

# *Chaucer, St Loy, and the Celts*

Article

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# Chaucer, St Loy, and the Celts

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Although St Loy the smith was one of the popular saints of late medieval Europe, the British evidence for his legend has never been fully described. In its common form the legend tells how St Loy, while working as a blacksmith, calmed a dangerously rearing horse (believed possessed by the Devil) with the sign of the cross, cut off its leg, shod the leg, and then attached it to the horse again without ill effect. This story was known to Chaucer and St Thomas More, both of whom allude to the saint's power with horses. Other references to the legend in Britain occur in sources as diverse as English art, Welsh poetry, and Protestant polemic.

However, in spite of its popularity, this story has been neglected by Anglicists and others, perhaps because it existed almost entirely in oral form. There certainly seems to be no narrative written version of it in medieval British sources. In fact the oral nature of the legend receives striking confirmation from modern Irish and Scottish Gaelic folklore, where the account of the miraculous shoeing, without mention of St Loy, forms the first part of the tale *Gabha an tSuic*, 'The Smith of the Ploughshare'. Over the last hundred years or so this story has been collected from most parts of Ireland by folklore scholars, as well as in a Scottish Gaelic version from Tiree in the Inner Hebrides. We can assume that the tale of the miraculous shoeing was as familiar in medieval English spoken tradition as it has been in the spoken tradition of modern Gaelic communities.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the material from the British Isles, evidence for the story also occurs in Continental sources, including items as diverse as a medieval Norwegian saga and a painting by Botticelli. What appears below may thus interest students of European folklore, art, and popular religion, as well as Chaucer scholars.

Born near Limoges, St Eligius or St Loy of Noyon (c. 588-660) trained and worked as a goldsmith, but rose from this to high office

under the Frankish kings Clothaire II and Dagobert I. In 641 he became Bishop of Noyon, now a small cathedral town near the Oise some sixty-seven miles north-north-east of Paris. (Noyon continues to have great effect on Britain and Ireland alike as birthplace, in 1509, of John Calvin.) From Noyon St Loy went on to evangelize the pagan country near Tournai, Courtrai, Ghent and Antwerp, of which last he is patron saint, as he is also of Noyon itself, Limoges, Marseille (where he had been director of the mint) and Bologna.<sup>2</sup>

In the late middle ages the cult of St Loy was strong in these and other parts of France, Italy and the Low Countries, as well as in Germany and Britain.<sup>3</sup> The *locus classicus* on this for Anglicists is Chaucer's line,

Hir gretteste ooth was but by seint Loy,

from his description of the Prioress in *The Canterbury Tales*.<sup>4</sup> Yet as St Loy had a dual cult and reputation in the middle ages, and was patron not only of jewellers, goldsmiths, stonemasons and watchmakers, but also of saddlers, grooms, coachmen, vets, farmers, wheelwrights, blacksmiths and all whose living depended on horses, it is Chaucer's less regarded lines from *The Friar's Tale* that concern us here:

I pray god saue thee and seint Loy.  
Now is my cart out of the slow *pardee*

- where a carter blesses his horses after they pull his cart from the mire.<sup>5</sup> These lines are not only further proof of Chaucer's ear for speech (and genius for detail); they also show how well known St Loy's association with horses was, both to humble carters and Chaucer's not-so-humble readership. It was because St Loy was known to be helpful when there were difficulties with horses or smithing that he and the legend of the miraculous shoeing became popular throughout Western Europe.

The fundamental study for this legend in Ireland and on the Continent is by the Norwegian Celticist and philologist Carl Marstrander (1883-1965).<sup>6</sup> In his discussion of the theme of the miraculous shoeing, classified by folklore scholars as that of 'Christ and the Smith', Marstrander quotes instances from the medieval art of modern folklore of France, Brittany, Germany, Italy, the Low

Countries, Catalonia, Denmark, Finland, Silesia, Slovenia and Transylvania, as well as from Norwegian saga. But it is remarkable that Marstrander seems unaware of any British evidence for the legend except that of the early printed poem *The Smith and his Dame*, which deals not with a miraculous shoeing, but with a smith's catastrophic attempt to rejuvenate his wife.<sup>7</sup> The present article attempts to show that the legend of the miraculous shoeing was as familiar in medieval Britain as it was elsewhere in Europe.

Marstrander accounts for the distribution of his evidence by suggesting that an originally German legend was associated with St Loy in northern France, that it returned to Germany as a saint's legend, and that it diffused from Germany to the north, east and south, in the last by way of German-speaking communities. Marstrander also notes that the non-literary evidence both for the miraculous shoeing and for St Loy the smith almost always long predates the literary evidence, the earliest for St Loy being some thirteenth-century lead tokens found in the Seine at Paris. In these tokens the miraculous smith is Christ himself, who confounds the pride of Loy the smith with a miracle Loy cannot repeat. But after the fourteenth century Christ is absent, and it is the saint who performs the miracle. (The version of the theme in *Gabha an tSuic*, where a smith sees a mysterious visitor perform a supernatural act of shoeing, which he himself tries afterwards to imitate, with disastrous results, is actually closer to this earlier legend of St Loy than it is to the much commoner later one.) How remarkably popular and widespread this legend was is suggested by the number of Continental works of art in which St Loy the smith appears, as suggested by Gazetteer I below.<sup>8</sup>

When we turn from the Continent of Europe to Britain, the earliest literary references to St Loy the smith, Chaucer's apart, occur in Welsh.

Duw oedd arglwydd da iddaw,  
Sain Lo a'i rhoes yn i law;  
Aed ag ef hyd i gafell,  
Nid aeth erioed athro well!<sup>9</sup>

Y troed blaen, nid rhaid blinaw,  
Sain Loe wyn, sy yn ei law.<sup>10</sup>

Other allusions to St Loy, two of them in the context of horses, include the following.

Mae pêr pedolau arian  
I Sain Loe dros hwn yn lân.<sup>11</sup>

Santa Maria, sante Barnabas;  
Santi Loyw aco; a santi Lucas.<sup>12</sup>

Sain Lo, - a'u rho, ar eu hil  
A ro hap, ar eu hepil.<sup>13</sup>

Further evidence for the popular cult of St Loy comes with the Reformation, where it figures in the attacks of the Protestant reformers as well as St Thomas More's reasoned defence. It is a comment on the nature of literary transmission in early modern Britain that while the rich oral traditions about St Loy the smith are all but lost, the denunciations of them are excellently preserved.

Sanct Eloy he doith staitly stand,  
Ane new hors schoo in tyll his hand.  
Sum makis offrande to sanct Eloye,  
That he thare hors may weill conuoye.<sup>14</sup>

Every man, as his superstition leadeth him, he commandeth ... his horse to God and Saint Loye, for every disease he hath a diverse patron, and honoureth him with the prayer that only should be said unto God almighty in the name of Christ. John xv. xvi. This idolatry hath in manner infected all the Latin church.<sup>15</sup>

On the Continent Thomas Naogeorg *alias* Kirchmair (1511-63) gave his attack on popery international range with the ammunition of Latin.

Curat equos faber Eulogius, tutatur et omnes  
Fabros, seu ferrum tractent, seu pulchrius aurum.

This was soon Englished and balladized as:

And Loye the smith doth looke to horse, and smithes of all degree,  
If they with Iron meddle here, or if they Goldsmithes bee.<sup>16</sup>

The reformist 'messenger' had complained to More, in one of the saint's dialogues,

St Loy we make an horseleach, and must let our horse rather run  
unshod and mar his hoof than to shoe him on his day, which we  
must for that point more religiously keep high and holy than Easter  
Day.<sup>17</sup>

To this More replies that since St Loy was a farrier, 'it is no great fault to pray for him for the help of our horse', though he concedes that the devotion 'runneth somewhat too far' if it is thought right to pray for a poor man's horse on St Loy's Day, but wrong to shoe it.

Even a casual allusion shows how the tradition survived. In his poem *The Siege of Leith*, on an English military bungle of 1560, the Elizabethan super-hack Thomas Churchyard says of soldiers under fire, 'Some sacrificed their horse to sweet saint Loy'.<sup>18</sup>

These literary references to St Loy's association with horses are amply reinforced by evidence from non-literary sources in Britain, especially iconography. Yet the discussions of the iconography of St Loy the smith in the reference works by Künstle, Réau and Kirschbaum cited above mention no material from Britain whatsoever. The evidence presented in Gazetteer II below shows how well known the saint and his legend were in medieval British art and elsewhere. This, in the form of paintings, sculpture, and stained glass, together with place-names, church dedications, a chance reference in Chaucer, Protestant polemic, and some lines of medieval Welsh, provide a substantial *dossier* for the legend of St Loy as smith and patron of those working with horses in Britain. It is curious to reflect that it is only by assembling such more or less random historical fragments, in a kind of cultural palaeontology, that we can guess at the otherwise lost oral traditions of our ancestors.

## Postscript

For two further allusions to St Loy and horses in English, which have come to my attention since this article was submitted for publication, see *The Cely Letters* and *The Fyftene Joyes of Maryage*.

The first allusion occurs in a letter, dated 13 May 1479, from Richard Cely the elder to George Cely. Explaining to his son that he has failed to sell his horse in London, Richard writes 'The horse ys fayer, God saue hym and Send Loye, werefore God send you a schapeman [purchaser] for hym and redy money in hand'; *The Cely Letters 1472-1488*, ed, Alison Hanham (EETS O.S. 273, 1975), p.48.

The second allusion, in a translation of the French *Les Quinze Joies de Mariage* c. 1400?) of between c. 1480 and 1507, describes how to dispose of a pregnant daughter, both by placing her at dinner next to an eligible visitor, and ensuring no horse the next day can carry two,

Excepte thi galauntes horse there, by Saynt Loy  
 Whereof grete pleasure taketh he and joy,  
 For one damoyzell behynde his backe  
 Dooth sette uppon his horse - and he no lacke\Fyndeth therin ...

(On horseback, the girl encourages his interest in her by holding on to him tight.) For this passage and comment on St Loy, see *The Oxford Book of Late Medieval Verse and Prose*, ed. Douglas Gray (Oxford 1985), pp.376 and 485. No doubt more English evidence on St Loy and horses will come to light in future.

## GAZETTEER I - EUROPE

### French

Primitive representations on lead tokens of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century date found in the Seine; illustrated in C. Marstrander, 'Deux Contes Irlandais', *Miscellany presented to Kuno Meyer*, ed. Osborn Bergin and C. Marstrander (Halle, a.S. 1912), p.421.

An elmwood carving in high relief, dated c. 1420, from Vigne, east of Montluçon in central France, near the town of St-Éloy.

A tapestry of c. 1500 in the Hôtel-Dieu at Beaune, near Dijon.

A stained glass window and sixteenth-century stone statue at Semur, between Auxerre and Dijon; the latter illustrated in Marstrander, p.421.

### Breton

Statues at Ploëget-Moysan, in Finistère; near Louargat, between Guingamp and Morlaix; and (a wooden group) at Plozévet, some fifteen miles west of Quimper.<sup>19</sup>

Stained glass of c. 1550 at Crann-en-Spezet, some twenty-five miles north-east of Quimper.

### German

A retable wing of c. 1410 in the Barfüsserkirche at Erfurt in East Germany.

Stained glass in Freiburg Cathedral.

Stained glass (in a pre-war description) at St Cunibert's Church, Cologne.

A painting of 1540, showing St Loy seizing the Devil's nose with his smith's tongs, at Passau, on the Austrian frontier. The demoniac horse stands in the background.<sup>20</sup>



### Italian

A wall painting of the first half of the fourteenth century at Lodi, nr Milan.

A painting, of c. 1380-85, formerly at Bagnères-de-Bigorre and attributed to Taddeo Gaddi; now at Avignon and attributed to Niccolò di Pietro Gerini (plate I below, with acknowledgments to the Petit Palais, Avignon). On the left of the painting appears the Devil as an angel with black wings, talons instead of feet, and no nose. In the centre is St Loy, a sombre, bearded figure in smith's apron. The saint has pinched off the Devil's nose, like St Dunstan, and is now hammering away at his anvil shoeing a horse's leg. On the right stands an attendant in crimson, supporting a surprised-looking stallion by the leg's bleeding stump.<sup>21</sup>

A fresco at Verona, painted c. 1390 by Altichiero Altichieri, depicting the miracle in the smithy.

A bas relief of the miracle, below a marble statue of the saint, by Nanni di Banco at the Or San Michele in Florence. Dated c. 1410.<sup>22</sup>

A painting by Botticelli on the predella of his altar in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, depicting the Coronation of the Virgin. Dated. c. 1490, and based on Nanni's relief.<sup>23</sup>

A picture of the saint with hammer and horse's leg on the banner of St Antony's brotherhood, painted by Signorelli c.1505, and kept in the gallery of the small town of Sansepolchro, near the Tiber's source.

A painting of the Virgin and Child by Innocenzo da Imalo *alias* Francucci, in the Bodemuseum, East Berlin. St Loy appears in the background with the demoniac horse.

Flemish and Liégeois

A miniature depicting the miracle of the horse's leg by a member of the Dreux Jean atelier (Brussels, c. 1460) added to the Hours of Philippe le Hardi.<sup>24</sup>

A fifteenth-century carving in the Holy Cross Church, Liége.

Danish

A medieval wall painting at Stubbeköbing, on the isle of Falster south of Copenhagen, showing St Loy tweaking the Devil's nose with his tongs, and a dappled demoniac horse standing supported by a chain within a wooden frame, an arrangement paralleled in English alabasters.<sup>25</sup>

GAZETTEER II - THE BRITISH ISLES<sup>26</sup>Bedfordshire

St Paul's, Bedford. The tie-beams in the chancel (rebuilt in the fifteenth century) are supported by fourteen carved figures, one of them of St Loy as bishop with a hammer in his right hand and a horse's leg tucked under his left arm. See F.W. Kuhlicke, 'St Loyes in Bedford', *The Bedfordshire Magazine*, 4, 1953-54, 113-14, and the same writer in *The Bedfordshire Times*, 25 January 1957.

The Bedford street name 'St Loyes', appearing first in the sixteenth-century records and John Speed's plan of 1611, probably derives from an inn or smithy. A smithy existed in St Loyes till the last century.

Berkshire

St Michael, Inkpen, in the south-west corner of the county. A wall painting in this church of a figure with horseshoe and hammer was identified as St Loy in J.C. Wall, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, London 1914, p.201. Cf. also the reference in *Berkshire*, IV, p.204 n., VCH 1924.

Buckinghamshire

St Lawrence, Broughton, a church in a village now swallowed up by Milton Keynes. A wall painting dated c. 1450 of St Loy with hammers, pincers, horse-shoes, stirrups, keys and padlocks, besides one of St Helena. Described in *Buckinghamshire*, II, p.p.71, RCHM 1913; *The County of Buckingham*, IV, 307, VCH 1927; Pevsner, *Buckinghamshire*, 1960, p.73; Caiger-Smith, p.132. The painting appears in the plate facing p.72 in the RCHM volume. See also John Edwards, 'The Wall-Paintings in St Lawrence's Church, Broughton', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 26, 1984, pp.44-55.

St Giles, Stoke Poges, near Slough. In early sixteenth-century German or Flemish stained glass the saint is shown in plate armour, a lion at his feet, sword in his right hand, and anvil and hammer to his left: Francis Bond, *Dedications & Patron Saints of English Churches*,

London 1914, p.156. The church is described in *Buckinghamshire*, I, pp.286-88, RCHM 1912; Pevsner, *Buckinghamshire*, p.245.

### Cambridgeshire

The city of Cambridge formerly possessed a leper hospital of SS Anthony and Eligius, in which St Loy was considered as a thaumaturge: Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge*, Cambridge 1987, pp.119-26. (I owe this reference to Nicholas Rogers.)

St Andrew, Toft, five miles west-south-west of Cambridge. In this church an alabaster fragment, one of several from what must have been an altar of high quality: *West Cambridgeshire*, p.208, RCHM 1968; Cheetham, p.99. Cf. Pevsner, *Cambridgeshire*, 1970, p.472. There is no mention of the fragments in the account of the church in *The County of Cambridge*, V, pp.134-35, VCH 1973.

### Cornwall

The smith's guild in medieval Bodmin was the guild of SS Dunstan and Eloy. In 1469-72 it helped raise funds to build Bodmin church: *English Historical Documents*, iv: 1327-1485, ed. A.R. Myers, London 1969, pp.741-42. It would be reasonable to assume St Loy the smith was represented somewhere in town or church.

### Devon

St Peter, Ugborough, a granite-towered church by the southern fringe of Dartmoor. A roof boss in the vaulted north porch shows St Loy forging a horseshoe on an anvil: Francis Bond, p.156; C.J.P. Cave, *Roof Bosses in Medieval Churches*, Cambridge 1948, p.213. The church is described in Pevsner, *South Devon*, 1952, pp.301-2.

St Loy's Chapel, Wonford, a ruin in the housing estates of east Exeter: Pevsner, *South Devon*, pp.163-64.

Dorset

St Nicholas, Durweston, sixteen miles north-east of Dorchester. The church contains a sculpted stone panel showing the saint in his priest's vestments with hammer and horse's leg, together with three-legged horse and its groom. Below this scene is a line of carved horseshoes. *Dorset*, III/1, pp.90-91, pl. 13, RCHM 1970; Cheetham, p.99.

Essex

St Andrew, Great Yeldham, in the far north of central Essex, near the Suffolk border. St Loy appears as bishop, holding a claw hammer, in a painting on the late fifteenth-century chancel-screen: *Essex*, I, 140, RCHM 1916; Pevsner, *Essex*, 1965, p.214.

Kent

Several lost religious *objets d'art* representing St Loy the smith in east Kent churches are itemized in pre-Reformation wills: Leland L. Duncan and Arthur Hussey, *Testamenta Cantiana*, II, London 1907, *passim*. (I thank Nicholas J. Rogers for this reference.)

London

Victoria and Albert Museum. English Alabaster A121-1946.A fifteenth-century alabaster, provenance unknown, showing St Loy shoeing a horse (plate II below, with acknowledgments to the Victoria and Albert Museum). Cheetham, no.28.

Henry VII's chapel, Westminster Abbey. The abbey contains by far the most sophisticated of the works of art in England listed here: a freestone statue of St Loy in his mitre, crozier in his left hand and a massive horseshoe in his right (plate III below, taken from F. Bond, *Dedications and Patron Saints of English Churches. Ecclesiastical Symbolism, Saints and their Emblems*, Oxford, 1914, p 87). The features of the face, sharply individualized, deserve note. The sculptor may have been Flemish. There is a good illustration in Francis Bond, p.87; cf. *London*, I, p.65 and pl. 212, RCHM 1924. A forthcoming survey of the sculpture in this chapel is mentioned in Pevsner, *London*, I, 1973, p.418.

Middlesex

Tottenham, in London's northern suburbs, once had an offertory chapel of St Loy (long demolished), and a well of St Loy. The curative powers of the second (for horses?) were still known a hundred years ago, when it finally fell into neglect. This suburban holy well, if it still exists, is unromantically sited somewhere near a railway. In the fifteenth century Tottenham also had a somewhat obscure hospital of St Loy. On all this see *Middlesex*, V, pp.309, 313, 331, VCH 1976.

Norfolk

St Andrew, Hempstead, a mile inland from a point on the coast almost midway between Yarmouth and Cromer. A painted figure of St Loy on a late fourteenth-century screen, horse's leg in his right hand, hammer in his left: W.W. Williamson, 'Saints on Norfolk Rood-Screens and Pulpits', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 31, 1955-57, 329. Cf. Pevsner, *North-East Norfolk and Norwich*, 1962, p.162.

St Nicholas, Potter Heigham, eleven miles north-west of Yarmouth. A painted figure on a rood-screen, with crozier and hammer: Williamson, 'Saints', 335. Cf. Pevsner, *North-East Norfolk and Norwich*, p.300.

St Mary, Tunstead, eleven miles north-north-east of Norwich, has St Loy holding a horse's leg painted on its rood-screen according to M.D. Anderson, *Looking for History in British Churches*, London 1951, p.286, but this is confirmed neither by Williamson, 341-42, nor Pevsner, p.335.

Northamptonshire

St Botolph, Slapton, three miles west of Towcester in the south of the county. A wall painting of the saint shoeing a horse, the lines of the figures scored into the plaster before the paint was applied: Caiger-Smith, p.164; Pevsner, *Northamptonshire*, 1973, p.404.

St Mary, Weedon Lois, three miles west of Slapton. In the church was a shrine of St Loy (possibly that still surviving), which was recorded in 1614 as having had curative powers for horses, while at the west

end of the parish was a well of St Loy that miraculously cured lepers and the blind. The name 'Lois' is certainly from 'Loys' or 'Lewis', but as regards the shrine there was a medieval confusion with St Lucien, whose house at Beauvais had a priory in the village until Henry V expropriated it. See *The County of Northampton*, II, pp.184-85, VCH 1906; J.E.B. Gover *et al.*, *The Place Names of Northamptonshire*, Cambridge 1933, p.45; Pevsner, *Northamptonshire*, p.449 n.

### Oxfordshire

All Saints, Shorthampton, a hamlet chapel near the railway west of Charlbury, some thirteen miles north-west of Oxford. The chapel contains a fragmentary red and red-brown wall painting of the miraculous shoeing which has been dated to c. 1500. It is described and reproduced in P.M. Johnston, 'Shorthampton Chapel and its Wall-Paintings', *The Archaeological Journal*, 62, 1905, 170-71 and pl. facing 168. Cf. Caiger-Smith, p.168; E.T. Long, 'Mediaeval Wall Paintings in Oxfordshire Churches', *Oxoniensia*, 37, 1972, 103; Pevsner, *Oxfordshire*, 1974, p.763; and the entry for Shorthampton in the forthcoming VCH volume for Chadlington hundred.

### Somerset

St Peter and St Paul, Wincanton, near the border of Somerset with Dorset and Wiltshire. The church contains a freestone panel of the miraculous shoeing similar to that at Durweston a few miles away in Dorset. Cf. the Rev. J.A. Bennett's description in the *Somerset shire Archaeological and Natural History Society's Proceedings*, 33, 1887, 165-66, and Pevsner, *South and West Somerset*, 1958, p.346.<sup>27</sup>

### Suffolk

St Andrew, Freckenham, in the north-west of the county, near the Cambridgeshire border. The saint appears on an alabaster relief from an altar: Pevsner, *Suffolk*, 1974, p.222; Cheetham, p.99.

### Surrey

A former chapel of St Loy at Kingston on Thames is mentioned in Frances Arnold-Foster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, London 1899,

I, pp.472-75.

### Wiltshire

St Michael, Highworth, near Swindon. The church had a lively wall-painting of St Loy in mitre and purple robes performing the miraculous shoeing in front of a Gothic smithy. The painting, discovered and destroyed by Victorian restorers, is reproduced in George Fleming, *Horse-shoes and Horse-shoeing*, London 1869, frontispiece.

### Yorkshire

St Eligius, Great Smeaton, in the former North Riding. The parish abuts the southernmost loop of the river Tees, here marking the border between Yorkshire and Co. Durham. The parish church is the only one in England anciently dedicated to St Loy. However, the connection between this and *Smeaton*, 'smiths' form', seems not to have been noticed, at least not in print. Cf. A.H. Smith, *The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire*, Cambridge 1928, pp.211, 281; Pevsner, *Yorkshire: The North Riding*, 1966, p.174. One would like to know when the church was consecrated.

St Loy also appears, holding pincers and horse's leg, in the celebrated Luttrell Psalter produced before 1340, somewhere in East Anglia, for Sir Geoffrey Luttrell of Irnham, in south-west Lincolnshire.<sup>28</sup>

### Scotland

To the above examples of St Loy the smith from art in England may be added one example from Scotland. This is the fine fifteenth-century sculpture of St Loy, complete with crowned hammer, now kept in the Rutherglen Museum, Glasgow (plate IV below, with acknowledgments to the Rutherglen Museum, Glasgow Museums). The sculpture was apparently buried during the Scottish Reformation to protect it from Protestant iconoclasts, and was discovered only in 1794. (I thank Mr Alistair Gordon of the Rutherglen Museum for answering my queries about this statue, and sending a picture of it.)



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> On *Gabha an tSuic* and this motif generally see Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Copenhagen 1955-58, E 782.4; Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*, Helsinki 1961, no. 753; Kenneth Jackson, *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition*, Cardiff 1961, p.63; Séan 'O Suilleabháin and R.T. Christiansen, *The Types of the Irish Folktale*, Helsinki 1963, no. 753; and Séan 'O Conaill's *Book*, ed. Séamus 'O Duilearga, Baile 'Atha Cliath 1981, pp.115-16, 384. The Scottish Gaelic version is described in R.C. Graham, 'On a Legend from the Island of Tiree', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 1, 1904, 113-22. Professor Bo Almqvist, of the Roinn Bhéaloideas Éireann at University College, Dublin, has kindly drawn the writer's attention to references on this subject in Carl-Martin Edsman, *Ignis Divinus*, Lund 1949.

<sup>2</sup> Of the facts of the saint's life there is a recent account in the *Dictionnaire de Biographie française*, Paris 1933-, s.n. 'Éloi'.

<sup>3</sup> St Loy and Flemish folklore are discussed in Maurits van Coppenolle, *Sint Eloo in het volksleven*; Antwerpen 1944.

<sup>4</sup> In *The General Prologue*, line 120.

<sup>5</sup> Fragment D 1564-65; quoted with the above, from N.F. Blake, *The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer*, London 1980. On St Loy here see also *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, V, 3-14, 328, ed. W.W. Skeat, Oxford 1900, and J.L. Lowes, 'The Oath of the Prioress', *The Romanic Review*, 5, 1914, 368-85 (382-85). Recent discussions appear in Ann S. Haskell, *Essays on Chaucer's Saints*, The Hague 1976, and R.F. Fleissner, 'That Oath of the Prioress', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 86, 1985, 197-98. The statue of 'St Loy' at the London Greyfriars, adduced in J.M. Manley, *The Canterbury Tales*, London, (1929), p.505, to show the cult of St Loy was strong at Richard II's court, must in fact have been of St Louis. Cf. Hilary Jenkinson, 'Mary de Sancto Paulo, Foundress of Pembroke College, Cambridge', *Archaeologia*, 66, 1914, 434. For information on this and other points of art history I thank my friend Mr Nicholas J. Rogers. It is St Loy the goldsmith who appears in Petrus Christus's celebrated painting, completed at Antwerp in 1449, and now in New York, in which the saint looks up sombrely from his bench at a fashionable young couple buying their wedding ring. A more accidental tribute to the saint is the reading 'loye' in the Cambridge University Library MS li.3.26 text of *The Miller's Tale*, where Gervase the smith's actual oath, by St Neot, was as puzzling to one medieval scribe as it is to us. See J.A.W. Bennett, *Chaucer at Oxford and Cambridge*, Oxford 1974, pp.41-42; *A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. Thomas W. Ross, II/3, Norman (Oklahoma) 1983, p.236 n.

<sup>6</sup> Carl Marstrander, 'Deux Contes Irlandais', in *Miscellany presented to Kuno Meyer*, ed. Osborn Bergin and Carl Marstrander, Halle a.S. 1912,

pp.371-487.

<sup>7</sup> This English poem is no. 978 in Carleton Brown and R.H. Robbins, *The Index of Middle English Verse*, New York 1943.

<sup>8</sup> On the folklore and iconography of St Loy the smith, cf. K.H. Künstle, *Ikongraphie der Heiligen*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1926, pp.196-97; Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, II, Berlin 1929-30, cols. 785-89; Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'Art chrétien*, III/1, Paris 1958, pp.422-27; and Engelbert Kirschbaum, S.J., *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, VII, Rom 1974, cols. 122-27. A 1956 Munich thesis by K. von Etzdorf, 'Der Heilige Eligius und die Typen seiner Darstellung als Patron der Goldschmiede und Schmiede', is mentioned by J.-Cl. Poulin in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, III, München und Zürich 1984-86, col. 1830. The excellent brief account of St Loy by Maria Jacniacka in *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, IV, Lublin 1983, cols. 892-93, mentions late medieval guild tokens showing St Loy with his hammer and anvil from the Polish cities of Kraków, Lublin and Lwów.

<sup>9</sup> T. Gwynn Jones, *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, Caerdydd 1926, p.449. 'God was a good lord to him (a dead smith), St Loy put him in his hand; may he take him to his holy place, there was never a better teacher!' For dates, etc. on the bards quoted here see Meic Stephens, *The Oxford Companion to the Literature of Wales*, Oxford 1986.

<sup>10</sup> E.I. Rowlands, *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, Caerdydd 1975, p.236. 'The front foot (no need to tire) is in blessed St Loy's hand.' Lewys, who was a blacksmith as well as a poet, is describing a horse. Cf. Professor Rowlands' translation in A.O.H. Jarman and G.R. Hughes, *A Guide to Welsh Literature*, II, Swansea 1979, p.309.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Roberts, *Gwaith Tudur Penllyn*, Caerdydd 1958, p.58. 'For this (a horse) there is a pair of silver horseshoes clean for St Loy.' It is curious that the silver horseshoes are paralleled in Sebastian Brant of Strasbourg (1458?-1521): *Marstrander*, 'Deux Contes Irlandais', p.418.

<sup>12</sup> *Gwaith Lewis Glyn Cothi*, ed. Rev. John Jones and Rev. Walter Davies, Oxford 1837-39, p.340. 'St Mary, St Barnabas, St Loy yonder, and St Luke.' The lines are from a call to arms beginning 'Gras sain Nicolas, trwy nerth Celi'.

<sup>13</sup> T. Gwynn Jones, p.410. 'May St Loy who gives them (six mares) grant good fortune to their lineage and offspring.'

<sup>14</sup> *The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, 1490-1555*, I, 267, 269, ed. Douglas Hamer, Scottish Text Society 1931.

<sup>15</sup> *Early Writings of John Hooper*, ed. Rev. Samuel Carr, Cambridge 1843, pp.309-10. Hooper's contemporary Thomas Becon gives lists of saints, including St Loy, popularly invoked for problems as diverse as pig disease and obtaining a son-in-law. See his *Early Works*, Cambridge 1843, p.139, and *Catechism*, Cambridge 1844, p.536, both edited by the Rev. John Ayre. These and other Parker Society volumes contain much information

on Tudor popular religion.

<sup>16</sup> *Regnum Papisticum Thoma Naogeorgo autore*, Basileae 1559, p.116; Barnabe Googe, *The Popish Kingdom*, London 1880, sig. M iv recto.

<sup>17</sup> 'A Dialogue concerning Heresies', *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, VI, 226, 232, 233, ed. T.M.C. Lawler *et al.*, New Haven 1981.

<sup>18</sup> *Churchyard's Chips concerning Scotland*, ed. George Chalmers, London 1817, p.103.

<sup>19</sup> There is a discussion of these in V.H. Debidour, *La Sculpture bretonne*, Rennes 1953, pp.195ff.

<sup>20</sup> Künstle, p.197.

<sup>21</sup> Michel Laclotte and Élisabeth Moggetti, *Avignon - Musée de Petit Palais: Peinture italienne*, Paris 1977, no. 79. The present writer thanks the curators of this museum for their kind help in answering questions about this painting.

<sup>22</sup> Illustrated in P.M. Johnson, 'Shorthampton Chapel and its Wall-Paintings', *The Archaeological Journal*, 62, 1905, pl. facing p.170.

<sup>23</sup> Ronald Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, London 1978, II, pp.73-74.

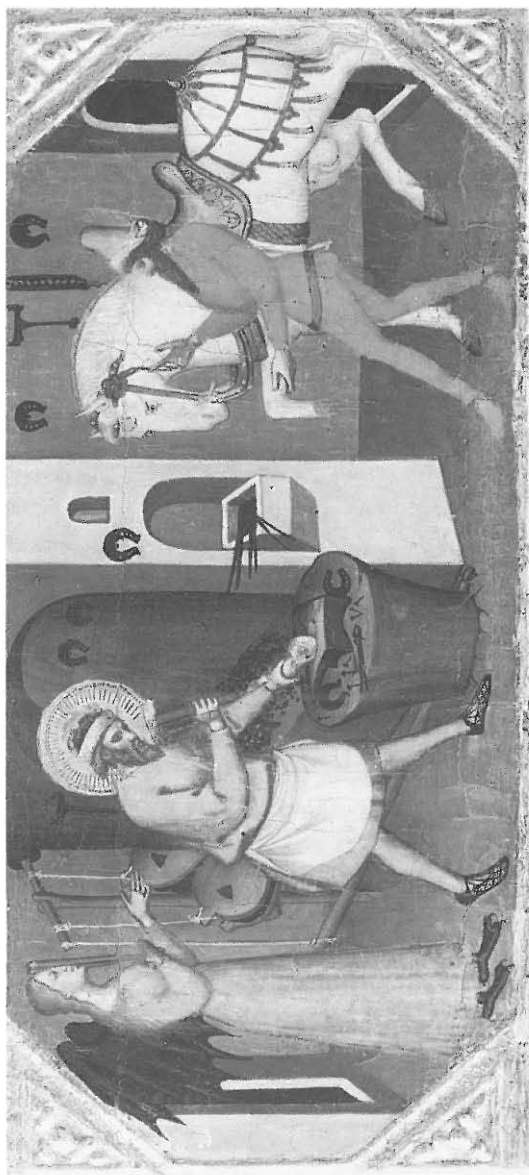
<sup>24</sup> Francis Wormald and Phyllis M. Giles, 'Description of Fitzwilliam Museum MS 3-1954', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 4, 1964-68, 26 and pl. iv. I owe this reference to Nicholas J. Rogers.

<sup>25</sup> Discussed in Knud Banning, *A Catalogue of Wall-Paintings in the Churches of Medieval Denmark 1100-1600*, Copenhagen 1976-. This work describes other paintings of St Loy the smith in what is now southern Sweden, at Långaröd, Brunnby and Sölvesborg. On the shoeing-frame, cf. M.R. James' introduction to *The Romance of Alexander*, Oxford 1933, p.33.

<sup>26</sup> In this survey, VCH = *The Victoria History of the Counties of England*, London 1900-; RCHM = The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, England; Pevsner = Sir Nikolaus Pevsner *et al.*, *The Buildings of England*, Harmondsworth 1951-; Caiger-Smith = Alan Caiger-Smith, *English Medieval Mural Paintings*, Oxford 1963; and Cheetham = Francis Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, Oxford 1984.

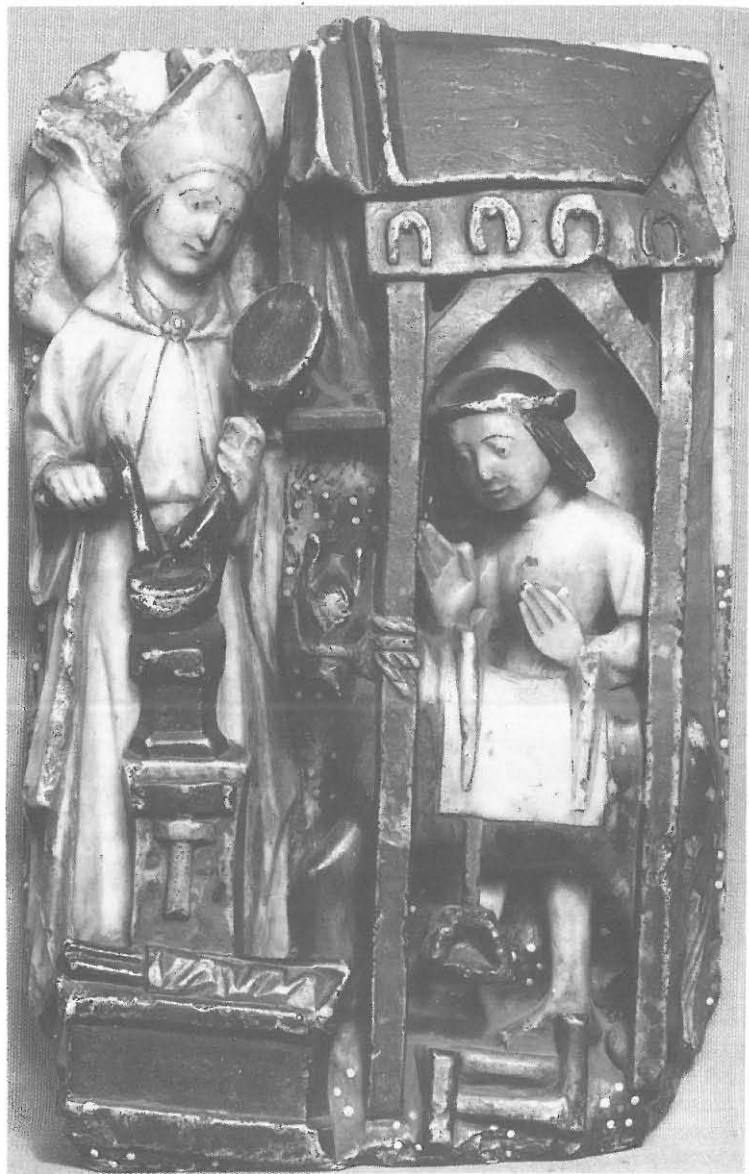
<sup>27</sup> Katharine M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk Tales*, part B/ii, London 1970, pp.433-34, gives a suspiciously vernacular 'folklore' account of St Loy the smith allegedly recorded at Wincanton in 1963. Even if genuine, this and other supposed items of 'folklore' about St Loy from the area must postdate the discovery of the saint's panel at St Peter and St Paul's in the 1880s, i.e. they are as much dependent on clerical learning for their existence as the Durbeyfields were for knowledge of their ancestry.

<sup>28</sup> *The Luttrell Psalter*, London 1932, pl. 6.



*Plate I*

Painting (c. 1380–85) showing St Loy, Petit Palais, Avignon (see p. 110).



*Plate II*

Fifteenth-century alabaster of St Loy, Victoria and Albert Museum (see p. 114).



*Plate III*

Statue of St Loy, Westminster Abbey (see p. 114).



*Plate IV*

Statue of St Loy, Rutherglen Museum, Glasgow (see p. 117).