

MASTER ELIAS OF DEREHAM
AND THE KING'S WORKS

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Of recent years much labour has been devoted to the question of medieval building organisation and the part played in it by the various individuals connected with the process.¹ Our views to-day upon the architectural profession in the middle ages are more precise and a great deal more reasonable than when we cherished the remarkable superstition that bishops and abbots were their own architects and that Gothic cathedral and abbey churches were a by-product of the clerical or monastic life. We know that for the achievement of such works of art single-hearted devotion to a skilled profession was necessary; and, while it is no doubt highly complimentary to the superior clergy of the middle ages to credit them with such architectural intelligence and powers of execution, it must be admitted, in view of their normal training, that their intelligence and their powers in this direction, if indeed they possessed them, must have been acquired by means little short of miraculous.

I am proposing to examine what we know of the life of a clerical dignitary who lived in an age of great architectural effort and was so keenly interested in and so nearly connected with some of its most conspicuous works that his name is still often counted among those of the great artists of the thirteenth century, like Robert de Luzarches and Thomas de Cormont of Amiens and Robert de Coucy of Reims. A recent writer, anxious to rehabilitate the fame of Elias of Dereham as an architect, has indeed accused those who would adopt a somewhat different conception of his activities as striving to free the clerical

¹ In this connexion special tribute may be paid to the labours of Professor D. Knoop and Mr. G. P. Jones, whose numerous publications require a bibliography to themselves. Their general conclusions are embodied in *The Medieval Mason*, 1933.

See also the present writer's paper on *Medieval Building Documents* in *Proc. Somerset Arch. Soc.*, lxvi, 1, and his introduction to *The Building Accounts of Kirby Muxloe Castle*, *Trans. Leic. Arch. Soc.*, xi, 193.

profession from the taint of a degrading and contaminating interest in the practice of arts and crafts.¹ The truth is otherwise, for the fundamental principle of such a distinction between the cleric and the artist is the recognition of the nobility of the characteristic art of the middle ages and of its exacting demands upon its practitioners. It is mere common sense to see that the architectural profession could not have been combined with or subordinated to any other, however important, by those who, taking it seriously, gave their lives to it.

What, then, is the truth about Elias of Dereham? What do we know of his interest in art and his part—for he unquestionably did play a part—in the great and prolonged artistic movement of his age?² His life began, so far as we know, at one of the Derehams in Norfolk, and probably at West Dereham, for it seems to have been under the patronage of a native of West Dereham, Hubert Walter, that he entered upon his career. In 1188 Hubert Walter, then dean of York, founded an abbey of Premonstratensian canons at his native place. In a version of the charter of foundation quoted by Blomefield³ Elias of Dereham appears as one of the witnesses. On the other hand his name is absent from the charter as printed in full in *Monasticon*, which gives only the names of Richard the parson of Dereham and Nicholas of Dereham.⁴ In the following year Hubert Walter was appointed bishop of Salisbury. Five years later, in 1193, he was translated to the see of Canterbury and remained there for twelve years, dying on 13th July 1205. There is no doubt that, at the time of Hubert's death, Elias of Dereham had been engaged in his service for some time. It has been said, on what authority I cannot discover, that he was Hubert's steward, which in itself is not at all unlikely. It is quite possible,

¹ H. L. Honeyman in *Trans. Durham and Northumb. Arch. Soc.*, viii, 15-26: *Master Elias Dereham and his Connection with Durham*.

² Elias of Dereham is the subject of a paper read before the Institute, by the Rev. J. A. Bennett, at the Salisbury meeting of 1887 and printed in *Arch. Journ.*, xlv, 365-74, under the title 'The Architect of Salisbury Cathedral'. Later than

this is the lecture, in many respects excellent, *Elias de Derham, rector of Harrow and architect of Salisbury Cathedral*, by the Rev. W. D. Bushell, printed as no. xiii of the Harrow Octocentenary Tracts, *Church Life on Harrow Hill*, 1909.

³ Blomefield, *Norfolk*, ed. Parkin, vii, 331.

⁴ *Monasticon*, vi (2), 899, 900.

considering the enduring connexion which he established with Salisbury, that Hubert gave him, as a competent and favourite household clerk, a canonry and prebend in his cathedral church at a time when Elias must have been a very young man, unless we suppose his life to have been protracted long beyond the usual term. At any rate, if we cannot establish with certainty the date at which he entered the service of Hubert, we may say confidently that it was to Hubert that he owed the origin of his career and that his association with him must have begun considerably earlier than 1205.

Shortly before the death of Hubert Walter, Elias can be recognised under the title of king's clerk, as was natural in the case of a clerk attached to the service of so prominent a servant of the Crown. On 6th April 1205 King John confirmed by charter to God and the church of St. Mary of 'Meauton', at the petition of his clerk, Master Elias of Dereham, rector of the church, that all its tenants henceforward should be free of suits of shires and hundreds and other burdens of the kind.¹ Now and afterwards *magister* is habitually prefixed to his name, which implies a University degree.² At Hubert Walter's death he appears as one of his executors,³ and the keeping of the temporalities of the vacant see was placed in his hands and those of certain associates by the Crown.⁴ For two or three years he was busy clearing up the archbishop's debts and administering the affairs of the see. It is immaterial to the present purpose to do more than call attention to documents concerning lands belonging to the see in South Malling, Harrow and Wimbledon with whose transfer from one tenant to another he was entrusted.⁵ In the discharge of his duties, however, we realise that he had to transact business with several persons with whom we find him associated in succeeding years. In August 1205, less than a month after the death of Hubert Walter,

¹ *Rot. Chart.* (Rec. Comm.), i, 147b. Meauton=Melton. The mention of the dedication of the church narrows down its identity to an alternative between Melton Mowbray, the rectory of which was not yet appropriated to the prior and convent of Lewes, and Great Melton in Norfolk.

² It is certainly more reasonable to take this view than to assume that the term implies that Elias was a master artist.

³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.* (Rec. Comm.), i, 61, 92.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 44b.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i, 42b, 43, 44b.

died Savary, bishop of Bath and Wells, and on 25th September of the same year Peter des Roches, the Poitevin minister of King John, was consecrated to the see of Winchester. At one time Peter des Roches had lent £100 to Savary, and of Savary Hubert Walter had obtained the same sum, which his executors were ordered to pay to Peter out of the late archbishop's goods. The letters close which contained this mandate were to be handed over by way of a receipt on behalf of the late bishop of Bath and Wells to Hugh, the archdeacon of Wells, and William, the archdeacon of Taunton.¹ This was in January, 1206, nearly six months before the accession of Jocelyn to the see, left vacant by Savary. Hugh the archdeacon, who within the next four years was to become bishop of Lincoln, was brother to Jocelyn, and with these two Elias became closely connected.

It is not certain when his association with Jocelyn began, but in 1208 he was witness to a charter, made at 'Chartuse', i.e. the Charterhouse at Witham in Somerset, in which Philip de Lucy acknowledged a fine of 1,000 marks to the king, other witnesses being the chancellor Walter de Gray, afterwards bishop of Worcester and archbishop of York, Hugh, archdeacon of Wells, and Master Richard Marsh, then clerk of the chamber to Jocelyn, and afterwards bishop of Durham.² We know that he was in France with Hugh in the course of 1212, when both Hugh and Jocelyn were in exile, for at St. Martin-de-Garenne, a few miles from Paris, on 13th November in that year, he was a witness to the testament which Hugh made with regard to goods which should be restored to him in England.³ At this time Hugh had been a bishop for nearly three years, and it was at an earlier date, while he was still archdeacon of Wells, that Elias witnessed a grant from him to his brother Jocelyn relating to the episcopal manors of Banwell and Compton Bishop.⁴ Few, however, of the charters which might supply an initial date for the connexion of Elias with Wells are dated. All that can be said is that it extended over the whole of the thirty-six

¹ *Ibid.*, i, 61.

² *Rot. Litt. Pat.* (Rec. Comm.), (Hist. MSS. Comm.), i, 432.

³ *Cal. MSS. D. and C. Wells*

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 480.

p. 82.

years of Jocelyn's episcopate and lasted a few years longer. Two undated charters to which he was a witness concern churches granted to the bishop, and one of these, a grant of the church of Ilton, which became a prebend in Wells Cathedral, by Benedict, abbot of Athelney, must have been made at any rate before 1226, the probable date of Benedict's death.¹

More interesting is the charter in which Master Elias of Dereham, named as steward of Bishop Jocelyn, witnessed a deed relating to property in the city of Wells made by Thomas Lock, son of Adam Lock, mason. Other witnesses were Richard of Wells and William of Wethamsted, both canons of Wells whose names occur after that of Elias, and two other masons, one called Thomas Noreis, and the other with the name, unusual for an Englishman, of Deodatus (Dieudonné).² Considering the intimate association of Elias with the architectural movements of his day, the part which he takes in this document is significant. It was in the episcopate of Jocelyn that the nave of the cathedral church of Wells with its remarkable west front was completed.³ I think that we have good ground for supposing that the Locks, father and son, like the Hotons at York a century later,⁴ were the master-masons employed by the dean and chapter upon the works of the church and that Noreis and Dieudonné were two of the freemasons who acted under their direction. It is equally probable that the two canons just mentioned were the administrative clerks deputed by the dean and chapter to look after the works of the church, with Elias, himself probably at this time a canon of Wells, as general surveyor of the whole operation. At all events the name of the witnesses imply a special interest in the business of the master-mason which explains their appearance in this context.

We have seen that in 1212 Elias was out of England. He no doubt shared the exile of Hugh and Jocelyn during the long protracted quarrel of John with the pope over the provision of Stephen Langton to the see of Canterbury and the consequent interdict laid upon

¹ *Ibid.*, i, 43. The other church of Wells and Dr. John Bilson in was that of Long Sutton (*ibid.*, i, 487). *Arch. Journ.*, lxxxv, 1-68.

² *Ibid.*, i, 36.

³ For the building of the nave at Wells see the papers by the late dean

⁴ See *Fabric Rolls of York Minster* (Surtees Soc.), p. 166.

England.¹ This explains the safe conduct which was granted on 4th May 1212 to Master Elias of Dereham and the men who should come with him at his coming into England and in their staying and returning. This safe conduct, to last till midsummer, was contingent upon an oath taken by Elias that no harm should come to the king or his realm by him or his men.² It is probable that he came to England on a mission from the exiles who took the part of Langton, and it is likely that one of its objects was to safeguard their property from the rapacity of intruders.

The next thing that we know of him is that he was present at Runnymede in June 1215, when he was appointed one of the commissioners for the distribution of copies of the Great Charter to the various English counties. Four copies were entrusted to him on 19th June and six more at Oxford on 22nd July.³ On 19th June he was also appointed to make a distraint upon the goods of Flemish merchants in England who had deprived one William Hervey of his chattels.⁴ The reference to him as 'our beloved Master Elias of Dereham' does not of course imply any very warm personal affection on the part of the king; but, while it is highly probable that the use of his services after Runnymede was due to the personal recommendation of Langton, the king must have been fully aware of his capability, with which he had made acquaintance at a date at any rate as early as the beginning of the vacancy of the see of Canterbury ten years before.

Langton's appreciation of his merits is quite certain, and it is in this connexion that we come across the first piece of definite evidence on which his traditional reputation may be said to rest. On 7th July 1220 Langton translated the remains of St. Thomas of Canterbury from the crypt of the cathedral church to the Trinity chapel behind the high altar. In recording the event, Matthew Paris notes that among those present were the incomparable artists, Master Walter of Colchester, sacrist of St. Albans, and Master

¹ See Matth. Paris, *Chron. Maj.* (Rolls Series), ii, 528, 542, for the seizure of the temporalities of Lincoln and for the inclusion of Hugh among the prelates in John's act of submission.

² *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, u.s., p. 92.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 180b.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

Elyas of Dereham, canon of Salisbury, 'by whose advice and ingenuity all things needful for the artificial working of the shrine and its elevation and translation were got ready without cause for blame'. I propose to leave the discussion of this passage, added by Matthew Paris to the account which he took from Roger of Wendover, till later and meanwhile to proceed with the main story.¹

Stephen Langton died on 9th July 1228, and a fortnight later Elias appears as one of his executors.² On the same day, 22nd July, he was one of the two persons charged with the custody of the temporalities of the bishopric of Salisbury, then vacant by the translation of Richard Poore to Durham.³ We have seen that his first association with Salisbury may have been as a member of the household of Hubert Walter, but there is no record of the date at which he first obtained a prebend in the church. The allusion to him as a canon of Salisbury in 1220 by Matthew Paris is not proof positive that he was actually a canon at that date. At the same time it is certain that he was a canon in 1222, when he was a witness to the grant by the dean and chapter of Wells of the church of Whitchurch Canonicorum in Dorset to Master Hugh Grenefeld.⁴ It is rather surprising, considering the traps into which an accident of this kind may lead the unwary, that no-one has yet discovered an artistic connexion between Elias and the fabric of that beautiful church.⁵ All, however, that can be said is that on this occasion he was present on behalf of the dean and chapter of Salisbury as joint patrons of the church, the advowson of which they shared with the dean and chapter of Wells. His presence was all the more appropriate in that he was without doubt a member of the chapter of Wells by this date, and we know

¹ Matth. Paris, *Hist. Anglorum* (Rolls Series), ii, 242: 'praesentibus etiam incomparabilibus artificibus magistris Waltero de Colecestria, sacrista de Sancto Albano, et Elya de Derham, canonico Sarisburiensi, quorum consiliis et ingeniis omnia quae ad artificium thecae et ipsius elevationis et translationis necessaria fuerant, irreprehensibiliter parabantur.'

² *Close Rolls 1227-1231*, p. 110.

³ *Pat. Rolls 1225-1232*, pp. 195-6.

See also *Close Rolls 1227-1231*, pp. 66-7, 73. In *Pat. Rolls*, u.s., p. 42, there is an undated notice to the bishop-elect of Salisbury (Robert Bingham) of the presentation by the Crown to the church of Old St. Peter's, Salisbury, of Wymund, clerk of Master Elyas de Derham.

⁴ *Cal. MSS. D. and C. Wells*, u.s., i, 527.

⁵ For this church, see the paper by the late Miss E. K. Prideaux in *Arch. Journ.*, lxiv, 119-150.

that now or later his prebend in that church was that of Litton, which he resigned shortly before his death.¹

In the same year, 1222, on 18th August, he witnessed the statute of the chapter of Salisbury by which the church of Swallowcliffe, with others, and the prebend of Warminster were exempted from the jurisdiction of the archdeacon of Salisbury, who, apparently in compensation, was exempted from residence in the cathedral church and received from the bishop the right of jurisdiction in the church of Melksham.² It may be noted here that later, on 13th August, 1235, 'Master Elias de Berham' appears in the archives of the dean and chapter of Wells as party to an award made by Bishop Poore of Durham at Tarrant with regard to a prebend in Wells Cathedral. This prebend seems to have been that of Warminster, otherwise known as Luxvile and quite distinct from the prebend in Salisbury.³ Poore was evidently chosen to act as arbiter in this business, as he had previously made a compromise, no doubt while bishop of Salisbury, the diocese within which Warminster lay, affecting his own rights and those of Master William, archdeacon of Berkshire, and the aforesaid Master Elias. This looks like rival claims of Elias and William, if not to the prebend itself, at all events to rights in the property out of which it seems to have been founded not long before.⁴ It can hardly be doubted that in this document as printed 'Berham' is a misreading of 'Derham'. The names of Elias and William, archdeacon of Berkshire, are found coupled on an earlier occasion, when on 27th May 1225 they were appointed joint commissioners to make ordinances concerning the churches of Tarrant Keynston, Coombe Keynes, East Lulworth and Somerford Keynes, appropriated to the prior and convent of Merton in Surrey.⁵

In the Salisbury documents of this period the name of Elias, as early as 1222, takes a prominent place in

¹ *Cal. MSS. D. and C. Wells*, u.s., i, 121.

² *Reg. St. Osmund* (Rolls Series), i, 339.

³ The prebend in Salisbury consisted of the church of Warminster; that in Wells was manorial.

⁴ *Cal. MSS. D. and C. Wells*, i, 365.

⁵ *Reg. St. Osmund*, u.s., ii, 26. The church of Tarrant Keynston appears to have escaped appropriation.

lists of witnesses. In the statute relating to Westminster, of which mention has been made, it comes second among the names of canons after the dignitaries of the chapter. On 15th May 1223, when the chapter ratified a deed by the abbot of Westminster concerning tenements in London and Westminster, it is first after the dignitaries on the list.¹ It occupies the same position in the confirmation by Bishop Poore of the annexation of the prebend of Calne to the dignity of treasurer in 1224.² In this last year Elias was *custos* of the common of the chapter, and as such bore witness to the statute by which the chapter regulated the habit of holding drinkings in the canons' lodgings during the Oes of Advent.³ Here, however, his name is fifth on the list ; but on 15th August 1226, when twenty-eight canons met in chapter to discuss the aid demanded by the king, it is first again,⁴ and his prominence in their business affairs is evident from the fact that he and Master Luke of Winchester were appointed proctors by the chapter to appear in London in this connexion.⁵ It is thus obvious that he was frequently the senior canon in residence at Salisbury after the dignitaries, and, although canons who were senior to himself were occasionally present at chapter meetings, he was a standing member of the *major et sanior* pars of the canons. When at Michaelmas 1225 the first service took place in the choir of the new cathedral church, among the thirty-seven canons, including the bishop, who were present, Elias is named in the fourth place, after the dignitaries as usual ;⁶ while among the canons who consented and subscribed to the election of Bishop Bingham on 9th September 1228, 'Ego Helias canonicus Sarisburiensis' occurs in similar manner in the sixth place.⁷ From a list of canons in 1226, usually taken as the starting-point for lists of holders of individual prebends in the church of Salisbury, we learn that his prebend was the valuable prebend of 'Lavinton and Poterne', generally known as Potterne.⁸ This may not have been the first prebend which he held in the church, but it

¹ Ibid., i, 330.

² Ibid., ii, 25.

³ Ibid., ii, 22.

⁴ Ibid., ii, 60.

⁵ Ibid., ii, 63.

⁶ Ibid., ii, 38.

⁷ Ibid., ii, 108.

⁸ Ibid., ii, 70.

is unlikely that at a later date he exchanged it for any other.¹

It is well known that Richard Poore, translated from the see of Chichester to that of Salisbury in 1217, some three years later removed the seat of his authority from its inconvenient position on the hill of Old Sarum to the new city in the valley below. Here he began the construction of his new cathedral church. 'With the advice of noble artists whom he had summoned from distant parts he laid out a spacious foundation, himself putting in place the first stone.'² To this sentence, so characteristic of the medieval habit of giving the credit for a building to its chief founder and instigator, Matthew Paris adds the couplet :

' Rex largitur opes, fert praesul opem, lapicidae
Dant operam ; tribus his est opus ut stet opus.'

The actual work, in fact, is due not to the king or to the bishop, who contribute largely to its aid, but to the stonemason, the operative mason who carries out and controls the plans. Clearly as these lines put the relative importance of the three persons in question, it should be remembered that, however generously king and bishop might be ready to finance a work of this kind, the actual supervision of its execution was the business of the governing body of the church, the dean and chapter in a secular, the prior and convent in a monastic cathedral. These were the effective employers who, as the existing fabric rolls of York, Exeter, Wells and other places show, appointed representatives of their body to do this work and account to them for its progress. It can hardly be supposed that Salisbury was an exception to the rule.³

Three centuries later, Leland stated, on what

¹ In the list of prebends and their holders in 1226 the prebend of Beaminster Secunda is entered as the prebend 'which was of Elias'. Whether this was our Elias or not is uncertain, but he may have recently quitted this less profitable stall for Potterne.

² Matth. Paris, *Chron. Maj.* (Rolls Series), iii, 391. 'Et consilio nobilium artificum quos a remotis

convocaverat, amplum jecit fundamentum, ipso primum lapidem componente.'

³ The clerk of the works and his associate were not always members of the chapter which appointed them. At York, for example, they were habitually chosen from the body of vicars choral, who were more constantly on the spot than the canons.

authority he does not say, that Elias of Dereham was 'rector' of the new fabric of the church for twenty-five years from its first foundation.¹ We have seen already that in 1224 he was *custos* of the common, that is to say of the common fund which was shared by the resident canons of the church in sums answering to the daily allowances or 'quotidians' to which they were entitled. This implied of course the management of the lands and tenements from whose rents the fund arose. Leland's reckoning of twenty-five years obviously corresponds to the period 1220-1245, the latter year being that of the death of Elias, and it was highly probable that the custody of the fabric fund was in his hands from the beginning. The first definite statement, however, that this was so seems to occur on 5th October 1225, a few days after the new choir had been opened for service,² when the dean and chapter committed the keeping of the offerings made at the new high altar to the bishop for seven years at the expiration of which they were to be returned to the treasurer, 'all of which the bishop now committed to the keeping of Master Elias of Dereham, having at that time no confidence in the trustworthiness of any other person'.³ It would be unfair to take this as a reflection upon the honesty of the other members of the cathedral body, or as more than a signal compliment to the business ability and probity of Elias, which marked him out as the natural depositary of this addition to the fabric fund. And, as keeper of the fabric fund, he was the channel through which passed all orders affecting the work in progress. Thus in December 1225 the keeper of the king's park at Odiham in Hampshire was instructed to provide Elias with thirteen oaks, tall and upright, from the little park to make 'vernes', i.e. machines worked by windlasses for lifting building materials, for the works of the church of Salisbury.⁴ To estimate

¹ Leland, *Itin.*, ed. Toulmin-Smith, i, 266: 'Helias de Derham, canonicus Sarum, qui a prima fundatione Rector fuit novae fabricae Eccl. Sarum 25 annis.'

² As before stated. the name of Elias occurs in this list fourth among the canons not dignitaries. There is no distinguishing mark of his special connexion with the building:

he is treated simply as one of the chapter.

³ *Reg. St. Osmund*, ii, 44: 'quae omnia modo commisit dominus episcopus custodiae mag. Eliae de Derham. in nullo alio fiduciam fidelitatis tunc temporis habens.'

⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, u.s., ii, 91b.

properly the exact nature of the office held by Elias in the conduct of this great building adventure, special prominence may be given to one detail. Somewhere about 1230 Bishop Bingham granted to the dean and chapter a messuage outside the canons' cloister next the road on the east side, which they engaged to put into the occupation of the *cementarius*, Master Nicholas of Ely and his heirs, for a rent of two wax tapers, weighing two pounds each, to be paid yearly on the eve of the Assumption for the augmentation of lights at the mass of the Virgin.¹ The witnesses to the charter were the dean, the chancellor, and, among others, some canons headed by Master Elias of Dereham. This precedence does not imply his special interest in the grant, but is probably, as we have noted in other instances, a matter of his seniority, just as in 1228 he heads a list of seven canons who witnessed a quitclaim in a transfer of land at one of the Caundles in Dorset to the dean and chapter.² But it may be pointed out for the benefit of those who claim Elias of Dereham as the 'architect' of Salisbury Cathedral that the *cementarius* provided with a house near the canons' cloister corresponds to the *lapidida* of Matthew Paris' distich, and, if we may assume that the Locks, to whom allusion has already been made, were the master-masons at Wells, we have even better reason to conclude that Nicholas of Ely was the master-mason at Salisbury, which is as much as to say that he was the resident architect.

In 1228 Richard Poore was translated from Salisbury to Durham, where he remained until his death in April, 1237. It was constantly the fashion, both then and later, for a bishop, removing from one diocese to another, to take some of his household clerks and provide for them in his new see. Elias, however, did not migrate to the North with Poore, nor have we evidence at any time that he was a member of Poore's household, as of Hubert Walter's or of Jocelyn's. At the same time we have noticed the special confidence put by Poore in him, and there is one point in which his name is certainly related to that of Poore

¹ *MSS. D. and C. Salisbury*
(*Hist. MSS. Comm.*, *MSS. in Various*
Collections, i, 382).

² *Ibid.*, i, 354.

while the latter was bishop of Durham. He appears among the witnesses to the Convent or agreement into which Poore entered with the prior and convent of Durham with regard to property which had been disputed between them and his predecessor, Richard Marsh. This agreement took place in 1229, not long after Poore's entry upon his new see. Among the witnesses also was Jocelyn of Wells, together with Walter Mauclerc, bishop of Carlisle, the archdeacons of Durham and Carlisle, and other clerks, some of whom, such as Robert of Amiens, were certainly foreigners.¹ Elias may have had more than one reason for his presence in this distinguished company, for, apart from his friendship for Poore, there was also his attachment to the service of his old friend and employer Jocelyn. So far as I know, there is no other record of his presence at Durham or in the diocese, and there is no evidence for the conjecture which has preferred him to the rectory of Houghton-le-Spring in the Bishopric.²

As one of Stephen Langton's executors and as keeper of the bishopric of Salisbury on behalf of the Crown, he must have been fairly well occupied during 1228. Langton's successor, Richard of Wethersett, known also as Grant, a distinguished theologian,

¹ See *Feod. Prioratus Dunelm.* (Surtees Soc.), p. 212; *Scriptores Tres Hist. Eccl. Dunelm.* (Surtees Soc.), appendix, p. lxxii.

² In the paper already referred to, Mr. Honeyman has suggested that Elias was responsible for the design of windows in the church of Houghton-le-Spring which, being two-light windows with quatrefoils in the heads, bear an interesting similarity in design to windows, also of two-lights with quatrefoil tracery, in Salisbury Cathedral. But the likeness is not so close as to attribute them with any certainty to the same designer. It is, however, too optimistic to discover a parallel between the design of the transept-crossings at Houghton and Salisbury. It is indeed drawing the long bow of conjecture too far to assume on such slender grounds that Elias was rector of Houghton. On the other hand, Mr. Honeyman realises that the work of the Nine Altars at Durham, between 'many portions' of which and Salisbury

Cathedral others have discovered 'a wonderful similarity of design', can hardly be attributed to Elias, partly because it was not begun till after Poore's death, and partly (a better reason) because of certain irregularities of design of which the architect of Salisbury Cathedral cannot be supposed to have been guilty. Mr. Bushell's paper, carefully documented as it is, is vitiated by his attempt to connect Elias with the fabrics of buildings so diverse as Wells and Lincoln Cathedrals, owing to the friendship of Elias with Jocelyn and Hugh, and even by a tentative suggestion founded on the likeness between the circular window at the east end of the cathedral at Laon and that in the north transept at Lincoln. Such efforts to make the *custos* of the fabric at Salisbury a universal purveyor of the 'Early English' style are founded on assumptions for which the evidence is of the slightest and most casual kind.

died two years after his promotion to the archbishopric, and for the third time in succession Elias acted as executor of the will of an archbishop.¹ There was a long vacancy at Canterbury, and it was not until 1234, two and a half years after Archbishop Richard's death, that Edmund Rich, previously chancellor of Salisbury, was appointed to succeed him. Earlier in 1234 Langton's affairs were not wholly settled, for Elias was ordered to refrain from levying a distraint upon the tenants of the prior and convent of Canterbury for fines which they had incurred for their failure to satisfy the executors.² It may be added that he appears again twice in what had become his habitual role of executor to deceased prelates, once as an executor of Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, who died in 1238, while in 1237 his name comes first among those of the executors of Bishop Poore.³

Meanwhile, however, the experience which he had acquired in the conduct of building operations at Salisbury had brought him into direct contact with the king's works. Under Henry III their direction was not yet so centralised as it became later, and at no time does Elias seem to have had anything like the general control of the Office of Works which William of Wykeham, for example, exercised in the next century. Indeed at this date there is no distinct gradation of functions noticeable among the king's clerks to whom the supervision of these operations was entrusted. The special business of Elias was localised at Winchester Castle, where we first find him early in 1233. The great aisled hall was then in building, and large donations of timber from the royal forests were made by the king for this purpose. In February 1233 there was an order for the delivery of timber from the forest of Melksham for the making of 7,000 laths for the hall.⁴ In June more timber was supplied from forests in the neighbourhood of Andover and in Dorset.⁵ In August six tree-trunks were ordered from the forest of Aliceholt

¹ *Cal. Liberate Rolls*, i, 200.

² *Close Rolls 1231-1234*, p. 365.

³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1232-1247*, pp. 166, 180. See also *Close Rolls 1234-1237*, p. 436. The only meeting recorded between Elias and Poore after 1229 took place at

Tarrant in 1235, when, as already mentioned, Poore made there his award concerning the Wells prebend of Warminster.

⁴ *Close Rolls 1231-1234*, p. 194.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

for the making of the great windlass in Winchester Castle.¹ Later in the same month the bailiff of a forest unspecified was charged to let Elias have as much timber as was necessary for the completion of the work on the hall,² while in June the sheriff of Southampton had been commanded to supply him with stone, to be carried to Winchester for this work.³ The building of the hall must have been well advanced by the end of May 1234, when the warden of the forest of Bere had a mandate to cause Elias to have as much timber as he wanted.⁴ It had probably been finished by the beginning of 1236, when the sheriff had orders to pay in the arrears of wages due to the workmen and to wait on Master Elias of Dereham for directions about further operations.⁵ These seem to be concerned chiefly with the great gatehouse, which was in hand in May 1236, when an allowance was made towards it from the aid contributed to the king by the county of Southampton. The supervision of the gatehouse operations was given to Elias, by whose advice the money was to be brought to Winchester and laid out there by witness of Nicholas Kipping, or Kniping. While this order went to the sheriff, a special mandate directed Elias to give advice by whatever means he could in conjunction with Kipping, and the said Nicholas had another commanding him to attend diligently to the works.⁶

The appointment of Kipping as an assistant to Elias at Winchester was no exceptional measure, as we shall see when we examine the nature of the office which Elias filled here and elsewhere. Winchester Castle, however, was not his only care at this date. We have no reason to suppose that he had abandoned his charge at Salisbury for it. Salisbury is easily accessible from Winchester, as also is Clarendon, where in the course of 1234 he had charge of the king's works. In July of that year the keeper of the king's demesne woods was instructed to let him have timber for the operation of the chapel at Clarendon and other works which the king had ordered to be done there.⁷

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 242. The word for the machine is *verina*, i.e. *verna*. See N.E.D., s.v. Fern.

² *Ibid.*, p. 254.

³ *Cal. Lib. Rolls*, i, 220.

⁴ *Close Rolls 1231-1234*, p. 433.

⁵ *Close Rolls 1234-1237*, pp. 241-2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁷ *Close Rolls 1231-1234*, p. 486.

Again in June 1236, shortly after the issue of the mandates to him and Kipping relating to their work at Winchester, an order was delivered to Henry Dun, keeper of the houses (i.e. the buildings generally) at Clarendon, to provide him with timber in the king's forest of Melchett and elsewhere in his bailiwick for the works at Clarendon and for making a wood-pile for the same works, according to instructions which he would give on the king's behalf.¹ Further, his work at Salisbury, as we have said, does not seem to have been interrupted. In January 1237 Henry Dun again had an order to let him have ten logs from Graveley wood for a wood-pile for the operation of the church of Salisbury, while for the same purpose John of Monmouth was directed to let him have twenty from Bramshaw wood.²

During this period an interesting statement is made by the continuator of the chronicle of Gervase of Canterbury with reference to the early days of the short pontificate of Edmund Rich. The archbishop, formerly the chancellor of a great secular church, had the intention of founding a college of secular canons at Canterbury, no doubt as a make-weight to the privileged position of the monastic cathedral chapter.³ The failure of Baldwin's attempt, half a century earlier, to establish a similar foundation on a large scale at Hackington did not deter him from provoking the opposition of the prior and convent of Christ Church. 'None the less, in the presence of Master Elias "de Dunolmia", he chose the site on which a church of great size should be built, and certain plots of land, about a hundred measures, as it is said, were (allotted) for making the canons' houses.'⁴ There can be no doubt that by Master Elias of 'Durham' is meant Elias of Dereham; and we must put it down to the chronicler's hasty conversion of the unfamiliar

¹ *Close Rolls 1234-1237*, p. 279.

² *Ibid.*, p. 409.

³ More than one similar attempt was made in the course of the thirteenth century, e.g. the endeavour of Godfrey Giffard to augment the endowments of the church of Westbury-on-Trym as a secular counterpart to his church of Worcester, and Anthony Bek's activity in

organising the secular chapters of Auckland, Lanchester and Chester-le-Street in the diocese of Durham.

⁴ *Gervase of Canterbury* (Rolls Series), ii, 174: 'Ipse nihilominus presente mag. Elya de Dunolmia [elegit] locum in quo ecclesia magnae quantitatis aedificabitur; et sunt certae portiones terrarum ad canonicorum aedificia facienda, ut dicitur, circiter c jugera.'

Dereham into the Latin form of a name better known to him that the mistake occurred, and not to any idea that he had followed the fortunes of Bishop Poore. Edmund Rich had known Elias at Salisbury, and it is obvious that he set high value on the advice of a friend so skilled in the requirements of a secular foundation. But the alarm of the prior and convent was aroused at the prospect of the erection of a church which might prove a formidable antagonist to their authority, and the attempt came to nothing.

After 1236 there seem to be no further details of the doings of Elias at Winchester or Clarendon, and it is clear that shortly after this his headquarters were, as they may always have been, at Salisbury.¹ This is suggested by a singularly interesting entry on a Liberate roll, dated 6th March 1238. The sheriff of Wiltshire had orders to cause payment to be made for the marble tomb which Master Elias of Dereham was making at Salisbury, and to have it carried with all speed to Tarrant for the entombment there of the king's sister, Joan, queen of Scotland.² Joan, the first wife of the Scottish king, Alexander II, had died two days before, and Tarrant is of course the Cistercian nunnery in Wiltshire, so long associated with Bishop Poore and the composition of the *Ancren Riwle* until modern criticism directed us elsewhere. There is an equally interesting entry six years later, on 8th March 1244. The long vacancy of the see of Winchester after the death of Peter des Roches was then drawing to an end, when the king allowed thirty marks out of the issues of the bishopric, then in his hands, to Master Elias of Dereham, to make a cup for the reservation of the Eucharist over the high altar of the church of Salisbury.³

It has already been said that Elias was one of the executors of Peter des Roches, and his name has been mentioned in connexion with that of Peter as early as 1205. It is likely that he came into close relations with him during the period of his activity at Winchester Castle, and it is to that period, from 1233 onwards,

¹ A document at Salisbury, mentioned by Mr. Bennett in *Arch. Journ.*, xlv, 367, is entitled 'Scriptura de domibus de Ledenhall per Elias (sic) de Derham sumptuose

constructis'. This may refer to his residence at Salisbury.

² *Cal. Lib. Rolls.*, i, 316.

³ *Ibid.*, ii, 22.

that a number of charters belong which concern one of Peter's religious foundations, the priory of Selborne in Hampshire, and among the witnesses to which the name of Elias of Dereham takes a prominent place. The first of these, attributed to the year 1233, is a grant of land made directly to the bishop; the rest, of which some may be subsequent to the bishop's death,¹ concern the landed property of the priory. In the first and in two others the name of Elias heads the list of witnesses;² in another it comes after the names of the prior of Mottisfont and the prior of Ivychurch;³ in another it is second after the name of Stephen, prior of Mottisfont;⁴ in another it follows those of the bishop's official, the archdeacons of Winchester and Surrey, and precedes that of the well-known servant of the Crown Peter of Rivaux.⁵ In a seventh Elias himself acts as an arbiter in a dispute between the prior and convent and Gilbert of Burhunte (i.e. Boarhunt), clerk, presumably the vicar of Selborne, about tithe from the demesne of John of Norton.⁶ From these it is very clear that the business capacity of Elias was called into aid, as indeed it always had been, over other than architectural matters. Other documents of much the same period occur among the Charter Rolls, one of which, dated 9th June 1233 and witnessed by Elias, deals with a sale of land in Little Kington, Dorset, to Peter des Roches. Another, dated 20th March 1235, is a confirmation of a grant of the manors of Saffron Walden and Debden in Essex, saving advowsons of churches, to the Cistercian abbot and convent of Walden by Archbishop Edmund Rich, made in the previous September. To both of these Elias was a witness.⁷

It is perhaps surprising that in the course of a long life in which he was the friend and counsellor of so many prelates and must have been very well known

¹ See *Cal. Charters Selborne Priory*, ed. Macray (Hants Record Soc.), 1891. The document on p. 23 is dated at Farnham, 4th June 1238, i.e. five days before the death of Peter des Roches. Those on pp. 31-2, 36 are dated tentatively c. 1240-1250 and c. 1250; but neither can of course be later than 1245, the year of Elias' death.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 31-2, 36.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16. In this his name appears in print as 'Elias of Durham', a mistake which we have noted before.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁷ *Cal. Charter Rolls*, i, 183, 197.

in ecclesiastical circles, Elias did not become a bishop himself, but remained a *canonicus praebeudatus* in two cathedral churches without acquiring a dignity in either. Of his other preferments we know little. Among the archives of the dean and chapter at Salisbury there is a composition made under witness of the dean and chapter between him and another person touching tithe at Imber in Wiltshire.¹ The church of Imber was a prebend in the conventual church of Romsey, and we may reasonably assume that Elias claimed tithe as rector and therefore as prebendary. There is no record of the date at which he obtained the rectory of Harrow in Middlesex, a peculiar of the see of Canterbury, but, considering his relations with successive archbishops, it is possible that his connexion with this church may go back to the days of Hubert Walter. The fact, however, that, as guardian of the issues of the archbishopric in 1206, he had a command to deliver seisin of property in Harrow to a new tenant² proves nothing with respect to his tenure of the benefice. This was a long time before 1233, when William of Haverhill, laying out the large sum of £43 8s. 4d. in buying oats for seed and provender for horses, expended part of it in buying corn from Master Elias of Dereham for the wages of the cowherds and serjeants at Harrow and Hayes.³ Obviously Elias was able to supply this corn from his tithe-barns at Harrow, and it looks much as if he had added to the rectory of Harrow that of Hayes, which was not far off and was also a member of the archbishops' Middlesex peculiar. There is a further reference to Harrow in letters close of 1st May 1242, when the keepers of the see of Canterbury during the vacancy between the death of Edmund Rich and the appointment of Boniface of Savoy were directed to let Master Elias of Dereham have six logs in the wood of Harrow for making a wood-pile for the chancel of the church of Harrow.⁴ While it is improbable that Elias paid much personal attention to the cure of souls involved in the tenure of a parochial benefice, it is clear that his interest in the progress of other buildings did not absolve his

¹ MSS. D. and C. Salisbury ap. MSS. in Var. Coll., u.s., i, 85.

² Rot. Litt. Claus., u.s., i, 48.

³ Cal. Lib. Rolls, i, 237.

⁴ Close Rolls, 1237-1242, p. 420.

conscience from his legal responsibilities to the fabric of his church.¹

On 10th April 1245 Elias resigned the prebend of Litton in the church of Wells,² and later in the same year he died. 'At this time also' writes Matthew Paris, 'died Master Elias of Dereham, canon of Salisbury, upon whose revenues thus vacant Master Martin laid greedy hands for the use of the pope'.³ The pope was Innocent IV, and it was the year of the council of Lyons and the excommunication of the emperor Frederick II, a time at which the Holy See needed all the money it could get. The prebend of Potterne, which Elias presumably continued to hold until his death, though surpassed in value by a few prebends in the church of Salisbury, was nevertheless one of the wealthier benefices in that church, and its annual income was enough to tempt, if it did not satisfy, the papal collector's rapacity.⁴

We know no more. It must be owned that the evidence which lies before us presents us with more than one problem. There are two main questions which we have to answer. In the first place: what was the actual relation of Elias of Dereham to the buildings with which his name is associated? In other words, how far can the tradition that he was an architect, and in particular the architect of the cathedral church of Salisbury, be confirmed? Secondly: what is meant by the reputation of *incomparabilis artifex* which he enjoyed in his own day? In other words again, was he actually an operative artist, or was he a man of taste who knew the beauty and value of works of art and was able to command and give sound advice as regarded their making—the sort of

¹ It is unfortunate that in Newcourt's *Repertorium*, and in the *Novum Repertorium* of Hennessy, Elias, noted as rector in 1242, is disguised under the name of Edward of Derham. It may be noted that the lists in these volumes show an example of the tenure of the churches of Harrow and Hayes together at a much later date when William Warham, archdeacon of Canterbury c. 1513-1534 and rector of Hayes 1516-1557, was also rector of Harrow 1532-1537.

² *Cal. MSS. D. and C. Wells*, u.s., i, 121.

³ *Matth. Paris, Chron. Maj.*, u.s., iv, 418: 'Ipso quoque tempore obiit magister Elyas de Derham, canonicus Sarisberiensis, cujus redditibus vacantibus manus rapaces iniecit magister Martinus ad opus papae'.

⁴ The annual value was assessed in 1226 at fifty marks. In 1254 it was permanently annexed to the bishop of Salisbury as his prebend in the Church (Jones, *Fasti Eccl. Sar.*, pp. 393, 410).

person, shall we say, who would have been invaluable as chairman of a diocesan advisory committee in our own day?

To the first of these questions the documents which I have laid before you supply, it seems to me, only one answer. I will refer you to a famous picture with which we have all probably been familiar from our childhood, the drawing in the manuscript of Matthew Paris (Cotton Nero D.v.) of the visit of the king to the works of some building in which he has a special interest. Let us remember again the words of Matthew Paris already quoted and the parts which he assigns to three persons, *rex, praesul* and *lapidida*. 'Of these three there is need, that the work may be established.' Here we have at any rate the first and third, the king and the master-mason with his compass in his hand, who listens deferentially to what the king has to say, but evidently reserves his own opinion. If the other person represented is neither bishop nor abbot, he is at any rate the deputy of the one or the other, the clerk who has charge of the administration of the work. In the background the building is rising, the freemasons are dressing and carving stone, the wallers and setters are at work on the wall, the ordinary workmen are working the windlass of the 'fern' by which stone is lifted to them. In fact, what may be called the whole hierarchy responsible for medieval building operations is represented here, the king as chief employer, the chief administrative official who acts on his behalf and that of the body for whose use the building is intended, the architect who is charged with the executive oversight of the work, and the grades of craftsmen and labourers who work under his orders and to his designs. This system, which had its origin in a period long before the middle ages set in, is thoroughly familiar to students of medieval building accounts. The normal method indicated in these is for the employers to appoint representatives to act as clerks of the works whose business is administrative and financial. Sometimes a single clerk was appointed; but he was usually supplied with an assistant or comptroller, whose duty, as his title implies, was to keep a duplicate account-roll and to act when necessary as his deputy.

This, I submit, is the position which Elias of Dereham filled on the king's behalf at Winchester and Clarendon, with Nicholas Kipping as his comptroller at Winchester. It is precisely the role which in the next century we find William of Wykeham filling in his works at the royal castles. In his letters of appointment on at least one occasion his duties are clearly defined. He has full power to ordain and dispose touching all works required at the castles, manors and parks specified in the letters, to take carpenters, masons and other workmen, to take stone and timber, to hold leets and other courts of the king in the manors, to take transgressors and amerce and punish them according to their deserts, to depute others to such services when he cannot attend to them himself, and to do all other things required for his employer's advantage and for the good rule of the said castles, manors and parks.¹ In these duties of course financial management is implied, all payment of wages and purchase of necessary material: details of administration, however, may be left to the comptroller, who is there to relieve his principal of some of the weight of his responsibility.²

To those who pursue through such sources as the Patent, Close and Liberate rolls the history of the growth of the Office of Works, and to those who trace the details of building administration through accounts kept by clerks of the works and their comptrollers, the individuality of Elias of Dereham in this connexion is perfectly intelligible. Nor is there any reason to suppose that at Salisbury his relation to the works of the cathedral church was of another kind. In its building he was the deputed representative of the dean and chapter, and through them of the king and the bishop, through whose hands and those of his clerical staff all materials were delivered and accounted for. It is obvious that his training was a clerical training and that the title *magister*, so frequently used of a master-mason as *magister operis*, was applied to him long before we have any special reason to connect

¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls 1358-1361*, p. 243.

² *Ibid.*, p. 191, where Henry Mulsho, the comptroller, is appointed 'to control all payment of wages

and buying of necessaries'. His duty 'to imprison all contrariants and rebels' is implied in the clause which empowers his principal 'to take all transgressors, etc.' as above.

him with architecture, and in his case implies a university degree, probably legal.¹ The facts of his career, not at all unlike those of Wykeham's earlier career, show him employed in offices of trust and importance which needed a knowledge of legal procedure, constantly engaged in winding up the affairs of deceased prelates, a matter often of years, or administering the property and revenues of a vacant see. His office of steward to Jocelyn implied the holding of manorial courts and the supervision of manorial bailiffs, in fact an acquaintance with business affairs for which continual practice and experience were necessary. We notice, however, scanty as are the glimpses which we obtain of him, that as time went on his interest in the fine arts made his administrative capacities in that direction peculiarly useful and his previous activities were almost entirely superseded by his occupation with contemporary building schemes. Architects are often good men of business, but they also have their own special business to look after and cannot exercise two professions simultaneously. We cannot imagine that in this respect the middle ages differed so much from our own day. Neither the man who designed the fabric of Salisbury Cathedral nor the industrious clerk engaged in office routine of a complicated kind can have had much time to spare outside their respective callings, or to take up either as a hobby with signal success.

But, if we must relegate Master Elias to the less exciting of these occupations and forbear from confounding his duties at Salisbury with those of Master Nicholas of Ely, the master-mason, we have at any rate the testimony of Matthew Paris to his merits as *incomparabilis artifex*. In this context we must remember two circumstances. In the first place the use of the term *artifex* by Matthew Paris is literary and has no precise and scientific connotation; while in the second place this term, as used by medieval writers, is not confined to any single form of artistic activity. The architect has his place among *artifices*, but the *artifex* is not necessarily an architect.

¹ If this is so, his university at this date, when the claim of Oxford to recognition as a *studium generale* was still young, is more likely to

have been foreign than English. But of this nothing can be said with an approach to certainty.

It is almost unnecessary to say that the word architect in the modern sense was certainly unfamiliar in the middle ages.¹ To the ordinary mind it conveyed the inspirer or initiator of a building scheme. Thus the biographer of Hugh of Cluny, under whose rule the new church of the abbey was begun in 1088, calls him *architectus noster*² in the purely figurative sense, a sense very familiar to medieval writers in the Vulgate translation of 1 Corinthians vi. 10, where St. Paul says: *Ut sapiens architectus fundamentum posui: alius autem supraedificat.* That famous text was constantly echoed by chroniclers and hagiographers, as for example by the biographer of Jean de Commynes, bishop of Thérouanne, the *sapiens architectus* who early in the twelfth century set about repairing his cathedral church.³ I may remark incidentally that, if only collectors of medieval anthologies of architectural or, indeed, of any other texts, began their work with a series of selections from the Vulgate, they might spare themselves a good many footnotes and their readers a good deal of perplexity, so deeply did the phraseology of the Vulgate penetrate the thought of medieval writers and colour its expression. A

¹ The classical use of *architectus* was much more like our own. See Vitruvius, *De architectura*, i, 1: 'Architecti est scientia pluribus disciplinis et variis eruditionibus ornata, cuius iudicio probantur omnia quae a ceteris artibus proficiuntur opera. Ea nascitur ex fabrica et ratiocinatione', etc. Vitruvius insists upon the architectural profession as learned and demands a wide range of skill and learning for the architect. 'Et ut litteratus sit, peritus graphidos, eruditus geometria, historias complures noverit, philosophos diligenter audierit, musicam scierit, medicinae non sit ignarus, responsa iurisconsultorum noverit, astrologiam coelique rationes cognitatas habeat.' The distinction between the *architectus*, charged with the work of planning and designing, and the *faber* or manual worker is made, e.g. by Cicero (*Ad Famil.* ix, 2) in discussing the qualities of a statesman 'non deesse . . . non modo ut architectos, verum etiam ut fabros ad aedificandam rempublicam'.

² 'Affuit tamen stimulus qui eum fortiter pupugit, et assurgere compulit architectum nostrum timide commorantem' (Mortet, *Textes relatifs à l'histoire de l'architecture en France*, i, 273).

³ 'Ecclesiam beatae Mariae Teruanensis . . . mox primis ordinationis suae temporibus biformi structura sapiens architectus praeparavit' (ibid., i, 313). Cf. *Catal. abb. Fuldensium*, ap. Schlosser, *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte (Schriftquellen für Geschichte der karolingischen Kunst, N.F. iv, 122)*: 'Ratger, sapiens architectus' (abbot of Fulda 815). A variation in the phrase occurs in the treatise of Pierre de Roissy, chancellor of Chartres, *De mysteriis ecclesiae*: 'In aedificatione autem huiusmodi domus episcopus vel eius vicarius lapidem iacit in fundamento . . . Unde apostolus . . . Tanquam prudens architectus fundamentum posui Christum Ihesum' (Mortet & Deschamps, *Textes*, u.s., ii, 184).

word so vaguely used as *architectus* might very well on occasion be applied to the practitioner of the art of *architectura*, yet as a matter of fact its use in this exact sense, where it occurs, is accidental.¹ Almost the one specialised meaning which can be quoted with certainty is that which connects it with the roofing of a building, and that not roofing with stone.² In the dictionary of Johannes de Garlandia, a contemporary of Elias of Dereham, *architectus* is defined as *magister carpantatorius*, master carpenter, a technical sense for which there is no general authority.³

The meaning of *artifex*, on the other hand, has no time-honoured figurative tradition, but the term applies to any form of craftsmanship and must be interpreted by the context in which it occurs. The medieval equivalent of our architect was undoubtedly the *caementarius* or *lathomus*,⁴ the freestone mason trained in the practice of his craft, the worker in stone who, at the head of such a body of masons, is the *magister caementarius*, the master-mason. About that term there is no ambiguity; but, if we go so far as calling him *magister operum*, a title which he not infrequently bears, we may very well confound him

¹ One definite instance of its use in this way occurs 2 Mach. ii. 30: 'Sicut enim novae domus architecto de universa structura curandum est.'

² Although the formation of *architectus* and words connected with it suggests a connexion with the verb *tegere*, and although the *tegelator* or tiler (see p. 32, note 3) gives a surname which was borne by masons, there is no doubt that the derivation of *architectus* is from ἀρχη and τεκτων. The architect is in fact not the arch-roofer, but the arch-craftsman.

³ Mortet and Deschamps, u.s., vol. ii, p. 277.

⁴ Isidore, *Etym.*, lib. xix, c. 8, makes the distinction: 'Fabros sive artifices Graeci τέκτονας vocant, id est structores. Architecti autem caementarii sunt, qui disponunt in fundamentis. Unde et apostolus de semetipso, Quasi sapiens', etc. Here *artifex* is the manual worker, the actual builder. So Rabanus Maurus,

De Universo, lib. xxi, c. 1, repeats Isidore's definition of *architecti*. We must beware, however, of attempting to fasten a rigid meaning upon words the use of which is extremely fluid, and such theories as that *caementarius* is a general term for a stonemason, while *lathomus* was a technical term used by masonic guilds, have purely casual evidence for their support. Thus *artifex* and *operarius* can be convertible terms: see a charter of Arnulf (890) granting property 'cuidam artifice nostro nomine Eoprecht', and another (898) of the same emperor to the same man as 'cuidam fideli operario nostro', ap. Schlosser, u.s., p. 424. Likewise, in the account of the foundation of the monastery of Saint-Guilhem-le-Desert (*ibid.*, p. 219), what distinction there is between the words is purely rhetorical: 'Ipse dux ad opus rediit, operarios ponit, artifices praeponit, qui quibus insistant operibus quaeve exerceant studia diligenter et opportune disponit.'

with his administrative partner, who has at any rate as good a right to it.¹ There is no doubt that *artifex* may be often interpreted of a mason, master-mason or otherwise. In the famous and instructive narrative by Gervase of the proceedings which followed the great fire at Canterbury in 1174 there can be no question of the character of the *artifices*, foreign and English, who were summoned to give their advice to the disconsolate convent. The meeting was a competition open to skilled architects, from which emerged the successful candidate, William of Sens, 'a man of the greatest energy, a most subtle artist (*artifex*) in wood and stone'.² We know from the sequel the flexibility of his genius, the mechanical skill with which he devised engines for loading and unloading the ships which brought stone from across the Channel, the moulds which he prepared for his masons to work from, the close personal supervision which he gave to the work.³ Everyone will remember how that solicitude brought about the catastrophe, when 'after the triforium and clerestory on both sides of the presbytery had been completed and he had made ready the engines for the turning of the high vault, suddenly the scaffolding broke under his feet and fell to the ground, and he with it, in a shower of stones and timber, from the

¹ Thus the official title of the monk who administered the works at Croyland Abbey was *magister operis* (*Vis. Relig. Houses dio. Lincoln* [Lincoln Rec. Soc.], ii, 57, 58, 59). But as regards the normal use of the term, whether with *operis* or *operum*, there can be little doubt, and there can be no question of its meaning in the famous rhyme of the engraved metal plate of the labyrinth in Amiens Cathedral, which admirably illustrates the triple role assigned by Matthew Paris to *rex, praesul* and *lapicida*. 'En lan de grace mil deux cents Et vingt fu leuvre de cheens Premierement encommenchie. Adonc yert de ceste evesquie Evrart evesques benis Et roy de Frances Loys Qui fu filz Phelippe le sage. Chil qui maistre yert de loeuvre Maistre Robert estoit nommes Et de Lusarches surnommes. Maistre Thomas fu apres luy De Cormont et apres. . . . Ses filz maistre Regnault qui mettre

Fist a chest point chy ceste lettre Que lincarnacion valoit Treize cent ans douze en faloit.' The word after *apres* is missing, but was possibly *suivist*.

² *Gervase* (Rolls Series), i, 6: 'Convocati sunt igitur artifices Franci et Angli; sed et ipsi in dando consilio dissenserunt . . . Advenerat autem inter alios artifices quidam Senonensis, Willelmus nomine, vir admodum strenuus, in ligno et lapide artifex subtilissimus. Hunc, caeteris omissis, propter vivacitatem ingenii et bonam famam in opus susceperunt.'

³ *Ibid.*, i, 7: 'In acquirendis igitur lapidibus transmarinis opera data est. Ad naves onerandas et exonerandas, ad cementum et ad lapides trahendos tornamenta fecit valde ingeniose. Formas quoque ad lapides formandos his qui convenerant sculptoribus tradidit et alia in hunc modum sollicitate praeparavit.'

capitals at the springing of the vault, a height of fifty feet'.¹

There is again no doubt that the *artifices* whom Abbot William hired, with the advice of Hugh of Cluny, for his work at Le Monastier were men of the same type as William of Sens, capable of constructing a building from its foundations upwards.² On the other hand, the *artifices* who are said in the *Vita prima* of St. Bernard to have worked at Clairvaux were a mixed multitude, equally well described by the general term *operarii*. 'Some hewed logs, others squared stones, others built walls, others diverted the stream into several channels and raised dams for mill-ponds. The fullers, bakers, curriers, smiths and other craftsmen (*artifices*) fitted to their work devices' by which the water, carried by ducts beneath the buildings, might be used, and so, after it had done its work of cleansing, might return to the river.³ Here the *artifex* is obviously any sort of craftsman, as in the Cistercian statutes regarding *conversi*, where the *artifices monasterii* are the lay brothers who exercised their crafts within the precincts, and where masons are treated as one class of many who can be described under that name.⁴ Or again it was enacted in the Dominican chapter held at Marseilles in 1248: 'The carpenters and the other craftsmen (*artifices*) shall bring with

¹ Ibid., i, 20: 'Peractis autem utrisque triforiis et superioribus fenestris, cum machinas ad fornicem magnam volvendam in anni quinti initio praeparasset, repente, ruptis trabibus sub pedibus eius et inter lapides et ligna simul cum ipso ruentibus, in terram corruit, a capitellis fornicis superioris altitudine videlicet pedum quinquaginta.'

² 'Praefatus namque abbas ex aliis regionibus peritos conduxit artifices, qui sua industria locum fundamenti, licet cum ingenti fodientium labore quaesitum, repererunt, ubi stabile fundamentum locantes ex imis ad superiora consurgere coeperunt' (Mortet, u.s., i, 235).

³ 'Ipsi fratres per omnia incumbant operibus. Alii caedebant ligna, alii lapides conquadabant, alii muros struebant, alii diffusis limitibus partiebantur fluvium et extollebant saltus aquarum ad molas. Sed et fullones et pistores et coriarii et fabri

aliique artifices congruas aptabant suis operibus machinas ut scaturiret et prodiret, ubicumque opportunum esset, in omni domo subterraneis canalibus deductus rivus ulro ebulliens; et demum, congruis ministeriis per omnes officinas expletis, purgata domo, ad cardinalem alveum reverterentur quae diffusae fuerant aquae et flumini propriam redderent quantitatem' (Mortet and Deschamps, u.s., ii, 26, 27). For the variety of *artifices* mentioned here cf. the case of the early inmates of Thiron: 'Unde libenter convenerunt . . . fabri tam lignarii quam ferrarii, sculptores et aurifabri, pictores et caementarii, vinitores et agricolae multorumque officiorum artifices peritissimi' (Mortet, u.s., i, 279, 280).

⁴ 'Similiter faciant omnes artifices monasterii . . . magistri cementariorum . . . vel ejusmodi artificum (Mortet and Deschamps, u.s., ii, 33).

them the iron tools which they have brought into the Order, when they are transferred from one convent to another.'¹ In the will of a burgess of Rodez, towards the end of the thirteenth century, there is a bequest to the craftsmen and masters constructing or building one of the chapels of the cathedral church, in which the members of the whole operative staff are clearly included.²

The term *artifex*, therefore, though there are plenty of examples of its employment in connexion with architectural work, is not limited to a fixed meaning. The architect himself, in our modern sense of the word, may be *artifex*, but so may any of the masons who work under his direction, and not merely they, but any person who works with his hands. And, further, *artifex* is used also of any ingenious amateur with inventive talent. What else are we to say of the characterisation by Ordericus Vitalis of Robert of Bellême 'subtle of genius, crafty and versatile, a clever artist (*ingeniosus artifex*) in the construction of buildings and engines and other difficult forms of work'³ In fact, Robert of Bellême was a person of great intelligence and skill in invention, but, when it came to the actual devising and making the things of which he understood the general principles, he had to summon the help of persons more ingenious than himself. Ordericus says that at the siege of Bréval he had to bring in an *ingeniosissimus artifex*, whose imaginative sagacity had been of advantage to the Crusaders at the taking of Jerusalem.⁴ One *artifex* in these passages is the resourceful amateur

¹ 'Item carpentarii et alii artifices ferramenta que attulerunt ad Ordinem secum ferant quando de conventu ad conventum mutabuntur' (Ibid., ii, 247).

² 'Item lego operi dicte ecclesie beate Marie civitatis Ruthene, in subsidium constructionis unius de capellis dicte ecclesie, xxv libras Turonenses, semel tantum solvendas . . . artificibus et magistris qui dictam construent seu aedificabunt capellam. . . . Et volo quod dicte xxv libre Turonenses tradantur seu solvantur operatori dicte ecclesie nec alicui alie persone, nisi artificibus et magistris predictis' (Ibid., ii,

316). In this passage the *operator*, distinguished from the *magistri* and *artifices*, is very clearly the administrative *magister operis* through whose hands money passes. See p. 26, note 1.

³ 'Rodbertus Bellesmensis, ingenio subtilis, dolosus et versipellis . . . in exstruendis aedificiis et machinis aliisque arduis operibus ingeniosus artifex' (Mortet, i, 275).

⁴ 'Illuc Rodbertus Bellesmensis ingeniosissimum artificem adduxit, cuius ingeniosa sagacitas ad capiendam Jerusalem Christianis profecit' (ibid).

with a fund of theory, while the other is the operative professional who possesses the executive skill.

In no other way would I wish to compare Elias of Dereham with the nobleman to whom a distinguished member of this Institute, Professor E. A. Freeman, used to refer as 'the Devil of Bellême'. But I am bold enough to think that they had this one point in common, a high intelligence of the arts in which each was interested and, with this, a certain power of direction which went beyond a merely passive contemplation of technical processes or, in the case of Elias, a purely routine conception of his clerical duties. But we cannot go as far as crediting Robert of Bellême with the full equipment of an *ingeniator*, or Elias of Dereham with that of a *caementarius*.¹ Further we may notice that the reputation of Elias as *artifex* rests entirely upon his connexion with minor works of art, however important; it cannot be extended to the receipt of timber from the royal stewards and bailiffs, whether for the roofing and scaffolding of a fabric or for the wood-pile. It is applied to him as the joint adviser appointed for the translation of St. Thomas and for the work of his shrine at Canterbury. It is implied, eighteen years later, in the mention of the marble tomb made for the queen of Scots, and later again in that of the pyx made to hang above the high altar of Salisbury Cathedral. That Elias made the tomb or wrought the cup with his own hands we cannot say, for everyone is familiar with the use of *facio* in a loose sense of the

¹ Mr. Bushell (*Elias de Derham*, p. 34) applies a document quoted in Madox's *Antiquities of the Exchequer*, viz. a memorandum of an allowance of ten marks by the sheriffs of London and Middlesex *Elyae ingeniatori* for the repair of the king's houses at Westminster. This was granted *per breve H. Cantuar. archiepiscopi*, i.e. Hubert Walter. But there is nothing but the Christian name, by no means uncommon, and the mention of Hubert, to justify the identification of this Elias with Elias of Dereham. The role, however, of the master-mason as *ingeniator* is well illustrated in the case of William of Sens. See p. 25 above, note 3, with which

may be compared the famous passage in which Procopius (*De Aed.* i, 23, 24) describes the building of Sta Sophia at Constantinople. After noting that Justinian summoned *τους τεχνίτας* (i.e. *artifices*) *ἐκ πάσης γῆς ἅπαντας*, he proceeds 'Ἀνθέμιος δὲ Τραλλιανός, ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ τῇ καλουμένῃ μηχανικῇ λογιστάτος οὐ τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν μόνον ἁπάντων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ προγεγενημένων πολλῶν, τῇ βασιλέως ὑπουργεῖ σπουδῇ, τοῖς τεκταινομένοις τα ἐργα ρυθμίζων, τῶν δὲ γενησομένων προ-οιασκενάζων ἰνοάσματα, καὶ μηχανοποιος σὺν αὐτῷ ἑτέρος Ἰσιδώρος ὄνομα, Μιλήσιος γένος, ἐμφῶν τε ἄλλως καὶ πρεπῶν Ἰουστινιανῶ ὑπουργεῖν βασιλεῖ. Here both Anthemius and Isidore are *μηχανοποιοί*, i.e. *ingeniatores*.

act of causing a thing to be made;¹ but there is nothing in the context of these passages which excludes him from being the 'only begetter' of the design, the mind which conceives it and stimulates others to its execution.

Of Gozlin, abbot of Fleury from 1005 to 1029, it is related that he determined to build a tower of squared stone at the west end of his church, for which he had the material shipped down the Loire from the Nivernais, and that he did various other works of adornment and reconstruction. Such architectural ability, however, as he possessed we may estimate from the story that, when the *princeps artificum*, the master-mason, asked him what sort of work he wished to suggest, his answer was, 'Such a work as shall be a model to the whole of Gaul'.² This gave the artist considerable freedom in the choice of a design, and it is possible that Elias of Dereham was more explicit in his directions to the marbler and the silversmith whose work he supervised at Salisbury. I also think it not unlikely that the design for the shrine of St. Thomas may have been evolved by him and the sacrist of St. Albans *inter se disputando*, as Villard de Honnecourt wrote of the design for the *chevet* of a church worked out by him and Pierre de Corbie;³ and the result of their discussion may have been some sketch which was handed to the *princeps artificum* for further elaboration. If Elias had been a member of that club of *savants* which met in Charlemagne's palace under the presidency of the *soi-disant* King David, he might very well, like Einhard, the superintendent of the palace buildings,⁴ have earned the

¹ The language of the Vulgate affords many examples. See, e.g. 3 Reg. vi, 29: 'Et omnes parietes templi ter circuitum sculpsit (sc. Salomon) variis caelaturis et torno; et fecit in eis cherubim, et palmas, et picturas varias, quasi prominentes de pariete et egredientes.'

² 'Porro Gauzlinus abbas, nobilitatem generis probitatis exornans titulis, turrim ex quadris lapidibus construere statuit ad occidentalem plagam ipsius monasterii, quos navigio devehit fecerat a Nevernensi territorio. Hunc etiam benignissimum cum princeps interrogasset artificum, quodnam opus juberet

adgrediendum: Tale, inquit, quod omni Gallie sit in exemplo' (Mortet, i, 33, 34).

³ There are two notes to this effect in Villard's sketch-book: 'Istud bresbiterium inuenerunt ulardus de hunecort et petrus de corbeia inter se disputando', and in French at the foot of the leaf: 'Deseure est vne glize a double charole ke vilars de honcort trova et pieres de corbie.'

⁴ See Einhart, *Vita Caroli*; for Einhart's reputation as *variarum artium doctor peritissimus*, whose advice was sought for architectural schemes, cf. *Catalog. Abb. Fuld.* ap. Schlosser, u.s., p. 122.

sobriquet of Bezaleel, with a reputation for the plenitude of inspiration and versatility of talent which enabled Bezaleel 'to devise curious works, to work in gold and silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work'.¹

There are of course instances in which an official of the type of Elias of Dereham was capable in an emergency of taking over the direction of the execution of architectural work. I may refer again to the narrative of Gervase. When the wrath of God or the envy of the devil had singled out William of Sens for condign punishment and he had gone crippled to his bed, he committed the supervision of the vaulting to a certain monk, diligent and ingenious, who was over the masons—*qui prae fuit caementariis*.² The phrase recalls the Vulgate description of Solomon's temple in building, where the *praepositi qui prae fuerunt singulis operibus* were the administrative officers set over each department of the work;³ while again, in the account of the repairs of the temple under Joash, the fabric fund was delivered *in manu eorum qui praecerant*

¹ See Ex. xxxv. 30-33: 'Ecce vocavit Dominus ex nomine Beseleel . . . implevitque eum spiritu Dei, sapientia et intelligentia, et scientia et omni doctrina, ad excogitandum et faciendum opus in auro et argento et aere, sculpendisque lapidibus, et opere carpentario; quidquid fabre adinveniri potest. dedit in corde ejus.' Cf. allusions such as the letter of Ermenric to Grimoald, describing the work at St. Gall: 'Et ne de omnibus sileam, quid est Winihardus, nisi ipse Dedalus? vel quis Isenricus, nisi Beseleel secundus? in cuius manu versatur semper dolabrum' (Schlosser, u.s., p. 139). The special works of art connected with the name of Elias recall the activity of St. Eloi in the making of shrines, in particular that of St. Martin at Tours and the *mausoleum* of Saint-Denis, 'et turgurium super ipsum marmoreum miro opere de auro et gemmis' (See Audouenus, *Vita S. Eligii*, ap. Schlosser, *Quellenbuch zur Kunstgesch. d. abendländisch. Mittelalters*, p. 47.) There is a passage in the Martyrology of Auxerre, quoted in Schlosser's earlier volume,

p. 195, which affords an interesting parallel to Elias' silver pyx: 'Eodem die (9 Jan.) obiit Frodo levita et canonicus, qui pro salute anime sue fecit huic ecclesie columbam argenti auro mundo deauratam cum corona et catenis argenteis desuper altare pendentem ad corpus Domini . . . conservandum.'

² *Gervase*, u.s., i, 20: 'In solum magistrum vel Dei vindicta, vel diaboli desaevit invidia. Magister itaque sic laesus . . . convalescere non potuit; verumtamen, quia hiems instabat, et fornitem superiorem consummari oportebat, cuidam monacho, industriosi et ingenioso, qui caementariis prae fuit, opus consummandum commendavit, unde multa invidia et exercitatio malitiae habita est, eo quod ipse, cum esset juvenis, potentioribus et ditioribus prudentior videretur.' The superior attitude of the professional masons to the monk who was the representative of their employers, the prior and convent, is worth remarking.

³ 3 Reg., v, 16.

caementariis.¹ We are told that the disabled master conveyed his orders to the masons through this accomplished monk, thereby arousing their malice and envy at the favour shown to an insignificant intruder; and, when at last William took away his incurable hurt to his home over sea, he was succeeded by one of their own craft, another William, English by birth, small indeed in stature, but very resourceful and approved in divers forms of work.² In the two Williams we have the professional *caementarius*, the man of the type of Richard of Gainsborough, whose tomb-slab is in the cloister of Lincoln Minster, of William of Warmington, whose slab is preserved at Croyland Abbey, or of Guillaume le Tellier, commemorated in the church at Caudebec.³ The monk of Canterbury, the *monachus qui praeftuit caementariis*, however high his intelligence of their calling, was not bred to or engaged in it: he was not the *caementarius qui praeftuit operi*, the phrase employed of the master-mason of the diocese of Tournai, who, like William of Sens and so many others of his profession, with a touching devotion to common form entirely characteristic of their age, tumbled with insecure scaffolding to the ground, but, though cast down, was not destroyed.⁴ The distinction between Elias of Dereham

¹ 4 Reg., xii, 11: 'Et dabant eam juxta numerum atque mensuram in manu eorum qui praeerant caementariis domus Domini; qui impendebant eam in fabris lignorum, et in caementariis iis qui operabantur in domo Domini, et sartatecta faciebant, et in iis qui caedebant saxa . etc.

² *Gervase*, u.s., i, 21: 'Successit autem huic in curam operis alius quidam Willelmus nomine Anglus natione, parvus quidem corpore, sed in diversis operibus subtilis valde et probus.'

³ The name le Tellier (*tegulator*, tiler) recalls the supposed connexion of the term architect with the roofing of a building to which we have already alluded, and Tyler may have been the professional surname of a well-known demagogue. Guillaume le Tellier, of Fontaines-le-Pin, near Falaise, so runs his epitaph, was 'en son viuant maitre macon de ceste eglise de Caudebec qui par

lespace de trente ans au plus en a eu la conduite pendent lequel temps a acheue loo et soupellez avec le hault de la nef dicelle eglise: plus a fonde et esleue tout le ceur et chapellez entour icelle et leue iusque au premieres allees avec la clef pendente de ceste presente chapelle'. He died 1st September, 1484.

⁴ The passage is quoted by Mortet, u.s., i, 127: 'Cum moderno tempore reficeretur (sc. ecclesia vici Credenae) et caementarius qui praeerat operi super excelsa parietum stans fastigia quiddam operis percomplere, repente disruptis machinis, ad terram cecidit cum aliis, et maxima pars maceriae subito desilivit, ita ut homines infra, lapides vero supra homines corruerint.' Another example of this common accident, at Oudenbourg, near Ghent, introduces us to the *bituminis artifex*, whose office was to plaster the walls with a coating of thick cement (Mortet, i, 170).

and Nicholas of Ely at Salisbury finds an exact parallel less than a hundred years later in that between the famous sacrist and prior of Ely, Alan of Walsingham, *Flos operatorum*,¹ from whose ingenious brain came the idea of substituting the Octagon at Ely for the conventional transept-crossing, and John Grene, whom the sacrist's accounts show to have been the master-mason in charge of that work.²

The reputation of Elias of Dereham as the 'architect' of Salisbury Cathedral has been so consistently maintained; there has been such strong temptation to connect him with other architectural work in his day and attribute to him an influence over contemporary work at Wells and elsewhere, that I have thought it not superfluous to take a close look at what we really know about him and see where we are. Even if we came to the conclusion that his profession was the work of architectural design and execution, if we could be convinced that the large, if scattered, body of documentary evidence concerning him pointed clearly to this, we should still have nothing which gave him a claim to a far-reaching influence upon the English architecture of his day but one or two vague possibilities.³ But, if we cannot give him a place among the practical architects of his day, we may discover in him without much effort a keen understanding of artistic questions, a sympathy with artistic movements

¹ The phrase is from his epitaph, recorded in Browne Willis, *Survey of the Cathedrals of Lincoln, Ely, etc. Operator*, like *magister operis* (see p. 26 above, note 1) need not imply skill in handiwork. As there indicated, *magister operis, operum*, may have more than one meaning. The Ely Fabric rolls do not give Alan this formal title, and his connexion with the construction of the Octagon was as sacrist and, in virtue of that office, keeper of the fabric fund.

² See Archdeacon Chapman's edition of the *Ely Sacrists' Rolls* for that period.

³ See p. 13 above, note 2. The conjecture mentioned there which has credited him with a coincidence in detail between windows at Salisbury and at a parish church in Co. Durham rests entirely upon the assumptions that Elias was an architect and was employed by Bishop Poore at Durham

in that capacity. Likenesses of detail might easily be discovered between a very large number of windows in English, and indeed in foreign buildings of the thirteenth century. The two-light window with a cusped circle in the head was, it need hardly be said, a favourite design with the masons of the middle of the thirteenth century, coming into general fashion during the quarter of a century following the death of Elias. Even though its vogue in France began somewhat earlier, it was evidently a new and attractive fashion to Villard de Honnecourt when he saw it at Reims sometime in that part of the century and drew an example of it with special care and delicacy, noting 'Vesci une des formes de Rains des espases de le nef teles com eles sunt entre ii pilers. Jestoie mandes en la terre de hongrie qant io le portrais porco lamai io miex'.

and a conspicuous ability in the practical administration of artistic work which was no doubt a stimulating influence on those who came under his supervision. His work, in short, was to inspire rather than actually to create. How inspiring such work as his can be is shown by the great example of the abbot Suger, whose devotion to his church and love of beauty called together from all parts of the realm of France craftsmen, stonemasons, workers in wood, smiths and founders of metal, goldsmiths and jewellers, each most skilful in his art, to adorn with wood and stone, with gold and gems and every costly material the memory of the martyrs and leave a new church instead of an old one, one most spacious for one narrowly confined, for one most dim and dark one glowing with light.¹ It was in such work as this that Elias of Dereham played his part, and it is hardly fanciful to imagine that, in contemplating works of art of which he could justly say *quorum pars magna fui*, he had such moments of rapt vision as Suger describes in his tract on the abbey church of St. Denis. 'When, out of love for the glory of the house of the Lord, I was sometimes called away from the cares of the outer world by the manifold hues and beauty of precious stones, and when exalted meditation persuaded me to dwell upon the variety of holy virtues, passing from material things to things immaterial, methought I saw myself dwelling in a climate foreign to this world, not wholly among the dregs of earth nor yet wholly in the pure air of heaven, while in a mystical manner I could by the gift of God be translated from this lower to that higher region.'² We are sometimes tempted to forget that exaltation of mind which is a

¹ Mortet and Deschamps, ii, 87: 'Qui, inter alia quae nobiliter gessit et strenue, varios de cunctis regni partibus asciverat artifices, lathomos, lignarios, pictores, fabros ferrarios vel fusores, aurifices quoque et gemmarios, singulos in arte sua peritissimos; ut ligno, lapide, auro, gemmis et omni pretiosa materie martyrum memoriam exornarent, et ex veteri novam, ex angusta latissimam, ex tenebrosiore splendidam redderent ecclesiam.'

² 'Unde cum ex dilectione decoris domus Dei aliquando multicolor

gemmarum speciositas ab exintrinsicis me curis devocaret, sanctorum etiam diversitatem virtutum de materialibus ad immaterialia transferendo, honesta meditatio insistere persuaderet, videor videre me quasi sub aliqua extranea orbis terrarum plaga, que nec tota sit in terrarum faece, nec tota in coeli puritate demorari, ab hac etiam inferiori ad illam superiorem anagogico more Deo donante posse transferri' (Suger, *Liber de rebus in sua administratione gestis*, ap. Migne, *P.L.*, clxxxvi, col. 1233-4).

necessary consequence of the love of beauty for its own sake, but we may be sure that a man like Elias of Dereham, face to face continually with noble works of art in whose creation he could claim a share, would have readily understood Suger's words as part of his own experience.¹

¹ To what has been said here may be added the conclusions of the accomplished architectural historian R. de Lasteyrie: 'La verite est qu'il y a eu, au xi^e et au xii^e siecle, un assez grand nombre de moines pratiquant l'architecture comme les autres arts, que beaucoup d'evêques, d'abbes et de clercs de tout ordre etaient assez instruits pour diriger les hommes du metier qu'ils faisaient

travailler, pour dresser le programme qu'il s'agissait d'exécuter, pour inspirer les sculpteurs et les peintres et leur fournir les themes sur lesquels s'exerçait leur talent; mais la se bornait habituellement le role des moines et des clercs et c'étaient des laïques qui le plus souvent etaient les exécutants' (*L'archit. relig. en France à l'époque romane*, 1912, p. 237).