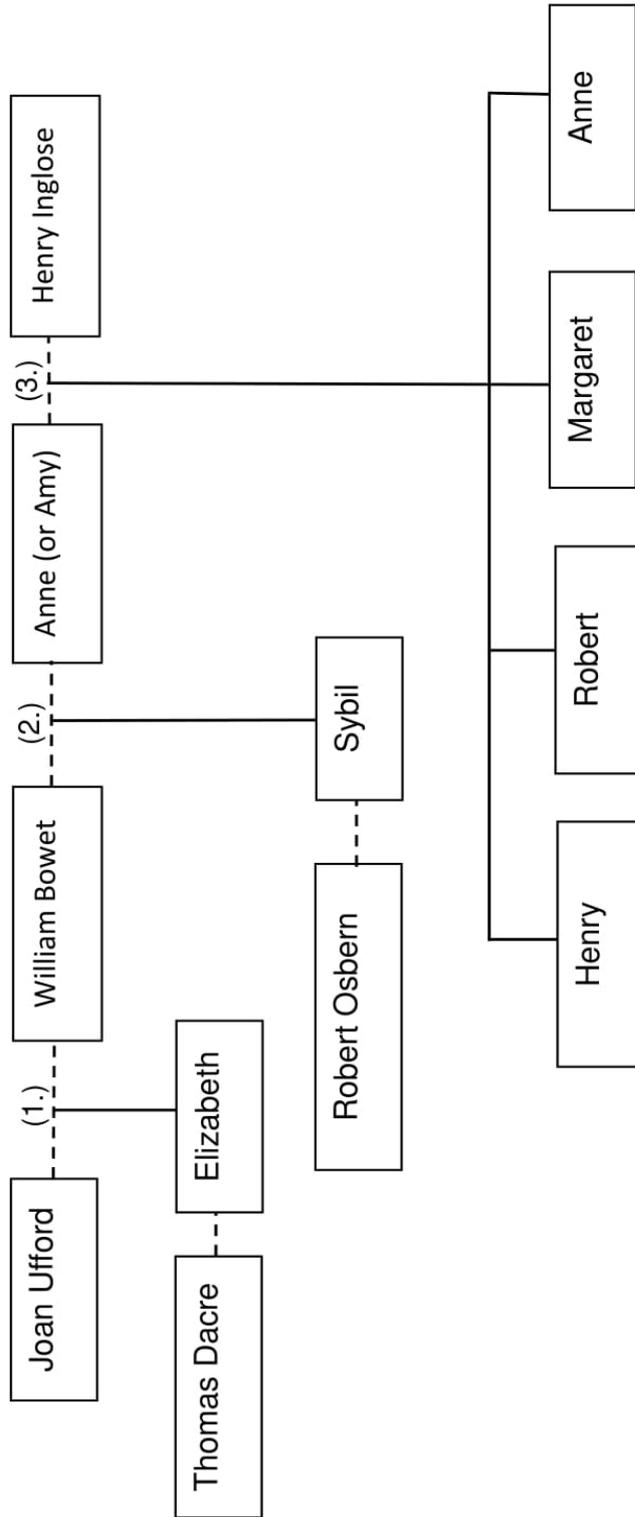
Fig. 2.49 Fitzwalter family tree (continued)



¹ Thomas and James de Audley were cousins

² Richard and William Bowett were brothers

Fig. 2.50 Inglose family tree



Appendix 3

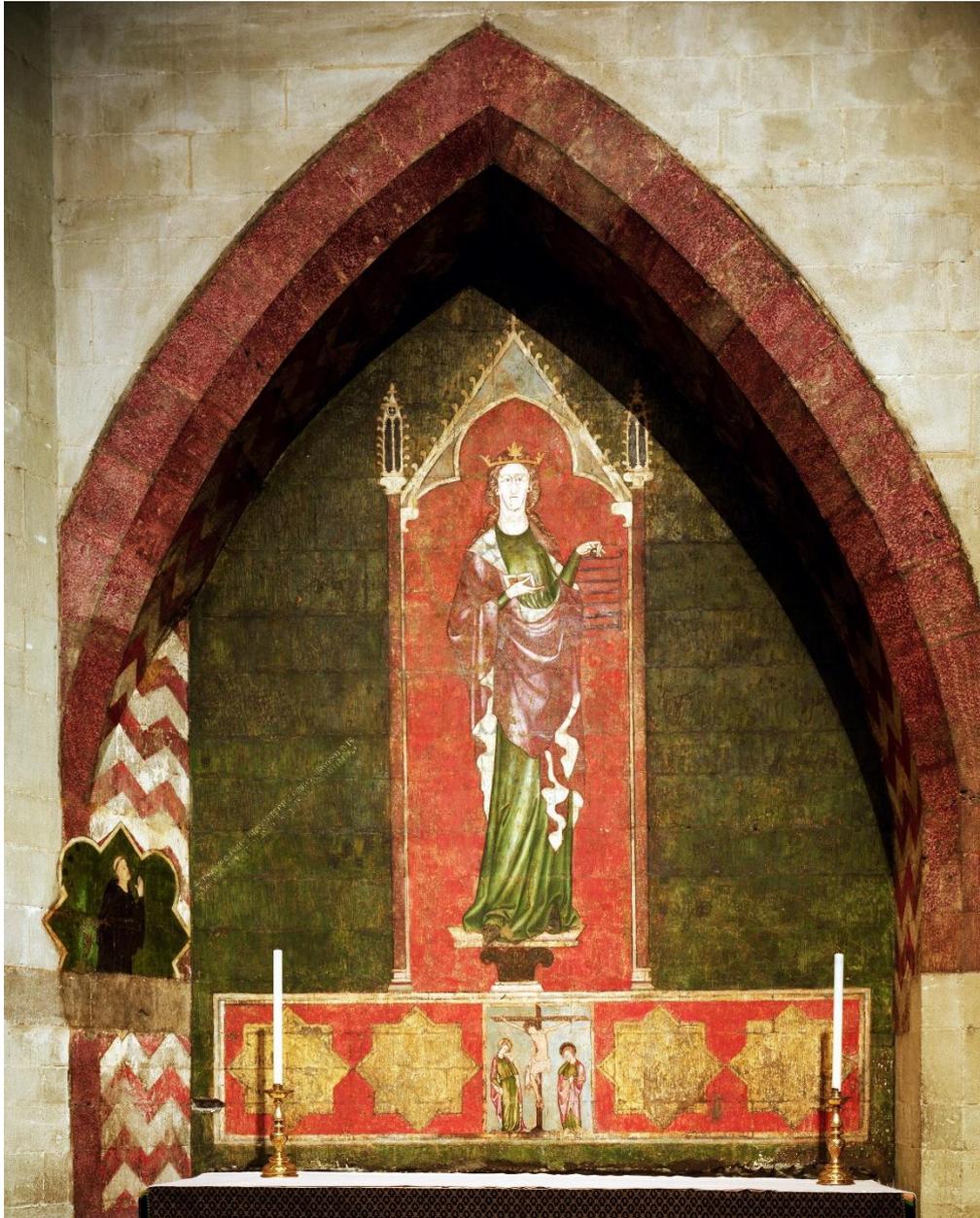


Fig. 3.1 Wall painting, Sainte Foy, under a canopy; crucifixion scene below her, c. 1310, St Faith's Chapel, Westminster Abbey



Fig. 3.3 Wall painting, monk in prayer, St Faith's Chapel, Westminster Abbey, c. 1310



Fig. 3.4 Jacob Schnebbelie, Sainte Foy, under a canopy; crucifixion scene below her, etching, 1821



Fig. 3.5 The Westminster Sedilia, painting on wood, c. 1307



Fig. 3.6 MS Arundel 83, 'The De Lisle Psalter', fol. 131v, British Library, London, c. 1308–c.

1340



Fig. 3.7 Wall painting, Saint Thomas and Saint Christopher, Westminster Abbey, c. 1260–1270



Fig. 3.8 The Westminster Retable, Saint Peter holding keys, painted on wood with gilding, Westminster Abbey, c. 1270s



Fig. 3.9 MS Arundel 83, 'The De Lisle Psalter', fol. 125r, British Library, London, c. 1308–c. 1340



Fig. 3.10 Thornham Parva Retable, painted on wood, Thornham Parva, Suffolk, c. 1330s



Fig. 3.11 Tomb of Edmund Crouchback, memorial tomb, Westminster Abbey, c. 1290s



Fig. 3.12 Fictive retable, wall painting, Brent Eleigh, Suffolk, c. 1325–30

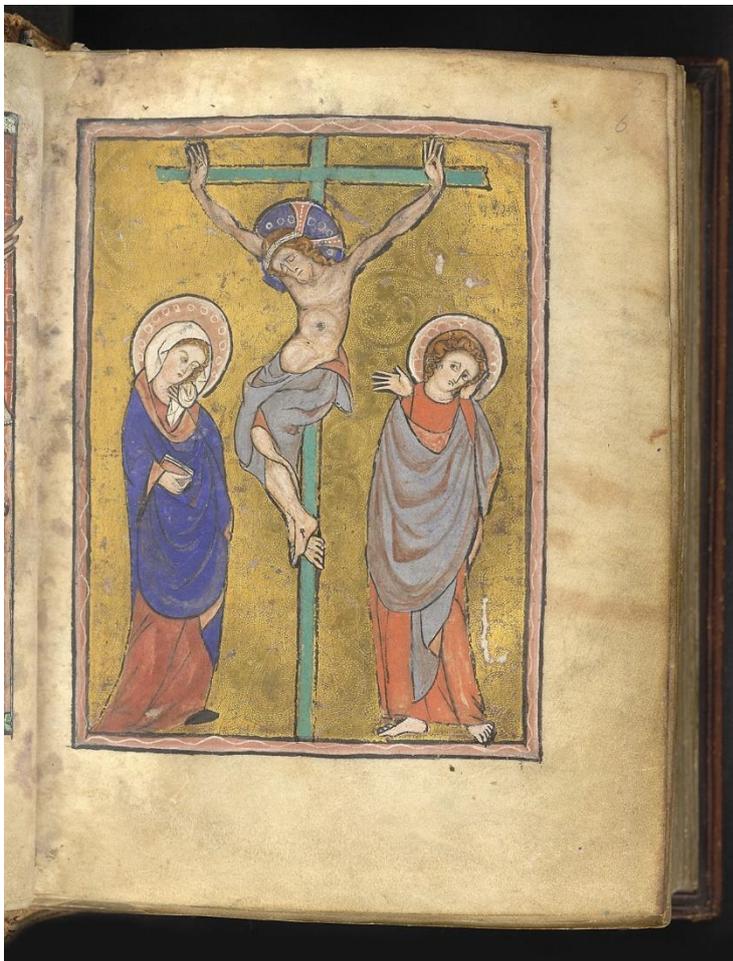


Fig. 3.13 MS Additional 28681, 'The Map Psalter', fol. 6r, British Library, London, c. 1265



Fig. 3.14 MS Arundel 83, 'The Howard Psalter', fol. 116r, British Library, London, c. 1308–c.1340



Fig. 3.15 MS Egerton 2781, 'The Neville of Hornby Hours', fol. 161 v, British Library, London, c. 1325–c.1350



Fig. 3.16 MS Additional 49622, 'The Gorleston Psalter', fol. 7, British Library, London, 1310–1324



Fig. 3.17 *Crucifixion*, Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire, fourteenth century

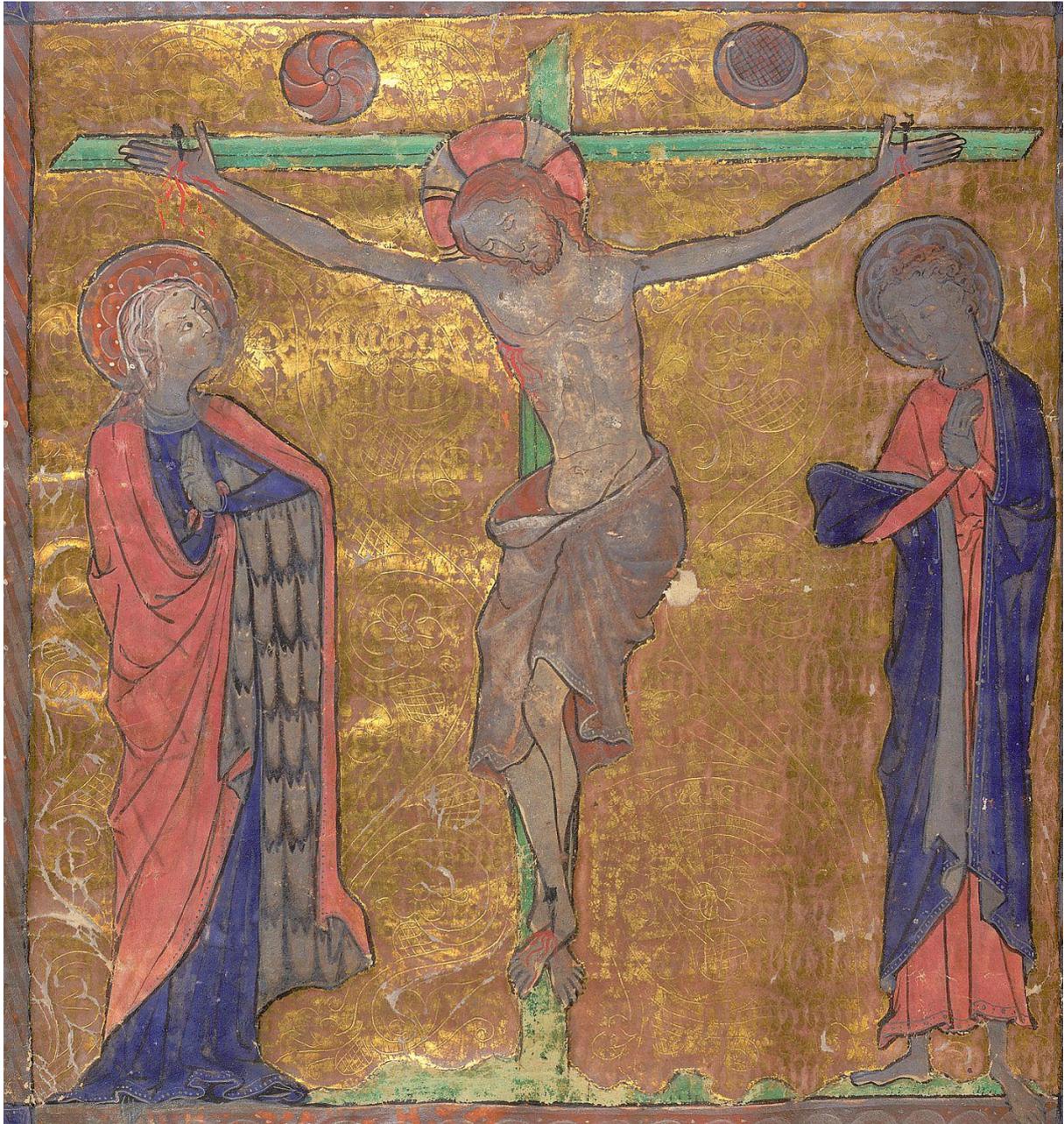
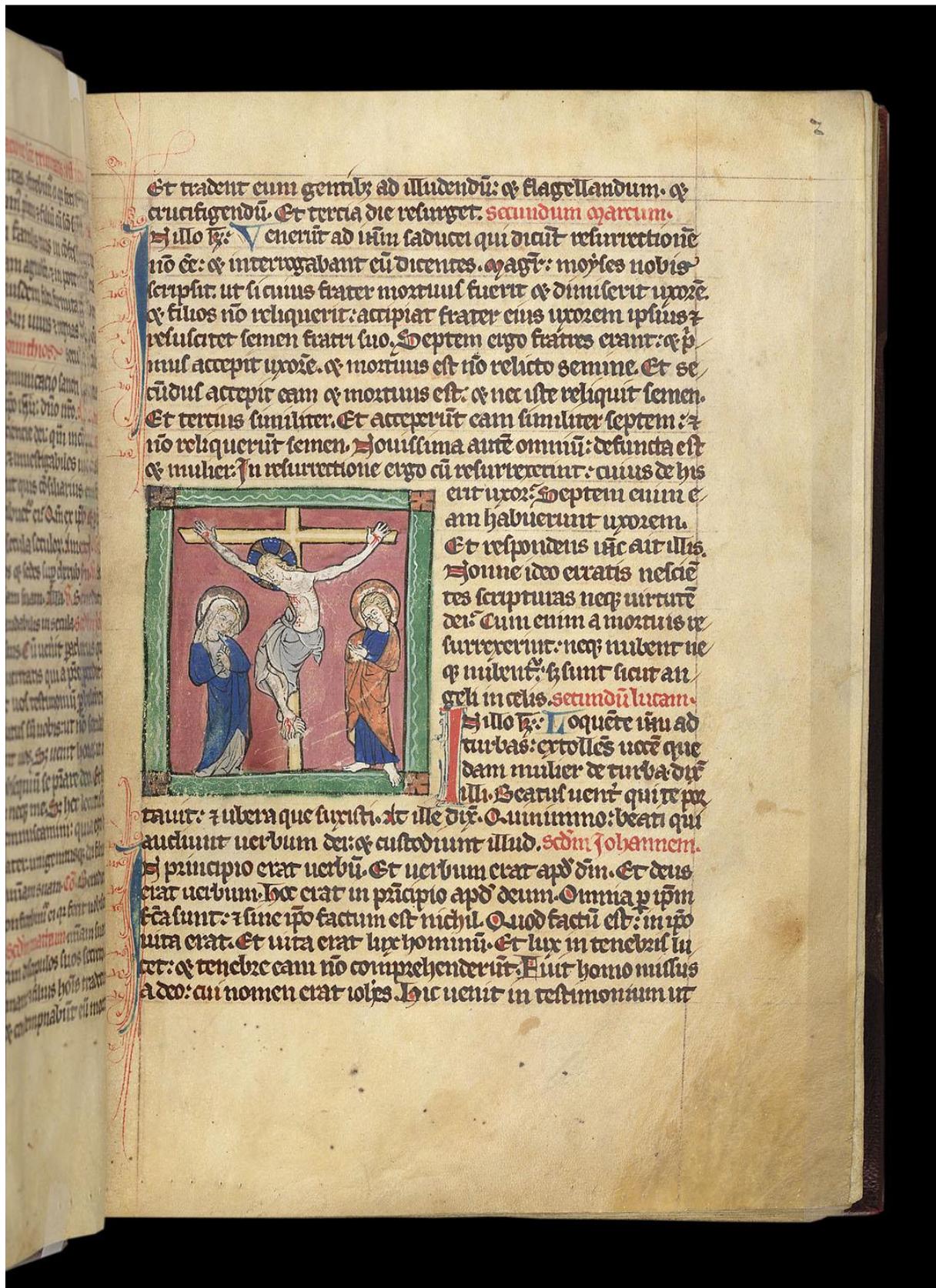


Fig. 3.18 MS Arundel 68, 'Registrum Prioratus Ecclesiae Christi Cantuariensis', fol. 166^v,
British Library, London, second half of the thirteenth century



Et tradent eum gentib; ad illudendu; & flagellandum. & crucifigendu;. Et tertia die resurget. **secundum martum.**

In illo t;: Venerunt ad ihm saducei qui dicunt resurrectione non esse: & interrogabant eum dicentes. **magi:** moyses vobis scripsit. ut si cuius frater mortuus fuerit & dimiserit uxorem & filios non reliquerit: accipiat frater eius uxorem ipsius & relinquet semen fratri suo. Septem ergo fratres erant: & primus accepit uxorem. & mortuus est non relicto semine. Et secundus accepit eam & mortuus est: & nec iste reliquit semen. Et tertius similiter. Et acceperunt eam similiter septem: & non reliquerunt semen. Novissima autem omnium defuncta est & mulier. In resurrectione ergo cum resurrexerint: cuius de his

erit uxor: septem enim eam habuerunt uxorem. Et respondens ihesus ait illis. Nonne ideo erratis nescientes scripturas neque virtutem dei? Cum enim a mortuis resurrexerint: neque nubent neque nubentur: sicut sunt angeli in celis. **secundum lucam.**

In illo t;: Loquente ihesu ad turbas: extolles vocem quendam mulier de turba dixit illi. Beatus uenit qui te portauit: & uerba que dixisti. At ille dixit. Quinimummo: beati qui audiunt uerbum dei: & custodiunt illud. **secundum iohannem.**

In principio erat uerbum. Et uerbum erat apud deum. Et deus erat uerbum. hoc erat in principio apud deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt: & sine ipso factum est nichil. Quod factum est: in ipso uita erat. Et uita erat lux hominum. Et lux in tenebris lucet: & tenebre eam non comprehenderunt. Fuit homo missus a deo: cui nomen erat iohannes. Iohannes uenit in testimonium ut

Fig. 3.19 MS Harley 3601, 'Liber memorandum prioratus de Barnwell', fol. 2, British Library, London, c. 1295–1296

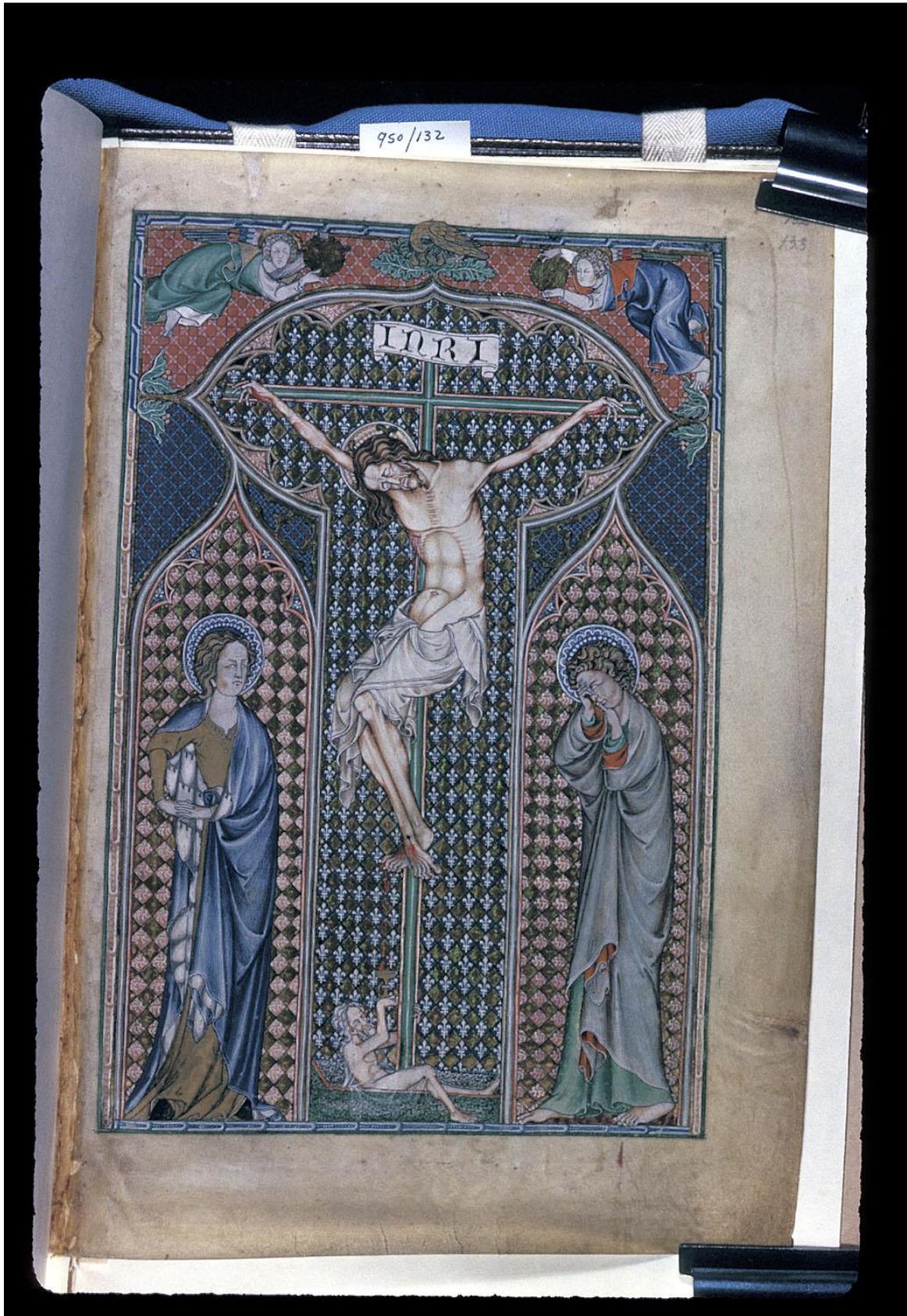


Fig. 3.20 MS Arundel 83, 'The De Lisle Psalter', fol. 132, British Library, London, c. 1308–c.

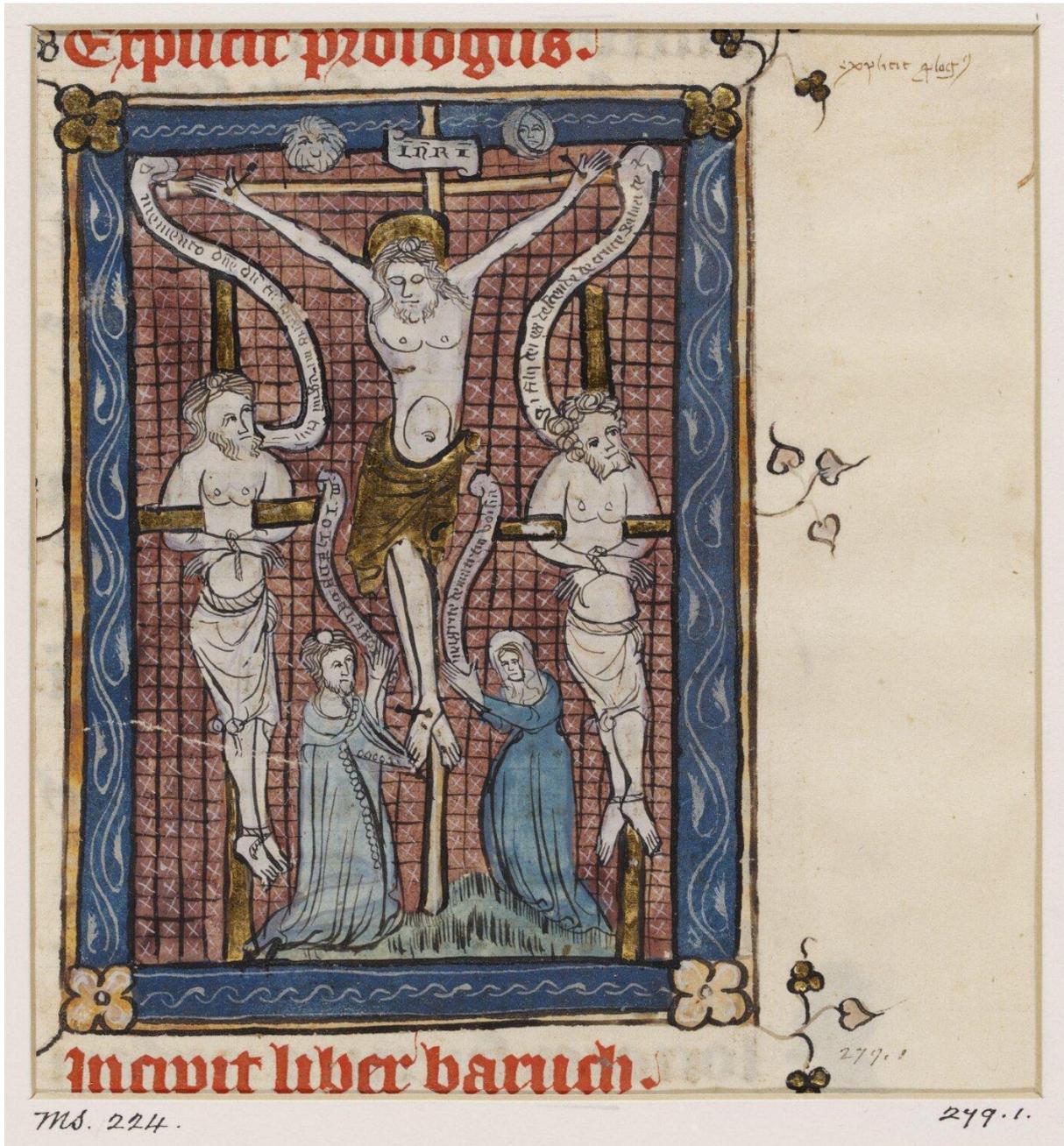


Fig. 3.21 'Cutting from the Hastière Bible', Victoria and Albert Museum, 279:1, fourteenth century

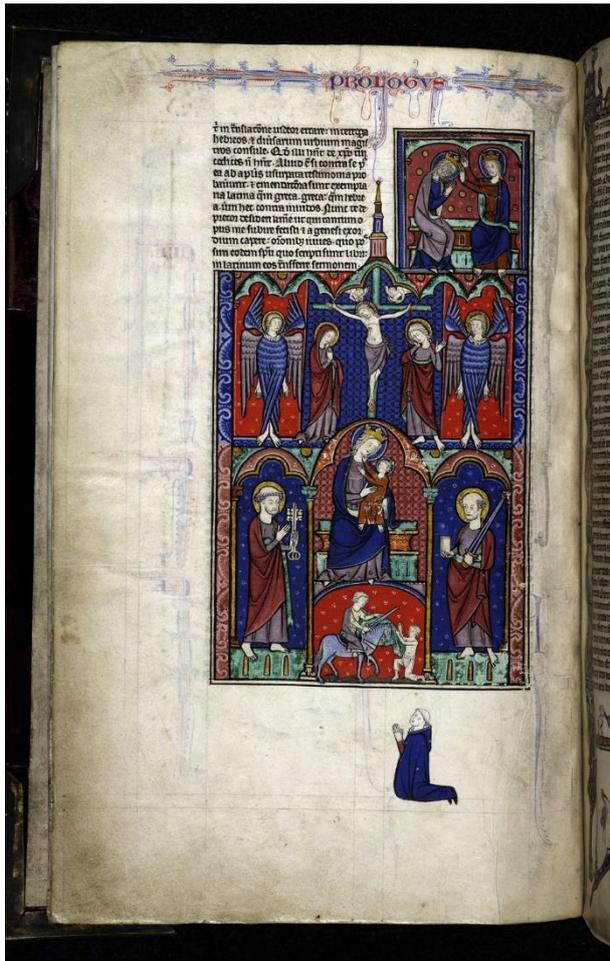


Fig. 3.22 MS Royal 1 D I, 'Bible of William of Devon', fol. 4v, British Library, London, third quarter of the thirteenth century

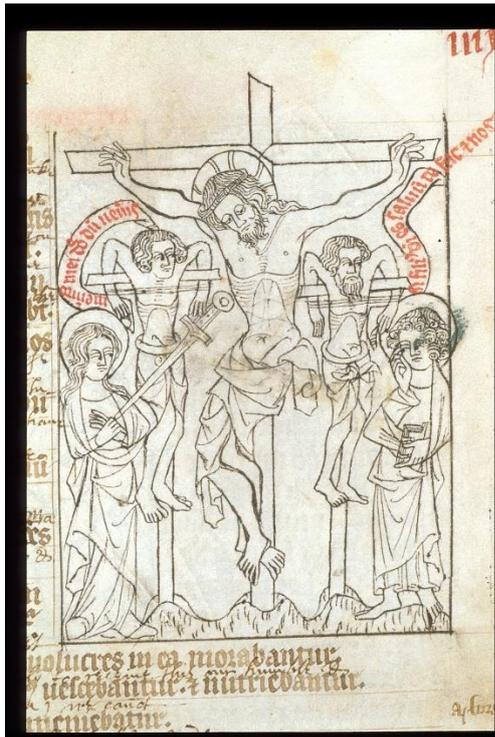


Fig. 3.23, MS Sloane 346, 'Speculum humanae salvationis', fol. 15, British Library, London, c. 1330–1340



Fig. 3.24, Cotton MS Nero D II, 'Chronicle of Rochester Cathedral Priory', fol. 194^r, British Library, London, c. 1100–c.1650



Fig. 3.25, MS Royal 2 A XXII, 'The Westminster Psalter', fol. 9', British Library, London, c.1200–c.1250