

## The Goldsmiths at St. Albans Abbey during the 12th and 13th Centuries.

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**T**HOUGH the last few years have been marked by a tendency to study more seriously the history of the so-called "minor arts" in this country during the Middle Ages, all who have followed the progress of recent research must be aware of how much more work there is to be done.

The neglect in the past of the early English goldsmiths and their works, usually justified on the grounds of the paucity of surviving examples of the latter, has led to general under-valuation of English art. It is well to remember the words of an eminent writer<sup>1</sup>:—

“As a rule, work in jewellery and the precious metals is a minor art, employing the hands of craftsmen of a rank subordinate to that of artists in architecture, sculpture or painting. But at the time with which we are dealing [the age of St. Eloi] it was not so. Architects, sculptors and painters were the minor artists, goldsmiths were the great artists. Just as the thirteenth century was the great age of architecture, and the fifteenth and sixteenth of painting, so the period from the seventh to the eleventh was a great age of orfèvrerie.”

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with which we are concerned, the goldsmiths still remained great artists, but whereas they had been supreme, they were now being forced to share their pre-eminence with the artists of those other crafts which had progressed so sensationally.

The records which form the basis of the present study are well known, but whilst some have been used repeatedly by writers on St. Albans others have been neglected, with the result that the picture that has been presented of the goldsmiths at St. Albans has been unnecessarily incomplete. Again, although

<sup>1</sup> Lord Conway in *Archæologia*, LXVI, 1914-15, 124.

many writers have referred to the individual artists with whom we will have to deal, none have attempted to tell the story of the goldsmiths of St. Albans as a whole, and thus much of its significance has been lost.

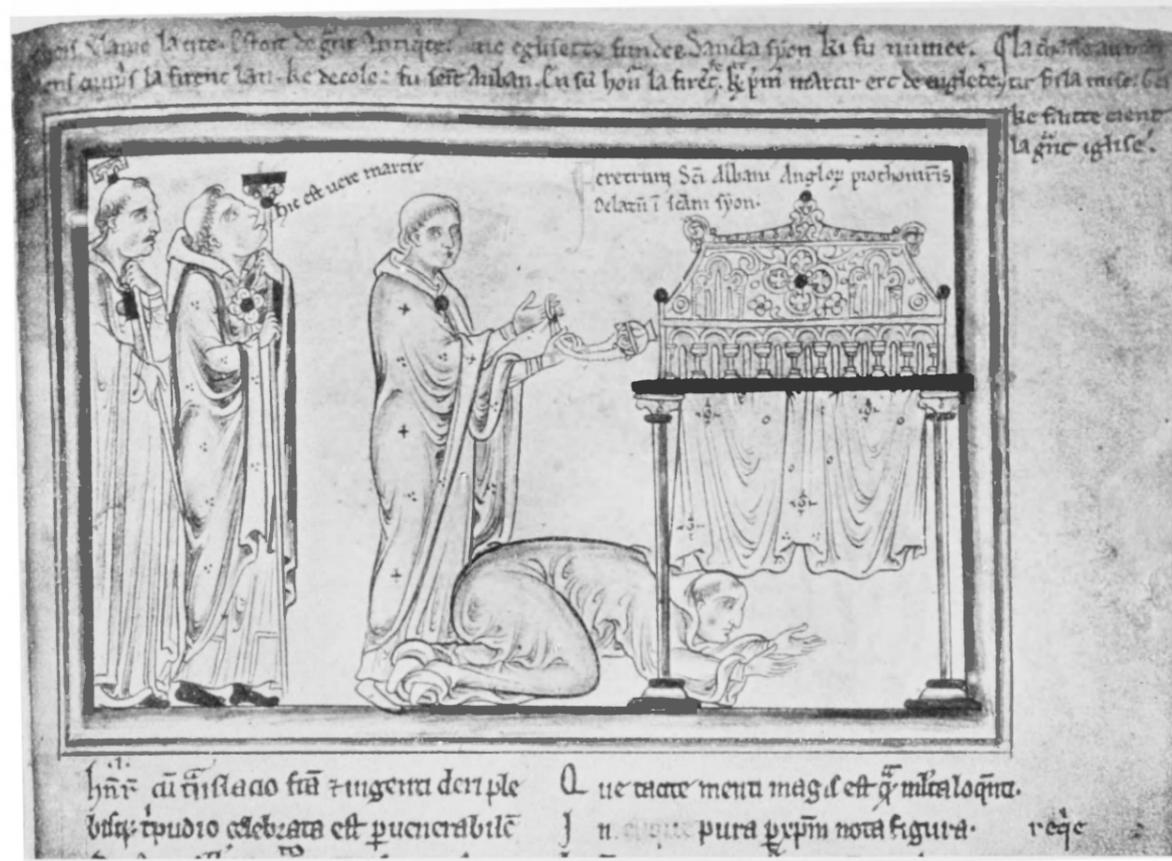
The principal authority is, of course, the *Vitae Abbatum* of Matthew Paris and its anonymous continuation, both of which are printed in Thomas Walsingham's *Gesta Abbatum monasterii Sancti Albani* in the Rolls Series.<sup>2</sup> The reason why Matthew Paris is so immeasurably superior, for our purpose, to any of the other chroniclers who mention the works of art which adorned the abbeys of this country in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is the fact that he himself was a goldsmith.<sup>3</sup> We may complain that his descriptions are always too brief and sometimes vague, but taken all round they provide us with material incomparably more useful than the author of the *Gesta Sacristarum* of Bury or William of Malmesbury. Matthew Paris became a monk in 1217, but he had evidently been educated in the abbey, and had reliable authorities for events which occurred long before his own time. He was, for instance, a personal friend of one craftsman who had worked at the abbey at least forty-seven years before the date of his own profession. For the events of the earlier part of the twelfth century he had only an authority who took no particular interest in goldsmiths or their works. When he himself abandoned work in 1255 it was continued by another writer who was no goldsmith, and who provides us with nothing important but Matthew's obituary in 1259, where it is stated "he possessed such a skill in gold or silver, and other metal that it was believed that he left no equal in the Latin world after him."<sup>4</sup>

Of our other authorities the most important are the Pipe Rolls which provide us with a number of side lights on craftsmen who worked at St. Albans, which have never before been utilised. The remainder are

<sup>2</sup> Ed. H. T. Riley, 1867, henceforward G. A.

<sup>3</sup> Typical of Matthew Paris's interest in goldsmiths' work is the addition in his account of the elevation of the shrine of Becket of the names of the persons responsible for its making (M. Paris—*Chronica Majora*, III, 58), which Roger of Wendover had not thought worthy of mention (*R. Wendover*, II, 254).

<sup>4</sup> G. A., I, 394.



THE SHRINE OF ST. ALBAN IN THE DAYS OF OFFA.  
(From the *Lives of St. Alban and St. Amphibalus*, see p. 219, note 8.)



A  Anulus magnus de anulis et  
 cui castro huius gemis et pallis q  
 fecerunt est. Atq; sunt de thesau  
 rorum magnitudinis conro huius ecce  
 tines una gemā in medio rubea et ob  
 longa videlicet; dāni vulgarit rubea lo  
 et plerū gemulaf i ei' ceutu. in q; 7 castone  
 ita sculptunt duo usus cū h' noie Johs: fuc  
 nob' adq; sunt p' dnm hamone quā hui'  
 ecce factam 7 camerariū. Hūc aū a  
 nulū gultit nob' d' Johs de erundale dā  
 dnm hamon' amūc' q'onach' ecce scē cri  
 mitatis canuarie 7 sacra. 7 qm; capel  
 lan' dnm canē archiepi steph'. De cuius  
 dono ipse d' Johs illū anulū tanq; donū  
 p' dnm suscepit memoratū. P' misit aū  
 couent' h' ecce dō dno. J. ut audito obitu  
 ei: tantū fieret p' aia eius: qm; p' aia h'  
 ecce monachi. P' ondat aū dēs anulū de  
 rignata duos denarios. Anulo cū Alamādi  
 B  Anulus gemis gemā rubeā mēn  
 si colorit. q' vulgarit Alamādi dū  
 dē: est de beci thesauro hui' ecce. de  
 putatū usui dnm abbi' qm; quē  
 est in capis. Dicitur aū anulū castone  
 h' fecerunt illius qd' pingit i p'ncipio h'  
 capiti. Et ita sculptunt eide anulū hec  
 hūc. In capis. 7 erur' i adusa p'ce castoni.  
 P' ondat aū 21. den. De lapide purpu  
 C  Anulus qm; itū dnm rei colorit.  
 hāmo de q' ruius fecim' mēconē  
 dedit couentu' castone rotundū  
 h' cū q' tuoz tenachis gemā p' pu  
 rei colorit corinthe. cōsimile amecito.  
 In castone q' nom' d' d' rui' ita p' r' nigel  
 latū. fuerit aū anul' canē archiepi S.  
 P' ondat utiq; nouē den. De anulo gūcēte  
 D  Anulus iste cui fecim' i h' ropazū.  
 loco figurat: est de amūc' thesauro  
 h' ecce. corinthe gemā oblongā colo  
 ris cerulei. videlicet; ropazūm. De  
 putat aū usui; dnm abbi' qm; quē  
 est i albi. J. et si qd' castoni p'ce. ita in  
 sculptū A. et I. P' ondat aū 21. den. De  
 E  Hunc lapidē p' dnm gemā. s. sa  
 videlicet; saplurū colorit aerei pluro  
 mēnsi dedit dnm thonia q' dāni

DRAWINGS BY MATTHEW PARIS OF JEWELS  
 BELONGING TO ST. ALBANS ABBEY.  
 (British Museum M.S., Cotton, Nero D.I.  
 f. 146 r.)



prior de Walingford deo & eccle. sci Albani  
 Caste au continent eandem gemam unon &  
 ipse lapis ad maiore cancelam & sciza  
 rem quam aureo cculo cecumgatur  
 prout in capite huius capituli figurat.

**F** **H**unc lapide p̄cosū d̄i Hiel.  
 Videlicet saphirū fere rotundū  
 et coloris remissi dedit dominus  
 Nicholaus aurifab̄ de sco alba  
 no orundus: deo & eccle. s̄. Albi. h̄ gema  
 ep̄us: fuit h̄ Admundi can̄ archiepi  
 Postea vero S̄i Rob̄i fr̄s ei. Postea n̄  
 memorati d̄ni Nicholai. In libo sic̄de  
 castoris strabon̄ h̄c̄ isculp̄tur  
 iugellate. Et crux cū crucifixo figurat.

**G** **H**unc Anulū cōtinēt̄ aconū Joh̄is.  
 unū Saphirū orientale int̄ensi  
 coloris dedit h̄nc̄ eccle. d̄ni Joh̄is  
 de W̄ unū d̄n̄ h̄nc̄ eccle. archidiaconū  
 Quē de dono d̄ni Roḡi eccle. h̄ p̄ors  
 optinuerat. In una q̄ parte anulū ad  
 memoriā h̄ nōis Joh̄is perpetuandam:  
 isculpit & iugellat h̄ h̄ca. J. ex alia vero  
 p̄. Pondat̄ aut̄ nouē den̄ & ob̄. d̄ Anulo Ric̄

**H** **H**unc Anulū cōtinēt̄ Anulū.  
 Saphirū orientale coloris it̄ensi:  
 dedit d̄ns Ric̄ cognom̄eto animal  
 deo & h̄nc̄ eccle. Quē de dono cui  
 dam regine Alienore optinuerat  
 quā ḡscolaret̄ i sua inuenture gratiā  
 et sobales. fuerat aut̄ gema Antea ipsi  
 regine A. In una q̄ p̄te Anulū isculpi  
 tur R. In alia: A. R. pro Ric̄. A. p̄. A. A. l.

**I** **H**unc Anulū dedit deo cum magno  
 et h̄nc̄ eccle. d̄ni Joh̄is Saphirū o.  
 ep̄e quidam archiep̄us. In cui  
 castone ḡtinet̄ saphirū q̄d̄ orien  
 tal̄ pulch̄m̄ m̄veq; magnitud̄is  
 quatuor tenacul̄ que uulgarit̄ p̄com  
 dicunt̄ cecūseptis. Qui dico saphirū per  
 quatuor angulos i una ḡsur̄at̄ i medio  
 sūm̄itate. Deputatur p̄cipuis festiui  
 tatis. Interbiturq; hoc nomē Joh̄is.  
 Pondat̄ aut̄ xviii. den̄.

**J** **H**unc lapide in p̄cosū de perido.  
 Qui uulgarit̄ d̄i perido. Qui ec  
 subuudis coloris est. Et in cui me  
 dio saphirū m̄ve pulch̄tud̄is colloca  
 tur. h̄ nomē Joh̄is in cui alit̄ isculpi  
 tur: dedit d̄ns Joh̄is ep̄e quidam archiep̄us  
 deo & h̄nc̄ eccle. p̄foratur aut̄. Et uicū  
 h̄t̄ sp̄smū pot̄it̄ refrenandi. h̄t̄ utiq;  
 formā fere elipealē Et pondat̄ xi. den̄.

**K** **H**unc lapide p̄cosū De Saphiro ei  
 videlicet saphirū orientale dem ep̄i.  
 dedit deo & h̄nc̄ eccle. p̄recedat̄  
 us memorat̄ d̄ns Joh̄is ep̄e quidam  
 archiep̄us. In cui castone oblongo  
 et fere triangul̄ d̄s saphirū cōtinetur.  
 In longū r̄i cui sūm̄itate p̄foratur.  
 Caste aut̄ hac notula signatur

**L** **H**unc Anulū De magno Anulo  
 nobilissimū rotundū & gema  
 mat̄ia & ape p̄cosū. In cui  
 medio saphirū remissi colo  
 ris m̄ve m̄. aureos flosculos  
 collocat̄. r̄i c̄ant̄ ei octo gem  
 ge. quatuor s̄. perle. & quatuor ḡnate: dedit  
 d̄ns Henr̄ ep̄e Winton̄ fr̄ d̄ni Angl̄ regi  
 deo & h̄nc̄ eccle. ad memoriā sui r̄eade  
 perpetuandā. sp̄m̄ & nomē d̄ebit̄ c̄au  
 lo Anulū. Assignat̄ aut̄ ornatu ab̄tis  
 p̄cipuis festiuitatis. Pondat̄ aut̄ xviii. den̄.

**M** **H**unc lapide pre  
 ciosum quod videlicet  
 costat ex far  
 tonice cal  
 cedonio et  
 onie p̄  
 hoc quod in  
 t̄nt̄ec̄ la  
 t̄ec̄. d̄erū  
 ip̄e to en̄  
 uulgarit̄  
 kaadma  
 appellat̄. de  
 dit deo & eccle

DRAWINGS BY MATTHEW PARIS OF JEWELS BELONGING TO ST. ALBANS ABBEY. (British Museum MS., Cotton, Nero D.I. f. 146 v.)



other St. Albans chronicles or documents, most of which have been published in the Rolls Series.

It will be convenient to begin this study with the Norman Conquest. There is little evidence to support the idea that the abbey of St. Alban contributed seriously to the patronage of the arts during the Anglo-Saxon period. We hear of the acquisition and of the loss of certain pieces of goldsmiths' work, but there is nothing to suggest that in 1066 the abbey possessed any particularly large collection of sacred vessels.

At the time of the Conquest, Frederick, thirteenth abbot, had been ruling for two years. He was of mixed German and Danish blood, and succeeded in maintaining himself for eleven years, until, as a result of his intrigues with Normans and English, he was forced to flee to the marshes of Ely, where his death anticipated his deposition.

With his successor, Paul of Caen (1077-97), the great days of St. Albans began. He is primarily memorable for having built the great abbey church, and, secondly, for his enthusiastic love of fine books which he got transcribed at the monastery. Compared with these his patronage of the art of the goldsmith remains comparatively unimportant. He presented a silver bowl to contain a light to hang before the high altar, three candlesticks covered with gold and silver for the same altar, two silver candlesticks of wonderful workmanship to be carried before the Martyr on high festivals, and two book-covers enriched with gold, silver and gems.<sup>5</sup> We are not told where or by whom these were made, so that we are free to believe as we choose that they were made by monks, or lay craftsmen at the abbey, or that they were made in the goldsmiths' shops of London, twenty miles away. The probabilities, however, in this and other doubtful cases favour an origin at St. Albans.

The same problem presents itself with regard to the two shrines made for Abbot Richard (1097-1119). One was covered with gold figures and contained relics of

<sup>5</sup> G. A., I, 58-9.

the Apostles and of martyrs brought by St. Germanus, the other had a gilt front and an ivory back, and contained relics of martyrs.<sup>6</sup>

In 1124 Abbot Geoffrey started work on the long projected shrine of St. Alban for which Roman cameos excavated from Verulamium had been saved up since Saxon times. The work was placed in the hands of a monk Anketyl and of his young lay assistant Salamon of Ely.<sup>7</sup> Anketyl, himself, had spent seven years in Denmark, having originally gone to execute a special task for the King of Denmark, who had afterwards put him in charge of his goldsmiths' works and made him "custos" of the mint. Coming on leave to England to visit relations, he was so attracted by the life at St. Albans that he became a monk there. That the distinction of making the shrine of the Proto-martyr should have been allotted to a goldsmith trained elsewhere, and that his assistant should be a layman from afar, does not suggest that the goldsmith's craft had become popular amongst the monks of St. Albans.

The long-intended task of making a habitation worthy of the saint was not destined to be accomplished without interruptions. Work had already been begun, and sixty pounds or more expended when a famine occurred, and the abbot decided that the poor had the first claim on the abbey's purse. The sheets of silver which had been prepared but not yet gilt and certain unset gems were sold to buy victuals. "If this was well done or not, He knows who is ignorant of nothing" is the comment of the goldsmith chronicler. The next year was one of plenty, so that the abbot was able to collect more money and press on with the work. The translation of the bones of the saint took place on August 2, 1129, but the cresting of the shrine remained unfinished as the artist wished to make it especially rich. The fresh supplies of gold, silver and gems for which he waited never materialised, and the shrine remained unfinished at his death. I have already discussed else-

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 69.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 83-4, 87.

where the question whether we can arrive at any decision as to the appearance of this shrine<sup>8</sup> (Plate I).

No further works of Anketyl's are recorded, but it does not seem unfair to attribute to him a share in some of the other important works presented by Abbot Geoffrey. These included three silver cruets, and one of crystal, silver-gilt candlesticks, an arm-reliquary, a chalice and paten weighing eight marks of gold (afterwards sent to Pope Celestine, 1143-4), and a gold and silver altar-piece of fine workmanship and set with choice gems for the high altar.<sup>9</sup> This last came to an untimely end in 1142 when the abbey's knights got involved in a skirmish with Stephen's supporters who were trying to arrest Geoffrey de Mandeville. The result of this was that the abbot was forced to sacrifice this costly masterpiece to the irate royalists who threatened to burn the town.

The last that is heard of Anketyl is that an uncut seal was found on his work bench by the next abbot, Ralph Gubiun (1146-51), who leapt to the conclusion that something prejudicial to the convent was being planned.<sup>10</sup> The principal blame fell on Prior Alcuin, who was deposed, and who sought refuge at Westminster where he afterwards became prior. It was perhaps owing to Anketyl's share in this business that the abbot chose to strip the silver-gilt plates from the shrine of St. Alban when it became necessary to raise eighty marks to buy the manor of Bramfield. That the rents should have been ear-marked for the reparation of the shrine, and afterwards that of the roof of the church, was the least that the abbot could do.

We have no indication as to the date when Anketyl's young assistant, Salamon of Ely, left St. Albans. Some light on the latter part of his career was thrown by Canon F. R. Chapman's discovery<sup>11</sup> that he was in all proba-

<sup>8</sup> *Burlington Magazine*, April, 1933. The conclusion reached is that the illustration of the shrine in the days of Offa (Plate I) given in the *Lives of St. Alban and St. Amphibalus* (Trinity College, Dublin, MS. E.i, fo. 61a) may be fairly regarded as giving the form of Anketyl's shrine with its unusual four-sloped roof. It remains doubtful, however, whether the same reliance can be placed on the decorative details as shown in the drawing.

For the loan of the block for Plate 1 the author is indebted to the kindness of Mr. Ernest Woolley, F.S.A.

<sup>9</sup> *G. A.*, I, 93-4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 109.

<sup>11</sup> *Sacrist Rolls of Ely*, 1907, I, 151.

bility the Salamon the goldsmith mentioned in two charters datable between the years 1166 and 1175. In one, preserved at Ely, Salamon, prior of Ely, grants to Salamon the goldsmith a rent charge on an estate called Brame with an annual payment from the revenues of the sacristy of Ely, to him and to his heirs as long as they perform the office of goldsmith. The other, in the Bodleian, is a confirmation by Henry II of the above charter. The fact that both prior and goldsmith have the same name strongly suggests nepotism, but the reason for the king being brought into this rather shady transaction was not apparent. The key to this problem is to be found in the Pipe Rolls. In the year 1155-6 the sheriff of Cambridgeshire made the entry "in the king's work to Salamon the goldsmith £ 11 through the Bishop of Ely."<sup>12</sup> In the year 1157-8 appears the entry "to Salomon the king's goldsmith 60s. from the mill at Cambridge."<sup>13</sup> This item recurs annually down to the year 1175-6.<sup>14</sup> The grant of the royal confirmation, it will be seen, would be of great importance to the goldsmith who was thus protected from any charge of accepting an office which might interfere with his duties as a royal servant, whilst the form of the document at the same time added greater validity to the charter by which he hoped to found the fortune of his family. Canon Chapman has been able to show that the office of abbey goldsmith lasted in this family until the first quarter of the fourteenth century, and gives strong reasons for supposing that Alan of Walsingham, the great sacrist and then prior of Ely, and a renowned goldsmith, was a descendant through his mother from our Salamon.<sup>15</sup>

We must now return to the vicissitudes of the shrine of St. Alban. The name of the goldsmith who repaired the shrine during the abbacy of Robert de Gorham (1151-67) is not given, but his work appears to have given satisfaction. The abbot was a lavish spender, and left the abbey heavily encumbered with debts, but his offence was palliated in the eyes of the chronicler by

<sup>12</sup> Hunter—*Great Rolls of the Pipe for 2nd-4th years of Henry II*, 1844, 14.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>14</sup> *Publications of the Pipe Roll Society*, XXV, 1906, p. 70.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, 159.

the fact that he always got good value for his money. We cannot tell how large a proportion of his gifts and bribes of gold- and silversmiths' work which are mentioned, were the work of the abbey goldsmiths and how much was bought in London and elsewhere, but it is clear that the "candelabra wondrously made"<sup>16</sup> which Adrian IV asked of him, during a rather embarrassing interview in Rome, were ones which had adorned the abbey church years before when Nicholas Breakespeare had sought to become a monk but had been refused as he was not even "litteratus aliquantulum," like his father who had scraped admission to the brotherhood. Of the abbot's gifts to the abbey church may be mentioned a silver censer, a precious vase for the Eucharist and a silver corona of lights.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately nothing is told of the makers of these objects.

The goldsmithing activities of Abbot Robert were well maintained during the long prelacy of his successor Simon (1167-83). We know the names of two of his master-goldsmiths, and as these were not responsible for all the objects presented by him, it is clear that there must have been at least a third. Unfortunately we do not know the dates when these artists were employed at the abbey, whether they worked at the same time on their several tasks, or whether, as is more probable, they followed one another.

The greatest work undertaken by Abbot Simon was not begun till 1170, so that it is not improbable that the three previous years were spent in making preparations for it and in improving the abbey's credit by paying off some of its debts. Abbot Simon's ambition appears to have been to make the shrine of the Proto-martyr unique in England, and, as far as I know, in Europe. The ordinary precious shrine of a saint had a wooden cover which was attached by a rope going up to a pulley-wheel in the roof of the church. This cover was kept locked, and was only raised to expose the shrine at certain services, or to show it to pilgrims or visitors. Whilst this cover was normally only of painted oak, Abbot Simon had the remarkable idea of covering the one of

<sup>16</sup> G. A., I, 131-2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 179.

St. Alban with silver-gilt.<sup>18</sup> It was not a very practical idea, as the aim of the cover was to remove temptation from the eye of dishonest workmen or pilgrims who would have found ample satisfaction for their cupidity in Abbot Simon's work. Actually the danger seems to have been so obvious that it was always guarded against. Though the iron screen attached to the monument of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, looks like the result of a panic, no attempt on the shrine appears to be recorded. I do not intend to discuss the details that are given of this most interesting work.

The reconstruction of the career of Master John of St. Albans presents considerable difficulties. He is referred to as a monk by Texier<sup>19</sup> and by other writers in quite recent times who have followed him without investigating his authorities. There is nothing whatever to support this supposition. He survived to become the friend of Matthew Paris,<sup>20</sup> who, although he only became a monk in 1217, was able to record memories of Abbot John de Cella who had died in 1214. If we suppose that Master John died in, say, 1210, at the ripe age of seventy, he would have been thirty when he began work on the outer cover of the shrine in 1170. He may well have been some years younger. He spent some time in the service of the King of Denmark,<sup>21</sup> but we are not told at what period of his career. In the Pipe Roll for 1192-3 the Sheriff of Kent records the payment of 100 shillings from certain lands to John of St. Albans, the king's goldsmith.<sup>22</sup> Now, if Master John was the king's goldsmith, is he to be identified with the John the goldsmith who received the payments of £4 11s. 4d. annually or 3d. a day from the Sheriff of London and Middlesex from 1169-70<sup>23</sup> until 1213,<sup>24</sup> after which date the entry no longer occurs? John was, of course, then,

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 189.

<sup>19</sup> Texier, *Dictionnaire d'orfèvrerie*, 1857, cols. 1056-7.

<sup>20</sup> G. A., I, 190.

<sup>21</sup> Francis Beckitt conjectures that Waldemar I (1157-82) may have entrusted him with the task of making the shrine of Knut Lavard at Ringsted (*Danmarks Kunst*, Copenhagen, 1924, I, 231).

<sup>22</sup> *Pipe Roll Society N.S.*, II, 1926, 308.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, XV, 1892, 14.

<sup>24</sup> The Pipe Roll for 1214-15 (P.R.O., Pipe Roll E.372, 61) unfortunately is very abbreviated in its London section so that there is no actual reference to his death. His office was afterwards divided between John Butler and Stephen Carter at 1½d. per diem.

as now, the commonest Christian name, but against this must be set the point that we might expect to find some references to John of St. Albans in his capacity as goldsmith in the Pipe Rolls. The fact that the period of activity of John the goldsmith coincided with that of John of St. Albans cannot be overlooked. If the identification be accepted, his visit to Denmark would seem to have occurred before 1170, and we must suppose that he did his work on the shrine of St. Alban (for whom he felt a special devotion) in his spare time after his appointment as royal goldsmith. That his connection with St. Albans did not entirely cease with the completion of the shrine is shown by the fact that his son Nicholas is spoken of as a native of that town.

At any rate Master John had two sons. There is no indication that John, who was probably the elder, followed his father's profession, but he was probably employed by the king in some capacity, as from 1194 to 1198<sup>25</sup> (where the publication of the Pipe Rolls stands at present suspended) he received the payment of the 100 shillings from the same lands in Kent as his father had had in 1193. A further mention of him occurs in the Pipe Roll for 1229-30, but as it refers to a debt due to King John it does not prove that he was still alive.<sup>26</sup>

Master Nicholas of St. Albans was probably born during the last quarter of the twelfth century. He followed in his father's footsteps, both by becoming a goldsmith and by seeking his fortune in Denmark, where he served Waldemar II (1202-41) for thirty years as an officer of the mint.<sup>27</sup> He had returned to England by 1237, when he entered the service of Henry III and acted as an officer of the mints at London and at Canterbury<sup>28</sup> until his death, which took place before March, 1253, when there is a reference to the executors of his will.<sup>29</sup> In 1248 he had received the additional appointment of King's Remembrancer.<sup>30</sup> As he had taken orders his services to the state were able to be

<sup>25</sup> *Pipe Roll Society N.S.*, 1927, III, 166; 1928, V, 244; 1929, VI, 2; 1930, VII, 282; 1931, VIII, 26; 1932, IX, 199.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid. N.S.*, IV, 1927, 253.

<sup>27</sup> *G. A.*, I, 19.

<sup>28</sup> *Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1231-7*, 477. The coins for which he was responsible are amongst the commonest of the Long Cross issue.

<sup>29</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1247-58*, 180.

<sup>30</sup> *Calendar of the Close Rolls, 1247-51*, 248.

rewarded by ecclesiastical preferment. In 1242 he was presented to the benefices of Penn (Staffs) and Wadenhoe (Northants),<sup>31</sup> and in 1248 to Drayton (diocese of Lincoln) and Scaldewell (Northants).<sup>32</sup> Though there is no record of his having worked for the abbey of St. Albans, he appears to have felt some attachment for the place where he had probably been educated. Amongst the jewels belonging to the abbey of which Matthew Paris has left us drawings is a pendant given by Master Nicholas. Unfortunately the front, set with a sapphire which had been the property of Archbishop Rich and of his sainted brother, is depicted, though we should have preferred the back, which was engraved with a crucifix, or the edge "most subtly nielloed" with an inscription.<sup>33</sup> Probably the greatest opportunity of displaying his skill as a goldsmith was the making of three images for the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury for which the king allowed him from 250 to 300 marks from the revenues of the archbishopric of Canterbury in November, 1243.<sup>34</sup>

The second of Abbot Simon's goldsmiths mentioned

<sup>31</sup> *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1232-47*, 299.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 1247-58, 21, 24.

<sup>33</sup> To the courtesy of the Editor of the *Burlington Magazine* the writer owes the loan of the blocks for Plates 2 and 3, which were originally made to illustrate an article by him in Vol. LVII of that periodical. In its attention was drawn to the artistic importance of these drawings which had been very much overlooked, although they had been reproduced in colour in Matthew Paris's *Additamenta* in the Rolls Series. The name of the donor and the description are given with each object and can be read without much difficulty. Master Nicholas's pendant is Plate 3, F; Plate 2, E, and Plate 3, J, and K, also depict pendants. The curious way in which the sapphire of J is set in the middle of peridot can be paralleled in surviving jewels of the period. Plate 2, B, C and D, and Plate 3, G, H and I, all show rings, most of which belong to well-known types. I and K show the manner in which the mediæval jeweller often made the setting conform to the shape of the gem, which was not cut regular. Plate 2, A, and Plate 3, L, depict "pontificals" (*i.e.*, rings which bishops and certain high dignitaries are entitled to wear over gloves when celebrating). These are particularly important as no English "pontifical" of this period has survived. Plate 3, M, shows a classical cameo presented by Ethelred the Unready. On the back of its gold mount were inscribed the names of the abbey and the donor. The project of attaching it to the shrine was abandoned since it was specially valued for its supposed power of giving relief to women in childbirth. It was lent to highly favoured friends of the abbey, but its powers were said to deteriorate if kept away too long! All except H appear in the late fourteenth century inventory.

<sup>34</sup> *Calendar of Liberate Rolls, 1240-5*, 196. In view of the known connection of our Master Nicholas with the royal service and with Canterbury, it seems safe to attribute this work to him. There was, however, in London at this time another Nicholas of St. Albans, goldsmith, who had a wife Joanna and sons Richard and Michael, whose will appears under the date 25th July, 1259, in the *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled by the Court of the Husting*, page 5.

by name is Master Baldwin "aurifaber praelectus."<sup>35</sup> Like Master John, he was probably a layman, as there is no evidence to support Dr. Page<sup>36</sup> in supposing him to be the same as the sacrist Baldwin who is mentioned purely formally in connection with the elevation of the shrine of St. Amphibalus in 1186.<sup>37</sup> What evidence there is does not tend to support such an identification as Matthew Paris, who is loud in his praise as a craftsman, gives no indication that he was a member of the community. Thomas Walsingham, who had access to all the St. Albans records now available, and others besides, makes no mention of a Master Baldwin in his *De fundatione et meritis monasterii Sancti Albani*, where he celebrates the goldsmith monks Anketyl, Walter of Colchester and Matthew Paris, besides an Alcuin of whom we know nothing.<sup>38</sup> There appears to have been a Baldwin the goldsmith employed by the crown<sup>39</sup> about this time, but as the name was a common one this does not give us very much help.

At any rate Baldwin's masterpiece was a large chalice of pure gold "than which we have seen none more noble in the realm of England," "set with precious stones suitable to a work in such a material, embellished with a most subtle design of intricate flowers." It would seem to have been an earlier work in the same style as the chalice at St. Godehard, Hildesheim, with foot and lip set with gems and decorated with a kind of filigree foliage with little stamped-out leaves and flowers. He also made a ciborium for the Eucharist to hang over the high altar. Though of gold enriched with gems "the workmanship surpassed the material," and Henry II after seeing it sent a precious cup to contain

<sup>35</sup> G. A., I, 190.

<sup>36</sup> *Archæologia*, LVIII, 1902, 275. In this he has recently been followed by Mr. R. E. Swartwout (*The Monastic Craftsman*, 42) who also assumes, with equal want of evidence, that the celebrated artist Hugo at Bury was the same as the later sacrist of that abbey. Dr. Coulton (*Art and the Reformation*, 515 n.) had already struck a more careful note with regard to Master Baldwin.

<sup>37</sup> G. A., I, 205.

<sup>38</sup> This Alcuin is evidently not the same as the prior of Westminster of this name who is mentioned separately (J. Amundesham—*Annales Monasterii Sancti Albani*, II, 304).

<sup>39</sup> Perhaps there were actually two. The travelling expenses of a Baldwin, the goldsmith, from London to Bedford, are charged up in 1179-80 (*Pipe Roll Society*, XXIX, 1908, 123). The debts of a Baldwin, the goldsmith, are mentioned under Northumberland in 1184-6 (*ibid.*, XXXIV, 1913, 152; XXXVI, 1914, 124).

the actual wafer to be placed within it. Baldwin's other works were a gilt chalice for the daily high mass "of low but admirable form," and two chalices of plain silver.

Abbot Simon's two remaining gifts of goldsmiths' work, though obviously of great importance, are not attributed to any maker. Firstly, there was a cross covered with gilt plates, and having in its centre a jewel containing a piece of the True Cross. The other was "a marvellous vessel in the form of a shrine" with sloping roof, with cast figures showing the story of the Passion in a series of roundels going right round it. The sheet metal was so thick that no wooden background was required.<sup>40</sup>

Though no further work is recorded as having been done for Abbot Simon it is possible that before his death work may have already begun on the shrine of St. Amphibalus and his companions. It may be supposed that work would have begun at an early date after their "invention" in 1178, in order not to allow popular interest in them to flag. The elevation of the shrine took place on the 24th June, 1186, by command of Abbot Warin (1183-95), through the subprior, Adam the cantor, Gilbert and Baldwin the sacrists, and Roger of the Hospital, keeper of the relics of the saint and of his companions. Unfortunately the account of the shrine is meagre and the name of its maker is not given. It was adorned with silver and gold, and was divided internally, one end containing the relics of the saint and of the three companions found with him and decorated outside with the scene of his passion, the other end containing the relics of the six other companions.<sup>41</sup>

The abbacy of John de Cella (1195-1214) was made notable by the admission into the brotherhood of a man who was probably the greatest artist that the abbey ever sheltered. Walter of Colchester, we are told, was attracted to St. Albans by Brother Ralph Gubiun, who belonged to a family with Essex connections.<sup>42</sup> He was not only a goldsmith but also a sculptor and painter, and has therefore attracted the attention both of Dr. Page<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> G. A., I, 191.

<sup>41</sup> G. A., I, 205-6.

<sup>42</sup> G. A., I, 233.

<sup>43</sup> *St. Albans School of Painting*, in *Archæologia*, LVIII, 1902, 275.

and the late Professor Lethaby.<sup>44</sup> The former identifies him with a Walter the painter (a name by which he is also referred to in St. Albans chronicles), who appears in the accounts of St. John's at Colchester in the time of Abbot Adam of Campes (1192-1237). Like Anketyl, he was a fully-trained artist before he ever became a monk,<sup>45</sup> but his admission into the brotherhood involved no severing of ties, since his relations, also artists, migrated with him. His brother, Master Simon, a painter, who remained a layman, was the father of Richard, who chose to follow his uncle's example in becoming a monk as well as a painter and goldsmith.

Master Walter of Colchester became sacrist in about 1215 and died in September, 1248, but all the goldsmith's work he did for his own abbey was done in the time of John de Cella. This consisted of a frontal for the high altar, partly of wood and partly of metal, two book-covers of silver-gilt, on one of which was the crucified Christ between the Virgin and St. John and on the other the Majesty between the emblems of the evangelists.

The greatest opportunity to display his skill as a goldsmith which ever fell to his lot was the designing, in collaboration with Master Elias of Dereham, canon of Salisbury, of the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, the elevation of which took place on 7th July, 1220. The phrase used does not make it clear whether they actually made as well as designed the shrine, as has usually been stated, though in the case of Walter there is no reason to doubt his ability to do the work.<sup>46</sup> The

<sup>44</sup> *English Primitives*, I, in *Burlington Magazine*, XXIX, 1916, 189.

<sup>45</sup> Dr. Page, when describing the advent of Master Walter, uses the phrase "he must have *become a monk* at St. Albans in about 1200 or a little after" (*op. cit.*, 278). Dr. Coulton would like to make the quite legitimate correction of "migrated to" for the words in italics (*op. cit.*, 515). Mr. Swartout, however, goes too far when he speaks of him as being "ultimately persuaded to become a monk" (*op. cit.*, 43) as it is improbable that he would have been appointed sacrist until he had been a monk for some time. There is no evidence that he made a shrine for relics of St. Amphibalus, as stated by Mr. Swartout.

<sup>46</sup> "Praesentibus etiam incomparabilibus artificibus magistris Waltero de Colcestria, sacrista Sancti Albani, et Elya de Derham, canonico Sarisbiriensi, quorum consiliis et ingeniis omnia quae ad artificium thecae et elevationis et translationis necessaria fuerant irreprehensibiliter parabantur" (T. Walsingham—*Historia Anglorum*, II, 242). In the account in the *Chronica Majora* (III, 59) there is no mention of Elias but only of Walter "mirabilis artifex cuius documento omnia tractabantur." The latter text is probably the earlier one, so that the significance of the omission is probably no more than that at the time of writing Matthew Paris had not yet made the acquaintance of Elias.

office of sacrist would naturally have first claim on the time of Walter of Colchester, but in view of the honour which was being conferred on the house it is possible that the abbot may have agreed to some relaxation of discipline in his favour in order that he might undertake the work.

The main facts of the career of Master Elias of Dereham<sup>47</sup> were worked out some years ago by the Rev. W. Done Bushell, but the interpretation to be placed upon them has led to much dispute. He has been regarded as the architect of Salisbury Cathedral and of the castle hall at Winchester, of which buildings he was more likely only the clerk of the works, and his handiwork has been seen in other buildings with still less show of probability. He is nowhere specifically described as a goldsmith, but it is possible that this was his real profession. At any rate, in 1244 he received from the king thirty marks from the revenues of the bishopric of Winchester to make a cup in which to reserve the sacrament for Salisbury Cathedral.<sup>48</sup> If he was a goldsmith, he was not the only one at this period to be set to supervise royal building work,<sup>49</sup> whilst his clerical career would find a parallel in that of Master Nicholas.

We must now return to Master Walter of Colchester's nephew Richard. Although Matthew Paris only mentions him in his chronicles as a painter, like his father, Master Simon, a partially illegible marginal note in the *Additamenta* shows him to have been a goldsmith as well.<sup>50</sup> It is, of course, possible that his father may also have plied his skill at this art, but if this was not so it must be supposed that he received his training from his uncle. Under these circumstances his career can be more fairly used to illustrate the mediaeval tendency for the junior members of a family to follow in the footsteps of their elders than as a typical instance of the transmission of the goldsmith's tradition within a monastery.

<sup>47</sup> *Elias de Derham, Rector of Harrow and Architect of Salisbury Cathedral*, no. XII of the *Harrow Octocentenary Tracts*, 1906.

<sup>48</sup> *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls, 1240-5*, 222.

<sup>49</sup> For instance, Odo and his son Edward at Westminster (W. R. Lethaby—*Westminster Abbey and the King's Craftsmen*, 1906, 113).

<sup>50</sup> It is probable that it was because Richard's posthumous fame depends mainly on this scrawl that his name is not included with other craftsmen in Walsingham's apology (*De fundatione*, etc.).

The list of his works is headed "Opera Ricardi pictoris usque ad annum Domini MCCL infra IX annos et dimidium." It includes seventeen more or less decipherable items, principally paintings, and a number of works for the cells at Hertford and Wallingford. Only two items concern us—

Cristam feretri cum quodam aurifabro.  
Magnum candelabrum.<sup>51</sup>

There is little to be said about these. The cresting was in all probability a finishing touch to the shrine of St. Amphibalus, of which, at a later date, Richard is mentioned as keeper. The inner and the outer shrines of St. Alban were presumably finished by this date and the abbey possessed no other large shrines. The great candlestick is of more importance, as this is the name by which are known the large bronze seven-branched candlesticks, which most important English abbeys and cathedrals seem to have acquired between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. There can be little doubt that the "great candlestick" which we know stood in the choir at St. Albans in the fifteenth century was one of these.<sup>52</sup> The description of the one at Durham shows it to have been a product of the same school as those which survive more or less completely at Rheims and Milan. The example at St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, we know was bought abroad,<sup>53</sup> but nothing is recorded of the origin of those which existed elsewhere. A definite instance of the manufacture in England of one of these elaborate ornaments is not without interest.

As we do not know the year of Matthew Paris's birth we cannot tell whether he would have been old enough to have learnt the rudiments of goldsmithing from the elderly Master John of St. Albans, with whom he was certainly acquainted. As soon, if not before he became a monk in 1217, he must have come under the influence of Master Walter of Colchester. We are not concerned with Matthew as a painter or illustrator, but only as a goldsmith, and there is little enough to tell, as he is completely silent on the subject himself.

<sup>51</sup> *Chronica Majora*, VI, 203.

<sup>52</sup> J. Amundesham—*op. cit.*, I, 434.

<sup>53</sup> *Chronica Willelmi Thorn* (Hist. Angl. Scriptores Decem), London, 1652, col. 1796.

The late fourteenth-century book of benefactors (Nero D. vii., 51) records that on his return from Norway "he gave two silver dishes to be used on Saturdays at the washing of feet. He also gave a gold jewel<sup>54</sup> containing part of the True Cross which is kissed on the Good Friday and which hangs from the gold cross by a silver chain on the right side." Subsequently is mentioned "a silver cup for secular use for the refectory weighing 4 marks 6 dwt." The two dishes and probably also the jewel may have been included amongst the rich gifts which he received from King Hacon in return for bringing a letter from St. Louis.<sup>55</sup> The cup, however, may well have been of his own making. For the rest, he may have evinced his skill in the making of some of the minor church ornaments mentioned in the fifteenth century inventory, but the golden opportunity of making a shrine never came his way. He died in 1259.

Nothing further is recorded of goldsmithing activity of the monks during the second half of the thirteenth century, but it is unlikely that it ceased entirely as Brother Richard, whose father was still alive in the decade when Matthew Paris died, may be presumed to have lived till the fourth quarter of the century. There is no mention, however, of the source of the only piece of goldsmith's work recorded to have been given by Abbot Roger de Nortone (1260-90), a very fine silver-gilt censer weighing £4 11s.<sup>56</sup>

Although the records from which the above sketch is drawn are woefully incomplete, I think that it is still possible to obtain from them some idea of how the art of the goldsmith was practised at a great English abbey during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Or perhaps only silver-gilt, unless we suppose that it had been remounted before the time of Henry IV. See the inventory in J. Amundesham, *op. cit.*, I. 323.

<sup>55</sup> *Chronica Majora*, IV, 652.

<sup>56</sup> G. A., I, 483.

<sup>57</sup> I should like to mention here that the whole of this paper had been written before the appearance in September, 1932, of Mr. R. E. Swartwout's *Monastic Craftsman*. Previous to that the monastic goldsmith had only been treated in recent years summarily by Dr. G. C. Coulton in his *Art and the Reformation*, where attention was rivetted principally on the much more fabulous monastic architect. After reading Mr. Swartwout's book I still felt that what I had previously written was worth printing with practically no alterations. I have alluded in the notes to a number of points where Mr. Swartwout's account of the St. Albans goldsmiths has to be corrected and it is curious to note that he does not make any mention at all of Matthew Paris as an artist.

First, we must be struck by the quantity of the goldsmith's work of which we hear, which we must remember was almost entirely for religious use. Besides all this an important personage, whether layman or ecclesiastic,<sup>58</sup> had constantly to be making expensive gifts of plate varying from rich cups, down to spoons<sup>59</sup> and finger-rings.<sup>60</sup> A new abbot of St. Albans had, moreover, to supply himself with gifts for his journey to Rome.<sup>61</sup> We may well imagine that whenever the occasion of presentation did not arise too suddenly, these presents would be made by the abbey goldsmiths. Besides these there were oft-recurring tasks, such as keeping in repair the church and refectory plate, and occasional ones such as the cutting of a new seal for the abbey or one of its cells. It will readily be understood that only the patronage of the king himself, or of a most luxurious bishop, would be preferred to that of a large abbey. If the patronage of the abbey was all-important at this time it is necessary to enquire how and to whom it was extended. It has long been the fashion for writers on English goldsmiths' work to allude to "monastic schools of goldsmiths," amongst which St. Albans is always included. When a "school" is mentioned in this way it seems to be implied that there was a tradition of craftsmanship handed down by one master-goldsmith to his pupils, one of whom eventually followed him in his office and imparted his skill to his own successors. Further, it seems sometimes to be implied that the principal agents in the building up and transmission of this tradition were the craftsmen amongst the monks, who are regarded as a sort of caste superior to and distinct from their lay contemporaries.

Let us consider these propositions in relation to St. Albans. It is obvious that if we are to suppose that there was a tradition passed on by monkish goldsmiths alone, the number of these must have been considerable.

<sup>58</sup> As an instance we may cite Bogo de Clare, the notorious pluralist, who, between June, 1284, and March, 1284-5, got no less than four dozen gold rings from his goldsmith. Between March, 1284-5, and September, 1285, he gave away seven silver cups (*Archæologia*, LXX. 1918-20, 20, 34).

<sup>59</sup> See *G. A.*, I, 133.

<sup>60</sup> See the account for the rings supplied to Abbot Hugh de Sulgrave, of Ramsey, in apparently the third quarter of 1262 (*Cartularium monasterii de Rameseia*, III, 327).

<sup>61</sup> Abbot Robert seems to have bought his minor gifts in London and Paris (*G. A.*, I, 127).

It is very necessary to remember, however, that most references to monkish craftsmen are drawn from chronicles written by monks who naturally took more care to celebrate the names of illustrious members of their community than those of strangers. Actually we only know of five monkish goldsmiths of St. Albans, and though there may have been more there was demonstrably no continuity in the supply of them. Firstly, it is clear that there was no living tradition at the time of the arrival of Anketyl, and secondly, a rupture may be safely presumed during the abbacy of Simon, since the greater part of the works undertaken by him are definitely assigned to laymen, whilst none are attributed to monks. As a matter of fact there is little reason for supposing that these were the only periods when the supply of monastic goldsmiths failed.

Even if laymen be included in the "monastic schools of goldsmiths," it is impossible to believe in a single tradition of craftsmanship. The two most important monkish goldsmiths were not trained at the abbey, whilst the lay master goldsmiths of whom we hear appear to have been transient, even when they had special ties with the place. Although there was a very real tendency for the lay goldsmith to prolong his stay in the employment of an abbey, Master John's work actually lasted only "a few years," whilst Master Baldwin's tasks, though numerous, were not of a sort which would have necessitated a very long residence. That these successive master-goldsmiths to the abbey were acquainted with each other and studied each other's work is probable enough, but there is no justification for attempting to weave them into a single "school." As a corollary it will be seen that a young native of St. Albans who was taken as a pupil by the abbey's master-goldsmith, say, in 1170, might be imbued with an entirely different tradition from a similar aspirant ten years later.

It might seem tempting to say that we find at St. Albans not a school but a succession of schools, but this would again be begging the question. The establishment of goldsmiths attached to an abbey differed from place to place and from time to time. Salamon of Ely, we have seen, anticipated no difficulty in satisfying (doubtless with the aid of an assistant) the demands of

the prior of Ely whilst remaining in the royal service. At Bury, on the other hand, where the abbey had a mint, we hear that the sheriff arrested the five goldsmiths in 1277 and sent them up to London.<sup>62</sup> It is always well to remember that if the abbeys spent vast sums on plate the work was usually spread over a considerable number of years and not to imagine that the abbey's master-goldsmith had a large number employed working from year's end to year's end. We may imagine that the goldsmith regarded the making of a large shrine as a stock job on which he fell back when not disturbed by the importunate demands of the abbot. Though we know little of how the goldsmith's shop was staffed at St. Albans the most normal establishment for an abbey appears to have been no more than a goldsmith with an assistant.

It is only after the arrival of Master Walter of Colchester that we have evidence at St. Albans of an establishment which it would not be grandiloquent to describe as his "school," over which he presided in the dual capacity of master-goldsmith and sacrist. It must be remembered that although several of his craftsmen were qualified as goldsmiths they did not spend their time entirely on what we should describe as goldsmiths' work. The "monastic" character of the coterie which seems to have collected round Master Walter must not be stressed. Similar "schools" of skilled craftsmen under the direction of some presiding genius must have tended to collect wherever there was a rich prelate to serve, and the one at St. Albans only differed from these in that some of its members being monks were less free to seek employment elsewhere when work at the abbey failed.

If the activities of the monkish goldsmith tended to be localised his influence was almost as liable to diffusion as that of his lay contemporaries. He was not an exclusive person working only with his fellow monks, but was ready to obtain outside assistance whenever the necessity arose. It is, of course, equally mistaken to picture the lay goldsmith as an entirely errant being. If his work had been approved, he was likely to obtain a fresh commission from the same patron, and as his talent might not be confined to working in the precious metals

<sup>62</sup> *Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey*, III, 33.

he might well find employment for years on end, even if he did not definitely settle and bring up his family in the neighbourhood.

Perhaps the unwarranted creation of "monastic schools of goldsmiths" has been held to be supported by the existence of goldsmith abbots and bishops who are depicted as the products as well as the promoters of such establishments. Comparatively few of the notabilities who are put forward in this connection can seriously be regarded as goldsmiths, but a residuum of undoubted cases must be admitted.<sup>63</sup> It is not, however, necessary to believe that all these had learnt their skill as novices in a "monastic school."<sup>64</sup>

It is unfortunate that we know the early history of hardly any goldsmith monks, but if the material was more abundant we should probably find that a considerably larger proportion of them than is generally realised had learnt their skill before entering the cloister. It is necessary to remember that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries monasticism made a genuine appeal to the best intellects of the time, and it was only natural that goldsmiths also should have been drawn towards the claustral life. Though some might choose to spend only their latter years in the peace of the cloister, both Anketyl<sup>65</sup> and Walter of Colchester must have come to St. Albans at a comparatively early age, since the former survived his profession by twenty years and the latter perhaps double that time.

An abbot might with justice congratulate himself on

<sup>63</sup> Abbot Manny, of Evesham, Abbot Spearhavoc of Abingdon, and Prior Alan of Walsingham, of Ely, may be cited as genuine instances.

<sup>64</sup> It does not seem to be generally realised how slight are the claims of St. Dunstan to be considered a goldsmith. Neither of the two nearly contemporary lives make any mention of his skill in this art. It is only after the Conquest that this feature appears, together with the celebrated incident of the tongs and other stories which can only be regarded as folk-lore. It is worthy of notice that although William of Malmesbury borrowed from Osbern the incident in question, he does not attribute to the saint's hands any of the pieces of goldsmith's work which he is recorded to have given both to Glastonbury and Malmesbury. The inscriptions on two of the pieces which are quoted definitely show that they were not the saint's work (*Gesta Pontificum*, 407, *De antiquitate Glastoniensis ecclesiae* in Hearne's *Adam de Domesday*, 1727, 92). A ring in the royal wardrobe in the year 1300 is mentioned as being attributed to the saint's workmanship, but even this has a cautionary "ut dicitur" and I know of no earlier references.

<sup>65</sup> This contradicts Mr. Swartwout's statement "it was not till late in life that he became a monk" (*op. cit.*, 42).

the admission of a trained goldsmith to the brotherhood, whereby he would save the remuneration paid to a lay craftsman. Professor Hamilton Thompson has collected evidence to show that some bishops and abbots conscientiously collected for this purpose artists who would be useful to the communities for which they were responsible.<sup>66</sup> The admission of the goldsmith was not, of course, an act of condescension attributable solely to his technical skill. Socially the goldsmiths with whom we have been dealing must have belonged to much the same class as the majority of the monks of their abbey. We know, moreover, not only of goldsmiths who became monks, but of goldsmiths who had monks as their fathers and brothers.

Although an ambitious goldsmith who was willing to take vows of celibacy was more likely in the thirteenth century to take secular orders, like Nicholas of St. Albans, in the hope of collecting rectories and canonries through royal or episcopal favour, the prospects of promotion were not unpromising for those who chose a monastic career at a comparatively early age. The lay goldsmith, besides being an artist, seems usually to have been a business man accustomed to complicated accounts, and such a training would be especially valuable in the cloister where the recurrent financial crises were often associated with bad book-keeping. It is not, therefore, surprising that Walter of Colchester should have been chosen sacrist at St. Albans, and there cannot but arise a suspicion (it cannot be described more strongly for lack of evidence) that the true goldsmith bishop and abbot had usually learnt his artistic skill before taking orders.

If too much importance seems to have been attributed in the past to the artistic atmosphere of the cloister, too small an allowance has been made for hereditary tendencies. Richard, son of Simon of Colchester, at St. Albans, and Alan of Walsingham, prior of Ely, were perhaps typical of many who preferred to follow the profession of their family within the cloister. The falling-off of the artistic output of the abbeys during the later middle ages, so often noted, may perhaps be more

<sup>66</sup> *Cathedral Builders of the Middle Ages in History*, N, 1925, 140-2.

fairly assigned to the general decline of the appeal of monasticism to the educated laity than to any failure of the goldsmith monks to impart their skill to their successors. It was not that monks had ceased to train as goldsmiths, but rather that goldsmiths had ceased to train as monks.

