

BENEDICTINE MONASTIC BUILDING

IN ENGLAND 1200-1540

by

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*ABSTRACT*


The magnificence of the Gothic style has understandably drawn the interest of many art historians - but with the result that the appearance of Gothic buildings is better known than the way they functioned. Even the type of building is often regarded to be of secondary or even no importance compared with its stylistic features. The purpose of this thesis is to consider the functional development of medieval architecture. In order to observe a wide enough range of buildings in fine enough detail, a case study has been made of Benedictine monasteries in England from 1200 to 1540.


It is proposed here that the form of a monastic fabric and changes to its buildings are motivated primarily by considerations of use and reflect not only how the buildings were used by the monks who inhabited them, but how monasteries functioned in contemporary society. Thus, they give evidence of current monastic practice and of the social status of monasteries in general. Since monasteries were basically publicly-supported institutions, there was a dynamic relation between monastic practice and social status especially apparent in monastic buildings; the great expense of such architecture must represent very fundamental social aspirations.


Benedictines engaged in building of the most varied character. The main thrust of their building was directed toward the monastic precinct and particularly toward the monastic church. The church, the most important building of a monastery, forms the subject of Chapter One of this thesis. The second chapter deals with the cloisters and the buildings around them, which comprised the main domestic buildings of the monks. The third chapter examines other building in the precinct and also treats briefly of building outside the precinct.


The results of these investigations combine to show, through changes in the monastic fabric, that the early 13th century was the high point of monastic popularity and popular participation in the monastic enterprise. From the later 13th century that long process of decline which eventually led to the demise of monasticism in England under Henry VIII is also traceable in monastic building practices. The thesis ends with conclusions which form a chronological summary of the main currents of this process.

*Examiners:*

  
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*Dedicated to Fernwood*

## *INTRODUCTION*

The Norman Conquest introduced to England a new conception of monasticism and a new standard of architectural scale. Throughout the realm new monastic structures began to rise up in new monumental architectural forms. By the late 12th or early 13th century the face of England had been transformed by great numbers of monastic foundations. The buildings which comprised these monasteries were constructed during the vernal days of this new monasticism. It was only in the 13th century that they blossomed fully, and thereafter set in the long autumn which eventually led to the complete dissolution of monasticism in England by Henry VIII and the destruction of the majority of monastic structures in the years after 1535. The period from 1066 to 1540, then, saw the complete life cycle of monumental monastic architecture in England; the years between 1066 and the early 13th century represent its youth, the remaining years its maturity and slow decay.

At its high point the network of monasteries across England comprised over 1,000 establishments housing over 18,000 monks and nuns. These monasteries were of the most varied nature: houses of monks and nuns; abbeys, priories, and smaller dependent cells; houses of Benedictine, Cistercian, Cluniac, Carthusian, and Grandmontine monks; and houses of Augustinian, Premonstratensian, and Gilbertine canons. The buildings which housed most of these monastic groups

exhibited general similarities which justify their identification as a homogeneous class of buildings (a class not shared, however, by the Carthusians, the Gilbertines, the friars, or the military orders), but there were significant differences between them all.

A study of all the medieval monastic buildings in England would be huge indeed - too big, in fact, for a project such as this thesis. It is here proposed to study only Benedictine monastic buildings, a significant but more manageable segment of English monastic architecture, and at that, only the later part of their existence. The considerations and problems arising from the initial appearance of monumental monastic architecture are considerably different from later developments and will not be dealt with here in more than a prefatory manner.

Benedictine monasteries constituted one of the most numerous and certainly the wealthiest of the regular monastic groups in England in the Middle Ages. The Benedictines were also the oldest monastic class in England - all pre-Conquest monasteries were Benedictine - and in distinction to the other monastic classes, did not originally formally constitute an 'order'. Reliance on the Rule of St. Benedict of Nursia was virtually their only unifying characteristic, and before the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 established metropolitan chapters for their general regulation they were completely independent of one another in the administration of their affairs. Similar needs and concerns, however, and the common requirements of the Rule, resulted in close correspondences between Benedictine houses in their

administration, in their daily life, and in their buildings. Nevertheless, the similarities are not as general as is sometimes implied, often by analogy with the more regular administrative and building practices of the completely centralized Cistercian Order.<sup>1</sup> Significant singularities and considerable local variation existed among the Benedictine monasteries of England, and their virtual independence in matters of building - excepting only the regulatory injunctions of the General Chapters - lend general trends in Benedictine building an incisive social significance which would be confused in some other orders by the vastly greater degree of centralized control.

Benedictine monasteries were never static. At some times they changed faster or slower, however, than at others. The nature of changes to the monastic fabric also varied greatly after its initial appearance in the 12th century. The nature and even the amount of construction at Benedictine monasteries reflect changes in the practice of monasticism and in the relations between monasteries and society in general. As the buildings of a monastery became inadequate or inappropriate to new needs or new social status, the monastic fabric tended to adjust to the situation. The degree to which this was possible was determined by the resources at hand, a large portion of which depended directly or indirectly on outside support. It will be the purpose of this thesis to trace the evolution of Benedictine monastic buildings in the later Middle Ages and, where possible, to correlate this evolution with the social and religious currents which engendered it. (Unless otherwise noted, all monasteries mentioned

in the text are Benedictine. This must especially be borne in mind for the cathedral priories: Bath, Christchurch, Canterbury, Coventry, Durham, Ely, Norwich, Rochester, St. Swithun's, Winchester, and Worcester; thus, for instance, Canterbury Cathedral is also a Benedictine monastic church.)

Such a study is not without problems. At the Dissolution and in the centuries which followed a great many Benedictine monasteries were destroyed or stripped of their valuable building materials. Today more than half of the Benedictine monasteries of medieval England have either disappeared completely or still await archaeological excavation. Of the rest only the smallest fragment of a once grand monastery often survives. Only at those houses which in the years after the Dissolution were refounded as cathedrals or parish churches or were turned into secular residences were parts of the monastic fabric deliberately preserved and then only in varying degrees.

Surviving monastic documents form another source of evidence for changes to monastic structures. The best of these are building accounts, such as survive for Westminster Abbey,<sup>2</sup> and the annual accounts of the administrative officers or obedientiaries of a monastery. These survive for only a few monasteries, however, and are seldom even close to complete. Chronicles, histories, chartularies, and the recorded lives of monastic superiors form less valuable but still considerably helpful sources.

A great deal of difficulty exists in the full utilization of documentary material. The practical limits of this study will not allow

the direct scrutiny of the documents themselves and even those which have been published and are easily available are often untranslated. Such documentary information as is contained in this thesis is necessarily taken, therefore, largely from secondary sources, but pains have been taken to assure the reliability and veracity of such information. Particularly useful sources include the often lengthy introductions and glosses to transcriptions of medieval documents such as those from the Rolls Series and those published by the Surtees Society and the Camden Society. Studies of documents such as Kirk's *Accounts of the Obedientiars of Abingdon Abbey* and Whittingham and Fernie's *The Early Communar and Pittancer Rolls of Norwich Cathedral Priory With an Account of the Building of the Cloister* form another usable source for a few monasteries. By far the most consistently helpful and most widely available sources of documentary information, however, are the *Victoria County Histories*. Although these are as yet incomplete, the section on the history of religious houses is available for most counties and is very closely based on documentary sources. The topography sections, which include physical descriptions of remaining monastic fabric, have only been partially completed, but where they exist, their descriptions of monasteries are usually a reliable admixture of archaeological and documentary material.

These topographical descriptions are supplemented by a variety of sources based upon archaeological excavation and documentary research. The most complete of these sources is Pevsner's *Buildings of England*, a county by county description of all the architecturally

important buildings and remains in the country. This series is now complete and some volumes have already been substantially re-edited. The information they contain is sometimes open to question but they are generally competent sources. Less widely available but usually more reliable sources are the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments' *Inventories of Historical Monuments* (again only some counties and cities have been completed) and the Department of the Environment's *Official Guidebooks* to monuments (generally ruins) in their care. Guidebooks other than these exist for many former monastic churches and sites; some of these are useful, but their quality varies enormously and they must be used with extreme caution. Very good individual studies of monasteries which combine archaeological and documentary investigation have also been published both by archaeologists, of whom Sir Harold Brakspear and Sir William St. John Hope are eminently worthy of note, and by historians, amongst whom Sir Charles Peers and A. Hamilton Thompson stand out. More strictly archaeological reports have also been used where available, as have various general studies of individual monasteries and general works on medieval architecture and history. Although not every possible source of information has been plumbed, it is hoped that a wide enough base of information has been collected here to form as representative a picture of Benedictine building through the period considered as it is possible for us to see, given the unsurmountable gaps in the architectural record.

Although building represented a very large expenditure of monastic funds, it was far from being the only major expenditure. It is

difficult to estimate at any period in the Middle Ages even the roughest approximation of the percentage of monastic funds spent on building. For Christchurch, Canterbury, a surviving document summarizes the works and expenses of Prior Henry of Eastry (1285-1331); out of a total expenditure of some £18,000, only about £2200, or about one eighth of the expenses, was spent on the adornment and improvement of church and monastery.<sup>3</sup> Although this may very well be representative for larger monasteries at this time, there is no guarantee that it reflects the contemporary situation at smaller and less well endowed houses where routine expenses may have consumed a far larger percentage of the revenues than at such a large monastery. It is also very probable that the percentage of expenditure on building at Benedictine monasteries declined more or less steadily from the early or mid 13th century right until the Dissolution (although the rate of decline was probably variable).

Public support for Benedictine building is equally difficult to determine exactly. Only a small number of benefactions made to Benedictine monasteries are known to have been specifically for the purpose of building and the actual percentage of such gifts in the total benefactions of a monastery is even more difficult to ascertain. Even a benefaction not specifically documented as such could have been meant for building purposes if given at the time of a major building project, and at such times benefactions made for no stipulated purpose could also have been used for building. Conversely, benefactions made specifically for building were not always spent appropriately,

either through mismanagement or abuse of office. And while, despite these limitations, it would appear that architecture represented perhaps the largest tangible and enduring product of benefactions and, indeed, of all monastic revenues, even this is not such a straightforward proposition as it might at first seem. Fittings, vestments and plate could account for substantial funds and benefactions which are impossible to compare generally to those for building. At the same time that Archbishop Courtenay (1381-1411) contributed £266 to the repair of the precinct walls of Christchurch, Canterbury, £133 to the construction of the infirmary kitchen, £20 for a new glass window in the nave of the church, another 1000 marks for construction of the nave, and £300 towards rebuilding the south cloister walk, he donated a silver gilt altarpiece for the high altar valued at £340 and a rich cope worth £300.<sup>4</sup> Only if reliable inventories existed for a significant number of houses and for different periods or if other records survived could a history of these often valuable portable objects be compiled and compared with building. Nevertheless, its buildings could embody the ideals and activities of a monastery in a way which other channels for funds could not, and what is more, their scale, extent, and chronology are more easily determined than other concrete sources of expenditure. Building can, thus, be taken as a satisfactory indicator of the place of Benedictine monasticism in English society and its relation to the social aspirations of the English people.

In the 12th century administrative systems evolved at Benedictine monasteries which delegated responsibility for the monastic buildings

to various administrative officers of the house. Each obedientiary was responsible for the buildings of his own department, but beyond that, responsibility for the main conventual buildings devolved on only a small number of obediences. The most important obedientiary was usually the sacrist, whose principal duty it was to ensure that the fabric and fittings of the church were in good order and to provide for services. His responsibilities often extended to other parts of the monastic fabric, especially the cloisters and chapter house. At Ely the sacrist also had the care of the refectory, dormitory, kitchen, and most of the infirmary. At other houses, however, many of these latter buildings were the responsibility of the cellarer, the next most important obedientiary after the sacrist in terms of the maintenance and repair of buildings. As there was no standard administrative arrangement for Benedictine houses, these arrangements varied from house to house, but always more or less along the same lines unless the monastery was one of the few in England to possess a centralized financial system. In such a case the treasurer or bursar, the obedientiary from whose hands the resources of the house were allocated, was directly responsible for funding all communal building operations.

Responsibility for building and maintenance is confused at a few houses by the presence of an obedientiary usually known as the 'master (or clerk) of the works' or *custos operis*. The function of this officer is very problematic, for where accounts exist for the office, they normally show a very small annual budget which could not

possibly have been used to finance building projects. At other houses, the office of the master of the works can be shown to have been a temporary office, initiated at the outset of some large building project and lasting only for the duration of the project.

The role of monastic superiors in the construction of buildings at their monasteries is also a problematic issue. The superior of a monastery had the ultimate say in all the expenditures of the house and so, in theory, could have closely controlled all its building. In fact, only in the early 12th century did monastic superiors exercise a great deal of direct control over building. As the resources of the house were divided among the obedientiaries, they began to assume more responsibility and took more and more initiative in the planning and execution of building projects. Although superiors often intervened in a building project with gifts of money or materials, they would appear to have taken a smaller and smaller part in the administration of all but their own buildings. In a rather singular situation at Christchurch, Canterbury, in the later Middle Ages, Prior Chillenden (1385-1411) re-established a more active participation in building, but by assuming in plurality the office of treasurer rather than directly as superior.<sup>5</sup>

The complexity and diversity of the monastic fabric poses some interesting problems for its systematic study. The church stands apart from the other monastic buildings in function, scale, and importance and is most conveniently dealt with on its own. Many of the buildings used by the monks communally, however, are difficult to treat

independently, as they are located in the ranges of buildings around the cloister. These claustral ranges are complicated and functionally diverse and form a cohesive grouping which is most easily studied as a unit. The other monastic buildings are often difficult to study as independent structural entities because they do not occupy a standard position and can be found in different structures or in conjunction with different structures from one monastery to the next; these are best treated as functional, or, in the case of study facilities, even as thematic, units.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>German historians in particular have warned that the position of each monastery must be studied in terms not of its relation to the papacy and the general privileges of its order but of its individual relations with the local secular and ecclesiastical authorities and its special legal position ("das territorial-geschichtliche Forschungsprinzip"). This applies especially to Benedictine monasteries. See Giles Constable, *Monastic Tithes From Their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: 1964), pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup>See H.M. Colvin, *Building Accounts of King Henry III*, (Oxford: 1971).

<sup>3</sup>D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, Vol. I (Cambridge: 1956), p. 322.

<sup>4</sup>J. Duncombe, *An Historical Description of the Metropolitan Church of Christ, Canterbury* (Canterbury: 1783), p. 98.

<sup>5</sup>R.A. Smith, *The Organization and Financing of Monastic Building in the Later Middle Ages* (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of London: 1952), pp. 99-196.

*CHAPTER ONE**THE MONASTIC CHURCH**A. INTRODUCTION*

Ecclesiastical architecture is a large field; no single study can hope to encompass all of its diverse areas, areas which frequently differ greatly in terms of the questions considered and the methods of research. This study will attempt to trace the structural development of English Benedictine churches in response to the changing demands which were placed on them through the later Middle Ages. Many areas of interest must perforce be left untreated, the question of stylistic development unfortunately among them. Although changes in style ultimately have a bearing on the questions raised here, they must be passed over in such a basic study as this. Another area which must be ignored to some extent is the study of the liturgical and ceremonial use of the church. Although the field has a more direct bearing on this study, it is as yet in its infancy; too little is known to deal with it other than as opportunely discovered information will allow.

The analysis of church building presented here has focussed strongly on economic factors. By attempting to ascertain who paid for building activities on Benedictine churches, it is hoped that a clear idea will emerge of who stood to gain by that activity and how they

imagined it would serve their ends. The study has been divided into four parts, corresponding to structurally separate parts of the church - the east end, the Lady Chapel, the nave, and towers. The approach to each of these sections is slightly different, and it is hoped that they will each complement the approaches taken in the others.

Even within the limits defined here, a significant area must be passed over in relative silence. Churches were monumental structures; in size and adornment they were unmatched by any other class of buildings in the country. In particular, monastic churches, by their scale and magnificence, dominated all of the other monastic buildings. The church was, thus, a source of pride for a monastery and a focus for monastic self-identity. This attitude led to a concern for the appearance of monastic churches which was completely separate from considerations of function. Intensified no doubt by rivalry and jealousy between monastic houses, it led to building campaigns, often of considerable proportions, whose real purpose - even where not explicitly stated - was to make the church more impressive visually. Campaigns to vault and refenestrate parts of the church can be singled out especially in this regard. Building activities such as these occurred constantly through the period under consideration, frequently in conjunction with alterations of a more 'functional' nature. Such motives are very rarely documented, however, and it is seldom that they can be ascribed confidently to a specific campaign of building. The problems involved in doing so, moreover, are quite different from the main direction of this study. So, although much building and great expense were undoubtedly devoted

to these ends, they must be passed over here with no more than a reminder of their ubiquitous presence.

1. *The Initial Appearance of Monumental  
Benedictine Churches*

The late 11th and 12th centuries had been a period of overwhelming enthusiasm for religious life; a great many monasteries had been founded, and at the vast majority of Benedictine houses the building of a monumental stone church, not usual before the Conquest, had been begun and in most cases finished.

Quite a few of the larger Benedictine churches had been built on such a scale that the entire structure could not be finished in a single campaign. In such cases the eastern arm of the church was the first part to be undertaken, in order that the altars and choir be functional as soon as possible. The building would then gradually proceed westward, as finances allowed, until the nave and west front were completed. At some houses this string of campaigns lasted into the 13th century. Even the west facades of such major churches as Bury St. Edmunds, begun c1090; Peterborough, begun after a fire in 1116; and St. Albans, begun by Abbot Paul of Caen (1077-1093), were not finished, or perhaps even begun, until the 13th century.<sup>1</sup>

By the 13th century, however, this period of church building was definitely drawing to a close. At most monasteries the building of a stone church in the 12th century was the largest single building project they would embark on until the Dissolution. Nevertheless, for one

reason or another, several Benedictine churches were completely rebuilt during the 13th century. The abbey church at Glastonbury, for instance, had been totally destroyed by fire in 1184. Although rebuilding was commenced almost immediately, work continued through the 13th century, and the new church was finally dedicated c1309. Finchale was not founded as a priory until 1196, and the new church to replace Godric's small chapel was not begun until 1237; it was finished by the late 13th century. At Birkenhead, Chester, Whitby, and perhaps Broomholme, too, a general rebuilding was begun in the 13th century.

At Chester, the east end was begun from new foundations c1265, but the western half of the church retained substantial parts of its older, Norman fabric. It certainly created the appearance of a new church, but by refacing and incorporating existing fabric, the rebuilding could be done more easily and less expensively; nevertheless, this rebuilding was not finished until c1490. Westminster Abbey presents an even more drawn out case. It was begun in 1245 under the generous aegis of Henry III. At his death in 1272 it was finished nearly to the fifth bay of the nave, yet the west front remained unfinished until the 18th century.

Thus, even by the 13th century the era of monastic church building was on the wane. Henceforth, only churches of the smallest scale could be rebuilt without difficulty. When the church at Lyminster Priory was rebuilt in the 13th century, it followed the same modest lines as its aisleless, Saxon predecessor. The church at Farne Island, as it was rebuilt c1370, was no more than an aisleless chapel with no

architectural division between nave and presbytery. And when the church at Bath Abbey had to be demolished in the late 15th century because of its dilapidated condition, the new one, begun in 1499, was only planned to be half as large; nevertheless, it remained unfinished at the Dissolution. On the other hand, when Milton Abbey church was destroyed by fire in 1309, rebuilding was begun on a grander scale than the previous church - by the Dissolution only the east end, crossing, and transepts were complete; the nave was probably never even begun. The same is true of the church at Upholland Priory, begun after the founding of the house in 1319.

Despite this trend, three major Benedictine churches - Great Malvern, Muchelney, and Sherborne - were largely rebuilt in the 15th century. These rebuildings did not involve a totally new fabric from the foundations, but were rather largely recasings of existing fabric. Even so, the entire church was involved in each case and they clearly remain exceptional; "monastic churches in the late Middle Ages [were] rarely built so sweepingly."<sup>2</sup>

This decline in the complete rebuilding of churches, certainly did not mean the end of all building activity on churches, however. Even though building projects in general tended to become smaller and less ambitious, Benedictine communities throughout the later Middle Ages continued to transform their churches in response to religious and social change.

## B. THE EAST END

### 1. Introduction

Most of the liturgical requirements of a Benedictine church were accommodated in its eastern arm. The important services and all of the monastic offices took place there, and if the monastery possessed important relics, they too were located in the east end. This multiplicity of functions made the east end a complex area. Many aspects of the east end were increasing in importance in the later 12th century, and it began to undergo a widespread and very often thorough change to meet the new demands which were being placed on it. The general effect, and perhaps to some extent the cause, of these changes, which amounted to nothing less than a transformation of the east end, was to open it up systematically to lay use. This can be seen either as an increase in lay participation in east ends or as a growing exclusiveness on the part of the religious community. In either case, increased and diversified use of the east end led eventually to a compartmentalization which attempted to divide it physically to correspond with its various functions.

The transformation of the east end involved enlarging and in most cases substantially modifying the form of the eastern part of the church. The rebuilding of the east end of Canterbury Cathedral after the 1174 fire lies very near the beginning of this movement. The most prolific period of rebuilding lasted from this time until after the middle of the 13th century, when the scale and frequency of rebuilding began to decline.

The choir does not seem to have been involved in the transformation of the east end; the changes did not involve the accommodation of more monks but rather liturgical and ceremonial elaborations. The presbytery was usually enlarged, and in some cases a virtually new kind of liturgical space was added to the east end; a 'feretory', an area whose principal function was to house a shrine (feretrum) and accommodate its popular veneration, was sometimes built to the east of the presbytery to increase the prestige of an existent or new shrine. A general increase in the number of altars was also involved. An increased emphasis on windows, vaults, elaborate pavements, and other forms of decoration lent the east end a richer appearance which could be appreciated the more for the opening up of routes of circulation, either by ambulatories, 'retrochoirs', or other spaces east of the presbytery.

## 2. *Norman East Ends*

The east ends of 12th-century Benedictine churches had been built on two basic plans. In the most popular of these, the triapsidal plan, the presbytery terminated in an eastern apse which was flanked by smaller apses at the end of each aisle. These apses formed an echelon arrangement which was sometimes augmented by the transept chapels, as at Peterborough, St. Albans, and in Edward the Confessor's church at Westminster Abbey. At Lindisfarne, where there were no presbytery aisles, the presbytery terminated in a single, semi-circular apse two bays east of the crossing. Such length was unusual, but aisleless presbyteries terminating in a single apse were common in smaller churches.

The chevet, usually with three radiating chapels, was not quite as popular as the triapsidal plan but, nonetheless, was common and widespread.<sup>3</sup>

In all but the smallest churches the east end extended usually two to four bays east of the crossing before the commencement of the apsidal termination. Moreover, the choir usually extended westward to incorporate the crossing and even one or more of the eastern nave bays. The choir was the part of the church where the convent sang the monastic offices; each monk had a seat in the choir stalls, which ran along the north and south sides of the choir and along the east side of the choir screen, which enclosed the western end of the choir. The choir screen also ran behind the stalls on the north and south sides of the choir blocking access to and from the aisles. The choir was further separated from the lay, western part of the nave by the pulpitum or rood screen, which was located about one bay west of the choir screen, forming a small antechamber between nave and choir.<sup>4</sup>

East of the choir was the presbytery, containing the high altar, where the principal services were held. There were no screens between choir and presbytery but there were often one or two stairs, the *gradii presbyterii*, the presbytery being at a slightly higher level. In a chevet the rest of the presbytery around the apse was screened; in a triapsidal east end the presbytery would have been similarly inaccessible from the east. In both cases, however, an arcade arch on each side of the presbytery just east of the choir would have provided entrance from the aisles.

A more constricted arrangement can be seen in the nuns' church at Shaftesbury, which featured a triapsidal east end with solid side walls between presbytery and aisles right to the crossing.<sup>5</sup> Since the choir undoubtedly occupied the crossing, there would seem to have been no access to the presbytery other than through the choir. This may not have been too inconvenient for the nuns, but would seem to have greatly hampered, or even completely negated, any lay access to the high altar.

The east end of Shaftesbury lent itself very easily to the complete exclusion of the laity from contact with the nuns.<sup>6</sup> There were also churches at houses for monks with east ends similar to Shaftesbury's, however. The Norman church of St. Mary's, York, the early 12th-century church at Whitby, and perhaps also the churches at St. Albans, dedicated in 1115, and at Westminster, built c1050-1065, featured triapsidal east ends with solid side walls in the presbytery.<sup>7</sup>

The impetus for this design, as Robinson points out, came from Normandy, and in particular, from such monastic churches as Jumieges.<sup>8</sup> Like its Norman models, the Confessor's monastery at Westminster fulfilled the function of a royal *Eigenkloster*, i.e. a monastery for virtually the sole spiritual advantage of a noble patron and under his close supervision.<sup>9</sup> This particular status would not have fostered involvement in the religious life of the monastery by any other segment of society than the patron and his family. For a number of reasons, this more or less exclusive monasticism was giving way throughout the 12th century to a religious function with a more integral link to secular elements in society. To a great extent, the east end

was transformed in response to the new social status that monasteries were coming to hold.

### 3. *Ambulatories*

One of the most fundamental changes to the east ends of Benedictine churches was the widespread appearance of ambulatories. Ambulatories allowed laymen access to the east end without disturbing services in the choir or the sanctity of the presbytery. They also increased the processional potential of the east end; the Sunday Procession at Durham, for instance, made use of ambulatory space east of the presbytery (Figure 10). Among major Benedictine churches, unambulated presbyteries formed a distinct minority after the later 13th century. By then most larger east ends featured an ambulatory of some kind, usually in a rectangular east end arrangement. The chevet, however, continued to form a small but distinct subgroup of ambulated east ends.

Most chevets in English Benedictine churches were built in the 11th century.<sup>10</sup> Their popularity was declining even in the 12th century, the only Benedictine examples being at Reading, Leominster, Muchelney, Malmesbury, and in Anselm's rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral.<sup>11</sup> Thereafter very few new chevets appeared in Benedictine churches in England; the churches built at St. Mary's, Coventry, in the 14th or 15th century<sup>12</sup> and at Westminster, begun c1245, both featured new chevets, and the chevets at Battle and Tewkesbury were both totally rebuilt in the early 14th century on expanded ground plans. These new chevets were all polygonal like the earlier chevets

of Gloucester and Tewkesbury, rather than circular like most pre-13th-century chevets.

On the other hand, quite a few Benedictine churches lost their original chevets in the 13th and 14th centuries. This trend began with the rebuilding of St. Martin's Priory, Dover, in 1131. The church then begun featured a variation of the triapsidal plan in which the eastern termination of the presbytery was rectangular. The chevet at Tynemouth was demolished c1191 to make way for a larger east end and may have been preceded by that at Chester. The chevets of Winchester and Worcester followed in the early years of the 13th century. The chevet of Malmesbury was demolished under Abbot William of Colerne (1260-1296), as was that at Muchelney at an indeterminate date. The chevet of Gloucester, as it was rebuilt in the later 14th century, had the appearance of being rectangular but without destroying the polygonal ambulatory behind it. The only 11th and 12th century Benedictine chevets to survive until the Dissolution were Bury St. Edmunds, Canterbury Cathedral, St. Augustine's, Canterbury, Gloucester, Leominster, Norwich, and Reading.

Much more common than the chevet was some form of east end with a rectangular ambulatory around the presbytery. They can be divided into three groups which more represent differing degrees of elaboration than differently functioning systems. The simplest of them had a straight east wall. Some, however, had a rectangular eastern projection to accommodate chapels. The most elaborate could feature a feretory, eastern transepts, and/or subsidiary chapels as well.

The origins of these forms go back to the 12th century, one of the earliest known examples being the nunnery church at Romsey, begun c1120 (Figure 18). There, the aisles of the rectangular presbytery were carried one bay further east than the presbytery and connected by two intermediating bays to form a rectangular ambulatory. The two middle bays opened onto a double axial chapel which formed a rectangular extension east of the ambulatory.<sup>13</sup> While the double axial chapel at Romsey was highly unusual, a single rectangular chapel projecting from a rectangular ambulatory became a standard solution in the design of east ends.<sup>14</sup> This was the form of the east end of Glastonbury as it was rebuilt after the 1184 fire, and Sherborne, too, may have had such an arrangement in the late 12th or early 13th century.<sup>15</sup> This basic plan remained popular, and was used in the extension of the east end at Malmesbury by Abbot William of Colerne (1260-1296), in the rebuilding of Milton Abbey church after the 1309 fire, in the 15th-century rebuilding of Great Malvern church, and probably also at Abingdon.

A variation on this plan which occurred both at Boxgrove and Whitby c1220 in new extended east ends featured a straight east wall with no projecting chapels, although at Boxgrove there were altars against the east wall at the ends of the aisles. The east end of St. Mary's, York, rebuilt to a similar plan but on a grander scale beginning in 1270, had three altars against the east wall (Figure 24). The east ends of Selby, c1280-c1340, and Glastonbury, rebuilt under Abbot Walter de Monyngton (1342-1375), were also of this kind.

At the simplest level, many east ends of smaller Benedictine churches were rebuilt on a rectangular plan but with no ambulatory at all. The late 12th-century rebuilding of the east end of Bardney Abbey church was characteristic of such undertakings (Figure 1). Until this time the church had featured a triapsidal east end. The central apse was now extended and squared off and the two aisle apses were also squared off.<sup>16</sup> Considering its previous form, the significance of the changes at Bardney in terms of ritual and liturgical arrangements was not very great. They were, nevertheless, quite characteristic of the transformations of many smaller east ends. A quite similar change transformed the east end of Binham Priory church, for instance, but not until the 14th or 15th century.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4. *Altars and Chapels*

The east end of Peterborough was similar to the east ends of Whitby and St. Mary's, York, after it was squared off c1496-1508 with the addition of the 'New Building' (Figure 16). The purpose of this late addition was probably to increase the number of chapels in the church; the buttresses against the east wall divide it into five sections which, on analogy with other such east ends, probably indicates the intention for five altars against the east wall. Thus, the 'New Building' at Peterborough is in some respects analogous to the Chapel of the Nine Altars built onto the east end at Durham 1242-c1280 (Figure 10). The Chapel of the Nine Altars extended past the aisle walls to create a kind of eastern transept with nine altars set against the east wall.

Such a drastic increase in the number of chapels was unusual at Benedictine monasteries but indicative of a general trend toward more altars. In most instances this increase is much more difficult to determine, as the disposition of the medieval altars in a surviving east end, let alone one that has been destroyed or replaced, is often far from clear.

Perhaps the main reason for this increase in altars was an increasing number of masses in the form of votive masses, and especially anniversaries and obits, i.e. services for the dead, for which individual houses were becoming responsible. Persons who could afford it would donate money or property to a monastery as an endowment for the saying of masses for the benefit of their souls. The absolute worth of such endowments was probably greatest in the 12th century; large donations were beginning to fall off in the 13th, but this decline was matched by an increase in smaller and smaller mass endowments with the growth of a larger and more prosperous populace who could afford them.

At Durham in 1244, two years after the Chapel of the Nine Altars was begun, the monks were pledged to 7332 masses a year;<sup>18</sup> since only one mass per day could be said at each altar, at least 21 altars would have been needed to fulfil this enormous obligation. The construction of the Chapel can thus be seen to have been initiated in direct response to a growing responsibility for masses. The widespread nature of this situation can be inferred from contemporary legislation concerning it. In 1249 the Benedictine Chapter for Canterbury Province decreed that "lest the souls of defunct benefactors be deprived through

omission and negligence of the Masses owed unto them," any priest-monk who passed more than three consecutive days without saying mass should be punished; such a provision was also made for York Province. In 1278 provision was made for the hiring of secular priests to avoid negligence of masses; in c1280 the 80 monks of Bury St. Edmunds employed 11 such chaplains to help with masses. And at the more encompassing Council of Vienne in 1311 it was decreed that no monk of twenty-five years of age and who was not otherwise disqualified might refuse to take holy orders when commanded by his abbot;<sup>19</sup> furthermore, dispensations on the age limit here decreed were made in vast numbers after the losses of manpower incurred in the Black Death in 1349.

This rigid measure marks the beginning of a decline in the diligence with which monastic houses carried out their mass obligations. By the 15th century masses were commonly either 'lumped together', with one mass supposedly representing a number of individual masses, or else completely ignored. In Bishop Alnwick's visitation of Peterborough in 1437 it was found that "oftentimes very few masses are celebrated" and in 1447 it was found that the monks had been in the habit of receiving pocket money for saying masses.<sup>20</sup> It may have been complaints about abuses such as these which were responsible for the construction of the 'New Building' at Peterborough so late in the abbey's life. For growing irresponsibility in saying masses did not fail to have an effect on the endowment of masses at monastic houses. In the later Middle Ages such endowments were increasingly granted to parish churches and chapels.

### 5. *Feretories and Shrines*

The third major type of ambulated rectangular east end, and the most complex, featured a feretory east of the presbytery. Long before the 13th century it had been common practice to locate the shrines of a church's major saints around the high altar, the place of honour being directly east of the altar. In a chevet, for instance, shrines were commonly placed in the apse. Even if space was reserved east of the altar, however, a shrine was still essentially located in the presbytery, and access to it entailed entrance into the presbytery.

By the late 12th century it seems to have become desirable to dissociate shrines from the presbytery; in some cases this resulted in a separate area behind the high altar. This was commonly accomplished by screening off the area east of the high altar. At Westminster, for instance, the shrine of St. Edward the Confessor was located in the chevet apse. When the reredos was erected c1400,<sup>21</sup> the chevet apse was separated from the presbytery and in effect became a feretory. This was similar to the development of the late 12th century east end of Canterbury Cathedral, where the chevet apse or Trinity Chapel was extended eastward after 1174 to house the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury (Figure 6). At an uncertain date a reredos came to separate the Trinity Chapel from the presbytery, although in both of these cases doors in the reredos allowed access to the feretory from the presbytery. Despite the seeming convenience, however, feretories were not generally located in chevets. They were much more commonly found in rectangular east end arrangements.

One of the earliest feretories in a rectangular east end was that at Barking, which appeared when the east end was rebuilt about the beginning of the 13th century (Figure 2). Here the high altar was built against a very thick east wall which served as a reredos. A rectangular, three-bay ambulatory east of this wall was extended eastward for three bays to form a square 'retrochoir' of nine bays which served as the feretory for St. Ethelburga and her successor abbesses, SS. Hildalitha and Wulfhilda. Clapham has stated that the reason for the rebuilding of the east end at Barking was, in fact, precisely to provide a more splendid setting for these shrines.<sup>22</sup> An added consideration especially pertinent to Barking, which was a house of nuns, is again the enclosure of the choir and presbytery. Access to the shrines would have been possible for the laity even during monastic services, and if the laity approached the feretory from the south presbytery aisle next to the parish churchyard, the nuns would have had free and exclusive access to the choir from the claustral buildings north of the church.

It is not entirely clear in the layout of Barking, which is known only from excavation, whether the reredos formed simply a high screen between presbytery and feretory, or whether it was in fact an east wall in the full structural sense, the feretory forming a lower structure of aisle height like the retrochoir of Wells Cathedral; this latter possibility is raised because of the extreme thickness of the base of the reredos. Most of the feretories which began to appear at this time, however, were located in the main body of the church and

were separated from the presbytery merely by a screen. This was the case at Winchester, where the new east end begun c1204 and finished c1240 featured a feretory for the shrine of St. Swithun;<sup>23</sup> at Ely, where the new east end built by Bishop Hugh Northwo1d (1229-1254) had a feretory for the shrine of St. Etheldreda; at Durham, where the new east end built 1242-c1280 featured a feretory for the shrines of St. Cuthbert and St. Bede; and at St. Albans, where the new east end of 1257-c1320 included a feretory to house the shrines of St. Alban and St. Amphibalus. At Chester the new east end begun c1270 did not have a feretory as such, but the western bays of the Lady Chapel were adapted to form a feretory for the shrine of St. Werburgh (Figure 8). Such may also have been the case in the early 13th century east end of Worcester, but the exact locations of the shrines of SS. Wulfstan and Oswald are unknown.

The feretories mentioned above, all built in the 13th century, appear to have been most of the feretories specifically built as such in all the Benedictine churches in England. They were all located in the churches of extremely wealthy monasteries; with the exception of Barking (≈862), they all had net incomes of over ≈1000 according to the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535. Smaller houses possessed the relics of saints but were seemingly unable to provide them with such an elaborate setting. Perhaps the most elaborate alternative to an eastern feretory can be seen in the small group of east ends which were rebuilt with eastern transepts.

Although eastern transepts also accommodated the trend towards an increased number of altars, they were sometimes associated with shrines. At Rochester, where the east end was rebuilt with eastern transepts c1200-1227, the shrine of St. William of Perth was located in the northeast transept. And in the new east end built by Abbot William of Colerne (1260-1296) at Malmesbury the shrine of St. Aldhelm was probably in the southeast transept; in both of these cases the shrines were located on the opposite side from the claustral buildings. There were no known shrines in the east transepts of Canterbury Cathedral, Worcester, and probably Muchelney, but Pershore and Tynemouth both had eastern transepts and also shrines of unknown location. In the east end of Pershore, begun c1210 and dedicated in 1239, it is difficult to see where else the shrine of St. Edburga could have gone except in the northeast transept, and at Tynemouth, where the east end was rebuilt beginning c1190, the shrine of St. Oswin is known to have been located behind the high altar in the aisleless presbytery until it was moved in the 14th century; its new resting place is unrecorded but again could have been in the eastern transepts.

Only the most popular shrines at the wealthiest monasteries would have been separately located in a feretory. On a more modest level, some smaller houses which possessed relics did not even have a shrine in which to keep them. At Finchale St. Godric was buried on the north side of the presbytery. His tomb was marked by a slab of Frosterley marble on which, at least in later times, was an image of the Virgin. The north transept chapel was dedicated to him, however, and contained his altar,

his light, and a chest for the offerings made at his tomb.<sup>24</sup> Elsewhere relics were directly associated with an altar; at St. Benet of Hulme the remains of SS. Wolfey and Margaret, two local saints, were buried with other relics under the high altar.

#### *6. Relics and the Rebuilding of East Ends*

Relics formed a focus for popular veneration in churches. The donations of pilgrims and the local population were usually made specifically to the relic of a particular saint or to a particular altar. In general the most venerated relics received the most elaborate shrines; these were at once the most costly and the most lucrative. If the transformation of east ends in the 13th century was partially to provide relics with a setting more fitting to their importance, this should be seen as the culmination of the relic cult rather than something new. Never before had so much effort gone into providing such a splendid setting either for old or newly acquired relics.

New relics were appearing in the later 12th and early 13th centuries, just as they had been for the past 200 years: in 1161 Edward the Confessor, whose body rested at Westminster Abbey, was canonized; St. Benet of Hulme received the body of St. Margaret in 1170; Thomas a Becket, murdered in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170, was canonized in 1173; the relics of St. Amphibalus were discovered at St. Albans in 1178; Wulfstan, the last Saxon bishop of Worcester, was canonized in 1203; William of Perth, a Scottish youth murdered outside of Rochester and buried in the cathedral in 1201, was canonized in

1256; Broomholme Priory became a prosperous house after the acquisition of a piece of the True Cross stolen from Constantinople in 1205; and even though not saints, the finding of the remains of Arthur and Guenevere at Glastonbury in 1191 is also appropriate to mention here. At about the same time Glastonbury also claimed, against Canterbury Cathedral, to have the remains of St. Dunstan; as unfounded as this claim was, over 100 years elapsed before Canterbury's defense received final recognition. Almost nothing was below monastic scruples in the acquisition of relics.

It was natural, therefore, that each great abbey should have possessed a veritable thaumaturgic museum; each vied with its fellows in the rarity and curiosity of its specimens. The monks of Durham, for instance, had griffins' eggs and claws - i.e. ostrich-eggs and ibex-horns. They boasted not only the coals of St. Lawrence, reminiscent of Boccaccio, but also one of his joints, still bearing traces of the sacrilegious fire. They had portions of Moses's rod, of John Baptist's raiment, and the charger which had held his head; the Virgin Mary's shirt, and rock marked with spots of her milk; of the tree under which the three angels sat with Abraham, and of the Tree of Paradise; of the flesh and fat of St. Thomas Becket; a tooth of St. Gengulphus, sovereign for the falling sickness; of the twelve thrones of the Apostles. Their long list of relics contains specimens from at least three of the classes which Guibert of Nogent, in his *De Pignoribus Sanctorum*, had long since condemned as spurious and blasphemous. The long list of St. Albans' relics (Dugdale, II, 234) is almost as ludicrous

. . . .25

If a church did not have a major relic, oblations would naturally make their way elsewhere. Thus, the shrine of St. Kenelm at Winchcombe suffered enormously when the neighbouring Cistercian abbey at Hailes acquired a popular relic of the Holy Blood in 1270.

Popular interest in relics can be profitably measured by the oblations which they attracted. The oblations of Canterbury Cathedral have been particularly well documented and have the added advantage of association with one of the most lucrative shrines in medieval Europe, that of St. Thomas a Becket. In 1174, the year after Becket was canonized, a fire in the cathedral made rebuilding necessary. In this rebuilding the east end was extended to provide proper room for the veneration of the newly created saint. The tomb, and later the shrine of St. Thomas in the Trinity Chapel, attracted the greatest attention; there was also apparently a portion of his skull in a reliquary in the Corona and oblations were also made at the site of his martyrdom, later the Altar of the Sword's Point. Accounts recording the oblations in the cathedral survive from 1198, and although these are confused by a period when the monks were exiled (1206-1213) during the Interdict, Woodruff has analyzed their content:

During the pre-exile years (1198-1213) the offerings average £429 3s 7d per annum, of which the Tomb contributed £309 5s 0d, Corona £39 17s 6d, High altar £39 19s 10d, St. Mary's altar £8 9 s 0d, Holy Cross Altar £1 2s 0d, St. Michael's altar 16 s 3d. During the same period the Treasurer's receipts from all sources average £1406 1s 8d.<sup>26</sup>

The oblations accounted, then, for almost a quarter of the entire revenues of the house. As exceptional as this was, it was made even more exceptional when the shrine was completed. The remains of St. Thomas were translated to the shrine in 1220, the Jubilee year, fifty years after the murder:

The offerings at this first Jubilee amounted to no less than £1,142 5s 0d, the receipts of the individual altars being as follows: High Altar £54 15s 8d, St. Mary £13 4s 9d, St. Cross £2 9s 3d, St. Michael 14s 5d, Shrine £702 11s 2d, Martyrdom £93 0s 2d. It is remarkable that nothing was received this year from the Corona. In the following year, however, the Corona contributed £71 10s 0d and the next year £80 10s 0d.<sup>27</sup>

The oblations for this year were never equalled, before or after, by Canterbury or any other church in England. This marks the apogee of popular interest in relics, and it was probably not just at Canterbury that its benefits were reaped; the remains of St. Wulfstan were translated to a new shrine at Worcester Cathedral in 1218 and those of St. Waltheof at Crowland in 1219.

This period also marks the apogee of rebuilding on the east ends of Benedictine churches. Even where a major shrine was not involved, churches stood to gain and to offer more from an expanded and modernized east end than at any other time up to the Dissolution. Indeed, there was such an eager desire to make east ends operational that legislation was introduced to speed up the dedication of the many new east ends in building at the time. In 1237 the papal legate, Otho, addressed the question at the Council of London, and Cheney associates the first canon of his constitutions ('quae perfectis parietibus sunt constructae') with a number of reasons why clergy were anxious to have churches dedicated quickly, not the least among them being that donations to the altars could then be made.<sup>28</sup> Haigh connects the dedication of the church of Winchcombe Abbey by Walter Cantilupe, Bishop of Worcester, on 13 October 1239, with this legislation,<sup>29</sup>

and it was no doubt responsible for many of the other church dedications in and about that year.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the fortunate survival of documentation from Canterbury, it is impossible to make hard and fast historical generalizations on the changes in oblations received at the altars and shrines of Benedictine churches through the Middle Ages, or for that matter, any other indicator of change in popular devotion to relics. This is just as true of the rebuilding of the east ends of Benedictine churches. Both can be seen generally to decrease throughout the later Middle Ages. And, while relics are certainly not the only factor involved in such rebuildings, the two evince a symbiotic relationship of considerable significance for building campaigns.

Under widely differing circumstances, the acquisition or promotion of relics coincided very frequently with major building campaigns. Canterbury Cathedral presents the classic case. The fire of 1174, which destroyed the east end and made rebuilding necessary, came only a year after the canonization of St. Thomas. Similarly the fire of 1202 at Worcester, which also necessitated considerable rebuilding, occurred within a year of the first reports of the miracles at the tomb of St. Wulfstan which resulted in his canonization in 1203. It is generally supposed that the acquisition of a relic of the True Cross in the early 13th century by Broomholme Priory resulted in extensive rebuilding there, and it may have been the offerings at the tomb of William of Perth which encouraged the monks of Rochester to begin rebuilding the east end of their church c1201, although William was

not canonized until 1256.<sup>31</sup> At Gloucester, the offerings at the tomb of Edward II are said to have paid for the remodelling of the east end in the mid 14th century. It was also to a great extent Henry III's devotion to St. Edward the Confessor which prompted him to undertake the rebuilding of Westminster Abbey on such a magnificent scale.

At Glastonbury the entire monastery was destroyed in the fire of 1184. This happened during an abbatial vacancy when the temporalities of the house were in the hands of the king. Consequently, Henry II generously subsidized rebuilding until his death in 1189, but his successor, Richard I, was not much interested in the project and withdrew royal support. It was under these circumstances that the remains of King Arthur and his Queen, Guenevere, were found at the abbey. Moreover, the circumstances of the discovery seem suspiciously contrived and it was very probably a deliberate hoax;<sup>32</sup> it was also at this time that Glastonbury claimed possession of the relics of St. Dunstan. The translation of Arthur and Guenevere to a more honoured location in 1278 is thought also to be connected with a building campaign.<sup>33</sup>

The efforts of the monks at Glastonbury to acquire relics in aid of building campaigns would suggest that they considered them financially beneficial. Woodruff, on the other hand, doubts that in the long run the offerings of pilgrims at St. Thomas' shrine resulted in any great financial benefit to the cathedral priory, because their offerings were completely drained by the expense involved in maintaining them during their stay in Canterbury. Smith, moreover, notes only

three instances where oblations seem beyond a doubt to have been used directly to finance building operations: at Worcester and Gloucester in the rebuildings of their east ends mentioned above and at St. Albans. In the early 13th century Master Geoffrey and his assistants, who were building the choir stalls, received their wages from the 'custos feretri et altaris'.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the financial benefits of shrines and relics are widely recognized, and even if oblations did not pay directly for building, such offerings supplemented an income which ideally should have been adequate for the normal maintenance of the house, and thus, contributed to the excess capital necessary for large building projects.

#### 7. *The Decline of the Relic Cult*

The early 13th century frenzy of interest in altars and relics soon began to expend itself. Oblations began to drop more or less steadily. The Black Death temporarily injected some renewed enthusiasm into popular veneration, but by the age of Chaucer, this enthusiasm was dying a more or less final death. This decline was not taken passively by monastic houses; a number of measures were taken to turn or at least stem the tide.

At the same time the relic cult had become secularized to a remarkable extent. This can be seen at a number of monasteries. In 1278 the remains of Arthur and Guenevere were translated to a magnificent shrine behind the high altar at Glastonbury. The tomb of Edward II presents an even more interesting case of secular veneration. The

east end of Gloucester was extensively recased and remodelled after his burial there, purportedly from the offerings at his tomb. The tombs of important clerics were also honoured in this manner. In 1301, 56s 5d was deposited by the faithful in the box at the head of Walter Calthorp, who had been bishop of Norwich (1244-1257) and who was of such a saintly disposition that miracles were reported at his tomb in the Lady Chapel of Norwich Cathedral, which he had built.<sup>35</sup>

Walter was never canonized, however, and the importance of his tomb was probably of short duration. This was certainly the case with the tomb of Archbishop Winchelsey (d. 11 May 1313) at Canterbury Cathedral. He had been prominent as a member of the party opposed to the Despensers, which party unsuccessfully demanded his canonization.<sup>36</sup>

In 1320 the offerings at his tomb amounted to £90, such a high sum that, under the circumstances, political motives might be imputed to the offerants. By 1370 these offerings had stopped completely.

In the early 14th century a concerted effort to upgrade the appearance of shrines is discernable: at Canterbury Edward I spent over £360 on the adornment of the shrine of St. Thomas in 1285<sup>37</sup> and a further £115 was spent in 1314 'pro corona Sancti Thome'; St. Werburgh's shrine at Chester dates from c1310; the shrine of St. Yvo at Ramsey was rebuilt slightly earlier in c1262; at Rochester the shrines of SS. Paulinus and Ythamar were rebuilt in marble and alabaster in 1344; at St. Albans the shrine of St. Alban was rebuilt by Abbot John de Maryns (1302-1308) and the shrine of St. Amphibalus in the mid 14th century; and in 1309 Sir William de Lilburn presented a

reliquary chest to Winchester Cathedral for the relics of St. Swithun.

The early 14th century was also a crucial time for oblations, at least at Norwich. After 1305 oblations dropped off drastically there until the Black Death. At Canterbury the oblations seem to have fallen steadily from 1220 until c1275 when they experienced a minor resurgence.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the importance of oblations in the total income of the house continued to drop; in 1291, when the temporalities of the house alone amounted to £1066 8s 1d (compared to average total revenues from all sources of £1406 1s 8d in the early 13th century) and the spiritualities would have been considerable, the oblations could at most have accounted for a fifth of the total income and were probably much less.

The fortunes of relics differed greatly through the 14th century, but despite a general and dramatic increase in oblations after the Black Death, their days of importance were numbered. Additional incentives prolonged devotion here and there. Indulgences, sometimes of massive proportions, could often be obtained for visiting a relic or an altar, and the sort of theatrics resorted to at Norwich was probably not uncommon. In 1401

a special feature was introduced into the services, probably at the time of high mass. The figure of an angel in the roof of the body of the church descended with a great censer, censuring the doubtless vast congregation in the nave. The angel was generally brightened with silver foil year by year, a charge for which constantly occurs.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, by the mid 15th century devotion to relics throughout England had become negligible and remained so until the Dissolution.

### 8. Burials

One of the first discernable results of enlarged and more public east ends was an increase in burials within the church. Burial rights and perquisites had long been valuable sources of revenue to monastic houses and had been ardently sought. But before the mid 13th century very few people had actually found their resting place inside the church; the precinct of every Benedictine monastery included a cemetery in which the vast majority of burials were made. Before the 13th century only a privileged few were eligible for burial inside churches.

High ranking clergy, bishops and abbots, for instance, were sometimes buried in the church. Many early, albeit beatified, archbishops were reburied in Anselm's new east end at Canterbury Cathedral in the early 12th century, and at Winchester Bishop Henry of Blois (1129-1171) collected together the remains of many ancient corpses buried there in mortuary chests which were placed about the presbytery.<sup>40</sup> To some degree they no doubt added a certain amount of sanctity to the presbytery, but they also provided tangible evidence of the lineage of the house - chartularies in stone, so to speak. This can be seen clearly in the tomb effigies of early bishops placed in Wells Cathedral in the very early 13th century. These effigies were deliberately carved to look old, even to the extent of being provided with Saxon mitres.<sup>41</sup> In this respect these ecclesiastical burials were emulating the burial of founders and patrons in their churches. In the 13th century this emulation of founders' rights led to the frequent burial

of clerics in parts of churches which they had been responsible for building. This was, in fact, a more common pattern of burial for abbots and priors of Benedictine houses in England than the much-cited preeminence which the chapter house supposedly possessed - there is actually little evidence that Benedictine chapter houses were used extensively for burial in England.

Burial in their church had long been a privilege of the founders of churches and monastic houses. In England this concept of an *Eigenkloster* or *Eigenkirche* seems to have gotten curiously overlaid by royal privilege, and a great number of the early burials in English Benedictine churches were royal. There were exceptions to this, of course, as noble patronage flourished throughout the 13th century and later. The most significant, major exception was perhaps Tewkesbury, founded by Robert FitzHamon (d 1107), who was buried initially in the chapter house. Throughout Tewkesbury's existence as an abbey the rights and privileges of its noble patrons were rigorously maintained. It was very largely the maintenance of these privileges which lead to the reburial of Robert FitzHamon in the church in 1241, and which lead to the founding of a chantry chapel in the church to him in 1397. Furthermore, when the east end was remodelled in the early 14th century, tombs of patrons, the De Clares, were set in a row in front of the steps to the presbytery.

Knights in the service of a monastery were also sometimes permitted burial in the church. The exceptional nature of this privilege in the 12th century is shown by the enormous expenses demanded for it.

At Peterborough Abbot Ernulf (1107-1114) made an agreement between his convent and those knights who held abbey lands, that a knight should pay yearly two parts of his tithes and at his death a third of his whole estate for burial in the church. As well, all his 'knightly endowments', including his horse and his arms were to be brought with his body to the funeral ceremonies and offered up to St. Peter, at which time the convent received the corpse in procession and performed the office of the dead.<sup>42</sup> As burial in the church became more common, the cost was undoubtedly made more reasonable. By the later Middle Ages it was probably relatively inexpensive; although perhaps not in direct proportion, the dignity of this privilege undoubtedly decreased with the cost and with its increasing popular accessibility.

From the time Edward the Confessor was buried in his new church at Westminster, royal burials began to proliferate in England. Until the time of Henry III, almost every ruler was buried in what amounted to an *Eigenkirche*, usually one he had founded or refounded.<sup>43</sup> Very early this began to extend to members of the royal family; for instance, Richard, Duke of Beorn, younger son of William the Conqueror, was buried in Winchester Cathedral, and in 1135 Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, his older brother, was buried at Gloucester before the high altar.

The new east end of Westminster Abbey was the setting for a drastic increase in burials, beginning with Henry III's daughter, Katherine (d 1257). This soon extended to nobles close to the king. At the same time, this efflorescence of burials saw the rise of

monumental, freestanding tomb sculpture, which set the standard for tombs throughout England. The rise of monumental tombs presupposed sufficient space in which to put them, and it is significant that they begin to appear immediately after the most active period in the rebuilding of east ends.

Monumental tomb architecture received a further elaboration with the rise of chantry chapels. Chantry foundations began to appear in the mid 13th century about the same time as monumental tombs, but until the Black Death chantries were always founded at an existing altar in the church. Moreover, until the mid 14th century they were comparatively rare. After the Black Death, not only did chantry foundations increase, but separate chapels were built in conjunction with the endowment. These chapels, sometimes filling an arcade arch, sometimes projecting from the body of the church, included the tomb of the founder of the chantry and an altar at which the chantry masses were said for his soul.

There is even some evidence that church design was influenced by the desire for burial space in the church. In the early 13th century east end at Rochester, the north and south walls of the aisleless presbytery are lined with recesses in the wall probably meant for tombs. The crypt was also extended under the new east end, although it is unclear what role crypts played in such burials. At Canterbury Cathedral, though, the crypt contained important chantry chapels, including those of Lady Mohun (d 1404) and Edward, the Black Prince (d 1376). Moreover, at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, the east chapel of the crypt was altered in the later Middle Ages to include a screened-

off chamber in the apse with wall recesses like those of Rochester.

From the mid 13th century burials formed a more and more important aspect of church design. Again at Rochester the 15th-century extension of the Lady Chapel in the south transept is matched by an impressive number of wills, whose bequests are accompanied by stipulations of burial in the church, and especially in the Lady Chapel.<sup>44</sup> Such bequests were becoming increasingly common through the 15th century and into the 16th, but the policy of individual houses differed widely regarding them; they were, strictly speaking, an abuse, even though a widely recognized and accepted one by that time. Although repaving in later centuries has erased the large measure of evidence for the lesser burials in monastic churches, some, such as Bardney,<sup>45</sup> appear to have been virtually paved with sepultral slabs - either inscribed stones or the monumental brasses which began to appear in the later 13th century.

#### 9. *Screens*

Another factor which facilitated the rise of monumental tombs and chantry chapels was the simultaneous increase in the compartmentalization of the church from the late 12th century. Perhaps in response to growing secular involvement in the life of monastic churches, screens were proliferating and becoming more substantial from this time. Such development is hard to trace due to the complete absence of 12th-century survivals in England,<sup>46</sup> but the developments discernable at Winchester Cathedral are fairly indicative of the development of screens in general:

The position of the choir and the height of the screens before the late thirteenth century are obscure; there are some indications that when the central tower was rebuilt in the early twelfth century it was designed to accommodate a screen no higher than that in San Clemente [2 or 3 feet]. By the end of the thirteenth century at least one lofty screen had been built, and by the mid fourteenth century two substantial screens of stone effectively blocked any view of the choir from the nave; a layman wishing to observe the elevation [of the host] had to wait for a mass on one of the nave altars. The beautiful choir stalls which still survive are of about 1300; from then on the monks were enclosed on three sides by screens of considerable height. At the end of the fourteenth century the enormous reredos which also still survives (though much restored) rose behind the high altar, effectively hiding St. Swithun and his shrine. Thus was completed a process which had begun when the retro-choir was first extended at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Step by step, culminating in the fourteenth century, St. Swithun was swung round on his axis. No doubt his shrine had always been approachable from the ambulatory as well as from the choir; but in a real sense it had presumably faced west in earlier centuries, and dominated the vista in one of the longest naves ever built. By 1400 it was visible only from the east. The high altar itself was still visible, as in most great churches, from the choir aisles as well as from the choir. But in the early sixteenth century even this opening was screened for most of its length, so that by the time Bishop Fox's screen was complete, choir, sanctuary, and high altar were united in [a] single box, entirely surrounded by screens of stone and wood; a rectangle lavishly carved and decorated, a church within a cathedral.<sup>47</sup>

In the 15th century even subsidiary chapels in many churches were being enclosed by stone or wooden parclose screens. Examples in both materials can also be seen at Winchester and also at Gloucester and Westminster.

Brooke compares this growing compartmentalization with contemporary developments in domestic architecture, particularly that in the

cloister, as, for example, in the partitioning of dormitories which will be discussed later.<sup>48</sup> While he stresses that the comparison is "significant if not stretched too far," late 13th century developments in the design of choir stalls can be seen very closely to parallel these domestic trends. It is at this time that canopied stalls begin to appear. Prior to this, choir stalls had been merely continuously joined benches (armrests and misericords, however, existed probably at least as early as the 12th century). In this new type of choir stall wooden panelling ran up the back of the stall to a canopy over it. Such choir stalls were warmer and less draughty. By the later 14th century, they had achieved forms of great magnificence, as at Chester, but their original motivation was undoubtedly comfort and can be seen as the culmination of the growth in England through the 13th century of papal sanction for wearing caps in choir on account of the cold. One of the earliest recorded instances of this privilege was at Abingdon, where Pope Alexander IV granted permission in February 1232; from this time such grants were common.<sup>49</sup> The earliest surviving canopied stalls are once again at Winchester and were made c1300. At about the same time, choir stalls being built at Canterbury Cathedral and probably finished by 1304/5 did not have canopies,<sup>50</sup> thus the Winchester stalls probably lie close to the beginning of the tradition.

*C. THE LADY CHAPEL*

The transformation of the east end achieved its final development with the rise of Lady Chapels - large, structurally independent chapels dedicated to the Virgin. Although chapels dedicated to Mary were common throughout Europe, only in England did they achieve the prominence of major, semi-autonomous structures which deserve treatment in their own right. The study of Lady Chapels also points up changes in religious sentiment and building motives more clearly than the east end in general, being a smaller, more manageable reflection of the whole.

One of the very earliest Lady Chapels was the one at Durham, the work of Bishop Hugh Pudsey (1153-1195). At some time before 1175, Hugh decided to build a chapel to the Virgin at the east end of the church. This work met with difficulties which Hugh took to be the result of 'divine prohibition', and so he abandoned it. In its place he began a chapel at the west end of the church, the Galilee Chapel, which he dedicated to the Virgin. Such a position for a Lady Chapel had been anticipated at Glastonbury, where the ancient, wattle-and-daub *Vetusta Ecclesia* had existed since long before the 10th century. It had been one of an axial group of detached churches, a common Anglo-Saxon arrangement which no doubt played some part in the rise of Lady Chapels. Before the turn of the 13th century, an eastern chapel with a crypt was added at Great Malvern; it is not known if the chapel was dedicated to the Virgin at this time, but it certainly was after the chapel was rebuilt and lengthened probably late in the 14th century.

An eastern Lady Chapel of two bays was certainly included in the extension of the east end at Barking about the beginning of the 13th century, and thereafter Lady Chapels were built at a tremendous rate until the close of the century.

Lady Chapels sometimes formed an integral part of the rebuilding of an east end; notable instances include Barking, Winchester, and Worcester in the early 13th century; Chester, Malmesbury, and Westminster in the mid 13th century; and Milton, St. Albans, and Tewkesbury in the early 14th century. Elsewhere the building of a Lady Chapel was virtually the only thing done after the beginning of the 13th century to significantly change the plan of the east end. Such churches include Bury St. Edmunds; St. Augustine's, Canterbury; Gloucester; Leominster; Norwich; and Reading, in all of which the Lady Chapel formed the eastern ambulatory chapel of a pre 13th century chevet. With the exception of Canterbury Cathedral, these churches are the only ones in which pre 13th century chevets survived until the Dissolution. At Canterbury Cathedral, the altar of the eastern chapel, called the Corona, was dedicated to the Holy Trinity.<sup>51</sup>

At Peterborough, a building campaign from 1272 to c1286 squared off the presbytery aisles, replaced the aisle windows, and added a rectangular Lady Chapel east of the north transept along side the north presbytery aisle; the central apse was not squared off until the end of the 15th century, when the 'New Building' was added. Until that time the Lady Chapel here, as elsewhere, formed the major structural addition to the later medieval east end. It was only occasionally that

a Lady Chapel was added, as at Ely, to an east end which had already undergone a thorough rebuilding. The east end of Ely was rebuilt by Bishop Hugh Northwold (1229-1254) and finished in 1252. Although an area in the south presbytery aisle may have functioned as a Lady Chapel at this time, a major, structurally independent Lady Chapel was not begun until 1321.

The majority of Lady Chapels were built as axial, eastern chapels. They did occupy other positions, however, notably, as at Peterborough, off the north transept along side the north presbytery aisle. This position is almost exclusively characteristic of East Anglia and the fenlands. The mid 13th-century Lady Chapel of Ramsey Abbey is perhaps the earliest Benedictine example, followed closely by Peterborough, begun in 1272, and Bury St. Edmunds, begun in 1275. Other Lady Chapels were built in this position at Ely, 1321-c1349; Tynemouth, 1326-1336 (the only major, geographically separate example); Binham, in the late 14th or early 15<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>52</sup> and perhaps Crowland in the time of Abbot Thomas (1392-1417).<sup>53</sup> The regional nature of this group is not limited to Benedictine monasteries. At the Cluniac priory at Thetford, a Lady Chapel was built projecting east of the north transept in the early 13th century, prior to most Benedictine examples, and a Lady Chapel was similarly built at Leiston, a house of Premonstratensian Canons in Suffolk, in the 14th century.<sup>54</sup>

Projecting Lady Chapels in a similar position but on a smaller scale were built at Canterbury Cathedral and Glastonbury.<sup>55</sup> In neither of these two churches does it form the main chapel dedicated to the

Virgin, however. At Canterbury the Lady Chapel built east of the north transept, 1448-1455, definitely takes second place to the eastern chapel of the crypt which, from 1262, was dedicated as Our Lady of the Undercroft. At Glastonbury Abbot Beere (1493-1524) built the Chapel of Our Lady de Loreto to the west of the north transept in memory of an embassy he made to Italy. Although it did project westward, it was not structurally independent and was definitely of a minor status, especially compared with the Lady Chapel which since Saxon times had existed to the west of the church. This west chapel had been rebuilt after the 1184 fire as a separate church like its Saxon predecessor, but was joined with the abbey church in the 13th century, when the Galilee was built to connect it with the nave.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Abbot Adam de Sodbury (1323-1334) decorated the high altar with an image of the Virgin in a tabernacle, and c1500 the same Abbot Beere who built the Chapel of Our Lady of Loreto added a crypt to the main, western Lady Chapel (although this crypt was associated with the cult of Joseph of Arimathea, whose relics were 'found' at Glastonbury in the 1360's). Such intense, material interest in the Virgin manifests itself at other churches as well, St. Albans, for instance, had numerous altars dedicated to the Virgin. Besides the eastern Lady Chapel, the main nave altar against the rood screen was dedicated to Our Lady, the east chapel of the south presbytery aisle was dedicated to Our Lady of the Four Tapers, and two altars against nave piers in the south nave arcade were dedicated to Our Lady and Our Lady at the Pillar; the north-east altar of the parochial chapel of St. Andrew adjoining the north-west end of the nave was also dedicated to the Virgin (Figure 19).

A much smaller group of Lady Chapels was associated with the south transept, although they were seldom structurally autonomous and, thus, of relatively less importance in the church. At Finchale the Lady Chapel in the south transept was remodelled c1300 to feature a large east window, but it did not project beyond the transept walls. The south transept at Rochester, too, was rebuilt in the later 13th century as a Lady Chapel. Before the rebuilding, there had been two altars in the south transept, one of which was dedicated to the Virgin; at this time the other altar was removed. In the early 16th century a western extension, planned with fan vaulting, was added to the transept forming a choir. Altars dedicated to the Virgin were also common at the east end of the south presbytery aisle, as at Norwich (Bauchon Chapel, c1330), St. Albans, Sherborne, and possibly Shaftsbury, and on the south side of the nave as at Gloucester and St. Albans.

By the Dissolution, Lady Chapels had been built at most major Benedictine churches - unless, of course, the church itself, like Cistercian churches, was dedicated to the Virgin, as at St. Mary's, Coventry, and St. Mary's, York. The building and rebuilding of Lady Chapels declined rapidly, however, after the mid 14th century and was infrequent in the 15th, although there are a small number of very fine and costly late medieval examples, such as the Lady Chapels at Gloucester, rebuilt c1450-1499, and at Westminster, 1502-1512 (more will be said about these two Lady Chapels later).

The reasons for the popularity of Lady Chapels are obscure. Analogy with Saxon church planning does no more than suggest a possible

precedent for the typical axiality and autonomy of Lady Chapels. Their existence owed more to a general increase in devotion to the Virgin which, if it cannot be clearly measured, is at least implied by contemporary practice. The 'Salve Regina' was the most celebrated of the four Breviary hymns to the Virgin which H.T. Henry has traced through the crucial years of the early 13th century. Use of the hymn underwent transformation and regularization among the Cistercians in the 1220's, and c1221 the Dominicans began to use the hymn at Compline; the Carthusians were singing it daily at Vespers from before 1239, and from 1251 until the close of the 14th century the Cistercians sang it after Compline.<sup>57</sup> The Benedictines, not being a centralized and regularized order like those mentioned above, could not be expected to comply to such a standardized formula of devotion, but although it may have been more haphazard, such devotion was no doubt at least as widespread as were Lady Chapels in their churches. But it is more likely that such monastic devotions would have taken place in choir than in the Lady Chapel.

The Lady Chapel, however, could very well have been a focus for secular devotion and Henry notes that the 'Salve Regina' - which was known in England simply as the 'Salve' - figured largely in the evening devotions of the confraternities and guilds which were formed in great numbers about the beginning of the 13th century.<sup>58</sup> Such confraternities existed at most of the major Benedictine foundations; they formed an important medium by which the laity could participate in the spiritual life of the monastic community, and as has already been

shown, the transformation of the east end of the church in general owes much to the need which was felt - by monasteries and the wider community of believers - to open up monastic churches to the positive participation of society in general.

Such secular devotion to the Virgin is borne out by the oblation records at Canterbury Cathedral. In 1220, the first Jubilee year of St. Thomas, offerings at the High Altar amounted to £54 15s 8d, at St. Mary's Altar £13 4s 9d, the next most profitable altars being St. Cross which brought in £2 9s 8d and St. Michael at 14s 5d. The popularity of the Mary altar must have risen, for in 1262 the east chapel in the crypt was rededicated as the main chapel of the Virgin. This rise in popularity through the 13th century is also reflected in the oblations of the third Jubilee in 1320. While the total oblations were less, the relative importance of the altar of St. Mary in the Crypt is obvious; that altar attracted £6 13s 4d in offerings while the High Altar brought in only £3. This difference was even more pronounced in the fourth Jubilee year of 1370, when the offerings at St. Mary in the Crypt amounted to £50 and, at the High Altar, £7.<sup>59</sup>

Even though oblations dropped off in the later Middle Ages, the loss in revenues was partially supplemented by burial perquisites and bequests which stipulated burial in the church and sometimes specifically in the Lady Chapel. St. John Hope has researched burials in the Lady Chapel of Rochester, and an interesting line of development seems to appear. The earliest recorded burials are those of bishops. The will of Bishop Thomas Trillek, dated 11 December 1372, requests

burial in the Lady Chapel, as does that of his successor, Thomas of Brinton, dated 30 April 1389, and that of Bishop Richard Young, of 17 October 1418.

From early in the 15th century members of the nobility were also requesting burial in the Lady Chapel. One of the earliest was Sir William Rikhill in 1407; he also gave £100 for the celebration of daily requiem masses in the Lady Chapel in perpetuity for himself, his wife and others. His wife requested to be buried beside him in her will of 28 April 1418, and Sir Richard de Arundell, by his will of 8 July 1417, also desired burial in the Lady Chapel.

Later in the century any citizen who could afford the privilege seems to have been able to request burial in the Lady Chapel. It is also likely that the privilege was becoming more and more affordable. In 1518, one Thomas Harlow left only 6s 8d by his will to be buried next to his wife in the Lady Chapel.<sup>60</sup>

It was probably to accommodate this growing trend that the Lady Chapel at Rochester was extended westward in the early 16th century, more than doubling its size. St. John Hope suggested that this extension was meant to furnish a choir in the chapel. This is certainly possible for stalls appeared in the Lady Chapels of Winchester and Westminster in the early 16th century.

The replacement of oblations by bequests and their accompanying demands for burial in the church evinces a fundamental change in religious sentiment - from a communal activity of (relatively) disinterested charity and reverence, to an essentially personal activity

with more self-interested motives, namely, the benefit to one's own soul which could be derived from the burial of one's body in the sacred precinct of the church. People wanted something more tangible for their money and many were willing to give generously for this purpose. Many new chapels of the later Middle Ages were associated specifically with a chantry or burial of the benefactor who financed the building of the chapel. Some of the few Lady Chapels rebuilt in the later Middle Ages resulted from such motives. The Lady Chapel at Gloucester was rebuilt c1450-1499 by Edmund Compton (d 1493), whose son, Sir William Compton, was a ward of Henry VII and a friend of Henry VIII as well as Chief Steward of the abbeys of Gloucester and Cirencester.<sup>61</sup> At Westminster Henry VII began an extremely sumptuous rebuilding of the Lady Chapel in 1502. When he died in 1509 the chapel was completed by Henry VIII specifically as a chantry chapel for his father.

Religious sentiment in the later Middle Ages was tending toward a more direct knowledge of and communion with God and away from the need for the intercession of the catholic church and its sacraments. This is mirrored in a more personal and less communal use of Lady Chapels in the later Middle Ages. Communal use of Lady Chapels, as measured (albeit imperfectly) by oblations, would seem to have declined rapidly from the early 15th century. Overlapping with this decline, however, from the later 14th century, burials provided the means for a more personal involvement in the life of Lady Chapels. But Lady Chapels were designed and built initially for communal use, and in this context

their later use must be seen as decadent. After the Reformation an attempt was made to rectify the situation when most graves were removed from churches and the practice of saying masses for the dead was abolished.

#### D. THE NAVE

##### 1. Monastic Usage

The nave presents a far different line of development from the east end. This is partly because the east end contained the most important liturgical features of the church - the high altar and relics - and partly because the nave was not used so extensively by the monastic community. In fact they used it principally for processions. One of the most common of these was the Sunday Procession for which the pavement of the nave was sometimes inscribed with cross-shaped markers to help the monks place themselves when the procession made its station in front of the rood altar. Traces of these pavement markers survive at Bardney Abbey and some can still be seen *in situ* at the Cistercian house of Fountains.<sup>62</sup> The procession would then proceed through two doors in the rood screen on either side of the central altar and through the central door of the choir screen back to the choir (for the route of the Sunday Procession at Durham, see Figure 10). St. John Hope maintained that the Sunday Procession had a far greater influence over the planning of buildings and the

placing of screens and doorways than has hitherto been noticed.<sup>63</sup>

The nave aisles were also used in processions. It is difficult to reconstruct much of the Benedictine liturgy in England, but analogy with the secular cathedrals is not totally inappropriate; it is known, for instance, that at Salisbury Cathedral the south nave aisle was used in festal processions to High Mass.<sup>64</sup> The same was probably true at Durham for the north nave aisle.<sup>65</sup>

In the later Middle Ages, services were not attended or carried out with the same degree of punctiliousness as in the 13th century. This went beyond the exclusion of minor services such as masses for the dead. Absence from choir and irreverent or even rowdy behavior during important services were common; at Exeter Cathedral in 1330 the canons in the higher stalls amused themselves by pouring hot candle wax upon those who sat below.<sup>66</sup> Such abuses accompanied, perhaps even caused, a simplification and diminution of ritual in monastic services. Part of this process is recorded in the naves of Benedictine churches.

From the 14th century, it is possible to see a decline in the processional and ritual function of naves. This decline is detectable principally in a decrease in the processional potential of the nave aisles. At Bardney in the 14th century the eastern arches of both nave aisles leading into the transepts were blocked off by stone screens; in the north aisle the screen formed the reredos of an altar, the two bays in front comprising the Chapel of St. Laurence; there was no altar against the screen in the south aisle and Brakspear suggests it was probably a vestry.<sup>67</sup> He also states that chapels were common

in one of these two positions, that such chapels were universal in Cistercian churches in later days, and were also found at Durham (Nevile's Porch), Gloucester, and Malmesbury. Such screens appear to have been widespread. Evidence of them can be seen at Binham, according to Marr's plan;<sup>68</sup> at Chester and Ely, according to Atkinson's plans;<sup>69</sup> and at St. Mary's, York, according to Whittingham's plan.<sup>70</sup> Of course a great many smaller churches had always had aisleless naves; their small populations obviated a full programme of ritual from the beginning. At Boxgrove a not uncommon hybrid appears with only one nave aisle, the other being subsumed by the cloister alley next to the church. Boxgrove's solitary south aisle also appears to have been screened in the later Middle Ages.

A more limited constriction existed at Durham. There the south aisle was completely blocked by 'Nevile's Porch', a chapel built by Lord Neville, 1372-1380, in line with the rood screen. The north aisle was only partially blocked when a trellis, probably of wrought iron, was built across the eastern arch. It was pierced by a 'trellis-doure' which was always kept locked except on holy days and days when there were processions.<sup>71</sup> Processions could still take place at Durham and did; the *Rites of Durham*, written in the later 16th century probably by an ex-monk of the cathedral priory, mentions a mass said every Friday at the Jesus Altar against the rood screen; after Evening song the Jesus Anthem, a favourite devotion in the 15th and 16th centuries, was sung in the nave. But the presence of the grille at Durham shows the exclusion process to have been mutual; both the nave

and east end were becoming more impenetrable, the one to the monastic community, the other to the laity. Winchester also had such a grille across its south nave aisle from the end of the 13th century, and after Henry V's Chapel was completed at Westminster in 1448, the monks erected stone screens isolating the east end to 'extract something more from the pilgrims who passed through'.

More drastic examples exist of the disuse of aisles. Finchale Priory provides the most extreme case. The church was built of sandstone subject to both weathering and insect erosion. By the mid 14th century the walls had deteriorated and needed attention. Rather than rebuild the outer walls of the church, which were also the outer walls of the aisles, in 1364 all the aisles of the church were demolished and the main arcades filled in with new stone, the old aisle windows being reset in the new walling (Figure 12). This still left the main body of the nave free for processions, but the ritual capacity of the church was reduced enormously. The same trend can be seen at Lindisfarne where the door between the south nave aisle and the west cloister walk was blocked up in the 15th century. This door was a necessary part of the Sunday Procession and its disuse, together with prior developments in the cloister,<sup>72</sup> would seem to preclude the continued existence of the Sunday Procession in the later life of the priory; Thompson goes so far as to suppose the total disuse of the nave during the century before the Dissolution.<sup>73</sup>

Although naves were sometimes rebuilt in the later Middle Ages, a very negligent attitude, presumably relating to decreasing monastic use,

was adopted in many cases. There was a reluctance or inability to finish naves at which rebuilding had been begun rendering them virtually useless for very long periods of time. Westminster Abbey presents the classic case. By the death of its great patron, Henry III, in 1272, the first five bays of the nave were finished. The choir occupied the eastern three bays, so there was virtually no nave at all, yet building stopped completely until the 1360's. The continuation of the work, remarkable for being exceptionally conservative in design - in fact almost identical to the five eastern bays of nearly one hundred years earlier - continued slowly and sporadically until the early 16th century; from c1366 until 1513 the nave was filled with mason's sheds and scaffolding.<sup>74</sup> A similar story unfolded at Chester in the mid 14th century, where a rebuilding of the nave was begun c1350. Most of the south side of the nave was finished to triforium height, but there was then a 135-year hiatus in the work. Building was resumed by Abbot Simon Ripley (1485-1493), who finished the north side of the nave up to triforium height c1490, again a very conservative copy of the much earlier south arcade; the Perpendicular clerestory could be the work of Ripley's successor, Abbot John Birchenshaw (1493-1524).<sup>75</sup> Similar trouble probably also existed at Abingdon, where the obedientiary rolls variously begin to mention the 'new work' from 1375/6. Later references make clear that the 'new work' consisted of rebuilding the transepts, crossing and tower, nave, and western towers. The work was finished under Abbot John Sante (1468-1496), a great builder. Leland recorded building dates of 1427-1495 when he visited the church before

the Dissolution; unfortunately it was demolished shortly later. We do not know what it looked like, but apart from certain discrepancies and lack of adequate information, the campaign appears to have been a long one, perhaps as long as 120 years.<sup>76</sup>

When the south nave arcade at St. Albans collapsed in 1323, work was not even begun until 1336. The king, when on a visit to the abbey, reproachfully told Abbot Richard de Wallingford (1328-1336) that he ought to turn his attention to the south side of the church, which still lay in ruins; Richard was not much interested.<sup>77</sup> Work was only begun by his successor, Abbot Michael de Mentmore (1336-1349), and it was also rebuilt in a very conservative manner, very much like the Early English work at the west end. It would seem that these examples of conservatism in architectural style appeared when the original function of the nave was lost, or at least declining. The possible range of motivation for such conservatism is very broad. On the one hand, they may have been able to rebuild more inexpensively by not having a master mason design something completely new; but on the other hand, the older style may have had associations with a time of more spiritual energy and popular participation than existed at the time of rebuilding, thus restoring by implication what was in actuality gone forever.

The new nave of Great Malvern church, largely a recasing of Norman fabric, was completed in reasonable time, however, in the later 15th century, and there is no reason to doubt that the nave of Bath Abbey would have been, too, if it had not been interrupted by the

Dissolution (the new church was only begun in 1499). Both of these new naves, however, were smaller than those they replaced. At Great Malvern two Norman nave piers are built into the 15th century west wall; the Norman nave must have been longer. At Bath the whole new church fit completely into the space of the former Norman nave; the new nave occupied the four western bays of the 10-bay Norman nave.

Milton and Upholland both managed to do without naves altogether in the later Middle Ages. Naves were planned at both, at Milton after the church was destroyed by fire in 1309, at Upholland after the foundation of the house in 1319. At both houses, however, only the eastern arm, crossing, and transepts were built. The resulting 'T-plan' resembled what came to be the standard plan for college chapels at Oxford, of which New College Chapel was the first deliberately designed example, dating from 1380-1386. These college chapels did not have to cater to lay use, and the comparison is probably indicative of a decline in monastic interest in lay use of their churches.

The exclusion of ritual from the nave must have resulted in a concomitant localization of ritual in the choir. This, and probably a growing amount of reactionary formalization of ritual, could have been responsible for the fairly widespread erection of vestries or 'revestries' projecting from the choir aisles in the later Middle Ages. At Bardney the east end of the south nave aisle was probably made into a vestry in the 14th century. In 1440 a new vestry was built onto the south side of the presbytery. It was slightly built

and floored with plain red tiles, but it had an altar against the east wall. At St. Mary's, York, an altar of St. Katherine was dedicated in 1283 in the newly built vestry off the south presbytery aisle, but most of these vestries were without altars. In the late 14th and 15th centuries vestries, and also sacristies, were common in this location. Fowler rightly points out that these vestries were usually on the same side of the church as the cloisters.<sup>78</sup>

The desultory attitude towards the fabric of naves in the later Middle Ages is in distinct contrast to earlier interests. In the early 13th century a number of Benedictine naves were lengthened. The west end of the Norman nave at Elstow featured two Early English bays and the west end of the Norman nave at Freiston had three. At Tynemouth the nave was extended by two bays c1200, and Abbot John de Cella (1195-1214) extended the nave of St. Albans three bays. At the same time, some smaller, aisleless naves were given aisles. At Deerhurst aisles and nave arcades were added to the aisleless Saxon nave c1200, and the aisleless nave at Carisbrooke was supplemented by a south aisle from the late 12th century.

By the end of the 13th century this enthusiasm was paling. The change is most likely associated with the parochial responsibilities which many Benedictine churches bore; it is parallel to and symptomatic of a gradual souring of relations between the monastic community and the parish.

## 2. *Parochial Associations*

Many Benedictine houses in England were involved with the care of souls in a parochial context. This relationship was closer than the patronal or rectorial role which appropriations created; the house and surrounding area actually constituted a parish, the parishioners having to enter the precinct of the house to avail themselves of their spiritual rights. Page believed this relationship dates back at least to the 10th-century monastic revival in England,<sup>79</sup> but it received much impetus from the Gregorian reforms of the late 11th and early 12th centuries, which made it improper for lay persons to collect church tithes. Thus, many monastic houses were founded around the gift from a lay patron of a parish church in his hands. In the most modest of these foundations, the monastic community was simply given the east end of the parish church to use as their choir, and the parishioners continued to use the nave as they had done before. At Easebourne, Hurley, Wilmington, and other small houses, this arrangement lasted until the Dissolution. The monks of Bardney made use of their parish church in this way until a more substantial abbey church could be built. This resulted in a parish church in the precinct separate from the abbey church, a situation which commonly arose, although a single church more often accommodated parish and monastic community. Even at such major houses as Chester and Tewkesbury, when an imposing monastic church was built, the parishioners moved into it with the monks. A spirit of cooperation and harmony between monasteries and their parishes prevailed in the

early 13th century, but while the relationship was accepted it was not always perfectly felicitous. Within monasteries a growing bureaucratization and concern for revenues lead to a hardening of financial channels which tended increasingly to exclude the parishioners from proper consideration. This in turn caused friction with parishes which were growing in ecclesiastical importance, financial stability, and population. Especially as towns grew, civic solidarity began to resist the sometimes overwhelming presence of powerful urban monastic houses.

The friction was notably less at those houses with separate parish churches; when monks had to share their church with local villagers, they resented the resulting noise and confusion. It was undoubtedly this concern which led to the building of separate churches - sometimes only feet apart from one another - in the precinct. At some houses separate parish churches had existed since the 12th century or earlier. In the mid 13th century others began to be built. One such was St. Mary's parish church, built at the alien priory of Hayling Island probably at the instigation of Jumieges, the mother house. A dedication date of 1237 is recorded for the parish church of St. Thomas of Canterbury at Ramsey Abbey; it was probably the remodelled, Norman hospitium or guest house of the abbey which is known to have been dissolved some time before 1291. A parish church was also built at Great Malvern Priory before 1296 and also dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. Separate parish churches continued to appear later. An agreement made in the Consistory Court of Canterbury in 1312 between the prior and convent of Rochester on the one hand and the parishioners

on the other stipulated that if at any time the monks would build them a separate church outside the cathedral, the parishioners should move to it and resign all claims to an altar in the cathedral. Such a church had actually been started late in the 13th century, but had come to naught; another was begun in the early 15th century - but by the parishioners, not by the monks. In May, 1418 Bishop Richard Young granted the parishioners licence to continue and finish building their parish church in the cemetery north of the cathedral church. Nevertheless, various objections and hindrances were raised by the monks and building continued slowly - one might imagine they resented the loss of lucrative space in the cemetery and perhaps also fees pertaining to sacraments and other spiritual business. In 1421 a new agreement finally withdrew all formal opposition to the completion of the church. It was consecrated in 1423, the old parochial altar of St. Nicholas being removed from the nave of the cathedral to the new church.<sup>80</sup>

The parishioners had good reason to want their own church. As early as 1283 Archbishop Peckham ruled that, since the people of the city had no parish church except the cathedral, from which they were debarred at night by the closing of the priory gate, they should henceforth either have access to it at all times or a parish church should be built for them. There was never a great deal of cooperation, however, on the part of the convent. The monks, disliking the arrangement, tried by a variety of means to prevent the parishioners from using the church: they shut the doors at night, refused the sacrament to the sick, denied services, and in 1327 they locked the doors of the nave and took away

the key.<sup>81</sup> By the intervention of the bishop, a compromise solution was adopted to satisfy the parishioners. An oratory was built in the north nave aisle by screening off the three westernmost bays from the rest of the nave, probably with wooden screens.<sup>82</sup> The parishioners had access to the oratory even at night. Undoubtedly this must have entailed night access into the priory, a situation which no doubt rankled with the monks and which may have affected the layout of the precinct.<sup>83</sup> However, it did keep the parish church and its fees inside the priory church, so the monks also benefitted from the compromise. Similar solutions were adopted elsewhere.

At Ely in the mid 14th century it was decided to build a separate church against the nave wall for the people of Trinity parish, who had previously had rights in the nave of the cathedral. In 1359/60 an area was cleared against the north nave aisle at the back of the screen facade (Figure 11). The church was consecrated and dedicated by Bishop Simon Langham (1362-1366). However, the work was apparently done in a parsimonious spirit and was never fully satisfactory.<sup>84</sup> Similar semidetached chapels were also built at Romsey and St. Albans. In 1372 the north nave aisle at Romsey, which served as the parish chapel of St. Laurence,<sup>85</sup> was found to be in an unsatisfactory condition. An episcopal enquiry was held to determine whether responsibility for the repair of the north aisle lay with the priory or with the parish. This resulted in an application dated 10 May, 1403 from the Vicar, John Umfrey, and the parishioners of St. Laurence for permission to pull down the north aisle from the transept to the porch

and to rebuild it on a larger scale; the north transept became the presbytery and the chapel was separated from the rest of the church by oak screens (Figure 18).<sup>86</sup> At St. Albans the parish chapel of St. Andrew, consisting of two equal naves ending in altars dedicated to St. Andrew and Our Lady, was built 1454-1462 in a position similar to Ely's against the north nave aisle (Figure 19). A three-bay arcade connected the chapel with the nave.

Two more singular variations also deserve notice. The history of the parish of St. Oswald at the Abbey of St. Werburgh, Chester, is vague, but towards the end of the 13th century, it suffered the same financial alienation as occurred elsewhere. Between 1246 and 1295 the Bishop of Lichfield decided that

. . . the parishioners of the altar of St. Oswald shall be bound to enclose their cemetery, and repair the walls, windows and roof of the nave aisle of the church of St. Werburgh adjoining the cemetery, from the great door on that side to opposite the altar of St. Oswald.<sup>87</sup>

At this time, then, and probably until the nave was rebuilt c1350, the parish used the south nave aisle. After c1350 the parishioners must have been moved because the nave was under construction and was not finished until c1490. They probably removed to the south transept, rebuilt c1340, which appears to have been designed specifically to accommodate the parish, perhaps permanently, perhaps just while the nave was being rebuilt. It is almost as large as the nave itself, and was screened off from the rest of the church (Figure 8). A document of 1488 mentions 'the church of St. Oswald', but this could refer

once more to the south nave aisle, to the south transept, or even to a separate church.

At Sherborne a three-aisled parochial extension was added onto the west front of the church in the late 14th century. The Saxon west tower was demolished, but the west wall of the nave remained. North and south doors provided access between nave and parish chapel. These doors were necessary, because the parish chapel had no font and the parishioners still had to use the one in the monastic church for baptismal rites. This caused a great deal of resentment amongst the parishioners. In 1436, after the abbey had narrowed the access doors between parish chapel and nave, the parishioners rioted and the roof of the abbey church was set alight.

It is significant that the chapels of Chester and Romsey were built and paid for by the parishioners. This situation developed because the parish received the oblations at the altars in the chapel. From the Benedictine viewpoint, ever narrowing into monetary channels, the "owner" of the altar was responsible for the overhead, i.e. the maintenance and upkeep of the parochial chapel. This was even the attitude of the monks of Rochester when c1305 the Customale Roffense tells us

. . . the infirm [of St. Bartholomew's Hospital near Chatham - an earlier foundation of the priory] also have the offerings of two altars, namely, of St. James and St. Giles [in the nave aisles] and on that account they ought to cover the aisles of the nave.<sup>88</sup>

At Winchcombe in 1384 the vicar protested his liability to repair the

chancel and windows of the parish church and tried to have the responsibility laid on the abbey; he lost his case. Later the chancel became so ruinous that it could not be used for services, and the parishioners turned instead to the nave of the abbey church. Under these circumstances Abbot William Winchcombe (1454-1474) reluctantly built a new chancel. The parishioners paid £200 towards a new nave and Ralph Boteler, Lord of Sudeley, helped them to finish the work.

This attitude determined very strongly the policy which Benedictines adopted towards the fabric of the naves of their churches after the 13th century. That they had a vested interest to maintain parochial connections in their churches can be seen from the above, as can the disadvantages. No clear policy ever emerged to define the relationship between monastery and parish, but growing tensions after the 13th century led to separate parish churches at some houses; at Muchelney it would even appear that the parish and parish church became virtually independent of the abbey after 1400. Nevertheless, some houses continued to maintain parishioners in the monastic church, especially in the nave or one of the nave aisles. Those naves which remained parochial can be correlated very closely with Benedictine naves which were rebuilt in the later Middle Ages. Moreover, enough of this building activity is known to have been initiated and financed by the parish rather than the monastery that such an arrangement can be regarded as fairly widespread.

Work on parochial naves was often done on a relatively small scale. For instance, the parochial nave of Bungay features early 14th-century

arcades and a Perpendicular clerestory; the south nave aisle windows are also Perpendicular, and the whole nave is dominated by a spectacular southwest tower begun c1470. At Dunster the crossing and its tower were rebuilt 1443-1446. Over the next century the nave and both transepts were rebuilt. A screen was erected in 1498 as the outcome of a quarrel between the parishioners and the monastery, and the font is Perpendicular also. The Perpendicular parts of the west facade are the latest pre-Dissolution features. At Stogursey, however, the whole parochial nave dates from one campaign shortly after 1414. So does the 14th-century nave at Wilmington, although the north porch was added later.

At Crowland the rebuilding of the parochial nave was begun under Abbot Thomas (1392-1417) and the vaulting and glazing of the windows was finished under Abbot Litlington (1427-1470). At the same time the north aisle was enlarged to a width comparable with the nave itself. It featured a large tower at its western end dating from the second quarter of the 15th century, and three western chapels, provided by a will of 1394, projected further to the north. The expansion of nave aisles was common in parochial monastic naves: the south nave aisle of Blyth was enlarged c1300, as was that of Earl's Colne in the 15th century. Leominster experienced two such expansions. The south aisle was enlarged to nave size remarkably early; it was dedicated c1239. In the early 14th century an additional nave was built south of this, creating a series of three parallel naves. Such enlargements were probably built as a response to increasing urban populations and enabled by rising urban prosperity.

It is not always easy to ascertain from documents whether a nave served a parish. Where such information is lacking the fabric of a nave can provide a good indication. For instance, the western half of the nave and the north porch at Shrewsbury were rebuilt in the later 14th century. Even without documentary verification this would strongly suggest parochial associations. Furthermore, it is often difficult to ascertain exactly what parts of a church the parish controlled. In 1249 Pope Innocent IV arranged that at Wymondham the town should have the nave, north aisle, and northwest tower of the church, the priory the rest including the south aisle and southwest tower.<sup>89</sup> This settlement did not end all strife at Wymondham and certainly cannot be considered as paradigm for other parochial/monastic settlements.

The financial responsibilities of the parishes at Chester and Romsey towards the fabric of the monastic churches there have already been mentioned. At Chester the parishioners were responsible for the south nave aisle before 1295. This is an early documented instance of this change; in 1359/60 the priory at Ely still paid for the construction of a new parochial chapel. But by this time more and more parishes were assuming or were being forced into accepting responsibility for part of a monastic nave. At Pershore the parochial nave of St. Edburga was taxed as the Church of Holy Cross as early as 1340 (this would seem to indicate some financial independence) and by 1372 the parish at Romsey was responsible for the north nave aisle.

The extent of parochial involvement in monastic building covered more than just naves, however. The belltower at Evesham, built under

Abbot Clement Litchfield (1514-1539), was spared destruction at the Dissolution by the intervention of the men of the town. Brown Willis suggested that it was saved because the men of Evesham had contributed to its construction.<sup>90</sup> Firmer evidence survives for Dunst r; a contract exists dated 1443 between the parishioners and the mason, John Marys of Stogursey, for the rebuilding of the crossing and crossing tower. On the other hand, monasteries were beginning to be forced into a position of financial responsibility with regard to town walls, which were sometimes contiguous with precinct walls, and public highways and bridges.<sup>91</sup>

Three other rebuilt naves also deserve attention: Canterbury, Winchester, and Worcester. These were all cathedrals, and in all three cases, the work was clearly an episcopal responsibility. The rebuilding of the nave at Canterbury was initiated by Archbishop Sudbury, who paid for the demolition of the old nave and in all contributed 3000 marks. He also enjoined the clergy of his diocese to collect subscriptions for the new work. His successor, Archbishop Courtenay (1381-1396), donated 1000 marks, and induced Richard II and other nobles to do likewise. His successor, Archbishop Arundel, also contributed 1000 marks. Likewise, the nave of Winchester appears to have been rebuilt largely under the auspices of Bishop William de Edington (1346-1366) and Bishop William Wykeham (1367-1404) and Worcester through the generosity of Bishop Henry Wakefield (1375-1395).

Norwich Cathedral makes an interesting comparison with the above episcopal and parochial building. It remains one of the purest

major Norman churches in England. Part of the reason for this involves a lack of popular financial support. Norwich never had a good relationship with the local population. The riots and violence which resulted were fairly common elsewhere but certainly not as early as the first recorded riot at Norwich in 1232. Neither bequests nor burials were substantial enough to warrant any major rebuilding schemes. Nevertheless, Norwich was a prosperous town. Instead of pumping money into the monastic cathedral, however, a great deal was spent on the parish churches of the city. There are said to have been 52 of them in the city of Norwich at the Dissolution and many of them were Perpendicular structures.

#### *E. TOWERS*

A monastic church represented an enormous financial commitment. Most of the expense went toward the enclosure and adornment of interior space, but a significant proportion was also used to build towers. Together with an elaborate west facade, towers helped to make the church impressive from the exterior. They could often be seen from considerable distances, and were sometimes used as beacons. By their presence, too, a church and monastery could physically dominate their surroundings. But they functioned principally to house the bells of the monastery. Bells not only dominated a wider area than the towers in which they hung, they did so far more eloquently; they called the monks to the monastic offices and parishioners to their services, they rang to

celebrate principal feast days, to mark burials, and to commemorate benefactors.

The Normans were ambitious tower builders. Where they could be afforded, their churches included a crossing tower and two west towers. At Ely, only two towers were built, one over the crossing and an axial western tower. Bury St. Edmunds featured an elaboration on this; the church there had a crossing tower and three west towers. Towers were expensive to build, however, and most Benedictine houses had to be content with a single crossing tower.

The Norman church at Durham had a crossing tower and two west towers. Only two of them contained belfries, however. The three bells in the central tower were rung to announce the monastic offices, while the four bells in the northwest tower, the 'Galilee Steeple', were rung at principal feasts and 'such other times as the Bishop did come to town'. The great bell in the Galilee Steeple was also rung on Sundays to announce the services to people in the surrounding area.<sup>92</sup> At Rochester the bells in Gundulf's tower, the 'turris major', were rung on principal feasts and the bells in the 'parva turris' were rung for commemorations of benefactors.

Bells, in fact, seem to have been an important indicator of ecclesiastical rights and privileges. This is particularly clear in the controversies from the mid 13th century over the building of chapels at monastic agricultural estates. The main point of contention in this matter was the potential contravention of existing ecclesiastical jurisdictions. When the monks of the Cistercian house

of Waverley, for instance, sought the right to celebrate mass at their grange at Neatham in the mid 13th century, "they agreed to permit neither the ringing of bells nor the administration of the sacraments at their grange."<sup>93</sup> A more drastic example of the identification of bells with ecclesiastical rights comes from France, where in 1362 the nuns of Notre-Dame de l'Eau were forced to destroy "the belfry that previously had adorned the chapel of their town establishment at Chartres. The nuns had unwittingly contravened a privilege of the dean and chapter of Chartres, for they had built the chapel without first seeking licence to do so."<sup>94</sup> This point could also help explain why the monks of the Cistercian house of Byland moved the site of their abbey from its previous location at Old Byland, supposedly because they could hear the sound of the bells from nearby Rievaulx Abbey.

As at Durham, most major Benedictine churches had two belfries. Moreover, the uses of the bells at Durham may point to a common division of function; it seems possible to associate the crossing tower at Durham with the priory and the western, Galilee Steeple with episcopal use. Elsewhere western towers are known to have been built and used parochially; much of the tower building at the west end of Benedictine churches from the 14th century is known to have been parochial. Instances include Bungay, where the spectacular, parochial, northwest tower dates from the second quarter of the 15th century; and Wymondham, where the 15th century, axial, western tower was built by the parishioners after a dispute with the monastery over the ringing of the bells in the crossing tower. At Dunster the crossing tower

was rebuilt by the parishioners, 1443-1447, and parishioners are also known to have used the bells in the central tower of other Benedictine churches where there were no west towers. After the Dissolution, the parishioners at Little Malvern Priory made suit to the king for the five bells in the crossing tower, which had always served the parish as well as the priory. At the same time, the parishioners at Evesham made similar claims with regard to the detached bell tower there. In both cases the parishioners' claims were upheld.

The smallest Benedictine churches had no towers at all, but they still had need of bells. Even the smallest towerless church would, therefore, have been provided with a belfry of some sort. At Wilming-ton a wooden bellcote was built over the west end of the church in the 15th century, and others existed at Hurley and Kilpeck. At Binham, where there was a crossing tower, a bellcote was also added to the gable of the west front after the 13th century.

A few Benedictine monasteries also had detached bell towers. The reasons for such campanile are obscure. At Tynemouth, where the 'Little Tower' was built in front of the south nave aisle in the 14th century, detached but connected to the church by arches, it may simply have been a case of structural practicality; if no suitable foundations could be found below the church, or if a tower on the church would have compromised the structure in some other way, a tower was often built separately. Structural problems with church towers were very common in the later Middle Ages, and especially where further building was planned on a tower, underbuilding of some sort

was commonly undertaken. Even preventative measures, however, did not stop the occasional costly and inconvenient collapse of a church tower.<sup>95</sup>

It is equally clear that campanile were sometimes built for other reasons. They were built at some large monasteries where the church already had a crossing tower and two western towers<sup>96</sup> and elsewhere where the church already had just a crossing tower.<sup>97</sup> Little is known about them, but they must certainly have added to the monastic dignity. The only campanile to survive at a Benedictine monastery in England, that at Evesham built by Abbot Clement Litchfield (1514-1539), is a relatively late example. The campanile at Glastonbury was built by Abbot Henry of Blois (1126-1171), that at Christchurch, Canterbury, was also Norman, and legend ascribes the building of the campanile at Worcester to Bishop Wulfstan (1062-1095), although other traditions also credit both King John and Henry III. The 13th and early 14th centuries, however, were the high point of interest in campanile.<sup>98</sup>

The many towers which had been built in the 12th century were certainly not ignored thereafter, but neither was the absolute volume of tower building ever again as great. Interest in rebuilding and improving the appearance of towers is evident right until the Dissolution; attention to towers even seems to have increased in the 15th and early 16th centuries. 'Bell Harry', the crossing tower of Christchurch, Canterbury, rebuilt by the royal mason, John Wastell, c1494-1503 at a cost of at least £1036, gives magnificent testimony

that towers were still an important part of the church. At Gloucester, however, when the Norman west end collapsed c1420, it was rebuilt without the towers which it had formerly possessed. Similarly, Winchester Cathedral lost its west towers when the nave was rebuilt in the late 14th century and Bath, too, when it was rebuilt, beginning in 1499. These were certainly exceptional cases, but they point out that, however desirable towers were, tower building was an expense which sometimes could not be afforded. Much more often an existing tower was improved by heightening it, recasing it, or even just crenellating it.

Spires, either of stone or wood, often graced towers, and although many have now been dismantled, attention continued to be paid to them until the Dissolution. An alternative to spires which gained some popularity in the 14th century was the octagon. The Octagon built at Ely after the collapse of the crossing tower in 1322 seems to have set the standard for later examples, although it could possibly have been preceded by that at Peterborough, where c1315 the crossing tower was replaced by a lower, safer one. It was surmounted, as at Ely, by a wooden, embattled octagon, probably c1330.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The church of Bardney Abbey was begun shortly after 1115 but was not finished until the third quarter of the 13th century. It is recorded that the west front of Binham Priory church, begun in the early 12th century, was finished under Prior Richard de Parco (1226-1244), but the great west window could be even later. At the nunnery of Carrow the nave and west front of the church begun in 1146 both date from the 13th century, and the west front of Romsey Abbey church, begun c1120, is of an early or mid 13th century date.

<sup>2</sup>N. Pevsner, *Worcestershire* (Harmondsworth: 1968), p. 159.

<sup>3</sup>The ambulatory of Reading Abbey church, however, seems not to have had any radiating chapels in the 12th century.

<sup>4</sup>This is sometimes referred to as a 'retrochoir', a word which is used far more usually, but far less cogently, to describe the area behind (east of) the high altar in the presbytery.

<sup>5</sup>Although this arrangement belongs to the late 11th or early 12th century church, it was surprisingly never rebuilt. The south aisle was enlarged in the late 14th century, but this does not appear to have altered the basic arrangement of the east end.

<sup>6</sup>The ritual necessities for houses of nuns appear from the forms of their churches to have been far simpler than for houses of monks. Although their sex barred them from direct participation in the liturgy, there were no religious injunctions against their participation in the strictly monastic offices, which did not presuppose the taking of holy orders (i.e. priesthood). The reason for the simpler nature of the east ends of nunnery churches, and for the particularly isolationist arrangement at Shaftesbury, was more likely the peculiar medieval views on the enclosure of nuns. Because of their sex and its supposed accompanying characteristics of frailty and weakness, it was thought that nuns needed far more protection from the outside world than monks. Thus, in theory anyway, they led a more enclosed life in the later Middle Ages than did monks. See E. Power, *Medieval English Nunneries, c1275 to 1535* (New York: 1964), pp. 341-346.

<sup>7</sup>The solid walls between presbytery and aisles found in excavations at St. Albans and Westminster could also have formed foundations for an arcade.

<sup>8</sup>J.A. Robinson, "The Church of Edward the Confessor at Westminster," *Archaeologia*, Vol. 62, Part 1 (1910), 81-100.

<sup>9</sup>See D. Matthew, *The Norman Monasteries and Their English Possessions* (Oxford: 1962), pp. 15-17 and D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge: 1950), pp. 579-580.

<sup>10</sup>These included Battle, St. Augustine's, Canterbury, Bury St. Edmunds, Winchester, Worcester, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Chester, Norwich, Dover and Tynemouth.

<sup>11</sup>A.W. Clapham, *English Romanesque Architecture After the Conquest* (Oxford: 1934), pp. 28-37.

<sup>12</sup>Evidence of reused stone carved with 14th-century ornament found in the foundations of the surviving parts of the polygonal radiating chapels is cited in W.B. Stephens, ed., *A History of the County of Warwickshire*, Vol. 8 (London: 1969), p. 127, which would lend more authority to this dating than the 13th-century date proposed in N. Peysner and A. Wedgwood, *Warwickshire* (Harmondsworth: 1966), p. 263.

<sup>13</sup>See M.F. Hearn, "Romsey Abbey: A Progenitor of the English National Tradition in Architecture," *Gesta*, Vol. 14, Part 1 (1975), 27-40.

<sup>14</sup>Except that no structural provisions were made for an ambulatory, the east end of Gundulf's church at Rochester, 1077-c1090, was very similar to Romsey. It featured a diminutive rectangular eastern chapel. See W.H. St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of the Cathedral Church and Monastery of St. Andrew at Rochester," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XXIII (1898), 203-204. The nuns' church at Malling, founded by Gundulf c1090, had a similar plan but adapted for an aisleless presbytery. See J. Newman, *West Kent and the Weald* (Harmondsworth: 1969), p. 577.

<sup>15</sup>Also after the fall of the crossing tower at Evesham in 1207, the walls of the presbytery were rebuilt 'in modum pinnaculorum' to make a passage around the presbytery, 'which was not done before'. The documentary references are obscure, but seem to indicate the

appearance of an ambulatory at this time. See W. Page and J.W. Willis-Bund, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Worcester*, Vol. II (1906; London; 1971), p. 387.

<sup>16</sup>Previously the aisle apses had been rectangular externally, although the interior complied with the standard Norman semi-circular form. Triapsidal plans with the side apses squared off externally were found at several other Benedictine houses, including Bath, Durham, Norwich, St. Albans, Shaftesbury, Westminster, and St. Mary's, York.

<sup>17</sup>East end arrangements which correspond to those at Bardney and Binham include: Birkenhead, which received a rectangular presbytery projecting beyond flanking, rectangular, aisle chapels in the later 13th century; the first church at Finchale, built between 1234 and 1242, had a practically identical east end; the Norman triapsidal plan at Great Malvern sufficed until c1420, when the east end was rebuilt in a different form; the church of the nunnery at Higham received a completely aisleless, rectangular presbytery in the late 12th or early 13th century; Lindisfarne had an aisleless apse until it was extended and squared off in the second half of the 12th century or even earlier; the east end of Little Malvern is similar to this, only with transept chapels flanking an apparently aisleless eastern arm; the perhaps early 12th-century east end of Carrow Abbey in Norwich is again similar to Bardney. Even such a major church as Peterborough appears to have had a triapsidal plan with a four-bay eastern arcade, as at Bath, until the construction of the 'New Building' c1496, although the aisle chapels were squared off in the 13th century.

<sup>18</sup>See G.G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, Vol. III (Cambridge: 1936), p. 69.

<sup>19</sup>This legislation has been cited from *Ibid.*, Chapter V, "The Value of Masses," pp. 65-86. Much further historical information on this subject is cited from this chapter and elsewhere in Coulton's four-volume study of monasticism.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>21</sup>F. Bond, *Westminster Abbey* (London: 1909), p. 48.

<sup>22</sup>A.W. Clapham and W.H. Godfrey, *Some Famous Buildings and Their Story* (London: 1912), p. 208.

<sup>23</sup>Pevsner suspects that the vaults of the feretory originally were intended to be lower, and that the present height is due to a change in plan decided upon in the course of building. See N. Pevsner, "A Note on the East End of Winchester Cathedral," *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 116 (1959), 133-137.

<sup>24</sup>C. Peers, *Finchale Priory* (London: 1973), p. 11.

<sup>25</sup>Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, Vol. III, pp. 106-107.

<sup>26</sup>C.E. Woodruff, "The Financial Aspects of the Cult of St. Thomas of Canterbury," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XLIV, (1932), 16.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>28</sup>C.R. Cheney, "Churchbuilding in the Middle Ages," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. 34 (1951/52), 36.

<sup>29</sup>G. Haigh, *The History of Winchcombe Abbey* (London: 1947), p. 64.

<sup>30</sup>Bishop Cantilupe also dedicated the church of Tewkesbury on 18 June 1239, the church of Gloucester on 18 September 1239, and the churches of Evesham and Pershore also in 1239. Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, and William Brewer, Bishop of Exeter, dedicated the church at Peterborough on 6 October 1238. The Bishops of Rochester and Bangor dedicated Rochester Cathedral on 5 November 1240. Ralph Maidstone, Bishop of Hereford, dedicated the expanded south aisle of the church at Leominster c1239. At Finchale the high altar and the altars of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert were all consecrated in 1239, even though the laying out of the church was not begun until c1237; it is almost inconceivable that the church or even the east end could have been completely finished at this time.

<sup>31</sup>St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of . . . Rochester," 233.

<sup>32</sup>See A. Grandsden, "The Growth of the Glastonbury Traditions and Legends in the Twelfth Century," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1976), 337-358.

<sup>33</sup>The remains of Arthur and Guenevere were placed in the presbytery behind the high altar at Easter, 1278, when Edward I, Queen Eleanor, and Archbishop Kilwardby were at the abbey. See W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Somerset*, Vol. II (1911; London: 1969), p. 91.

<sup>34</sup>R.A. Smith, *The Organization and Financing of Monastic Building in the Later Middle Ages* (M.A. Thesis, University of London, 1952), pp. 246-253.

<sup>35</sup>W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Norfolk*, Vol. II (London: 1906), p. 321.

<sup>36</sup>W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Kent*, Vol. II (1926; London: 1974), p. 50.

<sup>37</sup>A.J. Taylor, "Edward I and the Shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, Vol. CXXXII (1979), 22-28.

<sup>38</sup>Woodruff, "The Cult of St. Thomas," 19.

<sup>39</sup>W. Page, ed., *VCH Norfolk*, Vol. II, p. 322.

<sup>40</sup>W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, Vol. I (London: 1817), p. 195.

<sup>41</sup>These instances occurred contemporaneously with the rise in importance of documents, especially in the definition of rights and privileges, and could be fruitfully brought to bear on the problem of medieval forgery.

<sup>42</sup>S. Gunton, *The History of the Church of Peterborough* (London: 1686), p. 21.

<sup>43</sup>Edward the Confessor was buried at Westminster, which he had refounded; William the Conqueror at his foundation of St. Etienne at Caen; William Rufus at Winchester Cathedral; Henry I at his foundation at Reading; Stephen at his foundation of Faversham; Henry I, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Richard, and his queen all at Fontevrault; and John at Worcester. John had founded the Cistercian house at Beaulieu with the probable intention of being buried there, but circumstances must have prevented this. After the loss of French possessions in

John's reign, including Fontevrault, which at the time was the closest thing to an English royal burial church, Henry III may have intended the rebuilding of Westminster to prepare it as a burial place for the English monarchy on the model of S. Denis in France.

<sup>44</sup>St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of . . . Rochester," pp. 279, 288, 290-291, 294-296.

<sup>45</sup>H. Brakspear, "Bardney Abbey," *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 79 (1922), 32.

<sup>46</sup>C. Brooke, "Religious Sentiment and Church Design in the Later Middle Ages," in his *Medieval Church and Society: Collected Essays* (London: 1971), p. 166.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 177-179.

<sup>49</sup>Permission to wear caps or have their heads hooded in choir at divine office was granted to the monks of Winchester Cathedral Priory in 1243; to the monks of Rochester by Pope Innocent IV in 1245; to the monks of Peterborough in 1251; to the monks of Hyde Abbey, Winchester, in 1288, where caps of sheep or lamb skin are mentioned; and to the monks of Winchcombe by Pope Nicholas IV on 7 July 1291.

<sup>50</sup>D. Hill, *Christ's Glorious Church: The Story of Canterbury Cathedral* (London: 1976), p. 20.

<sup>51</sup>Trinity Chapels were common in the body of the church, but the prominence of the Trinity Chapel at Canterbury is rare. It is recorded, however, that John de Blossmeville, abbot of Abingdon (1241-1256), built chapels to the Virgin and to the Holy Trinity at the east end of the church, for which see M. Biddle, H.T. Lambrick, and J.N.L. Myres, "The Early History of Abingdon, Berkshire, and its Abbey," *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol. 12 (1968), 48.

<sup>52</sup>Little evidence of the Lady Chapel at Binham survives by which to date it, except for the mouldings of three doorways. The jamb of the southeast doorway from the presbytery aisle features a wave moulding on one side of a roll and fillet flanked by a beaked half roll (Figure 25). This is similar in design to a section of the profile of the south doorway arch of Ingham church, also in Norfolk, which dates from the third quarter of the 14th century. The west and southwest

doorways into the presbytery aisle and north transept, however, have almost identical jambs comprised of a simple chamfer and a double ogee moulding to each side (Figure 25). These jambs are far more characteristically Perpendicular and probably indicate a later date than the other jamb, probably the early 15th century. See Richard Morris, "The Development of Later Gothic Mouldings in England c1250-1400 - Part I," *Architectural History*, Vol. 21 (1978), 18-57.

<sup>53</sup>My only evidence for the siting of the Lady Chapel of Crowland here is a plan in the church (all but the north nave aisle of the abbey church was demolished at the Dissolution), which purports to be based on a plan made in 1747 and on notes compiled by a certain Canon Moore in 1850.

<sup>54</sup>For a plan of Thetford see F.J.E. Raby and P.K. Baillie-Reynolds, *Thetford Priory, Norfolk* (London: 1962), pp. 6-7. For a plan of Leiston see R. Gilyard-Beer, *Abbeys* (London: 1976), Figure 16.

<sup>55</sup>It is also possible that when the chapel of St. Nicholas in the north transept at Tewkesbury was enlarged northward c1237, it included an altar to the Virgin until the 14th-century Lady Chapel was built, but the dedication of the altars in this chapel are much disputed.

<sup>56</sup>After the fire of 1184 the ruined nave was patched up and served for nearly 30 years as a temporary church until the eastern part of the new church was ready. Initially, the Galilee undoubtedly connected the Lady Chapel with this patched-up nave, the rebuilding of which was only finished in the early 14th century.

<sup>57</sup>H.T. Henry, "Salve Regina," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1912), XIII, 409.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 410.

<sup>59</sup>Woodruff, "Financial Aspects of the Cult of St. Thomas," 293-298.

<sup>60</sup>St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of . . . Rochester," 293-298.

<sup>61</sup>D. Verey, *Gloucestershire: The Vale and the Forest of Dean* (Harmondsworth: 1970), p. 214.

- <sup>62</sup>Brakspear, "Bardney Abbey," 32-33.
- <sup>63</sup>W.H. St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of the Cathedral Church and Monastery of St. Andrew at Rochester. Part II. The Monastery," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XXIV (1900), 82.
- <sup>64</sup>C. Wordsworth, *Notes on Medieval Services in England* (London: 1898), pp. 23-24.
- <sup>65</sup>J.T. Fowler, ed., *Rites of Durham* (Surtees Society, Vol. CVII, 1902), p. 37.
- <sup>66</sup>Wordsworth, *Medieval Services*, p. 54.
- <sup>67</sup>Brakespear, "Bardney Abbey," 31.
- <sup>68</sup>L. Marr, *Binham Priory* (Parochial Church Council, n.d.).
- <sup>69</sup>T.D. Atkinson, *An Architectural History of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Etheldreda at Ely* (Cambridge: 1933), p. 48.
- <sup>70</sup>A.B. Whittingham, "St. Mary's Abbey, York: An Interpretation of Its Plan," *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. CXXVIII (1971), 118-146.
- <sup>71</sup>Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, p. 37.
- <sup>72</sup>For the developments in the cloister, see Chapter Two, pp. 103-4.
- <sup>73</sup>A.H. Thompson, *Lindisfarne Priory, Northumberland* (London: 1949), p. 14.
- <sup>74</sup>F. Bond, *Westminster Abbey* (London: 1909), p. 66.
- <sup>75</sup>R.V.H. Burne, *The Monks of Chester* (London: 1962), pp. 134, 135, 142.
- <sup>76</sup>See R.E.G. Kirk, *Accounts of Obedientiars of Abingdon Abbey* (New York: 1965), pp. xvi ff. and Biddle, Lambrick, and Myres, "The Early History of Abingdon . . .," 49.
- <sup>77</sup>W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Hertford*, Vol. 4 (1941; London: 1971), p. 388.

<sup>78</sup>Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, p. 211.

<sup>79</sup>W. Page, "On Some Recent Discoveries in the Abbey Church of St. Alban," *Archaeologia*, Vol. 56, Pt. 1 (1898), 21.

<sup>80</sup>St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of . . . Rochester," 272-273.

<sup>81</sup>A.M. Oakley, "The Cathedral Priory of St. Andrew, Rochester," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. 91 (1975), 56.

<sup>82</sup>St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of . . . Rochester," 274-275.

<sup>83</sup>On the precinct layout, see Chapter Three, pp. 178-187.

<sup>84</sup>Atkinson, *An Architectural History of . . . Ely*, p. 8.

<sup>85</sup>In the documents it is also called the Church of St. Laurence, which could just as well indicate a separate structure; this vague terminology has led to much confusion, notably for the parish of St. Oswald at St. Werburgh's, Chester.

<sup>86</sup>H. Liveing, *Records of Romsey Abbey* (Winchester: 1912), pp. 180-185.

<sup>87</sup>Burne, *The Monks of Chester*, p. 23.

<sup>88</sup>St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of . . . Rochester," pp. 286-287.

<sup>89</sup>N. Pevsner, *North-West and South Norfolk* (Harmondsworth: 1962), p. 392.

<sup>90</sup>W. Page and J.W. Willis-Bund, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Worcester*, Vol. II (London: 1971), p. 126.

<sup>91</sup>See Chapter Three, p. 245.

<sup>92</sup>Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, pp. 22; 39.

<sup>93</sup>C. Platt, *The Monastic Grange in Medieval England* (London: 1969), p. 28.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>95</sup>When the crossing tower at Ely collapsed in 1322, the Octagon was built to replace it at a cost of over £2409; this did not include the rebuilding of the choir which was also damaged and which cost a comparable amount to rebuild. At Bury St. Edmunds, after the crossing spire was blown down in a storm in 1361, a new 'campanile' was built over the crossing at a cost of over £866.

<sup>96</sup>As at Bury St. Edmunds, Christchurch, Canterbury, Glastonbury, Gloucester, and probably Abingdon.

<sup>97</sup>As at Muchelney, Norwich, Tewkesbury, Tynemouth, and Worcester.

<sup>98</sup>Campanile were built at Abingdon under Abbot Hugh (1189-1221), at Evesham by Prior Thomas Marlborough (1218-1229), at Norwich and Tewkesbury, some time in the 13th century, at Westminster begun in 1224, at Winchester in 1200, and at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and Tynemouth in the 14th century.

*CHAPTER TWO**THE CLAUSTRAL BUILDINGS**A. INTRODUCTION*

Although cloisters probably existed in Anglo-Saxon England, it is likely that their form and the arrangement of buildings around them drastically changed after the Conquest. In conjunction with the unprecedented monastic enthusiasm of the 12th century, the emphasis on monumental architecture and masonry construction introduced by the Normans had vast implications for all monastic buildings, especially those around the cloister. All new foundations and most older ones were provided with a great number of stone domestic buildings in the first half of the 12th century, and where actual monastic populations were not large, houses were sometimes planned to accommodate a huge ideal population. Archbishop Lanfranc (1070-1077), for instance, planned Christchurch, Canterbury, for an ideal population of 140 to 150 monks. To this end he actually demolished some of his earlier stone claustral buildings and rebuilt them on a larger and more sumptuous scale; this was done despite the fact that c1080 there were only 60 monks in the house, and the population probably never much exceeded the 100 monks which it reached c1146. In fact, most monastic populations did rise throughout the 12th century to the extent that much

of the early 12th-century domestic building became insufficient later in the century, and rebuilding had to be undertaken. This secondary rebuilding programme, often initiated by fire damage, lasted into the early 13th century, when the monastic population of England peaked. After this time few monasteries in England had to worry about accommodating their entire populations. This means that building motives changed substantially in the period under consideration. So too did the amount of building carried out.

With the church against one of its sides and the most important communal buildings ranged around its other three, the cloisters lay at the very heart of the monastery. While the church can easily be isolated from this group of structures, the cloisters and its three accompanying domestic ranges form an interlocking and complementary unit which is more easily studied as a whole. The cloisters, east range, refectory range, and west range will be dealt with separately in this chapter, but each with considerable reference to the other parts.

The cloisters consisted of four covered passages arranged to form a rough square surrounding the cloister garth, which was usually a plain lawn. They were situated against one of the exterior walls of the nave. Most commonly the cloisters were south of the church, although a significant number, about 35 per cent, were to the north (Figure 26).<sup>1</sup> They formed virtually the sole means of communication between the different ranges of buildings around them and, most importantly, between the domestic buildings and the church. Two doorways, usually elaborately treated and in line with the east and west cloister

walks, permitted routine communication and allowed liturgical processions to make use of the cloister.

The east range lined up with the transepts, and usually ran past the far end of the east cloister walk. It was a complicated structure with many different chambers which served most of the domestic needs of the monks. The two most important chambers in the east range were the chapter house and the dormitory; both of these will be discussed at length in this section.

The range opposite the church was dominated by the refectory and so, for convenience, will be called the 'refectory range'; since the refectory could be on the north or south side of the cloisters, depending on whether the cloisters themselves were north or south of the church, it will here be said to be on the 'far' side of the cloisters. Near the entrance to the refectory in the cloister walk was the lavatory, where the monks washed - for both symbolic and practical reasons - before eating in the refectory. It will be treated with the cloisters, however, since structurally it belongs with them, rather than with the refectory.

Like the east range, the west range was a complicated structure, but the chambers which comprised it were more diverse in nature. The two main structures which usually dominated the range were the guests' lodgings and the superior's lodgings. Both of these were often located outside of the west range, however, and will be dealt with separately in Chapter Three. Thus, the treatment of the west range will be basically morphological.

## B. THE CLOISTER WALKS

### 1. Liturgical Use of the Cloisters

The *Rites of Durham* gives a vivid picture of how the cloisters there functioned on the eve of the Dissolution. Firstly, they played an integral role in the liturgical life of the priory. The route of the Sunday Procession led through the cloisters; the monks entered the cloister from the south nave aisle into the east cloister walk, proceeded along its length, along the south and west walks, and into the church again (Figure 10). Burial processions for monks also made use of the cloisters. At Durham the procession at first left the cloister by means of the slype, as was usual, but later on by means of a passage at the opposite end of the east range next to the prior's lodgings.<sup>2</sup>

On Maundy Thursday certain paupers were admitted to the cloisters and the monks both distributed alms to them, and symbolically washed their feet. For this ceremony use was made of a stone bench set against the wall of the refectory in the south cloister walk.<sup>3</sup>

### 2. Lavatories

The south alley was also where the monks washed in preparation for dining in the refectory, an activity which, if not liturgical, at least had strongly ritual connotations. The monks washed their hands and faces at the lavatory, and dried them on a towel from one of two wooden towel cupboards located on either side of the refectory door at the west end of the south alley. Such towel cupboards or *armaria*<sup>4</sup>

were standard, and were usually made of wood, and set against the refectory wall. At Peterborough and probably elsewhere they were set in recesses next to the lavatory.

Two forms of lavatory served Benedictine houses in England. The simpler of the two was merely a stone trough inset either into the refectory wall or just around the corner in the wall of the west alley. At Durham and elsewhere, however, the lavatory formed an independent structure in the cloister garth. At Durham it was octagonal, but hexagonal lavatories existed at St. Augustine's, Canterbury (Figure 7), and at Sherborne. Exeter St. Nicholas also had a polygonal lavatory with waterleaf capitals, and foundations in the cloister garth at Battle Abbey suggest the presence of an independent lavatory structure there, but its form is unknown.<sup>5</sup> These independent structures were elaborately designed and far more costly than trough-type lavatories. The *Rites of Durham* describes the lavatory there:

Within the cloister garth over against the refectory door was a fair lavatory or conduit<sup>6</sup> for the monks to wash their hands and faces at, being made round [sic] in form covered with lead and all of marble saving the outer walls. Within the walls you may walk round about the lavatory of marble having many little conduits or spouts of brass with 24 [stop] cocks of brass round about it; having in it 7 fair windows of stone work and in the top of it a fair dovecote covered finely over above with lead, the workmanship both fine and costly as is apparent to this day.<sup>7</sup>

These independent lavatories were invariably located opposite the refectory door. Trough-type lavatories were also placed as close to the refectory door as possible. In the south walk itself such lavatories were usually against the refectory wall just east of the refectory

door, as at Chester, Horsham St. Faith and Peterborough (Figure 16), at Bardney it appears to have been just west of the refectory door, and at Christchurch, Canterbury (Figure 6) and Gloucester they were built into the exterior cloister wall opposite the refectory door, paralleling the site of independent lavatory structures. At Norwich, Westminster, Worcester, and perhaps Lindisfarne the lavatories were all in the west alley of the cloisters just around the corner from the refectory door.

Lavatories were as elaborately treated as possible; at least at larger and richer houses this resulted in imposing structures as can still be seen at Norwich, at Peterborough, and at Sherborne, where the lavatory has been re-erected in the town market place. This trend culminated in independent lavatory structures which, as the *Rites of Durham* attests, were costly affairs. The more elaborate lavatories also had gravity-fed taps, which necessitated water being brought from higher ground outside the precinct. At Westminster, this system involved a cistern near the lavatory, probably of the 14th century, to improve water pressure.<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly, less pretentious examples were filled by hand.

The function of the lavatory was integral with that of the refectory. Thus, it is not surprising that the great period of building activity on refectories, from the late 13th to early 15th centuries,<sup>9</sup> was paralleled by lavatories, which were sometimes rebuilt in conjunction with refectories.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. Study in the Cloister

Besides its liturgical use cloisters also served prominently as places of study. At Durham, the north alley next the church was divided off by a wooden screen at each end, and carrells were ranged along its exterior wall. This, too, is well described in the *Rites of Durham*:

In the north side of the cloister from the corner over against the church door to the corner over against the dormitory door [ie. the whole north walk] was all finely glazed . . . and in every window [were] 3 pews or carrells where every one of the old monks had his carrell severally by himself . . . . All their pews or carrells were finely wainscotted, and very closed [in] all but the forepart which had carved work that gave light in at their carrell doors of wainscott [ie., of wood]. And in every carrell was a desk to lay their books on. The carrells were no greater than from one stanchell [mullion] of the window to another. And ever against the carrells against the church wall did stand certain great almeries or cupboards of wainscott all full of books.]]

The novices were also taught in the cloister but in the west alley just around the corner from the monks' carrells. Since the west alley also had a processional function, the arrangements here were much less elaborate than in the north alley. The novices, who appear to have numbered about six normally, sat at a 'fair great stall' set against the external cloister wall, and the master of the novices had a wooden seat opposite them just south of the treasury door. There is also mention made of the novices' armarium for books but its position is no longer known.

Similar arrangements were widespread among Benedictine houses, although it would be difficult to find an exact parallel to the Durham

arrangement. As will be discussed later, individual houses had widely differing attitudes towards education and study, which were regarded with relative favour at Durham.

Birkenhead, Chester, Gloucester and Tynemouth are also known to have had carrells in the cloister walk next the church. Carrells are thought also to have existed at Ely, but their position is disputed.<sup>12</sup> At Canterbury it is recorded that the novices were taught in the south cloister alley. In most cases, however, any possible evidence for carrell arrangements has disappeared; even at Durham little besides documentary evidence attests to the presence of carrells. Only at Chester and Gloucester can physical evidence of carrells be seen, for the stonework of the external cloister walls was treated especially to accommodate the wooden fittings of the carrells. In the south alley of the cloisters at Gloucester it is difficult to see how the late 14th century carrells, each one of which is divided off into a shallow stone niche, could have been completely enclosed by wainscotting. The carrells at Chester date from the rebuilding of the cloisters in the early 16th century. The carrells there not only extend along the whole length of the south cloister alley but continue around the corner into the west alley for five bays (Figure 8).

At the other extreme Lindisfarne appears never to have had a cloister alley next the church.<sup>13</sup> This presents two possibilities: either study facilities were located elsewhere in the precinct or else none existed at all. In the latter case it is possible that studious monks were sent elsewhere to study. In the former the arrangement

adopted at Evesham did not totally divorce study from the cloisters. In the time of Abbot John de Brokehampton (1286-1316) the east alley of the cloisters was rebuilt as a two-storied structure with studies for the monks over it. A similar situation seems to have applied at St. Albans; in c1398 Abbot de la Moote built a library and scriptorium over the east and south cloister walks. Two-storied cloisters such as these were not common, but did occur at a few Benedictine houses.<sup>14</sup>

#### *4. Chronology of Construction*

Sporadic building took place on the cloister alleys in the 13th century, in many cases in conjunction with the rebuilding of the adjacent claustral ranges; the cloister alley bordering on the refectory could be especially singled out in this regard.<sup>15</sup> This pattern is indicative of the rebuilding of cloisters in general which was more often achieved in piecemeal campaigns than as a single, homogenous building programme.

The greatest period of building activity on the cloisters began in the later 14th century, however, and involved a fundamental change in the formal conception of the cloister alley. In the 12th century the standard cloister alley was simply a covered walkway with a wooden pentise roof corbelled out of the interior wall and supported on the exterior side by an open arcade, very often of delicate, paired columns. This form was superseded by a traceried exterior wall usually with at least the heads glazed and ideally supporting a stone vault. Brakspear states that this change was general among English abbeys in the 14th century.<sup>16</sup>

There are many points of contrast between these two forms. Firstly, the later form was far costlier than the earlier. The glazing, for instance, was a completely new expense, and it would appear that it was often undertaken virtually as a separate campaign after the stone structure was finished.<sup>17</sup> The vaulting too was expensive and it seems to have been less of a priority than the traceried windows; in some cases vaults seem to have been judged too expensive and were never built.<sup>18</sup> It is probably this consideration of expense which is alluded to in the will of John Lowe who c1421 bequeathed to Battle the proceeds of the sale of land at Iridge to be devoted to "the new work of the cloister or to complete it in the style in which it had been begun."<sup>19</sup> The work in question is the west alley, the others having been completed in the later 13th century. Here 'style' probably refers to the quality of the materials and workmanship to be used rather than to the design as we normally mean the term.

Secondly, besides being more costly, this later form was more elaborate and ornate, a consideration which, together with the cost, would have made it aesthetically more pleasing to medieval eyes. These two considerations are integrally bound up not only with the economic position of monastic houses and their general level of prosperity, but also with the monks' own perception of their role in society and their conception of an appropriate setting for it.

A third point of comparison is comfort. Benedictine monks had always maintained a high standard of living, but by the later 14th century the consideration of material comfort was manifesting itself

in most aspects of monastic life; this was often more apparent, however, in the monks' diet than in their buildings.<sup>20</sup> The growing importance of study-in monastic cloisters could have been a significant factor in making the cloister a less draughty and more comfortable place. Indeed, at Canterbury Cathedral Priory the south alley of the cloisters where the novices were taught was glazed and the walls painted by Prior Selling c1480 at the same time as carrells were built there.<sup>21</sup>

Probably the earliest cloister in England to be rebuilt with traceried windows and vaults was that of Westminster Abbey during Henry III's ambitious rebuilding scheme there.<sup>22</sup> The north bays of the east walk and the east bays of the north walk were the first built; they were begun as early as 1246 and finished as early as 1250. The lavish scale which Henry III envisioned for Westminster could very well have precipitated this new standard of elaboration for cloisters, for most of his monastic interests seem to have been concentrated at this one house, whereas his contemporary, St. Louis of France, was the founder and benefactor of many monastic houses.

By the early 1260's, however, building at Westminster was slowing down as a result of Henry III's deteriorating financial position. At his death, work on the cloister stopped completely until Abbot Simon de Byrchestone (1344-1349) finished the east alley at least partially at his own expense. The south and west alleys followed under Abbot Nicholas Litlyngton, prior (1350-1362) and abbot (1362-1386); the Norman west alley was only demolished c1375. The work was thus very slow and sporadic with more than 130 years elapsing from start to finish.

One of the first Benedictine cloisters to copy the Westminster cloister was that of Norwich, destroyed by fire in 1272.<sup>23</sup> It was just as drawn-out an affair as at Westminster. Rebuilding was not begun until 1297, and was not finished until c1430. It was also done in a number of campaigns, which all conform to the same basic design but with notable changes in detail.<sup>24</sup>

It was not until after the mid 14th century that the rebuilding of cloisters in this new style became widespread. In a great many cases such rebuilding was comparably slow, but the trend was inexorable; today very little evidence at all exists for Norman cloisters at English Benedictine houses. A particularly beautiful elaboration on this type of cloister appeared at Gloucester in the mid 14th century. In the cloisters begun there by Abbot Horton (1351-1377), fan vaults were employed probably for the first time ever. The use of such vaults was never very prolific and was certainly not limited to covering cloister walks, but the cloisters at Malmesbury and perhaps Tewkesbury also received fan vaults in the 15th century.

Nevertheless, Norman cloisters did exist at the Dissolution, especially at such major but financially destitute houses as Faversham, Reading and Rochester.<sup>25</sup> The expenses involved, which made the building of this new type of cloister a slow process even at a well-fixed house, prevented many smaller ones from realizing such a design. For instance, when the cloisters at St. Neots were rebuilt in the 15th century they were built not of stone but of wood. Timber cloisters are also known at Boxgrove, Hurley, and probably Romsey, where they

may also have been two-storied.

Moreover, there seems to have been a significant difference between the cloisters of large and small houses. St. Benedict had specified twelve monks and an abbot as the minimum population for the efficient operation of a monastic house, and the liturgy and ritual which was subsequently designed for monastic institutions also presupposed at least such a minimum. Thus at Jarrow, which rarely had more than three or four monks after 1083, all the cloister walks (except the east) which Prior Aldwin had erected in the 11th century were demolished in the 13th century, when a less regular arrangement was adopted with domestic buildings in the cloister garth.

A less drastic but equally telling development can be seen at Lindisfarne, a house of about half a dozen inhabitants (Figure 14). There never seems to have been a north alley, and the east alley was quite narrow. The refectory was enlarged in the 14th century by making a substantial incursion into the south alley which thus became even narrower than the east alley, and what is more, the west end was blocked entirely by a large mass of masonry which probably formed the base of a straight flight of stairs to the first-floor refectory. In the 15th century the cloisters were rendered even more nugatory when the doors between the nave and cloisters were blocked. Thompson assesses these developments:

The whole arrangement of the cloister shows a transition from the regular monastic plan to a plan of a frankly domestic type. The cloister walks were simply covered passages in front of the buildings and can have

been of little use for study or contemplation, while after their complete interruption in the fourteenth century they were rendered useless for processions.<sup>26</sup>

As regular attendance by the monks at routine services became less and less frequent even at larger houses, even fully articulated and functioning cloisters must have served a more and more nominal or perfunctory role. This did not seem to have had a very great effect on cloister building, for cloisters were being built even into the 16th century, as at Chester, Milton, Nuneaton, and probably Muchelney. General disuse did not totally end all processions in every cloister, and the medieval mind was just as capable of building for occasional great or symbolic events as for necessary routine use. The cloisters were also a particularly symbolic part of the monastic fabric, and in a sense embodied the conventual activities of a monastery; the German word 'Kloster', for instance, means both cloister and monastery.

### C. THE EAST RANGE

#### 1. *Morphology*

The east ranges of Benedictine cloisters present a relative amount of homogeneity of function, but exhibit a good deal of variation in the exact arrangement of the chambers and passages which comprise them. Only the monks' dormitory and the chapter house can be found with any degree of certainty to occupy approximately the same position within the east range. The other common parts of the east range are the

calefactory<sup>27</sup>, the inner parlour, the slype and other passages, and, less frequently, sacristies, vestries, the treasury, obedientiaries' chequers, rooms for novices, the monastery library, and occasionally chambers of even more singular function.

The east range normally adjoined one of the transepts (depending whether the cloisters were north or south of the church), only a very few exceptions being known. At Rochester the cloisters were built adjacent to the choir rather than the nave by Prior Ernulf (1114-1124); the east range of the cloisters in this rare instance abutted the later southeast transept (Figure 17).<sup>28</sup> At Romsey the nuns' cloister is known to have adjoined the south side of the nave but there is no evidence that anything was ever built against the south transept, which is still in its initial Norman state (having undergone an indeterminate amount of restoration, however).

Most commonly the transept was immediately abutted by the slype, a covered passage leading from the cloisters to the monks' cemetery and sometimes also to the infirmary; it is known to have been used in the funeral processions of deceased monks. Slypes in this location are far from universal, however, and there is some indication that their importance declined or that their function was eclipsed towards the end of the 12th century. In the late 12th or early 13th century the slype at Ely was converted into a Chapel of St. Catherine. At Whitby the slype disappeared completely when the transepts were enlarged in a 13th-century rebuilding of the church. And at Gloucester the original entrance to the slype was blocked up in a rebuilding of the cloisters

after 1371. At other houses the transept was abutted by a chamber or series of chambers. At Thetford the chamber was a sacristy; at Durham, Lindisfarne, Reading, Westminster, and possibly Horsham St. Faith it was a vestry. Like Ely, Westminster also had a chapel, the Chapel of St. Faith, as well as its vestry. At Norwich the transept is adjoined by the treasury, which at Westminster occurs elsewhere in the east range (Chamber of the Pyx). Other such chambers of an unidentified function occur at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, the nunnery of Carrow at Norwich, and possibly Malmesbury Abbey. Chambers occur in conjunction with a slype at St. Radegund's, Cambridge, Peterborough, and Sherborne.

At some houses, there is nothing separating the transept from the chapter house, which in all other cases adjoins the slype and/or chambers next to the transept. Such houses include Battle, Binham, Birkenhead, Chester, and Finchale, where the surviving fabric of the east range is no earlier than the 13th century, and Boxgrove, Higham, and Tynemouth, where the fabric of the east range appears to be older.

From the far side of the chapter house, and sometimes right from the transept itself, the east range is generally two-storied with the dormitory at first floor level resting on a vaulted undercroft. The undercroft is most usually long and narrow, extending away from the church past the end of the refectory range. No examples of unvaulted undercrofts are known, although only a small percentage are known certainly to have been vaulted. In smaller houses the undercroft was usually vaulted by a single span.<sup>29</sup> More ambitiously scaled under-

crofts needed a central longitudinal row of supports.<sup>30</sup> At Battle the near end of the undercroft has two longitudinal rows of supports, while the far end has only a single row (Figure 3). The interior arrangement of these undercrofts varied considerably.

Besides the chapter house the most important chamber occurring commonly in the undercroft was the calefactory which contained the only fireplace generally available to the monks. Its position within the undercroft varied considerably, but it was usually fairly close to the chapter house. At Pershore, St. Mary's, York, and probably also at Ely and Carrow the calefactory was contiguous with the chapter house. More commonly it was separated from the chapter house by a passage, the inner parlour, the daystairs to the dormitory, or a combination of these. This was a practical consideration, as the undercroft usually extended far past the end of the east walk of the cloisters to which the daystairs and passage gave access. At some houses the inner parlour was combined with such a passage or with the slype next the transept by providing benches along the walls of the passage as at Durham and Gloucester.

The undercroft at Evesham is said to have contained both the minutorium<sup>31</sup> and the chequers, or offices of some of the obedientiaries, which Palmer says were probably commonly located in the dormitory undercroft, although he gives no other examples of such an occurrence.<sup>32</sup>

At Norwich and St. Mary's, York, the undercroft contained space for the novices. The exact function of this space is problematic, but at St. Mary's, York, it probably quite uncharacteristically included

or accompanied a school for the novices, who usually received their instruction in an appointed place in the cloister walks.

At a number of houses, including Ely (at least from the early 13th century), Norwich, Peterborough, St. Albans, and Westminster, there was a chapel either in the dormitory undercroft or extending eastward from it. At Peterborough the novices' chapel extended eastward from the undercroft on the far side of the chapter house. At Norwich the Chapel of St. Nicholas probably adjoined the far end of the undercroft next to the novices' space; thus, it would seem that it too was a novices' chapel. At St. Albans a two-story extension projecting eastward from the east range contained a small dormitory at undercroft level with a Chapel of St. Cuthbert over it.<sup>33</sup> The chapels at Ely and Westminster have already been mentioned.

Like St. Albans, Christchurch, Canterbury, had another dormitory extending eastward from the east range (Figure 6). It was known as the 'second dorter' and Thompson suggests that it was for the use of the obedientiaries.<sup>34</sup> There is also mention of a 'little dorter' at Peterborough, but its function is unknown.<sup>35</sup>

At smaller houses the dormitory undercroft could take on a far different character which reflected the smaller scale and more limited financial resources of the house. At the nunnery of Wilberfoss, on the far side of the chapter house the undercroft accommodated the daystair, a dairy, stores, the brewhouse, and a kitchen, and was adjoined at the far end by a barn.<sup>36</sup> At Jarrow Prior Aldwin built a more or less conventional east range in the 11th century but in the 13th century

financial exigencies forced the house to convert it drastically, with a hall occupying the north end nearest the church and a kitchen, bake-house, and brewhouse toward the south. Financial difficulties and a reduced population also lead to a drastic reduction of facilities at Finchale by the 15th century, when the parlour and calefactory had been converted into larders, a passage to the prior's kitchen, and probably a pantry. At Wilmington, a foreign cell of the abbey of Grestein, a proper claustral arrangement was never built, and the small population occupied a set of buildings which somewhat resembled a contemporaneous manor house.

## 2. *The Chapter House*

The chapter house was the meeting place of the monastery for all communal business other than the services in the church. Every day the monks assembled in the chapter house to hear a chapter from the Benedictine Rule read to them (hence the name, 'chapter house'), to conduct business of the house, and to discuss matters of importance. Visitations, regulatory examinations of the workings of the monastery usually by a bishop, also took place in the chapter house.

Chapter houses were not known at English monasteries before the Conquest. They had existed for centuries on the continent, however, where they had come to take on an importance in the monastery exceeded only by the church itself. This importance was concurrent with their appearance in England, and they could be quite impressive in architectural adornment and scale. The chapter house at St. Albans built

by Abbot Robert (1151-1166), for instance, at the time one of the most elaborate in the country, measured 30' x 90' and abounded in mature Norman ornament comparable to the surviving Augustinian chapter house at Bristol. To emphasize their importance, the entrances of chapter houses from the cloisters were nearly always flanked by a pair of openings, usually either glazed or unglazed windows but occasionally full length doorways, as at Winchester Cathedral Priory. Winchester also had twin openings on either side of the chapter house entrance, rather than the more usual single openings. The lavishness of decoration in chapter houses varied greatly, but was usually of a comparable degree to the decoration of the conventual church. Blind dado arcading was common, and decoration also tended to be concentrated around windows and doors and around vaults and vaulting shafts. Little information on paintings survives, but the dado at Westminster still carries some 14th-century painting and it was probably not alone in this respect. The Westminster chapter house also has some sculptural decoration, an Annunciation scene on the west wall above the door, and the chapter house at Rochester had a sculptured west doorway from the mid 12th century. It has also been suggested that monumental statues unearthed at St. Mary's, York, were from the chapter house, forming either a sculptured entrance portal or perhaps bay divisions on the interior walls. This is very speculative, however,<sup>37</sup> and in general, figural sculpture was rarely found in chapter houses.

Chapter houses contained benches along the interior walls for the monks. The superior had a raised seat at the east end, flanked

by seats for the main obedientiaries. There was also a pulpit in the middle of the room from which chapters of the Rule were read. These simple internal arrangements sufficed for the functioning of the chapter house in the daily routine of the house.

Benedictine chapter houses were almost always rectangular and oriented in an east-west direction parallel to the church. Most characteristically chapter houses terminated in a rectangular east end, but some early examples featured a round apse. There were also a few centralized chapter houses.

Early examples of chapter houses with rectangular east ends are known from the late 11th century at Winchester and from the first half of the 12th century at Bardney, Birkenhead, Boxgrove, St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and St. Albans. By the 13th century this form had become nearly universal for chapter houses. Smaller and less elaborate examples were completely contained within the undercroft of the east range, and were separated from the rest of the undercroft in some cases simply by a timber partition wall; examples include Finchale (Figure 12), Higham, and Lindisfarne.<sup>38</sup>

A handful of Benedictine chapter houses were built with the east end terminating in a round apse; among them Battle, Binham, Durham, Muchelney, Norwich, Reading, and also perhaps Christchurch, Canterbury, Gloucester, and Wymondham. In terms of ecclesiastical architecture in general, this form had a more ancient lineage than the rectangular form, and thus, probably had revered associations; the chapter house of the St. Gall monastic plan, c820, may have been of

this type.<sup>39</sup> Such a supposition is strengthened by the number of major houses among the examples cited which had apsed chapter houses. What is more certain, by the middle of the 12th century it had gone out of fashion; no round-apsed chapter houses were built in England after this time. Moreover, all the examples above, with the exception of Battle, Durham, and possibly Reading, lost their round apse at a later date, usually by the addition of a straight east wall cutting off the apse. The east end of the chapter house at Christchurch, Canterbury, was rectangular from at least the 13th century, Gloucester received a new rectangular east end c1380, and Wymondham was squared off c1400. The Early English chapter house at Broomholme Priory appears to have been later squared off with an east wall which lined up with the east wall of the east range, but the previous form of the east end is unknown. The round apse of the chapter house at Norwich was replaced in the late 13th century by a shallow polygonal apse, a form which found a parallel at St. Mary's, Coventry, in the 14th or 15th centuries.<sup>40</sup>

Besides rectangular and apsed chapter houses there were also four centralized Benedictine chapter houses: Evesham, Pershore, Westminster, and Worcester.<sup>41</sup> Centralized chapter houses were peculiar to England, and of the twenty-five or thirty-odd known examples there does not seem to be a preponderance in the houses of any one order; they are found at Benedictine, Cluniac, Augustinian, Premonstratensian, and Cistercian houses and also at secular cathedrals. However, the chapter houses at Evesham, Pershore, and Worcester do seem to form a cohesive group. Not only are they located within twelve miles of one

another, but they exhibit particular traits which set them apart from other English centralized chapter houses. Firstly, neither the Worcester nor the Pershore chapter house had a vestibule, the centralized structure intruding directly into the east range (the chapter house at Evesham seems to have had a vestibule, although the exact arrangement is imperfectly known). At Worcester this presents relatively few logistical difficulties, as the dormitory is uncharacteristically located in the west cloister range. At Pershore, while the interior of the chapter house was round, the exterior walls were rectangular and fit into the dimensions of an unusually wide east range. Like Pershore, the Worcester chapter house, as it was built c1120-25, was also round internally. In the late 14th century, however, the exterior was encased and buttressed to form a ten-sided structure. The chapter house at Evesham, as it was rebuilt by Abbot John (1286-1316), was also ten-sided, finely vaulted with no central column. Worcester chapter house was also vaulted but did not have a central column. The most usual shape for centralized chapter houses in England was octagonal; both circular and decagonal ones were rare.

The chapter house at Westminster, as rebuilt between 1246 and 1253, was octagonal, and was set outside of the dormitory range, being approached from the cloister by a vestibule which occupied the whole width of the east range (Figure 20). This arrangement became the paradigm of most later, centralized chapter houses.<sup>42</sup> The possibility exists that an earlier centralized chapter house existed at Westminster.

A 13th-century Norman French poem on the life of Edward the Confessor claims that he built a chapter house there "vaulted and round".<sup>43</sup>

No trace of such an early structure has been found, however, and if it did exist, it was probably built slightly later than the reign of Edward (1047-1066),<sup>44</sup> but would still have probably been the seminal example in England.

Between the Conquest and the early 13th century, chapter houses were built at every Benedictine monastery in England. This represents by far the greatest amount of building activity directed towards these chapter houses. After their initial appearance, however, a considerable number were rebuilt in the 13th century.<sup>45</sup> At St. Mary's, York, a new chapter house was built to the east of the old chapter house, probably in the time of Abbot Robert Longchamps (1197-1239), the old chapter house forming a vestibule for the new one (Figure 24). This could indicate that increased size was a motive for rebuilding, for the monastic population of England peaked in the early 13th century. Another motive, no doubt, was to provide a more magnificent setting in which to carry out the communal business of the house; the chapter house, as the monks' 'board room', must have to some extent mirrored the success and importance of the monastery in the eyes of its community.

After the 13th century, however, complete rebuildings of chapter houses are known only at Coventry in the 14th or 15th century and at Glastonbury, where the project met with considerable difficulty. The new chapter house at Glastonbury was begun under Abbot Walter de Momynton (1342-1375). Rebuilding continued under his successor,

Abbot John Chinnock (1375-1420), but was only finished in the time of Abbot Nicholas Frome (1420-1455). For a single project to have dragged out for such a considerable length of time, especially at one of the very richest monastic foundations in the country, indicates to what a great extent finances available for building, and also perhaps the communal spirit of monastic life, had declined since the 12th century.

It was not usual for chapter houses to be involved in such protracted building operations simply because after the 13th century nothing on the scale of a total rebuilding was contemplated. When we are informed that the chapter house at St. Augustine's Canterbury, was largely 'refaced or refashioned' after 1382, or that there were building operations on the chapter house at Pershore in the early 15th century, where both structures have almost entirely disappeared, it is probable that these operations may be regarded as involving one of two major areas: one to do with vaults, the other with the east end of the chapter house.

Relatively little information exists pertaining to the vaulting of chapter houses, but it would appear that by far the greatest majority of Benedictine chapter houses were vaulted. No clear evidence survives, even for relatively minor houses, of any unvaulted Benedictine chapter houses, although it is probable that examples existed at Broomholme, Finchale, and Winchester Cathedral Priory. Chapter house vaults were built roughly on two different scales. In smaller chapter houses the vault comprised part of the dormitory undercroft vault and was, thus, of only one story. The more sumptuous chapter houses at the larger and

richer monasteries were often of a more impressive height, rising far above undercroft level and even above first-story level; examples can still be seen at Christchurch, Canterbury, Chester, Durham, Gloucester, Westminster, and Worcester. At Canterbury, Durham, and Gloucester these lofty structures completely interrupt the east cloister range; the dormitories at Canterbury and Gloucester are on the far side of the chapter house from the church with no night stairs connecting them to the church. Other houses obviated this interruption by appending a lower entrance vestibule to their chapter houses. The vestibule of Westminster has already been mentioned. Vestibules also existed at Chester, St. Mary's, York, and perhaps also at Muchelney, Peterborough, and St. Albans. At Rochester the westernmost bay of the chapter house was vaulted at a lower level than the rest of the structure, thus functioning in much the same way as a vestibule.<sup>46</sup>

Rib vaulting seems to have been by far the most common technique of vaulting, but other kinds were used. Gloucester chapter house has a pointed Norman barrel vault, and Monk Bretton chapter house may also have been barrel-vaulted. The chapter house at Boxgrove could possibly have been groin-vaulted. The chapter house at Christchurch, Canterbury, did not have a stone vault, but its wooden roof was designed in imitation of a barrel vault.

Although no unvaulted examples of chapter houses are known with certainty (besides Canterbury), some of the vaults themselves are much later than the chapter houses they cover: Malmesbury chapter house was probably vaulted under Abbot William of Colerne (1260-1296);<sup>47</sup>

Binham appears to have been vaulted in the mid 14th century;<sup>48</sup> Christchurch, Canterbury, chapter house received its wooden barrel vault c1397, the vestibule, at least, of St. Mary's, York, was also vaulted in the late 14th century. At St. Albans, under Abbot William Wallingford (1476-1492), the buttresses of the chapter house were thickened, or perhaps flying buttresses added, and recent excavation has shown that fan vaults were probably built. Westminster chapter house received flying buttresses in 1377 in order to bolster the already existing vault which was showing signs of movement. Worcester chapter house was, likewise, encased externally in the early 15th century in order to stabilize its vaults.

The other area of major building operations on chapter houses was the remodelling of the east end. Muchelney chapter house was lengthened at some time after the original Norman structure was built, the Norman apse being destroyed. It was much more usual, however, for apsed chapter houses to be decreased in size by cutting off the apse with a straight east wall, as has already been noted. In most cases size was probably not a crucial consideration due to generally smaller populations in the later Middle Ages. The strongest motive for east end renovations was to replace an apse with a splendid east window or windows. Indeed, windows continued to be rebuilt, usually larger than they had been before, throughout the period. This often involved reroofing or vaulting on a flatter plane, especially for large Perpendicular windows with four-centred heads.

### 3. *The Dormitory*

The first floor of the east range commonly contained the monks' dormitory. Most dormitories were aligned in a north-south direction over the undercroft of the range, although two variations of this can be noted.

At Christchurch, Canterbury, the dormitory was twice as wide as usual with a bearing wall running longitudinally along the length of its undercroft dividing it into two spaces which more closely resemble the usual shape (Figure 6). In turn each of these spaces had a central longitudinal row of supports. The huge size of the resulting dormitory space reflects the ambition of Archbishop Lanfranc, who intended the dormitory to accommodate 150 monks. This shape is paralleled at St. Mary's, Coventry, where the dormitory is more nearly square, the undercroft having five rows of five supporting piers each (Figure 9).

At Chester (Figure 8), Birkenhead, Winchester, probably at Gloucester, and possibly also at Malmesbury the dormitory extended in an east-west direction from the east range on the far side of the chapter house. There is no evidence that the undercroft in these cases was used differently from the more usual arrangement; in fact at Chester and Birkenhead the daystairs rose in a north-south direction at the far end of the east cloister walk, and at Chester they were immediately adjoined by the calefactory.<sup>49</sup>

The dormitory, in its more usual position running north-south over the east range, was sometimes contiguous with the transept, as at

Boxgrove and Finchale, but it was more common for some space to intervene. At many of the larger houses, as has been noted, the chapter house rose above undercroft height and the dormitory extended from its far side. As also noted previously, in such cases a vestibule could enable passage from the dormitory to a night stair. Night stairs existed at Durham, Finchale, Lindisfarne, and Whitby, (all in the northwest) and probably at Boxgrove.<sup>50</sup> Some houses are known not to have had night stairs, however, and positive evidence for night stairs is rare. They do not seem to have been usual in Benedictine houses.<sup>51</sup>

At some houses the dormitory is separated from the transept by another first floor chamber. Both Birkenhead and Tynemouth have such chambers. At Birkenhead a chamber was built over the chapter house in the 14th century. It was entered from the church, and its use remains unknown, although for many years it was known as 'the scriptorium'. At Tynemouth a chamber was built over the chapter house in the 13th century. In its north wall was a fireplace, and it connected with another room above the vaulting of the south choir aisle which also had a fireplace. Its use has, likewise, remained unexplained.

At Gloucester there was a vestry over the slype on the first floor next to the transept. However, since the chapter house rises up past first-floor level, it, rather than the vestry, blocks the dormitory. In the 14th century a library was built above this vestry. This parallels the position of the 14th-century library at Durham which, however, was directly over the slype on the first floor. Neither does the library at Durham block the dormitory because, as at Worcester, the dormitory

is uncharacteristically in the west cloister range.

The Norman dormitory at Durham was in the east range as was normal, but in 1398 a contract was made for the construction of a new dormitory to be located in the west range.<sup>52</sup> As it was built, it occupied the whole first floor of the west range and had a night stair into the south nave aisle. At this time the function of the undercroft of the west range was also altered. Next the southwest tower was a treasury, then several vestries, then the calefactory, a passage to the infirmary and finally the great cellar or buttery. As can be seen, this arrangement also curiously mirrors that normally found in the undercroft of the east range.

The dormitories at Barking and Worcester were also in their west ranges.<sup>53</sup> The west ranges of these two houses were both in the same position relative to a river as was the west range at Durham, and it may be that the change in position of the dormitory there was undertaken to facilitate drainage. If so, the older arrangement in the west range at Worcester could have provided the model. The reredorters, or latrines, of each extended westward from the dormitory towards the river. The dormitory at Worcester, however, built at the end of the 11th century, extends westward from the west cloister walk rather than forming a range along the whole west side of it (Figure 23). It is also wider than the normal dormitory, after the fashion of Canterbury and Coventry, although it seems only to have had a single row of supports running longitudinally down the centre of the undercroft.

The reredorter formed an ubiquitous appendage to the dormitory. It was a long and narrowly proportioned building with a drain, usually of running water, flowing through the undercroft lengthwise.<sup>54</sup> On the first floor were seats arranged in rows, either back to back or along one wall.

The reredorter usually abutted the east wall of the dormitory near its far end and extended toward the east. Sometimes, however, it adjoined the far wall of the east range, still extending in an east-west direction, as at St. Radegund's, Cambridge, Coventry, Finchale, Reading, and Westminster. At Bardney the reredorter ran parallel to the east range from the far end of the east wall.

#### 4. *Appearance and Fittings*

Apart from the masonry which formed the main structural basis of the east range, little has survived to give a complete idea of its appearance during the period in question. Survivals such as the timber dormitory roofs at Durham and Westminster are rare, and the exact treatment of roofs, floor coverings, and internal fittings must be deduced from only the scantiest of sound evidence.

The open timber roofs still to be seen at Durham and Westminster evince the standard solution for roofing halls in general and dormitories in particular, although a variety of different timber roof types were in use throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>55</sup>

The records of the inventories ordered by King Henry VIII leave no doubt that the most common type of roofing for all monastic buildings,

at least by the early 16th century, was lead. It was not used universally, however it probably represented the ideal to which a house would have aspired. Nevertheless, such a well-fixed house as Ely appears to have had a thatched dormitory roof as late as 1334/5; twenty years later it would appear that it had been replaced by a leaden roof, however, as a plumber was employed for its repair.<sup>56</sup>

At Battle in 1364 the dormitory seems to have been covered with "shingles".<sup>57</sup> At Malmesbury Abbot William of Colerne (1260-1296) had the dormitory roof removed and "covered with stone and new alures".<sup>58</sup> And at the more modest establishment of Higham roof tiles, believed to have been introduced not much before 1200,<sup>59</sup> have been found on the site.

It is very likely that the floor covering of the dormitory was largely a matter of indifference both to the builder and the monks, as it was common custom for the floor to be covered with straw which was changed at regular intervals. At least in the chapter house, however, more permanent materials would have been appropriate. Glazed tiles are the most common type of permanent floor covering known in conventual buildings (mainly from archaeological recovery, although many do remain in situ). Stone flags are also known to have been used, and at Higham evidence remains of how a smaller and less well endowed house would have handled such matters. In the chapter house, the most prestigious building in the east range, remains of unglazed floor tiles were found. A much cruder form of floor covering was found in the calefactory; excavations revealed successive layers of black

wood ash spread over the unpaved ground and in one case sealed by yellow sand.<sup>60</sup>

The internal fittings in the rooms of the east range have universally disappeared without a trace. Only in the case of dormitories can a vague idea of its fittings be gleaned from documentary description. In the late 11th and early 12th centuries dormitories would have been austere, cold, and uncomfortable as befitted the ascetic ideal encouraged by the great monastic reforms of that time. But by the 13th century concessions were beginning to be made to the comfort of the monks. Most commonly this took the form of glazed windows and the construction of warmly wainscotted cubicles for each monk. Such cubicles were built at Peterborough at the beginning of the 13th century, and at the same time the monks at St. Albans were provided with oaken bedsteads.<sup>61</sup> The lengths to which this trend was prone to reach is indicated by an injunction laid down in the statutes of the Benedictine Chapter of the Province of Canterbury in 1277 that beds in the dormitory must be so arranged that they could all be seen by anyone walking through the room;<sup>62</sup> such injunctions usually reflect a situation in which there is a need for them.<sup>63</sup> There seems to have been a great deal of variation in these arrangements between different houses. The beds themselves were probably little more than mattresses filled with straw. It is recorded that when the new dormitory at Gloucester was finished in 1313, the monks entered it in procession, each carrying his own bed with him.<sup>64</sup>

### 5. *Chronology of Construction*

In the course of the 12th century the building and rebuilding of the conventual offices of all houses kept pace with the contemporaneous high level of monastic enthusiasm and growth of monastic populations. It seems on the surface that money was available for virtually every Benedictine house in England to build relatively more substantial and permanent conventual buildings than their Saxon predecessors had possessed. It is probable, however, that the process of acquiring such conventual buildings was sometimes a slow one, and conventual buildings constructed of wood or wattle and daub were probably still fairly common at the turn of the 13th century.<sup>65</sup> Finchale, for instance, was founded in 1170<sup>66</sup> but the formal setting out of a stone church and permanent conventual buildings was not begun until c1237 and not finished until near the end of the 13th century.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, there is some reason to think that the dormitory at Ely, or at least some part of it, was still composed of such materials at a substantially later date, as clay was used for its repair; this would probably be exceptional for such a major house.

The documents give only scanty information on the priorities involved in the construction of conventual buildings but there is reason to believe that the eastern or dormitory range received a relatively high priority in such undertakings. At Peterborough Abbot Ernulf (1107-1114) rebuilt the monastic buildings beginning with the east side of the cloister including a new dormitory and reredorter. At Battle

the monastic buildings were rebuilt on a sumptuous scale in the 13th century and the great dormitory range was the first work undertaken. Also, when Henry III began rebuilding Westminster abbey after 1246, work was begun on the chapter house and adjacent parts of the east range simultaneously with the east end of the church. The importance of the chapter house and the self-evident practical need for the dormitory make such a priority a reasonable expectation. At Chester, however, where there was also much rebuilding around the cloister between c1230 and 1270, the refectory was built first, followed immediately afterwards by the east range.

Such rebuildings of the east or dormitory range (excepting the chapter house which has been discussed previously) continued on quite a large scale throughout the 13th century.<sup>68</sup> There is little in the quality, scale, or degree of lavishness in the majority of such rebuilding, however, which evinces an effort to provide more than adequate living arrangements for the monks. This would suggest that the buildings they replaced were of substandard or makeshift quality and were either never intended as permanent structures, or were built only with considerable strain on the resources of a house which was either newly founded or unused to building and maintaining such expensive, ponderous structures.

After the 13th century there was a dramatic curtailment of all major building activity in the east range, except that precipitated by catastrophe. Only at a few houses is there any evidence for major rebuilding in the east range (or dormitory range as at Durham, rebuilt

in 1398) and, among those, only at Coventry can be seen an instance of an entirely new claustral fabric after this time. At Glastonbury a new dormitory was built under Abbot Chinnock (1374-1420), and at Thetford substantial repairs and alterations throughout the late 14th to the 16th centuries are interspersed with older masonry.

#### 6. *The Danger of Fire*

It is almost incontrovertable that one of the motives behind the upgrading of the conventual buildings was the danger of fire. It is readily apparent that the 12th century was plagued with incendiary disaster (see Appendix). In fact, damage to conventual buildings by fire would appear to have been the greatest immediate motive behind new building in the east range and in all domestic building throughout the century. A documented interest in fire prevention begins to become apparent near the end of the 12th century. Tangible evidence for this lies in building regulations surviving for the city of London from the year 1189, namely Henry Fitz-Ailwyn's Assize of Buildings.<sup>69</sup> These regulations required stone party walls three feet wide and sixteen feet high to be built between all contiguous wooden buildings. Wood also claims that these regulations offered special privileges to citizens who built in stone,<sup>70</sup> but Knowles and Pitt offer no substantiation on this point. Moreover, they consider that the immediate effects of these regulations were negligible. The cost of realizing such fire precautions made them impracticable for the majority of the population. Nevertheless, additional building regulations motivated

by fire prevention were forthcoming over the next 150 years from London's occasional 'ward motes'. These included further provision for the use of fireproof materials. In particular, roofing materials were limited to lead, tile, and stone.

Although religious houses would have enjoyed a fair amount of freedom from such municipal injunctions, they would have been just as concerned with fire prevention, and were in a much better financial position to carry out preventative measures. This freedom is demonstrated by the instance at Ely of a thatched dormitory roof as late as 1334/5, to which can be compared the case of one Thomas Bat, who was taken to court by the City of London as early as 1302 for putting thatch on his houses instead of tiles. In general, however, Benedictine houses were ahead of the observable progress of fire prevention in London. It is recorded, for instance, that at Bury St. Edmunds Abbot Samson (1182-1212) ordered the replacement of reeds by slates for the roofs of the monastic stables and offices to lessen the danger of fire.<sup>71</sup>

Precautions against fire did not manifest themselves only in restrictions against inflammable building materials. In 1236 water was first brought to London in lead pipes from sources outside the city; this artificial water supply was improved in 1285 and augmented by the construction of reservoirs within the city. Firefighting facilities and an adequate system of alarm were also provided for.<sup>72</sup> London was considerably behind many Benedictine houses in providing such a water supply.

From the late 12th century many Benedictine houses made a conscious effort to improve the water supply to their buildings. Christchurch, Canterbury, is amongst the first houses recorded to have laid on such a supply of water.<sup>73</sup> By a charter dating between 1148 and 1162 the house was granted a source of pure water in a field now called the Holmes, 3/4 miles from the precinct. Prior Wibert built a water tower and devised an elaborate system of lead pipes and cisterns to water and drain the monastery.<sup>74</sup> These works were probably finished, or at least in an advanced state of construction, by about 1165, when one of the two surviving waterworks maps of the convent was drawn up. The use of lead or wooden pipes for such a system was common. They were often used to carry water from sources a considerable distance away, at Tynemouth, for instance, about two miles. Since such systems were necessarily fed by gravity, a water source well above the level of the priory was sought to improve water pressure.<sup>75</sup> There were also some precautions taken against the silting of the pipes; at Canterbury a well house was built, and the conduit to the priory included a series of settling tanks.<sup>76</sup>

Fire was one of the main considerations behind the construction of such a water system. Without such a precaution a house was virtually helpless to stop a serious fire, as can be seen in the case of the fire which destroyed almost all of Peterborough Abbey in 1116. The fire burned uncontrolled for nine days in the tower of the church before a wind finally spread it to the abbot's lodgings. In many instances a disastrous fire can be seen to have immediately prompted steps toward an improved water supply. At Winchcombe Abbot Robert III (1194-1221)

had an aqueduct built at considerable cost, by which water was carried to the abbey in lead pipes from a spring at Hanwell. At the time, the abbey was still not completely rebuilt after its complete destruction by fire in 1151. Likewise, after it was razed by fire in 1184, Glastonbury made the Chalice Well the main water source for the abbey. The well head was probably constructed with reused stone from the burned buildings. And in September, 1278, royal licence was obtained by St. Werburgh's, Chester, to make a conduit from Newtones well to the abbey and to pierce the town wall if necessary; a clear response to the fire which destroyed nearly all of the town on the previous 15th of May.

Only the wealthiest houses would have had water supplies by 1200. Lead was expensive, and it was twice as costly to have a plumber do conduit work as roofing work. Nevertheless, progress continued to be made throughout the 13th century and by 1346 even the modest establishment of nuns at Higham were building a conduit half a mile long to their priory. Only occasionally thereafter are there references to the construction of water systems; more often the documents give evidence of repairs or minor modifications. At Canterbury, the 12th century water system was repaired by Prior Chillenden (1390-1411) and again by Prior Goldston (1495-1517), but little additional attention appears to have been required throughout the almost four hundred years of its existence.

### 7. *Maintenance and Decay*

The concern of Benedictine houses for their buildings was not limited simply to the dangers and effects of fire, even though fire presented by far the most dangerous and prevalent cause of sudden damage to the buildings. There was also the slower and more insidious process of deterioration and natural decay to which it was necessary that a constant and energetic programme of building maintenance be opposed. At the majority of Benedictine houses virtually all work on the domestic buildings in the east range after the end of the 13th century was precipitated either by fire damage, or by considerations of maintenance or the lack thereof.

The study of building maintenance through the period in question is particularly difficult as the documentary material relating to it has not been of more than peripheral interest to those who have worked with the appropriate documents. The published information which is available tends to be of an exceptional nature. In other words, where the maintenance of the buildings of a house was kept up to an adequate extent, it is unlikely that any mention of it would be singled out for attention by historians, even in the exceptional cases where any documentary information has survived. However, where building maintenance was not kept up and the state of the buildings had reached a point calling for immediate action, or where financial difficulty, mismanagement, or irresponsibility made normal maintenance impossible, chroniclers are more apt to have made mention of it, clerks are more likely to have made

account of it, and historians are more likely to have considered it. The amount of such information which is available is sufficient, moreover, to make it clear that dilapidation of buildings occurred all too commonly at Benedictine monasteries.

When Henry of Blois became abbot of Glastonbury in 1126, he found the buildings ruinous, and the monks in need of the necessities of life.<sup>77</sup> This is a very early reference to dilapidation at a Benedictine monastery, but in the later Middle Ages it becomes obvious that a process of decay was at work which had reached considerable proportions by the Dissolution. The reports of episcopal visitations and of the royal visitations promulgated by Henry VIII are prime sources for such information. A royal report of 22 February 1538 states that the buildings at Abingdon are in a condition of great decay.<sup>78</sup> At Higham, the buildings are described in 1508/9 as falling into ruin.<sup>79</sup> At Shrewsbury between 1518 and 1525 many of the buildings were apparently in a serious state of dilapidation, the dormitory in particular being in bad repair.<sup>80</sup> At Tewkesbury also the monastic buildings are said to have been in a ruinous condition at the beginning of the 16th century.<sup>81</sup> In the 16th century especially, even taking into account the ulterior motives of many of the (royal) reports involved, mentions of decay and ruin are alarmingly apparent.

The causes of such conditions were financial, but it is difficult to determine the root of the financial problem in many cases. In all probability financial mismanagement and lack of resources struck a varying balance. Financial mismanagement could, and did, result both

from incompetence and from misuse of funds or abuse of office; in either case the results were usually the same. Thus, at Binham Henry Halstede was appointed prior (1454-c1461) only on the condition that he give sureties in writing to rebuild the dormitory which had fallen into ruin.<sup>82</sup>

An incident at Worcester Cathedral Priory shows the extent to which such dilapidations were allowed to progress. In July, 1302, the greater part of the dormitory simply collapsed. This was the result of sheer negligence, for the documents clearly record that it had been in a "threatening condition" for a long time.<sup>83</sup> In all probability this was the result of financial mismanagement; during the archepiscopal visitation in 1301 complaints were voiced that the bishop was wasting the first fruits of vacant churches within his diocese which should have been applied to the repair of the church, described also as ruinous.<sup>84</sup> Although the bishop was not directly responsible for the upkeep of the priory buildings, his financial control of the resources of the cathedral priory could have had considerably far-reaching implications. Again at St. Albans, an even wealthier house than Worcester, in 1323 "the north wall behind the dorter" (as well as the south nave arcade) collapsed necessitating major repairs. These repairs were not completed until c1345.<sup>85</sup>

Despite what may appear as a somewhat negligent attitude towards domestic buildings, there was also a close relationship between dilapidation and improvement. When substantial repairs were necessary or disaster struck, subsequent rebuilding was liable to go far beyond

the extent required by necessity. Change and improvement could often result.<sup>86</sup>

Such could only be the case, however, where the endowments of a house were sufficient to maintain the extent and scale of buildings constructed at an often ambitious and enthusiastic foundation. Where sufficient endowments did not exist, the financial burden of building maintenance, sometimes combined with a reduced population, led at least a small number of houses to actually reduce the scale of their buildings. The most dramatic of such reductions occurred at the priory of Finchale, a dependant cell of Durham. Not only were the monastic buildings rearranged on a reduced and more economically viable scale, so also was the church itself (Figure 12). Finchale must have been an exceptional case. A more indicative example is perhaps that of Thetford where at some time in the 14th or 15th centuries, the west end of the reredorter was blocked off and abandoned. It seems that the reredorter at Christchurch, Canterbury, was also reduced from 55 to 50 seats.<sup>87</sup> Reductions on this scale were probably fairly common throughout the 14th and 15th centuries.

#### D. THE REFECTORY RANGE

##### 1. Morphology

The claustral range opposite the church was dominated both structurally and in function by the refectory. Without exception Benedictine refectories ran in an east-west direction bordering on the cloister walk. Occasionally, as at Abingdon and perhaps Glastonbury, the refectory occupied the entire range, but it was far more common for a passage to be located at one end and at a few houses subsidiary chambers were also included. The passage in the refectory range usually led either to the infirmary or to a hostelry. It was most commonly located east of the refectory, thus forming a continuation of the east walk of the cloister. Passages to the west of the refectory occur occasionally, however, as at Chester, and perhaps St. Augustine's, Canterbury. At St. Radegund's, Cambridge, Tynemouth, and Westminster there are passages at either end of the refectory. Of the chambers which in a few cases detract from the refectory space, most appear to be to the west of the refectory, as at Birkenhead, Durham, Ely, and Horsham St. Faith.

The principal access to the refectory was from the cloister walk, usually at its west end.<sup>88</sup> This doorway was often relatively elaborate as was the interior decoration of the refectory. Images on the walls appear to have been common, and the decorative treatment of the walls sometimes included dado arcades, as at Peterborough and Reading.

At Durham in 1518 Prior Castell wainscotted the refectory with wooden panelling about eight feet high; no doubt this instance was repeated at other houses in the later Middle Ages.

At the east end of the refectory the superior's table was set on a dais, as can still be seen at Chester (though a modern restoration). At Bardney the dais was three steps high. The high table was 15 feet long, and a stone seat was set behind it against the east wall. Stone benches for the monks ran along both side walls to within 20 feet of the west end, and two long wooden tables with stone supports were placed on either side of the hall in front of these benches.<sup>89</sup>

The east wall behind the superior's table was often decorated with a wall painting. In the surviving refectory at St. Martin's Priory, Dover, the east wall has a painting of the Last Supper which has been painted over another unidentified fresco. On the east wall of the refectory of Horsham St. Faith can still be seen a large painted crucifixion scene with a series of smaller scenes below probably depicting the foundation of the priory. Some evidence of wall painting also survives on the east wall of the refectory at Durham. The refectory at Worcester contains an even more elaborately treated east wall which features a large relief carving of Christ in Majesty surrounded by the four signs of the evangelists. Although evidence of such representations is rare, their presence at other houses can be conjectured from the widely differing circumstances and locations of the houses cited above. Moreover, refectory windows seem commonly to have been set high in the walls leaving a blank space of wall below eminently suited for such decoration.<sup>90</sup>

The Benedictine rule makes provision for readings from the Bible during mealtimes. For this purpose a pulpit was required and it often became a major feature of the refectory. The pulpit was located at the east end of the refectory, usually on the south side, although the pulpit at Worcester was to the north. It was set high in the wall, and usually a stair led up to it from floor level. The surviving pulpits at Chester and Shrewsbury present many similarities. In both cases access to the pulpit is provided by a straight stair in the thickness of the refectory wall. The pulpits themselves form oriels. At Chester the oriel forms a triangular projection. At Shrewsbury the pulpit projects on both sides of the wall to form an octagon which is vaulted, the central boss of the vault containing a crucifixion scene. Both pulpits are lighted by glazed windows to the exterior.

The floors of refectories appear to have been commonly covered with straw. A 14th-century consuetudinary for the refectory at Winchester Cathedral Priory stipulates that fresh straw is to be furnished seven times a year.

Refectories were invariably covered with a wooden roof; no vaulted refectories are known in England. All of the refectory roofs which have survived are of a single span, but in all probability this only represents their condition in the later Middle Ages, from which time all the surviving evidence dates. Improved timber construction techniques and the development of new truss types at the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century made it possible for the first time to cover major spans by unsupported wooden roofs. A smaller space

could have always been covered by a single span, of course, but the capacity to do so was dependent on the availability of appropriately-sized timbers. Before the end of the 13th century, then, it is highly improbable that refectories of any great size were roofed in a single span, and supports, probably rows of wooden posts, would have been necessary. Where the refectory rested on an undercroft, it is furthermore likely that these rows of supports would have been arranged, for efficiency and structural stability, analogously to the masonry supports in the undercroft below. At Durham and St. Mary's, York, the refectory undercroft vaults were supported on two rows of piers, and so it is likely that their refectories were originally aisled. At Glastonbury and Worcester, however, the refectory undercroft, and so probably their refectories as well, possessed a single central row of supports.<sup>91</sup> All Benedictine refectories, however, were eventually aisleless halls of which two variations occur: the ground-floor refectory and the more usual first-floor refectory resting on a vaulted undercroft. Both of these hall types were to be found in secular domestic architecture in England, and they exhibit many similarities of development with Benedictine refectories.

Although ground-floor refectories are less common than their first-floor counterparts, they are far from rare.<sup>92</sup> Only a few 12th-century examples are known, however; amongst them are Norwich, c1125, Dover, mid 12th century, and Peterborough, c1190. This is quite in keeping with their frequency in lay building. Wood notices only four possible early examples of non-monastic, ground-floor, aisleless

halls.<sup>93</sup> There are too few survivals of each to make a trustworthy comparison, but it would seem that, compared with ground-floor halls in general, early ground-floor refectories appeared with disproportionate frequency (no doubt the different requirements of monastic refectories and secular halls had much to do with this disparity).

In general ground-floor halls were increasingly common in the 13th century, and by the 15th century had superseded the first-floor hall, which achieved its last major expression in the hall built for John of Gaunt at Kenilworth Castle, 1390-93. Ground-floor refectories were built at Chester in the late 13th century and at Shrewsbury in the 14th. Unfortunately, very few refectories survive intact enough to determine how general a trend this can be considered. To Shrewsbury and Chester could be compared the first-floor refectory at Coventry which was built in the 14th or 15th century. The continued existence of first-floor refectories would seem to indicate that refectories developed somewhat independently of secular halls. It is also possible that later refectory development was affected by a conservatism borne of a rigid institutional framework to which secular domestic architecture was not subject; the more usual first-floor refectory was retained long after first-floor, domestic halls had gone out of current fashion.

At most Benedictine houses the refectory was built on an undercroft. One of the earliest of these undercrofts survives at Durham (Figure 10). It was built c1080-90, and is divided into a series of chambers. At the east end of the undercroft is a one-bay chamber,

then a five-bay, groin-vaulted chamber with 2 rows of supports, 3 more one-bay chambers, and at the west a cellar built slightly later than the rest of the undercroft (between c1093 and 1140). Most refectory undercrofts were subdivided, but such a great number of divisions is unusual. The most common arrangement was two chambers. Sometimes, as at Binham and Coventry, the partition wall was roughly central resulting in chambers of approximately the same size. At Birkenhead, Ely, and Horsham St. Faith, however, the partition wall is off centre and forms a small, sometimes only one-bay, chamber at the west end.

The function of refectory undercrofts is difficult to ascertain. Scattered documentary references imply that several alternatives were open. Small rooms at the western end are very likely to have been service chambers, and indeed, that at Ely is known to have served as a buttery. In many cases cellars occupied one of the principal spaces of the undercroft.<sup>94</sup> A cellar has already been noted at Durham. The refectory undercrofts at Easebourne and Gloucester seem also to have served as cellar space. However, it would appear that refectory undercrofts did not always exhibit such a mundane character. According to Whittingham's plan, the refectory undercroft at St. Mary's, York, had a three-bay eastern chamber which served as the 'recreation room' (calefactory?) while the seven-bay, western chamber served as a guest hall.<sup>95</sup> Although a 'recreation room' in this position is highly unusual among Benedictine houses this is the exact position occupied by the calefactory in Cistercian houses.<sup>96</sup> Brakspear suggests that the

refectory undercroft at Birkenhead Priory was also used for the accommodation of inferior guests.<sup>97</sup> Undercrofts were not generally prestigious spaces, however, and guest halls were far more commonly located at first-floor level. Thus, it would appear that cellarage and kitchen service were more suited to the refectory undercroft.

## *2. Chronology of Construction*

In contrast to other conventual buildings refectories received a substantial amount of attention in the 14th century. A large number of houses are known to have rebuilt their refectories between the late 13th and early 15th centuries.<sup>98</sup> This period of activity did not end major work on the refectory, however. Beginning as early as the late 13th century and continuing sporadically until the Dissolution the refectories at some houses were completely transformed in a way which can be correlated with the development of secular halls.

Although there is a good deal of evidence for the 'rebuilding' of refectories in the 14th century, it is not always clear exactly what this construction entailed. Many of these references are primarily or even solely documentary and could refer to anything from a total replacement of the fabric to the remodelling of the interior. Where material evidence of such rebuilding does survive, a great deal of variation can be noted in the extent and character of the work. The refectory at Birkenhead was rebuilt from the foundations in the mid 14th century complete with undercroft. When the refectory at Worcester was rebuilt c1330, however, the Norman undercroft was

retained while at least most of the upper fabric was replaced. At Horsham St. Faith extensive renovations after 1390 resulted in a refectory both shorter and narrower than before, however substantial parts of the old fabric were retained including the later 13th-century wall painting on the east wall. At the other extreme it is clear that the refectory at Hurley underwent some work in the 14th century including new windows, but most of the Norman fabric was left unaltered.

Perhaps the only generalization that can be made with respect to this period of rebuilding is that there was a widespread attempt to upgrade the interior appearance of the refectory in keeping with its importance in the monastery. The readings and solemnity which the Benedictine rule demanded during meals transformed the mundane activity... of eating into another aspect of the service of God. As a result the refectory occupied a place in the hierarchy of conventual buildings transcended only by the church and perhaps the chapter house and cloister walks.<sup>99</sup> They thus demanded a corresponding degree of architectural magnificence.

### 3. *The Refectory in the Later Middle Ages*

The *Rites of Durham* describes the refectory in very reverential terms. However, it makes clear that the function of the refectory at Durham had changed considerably from its original usage. According to the *Rites*, the refectory at Durham was used by the monks only once a year on the feast day of St. Cuthbert, at which time noble guests from the area shared in the special meal then served. Throughout the rest of the

year the monks dined in 'the Loft', the upper of two chambers built into the west end of the refectory, while the high table of the refectory itself was normally used by the novitiate.<sup>100</sup> In this way the monks could dine under ordinary circumstances in a more comfortable and less formal ambience, for the Loft at Durham also served as the misericord in which the monks were allowed to eat meat which was forbidden in the refectory. This development at Durham took place after 1395, when a document makes clear that the refectory was still in normal everyday use, and before 1444, when all but 'growing youths' were actually forbidden to use the refectory during certain parts of the year.

It is likely that the Loft at Durham was built in order to facilitate the changing function of its refectory, probably in the early 15th century.<sup>101</sup> When the refectory at Horsham St. Faith was rebuilt shortly after 1390, the west end was blocked off to form a small room which could possibly have served a similar function. However, misericords did not always occupy such a position. At Finchale when the monks stopped using the refectory at some time during the later life of the priory, they dined instead in the prior's hall. Here too, however, the refectory changed its form when in the late 15th or early 16th century an upper room was built over it. At other houses the 'Table Hall' in the infirmary probably served as the misericord.<sup>102</sup>

Such changes in the structure of the refectory range as occurred at Durham and Horsham St. Faith can be seen to parallel the developing form of secular house types. From the 13th century the houses of the English nobility began to develop blocks of chambers at either end of

the hall, which remained the focus of the house throughout the Middle Ages. At the high table end of the hall, corresponding to the east end of a refectory, a block of living rooms for the owner and his family developed, while at the low end was a service block.

One of the clearest parallels to this domestic development can be seen in the refectory at Lindisfarne Priory.<sup>103</sup> Here the refectory range was rebuilt and enlarged in the 14th century so that it encroached upon the buildings of both the east and west ranges (Figure 14). The refectory itself had a central hearth and bay windows, as would be appropriate in a secular hall but certainly not in a proper monastic refectory; according to the Rule, the calefactory and the infirmary were the only conventual chambers which were allowed to have a fire for warmth. In fact, the refectory at Lindisfarne also served as the prior's hall.

At the west end of the refectory at Lindisfarne was a screens passage which not only linked the service block and the refectory but also allowed entrance from the outer court of the precinct by means of a porch attached to the south wall of the refectory.<sup>104</sup> The service block was entered by three doors in the west wall of the screens passage, one of which led to the kitchen, another to a larder, and the other to a group of chambers which included the bakehouse and brewhouse. In the undercroft of the west range a pantry or buttery clearly belongs with this group. Such a compact arrangement of service chambers is distinctly uncharacteristic of Benedictine monasteries. The kitchen was usually detached from the refectory as a precaution against fire,

and for the same reason so were the bakehouse and brewhouse, which were commonly grouped together at some distance from the claustral buildings.

To the east of the refectory at Lindisfarne in the east range was the prior's lodgings, which were being rebuilt during 1341/2, a date which could indicate the rebuilding of the refectory as well. As it was rebuilt, the prior's lodgings consisted of a parlour and a large chamber with a fireplace on the ground floor, and on the first floor the prior's chamber, possibly partitioned into bedroom and study, and also probably the prior's chapel.<sup>105</sup> There was access from the refectory to both the prior's lodgings on the first floor and the large chamber on the ground floor.

Thus the refectory range at Lindisfarne functioned remarkably like a secular house of the period. Much the same arrangement prevailed also after a late 15th or early 16th century rebuilding at Muchelney Abbey, except that the abbot's lodgings were located over the screens passage through which it had access to the refectory. Here, too, the refectory served as the abbot's hall. The small nunnery of Wilberfoss also had an unconventional plan in the later Middle Ages (Figure 21). A ground-floor refectory had a chamber over it which extended over the cloister walk, and featured two oriel windows. There was a kitchen and several butteries at the west end of the range. In combination with this, the first floor of the west range was broken up into a series of private chambers. Another unconventional arrangement was adopted at Bardney in the 15th century, when the 16 monks of the house were divided into three separate households

who ate in different parts of the priority: one group in the abbot's hall, another in the refectory, and the other in the infirmary.<sup>106</sup>

#### 4. *The Kitchen*

The main service building of the refectory was the kitchen. At most houses the kitchen was a detached building on the far side of the refectory near its west end. Evidence exists for a passage between many such kitchens and the refectory. At some other houses a chamber, perhaps a scullery, joined the two buildings.

It was common practice in the Middle Ages to have the kitchen located in a separate building, mainly, it would seem, as a preventative measure against fire. This was the case even in secular dwellings of quite modest proportions. However, domestic developments in the later Middle Ages resulted in two variations in kitchen planning which can be observed at some Benedictine establishments.

In the general development towards a more compact domestic plan the kitchen was sometimes located in the block of service buildings which accumulated at the lower end of the hall. At St. Radegund's, Cambridge, Lindisfarne, and Wilberfoss the kitchens occupy a similar position in relation to the refectory. The kitchens at all three of these houses could actually be considered as integral parts of the west range. At Finchale, where the function of the refectory was taken over by the prior's hall in the later life of the priory, the prior's kitchen similarly adjoined the west end of the prior's hall (Figure 12). All of these houses were very small, and it is probable that their

small populations, perhaps combined with economic hardship, made such an arrangement more convenient.

At Binham, Norwich, and St. Mary's, York, the kitchens occupied approximately the usual position except that they immediately adjoined their respective refectories forming in each case an L-shaped plan. This L-plan developed in the 15th century as the final kitchen arrangement in the English medieval house.<sup>107</sup> Not enough information remains to date on any of these three kitchens, but they are probably late constructions.

The most common kind of Benedictine kitchen was rectangular with large fireplaces ranged around the walls, often in the angles. It was a tall structure ventilated by louvres in the high, and steeply pitched roof; chimney flues around the perimeter often provided subsidiary ventilation.

By far the majority of Benedictine houses could afford a stone kitchen. At Jarrow, however, the rare evidence for a kitchen made of timber survives. Jarrow was afflicted with extreme economic hardship throughout its existence. In the 11th century Prior Aldwin had begun a refectory, but only the north wall was built. It was on the site of this intended refectory that the timber kitchen was built in the 12th century.

Although not the most numerous, by far the most interesting group of Benedictine kitchens were those which formed a centralized plan. The simplest of these were square in shape. The kitchens at Battle, Ely, Glastonbury, and Lindisfarne were all square. Of these

the 12th century kitchen at Ely was the earliest. Although simply designed, it was large enough to serve the community until the Dissolution. The conventual kitchen at Glastonbury was slightly more complex, with four internal piers supporting the span of its roof. The 14th-century kitchen at Battle was even more elaborate with large indented fireplaces in the centre of three of its walls, and a large hearth in one corner. This central section was surrounded by subsidiary chambers forming a larger square around it.

The kitchens of Canterbury and Durham were square externally, but the corners were cut off internally to form an octagon (Figure 10). The conventual kitchen at Worcester was also octagonal, as was the abbot's kitchen at Glastonbury, built by Abbot John de Breynton (1334-1342). Judging from the Durham kitchen and the abbot's kitchen at Glastonbury, the rationale behind this usually symbolic shape was to aid ventilation. These two kitchens survive with their stone vaults intact. In both cases their centralized vaults permit a lantern to rise from a central opening in which the main ventilation louvres were located. The vault of the Glastonbury abbot's kitchen is the simpler of the two; eight ribs rise to meet a central roundel. An octagonal lantern rises from the ribs outside of this roundel. The vault of the Durham kitchen forms an octagonal star vault which closely resembles Islamic vault patterns. Although the Durham vault is more sophisticated, they were built almost contemporaneously; the abbot's kitchen in the mid 14th century, Durham 1365-70. Nearer to the beginning of this tradition is the surviving kitchen of Fontevault

Abbey of c1195. It is also octagonal and vaulted in stone, but it does not make use of ribs at all; instead it features an octagonal corbel vault.<sup>108</sup>

Kitchens were regarded in strictly utilitarian terms, although at times they could attain to an unintended, functional magnificence. This is especially true of centralized kitchens which were elaborately vaulted. Yet while the writer of the *Rites of Durham* includes a very detailed description of the refectory, the kitchen is mentioned only in passing. Although the monks may have worked in the kitchen on occasion it was outside the ambit of their prescribed rituals and activities. Thus, almost the sole motives for any work at all on the kitchen would have been ones occasioned by considerations of maintenance or ones occasioned by changes in the monks' diet.

The most significant of these dietary changes was a drastic increase in meat. At some houses this led to the construction of a meat kitchen. At Norwich the meat kitchen, probably of the 15th century, adjoined the conventual kitchen which was built against the west end of the south wall of the refectory.

The functions of the superior's household could often entail considerable demands which the conventual kitchen could not handle, and a separate abbot's or prior's kitchen was often built. The abbot's kitchen at Glastonbury, which can still be seen intact, served exclusively the abbot's household which regularly numbered over 300 persons. Superior's kitchens quite often supplemented the conventual kitchen. It must have been only rarely that a major house did not have one,

as is known to be the case at Peterborough, where the conventual kitchen also served the abbot's household.

As could be expected, the 13th century was a period of great building activity with regard to kitchens. A second period of rebuilding can also be noticed in the second half of the 14th and early 15th centuries, often in conjunction with work on the refectory.

#### *E. THE WEST RANGE*

Unlike the other claustral ranges, the west range was not primarily conventual in nature; the monks themselves had only limited contact with these buildings. The west range comprised a number of differently functioning chambers administratively independent of one another. Although a great degree of similarity existed among the west ranges of Benedictine houses, they never possessed the ritual necessity or functional homogeneity of the refectory range or even the east range. This precipitated a flexible attitude towards the planning of the range, which could accommodate considerations of site and the individual exigencies of each particular house.

The flexible nature of the west range is exemplified by the handful of houses which managed to do completely without one. At Jarrow the west range was begun, but as with the refectory, finances were never available for its completion. At Finchale it would appear that no west range was ever planned.<sup>109</sup> This arrangement was not peculiar, however, merely to smaller houses. Until the end of the 13th century the west

range at Westminster consisted of an undercroft in which the Great Cellar was located, and an upper floor which housed the abbot's lodgings and great hall. After a fire destroyed these buildings in 1298 the range was never rebuilt (Figure 20). Its remains were largely demolished, and the west cloister walk was moved a few feet further west. Only the fabric at the far end of the range, consisting of a passage into the cloisters with some chambers of the abbot above, was retained. The abbot's lodgings were rebuilt further to the west to connect with these surviving chambers, and were separated from the west cloister walk by a courtyard. At the same time a new cellarer's range was built to the south, connecting with the far end of the west cloister walk. Like the previous cellars these extended in a north-south direction, and were still conveniently close to the refectory and kitchen. At Ely a similar range of cellars existed, but they were further from the cloister, for the prior's lodgings and guest hall intervened (Figure 11). These were located south of the refectory instead of west of the west cloister walk as at Westminster. This does not entirely preclude the existence of a west range at Ely; however there is little evidence for buildings on the site at any period, and in the 15th century the west cloister walk was moved west as at Westminster. At least since the fire of 1184, Glastonbury, too, probably never had a west range, and, although the archaeological evidence, by its very nature, is minimal, neither Exeter St. Nicholas nor Hurley appear to have had west ranges either.

At the majority of monasteries a west range did exist, and consisted of a wooden-roofed first floor over a vaulted undercroft.<sup>110</sup> In a normal west range the storage cellars of the cellarer occupied most of the undercroft. In fact, the west range is often known as the cellarer's range. Often, however, the cellarer had to share the undercroft. The outer parlour, a passage where monks could meet and talk with people outside the monastic community, was also commonly located in the west range undercroft, in a continuation of the cloister walk against the nave. It was the only strictly conventual part of the west range, although at some houses a passage led through the opposite end of the undercroft either to the infirmary or a courtyard. Occasionally kitchens and such service chambers as larders, pantries, and butteries were also located in the undercroft near the refectory; these were also in the care of the cellarer.

This does not exhaust the uses of the west range undercroft. It is clear that they commonly underwent some substantial modifications in the later Middle Ages. The west range undercroft at Binham provides a good example. Most of the central row of Norman supports were incorporated in later walls which divided the undercroft into a complicated series of compartments. These modifications must reflect changes in the function of the undercroft, but the nature of these changes is virtually unknown.

Just as cellars generally dominated the undercroft, a guest hall was usual on the first floor of the west range in the 12th century. It often became connected with or supplanted by the superior's lodgings

which very often became associated with the west range. Both guest lodgings and superiors' lodgings are dealt with more fully in Chapter Three.

Occasionally the upper floor of the west range was put to a less conventional use. The first-floor hall in the west range of Tynemouth Priory was known as the Common Hall. Hadcock suggests that it was used originally by the lay brothers, but later housed the servants of the priory. Thompson suggests that the upper story of the west range at Lindsfarne Priory was also used as rooms for the monastic servants.<sup>111</sup> The first floor of the west range at Wilberfoss Priory came to have a seemingly unique arrangement in the later Middle Ages; it was entirely segmented into a series of small chambers (Figure 21). The west ranges at Durham, Worcester, and Barking all contained first-floor dormitories, more usually located in the east range.

Although most west ranges had an undercroft, those at Birkenhead and Norwich, at least in their latest form, did not. In 1279 the Norman west range at Norwich was rebuilt as a wider structure with an aisleless, ground-floor hall known alternately as the Great Hall, the Guest Hall, and the Hostry Hall (Figure 15). The south end of the range was blocked off to form a buttery, while the north part remained two-storied. The outer parlour was retained and over it St. Edmund's Chapel (apparently not the superior's chapel). Between the outer parlour and the hall were lodgings for the priors of the dependent houses of King's Lynn and Yarmouth and above these, the Great Chamber of St. Edmund. The fate of the apparently displaced cellars is unclear.

A cellarer's range similar in shape and location to Ely and Westminster is now evident, but was apparently not built until the second half of the 14th century. The later 13th-century west range at Birkenhead is also dominated by an aisleless, ground-floor guest hall (Figure 4). Similarly the end of the range next to the church is two-storied, in this case forming the prior's lodgings.

No clearly consistent pattern of attention to the fabric of the west range is evident among Benedictine houses. The changes and variations which can be noticed, however, point to a general breakdown of the initial arrangement of the range. This arrangement would delegate the undercroft to cellars and the first floor to a guest hall or superior's lodgings. Such an arrangement may have served 12th-century needs, but the evolution of monastic life in England rendered it increasingly inadequate. As the austerity and simplicity of monastic life was tempered by increased material comfort and a more complex institutional structure, increased demands were put on cellars, which could not easily be expanded to meet new needs while confined to the west range. The demands of hospitality, often integrally combined with the superior's expanding household and evolving social position, may also have required a more flexible situation than the west range could often provide. The conflicting demands of the various obedientiaries who had a stake in the west range could also have led to a certain tension in planning changes to the range. These factors led to a clearly defined, if limited, centrifugal influence which fractionalized the west range. Thus, at Westminster the cellars and abbot's

lodgings were both rebuilt as separate and more tractable units. At Norwich the cellars only were removed from the west range.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>This percentage is based upon evidence which survives only sporadically. The houses involved are all represented in Figure 26.

<sup>2</sup>For the general disuse of the slype see Chapter Two, pp. 105-106.

<sup>3</sup>The existence of such seats in the cloister was widespread. Only the most elaborate cloisters seem to have had stone benches, however, as at Gloucester where all the cloister alleys have stone benches built into the dado. In 1383/4 timber was bought for seats in the cloister at Abingdon, and at the smaller house of St. Benet of Hulme a 1514 visitation report states that there were no seats in the cloister at all. This would further suggest that wooden seats were common, especially at smaller houses. Even at Durham a wooden bench was moved from its place in the church for part of the Maundy Thursday ceremonies, despite the stone bench in the south alley. See Rev. J.T. Fowler, ed., *Rites of Durham* (Publications of the Surtees Society, Vol. CVII, 1902), pp. 77-78.

<sup>4</sup>'Armarium' or 'almarium' was simply the medieval Latin term for a cupboard or section of a cupboard; a plethora of Anglicized variants also appear: almary, aumery, aumry, ambry, aumbry, etc.

<sup>5</sup>Fowler cites much information on lavatories in the *Rites of Durham*, p. 261, including evidence for four independent lavatory structures at Christchurch, Canterbury, and one at Peterborough. If such lavatories once did exist at these two houses, they were eventually replaced by trough-type lavatories.

<sup>6</sup>For various uses of the word 'conduit' in medieval documents and modern usage see P. Norman, "On an Ancient Conduit-head in Queen Square, Bloomsbury," *Archaeologia*, Vol. 56, Part 2 (1899), 252.

<sup>7</sup>Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, p. 82. This and other quotes from the *Rites* are paraphrased in contemporary English.

<sup>8</sup>See J.T. Micklethwaite, "On a Filtering Cistern of the Fourteenth Century at Westminster Abbey," *Archaeologia*, Vol. 53, Part 1 (1892), 161-170.

<sup>9</sup>See Chapter Two, Page 140.

<sup>10</sup>Rebuildings of lavatories occurred at Abingdon in 1308; St. Augustine's, Canterbury, in 1272; Chester between 1230 and 1270; Durham in 1432/3; Gloucester in the later 14th century; Horsham St. Faith after 1390; Norwich in the early 15th century; Peterborough in the 15th century; Sherborne in the time of Abbot More (1504-1535); Westminster in the mid 14th century and Worcester in 1395/6.

<sup>11</sup>Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, p. 83.

<sup>12</sup>Atkinson thinks they were in the north alley, Ladds the west alley. See T.D. Atkinson, *An Architectural History of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Etheldreda at Ely* (Cambridge: 1933), p. 48.

<sup>13</sup>A.H. Thompson, *Lindisfarne Priory* (London: 1949), p. 15.

<sup>14</sup>It has been suggested that the cloisters at Westminster were also two-storied in the 15th century. See J.A. Robinson, *The Abbot's House at Westminster* (Cambridge: 1911), pp. 14-15.

<sup>15</sup>Such was most likely the case at Battle in the later 13th century. The north cloister alley at Christchurch, Canterbury, was rebuilt or reashlared when the refectory was rebuilt 1226-1236. It is stated that the cloister of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, was rebuilt c1276 by Abbot Nicholas Frome, but as this occurs in the context of a building programme which included a new refectory in 1260-69, a hexagonal lavatory in 1272, and a hexagonal kitchen in 1287-1291, it is probable that the north cloister alley was at least the main part of the cloister to receive attention. It is highly likely that the south alley of the cloister at Ely was rebuilt with the refectory c1270-75. At Peterborough the rebuilding of the lavatory and south cloister alley by Abbot Robert de Lindsay (1214-1222) prepared for the rebuilding of the refectory by Abbot Walter of Bury St. Edmunds (1233-1245). And at St. Albans the refectory was rebuilt under Abbot John de Cella (1195-1214) followed by the south alley of the cloisters under Abbot William of Trumpington (1214-1235).

<sup>16</sup>H. Brakspear, "Bardney Abbey," *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 79 (1922), 33.

<sup>17</sup>The account roll of the treasurer of Abingdon for 1383/4 records payments for the glazing of cloister windows, the only other work in the cloister involving seats. At St. Albans the rebuilding of the cloister alleys was completed structurally by Abbot William Heyworth (1401-1420), but the windows were glazed during the second term of office of Abbot John Wheathampstead (1452-1465). It is also recorded that the cloister windows at Whitby were glazed in the later Middle Ages, although the extent of this work is unknown.

<sup>18</sup>The cloister alleys at Birkenhead had windows but were covered by flat wooden roofs. So were the cloisters at Durham. The north and east cloister alleys at Ely were rebuilt in the early 16th century for wooden roofs. The cloisters at Finchale were also rebuilt after the mid 14th century with traceried windows but no vault.

<sup>19</sup>L.F. Salzman, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex*, Vol. IX (London: 1937), p. 103.

<sup>20</sup>G.G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, Vol. III (Cambridge: 1936), pp. 192-195 gives ample evidence for the often blatant re-direction of funds and even the acquisition of resources to improve the creature comforts of Benedictine monks, especially food and drink.

<sup>21</sup>See John Duncombe, *An Historical Description of the Metropolitan Church of Christ, Canterbury* (Canterbury: 1783), p. 61 and R. Willis, *The Architectural History of the Conventual Buildings of the Monastery of Christchurch in Canterbury* (London: 1869), p. 45.

<sup>22</sup>This type of cloister does not appear to have been as widespread on the continent, and can probably at the very least be regarded as characteristically English. An important French example, however, especially in relation to Westminster, which introduced many aspects of French court style architecture to England, existed at S. Denis. The tracery there, as shown in an 18th century print, is probably contemporary with the rebuilding of the nave and transept of the abbey church, begun c1231. See M. Eschapaspe, *L'Architecture Benedictine en Europe* (Paris: 1963), p. 166.

<sup>23</sup>The cloister at Salisbury Cathedral, however, was perhaps the earliest and certainly the closest copy of the Westminster cloisters.

<sup>24</sup>See A.B. Whittingham and E.C. Fernie, *The Early Communal and Pitancer Rolls of Norwich Cathedral Priory with an Account of the Building of the Cloister* (Norwich: 1972).

<sup>25</sup>None of these cloisters remain, but fragments unearthed in archaeological excavation would seem to indicate that they kept their Norman form until the Dissolution.

<sup>26</sup>A.H. Thompson, *Lindisfarne Priory* (London: 1949), pp. 15-16.

<sup>27</sup>The calefactory (calefactorium) is variously referred to as the warming room, the warming house, and the common room.

<sup>28</sup>This unusual arrangement was also adopted at the Welsh house of Augustinian Canons at Penmon on Anglesey.

<sup>29</sup>As at Binham, Finchale, Higham, Jarrow, Lindisfarne, Tynemouth, and probably Boxgrove.

<sup>30</sup>As at Bardney, Bury St. Edmunds, Ely, Norwich, Carrow, St. Neots, Thetford, and Westminster.

<sup>31</sup>A room for bleeding the monks, and for the recovery of the monks who had been bled, ie. the minuti. Thompson says that the calefactory of Cluniac houses also served as the minutorium. This could also have been the case at Evesham and perhaps other Benedictine houses. See A.H. Thompson, *English Monasteries* (Cambridge: 1913), p. 81.

<sup>32</sup>R.L. Palmer, *English Monasteries in the Middle Ages* (London: 1930), p. 131.

<sup>33</sup>It is tempting to connect this whole extension with the novitiate, but there seems to be no evidence for such a connection.

<sup>34</sup>Thompson, *English Monasteries*, p. 84.

<sup>35</sup>R.M. Sergeantson and W.R.D. Adkins, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Northampton*, Vol. II (1906; London: 1970), p. 449.

<sup>36</sup>Several instances of buildings adjoining the far end of the east range could be cited. The function of such structures varied widely. At Binham the east range was adjoined by a workroom with a kiln in it. But at Bury St. Edmunds, Durham, Lindisfarne, and Winchester the east range was adjoined by the superior's lodgings, and at Coventry the dormitory was adjoined by buildings thought to represent either the prior's lodgings or the infirmary.

<sup>37</sup>See R. Marcouse, *Figure Sculpture in St. Mary's Abbey, York* (York: 1951).

<sup>38</sup>Such was also the form of no less a distinguished continental house than Cluny (Cluny II and Cluny III), which was also contained within the dormitory undercroft. See M. Eschapasse, *L'Architecture Benedictine en Europe* (Paris: 1963), p. 18.

<sup>39</sup>Although it could also possibly have been contained within the dormitory undercroft. For different versions of the plan see K.J. Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture 800 to 1200* (Harmondsworth: 1973), p. 21 and N. Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture* (Harmondsworth: 1968), p. 49.

<sup>40</sup>The form of the previous chapter house at Coventry is unknown, as the new one appears to have been rebuilt from the foundations. Other polygonal foundations have been exposed at Coventry, which are thought to be ambulatory chapels of the monastic church, and the east end of the parish church of St. Michael, 1432-1450, located just outside of the monastic precinct, is also polygonal. Since polygonal apses are rare in England, this group of polygonally-planned structures would seem to be a locally-based characteristic. See B. Hobley, "Excavations at the Cathedral and Benedictine Priory of St. Mary, Coventry," *Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions*, Vol. 84 (1967-1970), 45-139, and N. Pevsner and A. Wedgwood, *Warwickshire* (Harmondsworth: 1966), pp. 250-251. Non-Benedictine examples of chapter houses with polygonal east ends in the Midlands include those of the Augustinian Abbey of Haughmond, the collegiate church of St. Mary, Warwick, built c1370-1394, and the Carmelite Whitefriars in Coventry. The east ends of Lichfield Cathedral and the chapel in the outer ward of Kenilworth Castle, c1370-1395, were also polygonal.

<sup>41</sup>The symbolic implications of the plans of centralized chapter houses are intriguingly vague. Two studies on this question have appeared recently, however. W.S. Gardner, *The Role of Central Planning in English Romanesque Chapter House Design*, 2 Vol., (Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University: 1976) and J.R. Zukowsky, *The Polygonal Chapter House: Architecture and Society in Gothic England* (Ph.D. Thesis, State University of New York: 1977), which suggests a symbolic association between polygonal chapter houses and the Temple of Solomon.

<sup>42</sup>Although centralized chapter houses built at secular cathedrals were often built east of the north transept, as at Lincoln, Wells and York. They were nearly all freestanding and approached either by a vestibule or a similarly functioning structure; they were also nearly all octagonal.

<sup>43</sup>J.A. Robinson, *The Abbot's House at Westminster* (Cambridge: 1911), p. 1.

<sup>44</sup>Edward did not finish the rebuilding of the monastic buildings at Westminster which he began, and since chapter houses probably did not exist generally in England before the Conquest, if the chapter house was built by Edward, it very well could have been the first ever built in England.

<sup>45</sup>The remains of Monk Bretton chapter house would suggest that it was rebuilt in the early 13th century; the chapter house at St. Albans was rebuilt during the abbacy of Hugh Northwold (1215-1229), although how extensively is unclear; the chapter house of St. Radegund's Priory, Cambridge (now part of Jesus College), was built c1230; the chapter house of Broomholme Priory was rebuilt in the mature Early English style of the mid 13th century; Westminster chapter house was completely rebuilt 1246-1253; that of St. Werburgh's, Chester, was rebuilt c1250-60; Easebourne was rebuilt in Early English style c1270; Evesham was rebuilt by Abbot John (1286-1316); Finchale got a new chapter house in the late 13th century; as did the nunnery of Shaftesbury; and Battle, Lindisfarne, and probably Ely chapter houses were also rebuilt in the 13th century.

<sup>46</sup>No recorded function has survived for chapter house vestibules. At St. Mary's, York, which had a chapter house vestibule, the obedientiaries met in the slype before chapter to discuss matters of business, but it possible that elsewhere vestibules served a related purpose.

<sup>47</sup>Abbot William is said to have 'caused the chapter house as far as the walls to be removed and again put up the whole with new timber and covered with stone and alures in the circuit of the chapter house'. See H. Brakspear, "Malmesbury Abbey," *Archaeologia*, Vol. LXIV (1913), 429.

<sup>48</sup>Only the bottoms of some of the vaulting shafts at Binham survive, and the documents tell us nothing about them. They are distinctive, however, and must have worked in much the same way as those in the west cloister walk at Worcester. There the ribs of the lierne vaults

have an elongated profile, and terminate in a fillet. There are no capitals on the wall responds, and the profile of the responds continue the terminal fillets of the ribs, each fillet separated from the next by a deep groove. The rebuilding of the cloisters at Worcester began in 1372. Thus, the chapter house vault at Binham is also likely to have been built in the mid or later 14th century. Fluted respond profiles at Beverley Minster similar to these could be as early as the 1330's; this would seem to make an earlier date possible.

<sup>49</sup>The calefactory seems invariably to have been associated with the dormitory. See A.H. Thompson, *English Monasteries* (Cambridge: 1913), pp. 81-82.

<sup>50</sup>Christchurch, Canterbury, seems to have had a night stair of sorts. The chapter house blocked the dormitory off from the main north transept which the east range adjoined, but there appears to have been a passage around the east side of the chapter house from the dormitory to the northeast transept, where there was access to the church.

<sup>51</sup>See Atkinson, *An Architectural History of . . . Ely*, p. 59.

<sup>52</sup>A translation of this contract appears in L. Shelby, "Monastic Patrons and their Architects: A Case Study of the Contract for the Monks' Dormitory at Durham," *Gesta*, Vol. XV, No. 1 and 2 (1976), 93-94.

<sup>53</sup>It has been suggested that the blocked doorway in the west bay of the south nave aisle at Great Malvern was for a night stair. This would imply that the dormitory there was also in the west range. See J.W. Willis-Bund, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Worcester*, Vol. IV (1924; London: 1971), p. 129. The dormitory of the Premonstratensian house of Easby in Yorkshire was also in the west range.

<sup>54</sup>The reredorter at the small house of Higham appears to have had a non-running reredorter drain. See P.J. Tester, "Excavations on the Site of Higham Priory," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. LXXXII (1967), Figure 2.

<sup>55</sup>For a general work on the different types of medieval wooden roofs see J.T. Smith, "Medieval Roofs: A Classification," *Studies in Medieval Domestic Architecture*, J.T. Smith, P.A. Faulkner, and A. Emery (London: 1975), pp. 45-83.

<sup>56</sup>Rev. D.J. Stewart, *On the Architectural History of Ely Cathedral* (London: 1868), p. 267; see also Atkinson *An Architectural History of . . . Ely*, p. 34.

<sup>57</sup>L.F. Salzman, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex*, Vol. IX (London: 1937), p. 104. The south part of the church also appears to have been covered with shingles in 1410 and 1434. This could probably refer to tiles, slates, or stone slabs, just as well as to wood.

<sup>58</sup>H. Brakspear, "Malmesbury Abbey," *Archaeologia*, Vol. LXIV (1913), 429.

<sup>59</sup>See Tester, "Excavations on the Site of Higham Priory," p. 155.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>61</sup>D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: 1956), p. 289.

<sup>62</sup>R.V.H. Burne, *The Monks of Chester* (London: 1962), p. 64.

<sup>63</sup>A 1311 visitation of Romsey ordered the removal of the curtains in front of the nuns' beds in the dormitory. During a 1335 visitation of Muchelney, Bishop Ralph of Shrewsbury found that the monks were not content with simple cubicles in the dormitory, but had made themselves larger beds in the form of 'tabernacles' which were too ornate and too richly covered. And as late as 1439 the injunctions of Bishop Wells' visitation of Rochester declared that the beds in the dormitory were to be open and uniform.

<sup>64</sup>W.H. Hart, ed., *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, Vol. 1 (Rolls Series No. 33: 1863), p. 1x.

<sup>65</sup>Such means of construction continued in monasteries for minor and utilitarian buildings in the precinct until the Dissolution. For references to such construction at Benedictine houses from the earliest times to the end of the Middle Ages see L.F. Salzman, *Building in England Down to 1540* (Oxford: 1967), pp. 187-209 in *passim*.

<sup>66</sup> Bishop Flambard of Durham allowed St. Godric to settle here as a hermit. After Godric's death in 1170 Bishop Pudsey granted Godric's hermitage to Durham as a dependent cell for two monks, and his son, Henry, endowed it with the lands of the Augustinian priory of Baxterwood, in 1196. It soon became a priory for a prior and usually eight monks, and in 1278 the number was raised to 15. After the Black Death the population was greatly reduced, however. See D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales* (London: 1971), p. 66.

<sup>67</sup> C. Peers, *Finchale Priory, Durham* (London: 1966), p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> Among those houses in which major rebuilding of the east range was undertaken in the 13th century (involving at the very least, the dormitory, but excluding again the chapter house) could be cited Bardney, Battle, St. Augustine's, Canterbury, Chester, Coventry, Evesham, Finchale, Hurley, Jarrow, Lindisfarne, St. Albans, St. Neots, and Westminster.

<sup>69</sup> C.C. Knowles and P.H. Pitt, *The History of Building Regulations in London 1189-1972* (London: 1972), pp. 6-7; pp. 6-10 discuss fire precautions in general up to the end of the 14th century.

<sup>70</sup> M. Wood, *Norman Domestic Architecture* (London: 1974), p. 75.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>72</sup> Knowles and Pitt, *Building Regulations*, p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Although St. Aethelwold, abbot of Abingdon from c954 to 963, is recorded to have constructed at that house an aqueduct that brought water from a stream called the Hokke.

<sup>74</sup> For a description of the water and drainage system of Canterbury see L.F. Salzman, *Building in England Down to 1540* (Oxford: 1967), pp. 268-269; for a more detailed description see R. Willis, *The Architectural History of . . . Canterbury*, pp. 158-181, 196-204.

<sup>75</sup> Micklethwaite claims that "it is pretty certain that the engineers of the waterworks of our English abbeys had Vitruvius for their text-book." J.T. Micklethwaite, "On A Filtering Cistern of the fourteenth Century at Westminster Abbey," *Archaeologia*, Vol. 53, Part 1 (1892), 164.

<sup>76</sup>For a list of surviving medieval well houses in England and Wales see P. Rahtz, "Excavations at Chalice Well, Glastonbury," *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, Vol. 108 (1963/4), 159.

<sup>77</sup>W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the Counties in England: Somerset*, Vol. II (London: 1969), p. 86.

<sup>78</sup>W. Page and P.H. Ditchfield, ed., *The Victoria History of Berkshire*, Vol. II (1907; London: 1972), p. 59.

<sup>79</sup>A.F. Allen, "Higham Priory," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. LXXX (1965), 197.

<sup>80</sup>A.T. Gaydon, ed., *A History of Shropshire*, Vol. II (London: 1973), p. 36.

<sup>81</sup>W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Gloucester*, Vol. II (1907; London: 1972), p. 64.

<sup>82</sup>W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Norfolk*, Vol. II (London: 1906), p. 345.

<sup>83</sup>W. Page and J.W. Willis-Bund, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Worcester*, Vol. II (1906; London: 1971), p. 103.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>85</sup>W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Hertford*, Vol. IV (1914; London: 1971), p. 387.

<sup>86</sup>This has been pointed out especially in relation to the rebuilding of the cloisters at Norwich after the 1272 fire by Whittingham and Fernie, *Rolls of Norwich*, p. 28.

<sup>87</sup>Thompson, *English Monasteries*, p. 85.

<sup>88</sup>The principal access to the refectory at Christchurch, Canterbury, appears to have been from the centre of the north cloister walk. At Coventry the refectory may have had an eastern entrance.

<sup>89</sup>H. Brakspear, "Bardney Abbey," *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 79 (1922), 42.

<sup>90</sup>The large east window in the refectory at Chester is unusual. At most houses the east wall of the refectory abutted the east cloister range which extended past the refectory. But at Chester the dormitory extended eastwards from the east cloister walk instead of running north to south as was usual (Figure 8).

<sup>91</sup>Both of these arrangements can be seen in surviving Cistercian refectories on the continent. The 13th-century refectory at Alcobaça features two rows of supports. The 13th-century refectories at Royáumont, Maulbronn, and Villers-la-Ville all feature a central row of supports. In all of the continental examples above the supports are of stone and support masonry vaults.

<sup>92</sup>Benedictine examples of ground floor refectories include Bardney, Chester, Norwich, Shrewsbury, Dover, Christchurch, Canterbury, Westminster, and probably Broomholme and Peterborough.

<sup>93</sup>Horton and Minster Courts from the first half of the 12th century, Sutton Courtney 'Norman Hall' from the c1190, and Appleton Manor from c1210. See M. Wood, *Norman Domestic Architecture* (London: 1974), p. 69.

<sup>94</sup>The word 'cellar' is ambiguous in many documents. It can either have the generic meaning of a basement or undercroft in general, or else it can refer specifically to a chamber for the cellarer's stores. Modern usage tends towards the latter meaning, which will also be followed here.

<sup>95</sup>See A.B. Whittingham, "St. Mary's Abbey, York: an Interpretation of its Plan," *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 128 (1971), 128-130.

<sup>96</sup>The large number of Cistercian houses in Yorkshire and the connections between St. Mary's, York, and Fountains (Fountains was founded from St. Mary's) make the possibility of Cistercian influence especially strong here.

<sup>97</sup>R. Stewart-Brown, *Birkenhead Priory and the Mersey Ferry* (Liverpool: 1925), Chapter VIII (by H. Brakspear), p. 121.

<sup>98</sup>Among these houses are: Battle in the late 13th or early 14th century, Birkenhead in the mid 14th century, Crowland in the time of Abbot Thomas (1392-1417), Glastonbury in the time of Abbot Chinnock (1374-1420), Horsham St. Faith shortly after 1390, Muchelney

perhaps as late as the early 16th century, Pershore in 1379/80, Rochester in 1336, St. Albans c1388, Shrewsbury in the 14th century, Tynemouth in the later 13th century, Westminster in the time of Abbot Litlington (1362-1386), Worcester c1330, and St. Mary's, York, probably after the fire of 1377. In general the first half of the 14th century seems to present a conspicuous lack of activity.

<sup>99</sup>See W. Braunfels, *Abendländische Klosterbaukunst* (Köln: 1969), pp. 15-16.

<sup>100</sup>Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, pp. 79-82, 86-88.

<sup>101</sup>Later modifications and continued use have so far mitigated against the verification of such a date. See W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Durham*, Vol. III, (1928; London: 1968), pp. 127-128.

<sup>102</sup>See Chapter Three, *Infirmaries*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>103</sup>See A.H. Thompson, *Lindisfarne Priory* (London: 1949), pp. 17-18.

<sup>104</sup>At St. Radegund's Priory, Cambridge, the refectory was also entered from two doors in the west wall, which opened onto a passage leading to a service block which formed a continuation of the west range. This entry closely resembles the screens passage which developed at the entrance and service end of secular halls.

<sup>105</sup>Thompson, *Lindisfarne Priory*, p. 19, notes that the larger ground floor chamber could have been the calefactory. If so, then this east block would also resemble the collegiate plan of the later Middle Ages where the master's room was above the common room of the fellows.

<sup>106</sup>R. Gilyard-Beer, *Abbeys* (London: 1976), pp. 54-57.

<sup>107</sup>See M. Wood, *The English Medieval House* (London: 1965), p. 252.

<sup>108</sup>For a more general discussion of centralized kitchens see *Ibid.*, pp. 249-251, 253-254.

<sup>109</sup> Although in the 14th century a building c23 feet square was built against the west cloister walk where it joins with the south aisle of the nave. Peers suggests that it may have been a guest house or the cellarer's lodgings (Figure 12). C. Peers, *Finchale Priory, Durham* (London: 1966), p. 14.

<sup>110</sup> A singular exception to this occurred at Bardney Abbey. Although the outer parlour next to the church was barrel vaulted, the rest of the undercroft was completely unvaulted. The floor above was wooden, and was supported by a central row of columns.

<sup>111</sup> R.H. Hadcock, *Tynemouth Priory and Castle* (London: 1952), p. 16 and A.H. Thompson, *Lindisfarne Priory*, p. 24.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE OTHER MONASTIC BUILDINGS

##### A. THE PRECINCT

###### 1. Precinct Walls

The land on which a monastery was built was divided off from its surroundings and was known as the precinct. From long before the Conquest some monastic precincts had been enclosed by walls. Parts of the precinct wall of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, even date back to the 7th century and may have belonged to the original foundation. Other monastic precincts were walled in the 11th century. Peterborough takes its very name from the walls which since 1005 had protected it from threat of attack; after the depredations wrought by Hereward the Wake Abbot Thorold (1069-1098) greatly strengthened these walls. His contemporaries, Abbot Baldwin (1065-1097) of Bury St. Edmunds and Prior Aldwin of Jarrow, also built walls and at Gloucester Abbot Peter (1104-1113) built the precinct wall. Despite the evidence of Peterborough, not all of these precinct walls were primarily defensive in nature, and despite the varied nature and locations of the examples cited above, most monasteries were not walled at this time. Some monasteries were to remain without walls until the Dissolution, and sparcity of evidence and the difficulty of its interpretation make it

very difficult to estimate how generally precinct walls existed at any period between the Conquest and Dissolution. Even the exact boundary of the priory at Ely, for instance, is not accurately known, and at other monasteries even where walls are known from documents to have been built their nature and extent are not always apparent. At Peterborough, where walls are known to have existed from an early date, the earliest surviving parts of the precinct wall are as late as the 14th century.

Where walls did not exist, some other form of demarcation would have divided the precinct from its surrounding milieu, for the rights and privileges attached to the monastic curia and to its cemeteries required their exact definition.<sup>1</sup> The commonest way of doing so was by digging a ditch around the precinct. Bardney was originally surrounded by a ditch only; at some time in the later Middle Ages a wall was built on its inner bank. At St. Benet of Hulme the ditch surrounding the precinct still shows up clearly from the air.<sup>2</sup> It was never replaced as the indicator of precinct boundaries despite a surviving short piece of wall near the gatehouse which was probably a very late construction. Where walls existed, ditches were often dug on their exterior side as well, as on the southern precinct boundary at Rochester.

Precinct walls continued to be built sporadically through the 12th and 13th centuries at a wide cross-section of houses. Reginald of Gloucester, Abbot of Evesham (1130-1149), built a wall around the precinct there; Prior William surrounded the precinct of Earl's

Colne with walls in the early 13th century; and at St. Mary's, York,

. . . the earliest mention of the building of a stone wall around the precinct was during the abbacy of Simon de Warwick in October, 1260, when an enquiry concluded that 'to build a stone wall below the Abbey of St. Mary as far as the Infirmary of St. Leonard would strengthen and improve rather than damage the city of York.' On 9 December 1260 the king granted permission to the abbot and convent to 'construct the said stone wall within their abbey up to the aforesaid Infirmary [not the abbey infirmary] according as shall seem most advantageous to them' . . . . The stone wall was started in 1266 . . . [and was] simply a boundary to the precinct and served no defensive function.<sup>3</sup>

From this time (at least) the building of precinct walls seems to have called for royal permission, especially where a monastery bordered on city walls. This was one measure of an increased royal concern for control over defensive structures in the realm. A further indication of this was the appearance of royal grants for permission to crenellate walls or buildings which came to be a hallmark of Edward III's reign.<sup>4</sup> It is not clear in many of the licences how much building is implied; in some instances walls appear to have been built whole and in others old walls strengthened or embattled. It is also unclear how much this rash of crenellation grants reflects changes in licensing practices - which it obviously does to some extent - and how much it is indicative of a heightened interest in the building of precinct walls. Crenellation and, indeed, walls themselves could lend a monastery an aristocratic appearance. In fact, Coulson has shown that licence to crenellate was a virtually unnecessary 'courtesy of feudal convention' for at least the greater nobles and that "licence was sought

most usually by lesser men in order to enhance their own social status."<sup>5</sup> Even if licences to crenellate were not needed, however, they clearly indicate the desire to engage in work on the precinct walls. It is equally clear that, while the work may in some cases have been done primarily to enhance a monastery's social standing, it often improved the defensive potential of the house and may initially have been motivated by defensive concerns.

On 12 July, 1318, a licence was granted to the abbot and convent of St. Mary's, York, to crenellate the walls which were built fifty years earlier around the abbey precinct

. . . which is without the city of York, but is contiguous thereto, provided that the wall to be constructed between the abbey and the wall of the city shall not exceed sixteen feet in height and shall not be crenellated.<sup>6</sup>

This stipulation ensured that the defensive potential of the city walls was not jeopardized by that part of the precinct wall opposite them. A slightly different situation at Rochester resulted in just the opposite stipulation. The cathedral priory at Rochester was located just inside the south wall of the city. In the 12th century the precinct was expanded south of the city wall and a later Norman wall was built to contain the new area outside the city; thus the protective ring of the city remained unbroken. A further southern extension of the precinct in 1225 resulted in a wall and a ditch outside of it. Again in 1344 the king granted the priory more land south of that including the ditch of 1225 on the condition

. . . that the prior and convent build a new wall of stone sufficiently embattled of the height of sixteen feet outside the ditch and a ditch on the outside of the wall and that they maintain the wall henceforth.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, the standards which are apparent in the injunctions at both St. Mary's, York, and Rochester concern city walls rather than precinct walls.

If, in fact, the proliferation of licences to crenellate and build walls in the reign of Edward III implies an increase in defensive measures around the precinct, a possible cause could lie in the relations of monasteries, especially urban ones, with the townspeople around them. Issues such as taxation and right of fairs began to flare into violence which could result in riots and serious damage to a monastery; Norwich seems to have been particularly unpopular in this respect. At Bury St. Edmunds after the gates were broken and buildings damaged in the summer of 1327 the great gate was rebuilt but whether other improvements were made to the outer defenses of the precinct is unclear. At Abingdon, however, three years after rioters had burnt the abbey gates and 'broken the walls' in May, 1327, Edward III granted the abbey permission to crenellate their whole site including the Hospital of St. John and the Church of St. Nicholas at the abbey gates. This is still only a tenuous connection, but even if defensive measures or crenellation cannot be closely correlated with specific threats to the safety of the house, royal control over crenellation lent instances of it the authority and security of royal favour and protection. This is especially apparent in the crenellation of churches and church towers which in very few instances provided any immediate

defensive potential for the building.

It would be unfair to emphasize the defensive nature of precinct walls exclusively, however, or to confuse them unduly with the issue of crenellation. A 1501 complaint from Romsey that the fabric of the stone walls was becoming decayed 'through the fault of the Abbess' came from a visitation, not from a civic or royal source, and it is therefore likely that it was a matter of importance to the internal life of the abbey rather than to its defensive responsibilities. The case of Higham Priory is further enlightening. In July, 1513, with several of their small community pregnant, the nuns petitioned to be allowed to build a precinct wall "for the increase of virtue and the perfect observance of their rule" and the petition was only granted "on account of the necessity of extinguishing the ill repute spread about concerning them."<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Gates

Precincts were entered by means of gateways. Initially there was probably only one gateway into the curia, often called the 'Great Gate', but others also came to be built. The gates were usually located in a gatehouse, and it would appear that in many cases gatehouses predated the walls which were often built around precincts. Brakspear contends that a Great Gate existed before the precinct wall was built at Bardney, presumably in the position of the present 14th-century gatehouse, although no sign of it remains.<sup>9</sup> At St. Benet of Hulme the remains of an impressive late medieval gatehouse can

still be seen; it provided an entrance over the ditch surrounding a precinct which was never walled.

Evidence of gatehouses first appears in the first half of the 12th century. Abbot Henry of Blois (1126-1171) built a 'remarkably fine' entrance gatehouse at Glastonbury. This would probably have been made of stone but early gatehouses of wood or half-timbered construction are a possibility. Later domestic examples of wooden gatehouses exist and one of the earliest surviving Benedictine gates at Evesham, probably from the time of Abbot Reginald of Gloucester (1130-1149), combines a lower story - including the entrance arch - of stone with a half-timbered upper story, now of a Tudor date.<sup>10</sup> Other evidence of 12th-century gatehouses can be seen in the Court Gate of Christchurch, Canterbury, built shortly after 1153; in the Great Gate of Peterborough, built by Abbot Benedict (1177-1194); and in St. James Gate Tower at Bury St. Edmunds, built 1120-1148, which also served as the belfry for the parish church of St. James the Great beside it. These gatehouses all featured a single entrance arch and were all at least two-storied. The upper chamber was often of some importance - a belfry at Bury St. Edmunds; a Chapel of St. Nicholas at Peterborough - but its status seems to have declined in later years.

Less evidence of 13th-century gatehouses survives. St. Mary's Gate, the Great Gate at Gloucester, was built in the 13th century, as was the gate into the inner court of Peterborough. These gatehouses were slightly deeper than those of the 12th century and the Inner Gate at Peterborough featured an innovation which was to become very common

thereafter, an internal division of the entrance arch into a small pedestrian archway and a larger archway for heavy traffic. As was also common later, this division did not extend all the way through the entrance arch. Here it is only evident in a wall running across the entrance archway half way down its length so that there is still a single arch showing on either face of the gatehouse (Figure 16).

The upper chamber of the Inner Gate at Peterborough was known as 'the Knight's Chamber' and features a fireplace with a rare example of a 13th-century chimney. While its exact function is unclear, other 'Knight's Chambers' are known to have existed above gates, and at Bath a lodging for the king was maintained over the west gate. Speaking more generally of domestic gatehouses, Wood states that in the 14th century the upper room of a gatehouse, "reached by a newel staircase, was usually the lodging of some important official."<sup>11</sup> Although it is clear from the above that some monasteries attached a specific religious or secular importance to the upper chambers of their gatehouses, it is just as impossible to say how general this was as it is to interpret the function of most upper chambers. Often there is no indication of a stairway to the upper chamber; in such cases it is difficult to believe that the chamber had any great importance.

Interest in gatehouses became far more intense in the 14th century and many more were built from this time than there had been previously. Old gatehouses were frequently rebuilt and the Great Gate was often supplemented by additional gateways into the precinct. The Cemetery Gate at Barking was probably first built in the time of Abbess Sybilla

Fenton (1349-1419) and the Prior's Gate at Rochester was probably first built c1344. One of the motives behind this proliferation of gateways was convenience in getting in and out of the precinct; in 1275 Edward I allowed the monks of Chester to make a postern gate in the city wall (which was also the precinct wall) for their convenience in getting to the abbey Caleyard, and others are known to have accommodated agricultural pursuits. In applying for permission to build its postern of 1497 near Bootham Bar, St. Mary's, York, gave reason

. . . that the Kyng's good grace their in his noble viage toward Scotland wuld rest within your monastery and for his pleasure and passage to the mynster ye wuld make ye said posterne.<sup>12</sup>

This work probably supplied a need for better access to the abbot's house, and the Prior's Gate at Rochester and new gates at other monasteries probably supplied similar needs.

Another reason for the increased interest in gatehouses was the growing social unrest in 14th-century England which culminated in the Peasant's Revolt in 1381. The gates of Norwich Cathedral Priory were fired by rioters in 1272, and in the widespread riots of 1327 the gates of both Abingdon and Bury St. Edmunds were burnt. As it was rebuilt the Great Gate at Bury was obviously defensive in nature. At Lindisfarne a barbican was added to the gate in the 14th century, recalling the gatehouse of the Augustinian house at Thornton built in 1382, the most emphatically defensive of all monastic gatehouses in England.

Even where no specifically defensive features were adopted, gatehouses in the 14th century were designed as impressive structures and many stylistic innovations were adopted to bolster their effect. Gatehouses tended to become taller, and the more vertical proportions were emphasized by octagonal corner turrets. One of the most impressive surviving examples of this type of gatehouse is Christchurch Gate at Christchurch, Canterbury, which was finished in 1520/1.

The impressive nature of gatehouses is not just a modern bias. They were impressive to their medieval contemporaries as well; in a manuscript from the time of Edward II, the gatehouse at Thorney was noted as one of the one hundred most noteworthy sites in England.<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to pinpoint the exact semiotic parameters of their form even though the symbolic variables of their design are fairly well known: their defensive potential, the ritual aspect of 'entering', their embodiment of certain rights and privileges, and sheer pomp and display of power all combine to create an aura of respect and authority. One of the most ubiquitous features in the creation of their social image was the use of heraldic devices. The first known use of heraldry on a gatehouse was at the Augustinian Kirkham Priory, c1295, and coats of arms proliferated in the 14th and 15th centuries. Originally they would have identified patrons and founders and the coat of arms of the monastery itself might have been included to bolster its institutional identity and give it a sense of 'lineage'. Later, the coats of arms of benefactors and subscribers to building funds came to be included - an everpresent reminder of favour in high

places, in which context royal coats of arms and those of previous kings were often included where there is little evidence of financial help from the king. Their use became even more flagrantly suggestive in the very late Middle Ages, tending towards the invocation of 'big names' - amongst which the superior very often included his own coat of arms - and to simple flattery. This last is especially suggested in the many posthumous armorial references to Prince Arthur (d 1502) including Christchurch Gate at Christchurch, Canterbury.

Interest in gatehouses continued after the 14th century right until the Dissolution and many impressive late medieval gatehouses survive. This is true especially of gatehouses at smaller monasteries. It may well have been that the heightened activity in the construction of gatehouses which was initiated in the 14th century by the larger and wealthier houses was slower to spread to smaller houses because of economic disparities. The building of a gatehouse was a relatively expensive undertaking. It is recorded at St. Albans that Abbot John Wheathampstead (1420-1440) spent £665 in rebuilding the Great Gate and in repairing some tenements in the town; no doubt the largest portion of this went towards the gate.

### 3. *The Organization of the Precinct*

The monastic precinct contained everything, short of food farms, that a monastery needed to fulfil its various spiritual and social functions. But a monastery's responsibilities were many and some, such as the distribution of alms and the provision of hospitality,

involved the public. Since, however, monasteries were intended in essence as places of refuge from the distractions of the world, a basic conflict of interest was created within the precinct. It was resolved by a strict partitioning of the precinct into distinct areas, each to serve a particular need. It is readily apparent that a monastery's needs, its social position, and spiritual obligations all changed very much in the later Middle Ages, and precinctual arrangements perhaps from the mid 12th century.

All later alterations to the precinct were made on the arrangement of the Normans, an arrangement both simple and functional that, if it did not remain completely intact, at least left an indelible mark on the layout of the precinct. The church was the centre of the Norman precinct. It formed a hub from which the divisions of the precinct radiated and to which all initially had access. The cloister and its buildings formed the most important of these divisions. It was the heart of monastic life and in theory - even if such was seldom attained in practice - a monk could live out his entire professed life within the bounds of the church and cloister area.

He need not have left the precinct even after death, for much of the precinct formed a cemetery, or rather two cemeteries: monastic and lay. The monastic cemetery was located against the church east of the cloisters and communicated with the cloisters initially by means of the slype next to the church. It was thus conveniently close to both the church and chapter house, both of which figured in the funeral ritual for a deceased monk.

The lay cemetery was located against the side of the church opposite the cloister and monastic cemetery. Such were the social responsibilities of monasteries and the financial advantages of burial perquisites, that the lay cemetery was much larger than its monastic counterpart. Even so, charnel houses began to appear in later centuries as the lay cemetery filled up. When more space was needed, old or unidentified bones would be exhumed to make more room and church law forbade their reburial; their last resting place would be the bone house, the charnel house. Where a parish was attached to the precinct, the lay cemetery would also serve as the churchyard. Whether a parish church existed in the precinct (or just outside of it) or not, there was access to the monastic church by means of a porch attached to the wall of the nave aisle usually directly opposite the door into the west walk of the cloister. A gatehouse sometimes served to give access to the lay cemetery from without the precinct.

Monasteries also dealt inevitably with the community around them. They had responsibilities to the outside community and also relied on secular help to deal with supportive activities in the mundane aspects of monastic existence. Both of these activities took place principally in the curia or outer court of the precinct. Ideally this was located to the west of the church with access to the church through the west doors. It communicated with the outside world by means of the principal gatehouse of the abbey.

The main gate was the focus for many of the charitable facilities of the monastery, thus necessitating minimum traffic into the precinct.

The almonry was nearly universally located next to the gatehouse. Almonries distributed alms and the monk's table scraps to the poor and occasionally supported orphans or bedesmen. The scale of almonries seems to have varied greatly. The almonry at St. Albans, built by Abbot Wallingford (1326-1335), included a hall, chapel, chambers, kitchen, cellar, and other buildings necessary for 'poor scholars' and their master.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the surviving half-timbered and stone almshouse at Evesham just outside the abbey gate is far simpler. In fact the St. Albans almonry may also have been the almoner's lodgings, for in general monastic charity was minimal (usually less than 5% of the income of the house) from as early as the 14th century.<sup>15</sup>

The almonry was occasionally accompanied by other public-oriented facilities. At Abingdon the gatehouse was also flanked by the Hospital of St. John the Baptist, founded for the sick and poor perhaps by Abbot Vincent (1121-1130), and also by the Church of St. Nicholas, built for travellers, abbey servants, and occupants of abbey property (not the parish church, which was located just across the River Thames) and is first mentioned in the late 12th century - it perhaps found inspiration in the ubiquitous Cistercian *capella ad portas*. Similarly a Hospitium of St. John the Baptist and a Church of St. Laurence surrounded the gatehouse at Reading. Peterborough and St. Mary's, York, also had chapels next their main gatehouses, and the almonry at Durham was supplemented by the nearby Infirmary without the Gates.

The centre of the curia was generally empty to allow clear passage for traffic between the buildings ranged around it. Among the most common buildings found in the curia, besides the almonry, were stables, granaries and barns, the bakehouse, the brewhouse, guest lodgings, and when it appeared, the superior's lodgings. If the monastery possessed the right to hold court, then the tribunal, and possibly a jail, was usually located in the curia; the Hall of Pleas at Bury St. Edmunds came to have such a function and a 'court room' also flanked the gatehouse at Battle. The late medieval tribunal at Glastonbury was built in the town, however. Other buildings, less common except perhaps at the larger and wealthier houses, might include tailor's shops, blacksmith shops, mills (the location of water mills, however, was totally dependent on their source of power), and other semi-industrial and agricultural structures.<sup>16</sup> In general this multitude of minor structures can be said to have accumulated slowly, where they did appear, and the curia of the later Middle Ages must have been far busier and more cluttered than that of the 12th century. In later years buildings which appeared there also included storage sheds for the masons, plumbers, etc. who came to be permanently attached to larger monasteries - Ely, for instance - for the purpose of maintaining the growing number of buildings in the precinct.

The buildings of the curia cannot be said to have conformed to any sort of standardized plan or arrangement. Their location at each house was pragmatically determined by the limitations of the site and efficiency and ease of operations, considerations determined over-

whelmingly by local factors. Another consideration was fire safety. For instance, the bakehouse, brewhouse, and granary, usually grouped together for the sake of convenience, was a notorious starting place for fires and thus was usually located as far from the church and cloister as possible.

Palmer states that "within the outer court in large monasteries was a second court, containing the infirmary group . . .; the guesthouse for more important strangers; quarters for the servants of the monastery, etc."<sup>17</sup> He does not give examples of this arrangement, and although at Christchurch, Canterbury, Meister Omers, which could be construed as a guesthouse for 'more important strangers', does lie in close proximity to the infirmary, the available evidence would suggest that at Benedictine houses this was the exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless, the infirmary was usually kept separate from the curia. It usually adjoined the monastic cemetery on one side, and if not formally separated from other parts of the precinct on the other, it was generally separated from the curia or lay cemetery by other buildings, such as the prior's lodgings at Christchurch, Canterbury, and Bury St. Edmunds.

At the larger and more rural monasteries there was often a substantial amount of precinct area unaccounted for by the previously mentioned divisions. This was taken up by gardens, pasture, orchards, vineyards, stewponds for fish, or some other agricultural pursuit.

These arrangements must be seen as flexible for they apply topologically to a great many precincts of different sizes and shapes. Occasionally, too, a precinct would be so cramped that a significant

modification was necessary, but the basic motivations for the standard arrangement were only tempered at a few of the cathedral priories where a separate episcopal or archepiscopal precinct adjoined the monastic precinct or subsumed part of it.

Most bishop's palaces intruded on or adjoined the lay cemetery and did not drastically affect the monastic precinct, but at Ely the episcopal precinct - and perhaps a parvis - lay just west of the church. The curia was consequently pushed to the south on the far side of the cloister buildings. The situation at Rochester was complicated by an extremely restricted site in the very southeast angle of the city against the city wall. The episcopal precinct chosen by Bishop Gundulf in the early 12th century lay in the southwest corner of this site and since the lay cemetery by practical necessity lay north of the church, the only way to make room for a curia at the west end of the church was to move the cloister eastward adjoining the choir; a unique solution adopted in order to approximate the usual precinct lay-out.

At Barking, Durham, and Worcester the western side of the precinct bordered on a river, and at all three houses the dormitory was in the west range of the cloister. The reason usually given for this rare arrangement is that the reredorter could then drain directly down the bank of the river. Undoubtedly there is something in this, but other houses did not shy away from elaborate drainage systems. Another likely reason is so that the prior's lodgings could freely impose on the east range of the cloister and thus retain its usual relationship

to the main gate leading into the curia. At the same time the dormitory and infirmary would be more secluded from the curia.

The position of superiors' lodgings was an important consideration in the planning of the precinct which led to an additional partition in the cloister known as 'the inner court'. It was usually formed by building a wall in the curia between the main gate and the church isolating the cloister ranges - and in particular the west range housing a newly developed superior's lodging - from the outer court. A gateway in this wall would give access to the inner court. The wall defining the inner court at Bardney may be as old as the mid 12th century and was probably contemporary with the construction of the abbot's lodgings in the west cloister range; the inner gateway was known as 'the Abbot's Gate' (Figure 1). At Peterborough the inner court was probably built by Abbot William of Waterville (1155-1175), and an inner court may have been created with the construction of the Hall of Pleas as the abbot's lodgings at Bury St. Edmunds in the late 12th century.

Inner courts were probably possible only at larger monasteries - and probably only at abbeys - where the superior had some secular importance, for they seem primarily intended to enhance the importance and position of the abbot's lodgings. The only other building which with any regularity occurs in the inner court is the guest lodgings, again stressing the secular nature of this courtyard.

Although some inner courts can be traced back to the 12th century, it cannot be shown that all of them developed at this time. The inner court at Westminster would seem to date only from the late 14th century.

In 1380/1 a wall was being built at the abbot's expense between the new abbey gate to the west and the new Jerusalem Chamber in the abbot's lodgings against the south west tower of the church; it does not seem likely that this new embattled wall replaced an earlier one.

It is possible that the inner court was inspired by the precinct arrangements of some smaller monasteries. Braun equates the monastic curia generally with the inner court and states that the west front of the church was generally accessible to the public from a parvis (Paradise) in front of it.<sup>18</sup> Braun gives no examples of this arrangement, and it clearly was not as common as he stated, although a parvis of sorts may have existed to the west of Ely, Norwich, and perhaps some other of the monastic cathedrals. Nevertheless, despite a general lack of evidence, some precincts may have followed this arrangement. St. Radegund's, Cambridge, with its large gatehouse projecting perpendicularly from the west front of the church, could very possibly have had such a precinct arrangement. If such an arrangement did exist amongst Benedictine monasteries, however, it was not as common as precincts which completely enclosed the church. Since not all monasteries were walled, the main difference between these two types of arrangement may have rested largely in the position of the gatehouse and how closely the lay cemetery was identified as monastic property; monastic burial privileges were accepted by long tradition at some monasteries and contested bitterly at others by parish churches in the area. Evesham had claims to burial rights over a very wide area, which many of the parishes in the area strongly resented; when the precinct wall was

built by Abbot Reginald of Gloucester (1130-1149), it was built 'round the whole monastery and its cemetery.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, between 1246 and 1295 the bishop of Lichfield decided that the parishioners at Chester were responsible for the enclosure of their cemetery. This was probably not a common situation, but it is certainly possible that the division of responsibilities between monastery and parish affected precinct walls elsewhere.

As the buildings around the cloister began to develop, they inevitably radiated outward from the cloister. Especially in the expansions of superiors' lodgings and the development of inner courts more and more demands were made on the limited space of the precinct. Even more serious demands were made on precinct space with the growth of obedientiaries' establishments at the larger monasteries. These often included a garden and sometimes were even walled.

These developments would have been limited by the size of the precinct, but where possible precincts responded to pressure for space by expansion. The precincts of both Benedictine houses in Canterbury, Christchurch and St. Augustine's, were extended in the 14th century. This can be seen clearly at Christchurch where the bakehouse, brewhouse, and granary range, built against the old precinct wall, is some distance from the wall of the extended precinct (Figure 6). Rochester, which occupied an unusually cramped site, received two or three southward extensions to the precinct, one perhaps in the 12th century, one in 1225, and another in 1344.

*B. THE INFIRMARY*

At many Benedictine houses an infirmary was built close to the cloister area to temporarily house monks who were sick or who had been bled and to provide permanent accommodation for monks who were infirm or who had been ordained for fifty years and were thus subject to a less rigorous regimen. Infirmarys did not exist at the smallest Benedictine foundations; such a specialized structure presupposed enough monks to make regular use of it. The smallest Benedictine houses in England known to have had infirmarys include Lindisfarne, Monk Bretton, Shrewsbury, and Tavistock. All of these except Lindisfarne appear to have had populations of at least 13 or 14 monks until the later 14th century. Lindisfarne probably never had a population of more than 9 monks. The presence of an infirmary there is known from documents, and its location is also known. It was a small and irregular affair. After 1341/2, at which time there were only six monks, the infirmary disappears from inventories, and it is possible that after alterations about this time the infirmary was done away with.<sup>20</sup> In general the presence of an infirmary would seem to indicate a population of at least 20 monks.<sup>21</sup>

The infirmary was usually located just east of the east cloister range, to which it was sometimes connected by a covered passage as at Christchurch, Canterbury, and Ely. At Norwich, however, the infirmary adjoined the far end of the dormitory, extending westward parallel to the refectory (Figure 15). Although in the same general

location, the infirmary at St. Mary's, York, was located farther to the west (Figure 24). At Durham and Worcester the infirmaries were west of the west range, reflecting the locations of their dormitories.

Originally Benedictine infirmaries consisted of a hall, chapel, and kitchen. These were grouped usually in one of two common arrangements. The most popular of the two is well represented by the infirmary at Ely (Figure 11). The hall, aisled and aligned east-west, was probably built c1140-50. Its resemblance to the nave of a church was strengthened by the infirmary chapel which was added to the east slightly later, probably c1175. The chapel was also aisled with a rectangular presbytery extending to the east. The infirmaries at Christchurch, Canterbury, and Gloucester were very similar. So were the infirmaries at Bardney and Peterborough, although the chapels there were aisleless.

A less commonly used type of infirmary is exemplified at St. Augustine's, Canterbury (Figure 7). The hall was aligned north-south and had only an eastern aisle. The aisled chapel extended eastward from the south end of the eastern wall forming an L-plan. It featured a triapsidal east end with a rectangular central apse but rounded apses in the aisles. Similar arrangements existed at Barking and Bury St. Edmunds.

In 1298 the infirmary at Westminster Abbey was burnt in a fire and was rebuilt around a small cloister enclosure (Figure 20). This could represent a new and somewhat singular infirmary arrangement at

a Benedictine monastery and may have been influenced by contemporary hospital plans. Nevertheless, a few other infirmaries at large, rich houses also possessed cloisters. Christchurch, Canterbury, had one as early as the 12th century, and documents also mention an infirmary cloister built at Peterborough by Abbot William of Waterville (1155-1175), although this could simply refer to a covered passage leading to the infirmary. At Canterbury the infirmary cloister was used as an herb garden for medicinal plants, as was the 'Little Cloister' at Gloucester, located adjacent to the infirmary (Figure 13). An infirmary's garden is also recorded at Ely just south of the infirmary, and such herb gardens were probably a fairly common part of an infirmary complex. It was only rarely, as at Canterbury, Gloucester, and Westminster, however, that such a garden was enclosed by cloister walks. At Westminster the cloisters must have been one of the last parts of the infirmary to be (re)built after the 1298 fire; most of the building took place in the early and mid 14th century, but it is recorded that Abbot Litlington enclosed the infirmary garden only in 1371/2.

Infirmaries began appearing in the early 12th century, but many infirmaries built at this time were probably of wood. In the late 12th and early 13th centuries many new masonry infirmaries were built at Benedictine houses replacing both wooden and earlier stone infirmaries. Nevertheless, kitchens and other peripheral chambers around the infirmary continued to be constructed largely of wood; not a single Benedictine infirmary kitchen has left a trace and the

same is probably true of other subsidiary parts of the infirmary.

Infirmary structures began to diversify in the 13th century in response to changes in the level of austerity in Benedictine communities and in the self-image of monastic houses themselves as social institutions. Pentises like the Dark Cloister at Ely and those at Gloucester, Christchurch, Canterbury, and St. Augustine's, Canterbury, were built at many houses in the 13th century and indicate a general increase in the importance of infirmaries and the comfort associated with them. Many other kinds of additions were made to infirmary structures as well. At Bury St. Edmunds a minutorium, where monks who had been bled (minuti) could recuperate, was added to the infirmary c1260. The Black Hostelry, a hostel for visiting or travelling Benedictine monks, was built onto the infirmary at Ely in the mid 13th century. An infirmarer's lodging was added to the infirmary at Peterborough in the early 13th century. At this time misericords were also associated with infirmaries at many houses.

The normal hardships of Benedictine living were tempered in infirmaries by the sanction of the Rule itself, and while the functions of the additions mentioned above may be diverse, they all take advantage of the special privileges the infirmary could offer. These consisted initially of little more than dietary concessions, but other comforts came to be associated with infirmaries in the 14th century. The Rule provides specifically for neither privacy nor comfort, but from this time both increased in infirmaries and increasing advantage was taken of the trend.

It was quite natural for the infirmarer to have a chamber in or near the infirmary in order to run it more efficiently. Such chambers were becoming more and more necessary in the 13th century as the administrative functions of the obedientiaries became more complex. At Peterborough the infirmarer had such a chamber from the early 13th century, and at Norwich a chamber for the infirmarer was added to the south side of the infirmary in 1309. So it probably was also at Ely, for the infirmarer's garden, usually located adjacent to the infirmarer's lodgings, was just to the south of the infirmary.<sup>22</sup>

But other obedientiaries also began to have chambers in the infirmary - at Abingdon perhaps as early as 1278. The subprior at Ely had a chamber in the infirmary by the 1330's, as did the subprior at Christchurch, Canterbury, before the 15th century. Also at Ely a 14th-century building added to the south side of the infirmary was known as the 'Cellarer's House' and at Bardney the subcellarer had a chamber in the infirmary. At Norwich the sacrist's hall (chamber?) was over the infirmary hall. These other obedientiaries stood to gain nothing from attachment to the infirmary except the personal advantage of extra comfort. To what extent they partook of these comforts will be considered later.

Obedientiaries were not the only ones to take advantage of the benefits of the infirmary. In 1318 a 'new chamber' was built next to the infirmary at Bardney for occupation by deposed Abbot Wayneflete. These lodgings, which included a kitchen, were probably of timber but undoubtedly suitable to an abbot's position. At Abingdon in 1428 an

ex-abbot was allotted a high double chamber for sleeping in the infirmary. At St. Albans Abbot John Wheathampstead (1420-1440) built himself a large room in the infirmary before 1427; he was perhaps thinking ahead to an eventual retirement, but he may also have planned to use it during his term of office.

It is unlikely, however, that monastic communities in general enjoyed many greater advantages in the infirmary on account of such changes. It had always been recognized that sick monks could better fight a malady if they did not have to fight the cold as well. Consequently there had always been fireplaces in infirmaries. From the 14th century more fireplaces began to appear, but their locations in many cases indicate that they served one of the private chambers which were accumulating in infirmaries and were not for the benefit of the infirm. Moreover, with the encroachment of more and more different functions onto the original ones of the infirmary, it would appear that less and less room could have been allotted to the sick and infirm. Not enough is known about infirmaries, however, to verify such a speculation, and it could just as well be that the sick ward was also becoming more private.

On the other hand, monks who had been bled do seem to have benefited from changes in some infirmaries, where space was allotted to a 'minutorium'. More than half of the north aisle of the infirmary at Ely was taken up by the Aula Minutionem built by Prior William Powcher c1417. At Bury St. Edmunds a separate complex, Bradfield Spanne, was built adjacent to the infirmary c1260 for the minuti.

Such a development was not repeated at all houses, however. At Bardney the *minuti* normally recuperated in the infirmary in the early days, but later the outlying manor at Southrey was allotted as a recuperation centre and monks went there to be bled. Other houses did likewise, and such manors were also used for recreation. In its later life Finchale Priory served as a 'resort' for the monks of Durham, who visited Finchale four at a time for a two week 'vacation'. At some houses this resulted in extensive renovations to manors in the vicinity of the precinct.<sup>23</sup>

The growing functional diversity of infirmaries required extensive changes in their form. Many more new private chambers were needed than the infirmaries of the 12th and early 13th centuries could accommodate. Often this resulted in additions extending from the original infirmary structure. The infirmary at Ely eventually received at least three such additions: the Black Hostelry; the Cellarer's chambers, and the Painted Chamber (Figure 11). One such addition which seems to have been fairly widespread in the later Middle Ages was an additional hall of some sort. Such halls were built at Barking and at Bardney in the 15th century. The hall at Bardney contained a large fireplace at one end and was probably built of wood or brick above the foundation (Figure 1). The hall at Barking was smaller but contained a hearth and probably a screens wall at one end. The function of neither of these buildings is known although Clapham thinks that at Barking was likely the misericord.<sup>24</sup> Other such halls existed at Christchurch, Canterbury, Norwich, and probably Peterborough where they are all

known through documents as 'Table Halls' (mensa magistri infirmatorii). Fowler describes the Table Hall at Canterbury as if it were a misericord. He also mentions such a hall at Ely called the 'Gent Hall' (which from his description was probably (above?) the Painted Chamber), probably so named because 'gentlefolk' were entertained there. Supporting such a view, regulations banning seculars from the infirmary were apparently promulgated in the later Middle Ages.<sup>25</sup>

Such additions did not constitute the sole means of accommodating the many new chambers in the infirmary. Two other means of structural diversification were prominent. Of one we know comparatively little due to the limited nature of the surviving evidence. This entailed the addition of extra stories to the originally one-story structure. The infirmary at Norwich was given an upper floor before 1379, and at Ely a third floor was built over the minutorium as early as the 13th century. Both of these instances are known only from documentary evidence but the practice was probably widespread.

From the mid 14th century small chambers were also obtained by blocking off bays of the infirmary aisles. This can be seen at Christchurch, Canterbury, Bardney, Ely, Gloucester, and Peterborough. These chambers served a wide variety of purposes. The north aisle of the infirmary at Ely was made into the minutorium, and the south aisle of the infirmary at Christchurch, Canterbury, was blocked up in the 15th century and turned into lodgings for the subprior. We also know that c1342 Prior Hathbrand (1338-1370) built seven chambers adjacent to the infirmary hall at Canterbury for the infirm.<sup>26</sup>

These were probably in one of the aisles and could indicate that such partitioning originally divided up the communal sick ward into private chambers for the infirm which were then appropriated to other uses. Despite the date of this development at Canterbury, it is tempting to correlate it to the special dangers manifest in the Black Death (1348-49).

The partition of the infirmary raises some interesting points. For instance, even if aisle chambers were originally intended for the infirm, their original function was soon widely usurped and either the infirm were allotted much less space in the infirmary or other arrangements were made for them. It is tempting to suppose that the original function of infirmaries was becoming less important in the later Middle Ages. The infirmary at Lindisfarne was probably done away with after 1341/2, and it is also recorded that in 1535 the infirmary at Worcester had been allowed to collapse.<sup>27</sup> Such a state is more surprising in giving evidence of neglect of the privileges associated with infirmaries than in neglect of the infirm, but such privileges were not exclusively tied to infirmaries in the later Middle Ages. At both Lindisfarne and Worcester the prior's lodgings may have partially served many of the functions which infirmaries served elsewhere.

In any case an infirmary with partitioned aisles functioned far differently than its original form of an aisled hall. When the aisles were blocked off, the aisle chambers were then regarded as the most important spaces in the structure, rather than the hall, which assumed a status much closer to its modern one. It is also interesting that

such a change was very early relative to general developments in secular domestic architecture where the hall continued to be of primary importance throughout the Middle Ages. Infirmaries can be considered precocious both in their early emphasis on private chambers and in the status of the hall. The reduced importance of such infirmary halls is particularly evident at such houses as Peterborough and Ely where the chambered aisles survive but the hall has been demolished to form a narrow roadway. Such a roadway exists at Christchurch, Canterbury, although the aisles no longer survive either.<sup>28</sup>

#### C. GUEST LODGINGS

The provision of hospitality became incumbent upon monasteries as one of the functions which traditionally grew up with them as distinct architectural entities. Such a function may have predated the Conquest in England but was certainly accelerated by the new, monumental architectural forms which reached England through the Normans. Even so, references to guest lodgings are rare before the middle of the 12th century. Bishop John de Villula (1088-1122) planned a guest house at Bath Abbey; so did Abbot Geoffrey de Gorham (1119-1146) at St. Albans; and one is known to have been built at Evesham by Abbot Reginald of Gloucester (1139-1149). It is also recorded that the 'Aula Hospitum' at Abingdon was built by Abbot Vincent (1121-1130), and Knowles suggests that at such an early date it must have been part of the almonry.<sup>29</sup>

By the early 13th century, however, guest houses were a common feature of Benedictine monasteries and had generally become the responsibility of the cellarer. Whether they existed widely through local tradition at individual houses or whether their existence was mandatory, guest houses are found at a wide cross section of Benedictine monasteries from this time.

In the early 11th century the threat of attack from without and lack of internal security within England had made travelling relatively difficult. Especially after the Norman Conquest, however, both population and local mobility were rising rapidly so that the formative period for guest lodgings coincided with a growing need for the accommodation of travellers. Movement within the country was common by the 13th century and monasteries provided one of the most widespread sources of accommodation. In monastic terms, two types of guest made use of these facilities: travellers, whose journey took them past a monastery which formed a convenient stop-over for them, and pilgrims, whose destination was actually the monastery itself.

Travellers could count on bread and board at a monastery at no set expense usually for the period of two days. Not all monasteries, however, could provide the same degree of hospitality. The quality of their guest facilities usually depended upon the demands made on them and this could vary widely. Some houses were relatively isolated. On the other hand, when Great Malvern Priory applied to Edward III in 1346 for the appropriation of the churches of Upton Snodsbury and Eastleach, they pleaded that, being situated on a busy, public

thoroughfare, the demands of hospitality taxed their slender resources. Birkenhead Priory on the south bank of the Mersey held right of ferry across the river and since the road to the ferry actually passed through the precinct, at least until 1284, their income was sorely taxed by the cost of hospitality. Thus, in 1317 they successfully petitioned the king for permission to put up buildings for the accommodation of travellers and to charge them for their 'entertainment'. In 1330 they also won the right to charge tolls for the ferry. This apparently raised the priory "from a position of poverty to one of comparative wealth."<sup>30</sup> Faversham and Canterbury were both on the road from Dover to London and the monasteries there caught a great deal of traffic from it, the king not excepted. All of the above monasteries could be expected to have better and more commodious guest lodgings than those located off the beaten track.

Guest lodgings also became common in the very period when the financial advantages of the relic cult were reaching their highest point in the early 13th century, and no doubt pilgrim traffic contributed to their appearance. If a monastery was the goal of a pilgrimage its location became unimportant. After Broomholme Priory on the Norfolk coast acquired a relic of the Holy Cross in the early 13th century quite a sizable pilgrimage developed which even drew the king on several occasions. Although the guest lodgings there have not survived, they must have been fairly extensive because of Broomholme's isolated position away from major arteries and centres of population.

At Christchurch, Canterbury, where the relics of St. Thomas attracted more pilgrims than any other shrine in England, the expense of hospitality is well documented. The cost of entertaining so many pilgrims is thought by Woodruff to have completely swallowed up even the astronomical offerings of pilgrims in the early 13th century. The accommodation of pilgrims probably did not present such a financial drain as this, as such a system of gratuitous hospitality was probably matched by a system of gratuitous payment, but the total demands of hospitality to common travellers as well as pilgrims were an increasing burden to many monasteries. In 1307 Winchcombe was in debt because of, amongst other things, the maintenance of alms and hospitality. Earlier in 1251, when Gloucester was heavily in debt, the reception and entertainment of guests was forbidden as one of the austerity measures temporarily adopted.

Some urban monasteries met this challenge by the construction of inns in the town.<sup>31</sup> These included the George Inn at Glastonbury, c1480, the New Inn at Gloucester, c1450, the New Inn at Sherborne, and the George Inn at Winchcombe.<sup>32</sup> One of the earliest references to an inn built by a Benedictine monastery is that attributed to Prior Chillenden (1391-1411) in the High Street of Canterbury. Another early reference to a monastic inn is at Abingdon. It was built in the town before 1414 and was leased out at an annual rate, leaving the lessee to derive what profit he could from its operation.<sup>33</sup> Inns could not only relieve strain on guest lodgings but could also be a positive investment for a monastery. The capacity for both could be great; the

New Inn at Gloucester, for instance, could accommodate two hundred people at a time. The existence of inns associated with Benedictine monasteries was not particularly widespread, however, and was probably limited to houses of some wealth and popularity.

The demands of hospitality could not all be met by the same facility. Class distinctions were made which are hard to define exactly. The poor were probably lodged separately where possible, sometimes in the almonry. Brakspear conjectured that the undercroft of the refectory range at Birkenhead may have served as accommodation for inferior guests. Superior guests - royalty, nobility, and prominent clerics - were also lodged apart. They were normally lodged in the superior's lodgings, although references to lodgings for noble guests cannot always be tied down to such a location.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the architecturally distinct guest lodgings which can be identified were generally meant for the 'middle classes'. At smaller houses such as Birkenhead, Exeter St. Nicholas, and Kington St. Michael these distinctions could not be catered to with perfect scrupulousness, but they would certainly have attained to doing so; at these three houses the guest hall was also the prior's (or prioress') hall and the two lodgings overlapped integrally.

The division between lodgings for ordinary guests and noble guests is not always easy to ascertain. References to 'Great Halls' or 'Common Halls' could refer to either depending on the hall's attachment to the superior's lodgings and on the other facilities the monastery possessed. It will here be assumed that noble guests were

put up in the superior's lodgings and so 'guest lodgings' will refer primarily to facilities for ordinary guests.<sup>35</sup>

The cellarer was generally the obedientiary responsible for hospitality to guests, and it would appear that most guest lodgings before the late 12th century were located in the west range of the cloisters, the cellarer's range. This was commonly a two-story structure with cellars below and a guest hall above. Encroachments upon the west range, however, especially by superiors' lodgings, forced many guest lodgings out of the west range. Increased demands for hospitality were also significant in this respect; it was more convenient to build new guest facilities elsewhere in the precinct than to add to an already crowded cloister area. By the Dissolution a great many guest lodgings had been completely moved out of the west range. Still, at St. Mary's, York, Malmesbury, Norwich, Sherborne, Birkenhead, Kington St. Michael, and possibly Rochester and Tynemouth this early arrangement was preserved.

One of the earliest surviving guest lodgings to have been moved away from the cloister is the North Hall or Aula Nova at Christchurch, Canterbury. It was built by Prior Wibert soon after 1153 far from the cloister but adjoining the Court Gate, the main entrance for lay visitors. Other guest lodgings were also built against the precinct wall close to a gatehouse. Such was the case at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, Great Malvern, Reading (Hospitium of St. John), and St. Albans.<sup>36</sup> Such was also probable at Ely<sup>37</sup> and Westminster which possessed long cellarer's ranges close to both of their respective

south gates. At St. Mary's, Coventry, the guest house may even have been outside the precinct wall.<sup>38</sup> This put some of these guesthouses into close proximity to the almonry, as at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, Bury St. Edmunds, and Worcester. Since the almonry probably handled hospitality for the poor, this could represent an attempt to localize guest traffic in a position as far away from the cloister as was practical.

Another common position for guest lodgings was just southwest (or northwest) of the cloister area, as at Bardney, Battle, and Eye, or just southeast (or northeast) of the cloister area, as at Boxgrove, Monk Bretton, and Peterborough. This position was probably suggested by Cistercian examples. The Cistercian monastic plan was far more standardized than Benedictine plans, and this was the accustomed place for the guest house from the earliest days of the Order, since the west range was devoted to the lay brethren.<sup>39</sup>

Archaeological evidence for the forms which guest lodgings took is scanty at best, but it is clear that they developed basically within the mainstream of domestic architecture in general. The earliest ones were simply common halls, presumably with garderobe facilities, in which guests would have dined and slept communally. This was the form of the original guest lodgings in the west range of the cloister. The North Hall at Christchurch, Canterbury, must also have been similar to such a plan, although the undercroft there presents something of a problem. Detached guest lodgings seem to have been built with undercrofts until the later 13th century, and some of the

later ones, such as Boxgrove, c1300, contained fireplaces. At others fireplaces were added later. The undercroft must then have been an integral part of the guest facilities, but it is not known exactly how it functioned.

By the later 13th century, however, the upper floor hall was going out of fashion for guest lodgings. It was generally replaced by a ground floor hall with a two-story chamber block at one end, as in the later 13th-century guest lodgings at Bardney and Birkenhead<sup>40</sup> and that at Monk Bretton of c1300.<sup>41</sup> Presumably, the function of this chamber block was flexible and can probably be compared with chambers of inns, which are known from the later 14th century, where a chamber could provide privacy for an important or wealthy enough guest or accommodate a number of guests as the need arose. That the importance of the hall was decreased by this development can perhaps be implied from the guest lodgings at Bardney, where the aisles of the hall were demolished in the 14th century (Figure 1).

As the importance of the hall declined, some later guest houses became more compact, as can be seen in illustrations of the timber-framed guest houses at Coventry and Great Malvern, which both survived into the 19th century; that at Coventry was a two-story structure, that at Great Malvern three-storied.

In whatever form they took, it would appear that a few guest lodgings were maintained relatively scrupulously right through until the Dissolution. The *Rites of Durham* glowingly describes the guest lodgings there as

. . . a famous house of hospitallitie . . . not being inferior to any place in England, both for ye goodnes of ther diete, the sweete & daintie furniture of there Lodgings, & generally all things necessarie for traveillers.<sup>42</sup>

And in an attempt to stop the dissolution of Great Malvern Priory, Bishop Latimer pleaded for the reputation of the Prior in a letter to Cromwell:

. . . for the 'upstandynge' of his [the Prior's] house, and continuance of the same to many good purposes, 'not in monkery . . . but to maintain (to which he is much given) good 'howsekepyng', for to the 'vertu' of hospitality he hath been greatly inclined from his beginning, and is very much commended in these parts for the same.<sup>43</sup>

These may describe only lodgings for important guests, however, for in general hospitality declined noticeably at many Benedictine houses, especially from the first quarter of the 15th century. The inns at large monasteries increasingly diverted traffic away from guest lodgings in the precinct, and although hospitality for important guests would have been kept up, ordinary guests received less and less consideration in the century before the Dissolution.<sup>44</sup>

#### D. THE SUPERIOR'S LODGINGS

Before the 12th century the abbot had shared integrally in the communal life of his convent; he had slept in the dormitory, eaten in the refectory, and attended services in the choir with the other monks. In the early 12th century, predominantly during the reign of Henry I, this situation began to change in England due to new financial pressures brought to bear on monasteries. The position of the abbot,

as the legal embodiment of the monastic corporation, was becoming 'feudalized'. Before the Conquest all the abbeys in the kingdom had been de facto royal *Eigenkloster*. They were now gradually transformed into baronies with the abbot holding the temporalities of the house as a baron and feudal vassal of the king. Moreover, due mainly to the rapacity with which William Rufus exploited this situation, the temporal revenues were becoming divided between abbot and convent so that during an abbatial vacancy only the abbot's portion, rather than the whole temporal revenues of the house, would revert to the crown. The abbot thus acquired more and more social responsibilities which brought him further and further into the world and out of the cloister and resulted finally in his almost complete abandonment of the communal life of the monastery. The most architecturally tangible part of this process was the creation of a separate lodgings for the abbot. At first this might have consisted of no more than a separate chamber where he could have conducted his expanding business affairs, but with demands of hospitality also growing, this soon resulted in his abandonment of the dormitory and refectory for his own private facilities.

This separation naturally lent itself to a wider involvement in national affairs than was practical in the reformed and encloistered monasticism which the Normans had at first promulgated, but found ready parallels in pre-Conquest English monasticism. Soon the heads of all monastic houses, whether they were royal vassals or not, began to dissociate themselves from the communal lives of their monks. Thus, at priories and cathedral priories there came to be separate

priors' lodgings. Even at some of the larger abbeys where the abbot already had separate lodgings, the prior, as second in command, often acquired lodgings of his own.<sup>45</sup>

Because these developments were born of feudal considerations, they differed widely from one monastery to another. Thus abbots' lodgings began appearing sporadically from the early 12th century. At Bury St. Edmunds the abbot's hall was built approximately between 1102 and 1107; at Abingdon the 'camera ipsius abbatis' is first mentioned in 1106. Most others followed in the early 12th century, but a few whose feudal position was relatively secure remained conservative in this respect. An abbot's lodgings was not built at Battle, for instance, until the later 12th century. Cluniac houses had no abbot and so superiors' lodgings did not appear until later; Reading, strongly Cluniac in organization, similarly did not have a separate abbot's lodgings until relatively late.<sup>46</sup>

Priors' lodgings followed abbots' at a respectful distance. At Abingdon, for instance, a chamber and possibly a chapel for the prior was built by Abbot Ingulf (1130-1158). At the cathedral priories the bishops held the legal position which abbots held in their abbeys, but in practice they had far less to do with their monks. In fact relations between bishop and priory could be distinctly cool, if not openly hostile, and for all intents and purposes the prior of a cathedral priory was the equal of an abbot in all respects except his legal/financial status. The separation of finances occurred between the bishop and priory, and although the prior probably had his own

budget from quite early, this was entirely an internal arrangement. At Bath Bishop John de Villula (1088-1122) built the prior's lodgings there. This was relatively early compared to Christchurch, Canterbury, and Rochester which, under Archbishop Lanfranc and Bishop Gundulf, were centres of the Norman monastic reform. Both Lanfranc and Gundulf had been monks at Bec in Normandy and both continued to lead a semi-monastic existence in England despite their rather more public offices. At Christchurch, Canterbury, the prior had a separate establishment by c1165. At Rochester the prior slept in dormitory until Prior Osbern of Sheppey (1186?-1199) built himself a 'camera' beside the infirmary.

Since hospitality was one of the functions which finally brought the abbot out of the dormitory, it was only natural that he relocate himself close to the guest lodgings which at that time were generally located in the west range of the cloister. Thus, most abbots' lodgings at Benedictine monasteries were originally either incorporated in the west range or developed contiguously with it. Although some were eventually relocated further from the cloister, this position remained standard for abbots' lodgings, and also for priors' lodgings at priories, at the majority of Benedictine establishments in England until the Dissolution.

Only occasionally were superiors' lodgings at abbeys and priories located elsewhere. At Exeter St. Nicholas the prior's lodgings were on the far side of the refectory. So were the prior's lodgings at St. Mary's, York, where also the abbot's lodgings were to the east of the east range of the cloister,<sup>47</sup> as also at Milton Abbey.

The abbot's lodgings at Gloucester were in the west range of the cloister until 1316 when the abbot moved into a new lodgings far to the north of the cloister against the precinct wall. This position is further unusual for an abbot's lodgings in being so far from the cloister; in this respect it more closely resembles an episcopal palace, to which, to some extent, it may have had pretensions.

The positions of episcopal palaces at cathedral priories varied considerably since they required a suitably impressive area in or adjacent to the precinct, which widely varying precinct areas and layouts rendered impossible to standardize. On the other hand the priors' lodgings at cathedral priories were nearly all located in or adjacent to the far end of the east range of the cloisters. The only exceptions to this were Bath, where the prior's lodgings were in the west range of the cloister, and Ely, where the prior's lodgings developed on the far side of the refectory, as at Exeter St. Nicholas and St. Mary's, York.

The prior's lodgings at Durham Cathedral Priory, located in the usual position at the far end of the east cloister range, seems to have influenced the location of several priors' lodgings at Benedictine priories in the north; the priors' lodgings at Finchale, Lindisfarne, and Tynemouth all developed at the far end of the east cloister range instead of the more usual position in the west range.

The earliest superiors' lodgings to appear were in the west cloister range. In fact most of the work done on superiors' lodgings in the 12th century was centred on this location, and a common line of

development emerged. The rooms which comprised the lodgings at this time were basically a hall, a solar or great chamber, and a chapel. The earliest of these lodgings, well represented at Chester, were completely contained within the west range and were formed by simple modifications to the cellarer's range (Figure 27). The undercroft had usually consisted of cellars with the bay nearest the church divided off to form the outer parlour. The abbot's chapel was usually built over the outer parlour and one end of the remaining space was partitioned off to form the abbot's great chamber; the remaining space formed his hall. At Chester the great chamber occupied the three bays at the far end from the church but some were undoubtedly at the other end close to the chapel.

Although the 12th century saw the appearance of superiors' lodgings, their scale was usually modest and work done on them minimal until the 13th century. From early in the 13th century superior's lodgings were either built, rebuilt, or added to with the result that they became impressive and noble structures comparable to the houses of most secular magnates. In the process the integrity of the west range was destroyed by a succession of additions which in many cases eventually shifted the centre of gravity away from the west range in one of several ways. At Peterborough the extensions began with a block at the far end of the west range containing the abbot's great chamber. Subsequent extensions were added to the far side of that, and the abbot's lodgings trailed off to the southwest (Figure 16). By the 14th or even the later 13th century the west range had changed from the centre to an outer wing of the abbot's lodgings. The abbot's

lodgings at Battle underwent a similar development, although on a smaller scale (Figure 27).

At other abbeys, such as Tewkesbury and Chester, the abbot's lodgings developed westward from the end of the west range nearest the church, forming a block extending perpendicular to the facade of the church.

At Westminster and probably also at Gloucester the abbot's lodgings began in the west range, but in the 14th century the west range was demolished and new lodgings were built further west with a courtyard between it and the west cloister walk. At Gloucester these new lodgings were for the prior, the abbot taking possession of new lodgings further from the cloister.

Other abbots' lodgings also participated in this minor exodus from the west range. At Bury St. Edmunds the abbots' lodgings were occupying their fourth location by the late 13th century. Each move was motivated by a need for more space and the final location was obtained by an early 13th-century extension of the precinct. Additional space gained by moving away from the cloister was seldom unrestricted, however; superiors' lodgings which made such a move generally had to adapt themselves to an irregular site and so seldom developed as would a contemporary secular establishment. The Hall of Pleas, the third abbot's lodgings at Bury St. Edmunds, built very late in the 12th century, was an exception to this. It comprised a ground-floor hall set between a two-story service block with kitchen and buttery and a two-story solar block. Although the end blocks did not

project beyond the width of the hall, this was essentially a fully developed H-plan house, and if it is an early example, the relative security of the precinct perhaps accounts for it.

The first stage of development in the west cloister range, as at Peterborough, was usually a two-story extension accommodating the abbot's solar. This was sometimes accompanied, as at Bardney and perhaps Battle, by a smaller chamber which served as the abbot's private bedroom. Otherwise the solar was not only the main private apartment of the abbot but a more private chamber for the entertainment of superior guests. When the king and a large company visited Bardney on 21 August, 1406,

. . . the king spent the night in the abbot's lodging, at breakfast the day following the king, the princes, and the Scottish nobles sat apart in the abbot's great chamber, the king at a table on the west side of the abbot's bench and his sons at each end, while the Scots were at a table on the north side. The abbot meanwhile entertained the greater part of the company in his hall, sitting at the head of the high table with the bishop of Llandaff.<sup>48</sup>

This development also provided an opportunity for the expansion of the hall.

Abbot Ralph of Coventry (1235-1261) entirely rebuilt the abbot's lodgings at Battle in the west range of the cloister. It was an L-shaped structure with the solar projecting westward at the far end of the west range. At Bardney such an extension, consisting of the great chamber mentioned above over a cellar, a bedroom, and garderobe block, was built adjacent to the abbot's chapel near to the church in the early 13th century. Later in the century another extension was built

from the far end of the west range. This consisted of a checker or business office and a kitchen specifically to serve the abbot, his household, which could be extensive, and his guests. Previously the abbot had relied on the convent kitchen and many houses, even such a major establishment as Ely, would continue to do so until the Dissolution. Kitchens to serve superiors' lodgings did appear quite commonly, however, from this time.<sup>49</sup> By the end of the 14th century abbots' kitchens must have been common at the larger monasteries.

Courtyards, like the ones at Westminster and Gloucester, became a common part of the superiors' lodgings from this time, usually formed by successive additions which eventually surrounded a small space.

Another late development of superiors' lodgings was the occasional occurrence of another hall. As opposed to the parts of superiors' lodgings built previously, such halls were usually built at ground level with no undercroft. Additional halls appeared sporadically at larger monasteries throughout the 14th and 15th centuries but were certainly not built everywhere.

The development of superiors' lodgings often resulted in a vast complex of halls and chambers. By the mid 15th century the abbots' 'Palace' at Bury St. Edmunds consisted of the Hall with its cellar below, the Queen's (Great) Chamber, the 'King's Hall', chapel, wardrobe, kitchen, the Abbot's larder, buttery, bakehouse, brewhouse, stables, and a substantial walled garden with dovecotes on the walls. The existence here of a bakehouse and brewhouse specifically associated with the superior's lodgings is unusual; use was usually made of the

corresponding conventual facilities. The stables would have been located in an outer part of the precinct.

An abbot's lodgings of this size strongly reflects the political importance of the monastery and the abbot in particular. In fact the most magnificent superiors' lodgings were generally those with the greatest political importance and especially those with the closest royal connections. From the 12th century some monasteries, such as Bath and Gloucester, were bound to keep lodgings for the king, but from the 13th century a more particular bond with the crown often resulted in specific building activity on an abbot's lodgings. At Malmesbury Abbot William of Colerne (1260-1296), who entertained Henry III in 1265 and Edward I in 1283, rebuilt the abbot's lodgings there. The prior's lodgings at Ely received a substantial amount of attention under Prior John of Crauden (1321-1341), a personal friend of the king and queen. Prior Crauden rebuilt the Great Hall and also built the Queen's Hall, apparently for a visit by Queen Philippa. The connections between political importance and building activity are even more marked at Bury St. Edmunds. New, larger abbot's lodgings were built there in the later years of Henry III's reign after he had visited the abbey several times. Later the buildings were extended probably to accommodate Edward I, who visited the abbey 15 times; the Queen's Chamber was presumably used for the frequent visits of Queen Eleanor and her daughters. In 1433, when Henry VI had given eight weeks notice of his intention to spend Christmas at the abbey, Abbot Curtys set 80 men to work to improve his lodgings to a suitable

standard. After 1446, however, the political importance of the abbey declined, and by 1465 the King's Hall had been converted into a granary.

After the mid 14th century the main structure of most abbots' lodgings was complete, and although additions kept on appearing until the Dissolution and some lodgings were actually rebuilt after this time, the total volume of building on superiors' lodgings declined until later on in the 15th century.

There would appear to have been a resurgence of building activity on superiors' lodgings beginning in the early 15th century and picking up throughout the century until the first or second decade of the 16th century. The character of this resurgence was different from earlier building periods, however. The building activity was not directed so much at providing larger or more extensive facilities, but at improving the standard of domestic comfort and pretensions to try to keep it in line with its secular counterparts.

Entrance porches, for example, had appeared sporadically probably from the late 12th century.<sup>50</sup> Porches of the early 13th century can be seen at Battle and at St. Swithun's, Winchester, where they are built into a lower story, rather than projecting. They are both three bays in length and one bay deep with an arcade in the lower story of the facade and chambers located above. Porches were more usually projecting; recessed porches such as these were probably never built after the mid 13th century. Porches were just beginning to appear in noble residences at this time, and they did not become a common

feature of secular houses or abbot's lodgings until the 15th century. Porches were added to the superiors' lodgings at Bardney at some time in the 15th century, at Birkenhead in the late 14th century, at Christchurch, Canterbury, under Prior Selling (1472-1494), and at Cerne probably also in the 15th century. Porches were becoming a common feature of noble domestic architecture at this time and new superiors' lodgings or halls would include a porch. The new Great Hall built at Milton in 1498 featured such a porch and an oriel as well.

Oriels had a complicated evolution, but by the 15th century oriel projections could take the form of upper story bay windows, two-story bay windows or even projecting polygonal staircases, in which form they appeared in the abbot's lodgings at Sherborne and the prioress' lodgings at Carrow. The more usual upper-story oriel windows appeared at Peterborough, where one oriel was added to the great hall and two built with the new Heaven's Gate Chamber by Abbot Robert Kirton (1496-1528). The abbot's lodgings at Tewkesbury, built by Abbot Henry Beoly (1509-1531), also featured oriels of this sort. Beoly's oriels were decorated with his initials and Kirton's with his rebus, both stressing the personal status of the builder.<sup>51</sup> The prior's lodgings at Bath and what were probably the prioress' lodgings at Wilberfoss both featured oriel windows projecting out over the cloister walks, and the prior's chapel at Birkenhead, which extended out over the west cloister walk, would also, in medieval terminology, have been called an oriel.

Covered galleries were another common addition to superiors' lodgings. An early instance of this occurred at Ely where Prior Crauden (1321-1341) built raised galleries between his new Queen's Hall, his new study, and his new chapel. At Bardney a gallery was built between the checker and the Great Chamber in the 15th century, and at Westminster Abbot Islip (1500-1532) built a gallery between his old private apartments and his new Jericho Parlour (Figure 47).

Parlours such as this began appearing as the separation between the superior's public facilities and private apartments became more distinct and concomitantly as the hall became less important. Many new private apartments began to appear at this time and often took on individual, and usually quite colourful, names such as the Jerusalem Chamber and Jericho Parlour at Westminster and the Starred Chamber at Bath. Fireplaces were usual in such chambers at this time and many were also added to earlier chambers.

In the 13th century superiors' lodgings had often rivalled the houses of secular nobles. Even at that time however, their importance in the social and political life of the country was perhaps past its peak. Abbots would never recover the importance they had once held in national affairs but they at least had the means and social image to try to live as if they had never lost it. Monastic superiors were certainly trying to keep apace of the great nobles of the realm in their residences, but even before the Dissolution put an end to the contest, superiors' lodgings were definitely falling behind the standards of the sometimes magnificent houses of a transformed and burgeoning

noble class in which there was increasingly little place for monastic elements.

#### *E. OBEDIENTIARIES' CHAMBERS*

St. Benedict had provided for the efficient operation of the monastery by the institution of a small number of administrative offices, or obediences. The monks who filled these offices, the obedientiaries, were chosen by the superior for a specific term of office and their duties were defined to cover all aspects of monastic life.<sup>52</sup> As the size of monasteries grew, as the resources they administered multiplied, and even more importantly, as the internal and external aspects of monastic life became more complex in the late 11th and early 12th centuries, the number of obedientiaries increased and as well the duties of the more important obedientiaries became more demanding.

Most obediences entailed responsibilities involving a certain part of the monastic fabric; the cellarer had his cellars, the almoner his almonry, the granarius his granary, etc. As we have seen, the actual responsibility for the fabric of the monastery did not always coincide with these functional divisions and so, for instance, the fabric of the kitchen was rarely the responsibility of the coquinarius, the kitchener, even though his duties revolved around that structure.

But as the financial organization of the monastery developed, the temporal and spiritual resources of a monastery tended to be divided between the obedientiaries so that the revenues which each obedientiary could expect were standardized and became constant. The revenues of an

obedience might include the revenues of a specific number of manors, rents from certain monastic properties in towns, the tithes of certain churches, and a variety of other sources. Not only did each obedientiary depend on these sources of revenue but in time he also became responsible for their maintenance. The responsibilities which this entailed led consequently to the appearance of offices, or checkers, from which an obedientiary, and sometimes his staff, could better manage their growing affairs.

The earliest extant checkers all date from the 13th century. These include 'the Chequer' (probably the treasurer's checker) at Abingdon, the cellarer's checker at Gloucester, and the early 13th-century infirmarer's house east of the infirmary at Peterborough. This was the usual position for infirmarers' checkers, being most convenient for running the infirmary. Other checkers were likewise located conveniently for the running of the obedientiary's affairs. Thus, the checkers of sacrists, who were responsible for supplying all the physical needs for the maintenance of liturgical services, were usually located near the church. At Bardney, Durham, and Worcester the sacrist's checker was just north of the presbytery and at Gloucester it was built against the south wall of the south transept. Cellarers' checkers were commonly located in or close to their cellars; the cellarer's range at Norwich contained the checkers of both the cellarer and the communar. At Durham the Master of the Garner's checker was in the granary and the chamberlain's checker was above the tailor's shop.

As the duties of the obedientiaries became more demanding they were able to share less and less in the communal life of their monastery, and just as their superiors had in the 12th century, some of them, too, began to leave the dormitory and/or refectory for chambers of their own. Originally they may have begun to sleep in their checkers, but at many monasteries they eventually acquired a 'camera' also. At Abingdon such private chambers were in existence by 1278, but the exact arrangements at other monasteries differed widely. There was never a standardized Benedictine administrative system, and just as the obedientiaries at different monasteries acquired a widely varying range of responsibilities and importance, the exact arrangements of the different administrative and private chambers of obedientiaries evolved independently at each monastery.

The minor obedientiaries, of which there were many (by 1510 nearly all the monks of Malmesbury held an obedience of some sort, many in duplicate), did not share in this development. Although they may have acquired some sort of checker, for the most part they would have continued to sleep and eat communally. The *Rites of Durham* mentions the checkers of the Bursar, the Cellarer, the Master of the Infirmary, the Chamberlain, the Prior's Chaplain (who often came to serve as the prior's treasurer, as well), the Communar, the Master of the Garner, the Sacrist, the Subprior, and the Terrer. Of these, only the Bursar, the Master of the Infirmary, the Prior's Chaplain, and the Terrer possessed chambers outside of the dormitory - the prior's chaplain's chamber next the prior's in his lodgings, the others' in

the infirmary. The rest are said to have had 'chambers' in the dormitory - this probably refers to wooden partitions. Apparently all except the Bursar and Sacrist (and the Prior's Chaplain who probably dined with the Prior) ate communally; these two officers each had their 'meat served from the great kitchen to his checker.'<sup>53</sup>

At some, especially smaller, monasteries no doubt this process did not go so far as at Durham; at other larger ones the process undoubtedly went further. The amount of revenues an obedientiary commanded determined how great an establishment he was able to build; he was free to spend his revenues as he would, barring only gross mismanagement of his office, and thus, the personality of an obedientiary could determine strongly how his resources were spent. An especially dominant and ambitious obedientiary could be expected to spend more on building for his own use and aggrandizement than a more 'religious' one. Thus Alan of Walsingham, the famous and active sacrist at Ely (1321-1341), built an unusually large sacrist's range in 1325/6 and built a wall around the sacrist's property.

The chambers of some obedientiaries expanded more legitimately than others. Workrooms and service areas often became appended to an obedientiary's chambers. Alan of Walsingham's sacrist's range at Ely contained a Goldsmith's Tower, for instance, where presumably new church plate was manufactured and old metalwork repaired. Likewise, the kitchener at Abingdon had his own garden attached to his chamber by 1219 and so eventually did the Gardener. But so also did the keeper of the works, the precentor, and the sacrist; in these cases the

garden could not be supposed to serve the obedience better, but rather the obedientiary himself. Gardens became common in many monastic precincts and greatly complicated their layout; in fact at some monasteries, one obedientiary's property was often 'rented' from one of his fellow officers.

Evidence of substantial elaboration of obedientiaries' chambers begins to appear from the late 13th century. Between 1285 and 1290 the sacrist at Christchurch, Canterbury, incurred expenses for a 'camera' with 'diversorii ibidem', i.e. pictures on the walls and/or a fireplace.<sup>54</sup> A fireplace and chimney were also added to the Chequer at Abingdon in the late 13th century. Fireplaces were common by the 15th century. Also by the 15th century even such a relatively minor obedientiary as the hordarian at St. Swithun's, Winchester, could afford pictures for his chamber; in 1405/6 he spent 10s on a picture of the Five Joys of the Virgin.<sup>55</sup>

New domestic facilities also began to appear. In 1301 the treasurer at Christchurch, Canterbury, built himself a new stable with a courtyard and small granary. The kitchener's establishment at Abingdon eventually included his own gatehouse, dovecote, courtyard, and orchard.

By the Dissolution obedientiaries' establishments and their often accompanying gardens occupied a substantial amount of the precinct area at many monasteries. Even before this time, however, there was a limited conservative disapproval of these establishments. At Christchurch, Canterbury, for instance, Archbishop Simon de Sudbury ordered in 1376 that all obedientiaries' chambers recently built should

be destroyed. Such a conservative reaction would not perhaps have kept pace of the growth of obedientiaries' facilities except in the occasional case of blatant indiscretion, as when between 1518 and 1525 the subprior at Shrewsbury, Thomas Butler, was reprimanded for carrying off the glass of the infirmary for the windows of his own chamber. However, if it had not already by the Dissolution, the development of obedientiaries' lodgings would likely have soon provoked serious social censure had they been allowed to keep growing in size and magnificence.

#### F. CORRODIANS' LODGINGS

Corrodies constituted another class of domestic lodgings in the precinct. A corrody was a grant of food, drink, clothing, and sometimes shelter usually held for the lifetime of the recipient. Records of corrodies exist for many houses, but the interpretation of such documents is hampered by virtually a complete lack of architectural evidence. Some corrodies did not involve lodgings, and some that did were accommodated on monastic property outside the precinct. It is clear, however, that many corrodies resulted in lodgings being built in the precinct. At some monasteries they must have constituted a significant group of structures; it is said that by 1282 the 45 monks of Winchcombe were maintaining 15 corrodies, although Haigh cannot find evidence for so large a number,<sup>56</sup> and in 1322/23 there are records of 19 corrodians at Glastonbury.

Corrodies are rarely mentioned before the mid 13th century. At Christchurch, Canterbury, although no direct evidence of them exists, corrodians can be inferred from a promise of Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) that in future he would not intrude his nominees into corrodies there.<sup>57</sup>

After the mid 13th century corrodies began to be granted to superiors who had retired or been deposed. One of the earliest records of such a corrody occurs at Glastonbury where in 1252 Abbot Michael retired to a chamber within the abbey built by Thomas, the prior. It must have been a substantial structure befitting the abbatial dignity and it is known to have possessed a chamber, a hall, a chapel, a cellar below, and a garden adjacent. This was far more prepossessing than ordinary corrodies, but was no doubt comparable to other abbatial corrodies, such as that built at Bardney in 1318 for deposed Abbot Waynefleete, or that which in 1324 the Archbishop directed be built for Richard de Halghton, the deposed prior of Monk Bretton. By the 15th century domestic dignity was conceived somewhat differently, and in 1428 an ex-abbot of Abingdon was allotted a high chamber with a parlour beneath, a small garden, and another high double chamber for sleeping in the infirmary. Only at the smallest and poorest houses would a retired or deposed superior be relegated entirely to the infirmary with the other infirm monks. Suitable provision in the precinct would usually be their due, and this class of corrodians lodgings, often, it would seem, attached to the superior's lodgings, was the most elaborate which came to be built, even if such corrodies were never very numerous at any single house.<sup>58</sup>

Most corrodies were provided for laymen, usually of no great social status. Laymen began to come into corrodies at Benedictine houses frequently in the late 13th century, and corrodies continued to be granted at a great rate until the early years of Edward III's reign in the 1330's. Corrodies were often sold by monasteries during this period, and others were given to monastic servants. The way this came about can be seen well at Christchurch, Canterbury. In 1249 Magister Omerus, a lawyer in the priory's service, was being paid a pension of £2 and for the next 31 years rendered continual service to the priory. In his last years his annual salary had risen to £5, and probably in order to facilitate his legal work when in Canterbury, he had been provided as well with a house in the precinct which still bears his name, i.e. Meister Omers.<sup>59</sup> This practice became common in the early 14th century, as can be seen from the records of Glastonbury Abbey.<sup>60</sup> Corrodies were also granted to the stewards of abbeys. An early example of this occurred at Winchcombe in 1278, when Elias de Foxcote, the abbey steward, was granted a corrody for which he built a chamber at his own expense near the abbey gate.

In the same year another corrody was granted at Winchcombe to a monastic servant of some interest in the context of building. William the mason of Hereford bound himself to serve the abbot and his successors all his life, to finish the new work (Lady Chapel?) as well as he knew how, and to undertake no other building except for the king. He was allowed to build a chamber for himself next the granary for which the abbot was to find stone and timber. Thirty years later

he was still in the service of the house.<sup>61</sup> Likewise, the agreement which Bury St. Edmunds worked out in 1286 with Richard the Tiler could have involved a corrody. He agreed to tile the sacrist's houses and received the office of the belfry, to keep the belfry in repair, for life. Other corrodies to masons occurred at Glastonbury, where a corrody was granted 15 May, 1309, to Richard Lengynour; at Worcester, where a corrody consisting of food allowances, a room, and stabling for his horse was granted in 1316 to William de Schokerwych; and at Bath, where a corrody was granted in 1335 to Richard of Farleigh, a master mason of national repute (he built the steeple of Salisbury Cathedral and also worked at Reading and Pershore Abbeys). The following year another prominent master mason, William Joy, (the retrochoir and central tower of Wells Cathedral), applied for a corrody there.<sup>62</sup>

Throughout these years the inconvenience of having laymen in the precinct and the financial disadvantages of corrodies were becoming more apparent, and a reaction was setting in against them. At Romsey in 1302 the injunctions of an episcopal visitation forbade the sale of corrodies and grants of pensions without the bishop's permission, and later, in 1346, Romsey was warned by Bishop Edington not to sell or give corrodies when the old ones became vacant.

In other circumstances, the monasteries themselves tried to reduce the number of their corrodies. This was especially the case with royal corrodians. In the very late 13th and early 14th centuries it became a matter of course for monasteries to accept royal nominees for corrodies. These nominees were for the most part aged retainers

of the king who were too old to be of further service and socially unworthy of a better pension. A particularly early instance of royal nominees to Benedictine monastic corrodies occurred at Romsey. On 20 November, 1271, the abbey accepted Matilda Waler and her handmaid to corrodies in return for which the king granted them six oaks from Clarendon Forest. At this early date the king perhaps lacked precedent for such a nomination; the valuable gift of oaks could be considered a partial payment for the corrody. Such payments were considered unnecessary once the custom had been established.

Edward I made the practice common. Worcester received frequent demands from the king for corrodies and grants for his retainers from c1287. The first royal corrodies at Muchelney appeared c1282, at Christchurch, Canterbury, in 1293, and at Glastonbury perhaps as late as 1303. Royal corrodians were common from this time until the Dissolution. The heaviest concentration of royal corrodians however, was limited to the last years of Edward I, the reign of Edward II, and perhaps the first few years of Edward III. At Christchurch, Canterbury, it became customary for two royal nominees at a time to receive corrodies for life, each corrody being refilled upon vacancy. At Glastonbury the king came to have the right to two nominees and apparently also the right to nominate another at the election of an abbot to a living in the abbey's gift.

Monastic opposition to this policy was strong and by the 1330's it was not uncommon for royal nominations to be contested. As early as 1310 the monks of Christchurch, Canterbury, refused to receive any

further royal corrodians, but the practical results of this position appear to have been negligible. In 1336 Edward III was induced under financial pressure to declare that previous grants of corrodies conferred at Christchurch, Canterbury, by kings of England should not be drawn into a precedent for the future. Even this did not stop a steady but decreasing stream of royal corrodians. But soon after Richard II in 1395 repeated the stipulation that royal grants of corrodies should not be drawn into precedent, the practice seems to have stopped.<sup>63</sup> At Glastonbury royal corrodies keep appearing sporadically until the Dissolution, but after this time they are not so numerous as they were previously. Nevertheless, it would appear that from the beginning of the 15th century royal nominees, however few, probably formed the majority of corrodians at most houses.

The nature of the lodgings which corrodies entailed is difficult to assess. Different grades of lodgings would probably have been appropriate to different values of corrodies. By 1322 there were six different values of corrodies at Glastonbury:

The first class corrody corresponded to the prior's portion, or double that of a monk; at the other end of the scale were the corrodies worth about three halfpence a day, equivalent in value to the wages of servants or to the pittance paid to the twenty inferior brethren of the convent (novices and lay brothers).<sup>64</sup>

If lodgings were to be supplied by the monastery, they would probably have been of varying degrees of scale and elaboration. It is not possible to generalize too widely, however. Some corrodies make clear that the onus for the building of lodgings is on the corrodian himself. Other

corrodies specify that the corrodian is to build a 'chamber' for himself using materials supplied by the monastery. Such measures would have been beyond the means of most of the royal nominees, and their accommodation was probably fairly basic. At Ramsey Abbot John of Sawtry (1285-1316) objected strongly to receiving the king's old servants in his almonry, but how far this was common practice is impossible to say. Whether they were lodged in the almonry, or near the abbey gates as was the case with Elias de Foxcote's lodgings at Winchcombe, or next the granary as with William the mason also at Winchcombe, they would all (except for the most important ones) appear to have been kept to the outer fringes of the precinct. No evidence for the centralization of corrodians lodgings exists. They evolved haphazardly and many were probably insubstantial half-timbered buildings. What became of many of these lodgings as the number of corrodies diminished in the late Middle Ages is a matter of speculation.

#### G. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

##### 1. *Study Facilities in the Precinct*

The learned aura which surrounds the monasticism of Bede does not find ready parallels in post-Conquest England. While monasteries could still produce literate monks, the main focus of learning had shifted to the universities.

St. Benedict had prescribed study as one of the regular monastic occupations but a steady increase in services and the growing pressure

of administrative duties allowed less and less time for the strictly religious studies which he had envisioned. In the later Middle Ages such study was further restricted by changes in attitude towards religion and learning. Nevertheless, most monks always had recourse to some study facilities. The extent and breadth of such facilities, however, depended very greatly on the size and even the 'personality' of a monastery; some were far more (and some far less) interested in learning than others.

From the beginning of Norman monasticism the main centre for study in the monastery was the cloisters. The exact 12th-century arrangements for study in the cloisters is unknown; carrels survive from later dates but none are known from this early. In all probability most houses would simply have had benches in the cloister walks at which the monks could sit as they read. It is also probable that at most smaller houses such an arrangement sufficed until the Dissolution. This situation may be implied at St. Benet of Hulme where a 1494 visitation reported that services left no time for study, while a 1514 visitation reported that there were no seats in the cloister.

Evidence for cloister carrells is scanty at best for they were generally built of wood. At Chester, Gloucester and Worcester, stone recesses wherein the wooden carrells fit can still be seen but these are rarities. Even the most elaborate examples were usually completely of wood.<sup>65</sup> Carrells must have been built or rebuilt occasionally in conjunction with cloister walks but it is impossible to demonstrate an historical development. It is even impossible to infer their

general existence, for carrells are known certainly to have existed only at a handful of monasteries.<sup>66</sup>

Other study facilities eventually appeared at some houses. Abbot John de Brokehampton (1286-1316) rebuilt the east walk of the cloisters at Evesham with studies for the monks over it, and a study range was also built at Glastonbury in the early 14th century. These developments probably depended upon the same impetus which at other houses resulted in the replacement of benches in the cloister with carrells. These elaborations of study facilities imply that the monasteries were coming to terms with the new status of education which the universities at Oxford and Cambridge were fostering. Moreover, later in the 14th century an alternative facility began to develop with the appearance of a library at some monasteries.

In the 12th century books would have been available from a wooden book cupboard or armarium usually located on one side of the door from the east cloister walk into the church. The books available at different houses varied greatly. New monasteries and an increasing number of monks meant shortages of adequate book supplies at many houses in the 12th century and no doubt spurred the production of books. Only at a few of the larger monasteries such as St. Albans, where Abbot Paul of Caen (1077-1093) established a scriptorium, does evidence for the many scriptoria which must have existed at Benedictine houses survive.

The number of books increased enormously in the 13th and 14th centuries, for most libraries developed not as replacements for the

armaria in the cloister but as an alternative resource. This is especially clear in the case of the early 15th-century library at Durham. A good number of Durham's book inventories and over half its medieval book collection still survive at Durham and give evidence of an extremely large collection of books, probably about 1200 - a larger number than some of the college libraries at Oxford could boast, although both Christchurch and St. Augustine's, Canterbury, surpassed it easily. Not all monasteries by any means could boast such superlative libraries. When Leland visited Faversham in 1530 he found its manuscript library almost negligible, and the situation was probably similar at many smaller houses.

One of the earliest libraries, finished in 1377, was at Worcester. It was over the south aisle of the nave and it was formed by raising the outside aisle wall and roof. Another early one was at St. Albans, built c1398 by Abbot de la Moote. The great period of library building at Benedictine houses, however, was the first half of the 15th century. At Durham the library was built between 1414 and 1418 and supplemented not only the cloister armaria but also the treasury in the west range of the cloister which had been a repository for books at least since the 14th century. It also supplemented the carrells. The library was built at the same time the cloisters were being rebuilt and is thus contemporary with the cloister carrells which numbered 30 as opposed to 56 professed monks in 1372 and 40-50 in the 15th century. Documentary description makes clear that the library was also used as a study facility.

The library at Durham was built next to the church over the slype in the east cloister range and consisted of a room 60' x 16½' with a large window at each end. The books were kept in ten presses or lectern-type desks set at right angles to the windows. Each lectern or desk was double-sided except two and each side held from twenty to twenty-five books for a total capacity of about 450 (probably chained) volumes.<sup>67</sup> The nearly contemporary library at Gloucester was similarly located, only two floors above the slype, a vestry intervening. It had late Perpendicular windows added at either end and must have resembled the Durham library closely. The few remaining known Benedictine libraries were all built around this time.<sup>68</sup> What is more they were all located very near to the church. This may reflect the common practice of having libraries under the care of the precentor, implying that they also contained service books. Such is known not to be the case, however, at Durham where there was a separate librarian and the library probably did not contain service books.

The fact remains that by this time many of the monks using such facilities would already have been university educated. The main thrust of education per se in the precinct was directed towards the novices. Novices underwent a lengthy education, usually in the cloister (separate from the monks), although at Ely they appear to have been taught in the almonry. Candidates for a university education were usually chosen from the more gifted novices. The process is well described in the *Rites of Durham*:

There were always 6 novices that went daily to school within the house for the space of 7 years and one of the eldest monks that was learned was appointed to be their Tutor . . . . The Master or Tutor's office was to see that they lacked nothing, as . . . they never received wages nor handled any money in that space but went daily to their books within the cloister [at the north end of the west cloister walk]. And if the Master did see that any of them were apt to learning and did apply [himself to] his books and had a pregnant wit withall then the Master did let the Prior have intelligence and straight away after he was sent to Oxford and there did learn to study Divinity, and the residue [sic] of the novices were kept at their books until they could understand the service and the scriptures, then at the aforesaid years end they did sing their first mass.<sup>69</sup>

Monastic use of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge changed the nature of the educational facilities at some monasteries. With these alternate facilities available, there was increasingly less point in maintaining others in the precinct. For instance, Stamford St. Leonard, a dependency of Durham, had maintained some distinction as a house dedicated to private scholarship and study - monks leaving the small cell of Jarrow for study were sent, for instance, either to Stamford or to Durham College, Oxford.<sup>70</sup> After the mid 14th century, however, "the fortunes of the cell apparently declined in the face of academic competition from Durham College."<sup>71</sup>

## 2. *Benedictine Involvement in the Universities*

The general movement to Oxford was signalled in 1279 when a Benedictine chapter-general of the Province of Canterbury imposed a tax of 2d. per monk upon the revenue of all Benedictine houses in the province for the purpose of maintaining a hall at Oxford as a *studium*

for their monks.<sup>72</sup> Monks from Durham were studying at Oxford as early as 1278, and this arrangement had become so permanent that by 1286 Durham planned to build a 'manse' there (north of Carditch or Broad Street).<sup>73</sup> This was eventually to develop into Durham College, which began its endowed existence thanks to Bishop Hatfield in 1381. Durham College was one of three Benedictine colleges that appeared at Oxford; the other two were Canterbury College, which was founded in 1331 by Archbishop Islip, and Gloucester College, the earliest of the three, founded in 1283 by Sir John Gifford. Canterbury College was the most exclusive of these institutions, primarily serving the monks of Christchurch, Canterbury.<sup>74</sup> Durham College was also primarily for the monks of Durham and its dependent houses, Finchale, Jarrow, Stamford, etc. but monks from Whitby and St. Mary's, York, often went there, too, and it probably served as an educational centre for the north. In 1291, however, Gloucester College broke its specific ties with Gloucester and became a pan-Benedictine facility.

In addition to these formally instituted colleges, individual houses established lodgings for their monks studying at one college or another; in fact, Gloucester College was not a corporate body but a collection of *camerae* belonging each to a different monastery. Certain buildings used in common, such as the hall and chapel, were maintained communally but otherwise each house was allotted a small plot of ground on which it was at liberty to construct buildings to conform to its own needs and specifications.<sup>75</sup> Abbot John de Breynton (1334-1342) built four 'honest chambers' at Oxford for the use of

Glastonbury monks studying there. Abbot Simon de Eye (1316-1343) of Ramsey also built a lodging at Oxford, and there was also an 'apartment' at Gloucester College called Winchcombe Lodging, owned by that monastery and apparently predating the foundation of the college. Facilities for students from St. Albans were also in existence by the end of the 14th century, for Abbot John de la Moote (1396-1401) began to rebuild them. They were finished by his successor Abbot William Heyworth (1401-1420), and this interest was maintained by the next abbot, the famous scholar, John Wheathampstead (1420-1440), who spent the huge sum of £108 in building a library and a chapel for Gloucester College; for his benefactions he was pronounced 'the chief benefactor and second founder' of the College. According to Dugdale, Benedictine houses with lodgings at Gloucester College included, besides the houses mentioned above, Abingdon, Westminster, Tavistock, Burton, Chertsey, Coventry, Evesham, Eynesham, Bury St. Edmunds, Abbotsbury, Muchelney, Malmesbury (to whom the 'ownership' was soon transferred from Gloucester), Rochester, Norwich, Stokes, St. Neots, and others.<sup>76</sup>

A hostel for the monks of Ely was set up in Cambridge by Prior Crauden (1321-1341). According to Rashdall, students from Crowland and neighbouring Benedictine houses also had facilities in Cambridge. These 'scattered halls' coalesced after 1428 when they acquired a permanent college of their own, later known as Buckingham College after the founder, Henry Stafford, second Duke of Buckingham (now Magdalene College).<sup>77</sup> Willis and Clark give evidence, however, that monks from Crowland and other Benedictine houses had no hostel of their own and

had to lodge with seculars until the establishment of Buckingham College which was operated under the auspices of Crowland.<sup>78</sup>

Although these lodgings mirror an intense material interest on the part of monasteries in providing a university education for their monks, none of the monastic colleges themselves were actually founded by religious; they were founded for them - two by noblemen and the other two by a bishop and an archbishop, both the titular heads of cathedral priories. The division of finances between bishop and priory will not allow these to be classed as monastic foundations, but there was, nevertheless, a bond between bishop and priory which went somewhat beyond the mutual use of the cathedral. But whereas bishops in the 12th and 13th centuries had on occasion taken a magnanimous interest in their cathedral priories, their interest in the later Middle Ages was increasingly directed towards educational institutions, principally at Oxford and Cambridge. Bishops of cathedral priories played a significant role as founders and benefactors in the development of these two universities.<sup>79</sup> The situation is nowhere more dramatically defined or elucidated than at Winchester under Bishop William of Wykeham (1367-1404). His predecessor, William of Edington (1346-1366), had rebuilt the west front of the cathedral, apparently because of its ruinous state. He had actually planned to rebuild the nave also but at his death only one bay of the north aisle and two bays of the south aisle had been completed. Nevertheless, he bequeathed his private fortune for the continuation of the work. It would have been relatively easy under these circumstances and considering his past experience in building

administration,<sup>80</sup> for Wykeham to have begun the necessary work at once but he was far more interested in other projects. The founding of New College, Oxford, and Winchester College, amongst other things, occupied him until 1393. Only then did he resume the work of rebuilding the nave which, in fact, was not finished during his lifetime. His documented reasons for this neglect are even more elucidating:

. . . spending his money not on monasteries but on two colleges, [he] gave as his reason: 'Nowhere have I found such (monastic rules, etc.) observed now as of old according to the founders' intentions.'<sup>81</sup>

Wykeham's attitude gives expression to a growing public discontent with monastic institutions. Whether consciously or unconsciously, education was filling (or perhaps in part creating) the social vacuum which monasticism was beginning to leave in the institutional fabric of English life. Again, this is well illustrated in the case of St. Radegund's Priory in Cambridge, which in 1496 was suppressed and its buildings and endowments utilized in the foundation of Jesus College.

Monasteries reacted to education and learning in different ways. As we have seen, many houses, such as Durham and St. Albans, embraced it strongly. Of the 132 new monks at Durham between 1383 and 1441, at least 51 went to Durham College. And in 1529/30 6 out of the 54 monks at St. Albans were at Oxford. Indeed, some monks lived out their entire professed lives at Oxford, leading the life of an academic rather than that of a monk.

This positive attitude was certainly not universal among English Benedictines. At Norwich, for instance, the bishop's visitation of 1493 ordered that two monks and two novices be sent to Gloucester College, Oxford, and the 1532 visitation complained of 'no learning'. Such complaints of laxity in regard to education occurred frequently at some Benedictine houses, and there is even indirect evidence of a conservative reaction against education. After Bishop Cobham's visitation of Little Malvern Priory in 1323, he desired that Henry de Wigorn, a monk studying at Oxford

at the sole discretion of the prior, and spending money which had better be applied to the needs of the sick, be recalled 'since whoso does not work in the Lord's vineyard should have no share in the daily wage' but directed that he and others of studious tastes [sic] should have liberty after the completion of the hours to read good works.<sup>82</sup>

Although Cobham was not a monk, such a proto-Protestant point of view might very well mirror the consensus of the priory and probably permeated more than one cloister in the later Middle Ages.

### 3. *Benedictine Grammar Schools*

The relation of monasteries to learning was evident in other ways as well. Grammar schools for non-religious students, for instance, were sometimes maintained by Benedictine monasteries, although such schools were far more frequently attached to cathedral and collegiate churches. A grammar school had an endowed existence at St. Mary's, Coventry, as early as 1303. A school also existed at Ely at least as early as 1314 and in 1327/28 consisted of twenty-three boys and two

masters. This was unusually large for such a school according to Ellis and Salzman; apparently such schools did not usually exceed twelve or thirteen boys.<sup>83</sup> Monastic schools were becoming increasingly common in the late 15th century, some founded by the monastery itself, as at Milton in 1521, but more often not. A grammar school was founded at Durham by Bishop Thomas Langley (1406-1437) and royal foundations, anticipating those after the Dissolution, also occur - at Reading in 1486 and also at Durham (a refoundation of Langley's establishment). It is hard to establish how generally these existed but they were unlikely to have been as universal as Rashdall believed.<sup>84</sup>

In any case this monastic concern for education points up a consideration which furthered the decline of monasticism per se. These grammar schools, like hospitality and alms-giving, constituted one of the socially 'useful' aspects of monasteries in the later Middle Ages - value received for capital invested - with which the 12th-century ideal of disinterested service to God through a lifetime devoted to monastic offices could no longer compete.

#### H. *BUILDING OUTSIDE THE PRECINCT*

Buildings outside the monastic precinct fall largely into two overlapping categories.<sup>85</sup> The largest category by far (but not necessarily the most significant) comprises buildings which were necessary to obtain revenues from the temporal holdings of the monastery. The second category comprises outlying residences for the superior and convent. Since all the monastic properties outside the precinct were

capable of producing revenue, these monastic residences, usually manor-houses, were virtually always built in conjunction with revenue-related - usually agricultural - buildings. The two categories are easily confused, for accounts frequently do not make clear which category obtains in the building activities on a monastic estate.

### *1. Revenue-Related Building*

The temporal resources of Benedictine monasteries in England have not received enough study to make possible a well-proportioned account of their history. Their diversity seems matched in the surviving accounts by an incompleteness which prevents a balanced study of any single resource.<sup>86</sup> Archaeological evidence is primarily limited to some agricultural buildings and estates which give some idea of the architectural parameters of monastic farming activities. Excepting, however, the more singular resources - Durham, for instance, was involved in coal mining - it is possible to outline some of the more common sources of temporal revenues and give some idea of the building activity involved in them.

Three types of buildings accounted for most of the temporal income of Benedictine monastic houses in England: urban tenements and shops which were leased for annual rents; various kinds of mills; and, most importantly, agricultural buildings.

Monasteries may have acquired urban structures by grant before the late 12th century, but it was only then that such acquisitions became part of a deliberate financial policy. It is not surprising

that Bury St. Edmunds, which, through royal grants, had special privileges in the surrounding borough, was one of the first to adopt such a policy. Abbot Samson (1182-1212) both bought and built stone houses in the borough. At that time stone buildings of any kind would have been deluxe urban structures and were probably relatively rare compared with timber-framed structures. Only such a wealthy house as Bury St. Edmunds or one in an area with an abundance of quarries would have been able to build in stone. When the records show, for instance, that at Winchcombe in the early 13th century Prior Thomas bought a plot of land in North Street for one mark and built a house on it costing 'rather more than 7 marks', it is fairly certain that it was a timber-framed structure more fitting to the budget of such a moderately fixed monastery.

Such structures required an urban setting. Initially then this development took place in the older, established urban centres. But as towns grew around some monastic establishments, buildings were erected by those monasteries, often in an overtly speculative manner. Tewkesbury, for instance, built a long row of houses and shops, some quite large for their time, against the outside of the precinct wall in the 15th century to let out to whatever tenants would rent them.

Sometimes the monastery itself was the motivating force for urban growth. Christchurch, Canterbury, for instance, was probably inclined to supplement its spiritual revenues from the steady flow of pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas when in 1298 it paid out the sizable sum of £40 0s 6d in building ten new, stone 'shoppe' in Burgate, an area

of the city close to the priory. Again it would have taken a wealthy house, and perhaps the administrative abilities of a prior like Henry of Eastry (1285-1331), to enable such a sizable development.

Elsewhere it can be shown that propitious grants were responsible for urban rental building. St. Mary's, Coventry, provides a good example. It was a modestly endowed house which, however, had been granted land near the priory by one Richard Gardiner before 1279. This land had at one time been Earl Ranulf of Chester's orchard, but by the 15th century it had become encompassed by the town and two streets, New Street and Mill Lane, ran through the property. In 1410/11 the priory still held possession of all the tenements in New Street and all those on the west side of Mill Lane.

The beginning of these developments in the later 12th century represents a significant change in Benedictine policy towards their temporal revenues. Traditionally the Benedictines had not actively exploited their temporal resources. Where they were granted a fully operational manor or other agricultural estate they might have accepted and maintained it, but they were more inclined to rent temporal holdings than to actively develop them as sources of revenue. One factor which had previously led to a lack of interest in this area was the question of monastic tithes. The debate as to whether monasteries were liable to pay tithes raged throughout the 12th century, but towards the end of the century monastic exemption from tithes was beginning to be recognized and accepted and this position was finally ratified by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.<sup>87</sup> Henceforth, all monastic revenues

were virtually tax-free, and monasteries were more motivated and better able to make capital investments to improve their revenues.

Just as importantly, the way had already been paved by the new religious orders, particularly the Cistercians. Part of their policy of reform involved a return to monastic labour which amongst Benedictines had practically disappeared. The Cistercian labour force soon came to be composed, however, not of monks but of lay brethren, conversi, who were never very numerous amongst the Benedictines. This semi-monastic labour force developed vast areas of waste land which the Cistercians had acquired - mainly for the purpose of raising sheep - effecting nothing less than an agricultural revolution in the English countryside. Benedictine houses were quick to see the advantages of such progressive policies and they soon began to actively develop not only their agricultural potential but their potential for any revenues, including urban rentals.

The operation of mills of all kinds was controlled by the crown, and partly to enable their relative self-sufficiency, monasteries had for a long time received royal grants of milling privileges, which were as jealously guarded by monasteries as their spiritual monopolies. So it is not so surprising to find that Ralph, the Abbot of Winchcombe (1077-1905), built a fulling mill at Clively. But neither is it surprising that, rather than operate it themselves, the convent let it out, together with a corn mill, a house, and land, for an annual rent of 28s. Throughout the 12th century it could be expected that Benedictines became more actively engaged in running their mills them-

selves. In the 13th century it became common for a mill to be built either within or in close proximity to the precinct and monasteries went to great lengths to maintain and expand their milling facilities. While it may be impossible (at least without intensive study of monastic accounts and charters) to observe a distinct historical development of mills, it can at least be stated that the royal favour which monasteries enjoyed in the 11th and 12th centuries in the acquisition of milling rights had definitely disappeared by the end of the 13th century. Marsh laws and ordinances pertaining to embankment and sewers were instituted and effectively enforced during the reigns of Edward I and Edward II and offenders against these ordinances were regularly prosecuted.<sup>88</sup> These measures included the development of an effective licensing system which came to be exploited by the crown as a source of revenue. The Earls of Chester, and especially the Black Prince, were particularly aggressive in this policy. For instance, in 1353 the Abbot of St. Werburgh's, Chester, was fined for building a water mill on Ince marsh without the Black Prince's licence - one of a long series of such fines levied on that monastery. This policy possibly curbed any further large scale development of milling facilities.

As with their other temporal resources, English Benedictines were not very actively engaged in agricultural pursuits until the end of the 12th century. Throughout most of this century it was the monastic house itself that had first call on all too rarely available funds. Agricultural buildings would likely have been erected on very simple lines at this time. Not enough of these survive to form an

adequate picture of them, but there is good reason to believe that many barns and even domestic buildings were later rebuilt from the ground.<sup>89</sup> At Christchurch, Canterbury, it had previously been common practice to divide up demesnes and lease them as 'feé-farms' for a money or food rent, but this policy was gradually abandoned in the latter half of the 12th century, and "by 1225 most of the leases . . . had fallen in and the monks were already entering upon that epoch of 'high farming' which reached its apogee in the priorate of Henry of Eastry (1285-1331)."<sup>90</sup> This period of high demesne farming was a general feature of Benedictine agricultural policy roughly between 1250 and 1350, although the development of facilities and properties for the direct exploitation of agricultural estates by Benedictine houses using hired labour began early in the 13th century.

The buildings which Benedictines erected on their agricultural estates were designed to meet a compromise between economy and optimization of profits or productivity, depending upon whether the produce was to be sold or to supply the monastery directly. Their exact nature depended both on the type of agricultural pursuit carried out on the property and the size of the estate.

Benedictines were chiefly engaged in growing corn, dairy farming, and raising sheep, the latter, however, not nearly to the extent that it was practiced by the Cistercians. The buildings required for each of these activities were substantially different, but they all would have been constructed as cheaply as possible for effective use. The dairies on the estates of Christchurch, Canterbury, for

instance, were "of a simple and uniform kind, little more perhaps, than rough wooden sheds."<sup>91</sup> Where corn was grown, however, and indeed wherever produce needed to be stored, rough wooden sheds were unsatisfactory. A greater percentage of crops could survive in stone barns (granges, garner, granaries, etc.) which were built, not only to store the produce which the monastic estates produced, but to store tithes paid in kind from parishioners whose church a monastery had sequestered. Such granges were usually long and relatively narrow, their length determined by the amount they would be expected to hold; the very large tithe barn at Tisbury, a manor of Shaftesbury, measured 32' x 188'. They also usually had a central, projecting cross-bay - like a transept - one (or both) of which would accommodate the main entrance(s) to the grange on its gable end. Some of the more elaborate examples were two-storied inside by making use of a mezzanine floor. The surviving Early English barn at Cerne is somewhat of a rarity; the greatest majority of surviving Benedictine barns dates from the 14th century and later.

Some sort of centralized administration was required on the larger estates and often resulted in the building of a manor-house. These were built both on manors and granges. A grange (grangia) was a large estate made up of contiguous manors and properties irrespective of feudal boundaries and was originally a creation of the Cistercian agricultural revolution (the term 'grange' derives from the word for a barn, as stated above).<sup>92</sup> Large estates were usually managed by a sergeant or bailiff, who was a secular official rather than a monk.

At Christchurch, Canterbury, some monks were dwelling on estates and acting as manorial bailiffs in the later 13th century, but the austere Prior, Thomas Ringmer (1274-1285), forbade the practice.<sup>93</sup> Other houses were less scrupulous in this matter, but whether it was usual for monks to reside on an estate or not, the design of manor-houses on Benedictine estates did not bear any resemblance to the monastic plan itself; rather they assumed a plan which can be said to remain standard irrespective of whether the lord was monastic or secular.

The domestic apartments of manor-houses were usually grouped in a compact range in a very common arrangement. The hall formed the centre of the range and bordered at one end on a chamber block and at the other on a service block, usually connected with a detached kitchen. Although much of the evidence for the arrangements of manor-houses dates from the later Middle Ages,

. . . it would seem evident - in the fourteenth century certainly, in earlier centuries probably as well - that the plans of ecclesiastical manor-houses, even the dimensions of their respective apartments, might conform to long-established conventions. But this is not to say that in the individual case building to meet a particular need might not frequently have distorted the hall, chamber and kitchen arrangement of what should be taken as the conventional plan.<sup>94</sup>

A variation of this plan is L-shaped with the chambers forming a range perpendicular to the hall. This variation occurs at two manors of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, at Salmstone and Minster-in-Thanel. The plan of the domestic quarters at Minster-in-Thanel dates back to a rebuilding from the late 11th or early 12th century, the hall of which

measured 26' x 63'. It is thus designed on a larger and more elaborate scale than was usual later on. The motivation for this design may be attributed to considerations of feudal importance rather than to the more characteristic later consideration of optimizing frugal efficiency.

A few of the more elaborate manor-houses also featured chapels but they were never common. In fact, there was considerable resistance to the presence of chapels on estates which made even their rare existence almost negligible before the mid 13th century. A Cistercian general chapter in 1180, for instance, forbid the consecration of new altars or chapels on their granges and another in 1204 demanded that those already established should be destroyed.<sup>95</sup> The major point of contention in this respect seems to have been the various rights attached to a consecrated altar, and when chapels did begin to appear, their use was very strictly limited so as not to infringe upon previously established ecclesiastical rights and benefits in the area. The situation differed somewhat between the Cistercians and Benedictines, however. Some of the older Benedictine estates, such as Minster-in-Thanet, had long established ecclesiastical rights, and chapels may have existed on such manors from the time of their acquisition.

The agricultural buildings of a manor often adjoined the domestic block of a manor house in perpendicular ranges to form a courtyard. At Tisbury, an important manor of Shaftesbury, the domestic and agricultural buildings were disposed around two courtyards, each with its own gatehouse.

The development of agricultural estates required not only favourable economic conditions but also sufficient administrative competence and energy. A community of men or women established for primarily spiritual reasons might be expected to come upon such administrative talent only fortuitously, and surviving records of the beginnings of large scale agricultural activities at monastic houses are overwhelmingly related to the career of a particularly able superior. At Peterborough, for instance, Abbot Acharius (1200-1210) built many buildings on several manors of the church. At Evesham Abbot Randulf (1213-1229) seems to have been chiefly occupied in his building activities in improving the abbey lands, building mills and granges, making dovecotes and fishponds and clearings in the forest. Some houses had to wait longer than others for a superior suitable to such an administrative career. At Glastonbury no previous abbot had engaged in building on the estates on so magnificent a scale as Abbot Michael de Ambresbury (1235-1252).

However fortuitous administrative ability was in the superiors of the early 13th century, it increasingly became an attribute expected of candidates for the abbacy, and by the late 13th and early 14th centuries, an observable period of widespread building activity on Benedictine estates gives evidence of a more general competence in this area.<sup>96</sup> The intensity of building activity on monastic estates at this time was shortlived, however, and was never equalled. Moreover, it would seem to have been Edward I who began to apply the brakes with such statutes as Mortmain (1279) and Quia Emptores (1290).

The impetus of development was definitely lost after 1279 when the Statute of Mortmain came into effect:

. . . owing to the working of the Statute of Mortmain, all additions to monastic property between 1279 and the dissolution may be traced in the enrolled licences. Now a study of the Patent Rolls shows that very few changes in monastic property took place during the two and a half centuries preceding the dissolution . . . [thus] monastic estates in the majority of vills had reached their greatest extent by the year 1279. . . . Not only did the statute of Mortmain hinder the alienation of lay fee to monasteries, but, there is reason to believe, it also prevented them from converting to demesne tenanted portions of their own estates, and even from such slight adjustments or exchanges as might enable them to rearrange or consolidate their property.<sup>97</sup>

Partly because of these strictures on monastic demesnes and also partly because of labour shortages and the concomitant rise in wages during the 14th century, due, amongst other reasons, to the Black Death, Benedictine monasteries began once more to resort to the leasing out of agricultural holdings for an annual rent. By the end of the 14th century all of the manorial demesnes of Christchurch, Canterbury, were let out on lease, due largely to the policies of Prior Chillenden (1390-1411).<sup>98</sup> Thereafter the priory did not directly participate in farming their estates. This was a general phenomenon among Benedictine monasteries, although it did not perhaps reach such extreme proportions at all houses.

Large scale rental of agricultural properties did not spell the end of the monastery's responsibility for the buildings on their estates, however. Even after leasing, they were still responsible for the maintenance of their manorial property. The cost of new

buildings ordered by the monastery was usually subtracted from the annual rent, and at least at Christchurch, Canterbury, some aspects of routine maintenance, such as the reroofing of barns, could be taken over by the tenant farmer for a set reduction in his rent. Whether or not this practice was common, it is indicative of a widespread trend towards growing disinterest on the part of monasteries in direct participation in the farming of their estates. After this time it was only sporadically that a superior appeared who would take an active interest in maintaining or developing agricultural potential.<sup>99</sup> Almost as common, it would seem, were instances of the neglect of agricultural properties. At Tewkesbury, for instance, some manors and barns were said to be in a ruinous condition at the beginning of the 16th century. At Bardney by 1437/8 the abbey stew ponds, which at one time had been stocked with 300 to 400 pike, were 'almost brought to nothing' and in 1444 the grange of the almonry was alleged to have become ruinous through neglect. Among the measures taken to counteract what must have appeared as the deteriorating potential of monastic resources was the leasing of some very large and previously valuable estates shortly before the Dissolution, evincing a climate of opinion ominously similar to the contemporary claims of the advantages of free enterprise over nationalized or government-controlled business. Such estates included Broadway, which was leased by Abingdon in 1535, and Salmstone, which St. Augustine's, Canterbury, leased out in 1531.

## 2. *Outlying Monastic Residences*

The lease of Broadway did not entail all of the properties on the manor. While it is clear that Abingdon was no longer interested in farming the manor, the abbot reserved use of the manor-house and enough pasture land to maintain about 50 sheep. The retention of some important manors or parts of manorial demesnes was a common feature in the late medieval trend towards the leasing of monastic property.

Platt summarizes this development:

The processes of reorganization, while they were to encourage widespread leasing, would also place a special importance on particularly favoured estates. Immediate home farms and places of resort and vacation were usually retained. They kept some of the characteristics of the original granges [Benedictine use of the term 'grange' came to indicate specifically such home farms and places of resort or even just the buildings on them; yet another transformation of the term], for they were preserved as monastic demesne; but their identity as granges owed quite as much to their association with the members of a religious community, obvious enough in the case of the home farms, yet equally recognizable where it was established by the frequent visits of the abbot, his guests and associates.<sup>100</sup>

While manorial facilities for an abbot could perhaps be characterized as a feudal privilege, strictly monastic usage was concomitant with relaxations in the Benedictine Rule in the later Middle Ages. Abbots used such manor-houses for rest and relaxation, for conducting business affairs in private, for entertaining guests, etc. They could also serve as vacation centres for the monks. One of the earliest manifestations of this use was for recuperation from their regular bleedings; the monks of Bardney took their 'seynies' at their

estate of Southrey and the monks of Peterborough at their cell or grange at Oxney.

Manor-houses were not built strictly for monastic usage, however. They also bolstered the prestige of individual superiors and helped to define and promote the institutional image of late medieval monasticism. The building and enlargement of manor-houses is so described in the introduction to the *Rentalia* of Glastonbury Abbey:

This was done by the very best Abbots, and is written by the Chroniclers amongst their good deeds. It was popular with the monks as impressing the grandeur of the institution upon their dependents. Every manor [which was not leased] had of necessity a house where the reeve could dwell, and a hall large enough for the hall-mote or manor-court, and the Scot-ale, but these needed much enlargement for an Abbot's or even a cellarer's retinue. In the fourteenth century, we read that Abbot Adam, 1322-35, built handsome chapels and chambers at Meare, Pilton, and Domerham, and almost every Abbot in the fifteenth century did the same thing. Abbot Selwood rebuilt the manor-house of E. Brent, with grand 'gesten chambers'. Abbot Beere 1493-1524 built two sumptuous houses within two miles of the Abbey in his parks of Northwood and Sharpham, these were not for manorial use, but for pleasurable occupation. From the Chroniclers it appears that besides his state lodgings at the Abbey, and his two park houses, and his London house,<sup>101</sup> the Abbot of the fifteenth century had at least ten manor-houses capable of receiving him for a sojourn, and kept in readiness thereto.<sup>102</sup>

This summary not only gives an indication of the motivation for such building but of its diversity and scale. The *Terrier* of Glastonbury gives illuminating descriptions of many of the manor-houses mentioned above, including Eastbrent:

Here is a manor-house decently and sumptuously built by John Selwood, late Abbot, containing a chapel, hall, dining-hall, upper and lower chambers, storehouse, cellar, pantry, kitchen, larder, and westward of the kitchen a building called Wodehouse, with rooms above called Gisten-chambers, and divers other chambers nobly built; likewise a costly porch with [blank] and arms, and enclosed with sawn palings to the height of eight feet, with a garden of one acre within the said pale. In the outer court is a stable with upper chamber and a hay house built by the same Abbot; whereof the site, with the aforesaid farmyard and the pin fold, containeth 3 roods. To the north is an orchard of 3 acres  $1\frac{1}{2}$  roods, planted by the Abbot aforesaid with apples and pears of the most excellent fruit, the produce whereof is worth in ordinary years 40s. Around the aforesaid orchard stand elms and oak trees of marvellous height and girth, where herons are wont to build and to rear their young, etc. [sic], and the firewood from these trees is not here accounted, since it is of the stock of this manor.<sup>103</sup>

When it is borne in mind that Eastbrent represents less than a tenth of the manorial residences just of the abbot of Glastonbury (which, albeit, was the very richest monastery in the country), both the relative importance of such manors in the total architectural make-up of a monastery and the absolute number of Benedictine manorial residences in England in the later Middle Ages can be seen.

Manorial residences began to appear as early as the beginning of the 13th century; Robert of Lindsey, abbot of Peterborough (1214-1222), built a manor-house at Bellasise and a hall at his manor of Collingham, and his successor, Abbot Alexander of Holderness (1222-1226), built a hall at Castor and others at Oundle, Castre Eyebury, and other places. No doubt these residences would have kept apace of contemporary developments in domestic architecture but, apart from this, it would seem that in the later Middle Ages some superiors

were asserting their architectural presence abroad perhaps too arrogantly for their own good. One such indication comes from St. Albans. Abbot Richard de Wallingford (1328-1336) built an extensive residence at the manor of Tyttenhanger, which involved such expensive hospitality that Abbot Michael de Mentmore (1336-1349) pulled down and sold his predecessor's hall there and built a house at Bradway which was more retired. This was not the end of the matter, however. Abbot John de la Moote (1396-1401) began once again to build a 'princely residence' at Tyttenhanger and in so doing 'passed all bounds in extravagance and forgetfulness of duty;' it was eventually finished by the next abbot, William Heyworth (1401-1420).<sup>104</sup>

As the monks hoped, such grand manors did not go unnoticed; adulation was not universal, however. John ap Rice, one of Henry VIII's commissioners, charged in 1535 that John Reeve, the abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, was apt to lie 'moche forth in his granges':

Over a century before, legislation had been thought necessary to check a practice to which some abbots had clearly become prone. The King's Articles, presented at Westminster in May 1421, began a more general criticism with the particular indictment of the abbots, whose lives and deeds should properly have served as an example to all. Prolonged absence on a personal manor was held to imply both an excessive accumulation of private property, and a neglect of the cure of souls. In consequence, it was decreed that no abbot after that date might spend more than three months annually on his manors; and these were further to be limited to the months immediately following Easter.<sup>105</sup>

This was, no doubt, representative of the growing disfavour with which monasteries, as specially favoured, perpetual feudal corporations, were being viewed and which in part prompted the Dissolution.

Nevertheless, the monks, whose perception of the social obligations of monasteries probably differed from the more traditionally conditioned and idealistic views of other elements of society, were proud of the accomplishments represented by their manors. This extended not only to buildings but to more strictly agricultural improvements such as drainage and embankment which, if they cannot strictly be called architecture, were certainly a part of the 'built environment' which Benedictine houses created in England. Moreover, such improvements are mentioned approvingly in chronicles and accounts in such close proximity to both the agricultural and manorial building on monastic estates that there is some justification for assuming that they saw no such difference between them as our a priori concept of 'architecture' might have us believe. This is not to say that they could not tell the difference between a chapel and a reclaimed field; instead it projects an attitude onto the monks which simply does not conform to modern notions of religious sensibilities in the 'Age of Faith'.

A door to this state of mind is unlocked by R.A.L. Smith, who in his classic work on the administration and finances of Christchurch, Canterbury, concluded that the two 'most ambitious achievements' of the priory in the last century of their existence were the erection of Bell Harry, the central tower of the cathedral, built between 1494 and 1503 during which time the Treasurer paid out £1036 a year on its construction,<sup>106</sup> and the reclamation of Appledore marsh, for which Prior Thomas Goldstone I (1449-1468) spent no less than £1200 and Prior William Petham (1471-1468) a further £300, 600 acres of marsh

being reclaimed.<sup>107</sup> If this attitude has any historical veracity, it may be with some justification that Coulton speaks of it as 'monastic capitalism'.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Infangentheof, the right of sanctuary, was often granted within the curia and at Christchurch, Canterbury, "the curia enjoyed an immunity from all royal control. It was specifically enjoined in 1447 that 'no justice of the peace or other justice, sheriff, escheator, coroner, bailiff, or other minister of the king's, shall in future make any execution within the bounds of the priory'." See R.A.L. Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory* (Cambridge: 1943), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>For an aerial photograph of the precinct of St. Benet of Hulme see M.D. Knowles and J.K.S. St. Joseph, *Monastic Sites From the Air* (Cambridge: 1952).

<sup>3</sup>Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of York*, Vol. IV (London: 1975), pp. 4-5.

<sup>4</sup>On 12 July, 1318, a licence was granted to the abbot and convent of St. Mary's, York, to crenellate the abbey. In July, 1330, Edward III granted licence to Abingdon to crenellate the whole of their site. In 1338 Battle obtained a licence to crenellate. Abbot William of Chiriton (1316-1344) built an embattled gateway at Evesham. St. Albans was crenellated in 1357. Licence to crenellate was granted to St. Mary's, Coventry, in 1363 and was followed in 1385 by a licence to finish the work. Shaftesbury obtained a licence to crenellate in 1368. A charter of Edward III from 1369 gave leave to the monks of Worcester to crenellate the priory, and this grant was confirmed by Richard III in 1377. In 1373 Edward III granted licence to embattle and crenellate Winchcombe. At Peterborough the embattled presbytery parapet, except that of the apse, dates from the second half of the 14th century.

<sup>5</sup>C. Coulson, "Structural Symbolism in Medieval Castle Architecture," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, Vol. CXXXII (1979), 78.

<sup>6</sup>RCHM, *An Inventory of . . . York*, Vol. IV, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup>St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of Rochester. Part II. The Monastery," 16-17.

<sup>8</sup>A.F. Allen, "Higham Priory," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. 80 (1965), 195.

<sup>9</sup>Brakspear, "Bardney Abbey," 9.

<sup>10</sup>This type of gatehouse was not particularly limited to the 12th century, however. The Steeple Gate at Ely of c1500 also has a timber-framed upper story and Wood also mentions such gatehouses at the Benedictine priory of Bromsfield and the Augustinian house of Wigmore from the 14th century. See Wood, *The English Medieval House*, p. 163.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>12</sup>RCHM, *An Inventory of . . . York*, Vol. IV, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup>L.C. Young, *A Short History of Thorney Abbey* (Thorney: n.d.), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>Thompson, *English Monasteries*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>15</sup>R.H. Snape, *English Monastic Finances in the Later Middle Ages* (1926; New York: 1968), pp. 112-118.

<sup>16</sup>Minor buildings in the precinct existed in almost infinite variety. The cellarer's and bursar's accounts at Durham mention woodyards, coalyards, a spicehouse, fishhouse, salthouse, slaughterhouse, pastehouse, goosehouse, seethinghouse, applehouse, caponhouse, and pig sties.

<sup>17</sup>R.L. Palmer, *English Monasteries in the Middle Ages* (London: 1930), p. 54.

<sup>18</sup>H. Braun, *English Abbeys* (London: 1971), pp. 181-183.

<sup>19</sup>W. Page and J.W. Willis-Bund, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Worcester*, Vol. II (1906; London: 1971), p. 387.

<sup>20</sup>A.H. Thompson, *Lindisfarne Priory* (London: 1949), p. 19.

<sup>21</sup>This throws into doubt Brakspear's contention that the passage next to the chapter house at Birkenhead probably led to the infirmary. There were only five monks in 1381 and the population was probably

never much larger; thus it would be surprising to find an infirmary here at all. See his Chapter VIII, "The Monastic Buildings," in R. Stewart-Brown, *Birkenhead Priory and the Mersey Ferry* (Liverpool: 1925), p. 118.

<sup>22</sup>See Obedientiaries' Chambers, p. 219.

<sup>23</sup>In 1326 Archbishop Reynolds presented the minuti of Christchurch, Canterbury, with the manor of Caldicote, east of the city, in order that they might recuperate there and breathe fresher air.

<sup>24</sup>A.W. Clapham and W.H. Godfrey, *Some Famous Buildings and Their Story* (London: 1912), p. 214.

<sup>25</sup>Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, pp. 270-271.

<sup>26</sup>R. Willis, *The Architectural History of the Conventual Buildings of the Monastery of Christ Church in Canterbury* (London: 1869), p. 55.

<sup>27</sup>Page and Willis-Bund, *VHC Worcester*, Vol. II, p. 110.

<sup>28</sup>The additive and disorganized nature of many infirmaries in the later Middle Ages may very well have promoted the 18th and 19th century views of monasteries as confused beehive-like affairs. This aspect of infirmaries was perhaps most evident in the infirmary at Gloucester which had a particularly colourful post-Dissolution life.

<sup>29</sup>Quoted from M. Biddle, H.T. Lambrick, and J.N.L. Myres, "The Early History of Abingdon, Berkshire, and Its Abbey," *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol. 12 (1968), 53.

<sup>30</sup>Stewart-Brown, *Birkenhead Priory*, p. 111.

<sup>31</sup>According to W.A. Pantin, "Medieval Inns," in E.M. Jope, ed., *Studies in Building History* (London: 1961), p. 166, "During the Middle Ages the English word "Inn", like the Latin word "Hospitium", had several meanings: (1) a general term for a lodging or dwelling house; (2) the town house of an ecclesiastical or lay magnate or a wealthy citizen . . .; (3) a lodging-house for students, such as the academic halls at the universities and the inns of court; (4) a public-house for the accommodation of travellers, in the sense in which the word is still used, the earliest example of this sense recorded in

the *Oxford English Dictionary* going back to c1400 (Maundeville) . . . There is . . . difficulty in finding surviving medieval buildings, which we can be certain were built or used as inns during the medieval period; for not every medieval building now used as an inn was necessarily so from the beginning. I do not know of any surviving examples dating from before the late fourteenth century."

<sup>32</sup>See Wood, *The English Medieval House*, p. 192.

<sup>33</sup>R.E.G. Kirk, *Accounts of the Obedientiars of Abingdon Abbey* (1892; New York: 1965), p. li.

<sup>34</sup>Strictly speaking, it would be more accurate to say that guests of the superior, rather than all 'noble guests', were shown hospitality in his lodgings, and guests of the convent per se were put in the guest lodgings. In practice, however, most noble guests would have been lodged with the superior, although it is possible that on occasion some noble guests would be lodged in the guest lodgings.

<sup>35</sup>At Bury St. Edmunds a charter of 1281 states that "the convent was responsible for religious (i.e. monastic) guests and the abbot for all others except during his absence, when the convent entertained all those with less than 14 horses." Whittingham believes that those with less than 14 horses were normally entertained in the abbot's hall, and the more important in the abbot's chamber. It is unlikely that the cellarer's guest lodgings were used only when the abbot was away, however, and even more unlikely that poor visitors would have been received into the abbot's hall. Thus the guests considered in this charter were probably only the more important ones. Nevertheless, the charter may indicate that guests who arrived by horse were important enough to receive the attention of the abbot. See A.B. Whittingham, "Bury St. Edmunds Abbey, the Plan, Design and Development of the Church and Monastic Buildings," *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 108 (1951), 176.

<sup>36</sup>Pantin, "Medieval Inns," p. 190, n. 6.

<sup>37</sup>According to J.M. Fletcher and F.W.O. Haslop, "The West Range at Ely and its Romanesque Roof," *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 126 (1969), 172, this range was built in the late 12th century as a granary, but was converted to guest lodgings in the mid 13th century.

<sup>38</sup>See plan in B. Hopley, "Excavations at the Cathedral and Benedictine Priory of St. Mary, Coventry," *Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions*, Vol. 84 (1967-70), 85.

<sup>39</sup>R. Gilyard-Beer, *Abbeys* (London: 1976), p. 39.

<sup>40</sup>It may be noted that the guest and prior's lodgings at Birkenhead, which together comprise the west range of the cloister, bear considerable resemblance to the 14th or 15th-century George Inn, Norton St. Philip, Somerset. It is not surprising that guest lodgings and inns, whose functions were similar, should resemble one another. No inns are known from before the later 14th century, but given the relatively early date of the west range at Birkenhead, it is tempting to suppose that monastic guest lodgings influenced the design of inns. This would seem to be especially likely of the 'Block or Gatehouse Type' of inn as defined by Pantin. For a plan of the George Inn, see Pantin, "Medieval Inns," p. 179.

<sup>41</sup>For a description and plan of the guest lodgings at Monk Bretton, see P.A. Faulkner, "Domestic Planning From the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Centuries," in J.T. Smith, P.A. Faulkner, and A. Emery, *Studies in Medieval Domestic Architecture* (London: 1975), pp. 104-105.

<sup>42</sup>Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>43</sup>Page and Willis-Bund, *VHC Worcester*, Vol. II, p. 142.

<sup>44</sup>See Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, p. 112 and Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>45</sup>See D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge: 1950), pp. 404-410.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 406.

<sup>47</sup>A.B. Whittingham, "St. Mary's Abbey, York: an Interpretation of its Plan," *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 128 (1971), 138-143.

<sup>48</sup>Quoted from Leland in H. Brakspear, "The Abbot's House at Battle," *Archaeologia*, Vol. 83 (1933), 143.

<sup>49</sup>Kitchens were built for the superiors' lodgings at Peterborough during the abbacy of Walter of Bury St. Edmunds (1233-1245), at Malmesbury under Abbot William of Colerne (1260-1296), at Evesham after 1286, at Gloucester by 1316, at Glastonbury under Abbot John de Breynton (1335-1341), and at Westminster c1370.

<sup>50</sup>The prior's lodgings at the Cluniac house of Castle Acre had a porch by the late 12th century. This must have been an early example and predates most known Benedictine porches.

<sup>51</sup>The importance of the individual patron with regard to building design becomes increasingly obvious in late medieval England. This can be seen especially in relation to monastic superiors. Initials and rebuses of builders appear commonly on their works. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this new attitude, however, is the design of the west front of the new church at Bath; begun by Bishop Oliver King in 1499. Not only does his rebus appear prominently all over the facade, but the iconographic programme, featuring 'Jacob's Ladders', refers specifically to a dream he had and thought significant - a far cry from the doctrinaire theological programmes of the 13th century.

<sup>52</sup>For a short summary of the most common obedientiaries and their duties, see Thompson, *English Monasteries*, pp. 133-136.

<sup>53</sup>See Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, pp. 93-102.

<sup>54</sup>D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, Vol. I (Cambridge: 1956), p. 322.

<sup>55</sup>G.W. Kitchin, ed., *Comptus Rolls of the Obedientiaries of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester* (Winchester: 1892), p. 86.

<sup>56</sup>G. Haigh, *The History of Winchcombe Abbey* (London: 1947), p. 75.

<sup>57</sup>Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, p. 51.

<sup>58</sup>See A.H. Thompson, "A Corrody From Leicester Abbey A.D. 1393-4 With Some Notes on Corrodies," *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society*, Vol. XIV (1925), 113-134.

<sup>59</sup>Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>60</sup>See I. Keil, "Corrodies of Glastonbury Abbey in the Later Middle Ages," *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, Vol. 108 (1963/64), 116-117.

<sup>61</sup>W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Gloucester*, Vol. II (1907; London: 1972), pp. 67-68.

<sup>62</sup>J. Harvey, *Gothic England, A Survey of National Culture, 1300-1550* (London: 1948), p. 55.

<sup>63</sup>Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>64</sup>Keil, "Corrodies of Glastonbury Abbey," 113.

<sup>65</sup>For a description of the carrells at Durham on the eve of the Dissolution and the situation of carrells in the cloister walks see Chapter Two, pp. 97-99.

<sup>66</sup>See also Chapter Two, p. 98.

<sup>67</sup>R.B. Dobson, *Durham Priory 1400-1450* (Cambridge: 1973), pp. 365-368.

<sup>68</sup>A library was built just north of the church at the relatively small house of Hatfield Broad Oak at the end of the 14th century or later. There was a library in the church at Bardney - probably in the fourth and fifth bays of the south nave aisle - at a visit of Henry IV (1399-1413). Abbot Curteys built a library at Bury St. Edmunds in 1430. Archbishop Chicheley (1414-1443) built a library at Christchurch, Canterbury, over the prior's chapel. And at Selby there was either a library or a scriptorium over the Decorated sacristy adjoining the south presbytery aisle.

<sup>69</sup>Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>70</sup>A determined effort to found a university at Stamford was made by northern scholars at Oxford in 1334, but its connection with the monastic cell there is unclear. See H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden, Vol. III (Oxford: 1936), pp. 89-90.

<sup>71</sup>Dobson, *Durham Priory 1400-1450*, p. 316.

<sup>72</sup>Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe*, Vol. III, pp. 184-185.

<sup>73</sup>Dobson, *Durham Priory 1400-1450*, p. 344.

<sup>74</sup>The first site of their hall was sold to Westminster Abbey and new buildings constructed after the college became regularly endowed. See Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe*, p. 188.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>76</sup>See W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed., J. Caley, H. Ellis, and B. Bandinel, Vol. 4 (London: 1823), pp. 403-406.

<sup>77</sup>Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe*, p. 295.

<sup>78</sup>R. Willis and J.W. Clark, *An Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: 1886), pp. 351-353.

<sup>79</sup>From Ely Bishop Hugh Belsham (1257-1286) founded St. Peter's College, Cambridge (now Peterhouse); Bishop William Gray (1454-1478) was a great benefactor of Balliol College, Oxford, and Bishop John Alcock (1486-1500) founded Jesus College, Cambridge. At Winchester, besides William of Wykeham, Bishop William of Wayneflete (1447-1486) was the first provost of Eton and the founder of Magdalen College, Oxford.

<sup>80</sup>In 1356 Wykeham had been appointed clerk of the king's works in his manors of Hendle and Yestampsted. In 1359 he became surveyor of the works at Windsor, where he was continuously engaged until 1373. Later in 1359 he was appointed keeper of the manors of Old and New Windsor. He was also engaged in building another royal residence at Queenborough in Kent. See J. Britton, *The History and Antiquities of the See and Cathedral Church of Winchester* (London: 1817), p. 119.

<sup>81</sup>G.G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: 1927), p. 399.

<sup>82</sup>Page and Willis-Bund, *VHC Worcester*, Vol. II, p. 146.

<sup>83</sup>L.F. Salzman, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*, Vol. II (1948; London: 1967), p. 206.

<sup>84</sup>Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe*, Vol. III, pp. 348-349.

<sup>85</sup>These two categories do not take into account buildings for the purpose of education at Oxford and Cambridge or the occasional building of a charitable nature such as a hospital, almshouse, or chapel.

<sup>86</sup>See Snape, *English Monastic Finances*, pp. 91-94.

<sup>87</sup>See G. Constable, *Monastic Tithes* (Cambridge: 1964), pp. 220-270.

<sup>88</sup>Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, p. 169.

<sup>89</sup>C. Platt, *The Monastic Grange in Medieval England* (London: 1969), p. 16.

<sup>90</sup>Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, p. 114.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>92</sup>The classic study of the institution and buildings of granges is Platt, *The Monastic Grange in Medieval England*. The grange is most clearly defined on Cistercian estates, and Platt does not make a hard and fast distinction between Benedictine granges and the large feudal manors which were virtually unique to their order.

<sup>93</sup>Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, p. 102.

<sup>94</sup>Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, p. 102. Platt accompanies this statement with a wealth of dimensions of the halls and chambers of monastic manor-houses. Some dimensions of halls at manor houses: Benedictine - Broadway, 19' x 25', Cumnor, 22' x 44', Sutton Courtenay, 24' x 40'; Augustinian - Addington, 28' x 35', Mitcham, 32' x 34', Banstead, 28' x 34'; Cluniac - Swanborough, 15½' x 37'; Cistercian - Cowton, 20' x 36'; St. Paul's Cathedral - Kensworth, 30' x 35'. Some dimensions of chambers at manor-houses: Benedictine - Broadway, 13' x 26', Charney Basset, 16' x 30'; Augustinian - Addington, 18' x 32' and 11' x 32', Banstead, 16' x 40', Reigate, 15' x 28', Stokes, 17' x 31'; Cistercian - Cowton, 16' x 20'.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>96</sup>Abbot John de Brokehampton (1286-1316), besides improving the abbey buildings at Evesham, built granges and made canals on abbey lands and improved many of the churches belonging to Evesham. At Glastonbury Abbot Robert de Petherton (1261-1274), besides bringing the abbey out of debt, built many agricultural buildings including new cattle sheds at Glastonbury, offices and a dovecote at Ashbury, offices and the buildings of a bercary at Winterborne, and dairy farms at Domerham, Sowey, and Christian Malford; his successor, John of Taunton (1274-1291), also built several granges, a dairy farm, and its enclosure. Abbot John de Gamages (1284-1306) of Gloucester was very active in agricultural pursuits and was responsible for much building on the abbey manors. Abbot William of Colerne (1260-1296) pursued a

progressive agricultural policy and constructed many farm buildings on the manors of Malmesbury, including 14 barns, stables, and a mill at Purton. At Peterborough Abbot Godfrey of Crowland (1299-1321) built many granges, stables, and other offices on the manors of the abbey, erected mills, planted woods and orchards and effected many other improvements. And while abbot of Winchcombe, Walter de Wickwane (1282-1314) bought timber for 16 granaries and many sheep folds, as well as for buildings within the abbey precinct.

<sup>97</sup>T.A.M. Bishop, "Monastic Granges in Yorkshire." *English Historical Review*, Vol. 51 (1936), 194-195, 198. Not everyone subscribes to this view, however. Others think that the Statute of Mortmain had no real effect on the acquisition of monastic property. See L.P. Salzman, *Edward I* (London: 1968), pp. 207-208 and W.O. Ault, "The Village Church and the Village Community in Medieval England," *Speculum*, Vol. 45 (1970), pp. 210-211.

<sup>98</sup>Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>99</sup>Notable among such superiors were Abbot Frocester (1381-1412) of Gloucester, Prior Chillenden (1390-1411) of Christchurch, Canterbury, and Abbots John de la Moote (1306-1401) and John Wheathampstead (1429-1440) of St. Albans.

<sup>100</sup>Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, p. 94.

<sup>101</sup>Most large Benedictine houses would seem to have had accommodation in London, as did episcopal and secular lords. This practice evidently dates back at least to the 13th century, for William de Trumpington, abbot of St. Albans (1214-1235) bought a hostel in London for lodging himself and his monks when necessary.

<sup>102</sup>Quoted from Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion*, Vol. 2, p. 42.

<sup>103</sup>Quoted from *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>104</sup>W. Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Hertford*, Vol. 4 (1914; London: 1971), pp. 389-390, 398.

<sup>105</sup>Platt, *The Monastic Grange*, p. 115.

<sup>106</sup>See D. Hill, *Christ's Glorious Church; the Story of Canterbury Cathedral* (London: 1976), p. 35.

<sup>107</sup>Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, pp. 203-204.

### CONCLUSIONS

The material gathered here shows that the various parts of Benedictine monasteries evolved in very different ways and changed at very different times in the later Middle Ages. When these changes and developments are considered together, Benedictine houses can be seen to have undergone a process of physical transformation, which reflects not only the changing place of monasteries in the social life of England but also the process of secularization latent in the English society of the later Middle Ages.

This evolution can be seen even more effectively by comparison with Norman monasticism. At the Conquest there was only a handful of monasteries in England. Although many of them were handsomely endowed through the benefactions of the Anglo-Saxon kings, monasticism was not a very widely apparent social institution. The Normans brought with them a more dynamic and far reaching monastic ideal. Where previously benefactions would have been made to existing churches or foundations to mark success or failure, to expiate sin or to dispel the fears of death and judgement, the Normans founded monasteries, monasteries which became increasingly wealthy institutions until a reaction set in against them in the later Middle Ages.

The setting for these developments was a monastic precinct far different from its Saxon predecessors. In scale and form Norman monasteries (and cathedrals) evinced a monumental architecture which

Britain had perhaps never seen before (at least not since the Roman occupation). A more or less regularized conception of the monastic precinct - it would perhaps be overly precise to speak of a standard or ideal Benedictine monastic plan - shaped these monumental forms. The elements of this layout had a lengthy pedigree on the continent, traceable at least to the Carolingian era. It would appear to have differed greatly, however, from Anglo-Saxon monastic arrangement. The extent of difference becomes apparent when it is realized that even such an important structure as the chapter house did not exist in the originally Irish-inspired monasteries of pre-Conquest England.

This wave of monastic fervour, born of both the Conquest and the Gregorian Reform, saw the stone - and sometimes partly timber-framed - fabric of new monasteries and old rise all over the face of England. This process was slow, and lasted throughout the 12th and at many houses even into the 13th century; building on such a scale entailed large extraordinary expenditures which a monastery would have had trouble meeting without special endowments or public support.

The popular fervour and growing financial commitment to monasticism mirrored a newly unified conception of Christendom and a deep sense of religious humility; monasteries functioned in English (and European) society at this time to expiate social guilt for the inevitably sinful nature of humankind. Every gift or bequest, and especially every life dedicated to a renunciation of the world, was seen to counterbalance the social ills plaguing a society which saw its own humanity as depraved and corrupted with original sin.

This role represented a new level of social commitment to monasticism. Previously a wealthy aristocracy, the only class of society which lived at all above a bare subsistence level, had supported monasteries with far more limited vision as virtual *Eigenkloster*. Elements of this narrow social vision are even traceable in some early Norman east ends of Benedictine churches. Very early in the 12th century, however, Benedictine monasteries began to be more integrally incorporated into the political and economic life of the country. The economy of the major monasteries was feudalized, and monastic temporalities were held of the king. Superiors of such houses were raised to the rank of barons and reached the apogee of their involvement and importance in the political life of the realm. This was also the time that separate superiors' lodgings began to appear, but as yet they were simple affairs befitting a still thriving ascetic ideal.

The social role of monastic churches also changed, and this led directly to their extensive and widespread transformation. The appearance of ambulatories and feretory space allowed for the first time the systematic lay use of the east end. An intensive period of rebuilding of east ends was signalled with the new east end of Canterbury Cathedral, begun c1174, which also virtually initiated the use of the Gothic style of architecture in England. Rebuilding was intensive until the mid 13th century when the scale and frequency of such projects began to fall off. This decline of interest in the east ends of Benedictine churches also saw the beginnings of a decline in oblations which had made itself felt significantly by the time that the Black

Death in the mid 14th century triggered a momentary resurgence in the popular support of altars and relics.

The late 12th and early 13th centuries saw other changes in Benedictine monasteries. Superiors' lodgings began to take on the scale and lavishness of secular aristocratic dwellings, and at many houses inner courts began appearing in the precinct. At the same time monastic temporal resources, especially agricultural properties, were actively developed for the first time. It is difficult to say whether these related temporal developments were occasioned by monastic self-confidence in their newly defined place in the social order or whether the dizzying heights of popularity and prosperity simply went to their heads. Neither enterprise furthered the current monastic ideal per se. The explicit statement of temporal importance implied by the change in superiors' lodgings soon led to internal changes, such as the development of obedientiaries' establishments, which signalled a breakdown in the strictly coenobitical life of monasteries. The development of temporal resources eventually led to friction with segments of the populace and a significant popular disenchantment with not a few Benedictine houses.

The full implications of these developments had not yet become apparent in the mid 13th century. In fact the long reign of Henry III (1216-1272) saw a continuous high level of royal support for Benedictine monasteries. But, whereas Henry's enthusiasm at the beginning of his reign conformed to the general mood of his realm, it became an increasingly conservative attitude towards its end. This conservatism perhaps

partly explains why in Henry's favourite monastic enterprise, the complete rebuilding of Westminster Abbey, the church was planned with a chevet, an arrangement which in the 13th and 14th centuries was disappearing before the far more popular rectangular eastern termination of English churches, which Hearn equates with a growing English national style of architecture.<sup>1</sup> Besides his massive financial commitment to Westminster Abbey, Henry showered widespread favour on many Benedictine houses in England during his reign.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, however, other religious institutions were taking on an importance which was eventually to usurp much of the social position which monasteries had come to hold. Secular participation in the life of the church was never a straightforward development. At the same time that ambulatories were becoming common - or perhaps slightly later - screens, which had the somewhat opposite intent of excluding the laity from participation in the liturgical life of the church, were developing around the choir and presbytery. This conflict of interests was much more acute in monastic churches than it was in cathedrals, generally richer institutions which had also been gaining in importance through the 12th century with the spreading density and development of a network of parochial churches across England. To some extent cathedrals and bishops in the 13th century were drawing off the popular support for and national importance of monasteries and abbots, although the presence of cathedral priories in England makes the issue more complicated than on the continent. It is also complicated by the growing popularity and proliferation

of endowed masses at monastic churches. The effusion of obits and anniversaries from the beginning of the 13th century did not fail to change the nature and status of these masses drastically, as was also the case with the popularization of indulgences.

Cathedrals themselves were not immune from the proliferation of screens and in the 13th century new forms of popular worship were engendered by this clerical exclusiveness. This is amply illustrated by the growth in popularity of the friars and an emphasis on preaching. In very many ways the populace was becoming more directly involved in organized religious life, and the 13th century also saw the formation and spread of religious confraternities for laymen. Many of these were associated with monasteries, and there is some indication that the rapid appearance of Lady Chapels in the 13th century was aimed at these new lay organizations and this growing lay attitude towards religion. Lady Chapels began to appear frequently from early in the 13th century, and by the end of the century they existed in all but the smallest Benedictine churches.

The concerns of Benedictine monks were becoming increasingly introspective through the 13th century. Secure in their adulation they set about rebuilding the claustral structures which housed them - especially the east range. While much of the claustral building of the 12th century had probably been greatly inferior to what very often replaced it in the 13th, the substantial stone buildings which came into being at this time can either be seen as a concerted effort to replace flimsy or makeshift structures with more permanent ones or

as evidence of substantially elevated monastic social aspirations. The stone buildings in which Benedictine monks lived from this time could not match the lavishness or comfort of aristocratic dwellings but were far above the domestic level of most of the populace. In their own minds the monks may very well have justified these changes as enabling their more effective service to God through the monastic offices. It was, however, a process which subtly undermined the old ascetic ideals of the 12th century, and the 13th century also saw the appearance of the first obvious architectural concessions to monastic comfort such as the partitioning and wainscoting of the dormitory and, towards the end of the century, canopied choir stalls.

The long period of favour that monasteries enjoyed through the reign of Henry III allowed the Benedictines to develop their social position perhaps farther than was good for them. The reign of Edward I (1272-1307) saw a reaction set in against monastic acquisition of property and development of resources. The enormous amounts of royal funds still being spent on Westminster Abbey were immediately withdrawn by Edward, who seemed to feel that monasteries were rich enough to take care of themselves. He was far more concerned with improving 'law and order' in the realm than in the development of monasticism on the scale that his father had supported it. In his insistence on monastic maintenance of royal corrodians and an increase in royal exactions and forced loans, he even began to demand of monasteries a social responsibility to some extent at variance with the 13th century monastic ideal. If this old ideal was under attack, the monasteries

were no doubt at least partly to blame. An inevitable gap appeared between the ideal itself and monastic fulfilment of that ideal, and this gap was filled in peoples' minds by new social aspirations. One of these was the relief of the poor, and a heightened interest in monastic almsgiving is also noticeable at the beginning of the 14th century. But if a new monastic ideal can be said to have appeared during Edward's reign, it was not nearly so compelling as it had been earlier. The social enthusiasm which had engendered so many changes in Benedictine monasticism through the 13th century was dissolving in the face of these changes.

If Edward I had begun to place checks on the economy of monasteries, their legal and formal status was further shaped under Edward II (1307-1327) and Edward III (1327-1377). Royal licences were required for many kinds of buildings outside of the precinct, and some monasteries seem to have been made responsible for the maintenance of roads and bridges in the neighbourhood of some of their properties. Crenellation and the building of precinct walls also came under royal control. These injunctions seem to have been established in time to control a widespread interest in gatehouses and the defensive potential of precinct walls at Benedictine houses. Even where no defensive purpose was intended, gatehouses and walls established a relationship of exclusiveness and aristocratic pretension between monasteries and the secular world around them. The legal limits of the monastic body which were established in the late 13th and early 14th centuries were contrived in 'literate modes' which had been developing in

England since the Conquest but only now were becoming widely recognized and effective.<sup>3</sup> It would be going too far to say that Benedictine monks could now refer to precisely written legal guidelines to establish their exact social rights and responsibilities, but an implicit formalization of the monastic role in society was developing to the detriment of the traditional monastic services to society. Endowed masses and the monastic offices were both increasingly ignored or given only superficial attention, and from this time a growing murmur could be heard through England accusing the monasteries of 'bad faith' in the fulfilment of their duties. From the mid 14th century the number of corrodians began to drop off drastically and the eleemosynary effectiveness of Benedictine monasteries began to plummet towards an appalling level. Monastic social irresponsibility, however, would not reach its full proportions until the 15th century.

In the face not only of a relative withdrawal of active royal support of Benedictine monasteries but even significant restrictions on them, there is some evidence that monasteries were turning more and more to their local aristocracy for allegiance and support. This can be seen in a variety of ways, from the rebuilding of the choir of Tewkesbury Abbey as a mausoleum by the Despenser family in the early 14th century, to an increasing display of aristocratic heraldry on gatehouses and churches, to the widespread practice of obtaining more or less honorary aristocratic stewards for the furtherance of their position at the royal court. A significant amount of rebuilding of refectories in the 14th century could be related to this trend.

The generally more impressive refectories which resulted were used more and more ceremonially, and it would appear that locally important laymen began to partake of the ceremonial aspects of the refectory for elaborate feasts on important dates through the year. The monks themselves ate more and more often in misericords which, together with kitchen facilities, also received much attention in the 14th century, and the implied dietary changes show an even more advanced stage in the decay of the original spirit of the Benedictine Rule.

At the same time Benedictines were alienating themselves from ever larger segments of the populace. Changing relations between monasteries and parishes show this trend most clearly. What construction did occur in the naves of Benedictine churches from the 14th century was in the interests of and to some extent even paid for by parishioners rather than the monks, who were increasingly barricading themselves into the east end of their churches.

The popular disenchantment which this attitude bred had widespread financial implications. By the early 15th century oblations at Benedictine churches had become negligible and would remain so until the Dissolution. Benefactions were also increasingly drawn off by parish churches and other charitable institutions. Educational establishments were a particularly clear goal for benefactions which previously would very likely have been directed to monasteries; a significant part in their support was played by Benedictines themselves, and it is probable that new spiritual aspirations, as well as monastic 'bad faith', as Wykeham's comment would imply, played a large part in this process.

Among attempts to recoup these losses which bordered on desperation, Benedictines began to sell burial space in their churches at steadily dwindling prices through the 15th century, a process which made this once honourable privilege next to worthless. A certain loss of self-respect is detectable among Benedictine monks accompanied by a growing lethargy which in the generation before the Dissolution would produce signs of deep depression.

Building at Benedictine monasteries, which had fallen off drastically in the 14th century, was limited even further thereafter. Some generally cosmetic alterations, notably refenestration, are detectable in the church. But the main targets for construction comprised just those aspects of monasticism which would spell its downfall. Gatehouses continued to be rebuilt and superiors' lodgings were becoming increasingly elaborate and pretentious, both in an attempt to project a social image which monasteries no longer possessed. There is other evidence as well, particularly in the developments in obedientiaries establishments, of undue luxury and elaboration in the precinct.

To a growing extent, however, Benedictine monks were beginning to see the immanence of decline. In the early years of the 16th century the majority of estates still managed directly by monasteries were leased to private interests. The monks seem to have become too dispirited to do anything for themselves or their buildings. The condition of the fabric at many monasteries was becoming increasingly ruinous. It is difficult to estimate how general this was or how far

it had been allowed to go, but at some houses it would appear that, had not Henry VIII put an end to the enterprise, it would have met with a far more ignoble fate.

Even had the monks been able to maintain a credibility in the fulfilment of their obligations which they had not possessed for the better part of two centuries, support of monasteries would have been seen as an increasingly vicarious fulfilment of spiritual responsibility at the time of the Dissolution. Aided perhaps by an increase in endemic poverty in the late 15th century, the alleviation of suffering and the support of more humanly oriented social institutions were replacing the whole concept of monasticism as a socially desirable means for salvation and the vindication of a quickly changing social order.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>M.F. Hearn, "Romsey Abbey: A Progenitor of the English National Tradition in Architecture," *Gesta*, Vol. XIV (1975), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>One of the most common ways in which Henry III aided in construction of Benedictine monasteries was with a gift of oaks from one of the royal forests. Evidence of his generosity is widespread. In 1238 oaks from Windsor Forest were used to build the choir stalls at Abingdon. Henry spent some money on building at St. Mary's, Coventry, c1250. In 1232 Henry granted 100 oaks from the Forest of Dean for work on the church at Gloucester and in the following year he gave 10. Henry visited Malmesbury on 1 September 1265 on which occasion the sacrist was granted 4 oaks from the Forest of Gillingham. In 1236-38 Henry granted the nuns of Nuneaton 10 oaks from Kenilworth Woods and 15 from Cank Forest for the rebuilding of their church. On 15 March 1231 Henry granted to Romsey Abbey 5 oaks from Milchet Wood 'ad planchias faciendas' for the repair of the dormitory; 6 New Forest oaks came into the hands of the sacrist on 24 June 1251; on 21 June 1253 16 oaks from the same place were given for the fabric of the church; and on 20 November 1271 6 oaks from Clarendon Forest were given by the king in exchange for a corrody. On 14 August 1233 Henry gave the abbot of Winchcombe 20 oaks from the Forest of Dean; in 1235 a mandate was issued to the Constable of St. Briavels granting the abbey 40 oaks; in 1241 the king gave 4 oaks to the abbey for reroofing; and in 1251 Henry granted the abbey 10 oaks 'ad reparacionem cuiusdam aule sua.' In 1256 Henry gave Worcester Cathedral Priory custody of woods within the Forests of Feckenham and Kenfare.

<sup>3</sup>See M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (London: 1979).

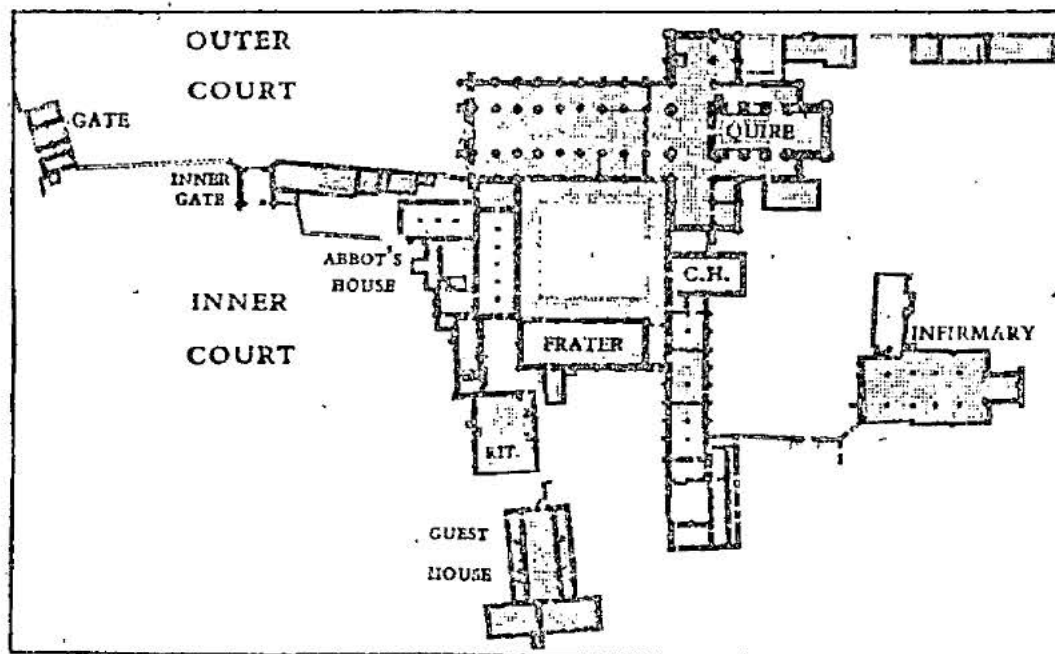


Figure 1. Plan of the Abbey of SS. Peter, Paul, and Oswald, Bardney.  
 (Atkinson, *An Architectural History of . . . Ely.*)

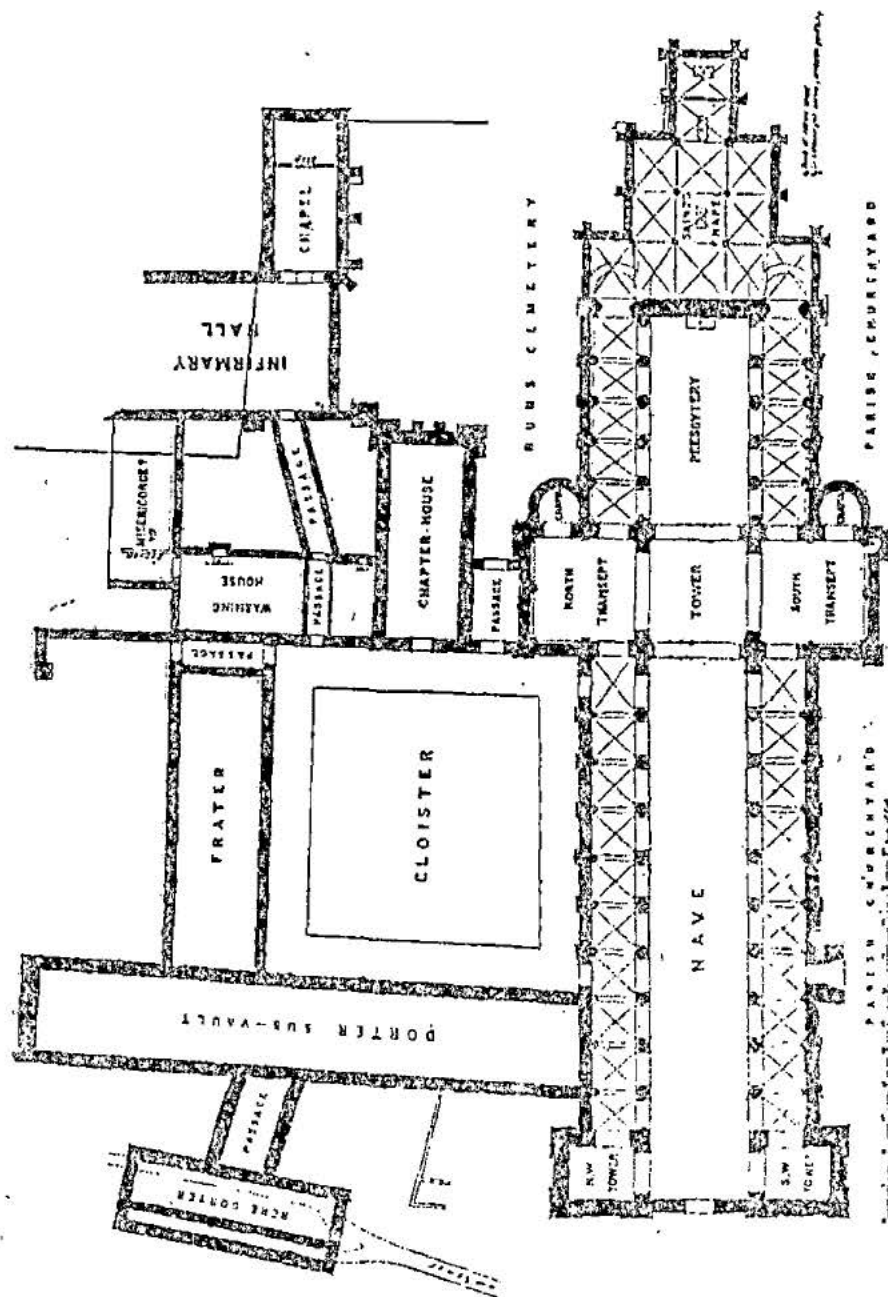


Figure 2. Plan of the Abbey of SS. Mary and Ethelburgha, Barking (Benedictine nuns).  
 (Clapham and Godfrey, *Some Famous Buildings and Their Story.*)



# BIRKENHEAD PRIORY

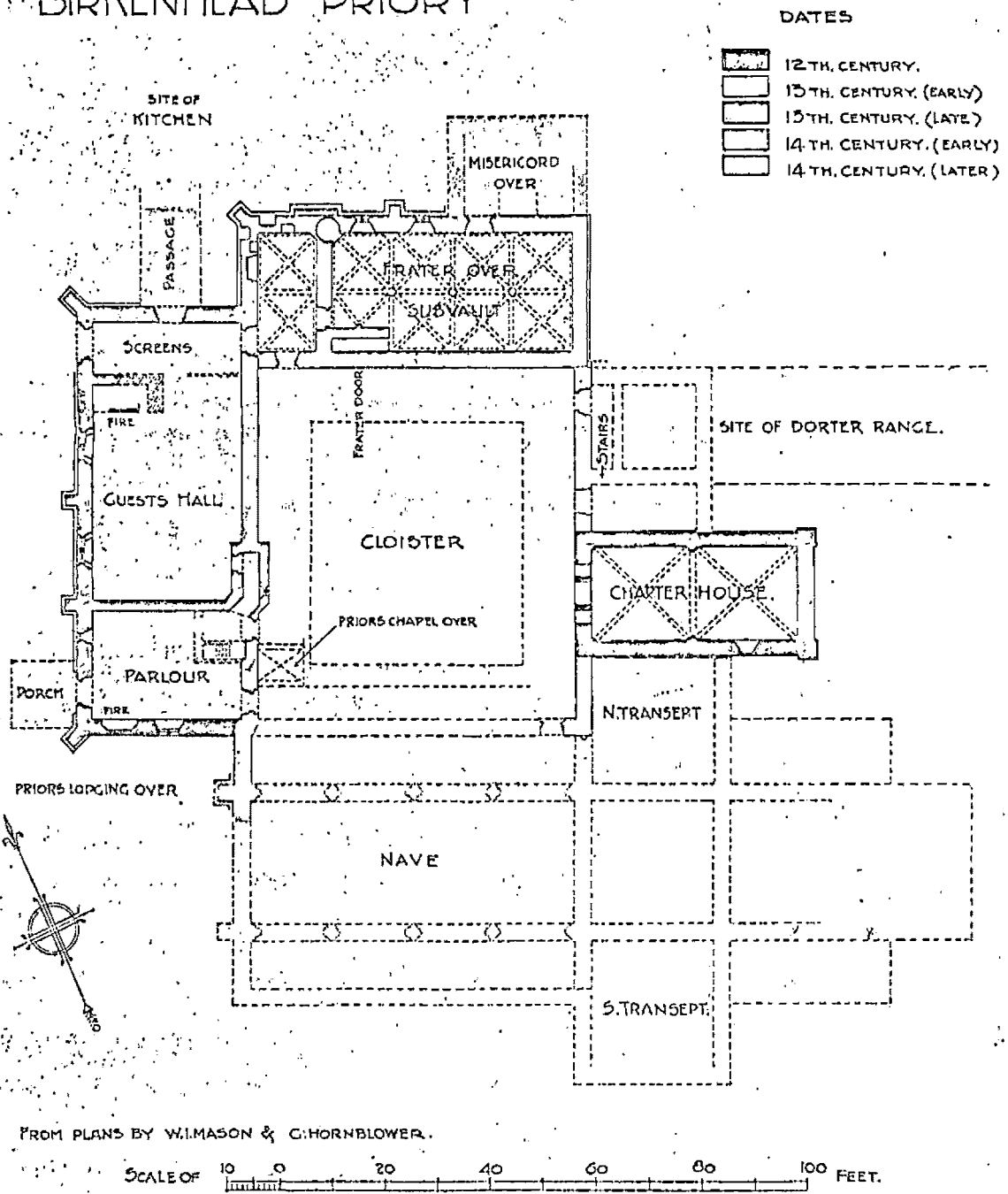


Figure 4. Plan of the Priory of St. James, Birkenhead.  
 (Stewart-Brown, *Birkenhead Priory and the Mersey Ferry.*)

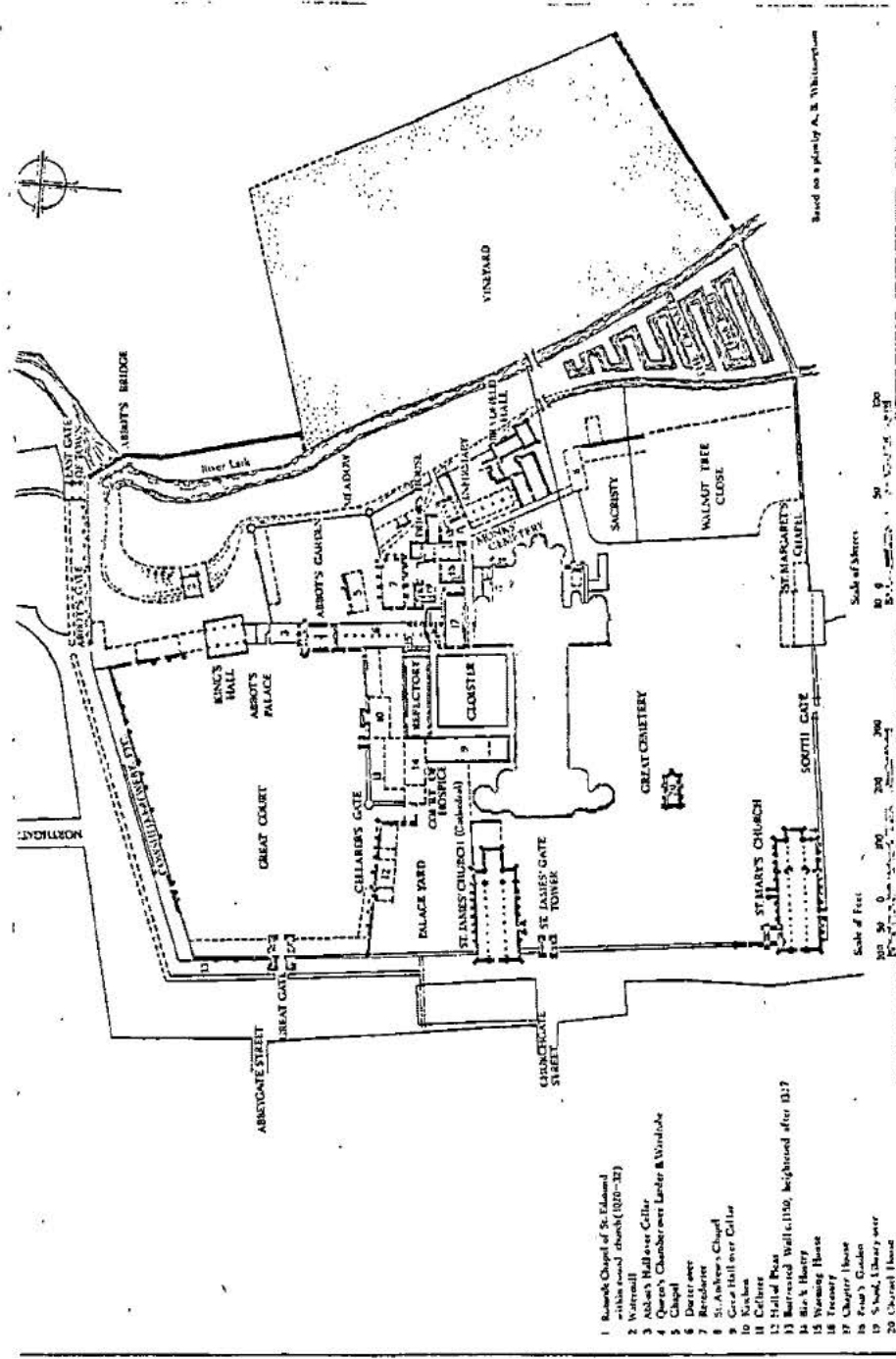


Figure 5. Plan of the Abbey of St. Edmund, Bury. (Whittingham, Bury St. Edmunds Abbey.)

- 1 Remains Chapel of St. Edmund
- 2 within round church (1850-1870)
- 3 Nave
- 4 Choir
- 5 Choir's Chamber over Larder & Windmill
- 6 Chapel
- 7 Ductor over
- 8 St. Andrew's Chapel
- 9 Great Hall over Cloister
- 10 Kitchen
- 11 Cellars
- 12 Hall of Pica
- 13 Burrowed Wall c. 1150, heightened after 1327
- 14 St. Edmund's Church
- 15 St. Edmund's House
- 16 Treasury
- 17 Chapter House
- 18 East's Garden
- 19 S. Hall, Library over
- 20 Chapter House

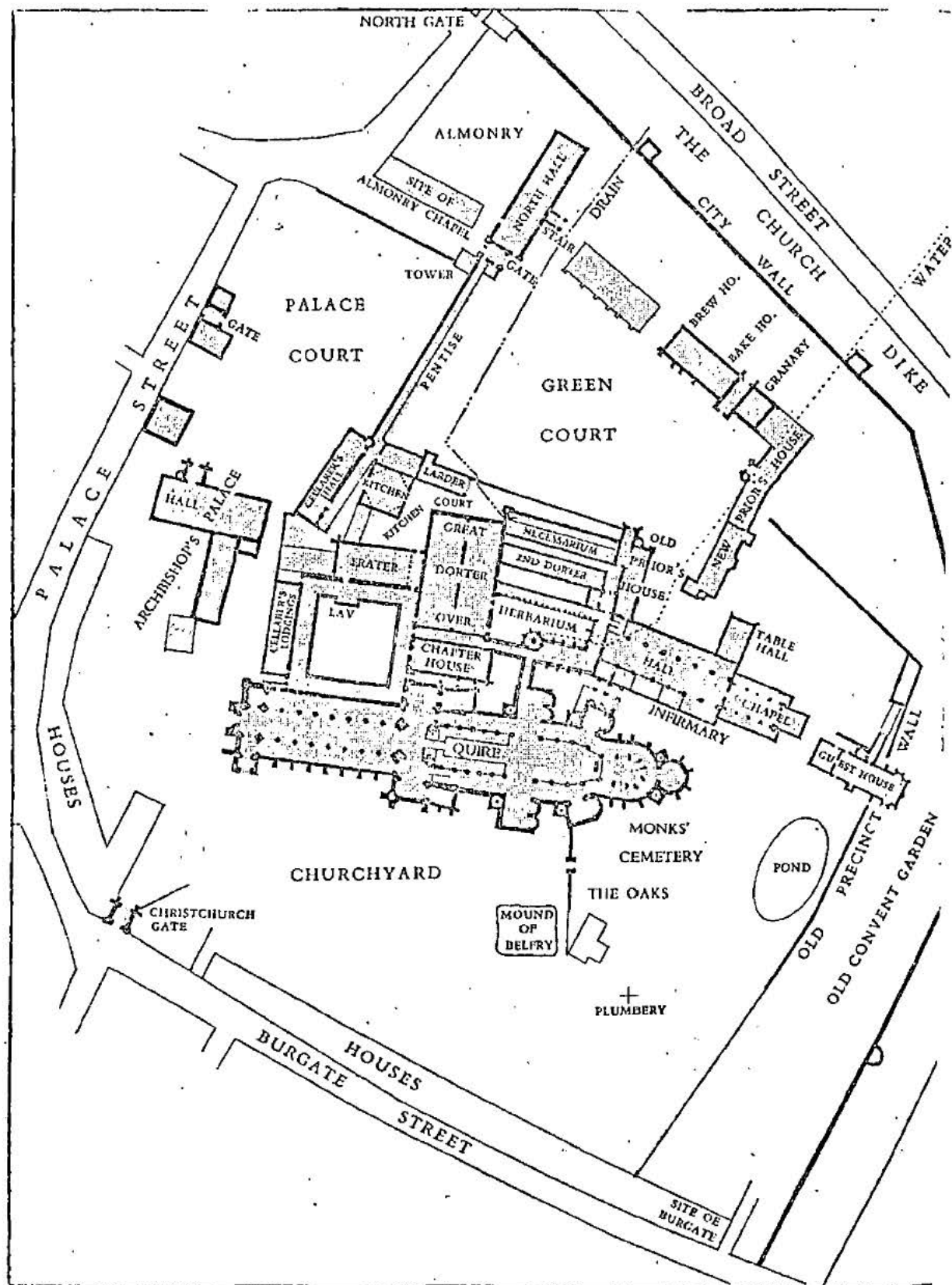


Figure 6. Plan of the Cathedral Priory of Christchurch, Canterbury.  
(Atkinson, *An Architectural History of . . . Ely.*)

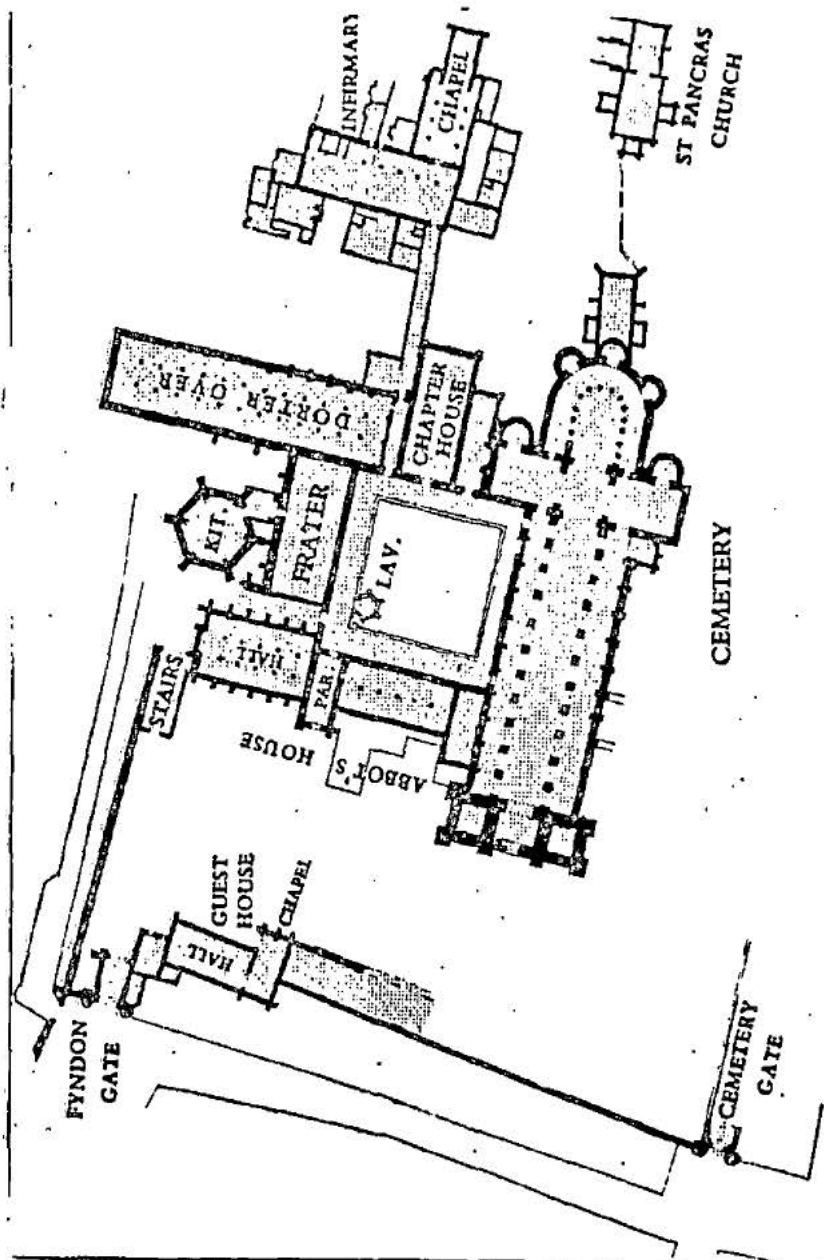


Figure 7. Plan of the Abbey of St. Augustine, Canterbury.  
 (Atkinson, *An Architectural History of . . . Ely.*)

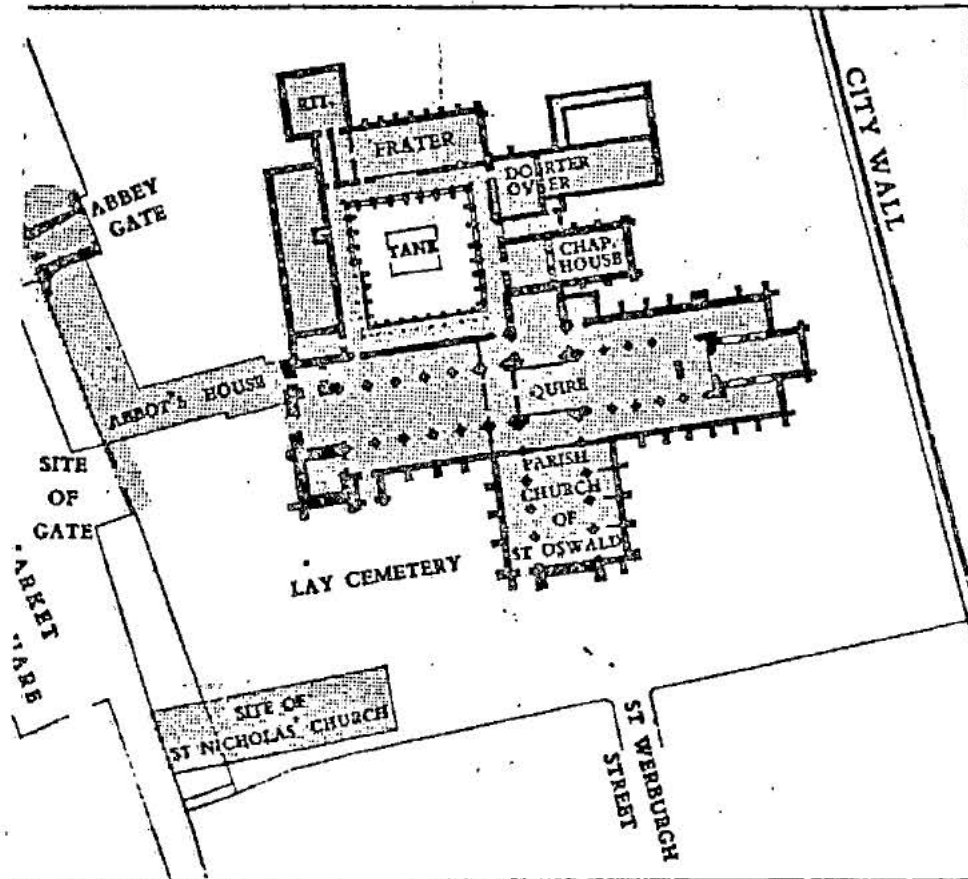
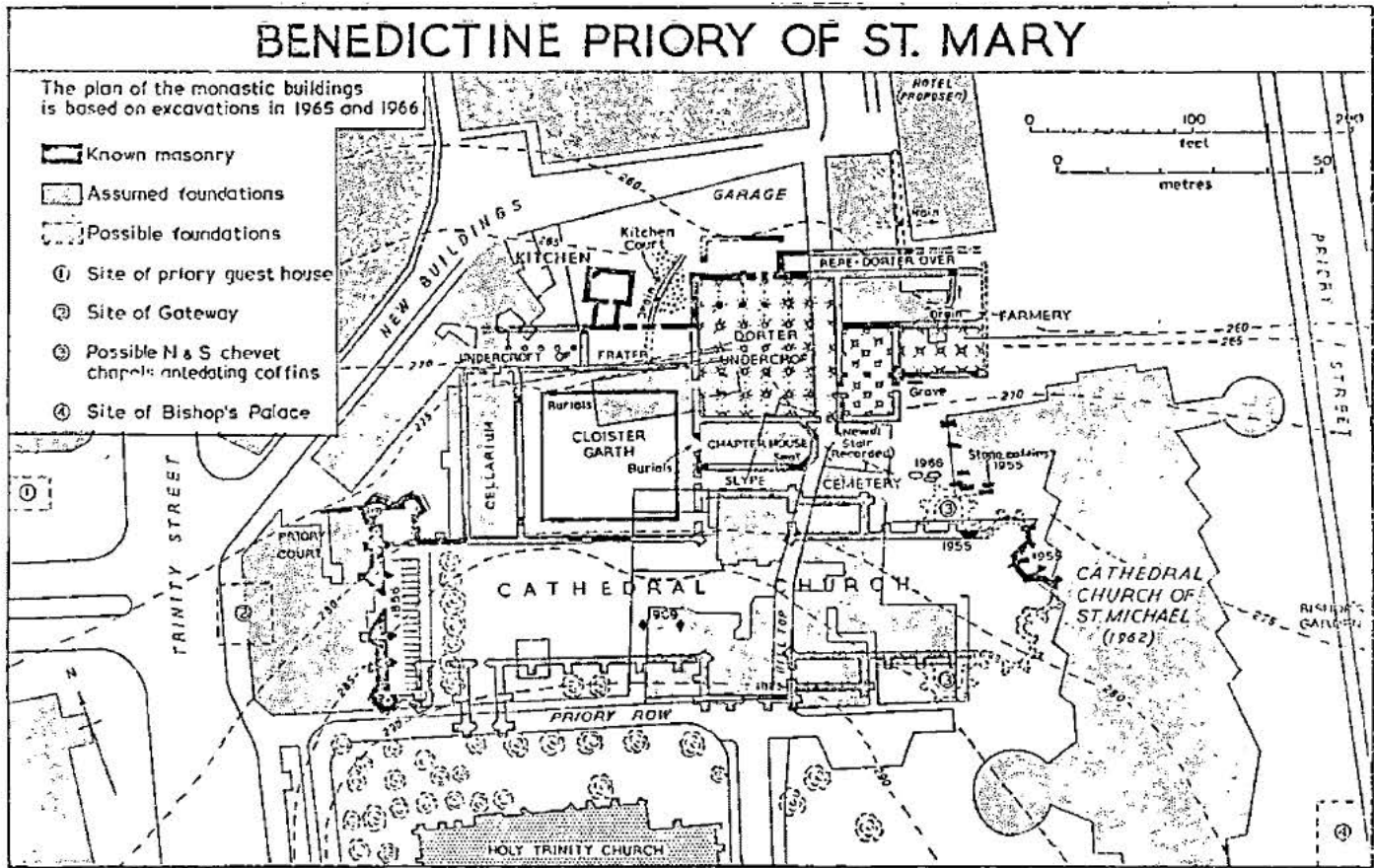


Figure 8. Plan of the Abbey of St. Werburgh, Chester.  
 (Atkinson, *An Architectural History of . . . Ely.*)

Figure 9. Plan of the Cathedral Priory of SS. Mary, Peter, and Osburg, Coventry. (Stephens, *VHC Warwick*, Vol. VIII)



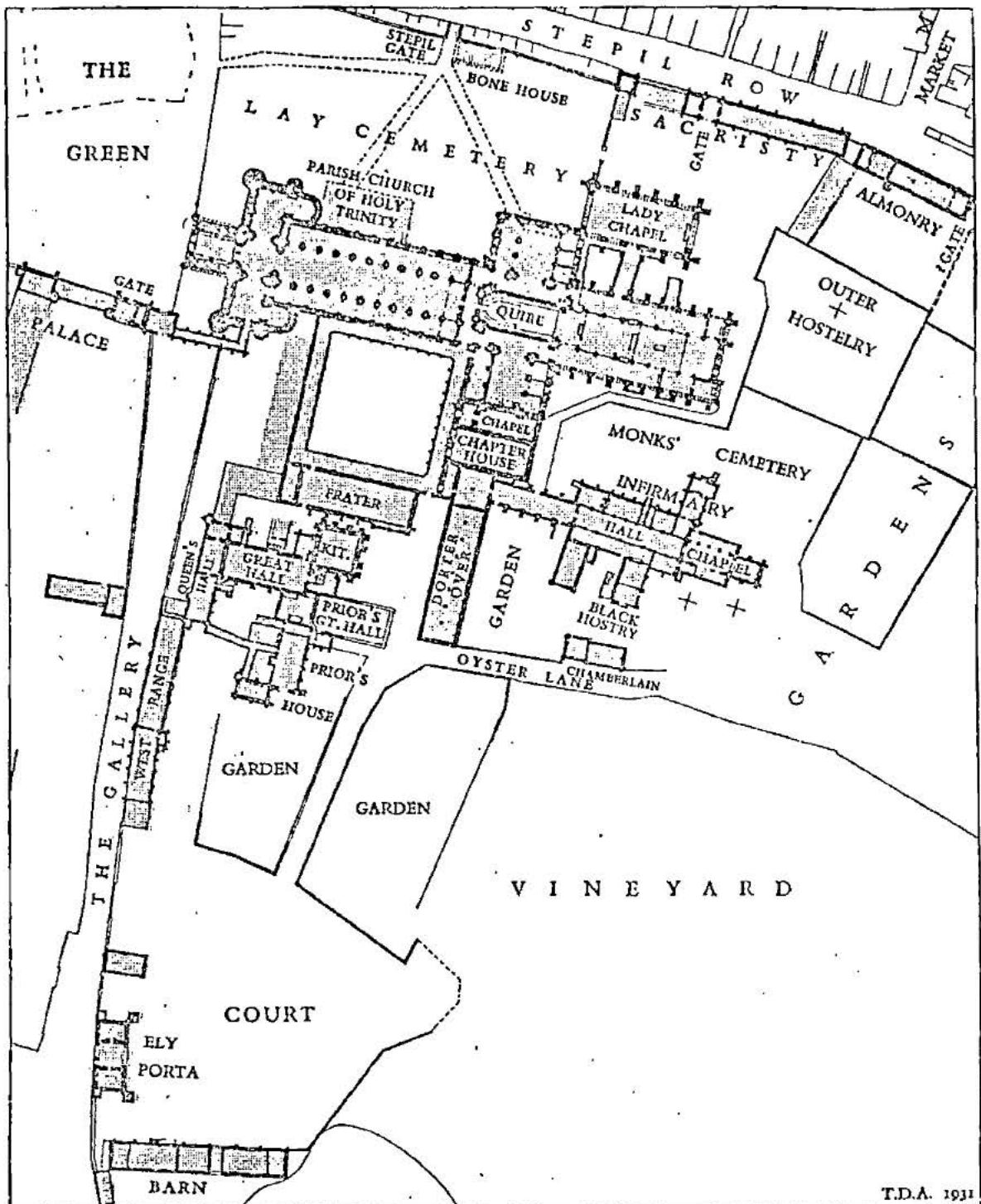


Figure 11. Plan of the Cathedral Priory of the Virgin, St. Peter and St. Etheldreda, Ely.  
(Atkinson, *An Architectural History of . . . Ely.*)



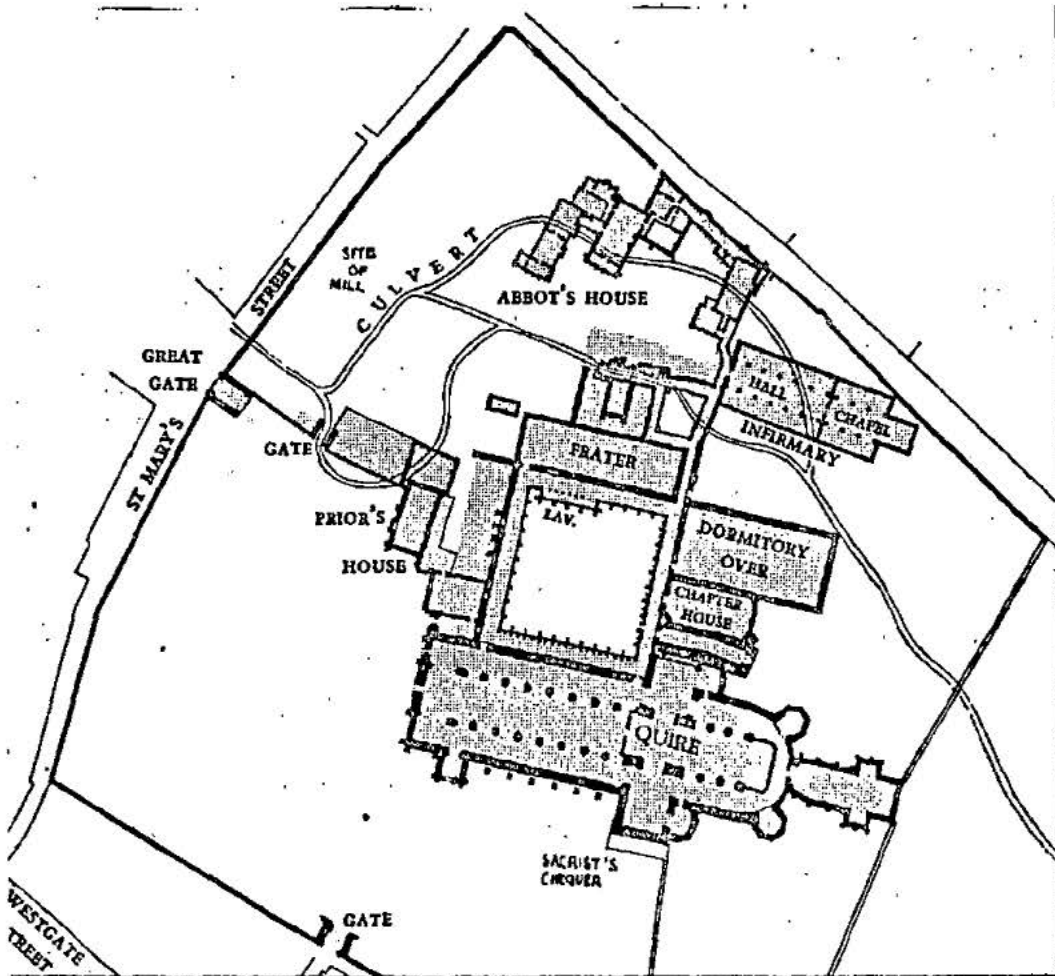
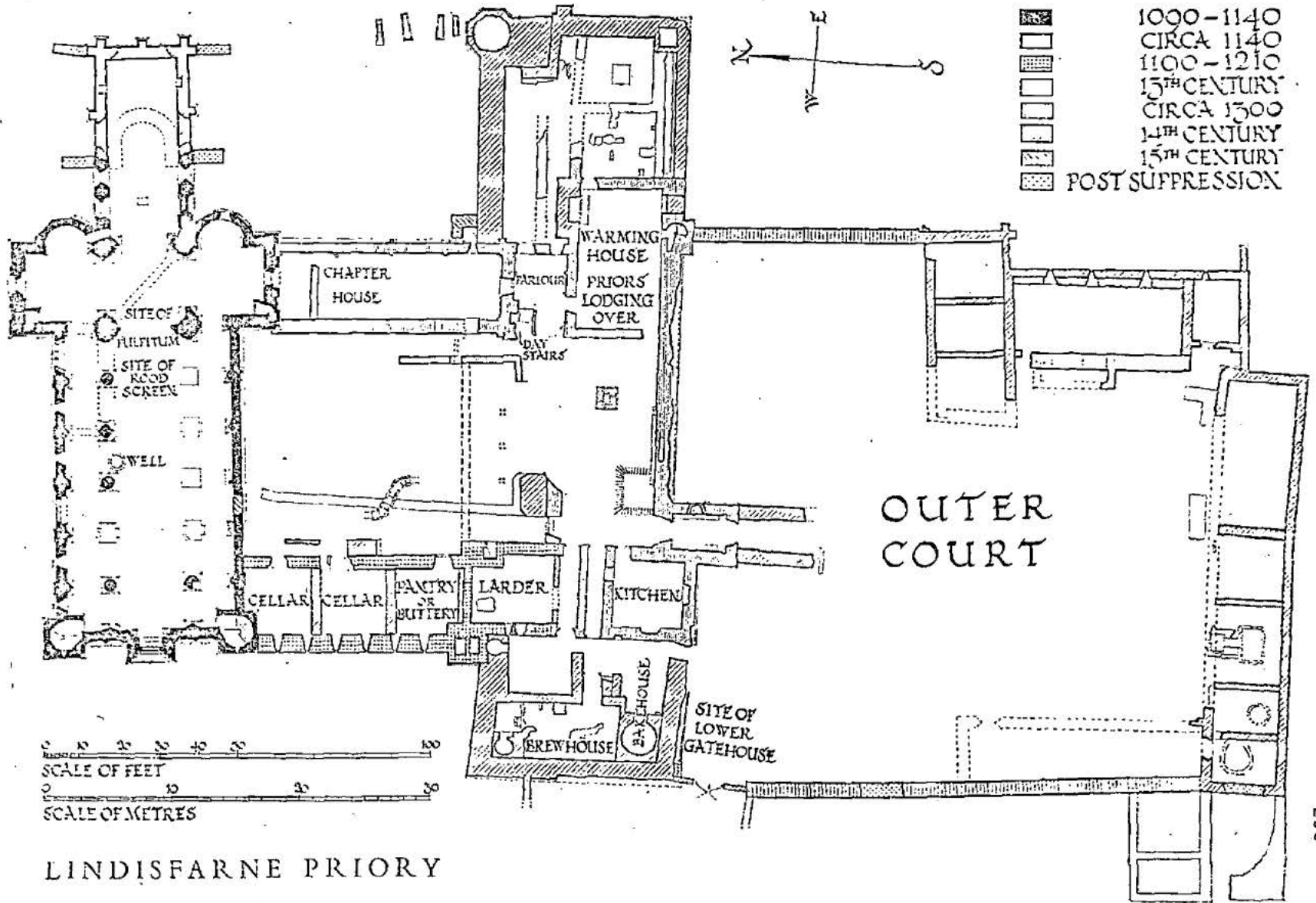


Figure 13. Plan of the Abbey of St. Peter, Gloucester.  
 (Atkinson, *An Architectural History of*  
*. . . Ely.*)

Figure 14. Plan of the Priory of St. Cuthbert, Lindisfarne.  
 (Thompson, *Lindisfarne Priory, Northumberland.*)





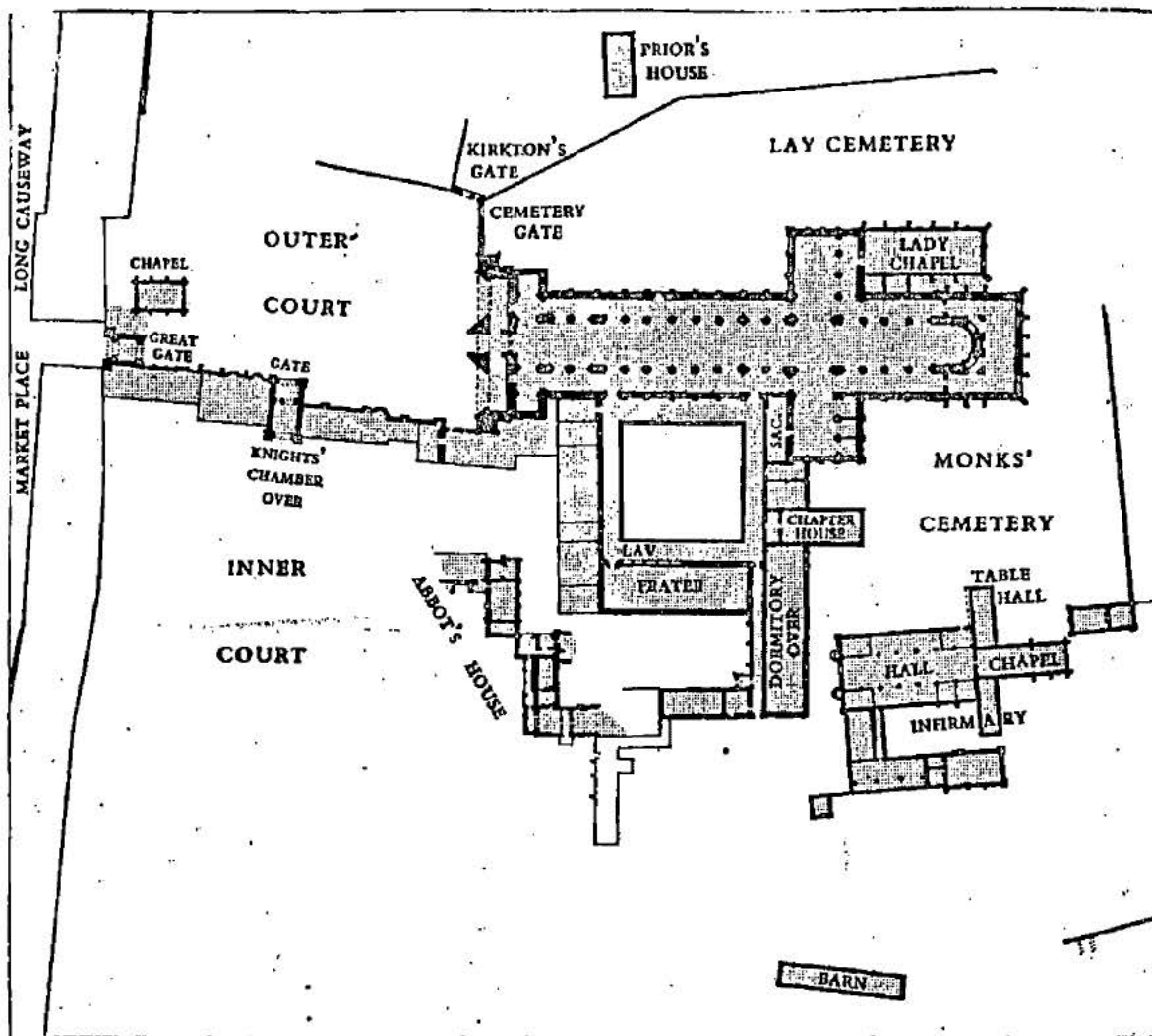


Figure 16. Plan of the Abbey of St. Peter, Peterborough.  
 (Atkinson, *An Architectural History of . . . Ely.*)

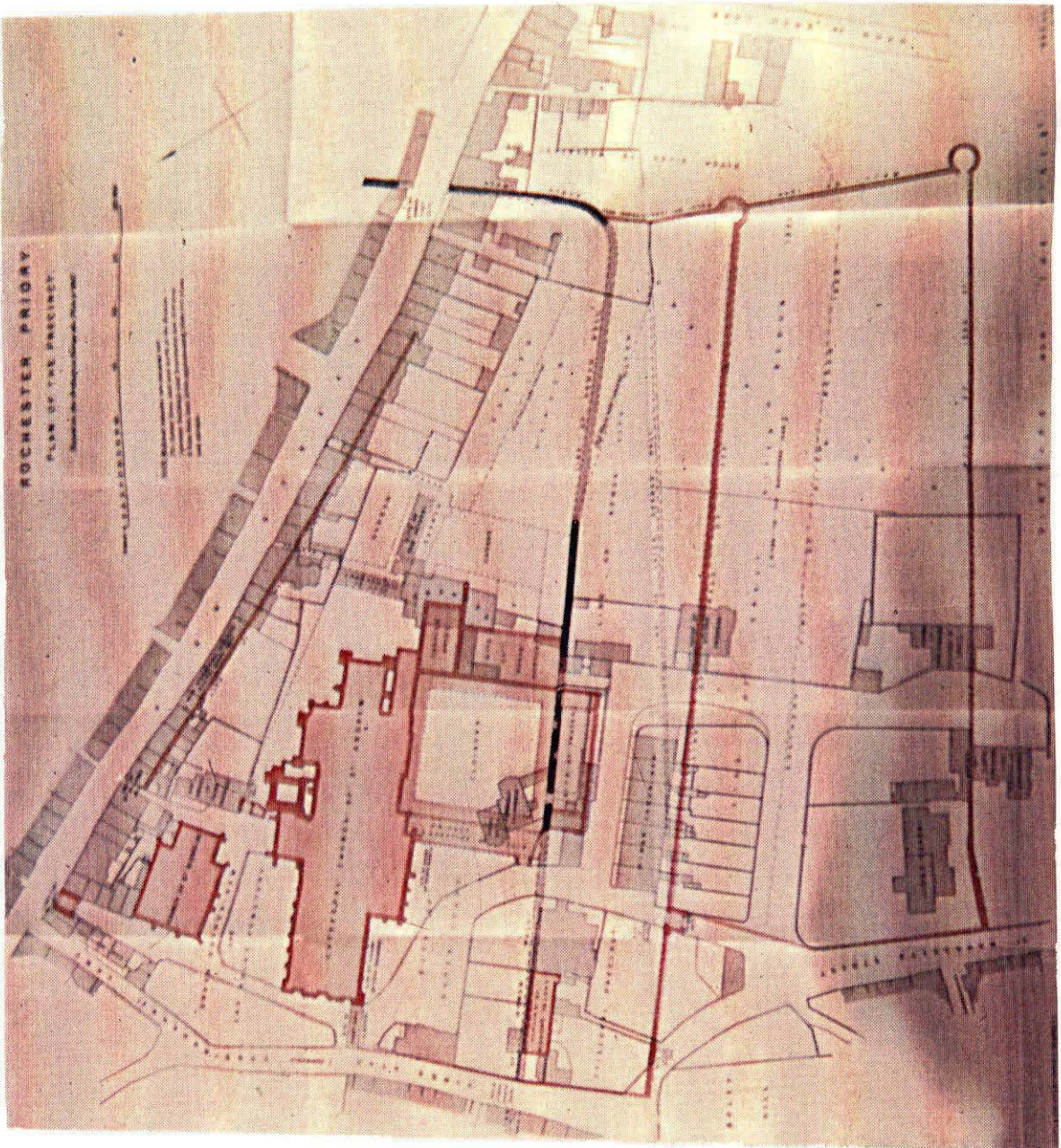


Figure 17a. Plan of the Cathedral Priory of St. Andrew, Rochester.  
 (St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of . . .  
 Rochester. Part II. The Monastery.")

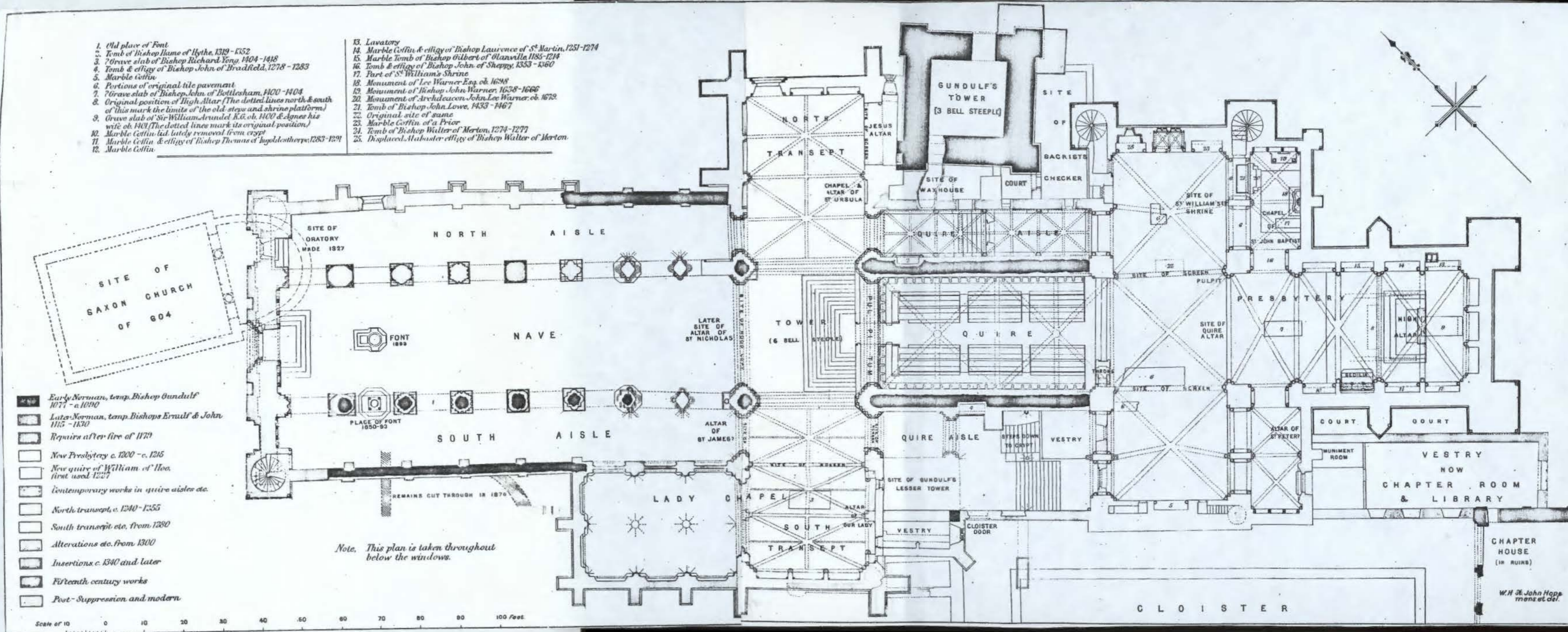


Figure 17b. Plan of the church of the Cathedral Priory of St. Andrew, Rochester. (St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of . . . Rochester.")



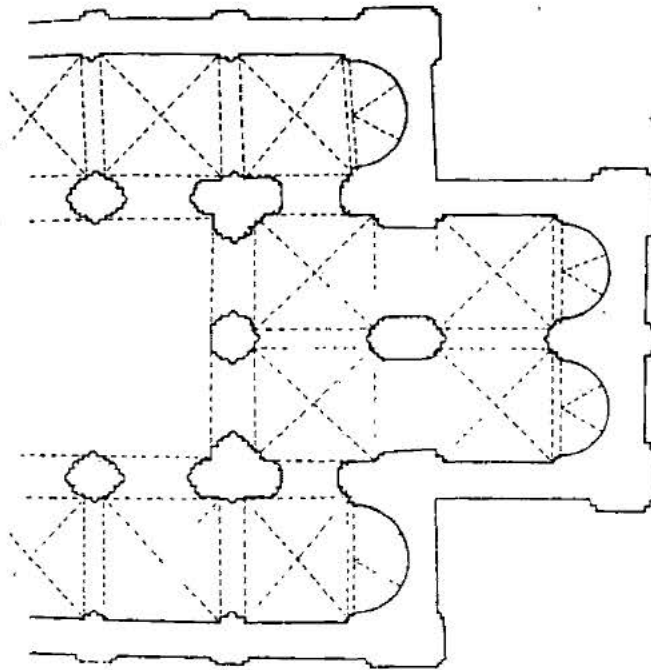


Figure 18. Reconstruction of the East End of the Church of the Abbey of SS. Mary and Efleda, Romsey (Benedictine nuns).  
(Hearn, "The Rectangular Ambulatory in English Medieval Architecture.")

# ST. ALBANS CATHEDRAL

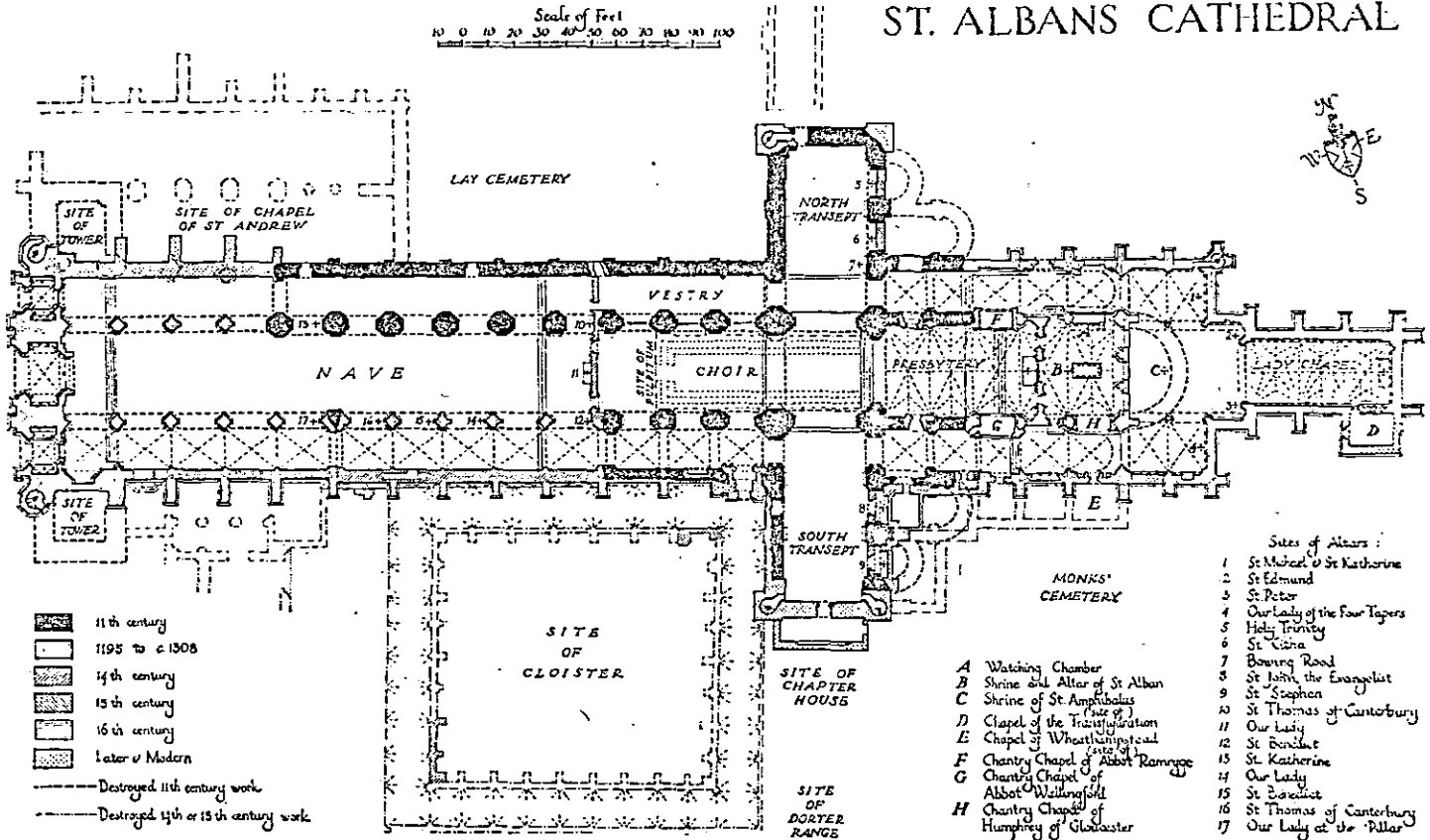


Figure 19. Plan of the Abbey of St. Alban, St. Albans. (Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *A Guide to St. Albans Cathedral*.)

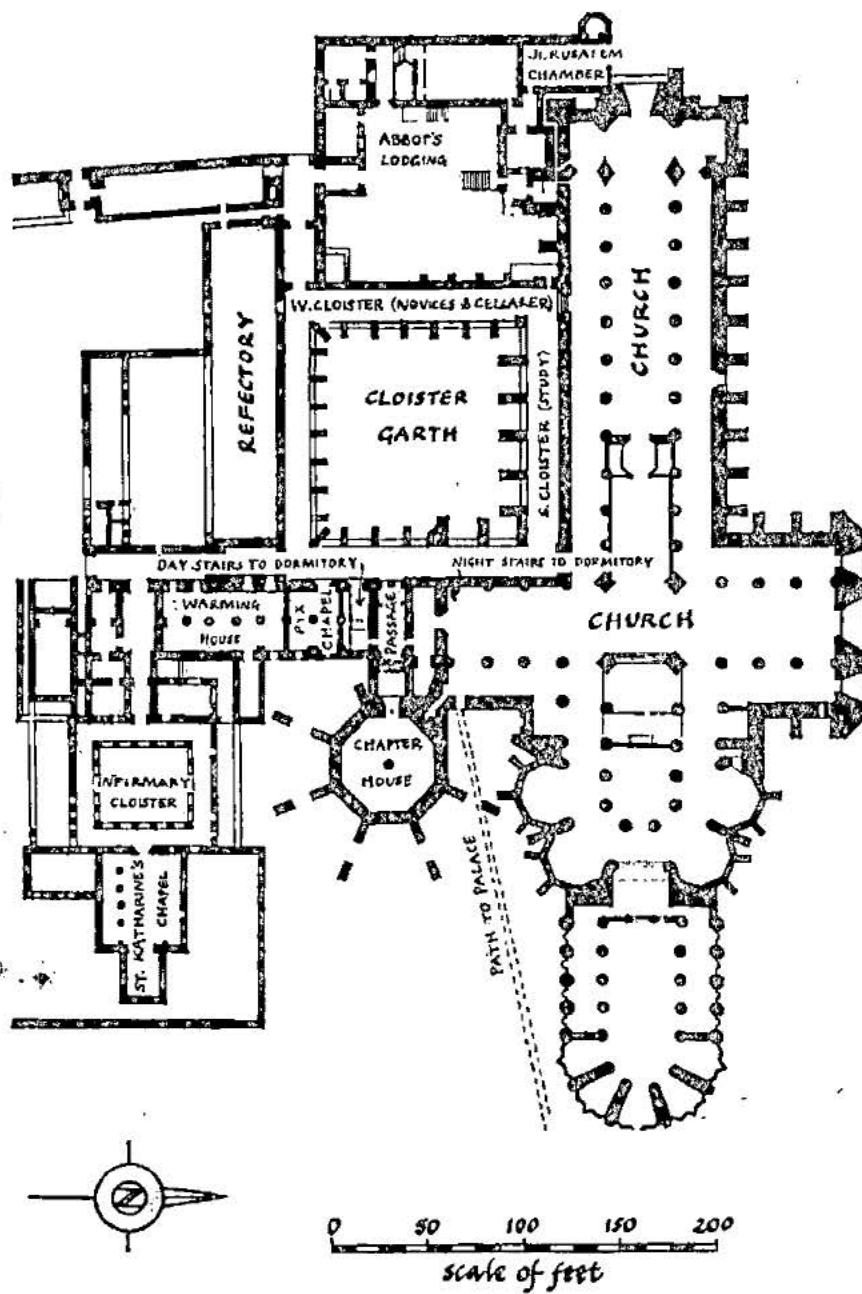


Figure 20. Plan of the Abbey of St. Peter, Westminster.  
(Harnett, *Monasteries and Monks.*)

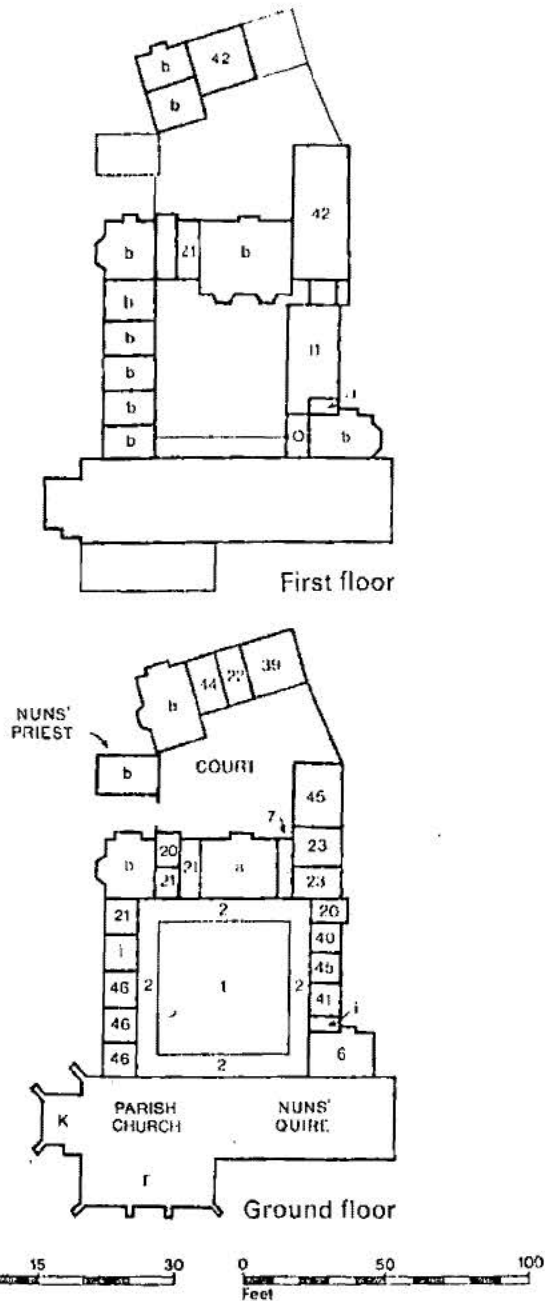


Figure 21. Plan of the Priory of St. Mary, Wilberfoss. (Benedictine Nuns). (Gilyard-Beer, *Abbeys*.)

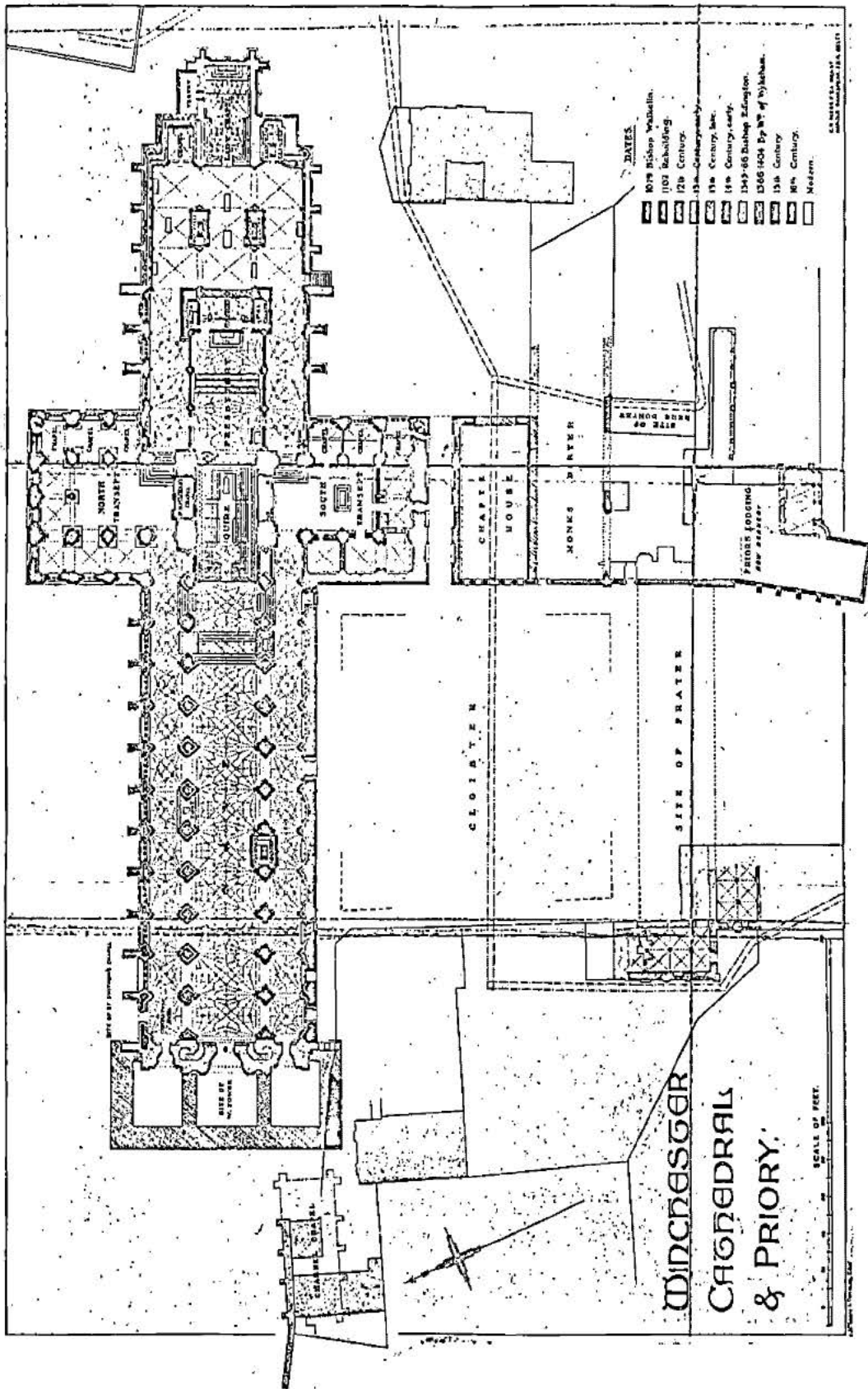


Figure 22. Plan of the Cathedral Priory of the Holy Trinity, SS. Peter and Paul, and St. Swithun, Winchester. (Page, *VHC Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, Vol. V.)

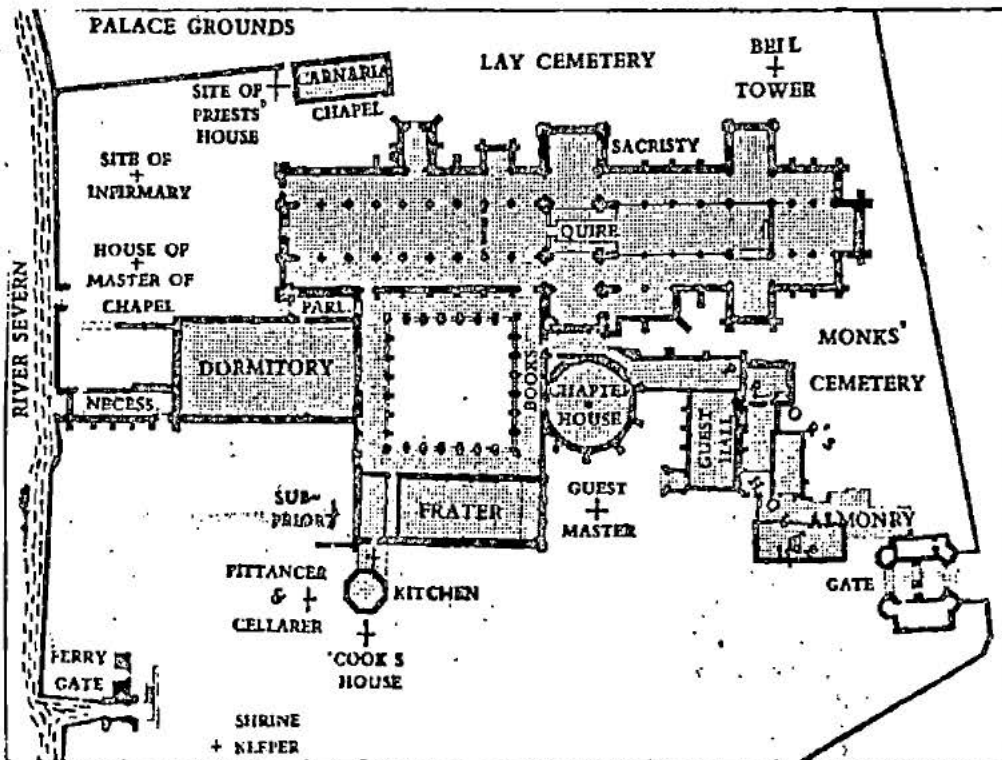
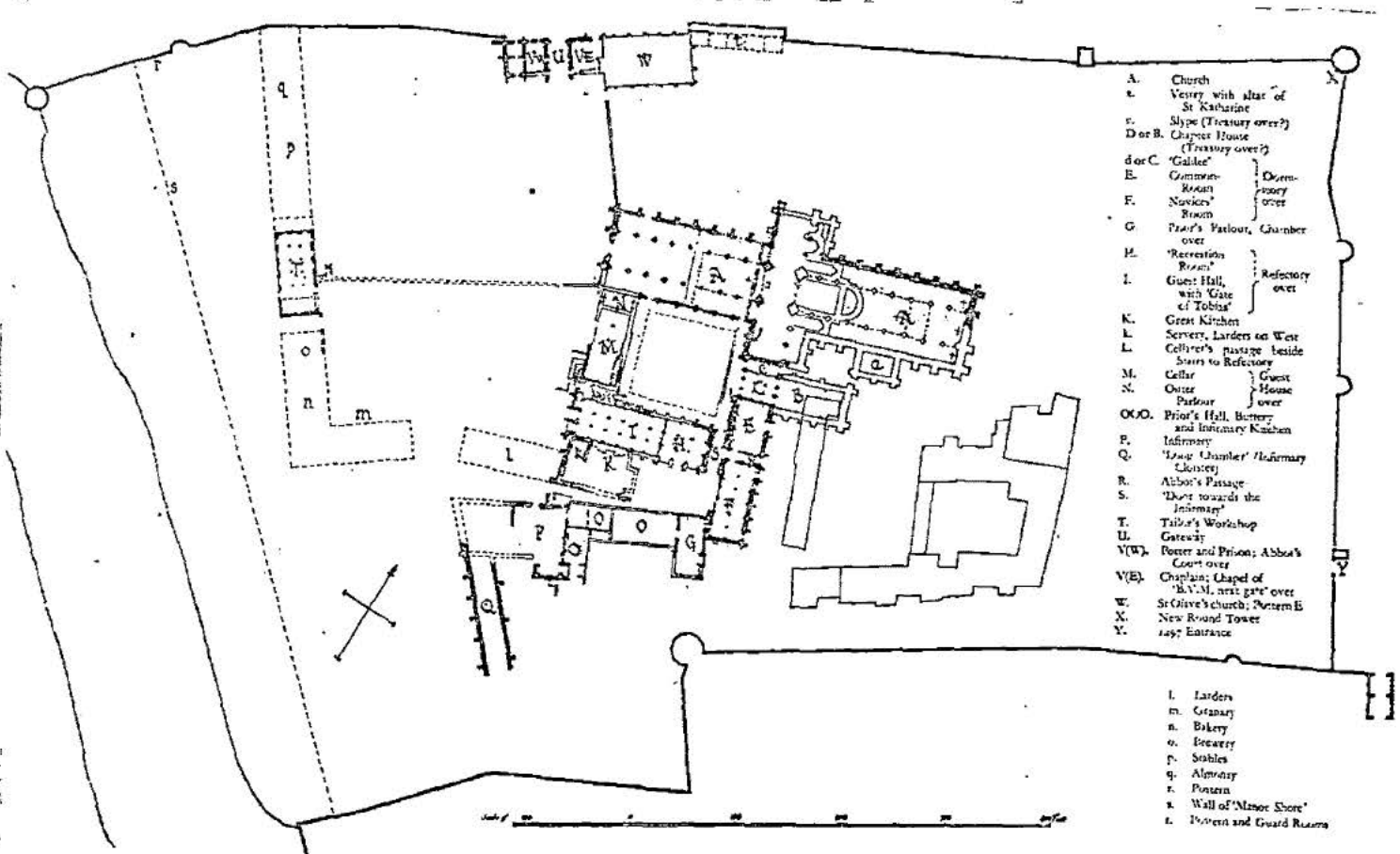
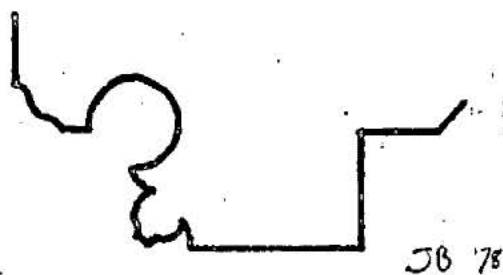


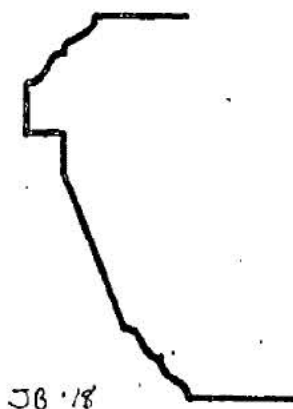
Figure 23. Plan of the Cathedral Priory of SS. Mary, Peter, Oswald, and Wulfstan, Worcester.  
 (Atkinson, *An Architectural History of . . . Ely.*)

Figure 24. Plan of the Abbey of St. Mary, York.  
 (Whittingham, "St. Mary's Abbey, York:  
 An Interpretation of its Plan.")





Jamb of the southeast doorway



Jamb of the southwest and west  
doorways

Figure 25. Sketches of Mouldings From the Lady Chapel of the  
Priory of St. Mary, Binham.



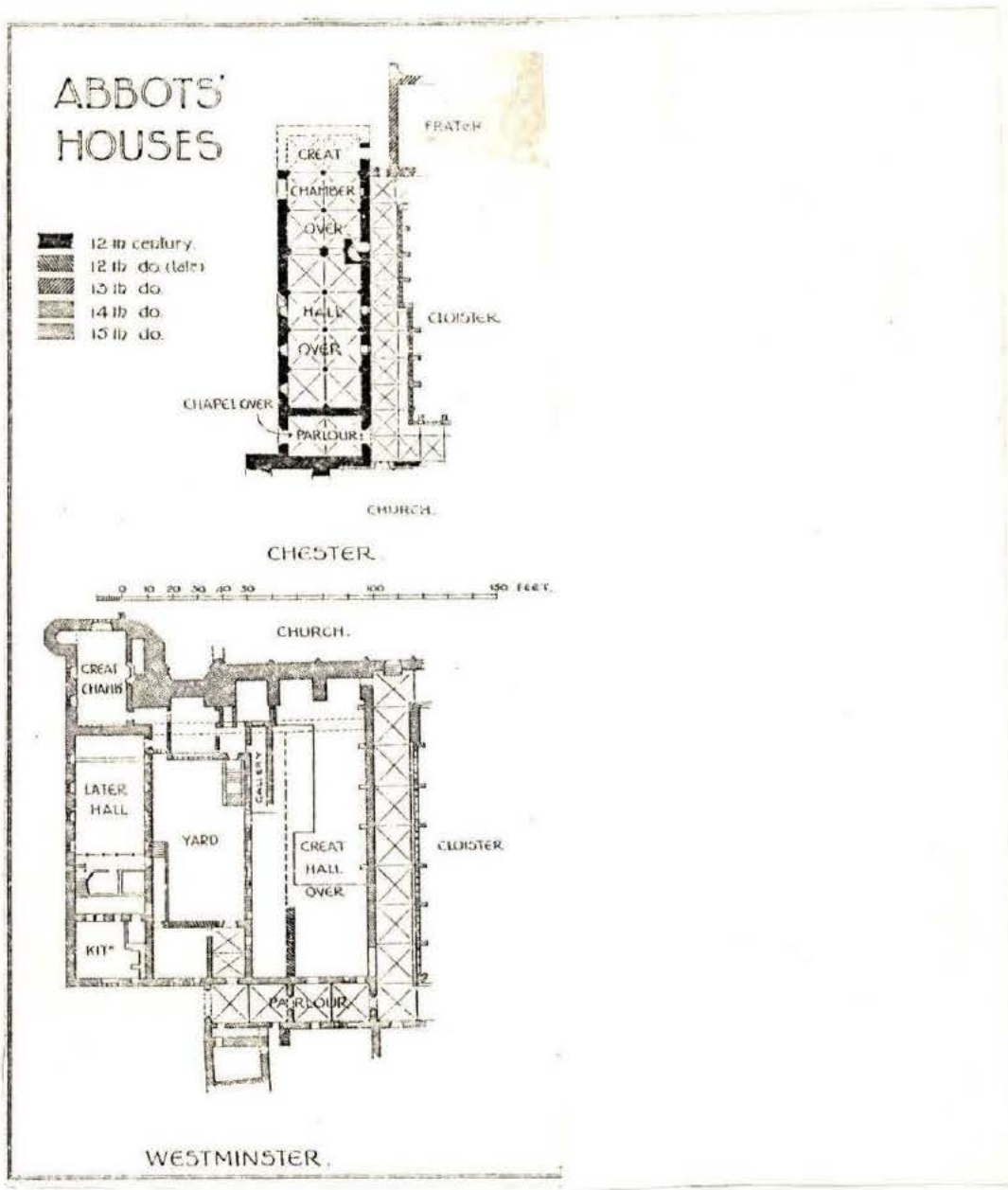


Figure 27. Abbot's Lodgings  
 (Brakspear, "The Abbot's House at Battle.")

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*APPENDIX**FIRES AT ENGLISH BENEDICTINE MONASTERIES, 1066-1540*

Such singular events as fires were subjects of great interest to chroniclers, and so a great number of the fires which afflicted Benedictine houses during the Middle Ages were put on record. These records, however, are far from complete. It cannot be assumed that all fires were recorded by any one particular chronicler. Moreover, no house has the distinction of being completely chronicled through the period 1066-1540, and many houses never elicited a chronicler at all. Added to this, many records have been lost over the years, fire itself being a major cause of such losses. Thus, even if all of the available records were considered, a complete list of fires could never be compiled. This list makes no pretence to such completeness. The incidents of fire which are here enumerated were gleaned from only a cursory and haphazard consideration of the topic. Nevertheless, most of the major sources for most of the major houses were considered, and it is to be hoped that the following list is at least a fairly representative sampling of fires between 1066 and 1540 at Benedictine houses in England:

In 1067 at the time of the arrival of Archbishop Lanfranc a fire occurred at Christchurch, Canterbury. Nearly all the buildings except the church appear to have been destroyed.

About 1070 in the time of Abbot Thorold (1069-1098) Hereward the Wake attacked and burned the abbey of Peterborough. All the monastic buildings were destroyed, but the abbey church was saved. Shortly thereafter the church itself was set on fire by the carelessness of the monks and damaged to an indeterminate extent.

On 15 October 1091 the abbey church at Winchcombe was struck by lightning and the tower 'rent in twain' (lightning was often the cause of fires).

In 1102 Gloucester Abbey church suffered some damage by fire.

In 1113 there was a fire in Worcester Abbey church. The damage seems to have been limited mainly to the roofs.

On 4 August 1116 a disastrous fire consumed almost the whole of Peterborough abbey as well as most of the town. It started in the bake-house and burned everything except the new chapter house, dormitory, and refectory. The fire lasted for nine days in the tower of the church, and on the ninth day a wind spread it to the abbot's lodgings.

On 8 March 1122 a fire almost totally destroyed the abbey of Gloucester. It is thought to have destroyed the wooden roof of the nave, and there are still signs of calcination on the piers.

It has been claimed that a fire damaged Canterbury precipitating the rededication of the church in 1130.

A fire at Worcester on 13 Cal. Jul., 1133 apparently damaged the church and conventual buildings as well as the castle and city.

On 29 July 1137 the church at Bath Abbey was burned.

Also in 1137 a great fire did extensive damage to St. Mary's Abbey and the rest of the city of York.

A fire in 1137 or 1138 destroyed the city of Rochester and all of the cathedral priory. The monks were temporarily dispersed among various abbeys. Repairs were not begun until the appointment of Bishop Ascelin (1142-1148), who appears to have restored the house.

In 1139 the city of Worcester was put to fire, but the cathedral (priory ?) appears to have escaped damage.

In 1141 Hyde Abbey in Winchester was burned. The rebuilding of the church was only begun in 1182.

About 1150 a fire at Bury St. Edmund's Abbey damaged the abbot's hall, the refectory, the dormitory, the chapter house, and the infirmary. These buildings were repaired and reroofed during the time of Abbot Ordning (1148-1156).

In 1151 the church and monastic buildings of Winchcombe Abbey suffered serious damage by fire. It started in cottages near the abbey, and as there was probably as yet no stone wall around the abbey, the fire spread easily and the whole house was reduced to ashes.

At Westminster a fire in the time of Abbot Laurence (c1153-c1175) burned and ruined most of the monastery. Henry II actively helped in the rebuilding.

On the day of the Decollation of John the Baptist, 1168, at St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, the church was almost entirely burned. It is not known what part of the buildings were damaged, but the rebuilding probably took a considerable length of time, for in 1178 the abbey was granted the church at Faversham to help with repairs.

Crowland Abbey was damaged by fire in the later 12th century. Rebuilding was well under way in 1175.

On 5 September 1174 at Christchurch, Canterbury, a fire broke out in a workshop near the cathedral at about 9 a.m. Six hours later the roof of the church caught fire and the choir was burned out. It was restored at first by William of Sens and then by William the Englishman.

On 11 April 1177 there was a great conflagration in the city of Rochester. The convent does not seem to have been greatly affected by it.

A fire in 1178 at Tewkesbury badly damaged the main conventual buildings, but the church appears not to have suffered.

Gloucester Abbey suffered from a fire in 1179.

Also in 1179 Gervase of Canterbury records a 'disastrous fire' at Rochester Cathedral Priory. It was probably not all that disastrous but seems to have destroyed or damaged the bishop's palace.

About 1180 the city of Chester almost entirely burned down. The extent of the damage to St. Werburgh's Abbey is unknown (Burne does not associate this with the ruinous state of the abbey mentioned in 1186).

In 1180 there was a fire at Worcester Cathedral Priory.

On 25 May 1184 a fire destroyed the Abbey of Glastonbury, including the church and all the monastic buildings except Henry of Blois' bell tower. As there was an abbatial vacancy at the time and the temporalities of the house were in the hands of King Henry II, rebuilding was begun with royal aid.

In 1189 there was yet another disastrous fire at Worcester Cathedral Priory which did great damage.

Gloucester Abbey suffered from fire in 1190.

On 15 Kal. Maii, 1202, Worcester cathedral and the adjoining monastic offices were once more visited by a fire and the monks were homeless for a while.

In 1205 a fire partially destroyed the monastery of Tewkesbury including the roofs of the south transept and the choir.

At Gloucester Abbey some of the monastic offices, including the bakehouse and brewhouse, were destroyed in a fire in 1222.

In 1223 the eastern arm of Pershore Abbey church burned down. It may have been under construction at the time.

A fire occurred in the monastery or neighbouring offices at Tewkesbury Abbey in 1234.

Another fire occurred in the monastery or neighbouring offices at Tewkesbury in 1256.

In 1261 the bell tower at Evesham was set on fire by lightning. It was repaired in 1278 but was partly wrecked again in 1291 by a storm.

On 4 May 1264 the citizens of Winchester rose against the monks and burned the priory gateway, the gate called Kingsgate, the upper part of the church and all the houses near the wall that belonged to the priory.

On 17 May 1265 at Abingdon the south west tower of the abbey church was struck by lightning and much damaged. The building caught fire, and the flames were only extinguished with some difficulty.

At Norwich in 1272 rioters from the town burned the whole church except for the Lady Chapel and most of the conventual buildings.

On 15 May 1278 the city of Chester almost entirely burned down. The abbey church does not seem to have suffered.

At Pershore in 1288 a fire broke out in the bakehouse and brewhouse. It spread to the bell tower from there and eventually consumed nearly all the church.

A fire on 29 March 1298 at Westminster Abbey destroyed most of the monastic buildings but did not reach the church. The renewal of the monastic buildings was not finished until the time of Abbot Litleton (1362-1386).

On the Feast of the Epiphany, 1300 a disastrous fire devastated the domestic buildings of Gloucester Abbey. It spread to the small bell tower, the great camera, and the cloister. The dormitory suffered some damage, and in 1303 it was pulled down and a new one was finished in 1313.

There is some evidence for a fire in the west range at Birkenhead in the early 14th century.

A 1314 document says that a fire had wrought havoc amongst the domestic buildings at Tewkesbury Abbey.

During a riot in May 1327, the mob burned the gates of Abingdon Abbey and certain of the houses within the abbey precinct. Buildings were put to the torch, and the flames were only extinguished with some difficulty. The abbey muniments from the abbot's treasury were burned in his curia.

Riots in the summer of 1327 resulted in the sacking and burning of a large portion of the Bury St. Edmunds Abbey. Gates, doors, and windows were broken indiscriminantly. In addition, at least 13 manor houses were burned.

A 1327 document states that the greater part of Pershore Abbey was destroyed by fire. As late as 1345 the refectory and dormitory were still in need of repair.

In 1349 a riot between the monks of Worcester Cathedral Priory and the townsmen resulted in the breaking of the priory gates, and there was an attempt to set the church on fire.

On 14 April 1377 St. Mary's Abbey, York, was struck by lightning and a fire was started. The central tower and transept were damaged and the fire spread to the south choir aisle, nave, and cloisters but these were all saved.

In 1429 the belfry of the crossing tower of Durham Cathedral was struck by lightning and suffered some damage by fire. Rebuilding was begun shortly after 1456.

In 1436 the roof of Sherborne Abbey church was burned by the parishioners.

In 1446 the great bell tower at Winchester Cathedral Priory was destroyed by fire.

A fire in 1447 seems to have damaged the dormitory of Westminster Abbey.

There was a fire in the nave of Norwich Cathedral in 1463. The pulpitum was remodelled consequently.

On 20 January 1465/5 the church of Bury St. Edmunds Abbey was gutted by fire, and the central tower collapsed. The fire was caused by careless plumbers working on the roof of the church. The fire burned out all of the church, the refectory, the 'fleche' of the palace, and the abbot's chapel. The repairs were extensive and were not finished until after 1506.

In October 1535 an outbreak of fire at Christchurch, Canterbury, did a great deal of damage.

The instances of fire at Benedictine monasteries decreased dramatically after the 12th century. Of the fires noted here, 26 were in the 12th century, 13 in the 13th century, 8 in the 14th century, 6 in the 15th century, and 1 in the first forty years of the 16th century.

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