

Fashions in Monastic Endowment: the Foundations of the Clare Family, 1066–1314

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The great expansion in monasticism in Normandy and England in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is a commonplace of medieval history, as is the marked diminution in monastic grants after *c.* 1200. Far more attention, however, has been paid to the religious houses than to their founders, and it is only by looking at a baronial family over a long period that one can discern the fashions which undoubtedly existed in monastic benefaction and the changes in attitude of successive generations. The Clare family were both long-lasting and prolific, and, because of the numerous changes in the landed position of various members of the family, it is possible to see how closely in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the acquisition of new territories and the endowment of monasteries went together. Moreover, we are able to trace the changing preferences for different monastic orders and, to some extent, the reasons for this, and, in addition, to see this in the context not only of Normandy and England, but of Wales and Ireland as well. Whereas in the eleventh and early twelfth century, the Clares' gifts passed to Benedictine houses, many of them Norman or with Norman connections, they became more interested later in the new orders of the Augustinian canons and Cistercians which were spreading rapidly over Europe. At the same time they made grants to the military orders of the Hospitallers and Templars which, by giving knights the opportunity to combine fighting with a monastic life, fused two ideals of the twelfth-century world. In contrast to the variety and amount of these monastic benefactions, the Clares were content in the thirteenth century to make only the occasional grant, but they were insistent on maintaining their rights of patronage. In addition, their interest turned to the new orders of friars. There is, however, no indication here of continuous family interest from one generation to the next as would have been the case in the early twelfth century.

It is clear that any view of the Normans which simply sees them as warlike, acquisitive and immersed in territorial interests is bound to be one-sided, for they coupled with their secular ambitions a strong religious sense. This is seen in its most extreme form in the case of those Normans of the late eleventh century, men like Richard son of Count Gilbert, the founder of the Clare family, who, after a life of martial and political activity, ended their days in a monastery. It was more usual, however, for lords, knights and freemen to make grants of land, churches or tithes to monasteries, and such gifts were encouraged by the Church. Its attitude is brought out by a letter to Richard son of Count Gilbert from Anselm, written shortly after he became abbot of Bec in 1078. He pointed out that Richard and his wife Rohaise showed their love towards God in their grants to the monastery and in their promises of future gifts; they were included daily in the monks' prayers, and their generosity would be rewarded in the heavenly kingdom.¹

This practical interpretation of piety was typical of the age; without gifts of land and revenue the new foundations could not have existed, and the Clare family, like many of their contemporaries, were often eager benefactors. At the same time, there was a strong element of hard-headed realism in the monastic endowment, and the Clares by no means impoverished themselves in making their grants, a large proportion of which consisted of churches and tithes. These spiritual revenues had often fallen into lay hands before the eleventh century and would be regarded by a Norman baron or knight as an integral part of his property, and considered in the same light as his other possessions.² Tithes were in theory payable to the parish church, but Church reformers, in their anxiety to recover them from laymen, encouraged monastic possession.³ The Cistercians later opposed such grants, but other orders, such as the Benedictines, welcomed them. In view of the growing pressure against lay ownership of churches and spiritual revenues, lords, such as the Clares, were willing to present these to monasteries; a large proportion of their gifts was thus derived from a source of revenue which they could themselves no longer fully exploit.

In Normandy, where the barons were following their dukes' example in making foundations from c. 1030, the Clare family were most closely associated with the abbey of Bec; the association however was originally based on hostility, and grants before 1066 were meagre. When Bec's founder, Herluin, a knight in the service of Count Gilbert of Brionne, decided to retire from the world and left the count's household, Gilbert

¹ *Sancti Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt, Edinburgh 1946, iii. 220-1, *ep.* 94.

² D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, Cambridge 1950, 596. This point is illustrated in the cartulary of the priory of Stoke by Clare; B.L. Cotton MS Appendix xxi. fo. 28a.

³ G. Constable, *Monastic Tithes from their Origins to the Twelfth Century*, Cambridge 1964, 95.

seized his goods and ravaged his lands. Eventually the two were reconciled; Herluin was released from his service and allowed to keep his father's inheritance, and it was on this land at Bonneville, near Brionne, that he built his hermitage.⁴ There is no indication that Gilbert gave any additional land at this stage; possibly he considered that by the release of Herluin and his patrimony he had been generous enough. The lack of a good water supply prompted the move to a new site in 1039, and Herluin approached the count for a piece of the forest of Brionne; as his biographer remarked, Count Gilbert had nothing of value there.⁵ It was probably at this time that the count made certain additional grants and released Herluin's brothers from the service which they owed to him.⁶

Count Gilbert was murdered in 1040, and his two sons, Richard and Baldwin, spent the next eleven years in exile in Flanders. On their return they were restored to only a part of their father's lands, Baldwin receiving Le Sap and Meules, and Richard, Bienfaite and Orbec. Their resources for making grants to Bec were therefore limited, although Baldwin gave land in Le Sap and Richard the churches and tithes of Orbec and Bienfaite.⁷ Richard also confirmed Duke William's grant of the churches in Auge which had previously been part of Count Gilbert's demesne and had been taken over by the duke.⁸ The two brothers did not, however, confine their benefactions to Bec. Baldwin gave the tithes of Meules to the house of Saint-Amand of Rouen⁹ and tithes and land to the abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen, whilst Richard made gifts to Jumièges which were confirmed and extended by his son Roger.¹⁰

It was only after the Norman Conquest that the Clares were able to become more generous patrons. By 1086 Baldwin was lord of the honour of Okehampton in Devon which was valued at nearly £350, and Richard was one of the wealthiest tenants-in-chief in England as his lands, centred on Tonbridge in Kent and Clare in Suffolk, were valued at just over £950. Both men, like most of their contemporaries, considered that, although most of their estates were in England, their real interests lay in Normandy. The links which had been forged between lords and abbeys

⁴ *Vita Herluini*, in J. Armitage Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster*, Cambridge 1911, 89-91.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁶ *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066*, ed. M. Fauroux (Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie, xxxvi, 1961), no. 98. E. Porée, *Histoire de l'abbaye du Bec*, Evreux 1901, i. 43, 326-7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, i. 141-2, 329. *Recueil des actes de Henri II*, ed. L. V. Delisle and E. Berger (Chartes et Diplômes relatifs à l'histoire de France, 1916-27), ii. 376.

⁸ *Actes des ducs de Normandie*, no. 179.

⁹ *Ibid.* no. 192. M.-J. le Cacheux, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Amand de Rouen des origines à la fin du seizième siècle*, Caen 1937, 25, 178.

¹⁰ *Actes des ducs de Normandie*, nos. 220, 231. *Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la reine Mathilde pour les abbayes caennaises*, ed. L. Musset (Mémoires de la société des antiquaires de Normandie, xxxvii, 1967), no. 2. *Chartes de l'abbaye de Jumièges*, ed. J.-J. Vernier, Rouen 1916, i. 88-9, 102-3; ii. 25.

before the Conquest therefore continued and were strengthened after 1066, and it became the current trend to bestow gifts of English lands, tithes or churches on Norman houses, sometimes with the intention of founding a dependent cell. Although, as time went on, the type of monastery in favour changed, it remained usual until the later twelfth century to 'celebrate' the acquisition of extensive estates with a monastic grant.

The Clare family became the principal benefactors of Bec after 1066, and the strength of their ties with the monastery is emphasised by the fact that in the first two generations in England four of their members entered the religious life at some point of their lives. Richard son of Count Gilbert died as a monk at the cell of St Neots, his youngest son Richard fitz Richard entered Bec itself as a child, and his daughter Adeliza ended her life at the daughter-house of Conflans; Guiger, the illegitimate son of Baldwin son of Count Gilbert, was also a monk at Bec.¹¹ Of the four dependent priories founded by Bec in England, the Clares were responsible for three, Cowick, St Neots, and Stoke by Clare.¹² Baldwin son of Count Gilbert gave Christow in Devon to Bec, a gift confirmed by his wife Emma and his sons Robert and Richard.¹³ His other son William gave land in Cowick, Devon; it is not clear whether he intended to found a cell, but one had been established by 1144.¹⁴ With the death of Baldwin's sons, however, Cowick passed out of the hands of the Clares.

Far more is known about the gifts of Richard son of Count Gilbert and his family. Quite apart from the foundation of cells, it is apparent from Domesday Book and charter evidence that considerable grants were made to Bec itself. On Richard's lands in Surrey, the abbey held the manor of Tooting, land in Streatham, and two-thirds of the demesne tithes in several of his manors;¹⁵ it was usual at this time for tithes to be handed over from the grantor's demesne.¹⁶ There is no evidence that Tooting was ever a distinct cell. A cell might have developed there had not Richard decided to found a priory at St Neots, the former dependency of Ely, and had not the greater wealth and importance of the honour of Clare made the foundation of a priory there a more obvious step in 1090. At Clare, Richard appears to have respected the possessions of the college

¹¹ *Sancti Anselmi Opera Omnia*, iii. 220-1, ep. 94, refers to Richard as *parvulus monachus*. J. H. Round, *Feudal England*, London 1895, 478-9. Richard became abbot of Ely in 1100.

¹² The exception was Goldcliff, Monmouthshire, founded in 1113 by Robert of Chandos.

¹³ H. E. Salter, 'Two deeds about the Abbey of Bec', *EHR*, xl (1925), 74. *Actes de Henri II*, i. 564.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 563. D. Knowles and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales*, London 1971, 63.

¹⁵ *Select Documents of the English Lands of the Abbey of Bec*, ed. M. Chibnall (Camden Society, 3rd ser., lxxiii, 1951), nos. 40, 41. Salter, 'Two deeds', 75-6. M. Morgan, *The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec*, Oxford 1946, 149. *Domesday Book*, ed. A. Farley and H. Ellis (Record Commission, 1783-1816), i. 34b.

¹⁶ R. Lennard, 'Peasant tithe-collectors in Norman England', *EHR*, lxxix (1954), 593.

of secular clerks, founded by Aelfric in the reign of Edward the Confessor; these mainly consisted of churches and tithes on the demesne manors, and there were thus fewer spiritual revenues available to grant to Bec. Yet two-thirds of the demesne tithes at Little Sampford, Essex, and Standon, Hertfordshire, were given, together with one villein at Standon, presumably to act as the tithe-collector.¹⁷ It was already apparent that Richard's example would be followed by his men, and he confirmed grants of tithes by a number of his vassals.¹⁸ Such gifts as these directly to Bec were rarely made by Richard's descendants; similarly the Clare vassals in the twelfth century generally presented their gifts to the priory of Stoke by Clare rather than to Bec. In fact, by the early twelfth century the preponderance of their English lands and English interests meant that they turned automatically to English rather than to Norman foundations.

Far more important in the long term than these isolated grants of land and tithes was the founding of two cells of the abbey of Bec, St Neots in Huntingdonshire and Stoke-by-Clare in Suffolk. In both cases an Anglo-Saxon religious community was remodelled; St Neots had been a dependency of the abbey of Ely, but was probably seized by Richard son of Count Gilbert just before Ely's surrender in 1071.¹⁹ Richard founded a cell there by 1080.²⁰ The request to Bec for monks was made jointly by Richard and his wife Rohaise, and Abbot Anselm agreed to send them.²¹ In his letter Anselm stressed that they were completely dependent on their patrons who were urged to afford all protection to the monks. Anselm continued to watch over the growth of the priory. He apparently visited St Neots when he was in England c. 1081;²² he examined the relics, and later, as archbishop of Canterbury, gave an indulgence to those who contributed to the building of the church.²³

Anselm probably felt some anxiety as to whether the endowments would be sufficient for the monks. It is not clear what lands Richard gave to them; Anselm's letter referred to a promise of future grants, and probably the endowment was spread over a long period.²⁴ In 1086 their

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 592. Salter, 'Two deeds', 76. Morgan, *English Lands of Bec*, 147. *Select Documents of Bec*, no. 39.

¹⁸ Salter, 'Two deeds', 76. Morgan, *English Lands of Bec*, 147-8. *Select Documents of Bec*, no. 40.

¹⁹ *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E. O. Blake (Camden Society, 3rd ser., xcii, 1962), 103-4, 188-9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 104. Porée, *Histoire de l'abbaye du Bec*, i. 161-3. G. C. Gorham, *The History and Antiquities of Eynesbury and St Neot's*, London 1824, i. 61-3. Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 75. M. Chibnall, 'The relations of St Anselm with the English dependencies of the Abbey of Bec, 1079-93', *Spicilegium Beccense*, Paris 1959, i. 523-4.

²¹ *Sancti Anselmi Opera Omnia*, iii. 220-1, ep. 94.

²² Gorham, *Eynesbury and St Neot's*, i. 66-7. Chibnall, 'The relations of St Anselm', 522, 525.

²³ *Sancti Anselmi Opera Omnia*, v. 421/2, ep. 473. *The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton, 1280-99*, ed. R. M. T. Hill (Lincoln Record Society, lx, 1965) v. 79-80.

²⁴ Cf. V. H. Galbraith, 'Monastic foundation charters of the eleventh and twelfth centuries', *Cambridge Historical Jnl.*, iv (1932-4), 214.

possessions were meagre; Rohaise held the manor of Eynesbury where St Neots was situated, and a food rent was paid to the monks; they also held land of Richard in Eaton Socon, on the other side of the River Ouse.²⁵ The gift by Rohaise of the whole manor of Eynesbury, made with the consent of all the members of the family in 1113, amounted practically to a refoundation,²⁶ and it is likely that it was not until after this grant was made that the monks felt economically secure.

St Neots was essentially a Clare family monastery. It was here that Richard became a monk and was buried,²⁷ and one of his younger sons, Robert fitz Richard, was also buried in the monastery.²⁸ Endowments were given by many of the descendants of Richard and Rohaise; the eldest branch, holding the patronage, was most closely concerned, but the younger lines maintained their interest until the end of the twelfth century. St Neots is the only Clare house where this occurred, and the reason probably lies in its early establishment by the founder of the family. None of the family grants, however, approached that of Rohaise in importance. Nothing was given by the eldest branch until the time of Roger of Clare, earl of Hertford (d. 1173), who granted two churches in Norfolk, one of which had previously been given to Stoke.²⁹ Most probably this was because the earl's father and grandfather were more interested in the priory of Stoke by Clare, close to the *caput* of the honour of Clare. Of the other descendants of Rohaise, her son Roger fitz Richard gave tithes at Everton in Bedfordshire; his estates were inherited by his nephew Gilbert Strongbow, earl of Pembroke, who granted Everton church, and the whole gift was confirmed to St Neots by his son Richard Strongbow.³⁰ Another son, Robert, who was buried there, gave land at Wimbish in Essex, and his grant was increased by his son Walter and his daughter Matilda.³¹ Gilbert of Montfichet and his son Richard, related by marriage to the Clares, also made a gift.³² There is little evidence that any of the Clare sub-tenants made grants, apart from Richard son of Simon.³³ In all, an impression is gained of wide family interest in the house in the

²⁵ *Domesday Book*, i. 207a, 216a.

²⁶ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, London 1817-30 (hereafter cited as *MA*), iii. 473. *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1100-35*, ed. C. Johnson and H. A. Cronne, Oxford 1956, no. 1015a. B.L. Cotton MS Faustina A iv, fo. 45b.

²⁷ *MA*, v. 269. *The Domesday Monachorum of Christ Church Canterbury*, ed. D. C. Douglas, London 1944, 40.

²⁸ B.L. Cotton MS Faustina A iv, fos. 78a, 79b.

²⁹ *MA*, iii. 474. B.L. Cotton MS Faustina A iv, fo. 77b. The church of Barton Bendish was granted to Stoke by Gilbert of Tonbridge; B.L. Cotton MS Appendix xxi, fo. 64b.

³⁰ B.L. Cotton MS Faustina A iv, fos. 46a, 73a.

³¹ *Ibid.*, fos. 78a-80a. *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, ed. A. Morey and C. N. L. Brooke, Cambridge 1967, no. 449.

³² B.L. Cotton MS Faustina A iv, fo. 37a. *MA*, iii. 476.

³³ *Ibid.*, iii. 476. Richard was a Clare honorial baron, holding land in Essex and Norfolk.

twelfth century; although many of the grants were small, they amounted to a significant total.

The eldest branch of the Clare family exercised considerable rights as patrons. Alien priories such as St Neots were dependent on their founders' families, and it is possible that this was particularly the case before Bec tightened up her relations with her dependencies in the thirteenth century.³⁴ Unfortunately the evidence dates not from the twelfth but from the next century when it is definitely known that the Clares exercised their right of patronage on several occasions;³⁵ in three cases a monk from Bec was appointed. New priors had to bring with them letters both to the patron and the bishop asking for presentation.³⁶ Richard, earl of Gloucester, (d. 1262) claimed the custody of the priory during a vacancy, when the prior had died, been removed or was overseas;³⁷ probably this right went back to the twelfth century. This charter from Earl Richard confirmed to the monks their possessions in St Neots but made no additional grant. It points the contrast between the formal relationship of his time and the close family links of the twelfth century.

Like St Neots, the priory of Stoke-by-Clare was founded as a cell dependent on Bec, but, unlike the former house, it was primarily associated with the eldest branch of the family and with the honour of Clare; it was here that Gilbert of Clare, earl of Hertford (d. 1152), and his brother Earl Roger (d. 1173) were buried.³⁸ Stoke can be compared with other honorial monasteries, such as Little Dunmow in Essex, connected with one particular Clare line, rather than with the family as a whole. As at St Neots, an Anglo-Saxon community was taken over and converted to Norman use. Stoke's principal endowments came from Gilbert of Tonbridge (d. 1117), the second son of Richard son of Count Gilbert and the heir to his English estates, and these were supplemented by the grants of his descendants and sub-tenants. The cartulary of the priory, compiled in the second half of the thirteenth century, shows in detail how its possessions were built up and throws considerable light on the relationship between priory, lord and vassals. Not only were many individual charters copied, but two confirmation charters by Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury, one dated 1150-4, and the other 1150-61, provide much information on the priory's early history.³⁹

³⁴ Morgan, *English Lands of Bec*, 19, 21, 29. St Neots paid the yearly sum of £1. 10s., and Stoke £1., as tokens of their subjection to Bec.

³⁵ MA, iii. 464.

³⁶ B.L. Cotton MS Domitian A xi, fos. 115b-116a. Cf. R. M. T. Hill, 'Bishop Sutton and the institution of heads of religious houses in the diocese of Lincoln', *EHR*, lviii (1943), 204.

³⁷ B.L. Cotton MS Faustina A iv, fo. 27b. Gorham, *Eynesbury and St Neot's*, ii. cxli-iii.

³⁸ B.L. Cotton MS Appendix xxi, fo. 162a.

³⁹ A. Saltman, *Theobald Archbishop of Canterbury*, London 1956, 477-90. MA, vi. part 3, 1659-61. B.L. Cotton MS Appendix xxi, fos. 64a-70a.

Gilbert of Tonbridge is known to have made a number of restorations to the Church of lands and men seized by his father Richard. His foundation of a monastery in Clare Castle in 1090 (to be transferred to Stoke in 1124) was, however, his greatest and most permanent benefaction. The college for secular clerks, founded at Clare by Aelfric, father of Wisgar, in the time of Edward the Confessor, was transformed, and a number of additional possessions given. The college had been seized by the Conqueror and been given to Richard son of Count Gilbert along with Wisgar's other estates. Although at least some of its rights were usurped by the Normans,⁴⁰ it had continued to function, and the names of the seven prebendaries in 1090 indicate that several of them were Norman. By Gilbert's grant, the collegiate church of St John the Baptist in Clare Castle was handed over to Bec for the new monastery, and the monks were to receive the revenues from the prebends as soon as they fell vacant.⁴¹ The prebends comprised a certain amount of land, but their principal endowment consisted of tithes and churches, including those of the three most important demesne manors in Suffolk, Clare, Hundon and Desning-in-Gazeley. The most valuable grant made by Gilbert himself included the tithes from the demesne of his Norfolk manors and the churches when vacant; these lands had comprised the estates of Rainald son of Ivo and were probably acquired after 1100.⁴² There is little indication that Gilbert's brothers associated themselves with his gifts, although Roger and Robert agreed that the monks be given fishing rights in the river Stour between Sturmer and Clare Castle; Robert mentioned as one of his reasons his love for his kinsman Gerard Giffard, then prior.⁴³

The close proximity of castle and monastery probably proved disturbing to the monks, and Gilbert's son, Richard fitz Gilbert (d. 1136), moved them to Stoke by Clare in 1124, and agreed to help them to set up their new church.⁴⁴ The monks' lands and houses in Clare were exchanged for possessions elsewhere. From this time until 1217, the Clare lords regularly confirmed their predecessors' grants to Stoke, often making a small additional grant. Thus, Richard's son Gilbert, earl of Hertford (d. 1152), confirmed the monastery's possessions on the day of the dedication of the church of St Augustine, in the presence of Archbishop Theobald; he added his own gift of the church of Bures in Suffolk.⁴⁵ Further confirmation was made by his brother and successor, Earl Roger (d. 1173).⁴⁶ Roger himself gave £5 worth of land in Stoke to the

⁴⁰ B.L. Cotton MS Appendix xxi, fo. 87b.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, fo. 67b.

⁴² *Ibid.*, fo. 64b. Gilbert's Norfolk manors were at Barton Bendish, Beechamwell, Crimplasham and Wereham.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, fos. 64b, 69a-b.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, fos. 25a, 65a.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, fos. 19a, 19b-20a.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, fos. 20a-b, 21b, 22a, 22b, 23a-24b.

monastery, provided there was enough land there; if not, land was to be granted in Thaxted.⁴⁷ Roger also gave relics.⁴⁸ His son, Richard, earl of Hertford (d. 1217), granted the hermitage at Standon in Hertfordshire, on the condition that the hermit should stay there for his lifetime,⁴⁹ and he also gave the churches of Carbrooke in Norfolk and Thaxted in Essex.⁵⁰ Small grants were likewise made by the earls' wives. Matilda of St Hilary, wife of the Earl Roger, gave a yearly payment of half a mark from her mill in Carbrooke, and her daughter-in-law, Amice, handed over a messuage in Sudbury, Suffolk.⁵¹ Both these grants were probably made from their *maritagia*. Amice also founded the hospital of the Holy Sepulchre in Sudbury,⁵² which she gave to Stoke after her husband's death.⁵³ It was only after 1217 when the Clares became earls of Gloucester that they ceased to show an interest in the priory, apart from their rights of patronage.

According to Archbishop Theobald's second confirmation charter,⁵⁴ Gilbert of Tonbridge entreated his barons to give to the monastery as much as they desired of their lands, churches and tithes, provided that they did not impoverish their successors, and they all very willingly made grants for themselves and their men; the practical common-sense element in Gilbert's appeal is typical of the Clares. Most of the gifts were in Essex and Suffolk, a few in Norfolk, and only a handful from the Clare lands in Kent and Surrey.⁵⁵ Holdings granted were generally small; thirty acres at Rede in Suffolk was the largest amount referred to.⁵⁶ Occasionally, houses or mills might be given.⁵⁷ The most frequent type of grant, however, comprised tithes; according to a later charter, the barons in the time of Gilbert of Tonbridge confirmed their tithes to the monks for ever, in the presence of Herbert Losinga, bishop of Norwich.⁵⁸ Thus, to take only a few examples, Roger of Gyney gave two-thirds of his tithes at Haveringland and Whitwell, Norfolk, and of his land in Norwich, together with St Clement's church in the city; Geoffrey of Favarches granted two-thirds of his tithes at Walsingham; and Osulph Maskerel two-thirds of his tithes at Cavendish, Suffolk.⁵⁹ It was presumably for

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, fo. 21a.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, fo. 22b.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 24b.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, fo. 26a, 26b.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, fos. 28b, 31a-b.

⁵² *Ibid.*, fos. 29a-b, 31a.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, fo. 30a-b.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, fo. 67a.

⁵⁵ E.g., *ibid.*, fo. 68a; Ingelram of Abernon gave the church of Woking, Surrey, together with his Suffolk grants.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, fo. 65b.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, fo. 69a.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, fo. 28a; Herbert was bishop of Norwich between 1090 and 1119.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 65b.

reasons of prudence that the grants were often confirmed by the donors' wives, sons and other relatives, as well as by the Clares themselves.⁶⁰

It is not clear why the honorial barons made these grants, although most were given before 1150 when there was a strong personal relationship between the lord and his vassals. Several of them made their gifts for the repose of the souls of Earls Gilbert or Roger, as well as of their own families.⁶¹ Thus there was probably a feeling of loyalty and common identity which prompted the vassals' gifts to Stoke. Moreover, as has been seen, pressure was being brought to bear on laymen to relinquish their holding of tithes and churches; the priory, by appropriation, could gain far more in revenue from a church than could a layman. It should not be assumed, however, that the donors had no further motive. Wildelard of Balliol and his wife received £1 for their grant of land in Stoke,⁶² and such a payment may have been common. An intermediate lord might expect recompense for confirming the grant of a sub-tenant; towards the end of the twelfth century, Gilbert of Balliol confirmed Gilbert of Danmartin's grant of land in Great Bardfield which belonged to the Balliol fee; Gilbert of Balliol was paid one mark by the monks, and his mother 23s. and six loads of corn, since she claimed the land as her dower.⁶³ There is no means of knowing whether such payments were general, but the examples found are certainly suggestive.

In a number of cases, grants were made so that the donors or members of their families could become monks. In the second half of the twelfth century, Gilbert of Danmartin gave the church of East Peckham in Kent, the mill there and houses in Tonbridge and Blechingley, so that he could become a monk when he chose and so that the anniversary of his death could be celebrated.⁶⁴ Earlier, Elinand the sheriff, who held land in 1086, made a substantial grant when his son Adam who was disabled entered the monastery; the gift was increased by his son Geoffrey who also became a monk, together with his nephew Richard.⁶⁵ Geoffrey of Blavenni, a knight of Roger fitz Richard, the elder brother of Gilbert of Tonbridge, gave land at Birdbrook in Essex when he assumed the monastic habit.⁶⁶

The church authorities could and did take action in the event of non-payment of tithe,⁶⁷ but in the twelfth century the Clares themselves often dealt with such matters. Earl Roger acted on several occasions. He

⁶⁰ E.g., *ibid.*, fos. 68b–69a.

⁶¹ E.g., *ibid.*, fos. 81b, 114b, 170a. It is probable that this was also the practice earlier, but that the charters have not survived, or that the gifts were made orally and summarised in the confirmation charters.

⁶² *Ibid.*, fo. 69a.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, fo. 171a.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, fos. 50a, 170a–b.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, fos. 65b, 69a, 77a.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, fos. 66a, 69b.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fo. 63a–b.

ordered that the monks were to hold their possessions freely and were to deal with their churches as they wished.⁶⁸ He commanded his bailiffs to ensure that the monks received their rents; otherwise they were to distrain on the chattels of the defaulters.⁶⁹ Yet another letter announced his displeasure that his grandmother, Adeliza of Clermont, the widow of Gilbert of Tonbridge, his steward Peter and his men of Norfolk were interfering with the monks and their possessions; he ordered them to leave the monks alone and not to lay hands on their goods.⁷⁰

The early development of the priory at Stoke was, therefore, intimately bound up with the house of Clare. Endowed as it was by the lords and their vassals, mainly in the first half of the twelfth century, the execution of their charters depended on the goodwill of their successors and the strength of the Clares and their officials. This is not to say that some grants were not made from outside the honour. William, earl of Gloucester, confirmed the gift of Stambourne church in Essex made by his vassal Robert of Greinville; the first witness of this charter was however Richard, earl of Hertford.⁷¹ The close relationship between the Clares and the priory continued at least until 1200, but was lost in the thirteenth century.⁷²

The connection between the Clare family and the abbey of Bec and its cells brings out a crucial factor affecting the changing attitude to monastic endowment about 1100. No longer were baronial interests restricted to Normandy, but more and more grants were being made to English houses, not only cells of Norman abbeys, but English Benedictine houses as well. This was especially true of the Clares who, as has been seen, had only limited possessions in Normandy before the Conquest. In fact, the eldest branch, from the time of Gilbert of Tonbridge to that of Earl Roger, had no lands at all in the duchy; Orbec and Bienfaite passed to Roger, eldest son of Richard son of Count Gilbert, and then to his nephew Gilbert Strongbow *c.* 1135, and were subsequently lost as a result of the Angevin conquest of 1144.

The years between 1090 and 1140 saw the widest extent as well as the greatest variety in the Clares' monastic patronage; the most notable monastic benefactors were found in the second generation of the family in England and to a lesser degree in the third. Few important grants were made in Stephen's reign, in striking contrast to England as a whole. The reason for this lies in the vast increase of territory and influence gained by the family under Henry I. All the sons of Richard son of Count Gilbert benefited substantially. Thus, Gilbert of Tonbridge became lord of Ceredigion in West Wales in 1110, and at about the same time Robert fitz

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fo. 22a.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 21a.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, fo. 22a.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, fos. 28b-29a.

⁷² See below, pp. 446-7.

Richard became lord of the honour of Little Dunmow in Essex, valued at about £440 in 1086. Walter fitz Richard received a grant of lands in Lower Gwent, Gloucestershire and elsewhere in England sometime before 1119. Moreover, it was in 1100 that Richard fitz Richard became abbot of Ely. Probably shortly before 1130, Baldwin fitz Gilbert, younger son of Gilbert of Tonbridge and a knight at Henry I's court, gained the honour of Bourne in Lincolnshire through marriage. Usually within ten years of gaining their new estates, these men set about endowing a religious house; their foundations were often closely associated with honorial *capita*, as the desire of a lord to have a monastery especially connected with his family and his estates was very strong.

Many members of the family continued to patronise the Benedictine order and to make small grants to the Cluniacs. It was probably in the reign of Henry I that Roger fitz Richard was giving land to the abbey of Jumièges and to the Cluniac house of Longueville.⁷³ His brother-in-law, Eudo Dapifer, founded St John's Abbey at Colchester as a Benedictine house in 1096, and the first abbot was blessed in 1104.⁷⁴ Gilbert of Tonbridge and his wife made a small grant to the Cluniac priory of Lewes, and his sons and grandsons maintained an interest in the monastery.⁷⁵ Adeliza of Clermont, by this time Gilbert's widow, confirmed her tenants' gifts of land in Northamptonshire to the abbey of Thorney.⁷⁶ In 1139 Baldwin fitz Gilbert founded a cell of the abbey of Thorney at Deeping St James in Lincolnshire.⁷⁷

The most outstanding gift to a Benedictine house was made by Gilbert of Tonbridge to the abbey of Gloucester after his conquest of Ceredigion. As in his father's time, a religious foundation was replaced with a community rather more to his taste. It was usual for the Marcher lords to replace the *clas* of Welsh monasticism with Norman houses, and, sometime between 1115 and 1117, Gilbert handed over the *clas* of Llanbadarn Fawr in the north of Ceredigion to Gloucester Abbey, together with its commote, half the great fishery and the tithes of his demesne belonging to Castell Gwallter.⁷⁸ Monks were sent out to

⁷³ *Chartes de Jumièges*, ii. 25. *Chartes du prieuré de Longueville de l'ordre de Cluny antérieures à 1204*, ed. P. le Cacheux (Société de l'Histoire de Normandie, 1934), 2.

⁷⁴ J. H. Round, 'The early charters of St John's Abbey, Colchester', *EHR*, xvi (1901), 723-4.

⁷⁵ *The Chartulary of the Priory of St Pancras of Lewes*, ed. L. F. Salzman (Sussex Record Society, xxxviii. 1932), 120-1, 130-1, 155, 156. *The Surrey Portion of the Lewes Chartulary*, ed. D. Harrison (Surrey Archaeological Collections, xliii. 1935), 92, 96, and reprinted (Sussex Record Society, 1943), 9, 13. *The Norfolk Portion of the Chartulary of the Priory of St Pancras of Lewes*, ed. J. H. Bullock (Norfolk Record Society, xii. 1939), 17, and reprinted (Sussex Record Society, 1943), 17.

⁷⁶ *MA*, ii. 601, 603. *Facsimiles of Early Charters from Northamptonshire Collections*, ed. F. M. Stenton (Northamptonshire Record Society, iv, 1930), no. 18.

⁷⁷ B.L. Harley MS 3658, fo. 12a. *MA*, ii. 597.

⁷⁸ *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, ed. W. H. Hart (Rolls Series, 1863-7), i. 106; ii. 73-6. *Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, no. 1041.

Llanbadarn from Gloucester, and the cell was protected by Gilbert and his son Richard who specifically forbade any interference with the monks' lands.⁷⁹ The Welsh rising of 1136, with the consequent loss of Llanbadarn, brought the connection between the Clares and Gloucester to an end, even though the abbey still tried to cling to its rights in the reign of Henry II.⁸⁰ Gilbert of Tonbridge probably also gave the church of Cardigan to Gloucester, but from the late twelfth century this was a cell of the abbey of Chertsey in Surrey which traced its title from a charter of the Lord Rhys who conquered Ceredigion from Earl Roger.⁸¹ Why and how Chertsey secured the cell remains a mystery, although it is likely that Roger, ignorant of or forgetting Gilbert's grant, gave it to Chertsey, and that his action was confirmed by Rhys.⁸²

In the early twelfth century, however, many patrons including the Clares were turning from the Benedictines to the new orders, and gifts to the Cistercians and the Augustinian canons in particular multiplied rapidly. Two of the brothers of Gilbert of Tonbridge and one of their cousins were among the first to endow monasteries for them. Several possible reasons can be put forward for the popularity of the Cistercians and Augustinians. Economically it should have been easier to found a house for either order than for the Benedictines. The Cistercians to start with desired an isolated wilderness in which to settle and rejected all forms of revenue from manors and churches. The Augustinians accepted rents and tithes, but their houses were often small, and the endowment could be comparatively meagre; they never had the statutory minimum of thirteen monks which the Benedictines and Cistercians insisted on.⁸³ Although the economic argument is superficially attractive, it is not enough to explain the rapid spread of the new orders. As has been seen, the Clares can hardly be said to have over-endowed their Benedictine foundations. Two other factors were probably of equal if not greater importance; the desire to be in at the start of a new monastic movement and the high regard in which the Cistercians and Augustinians were held. The frequent presence of the Clares at the court of Henry I ensured that they had considerable knowledge of what was happening in the monastic world, and it has been shown that many of the early Augustinian foundations were made by men associated with the court.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ *Historia . . . Sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, ii. 75. Richard's wife Alice added to the endowment; *ibid.*, i. 104, 241; *Actes de Henri II*, i. 68.

⁸⁰ *Historia . . . Sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, i. 352; ii. 77, 128.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 74, 76. *Chertsey Cartularies* (Surrey Record Society, xii, part 1, 1933), pp. ii, 104.

⁸² On the other hand, it has been suggested that the Gloucester charters were forgeries; H. E. Malden, 'The possession of Cardigan Priory by Chertsey Abbey (A study in some medieval forgeries)', *Trans. Royal Historical Society*, 3rd ser., v (1911), 145-6, 150-3.

⁸³ J. C. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England*, London 1950, 134.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 125-30.

Two Cistercian houses were established by the Clares. Richard fitz Baldwin (younger son of Baldwin son of Count Gilbert) founded a Cistercian priory at Brightley in Devon as a daughter-house of Waverley in 1136, but he died shortly afterwards, and the house was established at Ford in Dorset by his sister Adeliza.⁸⁵ Tintern in Monmouthshire is far better known. It was the second Cistercian house to be founded in Britain, and its founder, Walter fitz Richard, like his brother Gilbert of Tonbridge, was clearly guilty of seizing lands from the Church in Wales.⁸⁶ Although Tintern was only about four miles from Walter's *caput* at Chepstow, it fulfilled the Cistercian demands for a lonely situation, as the area was sparsely populated. The abbey was founded on 9 May 1131, with monks from L'Aumône in Eure-et-Loire.⁸⁷ Walter's knowledge of L'Aumône probably came through his kinsman William Giffard, bishop of Winchester, who founded the first Cistercian house in England, Waverley in Surrey, from L'Aumône in 1128.⁸⁸

The Cistercian patron was expected to provide the original buildings for the monks as well as the endowment. It is unfortunate that no cartulary for Tintern has survived, but the extent of the grants of the lords of Gwent, whether Clares or Marshals, can be discovered through the royal confirmations in the Charter Rolls. Walter's grant consisted of land, fisheries and moorland, together with his lordship at Woolaston, including the church, houses, withybed, park, fisheries and wood;⁸⁹ Tintern was thus receiving at least some land which was already being farmed at the time of its foundation. Minor additions were made to the endowment by Walter's successors, Gilbert and Richard Strongbow, earls of Pembroke.⁹⁰ Because of the Cistercians' centralised organisation, the rights of patrons were more limited than in a Benedictine priory; there was no question of the patron having custody during a vacancy, or of consenting to the election of the head of the house. Yet the Tintern chronicle, with its scraps of information about the patrons, makes it clear that a connection was maintained in the twelfth century,⁹¹ and Gilbert Strongbow was buried in the abbey church in 1148.⁹²

No other Cistercian house was founded by the Clares, and instead they turned increasingly to the Augustinian canons when making new

⁸⁵ A. M. Cooke, 'The settlement of the Cistercians in England', *EHR*, viii (1893), 643-4. *MA*, v, 377-8. *Annales de Waverleia*, in *Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1864-9), ii, 225. L. Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, Vienna 1877, i, 40-1.

⁸⁶ *The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv*, ed. J. G. Evans and J. Rhys, Oxford 1893, 37, 93.

⁸⁷ Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, i, 19, 287.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 16-17, 286. Knowles, *Monastic Order*, 707.

⁸⁹ *Calendar of Charter Rolls* (hereafter cited as *CCR*), 1300-26, London 1908, 88, 96-7. F. G. Cowley, *The Monastic Order in South Wales, 1066-1349*, Cardiff 1977, 71, 90.

⁹⁰ *CCR*, 1300-26, London 1908, 88, 96-8.

⁹¹ The chronicle is printed in *MA*, v, 269-70. It is reasonably accurate for the information obtained locally, but the Clare genealogy, based on the work of Robert of Torigni, is hopelessly muddled.

⁹² *Ibid.*, v, 270.

foundations. Much probably depended here on personal preference, and the order was certainly popular in East Anglia where a great part of the Clares' land was situated. Moreover it is likely that the Clares preferred an order which allowed a close relationship between house and patron, with the latter normally having rights of custody and of consent to elections.

The two most important Augustinian houses endowed by the family date from the great period of the Clares' monastic patronage before 1140. The first of these, Little Dunmow, was one of the earliest Augustinian houses in England. It was in 1106 that Geoffrey Baynard, on the advice of Henry I and Archbishop Anselm, converted a chapel founded two years before by his mother into a house for canons.⁹³ When the honour passed into the hands of Robert fitz Richard five years later, Robert and his family proved generous patrons. Like Stoke-by-Clare, Little Dunmow was essentially a honorial monastery, benefiting from the grants of its lords and their men.⁹⁴ No other members of the Clare family made gifts to the house.⁹⁵ Robert and his wife, Matilda of St Liz, confirmed the existing possessions of the canons and made their own grants of small parcels of land and demesne tithes;⁹⁶ Matilda also provided endowments herself.⁹⁷ Several charters of her son Walter survive in the cartulary,⁹⁸ and in the early thirteenth century her grandson Robert fitz Walter added his own gifts.⁹⁹

Baldwin fitz Gilbert made his grant to the Arrouaisian canons in 1138, thus showing that he wished his foundation at Bourne to follow a strict rule. The grant itself included the church and land at Bourne, other churches, fisheries, tithes, wool for the canons' clothes and the tithes of hides from Baldwin's hunting.¹⁰⁰ He confirmed any gifts made by his knights and freemen, but he reserved the service due to himself.¹⁰¹ Other members of his family made their own grants, for instance his daughter Rohaise and his eldest daughter Emma, whose husband Hugh Wake inherited the honour after Baldwin's death in or after 1154.¹⁰² As with Little Dunmow, Bourne was very much an honorial monastery rather than one connected with the Clare family as a whole.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, vi. part 1, 147. Dickinson, *Origins of the Austin Canons*, 109, 283. B.L. Harley MS 662, fo. 6a.

⁹⁴ B.L. Harley MS 662, fos. 11b-12b, confirmation by Walter fitz Robert; *ibid.*, fos. 7a-8a, 12b, confirmations by Robert fitz Walter.

⁹⁵ One charter mentions the eldest branch of the family; Walter fitz Robert issued a charter for the repose of the soul of Earl Roger his kinsman, among others; *ibid.*, fo. 57b.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, fos. 6b, 9a, 59a, 71b.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, fos. 6b, 9a-b, 11a, 104a.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, fos. 6b-7a, 9b-10b, 57b, 63b-64a, 65b, 68b-69a, 80b, 82a, 94b, 123b. *Letters and Charters of G. Foliot*, no. 368.

⁹⁹ B.L. Harley MS 662, fos. 7a-8a, 12b-13a, 57b, 64b, 69a-b, 94b.

¹⁰⁰ *MA*, vi. part 1, 370-1. *Facsimiles of Northamptonshire Collections*, no. 4A.

¹⁰¹ *MA*, vi. part 1, 371.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* *CCR*, 1327-41, London 1912, 20, 27-8.

Thus, between about 1090 and 1140, the Clares were not only responsible for endowing houses at St Neots and Stoke by Clare, but also for establishing cells in Ceredigion, for founding the abbeys of Tintern and Bourne and for developing the priory of Little Dunmow. Looking at these monastic benefactions as a whole, it is clear that during these two generations, an amazing development was taking place on the Clare estates which mirrored the general expansion going on in England and Europe. By about 1140, however, the Clares had made their most notable foundations.

It is significant that under Stephen and early in Henry II's reign Gilbert and Roger, earls of Hertford (d. 1152 and 1173), and Gilbert Strongbow, earl of Pembroke (d. 1148), established no new monastery; they contented themselves with making grants to houses founded by their predecessors and also to the military orders of the Hospitallers and Templars. Once new lands were gained by inheritance, the Clares obtained fresh responsibilities as patrons, but their relationship with the religious house was often purely formal and few major grants were made.¹⁰³

The Clares, therefore, antedate the general slackening in monastic endowment which took place in the second half of the twelfth century. In two further respects they did not altogether conform to the general trend. The foundation of two small Augustinian houses at Anglesey in Cambridgeshire and at Tonbridge about 1200 by Richard of Clare, earl of Hertford (d. 1217), came after a long period when the eldest branch of the family had simply made additional grants to existing houses. Far more important, the conquest of Leinster by Richard Strongbow and his followers between 1170 and 1176 occasioned a series of gifts to monasteries which can be regarded as the result, just as in the early twelfth century, of the acquisition of new and extensive territories.

The order of Augustinian canons continued to be popular in the reign of Henry II and not only with the Clare earls, for by this time certain Clare vassals were founding their own monastic houses, the best known being Walsingham in Norfolk;¹⁰⁴ they were no longer content to make their grants to honorial or other monasteries. Whether Earl Richard had any special reason for establishing houses at Anglesey and Tonbridge is uncertain. The foundations may be connected with his acquisition of half of the honour of Giffard in 1189, for both were partly endowed with Giffard lands. It is more likely, however, that he had to found the monasteries as a condition for release from his oath to go on the Third Crusade; he apparently took the oath, but there is no sign that he went to the East.¹⁰⁵ The priory of Tonbridge was founded shortly before 1191;¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ E.g., Field Dalling, Norfolk, part of the inheritance of Matilda of St Hilary, wife of Earl Roger; *Calendar of Documents preserved in France, 918-1206*, ed. J. H. Round, London 1899, no. 803.

¹⁰⁴ See below, pp. 449-50.

¹⁰⁵ B.L. Cotton MS Appendix xxi, fo. 25a.

¹⁰⁶ C. R. Cheney, 'A papal privilege for Tonbridge Priory', *Bull. Institute of Historical Research*, xxxviii (1965), 196.

Richard gave it half the Giffard manor of Bottisham in Cambridgeshire, together with money and pasture rights in Tonbridge itself, and the advowsons of a number of churches in Kent and Suffolk. Anglesey was founded somewhat later; it had previously existed as a hospital, and Richard gave it the other half of Bottisham manor and the advowson of the church about 1212, in spite of the fact that the latter had been granted by the Giffards to their abbey of Notley.¹⁰⁷ Both Tonbridge and Anglesey were among the seven Augustinian houses in England owing tribute to Rome; in addition, Tonbridge was exempt from episcopal visitation, an even rarer privilege for an Augustinian house.¹⁰⁸ During the thirteenth century a strong connection was maintained between the priories and the Clares; for instance land was bequeathed by Gilbert, earl of Gloucester (d. 1230), for the fabric of Tonbridge church.¹⁰⁹

The orders of the Templars and Knights Hospitallers brought a new attraction for monastic patrons. Combining as they did the life of a monk and a knight, and being closely associated with the safeguarding of Jerusalem and the Latin states of the East, they made a strong appeal to the feudal baronage. Both orders expanded rapidly in England from the time of Stephen, and several members of the Clare family made them gifts, as did a number of their vassals. The Templars benefited particularly from the grants of Gilbert Strongbow who gave them the church and land in Weston, Hertfordshire, together with the church and land in Baldock on which the Templars built a borough.¹¹⁰ Two of Gilbert's vassals also made them gifts.¹¹¹ Strongbow was not the only member of the Clare family to give estates to the Templars; under Henry II, his cousin Walter fitz Robert, lord of the honour of Little Dunmow, granted them land near Baynard's Castle in London.¹¹²

The Knights Hospitallers, however, received far more extensive endowments from the Clares. Richard Strongbow founded the preceptory at Kilmainham outside Dublin, and Walter fitz Robert gave them two churches in Essex and also his charger and arms.¹¹³ But the most extensive grants in England were made by the eldest branch of the family and by their vassals. The earliest gift was by Gilbert, earl of Hertford, who presented land in Standon, including the vineyard and the church;¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ *Curia Regis Rolls, 1213-15*, London 1935, 84-5. *CCR, 1300-26*, London 1908, 210. E. Hailstone, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Bottisham and the Priory of Anglesey in Cambridgeshire*, Cambridge 1873, 187-8.

¹⁰⁸ Cheney 'A papal privilege', 196-7.

¹⁰⁹ S. Wood, *English Monasteries and their Patrons in the Thirteenth Century*, Oxford 1955, 16, 118. *CCR, 1226-57*, London 1903, 148.

¹¹⁰ *Records of the Templars in England in the Twelfth Century*, ed. B. A. Lees (Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales, ix, 1935), cxxxvi-vii, 63, 65, 77, 218. B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vi, fo. 135b.

¹¹¹ *Records of the Templars*, cxxvii, 52, 198-9, 223-4.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 168-9, 171.

¹¹³ B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vi, fos. 124a, 124b, 235b. *Letters and Charters of G. Foliot*, no. 385.

¹¹⁴ *MA*, vi. part 2, 804, 806-7. B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vi, fo. 123a-b. *Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati, 1199-1216*, ed. T. D. Hardy (Record Commission, 1837), 16.

whether the knights established a preceptory there in the twelfth century is not known, but one certainly existed in 1300.¹¹⁵ The widow of Gilbert of Tonbridge, Adeliza of Clermont, founded a preceptory at Melchbourne in Bedfordshire in the reign of Henry II.¹¹⁶ Further gifts were made by Earl Roger and his wife, including the church at Tonbridge which his brother Earl Gilbert had previously given to Lewes priory.¹¹⁷ It is significant that when Roger regained Ceredigion for a few years, he made his grants there to the Hospitallers, and in many cases these were confirmed by the Lord Rhys.¹¹⁸

In addition to these grants by the eldest branch of the Clares, the order attracted gifts from several of their vassals, many of whose families had also helped to endow the priory of Stoke-by-Clare. For instance, Beatrice of Bullers, widow of the Clare steward, Baldwin son of Geoffrey, and their descendants made grants in Harefield, Middlesex, and Little Sampford in Essex.¹¹⁹ Robert son of Geoffrey and his wife gave them the church and land at Badley in Suffolk.¹²⁰ Robert of Wateville confirmed the gift of one of his knights to the Hospitallers, and further gave them land in Hempstead in Essex.¹²¹ These three are all named in the *carta* of 1166, and in addition two grants by vassals can be dated to the reign of Stephen. Adam son of Warin, at one time steward of the honour of Clare, gave land at Binsley-in-Bulmer, Essex,¹²² while Alured of Bendeville and his wife granted the church and land at Chaureth in Broxted in Essex.¹²³

While the tide of monastic patronage in England was slackening by Henry II's reign, in Ireland the situation was reversed, and the conquest by Richard Strongbow and his followers resulted in widespread monastic grants, as had the settlement of Wales about seventy years earlier. Before the expedition to Ireland, Richard's gifts had been small,¹²⁴ but once he had conquered Ireland he could afford to be more lavish, though it has to be borne in mind that only six years elapsed between his arrival in Leinster and his death. Moreover, in the Irish charters a distinction has to be drawn between the confirmations Strongbow gave to existing houses, either just after his arrival or when he was the king's deputy, and the grants he made himself. Even when these factors have been taken into

¹¹⁵ *VCH, Hertfordshire, London 1914*, iv. 444.

¹¹⁶ *MA*, vi. part 2, 803, 834-5. B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vi, fo. 123a-b.

¹¹⁷ B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vi, fo. 123a-b. *A Kentish Cartulary of the Order of St John of Jerusalem*, ed. C. Cotton (Kent Records, xi, 1930), 70, 73-6. *Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi*, 16. *MA*, vi. part 2, 806-7. *Registrum Roffense*, ed. J. Thorpe, London 1769, 665-6.

¹¹⁸ W. Rees, *A History of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in Wales and on the Welsh Border*, Cardiff 1947, 112-13.

¹¹⁹ B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vi, fos. 84a-85b, 458a-460b.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, fo. 123a-b.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, fos. 328b, 329a, 383a.

¹²² *Ibid.*, fo. 332b.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, fos. 123a-b, 205a, 210a.

¹²⁴ E.g., Richard's establishment of a priory for Benedictine nuns at Usk, c. 1170; B.L. Additional Charter 5342; *MA*, iv. 591.

account, Richard's endowments compare favourably with those of his predecessors under Henry I at a time when they, like him, had secured extensive estates.

Richard's principal foundation was a preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers at Kilmainham outside Dublin. Unfortunately no cartulary of the house exists, but an assize of 1261 indicates that he enfeoffed it with all the land at Kilmainham, and the Anglo-Normans added substantially to its endowments.¹²⁵ The first prior was Hugh of Clahull, probably the brother of John of Clahull, Strongbow's marshal.¹²⁶ At first the house was dependent on the English priory of Clerkenwell, but in 1202 it became a separate priory in the order, with Maurice of Prendergast as prior.¹²⁷ In Dublin itself Richard, together with Robert fitz Stephen and Raymond le Gros, helped Archbishop Laurence O'Toole with the building of the choir of the cathedral with the two chapels of St Edmund, and St Mary Alba and St Laud,¹²⁸ and the earl also made grants of land to the church.¹²⁹

Unlike the English and Welsh houses, it sometimes proved difficult to persuade English abbots to take over the new foundations, or monks to come and live in them. According to the Walden Abbey chronicle, Prior Reginald was induced to go to Ireland by Strongbow's uncle, Hervey of Montmorency, to become the abbot of a monastic house which the earl intended to found. It is more likely, however, that it was Hervey who was planning to endow the abbey. Reginald landed at Bannow which was considered a suitable site for the foundation, and the ground was consecrated in the presence of the earl and the chief men of Leinster; but Reginald was unable to find monks and decided to return to Walden. Eventually he transferred the rights to Christ Church, Canterbury, where Hervey became a monk in 1179.¹³⁰ Difficulties were also encountered by Hervey in his foundation at Dunbrody, possibly begun in 1171-2, which he gave to the abbey of Buildwas for a Cistercian house. Hervey issued a second charter in about 1182, but Buildwas did not wish to take up the

¹²⁵ *Historic and Municipal Documents of Ireland, 1172-1320*, ed. J. T. Gilbert, London 1870, 497. *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, ed. J. T. Gilbert (Rolls Series, 1884), ii. 223.

¹²⁶ *Registrum de Kilmainham*, ed. C. McNeill (Irish MSS Commission, 1932), p. iv.

¹²⁷ Rees, *St John of Jerusalem in Wales*, 18.

¹²⁸ *Some Unpublished Texts from the Black Book of Christ Church, Dublin*, ed. A. Gwynn, *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 16, Dublin 1946, 308. *A Calendar of the Liber Niger and Liber Albus of Christ Church, Dublin*, ed. H. J. Lawlor, *Proc. Royal Irish Academy*, xxvii (1907-9), section C, no. 1, p. 69. *MA*, vi. part 2, 1148. G. H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1169-1333*, Oxford 1911-20, i. 355, suggests that the second chapel was dedicated to St Mary of Alba Landa, i.e., the Cistercian monastery of Whitland in Pembrokeshire.

¹²⁹ *Calendar to Christ Church Deeds, Dublin*, in *The Twentieth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records in Ireland, 1888*, 36, 103. *Liber Niger and Liber Albus of Christ Church, Dublin*, 29.

¹³⁰ 'The book of the foundation of Walden Abbey', translated C. H. Emson and H. Collar, *Essex Review*, xlv (1936), 225-7. H. G. Richardson, 'Some Norman foundations in Ireland', *Medieval Studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn*, ed. J. A. Watt, J. B. Morrall and F. X. Martin, Dublin 1961, 30-2.

enterprise, and the lands were handed over to St Mary's Abbey, Dublin.¹³¹

There was no abbey on Strongbow's lands which attracted the grants of his followers; no parallel can be seen to the priory of Stoke on the honour of Clare. The difficulties facing an Irish house were clearly much greater than in an area such as Wales. In both countries there was a risk of fighting and native risings, but in Ireland the problem of distance from England could be insurmountable. The Irish abbey which received the most generous grants was the Augustinian house of St Thomas of Canterbury at Dublin, founded after Strongbow's death by Henry II in 1177. Considerable gifts were made by the earl's sister Basilia, who was buried in the abbey,¹³² and by several of the earl's followers.¹³³ Some vassals made their gifts to other churches in Dublin, such as to Dublin Cathedral,¹³⁴ and to St Mary's Abbey.¹³⁵

The extent of monastic benefaction by Strongbow and his followers was exceptional in the late twelfth century, and in many respects harks back to the activities of the Norman conquerors in Wales. Richard Strongbow and, to a lesser extent, Richard, earl of Hertford, were the last of the Clares to make numerous grants to several monastic houses, and to be closely associated with their vassals in their relationship to particular monasteries. By the end of the twelfth century, the spectacular increase of the monasteries in England was over; few new houses were founded in the thirteenth century, and, instead, the period saw the rapid expansion of the friars, a movement with which the Clares also became involved. They maintained a legal and formal relationship with the houses which the family had founded in the twelfth century, but there is no longer any impression of a close personal or family or honorial connection with the monastery. Thus, there is no indication that Stoke-by-Clare continued to be regarded as an honorial monastery after 1217, nor that St Neots was closely connected with the whole Clare family. It would appear that the Clares zealously maintained their rights of patronage, but were otherwise little interested in the priories.

There are several possible reasons for this change of attitude by the Clares. Like other patrons, they probably felt that sufficient land and revenues had been given to monasteries; moreover, with the passage of time, as the honours became less close-knit, and honorial administration became professional, it would be unrealistic to expect a close personal relationship with family monasteries to continue. Yet, in the case of the

¹³¹ *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, ed. J. T. Gilbert (Rolls Series, 1884), i. 354-6; ii. 151-2. A Gwynn, 'The Origins of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin', *Jnl Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, lxxix (1949), 124.

¹³² *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas, Dublin*, ed. J. T. Gilbert (Rolls Series, 1889), 110-15, 117, 367-8.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 75-80, 142-4, 167, 170-2, 369.

¹³⁴ 'Crede Mihi'. *The Most Ancient Register Book of the Archbishops of Dublin before the Reformation*, ed. J. T. Gilbert, Dublin 1897, 49.

¹³⁵ *Chartularies of St Mary's, Dublin*, i. 30-1, 67-8.

Clares, there was one overriding reason for the change, namely, their acquisition of the honour of Gloucester in 1217, which more than doubled their estates and enabled them to emerge among the most powerful baronial families. With its most extensive lands situated in west and south-west England, and with the earls of Gloucester as lords also of Glamorgan and parts of Monmouth, this meant that the main Clare interests switched from eastern England to the west, and the honour of Clare was no longer their main centre of operations.

Whereas one hundred years earlier the Clares would in all probability have made a new monastic foundation or substantially increased the endowment of an existing house to 'celebrate' so great an increase in territory, in the thirteenth century they simply maintained relations with their monasteries, making very few grants. They showed little interest in the abbeys and priories on their Welsh lands, and this is brought out by the lack of personal detail about the family in the *Annals of Margam*.¹³⁶ This had been true of the twelfth-century earls of Gloucester as well. The Clares were intent, however, on preserving their rights of lordship, as is illustrated by their suit with the prior of Goldcliff in 1291;¹³⁷ Goldcliff was a cell of the abbey of Bec and had been acquired by Earl Richard in his share of the Marshal inheritance in 1247. For the Clares, the Welsh abbeys were subordinate to their general political interests and especially to their policy of securing their Welsh lordships against Welsh or Marcher attack from the north; this explains why Earl Gilbert (d. 1295) took over large areas of mountainous land from the abbeys of Margam, Neath and Caerleon, giving Margam and Caerleon little in exchange.¹³⁸

Their share in the estates of William Marshal again brought the Clares into contact with Tintern Abbey, but there is little sign of a resumption of a close relationship. Earl Richard (d. 1262) confirmed the abbey's holdings on his lands, and was presumably grateful for the help provided by Tintern ploughs in tilling his land at Trelleck and Usk, cultivation having fallen behind during his minority; it was carefully laid down that this help was not to be treated as a precedent.¹³⁹ The main patrons of Tintern continued to be the lords of Chepstow, and here it was the Bigod earls of Norfolk who succeeded the Marshals. Earl Roger (d. 1306) was largely responsible for the rebuilding of the abbey church.¹⁴⁰

For the earls of Gloucester in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was Tewkesbury which was the most important monastery, and this is brought out conclusively by the *Annals of Tewkesbury* which were continued down to 1263.¹⁴¹ At least to that time, and probably later, the abbey kept itself well

¹³⁶ *Annales de Margan*, in *Annales Monastici* (ed. Luard), i. 1-40.

¹³⁷ Morgan, *English Lands of Bec*, 29-30, 33. Cowley, *Monastic Order in S. Wales*, 200-1.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 196-7, 216, 225-6, 246, 248-9, 252.

¹³⁹ *CCR*, 1300-26, London 1908, 103-4.

¹⁴⁰ Cowley, *Monastic Order in S. Wales*, 197.

¹⁴¹ *Annales de Theokesberia*, in *Annales Monastici* (ed. Luard), i. 41-180.

informed on the family, on the birth of children and on their activities. Thus, quite apart from his political involvements, Earl Richard's pilgrimages to Pontigny and St James of Compostella were referred to, as was his journey abroad in 1252 to recover the arms and horses of his brother William who had been worsted in a tournament.¹⁴² It was at Tewkesbury that the Clare earls of Gloucester were buried and the Annals provide a graphic description of how Earl Gilbert's body was brought back to England in 1230 and interred in the abbey.¹⁴³ In other matters the abbot gave practical assistance, as when he helped to pacify Glamorgan in 1242,¹⁴⁴ and when he, with the abbot of Keynsham and the prior of Stoke-by-Clare (all Clare monasteries), acted as the earl's guarantors for the marriage of his son Gilbert to Alice de la Marche.¹⁴⁵ Earl Richard also shared the Tewkesbury procurator at the Roman Curia.¹⁴⁶

Such instances could be multiplied, but they demonstrate the close relationship of abbey and family. Tewkesbury was one of the few houses to receive grants from the Clares in the thirteenth century; Earl Gilbert (d. 1230) bequeathed to the abbey woodland and a silver-gilt cross,¹⁴⁷ and Earl Richard, his son, granted the monks free transport of their goods by water through all his lands.¹⁴⁸ The importance of the Clares at Tewkesbury is shown by Earl Richard's visit in 1258 when he asked the abbey for a procession and gave all the kiss of peace.¹⁴⁹ As patrons, the earls granted the licence for the election of the abbot.¹⁵⁰ As elsewhere, however, the Clares were watchful for the maintenance of their own advowsons and franchises, as is apparent in the controversy between earl and abbey in 1250 over its criminal jurisdiction.¹⁵¹

It is likely that this close relationship continued with Richard's son and grandson who were both buried at Tewkesbury, but, with the ending of the Annals, there is no evidence to substantiate this. These show that the Clares, like the earlier Gloucester earls, concentrated their interest on Tewkesbury rather than on any of the other houses on their Welsh or English estates. Moreover, they make it clear that close relations could and did exist between the Clares and an abbey in the thirteenth century, but that the acquisition of the honour of Gloucester had involved a complete reorientation of their areas of interest. Stoke-by-Clare and St Neots were now insignificant in comparison with Tewkesbury.

At the same time, there were individual houses in England which gained Clare patronage, but these exhibit a tendency in the thirteenth

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 137, 140, 151.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 76; *ibid.*, 132, the woodland was returned to Earl Richard in 1243.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 140, 511-16.

century for an individual to be involved rather than a family or an honour. Thus, it was Matilda, the widow of Earl Richard, who before 1285 transformed Canonsleigh priory in Devon into a house for Augustinian nuns, and there is no sign that grants were made by other members of the family.¹⁵²

The priory of Walsingham is an even better illustration of the transition from regular family donations to a more formal and sporadic relationship. Walsingham began as a small Augustinian priory and only developed as a great centre for pilgrimage after c. 1250.¹⁵³ In the early twelfth century the Clare vassal, Geoffrey of Favarches, had given two-thirds of his tithes in Walsingham to the priory of Stoke-by-Clare.¹⁵⁴ He died before 1130,¹⁵⁵ and his widow founded the chapel in Walsingham which under her son became the priory c. 1153. Earl Roger confirmed the change, and granted to the canons the tithes which Geoffrey had previously paid to the monks of Stoke.¹⁵⁶ Roger's generosity was followed up by his son Richard, earl of Hertford, who gave the advowson of the church of Great Walsingham,¹⁵⁷ and by his grandson Gilbert, earl of Gloucester, who provided for the extension of the priory enclosure.¹⁵⁸

Geoffrey's land at Walsingham became part of the Clare demesne in 1204, and the earls acted as patrons of the priory in the thirteenth century. It is significant that they made no further grants of land after 1230.¹⁵⁹ It would seem likely that it was the frequent visits of Henry III and Edward I to the shrine which contributed to its popularity, although possibly Henry III's original visit in 1226 was encouraged by the Clares. By the mid-thirteenth century they were more anxious to take advantage of the priory's growing wealth than to build it up further. Walsingham was one of the manors granted in 1248 by Earl Richard to his brother William (d. 1258).¹⁶⁰ The cartulary shows that, although William was ready to confirm the priory's possessions and grant them certain judicial rights, he was not prepared to allow them to hold their eight-day fair from the eve of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary which they had been granted by the king in 1251.¹⁶¹ In fact, the priory had to quit-claim the fair to William, and this was then confirmed by Henry III.¹⁶² The priory

¹⁵² MA, vi. part 1, 333. Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 278-9.

¹⁵³ J. C. Dickinson, *The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham*, Cambridge 1956, 11-19.

¹⁵⁴ B.L. Cotton MS Appendix xxi, fo. 65b.

¹⁵⁵ His son Geoffrey was referred to as a minor in the Pipe Roll of 1130; *Magnum Rotulum Scaccarii, de anno 31 Henrici I.*, ed. J. Hunter (Record Commission, 1833), 94.

¹⁵⁶ MA, vi. part 1, 73. B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vii, fo. 8a-b.

¹⁵⁷ MA, vi. part 1, 74. B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vii, fo. 31a.

¹⁵⁸ B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vii, fos. 12b-13a.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 13a has two minor confirmations from Earl Richard (d. 1262) and his wife, Countess Matilda.

¹⁶⁰ CCR, 1226-57, London 1903, 334.

¹⁶¹ B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vii, fos. 13b-15a.

¹⁶² CCR, 1226-57, London 1903, 354, 377.

was only to receive the tithe of the fair's issues. In addition to his own market at Little Walsingham, William was to receive half the stallage and all the profits from trading by the gate of the priory cemetery on Saturday and Sunday.¹⁶³ In all these transactions William showed himself eager for profits, and when on his death the land reverted to the Clare earls there is no sign that they took a different attitude.

The thirteenth century was far more the age of the friars than of the monks, and the Clares extended their patronage to them, although in a more half-hearted way than they had fostered the cells of Bec over 150 years before. Richard, earl of Gloucester, protected the Franciscans at Bury St Edmunds when they came to the town in 1258;¹⁶⁴ one suspects that this was done to annoy the great Benedictine abbey with which Richard was in dispute at the time. More important was Richard's move to bring the Augustinian friars to England in 1248.¹⁶⁵ Yet when the friars arrived at Clare, they found that he had forgotten to provide them with anywhere to live; no charter of his nor of any other of the Clare earls is included in the priory's cartulary.¹⁶⁶ Presumably it was left to the honorial officials at Clare to provide for them; Roger de Scaccario was steward of Clare in 1248, and several of his own grants survive in the cartulary.¹⁶⁷ Another steward, William of Ocsted, later made a grant towards the priory church for the souls of Earl Richard, his wife, Countess Matilda, and himself.¹⁶⁸ The earls' wives appear to have shown more interest in the priory than their husbands. Countess Matilda, as a widow, granted several pieces of meadow which lay near the priory and which she had bought from their previous owners.¹⁶⁹ Joan of Acre, the daughter of Edward I who married Earl Gilbert in 1290, founded a chapel to St Vincent, and was buried in the friars' church.¹⁷⁰

Earl Richard's introduction of the Austin friars links him with his ancestors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries when the Clares had been in the lead in their patronage of new monastic movements; they had been the principal patrons of the abbey of Bec in England and among the first to found and endow Augustinian and Cistercian houses. Another link between Richard and his ancestors is evident in their maintenance of personal relations with a family and honorial monastery, whether it was St Neots, Stoke-by-Clare or Tewkesbury. In other respects, however, there are marked contrasts between Richard and the other thirteenth-century earls and their predecessors. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 377, 475. B.L. Cotton MS Nero E vii, fos. 14b-15a.

¹⁶⁴ *MA*, iii. 106. *Matthaei Parisiensis Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1872-84), v. 688.

¹⁶⁵ *MA*, vi. part 3, 1599-1600.

¹⁶⁶ B.L. Harley MS 4835.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fos. 7b, 8a, 8b, 9a. *CCR*, 1226-57, London 1903, 334.

¹⁶⁸ B.L. Harley MS 4835, fo. 48b.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* fos. 1b-6b.

¹⁷⁰ *MA*, vi. part 3, 1600. *Flores Historiarum*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1890), iii. 142.

FASHIONS IN MONASTIC ENDOWMENT

combination of acquisitiveness and religious sentiment was typical, with new gains of land being marked by a new foundation or the further endowment of an existing house; from the later twelfth century this practice became rare. Moreover, there was a much stronger sense of the family and the honour in the twelfth century; the close relationship between the Clares and their vassals, as seen in the cartulary of the priory of Stoke-by-Clare, was fading by 1200, as was the practice of several branches of the family, in succeeding generations, making grants to a single priory, as at St Neots. In the thirteenth century the Clares maintained their connections with their monasteries, but in a more legal and impersonal form. This greater formality reflects the changes taking place on the Clare estates, and, more especially, the rapidly increasing importance of the Clare family in the English baronage.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ I wish to thank Professor R. M. T. Hill, Mr A. Tomkinson and Dr E. M. Veale who read an earlier draft of this article.