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# Alan of Tewkesbury and St Thomas of Canterbury

Margaret Harris

The story of Thomas Becket, St Thomas of Canterbury, is well known.<sup>1</sup> He was first a clerk in the household of Theobald, the archbishop of Canterbury, and then royal chancellor, in which post he became a close friend of the king, Henry II, successful, wealthy and renowned for his magnificence. As chancellor, his loyalty to the king was undivided, even at times at the expense of the Church, but when Henry made him archbishop of Canterbury in 1162, he had no doubt that his loyalty must be first and foremost to God and the Church and when that loyalty came into conflict with his loyalty to the king, it was the latter that had to be sacrificed. Matters came to a head when Henry expressed his requirements in the Constitutions of Clarendon which, it seemed to Thomas, imposed intolerable restrictions on the freedom of the Church. Henry was enraged when he found that Thomas, contrary to his expectations, so far from supporting his plans for reform of the Church, was opposing them, and summoned him to give account of himself at a council at Northampton. There Thomas, who understood the mind of the king perhaps better than anyone and recognised that the king was determined to break him, made his escape and fled into exile in France. Opinion was divided about him and the action he had taken. In exile he had the support and encouragement not only of scholars, such as the great humanist, John of Salisbury, and the distinguished Italian canon lawyer, Lombard of Piacenza, both of whom were his clerks, but also of dignitaries of the French Church, such as William, the archbishop of Sens, and John, the bishop of Poitiers, who was an Englishman and had been a colleague many years earlier when they were both clerks in the household of Archbishop Theobald. Others, in particular a number of the English bishops, led by Gilbert Foliot, the bishop of London,

opposed him strongly and gave their support to the king. These were motivated partly out of a genuine feeling that Thomas was exaggerating the implications of the king's demands and exacerbating the situation by his obstinacy and partly out of personal prejudice. Gilbert Foliot, for instance, had perhaps hoped that he might become archbishop of Canterbury himself.

Soon after Thomas arrived in France, a group came from England to represent Henry's case to the pope, Alexander III. Alan of Tewkesbury, in his brief biography of St Thomas,<sup>2</sup> describes vividly the scene at Sens when they tried to persuade the pope against Thomas.

Gilbert Foliot, the bishop of London, the leader and 'standard-bearer' of the king's party, made the opening speech. Dissension had arisen, he said, between the king and the archbishop 'on a small and insignificant matter'. The archbishop had blown this up out of all proportion, insisting on his own viewpoint and not listening to anyone else. To make matters worse, he had taken to flight, though 'no-one was showing force against him and no-one was making threats'. The bishop continued. 'As it is written, "The wicked man flees when no-one is after him"'.<sup>3</sup> (Gilbert Foliot was quite right, of course. No-one had sent Thomas into exile but that was a superficial view of the situation and the bishop's criticisms were unnecessarily harsh.) The pope interrupted him. 'Brother, spare', he said. 'Lord, I would spare him', said the bishop. 'Brother, I am not saying that you should spare him, but that you should spare yourself'. The bishop of London was thrown into confusion and could say no more. He was followed by the bishop of Chichester, who 'gloried in words' but whose speech ended in even greater discomfiture. He used the impersonal verb, *oportet*, as though it were a personal verb and the whole assembly burst into laughter when they heard 'the master of grammar jump from port to port'. 'You've made a mess of coming into port', one called out. After this the archbishop of York and the bishop of Exeter were more cautious in their approach, pointing out only that Thomas's obstinate nature would make reconciliation difficult and asking for papal legates to try to bring about a settlement. The final speech was made by the earl of Arundel, who spoke respectfully of both the king and the archbishop, and earned the admiration of all for his eloquence and discretion, even though he spoke in his native tongue. The pope granted legates but refused the bishop of London's request that they could give judgement without an

appeal. That, said the pope, was his prerogative. 'When the archbishop is to be judged, he will be judged by us. It would be quite unreasonable for us to send him into England to be judged by his opponents and among his enemies.'

Alan goes on to describe how Thomas himself then came to Sens, how he resigned his see into the pope's hands and received it back again, and how he was given a home in the Cistercian abbey of Pontigny. Alan's account concludes when the pope left France to return to Rome. Thomas accompanied him as far as Bourges and there said his final farewell. 'When he (Thomas Becket) had received a blessing, he returned to Pontigny, never to see the Lord Pope in the flesh again.'

Eventually a fragile truce was obtained and in the late autumn of 1170, after six years in exile, Thomas Becket returned to his Cathedral of Christchurch and to the Benedictine monastery attached to it, of which he was head. The situation at Christchurch was not an easy one. Since the archbishop was also the abbot, the monks had a right to a say in the appointment. In the case of Thomas they had been persuaded, albeit reluctantly, to celebrate the formal election, but the choice had been the king's and Thomas had been thrust on them. They had had little opportunity to establish any sort of relationship with him before he went into exile and their loyalty to him, during his time in exile, was not all that it should have been. More than once, both the pope and John of Salisbury, had to ask them to give him financial support. There was even a faction, possibly led by the notorious Roger Norreys, who betrayed secrets to his enemies. Yet his return was marked by great rejoicing. The monks came out to greet him in a chanting procession and the cathedral bells were pealing. A few weeks later, on December 29th, in the gathering dusk of a winter afternoon, four knights, fully armed, burst into the cathedral and murdered him, slashing him down with their heavy swords as he stood on the steps near an altar.

Unlike Thomas Becket, the name of Alan of Tewkesbury is little known. That it is known at all is due almost entirely to the outstanding work he did in producing an edition of the correspondence relating to the controversy between Thomas Becket and the king. Alan came to Canterbury, to become a monk at Christchurch, some three years after the murder of Thomas Becket, in 1174 or thereabouts.<sup>4</sup> Much had happened at Canterbury during those three years. Immediately after the murder, the monks, stunned and

frightened, and harried by threats from those who had assisted the murderers, had hastily buried the body of their archbishop in a marble sarcophagus which was to hand, with no proper funeral Mass. Because of the stand Thomas had made, however, and the nature of his death and the miracles which were taking place, Thomas was quickly recognised as a saint and martyr. He was canonized by Pope Alexander III on Ash Wednesday, 1173, and the place where he was buried became a shrine. Pilgrims were coming from all over Christendom to pay their respects at it. In July 1174, about the time that Alan arrived in Canterbury, Henry II himself came to do penance at the tomb of his former friend and chancellor, archbishop and opponent, walking the last part bare-foot and submitting himself to a scourging beside the tomb. If Alan came to Canterbury in the early part of 1174, he would have witnessed this.

Unfortunately little is known about Alan's life before he became a monk at Christchurch and therefore we cannot tell for certain whether he knew Thomas Becket or whether he was involved in the controversy at all. It seems, however, that he came from Canterbury or the Canterbury environs and that in coming to Christchurch he was returning to the district of his birth and childhood. If so, it is quite probable that he would have seen Thomas Becket from time to time in and around Canterbury during his childhood, especially if he was one of the refugees who came to the monastery of Christchurch for help when Kent was ravaged by famine in 1148, as seems likely, for by then Thomas was already well established as a clerk in the household of Archbishop Theobald, but he would, presumably, have noted Thomas only as one of the officials in the archbishop's retinue, probably unaware of either his name or his role and certainly unaware of the future events which were to have so profound a significance for his own life.

Immediately before returning to Canterbury, Alan was a canon of the cathedral of Benevento in southern Italy. The archbishop of Benevento at that time was that same Lombard, Lombard of Piacenza, who had been a clerk to Thomas Becket during his exile in France. Lombard seems to have joined Thomas Becket's household in 1164, or shortly before, and to have spent some five years with him, as clerk, adviser and tutor, writing letters on his behalf and teaching him canon law. He left the household in 1169 to join the papal curia but he continued to be a staunch supporter of Thomas Becket and his cause and to act as his representative when necessary. He was made

archbishop of Benevento in 1171. Alan was thus in Benevento with Lombard in the years immediately following the murder. They must have often discussed it together, and the circumstances which led up to it, and Alan would have learnt much from Lombard about incidents which had taken place in the household of Thomas Becket during the exile and become familiar with his view of the events. It is usually assumed that Alan must have received his appointment at Benevento from Lombard and this seems to provide the most probable explanation why an Englishman should have become a canon so far south in Italy. If he did, it would seem to suggest that they were acquainted. Alan was trained in canon law and an able canonist himself.<sup>5</sup> It is therefore possible that he had studied under Lombard or taught alongside him. Another possibility is that Alan was a clerk in the papal curia and that he met Lombard there some time between 1169 and 1171. Yet another possibility is that he met Lombard in the household of Archbishop Thomas himself. This, however, seems less likely. Thomas had a clerk named Alan but this Alan has not been identified and it would surely have been noted by one or other of the biographers if that clerk had been someone as well known as Alan later became. Whatever the circumstances which led Alan to become a canon at Benevento, the likelihood is that he was in contact with Lombard, or moved in circles similar to his, at least during the latter part of the exile, and that he would have been in a position to learn things about the controversy second-hand, perhaps even to witness some incidents first-hand. In later years, in a letter he wrote to the Christchurch monks after he had become abbot of St Mary's, Tewkesbury, Alan referred to their disloyalty to Thomas Becket during his exile in France, seeing the troubles they were suffering at the time as a punishment for the lack of support they had given their archbishop when he needed them. It seemed, he said, that those who had turned their back on their father while he was suffering in exile, were now finding themselves abandoned by him.<sup>6</sup> Alan could have learnt about the monks' attitude from Lombard but it may be that he was referring to something he had been aware of at the time himself.

It is not known when Alan began work on creating an edition of the Becket correspondence, or why. With the increasing interest in St Thomas and an increasing number of pilgrims coming to visit the shrine, there was naturally, as Alan himself said,<sup>7</sup> a thirst to know more about the life of St Thomas and the circumstances which led to his martyrdom. Attempts had already been made, or were being made,

to meet this need when Alan arrived in Canterbury. John of Salisbury, Thomas Becket's clerk, and William of Canterbury, the Christchurch monk whom Thomas had made a deacon in 1170 and who had been at his side when the knights first struck, had already produced a biography of the saint, or were to produce one soon afterwards. It would seem that work had also started on putting together a collection of the correspondence.

It was Thomas Becket himself who had first expressed a wish that a collection be made of the correspondence as a permanent record of the controversy between himself and Henry II. He had asked Cardinal Gratian that copies of letters from the pope to Henry II be kept in the papal register and he had himself sent the cardinal copies of letters he thought the papal curia might need. Soon after his death John of Salisbury seems to have done further work in putting together a collection of letters, including many that he had written himself in the archbishop's cause. The probability is that Alan took this work over when John was appointed bishop of Chartres in 1176. As a trained scholar and a monk at Christchurch, the centre of the martyr's cult, he was well suited for the work. Not only would he have been able to read the Latin letters with ease but his training in canon law would have equipped him to understand the issues at stake and to unravel the complexities of the controversy. His earlier experiences, if only what he had learnt from Lombard, would have provided him with a basic knowledge and he would have been well placed at Canterbury for contacts with those who could provide him with the additional information he needed to work out the sequence of events, gain an understanding of the attitudes of all those involved, and thus build up a picture of what had happened.

Alan gathered together more than five hundred letters from a variety of sources, presumably including John's initial work and material already in the Canterbury archives.<sup>8</sup> At this stage, it seems, they were in a disorganised state, for Alan speaks of bundles of letters in no particular order.<sup>9</sup> The task of sorting them into chronological order, identifying by whom and to whom each was written and attempting to establish the best text from the various copies available, was a long and tedious one. When he finished, he said, 'If anyone wants to arrange the letters in a better order, no-one will envy him'.<sup>10</sup>

The majority of the letters cover the period of the exile. This is perhaps inevitable. This was the time when letters were being sent to

and fro, between the protagonists and the papal curia, and when letters were being sent out by Thomas Becket's clerks to elicit support for the exiled archbishop. Alan seems to have wanted to produce as comprehensive and unbiased a record as possible. To make the story complete, he included additional material, such as the text of the Constitutions of Clarendon, and prefixed the letters with John of Salisbury's 'Life of St Thomas' and with the biographical details he had written himself to supplement the letters. He also included, in his first edition at least, letters apparently detrimental to Thomas Becket, including, for instance, the infamous letter written by Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London, beginning 'Multiplicem nobis ...', in which the bishop laid a number of charges against his archbishop. In the period after the martyrdom, of course, as Dr Duggan has rightly pointed out,<sup>11</sup> this letter would have been seen as an indictment of its author rather than of its recipient, but even so, its controversial nature seems to have caused offence to some and it was dropped from later editions.

Alan organised the letters in five sections, based on the four papal legations, the first part covering the period from the beginning of the exile until the legation of the cardinals, William and Otto, the second part continuing until the legation of Gratian and Vivian, the third part until the legation of Simon of Mont-Dieu and Bernard de Corilo, and the fourth part until the legation of Rotrou, archbishop of Rouen, and Bernard, bishop of Nevers (and later William, archbishop of Sens). The fifth part concludes with the martyrdom and the canonization. In doing so, he made one major mistake for in reality the legation of Simon and Bernard preceded that of Gratian and Vivian. That mistake can probably be accounted for, as Dr Anne Duggan has suggested, by erroneous and misleading statements in the 'Life' of Becket already written by William of Canterbury,<sup>12</sup> but it is surprising that a careful and thorough man like Alan did not see the mistake himself or that one of his contemporaries did not point it out to him. It is evident that he took great trouble to improve on the text and the organisation of his first edition, and he would undoubtedly have rectified this mistake, had he been aware of it. That apart, the chronology of his work shows a remarkable degree of accuracy. Even where letters are not in strict chronological sequence, they are usually grouped in a sensible way. Sometimes the reply to a letter is placed next to the letter itself. At other times letters are grouped together according to subject matter. This was probably deliberate. Alan's prime intention was not to create a strict chronological sequence but to create a



coherent record of the controversy, so that the reader could trace the story as it unfolded, for he believed, as he stated explicitly in his preface to the letters, that the letters themselves, arranged in their rightful place and order, would constitute the best portrayal of 'the man of God' and would thus show, by his example, how the freedom of the Church ought to be defended.<sup>13</sup>

His work quickly won the respect of his contemporaries and though few copies of it now survive there were many copies in circulation, owned either by individuals or by churches, when Herbert of Bosham was writing his biography of St Thomas between 1184 and 1186.<sup>14</sup> Both Herbert and the Christchurch chronicler, Gervase, recommended their readers to study Alan's book.<sup>15</sup> It was a magnificent achievement and has provided an invaluable source of information for later generations. Despite the imperfections of the work, Alan fulfilled the wishes of St Thomas admirably and by his painstaking care he produced a worthy tribute for the martyr.

In 1179 Alan was promoted to the post of prior. It is a sign of his popularity and the respect with which he was held that he should have been elected by the unanimous consent of almost the whole community only five years after he had first joined them. The post to which he was promoted was a particularly important one. Since the abbot of Christchurch was also the archbishop, it was the prior who was the effective leader of the community of monks. It was also an important time for Canterbury and the monastery of Christchurch. The cult of St Thomas was gaining in popularity and an increasing number of pilgrims were coming from all over Christendom to visit the shrine. This inevitably brought wealth and prestige to Christchurch, which was at the centre of the cult. Looking back in later years, Alan felt that the monks had enjoyed the wealth too much and respected the saint too little. 'While I was with you', he said, 'I often grieved about it and warned about it... and because I played no small part in it myself, I await my judgement trembling'.<sup>16</sup> Yet his criticism of himself was not entirely justified. There can be no doubt about his veneration for the martyr. With the monks of Christchurch, he played a part in making amends to the family of Thomas Becket, which had suffered badly at the hands of Henry II while Thomas was in exile in France. They presented one of Thomas' nephews, John, the son of Thomas' sister, Agnes, to the perpetual vicarage of Halstow in Kent, and another nephew, also named John, to St Mary Bothaw in the City of London.<sup>17</sup> Alan also endeavoured to have the martyr

translated to a better shrine. The body of St Thomas still lay in the marble sarcophagus in which it had first been put, now boxed in with the massive stone walls which the monks had built when there were threats to steal the body. This had always been seen as a temporary shrine, and though there were plans to build a more dignified one, a number of events, the fire in 1174, the consequent rebuilding of the cathedral and the premature death of Archbishop Richard, had combined to prevent these plans being carried out. Alan wrote to Henry II, pointing out that it was a scandal, even among barbarians, that the martyr's body should lie in such an unworthy place, and urging that a better one be built.<sup>18</sup>

It is also possible that he intended a copy of his edition of the correspondence to be placed in the shrine. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries a number of books of lives of saints were being produced, written in a fine script, characteristic of liturgical books, with elaborate initials and accompanied by long sets of illustrations. These were not kept by the librarian, it seems, but by the sacristan and seem to have been regarded with especial importance.<sup>19</sup> There is in the British Library a beautiful, illuminated manuscript of Alan's first edition of the correspondence which has many of the characteristics of these books. It is written in a fine script with illuminated initials and a number of illustrations (including the first depiction of Becket's murder). It would seem to have been produced at Christchurch in about 1180, for the script and the style of illumination are characteristic of manuscripts produced at Christchurch at that time, and was clearly intended as a presentation copy of some sort. It is not, of course, a 'Life' of a saint in the generally accepted sense, but Alan himself believed that the letters portrayed the story of St Thomas and he could have believed that this was an appropriate book to place in the shrine.<sup>20</sup> However, the new shrine was not built until 1220 and this fine book never served the purpose for which it was originally intended. It was superseded by later work and became a working document. It has a number of corrections and a number of notes written in the margins, attempting to bring it up to date with later editions. Though it was almost certainly produced at Christchurch, it has no Christchurch pressmark and does not seem to have been kept in the library there. It is quite possible that Alan himself kept this copy after it was superseded. A number of marginal notes, written in a distinctive hand, give detailed cross-references and comments about people mentioned in the letters. They reveal an intimate knowledge of

the letter collection and may well have been written by him.<sup>21</sup>

Alan's own life was to have parallels with that of Thomas Becket. Five years after he became prior of Christchurch, in 1184, Richard of Dover, Thomas Becket's successor as archbishop of Canterbury, died. His death marked the beginning of a long period of conflict in the life of the Christchurch community. The issues at stake were not of such major or far-reaching significance as those for which Thomas Becket had fought and died, but there were similarities and Alan took encouragement from the example which St Thomas had set. The death of Archbishop Richard immediately raised yet again the vexed question of who should elect the new archbishop, the king, the bishops or the monks. Henry himself, despite royal intervention in earlier appointments of archbishops of Canterbury, made no nomination, perhaps wary after the disastrous consequences of his appointment of Thomas Becket to the post in 1162. The bishops, however, insisted on their right to elect their metropolitan and proceeded not only to nominate their candidate, Baldwin, bishop of Worcester, but to celebrate the formal election. The monks, on the other hand, also had a right to a say in the election of their head and Alan, as their prior and leader, fought for their rights with determination. The strain inevitably told on him, however, as it had on Thomas Becket. On one occasion the stress was such that he fell in a faint at the king's feet. With the memory of Thomas Becket's murder fresh in his mind, Henry was deeply affected by the sight of an ecclesiastic prostrate before him, deathly pale and fighting for his breath. He called for water, poured it over Alan himself and when Alan came round, he straightaway said he would consent to whatever he wished. At this Alan agreed to accept the nomination of the bishops, but in doing so he showed more generosity than was perhaps wise.

Baldwin had not been in office long before he began to put into action his plans to found a secular college at Hackington in the suburbs of Canterbury, intending this college to provide prebends to attract and reward clerks employed in diocesan administration. The king and the bishops were also to have stalls there. Whatever the justification for this scheme, Baldwin's action, so far from creating a harmonious relationship with his monks, drove a wedge between him and them, for the monks inevitably saw this college as a threat both to their electoral rights and to their influence in diocesan and national affairs. Thus Alan, as champion of the monks, now found himself in

conflict with Archbishop Baldwin. One of Baldwin's moves was to give land to influential men to win support for the scheme. He offered land, which rightly belonged to the monks, to John, archbishop of Lyons, that same John who, as bishop of Poitiers, had been a firm friend and supporter of Thomas Becket throughout the exile. Alan countered Baldwin's move by writing a letter to Archbishop John himself, begging him not to accept the land, pointing out that the revenues of that land were devoted to alms for the poor and reminding him that he did not need land in Canterbury for he would always be welcome as a guest of the Christchurch monks.<sup>22</sup> Baldwin, in turn, countered this move by appointing Alan to become abbot of St Mary's, Tewkesbury, and moving him far away from Canterbury.

This was a bitter blow to Alan. His life at Tewkesbury was to prove rich and rewarding but his first feelings on arriving there were of desolation and humiliation. Cut off from his friends in Canterbury and removed from the high office he had held in the leading Benedictine monastery of the country, he could view the move only as a punishment and a relegation, but in his unhappiness he found strength and comfort in the parallel he saw between his own situation and that of Thomas Becket. 'Among all the things which bring relief in this distress', he wrote to a friend soon afterwards, 'clearly the cause and the crown of the blessed Thomas come first to mind. By the example of his struggle we are shown how we ought to meet the cunning of hostile men. When I recall the martyr's exile and his cause, my misery is turned into joy and I find no small consolation in the fact that I am suffering this punishment of relegation with him, and perhaps for him, in a similar cause, indeed, to speak more boldly, in one and the same cause.'<sup>23</sup> The parallels should not be pressed too far. Alan had been sent to a post of dignity and importance and his banishment to Tewkesbury cannot be compared with Thomas Becket's exile, where he had no home except that which was provided by the hospitality of others. Nor can the issues for which Alan was fighting be compared with those for which Thomas had fought. Yet Alan, like Thomas, had stood firm, regardless of the cost, not in his own self interest but for the principles he believed in and for the rights of others, and like Thomas he had paid the price.

On a light-hearted note, it is recorded that in later years and happier times he related to a fellow abbot a tale from Thomas Becket's hunting days.<sup>24</sup> This story, if true, is indicative of the stories which were current in the years after the murder and which Alan would have

picked up in Canterbury. It is also indicative of Alan's continuing interest in the memory of St Thomas. Alan was dining with Thomas Carbonnel, abbot of the neighbouring abbey of St Peter's, Gloucester, when two monks came in to ask their abbot's blessing. Abbot Thomas explained to Alan that they were both Welshmen and that they were going into Wales to deal with some Welsh raiders who had been marauding lands belonging to the abbey. Alan took the opportunity to tease Thomas Carbonnel. Before Thomas Becket became archbishop of Canterbury, Alan said, he had kept two pet wolves. Unlike most wolves, which were trained for hunting hares, these wolves had been trained for hunting other wolves. They were fast, fierce and strong when attacking other wolves but remarkably gentle with their master. Becket was understandably proud of them. On one occasion, when he was out hunting, a group of wolves was seen in the distance. Becket let his tame wolves off the leash. They rushed with speed towards the wild wolves, but the wild wolves, suspecting nothing amiss, remained where they were. At this, the tame wolves suddenly seemed to forget what they had been trained for, slowed down and went up to the group quietly. They even seemed to kiss each other before going off into the woods together. 'I think, Lord Abbot', said Alan, turning to his fellow abbot with a smile, 'that these monks whom you have sent to bring a lawsuit against the Welshmen will do the same. When they see their kinsmen, they will forget your instructions and the discipline of the cloister, and will take to the life of the woods'.

Alan was a man of considerable standing in the latter part of the twelfth century. As abbot of Tewkesbury he was commissioned to act as papal judge-delegate in two of the famous cases of the time, first to see to the restoration of the monks of Coventry who had been removed by Hugh of Nonant and later to arbitrate in the case between Archbishop Geoffrey of York and his canons. He was also held in high regard by Henry's youngest son, John, and appointed to act as Justice in Eyre in the first autumn of John's reign. He was a man of high intelligence and respected for his learning. His advice was sought on matters of canon law and he was unafraid to challenge the teaching of contemporary scholars.<sup>25</sup> He was a fine man, loved and respected by almost everyone who knew him, and devoted to the ideals of the Christian Gospel and the Benedictine Rule. He was much influenced by the great monastic writers, St Anselm of Bec and St Bernard of Clairvaux in particular.<sup>26</sup> Yet there can be no doubt that he also held

St Thomas in high regard and was much influenced by him too. He differed from Thomas in a number of ways. Despite the story he told about the wolves, there is nothing to suggest that he was ever a sportsman himself. His aptitude and inclination was for learning. He also had, perhaps, a more gentle disposition and a greater assurance of the love of God. He does not seem to have felt Thomas' need to earn the approval of God by austere privations and the wearing of a hair-shirt. Yet the similarities are more marked than the differences. He shared the ideals of St Thomas. Like St Thomas he was a staunch supporter of the papacy. He earned the displeasure of Henry II when, as prior of Christchurch, he received a mandate to collect the papal tax, Peter's Pence, throughout England. 'He wants to be a second pope in England', Henry muttered to the count of Flanders. Like St Thomas, too, he fought unflinchingly for the interests of the Church, as he perceived them. He once complained that the passion of the martyr and the cause for which he had fought had so far receded from memory that there was no-one left who followed in his footsteps.<sup>27</sup> Yet it is certainly true that he himself endeavoured not only to make that cause known, in producing as comprehensive and accurate an edition of the correspondence as he could, but also to model his own life on the example of St Thomas and to follow in his footsteps.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For details of the life and death of St Thomas, see Professor Barlow's scholarly biography of him. F. Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London 1987).

<sup>2</sup> *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury* (eds. J.C. Robertson and J.B. Sheppard, RS 1875-85) (henceforward MB), ii, 323-51.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. 28,1.

<sup>4</sup> For details of the life of Alan of Tewkesbury, see M.A. Harris, 'Alan of Tewkesbury and his letters' in *Studia Monastica*, xviii (1976), 77-101 and 299-351. For the text of Alan's early letters, nos. 1-15, see *Patrologia cursus completus, series Latina* (ed. J.P. Migne, Paris 1844-64) cxc, 1475-1488. For the text of Alan's later letters, nos. 16-50, see M.A. Harris, *op. cit.*, 299-345.

<sup>5</sup> See M.A. Harris, 'Influences on the Thought of Alan of Tewkesbury' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (1982), 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> 'Monui et dolui ... ne qui patrem exulem abdicaverunt dum tribularetur, ab ipsius paternitatis sinu exulenti et ipsi tribulati. ... Quid enim aliud pretendit ista perturbatio, nisi quod aperte datur intelligi, ut qui patri

denegaverunt in angustiis consolationem, angustiati a patre recipiant desolationem?' Letter 20.

<sup>7</sup> 'Fama pervolans in id ipsum attrahit barbaras etiam nationes, quibus sitibunde quarentibus viri vitam et conversationem, martyrii insuper causam et occasionem ...'. MB ii, 299.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed analysis of Alan's work on the Becket correspondence, see A. Duggan, *Thomas Becket: A Textual History of His Letters* (Oxford 1980), in particular pp. 85-145.

<sup>9</sup> See below, note 13.

<sup>10</sup> MB ii, 300.

<sup>11</sup> A. Duggan, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>12</sup> A. Duggan, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>13</sup> 'Epistolae vero vario et disperso per schedulas collectae corpus rediguntur in unum, singulae locum suum retinentes et ordinem ... In quibus sedulus lector et devotus viri Dei imaginem inveniet plenius depictam ... Nec opus erit amplius longius evagari, ut quaerat quis, quomodo ecclesiae libertas debeat defensari'. ii, 300. See also my MA dissertation presented to the University of Reading, *Alan of Tewkesbury and his collection of the Becket Correspondence*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>14</sup> 'Liber ille epistolaris a multis personis et a multis ecclesiis iam habetur'. MB iii, 396.

<sup>15</sup> '... post libellum historicum hunc legat et illum librum epistolarem'. MB iii, 396. 'Legat et volumen epistolarum eius quas prior compilavit Alanus'. *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, (ed. W. Stubbs, RS 1789-80), ii, 391.

<sup>16</sup> Letter 20.

<sup>17</sup> See F. Barlow, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

<sup>18</sup> Letter 6.

<sup>19</sup> See F. Wormald, 'Some illustrated Lives of the Saints' in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, xxxv (1952-53), 250-61.

<sup>20</sup> British Library Ms. Cotton Claudius B ii. Mr D.H. Farmer first put this suggestion to me. See also C.R. Dodwell, *The Canterbury School of Illumination* (Cambridge 1954), p. 112, n.1. See also my MA dissertation presented to the University of Reading, *Alan of Tewkesbury and his collection of the Becket correspondence*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>21</sup> See A. Duggan, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-23.

<sup>22</sup> Letters 11 and 12.

<sup>23</sup> Letter 19.

<sup>24</sup> Oxford, Corpus Christi College Ms. 32, f.96.

<sup>25</sup> See M.A. Harris, 'Influences on the Thought of Alan of Tewkesbury' in

*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33 (1982), 3-9.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, pp. 10-12.

<sup>27</sup> 'Post eius obitum si esset qui sequeretur illius vestigia ... Verum martyris passio et eius causa tanto longius recessit a memoria, quanto negligentius recolitur singulare ipsius certamen et victoria.' Letter 48.