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19 September 1988

Ken Follett  
P.O.Box 708  
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Dear Mr Follett,

Thank you for your letter and cheque of 7 September which the courier delivered by the 12th. I am enclosing a receipt for the full sum for your records.

I am taking advantage of your comment that you would be interested in any arguments I may have about the points outstanding. Certainly about Becket, Barrow is both the most respected and most up-to-date, so I shall happily bow to your insertion of William in the church. I always felt you could justifiably place Waleran at the discussion in Normandy. "Circuitor" bothers me because I think it is likely to confuse many of your readers, where 'sub-prior' would not.

Regarding records of the manor court, they really did write everything down. Certainly monasteries, because of their sheep, had access to plenty of vellum. In the last 20 years a lot of the manorial court records, especially of English monasteries, have been edited and published. They are fascinating just because they are so full of trivia and so complete.

Re troubadour, I would still find 'minstrel' much more characteristic of English use and description. Troubadour seems too romantic and of too high status for Jack's father.

Toledo certainly had a cathedral, but it was a Visigothic church, and from the remaining Spanish examples these were heavy with horseshoe arches and little light. The Visigothic church was not torn down until c.1225. Would Jack have been enthralled by such a primitive building?

About Gratian, it is certainly your point to stretch. The new Dictionary of the Middle Ages (1985) says that the Decretum was finished c.1140 but had been built up at Bologna in the previous ten years. My point was that English bishops were generally very far behind the Italian developments in canon law. If you want to make Waleran ahead of his contemporaries, why not give him an eager junior cleric in his household who had listened to Gratian while studying at Bologna? That is credible.

About castles and place-names, I would prefer a more nuanced approach, but that is the historian, not the novelist!

With best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,

*Margaret Wade Labarge*