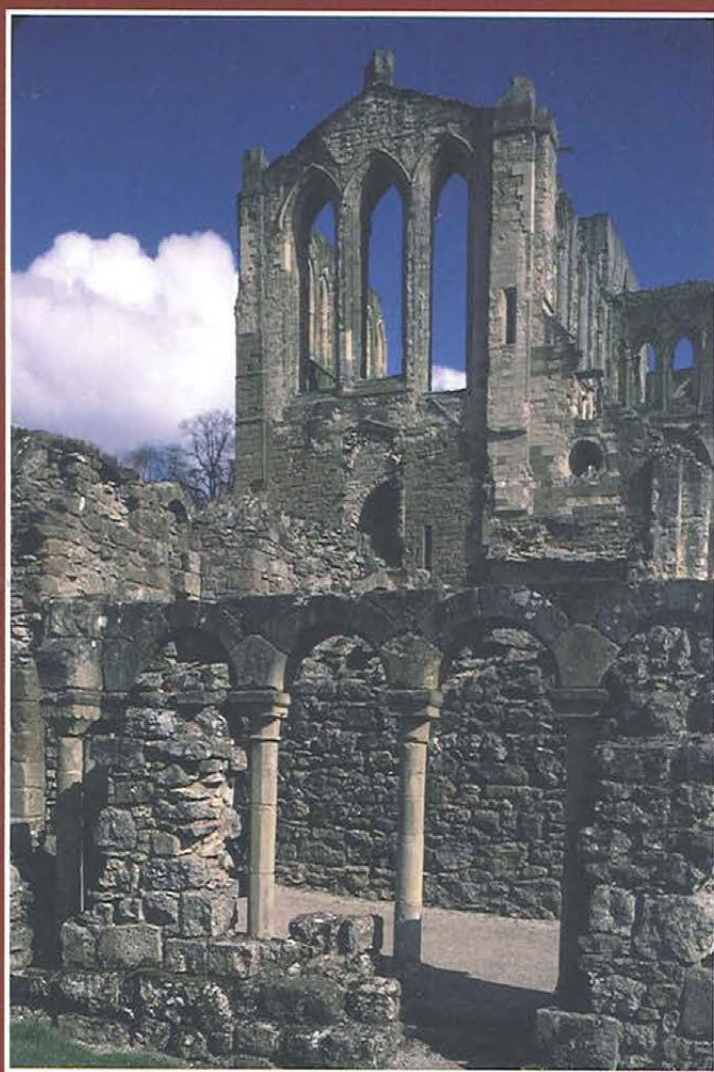


MEDIEVAL CHURCH STUDIES 11
CÎTEAUX: STUDIA ET DOCUMENTA 13

PERSPECTIVES FOR AN ARCHITECTURE OF SOLITUDE

ESSAYS ON CISTERCIANS, ART AND ARCHITECTURE
IN HONOUR OF PETER FERGUSSON



EDITED BY TERRY N. KINDER

BREPOLS | CÎTEAUX

“According to the Form of the Order”: The Earliest Cistercian Buildings in England and their Context

GLYN COPPACK

My first contact with Peter Fergusson came in 1981–82 while writing up my excavation in the church at Fountains Abbey; he was busy finishing *The Architecture of Solitude* and researching his important paper on the work of Abbot Adam of Meaux. A simple enquiry requesting information on an incomplete piece of research, put so tactfully and impossible to refuse, began a friendship that continues today. I think it was the warning from more experienced colleagues that he had some rather dangerous ideas that attracted me to him; certainly he seemed to offer a clarity of thought rarely found in monastic studies at the time. But for Peter's encouragement and generosity my own research could easily have developed very differently. This essay — which would never have been written without his gentle persuasion — is offered in all sincerity to an exceptional man, truly a scholar and a gentleman, a friend, and a mentor who has quietly and safely propelled me through the minefield that is Cistercian studies.

The origins of any monastic order tend to be obscured by myth, hagiography, and a lack of basic research. The Cistercians are particularly difficult because they, no less than their contemporaries, thought in biblical parallels and created almost from the beginning an “autho-

rized version” of events that many communities tried to emulate as the Order grew.¹ With the obvious exception of St Bernard, true Cistercians appear to have had little concept of time or of non-monastic events happening around them; they were interested in the natural world but not the buildings they inhabited beyond describing their frugality, as is clearly apparent from the sources considered below. Obviously, they were not indifferent to architecture; it was after all a necessary framework for religious life. It was simply a given that was not worthy of incorporation into official histories. The Cistercians were seen by many of their contemporaries as dangerous men; by their own admission setting out to redefine monastic life and return to the simplicity and poverty of St Benedict's rule of the early sixth century. This is not exactly the impression given by their earliest surviving buildings in England or on the continent that imply a certain degree of maturity and economic stability. Indeed, it is unlikely that any churches surviving are earlier than the late 1140s, a full half-century after the settlement of Cîteaux in 1098, and they represent the aspirations not of their founding communities but those of the second or third generation of monks drawn to an established and rapidly growing Order.

1. L. G. D. Baker, “The Foundation of Fountains Abbey”, *Northern History*, 4 (1969), p. 29–43, and “The Genesis of English Cistercian Chronicles: The Foundation History of

Fountains Abbey I & II”, *Analecta Cisterciensia*, 25 (1969), p. 14–41; and 31 (1975), p. 179–212.

Monastic buildings are only a framework for religious life, and the early development of an architectural philosophy by the Cistercians has long been debated on the basis of little positive evidence. In the past scholars have attributed the Order's earliest ideas on building to St Bernard, first abbot of Clairvaux, who joined the Order in 1113 and who fulminated against the excesses of Cluniac architecture in his *Apologia ad Guilielmum* written in the early 1120s. The building of a new church and cloister at Clairvaux between 1135 and 1145, something which Bernard himself regretted, was seen as the origin of true Cistercian architecture and the start of a "Bernardine" tradition that could be traced in many churches of the Order. While this is no longer as clear cut as many scholars would have wished, the cellular structure of the Cistercian Order and its pattern of visitation would suggest that there was a degree of commonality in planning within families. This is supported by surviving twelfth-century churches and cloister buildings. Though we do not have the buildings that preceded these "developed" monasteries, with one important exception, it would be realistic to believe that there was a commonality in the design and layout of the earliest buildings of the Order.

There is evidence for Cistercian building before the rebuilding of Clairvaux in 1135. It is fragmentary and sometimes contradictory. Peter Fergusson's 1983 paper on the earliest architecture of the Order in England was the first attempt to define the evidence that did exist.² More recent work in England, however, has shown that considerable evidence, both documentary and archaeological, exists for the form of both the first timber buildings developed by the Order and for the first stone monasteries that replaced them, primarily within the family of Clairvaux and built dur-

ing the life of St Bernard. It is likely that the timber buildings and early stone monasteries now well established in England are typical of the Order generally in the first half of the twelfth century and mark the first two stages in the development of permanent houses; the first the initial settlement, the second the achievement of *stabilitas*.³ In Britain a third stage of development can be observed in those houses which were the heads of developing families, notably Rievaulx, Fountains, and Melrose, where the monumental expansion of the mother house follows the establishment of the final daughter.

The past twenty years have seen research concentrated on the earliest phases of Cistercian building in England and Wales, in an attempt to examine how the Order's return to the first principles of the Benedictine rule was reflected in the very framework of monastic life. This work, both historical and archaeological, has concentrated on three northern houses, Fountains and Sawley, where excavation for conservation purposes in the late 1970s and early 1980s revealed the first timber buildings excavated in a Cistercian context, and Rievaulx, where a geophysical survey has revealed the presence of an early church within the existing cloister garth.

Early Timber Buildings from Documents

The family of Fountains has produced the best documentary evidence for the earliest years of the Cistercian reform: in the early thirteenth century, *Narratio de fundatione Fontanis monasterii*⁴ of Hugh of Kirkstall, which uses the memories of the centenarian brother Serlo who was a monk of Fountains between ca. 1137 and 1147; the *Chronicon Abbatie de Parco Lude*;⁵ the *Fundacio abbathie de Kyrkestall*;⁶ and Thomas Burton's late-fourteenth-century *Chronica monasterii*

2. Peter Fergusson, "The First Architecture of the Cistercians in England and the Work of Abbot Adam of Meaux", *Transactions of the British Archaeological Association*, 136 (1983), p. 74-86.

3. For the achievement of *stabilitas*, see Glyn Coppack, *The White Monks: The Cistercians in Britain 1128-1540* (Stroud, 1998), p. 33-39, and "Sawley Abbey, an English Cistercian Abbey on the Edge of *stabilitas*", in *Cîteaux*, 52.3-4 (2001), p. 319-36.

4. John Richard Walbran, "Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains I", *Surtees Society*, 42 (1862), p. 1-129. Subsequently quoted as Memorials I.

5. *Chronicon Abbatie de Parco Lude*, ed. Edmund Venables, Lincolnshire Record Society, 1 (Horncastle, 1891). Subsequently quoted as *Chronicon de Parco Lude*.

6. *Fundacio abbathie de Kyrkestall*, ed. E. J. Clark, Thoresby Society, 4 (Leeds, 1895). Subsequently quoted as *Fundacio de Kyrkestall*.

de Melsa,⁷ which uses earlier sources that have not survived. The information supplied by these documents, however, is tantalizing in the extreme and is often difficult to interpret. The Fountains *narratio*, for instance, implies buildings but with one exception does not describe their appearance; the Louth Park chronicle tells of timber buildings at Kirkstead; at Kirkstall the only clue is the existence of "humble buildings" and a church; only at Meaux are the buildings described in any detail.

Fountains Abbey

From the Fountains *narratio* it was apparent that the abbey went through a sequence of development from its foundation on 27 December 1132: an initial settlement that began by sheltering among the rocks of the valley, then under a great elm tree, and then in a crude hut;⁸ the provision of temporary buildings under the direction of the Clairvaux monk Geoffrey of Ainaï from 1133;⁹ the construction of a stone monastery between 1136 and its destruction by fire in 1146;¹⁰ and the great monastery that rose from its ruins in the 1150s and 60s, described simply by Hugh of Kirkstall as *longe festevior*.¹¹ From the second phase, Fountains was clearly under the tutelage of Clairvaux, to the extent that Abbot Bernard imposed Henry Murdac as abbot in 1144 to ensure continental Cistercian orthodoxy.¹²

Kirkstead Abbey

In 1137, Hugh Brito, lord of Tattershall in Lincolnshire, visited Fountains and gave a site for a daughter house on the edge of the Lincolnshire fen. Brother Adam was dispatched

in aedificiis construendis,¹³ a process that took two years to complete.¹⁴

Meaux Abbey

Meaux Abbey, established in 1150, was Fountains's final daughter house. Its first abbot, Adam, was one of the two members of the Fountains community known to have been trained by Geoffrey of Ainaï, and we know that he personally selected the site and arranged for the founder to provide temporary buildings.¹⁵ That they conformed to the approved Cistercian model is certain from the fact that they were replaced with identically planned but larger buildings when they proved to be inadequate, though the chronicle does not record that they were built *de more*.¹⁶ Meaux followed almost exactly the same sequence of development as its mother house. We know from the Fountains *narratio* that there was a tradition brought from Clairvaux of building "after our custom". It was Adam who was most active in this field, responsible for setting out Kirkstead in 1137–39, Woburn in 1145, Vaudey in 1147, and Meaux in 1150. Robert, the second monk trained by Geoffrey, was the founding abbot of Newminster, the mother house of Sawley, and is credited with "setting out the buildings therein after our manner".¹⁷ At Barnoldswick, where the community that eventually settled at Kirkstall was first established in 1147, lay brothers from Fountains provided buildings "according to the form of the Order" before the site was colonized, though the person responsible for the design is not recorded.¹⁸ When resettled at Kirkstall in 1152, it was Abbot Alexander (sometime prior of Fountains) who "elevated a basilica [. . .] and arranged humble buildings according to the Order".¹⁹ It is only at Meaux,

7. Thomas de Burton, *Chronica monasterii de Melsa*, ed. E. A. Bond, 3 vols, Rolls Series, 43 (London, 1866–68). Subsequently quoted as *Chronica de Melsa*.

8. The hut is described "nulla ibi ligna dolata, nulla saxa complanata, sed pauper tugurium et pastorum quasi tabernaculum humili desuper cespite coniectum": Memorials I, p. 34.

9. "ad ejus consilium casas erigunt, ordinant officinas": *ibid.*, p. 47.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

11. "Adjuvabant eos de vicinia viri fideles et consurgit fabrica longe festevior quam ante fuit": *ibid.*, p. 102.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 80–84. Serlo remembered that he turned the house upside down, searching out hidden things and remov-

ing those customs which they had brought from their first mother house, Saint Mary of York (*Ibid.*, p. 86–87).

13. *Chronica de Melsa*, I, p. 76. Adam was also to set out the monasteries of Vaudey in Lincolnshire and Woburn in Bedfordshire.

14. *Chronicon de Parco Lude*, p. xxii.

15. *Chronica de Melsa*, I, p. 63.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

17. Memorials I, p. 58–59; at the foundation of Newminster, Abbot Robert *aedificiis inibi de more dispositis*.

18. *Fundacio de Kyrkestall*, p. 178.

19. *Ibid.*

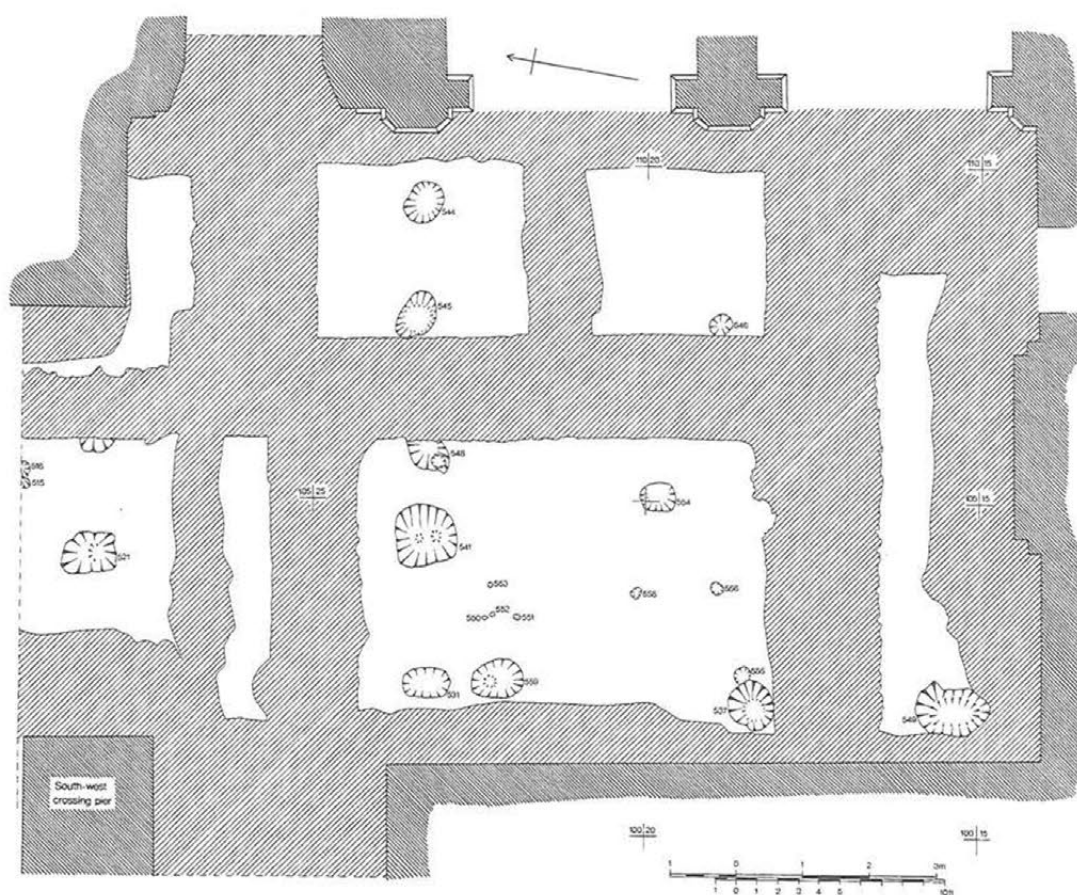


Fig. 1. Fountains Abbey, the first timber church and the gable wall of the domestic range, post-holes found below the south aisle of the crossing and south transept of the later church. (author)

a near contemporary of Kirkstall and Sawley and a member of the same family, that a description of the first temporary buildings survives in the chronicle of the house. Count William of Aumale, the founder, provided "a certain great house built with common mud and wattle [...] in which the arriving lay brothers would dwell until better arrangements were made for them. He also built a certain chapel next to the aforementioned house [...] where all the monks used the lower storey as a dormitory and the upper to perform the divine service devoutly."²⁰

Early Timber Buildings from Excavation

Fountains Abbey

Temporary Cistercian buildings are known from excavation at only three sites in England: Fountains,²¹ Bordesley,²² and Sawley.²³ In the first case, only two fragmentary buildings — presumed to be the church and a domestic building — were recovered. In the second case only fragments of the timber buildings themselves were found, reused as grave covers for members of the early community. In both cases, the implication was that the buildings were properly carpentered structures that belie the

20. *Chronica de Melsa*, I, p. 82.

21. For Fountains, see Roy Gilyard-Beer and Glyn Coppack, "Excavations at Fountains Abbey, North Yorkshire, 1979–80: The Early Development of the Monastery", *Archaeologia*, 108 (1986), p. 147–88.

22. I am indebted to Dr Sue Hirst and Dr Susan Wright for information on the first monastery at Bordesley. Fragments of timber buildings were used as grave covers in the monastic cemetery.

23. For Sawley, see Glyn Coppack, Colin Hayfield, and Rich Williams, "Sawley Abbey: The Architecture and Archaeology of a Smaller Cistercian Monastery", *Transactions of the British Archaeological Association*, 155 (2002), p. 22–114, particularly p. 30–45.

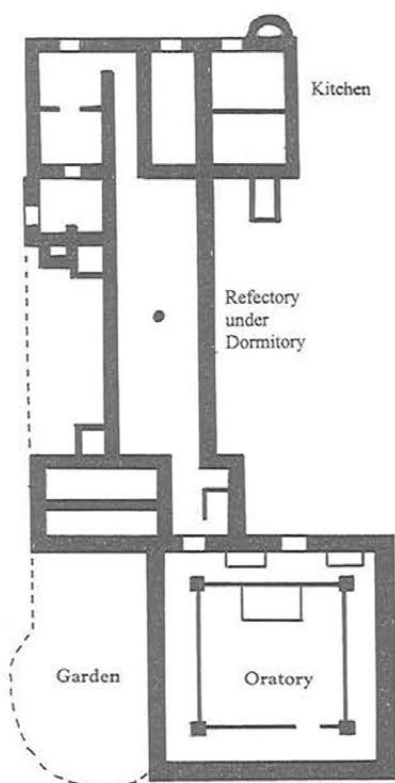


Fig. 2. Clairvaux Abbey, first monastery; plan of 1708. (author, adapted from Milley)

simple post-hole evidence recovered at Fountains (Fig. 1). The Fountains buildings can be dated with some confidence to the late summer of 1133, for when the harvest failed in that year Serlo recalled the presence on site of *carpentarii et operarii*.²⁴ They represent the earliest Cistercian timber buildings to be recovered. The oratory was a rectangular building of at least four bays, with opposed doors and shallow porches in its westernmost surviving bay, and only apparently of a single storey. To its south, and also apparently lying east-west, the domestic building had much deeper post-pits and is presumed to have been of two storeys.

The model for the Fountains buildings laid out by Geoffrey of Ainaï must be the contem-

porary monastery at Clairvaux, parts of which still survive in the western part of the precinct there, which were described in some detail in 1517,²⁵ 1642,²⁶ and 1667,²⁷ and which are also known from Dom Milley's monumental plan and perspective. There is a serious problem of interpretation, for the original church is described as being some 6.1 m long and 4.3 m wide²⁸ though Milley shows an aisled church (Fig. 2). The descriptions of two separate complexes have unwittingly been conflated: the first church built by the monks themselves on their arrival described by Manrique, and the subsequent semi-permanent buildings that replaced it, illustrated by Milley and seen by the Queen of Sicily in 1517. Terryl Kinder's analysis of the *vetus monasterium*, superimposing a plan of the surviving buildings on Dom Milley's plan and cadastral drawings and using geophysical survey, identifies the scale of the buildings. The church measures externally 17 m² and the dormitory 19.8 m long.²⁹ It is these later buildings, of stone and not timber though still of a temporary scale and design, which should provide the model for the first buildings of the daughter houses of Clairvaux in England: an oratory; a domestic building attached to it, the first floor of which was the dormitory and the ground floor the refectory; a latrine; a kitchen; and a small guest chamber à l'entrée de la porte completed the layout.

The surviving portion of the timber oratory at Fountains measured 4.88 m wide by 7.32 m long internally (its east and west ends were not recovered); the domestic building is of unknown length and though not physically attached to the oratory lay within 0.3 of it. Their planning is thus unlike that seen at Clairvaux but the inter-relation of the buildings is similar.

The disparity between the recovered 1133 buildings at Fountains and the 1150 buildings documented at Meaux, both undoubtedly built

24. Memorials I, p. 50.

25. H. Michelant, "Un grand monastère au XVI^e siècle", *Annales Archéologiques*, 3, ed. Edouard Didron (1845), p. 236–37.

26. Angel Manrique, *Cisterciensium seu Uerius Ecclesiasticorum Annalium a Conditio Cistercio*, vol. 1 (Lyon, 1642), p. 80.

27. Joseph Meglinger, "Epistola Familiaris de Itinere ad Comita Generalis S Ordinis Cisterciensis", in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1844–64), 185, cols 1608–09.

28. Jean Owens Schaefer, "The Earliest Churches of the Cistercian Order", *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture*, vol. 1, ed. Meredith P. Lillich (Kalamazoo, 1982), p. 1–12, quoting Angel Manrique.

29. Terryl N. Kinder, "Les Églises médiévales de Clairvaux: probabilités et fiction", in *Histoire de Clairvaux: Actes du Colloque de Bar-sur-Aube / Clairvaux, 22 et 23 juin 1990* (Bar-sur-Aube, 1991), p. 204–29 (p. 207–08).

BUILDING A

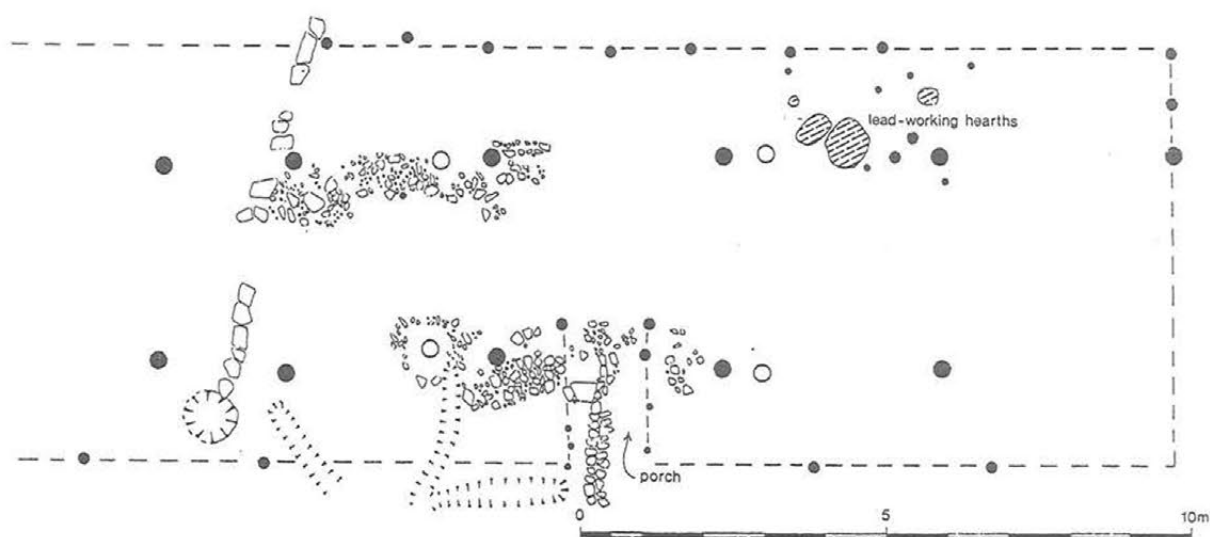


Fig. 3. Sawley Abbey, Building A, one of two aisled buildings with mud walls and reversed construction dating from the foundation period. (author)

de more, indicates the development of Cistercian architectural practice over a period of only seventeen years, just as the difference between the unaisled Fountains oratory and the aisled chapel at Clairvaux demonstrates the first seventeen years of development within the *familia* of Clairvaux itself. Because the Order was establishing its architectural philosophy throughout this period, a development in the modelling of its temporary buildings should be apparent.

Sawley Abbey

The foundation of Sawley in January 1147/8 followed the preparation of the site in the previous year by William de Percy, and the timber buildings recovered must at least in part have been provided then. Abbot Robert of Newminster was personally involved in the foundation and may even be responsible for their design. The planning of the first buildings, if they followed the pattern of the mother house at Newminster and the Order's legislation, would have been the responsibility of the founding abbot, their erection being commissioned by the founder. They mark, therefore, an intermediate stage between the planning of Fountains and Meaux within the extended Fountains family.

The early timber buildings at Sawley Abbey represent the largest concentration of Cistercian

temporary buildings so far excavated and cover the period *ca.* 1150 to *ca.* 1180, remaining in use until they were replaced with permanent stone ranges. At Sawley this was a lengthy process resulting from an initially inadequate endowment, and it is therefore hardly surprising that there are as many as three phases of development apparent in the excavated structures. It is possible to define three techniques of building which relate to the stratification observed which conveniently fall into the standard typology of early medieval structures: earth-fast timber buildings; timber buildings set on pad-stones and slight cill walls; and timber buildings raised on substantial cill walls.

Stratigraphically, the fragmentary Building B below the later kitchen was the earliest, but its form of construction was almost identical to that of the detached Building A (Fig. 3) below the later monks' latrine, and it is tempting to see them as contemporary and perhaps belonging to the period of settlement. Both were aisled buildings with clay walls strengthened with timber, similar to those described at Meaux. Building A had an internal porch and heavy stone flooring. The use of neither can easily be determined, but both were substantial. Their technique of building — with clay walls and reversed assembly — has a long tradition which, although the carpentry used was undoubtedly

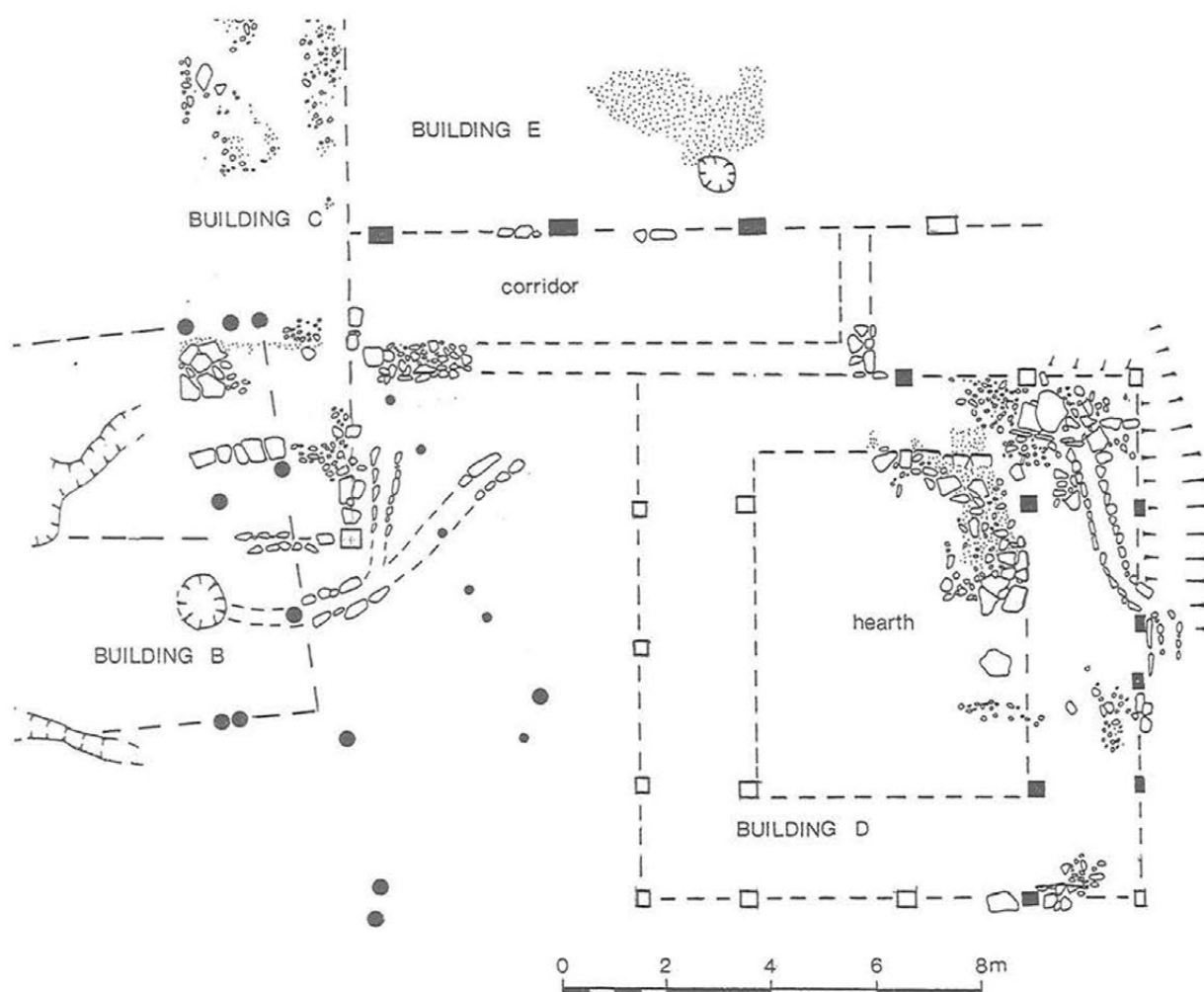


Fig. 4. Sawley Abbey, Buildings C, D, and E, constructed in the 1160s and 70s to replace aisled building B. These buildings all pre-dated the construction of permanent cloister ranges. (author)

rudimentary, can be seen at such contemporary high-status sites as Goltho in Lincolnshire³⁰ and implies that they were of equal status to the halls of the knightly and baronial classes. The Fountains buildings of 1133–35, though properly carpentered, were conceived in the same earth-fast tradition. It is fair to assume that in both cases the design of the structures and their method of construction reflect the local building tradition of the time, that they were professionally built, and that their layout and use

reflected contemporary Cistercian philosophy and planning. What is particularly interesting about the Sawley buildings, and what makes them exceptional, is the provision of a water supply in lead pipes. The earliest dated piped water supply in England is that of Henry of Blois's episcopal palace of Wolvesey in Winchester of the early 1130s.³¹ To find a supply of as early as 1150 to the temporary buildings of a second tier Cistercian foundation is quite remarkable. Piped water has yet to be con-

30. Guy Beresford, *Goltho: The Development of an Early Medieval Manor c. 850–1150*, English Heritage Archaeological Report, 4 (London, 1987), esp. p. 106–10 and Figs 114–17.

31. I am indebted to Professor Martin Biddle for information regarding the piped water supply at Wolvesey Palace in Winchester in advance of his own publication of the site.

firmed at Fountains before 1150.³² These buildings were contemporary with a stone church of developed Cistercian plan which combines the plan of the mother house of Newminster with the elevations of the church building at Fountains in the early 1150s.

The construction of a second phase of post-pad buildings at Sawley, Buildings C, D, and E, and the replacement of Building B relates to a replanning of the house that was contemporary with the construction of the first stone cloister range on the site, a permanent east range and latrine for the monks, in the 1170s (Fig. 4). If Cistercian tradition was being followed, and there is no reason to suspect that it was not, it should be reasonably easy to identify these buildings. Building D was apparently the kitchen, its planning with a central hearth below a tall roof and louver and preparation areas in the aisles, is typical of later medieval kitchens and its scale is unexceptional. It was clearly associated with both Building C to the west and Building E to the north, an association strengthened by the construction of an enclosed passage between the buildings as a secondary feature. The only major buildings not accounted for are a refectory and a guest-house, both of which would necessarily be associated with a kitchen. As Building E was the more substantial it is likely to have been the refectory. Its siting, within the cloister area of the later stone monastery, would ensure its survival until permanent buildings could be completed. Although it post-dates the construction of Building C, this need only reflect the order of the rebuilding, perhaps reflecting the move from an earlier building which had to be demolished to lay out the east cloister range. Building C could easily be a guest-hall, closing the east side of a nascent inner court.

The only partial recovery of the plan of the early monastery inevitably leaves more questions unanswered than resolved, but Sawley Abbey has demonstrated the complexity that even temporary buildings can display as the community achieved *stabilitas* and the Cistercians continued to develop their philosophy of building. At Meaux, for example, we know that buildings were replaced as need required, but we only have the barest description of their form. At Kirkstall a permanent church (*basilica*) was built alongside "humble" temporary buildings; and at Fountains only the first phase of the temporary monastery survives, although it must have been modified substantially as the first stone church was constructed, for the east end of the domestic building lay within the south transept of the new church. What is common to Clairvaux, Fountains, and Sawley in their foundation phase was that there was no cloister and no specific chapter house, structures supposedly central to monastic life in the twelfth century. The only buildings that appear to have been provided are those required by the *Instituta* for the foundation of an abbey: oratory, refectory, dormitory, guest-house, and a room for the porter.³³ This plan was not peculiarly Cistercian, for a similar layout can be seen in the first buildings erected at Benedictine Finchale, a cell of Durham cathedral priory, in the later twelfth century.³⁴ There, a hall and chamber of decidedly manorial type were provided, to which other rooms and a latrine were added after 1196 to house a growing community.

Early Stone Buildings from Excavation and Survey

Timber buildings were meant to serve until the house achieved *stabilitas*, when permanent

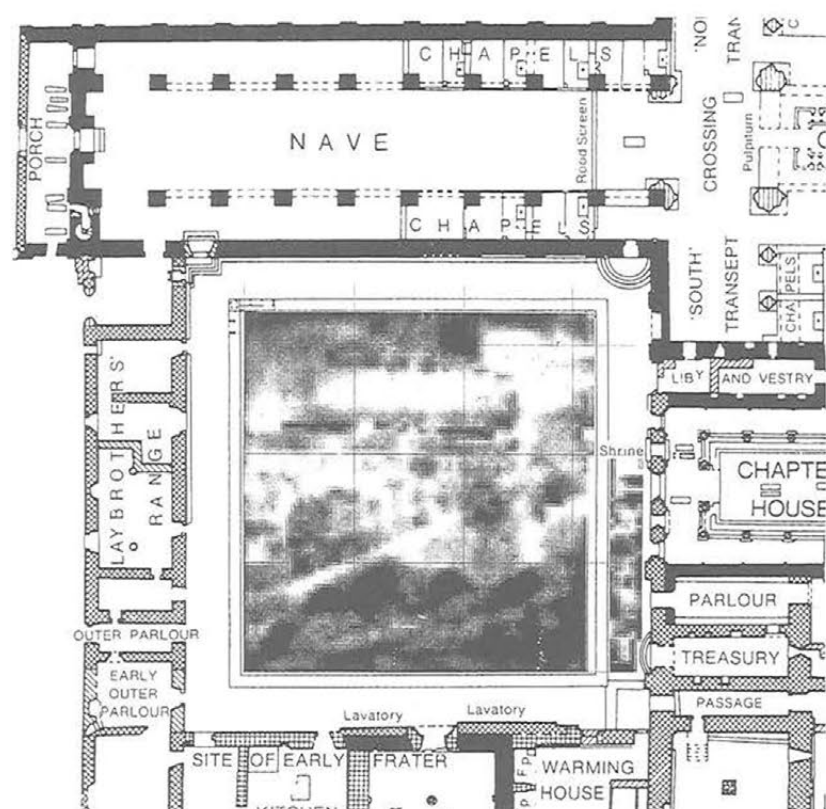
32. The piped water supply at Fountains Abbey was a twin supply, with separate systems supplying the monks and lay brothers. The well-house of St John's Well on the monks' supply system is no earlier than the middle years of the twelfth century; the supply pipe for the lay brothers' system was contemporary with the use of the first phase of the abbey's wool house in the 1160s. For this, see Glyn Coppack, "The Excavation of an Outer Court Building, Perhaps the Wool House, at Fountains Abbey,

North Yorkshire", *Medieval Archaeology*, 30 (1986), p. 46-87 (p. 55).

33. *Narrative and Early Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. Chrysogonus Waddell, *Cîteaux: Studia et Documenta*, 9 (Brecht, 1999), p. 460-61.

34. Charles Peers, *Finchale Priory, Durham* (London, 1987), p. 10.

Fig. 5. Rievaulx Abbey, the first stone church, revealed by resistivity survey below the later cloister garth.
(John Syzmansky, University of York; English Heritage)



buildings were begun. Substantial remains of four Cistercian primary stone layouts have been identified; at Waverley,³⁵ Tintern,³⁶ Fountains,³⁷ and Rievaulx,³⁸ each with a small, aisleless church and simple cloister ranges around a substantial cloister. Brakspear's early excavations at Waverley and Tintern identified the early stone plan-form but did little to resolve their chronology. At both Rievaulx and Fountains, it is apparent that the church pre-dates the cloister layout, and at Rievaulx (Fig. 5) it was intentionally placed within the cloister area of the later monastery so that it could remain in use throughout the building of larger permanent buildings. It has been traced by resistivity but remains to be evaluated by excavation. Amid Aelred's rebuilding of the church and cloister

ranges in the 1150s, the lay brothers' range stands out as curiously old fashioned and out of scale. It almost certainly pre-dates Aelred's rebuilding and is contemporary with early masonry which lies below his chapter house, the remains of the first stone ranges raised by Abbot William before his death in 1145. None of this has been tested by excavation, though the sequence of building can be read in the surviving masonry.

Fountains Abbey

At Fountains, the sequence of events is plain. A small cruciform church was built after 1135 as a free-standing building. The east range of the cloister was then butted against it, and both buildings were damaged by a documented fire

35. Harold Brakspear, *Waverley Abbey* (Guildford, 1905). For a reconsideration, see Coppack, *The White Monks*, p. 33–35 and Fig. 10.

36. David Robinson, "The Twelfth-Century Church at Tintern Abbey", *Monmouthshire Antiquary*, 12 (1996), p. 35–39. For the early cloister buildings, see David Robinson, *Tintern Abbey* (Cardiff, 1995), p. 27–29.

37. Gilyard-Beer and Coppack, "Excavations at Fountains Abbey"; see also Glyn Coppack, *Fountains Abbey: The Cistercians in Northern England* (Stroud, 2003), p. 33–37 and Figs 14–15.

38. Peter Fergusson and Stuart Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey: Community, Architecture, Memory* (New Haven, 1999), p. 45–54.

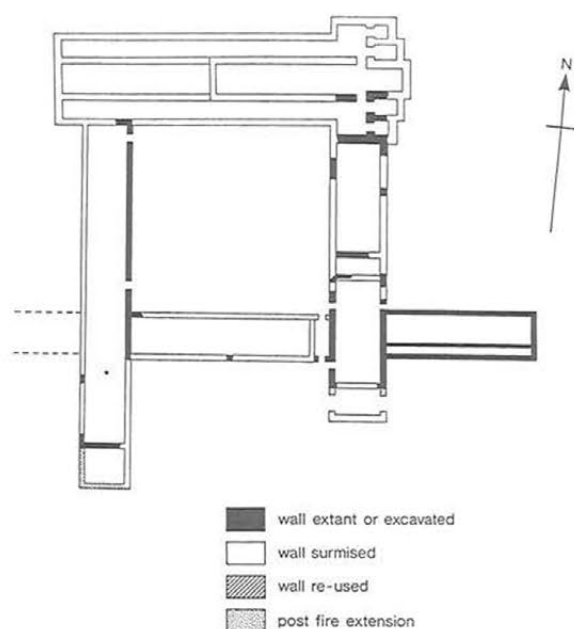


Fig. 6. Fountains Abbey, the first church and added cloister ranges. (author)

in 1146.³⁹ The most likely, indeed the only likely, builder of the cloister ranges was Abbot Henry Murdac, appointed in 1144 on the death of the unworldly and retiring second abbot, Richard, who was frankly unlikely to have built anything. An aisled nave was also added to the church at this period (Fig. 6). Large parts of the cloister ranges survive to full height, were incorporated in later rebuildings, and provide a remarkably clear impression of the domestic ranges which are at most only five years later than Achard's building of the permanent monastery at Clairvaux. If Murdac was the builder, they must represent the latest in continental design, for he was a close confidant of St Bernard and the builder of Vauclair. The plan is the standard Benedictine plan, simplified dramatically but with a long west range provided for the lay brothers. The ranges are unvaulted, the chapter house is within the east range and built against the church, and the refectory is aligned on the south alley of the cloister. Architectural detailing is restricted to plain chamfers, and the buildings are all of roughly

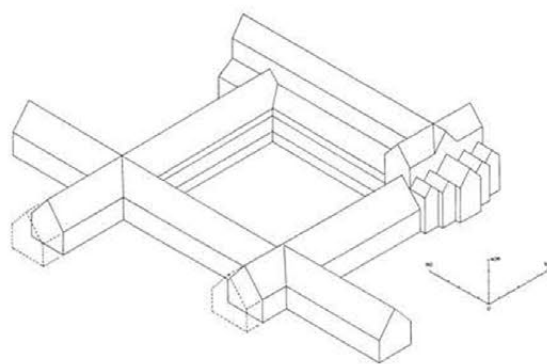


Fig. 7. Fountains Abbey, reconstruction of the first stone church and cloister ranges. The broken lines indicate extensions post-dating the 1146 fire. (author)

dressed stone, plastered and painted inside and out. Excavation has shown that both east and west ranges were completed before they were damaged by fire in 1146,⁴⁰ and building must have been rapid. The ranges were 8.23 m wide, a measurement that occurs also at Rievaulx, Waverley, and Tintern at the same date, and remarkably later at Sawley, Rufford, and Roche in the second half of the twelfth century, and 6.1 m high to the wall-top. Excavation has revealed a stone cloister alley 3 m wide, and geophysical survey suggests a square lavabo in the south-west angle of the cloister garth.⁴¹

The burning of Fountains in 1146 was followed by immediate repair and expansion rather than rebuilding. Both the west and east ranges were lengthened to expand dormitory space. The reason for this was that Fountains was still in its mission-centre stage and was sending out colonies: in 1146 to Lysa in Norway, in March 1147 to Barnoldswick in Craven, and later in that year to Bytham in Lincolnshire. The final colony was established at Meaux in 1150, and only then was the community allowed to grow. The result was that both the church and cloister ranges were too small and rebuilding began. From surviving early masonry, it is possible to reconstruct the appearance of the first stone monastery at the height of its development (Fig. 7).

39. Gilyard-Beer and Coppack, "Excavations at Fountains Abbey", p. 156.

40. Coppack, *Fountains Abbey: The Cistercians in Northern England*, p. 33–37, 39, and 40–41.

41. I am indebted to Dr Keith Emerick and Dr John Syzmansky for bringing this to my attention.

Here, we have the first permanent buildings raised in England by the Cistercians and the timber buildings that preceded them. Neither accords with the traditional interpretation of early Cistercian architecture, and both have profound implications for the study of the Order's earliest years. None of this would have been obvious but for the recovery of early buildings by excavation at Fountains and Sawley on sites where it had long been assumed that the earliest buildings had been identified. Fountains in

particular shows the trust that can be placed in contemporary sources despite their economy of information, and the potential for future research on even well-researched sites. If Peter Fergusson had done nothing else, his encouragement for my continued research has provided yet another avenue for the study of the early Cistercians.

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Rievaulx Abbey: The Early Years

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As the premier Cistercian abbey in the north of England, the history of Rievaulx has always held a particular fascination.¹ Historians have rightly contrasted the seemingly quiet, almost anonymous, arrival of the White Monks from L'Aumône (dépt. Loir-et-Cher) to found the first two British Cistercian houses at Waverley in 1128 and Tintern three years later, with the rather more high profile appearance of the monks from St Bernard's own monastery of Clairvaux at the court of Henry I in the Autumn of 1131.² From there the monks were to journey north to found the first northern Cistercian house, on a site provided by Walter Espec, with the approval and consent of Henry I himself and of Archbishop Thurstan of York. They have also pointed to the rapid rise of Rievaulx's fame, suggested both by the entry of a man of the status of Ailred only two years after the foundation of the abbey, as well as by the confidence with which the

Abbots of Rievaulx and Fountains joined forces with members of the cathedral church of York and of the religious orders of the diocese to challenge the elected Archbishop of York, William fitzHerbert, in 1141, a mere ten years after the Cistercian settlement in Yorkshire. None of this is to be denied. However, it is possible that our interpretation of the early years of Rievaulx has been too much coloured by that inspiring work, used to such great effect by David Knowles — that is, Walter Daniel's *Life of Ailred* — and that Rievaulx's rise to prominence was, in some ways, less rapid.³ This essay looks at the development of the abbey in its first crucial fifteen years, between the foundation in 1132 and the election of Ailred as third abbot in 1147. It draws on the evidence of Walter Daniel's *Life*, but also on other sources, notably the twelfth-century cartulary of the house, London, British Library, Cotton MS, Julius D I,⁴ both the cartulary copies of

1. It is a privilege to contribute to Peter Fergusson's *Festschrift*, and to be able to offer him these thoughts on the early history of Rievaulx Abbey. In the early 1990s Peter kindly invited me to work with him and Stuart Harrison on the research for their *Rievaulx Abbey: Community, Architecture, Memory* (New Haven, 1999), and I was grateful for the opportunity to work with him. The full results of my research were published as "The Estates and Economy of Rievaulx Abbey in Yorkshire", *Cîteaux*, 49 (1998), p. 29–94. A version of the present essay was delivered at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds in 1998, in the 900th anniversary year of the foundation of Cîteaux. Since then I have benefited from discussions with a number of people, including Emilia Jamrozak, who is currently preparing a monograph on Rievaulx Abbey for Brepols.

2. For the foundation of Rievaulx and the Cistercian set-

tlement in Yorkshire generally, see Janet Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire 1069–1215*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4th series, 40 (Cambridge, 1999), p. 98–124.

3. *The Life of Ailred of Rievaulx* by Walter Daniel, ed. and trans. F. Maurice Powicke (London, 1950; repr. 1963; repr. Oxford, 1978); for comment, see David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 943–1216* (Cambridge, 1963²), p. 239–45, 257–66.

4. Printed as *Cartularium Abbathiae de Rievallie*, ed. J. C. Atkinson, Surtees Society, 83 (Durham and London, 1889), afterwards cited as *Cart. Riev.* As with many nineteenth-century editions this contains errors and omissions, and the editor has interfered with the order of some of the contents.

the early charters of Rievaulx, and what I shall call the "Memorial of Benefactions", a list headed *Isti sunt possessiones Rievallenses perennes quae sic collatae sunt nobis*. Although printed by the nineteenth-century editor of the cartulary after the charters, it does in fact precede them, beginning on fol. 19^r [15^r] of the cartulary.⁵ The essay considers the evidence for the acquisition of the estates of Rievaulx in these fifteen years and the identity of its benefactors, what we know of Rievaulx's first two abbots, and the wider connections built up by the abbey, in an attempt to identify some of the characteristics of the formative settlement period of this famous monastery.

The Estates and their Donors

The chronology of the foundation grants poses a particular problem because the surviving copy of Walter Espec's charter is undoubtedly a composite one, dating not from the foundation but later, certainly after 1145, and possibly as late as the mid-1150s when Espec is said to have retired to Rievaulx.⁶ However, it seems reasonably certain that Espec's grants were made in two stages. In 1131, according to the "Memorial", he conveyed to "Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux [...] for the building of an abbey there" nine carucates of land, four in Griff and five in "Tilleston", now represented by Stiltons Farm, both of these in the parish of Helmsley.⁷ The canons of Espec's Augustinian foundation

of Kirkham, founded some ten years earlier, whose endowment had included the church and tithes of Helmsley, remitted to the monks the tithes due on these two portions of land.⁸ The second stage in Espec's endowment of Rievaulx was the grant of Bilsdale, which the "Memorial" dates to 1145. Detailed boundaries are given in the foundation charter, which identify Bilsdale as an extensive area to the north of the abbey.⁹

Compared with his more lavish grants to Kirkham,¹⁰ Espec's endowment of Rievaulx was modest indeed, most of those acres comprising moorland, but — whatever the debate about the chronology of Cistercian thinking on the economy and prohibited revenues — the endowment was certainly what would come to be regarded as classically Cistercian.¹¹ To Espec's grants there was a slow and modest supplement in the form of donations, of waste land, meadow, and shares in common pasture, from a circle of benefactors mostly limited to Espec's — and now Rievaulx's — close neighbours. Before 1145 Odo of Boltby granted Hesketh along with part of his waste land adjoining Boltby, and charter evidence reveals that he added common pasture of three vills, Boltby, Ravensthorpe, and Thirlby.¹² Between 1145 and 1147 Stephen de Meinill of Whorlton granted moorland in Stainton adjoining the moorland in Bilsdale that had been transferred to the monks by Espec in 1145 — indeed the two grants may have been made at the same time.¹³ Also at a date between 1145 and 1147 the monks received land in Rook Barugh and

5. London, British Library [hereafter BL], Cotton MS, Julius D I, fols 19^r–20^r (15^r–16^r); *Cart. Riev.*, p. 260–62.

6. BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fols 28^r–29^r (24^r–25^r); *Cart. Riev.*, p. 16–21, no. 42.

7. BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fol. 19^r; *Cart. Riev.*, p. 260. Griff became the home grange of the abbey. For an aerial photograph, see *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire*, ed. Robin A. Butler (Oxford, 2003), p. 94.

8. BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fols 160^v–161^v (143^v–144^v); *Cart. Riev.*, p. 171–72, nos 234–35.

9. For a map showing Espec's two grants to Rievaulx, see *A History of Helmsley, Rievaulx and District*, ed. J. McDonnell (York, 1963), p. 111.

10. Espec's charter for Kirkham is printed from BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fols 151^v–152^v (144^v–145^v) in *Cart. Riev.*, p. 159–61, and from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Dodsworth 9, fol. 157^r, in *Cart. Riev.*, p. 243–45, no. 347. For comment, see Janet Burton, *Kirkham Priory from Found-*

ation to Dissolution, Borthwick Paper, 86 (York, 1995), p. 3–6.

11. For debates about the evolution of Cistercian economic practice, see, for instance, Constance Hoffman Berman, "Cistercian Development and the Order's Acquisition of Churches and Tithes in Southwestern France", *Revue bénédictine*, 91 (1981), p. 193–203, and "The Development of Cistercian Economic Practice during the Lifetime of Bernard of Clairvaux: The Historical Perspective on Innocent II's 1132 Privilege", in *Bernardus Magister*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt, special issue of *Cîteaux*, 42 (1991), and *Cistercian Studies Series*, 135 (Spencer, MA, 1992), p. 303–13; Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Holy Entrepreneurs: Cistercians, Knights and Economic Exchange in Twelfth-Century Burgundy* (Ithaca, NY, 1991).

12. BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fols 49^v–50^v (45^v–46^v); *Cart. Riev.*, p. 45–46, no. 76. The "Memorial" dates the grant of Hesketh *aliquot annos* after the foundation, but in the lifetime of Abbot William (1132–45): *ibid.*, p. 260.

13. BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fol. 48^r (44^r); *Cart. Riev.*, p. 42, no. 72.

Great Edstone from Gervase del Sneit and Benedict his son, who, like Stephen de Meinill, had witnessed Espec's foundation charter,¹⁴ and land in Waterholmes from Odo of Ness.¹⁵ Gervase and Benedict also granted land and pasture in Wombleton, and by c. 1152, when Roger de Mowbray confirmed the grant, the monks had houses there which they had enclosed with a ditch.¹⁶ Only two early benefactors were of baronial rank; these were Gundreda de Gournay, donor of demesne land in Welburn and Skiplam,¹⁷ and her son, Roger de Mowbray, who confirmed the grants of his men and became a benefactor himself.¹⁸ Most were men of more modest means whose interest in the abbey was probably stimulated by its proximity. The combined evidence of charters and the "Memorial" suggests that the territorial expansion of the abbey estates in its first fifteen years was very limited, its benefactors were mostly local people, and one effect of this was that geographically the early estates of Rievaulx lay within a radius of about twelve miles (twenty kilometres) of the abbey.¹⁹

Rievaulx's Abbots

During this fifteen-year period two abbots ruled Rievaulx. The first, the man who led the colony from Clairvaux, was William, a Yorkshireman by birth and one of a number of prominent north-

erners who had entered the monastic life in the cradle of Cistercian monasticism, Burgundy. Former secretary to Bernard he was probably an obvious choice to lead the men from Bernard's army who were to seize the booty of the lord, and, in the saint's words "claim it, recover it, and restore it with a strong hand";²⁰ indeed, he is likely to have taken a prominent part in the negotiations — with Henry I, Archbishop Thurstan, and Walter Espec — which must have preceded the journey of the colony to England.²¹ William played a leading role in the disputed election at York from 1141 onwards, was present in person at the Roman curia in 1143 to appeal against fitzHerbert, and was warned by Bernard not to allow his zeal to overstep the mark.²² William ruled Rievaulx until his death in 1145 and was succeeded by Maurice. Maurice was one of the Benedictine converts to the Cistercian way of life. Educated at Durham from his childhood, he had been subprior of the cathedral priory and, according to Walter Daniel, was a man renowned for his learning.²³ Maurice is an enigmatic figure. He was Abbot of Rievaulx for barely two years, and it was his resignation, not later than November 1147, that led to the election of Ailred and his move from his post as Abbot of Revesby. One could put Maurice's brief tenure as abbot down to a lack of aptitude for high office, what monastic writers would have called the Mary rather than the Martha — certainly John of Hexham hints that he resigned his office *fervore perfectionis*.²⁴

14. The grants of Benedict and Gervase are noted in the "Memorial of Benefaction" (*Cart. Riev.*, p. 260); for their attestation of Espec's charter, see *ibid.*, p. 21.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

16. BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fol. 43^r (39^r); *Cart. Riev.*, p. 36, no. 63; *Early Yorkshire Charters*, vols I–III, ed. W. Farrer (Edinburgh, 1914–16), vols IV–XII, ed. C. T. Clay, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, extra series, nos 1–3, 5–10 (Wakefield, 1935–65) [hereafter *EYC*], IX, no. 146; (calendar) *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray 1107–1191*, ed. D. E. Greenway, British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, n.s., 1 (London, 1972) [hereafter *Mowbray Charters*], no. 234.

17. BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fol. 38^v–v (34^v–v); *Cart. Riev.*, p. 30–31, nos 55–56; *EYC*, IX, nos 149–50; (calendar) *Mowbray Charters*, nos 232, 235.

18. BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fols 38^v–40^r (34^v–36^r), 41^r–42^r (37^r–38^r), 43^r (39^r), 47^v–48^r (43^v–44^r); *Cart. Riev.*, p. 31, 34–36, 40, nos 57, 60, 63, 71, 229; *EYC*, III, no. 1843; IX, nos 146, 151, 153; (calendar) *Mowbray Charters*, nos 233–34, 236–37.

19. For a discussion of the development of the Rievaulx estates, see Burton, "Estates and Economy of Rievaulx Abbey".

20. *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux*, ed. and trans. Bruno Scott James (London, 1953, repr. Stroud, 1998), no. 95.

21. For discussion, see Burton, *Monastic Order in Yorkshire*, p. 98–102.

22. *Letters of St Bernard*, ed. and trans. James, no. 199 (to William) and no. 201 (a letter addressed jointly to William and Abbot Richard of Fountains). To William Bernard wrote, "your zeal is well known to me and it would ill become our Order and not help your house were it to flare up beyond the bounds of prudence and discretion".

23. *Life of Ailred of Rievaulx by Walter Daniel*, ed. Powicke, p. 33: "a man of great sanctity and of outstanding judgement, befitting one who from boyhood had drunk the wine of spiritual gladness in the cloister of Durham, and, refreshed by the bread of Cuthbert, that man of God, had climbed so high as to be called by his companions a second Bede".

24. John of Hexham, *Historia Regum*, in *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, ed. T. Arnold, 2 vols, Rolls Series, 75 (London, 1882–85), II, p. 317.

However, in 1147 or early 1148 he was appointed by Henry Murdac as suffragan Abbot of Fountains, in the wake of Murdac's own election as Archbishop of York, which had taken place in July 1147. The *Narratio de Fundatione* of Fountains records:

Meanwhile, coming to Fountains, he made a monk of Rievaulx named Maurice abbot. This Maurice did not remain a full three months at Fountains but resigned his office into the hands of the archbishop and returned home whence he had come.²⁵

One could ask whether Maurice's resignation at Rievaulx was connected to his appointment to Fountains; that is, did Maurice resign in order to take up Murdac's offer of a post at Fountains? Possibly — though the dating is simply not precise enough to say. What is clear is that Maurice was no more a success at Fountains than he was at Rievaulx and returned to his home abbey after the brief tenure noted by the *Narratio de Fundatione*. His successor at Fountains was another monk of Rievaulx, Thorald, described as a man well versed in the liberal arts and only slightly less so in Holy Scriptures.²⁶ Like Maurice, Thorald resigned the abbacy of Fountains, although he managed rather longer, being in post for two years. There is a clear indication that his departure was connected with a disagreement with Henry Murdac, and this may too have been the reason for Maurice's departure.²⁷

What do these two brief discussions tell us about the first fifteen years of Rievaulx? The first suggestion I would make is that the abbey had not yet, by 1147, secured a large territorial basis, so that its "success" — if success be equated with wealth — was not immediate. The grants it had accumulated were useful to be sure, but hardly remarkable. Analysis of the charters

just discussed, as well as those that belong to the second phase of Rievaulx's history, the twenty-year long abbacy of Ailred (1147–67), suggest that it is from 1147 onwards that the firm economic basis of the abbey became established. According to the "Memorial of Benefactions" in 1147 Ailred, as Abbot of Rievaulx, received from Gilbert de Gant the grange of Hunmanby; apart from Roger de Mowbray, whose interest in Rievaulx may be explained by the proximity of his own estates to the abbey and by the benefactions of his tenants, Gant was the first baronial benefactor whom Rievaulx acquired. This is an indication that after 1147 the monastery was gaining a wider profile in baronial circles. Most significant was the interest shown by the Bishops of Durham. In 1152 Bishop William of St Barbe made the grant of the important grange of Crosby, and William's successor, Hugh du Puiset, granted the grange of Cowton shortly after his appointment in 1153.²⁸ It was also after 1153 that Rievaulx began to attract more in the way of royal patronage. The monks had received routine charters of confirmation from Henry I, no doubt sought by his justiciar, Walter Espec, who also took advantage of King Stephen's presence in York in February–March 1136 to secure the confirmation of the new monarch both for his foundation charter of Rievaulx and for his second Cistercian foundation and Rievaulx's first daughter house at Warden (Bedfordshire).²⁹ Quite how far the involvement of the northern White Monks in the disputed election at York might have alienated King Stephen is not clear. Christopher Holdsworth has suggested that Cistercian opposition to the Archbishop who enjoyed Stephen's support, and who had received the temporalities of the see from the King, led Stephen to withhold royal favour, and that it was for this reason that Rievaulx received no charter from Stephen after 1136 (well before the disputed election) and that the monks of

25. *Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains*, ed. J. R. Walbran et al., 3 vols, Surtees Society, 42, 67, 130 (Durham, 1863–1918), I, p. 104 (my translation).

26. *Ibid.*, I, p. 105.

27. *Ibid.* "He presumed to do certain things against the advice and authority of the venerable archbishop, and so a dispute arose between them and, resigning his office on the order of St Bernard, he returned home to Rievaulx." The intervention of Bernard is worthy of note.

28. BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fol. 19^r (15^v): *Postea* [1152] *dedit nobis Hugo Episcopus Dunelm' Cotun cum pertinentiis suis; ibid.*, fols 35^v–37^v (31^v–33^v); *Cart. Riev.*, p. 27–29, nos 49–53.

29. Henry I confirmed the foundation of Rievaulx and further granted immunity from the payment of danegeld on the initial endowments: BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fols 133^r–134^v (126^r–127^v) (*Cart. Riev.*, p. 140–42, nos 194, 196); *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154*, vol. II, *Regesta Henrici Primi 1100–1135*, ed. C. Johnson and H. A. Cronne (Oxford, 1956), nos 1740–41.

Fountains did not receive their charter until after the King and Henry Murdac were reconciled in 1151.³⁰ Like Holdsworth, I would be cautious in drawing conclusions from this evidence, more so because Stephen issued at least four charters for Rievaulx, only one of which has survived.³¹ Moreover, that the king was not overly hostile is suggested by his confirmation of the foundation of a daughter house of Rievaulx at Rufford by Gilbert de Gant (Christmas 1146).³² However, Rievaulx attracted no English royal patronage until 1158 when Henry II granted the important property of Pickering, a grange created almost entirely from waste.³³

The conclusion must be, then, that the apparent success, or high profile, of Rievaulx by the early 1140s was not due to an increase in the territorial basis of the abbey, nor to prominent benefactors. The latter are associated with the abbacy of Ailred who, if Walter Daniel's description of his Revesby years is accurate, was proactive in seeking new endowments:

The bishop orders him [...] to accept grants of land from knights in generous free alms, and he obeys, since he had realized that in this unsettled time such gifts profited knights and monks alike, for in those days it was hard for any to lead the good life, unless they were monks or members of some religious order, so disturbed and chaotic was the land, reduced almost to a desert by the malice, slaughters and harryings of evil men.³⁴

30. For remarks concerning Stephen's grant of charters of confirmation to the White Monks, see Christopher Holdsworth, "The Church", in *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign*, ed. Edmund King (Oxford, 1994), p. 207–29 (p. 226–27).

31. The chronology of Stephen's charters to Rievaulx is impossible to establish. According to Dodsworth's transcript of a further cartulary of Rievaulx, which in 1640 was at Belvoir Castle but which is now lost, there were four charters of King Stephen, one confirming liberties, the second confirming freedom from toll, and the third and fourth confirming grants of Walter Espec (*Cart. Riev.*, p. 268). The third or fourth of these survives as an original, although damaged, and is printed in *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, vol. III, *Regesta Regis Stephani et Mathildis Imperatricis*, ed. H. A. Cronne and R. H. C. Davies (Oxford, 1968), no. 716. It was probably on the same occasion that Stephen issued a confirmation charter for Fountains Abbey (*ibid.*, no. 335) and for Warden (*ibid.*, no. 919).

32. *Ibid.*, III, no. 736.

Walter's portrait is one of a man astute enough to turn the tenurial insecurity of Stephen's reign to the advantage of his monks, and also astute enough, perhaps, to hail the new king, Henry II, as the cornerstone of the English and Norman races.³⁵ If not to territorial wealth based on benefactions to Rievaulx itself, were there wider networks into which Rievaulx tapped that might suggest the importance of other factors in its rise?

A significant feature that seems to emerge in these early years is the close connection between Rievaulx and Fountains. It was perhaps to be expected that the Abbot of Rievaulx would keep an eye on the struggling community just over twenty miles away, founded under such unusual and inauspicious circumstances, the result of a crisis which the Rievaulx monks themselves had sparked as they passed through York.³⁶ And it is likely that the abbots of the two sister houses would have travelled together to the General Chapter. However, the concerted opposition that William of Rievaulx and Richard of Fountains brought against William fitzHerbert — St Bernard was able to write to them jointly about the affair³⁷ — and Henry Murdac's appointment of two suffragan abbots from Rievaulx is suggestive of sustained contact beyond the foundation years.

One could rightly as well point to the significance of the Durham connection. Much is made of the entry of Ailred into Rievaulx, but what is equally telling is the conversion of Maurice, subprior of the cathedral monastery, sub-

33. For Henry II's confirmation charters, see BL, Cotton MS, Julius D I, fols 134^r–147^r (127^r–140^r) (*Cart. Riev.*, p. 142–54, nos 197–213). The grant of Pickering is at no. 210.

34. *Life of Ailred of Rievaulx by Walter Daniel*, ed. Powicke, p. 28.

35. On Ailred's life and career, see Aelred Squire, *Aelred of Rievaulx: A Study* (London, 1969; repr. Kalamazoo, 1981); D. Roby, "Chimaera of the North: The Active Life of Aelred of Rievaulx", in *Cistercian Ideals and Reality*, ed. J. R. Sommerfeldt, Cistercian Studies, 60 (Kalamazoo, 1978), p. 152–69; and Marsha L. Dutton, "The Conversion and Vocation of Aelred of Rievaulx: A Historical Hypothesis", in *England in the Twelfth Century: Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Daniel Williams (Woodbridge, 1990), p. 31–49.

36. The story of the foundation of Fountains has been told many times; see, for instance, Burton, *Monastic Order in Yorkshire*, p. 103–07.

37. See above, note 22.

sequently Abbot of both Rievaulx and Fountains. When we add to this the patronage of the Bishops of Durham — which, although the formal grants date from after 1152, seem to have gone back to before that date — we can suggest that the Durham connection may have been a significant factor in Rievaulx's rise.

And so further north than Durham, to Scotland, and to the court of its king, David I. The most famous point of contact between David and Rievaulx is Ailred himself, steward of the Scottish king, who became a monk at Rievaulx in 1134. Walter Daniel paints a vivid description of how Ailred rode out with Walter Espec from Helmsley castle to view the progress of the abbey and was overcome by the sight of the industrious holy men among their half constructed buildings, and of how the following day he turned aside on his journey homewards in order to enter the community. This is an attractive and compelling picture, but one which masks the preparations which must surely have been made in advance of Ailred's visit. Historians such as Marsha Dutton have rightly questioned Walter Daniel's representation of Ailred's sudden conversion to Cistercian monasticism and have drawn attention to the network of patronage that brought him to the new foundation in the valley of the river Rye. Ailred apart, however, is there any other indication of David's interest in, or connections with, Rievaulx? A trawl through the cartulary does not reveal his name at the beginning of any charter. However, there are other suggestions of very real influence. David was the recipient of a letter from Bernard of Clairvaux, and I think it is worth quoting a part of it:

I have long since learned to love you, most illustrious king, your fair renown has for long stirred in me the desire to meet you in person [...]. Our brothers at Rievaulx were the first to experience the effects of your mercy. You opened to them the treasury of your good will, and anointed them with the oil of your compassion and kindness, so that the house of the king of Heaven was filled with the odour of your ointments. I am not ungrateful for this. I am as grateful as if you had shown your favours to me personally. And now there are others in the same neighbourhood who have lately joined

us. I do not think that your Highness can be ignorant of how these brothers, inspired from on high, came forth into a desert place from the church of the blessed Mary at York where the observance was perfunctory. [...] To you, therefore, most merciful king, I commend these aforesaid servants of Christ that you may comfort them in their poverty, looking to Christ the King of Kings for the meed which he will distribute to the just in his eternal kingdom.³⁸

Here we see Bernard seeking support, or funds perhaps, from King David for the monks of Fountains after the secession from St Mary's, York. The letter cannot be dated accurately; however, the reference to the brothers "who have lately joined us" suggests a date shortly after the formal acceptance of Fountains as a daughter house of Clairvaux, which took place in late 1133 or early 1134. It seems that David's patronage of Rievaulx — which, whatever form it took, was substantial enough for Bernard to have high hopes of him for Fountains — actually predated the decision of Ailred to become a monk at Rievaulx. The very least that it suggests is that David's early relations with Rievaulx were not confined to his passive consent for Ailred's entry, but took a more practical form. That David was so attuned to the ecclesiastical affairs of the north of England is not surprising. Not only was Ailred on a diplomatic mission to Archbishop Thurstan just prior to his entry into Rievaulx, but David's own stepson, Waldef, had entered the religious life as an Augustinian canon of Nostell in the 1120s and had then moved to Kirkham, Espec's own foundation, where he was prior by the time of the disputed York election. It would seem that from shortly after the establishment of Espec's second monastery at Rievaulx King David I had begun to create and strengthen ecclesiastical ties with the north of England, perhaps indeed anticipating the power struggle which was to break out on the death of King Henry I. His patronage of Rievaulx is to be seen in the context of his benefactions to the northern Benedictines of Tynemouth, Lindisfarne, St Bees, and Wetheral, and other northern houses. Indeed it was the year after Henry I's death and the succession of Stephen that David invaded the north and strengthened links still further

38. *Letters of St Bernard*, ed. and trans. James, no. 172.

by the foundation of a daughter house of Rievaulx, at Melrose, to be followed by a second, Dundrennan, at precisely the time (1142) when the profile of the northern Cistercians in the disputed election was gaining momentum.

The Cistercians arrived at Rievaulx in what might be described as the last years of calm before the storm, and that storm — the failure of royal authority in the north, the rise of a baronial faction, and the territorial and political ambitions of the Scottish king — had a profound effect on Cistercian development. The impact of the settlement at Rievaulx has to be considered on different levels. In terms of the appeal of its spirituality it was decisive — witness the turmoil it brought to St Mary's, the conversion from the traditional orders of Maurice of Durham and later Waldef of Kirkham, as well as the buoyant recruitment which allowed the regular foundation of daughter houses, Warden as well as Melrose in 1136, Revesby the year after Dundrennan, in 1143, and Rufford in 1146. Initially the impact of the coming of the Cistercians to Rievaulx on potential benefactors from the baronial class was muted, and those who provided material support for the community were, by and large, drawn from very local men. This clearly affected the territorial distribution of estates and the economic basis of the abbey. However by 1147 there had emerged two connections that were to prove critical in the development of Rievaulx. One was with Durham, perhaps created initially by Ailred, who had been educat-

ed at Durham, and by Maurice and manifest in the patronage of the Bishops of Durham and in manuscript production, a field explored and illuminated so sensitively by Anne Lawrence.³⁹ And finally there was the connection created by the territorial ambitions of the Scottish king, which determined to a large extent the shape of the filiation of the family of Rievaulx. In other words, the first fifteen years of Rievaulx present rather a paradox. On one level we are looking at a very local establishment, one reliant on local men and women for material support and with limited estates. Despite the high profile of its founder (Walter Espec was a prominent royal justiciar in the north under Henry I) there was little intermediate patronage by the baronage until after 1147, although mention should be made of the significant foundation, by William de Roumare, earl of Lincoln, of Rievaulx's daughter house at Revesby. The foundation dates from 1143, which means that the negotiations and planning that accompanied Cistercian foundations coincided with Roumare's defection to the Angevin camp in 1141. Despite this instance of baronial patronage, manifest in the foundation of a daughter house, I would argue that in its early years Rievaulx leapfrogged from intensely local patronage to high level connections with Durham and Scotland, and that these were decisive factors in its development.

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39. Anne Lawrence, "The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts", in *Anglo-Norman Durham 1093–1193*, ed.

David Rollason, Margaret Harvey, and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994), p. 451–69 (esp. p. 459–62).

The Crossing of Fountains Abbey Church*

MALCOLM THURLBY

In an article entitled "Early Cistercian Churches in Yorkshire and the Problem of the Cistercian Crossing Tower", Peter Fergusson discussed aspects of the design and archaeology of the crossings of the twelfth-century Cistercian abbey churches of Rievaulx, Fountains, Kirkstall (all in Yorkshire), Buildwas (Shropshire), and Dore (Herefordshire).¹ Since the publication of that article in 1970, each one of these buildings has been the topic of further investigation. Rievaulx is the subject of the brilliant monograph by Peter Fergusson and Stuart Harrison.² Aspects of Kirkstall have been addressed by Stuart Harrison and Malcolm Thurlby.³ Dore has been the subject of a multi-authored volume, and, most recently, David Robinson has produced a new guide to Build-

was.⁴ Most importantly for our purpose, the excavation in the south transept at Fountains by Roy Gilyard-Beer and Glyn Coppack produced evidence for an early wooden church that was superseded by a stone church built before, and rebuilt after, the fire of 1147.⁵ As a result, the present fabric — the second stone church — could not have been commenced until sometime after 1147. The excavation also revealed that there was a revision in the design of this church. Although it is agreed that the change of plan took place between 1150 and 1160, the building chronology has not been investigated vis-à-vis the design of the daughter house at Kirkstall, where the construction of the church commenced in 1152.⁶ Not least significant in this connection is the form of the

* I am very grateful to Peter Fergusson for encouraging my adventures into the Cistercian world. Glyn Coppack kindly clarified and expanded on aspects of the excavation in the south transept at Fountains. Stuart Harrison and David Robinson read drafts of this paper and were generous and inspiring discussants on all aspects of its contents.

1. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 29 (1970), p. 211–21.

2. Peter Fergusson and Stuart Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey: Community, Architecture, Memory* (New Haven, 1999).

3. Stuart Harrison, "Kirkstall Abbey: The 12th-Century Tracery and Rose Window", and Malcolm Thurlby, "Some Design Aspects of Kirkstall Abbey", in *Yorkshire Monasticism: Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, ed. Lawrence R. Hoey, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, 16 (Leeds, 1995), p. 73–78 and p. 62–72 respectively.

4. *A Definitive History of Dore Abbey*, ed. Ron Shoesmith and Ruth Richardson (Little Logaston, Herefs., 1997); David M. Robinson, *Buildwas Abbey* (London, 2002).

5. Roy Gilyard-Beer and Glyn Coppack, "Excavations at Fountains Abbey, North Yorkshire, 1979–80: The Early Development of the Monastery", *Archaeologia*, 108 (1986), p. 147–88. See also Peter Fergusson, *Architecture of Solitude: Cistercian Abbeys in Twelfth-Century England* (Princeton, 1984), p. 39–48; Stuart Harrison, "The Architecture of Byland Abbey" (unpublished master's dissertation, University of York, 1988), p. 111–13; Glyn Coppack, *English Heritage Book of Fountains Abbey* (London, 1993); Glyn Coppack and Roy Gilyard-Beer, *Fountains Abbey* (London, 1993); Glyn Coppack, "Fountains Abbey: Archaeological Research Directed by Conservation and Presentation", in *Monastic Archaeology: Papers on the Study of Medieval Monasteries*, ed. Graham Keevill, Mick Aston, and Teresa Hill (Oxford, 2001), p. 175–82, esp. p. 178–80; Jens Rüdiger, "Fountains Abbeys frühe Klosterkirche(n) – zum Stand der Bau-forschung", *Cîteaux*, 53 (2002), p. 73–98; Glyn Coppack, *Fountains Abbey: The Cistercians in the North* (Stroud, 2003).

6. Thurlby, "Kirkstall", p. 62.

crossing at Fountains, a matter not easily resolved in view of the ruined state of the fabric. Just the south-east and north-west piers of the crossing remain and, in the case of the former, only in modified form. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that there is difference of opinion as to the form and articulation of the crossing, especially for the superstructure. In particular, was there a lantern tower or was the crossing vaulted? Or was there perhaps some combination of both vault and lantern? The evidence provides for an intriguing examination of the appropriate form for the crossing of a major Cistercian church, one that both reflects regional traditions and Cistercian practice elsewhere in Europe.

The State of the Question

In 1157 the General Chapter passed legislation that stated "Let stone towers with bells not be built".⁷ Fergusson indicated that this was not a ban on crossing towers but quite literally a ban on towers with bells.⁸ The classic example of a Cistercian church without a crossing tower is at Fontenay (Côte-d'Or), and something similar once existed in England at Waverley (Surrey) and in Wales at Tintern (Gwent).⁹ However, if there was a desire to create a more ambitious structure, the *sine qua non* of a great church was a crossing tower. In the Cistercian context the matter was clearly not a straightforward one, as at Buildwas where the crossing tower represents a modification of the original design during construction.¹⁰

Glyn Coppack stated that originally the crossing of the present church at Fountains "was

designed simply as a continuation of the nave up to the entrance of the presbytery, without a central tower at the intersection".¹¹ He suggested that provision for the central tower was only made when work commenced on building the nave in the late 1150s.¹² Elsewhere, Coppack has written that the north-west and south-east crossing piers "exhibit evidence of the change of plan during building".¹³ He adds that "[a] round shaft rises from the springing of the crossing arches in the south-east corner to support an arch similar to that on the west gable wall of the church that outlined the profile of a wooden ceiling".¹⁴ The implication is that in the putative first design this wooden barrel would have continued uninterrupted from the east crossing arch to the west front. However, Coppack observed that "[b]y the time the nave was begun the decision had been taken to build a tower, for no arch across the nave would have been needed between the west crossing piers if a tower was not intended, yet its springing remains of the north-west pier, clearly an integral part of the design".¹⁵ Fergusson also saw the crossing tower as part of a revised plan but this he placed earlier than Coppack, around 1152.¹⁶

The excavation report by Gilyard-Beer and Coppack indicated that the east crossing piers of the present church were probably executed before the demolition of the nave of the first stone church.¹⁷ Moreover, the west crossing piers could not have been erected until the previous structure had been taken down. As to the sequence of construction there is no debate, for the excavated remains of the south-west crossing pier are built over a northward continuation of the west wall of the south transept.¹⁸ Be that as it may, the change in plan does not nec-

7. "Turres lapideae ad campanas non fiant": *Twelfth-Century Statutes from the Cistercian General Chapter*, ed. Chrysogonus Waddell, *Cîteaux: Studia et Documenta*, 12 (Brecht, 2002), p. 70, 579.

8. Fergusson, *Architecture of Solitude*, p. 46–47.

9. David M. Robinson, *Tintern Abbey*, (Cardiff, 2002⁴), reconstruction on p. 28.

10. Robinson, *Buildwas Abbey*, p. 8.

11. Coppack, *Fountains Abbey: The Cistercians in the North*, p. 46.

12. Coppack, *English Heritage Book of Fountains Abbey*, p. 40; Coppack, *Fountains Abbey: The Cistercians in the North*, p. 48.

13. Coppack and Gilyard-Beer, *Fountains Abbey*, p. 20.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 20. For the reconstruction of a wooden barrel vault over the Fountains nave, see Malcolm Thurlby, "Glasgow Cathedral and the Wooden Barrel Vault in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Architecture in Scotland", in *Medieval Art and Architecture in the Diocese of Glasgow*, ed. Richard Fawcett, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, 23 (Leeds, 1998), p. 84–87 (p. 84), pl. XVIIA.

15. Coppack and Gilyard-Beer, *Fountains Abbey*, p. 20.

16. Fergusson, *Architecture of Solitude*, p. 46.

17. Gilyard-Beer and Coppack, "Excavations at Fountains Abbey", p. 158.

18. *Ibid.*, pl. LVIC.



Fig. 1. Fountains Abbey, south transept, interior to north-east. (author)

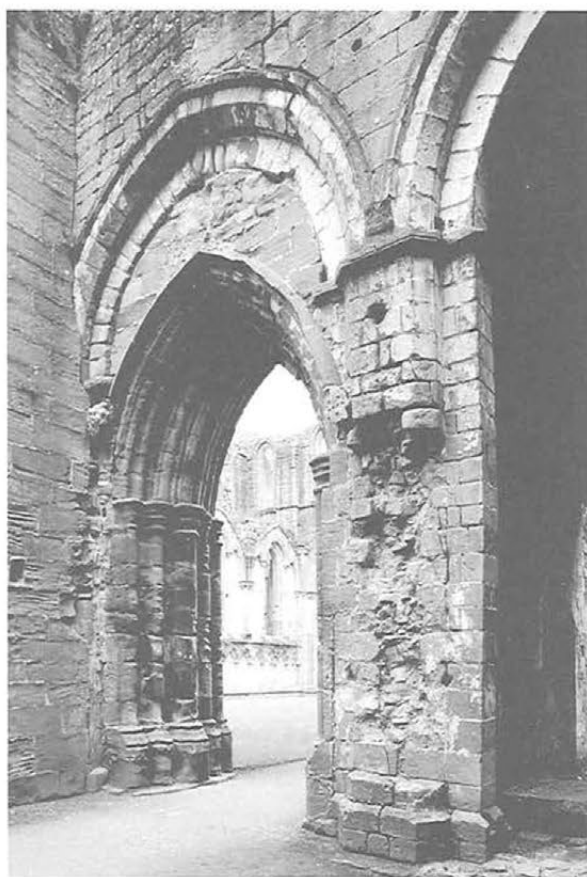


Fig. 2. Fountains Abbey, south transept, interior to north-east, detail of north bay. (author)

essarily entail any great lapse of time between the erection of the east and west crossing piers. Coppack's reading of the shaft that rises in the angle between the south and east crossing arches is also open to reinterpretation. Concerning the superstructure and covering of the Fountains crossing, J. Arthur Reeve wrote, "[t]hat the space under the low central tower was vaulted is certain, because the springing stones of the diagonal rib of a simple quadripartite vault are still in situ at the top of the south-east pier of the great crossing; these ribs did not spring directly from the capitals of the great piers, but from short columns which were inserted, in the angles, above them".¹⁹ Both A. W. Oxford and A. E. Henderson likewise claimed that the space

beneath the crossing tower was vaulted in stone, but Peter Fergusson found this idea "implausible for a number of reasons".²⁰ Both St John Hope and Coppack assumed a lantern over the crossing.²¹ Aside from these interpretative matters, there is the question of the date of the crossing tower and nave of Fountains.

Analysis

The south-east crossing pier (Fig. 1) is now dominated by the large, stepped buttress added to the west side and variously attributed to the fourteenth century,²² to Abbot Darnton (1479–94),²³ and to Abbot Marmaduke Huby

19. J. Arthur Reeve, *A Monograph on the Abbey of S. Mary of Fountains* (London, 1892), p. 18.

20. Arnold W. Oxford, *The Ruins of Fountains Abbey*, (Ripon, 1967⁵), p. 19; Arthur E. Henderson, *Fountains Abbey Then and Now* (London, 1948²), unpaginated; Fergusson, "Early Cistercian Churches", p. 216, n. 27.

21. William H. St John Hope, "Fountains Abbey", *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 15 (1900), p. 269–402 (p. 287); Coppack and Gilyard-Beer, *Fountains Abbey*, p. 20.

22. Coppack and Gilyard-Beer, *Fountains Abbey*, p. 20.

23. Hope, "Fountains Abbey", p. 287–88; Oxford, *Ruins of Fountains Abbey*, p. 10.



Fig. 3. Fountains Abbey, south-east crossing capitals. (author)

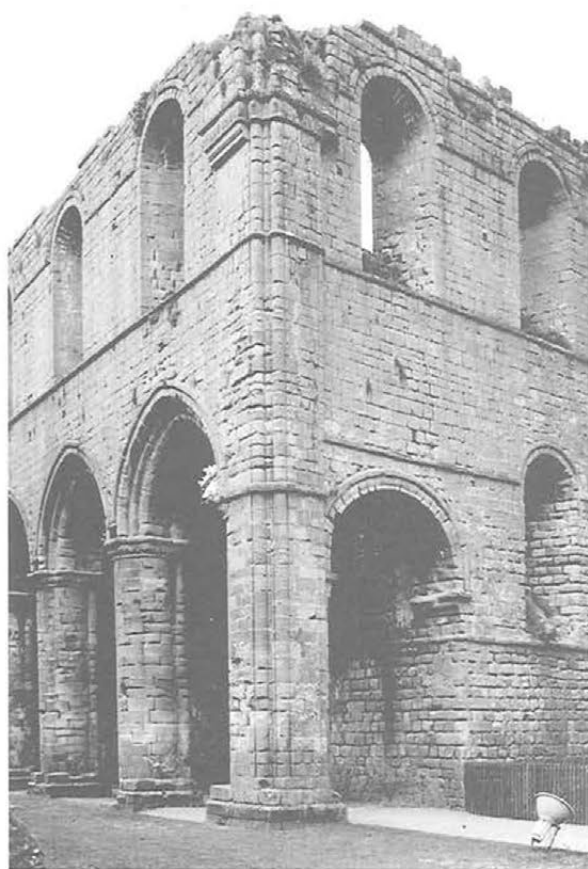


Fig. 4. Fountains Abbey, crossing to north-west. (author)

(1495–1526).²⁴ Behind the buttress, at the south-west angle of the original pier, a small section of the original chamfered base of the pier is preserved (Fig. 2). It aligns with, and has the same form as, the bases that front the piers between the south transept chapels. Turning to the top of the pier, the corbel that supports the south crossing arch projects from the flat plane of the clerestory wall. This section of wall is separated from the lower wall face by the string course at the base of the clerestory, but otherwise the plane of the entire wall is flat (Fig. 1). It follows that there could not have been another pilaster projecting on the west face of the south-east crossing pier. This contrasts with the north face of the pier on which the corbel is set above a pilaster (Fig. 3). Between the corbelled capitals on the north and west faces of this pier are two capitals with squared necking that would have topped square elements in the pier.

The north-west crossing pier is different from its south-east counterpart in a number of respects (Figs 4–7). Here, a moulded corbel is used only on the south face of the pier and it has a different profile from the corbels on the south-east crossing pier (Figs 3, 7). The north crossing arch springs from a scalloped capital atop a pilaster flanked by single capitals on nook shafts (Figs 4, 6, 7). This contrasts with the corbelled support of the south crossing arch on the south-east crossing pier (Fig. 3). Like the north and south crossing arches, the west crossing arch has just one order (Figs 4, 7). In contrast, the east crossing arch has two orders; the inner one carried on a scalloped capital on a moulded corbel while the outer order rests on a scalloped capital atop a stepped element in the pier (Fig. 3). The next capital to the right carries a triple shaft that rises four courses to an angle-set, artichoke-leaf capital (Fig. 3). On the north-west crossing pier both minor cap-

24. Roy Gilyard-Beer, *Fountains Abbey* (London, 1970), p. 25, 31; Fergusson, "Early Cistercian Churches", p. 215;

Gilyard-Beer and Coppack, "Excavations at Fountains Abbey", p. 162.



Fig. 5. Fountains Abbey, north-west crossing pier, detail from north-east. (author)



Fig. 6. Fountains Abbey, crossing and north transept from north choir aisle. (author)

itals top nook shafts (Fig. 7). The one on the right forms part of the support of the single-order north crossing arch, while the one on the left carries a triple shaft and angle-set capital, like the right minor capital of the south-east crossing pier (Figs 3, 7).

The differences in form between the south-east and north-west crossing piers have suggested to commentators that they belong to different phases of construction. There is every reason to believe that this was the case, for otherwise it would be difficult to explain the use of the more elaborate, shafted pier on the west side of the crossing rather than on the east to mark the entrance to the sanctuary. Other enrichments accompany the second phase of construction. The arches to the transept chapels have two chamfered orders while in the nave arcade a roll moulding intervenes between two

chamfered orders (Figs 1, 2, 4). In the arches from the transepts to the nave aisles there are roll mouldings separated by an angle fillet (Fig. 5). Chamfered imposts in the transept chapel arches give way to scalloped and artichoke-leaf capitals in the nave arcades (Figs 2, 3, 4). Thus there is a change from simple to more complex, an evolution analogous to that from the Romanesque choir to the nave of St Peter's abbey (now cathedral), Gloucester, to cite just one example.

Glyn Coppack suggested that originally the design of the second church at Fountains would have been for an aisleless nave, as at Sawley (Yorks.), even though there was no evidence that its construction was ever undertaken.²⁵ He pointed out that there "is a near vertical break in the west wall of the south transept where it was cut back to insert the return of the south

25. Coppack, *Fountains Abbey: The Cistercians in the North*, p. 47. On the parallel with Sawley, see Fergusson, *Architecture of Solitude*, p. 42; Glyn Coppack, Colin Hayfield, and Rich Williams, "Sawley Abbey: The Architecture and

Archaeology of a Smaller Cistercian Abbey", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 155 (2002), p. 22–114 (p. 45–48, 105–06).



Fig. 7. Fountains Abbey, north-west crossing capitals. (author)

aisle wall".²⁶ It is significant that this break stops after eight courses (counting from the angle of the south transept and south nave aisle), above which the ashlar continues without interruption. This indicates that the change in plan took place soon after construction of the second church had commenced, something that is not surprising since an aisleless nave hardly seems an appropriate successor to an aisled nave in the previous church.

Coppack placed the modified crossing and nave to the late 1150s, but this is problematical considering the typologically more advanced design of Kirkstall. The transept chapel arches at Kirkstall have roll mouldings, but these only appear in the nave and crossing arches at Fountains. The nave piers and arches at Kirkstall are more complex than their counterparts at Fountains.²⁷ The Kirkstall nave has larger aisle and clerestory windows, the latter having nook shafts

and scalloped capitals which are absent at Fountains. There are ribbed vaults in the nave aisles at Kirkstall rather than the transverse barrels at Fountains. The plinth is more complex at Kirkstall. The disposition of string courses, pilaster buttresses, the corbel table, and the two-storey elevation suggests that Kirkstall is modelled on Fountains. Admittedly, typological progression cannot always be associated with absolute date, and it might be argued that Fountains wanted an old fashioned design to emphasize the antiquity and role as mother house. Had that been the case, however, it would be very difficult to account for the stylistic updating between the first and second phases of construction in the second church at Fountains. It therefore makes more sense to place the start of the Fountains crossing and nave before Kirkstall and perhaps to equate the change in plan with the arrival in 1150 of Abbot Richard from Vauclair.²⁸

26. Personal communication.

27. Excellent drawing of Fountains and Kirkstall in Edmund Sharpe, *Architectural Parallels*, part 3 (London: J. Van Voorst, 1848). Also on comparison of Kirkstall and Fountains, see Fergusson, *Architecture of Solitude*, p. 49–50.

28. Fergusson points out that "[w]hen Richard left Vauclair, the church was still under construction; the plan was very similar to the one adopted at Fountains including the feature of a segregated crossing" (*Architecture of Solitude*, p. 42).

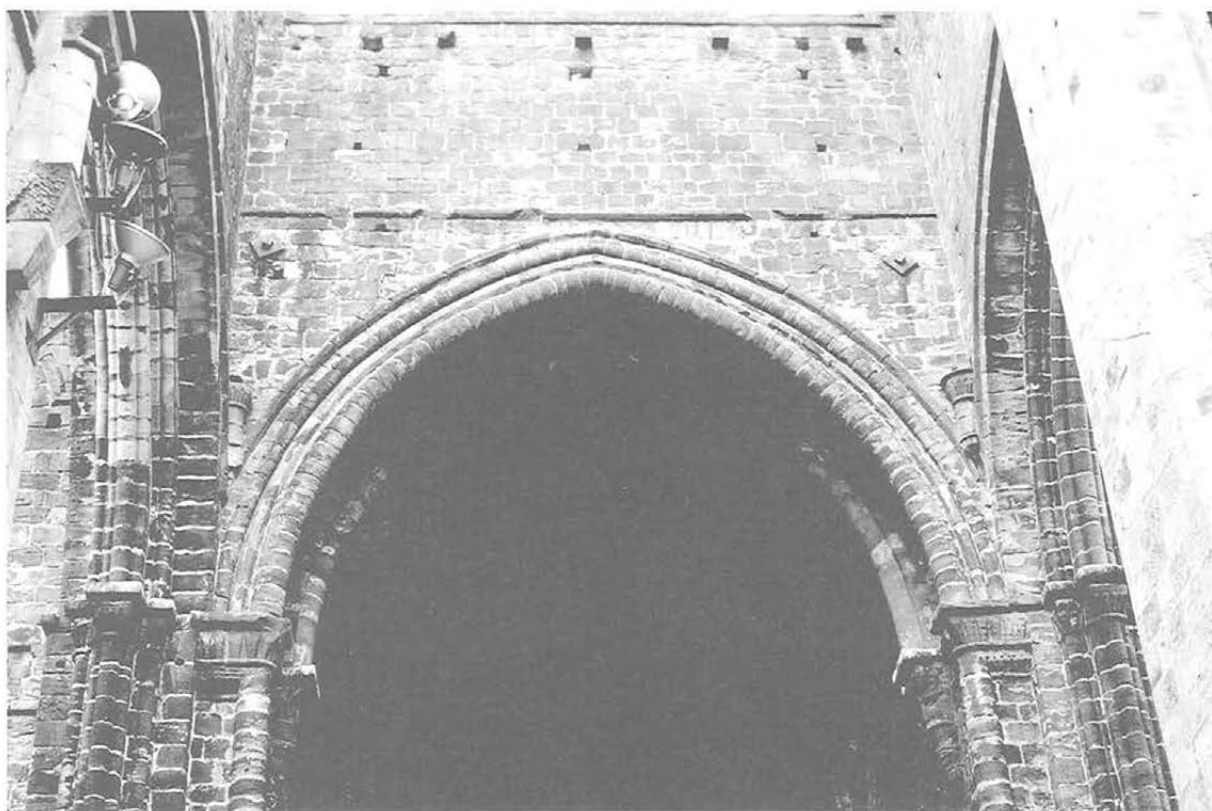


Fig. 8. Kirkstall Abbey, crossing, detail from west. (author)



Fig. 9. Lindisfarne Priory, crossing and nave from south-west. (author)

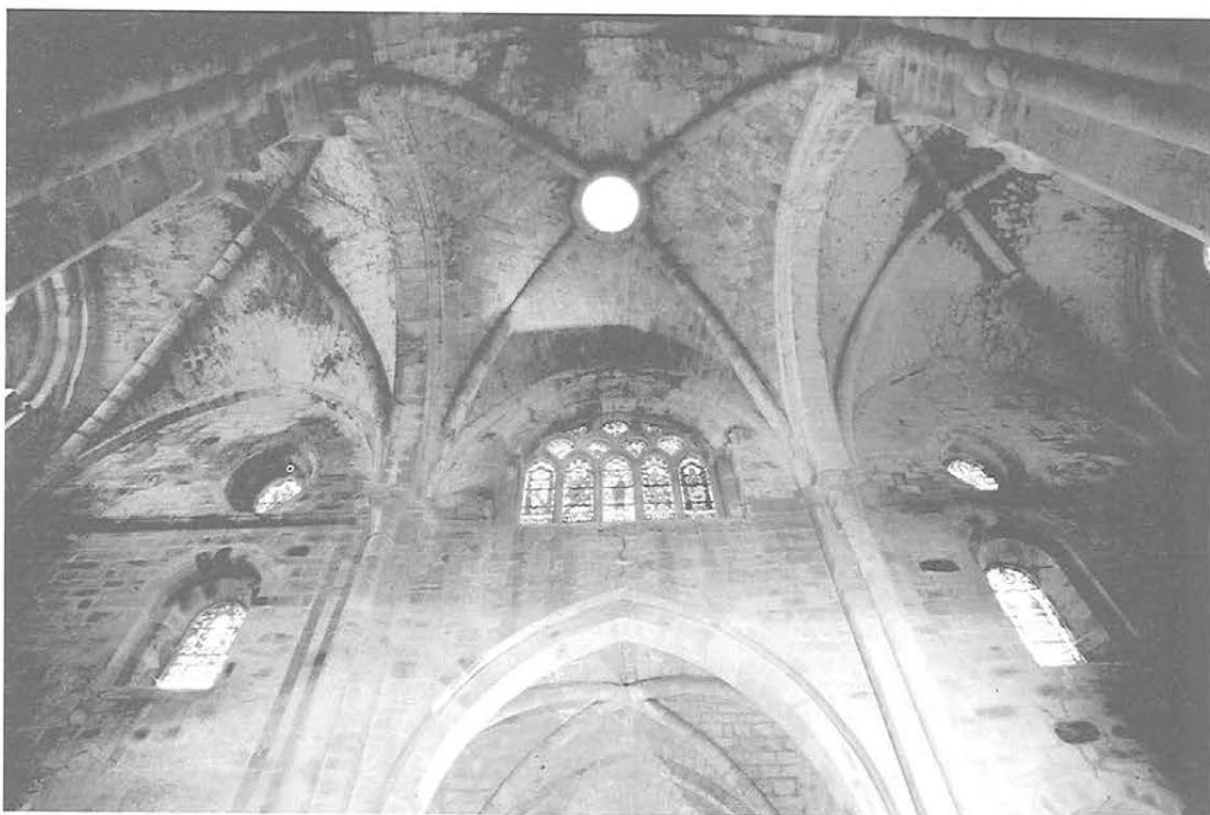


Fig. 10. Fontfroide Abbey, crossing vault. (author)

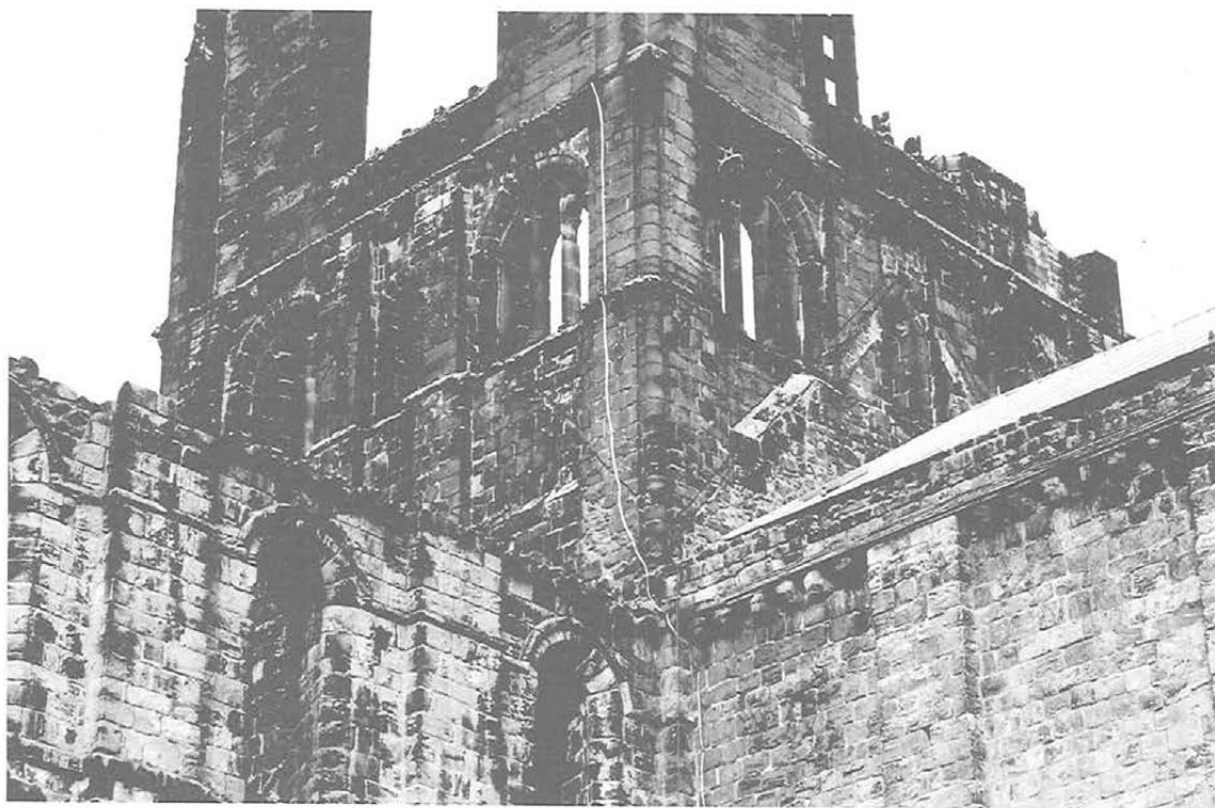


Fig. 11. Kirkstall Abbey, crossing tower from south-east. (author)

The final design of the Fountains crossing represents a carefully devised scheme that both emphasizes the hierarchy of liturgical space and produces an aesthetically integrated design. In the clear, the crossing measures 30 ft 4.5 in. (9.25 m) north to south, and 29 ft 5 in. (8.97 m) east to west. The east pilaster on the north-west crossing pier projects 11 in. (34 cm) but, because pilasters are not used on the north and south faces of either the south-east or the north-west crossing piers, it follows that the plan for the crossing was generated from a square measuring 30 ft 4.5 in. (9.25 m) on each side. The result is a directional crossing, a popular device in the great churches of Norman England, which has the effect of emphasizing the east-west axis of the church as well as the visual progression to the sanctuary.²⁹ This is enhanced by the embellishment of the east crossing arch with two moulded orders in a manner analogous to the crossing at Kirkstall (Figs 3, 8).³⁰ The inclusion of nook shafts on the angles of the north-west crossing pier integrates the design of the pier with the nave piers and creates a nearly symmetrical plan for the pier itself (Figs 4, 5, 6). Moreover, the two nook shafts on the angle of the north-west pier towards the crossing balanced allied stepped elements in the south-east pier.³¹

Coppack compared the shaft in the south-east angle of the crossing with the one that carried the relieving arch of the west gable wall of the nave (Fig. 3).³² However, the capital atop the shaft in the crossing differs from the one at the west end of the nave in being set on a 45-degree angle. Close examination of the analogous capital above the north-west crossing pier

shows that it, too, is angle-set (Fig. 7). Angle-set capitals are associated with the support of diagonal ribs in a vault.³³ Here a particularly relevant parallel exists in the crossing of Lindisfarne Priory, where not only are there angle-set capitals, but one diagonal rib of vault is also extant (Fig. 9). One detail at Fountains deserves closer inspection: above the south-east angle-set capital is a significant void in the shape of a rectangular channel into which something should be slotted (Fig. 3). It is possible that this void was simply intended to accommodate square-sided stone ribs, but had that been the case something closer to *tas-de-charge* construction would be expected, as seen at Fountains itself in the slype. An alternative explanation is that such a channel would be well suited to a wooden rib.

In the hierarchy of vault forms the rib is liturgically superior to the barrel.³⁴ This might imply that the twelfth-century sanctuary of Fountains would have been rib-vaulted, as at Kirkstall. In a Cistercian context, however, the matter is not so straightforward. There is a quadripartite ribbed vault over the crossing at Silvacane (Bouches-du-Rhône) with barrel vaults over the main arms; the ribbed vault therefore seems to have been just a convenient form for the crossing. There was a wooden barrel vault over the main span of the nave at Fountains and wooden barrels probably covered the transept and presbytery.³⁵

St John Hope and Coppack have suggested that there was a low lantern tower over the twelfth-century crossing at Fountains.³⁶ This idea is supported by the presence of a newel post from a spiral staircase above the south-east

29. On the directional crossing, see Eric Fernie, *An Architectural History of Norwich Cathedral* (Oxford, 1994), p. 73–76; *id.*, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford, 2000), p. 257.

30. Thurlby, "Kirkstall", p. 65–66.

31. On symmetry of design in the pier itself and around a void, see Lawrence Hoey, "Pier Form and Vertical Wall Articulation", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 48 (1989), p. 258–83.

32. Coppack and Gilyard-Beer, *Fountains Abbey*, p. 20.

33. Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations Through Eight Centuries* (Princeton, 1960), p. 792–826; *id.*, *Gothic Architecture*, rev. Paul Crossley (New Haven, 2000), p. 18–19; Jean Bony, "Diagonality and Centrality in Early Rib-Vaulted Architectures", *Gesta*, 15 (1976), p. 15–25; William W. Clark, "The Nave Vaults of Noyon Cathedral", *Journal of the Society of Architectural*

Historians, 36 (1977), p. 30–33; *id.*, "Spatial Innovations in the Chevet of Saint-Germain-des-Prés", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 38 (1979), p. 348–65. For a list of English Romanesque examples, see Malcolm Thurlby, "The Romanesque Priory Church of St Michael at Ewenny", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 47 (1988), p. 281–94; and discussion in *id.*, "Jedburgh Abbey Church: The Romanesque Fabric", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 125 (1995), p. 793–812.

34. Lawrence Hoey and Malcolm Thurlby, "A Survey of Romanesque Vaulting in Great Britain and Ireland", *Antiquaries Journal*, 84 (forthcoming 2004).

35. Thurlby, "Glasgow Cathedral", p. 84, pl. XVIIA.

36. Hope, "Fountains Abbey", p. 287; Coppack, *Fountains Abbey: The Cistercians in Northern England*, p. 48–49.

crossing pier.³⁷ In addition, Coppack also reported fragments of "wall galleries of the lantern" related to Byland Abbey and Ripon Minster and therefore attributable to Abbot Robert of Pipewell (1170–80).³⁸ These are triple- and single-moulded capitals excavated just east of the crossing that can only have come from the crossing tower. What is not certain is whether they came from the interior or exterior of the tower. If it is maintained that a wooden ribbed vault was constructed over the crossing, it follows that the marble capitals would have come from the exterior of the tower. On the other hand, if plans for the crossing vault were abandoned in favour of a traditional lantern, then the capitals could have come from the interior. They relate to the moulded capitals in the refectory attributable to Abbot Pipewell, who is recorded to have "recommenced work on the church and erected splendid buildings".³⁹

In a number of later twelfth-century Cistercian churches in France quadripartite ribbed vaults were used over the crossing. Of these, two are of particular relevance in the present context: Fontfroide (Aude) and Noirlac (Cher). In each case there is a large ring at the centre of the vault. At Fontfroide this opens to an octagonal lantern tower and allows a Pantheon-like circle of light into the crossing (Fig. 10). This was formerly the case at Noirlac where there was a wooden lantern above the crossing.⁴⁰ A ring at the apex of the putative wooden crossing vault at Fountains seems an entirely plausible construction.

At Kirkstall there are capitals on corbels in the angles of the crossing tower and four cuts in the

string course above the east crossing arch (Fig. 8).⁴¹ The inner cuts may be associated with wall arches of a wooden ribbed vault over the crossing, and the outer cuts with struts to support a floor above. The lower storey of the crossing tower at Kirkstall also dates from the twelfth century, as demonstrated by the angle shafts, pilaster buttresses, and articulation of the round-headed windows with nook shafts, scalloped capitals, and heavy roll mouldings (Fig. 11). This combination of a lantern tower and wooden ribbed vault over the crossing at Kirkstall only makes sense if there was an oculus in the vault to admit light from the lantern, as proposed here for Fountains.

Conclusion

Construction of the present — second stone — church of Fountains Abbey would have begun in 1148 or early 1149. The arrival of Abbot Richard from Vauclair in 1150 possibly coincides with a change of plan for a segregated crossing with ribbed vault and tower, as well as richer articulation in the nave. This served as the inspiration for Kirkstall Abbey in 1152. Aspects of the design reflect the regional tradition in the north of England and awareness of Cistercian architecture on the continent, a combination that could well have resulted in the construction of a lantern tower and wooden ribbed vault with oculus over the crossing at both Fountains and Kirkstall.

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37. Thanks to Stuart Harrison for this observation.

38. Coppack, *Fountains Abbey: The Cistercians in Northern England*, p. 60–66; Harrison, "The Architecture of Byland Abbey", p. 112.

39. *Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains*, ed. John Richard Walbran, vol. 1, Surtees Society, 42 (Durham, 1863), p. 114.

40. Anselme Dimier, *L'Art cistercien: France*, (La Pierrequi-Vire [Yonne], 1982³), p. 257.

41. William H. St John Hope and John Bilson, *Architectural Description of Kirkstall Abbey*, Thoresby Society, 16 (1907), p. 15.

Chambers, Cells, and Cubicles: The Cistercian General Chapter and the Development of the Private Room*

DAVID N. BELL

What a pleasure it is to offer this small contribution to a volume commemorating the retirement of Professor Peter Fergusson, a great teacher and an estimable scholar. I have had the pleasure of knowing him for more years than I care to remember, and have always profited from his conversation, his expertise, and, above all, his formidable zest for life. Given the fact that he is an individual among individuals, it seemed to me that a brief investigation of the development of the private room in Cistercian monasteries — Virginia Woolf's room of one's own — might be an appropriate way to thank a unique scholar for his great contribution to the world of the Cistercians and those who love them.

In 1972 there appeared a study by Colin Morris entitled *The Discovery of the Individual: 1050–1200*. In this volume the author (following in the footsteps of Walter Ullman, Peter Dronke, Robert Hanning, Richard Southern, and a number of others) suggested that the emphasis which, in the twelfth century, we find being placed on inner intention and motivation — together with a burgeoning interest in emotive and psychological development — was evidence that changes which

earlier scholars had attributed to the fifteenth century were actually to be witnessed some three centuries earlier. There are a number of twelfth-century writers — Abelard is the obvious example — in which we find

a keener awareness than in the immediately preceding centuries both of the complexity of the individual's inner life and of the boundary that separates that varied and fascinating inner being from other equally fascinating and complex selves.¹

In a paper published in 1980, however, Caroline Bynum suggested with some cogency that the “discovery of the individual” was not so much the discovery of the individual as the discovery of the self.² If an “individual” is someone distinct from society, isolated, personal, and private, then such a term would indeed be inappropriate for a twelfth-century person who, says Bynum, “did not find himself by casting off inhibiting patterns, but by adopting appropriate ones.”³ The discovery of “self”, she maintains, involves the discovery of a model for behaviour and the discovery of a consciously chosen community.⁴

* In the following notes, Stat. = *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis ab Anno 1116 ad Annum 1786*, ed. Joseph-Maria Canivez, 8 vols (Leuven, 1933–41), cited by the year and paragraph number of the statute, and the volume and page number in Canivez's edition.

1. Caroline Walker Bynum, “Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?”, in her *Jesus as Mother: Studies in*

the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (Berkeley, 1984), p. 82–109 (p. 86).

2. *Ibid.* For the background to the question, see the works cited by Bynum in *ibid.*, p. 83.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

Giles Constable, while agreeing in essence with Bynum, finds difficulties with the term "self" and prefers the term "person", on the grounds that "personalism" involves

a sense of the importance of the inner *persona* rather than a view of society, in modern terms, made up of distinct units marked by a self-awareness of their differences from other people.⁵

Constable makes a valid point, and my own view which, for reasons of space, I cannot demonstrate in detail here, is that the discovery of the *individual* — the individual as a distinct unit marked by a self-awareness of his or her difference from others — began to take place from the late thirteenth century. It evolved hand in hand with the development of the concept of privacy, together with certain technological innovations such as the development of the chimney and the invention of the wall-fireplace⁶ which permitted the heating of small, individual spaces and the enjoyment of a room of one's own. It is not coincidental that this is the period in which we begin to see the proliferation of anchorites and recluses,⁷ a dramatic

increase in the number of Carthusian foundations,⁸ and (in the eyes of the General Chapter) the insidious spread of private rooms and the partitioning of dormitories in Cistercian monasteries.⁹

So far as I am aware, there is no archaeological evidence for such partitioning in the twelfth century, but in the ruined dormitory of Jervaulx in Yorkshire there remain socket holes for wooden screens which may date from the early thirteenth century.¹⁰ By the end of that century, in some monasteries, wooden screens had given way to permanent stone walls, but how widespread this was is unknown.¹¹

The first indisputable documentary evidence of problems appears in a statute of 1287 which prohibits nuns from having private rooms (*camerae*) but makes an exception for any nuns who may also have been the founders of monasteries.¹² On the other hand, something had been going on in the dormitory of Longpont about a century earlier, for in 1192 the General Chapter decreed that the dormitory of the abbey had to be rebuilt within three years *ad formam Ordinis*.¹³ Unfortunately, the statute gives no hint as

5. Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 293.

6. The earliest English chimney dates from c. 1130, but they did not become really popular for another century and a half. See Margaret Wood, *The English Medieval House* (London, 1965; repr. 1996), chs 19–21. Marcel Aubert and the Marquise de Maillé, *L'Architecture cistercienne en France*, 2 vols (Paris, 1947²), II, p. 86, suggests that there might have been a chimney at Sénanque in the twelfth century, but this cannot be regarded as certain.

7. See Appendix C, "Tabulated List of Cells" [with dates] (p. 203–63) in the classic study by Rotha M. Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England* (London, 1914), and Ann K. Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley, 1985), p. 18–29.

8. Of the ten English Carthusian houses, only one — Witham — was founded in the twelfth century (1178–79). Two more were founded between 1222 and 1232, and all the others after 1343. In the whole of Europe there were thirty-nine houses in 1300, but during the course of the fourteenth century a further 113 came into being. During the fifteenth century the number of new foundations dropped to forty-four. It should be noted, however, that Carthusian life in the Middle Ages was not quite as solitary as in its later revival.

9. And, of course, in the monasteries of other Orders as well, but that is not here my concern. See Nancy Bauer, "Monasticism After Dark: From Dormitory to Cell", *American Benedictine Review*, 38 (1987), p. 95–114 (a charming but lightweight survey, based almost entirely on secondary sources). Useful archaeological information on the parti-

tioning of Cistercian dormitories may be found in Virginia Jansen, "Architecture and Community in Medieval Monastic Dormitories", in *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture*, vol. v, ed. Meredith P. Lillich (Kalamazoo, 1998), p. 58–94, but Dr Jansen's account of the legislation concerning private rooms and stoves/fireplaces is not always reliable. Two other, and very sound, articles by Sheila Bonde and Clark Maines deserve mention here, though both are concerned with an Augustinian house and neither deals in detail with Cistercian legislation: "A Room of One's Own: Elite Spaces in Monasteries of the Reform Movement and an Abbot's Parlor at Augustinian Saint-Jean-des-Vignes, Soissons (France)", in *Medieval Europe Brugge, 1997, Religion and Belief in Medieval Europe: Papers of the "Medieval Europe Brugge 1997" Conference*, vol. IV, ed. Guy De Boe and Frans Verhaeghe (Zellik, 1997), p. 43–53; and "A Room with a View: The Cellarer and his Office at the Augustinian Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes, Soissons", in *Pierre, lumière, couleurs: Études d'histoire de l'art du Moyen Âge en l'honneur d'Anne Prache*, ed. Fabienne Joubert and Dany Sandron (Paris, 1999), p. 199–212. In this present essay, I do not intend to deal with abbots' houses. They deserve a separate study in their own right.

10. See Jansen, "Architecture and Community", p. 75.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Stat.* 1287/9; III, 239.

13. *Twelfth-Century Statutes from the Cistercian General Chapter*, ed. Chrysogonus Waddell, *Cîteaux: Studia et Documenta*, 12 (Brecht, 2002), p. 244 (1192, no. 23). For examples of similar problems in houses of other Orders, see Jansen, "Architecture and Community", p. 72.

to the nature of the problem, and its real interest, as Chrysogonus Waddell has pointed out, lies in the expression *ad formam Ordinis*, which certainly presupposes "at least a general norm to which Cistercians are expected to conform".¹⁴ To suggest that the censure resulted from the partitioning of the dormitory can be no more than conjecture, and the matter is not heard of again.

As we said above, the 1287 statute applied to nuns, and that is also true of the next three statutes which refer to private chambers. In 1314 the General Chapter found it necessary to take further action, for the proliferation of private rooms for nuns appeared to be a cause of envy or spite. The Chapter therefore decreed (under pain of excommunication) that no new rooms should be constructed and that if any were, they were to be utterly destroyed. Furthermore, said the General Chapter, there shall not be more than two nuns with the rank of abbess (*de genere abbatissae*) in the same monastery, *si possit fieri bono modo*.¹⁵ But what has this last curious pronouncement to do with private rooms?

The key is to be found in a statute of 1323, for it has now come to the ears of the General Chapter that certain nuns, seeking luxury and pleasure, are taking upon themselves the position of abbess too lightly (*faciliter*) and then, after a short time, resigning it. The reason for this is so that they can have the perquisites which come with abbatial status: viz., an annuity (*pensio*) and their own private room. To prevent the spread of this sickness, the General Chapter now prohibits the granting of annuities or rooms to these other abbesses.¹⁶

It is clear, however, that abuses continued, for four years later, in 1327, the General Chapter found it necessary yet again to prohibit nuns from residing in private rooms without the Chapter's special permission, and nuns inhabiting such chambers without such permission must give them up.¹⁷ At this time, the General Chapter also drew attention to the most important reason for the prohibition: it was not, in this case, to prevent envy or spite but — far

more significantly — to counter the vice of *personalitas* or *partialitas*,¹⁸ both of which are the product of that self-will or egocentricity whose eradication lay at the heart of the Cistercian tradition.

Quite what we are to make of the fact that these earliest injunctions all relate to nuns is difficult to say. There is no reason to believe that their male colleagues were any less partial to privacy, but unless the problems in the Longpont dormitory were related to partitioning (and we cannot be sure of that), the fact remains that until the bull *Fulgens sicut stella* (commonly referred to as the *Benedictina*) promulgated by Benedict XII in 1335, the men of the Order escaped specific censure.

In his great scheme for Cistercian reform, Pope Benedict addressed himself to the entire Order, and the section of the constitution dealing with private rooms makes it quite clear, first, that the problems were not restricted to nuns and, second, that they had been going on for some time. The institutes of the Order, says the pope, require all religious to sleep in one place, but in some monasteries separate rooms (*cameræ sejunctæ*) have been built outside the infirmary, and cells (*cellæ*: the first appearance of the word) have been constructed in dormitories. This has led to many shameful and wicked things. The pope therefore decrees that no monk shall sleep in a private room, save only those who are suffering from bodily infirmities, and they shall use only the rooms in the infirmary. All the others shall sleep in the common dormitory "unless they may be excused from this by virtue of their office". In other words, the officials of the monastery may be excused from the general requirement if it is not convenient (*commode*) for them to sleep in the same room as their fellows.¹⁹ But, as we shall see, exceptions of this nature are always dangerous.

Furthermore, the pope continues, no more such cells shall be constructed in dormitories, and those that are there now shall be demolished within three months on pain of the usual sentence of excommunication. But — and here

14. *Twelfth-Century Statutes*, ed. Waddell. For further examples of the phrase *ad formam Ordinis*, see notes 46 and 55 below.

15. *Stat.* 1314/4; III, 328–29.

16. *Stat.* 1323/12; III, 365.

17. *Stat.* 1327/3; III, 376.

18. *Ibid.* *Personalitas* appears in Canivez's text; *partialitas* is a variant reading.

19. *Stat.* 1335/23; III, 425.

follows the exception — claustral priors and sub-priors²⁰ may have an appropriate cell within the dormitory if such is the decision of the abbot or principal official of the monastery.²¹

Reaction to the *Benedictina* was very mixed, and many powerful abbots had profound objections to it on the grounds (not unjustified) that it presented a serious erosion of their plenipotentiary powers. The prime purpose of the document, as Bernhard Schimmelpfennig has said, was to reform monastic life so that it would “reflect the order’s original ideals — or, rather, the notion of the early period of the order as Pope Benedict understood it”.²² The problem, however, was that the order’s original ideals had been formulated more than two centuries earlier, and, in the matter of privacy, the world had changed. In the twelfth century few would have found the commonness of the common dormitory to be any hardship since life itself was, in general, lived in common. But by the fourteenth century, as we have seen, the modern concept of individuality was well developed, and new forms of study and devotion had developed along with it. It was inevitable, therefore, that Pope Benedict’s call for a return to an earlier mode of life would have met with opposition, and we will not be surprised to hear, in 1370, yet another strident call on the part of the General Chapter for the destruction of private chambers and a return to the ideals of the *Benedictina*.

Before that, however, we must glance at a statute of 1343 which leads us away from the purely monastic cloisters to the *Collège Saint-Bernard* in Paris.²³ The college had been founded in 1245 as part of what Louis Lekai has called the “thirteenth-century *aggiornamento*”²⁴ in the Cistercian attitude to learning, and, as might be expected, the first monk-scholars were required to sleep in a common dormitory like all other monks, scholars or not. But scholarship has always demanded a certain amount of private space, and the statute of 1343 makes it quite

clear that by that time private rooms were standard. The statute requires that all rooms, save those occupied by monk-students with bachelors’ degrees, should be restored to common use and allocated either to students who were ill or to “those who have need” by the provisor or cellarer of the college. The nature of the need, however, is not specified, and we may suspect that exceptions were common.

Exceptions everywhere appear to have been sufficiently common to goad the General Chapter into action in 1370. A statute of that year is the first since the *Benedictina* to be directed to the Order as a whole, and it specifies clearly some of the problems which, in the eyes of the Chapter, were associated with *camerae privatae*.²⁵ There is no mention here of what we might call the general spiritual danger of *personalitas* or *partialitas* which we mentioned above, but the much more down-to-earth scandals of opulent meals (*commessiones*: from now on the word occurs frequently), disorderly get-togethers, meat eating, “murmurings”, and, sometimes, conspiracies against either the principal officials or the institutes of the Order. The Chapter therefore decrees that, in accordance with the papal statutes (the reference is to the *Benedictina* of 1335) and the ancient constitutions of the Order, cells (*cellae*) in all monastic dormitories shall be completely demolished and the dormitories restored to their original state. As to private rooms (*camerae privatae*), they too shall be demolished, though exceptions may be made for those who, *ab antiquo*, have been granted the use of such rooms: abbots, the sick, and the community itself. But in general, private rooms deemed to be unprofitable or dangerous shall either be destroyed or converted to community use. And all this is to be done within two months after the promulgation of this statute. Furthermore, adds the General Chapter, no new private rooms shall be constructed in any monastery, and meat shall be eaten only in such places as have been ordained in the ancient customs of the Order.

20. *Supprieores*, but there is a variant reading *superiores*. See also note 33 below.

21. *Stat.* 1335/24; III, 425–26.

22. Bernhard Schimmelpfennig, “The Papacy and the Reform of the Cistercian Order in the Late Middle Ages”, in *Studiosorum Speculum: Studies in Honor of Louis J. Lekai*, O.Cist., ed. Francis R. Swietek and John R. Sommerfeldt (Kalamazoo, 1993), p. 337–54 (p. 340). The best study of

the *Benedictina* and Cistercian reaction to it remains Jean-Berthold Mahn, *Le Pape Benoît XII et les Cisterciens* (Paris, 1949).

23. *Stat.* 1343/1; III, 472–73.

24. Louis J. Lekai, “The Cistercian College of Saint Bernard in Paris in the Fifteenth Century”, *Cistercian Studies*, 6 (1971), p. 172–79 (p. 172).

25. *Stat.* 1370/2; III, 550.

From the statutes we have considered so far, it seems that *camera* is the general term for a room, but that *cella* is the preferred term for structures in the dormitory. The nature of these structures, however, is nowhere described, but a clue is provided by a statute of 1392 which permits a brother of Boulbonne to have a door (*porta seu ostium*) to his cell in the dormitory. The reason for the concession is the brother's state of health and great age, and the Chapter adds that the door must not open into the cell in such a way as to conceal anything inside from the eyes of those whose duty it is to inspect it.²⁶

The clear implication is that, in general, dormitory cells at this time were no more than simple wooden partitions which projected from the wall of the dormitory and afforded a minimal degree of privacy.²⁷ They did not have doors (or, presumably, ceilings, though canopies are a possibility²⁸) and would not have been difficult to dismantle. But it would not be long before doors became standard, and the General Chapter then had to deal with the question of whether such doors could or should be locked or bolted.

Meanwhile, the General Chapter was still having difficulty with nuns.²⁹ In 1405, an exception was made in the case of a nun of Parc-aux-Dames who had used part of her inheritance to effect necessary repairs to the monastic buildings, and who was rewarded for her generosity by being granted a room in the infirmary.³⁰ But five years later, the General Chapter again had to prohibit abbots from granting *camerae particulares* to nuns, or permitting them to build new ones.³¹

By 1437, however, the situation had become more serious, for not only were cells still to be found in dormitories, they were now *camerae*

clausae, which implies both a door and a lock. Furthermore, not only were many abbots, monks, and lay brothers enjoying the privacy of enclosed spaces, they were also sleeping on feather mattresses with linen sheets and wearing a variety of garments wholly unbecoming to Cistercian monks. Abbots and monks, states the Chapter, are to refrain from these excesses, the rooms are to be demolished, the feather mattresses and sheets done away with, the luxurious garments eschewed, and the religious of the Order are admonished to imitate "our most blessed father Bernard", so that those who see them shall see nothing which may cause offence.³²

The rooms, of course, were not demolished. Two years later, in 1439, as part of a general programme of reform, the General Chapter found it necessary to reiterate the demands of the *Benedictina* that, except for the chambers placed at the disposal of priors and sub-priors,³³ all other rooms within the dormitory were to be dismantled. But as we have seen, in the century since the *Benedictina* new problems had arisen, and the Chapter of 1439 also found it necessary to forbid any doors or locks (*clausurae*) by which entry into a room might be impeded.³⁴

The doors, however, were still there in 1442 when the abbot of La Charité was ordered to remove them from the dormitory of Balerne. But we now have the added refinement of warmth, for the abbot was required to destroy not only all doors, but also all stoves or fireplaces (*camini*).³⁵ That some sort of personal heating device was in use cannot come as a surprise (one pales at the thought of an unheated northern abbey in winter³⁶), but how early they appeared is unknown. Fireplaces were prohib-

26. Stat. 1392/47; III, 631.

27. In some houses, both for men and women, curtains were used for the same purpose: see Jansen, "Architecture and Community", p. 75.

28. See *ibid.*, p. 86, n. 16 and p. 90, n. 48.

29. As were the English bishops: see Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries, c. 1275–1535* (Cambridge, 1922; repr. New York, 1964), p. 319–22.

30. Stat. 1405/15; IV, 74.

31. Stat. 1410/41; IV, 124.

32. Stat. 1437/46; IV, 431–32.

33. Or priors and *superiores*: the same variant reading as appears at note 20 above.

34. Stat. 1439/96(j); IV, 487.

35. Stat. 1442/83; IV, 527. *Camini* here almost certainly means a portable stove, not a built-in fireplace. Jansen, "Architecture and Community", p. 65, observes that "removal of fireplaces and stoves was ordered in 1335, 1482, 1494, 1531, and — for the last time — in 1605", but the list is incomplete and partly incorrect. The actual dates are 1442, 1476, 1482, 1494, 1601 and 1605. All are discussed below.

36. Though the actual location of the dormitory on the second floor and not far from the warming-room might have taken some of the chill off the air: see Jansen, "Architecture and Community", p. 64, 85–86, n. 13–14.

ited in granges as early as the second half of the twelfth century,³⁷ but granges were always a different matter and presented their own problems.

Meanwhile, the women, like the men, continued to enjoy their privacy, though the possession of their rooms was not always undisputed. In 1454 the abbess of La Zaida in Spain had dispossessed Sister Castellana Catula, and the sister had appealed the decision, apparently to the abbot of Cîteaux. In any case, the abbot of Cîteaux had approved the restitution of the room, and the General Chapter ratified his decision — so long as the said sister conducted herself *religiose* and was found to be humble and obedient to her abbess.³⁸

Should a nun be elected abbess, she was expected to move into the abbess's quarters, but it seems that this was not always to the taste of the one elected. Thus, in 1470, the abbess of Val-Notre-Dame in Belgium successfully petitioned the General Chapter to keep the room in which she had been living before her election. The room, we might note, was referred to as a "Gloriette" (*illa camera quae vocatur gloriëtte*³⁹) which, in the fifteenth century, indicated a chamber on the uppermost floor of a house with a view of the surrounding countryside. Later on, the term usually referred to a garden pavilion. Whether the *gloriëtte* of the new abbess of Val-Notre-Dame looked out over the cloister or the lands *extra claustrum* we do not know.

By 1460, however, the situation seems to have deteriorated. There are now some abbots who are granting their monks permission to have rooms in the infirmary and, "to the grave danger of their souls, to spend time in them both day and night over-indulging, sleeping, and other irregularities". They persist in their

heinous conduct and never or hardly ever participate in the claustral rituals in the dormitory or common refectory. And what is the result? Conspiracies, "murmurings", and the vice of personal as against communal possession.⁴⁰ The General Chapter therefore prohibits such practices, and this time invokes imprisonment as a punishment.⁴¹

But only the next year it comes to the ears of the Chapter that many abbots, monks, and lay brothers are doing exactly what they were doing more than twenty years earlier in 1437.⁴² The statutes of 1461 and 1437 are identical, even to the invocation of the name of "our most blessed father Bernard". Some monks are still living in lockable rooms, they are still sleeping on feather mattresses, they are still using linen sheets, they are still wearing unsuitable clothes, and the General Chapter is still fulminating against all these dissolute practices.⁴³

As to the individual rooms, which are here our only concern, they continued to be used, and by 1476 the General Chapter had effectively given up the struggle to return to the unpartitioned common dormitory and had turned its attention to the question of heating. A statute from that year tells us that in many dormitories, *camerae et camini construuntur*, which seems to indicate not just portable stoves, but permanent built-in fireplaces. This, indeed, is confirmed by archaeological findings,⁴⁴ but it was not to the liking of the General Chapter, especially since the rooms were being used for feasting (*commessiones*, the usual term) both by day and night. All fireplaces, therefore, which have been built in dormitories within the last fifty years shall be destroyed and the rooms rebuilt *ad formam Ordinis*.⁴⁵ This last phrase is important,⁴⁶ for it indicates clearly that if —

37. *Twelfth-Century Statutes*, ed. Waddell, p. 620 (local collection from Signy [1158–1189/90], no. 32) = p. 632 (Vauclair [1158–1201], no. 11) = p. 681 (Alcobaça [same date], no. 25). In all cases the term is *caminata* which normally refers to a room with a built-in fireplace.

38. *Stat.* 1454/46; iv, 702.

39. *Stat.* 1470/37; v, 274.

40. This is the meaning of the rare word *monopolia*, "exclusive possessions". It echoes the concern with *personalitas* mentioned at note 18 above. The Chapter of 1573 also stated that no one should possess private property and that proprietorial terms like "mine", "yours", and "his" should be avoided (*Stat.* 1573/9; vii, 128).

41. *Stat.* 1460/30; v, 53.

42. See note 32 above.

43. *Stat.* 1461/26; v, 76–77.

44. See, for example, Glyn Coppack, "The Planning of Cistercian Monasteries in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence from Fountains, Rievaulx, Sawley and Rushen", in *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. James G. Clark, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion, 18 (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 197–209 (p. 200–02). The examples discussed by Coppack are but few among many.

45. *Stat.* 1476/67; v, 347–48.

46. For an early example, see note 14 above. See also note 55 below.

proh dolor! — private rooms were here to stay, there should be some regulations about how they were to be constructed. Unfortunately, the statute provides no information about the *forma* to be followed.

Six years later, the fireplaces were still there, both in men's and women's houses,⁴⁷ and the situation had not changed in 1494. In this last statute, however, the General Chapter again demands that all members of the monastic community should sleep in the common dormitory (though presumably in their own unheated cells), but, once again, there is the usual exception: "save for those whom the abbot, for just cause, assigns elsewhere."⁴⁸

Meanwhile, at the *Collège Saint-Bernard* in Paris, the situation was grave. Throughout the fifteenth century the college operated only at about half its capacity, and the efforts of the General Chapter to remedy the situation remained, as Louis Lekai has told us, largely fruitless.⁴⁹ The buildings were in a state of decay, discipline was lax, and according to the Chapter of 1453,

the bachelors refused to accept the authority of the provisor, but tried to boss and abuse those below their ranks. They often neglected to attend divine services and spent the time in their own quarters eating, drinking, and playing.⁵⁰

An attempt at redressing the situation was made in February 1493 with the promulgation of the so-called *Articuli Parisienses*, an ambitious programme for general reform proposed by the abbot of Cîteaux, Jean de Cirey, but more significant were the statutes published specifically for the college on 11 August of the same year.⁵¹ It was these statutes which, essentially, directed the life of the college until the French Rev-

olution. As to private rooms at that time, there was, of course, no possibility of going back to a common dormitory in the twelfth-century sense, and the private cells into which the dormitory had been divided remained. The new regulations, however, insisted that each monk-scholar have his own cell and that he must not share his bed with anyone else.⁵² How common this bed sharing was we do not know (it was certainly contrary to chapter 22 of the Rule of St Benedict), but there is no reason whatever to pounce upon this single phrase and categorize the college as a hotbed of homosexuality.

Little, in general, changed in the course of the sixteenth century, though we do find the introduction of two new terms. In 1521 the General Chapter gives special permission to a monk of Mont-Sainte-Marie (Doubs) to enjoy the use of "one room or dwelling (*domus*) which he has built in the aforesaid monastery",⁵³ though the unusual term *domus* is not explained;⁵⁴ and in 1565 the abbot of Poblet is granted permission to construct "little cubicles" (*parva cubicula*) in the dormitory, provided the said cubicles be arranged "according to the *forma Ordinis*" and that "the discipline of the Order" be observed in all things.⁵⁵ But again, the form of the *forma* is not specified. "Cubicles" also appear in a statute of 1573 which, yet again, requires all religious to sleep in a common dormitory and forbids them from having "private cubicles" (*cubicula privata*) elsewhere. Furthermore, their rooms shall not be used for feasting (*commessiones* yet again), drinking parties (*ebrietates*, a new problem), or any other dissolute practices, and it is the business of the monastic superiors to ensure that this statute is obeyed.⁵⁶

In 1601, however, and in obedience to the 1579 Ordonnance of Blois, there appeared a

47. Stat. 1482/54; v, 447. The Chapter appeals once again to the *Benedictina*.

48. Stat. 1494/45; vi, 92. This is part of the *Articuli Parisienses* discussed below.

49. Lekai, "Cistercian College of Saint Bernard", p. 175.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

51. See Michel Félibien, *Histoire de la ville de Paris*, rev. Guy-Alexis Lobineau (Paris, 1725), II, p. 168–80.

52. See Lekai, "Cistercian College of Saint Bernard", p. 178.

53. Stat. 1521/18; vi, 578.

54. *Domus* occurs in a number of statutes (see the index to Canivez, VIII, 168, though this list is not comprehensive), but always, so far as I am aware, as a house or dwelling in a town. I know of no other instance where it appears as a synonym for *camera*. Ten years later, in 1531, a visitation of Fontfroide revealed that the twenty-five monks living there had "a dormitory partitioned into individual cells, many furnished with fireplaces" (Louis J. Lekai, *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality* [Kent, OH, 1977], p. 113), but *pace* Jansen ("Architecture and Community", p. 65), the General Chapter of that year does not mention the matter.

55. Stat. 1565/41; VII, 97. For the phrase *secundum Ordinis formam*, cf. notes 14 and 46 above.

56. Stat. 1573/10; VII, 128–29.

new attempt at comprehensive reform which covered the whole of Cistercian monastic life.⁵⁷ It was the result of many years of assiduous preparation, but, as Lekai has said,

The text was found to be too elaborate for practical execution, and in 1604 an abbatial convention held in Paris produced a shortened version of the decree, to be considered by the next Chapter. It was probably this modified text that was incorporated into the decisions of the Chapter of 1605.⁵⁸

In chapter XV of the 1601 document there appears a fairly detailed discussion of the dormitory, and what it says sheds considerable light on the actual construction and furnishings of dormitory *cellae* at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The chapter begins by assuming the existence of private rooms, for it tells us that after the blessing which follows Compline the brethren should climb the stairs to the dormitory and, once there, each should retreat to his own little cell (*cellula*) and there occupy himself for a part of one hour in regular meditation, study, reading, or other spiritual exercises. The prior then locks up the dormitory, visits each cell, and looks through a little window (*fenestella*) set in the door to check that everyone is there and that they are all resting "decently and in an orderly manner". We are also told that these little windows were to be protected, where necessary, by iron gratings or bars, so that nothing improper might be passed through them.⁵⁹

When it came to heating, however, the General Chapter remained adamant. In winter in colder climes the brothers may warm themselves in the warming-room for half an hour before retiring to their cells, but "*camini*, wherever they may be found, are to be destroyed".⁶⁰

Furthermore, the document continues, the abbot or prior shall inspect the cells at least once a month to check that the bedding is appropriately monastic and that there are no prohibited books, weapons, garments, or anything else unbecoming to the Order. They shall also ensure that no one is keeping either food or drink in his cell. The abbot and/or prior must therefore have a master key by which they can enter any cell whenever they wish; and with the same or a different key, the abbot or prior shall open any box or book-chest (*arcula aut scrinium*) in each monk's cell and examine its contents.⁶¹

So what does this statute tell us about cells in dormitories in 1601? It tells us that a cell was — or should be — an enclosed space with a door that could be locked, and that in the door there was a small barred or grated window. Each cell would also have had a larger window letting in the sunlight.⁶² Inside the cell there must have been a bed and a reading lectern or some sort of work table (the statute requires monks to study or read in their cells), and each monk had a lockable chest or chests in which to keep his papers, books, and possessions. There was, in theory, no heating device, and the consumption of food and drink was forbidden. A good example is the dormitory at Bebenhausen, which was remodelled with individual cells in 1513–16 (Fig. 1).

In 1605, as we have seen, the General Chapter promulgated a modified version of the great reform programme of 1601, but the statute concerning private rooms has been misunderstood. According to Lekai,

Surprisingly, the Chapter of 1605, "disregarding all excuses", ordered the removal of partition walls, the destruction of fireplaces, and the restoration of old-style common dormitories.⁶³

57. See Louis J. Lekai, *The Rise of the Cistercian Strict Observance in Seventeenth Century France* (Washington, 1968), p. 20–21.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Stat.* 1601/XV (*De dormitorio*).1–5; VII, 217.

60. *Stat.*, 1601/XV.2 and 5.

61. *Stat.*, 1601/XV.2. Jansen, "Architecture and Community", p. 79, observes that "a cistercian statute of 1213 forbade writing chests [i.e. *scrinia*]", but this is incorrect. The statute in question forbade abbots from carrying them, and that is a quite different matter (see *Stat.* 1213/1;1, 404). The same statute

from 1213 also tells us that *scrinia* were commonly called *coffra*, "coffers". According to chapter 55.19 of the Rule of St Benedict, the only things a monk or nun should have in his or her possession — presumably in the dormitory — are a cowl, tunic, gaiters (*pedules*), shoes, girdle, a small knife, stylus, needle, face-towel (or kerchief or napkin: the word is *mappula*), and writing-tablets. But by the late Middle Ages this bare minimum was frequently exceeded, and some nuns at least were equipping their cells with their own furniture (see Power, *Medieval English Numerics*, p. 319).

62. See Jansen, "Architecture and Community", p. 67–68.

63. Lekai, *Rise of the Cistercian Strict Observance*, p. 23.

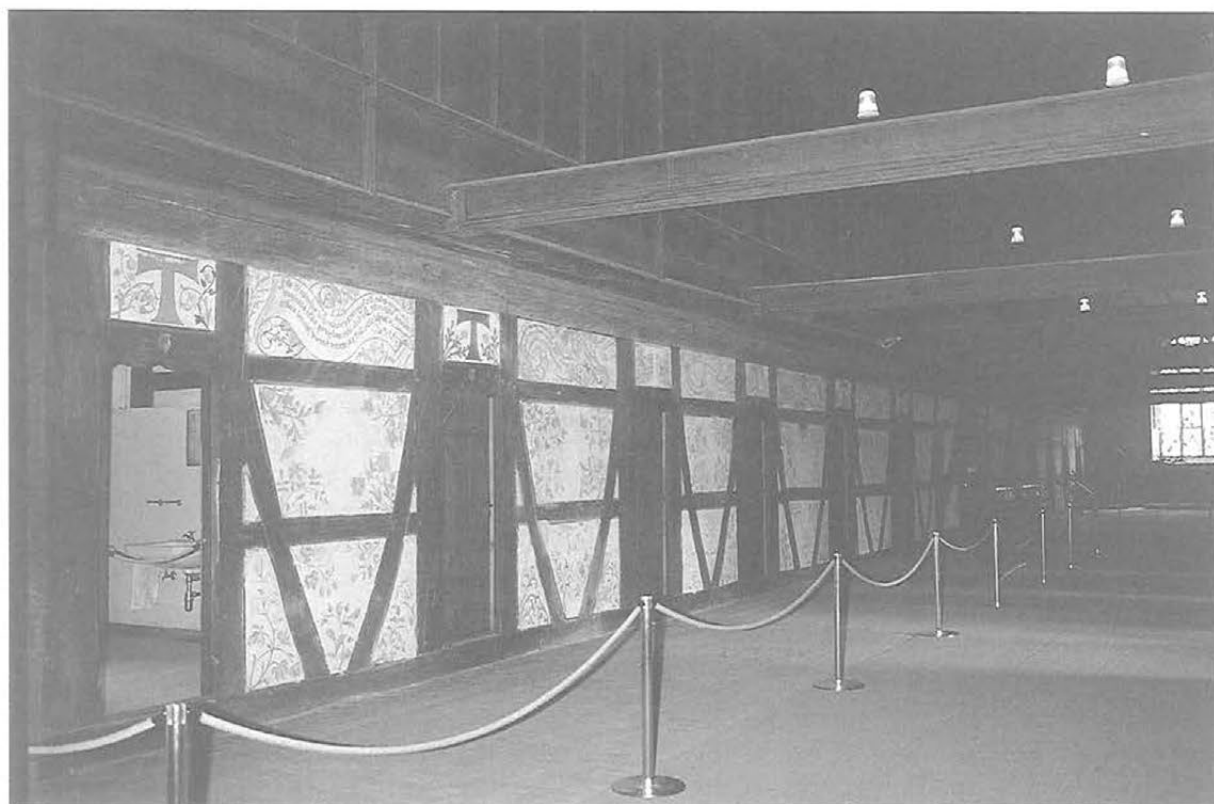


Fig. 1. Bebenhausen (Württemberg), monk's dormitory remodelled into individual cells, 1513–16. (T. N. Kinder)

Were this the case, it would indeed have been surprising, but the Chapter of 1605 did nothing of the sort. What the statute actually says is that in many places, dormitories have ceased to live up to their name, for everyone everywhere is extorting from their superiors an exemption to the requirement that all should sleep in the same room. The General Chapter therefore decrees that, with the exception of monks who have received their doctoral degrees, or who are “formed” bachelors (*i.e.*, those who have completed their reading of the *Sentences*), or others who need “the comfort of special chambers” (*specialium camerarum solatio*), “each and every monk should be pushed back into or enclosed within (*retrudi seu recludi*) the little cells (*cellulae*) of the dormitories;⁶⁴ and if, at the moment, there are any stoves in these [cells], they are to be destroyed immediately, disregarding all excuses.”⁶⁵ In other words, the problem is not the cells but the stoves, and the

essential question is who is to be given permission to have a room *extra dormitorium*. We might also note that this is the last time that the General Chapter orders the destruction of *camini*, and Professor Virginia Jansen has made the interesting observation that it coincides with a series of intensely cold winters in Europe, sometimes called the “Little Ice Age”.⁶⁶

The same question concerning rooms *extra dormitorium* was addressed four years later, when the Chapter of 1609 decreed that no monk shall have a private room outside the dormitory, but then, as usual, added the qualifier *sine gravissima causa*, “save for the most important reason”. Furthermore, the officials of the monastery were not to use the excuse of their office to eat in their rooms, but were to take their meals in the common refectory or, if they were so commanded, at the table of the abbot. They were also forbidden to spend the night in their own rooms, but were to sleep in the common dor-

64. Reading *dormitorium* for *dormitorium*.

65. *Stat.* 1605/67; vii, 260. I am indebted to my colleague Dr James Butrica of the Department of Classics at Memorial University for his assistance in translating this statute. It

is he who suggested the necessary amendment at note 64 above.

66. Jansen, “Architecture and Community”, p. 86, n. 15.

mitory or, if that were not possible, in the infirmary, unless the abbot-visitor judged otherwise *pro necessitate locorum*.⁶⁷ But by 1623 the obedientiaries appear to have been given blanket clearance from this last requirement, for the statute requires everyone *praeter necessarios officiales* to sleep in the common dormitory.⁶⁸

And so we come to the last statute we need to consider: that which appears in the apostolic constitution *In suprema* approved and sealed by Pope Alexander VII on 19 April 1666.⁶⁹ The constitution as a whole cannot be understood without reference to the complicated story of the war of the Observances, but the section dealing with private rooms (unlike, for example, the sections dealing with abstinence) was one of the less contentious items. The essential form of the constitution is a paragraph by paragraph commentary on the Rule of St Benedict, and the section on private chambers is therefore to be found in the commentary on chapter 22 of the Rule: *Quomodo dormiant monachi*.

We begin with familiar material: all abbots, abbesses, monks, and nuns are to sleep in the common dormitory, except (as usual) those whom the abbot or other obedientiary may excuse by reason of their office, their duties, or "other just cause". The reasons for exemption could hardly be more wide-ranging. But then, for the first time, we find an *apologia* for private chambers:

Even though the Rule [of St Benedict] demands that everyone sleep in one place without separate cells (*sine cellis separatis*), and even though the constitution of Pope Benedict XII [i.e., the *Benedictina*] requires it, nevertheless, for reasons of greater modesty and decency of life, as has been proved by long experience, and taking into consideration those who are sick, the use of such cells has come to be tolerated.⁷⁰

67. Stat. 1609/29–30; VII, 273–74.

68. Stat. 1623/27; VII, 350.

69. See Louis J. Lekai, "Pope Alexander VII and the Cistercian Observances", *Catholic Historical Review*, 45 (1959), p. 1–23, and (better) the same author's *Rise of the Cistercian Strict Observance*, p. 132–42 (ch. 10).

70. Stat. 1666/19; VII, 430.

71. *Ibid.* The Cluniacs appear to have used the same device: see Bauer, "Monasticism After Dark", p. 107.

72. The first edition of *Du premier esprit de l'ordre de Cîteaux* by Julien Paris, abbot of Foucarmont, appeared in

There are, however, certain conditions. In accordance with the decrees of Pope Clement VIII (this can only refer to the reform programme of 1601 which we discussed above) there must be a master key which will unlock every cell, and no one shall have a cell which, at night, can be locked in such a way that it cannot be opened by a superior. There shall also be a hole or opening (*foramen*: this must refer to the little window we have already discussed) in each door covered by a board (*tabula*) which can be raised or drawn aside.⁷¹

By April 1666, however, Armand-Jean de Rancé had been regular abbot of La Trappe for almost two years and the great Trappist reform was well under way. But it is significant that, despite Rancé's desire to re-create what one of his mentors, Julien Paris, had called *le premier esprit de l'ordre de Cîteaux*,⁷² and his intention to restore "l'entière Observance de la Règle de S. Benoist",⁷³ the dormitory at La Trappe remained partitioned. The Regulations for the abbey make it clear that the dormitory was divided into cells and that cells had doors (which were never left open) and windows which could be opened to the outside. In each cell there was a bed, a table, various images, clothing (including a face-towel or kerchief⁷⁴), and a chamber pot, and each cell was to be swept twice a week. During the day, however, the cells were not to be used either for reading (which was to be done in the chapter room or cloister) or prayer (which was to be done in the church). Neither candles nor lamps were permitted in the cells, save for the superior, the cellarer, the sacristan, and whoever was in charge of the clock. And no brother entered the cell of any other brother, save only the infirmarian and whoever dealt with the monastic wardrobe.⁷⁵

1653. Two later augmented editions were published in 1664 and 1670. Its influence on Rancé is examined in ch. 6 of my *Understanding Rancé* (Kalamazoo, forthcoming).

73. See *ibid.*

74. As required by the Rule of St Benedict: see note 61 above.

75. Armand-Jean de Rancé, *The Regulations of the Abbey of Our Lady of La Trappe in the Form of Constitutions: Printed at Paris, by Estienne Michallet, First Printer of the King, rue S. Jacques, at the Image of St. Paul, 1690, with the Privilege of the King*, trans. John Baptist Hasbrouck (Lafayette, OR, 1999), p. 6–8.

Rancé's regulations, of course, represented an ideal, as also did the regulations and statutes issued so abundantly by the General Chapter. But we cannot dismiss them as no more than pie-in-the-sky idealism. If we do so, we must also dismiss Bernard of Clairvaux's *De diligendo Deo* or William of Saint-Thierry's letter to the brethren of Mont-Dieu. Few of us will achieve a love of God which is without measure (*sine modo*),⁷⁶ and few of us will experience the Trinitarian vision which is the summit of William's mystical theology, but that is no reason to throw aside their works. The statutes issued by the General Chapter are actually important documents of Cistercian spirituality, and the fact that a large number of monks and nuns did not live up to the ideals they set forth is no more than a reflection of human frailty. A little warmth and privacy are not, perhaps, the gravest of sins, not even for religious; or, if they are, then all of us are in deep trouble.

On the other hand, it can be argued that things could go too far. The inventories taken by the commissioners when the French abbeys were dissolved at the Revolution often reveal a degree of comfort — indeed, opulence — quite contrary to the austere regulations set forth in the *In suprema*. Quincy, for example, an abbey situated in northern Burgundy about ten kilometres east of Tonnerre, was visited by the Revolutionary commissioners in May–June 1790, and they have left us a detailed account of the rooms and possessions of the four monks then in residence.⁷⁷ One of them, Dom Étienne Tronchet, was seventy-nine at the time and in poor health, and in his room were to be found a bed with bed-curtains (in poor condition), two bolsters, two coverlets (one green, one red), a feather mattress, a bureau, two tables, six chairs, a reading-stand, a wardrobe (also in poor condition), a night-table for his medicines, a large natural history collection, five celestial

spheres, a variety of paintings (six large and eleven small), two vases of Bohemian glass filled with artificial flowers, two clocks, a large mirror, a barometer, a crucifix, and his own personal library of forty-seven volumes in folio, 118 in octavo, and fifteen in quarto.⁷⁸ It must have been a crowded room.

It is easy, too easy, to generalize from Dom Tronchet to the rest of the Order and accuse every monk and nun of gross laxity at the time of the Revolution. This was not the case. The same thing has been said of English monasticism at the time of the Dissolution, and it is only within about the last ten years that the old idea of religious who “turned lazies, then, getting wealth, waxed wanton, and at last endowed with superfluity, became notoriously wicked”⁷⁹ came to be challenged.⁸⁰ There was, in fact, both in France and England, a revitalization of monastic life in the decades before the monasteries were closed, and although there were indeed examples of straightforward laxity and decadence, there was also a great deal of honest effort to live the religious life to the full. But the eighteenth century was not the twelfth, and not only the times but mentalities had changed. The question to be asked, therefore, is not whether religious in the eighteenth (or twenty-first) century *could* live in the same way as their twelfth-century predecessors, but whether they *should* live in the same way. My own view is that they should not. Adaptation does not always imply decadence, and those of us who know the modern Cistercians will also know that a room of one's own is not necessarily the first inexorable step to everlasting darkness, eternal torment, and the worm that dieth not.

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76. Bernard of Clairvaux, *De diligendo Deo* I.1; *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq et al. (Rome, 1957–77), III, p. 119.

77. See David N. Bell, “The Library of the Abbey of Quincy from the Twelfth Century to the French Revolution”, *Analecta Cisterciensia*, 54 (2002), p. 26–29, 33–35.

78. Auxerre, *Archives départementales de l'Yonne*, Q.354 “Inventaire”, fol. 3^r. See also Bell, “Library of the Abbey of Quincy”, p. 27.

79. Thomas Fuller, *The Church-History of Britain; from the Birth of Jesus Christ, until the Year MDCXLVIII* (London, 1655), p. 265.

80. See, for example, the excellent collection of papers in *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. Clark.

APPENDIX

THE TERMINOLOGY OF THE PRIVATE CHAMBER

References are to year and paragraph number in *Stat.* (see note preceding n. 1).

Camerae

1287/9, 1314/4, 1323/12, 1327/3, 1335/23, 1343/1, 1405/15, 1439/96f., 1442/83, 1444/10, 1454/46, 1460/30, 1470/37, 1476/67, 1521/18, 1609/29–30

Camerae clausae

1437/46, 1461/26

Camerae particulares

1410/41

Camerae privatae

1370/2

Camerae sejunctae

1335/23

Camerae speciales

1605/67

Cellae (in dormitorio)

1335/23–24, 1370/2, 1392/47, 1601/XV.1–3, 1666/19

Cellula

1601/XV.1, 5, 1605/67

Cubicula parva

1565/41

Cubicula privata

1573/10

Domus

1521/18

East of the Cloister: Infirmarys, Abbots' Lodgings, and other Chambers*

JACKIE HALL

At my viva in summer 2003 I was privileged to discuss many aspects of my work with Peter Fergusson and so it seems appropriate now to revisit those discussions. As the examiner of my thesis, he displayed those characteristics which make him so beloved of the scholarly community: immense courtesy and generosity and, of course, deep and extensive knowledge of Cistercian life and buildings. This paper addresses one of the questions which arose then: how to interpret those complexes which usually lie on the eastern side of a Cistercian cloister, typically including the abbot's lodging and the infirmary, along with associated buildings.

The reasons for locating monastic infirmaries well to the east of the main cloister have been examined in detail by David Bell,¹ and these reasons are valid for all orders. But, unlike other orders, the Cistercians accommodated their

abbots in a similar location. On the one hand, this is because the western range of the cloister was the domain of lay brothers rather than of abbots and priors, and on the other it is a result of the practice — enshrined in the Cistercian customary — of abbots sleeping in common with their communities in the main dormitory.² It has been reasonably assumed that when Cistercian abbots did begin to move out, largely in the thirteenth century, that they moved into the buildings so frequently found annexed to reredorters. The link with the monks' dormitory was then not wholly lost, and abbot and convent shared a common latrine. Abbots' lodgings have been identified, for instance, in latrine extensions at Fountains, Kirkstall, Tintern, and Waverley³ and may also have existed at Jervaulx and Roche, as suggested below. In many cases — but by no means all — separate lodgings were built later and,

* With gratitude to English Heritage for their support at the early stages of my research into this subject at Croxden Abbey, and to Christopher Norton and David Robinson who read this paper and made numerous helpful comments, and to Shelagh Sneddon for discussions of the statutes.

1. David N. Bell, "The Siting and Size of Cistercian Infirmarys in England and Wales", in *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture*, vol. v, ed. Meredith P. Lillich (Kalamazoo, 1998), p. 211–37 (p. 212–21).

2. The instruction for abbots to sleep in the dormitory can be found in *Les "Ecclesiastica officia" cisterciens du XI^{ème} siècle*, ed. and trans. Danièle Choiselet and Placide Vernet, *La Documentation cistercienne*, 22 (Reiningue, 1989), p. 313. See also David H. Williams, *The Cistercians in the Early Middle Ages* (Leominster, 1998), p. 72–73, and Virginia

Jansen, "Architecture and Community in Medieval Monastic Dormitories", in *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture*, vol. v, ed. Lillich, p. 59–94 (p. 76–78).

3. For Fountains, see William H. St John Hope, "Fountains Abbey", *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 15 (1900), p. 269–402 (p. 335–39), and Glyn Coppack and Roy Gilyard-Beer, *Fountains Abbey* (London, 1993), p. 47; for Kirkstall, William H. St John Hope and John Bilson, *The Architecture of Kirkstall Abbey Church, with some general remarks on the Architecture of the Cistercians*, Thoresby Society, 16 (Leeds, 1907), p. 34–38, and Stephen Moorhouse and Stuart Wrathmell, *Kirkstall Abbey. The 1950–1964 Excavations: A Reassessment* (Wakefield, 1987), p. 50; for Tintern, David M. Robinson, *Tintern Abbey*, 4th edn (Cardiff, 2002), p. 31 and p. 63; and

whether because of tradition or other reasons, these buildings tended to remain in the same area, often sharing facilities, such as kitchens, with the infirmary. This essay does not look at the earliest accommodation of the abbot in the dormitory, nor at the earliest spaces in which the abbot might have conducted business (possibly the parlour or another small space off the cloister⁴), but at those extra-claustral buildings or parts of buildings that still survive, including many infirmaries or supposed infirmaries.

Despite their frequent proximity, and despite the fact that their basic components are very similar, infirmaries and abbots' chambers have to date been treated separately. The contention here is that if these buildings are studied together, then new interpretations can arise, both of specific buildings and more generally of the ways in which they were used. Even if the activities which went on inside them were often different, in essence each had to supply somewhere to eat, somewhere to sleep, and somewhere to pray, as well as heating and access to a latrine and a kitchen separate from those of the cloister.⁵ The opportunities for misunderstandings are clear, even though recent studies — such as the rich accounts of the infirmary and abbot's lodging at Rievaulx by Peter Fergusson and Stuart Harrison⁶ — mean that at some abbeys these buildings are both well attributed and well understood. Elsewhere, the attributions of

buildings rely on those made a century or more ago, principally by William St John Hope and Harold Brakspear. Their work was pioneering and comprehensive and should never be ignored, but a review suggests that, in some cases at least, the buildings can be legitimately interpreted differently. On the one hand, there seems to have been (and still is) a determination to identify infirmaries, despite the fact that many equally substantial buildings have disappeared.⁷ Even though what now survives at each abbey is usually much later than its foundation (often by a century or more), infirmaries are assumed to have existed almost from the beginning of each house. This is because of St Benedict's injunction in the Rule that "Before all things and above all things care must be taken of the sick" and that they should have a special room assigned to them.⁸ On the other hand, the probable fluidity of abbots' chambers has only recently been grasped,⁹ and the notion that chambers may have had many different uses, or existed for a range of occupants, is not yet fully explored.

What follows is not a comprehensive survey, but an examination of four particularly problematic examples. The second half of the essay contains a discussion of the multiplicity of chambers, followed by an exploration of the many uses of infirmary buildings including, perhaps, their use by abbots as proto-abbots' halls.

for Waverley, Harold Brakspear, *Waverley Abbey* (Guildford, 1905), p. 70–71.

4. Monastic business was conducted in the parlour, which functioned as the prior's office and also as a place for visiting abbots to interview monks (see *Les "Ecclesiastica officia"*, ed. and trans. Choiselet and Vernet, p. 214 and 220; and *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. Chrysogonus Waddell, *Cîteaux: Studia et Documenta*, 9 [Brecht, 1999], p. 494–95). For the possible use of the parlour to conduct secular business, see Williams, *The Cistercians*, p. 243, and Jackie Hall, "Croxdon Abbey: Buildings and Community" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2003), p. 77–81. For the use of other claustral spaces for abbots to conduct business in the context of reformed monasticism, see Sheila Bonde and Clark Maines, "A Room of One's Own: Elite Spaces in Monasteries of the Reform Movement and an Abbot's Parlor at Augustinian Saint-Jean-des-Vignes, Soissons (France)", in *Medieval Europe Brugge, 1997, Religion and Belief in Medieval Europe: Papers of the "Medieval Europe Brugge 1997" Conference*, vol. IV, ed. Guy de Boe and Frans Verhaeghe (Zellik, 1997), p. 43–53.

5. Rochelle Ramey recognized this in her study of late medieval Cistercian abbots' lodgings ("Abbots' Lodgings of the Cistercian Order in the Late 15th and Early 16th Centuries" [unpublished master's thesis, University of York, 1996], p. 5).

6. Peter Fergusson and Stuart Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey: Community, Architecture, Memory* (New Haven, 1999), ch. 5 and ch. 7.

7. An earthwork survey of Jervaulx's precinct, for instance, was unable to locate the main gatehouse (Royal Commission on Historic Monuments [England], "Survey Report, Jervaulx Abbey, Richmondshire, North Yorkshire", unpublished report (1999), p. 15–17 and fig. 14).

8. *The Rule of St Benedict*, ed. and trans. Justin McCann (London, 1976), ch. 36. See David N. Bell, "The English Cistercians and the Practice of Medicine", *Cîteaux*, 40 (1989), p. 139–73 (p. 143–45). Oddly, the infirmary is one of the few buildings mentioned in the Rule that does not also appear in the list of buildings which must exist prior to a convent moving into a new foundation (*Narrative and Legislative Texts*, ed. Waddell, p. 408 and 461).

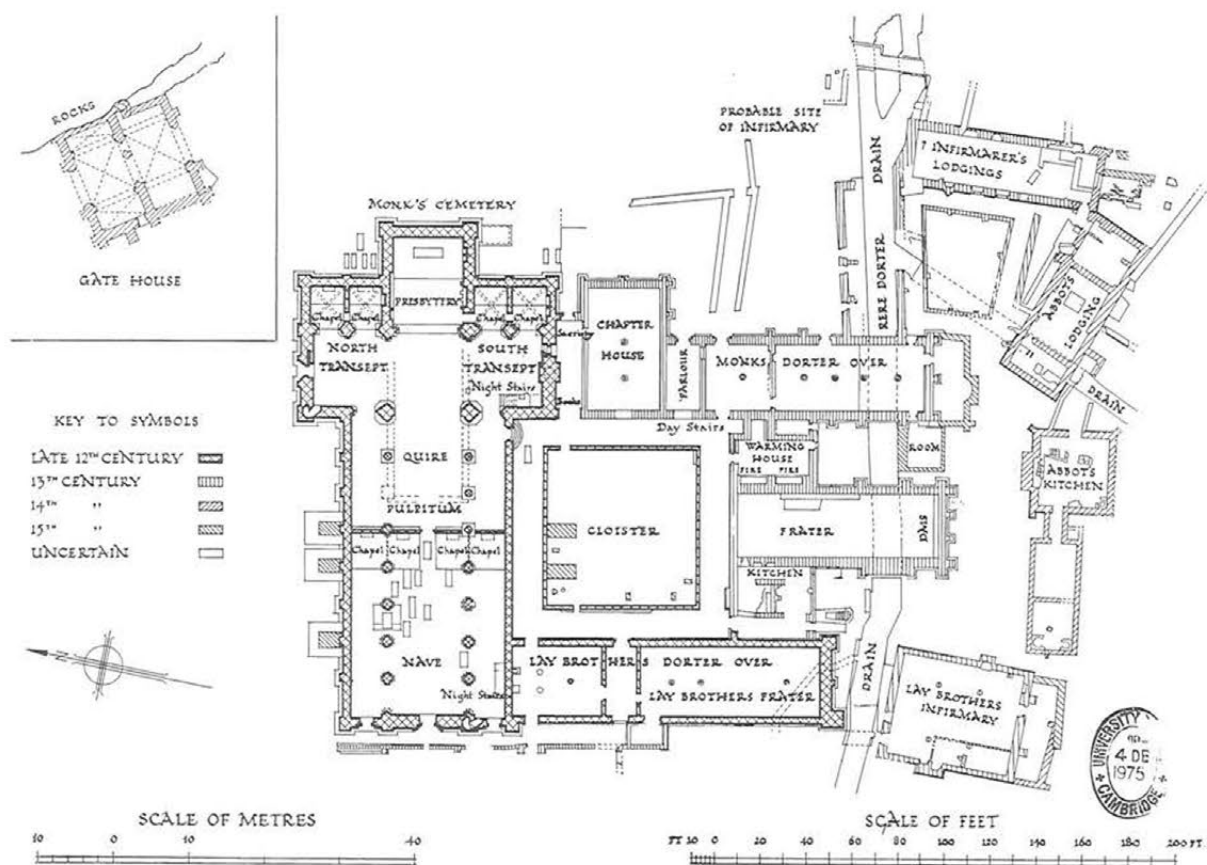


Figure 1. Roche Abbey, plan. (A. Hamilton Thompson, *Roche Abbey*, London: H.M.S.O., 1935; reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library)

Roche Abbey

At Roche (Fig. 1), of the two major two-storey buildings south-east of the cloister, one (fourteenth-century) has traditionally been called the abbot's lodging, and the other (early-thirteenth-century) has been called either the infirmary or the infirmarer's lodging.¹⁰ Yet the covered passage from the cloister heads more-or-less due east — surely this could have led to a now-lost infirmary, in its most traditional location? Indeed, as seen in figure 1, Hamilton Thompson identified this as the site of the infirmary in 1935, but did not go on to draw the logical conclusion that the building to the south is then

unlikely to be the infirmarer's lodging.¹¹ It is not conveniently sited for the infirmary, and it seems unlikely that an infirmarer could have commanded such a building at such an apparently early date. The building would seem better interpreted as an early abbot's lodging. A mass of masonry at its north-west corner joins it to the latrine block, which means that, as at other abbeys, it could have communicated indirectly with the monks' dormitory. When the new abbot's lodging was built in the fourteenth century the old one could have had many uses, including housing important guests or officers of the abbey, such as the prior.

9. See especially Terryl N. Kinder's recent thoughtful observations on abbots' lodgings (*Cistercian Europe: Architecture of Contemplation* [Grand Rapids, MI, 2002], p. 355–59).

10. Nikolaus Pevsner and Enid Radcliffe, *Yorkshire, the West Riding, The Buildings of England* (Harmondsworth,

1967), p. 416; Peter Fergusson, *Roche Abbey* (London, 1990), p. 23–24; a particularly useful account of archaeological work on the abbey can be found in Alice Rodgers, "Lifting the dark veil of earth: Roche Abbey Excavations 1857–1935", in *Aspects of Rotherham*, vol. II, ed. Melvyn Jones (Barnsley, 1996), p. 95–114.

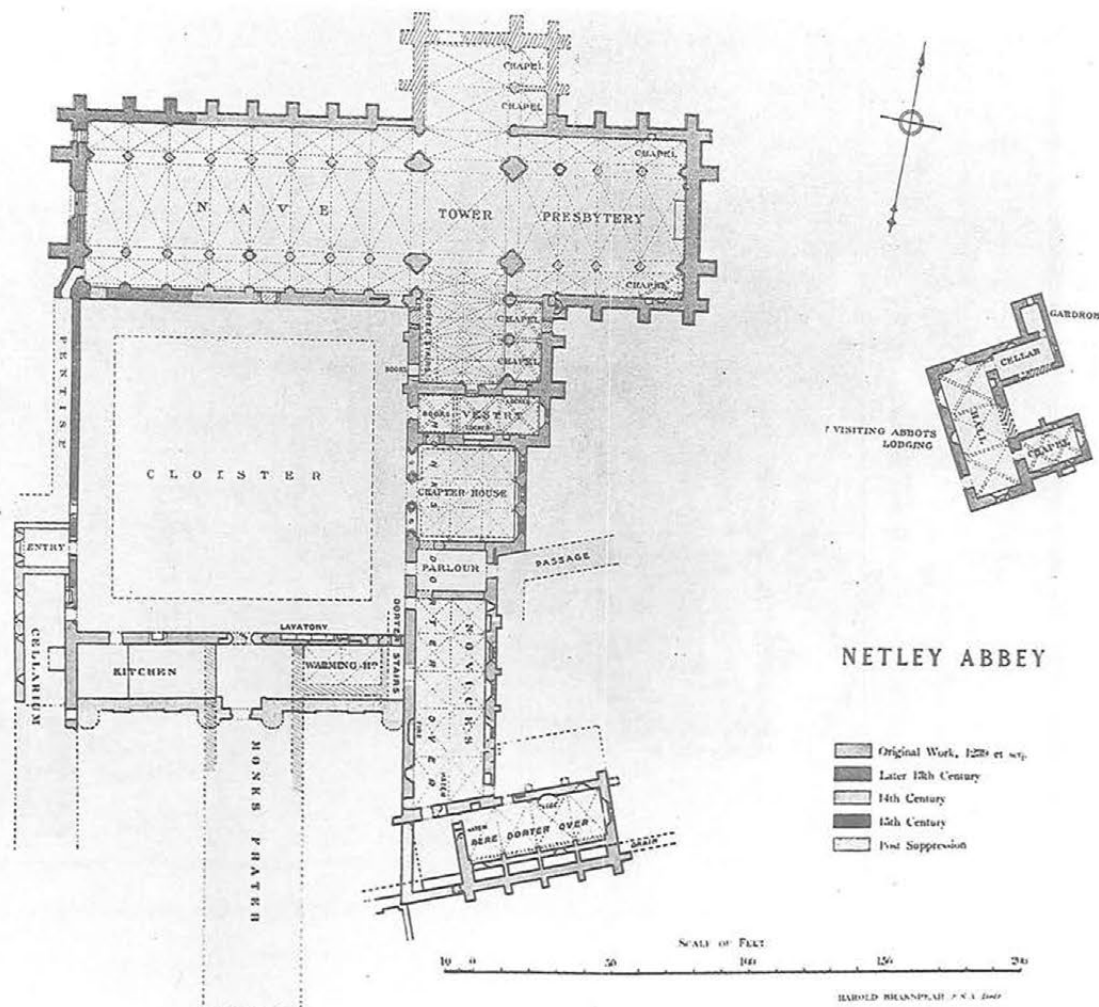


Figure 2. Netley Abbey, plan. (*The Victoria History of the County of Hampshire*, vol. iii, London: Institute of Historical Research, 1908)

Netley Abbey

Netley's infirmary has usually been located either in the latrine undercroft or in the dormitory undercroft, rather than the detached eastern building, interpreted as the abbot's lodging (Fig. 2).¹² The basis for this attribution appears to be on the one hand the lack of a suitable infirmary building elsewhere, and on the other the presence of internal buttresses in the latrine undercroft, possibly marking bays for the placement of

beds. Yet why did the monks at Netley feel able to do without the use of a work-room in the dormitory undercroft (in Dimier's interpretation, part of the infirmary) and why should we not see the latrine undercroft as the novice's room, as traditionally located at other abbeys? Only one commentator interprets it this way rather than as an infirmary.¹³ The undercroft does have a fireplace, but this was also true of the much earlier proposed novices' room at Rievaulx.¹⁴ Furthermore,

11. A. Hamilton Thompson, *Roche Abbey* (London, 1935), p. 17–18.

12. Brakspear thought the latrine undercroft may have been the novices' infirmary, and Thompson thought it the monks' infirmary, an interpretation continued by Dimier (who also added the dormitory undercroft) and Bell (Harold Brakspear, *The Victoria History of the County of Hampshire*, vol. iii [London, 1908], p. 475–76; A. Hamilton Thompson,

Netley Abbey [London, 1976]; M.-Anselme Dimier, "Infirmeries cisterciennes", in *Mélanges à la mémoire du Père Anselme Dimier*, vol. 1.2, ed. Benoît Chauvin [Arbois, 1987], p. 804–25 (p. 819–20); Bell, "Cistercians and Medicine", p. 163n). Brakspear also interpreted the eastern building as the visiting abbot's lodging, while subsequent studies have suggested that it is the abbot's lodging.

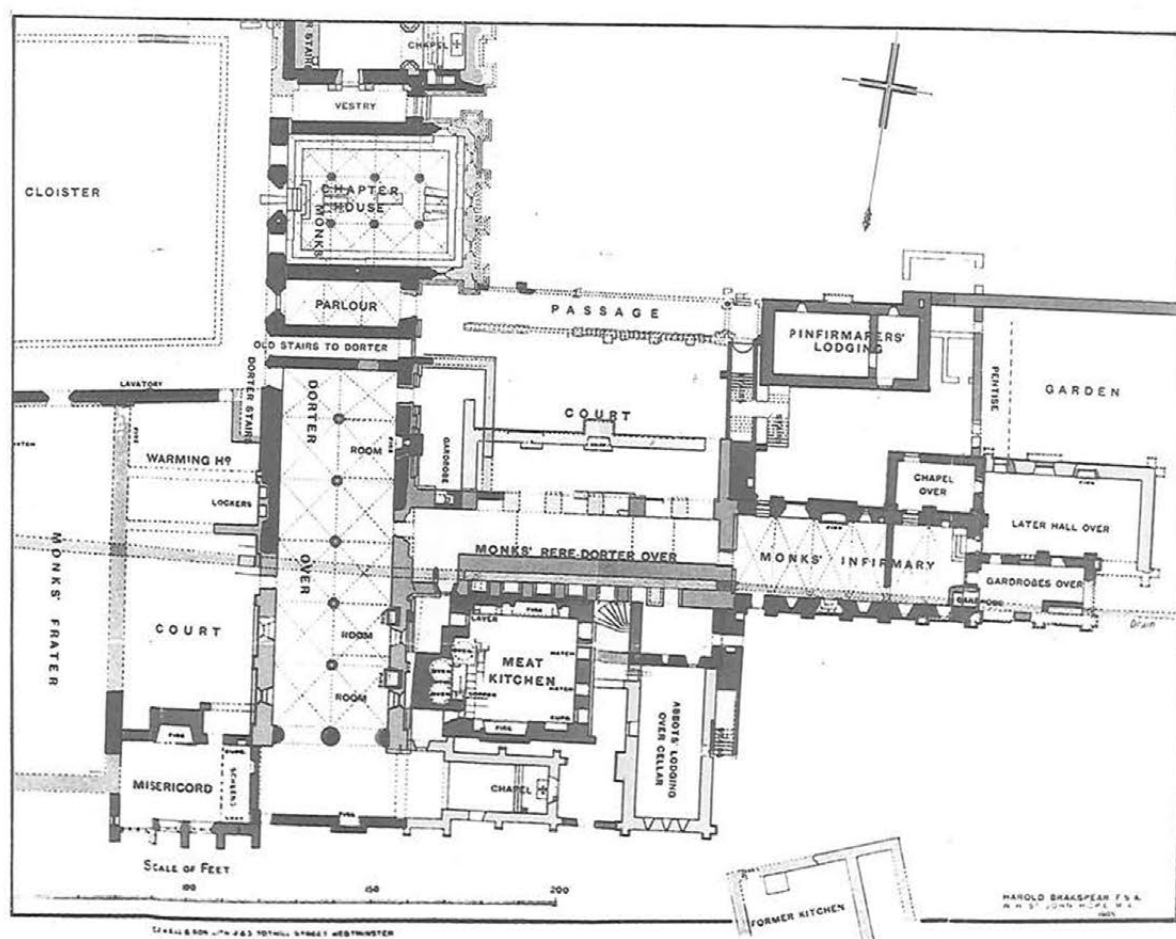


Figure 4. Jervaulx Abbey, plan of eastern buildings. (W. H. St John Hope and Harold Brakspear, "Jervaulx Abbey", *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 21 [1911], detail)

interpreted as the early infirmary, later converted to the abbot's lodging, but it could equally have been an abbot's lodging from the beginning. While it might seem early for an abbot's lodging separate from the monks' dormitory, earlier examples survive at Rievaulx and Byland.¹⁷ The absence of a chapel, either projecting or axial, usually a prominent feature of infirmary buildings, is also significant. The first infirmary could have been in the same location as the second, its unusual southern position a consequence of the rock face on the eastern side of the site.¹⁸ Alternatively one might argue (though I am not) that the later infirmary is in fact a particularly impressive abbot's hall and the

earlier building was the infirmary throughout the life of the abbey. The large chapel of the later building would, however, be unusual in the context of lodgings, where a private oratory for prayer (rather than mass) is likely to open off the abbot's private chamber rather than the hall. Additionally, the chambers do not communicate easily with the hall. At the very least, the attributions of buildings at Furness are open to discussion.

Jervaulx Abbey

At Jervaulx (Fig. 4), the situation is complex since there are four buildings, or parts of build-

17. For Rievaulx, see Fergusson and Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey*, ch. 7, and for Byland, Stuart A. Harrison, *Byland Abbey* (London, 1990), p. 18. Rievaulx, of course, was exceptional both for the early date of its lodging and the sanctity and illness of its abbot, Aelfred.

18. Since the building stone for the abbey was quarried from this rock face, this eastern area may not even have been available when the supposed first infirmary was built.

ings, which could arguably be called abbots' lodgings, yet only one of them is suggested as such.¹⁹ The earliest is the early-thirteenth-century southern extension to the east range. Although apparently not much later than the rest of the range, the extension is in a quite different style. East of this is a chapel, which is later still. While the chapel may seem excessively large for the private prayers of an abbot,²⁰ in other respects this little annexe is entirely suitable for an early abbot's chamber. It is quite modest and communicates directly with the monks' dormitory.

The second and third buildings appear to be contemporary with each other and date to the late thirteenth century.²¹ They are the annexe east of the latrine block, called the infirmary, and that south of the latrine block, called the abbot's lodging (see Fig. 4). The latter is really a chamber on the upper floor, built over an unvaulted cellar. Its north end abuts an earlier structure and, judging by the position of the external stair, it would have spanned the earlier structure at first floor level, giving direct access to the latrines. As well as a transomed and traceried window in its south wall, the chamber had a fireplace and a small sink within a trefoiled cupboard. Overall, it was not much bigger (though perhaps more private) than the putative first abbot's chamber and it was in communication with the monks' dormitory via the reredorter.

The "infirmary" was rather different. Like the former building it was in communication with the dormitory via the latrine but in this instance the ground floor was not for storage but contained a substantial hooded fireplace, was fully vaulted, and had, perhaps, a private latrine in the south-east corner. On the first floor were transomed and traceried windows very similar to that of the lodging to the south, access to a

small chapel on the north side and to a chamber on the east side. This chamber has previously been interpreted as a garderobe, but other than the fact it is over the main drain there is no positive evidence to confirm this. The whole could certainly have made a very impressive abbot's lodging — the hall measures approximately 19.4 m by 6.6 m (63 ft 8 in. by 21 ft 8 in.). However, the lack of an internal stair might suggest different users for the two storeys of the building; the noviciate, for example could have moved into the ground floor.

It could also, of course, have been the infirmary, as proposed by Hope and Brakspear and every subsequent commentator,²² with a refectory on the ground floor and sleeping arrangements on the first floor. The hall to the east, added in the fourteenth century at a time of reduced monastic populations and presumed decreased use of the infirmary, would seem to favour the use of this complex as an abbot's lodging. But if this were the case, where was the infirmary? The covered passage from the parlour leads now to a much later (sixteenth-century) building called the infirmarer's lodging. Before this was built, the covered passage could have led further east to what would have been the conventional location for an infirmary. Immediately north of the sixteenth-century building is a substantial north-south rectangular bank, recently interpreted as a post-suppression garden structure.²³ It could, though, have been the infirmary, but it is perhaps more likely that that building lay further east, in a completely levelled field which now retains no monastic features other than the bottom of the main drain. The "infirmarer's lodging" is, in fact, the last of the surviving high status chambers on the eastern side of the cloister at Jervaulx.

19. William H. St John Hope and Harold Brakspear, "Jervaulx Abbey", *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 21 (1911), p. 303–44, plan facing p. 308 and p. 332–34. Subsequent commentators have accepted their interpretation of the buildings, including of the infirmary, e.g. Dimier, "Infirmaries cisterciennes", p. 818–19; S. Davies, *Jervaulx Abbey* (Jervaulx, 1997); Bell, "Cistercian Infirmaries", p. 227.

20. The chapel, though, is rather smaller than the one for the proposed abbot's lodging at the south end of the dorter of Coggeshall abbey. At Coggeshall, however, the chapel is on the first floor. See J. S. Gardner, "Coggeshall Abbey and its Early Brickwork", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 18 (1955), p. 19–32 (p. 26–27).

21. Despite the slightly different dates given to them by Hope and Brakspear ("Jervaulx Abbey", plan facing p. 308, p. 325 and 332), the window details are close to identical, with transomed windows (with tracery above and probably shuttered below) and matching mouldings. The trefoiled opening in the building south of the latrines also has a very late 13th-century look about it, despite the suggested 14th-century date. Additionally, both buildings have identical shouldered lintels in some of their doors.

22. See note 19, above.

23. RCHME, "Jervaulx Abbey", fig. 15.

Multiple Chambers

At Jervaulx, then, there appears to be no extant infirmary, and by the sixteenth century there were at least three sets of elaborate chambers other than the abbot's lodging. At Roche, the building of an improved free-standing abbot's lodging in the fourteenth century left a chamber block free for an alternative use. At Furness, the new infirmary of ca. 1300 incorporated chamber blocks at both ends; only the eastern block survives to any height. The ground floor comprises the chapel and serving rooms but the first floor is almost completely cut off from the infirmary hall, suggesting that they too might be discreet rooms for a monastic officer — whether or not the infirmarer — rather than accommodation for residents of the infirmary. This situation of multiple chambers clearly pertained at many abbeys; at Croxden, for instance, a new one was built for the abbot in 1335, only a year after major repairs to the earlier chamber, leaving that one free.²⁴

Some of these extra chambers could have been the "visiting abbot's lodging" that appears on several abbey plans where two buildings of obvious importance and domestic character (not counting the infirmary) have survived east of the cloister.²⁵ This is based on the Cistercian system of visitations which specified that the abbots of mother houses should visit their daughter houses once every year.²⁶ The attribution seems to originate in the nineteenth century, at least by the time of Hope's pioneering studies of individual houses,²⁷ yet it seems inherently unlikely that a chamber should exist

to be occupied for only a few days a year. Without doubt the visiting abbot would have been provided with accommodation befitting his status, but it is likely to have had different uses the rest of the year, perhaps for other elite guests. Other interpretations for multiple chambers must additionally be found. One is their use by retired abbots. For example, abbots are recorded as having retired, or been deposed, at Croxden in 1242, 1284, 1308, 1313, 1329, and 1368, and abbots from other houses joined the convent twice.²⁸ Retirement was common both in Cistercian houses and those of other orders.²⁹ Thomas Burton, the Meaux chronicler and former abbot, recorded the provisions made for retired abbots at his house in some detail, and it is clear from his descriptions that chambers in three different places were used for this purpose at different times. The first reference of 1310 — though not necessarily the first case — is perhaps the most interesting, since we learn that Abbot Roger, planning his retirement, built a chamber especially for that purpose on the east side of the monks' infirmary; later it became the abbot's chamber.³⁰ We find another chamber prepared (but not built) for William of Drynghowe in 1353, after his deposition. It was located between the monks' infirmary and dormitory, and it can easily be imagined as the reuse of an earlier abbot's lodging, perhaps in an annexe to the latrines.³¹ Lastly, Thomas Burton mentions the arrangements for William of Scarborough, who retired in 1396. Thomas was William's successor, which no doubt accounts for the fact that the arrangements he made for William are mentioned three times.³² As well

24. Hall, "Croxden Abbey", p. 84–89.

25. For instance, those of Kirkstall, Tintern, and Waverley. See Hope and Bilson, *Kirkstall Abbey*, loose plan; Robinson, *Tintern Abbey*, end plan; Brakspear, *Waverley Abbey*, loose plan.

26. For visitations, see Louis J. Lekai, *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality* (Kent, OH, 1977), p. 26–29 and 463; Williams, *The Cistercians*, p. 41–43.

27. For instance, Hope in his study of Fountains Abbey suggested that the north chamber east of the infirmary hall may have been used for this purpose. Earlier, Micklethwaite in his study of Cistercian plans suggests the use of a chamber by the visiting abbot, probably in the infirmary (Hope, "Fountains Abbey", p. 329–30; J. T. Micklethwaite, "Of the Cistercian Plan", *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 7 [1882], p. 239–58 [p. 256]). The move from the suggestion of use to seeing this use as permanent in a single building had occurred by the time of Hope's study of Kirkstall and Brakspear's of

Waverley (Hope and Bilson, *Kirkstall Abbey*, p. 40 and plan; Brakspear, *Waverley Abbey*, p. 65–66).

28. See "The Chronicle of Croxden Abbey", ed. Philip Morgan et al. in *Collections for a History of Staffordshire* (forthcoming), *passim*.

29. See *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales*, vol. I, 940–1216, ed. David Knowles, C. N. L. Brooke, and Vera C. M. London (Cambridge, 2001²), and *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales*, vol. II, 1216–1377, ed. David Smith and Vera London (Cambridge, 2001), *passim*, for an idea of the frequency of resignations.

30. Thomas de Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa*, ed. E. A. Bond, 3 vols, Rolls Series, 43 (London, 1866–68), II, p. 238. Around the same time a large chamber was built next to the cemetery by the Dean of York. It may have been his residence, but its purpose is not clear (*Ibid.*, II, p. 237).

31. *Ibid.*, III, p. 86–87.

32. *Ibid.*, III, p. 234; III, p. 275; III, p. 242.

as receiving the usual pension and other provisions, he was to inhabit a chamber at the north end of the infirmary which Thomas had decently repaired for him. This retired abbot's lodging was probably within the infirmary and shows the sort of use to which that building could be put after the decline in monastic population during the fourteenth century and after the division of the infirmary into separate chambers. The chamber in question, though, must have been somewhat above the ordinary since much is made of William's former status.

This honouring of past — but living — abbots with the provision of special chambers (as well as other privileges) is certain to have continued up to the suppression. There is a record of a "white chamber" being assigned to John Colyngnam, a former abbot of Kirkstall in 1432, and a "new chamber" of three rooms was assigned to Thomas Cleurbury of Dore in 1526.³³ At Louth Park a private chamber was built between 1227 and 1246. This is of interest both because of its early date and because it was neither for an abbot nor a retired abbot, but for one William of Tournay, former Dean of Lincoln who became a monk of the abbey. He is described as "venerable and most pious, amiable and religious, who on his coming raised the house in divers ways, and enriched its offices exceedingly from his own wealth".³⁴ Seemingly, a man with the status and wealth which he had was accorded the privileges of that status and wealth even though he became a monk, just as retired abbots were accorded privileges even though they remained monks. This apparently did not cause any resentment, since William of Tournay is eulogized in the Louth Park chronicle, perhaps no surprise in a hierarchical society.³⁵

What this documentary evidence shows, as the physical evidence at many abbeys suggests,

is that we should expect there to have been two, three, or even four abbatial or sub-abbatial residences in the area beyond the cloister in Cistercian abbeys, some free-standing and some incorporated into other buildings. This appears to be a reflection of the situation at Benedictine abbeys. At Westminster Abbey, several senior monks occupied chambers in the infirmary, although most of the evidence for this is from the fifteenth century; obedientiaries had chambers near the infirmary at Ely, Durham, and Bardney; also at Bardney, a "new chamber" was made next to the infirmary in 1318 for the occupation of a deposed abbot.³⁶ The date at which private chambers began to be built for monks other than the abbot is not clear, though the Louth Park chronicle suggests that it started at least as early as the mid-thirteenth century. They may even have been used by corrodiaries, who are documented at almost every abbey from the late thirteenth century, but current research suggests that such people were housed outside the precinct or at least not close to the conventual buildings.³⁷ The use of extra-claustral buildings may have been very fluid (as implied by the evidence of the Meaux chronicle). Many may have changed use more than once, fallen into disuse, or been destroyed by the time of the Dissolution. Frustratingly, at Rievaulx — despite a wealth of Dissolution material — there is no reference to a building conveniently called "the retired abbot's chamber", although the survey lists "on the east side of the same dorter a howse of 4 bays wt a steap roffe coveryd wt lede", which has not been adequately located.³⁸

Multiple Uses of Infirmeries

The doubtful attributions of buildings at Roche, Netley, Jervaulx, and Furness show that

33. *The Victoria History of the County of York*, vol. III (London, 1913), p. 144; David Williams, "The Abbey of Dore", in *A Definitive History of Dore Abbey*, ed. Ron Shoesmith and Ruth Richardson (Little Logaston, Herefs., 1997), p. 15–36 (p. 29).

34. *Chronicon Abbatie de Parco Lude*, ed. Edmund Venables, Lincolnshire Record Society, 1 (Horncastle, 1881), p. 16.

35. The chronicler says "And, what is still of greater importance, by his pious, holy and religious life, he set a praiseworthy example to us all. Moreover, during the whole time he was with us, he universally and cheerfully showed kindness and very great solace to both upper and lower servants and to strangers" (*Ibid.*, p. 16–17).

36. Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1000–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford, 1993), p. 87–89; Roy Gilyard-Beer, *Abbeys* (London, 1976²), p. 42; Harold Brakspear, "Bardney Abbey", *Archaeological Journal*, 79 (1922), p. 1–92 (p. 4).

37. Williams, *The Cistercians*, p. 122–23.

38. Glyn Coppack, "Some Descriptions of Rievaulx Abbey in 1538–1539: The Disposition of a Major Cistercian Precinct in the Early Sixteenth Century", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 139 (1986), p. 100–33 (p. 112, 125).

there is clearly a need for the careful disentangling of structural sequences, absolute chronologies, and the former uses of buildings to understand better the development of the monastic infirmary. That is a very big job, which I shall not attempt here. It should be stated at once, however, that these interpretations of individual buildings may not affect the general interpretations of Cistercian medicine and infirmaries, the most important of which have been made by David Bell.³⁹ After all, as a group, they remain sited to the east of the cloister and are impressively grand, no doubt for the mixture of practical, medical and spiritual reasons proposed by Bell, with the possible exception, as we shall see, of a desire to separate the sick from the well. As we shall also see, they may not have been built solely for the benefit of the sick.

Instead of surveying all the buildings, only a single issue is addressed here — the multiple uses of monks' infirmaries — which will add different elements to the interpretation of infirmaries and lead back to the study of abbots' lodgings.

From the perspective of Cistercian customs, as set out in the *Ecclesiastica officia*,⁴⁰ there was only a single type of infirmary patient, whether more ill or less ill, whose conduct, along with those of the infirmarer and his assistants, is detailed at length. The customary, however, dates to the late twelfth century, before the majority of surviving infirmary buildings had been erected and before monks were permitted to leave the cloister to be bled and to recover. Although the custom of *minuti* staying in the cloister was not formally relaxed,

it is generally assumed that, perhaps as early as the early thirteenth century, the Cistercians had begun to adopt the custom of other orders, which allowed their brethren to recover in the infirmary or elsewhere outside the cloister.⁴¹ The whole community was bled four times a year, in groups chosen by the abbot, which could have substantially increased the numbers of patients in the infirmary, at least during the day.⁴²

This was a move not only towards contemporary Benedictine practice, but also towards ancient practice. The plan of St Gall (ca. 815) has a separate house for blood-letting, but within the infirmary complex; it also shows a room for the very ill, as well as a dormitory, a refectory, and a room for the infirmarer.⁴³ The very differently planned infirmaries of the later Middle Ages must have had to provide for a similar range of functions. Divisions like a hospital hall, kitchen, refectory, infirmarer's room, latrine block, chapel, and sometimes a cloister have been recognized in recent interpretations,⁴⁴ although not all may be seen at each abbey. The list should also include (as at St Gall) a chamber for the seriously ill. One was built at Louth Park by Richard of Dunham, abbot 1227–46,⁴⁵ and a similar chamber at Meaux was newly furnished between 1372 and 1396.⁴⁶ The famous early-sixteenth-century description of Clairvaux also describes *la chambre griefve*, for those with infectious diseases.⁴⁷ In other orders, the infirmary was divided into areas for long-term patients and areas for day patients, who included those recovering from phlebotomy.⁴⁸

39. Even though in his earlier paper, he uses all of these examples. See Bell, "Cistercians and Medicine" and "Cistercian Infirmaries", with references to other standard works.

40. *Les "Ecclesiastica officia"*, ed. and trans. Choiselet and Vernet, p. 262–69 and p. 326–28. See especially Williams, *The Cistercians*, p. 250–53, and Kinder, *Cistercian Europe*, p. 361–65, for accounts based on the Cistercian customary.

41. Bell, "Cistercians and Medicine", p. 163; Williams, *The Cistercians*, p. 252; Fergusson and Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey*, p. 123 n. 15. For the early usages, see *Les "Ecclesiastica officia"*, ed. and trans. Choiselet and Vernet, p. 254–60. In the later Middle Ages, some of the larger Benedictine houses at least had a separate house for blood-letting and recovery and the whole event was regarded as a holiday. At Bardney (Lincolnshire), a grave cover records that Prior Walter Langton built the new place for the *minuti* at Southrey two miles from the abbey before 1426 (Brakspear, "Bardney Abbey", p. 65–67).

42. This is one of the reasons given by Bell for the large size of infirmaries ("Cistercian Infirmaries", p. 230–31).

43. Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St Gall: A Study of the Architecture and Economy of, and Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, 3 vols (Berkeley, 1979), I, p. 314 and figs 247–50; II, p. 184.

44. Williams, *The Cistercians*, p. 250; Kinder, *Cistercian Europe*, p. 364.

45. *Chronicon Abbatie de Parco Lude*, ed. Venables, p. 13; Williams, *The Cistercians*, p. 250.

46. Thomas de Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa*, III, p. 223–24.

47. Quoted in Dimier, "Infirmaries cisterciennes", p. 811.

48. Carole Rawcliffe, "On the threshold of eternity": Care for the Sick in East Anglian Monasteries", in *East Anglia's History*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Carole Rawcliffe, and Richard G. Wilson (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 41–72 (p. 49). At Benedictine Westminster, it was also usual for all but the very ill to be admitted only as "day-cases", even in the later Middle Ages (Harvey, *Living and Dying*, p. 98 and 91–92).

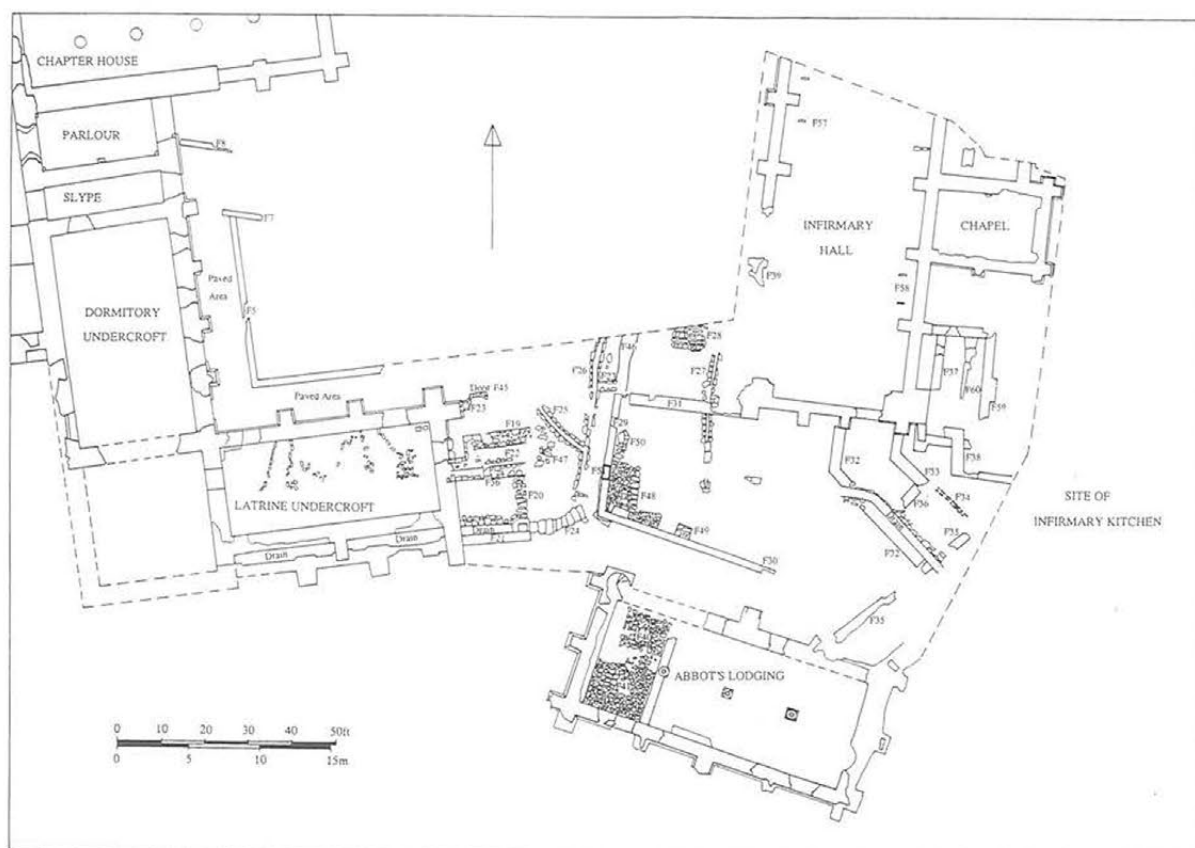


Figure 5. Croxden Abbey, plan of eastern buildings and excavations. (after Peter Ellis, "Croxden Abbey, Staffordshire: Report on Excavations 1956–57 and 1975–77", *Transactions of the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 36 [1995], with additions; reproduced with permission)

Some of these divisions can be seen, if not precisely identified, in surviving buildings. At Croxden Abbey (Fig. 5), there is evidence in foundations and parchmarks of chambers added to the infirmary hall to the south-east and south-west and perhaps also the north-east.⁴⁹ Rievaulx's infirmary hall, built in the 1150s, was divided in a complex manner into many rooms, but the date and purpose of the divisions is not known.⁵⁰ Where refectories have been identified, they have been identified as misericords, for the eating of meat, and not just by those in the infirmary but by the whole community in turn. They are frequently separate buildings, invariably erected later than the infirmary. Examples include buildings at

Furness, Jervaulx (though here south of the cloister near the refectory), Fountains, and Beaulieu.⁵¹ Prior to the use of misericords, part of the infirmary proper must have been used as a refectory, whether it was just for the infirm or a wider community. In 1228, in one of his injunctions to the abbeys of Ireland, Stephen of Lexington required that monks and lay brothers should eat together in their own infirmaries, save for the bed-ridden and blind.⁵² Given the appalling conditions in the Cistercian abbeys of Ireland at the time (as Stephen of Lexington saw it), this comment can almost certainly be read as a reflection of the norm elsewhere — a norm only practicable for the relatively fit.

49. Hall, "Croxden Abbey", p. 95–95 and fig. 67.

50. Fergusson and Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey*, p. 111–15.

51. For Furness, see Harrison, Wood, and Newman, *Furness Abbey*, p. 20; for Jervaulx, Hope and Brakspear, "Jervaulx Abbey", p. 334–35; for Fountains, Coppack and Gilyard-Beer, *Fountains Abbey*, p. 51; and for Beaulieu, W.

H. St John Hope and Harold Brakspear, "The Cistercian Abbey of Beaulieu in the County of Southampton", *Archaeological Journal*, 63 (1906), p. 129–86 (p. 171–72).

52. Stephen of Lexington, *Letters from Ireland 1228–1229*, ed. Barry O'Dwyer (Kalamazoo, 1982), p. 164; Williams, *The Cistercians*, p. 251.



Figure 6. Croxden Abbey, stone table end. (author)

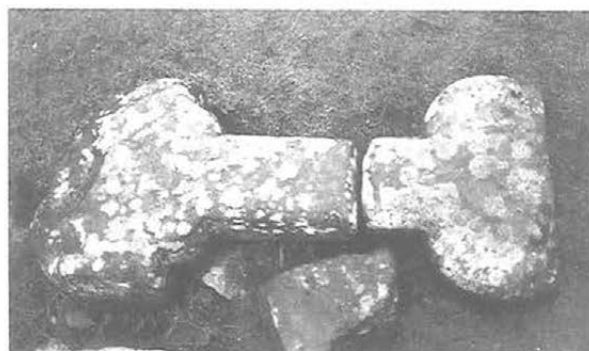


Figure 7. Fountains Abbey, stone table end. (author)

There is evidence of communal eating at Croxden Abbey, where four chalice-shaped stone table legs survive in three of the visible bays (Figs 5 and 6), perhaps indicating use of the infirmary hall as a refectory. Furniture like this does not often survive, which makes dating and comparison difficult, but a table-end similar to the Croxden examples was recently recognized at Fountains (Fig. 7). It lies within the guest hall discovered by remote sensing, provisionally dated to the late twelfth century.⁵³ In any event, they show that the buildings in question, including the infirmary hall at Croxden, were places for formal eating and that this use was, literally, fixed in stone (and buried in the ground), unlike the more mutable uses of a secular hall.

Even if only half the bays were used for eating at Croxden, the infirmary eating space would still be almost as large as the contemporary claustral refectory.⁵⁴ Perhaps those who had been bled were served at one or more tables, elderly monks at another, the convalescent at another, and so on. Following usual practice, the monks would have sat with their backs to the wall and no one would

have faced them.⁵⁵ Allowing eighteen inches of table per person, four monks may have been accommodated at each table (the space between the legs is 1.85 m/6 ft 1 in.), although they might also have sat at the ends. Since Croxden's infirmary probably had two storeys, all the bays in the lower hall could have been occupied by tables, save for those bays with the chapel, the fireplace, and two lateral doors, and thirty-two monks or more could have eaten here, a substantial proportion of the convent even at its height.⁵⁶

The infirmary might also have had other uses, not associated with the infirm. Indeed, it may have been facilities such as those at Croxden that provided the kernel of truth in early criticism of the Order as in the following satirical verse, describing the visitation of a father abbot:

Hinc facturus scrutinium
ad abbatiam equitat,
intrat infirmitorium,
illud in primis visitat;
ibi sumit edulium,
ibi libenter habitat.⁵⁷

53. Keith Emerick and Kate Wilson, "Fountains Abbey: Some Interim Results of Remote Sensing", *English Heritage Conservation Bulletin*, 18 (1992), p. 7–9 (p. 9); Hope, "Fountains Abbey", p. 364. There are also survivals at Roche, Jervaulx, Rievaulx, and (Benedictine) Bardney (Stuart Harrison, "The Cloistral Ranges and a Fresh Look at the Chapter House", in *A Definitive History of Dore Abbey*, ed. Shoesmith and Richardson, p. 113–24 [p. 114]; Fergusson and Harrison, *Rievaulx Abbey*, p. 144–45; Brakspear, "Bardney Abbey", p. 42–44).

54. Hall, "Croxden Abbey", p. 61–63 and 95–102. The size of the infirmary is based upon reconstructing it with six bays.

55. For the social context of eating, see Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven, 1978), p.

30–50, and C. Anne Wilson, "From Medieval Great Hall to Country House Dining Room: The Furniture and Setting of the Social Meal", in *The Appetite and the Eye*, ed. C. Anne Wilson (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 28–55.

56. Hall, "Croxden Abbey", p. 62.

57. From *De visitatione abbatis*, in *The Latin Poems commonly attributed to Walter Mapes*, ed. Thomas Wright, Camden Society, 17 (London, 1841), p. 185, and quoted in Micklethwaite, "Cistercian Plan", p. 256. The author of the poem, however, is almost certainly not that well-known critic of the Cistercians, Walter Map, but anonymous (see A. G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066–1422* [Cambridge, 1992], p. 88, and A. G. Rigg, "Satire", in *Medieval Latin*, ed. Frank A. C. Mantello and A. G. Rigg [Washington, DC, 1996], p. 562–67 [p. 564]).

Similar uses are suggested in some of the statutes of the General Chapter. In 1193, visiting abbots are enjoined to be an example to the flock, and this included not entering infirmaries too lightly.⁵⁸ It was allowed, however, for visiting abbots to interview monks there (among other places) in both the *Instituta* (ca. 1147) and the 1202 codifications.⁵⁹ In 1205 the Abbot of Rigny was punished for receiving in the infirmary a bishop whom he could have received conveniently elsewhere, and the Abbot of Cherlieu was punished for receiving bishops, archbishops, and abbots in the monks' infirmary. The latter statute ended with the general admonition that seculars should not again be lodged in infirmaries.⁶⁰ Also in 1205, the Abbot of Pontigny was condemned for receiving the Queen of France and her party; among other things they stayed for two nights in the infirmary. In 1211, the Abbot of Bithaine was deposed for allowing seventy priests access to the church, chapter house, and refectory and, presumably on the same occasion, eating with abbots in the infirmary.⁶¹ In 1218, all abbots were prohibited from entering and leaving the infirmary on the same day, perhaps to prevent them using its table as their private hall, while the Abbot of Sambucina was deposed for leading the monks of Eberbach to his own house, a crime seemingly aggravated by his staying for six weeks in the infirmary of Eberbach.⁶²

Although it is possible to interpret some of these statutes as meaning that abbots and other dignitaries were received into the monks' infirmary for medical care, it seems much more likely that they reflect a situation in which the lack of separate abbots' lodgings was handicapping abbots from conducting their abbatial business, including necessary entertaining and hospitality. The (re)building of great infirmaries in stone during the thirteenth century might even have been made with this extra function in mind. The lack of later statutes on the issue suggests a growing realization throughout the Order of the necessity of this sort of use. Indeed, in 1260

the General Chapter released abbots from the weekly rotas of reading, kitchen service, and other duties and also granted them leave to rest in the infirmary.⁶³ This isn't the equivalent of entertaining but is definitely an official loosening of how an infirmary might be used.

The Abbot of Croxden and his guests might have eaten at the infirmary table prior to the construction of the new abbot's hall in 1335, since the *Rule* did specify that abbots were to eat with guests away from the monks' refectory.⁶⁴ After completion of the abbot's hall, if not before, the infirmary hall might have easily passed into use as a misericord, where all members of the community could eat meat away from the cloister, after bleeding and on other occasions, as discipline relaxed.

Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to show the mutable nature of both infirmaries and chambers — including abbots' chambers — in Cistercian monastic life, as well as the potential connections between the two. Evidence suggests that infirmaries were partially appropriated by abbots, or even designed with abbatial use in mind. As separate abbots' lodgings were built, often close by infirmaries and sharing some of the same facilities, infirmaries might have been put to other uses besides caring for the sick. This could include the provision of private chambers for monastic officers, guests, or retired abbots, a provision which also found expression in the springing up of new buildings or the reuse of old ones, such as early abbots' lodgings. This multiplicity of chambers, and the physical similarities of infirmaries and lodgings, has often resulted in confusing physical remains, which require careful consideration before these buildings can be properly interpreted.

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58. *Twelfth-Century Statutes from the Cistercian General Chapter*, ed. Chrysogonus Waddell, *Cîteaux: Studia et Documenta*, 12 (Brecht, 2002), p. 257.

59. *Narrative and Legislative Texts*, ed. Waddell, p. 408; Bernard Lucet, *La Codification cistercienne de 1202 et son évolution ultérieure* (Rome, 1964), p. 107.

60. *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis ab Anno 1116 ad Annum 1786*, ed. Joseph-Marie Canivez, 8 vols (Leuven, 1933–41), 1, p. 312–13, 316.

61. *Ibid.*, 1, p. 389.

62. *Ibid.*, 1, p. 487.

63. *Ibid.*, 11, p. 461, 501–02.

64. *Rule*, ed. and trans. McCann, chs 53 and 56.