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## **NEW SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE: THE REGISTERS OF THE APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY\***

The Apostolic Penitentiary was the highest office in the later medieval Church concerned with matters of conscience. It emerged as a department of the papal curia in the thirteenth century and received powers from successive popes to act on their behalf. It granted absolutions in cases which were reserved to the apostolic see. It issued dispensations and licences that were also a papal monopoly. These favours were granted in response to supplications; the latter were drawn up for petitioners by proctors affiliated to the Apostolic Penitentiary. By the late fourteenth century supplications approved by the officials of the Apostolic Penitentiary, including the cardinal or major penitentiary in charge of the office, were copied into registers of the penitentiary. Over 150 such registers survive for the years 1410-11, 1439-43 and 1449-1585 and are held in the Vatican Archives. Access to them was first granted to researchers in 1983 and it remains restricted to those who have the permission of the Apostolic Penitentiary. This material is, however, being made more accessible to historians through editions of entries in the registers relating to particular countries. For example, five volumes have so far appeared of entries concerning the German Empire in the *Repertorium Poenitentiariae Germanicum* edited by Ludwig Schmutge and his collaborators. Patrick Zutshi and I are currently editing the entries regarding England and Wales down to 1503, and this article arises from our project.

These sources are of general interest for ecclesiastical, social and cultural history and of particular

interest for the history of the religious life.<sup>1</sup> We have edited c. 365 entries relevant to the latter from the registers down to the end of Innocent VIII's papacy in 1492; our editorial work on the registers of his successor Pope Alexander VI (d. 1503) is still in progress but will add further to this total. In a short article I can attempt no more than a brief survey of these c. 365 entries, but if it encourages historians of the religious life towards more detailed study of this material then it will have served its purpose.<sup>2</sup>

The overwhelming majority of these entries concern male religious; a mere 28, less than 1 in 10, refer to nuns. The greater restrictions on the lives of female religious no doubt limited the range of papal favours available to them but this does not entirely explain their under-representation here. However, the entries reflect more accurately the relative

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\* I am grateful to his Eminence the Cardinal Penitentiary and the Regent of the Apostolic Penitentiary and to Drs Patrick Zutshi and Kirsi Salonen for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

<sup>1</sup> Two essential introductions to the registers are L. Schmutge, P. Hersperger & B. Wiggerhauser, *Die Supplikenregister der päpstlichen Pönitentiare aus der Zeit Pius' II (1458-1464)* (Tübingen 1996), and K. Salonen, *The Penitentiary as a Well of Grace in the Late Middle Ages: The Example of the Province of Uppsala 1448-1527* (Saarijärvi 2001). Unpublished studies of monastic material in the registers are G. Murphy, *Monks and Popes: The Legitimation of Deviation from the Benedictine Rule in the Middle Ages* (Univ. College London PhD, 2001), and M. Svec Goetschi, *Klosterflucht und Ordenswechsel im 15. Jahrhundert. Eine Untersuchung von apostasia a religione und transitus ad alium ordinem in den päpstlichen Supplikenregistern und in der Überlieferung in partibus* (Univ. of Zurich PhD, in progress).

<sup>2</sup> These entries are from Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Penitenzieria Apostolica [= ASV, PA], Reg. 1-41. Reg. 1 covers 1410-11 and is the only register from the Great Schism, relating to the Pisan obedience. Reg. 2 and 2bis cover 1439-43 in Eugenius IV's pontificate, and Reg. 3-41 cover 1449-92.

numerical strengths of the various religious orders; the bigger orders tend to account for more entries. Thus of the 333 entries regarding male religious 115 refer to Augustinians; 92 to Benedictines; 38 to Cistercians; 13 to Franciscans; 12 to Dominicans; 9 to Premonstratensians; 8 to Austin friars; 8 to Carthusians; 7 to Gilbertines; 6 to Carmelites; 5 to Cluniac monks; 3 each to the Order of Tiron, the Trinitarians and *Bonhommes*; two to the order of St Lazarus; one each to the Bridgettines, Hospitallers and the Crutched Friars; and eleven to unspecified orders. Likewise, of the 28 entries regarding female religious 10 refer to Benedictines, 8 to Cistercians, 5 to Augustinian canonesses, one each to the Cluniac, Dominican, Hospitaller and Gilbertine orders, and one to either a Bridgettine or Franciscan abbess. Nevertheless, larger religious houses do not necessarily dominate; smaller houses are surprisingly well represented.

The entries concern a variety of issues relating to the religious life. One of the most recurrent is apostasy, featuring in over 60 entries. This adds new evidence to that expertly described by F. Donald Logan in his study of *Runaway Religious in Medieval England, c. 1240-1540* (Cambridge 1996), although seven of the 60 odd apostates found in the penitentiary registers were also noted by Logan in other records.<sup>3</sup> In all but two of these seven cases the apostates also appeared in the registers of the papal chancery since they had asked the chancery for a dispensation to hold a benefice with a cure of souls as a secular priest. As Logan noted, such

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<sup>3</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2, fol. 233v; 3, fols. 36v, 72r; 11, fol. 205r-v; 18, fol. 140r; 25, fols. 82r, 91v-92r. Cf. Logan, 56 (Smyth), 63-5 (Pouns), 134 (Elkyngton), 195 (Strete), 196 (Smaw), 215-16 (Cuerton, *sic*), 240 (Standerwick). See Schmutge, 117-25, and Salonen, 138-44, on the Apostolic Penitentiary and apostasy.

dispensations were increasingly sought by men in order to escape the religious life from the 1390s. Indeed they were solicited by eight other of our apostates in the registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary, six of whom petitioned the chancery and Apostolic Penitentiary simultaneously.<sup>4</sup> Such parallel approaches to separate curial offices may account for the 16 of our 60 odd entries where the petitioner was apostate because he came to the curia without his superior's permission to leave his monastery. The Apostolic Penitentiary granted absolution from the excommunication automatically incurred by apostates, but those present at the curia must have come for some other purpose as they would not have been apostate had they not come to the curia in the first place. In one entry, for instance, the supplicant claimed that he had gone to the curia in order to accuse his abbot of various crimes. Two others probably had similar motives for both claimed that they had been unjustly incarcerated by their abbots and had arrived at the curia after escaping.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to those supplicants seeking to become secular priests the latter two apostates wanted to return to the religious life, and 17 other of our apostates expressed a similar desire. Presumably they wished to be re-admitted to the houses that they had left, although only six actually say so; Pope Benedict XII's constitution *Pastor bonus* (1335)

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<sup>4</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2, fols. 229r, 235v, 242v, 243r; 3, fols. 175r, 385r; 11, fol. 169r; 20, fol. 207r; 24, fol. 103v. Cf. *Calendar of Papal Letters* [= *CPL*], 9. 203 (Grobham), 214 (Gysborne), 271 (Haukesbury); 10. 115 (Gloucester), 170 (Geffus); 11. 524 (Herford); 12. 639 (Cowper); 13. 730 (Fawkeswell).

<sup>5</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2, fol. 243r (to accuse abbot); 3, fols. 8v (incarcerated) 36v, 77v; 5, fol. 296v; 7, fol. 130r; 13, fol. 159r; 16, fols. 66v, 107v, 140r; 19, fols. 111v, 131r; 20, fols. 189r, 207r; 24, fol. 103v; 33, fols. 141v-42r (incarcerated).

indeed provided for reconciliation of apostates. One other apostate had already returned to his priory and done penance for his apostasy.<sup>6</sup> However, two of the sixteen who expressly sought to return to their monasteries, including one of the incarcerated monks, requested as an alternative that they might have a licence to transfer to another monastery of equal or stricter observance. A decretal of Pope Innocent III had created this provision in 1206, and 11 more of our apostates (not among the 17 above) wished to avail themselves of it rather than return to their original monastery. No doubt many sought transfers for the same reasons that had caused them to leave their monastery in the first place. This was certainly true of the incarcerated monk above, but in the case of other apostates their motivation for leaving is rarely specified. One supplicant said that he had left his monastery because of ‘molestias’ inflicted on him there, while two others complained of imprisonment by their monastic superiors. Another perhaps had similar grievances but merely stated that he felt unable to return to his monastery; he had been granted permission to leave it for two years by his superior but had failed to go back after this time, thereby committing apostasy. Another also had permission to leave for the sake of pilgrimage to Rome but when he had failed to make this journey, his abbot refused to readmit him; hence he became apostate and had to seek a transfer elsewhere. In this

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<sup>6</sup> Seeking to return: ASV, PA, Reg. 2, fols. 229r, 243r; 5, fol. 323v; 10, fols. 119v, 133r; 12, fol. 50v; 13, fols. 126r (nun), 134v; 16, fols. 66v, 79v; 35, fol. 153r. Seeking readmission: Reg. 2bis, fol. 346v; 3, fols. 8v (or transfer), 32r (or transfer), 77v, 175r; 6, fol. 387v; 20, fol. 189r. Already readmitted: Reg. 2, fol. 228v. See Logan, 123-7, on *Pastor bonus*. Incidentally one of those requesting readmission had married after becoming apostate but had since abandoned his wife (Reg. 2bis, fol. 346v).

and seven other entries transfer was sought to another house of the same order, but in two others supplicants were also prepared to move to another order as an alternative, and in one entry the supplicant saw this as the only option.<sup>7</sup>

It will perhaps be apparent that almost all of our apostates were men; only one was a nun. Like the men she sought absolution, wishing to return to the religious life, but most of the men also requested a dispensation.<sup>8</sup> This was necessary to allow them to minister in their clerical orders and be promoted to higher ones, possibilities denied to women altogether. What excluded apostate men from these was irregularity, which they incurred usually by celebrating divine offices while excommunicate by reason of their apostasy; hence the dispensation was required to remove their irregularity.

Many of the entries concerning apostasy are rather brief and formulaic. But a related group of entries tend to contain more individual detail. These regard nineteen men who were admitted to religious houses while under age and later ran away.<sup>9</sup> The legal age for boys to begin the novitiate was 14, and three supplicants thus stated that they had entered religious houses below the age of 14. Six others were

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<sup>7</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2, fols. 216r, 233v; 2bis, fol. 318v; 3, fols. 32r (visited Rome after refused permission to do so by his superior), 46r (exceeded 2 years' leave), 90v; 5, fol. 296v (failed to go on pilgrimage); 25, fol. 82r ('molestias'); 29, fol. 9r; 33, fol. 127r; 34, fol. 156v. See Logan, 43-50, on such transfers.

<sup>8</sup> 52 male apostates sought absolution and a dispensation, while only 13 sought absolution alone, and even in these cases the request for a dispensation may simply have been omitted in the registers.

<sup>9</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 3, fol. 25r, 80r (3), 86r, 109r, 121v, 122r, 124r (2), 203r, 203v, 204v, 240r (2); 8, fol. 218v; 33, fol. 158v, 182v; 34, fols. 184v-5r. See Logan, 10-25, on under age profession.

more specific, one saying that his age on admission was 12; another, 11; three, 10; and two as young as 7 and 6. Three simply said that they were underage, and two, that they were *in statu puerili* or *pupillari*. Some of them also indicated that they had made profession below the minimum age, which was after a year's probation, thus 15 at the earliest. Two thus said that they were professed below the age of 14, one below the age of 12, one at the age of 12, one at the age of 10, and one simply under the age of discretion; albeit one claimed not to have made profession at all. Profession was invalid if made under age, or under duress, and twelve supplicants hence added that they made profession owing to coercion. Four referred to parental pressure, one even claiming that his father had threatened to kill him unless he made profession. Indeed seven supplicants held their parents responsible for their premature admission to religious houses, albeit only three said that this involved coercion. In eight other entries where profession was said to be coerced, the brethren of the religious house in question were blamed. Beatings at their hands were cited by three supplicants, and one even alleged that they had imprisoned him until he made profession. Monks and friars were notorious for inducing under age boys to enter their houses in the first place. Three supplicants refer to such persuasion, though not subsequent coercion, and two of them add that their parents were unaware of their entry into the religious life; one even claimed that Franciscans had moved him from their Nottingham convent to the Reading one to stop his parents finding out. One supplicant even alleged that he was abducted from his parents at the age of 6, taken to an Augustinian house and beaten by its canons until he made profession.

These are all heart-rending tales, but it must be borne in mind that proctors drew up these supplications to the Apostolic Penitentiary and they clearly shaped such accounts to obtain what their clients sought. Thus legal formulaic devices appear; the coercion of many supplicants is said to be the sort that would have moved a ‘constant man’, the canonical standard that invalidated any vow sworn under duress. The aim of these supplications was to demonstrate that the runaways were not legally professed (since under age or coerced) and thus not strictly speaking apostates; therefore they did not need absolution and might seek a declaration that they were not bound to the religious life but free to remain in the world. All of them did so, although two wished to remain there as secular priests, as did a third presumably who wished to ‘serve God in the world’, while another wanted a choice between secular ordination or marriage. Two related entries concern two women who ran away from nunneries that they had entered as girls, but not under age: one had become a novice at 12, the legal minimum age for girls; the other had taken the veil at 14, although she complained of coerced profession. The first had since become married at 18 and wished to remain so, whilst the second sought the freedom to marry.<sup>10</sup>

Although the legal nature of these records must be borne in mind, they clearly contain human stories. This is also plain in another group of supplications concerning illegitimacy. The latter was a canonical impediment, not for entry to the religious life, but for religious who sought promotion to high offices in their house or order, and for men who sought ordination or benefices. The Apostolic

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<sup>10</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 40, fol. 366r; 41, fol. 238v.

Penitentiary granted dispensations from this impediment, however, and c.80 requests for these from England and Wales in the period 1410-92 refer to religious. They comprise 44 supplications from men and 13 from women.<sup>11</sup> Of these 56 supplicants thirty-three, including eight women, sought a dispensation to obtain all offices in their house or order, except the principal dignity; and sixteen, including three women, requested the same but without this exception, five men and one woman among them even aspiring to abbatial offices. Two women and two men conversely sought a dispensation for the principal dignity alone, three of them explaining that they had been granted a dispensation regarding lesser offices already. In addition, 19 male religious sought favours available to men alone. Five aspired to a benefice and three wished to be ordained. Sixteen had already been ordained as priests and so required a dispensation to minister in their existing orders. No doubt twelve of them had received these while unaware of their illegitimacy, though only one said so, as they did not also request absolution. Men who knew of their illegitimacy but kept quiet about it when ordained incurred automatic excommunication and thus required absolution and a dispensation to continue ministering, and this was certainly

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<sup>11</sup> Males: ASV, PA, Reg. 1, fol. 106r; 4, fols. 18v (2), 24v, 29r, 32v, 41v, 80v, 95r, 214v; 6, fols. 118r, 152v-3r; 9, fols. 280r, 287v (2); 11, fols. 313v, 319r, 329v; 12, fol. 155v (2); 13, fols. 265v-6r; 14, fol. 262v; 16, fols. 187r, 188v, 189v, 190v; 18, fols. 243v, 244r, 246r; 19, fols. 50r, 51v; 22, fols. 200v, 210r, 211r; 23, fol. 258r; 26, fol. 234r; 29, fol. 232v; 31, fol. 231v; 32, fol. 233r; 34, fol. 294r; 35, fol. 231v; 38, fol. 214v (2); 39, fol. 407r. Nuns: Reg. 9, fol. 283v; 14, fol. 275r; 15, fol. 283r; 16, fol. 190r; 18, fol. 245v; 20, fols. 237v, 240r; 22, fol. 206r; 24, fol. 244v; 26, fol. 243v; 30, fol. 136v; 31, fols. 209r, 216r. See Schmutge, 186-95, and Salonen, 192-202, on the Apostolic Penitentiary and illegitimacy.

the case for 3 of our 16 ordained supplicants.<sup>12</sup> One other was ordained before his mother told him on her deathbed that he was illegitimate, but he had carried on ministering till the age of 70 before he sought the necessary absolution and dispensation.

In all but three of these 56 supplications the status of the supplicant's parents is described. Twenty men and nine women stated that their parents were unmarried. Nine supplicants were children of adulterous relationships: six, including two female religious, born to a married man and an unmarried woman, including a friar who claimed that his father was a knight; one born to an unmarried man and a married woman; and two born to a married man and a married woman, but clearly married to other people not each other. Fifteen others, including one female religious, said that their parents were an unmarried woman and a member of the clergy, described as a (secular) priest in eleven cases, as a priest and regular canon in two, and a regular canon alone in two others. Such indirect evidence of violations of clerical celibacy is also found in twenty-two other supplications from England and Wales.<sup>13</sup> These were made by illegitimate men who were not themselves religious but claimed to be the sons of religious. In all but one case the father was the religious in question while the mother was apparently lay; 18 supplications refer to an unmarried woman, 3 to a married

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<sup>12</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 16, fol. 187r; 23, fol. 258r; 29, fol. 232v. The following case is in Reg. 1, fol. 106r.

<sup>13</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 4, fol. 165r; 6, fol. 111v; 8, fols. 246r, 278v; 15, fols. 273v, 283r; 16, fols. 190v, 191v; 17, fols. 168v (3), 175v; 18, fols. 243r, 246r; 19, fol. 62r; 21, fols. 183v, 184v; 23, fols. 256v, 264r; 24, fols. 230v, 235v; 34, fol. 289v. On the Apostolic Penitentiary and celibacy violations see Schmugge, 147-51, and Salonen, 157-59.

woman, and one to a widow. The exception was the supplicant claiming to be the son of an abbess and a priest; his father had presumably frequented his mother's convent to hear confession and celebrate mass.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps just as scandalous was the case of three supplicants named Oldham from the Coventry and Lichfield diocese who petitioned the Apostolic Penitentiary together in 1469 claiming to be sons of a Benedictine abbot and a married woman; their father was Richard Oldham, abbot of St Werbergh's Chester (1455-78), presumably.<sup>15</sup> Doubtless he had all three sons by the same married woman, which suggests a long-term relationship. Similarly, John ap Reynaldi of St Asaph diocese who petitioned the Apostolic Penitentiary in 1468 said that he was the son of a Cistercian abbot and an unmarried woman.<sup>16</sup> His patronymic may identify his father as Reginald, abbot of Aberconwy, who had at least one illegitimate son and probably also a long-term mistress; the Cistercian General Chapter heard in 1482 after Reginald's death that his abbey was paying an annuity to his son David Apiggam and providing the boy's mother with a house!

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<sup>14</sup> ASV, PA, 23, fol. 256v. The abbess is said to be 'ordinis sancte ..', doubtless of the order of St Clare or of St Bridget, and thus head of one or other of the three Franciscan female abbeys in England or of the Bridgettine house at Syon. The controversy surrounding the latter's abbess Matilda Muston in the 1440s may suggest her as the most likely candidate (*Victoria County History: Middlesex*, 185, 187).

<sup>15</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 17, fol. 168v. On Richard Oldham: *Victoria County History: Cheshire*, 3, 142, 145.

<sup>16</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 16, fol. 191v; J. M. Canivez, *Statuta capitulorum generalium ordinis Cisterciensis ab 1116 ad annum 1786* (Louvain 1933-41), 5, 438-9 (on Reginald, abbot of Aberconwy).

More direct evidence of violations of clerical celibacy is found in the registers only rarely.<sup>17</sup> One example concerns an Augustinian canoness who had had sexual relations with a priest and given birth to his child in her monastery; she had since done penance for her lapse and sought a declaration that she might be appointed to all offices of her house and order. Another supplicant admitted that as a young clerk, before becoming a Premonstratensian, he had fornicated with a pregnant woman, who then gave birth prematurely. Her infant had died within five days, and this clearly still weighed on the canon's conscience as his own death neared, since around the age of 80 he said that he had ceased ministering in his holy orders on this account and requested a dispensation that he might resume. Another serious misdemeanour to which supplicants from religious houses sometimes admitted was involvement in violence and even murder. The previous case also falls into this category since canon law regarded killing a foetus as murder. Five other male religious admitted responsibility for another's death.<sup>18</sup> One had even killed a priest, simply stating his guilt and seeking absolution, but the others had killed laity and pleaded mitigating circumstances in some detail. Three claimed to have killed an assailant in self-defence, but only one sought absolution and a dispensation from the consequent excommunication and irregularity. The other two requested a declaration of

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<sup>17</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2bis, fol. 351v; 15, fol. 198r-v (nun; cf. *CPL* 12. 646). Cf. also Reg. 2bis, fol. 392v; 3, fol. 36v (monk accused of incontinence before his superior, licensed to transfer to another house of his order, but denied admission there before approaching the curia in person); 5, fol. 411r; 17, fol. 283r.

<sup>18</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2bis, fols. 117v, 240r-v; 11, fol. 175v; 18, fol. 99r-v; 39, fols. 293v-4r. On murder and violence and the Apostolic Penitentiary see Schmugge, 98-116, and Salonen, 128-38.

innocence so that they might incur no such penal consequences; both explained that they had struck a blow from which their victims died only several days later, while the first supplicant's victim died the same day. The fifth supplicant said that as a youth he had shot a little girl during archery practice, but, although her death was accidental, he sought absolution and a dispensation. Another supplicant who admitted to striking his prior at first requested absolution and a dispensation, then in a further supplication he added that the prior had died soon afterwards as a result not of his blow but of old age and infirmity, so he alleged, hence he also sought a declaration of innocence.<sup>19</sup> Finally two supplicants admitted to witnessing homicides but not to perpetrating them, albeit one (bearing the unfortunate surname Kylling) admitted to supporting them; he had in fact been ejected from his monastery then followed an army abroad, where he saw the violence of war. Therefore he asked to be absolved, dispensed and allowed to hold all offices on his reconciliation to his order, while the other being less complicit sought a declaration of innocence. All of these detailed supplications, like those from the under age runaways, are informed by knowledge of canon law, expressed in such canonical formulae as 'vim vi repellendo' referring to self-defence, but their lengthy narratives, nevertheless, appear to be largely in the supplicants' own words.

Such supplications again reveal the human face of the Church. Another group of supplications similarly plead human frailties as grounds for mitigations of monastic

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<sup>19</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 33, fols. 118r, 178v-9r. The following two cases occur at Reg. 2, fols. 61v-2r, 120r-v; 2bis, fol. 85 (this and the preceding two entries all concern Kylling); 40, fol. 348v.

discipline. For instance 7 monks asked to wear linen, one specifically while saying the night office and the others generally and on various medical grounds. The former also asked to use a light to read the night office, while one of the others wished to recite all the canonical hours by candlelight because of his old age.<sup>20</sup> Three religious were even released from the duty of attending their houses' daily round of services altogether for personal reasons. Two were nuns who pleaded infirmity, one also being released from vows of fasting and abstinence and the other being allowed to stay in her room and eat and drink there rather than in the refectory. The third supplicant (male) was frequently absent from his abbey for administrative reasons but was still obliged to attend offices wherever he was.<sup>21</sup> By contrast, another nun whose poor eyesight often caused her to misread the text of the divine office asked for this not to count against her and that she might still read the office. Meanwhile a prioress asked to resign on health grounds and a Carthusian of Sheen Priory (Surrey) requested that he might retire to nearby London to convalesce. Finally 6 supplications sought the relaxation of dietary rules for religious. Four simply requested the freedom to eat foods banned on fasting days, such as meat, eggs and dairy produce during Lent. Nevertheless laity and secular were also bound by these fasting rules, and they too sought such freedom and, like the four male religious here, largely on medical grounds. But the other two supplications sought freedom specifically from

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<sup>20</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2bis, fols. 162r, 164v; 3, fols. 88v, 211r (2), 246r; 8, fol. 196r.

<sup>21</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2bis, fol. 387v; 12, fol. 49v; 25, fol. 96v. The following three cases are found at Reg. 2bis, fol. 387v (Carthusian); 5, fol. 267v (prioress); 31, fol. 131r.

Benedictine restrictions on eating meat. One came from an individual monk, but the other was from an abbot who asked that he and his successors might dispense their monks to eat boiled and roast meats between Septuagesima and Quinquagesima rather than just offal and ‘carnes frixas cum ovis vel aliis mixturis’ (hash or burgers?!).<sup>22</sup>

However, the deviation from the religious life sanctioned most frequently was leaving one’s house. A licence to transfer to another house was sought by five besides the apostates already noted. Three, including a nun, stated that they felt unable to stay in their present house, in two cases St Alban’s Abbey. Four sought to move to another house of their order, specifically Wymondham Priory (Norf.) in the case of one of the St Alban’s monks; and one was a Cluniac monk who wished to become a Benedictine. A related supplication concerned a priest who had told his confessor that he wished to join the Carthusians but then asked the Apostolic Penitentiary that he might enter the Bridgettine abbey at Syon instead.<sup>23</sup> Five other supplicants remained affiliated to their houses but sought licences to become parochial chaplains with the consent of their monastic superiors. Four explained that they needed such posts in order to feed and clothe themselves for their houses were too poor to support them.<sup>24</sup> We have already observed that apostates sometimes sought dispensations to hold

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<sup>22</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 3, fol. 246r (also asks to wear linen); 9, fol. 129v; 14, fol. 168v; 20, fol. 169r; 29, fol. 45r (abbot); 40, fol. 298r. See Schmugge, 151-7, and Salonen, 160-61, on the Apostolic Penitentiary and fasting.

<sup>23</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 19, fol. 175v. Transfer: Reg. 2bis, fols. 32v (nun), 139v (St Alban’s); 3, fol. 8v (from St Alban’s to Wymondham, then a dependency of St Alban’s); 21, fol. 116v; 23, fol. 125v (Cluniac).

<sup>24</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2bis, fols. 277r, 381r, 381v, 392v, 393v.

benefices, and indeed we also find four other supplicants still affiliated to their houses but holding benefices. One had done so for 4 years with his superior's consent but presumably without a dispensation, hence he had to be absolved and dispensed as an apostate. Another required the same for he had not always worn his habit. One supplicant who did not hold a benefice but was dispensed to do so likewise presumed to remove his habit on this account.<sup>25</sup> This might be seen as a sign of apostasy, and two more supplicants required absolution for removing their habits and another for disguising his while travelling to the curia though none of them admitted to apostasy; one had left his priory with his superior's consent but went on to minister as a secular priest.

Some male religious sought licences to leave their houses temporarily for an approved purpose. Thirteen wished to study at university, in three cases specifically for 5 years, and in six cases for 7 years.<sup>26</sup> Two wished to study canon law; one, theology; two, theology or canon law; and one, civil law. In the latter case papal permission was clearly required for Pope Honorius III had forbidden clergy to study civil law in 1219. But normally male religious might go to university with the permission of their superiors alone;

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<sup>25</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 24, fol. 103r (rector not wearing habit); 18, fol. 156r; 35, fol. 152v, 153r (rector with superior's consent). Others not wearing habits: Reg. 2, fol. 239r (disguising habit); 3, fol. 32r (left with superior's consent); 5, fol. 411r; 36, fol. 132v.

<sup>26</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2bis, fols. 50r, 143v, 297r; 3, fol. 142r; 18, fol. 156r; 22, fol. 163r; 31, fol. 158v; 33, fol. 143v; 35, fol. 152v; 36, fol. 171r; 40, fol. 176r; 41, fols. 183v, 236v-7r. Only the supplicants in the second and maybe the tenth of these entries are noted by A. B. Emden respectively in his *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (Oxford 1957-9) [= *BRUO*], 1676, and *Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge 1963), 422.

ironically two supplicants sought licences to study with their superiors' consent. Two other supplicants, however, explained that they had been denied their superiors' permission; in effect they used the Apostolic Penitentiary 'as a court of appeal' and this may be true in other cases. A religious attending university without his superior's or papal permission was apostate, as in the case of one supplicant, while another needed absolution since he remained at university longer than his superior had allowed. In contrast, one supplicant obeyed his abbot's order to return before he could preach a sermon in fulfilment of his degree requirements; he asked the penitentiary to absolve him from this duty.<sup>27</sup> Another acceptable reason for leave from male religious houses was pilgrimage.<sup>28</sup> One monk sought a licence to visit Rome in the Jubilee year 1450 perhaps because his superior had refused him permission. But four others sought licences to visit Jerusalem, and another, Compostella, which might only be granted on papal authority. Going to such holy places could involve contact

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<sup>27</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2, fol. 238r (exceeded study leave), 238v (apostate); 2bis, fol. 146r-v; 3, fol. 217v. The latter two entries concern Stephen Landon who was obliged to give a sermon as an Oxford MTh (*BRUO*, 1158); the supplicants in the other entries are not noted by Emden. On the Apostolic Penitentiary and study see Schmutge, 161-2, and Salonen, 161-3, esp. p. 163 on the Apostolic Penitentiary as 'a court of appeal'. It must be emphasized, however, that in this period the Apostolic Penitentiary was not a court in the sense of a tribunal but rather an administrative body.

<sup>28</sup> Jerusalem: ASV, PA, Reg. 2bis, fol. 139v; 3, fol. 152r; 19, fol. 148r; 22, fol. 102v. Jubilee: Reg. 3, fol. 94r. Compostella: Reg. 5, fol. 154r. See Salonen, 167-8, on the Apostolic Penitentiary and pilgrimage.

with Muslims, which canon law forbade on pain of excommunication unless papal permission was gained.

Of the remaining supplications many concern routine matters. For example, 72 concern irregular ordinations, which in all but seven cases meant ordination below the canonical age. Thirty-nine supplications sought dispensations for ordination to the priesthood below the normal age of 25, in seven cases at the age of 24, in twenty-six at the age of 23, and in six at the age of 22, while one supplicant did not specify his age. Six others wished to be dispensed for promotion to all holy orders (including the priesthood) while under age, two at the age of 24 and four at the age of 23, while another sought ordination as both deacon and priest at the age of 24.<sup>29</sup> The need for such under age ordinations probably arose from a shortage of priests in the supplicants' houses, although only four of them actually say so. This reason is also stated by two of the five heads of houses who requested faculties to grant dispensations for under age ordination themselves, in three cases for 6 monks, and in the other two for 3 and 5 monks respectively. Thirteen other supplications concerned those ordained under age without a dispensation and hence in need of absolution and, if they had ministered in their illicit orders, dispensation from

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<sup>29</sup> Dispensations for underage ordination: ASV, PA, Reg. 2bis, fols. 199r-v (2), 215r, 356r (2), 326r (4), 371r (2), 416r (incomplete); 6, fols. 356v (2), 357v; 8, fols. 303v, 380v (2); 16, fols. 233r, 240r; 18, fol. 223v; 19, fol. 75r; 20, fol. 271r; 21, fol. 201v; 22, fols. 179v, 181v (3), 188v; 23, fol. 211v; 24, fol. 199v; 28, fols. 266r, 272r; 30, fol. 161r; 31, fols. 248r, 251r; 36, fols. 280v, 301v, 303v (2), 307v; 37, fols. 271v, 291v; 38, fol. 337v (3); 39, fols. 320v, 343r; 40, fol. 400v. See Schmutge, 143-7, 196-206, and Salonen, 178-92, on the Apostolic Penitentiary and impediments to ordination.

irregularity.<sup>30</sup> But ‘defect of age’ was not the only canonical impediment to ordination. Besides illegitimacy (‘defect of birth’) already noted, bodily defects were another, and three supplicants requested dispensations to be promoted to all orders despite a defect of their right eye. Three others were each defective in their own way, one having been ordained without a clerical tonsure, another without his bishop’s licence, and the third while apostate and to a fictitious title; all three sought absolution and a dispensation.<sup>31</sup>

Another routine request was for a licence to appoint a personal confessor. One monastic supplicant sought this for only five years, but fifteen requested it for life and thirteen in perpetuity, which amounted to the same thing since they only asked this for themselves as individuals. Indeed 32 requests for these licences came from 27 monks, including 2 abbots and 3 priors, and 5 nuns, including 1 abbess; a further such request was from all monks and nuns of the Gilbertine order then in England.<sup>32</sup> They and four individual monks specifically sought licences *in forma* ‘Provenit’, thereby giving their confessors additional powers to absolve them in reserved cases once in their lives and grant them plenary

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<sup>30</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 12, fol. 193r; 13, fol. 130r; 20, fols. 274r, 276v, 286r; 21, fol. 218v (3); 26, fol. 201v; 33, fol. 207v; 34, fol. 241v; 35, fol. 192bisv; 36, fol. 305r. Faculty to grant dispensation: Reg. 2bis, fol. 403r (2); 6, fol. 356v; 13, fol. 212v; 38, fol. 261v.

<sup>31</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 3, fols. 31v, 71v; 6, fol. 387v. Defect of right eye: Reg. 25, fol. 109v; 35, fol. 147v; 41, fol. 242r.

<sup>32</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 1, fols. 81v, 97v, 104v; 2, fols. 80r, 157r (3), 157v (2), 167r, 173v, 174v (2), 176r, 181v, 183r; 2bis, fol. 29v; 6, fols. 22v, 33r, 40r (2), 45r; 7, fols. 408v (2), 411r; 14, fol. 319v; 17, fol. 272r; 20, fol. 293r; 29, fol. 267v; 34, fols. 309v, 310v (Gilbertines); 36, fol. 320r; 40, fol. 456v. The last four entries sought *littere confessionales in forma* ‘Provenit’.

remission *in mortis articulo*. Likewise eight other monks asked the Apostolic Penitentiary to absolve them from ‘general sentences’, that is sentences incurred under canon law automatically and normally reserved to papal absolution.<sup>33</sup>

The remaining supplications concerning the religious life are miscellaneous, including nine from men, 2 abbots and a prior among them, seeking to be released from various vows or oaths. One was the graduate unable to fulfil his oath to give a sermon already noted. Two others sought the commutation of vows to go on pilgrimages to Rome and Compostella respectively. Another was a monk whose prior had let him go to Rome if he swore not to return to his priory; he agreed but sought to be readmitted despite this. Conversely, another had sworn to enter a Carthusian house, but sought a dispensation to remain a secular priest instead. The rest had taken on more peculiar obligations that there is no space to discuss here. Seven other supplications are also *sui generis*.<sup>34</sup> Six regard the conduct or misconduct of priestly duties. Two sought licences to celebrate anywhere

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<sup>33</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 2, fol. 21r; 2bis, fol. 392v; 5, fol. 411r; 7, fol. 408v; 15, fol. 320r; 17, fol. 283r; 21, fol. 245r; 22, fol. 234v. See Schmugge, 207-17, and Salonen, 203-10, on such licences and absolutions and the Apostolic Penitentiary.

<sup>34</sup> ASV, PA, Reg. 1, fol. 100r (infamy); 3, fols. 141v, 142v; 7, fol. 225r; 25, fol. 80r; 32, fol. 116v; 40, fol. 453r. Vows/oaths: Reg. 1, fols. 67r, 98r; 2bis, fols. 122v, 146r-v; 3, fol. 217v; 5, fol. 231v; 15, fol. 89r; 28, fol. 175v; 34, fol. 163r. See Schmugge, 140-42, 157-60, and Salonen, 152-6, on vows or oaths and the Apostolic Penitentiary. One French supplicant, a monk of Seéz abbey, also complained at Reg. 2bis, fols. 228v-9r, that his abbot had appointed him prior of their dependent house at Lancaster, but he had been deprived when Henry V suppressed this alien priory and appropriated it to his foundation Syon abbey.

and similarly another, a licence for all monks of a priory to have a portable altar. An Augustinian parish priest also requested a faculty to absolve his parishioners in cases reserved to his bishop, and two others sought absolution from abuses of holy orders: chanting the gospel while excommunicate and blessing clandestine marriages respectively. Like the licences for monks to become parochial chaplains this illustrates monastic involvement in pastoral care. Finally, a monk convicted of various crimes alleged by his brethren at a visitation sought a dispensation from the consequent infamy and *inhabilitas* so that he might still be appointed to offices of his order.

From this survey it will be clear that the registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary contain extremely rich and varied material concerning the religious life in late medieval England and Wales. The range of issues covered includes apostasy, under age profession, illegitimacy, violations of celibacy, violence and murder, deviations from the rule, university education, ordination, and confession *inter alia*. In most cases it has not been possible to give full details of individual supplications here, in particular dates and the names of persons and houses, but this article will hopefully whet the appetites of its readers sufficiently to pursue these in the forthcoming edition of the entries concerning England and Wales in the registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary to 1503.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> To be published by the Canterbury and York Society.

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## **THE ENGLISH MONASTIC ARCHIVES PROJECT: PROGRESS REPORT**

Many readers of the *Monastic Research Bulletin* will be aware of the English Monastic Archives (EMA) project, a research project in the History Department of University College London (UCL) [see *Monastic Research Bulletin* v (1999), 43-53]. The EMA project seeks to reconstruct the dispersed archives of England's religious houses in a house-by-house listing, organised by genre or type. Now in its sixth year, it has been funded chiefly by large grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), supplemented by grants from UCL, the Marc Fitch Fund and the British Academy, and is under the direction of Professor David d'Avray. It employs two full-time research fellows, Dr. Nigel Ramsay and Dr. Maureen Jurkowski.

The work of the project has been carried out in two distinct phases. In the first phase an authoritative list was compiled of the principal properties -- manors, granges, churches and chapels, as well as urban tenements and rural estates worth £5 a year or more -- owned by each house, in order to facilitate the identification of estate documents as having belonged to particular monasteries. This was necessary because many such records, especially court rolls and manorial accounts, do not indicate the name of the owner. For each property we have recorded its name, type, the parish and county in which it is located, the dates of

tenure, and the source(s) of our information. Our list, which provides the details of nearly 16,000 properties, is to be published by the List and Index Society in a three-volume set with index, and will shortly go to press.

We then moved on to the second phase -- the reconstruction of the archives of each house. Our archival reconstruction had to be limited to the archives of the monastic orders in the strict sense: Benedictine, Cluniac, Fontevraud, Cistercian and Carthusian and the late medieval orders of Bonhommes and Brigittines. Orders of canons (Augustinian, Premonstratensian and Gilbertine) and non-denizen alien priories, although included in the first phase of the project, had to be omitted, as well as the friars (excluded wholly), because it rapidly became clear that to include them would require another project of similar length. The scope is in general limited to documents and records that were themselves once held at the monasteries. We decided, however, to make an exception for the deeds of surrender, which provide a definitive date for the end of a house; all extant deeds of surrender have been included.

Our archival reconstruction will be published in full electronically on the web, but a more detailed version of the data relating to the Cistercians will also be published as a book. The volume of data for the Cistercians is of an order to make publication in the traditional sense possible, and the high degree of scholarly interest in them makes it especially desirable. The volume may serve as a model for hard copy publications based on other parts of the database.

The fruits of the research for the English Monastic Archives project are already becoming available. All of the information gathered in both phases of the project has been (or is being) entered into a series of three interlinked

relational databases. We are happy to announce now that a provisional version, to be updated periodically, is currently accessible via the internet. The web address is:

**[www.ucl.ac.uk/history/englishmonasticarchives](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/history/englishmonasticarchives)**

Freely available to all, the databases will be hosted permanently on the website of the History Dept. at UCL. We are hoping to hold a formal launch of these databases in 2006, after the completion of the project.

The first database contains information about each house (and this includes all the monastic establishments, including houses of canons and alien priories) -- dates of foundation and dissolution, a brief history, and general observations about the house's archive. There is also a bibliography of printed works about each house whose archives have been listed in linked word processing files, but this option is not yet available. The second database has details of the properties owned by each house (again, whether of monks, nuns, or canons, both denizen and alien), including dates of tenure and the sources of our information. The third database comprises the archival sources section, into which information about documents from each house's archive has been entered -- the name and location of the archival repository or library, the document reference number or shelfmark, dates of content and creation, a description of the document, and information about its provenance, known copies or transcripts, and references to any printed editions, published discussions of the document, and facsimiles or illustrations.

Detailed instructions on how to search the databases can be found on our website, and a 'Feedback' option

provides an opportunity for you to let us know what you think of them; we would very much welcome your views. Although the project is still in progress, those areas of England for which the information in the archives database is substantially complete are the south (particularly the Home Counties), the midlands and the northwest (though not Cumberland or Westmorland). Parts of the north, south and virtually all of East Anglia remain to be finished. We expect, nonetheless, that all monastic researchers will find something in our databases that will aid their research, and encourage you to visit our website.

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### **RESOURCES FOR MONASTIC HISTORY NEWLY AVAILABLE ON 'BRITISH HISTORY ONLINE'**

As many readers will be aware, British History Online is a digital library of core sources for the medieval and early modern periods, based at the Institute of Historical Research. We have recently completed our digitisation of the full text of the volumes of the Victoria County History relating to the religious houses. The volumes are fully searchable, and are available free of charge. Also on the site are the IHR's own *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, listing the higher clergy of the English and Welsh dioceses. These may be accessed at:

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/subject.asp?subjectid=13>

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### EUGIPPIUS OF LUCULLANUM

My research is concerned with constructing a more complete biography of Eugippius of Lucullanum than has previously been available. Details of his life are relatively sparse; Eugippius appears in Noricum in the 480's as part of the community founded around Saint Severinus. The community was evacuated, along with the rest of the Roman population, and they resettled at Castellum Lucullanum in the 490's. By 511, he has become abbot of the monastery at Lucullanum, and he writes the *Vita Severini*, dedicated to the Roman deacon Paschasius. The two other works attributed to Eugippius are the *Excerpta ex operibus sancti Augustini*, thought to have been compiled c. 506-509, and the *Regula Eugippii*, composed c. 535 as a last testament for his monks at Castellum Lucullanum.

Of the three works of Eugippius, most work has been done on the *Vita Severini*. This is an extremely important text for the history of the Migration Period, and has appropriately been paid much attention by scholars. The other two have been relatively untouched; both the *Excerpta Augustini* and the *Regula Eugippii* have been viewed as sloppy attempts at extracting salient points from the writings of Saint Augustine

in the first instance, and early monastic rules in the second. Despite this assessment, it seems as though both of these works, in conjunction with what is known about the *Vita Severini*, can offer a great deal of insight into the life of Eugippius, as well as monasticism and literacy in early sixth-century Italy.

The *Excerpta Augustini* opens with a dedication to the virgin Proba, who was the daughter of Symmachus and sister-in-law of Boethius, as well as a correspondent of Dionysius Exiguus and Fulgentius of Ruspe. In the dedication, Eugippius compliments her on her large library of writings of Saint Augustine. It has commonly been thought that Eugippius compiled the *Excerpta* from her library, but upon closer inspection, Eugippius actually says that he intends his *excerpta* to supplement her collection. This illuminates a number of interesting points, including what works Eugippius may have had access to (either at Lucullanum or elsewhere), what works Proba had in her library, and what all of this means for the nature of asceticism in early sixth-century Roman society. Further, I expect there may be connections to the Laurentian schism, as both Eugippius and Proba were closely aligned with the pro-Laurentian faction, but this area requires further research.

The *Regula Eugippii* has also proved to be a fascinating text, as it appears to act as a bridge between the earlier *Regula Magistri* and the more famous *Regula Benedicti*. Having begun to analyse the three texts in conjunction, it has become apparent that many of the sections that the *Regula Benedicti* borrows from the *Regula Magistri* are also the ones that the *Regula Eugippii* uses. I am continuing research into how other monastic texts may have

been transmitted to the *Regula Benedicti* (as well as other monastic rules) by the *Regula Eugippii*.

It is my hope that my studies will shed light on the relatively under-examined career of Eugippius, as well as providing some insight into the ascetic interests of the early-sixth century, while also contributing to the on-going academic dialogue concerned with the relationship between the *Regula Magistri* and the *Regula Benedicti*.

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## **THE AUGUSTINIAN CANONS IN THE DIOCESE OF COVENTRY AND LICHFIELD AND THEIR BENEFACTORS, 1115-1320**

My doctoral thesis explores the relationship between the Canons Regular of St Augustine in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, and their benefactors between the twelfth and early fourteenth centuries. A fundamental element is to examine evidence of how the canons (and in the case of one monastery, canonesses) were regarded by their royal, episcopal and knightly founders, patrons and supporters, in the context of a predominately rural and diverse region. The earliest recognized foundation of an Augustinian monastery in the see was by William, constable of Chester at Runcorn in 1115. My thesis incorporates thirteen houses of canons and one of canonesses.

Whilst investigating the accepted ‘attractions’ of the canons to founders and benefactors, such as comparatively modest financial outlay, accessibility and fashion (put forward by R. W. Southern in particular), the study considers the Augustinian movement as an important agent of religious reform in the diocese and in many cases, the parish, and its supporters’ response to it. Especially vital to the development of the order in twelfth-century England were the activities of Henry I, Queen Matilda (of particular significance), reform-minded bishops, such as Richard I of Belmeis and Roger of Clinton, and a number of *curiales* and nobles.

However, the role played on a local level by the more modest members of the knightly class (probably the ‘natural’ benefactors of the Augustinians) was no less important. Addressing this in particular, the thesis aims to employ something of a ‘from the bottom upwards’ approach, in order to establish the motives of knightly founders and benefactors, and argue that their patronage of the canons did not arise solely from a desire to emulate their lords, but had its own dynamic. Certain assumptions, like the canons’ parochial activities, moderate endowment costs, and the important role of female benefactors in the nature and type of endowments, are challenged. Moreover, surviving sources often reveal a wealth of information concerning what have been considered ‘small’ and merely local Augustinian communities, such as Calwich and Ranton.

The primary sources consist of original charters, cartularies, bishops’ registers and monastic ‘histories’, many of which survive in remarkable condition. Several, but by no means all, have also been published and edited. Among the unpublished material explored is BL, MS Egerton 3712 (15<sup>th</sup>-century cartulary of Wombridge Priory); Chester, CRO,

DDX 553/1-7, 9-27 (original early 13<sup>th</sup>-century charters of Mobberley Priory); and Manchester, John Rylands University Library, Arley Charters (original documents pertaining to the constables of Chester, c.1170 – c.1240). The methodology of the thesis primarily consists of exploring the devotional, tenurial, political and familial dynamics of benefaction within the north and west of Coventry and Lichfield diocese, including Cheshire, south-western Lancashire, western Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire. This incorporates the correlation of spiritual and temporal manifestations of support, such as gifts, confirmation grants, confraternity and burial.

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**STRATEGIES OF SURVIVAL AND SUCCESS ON  
THE BORDERS: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
CISTERCIAN MONASTERIES IN SCOTLAND AND  
IN POMERANIA**

In January 2004, I started a project, ‘Strategies of survival and success’, which considers the issue of the stability of medieval borders and the role of religious houses in maintaining this. Spanning the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the study explores various issues through six case studies of Cistercian foundations on the Scottish-English border and on the Polish-German frontier (Pommern and Neumark), which represent two important

types of border regions. In Scotland from the 1130s and in Pomeranian from the 1170s there was a wave of establishing new Cistercian houses, many of them royal (ducal) foundations and others established by ambitious noblemen looking to advance their positions. Importantly, all the cases I've selected as examples had mother houses on the other side of the border in the ethnically and culturally different regions. On the Scottish side of the project there is Melrose (daughter house of Rievaulx), which was founded in 1136 by King David I of Scotland); Dundrennan (also a daughter house of Rievaulx) was founded in 1142 by Fergus Lord of Galloway; and finally Holm Cultram (a daughter house of Melrose) was founded in 1150 by Prince Henry, son of David I. For the eastern part of the project I have selected Kołbacz (in Pomerania, a daughter house of Esrum Abbey in Denmark) founded in 1174 by Warcisław Świętopełk, a relative of Duke Bogusław I of Stettin; Marienwalde (in Neumark, a daughter house of Kołbacz), founded in c.1280 by Margraves Otto IV and Conrad and his son John VI; and finally Himmelstädt (also in Neumark, a daughter house of Kołbacz), founded in 1300 by Margrave Albrecht III.

My project considers a set of questions connected with the issue of formation and contemporary perception of borders and the role of social networks connected with religious houses in cross-border exchange, patronage and warfare. It aims to uncover a system of vertical connections among and between the lay people and religious houses, which were more than a mere expression of religious affinities. The project and the book resulting from that work is organised around the following sections:

1. Borders and frontiers in medieval Europe. How the comparison of Scotland and Pomerania can help us to understand how and why various forms and strategies of cross-border politics developed in northern Europe.

2. Building support networks in the frontiers. What were the expectations of the founders of the religious houses there? How was the ‘support group’ created? Were there benefactors on both sides of the border or not?

3. Across the border: mother houses and why did they matter. This section investigates the views and expectations of the monastic communities coming from the other side of the border to a different cultural background. How and why the contacts with the mother house were maintained.

4. Bishops – having friends in high places. What was the importance of friendship networks and connections with the secular church structure? Why so many monks of Melrose became bishops but none from the Pomeranian houses? What made Cistercian monks such good candidates in the frontier position?

5. When things go wrong – violence and war. What were the methods of dealing with violence? What were the strategies of preventing its occurrence? How the communities dealt with the reality of being a victim of violence.

The research so far shows that the ability to enlist a number of powerful supporters, and not over-relying on one family or political power, and the ability to change loyalties, were a key element of successful strategy. Having a strong sense of

institutional identity, either continuing with the attachment to the culture and tradition of the mother house (as seems to have worked well for Melrose), or being focused locally as the distant mother house seemed not to have had much to offer (as in the case of Kolbacz) gave another advantage. On the practical level making most of the terrain, both in terms of defensive possibilities and economic expansion was very important in the face of the growing problem of periodic destruction caused by military actions, prevalent in both areas since the late thirteenth century. The monograph arising from that project is planned for publication in the series 'Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe' by Brepols.

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## **MONASTIC HOSPITALITY: THE BENEDICTINES IN ENGLAND IN THE TWELFTH AND EARLY THIRTEENTH CENTURIES**

Hospitality has been integral to social life from time immemorial and was, from the outset, accorded a special role in the monasteries. The reception of guests is discussed by St Benedict in chapter 53 of his *Rule*, and remained an important part of monastic observance throughout the Middle Ages. Indeed, at the time of the Dissolution, tribute was paid to the hospitality administered by the religious houses, and cited in their defence against closure.

This analysis of hospitality in England stems from my doctoral thesis, 'Monastic hospitality: the Benedictines in England c.1070-c.1245', that was completed in 2000. It explores the practice and perception of hospitality by the Benedictines at this time, in particular, the monks of the great southern houses, for whom a significant and diverse body of evidence survives. This period is less fully documented than the later Middle Ages, but is, nonetheless, an important and incisive time, both in a European and Anglo-Norman context. It was a formative period, which gave rise to a number of religious, social and economic developments. The implementation of a new ruling elite in England following the Norman Conquest of 1066, intensified links with the Continent and, not least of all, would have led to an increase in travel and a greater number of people requiring hospitality on their journey.

The analysis is based on a large body of wide-ranging evidence, for every source potentially offers an insight to hospitality at this time. But evidence is scattered and yields a rather fragmented picture; for this reason a number of case studies are included. It is hoped that this study will shed light on the ideals and practice of Benedictine hospitality and its importance to the wider community, and contribute also to our understanding of the monastery as a living institution and its place in the medieval landscape. Chapter 1 considers the impetus behind hospitality, and examines the spiritual and worldly factors that compelled monasteries to open their doors to strangers. Chapter 2 explores the administrative organisation of the monastery to establish how the monks sought to provide for guests without jeopardising their monastic ideals. The chapter includes a short discussion of the division of revenues between the abbot and convent and

also of the emergence of the obediatory system, for these developments had a significant impact on how hospitality was organised and its complexity. Case studies of the guestmaster and the guesthouse follow. The next three chapters are concerned with the process of hospitality, and consider the reception of guests, physical and spiritual care provided during their stay and the procedure upon their departure. Freedom of access within the precinct and the extent to which visitors interacted with the monks is explored, and is of interest to current discussions of sacred space. Whilst there were potential benefits to be reaped by the community that welcomed guests warmly, hospitality could inevitably be a considerable drain on the monastery's resources, especially if houses were located on a thoroughfare or a pilgrim route, or had demanding patrons. The final chapter therefore considers the financial impact of hospitality.

Although monastic hospitality was driven by ideals that were integral to the Benedictine life, social, political and economic developments might affect how it was perceived and administered. For example, hospitality was likely curtailed in times of famine and warfare, and ideas on humanism may have increased the importance of showing guests courtesy. The arrival of the new religious orders introduced a new category of regular guest, who was invariably distinguished from monks of the order and entertained in a separate complex; at some houses new facilities were constructed specifically for their use. The reception of guests was clearly complex and whilst founded on principles that remained constant throughout the Middle Ages, practices were debated and adapted in accordance with internal and external developments.

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## **THE STAINED GLASS OF GREAT MALVERN PRIORY (WORCS.), c.1430-1501**

It is surely every doctoral student's nightmare to discover that a weighty volume has already been published on their particular subject, and even more so when that volume has been judged to contain 'every conceivable detail of information...on the subject'.<sup>36</sup> Fortunately, however, this proved not to be the case. Indeed, Rushforth's meticulous examination of the glass and reconstruction of the medieval glazing at Great Malvern allow a broader thematic study of the scheme, a key strand of which is the light the glass throws on monasticism, and, in particular, Benedictinism, in late medieval England.

The pre-Reformation priory church at Great Malvern was a Benedictine house, founded in 1085, but rebuilt almost entirely in the course of the fifteenth century. It was, until recently, the norm to dismiss the Benedictine order in

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<sup>36</sup> As L. A. Hamand commented of G. McN. Rushforth's *Medieval Christian Imagery as Illustrated by the Painted Windows of Great Malvern Priory Church, Worcester, together with a Description and Explanation of all the Ancient Glass in the Church* (Oxford, 1936), in his own short guide to the glass, *The Ancient Windows of Great Malvern Priory Church* (St Albans, 1947), p. xii.

England as an irrelevant archaism by the late middle ages; an order that had lost its appeal to society through a combination of its own corruption and the growing competition of other religious orders and of new modes of religious expression. The very scale and ambition of the rebuild at Malvern goes some way toward refuting this view of a defunct order; the details of its architecture provide further evidence. Heavily indebted to the magnificent abbey church at Gloucester, it, furthermore, shared its distinctive elevation of exceptionally low arcades and soaring clerestory with the late medieval Benedictine schemes at Sherborne and Glastonbury, suggesting perhaps the creation of something of an architectural Benedictine ‘brand’ at that period.

It is the medieval glass scheme at Great Malvern, however, that does most to contribute to the current re-evaluation of the Benedictine order. Major glazing programmes are known to have taken place at a number of Benedictine houses in the late middle ages, including Sherborne and Westminster Abbies, Durham Cathedral Priory, and the Lady Chapel at Gloucester. Malvern, however, is exceptional for the extent of the scheme’s survival, and the detail with which the lost or re-organised portions can be imaginatively reconstructed. As such, it offers detailed evidence for how a Benedictine community in late medieval England went about the task of undertaking such a project and what image of itself it wished to present to the world. Some of the initial research findings are outlined here.

A key feature of the glass’s original iconography was repeated depictions of kneeling lay figures, lining the foot of

almost every one of the church's windows.<sup>37</sup> Some of these figures seem quite clearly to have represented donors who provided the funds, at least, for the windows in which they appeared and, as such, were evidence of the ongoing attraction of the order as an object of patronage, and, presumably, for the value still placed on Benedictine spiritual services. Striking too is the range of lay figures depicted in the glass. Alongside numerous figures of local merchants and their wives were representations of leaders of the fifteenth-century realm, including Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, Henry VII and Prince Arthur, and emphasising that, despite the attractions of 'fashionable' orders such as the Carthusians and novel forms of patronage, such as the foundation of colleges, traditional monastic forms of patronage were not entirely abandoned.

The representation of other lay figures in the Malvern glazing, however, appears to have been the choice of the monastic community. On the one hand, this seems to be evidence of the maintenance of closer ties by the monks with their families after entering the monastery: inscriptions identified some of the figures as the parents of a prior and sub-prior. On the other hand, the figures seem to suggest an awareness by the monastic community that their religious mission included the instruction of the laity in the rudiments of the faith: a suggestion underlined by the depiction in the windows of the north choir aisle of the catechistic basics - the Seven Sacraments, Ave Maria, Pater Noster and Creed.

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<sup>37</sup> See forthcoming article by the author in 2005 volume of *The Stained Glass Journal*, 'Lay Figures in Sacred Spaces: the Fifteenth-century 'Donor Figures' of Great Malvern Priory, Worcestershire', for further discussion of some of these issues.

Perhaps the most revealing of the priory's windows, however, is one set high in the north choir clerestory, ostensibly depicting a simple narrative of the foundation and early history of the monastery, including the sanctification of the site by a pre-Conquest martyr, St Werstan. No other evidence of this individual, however, exists, and the window seems, in fact, to be a sharp piece of propaganda by the priory, creating for itself an illustrious sacred history and displaying it prominently. As such, the window may be evidence of the competitive environment in which late medieval Benedictines operated: but it is also testimony of the creativity of their response!

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### **APOSTOLIC POVERTY AT THE ENDS OF THE EARTH: THE OBSERVANT FRANCISCANS IN SCOTLAND, c.1450-1560**

The Observant Franciscan Order was, with the exception of the Carthusians and their single house established at Perth by James I in 1429, the last religious order with late-medieval origins to found houses in Scotland before the Reformation. Most likely invited to come to Scotland by Mary of Gueldres, Dutch wife of James II of Scotland in the 1450s, they were to found nine houses by the first decade of the sixteenth century. The order was one example of the changing fashions in piety and devotion of later medieval Europe that found

their way into Scotland via the trade routes from Flanders, the Low Countries and Northern Germany and the ever-increasing international connections of the House of Stewart. The first group of Observants to come to Scotland came from the Dutch dependencies of the Duke of Burgundy, who at the time was Philip the Good, uncle of Mary of Gueldres. Yet as much as the fortunes of the Scottish Observants reflected the experience of the order elsewhere in Europe, especially that of the Observant Franciscan Province of Cologne, to which the Scottish Observants belonged, the Scottish situation was also quite distinct. Unlike elsewhere in Europe, the Observants in Scotland never supplanted their Conventual brethren. There is some evidence that the two branches of the Franciscan order in Scotland were in competition with each other as well, but there were no attempts by their respective Scottish patrons to reform any of the existing Conventual houses to the Observance. In fact there is some indication that in Scotland the two orders tended to share patrons. It is also very striking that no Scottish Observant house was founded in a burgh with an already established Conventual house – though it should be remembered that while the Observants managed to found nine houses in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, only three of the sixteen Conventual houses were founded in that same period – after a hiatus of more than a century.

The Observants settled in Edinburgh, St Andrews, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Ayr, Elgin, Stirling, Perth and Jedburgh, which put them in six royal burghs, two important ecclesiastical burghs as well as all three of the Scottish pre-Reformation university centres – although the foundation in Aberdeen pre-dates that of the university there. With the exception of Glasgow and Ayr these were all east coast

burghs most of which had well-established trade links with the Low Countries, Flanders and Northern Germany. Traditionally it has always been assumed that the Observants occupied an influential role at court – they supplied confessors to two successive kings of Scots, James IV and V – but at the same time this influence appears to be tied to certain locations, not necessarily the order as a whole in Scotland. An investigation into patterns of royal patronage suggests that royal patronage was most prominent in those royal burghs where the Observant house had most likely been a royal foundation, while it was markedly less consistent for foundations undertaken either by ecclesiastical or burghal influence.

Overall the thesis aims to shed some light on the role the Observants played in later medieval Scotland, how they were perceived by their contemporaries and what actual influence they had both at court and within the burgh community. In so doing it also aims to dispel some of the myths that surround them, myths very often based on conjecture due to a dearth of primary sources which often put the Observants in a better light than they might have deserved. At the same time recent historiography has shed light on some aspects of the Observants' experience in pre-Reformation Scotland within the framework of other studies, but hardly any attempts have been made so far to link these different strands of scholarship into one comprehensive study of the Observant Franciscan order in Scotland up to the Reformation.

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## **THE BRIDGETTINES OF SYON ABBEY, c.1400-1600**

Desire for access to spiritual power underlay Henry V's foundation of Syon Abbey and its support by subsequent royal dynasties. The prayers of the Bridgettines were considered powerful because of their austere contemplative lifestyle, and they attracted patronage from political, mercantile and clerical elites. Syon Abbey was the only English house of Bridgettines, the Order of St. Saviour, founded by St Bridget of Sweden (1303 - 1373). St Bridget intended this order for women religious, served by a college of priests, to contribute to a contemporary movement for Church reform and renewal. The Bridgettines were at the forefront of devotional and intellectual innovation. They and their patrons shared a common agenda for religious and social reform spread through literacy and education. Continuities between their ideas and later protestant thought make them an ideal subject for exploring the transitions between humanist reform and later protestant and catholic reformation.

When Syon was dissolved in 1539 the inmates, almost without exception, continued to live in groups according to the Rule. Briefly restored by Queen Mary, the community went into exile in 1558, and began a period of 'wanderings' through Flanders and northern France, eventually settling in Lisbon, Portugal in 1594, where they remained until their return to England in the 19th century. The sisters settled in Devon and still maintain the unbroken 600-year history of the House.

I am currently undertaking a major prosopographical study of the 500 people commemorated in the Syon Martiloge, BL Add. MS 22285. The names of 250 sisters, 100 priests, and 150 benefactors are recorded in the manuscript's calendar. Some biographical information has now been assembled on about two thirds of these people, on their families, social status, education and book ownership. However, the rest are proving harder to trace.

Dr. Claes Gejrot of the Swedish Royal Archives, editor of the *Vadstena Diary* (Stockholm 1988), is preparing a transcription and translation of the Martiloge's calendar and historical notes. It is intended to publish short biographies of those named as appendices to the edition.

Interesting patterns are beginning to emerge from the data collected so far. The findings will be published in a new social history of the House c.1400-1600, which will update George Aungier's *History and Antiquities of Syon Monastery* (London 1840), still the standard reference work.

I am happy to answer queries about Syon's inmates and benefactors, and to circulate my unpublished papers. I would also be very pleased to receive, and to acknowledge in full, any new information for the biographies.

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## **PEASANT AGRARIAN OUTPUT IN LATER MEDIEVAL ENGLAND**

This is an ESRC-funded project directed by Professor Richard Smith (Unit for the History of Population and Social Structure, University of Cambridge) and Dr Ben Dodds (Dept. of History, University of Durham). Dr Neil Rushton (Unit for the History of Population and Social Structure, University of Cambridge) was research associate on the project until May 2005.

The project seeks to study peasant agrarian output c. 1250-1450 by the collection and analysis of tithe records incorporated within ecclesiastical account rolls. Study of the medieval agrarian output of demesne estates, most notably by Bruce Campbell, has provided much evidence for the changing nature of land management and direct farming on the manors of (predominantly) ecclesiastical landlords. In contrast, peasant agrarian output has been largely neglected due to the lack of account rolls and the difficulties posed in the interpretation of tithe records. However, tithe records provide the only access to medieval peasant agrarian production and thus constitute a vital and largely untapped source for the study of peasant economies and land management. The current project builds on the work carried out by Dr Ben Dodds on tithe management on the estates of Durham Cathedral Priory and extends the study to the estates of the Bishop of Winchester, Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral Priory.

The main research aims of the project are to study all those demesne manors where there was also an appropriated rectory. The grange accounts of these rectories (whether separate accounts or incorporated within demesne accounts)

detail the tithe income from various types of grain (usually wheat, barley oats and pulses), which can then be compared to the demesne output. Where manors have good sequences of account rolls it is possible to produce time-series of agrarian output over long periods and subsequently to analyse trends. Most especially, the project aims to examine the effects of the Great Famine (1315-22) on the agrarian economy and the recovery of both peasant and demesne sectors in the post-Black Death period. This will allow for a comparative analysis of the productivity and efficiency of both directly-farmed demesne estates and peasant holdings. Due to the incomplete nature of many of the tithe records (usually as a result of tithes being wholly or partially leased for numbers of years within time-series) the process of analysis involves the use of estimation models that have been developed by Dr Ben Dodds and Dr Neil Rushton.

All tithe records from the included manors have been entered into a MS Access database, which will become a useful research tool for future socio-economic study of agrarian conditions in medieval England. The appropriate account rolls at Westminster Abbey have also been photographed using an Olympus C-5050 digital camera in order that the high quality images of the account rolls can be studied more conveniently. There are currently over 6000 images in this archive.

By May 2005 the project had collected a complete database of tithe records from the estates of the Bishop of Winchester and Westminster Abbey along with an extensive digital photographic record of the primary sources. The records from Westminster Abbey and Winchester have also formed the basis for analysis and dissemination of the material in the form of several presentations in Cambridge

and at the Economic History Society Annual Conference in Leicester during April 2005. Dr Neil Rushton, Dr Ben Dodds and Professor Richard Smith are also currently working on an article based on the material for publication in 2006 or 2007. Dr Ben Dodds is now the primary investigator on the project and an attempt will be made to incorporate all the data and analysis with work already carried out on Durham Cathedral Priory, as well as adding any appropriate material from Canterbury Cathedral Priory.

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## **JUDGEMENT IN MEDIEVAL MONASTIC ART**

For many years I have been very interested in the origination of monastic judgment and how this has affected the art produced during the middle ages. I'm particularly interested in artistic depictions of damnation. Medieval iconography lacked for obvious reasons any sense of hope and never strayed far from the religious purpose of judging those that committed a sin. This is a very interesting area for me to peruse at a deeper level. Last year I began a degree course in Art and Aesthetics at Cardiff University. My specialism and dissertation will focus on this period, where eternal punishment and damnation were the focus of everyone's lives. I hope to examine and compare works of art that address these themes, especially works that were produced / executed by members of the monastic orders and would welcome any feedback from those with similar interests.

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