

Chapter 7

FOUNDERS, PATRONS, AND BENEFACTORS

The monastic expansion in Yorkshire was in part a movement of the spirit, a response, by those who entered the religious life, to the rich variety and vitality of northern monasticism. However, for monasticism to flourish it needed patrons as well as recruits. Men and women established monasteries in order to obtain prayers for the salvation of humankind, and for their own security in particular; but there were other motivations. As Professor Southern remarked, monasteries ‘did not exist solely or even mainly for the sake of the monks who sought within their walls a personal salvation . . . [they] were founded and filled for political, social, and religious purposes of which we hear nothing in the Rule’.¹ This chapter explores the explosion of monasticism in Yorkshire from the angle of those who established religious houses. How did founders choose the type of house to establish, or the monastery from which to draw a colony? Why did they sometimes go on to establish other houses or to endow monasteries founded by others? The particular circumstances of foundation have been discussed in chapters 1–5. The first part of this chapter brings together evidence to support the thesis that the monastic expansion in Yorkshire – which was essentially sponsored by baronial patronage although aspirations later percolated down to the middle orders of society – was a product of particular political, social, and tenurial circumstances which existed between 1066 and the close of the twelfth century; and that these factors, as much as spiritual vocation, determined the shape of the monastic order.

Those who founded religious houses assumed, or enjoyed, a particular status, that of *fundator*, *patronus*, or *advocatus*, and with it a privilege and a responsibility which was transmitted to their heirs. Although often used interchangeably, the words patron and advocate were legally distinct. *Ius patronatus* was ‘in theory a privilege, a concession made by the Church to

¹ Southern, *Western Society and the Church*, p. 224.

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the founder and his family . . . in effect the feudal relation, not denied but limited and charged with obligations of defence'. Advocates, on the other hand, were 'chosen officials paid with privileges or a fief, in practice hereditary masters with numerous rights'.² Despite the distinction made by canon law, in England the two concepts merged. In contrast in Germany, despite an attempt in the tenth century by monasteries to escape the hereditary *dominium* of lay lords by placing themselves under the control of the papacy, the aristocracy succeeded in gaining wide powers of advocacy over monastic lands.³ In England the founder-patron usually also acted as advocate;⁴ and the words *fundator*, *patronus*, and *advocatus* could be used synonymously. William II de Percy was described as *advocatus* of Whitby when he confirmed grants made by himself and his brother, and Henry de Lacy as *advocatus* of Nostell; Roger de Mowbray was *patronus* of Byland; and Walter Espec *fundator* and *advocatus* of Kirkham.⁵ The rights which these and other founders enjoyed, and the responsibilities which they assumed, varied according to the character of the monastic house and the order or congregation to which it belonged; to the circumstances in which it was founded; to the aspirations and ambitions of the founder; and, it will be argued, to particular political circumstances. The second and third sections of this chapter will therefore explore the relationship between the Yorkshire houses and their founders, and both the spiritual expectations and the material benefits which they and their heirs, as patrons, might enjoy. Finally, the monastic expansion involved the contribution of thousands of people who were not themselves founders, but whose endowments made possible the material expansion of the monastic order in the county. What prompted them to support particular houses? Previous studies have tended to assume that tenurial connections were of supreme importance in the choice of patronage. This chapter argues that the desire for the benefits, both spiritual and material, which could derive from the status of benefactor, although influenced by patterns of tenure and obligation, was also connected to the ambitions of the lesser baronage and the knightly class, which drew their inspiration from those above them on the social scale.

² Wood, *English Monasteries and their Patrons*, pp. 16–17. See also B. Thompson, 'Monasteries and their patrons at foundation and dissolution', *TRHS*, 6th series, 4 (1994), 103–25.

³ H. Hirsch, 'The constitutional history of the reformed monasteries during the Investiture Contest', in *Medieval Germany 911–1250*, ed. G. Barraclough (Oxford, 1938), II, 131–73; J. W. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany, c. 936–1075* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 27–35, 138–9.

⁴ E. M. Hallam, 'Henry II as a founder of monasteries', *JEH*, 28 (1977), 113–32 (p. 116).

⁵ *Cart. Whitby*, I, no. 209; Leeds District Archives MS NP/C1, p. 85; Newburgh, *Historia*, I, 52; *Cart. Riev.*, no. 149.

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THE FOUNDERS: CONSOLIDATION OF BARONIAL POWER, AND KNIGHTLY ASPIRATIONS

The material support which made possible the monastic expansion in Yorkshire, as in other areas of England but in contrast to Scotland and Wales, was largely furnished by the baronage, or the aristocracy. Although, as we have seen in previous chapters, the Norman kings took the post-Conquest Benedictine houses into royal patronage and saw their political potential, and although Henry I clearly encouraged Augustinian foundations, no Yorkshire house could have claimed to be a 'royal foundation' in the sense of a deliberate royal creation *de novo*. In the same way, although notable for their encouragement of others, the archbishops of York (with the exception of Thurstan's foundation of St Clement's) were not deliberate founders of religious houses. Both kings and prelates issued routine charters of confirmation, and indeed sometimes went further and granted property and privileges, and the monastic expansion clearly had a certain royal and ecclesiastical agenda; yet it was baronial sponsorship which shaped monastic developments.

Defining quite what constituted the 'aristocracy' has exercised the minds of historians. Here I am using the terms 'baronage' to denote the group of men holding in chief of the king – although that was a fluid and constantly changing group – and 'aristocracy' to describe, in David Crouch's words, 'a self-conscious and dominant social group at the head of society'.⁶ When I come to discuss members of the 'middle ground' I prefer the term 'knightly class' to 'gentry'.⁷ This is also a difficult group to define. Its members held enough land to sustain a non-agrarian lifestyle, and were figures of local prominence, but there were great variations in the amount of land held and the degrees of influence.

In his study of Yorkshire between 1066 and 1154 Paul Dalton has traced the changing nature of Norman settlement of the county and the development of its baronial honours.⁸ The men who aspired to, succeeded in joining, and who fell from the baronial class, were the ones most closely involved in the monastic expansion. Between 1066 and 1088 the houses whose foundations were described in chapter 1 came into existence largely on monastic initiative. Those lay patrons materially involved in the consolidation of Selby, Whitby, and St Mary's, however, were men operating on the highest political level. Hugh Fitz Baldric and

⁶ D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London and New York, 1992), pp. 15–16; see also the discussion in C. Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1987), pp. 11–25.

⁷ Crouch, *Image of Aristocracy*, pp. 23–7, prefers the term 'gentry' as a more amorphous and all embracing one.

⁸ Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*.

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William I de Percy were, Dalton argues, among the first Normans to be established north of the Humber. Robin Fleming has suggested that Hugh received the estates of thegns deprived after the harrying of 1069–70; it was at this same time that, acting as sheriff of Yorkshire, he brought Benedict of Selby to the attention of the king.⁹ Just a few years after the arrival of William de Percy in the county he became the patron of the fledgling community at Whitby. Count Alan of Brittany, established in Richmondshire on the confiscated estates of Earl Edwin, was protector of the Whitby monks who moved to Lastingham, and was instrumental in transferring them from there to York (1086).¹⁰ All three monastic communities received both royal and aristocratic backing, as the interests of king and baronage coincided: a strong, even if small, monastic presence was a symbol of Norman power as well as a nucleus of loyal support for an alien regime, and this was particularly important at a time when royal authority was as fragile as it was in Yorkshire before 1070.¹¹ Two further baronial foundations coincided with the consolidation of Norman power. Although Ilbert I de Lacy evidently held the guardianship of Pontefract and began the construction of a castle there in the 1070s, he does not seem to have established a firm hold on the honour until 1086.¹² The foundation of a Cluniac priory by his son, Robert, in the following decade, therefore, marks an important stage in the creation of a solid power base for the family in south Yorkshire centred on a strategic crossing place into the county. Similarly, Ralph Paynel's foundation of Holy Trinity, York, coincided both with his tenure of the office of sheriff of Yorkshire and his organization of his estates within the county.¹³

Political conquest and alien settlement marched hand in hand with monastic foundations, and stone abbeys like stone castles became a powerful symbol of the Norman presence in the north, even when – perhaps especially when – they annexed Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian nostalgia and sentiment.¹⁴ Matthew argued that, as a class, the first generation of Anglo-Norman barons were not notable for their monastic foundations in England, but preferred to endow continental houses with English estates, often sharing with family foundations in Normandy the

⁹ Robin Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 167; Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, pp. 65–7; see above, pp. 26–7.

¹⁰ Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, pp. 66–7.

¹¹ Fleming, *Kings and Lords*, pp. 165–7. Between 1066 and 1069 the Yorkshire lands available for reganting were very limited.

¹² Wightman, *Lacy Family*, pp. 17–40, argued that the Lacy fee was a creation of the 1080s; Fleming (*Kings and Lords*, pp. 177–8), however, argues for a date a decade earlier. See also Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, pp. 39–49.

¹³ See above, pp. 46–8. ¹⁴ See above, pp. 32, 38–9.

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fruits of military victory.¹⁵ In Yorkshire the line is not clear cut, for although some first-generation barons, like Stephen of Aumale, showed loyalty to Norman abbeys, 'alien cells' continued to be founded long into the twelfth century; conversely the earliest independent houses were not affiliated to continental houses.¹⁶ Holy Trinity and Pontefract were, indeed, derived from Marmoutier and La Charité, but it is by no means certain that this was due to any 'family feeling'. Moreover, if the identification of Robert de Lacy as founder of Nostell can be sustained, a band of what were probably native hermits could as easily form the basis of a monastic community loyal to its lord as could a colony of Norman or French monks.¹⁷ In Yorkshire the 'Conquest generation' played a significant part in the establishment of locally based monastic power and influence.

Paul Dalton has argued that the Norman settlement of the north was a much speedier and sustained process than has hitherto been recognized. Moreover, it was precisely on those honours where reorganization and subinfeudation progressed rapidly – the estates of Percy, Fitz Baldric, Richmond, and Lacy – that monastic foundations, or 'religious enfeoffment', also took place.¹⁸ The Norman settlement was, however, far from complete by the last decade of the eleventh century; moreover the baronage was soon to be shaken by a series of confiscations and restructuring of honours during the reigns of the sons of the Conqueror.¹⁹ The rebellion of 1088 claimed the downfall of Hugh Fitz Baldric, and that of 1095, Earl Robert of Northumberland. Parts of their honours were divided among newcomers like Robert I de Stuteville, Guy de Balliol, and Robert de Rumilly. Under Henry I the transformation continued; several barons with interests in the shire fell, and others rose, as estates went to the 'new men' of Henry I, like the lands formerly of the honour of Robert I de Stuteville in Upper Ribblesdale, Thirsk, and Kirkby Malzeard, which went to Nigel d'Aubigny.²⁰ Nigel also benefited from the demotion of Gilbert Tison and William de Arches, who both now

¹⁵ Matthew, *Norman Monasteries*, p. 28.

¹⁶ See above, pp. 51–5. On the establishment of alien cells in a neighbouring county, see D. M. Owen, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire, 5 (Lincoln, 1971), pp. 47–8.

¹⁷ See above, pp. 71–7.

¹⁸ The exceptions, where no monastic foundation took place, are the honours of Conisborough (Warene) and Tickhill (Builli). The major Warene foundation was on the southern estates at Lewes; the family of Builli made a foundation of its Nottinghamshire estates at Blyth (from Rouen) and did not establish a house in Yorkshire until 1147 (Roche).

¹⁹ For the following details I am indebted to Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, pp. 79–112. For a discussion of the second generation of post-Conquest nobles, see Charlotte A. Newman, *The Anglo-Norman Nobility in the Reign of Henry I: The Second Generation* (Philadelphia, 1988).

²⁰ For the classic description of Henry's treatment of magnates and new men, see Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, vi, 16–17. On Nigel see *Mowbray Charters*, pp. xvii–xix.

became his tenants. The scattered estates of the count of Mortain went to several tenants, and two subtenants, Fossard and Surdeval, were raised to baronial status. Through marriage into the family of Surdeval the family of Paynel was enriched and a new branch established at Hooton Pagnell. Thirteen Surdeval manors then passed intact to form a barony, based on the *caput* of Skelton, for Robert I de Brus, a newcomer to England and a close associate of Henry I.²¹ As Dalton has shown, the 'old amorphous Domesday lordships were being woven by the king and his magnates into compact castleries'.²² The Brus fee is a good example of a consolidated conglomeration of Domesday estates of the Crown, those of Robert Malet, and of Hugh Fitz Baldric. Brus, and his honour, were deliberate creations of the king designed to bring royal authority into a distant, marcher, region.

The fate of the honour of Pontefract shows how, in contrast to the Brus fee, old lordships could be preserved: at Lacy's exile it passed direct to a 'new man', Hugh de Laval, and at his death (before 1129) to another, William Maltravers, who paid handsomely for Laval's estates and his widow. Thus, when Maltravers's murder in 1135 cleared the way for the return of the Lacy family, Ilbert II resumed his estates more or less intact. The 'new' men were intended by Henry to be a novel breed of magnate. Not only would they be loyal to the king who had created them, they would be administrators too. Prominent in this respect in Yorkshire were Walter Espec and Eustace Fitz John. Walter, whose modest patrimonial lands lay in Bedfordshire, was a newcomer to the north. Although his first recorded appearance was at Durham in 1121, he must have been well established by that time in his power bases of Helmsley (Yorkshire) and Wark (Northumberland).²³ Also holding lands in both counties was Eustace Fitz John, a younger son who made his fortune at the royal court. Royal grants brought him Bamburgh and Malton, and before 1130 he had acquired the hand of an heiress, Beatrice, daughter of Ivo de Vescy, and with her the lordship of Alnwick (Northumberland). His second marriage, to Agnes, daughter of William Fitz Nigel, constable of Chester, was just as advantageous, and brought land in Loddington (Northamptonshire) and Hilderthorpe, near Bridlington.²⁴ Although there is some evidence to suggest that Ralph Paynel and Robert de Lacy had earlier been associated with the operation of royal justice in the shire, it is with Walter Espec and Eustace Fitz John, the 'new men', that the

²¹ For discussion of the creation of the Brus fee, which the author dates to between 1114 and 1119, see Peter King, 'The return of the fee of Robert de Brus in Domesday', *YAJ*, 60 (1988), 25–9.

²² Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, p. 91.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 96–9, and 'Eustace Fitz John and the politics of Anglo-Norman England: the rise and survival of a twelfth-century royal servant', *Speculum*, 71 (1996), 358–83.

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integration of Yorkshire into the administrative structure created by Henry I and his *curiales* is first apparent.

It is also in the reign of Henry I that the pace of monastic foundations in Yorkshire accelerated, and the chronology is closely tied to the rise and fall of the baronage, old and new. Walter de Gant, Domesday Book tenant in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, had marked his arrival with a Benedictine foundation at Bardney (Lincolnshire). The acquisition of further estates was accompanied by the foundation of an Augustinian house at Bridlington. Significantly, Bridlington was not only a port and a borough, it was 'the administrative centre of the neighbouring Hunthow hundred'.²⁵ Gant's revitalization of a minster church reinforced his own growing status in the locality. The honour of Robert de Rumilly in Skipton, created by William II and consolidated by Henry I, lay on the western fringes of the county. By 1120 the honour had passed to Robert's daughter, Cecily de Rumilly, who married William Meschin, lord of Copeland. The marriage made a formidable alliance, and the two collaborated just a year or so later in the foundation of Embsay Priory, not far from the castle of Skipton.²⁶ In 1155 their daughter, Alice, removed the canons to Bolton, the soke manor which had formed the initial royal enfeoffment of Robert de Rumilly.

It was perhaps more important, psychologically, for Henry I's 'new men' than for the established barons to mark their arrival and their rise in status by the foundation of a monastic house, and by the patronizing of a community of monks or canons to pray for their souls and provide more material benefits. Robert de Brus's elevation in Cleveland was bolstered by the foundation of Guisborough on one of the most important manors he had been granted, just three miles from his castle at Skelton.²⁷ Walter Espec introduced Augustinian canons to Kirkham in around 1121;²⁸ in 1132 he established a second Yorkshire monastery, Rievaulx, but it was not until 1136 that his patrimonial estates were graced with a monastic foundation, at Warden. Eustace Fitz John consolidated his authority in Northumberland with a Premonstratensian foundation at Alnwick and in Cheshire he assumed the patronage of Augustinian Norton, founded by William Fitz Nigel; to these he would later add the Yorkshire Gilbertine houses of Malton and Watton.²⁹ Bertram de Bulmer, son of Ansketil de Bulmer, like his father before him sheriff of Yorkshire, was founder of the double house

²⁵ Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, p. 85.

²⁶ See above, pp. 80–3.

²⁷ See above, pp. 77–9.

²⁸ See above, pp. 79–80. 1121 is the year of Walter's first recorded appearance in the north, but his foundation of Kirkham around that date suggests that he had had time to organize his estates at least enough to select an appropriate endowment.

²⁹ J. Patrick Greene, *Norton Priory* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 1–9; on Malton and Watton see above, pp. 89–90, 137–8.

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of Marton, and another royal elevation, Geoffrey Fitz Pain, founded a cell of Nostell at Tockwith, and may have been associated with the establishment of Warter Priory.³⁰ If William Fitz Turgis Brundos was indeed founder of Rosedale, then he can be added to the roll of 'new men' who consolidated their authority by the foundation of a religious house.³¹

Some 'new men' in this second and third generation of post-Conquest barons by now inherited monastic foundations. Pontefract and Nostell were Lacy foundations, but the patronage was taken over first by Hugh de Laval and then by William Maltravers. Hugh was a particularly generous benefactor. He granted Nostell considerable estates in the honour of Pontefract, and the section of the Nostell cartulary headed *Carte advocatorum* begins with Hugh's grants.³² Clearly the continuity of a relationship of patronage with the canons brought with it respectability and acceptance. The concern for continuous expansion of monastic interests is exemplified by the Paynel family. In the 1130s William Paynel added a second family foundation to the alien priory founded by his father in York, by establishing Augustinian canons at Drax, and around 1145, towards the very end of his life, founded a third monastic house, Hambye, in Normandy. On his death William's lands, both in England and Normandy, were partitioned between his two sons, Hugh and Fulk. To the latter fell the patronage of all three religious houses.³³

The reign of Henry I witnessed a quite remarkable increase in the number of monastic foundations in Yorkshire. The process was dominated by the Augustinian canons (possibly seven foundations), with two Cistercian abbeys, and two or three nunneries, and possibly three cells. This contrasts with neighbouring Lincolnshire, where the establishment of small alien cells 'was to be the pattern of foundation until after 1130', the only exceptions being Benedictine Bardney and Augustinian Wellow.³⁴ Matthew suggested that the Norman barons did not endow or found English monasteries until they ceased to regard the duchy as their home, and that 'this process of losing touch with Normandy is hardly noticeable before the death of Henry I'.³⁵ For Professor Southern, part of the appeal of the Augustinian canons to Henry's 'new men' lay in their combination of prayer and practical service, and part in their modest needs.³⁶ In Yorkshire both the established baronage whose fortunes were rejuvenated by the king, and the *novi homines*, combined

³⁰ See above, pp. 84–5, 87–8. ³¹ See above, p. 130.

³² A point made by Wightman, 'Foundation of Nostell Priory', 57. See above, pp. 60–2 and p. 76.

³³ EYF, pp. 68–9. ³⁴ Owen, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire*, p. 48.

³⁵ Matthew, *Norman Monasteries*, p. 28.

³⁶ R. W. Southern, 'The place of Henry I in English history', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 48 (1862), 127–56; reprinted as 'Henry I' in R. W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 206–33.

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to produce the expansion; in some respects, as the latter acquired wealth, status, and security, the two groups merged. There can be no doubt, however, that the rise of a new aristocracy and the monastic expansion were intimately linked: the former used the latter to signal their arrival to the baronage, to provide a visible sign of their elevation, and to lay claim to their lands.

It was, however, the next generation, those who lived through the turbulent reign of King Stephen, who witnessed the most intense period of activity. The monastic foundations of this period are distinctive in a number of ways. First, the class of founders was widened, and a foundation now came within the aspiration of men and women of the knightly class. Second, expansion was dominated by two groups, the Cistercians and religious women. Third, the foundations took place against a background of increased tenurial insecurity, the breakdown of royal authority and administration, the rise to supreme power of William of Aumale, earl of York, and a series of local wars.

The founders of monasteries in the period 1135 to 1154 were drawn from a variety of backgrounds. Some were members of established families which already had monastic foundations, and who now added to them. Henry de Lacy added Kirkstall to the family houses of Pontefract and Nostell, and took an interest in his tenants' Templar foundations of Temple Hirst and Temple Newsam. Alan of Brittany offered protection to his tenant's community at Fors, and his son and successor, on removing that community to Jervaulx, took it into comital patronage. The Percy foundations of Whitby and Handale were joined now by Cistercian Sallay. William of Aumale founded Augustinian Thornton (Lincolnshire, 1139), and Cistercian Vaudey (Lincolnshire, first at Bytham, 1147) and Meaux (1151) to join the cell at Birstall. Gilbert de Gant added Cistercian Rufford (Lincolnshire) to Bardney and Bridlington, possibly fulfilling his father's intention to found an abbey at Stainton, in the North Riding.³⁷ Some established families made Yorkshire foundations for the first time: Richard de Busli, grandson of the Domesday Book tenant in chief at Tickhill, and his neighbour, Richard Fitz Turgis, together founded Roche. Roger de Mowbray, son of Nigel d'Aubigny, came of age shortly before 1138. In that year he founded Savigniac Byland and later Augustinian Newburgh, and was probably also responsible for three Templar houses at Cowton, Penhill, and Stanghow.³⁸ Robert III de Stuteville, who was later to dispute lands with Mowbray, marked the restoration of his fee after 1154 by the foundation of a nunnery at Keldholme.

³⁷ *Cart. Riev.*, p. 261: Walter died in 1139, and his son succeeded as a minor. The grant of Stainton had been exchanged for other lands by 1158.

³⁸ Janet Burton, 'Knights Templar', 30.

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These tenants in chief, however, did not have a monopoly on monastic foundations, for a new phenomenon was the foundation of monasteries and particularly nunneries by their tenants and subtenants. Adam Fitz Swain was the grandson of Ailric, who in 1086 held lands in Cawthorne of the honour of Pontefract.³⁹ Swain had added several further manors, and by 1135 the family was one of the most important of the Lacy tenants. Adam also succeeded in obtaining lands in Cumbria and following the Scottish annexation of the area in 1138 he was to be found attesting charters of David I. It was probably at the instigation of William Fitz Duncan, nephew of David I and husband of Alice de Rumilly, lady of Skipton, that Adam was enfeoffed after 1138 with estates of the Honour of Skipton. Dalton has suggested that William was competing with the Lacys for the loyalty of Adam, whose estates of the honour of Pontefract surrounded an outlying portion of the honour of Skipton, at Wath on Dearne; this was a strategy which he tried with other families. Adam was in a vulnerable, but at the same time a commanding position: he was a tenant of two lords with conflicting interests, and his dilemma may have led him to play off the two sides. It was towards the end of Stephen's reign, that he established both a castle at Mirfield and a monastery at Monk Bretton. It has been traditional to describe Adam's foundation, his choice of the Lacy Cluniac house of Pontefract as the mother house, as dictated by tenurial connections.⁴⁰ It may also have been a case of geographical proximity, or admiration for Cluniac monasticism. Certainly loyalty to a Lacy foundation did not stop him patronizing the Cumbrian cell of St Bees, then under Scottish control, which grant was confirmed by David I, and before 1146 he had intended to found a Cistercian abbey as a daughter house of Fountains.⁴¹ Was the choice of Pontefract as a mother house intended to reassure Henry de Lacy of his loyalty? Or in constructing a monastery at Monk Bretton was Adam announcing to Lacy that he was, to a certain extent, an independent agent? Certainly he signalled his intention to keep firm control on his new foundation.⁴²

Adam was not alone among the class of wealthy tenant who aspired to his own monastic house.⁴³ Acaris Fitz Bardolph, though apparently he had not planned to found a Savigniac house, did not hesitate to offer his

³⁹ For the details which follow I am indebted to Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, pp. 216–18. See also Hugh M. Thomas, 'A Yorkshire thegn and his descendants after the Conquest', *Medieval Prosopography*, 8 (1987), 1–22.

⁴⁰ Golding, 'Coming of the Cluniacs', p. 69.

⁴¹ *The Register of the Priory of St Bees*, ed. J. Wilson, Surtees Soc., 126 (1915), nos. 39–41. On Fountains see above, p. 107, note 39.

⁴² See above, pp. 63–5.

⁴³ Adam demonstrates the difficulty of defining a man as of baronial or non-baronial rank, since in Yorkshire he was an honorial baron and in Cumbria a tenant in chief.

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patronage to a wandering monk, Peter de Quinciaco, and to found the abbey of Fors (1145).⁴⁴ Another tenant of the honour of Richmond, Roald, constable of the castle, brought Premonstratensian canons to Easby, within sight of the caput of the honour (1151). However, these three founders of male houses were exceptions in not belonging to the class of Yorkshire tenants in chief; it was among the nunneries that the difference in the status of founders becomes most apparent. William de Percy, Robert de Stuteville, and Eustace Fitz John were the only founders of nunneries who were of baronial rank. The remainder were drawn from the wealthier tenants of the major honours, men like William de Arches, Bertram Haget, and Peter of Thirsk, tenants of the honour of Mowbray, Roger de Aske, holder of nine carucates of the Steward fee of the honour of Richmond, and Peter de Arthington, tenant of the Paynells of Hooton Pagnell.⁴⁵

The predominance of the baronial class in the expansion of monastic houses need not surprise us. The foundation of even a house of modest size demanded the permanent alienation of land and revenue. Members of the aristocracy were those with the resources to found such establishments, and with the motivation – the desire to consolidate political power and the acquisition of estates – to exploit the material potential from a foundation. That founders of lower status opted for houses of regular canons and nuns may be related to their more modest requirements,⁴⁶ and nunneries may have had a more obvious local appeal.⁴⁷ What is clear is that after the first few decades of the twelfth century, members of the knightly class ceased to be content to endow the houses established by their lords, and themselves aspired to the status of founder. In both groups monastic foundations were influenced by marriage, for the foundation of a religious house could be a means of consolidating such an alliance.⁴⁸ It certainly helps to explain how a man or woman came to choose an order to patronize or a house from which to draw a colony. The Gant family was linked by marriage to the Mowbrays, the Percys, and the Paynells, and canons of Roger de Mowbray's foundation at Newburgh were initially drawn from the Gant monastery at Bridlington. Among the knightly class a cluster of nunnery foundations in the late 1140s and early 1150s may reflect family connections.⁴⁹ Dynastic and political relationships fostered the spread of monastic houses and were influential in the popularity of particular orders, groups, and mother

⁴⁴ *Mon. Ang.*, v, 568; see above, p. 124.

⁴⁵ See above, pp. 127–39. Bertram also founded the hermitage of Healaugh Park, later converted into an Augustinian priory.

⁴⁶ For this argument applied to Augustinian houses see Southern, *Western Society and the Church*, p. 245, and to Gilbertine houses, Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham*, pp. 269–80.

⁴⁷ See above, pp. 139–46, 167–70. ⁴⁸ See above, p. 86. ⁴⁹ See above, pp. 132–4.

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houses. Among both aristocracy and knightly class the foundation of a religious house was, in part, about their image, their aspirations and their continuity with the past and the future. It was part of a self-conscious expression of their status in society, a need which increased in times of tenurial and political insecurity.

PATRONAGE AND PENANCE

The foundation of a religious house was, accordingly, part of the image of the aristocracy, and increasingly of the knightly class, a trapping of power and authority. We should not forget, however, that there was a fundamental spiritual and penitential motive for making a religious foundation: the fear of hell and damnation. Sermons and homilies constantly reminded medieval man and woman of the consequences of sin, and recalled for an aristocracy bred for war the need for intercessory supplication on its behalf. Their message was reinforced by monastic writers. When Orderic Vitalis recorded the foundation of Shrewsbury Abbey, he placed in the mouth of his father, Odelerius, a speech in which he urged Roger of Montgomery to found a community of monks, a 'citadel of God against Satan, where the cowled champions may engage in ceaseless combat against Behemoth for your soul'.⁵⁰ The seeming innocuousness of the *pro anima* clause in charters masks the enormity of medieval humanity's fear of retribution; and the development of the doctrine of Purgatory, fast-growing in the twelfth century, added an extra incentive to secure vicarious intercession.⁵¹

A charter generally stated that a foundation had been made, and land granted to God and the religious community *pro anima mea*, or *pro salute anime mee*. An addition might be the expectation that the foundation would benefit the souls of the founder's ancestors and heirs, his wife and his children, perhaps even his king. Walter Espec made his foundation grant to the Cistercians to

God and the church of St Mary of Rievaulx in the hand of Abbot William and the brethren serving God there, for the love of God and for the salvation of the soul of William, king of the English, and for the salvation of Henry, king of the English, and of all their ancestors, and for the salvation of the soul of my father and my mother, and for the soul of Hugh de Wildecher, and for the souls of the father and mother of my wife, and of all our family and ancestors.⁵²

⁵⁰ Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 142–7.

⁵¹ See the short but useful discussion in Crouch, *Image of Aristocracy*, pp. 311–16.

⁵² Translated from *Cart. Riev.*, no. 42. On this theme see B. Thompson, 'Free alms tenure in the twelfth century', *Anglo-Norman Studies XVI, Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1993*, ed. M. Chibnall (Woodbridge, 1994), 221–43.

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However much there may have been other motives (usually not mentioned in charters), the fundamental reason for a foundation remained penitential. Henry de Lacy's charter for Kirkstall, for instance, makes no mention of his illness but records his grant to God and St Mary and to Abbot Alexander and the monks of Kirkstall, of his land in Barnoldswick and Kirkstall, for the souls of his grandparents, Ilbert and Hawise, his own heirs, his father and mother, brothers and sisters, his aunt, Matilda, and all the faithful dead.⁵³

Desire for salvation meant that responsibility did not end with the act of foundation. Further grants or confirmations to a religious house could follow, often when the founder felt in particular need of reassurance. When he returned to England after 1154 Earl Conan of Brittany removed the monks of Fors to a more salubrious site at Jervaulx, and then assumed the status of founder from his tenant, Acaris Fitz Bardolph. Some time later he issued a charter of confirmation:

Iccirco in hac vita degens, et saluti anime mee volens providere, Deo et Beate Marie, et abbacie de Jorevalle Cisterciensis ordinis quam fundavi in honorem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et monachis meis ibi Deo servientibus et pro me orantibus.⁵⁴

(Therefore declining in this life and wishing to provide for the salvation of my soul [I grant] to God and St Mary and the abbey of Jervaulx of the Cistercian order, which I founded in honour of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to my monks who are there to serve God and to pray for me.)

This vividly conveys the anxiety of a man approaching death, certainly, but it is also a self-confident expression of the purpose and function of the monks of Jervaulx. They were Conan's monks, and they were there to serve God and to intercede on his behalf. The use of the term 'my monks' almost seems to imply a personal chantry. Conan added to his requests for spiritual services the reassurance of burial at the abbey *ubicunque obiero in Anglia*.

Often spiritual expectations of founders are unspoken. On other occasions the charters make manifest a close relationship between monastery and founder or patron. Gilbert de Gant encapsulated many of the expectations of a founder when he issued a charter for Bridlington Priory, part of which states:

pro redemptione peccatorum meorum et pro peculiari dilectione quam semper habui erga ecclesiam Sancte Marie Brellintone, mancipavi me ipsum eidem ecclesie, ea videlicet ratione ut ubicunque vivendi finem fecero in monasterio

⁵³ *Kirkstall Coucher*, I, no. 67 (a later charter, issued after the relocation to Kirkstall); see also *ibid.*, no. 268 (EYC, I, no. 641). For the foundation see above, pp. 118–20.

⁵⁴ *Mon. Ang.*, v, 572–3, no. IX.

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Bredlintoniensi locum sepulture accipiam. Et si aliquando Deus per gratiam suam cor meum tetigerit et opportunitatem dederit ut relicta seculari vanitate in paupertate Deo servire decernam, in predicto monasterio habitum religionis accipiam et in illorum consortio ultima vite mee spatia compleam inter quos ab annis infantie coalueram, conveniens quippe mihi visum est ut ubi in hunc mundum ingressus sum de ventre matris mee, ibi de hoc mundo egrediar in matrem omnium.⁵⁵

(For the redemption of my sins and for the special love which I have always had for the church of St Mary of Bridlington, I have bound myself to the same church in this way, that wherever I shall come to the end of my life I will receive a place of burial in the monastery of Bridlington. Moreover, if at any time God in his grace shall touch my heart and give me the opportunity to leave behind the vanity of the world and serve him in poverty, I shall receive the habit of religion in the aforesaid monastery and shall complete the last space of my life in the company of those among whom I grew up from the years of my childhood, since it seems good to me that where I entered this world from the womb of my mother I should also leave this world in the mother of all.)

This charter brings together so many of the spiritual goods a founder could expect to reap from the act of foundation and shows that they could endure from the cradle to the grave and beyond. Prayers, a promise of entry should a founder wish to take the habit, burial within the monastery, ensuring a resting place in the holy of holies and an unbroken series of masses from the point of burial, and the spiritual–material benefits of education of one’s children among the religious, were the primary concerns of founders. These concerns were individual, but they were also about family and continuity of family. Burial at a religious house was an individual mark of grace, but it cannot be divorced from a founder’s concern for genealogy, or lineage. Patronage of the family monastery at Kirkham brought the Ros heirs of Walter Espec the prayers and masses of the canons; it also provided them with a mausoleum, which would lead in the thirteenth century to the lavish rebuilding of the east end of the church as a fitting environment for their tombs. The priory gatehouse, also of the thirteenth century, blazoned the Ros arms, leaving the world in no doubt as to the standing, and continuity, of the family line. In stone the canons of Kirkham celebrated the line of Walter Espec as Ailred, writing at Walter’s Cistercian house of Rievaulx, celebrated his deeds in the words of his *Relatio de standardo*.⁵⁶

PATRONAGE AND POLITICS: THE POWERS OF ADVOCACY

The political dimension of monastic foundation has been a constant theme of this book. I do not seek to marginalize the primacy of spiritual

⁵⁵ EYC, II, no. 1138.

⁵⁶ See below, p. 284.

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considerations in the minds of founders, rather to emphasize that foundations should not be separated from their political and social context: in Yorkshire the consolidation of Norman baronial power in the late eleventh century, the extension of royal government in the early twelfth century, and the anarchy and breakdown of central government in the reign of Stephen. The general dominance of the Cistercians between 1135 and 1154, and the relationship between monastic growth and the 'anarchy', were taken further by B. D. Hill, who argued that

when the great barons assisted the Cistercians with landed endowments, with privileges and with rights, and the monks accepted these gifts, there was established between the two institutions, the feudal and the monastic, a strong, close, and virtually indissoluble bond . . . the barons realized that the monasteries posed no threat to feudal power or ambition; indeed, the monasteries, by the fact of their dependence on the nobles and by the fact of their close connection with the Holy See, implicitly supported the barons in their opposition to royal authority.⁵⁷

Not just in England, but in France and Germany, the Cistercians were most powerful in areas where royal authority was weakest. The question which Hill is addressing here is not so much 'why did founders establish monasteries?' as 'why did they choose to found Cistercian houses?' Hill's answer seems to be that English patrons founded Cistercian houses because they desired German-style powers of advocacy which would give them control over monastic lands and estates; that Stephen was unable to prevent this; but that Henry II was able to bring the Cistercians back into the orbit of royal authority. This leads us into the question of the nature of the powers which patrons had over their houses, the material benefits which they enjoyed and the responsibilities which they were seen to have. Did patrons protect, or exploit, their monasteries? Further, we must ask if the evidence sustains Hill's thesis that there was something distinctive about the powers enjoyed, or sought, by Cistercian patrons.

As stated earlier, in England patrons were also generally advocates, that is, they had a function to act on behalf of a religious community. The responsibilities of a founder-patron were numerous. The first was to provide endowments, the second to augment those assets if they proved inadequate. Reference to surviving cartularies reveals how, with few exceptions, families granted layer upon layer of benefactions, as heirs succeeded to baronies. Alan de Percy added to his father's endowments of Whitby, and Nigel de Mowbray to his father's foundations at Byland and Newburgh. Matilda de Percy, countess of Warwick, was approached by

⁵⁷ Hill, *English Cistercian Monasteries*, pp. 38–40.

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the monks of Sallay with a complaint about the inadequacy of her father's endowment and responded accordingly:

pater meus abbaciam quamdam Salleiam nomine fundavit in Crauena in terra nebulosa et pluviosa, ita quod segetes jam albe ad messem per consuetudinem in culmo computrescant et ubi conventus per xl annos et amplius propter aeris intemperiem tanta inedia et omnium necessariorum inopia attritus est quod pauperitatis eorum immensitas in contumeliam et obprobrium patris mei et omnium heredum eorum redundabat.⁵⁸

(My father founded a certain abbey named Sallay in Craven, in land so cloudy and rainy that the crops, still white at harvest, usually rot on the stalks. When the convent had been worn down for forty years and more on account of the intemperateness of the climate by their great austerities and the lack of all necessities, the immensity of their poverty redounded as a disgrace and a shame on my father and all his heirs.)

There was doubtless the hand of a monastic scribe of Sallay behind this forceful statement, but its point was not lost on Matilda, who granted the church of Tadcaster, the income from which would enable the monks to fulfil their function 'in the service of God . . . and in the reception of the poor and pilgrims'; nor, presumably, would it have been lost on her successors. It was not only endowments but sites which might prove inadequate, and several Yorkshire monasteries found it necessary or desirable to move to another location. The details of the process by which these transfers were effected are not always recorded, but the role of the patron was clearly important. Roger de Mowbray provided a total of four sites for the Byland community, and Alice de Rumilly, as patron, moved the canons of Embsay to the important manor of Bolton. The initiative for locating a second and more appropriate site for the monks of Barnoldswick, as the Kirkstall narrative tells, lay with Abbot Alexander, but it was the founder, Henry de Lacy, who obliged by securing the estate from the holder.⁵⁹

In addition to providing lands himself or herself a patron might encourage his or her tenants to do the same, and the dependency of a number of monasteries on the ability of a patron to promote their interests is indicated by the geographical limits of their estates which were confined to the fee, or honour, of the founder/patron.⁶⁰ There were obvious exceptions, monasteries like St Mary's, a royal foundation which attracted considerable baronial patronage, early foundations when there were few monasteries a benefactor might choose, and those, like Rievaulx, whose well-known figures commanded public attention.

⁵⁸ EYC, xi, no. 50; *Cart. Sallay*, II, no. 615. See below, p. 223.

⁵⁹ *Foundation of Kirkstall*, p. 178.

⁶⁰ For a similar phenomenon, see Owen, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire*, pp. 49–50.

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However, an incident from the early years of Fors allows us to see the importance of a patron, in this case not the founder himself but his lord, Alan III, count of Brittany.

Omnibus autem praeparatis ad erectionem primi aedificii, frater Petrus quaesivit comitem sicut praeceperat. Qui veniens ad locum illum ubi domus illa deberet levari, advocavit sibi nominatim quatuor vel quinque de militibus qui secum advenerant, et dixit illis, jocundo vultu quasi in ludendo, 'Nos omnes habemus terras magnas et possessiones; nunc ergo propriis manibus adjuvemus, et erigamus istam domum in nomine Domini nostri, et unusquisque nostrum terram vel redditum exhibeat in perpetuam elemosinam et sustentationem partis quam levaverit.'⁶¹

(When all the preparations had been made for the erection of the first building Brother Peter sought out the count as he had been ordered. When he [the count] came to the place where that house was to be raised he called to him four or five of the knights who had come with him, and said to them, with a smile on his face as if he was joking, 'We all have great lands and possessions. Let us now assist with our own hands and raise this house in the name of our Lord. And let each one of us give land or rent in perpetual alms to maintain the part he has built.')

Some of the knights were said to have been willing to comply with Count Alan's suggestion; others, less impressed perhaps by his sense of humour, assented only *per conditionem*. Alan was not acting in an unusual way in setting himself up as protector for a tenant's foundation; this was part of the reciprocal nature of feudal relations. The account raises, however, the question of whether Alan's son, Conan, regarded the monks of Jervaulx as 'his monks' because he transferred the community to its second site or because he was the superior of the founder.

It was not just estates which monasteries could expect, but also protection and privilege. Roger de Mowbray granted Byland freedom of his seal, so that they could receive confirmation of any gift 'absque alicujus exactione temporalis seu secularis impensionis' ('without the demand for any temporal or secular payment').⁶² Following her grant to Embsay Priory of the mill of Silsden, Cecily de Rumilly took steps to ensure that the canons would benefit from the gift to the full. First she ordered that no other mill should be built in the vill without the consent of the canons, and that no hand mill should be used; and second that she and her heirs would confiscate the grain of anyone using another mill. Similar provisions attached to her grant of the mill of Harewood.⁶³ When Roger de Mowbray left England for Normandy in 1147, Robert and William de Stuteville, part of whose family possessions had passed a generation earlier to Nigel d'Aubigny, attempted to regain some of those estates which

⁶¹ *Mon. Ang.*, v, 569.

⁶² *Mowbray Charters*, nos. 64, 71.

⁶³ *EYC*, vii, no. 4; iii, no. 1861.

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Mowbray had granted to Byland. Other Mowbray tenants apparently followed suit, and the monks were forced to ask for their patron's aid.

Scripsit . . . quod ipsi cessarent deinceps molestias facere monachis suis, et si quid factum fuisse iniuste, ad redditum suum in Angliam per legales homines vicinos secundum legem terrae voluit emendari. Scripsit etiam matri suae et dapifero suo et omnibus ballivis suis comitatu Eboracensi quod ipsi manutenerent, protegerent, et defenderent abbatem R. de Bellalanda et monachos suos fratres, et terram eorum sicut suam propriam terram.⁶⁴

(He wrote . . . that they should from now on cease troubling his monks, and if anything had been done unjustly he wished to set it to rights on his return to England through men of law of the neighbourhood, according to the law of the land. He wrote also to his mother and to his steward and to all his bailiffs in the county of Yorkshire, that they should maintain, protect, and defend Abbot R[oger] and his brother monks and their land as they would their own land.)

The close relationship which could exist between monastery and patron might be reinforced by the use of a proprietorial tone – references by patrons to ‘my monks’, or ‘my canons’.⁶⁵ Gilbert and Robert de Gant could both speak of ‘my canons’ of Bridlington, and Roger de Mowbray of ‘my canons’ of Newburgh. Similar terms were used by Henry de Lacy to describe the monks of Pontefract and Kirkstall, and by Eustace Fitz John of the canons of Malton.⁶⁶ Although not the founder or the patron of Easby, Richard II de Rollos could call the canons ‘my canons’, possibly because he and Roald, founder of Easby, held joint interests in the land of Ernisan Musard.⁶⁷ In a number of cases the close relationship was reinforced, physically, by the proximity of a monastery to the patron's castle. Thus Nostell and Pontefract lay near to the caput of the Lacy estates at Pontefract, Rievaulx three miles or so from Espec's castle at Helmsley, Roche near Tickhill, Easby and Jervaulx not many miles from Richmond castle. Guisborough, Drax, Marton, Bolton, Byland, and Newburgh were within easy reach of the castles of Skelton (Brus), Drax (Paynel), Sheriff Hutton (Bulmer), Skipton (Rumilly), and Thirsk (Mowbray).⁶⁸ This contrasts sharply with the liminal sites of many nunneries.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ *Mon. Ang.*, v, 352. There is a parallel between the letter which the author was paraphrasing and royal charters in which kings protect lands *sicut dominium meum*.

⁶⁵ I have found no references to ‘my nuns’.

⁶⁶ EYC, II, nos. 1156–7; see also the grant by Robert de Lacy to ‘my monks of Pontefract’ (EYC, III, no. 1514, *Cart. Pont.*, I, no. 8, dated c. 1180 x 1193); *Mowbray Charters*, nos. 205, 208; *Cart. Pont.*, I, no. 15; EYC, I, no. 643; London, BL MS Cotton Claudius D XI, fo. 34. For other instances see Edmund King, ‘The foundation of Pipewell Abbey, Northamptonshire’, *Haskins Society Journal*, 2 (1990), 167–77 (p. 172).

⁶⁷ EYC, v, no. 198 and pp. 84–5.

⁶⁸ On this theme see also M. W. Thompson, ‘Associated monasteries and castles in the Middle Ages: a tentative list’, *Archaeological Journal*, 143 (1986), 305–21.

⁶⁹ Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture*, pp. 65–9.

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Links between a monastery and founder could also be sustained through the appointment of a head of a community related to, or sympathetic to, the interests of the patron. Attention has been drawn to a number of instances early in the history of a community: Serlo de Percy, brother of the founder, as prior of Whitby; Elias Paynel as prior of his father's foundation at Holy Trinity; William, uncle of Walter Espec, as prior of Kirkham; William de Brus as first prior of Guisborough.⁷⁰ Reference was also made in an earlier chapter to how Adam Fitz Swain, as founder and patron of Monk Bretton, envisaged a role for himself and his heirs in the election of its prior.⁷¹ How prominent patronal intervention was in the election of abbots and priors is not clear: Adam's claim came early in the life of the monastery and also coincided with a period of instability in the region. However, at least one record which plays down the part of the lay patron is suggestive of special pleading. In the 1180s the canons of Kirkham secured the testimony of several notable ecclesiastics as to the form of election of the previous prior, Geoffrey, which they agreed had been canonical: the choice had been made by the canons, the *Te Deum* sung before the high altar to indicate an absence of secular interference, the elect presented to the advocate, and by him and the canons to the archbishop for ordination.⁷² This follows what became standard practice, which allowed the patron, as well as the right to issue a *congé d'élire* and custody of estates during a vacancy, a formal right in the ceremony of election.⁷³ However, the evident need to stress the freedom from lay interference suggests that the current patron of Kirkham, Everard de Ros, may have been trying to exert undue pressure on the choice of a new prior.

There are other ways in which patrons attempted to influence affairs at their houses. It will be recalled that the status of mother house of Byland was contested between Furness, King Stephen's abbey from which the convent at Calder was founded in 1134, and Savigny, to whom the monks of Byland had affiliated themselves in 1138.⁷⁴ After the merger of 1147 the case was brought to the Cistercian General Chapter, and delegated for investigation to Ailred of Rievaulx. Ailred reported the testimony of the abbot of Savigny, and the words he allegedly used are significant. The abbot maintained that Roger de Mowbray as *fundator* of Byland had visited Savigny and there, in the General Chapter, had granted his new foundation to Savigny, and Roger was the man 'qui monasterium Bellelande assignare potuit et donare cujuscumque voluit

⁷⁰ See above, pp. 34, 49, 78–9.

⁷¹ See above, pp. 64–6.

⁷² EYC, x, nos. 105–6; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 7, fo. 60v.

⁷³ D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, II (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 248–54.

⁷⁴ See above, pp. 116–7.

subjectioni' ('who could assign and grant the monastery of Byland to the subjection of whomsoever he wished').⁷⁵ Again, this action has to be seen in the context of northern power politics, and Mowbray's shift into alliance with the earl of Chester following Stephen's defeat at Lincoln in 1141. The unsettled conditions may have inclined monasteries to grant more powers than usual to their patron.

Hill's remarks about advocacy applied specifically to the reign of Stephen, and the lack of stability, the breakdown of royal authority and the explosion in monastic foundations are, indeed, linked; and the wider fate of the Yorkshire monasteries, both Cistercian and non-Cistercian, in this period shows how patronage and politics went side by side. If religious houses were founded partly as symbols of baronial power, then it is not surprising that the interests of monastery and patron were seen to coincide. Some monasteries suffered physical damage during this period. Selby Abbey became involved in local politics partly because of the intervention of the archbishop as patron,⁷⁶ and partly because of the family connections of the head of the house. In 1143 Elias Paynel, prior of Holy Trinity, was elected abbot. He was related to William Paynel, lord of Drax, and possibly also to Henry de Lacy, who succeeded his brother Ilbert II de Lacy at Pontefract after 1141.⁷⁷ One of Elias's first measures was to construct a castle at Selby to provide, in Wightman's words, 'an outpost for the protection of the Pontefract estates on their weakest side, and to protect the lands of the abbey and the town itself'.⁷⁸ This impinged on the ambitions of several other parties. William of Aumale, with an interest in Sherburn in Elmet,⁷⁹ besieged the castle, captured it, and laid waste the countryside. The *Historia Selebiensis monasterii* vividly describes the impact on the town which had grown up around the abbey.⁸⁰ This is corroborated by charter evidence. In the years after 1143 Roger de Mowbray granted to Selby the manor of Middlethorpe in restitution for damage which he had inflicted on the monastery.⁸¹ He, too, had embroiled the monks in his own territorial ambitions: the additional clause, that the monks were to hold Middlethorpe until he himself should recover York castle, suggests that his quarrel was not with the monks of Selby but with William of Aumale, now custodian of the castle which had once been in the hands of Roger's father, Nigel d'Aubigny, and that the damage sustained by Selby Abbey

⁷⁵ *Mon. Ang.*, v, 353. ⁷⁶ See above, pp. 156–60.

⁷⁷ *Hist. Selb.* fo. 30v (p. 33) regarded Elias as a *cognatus* of Henry de Lacy. The relationship is not proven, but it is possible that Ralph Paynel's wife was an otherwise unknown daughter of Ilbert I de Lacy: Wightman, *Lacy Family*, pp. 57–8, note.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 76–7.

⁷⁹ For this point I am indebted to Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, pp. 169–71.

⁸⁰ *Hist. Selb.*, fos. 30v–39v (pp. 33–44). ⁸¹ *Mowbray Charters*, no. 255.

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was part of the conflict between the two magnates for the control of the Ainsty area around York.

The years around 1143 were crucial ones in the political manoeuvring of the Yorkshire magnates: Roger himself was directed by the earl of Chester to marry the widow of Ilbert II de Lacy (1142 or 1143); William of Aumale attempted to bribe Waldef of Kirkham, promising his support for his candidature as archbishop in return for the manor of Sherburn in Elmet;⁸² the abbot of Selby attended the consecration of William Fitz Herbert as archbishop at Winchester (September 1143). The monastery of Selby seems to have been caught up in these political activities, less, it would seem, as the result of the affiliations of its patron – although it was in archiepiscopal patronage and neutrality cannot have been easy – than from the strategic importance of its location, and the family connections of its abbot. The uncertainty of tenure in the region is emphasized by Mowbray's further notification that, should the monks be dispossessed of land in Acaster Selby that he had granted them, he would himself restore it, and his later statement that such restoration had been necessary.⁸³

The territorial and jurisdictional ambitions of William of Aumale, appointed earl of York in 1138, brought him into conflict with others apart from Mowbray and led to a series of local wars in the 1140s. The quarrel with Gilbert de Gant appears to have arisen when William seized the hundreds of Turbar and Hunthow from the Gant family. Alan of Brittany was another rival, whose storming of Galclint castle and expulsion of William in 1141 forced King Stephen himself to journey north to intervene. Dalton has argued convincingly that Galclint, the identification of which has long puzzled historians, is to be located to the Willerby area of the East Riding, and is therefore also part and parcel of the rivalry with the Gant family, in particular the struggle for the Gant estates during the minority of Gilbert after the death of his father Walter de Gant in 1139.⁸⁴ The valuable Gant estates were contested between the earl of York and the earl of Chester who had forced Gilbert de Gant to marry his niece Rohaise; custody of the Brus fee during the minority of Adam II (from 1143) was disputed among the earls of York, Chester, and Richmond; and Richmond and York fought over the Yorkshire estates of the bishop of Durham. Far from being united in their opposition to the territorial ambitions of Aumale, Henry de Lacy and Gilbert de Gant – whose sister, Alice, had married Ilbert II de Lacy (d. after 1141) – were at

⁸² Baker, 'Waldef of Melrose', rejects this story as a later invention, but the mention of Sherburn in Elmet, which lay in the disputed area, is a convincing detail.

⁸³ *Mowbray Charters*, nos. 254, 256. See also Henry de Lacy's restoration of land to Selby: *EYC*, III, no. 1506.

⁸⁴ Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, pp. 162–5.

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odds with each other. The cause of this strife is not recorded; it may have been concerned with Gilbert's elevation to the earldom of Lincoln by Stephen in 1146, giving him potentially substantial influence on the southern edge of the county, bordering on the Lacy lands; it may have been an extension of the struggle between Lacy and Aumale for control of the area around Selby; it may have been concerned with the bringing of Lacy into the camp of the earl of Chester following the marriage the earl arranged between Alice de Gant, Ilbert de Lacy's widow, to Roger de Mowbray.

In all these rivalries the monasteries were pawns. Both Pontefract Priory and the Lacy estates generally suffered as a result of the Gant–Lacy rivalry. In 1148 or 1149 the dean and chapter of York confirmed to the monks half the town of Ledsham and sixty-seven acres to hold for the payment of 10 marks per annum, but they were to be relieved of the rent 'si forte occasione aliqua villa ipsa depopulata fuerit, vel sterilitate vel alia devastatione' ('if by any chance the vill itself shall be depopulated, either as the result of barrenness or any other devastation').⁸⁵ Damage to the monastery itself was evidently so great that the church needed rebuilding and rededicating. In 1154 Gilbert made a substantial grant to Pontefract of a ferry at South Ferriby, on the river Humber, and land there, and in Barton-upon-Humber:

pro maximis dampnis que predictis ecclesie et monachis, culpis meis exigentibus, intuli in guerra illa que fuit inter me et H. de Lascy. Et ipsi monachi fecerunt me absolvi de excommunicacione qua fecerunt me excommunicari et susceperunt me in plenariam fraternitatem ecclesie sue et totius ordinis sui.⁸⁶

(for the very great injuries which I, by my own exigent faults, brought on the said church and monks during that war between me and H[enry] de Lacy. And the monks themselves have caused me to be absolved from that sentence of excommunication by which they excommunicated me, and have received me into full confraternity of their church and the whole of their order.)

Henry de Lacy issued two charters, augmenting the endowment of the monastery and stating:

feci dedicari ecclesiam Sancti Johannis Evangeliste in Pontefracto per consilium Rogeri venerabilis Eboracensis archiepiscopi qui eandem ecclesiam consecravat.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ EYC, III, no. 1472. ⁸⁶ *Cart. Pont.*, II, no. 400.

⁸⁷ EYC, III, no. 1499; *Cart. Pont.*, I, no. 10; the date lies between the consecration of Archbishop Roger in October 1154 and 1158, the latest date for the confirmation charter of Henry II which includes some of the grants made by Henry. See also EYC, III, no. 1504; *Cart. Pont.*, I, no. 14, a grant made by Henry to the monks 'in die quando feci ecclesiam eorum dedicari'.

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(I have caused the church of St John the Evangelist in Pontefract to be dedicated on the advice of Roger, the venerable archbishop of York, who has consecrated the same church.)

On the day of the dedication, Archbishop Roger, wishing to protect the monks against the malice of evil ones (*contra perversorum malitiam*), confirmed the grants of their Lacy patrons and released all those who visited the monastery on the anniversary of the consecration from twenty days' penance.⁸⁸ Indeed, archaeological investigation in the 1950s confirmed rebuilding of the east end of the priory church around 1150.⁸⁹ Similar damage seems to have been sustained at Gant's own monastery of Bridlington, located as it was in a strategic administrative centre. In 1143 Aumale attacked the town; John of Hexham recorded that he made his military camp in the priory itself, and William of Newburgh later recalled how 'having excluded the regular canons he invaded and violated the church'.⁹⁰

Religious houses, however, did not just suffer at the hands of the enemies of their founders and patrons. Between 1153 and 1155 Henry de Lacy issued a notification that Prior Savard and the canons of Nostell had absolved him from the injuries he had done them when he seized booty, men and chattels from their lands in the time of war (*tempore guerre*).⁹¹ Further reconciliation was necessary after Henry attempted to seize control of a half carucate above his fishpond, on which land the canons had built their church.⁹² Was Lacy here using his special status as advocate to requisition priory lands and goods during his conflict? This instance, along with the possible involvement of Pontefract in the disputed election, and the foundation of Monk Bretton towards the end of the reign, as well as Adam Fitz Swain's insistence on controlling elections to the office of prior, suggest that the Nostell–Pontefract–Monk Bretton axis was closely affected by the lack of strong central authority, and a prey to factional interest. In such circumstances the baronial patrons may well have sought the wide powers of advocacy suggested by Hill. These would have included the control of monastic property suggested by the charter of Henry de Lacy, and the control of elections sought by Adam Fitz Swain at Monk Bretton.

However, it was not just patrons who interfered with monastic property. The case of the Stuteville claim on Byland land has already been

⁸⁸ EYC, III, no. 1477; *Cart. Pont.*, I, no. 48.

⁸⁹ C. V. Bellamy, *Pontefract Priory Excavations, 1957–1961*, Thoresby Soc., 49 (1965).

⁹⁰ Symeon, *Opera*, II, 315; Newburgh, *Historia*, I, 47. For examples of armed attacks on monasteries in the West Midlands and East Anglia, such as Worcester, Tewkesbury, Abingdon, and Ramsey, see Knowles, *Monastic Order*, pp. 268–72.

⁹¹ EYC, III, no. 1497. ⁹² Leeds District Archives MS NP/C1, p. 85.

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cited. Roger de Mowbray, in a charter of restoration to St Mary's, York which can be dated to before 1154, referred to a grant made in restitution for damage (*multa dampna multociens*) which included freedom from castle work (*de operibus castrorum*) and from taxes (*de tensariis*), which he had clearly extorted from the monks.⁹³ The charter further restored to the abbey its mill, millpond, and fishery at Myton on Swale, which suggests that the seizures were connected with Mowbray's construction of a castle at Myton to prevent William of Aumale from extending his influence into the North Riding.⁹⁴ The picture that the evidence paints is one in which monastic property was seized by the baronage as they fought for territorial control of parts of the shire, and that those most likely to offend were the patrons themselves, who as advocates used and abused the property of their own house. However, in modification of Hill's thesis, it has to be pointed out that the patrons and houses concerned were not exclusively or even mainly Cistercian ones. The crucial factors seem to have been the identity of the patron and the depth of his involvement in local warfare, and the location of the monastery and its estates. Thus, the houses at which there are most documentary traces of damage and disruption, Pontefract, Nostell, Bridlington, Selby, and St Mary's, were ones most closely tied to the main protagonists, Henry de Lacy, Gilbert de Gant, and William of Aumale. The interests of a monastery and its founder/patron/advocate were not easily disentangled.

BENEFACTORS AND BENEFITS

The status of patron was a special and envied one, and brought with it spiritual and material advantages which the heirs of a founder took care to preserve.⁹⁵ The interests of the baronage, however, were not limited to their own foundations, nor to a particular order, and several individuals became benefactors of other houses. Many examples of this phenomenon could be cited. William II de Percy, with family monasteries at Whitby, Sallay, and Handale, was a benefactor of Byland. Eustace Fitz John, patron of Alnwick, Norton, Watton, and Malton, also granted lands which he obtained as a subtenant of William of Aumale to the canons of Bridlington, was credited by Hugh of Kirkstall with saving the infant community at Fountains from extinction by a timely gift of bread, and became a benefactor of St Mary's, York. William Paynel, patron of Holy

⁹³ *Mowbray Charters*, no. 318; the word, *tensarie*, is that used by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicler in his famous description of the nineteen long winters: *ASC*, s.a. 1154.

⁹⁴ Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship*, p. 184, commenting on this charter.

⁹⁵ Note the insistence by the joint founders of Roche that the patronage be shared, on whichever part of the estate the monks chose to settle: *Mon. Ang.*, v, 502, nos. 1–11.

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Trinity and Drax, also favoured Nostell, and Bertram de Bulmer, founder of Marton, was drawn to Byland and Rievaulx. D. E. Greenway's edition of the charters of the honour of Mowbray has shown very clearly how widely a baron – admittedly a wealthy and powerful one – could spread his interests. Roger, it will be recalled, was barely out of his minority when he was persuaded to provide a site at Byland for the refugee monks of Calder, and he followed this a few years later with the Augustinian foundation at Hood (Newburgh). His interests in the crusading movement – he was one of the few English barons to go on the Second Crusade in 1147 and he was to be captured at the Battle of Hattin (1187) and die in the Holy Land – led him to patronize the Knights Templar and Hospitaller and provide material for the construction of three Templar preceptories.⁹⁶ In addition to these foundations Roger and his son Nigel endowed over forty religious houses, seventeen of them in Yorkshire. Roger was commemorated at Durham, at Arden (founded by his tenant), and by the Templars, and his wife, Alice de Gant, at Fountains Abbey as well as at York Minster.⁹⁷ The motives behind the endowment of religious houses other than one's own foundations could be political, dynastic, and tenurial. They could mark the resolution of a conflict, submission after defeat in battle, a marriage alliance, or the consolidation of territorial interests in a particular locality. They could signal the desire of a man, like Mowbray, to secure the prayers of a wide range of religious houses. Moreover, benefactions were often business transactions in disguise. On at least four occasions Roger de Mowbray received money from the monks of Fountains Abbey: 10 marks 'in testimony and in memory' of his grant; 350 marks for confirmation of the abbey's rights in Brimham; 83 marks 'in my great need'; and 120 marks to assist his journey to Jerusalem.⁹⁸ It was religious houses other than those of which he was patron, with which Mowbray had most financial dealings.⁹⁹

Monastic houses depended for their material wellbeing on a range of benefactors drawn from all free sections of society. A benefactor could, with certain exceptions, request the same benefits as a patron. He or she could expect the prayers of the community. Sometimes more specific spiritual services were requested. The degree of refinement which this could reach is well illustrated by a charter of William son of Hervey for Pontefract. He granted to the monks 40s rent from property in Darrington, to be received each year in mid Lent. The sacrist of the monastery was to assign 3s for the monks and 1s to purchase wine for mass. On the

⁹⁶ *Mowbray Charters*, no. 272; Burton, 'Knights Templar in Yorkshire', 30.

⁹⁷ *Mowbray Charters*, p. xli, note 8. ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 103, 111, 120, 126.

⁹⁹ For an example of financial assistance offered by one of Mowbray's own monasteries, Byland, which agreed to hold Nidderdale for ten years in mortgage for 300 marks, see *ibid.*, no. 54.

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day the money was received each monk-priest was to sing one mass for the soul of William's parents and ancestors, and each non-priest was to say fifty psalms for William's soul for as long as he lived, and to continue after his death to pray for him and all the faithful departed.¹⁰⁰ William Fossard granted land to Watton Priory, a foundation in which he had been closely involved, with a particular danger in mind: 'maxime pro itinere quod facturus eram Ierosolimam, et pro remissione peccatorum meorum' ('chiefly on account of the journey which I was about to make to Jerusalem and for the remission of my sins').¹⁰¹ Benefactors of many houses specifically asked for the rights of confraternity, or spiritual union with the community.¹⁰² Matilda de Rouellé confirmed the grant which she and her husband had made to Malton, and in recognition the canons received her *in specialem sororem domus sue*, a commonly used phrase explained in Matilda's charter as 'facient pro me sicut pro sorore sua sive viva sive defuncta' ('they shall perform for me as for a sister, alive or dead').¹⁰³

Some grants were made when a man or woman entered the house, or were intended to secure entry into a religious community at a later date. Attention has already been drawn to instances of female relatives of benefactors entering nunneries.¹⁰⁴ Others reserved their place as well. Samson d'Aubigny, cousin of Roger de Mowbray, made grants when he entered the Mowbray foundation of Newburgh. Peter son of Toke and Serlo the cook secured entry into Bridlington and Byland respectively with a grant of land; Osbert Salvain made a grant *fratribus meis canonicis regularibus* ('to my brothers, the regular canons') of Nostell.¹⁰⁵ Thomas son of Robert de Toulston granted land to Pontefract when his brother became a monk there, as did Gurwald of Cowton to Fountains (*quum receptus ibi fui*: 'when I was received there').¹⁰⁶ Promises of future reception accompanied grants made by William de Preston to Nostell ('si in vita mea ad religionem me conferre voluero, apud sanctum Oswaldum habitum religionis suscipiam': 'if I shall wish, during my lifetime, to give myself to the religious life, I may take the habit of religion at St Oswald') and by William Aguillon to Malton ('ipsi vero canonici receperunt me in specialem fratrem omnium domorum ordinis de Semplingham et facient me canonicum quandocumque canonicus esse rationabiliter voluero': 'indeed the canons themselves have received me as a special brother of all

¹⁰⁰ EYC, III, no. 1720, dated by Farrer to 1170 x 1180. ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, II, no. 1095.

¹⁰² See, for example, EYC, II, no. 755; III, no. 1692; V, no. 197; VI, no. 121; IX, nos. 105, 166; *Cart. Pont.*, I, no. 159; *Cart. Sallay*, I, no. 255; *Kirkstall Coucher*, no. 93.

¹⁰³ EYC, VI, no. 91. ¹⁰⁴ See above, pp. 167–70.

¹⁰⁵ *Mowbray Charters*, nos. 178n, 196; EYC, III, nos. 1357; *Mon. Ang.*, v, 571; BL MS Cotton Vespasian E XIX, fo. 53v.

¹⁰⁶ EYC, III, no. 1612, v, no. 296.

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the houses of the order of Sempringham, and will make me a canon whenever I may reasonably wish to become a canon').¹⁰⁷ Fountains Abbey, which depended on the grants of the knightly class and the well-to-do peasants, promised Richard son of Gleu that they would find food and clothing for his son until he came of age to be a Cistercian monk; and Edulf de Kilnsey, also a benefactor of Fountains, received an undertaking that he should be admitted to the house as a *conversus*, his son, Nicholas, as a monk, while his wife would be placed in a house of religious women. In return for his 'grant' Edulf provided for three members of his family. Such alienation of property naturally had implications for the following generations, and a further charter secured the consent of Edulf's four remaining sons.¹⁰⁸ Peter de Cordanville, granting the church of Sherburn in Pickering Lythe to the canons of Guisborough, stipulated that he should be afforded the right to nominate a clerk at each vacancy – a somewhat extreme privilege which he soon remitted.¹⁰⁹

Benefactors might ask for specific material returns for their grants, which amounted to what would later be termed a corrody. William son of Walding requested that he should be allowed to lodge at Pontefract Priory if he was required to perform castle duty.¹¹⁰ Hugh son of Everard entered into a detailed arrangement with the monks of Selby whereby he received a yearly rent, a promise that he would be accepted as a monk whenever he wished, land in Selby with a house and courtyard where he and his wife could lodge, and allowances of food and clothing for his wife.¹¹¹ Pagana, with the consent of her son William, canon of York Minster, granted to Whitby Abbey a plot of land near to the minster of St Wilfrid in York, so that she might partake in all the spiritual benefits of the church and have the provision of one monk and one servant throughout her life. The abbey undertook to provide clothing for her for the next two years, then for her son for two years, and so on for their lives, and if her son died or became a monk, she was to have the entire clothing allowance.¹¹² All these were ways of cementing the relationship between the monks and their benefactors. The frequency with which grants were reciprocated varied according to the circumstances of individual houses. Rievaulx, which attracted a wide circle of baronial benefactors, seems not to have been lavish in its rewards. In contrast Fountains Abbey, which also received considerable baronial patronage, notably from Roger de Mowbray, the Percys, and the

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, III, no. 1596; II, no. 1084.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, v, no. 288; VII, nos. 120–I; for further instances see *ibid.*, v, no. 287, VII, no. 118.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, IX, nos. 94–5. ¹¹⁰ *Cart. Pont.*, I, no. 101.

¹¹¹ *Selby Coucher*, II, no. 1296, where he is called Hugh son of Edward. King Stephen confirmed the grant as that of Hugh son of Everard: *EYC*, I, no. 480.

¹¹² *EYC*, I, no. 249; *Cart. Whitby*, I, no. 260 (dateable 1150 x 1160).

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Stutevilles, nevertheless relied heavily on the grants made by men and women of knightly status and from the upper peasantry, and the abbey records are full of returns offered for their grants.¹¹³

Finally burial rights could be demanded. These were highly prized and advantageous to both monasteries and their benefactors. To the house, a request for burial rights could be accompanied by a grant of land, money, or other financial asset. To the benefactor the granting of such rights allowed them to be buried on holy ground. Cistercian statutes forbade burial in the monastery to any lay person, although this was later amended to allow burial of patrons, as the pressures of benefactors and the financial incentive mounted. When individuals were patrons and benefactors of more than one foundation their choice of burial place could be revealing about their loyalties.¹¹⁴ Matilda de Percy, countess of Warwick and daughter of William de Percy, and Alice de Rumilly the younger, for instance, despite having their own family monasteries, chose to be buried at Fountains.¹¹⁵ Grants were frequently made *cum corpore meo*, indicating an intention to be interred in a certain monastery or nunnery. Humphrey de Lascelles, for instance, granted to Monk Bretton with his body for burial, Geoffrey son of Gamel with four acres of land ('*corpus meum in die depositionis mee apud eos sepeliendum*': 'my body for burial among them on the day of my death').¹¹⁶ One such undertaking carried the provision that Sallay Abbey would grant burial to Norman de Horton *si christiano morte obiero* ('if I shall die a Christian death').¹¹⁷ Ralph of Adwick granted land which he held within the court of Kirkstall's Bessacar grange, in the monks' close near the sheepfold, to the monks in return for an undertaking that, wherever he died, he was to be buried at Kirkstall.¹¹⁸ With increasing frequency benefactors, like Gilbert de Gant, covered all eventualities. William III de Wennerville granted himself to St Oswald and to Nostell 'in capitulo suo per tuppum capitis mei ita ut si forte inspirante gratia divina habitum religionis suscipere voluero ibi inter canonicos suscipiam et non alibi, nisi concedente priore et conventu ejusdem loci' ('in their chapter house, by the bowing of my head, so that if by chance, by the inspiration of divine grace, I should wish to take the habit of religion I shall do so among the canons, and nowhere else, except with the consent of the prior and convent of the same place'), and stated

¹¹³ See in particular Joan Wardrop, *Fountains Abbey and its Benefactors 1132–1300*, Cistercian Studies Series, 91 (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1987).

¹¹⁴ For a general discussion see B. Golding, 'Burials and benefactions: an aspect of monastic patronage in thirteenth-century England', in *England in the Thirteenth Century*, Proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium, ed. W. M. Ormrod (Harlaxton, 1985), pp. 64–75.

¹¹⁵ EYC, xi, no. 45; vii, no. 32.

¹¹⁶ 1180 x 1200 (EYC, iii, no. 1546; *Cart. Monk Bretton*, no. 572).

¹¹⁷ *Cart. Sallay*, i, no. 94. ¹¹⁸ EYC, ii, no. 823.

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that he would receive burial there whether he died in England or overseas.¹¹⁹

Early charters granting lands and assets to the monastic order tend not to be specific about the use to which the property or income was to be put. As the twelfth century progressed, however, benefactors seem to have been more self-confident in their freedom to specify a particular purpose. Between 1160 and 1170 John de Lascelles made a grant to the monks of Selby of a man called Asswin of Birkin, land, and an assart. This was given in pure alms to provide a light in the cloister throughout the night.¹²⁰ Around the turn of the twelfth century Hugh de Milford granted to Selby Abbey an annual rent towards the building work of the abbey (*ad opus ecclesie sue*);¹²¹ and the canons of Bridlington received a quarry at Filey for the fabric of the monastery and its offices.¹²² Hugh son of Lewin confirmed a grant made by his mother, Juliana, to St Mary's Abbey to purchase wax for eight candles upon the beam of the high altar.¹²³ Others made grants specifically for providing shoes for the poor; to maintain a light in front of the altar of St Andrew, Marrick; the fabric of the new church at Easby; for the sustenance of the poor gathering at the abbey gate at Fountains; and the poor at the gate and in the infirmary of Marrick Priory.¹²⁴ There was a considerable degree of interaction between those who gave and those who received.

A CASE STUDY: ADAM SON OF PETER DE BIRKIN

Many individuals might be selected as a case study of a monastic benefactor. Adam de Birkin is of particular interest as a man of Anglo-Scandinavian descent, whose family survived the Conquest and increased its fortunes. Adam's grandfather was Essolf (Asulfr);¹²⁵ his father, Peter, married a Norman, Emma, probably the sister of John de Lascelles, who seems to have brought as her marriage portion lands in Snaith and Shitlington.¹²⁶ On Peter's death (by 1143) his lands passed to Adam, eldest of at least four sons (Adam, Thomas, William, and Roger), and in 1166 Adam held one knight's fee of Henry de Lacy. He also held lands as a

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, III, no. 1591. It is worth noting the contractual nature of this charter.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, III, no. 1545; *Selby Coucher*, I, no. 486.

¹²¹ EYC, III, no. 1614; *Selby Coucher*, I, no. 531; Farrer dated the charter c. 1190 x 1196, but one witness, Martin, prior of St Andrew's, York, occurs c. 1200 (*HRH*, p. 205).

¹²² EYC, II, no. 1176. ¹²³ *Ibid.*, I, no. 208.

¹²⁴ EYC, III, no. 1599, v, nos. 126, 202A, 287; *Coll. Top. Gen.*, v, 122.

¹²⁵ Whether there were one or two individuals by this name is unclear, and the family of Jordan son of Essolf of Thornhill may have been of different descent: EYC, III, 359; EYF, pp. 6, 90–2; C. T. Clay, 'The family of Thornhill', *YAJ*, 29 (1927–9), 286–321.

¹²⁶ In or before 1179 Adam made a claim against Simon de Lascelles for twenty-four carucates in Birkin and the soc of Snaith 'in the right of his mother', that is, Emma de Lascelles.

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tenant of the Paynel fee (Bingley), Meschin fee (Horsforth), and Fossard fee (Bramley). Farrer, followed by recent writers, suggested that the interests of Adam's descendants in Mirfield may have derived from Adam's first marriage to Matilda (d. c. 1175), who he suggested was a sister of Adam Fitz Swain. By her, Adam son of Peter had a son Robert (who died without heirs) and a daughter Isabel. His second wife was another Matilda, daughter and coheir of Robert de Caux, by whom he had four sons (John, Peter, Roger, and William) and a daughter. Adam was dead by 1185.

Of the monastic interests of Adam's parents we know a little. His father, Peter, is recorded in a charter of his son, Thomas son of Peter, as having granted rent from property in Leeds to the Knights Hospitaller.¹²⁷ With his sons Adam and Thomas he witnessed William Paynel's foundation charter of Drax.¹²⁸ Like other members of her family Adam's mother, Emma, favoured Selby Abbey. With the consent of her son, Adam son of Peter de Birkin, she granted Shitlington mill to the monks of Selby, *ad vinum missarum emendum* ('to purchase mass wine').¹²⁹ Adam himself confirmed to the monks Langley, and a villein named Thomas son of Archil, and granted lands 'de feudo meo et hereditate mea . . . et manu propria obtuli Deo et Sancto Germano de Seleby et monachis super altare' ('of my fee and my inheritance, and I have offered [them] with my own hand to God and to St Germanus of Selby and to the monks on the altar').¹³⁰ Emma also showed an interest in Rievaulx Abbey, and between 1145 and 1160 granted two carucates in Shitlington and Flockton and common pasture of both villis.¹³¹ Adam's earliest benefactions appear also to have been those to Rievaulx, though whether these predated his mother's grant is not clear. Some time before 1150, with the consent of his brothers, he granted a place to build forges on the river Dove in Stainborough; and a second charter specified that the assart of 'Oggethwaite' was intended for the creation of forges. Both charters guaranteed Rievaulx a monopoly of iron-working in the vill,¹³² and this marked the beginning of Rievaulx's industrial development of the region. In roughly the same period he granted the site of a grange at Shitlington, and common pasture and materials for building, and land in

¹²⁷ EYC, III, no. 1746.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, VI, no. 13. Adam and his brother Thomas later witnessed the confirmation of William Paynel's grants to Drax by Robert de Gant, husband of Alice Paynel, William's daughter, and by William's widow, Avice de Rumilly: *ibid.*, nos. 46, 62.

¹²⁹ EYC, III, no. 1721; *Selby Coucher*, II, no. 1277. Farrer assigned a date of 1145 x 1160. Peter son of Essolf, Emma's husband, was dead by 1143.

¹³⁰ EYC, III, no. 1738; Adam claimed for himself the grant of Langley, but this, and Archil, were actually granted earlier by John de Lascelles, probably his uncle, and confirmed by Henry de Lacy.

¹³¹ EYC, III, no. 1724. ¹³² *Ibid.*, III, nos. 1725–6; *Cart. Riev.*, nos. 91–2, 94.

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Blacker (Upper Hoyland) as the site of iron smithies, iron ore in Shitlington and Flockton and licence to construct a pool. Both grants were witnessed by his three brothers.¹³³ In another area, where he held lands through enfeoffment of the Paynel fee, he granted to Rievaulx Faweather on Rumbold's Moor (Bingley) and a ridding in Stainborough; and by a further charter he conveyed dead wood and minerals in four vills, Halton (Bingley) and Shipley, and Heaton and Chellow (Bradford).¹³⁴ In later years he increased his endowment to Rievaulx by adding thirty acres in Shitlington, that is, ten in 'Breriroda' and twenty in the wood of Little Midgely.¹³⁵ With consent of all four sons by his second marriage Adam confirmed to Rievaulx their smithies and other possessions.¹³⁶

Adam's closest tenurial connection was with the Lacy family, from whom he held most of his lands. It is not therefore surprising that the Lacy monastery at Pontefract should attract some of his endowments. To the monks there he granted one eighth of the vill of Midgely. He granted half a bovate in Fairburn, for which the monks received him 'in fraternitatem et societatem omnium beneficiorum suorum que amodo in monasterio Sancti Johannis agentur' ('in confraternity and association in all the benefits which are to be enjoyed in the monastery of St John'), and ten acres in Smeathalls (Birkin). Another grant brought them five acres in the riddings of Birkin and three in the meadow of Smeathalls, near to the two acres of the hospital of St Michael, and pasture for twenty cows and one bull; and with his second wife, Matilda de Caux, he granted half the mill of Stainborough. With the consent of John, his son and heir, he granted to Pontefract a buck or doe yearly from his park at Birkin, to commemorate his soul each year on the feast of St John the Evangelist, and two old oak trees yearly for burning in preparation for Christmas time. He granted lands in Horsforth to the monks of Kirkstall, another Lacy foundation.¹³⁷

Farrer suggested a connection, through Adam's first marriage, with Adam Fitz Swain. This, along with the proximity to his estates, would explain Adam's interest in Monk Bretton. To the monks there he granted the service of Roger de Montbegon for lands in Worsborough, that is, 4s, and five acres of meadow in Smeathalls next to the meadow of the monks

¹³³ EYC, III, nos. 1727–8; *Cart. Riev.*, nos. 95, 99.

¹³⁴ EYC, III, no. 1726, attested by his brothers; *Cart. Riev.*, no. 100.

¹³⁵ EYC, III, no. 1722, where dated 1170 x 1185. However, the charter is witnessed by two of his sons by his second marriage, John and Peter. John cannot have been born before c. 1175, and even if they attested at a tender age the charters cannot be much earlier than the early 1180s.

¹³⁶ EYC, III no. 1737, where dated 1173 x 1185. However, in view of the mention of all four sons, who gave their consent to the confirmation, this is likely to have been issued late in Adam's life, towards 1185.

¹³⁷ EYC, III, nos. 1730–1, 1734, 1739–41, 1452 (*Cart. Pont.*, I, nos. 319–21, 323–5; *Kirkstall Coucher*, no. 92).

of Pontefract, and a fishpond between Royston and Carlton.¹³⁸ His interests spread to other local houses, to Hampole, and the cell at Headley, both recipients of meadow in Smeathalls, and to larger establishments further afield, like St Peter's Hospital, which received a similar grant free of secular service 'preter orationes pauperum eorumdem et ut simus participes omnium beneficiorum et elemosinarum et precum que fiunt vel facienda sunt in illa domo tam in morte quam in vita' ('except for the prayers of their poor, and that we might be partakers – in death as in life – in all the benefits and alms and prayers which are performed, or may be performed, in that house').¹³⁹ He witnessed the grant of the nunnery of Esholt to Sinningthwaite, and to the former he conveyed lands in Cullingworth (Bingley), common rights in Harden, and materials to repair their buildings and for their fires.¹⁴⁰ He confirmed a grant made by his brother, Thomas, to Fountains, and attested charters in favour of Byland, Esholt, Rievaulx, St Peter's Hospital, York, Pontefract, and the Knights Templar.¹⁴¹

Finally, his benefactions to the Lincolnshire Gilbertine priory of Haverholme are to be explained by family considerations. He granted all that he had in Horsforth and Keighley with his daughter, Juliana, and his niece, Matilda. In return the convent promised him and his wife the service due to a canon and nun. Farrer dated this charter to around 1165 × 1179, yet identified Juliana as Adam's daughter by his second marriage. However, the land was soon leased to Kirkstall Abbey, which already had substantial interests in Horsforth. If, as the editor of the Kirkstall cartulary suggested, the copy of the charter in the *Monasticon Anglicanum* mistakenly gave the witness Ralph, abbot of Kirkstall, in error for Ralph, abbot of Kirkstead, then the charter can be dated to between 1174 and 1178.¹⁴² It seems clear, therefore, that the daughter of Adam who became a nun at Haverholme was not the daughter of his second marriage but either the daughter of his first marriage or illegitimate. Adam was a benefactor of two smaller and much more local nunneries, Esholt and Hampole; yet he, or Juliana, seems to have been drawn by the reputation of the Gilbertines.

The influence on Adam's monastic interests seems to have been partly

¹³⁸ EYC, III, no. 1735; confirmed by his son, John (*ibid.*, no. 1736); *ibid.*, no. 1747.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, III, nos. 1732–3, 1742. The first witness to the grant to Headley was Albinus, master of Hampole.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, I, no. 201; VI, no. 67.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, I, no. 610; II, no. 849; III, nos. 1499, 1505, 1549, 1627, 1837.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, III, no. 1871; *Kirkstall Coucher*, no. 89. *Mon. Ang.*, VI, 949, has as witnesses Abbots Robert of Fountains (1170–80), Sylvanus of Rievaulx (1167–88), Ralph of Kirkstall (1182–90), Hugh of Revesby (1172–1203 × 1206). Ralph was abbot of Kirkstead between 1174 and 1178. The cartulary copy (*Kirkstall Coucher*, no. 90) and the confirmation by Adam son of Peter (no. 91) have no witnesses.

The life within and the world outside

dictated by existing family interests (Selby), possibly by his own marriage (Monk Bretton), by his tenurial connections with the Lacys (Pontefract, Kirkstall) and Fossards (Headley), and by geographical proximity: he was a benefactor of local houses at Pontefract, Monk Bretton, Selby, Esholt, and Hampole. However, his most significant endowments were to the Cistercians at Rievaulx, some thirty to forty miles to the north, with whom he had no known connections. It is possible that both he and his mother were attracted by the reputation of Rievaulx; certainly no family or tenurial connection suggests itself.

The effect of Adam's activities as a monastic benefactor was to give the monks of Rievaulx two important industrial sites in the West Riding, and a monopoly of mining activity there. In contrast, Smeathalls was shared among a number of religious houses: Headley, Hampole, Pontefract, Monk Bretton, the hospital of St Michael, and St Peter's Hospital, York, all held adjoining meadow land. In common with other monastic benefactors Adam was careful to associate his sons with his grants, and those of his second marriage attested charters and gave their 'consent' at a tender age.¹⁴³ This guarded against future hostility to recipients of Adam's grants, and indeed his patronage of the monastic order was continued by his family.¹⁴⁴ Adam's charters show him to have been conventionally concerned for the salvation of his soul and those of members of his family. A number, however, notably those to Pontefract, Hampole, Headley, and Monk Bretton, express deeper concern, and include prayers for those who had sinned on behalf of the donor; these contain variations on the clause 'pro remedio anime mee et patris mei et matris mee et uxoris mee Matildis et omnium antecessorum meorum et heredum meorum et pro animabus omnium qui causa mei peccaverunt / omnium illorum qui causa mei in aliquibus deliquerunt' ('for the salvation of my soul, and for those of my father and my mother and my wife Matilda, and all of my ancestors and heirs, and for the souls of all who have sinned for my sake / of all those who have in any way sinned on my behalf').¹⁴⁵ Had these instances been confined to a single monastery the clause might have been explained as the idiosyncrasy of one monastic scribe. That they occur more widely suggests the desire of the donor, Adam son of Peter himself, that such persons be remem-

¹⁴³ EYC, III, nos. 1722, 1735, 1737; VI, no. 67.

¹⁴⁴ The alienation of lands to religious houses could have a devastating effect on the economic fortunes of a knightly family; for an example, see P. Coss, *Lordship, Knighthood and Locality: A Study in English Society c. 1180–c. 1280* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 189–94 and 206–7.

¹⁴⁵ EYC, III, nos. 1730, 1732; see also nos. 1733–4, and no. 1735 ('pro omnibus sive vivis sive mortuis qui pro me vel propter me peccaverunt': 'for all, whether living or dead, who have sinned for me or on my behalf').

Founders, patrons, and benefactors

bered, his charitable forgiveness presumably adding to his own chances of salvation.

This chapter has illustrated the vital connection between monastic houses and their founders and patrons. Monks, canons, and nuns benefited, materially, from the religious aspirations and spiritual impulses of the laity, and by the way in which the level of benefaction to religious houses was seen as a mark of status. Religious houses reciprocated with their prayers, with confraternity, by providing a final resting place, and by allowing members of the laity to specify how their alms were used. However, the monastic order depended for material support on a wider circle of benefactors than the immediate family of the founder/patron. The major grants of resources may have derived from foundation endowments, supplemented by a later patron. However, many religious houses depended also on small, piecemeal donations, sales and quitclaims by men and women of the locality, and they repaid the local community with their care for the sick and alms for the poor – often the target specified by local benefactors for their grants. It was from the local community that monastic houses drew many of their recruits, and those recruits themselves and their families might mark their entry, or expected entry, by grants, further cementing the relationship of mutual reciprocity. Moreover, the conveyance of even a small parcel of land involved more than the grantor and the recipient. When Walter de Dinant and his wife quitclaimed to Fountains half a carucate of land which the three daughters of Nigel son of Gurwald had granted, the monks promised to find food and clothing for the girls, and to provide spiritual guidance for them, or place them in a house of religion. Walter pledged his warranty in the hand of Richard, priest of Kirby Wiske; his wife, Emma, made her pledge in the hand of Raisanta, wife of William son of Eudo; William son of Eudo was the first witness, and used his seal to seal the charter; and two sets of witnesses, one male and one female, attested the transaction.¹⁴⁶ This was an occasion that involved the village community, and illustrates the monks of this one monastery caring for the spiritual welfare of the daughters of local benefactors. The case study of Adam son of Peter is a fine example of how one man, acting not as founder nor as patron, was a conscientious supporter of religious houses, primarily those in his own locality of Birkin. It may have been baronial affairs, enthusiasm, and ambition that influenced the shape and character of the monastic expansion in Yorkshire, but in many ways interaction with the local community was an equally vital force.

¹⁴⁶ EYC, v, no. 287.