Visiting Reading Abbey: Cure-Seeking Pilgrims and the Cult of St James

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Arriving at Reading Abbey's West Gate and main entrance, after travelling on foot for many hours, a medieval pilgrim might have looked east to what would have undoubtedly been an impressive entrance to the royal abbey's church. Inside, visitors would have found altars honouring the various saints connected to the Abbey through their relics. Among these saintly individuals was the apostle James the Greater, whose hand had been given to the Abbey by Henry I and then, later, had been restored to the Abbey by his grandson Henry II following his ascension to the throne. Among those who came to Reading as part of their devotional practice were those whose journeys were made in the hope of securing a more tangible and physical reward. Through the intercession of the saint, cure-seekers came with the anticipation that their prayers might result in the restoration of their health. Such a desire drew many faithful cure-seekers to the shrines of saints during the Middle Ages, and the cult of St James at Reading was no different.

But what would a cure-seeking pilgrim have expected from their visit to St James's altar at Reading Abbey? Can anything be learnt of what a visitor, and particularly a cure-seeker, would have seen and experienced of the cult and of the Abbey itself? Within the context of celebrating the 900th anniversary of Reading's foundation, it is important that we consider the experiences of those who came to, and interacted with, the Abbey (both the buildings and the monastic community that resided within) in its heyday in order to better appreciate St James and Reading Abbey's place in medieval practices of devotion and healthcare.

While little of Reading's once-great abbey buildings survive, we are fortunate that a collection of miracles attributed to St James offers a tantalising glimpse into the experiences of those who visited the Abbey

within the first century of its foundation. This collection, the *Miracula S. Jacobi* (hereafter *M. Jacobi*), was produced *c.* 1190 and survives in a single early thirteenth-century manuscript (Gloucester Cathedral Library MS 1). It is this posthumous hagiography that sits at the heart of this article's discussion of the visitors to James' cult-centre at Reading Abbey.[1] Although the manuscript is a sole survivor, Brian Kemp's modern translation of *M. Jacobi* in *Berkshire Archaeological Journal* (1970) – and the more recently republished translation (along with the accompanying transcription of the Latin original) as part of Kemp's *Reading Abbey Records: A New Miscellany* (2018) – provide an accessible alternative.[2] Here, I use my own transcription of the Latin manuscript alongside Kemp's edition. Kemp's contribution to the history of Reading in general and of Reading Abbey in particular goes well beyond his edition of *M. Jacobi*. This article also draws upon his two-volume edition of the Abbey's cartulary and has benefited from Kemp's work on, and enthusiasm for, the history of Reading's royal institution.[3]

This article begins by placing James the Greater's cult into the context of Reading's first hundred years and, in so doing, highlights the cult's royal connections and its development at Reading. Attention then turns to *M. Jacobi* itself and to the accounts of curative miracles recorded within the collection. Experiences of cure-seeking and the cult of St James will be explored through the in-depth study of four select accounts of holy healing from the *miracula*, these being the miraculous cures of: Alice from Essex; an unnamed woman from Collingbourne; William from Reading; and Gilbert from 'aquilonalibus Anglie' ('the north of England').[4] Through these case-studies, this article addresses the experiences of cure-seeking visitors who sought out James' intercession at Reading. In doing so, this article asks what can be learnt about James' altar within the abbey church, and the cure-seekers' experiences of (and interactions with) the Abbey and its inhabitants.

James the Greater's cult has received attention from historians of English saints' cults in the high Middle Ages but, besides the analysis that accompanies Kemp's translation, there has been little individual exploration of the cult and its context. Among those who have analysed *M. Jacobi* within a broader study of high-medieval saints' cults, with Simon Yarrow and Anne E. Bailey's work are notable additions.

Yarrow's *Saints and their Communities* (2006) considered six hagiographic collections, including *M. Jacobi*.[5] In discussing *M. Jacobi*, Yarrow reflects on the miracle accounts themselves noting the broad social spectrum of devotees within the miracle collection and their geographic range, although the latter also showing the 'core catchment area' for the cult coincided with the Abbey's estates.[6] Bailey features *M. Jacobi* in a number of articles focusing on various aspects of high-medieval English pilgrimage.[7] In a particularly relevant article (published 2021), Bailey argues that eleventh- and twelfth-century English cult centres, including Reading, were more restrictive in their allowances for lay access than is sometimes supposed.[8] In terms of access to the hand of St James at Reading, as will be discussed below, Bailey highlights that the limited access to the reliquary granted to lay devotees was (at least in part) due to the value of the apostolic relic.[9] Bailey agrees in this respect with others, including Benedicta Ward and Yarrow, who have underscored the relic's political importance to the Abbey as well as its spiritual significance.[10] My own research into *M. Jacobi* has also shown to this to be the case: this was not an item regularly accessible to visitors to Reading Abbey.

Much like Bailey and Yarrow, and others who have addressed high-medieval cults and pilgrimage, my own work here (and elsewhere) focuses on select cases studies of shorter miracle collections.[11] These collections reflect cults that, first and foremost, could be termed 'local cults for local people'. They provide valuable insights into the practices and experiences at specific cult centres through the miraculous accounts recorded within posthumous *miracula*. In this manner, the saints can be understood, as Robert Bartlett argued, not just as patrons and protectors but also 'an invisible friend' to their medieval devotees.[12] Such 'friends' could be late, local bishops or abbesses or, as at Reading, one of Christ's apostles.

St James at Reading

The saints and their cults were an integral part of medieval Christianity. For those saints who drew in devoted visitors, such as St James, their cult-centres became a principal attraction. The saints acted as intercessors between the temporal and the divine, and their altars and

shrines acted as physical focuses for the devotional practices of religious and lay people alike. The spaces dedicated to the saints, especially in wealthy institutions, would have been highly decorated to celebrate and promote the saint, and would have acted as a visual cue to visitors reminding them that this was a place of importance. Importantly, altars were not only part of medieval spiritual culture but part of the visual and artistic culture too. Indeed, as has been discussed by Emma J. Wells, as part of a multi-sensory experience, these spaces that also involved sounds, such as the singing of the monastic choir, and smell, such as the burning of incense.[13]

What of the cult of St James at Reading Abbey? Unlike some of the other important saints' cults active in twelfth-century England, Reading could not develop James's cult around the tomb of a sainted figure. While priory cathedrals at Durham or Winchester could claim ownership over the tombs of their saintly patrons (Cuthbert and Swithun, respectively), Reading's apostolic relic was a hand and thus was a much smaller, and more portable, item.

Following the death of her first husband, Heinrich V of Germany, Empress Matilda returned to her father's court in 1125. As part of the agreement for her surrendering her lands in Germany on her return, Matilda was permitted to take certain precious items away with her, including the hand of St James, which had been in the royal treasury.[14] This hand did not come from Compostela, the primary cult-centre for James the Greater that claimed to have the apostle's body, and the provenance of this relic has been discussed in detail by Karl Leyser and Brian Taylor.[15] In summary, the supposed apostolic arm is thought to have been brought to Altino, near Venice, from Jerusalem.[16] From there, while the arm remained in the see of Torcello, the hand had made its way into the possession of the bishops of Hamberg-Breman and then the royal German treasury.[17] Matilda joined her father in Normandy travelling to England in 1126. Between then and Henry I's death, the hand was brought to Reading Abbey. The exact date this occurred is unclear as the writ recording this gift, which dates events to 1126, and is recorded in the Abbey's *c.* 1200 cartulary, is of doubtful authenticity.[18] Leyser preferred the slightly later date of 1133, which coincided with Henry I's last crossing of the Channel to Normandy.[19]

Kemp, likewise, believed this to be the most likely date for the relic's initial arrival at Reading.[20]

It is possible that Henry's intention at this point was not to gift the relic to the Abbey, but rather to make use of his foundation as a royal treasury. However, following Henry's death in Normandy in 1135 and burial in Reading Abbey, the proceeding Anarchy saw Henry of Blois, the bishop of Winchester and brother of Stephen (Henry I's eventual successor), remove the hand from Reading.[21] Following Henry II's ascension to the throne in 1155, he ensured James's hand was returned to Reading Abbey.[22] From the mid-1150s, having re-established the connection between both the Abbey and the relic, and the Abbey and the royal family, it appears likely that the relic was seen as a possession of the Abbey rather than the king. This did not prevent Frederick Barbarossa from requesting, albeit unsuccessfully, that Henry II return James's hand to Germany.[23] Nevertheless, considering the fact this was a small, portable item, and the threat of its potential removal was still an issue that the Abbey needed to contend with, might help to explain the possible fabrication of Henry I's 1126 writ, in the hope that this would provide a more secure claim for Reading's ownership.[24] The concern over the relic's portability could likewise explain why the relic appears not to have been kept within Reading's abbey church, or at least not in an accessible location, as discussed further below.

In considering the development of James the Greater's cult at Reading, Henry II's safeguarding of the relic's return must be recognised as pivotal. It was Henry II who also granted the Abbey its fair on St James's day (25 July) and for the three proceeding days.[25] The connection between the new king and Reading was further strengthened in 1156 when his eldest son, William, died as a young child and was laid to rest at the feet of his great-grandfather within the abbey church.[26] In terms of James' cult, it is clear that the later twelfth century was a period of popularity and progression, despite the fact that James' hand was only one of over 230 relics owned by the Abbey by the turn of the thirteenth century.[27] The pre-eminence of James, however, is evidenced by the production of *M. Jacobi*, which provides a clear marker of the late twelfth-century development of the cult both in terms of lay devotion, and the perceived place of the cult for Reading's monastic inhabitants too. Indeed, despite the size and portability of the relic, Ben

Nilson has argued that this is a rare example of a smaller relic that acted like the 'greater shrines' that contained the full bodies of the saints, further highlighting the reverence and status of the hand of St James at Reading.[28]

M. Jacobi and the cult of St James

As noted, *M. Jacobi* survives in a single manuscript produced *c.* 1200.[29] The manuscript is a *vitae sanctorum* and would have been produced within only a decade or so of the original hagiography. The specifics of this manuscript's provenance are not known, but Kemp highlights that it might have belonged either to Reading Abbey or to their Herefordshire daughter house, Leominster Priory.[30] Across 27 chapters (as numbered in Kemp's translation), *M. Jacobi* contains 28 reported miracles that were credited to St James' intercessory abilities. Of these, 24 accounts record cure-seekers who experienced healing miracles (see Appendix). Of the non-healing miracles, one account records the divine punishment of Matthew, count of Boulogne, during the 1173 rebellion against Henry II by his son Henry.[31] The remaining three accounts relate to what could be termed 'communal miracles'. Two accounts report local plagues, the first in Reading the second in Bucklebury, and the latter is followed by an account recording the erection of a cross in Bucklebury after the plague (and the miraculous effect of St James on the oxen pulling the timber to the site).[32] *M. Jacobi*'s inclusion of an account of divine (and fatal) punishment, and accounts relating to communal care is in keeping with other collections of posthumous miracles and reflects broader understandings about the saints and their intercessory abilities within this period.[33]

Of primary interest within this article, however, are the accounts of the cure-seekers who recovered their health through James's saintly thaumaturgy, because it is these reports which record individuals who journeyed to Reading Abbey either to petition James's assistance or to give thanks, and fulfil a vow, for aid already received. Thus, through these accounts, we can carefully extract information about the experiences of those who visited Reading, their presence within the space of the abbey church, and their interaction with the saint and the inhabitant monastic community.

The cure-seekers recorded in *M. Jacobi*, as with many other contemporary *miracula*, predominantly reflect lay devotion in the cult. Twenty of the individuals cured were laypeople, with laymen and laywomen equally represented. Adult cure-seekers appear more frequently than children or youths, with no direct mentions made of more senior cure-seekers. Wealthier cure-seekers are mentioned on seven occasions, but *M. Jacobi* makes no direct reference to those in extreme poverty.[34] That James's cult is represented as having had such great secular appeal is important to recognise. Although *miracula* like this were produced by monks, in Latin, and contain a select collection of accounts relating to successful interactions with saints, there is no denying the interests of the laity in the cults of the saints and, conversely, the importance of lay support in ensuring the longevity of any cult. Within *M. Jacobi* only four accounts refer to the miraculous cure of monks or clerics. Thomas and John were both monks at Reading, while Osbert was the abbot of Notley, and Roger Hosatus was a canon at Merton Priory.[35]

Of *M. Jacobi*'s cure-seekers, 22 spent time within Reading Abbey as part of their cure-seeking process. Of the two accounts that do not mention that a journey was made, one account records the cure of a man at the aforementioned Bucklebury cross, and the other is unclear due to its brevity.[36] However, the latter account implies that a journey was made as it records that the cure-seeker, a knight named Ralph Gibuin, was healed 'similmodo similique medicina' ('in a similar way and by a similar remedy') to the preceding account which does include a journey being made to the Abbey.[37] Of the fourteen individuals who are recorded as having travelled to Reading Abbey prior to their cure, eleven found their thaumaturgical therapy within the church. Somewhat frustratingly, the accounts of the two Reading monks do not make clear where in the Abbey their healing miracles occurred. However, of those recorded as being healed within the church, two of the accounts, the cures of children Alice from Essex and William from Reading, indicate that the miracle was initiated (if not fully completed) at an altar honouring the apostle.[38] A further account, that of Gilbert the hound-keeper, also alludes to an altar with some form of screen or stage.[39]

The accounts of Alice, William, and Gilbert are discussed in further detail below, but it is worth highlighting this issue of where the

altar attributed to St James might have been located in this period. Could this have been in one of the transept or ambulatory chapels? It would seem unlikely that lay presence at the abbey church's high altar would be expected or accepted. Here though, we face one of the major challenges that studying Reading Abbey poses; the buildings themselves were all-but destroyed following the Dissolution (the last abbot, Hugh of Faringdon, was executed 1539), and no documentary evidence explicitly states where in the church any such dedicated space would have been found.[40] Nevertheless, compelling arguments have been put forward by Malcom Thurlby and Ron Baxter, and Tim Tatton-Brown as to where James's altar was likely located. Having studied the floorplan of the abbey church, Thurlby and Baxter posited that the inner south-transept chapel (the 'Founder's Chapel') – which is notably larger than the outer south-transept chapel or the two north-transept chapels – was clearly built for a special use.[41] In *The Royal Abbey of Reading*, Baxter further suggested that this space could well have been built intentionally to house James' relic from the onset of the building process.[42] In a public lecture given to mark the 900th anniversary of Reading Abbey's foundation, Tatton-Brown similarly agreed that this was a likely location.[43] This location would not only have been a suitable place for a dedicated altar, given the status of the saint and the royal connection, but would have allowed devotees to visit the saint with limited disruption to the daily services of the inhabitant monastic community. In order to tease out more definitive information about the space of the shrine and, importantly, about the experiences of the cure-seekers who sought James's aid at Reading, we must turn to the *miracula*.

Alice of Essex

Alice, the daughter of an Essex clerk, went to milk the sheep at the break of day on Good Friday. On her return she saw 'phantastica effigies' ('a ghastly figure') that looked like a dead man 'in funus et sepulturam preparati' ('prepared for his funeral and burial').[44] This apparition caused her to tremble and 'gelidusque stetit circum precordia sanguis' ('the blood froze around her breast').[45] The phantom disappeared, and Alice ran home, with *M. Jacobi* recording that:

> Come illi steterunt pili inhorruerunt confunditur sensus tollitur intellectus. Tandem domum ueniens et ignem aspiciens in faciem corruit et tanquam in insaniam uersa agitari enormiter cepit omnemque gestum et motum insanienti simillimum pretendit.
>
> (Her hair stood on end and bristled, her senses were confused and she lost her reason. At length she got home and, catching sight of some fire, she threw it in her face. She became seriously disturbed, as though she had gone mad, and acted and moved very much like a mad woman.)[46]

Eventually sleep came to Alice, and, on waking, she had recovered from her temporary madness. However, having slept with her arm resting on her chest, she found the limb had become fused to her body so that the two could not be parted and 'os ossibus incumbens uementum dolorem ingessit' ('one bone pressing on others caused her violent pain').[47] This prompted Alice's miraculous cure-seeking and *M. Jacobi* records that she visited the shrines of many saints, but without luck. A *matrona* (older woman) from the region was then visited by St James with a message to relay to Alice that she needed to make the journey to Reading before she would find her remedy. After the saint visited the woman three times, she conveyed the apostle's instructions to Alice who then travelled to Reading.[48] It should be noted that *M. Jacobi* makes no reference of this woman being related to, or having had any previous connection with, Alice. However, the use of *matrona* could indicate a level of respect towards, and the respectability of, this woman and thus her reliability as a messenger for the apostle.

Although some who sought cure from the saints and their intercession found an almost immediate resolution on their arrival at the cult centre, Alice spent six days at Reading without any success before, losing hope, she decided to leave the following day. At this point, James appeared to Alice in a dream and instructed her to use 'de uno nummo quem solum habebat' ('the only coin she had') to purchase wax and have a candle prepared.[49] Returning to the abbey church with her candle, Alice informed the sacrist of her vision. He admitted her to the altar where 'missam audiuit et candelam suam optulit' ('she heard mass and offered her candle').[50] Alice's engagement with Reading's

monastic community continued following mass when the subprior, William, brought the 'capsam qua manus sancti Jacobi continebatur' ('the reliquary in which the hand of St James was kept') to her and held it over her paralysed arm.[51] The reliquary was held aloft while another monk, Nicholas, bathed Alice's arm with water, which resulted in an immediate reaction. Over the following three hours, Alice experienced intense pain as the arm was freed from her chest. The author of *M. Jacobi* recorded that, having been freed, 'brachium ad huc plurimum fetebat et dolebat nimisque intumescebat' ('the arm still smelt and ached badly and became very swollen'), leading Alice to remain within the church for some time before she recovered fully.[52] Whether the time spent was hours or days is not recorded, although it might be expected that the latter would be noteworthy enough to warrant recording explicitly. Similarly, whether Alice remained at the altar or whether she moved, or was moved, elsewhere is not specified. However, it is evident that Alice's cure not only occurred at the altar but was in close proximity to James's reliquary. Equally important to note is the presence of, and engagement with, the Reading monks who played an instrumental role in ensuring the success of the thaumaturgical process. That admission to the altar was provided by the sacrist, and that the reliquary was retrieved by the subprior, indicates that access to both space and relic were not necessarily guaranteed. If the altar was located in a side chapel, to which access could be limited, the requirement for the sacrist to act as guide to, and gatekeeper of, this space would make sense.

A woman from Collingbourne

Accessibility to the relic itself was evidently an issue that the later twelfth-century monastic community at Reading were concerned over. It must be recalled that not only was this a small object, but, having previously been removed from the Abbey, it would be understandable that there was caution over when, and to whom, access was permitted. That the reliquary was not kept at or on the altar is supported further by two other accounts in *M. Jacobi*. When an unnamed woman from Collingbourne was wasting away from a long-term illness, James appeared to her in a dream instructing her to come to Reading. Moreover, the apostle told her that 'si illa die quam ei prefixit Rading

ueniret' ('if she came to Reading on the day which he appointed for her') she would see the relic for herself.[53] James' final instruction to the woman was not to take the candle she had made to Salisbury, but to bring it with her to Reading.[54] She travelled to Reading for the benefit of seeking James's aid, and she was permitted to view the reliquary owing to the fact she had arrived at the same time as the earl of Gloucester.[55] The earl, along with his wife and other nobles, had been given permission 'aspicere et adorare' ('to see and adore') the hand of St James.[56] Having been allowed the same opportunity, owing to her fortuitously-timed arrival, the woman from Collingbourne recovered her health.[57]

Although the earl is not named within the account, it would seem likely that this is a reference to William, the second earl of Gloucester and cousin of Henry II. His aristocratic standing and familial relation to the king – who had ensured the return of Reading's prized relic – would have made the earl a visitor for whom the abbot was unlikely to refuse such a request. No mention is made within this miracle account of the usual location of the reliquary: was this kept safe within the abbey church or even within the abbot's guardianship? However, it is evident that despite a broad social spectrum of visitors being welcome within the abbey church for the adoration of the apostle, being able to view the hand itself was a rare opportunity, and available only to an eminent few. Alice, for whom the reliquary was held aloft and who benefited from the water of the hand of St James, does not appear to have seen the hand itself. But in light of the woman from Collingbourne's experience, even Alice's engagement with the reliquary would appear an uncommon occurrence.

William from Reading

If accessibility to the reliquary itself was potentially limited, and had to be negotiated with senior members of Reading's community, such as the abbot or subprior, what was present at the site of the altar to mark its association with St James? The answer to this can be gleamed through the account of William, a boy from Reading, who was cured of his lower-body paralysis one Christmas.[58] William was brought to the Abbey's church on Christmas Eve when, *M. Jacobi* records, 'cum annua

deuotione populus ad ecclesiam congregatus' ('the people had assembled in their annual devotion') and he was placed 'ante altare quod uulgus sancti Jacacobi [sic] altare appellare consueuit collocatus' ('in front of the altar which the people have been accustomed to call the altar of St James').[59] The suggestion that the identification of this altar being St James' was popular rather than official is intriguing, and no other mention of this is made in *M. Jacobi*. It would seem unlikely, given the nature of the saint and the relic, that Reading Abbey would not have ensured there was a specific location for the saint's altar, therefore this is perhaps more of an indication of the popular support for the altar than of some form of local lay-driven establishment of the cult within the Abbey church. The hagiographer's decision to use the term *uulgus* in recording this account is nevertheless significant. It is possible the choice of words reflects the author's pedantry as, technically, an altar could only be dedicated to God even if it honoured a specific saint.

Unlike Alice's experience of miraculous healing, William's recovery rapidly followed his arrival at James's altar. His legs gained strength as 'nerui enim qui arefacti et contracti fuerant remitti et humectari ossa ingrossescere et consolidari ceperunt' ('the withered sinews began to slacken and become moist, and his bones began to grow and harden').[60] At this point the account provides us with a rare glimpse into the altar and the surrounding space, noting that:

> Surrexit igitur puer columpne innitens que est a dextris altaris ubi iacuerat. Adhuc enim surgere insolitus et gradi non expertus se sibi credere non audebat quia tam de usu quam de potentia diffidebat. Post pusillum primitias ambulandi arripiens quod difficile est gressui infirmo per gradus ad altare ascendit. Et ut claresceret cuius meritis erectus fuisset ante imaginem beati Jacobi ibi depictam substitit cornibusque altaris adhesit tanquam saluatori suo gratias referens uel ei adherere cupiens.
>
> (The boy stood upright supporting himself by the pillar standing to the right of the altar where he had lain. Hitherto he had been unaccustomed to standing upright and incapable of walking so he was afraid to trust himself, because he lacked confidence in his

> ability and strength. After a little while he mastered the basic principles of walking and climbed the steps to the altar, a difficult operation for the feet of a disabled person. And in order to show by whose merits he had been raised up, he stopped in front of the picture of the blessed James painted there and grasped the ends of the altar, as though he were giving thanks to his saviour or trying to embrace him.)[61]

William remained at the altar throughout Christmas Day, leaving in the evening when, presumably, he felt he had given due thanks for James's intercession and had grown more confident in his newly-found mobility. In terms of the altar itself, we are offered a little insight into the layout and design features within this space. The pillar to the right of the altar was likely structural, for instance at the entrance to the inner south-transept chapel or as part of the adjoining wall between the two south-transept chapels. The presence of the steps that William climbed implies something more of the altar itself. The wording in the account – 'gradus ad altare ascendit' ('[he] climbed the steps to the altar') – implies that the steps formed a dais which permitted access to an elevated altar. This was a familiar feature in the design of medieval English shrines, as Nilson has shown.[62] A raised platform would potentially have allowed for great visibility for an amassed crowd, such as that which appears to have congregated in the Abbey's church on Christmas Eve or, as discussed below, during the translation of relics to a new reliquary.

Perhaps the most intriguing comment about James' altar, however, is the mention of an 'imaginem' ('likeness') of James.[63] It should be noted that, in his translation of the account, Kemp translated *imaginem* (from *imago*, *imaginis*) as 'picture' as this appears to best match the following statement that the likeness was 'ibi depictam' ('painted there', or 'depicted there').[64] While it is possible *imago* could refer to the three-dimensional statue, a painted image (on, or as part of the altar or its retable) would seem fitting in the account's context. The presence of a depiction of St James at the altar further testifies to this being a location within the church that was specifically devoted to the apostolic saint and his cult at Reading. Regardless of *M. Jacobi*'s comments in William's miracle, the presence of such an image also indicates that it was not just

the laity who saw this as a space connected to the saint. Imagery at and around an altar would have been an important element at any cult centre, but the image of James at Reading, as attested to in this account, also acted as a focus for visitors and devotees in lieu of the reliquary itself. As such, with the reliquary rarely accessible or visible at the shrine, the depiction of James would have provided a focus, and for William at least a tangible connection, for prayers and intercessory requests.

What either the image of James, or the reliquary that housed the hand, would have looked like in the late twelfth century, alas, remains a mystery. It is tempting to think that in addition to an image of the saint himself, the decoration would have used the symbolic scallop shells that had come to be associated with the apostle and his cult in Compostella from *c.* 1130.[65] However, scallops (and indeed the apostle) only began to appear on the Abbey's seals in the thirteenth century, suggesting this might not have been a symbol used by Reading before this point.[66] Nevertheless, the use of scallops on the seals of the early-thirteenth century does attest to the cult being fully established and flourishing by this point, and it could be that the use of the scallops on the seal reflect decoration already in place at James' altar.

The scant information we have regarding the reliquary itself come primarily from Reading Abbey's cartularies. Reading's cartulary records John's 1192 instruction for an annual mark of gold from his Tewksbury revenues to be used to make a new cover for the hand of St James.[67] The need for a new cover is explained in a later charter, dated to 11 March 1200, also recorded in the cartulary, in which John promised another annual payment to Reading (this time from the Exchequer) and testifies that this was inspired by the hand of St James, which Richard had 'denudavit' ('denuded') ahead of the Third Crusade.[68] The charters do not record the form of the reliquary. Reading's annals are similarly vague when recording that the reliquary was taken to Les Andelys in 1200 – when Phillip II 'Augustus' of France swore on the relics he would keep the peace with England.[69] The transportability of the reliquary is also demonstrated in *M. Jacobi*. The miracle collection records that the reliquary was processed by the Abbey (such as in times of plague) and at that it was requested by Henry II before his crossing of the Channel.[70] In 1802 antiquarian Charles Coates claimed that '[the] relick was inclosed in a case of gold', although with no supporting

evidence to substantiate this claim.[71] Baxter, conversely, has argued that it is probable that the reliquary was shaped like a hand or arm to mirror what it enclosed.[72] However, it is worth considering Alice's miracle here too and the use of *capsa* which could be translated as reliquary, but could also indicate a casket or box more specifically. Whatever the reliquary's shape or design, it is evident, as might be expected, that this was a luxury item fit for housing such an important relic.

Gilbert the hound keeper

While the exact structure of the reliquary is unknown, *M. Jacobi*'s use of the term *capsa* is not the only indication that this could have been box-shaped. The final case-study that this article considers further supports this possibility, by suggesting that the reliquary might have been placed on top of a screen, beam or on a raised platform. If this was the case then a casket-shaped container could have been a more practical choice of design.

Gilbert, who kept the hounds of a rich man in the 'aquilonalibus Anglie' ('the north of England'), was punished with blindness when he disregarded St James's feast and chose to hunt.[73] Having congratulated himself on catching a stag, 'videbatur enim ei quasi salsugo sudoris oculis influeret uisumque penitus obduceret' ('salty perspiration seemed to run into his eyes and entirely cut off his vision').[74] When Gilbert wiped away the sweat, he wiped away his sight. Gilbert finally managed to make his way home but found that he could not be cured by either 'colliriis' ('eye salves') or other 'curationibus' ('treatments').[75] Gilbert's condition caused him to fall into poverty, presumably due to his inability to continue work as a hound keeper, and he was abandoned by everyone except his (unnamed) wife. Gilbert's wife took him around the shrines of many saints but without there being any change in his condition. Eventually, James appeared to Gilbert in a dream and instructed him to come to Reading. Along with his wife, he came to Reading Abbey but having remained there for some time without receiving a miraculous remedy, he departed. Gilbert, and presumably his wife, reached Banbury (approximately 50 miles north of Reading) when James appeared again to Gilbert, rebuking him for his impatience and instructing him to return to Reading with a candle to wait for his

cure. Gilbert did as James requested and returned to the Abbey, with the desired candle, on the eve of James's feast day. On the following day, Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London, was present at the abbey for the translation of the relic into a new reliquary. *M. Jacobi* records:

> pulpitum ascendens et manum sanctissimi apostoli de capsa ueteri in nouam transferens populum ex ea benedixit. Quam cum eleuaret et benedictionem proferret oculi prefati ceci ceperunt uehementissime prurire et scintillare. Sanguinee autem gutte ex concauitatibus oculorum defluenentes [sic] genas irrigabant. Ipsa uero hora ipsoque momento aperti sunt oculi eius.
>
> ([Gilbert Foliot] went up on to the *pulpitum* and, as he transferred the hand of the most holy apostle from the old reliquary to a new one, he blessed the people with it. And when he lifted it up and gave the blessing, the aforesaid man's eyes began to smart keenly and to gleam. Moreover, tears of blood flowed down from his eye sockets and streamed down his cheeks. At that hour, in fact, at that very moment his eyes were opened.)[76]

It is worth noting, again, the use of the term *capsa* to refer to the reliquary; a possible, if not conclusive indicator of the reliquary's shape. Another word that needs attention here is *pulpitum*. A pulpit, from which a sermon was delivered, was not a feature of the medieval church until the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century, thus the use of *pulpitum* in this account needs further attention. In his translation of *M. Jacobi*, Kemp translates *pulpitum* as screen and this would seem fitting, considering that there might have been some form of barrier in front of the altar – and there certainly would have been a screen between the nave and the choir. The term could also refer to a decorated panel at or on the altar. Simon Yarrow has suggested this screen might, in fact, have been the main screen between the nave and the choir and high altar.[77] Bailey further argues that the reliquary would have been kept 'on a reliquary beam in the choir of the abbey church'.[78] Such a placement would be fitting for such a prestigious relic, and would have ensured the protection of the reliquary by restricting access.[79] On a side note, beams were also, occasionally, suspended before the shrine where they might take on a practical purpose in displaying votive offerings or housing

candles, though this form of beam would not appear to suit the situation described in *M. Jacobi*, if this was indeed a beam on which the reliquary was housed.[80] However, it should be noted that as *pulpitum* could also refer to a raised stage or platform, this could either be a temporary structure erected for the occasion of the translation or refer to a raised platform on which James's altar was situated. Yarrow and Bailey's argument for the reliquary's placement on a beam appears most likely, but it should be recalled that William's miracle also mentioned the presence of some form of platform, hence the boy's need to carefully climb the steps to the altar.

Regardless of where or what was being ascended, what is clear is that Bishop Gilbert would have been highly visible in the performance of the translation, meaning that those present, including the hound-keeping Gilbert, would have been able to witness this rare occasion when it appears the relic itself was shown to the crowd of the faithful. Moreover, whether this *pulpitum* was a screen as Kemp and Yarrow suggest, or a beam as Bailey proposes, this could further strengthen the argument for the reliquary being casket-shaped, as this would be practical in terms of secure placement. It would of course not be impossible for a hand- or arm- shaped reliquary to be placed in such a position, and such a reliquary would surely have been a more impressive container for such a highly-valued relic, yet a casket would have had the advantage of providing a more secure and balanced casing.

Gilbert's account provides further tantalising comments on the materiality of James's cult and Reading's abbey church. Nevertheless, the lack of surviving material and architectural evidence for Reading Abbey and St James's altar means that the full picture remains elusive. *M. Jacobi* offers up glimpses of what might have been, but also raises further questions about the cult of St James at Reading.

The Visitor's Experience

Although no definitive conclusions can be made about the cult spatially within the abbey church, *M. Jacobi* demonstrates that there was a level of interaction between cure-seeking pilgrims and the cult centre, and highlights that this was a space in which lay visitors and Reading's resident monastic community – and occasionally other church leaders

such as Gilbert Foliot – crossed paths in the process of miraculous healing. Not every cure-seeking visitor would have had an experience like that of Alice, the recipient of notable attention from the inhabitant community. Yet, the presence of lay visitors, including those who came in search of a healing miracle, was an accepted and expected part of the late-twelfth-century cult. Likewise, *M. Jacobi* reveals that there were particular processes though which devotees could engage with the cult.

The saying of prayers and keeping of vigils were common practices at the altars of the saints, and James' cult was no different.[81] However this is not the only form of interaction recorded as having occurred at Reading. A frequently-mentioned factor in the cure-seeking process at Reading was the use of water in which the hand of St James had been bathed. Eleven accounts in *M. Jacobi* refer to the use of this water and its thaumaturgical properties. A twelfth account, although not related to a curative miracle, refers to the water being used on the oxen who were drawing the cart containing the timbers to erect the cross at Bucklebury.[82] Bailey has also recognised the importance of 'relic water' to the cult, and highlights how this was not only used within the abbey church – as was Alice's experience – but that this could also be taken to those in need.[83] Edward Haver and his daughter, who lived in Reading, were both cured of their serious illnesses after drinking the water, which had been sent to them by the Abbey's monks.[84] Two higher-status women, Goda and Aquilina, were also sent the waters and, once recovered, both then came to Reading to fulfil their vows and to give thanks to God and St James.[85] How accessible this water was in practice, and whether elite cure-seekers were more likely beneficiaries of this gift, can be questioned. The numerous references to the water within *M. Jacobi* would, however, appear to indicate that this was not an uncommon practice.[86] The use of this water – either as something to be ingested or bathe with – marks another, tangible, route through which devotees could engage with the saint. Moreover, this provided devotees with a way of extending their engagement with the cult by providing an avenue to commune with the saint away from the cult centre.

Relic waters offered a means of disseminating the intercessory powers of the saints beyond the cult centre and was evidently seen to be beneficial to those whose poor health made travelling to the shrine prior to miraculous healing a challenge. However, most cure-seekers, both to

James' altar at Reading and to other locally-focussed twelfth-century cults, favoured making the journey prior to their cure.[87] While the cult centres might 'export' relic water, another common experience of the cult was the 'import' of candles as part of the supplicatory process and the donation of these to the named saint. The presentation of candles was not a practice unique to Reading.[88] Nevertheless, the frequent mentions within *M. Jacobi* reflects the perceived importance of this process. Among the case-studies, both Alice and Gilbert are recorded as having brought candles with them on their second attempts to secure James' intercession.[89] The woman from Collingbourne was instructed by the apostle to donate the candle destined for Salisbury to Reading instead on her arrival there.[90] Gilbert's account records that his candle, which James had instructed him to make, was lit at the point that his eyesight was returned to him. This implies that candles were likely to be lit by the visitor themselves, rather than merely being donated at the shrine to be used as the Abbey saw fit. Indeed, when Gilbert's sight was restored, *M. Jacobi* records that his candle 'consumptam usque ad plicam condilatam' ('had burnt down as far as the knotted fold'), resulting in Gilbert 'lichinum subrigens' ('lifting the wick'), presumably to make sure the candle burnt for longer.[91]

Ronald Finucane suggested that the lighting of a candle might have symbolised 'the supplicants absorbing the beneficent aura' of the saint.[92] In miracles involving the restoration of sight, such as in Gilbert's account, this connection between darkness and blindness, and light and sight, appears all the more poignant and symbolic. But it is important to consider, too, how the presence of candles would have impacted on the experience of the altar for other visitors. The sensory impact of the lit candles at James' altar in Reading's abbey church would have been shared by others who were present within this space, whether they were members of the monastic community or lay visitors.[93] Wells has discussed how the stained glass in Trinity Chapel, Canterbury, would have authenticated the intercessory power of Becket.[94] Candles, similarly, would have aided in confirming and amplifying the sense of James' apostolic presence at his altar. Light would not have been the only sensory stimulant within Reading Abbey, and it is worth reflecting how the sound of the monks in the choir and other pilgrims praying would have added to the atmosphere. James' altar itself, as William's

healing miracle illustrates, was tactile and touchable even if the reliquary was not. The thaumaturgic waters also evoked a sense of the saintly through bathing and, importantly, through ingestion. We might ask (although we would, understandably, be unwilling to find out for ourselves) what the water of St James would have tasted like. The important thing, however, is to recognise the multisensory natures of these spaces and to be aware of the fact that visitors to the shrines, such as those who sought out James at Reading, would have been fully enveloped within this experience.

More could, and should, be said about the engagement of cure-seekers and other visitors with the cult centres and saints with whom they interacted. What this article shows, however, that posthumous miracle collections like *M. Jacobi* can reveal otherwise lost information regarding the experiences of visiting cult centres such as Reading Abbey. This becomes particularly valuable when the site itself no longer survives in full. For Reading, while there are details which remain elusive, and certain questions will never be decisively answered, in-depth study of the cure-seekers recorded within the *miracula* shed valuable light on the cult and on the expectations and experiences of those who made their way to the Abbey at this time.

M. Jacobi is, undoubtedly, a valuable source of information not only about the cult St James but about those who came to Reading to request the apostle's intercession. The motivation of cure-seeking sets these individuals apart in their engagement with the saint, but the records of their experiences also shed light on Reading's royal abbey. Importantly, these accounts allow us a glimpse into what visitors to Reading could have expected of the Abbey's church and James' cult: an insight that is especially significant in light of the now ruinous state of the Abbey's once-great buildings. Further study, taking into account both surviving architecture at other contemporary cult centres and other collections of miracles, could prove fruitful in furthering understanding the experiences of visitors to twelfth-century cult centres, and potentially provide us with even greater insights into what visitors to Reading Abbey would have encountered.

Appendix

The 24 cure-seekers recorded within *M. Jacobi*. The account numbers provided are those given by Kemp in his translation (1970).

Account	The cure-seeker (the subject of the miracle)	GCL MS 1 (fols.)	Kemp (pp.)
I	Mauger Malcuvenant, sheriff of Surrey[1]	171va-b	6a-7a
II	A woman from Earley	171vb	7a-b
III	John, a clerk from Barking	171vb-172ra	7b
V	Edward Haver from Reading	172ra-b	8a-b
VI	The daughter of Edward Haver from Reading	172rb	8b
VII	Goda from Herefordshire, wife of Hereward (a knight)	172rb	8b-9a
VIII	Alice, a girl from Essex	172rb-172vb	9a-10a
IX	Thomas, a Reading Abbey monk	172vb	10a-b
X	John, a Reading Abbey monk	172vb-173ra	10b
XI	A woman from Collingbourne	173ra	10b-11a
XII	A girl from Sussex	173ra	11a
XIII	William, a boy from Reading	173ra-b	11a-b
XVI	A man from Bradfield	173va	12b-13a
XVII	Ysembela from Curridge, wife of Sewel (lord of Curridge)	173va-b	13a
XVIII	Gilbert, a hound-keeper from the north of England	173vb-174ra	13a-14a
XIX	Osbert, abbot of Notley Abbey	174ra-b	14a-b
XX	Ysembela, a girl from *Seford* near *Estonie* (Sussex?)	174rb-174va	14a-16a
XXI	Aquilina, daughter of Reginald de Courtenay, wife of Gilbert Basset[1]	174va-b	16a-b
XXII	A young man travelling to Ireland with Prince John	174vb-175ra	16b
XXIII	A woman from the Oxford region	175ra	17a
XXIV	Robert of Stanford (a knight)	175ra	17a
XXIVa	Ralph Gibuin (a knight)	175ra	17a
XXVI	Roger Hosatus, canon of Merton Priory	175rb	18a-b
XXVII	Peter from Wavercurt, son of Richard de Leuns	175rb-175va	18b-19a

Notes

1 Gloucester, Gloucester Cathedral Library, MS. 1, fols. 171va-175va (hereafter GCL, MS. 1).
2 B. Kemp, 'The Miracles of the Hand of St James: Translated with and Introduction', *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 65 (1970): 1–19; Kemp, B., *Reading Abbey Records: A New Miscellany* (Reading: Berkshire Record Society, 2018), pp. 53–100.
3 *Reading Abbey Cartularies. British Library Manuscripts: Egerton 3031, Harley 1708 and Cotton Vespasian E xxv*, ed. B. Kemp, 2 vols. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1986-87).
4 GCL, MS. 1, fols. 172rb–172va, 173ra–b, 173vb–174ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', VIII, XI, XIII, XVIII, 9–11, 13–14.
5 S. Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities: Miracle Stories in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006).
6 Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, pp. 198, 213.
7 A. E. Bailey, 'Flights of Distance, Time and Fancy: Women Pilgrims and their Journeys in English Medieval Miracle Narratives', *Gender & History*, 24.2 (2012), 292–309; A. E. Bailey, 'Wives, mothers and widows on pilgrimage : categories of 'woman' recorded at English healing shrines in the High Middle Ages', *Journal of Medieval History*, 39.2 (2013), 197–219; A. E. Bailey, '"The Rich and the Poor, the Lesser and the Great": Social Representations of Female Pilgrims in Medieval England', *Cultural and Social History: The Journal of the Social History Society*, 11.1 (2014), 9–29; A. E. Bailey, 'Women Pilgrims and Their Travelling Companions in Twelfth-Century England', *Viator*, 46.1 (2015), 115–34; A. E. Bailey, 'Miracle Children : Medieval Hagiography and Childhood Imperfection', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 47.3 (2017), 267–85.
8 Bailey, 'Reconsidering the Medieval Experience at the Shrine in High-Medieval England', *Journal of Medieval History*, 47.2 (2021), 203–29.
9 Bailey, 'Reconsidering the Medieval Experience at the Shrine in High-Medieval England', 213.
10 B. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event, 1000-1215*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), p. 115; Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, pp. 211–12.
11 Also see: R. J. Salter, *Saints, Cure-Seekers and Miraculous Healing in Twelfth-Century England*, Health and Healing in the Middle Ages 1 (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2021).

12 R. Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?: Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 103.
13 E. J. Wells, 'Making 'Sense' of the Pilgrimage Experience of the Medieval Church', *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture*, 3.2 (2011), 122–46.
14 K. Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa, Henry II and the Hand of St James', *The English Historical Review*, 90.356 (1975), 481–506 (490); M. Chibnall, 'Matilda [Matilda of England] (1102–1167), empress, consort of Heinrich V', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) via *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18338> (accessed 6 January 2022).
15 Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa', 489; B. Taylor, 'The Hand of St James', *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, 75 (1994–97), 97–102 (98).
16 Taylor, 'The Hand of St James', 98.
17 Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa', 489.
18 London, British Library, Egerton MS. 3031, fol. 14r; *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, I, pp. 39–40.
19 Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa', 494.
20 B. Kemp, 'The hand of St James at Reading Abbey', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 16 (1990), 77–98 (82).
21 Ibid.
22 Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa', 497, 499.
23 Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa', 483–4, 499.
24 For discussion of forgery in the Abbey cartularies, see: *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, I, pp. 19–22.
25 Egerton MS. 3031, fols. 23r-v; *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, I, pp. 56–7.
26 R. Baxter, *The Royal Abbey of Reading* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016), p. 77.
27 Egerton MS. 3031, fols. 6v–8r; Baxter, *The Royal Abbey of Reading*, pp. 303–17.
28 B. Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), p. 5.
29 Kemp, 'Miracles', 1b.
30 Kemp, 'Miracles', 1a.
31 GCL, MS 1, ff. 175ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XXV, 17b.
32 GCL, MS 1, ff. 172ra, 173rb–173va; Kemp, 'Miracles', IV, XIV, 7b, 11b–12b.

33 For an example of punitive miracles from twelfth-century English miracle collections see: *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth*, trans. J. Fairweather (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), III.92, pp. 415–9. For an example of communal care from twelfth-century English miracle collections see: Eadmer of Canterbury, *The Miracles of St Oswald*, in Eadmer of Canterbury, *The Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald*, ed. and trans. A. J. Turner and B. J. Muir, OMT (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), pp. 290–323 (8, pp. 314–7).
34 For further discussion of *M. Jacobi* alongside other twelfth-century hagiographical demographic analysis, see: Salter, *Saints, Cure-Seekers and Miraculous Healing*, pp. 92–117.
35 GCL, MS 1, ff. 172vb–173ra, 174ra–b, 175rb; Kemp, 'Miracles', IX, X, XIX, XXVI, 10a–b, 14a–b, 18a–b.
36 GCL, MS 1, ff. 173va, 175ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XVI, XXIVa, 12b–13a, 17a.
37 GCL, MS 1, f. 175ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XXIVa, 17a.
38 GCL, MS 1, ff. 172rb–172vb, 173ra–b; Kemp, 'Miracles', VIII, XIII, 9a–10a, 11a–b.
39 GCL, MS 1, ff. 173vb–174ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XVIII, 13a–14a.
40 For an overview of Reading Abbey's final decade, see: *A History of the County of Berkshire: Volume 2*, ed. P. H. Ditchfield and W. Page (London: Victoria County History, 1907), pp. 68–73.
41 M. Thurlby and R. Baxter, 'The Romanesque Abbey Church at Reading', in *Windsor: Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture in the Thames Valley*, ed. L. Keen and E. Scarff, BAA Conference Transactions Series 25 (London: British Archaeological Association, 2002), pp. 282–301 (p. 295).
42 Baxter, *The Royal Abbey of Reading*, p. 209.
43 Tatton-Brown stated: "I think almost certainly that from day one, it's part of the original church, [the inner south-transept chapel] is where the amazing relic, that hand of St James, [was located].", see: T. Tatton-Brown, 'Reading Abbey at 900: Revealing Reading Abbey's Archaeology', 21 September 2021 (University of Reading), *YouTube* [website], 13 October 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJCqIOSF77Q> (last accessed 19 January 2022), 1:16:55-1:17:03. The above quotation is taken verbatim from Tatton-Brown's lecture, but the punctuation and wording (provided in square brackets) is my own for additional clarity.
44 GCL, MS 1, ff. 172rb; Kemp, 'Miracles', VIII, 9a.
45 Ibid. It should be noted that Kemp translated *precordia* as 'heart', however I have translated this as 'breast'.
46 GCL, MS 1, ff. 172rb-172va; Kemp, 'Miracles', VIII, 9a.
47 GCL, MS 1, f. 172va; Kemp, 'Miracles', VIII, 9a.

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 GCL, MS 1, f. 172vb; Kemp, 'Miracles', VIII, 9b.
53 GCL, MS 1, f. 173ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XI, 10b.
54 GCL, MS 1, f. 173ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XI, 10b–11a.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 GCL, MS 1, f. 173ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XI, 11a.
58 GCL, MS 1, f. 173ra–b; Kemp, 'Miracles', XIII, 11a–b.
59 GCL, MS 1, f. 173rb; Kemp, 'Miracles', XIII, 11b.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England*, p. 49.
63 Ibid
64 Ibid.
65 B. Kemp, 'The Seals of Reading Abbey', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 14 (1988): 139–62 (142).
66 Ibid.
67 *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, I, p. 69 (no. 43).
68 *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, I, pp. 71–2 (no. 46).
69 'The annals of Reading Abbey', in *Reading Abbey Records: A New Miscellany*, ed. B. Kemp, Berkshire Record Society 25 (Reading, Berkshire Record Society, 2018), pp. 1–51 (p. 17).
70 GCL, MS 1, f. 172ra, 173ra, 173rb–173va, 175rb; Kemp, 'Miracles', IV, XII, XIV, XXVI, 7b–8a, 11a, 11b–12a, 18a–b.
71 Coates, C., *The History and Antiquities of Reading* (London: J. Nichols and Son, 1802), p. 247.
72 Baxter, *The Royal Abbey of Reading*, p. 49.
73 GCL, MS 1, f. 173vb; Kemp, 'Miracles', XVIII, 13a.
74 GCL, MS 1, f. 173vb; Kemp, 'Miracles', XVIII, 13b.
75 Ibid. Kemp translates *colliriis* here as 'ointments', but it can be used more specifically to refer to 'eye salves', and given the nature of Gilbert's complaints, the latter has been chosen here.
76 GCL, MS 1, f. 174ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XVIII, 14a.
77 Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, p. 198.
78 Bailey, 'Reconsidering the Medieval Experience at the Shrine in High-Medieval England', 213.
79 For further discussion of the use of beams, see: Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines in Medieval England*, p. 57.

80 Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England*, p. 50.
81 Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, p. 116. For further discussion of common practices of supplication in miracle stories, see: Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, pp. 18–9; R. Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate: Miracle Stories and Miracle Collecting in High Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 55.
82 GCL, MS 1, f. 173va; Kemp, 'Miracles', XV, 12a–b.
83 Bailey, 'Reconsidering the Medieval Experience at the Shrine in High-Medieval England', 213. Also see: C. Rawcliffe, 'Curing Bodies and Healing Souls: Pilgrimage and the Sick in Medieval East Anglia', in *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan*, eds. C. Morris and P. Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 108–40 (p. 121).
84 GCL, MS 1, f. 172ra–b; Kemp, 'Miracles', V, VI, 8a–b.
85 GCL, MS 1, f. 172rb, 174va–b; Kemp, 'Miracles', VII, XXI, 8b–9a, 16a–b.
86 The use of similar waters also occurred at other later twelfth-century cults. For an example see: Thomas of Monmouth, *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich*, ed. and trans. A. Jessop and M. R. James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896), III.31, pp. 161–2.
87 Salter, *Saints, Cure-Seekers and Miraculous Healing*, p. 125.
88 For discussion of the donation of candles and votive offerings more broadly, see: Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, p. 107, 254; Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England*, pp. 100–5.
89 GCL, MS 1, f. 172rb–172vb, 173vb–174ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', VIII, XVIII, 9a–10a, 13a–14a.
90 GCL, MS 1, f. 173ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XI, 10b–11a.
91 GCL, MS 1, f. 174ra; Kemp, 'Miracles', XVIII, 14a.
92 R. C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1995), p. 95.
93 For further discussion of the multi-sensory nature of the medieval church, see: Wells, 'Making 'Sense' of the Pilgrimage Experience', 122–3.
94 Wells, 'Making 'Sense' of the Pilgrimage Experience', 126.