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Declaration

This thesis has been composed by the undersigned student, Liu Ming, and is the student’s own work. The work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Liu Ming
Abstract

As one of the most famous English monastic historians in the early twelfth century, William of Malmesbury is believed to have travelled widely in order to collect information and materials for his writings. Despite research focusing on his travels and works, however, surprisingly little attention has been paid to investigating the details of his itinerary and the influence of his mobility. This thesis reconstructs William’s itinerary and demonstrates how mobile he was as a Benedictine monk in the early twelfth century. It shows that although monks were usually supposed to be bound to the cloister throughout their life, there did not seem to exist an insurmountable obstacle in practice between travel and monastic rules. William’s case also suggests the importance of mobility as the basis for the circulation of knowledge, which laid the vital foundation for the form of scholarly connections and the flourishing of a group of monastic historians in the Anglo-Norman world in the early twelfth century.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter determines a chronology of William’s life and works. This forms the foundation of the second chapter, which uses the information in his different works and versions to find detailed evidence for his travels and to give them probable dates. The third chapter reconsiders the previous results and presents the general patterns of his itinerary. The fourth chapter analyses William’s mobility and presents the special and common factors for his travels, which suggests that more ordinary monks were able to follow his steps. Finally, the fifth chapter discusses the circulation of knowledge resulting from his travels. William’s mobility helped him to make connections with both secular and ecclesiastical people,
and knowledge was easy to circulate through these personal networks.

This detailed exploration of William’s itinerary and the analysis of his mobility not only raises new thoughts on his life and works, but also sheds new light on monastic culture in general in the Middle Ages. William’s case shows vividly a more connected Benedictine world in the early twelfth century than has previously been thought.
Lay Summary

William of Malmesbury is one of the most famous English monastic historians of the early twelfth century. Despite his identity as a monk who was supposed to be bound to the cloister throughout his life, he surprisingly travelled far and wide in order to collect information and materials for his writings. This thesis investigates the details of his itinerary and demonstrates how mobile he was as a Benedictine monk in the early twelfth century. It shows that there did not exist an insurmountable obstacle between travel and monastic rules in practice. His case also suggests the importance of mobility as the basis of the circulation of knowledge, and scholarly connections were built and maintained through travels in the Middle Ages.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter determines a reasonable chronology of William’s life and works. From the different information in his various works and versions, the second chapter lists all the evidence related to his travels and deduces their probable dates. Then, the third chapter reconsiders the previous results and presents the general patterns of his itinerary. The fourth chapter analyses William’s mobility and argues that he was not special, but more ordinary monks were also able to follow his steps. Finally, the fifth chapter discusses the circulation of knowledge resulting from his travels. His mobility helped him to form connections with people, and this personal network was then combined into an even bigger network of knowledge through the personal connections of his friends and acquaintances. In this way, knowledge could overcome the natural boundaries and reach every corner of this connected medieval world. William’s case shows vividly a more connected Benedictine
world in the early twelfth century than has previously been thought.
Acknowledgements

It took me three years to finish this dissertation, and many people had given me much help. First, I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Bill Aird and Dr Mike Carr, without whom, there would not be such a dissertation. They helped me quite a lot during the process, and many ideas had developed from our valuable and interesting discussion. Second, special thanks need to go to Prof. Harry Dickinson, who kindly proofread this thesis and provided many detailed suggestions on grammar, style and format. I am also very grateful to the continuous encouragement from Dr Frances Dow each time when we met together with Harry. Third, I offer thanks to other scholars outside of the University of Edinburgh who had given advice on my project, in particular, the historians in the Battle Conference 2021, such as Prof. David Bates, Dr Leonie Hicks, and Dr Charlie Rozier, who gave me many warm comments on my academic poster.

In addition, I would like to thank the China Scholarship Council for awarding me the Chinese Government Award for Outstanding Self-financed Students Abroad in 2020. I am also very grateful to Prof. Yu Wenjie from Nanjing University, who was my master supervisor and continued to give me much support during my PhD study.

Last but not least, I thank my parents for their continuous support, both financially and mentally. They spent their life savings supporting me pursuing my dream, and I can never fully repay their love. Special thanks should be given to my best friend, Qiu Yuhua, who is a great cook and would be a doctor in history as well shortly. I am not a person good at dealing with daily life stuff and am grateful for all the help he had given me. He also helped me with the making of maps in this dissertation.
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HE  Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. and
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Introduction

Hic liber primus Achademicorum in Anglia non inuenitur, sed nec secundus in quo Catulus pro Achademicis disputans introductur, sicut ex multis que in hiis libris proxime scriptis animaduerti potest. Tertius uero et quartus libri Achademicorum hi duo sunt qui propriie Lucullus appellantur, quia in uno introductur Lucullus contra Achademicos disputans, in altero Tullius ei pro Achademicis respondet. Dicit idem Cicero in principio secundi libri De Diuinacione se composuisse librum in quo introductit Hortensium hortantem ad studium philosophie. Dicit eciam ibidem se .vi. libros De Re Publica edidisse. Qui libri quia in Anglia non reperiuntur, ego Willelmus Malmesburgenis more meo hic apposui quicquid de materia et intentione eorum in beato Augustino inuenire potui.1

[The first book of the Academica is not found in England, and neither the second, in which Catulus is brought in, who argues for the Academics, as it can almost be observed to have been written both in these and many other books. The third and fourth books of the Academica, however, are particularly called as the Lucullus, because in one of them, Lucullus is brought in, who argues against the Academics, while in the other, Cicero responds to him for the Academics. At the beginning of his second book of De Divinatione, Cicero says that he wrote a book in which he brought in Hortensius exhorting to the study of philosophy. In the same place he says that he had published six books of De Re Publica. Now since these books are not to be found in England, I, William of Malmesbury, have according to my accustomed practice appended here all that I could find about the matter and purpose of them in St Augustine.]2

This is a very interesting paragraph written by William of Malmesbury, the famous monk historian in the early twelfth century, in his collection of Cicero’s works. As Rodney Thomson has noted, it is worthwhile to think about why William was so sure that those works of Cicero, namely parts of the Academica, and the whole of the

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2 Part of the translation here comes from M. R. James, Two Ancient English Scholars: St. Aldhelm and William of Malmesbury (Glasgow, 1931), p. 22. The rest is mine.
Hortensius and De Re Publica, could not be found in England.³ Is it likely that William had investigated the archives of most cathedrals and abbeys in England so that he could dare to make such a statement? If he did travel widely, did he visit places beyond the island of Britain, for example, on the Continent? When did these travels happen? Were looking for manuscripts and pursuing knowledge the only reasons for his travels? Was he special from the perspective of his travels compared to other Benedictine monks in the Middle Ages? What is the influence of his mobility on his monastic and writing career, and what can we learn from it?

This thesis tries to answer these questions. It will reconstruct William’s itinerary and demonstrate how mobile he could be as a Benedictine monk in the early twelfth century. His case may help us to consider the mobility of other Benedictine monks, and also think about what monks’ mobility could achieve in the Middle Ages. Before we dig into his itinerary and mobility, it would first be beneficial to provide some context for mobility in medieval society more generally.

Mobility means the ability to move both physically and socially. For the physical mobility which is the focus of this thesis, it involves the displacement and movement of people and materials in space, and also the spread of incorporeal things, like information and knowledge.⁴ Since the end of the twentieth century, increasing attention has been paid to the structure and feelings of mobile society in the area of social science, and a new cross or post-disciplinary research approach, ‘New Mobilities ³ Thomson, ‘William of Malmesbury and the Latin Classics Revisited’, p. 384.
Paradigm’, gradually emerged in the first decade of the new century, using a mobilities ‘lens’ as the basis of new theories and methods for studying the diverse movements of people, objects, and information, as well as their meanings and experience.\(^5\) Such research interest is clearly reacting to the changes in modern society, by which fast modes of travel based on the development of technology and machines and high carbon consumption is vital for modern life and experience.\(^6\) Different societies are shown to be composed and interlinked by complex mobilities of peoples and things, marking the research view shifting from regarding societies as a static and fixed form to understanding the nature of ‘mobile societies’.\(^7\) In other words, mobility is thought to be a significant phenomenon of modern society. Also, as the opposite of mobility, some social-science scholars noted the problem of seeing immobility and stillness as an aberration, a negative situation contrary to mobility as ‘liberty’ or ‘progress’ in the modern ‘progressive’ mind.\(^8\) This is a reflection of the association between mobility and modernity both in the research field and popular notions.

In historical research, mobility has long been associated with modernity as well, and as the ‘opposite’ of modern society, the medieval world is usually described as a ‘static mode of existence’, hence presenting a sharp gulf between past and present,

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between ‘a static Middle Ages and a mobile modernity’.⁹ It is true that medieval travels could be laborious and full of danger. The modern English word travel derives from the French term travail in the Middle Ages, which signifies the torments and fatigues of medieval journeys.¹⁰ Long-distance travel in the Middle Ages was usually time-consuming and expensive, and the problem of finding lodgings was always present.¹¹ The limited road network increased the possibility of getting lost, and dangers on the road came from not only hostile people, such as robbers, but also from the sometimes brutal natural world and the unfamiliarity with tracts of wilderness.¹² Moreover, long-distance travels might bring spiritual dangers for travellers, especially the clergy.¹³ They were exposed to the perils of worldly temptation, and vulnerable to the plots of devils, who were often lurking in their path.¹⁴

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¹⁴ Robert Winchelsey, archbishop of Canterbury, once warned of the perils of temptation for pilgrims in
These dangers and difficulties, however, did not prevent people from travelling in the Middle Ages. Although many old Roman roads ceased to be used for the lack of maintenance after the collapse of the Roman Empire, new road and bridge systems were gradually constructed after the eighth century in Western Europe. In addition, the average travel speed on foot in the Middle Ages was around 15 miles per day, but those travelling on horseback could cover a distance up to 50 miles in a day, and travelling on rivers or on the sea could sometimes be even two or three times faster than riding a horse, with the favour of currents and wind. Under such conditions, many medieval people travelled frequently. Kings, nobles, officials, bishops, and other leading churchmen travelled to execute their administrative duties and maintain and display their power by showing their presence.


messengers, and envoys often hit the road.\textsuperscript{18} Even peasants might migrate between regions and travel under the influence of spiritual and ecclesiastical authority, and like their men, women, whether noble or from the lower class, enjoyed mobility to some extent.\textsuperscript{19} Medieval society was not as ‘still’ or ‘immobile’ as we previously thought.

Monastic mobility, deserves to be discussed separately, not only for its specificity, but also because it is more related to the topic of this thesis. In his \textit{Feudal Society} from the mid-twentieth century, Marc Bloch outlined the factors favouring clerical mobility after the Carolingian Empire:

Moreover, in spite of the old hostility of the Benedictine rule to the \textit{gyrovagi}, the bad monks who ceaselessly ‘vagabonded about’, everything in contemporary clerical life favoured this nomadism: the international character of the Church; the use of Latin as a common language among educated priests and monks; the affiliations between monasteries; the wide dispersal of their territorial patrimonies; and finally the ‘reforms’ which periodically convulsed this great ecclesiastical body and made the places first affected by the new spirit at once courts of appeal (to which people came from all parts to see the good rule) and mission centres whence the zealots were despatched for the conquest of the Catholic world.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{20} Bloch, \textit{Feudal Society}, p. 63.
Bloch was discussing clerical mobility in general, though he particularly used many monastic examples. It seems that in his consciousness, monastic mobility belongs to clerical mobility, and hence was not given separate discussion. This assumption persists, so we can see that the study of monastic mobility is usually a part of different scholars’ research on general clerical mobility, such as Norbert Ohler’s and Jean Verdon’s books on travelling in the Middle Ages.\(^{21}\) The problem is, however, as Diana Webb pointed out when she was discussing medieval pilgrimage, that the ‘clergy’ never constituted ‘a single homogeneous grouping’.\(^{22}\) The impressive itinerary of bishops could not represent the mobility of monks, especially after the early monastic rules emphasising coenobitic lifestyle, and the mobility of the seculars was very different from that of the regulars as well. Clearly, monks belong to the clerical order, but a special focus on monastic mobility may have its own value and be useful in comparing the mobility of different groups among the clergy. It may also push the research on clerical mobility into a more detailed level and deepen our comprehension of medieval society as a dynamic entity.

Medieval monks are usually assumed to be bound to the cloister throughout their lives, which is the concept of *stabilitas loci*, or locative fixity. The two most influential monastic texts written in the sixth century, the *RM* and *RB*, both criticised the gyrovagues, who were always wandering around different regions and indulging their own desires, while praising the coenobites, who lived in monasteries and were


supervised by an abbot. This results in the deeply-rooted image of monks being isolated from the outside world in the Middle Ages. Monastic mobility, however, seems to have already been a pervasive phenomenon in the Late Antique world, when Christian monasticism was still being formed. Daniel Caner’s reworking of his doctoral dissertation demonstrates the existence of tension between two forms of monasticism – vagrant monks who led an ascetic and begging lifestyle, and coenobites who engaged in manual labour – in the Mediterranean region during the fourth and fifth centuries, and he shows how various social and economic concerns contributed to the promotion of the latter over the former. Similarly, Maribel Dietz has argued that the widespread attacks on unsupervised wandering monks in the early monastic rules and texts suggest the pervasive presence of such practices in Late Antiquity.

The early criticism of vagrant monks reflected the existence of plural forms of monasticism in the Early Middle Ages, and being a monk did not ‘invariably mean settling permanently within a stable community’, although this ‘sedentary’ lifestyle gradually developed into a mainstream practice, particularly after the RB gained its monastic authority in the Carolingian era with support from ecclesiastical and secular

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23 RM, vol. I, I. 1-74, pp. 328-346: ‘Quartum uero genus est monachorum nec nominandum, quod Melius tacerem quam de talibus aliquid dicere, quod genus nominator gyrouagorum...’ (The fourth kind of monks, who should not even be called that and about whom I would do better to keep silent than to say anything, are called gyrovagues...) The English translation here comes from L. Eberle, trans., The Rule of the Master (Kalamazoo, 1977), p. 106. RB, c. 1, pp. 16-18: ‘Primum coenovitarum, hoc est monasteriale militans sub regula vel abbate...Quartum vero genus est monachorum quod nominatur gyrovagum, qui tota vita sua per diversas provintias ternis aut quaternis diebus per diversorum cellas hospitantur, semper vagi et numquam stabiles et propriis voluntatibus et gulae inlecebris servientes et per omnia deteriores sarabaitis.’ (First are the cenobites, those in a monastery serving under a rule and an abbot... The fourth kind of monks are those called gyrovagues, who spend their whole lives lodging in different regions and different monasteries three or four days at a time, always wandering and never stable, serving their own wills and the lure of gluttony, worse than sarabaites in every way.)


On the one hand, as Pierre Miquel and Helen Lawson have argued, the vow of ‘stabilitas’ in the RB and early medieval context did not necessarily confine monks to a specific place geographically, but emphasised the obedience and steadfastness in the community, which was referring more to an inner state. On the other hand, as Jean Leclercq demonstrated, physical reality was more or less related along with the moral perseverance in the RB and RM, hence resulting in the interpretation of stability in both time (in perpetuity) and space (at a certain place), making stabilitas loci an inevitable consequence, though this term was never used in both texts. The ambiguity of the RB and RM is understandable, since both authors were not theologians writing for the universal institution of monasticism, but were abbots setting practical rules for their own communities. This resulted in the existence of diverse interpretations of monastic rules even though the RB had become the authority, especially when it comes to some specific issues, as in travel for particular reasons. In the twelfth century, therefore, the biographer of St Bernard of Clairvaux praised his stability of mind and complete disinterest in his surroundings during his travels, while reproving the Cluniacs who ‘had deserted the rule of St Benedict’. As Ian Wei argues, what mattered was the travelling monk’s ‘purpose, state of mind, and relationship with authority’, not simply whether they travelled.

From the view of the texts of the RB and RM, mobility is not the complete opposite
of monasticism. The principle of *stabilitas loci*, however, was increasingly emphasised by the secular and ecclesiastical authority. As the definition of the monastic order became narrower, the role of monks was more confined within the cloister and choir, carrying liturgical duties or engaging in ‘biblical scholarship, historiography or the literature of contemplation’, and the danger of monastic travel lay in exposing monks and nuns to the worldly enticements which they had renounced through their profession.\(^{31}\) Thus, in around 720, the English abbess, Eangyth, sought Boniface’s advice on her wish to undertake a Roman pilgrimage, while mentioning her hesitation because of the prescription of canons of councils that everyone should remain where he had been placed and had taken vows.\(^{32}\) Another well-known example is the Council of Ver in 755, which tried to discipline wandering monks who travelled without the permission of their abbots.\(^{33}\) Moreover, the emphasis of *stabilitas loci* can be seen clearly in the Old English translation of the *RB* by St Æthelwold of Winchester, an important figure in the English Benedictine Reform in the tenth century, who particularly added that the gyrovagues are worse than the sarabaïtes who depend on their own judgement, for the latter ‘hold their peace in one dwelling’.\(^{34}\) This is a reflection of the continuing dispute between monastic travelling and its criticism, both in theory and practice, from Late Antique to the twelfth century, on which Giles Constable made a detailed investigation.\(^{35}\)

\(^{34}\) J. Riyeff, trans., *Saint Æthelwold of Winchester: The Old English Rule of Saint Benedict with Related Old English Texts* (Minnesota, 2017), c. 1, p. 34.
More interestingly, some scholars have sought to make a distinction between *vagatio* and *peregrinatio*, and it was usually the former, aimless wandering, that was criticised by medieval writers as a danger to both the wider society and the monk himself, while the latter was often regarded as positive for the nature of pious trials and edification. The word *peregrinus* is the origin of ‘pilgrimage’ in many modern European languages, but this Latin term and its derivatives bear more general connotations of foreignness and alienation in the early medieval world, rather than simply indicating a specific religious journey. In this context, a monk could pursue asceticism and desolation in physical engagement in *peregrinations* in order to reach the spiritual perfection of his soul, namely *stabilitas in peregrinatione*. This kind of ascetic *peregrinatio* was famously taken by the Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks between the sixth and ninth centuries, who voluntarily took self-exile journeys for the sake of spiritual improvement and embraced the monastic experience of the Desert Fathers from centuries before. Hence, *peregrinatio* became a religious attitude, a way of living, and closely related to ancient monasticism. Besides, the *peregrinus* need not

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always be in the state of vagrancy, but could practise the monastic life in a foreign community or found a foreign monastery, the latter of which gradually developed into a missionary enterprise, a pious and beneficial activity as well.41 This is the reason why *vitae* in the Early Middle Ages always tried to depict their travelling heroes, like Columbanus and Willibald, as *sancti peregrini* rather than *vagi* or *gyrovagi*.

It can be seen that the tension between *stabilitas loci* and monastic mobility was complicated, and monasticism and mobility were never mutually exclusive even on a theoretical level. Moreover, various local and regional situations could bring diverse characteristics to monastic mobility in different areas and with the passage of time. This demands that we historicise and contextualise monastic mobility in the medieval world rather than stay on a general level. This has been shown by more and more research in the last decade, especially the two edited collections, *Les mobilités monastiques en Orient et en Occident de l’Antiquité tardive au Moyen Âge* (*The Monastic Mobility in the East and West from the Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*) for the two conferences in Rome and Vienna, in 2014 and 2016 respectively, and *Nach Rom Gehen: Monastische Reisekultur von der Spätantike bis in die Neuzeit* (*Going to Rome: The Monastic Culture of Travel from the Late Antiquity to the Modern Age*) for another two meetings in St. Gallen / Einsiedeln and in Rome, also in 2014 and 2016 respectively.42 They have demonstrated that various practical factors contributed to monastic mobility in different regions and at different times, such as administrative demands, economic

supplies, geopolitical situations, relic display, personal education, and monastic pilgrimage. Whether monks were able to travel should not be the end of any investigation, but rather the specific reason and monastic logic behind each case deserve more attention.

Although much research attention has been paid to monastic mobility in recent years, more work still needs to be done at least in two aspects. First, much research focuses on itinerant abbots or mobility of monks in general, and does not involve too many specific examples of more ordinary monks. At the end of his case study of the mobility of an ordinary Benedictine monk, Bernard Itier (1163-1225), Jean-Loup Lemaitre raised further questions and hoped to see similar studies on other contemporary monks so as to compare Bernard’s experience with theirs:

Is this itinerary ordinary, and to what extent could the position of librarian occupied by Bernard play a role in the choices of these journeys? Who did he travel with? He accompanied his abbot to Cluny, but what about the other times? We know that monks did not travel alone. So many questions remain unanswered. It would be interesting to be able to compare Bernard’s experience to that of other contemporary monks.

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So far, there have been few detailed examples with which Bernard can be compared, which limits our knowledge of ordinary monks’ reaction to travels and their practice on an individual level. Second, although many kinds of materials have been utilised to investigate monastic mobility, such as legal documents and archaeological evidence, hagiographical texts are still the most frequently used sources when it comes to enquiring into personal mobility before the Late Middle Ages. Hagiographies tell the story of saints, who were usually leading clerics, influential monastic reformers or travelling preachers, and who may have founded many monasteries. Hence, their experience might not be representative of the lives of ordinary monks. Despite the fact that some hagiographies are easy to interpret as a kind of travel writing, as in the research of Peregrine Horden on \textit{Vita Willibaldi}, we may be able to look into other genres to find a more diverse mobility. In fact, some scholars have started to broaden the genres of writings investigated in medieval travel research, such as letters, maps, and financial records, instead of being confined into a single and homogeneous sort of travel narrative. This may be applied in the research of monastic mobility as well.

This thesis will focus on the mobility of William of Malmesbury with a reconstruction of his itinerary, and it will try to provide some value in these two aspects.

\begin{flushleft}
45 Travel narratives appeared more frequently after the beginning of the 14th century, which often involved first-person accounts of journeys. See Coulet, ‘Introduction’, p. 10; Legassie, \textit{The Medieval Invention of Travel}, pp. 17-18. \\
\end{flushleft}
William spent almost his whole life in Malmesbury Abbey and was never an influential church leader, though he was close to abbacy at the end of his life after most of his works had been finished.\textsuperscript{48} His many travels had been undertaken when he was still an ordinary monk.\textsuperscript{49} Hence, if we can figure out William’s itinerary, we may be able to know more about how ordinary monks reacted to the experience of mobility on a personal level. Medieval monks were not faceless individuals, and they could also have their own personal characteristics. Their own personalities, preferences, relationships, and occupations in the monasteries may have different kinds of influence on their choice of journeys. Thus, the case study of William’s itinerary helps to historicise and contextualise monastic mobility in the Middle Ages, and may provide a vivid investigation of monastic culture and monks’ personal lives. In addition, William did not leave any travel writings in the strict sense, which would describe his journeys in detail, but there are still a lot of hints in his historical and religious writings that reflect on his travels. Using the different kinds of William’s writings, which we might term ‘non-travel narratives’, to reconstruct his itinerary and think about his mobility, can therefore be valuable in considering the feasibility of using other genres of writings in researching monastic mobility.

In addition, research on William’s itinerary and mobility can help us to learn more about his life and works. There is already some research on his travels, though not specially focusing on the topics of itinerary and mobility. Some scholars have laid much emphasis on his personal travels as the basis for the descriptions provided in his works,

\textsuperscript{48} We will discuss William’s career in Chapter One.
\textsuperscript{49} This will be shown by my detailed investigation on William’s itinerary later.
especially in the *GP*. Antonia Gransden believes that William had used ‘personal observation’ and ‘tireless sightseeing’ to get evidence for his historical writing.\(^{50}\) Likewise, Sarah Wright stressed William’s focus on eye-witnessing and suggested that the *GP* should be read as an itinerary.\(^{51}\) This opinion, however, has been reconsidered recently. Both William Kynan-Wilson’s and Stanislav Mereminskiy’s articles draw our attention to William’s heavy dependence on written sources when it comes to topography and Roman ruins.\(^{52}\) Their research warns us of the possible danger of overinterpreting William’s words and taking the modern impression of his wide travel as entirely reliable. Nevertheless, their arguments mainly focused on Northern England, which cannot be used to disprove the existence of his travels in other places. Meanwhile, the possibility of a northern tour could not be entirely excluded solely on the grounds that he paraphrased other sources alone. In the commentary on the *GP*, Rodney Thomson provided a long list of the places which William certainly or probably had visited: Athelney, Bangor, Bath, Bayeux, Bruton, Bury, Canterbury, Carlisle, Chester, Chichester, Corfe, Coventry, Crowland, Durham, Ely, Exeter, Glastonbury, Hereford, Hexham, Lewes, London, Milton, Muchelney, Oxford, Ramsey, Reading, Rochester, Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Soham, Tavistock, Thorney, Winchester, Worcester, York.\(^{53}\) This is still an impressive list even if we disregard the northern cities, though this does

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\(^{53}\) *GP*, II, pp. xli, xlii.
not mean that there are not any other problems. These studies help us to think about travel as a part of William’s life and its possible influence on his writings, but they each have different limitations. My research concentrating on his itinerary and mobility will provide a more complete view of his travels throughout his life. It will be seen that he was not always confined to his own monastery, and timings and reasons will be given for his different journeys. With a detailed itinerary, we may be able to put his works into the context of his travels and see how his mobility might have influenced his writings. By so doing we will push forward our knowledge of his life and works, and give a sounder picture of him as a great monk historian in the twelfth century.

William’s works will be the central sources of this thesis in order to reconstruct his itinerary and discuss his mobility. Unlike Bernard Itier, William did not talk too much about his own life in his writings, and he was also not frequently mentioned by his contemporaries. Thus, we can only try to find hints of his travels by analysing his own descriptions of different places in his various writings to discover pieces of evidence.

As mentioned above, previous research has paid special attention to the GP when discussing William’s travels, which might bring some problems. Although Thomson considered some parallel evidence from William’s other works when he was making

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54 My following research will show the imperfectness of Thomson’s list.
55 Bernard Itier left many autobiographical notes in the margins of manuscripts, hence Lemaitre was able to reconstruct his itinerary from these materials, see Lemaitre, ‘Les voyages d'un moine Limousin au XIIIe siècle’, p. 124. William, however, only mentioned a little about his life and experience in the prologues of his GR and Comm. Lam., and some few places dispersed in the main texts of his writings. For the contemporaries mentioning him, some of his works were praised by Robert of Cricklade, canon of Cirencester, shortly after March 1137, and he was also said to be present when St Caradoc was translated at St David’s some years after 1125. See GP, II, p. xix, n. 1; MBVM, 12, p. 49, n. 22; R. W. Hunt, ‘English Learning in the Late Twelfth Century’, Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 19 (1936), pp. 31-32.
the list of places visited by William, he ignored some negative testimonies that
to challenge the hypothesis of William’s travel to Durham, which is strange since he
pointed them out in his commentary on the *GR*. Nor did Kynan-Wilson and
Mereminskiy notice them. This problem might be rooted in the tendency of modern
scholars to give too much attention to the *GP* alone when it comes to William’s travels.
In addition, even if we are only focusing on the *GP*, we tend to ignore the slight
differences in William’s information in the different versions that he or his *scriptorium*,
or other scribes, made. From these differences, however, we may be able to find some
information hidden behind his words, or even offer conjectures on the chronology of
his specific travels.

For the reasons given above, this thesis will use as many extant major works of
William as possible. His *GR* and *GP* will still be the most important sources, for these
two texts contain abundant information about his travels, but his other works will also
be taken into consideration, including *Liber Pontificalis, VW, VP, VB, VI, VD, AG, Comm. Lam., Abbreviatio Amalarii, Defloratio Gregorii, MBVM, Chronicles, HN, PH*,
and the fragments of *Itinerarium*. Even though some texts of these works did not
provide specific information about his travels, their chronology and writing contexts
can help us reconstruct his itinerary and understand his mobility indirectly. Moreover,
different versions of his *GR* and *GP* will be considered, as the evolution of his texts is
very likely to reveal useful information for his itinerary. The *GR* has four main versions,
namely T, A, C, B, while the *GP* has his autograph manuscript A, which is Oxford.

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56 *GR*, II, pp. 43, 49, 52. I will return to this point in the following chapters.
Magdalen College MS lat. 172, s. XII\(^1\), and other versions, β, E, G, O, which are later copies of A.\(^57\) The relationship between these versions will also be a part of the following discussion.

The whole thesis will be divided into five chapters. Chapter One will focus on determining a reasonable chronology of William’s life and works. It will be the basis of my reconstruction of his itinerary in later chapters. The first problem is his date of birth. There are two current opinions, one of which believes that his date of birth was around 1095, while the other argues that he was born in c. 1090, preferably between 1085 and 1090. These opinions can be challenged, and I will argue that William was likely born in c. 1091, probably late 1091. Since his date of birth is closely related to the dating of his works, especially the *Comm. Lam.*, we will put more of his works into this framework, and reconcile all the contradictions we may meet in building the chronology. His monastic career will be discussed as well. The end of this chapter will provide a detailed chronology of his life and works, including not only his main works, but also different versions of his *GR* and *GP*.

With a chronology of William’s life and works established, we will be able to compare the information in his different works and versions, so that we can find the evidence for his travels and give them reasonable dates. This will be the content of Chapter Two. The aim of this chapter is to find the places and evidence that might be related to his itinerary. I will do some preliminary analysis of the information we find,

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\(^{57}\) The names here for these different versions of *GR* and *GP* come from Rodney Thomson and Michael Winterbottom’s introductions to the editions in *Oxford Medieval Texts*, which list all the manuscripts that belong to different versions in detail, see *GR*, I, xiii-xxi; *GP*, I, xi-xxv.
and try to give a possible date of his visit if it existed. A great part of this chapter will be based on Rodney Thomson and Michael Winterbottom’s valuable commentary of the GP, but I will also clearly show the places ignored by them, which William was likely to have visited. Even for the places noticed by these two scholars, we will give more detailed evidence and deduce the dates of his visits. This chapter will mainly focus on the evidence from his own works and rely upon the interpretation of his words. This will not be his final itinerary, however, and more information needs to be taken into consideration in the next chapter.

Chapter Three will be based on the results of the second chapter. It will consider more contemporary evidence, for example the sources of his writings and medieval roads, and use more background research to examine the possibility of his travels to certain places. By excluding some places and emphasising the risks of overinterpreting his words, I will discuss the general patterns of his itinerary. It will be seen that William mainly took two long journeys before 1125, the finishing time of the early versions of his GR and GP, and between 1126 and 1129, he spent much time in the monasteries of Worcester and Glastonbury. He also seems to have been active in travelling in the mid-1130s, when he made a tour in South England and went to Wales as well. These are the patterns that we can be more confident about than the specific places mentioned in the second chapter, but I will still combine the results from the last chapter into these patterns with some indications of the possibilities. The reasons for each of his long journeys will also be discussed. At the end of this chapter, we will get a more reliable itinerary of William.
After the reconstruction of William’s itinerary, it will be clear that he travelled far and wide. Then it is worthwhile asking if his mobility is special. Can his mobility be considered representative of other contemporaneous Benedictine monks, or was the pattern of his travels the result of circumstances peculiar to his own life and career? Chapter Four will address these questions. Some of his experiences might be a special contributor to his mobility; for example, his first long journey was probably sponsored by Queen Matilda, wife of King Henry I, and his position as the librarian at his monastery might be a reason for his travelling to collect manuscripts or notes. Nevertheless, his travel to collect information and pursue knowledge is not unique for a medieval Benedictine monk. There are many other contemporary examples of monks visiting other places to copy manuscripts and receive education. It is even more interesting if we do not restrict the purpose of his travels as only undertaken in order to collect information. From his writings, we can always see his religious concerns, hence it is reasonable to argue for the religious and sacred elements of his travels. He was always concerned about the deeds and relics of the saints. His mobility seemed to even be strongly devotional itself, so he might not be very different from other monks who made pilgrimages to sacred places. His mobility, therefore, can give us some new ideas about the broad context of monastic mobility in the early twelfth century.

In the previous chapters, I will have concentrated on William’s physical mobility, but it is also interesting to think about the influence of his mobility, especially the circulation of knowledge resulting from his travels. Knowledge’s mobility depended on physical carriers, that is the movement of people, in the Middle Ages, and books,
manuscripts, or other kinds of information were spread by people’s mobility. Thus, Chapter Five will discuss the circulation of knowledge contributed by his mobility. The knowledge that I mean here is not confined to books or other written records, but refers to all kinds of ideas and information, such as oral stories, news, physical monuments or even impressions of landscapes, no matter whether they were true or merely fanciful rumours. William travelled to different places to collect these kinds of knowledge for his own writings, and they are the basis of his works. His own writings and those books which he collected contributed to the dissemination of knowledge in his monastery. Meanwhile, his mobility was very likely to help the circulation of his own books, and we may be able to think of the popularity of some of his works from the perspective of his own travels or some other local monks’ mobility. In addition, travels and mobility are important for building personal relationships and maintaining networks in the Middle Ages. William’s mobility was also very likely to help him make connections with both secular and ecclesiastical people, and knowledge circulated more easily through these personal networks. As a result, it can be demonstrated that monks’ mobility was an important basis for the circulation of knowledge in the Middle Ages.

Overall, this thesis will investigate William’s itinerary and see how mobile he could be as a Benedictine monk in the early twelfth century. It will not only offer new perspectives on his life and works, but also shed new light on monastic culture in the Middle Ages. This case study of William’s itinerary and mobility helps us to consider the degree of mobility allowed to ordinary Benedictine monks. Hopefully, my use of ‘non-travel narratives’ may also provide some encouragement to future researchers of
medieval mobility to make use of other genres of writings.
Chapter One

The Chronology of William of Malmesbury’s Life and Works

In order to reconstruct William of Malmesbury’s itinerary and to analyse his mobility, we need first to determine a reliable chronology of his life and works. One of the most important and debatable issues of William’s life is his date of birth, and it is closely related to the dating of some of his works. This means that his date of birth will be a core issue in rebuilding the chronology, hence deserving much discussion. This chapter will go through the previous arguments on William’s date of birth by different scholars, and suggest a new approach to reconciling the existing disagreements and contradictions. Then, I will bring the dating of more of his works into this framework, and demonstrate that they can all fit into this new pattern. At the end of the chapter, a reliable and detailed chronology of his life and works will be offered, including both his main works and various versions of his GR and GP.

William’s date of birth has always been a significant and debatable issue. The traditional view is that he was born in 1095 or 1096, of which the earliest example I have found is the preface to the first English translation of his GR by John Sharpe in 1815.58 Late in that century, William Stubbs noticed some problems with such a late date, and tried to ‘throw the date five years further back’, though with much hesitation, implying that William’s date of birth is probably around 1090, without any further precise dating.59 Throughout the twentieth century, both these dates were used by

different scholars without providing additional evidence to support them, or, the issue of William’s birth was deliberately avoided.\textsuperscript{60} Things have been greatly changed since Rodney Thomson’s second edition of \textit{William of Malmesbury} was published in 2003, in which he provided a whole appendix discussing the date of William’s birth, and in which he pushed forward Stubbs’s arguments and suggested that William was born in c. 1090, preferably at some date between 1085 and 1090.\textsuperscript{61} Thomson’s research seems to have ended the former debate, and recent scholarship usually acquiesces in his opinion, using c. 1090 to mark William’s date of birth, without providing additional reasons or reconsidering Thomson’s view systematically.\textsuperscript{62} Thomson’s arguments are not conclusive, however, and his approach to William’s prologue for \textit{Comm. Lam.}, the most significant text involving his date of birth, needs to be reconsidered.

Before going through Thomson’s arguments, it is advisable to consider the


traditional view first, which maintained that William was born in c. 1095. The
traditional view is based on William’s own statement in his *Comm. Lam.*, which
indicates that he was 40 years old when he was writing the prologue:

Quadragenarius sum hodie, admouique pedem <ad> medietatem metae quam
diiinus psalmista ponit hominum uitae, dicens: *Dies annorum nostrorum in ipsis
septuaginta annis. Si autem in potentatibus octoginta anni, et amplius eorum labor
et dolor.*

[I am forty today; I have come to the middle point of the course that the divine
psalmist appoints for the life of man, when he says: ‘The days of our life are in
seventy years. But if there are eighty years for the strong, there are even more
labour and sorrow for them.’*

On the one hand, in one place of the *Comm. Lam.*, William seemed to refer to King
Henry as dead, so he was presumably writing after Henry I’s death in December 1135.

On the other hand, Robert of Cricklade, a canon of Cirencester, who later became prior
of St Frideswide, Oxford, praised some of William’s works shortly after March 1137,
including the *Comm. Lam.* Thus, the *Comm. Lam.* was seemingly written in 1135 or
1136, meaning that William was born in 1095 or 1096.

Both Stubbs and Thomson noticed many problems with such a late date. Based

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63 *Comm. Lam.*, I. 13-17, p. 3; M. Winterbottom, trans., *William of Malmesbury on Lamentations*
(Turnhout, 2013), p. 35. I have modified part of Winterbottom’s translation here.
64 *Comm. Lam.*, IV. 171-173, p. 276: ‘Illa autem strutio auis est membrorum grandium, pennas quidem
habens sed uolatu carens. Qualem in Anglia uidimus tempore regis Henrici, extraneorum monstrorum
appetentissimi.’ (The ostrich is a large-limbed bird, winged but flightless. We saw such a one in England
in the time of King Henry, that keen collector of prodigious exotica.) Sharpe, *The History of the Kings
65 Hunt, ‘English Learning in the Late Twelfth Century’, pp. 31-32; Farmer, ‘William of Malmesbury’s
Life and Works’, p. 52; idem, ‘William of Malmesbury’s Commentary on Lamentations’, *Studia
on Stubbs’s thoughts, Thomson made a list of the difficulties, which I shall summarise here:67

(a) William witnessed a miracle that involved Ernulf of Hesdin, a landowner in Wiltshire, who probably departed for the Crusade with Duke Robert of Normandy in September-October 1096, and died at Antioch.

(b) William had met old monks who knew Abbot Wulfstege (d. c. 1033/4) in his own abbey. Thomson assumed that those monks would have been born in c. 1010, and William must have heard from them no later than c. 1080-90.

(c) William seemed to assist Abbot Godfrey to restock the abbey library, who took office between 1084 and 1091, and died before 1106. William witnessed part of the miracles occurring in Godfrey’s time, so he would have become a novice several years after the beginning of Godfrey’s abbacy. Since he had already had some education, he would have been older than the dates of 1095 or 1096 would suggest.

(d) William had heard a priest talking about the good qualities of Bishop Ælfwold of Sherborne (d. 1058).

(e) William had seen Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1109).

(f) William had several conversations with Queen Matilda (d. 1118) about the project of writing the *GR*, part of which seems to have been finished by that date. He also compiled the *Liber Pontificalis* in or soon after 1119, which required much work.

If he was born in 1095 or 1096, he was in his early twenties when he had done

199-201. Stubbs tried to find a compatible way to reconcile these problems with the late date, but had already raised the hypothesis of throwing ‘the date five years further back’.

67 The following comes from Thomson’s Appendix I in the second edition of his monograph, see Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 199-200.
substantial research and writing.

If William’s date of birth should be moved back, then that means that the *Comm. Lam.* was composed earlier than 1135. For the strange reference to King Henry in the *Comm. Lam.*, Stubbs raised the possibility that the phrase ‘tempore regis Henrici’ might be understood as ‘a king reigning at the time’, while Thomson thought that William was likely to refer to him in the past tense for the sake of future readers, as had also appeared in the *GR*. Nevertheless, Thomson further suggested that William’s reference to his historical writings as ‘olim’ became more problematic if the making of *Comm. Lam.* was dated earlier and earlier. Thus, he believed that the date for *Comm. Lam.* should be shortly after 1130 to provide an interval for William’s writing of the *GR* and *GP*, the first editions of which were finished by 1125. Yet he was not satisfied with a birth date after 1090 because of the difficulties mentioned above, so he used Stubbs’s hypothesis of translating ‘quadragenarius’ to ‘in my forties’ rather than ‘forty’, which finally moved William’s birth date back to before 1090.

Stubbs’s and Thomson’s interpretation of ‘quadragenarius’ seems, however, to have gone too far. If we carefully consider William’s citation of the *Psalms* which follows

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71 Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 201. The original words of the translation suggested by Stubbs are ‘between forty and fifty’, see Stubbs, ed., *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, vol. I, p. xvi. Farmer also suggested translating ‘quadragenarius’ to ‘in my forties’, but he believed that the *Comm. Lam.* was composed in c. 1136, and William’s date of birth was c. 1093, without providing any reasons, see Farmer, ‘William of Malmesbury’s Life and Works’, pp. 50-51; idem, ‘William of Malmesbury’s Commentary on Lamentations’, pp. 283-284, 288.
‘quadragenarius’ in the same sentence – ‘Dies annorum nostrorum in ipsis septuaginta annis. Si autem in potentatibus octagenta anni, et amplius eorum labor et dolor’ (The days of our life are in seventy years. But if there are eighty years for the strong, there are even more labour and sorrow for them.)\textsuperscript{72} – it is clear that the Bible assumed the mortals’ life-span as normally between seventy and eighty years, so ‘the middle point of the course’ could never be over forty.\textsuperscript{73} In addition, in the \textit{GR}, William once used ‘maior quadragenario’ (being over forty years old) to describe William Rufus’s age at death.\textsuperscript{74} It is obvious that the ‘quadragenario’ here is precisely meaning ‘forty years old’, so it is very likely that William was also using the same meaning in the \textit{Comm. Lam.}.

Regardless of all the problems and contradictions we have encountered so far, there is still a way to reconcile them. I suggest that William was born shortly after 1090, probably 1091 or 1092. Let us go through Stubbs’s and Thomson’s arguments again to see whether it works. For (a), William would be 4 or 5 years old, and possibly able to remember the miracle involving Ernulf of Hesdin, whose hands were cured by the

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Comm. Lam.}, I. 15-17, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{73} One of the most influential schemes of lifetime in the Middle Ages is the six stages presented by Isidore of Seville in his \textit{Etymologies: infantia} (infancy, 0-7), \textit{pueritia} (childhood, 7-14), \textit{adolescentia} (adolescence, 14-28), \textit{juventus} (youth, 28-50), \textit{gravitas} (maturity, 50-70), and \textit{senectus} (old age, 70-). See S. A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and O. Berghof, eds. and trans., \textit{The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville} (New York, 2006), XI. ii. 1-8, p. 241. Although Isidore did not point out the usual maximum of old age, it still can be seen that medieval men were expected to live into their seventies, which is close to the meaning of William’s citation here. Roberta Gilchrist’s book in 2012 has an interesting appendix on the life stages of medieval men, but his own category of old age (50-72) as the last stage of lifetime seems to come from a wrong citation of Isidore’s words, which should have been between 50 and 70 years old. See R. Gilchrist, \textit{Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course} (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 34, 253. William should have been familiar with Isidore’s lifetime scheme, for \textit{Etymologies} seems to be a work known to him at first hand. See Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, p. 210.

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{GR}, I, iv. 333. 7, pp. 576-577: ‘Obit anno Dominicae incarnationis millesimo centesimo, regni tertio decimo, quarto nonas Augusti, maior quadragenario.’ (He died in the year of our Lord 1100, and the thirteenth of his reign, on 2 August, being over forty years of age.)
balsam from St Aldhelm’s tomb, which seemed to be a big local event. He could also
learn something on Bishop Ælfwold from the old priest, probably in Sherborne (d), and
would be in his mid or late twenties when getting substantive results from his research
(f). For Thomson’s mention of William’s meeting with St Anselm (e), it is actually
doubtful whether it occurred, and even if they saw each other once before 1109, this
would not pose a substantial problem for our conjecture. Now only (b) and (c) are
left. Thomson’s assumption in (b) can also be modified if the monks who knew Abbot
Wulfsige were oblates at that time and possibly lived a long life even into the beginning
of the twelfth century. Finally, the supposition of William’s assistance in Abbot
Godfrey’s restocking the abbey library (c) seems to be problematic as well. It is worth
reconsidering William’s words on his own labours for the library. After his description
of Godfrey’s efforts, he continued as follows:

Quod studium si predico, uideor id quodam meo propio iure facere, qui nullis
maioribus in hoc presertim loco cesserim, immo, nisi quod dico iactantia sit,
cunctos facile supergressus sim. Sit qui modo parta conseruet: ego ad legendum
multa congessi, probitatem praeli candi uiri in hoc dumtaxat emul atus. Ipsius ergo
laudabili cepto pro uirili portione non defui. Vtinam sit qui labores nostros foueat!

75 In William’s words, Ernulf was a man with good reputation, see GP, 1, v. 274. 1, pp. 654-655: ‘Producatur ergo in medium Ernulfus de Hesding, uir inter optim ates Angliae opinatissimus.’ (Let me therefore bring on the stage Ernulf of Hesdin, a man of high repute among the nobles of England.)
76 For William’s meeting with the old priest, see GP, I, ii. 82. 2, pp. 282-283: ‘Audiui ego bonae fidei presbiterum et iam canis sparsum bona eius lacrimabili gaudio referentem.’ (I have heard a reliable priest, his hair now flecked with white, weeping with joy to tell good things of him.)
77 Thomson’s thoughts were based on William’s description of Anselm in GP, I, i. 65. 1, pp. 194-195: ‘Vir qui omnes quos quidem uiderim sapientia et religione prestaret.’ (A man who in wisdom and sanctity surpassed everyone whom we have indeed seen.) It is hard to take William’s acquaintance of Anselm as certainty from this single sentence. Dr Jesse Harrington recently also pointed this out in his as yet unpublished paper for the online workshop ‘Eadmer of Canterbury: Life, Manuscripts, History and Thought’ on 8 Jan., 2021. Hopefully, we can see such a doubt in his paper later.
78 For William’s mention of these monks, see GP, I, v. 258. 2, pp. 614-615: ‘Non defuerunt nostro tempore monachi qui, eum in carne conspicati, memoriu uiri ruminare et alis proferre dulce habebant.’ (In my time there were still monks who had seen him in the flesh, glad to mull over their memories of the man and pass them on to others.)
[If I single out this activity, I think I have every right to do so, for in this area especially I have been inferior to none of those who went before; indeed (if I can say this without boasting) I have easily surpassed them all. May there be someone to look after the present stock! I have collected much material for reading, approaching the prowess of my excellent predecessor at least in this respect; I have followed up his laudable start as best I could.]\textsuperscript{79}

This passage does not mention that William had worked under Godfrey’s supervision for the library, but rather indicates that he was the one who continued Godfrey’s work as the librarian of the monastery.\textsuperscript{80} Stubbs and M. R. James argued that it only refers to William’s labours as librarian to follow Godfrey’s example and enlarge the collections.\textsuperscript{81} If we pay attention to William’s evaluation of Godfrey’s efforts, which was copying books or making a start on the library, it is reasonable that the above passage that follows such an evaluation was just pointing out his own subsequent contribution.\textsuperscript{82} William, therefore, might have begun his noviciate in the middle or late years of Godfrey’s abbacy (which ended before 1106) when Godfrey had already done much work for the library. If William was born in c. 1091, then he was very likely to be in his late childhood (10-14) when he entered the monastery, which both provided enough time for his early education outside of the monastery, and allowed him to witness some of the miracles involving Godfrey later.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{GP}, I, v. 271. 2, pp. 644-645.
\textsuperscript{80} At least in one place, William clearly told readers that he was the librarian of the monastery, see \textit{HN}, prol., pp. 2-3: ‘Willelmus bibliothecarius Malmesberiae’ (William the librarian of Malmesbury).
\textsuperscript{81} Stubbs, ed., \textit{De Gestis Regum Anglorum}, vol. I, p. xvi; James, \textit{Two Ancient English Scholars}, p. 17. However, part of James’s argument was based on the belief that William was born in c. 1095 and was not old enough to help Godfrey to collect books, which is problematic.
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{GP}, I, v. 271. 1, pp. 644-645: ‘Libri conscripti nonnulli, uel potius bibliothecae primitiae libatae.’ (Some books were copied, or rather a start was made on building up a library.)
\textsuperscript{83} Here I use Isidore’s scheme for the age of \textit{pueritia} (childhood), which is between 7 and 14 years old. See above, p. 30, n. 73. For a bolder guess, I believe that 12 or 13 years old would be more probably ages
So far, our hypothesis of William’s date of birth has worked, and let us begin to fill in his life-and-work pattern to see if there are other problems. The case before 1125 is rather clear. According to Thomson, William completed his Liber Pontificalis in or soon after 1119, which was close to the time when Bishop Roger of Salisbury started to occupy the abbacy.84

William had also finished the first edition of the GR and GP by 1125.85 It is worthwhile to consider the finishing time of their versions as well. The GR mainly has four versions, which is T, A, C and B. According to Thomson and Winterbottom, the T version is earlier than the other existing manuscripts, which contains words that were wrongly omitted in other versions, and one manuscript (Tt: Troyes, Bibliothèque

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84 Thomson, William of Malmesbury, p. 7. Bishop Roger’s appropriation lasted until his death in 1139, and a new abbot John was elected in 1140, see HN, ii. 35, p. 70.
Municipale MS 0294 bis, s. XII\(^2\)) of which was close to the lost one sent to Empress Matilda later in 1126/27.\(^86\) The T version was probably transcribed from William’s first draft of the \textit{GR}, and it deliberately omitted some information that was not suitable to be presented to the Empress.\(^87\) After the completion of this first draft, he started to revise it. Hence, the A version appeared, in which he added some new information and changed some words.\(^88\) The A version might be a stage of this redaction, and should have been finished in early 1126 so that one manuscript (Al: London, British Library Arundel MS 35, s. XII\(^{2/4}\)) could be sent to Winchester around that time.\(^89\) William continued his revision in later years, and the C and B versions contain clues to the date of the alterations. As Thomson and Winterbottom noticed, they both include an alteration which involves the death of Robert Curthose, so they should have been made after February 1134, the date of Robert’s death.\(^90\) Moreover, the B version even contains much more information related to William’s new findings that C does not have, indicating a later date than C.\(^91\) Since the C version had been disseminated by around 1135 and the \textit{GR} did not anticipate William’s writing of the \textit{HN} which he started in

\(^{86}\) \textit{GR}, II, pp. xvii-xxii. The manuscript that was close to Empress Matilda’s copy is the Troyes manuscript (T), which includes two letters respectively to King David of Scotland and Empress Matilda. These two letters were first printed and analysed by Ewald Könsgen, see E. Könsgen, “Zwei unbekannte Briefe zu den Gesta Regum Anglorum des Wilhelm von Malmesbury”, \textit{Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters}, 31 (1975), pp. 204-214. In the commentary of the \textit{GR}, Thomson provided three possible dates for the writing of these two letters: (1) before the death of Empress Matilda’s husband Henry V on 23 May 1125; (2) between the death of Henry V and Empress Matilda’s arrival in England in September 1126; (3) when Empress Matilda and King David were both in England later in 1126/27. Of the three possibilities, Thomson thinks the third is the most probable, see \textit{GR}, II, pp. 6-7. This is also the opinion of Könsgen and Marjorie Chibnall, see Könsgen, “Zwei unbekannte Briefe”, p. 207; M. Chibnall, \textit{The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English} (Oxford, 1999 [1991]), pp. 46-47. Similarly, Tahkokallio dated this presentation to the second half of 1126. See J. Tahkokallio, \textit{The Anglo-Norman Historical Canon: Publishing and Manuscript Culture} (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 19-21.

\(^{87}\) \textit{GR}, II, pp. xix, xxii.

\(^{88}\) \textit{GR}, II, pp. xxii-xxiii.


\(^{90}\) \textit{GR}, II, p. xxv. For the alteration that mentioned the death of Robert, see \textit{GR}, I, iv. 389. 10-11, p. 706.

\(^{91}\) \textit{GR}, II, pp. xxviii-xxix. In Chapter Two, I will also mention some unique information in the B version.
1140, the B version should have been finished between 1135 and 1140, preferably close to the mid-1130s, leaving a short interval between C and B.92

Compared to the GR, the GP is fortunate to have William’s autograph, which is Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 172, s. XII1 (A).93 It was a working copy of the first draft of the GP just after mid-1125, and was continuously revised probably until his death.94 It is also the only medieval manuscript that contains the complete fifth book of the GP. At some point later, a lost copy of A was made, which was called β by Thomson and Winterbottom, and can be partly recovered by the overlap of two manuscripts – London, British Library Cotton MS Claudius A V, s. XII (B), and London, British Library Harley MS 3641, s. XIIex (C).95 The manuscript B also contains an abbreviation of the fifth book. After the β version, William started to omit some offensive materials in the GP, just as he did in the C and B versions of the GR.96 The manuscript E (Oxford, All Souls College MS 34, s. XIImed), a copy of A, is a product of this process. From the comparison of its content with the other versions, Winterbottom and Thomson convincingly argued that the main text of E was made between 1130 and 1140.97 Another copy of A, the manuscript G (London, British Library Arundel MS

92 The dating of the B version between 1135 and 1140 was also suggested by William Stubbs, see Stubbs, ed., De Gestis Regum Anglorum, vol. I, p. xxxi. The absence of anticipation of the HN may mean that the B version had been finished a couple of years before 1140.
94 GP, I, p. xii.
95 GP, I, p. xiii.
97 GP, I, p. xviii. They also suggested that the corrections to E were made after 1158, so they were later interpolations and will not be discussed in this chapter.
222, s. XII) incorporates William’s new redaction that the main text of E does not include, and it records the death of Archbishop Thurstan of York in February 1140, but does not contain all the corrections in A, hence it was produced between 1140 and 1143, before his death. There is still one more manuscript directly copied from A, which is called O (Cambridge, Trinity College MS R. 5. 36 (727), s. XII-XIII) by Winterbottom and Thomson. It contains all the corrections in A, so it was probably made after William’s death.

Shortly after the completion of the first drafts of his GR and GP, William seemed to have planned or even started his Chronicles, which are now lost. He told readers at the end of the GR that he might make another book that would cover the events happening after the finishing of the GR year-by-year, which seemed to be its continuation in an annal form. This new work is certainly the Chronicles which he mentioned in the prologue of his HN, and he had already finished three books by that time. In the GR, he even implied that only death could end his writing of the Chronicles, so perhaps it would have included more than three books. These words

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98 GP, I, pp. xx-xxi.
99 GP, I, p. xxii.
100 GP, I, p. xxii.
101 GR, I, v. 449. 2, pp. 800-801: ‘Et quidem iam dudum, quibusdam persuadentibus, ferebat animus ut, quae pretereaunda non putarem, per succiduos semper annos huic operi apponerem; sed consultius uidetur alium de talibus librum procudere quam iam absolute frequenter noua insuere.’ (And indeed it had long been in my mind, at the persuasion of certain friends, that whatever seemed worthy of preservation should be added to this work year by year; but to make another book of those additions seems a better plan than to be frequently tacking new pieces onto a fabric already finished.)
102 HN, prol., pp. 2-3: ‘in tribus libellis quibus Cronica dedi vocabulum’ (in the three little books to which I have given the name of Chronicles). The three books of the Chronicles should have been finished by 1140. I will discuss the writing time of the HN later in this chapter.
103 GR, I, v. 449. 2, pp. 800-801: ‘in altero erit idem vitae qui scripturae terminus’ (the writing of the other will end only with life itself). Thomson thought that William was referring to his HN here, but as Hayward noticed, this reference was meant to be the Chronicles, see GR, II, p. 399; P. A. Hayward, ‘William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian’, in Medieval Cantors and Their Craft: Music, Liturgy and the Shaping of History, 800-1500, ed. K. Bugyis, A. B. Kraebel, and M. E. Fassler (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 225-226.
from the last chapter of the *GR* are very likely to have already existed in the A version which was finished in early 1126, for both manuscripts At (Cambridge, Trinity College MS R. 7. 10 (748), s. XII\textsuperscript{med}) and Aap (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 6047, s. XII\textsuperscript{ex}), coming from two branches of the A version, include those exact words.\textsuperscript{104} We may therefore expect that the *Chronicles* might have been started as early as 1126, and he continued to write it until the end of his life.

Then let us turn to the chronology of William’s hagiographies (*VW*, *VD*, *VP*, *VB*, *VI*) and local history work, *AG*. It is not very difficult to deduce the writing time of the works related to the abbey of Glastonbury. According to Winterbottom and Thomson, the main text of the *AG* and two books of the *VD* seemed to have been almost written simultaneously.\textsuperscript{105} In the first book of the *VD*, William had already envisaged the writing of the *AG* later.\textsuperscript{106} The main text of the *AG* also referred back to it.\textsuperscript{107} Moreover,

\textsuperscript{104} Cambridge, Trinity College MS R. 7. 10 (748), s. XII\textsuperscript{med}, fol. 150\textsuperscript{r}; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 6047, s. XII\textsuperscript{ex}, fol. 139\textsuperscript{r}. For the discussion of the two different branches of the A version, see *GR*, I, pp. xv-xvii. The two main witnesses of the T version of the *GR*, Tt (Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 0294 bis, s. XII\textsuperscript{2}) and Tp (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 6046, s. XIV), both stop at the word ‘extorquebat’ at the near end of c. 401\textsuperscript{2}, hence they did not include William’s mention of the *Chronicles*. See Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 0294 bis, s. XII\textsuperscript{2}, fol. 119\textsuperscript{r}; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 6046, s. XIV, fol. 296\textsuperscript{v}. In addition, the mention of the *Chronicles* belongs to the part where William praised Robert earl of Gloucester lavishly, which seemed unlikely to exist in the T version, since as we have discussed above, the T version might be more related to Empress Matilda.

\textsuperscript{105} *Saints’ Lives*, p. xv.

\textsuperscript{106} *VD*, i. 15. 6, pp. 204-205: ‘Quomodo autem et quo auctore reliquiae sanctorum ex Transhumbranis Glastonium sint aduecta, in libro de antiquitate eisdem ecclesiae occasione accepta inserere non pigebit, si Deus mentem meam ad quod intendo direxerit.’ (But how, and on whose authority, the relics of saints came to Glastonbury from beyond the Humber, I shall be happy to relate when the right moment arises in my book on the antiquity of the church, so long as God directs my mind to what I purpose.)

\textsuperscript{107} *AG*, 55, pp. 114-115: ‘Primam itaque diebus eius liberalitatis palmam preripuit Edmundus frater Ethelstani qui eciam, ut ante dictum est, diuine mentis consilio eum ibidem abbatem constituerat.’ (In his time Edmund, the brother of Athelstan, first carried off the palm for generosity, he who, as I reported before, established him as abbot there on the advice of the divine mind.) The text that it referred to can be seen in *FD*, i. 15. 4, pp. 202-203: ‘Tum deinde, ut ueteris scriptoris uerba subitiam, duecess eam ad sacerdotalem cathedram et eum imponens dixit: “Esto istius sedis princeps potensque insessor, et presentis ecclesiae fidelissimus abbas.”’ (Then – to quote the words of the old writer – he led him to the priestly chair, sat him in it, and said: ‘Sit in this seat in supreme power, as the faithful abbot of this church.’)
the second book of the *VD* mentioned the *AG* as already finished. Finally, in the prologue of the *AG*, William said that the two books of the *VD* had been completed. As a result, the writing sequence of the *VD* and *AG* should be: *VD* i.→ *AG* (main text)→ *VD* ii.→ *AG* prol.. In the prologue of *AG*, Henry of Blois, abbot of Glastonbury, had already become bishop of Winchester, for which he was consecrated in November 1129. Meanwhile, William mentioned his *GR* as a work published ‘several years ago’ in the second book of the *VD*. From all the evidence above, as Winterbottom and Thomson have suggested, it is very likely that *VD* and *AG* were written in c. 1129 - 1130. In addition, since William did not mention Henry’s episcopacy in the *VD*, and in the *AG*’s prologue he said that the two books of the *VD* had already been circulated among the monks to be checked some time before, I suggest that the *VD* and the main text of the *AG* were all finished before Henry’s consecration, while the prologue of the *AG* was written shortly after that, probably at the end of 1129 or in early 1130, as a gift to be presented to Henry. At the same place in William’s prologue, he also referred

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108 *VD*, ii. prol. 1, pp. 234-235: ‘Antiquitatem istius sanctissimi cenobii Glastoniensis, in quo caelestem profitemur militiam, alio opere quantum diuinus favor affuit absoluimus.’ (I have dealt in another work, as well as God allowed me, with the antiquity of this most holy monastery of Glastonbury in which I profess my heavenly service.)

109 *AG*, prol., pp. 40-41: ‘Unde sicut estimo non contemnende stilum dedi opere, qui beati Dunstani prius Glastoniensis abbatis, deinde archiepiscopi Cantuariensis uitam labore meo eternae mandaui memoriae duosque libros de hoc uolentibus Glastonie fratribus, filiis uestris, dominis et sociis meis, dudum integra rerum ueritate absolui.’ (Wherefore I have employed my pen on that work, which I judge to be of no small value, in which I laboured to commit to eternal memory the life of the blessed Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury and later archbishop of Canterbury, and have now completed, with scrupulous regard for the truth, the two books about him for which the brethren at Glastonbury, your sons and my masters and companions, had asked.)


111 *VD*, ii. 14. 2, pp. 264-265: ‘Gesta Regum Anglorum, quae ante aliquot annos edidi’ (the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, which I published several years ago).

112 *Saints’ Lives*, p. xv.

113 *AG*, prol., pp. 40-41: ‘Illos ergo libellos set et uitam beati Patricii, miracula uenerabilis Benigni, passionem martiris Indracti, que simili cura procuderam, iam pridem in eorum permisi uersari manibus, ut si quid citra racionem dictum esset corrigetur pro tempore.’ (Therefore, some time ago, I have already allowed those books to be circulated in their hands, not to mention the *Life of the Blessed Patrick*, the *Miracles of the Venerable Benignus*, and the *Passion of the Martyr Indract*, which I had produced
to the \( VP, VB, VI \) as having been finished before the two books of the \( VD \).\(^{114}\) It is therefore very likely that he had finished them a very few years earlier.\(^{115}\)

Compared to William’s works for Glastonbury, the finishing time of his \( VW \) is much more uncertain. As Winterbottom and Thomson pointed out, the \( VW \)’s prologue was addressed to Warin, prior of Worcester (c. 1124-c. 1142), hence they could not provide a more precise time.\(^{116}\) The T and A versions of \( GR \), however, having been produced by early 1126, had already envisaged the writing of \( VW \).\(^{117}\) William had also used Coleman’s Old English \textit{Life}, the basis of the Latin translation in the \( VW \), in his \( GP \) from the beginning, while neither his narrative of St Dunstan in the same book indicated the writing of the \( VD \), nor did the \( VP, VB \) and \( VI \).\(^{118}\) From these hints, I suggest that William went to Worcester to finish the \( VW \) shortly after the redaction of the A version of his \( GR \), and before he took on the much more onerous task from the other monastery. Thus, the writing time of the \( VW \) should be late 1126 or shortly after 1126. We may also imagine that William might have carried a copy of the earliest \( GP \) with him to Worcester

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\(^{114}\) \textit{AG}, prol., p. 40. See the previous reference.


\(^{117}\) \textit{GR}, I, iii. 269. 2, pp. 498-499: ‘quorum aliqua intendo dicere posterius, sit amen sanctissimis illius placuerit sensibus’ (subjects on which [i. e. deeds and miracles of St Wulfstan] I intend to say something later, provided that this wins the approval of his saintly judgement).

\(^{118}\) \textit{GP}, II, pp. 32, 194. William’s description of St Patrick, Benignus and Indract can be found in \textit{GP}, I, ii. 91. 6-9, pp. 310-311. It seems that when he was writing the \textit{GP}, he had not accessed as many documents about these saints as later he did when he was writing their hagiographies. For example, in the \textit{GP}, he only referred to Benignus as a local hermit, and implied no relationship between him and Patrick, while in the \textit{VB}, Benignus was alleged to be an Irish follower of Patrick. See \textit{GP}, I, ii. 91. 9, pp. 310-312; \textit{VB}, pp. 344-347. It seems to me that William received the request of writing the hagiographies for Glastonbury several years later than that of the \( VW \) for Worcester Cathedral Priory.
at that time, so that an anonymous local chronicler and John of Worcester could have had access to it.\footnote{For the use of the earliest \textit{GP} in the local chronicle and John of Worcester’s writing, see \textit{GP}, II, p. xlviii; \textit{JW}, p. lxxi.}

As a result, William’s five hagiographies and the main text of \textit{AG} were all written before the consecration of Henry of Blois in November 1129, except \textit{AG}’s prologue shortly after that, probably at the end of 1129 or in early 1130. This seems to be somewhat problematic if we start to consider the date of the \textit{Comm. Lam}. If my suggestion of William’s date of birth and interpretation of the term ‘quadragenarius’ are right, this means that the \textit{Comm. Lam.} was written in around 1131. This seems to cause two problems from the prologue of the \textit{Comm. Lam.}, both of which were also noticed by Thomson and Winterbottom.\footnote{\textit{Comm. Lam.}, pp. x-xi; Winterbottom, \textit{William of Malmesbury on Lamentations}, pp. 10-11.} The first is that there seemed to be a long period of ‘sloth’ that William did not write anything, or ‘at any rate nothing worthy’, before that book.\footnote{\textit{Comm. Lam.}, I. 1-2, p. 3: ‘Sepe monuisti ut stilum diu feriatum otii ugina exuerem, et necessariis rebus scribendis applicarem.’ (You have often urged me to draw from the sheath of sloth a pen that has long been on holiday, and to employ it on writing things that are all-important.); \textit{Comm. Lam.}, p. xi.} Second, William said that he would like to turn away from ‘pure’ histories to write a different kind of work as a result of his growing age and ‘worsening circumstances’.\footnote{\textit{Comm. Lam.}, I. 7-9, p. 3: ‘Olim enim cum historias lusi, uridioribus annis rerumque laetitiae congruebat rerum iocunditas. Nunc aetas progressior et fortuna deterior aliud dicendi genus expostulant.’ (For in the past, when I amused myself with histories, the charm of the subject suited my greener years and happy lot. Now advancing age and worsening circumstances demand a different kind of work.)} If our suggestion is right, then the ‘long period of sloth’ before the \textit{Comm. Lam.} did not seem to exist, and the \textit{AG} and William’s hagiographical works seemed difficult to be included in his devotion to ‘pure’ histories before. It is very likely, however, that William was exaggerating here.\footnote{Although Winterbottom once raised the hypothesis that the \textit{Comm. Lam.} may precede William’s hagiographies, which seems not to be the case from our discussion above, he still admitted that those phrases in the prologue of the \textit{Comm. Lam.} are ‘in any case overstated’, see Winterbottom, \textit{William of}}
If our suggested chronology is correct, then from William’s *Liber Pontificalis* to the *AG*, it is noteworthy how productive he was before 1130. If he wrote the *Comm. Lam.* in late 1131, he might have enjoyed an over-one-year or even two-year ‘holiday’ during which he did not write one major book.\(^{124}\) It is probable that the ‘long period’ was only his exaggeration, and the ‘sloth’ was just a word that he used for self-mockery since he was not so productive as he had been before 1130. In fact, it seems that late 1131 is a very likely time for the writing of this work. As Thomson argued, the ‘worsening circumstances’ that William mentioned in the prologue may refer to the ‘contemporary ills’.\(^{125}\) Although Thomson noticed that William’s strong feeling might have been related to Bishop Roger’s occupation of the abbacy after 1118, he did not push forward this hypothesis.\(^{126}\) In my opinion, William was highly likely to use this phrase to refer to King Henry’s confirmation of Bishop Roger’s control over the Malmesbury Abbey on 8 September 1131.\(^{127}\) The confirmation by King Henry was definitely a disaster for the monks, which brought an end to the dispute between them and Bishop Roger at least during King Henry’s reign. This was probably one important reason for William’s pessimism and his writing of the *Comm. Lam.* – lamenting the expected gloomy destiny of his monastery. If my supposition is right, then we can assume that William was probably born in late 1091.

\(^{124}\) One possibility is that William was carrying the administrative duties of cantor/precentor in his convent around that time, which occupation he might have obtained recently. I will develop this hypothesis later.

\(^{125}\) *Comm. Lam.*, p. xi.

\(^{126}\) *Comm. Lam.*, p. xi.

Moreover, William’s turn-away from histories is an even more obvious overstatement. As Winterbottom has pointed out, both his *Comm. Lam.* and *MBVM* showed his great interest in history, and he even finished a much more historical work, the *HN*, at the end of his life.\(^{128}\) He had also written three books of *Chronicles*, before he completed the *HN*, and he probably continued these annals until his death as we have discussed above. Nor did he stop editing his two major histories, *GR* and *GP*, in the 1130s.\(^{129}\) In fact, in many of his works, we can often see the heavy convergence of history and hagiography.\(^{130}\) We should be cautious with applying the modern distinction between these two genres to the Middle Ages.\(^{131}\) Is there a real difference between William’s *GP*, *Saints’ Lives*, and the local history *AG*? Can the fifth book of the *GP* be counted as another truly hagiographical work, the ‘Life of St Aldhelm’?\(^{132}\)

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\(^{129}\) The C and B versions of the *GR* were both made after February 1134, and the revision of the *GP* even continued until William’s death, see *GR*, II, p. xxv; *GP*, I, pp. xx-xxii; and our discussion above.


\(^{131}\) Felice Lifshitz has warned us of this danger, see F. Lifshitz, ‘Beyond Positivism and Genre: “Hagiographical” Texts as Historical Narrative’, *Viator*, 25 (1994), pp. 95-113. Matthew Kempshall also emphasised that medieval writing of history ‘straddled a huge variety of genres’, including hagiographies, see M. Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History* (Manchester, 2011), p. 34. James Campbell drew a clear line between historical works of William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntington on the one hand, who ‘stood for the pursuit of truth’, and works of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the hagiographies of St Edmund and St Osyth on the other hand, which set aside that pursuit and were ‘in favour of warmly interesting and richly circumstantial fiction’. His opinion was refuted by David Rollason, who used the case of Durham to argue that ‘history had a range of different forms and purposes’, and should not be simply judged by the modern ‘scientific’ view. See J. Campbell, ‘Some Twelfth-Century Views of the Anglo-Saxon Past’, *Peritia*, 3 (1984), p. 149; D. Rollason, ‘Symeon of Durham’s *Historia de Regibus Anglorum et Dacorum* as a Product of Twelfth-Century Historical Workshops’, in *The Long Twelfth-Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, ed. M. Brett and D. A. Woodman (London and New York, 2016), pp. 97-100.

\(^{132}\) It is noteworthy that the fifth book of the *GP* that is about St Aldhelm was usually missed in the circulation of the whole book in the Middle Ages. Of all the extant medieval manuscripts of the *GP*, only the manuscript A (Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 172, s. XII) has a complete fifth book, and only
If we really have to make a distinction between William’s works, I believe that the 
*Comm. Lam.* and *MBVM* are much more different from his historical and 
hagiographical productions. Therefore, I suggest that we do not need to take this idea 
of William’s ‘turn-away from history’ too seriously. Even if he were really making a 
claim here, the hagiographical works in our eyes were very probably historical in his 
mind, and such a statement may only represent his thoughts during a specific period, 
which would be set aside later for him to return to histories.

The prologue of the *Comm. Lam.* is not the only place where William claimed to 
turn away from history to other kinds of works. The *Abbreviatio Amalarii* also seems 
to show such an intention. At the beginning of its preface, William emphasised that he 
had been occupied in history previously, and implied that he was going to turn to other 
non-historical works, in which case it was the *De ecclesiasticis officiis* of Amalarius of 
Metz (d. c. 850). It seems to me that these two prologues, both of the *Comm. Lam.* 
and the *Abbreviatio Amalarii*, might be understood as William’s own statement of 
setting aside history, if not totally giving it up, and devoting himself to God during a 
specific period, in which he was sensitive to the division between historical and other 
 kinds of works, though he obviously returned to history later in his life. There are also 
two other connections between these two works. On the one hand, the prologues of 
these two works both mentioned that William was requested by some friends to 

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the manuscript B (London, British Library Cotton MS Claudius A. V, s. XII) contains an abbreviation of 
it, see *GP*, I, p. xxiii.

133 R. W. Pfaff, ‘The “Abbreviatio Amalarii” of William of Malmesbury’, *Recherches de théologie 
tua, Rodberte amice, voluntas.’ (Robert my friend, your good will has diverted us, who were occupied in 
the historical narratives, with a purpose.)
abbreviate certain texts for them – Robert for the *Abbreviatio Amalarii*, and an anonymous brother for the *Comm. Lam.*. On the other hand, the *Comm. Lam.* was based on the commentary of Paschasius Radbertus (d. 865), while Rabanus Maurus (d. 856), who was greatly criticised by William in the prologue of the *Abbreviatio Amalarii*, was a strong opponent of Paschasius in the Carolingian Eucharistic Controversy.

Therefore, I suggest that the writing time of the *Abbreviatio Amalarii* might be close to the *Comm. Lam.*. Moreover, William’s words, after his claim of turning to a ‘different kind of work’ in the *Comm. Lam.*, seemed to indicate that he had not written non-historical works before, which would be dedicated to God: hitherto he had lived for himself ‘enough and more than enough’, fully and continuously enjoying the charm of histories, and henceforth, he wanted to live for God and work on writings that would be totally different.

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135 *Comm. Lam.*, pro. 24-26, p. 4: ‘Paschasium Radbertum earum expositorem obiecisti, petens ut eum tibi abbreuiarem.’ (You put in my way Paschasius Radbertus, who did expound it. You asked me to abbreviate him for you.) Pfaff, ‘The “Abbreviatio Amalarii” of William of Malmesbury’, pp. 128-129: ‘Interea te ammonitum volo ut unum ex his qui de talibus disputaverunt fugiendum scias, Rabanum nomino, qui in libro De officiis ecclesiasticis dicit sacramenta altaris proficere ad saginam corporis ac per hoc corruptionem vel morbo vel etate vel secessu vel postremo morte obnoxia. Que de domini corpore dicere credere scribere quanti sit periculi vides; preterea libri eius per se parum conferunt scientiam, minimum accommodant doctrinam, de aliorum quippe laboribus aut ad litteram aut ad sententiam omnino usurpati.’ (Meanwhile, I wish to suggest you understanding that one man of these, which discussed such things, should be avoided; he is Rabanus, who says in the book, *De officiis ecclesiasticis*, that sacraments of the altar contribute to the nourishment of the body, and that through this they are liable to corruption by disease, time, separation or, finally, death. And you see of how much danger it can be to speak, believe, and write about the body of the Lord; besides, his books through themselves discuss too little knowledge, and adapt very little doctrine, having been usurped entirely about obviously others’ labour either for account and opinion.) This connection was noted by Pfaff, see R. W. Pfaff, ‘The “Abbreviatio Amalarii” of William of Malmesbury’, *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 47 (1980), p. 79, n. 8. For the Carolingian Eucharistic Controversy, see C. Chazelle, ‘Figure, Character, and the Glorified Body in the Carolingian Eucharistic Controversy’, *Traditio*, 47 (1992), pp. 1-36.

136 *Comm. Lam.*, pro. 7-12, p. 3: ‘Olim enim cum historias lusi, uiritidioribus annis rerumque laetitiae congruebat rerum iocunditas. Nunc aetas progressior et fortuna deterior aliiud dicendi genus expostulant. Id erit precipuum quod nos dehortari a seculo, quod ad Deum possit ascendere. Satis superque nobis usque modo uiximus; amodo factori nostro uiamus.’ (For in the past, when I amused myself with histories, the charm of the subject suited my greener years and happy lot. Now advancing age and worsening circumstances demand a different kind of work. The ideal will be something able to warn me
mentioned a previous period of ‘sloth’, the *Abbreviatio Amalarii* is more likely to have been written simultaneously with or after that work.\textsuperscript{137} In addition, the *terminus ante quem* might be 1135, around which time William’s *GR*, his most historical work, was revised. Thus, the *Abbreviatio Amalarii* was probably written between c. 1131 and 1135, preferably shortly after the writing time of the *Comm. Lam.*. If this deduction is right, then the ‘historical narratives’ with which he had been occupied before the *Abbreviatio Amalarii* might be the ongoing writing of the *Chronicles*, or the hagiographies, which might be regarded by him as a kind of histories, as we have discussed above.\textsuperscript{138}

One may even wonder whether the Robert in the prologue of the *Abbreviatio Amalarii* might be the same friend who asked William to abbreviate Paschasius’s commentary. All we know about this Robert is that he was probably a new monk who had professed shortly before, and whose Latin was not very good.\textsuperscript{139} From this point, I do not think that this Robert would be one of the three bishops who obtained the episcopacy in the 1130s listed by R. W. Pfaff.\textsuperscript{140} Although William referred to Robert

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\textsuperscript{137} *Comm. Lam.*, prol. 1-2, p. 3: ‘Sepe monuisti ut stilum diu feriatum otii uagina exuerem, et necessariis rebus scribendis applicarem.’ (You have often urged me to draw from the sheath of sloth a pen that has long been on holiday, and to employ it on writing things that are all-important.)

\textsuperscript{138} It is also not impossible that William may have his collection of Roman history (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Arch. Seld. B. 16, 1129) in mind which was made around 1129. One passage on fol. 137 suggests that it was written in 1129: ‘Sicilia Saracenis paruit usque abhinc xlii. annos, quando eam Normanni subiecerunt, anno Dominicae Incarnationis millesimo centesimo minus xiii.’ (Sicily was ruled by the Muslims until forty-two years ago, when the Normans conquered the place in the year of 1087.)

\textsuperscript{139} Pfaff, ‘The “Abbreviatio Amalarii” of William of Malmesbury’, p. 128: ‘Cuius cum materiam ex prima statim tituli fronte cognosceres, amplexus es occasionem qua rudimenta nove professionis animares, sed quia confestim animi tui alacritatem turbavit testimoniorum perplexitas et sermonum asperitas, rogasti ut cun abreviarem.’ (Since you recognised its subject at once from the first sight of the title, you esteemed the opportunity by which you might refresh the first lessons of your recent profession, but because immediately the confusion of testimonies and the roughness of words disturbed the eagerness of your mind, you asked me to abbreviate it.) Also see Hayward, ‘William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian’, p. 226.

\textsuperscript{140} The three bishops listed by Pfaff are (1) Robert, bishop of Bath from 1136 to 1166; (2) Robert Warelwast, bishop of Exeter from 1138 to 1155; (3) Robert de Béthune, bishop of Hereford between 1131
as ‘the most beloved man’, words are generally not as warm as when he was mentioning the anonymous friend in the prologue of the *Comm. Lam.* who seemed to enjoy a closer friendship and probably had known him for a longer time.\(^\text{141}\)

Both the abbreviated form of the *Comm. Lam.* and the *Abbreviatio Amalarii*, and the training of reading abilities for newly professed monks like Robert, obviously indicated William’s monastic occupation as the cantor.\(^\text{142}\) Since the eleventh century, the offices of cantor and *armarius* (librarian) in monasteries were usually combined, which means that the cantor also took charge of the books in the convent, though this duty could sometimes be separated from his central role concerning the liturgy and be entrusted to others.\(^\text{143}\) It is certain that William became the cantor of his convent no later than 1137, for Robert of Cricklade referred to him as ‘William monk and cantor

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\(^{142}\) Pfaff, ‘The “Abbreviatio Amalarii” of William of Malmesbury’, p. 128: ‘hominis dilectissimo’. For the warmer way of William’s mentioning of the anonymous friend in the *Comm. Lam.*, for example, see *Comm. Lam.*, prol. 33-35, p. 4: ‘amicitiae tuae morem gero, cui quo pos soluo plus debo. Avaro est tenator qui amico non reddid fenus uerborum cui se magnarum gratiarum recordatur obnoxium.’ (I am glad to obey you as a friend to whom I owe more the more I repay. More grasping than any miser is he who fails to pay a friend interest in words even though he is well aware how deeply he is in debt to him.)

\(^{143}\) The Fruttuaria customary between the 11th and 12th centuries gave many details on the duty of the cantor, including teaching the skill of reading and writing the abbreviations. See L. G. Spätling and P. Dinter, eds., *Consuetudines Fructuarienses-Sambiasianae*, Part II (Siegburg, 1987), p. 138: ‘Quicquid cantor pueris pertinet ad suam obedientiam, sine magistro licentia agit, ut est legere, cantare, scribere, notare, cartas radere, punicare, regulare, librum ligare, breuem de capitello scribere, quia hec omnia ipse debet eis monstrare.’ (Every cantor teaches obedience to the boys, so that they may not act without the permission of their master. They may obtain the abilities to read, sing, write, notate, scrape, polish and regulate parchments, bind books, and write abbreviations of chapters, because the cantor himself should teach them all these things.) Susan Boynton’s article also mentioned the descriptions of the duty of the cantor in some other customaries of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, though those are less detailed than the Fruttuaria customary. See S. Boynton, ‘Training for the Liturgy as a Form of Monastic Education’, in *Medieval Monastic Education*, ed. G. Ferzoco and C. Muesig (London and New York, 2000), pp. 9-11.

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141 Pfaff, ‘The “Abbreviatio Amalarii” of William of Malmesbury’, p. 128: ‘hominis dilectissimo’. For the warmer way of William’s mentioning of the anonymous friend in the *Comm. Lam.*, for example, see *Comm. Lam.*, prol. 33-35, p. 4: ‘amicitiae tuae morem gero, cui quo pos soluo plus debo. Avaro est tenator qui amico non reddid fenus uerborum cui se magnarum gratiarum recordatur obnoxium.’ (I am glad to obey you as a friend to whom I owe more the more I repay. More grasping than any miser is he who fails to pay a friend interest in words even though he is well aware how deeply he is in debt to him.)

142 The Fruttuaria customary between the 11th and 12th centuries gave many details on the duty of the cantor, including teaching the skill of reading and writing the abbreviations. See L. G. Spätling and P. Dinter, eds., *Consuetudines Fructuarienses-Sambiasianae*, Part II (Siegburg, 1987), p. 138: ‘Quicquid cantor pueris pertinet ad suam obedientiam, sine magistro licentia agit, ut est legere, cantare, scribere, notare, cartas radere, punicare, regulare, librum ligare, breuem de capitello scribere, quia hec omnia ipse debet eis monstrare.’ (Every cantor teaches obedience to the boys, so that they may not act without the permission of their master. They may obtain the abilities to read, sing, write, notate, scrape, polish and regulate parchments, bind books, and write abbreviations of chapters, because the cantor himself should teach them all these things.) Susan Boynton’s article also mentioned the descriptions of the duty of the cantor in some other customaries of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, though those are less detailed than the Fruttuaria customary. See S. Boynton, ‘Training for the Liturgy as a Form of Monastic Education’, in *Medieval Monastic Education*, ed. G. Ferzoco and C. Muesig (London and New York, 2000), pp. 9-11.

143 Boynton, ‘Training for the Liturgy as a Form of Monastic Education’, p. 9; Hayward, ‘William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian’, p. 222. Hayward pointed out that the decrees of Lanfranc of Canterbury showed that the care of books can be delegated to others if the cantor lacks the relevant skills. See D. Knowles and C. N. L. Brooke, eds. and trans., *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc* (Oxford, 2002), 86, p. 122: ‘De universis monasterii libris curam gerat, et eos in custodia sua habeat, si eius studii et scientiae sit, ut eorum custodia ei commendari debeat.’ (He takes care of all the books of the house, and has them in his keeping, if his interests and learning are such as to fit him for keeping them.)
of the church of Malmsbury’ in his *De connubio patriarche Iacob*, which is believed to have been written soon after March 1137. William did not mention himself as the cantor in his own books, but he clearly acknowledged that he was the librarian of his convent in the prologue of his *HN*, and he once depicted his own labours, following Abbot Godfrey’s example, to enlarge the collections of the monastery library in the *GP*. This means that William might have already been the librarian as early as 1125. Does this also mean that he became the cantor before 1125?

Paul Hayward’s interesting article on William’s identity as a ‘cantor-historian’ generally provides two possibilities: first, William’s monastic ideas deepened over time and finally led to his work as the cantor in his convent, which might take place in the 1130s; second, the contrast between his histories and monastic works only resulted from his concerns over the audience, context and purpose of the different writings, and he might have become the cantor before 1125. Hayward clearly favoured the latter, mainly for the reason of the existence of the *HN*, William’s third ‘pseudo-classical monograph’, in his late life, and that his *computus* collection, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. F. 3. 14, s. XII, was probably copied at an early stage when the scribes of his scriptorium were still ‘learning their craft’. Surely, this is a possibility, hence

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146 Hayward, ‘William of Malmsbury as a Cantor-Historian’, pp. 232, 238. Hayward’s article did not precisely point out the date, but only implied.
147 Hayward, ‘William of Malmsbury as a Cantor-Historian’, pp. 234-235. In fact, Hayward also argued that William’s claims about himself in his prefaces should be doubted, such as his saying of obtaining books with his ‘private funds’ (domesticis sumptibus) in the second prologue of the *GR*. For the reason that monks were not supposed to have private money, and by refuting the hypothesis of William’s entering the monastery at a rather late age, as a young adult, Hayward believed that this is a good example of William presenting himself as a ‘quasi-secular figure’ to cater to his worldly readers. In my opinion,
William might have become the cantor before he was 34 years old, if our hypothesis of his date of birth is correct. Nevertheless, can we combine the two theories of his personal evolution and his different concerns over the audience? He might apply various writing styles when it comes to different audiences, and meanwhile, the evolution of his thoughts and changing circumstances might also have influenced the focus of his writings and demanded different kinds of works during different periods.

The previous cantor in his convent might lack the necessary interests and skills, hence entrusting the duties of librarian to him. Since he was in charge of the newly established scriptorium of the monastery, he would be able to demand the copy of *computus* works, which not only interested him, but was also beneficial to the management of the liturgy in his monastery, or he was even asked by the cantor directly. At some later stage, the previous cantor died, and then William occupied the position, resulting in his lack of time to write extensive histories and his interests turning to religious works and producing abridgements, especially at the beginning of his tenure as cantor. Then after some years, the impulse to write histories returned, so he completed three books of *Chronicles* and worked on the *HN*, his last big historical work, late in his life.

however, that phrase may just mean the domestic money of the monastery rather than his own funds. Nevertheless, Hayward’s general argument of reconsidering William’s own statements about himself in his prefaces is correct and inspiring. For William’s mention of the ‘domesticis sumptibus’, see *GR*, I, ii. prol. 2, pp. 150-151: ‘Itaque, cum domesticis sumptibus nonnullos exterarum gentium historicos confassem, familiari oto querere perrexer si quid de nostra gente memorabile posteris posset reperiri.’ (So after I had spent the domestic funds on getting together a library of foreign historians, I proceeded in my leisure moments to inquire if anything could be discovered concerning England worth the attention of posterity.) Here I made a few changes to Thomson and Winterbottom’s translation, who translated ‘domesticis sumptibus’ to ‘my own money’ as well. The early date of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. F. 3. 14, s. XII, was firstly argued by Thomson, see Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 84-85.

148 There is an increasing concern over *computus* among Anglo-Norman historians in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, see A. Lawrence-Mathers, ‘Computus and Chronology in Anglo-Norman England’, in *Writing History in the Anglo-Norman World: Manuscripts, Makers and Readers, c. 1066 - c. 1250*, ed. L. Cleaver and A. Worm (York, 2018), pp. 53-68.
This hypothesis may bring two advantages to understanding William’s life and works. On the one hand, it may provide the evolution pattern of his monastic career, rather than make him occupy the highest position that he achieved in his life when he was still in the early stage of his writings. He might have become the subarmarius before 1125, who was supervised by the cantor, but was entrusted to carry the full duties of librarian, if cantor and armarius were still combined nominally in his convent.

Perhaps at the end of 1120s or in the early 1130s, when he was around 39 years old, he was raised to the position of cantor, and his abilities and skills allowed him to carry both the duties of caring the liturgy and managing book-related issues in an efficient manner. The occupation of cantor may have further increased his popularity and his influence among his brothers, and thus he was able to represent his convent on some important occasions, such as the translation of St Caradoc at St David’s probably in mid-1130s, and two councils at Winchester in 1139 and 1141 respectively.¹⁴⁹ He reached the peak of his monastic career in around 1140, when he gave up the abbacy

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¹⁴⁹ William was mentioned in the Life of St Caradoc as present for the translation at St David’s, see NLA, i., p. 176: ‘Cuius digitum cum Willelmus Malmesburyensis, monachus et historiographus insignis, deuotionis gratia abscidere et secum forte auferre temptaret; sanctus, quasi sentiens membrorum abscisionem, collectis in volam digitis et simul in palmam replicatis, manum manica subtraxit. Quo viso, perterritus monachus a sancto humiliter veniam postulauit.’ (whose finger, at that time William of Malmesbury, monk and famous historian, broke with goodwill of devotion, and tried to carry with him by chance; the saint, as though feeling the break of his limbs, with the fingers having been clenched into a fist and then unrolled back to a palm, took away his hand into sleeves. After seeing this, the terrified monk humbly begged pardon from the saint.) The text said that this translation took place ‘after many years’ (post multos vero annos) of Caradoc’s burial, which was in 1124, and the MBVM mentioned a miracle involving Guy of Lescar heard from an archdeacon called Elias, who was probably Elias archdeacon of Brecon in the diocese of St David’s, which was likely to be known by William in or after 1135-1136. Hence William might meet the Elias during the translation of St Caradoc, which probably took place in mid-1130s. See MBVM, 12, p. 49, n. 22. William’s recall of the content of Pope Innocent’s letter which had been read at the opening of the Winchester council in 1139 suggested his presence, see HN, ii. 25, pp. 50-51: ‘si bene memini’ (if I remember rightly). William also clearly indicated his participation in the council in 1141, see HN, iii. 46, pp. 90-91: ‘Cuius concilii actioni quia interfui, integram rerum ueritatem posteris non negabo; egregie quippe memini.’ (As I took part in the proceedings of the council, I will not deny posterity the whole truth of what occurred, for my memory is very clear.)
more than once.\textsuperscript{150} On the other hand, this hypothesis may explain why William made
the statement of turning away from history to other works in around 1131, as shown by
the prologues of the \textit{Comm. Lam.} and the \textit{Abbreviatio Amalarii}. The demands of his
new occupation as the cantor and changing circumstances, namely Henry I’s
confirmation of Bishop Roger’s control of the monastery, made him give up his
historical writing temporarily and turn to the monastic education of his fellow monks
with the compilation of abbreviations of religious works.

Whether William became the cantor before 1125 or in c. 1130, the \textit{Comm. Lam.}
and the \textit{Abbreviatio Amalarii} showed the focus of his writing turning away from history
to religious works or the abridgement of works that were more closely related to the
core duty of his occupation as the cantor, which was to take care of the liturgy and
provide education for monks. From this perspective, William’s \textit{PH} might have also
been compiled during this period. It consists of many selections of works of both pagan
and Christian authors. At the beginning of the first book, William addressed a friend
called Guthlac, probably a monk in his convent who had asked his advice on which
pagan books in the monastery library he should read to ‘establish a good life’.\textsuperscript{151}
To him, William recommended some of Cicero’s books, all of Seneca’s works except

\textsuperscript{150} William of Malmesbury, \textit{Itinerarium}, in \textit{Joannis Lelandi Antiquarii De Rebus Britannicis
Collectanea}, ed. T. Hearne (London, 1774), iii, p. 272: ‘Ingenuarum mentium (nisi me nimius mei amor
fallit) experimento, ut socio nostro cederemus in abbatia suscipienda, qua levi negotio plus quam semel
potiri potuissemus.’ (Under the experience of the ingenuous thinking (unless the excessive self-love
deceives me), I used to give place to my colleague in accepting the abbacy, which I had been able to
easily obtain more than once.) There are generally two opportunities for William to obtain the abbacy,
both in 1140, when John and Peter Moraunt were elected as abbots successively. See \textit{JW}, iii, pp. 278-
Houses}, p. 55.

\textsuperscript{151} \textit{PH}, i, 1-3, p. 37: ‘Amico suo Guthlaco Willelmus. Quia me consulendum putasti quinam libri
gentilium qui apud nos sunt tibi ad bone uite institutum legendi essent, breuiter respondeo.’ (William to
his friend Guthlac. Because you asked my advice about which pagan books in our collection you should
read to establish a good life, I answer briefly.)
Apotheosin de nece Claudii and De causis, and Hermes Trimegistus, who was praised by St Augustine of Hippo in his De ciuitate dei and Contra quinque haereses, while he emphasised that the rest were not suitable for his profession, such as Cicero’s Inuectiua, Philippicae, Rhetorica, and Academica.\(^{152}\) It is even more interesting that William also compiled extracts of writings by Christian authors into one volume and ruled out the works of historians deliberately, both of which were not required by Guthlac.\(^{153}\) It seems to me that William was taking this opportunity not only to answer Guthlac’s question, but also to address all the fellow monks in his convent about what they should or should not read. The deliberate absence of historical works might just indicate his

\(^{152}\) \textit{PH}, i. 3-14, p. 37: ‘Hermes Trimegistus, quem beatus Augustine in libris De ciuitate dei et in sermone Contra quinque haereses predicat, ad persuadendum hominibus unius dei cultum omni nitiur instantia, que est prima sapientia, nisi quod more gentilium quosdam deos uocat, quos tamen a summum deo factos non negat. Tullius, in libris De senectute et amicitia et officiis, de uirtutibus et uitiis utiliter disputat et fortasse in aliquis aliis, sed ego de illis solis loquor quorum possessione glorior. Libri Senecæ omnes preter Apotheosin de nece Claudii, et De causis, quot pene uerbis tot commodis referti sunt. Hos ergo bene uite proposito congruos lege. Reliqui minus professioni conueniunt tue. Nam aut furores intonant, ut Tullius in Inuectiuis et Philippicis, aut armant eloquium, ut idem in Rethoricis, aut questiones inaneventilant, ut idem in omnibus Achademicis.’ (Hermes Trimegistus, whom St Augustine praises in his books, \textit{De ciuitate dei}, and in the sermon, \textit{Contra quinque haereses}, strives to convince people of the worship of one God with every perseverance, which is the first kind of wisdom, save for the fact that he calls upon certain gods in the pagan custom, whom he believes to be made by the highest god. Cicero in his books, \textit{De senectute}, \textit{De amicitia}, and \textit{De officiis}, and perhaps in some other books, discusses virtues and sins profitably, but I mention those books alone, for I am proud that they are in our possession. All Seneca’s books except \textit{Apotheosin de nece Claudii} and \textit{De causis}, are almost as full of profit as they are of words: these therefore you should read, as agreeable to the purpose of right living. The others are less suitable to your profession, for they either thunder with rages, as does Cicero in his \textit{Inuectiua} and \textit{Philippicae}, or equip your utterance with eloquence, as he does in his \textit{Rhetorica}, or thresh out empty questions, as he does throughout his \textit{Academica}.) Part of the translation here comes from Farmer, ‘William of Malmesbury’s Life and Works’, p. 48.

\(^{153}\) \textit{PH}, i. 14-22, p. 37: ‘Veruntamen ne quibusdam relationibus quas gentiles suis inserunt scriptis fraudareris non solum de illis sed et de Christianis quedam collegi, et in uno volumnem compegi, que essent et lectioni iocunda et memorie fructuosa. Hoc ideo ut cum ex illis quos nominauit sententiaram copia lassatus fueris in istis reclineris. Illud te intelligere par est, neminem me de historicis uellicasse, quorum omnis ad hoc laborat intentio ut sua insigniant scripta memoriai aliquo dicto uel facto. Illios modo deflorare libuit, qui furtim et transeuntur hec suis indiderunt libris.’ (Still, lest you should be deprived of certain narratives which the heathens introduce into their writings, I have collected, not out of them only, but also out of Christian books, and compressed into a volume, matter which should be pleasant to read and profitable to remember, to this end, that when you are wearied of the multitude of precepts of the writers I have named, you may take your ease in the others. It is right that you should understand that I have not laid a finger on any of the historical writers. The whole aim of their work is to ennoble their writings with memorable sayings and doings. I have only cared to cull from those who have put such matter into their books by stealth, and in passing.)
self-restriction on histories. Therefore, it might have been written between c. 1131 and 1135, a period when he was focusing on his duties as the cantor and had decided to put histories aside.

Similar to the *PH*, William’s *Defloratio Gregorii*, a work extracted from the writings of Gregory the Great, may be another work resulting from his educational concerns for his fellow monks. William indicated clearly the educational function of this text in its preface:

> Dominis suis et fratribus Meldunensis cenobii monachis Willelmus fide frater, professione consuruus. Ad instructionem communem deflorationes ex libris precellentissimi pape Gregorii in hoc uolumine compegi, ea potissimum intentione ut si quis nostrum uel ualetudine uel occupatione uel etiam desidia impediente multis legendis non uacat, hic impromptu inueniat, quibus et animam pascat et uitam componat.

[To our lords and brothers, the monks of the monastery of Malmesbury, William your brother in faith, a fellow-servant by profession. For general instruction I have compiled in this book flowers from the books of the most excellent pope, Gregory, especially with the intention that if any of our own should be without the capacity for much reading – infirmity, business, or furthermore, slackness being an obstacle – he may readily find here that with which he may feed his soul and compose his life.]

Therefore, the *Defloratio Gregorii* might be another work which resulted from William’s occupation as cantor, and was written during the period when he changed his writing focus. The *terminus ante quem* of this work should be 1137, for it was also

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mentioned by Robert of Cricklade in his *De connubio patriarche Iacob*.\(^{155}\) Hence it might have been finished between c. 1131 and 1137.

The date of William’s another religious work, the *MBVM*, is rather more certain. As Thomson and Winterbottom noticed, one miracle in the *MBVM* regarding the captivity of Guy, bishop of Lescar, by Muslims in 1134 would probably have been known to William in or after 1135-36.\(^{156}\) In addition, a copy of the *MBVM* was preserved at the church of Cirencester when Robert of Cricklade was writing his *De connubio patriarche Iacob*.\(^{157}\) Therefore, it was probably completed between c. 1135 and 1137. During the process of composing the *MBVM*, William became ill, hence abandoning his writing for a while before he wrote the prologue of the second book.\(^{158}\)

Probably in late 1140 or early 1141, William finished the *Itinerarium* of the previous Abbot John to Rome, where he died, on the basis of the oral account provided by the newly elected Abbot Peter.\(^{159}\) This book is now lost, but John Leland copied several phrases from its prologue, in which William said that he was working hard at that time on the *HN*, his last work that covered the history from 1126 to 1142.\(^{160}\) Thus,

\(^{155}\) Robert of Cricklade, *De connubio patriarche Iacob*, ii. 22, in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 725, s. XII, fol. 129v, quoted from Hunt, *English Learning in the Late Twelfth Century*, pp. 31-32: ‘Quid dicam super deflorationibus eius ex opusculis beatissimi pape Gregorii?’ (What shall I say of his excerpts from the works of the most blessed pope Gregory?)

\(^{156}\) *MBVM*, pp. xvi, 45-49. For the Battle of Fraga and the capture of Bishop Guy, see B. F. Reilly, *The Contest of Christian and Muslim Spain, 1031-1157* (Boston, 1992), p. 173.

\(^{157}\) Robert of Cricklade, *De connubio patriarche Iacob*, ii. 22, in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 725, s. XII, fol. 129v, quoted from Hunt, *English Learning in the Late Twelfth Century*, pp. 31-32: ‘Legi et libellum eius de miraculis beatisimsi dei genitricis et perpetue uirginis Marie, qui et in nostra ecclesia habetur.’ (I have also read his little book on the miracles of the blessed virgin Mary, which is also in our church.)

\(^{158}\) *MBVM*, p. 70.

\(^{159}\) John was elected as abbot of Malmesbury in early 1140, and died in August 1140, see *JW*, iii, pp. 278-280; *GS*, 46, p. 98; *HN*, ii, 35, p. 70. Peter became the new abbot late that year, see *JW*, iii, p. 292.

\(^{160}\) William of Malmesbury, *Itinerarium*, in *Joannis Lelandi Antiquarii De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, iii, p. 272: ‘Jam vero in Novella Historia diligentem ad hoc nostra vigilavit oratio.’ (Now in fact, our narrative till now has been devoted to the *Historia Novella.*)
as Edmund King has suggested, William may have commenced the *HN* in late 1140.\(^{161}\)

King also argued that the first two books of the *HN* were composed together between late 1140 and early 1141, while the third book was written between 1142 and 1143, which is ‘less polished than the previous two’.\(^{162}\) This final work was never finished, since at the end William failed to provide more information on Empress Matilda’s escape from the siege of Oxford, which was shortly before Christmas 1142.\(^{163}\) From this hint, we can conclude that William died in early 1143.

In summary, our hypothesis of William’s date of birth in c. 1091 has worked. Although at first sight, our hypothesis does not seem to be greatly different from Thomson’s suggestion, who believed that he was born in c. 1090, preferably 1085-1090, the supporting arguments have been changed. There is no need to translate the ‘quadragenarius’ to ‘in my forties’ rather than ‘forty’, and all his main works can fit into this new pattern. Furthermore, from the discussion of the dates of his various works, it can be seen that William’s writing focus changed over time, and we can even shed some light on the experience of his monastic career. Therefore, we have suggested the chronology of his life and works as is shown below. From this evidence, we may start to recover his itinerary in the next two chapters.

| Birth                  | c. 1091, probably late 1091 |

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\(^{161}\) *HN*, p. xxxi.

\(^{162}\) *HN*, pp. xxix-xxxiii.

\(^{163}\) *HN*, iii. 79, pp. 132-133: ‘Quae tamen latius persequi fert animus si umquam, dante Deo, ab his qui interfueruere ueritatem accepero.’ (I am, however, disposed to go into this more thoroughly if ever by the gift of God I learn the truth from those who were present.) The time of the Empress’s escape was given by Henry of Huntingdon, see *HH*, x. 20, p. 742.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Liber Pontificalis</strong></th>
<th>c. 1119</th>
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<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>before 1125 – c. 1143 (perhaps <em>subarmarius</em> before c. 1130)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GR and GP</strong></td>
<td>1125 [<em>GR</em>: TA (before early 1126) → CB (after Feb. 1134); <em>GP</em>: A (main text, 1125) → β (1126-1129) → E (1130-1140) → G (1140-1143) → A (corrections until death) → O (after 1143)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chronicles</strong></td>
<td>c. 1126 – 1143 (three books finished by 1140)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VW</strong></td>
<td>c. 1126</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VP, VB, VI</strong></td>
<td>c. 1127 – 1129</td>
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| **VD, AG**             | c. 1129 – 1130 [*VD* i. → *AG* (main text) → *VD* ii. (before Nov. 1129) → *AG* prol.]
| **Cantor**             | before 1125 or in c. 1130 |
| **Comm. Lam.**         | c. 1131 |
| **Abbreviatio Amalarii**| c. 1131 – 1135 |
| **PH**                 | c. 1131 – 1135 |
| **Defloratio Gregorii**| c. 1131 – 1137 |
| **MBVM**               | c. 1135 – 1137 |
| **Itinerarium**        | c. 1140 |
| **HN**                 | c. 1140 – 1143 |
| **Death**              | 1143 |
Chapter Two

Places, Time and Evidence for William of Malmesbury’s Itinerary

In the last chapter, we have rebuilt a reliable and detailed chronology of William of Malmesbury’s life and works, and now in this chapter, by comparing the information in his various works and versions, we will be able to find the places and evidence that might be connected to his itinerary. The chronological order of his works may give us opportunities to determine the possible dates of his probable visits to different places. A great part of this chapter will build on Rodney Thomson and Michael Winterbottom’s valuable commentary on the *GP*, especially their list of places known to have been visited by William, but I will also clearly show other places ignored by them.\(^{164}\) Even for the places in their list, I will try to provide more detailed evidence, and use my chronology to deduce the timing of William’s possible visits. The particular vividness of details, the strong expression of personal feelings, his access to written materials persevered at the place, the likely eyewitness or oral materials without any origin of written records before his time, and the accumulation of evidence itself, usually point to a strong possibility of his visits. Also, his special mention of hospitality of local houses very likely reflects his stop at those communities during his travels. These are the basic principles in identifying the possible evidence.

This chapter will mainly focus on William’s own works and the interpretation of his own words. Therefore, our reconstruction of his itinerary at the end of this chapter will only be preliminary, and more work needs to be done later, such as the correlations and

\(^{164}\) For Thomson and Winterbottom’s list and the possible evidence pointed out by them, see *GP*, II, xli-xliii.
contradictions that can be found in the evidence. In this chapter, I will present the places, time and evidence generally following William’s order of the bishoprics of the old English kingdoms in his GP. For those places already included in Thomson and Winterbottom’s list, I will use italics, whereas the additions that I have made to their list are in bold font.

1. The Old Kingdom of Kent

(1) Canterbury (1109-1118, 1122-1125, 1126-1129, 1130-1135, p. 1140) [p. = after]

Canterbury is certainly a place that William had visited. In the main text of manuscript A of the GP, there are several hints that may indicate his visit to Christ Church before 1125: (a) he heard a miracle from a monk there about St Dunstan saving a thief, which he said was not in any writings; \(^{165}\) (b) he related three unique stories of St Anselm which were surely told to him by Eadmer; \(^{166}\) (c) he praised the monks there very

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\(^{165}\) GP, 1, i. 19. 12, pp. 40-41: ‘Quorum illud scriptum non uidi quod nuper quodam aeccliae Christi monacho referente audiui.’ (One of these I have not seen in writing, though I recently heard it narrated by a monk of Christ Church.)

\(^{166}\) GP, 1, i. 65. 2-3, pp. 194-197: ‘Adeo peccatorum extorris, ut uiro ueracissimo michique notissimo dixerit numquam se postquam monachus fuisset ita stimulis irae actum ut alciui impingeret conuitium, nisi semel tantum in hoc excidisse; numquam nisi unum dictum emisisse cuius memoria conscientiam exulcerasset. Super caenam quondam recordatus crudum se allec comedisse, percusso pectore peccatum ingemuit, quod crudam carnem contra legem absumpsisset. Edmero uero, qui assideret, dicenti quod sal cruditatem allecis excoxisset, ‘Sanasti me,’ inquit ‘ne peccati torquerer memoria.’ Obedientiae pertinax custos, cum archiepiscopus liberae potentatis esset, rogavit papam Urbanum ut sibi aliquem proponeret cuius iussi tanti fatiebat ut cum eum cubili locasset, non solum sine eius preceptio non surgeret, sed nec latus inuerteret.’ (So free was he from sin that he told a man I know well, a completely truthful person, that he had never since becoming a monk been angry enough to abuse anyone, except on a single occasion, and had only said one thing the memory of which lay heavily on his conscience. One day at dinner, recalling that he had once eaten raw herring, he beat his breast and let out a groan because he had sinned in consuming raw flesh against the law. When Eadmer, who sat next to him, said that the salt had removed the rawness from the fish, he said: ‘You have cured me of being tormented by the memory of a sin.’ He sedulously maintained his obedience; even when he was archbishop and free to act as he liked, he asked Pope Urban to nominate someone by whose orders he could regulate his life. The pope put up Eadmer, and Anselm so respected his commands that when Eadmer had put him to bed he would not get up without being told to, or even turn over.)
warmly, and mentioned their friendliness to visitors;\textsuperscript{167} (d) he probably saw Canterbury Cathedral with his own eyes.\textsuperscript{168} In addition, Thomson and Winterbottom have suggested that William had known the Canterbury archive well by examining the sources that he may have used in the \textit{GP}, including two documents relating to the councils at Winchester and Windsor in 1072, the notorious Canterbury forgeries, and Lanfranc’s obit, all of which had been accessed by him before 1125.\textsuperscript{169} In fact,

\begin{itemize}
\item[167] \textit{GP}, I, i. 44, 3, pp. 104-105: ‘Sunt hodie ampliori quam uspiam Angliae, ut decet, numero, religione Cluniacensibus non imparae. Plurimus inest eis adhuc Lanfrancus, multa uiri memoria, ingens in Deum deuotio, pulcra in aduenientes affabilitas.’ (They are today, as is only right, more numerous in Canterbury than anywhere else in England, and rank with the Cluniacs for their practice of religion. Lanfranc still means much to them, and they often think of him. Great is their devotion to God, beautiful their friendliness to visitors.)
\item[168] He provided many details of the church, see \textit{GP}, I, i. 72, 16, pp. 220-221: ‘Cantiae deiectam priorem partem ecclesiae, quam Lanfrancus aedificauerat, adeo splendide reerexit ut nichil tale possit in Anglia uideri in uitrearum fenestrarum luce, in marmorei pauimenti nit ore, in diuersicoloribus picturis.’ (At Canterbury he rebuilt the east end of the church, originally the work of Lanfranc, but now collapsed, so nobly that nothing like it is to be seen in England, what with the light that pours though its glass windows, the gleaming marble pavements, and the pictures of many colours.) William deleted the following words in the G version: ‘quae mirantes oculos trahunt ad fastigia lacunaris’ (which attract the wondering eye to look up to the ceiling). It is difficult to say that this deletion resulted from a new visit. For the construction of this new east arm, see E. Fernie, \textit{The Architecture of Norman England} (Oxford, 2000), pp. 140-142; R. Willis, \textit{The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral} (Richmond, 2006 [1845]), pp. 71-108.
\item[169] Thomson and Winterbottom suggested that the two documents in c. 26-27 derived from the manuscript, British Library, Cotton MS Cleopatra E I, s. XII\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{167}}, the Canterbury forgeries in c. 30-39 originated from Eadmer but with corrections from Eadmer’s own source, and c. 43-44 was based on Lanfranc’s obit, probably the copy in the manuscript, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius C VI, s. XI\textsuperscript{med.-XVI\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{167}}, fol. 173}. See \textit{GP}, II, pp. xxxiv, 40-41, 52; Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, p. 132.
\end{itemize}

They also mentioned that the story of the death of St Cuthbert archbishop of Canterbury (d. 760) in c. 7. 1 originated from a lost cartulary from Christ Church or the tradition it reflects, see \textit{GP}, II, pp. 22-23. In my opinion, William might have known the story roughly from other relevant oral or written sources rather than the cartulary itself before 1125, since it gave a much more elaborate story and clearly stated that St Cuthbert was buried in the church of St John the Baptist that had been built by himself, which was a fact that William only learnt at the time near his death. There is a modern edition of the lost cartulary by Robin Fleming. For the relevant content in this lost cartulary, see R. Fleming, ‘Christ Church Canterbury’s Anglo-Norman Cartulary’, in \textit{Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Proceedings of the Borchard Conference on Anglo-Norman History, 1995}, ed. C. W. Hollister (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 114-115, especially the statement of Cuthbert’s burial place: ‘Construxit etiam basilicam iuxta ecclesiam Christi quam in honore beati Iohannis Baptiste consecravit, ubi ipse et successores sui honorifice sepelirentur.’ (He also built a basilica next to the Church of Christ, which he consecrated in honour of St John the Baptist, where he and his successors were buried with honour.)

Sir Richard William Southern believed that William’s collection of Anselm’s letters in the manuscript, Lambeth Palace, MS 224, s. XII-XIV, derived directly from the Canterbury archive. See R. W. Southern, \textit{Saint Anselm and his Biographer: a Study of Monastic Life and Thought, 1059-c. 1130} (Cambridge, 1963), p. 223, n. 1; idem, \textit{Saint Anselm: a Portrait in a Landscape} (Cambridge, 1990), p. 471. His argument has been refuted by Samu Niskanen and Richard Sharpe, both of whom argued that a visit to Canterbury was not necessary to explain this collection, for it seemed to derive from Eadmer’s \textit{Historia Novorum} and other two existing letter collections: the letters in the manuscripts, British Library, Royal MS 5 F IX, s. XII, and British Library, Cotton MS Nero A VII, s. XI-XVI, or a copy of the latter.
William’s use of different versions of Eadmer’s *Historia Novorum* and *Vita Anselmi* in the *GR* and *GP* might indicate his two visits to Canterbury before 1125: one was between 1109 and 1118, from the finishing time of the first versions of Eadmer’s works to the time when William started the writing of his *GR*; the other was between 1122 and 1125, after Eadmer’s revisions of the two texts and before the finishing time of early versions of the *GR* and *GP*.\textsuperscript{170} We cannot be sure whether these two visits did exist, since it is also possible that William received the various versions of Eadmer’s works resulting from the circulation of texts alone, but there surely existed at least one visit to Christ Church before 1125 for him to get the oral and eye-witnessing information and the written materials in its archive.

In the *AG*, he also seems to have seen a copy of B.’s *Life of St Dunstan* at the monastery of St Augustine’s, which means that he had been there before 1129.\textsuperscript{171} This might be the result of his visit to Canterbury before 1125, for he might have been busy with writing hagiography at Worcester and Glastonbury, and also doing the first

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\textsuperscript{170} Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 72-73, 132. Thomson suggested the first visit might be between 1109 and c. 1115, but I tend to use the year of Queen Matilda’s death, 1118, as the *terminus ad quem*, because only by that time, we can be more certain that the writing of the *GR* had been started. The dedication letter to Empress Matilda suggested that William had started the *GR* or even had finished a small part before Queen Matilda’s death. See *GR*, I, Ep. ii. 6, pp. 8-9: ‘Sed uix imperatis institeramus cum illum repentem Fortuna, profectibus Angliae inuidens, immortalitatis, ut speramus, sedibus dedicauit.’ (Scarcely however had we started on our task when on a sudden Fortune, grudging the success achieved by England, removed her, as we trust, to the realm of immortality.)

\textsuperscript{171} *AG*, 1, pp. 44-47: ‘Quorum unus Britonum historiographus, prout apud sanctum Edmundum itemque apud sanctum Angustinum Anglorum apostolum uidit, ita exorsus est.’ (In the church of St Edmund and also in the church of St Augustine, the apostle of the English, we have seen a work by one of the latter, an historian of the Britons, which begins thus…) There was a version of the B.’s *Life* at St Augustine’s, which is now the manuscript, British Library, Cotton MS Cleopatra B XIII, s. XI-XIV, fos. 59r-90v, see W. Stubbs, ed., *Memorials of Saint Dunstan Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1874), pp. xxvii-xxix.
redaction of his *GR* and *GP* back at his own monastery between 1126 and 1129, but this cannot exclude the possibility of another visit during this period.

There is an interesting change between the versions of the *GP* that we need to mention here. As Thomson and Winterbottom have noticed, all the versions up to *G* referred to St Cuthbert (d. 760), archbishop of Canterbury, as buried in the Cathedral church, but in his latest correction William decided that he was in fact resting in the church of St John the Baptist.\textsuperscript{172} Although it is likely that William knew this from a written source that reached his hands or from letters from his readers at Canterbury, there is still a strong possibility that he had been to Canterbury again after 1140 and before his death, so that he could have received this piece of information, probably by examining the lost cartulary of Christ Church.\textsuperscript{173}

Another change between William’s different works that might be related to St Augustine’s is also worthy of attention. In Chapter 19 of the *C* version of the *GR*, William copied many phrases from the *AG*, but changed one from ‘apud sanctum Edmundum’ (at St Edmund’s) to ‘in nonnullis locis’ (in several places), when he was meaning the discovery of some words in B.’s *Life of St Dunstan*.\textsuperscript{174} John Scott suggested that William probably discovered other copies of B.’s *Life* after leaving

\textsuperscript{172} *GP*, I, i. 7. 1, pp. 18-19: ‘Ita dum interius cessante tumultu alieni arcerentur aditu, cadauer presulis aeclesiae \textsuperscript{[up to G]} principalis / \textsuperscript{[latest]} sancti Iohannis Baptiste, quam iuxta principalem ecclesiam fecerat}, sinibus illatum, nec ab alteris, qui se ingenio circumscripitos uiderent, repetitum.’ (All was quiet within, and outsiders were barred entry, when the bishop’s body was brought into the bosom of \textsuperscript{[up to G]} the main church / \textsuperscript{[latest]} the church of St John the Baptist, which he had built next to the main church), and it was not claimed back by the other party when they saw themselves so neatly double-crossed.)

\textsuperscript{173} For the lost cartulary of Christ Church, see above, p. 59, n. 169.

\textsuperscript{174} *AG*, 2, p. 50; *GR*, I, i. 19. 4, Appendix I: Additions of B and C, pp. 802-803. The source of William’s quotation can be found in B.’s *Life*, see Stubbs, ed., *Memorials*, p. 7.
Glastonbury so that he made such a change in his revision of the *GR*.\(^{175}\) We have, however, already mentioned above that he had seen B.’s *Life* at St Augustine’s before the making of the *AG*, so it is possible that he may just have St Augustine’s in mind when he was revising the *GR*. Nevertheless, he might still have been to St Augustine’s during this period, so that he could make sure that there were truly those words in the version of B.’s *Life* at that place.\(^{176}\) His memory of that text from the time before 1125 might have failed him and he might have not made enough notes, so he only changed the words from his *AG* after he was able to inquire into it again. If this is true, then he may have been to Canterbury once more, probably between 1130 and 1135.

To sum up, William may have been to Canterbury several times. He had certainly been to Christ Church at least once before 1125 in order to collect information for his *GR* and *GP*, probably twice (1109-1118, 1122-1125). He had also been to the monastery of St Augustine’s before 1129, which might have occurred both before and after 1125. Between 1130 and 1135, he might have been there again, though this is a limited possibility. It is also very likely that he visited Christ Church at Canterbury one more time after 1140.

(2) *Rochester (a. 1125, 1126-1140) [a. = before]*

In the main text of manuscript A of the *GP*, William said that he used ‘charter evidence’ to reconstruct the sequence of bishops of Rochester, which may indicate that he had

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\(^{175}\) *AG*, n. 20, p. 187.

\(^{176}\) There is another possibility which I will discuss below, when it comes to Arras (54).
been there before 1125. It is also interesting to note that a unique supplement describing Rochester’s topography appeared after the β version, and this might mean that he once went there between 1126 and 1140, though he could also have just added it from memory.178

(3) **Dover** (a. 1125)

The main text of manuscript A of the *GP* provides a detailed topography of Dover before narrating Aldhelm’s miracle involving the sailors, which is not included in the previous *Life of Aldhelm* written by Faricius of Abingdon.179 William’s particular mention of the distance from Canterbury to Dover seems close to the modern calculation.180 He might have been there before 1125.

2. **The Old Kingdom of the East Saxons**

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177 *GP*, I, i. 72. 10, pp. 218-219: ‘ceterorum nomina in cartulis notata subitiam’ (the rest I add from charter evidence).

178 The supplement can be seen in *GP*, I, i. 72. 1, pp. 214-215: ‘Rofa est oppidum situ nimium angustum, sed, quia in edito locatum fluuiio uiolentissimo alluitur, hostibus sine periculo non accessibile.’ (Rochester is a town on a very restricted site, but being on a hill and washed by a rushing river it cannot safely be approached by an enemy.)

179 *GP*, I, v. 224. 1-2, pp. 564-565: ‘Vnde factum est ut his diebus Doroberniam pergeret, quod est litus Cantuariae ad duodecim milia proximum, audiens illic naues appu lisse. Portus ibi, ut plerique maritimorum locorum, inquietus, quoniam angustus. Citissimus eo a Morinis transitus paucorum admodum milium trafictu. Quo fit ut in illius spatii angustia inter se recurrentes et illidentes fluctus minima occasione pelagus exasperent, ibique maxime incurrit periculum, ubi sperabatur periculorum effugium. Iam uero in statione nauibus receptis tutissima quauis tempestate quies.’ (So it was that during this period Aldhelm, learning that ships had put in there, went to Dover, which is twelve miles from Canterbury and the nearest place on the coast. Its port, like many spots on the sea, is a hive of activity, because of its limited size; it is to here that one can make the swiftest passage from Calais, a very few miles away. As a result, in that confined strait, the waves collide and clash, and it takes little for them to make the sea rough: one is especially at risk just where one was hoping to have escaped all danger. But once ships are in harbour, they are safe and sound whatever the weather.) Faricius’s *Life* did not include any description of Dover’s topography when he was narrating the miracle, see Chapter 11 in the modern edition in M. Winterbottom, ‘An Edition of Faricius, *Vita S. Aldhelm*’, *The Journal of Medieval Latin*, 15 (2005), pp. 108-109.

180 William said that it is twelve miles from Canterbury, see the previous reference. According to Thomson and Winterbottom, the distance is about fifteen modern miles, see *GP*, II, p. 278.
(4) London (a. 1125, 1126-1129)

Both in early versions of the GR and in the main text of manuscript A of the GP, William emphasised the new style of the Church at Westminster built by Edward the Confessor, and he praised the beauty of St Paul’s church buildings, which may indicate his visit before 1125. William also made an addition of the phrase ‘iuxta fenestram criptae’ (near the window of the crypt) since the β version when he was referring to the burial place of Theodred bishop of London (d. c. 952) in his GP, which might result from his memory of the early visit. Another possibility, as Thomson and Winterbottom suggested, is that he had visited London in the meantime, namely between 1126 and 1129.

3. The Old Kingdom of the East Angles

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181 For William’s mention of the new style of the Westminster Church, see GR, I, ii. 228. 6, pp. 418-419: ‘quam ipse illo compositionis genere primus in Anglia edificauerat quod nunc pene euncti sumptuosissimae emulantur expensis’ (which he himself [i. e. Edward the Confessor] had built, using for the first time in England the style which almost everyone now tries to rival at great expense); GP, I, ii. 73. 5, pp. 224-225: ‘qui ampliori conuentu monachorum ibidem adunato ecclesiae aedificationis genere nouo fecit’ (who [i. e. Edward] gathered there a larger body of monks and built a church in a new style). According to Thomson and Winterbottom, William’s remarks on the Westminster Church were ‘doubtless prompted’ by the description of Vita Ædwardi, see GR, II, p. 214; F. Barlow, ed. and trans., The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster (Oxford, 1992 [1962]), pp. 68-71. The description of the church in the Vita Ædwardi is in detail, but William’s remark of the ‘new style’ is unique. For his praise of St Paul’s church buildings, see GP, I, ii. 73. 19, pp. 230-231: ‘Tanta est decoris magnificentiae ut merito inter preclara numeretur edilitia. Tanta criptae laxitas, tanta superiores aedis capacitas, ut quampilbet confertae multitudini videatur posse sufficere.’ (It is so splendidly beautiful that it deserves to rank among the finest buildings. The crypt is so generously proportioned, the upper church so capacious, that one might think there is room for a crowd however great.)

182 GP, I, ii. 73. 16, pp. 230-231: ‘Eius corpus ([A before correction] locatum / [since β] iuxta fenestram criptae locatum est) in edito, pretoreunitibus conspicuo.’ (His body was ([A before correction] placed high / [since β] placed high up near the window of the crypt), for passers-by to see.)

183 GP, II, p. 92.
(5) Norwich (a. 1125)

In the main text of manuscript A of the GP, William showed great enthusiasm in praising the appearance of monastic buildings of Herbert, bishop of Norwich, probably meaning that he had been to that place before 1125.184

(6) Bury St Edmunds (a. 1125, 1126-1129, mid-1130s)

Bury St Edmunds is a place that William may have visited several times. He certainly had examined the archives there, so that in the main text of A of the GP, he could mention that he had not found any written hagiography ‘there or elsewhere’ about the two saints, Germin and Botwulf, buried in the church.185 This means that he had been there before 1125. In his AG, he also knew the B.’s Life at Bury St Edmunds, meaning that he had visited that place before 1129.186 This might result from an early visit before 1125, but it is also possible that he made another visit between 1126 and 1129, so that he could refresh his memory of the Life when he was writing the AG. In addition, there is a miracle regarding a country church there about which he had just heard when he

184 GP, I, ii. 74. 19, pp. 242-243: ‘Postremo quis in illius facti laudem digna pergat, quod tam nobile monasterium episcopus non multum pecuniosus fecerit, in quo nichil frustra desideres uel in edificiorum multorum spectum uel in ornamentorum pulchritudine, tuam in monachorum religion sedula ad omnes caritate?’ (Finally, who would proceed the praise in a fitting manner of the fact that, though a bishop of no great means, he built so noble a monastery, in which there is nothing one could find wanting, whether for beauty of many tall buildings and elaboration of ornament, or in the religious life of its monks and their concern to provide charity to all?)

185 GP, I, ii. 74. 33, pp. 248-249: ‘Iacent in aeclesia duo sancti, Germinus et Botulfus, quorum gesta nec ibi nec alibi haberi memini, nisi quod primus frater sanctae Etheldridae, secundus episcopus fuisse assertur.’ (Two saints lie in the church, Germin and Botwulf. I recall nothing being preserved of their doings there or elsewhere, except that the one is said to have been St Æthelthryth’s brother, the other a bishop.)

186 AG, 1, p. 44-47: ‘Quorum unus Britonum historiographus, prout apud sanctum Edmundum itemque apud sanctum Augustinum Anglorum apostolum uidimus, ita exorsus est.’ (In the church of St Edmund and also in the church of St Augustine, the apostle of the English, we have seen a work by one of the latter, an historian of the Britons, which begins thus…)
was writing the *MBVM*.\(^{187}\) This likely suggests another visit in mid-1130s, at least before 1137.

4. The Old Kingdom of the West Saxons

(7) *Winchester* (a. 1125, mid-1130s, 1139, 1141)

William certainly had been to Winchester before 1125. According to Thomson and Winterbottom, he knew ‘the topography and buildings well’, and had examined many written materials there.\(^{188}\) In the main text of manuscript A of the *GP*, he also wrote that he had seen with his own eyes a blind man cured by the merits of St Swithun, which was almost certain to have taken place at Winchester.\(^{189}\) More interestingly, William omitted the words ‘ut aiunt’ (as they say) in the B version of the *GR* when he was referring to King Æthelstan’s sword which was still preserved among the royal treasures.\(^{190}\) As Thomson and Winterbottom have suggested, this might mean that he had viewed the royal treasures probably at Winchester by the time of this redaction.\(^{191}\) This omission might signify that William had been to Winchester during the interval between the C and B versions in the mid-1130s. His trips to Winchester in 1139 and

\(^{187}\) *MBVM*, 38, p. 104: ‘It is often told, but I have only recently heard it myself.’

\(^{188}\) *GP*, II, pp. 86, 116-117. He might have examined the archives both at the Cathedral Priory and the New Minster / Hyde Abbey.

\(^{189}\) *GP*, I, ii. 75. 43, pp. 264-265: ‘Vidi ego, quod mirum dictu sit, hominem, cui uiolentia raptorum effiodisset lumina, oculis uel illis uel alis (nam illi longiuscule proiecti fuerant) receptis, serenam lucem per Swithuni merita recepisse.’ (Remarkably enough, I have myself seen a man, whose eyes had been gouged out by violent attackers, win back perfect sight by the merits of Swithun, receiving his previous eyes or another pair, his having been flung some way off.)

\(^{190}\) The words before the B version can be seen in *GR*, I, ii. 131. 7, pp. 208-209: ‘…ensem, qui hodieque pro miraculo in thesauro regum seruat. Est sane, ut aiunt, una parte sectilis, nec umquam auri aut argenti receptibilis.’ (the sword, which is still preserved among the royal treasures as evidence of the miracle. It is, they say, chased on one side, but can never be inlaid with either gold or silver.)

\(^{191}\) *GR*, II, p. 116.
1141 are much more certain. He took part in the two councils in those two years, probably representing his own monastery.\footnote{For William’s presence in the Winchester council in 1139, we can conclude from his recall of the content of Pope Innocent’s letter which had been read at its opening, see \textit{HN}, ii. 25, pp. 50-51: ‘si bene memini’ (if I remember rightly). He also clearly said that he took part in the council in 1141, see \textit{HN}, iii. 46, pp. 90-91: ‘Cuius concilii actioni quia interfui, integram rerum veritatem posteris non negabo; egregie quippe memini.’ (As I took part in the proceedings of the council, I will not deny posterity the whole truth of what occurred, for my memory is very clear.)}

(8) \textit{Sherborne} (a. 1125, p. 1125)

In the main text of manuscript A of the \textit{GP}, William seemed to have seen Bishop Wulfsige’s staff and other relics at Sherborne, which means that he had been there before 1125.\footnote{\textit{GP}, i, ii. 81. 3, pp. 282-283: ‘Seruatur ibi adhuc baculus eius et quaedam alia pontifices insignia, mediocritatis et humilitatis eius uiuum, ut ita dicam, simulacrum preferentia.’ (His staff and some other tokens of his rank are preserved at Sherborne to this day, and provide, so to say, a living image of his humility and his desire to avoid extremes.)} In Book Five of the \textit{GP}, he also mentioned that he had seen the church built by St Aldhelm at Sherborne in an insertion between lines made some time after 1125.\footnote{\textit{GP}, i, v. 225. 1, pp. 566-567: ‘habuitque sedem Scireburniae, ubi et aecclesiam, quam ego quoque uidi, mirifice construxit’ (His seat he established at Sherborne, where he built the remarkable church which I have myself seen,) This supplement is in the middle of folio 89\text{"} of A which does not indicate the exact place it should be inserted. Unfortunately, this chapter is not included in the abbreviation of manuscript \textit{B}.) This is probably an indication that he might have been there after 1125, though it is also possible that he added this sentence only from his early memory before 1125.

(9) South Dorset: \textit{Corfe} and \textit{Wareham} (a. 1125, p. 1125)

In the original Chapter 217 of the \textit{GP}, William had already given much detailed information on the church built by St Aldhelm close to the coast of South Dorset, and he seems to have seen these remains with his own eyes, which may indicate his early visit before 1125.\footnote{\textit{GP}, i, v. 217. 3, pp. 548-549: ‘Eius domus maceriae adhuc superstites caelo patuli tacto uacant, nisi} It is also noteworthy that he later added a sentence at the end of
this chapter, emphasising its closeness to Corfe Castle and Wareham.\textsuperscript{196} The closeness of these places suggests that he might have visited them together. Unfortunately, this chapter is only preserved in the manuscript A of the \textit{GP}, and it is not included in the abbreviation of the manuscript B, hence the time of this addition is after 1125, but a more precise date cannot be offered.\textsuperscript{197} Although this supplement may come from William’s memory of the visit before 1125, it is also likely that he had been there once again after 1125, so that he could be more precise about it in his revision.

\begin{enumerate}[(10)]
\item \textit{Milton} (a. 1125, mid-1130s)
\end{enumerate}

William might have been to Milton before 1125, because he seemed to know much about the relics of foreign saints there collected by King Æthelstan from Brittany, especially the bones of St Samson, in the main text of manuscript A of the \textit{GP}.\textsuperscript{198} He chose not to record his miracles, however, for they were well known and he was more concerned about English native saints.\textsuperscript{199} It is even more interesting that William 

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\textit{quod quiddam super altare prominent, quod a feditate ululcrum sacratum lapidem tueatur.’} (The walls of the building are still there, roofless and open to the sky, except that there is a projection above the altar to protect the hallowed stone from defilement by birds.) E. D. C. Jackson and E. G. M. Fletcher argued that the church described by William is in the position of the present St George’s Church, Langton Matravers, in the Isle of Purbeck. See E. D. C. Jackson and E. G. M. Fletcher, ‘Aldhelm’s Church Near Wareham’, \textit{Journal of the British Archaeological Association}, 26: 1 (1963), pp. 1-5.
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\textit{GP}, I, v. 217. 6, pp. 548-549: ‘Locus est in Dorsatensi pago duobus milibus a mari disparatus, iuxta Werham, ubi et Corf castellum pelago prominet.’ (The place is in Dorset, two miles from the sea, near Wareham, where Corfe Castle also stands, commanding the sea.) William might have travelled along the old road half a mile west of Culpeppers Dish, from the west over Southover Heath and Bere Heath, through Wareham to Langton, so that he could see the castle against the horizon of sea. See Jackson and Fletcher, ‘Aldhelm’s Church Near Wareham’, p. 5.
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\textit{GP}, I, ii. 85, pp. 292-293: ‘Ibi multas sanctorum reliquias ex Britannia transmarina emptas reposuit. Inter quas eminent precipue beatissimi Samsonis ossa, Dolensis quondam archiepiscopi: sanctissimi et plane Deo digni uiri, cuius uirtutes aliquas hic referrem nisi quia et notae sunt et indigenarum sanctorum miraculis scribendis occupatas manus habeo.’ (He housed there many relics of saints bought in Brittany, prominent among which are the bones of the blessed Samson, once archbishop of Dol, a holy man eminently worthy in the eyes of God. I should record some of his miracles here, except that they are well known, and I have my hands full writing of those performed by native saints.)
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\textit{GP}, I, pp. xxiii-xxiv.
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See the previous reference.
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inserted in Book Five a letter sent from Rodbod, provost of Dol Cathedral, Brittany to Æthelstan, which occupies the whole left and below margins of folio 93v of manuscript A. He tells us at the end of this insertion that he found this letter from the archive at Milton.200 The different ink and the manner of the insertion certainly indicate his visit after 1125. Interestingly, this whole letter, except one last sentence, was also copied into his redaction of the B version of the GR.201 As Thomson pointed out, this passage is one of the pieces of evidence that proves that the B version is a later redaction than the C.202 Since the C version of the GR does not include this letter, we can be almost certain that William travelled to Milton between the interval of producing the B and C versions in the mid-1130s.

(11) Shaftesbury (a. 1125)

Shaftesbury is another place that William had certainly visited before 1125. In the main text of A of the GP, he recorded the inscription on a stone in the nuns’ chapter house that originally came from the ancient town wall, which showed the old age of the city.203 In the early versions of the GR, he also devoted a whole chapter to praising the piety of

200 GP, I, v. 249. 6, pp. 598-599: ‘Haec epistola inventa est in scrinio apud Mideltunense cenobium, quod idem rex a fundamento fecit, et ubi reliquias sancti Samsonis posuit.’ (This letter was found in the archive at the monastery at Milton, which the king [i. e. Æthelstan] built from the foundations, and where he placed the relics of St Samson.)
203 GP, I, ii. 86. 1, p. 292-293: ‘Vetustatis inditium dat lapis in capitulo sanctimonialium insculptus ita, a vetustissimi muri ruinis illuc translatus: “Anno Dominice incarnationis Elfredus rex fecit hanc urbem octingentesimo octogesimo, regni suo octauo.”’ (An idea of its age is given by a stone in the nuns’ chapter house, brought there from the ruins of the ancient wall; it bears the inscription: ‘King Alfred made this city in the year of our Lord 880, the eighth of his reign’.) A fragment of this stone was found on the site of the abbey church in 1902. It is now lost, but a rubbing is preserved in the Shaftesbury Historical Museum, and it has been dated between c. 975 and c. 1050. The modern restored inscription shows that William’s record is not an exact transcript. See ‘Shaftesbury’, in An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset, Volume 4, North (London, 1972), pp. 55-76, [online] available at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/dorset/vol4/pp55-76> [accessed 04/07/2022].
nuns there, which may indicate his familiarity with them. These pieces of evidence suggest his early visit before 1125.

(12) **Frome and Bradford-on-Avon** (a. 1125)

In the main text of A of the *GP*, William seems to have seen the churches at both Frome and Bradford-on-Avon. He referred to the relations of these two places to St Aldhelm, who was said to have built two monasteries there, and William was very likely to have made much effort to investigate the local history of the fall of both convents, though he apparently failed. Both places are not far away from Malmesbury and Glastonbury. He must have been there before 1125.

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204 *GR*, I, ii. 163, pp. 266-269: ‘Certe apud Sceftoniam splendidum regiae sanctitudinis refulgurat speculum, quoniam illius meritis deputatur quod eo loci multus deuotarum Deo feminarum chorus, claritate religionis terras istas irradians, etiam ipsa prestringit sidera. Illic sacrae virgines nullius penitus corruptelae consciae, illic religiosae continentes post primi t hori dampna secundi ignis nesciae, in quarum omnium moribus ita facetus facetus cum seueram consentit elegantia quod nichil supra. Denique incerto hereas quid potissimum predicare velis, an assiduitatem ad Dei famulitium an affabilitatem ad hominum colloquium; unde non inuiuria credulitas apponitur dicentibus quod per illarum orationes totus sustentatur orbis, qui iam pridem suis uacillat peccatis.’ (At Shaftesbury certainly the king’s sanctity is reflected as though in a gleaming mirror, for it is due to his merits that at that place there is a great throng of women devoted to God who by the brightness of their religious faith shed light over all that region and outshine the stars themselves. There one finds holy virgins with no blemish of any kind upon their consciences, and other religious women living in continence, ignorant of a second flame after the extinction of the first; and in the character of them all there is such a blend of modest liveliness and elegant severity as has no superior. You might wonder, for example, which to praise more highly, their devotion to God’s service or their courtesy in converse with man; so that not without reason there is much support for those who say that it is their prayers which support a world that quakes long since under its own sins.)

205 For the church at Frome, see *GP*, I, v. 198, 1, pp. 522-523: ‘Stat ibi adhuc, et uicit diuturnitate sua tot secula, ecclesia ab eo in honorem sancti Iohannis baptistae constructa.’ (To this day, victorious over so many centuries, an aged church stands there, built by him in honour of St John the Baptist.) For the other church at Bradford-on-Avon, see *GP*, I, v. 198, 2, pp. 522-523: ‘Et est ad hunc diem eo loci ecclesiosa, quam ad nomen beatissimi Laurentii fecisse predicatur.’ (To this day, indeed, a small church is to be found there, which he is said to have built in the name of St Laurence.)

206 *GP*, I, v. 198, 1-2, pp. 522-523: ‘Sed enim utraque monasteria From et Bradeford, mortem mortalium emulantia, in nihilum defectere, restatque tantum nomen inane. Veruntamen utrum tantarum aedium destructio imputanda sit Danorum insanis preliis an Anglorum rapacibus consuuiuis non facile discerneurim.’ (But the monasteries of both Frome and Bradford have imitated mortal men by relapsing into nothing, leaving only an insubstantial name behind. I find it difficult to decide if the fall of such great houses is to be put down to the insane warring of the Danes or the greedy banqueting of the English.)
Bruton (a. 1125)

Bruton is very likely to be close to the place of William’s birth. In the third book of the *VW*, he mentioned that he used to hear from childhood of the holiness of a local priest at Bruton. In A of the *GP*, he also gave some descriptions of churches and buildings there, together with the altar which Aldhelm had given to King Ine and which still remained at that place. The story of the altar probably represented a local tradition at Bruton, which is not in Faricius’s *Life*. He must have been familiar with Bruton long before 1125.

Salisbury (a. 1125)

In the early versions of the *GR*, when William was discussing the building activities of Roger, bishop of Salisbury, he gave a detailed description of the appearance of those buildings at Salisbury, and he especially praised Salisbury Cathedral which was rebuilt by him. He had certainly seen it with his own eyes before 1125, and this indicates

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207 *VW*, iii. 29. 1, pp. 152-155: ‘Fuit hoc tempore apud Briuentonam bonae uiae presbiter, Dunstanus nomine, cuius sanctitatis suauem fragrantiam iam inde a pueritia audisse me memini.’ (There was at that time in Bruton a priest of good repute called Dunstan. I remember that from childhood I used to hear of the sweet fragrance of his holiness.)

208 *GP*, I, v. 222. 7, pp. 560-561: ‘Is illud in uico quodam tunc regio, Briwetune uocabulo, sanctissimae genitricis Dei locauit obsequio. Vbi ad hanc diem situm uium, ut ita dicam, sanctitatis Aldelmi prebet inditium. Est ibidem et alia maius ecclesia in sancti Petri nomine, quam a beato uero factam et consecratam non negligenter asseuerat opinio. Huius orientalem frontem nuper in maius porrexit recentis edificationis ambitio.’ (The king placed it in a town that was then a royal possession, called Bruton, for the service of the holy Mother of God. It is there to this day, giving, so to say, living witness to the holiness of Aldhelm. There is another, larger church there, dedicated to St Peter, which is confidently believed to have been built and consecrated by Aldhelm. Its east front has lately been enlarged in the rage for new building.)


210 *GR*, I, v. 408. 3, pp. 738-739: ‘Pontifex magnanimus et nullis umquam parcens sumptibus, dum quae fatienda proponeret, edificia preseritum, consummaret; quod cum alias, tum maxime in Salesberia {omitted in A version}et Malmesberia} est uidere. Fecit enim ibi edifitia spatio diffusa, numero pecuniarum sumptuosa, spetie formosissima, ita iuste composito ordine lapidum ut iunctura perstringat intuitum et totam maceriam unum mentiatur esse saxum. Aecclesiam Salesberiensem et nouam fecit et ornamentis excoluit, ut nulli in Anglia cedat sed multas prececat, ipseque non falsa posit dicere Deo: “Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuae.”’ (As a bishop he was liberal, and never spared expense provided
that the cathedral had been in an advanced state by that time.\(^{211}\)

(15)\textbf{Wilton} (a. 1125)

In the main text of \textit{A} of the \textit{GP}, William referred to Wilton as if he had been there, whilst in the early versions of the \textit{GR}, he greatly praised the nuns there.\(^{212}\) His unique mention of some of St Edith’s miracles, such as her posthumous explanation of the partial preservation of her body and her punishment of King Cnut’s profanity, which were not included in Goscelin of Saint-Bertin’s \textit{Vita S. Edithae}, probably indicated his access to some special local oral tradition.\(^{213}\) If he had seen Salisbury Cathedral before 1125, there would be no surprise that he could have visited the nearby nunnery.


\(^{212}\) \textit{GP}, I, ii. 87. 2, pp. 296-297: ‘Wiltuna est uicus non exiguus, supra Wile fluumium positus, tantae celebritatis ut totus pagus ab eo vocetur.’ (Wilton is a quite large town on the River Wylye, so well known that the whole county is named after it.) \textit{GR}, I, ii. 219, pp. 404-405: ‘San e ambae istae uirgines meritis suis singula fulciunt cenobia, adunatis in utroque multarum sanctimonialium cetibus, quae dominabus et magistris suis uocantibus ad gratiam respondent per obedientiam. Fortunatus qui uirginalium orationum particeps fuerit, quarum deuotioni se Dominus Iesus placido indulget assensu.’ (Of these two virgins each, of course, forms by her merits the cornerstone of a convent, and in both places are gathered together large communities of nuns who, when their abbesses and those with authority over them call them to virtue, reply by their obedience. Happy the man who finds a place in the prayers of virgins, to whose devotion the Lord Jesus lends Himself with a placid and indulgent ear.) Here William was meaning the convents at Pershore and Wilton.

\(^{213}\) Goscelin’s \textit{Vita} was an important source of William’s description of St Edith in the \textit{GR}, \textit{GP} and \textit{VD}, and he clearly mentioned his used of it in his \textit{VD}. See \textit{VD}, ii. 23, pp. 274-275: ‘Vnde quiddam quod in eius Vita legi apponere non fastidiam: quod quia alienum non est a Dunstano, non interim a materia uagabitur oratio.’ (So I shall not avoid adding something I have read in her Life; it is not irrelevant to Dunstan, and will not involve me in digression.) The biggest difference between William’s and Goscelin’s description is the miracles involving King Cnut. In the \textit{GP}, Cnut was punished by St Edith for his profanity, while in Goscelin’s \textit{Vita}, Cnut was very ‘devoted to her in affection and reverence’. See \textit{GP}, I, ii. 87, 7-9, pp. 298-301; Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, ‘The \textit{Translatio} of Edith’, trans. M. Wright and K. Loncar, in \textit{Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin’s Legend of Edith and Liber confortatorius}, ed. S. Hollis (Turnhout, 2004), 12-13, pp. 77-78. This is noted by Thomson and Winterbottom, see \textit{GP}, II, p. 135.
Reading (1121-1123)

Reading is surely a place that William had visited before 1125. In the early versions of the *GR*, he already praised the Cluniac monks of Reading very warmly. He mentioned his brotherly love for them, and their hospitality towards visitors. Similar but much briefer comments also appeared in the main text of A of the *GP*. As Thomson and Winterbottom pointed out, the abbey was founded by Henry I in 1121 and got its first abbot, Hugh of Amiens, in 1123. I suggest that William had probably visited Reading between 1121 and 1123, before Hugh arrived, since he did not mention him in either the *GR* or the *GP*.

Bath (a. 1125)

William had been to Bath at least once before 1125. In the main text of A of the *GP*, his unique description of the smell of the hot springs there seemed to indicate a personal visit. In addition, he mentioned Bishop John’s programme of decoration and book

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215 *GR*, I, v. 413. 1, pp. 746-747: ‘nisi me Radingensium fratrum caritas tacere non sinister…qui sunt Hodie preclarum sanctitatis exemplum, hospitalitatis indefessae et dulcis inditium: uideas ibi quod non alibi, ut plus hospites totis horis uenientes quam inhabitantes insumant.’ (if brothely love for the monks of Reading did not forbid me to keep silence…who are at this time a distinguished exemplar of holy life and a model of inexhaustible and delightful hospitality. One can see there, as nowhere else, how the guests, who arrive at all hours, get more provision than the inmates.)
216 *GP*, I, ii. 89. 2, pp. 304-305: ‘Posuitque ibi monachos Cluniacenses, preclarum sanctitatis exemplum, hospitalitatis indefessae inditium.’ (He [i. e. Henry I] settled there Cluniac monks, who set a shining example of holiness and unfailing hospitality.)
218 Hugh became archbishop of Rouen in 1130, and William saw him in the Winchester council in 1139, see *HN*, ii. 29, pp. 56-59.
219 *GP*, I, ii. 90. 3, pp. 306-307: ‘Salubres sunt aquae illae lauantibus, sed odore sulfuris primo aduentibus graues, donec consuetudo sensus horrorem compescat.’ (The waters are health-giving for those who bathe in them, though on first approach their sulphureous smell makes them disagreeable; custom later diminishes the unpleasant effect.)
collection at Bath in the early versions of both *GR* and *GP*. Thomson and Winterbottom suggested that he must have seen a record similar to that in the Bath cartulary, London, Lincoln’s Inn Archives, Hale MS 185, c. 1200 - s. XIV\textsuperscript{med}, which referred in detail to John’s activities.\footnote{GR, I, iv. 340. 2, pp. 590-591: ‘multa ibi nobiliter per eum incepta et consummata in ornamentis et libris’ (he began and carried through a notable programme at Bath in the field of decoration and books); exact same words in *GP*, I, ii. 90. 4, pp. 306-307.}

(18) *Glastonbury* (a. 1125, c. 1127-1130) [c. = circa]

William was probably a *confrater* of the Glastonbury community, which helped him to gain a good deal of knowledge about that place.\footnote{In the *VD*, William described himself as an ‘alumnus’ of Glastonbury, and there he professed his heavenly service. See *VD*, i. prol. 1, pp. 166-167; ‘…ut alumnus…’; ii. prol. 1, pp. 234-235: ‘…in quo caelestem profitemur militiam…’ (…in which I profess my heavenly service…). Both in his *AG* and *VD*, he was a ‘son’ of the church of Glastonbury and the monks’ ‘servant’, ‘brother’, and ‘son’. See *AG*, pro. 40-41: Willelmus, ueste dignitatis filius’ (William, a son of your church); *VD*, i. prol. 1, pp. 166-167: ‘Willelmus uester deuotione seruus, commilitio frater, dilectio ne filius’ (William, your servant in devotion, your brother in fellow service, your son in affection). These pieces of evidence probably mean that he was a *confrater* of the Glastonbury community, since the institution of confraternity was common in England at that time. Stubbs was the earliest scholar that raised this possibility, see Stubbs, ed., *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, vol. I, pp. xxix-xxx. John Scott and Thomson followed this idea, see *AG*, p. 4; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 5. For personal confraternity in England at that time, see D. D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of Its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 940-1216* (Cambridge, 1976 [1940]), pp. 475-479. Lanfranc of Canterbury also dealt with the rituals of confraternity in his *Constitutions*, see Knowles and Brooke, ed. and trans., *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, pp. 168-170.} His familiarity with the relics and saints and kings’ tombs at Glastonbury in the main text of A of the *GP* indicates a visit
before 1125.  

He also seemed to have already seen the Glastonbury farms and library at that time.  

After 1125, between c. 1127 – 1130, as I have discussed in Chapter One, he may have been to Glastonbury more than once to finish his hagiographical works and his AG.  

(19) **Doulting** (a. 1125, p. 1125)  
Doulting is a place near Glastonbury and Bruton. William’s information about this place in the Book Five of his *GP* is not included in Faricius’s *Life of St Aldhelm*.  

In the main text of manuscript A of the *GP*, William had seen the stone crosses erected to mark the funeral procession of St Aldhelm every seven miles from Doulting to Malmesbury, which indicated his visit to Doulting before 1125. More interestingly, in his corrections to Chapter 228 in the fifth book of the *GP*, he added some more information regarding St Aldhelm’s death at Doulting, and the tone became more definite. More information was told about the church where Aldhelm had died, with the confirmation from the locals. The stone that had witnessed Aldhelm’s death in the same church in aecclesiam mutata / [supplement in A] lignea erat aecclesia, in quam se ultimum spirans inferri iussit, ut ibi potissimum efflaret, sicut incolae Hodie per succiduas generationes asseuerant. ‘(The building where he died was changed into a church / [supplement in A] was a wooden church, to which he had himself carried as he was breathing his last, so that he could die there and nowhere else; this is what the locals even today affirm, for the story had come down the ages).')

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223 *GP*, I, ii. 91. 6-9, pp. 310-313. He mentioned St Patrick, Indract, Hild, Ceolfrith, Aidan, Benignus, King Edmund I and King Edgar.  
224 *GP*, I, ii. 91. 2, pp. 308-309: ‘tanta est diffusio et opportunitas fundorum, tanta librorum pulchritudo et antiquitas exuberat’ (such is the spread and convenient position of its farms, and the beauty and antiquity of its rich library).  
226 *GP*, I, v. 230. 3, pp. 574-575: ‘Manent omnes cruces, nec ulla earum uetustatis sensit iniuriam, uocanturque biscepstane, id est lapides episcopi; quarum unam in claustro monachorum in promptu est uidere.’ (The crosses all still stand, and not one of them has felt the ravages of time. They are called Biscepstane, that is Bishop’s Stones; and one of them can readily be seen in the monks’ cloister.)  
227 *GP*, I, v. 228. 1, pp. 572-573: ‘Domus obitus eius conscia ([main text of A and the abbreviation of B] in aeclesiam mutata / [supplement in A] lignea erat aeclesia, in quam se ultimum spirans inferri iussit, ut ibi potissimum efflaret, sicut incolae Hodie per succiduas generationes asseuerant).’ (The building where he died ([main text of A and the abbreviation of B] was changed into a church / [supplement in A] was a wooden church, to which he had himself carried as he was breathing his last, so that he could die there and nowhere else; this is what the locals even today affirm, for the story had come down the ages).
also changed from a ‘saying’ into a ‘fact’.\textsuperscript{228} It is almost certain that these changes must have resulted from William’s own observation, which was more careful and detailed this time than during his early visit before 1125. The original sentences of these two corrections were still not changed in the abbreviation of the fifth book in manuscript B of the *GP*, which means that he made these changes after the making of the β version. We can only ascertain that these changes were made after 1126, but a more probable date is after 1130, simultaneously with, or after, the production of the E version. Nevertheless, no matter when these changes occurred, it is only certain that he had been to Doulting at least one more time after 1125.

(20) *Athelney* (a. 1125)

In the main text of A of the *GP*, William gave a vivid description of the island of Athelney, together with the church built by King Alfred whose architectural style was emphasised by him.\textsuperscript{229} He also described the situation of monks there and their prayers

\textsuperscript{228} *GP*, I, v. 228. 2, pp. 572-573: ‘[\textit{main text of A and the abbreviation of B, the latter without ‘esse’}] Fertur in eadem ecclesia lapis esse, cui Sanctus acclinis morbo decubuerat / [\textit{after correction in A}] Constat in eadem ecclesia lapidem esse, cui Sanctus moriens insederat.’ ([\textit{main text of A and the abbreviation of B}] The stone is said to be in the same church, leaning to which the saint had died for sickness / [\textit{after correction in A}] It is a fact that in this church there is a stone on which the saint sat when he was dying.)

\textsuperscript{229} *GP*, I, ii. 92. 1-2, pp. 312-313: ‘Adelingea est non maris insula, sed ita stagnorum refusionibus et paludibus inaccessa ut nullo modo nisi nauigio adiri queat. Alnetum permaximum in ea ceruos et capreas multasque id generis bestias continet. Terra solida, uix duobus iugeribus lata, monasteriolum et monachorum officinas habet. Eius constructor fuit rex Elfredus, qui quondam a Danis pulsus prouintia tutas ilic alquandu latebras confouerat... Fecitque ecclesiam, situ quidem pro angustia spatii modicam, sed nouo edificandi modo compactam. Quattuor enim postes solo infixi totam suspendunt machinam, quattuor cancellis opere sperico in circuitu ductis.’ (Athelney is not an island in the sea, but thanks to flooding and swamps it is so inaccessible that it can only be approached on shipboard. A large alder grove there is home to stags, roe deer, and many beasts of the kind. The solid land, only a few hundred feet across, has room for a small monastic church and the monks’ buildings. The former was built by King Alfred, who was on one occasion driven out of his province by the Danes but for some time found safe refuge there... Accordingly he constructed a church, of only moderate size because of the confined site, but put together in a new architectural style: four columns fixed in the ground hold up the whole fabric, and four apses surround it in a circle.)
for St Æthelwine, brother of Cenwealh, king of the West Saxons. William seemed to be the only medieval historian to provide some detailed information about this saint. He was very likely to have talked with the monks or even to have investigated the archives there before 1125.

(21) Muchelney (a. 1125, mid-1130s)

William only gave a very brief description of Muchelney in the main text of A of the GP, but his interesting comment on the access to this place may reflect his visit before 1125. His visit to that place is much more certain after 1125. In the addition of the B version of the GR, he mentioned that he had read the muniments of the church at Muchelney. Thus, he had been there between the interval between the production of the B and C versions of the GR in the mid-1130s.

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230 GP, I, ii. 92. 3, pp. 312-313: ‘Sunt ibi monachi pauci numero et pauperes, sed qui egestatem suam quietis et solitudinis amore magni pendant uel consolentur; qui laudes patroni sui sancti Eielwini ferant in astra preconis, sanctitatem sentiant continuis impensis benefitis.’ (The monks there are few in number and poor, but they are the sort to value their neediness, or find consolation for it, thanks to their love of peace and quiet. They send up to heaven praises of their patron St Æthelwine, and feel the benefit of his holiness in the services he constantly does them.)

231 GP, I, ii. 92. 3, pp. 312-313: ‘Illum fratrem regis Westsaxonum Kenwalh fuisse, et generis magnitudinem sanctitatis indole inaltasse, perseuerans est opinio. Languoris perpetuo detentum compede nichilo segnius Deo seruisse. Bono fine consummatum omnibus se invocantibus presto ad remedia occurrere.’ (He was brother of Cenwealh king of the West Saxons, and he exalted his noble birth to a higher plane by the holiness of his character. Tied down by chronic illness, he none the less served God with devotion. He came to a good end, and is at hand to help all who call on him. That is the story that goes on finding credit.)


233 GP, I, ii. 93, pp. 312-313: ‘Est enim aditu difficilis, permeaturque estate pede uel equo plerumque, hieme musquam.’ (For the place is not easy of access; one can normally get through in summertime on foot or by horse, but not in winter.)

234 GR, I, ii. 139. 5, Appendix I: Additions of B and C, pp. 824-825: ‘sicut in cartis eiusdem aecclesiae legi’ (as I have read in the muniments of the church).
(22) **Tavistock** (a. 1125)

William may have been to Tavistock before 1125. In the main text of A of the *GP*, he mentioned the still existing custom of singing the fifteen Gradual psalms by the monks for the deceased Lyfing, bishop of Crediton.\(^{235}\) He also seemed to have seen the shrine of St Rumon there.\(^{236}\)

(23) **Exeter** (a. 1125)

William may also have been to Exeter before 1125. Both in the main text of A of the *GP* and in the early versions of the *GR*, he specially noticed the poor quality of the soil with low production of grain.\(^{237}\) He also seemed to have seen the reminders of Æthelstan and heard the account from locals.\(^{238}\)

5. **The Old Kingdom of the South Saxons**

(24) **Lewes** (a. 1125)

In the main text of A of the *GP*, William highly praised the piety of the Cluniac monks

\(^{235}\) *GP*, I, ii. 94. 3, pp. 314-315: ‘Humatus est Tauistokiae, quo loci multa spectabilia contulerat, tantamque sui gratiam apud monachos locauerat ut hodieque quindecim graduum psalmos, continuata per successores consuetudine, pro eius decantent quiete.’ (He was buried at Tavistock, to which he had made many notable donations, winning such favour with the monks that even now they sing the fifteen Gradual psalms for his repose, the custom having been handed down without a break by his successors.)

\(^{236}\) *GP*, I, ii. 95. 2, pp. 316-317: ‘Rumonus ibi sanctus predicatur et iacet episcopus, pulchritudinedecoratus scrinii, ubi nulla scriptorum fides assistit opinioni.’ (Rumon is celebrated there as holy and buried as a bishop. He has a beautiful shrine to distinguish him, but no written testimony to back up his reputation.)

\(^{237}\) *GP*, I, ii. 94. 4, pp. 314-315: ‘licet solum ieiunum et squalidum uix steriles auenas et plerumque innamem folliculum sine grano producat’ (though the barren and unkempt soil can scarce bring forth sterile oats, and the ears are generally empty of grain). Nearly same words in *GR*, I, ii. 134. 7, pp. 216-217.

\(^{238}\) *GR*, I, ii. 134. 7, pp. 216-217: ‘Plurima eius insignia tam in urbe illa quam in finitimia regione usiuntur, quae melius indigenerum ore quam nostro stilo pingentur.’ (Numerous reminders of Æthelstan are to be seen both in the city and in the country round, of which the native gives a better account by word of mouth than I can with my pen.)
of St Pancras at Lewes, whose hospitality he might have experienced himself.\textsuperscript{239} He had also copied a document about the death of Prior Lanzo into his text of the \textit{GR} since the A version, which he was very likely to have seen in the archives of the monastery.\textsuperscript{240} Thus, he had probably been to Lewes before 1125. In addition, it is noteworthy that in the fragment of the \textit{Itinerarium}, he wrote that Abbot John and his companion Peter boarded at the port of Shoreham, which is a place ‘ten miles away from St Pancras’.\textsuperscript{241} The distance is almost correct. This reference may demonstrate William’s familiarity with the region around Lewes, though it might result from Peter’s narration.

6. The Old Kingdom of Northumbria

\textit{(25) York (a. 1125)}

William had probably visited York before 1125. Both in the main text of manuscript A of the \textit{GP} and the early versions of the \textit{GR}, he gave a vivid description of the dilapidated state of the city and region after the Harrying of the North.\textsuperscript{242} He even mentioned that

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{239} \textit{GP}, I, ii. 98, pp. 324-325: ‘adeo ut ueraciter asseratur nullum omnino monasterium posse illud unicere religione ad monachos, affabilitate ad hospites, karitate ad omnes. Vincit pompam famae rerum ueritas, licet fatiget audientes referentium uerbositas.’ (so that it is fair to say that no monastery whatever can surpass it in the piety of its monks, its friendliness to guests, and its charity to all. The vaunts of report are surpassed by the truth, though the wordiness of those who speak of Lewes may weary the listener.)
\item \textsuperscript{240} \textit{GR}, I, v. 442, pp. 788-789: ‘uerbis quibus scriptum inueni’ (I have found a document with those words). The document can be seen in \textit{GR}, I, v. 443. 1-9, pp. 788-795.
\item \textsuperscript{241} William of Malmesbury, \textit{Itinerarium}, in \textit{Joannis Lelandi Antiquarii De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea}, iii, p. 272: ‘Ad portum, qui Scoram appellatur, decem milliar iis a S. Pancratio (Lewis) navem ingressi.’ (They went to the port and took ship. The place is called Shoreham, ten miles away from St Pancras (at Lewes.).)
\item \textsuperscript{242} \textit{GP}, I, iii. 99. 2-3, pp. 324-325: ‘Qui urbanis iratus quod Danis aduentantibus receptui et consultui fusissent, prius inedia mox flamma ciuitatem confecit. Regionis etiam totius uicos et agros corrumpi, fructus et fruges ige uel aqua labefactari iubet. Ita prouintiae quondam fertilis neriui preda incendio sanguine succisi. Humus per sexaginta et eo amplius miliaria omnifariam inculta, nudum omnium solum ad hoc usque tempus. Vrbes olim preclaras, turres proceritate sua in caelum minantes, agros laetos pascuis, irriguos fluiuis, si quis modo uidet peregrinus, ingemit, si quis uetus incola, non agnoscit.’ (Enraged with the people of York because they had taken in and served the needs of the Danes on their
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
the Northumbrian accent, especially as spoken in York, was uncivilised and made no sense to southerners like him.243

(26)Carlisle (a. 1125)

William seemed to have seen the Roman remains at Carlisle referred to in the main text of A of the GP, which may indicate a visit there before 1125.244

(27)Durham (a. 1125)

William might also have been to Durham before 1125, for he gave a detailed description of Durham’s topography in the main text of A of the GP.245 It is strange, however, that he seemed to be unsure in the early versions of the GR whether St Oswald’s head and arrival, he [i.e. King William I] first starved and then burned the city. He had the entire region, town and country alike, pillaged, and the crops and fruit ruined by fire or flood. Plunder, arson, and bloodshed thus hamstrung a province that had once been so fertile. For sixty and more miles around, cultivation ceased, and the soil is quite bare to this day. Cities once brilliant, towers lofty enough to threaten heaven itself, fields smiling with pasture and watered by rivers, are matter for lament to a stranger who sees them now, and an old inhabitant fails to recognize them.) Similar description also appeared in the early versions of the GR, see GR, I, iii. 249. 2-3, pp. 464-465.

243 GP, I, iii. 99. 4, pp. 326-327: ‘Sa ne tota lingua Nordanhimbrorum, et maxime in Eboraco, ita inconditum stridet ut nichil nos australes intelligere possimus.’ (Of course, the whole language of the Northumbrians, particularly in York, is so inharmonious and uncouth that we southerners can make nothing of it.)

244 GP, I, iii. 99. 3-4, pp. 324-325: ‘In aliquibus tamen parietum ruinis, qui semiruti remansere, uideas mira Romanorum artifitia: ut est in Lugubalia ciuitate triclinium lapidius fornicibus concameratum, quod nulla umquam tempestatum contumelia, quin etiam appositis ex industria lignis et succisis, ualuit labefactari. Cimbreland uocatur regio, et Cumbri uocantur homines, scripturaque legitur in fronte triclinii fronte “Marii uictorie”.’ (In some of the ruined buildings, though, whose walls were not completely destroyed, you may see remarkable Roman work: for example, at Carlisle a triclinium vaulted in stone that no violence of the elements, or even the intentional setting alight of timbers piled up against it, has succeeded in destroying. The district is called Cumberland, and its inhabitants Cumbrians. On the front of the structure one can read the inscription ‘To the victory of Marius.’)

245 GP, I, iii. 130. 8, pp. 412-413: ‘Dunelmum est collis, ab una uallis planitie paulatim et molli cliuo turgescens in cumulum. Et licet situ edito et prerupto rupiurn omnem aditum excludat hostium, tamen ibi moderni collibus imposuerunt castellum. Ad radices pedis castelli defluuit amnis piscosus, ut pleraque et omnia pene Northandrie flumina. Ita enim isitius in partibus occidentalis et aquilonalibus Angliae superfluit ut rustici proiectis piscibus sues pascant.’ (Durham is a hill, gradually and with a gentle slope swelling up from the level plain. Though, thanks to its lofty site and precipitous cliffs, it bars the approach of any enemy, moderns have sited a castle on the top. Below, at the castle foot, flows a river rich in fish, like many or indeed almost all of those in Northumbria. For salmon are superabundant in the west and north of England, so much so that the local peasants feed their pigs on discarded fish.)
Bede the historian’s body were buried at Durham.\textsuperscript{246} This presents some doubts on the existence of his travel to Durham. Anyway, if he had been to Durham, this trip would have happened before 1125.

(28) Hexham (a. 1125)

In the main text of A of the GP, William greatly praised the church built by St Wilfrid.\textsuperscript{247} Thomson and Winterbottom suggested that William may have seen the building himself.\textsuperscript{248} If this is true, this trip would have occurred before 1125.

(29) Ripon (a. 1125)

In the GP, William described the old church built by St Wilfrid at Ripon, based on which Thomson and Winterbottom suggested that he may have seen it with his own eyes.\textsuperscript{249} Since this description had already appeared in the main text of A, he might have visited there before 1125.

\textsuperscript{246} For St Oswald’s head, see GR, I, i. 49. 8, pp. 74-75: ‘Caput, tune ab eodem germano Lindisfarni humatum, nunc Dunelmi inter brachia beatissimi Cuthberti teneri aiunt.’ (His head was at that time buried by the same brother at Lindisfarne, but is said to be now at Durham, held in the arms of St Cuthbert.) For Bede’s body, see GR, I, i. 61. 4, pp. 94-95: ‘Humatus est tune in eodem monasterio, sed modo cum beato Cuthberto Dunelmi situm fama confirmat.’ (At that time he was buried in his own monastery, but now, it is asserted, he lies at Durham with St Cuthbert.)

\textsuperscript{247} GP, I, iii. 117. 1, pp. 386-389: ‘ibi edificia minaci altitudine murorum erecta et diuersis anfractibus per cocleas circumducta mirabile quantum expoliuit, arbitratu q uidem multa proprio, sed et cementariorum quos ex Roma spes munificentiae attraxerat magisterio.’ (Here he constructed buildings of remarkable polish, with menacingly high walls and ringed around by various winding ways, [joined] by spiral staircases. Much was the product of his own judgement, but he also learned from stonemasons who had been lured from Rome by hope of generous reward.)

\textsuperscript{248} GP, II, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{249} GP, I, iii. 100. 23, pp. 336-337: ‘Sensit et Ripis industrium antistitis, edificata ibi a fundamentis aeclesia, miro fornicum inflexu, lapidum tabulatu, porticuum anfractu.’ (Ripon too felt the impact of the bishop’s energy; he built there from the foundations a church with wonderful curved vaulting, stone exterior walls, and encircling porticus.) Thomson and Winterbottom’s suggestion can be seen in GP, II, p. xxxix, but they did not include Ripon into their list.
7. The Old Kingdom of Mercia

(30) **Worcester** (a. 1125, c. 1126)

William was very likely to have been to Worcester before 1125. In the *VW*, he told the readers that Prior Nicholas (c. 1113-1124) had shared accounts of many miracles of St Wulfstan with him.\(^{250}\) Thomson and Winterbottom also suggested that the description of Wulfstan’s tomb in the main text of A of the *GP*, which is not in the *VW*, was based on William’s own observation.\(^{251}\) The interesting information about ‘spiders’ webs’ seemed to indicate his personal conversation with monks there. In addition, as I have suggested in Chapter One, he may have been to Worcester in c. 1126 to finish his *VW*.\(^{252}\)

(31) **Gloucester** (1119-1125)

Gloucester is a place that William had certainly visited. In the main text of A of the *GP*, he said that he had discovered the close link between St Oswald’s Priory at Gloucester and his own abbey before the time of the Danes from the records of both churches.\(^{253}\) This means that he had been there before 1125. His rather detailed description of the topography of Gloucester also proves this.\(^{254}\) He also gave a vivid description of the

\(^{250}\) For the information provided by Nicholas, see *VW*, iii. 9. 2-3, 10. 3, 13, 17. 1-2, pp. 118-121, 122-123, 126-127, 132-133.

\(^{251}\) For William’s description of the tomb, see *GP*, I, iv. 148. 4, pp. 438-439: ‘Iacet inter duas piramides, arcu lapideo pulcre superuoluto. Lignum in superiori prominet, quod casses ferreos, quos uocant araneas, infixos habet.’ (It lies between two pyramids, under a beautiful stone arch. There is a wooden projection above, carrying attached to it the iron grilles they call ‘spiders’ webs’.) Thomson and Winterbottom’s suggestion can be seen in *GP*, II, p. 199.

\(^{252}\) See above, pp. 39-40.

\(^{253}\) *GP*, I, iv. 155. 3, pp. 446-447: ‘sicut in archiuis utriusque reperitur aecclesiae’ (as can be discovered in the records of both churches).

\(^{254}\) *GP*, I, iv. 153. 2-3, pp. 444-447: ‘Terra omnis frugum opima, fructuum ferox; hic sola naturae gratia, illic culturae solertia, ut quemuis tediosum per socordiam prouocet ad laboris illecebram, ubi centuplicato fenore responsura sit copia. Cernas tramites publicos uesitos pomiferis arboribus, non insitlua manus
Severn Bore and referred to a bridge, which must be the Foreign Bridge. According to the chronicle of Gregory of Caerwent, a monk of St Peter’s Abbey at Gloucester in the thirteenth century, which is preserved in London, British Library Cotton MS Vespasian A V, s. XVI, the construction of this bridge began on 15 May 1119. If this entry is true, then we can assume that William visited Gloucester and saw the bridge between 1119 and 1125. In the GR, however, he seemed to have conflated St Oswald’s

industria sed ipsius soli natura. Ipsa se terra sponte subrigit in fructus, eosque sapore et spetie ceteris plurimum prestantes. Quorum plures ante annum marcesere nesciant, ut dominis usque ad nouos successores present offitium. Regio plus quam aliae Angliae prouintiae uinearum frequentia densior, prouenta ueterior, sapore iocundior. Vina enim ipsa bibentur ora tristi non torquent acrider, quippe quae parum debeant Gallicis dulcedine. Villae innumerabiles, abbatiae prestantes, uici frequentes. Quibus omnibus accedit ad gloriam fluuius Sabrina quo nullus in hac terra alueo latior, gurgite rapacior, arte piscisor.’ (The land everywhere bears crops in abundance, and is fertile in fruit, whether naturally or thanks to the skill of the farmer; the conditions are such as to encourage even the most bored slacker to take kindly to labour, seeing that he will be repaid a hundredfold. You may see the public highways decked with fruit trees thanks not to laborious grafting but to the very nature of the soil. The land produces fruit spontaneously, fruit too that is far superior to all other in flavour and beauty. Many do not wither away by the end of the year, but do their duty by their owners until replacements come along. Compared with other provinces of England this district is thicker with close-set vines, and produces grapes in larger quantities and more pleasant to taste. The actual wines do not make the drinker grimace at their bitter taste; indeed when it comes to sweetness, they are little inferior to those of Gaul. There are countless villages, grand abbeys, crowded towns. The vale’s especial glory is the River Severn, unparalleled in this district for the width of its channel, the strength of its current, and the supply of fish it yields to the fisherman’s art.) Thomson and Winterbottom regarded this part as ‘William’s most extended and lyrical description of a landscape’, see GP, II, p. 202.

255 GP, I, iv. 153, 4, pp. 446–447: ‘In eo eoctidionis aquarum furor, quod uel uoraginem uel uertiginem undarum dicam nescio, fundo ab ino uerrens harenas et conglobans in cumulum, cum impetu uenit, nec ultra quam ad pontem pertendit. Nonnumquam etiam ripas transcendit, et magna parte terrae uictor regreditur. Infelix nauis, si quam e latere attigerit! Naute certe gnari, cum uident illam higram (sic enim Anglice uocant) uenire, nauem obuertunt, et per medium secantes uiolentiam eius eludunt.’ (Every day the water grows wild (I do not know whether to call it an abyss or a whirlpool of waves), sweeping the sands up from the very bottom and piling them into a crest; it comes on with a rush, though no further than the bridge. Sometimes it even goes over the banks, floods a large tract of land, and then retreats after its victory has been won. Unhappy the ship it meets side on! Indeed canny sailors, when they see the ‘eagre’ (that is the English name) coming, turn their ship to face it; by cutting through the middle they can frustrate its force.) Thomson and Winterbottom pointed out that this bridge is almost certainly the Foreign Bridge, see GP, II, 203. For the history of the Foreign Bridge, see J. Rhodes, ‘The Severn Flood-Plain at Gloucester in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods’, Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, 124 (2006), pp. 12-15.

with St Peter’s abbey when it comes to the translation of the bones of St Oswald from Bardney. This might just be a small mistake which he never noticed, because he did not confuse them in other places, and he correctly narrated that the relics of St Oswald were transferred to St Oswald’s in the GP.

(32) Tewkesbury (a. 1125)

William gave much praise to the buildings of the monastery at Tewkesbury and the charity of the monks there both in the A version of the GR and in the main text of manuscript A of the GP, with similar words. In the GP, he continued to mention that Abbot Gerald moved the monastery from Cranborne to Tewkesbury, because of ‘the convenience of the nearby river and the fact that it marched with the demesne lands’. He might have been there before 1125. Interestingly, in both places, William was emphasising the contribution of its patron, Robert Fitz Hamon, who was also the father-in-law of Robert earl of Gloucester, the dedicatee of his HN and later versions of the

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257 GR, I. ii. 125. 5, pp. 198-199: ‘Decessit ante germanum quinquennio sepultaque in monasterio sancti Petri Glocestrae, quod ipsa cum uiro Etheredo ingenti cura extruxerat, eoque ossa beati Oswaldi ex Bardenia transtulerat.’ (She died five years before her brother, and was buried in the monastery of St Peter at Gloucester which she herself and her husband Æthelred had built with great exertions, translating to it the bones of St Oswald from Bardney.) The relics of Oswald were brought to St Oswald’s in 909, see GR, II, pp. 108-109.

258 GP, I, iv. 155. 3, pp. 446-447: ‘illucque ex Bardanio reliquias regis transtulerant’ (and they had transferred there [i.e. St Oswald’s] from Bardney the remains of King Oswald). William also did not confuse them in GR, I, i. 49. 9, pp. 74-75; GP, I, iii. 121. 2β. 1-2, pp. 398-399.

259 GR, I, v. 398. 4, pp. 722-723: ‘et Robertus monasterium Theokesberiae suo fauore non facile memoratu quantum exaltauit, ubi et edifitorum decor et monachorum caritas aduentantium rapit oculos et allicit animos.’ (It is hard to express how much he improved it; lovely buildings entrance the eyes, and the charity of the monks attracts the minds, of those who come there.) This part did not exist in the T version of the GR, perhaps because here William was praising the monastery’s patron Robert Fitz Hamon, who was the father-in-law of Robert, earl of Gloucester. It might be counted by William as unsuitable materials to be presented to Empress Matilda.

One may wonder if William was trying to please his future patron. Yet since Tewkesbury is on the road between Worcester and Gloucester, he was very likely to have been there. The last chapter of the *GR* even indicates that William may have talked with monks there about Earl Robert’s good qualities.262

(33) **Malvern** (1120-1125, c. 1126)

William had probably visited Malvern before 1125. In the early versions of the *GR*, he told a story that he heard from Prior Walcher, which was about a cellarer being admonished by the dead abbot during a pestilence at the monastery of Fulda.263 Since Walcher was the prior from 1120 to 1135, it is likely that William visited Malvern between 1120 and 1125, though he may also have met him in some other places, such as Worcester. The story of the origin of Great Malvern might give more credit to William’s visit. In his *GP*, he told the prophecy of St Wulfstan on the bright future of Malvern’s religious community, which prompted its first prior, Ealdwine, to stay there rather than make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.264 This story was told less clearly in the

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261 William wrote a letter, which appeared for the first time in the C version, to dedicate the *GR* to Robert, see *GR*, II, p. 6. As Thomson and Winterbottom suggested, however, the A version of the *GR* might have already been dedicated to Robert, since he had been greatly praised at the end of A, C, B versions, almost with same words, and the sentence in c. 446 in all these versions – ‘Hoc autem opus postquam absolui, circumspectis plurimis, uobis potissimum delegandum credidi.’ (When I had finished my work, I considered many names, and chose you above all others as its recipient.) – seemed to imply the dedication. See *GR*, I, v. 446, 1, pp. 798-799; *GR*, II, p. xxxiii, n. 26. In addition, the prologue of the *HN* shows that it was commissioned by Robert, see *HN*, prol., pp. 2-3.

262 *GR*, I, v. 449, 1, pp. 800-801: ‘Munificentiae uestrae pecuniaeque contemptum pretendit Theokesberiae cenobium; de quo, ut audio, non solum xenia non corraditis sed etiam ulter missa remittitis.’ (Your generosity and your contempt of coin are advertised by the community of Tewkesbury; for, as I hear, so far from raking in presents from them, you even send back what they proffer of their own accord.) This passage already appeared in the A version.

263 *GR*, I, iii. 293, 1, pp. 526-527: ‘dicam quod ibidem accidisse uir reuerendus michi narravit, Walkerius prior Maluerni’ (let me tell of something which happened there, as I learnt from that reverend figure Walcher prior of Malvern).

VW, but at the end, William was probably implying that he saw the fulfilment of Wulfstan’s prophecy himself.\textsuperscript{265} We may assume that he was likely to have learnt of it during his visit before 1125, though it is not impossible that he went there again just before his writing of the VW.

(34)\textbf{Evesham} (a. 1125)

William seemed to have visited the Evesham Abbey before 1125 in the main text of A of the GP.\textsuperscript{266} Thomson and Winterbottom also suggested that he depended on oral tradition when he was writing the deeds of Bishop Ecgwine, who had founded the monastery.\textsuperscript{267}

(35)\textbf{Hereford} (1115-1125)

William might have been to Hereford before 1125, because he mentioned the remains of its steep ditches in the main text of A of the GP.\textsuperscript{268} He also probably saw a church at Hereford built by Robert of Lorraine.\textsuperscript{269} His description of Bishop Reinhelm is not brief, but it seemed that he did not know about Reinhelm’s project to rebuild Hereford

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\item \textsuperscript{265} VW, ii. 2, pp. 66-67: ‘Perstitit ille hoc nisus oraculo, et ueritatem uaticinii, sicut hodieque uidetur, exsecutus est sudore proprio.’ (Relying on these inspired words, Ealdwine stuck to his resolution, and by his own sweat brought about the fulfilment of the prophecy, as we see today.)
\item \textsuperscript{266} GP, I, iv. 160. 1, pp. 452-453: ‘quo nunc cenobium uisitur’ (where the house can now be seen).
\item \textsuperscript{267} GP, II, p. 209. Thomson and Winterbottom pointed out that there are important variants in William’s story about the fettered Ecgwine travelling to and from Rome, compared to the \textit{Vitae S. Egwini} by Byrhtferth of Ramsey and Dominic of Evesham.
\item \textsuperscript{268} GP, I, iv. 163. 1, pp. 454-455: ‘Trans Sabrinam pene collimitatur Walensibus ciuitas Hereford non grandis, quae tamen fossatorum prueruptorum ruinis ostendat se aliquid magnum fuisse.’ (Across the Severn and almost marching with the Welsh is Hereford, a small city, though by what survives of its steep ditches it shows that it has been something great.)
\item \textsuperscript{269} GP, I, iv. 164. 1, pp. 458-459: ‘Non multo post accepit sedem illam Rotbertus Lotharingus, qui ibi ecclesiam tereti edificavit etiam, Aquensem basilicam pro modo imitatus suo.’ (Soon afterwards the see was taken over by Robert of Lorraine. He built in Hereford a church rounded in form, modelled, so far as he could, on the basilica at Aachen.)
\end{itemize}
Cathedral. 270 This may indicate that he visited there after Reinhelm’s death in 1115.

(36) Chester (a. 1125)

William may have been to Chester before 1125. In the main text of A of the GP, he provided a vivid topography, and Thomson and Winterbottom suggested that he might have seen the extensive Roman remains there. 271 William also recounted one miracle of St Wærburh, which seemed to have come from the locals. 272

(37) Coventry (a. 1125)

In the main text of A of the GP, William transcribed the words from the inscription on a silver casket which housed the arm of St Augustine of Hippo at Coventry. 273 He must have been there before 1125.

(38) Bardney (a. 1125)

270 GP, II, p. 216.
271 GP, I, iv. 172. 4, pp. 466-467: ‘Regio farris et maxime tritici, ut pleraque Aquilonalium, ieiuna et inops, pecorum et piscium ferax. Incolae lac et butirum delitiae habent; qui diciores sunt carnibus uiuunt, panem ordeitium et siligineum pro magno amplectuntur. Transmittitur a Cestra Hiberniam reuehunturque ciuitati necessaria, ut quod minus natura soli habet labor negotiantium apportet.’ (Like most of the north, the district provides little in the way of spelt and especially wheat, but it is rich in cattle and fish. The inhabitants prize their milk and butter; the better off live on flesh, making much of their barley- and wheat-bread. There is trade from Chester to Ireland, and in return comes what the city needs; in this way the hard work of merchants supplies the deficiencies of the soil.) Thomson and Winterbottom’s suggestion can be seen in GP, II, p. 220.
272 GP, I, iv. 172. 6, pp. 466-467: ‘Cuius unum narro miraculum, quod ab incolis celebritate sui famam et memoriam meruit.’ (I shall recount one of her miracles, which has won a deserved reputation among the locals.) Although this miracle had been told by Goscelin in his Vita S. Weburgae, William’s version had some special details which was different from Goscelin’s, see GP, II, p. 221.
273 GP, I, iv. 175. 1, pp. 470-471: ‘Couentreiae habetur brachium Augustini magni, theca inclusum argentea, cernunturque in celatura huuismodi litterae: “Hoc brachium sancti Augustini Egelnodus archiepiscopus rediens a Roma apud Papiam emit centum talentis argentii et talento auri.”’ (At Coventry is kept the arm of the great Augustine, housed in a silver casket. In the engraving can be seen the words: ‘This arm of St Augustine Archbishop Æthelnoth bought at Pavia on his way back from Rome, for 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold.’)
In the early versions of the *GR*, William seemed to have seen the grave of King Æthelred at the monastery of Bardney. He probably had been there before 1125.

(39) *Oxford* (1122-1125, 1126-1137)

William certainly had been to St Frideswide’s at Oxford not long before 1125. In the early versions of the *GR*, he said that he had seen an account about the burning of the church tower in its archives, which is a charter still extant today. He also much praised Guimund, prior of St Frideswide’s, in the main text of A of the *GP*. Since Guimund was the prior from 1122 to c. 1139, we can almost be certain that William had been there between 1122 and 1125. In addition, he related a unique miracle about Guimund’s ship being helped by the strong winds from St Mary during his journey to Jerusalem in the *MBVM*. It is probable that he recorded this miracle from Guimund directly when he was visiting St Frideswide’s between 1122 and 1125, though it is also possible that he went there again between 1126 and 1137 to note the story.

(40) *Woodstock* (a. 1125, 1126-c. 1131)

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274 *GR*, I, i. 49. 9, pp. 74-75: ‘ubi et mausoleum eius usque diem hodiernum usitur’ (the king’s grave is shown there at the present day).
276 *GP*, I, iv. 178. 4, pp. 478-481: ‘Nostro tempore, paucissimis ibi clericis, qui pro libito uiuerent, residuis, datus locus ille a Rogerio Salesberiensi episcopo Guimundo excellentis litteraturae et non aspermandae religionis canonico. Qui non inoperose commisso insudans oper muneris multos ibi canonicos regulariter uicturos Deo exhibuit.’ (In our time, when there were very few clerics there, living as they pleased, the place was given by Roger bishop of Salisbury to Guimund, a canon of excellent education and notable piety. He buckled down to his task with energy, and pleased God with the spectacle of a large number of canons prepared to live there under the Rule.)
277 *MBVM*, 14, p. 52.
William had also been to Woodstock before 1125, where King Henry kept his favourite
menagerie. He mentioned the porcupine there, and depicted the spines that he saw in
detail in the early versions of the *GR*.278 In his *Comm. Lam.*, he even described an
ostrich for his readers.279 His impression of the ostrich probably came from his memory
of an early visit before 1125, when he also saw the spines of the porcupine, though it is
still possible that he visited the royal menagerie again before finishing the *Comm. Lam.*,
namely between 1126 and c. 1131.

(41) *Ramsey* and *Slepe* (a. 1125)

In the main text of A of the *GP*, when William was relating the miracles of St Ivo, who
was buried at Ramsey, he told an event of a monk being cured by the saint, which he
had witnessed personally.280 As Thomson and Winterbottom suggested, it might be a
local monk at Ramsey, which means that William might have visited there before
1125.281 What is more certain is that he must have been to Slepe, since the miracle
spring from St Ivo’s tomb that had cured the monk was at that place.282 He also seemed
to have observed the holy spring up close and had even tasted the water.283

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acutae, similis pennis auacarum ubi desinunt pluamae, sed paulo plus grossae, nigro et albo quasi
intertinctae.’ (The spines, as I have seen for myself, are a palm or more in length, and sharp at both ends,
something like goose quills at the point where the feather-part leaves off, but rather thicker, and as it
were striped black and white.)

quidem habens sed volatu carens. Qualem in Anglia uidimus tempore regis Henrici, extraneorum
monstrorum appettissimi.’ (The ostrich is a large-limbed bird, winged but flightless. We saw such a
one in England in the time of King Henry, that keen collector of prodigious exotica.) As we have
mentioned in Chapter 1, William was probably referring to King Henry in the past tense for the sake of
future readers.

280 *GP*, I, iv. 181. 9, pp. 484-485: ‘Vidi ego quod dicam.’ (I personally witnessed what I shall now relate.)

281 *GP*, II, p. 236.

282 Slepe is later known as St Ives under the influence of St Ivo’s cult.

283 *GP*, I, iv. 181. 8, pp. 484-485: ‘Manat ad hanc diem fons, dulcis potui, accommodus omni ualitudini.’
(The spring flows to this day, sweet to the taste and suitable for the relief of every complaint.)
(42) **Crowland (a. 1125)**

William may have been to Crowland before 1125. In the main text of A of the *GP*, he gave a vivid description of its topography, and he was familiar with the relics there. More importantly, he said that he had spoken with the prior of that place about Earl Waltheof’s miracles.

(43) **Soham (1109-1125)**

From William’s description of the road and the church remains at Soham in the main text of A of the *GP*, it is likely that he had visited there before 1125. Since he was describing the Stuntney causeway, which connected Soham and Ely across the fens and was built during the time of Hervey, bishop of Ely (1109-1131), we may assume that this visit occurred between 1109 and 1125.

(44) **Ely (1109-1125)**

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284 *GP*, I, iv. 182. 1, 3, pp. 486-487: ‘Croland est una insularum iacentium in illo tractu orientalium stagnorum, quae a meditullio terrae orientia et per centum et eo amplius milia fluentia in mare cum multis et magnis fluminibus impetu suo precipitantur… Quanuis enim locus nisi per aquam nusquam adiri possit, tamen ante portam monasterii publicus, ut ita dicam, preternauigantium trames habetur. Quo fit ut pene numquam ibi desint hospites, ultiro citroque commeantes.’ (Crowland is one of the islands that lie in the area of swamps in the east that have their rise in the Midlands and after flowing for a hundred or more miles are carried by their own impetus down many great river channels into the sea… The place cannot be approached from any side except by water, but in front of the monastery door there is, so to say, a public highway for those sailing by. The result is that there is almost never any lack of guests, on their journeys to and fro.)

285 *GP*, I, iv. 182. 6, pp. 488-489: ‘Michi prior loci narruit…’ (The prior of the place told me…)

286 *GP*, I, ii. 74. 2, pp. 234-235: ‘quae est uilla iuxta stagnum, quo dolore et vultibus ire in Heli quondam periculosum nauibus, nunc, facta uia per palustre harundinetum, transitur pedibus. Sunt ibi adhuc inditia diruatae et a Danis incensae ecclesiae.’ (a village on a marsh that was once a danger to ships wishing to reach Ely; but now it can be passed on foot, for a road has been built across the reed-beds. There are still traces of a church there, wrecked, and then burned by the Danes; its collapse buried the inhabitants who had met their ends in the flames.)

William might also have been to Ely before 1125. In the main text of A of the *GP*, he gave a long and vivid description of the special local products at Ely. Similar to Soham, he also mentioned that the newly-built Stuntney causeway provided the land route to reach the island. As Thomson and Winterbottom noticed, however, it is strange that William ignored the brand new church at Ely in his writing.

(45) *Thorney* (a. 1125)

In the main text of A of the *GP*, William gave much praise to the natural environment and buildings at the monastery of Thorney, together with the solitude of monks there and their special way of treating visitors. He may also have seen King Edgar’s

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*288* The local products mentioned by William included fish and water birds, see *GP*, I, iv. 183. 1-2, pp. 488-489: ‘Denique et illorum et omnis pene amnicorum piscium generisenta est copia ut sit aduenis miraculo, indigenis pro illorum ammiratione ludibrio. Nec minor aquaticarum uolucrum uilitas, ut pro unoasse de utroque cibo quinque homines et eo amplius non solum famem pellant, sed etiam satietatem expleant.’ (Indeed there is such a supply of eels and of almost every kind of fresh-water fish that strangers find it astonishing—and the locals find their astonishment a matter for ribaldry. Water birds are no less easy to come by. For a single penny, five men or more cannot merely ward off hunger with these two kinds of food: they can eat their fill.)

*289* *GP*, I, iv. 184. 2, pp. 490-491: ‘Non enim insula tunc nisi nauigio adiri poterat. Sed nostra aetas sollertior etas pontem commenta, aggeribus in paludem iactis tramitem terrestrem, et insulam pedibus accessibilem fecit.’ (The island could not in those days be approached except by water; but our contemporaries, able to bring more expertise to bear, have built a bridge and thrown a causeway over the swamp, thus providing a land route and making it possible to reach the island on foot.)

*290* *GP*, II, p. 241.

*291* *GP*, I, iv. 186. 1-3, pp. 492-495: ‘paradisi simulacrum, quod amenitate iam caelos ipfos imaginetur. In ipsis paludibus arborum ferax, quae enodi proceritate luctantur ad sidera. Nulla ibi uel exigua terrae portio uacat. Aequorea planities he rbarum uiridantibus oculos auocat, currentibus per campum nullus offensioni datur locus. Hic in pomiferas arbores terra se subrigit, hic pretextsit uer uineis, quae uel per terram repunt uel per baiulos palos in altum conantur. Mutuum certamen naturae et cultus, ut quod obliuiscitur illa producat iste. Solitudo ingens ad quietem datur monachis, ut eo tenatius superis quo castigatius mortales conspicient. Quid dietur de aedifitorum decore, quae solum, mirabile quantum inter illas paludes solidum, inconcussis fundamentis sustinet? Femina ibi, si uisitur, monstro habetur, maribus aduenientibus quasi angelis plauditur. Caeterum ibi nullus nisi momentanea conversatuer, famuli monachorum etiam iapi feriatis diebus absent. Vere dixerim insulum illam esse castitatis diuersorium, honestatis contubernium, diuinorum philosophorum gymnasium.’ (It is the image of paradise, and its loveliness gives an advance idea of heaven itself. For all the swamps surrounding it, it supports an abundance of trees, whose tall smooth trunks strain towards the stars. No part of the land, however tiny, is uncultivated. The flat countryside catches the eye with its green carpet of grass; those who hurry across the plain meet nothing that offends. In one place you come across tall fruit trees, in another fields bordered with vines, which creep along the earth or climb high on their props. Nature and art are in competition: what the one forgets the other brings forth. A vast solitude allows the monks a quiet life: the more limited their glimpses of mortal men, the more tenaciously they cleave to things...
foundation charter of 973 and a list of relics at that place. He was very likely to have visited the place before 1125.

8. Wales

(46) **St David's**

William probably had been to St David’s some years after 1125. As Thomson and Winterbottom noticed, he was mentioned in the *Life of St Caradoc*, probably by Gerald of Wales, as being chosen to represent his monastery and be present for Caradoc’s translation at St David’s. This translation took place ‘after many years’ of Caradoc’s burial, which was in 1124. If this account is true, William may have been there before 1140, when his monastery finally got an abbot by election, presumably in the

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heavenly. What shall I say of the beauty of the buildings, which the ground, remarkably solid amid the bogs, supports with the firmest of foundations? Any woman seen there is regarded as a freak; if males visit, they are applauded as though they were angels. But no visitor stays for more than a very short time; even the servants of the monks are dispensed with on feast days. It would be fair to say that the island is an abode of chastity, a society of uprightness, a training ground for godly philosophers.)

292 *GP*, I, iv. 186. 5, pp. 494-495: ‘regis edicto cunctorum episcoporum et optimatum assensu firmato… Quorum nomina scribere ultro refugio, quia barbarum quiddunt.’ (according to the terms of a royal charter that was confirmed by the assent of all the bishops and noblemen… I have chosen not to write down their [i. e. the saints at Thorney] somewhat barbarous names, for they grate on the ear.) Thomson and Winterbottom suggested that William may have seen these documents, see *GP*, II, pp. 242-243. The present form of the royal charter (S 792), which is spurious, can be seen in C. R. Hart, ed., *The Early Charters of Eastern England* (Hertfordshire, 1966), pp. 165-172.

293 Thomson and Winterbottom marked St David’s on their map of William’s visits, but did not include it in their list. See *GP*, II, pp. xli-xliii.

294 *GP*, II, p. xix, n. 1; *MBVM*, 12, p. 49, n. 22. The text which mentioned William’s presence can be found in *NLA*, i., p. 176: ‘Cuius digitum cum Willelmus Malmesburyensis, monachus et historiographus insignis, deuotionis gratia abscidere et secum forte auferre temptaret; sanctus, quasi sentiens membrorum absisionem, collectis in volam digitis et simul in palmam replicatis, manum manica subtraxit. Quo viso, perterritus monachus a sancto humiliter veniam postulauit.’ (whose finger, at that time William of Malmesbury, monk and famous historian, broke with goodwill of devotion, and tried to carry with him by chance; the saint, as though feeling the break of his limbs, with the fingers having been clenched into a fist and then unrolled back to a palm, took away his hand into sleeves. After seeing this, the terrified monk humbly begged pardon from the saint.)

295 *NLA*, i., p. 176: ‘Post multos vero annos…’ (But after many years…)

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Moreover, a piece of information in the MBVM may help us conjecture a more precise time. In that book, William told readers that he heard the miracle involving Guy of Lescar from an archdeacon called Elias. As Thomson and Winterbottom suggested, this man is very likely to be the Elias, who was archdeacon of Brecon in the diocese of St David’s, and William might have spoken with him during the translation of Caradoc. Since I have mentioned in Chapter One that the miracle involving Bishop Guy was probably known by William in or after 1135-1136, which was very likely to be the time when he spoke with Elias, he might have visited St David’s in the mid-1130s.

(47) Bangor (1120-1125)

William may have been to Bangor before 1125. Both in the early versions of the GR and in the main text of A of the GP, he described the existing remains at Bangor and seemed to have seen them with his own eyes. More interesting is the fact that he had sight of a book on the expedition of Emperor Henry V to Rome by David the Scot when he was writing the GR. According to Thomson and Winterbottom, only William

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296 John became the new abbot in early 1140, though he later died in the same year, see JW, iii, pp. 278-280; GS, 46, p. 98; HN, ii. 35, p. 70.
297 MBVM, 12, p. 49.
298 MBVM, 12, p. 49, n. 22.
299 See above, p. 49, n. 149.
300 GR, I, i. 47. 3, pp. 64-65: ‘Quorum incredibilem nostra aetate numerum fuisse inditio sunt in uicino cenobio tot semirutius parietes ecclesiarum, tot anfractus porticuum, tanta turbis ruderum quantum uix alibi cernas.’ (Their numbers would seem incredible in our own day, as is evident from the ruined walls of churches in the monastery near by, the complex arcading, and all that great pile of ruins, such as you would hardly find elsewhere.) GP, I, iv. 185. 2, pp. 492-493: ‘Sunt certe adhuc ibi tot semirutius parietes ecclesiarum, tantae turbae ruinorum, quantae uix alibi.’ (Certainly the existing remains there, including half-ruined walls of churches, are on a scale seen almost nowhere else.)
301 William mentioned some contents in that book, and commented that David was writing panegyric not history, see GR, I, v. 420. 4, pp. 764-765: ‘quia non historiam sed panegericum scrisit’.
identified him with David, bishop of Bangor.\textsuperscript{302} Since David was bishop of Bangor from 1120 to 1138, we can assume that William visited Bangor between 1120 and 1125. There is also another piece of evidence that may prove William’s travel to Wales before 1125, though not necessarily to Bangor. When he was discussing St Aldhelm’s help in amending the religious practices of the Britons in the main text of A of the \textit{GP}, he mentioned that at his time they did not recognise their benefactor and had even lost the book sent by Aldhelm.\textsuperscript{303} He must have been to Wales before 1125, so that he could come to this conclusion. He might have visited other Welsh cities besides Bangor before 1125, but we are not sure about this.

9. The Continent

(48) \textbf{Calais} (a. 1125)

In the main text of A of the \textit{GP}, when William was describing the topography of Dover, he mentioned its closeness to Calais, and that the passage to Dover was the ‘swiftest’ from Calais.\textsuperscript{304} He then continued to depict the rough sea and the danger of sailing in that confined strait.\textsuperscript{305} These words are not included in Faricius’s account, and are

\textsuperscript{302} \textit{GR}, II, p. 385.
\textsuperscript{303} \textit{GP}, I, v. 215. 7, pp. 544-545: ‘Debent usque hodie Britones correctionem suam Aldelmo, quanuis pro insita nequitia et uiurum non agnoscant et uolumen pessum dederint.’ (To this day, the Britons owe their reform to Aldhelm; but such is their inherent wickedness that they do not recognize their benefactor and have lost the book he wrote for them.)
\textsuperscript{304} \textit{GP}, I, v. 224. 1, pp. 564-565: ‘Citissimus eo a Morinis transitus paucorum admodum milium traiectu.’ (it is to here that one can make the swiftest passage from Calais, a very few miles away.)
\textsuperscript{305} \textit{GP}, I, v. 224. 1, pp. 564-565: ‘Quo fit ut in illius spatii angustia inter se currentes et illidentes fluctus minima occasione pelagus exasperent, ibique maxime incurrutur periculum, ubi sperabatur periculorum effugium.’ (As a result, in that confined strait, the waves collide and clash, and it takes little for them to make the sea rough: one is especially at risk just where one was hoping to have escaped all danger.)
William’s own supplement. He might have made such a journey from Calais to Dover before 1125, though it is also possible that he was just imagining the background to Aldhelm’s miracle of calming the tempest.

(49) Rouen (a. 1125)

It seems that William had visited Rouen before 1125. In the early versions of the GR, when he was relating the attempt of Robert, duke of Normandy, to gather the ships to invade England, he seemed to have seen the ship remains at Rouen. If he did make such a trip, it must have occurred before 1125. There is one possible counter-example in the HN, where he seemed to have not been to the convent of Notre-Dame-du-Pré, which is on the coast near Rouen. He only ‘heard’ some information about that priory. It is still possible, however, that he heard about it from the locals in Rouen city. He could still have visited Rouen even though he had not been to the coastal area nearby.

(50) Bayeux (a. 1125)

Many scholars believed that the Bayeux Tapestry was an important source for William’s description of the battle of Hastings in the GR, especially for his account of King

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307 *GR*, I, ii. 180. 11, pp. 320-321: ‘Reliquiae ratium, multo tempore dissolutarum, Rotomagi adhuc nostra aetate usebantur.’ (The remains of the ships, much damaged by long lapse of time, were still to be seen at Rouen in our own day.) William’s source about Robert’s intended invasion is presumably based on William of Jumièges, and the latter did not mention any ship remains at Rouen, see GND, II, vi. 9 (10), pp. 76-78.

308 *HN*, i. 13, pp. 26-27: ‘Reliquiae interaneorum in cenobio sanctae Mariae de Pratis iuxta urbem humate; quod ipse, ut audio, a matre sua inchoatum, non paucis comendis honorauerat.’ (The innards were buried near the city in the convent of Notre-Dame-du-Pré, which had been founded by his mother and distinguished by himself, I hear, with no small endowments.)
Harold’s death.  Although there are many theories about the patronage of the Bayeux Tapestry, Odo, bishop of Bayeux, is still the most likely candidate, and it was probably intended as a decoration for the walls of his cathedral. If this is true, then William might have been to Bayeux and have seen the Tapestry there before 1125, so that he could base his accounts on it.

(51) Metz (a. c. 1119)

Matthias M. Tischler suggested that William may have known a codex of annals from Metz before c. 1119, based on his research on the manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lat. Class. d. 39, s. XII[med]. As Thomson suggested that such works were not common in twelfth-century England, this raises an interesting possibility that William had been to Metz before c. 1119.

(52) Reims (a. c. 1119)

According to Thomson, William seemed to have had access to various sorts of Reims materials in his collections of Pope Leo the Great’s letters, John the Scot’s Periphyseon, and computistic texts, apart from his Liber Pontificalis and GR. Thomson suggested


312 Thomson, William of Malmesbury, p. 139.

that William might have certain friends who transcribed those materials for him.\footnote{Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 125.} In my opinion, it is possible that William had visited there to get some of these materials, and meanwhile, he built certain friendships which facilitated his future access to other materials. This trip perhaps occurred before c. 1119. He might have spent some time at Reims just before or after his visit to Metz.

(53) **Aachen** (a. 1125)

In the main text of A of the *GP*, William mentioned that the church at Hereford built by Robert of Lorraine was modelled on the basilica at Aachen.\footnote{*GP*, I, iv. 164. 1, pp. 458-459: ‘qui ibi ecclesiam tereti edificauit scemate, Aquensem basilicam pro modo imitatus suo.’ (He built in Hereford a church rounded in form, modelled, so far as he could, on the basilica at Aachen.)} Thomson and Winterbottom suggested that William may have seen Charlemagne’s palace chapel at Aachen, so that he could write down such a comment.\footnote{*GP*, II, pp. 214-215.} If this really happened, the time for William’s visit must be before 1125.

(54) **Arras** (1130-1135)

Above in (1), when I was discussing the change of words by William from ‘apud sanctum Edmundum’ (at St Edmund’s) in the *AG* to ‘in nonnullis locis’ (in several places) in the C version of the *GR*, I raised the possibility that William might have been to Canterbury between 1130 and 1135 to examine the B. *Life* again more carefully at St Augustine’s. It is still likely, however, that William was not referring to the text at St Augustine’s, but somewhere else. Except the Cotton manuscript from St Augustine’s,
there are still two extant editions of the B. *Life*: one at Arras, the other at S. Gall.\footnote{317}{stubbs, ed., *memorials*, p. xxvi.}
The S. Gall copy originated from the monastery of Squires in Gascony at an early period, where William seems unlikely to have visited.\footnote{318}{according to stubbs, the edition probably witnessed the death of abbo of fleury in 1004 at squires, see stubbs, ed., *memorials*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.}
On the other hand, Arras is a city not very far from Normandy and Calais, and the copy there also preserves the similar words that William mentioned both in the *AG* and in the C version of the *GR*.\footnote{319}{stubbs, ed., *memorials*, p. 7.}
It is possible that he might have seen that copy at Arras during his visit on the Continent, and hence changed those words in his revision of the *GR*. If so, his visit to Arras might have occurred between 1130 and 1135.

\section*{55) L’Aumône Abbey (1122 or 1123)}

It is noteworthy that William had presented much information on the Cistercians in his *GR* by 1125, while its earliest foundation in England was the Waverley Abbey in 1128.\footnote{320}{for the foundation of the waverley abbey, see c. kerry, *a history of waverley abbey, in the county of surrey* (guildford, 1873 [1872]), p. 2; h. e. malden, ed., *the victoria history of the county of surrey*, vol. ii (westminster, 1905), p. 77; knowles, *the monastic order in england*, p. 175.}
From Chapter 334 to 337 in the *GR*, he narrated both the early history and the liturgy of the Cistercians in detail, and some modern scholars have noticed the general accuracy of his account.\footnote{321}{gr, i, iv. 334-337, pp. 576-585; gr, ii, pp. 288-289; knowles, *the monastic order in england*, p. 226; l. j. lekai, *the cistercians: ideals and reality* (ohio, 1977), p. 23.}
He mentioned that Guy, the previous archbishop of Vienne, was ‘the present pope’, so he was certainly writing this part during Pope Calixtus II’s tenure (1119-1124).\footnote{322}{gr, i, iv. 335. 2, p. 580: ‘qui nunc apostolicus est’. for the tenure of pope calixtus ii, see j. w. o’malley, *a history of the popes: from peter to the present* (maryland, 2010), p. 335.}
William’s descriptions on the development of the event and the
liturgy bear some similarities to Orderic Vitalis’s narrative, who was writing on the Cistercians in c. 1135, around a decade later.\textsuperscript{323} Much of William’s information is also similar to the early Cistercian documents, such as the \textit{Exordium parvum}, the \textit{Charter of Charity}, the \textit{Exordium Cistercii}, and the \textit{Ecclesiastica officia}.\textsuperscript{324} William’s narrative, however, is special in three aspects. The first is his concise but informative account on Stephen Harding’s life before becoming a monk at Molesme, and his constant emphasis on Harding’s significant role in the foundation and development of the Cistercian Order.

Second, according to Thomson and Winterbottom, William’s details on the Cistercian liturgy cannot all be found in the \textit{Ecclesiastica officia}, and he ‘may be recording some earlier practices modified or abandoned’ in that document.\textsuperscript{325} Last but not least, as Thomson and Winterbottom also noticed, the figures of Cistercian filiations seem to be ‘both up-to-date and reasonably accurate’.\textsuperscript{326} According to the table of the genealogy of the Cistercian houses by Frédéric van der Meer, there were eighteen abbeys (not including Cîteaux) up to 1121, two new ones in 1123, and five more in 1124.\textsuperscript{327}

\textsuperscript{323} \textit{OV}, IV, pp. 310-327. Orderic mentioned that the time of his writing was ‘about thirty-seven years since Abbot Robert founded Cîteaux’, so he was writing in c. 1135, see \textit{OV}, IV, pp. 324-325: ‘Iam fere xxxvii anni sunt ex quo Robertus abbas ut dictum est Cistercium incoluit.’ Here I disagree with Thomson and Winterbottom’s opinion, who thought that William’s and Orderic’s accounts bear ‘remarkable similarities’, see \textit{GR}, II, p. 289. William’s description always focused on Stephen Harding from the beginning to the end, while Orderic only mentioned Harding in several sentences. In addition, unlike William, he devoted much length to the debate between Robert of Molesme and monks of Molesme.


\textsuperscript{325} \textit{GR}, II, p. 291.

\textsuperscript{326} \textit{GR}, II, p. 294.

\textsuperscript{327} F. van der Meer, \textit{Atlas de L’ordre Cistercien} (Paris, 1965), pp. 22-28. The list of the Cistercian monasteries until 1124 is as follows : Cîteaux (1098), La Ferté (1113), Pontigny (1114), Clairvaux (1115), Morimond (1115), Troisfontaines (1118), Preuilly (1118), Bouras (1119), Cadouin (1119), Fontenay (1119), La Cour-Dieu (1119), Bonnevaux [in Vienne] (1119), Tiglieto (1120), Bellevaux (1120), Mazah
William’s testimony was that sixteen abbeys had been founded by Harding, and seven mere had begun.\textsuperscript{328} Although William’s figure of sixteen is two less than the eighteen abbeys until 1121, Thomson and Winterbottom believed that the number seven mentioned by him is certainly referring to the houses founded between 1123 and 1124.\textsuperscript{329} If we take William’s figures seriously, then he probably got the information in 1121, since two more houses were still in progress to be founded in that year. This seems to be too early for William to know the preparation for three more abbeys in 1124. Therefore, I agree with Thomson and Winterbottom’s beliefs, and furthermore, I suggest that William probably got the information in 1122 or 1123, though his source or his memory on the number of Cistercian houses before 1122 may have been a little faulty.

The question here is where did William get such special information? It is noted that Harding had some sort of connection with the monastery of Sherborne in Dorsetshire, which William had probably visited several times. So did his source come from Sherborne? According to William, Harding was English born and once a monk of Sherborne, who was later attracted by worldly desire and left the abbey.\textsuperscript{330} Harding’s identity as a previous English monk of Sherborne is also proved by his letter to Abbot

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\textsuperscript{328} \textit{GR}, I, iv. 337. 2, pp. 582-583: ‘cuius quanti sit meritum testantur abbatiae sedecim iam per eum factae, septem ceptae’ (to whose outstanding merit bear witness the sixteen abbeys which he has already founded, and seven begun).

\textsuperscript{329} \textit{GR}, II, p. 294.

\textsuperscript{330} \textit{GR}, I, iv. 334. 2, pp. 578-579: ‘Is fuit Hardingus nominee, apud Anglos non ita recondites natalibus procreates, a puero Scireburniae monachus; sed cum adolescentem seculi urtica sollicitaret, pannos illos perosus, primo Scottiam, mox Frantiam contendit.’ (This man’s name was Harding; he was born in England of parents by no means obscure, and he had been from boyhood a monk of Sherborne, but as he grew up and felt an itch to live in the world, he came to hate his old sordid habit and made his way first to Scotland and then to France.)
Thurstan of Sherborne probably in the early 1130s. As Jean Leclercq suggested, it is possible that William obtained the information on Harding’s life from Sherborne. We already know that William once talked with an old priest about the virtues of Ælfwold, bishop of Sherborne (d. 1058), probably at Sherborne, and it would not be a surprise if he had heard from some local monks who had known the young Harding. It is less likely, however, that Sherborne would have sources on the detailed liturgy or history of the Cistercian Order before 1125, either in text or oral form. No matter the young Harding left the monastery of Sherborne for the attraction of the outside world, or for the reason of his family involved in the revolts against William the Conqueror as some scholars have argued, it could not be a happy memory for Harding in later years. In addition, Waddell’s analysis of Harding’s letter to Abbot Thurstan has shown ‘the strained relations’ between Sherborne monastery and the Cistercian Order, hidden under Harding’s warm words. We may assume that such strained relations had already existed in the previous years when William visited Sherborne. Thus, it is unlikely that Sherborne would have detailed information on the Cistercians apart from some old monks’ memory of the young Harding. If not Sherborne, it is even more


333 This is pointed out by Waddell, see Waddell, ‘An Exegesis of Stephen Harding’s Letter to Sherborne’, p. 103. In the first modern biography of Stephen Harding, John Dalgairms already noticed the possible connection between him and the family of Harding of Meriet, see J. D. Dalgairms, Life of St Stephen Harding: Abbot of Cîteaux and Founder of the Cistercian Order (London, 1898 [1845]), p. 2. Some scholars believed that this family connection and the political concern was the reason for Stephen Harding’s departure from Sherborne, see C. Stercal, Stephen Harding: A Biographical Sketch and Texts, trans. M. F. Krieg (Minnesota, 2008), pp. 10-12.

doubtful that William could have found all those pieces of information somewhere else in England before 1125. There is no evidence for the circulation of Cistercian documents in England at that time, and even the ‘early’ date of those Cistercian texts is uncertain and debatable.335

The only possible explanation is that William got the news on the Cistercians during his visit to the Continent, when he may have visited certain Cistercian houses. Some scholars have maintained that William gained the information from L’Aumône Abbey, which was founded in 1121, and was the parent-house of the future Cistercian Waverley Abbey.336 Others thought that William might have met Harding at Cîteaux.337 In my opinion, L’Aumône Abbey seems to be more likely, for it is closer to Normandy, and Stephen Harding is said to have been there in person to help the foundation.338 As I have discussed above, William probably got the information on the Cistercians in 1122 or 1123, so his journey was likely to have occurred at that time.339 We may imagine that when William visited the place, the monks there still retained fresh and exciting memories of Harding’s previous presence at their abbey, hence telling William much

339 Some scholars believed that the journey took place between 1120 and 1122, see Veyssière, ‘Les relations entre Etienne Harding, Bernard de Clairvaux et l'abbaye de Molesmes’, p. 56; Stercal, Stephen Harding, p. 7, n. 2. Nevertheless, as I have discussed in the previous paragraphs, 1122 or 1123 is a more possible date.
about Harding’s deeds with some exaggeration. With the hospitality of the monks there, William was also able to observe their liturgy in detail, and get some information on the figures of Cistercian foundations, though his memory went a little wrong when he was writing those parts in the *GR* one or two years later.

10. Places that William Did Not Visit

There are a few places that William seemed not to have visited at least before 1125. The first one is Peterborough. In the main text of A of the *GP*, William was clearly not sure whether the arm of the saint king Oswald was kept there.340 Second, he had not visited Romsey Abbey. He acknowledged his ignorance of stories of the two virgins who he knew to rest there, and promised to give more treatment if he ever learned of them, a promise which he never fulfilled.341 The third place is Lichfield. When William was talking about its topography, as Thomson and Winterbottom have suggested, his words implied that he was apparently not aware of the new Romanesque cathedral.342

Moreover, in his *GR*, William’s information about St Paul’s Jarrow and St Peter’s

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340 *GP*, I, iv. 180. 3, pp. 482-483: ‘sed fides dictorum uacillat ubi nichil auditor uisu explorat. Hoc uero non ideo dixerim quod de integritate Sancti sim dubius, sed utrum eo loci contineatur nolo esse affirmator preproperus.’ (but the truth of words is in doubt where the hearer cannot use sight to test them. I say this not because I am in any doubt as to the saint’s incorruption, but because I do not want to assert his presence in the place too hastily.)

341 *GP*, I, ii. 78. 7, pp. 276-277: ‘Apud Rumesiam, quod cenobium precellentissimus rex Edgarus instituit, noui iacere duarum uirginum corpora, Merewinnae et Elfledae, quarum gesta, quia nescio, non tam pretereo quam ad maiorem scribendi diligentiam reseruo, si forte cognouero.’ (At Romsey, a house founded by that most excellent King Edgar, I know that the bodies of two virgins, Mærwynn and Ælfflæd, lie. As I am ignorant of their story, I am not so much passing it over as reserving it for more careful treatment if I ever learn it.)

342 *GP*, II, p. 219; *GP*, I, iv. 172. 1, pp. 464-465: ‘Aecclesia angusto situ erat, antiquorum uirorum mediocratatem et abstinentiam preferens: locus pudendus nostri aei episcopis, in quo episcopalis dignitas duersari debebet.’ (The church, on its cramped site, gave a good idea of the moderation and restraint of the ancients; our modern bishops would not think it a fit place of residence for episcopal dignity.)
Monkwearmouth situated on both sides of the Wear is clearly wrong, which indicates that he had not visited them. Finally, William was not sure whether Oswald’s arms and hands were still kept at Bamburgh, just like the case for Peterborough. He certainly had not visited there.

To sum up, William had not visited Peterborough, Romsey, Lichfield, Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, and Bamburgh at least before 1125, since all these pieces of evidence come from the GR and GP. It is even more likely, however, that he did not visit them throughout his whole life. It seems unlikely that he would have forgotten to change the information if he had been there later in his life, for he probably continued his redactions until his death.

Through the analysis of the information in William’s various works and versions, we have so far found much evidence for his visits to different places and suggested possible time periods for such travels. Some of these pieces of evidence are more reliable, whereas others are more obscure and uncertain, hence only raising the possibility that William made such a visit. It is important to emphasise again that more

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343 *GR*, I, i. 54. 2, pp. 82-83: ‘Cuius utrasque ripas Benedictus quidam aeclesiis insigniuit et monasteria ibidem construxit, alterum Petri alterum Pauli nomine, caritatis et regulae unione non discrepantia.’ (Both its banks were enriched with churches by a certain Benedict, who also built two monasteries there, one called St Peter’s, the other St Paul’s, but both united in the bond of love and discipline.) St Peter’s is on the north bank of the Wear, and St Paul’s is on the south bank of the Tyne.

344 *GR*, I, i. 49. 7, pp. 72-75: ‘Quo loci quia opinione fluctuo utrum ad hunc diem seruentur, precipitem affirmationem non emitto. Si quid alii historiographi temere sunt professi, ipsi iudicant; michi fama ulius constet, ne quicquam nisi absoluta fide dignum pronuntiem.’ (Whether they are kept in that place to this day, I am far from certain, and therefore do not venture a definite opinion; if other historians have committed themselves, I leave that to them, hoping that I shall always put a lower value on mere rumour, and set down nothing except what deserves complete acceptance.)
work needs to be done to investigate the correlations and contradictions we find, which will give more credit to some of our suggested visits by William, while disproving others. This will be the task of the next chapter. Nevertheless, through the efforts of the present chapter, we are able to get a preliminary itinerary for William as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Location(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1109-1118</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1109-1125</td>
<td>Soham, Ely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1115-1125</td>
<td>Hereford</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. c. 1119</td>
<td>Metz, Reims</td>
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<tr>
<td>1119-1125</td>
<td>Gloucester</td>
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<tr>
<td>1120-1125</td>
<td>Malvern, Bangor</td>
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<tr>
<td>1121-1123</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1122 or 1123</td>
<td>L’Aumône Abbey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1122-1125</td>
<td>Canterbury, Oxford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Durham, Hexham, Ripon, Worcester, Tewkesbury, Evesham, Chester, Coventry, Bardney, Woodstock, Ramsey and Slepe, Crowland, Thorney, Calais, Rouen, Bayeux, Aachen

p. 1125 Sherborne, South Dorset: Corfe and Wareham, Doulting

c. 1126 Worcester, Malvern

1126-1129 Canterbury, London, Bury St Edmunds

1126-c. 1131 Woodstock

1126-1137 Oxford

1126-1140 Rochester

c. 1127-1130 Glastonbury

1130-1135 Canterbury, Arras

Mid-1130s Bury St Edmunds, Winchester, Milton, Muchelney, St David’s

1139 Winchester

p. 1140 Canterbury

1141 Winchester

Places that William did not visit Peterborough, Romsey, Lichfield, Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, and Bamburgh
Chapter Three

General Patterns for William of Malmesbury’s Itinerary

In Chapter Two, we provided a large amount of information mainly from William of Malmesbury’s works, some of which shows the high likelihood of his visiting some places during specific time periods, while others merely suggest the possibility to some extent. Much of the information is only based on William’s own ambiguous expressions, hence creating a risk of overinterpreting his words, especially when it comes to some specific places. Basing conclusions on the interpretation of individual words or phrases to reconstruct his itinerary is too risky, but if we consider them together and find correlations and contradictions, we may be able to present some conjectures and even recover some general patterns in his itinerary, such as the time period and geographical regions which his different journeys involved. Even if one or two pieces of evidence are later found to be problematic, we can still get some useful insights as long as many others point in the same direction. This is what I am trying to do in this chapter. I will compare the information from the second chapter and do some further analysis in order to discern some patterns in his itinerary. Then I will combine the results from the last chapter into these patterns and indicate the possibility of some visits. It will be shown that William was likely to have taken long or short journeys many times throughout his life, and reasons for these travels will be discussed as well. At the end of this chapter, a more refined itinerary will be presented.

William of Malmesbury’s Travel before 1125
William is highly likely to have taken two long journeys before 1125, the finishing date of the early versions of his GR and GP. One journey was probably taken between c. 1115 and 1118, while the other was between 1120 and 1125, presumably in c. 1122/23.

William’s first long journey which we are able to identify, is almost certain to have occurred after 1109. On the one hand, if William saw the first versions of Eadmer’s Historia Novorum and Vita Anselmi at Christ Church, Canterbury, he must have visited there after 1109, for both of them were finished in or shortly after that year.345 On the other hand, William’s description of the Stuntney causeway in Cambridgeshire probably provided a terminus post quem for his early travels, since it was built during the time of Hervey, bishop of Ely (1109-1131), though his visit cannot be attributed to his first long journey for certain.346

In fact, William probably undertook his first long journey between c. 1115 and 1118. Thomson correctly suggested the relation between William’s early travel and Queen Matilda’s sponsorship, since William mentioned the Queen’s concern over the history of her predecessors in his letter to her daughter and namesake.347 In that very letter, it was mentioned that the monks at Malmesbury first presented a list of the English kings with names and dates to the Queen, and then she requested them to undertake the project of writing a full history of the English kings, which became the GR later.348 The letter

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345 For the finishing time of the original forms of these two works, see G. Bosanquet, trans., Eadmer’s History of Recent Events in England: Historia Novorum in Anglia (London, 1964), p. xi; R. W. Southern, ed. and trans., The Life of St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury by Eadmer (London, 1972 [1962]), p. x. Also see Chapter 2, Canterbury (1).
346 See Chapter 2, Soham (43) and Ely (44).
347 Thomson, William of Malmesbury, p. 18.
348 GR, 1, Ep. ii. 5, pp. 8-9: ‘Exigua igitur scedula seriem et nomina simul et annos regum Anglorum
also indicated that William had started the writing of the \textit{GR}, very likely having finished a small part, before the Queen’s death in 1118.\textsuperscript{349} William must have taken some long travels to collect the materials he needed for writing the \textit{GR} before he was confident enough to start the work. The materials for his \textit{Liber Pontificalis} that was finished in or soon after 1119 very likely came from this long journey as well. Therefore, Thomson’s suggestion of c. 1115 as the beginning date of William’s ‘grand tour’ is reasonable.\textsuperscript{350}

There is another piece of evidence which may support this chronology of c. 1115-1118. William’s narrative of Hildebrand, the future Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), from Chapter 263 to 265 in the \textit{GR}, has a very clear affinity with the second recension of the \textit{Dicta Anselmi et Quaedam Miracula} by Alexander of Canterbury, presumably made in c. 1115.\textsuperscript{351} The story of Hildebrand learning the thoughts of Hugh, abbot of Cluny, in Chapter 263, and that of him seeing God and his angel and predicting the future disaster in Chapter 264, were not included in the original form of Alexander’s work, but were added later into the second recension.\textsuperscript{352} William’s version of the story in Chapter 265, focusing on Hildebrand’s miracle of overcoming a simoniac bishop, was much closer to Alexander’s revised one as well.\textsuperscript{353} It is without doubt that

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\textit{complecti fecimus. Tum uero grandiusculae narrationis illecta desiderio, facile dulcedine qua pollebat effecit ut plenam de antecessoribus eius meditari fecissemus historiam.’} (We therefore arranged for the drawing up of a brief list of the English kings, both names and dates. She was then attracted by the project of a somewhat fuller narrative, and with that charm which was one of her strong points she easily induced us to contemplate a full history of her predecessors.)
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\textsuperscript{349} \textit{GR}, I, Ep. ii. 6, pp. 8-9: ‘Sed uix imperatis institeramus cum illum repente Fortuna, profectibus Angliae imuidens, immortalitatis, ut speramus, sedibus dedicavit.’ (Scarcely however had we started on our task when on a sudden Fortune, grudging the success achieved by England, removed her, as we trust, to the realm of immortality.)

\textsuperscript{350} Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, pp. 18, 76.


\textsuperscript{352} Alexander’s version of the two stories were in c. 25-26 of his work after the second recension, see Southern and Schmitt, eds., \textit{Memorials of St Anselm}, pp. 211-213. William’s version of them can be seen in \textit{GR}, I, iii. 263-264, pp. 486-489.

\textsuperscript{353} The clear difference between the original form of the story and the revised one in Alexander’s work
Alexander was William’s source for these stories, not only for the reason of the affinity between their versions, but also because of the fact that William clearly told readers that at least one of the stories came from the ‘relatio’ (narration) of someone who heard them from the mouth of Hugh abbot of Cluny, which was definitely Alexander’s claim. William’s use of the word ‘relatio’ and the variants between his and Alexander’s narrative indicate that he probably derived these stories from Alexander orally. Therefore, William was very likely to have heard them from Alexander at least at a late stage of the latter’s second recension, finished in c. 1115, and Canterbury was the most likely place where such a conversation could take place. Even if the variants originated from William’s own alteration of Alexander’s work, it might still mean that he received the work after c. 1115, probably during his visit to Christ Church.

was discussed by its modern editors, see Southern and Schmitt, eds., Memorials of St Anselm, p. 22. The miracle is in Chapter 28, see ibid., pp. 215-216. William’s version can be seen in GR, I, iii. 265, pp. 488-491.

354 GR, I, iii. 263. 1, pp. 486-487: ‘Verum quia Hildebrandi mentio se ingessit, de eo dicam quae non friuolo auditu hausi, sed seria relatione eius audiui qui se illa ex ore Hugonis abbatis Cluniacensis audisse iuraret.’ (Now, since I have had occasion to mention Hildebrand, I will give an account of him, which I have not absorbed open-mouthed from frivolous gossip but learnt from the serious narrative of someone who swore that he had heard the facts from the mouth of Hugh abbot of Cluny.) Alexander’s claim can be seen in Southern and Schmitt, eds., Memorials of St Anselm, p. 196: ‘Ubi cum duobus mensibus moraremur, frequenter in die antistes videlicet et abbas colloquebantur de caelestis vitae patria, de virtutis morum institutione, de bonorum virorum sancta et admirabili operatione. Quibus cum saepe interfuissem, de beato Iacobo apostolo, fratre Iohannis evangelistae, et alia nonnulla, quae eodem abbate narrante cognovi, memoriae ne posteris laterent commendare curavi.’ (At that place [i. e. the Cluny Abbey], since we were staying for two months, the archbishop [i. e. Anselm of Canterbury] and the abbot [i. e. Hugh of Cluny] talked frequently during the day about heaven, the institution of morality, and the holy and admirable deeds of good man. Since I had often taken part in these conversations, I took care to commend the memory about St James the Apostle, the brother of John the Evangelist, and some other things which I learnt from the narration of the same abbot, in order that the posterity would not forget them.)

355 GR, II, pp. 248-249. Here it is strange that Thomson and Winterbottom said that William’s expression ‘narratio’ suggested a written source, for William’s word was ‘relatio’ instead, which can both mean word or oral account. In fact, at least in one place in the GP, William seemed to use ‘relatio’ to specially refer to oral account, see GP, I, iii. 99. prol. 7, pp. 326-327: ‘Dicamigitur in hoc libro, qui tertius est Pontificialis Gestorum, quicquid se de pontificibus Eboracensibus notitiae nostrae uel maiorum relatione uel librorum revolucione infudit.’ (In this book, therefore, the third of the History of the Bishops, I shall put down all I have learned of the bishops of York either from the accounts of our elders or by turning the pages of books.) In this sentence, it is natural to regard ‘maiorum relatione’ as oral account and ‘librorum revolucione’ as written words.
We may assume that during this visit, William had several conversations with both Alexander and Eadmer, got sight of a copy of the first versions of Eadmer’s *Historia Novorum* and *Vita Anselmi*, and investigated the archives of Christ Church.

William’s early access to some Continental materials, shown by the evidence concerning Metz (51) and Reims (52), suggests his possible visit to the Continent before the finishing time of his *Liber Pontificalis*, namely c. 1119. Reims’s position is roughly halfway between Rouen and Metz. If William really made a trip to Metz, he was very likely to stop by Reims on his journey to or from Metz. It is reasonable that he might have made such a ‘Continental tour’ in order to collect materials which were uncommon in England, like the Metz Annals, in the early twelfth century, in order to make solid preparations for his *GR* and *Liber Pontificalis*.356 As Thomson suggested, William’s collection of Continental materials, which is witnessed by a later manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lat. Class. d. 39, s. XII\textsuperscript{med}, was highly likely to be compiled before 1118 as an enterprise prompted by Queen Matilda’s request of the production of the *GR*, hence this ‘Continental tour’ probably took place between c. 1115 and 1118 as well, under the Queen’s sponsorship.357

Compared to William’s first long journey before the 1120s, there is more evidence to support the existence of his travels between 1120 and 1125. In the dedication letter

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356 Thomson pointed out the Continental materials known by William were uncommon in twelfth-century England, such as Suetonius’s *Vitae Caesarum*, Einhard’s *Vita Karoli*, Aulus Gellius’s florilegium, the *Cesar tantus eras*, the Metz Annals and the *Visio Karoli*, and the manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lat. Class. d. 39, s. XII\textsuperscript{med} that preserves these materials was copied from a lost book with same contents written by or for William. See Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 137-150. Some of these materials were already used by William in the *Liber Pontificalis*, hence indicating an early date before c. 1119 for collecting them. See Tischler, *Einharts Vita Karoli*, p. 1397.

to Empress Matilda, the Queen’s daughter, William mentioned that he had ceased his writing of the *GR* for some time because of his grief for her mother’s death, until he was prevailed upon to continue by the requests from friends and his own realisation of the value of the project.\(^{358}\) It is likely that he did not restart the *GR* until he had finished the *Liber Pontificalis* and, as we are going to demonstrate, he probably took another long journey to collect more materials for his writings of the *GR* and *GP*.

William had certainly visited Gloucester, for he had investigated the archives of St Oswald’s Priory before 1125, and his description of the topography of Gloucester is the most vivid throughout his *GP*.\(^{359}\) His mention of the Severn Bore, together with the Foreign Bridge, whose construction was not begun until 15 May 1119, strongly proved such a visit in the early 1120s.\(^{360}\) In addition, William’s conversation with Walcher, prior of Malvern (1120-1135), and his narrative of the origin of Great Malvern Priory, suggest his possible visit to that place between 1120 and 1125.\(^{361}\) Moreover, his description of the existing remains at Bangor and his unique identification of David the Scot as bishop of Bangor (1120-1138) also raised the strong likelihood of his visit during the same time period.\(^{362}\) All of these pieces of evidence may be part of William’s long journey between 1120 and 1125.

There is some other evidence which may help to provide an even more precise date.

\(^{358}\) *GR*, I, Ep. ii. 6, pp. 8-9: ‘Enimuero procedente tempore rupere silentium tum amicorum petitio, tum rei utilitas, quia uiuebat et erat indignum ut tantorum uiorum sepeliretur memoria, immorerevertur gesta.’ (Then, as time went on, our silence was broken, partly by requests from our friends, partly by the value of the project, for it both seemed and was quite wrong that the memory of those great men should remain buried and their deeds die with them.)

\(^{359}\) See Chapter 2, Gloucester (31).

\(^{360}\) See Chapter 2, Gloucester (31).

\(^{361}\) See Chapter 2, Malvern (33).

\(^{362}\) See Chapter 2, Bangor (47).
On the one hand, it is certain that William had visited Reading, because he offered lavish praise of the Cluniac monks there, and he surely travelled to this place after the abbey’s foundation in 1121, probably before its first abbot, Hugh of Amiens, arrived in 1123.363 On the other hand, William’s use of Eadmer’s revised versions of *Historia Novorum* and *Vita Anselmi* and Eadmer’s own source of the notorious Canterbury forgeries might indicate his visit to Canterbury between 1122 and 1125.364 William also investigated the archives at St Frideswide’s, Oxford, before he finished the early versions of his *GR*, and meanwhile, he greatly praised Prior Guimund (1122-c. 1139) at that place in the main text of manuscript A of the *GP*, indicating that he certainly travelled to Oxford between 1122 and 1125.365 The overlap of the chronology of William’s visit to Reading (16), Canterbury (1) and Oxford (39) suggests an interesting possibility that he made these travels in c. 1122/23. Coincidentally, this is also the time when he probably visited L’Aumône Abbey, which is a place not far from Normandy, so that he could have received the detailed information about Cistercians before the first Cistercian house in England, Waverley Abbey, was founded in 1128.366 From the

363 See Chapter 2, Reading (16).
364 See Chapter 2, Canterbury (1). The Canterbury forgeries first appeared in Book Five of Eadmer’s *Historia Novorum*, which was a part added into the later version completed around 1122. Eadmer described the ‘discovery’ of these materials in his work, which seemed to happen in c. 1121, see M. Rule, ed., *Eadmeri Historia Novorum in Anglia, et, Opuscula Duo de Vita Sancti Anselmi et Quibusdam Miraculis Ejus* (London, 1884), p. 261: ‘Ex his ergo ad haec investiganda multorum sollicitudo, ut diximus, evigilavit, et confisa justitiae ecclesiae Dei, antiquorum scriniorum abdita, sacrorum evangeliorum volumina, soli decori domus Domini eatenus inservientia, diligentius perscrutata est. Ecce autem ut voluntas justi amans optato effectu non privaretur, quae subscribimus, revelante Deo, privilegia quaedam reperta sunt, firma undique et apostolica auctoritate subnixa. Sunt autem haec.’ (Therefore, since then, as we have said, many people were concerned about investigating these things, and the secrets of the ancient caskets, which relied on the justice of the Holy Church, and the books of the sacred Gospels, which had been so far only devoted to the honour of Heaven, are searched more diligently. But behold, in order that the good will of justice, which we write below, may not be deprived of the desired effect, by the revelation of God, certain privileges were found, completely relying on the solid apostolic authority. Here are the documents.)
365 See Chapter 2, Oxford (39).
366 See Chapter 2, L’Aumône Abbey (55).
evidence that we have mentioned so far, we may suppose that William took his second long journey in c. 1122/23, which would certainly cover Gloucester (31), Reading (16) and Oxford (39), and highly likely include Malvern (33), Bangor (47), Canterbury (1) and L’Aumône Abbey (55).

It is even more interesting that collecting information for his writings of the GR and GP might not be the only reason for some parts of his second long journey, if we consider the evidence concerning Oxford (39) and Woodstock (40) together. William certainly visited King Henry’s menagerie at Woodstock before 1125 as he described the spines of the porcupine there.367 So far, we are not able to determine a more precise date for such a single piece of evidence. Nevertheless, his travel to Woodstock might be related to his visit to Oxford, for these two places are very close to each other. This means that it is likely that he travelled to Woodstock in c. 1122/23 as well, just before or after his visit to Oxford. Since King Henry was at Woodstock in early 1123, I suggest an exciting possibility that William might have visited Henry’s court just at that time.368 From February to March 1123 is the period when William of Corbeil was elected as the new archbishop of Canterbury at Gloucester, and two writs concerning the monks’ rights both at Bath and Gloucester were addressed.369 Perhaps in January, William accompanied some older monks on behalf of his own monastery, and made use of the forthcoming archbishop’s election to plead for a free election of their own abbot at

367 See Chapter 2, Woodstock (40).
368 King Henry was at Woodstock from January to early April, except some time spent at Gloucester from February probably to early March, see W. Farrer, ‘An Outline Itinerary of King Henry the First: Part II’, The English Historical Review, 34: 136 (1919), p. 528.
Henry’s court, though this attempt clearly failed. After leaving Woodstock, William probably undertook or continued his journey to Oxford, Reading, and other places, to consult more manuscripts for his writings, perhaps hoping that the completion of his *GR* project would be the next opportunity for finding a powerful patron for his own monastery. This journey was likely to have been finished in late 1123, allowing time for finishing some parts of the early versions of the *GR* in 1124.\(^{370}\)

Since we have started to take into consideration some places labelled as ‘a. 1125’ in Chapter Two, it is time to think about other places in that category. These places were only labelled as ‘a. 1125’ because the evidence we have mentioned so far can only suggest that William had certainly or probably visited them before 1125, but we cannot provide a more precise date. Although Thomson suggested that William took a ‘grand tour’ under the sponsorship of his abbey and Queen Matilda before 1118, there is no secure evidence to prove that William’s first journey between c. 1115 and 1118 was definitely much longer than his second one in the early 1120s, presumably in c. 1122/23.\(^{371}\) Based on our discussion above, it can only be almost certain that William visited Canterbury (1) and took an extended ‘Continental tour’, probably reaching as far as Reims (52) and Metz (51), during his first long journey, while for his second one, he certainly travelled to Gloucester (31), Reading (16) and Oxford (39), and highly likely visited Malvern (33), Bangor (47), Canterbury (1), L’Aumône Abbey (55), and Woodstock (40). We can be sure, however, that many more places labelled as ‘a. 1125’

\(^{370}\) According to Thomson and Winterbottom, there are three passages in the *GR* which show that parts of it were written in or even after 1124, see *GR*, II, p. xvii.

were visited by him during at least one of these two journeys, such as Bury St Edmunds (6), Winchester (7), Shaftesbury (11), and so on.

Here it is worthwhile to reconsider the places in Northern England in our list. From the discussion in Chapter Two, it seems that William had been to many northern towns including York (25), Carlisle (26), Durham (27), Hexham (28), and Ripon (29). Nevertheless, Kynan-Wilson has already suggested that William’s descriptions of the two churches at Hexham and Ripon were heavily dependent on the eighth-century hagiography, the *Vita sancti Wilfridi* by Stephen of Ripon, and most of the information regarding them given by William can be found in Stephen’s work. The difference between William’s and Stephen’s narratives on Hexham is that Stephen did not mention the Romanstonemasons who helped Wilfrid’s building projects, and Wilfrid’s taking the estate at Hexham through an exchange with Queen Æthelthryth. William also described the testimony of people coming from Rome at his own time in order to praise the style and beauty of Wilfrid’s church at Hexham. For William’s mention of the Romanstonemasons, Thomson and Winterbottom raised the possibility that he might

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372 Kynan-Wilson, ‘*Mira Romanorum artifitia*’, p. 37. However, Kynan-Wilson’s statement that all William’s information regarding Hexham can be found in Stephen’s work is indeed problematic, which will be shown by our following discussion.

373 *GP*, I, iii. 117. 1, pp. 386-389: ‘*Fisco regio famulabatur, quando eum beatae memoriae Wilfridus a beatissima Etheldrida Regina pro aliiis possessionibus commutauit… arbitratu quidem multa proprio, sed et cementariae quos ex Roma spes munificentiae attraxerat magisterio.*’ (It was a contributor to the royal fisc when Wilfrid of blessed memory took it from Queen Æthelthryth in exchange for other estates… Much was the product of his own judgement, but he also learned from stonemasons who had been lured from Rome by hope of generous reward.) Stephen’s narrative on Hexham can be seen in B. Colgrave, ed. and trans., *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* (Cambridge, 1927), c. 22, pp. 44-47.

374 *GP*, I, iii. 117. 2, pp. 388-389: ‘*Nunc qui Roma ueniunt idem allegant, ut qui Haugustaldensem fabricam uident ambitionem Romanum se imaginari iurent: adeo tot temporum et bellorum injuriae uenustatem edificis non tulerer.*’ (People coming from Rome nowadays say the same; when they see the manner in which Hexham is built, they swear it gives them a mental picture of the best Roman work, so true is it that the harm caused by time and war has not detracted from the beauty of the place.)
be extrapolating from the narration of Bede the historian on Benedict Biscop.\footnote{GP, II, p. 177. Bede mentioned the masons of Benedict Biscop whom he brought back overseas, see C. W. Grocock and I. N. Wood, eds and trans., \textit{Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow} (Oxford, 2013), pp. 32-33: ‘cementarios qui lapideam sibi ecclesiam iuxta Romanorum quem semper amabat morem facerent, postulauit, accepit, adtulit.’ (He asked for, engaged, and brought back masons who could build him a church of stone, in the Roman fashion which he always liked.)} In my opinion, it is more likely that William extrapolated this piece of information from Stephen’s own narrative, which mentioned that Wilfrid brought back to Ripon masons and all kinds of artisans from elsewhere.\footnote{Colgrave, ed. and trans., \textit{The Life of Bishop Wilfrid}, c. 14, pp. 30-31: ‘Ideo autem venerabiliter vivens, omnibus carus, episcopalia officia per plura spatia agens, cum cantoribus Aedde et Eonan et caementariis omnisque paene artis institoribus regionem suam rediens, cum regula sancti Benedicti instituta ecclesiarii Dei bene meliorabat.’ (So he lived in honour, dear to all men, and, after fulfilling episcopal duties in various places, returned to his own land with the singers Aedde and Aeona, and with masons and artisans of almost every kind, and there, by introducing the rule of St Benedict, he greatly improved the ordinances of the churches of God.)} William might believe that those masons ought to have come from Rome and helped to construct the buildings at Hexham as well. For his other unique information, however, his sources remain unclear. We are not sure if he did have access to some local sources, or he just heard or read it elsewhere. William’s description of Hexham also bears an obvious error, for he related that the distance between Hexham and York is fifteen miles, while it is indeed about ninety modern miles.\footnote{GP, I, iii. 117. 1, pp. 386-387: ‘Hengstaldeheim uocatur locus quindecim ab Eboraco milibus disparatus.’ (Hexham is the name of a place fifteen miles from York.) Thomson and Winterbottom have already noticed this error, see GP, II, p. 176.} Thomson and Winterbottom suggested that it might be a ‘mechanical copying error’, taking ‘xv’ for ‘xc’, and emphasised the ‘much more accurate’ reading of ‘eighty-four’ in the β version.\footnote{GP, II, p. 176.} The manuscript B, which is a witness to the β version, indicates however that the reading of ‘lxxxiiii’ seems to be a late correction from another hand rather than the words of the original scribe.\footnote{See London, British Library Cotton MS Claudius A V, s. XII, fol. 109.} If the original word was ‘xc’, why did the later scribe bother to change it into a number which is not only
too long to be inserted into the original line, but also makes no great difference? Moreover, if this was a copying error, it must have happened at a very early stage, considering the witness of manuscript B, but why did William ignore the error during his later revisions when he had many opportunities to correct it? Meanwhile, for William’s description of Wilfrid’s church at Ripon, it does not bear essential difference from Stephen’s words, and he might have just embroidered Stephen’s narratives. In addition, William’s brief words after his description of the church are merely abbreviations of Stephen’s onward narrative of its consecration, meaning that he was exactly following the layout of Stephen’s chapter concerning the building of the church at Ripon and its dedication. Therefore, his visits to Hexham and Ripon are indeed suspicious.

William’s visit to Carlisle is also shadowed in doubt. A Roman altar that carries the inscription that he had transcribed (‘Marii victorie’) was found at Carlisle in 1987 (see Figure 1).

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380 GP, I, iii. 100. 23, pp. 336-337: ‘Sensit et Ripis industriam antistitis, edificata ibi a fundamentis aecclesia, miro fornicum inflexu, lapidum tabulatu, porticuum anfractu.’ (Ripon too felt the impact of the bishop’s energy; he built there from the foundations a church with wonderful curved vaulting, stone exterior walls, and encircling porticus.) Compare Stephen’s words in Colgrave, ed. and trans., The Life of Bishop Wilfrid, c. 17, pp. 36-37: ‘Nam Inhrypis basilicam polito lapide a fundamentis in terra usque ad summum aedificatam, varis columnis et porticibus suffultam, in altum erexit et consummavit.’ (For in Ripon he built and completed from the foundations in the earth up to the roof, a church of dressed stone, supported by various columns and side aisles.)

381 GP, I, iii. 100. 23, pp. 336-337: ‘Inuitati ad eius consecrationem reges germani, Egfridus et Elwinus (nam pater inter haec Oswius decesserat), dotauerunt illi locum ingentibus prediis, retuleruntque famae pretium amplissimis uerbis coram populo laudati, tribusque diebus lautissimo apparatu obsoniorum redempti.’ (To its consecration were invited the brother kings Ecgfrith and Ælfwine. For their father Oswiu had died meanwhile, and it was they who endowed the place with vast estates; public panegyric was the prize they won in return, and for three days they were rewarded by lavish feasts.) Compare the much more detailed accounts of Stephen on its consecration in Colgrave, ed. and trans., The Life of Bishop Wilfrid, c. 17, pp. 36-37. William only supplemented the information that Oswiu, father of the brother kings, had died, which seems to be self-evident.

A reconstruction of the inscription has been made by scholars as follows:


‘To Jupiter Best and Greatest, to Queen Juno, to August Minerva, to Father Mars, to Victory, to all the other gods and goddesses, Marcus Aurelius Syrio, son of

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This picture comes from *ibid.*, p. 78.
Marcus, of Ulpia Nicopolis from the province of Thrace, military tribune of the Twentieth Legion *Valeria Victrix Antoniniana* [...] 384

Thomson and Winterbottom believed that this was definitely the one seen by William. 385 Nevertheless, if William did see it, why did he only copy two words from it, when there are eleven lines? 386 Kynan-Wilson maintained that William had made a careful selection to use the established rhetorical trope of amplifying the degraded state of the region at present with comparison to its glory in the past, whereas Mereminskiy suggested that he had received the information at second hand, or even by hearsay. 387

In addition, William seemed to lack the motivation to visit Carlisle, since Carlisle was not a significant town at that time, and there were not any important libraries there to satisfy his hunting for manuscripts. 388 Richard Sharpe’s essay on Norman Cumbria has shown that in Cumbria, and particularly in Carlisle, a shire was taking shape during the reign of Henry I, but it was not until 1133 that a new bishopric was erected at Carlisle, and the Augustinian canon Æthelwold, prior of Nostell, became the first bishop of Carlisle. 389

384 Ibid., p. 81.
385 GP, II, p. 158.
386 This question has been both asked by Kynan-Wilson and Mereminskiy, see Kynan-Wilson, ‘Mira Romanorum artifitia’, p. 38; Mereminskiy, ‘William of Malmesbury and Durham’, p. 108.
389 R. Sharpe, *Norman Rule in Cumbria 1092-1136* (Kendal, 2006), pp. 66-67. John of Hexham narrated this event in his *Historia XXV annorum*, which was a continuation of the *HR* by Symeon of Durham. See the entry for 1133 in *HR*, p. 285: ‘Mense Augusto, ante Assumptionem Sanctae Mariae, apud Eboracum a Turstino archiepiscopo consecrati sunt episcopi, Galfridus cancellarius regis Henrici, ad episcopatum Dunelmensem, Aldulfus prior de Nostilia ad urbem Karleol, quam rex Henricus initiavit ad sedem episcopalem, datis sibi ecclesiais de Cumberland et Westmariland, quae adjacuerunt archidiaconatui Eboracensi.’ (In Augustus 1133, before the Feast of the Assumption, two bishops were consecrated in York by Archbishop Thurstan, Geoffrey, King Henry’s chancellor to the see of Durham, and Aldulfus, prior of Nostell, to the city of Carlisle, which the king erected into an episcopal see, giving to it the churches of Cumberland and Westmorland, which belonged to the archdeaconry of York.) Here I use the translation from Sharpe’s paper, see Sharpe, *Norman Rule in Cumbria 1092-1136*, p. 60. Aldulfus is a
Besides, William’s visit to Durham is problematic as well. The only evidence, his detailed description of the topography of Durham, which we have used in (27) in Chapter Two to raise the possibility of his visit there, has recently been demonstrated by Mereminskiy to have relied on an Old English poem entitled ‘De situ Dunelmi et de sanctorum reliquiis quae ibidem continentur carmen compositum’, which might be dated to the second half of the eleventh century. Here it is worth following Mereminskiy’s claims and offer a comparison between William’s description and the first five lines of the *Durham* poem:

Dunelmum est collis, ab una uallis planitie paulatim et molli cliuo turgescens in cumulum. Et licet situ edito et prerupto rupium omnem aditum ex cludat hostium, tamen ibi moderni collibus imposuerunt castellum. Ad radices pedis castelli defluit amnis piscosus, ut pleraque et omnia pene Northaimbrie flumina. Ita enim isitius in partibus occidentalibus et aquilonalibus Angliae superfluit ut rustici proiectis piscibus sues pascant.

[Durham is a hill, gradually and with a gentle slope swelling up from the level plain. Though, thanks to its lofty site and precipitous cliffs, it bars the approach of any enemy, moderns have sited a castle on the top. Below, at the castle foot, flows a river rich in fish, like many or indeed almost all of those in Northumbria. For salmon are superabundant in the west and north of England, so much so that the local peasants feed their pigs on discarded fish.] 391

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391 *GP*, I, iii. 130. 8, pp. 412-413.
As Mereminskiy pointed out, their basic elements are nearly the same, including the rocky hill, the castle on the cliff, and the river rich with fish at the castle foot. The only unique information in William’s narrative is that the local peasants fed pigs with discarded salmon, which seemed to be ‘a perfect example of hearsay used to embellish an image of a region abundant with natural resources, but rather uncivilised’. Mereminskiy also emphasised the uncertainty of William’s direct use of Durham literary texts, and suggested that his familiarity with the oral stories concerning St Cuthbert and Durham might have come from his contact with Durham monks, or even Symeon, in other places. In fact, as I have mentioned in (27) in Chapter Two, William’s comments in the GR have already raised some doubts, since he was not sure whether St Oswald’s head and Bede’s body were buried at Durham, which both Kynan-Wilson and Mereminskiy ignored. If William did visit Durham, how could he not even know where Bede, whom he admired so much, was buried?

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396 See Chapter 2, Durham (27).
Compared to the other four towns, William’s visit to York seems more likely. As we have mentioned in (25) in the last chapter, he vividly described the devastation of York after the Harrying of the North, and he mentioned that the Northumbrian accent, especially as spoken in York, was uncivilised. Moreover, although his description of St Paulinus’s basilica at York was based on Stephen’s text, he added the details that the windows were once covered by linen and St Wilfrid whitened the walls with ‘white chalks’. It is likely that William heard these details from local people.

Therefore, only a visit to York looks likely, whereas a visit to Durham was almost impossible, and Carlisle, Hexham and Ripon were very unlikely. If we look at the map (Figure 2), we can even be more confident in the cases at least of Carlisle and Hexham: how could William visit towns further north than Durham if he had not been to Durham himself, since no cities north of York could be more famous than Durham at that time?

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397 See Chapter 2, York (25).
398 GP, I, iii. 100. 22-23, pp. 336-337: ‘Fenestris lucem dabat uel panni linei tenuitas uel multiforatilis axis... ipse illas candida calce dealbauit.’ (Light was supplied by windows [covered] either thin linen cloths or perforated boards… he whitened them with white chalks.) Thomson and Winterbottom noticed these pieces of information were not in Stephen’s text, while Kynan-Wilson only noted the first, see GP, II, 163; Kynan-Wilson, ‘Mira Romanorum artifitia’, p. 37. Compare Stephen’s words in Colgrave, ed. and trans., The Life of Bishop Wilfrid, c. 16, pp. 32-35.
In addition, if we consider the medieval roads in this region, it seems unlikely that William would travel to the towns further north without visiting Durham. Since travelling to northern towns would not be an easy journey for an ordinary monk in the early twelfth century, we suggest that it was more likely that William tried to visit as many of them as possible during one single journey away from his own abbey, if he had indeed travelled in the North. There were generally three routes to travel between York and Carlisle at that time. First, medieval travellers could travel westwards from York to the Irish Sea no matter by water or by road, and then follow the Roman road near the coast, which is similar to the modern M6 motorway and the West Coast mainline, along to Carlisle, or take a boat at the coast and sail to Carlisle through the
Solway Firth. Second, they could follow the Great North Road, sometimes replicated by the modern A1 motorway, turn north-westwards across the Pennines via the fort of Bowes and the Stainmore pass, then meet the main road at Penrith, and finally reach Carlisle. Third, Dere Street, part of the Great North Road, and its branches connected York and Durham, and the main road crossed the River Tyne at Corbridge, which was also the start of Stanegate, the westbound road that ran across to Hexham and led to Carlisle. Among these three routes, the first is the most unlikely one which William might have taken because it avoided all the places that he mentioned between York and Carlisle, whilst the third one bears the highest likelihood in theory, for it linked all those towns together, namely York, Ripon, Durham, Hexham, Carlisle. We have however suggested that it was highly unlikely that William had visited Durham, hence he did not take this route. Now only the second route is left. William might be able to visit Ripon when he travelled between York and Carlisle in this case, but if he wanted to travel from Carlisle to Hexham, he had to take the Stanegate as well, which brought him close to Dere Street. Then, it might be worthwhile to ask why he did not

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399 F. Edmonds, *Gaelic Influence in the Northumbrian Kingdom: The Golden Age and the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, 2019), pp. 73, 91. There were several branches along this route, which can be seen in Edmonds’ map on page 74. For example, there is a Roman road across the Ribble Valley to reach the coast, and there is another medieval road across the valley of Austwick Beck, which King Edward I took to travel to Carlisle in October, 1292. See H. Gough, ed., *Itinerary of King Edward the First throughout His Reign, AD 1272-1307*, vol. II: 1286-1307 (Paisley, 1900), pp. 97-98.


just take our third route across Durham back to York, but went back by the way he had come, which would have been inconvenient. He could even go eastwards to visit St Paul’s Abbey at Jarrow near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which we are sure that he did not visit at all.\textsuperscript{402} Meanwhile, the Stainmore pass rises to 417.5m and can be difficult to pass in bad weather, while the Stanegate offers a gentler route.\textsuperscript{403} The insoluble problem is still why William would bother to take a long and laborious route only to Carlisle, when he could choose a more comfortable way to the more ‘attractive’ Durham, and then to Hexham and Carlisle, and vice versa. Therefore, in my opinion, the only possibility is that he did not take such a trip to Carlisle and Hexham at all.

We are sure that William had not been to Jarrow and Monkwearmouth on the rivers Tyne and Wear, and now Carlisle and Hexham, towns to the north-west of Durham also seem not to have been visited. It was nearly impossible for William to visit Durham, and all his descriptions of Ripon were based on Stephen’s work. Thus, I suggest that his northern trip was very limited. He might have visited York before 1125, but stopped there, and never went further north. All the things he wrote about the other northern towns might have come from the manuscripts he found at York or elsewhere, and his contact with locals at York or even with some Durham monks who happened to be there.\textsuperscript{404} In particular, his information on Carlisle’s inscription might come from St Mary’s abbey at York, for the local religious community near Carlisle, at Wetheral.

\textsuperscript{402} See Chapter 2, Places that William Did Not Visit.
\textsuperscript{403} Edmonds, \textit{Gaelic Influence in the Northumbrian Kingdom}, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{404} It is suggested that some chapters of William’s \textit{GP} might have been based on Symeon’s \textit{LDE}, and probably at York, William might have spoken with Symeon. See \textit{GP}, II, p. 182; D. Matthew, ‘Durham and the Anglo-Norman World’, in \textit{Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193}, ed. D. Rollason, M. Harvey, and M. Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994), p. 11, n. 13. The \textit{LDE} was written in the period 1104 – 1107 × 1115, see \textit{LDE}, p. xliii.
Priory, was founded by Ranulf le Meschin as its daughter house sometime between
1101 and 1112, and hence had a strong connection with St Mary’s York since the early
twelfth century. William’s silence on the new castle constructed by Henry I and the
foundation of the Augustinian Priory of St Mary at Carlisle in 1122 may even probably
mean an early date for his limited northern travel, presumably during his first long
journey between c. 1115 and 1118.

For the Continental places in our list before 1125, namely Calais (48), Rouen (49),
Bayeux (50), Metz (51), Reims (52), Aachen (53), and L’Aumône Abbey (55), we have
so far suggested that William probably travelled to Metz and Reims between c. 1115
and 1118, while he may have visited L’Aumône Abbey in c. 1122/23. It would be more
interesting if we put South Dorset (9) and Dover (3) into consideration. Martin Biddle
has suggested that William’s reference to Wareham, Corfe, and the church of Aldhelm,
may reflect a view of the relative positions from a ship. Besides, according to
Thomson, Wareham was the closest south coast port to Malmesbury, and Poole harbour
near Wareham was very commonly used for shipping goods and people across the
Channel. If William took the ship at the port of Wareham or Poole, he was more
likely to land in Lower Normandy and visit Bayeux. Then he might travel to Rouen,
and from there he probably headed east into the interior of France, which may answer

405 Sharpe, Norman Rule in Cumbria 1092-1136, p. 47, n. 119.
406 GP, II, p. 132.
407 GP, II, p. 132. For example, in August 1139, Baldwin de Redvers sailed from Normandy and landed
at Wareham with a troop. See GS, 39, pp. 84-85; R. H. C. Davis, King Stephen 1135-1154 (London, 1967),
p. 39.
408 Mark Gardiner’s paper on cross-Channel traffic shows that medieval people tended to travel between
ports facing each other across the Channel, and prefer the shortest sea-crossing. M. Gardiner, ‘Shipping
and Trade between England and the Continent during the Eleventh Century’, Anglo-Norman Studies, 22
(2000), pp. 71-93. In this case, the opposite port of Wareham/Poole on the other side of the Channel
ought to be Cherbourg on the coast of La Manche in Lower Normandy.
why he only ‘heard’ some news about the convent of Notre-Dame-du-Pré on the coast near Rouen. He might have visited Reims first, before he reached Metz, from where he may even have headed to Aachen in the north. His last stop on the Continent may have been Calais, and from there, he embarked and returned to Dover in England. This probably resulted in his mentioning of the ‘swiftest’ passage from Calais to Dover, which we have discussed in (48) in Chapter Two. In my opinion, the possibility of William’s visit to Aachen might be increased if he really used the harbour at Calais, since Calais ought to be his most convenient choice if he wanted to return to England from the region of Aachen, rather than using ports in Normandy. As a result, in this hypothesis, we may even see the likelihood that William travelled through Flanders in order to reach Calais. Moreover, he was more likely to cover these places during his first long journey between c. 1115 and 1118, for the evidence for Metz (51) and Reims (52) suggested such a long ‘Continental tour’. Overall, this is an itinerary which is able to meet all the possible evidence we have found, but it is still hypothetical. It is highly likely that William collected the materials which were uncommon in England when he visited the Continent before 1118, but for the details of this itinerary, the evidence is still obscure and scarce, especially outside Normandy. For his second journey on the Continent in c. 1122/23, William’s detailed and accurate information on the Cistercians strongly indicates its existence. Nevertheless, we only have the evidence for L’Aumône Abbey (55), which did not suggest the existence of as a long ‘Continental tour’ as the previous one. He might have visited Bayeux and Rouen again and covered

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409 See Chapter 2, Rouen (49).
410 See Chapter 2, L’Aumône Abbey (55).
part of his previous itinerary similarly during this journey, but the farthest place he reached this time might only have been L’Aumône Abbey.

Apart from the places that we have so far discussed, there are still many locations labelled as ‘a. 1125’ left, which are Rochester (2), London (4), Norwich (5), Bury St Edmunds (6), Winchester (7), Sherborne (8), Milton (10), Shaftesbury (11), Frome and Bradford-on-Avon (12), Bruton (13), Salisbury (14), Wilton (15), Bath (17), Glastonbury (18), Doulting (19), Athelney (20), Muchelney (21), Tavistock (22), Exeter (23), Lewes (24), Worcester (30), Tewkesbury (32), Evesham (34), Chester (36), Coventry (37), Bardney (38), Ramsey and Slepe (41), Crowland (42), Thorney (45), together with Hereford (35) which is labelled as ‘1115-1125’ and Soham (43) and Ely (44) as ‘1109-1125’. We may be able to make a few conjectures concerning some of these places based on our patterns of William’s two long journeys before 1125.

For Rochester and London, William was very likely to have passed by them before he reached Canterbury, since the famous Watling Street connected London, Rochester and Canterbury, and even extended to the port of Dover.411 This southern part of Watling Street was still an important route in use in the Middle Ages, for it was depicted in the maps of Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century.412 Since we have discussed that William was highly likely to have visited Canterbury twice, during his two long journeys before 1125 respectively, we may assume that he had travelled to London and Rochester twice as well. For Chester alone, it might be related to his visit to Bangor


412 For example, one map of Matthew Paris in London, British Library Royal MS 14 C VII, c. 1250-1259, fol. 5r, depicted an itinerary going through Canterbury, Rochester, London, St Albans, Dunstable, Northampton, Leicester, which is clearly the southern part of the Watling Street.
between 1120 and 1125, presumably in c. 1122/23, for there was a Roman road connecting Chester and Caernarvon, which is a place to the south of Bangor in North Wales.\footnote{Codrington, *Roman Roads in Britain*, pp. 76-78; Margary, *Roman Roads in Britain*, pp. 348-351.} This road may still have been in use in William’s time, and a branch of it might have stretched to Bangor, hence becoming the route that Edgar the Peaceful took to march from Bangor to Chester in 973.\footnote{Caradoc of Llancarvan, D. Powel, and W. Wynne, *The History of Wales, Comprehending the Lives and Succession of the Princes of Wales, from Cadwallader the last King, to Llwelyn the last Prince of British Blood, with a Short Account of the Affairs of Wales, under the Kings of England* (London, 1702 [1697]), p. 59: ‘For Iago ap Edwal having fled to King Edgar, prevailed so far with him, that he brought an army into North Wales to restore him to his right. Being advanced as far as Bangor, he was honourably received by Howel, who, at his request, was contented his uncle Iago should have a share in the government, as he had in his father Ievar’s time. Then Edgar founded a new church at Bangor, on the south side of the Cathedral, which he dedicated to the blessed Virgin Mary; and confirmed the ancient liberties of that See, and bestowed lands and gifts upon it: And then with Howel and Iago in his company, he marched towards Chester, where he met, by appointment, six kings more, viz. Keneth King of the Scots, Malcolm King of Cumberland, Macon King of Man, and Dyfnwal, Sifrethus, and Ithel, three British kings.’} This means that William probably took this route to enter North Wales and visit Bangor and Chester together during his second journey in c. 1122/23.

For other places in England that are left in our list, I hesitate to use evidence of roads to connect them, since the changes to the road system throughout the Middle Ages in England is a complicated issue - some Roman roads were still in use, while others were not, and new roads and bridges continued to emerge.\footnote{The road situation in Medieval England is a complicated issue. On the one hand, the Roman roads provided a basic network, but they had not been maintained for hundreds of years by the eleventh century, and some had ceased to be used. On the other hand, the emergence of new towns not on Roman roads provided evidence for the construction of new roads, and new bridges continued to be built, making a new road system into shape by the time of Norman Conquest. See Stenton, ‘The Road System of Medieval England’, pp. 1-21; Harrison, *The Bridges of Medieval England: Transport and Society 400-1800*, pp. 1-7; P. Hindle, ‘Sources for the English Medieval Road System’, in *Roadworks: Medieval Britain, Medieval Roads*, ed. V. Allen and R. Evans (Manchester, 2016), pp. 33-35.} To add more difficulties, the places that William certainly or probably visited, especially in South and Middle England, may be connected by many different roads, making it impossible to figure out his detailed itinerary, and meanwhile, he was probably travelling by water at least for
part of his journeys rather than following the roads. We may only be able to make some
general conjectures. For his first long journey between c. 1115 and 1118, since we have
suggested that he took an extended long ‘Continental tour’, and might have crossed the
Channel both at Wareham/Poole and Dover, we may assume that he probably had
visited some places that are left in our list on his way to and back from these harbours.
It is hard to determine what those places exactly were, but we can be confident that he
travelled across South and Middle England before and after his Continental tour. For
his second long journey between 1120 and 1125, presumably in c. 1122/23, since we
have already suggested many places in South and Middle England that he certainly or
very likely had visited, we can be more confident that it must cover more places that
are left in our list in those regions.

To sum up, William is highly likely to have taken two long journeys before 1125,
the first of which was probably between c. 1115 and 1118, while the other was between
1120 and 1125, presumably in c. 1122/23. For the first one, he certainly travelled across
South and Middle England, probably made a limited north trip to York, and also had an
extended long ‘Continental tour’. The places that he may have visited during this
journey include Canterbury, Rochester, London, York, South Dorset: Corfe and
Wareham, Dover, Calais, Rouen, Bayeux, Metz, Reims, and Aachen. For his second
long journey, he was also certain to have travelled across South and Middle England,
and highly likely to have visited Wales and to have made a limited Continental tour to
Normandy, together with places near it. During this journey, he may have visited
Gloucester, Reading, Oxford, Malvern, Bangor, Chester, Canterbury, Rochester,
London, Woodstock, and L’Aumône Abbey. For other places in England, including
Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, Winchester, Sherborne, Milton, Shaftesbury, Frome and
Bradford-on-Avon, Bruton, Salisbury, Wilton, Bath, Glastonbury, Doulting, Athelney,
Muchelney, Tavistock, Exeter, Lewes, Worcester, Tewkesbury, Evesham, Coventry,
Bardney, Ramsey and Slepe, Crowland, Thorney, Hereford, Soham, and Ely, William
may have travelled to them during at least one of these two long journeys.

**William of Malmesbury’s Travel after 1125**

William’s itinerary after 1125 may be generally divided into three parts: between 1126
and 1130, in the mid-1130s, and from 1139 to his death in 1143. Also, our list of the
places in Chapter Two seems to suggest a far more limited itinerary than that before
1125, though he still travelled frequently.

As we have discussed in Chapter One, William probably visited Worcester and
finished his writing of the *VW* in c. 1126, and he may also have been to Glastonbury
more than once to finish the other four hagiographies (*VD*, *VP*, *VB*, and *VI*) and his
local history, *AG*, between c. 1127-1130. Meanwhile, he was probably busy with the
first redaction of his *GR* and *GP* at his own monastery during this period. Such an
occupied schedule may not, however, have ruled out the possibility of his travels to
some other places. During his trip to Worcester, he probably passed by Great Malvern
Priory, hence implying that he saw himself the fulfilment of St Wulfstan’s prophecy on
the success of Malvern’s religious community in his VW.\footnote{See Chapter 2, Malvern (33).} This piece of evidence may not be strong enough to prove it by itself, but considering its closeness to Worcester and its position between Worcester and Malmesbury, he would certainly have been able to conduct such a visit.

Although William probably visited Malvern in c. 1126, it might only have been a part of his journey to Worcester. One may wonder if he made any other journeys apart from his trips to Worcester and Glastonbury between 1126 and 1130. In Chapter Two, we have raised the respective possibilities of his visit to Canterbury (1), London (4) and Bury St Edmunds (6) between 1126 and 1129. Then is it likely that he made a journey to East England during this period? Here we need to go through the evidence again and see if there are any correlations or contradictions. The possibilities of William’s visit to Canterbury and Bury St Edmunds are based on his mention of the B.’s \textit{Life of Dunstan} both at St Augustine’s, Canterbury, and Bury St Edmunds Abbey in his \textit{AG}.\footnote{See Chapter 2, Canterbury (1) and Bury St Edmunds (6).} We are not sure, however, whether this reference came from his memory of the visits before 1125 or his visits between 1126 and 1129. The possibility of his visit to London during the same period, comes from his detailed information that the burial place of Theodred, bishop of London, was ‘high up near the window of the crypt’ since his changes in the \textit{β} version of his \textit{GP}, yet it might still result from his memory of an early visit before 1125.\footnote{See Chapter 2, London (4).} If he did travel to London and Canterbury between 1126 and 1129, then he was very likely to have visited Rochester as well, considering that the famous Watling
Street connected these places, as mentioned above. It is interesting to see that Rochester (2) also appeared in our list after 1125 in Chapter Two, though it is labelled as ‘1126-1140’, since he added a unique supplement about Rochester’s topography after the β version of his *GP*.419 Although this piece of information was certainly added later than that regarding London, it is possible that this addition resulted from his memory of the visit before the β version as well, hence raising the likelihood that he travelled to Canterbury, Rochester and London together in a single journey between 1126 and 1130, before he finished his *AG*. This journey might also have extended to Bury St Edmunds so that he could see B.’s *Life* there. Moreover, there are two other places that might suit this conjecture, namely Woodstock (40) and Oxford (39). William might have visited Woodstock between 1126 and c. 1131 so that he could see the ostrich kept in the menagerie of Henry I.420 He probably travelled to St Frideswide’s, Oxford as well and talked with Prior Guimund about the latter’s experience of St Mary’s miracle between 1126 and 1137.421 It is possible that William might have passed by Woodstock and Oxford during his journey to East England, but just like the other four places we have suggested, all the evidence may have come from his memory of the early visits before 1125. This puts such a journey between 1126 and 1130 into doubt, and we do not have secure evidence to prove its existence.

Besides, it seems that William did not have a strong motivation for making this journey as well. Most of the materials for his writings of the *AG* and hagiographies

419 See Chapter 2, Rochester (2).
420 See Chapter 2, Woodstock (40).
421 See Chapter 2, Oxford (39).
were provided by the convents at Worcester and Glastonbury, and his first redactions of the \textit{GR} and \textit{GP} may have started shortly after 1125, which did not require another journey to collect the information. Furthermore, the new information added by William was so scarce that it does not show the worth of such a journey at all. For his works which showed his concern as a cantor and may have been written in early 1130s, they also did not require a journey. His \textit{Comm. Lam.}, \textit{Abbreviatio Amalarii}, \textit{PH}, and \textit{Defloratio Gregorii} are all abridgements and extractions, which were reactions to the instant demands from his convent and were based on the existing collections of the library at the abbey.\footnote{Comm. Lam., prol. 24-26, p. 4: ‘Paschasium Radbertum earum expositorem obiecisti, petens ut eum tibi abbreuiarem.’ (You put in my way Paschasius Radbertus, who did expound it. You asked me to abbreviate him for you.) Pfaff, ‘The “Abbreviatio Amalarii” of William of Malmesbury’, p. 128: ‘In historicis nos narrationibus occupatos detorsit a proposito tua, Rodberte amice, voluntas.’ (Robert my friend, your good will has diverted us, who were occupied in the historical narratives, with a purpose.) PH, i. 1-3, p. 37: ‘Amico suo Guthlaco Willelmus. Quia me consulendum putasti quinam libri gentilium qui apud nos sunt tibi ad bone uite institutum legendi essent, breuiter respondeo… sed ego de illis solis loquor quorum possession glorior.’ (William to his friend Guthlac. Because you asked my advice about which pagan books in our collection you should read to establish a good life, I answer briefly…but I mention those books alone, for I am proud that they are in our possession.) William of Malmesbury, \textit{Defloratio Gregorii}, quoted from Farmer, ‘William of Malmesbury’s Commentary on Lamentations’, p. 309: ‘Dominis suis et fratribus Meldunensis cenobii monachis Willelmus fide frater, professione conservus. Ad instructionem communem deflorationes ex libris precellentissimi pape Gregorii in hoc volumine compegi, ea potissimum intentione ut si quis nostrum uel uaelectudine uel occupatione uel etiam desidia impediente multis legendis non uacat, hic impromptu inueniat, quibus et animam pascat et utiam componat.’ (To our lords and brothers, the monks of the monastery of Malmesbury, William your brother in faith, a fellow-servant by profession. For general instruction I have compiled in this book flowers from the books of the most excellent pope, Gregory, especially with the intention that if any of our own should be without the capacity for much reading – infirmity, business, or furthermore, slackness being an obstacle – he may readily find here that with which he may feed his soul and compose his life.)} It is unlikely that William would have started the preparations for these writings some years before, and the books that he used may have been copied into his library before 1125.\footnote{The library at William’s abbey should have obtained an impressive quantity of collections before 1125, so that he would be so proud of his own contribution. See GP, I, v. 271. 2, pp. 644-645: ‘Quod studium si predico, videor id quodam meo proprio iure facere, qui nullis maioribus in hoc presertim loco cesserim, immo, nisi quod dico iactantia sit, cunctos facile supergressus sim. Sit qui modo parta conseruet: ego ad legendum multa congressi, probitatem predicandi uiri in hoc dumtaxat emulatus. Ipsius ergo laudabili cepto pro urilri portione non defui. Vtinam sit qui labores nostros foueat!’ (If I sing out this activity, I think I have every right to do so, for in this area especially I have been inferior to none of those who went before; indeed (if I can say this without boasting) I have easily surpassed them all. May there be someone to look after the present stock! I have collected much material for reading, approaching the}
his journey to East England between 1126 and 1130. He may only have travelled frequently between Worcester, Glastonbury, and his own abbey during this period, together with a possible visit to Malvern near Worcester.

There is also not enough evidence to suggest that William had made some journeys in the early 1130s. The possible evidence for Rochester (2), Woodstock (40) and Oxford (39), as we have mentioned above, is very insecure. His change of the phrase from ‘apud sanctum Edmundum’ (at St Edmund’s) to ‘in nonnullis locis’ (in several places) when he was referring to B.’s Life in the C version of the GR suggests too many possibilities. Hence, it is also not a strong piece of evidence for his visit to Canterbury (1) between 1130 and 1135. This is same with the case of Arras (54), which is almost impossible to verify without other evidence to suggest the probability of a Continental journey during this period. Moreover, as we have discussed in Chapter One, he was very likely to have been fully occupied with his duties as cantor at that time, and his decision to turn away from history to some other works that ‘warn him off the world and set him on fire towards God’ probably reduced his chances of travelling.

Things changed in the mid-1130s. From the evidence of Bury St Edmunds (6), Winchester (7), Milton (10), Muchelney (21), and St David’s (46), it seems that William

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prowess of my excellent predecessor at least in this respect; I have followed up his laudable start as best I could.)

424 See Chapter 2, Canterbury (1).
425 See Chapter 2, Arras (54).
426 *Comm. Lam.*, I. 7-11, p. 3: ‘Olim enim cum historias lusi, uiridioribus annis rerumque laetitiae congruetat rerum iocunditas. Nunc aetas progressior et fortuna deterior aliud dicendi genus expostulant. Id erit precipuum quod nos dehortari a seculo, quod ad Deum possit ascendere.’ (For in the past, when I amused myself with histories, the charm of the subject suited my greener years and happy lot. Now advancing age and worsening circumstances demand a different kind of work. The ideal will be something able to warn me off the world and set me on fire towards God.)
took several trips in the mid-1130s. For the cases of Winchester (7), Milton (10) and Muchelney (21), he came to know new information from them, which is indicated in the supplements or corrections to the B version of his *GR*. He referred to King Æthelstan’s sword as being more definitely in the royal treasures probably at Winchester, and he found the letter from Rodbod provost of Dol Cathedral, Brittany to Æthelstan at the archives of Milton, together with the record of Æthelstan’s grant to the church at Muchelney’s archives. It is noteworthy that these changes are all related to King Æthelstan. It is even more interesting that their contexts all involve St Aldhelm or the monastery of Malmesbury directly or indirectly. First, Æthelstan’s sword preserved among the royal treasures at Winchester is a witness to the miracle of St Aldhelm, who made it reappear in his scabbard before he had engaged in battle. Second, after copying the letter found at Milton, William continued to write that the relics of St Paternus, which had been mentioned in it, were entrusted by Æthelstan to

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427 See Chapter 2, Winchester (7), Milton (10) and Muchelney (21).

428 *GR*, I, ii. 131. 7, pp. 208-209: ‘…ensem, qui hodieque pro miraculo in thesauro regum seruatur. Est sane, ut aiunt, una parte sectilis, nec umquam auri aut argenti receptibilis.’ (the sword, which is still preserved among the royal treasures as evidence of the miracle. It is, they say, chased on one side, but can never be inlaid with either gold or silver.) The phrase ‘ut aiunt’ was omitted in the B version. *GP*, I, v. 249. 6, pp. 598-599: ‘Haec epistola inventa est in scrinio apud Mideltunense cenobium, quod idem rex a fundamento fecit, et ubi reliquias sancti Samsonis posuit.’ (This letter was found in the archive at the monastery at Milton, which the king [i.e. Æthelstan] built from the foundations, and where he placed the relics of St Samson.) This letter was also copied into the B version of the *GR*. *GR*, I, ii. 139. 5, Appendix I: Additions of B and C, pp. 824-825: ‘Sed haec quomodocumque se habeant, illud reuera constat, quod, sicut in cartis eiusdem ecclesiae legi, rex Ethelstanus ecclesiam Mclaniensem sancto Petro excelsiorem fecit, multis redditibus habitatores consolatus.’ (Whatever be the truth of this, one thing is certain, that, as I have read in the muniments of the church, King Æthelstan raised the church of Muchelney to greater heights in honour of St Peter, helping those who dwelt there with many rents.)

429 Thomson and Winterbottom also noticed this, but only used it to prove that the B version of the *GR* is later than C, see *GR*, II, pp. xxviii-xxix.

430 *GR*, I, ii. 131. 7, pp. 208-209: ‘Quocirca, cum omnia formidinis et ceci tumultus plena essent, inclamato Deo et sancto Aldelmo reductaque ad uaginam manu inuenit ensem, qui hodieque pro miraculo in thesauro regum seruatur.’ (At this moment of universal fear and blind confusion, he called upon God and St Aldhelm, reached again to his scabbard, and there found the sword, which is still preserved among the royal treasures as evidence of the miracle.)
his own monastery, while those of the other saints were preserved at Milton.\textsuperscript{431} Third, the position of William’s supplement concerning Muchelney is just before Chapter 140 in the main text, in which he told readers that Æthelstan’s body was buried at Malmesbury with many gifts and relics.\textsuperscript{432} In fact, Æthelstan’s preference for the Malmesbury Abbey had already been shown in Chapters 136 and 137 in the original text, where William copied a charter which recorded such favour.\textsuperscript{433} The blood relationship between St Aldhelm and Æthelstan is also particularly emphasised by the B version.\textsuperscript{434} Therefore, it is very likely that the searching for Æthelstan’s records during William’s trip to Winchester, Milton and Muchelney in the mid-1130s belongs to a larger goal – to find more information about St Aldhelm and Malmesbury, to reveal the past glory of the monastery from documents elsewhere and, in the end, to recover the right of electing a new abbot freely and get rid of the episcopal control from the bishop of Salisbury, that is restoring the liberty of his monastery.\textsuperscript{435}

\textsuperscript{431} \textit{GR}, I, ii. 138B. 5, Appendix I: Additions of B and C, pp. 822-823: ‘Ceterum rex reliquias beati Paterni Malmesberiae, reliquorum Mideltune commendauit, quo loci monasterium a fundamentis procuderat.’ (For the rest, the king [i.e. Æthelstan] entrusted the relics of St Paternus to Malmesbury, and those of the other saints to Milton, a place where he had established a monastery from its foundations.)

\textsuperscript{432} \textit{GR}, I, ii. 140, pp. 228-229: ‘Exuuiae triumphales Malmesberiam de latae et sub altari tumulatae. Portata ante corpus multa in argento et auro donaria, simul et sanctorum reliquiae de transmarina Britannia emptae.’ (His remains were borne in state to Malmesbury, and buried beneath the high altar. Many gifts from him in silver and gold were carried before the body, and many relics of saints, bought in Brittany.)

\textsuperscript{433} \textit{GR}, I, ii. 136-137, pp. 222-225: ‘Nam quia Malmesberiam corpora cognatorum deferri et ad caput sepulchri sancti Aldelmi tumulari iusserat, ita locum illum coluit in posterum ut nihil desiderabilius, nihil haberet sanctius. Multa ibi largitus predia cartis quoque confirmavit, in quarum una post donationem subiecit...’ (For the king, having ordered that the bodies of his kinsmen should be taken to Malmesbury and buried there at the head of St Aldhelm's tomb, had such a veneration for the place thereafter that he thought nowhere more desirable or more sacred. He gave it many estates and confirmed them with charters, in one of which after making the gift he continues as follows:…) The charter (S 436), which William copied both here and in c. 250 in his \textit{GP}, is a conflation of S 415 and 434-5. The conflation is believed to be the work of himself. See \textit{GP}, II, 298; W. H. Stevenson, ed., \textit{Asser's Life of Alfred: Together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroineously Ascribed to Asser} (Oxford, 1959), p. 246, n. 4; S. E. Kelly, ed., \textit{Charters of Malmesbury Abbey} (Oxford, 2005), pp. 226-227.

\textsuperscript{434} For example, only the B version added such an emphasis in the narration of the sword miracle as a reason why Æthelstan called upon St Aldhelm, see \textit{GR}, I, ii. 131. 7, pp. 208-209: ‘erat enim et ex antiquis progenitoribis consanguineus’ (for he was related to him by blood a long way back).

\textsuperscript{435} Nigel Berry’s paper has already suggested William’s strong concern over the liberty of his abbey,
We can even reasonably conjecture that such a hunt for materials concerning Aldhelm and the Malmesbury Abbey in the mid-1130s should also bear some other fruits in the *GP*, apart from that letter from Rodbod found at Milton, which appeared in the revised texts of both *GR* and *GP*. The problem of the *GP* is the lack of copies of the fifth book, which focuses on Aldhelm and the history of William’s own monastery. As we have shown in Chapter Two, the existence of only one entire medieval copy leads to the result that we can only label the places with ‘p. 1125’ instead of a more precise date in most cases. From the analysis in the last paragraph, however, I suggest that many corrections and supplements in the fifth book of the *GP* may result from William’s trip in the mid-1130s. It is noteworthy that the evidence for Sherborne (8), South Dorset: Corfe and Wareham (9) and Doulting (19), which are labelled as ‘p. 1125’ in our list in Chapter Two, all involves new information related to St Aldhelm or Malmesbury directly or indirectly. He inserted the information that he had himself seen Aldhelm’s church at Sherborne into the text where he was transcribing a charter regarding the liberty of the three monasteries founded by Aldhelm, namely Malmesbury, Frome, and Bradford.\textsuperscript{436} He also supplemented the exact location of Aldhelm’s church near Wareham at the end of his description of Aldhelm’s local miracles, where he was which means to get rid of the episcopal control, in his writing of the fifth book of his *GP*, especially in his retranslation of the privilege alleged to be granted by Pope Sergius to Aldhelm. See N. Berry, ‘St Aldhelm, William of Malmesbury, and the Liberty of Malmesbury Abbey’, *Reading Medieval Studies*, 16 (1990), pp. 15-38.

\textsuperscript{436} *GP*, I, v. 225. 1, pp. 566-567: ‘habuitque sedem Scireburniae, ubi et aecclesiam, quam ego quoque uidi, mirifice construxit’ (His seat he established at Sherborne, where he built the remarkable church which I have myself seen.) The charter (S 1251a) is also printed in Kelly, ed., *Charters of Malmesbury Abbey*, no. 11, pp. 159-160. William may not have the text at hand when he was making the first version of his *GP*, hence leaving not enough space for its transcription. See Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 172, s. XII\textsuperscript{1}, fol. 89\textsuperscript{r}. Kelly (pp. 161-162) suggested that it reached the present form between 1125 and 1135. It is believed to be at least manipulated to support the Malmesbury Abbey’s claim of the right of freely electing its abbot. See *GP*, II, p. 279.
proud of his own monastery possessing the saint’s body, and for that reason the monks would not ‘begrudge others their local miracles’. Although the two pieces of evidence for Sherborne and South Dorset (Corfe and Wareham) still bear the risk of being supplemented only from his memory of the early visits before 1125, the new information and change of tone when he was describing St Aldhelm’s death at Doulting almost certainly resulted from his own observation after the making of the β version.

William provided more information about the church where Aldhelm had died, together with the testimony from local people. His tone also became more definite when he was referring to the stone there which had witnessed Aldhelm’s death. As we have mentioned in Chapter Two, a more probable date for these changes regarding Doulting is after 1130, simultaneously with, or after, the making of the E version. Perhaps Sherborne, Doulting, Corfe and Wareham are therefore other places covered by his trip in the mid-1130s. If this is true, we can suggest that he very likely took a journey to the south again in order to collect more information about Aldhelm and his own monastery.

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437 *GP*, I, v. 217. 6, pp. 548-549: ‘Deo, credo, per haec innuente satis superque sufficiere debere Meldunensibus corporis eius gloriam, modo ceteris non inuideant uirtutum eius presentiam. Locus est in Dorsatensi pago duobus milibus a mari disparatus, iuxta Werham, ubi et Corf castellum pelago prominet.’ (My belief is that this is God’s way of showing that the monks of Meldunum should be quite satisfied with the prestige of possessing his body, without begrudging others their local miracles. The place is in Dorset, two miles from the sea, near Wareham, where Corfe Castle also stands, commanding the sea.)

438 *GP*, I, v. 228. 1, pp. 572-573: ‘Domus obitus eius conscia [main text of A and the abbreviation of B] in ecclesiam mutata / [supplement in A] lignea erat ecclesia, in quam se ultimum spirans inferri iussit, ut ibi potissimum efflaret, sicu t incolae hodie per succiduas generationes asseuerant}.’ (The building where he died [main text of A and the abbreviation of B] was changed into a church / [supplement in A] was a wooden church, to which he had himself carried as he was breathing his last, so that he could die there and nowhere else; this is what the locals even today affirm, for the story had come down the ages.)

439 *GP*, I, v. 228. 2, pp. 572-573: ‘[main text of A and the abbreviation of B, the latter without ‘esse’] Fertur in eadem ecclesia lapis esse, cui Sanctus acclinis morb o decubuerat / [after correction in A] Constat in eadem ecclesia lapidem esse, cui Sanctus moriens insederat.’ (The stone is said to be in the same church, leaning to which the saint had died for sickness / [after correction in A] It is a fact that in this church there is a stone on which the saint sat when he was dying.)

440 See Chapter 2, Doulting (19).
in the mid-1130s.

One question still needs to be asked – why is the date of this journey in the mid-
1130s? It is reasonable that William’s interest in St Aldhelm is strongly related to his
concern over the liberty of his own abbey. Nigel Berry has argued that William’s
translation of the privilege granted by Pope Sergius to Aldhelm from the Old English
in the original text of the GP was a part of the attempt by the abbey to defend the right
of free election of its abbot and remove Salisbury’s episcopal control.\(^{441}\) In addition,
some charters transcribed by William in the main text of manuscript A of the GP were
at least manipulated by the monks at his abbey, if not himself, in order to support their
claim.\(^{442}\) It is even more interesting that two documents (S 1245, S 1251a), one
regarding the grant from Leuthere, bishop of the West Saxons (d. before 676), to
Aldhelm and the independence of the monastery, which is obviously a forgery, and the
other concerning the liberty of three monasteries, including Malmesbury, mentioned
above, probably achieved their final forms at some point after 1125, and were inserted
into the blank space left for them previously in the main text of manuscript A.\(^{443}\) It is
obvious that William had been concerned about the liberty of his own monastery at
least since the writing of his GP before 1125, and we can assume that he continued such
efforts in the redactions of his works until Malmesbury finally had a new abbot in 1140.

\(^{442}\) For example, the charter (S436) in GP, I, v. 250, pp. 598-603. Some other charters were manipulated
or even forged to assert their possession of some properties, such as S 306, S 320 and S 1166 in GP, I, v.
201, 238, 239, pp. 526-529, 584-597.
\(^{443}\) GP, II, pp. 261, 279; Kelly, ed., Charters of Malmesbury Abbey, pp. 127-131, 161-162. The charters
can be found in GP, I, v. 199, 225, pp. 524-527, 566-569; Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 172, s. XII, 
fos. 82, 89'. Kelly believed that these two documents were inserted by William between 1125 and 1135.
In my opinion, although the decade after finishing the main text of manuscript A was most likely, the
terminus ante quem need not be before 1135, for its revision continued to the 1140s.
The most important event in the mid-1130s is King Henry I’s death in Normandy in December 1135. It is likely that William began his trip to the south quickly, once the news of king’s death had reached his abbey. The monks might have decided to petition for the liberation of the abbey again, but this time to the new king, Stephen. They needed all the support they could get, and William as the librarian and cantor, was in charge of getting as many oral and written materials as possible to back their claim. King Henry’s confirmation of Bishop Roger’s control over the Malmesbury Abbey on 8 September 1131 must have brought great disappointment for the monks, hence the succession of a new king should have provided an opportunity to change the fortune of the monastery and brought new hopes to every monk, including William. If this is true, then William’s trip to the south might have happened in early 1136, which means that the B version of the GR and many corrections in the fifth book of the manuscript A of the GP were probably made in late 1136 or shortly after that.

For the cases of Bury St Edmunds (6) and St David’s (46), William heard new stories which were added by him to the MBVM. He likely spoke with Elias, archdeacon of Brecon, on St Mary’s miracle involving Guy of Lescar during the translation of Caradoc at St David’s in the mid-1130s, and meanwhile, he might have heard about another miracle regarding a country church at Bury St Edmunds when he visited there during the same period. In addition, he might have visited Oxford and Rochester at the same time, so that he could record the story of Prior Guimund’s experience of St Mary’s miracle in his MBVM and supplement the topography of Rochester after the β
version of his *GP*, though these two pieces of information were likely to result from his visits before the mid-1130s, or even before 1125.\(^{445}\) This might suggest the existence of another trip for William to collect materials for the writing of the *MBVM*. This is not certain however. As Thomson and Winterbottom have suggested, the *MBVM* seemed to be ‘hastily planned and written’, and was probably even never given a final polish.\(^{446}\) This might mean that William might not have planned a particular trip to collect information. His journey to St David’s might have had two purposes: one was to be present at the translation of Caradoc on behalf of his own monastery, and the other was to collect materials for his *MBVM* during the trip. His travel to Bury seems to have been more like a trip merely for the purpose of collecting materials, but there may have been other more important reasons which we do not know. It is possible that some miracle stories in the *MBVM* had been at least drafted before the 1130s, as Philip Shaw suggested, but this still cannot exclude the possibility of a trip particularly for gathering more information for that book in the mid-1130s.\(^{447}\) If such a trip did exist, it had probably occurred before his journey to the south to collect more materials about St Aldhelm and Malmesbury, since the latter seemed to be an emergency. Perhaps the death of King Henry made William change his original travel plan for the *MBVM*, and he hurried to the south immediately. Afterwards, he returned to his abbey and made the revisions to his *GR* and *GP*, with the *MBVM* written simultaneously or shortly after the completion of the revisions. This might be the reason why the *MBVM* seemed to be

\(^{445}\) See Chapter 2, Rochester (2) and Oxford (39).

\(^{446}\) *MBVM*, p. xx.

‘hastily planned and written’.

From 1139 to the time of his death in 1143, William also made several trips. It is certain that he represented his abbey and participated in the two councils at Winchester, one of which was from 29 August to 1 September, 1139, and the other was from 7 to 10 April, 1141.\textsuperscript{448} He was also very likely to have been present at King Stephen’s court at Salisbury and Reading from December 1139 to January 1140.\textsuperscript{449} According to William’s own narrative, the monks of his abbey approached Stephen, and successfully recovered their ancient privileges, electing John as their abbot.\textsuperscript{450} It is hard to imagine that William missed this chance to petition the king, since he had been concerned about the vacant abbacy for a long time. In addition, as the cantor and librarian of his monastery and after so many travels to collect materials, he had the most intimate knowledge of all the relevant documents both at his own abbey and at other monasteries, hence he would be the most appropriate monk to support any negotiations. In addition, he might have seen Abbot John off at the port of Shoreham near Lewes, though the

\textsuperscript{448} For William’s presence in the Winchester council in 1139, we can conclude from his recall of the content of Pope Innocent’s letter which had been read at its opening, see \textit{HN}, ii. 25, pp. 50-51: ‘si bene memini’ (if I remember rightly). He also clearly said that he took part in the council in 1141, see \textit{HN}, iii. 46, pp. 90-91: ‘Cuius concilii actioni quia interfui, integram rerum veritatem posteris non negabo; egregie quippe memini.’ (As I took part in the proceedings of the council, I will not deny posterity the whole truth of what occurred, for my memory is very clear.) The date of the councils can be seen in \textit{HN}, ii. 24, 31, iii. 46, 51, pp. 50-51, 60-61, 90-91, 96-97.

\textsuperscript{449} The date can be deduced from the death of Roger bishop of Salisbury on 11 December, 1139, and Monk John’s election as the new abbot of Malmesbury in January 1140. See \textit{HN}, ii. 33, 35, pp. 64-65, 70-71. The location of the court can be seen in \textit{JW}, iii, pp. 278-281. King Stephen celebrated Christmas at Salisbury and went to Reading ‘a few days’ later, where he invested the abbeys of Malmesbury and Abbotsbury with their own abbots.

\textsuperscript{450} \textit{HN}, ii. 35, pp. 70-71: ‘Anno incarnati Verbi millesimo centesimo quadragesimo, monachi abbatiarum quas Rogerius episcopus contra fas tenuerat, rege adito, antiqua priuilegia et abbates habere meruerunt.’ (In the year of the Incarnate Word 1140, the monks of the abbeys that Bishop Roger had unlawfully held approached the king, and obtained the restoration of their ancient privileges and their abbots.) The phrase ‘rege adito’ certainly suggests a time earlier than that of obtaining their ancient rights, and we do not need to confine the context only to 1140. It is very likely that the monks, including William, approached the king and started their negotiations once Bishop Roger had died.
Finally, he probably visited Christ Church, Canterbury, again after 1140, so that he could correct his mistake on the burial place of St Cuthbert, archbishop of Canterbury, in the previous versions, when he was making his last redactions of the *GP*. He might have examined the lost cartulary at Christ Church, although it is possible that this piece of information may have come from some written document that reached his hand, or letters from his readers at Canterbury, or even some reliable witness from Canterbury visitors to his abbey. Anyway, William’s several trips between 1139 and 1143 were generally related to religious affairs, and we are not sure if he travelled to Shoreham and Canterbury during this period.

**Conclusion**

Through our discussion in this chapter, we may be able to divide William’s itinerary into several stages: ① between c. 1115 and 1118, in order to collect materials for his writings, particularly his *GR*, he made his first long journey across South and Middle England, probably with a limited northern trip to York, and he also made an extended long ‘Continental tour’; ② between 1120 and 1125, presumably in c. 1122/23, for the reason of collecting materials for his writings and probably with the monastic affairs of his own abbey sometimes in mind, he took his second long journey again across South and Middle England, and was highly likely to have visited Wales and to have made a

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451 William of Malmesbury, *Itinerarium*, p. 272: ‘Ad portum, qui Scoram appellatur, decem milliariis a S. Pancratio (Lewis) navem ingressi.’ (They went to the port and took ship. The place is called Shoreham, ten miles away from St Pancras (at Lewes).) William might have accompanied John and Peter, both of whom were his close friends, to the port of Shoreham, but it is also possible that this piece of information was only told by Peter.

452 See Chapter 2, Canterbury (1).

453 See Chapter 2, Canterbury (1).
limited Continental tour to Normandy, together with places near it; ③ from 1126 to 1130, he travelled frequently between Worcester, Glastonbury, and his own abbey, so as to finish the writing tasks requested by the two monasteries; ④ in the mid-1130s, presumably shortly before 1136, he made a ‘business’ trip to Wales to be present at the translation of St Caradoc, together with a probable journey specially for collecting materials for his *MBVM*, and meanwhile, probably in early 1136, he made another long journey across South England to search for every document that was related to St Aldhelm and his own monastery; ⑤ from 1139 to 1143, he made several short trips which were related to various religious affairs. Furthermore, after much reconsideration of the detailed evidence from Chapter Two, we can combine the results with these general patterns and suggest a more reliable itinerary for William as follows:\(^{454}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Journeys and Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. 1115-1118</td>
<td>Canterbury, (Rochester, London, York), (Wareham/Poole → Bayeux → Rouen → Reims → Metz → Aachen → Calais → Dover)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other places whose dates cannot be</td>
<td>Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, Winchester,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{454}\) Places in round brackets are hypothetical or probable. ‘→’ means the visiting order.
determined but might have been visited at least once during the two long journeys before 1125

| 1126-1130 | Worcester, Glastonbury, (Malvern) |
| Mid-1130s | Winchester, Milton, Muchelney, Sherborne, Doulting, Corfe, Wareham, Bury, St David’s, (Oxford, Rochester) |
| 1139-1143 | Winchester [29 Aug. to 1 Sept., 1139 and 7 to 10 Apr., 1141], Salisbury [Dec. 1139], Reading [Jan. 1140], (Shoreham [early 1140]), (Canterbury) |
(Figure 3: Places certainly or probably visited by William of Malmesbury)
Chapter Four

From Itinerary to Mobility: Is William of Malmesbury Special?

In the previous chapters, we have reconstructed a probable itinerary of William of Malmesbury throughout his life, and from this it can be seen that he travelled frequently and far and wide. This seems to present a counter image to that of cloistered monks, who were regulated by the famous *RB*. Monks were usually assumed to have stayed in the cloister and seldom travelled, especially for ordinary monks who were not abbots or priors and did not need to execute other duties outside the monastery. Hence, it is worth considering whether William’s mobility is special. Can his mobility represent that of other Benedictine monks at his time, or was the pattern of his travels the result of circumstances peculiar to his own life and career? Were such travels breaking the monastic rules or actually following monastic ideals? If the latter is the case, then we may be able to suppose that more ordinary monks could travel like him, for there may not have been an insurmountable obstacle between mobility and the observance of monastic rules. This chapter is going to address these questions. Although some of William’s experiences specially contributed to his mobility, his travels to collect materials and pursue knowledge were not unique for medieval monks. Moreover, we will argue that monastic devotion was always the underlying motivation or fundamental logic for his travels, making his mobility compatible with his duties as a monk.

It seems that some of William’s experiences contributed to his mobility in particular.

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455 The *RB*, together with the *RM*, both written in the sixth century, emphasised the concept of ‘stabilitas’, which was originally referring to firmness, steadfastness and perseverance in faith, but generated the later representation of ‘stabilitas loci’, or locative fixity, meaning to bind the monastic individuals with a single place. See Leclercq, ‘Autour de la règle de saint Benoît’, pp. 200-203; Lawson, ‘Navigating Northumbria’, pp. 67-68.
First, the patronage of several of his works provided him with motivations for travel. The first and most prestigious patron of William’s writings was Queen Matilda, wife of King Henry I. During their eighteen-year marriage, she displayed great interest in various kinds of arts, and her active literary patronage both in England and Normandy became an important source of her political power and influence. As the secular overlord of the Malmesbury Abbey, she participated directly in the forming of the project of writing a full history of the English kings, which later became the famous GR. In his letter to Empress Matilda, daughter of the queen, William showed clearly that the monks were at first requested by the queen to establish a short history of the kings of the West Saxons during their conversation on St Aldhelm. After they had drawn up ‘a brief list of the English kings’ with names and dates, the queen obviously became more interested and then encouraged them to finish ‘a full history of her predecessors’. It is noteworthy that Queen Matilda enjoyed great personal influence over the early development of the project, making it a proceeding under her supervision.

Changing the ‘brief list’ into ‘a full history’ was certainly not easy, and the monks may

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457 *GR*, I, Ep. ii. 4, pp. 8-9: ‘Acceptoque responso quod eadem esset quae regum Westsaxonum fuissest, roguit ut totam eius progeniem breui sibi libello disponeremus.’ (When told in reply that his lineage was the same as that of the kings of the West Saxons, she asked us to set out his whole family history in a short essay for her benefit.)

458 *GR*, I, Ep. ii. 5, pp. 8-9: ‘Exigua igitur scedula seriem et nomina simul et annos regum Anglorum complecti fecimus. Tum uero grandiusculae narrationis illecta desiderio, facile dulcedine qua pollebat effecit ut plenam de antecessoris eius mediari fecissemus historiam.’ (We therefore arranged for the drawing up of a brief list of the English kings, both names and dates. She was then attracted by the project of a somewhat fuller narrative, and with that charm which was one of her strong points she easily induced us to contemplate a full history of her predecessors.)
have felt much pressure for the lack of detailed information, hence making William’s first long journey between c. 1115 and 1118 necessary, in order to collect materials, as we have argued in the last chapter. It is also highly likely that the queen provided much support for William’s access to books in various locations, at least financially. Thus, the patronage of Queen Matilda might be the most important contributor to his early travels.

With the death of the queen in 1118, the project of the GR was deprived of secular sponsorship, and the monks turned to King David of Scotland and Empress Matilda for new patronage in the mid-1120s, an appeal which did not seem to receive a warm response. William did however attract the attention of Earl Robert of Gloucester, the illegitimate son of Henry I, who was another preeminent literary patron in the early twelfth century, and he became the dedicatee at least for the later versions (C and B) of the GR and the commissioner of the writing of the HN. Here it might be worth

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460 The lack of support as a result of the queen’s death may be one of the reasons for shelving the project for some time by William. The abandoning of writing was mentioned by him in his letter to the empress, see GR, I, Ep. ii. 6, pp. 8-9: ‘Quo merore consternati, decreuimus stili abiurare studium, cum uiderem exisse de medio hortatricem studiorum.’ (Prostrated by grief, we decided to abandon the attempt to write, seeing that the lady who had encouraged our endeavours had been taken from our midst.)

461 For Earl Robert’s patronage of literature, see R. B. Patterson, The Earl, The Kings, and The Chronicler: Robert Earl of Gloucester and the Reigns of Henry I and Stephen (Oxford, 2019), pp. 178-206. William’s dedication letter to Robert appeared for the first time in the C version of the GR, see GR, II, p. 6. However, as Thomson and Winterbottom suggested, the A version may have already been dedicated to Robert, because he was greatly praised almost with same words at the end of A, C and B versions. The sentence in c. 446 – ‘Hoc autem opus postquam absolu, circumspectis plurimis, uobis potissim delegandum credidi.’ (When I had finished my work, I considered many names, and chose you above all others as its recipient.) – also seemed to imply the dedication. See GR, I, v. 446. 1, pp. 798-799; GR, II, p. xxxiii, n. 26. This sentence can be found in the manuscripts of the A version, such as Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 6047, s. XII, fol. 138v, and Cambridge, Trinity College MS R. 7. 10 (748), s. XII, fol. 150v. This may imply that William had already turned to Robert’s patronage as early as 1126. It is possible that he and other monks were trying to reach King David, Empress Matilda and
quoting William’s wording about Robert’s commissioning in the prologue of the HN:

‘Now your highness’s mind desires the transmission to posterity of those things that, by a wonderful dispensation of God, have happened in England in recent times: indeed a very noble desire, and like everything in you.’

If we take his words seriously, it would be striking that the role played by Earl Robert in the writing of the HN was similar to that of Queen Matilda in the GR – active participation in the early development of the projects and telling William what he wanted and what to write about.

We do not know when their friendship really began, but William may have started to try to please Earl Robert in the mid-1120s. If Robert were playing a similar role in William’s writings to Queen Matilda, it is likely that some of William’s travels were supported by him as well, though we may never know what they were exactly. In addition, as Robert Patterson has claimed, certain episodes recorded by William in the HN point to Earl Robert or his household as their anonymous source. These pieces

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Earl Robert at the same time. For Robert’s commissioning of the writing of the HN, see HN, prol., pp. 2-3.


For William’s early dedicating the GR to Robert, see above, p. 151, n. 461. Another possible evidence is that both in the A version of the GR and the manuscript A of the GP, William praised Robert Fitz Hamon as the patron of the monastery of Tewkesbury, who was father-in-law of Earl Robert. It is even more interesting that in the last chapter of the GR of A, C, B versions, the community of Tewkesbury was directly mentioned by William to praise Earl Robert’s generosity. See Chapter 2, Tewkesbury (32).

Patterson, Robert Earl of Gloucester and the Reigns of Henry I and Stephen, pp. 191-192. Patterson mentioned the rubric listing castles captured by Robert in 1142 in c. 74, the interpolated reference to Countess Mabel in c. 3, and Henry I’s deathbed confirmation of Empress Matilda’s royal succession in c. 11, as of probable Robertian origin. Personally, I am hesitating in supporting Patterson’s first two arguments for the reason that they only came from the Ce text, which is witnessed by London, British Library Royal MS 13 D II, s. XII or later, fos. 110-123, and London, British Library Additional MS 38129, s. XV, fos. 181-200. The differences between the Ce text and other C texts of the HN means that it is hard to determine whether it was written by William or someone else after his death. Stubbs and Mynors were inclined to conclude that it was William’s work, but Edmund King believed that it was more likely to be made after his death. See HN, pp. lxxvii-xciv. Nevertheless, I agree with Patterson’s general belief, and there might be some other episodes coming from Robert or his household; for example, William’s vivid details about Robert’s refusal to betray the Empress, after being captured by King Stephen’s party, in c. 63-64.
of information may have come to William through the form of letters, but it is also probable that he met Earl Robert or someone from his household during his journey, or visiting Robert might even be the primary reason for some of his travels. Anyway, such travels might have benefited him considerably for his writing of contemporary history.

Just as Earl Robert might have been a source in the *HN*, so Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester and papal legate, who was also the brother of King Stephen, might also have provided some information for William’s writing of this work.\textsuperscript{465} We do not know whether this influenced William’s travels in the early 1140s, but it is certain that Henry was the reason for his journey to Glastonbury probably more than once between c. 1127 and 1130, for his four Glastonbury hagiographies and *AG* were commissioned by Henry and the community.\textsuperscript{466} Prior Warin and the convent of Worcester also provided a similar kind of patronage for William’s writing of the *VW*, making necessary his travel to Worcester in c. 1126.\textsuperscript{467}

The second factor that might have contributed to William’s mobility is his occupation as librarian and cantor in his community. Since the eleventh century, the offices of cantor/precentor and *armarius* (librarian) were usually combined in the


\textsuperscript{466} *AG*, prol., pp. 40-41: ‘Henrico Wintoniensi episcopo’ (to Henry bishop of Winchester); *VD*, i. prol. 1, pp. 166-167: ‘Dominiuis suis uenerabilibus et fratribus patribusque in sancta Glastoniensi aeclesia Deo famulari gratulantibus’ (To his revered lords, brothers and fathers who rejoice to serve God in the holy church of Glastonbury). The commission of the *FP, VB, VI* can be seen from the monks’ examination of them, see *AG*, prol., pp. 40-41: ‘Illos ergo libellos set et uitam beati Patricii, miracula uenerabilis Benigni, passionem martiris Indracti, que simili cura procuderam, iam pridem in eorum permisi uersari manibus, ut si quid citra racionem dictum esset corrigaretur pro tempore.’ (Therefore, some time ago, I have already allowed those books to be circulated in their hands, not to mention the *Life of the Blessed Patrick*, the *Miracles of the Venerable Benignus*, and the *Passion of the Martyr Indract*, which I had produced with similar care, so that if anything short of reasoning had been said, it would be corrected for the time being.)

\textsuperscript{467} Worcester’s commission can be seen in *VW*, Ep. 1, pp. 8-9: ‘Dudum a uobis iussus in sancti patris nostri Wlstani uita manum ponere, aliquandiu subterfugi offitium.’ (Though I long since received your order to set my hand to a Life of our father St Wulfstan, for some time I shirked the duty.)
monasteries of Western Europe, and both involved the duties of caring for books.\textsuperscript{468} No matter when William really received the office of cantor or \textit{armarius}, he must have carried some of the duties of librarian from at least before 1125, because he had already described that he enlarged the collections of their library following Abbot Godfrey’s example in the early versions of the \textit{GP}.\textsuperscript{469} The duty of librarian and monastic mobility have already been noticed by Lemaitre to bear some correlation in his case study of the Benedictine monk, Bernard Itier, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and William’s other contemporaries who were librarian and cantor, such as Eadmer of Canterbury and Orderic Vitalis, enjoyed much mobility as well, which we will touch on in more detail later in this chapter.\textsuperscript{470} In fact, we may imagine that the duty of librarian is a suitable excuse for travelling in order to collect books from elsewhere, rather than waiting for them passively to spread to their own convents and being copied. In the second prologue of the \textit{GR}, William mentioned that he spent domestic funds (\textit{domesticis sumptibus}) on ‘getting together a library of foreign historians’ and collected chronicles ‘from far and wide’, which made one wonder if William also had travelling costs in mind.\textsuperscript{471} William’s hunting for Cicero’s works around England, as we noted at the beginning of

\textsuperscript{469} \textit{GP}, I, v. 271. 2, pp. 644-645. As we have suggested in our Chapter 1, William might have acted as \textit{subarmarius} before 1125, and was entrusted by the cantor at that time to fully carry the duty of librarian.
\textsuperscript{470} Lemaitre, ‘Les voyages d'un moine Limousin au XIII\textdegree{e} siècle’, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{471} \textit{GR}, I, ii. prol. 2, pp. 150-151: ‘Itaque, cum domesticis sumptibus nonnullos exterarum gentium historicos conflassem, familiari otio quere perrexi si quid de nostra gente memorabile posteris posset reperiri… cronica longe lateque corrogau.’ (So after I had spent the domestic funds on getting together a library of foreign historians, I proceeded in my leisure moments to inquire if anything could be discovered concerning England worth the attention of posterity… I collected chronicles from far and wide.) I disagree with Thomson and Winterbottom’s or Hayward’s translations of ‘domesticis sumptibus’ as ‘my own money’ or ‘my private funds’. In my opinion, William should be meaning the domestic money of the monastery. See also above, pp. 47-48, n. 147.
this dissertation, may be regarded as another proof of him combining his travels with his librarian duties. From the manuscripts detected to be in his hand, it is obvious that he had a team of scribes in his scriptorium to help him make copies, and his mission as librarian may have led to his swift method of copying in order to produce more books for his community.\footnote{Thomson, William of Malmesbury, pp. 76-96; S. Niskanen, ‘William of Malmesbury as Librarian: The Evidence of his Autographs’, in Discovering William of Malmesbury, ed. R. M. Thomson, E. Dolmans, and E. A. Winkler (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 117-127.} When he was compiling the \textit{PH} between c. 1131 and 1135, he expressed again his pride in the abundant collections in his library as he did in the \textit{GP} nearly a decade before.\footnote{\textit{PH}, i. 9, p. 37: ‘sed ego de illis solis loquor quorum possession glorior’ (but I mention those books alone, for I am proud that they are in our possession). William was mainly referring to Cicero’s \textit{De senectute}, \textit{De amicitia}, and \textit{De officiis} here, but since he was recommending books ‘in our collection’ (qui apud nos sunt), it is reasonable to believe that all the other books mentioned in this prologue-like passage at the beginning of the \textit{PH} must have copies in his library.} It is nearly certain that as librarian, he continued to enlarge the library of his monastery throughout the 1120s and 1130s, and considering his frequent travels during this period as our previous chapters have shown, he must have obtained many books from his journeys.\footnote{Thomson’s research on William’s scriptorium pointed to the expansion of book collections at the abbey in his time, see Thomson, William of Malmesbury, pp. 76-96.}

Last but not least, William’s mobility from 1118 to the early 1140s seems often to have been connected with the monks’ fight for the restoration of their monastery’s liberties and privileges. The year 1118 was miserable for the monks of Malmesbury, for not only did their prestigious patron, Queen Matilda, die, but also their abbot Eadwulf was dismissed for some reason which is so far not clear.\footnote{H. R. Luard, ed., \textit{Annales Monasterii de Wintonia}, in Annales Monastici, vol. 2 (London, 1865), p. 45: ‘Hoc anno [1118] … Matildis regina mortua est et sepulta in Westmonasterio. Edulfus abbatiam Malmesberiae sine causa amisit.’ (In this year [1118] … Queen Matilda was dead and buried at Westminster. Eadwulf lost the abbacy of Malmesbury without reason.) Probably Eadwulf was dismissed shortly before the queen’s death, since the two dedication letters of the \textit{GR} referred to her only fault as leaving their church without a shepherd, see \textit{GR}, I, Ep. i. 7, pp. 4-5: ‘Hoc solum in habundantia totius bonitatis superfuit, quod absque pastore gregem ecclesiae nostrae liquerit’; Ep. ii. 3, pp. 6-7: ‘Maxime uero, cum de uita eius nil aliud reprehendi possit nisi quod ipsam ecclesiam sine rectore dimiserit’.} After Abbot Eadwulf’s
dismissal, Roger, bishop of Salisbury, went on to acquire the abbey by 1125, probably intending it as a second cathedral priory in his diocese, and his possession was first confirmed by Pope Honorius II on 1 January 1126, then by King Henry I on 8 September 1131. As suggested in Chapter Three, William and some other monks may have visited King Henry’s court at Woodstock in January 1123 to take advantage of the upcoming election of the archbishop of Canterbury in order to plead for a free election of their own abbot, as a response to Bishop Roger’s recent seizure of the monastery. His second long journey between 1120 and 1125, presumably in c. 1122/23, as a whole, mainly serving to collect materials for his *GR* and *GP*, can also be regarded as an important step to use historical writings to attract an influential secular patron, so as to help the monastery get rid of Roger’s control. The confirmation by Pope Honorius II on 1 January 1126 may have been the direct inducement for the monks to make different copies of William’s newly finished *GR*, with alteration of contents to please different potential patrons, so that they could be sent to King David, Empress Matilda, and Earl Robert almost at the same time. The monks may have been thinking about

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477 A copy of the T version may have been sent to King David and the empress later in 1126/27, while another copy of the A version was probably delivered to Earl Robert at some point in 1126. For the deduction of the time, see above, p. 34, n. 86, and p. 151, n. 461. The words in the letters to King David and Empress Matilda suggested that the monks were also trying to convey some kind of petitions orally through their bearer, which were not suitable to be included in written words, probably on the problem of Roger’s seizure of the monastery, see *GR*, 1, Ep. i. 7, pp. 4-5: ‘non indignanter obaudiatis et munere nostri latorem apud imperatricem regali cura commendetis’ (with kingly forethought to recommend to the empress the bearer of our gift); Ep. ii. 7, pp. 8-9: ‘Preterea quae uobis per libri latorem mandamus, pro anima matris uestrae et antecessorum uestrorum omnium, imperialiter audite, et nobis misericordiam impendere curate.’ (Lend your imperial ear, furthermore, for the sake of the souls of your mother and all your predecessors, to the requests which we make by the bearer of the book, and do not forget to show
trying at least to obtain King Henry’s support for their claim through some influential patrons at court. King Henry’s confirmation of Roger’s occupation in 1131, however, may have finally crushed such a hope, making William turn to pessimism and write the Comm. Lam. late in that year, as suggested in Chapter One.

William’s concern over the liberty of his monastery may have been already demonstrated by his ‘improvement’ of Pope Sergius’s privilege in the fifth book of his GP before 1126, whose Old English version was probably prepared in the middle of the eleventh century as a counter-argument against Hereman, bishop of Ramsbury’s attempt to establish his see at Malmesbury.478 In the GP, he also criticised Hereman’s worldly ambition and described in detail his failed attempt to make the monastery the seat of his bishopric during the reign of Edward the Confessor: he must have had Roger’s threat in mind when he was writing about this event.479 More interestingly, the charter regarding Leuthere bishop of the West Saxons renouncing episcopal rights over Malmesbury Abbey (S 1245) and the document about Aldhelm confirming the right of free election of their own abbots at Malmesbury, Frome and Bradford-on-Avon, after his death (S 1251a), were inserted by William into the previously left space in the main text of manuscript A of the GP, meaning that the two documents may only have reached their current forms at some point after 1125.480 This persistent concern over the documents regarding the independence of the abbey from episcopal control may be

479 See GP, I, ii. 83. 6-8, pp. 286-289.
480 The charters can be found in GP, I, v. 199, 225, pp. 524-527, 566-569; Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 172, s. XII’, fos. 82v, 89v.
related to William’s journey to the south in c. 1136 as well, during which time he tried to collect more information about Aldhelm and his own monastery, including visits to the royal treasury probably at Winchester, to archives of many monasteries, like Milton and Muchelney, to churches related to Aldhelm at Sherborne, Doultning, and Langton Matravers, and to other places we do not know. The pocket size of manuscript A of the GP (106 folios, overall measuring 175 mm × 130mm) may be suitable for such travels, and William may be adding information that he had just got during his trips. As we have maintained in the previous chapter, William and other monks may have been preparing for a new petition to King Stephen regarding the liberty of their monastery.

The monks might have made a plea shortly after William had collected all the information from his journey to the south, but things only changed in later 1139 with the disgrace and death of Bishop Roger. William was very likely present at King Stephen’s court at Salisbury and Reading from December 1139 to January 1140, when his friend John was finally elected as the abbot. According to the HN, however, John’s occupation of the abbacy was still mired in controversy, and this became the reason for his trip to Rome to seek confirmation.\footnote{HN, ii. 35, pp. 70-71: ‘Probauit legatus causam, improbauit personam. Nullo enim modo menti eius persuaderi poterat regem preter dationem pecuniae electioni consensisse. Et quidem aliquantum nummorum promissum fuerat, causa libertatis ecclesiae, non electionis personae.’ (The legate approved their claim to elect but disapproved of the person elected, for in no way could he be convinced that the king had agreed to the election without a bribe. And it is a fact that a certain amount of money had been promised, but it was to secure the freedom of the Church, not the election of a person.)} As Berry argued, Abbot John’s other purpose might have been to obtain papal support of the liberty of the monastery against the diocesan threat, for the privilege of Pope Honorius II to Roger was still valid.\footnote{Berry, ‘St Aldhelm, William of Malmesbury, and the Liberty of Malmesbury Abbey’, p. 28.} As a friend of John, who was also concerned about this issue, William might have seen him...
off at the port of Shoreham near Lewes. Fortunately, with the help of King Stephen and Henry of Blois, who was the papal legate at that time, the monastery finally obtained a confirmation from Pope Innocent II about freedom from the control of the bishops of Salisbury on 23 May 1142. This was around one year after William’s last journey about which we can be sure, namely his presence at the council of Winchester in April 1141, and he was then nearly reaching the end of his life. It can therefore be seen that his concern over the liberty of his monastery persisted throughout his life after 1118, and it provoked much of his mobility during those decades.

Nevertheless, if we start to take more contemporaries of William into consideration, it may be seen that he was not alone in enjoying such mobility. Some other Benedictine monks in England and Normandy who were not abbots or priors seemed to travel extensively as well.

Similar to William, we may also learn much from his own writings about the mobility of Orderic Vitalis, another renowned Benedictine monk based in Normandy. According to autobiographical passages in the preface of Book V and the epilogue of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Orderic was born near Shrewsbury on 16 February 1075 and was baptised in St Eata’s church at Atcham on 4 April in the same year. In 1080, he

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483 The privilege of Innocent II can be seen in J. S. Brewer, ed., Registrum Malmesburiense: *The Register of Malmesbury Abbey Preserved in the Public Record Office*, vol. I (London, 1879), pp. 346-348. The monks must have launched another petition to the apostolic see at some point between 1141 and 1142, and this time their claim was supported by both King Stephen and Henry of Blois. This confirmation was based on the alleged privilege of Pope Sergius, and Berry argued that it was the text ‘improved’ by William, rather than other earlier versions. See Berry, ‘St Aldhelm, William of Malmesbury, and the Liberty of Malmesbury Abbey’, p. 28.

484 Much of the following discussion about Orderic’s itinerary owes a debt to Marjorie Chibnall’s valuable comments in her introduction to the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and her monography, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, especially see *OV*, I, pp. 25-29; M. Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 36-38.

485 *OV*, III, pp. 6-7: ‘A prefato nempe anno placet inchoare presens opusculum, quo in hanc lucem xiii" kal’ Martii matris ex utero profusum sum, sabbatoque sequentis Paschae apud Etingesham in ecclesia
was put to school at Shrewsbury and was educated by a local priest called Siward, for five years. At the age of ten, his father sent him to Normandy as an oblate in the abbey of Saint-Évroul, and he was tonsured on 21 September 1085. Thereafter, until his death in around 1142, he became a cloistered monk, but he still enjoyed much mobility in his later life.

Orderic’s first travel outside the monastery might have been taking part in the ceremony in which he was ordained subdeacon at Lisieux on 15 March 1091. Two years later, on 26 March 1093, he was ordained as a deacon at Sées, the seat of bishop of Séez, not far from the abbey of Saint-Évroul. Finally, on 21 December 1107, at Rouen, he was ordained to the priesthood, the top grade of clerical orders and able to celebrate Mass independently.

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486 OV, VI, pp. 552-553: ‘Nam sabbato Paschae apud Attingesham baptizatus sum, qui uicus in Anglia situs est super Sabrinam ingentem fluuium.’ (I was baptised on Holy Saturday at Atcham, a village in England on the great river Severn.)

487 OV, VI, pp. 554-555: ‘A uenerabili Mainerio abbate in monasterio Vticensi undecimo aetatis meae anno ad monachatum susceptus sum, undecimaque kalendas Octobris dominico clericali ritu tonsoratus sum.’ (I was received as an oblate monk in the abbey of Saint-Évroul by the venerable Abbot Mainer in the eleventh year of my age, and was tonsured as a clerk on Sunday, 21 September.)

488 OV, VI, pp. 554-555: ‘Idus Martii cum xvi essem annum, iussu Serlonis electi Gislebertus Luxouiensis presul ordinauit me subdiaconum.’ (On 15 March, when I was sixteen years old, at the command of Serlo, abbot elect, Gilbert, bishop of Lisieux, ordained me subdeacon.)

489 OV, VI, pp. 554-555: ‘Denique post biennium vii kalendas Aprilis Serlo Sagiensis antistes michi stolam imposuit diaconii, in quo gradu xv annis tibi libenter ministraui.’ (Then two years later, on 26 March, Serlo, bishop of Séez, laid the stole of the diaconate on my shoulders, and I gladly served thee as a deacon for fifteen years.)

490 OV, VI, pp. 554-555: ‘Denique xxxiii aetatis meae anno Guillelmus archiepiscopus Rotomagi xii kalendas Ianuarii oneravit me sacerdotio. Eodem uero die cxxiv diacones et cxx consecravit sacerdotes, cum quibus ad sanctum altare tuum in Spiritu Sancto deuotus accessi.’ (At length in my thirty-third year William, Archbishop of Rouen, laid the burden of priesthood on me on 21 December. On the same day he also blessed two hundred and forty-four deacons and a hundred and twenty priests, with whom I
ceremonies, Orderic also left many hints about his other travels. In 1106, one year
before he became a priest, he was probably at the priory of Maule, for he said that he
was at France at that time, and his description of Ansold of Maule’s confirming gifts to
the priory and making his eldest son Peter the heir, as Chibnall suggested, seemed to be
more like an eyewitness report rather than a reconstruction from charters. He was
also very likely to have been present in the retinue of his abbot at the council of Rheims
in October 1119, of which he gave a detailed description. Around that time, he may
have broken his journey at Cambrai, where he saw the chronicle of Sigebert of
Gembloux at the abbey of St Sepulchre with the kindness of its abbot Fulbert. His
very full information about Picardy troops in King Louis VI’s army and his particular
mention of the ruthless plunder of the men of bishops of Noyon and Laon during the

reverently approached thy holy alter, filled with the Holy Spirit.) At another place, Orderic showed
clearly that he was at Rouen for this ceremony. See OV, VI, pp. 142-143: ‘De hac siquidem ordinatione
indubitanter locutus sum quia in terfui, et sacerdotale pondas iubente domno Rogerio abbate meo
indignus suscepi. Tunc magna cleri multitudine Rotomagum commenersat, et familia Christi fere septingentis
ibi clerics illa die per diuersos gradus ordinatis prospere creuerat.’ (I have given an authentic account of
this ordination, for I myself was present and, though unworthy, took up the responsibilities of the
priesthood at the command of Dom Roger, my abbot. On that occasion a great multitude of clergy
gathered at Rouen and the service of Christ was favourably augmented by some seven hundred clerics
who were ordained to different orders on that day.) From Orderic’s description of such a great ordination
ceremony, it can be almost certain that it took place at the Romanesque cathedral at Rouen, whose
consecration was witnessed by William the Conqueror on 1 October 1063. For the previous two
ceremonies, although Orderic did not mention the exact places, we may assume that they took place at
Lisieux and Séges, for the ordination ceremony was usually performed in one of the chief churches at the
Depiction’, in A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages, ed. G. Peters and C. C.
Anderson (Leiden and Boston, 2015), p. 49. For the development of grades of ordination, see J. Barrow,
The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics, Their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe

491 OV, I, p. 26; VI, pp. 74-75: ‘per ommen Galliam ubi tunc eram’ (throughout France, where I was at
the time).
492 OV, I, pp. 25-26; Chibnall, The World of Orderic Vitalis, p. 36.
493 OV, II, pp. 188-189: ‘Familiariter ostendit ille michi Fulbertus prudens abbas coenobii Sancti
Sepulcri, quod in septentrionali parte Cameraci, studio aedificatum est ac sumptibus Liberti eiusdem
urbis episcopi, ubi idem praesul honorifice meruit sepoliri.’ (It was kindly shown me by Fulbert, the
worthy abbot of St Sepulchre’s, a monastery founded in the north part of Cambrai by Libertus, bishop of
the city, who endowed it and is honourably buried there.)
autumn of 1119 suggested that he was then in that region.\footnote{OV, VI, pp. 244-247.} Probably at the same time, he travelled to Haspres to see the relics preserved there and visited Arras, where he noticed its impressive city wall of white stone recently built by Robert II, count of Flanders.\footnote{OV, III, pp. 66-67: ‘ibiique in uico qui Haspis dicitur in territorio Cameracensi nunc usque in argenteo scrinio honorifice seruatum est’ (up to this day it has been honourably preserved in a silver reliquary in a place called Hapres in the region of Cambrai); III, pp. 304-305: ‘Gemeticenses enim corpora sanctorum Hugonis archiepiscopi et Aichadri abbatis Haspas transitulerunt, quae in scriniis preciosi Camaracenses et Atrebatenses incolae reuerenter usque hodie seruant et excolunt’ (Thus the monks of Jumièges transferred to Haspres the bodies of St Hugh, archbishop, and Aicardre, abbot; and the men of Cambrai and Arras preserve them in precious reliquaries and venerate them to this day); VI, pp. 162-163: ‘In Atrebatensem uero urbem quam ipse paulo ante contra Henricum imperatorem muniuerat, et insigni ex albo lapide muro undique cinxerat, corpus eius a Morinis cum magnu luctu delatum est’ (His body was borne with great mourning by the Flemings to the town of Arras, which he had recently fortified against the Emperor Henry and had completely surrounded with an impressive wall of white stone).} On his way from Rheims and Cambrai back to Saint-Évroul, Orderic may have passed by the dependent priory of Auffay near Rouen, where he heard the sanguinary conflict at the synod of Rouen between Archbishop Geoffrey and his fellow clergy in November 1119, which event was only recorded by him, and the two priests mentioned in particular by him, Hugh of Longueville and Ansquetil of Cropus, might have been his source of part of the event, when they fled back to their parishes, which were only a few miles from Auffay.\footnote{OV, VI, pp. 290-295.}

More fascinatingly, Orderic made a journey to England at some point between 1112 and 1124, presumably in the late 1110s.\footnote{The journey took place during the tenure of Geoffrey abbot of Crowland, namely between 1109 and 1124. Since Orderic mentioned that miracles ‘first began to take place at the tomb of Earl Waltheof’ in the third year of Geoffrey’s rule, and because of the frequent miracles he was asked by the monks to compose his epitaph, we may assume that his visit happened after 1112. See OV, II, pp. 348-349: ‘Huius regiminis anno tercio ad tumbum Gualleui comitis miracula demonstrari primitus ceperunt.’ W. G. Searle once suggested that Orderic visited Crowland around 1115, probably based on the possibility that Orderic was one of the visiting monks witnessing the dedication of the new church in 1114. See OV, II, p. xxvi; W. G. Searle, Ingulf and the Historia Croylandensis (Cambridge, 1894), p. 18. Chibnall suggested that Orderic’s journey to England might have happened right after his visit at Rheims in 1119. See Chibnall, The World of Orderic Vitalis, p. 36. Anyway, just as A. J. Hingst argued, late 1110s is the most likely time for Orderic’s journey to England. See A. J. Hingst, The Written World: Past and Place in the Work of Orderic Vitalis (Indiana, 2009), p. 185, n. 25 and 27.} He was invited by Geoffrey abbot of

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\footnote{OV, VI, pp. 244-247.}
\footnote{OV, III, pp. 66-67: ‘ibiique in uico qui Haspis dicitur in territorio Cameracensi nunc usque in argenteo scrinio honorifice seruatum est’ (up to this day it has been honourably preserved in a silver reliquary in a place called Hapres in the region of Cambrai); III, pp. 304-305: ‘Gemeticenses enim corpora sanctorum Hugonis archiepiscopi et Aichadri abbatis Haspas transitulerunt, quae in scriniis preciosi Camaracenses et Atrebatenses incolae reuerenter usque hodie seruant et excolunt’ (Thus the monks of Jumièges transferred to Haspres the bodies of St Hugh, archbishop, and Aicardre, abbot; and the men of Cambrai and Arras preserve them in precious reliquaries and venerate them to this day); VI, pp. 162-163: ‘In Atrebatensem uero urbem quam ipse paulo ante contra Henricum imperatorem muniuerat, et insigni ex albo lapide muro undique cinxerat, corpus eius a Morinis cum magnu luctu delatum est’ (His body was borne with great mourning by the Flemings to the town of Arras, which he had recently fortified against the Emperor Henry and had completely surrounded with an impressive wall of white stone).}
Crowland, who was previously prior of Saint-Évroul, in order to abbreviate and clarify the *Life of St Guthlac* by a certain Felix, and he stayed at Crowland for five weeks.\(^{498}\) He even composed the epitaph of Earl Waltheof, whose miracles ‘grew daily more frequent’, at the request of the monks there.\(^{499}\) Meanwhile, he paid a visit to the abbey of Thorney not far from Crowland, whose abbot was Robert of Prunelai, another former monk of Saint-Évroul. He may have been there around Christmas, for he added the name of St Évroul into its calendar next to 29 December: ‘On this day the pious father Évroul ascended above the stars.’\(^{500}\) From the Fens, Orderic then travelled westward and made a stop at Worcester. He certainly met John the historian there and talked with him about the writing of an universal history, which probably encouraged him to broaden his original plan of writing a history of his own abbey into a universal chronicle.\(^{501}\) This intimate contact may have been the source for Orderic’s praise of John’s learning and piety, and his lone statement that John, at the command of St Wulfstan of Worcester, continued the chronicle of Marianus Scotus with events of about

\(^{498}\) *OV*, II, pp. 322-325: ‘quae pro posse meo breuiter dilucidaui fratrum benigno rogatu, cum quibus quinque septimanis Crulandiae commoratus sum uenerabilis Goisfredi abbatis karitatiuo iussu’ (which to the best of my ability I abbreviated and clarified at the kind request of the brethren and loving command of Abbot Geoffrey, with whom I passed five weeks at Crowland).

\(^{499}\) *OV*, II, pp. 350-351: ‘Miraculis siquidem Crulandiae crebrescentibus monachi gauisi sunt, et tanti comitis corpus pro posse suo gratanter honorauerunt, et Vitali Angligenae uersibus heroicis epitaphium eius edere iusserunt. Mox ille iussis paruit, et corde meditate sic ore protulit.’ (The monks of Crowland rejoiced as the miracles grew daily more frequent, and showed all reverence to the relics of the earl. They asked the Englishman Vitalis to compose his epitaph in heroic verse. He speedily obeyed their commands, and after meditating in his heart recited these lines.) Orderic particularly liked deploying inscriptions, and he wrote ten of the thirty-eight epitaphs in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. See V. Debiais and E. Ingrand-Varenne, ‘Inscriptions in Orderic’s *Historia ecclesiastica*: A Writing Technique between History and Poetry’, in *Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works and Interpretations*, ed. C. C. Rozier, D. Roach, G. E. M. Gasper, and E. van Houts (Woodbridge, 2016), pp. 127-144.


For Orderic’s travels after 1120, we can be sure that he visited Cluny during Lent in 1132 for the great gathering organised by Peter the Venerable, where he processed with hundreds of monks and prayed with them. He also told readers that in August 1134, he was at Le Merlerault, where the abbey of Saint-Évroul held some property, and he hurried to the village of Planches nearby in order to see the proof of the thunderbolt in the previous day, which had only killed women and female beasts. Therefore, we may summarise his itinerary as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1075</td>
<td>Near Shrewsbury [16 Feb., birth],</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atcham [4 Apr., baptism]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1080-1084</td>
<td>Shrewsbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1085</td>
<td>Saint-Évroul [tonsured on 21 Sep.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1091</td>
<td>Lisieux [ordained as subdeacon on 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

502 OV, II, pp. 186-187: ‘Ioannes Wigornensis a puero monachus, natione Anglicus, moribus et erudition uenerandus, in quae Mariani Scotti chronicis adiecit, de rege Guillelmo et de rebus quae sub eo uel sub filiis eius Guillelmo Rufro et Henrico usque hodie contigerunt honeste de pompisit… Quem prosecutes Iohannes acta fere centum annorum contexuit, iussuque uenerabilis Wlfstani pontificis et monachi suprindicis chronicis inseruit.’ (John, an Englishman by birth who entered the monastery of Worcester as a boy and won great repute for his learning and piety, continued the chronicle of Marianus Scotus and carefully recorded the events of William’s reign and of his sons William Rufus and Henry up to the present… After him John, at the command of the venerable Wulfstan bishop and monk, added to these chronicles events of about a hundred years.)

503 OV, II, pp. 424-427: ‘Haec icciro secures edo quia gaudens interfui, et tam gloriosum agmen in Christi Iesu nomine congregatum uidi, atque cum eis de basilica sancti Petri apostolorum principis dominico processi, et per chastrum in aede virginis matris ingressus orai.’ (I can describe this authentically, for I myself had the joy of being present; I saw that glorious company assembled in the name of Christ Jesus, and on Sunday walked with them in procession from the church of St Peter, chief of the apostles, and, after passing through the cloister into the chapel of the Virgin Mother, prayed with them.)

504 OV, II, pp. 438-439: ‘Inundatio pluiae maxima erupit, uerumptamen bigam et garbas incendium consumpsit, quarum fauillas et extinctae cadauer in feretro in crastinum uidi, quia Merulae consitens illuc perrexii, ut diuinam posteris relaturus persecutionem, indubitanter scirem rei certitudinem.’ (Rain was pouring down in floods, yet the flames consumed the wagon and sheaves. I saw the ashes of them next day and the corpse of the dead girl on a bier, for I was staying at the time at Le Merlerault and hurried to the spot in order to be certain of the facts before recording for posterity how the blow fell from heaven.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1093</td>
<td>Sées [ordained as deacon on 26 Mar.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1106</td>
<td>Maule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1107</td>
<td>Rouen [ordained as priest on 21 Dec.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1112-1124</td>
<td>presumably late 1110s</td>
<td>Crowland, Thorney [around Christmas], Worcester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1119</td>
<td>Rheims [Oct.], Auffay [Nov./Dec.], (Cambrai, Haspres, Arras)⁵⁰⁵</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1132</td>
<td>Cluny [Lent]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1134</td>
<td>Le Merlerault [Aug.], Planches [Aug.]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 1142</td>
<td>Death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from William and Orderic, some other travels by contemporary monks can also be discovered. Another well-known monk historian, Eadmer of Canterbury, as Sally N. Vaughn suggested, had probably been to Bec in the 1080s and built a close relationship with Anselm, before the latter was translated to Canterbury in 1093, hence he was twice referred as ‘a monk of Bec’ by Anselm in an early archiepiscopal letter.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁵ Places in round brackets are hypothetical or probable.
⁵⁰⁶ S. N. Vaughn, ‘Among These Authors are the Men of Bec: Historical Writing among the Monks of Bec’, Essays in Medieval Studies, 17 (2000), pp. 7-8. The letter is printed in F. S. Schmitt, ed., S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia, vol. 4 (Edinburgh, 1949), Epistola 209, pp. 104-105. The words involving Eadmer are follows: ‘Librum quem ego edidi, cuius titulus est Cur Deus Homo, domnus EDMERUS, carissimus filius meus et baculus senectutis meae, monachus Becci, cui tantum debent amici mei quantum me diligunt, libenter ecclesiae Becensi ut filius eius transcribit.’ (The book which I completed, whose title is Why God became Man, Dom EADMER, my dearest son and the staff of my old age, a monk of Bec, whom my friends ought to love as much as they love me, willingly will transcribe for the church of Bec as its son.) Here I used Vaughn’s translation. Cur Deus Homo was finished in around 1098, when Anselm was in exile in Italy, before he attended the Council of Bari. See B. Davies and G. R. Evans, eds., Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works (Oxford, 1998), p. ix; S. N. Vaughn,
He had also visited Worcester probably several times and maintained contact with Prior Nicholas and the fellow monks there.507 We do not know the exact dates of such visits, but it was very likely to happen at least once before 1113, when he was asked by the Worcester monks to write the Life of St Oswald.508 His other movements were heavily influenced by his position in the household of two archbishops of Canterbury, Anselm and Ralph, which made him share their extremely itinerant life between 1093 and 1109 and from 1116 to 1119, and he travelled to Scotland in 1120 when he became bishop of St Andrews for only a short period.509 Hence, these travels may not be able to represent other more ordinary monks.

Osbern of Canterbury, another monk at Christ Church, had also made some journeys, though not as many as Eadmer. He was sent by Lanfranc to Bec in order to reform himself by studying under the supervision of Anselm, who was then abbot of Bec, and he stayed there for several years before 1080.510 Before he finished his Life

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508 Eadmer’s prologue shows that he was commanded by Worcester monks to write such a work, see Turner and Muir, ed. and trans., Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald, pp. 216-217: ‘Vnde iis, qui sicut ueraciter creditur illum in hac uita prae caeteris sincerius diligunt, placuit tarn prece quam praecepto me ad hoc commouere, ut quae multipliciter de eo scripta sunt compendioso ac nouo narrandi stilo expediam.’ (And so it pleased those who, as you may well believe, love him in this life more dearly than any others to stir me, by imploring as well as by commanding, to this task of setting out those things which have been written copiously about him in an abridged and new narrative manner.) Southern suggested that this work was written between 1113 and 1115. See Southern, Saint Anselm and His Biographer, p. 283, n. 2.

509 Ibid., pp. 234-236; Gransten, Historical Writing in England, pp. 133, 139.

of St Dunstan, which was probably written during the archiepiscopal vacancy after Lanfranc’s death in 1089, he was once in Thanet to hear a miracle of the saint from the mouth of a knight, whom he had known before, and he also visited Glastonbury to see Dunstan’s cell.\textsuperscript{511}

Moreover, the mobility of John of Worcester, the famous monastic historian and probably a mutual friend of William, Orderic, Eadmer and Symeon of Durham, can be partly discovered as well. He seldom told his readers about his travels, but it is certain that he was at Winchcombe at some point between 1132 and 1139, where he had a conversation with Grimbald, the physician of Henry I, about the three nightmares of the king, and heard from the abbot of St Valéry the story about two Christian captives meeting their different ends on account of the different strength of their faith.\textsuperscript{512} In

\textsuperscript{511} Osbern, \textit{Miracula Sancti Dunstani}, in \textit{Memorials of St Dunstan Archbishop of Canterbury}, ed. W. Stubbs (London, 1874), c. 24, pp. 156-157: ‘Ante hos dies, cum in insula Tanatos essem, gradiebar juxta littus maris cum milite, qui me pro defensione sui invitaverat, considerans ea aquae ibi sunt mirabilia Dei, et materiem boni sermonis exinde elicere.’ (A few days before, when I was in Thanet, I walked along the shore of the sea with a knight, who had invited me to defend him, and considering that those waters are the wonders of God, the topic of a good conversation was then elicited.) Idem, \textit{Vita Sancti Dunstani}, c. 13, p. 83: ‘Ut enim de re quam ipse vidi, testimonium feram, quantus a mea fide aestimatio, longitudo ejusdem cellae non amplius quinque pedum, latitudo vero duos semis pedes habet.’ (Let me record what I myself saw, that (as far as I can judge) the length of his cell is not more than five feet and its breadth two and a half feet.) For the latter, I have used Gransden’s translation. See Gransden, \textit{Historical Writing in England}, p. 128.

\textsuperscript{512} JW, III, pp. 200-201: ‘Erat itaque iste medicina artis peritus, Grimbaldus nominee, qui apud Winceleumb, me presente et audiente, narravat hie omnia domino Godefrido eiusdem ecclesie abbati’ (It was that skilled physician, Grimbald, who related all these matters at Winchcombe to the lord abbot Godfrey of the church there in my presence and hearing); pp. 214-215: ‘Hec olim exulans Winceleumb, ab ore doctissimi uiri abbatis de Sancto Walarico audiui, et huic chronice nostre inserere curavi.’ (I heard this account, when I was once exiled at Winchcombe, from the most learned abbot of St Valéry, and took care to insert in our chronicle.) These two stories were written in the entries for 1131 and 1134, which does not help us determine the date of John’s visit to Winchcombe. It is only certain that it happened between 1132 and 1139, for in 1132, John was accompanying Uhtred, precentor of Worcester, when he was approaching his death, while on 7 November 1139, John was engaged in divine service in the church when a hostile force approached Worcester. See JW, III, pp. 206-209; 274-275. Thomson problematically suggested that John was at Winchcombe in 1131, while Gransden and H. W. C. Davis suggested the date to be before King Henry’s death, probably in about 1134. See J. R. H. Weaver, ed., \textit{The Chronicle of John of Worcester 1118-1140: Being the Continuation of the ‘Chronicon ex Chronicis’ of Florence of Worcester} (London, 1908), p. 10; Gransden, \textit{Historical Writing in England}, p. 145, n. 60; Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, p. 75.
addition, he was probably a confrater of the community of Durham and may have visited Durham before 1113, for his name had been added to the Durham Liber Vitae by that time.513

Finally, it is also worth mentioning the mobility of Symeon of Durham, though our knowledge about this is very limited. It is nearly impossible to detect his travels from his own writings, for he was certainly not the sole author of the LDE, and his role in the compilation of the HR was limited.514 From his hand, however, it is believed that he came to Durham with other scribes from northern France or Normandy when William of St Calais returned to the bishopric of Durham from his exile in Normandy in 1091.515 Apart from this, we know nothing about his other travels, if they really existed.

On the one hand, it can be seen that similar to William, some other contemporary writers were also able to enjoy much mobility, such as Orderic and Eadmer. On the other hand, although our knowledge of the travels of Osbern, John and Symeon is limited, they might still have made many journeys for various reasons – at least their identity as monk did not entirely prevent them from venturing beyond the cloister. Yet we have to note here that the contemporaries of William which we have mentioned so far were all cantors or librarians, or at least related to historical writings in their own monasteries.516 This is because their writings may sometimes contain hints for their

514 LDE, pp. xlv, xlvi.
516 Orderic himself did not mention his role in his monastery as librarian or cantor, but recent scholarship strongly supports this possibility, see OV, I, p. 24; GND, I, p. lxvii; Chibnall, The World of Orderic Vitalis,
own travels, which provide a way to reconstruct part of their itineraries throughout their lives, but this does not mean that other ordinary monks in William’s time, who were not involved in writing, were totally prevented from enjoying the opportunities for travel. There are still examples which may show their mobility, though our knowledge is even more limited. As in the case of Osbern, during the archiepiscopacy of Lanfranc (1070-1089), many other monks moved between Canterbury and Bec, usually for the sake of education and discipline – Lanfranc sent Holvard, Wido, and his own nephew Lanfranc to Bec; and Henry, Gundulf, Maurice, Herluin, and Hernost were sent by Anselm to Canterbury.517 Such monastic exchanges can also be seen in the twelfth century from the letters of Peter the Venerable and Bernard of Clairvaux, which show that the desire or need for education provided an opportunity for ordinary monks to travel.518

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518 One letter from Peter to Geoffrey bishop of Châlons-en-Champagne between 1131 and 1143 shows that a Cluny monk was sent to Châlons for education, see G. Constable, ed., The Letters of Peter the
addition, travels directly related to religious devotion seem to have been even more common for ordinary monks. In the *GP*, William mentioned two monks at Malvern, Ealdwine and Guy, who had intended to undertake a pilgrimage in order to see the Holy Sepulchre or obtain the glory of martyrdom. From William’s narrative, Guy seemed to have fulfilled his intention later, while Ealdwine was persuaded by St Wulfstan of Worcester to remain there. He later attracted more followers and probably ended up being the first prior of Malvern. This story, in particular, reflects the coexistence of pilgrimage by ordinary monks and criticism of it. Interestingly, at the end of the twelfth century, when William of Longchamp, the chancellor, bishop of Ely, and papal legate, was endeavouring to prevent the Black Monks from going on pilgrimage to St Thomas at Canterbury and St Edmund at Bury, Abbot Samson of Bury St Edmunds objected to the decree, arguing that it was an infringement on abbatial rights over the free disposition of their fellow monks, which seemed to imply that only abbots had the authority to forbid or permit such travels. This means that monastic pilgrimage was a controversial issue but also a widespread phenomenon at least in England in the twelfth century.

From all the examples provided above, it seems that travel and mobility were not privileges that William enjoyed alone, since other contemporary monks were also able

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to be involved in various travels; some even had clearly much mobility just like him. To all appearances, William’s mobility was not exceptional, and monastic mobility seemed to be prevalent in practice. Nevertheless, we have been using inductive reasoning to induce general rules from particular examples, which may be problematic and unsafe – how can we be sure that all the examples we have provided are not particulars, while other thousands of monks in the cloister at that time, the majority silent in historical records, were strictly confined by the principle of *stabilitas loci*? If we can prove that William’s and other monks’ travels did not break monastic rules, or even were a way to fulfil monastic ideals, that is their mobilities were indeed the same in essence that followed monastic ideals, then we may be able to suggest that he was not so special, but more ordinary monks were able to travel like him and enjoy great mobilities, or at least had the ‘opportunity’ or ‘choice’ to do so.

In a broad sense, nearly all of William’s travels were meant to pursue knowledge – searching for books that were not available in his own monastery and collecting information for his own writings. This does not mean that knowledge was only preserved in writings, since seeing and hearing can also be useful ways to obtain it. Even for the ‘business’ trips in his later life, he always used the opportunities to see and hear those political or religious events, and then made them into a written record, a form of knowledge, preserved in his books. This is the same with other contemporary writers we have mentioned. For example, Orderic was able to borrow materials freely from neighbouring monastic or cathedral libraries, including Bec and Rouen, and search for
various works when he was travelling.\textsuperscript{521} His journey to England presumably in the late 1110s may have greatly influenced his ideas on writing a universal history, and his contact with the newly completed computistical miscellany (Oxford, St John’s College MS 17, 1110) at Thorney may have inspired him to make his own copies of this kind of work later.\textsuperscript{522} Eadmer also likely used his trips to Worcester as a source for gathering historical materials, and his company with the two archbishops of Canterbury during various journeys may have provided access to both written records and oral information which would benefit his own writings.\textsuperscript{523} Similarly, the \textit{exul} of John of Worcester at some point between 1132 and 1139 may have been a trip to collect information as well, which might explain why he added new materials into the annals for 1130s after 1139.\textsuperscript{524} It is noteworthy that for these writers, the period after they had returned from their journeys was usually a productive time for their writings, not only because of the stability and concentration when they were back to their monastic lives, but also, in my opinion, for the reason that those trips had really benefited and inspired their writings.\textsuperscript{525}

\textsuperscript{521} \textit{OV}, I, p. 27; II, pp. xvii-xviii; III, p. xxvii.
\textsuperscript{522} \textit{OV}, II, pp. 186-189; Chibnall, \textit{The World of Orderic Vitalis}, pp. 36-37; Hingst, \textit{The Written World}, pp. 74-78. Hingst even suggested that that Thorney collection might have been the main reason for Orderic’s visit.
\textsuperscript{523} Brett, ‘John of Worcester and His Contemporaries’, p. 113. Since Eadmer maintained a correspondence with Nicholas prior of Worcester on historical problems, his visits to Worcester would benefit himself even more, for he would be able to see those materials with his own eyes.
\textsuperscript{524} John used the word \textit{exulans} to describe his stay at Winchcombe, see \textit{JW}, III, p. 214: ‘olim exulans Wincelcumbe’. McGurk translated this phrase into ‘when I was once exiled at Winchcombe’. Since we know nothing, especially the reason, about the ‘exile’, I prefer to interpret this word as ‘be far away’, just like once William used this word in \textit{GR}, I, i. 68. 2, pp. 98-99: ‘occurrut quod sermo meus a uero non exulat’ (it occurs that my words are not far from the truth). This interpretation allows us to regard John’s \textit{exul} as a normal trip away from his own monastery. John certainly rewrote the annals for 1128-31 in or after 1131, and his reference to Stephen of Blois as ‘qui nunc imperat’ (who is now ruling) in the entry for 1130 indicates that it was written after 1135. Another mention of Henry of Blois as ‘non tunc, sed nunc Romane ecclesie legatus’ (not at that time, but now legate of the Roman church) in the entry for 1134 shows a date between 1139 and 1143 for that annal. Therefore, at least part of the annals for 1130s were added later after 1139, when John has returned from his \textit{exul}. See \textit{JW}, II, p. lxix.
\textsuperscript{525} For example, part of William’s \textit{GR} was written after his first long journey between c. 1115 and 1118, and the early versions of the \textit{GR} and \textit{GP} were finished shortly after his second long journey presumably in c. 1122/23. Orderic also seemed to be more productive in writing his \textit{Ecclesiastical History} after those
On the other hand, the monastic exchanges for education between monasteries can also be counted as travels in pursuit of knowledge, not only for obtaining specific skills, but also for learning the monastic discipline. This means that knowledge can be intellectual and rational on the one hand, and moral and spiritual on the other. The correspondence between Canterbury and Bec during the archiepiscopacy of Lanfranc clearly shows the two aspects of such mobilities. In a letter to Maurice, a monk from Bec who was visiting Canterbury at that time, Anselm encouraged him to seize the opportunity to improve his Latin grammar, in which he obviously had made less progress when he was at Bec, under the supervision of Dom Arnulf, who was then a specialist in this area at Canterbury. Osbern was also praised by Anselm for making great progress in obtaining knowledge during his visit at Bec. More importantly, his education at Bec helped him to improve his morality, and he successfully learned about how to correct himself and lead a praiseworthy life as a monk. Similar to Osbern’s trips at the end of 1110s. See Chibnall, The World of Orderic Vitalis, p. 37.

526 Niskanen, ed. and trans., Letters of Anselm, Epistola 55, pp. 158-159: ‘Audii quod legas a domno Arnulfo. Quod si uerum est, placet mihi, qui semper professum tuum, sicut ipse ex parte expertus es, desideravi, nee unquam utique plus quam modo. Audii quoque quod ipse multum ualeat in declinatione, et tu scis quia molestum michi semper fuerit pueros declinare, unde ualemus quam tibi expedire scio te apud in declinandi scientiam profecisse. Hortor itaque et precor et ut filio karissimo praecepi quantus quicquid ab eo legeris et quicquid aliud poteris, diligentissime declinare studeas.’ (I heard that you are studying under Arnulf. If this is true, I am very pleased, for I have always hoped for your progress, as you have sometimes seen for yourself, and never more so than now. I have also heard that he excels at declension, and you know it was always tiresome for me to teach boys to decline, whereof I am aware that your progress into the art of declension under me was much less than befits you. So, I admonish, beg, and charge you as my dearest son that you take the utmost care to parse whatever you may read under him and whatever else you can.) Here the meaning of ‘decline’ is similar to what we call now as parsing. See J. J. Murphy, ‘The Teaching of Latin as a Second Language in the 12th Century’, in Studies in Medieval Linguistic Thought: Dedicated to Geoffrey L. Bursill-Hall on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday on 15 May 1980, ed. K. Koerner, H.-J. Niederehe and R. H. Robins (Amsterdam, 1980), p. 168; A. A. Grotans, Reading in Medieval St. Gall (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 73-74.

527 Niskanen, ed. and trans., Letters of Anselm, Epistola 31, pp. 96-97: ‘Domnus Osbernus uester utique et pietatis affectu hilaritate condito in dies uenerabiliter pinguescit et scientiae profectu per studii instantiam et ingenii serenitatem tenacemque memoriam cotidie laudabiliter crescit.’ (Your Dom Osbern admirably expands every day in affection for piety, polished by cheerfulness, and laudably increases day by day to a greater knowledge thanks to persistent studies as well as his natural cleverness and tenacious memory.)

528 Ibid., Epistola 57, pp. 172-173: ‘Dilectus meus dominus Osbernus vester, qui ad vos reducitur, sic
case, the monk Lanfranc, nephew of his namesake the archbishop, was sent to Bec for learning monastic discipline as well, and Anselm suggested using informal conversations in order to teach the young man how to adapt to monastic life.\footnote{Ibid., Epistola 22, pp. 70-71: ‘oportet ualde ut uestri eum colloquii participem sepissime faciatis, omnesque quorum doctrina salubris ei esse potest colloqui cum eo quotiens expedit iubeatis.’ (It is of utmost importance that you allow him to share in your informal talk whenever possible and that you tell all those whose teaching can nourish him to talk with him whenever appropriate.)}

It can be seen that William’s mobility belonged to a broader context of monastic travels in pursuit of knowledge around his time, and it was certainly not a new phenomenon at all. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Bede had already mentioned that all the monks in Northumbria who were skilled in chanting came to hear the teaching of church music by Abbot John, who was the precentor of St Peter’s and the abbot of St Martin’s in Rome, having been invited by Abbot Benedict Biscop to Britain.\footnote{HE, iv. 18, p. 388-389: ‘Non solum autem idem Iohannes ipsius monasterii fratres docebatur, uerus de omnibus pene eiusdem prouinciae monasteriis ad audiendum eum, qui cantandi erant periti, confluabant. Sed et ipsam per loca in quibus doceret multi inuitare curabant.’ (Not only did John instruct the brothers in this monastery, but all who had any skill in singing flocked in from almost all the monasteries in the kingdom to hear him, and he had many invitations to teach elsewhere.)} Another well-known example is Richer of Reims, who left a precious account of his own journey from Saint-Rémi to Chartres in 991, with the company of a knight from Chartres and a boy probably from the city of Reims, in order to read the *Aphorisms* by Hippocrates of Cos.\footnote{J. Lake, ed. and trans., *Histories: Richer of Saint-Rémi* (Cambridge, MA, 2011), vol. II: Books 3-4, IV. 50, pp. 304-311.} He entitled this chapter ‘De difficultate sui itineris ab urbe Remorum ad Carnotum’ (On the Difficulty of His Journey from Rheims to Chartres), which narrated the obstacles he encountered during his journey. Justin Lake is right to argue that this

pristinae uitae peruersitatem sponte accusat et exsecratur, atque inquantum ex ea quam nobiscum habuit conversatione palam et secrete experiri potui, sic uitae laudabils amore accenditur, ut non immerito interior eius homo in melius aut iam mutatus aut procul dubio facile mutandus existimetur.’ (My beloved, your Dom Osbern, who is now delivered back to you, blames and curses the perversity of his former life so sincerely and—so far as I could gather from what he shared with us in public and private conversation—is so inflamed with love for the praiseworthy life that it is not unreasonable to think that his inner man has already changed for the better, or else will doubtless easily be changed.)
travel narrative provides a self-portrait of Richer’s own desire to learn and evidence of his diligence, which made him overcome all the hazards on the road.\textsuperscript{532} He may, however, have gone too far in emphasising the specificity of Richer’s journey in pursuit of knowledge, implying that it runs counter to his identity as a monk mainly for two reasons: he seemed to travel when he wanted to and was not restricted by his abbot, and his journey took place during Lent, when monks were supposed to devote themselves to prayer and fasting.\textsuperscript{533} Although his narration seemed to show that he started his journey nearly as soon as he received the invitation letter of Heribrand, his friend at Chartres, he obviously went from the city of Reims, where he got the letter from the knight, back to his own monastery to ask his abbot’s permission, who provided him with a horse.\textsuperscript{534} In addition, monastic travel was not forbidden during the period of Lent, and monks could still pray and fast during the journey when necessary.\textsuperscript{535} The absence of devotional overtones in Richer’s narrative may only result from the fact that he was writing secular histories, and he may have had his secular audience in mind.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{532} J. Lake, \textit{Richer of Saint-Rémi: The Methods and Mentality of a Tenth-Century Historian} (Washington, DC, 2013), pp. 264-265.
\item \textsuperscript{533} Lake, \textit{Richer of Saint-Rémi}, pp. 257, 261.
\item \textsuperscript{534} Lake, ed. and trans., \textit{Histories: Richer of Saint-Rémi}, IV. 50, pp. 304-305: ‘Unde et ego admodum laetatus, assumpto quodam puero, cum Carnotino equite iter Carnotum arripere disposui. Digressus autem ab abbate meo unius tantum parvaredi solatium accepi.’ (I was delighted at this, and taking a boy along with me, I arranged to make the journey to Chartres with the knight. Upon my departure, however, I received from my abbot only a single horse to assist me.) Although Richer complained the lack of support from the abbot, he must have asked his permission, and the latter clearly approved this journey.
\item \textsuperscript{535} RM, vol. II, LIII. 36-37, pp. 248-250: ‘Ieiunium vero in quadragesima propter superuentem non frangatur a domesticis fratribus, sed soli ipsi qui superuerit, si ambulare longo itinere cognitus fuerit, ipsi permittatur horam frangi ieiunii.’ (Furthermore, the home brethren may not break the fast during Lent because of a visitor, but only the visitor himself may be permitted to violate the time of fasting if he is known to be making a long journey.) The existence of visitors who are making long journeys suggests that monks were able to travel during Lent. Another possible evidence can be found in \textit{Ibid.}, XXVIII. 29, p. 156: ‘Deinde ab aequinoctio hiemali usque ad Pasha, quia breues sunt dies, ambulantium fratrum in quarta, sexta et sabbato ieiunia protrahantur in uesperam.’ (Then from the winter equinox until Easter, because the days are short, the brothers who are travelling are to prolong their fast until evening on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.) The ‘winter equinox’ was pointed out by the \textit{RM} as 24 September elsewhere, see \textit{Ibid.}, LXIX. 1, p. 274. The English translations here come from Eberle, trans., \textit{The Rule of the Master}, pp. 189, 217.
\end{itemize}
In fact, travel in pursuit of knowledge could be devotional, since knowledge, no matter whether secular or divine, was seen as significant for contemplation of God.\textsuperscript{536} For Church Fathers like Augustine, with faith preparing the way, human reason helps a believer to approach the fullness and perfection of knowledge, bringing wisdom to understand eternal things and arrive at an apprehension of God’s revelation.\textsuperscript{537} The invisible things and divinity is possible to be understood by contemplation of every created thing, for Paul the Apostle stated: ‘Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.’\textsuperscript{538} Augustine divided created objects into three classes - materials things, representations of material things including visions, and incorporeal things like wisdom and justice, while the Trinity and divinity are above all these classes.\textsuperscript{539} Based on Paul’s statement, Augustine believed that through the intellect of understanding all those created objects, humans may be able to raise their souls to the understanding of the Creator, with God’s help, which opens the possibility of the explanation that all human knowledge matters and needs to be learned by believers.\textsuperscript{540} Hence, William’s contemporary Hugh of St Victor made the famous statement – ‘Learn all things, and subsequently you will see that nothing is

\textsuperscript{536} My following discussion owes much to Sønnesyn’s inspiring work, \textit{William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History}, especially his last chapter. His arguments about the devotional pursuit of knowledge and history as part of ethics lay the foundation of my following three paragraphs. But his discussion does not leave much room for travels, which is an important point I am trying to contribute here.


\textsuperscript{540} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 310. Here Augustine quoted directly the statement of Paul the Apostle.
Hugh mentioned his own study in learning names, oratory, rhetoric, geometry, music and other kinds of knowledge since he was young, and how those things had benefited him. For him, similar to Paul’s statement, the divine Wisdom ‘has been made known and is recognised in and through creatures’, which was the reason that Christian students should learn as much as possible. Alan of Lille also echoed the same sentiment: ‘Everything in the created universe is like a book for us, a picture, a mirror, a truthful sign of our life, our destiny, our condition, our death.’ In this mirror of creation, a man will see his own wretched condition, but also the perfection mirrored, and thus he will see the reflection of God. Therefore, as Sønnesyn argued, a full knowledge of created things is the basis for understanding the divine order, in which everything participates, meaning that the apprehension of created objects is the starting point for the contemplation of divine truth. From this point of view, monastic travels in pursuit of knowledge, even secular knowledge, can be beneficial for one’s own faith, as long as it helps to understand the created world, the divine order, and finally provide an approach to contemplating God.

For William, his travels carried those meanings and were valuable because, during

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his search for manuscripts, he had obtained knowledge that was beneficial for his own and his fellow monks’ souls. Both pagan and Christian works that he had collected during his journeys for his monastery library brought benefits for establishing a good life. This is reflected in the prologue of his *PH*, where he recommended to his fellow monk, Guthlac, who had asked his advice on what to read, both pagan and Christian wisdom collected through his own endeavours and preserved at their convent library formed a volume teaching a way of life beneficial for the soul:

Habes ergo librum multiplices materie qui et instruet propositum, et oblectet animum, in quo preter collectionis industriam nichil reperies meum, nisi quod quaedam Plinii uel breuiaturu propter compendium, uel mutatur propter faciliorem intellectum.

[Therefore, you have a volume of many materials which teaches how to live and pleases the soul, in which you will find nothing except what I have collected, save for the fact that I have either abridged or modified certain words of Pliny for the sake of compendium and easy understanding.]\(^{547}\)

William’s desire for reading and studying had been consistent since his childhood, for he believed that if he turned away from them, it would be harmful for his own life and, in his own words, ‘damaging to my soul and my good repute’.\(^{548}\) Hence, at the time of compiling the *PH*, after his previous travels had helped him collect many books and manuscripts, he had amassed an enormous collection which both benefited his brethren’s soul and his own.

In William’s study of many kinds of literature, history stood out as an especially

\(^{547}\) *PH*, i. 24-27, p. 37. The translation here is mine.

\(^{548}\) *GR*, i, ii. pr. 1, pp. 150-151: ‘esset animae dispendium et famae pericum’.
beneficial subject. As Sonnesyn noted, history, in William’s mind, was subordinate to ethics, whose task was ‘animos ad bene uiuendum componat’ (to put the rational soul to live well), namely ‘to inculcate a good way of life’. History in particular had an ethical function, for it prompted people to ‘follow the good and shun the bad’ by imparting examples from past events. As a storehouse of moral examples, history cultivated virtues in men because divine order can be shown in God’s favour of the good and His punishment of those who strayed from the right path. His most historical works, the GR and the HN, both demonstrated the importance of the virtues of individuals and provided positive and negative examples for how to lead a good life. In addition, the fluctuation of past events was a reflection of the workings of Providence, within which framework, human agency sometimes played a causal role in forming the actual sequence of events. If a man or a nation showed their obedience and were wholly devoted to salvation, they would win the rewards from God, but if

550 GR, I, ii. pr. 1, pp. 150-151: ‘historiam precipue, quae iocunda quadam gestorum notitia mores condiens, ad bona sequenda ul mala cauenda legentes exemplis irritat.’ (In particular I studied History, which adds flavour to moral instruction by imparting a pleasurable knowledge of past events, spurring the reader by the accumulation of examples to follow the good and shun the bad.)
551 HN, pr., pp. 2-3: ‘Quid enim plus ad honestatis spectat commodum, quid magis conducit aequitati, quam diuinam agnoscere circa bonos indulgentiam, et erga peruersos uindictam?’ (For what is more to the advantage of virtue or more conducive to justice than recognizing the divine pleasure in the good and punishment of those who have gone astray?)
they were in a morally degrading situation, they would be punished by the divine Will, an idea that occurred frequently in William’s narrative, especially in the GR, the HN and the Comm. Lam.\(^{554}\) Hence, history can be particularly beneficial for the moral improvement of individuals and nations, and without travels, his understanding of past events and the divine power behind those events would have been more limited, especially as William thought that the writing of English history in Latin after Bede was lacking, and he had to ‘mend the broken chain’ of history by himself.\(^{555}\) In the same prologue where he argued for the edifying function of history, he mentioned that he ‘collected chronicles from far and wide’, and if we consider our findings of his mobility, we can almost be sure that he must have had his travels in mind so that he could fulfil this action.\(^{556}\) Thus, his mobility provided his access to historical knowledge, through which he and other readers could contemplate their morality and soul, and finally approach the understanding of the divine Will. In this way, those travels undertaken by William, in order to search for manuscripts, acted not just to pursue knowledge, but also became a process to cultivate his own soul and to bring growth in his monastic contemplation.


\(^{555}\) GR, I, i. pr. 4, pp. 14-15: ‘Vnde michi cum propter patriae caritatem, tum propter adhortantium auctoritatem voluntati fuit interruptam temporum seriem sacrare et exarata barbarice Romano sale condire.’ (It was therefore my design, in part moved by love of my country and in part encouraged by influential friends, to mend the broken chain of our history, and give a Roman polish to the rough annals of our native speech.)

\(^{556}\) GR, I, ii. pr. 2, pp. 150-151: ‘cronica longe lateque corrogatui’. 
Moreover, the advantage of travelling is reflected in the mutual confirmation of written knowledge and landscape, together with the benefit of eye-witnessing for approaching the truth. On the one hand, space and time were related to each other, and monuments and buildings in different places served as the perfect reflection of history and miracles, which demonstrated earthly vicissitudes and aroused feelings for the eternal life. While the Roman vestiges at Bath, the ship remains at Rouen, and the city ruins at York, seen by William during his journeys, reminded him of the transience of worldly power, the stone crosses on the road between Doulting and Malmesbury marked the profusion St Aldhelm’s miracles and the eternity of his sanctity with God as his witness. On the other hand, travel provided opportunities to see things with one’s own eyes, so that he could approach facts as close as possible and avoid falsehood, which would become the basis for apprehending God and the Supreme Truth. For William, repeating falsehoods meant a desecration of history and the saints, hence he ‘acted with care and diligence’ to make sure that truth always overcame falsehood in his own writings. Facts were important, but their usefulness in revealing the supreme

559 Eyewitness observation in particular strengthened the sincerity and reliability of testimony, and this principle of judicial rhetoric was an important element in William’s writing of history. See Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, pp. 174-175.
560 *HN*, iii. 60, pp. 112-113: ‘Nichil enim a me dabitur gratiae, sed sola ueritas historiae sine ullo fuco mendatui posteriorum producetur notitiaie.’ (For I shall make no concession to favour, but rather the truth of history alone, without any colouring of falsehood, will be set forth for the knowledge of posterity); *VD*, i. pr. 2, pp. 166-167: ‘Ille profecto abutitur litteris et otio qui de operibus sanctorum falsa scribendo, dum negligent famam, consciscit infamiam.’ (It is a misuse of learning and leisure to retail falsehoods about the doings of saints: it shows contempt for reputation, and condemns one to infamy); ii. 36. 1, pp. 300-301: ‘quannuis michi conscius sim multa merito redarguenda suppressisse silentio, et cauta egisse diligentia, ut non pericitareetur ueritas ubi superbiret falsitas’ (Yet I am aware that I have passed over in silence much that I could have censured, and acted with care and diligence to make sure that the truth was not endangered where falsehood was triumphant).
good and the divine truth behind them was even more significant.⁵⁶¹ In this respect, travels made him able to see not only facts, but what God had granted him to see, which strengthened his own faith and also made his fair-minded readers believe.⁵⁶² The things he saw in the present won belief for past events, and the present miracles confirmed the consistent divine intervention in the earthly kingdom.⁵⁶³ Travels can be edifying as well.

More interestingly, even if we put aside William’s travel aim of pursuing knowledge, his mobility seemed to be strongly devotional itself. William’s unremitting concern over the deeds, miracles, and relics of saints throughout his writings provided us with a hint in reconsidering the primary motivation or basic logic behind his travels. It may be valuable to examine the GP as an example, which was probably the perfect reflection of the arrangement and results of his early travels.⁵⁶⁴ Modern scholars

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⁵⁶¹ Sønnesyn, William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History, p. 266: ‘A thought was true in as much as it corresponded to divine truth, and an action was just in as much as it conformed to divine justice.’ This is, for example, reflected by William’s way of handling Osbern’s claim that King Edgar had taken pleasure with a nun, for which he believed that even if it had been a fact, it should not be publicised, since it would harm people’s search for the Highest Good. See FD, i. pr. 6, pp. 168-169: ‘Illud cum omni historiarum testimonio careat, etiam si probari posset, magis pie dissimulari quam improbe propalari et in uulgus efferri deceret.’ (There is absolutely no evidence for that; and even it could be shown to be true, it would be better for it to be passed over piously than circulated and publicised with malice.)

⁵⁶² William’s emphasis of eye-witnessing as an approach to strengthening faith can be seen in GP, I, v. 273. 6, pp. 652-653: ‘Sed minus est audita depromere, nisi sudeat et stilus ea apponere quae nobis donauit Deus uidere. Quod cum fecero, nihil minus michi lector, si aequus arbiter est nec studis partium agitur, credere debebit quam sibi credi uelit si aliquid insigne diebus suis factum uel scripto uel uerbo narauerit.’ (But it is one thing to record what one has heard; my pen must also strive to put down what God has granted me to see. When I do this, the reader, if he is a fair-minded judge with no parti pris, will do well to believe no less than he would want to be believed if he spoke or wrote an account of some wonder of his own days.)

⁵⁶³ GP, I, v. 273. 8, pp. 654-655: ‘quorum ut crederem ueritati exegerunt ipsa quae uidi. Merentur enim de presentibus fidem facta preterita, et confirmant antiquorum relationem signa recentia.’ (I could not but believe in them just because of the ones I saw for myself. For what happens in the present wins belief for past events; new miracles confirm what we are told of those long ago.)

⁵⁶⁴ Wright’s suggestion of the itinerant nature of the GP may have gone too far, considering our discussion of the details of William’s itinerary in the previous chapters, but the spatial arrangement in the GP is certainly better than his other works to reflect part of the results of his early travels. For Wright’s suggestion, see Wright, ‘The Art of Chorography in William of Malmesbury’s “Gesta Pontificum Anglorum”’, pp. 664-667.
usually categorise the *GP* as an historical work, the companion volume of William’s
collection of English saints in his mind, which is demonstrated in at least three places:565

ii. 74. 20: ‘Sic enim et *dispositum meum ordine* procedet, quo cogitaui post
commemorationem episcoporum *sanctos in eorum parrochii requiescentes non
preterire*.’
[For this will mean that I keep to the ordered plan by which I proposed, after
recording bishops, to mention the saints resting in their parishes.]566

The prologue of Book Four: ‘Et *promptum quidem habeo uelle sanctos patriae
meae laudare*, sed destituit conan tem scire et posse. Nam nec omnes sanctos ualeo
scire, uel quos remotissimae a nobis disparant plagae, uel quorum nullae propter
scriptorum desidiam extant quas uiderimus uitae. Nec illos quos michi diuinitatis
munus donauit et uicinia terrarum et scientia litterarum aliquantulum nosse potest
sterile ingenium et exile eloquium dignis informare laudum titulis, aequiperare
victoriae triumphis. Sed rursum haec meditandi fides occurren
dubietatis nebulas dissicit, securitatem inducit, cum sciam solam hominis bonam uoluntatem,
si forte Fortuna aemula effectum inuideat, aeternae mercedi suf
cire. Mentior si non angeli bonae uoluntati pacem annuntiauerunt. Militet ergo sanctis, si aliud in
me non est, pronae deuotio mentis. Seruiat eis si potest lingua clientis, quem sepe
hactenus seruatum nuper preclaro miraculo insigni exemerunt periculo.’
[My will to praise the saints of my country is readily available, but when I make
the attempt knowledge and ability fail me. I am not in a position to know all the
saints, those separated from me by their remote districts, or those who have no
Lives, so far as we can see, because men have been too lazy to write them. And
even where, by God’s gift, I know something of other saints because they lived
nearby and I am aware of writings about them, my barren talent and threadbare
style cannot accord them the sort of praise they deserve or bring them up to the
level of their triumphant victories. But again, as I reflect on this, faith comes to the

565 The title ‘Gesta Pontificum Anglorum’ is usually translated into ‘The History of the English Bishops’,
which shows the historical way of treatment from modern scholars. Thomson’s commentary and Bailey’s
paper started to raise our attention to the topic of saints and the convergence of history and hagiography
However, in my opinion, we may go one step further, to treat it as William’s collection on English saints.
In this way, the fifth book, that *Life of St Aldhelm*, seemed to be easier to be integrated into the whole
framework of the *GP*, rather than presenting a gap between the first four books as history and the last
book as hagiography. This helps us to touch on his devotional motivation behind his mobility, which I
am going to argue.

566 *GP*, I, ii. 74. 20, pp. 242-243. The emphasis in bold is mine. Same with the two other following
citations.
rescue, dispelling the mists of doubt and removing my cares, for I know that a man’s good intentions by themselves, even if envious fortune happens to grudge him success, is enough to win him eternal reward. Is it not true that the angels proclaimed peace for men of good will? So, even if I have nothing else to show for myself, let the devotion of an eager mind go into battle for the saints! Let them be served if possible, by the tongue of a client whom they have often saved before now, and whom they not long ago rescued miraculously from dire peril.[567]

The prologue of Book Five: ‘Quia igitur immaniter deuiaretur a iustitia si in hoc sanctorum breui commentario solus dominus et patronus noster obumbraretur silentio, suscepi uel paucis uita dicere, quanuis pro inscitia rerum nequaquam ualeam uoluntati satisfacere. Adeo, preter illud quod de illo Beda in Gestis Anglorum tangit, semper infra meritum iacuit, semper, desidia ciuiium agente, inhonorus latuit.’

[Because, then, it would be a monstrous deviation from justice if in this brief account of the saints I threw light on all save our own lord and patron, I have undertaken to say something, however short, of his life, though I cannot do as much as I should wish because of the shortage of information. In fact, apart from Bede’s brief account of him in his History of the English, recognition of Aldhelm has always fallen below the level of his deserts; he has always lain hidden and without honour, thanks to the sloth of his own people.]568

It can be seen that William’s plan for the GP was to record bishops and also ‘saints resting in their parishes’. If we take into consideration the fact that many English bishops recorded by him were saints themselves, we shall see that saints were a primary subject throughout this work. Hence, William referred to the whole work as a ‘brief account of the saints’, to whose framework the life and miracles of St Aldhelm also belonged. His intention to record the saints of his country however met two important obstacles: his ‘barren talent and threadbare style’ could not match the praise that saints deserved, and his lack of information of some saints who were in remote areas or had

no written Lives, thanks to the sloth of people. Yet he was a man of good will and
with firm faith, who with his devotion ‘went into battle for the saints’, namely writing
this book about saints, or recording things about them to the best of his ability, which
would ‘win him eternal reward’. Although these three passages never mentioned his
travels, they certainly left a space in which his mobility may fit – he had to travel to
gather enough information about those saints resting all over England, no matter
whether oral or written, so as to save the deeds and miracles of saints against the peril
of oblivion, which would show his devotion and finally win him heavenly favour;
otherwise, posterity would criticise him, just like he criticised previous generations for
their laziness and sloth. In other words, there is a possibility that it was primarily
monastic devotion that had prompted him to undertake these travels, while writing was
only a secondary concern, a subordinate result of his mobility.

Such purely devotional travels made by William are not easily detectable, for he
did not write much about his own journeys, let alone his motivation for them, but it is
still possible to offer some suggestive evidence. It seems astonishing that William at
least three times directly participated in the miracles of saints during his travels, twice
as a witness and once as a participant. First, he saw with his own eyes that a monk
sick of the dropsy visited the tomb of St Ivo at Slepe and was cured by drinking from
the spring there three times. Second, he witnessed the miracle of St Swithun, who
gave sight back to a blind man whose eyes had been gouged out, almost certainly at

569 William’s mention of his poor ability may only be a way to show his humility, a topos in Christian
writings since the Early Middle Ages. See D. Krueger, Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship
570 Therefore, we are not including the miracles he witnessed at or near his own abbey.
571 GP, I, iv. 181. 9-10, pp. 484-487.
Winchester.572 While the previous two miracles happened before 1125, the third event took place in the mid-1130s at St David’s, where William tried to steal the finger of St Caradoc ‘with the goodwill of devotion’ during the translation ceremony, and he was fought back by the saint, who clenched the fingers into a fist, unrolled back to a palm, and then took away the hand into sleeves.573 For the first two miracles, his narrative seemed to suggest a close contact and at least a short time spent together between him and those pilgrims seeking cures from saints. For the last one, even if the miracle itself might be created by someone later, his strong curiosity and concern over St Caradoc and his relics, shown by the story, was very likely to be true, hence leaving an intense impression over other people in the presence and later becoming the basis for the creation of this story. Why was he able to have such a frequent and strong involvement in those supernatural scenes during his travels away from his own monastery? It is possible that he may have visited those places for various reasons, but what if one of his primary motivations was to see those shrines and feel the divine power just like common pilgrims who tried to show their devotion and sought the pure spiritual value?

The first miracle we have mentioned may be particularly helpful in shedding some light on this aspect. The spot where William saw the miracle of St Ivo must be the new town of Slepe, which was emerging under the support of the abbey of Ramsey in the early twelfth century, with a new road and a new bridge being constructed by 1107, making it evolve into a local commercial centre.574 Why did William visit this place?

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572 GP, I, ii. 75. 43, pp. 264-265.
573 NLA, i., p. 176.
There seemed to be no important manuscripts or records preserved there when he visited, for the cell of St Ivo belonged to the abbey of Ramsey and was only built around a century before. If he only wanted to get materials for his writing, his visit at the abbey of Ramsey would have been enough, since he could get Goscelin’s *Life of St Ivo* and many oral narrations of miracles from the monks there, who owned the body of the saint and were certainly the biggest promoters of his cult. He was also not very likely to be attracted to Slepe by its market or the Easter fair, for he mentioned nothing of them. It is possible that he only passed by the town when he was heading north to Ramsey or east to Ely, but a stronger possibility is that the grave and spring of St Ivo was the most important or even the only reason for his visit. In the *GP*, he praised St Ivo as the easiest to win over by prayer and the most effective in action among the saints in England. He also seemed to have observed the holy spring up close and even tasted the water. He must have known the fame of the saint before he planned this trip. In my opinion, a very likely scenario is that he probably heard about many

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575 A church was built by Ednoth abbot of Ramsey (993-1006) near the spring of St Ivo and it was mentioned in the Domesday Book. See J. Morris, ed. and trans., *Domesday Book 19: Huntingdonshire* (Chichester, 1975), 6.7, 204 b, c. It was also mentioned in Goscelin’s *Life of St Ivo*, see *Patrologia Latina*, 155, cols 89B-C, available at: <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/all/fulltext?ALL=Y&ACTION=byid&warn=N&div=4&id=Z400135877&FILE=../session/1644596955_19967&CURDB=pld> [Accessed 08/07/2022]. See also an English translation of part of his *Life* in S. B. Edgington, *The Life and Miracles of St Ivo* (Great Yarmouth, 1985), p. 21.

576 William must have seen the work of Goscelin at the abbey of Ramsey, which was written for the monks between 1087 and 1090/91, during the tenure of Herbert Losinga as abbot.


578 Slepe is less than one mile to the south of the main medieval road from Huntingdon to Ely, see the map in Taylor, *Roads and Tracks of Britain*, p. 134.

579 *GP*, I, iv. 181. 9-10, pp. 484-485: ‘adeo ut nullus sit in Anglia sanctus Iuone uel exoratu facilior uel effectu efficatior’ (but the result is that there is no saint in England easier than Ivo to win over by prayer or more effective in action).

580 *GP*, I, iv. 181. 8, pp. 484-485: ‘Manat ad hanc diem fons, dulcis potui, accommodus omni ualitudini.’ (The spring flows to this day, sweet to the taste and suitable for the relief of every complaint.)
miracles of St Ivo from the monks at Ramsey, who owned the body of the saint, but he was even more impressed by the healing power of the spring at the grave of the saint, advertised by those monks, hence leading him to plan a detour to Slepe. Then, he was lucky enough to see the whole process of a monk, probably from Ramsey, being cured by the holy water during his stay in the town, which strengthened his faith even more in the power of the saint, leading to his very high praise in the writing of the GP. From this point of view, he was perhaps very similar to the monk pilgrim he met, both motivated by their devotion to visit the shrine. In this sense, he was even a pilgrim himself.\footnote{Webb has demonstrated that a great deal of medieval pilgrimage in England or elsewhere ‘took place over distances which were sometimes surprisingly short’. See Webb, Pilgrimage in Medieval England, p. xiii. Also see eadem, Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West, p. 16; eadem, Medieval European Pilgrimage, p. xii. It is hard to really give a definition of pilgrimage, as Webb’s research has shown, but normally, it is a trip related to the pursuit of spiritual value, usually in the appearance of visiting the relics and shrines. Therefore, if we consider William as a monk first, rather than a writer or scholar, his travel from Ramsey to Slepe in order to see the shrine and feel the divine power was obviously a pilgrimage.}

The case of Slepe suggests the possibility that William may have taken even more travels which can be regarded as pilgrimages. His visit to Winchester may have been strongly devotional as well, probably a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Swithun, and again he was lucky enough to witness another miracle. Since miracles were not every-day or common events especially at the same place – particularity and rarity made miracles and gave them power – we may assume that William may have taken many more devotional travels, in which he was not as ‘lucky’ as his visits at Slepe and Winchester to see miracles, and hence being unable to be detected in his writings. More interestingly, if we put aside William’s aim of collecting information, we may be able to touch on the essence of his travels, especially in South and Middle England: for the forty-five places
(from Bardney to the south) in Webb’s map which were probably pilgrimage centres in the late Anglo-Saxon period, the number of the places that William certainly or was very likely to have visited is at least nineteen, and this figure could have been even bigger.\textsuperscript{582} It seems to me that William’s travels consisted of a big pilgrimage tour around England. In our citation of the prologue of Book Four of the \textit{GP}, William also said, ‘Let them [i. e. saints] be served, if possible, by the tongue of a client whom they have often saved before now, and whom they not long ago rescued miraculously from dire peril.’ If we take these words seriously, it can be seen that William’s direct contact with miracles and divine power may have been even more frequent. This is a perfect reflection of his monastic mentality, devout and pious, and with such a mentality, his travels could have been purely devotional in the first place.

From this point of view, his seeking out of materials for the sake of his writings may have only been his secondary concern. In his mind, the glory of monasteries and that of saints support each other.\textsuperscript{583} Consequently, the charters and cartularies he encountered during his trips were not only the monuments of various churches and monasteries, but also the proof of the honour of the saints resting in those places. In this way, remembering the saints is also a way of remembering the monasteries, and \textit{vice versa}. His collecting information for his writing served this purpose and he was able to fight against the biggest enemy, oblivion. In his \textit{VW}, he clearly showed such vigilance


\textsuperscript{583} This is shown by his comment on the abbey of Glastonbury and its patron, St Dunstan. See \textit{AG}, pr., pp. 40-41: ‘Nec hoc multum a proposito alienum putari debet, cum honor ecclesie in Dunstanum et laus Dunstani ad ecclesiam redundet.’ (Nor ought this be considered very different from the original plan, since the honour of the church redounds to Dunstan and praise of him to the church.)
against the dilution of memory with the passage of time:

Et uos quidem, domini, vitalis adhuc compotes probe cognoscetis me nichil dicere quod non sit solida ueritate subnixum, quod non sit probabilium uirorum testimonio compertum, adeo antiquorum mentibus insederunt uisa, adeo iuniores ampluctuntur audita. Posteris uero quando gestorum memoria frig ebit, poterit subesse dubitatio nisi testem idoneum produxero.

[Now you, my lords, while you go on breathing the air of life, will be well aware that I say nothing that does not rest on a firm foundation of truth and is not known on the witness of reliable persons, for the older among you will remember what they saw, and the younger what they have heard. But what of posterity? When the recollection of events grows cold, doubts may arise, if I do not bring forward a credible witness.]584

William always felt an urgent need to use his own writings to preserve the memory of saints and monasteries and prevent the emergence of suspicion in later generations. Oblivion resulted from the transience of the mortal’s memory and also the ‘enemy action’ which incited doubts and destroyed the records of the past.585 For him, the enemy was those Vikings, Normans or others who doubted the power of English saints or laid devastation of the monastic property, and this is probably why he recorded those miracles in which the infidels were specially punished.586 Again, this is the motivation

585 GP, I, ii. 95. 2, pp. 316-317: ‘Rumonus ibi sanctus predicatur et iacet episcopus, pulchritudine decoratus scrini, ubi nulla scriptorum fides assistit opinioni. Quod non solum ibi sed et in multis locis Angliae iuueniis, uiolentia (credo) hostiliitatis abolitam omnem gestorum notitiam, nuda tantum sanctorum nomina et si quae modo pretendunt miracula tantum scrii.’ (Rumon is celebrated there as holy and buried as a bishop. He has a beautiful shrine to distinguish him, but no written testimony to back up his reputation. You will find this in many other places in England as well: that, no doubt as a result of enemy action, all record of the past has been destroyed, leaving only the knowledge of the names of holy men and of any miracles they still perform.)
586 The traditional topic of the Norman scepticism and hostility against English saints has been argued to be a scholarly myth in the research field by Susan Ridyard, who suggested the ‘businesslike readiness’ of some Norman churchmen in taking advantage of those past heroes to serve the present. See S. J. Ridyard, ‘Condigna Veneratio: Post-Conquest Attitudes to the Saints of the Anglo-Saxons’, Anglo-Norman Studies, 9 (1987), p. 179; eadem, The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West
for his long journey across South England in the mid-1130s, and this time, he was protecting the memory of his own monastery and his most reverend hero, St Aldhelm, against Roger, bishop of Salisbury and possible future enemies who might likewise appropriate the rights of his monastery, or in other words, damage its monastic past and doubt their memory about the saint. Hence, written testimony was necessary to preserve the memory of both saints and monasteries against oblivion and other dangers. From this point of view, his devotion and piety were the basic forces prompting his mobility.

From all the above, no matter whether William was travelling in pursuit of knowledge or taking pilgrimage-like journeys, monastic devotion always seemed to be the underlying motivation or fundamental logic for his mobility, which shows his self-consciousness and spiritual commitment as a Benedictine monk. It was a basic lens for him to view the world and helped him to find his own position in it. Although the sponsorship of secular and ecclesiastical nobles, his occupation as cantor and librarian, and his concern for the liberty of his own monastery, all provided special motivations for his travels away from his abbey, and there might be some other unclear reasons or justifications for some specific journeys, he was always following the obedience and

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*Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 251. Similarly, for William, some Norman churchmen’s positive attitude towards English saints were a laudable thing, even though he had done wrong in other aspects. For example, although Ranulf Flambard was criticised bitterly by William many times, he was praised for his veneration for St Cuthbert at Durham. See *GP*, I, iii. 134. 4, pp. 418-419: ‘In edificiis autem nostris monachorum et translatione beatissimi Cuthberti nonnullam gloriam nominis suo commentus est. Extulit ergo eius famam sacri corporis elatio, quod e mausoleo levatum cunctis uolentibus fecit conspicuum.’ (But by the erection of new buildings for the monks and by his veneration for St Cuthbert he contrived some glory for his name. So his fame was heightened by the elevation of the holy body, which he took up from its tomb and put on view for all who wished to see it.)

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587 One may wonder if written testimony was another form of relics in William’s mind, for relics could be symbols of a community’s ownership of properties. Written records regarding St Aldhelm could work together with the physical relics at Malmesbury to defend the convent’s properties and rights. For the connection between relics and community properties, see D. Rollason, ‘The Wanderings of St Cuthbert’, in *Cuthbert: Saint and Patron*, ed. idem (Durham, 1987), pp. 53-57; P. J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990 [1978]), pp. 78-81; K. M. Craig, *Mobile Saints: Relic Circulation, Devotion, and Conflict in the Central Middle Ages* (London, 2021), pp. 161-182.
stability that were demanded by monastic rules: the obedience to superiors and rules, and the stability of spiritual devotion to God.588 His mobility was therefore not incompatible with his identity as monk, but even helped to strengthen his faith and show his devotion to God.

We are not claiming that monastic devotion was the only reason for William’s mobility, but it was certainly the most significant element in his multi-layered motivations and the underlying logic of his behaviour. He was obviously not alone in this aspect. Let us see, for example, how Osbern expressed his feelings when he visited the cell of St Dunstan at Glastonbury:

Miserum me ac peccatorem fateor inspexisse sanctum sessionis ipsius locum, vidisseque etiam manuum illius opera, peccatricibus manibus contractasse, oculis apposuisse, rigasse lacrymis et flexis genibus adorasse. Recordatus namque sum quam saepe clamantem me in periculis exaudierit, quam misericorditer auxiliatus fuerit, et idcirco neque lacrymis temperare, neque si fieri potuisset inde recedere volebam.

[I confess that as a wretched and sinful man, I have looked into the holy place of his sitting, and have also seen the works of his hands, which I touched with my sinful hands, observed with my sinful eyes, wetted with my sinful tears, and worshipped on my sinful knees. For I remembered how often he had heard me when I called upon him in danger, and how mercifully he had helped me, and therefore, I neither wished to restrain my tears, nor to leave the spot if it is possible.]589

Surely Osbern went to Glastonbury to collect information for his writings about the saint, but his strong emotion expressed in these words also made him look like a

588 For the discussion of monastic obedience and stability, see Leclercq, ‘Autour de la règle de saint Benoît’, pp. 199-203; Lawson, ‘Navigating Northumbria’, pp. 67-76.
589 Osbern, *Vita Sancti Dunstani*, c. 13, p. 84.
devotional pilgrim who was deeply moved at the sight of saintly relics and who desired to be cleansed from sin. From this point of view, the mobility of many other monks, whether pursuing knowledge or undertaking a pilgrimage, was understandable: they did not need to break the monastic rules, but may even have found various ways to fulfil those monastic ideals. There was never an insurmountable contradiction between an individual’s mobility and his identity as a monk. Therefore, if they wished it, more ordinary monks may have had opportunities to practise these ideas just like William. In this way, William was definitely not alone, and his mobility was not special.
Chapter Five

The Circulation of Knowledge with the Mobility of William of Malmesbury

So far we have focused on the physical mobility of William of Malmesbury, asserted monastic devotion as his underlying motivation and revealed his self-consciousness as a Benedictine monk during his travels. This last chapter, however, will discuss the circulation of knowledge facilitated by his mobility. The knowledge to which I am referring is not confined to written works and documents, but includes all sorts of ideas and information, such as oral accounts, news, impressions of physical monuments or even landscapes, no matter whether they were true, inaccurate hearsays, or merely fanciful rumours. In the medieval world, knowledge’s mobility heavily depended on its physical carriers, namely the movement of people; and books, manuscripts, or other kinds of information were spread by people’s mobility. For an individual engaging in such movement, we may expect that knowledge flows in two directions: he/she obtains materials and information from his/her interaction with the outside world, and meanwhile, he/she disseminates them to others. This is exactly what happened with William’s mobility. In addition, the communication achieved through mobility helps to build personal relationships and establish and maintain networks. In William’s case, his mobility led to the making of connections with both laymen and ecclesiastics, and knowledge circulated easily and frequently through these personal networks,

sometimes even beyond his own original expectations. From his mobility, together with other earlier or contemporary examples, it will be seen that monastic mobility had been, and still was, an important basis for the circulation of knowledge in the early twelfth century.

One important result of William’s mobility was the influx of many books and manuscripts into his own monastery. By 1125, when he had finished his first two long journeys, he had made much progress in enlarging his monastery’s library, which was a noble enterprise that he continued after the start made by Abbot Godfrey, and he especially mentioned his collections of foreign histories and chronicles ‘from far and wide’. The explosion of volumes in his library during his intellectually active lifetime was firstly reflected in those manuscripts which contained his handwriting:

591 GP, I, v. 271, 2, pp. 644-645: ‘Quod studium si predico, videor id quodam meo proprio iure facere, qui nullis maioribus in hoc presertim loco cesserim, immo, nisi quod dico iactantia sit, cunctos facile supergressus sim. Sit qui modo parta conseruet: ego ad legendum multa congessi, probitatem predicandi uiri in hoc dumtaxat emulatus. Ipsius ergo laudabili cepto pro uirili portione non defui. Vtinam sit qui labores nostros foueat!’ (If I single out this activity, I think I have every right to do so, for in this area especially I have been inferior to none of those who went before; indeed (if I can say this without boasting) I have easily surpassed them all. May there be someone to look after the present stock! I have collected much material for reading, approaching the prowess of my excellent predecessor at least in this respect; I have followed up his laudable start as best I could.)

(a) Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 361, s. XI, which is a continental copy of Gregory the Great’s *De cura pastorali*, and the hand that made some corrections and divided the work into three sections is believed to be William’s.593

(b) Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 330, c. 1000-1199, whose first part (fos. 1-87) is a copy of Martianus Capella’s *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* written in the early twelfth century by a Norman hand, together with interlinear and marginal glosses by William, while the second part (fos. 88-127) contains a commentary on Martianus by a certain Dunchad (ninth century) or Martin of Laon, made on the Continent in the late ninth century and brought to England before the end of the tenth.594 William probably acquired the two books at different times and bound them together after he had made glosses on the first one.595

(c) London, British Library Royal MS 5 F IV, s. XII, which contains William’s collection of Ambrose’s texts on virginity, with his corrections and annotations.596 Certain Norman or French palaeographical features suggest that it was probably written in the early twelfth century.597

(d) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. F. 3. 14, s. XII/3, probably before 1125, which is a collection of computistical treatises, including the works of Isidore, Bede, Helperic of Auxerre, Dionysius Exiguus, Paschasinus, Robert of Hereford, pseudo-

595 Ibid., pp. 81-82.
597 Ibid., p. 95.
Hyginus, and others, compiled under William’s supervision from several exemplars.598

(e) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson G. 139, c. 1120-1130, which is William’s collection of several classical works: Cicero’s *Partitiones oratoriae* and *De officiis*, pseudo-Quintilian’s *Declamationes Maiores*, and extracts from Aulus Gellius’ *Attic Nights*, heavily annotated by him; William was likely to have derived the works of Cicero and pseudo-Quintilian from two lost French exemplars.599

(f) Oxford, Lincoln College MS lat. 100, c. 1120-1130, which contains the Roman works of Vegetius, Frontinus, and Eutropius, compiled under William’s supervision or at his command.600

(g) Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 172, s. XII1, which is an autograph copy of his *GP*.601

(h) London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 224, s. XII-XIV, which is a collection of Anselm’s letters and treatises, made under William’s supervision.602 He might have continued his search for Anselm’s works after the making of its main part, probably until his death, resulting in the last item copied at his time, the *De Processione Spiritus*

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601 It was first argued by Hamilton to be William’s autograph, see Hamilton, ed., *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum*, pp. xi-xviii.
Sancti, not contained in the table of contents by his hand and ending incompletely. Its letter collection may not derive directly from the archive of Christ Church, Canterbury, but from Eadmer’s *Historia Novorum* and other two existing letter collections, that is London, British Library Royal MS 5 F IX, s. XII, and London, British Library Cotton MS Nero A VII, s. XI-XVI, or a copy of the latter one’s source.

(i) London, British Library Royal Appendix MS 85, s. XII-c. 1600, fos. 25-26, and Cambridge, Trinity College MS O. 5. 20 (1301), s. XII, pp. 1-256, which are two parts of William’s copy of the *Periphyseon* of John the Scot. He probably had access to two different exemplars, perhaps from the Continent, at different times, and the earlier one was incomplete.

(j) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Arch. Seld. B. 16, 1129, which is William’s collection of Roman history, mainly in his hand, containing Dares Phrygius, Orosius, Eutropius, Jordanes, Paul the Deacon, a summary of Hugh of Fleury’s *Historia Ecclesiastica* which was claimed to be a digest of Aimoin of Fleury, and the *Breviarium Alaricu*. It must have derived from several exemplars and have relied upon a rough draft of the whole as the basis.

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603 Ibid., p. 87.
604 See above, pp. 59-60, n. 169.
605 The manuscript from the British Library was a copy of the prefatory letter to Peter (presumably Peter the Abbot, 1141-1156), perhaps incomplete, and was separated from the main text of the *Periphyseon* in the seventeenth century. William’s hand was mainly witnessed in the Cambridge manuscript. See Warner and Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King’s Collections*, vol. II, p. 399; Jeanneau, ‘Guillaume de Malmesbury’, pp. 169-171; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 88-90.
606 Ibid., pp. 89-90.
607 Ker, ‘William of Malmesbury’s Handwriting’, pp. 373-374; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 90-91, 170-171. One passage on fol. 137 suggests that it was written in 1129: ‘Sicilia Sarracenis paruit usque abhinc xii. annos, quando eam Normanni subierunt, anno Dominicae Incarnationis millesimo centesimo minus xiii.’ (Sicily was ruled by the Muslims until forty-two years ago, when the Normans conquered the place in the year of 1087.)
(k) Oxford, Merton College MS 181, s. XII\textsuperscript{2/4}, which is a collection of commentaries on the Sapiential Books, including Bede on Proverbs, Jerome and Alcuin on Ecclesiastes, Origen (trans. Jerome), Honorious Augustodunensis, and Bede on the Song of Songs, and Paul the Deacon’s \textit{Vita Gregorii}, together with part of Eusebius’s \textit{Historia Ecclesiastica} (trans. Rufinus) on the binding-leaf in William’s formal hand.\footnote{Ibid., p. 91; R. M. Thomson, \textit{A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Merton College, Oxford} (Cambridge, 2009), p. 135.} His hand is also found in the corrections and notes elsewhere, and he is believed to have arranged and supervised the collection himself.\footnote{Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, pp. 91-92.}

(l) Oxford, Oriel College MS 42, s. XII\textsuperscript{1}, which consists of the \textit{Collectio Quesnelliana} of early Church councils and a collection of Leo the Great’s letters and sermons, totally organised and copied by William himself.\footnote{A. Chavasse, ed., \textit{Sancti Leonis Magni: Romani Pontificis Tractatus Septem et Nonaginta} (Turnhout, 1973), p. xxvii; Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, pp. 64-66, 95-96. It was first identified as William’s autograph by L. Minio-Paluello in 1952.} His annotation on fol. 10 confirmed his comparison between ‘ueltustissimus exemplaris’ (a very ancient copy) and some ‘nouelli exemplares’ (new copies).\footnote{Oxford, Oriel College MS 42, s. XII\textsuperscript{1}, fol. 10: ‘Sciendum est autem quod in nouellis exemplaribus desunt cxvi. capitula, sed iste codex transcriptus est ex uetustissimo exemplari. Quocirca de ueritate scriptorum nec in isto primo capitulo Nicenorum canonum nec in omnibus sequentibus aliquis dubitare debet licet aliter in nouellis exemplaribus inmniatur.’ (It should be noted, however, since there are 116 chapters missing in the new copies, that code was transcribed from the very ancient one. Therefore, one should not doubt the truth of the writings either in this first chapter of Nicaea canons, or in all the following chapters, although it may be found otherwise in the new copies.) This annotation is printed in Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, p. 65.} It is suggested that his old exemplar was Carolingian, probably related to German houses, while for the new exemplars, he was likely referring to some versions of the pseudo-Isidorean Decretals, especially the \textit{Collectio Lanfranci}, which was very common in early twelfth-century England.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 65-66, 130-132.}

(m) Cambridge, University Library MS II. 3. 20, s. XII\textsuperscript{2/4}, presumably late 1130s,
which is the only surviving manuscript of William’s *Defloratio Gregorii*, and was a clean copy written expressly for the local community, with corrections in his informal hand throughout the text, probably from the exemplar.\textsuperscript{614}

Apart from (g) and (m), the two copies of William’s own works, all the other eleven existing manuscripts are his collections of various texts, including theological works, classical and Late Antique writings, canon laws, histories and chronicles, computistical treatises, and other items. Even for (m), a collection of the works of Gregory the Great lies behind it, and (a) might be one of them. Moreover, it is certain that those manuscripts containing his own hand only reflect part of the vast collection he obtained for his monastery. Some early manuscripts at his monastery, which did not contain his hand or those of the scribes related to him, may also have been collected by him. For example, William may have brought a copy of a *Sylloge Inscriptionum* made for Bishop Milred of Worcester (745-775) probably from Worcester to his own monastery, which was a manuscript found and annotated by John Leland, though only a bifolium remains, namely Urbana, University of Illinois Library MS 128, s. X.\textsuperscript{615} We may expect that


there were quite a few other manuscripts obtained by him from other places, just like the Urbana manuscript, but which are now lost.

There is some evidence which suggests the existence of some of his lost collections. First of all, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lat. Class. d. 39, s. XII\textsuperscript{med}, which contained many continental materials, including Suetonius’s \textit{De vita Caesarum}, a \textit{Genealogia regum Francorum} from Faramund to Pippin II, the \textit{Annales Mettenses priores} from Pippin II to III, Einhart’s \textit{Vita Karoli, a Prosapia regum} from St Arnulf to Lothar I, the \textit{Visio Karoli Crassi}, extracts from Aulus Gellius’s \textit{Attic Nights}, and the poem \textit{Caesar tantus eras}, was supposed to be copied from one of William’s books, and he had annotated the text on the margins in the original version.\footnote{Tischler, \textit{Einharts Vita Karoli}, vol. II, pp. 1392-1402; Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, pp. 138-150, revised from idem, ‘William of Malmesbury’s Carolingian Sources’, \textit{Journal of Medieval History}, 7 (1981), pp. 322-332.} His exemplar for the \textit{Annales Mettenses priores} in particular was very likely to be a codex from Metz, probably the abbey of Saint-Arnould.\footnote{Tischler, \textit{Einharts Vita Karoli}, vol. II, p. 1401; Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, p. 144.} Second, his collection of Tertullian’s \textit{Apology} and works of Lactantius survives in two late copies, namely Oxford, Balliol College MS 79, s. XV\textsuperscript{med} and Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek Membr. I. 55, s. XV\textsuperscript{1}, and the original manuscript may have been copied from two separate exemplars and emended by him.\footnote{James, \textit{Two Ancient English Scholars}, pp. 20, 28; Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, p. 43. One exemplar of Tertullian seemed to be still at the Malmesbury Abbey in Leland’s time. The Balliol manuscript was copied for Bishop Gray in Cologne in the middle of the fifteenth century, and the Gotha manuscript was copied slightly earlier. See R. A. B. Mynors, \textit{Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College Oxford} (London, 1963), pp. 64-65.} The works of both writers were very rare in medieval England.\footnote{James, \textit{Two Ancient English Scholars}, p. 20; Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, p. 43.} Third, London, British Library Harley MS 3969, s. XIV\textsuperscript{1}, is a later copy of William’s lost collection of texts on grammar and orthography, containing the works of Cassiodorus,
pseudo-Caper, Agroecius, Alcuin, and Bede, and William was probably not the one who had organised the contents, but who recopied them directly from a pre-existing exemplar, similar to Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 221, s. IX-XI, which contains the same works but in a different order.\textsuperscript{620} Finally, probably the whole of the Cicero-collection in Cambridge, University Library MS Dd. 13. 2, 1444, derived from William’s own copy, and his enthusiasm for seeking out Cicero’s works was clearly reflected by the famous passage on fos. 111\textsuperscript{v}-112\textsuperscript{r}, which we have quoted at length at the very beginning of this dissertation.\textsuperscript{621}

It is impossible to determine where he obtained those books and manuscripts in most cases, but what can be certain is that he could not have remained in his own monastery, passively waiting for all these exemplars to be put in his hands. Sources were not simply ‘available’ to William, rather he must have recognised a need for them and sought them out, and, in such a process, his mobility certainly played an important role.\textsuperscript{622} Evidence shows that he examined the libraries and archives of many houses during his journeys and made use of the materials that attracted him, as reflected in allusions to the sources he used, or mentioned explicitly in his own works.\textsuperscript{623}


\textsuperscript{622} The subjective initiative of William’s obtaining and using his sources was noted by Thomson. See Thomson, \textit{William of Malmesbury}, p. 151.

\textsuperscript{623} Here is a short list of the libraries and archives that William may have examined: Canterbury, Bury St Edmunds, Winchester, Milton, Bath, Glastonbury, Athelney, Muchelney, Lewes, Gloucester, Oxford, Thorney, Metz, and Rheims. See Chapter 2 for the evidence for each place.
instance, he saw copies of B.’s *Life of St Dunstan* both at St Augustine’s, Canterbury and Bury St Edmunds, and he found a letter from Rodbod provost of Dol Cathedral, Brittany to King Æthelstan at the archive of Milton.\(^{624}\) He may have discovered many materials that suited his interests at Winchester, such as the correspondence between Hædde, bishop of the West Saxons (676-705), and St Aldhelm, materials related to the so-called ‘Dugdale Document’ about the history of Hyde Abbey now preserved in London, British Library Cotton MS Vespasian D IX, s. XVI\(^{med}\), and many writings of Godfrey, prior of Winchester (1082-1107).\(^{625}\) The library of the abbey of Glastonbury was also particularly praised by him.\(^{626}\) From this point of view, his bold statement that parts of Cicero’s *Academica*, and the whole of his *Hortensius* and *De Re Publica*, could not be found in England was certainly based on his frequent and widespread travels.\(^{627}\) It is even more natural to suppose that he did not only focus on Cicero, but also many more authors that intrigued him, and he was even probably ignorant of some works before he set out: his interest in various writings was continuously refreshed throughout

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\(^{624}\) See Chapter 2, Canterbury (1), Bury St Edmunds (6), and Milton (10).

\(^{625}\) For the letters, see *GP*, I, ii. 75. 10, pp. 252-253: ‘Vinde non paruo moueor scrupulo, quippe qui legerim eius formales epistolae non nimis indocte compositas, et Aldelmi ad eum scripta, maximam uim eloquentiae et scientiae redolentia.’ (That judgement troubles me not a little, for I have read official letters of his [i. e. Hædde’s] which are not unlearned, and writings addressed by Aldhelm to him which are in the highest degree eloquent and erudite.) Yet at least one letter thought by William to be written from Aldhelm to Hædde, quoted in c. 195 of the *GP*, was indeed to his predecessor Leuthere (670-676), see R. Ehwald, ed., *Aldhelm Opus* (Berlin, 1919), p. 475, n. 1; M. Lapidge and M. Herren, trans., *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Ipswich, 1979), p. 137. For the material related to the ‘Dugdale Document’, see *GP*, II, p. 116. For Godfrey’s writings, see *GR*, I, iv. 444. 1, pp. 794-795: ‘Litteraturam protestantur libri plures, et epistolae familiaris illo et dulci stilo editae, maximeque epigrammata quae satirico modo absolvit, prererea uersus de primatum Angliae laudibus. Quid? omne diuinum offitiu, quod agresi quadam uetustate obsoletum per industriam suam natiuam uenustur et antiquitas uersus eximius? ’ (As evidence of his gifts we have his many books, and his letters written in an intimate and delightful style; above all, the epigrams written by him in satiric mood, and his poem in praise of the primates of England. Still more, the whole Divine Office, which had become a kind of rustic survival, was by his energy developed in its natural beauty, and given a new brilliance.) Similarly in *GP*, I, ii. 77. 3, pp. 272-273.

\(^{626}\) *GP*, I, ii. 91. 2, pp. 308-309: ‘tanta librorum pulchritudo et antiquitas exuberat’ (such is the beauty and antiquity of its rich library).

\(^{627}\) See Introduction, p. 1.
his journeys, hence resulting in the vast range of his collection. As for the frequent contributions from Continental exemplars in the making of his own collection, he may have acquired many of them from some English houses that had strong bibliographical links with their counterparts on the Continent, such as Canterbury, Salisbury, and Exeter, which had certainly been visited by him. He must, however, have also obtained some exemplars directly from the Continental houses, since we have pointed out the existence of his at least two Continental tours. As a result, by the time he was compiling his PH in the 1130s, he was very proud of the vast collection of books at his monastery library and recommended both pagan and Christian writings zealously to his fellow monks, which was an achievement only made possible by his wide travels.

The books and manuscripts that William collected were the most important basis for his own writings, but it is noteworthy that other forms of knowledge, which he obtained during his travels, were also preserved in his narratives. Although he sometimes relied on written sources to form his own descriptions of topography and physical monuments, observing and sightseeing still mattered a great deal to him during his travels and became the direct sources for some of his writings. Many of his

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629 See William’s first two long journeys in Chapter 3.
630 PH, i. 9, p. 37: ‘sed ego de illis solis loquor quorum possession glorio…’ (but I mention those books alone, for I am proud that they are in our possession); i. 14-16, p. 37: ‘Veruntamen ne quibusdam relationibus quas gentiles suis inserunt scriptitis fraudareris non solum de illis sed et de Christianis quedam collegi’ (Still, lest you should be deprived of certain narratives which the heathens introduce into their writings, I have collected, not out of them only, but also out of Christian books).
631 Both Kynan-Wilson and Mereminskiy noted William’s heavy dependence on textual sources when it comes to topography and Roman ruins, but their arguments were mainly focusing on his narratives of the North. See Kynan-Wilson, ‘Mira Romanorum artifitia’, pp. 35-49; Mereminskiy, ‘William of Malmesbury and Durham’, pp. 107-116. William’s observation and eye-witnessing were emphasised by other scholars. See Gransden, ‘Realistic Observation in Twelfth-Century England’, p. 34; idem,
narratives on the topography in South and Middle England did not depend on the writings of others, but were based on his own observation.\footnote{Historical Writing in England c. 550–c. 1307, p. 174; Wright, ‘The Soil’s Holy Bodies’, pp. 664-665.} For example, he provided the most ‘extended and lyrical description’ of the landscape around Gloucester, mentioning crops, roads, fruits, and even the taste of wines, and his vivid depiction of the Severn Bore could only have derived from his own careful observation.\footnote{GP, II, p. 202. For William’s long and detailed description of the topography of Gloucester, see GP, I, iv. 153. 2-4, pp. 444-447; Chapter 2, Gloucester (31).} He was also impressed by the topography of the Fenlands, describing it at length when he was writing about Crowland, Soham, Ely, and Thorney.\footnote{See Chapter 2, Crowland (42), Soham (43), Ely (44), and Thorney (45).} The special local products and the newly-built Stuntney causeway, which provided a convenient land route to reach the island of Ely, were particularly mentioned by him.\footnote{See Chapter 2, Soham (43) and Ely (44).} Moreover, he was interested in the physical monuments that he encountered during his travels and added their descriptions to his writings, from huge ruins to small caskets, from the remains representing earthly vicissitudes to marks of heavenly power.\footnote{See Chapter 4, p. 181.} On the one hand, a great part of the remains he discovered on his trips were the perfect confirmation of past events, supporting what he may have read in written records. In this way, the ship remains at Rouen confirmed the failed invasion of England probably after Easter 1033 by Robert I, duke of Normandy, which he might have learned from the writings of William of Jumièges, while the vestiges of steep ditches at Hereford and the stone inscription at Shaftesbury was a witness to the ancient history of these cities.\footnote{See Chapter 2, Shaftesbury (11), Hereford (35) and Rouen (49). For the accounts of William of Jumièges, see GVD, II, vi. 9 (10), pp. 76-79.}
other hand, the stone crosses on the road between Doulting and Malmesbury, marking the profusion of St Aldhelm’s miracles, and the silver casket keeping the arm of St Augustine of Hippo at Coventry, became the visible tokens of the saints’ power and God’s favour.638 As we have argued in Chapter Four, these physical monuments bear special meanings and become both informing and edifying knowledge preserved in William’s writings.639 In particular, he paid special attention to the church buildings at different places that he visited, commenting on their structures, decorations and overall style, providing a vivid picture of the contemporary religious reality for his monastic audience.640

More importantly, William liked to have conversations with others during his journeys, collecting many oral accounts and information for his writings from different regions. In the prologue of the third book of his *GP*, William particularly noted that he would write down what he had learned about the bishops of York, either from ‘the accounts (relatio) of our elders’ or ‘by turning the pages of books’.641 The juxtaposition of these two phrases obviously demonstrated William’s two important sources – oral accounts and written records. There is plenty of evidence which shows that much of the information he obtained and inserted into his writings came from various conversations during his travels. Ecclesiastics from the host communities along the road were a great,

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638 See Chapter 2, Doulting (19) and Coventry (37).
639 See Chapter 4, pp. 181-182.
640 Here is a list of the places where he may have seen various church buildings with his own eyes, and commenting on them in his writings: Canterbury, London, Norwich, Winchester, Sherborne, Langton (near Corfe), Frome and Bradford-on-Avon, Bruton, Salisbury, Athelney, Tewkesbury, Hereford, and Thorney. See Chapter 2 for the evidence for each place.
641 *GP*, I, iii. 99. prol. 7, pp. 326-327: ‘Dicam igitur in hoc libro, qui tertius est Pontificalium Gestorum, quicquid se de pontificibus Eboracensis notitiae nostrae uel maiorum relatione uel librorum reuolutione infudit.’ Here William was clearly using ‘relatio’ to specially refer to oral accounts, see also Chapter 3, p. 110, n. 355.
perhaps the biggest, group of William’s informants. This is understandable, because he
must have had access to the hospitality of those monasteries during his journeys. 642 At
Christ Church, Canterbury, he talked with Eadmer, Alexander, and probably a third
monk, respectively, about the stories of St Anselm and Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII),
the latter of which were originally told by Hugh of Cluny, and a miracle of St Dunstan
saving a thief from death. 643 At Worcester, Nicholas the prior (c. 1113-1124) provided
William with many stories about Wulfstan and, as a result, he believed that Nicholas
would have been a more suitable person to write Wulfstan’s biography, rather than
Coleman, Wulfstan’s chaplain, who wrote a Life in English. 644 There he also saw
Wulfstan’s tomb and heard from other monks the interesting nickname of ‘spiders’ webs’
for the iron grilles over it. 645 At least three more priors also told him about different
miracles – Walcher of Malvern about a dead abbot at Fulda, Guimund of Oxford about
St Mary’s help on the sea, and an anonymous prior of Crowland about the miracles of
Earl Waltheof. 646 He might even have had a dispute over the resting place of Daniel,
bishop of Winchester (c. 705-744), with the monks at Winchester, who alleged that they

642 Medieval monasteries were usually supposed to provide reception and lodging for both lay and
clerical visitors. The RB supplied a detailed regulation about receiving guests, see RB, c. 53, pp. 172-175.
See also Ohler, The Medieval Travellers, pp. 82-85; Luckhardt, The Charisma of Distant Places, p. 138;
himself mentioned explicitly the hospitality of some monasteries, for instance, Reading and Lewes,
which was nearly certain to result from his own delighted stay at those communities. See Chapter 2,
Reading (16) and Lewes (24).
643 See Chapter 2, Canterbury (1), and Chapter 3, pp. 109-111. From the case of Alexander, it is natural
to assume that William may be told much by Eadmer and Alexander about their travels.
644 VW, iii. 17. 2, pp. 132-133: ‘Porro Nicholaus Wlstani dicta et facta referre uoluptati habebat, in hoc
fortasse culpandus quod uitam eius stilo non commisit.’ (Further, Nicholas loved to tell over the doings
and sayings of Wulfstan, and could perhaps be criticized for not writing his biography.) For the
information provided by Nicholas, see VW, iii. 9. 2-3, 10. 3, 13, 17. 1-2, pp. 118-123, 126-127, 132-133.
One chapter in the GP may also originate from Nicholas’ narration, see GP, I, iv. 148, pp. 436-439.
645 See Chapter 2, Worcester (30).
646 See Chapter 2, Malvern (33), Oxford (39), and Crowland (42).
possessed his remains without providing any solid proof.647

Many conversations took place between William and his hosts during his stay in different monasteries and churches, and he also seemed to enjoy interacting with common people when he was on the road. One good example is his conversation with some Anglo-Saxon sailors about the Severn Bore near the Foreign Bridge at Gloucester. He certainly observed some ‘canny sailers’ handling the wild water, and he was very likely on the boat himself. He learned from them that the Old English name for the strong tide there was ‘eagre’.648 In addition, a native of Exeter told him about the ‘numerous reminders of Æthelstan’, and others at Chester provided him with certain special details of one miracle of St Wærburh.649 The above three examples all took place before 1125, while in the mid-1130s, he heard from the locals at Doulting about the story of St Aldhelm’s death at the local wooden church, which had been rebuilt in stone by the time of William’s visit.650

647 GP, I, ii. 75. 12, pp. 252-253: ‘Postmodum, ut uiuacem senectam sancto consummaret otio, uiuens honorem exuit, Melduni, quantumi uixit, monachum exercens, ut fert fama sinceriter ad nos per
successiones manans. Ibidemque sepultus asseueratur, quanuis Wintonienses eum apud se haberi contendant, nec eius mausoleum uel uere uel suspitiose ostender e preualeant.’ (Later, so that he could crown a green old age with a period of holy leisure, he gave up his office while yet living, and until his death was a monk at Meldunum, according to a genuine report that has percolated to us down the generations. And they say he is buried there too, though the monks of Winchester claim they possess him, without being able to show any tomb, genuine or even alleged.) It is interesting to note that in William’s words, the saying of monks at Malmesbury was ‘a genuine report’, while the monks of Winchester could not provide any solid proofs. Yet it may be that neither side could supply any decisive evidence, a fact which was pointed out by Thomson and Winterbottom in GP, II. p. 105. This passage showed again the image of William as an energetic advocate on behalf of his own monastery, which accorded with his continuously active role in defending the right of free election of the abbot of Malmesbury, as we have demonstrated in the previous chapters. Since he must have visited Winchester, such a dispute between him and monks there is very plausible.

648 GP, I, iv. 153. 4, pp. 446-447: ‘Naute certe gnari, cum uident illam higram (sic enim Anglice uocant)
uenire, nauem obuertunt, et per medium secantes uiolentiam eius eludunt.’ (Indeed canny sailers, when they see the ‘eagre’ (that is the English name) coming, turn their ship to face it; by cutting through the middle they can frustrate its force.) William must be good at Old English, for one of his parents was English, and he also translated the Old English Life by Coleman.

649 See Chapter 2, Exeter (23) and Chester (36).

650 GP, I, v. 228. 1, pp. 572-573: ‘Domus obitus eius conscia {{main text of A and the abbreviation of B}
in aeclesiam mutata / [supplement in A] lignea erat aeclesia, in quam se ultimum spirans inferri iussit, ut ibi potissimum efflaret, scit incolae hodie per succiduas generationes asseuerant.’ (The building
William’s conversations with various people during his travels gave him access to a great deal of knowledge which he could not have obtained through written records, though he did not always point out how he had received this knowledge in his own writings. One bad effect, however, was that it opened the door for inaccurate or even plainly false information entering his works. If we can note other earlier writings which contained the same mistakes as William’s, it is natural to assume that he might have derived the knowledge from them or other common sources, or, if not, it is very likely to have come from hearsay. This is most explicitly reflected in his knowledge of the North of England. In Chapter Three, we have maintained that William’s transcription of the Carlisle inscription is inaccurate and partial, and that his knowledge of the distance between Hexham and York is completely wrong. His description of the topography of Durham was also heavily dependent on an Old English poem, and his only unique information, which is that the local peasants fed pigs with discarded salmon, seemed to be a perfect example of hearsay. These pieces of inaccurate information probably came from his contact with some locals or monks at York, and he did not have a chance to tour these places so as to realise these mistakes. Similarly, some of his knowledge about the Roman history of the places he visited is problematic as well.

When he was discussing the origins of the name of Chester, he borrowed its title

where he died ([(main text of A and the abbreviation of B) was changed into a church / [supplement in A] was a wooden church, to which he had himself carried as he was breathing his last, so that he could die there and nowhere else; this is what the locals even today affirm, for the story had come down the ages); ibid.: ‘[(main text of A) Hanc quidam Glestoniensis monachus a solo refectam dum in Dei faceret consecrari fabricam / [after revision] Hanc dum quidam Glestoniensis monachus ex lapide refectam in Dei faceret consecrari nomine’ ([(main text of A) The church was rebuilt from the bottom by a monk of Glastonbury, and he had the building consecrated to God / [after revision] Later the church was rebuilt in stone by a monk of Glastonbury, who then had it consecrated in the name of God].

651 See Chapter 3, pp. 117-120.
652 See Chapter 3, pp. 121-122.
‘Legionum Ciuitas’ (the City of Legions) from Bede, but added his own glossing that it was because ‘the discharged soldiers of the Julian legions were settled there’. No legions were known to bear this name, and William probably meant ‘legions of Julius Caesar’, though it is incorrect as well, for Chester was not in Roman hands in Caesar’s lifetime, and he had never been there. He also wrongly made Caesar the conqueror of Britain and the ruler who first exploited the hot springs at Bath, since Caesar failed to bring Britain directly under his rule and he was never in Bath. The word ‘creditur’ that he used probably reflected a local tradition at Bath of attributing the springs to Caesar. It might also be the case with these other mistakes concerning Caesar, that William was probably influenced by popular beliefs on his journey. Moreover, his erroneous description of the relationship between Alcuin and Cormery Abbey in both the marginal notes of the original manuscript of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lat. Class. d. 39, s. XIImed, and the supplements in the B version of his GR, is not found in any other known written source, suggesting its origin probably from oral communication, presumably in the mid-1130s.

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653 GP, I, iv. 172. 4, pp. 466-467: ‘Cestra Legionum Ciuitas dicitur, quod ibi emeriti legionum Iulianarum resedere.’ HE, ii. 2, p. 140: ‘Ciuitatem Legionum’. William also named Chester in this way several times in the GR, see GR, I, i. 47. 3, 101, ii. 133. 1, 148. 2, iii. 300. 3, pp. 64, 146, 210, 238, 536.

654 GP, II, p. 220.

655 GR, I, i. 1. 1, pp. 16-17: ‘Britanniam, per Iulium Cesarem in Latias leges iurare compulsam’ (Britain was compelled to accept the rule of Rome under Julius Caesar). GP, I, ii. 90. 2, pp. 306-307: ‘in qua balnearum calidarum latex emergens auctorem Iulium Cesarem habuisse creditur.’ (The springs supplying the hot baths here are said to have been exploited first by Julius Caesar.)

656 GP, II, p. 220.

657 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lat. Class. d. 39, s. XIImed, fol. 147, quoted from Thomson, William of Malmesbury, p. 140: ‘In Gallia monasterium sancti Pauli Cormaricense de medietate possessionum quas habebant canonici de sancto Martino, hortante Alcuino, unde hodieque pro anima ipsius Alcuini fiunt ibidem elemosine multe cotidie.’ (In Gaul, half of the property of the monastery of St Paul of Cormery were brought from the canons of St Martin, encouraged by Alcuin, where many daily alms take place for his soul even today.) GR, I, i. 66B, pp. 820-821: ‘Iacet in Frantia apud Sanctum Paulum de Cormario, quod cenobium Karolus Magnus eius consilio construxit; unde hodieque quattuor monachorum uictus et potus pro eiusdem Alcwinii anima cotidianae infertur elemosinae in eadem ecclesia.’ (He lies in France at St Paul’s Cormery, a house built by Charlemagne on his advice. That is why even today in that church
William surely did not believe in everything he heard during his travels, however, and he sometimes showed his caution about relying on hearsay and possible rumours. The best example is his attitude towards the relics of St Oswald. He heard that the uncorrupted arm of the saintly king was brought from its old resting place, Bamburgh, to Peterborough and kept there, which information he probably obtained when he was visiting other houses in the Fenlands. Yet he only had learned from Bede that the relics were placed in a shrine by the king’s brother Oswiu at Bamburgh, and he had not been to either Bamburgh or Peterborough, hence remaining hesitant in stating it as true. More interestingly, his explanation for his own hesitation on this issue emphasised the testament of eyewitnesses rather than hearsay, and that he would always ‘put a lower value on mere rumour’. For the interesting information which he heard but was uncertain about, he usually preserved it in his narratives, though he did not vouch for its accuracy. This is also reflected by his words regarding the stories of Earl

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foot and drink for four monks are distributed as daily alms for the soul of Alcuin.) William’s characterisation of St Martin’s community as canonici, and that Alcuin founded Cormery and was buried there, was problematic. The errors in these two notes were pointed out by Thomson, ‘William of Malmesbury’s Carolingian Sources’, p. 326; idem, William of Malmesbury, p. 142. Since we have argued in Chapter 3 that William made a long journey across South England in the mid-1130s, it is likely that he obtained the wrong information about Alcuin from hearsay during this journey.

658 GP, I, iv. 180. 3, pp. 482-483: ‘Ornat sodalitatem virginum, ut predicant, rex sanctus Oswaldus, cuius ibi brachium haberi dicunt, neruis cute carne integrum, ab anti qua requietionis sede furtim allatum. Daturque ostentui magno scrinium, illius thesauri receptaculum.’ (An ornament of this company of virgins, as they say, is Oswald, saint and king, whose arm is said to be kept there, brought in secret from its old resting place, with sinews, skin, and flesh intact. Much is made of the shrine that contains this treasure.)

659 HE, iii. 6, pp. 230-231: ‘Denique in urbe regia, quae a regina quondam uocabulo Bebba cognominatur, loculo incuse argenteo in ecclesia sancti Petri seruantur ac digno a cunctis honore uenerantur.’ (They are in fact preserved in a silver shrine in St Peter’s church, in the royal city which is called after Queen Bebba [Bamburgh] and are venerated with fitting respect by all.) William referred to Bede’s accounts on St Oswald’s relics in GR, I, i. 49. 7, pp. 72-73: ‘teste ueraci historico’ (as the truthful historian affirms).

660 GP, I, iv. 180. 3, pp. 482-483: ‘sed fides dictorum uacillat ubi nichil auditor uisu explorat.’ (but the truth of words is in doubt where the hearer cannot use sight to test them). GR, I, i. 49. 7, pp. 72-75: ‘Si quid ali quoribosiographi temere sunt professi, ipsi uidetur; michi fama ulius constet, ne quicquam nisi absoluta fide dignum pronuntiem.’ (If other historians have committed themselves, I leave that to them, hoping that I shall always put a lower value on mere rumour, and set down nothing except what deserves complete acceptance.)
Waltheof told to him by the monks at Crowland. He continued to use words, ‘aiunt’ (they say) and ‘dicebat’ (he said), to stay a safe distance from an outright acceptance of these accounts, though he hoped that the whole story was true. Clearly, he did not find the words of the prior of Crowland and his fellow monks entirely convincing, even though he reported that the story came from ‘Englishmen of the highest trustworthiness’. In this way, we may expect that just like his subjective initiative in recognising and obtaining written materials, he was also selective in recording the oral information he encountered during his trips.

His mobility therefore helped him to collect knowledge from all these places outside of his own monastery, whether in the form of written materials, oral accounts, impressions of landscapes, or the sight of physical monuments. Codices and manuscripts were brought to his abbey and its library was greatly enriched, while some written records and other sources of knowledge were selected, and then preserved in his own writings. Most importantly, the knowledge he collected was neither useless nor without any influence in his monastery, nor was it overlooked like forgotten goods in a warehouse, but was frequently accessed by his fellow monks. As we have shown in Chapter Four, all the books and manuscripts that he had collected were beneficial for the monastic soul, and as the librarian and cantor of his abbey, he was enthusiastic in recommending the collections in their library to his fellow monks so that they could learn to establish a good life.

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661 *GP*, I, iv. 182. 4-6, pp. 486-489: ‘quae utinam a ueritate non dissideat’.
662 *GP*, I, iv. 182. 5, pp. 486-487: ‘Angli plurimum ueritate prestantes’. Presumably, William was referring to other English nobles or ecclesiastics other than the monks of Crowland alone.
663 See Chapter 4, pp. 176-180.
Malmesbury Abbey and its patron St Aldhelm also helped the monks to acquire a more sound knowledge of the history of their monastery, and promoted their campaign in restoring its ancient rights and liberty. His fellow monks should have always been able to access his various works as long as there were copies in their library, no matter whether they were religious works or his most historical work, *GR*. In this way, his mobility helped to collect different forms of knowledge from various places outside his monastery, and then contributed to its dissemination in his own abbey.

The influx and dissemination of knowledge in his own monastery was only in one direction, but it is almost certain that his mobility contributed to the circulation of his own works in a direct way, for he was very likely to carry some copies, showing them to his host communities or even donating them, though it is nearly impossible for us to recover most details of such activities. The portable size of the manuscript *A* of the *GP*, namely the Magdalen manuscript (106 folios, overall measuring 175 mm × 130mm) raises the possibility of William carrying it during his travels after 1125. This not only means that he would have been able to add information which he had just obtained when it was possible, but also that he may have shown the manuscript to others, or even let the host monastery make extracts from it, or copy it entirely, if he was not in haste. If he wanted to write something new on the manuscript, he had to get help from the host monasteries with the support of writing facilities probably at the scriptorium, which might be an occasion when certain local monastic scholars showed interest in his work.

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664 See Chapter 4, pp. 157-158.
665 As we have argued in the previous chapter, history is a beneficial subject in particular for inculcating a good way of life. See Chapter 4, pp. 178-180.
particularly when he had discovered some interesting documents which he was allowed to borrow and take away. Monks, who were in charge of libraries and archives and lent materials to William, were probably the most likely group of people to be interested in William’s writings. Perhaps he was even asked by them to perform or recite part of his GP or his other works to the community, in the same way that Gerald of Wales gave a public recitation of his Topographia Hibernica on successive days at Oxford in the late twelfth century. At least Worcester Cathedral Priory showed its interest in the GP immediately, for a copy was received shortly after 1125, and used by an anonymous local chronicle and John of Worcester. Considering our suggestion that William spent some time at Worcester finishing his VW in c. 1126, it is very likely that William himself took the copy to Worcester, probably the Magdalen manuscript itself as the exemplar to be copied there. Thus, it is possible to suggest that the knowledge which was contained in the GP circulated to Worcester. For example, John of Worcester’s original text simply claimed that Daniel, bishop of Winchester, retired in 744 and died in 745, based on the ASC, but his text was later supplemented with information from William’s GP, making Daniel a monk of Malmesbury after his retirement and noting his burial there, though he also mentioned Winchester’s claim just as William did.

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666 William’s visit to Milton in the mid-1130s might be such an occasion. Perhaps he inserted Provost Rodbod’s letter into his Magdalen manuscript as soon as he found it in Milton’s archive.


668 For the use of the earliest GP in the local chronicle and John of Worcester’s writing, see GP, II, p. xlviii; JW, p. bxxi.

669 See Chapter 1, pp. 39-40.

670 ASC, pp. 46-47; GP, I, ii. 75. 12, pp. 252-253; JW, II, pp. 192-195. John borrowed the following words directly from the GP (only with a change of conjugation): ‘Melduni, quantum uixit, monachum
John may even have extracted some problematic information from the *GP*, including an inaccurate list of the bishops of Selsey, and that Trumhere, bishop of Mercia (c. 658-c. 662), was made to succeed on Ceollach’s death, not his resignation. Apart from the *GP*, William may also have brought with him a copy of his *Liber Pontificalis* when visiting Worcester before 1125 or in c. 1126, hence the fact that the collection was used by John, and part of it was transmitted in Cambridge, University Library MS Kk. 4. 6, s. XII, which also bears John’s hand. In addition, we know that there were two copies of William’s *GR* at Glastonbury, one of which seemed to be a latest recension of the C version. This copy was likely to have been brought by William to Glastonbury in the mid-1130s when he was travelling across Southern England, or perhaps given by him to Bishop Henry of Blois when he was visiting Winchester, and then taken to Glastonbury by Henry. It is possible that the other copy, probably an earlier version of the A recension, was also brought by William when he was working at Glastonbury between c. 1127 and 1130, but Henry might have taken it from Winchester as well after he became the bishop there.

Our knowledge of William’s direct involvement in disseminating his works through his travels is limited and depends on much conjecture, but it would be natural

exercuvaret… ibidemque seputus asseueratur quanuis Wintonienses eum apud se haberi contendant.’ As a result, John’s version became a combination of the sayings in the *ASC* and the *GP*.

671 *JW*, II, p. lxx, n. 42. The list of Selsey bishops were added by John into his text in the entry for the year of 795, probably from *GP*, I, ii. 96. 3, p. 320. John’s supplement that Trumhere became the bishop after the death of Ceollach may be an inference from *GP*, I, iv. 172. 2, p. 466.


674 There was a copy of the A version at Winchester shortly after 1125, namely London, British Library Arundel MS 35, s. XII, which generated no fewer than four twelfth-century copies. See *GR*, I, pp. xv-xvi; Tahkokallio, *The Anglo-Norman Historical Canon*, p. 26.
and highly possible to assume that he was active in this regard. The difficulty is that William must have also frequently relied on others, monks or lay brothers, for sending out copies of his books, and we usually cannot make a clear distinction between William and his couriers’ efforts. For example, it is very likely that another monk of Malmesbury was responsible for carrying a copy of the T version of the _GR_ to King David and Empress Matilda in late 1126/27, and begging the Empress to grant the community’s requests concerning the free election of their own abbot. It is impossible, however, to know whether William accompanied him for part of the journey. Lay brothers of Malmesbury Abbey might also have been commissioned to send copies to other convents, just as was seen in their role delivering mortuary rolls, the preparation of which was usually a task of monastic librarians. Nevertheless, we may be able to...

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675 This messenger was mentioned in both letters to David and Matilda. See _GR_, I, Ep. i. 7, pp. 4-5: ‘non indignanter obaudiatis et muneris nostri latorem apud imperatricem regali cura commendetis’ (and also with kingly forethought to recommend to the empress the bearer of our gift); Ep. ii. 7, pp. 8-9: ‘Preterea quae ubis per libri latorem mandamus, pro anima matris uestrae et antecessorum uestrorum omnium, imperialiter audite, et nobis misericordiam impendere curate’ (Lend your imperial ear, furthermore, for the sake of the souls of your mother and all your predecessors, to the requests which we make by the bearer of the book, and do not forget to show us compassion). This messenger was more likely to be a monk so as to petition David and Matilda to help his monastery.

676 The roll-bearer was called a _breviator_ or _brevicularius_. Late medieval _breviatores_ were usually not monks and could be employed by several monasteries, but we know nothing about their counterparts in the twelfth-century England, who may be monks or not. The preparation of a mortuary roll was usually the responsibility of the librarian or cantor, who was in charge of the scriptorium. See J. Stiennon, ‘Routes et courants de culture. Le rouleau mortuaire de Guifred, comte de Cerdagne, moine de Saint-Martin du Canigou († 1049)’, _Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale_, 76: 68 (1964), p. 305; J.-C. Kahn, _Les moines messagers: la religion, le pouvoir et la science saisis par les rouleaux des morts XIe-XIIe siècles_ (Paris, 1987), Kindle edition, Introduction; J. Dufour, ed., _Recueil des rouleaux des morts (VIIIe siècle-vers 1536)_ , vol. I (Paris, 2005), pp. vii-ix; idem, ‘Rouleaux et brefis mortuaires’, in _Dynamiques sociales au Moyen Âge, en Occident et en Orient_ , ed. É. Malamut (Aix-en-Provence, 2010), pp. 27-31; L. Rollason, ‘Medieval Mortuary Rolls: Prayers for the Dead and Travel in Medieval England’, _Northern History_, 48: 2 (2011), pp. 187-223. Three extant mortuary rolls involved the Malmesbury Abbey in the early twelfth century, namely the rolls of Saint Bruno the Carthusian (1101/02), Matilda abbess of La Trinité, Caen (1113/14), and Vitalis of Savigny (1123/24). See L. Déisle, ed., _Rouleaux des morts du IXe au XIe siècle_ (Paris, 1866), n. 31, 36, 38, pp. 161, 193, 329; Dufour, ed., _Recueil des rouleaux des morts_, vol. I, n. 105, 114, 122, pp. 335-336, 409, 572; H. Beyer, G. Signori, and S. Steckel, eds., _Bruno the Carthusian and his Mortuary Roll: Studies, Texts, and Translations_ (Turnhout, 2014), n. 145, pp. 253-254. William may have seen the making of the Malmesbury _titulus_ in the roll of Vitalis, though his hand was not witnessed in it. After he became the librarian and cantor, he must have organised the preparation of some mortuary rolls for his own monastery and worked with his own _breviator_, monk or lay brother, for circulating them.
consider the influence of his mobility on the circulation of his writings in an indirect way. His travels helped him to build and maintain connections with secular and ecclesiastical people, and knowledge could easily circulate through these personal networks, and, naturally, in two directions (from William to others, and vice versa), whether by his own efforts or those of the couriers.

William’s various journeys laid the foundations for his network whose main component was the religious communities with which he was familiar and with which he enjoyed friendly relationships. William’s close connections with some of these houses can be most obviously detected in the frequency of his visits. The first was the church of Glastonbury, which he had certainly visited at least twice. He suggested his close relationship with its community in the *VD*, where he described himself as an ‘alumnus’ of Glastonbury, and there he professed his heavenly service, whilst both in the *AG* and *VD*, he was a ‘son’ of the church and the monks’ ‘servant’, ‘brother’, and ‘son’. This probably means that William was a *confrater* of the Glastonbury community, since the institution of confraternity was common in England at that time. He must have used the rich library and enjoyed the friendship of the monks there before 1125. The monks of Glastonbury provided the impetus for five of his later

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677 See Chapter 2, Glastonbury (18); Chapter 3, p. 147; Chapter 5 (the present chapter), p. 216. William visited the Glastonbury Abbey at least once before 1125, probably no fewer than twice between c. 1127 and 1130, and perhaps one more time in the mid-1130s.


works \((AG, VD, VP, VB\) and \(VI\), as a part of their enterprise to use literature in order to
‘prove’ the abbey’s long and holy tradition.\(^{680}\) More importantly, with the writing of
these works, William seemed to have built a close relationship with Henry of Blois,
who was abbot of Glastonbury from 1125, bishop of Winchester from 1129, and papal
legate between 1139 and 1143.

The second was Worcester Cathedral Priory, where he had also been at least
twice.\(^{681}\) He might have been a *confrater* there as well, just as with Glastonbury.\(^{682}\) He
certainly spent much time there, and this may have formed the basis of his friendship
with two priors, Nicholas and Warin, John the historian, and an old monk called Eadric,
who was a scribe.\(^{683}\)

The third monastic community with which William had a strong bond was Christ

\(^{680}\) For the crucial development of Glastonbury’s reputation in the twelfth century and the reasons why
the monks wanted to use literature to increase the abbey’s reputation, see A. Gransden, ‘The Growth of
the Glastonbury Traditions and Legends in the Twelfth Century’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 27:

\(^{681}\) See Chapter 2, Worcester (30); Chapter 3, p. 147.

\(^{682}\) Possible evidence for William’s status as a *confrater* may be his mention that the Worcester monks
should sacrifice to God on behalf of him as many days as he had spent on writing the biography of
Wulfstan, see *VW*, iii. 29. 3, pp. 154-155: ‘Par ergo erit erit, post huius animae corporisque discidium,
totidem diebus pro me Deo imnoletis hostias quot noctium ego Wlstano consecraui excubias.’ (So it will
be commensurate if, after the separation of this body from this soul, you should sacrifice to God on my
behalf on as many days as I have spent wakeful nights on Wulfstan.) Also, in the first prologue of *VW*,
he mentioned his brotherly bond with the monks, see *VW*, i. prol. 3, pp. 12-13: ‘munus quod fraterna
necessitudo imponit’ (a task imposed on me by ties of brotherhood).

\(^{683}\) William spent about six weeks finishing his *VW*, see *VW*, iii. 29. 3, p. 154. Taking the time of
preparation for *VW* into consideration, adding his efforts for collecting materials for other works, he
definitely spent much time there. His friendship with Warin was proved by the fact that he had received
the order from Warin to set his hand on a Life of St Wulfstan for a long time when he was writing the
prologue of the *VW*, see *VW*, Ep. 1, p. 10: ‘Dudum a uobis iussus in sancti patris nostril Wlstani uita
manum ponere’. William’s much information in the *VW* and *GP* came from his conversations with
Nicholas, showing their intimacy, see above, p. 208. William also mentioned his acquaintance with
Eadric, see *VW*, iii. 3. 3, pp. 112-113: ‘Quorum unus Edricus nomine, quem et ego noui’ (One such,
called Eadric, with whom I also am personally acquainted). According to Winterbottom and Thomson,
this Eadric wrote fos. ii-xi of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Hatton 113, s. XI\(^{vi}\), and his obit was later
added at 23 November on fol. viii: ‘Obit Edricus monachus et sacerdos qui scripsit hunc compotum.’
(On this day died Eadric the monk and priest, who wrote this part.) William never mentioned John in his
narratives, but it would be inconceivable if they did not know each other, considering many similarities
between some parts of their works and William’s friendship with other Worcester monks.
Church Canterbury, which he had probably visited at least three times. Unlike Glastonbury and Worcester, the community at Canterbury did not commission William to compose works for them, but he obviously spent much time staying there so that he could examine the archive and have many conversations with his monastic hosts. These visits also contributed to his friendship with Eadmer and Alexander, both of whom seemed to have shown him their works and shared with him many interesting stories.

The fourth one was Winchester Cathedral Priory, which he had probably visited no fewer than four times. He must have spent a great deal of time at the place, searching for materials, talking with monks, and even witnessing a miracle of St Swithun. Yet apart from Henry of Blois, the bishop after 1129, William did not name his other acquaintances there.

St Frideswide’s Oxford can be counted as the fifth community which enjoyed a close bond with William, and he probably visited the place at least twice. Guimund the prior (1122-c. 1139) seemed to be a good friend of William, and he allowed him to investigate their archive and told him some interesting stories, including his own witnessing of a miracle of St Mary. More interestingly, Guimund’s successor, Robert of Cricklade (c. 1139-c. 1174), was a big admirer of William, and he had shown great interest in his works when he was still a canon at Cirencester Abbey. It is highly

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684 See Chapter 2, Canterbury (1); Chapter 3, pp. 146-147. It should be noted here that William was also supposed to have good relationships with St Augustine’s Canterbury, where he had examined the archive as well, but his bond with the Christ Church should be stronger.

685 See Chapter 2, Canterbury (1); Chapter 3, pp. 109-111.

686 See Chapter 2, Winchester (7); Chapter 3, pp. 146-147.

687 See Chapter 2, Winchester (7); Chapter 5 (the present chapter), pp. 204, 208-209.

688 See Chapter 2, Oxford (39); Chapter 3, pp. 146-147.

689 See Chapter 2, Oxford (39).

690 Robert had read and praised the *Comm. Lam.*, *MBVM* and *Defloratio Gregorii* shortly after March 1137, and planned to read his other works if possible. See Robert of Cricklade, *De connubio patriarche*.
likely that they had known each other, or even had become friends, before Robert was
translated to Oxford, since Cirencester is only about twelve miles from Malmesbury.691

Moreover, Walcher, prior of Malvern, the noted astronomer, was another friend of
William, and one whole chapter in the GR derived from their conversations.692 William
may have visited Great Malvern twice, or even more times, especially when he was
travelling to Worcester or working there.693

Apart from the six communities which William probably visited frequently and
where he had friends and acquaintances whose names are known to us, there were some
other places where William seemed to have built close connections with the local
houses through his travels, such as Rochester, Bury St Edmunds, Sherborne, Milton,
Muchelney, and Gloucester.694 Since we know no details about William’s friends there,

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692 See Chapter 2, Malvern (33).
693 *Ibid.*; Chapter 3, pp. 146-147.
694 *Ibid.*. All these places but Gloucester are shown to be probably visited twice in our list at the end of
Chapter 3. Although we only have clear evidence for William’s visit to Gloucester between 1120 and
1125, the convenient position of the city between Malmesbury and Worcester may suggest his more visits.
We may also expect William to have a closer relationship with the Benedictine abbey, St Peter’s, than
the canonry, St Oswald’s, at Gloucester. His slightly different attitudes towards the two houses can be
seen in *GP*, I, iv. 155. 1-5, pp. 446-449. For other places that occur in our list more than once, we do not
mention them here either because that there were not big religious communities at the place when
William visited, like Doulting, or for the reason that some visits of William did not have clear relations
with local houses. For example, his stay at Salisbury and Reading in 1139/40 was probably more related
his intimacy with these houses was highly likely but not clear. As expected, William
mainly enjoyed good relationships with monastic houses in Southern England,
especially the south-western monasteries which were not far away from Malmesbury,
and his friends were usually the head of their communities or local scholars. These are
only the ‘nodes’, however, that we can identify from our previous chapters on the details
of his itinerary, and it can be expected that there were more religious communities
which had a close relationship with William, that we do not know about. What is almost
certain is that his travels contributed much to the form of his relationships with different
houses, especially his friendship with the individuals based in these different
communities across the South of England.

Outside of the circle of the religious houses, it is also noteworthy that William
seemed to have connections with many Anglo-Norman aristocrats. The two letters
addressed to King David of Scotland and Empress Matilda showed that Queen Matilda
was the patron and sponsor for William’s writing of the GR, and that they had several
private conversations over the progress of this project. Moreover, William told
readers that after Queen Matilda’s death in 1118, he ceased his writing for some time

to the court.

695 GR, I, Ep. ii. 4-5, pp. 8-9: ‘Semel igitur nobiscum in ito sermone de beatissimo Aldelmo, cuius se
consanguineam non immerito gloriabatur, seriem eius prosapiae sciscitata est... Exigua igitur scedula
seriem et nomina simul et annos regum Anglorum complecti fecimus. Tum uero grandiusculae
narrationis illecta desiderio, facile dulcedine qua pollebat effecit ut plenam de antecessoribus eius
meditari fecissemus historiam.’ (Thus on one occasion we were engaged in conversation with her on the
subject of St Aldhelm, whose kinswoman she claimed with proper pride to be, and she asked for
information about his family... We therefore arranged for the drawing up of a brief list of the English
kings, both names and dates. She was then attracted by the project of a somewhat fuller narrative, and
with that charm which was one of her strong points she easily induced us to contemplate a full history of
her predecessors.) Apart from the letters, there is another evidence in the Troyes manuscript, in which
William pointed out that the writing of GR was encouraged by ‘Queen Matilda and the brothers of our
church’, see GR, I, i. prol. 4, pp. 14-15: ‘propter Matildis reginae et fratrum ecclesie nostre adhortantium
auctoritatem’.
because of grief until being requested by his friends to continue. All the evidence suggests a close connection between William and Queen Matilda, even the existence of friendship. Although the two letters were sent to King David and Empress Matilda, William’s connection with them is less clear and can be only regarded as the extension of his relationship with Queen Matilda, for they were her brother and daughter respectively. There is no evidence that William met them in person throughout his life, and it appears that they did not give much support to those monks seeking to restore their monastery’s liberty, which they had sought in their letters. Compared to King David and Empress Matilda, William had a clearer friendship with Robert, earl of Gloucester, who was the recipient of William’s \textit{HN} and later versions of the \textit{GR}, and their close relationship may have started in the mid-1120s. In addition, William knew a certain Godfrey, who died in a battle during the First Crusade. He told readers that this Godfrey was the bastard nephew of King Baldwin I of Jerusalem, and he knew this man who ‘from boyhood had embodied the shade of courage in his countenance, and in his spirit breathed out the truth’. Alan V. Murray convincingly argued that this ‘Godfrey the Bastard’ was a son of Eustace III of Boulogne. The interesting

\textit{GR}, I, Ep. ii. 6, pp. 8-9: ‘Quo merore consternati, decreuimus stili abiurare stadium, cum uideremus exisee de medio hortatricem studiorum. Enimuero procedente tempore rupere silentium tum amicorum petito…’ (Prostrated by grief, we decided to abandon the attempt to write, seeing that the lady who had encouraged our endeavours had been taken from our midst. Then, as time went on, our silence was broken, partly by requests from our friends…)

\textit{GR}, iv. 385. 1, pp. 688-689: ‘Ceciderunt ibi plures quos ego quoque noram, inter quos Godefridus, abnepos eius nothus, iam inde a pueritia umbram uirtutis uultu colorans, ueritatem animo spirans.’ Alan V. Murray argued that the word \textit{abnepos} here should be understood as \textit{nepos}, meaning a nephew, see Murray, ‘A Little-Known Member of the Royal Family of Crusader Jerusalem’, pp. 398-399.
point here is that Eustace III married Mary of Scotland, the younger sister of Queen Matilda, and their daughter Matilda of Boulogne was the queen of King Stephen. This may further imply William’s connection with even a broader circle of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy. Finally, apart from Henry of Blois whom we have mentioned above, Bishop Roger of Salisbury was certainly another acquaintance of William. Roger appropriated Malmesbury Abbey into the bishopric between c. 1118 and 1140. William told readers several times that he heard what Roger said, which suggests frequent contact, though William obviously did not like him.\(^{701}\)

William’s connections with the royal family and aristocrats make one wonder if he even had any relationships with the English kings. He never told readers that he had seen the kings face-to-face, but there are some hints that might imply his possible acquaintance with them. William reported that Henry I had a menagerie at Woodstock in which he kept exotic animals sent by foreign kings, and he saw with his own eyes

\(^{701}\) There are at least three occasions where William narrated what he had heard from Roger. First, he told us about Roger’s excuse for breaking the oath he had taken to Empress Matilda, see *HN*, i. 3, pp. 10-11: ‘Ego Rogerium Salesbreiensem episcopum sepe audui dicentem, solutum se a sacramento quod imperatrici fecerat. Eo enim pacto se iurasse, ne rex preter consilium suum et ceterorum procerum filiam cuiquam nuptum daret extra regnum. Eius matrimonii nullum auetorem, nullum faisse consciunt, nisi Robertum comitem Glocestrieae, et Brianum filium comitis, et episcopum Luxouiensem.’ (I myself have often heard Roger, bishop of Salisbury, saying that he was released from the oath he had taken to the empress, because he had sworn only on condition that the king should not give his daughter in marriage to anyone outside the kingdom without consulting himself and the other chief men, and that no one had been involved in arranging that marriage, or had been aware that it would take place, except Robert, earl of Gloucester, and Brian Fitz Count, and the bishop of Lisieux.) William’s disliking of Roger is displayed clearly here, as he continued his comments as follows: ‘Nec uero haec iccirco dixerim quod credam uera fuisse uerba hominis, qui se unicuique tempori pro uolubilitate fortunae accommodare nosset.’ (In saying this I would not wish it to be thought that I accepted the word of a man who knew how to adapt himself to any occasion according as the wheel of fortune turned.) Second, when Roger was summoned by Stephen to Oxford in 1139, William recorded his reluctance to set out in detail, see *HN*, ii. 23, pp. 46-47: ‘Audiui eum dicentem uerba in hanc sententiam: “Per dominam meam sanctam Mariam, nescio quo pacto, reluctatur mens mea huic itineri. Hoc scio, quod eius utilitatis ero in curia, cuius est equinus pullus in pugna.”’ (I heard him speaking to this effect: ‘By my blessed lady Mary, somehow I am disinclined to this journey, I know not why! This I do know, that I shall be as useful at court as a colt in battle.’) Third, William talked about Roger’s negating of building the castle of Devizes at great expense for the adornment, see *HN*, ii. 23, pp. 48-49: ‘ut ipse presul dictatabat’ (as the bishop kept on saying himself).
the porcupine’s spines and the ostrich there.\textsuperscript{702} This was certainly a royal menagerie that was not open to the public, for those occasionally open to the public appeared more frequently at the end of the Middle Ages, and it would not escape the chroniclers’ record if common people could access Henry’s menagerie.\textsuperscript{703} As a result, Thomson and Winterbottom suggested that this demonstrates ‘some degree of friendship’ between William and King Henry, for it must have been hard for a monk to gain access to the royal menagerie.\textsuperscript{704} As we have suggested in Chapter Three, William and some other monks may have visited Henry’s court at Woodstock in January 1123 to petition for the free election of their abbot, and it is also not impossible that William might even have met him before 1118 through the recommendation of Queen Matilda.\textsuperscript{705} As for King Stephen, William might have met him at the council of Winchester in August 1139, or late in that year when the king led the royal army and captured the Malmesbury castle from the hand of the notorious Robert Fitz Hubert, whose profanity William witnessed with his own ears.\textsuperscript{706} William was also very likely to have been present at Stephen’s court at Salisbury and Reading from December 1139 to January 1140, when they finally

\textsuperscript{702} See Chapter 2, Woodstock (40). Judith Green mentioned Henry’s fondness of this menagerie, see J. A. Green, Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 5, 294.


\textsuperscript{704} GR, II, pp. 372-373.

\textsuperscript{705} For William’s probable visit to the court at Woodstock, see Chapter 3, pp. 114-115.

\textsuperscript{706} For the Winchester council in 1139, see HN, ii. 25-30, pp. 50-59. The council mainly attempted to deal with the conflict between King Stephen and Roger bishop of Salisbury. Although King Stephen did not present himself, he sent earls and Aubrey de Vere to defend his case. The fast speed of their bringing back Stephen’s answers to some charges shows that Stephen may have been at Winchester as well. For Stephen’s capture of the castle of Malmesbury, see HN, ii. 31, p. 62; GS, 43, p. 92. For William’s own hearing of Robert Fitz Hubert’s profanity, see HN, ii. 39, p. 76: ‘Hisce auribus audui…’ From this, we can infer that William was at the Malmesbury Abbey when Fitz Hubert occupied the castle, and William met him there. It is possible that William represented the monks of his church to show the gratitude to Stephen for saving them from destruction.
restored the monks’ ancient privileges and elected John as the new abbot. Moreover, we know that William had a close relationship with Henry of Blois, who was also the king’s brother, which further increases the possibility that William was acquainted with King Stephen.

Overall, it is obvious that William had many connections with a broad circle of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy, and Queen Matilda, Earl Robert, and Henry of Blois may only be the most obvious ‘nodes’ in his aristocratic network. Compared to his monastic network, the role of his mobility in forming his relationships with the aristocrats is vague and unclear. From his early friendship with Godfrey the Bastard, is it possible that William’s family of origin may have had certain ties with Queen Matilda’s family? If it is the case, it would be more convenient to explain William’s deep involvement in the network of Anglo-Norman nobles. Unfortunately, we know nothing about the identity of his parents. His mobility, however, may still have contributed to his connections with the nobles. We know that his frequent visits to Glastonbury helped to build his connection with Henry of Blois. He may not have met Queen Matilda outside of his monastery, but he may have built his friendship with Earl Robert during his visits to Gloucester. It is also certain that William had travelled to Salisbury at least once

707 See Chapter 3, p. 147.
708 We only know that William descended from both English and Norman parents, which was mentioned by him in the third prologue of his GR, see GR, I, iii. prol. 1, pp. 424-425: ‘Ego autem, quia utrusque gentis sanguinem traho’ (For my part, having the blood of both nations in my veins). From William’s description of his early education in the second prologue of the same work, his parents both seemed to be literate, especially his father, see GR, I, ii. prol. 1, pp. 150-151: ‘Diu est quod et parentum cura et meapte diligentia libris insueui... nam et ita a patre institutus eram ut, si ad duersa declinarem studia, esset animae dispendium et famae periculum.’ (It is many years since I formed the habit of reading, thanks to my parents’ encouragement and my own bent for study… Indeed I had been brought up by my father to regard it as damaging to my soul and my good repute if I turned my attention in any other direction.) It is commonly believed that his father was Norman, certainly ‘a man of means’, probably a knight. See GR, II, p. xxxvii, n. 44; Sharpe, trans., The History of the Kings of England and the Modern History of William of Malmesbury, p. vii.
before 1125, probably suggesting an early date for his connection with Bishop Roger.\footnote{See Chapter 2, Salisbury (14). Anyway, Roger’s seizure of the abbacy of Malmesbury had started by 1125, and there may be many occasions for William to meet Roger.}

Furthermore, William seemed to have been to the court at least twice, which was always the most appropriate place for making acquaintance with various aristocrats.\footnote{That is his visit to Woodstock probably in January 1123, and his stay at Salisbury and Reading in 1139/40.}

So far, we have sketched out William’s personal network, which mainly consisted of his connections with religious houses and Anglo-Norman aristocrats and was generally attributed to his wide travels. It is noteworthy that his different works first circulated in this network, among his acquaintances and friends, during his lifetime or shortly after his death. A copy of the earliest version (T) of the GR was sent to King David and Empress Matilda in 1126/27, and this can be related to William’s earlier close relationship with Queen Matilda.\footnote{This is witnessed by the Troyes manuscript (T: Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 0294 bis, s. XII\textsuperscript{2}), which is the only existent manuscript that includes the two letters to King David and Empress Matilda. See Chapter 1, pp. 33-34.}

Probably around the same time, the second version (A) was copied from William’s revised draft, and one copy (Al: London, British Library Arundel MS 35, s. XII\textsuperscript{2/4}) was quickly sent to Winchester, presumably before the tenure of Henry of Blois started in 1129.\footnote{See Chapter 1, p. 34. Tahkokallio suggested that Henry of Blois might have been involved with this copy reaching Winchester, but in my opinion, the bond between William and the Winchester monks formed from his early visit(s) might be enough for its early dissemination before Henry became the bishop there. See Tahkokallio, The Anglo-Norman Historical Canon, pp. 26-27.}

Henry was likely to have taken one later copy from Winchester to Glastonbury Abbey, though it might also have been William who carried it directly to Glastonbury when he was working there in the late 1120s.\footnote{See above, p. 216.}

Another neat copy of the A version may have reached Earl Robert as early as 1126, which was probably later used to correct the Ce manuscript (London, British Library
Royal MS 13 D II, s. XII⁴⁸ or later) of the third version.⁷¹⁴ For this third version (C), Earl Robert certainly had been given one copy, for the dedication letter to him appeared in most manuscripts containing the text for the first time, though it was located between Book Three and Four, and William’s systematic softening of his criticism of Kings William I and II, who were Robert’s grandfather and uncle, was likely to come from Robert’s feedback after reading the second version.⁷¹⁵ The abbey of St Peter’s Gloucester also seems to have obtained a copy of this version, which was interpolated with materials in favour of the monastery.⁷¹⁶ In addition, as we have mentioned above, Glastonbury Abbey received a copy of the latest recension as well, probably given by William directly to Henry of Blois.⁷¹⁷ Finally, our knowledge of the early circulation of the last version (B) of the GR is limited, though one may suspect that a copy was sent to Earl Robert as well.⁷¹⁸

Unlike the GR, William may have never issued a finished master copy of his GP, resulting in a textual spectrum without any clear final version.⁷¹⁹ This probably limited the early circulation of the work. As we have suggested, a copy of the GP in its early state was probably brought by William himself to Worcester Cathedral Priory shortly

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⁷¹⁴ See Chapter 4, pp. 151-153, esp. n. 461 and 463; Tahkokallio, *The Anglo-Norman Historical Canon*, p. 25.
⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25, 27-29. For the awkward position of the letter, Tahkokallio suggested that it might be resulted from the draft existing as two separate codices, one including the first three books, the other the last two left. The copy sent to Robert must later be used as an exemplar for the Ce manuscript.
⁷¹⁶ GR, I, p. xviii; Tahkokallio, *The Anglo-Norman Historical Canon*, p. 30. St Peter’s Gloucester must have received the manuscript before 1170, for the Buildwas copy (Cs: Cambridge, University Library MS Ii. 2. 3, s. XII) of this exemplar was very likely to have been produced around that year. See J. M. Sheppard, *The Buildwas Books: Book Production, Acquisition and Use at an English Cistercian Monastery, 1165–c.1400* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 34-39. It is very likely that the abbey had obtained the copy when William was still alive, considering that he may have visited that place many times and had a close relationship with the community.
⁷¹⁷ See above, p. 216.
⁷¹⁸ Tahkokallio, *The Anglo-Norman Historical Canon*, p. 31. But if Robert’s family preserved a copy of this last version, why did not they use it as the exemplar for the making of the manuscript Ce?
after 1125, which was later used by John of Worcester and an anonymous local chronicle.\textsuperscript{720} This seems to have been the only part of the contemporary dissemination of this work which we know to directly involve William’s personal relationships.\textsuperscript{721} Similarly, our knowledge of the circulation of the \textit{HN}, when William was still alive, is limited. Since the \textit{HN} seemed to be unfinished because of William’s death, he might never have meant it to circulate widely.\textsuperscript{722} One copy must have been sent to Earl Robert when William was approaching his death or shortly after, however, and this later became the exemplar for the text in the Ce manuscript.\textsuperscript{723} It is also possible that a copy of the first edition (A) reached Winchester shortly before William’s death, probably via Henry of Blois, hence being used by the thirteenth-century annals of Winchester and the monk, Thomas Rudborne, in the mid-fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{724} A copy of the revised version (B) from William’s hand was always kept in the library of Malmesbury until the Dissolution, and there is no solid evidence for the early circulation of this edition related to William’s personal connections.\textsuperscript{725}

\textsuperscript{720} See above, p. 215.
\textsuperscript{721} One copy is known to have been disseminated to certain northern houses, presumably between 1126 and 1129, so that it could be quoted in the \textit{HR} at Durham, and it later generated no fewer than five manuscripts in Yorkshire or Lincolnshire. See \textit{GP}, II, pp. xlvii-xlvi; Tahkokallio, \textit{The Anglo-Norman Historical Canon}, p. 32. From the view of William’s itinerary, however, his connection with the northern houses was shadowy. I suggest that this copy was more likely to derive from the exemplar at Worcester, since the monastery of Worcester had a more stable connection with the north. The manuscripts of later versions of the \textit{GP} were generally with late dates, so we do not mention them here.
\textsuperscript{722} The \textit{HN} circulated quite narrowly in the decade after being written, see \textit{HN}, p. xciv.
\textsuperscript{723} As Edmund King suggested, Earl Robert might be the annotator of the exemplar, and then someone in the service of Roger bishop of Worcester, son of the earl, made the final text at Worcester or Margam. See \textit{HN}, pp. xciii-xciv.
\textsuperscript{724} \textit{HN}, pp. ci-cii, ci-i-civ. Another possible piece of evidence is that all three existent manuscripts (made in the late twelfth century or early thirteenth century, see \textit{ibid.}, pp. lxix-lxxi) belonging to this edition also contained the A version of the \textit{GR} generated from the Al manuscript at Winchester. The texts of the \textit{HN} and \textit{GR} were probably copied together from the exemplars at Winchester directly. Since this is the first edition of the \textit{HN} rather than the revised one (B) by William, I suggest that it reached Winchester at a very early date, otherwise it would be more natural for Winchester to keep a copy of the B version.
\textsuperscript{725} \textit{HN}, pp. xc, cii-ciii. From the evidence of the manuscripts, this edition might have been disseminated to Gloucester, Salisbury and Glastonbury since the second half of the twelfth century, but this might be at least decades after William’s death. See \textit{ibid.}, pp. lxxi-lxxiii. The Gloucester copy at Lantheony secunda
For William’s other works, we have mentioned above that William himself may have brought a copy of his *Liber Pontificalis* to Worcester before 1125 or in c. 1126.\(^{726}\)

His hagiographies and *AG* did not seem to raise much interest outside of those commissioning communities during his lifetime or shortly after his death, meaning that they were probably only kept at Worcester (*VW*) and Glastonbury (*VD, VP, VB, VI, AG*) around that time.\(^{727}\) Only one copy of the *VD* was likely to have arrived at Worcester at an early date, and extracts from it were inserted into an abbreviation of Eadmer’s *Life of St Dunstan* in a Legendary, now partly preserved in London, British Library Cotton MS Nero E I/2, fos. 189-222, s. XII\(^3/4\).\(^{728}\) Worcester Cathedral Priory made a copy of William’s *Comm. Lam.* as well, whose exemplar might have been sent out directly by him.\(^{729}\) Another copy of the *Comm. Lam.* (London, British Library Cotton MS Tiberius A XII, fos. 1-45, s. XII\(^{2/4}\)) might have originated from St Peter’s Gloucester judging by the handwriting, or from Eynsham Abbey in Oxfordshire, when William was still alive, if it was the copy seen by John Leland.\(^{730}\) We also know that Robert of Cricklade had requested a copy of this work for Cirencester Abbey by 1137.\(^{731}\) Since Robert later became the prior of St Frideswide’s Oxford, it is possible that he contributed to the making of a copy for Eynsham Abbey, which is not far away, based on an exemplar

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\(^{726}\) See above, p. 216.

\(^{727}\) *AG*, pp. 36-39; *Saints’ Lives*, pp. xxv-xxvii, 3-5, 159-160.

\(^{728}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160. Eadmer’s *Life* is on fos. 200\(^{-}\)203\(^{3}\).

\(^{729}\) *Comm. Lam.*, pp. xxiv, xxviii-xxix. This copy still exists, namely Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 868, s. XII\(^{3/4}\).


\(^{731}\) See above, pp. 220-221, n. 690. Robert’s words seem to suggest his strong initiative in obtaining this work – ‘non tantum legi, verum ut et in nostra ecclesia scriptum haberetur exegi’.
According to Robert, there was also certainly a copy of the *MBVM* and probably an edition of *Defloratio Gregorii* as well at Cirencester by 1137. Together with the *Comm. Lam.*, they were all likely to have been given directly by William at the request of his friend Robert, considering the closeness of the two churches. Apart from Robert, we know nothing of the early circulation of these two works in William’s lifetime or in the decade after his death. The cases were also similar for William’s *Abbreviatio Amalarii* and his *PH*.

From these early circulations of William’s various works during his lifetime or shortly after his death, it can be seen that they were first disseminated through his personal network, especially with Robert of Gloucester, Henry of Blois, and Robert of Cricklade as the most important persons, and Worcester, Winchester, Glastonbury, Gloucester, and Cirencester as the central places. All these places were probably visited frequently by William, and he almost certainly met these people many times during his travels.

More interestingly, after William’s works had reached his acquaintances, friends and friendly communities, they were able to be spread to an even broader audience.

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733 See above, pp. 220-221, n. 690.
734 By c. 1200, the knowledge of the *MBVM* seems to have been disseminated to London, Kent, Salisbury, Chartres, and Paris. See *MBVM*, pp. lvi-lvii. The precise time and process of these circulations are in shadow. For the *Defloratio Gregorii*, there only exists one copy which we have mentioned above (m). It never enjoyed a wide circulation.
735 The Lanthony secunda in Gloucestershire may have obtained a copy of the *Abbreviatio Amalarii* at the end of the twelfth century. See Pfaff, “The “Abbreviatio Amalarii” of William of Malmesbury”, p. 78. For the situation of manuscripts of the *PH*, see *PH*, pp. 25-26.
736 All these places except Cirencester can be found in our findings of William’s itinerary in Chapter 3. Although William never mentioned whether he had visited Cirencester, it is highly likely that he had been to this place many times, since it is on the famous Roman road, the Foss way, which linked Exeter and Lincoln and passed near Malmesbury. William may have taken this road many times when he was heading north. See the map in Kelly, ed., *Charters of Malmesbury Abbey*, p. 95. If he passed by Cirencester frequently, his close friendship with Robert of Cricklade would be no surprise.
through their own networks and connections. The copy of the T version of the \textit{GR} that he sent to King David and Empress Matilda was almost certainly taken to the Continent with the entourage of the Empress after 1127, and it started to generate various copies in Flanders and eastern France from the middle of the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{737} The Winchester copies of the \textit{GR} and \textit{HN}, both in their A versions, also began to produce descendants in the second half of the same century, one of which was even likely during William’s lifetime.\textsuperscript{738} The copies of both the A and C versions of the \textit{GR} and the \textit{HN}, which had been sent to Earl Robert, became the exemplars for the making of the Ce manuscript at Worcester or Margam Abbey, both of which had appropriate links with him.\textsuperscript{739} A copy of the early version of the \textit{GP} might have circulated from Worcester to the North in the late 1120s, later generating no fewer than five manuscripts in Yorkshire or Lincolnshire.\textsuperscript{740} We may expect that the \textit{HR} attributed to Symeon of Durham made use of the \textit{GR} and \textit{GP} on the basis of Durham Cathedral Priory’s close link with Worcester, rather than directly from William himself.\textsuperscript{741} In addition, as we have argued, Henry of Blois may have initiated the circulation of William’s works between Glastonbury and Winchester, and Robert of Cricklade might have contributed to the

\textsuperscript{737} Tahkokallio, \textit{The Anglo-Norman Historical Canon}, pp. 22-23.
\textsuperscript{738} This is reflected by Cambridge, Trinity College MS R. 7. 10 (748), s. XII\textsuperscript{med}, which came from a parent lower than the Winchester copy of the \textit{GR} (A II). This means that a certain manuscript may have already been made from the Winchester copy when William was still alive. For the other manuscripts, see \textit{GR}, p. xvi; \textit{HN}, pp. lxix-lxxi.
\textsuperscript{739} See above, pp. 227-229; \textit{HN}, p. xciv. Margam Abbey was founded by Earl Robert in 1147, while his son Roger was the bishop of Worcester between 1163 and 1179.
\textsuperscript{740} See above, p. 229, n. 720.
\textsuperscript{741} For the \textit{HR}’s use of William’s \textit{GR} and \textit{GP}, see \textit{HR}, pp. 95-98, 115-116. For the frequent contact between the communities of Durham and Worcester, see Brett, ‘John of Worcester and His Contemporaries’, p. 119. Although there was no solid evidence for a copy of the \textit{GR} at Worcester in the late 1120s, it is not impossible that they possessed one copy or some extracts because of their close relationship with William. Perhaps John of Worcester was an important intermediary for Durham monks’ use of William’s works.
The dissemination of the *Comm. Lam.* in the Oxford region. Moreover, Geoffrey of Monmouth seemed at least to have known William’s *GR* and used the text of the *GP* at some point before he finished the first version of his *DGB*, dedicating it to Robert of Gloucester before 1138. William and Geoffrey may have never met each other, but their personal networks were connected: Earl Robert was patron of both. Henry of Blois also collected the *DGB*, and Geoffrey was active between 1129 and 1151 in the region of Oxford, where William had close friends. This means that Geoffrey had plenty of ways to know William’s works, and theoretically it would even have been no trouble for him to obtain an exemplar from William’s friends.

From this point of view, it can be seen that once William’s works had been disseminated to his friends and intimate communities, whether under his own initiation or at his friends’ requests, they entered a broader network which William was not able to reach through his own mobility, and their circulation started to slip from his own control. In other words, William’s personal network belonged to a much bigger contemporary network of knowledge, which connected various aristocrats, religious houses, scholars, monks, and clerics. William’s own mobility, though impressive to a modern eye, still had its limitation, meaning that he could not reach every Anglo-

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742 See above, pp. 216, 227-228, 230-231.

743 Geoffrey seemed to have used the *GP* as the basis of his stories at several places, see *GP*, II, p. xlix, n. 129; J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historia Regum Britanniae and its Early Vernacular Versions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1950), pp. 20, 120, 128. He also obviously knew William’s *GR*, though he did not quote it. See *DGB*, xi. 208. 602-603, pp. 280-281: ‘reges uero Saxonum Willelmo Malmesberiensii’ (…and the Saxon kings to William of Malmesbury).

744 Geoffrey’s work appeared in the book list of Henry of Blois, just before William’s *GR*, see Sharpe etc., eds., *English Benedictine Libraries*, B37. 21, p. 163. Several documents which bore Geoffrey’s name suggested that he was in the neighbourhood of Oxford between 1129 and 1151, two of which were also witnessed by Robert of Cricklade, as the prior of St Frideswide’s, see H. E. Salter, ‘Geoffrey of Monmouth and Oxford’, *The English Historical Review*, 34: 135 (1919), pp. 382-385.
Norman cathedral and house, know every secular or ecclesiastical scholar, or examine every archive and library, but nevertheless, the circulation of knowledge would not stop where William had stopped. Knowledge would circulate through other material carriers, other scholarly travellers, other ‘Williams’, to reach a broader audience, or it could come from far away to arrive in William’s hands. Knowledge would, then, circulate back and forth through this vast network. In this way, William’s vast collection and his possible use of many exemplars from distant places on the Continent is even more understandable.

What therefore was the role of William’s mobility in the circulation of knowledge? I believe that his mobility was the basic force forming and maintaining his personal network, connecting it to a broader network of knowledge. When Tahkokallio was discussing the concept of a ‘publishing framework’, he distinguished three overlapping networks, the aristocratic network, the networks of religious orders, and the scholarly network, which the dissemination of books could utilise in the second quarter of the twelfth century.\(^{745}\) In my opinion, it was William’s mobility which helped him to transcend his own identity as an ‘isolated’ monk to make connections to other networks and bring them together. Hence, the places he frequently visited and the people he was familiar with became the important ‘nodes’, the intermediaries, for the combination of his own network and the broader network of knowledge.

The influence of William’s mobility also shows what monastic mobility could

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achieve in the early twelfth century. It was believed to be an epoch of ‘the decline of
the monasteries as intellectual centres’, and the Benedictine monastic intellectual
tradition was increasingly challenged by the burgeoning cathedral schools and new
religious orders.746 These monastic communities, however, were still the primary
repositories of manuscripts, functioning as textual supply centres, and although the
cathedral schools in Northern France were flourishing, their English counterparts were
‘quite a century behind’, which means that English monasteries were not really replaced
in the local landscape of intellectual activities before the rise of the universities.747
William’s case shows that a great deal of knowledge was still circulated by Benedictine
monks in early twelfth-century England, just as it was in the Early Middle Ages. Around
five hundred years before William’s day, Benedict Biscop brought back to his own
monastery in the North of England not only holy books and pictures, but also tales and
stories of the church services from his oversea travels.748 Over a century before, Richer
of Reims travelled from Saint-Rémi to Chartres only to read the Aphorisms by

746 C. H. Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Massachusetts, 1927), pp. 32-69; Brett, ‘John
of Worcester and his Contemporaries’, pp. 125-126. From the middle of the twentieth century, there was
a trend of scholarship arguing for the existence of a ‘crisis of cenobitism’ between 1050 and 1150. For
example, see J. Leclercq, ‘The Monastic Crisis of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries’, in Cluniac
crise du monachisme aux XIe et XIIe siècles’, Bullettino dell’ Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 70
Historical Review, 66: 1 (1960), pp. 47-67. Although Benedictines were challenged by new religious
orders and influenced by other factors, such decadence and crisis were refuted by John van Engen, who
argued that Benedictine monasticism was still vital in the early twelfth century in many aspects, see J.
van Engen, ‘The “Crisis of Cenobitism” Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050-
1150’, Speculum, 61: 2 (1986), pp. 269-304. Recently, Steven Vanderputten suggested to examine the
structural and regional factors that challenged Benedictine institutions, see S. Vanderputten, ‘Crises of
Cenobitism: Abbatial Leadership and Monastic Competition in Late Eleventh-Century Flanders’, The

Anglo-Norman Historical Canon, p. 14.

748 Bede, Homily I. 13 on Benedict Bishop, in Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow, ed. C. W. Grocock and
Hippocrates of Cos.⁷⁴⁹ Decades before, Anselm, then prior of Bec, wrote to Lanfranc archbishop of Canterbury and asked some monks from Bec, visiting Christ Church, to find copies of the Rule of St Dunstan (presumably the Regularis concordia) and Bede’s De temporibus, and Maurice, one of the visiting monks, even transcribed some rare medical texts for Anselm.⁷⁵⁰

Knowledge flowed with the mobile monks, and it is obvious that William and his contemporary brethren were continuing the tradition. In addition, the bibliographical connections between different monasteries seemed to be mainly based on personal networks and individual travellers, otherwise the appearance of an individual monk such as William would not bring a significant change in the landscape of book collection and production in his own monastery over a short period. This is understandable because knowledge of the contents of a particular collection tended to be shared by friends with the same interests. Library collections would be examined by people who visited the repositories, and every monastic journey could be an opportunity for discovering new materials that would raise someone’s interest.⁷⁵¹ As Gameson wrote, ‘Travel was not only a precondition of giving and receiving bibliographical offerings, it was an opportunity to browse the holdings of the many foundations one would visit along the way, and to make requests.’⁷⁵² From this point of view, the intensive circulation of historical knowledge and research results, noticed by both Brett and Mereminskiy, between various English religious communities, such as Durham,

⁷⁴⁹ Lake, ed. and trans., Histories: Richer of Saint-Rémi, IV. 50, pp. 304-311.
⁷⁵² Ibid., p. 371.
Worcester, Malmesbury, and Canterbury, in the early twelfth century, was built on the mobility of individual monks. This resulted in an informal network of knowledge, which could be quickly brought together by some enthusiastic individuals, but may also easily be dissolved by their death. In other words, an informal network of exchanging information and knowledge between these Benedictine communities was based on personal networks, rather than the preexisting, loose alliance of the old religious order. Besides, even though travelling monks usually stayed at other host communities during their journeys, travel as an activity itself helped them to enter a secular world outside of the cloister. The road not only connected various religious communities, but also crossed over the boundary between the monastic and secular world, making the connections and communication between monks and lay people inevitable. Thus, news, oral accounts, and other forms of information and ideas were absorbed by the monks, while miracles, wonders of saints and relics, and other spiritual materials could be passed to the lay people as well. In this way, knowledge crossed over the boundary which was marked by the walls of the cloister.

In summary, William’s mobility both helped him to obtain materials and information from the outside world and disseminate them to others. It also helped the circulation of knowledge in two directions, and his personal initiative was noteworthy in this process. Through the connections he made during his travels, he built and maintained a personal network which involved both aristocrats and other religious houses. This network was then combined with an even broader network of knowledge.

through the connections of his friends and acquaintances, and knowledge would circulate among various aristocrats, religious houses, scholars, monks, clerics, and others. More interestingly, through the monastic mobility of individual monks like William, traditional Benedictine monastic communities were not isolated from each other, but formed into an informal network, which promoted the exchange of information and ideas and the circulation of knowledge. Perhaps this was the real foundation of the forming of ‘a school of monastic historians’ in early-twelfth-century England.\textsuperscript{754}

\textsuperscript{754} Brett, ‘John of Worcester and His Contemporaries’, p. 126.
Conclusion

As one of the most famous monastic historians and productive writers in the early twelfth century, the mobility of William of Malmesbury is a very interesting and significant subject that lies behind his vast range of writings and establishes an important basis for his intellectual activities. He was not a monastic scholar isolated in the cloister, but a great traveller, a tireless hunter for materials outside the monastery, and an enthusiastic communicator with other people and observer of a wide range of things along the road. He wrote with some authority when he stated that some works of Cicero (parts of the *Academica*, and the whole of the *Hortensius* and *De Re Publica*) were not to be found in England at his time, and his footsteps were even found beyond the British Isles. Such mobility laid the foundation for his abundant and distinguished writings, whether historical or religious. Since most current research interprets William’s narratives only, the investigation of his itinerary in this thesis will set a new basis for our understanding of his life and experience, and allows for future research to place his works within the framework of his life and travels. In short, it opens up further research dimensions of his writings.

William was never a leading churchman deeply involved in ecclesiastical affairs across the country, though he was nominated as abbot by his fellow monks probably several times later in his life. His frequent travels had begun in his twenties when he was still an ordinary monk without any noticeable influence on aspects of intellectual activities and monastic affairs. His wide travels were a reflection of contemporary monastic mobility and help us to see how mobile a Benedictine monk could be in the
Middle Ages. This case study of William’s itinerary helps to historicise and contextualise monastic mobility and provides a vivid investigation of travel experience of medieval monks on an individual level. Although the principle of *stabilitas loci* had been increasingly emphasised since the Carolingian Era, there did not seem to exist an insurmountable obstacle between travel and monastic rules in practice. His motivations for various travels were multi-layered, but monastic devotion always seemed to be the underlying reason for his mobility, which means that more ordinary monks may have been able to follow in his footsteps. From this point of view, he was first a monk, then a scholar and historian.

The mobility of people was the basis of the circulation of knowledge. William’s mobility helped knowledge to circulate in two directions: he obtained materials and information, and meanwhile, disseminated them to others during his travels. His mobility not only promoted the circulation of books and manuscripts between different monasteries and churches, but also brought oral accounts and other forms of knowledge to overcome the boundary between the monastic and secular worlds. Although he must have been provided with hospitality by other religious communities throughout his journeys, he frequently entered a secular world outside the cloister: there was not an isolated road for monks alone, but a road for everyone.

More interestingly, William’s mobility helped him to form connections with both seculars and various religious houses, and a personal network was hence built, in which knowledge circulated more easily and frequently. This provides new insight into the circulation of knowledge in the Anglo-Norman world. Recent work in this field has
focused on medieval publishing, such as that of Richard Sharpe and Jaakko Tahkokallio, but does not leave much room for the dissemination of works based on scholarly networks developed by personal travels.\textsuperscript{755} Our case study of William shows that mobility provided him with opportunities for intellectual interactions and knowledge exchange with his peers in a form of ‘horizontal learning’, a concept recently postulated by Micol Long and Steven Vanderputten which contrasts with the traditional research focus on ‘vertical’ transmission of learning between ‘teachers’ and ‘disciples’.\textsuperscript{756} His personal network was then combined into an even bigger network of knowledge through the personal connections of his friends and acquaintances, making the mobility of knowledge work in a larger scale.

Travel was not entertaining but laborious in the Middle Ages, which resulted in limiting the mobility that an individual could achieve, especially for a coenobite who had always to return to his own community. For William, if a circle would represent the region in which he had travelled, the centre of the circle would always be the monastery of Malmesbury. Yet by intersecting with the ‘circles’ of other people, he could be connected to a wider world, and in this way, knowledge could overcome the natural boundaries and reach every corner of this connected medieval world.

From the Early Middle Ages to the early twelfth century, William was certainly not the only mobile monk. Before the thirteenth century, the Benedictine houses in England never formed a disciplinary and constitutional link among the congregation as the

\textsuperscript{755} Sharpe, ‘Anselm as Author’, pp. 1-87; Tahkokallio, \textit{The Anglo-Norman Historical Canon}.

mother-daughter organisation for the new monastic orders like Cistercians.\textsuperscript{757} There seems, however, to have been an informal Benedictine network in England which was built on the mobility of monks like William. To what extent this network existed and how it really functioned are beyond the topic of this dissertation, but William’s case shows that a more connected Benedictine world existed in the early-twelfth-century England than has previously been thought. Perhaps when we are thinking about the connections between these English houses, we are indeed considering the connected personal networks that resulted from the mobile monks in large part. This also indicates that the Benedictines were still flourishing when the new, more corporate, monastic orders were emerging and establishing themselves in the early twelfth century, which requires reconsideration of the traditional view of religious orders going through cycles of development of growth, flowering, decay, and reform.\textsuperscript{758} Just as John van Engen remarked, ‘A new vision of religious perfection need not require the decadence of another; two or more may well flourish in the same era.’\textsuperscript{759} William’s distinguished writings, together with the abundant works of other contemporary monastic historians, clearly indicate the prosperity of the Benedictine monastic culture in the early twelfth century.

In addition, this picture of monastic mobility may provide a new approach to understanding the distinction of English historiography between the early and the end


\textsuperscript{759} Van Engen, ‘The “Crisis of Cenobitism” Reconsidered’, p. 274.
of the twelfth century. The early twelfth century witnessed the flourishing of a group of monastic historians in the Anglo-Norman world, a ‘golden age’ of medieval English historiography, in Michael Staunton’s words, which is followed by a ‘silver age’ at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, when secular writers were more prominent.760 It might be surprising to see the existence of many shared materials and their similar way in dealing with the Anglo-Saxon past in the historical writings of monastic historians in the early twelfth century, but it might be even more astonishing that these monastic authors might have enjoyed a close personal connection based on their mobility. The most striking thing is that John of Worcester was very likely a mutual friend of William of Malmesbury, Orderic Vitalis, Eadmer of Canterbury, and Symeon of Durham.761 We also know that William certainly knew Eadmer well, and it is probable that other monastic historians might also have interacted with each other during their travels.762 This suggests a specific and coherent network of historical writing and knowledge exchange for these monastic historians. This might be one of the most important reasons for their flourishing in the Anglo-Norman world in the early twelfth century and one of their major differences against their counterparts decades or even a century later. In other words, monastic mobility and the personal networks formed by it might have been the significant basis of this ‘golden age’ of English medieval historiography.

761 See above, pp. 163, 166-168.
762 For example, William and Orderic both visited Crowland in 1110s or early 1120s. There is a possibility that they first met each other at that place.
Appendix: The Itinerary of William of Malmesbury in the Context of His Life and Works

William of Malmesbury was very likely born in c. 1091, probably late that year, in or near Bruton on the border between Somerset and Wiltshire. His mother was English, while his father is believed to have been a Norman with resources, probably a knight, who supported his early education before he became a novice at the monastery of Malmesbury in the middle or late years of Godfrey’s abbacy (which ended before 1106), probably in his late childhood (10-14). His birthplace might have witnessed some sorts of relations with St Aldhelm, or even a cult, which made his family choose the Malmesbury Abbey, rather than Glastonbury, as the future home of the boy.\textsuperscript{763} He may not have assisted Abbot Godfrey with the restoration of the abbey library, but the manuscripts collected by Godfrey might have been a spur for his interest in history. He might have become a confrater at Glastonbury some time during this period.

In his twenties, he may have shown great talents in collecting information and writing history, thus gradually becoming an important member, if not the only one, at his abbey to finish the project of writing a history of the English kings commissioned by Queen Matilda. Sponsored by the Queen and his own monastery, he started his first long journey in c. 1115 to seek materials for the GR and visited many towns and religious houses across South and Middle England, probably with a limited northern trip to the region of York and an extended long ‘Continental tour’. This journey must have taken him a long time. He probably returned to his abbey in 1117 to organise his

\textsuperscript{763} Bruton was such a place which still had Aldhelm’s altar at William’s time. See Chapter 2, Bruton (13).
materials and to begin writing. Unfortunately, in 1118, his greatest sponsor, Queen Matilda, died, and Godfrey’s successor, Abbot Eadwulf, was dismissed for some unknown reason. After Eadwulf’s dismissal, Roger, bishop of Salisbury, went on to acquire the abbey by 1125, probably intending it as a second cathedral priory in his diocese. This event started William’s life-long attempt to help his church to restore its liberty. During this period, the project of the GR was suspended, perhaps because the monks were reduced into uncertainty over the future of their abbey. William then turned his efforts to compile the Liber Pontificalis, which was finished in or soon after 1119.

Probably in the early 1120s, the monks united together and decided to take every opportunity to protect the ancient rights of their monastery. William was supported by them to undertake another trip to collect more materials to continue the unfinished project. They might have hoped that the completion of the GR would help them find new powerful patrons. Presumably in c. 1122/23, William took his second long journey again across South and Middle England, and was highly likely to have visited Wales and have made a limited Continental tour to Normandy, together with places nearby. He and some monks may have visited the court of King Henry I at Woodstock in January 1123 in order to take advantage of the approaching election of archbishop of Canterbury to petition for the restoration of the free election of their own abbot. During this period, he might also have become the subarmarius of his community and started to take charge of the newly founded scriptorium at Malmesbury.

In 1125, William finally finished the early versions of the GR and GP and may have begun to seek suitable patrons for his works. Pope Honorius II’s confirmation of
Bishop Roger’s control over the abbey of Malmesbury on 1 January 1126 was probably the direct inducement for William and other monks to make different copies of the newly finished *GR*, with alteration of contents to please different potential patrons, and they were sent to King David, Empress Matilda, and Earl Robert almost at the same time late that year or in early 1127. The lost *Chronicles* may have been started as well around this time when he was working at his own monastery. Meanwhile, William spent some time at Worcester Cathedral Priory finishing his *VW*, a project which had been demanded by the monks there for a long time. Probably in or soon after 1127, Henry of Blois, the new abbot of Glastonbury, and some acquaintances there asked William, who must have enjoyed some fame at that time, to write some history and hagiography of their monastery. He may have visited Glastonbury at least once between 1127 and 1130, and have finished all the hagiographical works (*VP, VB, VI, VD*) and the main text of the *AG* before Henry’s consecration as the bishop of Winchester in November 1129. He probably dedicated the *AG* with a prologue at the end of 1129 or in early 1130 to Henry, as a present for his new bishopric. In the year of 1129, he was also known to have made his own collection of Roman history (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Arch. Seld. B. 16) with the help of his scriptorium at Malmesbury.

After finishing the main text of the *AG*, William might have enjoyed some leisure time and not written any substantial works for more than a year. Probably during this period, he was raised to the position of cantor and began to carry both the duties of caring for the liturgy and managing book-related issues. His advancing age and his new duties as the cantor may have prompted him to start to consider devoting more time to
writing religious works and making abbreviations and abridgements for his fellow monks. An anonymous monk asked William to abbreviate the commentary on the Lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah by Paschasius Radbertus, but King Henry’s charter on 8 September 1131 confirming Bishop Roger’s control over the abbey, definitely a disaster for the monks at Malmesbury, may have been the more important reason for William’s pessimism and his writing of the Comm. Lam. late that year so as to lament the expected gloomy future of his monastery. Shortly after writing the Comm. Lam., he went on to abbreviate the De ecclesiasticis officiis of Amalarius of Metz at the request of a certain Robert, perhaps a newly professed monk in his convent, and this work must have been finished before 1135, when the late versions of his GR were revised. The years between 1130 and 1135 seem to have been a period when William spent much time in his own monastery. He also finished his PH and Defloratio Gregorii approximately in this period in order to promote the education of his monks.

William’s hard work as cantor may have further increased his popularity among his convent, which made he able to represent his monastery at the translation of St Caradoc at St David’s in Wales in the mid-1130s, presumably shortly before 1136. He may have decided to write his MBVM for a long time and, hence, he visited some other places, including Bury St Edmunds, around this time, in order to collect useful materials. He probably received the news of King Henry’s death during his journey at the end of 1135, hence changing his original travel plan. His brothers probably urged him to take this opportunity and collect more oral and written materials about St Aldhelm and their own abbey, so that they could prepare a new petition to King Stephen. Thus, William hurried
to south in early 1136 in order to seek materials more carefully and dig through the archives of every religious house related to Aldhelm. Afterwards, he returned to his abbey and made the revisions of his GR and GP, while writing MBVM simultaneously or shortly after the completion of the revisions. Perhaps for the reason of the labour of frequent travels and continuous writings, together with some monastic affairs, his health situation was getting worse. He became sick once in the middle of his work for the MBVM and ceased his writing for a while.

The negotiation between the Malmesbury Abbey and King Stephen probably lasted for some time, sometimes delayed by the disturbances in England and also influenced by Bishop Roger’s changing destiny. William presented on behalf of his monastery at the Winchester council in August 1139, and witnessed the reversal of Roger’s fortune. The disgrace and death of the bishop at the end of that year cleared the largest obstacle to the restoration of the abbey, and finally, in January 1140, John was appointed by the king as the abbot of Malmesbury. From the end of 1139 to January 1140, William and other monks must have followed the royal court at Salisbury and Reading so as finally to witness this delightful event. The king’s approval of John’s abbacy was perhaps to some extent due to a certain amount of promised money, hence Henry of Blois, the papal legate at that time, disapproved of the result of the election. As a result, Abbot John set out to Rome with a delegation in order to obtain the confirmation of the pope, and his other aim was very likely to be the cancelling of the previous privilege of Pope Honorius II to Roger, which was still valid. As a friend of John, who was also concerned about this issue, William might have seen him off at the port Shoreham near Lewes.
Abbot John died in Rome in August 1140, and his companion Peter was elected as the new abbot after the delegation had returned. Based on Peter’s narration, William completed the *Itinerarium* of Abbot John in late 1140 or early 1141. At the same time, he started writing the *HN*, which was commissioned by Earl Robert of Gloucester. In April 1141, William witnessed another council at Winchester. He may have still continued to travel to collect information for his writing of the *HN* and the redaction of his earlier works, but we do not have enough evidence to discover his itinerary after 1140. He kept writing and revising his works until his death in 1143.
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