ABSTRACT

Patronage, Pastoral Provision and the Secular Clergy in the Dioceses of Worcester and Hereford during the Thirteenth Century, by S.C. Townley (Oriel College). Submitted to the University of Oxford for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Michaelmas Term, 1985.

The thesis is concerned with parochial patronage, recruitment of beneficed and unbeneficed secular clergy, and the quality of pastoral provision during the thirteenth century, with reference to the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford.

Chapter one examines the main characteristics of the dioceses and the ways in which these affected religious life, concentrating on the parish structure and the impact of war.

Chapter two concerns parochial patronage as a property right, tracing the distribution of advowson ownership and examining how patronage was viewed by patrons themselves. Amongst laymen there survived anachronistic attitudes reminiscent of proprietary right; while for monasteries the financial advantages of appropriation were generally as important as the actual right of presentation.

Chapter three examines the exercise of parochial patronage by the different advowson-owning groups. Although the composition of the beneficed clergy reflected the pressure to provide for relatives and retainers, the quality of pastoral provision was not affected by the type of patronage; while much influence was exercised by and between all patronage groups. Poorer churches and vicarages were often held by obscure clerks, possibly promoted through merit.

Chapter four concerns the origins, recruitment and employment of unbeneficed clergy. Most apparently found employment within the parish structure or in private service, the process being partially discernible in the granting of titles by potential (and usually local) employers. Some possessed their own lands, though most probably did not.

Chapter five examines the secular clergy in local society and their relations with the laity. Their incomes generally set them apart from the lesser peasantry, although as those of unbeneficed clerks were largely unregulated the vicarage system remained undermined. In other respects attempts to reform the clergy were generally successful, although the laity continued to exert much influence on religious life and even on recruitment of assistant clergy,

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The thesis is concerned with three separate but closely related issues of central importance to the thirteenth-century Church: parochial patronage and its exercise; the recruitment and quality of the secular clergy, beneficed and unbeneficed; and the adequacy of the pastoral network. While each of these issues has received some separate attention from historians over the past few decades, this has generally been in isolation, and seldom with particular reference either to a specific locality or to the thirteenth century. The right of advowson has been examined primarily in terms of the secular and canonical legal developments which occurred during the twelfth century, and there have been few detailed attempts to examine how patrons themselves viewed their rights by the thirteenth century or to relate this to the ways in which patronage was exercised. With some exceptions, most work on the parish system in England has similarly concentrated on its origins and on the crystallization of the classic two-tier structure during the twelfth century, rather than on the detailed pastoral implications of this for a particular region during the period after 1200; while studies of the thirteenth- (as opposed to the fourteenth- or fifteenth-) century clergy mostly concentrate - with the

exception of J.R.H. Moorman's very general survey forty years ago - on those actually beneficed, treating patrons, patronage and the assistant clergy only peripherally. Clearly these issues cannot be completely separated. It is impossible to discuss the quality and composition of the beneficed clergy without reference to the motives and preoccupations of patrons; while the adequacy of pastoral provision was also affected by the parish structure itself and by the quality and pastoral role of the non-beneficed clergy. The present study represents, therefore, an attempt to examine these issues as a unified whole during the hundred years between circa 1200 and circa 1300 - the period during which the Church's attempts to reform and secure control over the secular clergy reached their peak, and by which the evolution of the parish structure is generally considered to have been complete.

The area chosen - that occupied by the medieval dioceses of Worcester and Hereford - has already received some attention for the twelfth century, notably from Professor Brooke and Dom Adrian Morey (The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot, Cambridge, 1967), from Mary Cheney (Roger, Bishop of Worcester, 1164-79, Oxford, 1980), and most recently from Dr. J.S. Barrow ('The Bishops of Hereford and their Acta, 1163-1219', Oxford Univ. D. Phil thesis 1982). For the thirteenth century it remains, however, virtually untouched at present, despite being well served by monastic cartularies and (for the later period) episcopal registers - although the present study also relies heavily on secular and especially legal records. Clearly this region

was not typical in every respect, although within it there were important geographical and ecclesiastical contrasts, and useful comparisons may be made between the two dioceses. On the other hand there were some equally important unifying characteristics; and the final impression is that in an ecclesiastical context the similarities between the thirteenth-century dioceses outweighed the differences.

In the region as a whole, sub-parochial chapels remained especially important, albeit for slightly different reasons, and many continued to play a far-ranging pastoral role. To this extent the concept of a simple 'two-tier' system is, perhaps, rather misleading, since the actual number of gradations was far greater, with some 'chapels' functioning little differently from fully-fledged parish churches; and in fact even by the end of the thirteenth century the distinction between church and chapel remained less rigid and clearcut than developments in canon law might indicate. This had important implications not only for the structure of pastoral provision itself - which continued to rely heavily on this sub-parochial network - but equally for the employment prospects and religious functions of the large number of unbeneficed clergy in thirteenth-century society. In addition, the quality of religious life in this particular region may have been affected by the impact of warfare and (especially) the proximity of the Welsh border - although it is concluded that while the Church in both dioceses suffered economically from the border and baronial conflicts, there was little serious disruption at parish

level.

The recruitment of the beneficed clergy who served these parishes still rested, in the first place, with the patrons of local churches, who are examined in the second chapter. While the structure of advowson ownership remained fairly stable throughout the period, displaying a marked ecclesiastical bias, laymen from a wide range of social classes continued to hold large numbers of advowsons; although the nature of advowson ownership had, in the previous century, undergone a radical transformation in canon law and now represented a far more limited right. It is uncertain how far this change had permeated throughout secular society by the thirteenth century, however, and there is evidence for the survival amongst lay patrons of an anachronistic concept of parochial patronage which continued to see advowson ownership as an automatic feudal property right which the Church had no right to regulate or undermine. This view, which lay behind many of the advowson disputes of the period, apparently carried some weight even in the royal courts, while the Church itself continued to accommodate lay feelings on this issue up to a point. This adds an extra dimension to the judicial battle between Church and State for cognizance of advowson suits, and possibly accounts as much as the practical uses of parochial patronage for the value placed upon it by lay lords. Monastic patrons were in a rather different position insofar as they could benefit financially from advowson ownership through appropriation; and there is evidence that in this region, where

religious houses were severely impoverished through war and other causes, these financial benefits could be extremely important, in general even overriding the need to provide retainers with benefices.

But if patronage brought other, more amorphous benefits to its owners, it was nevertheless primarily a right to be used; and it was here that patrons exerted their most direct influence on the composition of the beneficed clergy. There is no evidence that the quality of pastoral provision was likely to be any different according to the type of patron, although patrons' requirements and preoccupations do show clearly in the types of clerk presented. The idea that benefices could be used to provide for non-resident administrators, lawyers and advisers was common to all classes of patron, bishops included, although rather less so in the case of laymen, who showed a greater preoccupation with provision for kinsmen - possibly because, by the later thirteenth century, their administrative and legal staff were not always in orders. No patronage-group exercised its rights in isolation however, and a great deal of mutual pressure was exerted on, by and between all patronage-groups. Ultimately the need to establish favour, goodwill and influence in high places was clearly as important as the need to provide for one's own retainers and relatives.

Such uses of patronage were generally confined to the richer rectories, and there are signs that in poorer churches and vicarages, there was perhaps some selection by merit, especially through the monastic schools and the bishops. The extent of non-residence in the

richer rectories however, combined with the pastoral significance of sub-parochial chapels, highlights the importance in local religious life of the unbeneficed clergy, as well as suggesting ways in which many of the vast numbers ordained may have been absorbed. The evidence from this region confirms furthermore that parochial staffs were often quite large; while other clerks were absorbed into private employment in religious houses, chantries and private chapels. Up to a point the ordination lists show recruitment in action, through the 'titles' granted to ordinands by incumbent clergy, religious houses and other potential employers; and altogether the evidence suggests that the majority of those ordained, despite their numbers, must have found at least temporary employment, mostly (like the beneficed clergy) through local networks. Some of them had quite substantial patrimonies irrespective of employment; although the evidence of the ordination lists is inconclusive, and it is suggested that many, possibly a majority, were non-inheriting younger sons who were forced to rely first on an external 'title' and later on clerical employment for their upkeep.

Whatever their origins, the status of the clergy employed within the pastoral structure was ultimately conditioned by their income and standard of living. That this should be in keeping with the newly elevated position of the priest in canonical theory was a matter of concern to bishops, and generally the beneficed clergy of both dioceses seem to have enjoyed adequate endowments which put them

at least on a footing with the richer peasantry - although they were also distinguished by their type of income, the bulk of which consisted of tithes and oblations rather than land, vicars especially often receiving their income wholly in kind or cash. This, however, despite their pastoral importance, was not necessarily true of the large numbers of unbeneficed clergy within the pastoral structure, many of whom, even in the later thirteenth century, were still hired privately and informally, received unregulated stipends, and may not even have enjoyed security of tenure. To this extent the vicarage system, and the ideals behind it, remained partially compromised; although other aspects of the reform movement achieved more positive results. By the end of the period standards of clerical conduct and education amongst the clergy, unbeneficed as well as beneficed, were apparently seen as adequate, while clerical marriage in particular had been all but eradicated as a normal social institution; and in this respect the Church succeeded in wrenching the priest apart from secular society. On the other hand, the role of the laity themselves was not as passive as ecclesiastical pronouncements might suggest; and parishioners continued to take an active interest in the provision of adequate pastoral facilities, in the running of churches and (in particular) local chapels, and even in the recruitment of parish staff. Despite a comparative dearth of information this is an important and over-neglected part of the overall picture; and combined with evidence for the continuing close relations between secular patrons and the churches

on their fees, and for the survival of anachronistic ideas about parochial patronage, suggests that the role of the thirteenth-century laity within the pattern of local religious life and the structure of pastoral provision was perhaps more important than has generally been allowed for.

PATRONAGE, PASTORAL PROVISION AND THE SECULAR CLERGY IN THE DIOCESES OF WORCESTER AND HEREFORD DURING THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

BY

SIMON CHARLES TOWNLEY.

(ORIEL)

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List of Abbreviations

Ann. Mon.	Annales Monastici, ed. H.R. Luard (5 vols, Rolls Ser., 1864-9).
AASS (Oct. I)	Acta Sanctorum, Octobris, Tom.I (Antwerp, 1765).
Beauch. Cart.	The Beauchamp Cartulary Charters, 1100-1268, ed. E. Mason (Pipe Roll Soc., new ser., xliii, 1980).
BL	British Library
— (AM)	———————— Additional MS.
— (HM)	———————— Harleian MS.
— (CM)	———————— Cotton MS.
Bodl. L.	Bodleian Library.
BRS	Bristol Record Society.
Cal.Ch.R.	Calendar of Charter Rolls preserved in the PRO (HMSO, 1903 -).
(Cal.)Clo.R.	(Calendar of) Close Rolls preserved in the PRO (HMSO, 1900 -).
Cal.Inq.p.m.	Calendar of Inquisitions post mortem...in the PRO (HMSO, 1904 -).
Cal.Pap.L.	Calendar of Papal Registers, vols. i-ii. Papal Letters 1198 - 1342, ed. W.H. Bliss (HMSO, 1893-5).
(Cal.) Pat.R.	(Calendar of) Patent Rolls...in the PRO (HMSO, 1901 -).
CYS	Canterbury and York Society.
Cat.Anc.D.	Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds...in the PRO (6 vols, HMSO, 1890-1915).
Cirenc.Cart.	The Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey, Gloucestershire, ed. C.D. Ross (2 vols, Oxford, 1964).
Cur.Reg.R.	Curia Regis Rolls preserved in the PRO (HMSO, 1922-).
Councils and Synods	Councils and Synods, with other Documents relating to the English Church, II. A.D. 1205-1313, ed. F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney (2 vols, Oxford 1964).
DB.	Domesday Book, gen.ed. J. Morris (35 vols, Chichester 1976 -).
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography.
DS	Dugdale Society.
EHR	English Historical Review.
EPNS	English Place Name Society.
Extra	'Decretalium Gregorii pp.IX Compilatio', in Corpus Iuris Canonici, vol.ii, ed. E. Friedberg (Leipzig, 1881).
Eyton	R.W. Eyton, Antiquities of Shropshire (12 vols, London, 1854-60).
Glouc. Cart.	Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae, ed. W.H. Hart (3 vols, Rolls Ser., 1863-7).

Heref. Cath. Muns.	A Calendar of the Earlier Hereford Cathedral Muniments, ed. R.G. Charles and H.D. Emanuel (3 vols, National Library of Wales, 1955).
J.Eccl.Hist.	Journal of Ecclesiastical History.
Landboc Winch.	Landboc sive Registrum Monasterii...de Winchelcumba, ed. D. Royce (2 vols, Exeter, 1892-1904).
M.	Magister, master.
Mon. Angl.	W. Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum, ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel (6 vols. in 8, London, 1817-30).
P & P	Past and Present.
PRO	Public Record Office
Reg. Cantelupe.	Registrum Thome de Cantilupo, ed. R.G. Girffiths (CYS, ii, 1907).
Reg. Gainsborough	Register of Bishop William Ginsborough, ed. J.W. Willis-Bund (WHS, 1907).
Reg. Giffard.	The Register of Godfrey Giffard, ed. J.W. Willis Bund (2 vols, WHS, 1902).*
Reg. Glouc.	'A Register of the Churches of...St. Peter's Gloucester', ed. D. Walker, Bristol and Gloucs. Archaeological Soc., Records Section, xi (1976), 3-58.
Reg. Reynolds.	The Register of Walter Reynolds, ed. R.A. Wilson (WHS, 1927).
Reg. Swinfield.	Registrum Ricardi de Swinfield, ed. W.W. Capes (CYS, vi,1909).
SCH	Studies in Church History.
Tax.Nich.	Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate P. Nicholai IV, A.D.1291, ed. T. Astle, S. Ayscough and J. Caley (Record Comm., 1802).
TBGAS	Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society.
TRHS	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.
WHS	Worcester Historical Society.
Worc.Reg.I.	The Cartulary of Worcester Cathedral Priory, ed. R.R. Darlington (Pipe Roll Soc., lxxvi, new ser., xxxviii for 1962-3, 1968).
VCH	Victoria History of the Counties of England.

* References are to the printed edn. except where otherwise indicated.

CHAPTER ONE

The Dioceses

(i) Introductory.

The area chosen for this study comprised a region of some size and diversity, at its furthermost points extending 90 miles from north-east of Shrewsbury down to Bristol in the south, and from Warwick and Stratford on Avon in the east through to Clifford, Radnor and the Clun Forest on the westernmost edge of the diocese of Hereford - a distance of around 65 or 70 miles[1]. Within any area of this size, we must expect to find contrasts; and this is especially true of a region which included both the anciently colonized and comparatively rich lands of central Worcestershire and Cotswold Gloucestershire, and the more recently settled and economically backward Marches of Herefordshire and Shropshire - still exposed throughout most of the thirteenth century to the ravages of the Welsh, and existing physically and politically on the fringes of the English-speaking world. Important though these contrasts were, however, they were by no means so strong or consistent as to submerge completely any unifying characteristics within the region; nor did they always neatly correspond to the imaginary line which, running roughly from north to south, cut the area into two ecclesiastically distinct compartments. On the contrary north-east Herefordshire, comprising the more anciently settled central plain and

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1. Ordnance Survey, Monastic Britain (south sheet), (3rd edn., 1976); below, pp. 2-10

containing most of the major towns of the diocese, arguably shared less in common with the rocky wastes of south-west Shropshire or the recently Anglicized regions south-west of the Wye by this period than it did with the more westerly parts of the neighbouring diocese of Worcester; and we should not pre-judge the extent to which even the proximity of the Welsh border effectively set the see of Hereford apart from its more settled neighbours to the east. The aim of the present chapter is two-fold therefore: first to determine how far the ecclesiastical (and in particular the parochial and pastoral) organization of the two dioceses in the thirteenth century was a product of local conditions, historical, topographic and ecclesiastical, and in what ways this affected the quality of religious life in the parishes; and second to enquire how extensively and in what ways the presence of the Welsh border affected religious life not only in the Hereford diocese itself, but equally further east in the more distant diocese of Worcester. Ultimately how far does the current tendency to see the Marches in the thirteenth century as an area socially and politically set apart from the rest of England[1] hold equally true in an ecclesiastical context?

(ii) Diocesan Boundaries.

By 1200 the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford had existed as ecclesiastical units for five and a half centuries, and both owed their origins

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1. See, in particular, J. Meisel, Barons of the Welsh Frontier: the Corbet, Pantulf and Fitz Warin Families 1066-1272 (Nebraska, 1980), pp.xv-xvii, 122-7, 128ff; R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the Marches of Wales 1282-1400 (Oxford, 1978), pp.34-5.

to tribal territorial divisions which were much older. Place-name and other evidence suggests that the medieval diocese of Worcester represented fairly exactly the territory of the Saxon Hwicce, a folk who by the eighth century, moving up the Severn, had colonized south-west Warwickshire, most of modern Gloucestershire east of the Severn estuary, and all of modern Worcestershire; and it was for this people, shortly after the conversion of Mercia in the mid-seventh century, that the new bishopric was created[1]. About the same time the diocese of Hereford, possibly centred initially on Ledbury or on Lydbury North in Shropshire, was similarly created to serve the neighbouring Magonsaetan, a folk who like the Hwicce fell under Mercian domination, and who occupied northern Herefordshire and southern Shropshire[2]. By the time the modern counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire were grafted onto this ancient pattern at some point before the early eleventh century therefore, the outlines of the medieval dioceses were already established, resulting in a complete lack of correlation between the diocesan boundaries and those of the later shires. While the thirteenth-century diocese of Worcester encompassed virtually all of modern Worcestershire, it nevertheless cut straight across the neighbouring county

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1. A.H. Smith, The Place-Names of Gloucestershire, Part iv (EPNS, vol. xli, 1965), pp.30-4; A. Mawer and F.M. Stenton, The Place-Names of Worcestershire (EPNS, vol. iv, 1927), pp.xiv-xv; J.E.B. Gover, A. Mawer and F.M. Stenton, The Place-Names of Warwickshire (EPNS, vol. xiii, 1936), pp.xv-xvii.
2. H.P.R. Finberg, 'Mercians and Welsh', Lucerna (London, 1964), pp.70-82; Smith, P.N. Gloucs. iv.32; F.M. Stenton in An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Herefordshire (3 vols, Royal Comm. Hist. Monuments, England, 1931-4), iii. lv-lvi; The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot, ed. A. Morey and C.N.L. Brooke (Cambridge, 1967), No. 227 (p.300) and n.

of Warwick from north-west to south-east, including Stratford on Avon and Warwick itself but omitting Coventry. Similarly the Hereford diocese not only included all of modern Herefordshire save for one or two peripheral villages and some Welsh areas to the south-west, but also took in the south-west half of Shropshire, the remainder of which (including Shrewsbury and Bridgenorth) formed part of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield. Gloucestershire's western border had originally followed the diocesan boundary between Worcester and Hereford, running along the Severn estuary and up the River Leadon; but by 1086 the shire had been extended to include the Forest of Dean on the west bank of the Severn, and so remained divided between the two dioceses throughout the middle ages, its south-west corner falling into Hereford diocese.[1]

By the thirteenth century the course of the diocesan boundaries was well established in broad outline therefore, particularly in the more settled eastern areas. The Worcester diocese's eastern border changed little if at all between the eighth century and 1291[2]; while the late medieval boundary between the two dioceses, running up the River Leadon from Minsterworth, cutting across the Malverns to the Teme and eventually rejoining the Severn, similarly conformed in most respects to that described in an early eleventh-century survey commissioned by Bishop Athelstan of Hereford[3]. On Hereford's western fringe, where for 90 miles from

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1. Ordnance Survey, Monastic Britain (south sheet); Gover, Mawer and Stenton, P.N. Warws., pp.xvi and n.2, xvii, xix; Smith, P.N. Gloucs. iv. 1-2; V.C.H. Shrops. ii.1; D.B. xvii (Heref.), Introductory note 4 (unpaginated).
2. Gover, Mawer and Stenton, P.N. Warws., pp.xvi-xvii.
3. The Early Charters of the West Midlands, ed. H.P.R. Finberg (Leicester, 1961), pp.225-7; V.C.H. Shrops, ii.1; Ordnance Survey, Monastic Britain (south sheet).

Alberbury in the north down to Beachley on the Severn the diocesan boundary touched the fluid border between England and Wales, the picture was less clear-cut however. The western boundary itself, which around Radnor and in the Clun Forest region of Shropshire projected into Wales for several miles beyond the line of Offa's Dyke, perhaps represented the original extent of Magonsaetan territory - particularly in view of the English placenames which appear on the Welsh side of the dyke at these points, and which led Stenton to suggest that these were once English lands subsequently lost and possibly surrendered by Offa[1]. In contrast the area to the south-west of Hereford between the Wye and the Monnow - that which by 1291 comprised the medieval archdeaconry of Archenfield - remained in Welsh hands until the eleventh century, and even in 1086 was still a semi-autonomous Welsh district with its own customs and social organization[2]. Also in the south-west, the area known as Ewyas (which included Ewyas Harold and Ewyas Lacy, now Longtown) was never absorbed,, and remained part of the Welsh diocese of St. Davids[3].

Sections of this western boundary remained ill-defined until quite late in the thirteenth century. During the 1270's and 1280's Bishops Cantelupe and Swinfield engaged in a bitter and long-running dispute with the bishop of St. Asaph concerning the course of the diocesan boundary between Montgomery and Shrawardine - a contest which on at least two

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1. Hist. Mons. Herefordshire, iii. lvii; Ordnance Survey, Monastic Britain (south sheet); Finberg, 'Mercians and Welsh', pp. 72, 81-2.
2. H.C. Darby and I.B. Terrett, The Domesday Geography of Midland England (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1971), pp. 53-5, 67; DB. xvii (heref.), Introductory note 1 (unpaginated); Tax. Nich. p.160.
3. Ordnance Survey, Monastic Britain (south sheet); DB.xvii (Heref.), Introductory note 1 (unpaginated).

occasions resulted in armed bands of Welsh clerics from nearby churches invading the disputed areas in defence of their rights, and at one point forcibly removing bodies for burial from the parish of Alberbury. The question was only finally settled in 1288, when a panel of jurors confirmed that the Severn represented the true 'et antiquus terminus'; although even then the bishop of St. Asaph remained unconvinced that Buttington and its neighbouring villages, situated on the Hereford side, should have been included in the dispute[1]. Uncertainty similarly existed as to whether the south-western boundary of the diocese near Ewyas Harold took in the Cistercian abbey of Dore; and in 1284 Bishop Swinfield had to discipline the abbot for attempting to appoint his own commissioners to decide the issue, while on another occasion Thomas Cantelupe is said to have dedicated the abbey church confronted by an armed band[2].

These disputes are themselves symptomatic however of the extent to which the western boundary was crystallizing and becoming more rigorously defined by the later thirteenth century; and as such are indicative not so much of the continuing fluidity of Hereford's Welsh border, as of the increasing tendency during this period towards the rigidification of ecclesiastical organization and the definition of their rights by ardent reforming bishops. Even the long-settled northern boundary of the Worcester diocese was subject to just such a redefinition in 1238, when

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.140, 284, 286-8; Reg. Swinfield, pp.8, 185, 190, 193-4, 196-202, 204-10; and see ibid., pp. 220-1, 223-4.
2. Reg. Swinfield, pp.58-61; AASS (Oct.I), p.566.

Walter Cantelupe reached an amicable agreement with the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield concerning the small borough of Dudley - the village and its churches remaining in the diocese of Worcester, while the castle and monastic cell passed to that of Coventry and Lichfield[1].

Nevertheless, the comparatively recent Anglicization of some areas, combined with the inhospitable nature of the western and north-western uplands, inevitably affected the general character of the western diocese. In contrast to the long-settled and prosperous Cotswolds or central Worcestershire plain, large areas remained sparsely populated and underdeveloped, particularly the recently-acquired lands to the south-west and the barren uplands of north-west Herefordshire and south-west Shropshire. The Forest of Dean, although long under English dominion, similarly remained largely uncolonized except on its fringes, partly because of poor soils and steep relief, partly as a consequence of the protective laws of the forest - although assarting continued throughout the period[2]. On the other hand these western areas were not representative of the diocese as a whole, and the contrast should not be taken too far. The central and eastern Herefordshire plains, which comprised the heart of the diocese, were as early as 1086 long settled and reasonably prosperous, with a population density equal to that of eastern Gloucestershire, central Worcestershire and much of Warwickshire; and it is with these regions -

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1. Ann. Mon, iv.429.
2. Darby and Terrett, Domesday Geography, pp.50-2, 78-80, 109-12, 270-1; D. Sylvester, The Rural Landscape of the Welsh Border (London, 1969), p.44; Smith, P.N. Gloucs. iv. 6-8, 20; below p.34.

rather than with, for example, the far poorer and less developed 'Marcher' county of Cheshire - that much of the diocese should be compared[1]. Similarly, while the Hereford diocese did not possess so great a concentration of market towns as its eastern neighbour, its position as a frontier region nevertheless brought economic compensations, with several small boroughs emerging very early alongside the major castles, while Hereford itself was a thriving free borough by the thirteenth century[2]. Conversely Worcestershire remained unevenly developed; and in 1287 Bishop Giffard of Worcester was moved to complain of the barrenness of his episcopal manors[3].

While there were certainly contrasts in the region therefore, these by no means followed consistently the diocesan boundary - a fact well illustrated in the valuation of ecclesiastical property undertaken by the papal commissioners in 1291[4]. Problems persist as to precisely what the figures given represent and how they were assessed, although the list nevertheless gives a reasonably comprehensive overview of the comparative incomes of churches throughout the region, the gross values recorded being summarized in Table I (over).

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1. Darby and Terrett, Domesday Geography, pp.107-8, 110, 429; Sylvester, Rural Landscape, p.181.
2. M.W. Beresford, New Towns of the Middle Ages (London, 1967), pp. 450-1, 478-80; M.D. Lobel, 'Hereford', Historic Towns, i (London and Oxford, 1969), pp.4-7.
3. Darby and Terrett, Domesday Geography, pp.267-71, 426, 429; Reg. Giffard, ii.301.
4. Tax. Nich. pp.157-77, 216-40.

TABLE I

COMPARATIVE GROSS VALUES OF BENEFICES IN THE DIOCESES OF WORCESTER AND HEREFORD AS GIVEN IN THE 1291 PAPAL TAXATION.

NUMBERS (& PERCENTAGES) OF CHURCHES			VALUE OF BENEFICES							
			UNDER £4	£4- £9-19-11	£10- -£14-19-11	£15- £19-19-11	£20- £24-19-11	£25- £29-19-11	£30- £39-19-11	OVER £40	
Diocese of Worcester	Archdeaconry of Worcester:		5(2.9)	88(50.9)	27(15.6)	21(12.1)	16(9.2)	8(4.6)	7(4.1)	1(0.6)	173(100)
	Archdeaconry of Gloucester:		6(3.2)	78(41.9)	54(29.0)	15(8.1)	12(6.4)	7(3.8)	7(3.8)	7(3.8)	186(100)
	Total for Diocese:		11(3.1)	166(46.2)	81(22.6)	36(10.0)	28(7.8)	15(4.2)	14(3.9)	8(2.2)	359(100)
		177 (49.3)									
Diocese of Hereford	Archdeaconry of Hereford:		40(21.8)	64(35.0)	32(17.5)	9(4.9)	16(8.7)	10(5.5)	4(2.2)	8(4.4)	183(100)
	Archdeaconry of Salop:		30(26.0)	39(34.0)	18(15.6)	10(8.7)	6(5.2)	4(3.5)	4(3.5)	4(3.5)	115(100)
	Total for Diocese:		70(23.5)	103(34.6)	50(16.7)	19(6.4)	22(7.4)	14(4.7)	8(2.7)	12(4.0)	298(100)
		173 (58.1)									

NOTE: Since total values for individual churches are not always given in the Taxatio, not every church listed is included in the above table.

It will be seen that although a substantially higher number of churches were valued at under £4 in the Hereford diocese, overall there was no consistent contrast in value between the two dioceses, or even between different deaneries - the majority of churches throughout the region being valued at under £10, with a sizeable number in both dioceses being worth considerably more.

It should be emphasized however that these figures represent not clerical income, but merely the gross annual income of the churches concerned, inclusive of all portions and pensions. In reality, the well-being of the priest charged with cure of souls depended on a number of other factors, chief amongst which was the status of his church - rectory, vicarage or chapel; while given the political history of this region during the thirteenth century, his income may also have been affected at some point by the intrusions of Welsh raiders or baronial armies. Any attempt to evaluate the actual economic and social status of the secular clergy in our region must consequently be deferred until each of these issues has been examined in more detail[1].

(iii) Parish Structure and Pastoral Provision : (a) General Characteristics.

In contrast to their general outline, the internal structure of the thirteenth-century dioceses was comparatively recent. The archdeaconries and their component deaneries were established by the mid-twelfth century - the former generally following the county boundaries between (respectively)

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1. Clerical income is discussed below, pp. 278-306.

Shropshire and Herefordshire and Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, while the latter were for the most part centred on monastic churches or on old-established and well-endowed parish churches, several of which, particularly in the Hereford diocese, were former minsters[1]. Most recent of all - and for our purposes the most important insofar as they represented not simply an administrative division, but rather the fundamental pastoral unit of the later middle ages - were the parishes themselves.

That is not to deny that many local churches in both dioceses were of great antiquity, several having their origins as far back as Domesday or even earlier, while many more owed their existence to Norman enterprise and were well-established long before 1200. It is impossible however to speak of a 'parish' system in the modern (or late medieval) sense before the late twelfth century, to which date belong the developments in canon law which gave it a fixed form and substance. True, the word parochia was almost as old as Christianity itself; and although even in the mid-twelfth century it might still be applied to a bishop's diocese[2], long before then it was already being used to describe a small and self-contained unit of pastoral organization. But up until the mid-twelfth century at the earliest, the structure which this implied remained fluid and inconsistent, with Norman landowners continuing to alienate their demesne tithes wholesale, and manorial churches being founded on a

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1. Tax. Nich. pp.157-61, 165-7, 216-24; J.S. Barrow, 'The Bishops of Hereford and their Acta, 1163-1219', (Oxford Univ. D. Phil thesis, 1982), pp.68-70; R.M. Haines, The Administration of the Diocese of Worcester in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century (London, 1965), p.13. On former minsters see below, pp.16-20.
2. e.g. PRO C115 K2/6683 (Lanthony cart.), f.32v.

large scale. Only as theoretical distinctions between church and chapel became more clearly defined during the twelfth century and - just as important - only as bishops keen to establish their authority over such matters started to protect and enforce these newly defined rights more vigorously, did the modern ' parish structure' really begin to crystallize[1]. In our own region, as elsewhere, this process was all but complete by the thirteenth century - although even by 1300 the structure was by no means as rigid or clearly defined as might be imagined[2]. Firstly however, what were the essentials of this structure as it had evolved in the region by circa 1200?

The dioceses of Worcester and Hereford contained, in the thirteenth century, around 400 and 300 parishes respectively[3] - although within this framework there was much diversity, not least in the relative size of parishes. Across the region as a whole the majority incorporated anything between 1,000 and 4,000 acres; although in both dioceses there were parish churches, some of them established by 1086, which served areas of only a

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1. On the question generally see C.N.L. Brooke, 'The Missionary at Home. The Church in the Towns, 1000 - 1250', SCH. vi (1970), 68-72; W.J. Blair, 'Landholding, Church and Settlement in Surrey before 1300', (Oxford Univ. D. Phil thesis 1982), pp.281-95, 327-41; R. Lennard, Rural England 1086-1135 (Oxford, 1959), pp.295-302; below pp.24-33
2. See below, pp.25-33.
3. It is impossible to be more specific since the status of many churches remained in doubt throughout the century, and even the 1291 Taxatio is unreliable and inconsistent: below pp.25-31,38-43. Prof. Hilton's statement that there were 445 parishes in the Worcester diocese merely follows Willis Bund in Reg. Giffard, i.ciii, and cannot be substantiated. (R.H. Hilton, A Medieval Society (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1983), p.61).

few hundred acres[1]. At the other extreme, and again in both dioceses, a substantial number of churches served vast parishes of over 10,000 acres - most of these being old-established foundations dating back to Domesday or beyond, and many representing the thirteenth-century descendants of Anglo-Saxon minsters. In the Hereford diocese the Shropshire churches of Alberbury and Westbury, probably both former minsters, served areas of over 8,000 and 11,000 acres respectively - Westbury parish encompassing thirteen separate townships with chapels at Yockleton and (by the later thirteenth century) at Cause, while Alberbury similarly contained several hamlets which have since disappeared or dwindled into mere farms[2]. In the neighbouring diocese the Domesday churches of Halesowen and Bromsgrove, together with that of Kidderminster which almost certainly pre-dates its earliest documentary notices, similarly served parishes of over11,000 acres[3].

Chapelries and multiple townships were not confined to these exceptional remnants of the pre-conquest structure however; and it remained common for parishes to include not only more than one village, but frequently one or more dependent chapels - hardly surprising given an average parish area of

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1. e.g. Shelsley Walsh, Edvin Loach, Stockton on Teme, Blaisdon, Syde, Spetchley, Warndon, Gt. Comberton, North Piddle, Billesley, Hadzor, Martin Hussingtree, Halford: VCH Worcs. iii. 127, 524, 552; iv. 57, 135, 177, 272, 335, 345; VCH Gloucs. vii. 227, x.6; VCH Warws. iii, 58, v.89. For parish areas generally, see VCH Worcs, Gloucs, Warws and Shrops. passim.
2. VCH Shrops. viii. 181, 188, 213, 295, 302-3, 326; Reg. Swinfield, pp.162-4; and see below pp. 15-22.
3. VCH Worcs. iii. 19-20, 31, 123, 136, 149, 158, 175.

some 2,000 or 3,000 acres. This was especially true in the more anciently-settled lands of central Worcestershire and eastern Gloucestershire, where parishes tended to be focused on old-established nucleated villages, and where there was a high degree of secondary settlement[1]. In the Cotswold deanery of Stonehouse there were, in addition to 25 parish churches, at the very least a total of 8 chapels of ease divided between 6 parishes, while from the early thirteenth century there was a chantry chapel at Bisley near to the manor house, and there may also have been a chapel of ease to Minchinhampton at Rodborough, although the earliest documentary evidence dates from the late fourteenth century[2]. Extensive though this network was however, not every village in this densely-populated region, let alone every outlying farmstead, possessed its own chapel. The church at Stroud - itself still a chapelry - also served the villages of Over and Nether Lypiatt and Bourne. Brimpsfield, as well as having outlying chapels at Cranham and Birdlip, included the hamlet of Caudle Green in addition to the sites of the priory and castle, and by 1241 there was an outlying farmstead at Eddington. By the twelfth century Coberley parish contained a number of dwellings even in its more sparsely-settled eastern part, notably at Upper Coberley; while Cowley, as well as including the western part of the village of Birdlip, had settlement at West Cowley by the early thirteenth century. Tetbury in particular served a large parish which included the hamlets

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1. Smith, P.N. Gloucs. iv. 8, 14-15.
2. Tax. Nich. p.221; VCH Gloucs. vii. 149, 208; x.123; xi. 32, 34-5, 136-7, 182, 201, 209, 215, 231, 235, 245; and see VCH Gloucs. x. 264-5.

of Upton, Charlton, Doughton and Elmstree in addition to its own rapidly expanding town; and early in the fourteenth century almost as many inhabitants were assessed for the 1327 lay subsidy from these surrounding hamlets as from the town itself[1].

Further west in the diocese of Hereford, settlement tended to be less nucleated. Much of Herefordshire was covered by dispersed settlement mingled with hamletting, while the Welsh area of Archenfield and the interior of the Forest of Dean remained sparsely populated even in the nineteenth century - although large villages set cleanly in open country were not unknown. By the thirteenth century the Forest of Dean was rimmed on its western edge and along the Severn Valley by a line of strongly nucleated vills centred on churches at Staunton, Newland and St. Briavels, and at Alvington, Aylburton and Newnham; while south-west Shropshire contained a number of large nucleated vills centred on ancient minsters at Pontesbury, Westbury, Worthen and Chirbury[2]. The result was that while some parishes included several nucleated hamlets or villages on the eastern pattern, others consisted of more scattered settlement; and as at Worcester it remained uncommon for parishes to be conterminous with a single village and its common fields. In the Forest deanery, Churcham and Tidenham consisted largely of scattered farmsteads and hamlets - although both included more nucleated settlements also, and Churcham contained

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1. Below p.36 ; VCH Gloucs. vii. 140-2, 149, 208, 174-6, 192-3; xi.257-61. There was a minster at Tetbury in 681: Early Charters of the West Midlands, ed. Finberg, p.31.
2. Sylvester, Rural Landscape, pp.43-4.

chapels of ease at Bulley and (by 1356) at Highnam[1]. Even beyond the Wye in the poorly developed deanery of Archenfield, outlying chapels as a result of dispersal and secondary settlement were not unknown, and Baysham (Sellack) had a chapel at King's Caple by the thirteenth century, while a chapel to Holme Lacy at Bolstone existed before 1200[2]. In the more settled eastern regions nucleation, and chapelries centred on nucleated vills, were again common. In the Herefordshire deanery of Weston the Domesday church of Bodenham served up to eight centres of settlement in the thirteenth century, chapels of ease existing in four of these by the mid-twelfth century; while Dilwyn and Stoke Edith contained chapels at Chadnor and Westhide respectively and served several other villages[3]. Thirteenth-century place-names also occur in other parishes[4].

It was not only patterns of settlement which affected the ratio of churches to chapels however. In the diocese of Hereford in particular, and there most especially in the north-west, the thirteenth-century descendants of Anglo-Saxon minsters continued to exert a strong although variable influence on the structure of pastoral provision well into the century. We have seen that the former minsters of Alberbury and Westbury continued

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1. Glouc. Cart. i. Nos.176-7, 209; VCH Gloucs. x. 11-12, 26, 55; Reg. Trillek (CYS, viii, 1911-12), p.228.
2. Tax. Nich. p.160; Reg. T. Charlton (CYS, ix, 1913), p.70; Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS.271, f.56r; Hist. Mons. Herefordshire, i.24, ii.96.
3. 'Cartularium Prioratus S. Johannis Evang. de Brecon', ed. R.W. Banks, Archaeologia Cambrensis, 4th. ser., xiv (1883), 20, 283; BL (HM) 3586, f.134v, 135v-6r; Tax. Nich. p.158; Hist. Mons. Herefordshire, ii.205; A.T. Bannister, The Place-Names of Herefordshire, their Origin and Development (Cambridge/Hereford, 1916), pp.5, 24, 43, 65, 124, 131, 181.
4. Bannister, P.N. Herefordshire, passim.

to serve areas of over 11,000 acres, and Pontesbury, another Shropshire church, was of a similar type, serving a parish of over 10,000 acres which included 21 separate townships[1]. Several other Shropshire churches serving unusually large parishes in the late middle ages, and often including multiple chapelries, may similarly have been former minsters subsequently reduced to orthodox parochial status. The Domesday church of Bitterley, as well as serving the townships of Middleton (where there may have been a chapel), Cleeton, Henley and Snitton, retained full or partial rights over the churches of Caynham, Hope Baggot and Upper Ledwich throughout the period - Silvington alone amongst its former dependencies apparently achieving full parochial status[2]. Stottesdon and Clun, both of pre-conquest origin, preserved similarly widespread rights, the latter retaining control of no fewer than eight chapelries into the fourteenth century[3].

Most striking of all however were the great monastic <u>parochiae</u> of (in particular) Leominster, Morville and Wenlock, similarly derived from ancient minster lands, but retained by the monks who had superseded the Saxon secular canons at various dates after the conquest[4]. Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries these vast spiritual fiefs continued to decay, although even in the early fourteenth century the parochial structure

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1. Above p.13 ; <u>VCH Shrops</u>. viii. 244, 283.
2. <u>Tax. Nich.</u> pp.166, 175; <u>Eyton,</u> iv. 363, 365, 371, 382; v. 86, 89; <u>Reg. Cantelupe</u>, p.302.
3. <u>The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey</u>, ed. U. Rees (2 vols, Aberystwyth, 1975), i. No.34, ii. p.263 (unnumbered) , No. 351 b; <u>Eyton,</u> iv. 152, 158-60, 163, 171, 180, 182, 192, 289; <u>Tax. Nich.</u> p.166; <u>Cal. Pat. R.</u> 1348-50, pp. 135-6, 188.
4. <u>VCH Shrops</u>. ii. 18, 29-30, 38-40; D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, <u>Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales</u> (2nd edn., London, 1971), pp.69, 71, 161.

in these areas remained markedly different from elsewhere. The full extent of the Leominster 'parish' was defined and confirmed by Bishop Richard de Capella of Hereford early in the twelfth century[1]; and although by 1291 many of the churches originally included were fully parochial, in several instances the process of transformation extended into the thirteenth century. Great Hatfield, which figured as a chapel within the parish throughout the twelfth century, was described as ecclesia and had its own rector by 1202, when it was ruled that a third of the tithes from Nicholas de Billeford's lands, claimed by the prior, in fact belonged to the church - although only in return for an annual payment of a pound of wax, and the prior was still drawing a pension in 1291[2]. The church of Eye was still called a chapel as late as 1200 x 15, when it owed a pension of 4 marks to the mother church, and it is possible that then as in the late twelfth century the rector and parishioners were required to go to Leominster on the four greater feasts of the ecclesiastical year with their offerings; although by 1291 the church enjoyed full parochial rights over its own chapel at Brimfield, and over the vills of Luston, Corfton, Ashton, Merton and 'Castslton'[3]. Other churches remained unequivocally subordinate to Leominster throughout the century. Hope-under-Dinmore, Docklow and Stoke Prior were so listed in the 1291 Taxatio, the latter also serving the vills of

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1. BL (CM) Domit. A. iii, f.59v.
2. BL (CM) Domit. A. iii, f.60r, 61r, 71v-72r, 108v-9r; Tax. Nich. p.159.
3. BL (CM) Domit. A. iii, f.50v-51v, 66r, 67r-v, 71r, 72r-v, 96r-v, 102v, 118r.

Wigton and 'Estebur'; and there were also chapels at 'Eiwda', Eyton, Ford, Miles Hope, Kimbolton, Lucton, Middleton on the Hill, Orleton and Yarpole, each served by chaplains with varying endowments or stipends, and several possessing no burial rights as late as 1271[1].

The situation at Morville and Wenlock was similar. Throughout the century Billingsley, Astley, Underton and Aston Ayer remained chapelries to Morville, which also retained limited pensionary and patronal rights over Oldbury (called a chapel as late as 1200 x 27 but listed as a parish church in 1291), Abdon and Tugford[2]. At Wenlock the survival rate was even higher. The churches of Linley, Monk Hopton, Benthall, Posenhall and Bourton remained subordinate chapels served by stipendiary chaplains into the fourteenth century and beyond, while in 1284 Bishop Swinfield ruled that the chapels of Shipton, Barrow and Acton Round were also fully dependent - in so doing resurrecting a then 170-year-old confirmation that all the lands of St. Milburge (Wenlock) constituted a single parish[3]. In addition the churches of Badger, Beckbury, Broseley, Hughley, Madeley, Little Wenlock, Willey and Stoke St. Milborough, although listed as parochial in the 1291 Taxatio, were subsequently confirmed in 1331 as owing pensions to Much Wenlock, when they too were described as 'churches or chapels'. Both Broseley and

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1. Tax. Nich. p.159; BL (CM) Domit. A. iii, f.58v, 59r-v, 61r-v, 66r, 68v, 102v-103v.
2. Cart. Shrewsbury, ed. Rees, i. Nos. 34, 62; ii. pp.235-6 (unnumbered), Nos. 299 b, 333-4, 340-5, 347-8, 350; Tax. Nich. pp.166-7; Reg. Cantelupe, p.156; Reg. Swinfield, pp.532, 540. Tasley also remained pensionary: Tax. Nich. p.166.
3. Cal. Pat. R. 1348-50, pp.186-9; Reg. Swinfield, pp.62-4; Eyton, ii.42, iii. 232-3, 264-8, 278, 284, 287, iv.29; Bodl. L. MS Top. Salop. d.2, f. 147r.

Willey were later found to be without cure of souls, and along with Little Wenlock were thereafter taxed as chapels - responsibility for providing divine service resting with the vicar of Much Wenlock[1].

In the Hereford diocese therefore the pre-conquest ecclesiastical structure continued to have an important influence throughout the thirteenth century, particularly (though not exclusively) in the northern archdeaconry of Salop. Why should this be? It has been pointed out by Professor Brooke and others that as a general rule a multiplicity of independent parishes developed where old institutions had grown weak or disappeared[2], and this, in reverse, is the crux of the matter here. We have seen that vestiges of these vast pre-conquest parochiae survived the longest where an Anglo-Saxon institution, instead of decaying, had metamorphosed into a monastic corporation as at Leominster, Wenlock or Morville, so that there remained at the centre a powerful corporate body which could continue to defend its inherited rights into the later middle ages - often with considerable success. Where former minsters had degenerated into ordinary rectories or portionary churches, ancient jurisdictions tended to survive only in more limited form, as at Bitterley, Bromyard or Ledbury[3]. The major exceptions were the distant Shropshire parishes of Alberbury, Westbury and Pontesbury, all of which were portionary

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1. Tax. Nich. pp.166, 167; Cal. Pat. R. 1348-50, pp.188-9; Eyton, ii. 34, 59, iii, 326.
2. Brooke, 'The Church in the Towns', p.76; C.N.L. Brooke and G. Keir, London 800-1216: The Shaping of a City (London, 1975), p.142; and cf. Blair, 'Landholding, Church and Settlement', p.245.
3. Neither Ledbury nor Bromyard retained widespread rights, though in the twelfth cent. Ledbury required confirmation of its (unnamed) appurtenances and chapels: Letters and Charters of G. Foliot, ed. Morey and Brooke, No. 227. For Bitterley see above p. 17.

parish churches in the thirteenth century[1] - although here the determining factor may simply have been their distance from the centre of episcopal authority. An entry in Bishop Swinfield's register suggests how this might have helped to perpetuate the older structure in practice. In 1283 the bishop was passing through Holmer, a parish some two miles from Hereford and included within the large area over which the cathedral chapter enjoyed exclusive rights of sepulture, when he was approached by a group of parishioners, who complained that the dean and chapter no longer allowed the burial of poor inhabitants within the parish as had formerly been the custom, and that the body of a local woman had recently been refused burial there. To this Swinfield expressed some surprise, since the parishioners had no means of transporting the body to Hereford, and he requested that the dean and chapter allow the woman to be interred at Holmer[2]. A similar incident occurred in the diocese of York twenty years later, when the archbishop himself, visiting Kingston upon Hull, found a funeral procession precariously making its way along the Humber in high gales to the church of All Saints, Hessle, which had retained exclusive burial rights; and he too made steps to consecrate a cemetery in the town[3]. In both these instances it was solely the fact of the bishop being present to witness the pastoral repercussions of the existing structure which led to a curtailment or erosion

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1. Tax. Nich. p.167; VCH Shrops, viii. 213-4, 283, 326.
2. Reg. Swinfield, pp.16-17.
3. M.W. Beresford, New Towns of the Middle Ages (London, 1967), pp.169-70.

of ancient rights; and in contrast the distant and inaccessible minster-parishes of Shropshire were far less likely to receive the frequent personal attentions of the diocesan, certainly before the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries. In addition, comparatively late settlement in these wilder northern regions must have meant that these ancient jurisdictions remained unthreatened by the foundation of large numbers of manorial churches within their boundaries much later than elsewhere - although during the twelfth century church-building in the region continued apace, and by the early thirteenth century at the latest the pattern which was to subsist in the diocese for the remainder of the middle ages was apparently all but complete.[1]

In the Worcester diocese, the situation was rather different. Not only was the area settled and developed much earlier, which meant both easier access and a multiplicity of local churches from an early date, but here there were also fewer instances of ancient minsters metamorphosing into religious corporations; and where a former Anglo-Saxon church had been reduced to a conventional rectory or vicarage, as in the neighbouring diocese its chances of preserving its former jurisdiction were greatly reduced. This, evidently, was what happened at Berkeley in Gloucestershire, where even in the twelfth century the concept of the 'Berkeley Hernesse' still had some currency - although it was already sufficiently decayed as to be only vaguely and inconsistently defined,

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1. Sylvester, Rural Landscape, pp.180-2; below pp.33 ff.

which produced a mass of litigation during the reign of Henry II. By the later thirteenth century, not one of the churches involved bore any sign of its former subjection[1].

Despite the contrasts however, the situations at Worcester and Hereford were not entirely dissimilar. In particular the great Benedictine monasteries which had dominated the Worcester diocese virtually from its formation represented, like the Hereford minsters which spawned religious houses, a continuity of interests between the Anglo-Saxon and late medieval periods. One result was that where monastic corporations had remained consistently strong, vestiges of ancient jurisdictions similarly survived into the thirteenth century.

The most striking example was in the deanery of Evesham, where by the mid-thirteenth century the abbey had established the independence from diocesan control not only of the house itself, but equally of all the churches in the Vale, which remained chapels subject to the abbey and were served by chaplains installed by the abbot and convent[2]. In the Gloucestershire deanery of Winchcombe, a substantial number of churches similarly remained subject to the pre-conquest monasteries of Deerhurst, Tewkesbury and (to a lesser extent) Winchcombe itself - despite the fact that many served large areas of 2,000 or 3,000 acres which included several centres of settlement. Some had independent advowsons by the

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1. B.R. Kemp, 'The Churches of the Berkeley Hernesse', TBGAS, lxxxvii (1968), 96-110.
2. Cal. Pap. L. i.24-5; Reg. Giffard, i. 9-10; Tax. Nich. p.219; BL (HM) 3763, f.69r, 154r.

late thirteenth century, others were occasionally called ecclesia, but the extent of their independence even in these cases was clearly doubtful, and many remained unequivocally subordinate throughout the period, being served by stipendiary curates or chaplains appointed by the abbey concerned[1]. Ten miles to the north the parish church of Holy Cross in Pershore Abbey retained, if not full parochial jurisdiction, at least extensive burial rights, which in the thirteenth century involved the (technically independent) parish churches of Eckington, Strensham, Pirton, Severn Stoke, Naunton Beauchamp, the Combertons, Peopleton, North Piddle, Abberton, Flyford Flavell, Broughton Hackett, Martin Hussingtree and Upton Snodsbury, as well as the chapels of Besford, Defford, Wick and Bricklehampton (annexed to St. Andrew Pershore) and of Birlingham[2].

The result of these various factors was that in the region as a whole, dependent chapelries continued to play a vital role within the network of pastoral provision - all the more so given that many chapels catered not only for the one outlying centre of population, but for several surrounding villages and farmsteads as well[3]. The pastoral implications of this are harder to assess however. In twelfth- and thirteenth-century canon law the distinction between church and chapel was, it is true, becoming more

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1. VCH Gloucs. viii. 50, 58, 60-1, 65-6, 95, 102, 105, 108, 172, 175, 184-5, 196-7, 206, 220, 226, 228-9, 234, 236-7, 241, 271-3, 279; VCH Worcs. iv. 45, 49; Landboc Winch. i.26-7, 72, 74, 81-2, 86-7, 144; Tax. Nich. p.223.
2. BL, Cotton Chart. xi.47; BL, Add. Chart. 42605.
3. e.g. BL (AM) 15668, f.10r; VCH Gloucs. vii. 6, x.215-7 (Pauntley, Aldsworth and Quedgeley); above pp.14, 18-19, 23, 24 n.1.

rigidly defined - indeed without this development the crystallization of the parish structure which took place during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries could not have occurred at all. The parish, in Professor Brooke's words, was to the canonist 'a bundle of rights', central amongst which were those of baptism, burial and receipt of tithes. Conversely a chapel - in theory at least - was subject to the rector of the mother church, did not possess its own parson with an independent income, and was limited in the range of pastoral and sacramental functions which it could dispense[1]. Throughout the thirteenth century however the reality was a good deal more diverse; and in terms of pastoral provision as opposed to legal definition, it would be truer to see the distinction between church and chapel as a broad spectrum between two extremes, rather than as a fixed and consistent line.

At one end of the scale lay those chapels which fitted most convincingly into the legal definition of capella. Very often these were chapels of ease in the traditional sense, having been founded comparatively recently to serve some outlying region of secondary settlement and remaining completely subject to the parish church, served by stipendiary chaplains and permitted only heavily circumscribed rights which frequently excluded those of baptism or burial. Such, to return to the Cotswold deanery of Stonehouse, were the chapels of

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1. Brooke and Keir, London, p.129; Brooke, 'The Church in the Towns', p.68; Blair, 'Landholding, Church and Settlement', pp. 341-2; and see Landboc Winch. i.67 (Hailes), Cur. Reg. R. xi. 340 (Little Fransham, Norfolk).

Paganhill, Cranham, Birdlip, Alkerton, Chavenage and probably (up until the early fourteenth century) Stroud[1]. At the opposite extreme were a number of foundations which, although technically dependent chapels and described as such throughout the thirteenth century, were in reality virtually 'parish churches' in all but name and legal definition. Hope Baggot was still being described as a chapel in 1291 and owed an annual pension to the mother church of Bitterley, but it possessed its own advowson which followed the manor, and its status was in fact identical to that of the 'parish church' of Caynham, so described in the same taxation although also paying a pension to Bitterley[2]. Monkland (Herefordshire) and Charlecote (Warwickshire) were similarly described as chapels in 1291 and owed pensions to Leominster and Wellesbourne respectively; although both were served by vicars presented by independent patrons throughout the period and were almost certainly baptismal, having possessed fonts since the twelfth century[3]. Knightwick, Doddenham, Dormington, Cardeston and Hanwood, although similarly described as chapels in 1291 and on other occasions, also displayed degrees of independence which in pastoral terms must have meant that they

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1. VCH Gloucs. vii. 149, 208; x. 123; xi. 137, 175-6, 182, 215, 231; below p.36.
2. Tax. Nich. pp.166, 175; Reg. Swinfield, p.527; Reg. Cantelupe, p.235; Eyton, iv. 360, 363, 365, 368.
3. Tax. Nich. pp.159, 219; Reg. Swinfield p.527; Reg. Giffard, i.2, ii.261, Hist. Mons. Herefordshire, iii.150; VCH Warws. v.37-8; cf. BL (CM) Domit. A.iii, f.59v, 60r, 105v; BL (HM) 3650, f.44r. By 1291 the Charlecote pension went to Kenilworth Priory as appropriator of Wellesbourne.

functioned little differently from fully-fledged 'parish churches'[1]; and this was apparently the impression received at Greete and Pixley by the papal commissioners, who in 1291 recorded these benefices as parish churches even though they continued to be called chapels at various times throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries[2].

Between these two extremes lay a vast spectrum of sub-parochial chapels displaying varying degrees of independence. In some mass was celebrated only on specified days of the week[3], although others were served continually by a resident staff[4], and the range of pastoral provision often extended much further. In some chapelries the priest was allowed to solemnize marriage[5], while in most of those subject to Leominster he could also hear confession[6], and although documentary evidence is scarce, this may have been true in other cases. Certainly a substantial number of unambiguously dependent chapels seem to have possessed their own fonts by this date, and presumably enjoyed baptismal rights. In particular many of the numerous chapels subject to Evesham, Deerhurst and

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1. Tax. Nich. pp.158, 167, 216; Reg. Giffard, i.49, ii.133; Reg. Cantelupe, pp. 36, 153, 302; Reg. Swinfield, pp. 536, 539; Worc. Reg. I, Nos. 94-6; Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS. 271, f.50r, 105r; Glouc. Cart. iii.32; Hist. Mons. Herefordshire, ii.71; VCH Worcs. iii.441; VCH Shrops. viii. 219-20; Eyton, vii.119.
2. Tax. Nich. pp.160, 165; Reg. Cantelupe, p.161; Eyton, iv. 336.
3. eg. Blackwell, Newland, Charlton, Charlton Abbots, Sibdon, Chadnor, Aldon: VCH Worcs. iii.551, iv. 133; Cirenc. Cart. ii. No.413/444; Landboc Winch. i.144; Reg. Trillek (CYS, viii, 1911-12), p.39; BL (HM) 3586, f.136; Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS.1, f.4v-5r.
4. e.g. BL (CM) Domit, A.iii, f.102v-103v; BL (AM) 37503, f.44r; below pp.30-1, 229-30, 299-303; above, p.23.
5. Reg. Giffard, i.11.
6. BL (CM) Domit. A.iii, f.102v-103v; although at Aldon this was expressly prohibited: Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS.1, f.5r.

Leominster contain twelfth- or thirteenth-century fonts or fragments of fonts, and there are isolated examples from elsewhere - although the absence of a medieval font proves nothing, while many lesser chapels have now disappeared altogether, and the actual proportion of those so equipped was almost certainly much higher. In two instances the present fonts are not original fixtures, although they are likely to be so in most cases[1].

Like confession, baptism could of course be a matter of some urgency, particularly where there was risk of imminent death; and it is perhaps not surprising to find concessions being made in respect of these particular rites[2]. Burial on the other hand not only lacked the spiritual urgency but was also especially lucrative, and consequently seems to have been a right more closely guarded. Both Pershore Abbey and Hereford Cathedral Chapter retained exclusive rights of sepulture over a wide area, while at least one of the former Deerhurst chapelries did not have its own cemetery until 1469[3]. Leominster similarly retained exclusive burial rights over several of its chapelries as late as 1272[4]. There is evidence however that where pastoral necessity demanded, bishops were prepared to

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1. VCH Worcs. ii.365, 407, 414; iii.445, 495; VCH Gloucs. vi.62; vii.42; viii.279, 289; VCH Warws. v.106; Hist. Mons. Herefordshire, i.24; ii.3, 28, 32, 136, 195, 206; iii.64, 68, 72, 148, 150, 156, 215; and see Reg. Giffard, i.11. At Laysters and Edvin Loach the twelfth cent. fonts are from Puddleston and Tedstone Wafer: Hist. Mons. Herefordshire, iii.103; VCH Worcs. iv. 274.
2. Cf. Councils and Synods, i.247, 298, ii.896-7 (Leg. Council 1237 c.3, Worcs. III c.7, Lambeth c.3) allowing baptism by laymen in an emergency.
3. BL, Cotton Chart. xi.47; BL, Add. Chart. 42605; Reg. Swinfield, pp. 16-17, 213-4; Reg. Orleton (CYS, v,1908), pp.66-7; Heref. Cath. Muns. i.152, 431 (Nos.1971-2); VCH Gloucs. viii.195.
4. BL (CM) Domit. A.iii, f.58v, 105v.

undermine existing rights. In 1222 the bishop of Worcester obtained a faculty from the pope enabling him to consecrate cemeteries at chapels which lay at a distance from the mother church; and several chapels in both dioceses possessed their own cemeteries by the twelfth or thirteenth centuries[1]. Moreover, as with the sacraments themselves, it was not of course the actual right of sepulture so much as the profits to be made which concerned the rectors of parish churches; and in reality burial was probably frequently allowed so long as this did not endanger the mother church's enjoyment of the proceeds. Indeed there are explicit instances of this happening. Early in the twelfth century Great Hatfield church, then still a chapel subject to Leominster, was granted a cemetery and right of sepulture expressly on condition that all profits should go to the mother church 'tanquam si corpus ipsum defuncti in principali cimiterio leom' sepeliretur'; and no doubt Swinfield envisaged a similar arrangement in the case of Holmer cited above, where there was never any suggestion that the cathedral chapter should cease to receive the mortuary dues[2]. At Rochford, an undated charter similarly gave the chapel right of sepulture in return for a fixed annual pension of 3 shillings to the mother church of Tetbury; while in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century the chapel of

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1. Cal. Pap. L. i.87; VCH Worcs. iv.319; VCH Warws. v.198; VCH Gloucs. vi. 248, x.167; Glouc. Cart. i. No.386; 'Cartularium Prioratus...de Brecon', ed. R.W. Banks, Archaeologia Cambrensis, 4th. ser., xiv (1883), 20; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.44-5; Reg. T. Charlton (CYS, ix, 1913), p.70; BL (CM) Domit. A.iii, f.60v, 102r; BL (HM) 3650, f.44r-v; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.46v, 91r, 91v-92r; Cart. Shrewsbury, ed. Rees, ii. Nos. 346, 348. Other chapels contain twelfth or thirteenth-cent. coffin lids, which possibly indicate burials there: Hist. Mons. Herefordshire, i.37, ii.28, 206.
2. BL (CM) Domit. A.iii, f.60r-v; above p.21.

Billingsley owed the mother church at Morville half the chief mortuary dues - implying not only that it possessed rights of burial but that it was also allowed a share in the profits[1]. In the case of Pershore Abbey, burial of those from surrounding villages who had owned land was apparently at the abbey itself; although masses for their souls were celebrated in their local chapels, which could keep the oblations and to which the bodies were initially carried[2].

There was a similar variety in the ways in which chapels were actually served. Technically, it was impossible for a 'chapel' to have its own rector or vicar, and in secular law an independent advowson represented one of the hallmarks of an independent parish church[3]. Nevertheless the churches of Oddingley, Little Comberton, Chadwick, Little Sodbury, Barnsley, Compton Grenville, Sudley and Hasfield, all described as 'chapels' in the thirteenth century, were each served by clerks presented to the bishop by independent patrons[4]. Even where chapels were staffed by informally appointed unbeneficed chaplains, the terms under which they held the cure varied enormously, some (even by this date) apparently having no security of tenure and being purely stipendiary, others enjoying a sizeable share of the profits or holding glebes equivalent to those of

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1. VCH Worcs. iv.319; Cart. Shrewsbury, ed., Rees, ii.235-6 (unnumbered).
2. BL, Cotton Chart. xi.47; BL, Add. Chart. 42605.
3. Bracton, De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae, ed. T. Twiss (6 vols, Rolls Ser. lxx, 1878-83), iv.32-3; above p.25 ; below pp.39-42, 107-9.
4. Reg. Giffard, i.48, ii.172, 346, 396, 462, 466, 498, 520, 528, 536-7; Reg. Gainsborough, p.97; Reg. Cobham (WHS), p.236; Tax. Nich. p.223; Landboc Winch. i.26, 74, 80, 242; The Cartulary of Oseney Abbey, ed., H.E. Salter (6 vols, Oxford Hist. Soc. lxxxix-xci, xcvii-viii, ci, 1929-36), v.23-8; Cal. Ch. R. 1226-57, p.172; The Letters of Pope Innocent III Concerning England and Wales, ed. C.R. and M.G. Cheney (Oxford, 1967), No.287; VCH Gloucs. viii.288; PRO E315/61, f.111r; PRO E135/4/22.

the average rector - although the majority received varying combinations of tithes, oblations and cash[1].

The result of this diversity was that in practice the distinction between ecclesia and capella remained less clearcut, even in the later thirteenth century, than contemporary developments in canon law and the emergence of a more rigid parish structure might suggest. It was not that the distinction itself had not become much more clearly defined in canon law, or that bishops were lax in applying the distinctions and in safeguarding existing parochial rights. But after two centuries of comparatively unrestrained and unco-ordinated development, the parish structure as it already existed by the early thirteenth century was too varied and divergent to fit neatly into the categories created for it by twelfth-century canonists, and in marginal cases it is hardly surprising to find evidence of inconsistency and apparent confusion even on the part of those required to run the system. Several churches were variously and inconsistently described as both ecclesia and capella - sometimes in the same sentence - throughout the thirteenth century; and although in secular documents we would perhaps not expect the distinction to be conscientiously maintained, while in other instances the inconsistency probably represents simply an isolated scribal error, in other cases the confusion apparently resulted from a writer's inability to determine conclusively the status of a given church[2].

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1. See below, pp.299-303.
2. e.g. PRO C115 K2/6683, f.40r, 70v, 71r (Little Barrington and Windrush); Reg. Giffard, i.33, ii.346, Glouc. Cart. ii.41, 235, 259, iii.31, Tax. Nich. pp.223, 224 (Lower Hatherley and Matson); Reg. Giffard, ii.287 (Bishampton); Reg. Cantelupe, pp.24-5, Cal. Pat. R. 1348-50, p.188, Tax. Nich. p.167 (Sutton by Shrewsbury); Reg. Swinfield, pp.357-8 (Turnastone).

Even more important are the pastoral implications of this diversity, which meant that although sub-parochial chapels remained a vital component of the pastoral network, nevertheless the range and extent of pastoral provision which they offered varied enormously from place to place; and the fact that a village or farmstead happened to lie on the fringe of an ecclesiastical parish did not necessarily mean that its inhabitants were any less well catered for than those at the parish church itself, which might equally lack rights of sepulture, be impoverished by pensions, or even (in the case of some conventual parish churches) be served by a technically unbeneficed chaplain[1]. Indeed in the case of medieval Surrey it has even been suggested that the numerous private chapels and oratories scattered across the county may have contributed yet further to this network, fulfilling limited pastoral functions as late as the thirteenth century[2]; and although in our own region most grants of private chapels unequivocally stipulated that ordinary parishioners were to be forbidden access and that performance of all sacraments was reserved for the mother church, nevertheless there are indications that very occasionally, the function of such oratories as outlying chapels of ease might possibly have extended beyond the lord's immediate household to local tenants. By an undated (though probably twelfth-century) charter noted in the Leominster cartulary, the monks of Reading granted Walter de Clifford a (private) chapel at Hamnish, stipulating that when he or his wife or retainers were present the monks' chaplain could celebrate mass there,

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1. See below, pp.298-9.
2. Blair, 'Landholding, Church and Settlement', pp.345-50.

but that when they were absent the villeins (rustici) must go to the mother church at Leominster; while around 1290 Roger of Cowley was licensed to build a private oratory in his curia there in which could hang a bell ('cum campana intra oratorium pendente') - which would hardly seem necessary (except perhaps as a status symbol) unless the chapel was intended to draw people from a slightly wider radius than from Roger's immediate household[1].

(b) Thirteenth-Century Developments

We have so far been concerned with the structure of pastoral provision as it existed throughout the thirteenth century; but how far was this structure fixed and completely static during this period, or how far did it remain subject to flux and change? Certainly the more rigorous definition of parochial rights as developed by twelfth-century canonists and applied by twelfth- and thirteenth-century bishops meant that the broad outline remained fundamentally unaltered from the late twelfth to the mid-nineteenth century and beyond, and in terms of new foundations never again did the region witness the unco-ordinated free-for-all which characterized the early Norman period here as elsewhere[2]. Within that structure however there was still much room for adjustment, albeit strictly controlled, while a variety of social interests and pastoral

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1. BL (CM) Domit. A.iii, f.77r-v; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.657 (f.333r). This was Cowley in Essex, near the bishop of Worcester's church of Hillingdon.
2. For the tightness of episcopal control over new foundations by the thirteenth cent., see Councils and Synods, ii.1002-4.

necessities continued to militate against the structure becoming too rigidified.

In the first place, even local patterns of settlement were by no means so firmly established during this period as to make further foundations redundant; and in the still only marginally colonized lands of Shropshire and south-west Gloucestershire it remained possible for new parishes to be carved out of recently cultivated and still technically extra-parochial lands even in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. As late as 1179 x 80 Bishop Robert Foliot discovered during a local visitation that the Shropshire village of Stitt was not included in any ecclesiastical parish and possessed only an oratory, and he licensed Haughmond Abbey to appropriate the tithes and build a chapel there which was to have rights of sepulture and baptism[1]. About the same time the Cistercian monks of Flaxley were commencing another assart near Monmouth on the fringes of the Forest of Dean, which by 1220 had its own newly built parish church named, appropriately, Newland. In 1305 Edward I increased its endowment by granting it the tithes of extra-parochial lands newly assarted within the Forest; although within two years this had produced a major controversy, with the parsons of several neighbouring churches insisting that the assarts concerned lay within their own parishes, and impeding collection of the tithes[2].

Even in the more settled Worcester diocese, new foundations were

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1. Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS1, f.210v.
2. H.E. Hallam, Rural England 1066-1348 (Fontana Hist. of England, London, 1981), p.150; Cal. Pat. R. 1301-7, pp.319, 547.

not unknown in the thirteenth century - although none involved the creation of new, independent parishes on this scale. Most intriguing of all is the building of a self-styled 'free chapel' at Wadborough by William Beauchamp around 1261, in which year a composition was reached with the abbot of Pershore regarding burial of the inhabitants of Sheriff's Hay (probably included in Birlingham parish). By this agreement Beauchamp succeeded in securing half of the heriots and mortuary dues for his chapel, although the abbot retained his exclusive right of sepulture; a quite amazing surrender of ancient prerogatives on the abbot's part, and one which was probably not unrelated to the powerful local influence of the Beauchamps as sheriffs of Worcester and (after 1269) earls of Warwick, although the episode also implies that the internal colonization of Worcestershire was even by this date not altogether complete[1].

In the Worcester diocese especially however, the most striking additions to the parochial map involved urban growth rather than colonization of virgin lands. In particular, six or seven towns and boroughs in the diocese were newly planted by seigneurial lords during the thirteenth century - a late medieval phenomenon which created serious problems for the ecclesiastical authorities insofar as the foundation of a new church to serve the community was bound to cut across existing parochial rights, while pastoral necessity argued that the inhabitants of a rapidly expanding borough should not be left unserved[2]. Most of

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1. Beauch.Cart. No.65; E. Mason, 'A Truth Universally Acknowledged', SCH, xvi (1979), 180.
2. M.W. Beresford, New Towns of the Middle Ages (London, 1967), pp.169-75, 437-41, 498-500.

the new plantations in our own region avoided (or at least reduced) the problem by being sited alongside existing villages which generally had their own church; although this still meant that the burgesses often had to travel a considerable distance. The inhabitants of Stratford on Avon (created in 1196) had to use the church at Old Stratford until 1855, and the new town of Henley in Arden, some two miles from the parish church of Wootten Wawen, remained without a chapel until 1367; although a reference in Giffard's register to the consecration of 'Market Sodbury' no doubt refers to the new church at Chipping Sodbury, which remained a chapelry to that in the original village settlement two miles away[1].

Even where no deliberate plantation occurred, spontaneous urban growth occasionally necessitated some adjustment in the parochial structure, as happened at Stroud in Gloucestershire. Situated in Bisley parish at an important centre of communication, the place first occurred in 1221 as 'la Strode', and by 1248 was already being described as a vill. Before 1279 it had its own chapel, which in 1304 superseded the older chapel of ease at Paganhill and also assumed responsibility for serving the villages of Over and Nether Lypiatt and Stroud itself through a resident chaplain licensed to dispense the sacraments - although technically it remained a chapelry of Bisley until the eighteenth century[2].

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1. Beresford, New Towns, pp.441, 500; Reg. Giffard, ii.234.
2. VCH Gloucs. xi. 99, 136-7; Beresford, New Towns, p.439.

In the Hereford diocese, urban expansion predictably caused fewer problems. Most of its late medieval boroughs were both small and long-established, for the most part owing their origins to the string of border castles built since the conquest to protect the Marches from Welsh attack - although in the thirteenth century this was still an ongoing process. In 1223 Henry III began a second and more elaborate castle at Montgomery some two miles from the original fortifications, which by 1227 had spawned a new borough, and the church of which secured full independence (save for an annual pension) from the mother church of Chirbury in the same year - the rapidity of its emancipation probably being due to the fact that the king himself was the founder and patron[1]. By 1267 a new town had also been founded at Kington at some distance from the castle and parish church, the latter presumably marking the site of the original village settlement; while by 1272 the castle-borough of Cause, founded in Westbury parish around 1200, apparently had its own chapel[2].

More common than new foundations were adjustments in the status of existing churches. We have seen that in the anachronistic and still-decaying minster parochiae of Herefordshire and Shropshire, the transformation of former chapelries into fully independent parish churches sometimes extended into the thirteenth century[3]; although the process was not confined to these areas, and throughout the period a

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1. Beresford, New Towns, pp.173, 564-5; Eyton, xi.65-6, 147; Cal. Ch. R. 1226-57, pp.53, 60, 101. New Radnor developed similarly: Beresford, New Towns, p.572.
2. Beresford, New Towns, pp.450-1, 478-80; Reg. Swinfield, pp.162-4.
3. Above, pp.17-20.

variety of vested interests encouraged similar centrifugal tendencies elsewhere. The result was frequent litigation concerning the parochial rights of individual churches, which although in most instances leading only to a redefinition of existing rights (and thus contributing to the hardening of the parish structure), very occasionally resulted in a greater degree of independence for some outlying chapelry.

In some instances a mother church's exclusive rights were challenged by the priest of a dependent chapelry. In 1191 Simon, the priest of Hailes refused to continue payment of a 7 shilling pension established during Stephen's reign as a sign of subjection to Winchcombe church; and following much litigation it was decreed that although Winchcombe was in fact entitled to the sum, Hailes was nevertheless 'ecclesiam ... matricem et baptismalem' with full parochial rights - a status which it subsequently retained throughout the thirteenth century[1]. Claims to greater independence on the part of serving chaplains were rarely so successful however. Right of sepulture was unsuccessfully claimed early in the thirteenth century by the chaplains of Frankley and Wick, dependencies of Halesowen and St. Andrew Pershore respectively, while the chaplain of St. Michael Pershore was cited in 1302 for performing clandestine marriages there[2].

At other times parishioners themselves pressed for greater

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1. Landboc Winch. i.26, 65-6, 199-200; Cal. Pap. L. i.240; Tax. Nich. p.223.
2. Descriptive Catalogue of the Charters and Muniments...at Hagley Hall, ed. I.H. Jeayes (London, 1893), No.13; PRO E315/61, f.106v; Reg. Sede Vacante (WHS), p.19.

independence, although this seldom produced anything more than a fuller definition of the services and sacraments permissible in a given chapel. In 1269 Nicholas le Archer and the commonalty (communitati) of Stoke Orchard in Bishop's Cleeve parish petitioned Bishop Giffard regarding services in the local chapel of St. James, and were subsequently licensed to hear mass and receive the sacraments there in return for an annual payment of two pounds of wax, on account of the distance of the mother church[1]. About the same time the men of Norton (Worcestershire) complained to the bishop that the vicar of Kempsey, in whose parish the village lay, had withdrawn the services of baptism, marriage and purification which they habitually received in Norton chapel, which led to a similar vindication and redefinition of their rights[2]. Of greater impact was an agreement reached between Nicholas fitz Robert and the abbot of Gloucester in 1185 regarding Nympsfield church, then still a chapel subject to Frocester, by which the chapel received rights of baptism and limited rights of sepulture; and by 1291 Nympsfield was apparently fully parochial, owing only a pension of 2 marks to Gloucester Abbey[3].

On yet other occasions it was a prospective patron who challenged the subjection of an outlying chapel to its mother church, insofar as this generally robbed him of his advowson[4]. Except where the status of a

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1. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.32 (f.19v).
2. Reg. Giffard, i.11.
3. Glouc. Cart. ii. No.488, iii. No.936; Tax. Nich. p.221.
4. See Bracton, De Legibus, ed. Twiss, iv.32-3; and below pp.107-9.

given church was already in doubt, such claims were almost always doomed to failure, and the chapels of Berrow, Grafton next Bromsgrove, Bearley, Alveston, Bickmarsh, Windrush, Little Colesbourne, Ruardean and Pauntley were all subject to unsuccessful claims by the lay owners of the fees on which they stood at various times during the thirteenth century[1]. On one occasion Lanthony Priory faced a combined attempt to establish Windrush's independence by both a prospective patron and the incumbent, when in 1283 William of Cheltenham claimed that he was 'rector' of the church at the presentation of 'a certain knight' who did not, in fact, own the advowson - an alliance of interests which proved equally fruitless[2]. Indeed, even where a claimant succeeded in securing the presentation, this was often at the expense of a restatement of the chapel's subjection, and did not necessarily involve any real change of status. Thus in the late twelfth century the prior of Wenlock made a conditional grant to Thomas de Lega of the advowson of Hughley, situated within the Wenlock parochia, by which Thomas and his heirs could present a candidate for institution, although the financial and other obligations of the chapel to the mother church were restated and confirmed; and similar arrangements were made at Shipston on Stour, Wilmcote, Hampton Wafre, Tasley, Billingsley, Ullington, Barnsley and Harescombe following twelfth or

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1. Below, pp. 107-8.
2. PRO C115 K2/6683, f.74v. Windrush was in fact approaching parochial independence, although the advowson remained with the priory on account of its former subjection to Gt. Barrington: see VCH Glouc s. vi. 182-3.

thirteenth-century disputes[1].

Very occasionally however, a dispute over patronage did produce a change in status. Both Minsterworth and Newnham, chapels annexed to Westbury on Severn for most of the thirteenth century, were the subject of frequent advowson claims during this period, which initially led to restatements of subjection but which by the early fourteenth century had contributed to both churches becoming fully independent - although as at Montgomery the situation was exceptional in that the plaintiff was the king himself[2]. In 1203 x 4 however the nuns of Brewood (Staffordshire) similarly succeeded in proving that the church of Broome, granted to them by King John, was fully independent of Clent, the rector of which claimed it as a chapelry[3]; while around 1206 Wigmore Abbey ceded the advowson of Myndtown to William de Muneda and his heirs in return for a pension of 12d. to their church of Lydbury, to which it had (presumably) formerly been a chapel. By 1291 the church was described as ecclesia and had an independent advowson, and there was no sign of any pension[4]. In 1214 the lord of Willey similarly sought the advowson of the local church against Wenlock Priory, in whose parochia it lay : by 1277 the

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1. Eyton, vi.303-4; VCH Worcs. iii.523; VCH Warws. iii.42; Cart. Shrewsbury, ed. Rees, i. No.106, ii.235-6 (unnumbered); Cart. Oseney, ed. Salter, v. 24 (No.534); HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.228-9 (f.118v-119r); BM (CM) Domit. A.iii, f.64r; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.60v-61r.
2. PRO Just. I/275-6, m.41d; Cal. Clo. R. 1259-61, p.469; Cal.Pat.R. 1258-66, pp.140-1; ibid., 1266-72, p.394; Reg. Swinfield, pp.469, 514, 540, 542, 543; Tax. Nich. p.161; VCH Gloucs. x.46-7.
3. VCH Worcs. iii.34.
4. J.S. Barrow, 'The Bishops of Hereford and their Acta, 1163-1219' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis 1982), p.452 (No.154); Tax. Nich. pp.127, 167; Reg. Swinfield, pp.524, 530, 535.

advowson was following the manor, and the church was variously called ecclesia and capella throughout the century, although its status remained uncertain and in 1323-4 it was found to be without cure of souls[1].

Well into the thirteenth century therefore, the hierarchy of rights and obligations which constituted the parish structure continued to be challenged and occasionally adjusted; although it should be added that not all these adjustments involved the securing of greater independence by outlying chapels, and occasionally these centrifugal tendencies were reversed. Yardley, Wolverton and Bourton on the Hill, all fully independent parish churches by the thirteenth century, were each the subject of advowson claims asserting their dependence on other churches, although in these instances the claims fell through and their independence was confirmed[2]. The Gloucestershire church of Sevenhampton was less fortunate. Originally a dependency of Prestbury, it had been creeping towards independence throughout the thirteenth century, being served by a 'rector' and frequently described as ecclesia; but in 1275 the prior and convent of Lanthony Secunda succeeded in establishing that it was annexed to and dependent on their church of Prestbury and consequently received corporal possession, finally putting an end to any such pretensions[3]. The independence of Bayton in the Hereford diocese suffered a similar set-

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1. Eyton, ii.59-60; Reg. Cantelupe, p.138; Tax. Nich. p.167.
2. Cur. Reg. R. iv. 91, 198; ix. 48-9; xvi. 225; Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Glouc s, Warws. and Staffs. 1221-2, ed. D.M. Stenton (SS. lix, 1940), No.525; PRO KB26/160, m.42.
3. PRO C115 K2/6683, f.122v, 123r, 125r-126r, 130v-131r.

back, although in rather different circumstances. The church had been fully parochial throughout the thirteenth century; but in 1298 the vicar of Mamble claimed the right to a third of the fruits, which in view of the slender means of Bayton church (which was already appropriated to Great Malvern Priory) presented Bishop Swinfield with a serious dilemma. In the end he was forced to compromise by charging the vicar of Mamble with the cure of souls in both parishes, in return for which he (the vicar) would receive a third of the corn tithes and various other portions - although the bishop equally attempted to avoid any diminution in the pastoral functions provided by the church, stipulating that its status should remain unaltered 'quoad jus patronatus, sepulture, baptisterii, ceterave ipsius insignia'.[1]

In this latter arrangement, the dilemma facing bishops generally as regards pastoral provision is well illustrated. On the one hand they were duty-bound to provide adequate pastoral facilities for their flock, however far from major centres of settlement they might live; and certainly bishops in our own region were not prepared to defend ancient privileges purely on account of their antiquity, William of Blois, as we have seen, even going to the trouble of obtaining a papal dispensation allowing him to consecrate cemeteries in outlying chapels. On the other hand both corporate and individual rectors had to be protected from diminutions of income which few in this region could afford[2]; and this,

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1. Tax. Nich. p.165; Reg. Swinfield, pp.308, 309, 346-7.
2. See below, pp. 55-60, 124-7.

ultimately, was what lay behind the attempts of canonists and bishops alike to freeze the parish structure and to restrict future additions to an already overburdened system. The problem was not confined to the secular church, and during the thirteenth century attempts by the Dominicans to establish themselves in Hereford were repeatedly rebuffed on precisely these grounds[1]. But however justified some (at least) of the appeals to ancient parochial rights on the part of monasteries, portionary ex-minsters or individual rectors may have been, it was the unbeneficed chaplains of outlying churches, and ultimately the parishioners themselves, who often suffered the worst deprivations as a result of this essentially economic problem - a fact testified both in the extent to which vestiges of the pre-conquest pastoral structure were allowed to survive into the later middle ages where powerful religious houses remained a strong influence, and in the comparative rarity with which the more centrifugal interests of chaplains, patrons and parishioners succeeded in producing substantial changes in the parochial hierarchy.

(c) The Towns.

There remains the question of how far the pattern of pastoral provision in the towns conformed to the generalizations made above. Outside the county town of Hereford itself, urban expansion in the western diocese remained minimal as we have seen; but in the Worcester diocese there

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1. Heref. Cath. Muns. i.338 (No.1330), and ibid., i.330, 339, 398, 399, 430, 441, ii.452, 474, 485.

lay, in addition to the 'new towns' already alluded to, the prosperous county towns of Worcester, Warwick and Gloucester, and the busy port of Bristol. Here the parish structure was inevitably somewhat different; although within this changed context many of the tendencies and conflicting interests which characterized the thirteenth-century countryside reappear.

We have seen that where powerful vested interests existed to protect ancient parochial jurisdictions, it was rare for a multiplicity of independent churches to develop[1]. In the towns this held equally true, and as early as the eleventh century had produced a contrast between places such as Lincoln, York or Norwich, where the influence of powerful monastic corporations and of strong episcopal authority had been comparatively less marked, and which generally contained a profusion of intramural churches, and those of western England, where new foundations had been more constrained, and where it remained common for one ancient church to remain the sole ecclesia mater for the whole city[2]. In our own region the urban parish structure generally supports this distinction; although by 1200, as in the countryside ancient parochial jurisdictions had already succumbed in varying degree to centrifugal tendencies, and the process continued throughout the century.

At Worcester, it was established in 1092 that the city contained only one parish - that of the cathedral itself - and that St. Helen's church had

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1. Above, pp.20,23-4.
2. Brooke, 'The Church in the Towns', pp.66,73-6.

been a 'vicarage' to it since the seventh century. In fact the eleventh-century parochia of St. Helen's extended far beyond the bounds of the city itself, including the churches of North Claines, Hindlip, Holt (and Little Witley), Churchill, Kenswick, Wick (?Episcopi), Whittington, Wichenford, Spetchley and possibly Martley[1]. By the thirteenth century many of these parochial rights had lapsed, and in 1291 7 of the 15 churches in Worcester itself were described as ecclesia[2]; although once again the process of decay stretched into the thirteenth century. As late as 1207 Bishop Mauger claimed some right in the church of St. Alban's Worcester, presumably on account of its former subjection; although on this occasion Evesham Abbey proved its right to the advowson, and by the later thirteenth century the church was apparently parochial[3]. All Saints, although described as a 'church' in 1291 and served by a 'rector' as early as 1208, was similarly only groping towards independence in 1175, when Osbert fitz Hugh secured a mediate right of presentation following an advowson suit against Worcester Cathedral Priory[4]. Outside the city, St. Helen's rights survived even longer in some instances. In 1234, when possession of the church was disputed between the bishop and his cathedral priory, the churches of Wick and Wichenford (which fell to the priory) and that of Claines (which with St. Helen's itself fell to the bishop)

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1. Worc. Reg. I, Nos. 52-3.
2. Tax. Nich. p.216.
3. Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham, ed. W.D. Macray (Rolls Ser.xxix, 1863), pp.73, 211, 223; Reg. Giffard, i.5, ii.455; Worc. Reg. I, No.52.
4. Tax. Nich. p.216; The Letters of Pope Innocent III concerning England and Wales, ed. C.R. and M.G. Cheney (Oxford, 1967), No.1187; Worc. Reg. I, Nos. 177-8.

were still explicitly described as dependent chapels - although this splitting into two of the church's jurisdiction no doubt accelerated the trend towards greater independence, and before 1291 both Wick and Wichenford were independent vicarages, while Claines passed separately to the nuns of Whistones[1]. The independence of Churchill may similarly have been in doubt as late as 1269, when John of Churchill, as patron, was involved in litigation with the bishop[2]. Other former dependencies were absorbed into neighbouring parishes and so retained the status of chapels throughout the period[3].

The situation in the other major towns was similar. At Bristol St. Peter's church, owned by Tewkesbury Abbey, was declared early in the twelfth century to be 'primitivam et principalem...omnium ecclesiarum de Bristo' ', possessing exclusive burial rights within the town. How late this restriction remained in force is difficult to determine; although by the later thirteenth century the churches of All Saints, St. Augustine the less, St. Michael's and St. Mary's possessed their own cemeteries, and by 1291 most of the churches in the town were apparently fully parochial[4]. At Hereford and Gloucester exclusive rights of sepulture - and

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1. Ann. Mon, iv.426-7,435,441,541; Tax. Nich. p.216; Reg. Giffard, i.35, ii.175,190,512.
2. Reg. Giffard, i.32,33; VCH Worcs. iii.299.
3. e.g. Little Witley, Whittington and (possibly) Kenswick: VCH Worcs. iii.408, 441, 517.
4. 'Original Documents relating to Bristol and the Neighbourhood', ed. W. de G. Birch, Journal of the British Archaeological Association, xxxi (1875),290; 'Some Documents relating to the Parish Church of All Saints, Bristol', ed. E.G.C.F. Atchley, Archaeological Journal, lviii(1901), 159,162; The Cartulary of St. Mark's Hospital, Bristol, ed. C.D. Ross (BRS,xxi, 1959), Nos.42-3; Bodl. L. MS. Film Dep.912 (microfilm of Bristol Abbey cart.), f.192r, 173v-r; Tax. Nich. p.220; Reg. Giffard, i,13, 14, 49, ii.68, 78, 91, 98, 277, 278, 316, 407.

perhaps other parochial rights as well - were similarly retained for much of the century by Hereford Cathedral Chapter, and by Gloucester Abbey and Lanthony Priory respectively; and although at Gloucester St. Mary de Lode and St. Michael's possessed cemeteries by the early and mid-fourteenth century, at Hereford the new appropriators of All Saints and St. Martin's had to undertake, as late as 1260, not to cause cemeteries to be made 'circa ecclesias memoratas, nec alibi in civitate predicta seu suburbis eiusdem'[1]. At Warwick, where most of the urban churches had originally been subject to the collegiate church of St. Mary, those of St. Peter, St. James and St. John the Baptist lacked cemeteries as late as 1391 - although this may have been a result of fourteenth-century depopulation, which the same year led to their being reintegrated with the former mother church[2].

Although the grip of the former mother churches was weakening by the later thirteenth century therefore, in the towns as in some rural areas the foundation of local churches and their progress towards independence was impeded by the presence of continuous vested interests. It should be added however that while the towns of the west midlands never rivalled places such as Lincoln in terms of the number of independent urban churches, there nevertheless existed a far greater concentration of

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1. Glouc. Cart. ii. Nos. 437-8, iii. No.973; Reg. Glouc. Nos.8, 20; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.27r, 46r; Charters and Records of Hereford Cathedral, ed. W.W. Capes (Hereford, 1908), pp.44, 114; Bodl. L., MS. Rawl. B.329, f.121r.
2. PRO E164/22, f.8v-9v, 12v-14r, 15v, 57r-v; VCH Warws. ii.124-6.

churches and chapels in the towns than anywhere in the countryside, and even after 1200 the number continued to rise. Some time after 1218 William of Blois founded the Carnarie or Charnel-House chapel at Worcester, bringing the number of churches and chapels in the city to 15 by the end of the century[1]. At Bristol and Gloucester the total number by 1291 was also 15, at Hereford 8 and at Warwick 6, while even Stratford on Avon, although remaining without a chapel of ease, saw the building of the Guild Chapel around 1269[2]. Such a concentration inevitably brought its own problems. By the mid-fourteenth century the cemetery of St. Michael's Gloucester was filled to capacity, and it was evidently several years before the church managed to obtain a suitable piece of ground as an extension[3]. The complexities of urban parish boundaries, running amongst crowded streets and tenements, are similarly illustrated in a dispute between the Gloucester churches of St. John and All Saints in the late twelfth century. The problem involved two adjoining houses - each falling into different parishes - which had been newly acquired and merged into one, following which it was decided that since the entrance lay in All Saints parish, the owner should go there to receive

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1. VCH Worcs. iv. 411-12, iii. 509-10; Tax. Nich. p.216; Reg. Giffard, ii.89, 124, 175, 395, 443, 455, 524, 527. There were also chapels to St. Nicholas and St. Mary in Worcester Priory and Worcester Cathedral: VCH Worcs. iv. 411.
2. Tax. Nich. pp.158, 218, 220, 224; Reg. Giffard, i.13, 14, 49, ii. 67, 71, 78, 98, 138, 167, 171, 211, 227, 230, 232, 277, 278, 284, 326, 432, 445; M.D. Lobel and J. Tann, 'Gloucester', Historic Towns, i (London and Oxford, 1969), p.6; Glouc. Cart. i. 25, 83; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.17r, 32v, 49v; PRO E164/22, f.12r, 57r; Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS.271, f.47v, 93r, 98r; Bodl. L. MS. Rawl B.329, f.52v-3r, 155r; VCH Warws. iii.276.
3. Reg. Glouc. No.20.

the sacraments and the church should receive two-thirds of the oblations, the remainder falling to St. John's church[1]. Disputes over parish boundaries were, of course, frequent events in a rural context also, but seldom involved such fine details; and given the continuing expansion of these west midland towns throughout the thirteenth century, the problems can only have been greatly exacerbated a hundred years later.

(iv) The Impact of War.

We have so far been concerned with the structure of pastoral provision in the dioceses, and with the implications of this structure for local religious life; but it is equally important to consider the extent to which life in the parishes was affected by other characteristic features of the region, amongst which, in the thirteenth century, border warfare and civil strife loomed large. The proximity of the Hereford diocese to the Welsh border has already been alluded to, and some of the effects of this in terms of settlement and economic development dealt with in a general way[2]; but the upsurge of Welsh power which occurred during the thirteenth century, culminating in Edward I's punitive expeditions of the 1270's and '80's, meant that the area frequently felt the impact of this proximity more directly, both through repeated border raids and the constant pressure of a hostile population on its western edge, and often through open warfare. Equally however, it is important to put the implications of this firmly into perspective, certainly as regards the Church. Not

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1. Reg. Glouc. No.11.
2. Above, pp.7-8.

only were the effects by no means evenly felt across the diocese, but in addition they did not stop at the diocesan border; and it should not be assumed that Hereford, despite its geographical position, was the only see to suffer from the Welsh conflict. Moreover, the Welsh border was by no means the only theatre of war in thirteenth-century England, which witnessed at least two periods of intense internal strife - during the second of which, between 1263 and 1265, the area around Worcester played a central strategic role. How far, then was the region as a whole affected by these factors, and what (if any) were the implications for religious life in the parishes?

Certainly Welsh incursions occasionally had very serious repercussions for the border region, and the chronicles of Worcester and Tewkesbury (which although lying in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire respectively had multiple interests both here and in Wales itself) frequently return to the theme of devastation[1]. Up to a point the drier records of ecclesiastical administration confirm this impression, and are permeated with indications of the extent to which the Welsh presence pervaded local life. The register of Thomas Cantelupe, bishop of Hereford from 1275 to 1282, includes a series of entries relating to a long-running dispute with Llewelyn for possession of the three border villages of Chastroke, Aston and Mellington, which pertained to the episcopal manor of Lydbury North; and in a letter to his seneschal dated 1276 he refers

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1. Ann. Mon. i.66, 74, 79, 80, 88, 158, 167; iv.400, 422, 436, 444, 485, 517.

to the urgency of transporting the inhabitants' grain and livestock into the bishop's castle, which he expects they will accept 'propter periculum Walensium, qui libenter ea raperent' - although on a number of occasions the bishop clearly had to contend with resistance even from the tenants themselves[1]. The same letter shows Cantelupe equally concerned with the transfer of arms to the castle from his manor at Sugwas, and with the supervision of those sent to these parts by the king 'pro Marchia custodienda'; while in 1262 we find Henry III thanking Bishop Peter for his efforts in defence of the area, and the king adds that since he has heard the Welsh are advancing he has called up his 'bachelarios' to come with horses and arms, and is delivering materials for the fortification of Hereford Castle[2]. It was not only bishops who had cause to be preoccupied by the Welsh threat however. Applying early in the fourteenth century for permission to appropriate a benefice in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, the monks of Shrewsbury Abbey drew attention to the fact that most of their possessions lay outside Shropshire in Marcher Wales and had been plundered and burnt; while in 1231 the prior of Leominster is said to have been forced to buy peace from Llewelyn at great cost in order to avoid the further devastation of his lands.[3]

As well as evidence of actual raids, sackings and burnings, there are occasional glimpses of a more general lawlessness along (and especially over) the border. In 1228 a dispute in the curia regis concerning lands

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.9, 29, 31, 42, 97, 103-4, 110.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, p.110; Cal. Clo. R. 1261-4, p.271.
3. Cart. Shrewsbury, ed. Rees, i.xxix; Ann. Mon. i.80.

in Shropshire and involving the prior of Wenlock had to be postponed because one of the litigants had been captured and imprisoned by the Welsh; and we have already seen that disputes over diocesan boundaries more than once precipitated use of violence by disaffected Welsh clerics[1]. Religious houses owning property on or near the border had especial cause for worry; and Tewkesbury Abbey in particular suffered repeated injustices where its Welsh churches were concerned. On one occasion the monk sent to take possession of Llanblethian church (in the diocese of Llandaff), having arrived to find it locked and the keys taken, was subsequently abducted and carried off into the Welsh mountains where he was held for three days; and even ten years later, when the Welsh farmer of the church had finally been deprived, the abbey was forced into granting him larger and larger pensions in compensation following his devastation of their Welsh lands, and threats against their English possessions[2]. It is against this sort of background, then, that religious life carried on actually along the border - although the fact that these incidents were related by the chronicler with such outrage suggests that they were not common, while violent occupations of churches were by no means unknown even in the more settled regions of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire[3].

Important as these factors undoubtedly were in some of the wilder and more exposed parts of the diocese however, we should not attach too much importance to the constant accounts of Welsh aggression and border

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1. Cur.Reg. R. xiii. 176 (No.781); above pp. 5-6.
2. Ann. Mon. i.81, 125-6, and see ibid., i.75.
3. See below pp. 103, 251-2.

lawlessness. Firstly, the area covered by the Hereford diocese represented only a part of the Welsh Marches; and it was in fact the lands to the north around Cheshire and Northern Shropshire, where the Welsh mountains ended abruptly at the border, which were most susceptible to attack[1]. Second and just as important, the diocese as a whole cannot be equated with its westernmost fringe, any more than this fringe itself can be equated with the whole of the Marches. We have already seen that in the thirteenth century this was a diverse region, extending from the thinly populated and in some instances only recently Anglicized lands of north-west Shropshire and south-west Gloucestershire, through to the more anciently settled and economically developed lands of the central Herefordshire plain, long protected from persistent raiding by the River Wye. More recently the absorption of the formerly Welsh area of Archenfield and the occasional retreat of the Welsh border to beyond the line of Offa's Dyke had further widened the buffer zone between the border and Hereford itself, lessening its prominence as an immediate frontier town; so that by 1200 it was already some hundred and fifty years since the bishop's seat had suffered directly at the hands of the Welsh[2]. In the light of this the bulk of the diocese, and certainly its wealthiest and most populous areas, are unlikely ever to have felt seriously threatened by the possibility of Welsh attack during the

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1. J. Meisel, Barons of the Welsh Frontier. The Corbet, Pantulf and Fitz Warin Families 1066-1272 (Nebraska, 1980), pp.104-5; and see Ann. Mon. i.158, iv. 481.
2. Above, pp.3-10; VCH Hereford, i.347; M.D. Lobel, 'Hereford', Historic Towns, i (London and Oxford, 1969), pp.1-5.

thirteenth century.

But if the proximity of the Welsh border had little direct impact on the diocese as a whole, the same cannot be said of the economic dislocation which this produced and which seems, so far as the Church is concerned, to have had more serious repercussions. Occasionally this resulted from the devastation of Church lands by Welsh raiders, as in the cases of Shrewsbury Abbey or Leominster Priory cited above. More frequently widespread economic hardship resulted indirectly from the more general importance of the diocese as a hinterland to the actual theatre of war, insofar as it contained some of the busiest and most important routes between England and Wales; and in this the neighbouring diocese of Worcester, although further from the border region itself, was little different, similarly lying across major lines of communication and in particular including the crossings of the Severn at Tewkesbury and Gloucester. The result was that for much of the century, both dioceses had to contend with the toings and froings of assorted armies, embassies and officials, which put a continual strain both on the limited economic resources of the region and on its hospitality. Edward I, writing to the pope in support of Godfrey Giffard's request to appropriate Bishop's Cleeve in 1283, drew particular attention to the bishop's losses as a result of the recent Welsh rebellion, and to the large number of people continually passing through the Worcester diocese on their way between England and Wales; while in 1287 Giffard's proctor at Rome, prosecuting the same claim, wrote that he had referred the pope to the great concourse of

armies in the diocese as well as to the sterility of the bishop's lands, the mortality of his flocks and the cost of repairing his manors - problems which were perhaps not unrelated[1]. Shrewsbury Abbey, in pursuit of its own appropriation claims, similarly commented not only on the devastation of its lands, but also on the cost of accomodating judges and other royal servants on their way to and from Wales[2].

Evidence of the extent to which the parish clergy were affected by this dislocation is harder to find - although insofar as economic pressure on religious houses increased the rate of appropriation and consequently the number of perpetual vicarages, they were certainly affected indirectly[3]. There are signs however that in some areas the combined impact of these factors could have a serious detrimental effect on a church's income. In 1263 Giles of Avenbury, treasurer of Hereford and already a licensed pluralist, was granted papal dispensation to obtain further preferment, since the combined value of the treasureship and of his churches of Avenbury, Kimbolton, Clun and Merthyr (in the dioceses of Hereford, St. David's and Lincoln) now scarcely reached 40 marks 'on account of the frequent wars there'[4]. Unfortunately there is no way of knowing which of these benefices had suffered the most serious losses of income, although the Welsh church of Merthyr would obviously be a prime candidate, while Clun, situated in one of the wilder areas of the Hereford diocese

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.222, 223-4, 257, 301.
2. Cart. Shrewsbury, ed. Rees, i.xxix. The general economic effects were felt as far afield as Warwickshire: Reg. Giffard, ii.313.
3. See below, pp. 58-9, 123 ff., 130, 290-5.
4. Cal. Pap. L. i.390.

not far from the Welsh border, may also have suffered directly. Whatever the case the overall reduction was clearly drastic, Clun alone being valued at over £40 clear in 1291[1]; and since the majority of incumbents could not hope to pull strings at the papal curia in this fashion when faced with financial difficulties, it is possible that some suffered severe economic hardship at one time or another.

These continual skirmishes with the Welsh were not, of course, the only military clashes with which both Church and laity had to contend in thirteenth-century England. During the baronial in-fighting which followed John's death in 1216, Worcester in particular suffered directly, and in the aftermath of the siege of the city the cathedral church was violated and 300 marks extorted from the monks, for which they had to melt down the offerings at St. Wulfstan's shrine[2]. Outside the town itself, the general turmoil apparently precipitated a marginally greater degree of lawlessness and disrespect for established rights than usual, which included despoliation of Church property - although the effects were not confined to our region, nor is it difficult to find examples of similar practices during peacetime[3]. The baronial wars of the mid-thirteenth century on the other hand had a special impact on the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford, partly as a result of the strategic importance which the area assumed in the final conclusive stages of the military confrontation,

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1. Tax. Nich. p.167. In 1263 Clun was a rectory, having been lost by Much Wenlock Priory: Cal. Pat. R. 1348-50, p.135.
2. Ann. Mon. iv. 406-7.
3. Cur. Reg. R. ix. 63, 55, 190; xi. 50; Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Lincs. 1218-19 and Worcs. 1221, ed., D.M. Stenton (SS. liii, 1934), Nos. 1111, 1134.

and partly because of the avowed committment of the two bishops to opposing sides. The extent to which these factors may have affected the religious life of the region must therefore be treated in slightly more detail.

The most immediately striking impact of the barons' wars on the area, as with the border conflict, appears to have been one of economic dislocation, with (again) local religious houses suffering particularly badly, often for very similar reasons. In 1266 the King admitted that Dore Abbey had suffered unduly in the recent disturbances because of the over-frequent demands made on its hospitality by royal justices, sheriffs, foresters and bedels; and since the monastery was consequently in great debt, he prohibited his officials from burdening it further without its consent[1]. In 1269 Pershore Abbey was similarly allowed to (re-) appropriate Alderminster church on account of the burden of hospitality and other oppressions which the house had suffered in the recent upheavals; and in 1271 Bruton Priory (in the diocese of Bath and Wells) was said to be so impoverished 'on account of the past disturbances of the kingdom' that Godfrey Giffard allowed the prior of its dependent cell at Horsley (Gloucestershire) to dwell for four years at the mother house, which in the meantime could dispose of the profits[2]. Other houses felt the effects more directly however. Kenilworth Priory, which although

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1. Cal. Pat. R. 1258-66, p.660.
2. PRO E315/61, f. 114v; Reg. Giffard, i.46. Worcester Cathedral Priory was similarly allowed to appropriate Grimley and Hallow because of losses sustained in the wars: Worc. Reg. I. No.471.

lying outside the Worcester diocese had interests in several churches in the area, was said in 1267 to have suffered serious losses during the siege of Kenilworth castle[1]. Gloucester also suffered a long siege at the hands of the royalists, and in 1266 the King made a grant of £50 to Gloucester Abbey on account of the losses sustained during the disturbances, while the letter book of Lanthony Secunda contains an undated fragment, probably relating to the priory, in which an appeal is made for help, and reference made to the siege of the castle and to impoverishment as a result of war[2]. Whatever the specific nature of the losses suffered, the effects could certainly be extremely prolonged; for as late as 1294 the Worcestershire priory of Little Malvern was licensed to appropriate Stoke Giffard church 'by reason of the hostile incursions' sustained during the wars between the Lord Edward and Simon de Montfort[3].

Again there is little direct evidence for the extent to which this dislocation affected the livelihood of the parish clergy; although in 1269 Godfrey Giffard granted a licence of non-residence to the rector of Stowell (Gloucestershire) on account of his poverty, and because of the various injustices and oppressions which he had suffered in time of war, which meant that he was unable to remain in his benefice 'nisi cum detrimento corporis et anime ac scandalo manifesto'[4]. This appears to be the only explicit reference to such a situation in the whole of Giffard's

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1. Cal. Pat. R. 1266-72, pp.29,121.
2. Cal. Clo. R. 1264-8, pp.200-1; R. Hill, Ecclesiastical Letter Books of the Thirteenth Century (No date/place publication), p.78 (No.14).
3. '...pretextu hostilis incursus...,' HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.766, (f.387v).
4. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.32 (f.19v).

register, and there is no reason to suppose that it was typical; although taken in conjunction with more general evidence for the economic impact of the wars on the region, it does raise the possibility that some of the parish clergy may have suffered severe economic hardship.

Beyond this general economic impact however, what evidence is there for serious disruption of local religious life, or disregard of ecclesiastical rights? The towns must have suffered the most, for Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford each faced prolonged sieges at various times, and it may be that evidence of rebuilding at All Saints, Hereford in the later thirteenth century indicates damage sustained during the baron's wars; while Hereford Cathedral itself was the scene in 1263 of one of the most notorious episodes of the entire conflict, when the hated Savoyard bishop Peter of Aquablanca was seized by Roger Clifford and his baronial supporters, and subsequently imprisoned in Eardisley Castle[1]. Elsewhere there are occasional glimpses of rights being overturned and property siezed amidst the general turmoil. In 1269, an assize was arraigned at Gloucester to decide whether Robert Fraunceys and two others had disseised William de Montfort, rector of Avening, of one messuage and one virgate, in the course of which it emerged that Robert's father had granted the land to William's predecessor in the church for life only and had recovered seisin in 1263; but that after the Battle of Lewes, 'quo tempore complices Symoni de Monteforti...roberias,

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1. Lobel, 'Hereford', pp.6, 7-8; Lobel and Tann, 'Gloucester', p.6; Ann. Mon. iv. 448-9; Cal. Pap. L. i.411.

homicida faciendo terram hostiliter incedebant', William had ejected Robert and seized all his grain. His tenure was, however, shortlived; for after the Battle of Evesham Robert succeeded in evicting him and recovered possession[1]. In 1279, during the usual enquiries preceding the institution of a rector to Lyonshall church, it similarly emerged that the previous rector had been presented in time of war by Ralph Mortimer, who had occupied the manor - although the last presentation in time of peace had been by Wormsley Priory, which had acquired the advowson earlier in the century and which consequently recovered its right of patronage[2]. In addition, there are occasional hints of more general lawlessness and disruption. In 1264 the pope ordered an enquiry into the fitness for office of William, abbot-elect of Evesham, since the 'general disturbance in the realm' prevented him from coming to Rome, while in 1284 the bishops of Bangor and Worcester were given power to absolve all those responsible for the murder of clergy, religious or laity, and for sacrileges, rapines, burnings and violences committed during the baronial wars and during Edward I's Welsh wars; and there are several instances of secular lands being seized and looted during the conflict.[3]

Interesting and instructive though these episodes are, however, we should be wary of generalizing too freely from what is very limited evidence.

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1. PRO Just. 1/275-6, m.30d. William was a son of Peter de Montfort of Beaudesert, a supporter of the earl although unrelated.
2. BL (HM) 3586, f.138r, 139r. The incumbent at the time of Mortimer's intrusion was Clement de Aquablanca.
3. Cal. Pap. L. i. 302, 477; Reg. Giffard, ii. 248; Cal. Clo. R. 1264-8, p.115; PRO Just. I/302, m.29-30.

General economic implications notwithstanding, neither secular court rolls nor ecclesiastical records (which from 1268 include Giffard's episcopal register at Worcester) give any indication of consistent or widespread disruption at parish and village level; and overall the forfeitures which followed the royalist victory probably had a more far-reaching impact on local patterns of land tenure and advowson ownership than anything which occurred during the conflict itself - while even this was limited in duration as a result of the Dictum of Kenilworth, and in any case involved no fundamental change in the underlying structure of advowson ownership. No doubt there was despoliation of churches, and no doubt some areas suffered directly from the presence of marauding armies; but then some of these things were not unknown in peacetime, and it seems likely that in many parishes the conflict remained a distant one with little direct impact on local life, religious or otherwise. That rectors and vicars continued to be presented and to serve their churches is evident even in the cases of Avening and Lyonshall cited above, insofar as both William de Montfort and Ralph Mortimer's presentee were apparently canonically instituted and retained their benefices long after the country had been pacified[1].

There was, of course, a political and ideological dimension to the events of 1258-65 which the Welsh conflict lacked; and this had particular

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1. Mortimer's presentee Adam held Lyonshall until his death in 1279, while William de Montfort still held Avening in 1291: BL (HM) 3586, f.139r; Cal. Pap. L. i.533.

implications for the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford insofar as the two bishops came to be closely identified with opposing interests. Peter of Aquablanca, as a Savoyard favourite of Henry III, earned a reputation which is only now recovering from Matthew Paris's acid pen, and on the fall of Hereford to the baronial forces he was violently seized and subsequently imprisoned as we have seen. In contrast Walter Cantelupe, his contemporary in the see of Worcester, showed an early interest in Montfort's ideas in his correspondence with Adam Marsh and Grosseteste, and subsequently became a staunch supporter of the baronial cause, entertaining the earl and saying mass for the baronial forces immediately prior to the Battle of Evesham[1]. It is debatable however how far this partisanship filtered down to parochial level. Certainly there must have been partisan rectors, if only as a result of family links or obligations to patrons, and William de Montfort at Avening is a case in point. In addition, the fact that both Aquablanca and Cantelupe tended - like other thirteenth-century bishops - to collate their own clerks, associates and relatives to the benefices in their gift must similarly have affected the picture; although the extent of non-residence amongst episcopal presentees throughout the century no doubt cushioned any direct effect which this might have had on local attitudes[2]. There is no evidence however that conscious 'political' packing of ecclesiastical

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1. DNB; W.N. Yates, 'Bishop Peter de Aquablanca (1240-68): a Reconsideration', J.Eccl. H., xxii (1971) 303-5; M. Gibbs and J. Lang, Bishops and Reform, 1215-72 (Oxford, 1934), pp.38-9.
2. See below pp.141-55.

benefices as a deliberate policy was ever attempted - and this, despite the reputation which he acquired for gross nepotism on an unprecedented scale, is as true of Peter Aquablanca as it is of Cantelupe. In fact the number of Savoyards and relatives promoted at Hereford, although high enough to provoke resentment in the atmosphere of the mid-thirteenth century, seems to have been grossly exaggerated, and actually indicates a level of nepotism no higher - indeed it was often lower - than that practised by other bishops both at Hereford and elsewhere. At Worcester, Cantelupe similarly catered for relatives as well as for members of his own familia - although in neither case is there anything to indicate that the level of provision, or the motives behind this, were any different from those behind any other episcopal collations of the period[1].

Nor - at parish level - is there much evidence for policital affiliations within the Church having had any significant effect during the conflict. The amnesties recorded on the patent rolls in the years after the pacification of the kingdom include the names of several beneficed clergymen, none, apparently, from either of our dioceses, despite the influence of Bishop Cantelupe; and although members of the clergy figured prominently in the popular religious cult which subsequently sprang up around the earl's remains at Evesham, pilgrims were drawn from an unusually wide catchment area, and Worcester does not figure unduly[2].

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1. Below pp.141-6.
2. The Miracles of Simon de Montfort (with The Chronicle of William de Rishanger), ed. J.O. Halliwell (Camden Soc. xv, 1840), pp.68-108; R.C. Finucane, Miracles and Pilgrims. Popular Beliefs in Medieval England (London, 1977), pp.131-5, 169-70. In any case devotion to the cult was not necessarily indicative of political affiliations during 1258-65.

So far as the lower clergy are concerned therefore, there appears to be little evidence for J.W. Willis Bund's sweeping statement in the Victoria County History, that in the diocese of Worcester 'the whole of the clergy, from the influence of the bishop, were either avowed or secret rebels'[1]; although we can, of course, never know how far individual priests may have used their position to preach a political message in support of either party.

It would seem, therefore, that in the barons' wars, as with the other military confrontations of the period, it was above all the general economic dislocation caused which had the greatest impact on the region so far as the Church was concerned. Certainly both dioceses suffered directly (if unevenly) from the presence of hostile armies at various times - although in this they were not alone, and towards the end of the baronial rebellion Norwich in particular was the scene of extensive violence against both local clergy and Church property[2]. The geographical position of both dioceses, lying between Wales and central England, meant however that indirect economic dislocation as a result of the Welsh conflict was a perpetual feature of thirteenth-century life, rather than the temporary and transient result of one isolated period of local disruption; and the strategic importance of the area during the mid-century crisis - itself largely due to this same geographical position - further exacerbated

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1. VCH Worcs. ii.206.
2. Ann. Mon. iv. 457, 461; Cal. Pat. R. 1266-72, p.96.

these problems. Despite some compensating gains for the region as a whole, epitomized in the castle-boroughs which continued to develop along the border, this evidently had serious repercussions for the Church, in particular contributing to the impoverishment of local religious houses and possibly reducing the income of the parish clergy; and these are factors which must constantly be borne in mind when evaluating the policies of local bishops as regards appropriation, vicarage ordination and protection of ancient financial rights.

(v) Conclusions

In the course of this chapter, some attempt has been made to isolate the predominant topographic, historical and political characteristics of the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford, and to determine the ways in which these affected religious life and pastoral provision. Within the region as a whole, sub-parochial chapels remained a vital component of the pastoral framework - this being a result not only of patterns of settlement, but equally of the continuing influence of former minsters and pre-conquest monastic churches well into the thirteenth century, which impeded the progress of many local churches towards full independence. This in turn involves a number of further implications. First, the decay of the minsters themselves, whether this is dated to the late Anglo-Saxon period or to the late eleventh century, was clearly not synonymous with the decay of their jurisdictions and influence, which in cases where the minster metamorphosed into a religious house sometimes remained a major force long after the emergence of the late medieval parish

structure. Second, undue concentration on the quality of pastoral care available at the parish church itself and on the person of the resident rector or vicar, although inevitable up to a point given the nature of the evidence, will clearly give a distorted and at best incomplete picture, insofar as many medieval parishioners were served not from the mother church, but from an outlying chapel; although this does not necessarily mean that the inhabitants of outlying hamlets or farmsteads were necessarily any worse served than their neighbours at the parish church. On the contrary, in terms of pastoral provision as against legal definition, some chapels apparently functioned little differently from fully-fledged 'parish churches', whilst conversely a good many technically independent churches nevertheless lacked rights of sepulture and other facilities; and in fact the distinction between 'church' and 'chapel' remained less rigid and clear-cut, even in the later thirteenth century, than contemporary developments in canon law would suggest. Finally, the continuing pastoral significance of these chapels clearly has important implications regarding the employment and religious functions of the large numbers of unbeneficed clergy in thirteenth-century society - a group which is discussed more fully below[1]. In addition, the quality of religious life in both dioceses was to some extent affected by the proximity of the Welsh border, which contributed to the economic problems of the Church in these areas throughout the period, these

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1. Below, chapter 4, pp.212-77.

difficulties being exacerbated by the baronial wars of the mid-century; although with the possible exception of the border parishes on the extreme western edge of the Hereford diocese, neither see seems to have suffered unduly at parish level from the direct effect of these conflicts.

CHAPTER TWO

Patrons, Patronage and Property.

(i) Introductory

The patron, lay or ecclesiastical, was central to the smooth functioning of the secular church in the thirteenth century. True, during the twelfth and late eleventh centuries canonists and bishops devoted much energy towards regulating and redefining the powers of patrons over local churches, in line with their aim to extricate the Church and its clergy from external (and especially lay) influence[1]; but by the thirteenth century the recruitment of parish clergy was still reliant, in the first instance, on the ecclesiastics, religious corporations and laymen who held the advowsons of local churches - that is the right to present a clerk to the diocesan for institution to the benefice. The nature and extent of patrons' rights thus remained a matter of central concern, while the use to which this patronage was put was of special importance to bishops, insofar as this was one of the most powerful factors affecting the composition and quality of the beneficed clergy. To patrons themselves however, advowson ownership represented first and foremost a valuable property right, which was defended as vigorously as any other feudal privilege by laity, monasteries and churchmen alike; and it is primarily with patronage as property that

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1. See below, pp.96-8, 102-4.

the present chapter is concerned. The enquiry falls into three broad but overlapping areas. First, what factors determined the structure of advowson ownership in this area? Second, what was the value of advowson ownership to the different patronage-owning groups - other than its obvious significance as an important source of patronage which could be used to provide for relatives, retainers or those with influence, and the exercise of which is discussed more fully in a later chapter[1]? Finally, what does the pattern of inheritance, conveyances and litigation tell us about the conceptions of parochial patronage as a property right current amongst patrons themselves during the thirteenth century, and how far were these compatible with the aims of ecclesiastical reformers?

(ii) The Structure of Advowson-Ownership: (a) The Church.

It has been estimated that as early as 1150, no fewer than a quarter of all advowsons in England were in monastic hands[2]; but in the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford, the bias towards ecclesiastical patronage was far more striking. Taking the diocese of Worcester first, there were by the start of the thirteenth century some 238 separate advowsons already in ecclesiastical hands, as against 173 owned by the laity: percentages of 58 and 42 respectively[3]. While local laymen exercised

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1. Below, chapter 3, pp.140-211.
2. D. Knowles, The Monastic Order in England 940-1216 (Cambridge, 1949), p.597.
3. Figures represent numbers of advowsons (prebends excepted) and not of parishes. Conventual parish churches often had no separate advowsons while many sub-parochial chapels did, and other churches included several portions with independent advowsons: above pp.26,30,40; below pp.148, 298-9.

a significant influence therefore, it was primarily the Church which dominated the preferment of parish clergy in the diocese. Ecclesiastical patrons did not constitute a homogenous group however, as Table IIa (over) illustrates; and it is particularly striking that of these 238 advowsons no fewer than 105-44 per cent - were distributed amongst the nine great Benedictine houses of the region, a further 25 (or 10 per cent) being held by Benedictine houses situated outside the diocese. Few religious orders or other ecclesiastics could compete with such a concentration, the closest contenders being the Augustinians with 55 advowsons distributed amongst 11 houses in and out of the diocese, the great alien abbeys or their cells (mostly Benedictine) holding 18, and finally the bishop holding 15.

The distribution of advowson ownership in the thirteenth century thus closely reflected the early domination of the region not only by the Church in general - which as early as 1086 held 786 out of 1,200 hides in Worcestershire alone[1] - but in particular by the great pre-conquest Benedictine houses at Gloucester, Worcester, Tewkesbury, Evesham and Pershore, whose west midland estates were already established in broad outline by the eleventh century at the latest. The origins of this distribution are consequently to be sought in the pattern of Anglo-Saxon endowment; and a glance at the chronology of acquisition by these houses corroborates this view. Of 23 advowsons owned by

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1. VCH Worcs. ii.6.

TABLE II

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ADVOWSONS IN ECCLESIASTICAL OWNERSHIP IN 1200.

		(a) Diocese of Worcester			(b) Diocese of Hereford		
	Religious Order.	House/No. Houses	No Advowsons Held	(%)	House/No. Houses	No Advowsons Held	(%)
Patrons within the Diocese	Benedictine:	Alcester Abbey	3		St.Guthlac's Priory		
		Evesham Abbey	9		*Hereford	15 } 16	(9.9)
		Gloucester Abbey	28		Kilpeck Priory*	1 }	
		Gt.Malvern Priory	6	105 (44.1)			
		L.Malvern Priory	2				
		Pershore Abbey	10				
		Tewkesbury Abbey	17				
		Winchcombe Abbey	7				
		Worcester Cathedral Priory	23				
	Cluniac	(2)	2	(0.8)	(2)	11	(6.8)
	Cistercian	(2)	2	(0.8)	(1)	1	(0.6)
	Augustinian:	(4)	34	(14.3)	(3)	26	(16.0)
	Secular Colleges:	(1)	9	(3.8)	-	-	-
	Kts.Hospitallers:		2	(0.8)		4	(2.5)
	Alien Cells.	(4)	11	(4.6)	(2)	12	(7.4)
	Bishop:		15	(6.3)		15	(9.3)
					Dean & Chapter:	13	(8.0)
Patrons outside the Diocese	Benedictine	(10)	25	(10.6)	(8)	33	(20.4)
	Cluniac	(1)	1	(0.4)	-	-	-
	Cistercian	-	-	-	(1)	1	(0.6)
	Augustinian	(7)	21	(8.9)	(3)	16	(9.9)
	Alien Abbeys:	(4)	7	(2.9)	(3)	12	(7.4)
	Episcopal/Other	(4)	4	(1.7)	(1)	2	(1.2)
		TOTAL:-	238	(100)		162	(100)

(*Cells to Gloucester Abbey).

Worcester Cathedral Priory at the start of the thirteenth century, no fewer than 17 were held as appurtenant to lands which had been in the priory's or bishop's possession before 1100, and in many cases since before the conquest[1]; while at Evesham and Pershore the pattern of acquisition was even more striking, all but one of the 19 advowsons held by these abbeys in 1200 being appurtenant to pre-conquest estates[2]. Overall, of the five most important pre-conquest foundations only Tewkesbury fails to conform to the pattern, all but one of its thirteenth-century advowsons in the region being the result of eleventh or twelfth-century gifts, mostly by the earls of Gloucester[3].

The late medieval distribution of parochial patronage in the region was closely related therefore to a structure of landownership which had its origins in the pre-conquest past; and although the emergence and endowment during the eleventh and twelfth centuries of several major new orders - notably the Cistercians and Augustinians - inevitably altered the pre-conquest picture, this nevertheless failed to undermine completely the domination of the older Benedictine foundations -

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1. Broadwas, Cleeve Prior, Cropthorne, Grimley, Harvington, Himbleton, Icomb, Overbury, Sedgeberrow, Stoke Prior, Tibberton, Wolverley, St. Helen's, St. Andrew's and St. Martin's Worcester, Wick Episcopi, Hartlebury: Worc. Reg. I, Nos.52-5,, 64, 73, 77, 551, pp.1, 44n.49: Ann. Mon. iv.367; VCH Worcs. iii.309, 312, 511, 513; iv.410.
2. VCH Gloucs. vi.39,45,51,56,151,159; vii. 194, 197; VCH Warws. iii.127, 129; VCH Worcs. ii.349, 353; iii. 463, 467; iv.4, 6, 7, 12, 38, 42, 103, 110, 139, 143; BL (HM) 3763, f.59r, 86v, 164r-v; PRO E315/61, f.100v, 105r; DB.xv (Gloucs), 12,7; 14,2 (166a); 34,4 (167b).
3. Earldom of Gloucester Charters. The Charters and Scribes of the Earls and Countesses of Gloucester to A.D.1217, ed. R.B. Patterson (Oxford, 1973), Nos.177, 179, 275-6; Mon. Angl. ii.53, 70, 73, 75; Book of Fees (3 vols, HMSO, 1920-31) ii.1276; VCH Gloucs. vi.226, 230; VCH Worcs. iii.37, 42.

especially as they themselves continued to benefit from grants of land and churches throughout, with new Benedictine houses being founded and endowed at Malvern and Alcester[1]. However one novel feature of the post-conquest period requires special mention, in that lay benefactors began increasingly to endow religious houses not only with landed estates to which a church (if it existed) was merely an incidental appurtenance, but also with individual advowsons as a separate and independent gift. The motives behind this new tendency, which reached a peak during the twelfth century and had all but dried up by the thirteenth, concern changing conceptions of church-ownership amongst lay rather than monastic patrons, and as such are discussed below[2]. The consequence however was that while the distribution of advowson-ownership in the area continued to reflect the preponderance of ecclesiastical lordship, there was also in ecclesiastical hands by the early thirteenth century a sizeable number of advowsons no longer appurtenant to the lands on which the church stood, largely as a result of twelfth-century gifts[3].

Further west in the diocese of Hereford, the picture was slightly modified. Here, in these wilder Marcher regions, settlement and with it the establishment of Benedictine monasticism had not occurred as early as in the more pacified eastern counties, and consequently the

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1. VCH Worcs. ii.136ff, 143ff; VCH Warws. ii.59; and see Table IIa.
2. Below pp. 89-91, 109-11.
3. e.g. all but 2 of Tewkesbury's advowsons; see above p.73 n.3.

diocese did not possess the concentration of rich, old-established institutions which so dominated the ecclesiastical scene in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. The result was that secular lordship remained dominant[1], and once again, these factors conditioned the distribution of advowson ownership, (see Table IIb). In Hereford diocese Benedictine monasteries accounted for only 49 advowsons, two-thirds of these being held by houses situated outside the diocese - most notably St. Peter's Gloucester and Great Malvern with 15 advowsons between them, and Shrewsbury Abbey with nine[2]. Of the local religious corporations, only the Augustinian canons of Wigmore succeeded in accumulating advowsons on any scale before 1200, largely through the lavish foundation grants bestowed on them by the Mortimers of Wigmore[3] - their closest rivals being the bishop of Hereford and his cathedral chapter, holding 15 and 13 advowsons respectively[4]. Yet despite these differences there remained, as at Worcester, an overall ecclesiastical bias, albeit in less exaggerated terms; and of 297 separate advowsons

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1. R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the Marches of Wales, 1282 - 1400 (Oxford, 1978), p.39.
2. Glouc. Cart. i.19, 66, 76, 80, 116, 251, 287; ii.101-1, 186, 288-9; iii. 32; Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS. 271, f.48r; The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey, ed. U. Rees (2 vols, Aberystwyth, 1975), i. Nos. 34-7, ii. Nos. 292, 295, 333-4, 340; Heref. Cath. Muns. ii.564 (No. 1058); BL (HM) 3586, f.138r; Cal. Pap. L. i.46; Eyton, i.68-9, 135-6; iv. 131; xi.315; VCH Worcs. iv. 240, 263-4.
3. Mon. Angl. vi. 349a, 345, 348a; Heref. Cath. Muns. i.261-2 (No.2098); Reg. Cantelupe, p.196; Reg. Swinfield, pp.527, 530, 539, 543, 544; Tax. Nich. pp.159, 167; Eyton, iv. 255; vi. 357; xi. 206, 318-9, 320; VCH Worcs. iv. 285, 289.
4. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.96-7, 196, 234-5, 251; Reg. Swinfield, pp.524, 526, 527, 533, 535, 536, 538; Cal. Pap. L. i.202; Cal. Pat. R. 1266-72, p.321; Heref. Cath. Muns. i.37, 63, 147, 167-8, 326, 394-6, ii. 499, 557; Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B.329, f.52v-53r, 155r, 171r-v; Cur. Reg. R. ix. 171, 310; x.100-1; PRO CP 25(1) 80/6/89; Tax. Nich. p.157; DB. xvii (Heref.), 2, 49; 2, 51 (182c).

at the start of the century, ecclesiastical patronage accounted for 162, lay patronage for 135 - 55 as against 45 per cent. In part this was due to the influence of houses outside the diocese, although the imbalance also illustrates that while it was comparatively easy for a religious house to accumulate large reserves of patronage, through endowments and grants as well as through manorial possessions, it remained uncommon for secular lords to hold large numbers of advowsons in any one area[1].

Local patterns of lay and ecclesiastical patronage were thus fixed long before the thirteenth century, and had their roots first in local settlement and land distribution, and second in the pattern of monastic endowment from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards. How far was this basic distribution subject to change between 1200 and 1300?

The overwhelming impression is one of stability - at least so far as traffic between lay and ecclesiastical patrons is concerned. During the period 32 churches in the diocese of Worcester which were under lay patronage in 1200 passed into ecclesiastical ownership, some of them more than once; although this figure, representing 18 per cent of the total number in lay hands, is deceptive in several ways. At least 3 (and possibly 4) of these transfers represented acquisitions by the bishop in his feudal capacity as overlord of the respective manors, and followed litigation with his tenant; while the abbot of Westminster, who purchased the advowson of Longdon from the coheirs of Reginald Folet, may also have been acting

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1. See Below, pp. 83, 91-2.

in his capacity as overlord of Longdon manor[1]. This leaves a maximum of 28 transfers which may have been bona fide grants, of which however 9 were either royal endowments and/or foundation grants to newly established religious houses[2]. Of the remaining 19 transfers some may have been sales[3], while others represented isolated gifts accompanying the bequest of the grantor's body for burial to the house in question[4], and one was a grant by the parson of Eldersfield to whom the advowson had descended[5]. Overall therefore, the evidence does not point to a continuation of the wholesale alienation of advowsons to religious corporations which characterized the twelfth century.

Moreover, these transfers were offset by corresponding recoveries of advowsons by the laity, mostly following litigation. Of those 32 churches passing at some time during the thirteenth century into ecclesiastical ownership, 5 were subsequently recovered by either the grantor, his descendants, or his successors as lords of the manor, (although of these most were subsequently regranted to religious owners)[6]. In addition a further 11 advowsons already in ecclesiastical hands by 1200 were also recovered by thirteenth-century lords, of which 8 remained in lay owner-

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1. Ann. Mon. iv. 403-4, 429-30; The Red Book of Worcester, ed. M. Hollings (4 Parts, WHS, 1934-50) iv. 370, 448; VCH Worcs. iii. 558, 561; iv. 113, 117, 215, 217; VCH Warws. v. 89, 92.
2. Ann. Mon. iv. 423; Cal. Pap. L. i. 240; VCH Worcs. iii. 34, 141, 149; Book of Fees, ii.1406; Reg. Giffard, ii.55-6 (all royal grants); below p.80 and n.1.
3. Possibly Lapworth or Saintsbury: Cal. Ch. R. ii.197; Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham, ed. W.D. Macray (Rolls Ser. xxix, 1863), p.284. For definite sales see below pp.79, 85-9.
4. PRO E315/61, f.54v; Cat. Anc. D. iii.281.
5. BL. Harl. Ch. B. 25-28.
6. Cal. Ch. R. ii. 197, 203; VCH Warws. iii. 41; v.12,38; VCH Worcs. iii. 242-3.

ship at the close of the century[1]. Discussion of the implications of this new impulse amongst lay landowners, which the curia regis and assize rolls show to have been far more prevalent than the number of successful recoveries alone might indicate, will for the moment be postponed[2]; but whatever the causes, the result of these recoveries, combined with the corresponding falling-off in secular grants to religious institutions, was that the distribution of lay and ecclesiastical patronage altered very little throughout the century. By the early 1300's, the Church had lost 9 advowsons to the laity in the diocese of Worcester but gained 30, leaving a total of 259 in ecclesiastical hands as against 152 under lay patronage - figures only marginally different from those of a century earlier[3].

In the neighbouring diocese of Hereford, the overall picture was strikingly similar. There some 22 advowsons were transferred from lay to ecclesiastical patronage between 1200 and the early fourteenth century, of which 7 were foundation grants[4] and 3 were royal endowments[5],

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1. Bagendon, Chaddesley Corbett, Eckington, Kidderminster, Loxley, Pillerton Hersey, Slimbridge, Old Swinford, Tanworth, St. James Warwick, Weston subedge: PRO C115 K2/6683, f.70v; PRO E164/22, f.8v; Glouc. Cart. i. 113, 114; The Cartulary of Missenden Abbey, ed. J.G. Jenkins, Pt.iii (Bucks. Rec. Soc. xii, 1962), Nos. 893, 895; Cur. Reg. R. iii. 167; v.63; vii. 2-3, 143; xi. 575; Mon. Angl. ii. 70, 76, PRO CP 25(1) 259/11/33; VCH Worcs. iv. 75; iii. 175; VCH Warws. iii. 133; v. 135, 174.
2. Below, pp.109-12.
3. In addition, several former chapels acquired independent advowsons by 1300: see above pp.41-2.
4. VCH Shrops. ii. 47-8; viii. 213; Reg. Swinfield, pp.51-2. (See above, p.70 note 3).
5. BL (HM) 3586, f.132r; Cal. Pat. R. 1225-32, p.27; Charters and Records of Hereford Cathedral, ed. W.W. Capes (Hereford, 1908), pp. 114-5; Reg. Swinfield, pp. 113, 411-12, 534.

while at least another 2 were re-grants prompted by litigation[1] and one - possibly more - were sales, perhaps necessitated by financial embarassment[2]. This leaves a maximum of 9 bona fide grants on the twelfth-century pattern[3], which were again counter-balanced by a high recovery rate, 1 of the 22 churches alienated during the thirteenth century being permanently recovered, along with 12 others already in ecclesiastical ownership by 1200[4]. Overall the Church lost 12 advowsons to the laity during the thirteenth century but gained 21, resulting in ecclesiastical patronage of 171 benefices by the early fourteenth century as against 126 under lay patronage: again a distribution very little different from that of 1200.

Nor did the internal structure of ecclesiastical patronage alter much during the period. The scale of grants to religious institutions was scarcely sufficient significantly to alter the existing distribution amongst the major ecclesiastical owners, and what grants were made were themselves fairly evenly spread amongst the various religious

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1. Cal. Pat. R. 1348-50, p.135; Heref. Cath. Muns. i.420 (No.1966); Charters & Recs. Heref., ed., Capes, pp.110-1.
2. Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B.329, f.5v,6r; ? Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS.271,f.65v, 68r. and see below pp. 81-2, 84-9.
3. BL(HM) 3586, f.137r,141r; BL Stowe Ch. 168; Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS 271, f.68r; PRO CP25(1) 81/19/66, 258/8/33; Cal.Pat.R. 1307-13, pp.163,179; ibid., 1313-17, p.357; VCH Worcs. iv.254; Eyton, iv.39.
4. Chetton, Avenbury, Cleobury N., Culmington, Edvin Loach, Humber, Kingsland, Moccas, Sutton St.Nicholas, Monnington, Pencombe, Staunton, Wentnor: Oxford, Balliol Coll.MS.271, f.18r-v, 19, 52v-53r, 70v, 71r, 88r, 98r; Shrewsbury, Local Studies Library, MS.1, f.46r, 52r; PRO CP25(1) 28/6/76; 'Cartularium Prioratus S.Johannis de Brecon', ed. R.W. Banks, Archaeologia Cambrensis, 4th. ser., xiii(1882), 306; Cur.Reg.R. iv.88, 254; xi.149, 232-3; xiv.158-9; xv.354; Calendar of Documents preserved in France, ed. J.H. Round (London,1899), i. No.1142; Reg. Cantelupe, p.41; Reg. Swinfield, pp.388, 533, 544; Eyton, i.172, 176; iii.30; xi.185.

orders. Foundation grants were made to the Cistercians of Hailes, the Premonstratensians of Halesowen, the Trinitarians of Thelsford and the Benedictine nuns of Usk[1]; and transfers to the older institutions display a similar mix, with Evesham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury abbeys appearing alongside the Augustinian priories of Lanthony Secunda and Wormsley, while the conveyance of Lapworth to Walter de Merton's House of Scholars at Oxford points to the emergence of corporate secular institutions as a major property-owning force during the thirteenth century[2]. Transfers between ecclesiastical owners did occur, but were rare and usually involved extraordinary circumstances. Taking both dioceses together, of 29 such transfers during the thirteenth century affecting 24 separate churches, 5 involved exchanges between the bishops and their respective cathedral chapters[3], while a further group consisted of sales, leases or grants of advowsons to local houses by alien abbeys. The reason given, in the case of Seez Abbey's transfer of Diddlesbury to the bishop of Hereford, was the large distance involved and the difficulties and spiritual dangers which this entailed; and it seems likely that similar considerations prompted the other alienations in this category[4]. Of the remainder, the majority either involved the

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1. Cal. Pap. L. i.240; Reg. Giffard, i.51, ii.174; D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales (2nd edn., London, 1971), p.267; VCH Worcs. iii.149; VCH Warws. v.12,35,38.
2. Above pp.76-7, 78-9 and notes.
3. BL(HM) 6981, f.55r-v; Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B.329, f.66r, 93r-v; Heref. Cath. Muns. i.167-8, 394-6 (Nos.1850, 1408); Reg. Cantelupe, p.267; Reg. Swinfield, p.536; VCH Worcs. iii.386; iv.410.
4. Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B.329, f.93r-94r, 151r; VCH Gloucs. vi.84; below pp.135-6.

settlement of some lawsuit, or represented repayment for favours bestowed[1]; and overall the structure of ecclesiastical patronage as outlined in Table II remained little altered by the close of the thirteenth century.

(ii) The Structure of Advowson Ownership: (b) the Laity.

As with ecclesiastical patronage, the overwhelming majority of advowsons owned by laymen in 1200 were held as appurtenant to the lands on which the church stood[2]. In contrast to monastic estates however, those under lay ownership seldom remained so stable or so permanently under one lordship; and consequently we might expect to find a more fluid pattern of ownership amongst the laity if only through the accident of inheritance. In addition, several other factors at work during the thirteenth century might equally have affected the overall structure of lay patronage. In particular it has long been recognized that the period was one of acute economic difficulty for lesser knights and other small landowners, to the extent that some historians have argued for a long term 'crisis' of the knightly classes; and it is certainly true that many small landholding families were forced to alienate their patrimonies in order to meet mounting debts, which is likely to have affected the patronage structure indirectly and possibly reduced the

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1. Glouc. Cart. i.31-2; Reg. Giffard, i.10, ii.294, 463; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.673 (f.341r).
2. The exceptions were Down Ampney (the advowson belonging to the king), Yardley and Eldersfield : Book of Fees, ii.1406; i.51, 376; VCH Worcs. iii.239, 242; below p.108.

number of advowsons held by marginal and lesser knights[1]. In the case of Yorkshire, it has even been suggested that baronial and other stable families consciously exploited this situation specifically to accumulate parochial patronage, resulting in the emergence of an independent market for the sale of advowsons, and ultimately producing a strikingly disproportionate concentration of ownership at the upper end of the social scale by the end of the century[2]. How far was the ownership of lay patronage in our own region affected by such factors?

Several rising families increased their access to parochial patronage in the area during the period, in many instances at the expense of lesser, more unstable landowners - although in all but a few cases the advowsons concerned were acquired only incidentally, as appurtenant to the manor or other lands which formed the real subject of the transaction. In particular Robert Burnel, Edward I's chancellor and bishop of Bath and Wells, made striking acquisitions in the region, and before his death had purchased or otherwise obtained enfeoffment in the manors of Woolstaston, Rushbury, Hope Bowdler, Little Rissington and Broughton Hackett as well as in the Shropshire barony of Castle Holdgate, each of which carried appurtenant advowsons[3]. In addition he purchased

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1. P.R. Coss, 'Sir Geoffrey de Langley and the Crisis of the Knightly Class in Thirteenth-Century England', P & P, lxviii (1975), 3-37; and literature there cited.
2. J.E. Newman, 'Greater and Lesser Landowners and Parochial Patronage : Yorkshire in the Thirteenth Century', EHR, xcii(1977), 280-308.
3. Cal. Inq. p.m., iii.Nos.65,194; Cal. Pat. R. 1292-1301,p.590; Reg. Giffard, ii.409; Reg. Swinfield, pp.525,543; Eyton, iv.66-8, 96-8, v.117, vi.155-6; VCH Worcs. iv.44-5.

the advowson of Chetton in Shropshire, along with certain rents, from Robert Corbet of Chaddesley in 1270 - his only acquisition of a local advowson independently of the main manor[1]. Similar purchases, though not on such a scale, were made by Sir Hugh Despenser, another outsider, who between 1279 and 1311 bought up the Gloucestershire manors of Miserden (with its castle and park) and Winstone, and a portion in that of Bisley, all with appurtenant advowsons[2].

Even more striking were the acquisitions of local families such as (in the diocese of Hereford) the Mortimers of Wigmore and (in that of Worcester) the Beauchamps of Elmley, who throughout the century amassed impressive blocks of territory through purchase and marriage, and who as a result held by 1300, mostly through recent acquisitions, no fewer than 10 and 12 appurtenant advowsons respectively - the largest single concentration of patronage in lay hands in either diocese[3]. In both cases dynastic marriage had played an important part in the accumulation of property and (incidentally) of patronage, the Mortimers acquiring the advowsons of Stoke Bliss, Kingsland and New and Old Radnor along with the respective estates following Roger Mortimer's marriage to Maud de Braose early in the century[4], and the Beauchamps acquiring at least 2 of their local advowsons with the earldom of Warwick, again

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1. Cal. Ch. R. ii.140,144.
2. Cat. Anc. D. i.108-9, 111;iv.106, 233, 242.
3. For these families see Beauch. Cart. pp.xviii-xxv; Davies, Lordship and Society, pp.35-8.
4. Reg. Swinfield, pp.524, 525, 532; Book of Fees, ii.805, 814, 1186; I.J. Saunders, English Baronies. A Study of their Origins and Descent 1086-1327 (Oxford, 1960), p.21; VCH Worcs. iv.350, 353.

through marriage, in 1268[1]; although both continued to add to their expanding blocks of territory by other means. The manor and advowson of Lighthorne were sold to William de Beauchamp by Sir Richard d'Amundeville in 1277 for £100 and a life tenancy[2], and William may also have held the manor and advowson of Broughton Hackett for a short period in the 1280's, while Edmund Mortimer similarly acquired the manors and advowsons of Sapey and Shrawley between 1275 and 1284, possibly through purchase, and the Roger Mortimer who bought the manor and advowson of Oddingley from the Hacketts before 1274 was apparently his brother[3].

These were only the most significant of such acquisitions; and throughout the period several other estates changed hands along with their appurtenant patronage in similar circumstances. The motive for the sale is not always clear, although in some instances it was certainly financial distress. Henry de Pennebrugge, an active local knight whose father had surrendered Pembridge manor and advowson to Roger Mortimer and who himself sold the manors and advowsons of Weston Subedge and Winstone in 1279 and 1310, was in debt to certain Jews of Oxford in the early 1270's[4]; while in 1274-5 John de Northwick mortgaged his lands at Broughton Hackett, including the advowson, to Eustace de la

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1. Cur. Reg. R. v.63; Reg. Giffard, ii.432; VCH Warws. v.168, 174; Beauch. Cart. pp.xxiii-iv.
2. Warwickshire Feet of Fines, vol.i, ed. E. Stokes and F.C. Wellstood (DS, xi, 1932), No.942.
3. VCH Worcs. iii.457-8, iv.44, 338, 341; BL(HM) 1240, f.44r.
4. BL(HM) 1240, f.75r; Cal. Inq.p.m. ii. Nos.305,314 (p.184); VCH Gloucs. xi.147, 149; C. Moor, Knights of Edward I (5 vols, Harleian Soc., lxxx-lxxxiv, 1929-32), iv.30.

Hache and Thomas de Naunton[1]. In other cases there is no definite evidence of financial difficulty, although several of those alienating their patrimonies were of very modest means and may have faced similar problems. The buyers, on the other hand, tended to be members of stable or expanding families such as the Russels, who acquired the manors and advowsons of Strensham and Peopleton in Worcestershire, or emerging royal administrators such as Geoffrey de Pickford, who similarly acquired the manor and advowson of Broseley over several years[2].

But while the patronage structure was, to this extent, indirectly affected by developments in the local landmarket, there is little evidence of the economic pressure on lesser landowners having resulted in a particularly buoyant independent market in advowsons, as suggested in the case of Yorkshire. Only 10 possible examples of patronage being sold completely independently of the manor have come to light[3]; and where independent sales were made these usually occurred not in isolation, but rather in the context of a complete fragmentation of estates, probably due to financial distress, over a number of years. Around 1270 for instance, William de Harecurt transferred the advowson of Lapworth church and certain other properties there to William de Bissopesden, lord of Moreton Morrell and his kinsman through marriage,

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1. VCH Worcs. iv.44-5.
2. PRO CP25(1) 259/12/14; VCH Worcs. iv.148,150,203,207; Eyton, ii. 27-31; Reg. Cantelupe, p.237.
3. Warws. Feet of Fines, i, ed. Stokes and Wellstood, Nos.470, 688, 849; Cat. Anc. D. iii.59; Cal. Ch. R. ii.140, 144; Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B. 329, f.5v; Eyton, xi.361-2; VCH Worcs. iv.249, 254, (?) 203; Reg. Swinfield, pp.14, 525; (?) PRO CP25(1) 81/21/114. Most included some property if not the main estate.

apparently in an independent transaction[1]. This must however be seen in the context of a series of alienations by which William gradually divested himself of the whole of his property at Lapworth, including his demesne and chief mansion, and at the time of his grant (or sale) to William de Bissopesden he is described as a 'former lord' of the manor[2]. There is thus a strong suggestion that faced with mounting and eventually insurmountable debt, William was forced, little by little, to divest himself of his patrimony - the alienation of the advowson (with certain lands, rents and services) being merely one stage in the process. Simon Bagot's conveyance of the advowson of Preston Bagot to John Peyeure earlier in the century - for confirming which he received 100 shillings in 1231-2 - was possibly of a similar type, in that he continued to alienate his other properties and by 1243 had been succeeded as lord of the manor by the Knights Hospitallers[3]. At Strensham, Clifton on Teme, Barton on the Heath and possibly Wistanstow, alienation of the advowson was similarly preceded or followed by alienation of all or most of the estate to which it had originally been appurtenant[4].

The chronology of these sales however, where this can be ascertained, implies that even in such circumstances, impecunious landlords were especially reluctant to alienate this part of their patrimony, preferring

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1. Cat. Anc. D. iii.59; Reg. Giffard, ii.281-2.
2. Cat. Anc. D. iii.44, 59, 78, 79.
3. Warws. Feet of Fines, i, ed. Stokes and Wellstood, No.470; VCH Warws.iii.143.
4. VCH Worcs. iv.203-4, 207, 249; VCH Warws. v.14; Eyton, xi.361-2.

first to dispose of lands and rents, and only resorting to the sale of their patronage once the situation became desperate. At Lapworth William de Harecurt started to sell small annual rents quite early, while still styled lord of the manor; and although none of the charters by which he alienated his property are dated, the fact that the deed by which he eventually granted the advowson to William de Bissopesden describes him as the 'former lord' of Lapworth implies that this conveyance was one of the last, probably later than his transfer of the chief mansion and part of the court to M. Henry de Braundeston[1].

While dire financial necessity occasionally forced the sale of advowsons to more stable families therefore, this remained comparatively rare, and in the case of piecemeal alienations over several years was apparently seen as a last resort - the majority of advowsons continuing to pass, whether through sale or inheritance, along with the estate to which they were appurtenant. It is of course true that where advowsons did come into the market independently, this generally resulted in an independent purchase - often by the self same magnates, administrators and other stable families who were also acquiring landed property in the region - and in the eventual transfer of manor and advowson to different people : although even so, buyers did not always purchase the advowson alone. The advowsons of Lapworth, Barton on the Heath and Chetton, although sold independently of the main manor and clearly respresenting

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1. Cat. Anc. D. iii.59, 78.

the most important part of the transaction, were all conveyed along with certain lands, rents or messuages[1]; and in some instances buyers went on to acquire the whole of the original manor. Before 1300 James Russel obtained the advowson of Strensham in an independent transaction, half of it having been held separately from the manor by Roger de la Warr. Around the same time however he was also engaged in buying up the estate, which like the advowson had become divided, from its various co-owners; and before 1312 he had passed on both, now reunited, to Nicholas his son and heir[2].

In the same way as some advowson sales were actually part of a piecemeal alienation of the whole manor therefore, similarly purchase of an advowson sometimes represented part of a piecemeal acquisition of a whole estate; and even where this was not the case, these conveyances must nevertheless be seen against the background of the more general sales and acquisitions of property described above. There is little evidence that stable baronial or upper knightly families in our region were particularly motivated by a desire to accumulate patronage as distinct from any other kind of property; and while men such as Robert Burnel, Simon de Walton or William de Ludlow might occasionally purchase an independent advowson in addition to buying up local estates[3], others like Geoffrey de Langley - a prominent Warwickshire knight and

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1. Cat. Anc. D. iii. 59; Warws. Feet of Fines, i.ed. Stokes and Wellstood, No.688; Cal. Ch. R. ii.144.
2. VCH Worcs. iv.203-4, 207.
3. Cal. Ch. R. ii.144; Warws. Feet of Fines, i, ed. Stokes and Wellstood, No.688; Eyton, xi.362.

civil servant who amassed a fortune through royal service - were apparently more concerned to acquire landed estates from impecunious landlords, irrespective of whether this increased their access to parochial patronage[1].

Nor was the social distribution of advowson ownership in our area seriously affected by transfers of patronage to or from religious houses during the thirteenth century - conveyances affecting 77 advowsons in the two dioceses during the period[2]. Newman, in his analysis of patronage ownership in Yorkshire, suggests that such transactions reveal definite patterns of behaviour amongst different social groups, with magnate and other stable families making significant numbers of recoveries, while lesser knightly families continued to alienate their patronage well into the century[3]. The pattern of grants and recoveries in our own region hardly justifies any firm conclusions in this matter, not least because the statistics involved are so small. Taking both dioceses together, 8 out of 47 transfers of ownership to religious houses which were possibly bona fide grants (as opposed to settlements of lawsuits or sales) were royal endowments[4]. Amongst the remainder, we find spread fairly evenly throughout the century grants from magnates such as Roger de Berkeley, Richard de Clare, Roger Mortimer and Guy de Beauchamp, from lesser baronage such as

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1. Coss, 'Geoffrey de Langley', 17-22. Despite his local land acquisitions Langley acquired only one advowson, with Weston Mauduit: Cal. Inq.p.m. ii. No.48 (p.35); Reg. Giffard, ii.170. Possible reasons for the differences between Yorkshire and the west midlands are discussed below, pp.186-7.
2. See above, pp.76-9.
3. Newman, 'Landowners and Parochial Patronage', pp.284-91.
4. Above, pp.77,78.

Malcolm Musard and John Giffard of Brimpsfield, and from local knights such as Henry Hubaud of Barford, Walter Loholt of Colesbourne or Gerard de Eillesford of King's Pyon[1]. Just as important as the fact that such grants came from a wide social spectrum however is the fact that so few advowsons were alienated by any social group. In contrast to their twelfth-century forebears most thirteenth-century patrons, whether barons or marginal knights, were apparently keen to retain their rights: and this is a conclusion which the social pattern of recoveries from religious houses bears out. Of 35 monastic advowsons passing back into lay ownership following litigation, 2 were recovered by the earl of Warwick in 1202 and 1206-7, 1 by the Berkeleys of Berkeley in 1224, 2 by the Corbets in 1200 and sometime after 1233, and 1 by the Cliffords in 1248[2]; although even more were recovered by knights of purely local significance, for example by the Bagendons between 1189 and 1214, by Peter de Mora before 1253, by the Lucys in the mid-thirteenth century , by the Frenes in 1226, and by the Stauntons (alias Waldyngs) between 1303 and 1317[3]. Moreover, these successful recoveries were simply the tip of a rather large iceberg which is nine-tenths litigation, as the curia regis rolls and local monastic

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1. Cur. Reg. R. xvi.394; Knowles and Hadcock, Med. Relig. Houses, p.267; Cat. Anc. D. i.108; Reg. Giffard, i.14, 51, ii.438, 540; Chron. Evesham, ed. Macray, p.284; Cal. Pat. R. 1301-7, pp.102, 163; VCH Warws. v.12; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.249r-v; BL(HM)3586, f.137r.
2. Cur. Reg. R. v.63; xi.575; Warws. Feet of Fines, i, ed. Stokes and Wellstood, No.80; Cart. Shrewsbury, ed. Rees, ii.No.292; Reg. Swinfield, p.536; Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS.1, f.46r; 52r; PRO CP25(1) 73/2/35.
3. PRO C115 K1/6681, f.228r; Cur. Reg. R. vii.143, 262; Reg. Giffard, ii.109; PRO CP25(1) 28/6/76; Reg. Swinfield, pp.533, 544; VCH Warws. iii.133, v.38.

cartularies indicate: and here too we find a similar social diversity, with landlords of limited means turning to the courts as frequently as their social betters in attempts (albeit usually unsuccessful) to recover manorial advowsons alienated by their predecessors[1].

The result of these attitudes was that while economic pressures and developments in the landmarket had some (largely indirect) effect upon the local patronage structure, with one or two individual families such as the Beauchamps or Burnels accumulating large numbers of advowsons primarily as a side-product of their acquisition of estates, overall there were no major shifts in the social distribution of advowson ownership in the thirteenth century. Around 37 advowsons in the diocese of Worcester, and a similar number in that of Hereford, were by the end of the century distributed amongst a score or so of families who were unambiguously 'baronial' - these being predominantly magnates of national standing such as the Clare earls of Gloucester and Hertford, the Bohun earls of Hereford and Essex, or the Beauchamp earls of Warwick[2]. To this list we should perhaps add a further group of patrons from the lesser baronage, men such as the Giffards of Brimpsfield, the de Montforts of Beaudesert or, at a slightly lower level, the Musard barons of Staveley and the Sudleys of Sudley - a group which

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1. See below, pp. 109-118
2. Above, pp. 82-4 ; below p. 92 note 4 ; Reg. Swinfield, pp.524-44; Reg. Giffard, passim (and see i. App.iv, where presentations are summarised, though very inaccurately); Cal. Inq.p.m. i. Nos.530, 812; ii. Nos. 6, 16, 18, 407, 813; iii. No.194; Saunders, English Baronies, pp.1, 6, 13, 21, 28, 38-9, 43, 66, 68, 73, 79, 112-4; VCH Worcs, Warws, Gloucs, Shrops, passim.

collectively accounts for a further dozen advowsons spread between the two dioceses[1]. Finally there were families such as de la Ware, already possessed of far-flung possessions and shortly to attain full baronial status through marriage, or conversely Verdon and Geneville, possessed of moieties of former baronies which had become divided - a group accounting for a further 9 or 10 advowsons in the two dioceses[2]. Clearly such figures are somewhat arbitrary, given the difficulty of demarcating these different social levels with any precision[3]; but nevertheless it is clear that what may loosely be described as 'baronial' patronage accounted by 1300 for about a third of all secular patronage - a significant but by no means overwhelming proportion, while few individual families held more than 2 or 3 advowsons apiece, and often fewer[4].

The residue of advowsons in secular hands remained distributed therefore amongst laymen of sub-baronial rank - usually as appurtenant

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1. Reg. Giffard, i.14, 23, 44, ii.67, 70, 174, 384, 438, 455, 462, 492, 540; Reg. Swinfield, pp.525, 526, 528; Reg. Cobham (WHS), p.233; VCH Worcs. iii.14, 18; VCH Gloucs. vi.74, 76; vii.228, 230; VCH Warws. iii.45-6, 48, 145, v.99, 103, 209-10, 213. For these families see R.H. Hilton, A Medieval Society (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1983), pp.45-7, Saunders, English Baronies, pp.83-4, 85-6.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.120, 330, 365, 374; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.140-1, 158; Reg. Swinfield, pp.527,528; Cal. Inq.p.m. ii.No.266; VCH Worcs. iv. 178, 180; VCH Gloucs. vi.100, 104, 174, 176-7, x.90, 96; Saunders, English Baronies, pp. 43, 95-6; Moor, Knights of Edward I, ii.258, iv.240, v.157-60.
3. Saunders, English Baronies, p.v; Newman, 'Landowners and Parochial Patronage', pp.282-3; Hilton, A Medieval Society, p.48.
4. Lesser baronage (like the Montforts of Beaudesert) with mainly local interests often held 4 or 5, but the earls of Gloucester and Hereford held only two apiece, and the Berkeley, Hastings, Fitz John, Bigod and Chandos families only one: above n.1, p.91 n.2; Reg. Giffard, ii. 63, 236; Reg. Cantelupe, p.206; Reg. Swinfield, pp.300, 526, 530; VCH Gloucs. vii.15, 19, 153, 160, 220, 226, x.62, 77; Eyton, v.133-42, 143.

to their estates. The majority were local tenants of knightly status, including a number who were especially prominent in local government and administration such as, in the diocese of Worcester, the Braceys, Cokeseys, Cardiffs, Wolvertons and de la Mares, each holding at least one local advowson in 1300[1]. As late as the end of the century however, ownership of parochial patronage continued to extend below these more active and socially prestigious knights to an even lesser class of landowners, some of whom may not even have qualified for knighthood, and who were certainly less prominent in local life - their influence sometimes being confined to a particular manor and its environs. There were by the end of the period around 40 or 45 lords in our region, still possessed of local advowsons, who took their name from the manor in question, and for whom there is no evidence of substantial lands held elsewhere or of consistent involvement in local affairs. Where the evidence of lay subsidy rolls is available to supplement the picture, this generally confirms the impression that some of these families were of very modest status indeed. John de Bradecot, who presented to Bredicot church in 1289-90, was presumably a descendant of the William de Bradecot who contributed 5 shillings to the lay subsidy of 1275, and who apparently held no lands elsewhere[2]. Maud, the widow of John de Churchill, a local

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.169, 214, 333, 336, 525; Reg. Swinfield, pp.526-7; VCH Worcs. iii.552-3, iv.119-20, 122, 372, 375; VCH Warws. iii.193, 196; VCH Gloucs. xi.168; Hilton, A Medieval Society, p.54.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.315, 342; Lay Subsidy Roll for the County of Worcester, c. 1280, ed. J.W. Willis Bund and J. Amphlett (WHS, 1893), p.39. (For the date of this roll, see Hilton, A Medieval Society, pp.55,276n.6).

knight, held land in Peopleton of Ralph de Abbehale as well as the manor and advowson of Churchill near Worcester; although her combined contribution to the same subsidy was only 13s. 4d., and at Churchill she was not even the highest contributor[1]. Philip of Pedmore, the lord and patron of Pedmore in Worcestershire, similarly contributed only 10 shillings in 1275 - the same sum paid by his neighbour Adam de la Pole, and only marginally higher than the half mark extracted from three other local residents[2]. Other Worcestershire patrons such as the Pendocks, Peopletons, Stauntons, Pyries of Martin Hussingtree and possibly the Croomes of Earls Croombe were of a similar status, although Robert of Pendock, who presented to his local church in 1290, was knighted and very occasionally appears in official capacities locally[3]. Where there are no taxation lists or Inquests to guide us, it would of course be dangerous to draw any firm conclusions simply from toponymic surnames and lack of other evidence. Nevertheless the comparative rarity with which such patrons appear in records of government, as charter witnesses outside their immediate areas, or in Inquisitiones post mortem, itself implies only limited importance and some degree of obscurity, while the extreme fragmentation of knights' fees which characterized the twelfth and thirteenth centuries meant that occasionally

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1. Lay Subs. Roll, ed. Willis Bund and Amphlett, pp.40, 106; Reg. Giffard, i.32.
2. Lay Subs. Roll, p.10; VCH Worcs. iii.201, 203.
3. Lay Subs. Roll, pp.26, 41, 44, 91, 92, 102, 106; Reg. Giffard, i.28, ii.142, 330, 370, 379, 480; Moor, Knights of Edward I, iv.35.

advowsons became divided between coparceners of even lesser status, possessed of minute amounts of land[1].

Despite the shifts in the patronage structure alluded to above, advowson ownership in our region continued to embrace a wide social spectrum therefore. This is important if we are to have an accurate picture of the types of people responsible for preferring local clergy; but what else can we conclude from this pattern of ownership, and from the scale and circumstances of such conveyances or there were? In the first place there is little evidence for an especial desire to accumulate patronage, as distinct from any other property right, amongst the rising baronial or upper knightly families of our region during the period. The most striking accumulations of patronage in either diocese were largely the indirect result of land acquisitions, and generally the structure of advowson ownership continued to mirror the structure of landownership. So far as advowsons themselves are concerned, the evidence points in two particular directions. First, there was apparently a fairly universal reluctance to alienate this particular property-right at all social levels, not least amongst the lower knightly patrons who remained a significant force within the local patronage structure as late as 1300 - this being illustrated not only in the infrequency of voluntary alienations except in cases of financial distress, and then often as a last

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1. e.g. Acton Scott: Eyton, xi. 375-8.

resort, but also in the pattern of recoveries and litigation. Second, far from there being a booming independent market in parochial patronage, advowsons only rarely became separated from the manor to which they appertained, and then usually in the context of a more general break-up of estates. This in turn raises questions about the nature of parochial patronage as a property right and the benefits which it brought: and we must thus look in more detail at what advowson ownership actually entailed in the thirteenth century, and at the conceptions of parochial patronage current not only amongst ecclesiastical reformers but also amongst the laity.

(iii) The Laity and the Ius Patronatus.

It is generally acknowledged that in canon law, ownership of parochial patronage bestowed on laymen only very limited and heavily circumscribed rights by the thirteenth century - although this was a comparatively recent development. The century following the conquest, which saw the foundation of large numbers of local churches on manorial estates largely through lay initiative, also saw the heyday in England of the proprietary church - the majority of these foundations being originally subject to the lord's jurisdiction and feudal dominium in much the same way as a mill or any other manorial appurtenance, and most probably being served by clerical retainers appointed at will, who remained the lord's 'men' and who sometimes even owed rent or other services in return for the church[1].

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1. R. Lennard, Rural England 1086-1135 (Oxford, 1959), pp.319-24, 331-2.

During the twelfth and late eleventh centuries however , the struggle of ecclesiastical reformers to secure full control over the parish clergy resulted in the gradual erosion of these proprietary rights. As early as 1123 the First Lateran Council decreed that priests could only be instituted in parish churches by their diocesan and attacked lay ownership of tithes; and by the time of the Fourth Lateran just under a century later, the old concept of the local lord's feudal dominium over his church had been replaced by that of the far more limited ius patronatus. Not only was this more restrictive in practice - in that a patron had now to present his clerk to the bishop, who might refuse institution if the candidate were deemed unsuitable - but it furthermore denied any measure of proprietary right over the local church on the part of the lord or founder. Patronage, declared Alexander III, was a right 'quod est spirituali annexum', and which was enjoyed by laymen not on account of any feudal right deriving from their lordship of the fee on which the church stood, but because the Church chose to bestow this privilege on the founders of churches and their successors[1]. These new and revolutionary attitudes were not, of course, instilled into the laity easily or overnight - indeed the extent to which they were fully accepted even by the later thirteenth century is a question to which we shall have cause to

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1. Extra, III, 38, c.5, c.8, c.10, c.15-17, c.25; G.W.O. Addleshaw, Rectors, Vicars and Patrons in Twelfth and Early Thirteenth-Century Canon Law (St. Anthony's Hall Publications, No.9, 1956), pp.3-6, 17-23; R.A.R. Hartridge, A History of Vicarages in the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1930), pp.7-8.

return - but there is no doubt that theoretically, advowson ownership in our period carried a comparatively limited right: that of presentation to the diocesan. This being so, why was it apparently so valued by all sectors of patronage-owning society, and what benefits did it bestow?

Patronage was, of course, primarily a right to be used; and its exercise by different advowson-owning groups is discussed in detail in a later chapter[1]. We must not confine our discussion to the actual uses of patronage however. Despite the erosion of laymen's rights with respect to the churches on their land, advowson-ownership continued during the thirteenth century to confer advantages over and above the actual right of presentation itself, which may be equally important in explaining the attitudes and actions of different social groups; and it is with these that we are primarily concerned at present. What form did these take?

It is especially striking that in social terms, the patron continued to enjoy a degree of prestige and influence denied to his lay equals - even in the eyes of the Church itself. While laymen in general were not allowed to carry the cross or candles in procession unless absolutely necessary, nor to sit in the choir amongst the clerics or in the chancel during service, Bishop Walter Cantelupe nevertheless felt the need, in his 1240 statutes for the diocese of Worcester, to add the qualifying statement, 'salva tamen reverentia patronorum et sublimium personarum',

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1. Below, chapter 3, pp.140-211.

and similar sentiments were expressed by Grosseteste at Lincoln[1]. While reformers were keen to insist that social rank in itself carried no weight in ecclesiastical matters therefore[2], the patron of the parish church was nevertheless granted privileges which raised him above his fellows in local society; and we find similar indications of this local prestige in other sources. A memorandum copied into the family register of the Beauchamps of Hatch (Somerset), for example, states that the parson of Schepertone (? Shepton Beauchamp) was bound to keep a lamp burning in the chancel until all masses had been sung, and until the lords and patrons had gone out[3]; and while these things might not have weighed heavily with a Beauchamp or a Mortimer, who already enjoyed vastly greater prestige by virtue of their social rank and who possibly seldom went near many of the churches in their gift, this was not true of some of the lesser patrons described above. Many of these, as we have seen, were men of purely local influence, who on the evidence of lay subsidy rolls were sometimes no more than primus inter pares even in their own villages, and who generally did not move around much outside their immediate vicinities[4]. To such people the social pre-eminence which patronage of the local church still bestowed must, in a world which placed increasing emphasis on the social pretensions of

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1. Councils and Synods, i.174, 275, 297. (Worc.II, c.23; Lincoln,c.45; Worc. III, c.4).
2. e.g. Reg. Cantelupe, p.25; but see below, pp.158-61,210-11.
3. Two Registers formerly belonging to the Family of Beauchamp of Hatch, ed. H.C. Maxwell-Lyte (Somerset Record Soc. xxxv,1920), p.103.
4. Above, pp.93-5; Hilton, A Medieval Society, pp.58-9.

knighthood[1], have been especially desirable.

In practice however, the deference accorded to patrons of churches extended beyond preferential treatment at mass; and generally the evidence indicates that whatever the Church's official pronouncements on the limited nature of the ius patronatus, there nevertheless remained, even in the minds of bishops, vestiges of an older conception by which the patron was seen to have wider interests and wider responsibilities regarding the church on his fee. In theory the destination of tithes, the income of the parish priest or the status of a particular church were no longer matters over which lay patrons had any right whatsoever, and were for the bishop alone to decide[2]; yet throughout the period patrons were apparently consulted, or at least their consent sought, in innumerable settlements involving precisely these things. A composition of 1263 between the rector of Colesbourne and the priory of Lanthony Secunda concerning the prior's possession of certain tithes in the parish was said to have been made with the common assent of the prior and convent, the rector, and the patron, who was then Walter Loholt, a local knight[3]. Episcopal ordinations relating to tithes at Kidderminster and Lench Botolph are similarly stated to have been made with the consent of the respective patrons, while early in the fourteenth century a tithe dispute at Strensham between the rector and Pershore Abbey was settled

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1. Hilton, A Medieval Society, pp.49-50; and more generally M. Keen, Chivalry (Newhaven and London, 1984), esp. pp.143ff, 168.
2. Extra, III, 37, c.17; Councils and Synods, ii.1002-4; above p.97 n.1.
3. PRO C115 K2/6683, f.268r; and see ibid., f.249r.

following deliberation with the patron, Nicholas Russell, and other leading parishioners[1]. More surprising still, the patron's consent as well as that of the rector appears to have been required for the foundation of a hermitage in the parish of Wickwar in 1278[2]; while the assignment of certain tithes, lands and oblations to the vicarage of Hampton in Arden by the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield in 1222 was also said - this time by the patron himself - to have been done 'de virorum prudentium consilio et de assensu meo'. In a slightly different context, following an assize utrum between Lanthony Priory and the parson of St. Nicholas's, Gloucester in 1222, the justices of assize ruled that a chirograph could not be made in the patron's absence; while some seventy years later the parson of Wentnor defaulted in a suit for rights of common since he said he could not reply without the patron of the church, Peter Corbet[3]. In none of the instances cited were patrons' rights directly affected; and although some of the patrons involved were men of particularly eminent status, this was by no means true in every case.

All this points to a significant dichotomy between the Church's official stance on the rights and status of patrons (and indeed of laymen generally) and the prevailing reality, which is important in two ways. First it meant, as suggested above, that possession of an advowson carried other and more amorphous social benefits in addition to the actual jus

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1. BL(AM)37503, f.32r-v; PRO E315/61, f.103r; Reg. Giffard, ii.116.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.99.
3. Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Gloucs., Warws. and Staffs., 1221-2, ed. D.M. Stenton (S.S. lix, 1940), Nos. 99, 652; Reg. Swinfield, p.293.

praesentandi, and this may well help to account for the apparent reluctance of many lay patrons - particularly those of comparatively humble or declining status - to part with their rights of patronage. More generally, it indicates the ambivalence of the patron's position in the thirteenth century, and raises the far more difficult question of how far the conceptions of parochial patronage current amongst ecclesiastics and (even more significantly) amongst laymen at this time actually conformed to the canonical theories set down in decretal collections. This is of course a difficult point to determine, especially as regards attitudes amongst laymen, insofar as nearly all the sources which deal with the question directly are written from an ecclesiastical (and usually prescriptive) standpoint. However, through an examination of the ways in which advowsons were held and conveyed, the basis on which litigation was generally fought, and the nature and extent of patrons' relations with the local church, it should be possible to assemble a picture of how patronage was conceived of in practice not only by the Church itself, but also by the laity.

We have seen that as defined in canon law, the ius patronatus redefined and constrained laymen's rights in two basic ways. First and foremost, the patron could no longer bestow the benefice on a clerk as if he were enfeoffing a vassal, but must present his candidate to the bishop who retained a right of veto. This procedure was well established by the thirteenth century, and seems generally to have been accepted; although there are occasional examples even from this late period of lords

intruding their clerks into churches either without the bishop's knowledge or against his will. In an assize of darrein presentment in 1233, it emerged that the late parson of Stretton on Fosse had never been presented to the bishop, but had held the chapel purely through the common consent of Ralph le Breton, the lord and patron, and of Robert le Chevaler, a neighbouring landholder who had impleaded Ralph for the advowson some years earlier[1]. Half a century later Richard Dansey, the lord and patron of Turnastone, resorted to more violent means, instigating an occupation of the church and rectory in league with Roger Devereux, apparently in an effort to turn out the bishop's clerk (who had recently been collated) and to intrude Roger's kinsman John Devereux, who was presented in the usual way the following year[2]. There are several other instances of churches being occupied by clerks or laymen during the period, and in some of these patrons may similarly have been involved[3]. Admittedly such behaviour was rare and seldom went unpunished, although it is significant that the case of Stretton only emerged in the course of a subsequent advowson dispute, and it seems feasible that in the first half of the century at least there were other examples which similarly went undetected. But the real importance of these isolated cases is the underlying attitudes which they reveal. The implication is that although lay patrons generally recognized that they were no longer entitled to

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1. Cur. Reg. R. xv. No.756.
2. Reg. Swinfield, pp.357, 531, 532.
3. Reg. Swinfield, p.469; possibly Reg. Giffard, ii.152, 155, 188, 224.

bestow their churches on whom they wished (or rather saw that they could not hope to get away with so doing, which is not quite the same thing), nevertheless under the surface the conception persisted that the lord had some hereditary right to dispose of the church as he pleased, and that episcopal interference was somehow robbing the patron of his birthright.

The partial survival of this outlook is, however, most strikingly evident in the treatment of patronage as a property right by thirteenth century laymen; and this brings us onto the second aspect of parochial patronage which canon law sought to regulate and redefine. As stated above, in canonical theory the ius patronatus was no longer seen - even in its new, limited sense - as a right derived automatically from lordship, but rather as a privilege bestowed on founders and benefactors by the Church, which remained strictly under ecclesiastical control[1]. In contrast, the evidence of thirteenth-century charters, court rolls and fines generally points to the partial survival amongst laymen of an older, more secular concept in which parochial patronage (albeit in diluted form) was still seen as a feudal adjunct to lordship, rooted in and appurtenant to the land on which the church stood, and to which the lord automatically had some claim simply by virtue of his lordship. Attention has already been drawn to the fact that the overwhelming majority of advowsons in our region, excepting those alienated to religious houses by eleventh- or twelfth

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1. Above, p.97.

-century grants, remained appurtenant to the fee on which the church stood and were generally conveyed as such[1]. This in itself did not contradict canon law, and indeed Alexander III had specifically ruled that the ius patronatus consisted 'in aliqua universitate temporalium', and that it should pass 'cum illa universitate' unless specifically excepted[2]. This does not mean however that he accepted the concept of patronage as an automatic feudal property right integral to lordship of the fee. On the contrary, on yet another occasion patronage was explicitly defined as being 'spirituali annexum'; and if it usually passed in harness with a temporal lordship, this was primarily because the Church denied laymen the right to dispose of advowsons independently like a temporal piece of property, except under strict ecclesiastical control and then preferably to a religious house[3]. In reality, not only were advowsons sometimes conveyed or sold independently during our period as we have seen - albeit it infrequently and often with reluctance - but in addition the various deeds by which property was transferred generally make quite explicit the continuing identification of patronage with other manoral appurtenances such as mills or rents. Thus in 1287 the manor of Eastington was confirmed to Roger le Rous 'ut in dominicis, homagiis, advocacionibus ecclesiarum, redditibus, serviciis... et omnibus aliis rebus pertinentibus'; and this equation of the advowson with manorial appurtenances in general is in

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1. Above, pp. 81-9, 95-6.
2. Extra, III, 38, c.7.
3. Extra, III, 38, c.8, 16, 23.

fact a commonplace of thirteenth-century diplomatic[1].

It is above all in the records of the royal courts that secular attitudes towards patronage as property can be most clearly seen, however. Not only do they furnish us with large numbers of disputes over patronage which did not, in the end, produce a change of ownership, but they also provide a unique insight into the grounds upon which advowsons were claimed and held; and it is striking that virtually all the recorded claims display a preoccupation with patronage as an automatic feudal property right, which the Church had no right to undermine.

Between laymen in particular, many advowson disputes ultimately came down to questions of manorial inheritance or enfeoffment. These took different forms, although the most frequent cause was subdivision of an estate between two or more coheirs, each claiming the right to an advowson which technically was indivisible[2]. Such disputes arose, often on more than one occasion, at Bishampton, Doverdale, Kemerton, Great Rissington and Winterbourne, and in the diocese of Hereford at Acton Scott, Awre, Blaisdon, Broseley, Chetton, Ludlow, King's Pyon and Westbury on Severn, the most common solution being for litigants to agree upon alternate presentation[3]. Occasionally there

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1. PRO CP25(1) 74/23/520, 74/27/604, 75/30/10, 75/33/100; Beauch. Cart. Nos. 43, 248, 287; Bodl. L., MS. Film Dep. 912 (Microfilm of Bristol Abbey cart.) f. 21v-22r, 109v. Advowsons were sometimes even described as the caput of an inheritance: Cur. Reg. R. viii. 138, 139, 322-4.
2. Bracton, De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae, ed. T. Twiss (6 vols, Rolls Ser. lxx, 1878-83), i. 606-7.
3. PRO CP25(1) 74/29/671; 75/30/2; 75/31/30; 75/31/36; 75/31/44; 75/35/147; 80/12/236B; Reg. Cantelupe, pp. 81, 140-1, 158; Reg. Swinfield, pp. 527, 528, 536; Reg. L. Charlton (CYS, xiv, 1914), pp. 17-21; VCH Worcs. iii. 69-71, 261-3, 265; VCH Gloucs. vi. 100, 104; viii. 211, 216; x. 7, 9-10; Eyton, i. 170-9, ii. 22-3, xi. 375-6.

was some uncertainty about precisely which fee the advowson was appurtenant to[1]; but in none of these disputes was the concept of patronage as a feudal right implicit in lordship challenged - indeed it was tacitly assumed. What was at issue was simply the question of who, given the complexities of inheritance or subinfeudation, could rightly be accredited with the title of dominus fundi and all that accrued to it, which included the advowson.

The only disputes which consistently undermined this concept were those involving the rights of parish churches over sub-parochial chapels; and these throw into sharp relief the tension and incompatibility between this secular, quasi-feudal view of patronage, and the conflicting concerns of the Church. The church of Berrow, for instance, had been built by a lord of the manor about the mid-twelfth century, but fell within the parish of Overbury, the manor and church of which were held by Worcester Cathedral Priory. In 1203 Robert of Berrow tried to present, but was impleaded by the prior and eventually forced to concede that Berrow was indeed merely a chapelry with no separate patronage - despite the fact, his quitclaim adds, that it had been situated 'a prima sui fundatione...in fundo meo in villa de Berga'. Clearly he felt that this fact alone should have guaranteed him some right: a view which his son Roger evidently shared, since he too impleaded the priory for the

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1. BL (HM)3586, f.138r-v; PRO CP25(1) 81/17/12; VCH Warws. v.154, 156; VCH Worcs. iii.191-3.

advowson in 1224, with as little success[1]. Similar claims were made, often on several occasions, by the lords of Grafton next Bromsgrove, Bearley, Alveston, Bickmarsh, Windrush, Little Colesbourne, Ruardean and Pauntley to cite but a few examples, and bear further witness to the prevalence of this outlook[2]. None succeeded, although this does not alter the fact that at the root of such disputes lay two opposing views of parochial patronage, the one predominantly secular, which saw the ius patronatus as a vestige of proprietary right, the other ecclesiastical, and less concerned with patrons' 'rights' than with safeguarding the established parochial hierarchy. It should however be added that where this suited their own interests, lay lords were occasionally prepared to connive at the subjection of feudal rights to parochial requirements. Although in most instances responsibility for staffing outlying chapels lay with the rector or vicar of the parish[3], occasionally the patron of a mother church also held the advowson of an appurtenant chapel, even though this might lie in another lord's fee. Thus the lords and patrons of Nafford, Longdon and (probably) Walford respectively secured the advowsons of Birlingham, Eldersfield and Ruardean against the local landowners by claiming them as chapels subject to their own churches, and on two further occasions the le Megres, lords of Whatcote, tried

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1. Cur. Reg. R. ii.230,258; iii.55; xi.368-9; Worc. Reg. I., Nos.244-7; Ann. Mon. iv.416; VCH Worcs. iii.259-60.
2. Worc. Reg. I., No.331; Ann. Mon. iv.481; BL, MS Egerton 3316, f.70r-v; Cur. Reg. R. i.213, iv.163,233, xiv.57,140; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.71r-v, 74v; BL(AM) 15668, f.3v,10r,52r,71v; Cal. Pat. R. 1225-32, p.158; VCH Warws. iii.43-4; T.D. Fosbrooke, A History of Gloucestershire (2 vols, Gloucester, 1807), ii.156.
3. See Below, pp.225,230-1.

to secure the advowson of Idlicote from Kenilworth Priory on similar grounds[1].

Most telling of all however are the attempts to recover advowsons alienated to religious houses in the twelfth or earlier thirteenth centuries. We have seen that this was an important feature of the period[2], although the amount of litigation recorded in monastic cartularies and in the curia regis rolls shows this tendency to have been far more prevalent than the number of successful recoveries alone would indicate. Of the advowsons already in monastic hands by 1200 as a result of recent gifts, 76 - 38 in each diocese - were subject to such claims during the thirteenth century, often on several occasions; while even advowsons granted to religious corporations during our period were sometimes reclaimed by the donor's successors or even by the donor himself. Most of these claims took the form of a straight denial of the validity, or even existence, of a predecessor's gift, so that the dispute ultimately came down to the authenticity of the charters and muniments produced by religious in defence, or the donor's right to have made the grant in the first place - although the arguments produced were often quite elaborate. Suing for the advowson of Newbold Pacy against Nostell Priory in 1221, Robert Hasteng' not only denied that his grandfather ever confirmed the grant as the prior asserted, but added that if such documents existed, they

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1. Roll Justs. Eyre Gloucs, Warws...1221-2. ed. Stenton, No.566; Cur. Reg. R. i.213; Fosbrooke, Hist. Gloucs., ii.156; VCH Worcs. iv.28,77,82.
2. Above, pp. 77-9, 89-91.

had been made after the theft of his grandfather's seal from a chest in Leamington Hastings church, and he produced several witnesses to testify to this event[1].

What are we to make of these attempted reclamations? In the case of Yorkshire, it has been suggested that they indicate changing attitudes towards the value of advowson ownership amongst different social groups; although it must be emphasized once again that there are in our area no obvious social or chronological patterns to these disputes or to the comparatively small number of successful recoveries[2]. To understand their significance fully however, it must be recognized that they do not represent a new development so much as a continuation of twelfth-century habits. During the century or so following the conquest, and before the concept of feudal rights over churches had been seriously challenged by developments in canon law, grants of advowsons to religious houses were seldom seen as necessarily permanent or binding on future lords, and were frequently revoked with impunity by the donor's successors, or even by donors themselves[3]. This, as Mrs. Cheney points out, was natural given the prevailing view that 'the advowson of a church belonged automatically to the lord for the time being of the fee in which it lay,...who could overturn and invalidate...his predecessor's grants', and the apparent endorsement of such acts by

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1. Roll Justs. Eyre Gloucs., Warws...1221-2, ed. Stenton, No.592.
2. Newman, 'Landowners and Parochial Patronage', pp.291-3; above pp.89-90.
3. M.G. Cheney, Roger, Bishop of Worcester 1164-79 (Oxford, 1980), pp.94-5; and see VCH Warws. iii.73 (Claverdon), V.209 (Whichford).

early twelfth-century bishops suggests that it was a view in which they acquiesced[1]. By the late twelfth century the Church's attitude had changed dramatically, with bishops now pressing laymen to ratify previous grants and actively opposing the conception that each new lord had a right to resume alienated patronage as an integral part of his inheritance[2]; and it may be that an awareness amongst laymen of this change of policy was a major factor behind the decline in the number of grants to religious houses in the thirteenth century. The views of the laity themselves had not necessarily changed so radically however; and in these thirteenth-century disputes we see a clear extension of twelfth-century attitudes.

Some claims were clearly spurious, insofar as they consisted not of denials of gifts made by distant ancestors, where there was possibly genuine room for doubt, but of attempts to invalidate grants or confirmations made only recently by the plaintiff himself - a very twelfth-century type of behaviour. Thus in 1245 Thomas, Lord of Stanton Long, tried to repossess the advowson of the local church, which he had earlier given to Wenlock Priory, and was impleaded for warranty of his own charter[3]. In 1271 Hugh Mortimer similarly attempted to recover the advowson of Clifton on Teme, which he had earlier granted to the bishop of Hereford; and in 1242 John de Berkeley (of Dursley) impleaded Gloucester Abbey for the advowson of Newington Bagpath despite having himself issued a

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1. Cheney, Roger, p.95.
2. Ibid., pp.94-6,147,191,354; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.218r.
3. Eyton, iv.39.

charter of confirmation some years earlier, which the abbot duly produced[1]. On numerous other occasions, suits were initiated by laymen newly seised of the estate[2]; and although there may have been genuine uncertainty in such instances, it seems likely, given the continuing identification of rights of patronage with manorial appurtenances, that their action was prompted partly by a sense that the estate was somehow incomplete without the advowson, which should never have been allowed to become permanently and irrevocably detached, and which was a natural and rightful part of their acquisition or inheritance. This was apparently the view of the lord of Ozleworth, who having failed to secure the advowson against Gloucester Abbey in 1206-7, then demanded that his overlord Roger de Berkeley (whose ancestors had alienated the patronage and whose warranty the abbot had produced) should make him suitable recompense (escambium) for the loss[3].

There is evidence that these views carried some weight in the royal courts. True, only a fraction of these attempted recoveries were successful - a fact largely due to the efficiency of monastic record keeping, since although laymen might deny the validity or existence of charters, by the thirteenth century they did at least recognize that where documents

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1. PRO C P25(1) 258/8/33; Cur.Reg. R. xvi.394 (No.1931); VCH Worcs. iv.249,254.
2. e.g. PRO CP25(1) 74/24/540, 259/11/33; BL(AM)15668, f.54v; PRO Just.I. 275/6, m.31d; Worc. Reg. I, No.189; Cur. Reg. R. xi.39; Reg. Swinfield, p.35; VCH Worcs. iii.59,216; iv.66,355; Fosbrooke, Hist. Gloucs., ii.246; Eyton, iv.151-2; below, p.113.
3. Cur. Reg. R. iv.300, v.6; Glouc. Cart. i.113, ii.69.

could be produced and substantiated, these were binding[1]. But even in cases where a religious house's claim was unambiguously upheld and the lord was forced to issue a quitclaim, this was sometimes under terms which amounted to a resale rather than a surrender to the house concerned. The church of Kempley had been given to Bishop Hugh Foliot's new hospital at Ledbury by Geoffrey de Longchamp, then lord of the manor, before 1232, and there were episcopal and capitular confirmations to prove the point; yet in 1260 Reginald de Grey, who had recently acquired the manor through marriage, nevertheless received 10 marks and twelve acres of land for his quitclaim of the advowson following a plea of darrein presentment[2]. The advowson of Lydney had been separated from the manor for even longer, being held in the mid-twelfth century by Lire Abbey, which in 1219 conveyed the church to the dean and chapter of Hereford, and again there was a mass of documentation; yet in 1269, when William de Beauchamp acquired the manor with the earldom of Warwick and sought the advowson, the dean and chapter paid him 36 marks for a quitclaim[3]. Similar payments in return for quitclaims were made to the lords of Dodderhill, Pillerton Hersey, Presteign, Putley, Tenbury Wells and Clifton on Teme, while in 1236-7 the new lord of Painswick, William de Monchesney, was given both the right to present three clerks to a chantry in the conventual church of Lanthony

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1. e.g. PRO C115 K2/6683, f.307v; Chtrs. & Recs. Heref., ed. Capes pp.110-1.
2. Reg. Swinfield, pp.51-2; PRO CP25(1) 74/24/540; Fosbrooke, Hist. Gloucs., ii.246.
3. Bodl.L., MS. Rawl.B.329, f.161v, 163v-164r; Cal. Pap. L. i.222; York, Borthwick Instit., microfilm of Dom Lenoir MS.xxiii, Nos.3, 83,85,91,107.

Secunda and a guarantee that the priory would feed a thousand poor on his obit[1].

In part these payments may have been prompted by an unwillingness to make enemies of influential men; but they also suggest that even where the long-term possession of a church by a religious house could be proved, nevertheless lords who sought the advowson before the royal justices as appurtenant to their manor were still seen as having rights which had to be acknowledged, and for which recompense had to be made. Indeed, the bias towards secular interests in the royal courts may have gone even further, at least insofar as they relied for judgements on juries of local knights whom we might expect to have been sympathetic to such claims. This was certainly the view of the abbot of Tewkesbury, who in 1238 was involved in a dispute with Ralph de Wyltune over the advowson of Bockhampton, which was to be settled through a grand assize. 'Et cum electi essent milites', relates the Tewkesbury chronicler, 'ipse abbas timens ponere se super juramentum eorum, per consilium virorum prudentium amicabiliter cum dicto Radulfo composuit'[2]. In other words so uncertain was the abbot that his claim would be fairly judged by a body of local knights that he preferred to compromise in an out of court settlement rather than risk placing his case before them.

To this extent, the Church's aim to shatter the old conception of

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1. PRO C P25(1) 80/2/39;80/8/149;258/8/33; Warws. Feet of Fines, i, ed. Stokes and Wellstood, No.505; Ann. Mon. iv.468; VCH Worcs. iv.370; PRO C115 K2/6683 f.294r, 296r.
2. Ann. Mon. i.109.

parochial patronage as a right automatically vested in lordship remained compromised, not only by the partial survival of older views amongst secular landowners, but also by their influence in the royal courts, which remained the only legal forum for disputes involving advowsons[1]. Nowhere is this more strikingly illustrated than in the case of Longborough, which in the early thirteenth century was the subject of several disputes in the curia regis between a lord of the manor and Bishop Mauger of Worcester.

Towards the end of the twelfth century, the church was resited by one of Mauger's predecessors, presumably for pastoral reasons[2]; but this resulted in the removal of the church from the fee of John de Montacute, who in 1200 paid the king 10 marks for an enquiry as to whether the church had been moved 'sine judicio in detrimentum advocacionis sue', and if so whether it should be rebuilt in his fee. The outcome is unknown, but in 1205 he sued Bishop Mauger in the curia regis regarding the translation of the church into Roger Mortimer's fee, and on this occasion was apparently successful according to his own assertion in a further dispute fifteen years later. He was then impleading Richard Labanc, a tenant on the Mortimer estate who had impeded his presentation, and again based his case on the fact that the church had wrongly been translated to Richard's fee from his own 'ad exheredacionem suam'.

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1. J.W. Grey, 'The Ius Praesentandi in England from the Constitutions of Clarendon to Bracton', EHR, lxvii (1952), 481-509; Bracton, De Legibus, ed. Twiss, ii.162-3.
2. As happened earlier at Rock, Stokesay and Long Staunton: VCH Worcs. iv.319,326; Eyton, v.28.

The result was a quite remarkable fine between the two men, levied at Westminster in 1220. Richard fully recognized that the advowson was John's right, and quitclaimed it in perpetuity. He also granted and quitclaimed to John and his heirs

> 'totum cimiterium de foedo ipsius Ricardi in quo sita fuit ecclesia postquam illuc translata fuit de foedo ipsius Johannis...Ita quod in eodem cimiterio licebit eidem Johanni vel heredibus suis ecclesiam construere vel inde transferre ad locum ubi esse solebat sine impedimento et contradiccione...'[1]

In other words, not only had the bishop's right to make adjustments in the parish structure for pastoral ends been successfully challenged on at least two occasions, on the grounds that this interfered with the lord's rightful inheritance, but John and Richard had further appropriated to themselves, in a legal instrument, the right to build or resite churches irrespective of episcopal will, in line with what they both saw as John's unassailable rights as lord of the original fee. This is strongly reminiscent of proprietary right; and although the subsequent descent of the advowson is difficult to determine[2], the fact that John's claim was upheld for so long, or even at all, bears striking testimony to the survival of this older viewpoint both amongst laymen and in the royal judiciary, and to the compromised position in which the Church

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1. Rot. de Oblat. et Finibus 1199-1216, ed., T.Hardy (Rec. Comm.,1835), p.61; Cur. Reg. R. iii.305, iv.27, viii.347, ix.224-5; PRO CP25(1) 73/4/5; Book of Fees, i.50,440; Feudal Aids (6 vols, HMSO, 1899-1920), ii.235.
2. It eventually passed to Hugh Despenser who gave it to Hailes Abbey (Cal. Pat. R. 1321-4, pp.290,432); but see Cal. Inq.p.m. ii.118, iii.483; Cat. Anc. D. ii.282.

consequently found itself.

Not that the battle was confined to the courts. So strong was this attachment towards older, more feudal conceptions of patronage amongst some laymen that they attempted to vindicate their rights without recourse to the law at all; and several recoveries of patronage from religious institutions during the thirteenth century seem to have been achieved not through litigation, but in a quiet fait accompli. According to the cartulary of Maiden Bradley Priory, which owned the advowson of Kidderminster, John Biset, the lord of the manor, abandoned a lawsuit against them in the mid-thirteenth century and quitclaimed any right to the advowson; but on the rector's death he 'nevertheless' presented a certain Roger of Essex who was duly instituted. The lords of the manor subsequently held the advowson until circa 1270, when it was re-sold to the priory, with various tenements, for 100 marks[1]. Similarly, although Cormeilles Abbey held the church of Kingsland as early as 1086 and received episcopal permission to appropriate in 1195, in 1230 it was found that William de Braose, the lord of the manor, had presented the last incumbent; and on these grounds the advowson passed to the king as guardian of the Braose lands, with which it subsequently descended[2]. The advowsons of Clun and Loxley were recovered in similarly uncertain circumstances[3]; and the fact that several of the

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1. BL(AM)37503, f.9r, 10r-11v, 30r, 31r-33r.
2. Cur. Reg. R. xiv.112,158-9; xv.354; Reg. Swinfield, pp.525,536; DB. xvii (Heref.), 1,5(179d); BL(AM)18461, f.2r, 4r, 8v.
3. Cal. Pat. R. 1348-50, p.135; VCH Warws. iii.133.

advowson pleas heard in the curia regis were initiated by religious houses suggests that similar usurpations had been attempted in these cases. On yet other occasions advowsons were specifically included in conveyances of land by laymen even though the churches had been in religious hands for decades[1]; and although this may not always imply a conscious attempt to usurp the patronage, it does at least suggest a general assumption that the advowson was appurtenant to the lands in question. Where advowsons were successfully usurped, it is unclear exactly how the lord established his right; although it is worth emphasizing that only one successful presentation was needed to legitimize a patron's right in English law, as the case of Kingsland illustrates, and to this extent the emphasis on 'last presentation' and seisin of advowson represented yet another concession to the anachronistic, secular view of parochial patronage, in practice if not in theory[2].

It is clear therefore that there remained current amongst thirteenth-century laymen an essentially secular concept of parochial patronage which was very different from that expounded in canon law. The ways in which patronage was conveyed, and above all the grounds upon which advowsons were claimed in the curia regis and occasionally usurped, imply

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1. BL(HM)1240, f.73v-74r; Warws. Feet of Fines, i, ed. Stokes and Wellstood, Nos. 351,957; VCH Worcs. iii.10; and see Reg. Cantelupe, p.70; Heref. Cath. Muns., ii.485 (No.2816); VCH Worcs. iv.360; VCH Warws. iii.56, v.217.
2. See Bracton, De Legibus, ed. Twiss, i.428-9, 432-3, iv.4-5, 20-9.

that despite the Church's efforts to prove otherwise, the right of patronage (albeit in diluted form) was still seen as a right implicit in lordship, as a manorial appurtenance which the lord could dispose of and reclaim as he pleased, and which ought to be inviolable even when ecclesiastical considerations - such as parochial rights over a chapelry or the need to resite a church - were in opposition. In practice these anachronistic ideas were not always vindicated, although they evidently carried some weight in the secular courts, while the sheer volume of litigation shows how deep-seated were these ideas.

It should be added however that the continuing closeness of the relationship between thirteenth-century lords and the churches on their fees was not evident solely in disputes over patronage, which should not be seen completely in isolation. In particular the evidence of wills suggests that many landowners, of whatever rank, still saw themselves as benefactors to the local church, and of several local laymen - ranging from the earl of Warwick through to lesser knights such as Walter de Cokesey - whose wills were copied into Giffard's register at Worcester, all left substantial bequests to the churches on their fees[1]. Admittedly by endowing churches of which they owned the patronage, laymen were in a sense endowing the clerks or relatives whom they had presented; although several lords made bequests to churches on their fees despite

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1. Reg. Giffard, i. 8-9, ii.283, 295-6, 388-90, 423, 449-50; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.842, 847, 871 (f.407v, 410r, 396r).

having lost or failed to secure the patronage, which suggests a continuing sense of responsibility towards manorial churches irrespective of the incidental benefits which this could have for a lord's family and retinue. Giles de Berkeley, a tenant of the Dursley Berkeleys, left numerous bequests not only to Coberley church (where he was lord and patron) but also to the chapel of Eldersfield, where he was lord but the advowson of which his ancestors had lost to the Folets[1]. Similarly even Hugh de Plessy, who obtained the manor of Long Compton for life only and who made his will there in 1292, endowed the fabric and parish priest of the church, which had been held by Walden Priory since the twelfth century[2]. The closeness of these ties is further illustrated by the fact that some lords and patrons chose to be buried in the local church,and Giles de Berkeley, although leaving his body to Little Malvern Priory, nevertheless directed that his heart be buried in the chancel of Coberley parish church[3].

We need not ascribe purely altruistic motives to such actions. Not only was it ultimately in patrons' interests to ensure that churches were adequately endowed, insofar as they could be used to provide for relatives or retainers, but lavish contributions to fabric or furnishings could only enhance the patron's status amongst his fellow parishioners - a consideration which, it has been argued, was of some importance,

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.449-50; see above p.108.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.423.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.449; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.871 (f.396r).

especially to lesser patrons[1]. Nevertheless it is clear that the relationship between the lord and the church on his land in the thirteenth century was not a purely legalistic but also a social one, which still encompassed a general sense of responsibility for its upkeep and protection. This seems occasionally to have extended beyond mere financial help. A final concord made some time before 1273 names Nicholas Poynz, the lord and patron of Tockington, as the rector's co-litigant in a dispute concerning the rector's tithes; while the lord and patron of Croome d'Abitot seems similarly to have been a litigant, with Nicholas the rector, in a tithe dispute against Pershore Abbey in 1255[2]. The implication is that the patrons concerned felt some responsibility not only towards the fabric of the church, but also for the protection of its temporal and spiritual possessions; and as such this involvement steps far beyond the legitimate sphere of interest allowed to laymen in thirteenth-century canon law, and points once again to the partial survival, here in a slightly different context, of anachronistic attitudes faintly reminiscent of a proprietary approach.

It is within this broader context of more general links with the manorial church and its affairs that laymen's continuing insistence on patronage as a natural and rightful part of their inheritance should be seen. Proprietary right might be a legal anachronism: but the patron's

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1. Above, pp.99-102.
2. Bodl. L. MS. Film Dep.912 (microfilm of Bristol Abbey cart.), f.157r; PRO E315/61, f.113r.

close identification with the church his predecessors had built was not to be terminated so easily. Indeed the Church itself seems to have recognized and even partially accepted these persistent tendencies. We have already seen that bishops not only continued to grant patrons rights denied to other laymen - such as admittance to the chancel - but also frequently sought their consent on precisely these sort of issues: tithes, the foundation of a hermitage which might affect the rector's income, even vicarage ordinations[1]. It seems unlikely that this would have been so had not the strength of feeling amongst lay patrons on such matters - such as for example the right to be consulted on any adjustments affecting the church's income - been so overwhelming as to convince the Church that their wishes could not be ignored, and that some degree of compromise and accommodation was unavoidable.

(iv) Ecclesiastical Patrons and Appropriation.

We have so far been concerned with attitudes towards advowson-ownership amongst the laity; although throughout the century well over half the parish churches in both dioceses remained under ecclesiastical (and especially monastic) patronage[2]. The relationship of ecclesiastical patrons with the churches in their gift differed markedly from that of laymen however, most especially as regards the financial benefits involved. It is uncertain how far laymen, even before the Gregorian

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1. Above, pp.98-9, 100-1.
2. Above, pp.70-81.

reform, generally appropriated tithes and oblations to their own use, although they certainly reserved the right to dispose of these to religious houses[1]. During the twelfth century however, the Church launched a successful campaign against lay ownership of tithes in any form; and although patronage could occasionally be turned to financial advantage through sales or leases, by the thirteenth century it was well established that laymen could not benefit directly from the church's income[2].

In contrast religious houses and other ecclesiastics continued to draw on the financial resources of local churches in various ways, partly irrespective of whether they owned the patronage. In 1291 Gloucester Abbey was receiving a little over £26 a year from fifteen churches in the Worcester diocese in the form of tithes and pensions; and while most of the churches concerned were in the abbey's gift, those of Quenington, Coberley, Eastleach Turville, Rendcombe and Shipton - from which the abbey received a combined income of £3 7s. - were under other patronage[3]. Gloucester was by no means untypical and most other houses with interests in the region, whether Benedictine, Cistercian or Augustinian, drew comparable amounts.

But the most important way in which local ecclesiastics and religious houses could benefit financially from parish income was through appropriation of a church already in their gift. By this act, which by

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1. Hartridge, Vicarages, pp.3-5.
2. Ibid., pp.7-8; Addleshaw, Rectors, Vicars and Patrons, pp.4-6.
3. Tax. Nich. pp.221-4; VCH Gloucs. vii.67,126,181,226; Reg. Giffard, ii.349.

the thirteenth century was strictly regulated in canon law and required full episcopal approval, the appropriating monastery was instituted into the church as a corporate and permanent rector, receiving all its revenues in proprios usus save for a specified portion set aside for the serving vicar in the bishop's vicarage ordination[1]. By the early fourteenth century, at least 84 churches in the diocese of Worcester were appropriated to religious corporations or other ecclesiastics, while at Hereford the proportion was even higher, 93 churches (representing 54 per cent of the benefices under ecclesiastical patronage) being held in proprios usus. Accurate dating is not always possible, and a high proportion were possibly appropriated soon after the religious house's acquisition of the patronage in the twelfth century or earlier. In 43 cases however there is documentary proof of twelfth-century appropriation; and the process continued apace with at least another 60 churches (and possibly more) in the two dioceses being appropriated during the thirteenth century.

Appropriation was thus extensive throughout the region; and there are signs that this fiscal side-product of advowson ownership was of particular importance to religious houses in our region. Canon law insisted that such arrangements should only be countenanced in cases of proven financial necessity; and the rubric prefacing episcopal licences of appropriation generally outlines the particular need which

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1. See Knowles, Monastic Order, p.599; Hartridge, Vicarages, pp.9, 20-1.

diversion of parish income was intended to meet. Admittedly by the thirteenth century the form of these documents was becoming increasingly stereotyped, and their assertions of poverty cannot in themselves necessarily be taken as evidence of extraordinary financial difficulties. Most make only general references to the costs of hospitality, almsgiving, lighting the church or repairing the fabric[1]; and although the reasons given are occasionally more specific - that for the appropriation of Bromsgrove to Worcester Priory in 1235 refers to the cost of providing candles for King John's tomb, while Tytherington was appropriated to Lanthony Secunda partly because of fire damage and loss of property in Ireland[2] - by the later thirteenth century such documents generally followed a standard pattern. Nevertheless there are indications that far from rubber-stamping such applications, some bishops at least were not prepared to consider any diversion of parish income unless the need was genuine. Swinfield resisted repeated demands from the king for the appropriation of Lindridge parish church by Worcester Cathedral Priory for over a year, pointing out that the priory had benefitted from constant royal patronage and was not in great need; and although he eventually capitulated, such determination in the face of persistent pressure from Edward I - hardly the weakest of opponents - strongly suggests a genuine need behind the appropriations to which the

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1. e.g. Reg. Giffard, ii.227; Reg. Swinfield, p.18; Glouc. Cart. i.71,252; Cirenc. Cart. i. No.154.
2. Worc. Reg. I, No.332; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.301v-302r.

bishop did consent[1].

Admittedly not all bishops were quite of one accord in this matter. Bishop Silvester of Worcester's monastic background, unusual in the thirteenth century, may have made him more lenient towards appropriation, and on at least two occasions he chose not to ordain perpetual vicarages in recently appropriated churches[2]. The same has been suggested of Wolfston de Bransford, also a Benedictine, in the early fourteenth century[3]. We should not be surprised however by the possibility that many of the religious houses in both dioceses were genuinely and desperately in need of fresh sources of income by the thirteenth century. Attention has already been brought to the detrimental effects of warfare on the local economy generally and on religious houses in particular[4], and several other factors contributed to a general drain on monastic resources. Many of the greater houses were embarked on elaborate building programmes throughout the century, the expense being further increased by frequent fires and occasional collapses[5]. Litigation too could be inordinately expensive, even when successful. A suit against Bishop Giffard for the advowson of Grafton was said to have cost Worcester Priory £200 over seven years; and it was not

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1. Reg. Swinfield, pp.421, 432-8.
2. Worc. Reg. I, No.58; Cirenc. Cart, i.xxxi, ii. No.409.
3. R.M. Haines, The Administration of the Diocese of Worcester in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century (London, 1965), p.250.
4. Above, pp.55-60.
5. e.g. Glouc. Cart, i.24,26,29,34; Ann. Mon. i.44,52,56,66,95,133,157, iv.391,398-9,415,446,495,549,552; Reg. Swinfield, p.171; R.Hill, Ecclesiastical Letter Books of the Thirteenth Century (no date/place publication), pp.63-4; below, p.128 and n.3.

uncommon for suits to drag on for this length of time[1]. True, some of these problems were of the monks' making; but this does not alter the fact that such factors, combined with a general falling-off in endowments to the older foundations, produced near-chaos in the financial affairs of many monastic corporations for which there is plenty of non-partisan evidence in addition to the complaints of monks and canons themselves.

The Tewkesbury chronicler's estimate of Gloucester Abbey's debts at 3,000 marks in 1251 may be exaggerated, but the problem was sufficiently serious for Bishop Cantelupe to take the matter in hand and forbid the provision of hospitality until further notice. The problem had still not been solved twenty years later, when Bishop Giffard requested that the bishop of Winchester recall a monk who had gone to reside at Gloucester Abbey, since the monasteries of Worcester diocese scarcely had sufficient income for their own upkeep[2]. About the same time Giffard intervened with the papal tax collectors on behalf of the Hospital of St. Wulfstan and the nuns of Whistones, again on account of their poverty; while at Hereford Thomas Cantelupe similarly took action to offset the debts of Wormsley and Chirbury Priories[3]. The patent rolls provide further indications of the financial difficulties besetting many local houses[4]; and such evidence perhaps gives slightly more credence to the claims of insolvency made by many religious themselves.

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1. Ann. Mon. iv.498; and see ibid., 480-1; i.108.
2. Ann. Mon. i.146; Reg. Giffard, ii.71.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.78; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.144,147.
4. Cal.Pat. R. 1247-58, p.520; 1258-66, p.308.

Despite the stereotyped nature of episcopal licences of appropriation therefore, in most cases the reasons given for appropriation were probably valid; and if we look in more detail at precisely how monastic income was derived in the thirteenth century, the central importance of appropriation, tithes and portions to the monastic economy becomes quite clear. Cirencester Abbey, for instance, drew a third of its income from the sixteen parish churches in its possession, five of which lay in the diocese of Worcester - a proportion which for an Augustinian house was unusually low[1]. Nor is this surprising, for the profits from one wealthy appropriated benefice could often far outstrip the income derived from individual manors[2]; and specific requirements such as building costs were often met almost entirely out of revenues from appropriated churches[3]. Bishops were evidently aware of the importance of church revenues to the monastic economy. Confirming certain tithes and appropriated churches to Lire Abbey in the late twelfth century, Bishops Robert Foliot at Hereford and Roger at Worcester both drew attention to the fact that the abbey's endowments consisted 'non in amplis terrarum possessionibus, sed in ecclesiis potius et decimationibus', while a century later an entry in Giffard's register, following his

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1. Cirenc. Cart. i.xxv.
2. Hilton, A Medieval Society, p.32.
3. W.N. Yates, 'The Fabric Rolls of Hereford Cathedral, 1290/1 and 1386/7', National Library of Wales Journal, xviii (1973-4), 79-86; and see Landboc Winch. i.72-3; BL (HM)3763, f.70r,86v-87r; BL (HM) 6981, f.55r-v.

visitation of St. Augustine's Bristol in 1284, ascribed the abbey's considerable debt of £300 largely to their loss of a single appropriated church worth £100 per annum[1].

A particular problem was lack of ready cash. There are several instances of annual pensions to retainers and benefactors being seriously in arrears; and when a creditor of Worcester Cathedral Priory suddenly demanded repayment of £50 in 1300 'ad urgens negotium', the monks had to raise the money from one of their chaplains in return for a corrody, 'cum prior et conventus tantam pecuniam non haberent'[2]. In fact a large cash income was increasingly the main requirement of all estate owners during the thirteenth century. Many of the heaviest expenses listed above required cash, and monastic accounts show that even demesne produce was not thought of primarily as a means of subsistence, but rather as 'an asset realizable in cash'[3].

If this was indeed one major root of the monasteries' problems in the thirteenth century, then it should be added that derivation of income from parish churches was a particularly useful solution. Annual pensions from churches of the type described above meant a steady flow of cash payments which might be useful in an emergency; and while much of the income from an appropriated church would be received in kind, that is in

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1. York, Borthwick Institute, microfilm of Dom Lenoir MS.xxiii, Nos.85, 89,90; Reg. Giffard, ii.233.
2. Ann. Mon. iv.544; i.133,141-2, 166-7; The Liber Albus of the Priory of Worcester, ed. J.M. Wilson (WHS,1919), Nos.307-8,775-6,788.
3. Hilton, A Medieval Society, pp.75,79.

the form of tithes and other agricultural offerings, this was not exclusively the case. A breakdown of the revenues of Kidderminster church, appropriated to Maiden Bradley Priory early in the fourteenth century, shows a substantial proportion of its income to have derived from rents, pecuniary oblations and other cash sources[1]; and in any case the revenues from an appropriated parish were a good deal easier to administer and convert into cash than those of an agricultural demesne.

The purely financial advantages of advowson ownership - in particular through appropriation - were thus of paramount importance to religious houses in our region. Appropriation did, however, carry certain disadvantages. By the early thirteenth century it was generally established that in any appropriated parish, a perpetual vicar must be provided to serve the church, whose income was fixed by the bishop, who enjoyed security of tenure, and who was bound to perpetual residence - principles which were reiterated and vigorously enforced by reforming bishops here as elsewhere[2]. Not only did this erode monasteries' profits, but the last requirement meant that even where religious houses retained the right of presentation to the vicarage - which in most cases they did - a church which had been appropriated could no longer be used effectively to provide for clerical retainers, since non-residence to attend to other duties was inadmissible. This created a dilemma for many religious corporations; and although appropriation continued apace, occasionally

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1. BL(AM)37503, f.43r-44r.
2. Extra, III, 5,c.30-1; Councils and Synods, i.249,313-4; BL(HM) 3650, f.47v.

the opportunity seems to have been passed over in favour of the alternative benefits arising from wider access to patronage.

In some instances appropriations which were licensed were never carried through. Cirencester Abbey received permission to appropriate the Gloucestershire churches of Preston and Driffield in 1182-3, but the canons apparently continued to present rectors; and although Preston was officially appropriated and a vicarage ordained by William de Blois between 1213 and 1218, in 1254 the abbey was still receiving only annual pensions from both churches[1]. Similarly Lucius III licensed Tewkesbury Abbey to appropriate the churches of Fairford, Marshfield, Thornbury and Great Sodbury late in the twelfth century, but by 1221 the monks had failed to do so[2]. Various external factors could delay an appropriation of course. The initial grant generally stipulated that actual induction into the church should be postponed until after the death (or resignation) of the present incumbent, and this might involve a delay of several decades[3]. In Tewkesbury's case however the reason for the delay is expressly stated to have been the presentation of secular clerks to the churches concerned following the original licence[4]. Nothing is known about the backgrounds of these clerics, although at least one, M. Serlo who held the rectory of Marshfield, was a university graduate; and the implication is that the monks had decided to put off appropriating the churches in order to provide for legal advisors or other men of influence,

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1. Cirenc. Cart. i.xxviii, Nos. 8,153,157,329, ii.376-9, 459.
2. Cal. Pap. L. i.81,123.
3. e.g. Diddlebury, Dymock, Newent: Heref. Cath. Muns. i.411, ii.486, (Nos.1392,2138); BL(AM)18461, f.8v, 13r, 14r.
4. See Note 2.

who may already have been in receipt of annual pensions before their preferment[1]. A similar motive was probably operative at Cirencester, where the canons presented Geoffrey fitz Peter's son to Preston, apparently as rector, in 1198 or '99, some fifteen years after Pope Lucius's confirmation of appropriation[2].

In so acting, religious were endangering their right to appropriate at all; and on other occasions appropriations already carried through were lost following presentation of rectors. In 1184 or 1185 Lucius III wrote to the monks of Worcester complaining that although the churches of Lindridge and Overbury were appropriated to the priory, some of the priors had nevertheless bestowed them on 'quibusdam personis'; and he emphasized that this must stop, since it entailed a diversion of revenue away from its allotted destination. The warning apparently went unheeded, since neither church was appropriated in the later thirteenth century[3].

Gloucester Abbey very nearly lost Much Cowarne under similar circumstances, the appropriation being confirmed in 1272 'non obstante quod iidem religiosi ad memoratam ecclesiam...clericos saeculares praestentasse dicuntur'; while in 1301 Bishop Giffard of Worcester restored to Cirencester Abbey the church of Ampney St. Mary, which although originally appropriated in the twelfth century had been lost following the abbot's presentation of his nephew and through the imprudence of his successors[4]. In several other instances where churches

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1. Ann. Mon. i.70-1; see below pp.162-74.
2. Cirenc. Cart. i. No.153, ii. No.376.
3. Worc. Reg. I, Nos.210,244,248,289; Tax. Nich. pp.165,217.
4. Glouc. Cart. i.No.182, iii. No.916; Cirenc. Cart.i. No.154, Reg. Giffard, ii.508.

known to have been appropriated were subsequently lost, the reasons may have been similar[1].

In certain circumstances therefore, religious corporations apparently attached less importance to the purely financial benefits of appropriation than they did to provision for clerks, retainers or men of influence - although it seems likely that most presentations of rectors to appropriated (or potentially appropriated) churches were responses to specific situations, rather than being symptomatic of any underlying ambivalence towards the value of appropriation. Priors and abbots - indeed patrons generally - were frequently faced with the need to provide for a particular clerk (their own or someone else's) at short notice in a benefice of a particular value[2]; and in such circumstances it must have been tempting, if nothing else was available, to risk a one-off presentation to a church which was technically a vicarage but which otherwise satisfied the requirements - especially as the alternative of granting a pension would further deplete scarce cash resources.

Certainly the rate at which appropriation progressed in both dioceses does not suggest that its value was questioned as a general proposition; and apart from the sheer numbers of applications there are several indications of the fervour with which appropriation was sought. In 1261 Alexander IV issued a mandate to several English bishops, including the bishop of Worcester, complaining of the

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1. e.g. Little Rissington, Mathon, Alderminster: The Cartulary of Oseney Abbey, ed. H.E. Salter (6 vols, Oxford Hist. Soc. lxxxix-xci,xcvii-viii, ci, 1929-36), v. Nos. 559,562,569; PRO E315/61, f.108v, 111r, 114v; Reg. Giffard, i.139.
2. See below, pp. 162-3, 170-4.

cupidity of religious houses in obtaining appropriations[1]; and it is certainly true that religious were prepared to spend much time and money to this end. The routine costs alone were considerable[2], while Worcester Cathedral Priory struggled for over thirty years to secure the re-appropriation of Dodderhill after Archbishop Winchelsey revoked the grant, and in the mid-fourteenth century the canons of Cirencester were so keen to obtain a royal licence for the re-appropriation of Hagbourne (Berkshire) that they sent one of their number in pursuit of the king, who was at Pogny-sur-Marne with his army[3]. Even the monks of Tewkesbury, despite their earlier indifference, demonstrated in dramatic fashion their keenness to appropriate Fairford church following the rector's death in 1231, when some of their number took physical possession of the church in the face of episcopal opposition - only to be violently ejected by the new rector and his supporters, acting (according to the Tewkesbury chronicler) on the bishop's orders[4].

A slightly different indication of this emphasis is the keenness of many religious houses to preserve the sub-parochial status of the chapels within their ancient parochiae. We have seen that a significant number of churches in both dioceses remained subject to conventual churches throughout the period[5]; and while such chapelries were useless as benefices with which to provide for non-resident retainers or clerks, in purely financial terms they were particularly valuable, especially as

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1. Cal. Pap. L. i.375.
2. Haines, Admin. Dioc. Worcester, pp.251-3.
3. Ibid., pp.245-6; Cirenc. Cart. i. Nos.135-6.
4. Ann. Mon. i.82-3.
5. Above, pp. 17-20, 23-4.

most continued to be served not by perpetual vicars but by stipendiary chaplains on essentially twelfth-century lines[1]. Just how valuable is made clear by a breakdown of Evesham Abbey's revenues in the late thirteenth century. Out of a total income of £305-5s.-3½d. from properties in the diocese of Worcester, £126-13s.-4d. was derived from spiritualities - tithes, pensions and appropriated churches. But of this figure £84-7s-10d. - 66 per cent - came from the chapelries of the Vale of Evesham, which the abbots had succeeded in removing from episcopal control, and which remained subject to the abbey and were served by stipendiary chaplains[2]. The numerous chapels subject to Tewkesbury, Deerhurst, Leominster, Morville and Much Wenlock were not taxed separately in 1291, and comparable figures are consequently not available; but few if any were subject to episcopal vicarage ordinations during the thirteenth century, and it seems likely that these houses continued to draw similar profits from the churches of their ancient parochiae[3].

There were other circumstances in which religious exchanged the advantages of patronage for purely fiscal benefits. We have seen that in 1263 Seez Abbey voluntarily exchanged the advowson of Diddlebury for an annual pension of 10 marks, since the distance involved made it difficult to ensure that the church was adequately served (and also, no doubt, to exploit the church's revenues directly)[4]. Similar motives perhaps

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1. Below, pp.298-304; above, p.23.
2. BL(HM)3763, f.164r-166r; above p.23.
3. For these chapels, see above, pp.17-20, 23-4.
4. Above, p.80.

prompted Lire Abbey's grant of Hanley Castle church to Little Malvern for 16 marks yearly in 1236, while in 1247 Cormeilles Abbey let the church of Beckford to the Priory of St. Barbe-en-Auge (Normandy), which owned the manor, in return for 60 marks yearly[1].

But the most suggestive examples are those where a religious house reached an agreement with a rival lay claimant or grantor, whereby the abbot or prior technically retained the advowson and any financial benefits connected with this, although the layman could nominate candidates for presentation, who were then presented to the bishop by the religious house. Following a dispute for the advowson of Tanworth church between Kenilworth Priory and the earl of Warwick, it was agreed in 1202 that the earl and his successors should nominate to the prior, who retained the mediate right of presentation and with it a yearly pension of 2 marks and a stone of wax. The arrangement continued until the end of the century and beyond[2]. Similarly at Cleobury North in 1221, the Prior of Brecon ceded the right of nomination to Thomas fitz Roger as lord of the fee, in return for which the prior reserved an annual pension in the church (subsequently commuted for an annual rent charge on the lord's estate), and the right to present the lord's nominees[3]. In a rather different arrangement, in 1254 the church of Lechlade was granted to the local Hospital of St. John and appropriated, saving a vicarage of £10; although the right of nomination (and in this instance of presentation) was reserved by the grantor, the earl of

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1. VCH Worcs. iv.100; BL(AM)18461, f.17v-18r, 19r-20v, 24r.
2. Warws. Feet of Fines, i, ed. Stokes and Wellstood, No.80; Reg. Giffard, ii.409-10.
3. Eyton, iii.26-7,30.

Cornwall[1]. These arrangements were mostly the result of litigation, and as such were not, of course, undertaken entirely voluntarily by the religious house concerned. Nevertheless, it is interesting that in such disputes a compromise was found which up to a point suited the interests of both parties alike. The monks or canons continued to enjoy any purely financial benefits connected with the advowson, while their lay rivals, who could not have benefitted financially from the church anyway, were able to use it as a means of providing for relatives or clerks: a mutually beneficial relationship, so long as the priorities of the religious house remained predominantly (though not exclusively) financial, and those of laymen predominantly concerned with the exercise of patronage.

(v) Conclusions.

This chapter has been concerned not with the exercise of parochial patronage, but rather with the significance of patronage as a property right. One point which emerges quite clearly is that for monastic and lay patrons, this significance was quite different. For the former, advowson ownership continued to involve important financial rewards in the form of portions and pensions and particularly through appropriation. Given the severe financial difficulties besetting many local houses, the tapping of these resources remained a major priority, notwithstanding the fact that appropriation diminished their capability to provide for clerical

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1. VCH Gloucs. vii.118; Reg. Giffard, ii.125; Reg. Gainsborough, p.20.

retainers or relatives through preferment to a benefice; although at times this created a dilemma, and very occasionally the opportunity to appropriate was passed by in favour of the ability to provide for a particular clerk - probably in response to an especially urgent need. Secular patrons faced no such dilemma, insofar as thirteenth-century canon law categorically prohibited the diversion of parish revenues to laymen, and denied absolutely the concept of lay proprietary rights over churches; although the ownership of parochial patronage continued to be seen as something more than a mere privilege bestowed by the Church, and there are indications that older attitudes, occasionally reminiscent of a proprietary approach, survived amongst the laity as late as the end of the century. Even in the royal courts such attitudes apparently carried some weight, which adds a new dimension to the ongoing contest between the secular and ecclesiastical judicatures during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries for control over suits involving patronage[1]; while even the Church itself seems to have recognized the need to compromise up to a point, bestowing special privileges on patrons and continuing to consult them on a range of issues affecting the parish church.

This is important in two ways. First, it indicates the extent to which the Church, despite its grandiose pronouncements in canon law, remained partially compromised throughout the period, and implies

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1. See Grey, 'Ius Praesentandi', pp.481-509.

that some of the ideas promulgated by successive councils did not permeate very far within secular society. Second, if we are to understand fully the attitude of laymen towards advowson ownership, including their behaviour in the courts and in the property market, it is important to take account of the prevalence of anachronistic ideas about patronage as a feudal appurtenance to the lord's fee, and as a natural and rightful part of his inheritance. Clearly patronage was seen as something more than simply a right to be exercised; and in these attitudes lies, perhaps, a partial explanation for the general reluctance to alienate patronage or to separate it from the estate - especially as subsequent recovery of a lost advowson, although still attempted on a large scale and occasionally successful, was becoming increasingly difficult as attitudes within the Church hardened. This in turn helps to explain the fact that overall, advowson ownership continued to mirror the pattern of landownership, with no single group accumulating a disproportionate amount of patronage, while what limited changes did occur were largely the indirect result of general social and economic trends in the land market. But this is not, of course, the whole explanation. However important these factors, an advowson was, in the end, a right to be used; and in this lay much of its value for both secular and ecclesiastical patrons. The following chapter will thus be devoted to an examination of precisely how this right was exercised by the various patronage owning groups.

CHAPTER THREE

Patrons and priests: the beneficed clergy and their preferment.

(i) Introductory.

We have so far been concerned with patronage as a property right, although clearly it was, first and foremost, a right to be used. It is with the exercise of patronage by the different advowson-owning groups that the present chapter is concerned therefore: a question which has important implications not only regarding the value of advowson ownership to different types of patron, but equally regarding the composition of the beneficed clergy and, ultimately, the quality of pastoral provision in the parishes. The preoccupations and requirements of bishops, abbots, knights and earls in this respect were however rather different; and for that reason episcopal, monastic and secular preferment are examined separately, the object in each case being to ascertain the primary motivations affecting the exercise of parochial patronage as well as the resulting pastoral implications. In the last analysis, was there likely to be any variation in the quality of local religious life in different parishes according to the type of patronage?

(ii) Episcopal Preferment.

At the start of the thirteenth century the bishops of Hereford and Worcester held between them the advowsons of thirty churches in the two dioceses - 7.5 per cent of the total number of advowsons in ecclesiastical hands[1]. In their own right therefore they exercised a

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1. See above pp.71,75 and Table II, p.72.

substantial if not overwhelming influence on the composition of the beneficed clergy; although in practice this influence was considerably expanded by rights of collation through lapse or other exceptional causes. Of 190 separate collations to parish churches on which this study is based 44 - well over one fifth - were to benefices technically under other patronage, usually following the patron's failure (through negligence or during litigation) to present within six months of the church falling vacant; although collations were also made following deprivations, and in at least one instance an advowson was voluntarily ceded to the bishop for one presentation only[1]. In what ways was this considerable volume of patronage exercised?

The most obvious use of patronage was to provide for kinsmen, and this is something in which all the thirteenth-century bishops of Worcester and Hereford indulged - although never on a particularly large scale, certainly by medieval standards. This is as true of the Savoyard Peter of Aquablanca at Hereford as it is of the other local prelates, despite the reputation which he acquired for unscrupulous nepotism (and other evils) during the thirteenth century, and which has only recently come to be seriously challenged[2]. Certainly Aquablanca was responsible for introducing into the cathedral chapter, and often into key administrative positions in the diocese, a sizeable body of

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1. e.g. Reg. Giffard, ii.98,191-2,272,325; Reg. Swinfield, pp.526,537; PRO E315/61, f.109r.
2. See W.N. Yates, 'Bishop Peter de Aquablanca (1240-68): a Reconsideration', J. Eccl.H., xxii (1971), 303-17.

Savoyard followers which included several kinsmen; although the scale of this provision has been exaggerated, and was no greater than that practised by other bishops at Hereford - in particular the Foliots and Richard Swinfield - during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries[1]. On the whole the resentment and friction which this undoubtedly caused seems to have been rooted less in Aquablanca's favouritism than in a general antipathy towards foreigners, a phenomenon which was widespread in thirteenth-century England[2]; and so far as preferment to parish churches is concerned, he was certainly no more indulgent than his contemporaries. Between 1240 and 1275, only seven foreigners appear to have been beneficed in churches to which the bishop held the patronage, or to which they are explicitly said to have been collated; and although systematic information about collations is lacking for this period, the fuller evidence contained in Thomas Cantelupe's register from 1275 on, combined with that of the dean and chapter archives and other sources, probably means that the figure is not far wrong. Of these seven only three however were related: Peter and Poncius de Coeurs, his great nephews, and Humbert de Aquablanca, all of whom were portionists at Bromyard[3]. During the 1280's and 90's Bishop Swinfield similarly collated his newphews John and Gilbert to Hampton Bishop and Bromyard

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1. Yates, 'Aquablanca', pp.310-12; J.S. Barrow, 'The Bishops of Hereford and their Acta 1163-1219' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis 1982), pp.119-20.
2. See Yates, 'Aquablanca', pp.312-5, and below pp.206-8.
3. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.135,141; Cal. Pat. R. 1266-72, pp.334,519. The other foreigners were Girard de Ogina, M. Canturmus, Hugh de Tournon, M. Peter Olga (Ogina): Reg. Cantelupe, pp.6,86,126,184; Cat. Anc. D. i.253.

respectively, in addition to which they held various dignities in the cathedral chapter[1]; and although Thomas Cantelupe was slightly more restrained, even dismissing from his household a favourite clerical nephew who fell below the required standard, he too bestowed a portion in Burford church on his kinsman M. William de Montfort, dean of St. Paul's and a large-scale pluralist[2]. At Worcester nepotism was practised on a comparable scale; and of 77 recorded collations made by Godfrey Giffard, 6 involved relatives, while his predecessor Walter Cantelupe was responsible for promoting his nephew Thomas, the future bishop of Hereford, to 3 benefices in his gift, and his nephew Matthew to one[3]. Overall eleven collations at Worcester are known to have involved kinsmen, representing 9 per cent of the total, compared to 6 such collations, representing 8 per cent, at Hereford.

While the need to provide for relatives clearly affected the bishops' exercise of their patronage during this period therefore, this was by no means a dominant consideration. Moreover in some of these cases nepotism may not have been the sole criterion, insofar as the kinsmen promoted were also active in the administration of the diocese or in the bishop's household. Of the Savoyards promoted by Peter Aquablanca, his nephew Peter de Coeurs acted as his chaplain, Peter de Ogina was his clerk and Gerard de Ogina later acted as Thomas Cantelupe's proctor and audited his accounts, while at Worcester Giffard's nephew John

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1. Reg. Swinfield, pp.524,531; J. le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, ed. T.D. Hardy (3 vols, Oxford, 1854), i.482,485,488,492.
2. AASS (Oct.I), p.553; Reg. Cantelupe, p.120.
3. Reg. Giffard, i.44, ii.249,255,326,407,429,461; AASS (Oct.I), p.550; Cat. Anc. D. ii.325; below p.159 ; and see Ann. Mon. iv.414.

of Evreux, successively collated to Kempsey and Tredington, was also archdeacon of Gloucester[1]; and overall the most striking feature of episcopal patronage during this period is the extent to which it was used to provide for diocesan administrators and members of the bishops' familiae. Of 190 separate collations to parish churches 46 per cent - 55 at Worcester and 33 at Hereford - involved clerks who had some proven links with episcopal administration; although the strength of these connections, and of the evidence, varies enormously. Some, especially in the earlier part of the period, merely appear as witnesses to episcopal acta at various times and places, and in some instances were already beneficed by this date[2]. Others however represented the mainstays of the bishop's administration. At Worcester Geoffrey of Coberley, Gregory de Caerwent, Thomas de Stok', Nigel le Waleys and Robert de Wychio, all beneficed by Giffard, represented only the most prominent of a group of clerks appearing time and time again in his register in various official capacities[3]. M. John de Winton' and M. Walter de Vienn', collated to Fladbury and St. Peter's Worcester respectively, were equally important under Walter Cantelupe in the 1250's and 60's; while at Hereford beneficed clerks such as Robert of Gloucester, Roger de

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1. Cat. Anc. D. i.253; Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B.329, f.148v; Reg. Cantelupe, pp. 260,261,272; Reg. Giffard, ii.343.
2. e.g. M. Hubert, William de Mill', M. Thomas de Diss': The Cartulary of St. Mark's Hospital, Bristol, ed. C.D. Ross (BRS., xxi,1959), No. 25; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.294v, 295v; Worc. Reg. I, No.332; Rolls of the Juctices in Eyre for Lincs. 1218-19 and Worcs. 1221, ed. D.M. Stenton (SS., liii, 1934), No.1004; Cirenc. Cart. i. No.330.
3. Reg. Giffard, i.40,50; ii.55,58,66,68-9,76,78,79,80-3,90,120-1,147-9, 295,313,320,327-8,341,342,352,354,367,370,379,393,461; Reg. Cantelupe, p.106.

Sevenake, John of Kempsey and Nicholas de Reygate represent a comparable group[1].

Nor does the extent to which patronage was used for these ends appear to have varied much over the course of the century; and although data from the earlier period is much sparser, the proportion of episcopal presentees known to have been active in diocesan administration is remarkably consistent. Only 6 of the clerks holding benefices in the bishop's gift during Mauger's episcopate at Worcester from 1199 to 1212 have been identified, but of these at least two, M. Robert de Clipstone and M. John of Cerney, were so employed, the former eventually becoming official of Worcester under Walter de Grey, and the number may be higher[2]. Under Walter Cantelupe in the mid-thirteenth century, at least 6 out of 13 clerks collated were similarly employed in episcopal administration,while 39 out of 77 collations made by Godfrey Giffard between 1268 and 1301 also involved clerks active in his service[3]. Several other presentees were magistri, or were involved in royal or ecclesiastical administration elsewhere, and it is possible that some of these were also beneficed in return for

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1. Reg. Giffard, i.7; Cart. St. Mark's, Bristol, ed. Ross, No.10; Landboc Winch. i.86; PRO E315/61, f.40r,109r; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.43r-v,126r; Reg. Swinfield, pp.95,111,142,154,475,524,526,536; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.16,63,88,117,221; AASS (Oct.I), pp.557-8,591; A Roll of the Household Expenses of Richard Swinfield, Bishop of Hereford, ed. J. Webb (2 vols, Camden Soc., lix, lxii, 1854-5), i.1,118, ii.xxxii.
2. Cur. Reg. R. iv.91; The Letters of Pope Innocent III concerning England and Wales, ed. C.R. and M.G. Cheney (Oxford, 1967), No.471; PRO C115 K2/6683 f.71v; Landboc Winch. i.109; Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham, ed. W.D. Macray (Rolls Ser., xxix,1863),p.120.
3. Ann. Mon. i.127,129; Reg. Giffard, i.4; Cirenc. Cart. i.No.330; above, p.144; below, pp.146 ff.

occasional services, advice or favours[1].

The emphasis on providing for a hard core of clerical administrators close to the bishop becomes even clearer when we consider that the same clerk was frequently collated to more than one benefice. William de Tintone, a clerk who witnessed several of William de Blois' acta in the 1220's or '30's, had been collated to both Kempsey and Bredon before 1236, while John de Staneway, Peter de Estcot and Robert de Wychio, all active administrators under Godfrey Giffard towards the end of the century, were each collated to no fewer than 3 benefices[2]. At Hereford John de Schelvinge, James de Henley, Hamo de Sandwich and John of Kempsey, again all active to varying degrees in diocesan affairs, similarly received episcopal preferment to two, and in the latter case three benefices[3]; although there the similarity between the two dioceses ends. At Hereford it remained extremely unusual for such clerks to be presented to benefices in plurality by the bishop, at least after 1275, from which date a reasonably continuous record of collations and other presentations is preserved in the diocesan registers; and almost always collation to another benefice coincided with the resignation of any already held[4]. In contrast several of the clerks collated by Godfrey Giffard at Worcester during the same period held benefices in plurality actually within the diocese, often as a direct

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1. e.g. BL(AM)37503, f.31v; Letters Inn. III, ed. Cheney, No.798; Reg. Giffard, ii.249,255.
2. BL, Harl. Chart. 83 B. 25-8; Cirenc. Cart. ii. No.378; Reg. Giffard, ii.132,254,294,327-8,340-1,354,427,431,441-2,447.
3. Reg. Swinfield, pp.346,524,526,527,531,533,537,538.
4. e.g. Reg. Swinfield, pp.346,524,533,538; Cal. Pat R. 1292-1301,p.278.

result of episcopal preferment. Walter de Berton, Giffard's steward from 1269 to 1297, held the churches of Bredon and Kempsford in plurality, both through the bishop's gift, for several years before 1300, in addition to which he was beneficed at Bridstowe and Norton in Hereford diocese, at 'Mellis' in Bath and Wells, and possibly at Leckhampton, Gloucestershire[1]; although he was by no means exceptional, and of the bishop's other beneficed clerks John de Staneway, Robert de Wychio, Thomas de Stok', Gregory de Caerwent, John of Rodborough, Geoffrey of Coberley and possibly Nigel le Waleys and John de Farleg' all held 2 or more local benefices concurrently, partly or wholly through episcopal patronage[2]. For the period before 1268, sufficiently detailed information regarding dates of collation and resignation is mostly unavailable; although Walter Cantelupe's official M. John de Winton' apparently held Fladbury, Wolverley and possibly St. Andrew's Worcester concurrently from 1256 and William de Tintone and Robert de Clipstone may also have held in plurality through episcopal preferment[3]. At Worcester the bishops were thus directly responsible for a sizeable proportion of the known instances of internal pluralism actually within their jurisdictions. Why should this be?

Certainly Giffard was no laxer regarding pluralism than were his contemporaries at Hereford - on the contrary his register shows him to have been seriously concerned with eradicating abuse, and he took

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.285,550; Reg. Cantelupe, p.125; Reg. Swinfield, p.527.
2. Reg. Giffard, i.39, ii.56,81,85,120-1,216,267,273,294,327,334,340, 342,354,367,370,429,450,463,515,550; Reg. Reynolds, p.47; Reg. Glouc. No.2.
3. Ann. Mon. iv.395,443,444; Reg. Giffard, i.7; BL. Harl. Chart. 83 B.25-8; Cirenc. Cart. ii. No.378; Cur. Reg. R. iv.91.

steps to ensure that all pluralists, even amongst his own clerks, had received the necessary dispensations[1]. The most likely explanation is the relative access to patronage enjoyed by bishops at Hereford and at Worcester. The number of parish churches to which they owned the advowsons was roughly equal as we have seen; but in addition the bishop of Hereford had at his disposal the twenty-eight prebends of the secular cathedral chapter, to which he automatically had the right of collation; and a glance at the personnel of the chapter during this period reveals the extent to which these were used by bishops to provide for kinsmen and familiares in much the same way as their parochial patronage, with the overriding advantage that permanent residence was not required and they could be held with other benefices[2]. In addition, of the parish churches under episcopal patronage at Hereford, those of Ledbury and Bromyard were still portionary in the thirteenth century, the portions being similarly described as 'prebendal' (although they had no connection with the cathedral chapter) and apparently being non-curative[3]; and these too were extensively used for the provision of relatives and administrators[4]. Bishops at Worcester, which had had a monastic cathedral chapter since the tenth-century Benedictine revival, had no comparable outlets; and plurality was

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1. Reg. Giffard, i.41,43, ii.90,363,487,514,516,543; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.53 (f.30r).
2. J. Le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1300-1541. ii, Hereford Diocese, ed. J.M. Horn (London, 1962), pp.14-51; Le Neve, ed. Hardy, i.475-533. Residence requirements were however rather more restrictive at Hereford than at some other secular cathedrals: K. Edwards, The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages (Manchester, 1949), pp.20-1,35-8,50-5; below, p.152.
3. Tax. Nich. p.160; Reg. Swinfield, pp.464-7.
4. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.63,135; Reg. Swinfield, pp.527,531,538; Cal. Pat. R. 1266-72, pp.334,519.

perhaps the only way in which they could hope to provide for their vast familiae and bureaucratic staff. Indeed Giffard, despite his own condemnation of unlicensed pluralism and non-residence, seems on occasion to have stretched the rules to the limit in order to allow his most prominent clerks to hold two or more benefices. Answering the charge in 1301 that he had conferred the church of Bredon and the vicarage of Kempsford on Walter de Berton, who already held benefices elsewhere, without sufficient dispensation, Giffard asserted that Walter had been granted a portion in Kempsford not as vicar, but as rector in commendam before the (second) council of Lyons, and a similar excuse was produced for Thomas de Stok's concurrent possession of Cam (which was said to be in dispute), Kempsey and the vicarage of Standish. In the case of three other episcopal clerks admitted as pluralists, he merely replied that he had done 'as other prelates do in like cases'[1]. Despite the repeated condemnation of commenda and subsequent legislation attempting to curb the practice therefore, these were still being used by the bishop to help to provide for his clerks as late as the turn of the century, and on a long-term basis too - Thomas de Stok' having received his portion in Standish as early as 1269[2]. Similarly, although custodia were technically an interim arrangement and were not supposed to bestow any financial advantage, there are instances of episcopal clerks being given custody of churches and presentees and receiving financial reward in return, as when Nicholas de

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.550.
2. Reg. Giffard, i.35; and see ii.390.

Wodeford obtained custody of Childs Wickham and of the under-age presentee in 1277, receiving 20 marks yearly from the benefice[1].

It was no doubt in response to these problems that Giffard sought to expand the college of secular canons at Westbury on Trym in 1288, attempting to make several benefices in his gift prebendal to the college - the original idea having been to make Westbury a joint cathedral, so that the diocese would have had a secular as well as a monastic cathedral chapter as at Bath and Wells[2]. This latter scheme never reached fruition, and Worcester Cathedral Priory vigorously opposed the bishop's attempt to establish his churches as prebends on the grounds that this would deprive them of the right to present sede vacante - although a judgement was finally obtained for the bishop in 1297, and he did in fact succeed in increasing the number of prebends[3]. This must have eased the pressure but certainly did not remove it; and as we have seen in the final year of his episcopate Giffard was still defending pluralism (under one name or another) amongst his clerks as the only way in which adequate provision could be made.

It is clear then that bishops in our region - and especially at Worcester - accepted the view that ecclesiastical revenues could be diverted to provide for non-resident and pluralist administrators. In this they concurred with the stance of the thirteenth-century ecclesiastical

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.91; and see Reg. Cantelupe, pp.101-2. For custodia and commenda, see R.M. Haines, The Administration of the Diocese of Worcester in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century (London,1965), pp.197-201.
2. VCH Gloucs. ii.106-8; D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales (2nd. edn., London,1971),p.443.
3. VCH Gloucs. ii.107-8; Reg. Giffard, ii.362-4; 492; Ann. Mon. iv.496, 498,500-2,504,523,

hierarchy generally. Defending papal provision in 1221, Honorius III commented on the need to support with benefices those labouring for the good of the whole Church, a view which even Grosseteste accepted[1]; and such a diversion of revenues was in any case increasingly inevitable as the Church's ever more complex organization gave rise to an expanding body of professional bureaucrats for whom the traditional economic structure of the Church, centred on the parish and on provision for a resident parish priest, could not easily provide. What however were the pastoral implications of this use of patronage by bishops in our region?

Certainly those most heavily involved in episcopal administration must have been non-resident for long periods if not permanently - and not only in cases of known plurality, for the scope and scale of the tasks undertaken can have left little time for the exercise of pastoral duties in person. Even John of Rodborough, only an up-and-coming clerk under Giffard and subsequently official of Worcester under Gainsborough, is found during his time as rector of Hartlebury visiting Beckford Priory, receiving the purgations of various clerks accused of homicide and theft, hearing matters arising from episcopal visitation and from plurality of benefices, visiting all the priories and hospitals of the archdeaconry of Gloucester, heading an enquiry concerning the church of Bidford, visiting St. Oswald's Priory Gloucester, hearing

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1. Councils and Synods, i.98; and see C.H. Lawrence, The English Church and the Papacy in the Middle Ages (London, 1965), p.149.

disputes between the parishioners and rector of Pitchcombe (near Stroud, and some 30 miles south of his own benefice), and assisting at the election of a new prior of Worcester[1]. There is of course no reason to assume that these few commissions recorded in Giffard's register represent anything like the full volume of work undertaken. Indeed such work was not always concerned directly with ecclesiastical affairs.

The household roll of Bishop Swinfield for 1289-90 shows Thomas de la Dane, a prominent member of Swinfield's familia collated to Hampton Bishop in 1288, in charge of providing the estate's clothing, which involved at least two round trips to London to buy cloth, in addition to which he spent time in Kent and at Oxford, returning, incidentally, with John de Schelvinge, another episcopal clerk then beneficed at Ross on Wye[2].

Pluralism clearly exacerbated the problem of non-residence - not only where clerks held two or more parish churches in plurality, but even where they held a prebend in Hereford Cathedral along with a parochial benefice, since residence for at least six months a year was required at Hereford if canons were to receive their share of the commons[3]. In addition a good many of those collated, even where they did not hold in plurality within the diocese, were also beneficed elsewhere. It is difficult to reach a definitive figure, since by no means all dispensations appear in the papal registers; but during the century a number of block dispensations for plurality or non-residence were issued to episcopal clerks

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.367,379,393,425,489,495,518,531,539,547.
2. Household Roll, ed. Webb, ii.cxcvii-viii; Reg. Swinfield, p.527.
3. Cal. Pap. L. i.223,229.

at both Hereford and Worcester, as well as individual licences where the clerk concerned is named[1]. To this catalogue of non-residence we must add several of the Savoyards beneficed by Aquablanca at Hereford, who maintained close links with their homeland and evidently resided there for long periods[2].

In some of the richest episcopal benefices, most frequently used to provide for administrators, this non-residence was officially recognized and institutionalized by the establishment of permanent vicarages, presumably with a fixed portion, to which the rector presented. The churches of Alvechurch, Bishops Cleeve, Hartlebury, Weston on Avon and Withington, and in Hereford diocese those of Bromyard, Ledbury and Ross on Wye were all served by a vicar in this way for at least part of the thirteenth century[3] - although there are indications of a changing attitude towards the end of the period, and evidence regarding the extent of non-residence is occasionally ambiguous. There is no reference to a vicarage in Alvechurch after the mid-thirteenth century, and Bishop Swinfield united the vicarages and rectories of Lindridge and Ross on Wye respectively in 1288 and 1298[4]. In the former case he explicitly extracted a promise of residence from the rector, John of Bitterley - a prominent episcopal clerk who had served as proctor at

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1. Cal. Pap. L. i.101,113,162,194,205,216,229,270,293,300,338,361, 382,533,557,603,605.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.160,163,186,248.
3. Cat. Anc. D. ii.325; Reg. Giffard, ii.117,123,387,549; Reg. Cobham, p.24; Tax. Nich. pp.160,161,224; Reg. Swinfield, pp.154,227.
4. Reg. Swinfield, pp.160,346.

Rome for both Swinfield and Giffard. The promise was apparently fulfilled, since all references to John's activities, well-documented at both Hereford and Worcester until then, abruptly cease after this date[1]; and in 1300 Giffard similarly informed his council that Thomas de Stok', his official, was now residing at Kempsey[2]. In some of these instances however, the undertaking to reside may simply have amounted to permanent or temporary retirement due to age or other circumstances. Thomas de Stok', for instance, had been beneficed in the diocese since 1269 at least[3] - although even so, the implication is that these parishes received the first-hand ministrations of a highly educated rector for several years.

Ultimately however there was no way in which the conflicting requirements of residence and diocesan administration could successfully be reconciled; and most beneficed officials must have remained distant figures, at best returning to oversee the ministrations of serving clergy, celebrating an occasional mass, and perhaps acting as absentee benefactors. Even Thomas Cantelupe, who before 1275 held several benefices in plurality in the diocese of Worcester, evidently managed little more than this, according to the highly complimentary accounts of his activities offered to the ecclesiastical commissioners prior to his canonization in the early fourteenth century[4]; and in general the bulk of

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1. Reg. Swinfield, pp.12,45,97,99,126,127,437-8; Reg. Giffard, ii.189, 291,301-3.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.516.
3. Reg. Giffard, i.35.
4. AASS (Oct.I), pp.550,559-60.

the work must have fallen on the shoulders of the vicars or (more usually) unbeneficed chaplains who served the parishes on a day-to-day basis.

Of the remaining episcopal presentees some, although not active in diocesan administration themselves, were apparently kinsmen or dependants of diocesan officials. This is almost certainly true of M. Richard de Staneway, who succeeded John de Staneway, one of Giffard's most active clerks, in the church of Weston on Avon early in the fourteenth century[1]; and although surname evidence is far from conclusive, a further two presentees at Worcester and nine at Hereford were possibly also connected to members of the bishop's familia. At Hereford these included the sons of Swinfield's head carter, Robert and Richard of Kingswood, in whom the bishop took a special interest, financing their studies at Oxford and collating them to Coddington and Cradley and to Colwall respectively[2]. In other instances preferment followed services rendered in a private rather than public capacity. Some years before his collation to Lapworth by Godfrey Giffard in 1286, Robert de Luttlebir' is found in correspondence with the bishop concerning a plea of dower in which he was acting for the bishop's niece; while although Ralph de Hengham, as a prominent royal justice, enjoyed a vast amount of preferment both in our region and elsewhere, Thomas Cantelupe perhaps had special reason to collate him to the prebend of

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.294; Reg. Cobham, p.44.
2. Household Roll, ed. Webb, i.116-7 and note, ii.xxxiii; Reg. Swinfield, pp.530,535,546.

Moreton Valence in 1279, given his role in the recent bitter dispute between the bishop and the earl of Gloucester over the episcopal chase of Eastnor and Colwall[1]. In addition it is interesting to find Giffard granting a portion in Chedworth church to Robert de Glen in 1287 on account of his old age[2]. Provision for aged clerks was a duty which bishops seem to have taken very seriously, and for which they evidently felt some diversion of parochial revenues to be justified. Giffard's clerk Walter de Berton continued to hold Kempsford and Bredon several years after giving up his stewardship of the bishop's lands because of infirmity; while in 1275 the bishop ordered Winchcombe Abbey to provide food and lodging for the aged rector of Twining, Bledington and Winchcombe, who apparently continued to hold his benefices for some years, and in 1291 Swinfield arranged for an annual pension from the church of Tugford to be paid to its ailing former rector[3].

There were in addition a number of presentees, comprising roughly one fifth of the total collated, for whom no supplementary information is available; and it seems reasonable to suppose that some were obscure clerks promoted purely on account of their merits. Two apparently came from families holding small amounts of land of the bishop[4], while several more, according to their toponymics, came from manors of which the bishop was lord[5], which perhaps helps to explain how such

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.179,297; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.52-61,225; AASS(Oct.I), p.563.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.307.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.86,481,550; Reg. Swinfield, pp.276-7.
4. Reg. Swinfield, pp.404,405,453,525,543. (John de Hakelute and Richard de la Sole)
5. Reg. Swinfield, pp.524,529; Reg. Giffard, i.46, ii.74,98,175.

clerks may have brought themselves to the bishop's attention. In a number of cases the hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that the clerks in question were presented to some of the poorest benefices, especially at Hereford, where the average value of the churches received bythis group, as taxed in 1291, was only marginally over £5, William de Marcle and John Rex each receiving benefices valued at under £4[1]. Several more in both dioceses were collated to vicarages[2], which given the automatic obligation of vicars to reside were of little use in providing for busy administrators - although Hamo of Sandwich, one of Swinfield's clerks, did hold the vicarage of Stretton Grandison as a non-resident from 1300 to 1306, and as a consequence was still being hounded to repay the fruits thirteen years later[3]. If the hypothesis is correct, then there was in operation a form of selection by merit, with the bishops drawing in particular on young clerks from their own manors, or with whose families they had feudal ties.

But perhaps the most suggestive group of collations consists of those where the choice of clerk was not exclusively the bishop's own. Occasionally the acceptance of someone else's clerk was apparently purely voluntary, this being especially common in cases where the

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1. Reg. Swinfield, pp.529 (Brinsop), 535 (Coddington), 536,538 (Eastnor, Eaton Bishop), 537 (Norton), 543 (Kyre Wyard); Reg. Cantelupe, p.161; Tax. Nich. pp.158,159,160,165.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.176,527 (St. John in Bredwardine), 536 (Stoke Giffard); Reg. Swinfield, pp.401 (Bosbury), 524 (Peterchurch), 526 (Fownhope), 537 (Kentchester); Tax. Nich. pp.159,161.
3. Reg. Swinfield, pp.532,537; Reg. Orleton, p.116. For vicarages see above, p.130.

collation was not made in the bishop's own right - presumably in an attempt to avoid causing unnecessary offence to the patron whose rights were being overturned. Collating to Broadway, a church in the gift of Pershore Abbey, in 1283, Giffard reinstated Peter de Caldwell, who had been deprived by the archbishop for failing to take full orders, and who was presumably a relative (and presentee) of the abbot of Pershore, Henry Caldwell. Following another deprivation John de Ulbeton was similarly 'collated' to Kidderminster in 1280, according to Giffard's register, but at the presentation of Maiden Bradley Priory, the usual patrons, according to the priory cartulary; and in 1279 Thomas Cantelupe similarly confirmed Geoffrey de Pickford's presentee in the church of Broseley, although technically collating through lapse[1]. There are innumerable examples however of bishops coming under strong pressure from outside to benefice particular clerks. The overwhelming majority of these requests emanated from the Crown, and are discussed more fully below, while others came from fellow-ecclesiastics and even from the archbishop himself[2]. On other occasions however, bishops seem to have bowed to the wishes of much lesser men. William de Upton, instituted to Kineton in 1285, was collated at the instance of William de Cokesey, a prominent Worcestershire knight, while lay influence may also account for the collation to Hanbury

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.128,191-2; VCH Worcs. ii.136; BL(AM)37503, f.34v; Reg. Cantelupe, p.237.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, p.226; Reg. Swinfield, pp.482-3; below pp.199 ff.

in 1294 of Peter de Verdunt, who is described as a clerk of the earl of 'Bare'[1]. Most illuminating of all is Godfrey Giffard's statement, when charged with receiving an annual income for several years from the church of Weston Subedge while its incumbent Godfrey de Crombe was a minor, that he had promised Godfrey to hold the church 'on account of his nobility of birth and other causes' - Godfrey being the son of Simon de Crombe, a minor local knight who held lands of the bishop at Earls Croome in Worcestershire[2].

This last collation may also have involved an element of nepotism, insofar as Simon had earlier married the bishop's niece[3]; but such examples do hint at a certain weakness in the Church's claims to be a totally autonomous and self-regulating institution, free from lay influence. The crux of the Church's reform programme over two centuries or more had been the freeing of the parish clergy from lay control, and their complete subjection to episcopal will; yet bishops evidently continued to see it as expedient to accommodate powerful (and even not so powerful) lay interests - even though two of these presentees turned out to be far from models of canonical propriety. Peter de Verdunt neglected to take full orders, and was not technically instituted, for three years, although numerous clerks with lesser connections were deprived for failure to be ordained within one

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1. 'clericus domini comitis de Bare' (sic), HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.742 (f.375v); Reg. Giffard, ii.272,439.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.463,549.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.548.

year[1]; while Godfrey de Crombe subsequently became involved with an armed gang of local gentry whose activities included, amongst other things, the systematic intimidation of his successor as rector of Weston[2].

Influence over presentations was only part of a much wider problem however, and there are other indications of the ways in which bishops' control over the clergy remained compromised by the necessity of bowing to lay opinion. Discussing with his council the measures to be taken against pluralists in the diocese in 1300, Giffard commented that it would be unwise to proceed against Ralph de Hengham since he was of the king's council; and it is striking to find the pope himself, in 1237, the very year in which new statutes against plurality were promulgated at the Legatine council of St. Paul's, ordering the legate to abandon proceedings against pluralists in England who had powerful relatives[3]. Indeed Thomas Cantelupe's unreadiness, as bishop of Hereford, to accommodate the whims and expectations of lay magnates is a theme to which the witnesses who testified before the ecclesiastical commissioners prior to his canonization constantly returned, emphasizing the extent to which this put him apart from his contemporaries and demonstrated his courage and integrity. Not only is he said to have taken on the earl of Gloucester, whom even the king feared, in a

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.439,485; 127,144,174,192,193,355,480.
2. R.H. Hilton, A Medieval Society (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1983), pp. 256-7.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.516; Cal. Pap. L. i.168.

protracted lawsuit, and to have insisted on a humiliating penance for Roger Clifford, but he also refused a request from Roger Mortimer to provide a certain clerk with an ecclesiastical benefice, contrary to the advice of his fellows, and acted against pluralists of every rank [1]. All this is presented as being highly unusual; and in the light of this Cantelupe's mandate to his official in 1275, ordering him to spare no-one in citations for ordination 'quantacumque perfulget dignitate', takes on new implications. Rather than typifying the extent to which secular rank carried no weight before the advance of clerical supremacy and reform, it was arguably rendered necessary precisely because it was common practice to bend the rules for the rich and powerful [2]. To this extent the Church remained essentially compromised throughout the thirteenth-century; and the influence exercised by powerful laymen and royalty even over episcopal collations represents one aspect of this phenomenon.

(iii) Monastic Preferment.

We have seen that the bishops of Worcester and Hereford exercised their patronage largely to provide for their households and expanding bureaucratic staff, and to a lesser extent to provide for relatives. Clearly monastic corporations did not require a permanent bureaucratic staff in secular orders in quite the same way, although like both bishops and laymen they did require an expanding body of estate officials to

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1. AASS(Oct.I), pp.561-2,563-4.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, p.25.

administer their lands, while the scale of litigation undertaken by all religious institutions during the middle ages, combined with the growing complexity of the law, must have necessitated increasingly extensive social and legal relations; and we might expect these to be reflected in the uses to which patronage was put. How far then did local religious houses, in whose hands a majority of advowsons were concentrated, use their own patronage to similar ends?

From the evidence of cartularies, annals and account rolls, it is clear that most religious houses retained clerical pensioners on a permanent basis throughout most of the century, both as proctors in the courts and elsewhere, and as advisors on legal and other matters. In most such cases preferment to a benefice was clearly seen as a desirable alternative to the payment of a monetary pension. In 1288 Winchcombe Abbey granted a corrody and pension of 20 marks to Nicholas de Mumham, 'considerantes labores, patrocinia ac benemerita que...nobis et Monasterio nostro hactenus impendit', until he should be provided for in an ecclesiastical benefice - only one of several such grants recorded in the abbey cartulary[1]. He was subsequently presented to Twining, and numerous similar arrangements appear in the cartularies of Gloucester, Evesham, Newent and Lanthony Secunda, and in the annals of Worcester and Tewkesbury[2]. The advantages of such an arrangement are obvious. It was suggested above that local religious houses were generally short of ready cash, and pensions frequently fell into arrears[3],

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1. Landboc Winch. i.128,143-4,265-6,296,297-8,305-6,351.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.341; Glouc. Cart. i.No.120; BL(CM) Vesp.B.xxiv,f.65r; BL(AM)15668, f.9v; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.166v; Ann. Mon. i.74-5,123, 128-9,131,136; iv.416,429,435,510; Heref. Cath. Muns. i.177 (No.733).
3. Above, p.129.

so that the ability to reward clerical retainers with lucrative benefices was of pivotal importance - although retainers themselves were not always willing to accept the exchange, and Tewkesbury Abbey twice experienced some difficulty in persuading pensioners to accept ecclesiastical benefices when offered, presumably on account of the additional responsibilities which this entailed even for a licensed non-resident[1].

Who exactly were these clerical retainers, and what was the precise nature of their relationship with their patrons? This is perhaps best illustrated with reference to Worcester Cathedral Priory, for which an abundance of documentation survives in the form of the prior's letter book and register known as the Liber Albus, the monastic annals which are mostly concerned with the priory's internal affairs and relations, and series of account rolls showing payments to clerical pensioners. Out of 126 recorded presentations involving 109 clerks made by the priory between 1200 and the early fourteenth-century, 11 (or just under 9 per cent) involved clerks known from these sources to have been retained on a permanent basis[2], while several more were the relatives or nominees of pensioners[3]. Most served in some legal capacity. Cuman

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1. Ann. Mon. i.123; Cal. Pap. L. i.144; and see above p.154, below pp.201,297.
2. Peter of Pirton, John of Broadwas, Ralph de Wythileg', Geoffrey de Norwyco, John of Bitterley, Cuman de Crema: Ann. Mon. iv.416,418, 488,491,493,510,513,539,542,548; The Liber Albus of the Priory of Worcester, ed. J.M. Wilson (WHS,1919), Nos.73,239,456,721; Early Compotus Rolls of the Priory of Worcester, ed. J.M. Wilson and C. Gordon (WHS,1908), pp.13,18,29,30,36-7; below p.164 and n.1-3.
3. Henry de la Lee, Adam of Alcester, Geoffrey of Orleton, Richard Bloyou, John of Middleton: Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos.249,261-2, 278,427,475,482,626,638,715; Ann. Mon. iv.547,552; Reg. Giffard, ii.506.

de Crema, beneficed at St. Martin's Worcester in 1225, was the priory's proctor at Rome,while M. John of Broadwas, presented to Himbleton in 1301, was appointed general proctor in all causes the same year; although others acted in a more general advisory role, and are found in correspondence with the prior over a wide variety of issues, ranging from the proposed appropriation of Overbury to the conduct of pleas before the curia regis[1]. As university graduates versed in canon or civil law[2], their services and expertise were in wide demand, and most served several clients in a similar capacity, often receiving preferment elsewhere in return. As well as being retained and subsequently beneficed by Worcester priory M. Peter de Pyriton was an official of the bishop of Salisbury and had links with both Pershore and Tewkesbury abbeys, which respectively presented him to the churches of St. Peter's Worcester and Fairford in 1289 and 1298; while Adam of Orleton, the future bishop of Hereford and Worcester and another pensioner, also received preferment from St. Augustine's Abbey, Bristol[3].

The range of those beneficed extended beyond this circle of privately employed magistri to those with wider connections however, and included a number of royal justices. Worcester Priory made at least three such presentations during the century, bestowing the church of Berrow on Martin of Pateshall in 1224, and those of St. Andrew's

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1. Ann. Mon. iv.416,418,548; Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos.73,151, 180,271-3,931.
2. See A.B. Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D.1500 (Oxford, 1957-9), pp.86-7,205-6,1465,1796-7.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.335,493,543; Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, No.475; Emden, Biog. Reg., p.1465; above, p.163 n.2.

Worcester and Stoke Prior on Simon de Walton - who was also a close relative of the prior's chamberlain - in 1219 and 1254[1]. Pershore, Eynsham, Llanthony Prima and (probably) Tewkesbury similarly presented royal justices to local benefices at different times during the thirteenth century[2]. It seems unlikely that such men were expected to serve their patrons in anything like the same capacity - although there are instances of prominent judges acting as private consultants to both lay and ecclesiastical clients throughout the period[3]. More generally however, success in medieval litigation depended not only on legal expertise but also on the procuring of goodwill and influence in high places, and particularly amongst the judiciary. A document from St. Augustine's Canterbury dealing with the abbey's preparations for the Kent Eyre of 1313 describes quite openly and in great detail how the goodwill of jurors, narrators and (in particular) justices was to be solicited through the systematic exercise of hospitality and the granting of gifts; and the feeing of justices to such ends on a more permanent basis became widespread during the thirteenth century[4]. Alternatively presentation to a fat benefice would equally bind a judge to the religious house concerned, and might also be expected to promote the sort of goodwill and benevolentia with which St. Augustine's was apparently

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1. Ann. Mon. iv.411,416,442; DNB (Simon de Walton).
2. Ralph de Hengham, Adam de Cestreton, John de Trillawe, Martin of Pateshall: Reg. Giffard, i.10-11, ii.483,493; Cal. Pat. R. 1292-1301, p.122; PRO CP25(1) 80/5/60.
3. G.O. Sayles, 'Medieval Judges as Legal Consultants', Law Quarterly Review, lvi (1940), 247-54.
4. F.J. Pegues, 'A Monastic Society at Law in the Kent Eyre of 1313-14', EHR, lxxxvii (1972),554-64; J.R. Maddicott, 'Law and Lordship: Royal Justices as Retainers in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century England', P&P Supplements, iv (1978),1-40; and see Glouc. Cart. i.38.

so preoccupied; and it is no doubt against this background that preferment of justices by local religious houses should be seen. In some instances this may have followed directly from the successful conclusion of an advowson suit before the justice concerned. Martin of Patteshall was presented to Berrow immediately following Worcester Priory's vindication of its right against the lord of the manor, and he was also one of the judges before whom the priory had successfully defended the advowson of Dodderhill three years earlier. On the other hand the fact that he was beneficed at Pencombe did not prevent a judgement concerning the advowson from going against the canons of Llanthony Prima, who had probably presented him, in 1225[1].

But although the goodwill of justices and lawyers was particularly valuable, they by no means represented the only social group able to influence the fortunes of a religious house; and it seems likely that other presentations involving clerks with proven social connections reflect similar attempts to procure the cooperation and goodwill of equally influential groups and individuals. In 1286 the canons of St. Mary's Warwick presented a chaplain of the earl of Warwick to a portion in St. Nicholas's church; while in 1198/99 Cirencester Abbey bestowed the church of Preston on a son of Geoffrey fitz Peter, the earl of Essex and Richard I's justiciar, despite apparently losing the chance to appropriate the church as a result[2]. More generally

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1. Ann. Mon. iv.413,416; Cur. Reg. R. iv.88,254; xi.149,232-3; PRO CP25(1) 80/5/60; and see Maddicott, 'Justices as Retainers', p.8.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.287; Cirenc. Cart. ii. No.376; above p.132.

William Thorntoft, a Worcester pensioner presented to Dodderhill before 1303, was a royal clerk and keeper of the king's hanaper, who had influence and connections stretching far beyond the royal courts[1]; and several other monastic presentations similarly involved clerks with royal connections, although it is not always certain whether these represented the voluntary and independent choices of patrons[2]. How important such connections could be is well illustrated by a series of entries in the Worcester Liber Albus concerning the priory's efforts to recover Dodderhill church in the early fourteenth century, and which show the prior not only consulting his own advisors on the legal points involved, but also writing to the bishop, importuning Sir Hugh Despenser to use his influence with the king, and approaching both the Prince of Wales and two successive lord chancellors in attempts to mobilize support for the priory's claim[3].

On this occasion the priory's task was rendered more difficult by the continued opposition of the bishop; and it seems likely that the large number of episcopal clerks and kinsmen presented to benefices by religious houses similarly reflects, at least in part, attempts to secure the bishop's favour. Of 126 separate presentations by Worcester Cathedral Priory during the period, 25 or nearly one fifth involved clerks either related to the bishop or involved in diocesan

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1. Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos.151,289,298; Emden, Biog. Reg. p.1867.
2. e.g. Reg. Giffard, ii.85; Cal. Clo. R. 1234-7, pp.145-6; VCH Gloucs. vi.45. For royal pressure on patrons, see below, p.199.
3. Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos.151,152,156,181,334-5,337,339,341.

administration[1]; and although in this instance the high proportion was probably partly due to the priory's unusually close links, as cathedral chapter, with the bishop and his staff, similar presentations were made by the abbeys of Tewkesbury, Gloucester, Pershore, Evesham, Winchcombe and Shrewsbury and by the priories of Lanthony Secunda, Deerhurst, Brecon, Wenlock, Monmouth and Wormsley at various times during the thirteenth century, often on several occasions[2]. During Giffard's episcopate alone, Gloucester Abbey presented Thomas de Stok' to Cam, Robert of Sutton (later Bishop Gainsborough's sequestrator) to Dursley, John of Rodborough to St. Mary de Lode, Gloucester, Walter de Berton to Kempsford, and John Blondel, the archdeacon of Worcester's proctor and chaplain, to Nympsfield; while during the same period Richard of Tardebigge, Nicholas de Reygate, Hamo de Sandwich and Stephen de Taneth, all prominent in diocesan administration at Hereford, were similarly beneficed by local religious houses in the neighbouring diocese[3].

Probably no one single factor prompted such presentations. Employment by the bishop did not preclude such clerks from offering their services and advice to others in a more private capacity, and

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1. Ann. Mon. iv.395,419,428,430,432,442-4,446,479,488,493,548; Reg. Giffard, i.39, ii.85,132,142,147,176,229,443; Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos. 480,612,692,721; and see above, pp.143-55.
2. e.g. Reg. Giffard, i.39, ii.81,171,195; Reg. Cobham, p.44 and n; Reg. Swinfield, pp.530,532; Letters Inn. III, ed. Cheney, Nos.651, 678; J.S. Barrow, 'The Bishops of Hereford and their Acta 1163-1219' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis 1982), No.105 and n; BL(HM)3586, f.139r; above, pp.143-55; below n.3.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.134,267,450,550; Cal.Pap. L. i.512; Reg. Swinfield, pp.439,530,532,533; Reg. Cantelupe, p.149; Cat. Anc. D. ii.352; above, pp.143-55.

several may have also served the institutions which promoted them as advisors or proctors. This was certainly true of M. John of Bitterley, who as well as serving the bishops of Worcester and Hereford also acted privately for Worcester Cathedral Priory, by which he was retained and subsequently beneficed; and Richard de Fraxino, one of Walter Cantelupe's clerks, and William de Conflens, the archdeacon of Hereford, were similarly retained in a private capacity by Tewkesbury Abbey and Newent Priory respectively[1]. In other instances however, the circumstances in which a clerk was presented suggest that the overriding consideration was the desire to secure episcopal favour. It is especially striking that within weeks of Walter Cantelupe's election as bishop of Worcester, the Cathedral Priory presented one of his clerks to the church of St. Andrew's Worcester, followed shortly after his enthronement by the presentation of Matthew de Cantelupe to Cropthorne[2]. Given the difficulties which bishops experienced, especially at Worcester, in providing adequately for their kinsmen and administrative staff[3], such gestures must have been extremely welcome, and can only have promoted goodwill and gratitude towards the house concerned - advantages which could well prove invaluable when requests for appropriation or similar matters came before the bishop. No doubt such considerations were also in the abbot

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1. Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos.410,453,721; Ann. Mon. i.79; BL(AM)15668, f.9v; Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS.271, f.20r; above, pp.153-4.
2. Ann. Mon. iv.428; and cf. Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, No.614.
3. Above, pp.148-50, below, p.199.

of Pershore's mind when he allowed the bishop to make one presentation to St. Peter's Worcester in 1249 - a concession which Cantelupe immediately took advantage of to provide for his official, M. Walter de Vienn'[1].

The picture is further complicated however by the fact that presentations were often made in response to direct requests from laymen or ecclesiastics. We have already seen bishops acting in response to such requests, and they in turn occasionally attempted to influence a monastery's exercise of its patronage by direct means - although in so doing they were often only passing on requests from other quarters. In 1279 Godfrey Giffard entreated Eynsham Abbey to present a chaplain of the bishop of Bath and Wells to Tetbury church, and a few years later wrote to the prior of Deerhurst asking that Nicholas de Clere, the queen's clerk, be presented to Welford, since he had received letters from the bishop of Bath and Wells and from the queen herself and did not wish to incur the king's indignation[2]. Direct demands from the king or his immediate entourage, not only for benefices but also for pensions and corrodies, were even more common[3]; although similar (if rather more politely phrased) requests also came from lesser laymen and from local ecclesiastics[4], and there is no

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1. PRO E315/61, f.109r.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.116,175-6.
3. Landboc Winch. i.139,296,297,313; Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos.40, 46-7,51-2,300 et sqq., 353,381,412,702 et sqq; Ann Mon. iv.435; below, p.199.
4. PRO C115 K2/6683, f.262r-v; Glouc. Cart. ii. Nos.491-2; Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, No.696, and see Nos. 1208-9.

reason to suppose that the requests which happen to have been recorded in episcopal registers or monastic cartularies represent anything like the total number.

Such attempts to influence the exercise of patronage, especially when they emanated from powerful sources, could produce serious dilemmas for religious houses, which had to balance their own immediate requirements against the need to maintain influence and goodwill in the right circles. In 1305 Prince Edward wrote the first of several letters to Worcester Priory requesting a benefice for his clerk Ingelard de Varley, and the same year the prior presented him to Cropthorne, which Peter de Pyriton, one of the priory's legal advisors who had just been presented to Overbury, intended to resign. Unfortunately the presentation to Overbury conflicted with a papal provision and consequently fell through, so that Pyriton did not resign and the prior was forced to write to Edward explaining that the church was not vacant after all. This prompted several angry replies from the prince, who threatened estrangement when any affair of the priory came before him; and the prior, who urgently needed royal support in the battle over Dodderhill church, had little choice but to increase Ingelard's pension in an attempt to pacify Edward, while at the same time inducing Peter de Pyriton, whom he was probably equally anxious not to offend, to resign the church. After several refusals Peter eventually agreed and Ingelard was duly instituted[1]; but the incident does indicate the sort of conflicting interests

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1. Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos.239-41,266,300-1,309-10,312-14,316, 325-7,329-31,337,343,344; Reg. Giffard, ii.507; Cal. Pap. L. ii.23.

which religious houses had to consider when exercising their patronage. On the one hand they were naturally keen to benefice their own clerks and retainers, especially as this would release scarce cash resources which would otherwise be taken up in pensions; but on the other the cultivation and maintenance of a network of influence and goodwill throughout the higher echelons of society, and the more long-term benefits which could follow, had to be carefully weighed against merely short-term considerations.

While religious houses did use their patronage to provide for their own clerks therefore, the overall picture was a good deal more subtle and intricate; and local monasteries, probably precisely on account of the extensive patronage at their disposal, found themselves at the centre of a complex network of interdependence. It must be added however that by no means all the churches in their gift were used in this way. First and foremost vicarages, as we have seen, were useless in providing for non-resident pluralists, and in 1242 the archdeacon of Middlesex actually refused to accept the church of St. James Bristol, to which he had been presented by Tewkesbury Abbey, until reassured by the abbot that it was a rectory[1]. Secondly it was primarily the richer rectories which tended to be most consistently so used. Dodderhill church, by far the richest unappropriated benefice in the gift of Worcester Priory with an annual income in 1291 of £28, was successively bestowed on M. Thomas Cantelupe, on William of Dover,

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1. Ann. Mon. i.123; and see above, pp.130 ff., 157.

the king's chaplain, on Robert de Wychio, a prominent episcopal clerk, on the brother of Gilbert de Middleton, another royal clerk, and on William de Thorntoft, the king's treasurer, the last two being also in receipt of pensions from the priory[1]. Conversely Broadwas, at £4. 13s. 4d. one of the poorer benefices, was held by a series of comparatively obscure clerks on whom no further information is forthcoming, with the exception of John the son of Senatus who witnessed several documents in the priory cartulary and must have served in some clerical capacity[2]. The pressure on richer benefices was increased by the fact that demands for preferment from Crown and papacy in particular tended to stipulate the value of benefice required, while in the case of clerical retainers it was clearly necessary to find a church roughly equivalent in value to the pension already being received. That is not to say however that poorer rectories were never used to provide for such clerks, and in many instances availability alone must have dictated the choice of church. Following a demand from the pope to provide for John Boter in a benefice worth 60 marks, Worcester Priory was forced initially to present him to Knightwick and Doddenham, worth only £4s. 6s. 8d., and to make up the remainder with a pension; and there are several examples of important justices,

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.85,132,136; Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos.46,249, 289,298; Emden, Biog. Reg., p.1274; Tax. Nich. p.217.
2. Ann. Mon. iv.411,447,496; Worc. Reg. I, Nos.93,109,140,291-2, 342; Tax. Nich. p.216.

lawyers or royal and episcopal clerks holding comparatively poor benefices in the area, usually in plurality[1].

The fact remains that particularly in the vicarages and less well-endowed rectories, there were in both dioceses a number of comparatively obscure clerks who do not fall into any of the categories so far discussed, who are not described as magistri, and who apparently had no special qualifications. A handful were related to the abbots or priors concerned, although nepotism, perhaps surprisingly, seems to have been even less of a dominant consideration than in the case of episcopal patronage, accounting for only four or five presentations all told. The brother of Prior Ralph of Worcester held the comparatively rich benefice of Lindridge for half a century, but the other recorded presentations of kinsmen by his successor Prior Thomas and by the abbots of Pershore and Cirencester were to much more modest benefices, while another prior of Worcester persuaded the rector of Overbury to employ his nephew in the chapel of Berrow[2]. It was not only abbots' or priors' relatives who had to be catered for however. John of Luckington, presented to Ozleworth by Gloucester Abbey in 1271, was probably related to the abbey's sacrist Thomas of Luckington, while Nicholas of Dumbelton and Richard of Madley, beneficed by

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1. Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos.444-9; Tax. Nich. p.216.
2. Ann. Mon. iv.398,443,447; Reg. Giffard, ii.508; Worc. Reg. I. No.246; above, p.158.

Worcester Priory, were possibly relatives of John of Dumbelton and G. of Madley, both monks at Worcester[1].

As with episcopal preferment however, there remain a number of presentees who were possibly obscure clerks promoted through merit - a group which accounts for 50 out of 126 recorded presentations by Worcester Priory during the period, a proportion of around 39 per cent. At least one of these was of unfree origin, having been manumitted by Bishop Giffard before receiving his first tonsure, and was probably a member of a family which held lands under the bishop at Northwick and Whistones[2]. Others such as William de la Hay and William de Gates, both beneficed by Gloucester Abbey, can perhaps be identified with families of those names holding lands of the monks for customary services[3], which gives some indication of the social origins of this group, as well as of the mechanism by which they may have obtained preferment. In most such instances however the only additional evidence consists of the toponymic surnames under which presentees were usually recorded.

How far these can be taken as indicating provenance is debatable, although several factors point strongly in this direction. Topographic

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1. Reg. Giffard, i.47, ii.512; Ann. Mon. iv.493; Glouc. Cart, iii.24-6; Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos. 1-2, 285; and see Ann. Mon. iv.523.
2. Richard Spelly: Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, Nos. 420,423; The Red Book of Worcester, ed. M. Hollings (4 Parts, WHS, 1934-50), i.21, 24.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.128; Reg. Swinfield, p.536; Glouc. Cart. iii.61-2, 127-9, 385.

elements apparently not used by the person concerned were frequently added to surnames in official documents in the thirteenth century[1]; and it has been suggested with reference to the diocese of Canterbury that toponymics may have been deliberately employed by the compilers of episcopal registers in order to distinguish between large numbers of similarly-named clerks drawn from a wide geographical area[2]. The consistency with which toponymics appear in the episcopal registers of Worcester and Hereford lends support to this theory; and on several occasions a descriptive topographic element appears to have been deliberately added to pre-existing surnames which presumably did not relate to provenance, and were possibly hereditary[3].

If such toponymics may indeed be taken as evidence of provenance, then the overwhelming majority of these clerks were local men, as Table III (page 177) indicates. It will be seen that of 51 clerks with identifiable toponymics[4] beneficed within the region by Worcester Priory or Gloucester Abbey between 1200 and 1300, and who apparently had no special qualifications, over a fifth came from within a five-mile radius of the religious house presenting them, and over two-thirds from within twenty miles. This suggests a readiness on the part of monasteries to patronize local clerks who managed to bring themselves to their attention,

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1. P.H. Reaney, A Dictionary of British Surnames (2nd edn., London, 1976), p.xiii.
2. B. Mains, 'The Beneficed Clergy of the Diocese of Canterbury 1279-1313' (Oxford Univ. D. Phil thesis, 1976), pp.111-5, and see pp.110-1.
3. e.g. Thomas called Newent of [Droit]wich, Robert Anketel of Bristol: Reg. Giffard, ii.337,369.
4. Some incumbents are known only by their Christian names, while some toponymics are too ambiguous for safe identification, and others unidentifiable.

Distance (in miles) between place of origin and religious house presenting. →

Distance (in miles) between place of origin and church to which presented. ↓

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	over 40	Total N° clerks
Local church	1		1	2					1	5(9.8%)
0-5	6	2								8(15.7%)
6-10	2	4		1						7(13.7%
11-15	1		2	2	1					6(11.7%)
16-20		3	1	3						7(13.7%)
21-25					3					3(5.9%)
26-30				1	2					3(5.9%)
31-35							1			1(2.0%)
36-40			1							1(2.0%)
over 40	1				1		1	3	4	10(19.6%)
Total N° clerks	11 (21.6%)	9 (17.65%)	5 (9.8%)	9 (17,65%)	7 (13.7%)	-	2 (3.9%)	3 (5.9%)	5 (9.8%)	51(100%)

(39.2%)

(64.6%)

(66.7%)

TABLE III: PROVENANCE OF 'UNQUALIFIED' CLERKS BENEFICED BY WORCESTER PRIORY OR GLOUCESTER ABBEY 1200-1300, showing distances between place of origin, religious house presenting, and church at which beneficed.

some of whom may have been youths from nearby villages taken into the monastic schools[1]. Proximity to a well-endowed religious house was not the sole criterion however. Several presentees, such as G. of Pershore, William of Winchcombe and Walter of Forthampton (near Tewkesbury) came from villages nearer to other religious houses than to those which eventually patronized them[2]; while about a quarter came from manors owned by their monastic patrons, and in some instances this seems to have been a more significant factor than distance alone. Walter de Foy, presented to Taynton church by Gloucester Abbey in 1290, presumably came from the abbey's manor of Foy in Gloucestershire, which lay some seventeen miles from the abbey although only about seven from Hereford with its priories and hospitals; while two other Gloucester presentees came from Bromfield in Shropshire, almost fifty miles distant but the priory of which was a cell to Gloucester Abbey[3]. This in turn implies a preference amongst monastic patrons, all else being equal, for their own feudal tenants; although the evidence is inconsistent and many presentees, whether local or otherwise, came from other monasteries' estates.

In addition almost two-thirds came from within twenty miles of the church to which they were presented, five being presented to their local church[4]. This possibly argues for some form of local recruitment,

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1. See below, pp.240,308.
2. Ann. Mon. iv.428; Reg. Giffard, ii.168,539.
3. Reg. Giffard, i.35; Reg. Swinfield, pp.525,528; Glouc. Cart. i.19,66.
4. Reg. Giffard, ii.326,346; Reg. Swinfield, pp.525,532; Cur. Reg. R. vii.216-7.

perhaps through the former rector or vicar[1]; although as nearly all the clerks in this category also came from within twenty or twenty-five miles of the house presenting them - the only exception being Thomas of Bromfield, presented to his local church in 1285 and probably recruited through Bromfield Priory[2] - the evidence is again highly ambiguous. All that can be said with certainty is that the majority of these more obscure clerks were apparently recruited through local networks, and that although no one factor dominated the monasteries' choice of presentees at this level, proximity to a religious house, the accident of birth on one of its manors, or proximity to a church in its gift may all have helped in the search for preferment.

(iv) Lay Preferment.

It has long been accepted that the developments associated with episcopal, monastic and royal administration in the thirteenth century must have been paralleled amongst the lay nobility, both as regards central household organization and estate management - although concrete evidence in the form of household rolls and receivers' accounts commences only from the mid-thirteenth century at the earliest, while definite evidence of permanent magnate councils is lacking until even later[3]. While we are consequently faced with a comparative dearth of evidence about the exact structure and personnel of most secular households,

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1. Assistant clergy were certainly so recruited, although few subsequently appear as beneficed in the vicinity: see below, pp.225, 230 ff., 236-8.
2. Reg. Swinfield, p.525.
3. N. Denholm Young, Seigneurial Administration in England (Oxford, 1937), pp.1-5,30-1; Maddicott, 'Justices as Retainers', pp.8-12.

especially for the earlier part of the period, the question nevertheless arises of how far lay patrons, particularly from the upper ranks of the nobility, similarly exercised their patronage to provide for an expanding retinue of clerks and administrators, as has been suggested in the case of thirteenth-century Yorkshire[1], and whether with similar pastoral implications, following from the granting of richer benefices in particular to a succession of habitually non-resident administrators.

A number of clerks presented by local laymen are known from other sources to have been professional lawyers or bureaucrats active in royal or ecclesiastical government[2], while several more were university graduates[3]; and it is conceivable that some of these were employed by their patrons in an official capacity. The likelihood is strengthened by the observation that most of the seneschals and other estates officials employed by the earls of Gloucester during this period were generally active in royal (and sometimes ecclesiastical) administration as well - a reflection of the reliance of Crown, Church and laity alike on an emerging class of professional administrators whose services and skills, like those of the legal retainers described above, were very much in demand[4]. Some of these clerks, like M. Hugh called Hamelyn, a royal

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1. J. E. Newman, 'Greater and Lesser Landowners and Parochial Patronage: Yorkshire in the Thirteenth Century', EHR, xcii(1977), 307-8.
2. e.g. John de Mont, Walter of Reading, William de Ayremine, Adam de Osegodob, Walter de Maidstone, Peter of Leicester, Nicholas de Chilebanton: Reg. Giffard, i.28, ii.67,93,97,213,229,303,345; Reg. Swinfield, pp.538,544; DNB (William Areyminne; Adam Osgodby).
3. Reg. Giffard, i.41; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.131,152,217,235; Register of Archbishop Walter de Gray, ed. J. Raine (Surtees Soc., lvi,1870), p.71; BL(AM)37503, f.32v.
4. M. Altschul, A Baronial Family in Medieval England: the Clares 1217-1314 (Baltimore, 1965), pp.227-8.

clerk presented to Clent by William de Valence, were preferred by magnates of baronial rank; although others were beneficed by local knights of much lesser status, whose motives were possibly rather different and which are discussed below[1]. In none of these instances however is there any definite evidence of the clerks concerned being formally employed or retained, much less of the precise nature of the services, if any, for which they were being rewarded; and for a fuller picture, a more specific knowledge of the patron's household, retinue and administration is required.

Amongst the more significant families holding advowsons in our region, the household organization and estate management of the Clare earls of Gloucester has been examined in detail by Professor Altschul, who has identified the most prominent estate officials and members of the domestic familia during the thirteenth century[2]. None of these were beneficed by the earls in our own region, although this may be partly due to the fact that the family's primary interests lay elsewhere in East Anglia and Glamorgan, and several clerical retainers were presented to churches in other dioceses[3]. For patronage-owning families whose interests centred on our own dioceses, and who seldom approached the Clares in either wealth or social status, the evidence is generally more limited, although the

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1. Cal. Pat. R. 1272-81, p.184; below pp.187-9.
2. Altschul, The Clares, pp.225-39.
3. Hilton, A Medieval Society, p.40; Altschul, The Clares, pp.206-8, 227-8, 238.

gap is partially filled by the existence of several fairly comprehensive collections of private charters. Most significant of these are the family cartularies of the Beauchamp earls of Warwick and of the Mortimers of Wigmore, who between them held the largest single concentration of advowsons in lay hands within the region[1]; while an almost equally comprehensive collection of original charters relating to the Berkeley family has also survived, and charters issued by other local laymen exist in cartulary copies. Naturally such documents are more concerned with property rights than with administrative personnel, although they do contain occasional references to proctors and other agents, while from witness lists it is possible to discern which people were most frequently in attendance on the lord. To what extent were local benefices used to provide for these retainers?

Of 18 clerks known to have been presented to local churches by the Mortimers of Wigmore during the thirteenth century, only two, Thomas Morf and Hugh de Breusa, attested family charters - both as rectors of their respective churches[2]. It is possible that these were household clerks who had remained part of their patron's entourage following preferment - in 1278 for example, an unnamed rector of Kingsland, another benefice in the Mortimers' gift, was given a year's leave of absence specifically to attend upon Roger Mortimer, his lord and patron[3]. On the other hand they may have

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1. Above, p.83.
2. BL(HM)1240, f.64v,73v,74r; Reg. Swinfield, pp.526,532.
3. Reg. Cantelupe, p.194.

been witnessing simply as local rectors, especially as the charters concerned related to lands in the vicinity of their benefices[1]; and although Hugh continues to appear in connection with the Mortimers, Thomas Morf was certainly not in personal attendance from 1301 since he spent the next few years studying at Oxford, from where occasional reports on his progress were sent to Bishop Swinfield[2].

An examination of 21 clerks beneficed by the main line of the Beauchamps during the thirteenth century produces a similar picture. Although two successive incumbents of Salwarpe witnessed, as rectors, a number of charters relating to local lands, only Ralph of Laughern (presented to Holt before 1269) appears as a witness prior to his preferment, and then on only one recorded occasion; while Richard of Powick, presented to St. Peter the less in Worcester in 1276, may have been connected with the M. William of Powick who attested several Beauchamp charters and who was apparently a fairly constant member of William de Beauchamp (III)'s household[3]. Of the clerks presented by the Berkeleys of Berkeley to Slimbridge - the only local church still in their gift - during the same period, not one appears as a witness to family charters.

The impression given by this admittedly very limited evidence, therefore, is that although both the Mortimers and the Beauchamps - two

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1. Pembridge (where Breusa was beneficed), Kingsland and Eardisland, about 7 miles from Old Radnor where Morf was beneficed; although an earlier group of charters concerned properties in the Cotswolds: BL(HM)1240, f.64v, 73v, 74r.
2. Cal. Pat. R. 1292-1301, p.370; Reg. Swinfield, pp.396,545. Breusa was a licensed pluralist and also penitentiary of Hereford Cathedral: Cal. Pap. L. ii.27.
3. Beauch. Cart. p.xxv, Nos.26,105,145; Reg. Giffard, i.28, ii.89.

of the most powerful families in the region - may occasionally have used their patronage to provide for familiar clerks, this was not a predominant consideration. The same lack of correlation is apparent if we compare the lists of attornies recorded in the curia regis and assize rolls with the clerks beneficed by particular patrons. Taking both dioceses together, in only one instance throughout the whole century is there evidence of an attorney being locally beneficed by the litigant for whom he was acting[1], while Richard de la Mare, presented to Rockhampton by Sir John Giffard in 1270, was probably the same clerk found acting as Bishop Godfrey Giffard's attorney the following year[2]. In most cases however, there is no evidence of attornies being locally beneficed at all, the few exceptions to this rule owing their preferment to patrons other than those for whom they are found acting.[3]

In part this lack of correlation may simply reflect the limitations of the evidence. It may equally however reflect the composition of many patrons' households and the consequent demand for benefices; for it cannot be assumed that a great lord's retinue of advisors and administrative staff would be exclusively or even predominantly composed of ordained clerics by this date. This is especially true of attornies, whose duties during the thirteenth century did not

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1. Ralph de Hengham: Roll of the Shropshire Eyre of 1256, ed. A. Harding (SS, xcvi, 1980), No.361; below p.187.
2. Reg. Giffard, i.44; Cal. Pat. R. 1266-72, p.587.
3. e.g. John de Solers, John of Pyon: PRO Just. I/302, m.95d; BL(HM) 3586, f.138r, 141v; Reg. Swinfield, pp.525,526.

necessarily require them to be specialized personnel, and who were very often simply family members or (in the case of religious houses) monks or canons; while in contrast the narratores, from whose ranks royal justices tended increasingly to be drawn and whose services and goodwill were probably more in demand, were almost exclusively laymen by the end of the century[1]. The tendency was not confined to legal personnel however. While some of the officials administering the Clare estates were ecclesiastics, several being beneficed outside our region in reward for their services as we have seen, others like Robert Bardolf were laymen; and it is especially striking that prominent household knights outnumbered clerics by 7 to 4 on the earl's council in 1299, the earliest date at which its composition can be established[2]. By this date literacy, administrative skill and legal expertise were no longer confined to the clergy, and to judge from the evidence of witness lists, a significant proportion of the household retinues of the greater local magnates also consisted not only of clerics but also of local knights and feudal tenants[3]. The result of these developments was that by the last quarter of the thirteenth century - precisely the date at which more systematic evidence about laymen's use of patronage becomes available with the advent of episcopal registers - it must have been becoming

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1. Maddicott, 'Justices as Retainers', pp.18-20,22; Pegues, 'Monastic Society at Law', pp.556-7; PRO Just. I/302, m.95-7, 95d-7d; Cur. Reg. R. xii. Nos. 1170, 1603, 2081 etc.
2. Altschul, The Clares, pp.224-8, 235-6.
3. BL(HM)1240, f.72v, 73v, 74r; Beauch.Cart. p.xxv; Altschul, The Clares, pp.236-7.

increasingly difficult to provide for one's administrative and legal staff purely or even predominantly through recourse to ecclesiastical benefices.

Nor did the most prominent advowson-owning families in our region have any close involvement with royal administration outside, which might have resulted in a more extensive network of clerical retainers, contacts and colleagues requiring preferment. Prior to their acquisition of the earldom of Warwick in 1268 the Beauchamps of Elmley, although locally one of the most powerful families in the region, played little part in national politics, and unlike the Mauduits, whose lands they inherited with the earldom, owed little to professional expertise or official contacts[1]. Similarly the Mortimers, like nearly all the Welsh Marcher barons during the thirteenth century, traditionally stood apart from Westminster-based politics, and this holds equally true of the Fitz Alans, the Corbets and Cliffords, all owners of parochial patronage on a large scale by lay standards, as well as of numerous lesser Marcher families[2]. This is in sharp contrast to the royal justices and administrators who in Yorkshire are said to have been accumulating advowsons on a large scale during the same period, possibly, it has been suggested, to provide for their expanding clerical retinues[3]; and it may

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1. Beauch. Cart. pp.xxiii-xxiv, xxxi.
2. R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the Marches of Wales 1282-1400 (Oxford, 1978), pp.34-8; J. Meisel, Barons of the Welsh Frontier: The Corbet, Pantulf and Fitz Warin Families 1066-1272 (Nebraska, 1980), pp.xvi-xvii, 128-30; above, pp.91-2.
3. Newman, 'Landowners and Parochial Patronage', pp.307-8.

be significant that on the limited evidence available, the local landowners who were more closely involved in royal government sometimes did use their patronage to provide for colleagues or for clerks serving them in professional capacities. Of seven local presentations made by Robert Burnel, Edward I's chancellor and bishop of Bath and Wells, or by his immediate relatives, 3 involved men also beneficed by the king who were probably (and in one case definitely) royal clerks[1], while a fourth was a canon of Wells who may have served Burnel as an episcopal clerk[2]. Similarly Giles de Erdington, a royal justice under Henry III and patron of Yardley in Worcestershire, apparently presented his clerk Ralph de Hengham to the church - Hengham later rising to become a prominent justice himself[3].

But if provision for privately employed clerks may not have represented a predominant drain on patronage for many local patrons, nevertheless lay magnates of whatever rank must certainly have needed, no less than local religious houses, the counsel and probably goodwill of lawyers and well-connected administrators; and in this context several presentations make much sense. In particular, at least two royal justices were presented to local churches by laymen: Ralph de Hengham, presented to Radnor by the Mortimers of Wigmore some time before 1283, and (probably) John de Cave, presented to Humber by Thomas Costentyn in

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, p.292; Reg. Swinfield, pp.524,525; Cal. Pat. R. 1272-81, pp.4,139,351,362,363.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, p.211.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.487; VCH Worcs. iii.242-3; Maddicott, 'Justices as Retainers', p.19.

1276[1]. In addition several presentees, as we have seen, were either magistri or had proven connections with royal or ecclesiastical government[2]; and it seems likely that many of these, whether formally retained or not, were preferred not in return for specific administrative duties so much as with a view to the legal or other advice they could offer and the influence they could command - particularly where the patrons concerned were of only moderate standing. M. William of Kingscote may or may not have undertaken specific duties for Nicholas of Bath, by whom he was presented to Westbury on Severn in 1289; although as a doctor of canon law and chancellor of Oxford University with extensive social connections he must have been an invaluable ally, and the same is true of other episcopal or royal clerks presented by local laymen[3].

Equally important for lesser landowners and feudal tenants was the goodwill and influence of their social superiors and particularly of their overlords; and it is perhaps this which accounts for the occasional presentation by lesser patrons of clerks apparently connected with, and possibly even nominated by, their feudal lords. Henry Corbet, who until 1288 held the church of Westbury (Shropshire), presumably owed his preferment to the Hodenets, who throughout the thirteenth century held the manor, and the advowson, of the Corbets of Cause; while

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1. Reg. Swinfield, p.524; Reg. Cantelupe, p.41; E. Foss, A Biographical Dictionary of the Judges of England 1066-1870 (London, 1870), p.159.
2. Above p.180.
3. Reg. Swinfield, pp.528,531; Emden, Biog. Reg., p.1074; and see above pp.166-7.

John de Kinley, presented to Alcaston by Sir John Poche in 1312, may have had connections with the earl of Arundel, Poche's overlord in the manor, and was subsequently beneficed by the earl at Hopesay[1]. How far such presentations were the result of overt pressure is unknown; although we have seen that requests from laymen were frequently relayed to ecclesiastical patrons[2], and it seems highly likely that a similar chain of influence operated amongst the laity in general, and not merely down the feudal hierarchy. In only one instance is there clear evidence of a lay patron being pressed to use his patronage in a particular way however, and this in rather unusual circumstances, when a notoriously extortionate undersheriff attempted to fine Adam de la Bolde 40 shillings for refusing to present him to the church of Bolde in 1271[3].

But the most obvious use of patronage, other than provision for clerks and retainers, was provision for kinsmen: and this appears to have been a far more important consideration for laymen than it was for either monks or bishops. Of around 600 presentations by laymen for which sufficient details are known, at least 90 (15 per cent) and probably as many as 120 (20 per cent) involved kinsmen[4] - the proportion being roughly equivalent between the two dioceses and also between social levels, with the great magnate families of the region evidently being as

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1. Reg. Swinfield, pp.527,541,542,546; VCH Shrops. viii.310-2; Eyton, xii.1-2.
2. Above, p.170.
3. Rotuli Hundredorum, ed. W.Illingworth (Record Comm.1812-8), ii.109; Eyton, i.156,158.
4. In some cases the surname evidence is ambiguous, the patrons taking their name from the manor and no supplementary information being available.

keen as their lesser neighbours to provide for relatives in this way. Four of the eighteen recorded presentations by the Mortimers of Wigmore involved relatives, while their cousins at Richard's Castle beneficed Roger Mortimer in 1299; and only one of the presentations made to Slimbridge by the Berkeleys of Berkeley between 1274 and 1307 did not involve kinsmen[1]. Relatives were similarly presented to local benefices, often on several occasions, by the Beauchamps, Burnels, Somerys, de Montforts of Beaudesert, Corbets and Fitz Alans, to name but a few of the more prominent magnate patrons[2]. The precise nature of the relationship varied, and we find nephews[3], in-laws[4] and half-brothers[5] being presented; although the overwhelming majority, where the relationship is made clear, were either brothers or sons[6]. This doubtless reflects the pressure upon all laymen, whatever their rank, to find provision for younger sons or brothers in a society based upon primogeniture, and this in turn almost certainly accounts for the noticeably higher proportion of kinsmen beneficed by laymen than by ecclesiastics. The desire to provide for clerical nephews and set them on their way could, of course, be a powerful motivation for Churchmen -

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1. Cal. Pap. L. i.350; Reg. Giffard, ii.63,365,373,385; Reg. Gainsborough, p.178; Reg. Swinfield, pp.534,536.
2. Reg. Giffard, i.4, ii .90,193,384,452,511,529; Reg. Cantelupe, p.164; Reg. Swinfield, p.536; VCH Shrops. viii.220; Eyton, xi.103,254.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.511,529.
4. Reg. Giffard, ii.55; PRO CP25(1) 74/24/545.
5. Charters and Records of Hereford Cathedral, ed. W.W. Capes (Hereford, 1908), p.87; I.J. Saunders, English Baronies. A Study of their Origin and Descent 1086-1327 (Oxford, 1960), pp.112-3.
6. Reg. Giffard, ii.370; Reg. Swinfield, pp.529,539; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.142,159,185,188; Landboc Winch. i.320; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.71v; BL(AM)37503, f.6r; Eyton, xi.283; below pp.191-3.

although this nevertheless lacked the urgency facing laymen who perhaps could not provide for even their immediate relatives in any other way.

That is not to deny that provision for relatives was a different matter for powerful magnates than for obscure country gentry. In the former case younger sons wishing to pursue a secular vocation could often be settled for life on a single estate or group of estates[1], and preferment to a family benefice was often the springboard for a high-flying ecclesiastical career. James de Berkeley, a younger son of Thomas de Berkeley by whom he was presented to Slimbridge in 1307, had been groomed from an early age for a career in the Church, and subsequently enjoyed much preferment elsewhere, eventually being elected bishop of Exeter in 1326[2]. Similarly Thomas Cantelupe, the future bishop of Hereford and also a younger son, was presented by the Cantelupes to the family churches of Snitterfield and Aston Cantlow as well as being patronised by his uncle Walter, the bishop of Worcester[3]; and several other notable ecclesiastics and pluralists, such as William de Montfort, Giles of Avenbury and Hugh Mortimer, were also beneficed in the region by their parents[4].

For lesser patrons, provision for a non-inheriting son or brother

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1. Altschul, The Clares, p.50.
2. The Berkeley MSS: the Lives of the Berkeleys by John Smyth of Nibley, vol.i, ed. J. Maclean (Bristol and Glouc. Archaeological Soc.,1883), pp.215-8; Reg. Gainsborough, p.178.
3. AASS(Oct.I), p.550; VCH Warws. iii.41-2,168,171; above p.143.
4. Cal. Pap. L. i.350,390,533; Reg. Giffard, ii.373,385,455; Reg. Cantelupe, p.152; PRO CP25(1) 80/1/11.

through preferment to a benefice was more probably an end in itself; and at this social level family churches often seem to have been treated as a second inheritance with which to provide for younger sons. In a number of cases there is, admittedly evidence of the presentee having inherited lands as well. Ivo Pipard, presented around 1255 to Bishampton and Lapworth by relatives and most probably by his father, Robert Pipard, apparently retained some lands in Lapworth manor as late as 1282[1]. William le Waleys, the rector of Winterbourne in 1250, held a third of the manor with other lands; and in the 1220's Reginald Folet, the rector of Longdon, inherited the whole of the manor along with the advowson on the death of his father Robert - although in this case he could well have been predeceased by an elder brother[2]. In most instances however there is no evidence of the sons or brothers presented having inherited any other property, and in some cases this is made quite explicit. Robert de Newenton, presented to Flyford Flavell by Amicia de Newenton in 1290 and subsequently enjoying further preferment from Philip Burnel and Robert de Somery, was specifically stated on his death in 1305 to have held no lay fee in Worcestershire[3]; while in 1281 John le Lou was presented to Whatcote by Philip le Lou and Philip's eldest son, who had already divided the

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1. Cat. Anc. D. iii.45,62,78; Cal. Pap. L. i.317; Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS.271, f.20r; VCH Worcs. iii.265; VCH Warws. v.110,115.
2. Cart. St. Mark's. Bristol, ed. Ross, No.335; Book of Fees, i.442; BL. Harl. Chart. 83 B.25-8.
3. Reg. Gainsborough, pp.299-30; Reg. Giffard, ii.373,409,537.

manor between them and were joint lords of the vill[1]. Indeed provision may even have extended to relatives disinherited on account of illegitimacy; and in 1297 John de la Hese was presented to Meysey Hampton by Sir Nicholas de la Hese, having been granted a dispensation for his illegitimate birth two years earlier[2].

Some families used their patronage to provide for relatives quite consistently over a number of years. Osbert d'Abetot successively presented Alexander, John and Osbert d'Abetot to Croome in 1283, 1301 and before 1310, while in 1289 John de Hercy presented his son Nicholas to Pillerton Hersey, vacated by the death of Luke de Hercy who had evidently held the church for some considerable time, being of full age in 1239 and incapable through age and imbecility by 1282[3]. Successive presentations of family members by laymen were similarly made to Ilmington, Barcheston, Flyford Flavell, Clun, Kinnersley, More and Stretford[4]. It must be remembered however that the ability to use patronage in this way depended on the concurrence of three conditions, namely that the church should be vacant, that the son or other relative needing preferment should be of the correct canonical age, and that the lord and patron should be in full possession of his lands and advowson. The chances of these conditions coinciding were considerably reduced

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.133; VCH Warws. v.202,204.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.463,487; and see ibid., i.4.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.152,216,335,546; Reg. Reynolds, p.87; VCH Warws. v.136.
4. Reg. Giffard, ii.141,373,384,452,483,541; Reg. Gainsborough, p.68; Reg. Swinfield, pp.521-2,524,535,538,543,544,546; Chtrs. & Recs. Heref., ed. Capes, p.87.

by the fact that most lay patrons, certainly below baronial rank, owned only one or at most two advowsons locally[1]; yet if any were lacking, for example if either the patron or the potential presentee were minors when the vacancy occurred, then the opportunity would be lost, possibly for many years. This probably explains the frequency with which under-age clerks were presented by laymen, as well as the surprising tolerance with which this was met by bishops.

For Worcester, Godfrey Giffard's register (1268-1301) furnishes at least ten examples of laymen presenting minors, who varied in age from 10 to 22 years[2]. What is most remarkable however is that in all but one instance this resulted not in a mandate to present a more suitable candidate, but in the granting of custody to another clerk until the presentee reached canonical age. Thus in 1290 Thomas de Berkeley presented 12-year-old Anselm de Gyse to Slimbridge, following which custody was given to William of Kingscote at the bishop's pleasure; and by 1305 Anselm had assumed the full rectorship, and was receiving letters dimissory for ordination tothe priesthood and a licence of non-residence for purposes of study[3]. At Hereford sixteen presentations by laymen between 1275 and 1317, at least 8 of which involved family members, were also followed by the temporary appointment of a custodian in commendam until the presentee fulfilled canonical requirements; and

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1. Above, p.92.
2. Reg. Giffard, i.4, ii.91,287,319,333,346,355,365,382,442,450.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.365,421-2,426; Reg. Gainsborough, pp.23,114,178.

although the exact nature of the canonical defect is not always specified at least one and almost certainly more were similarly under-age[1]. In most cases the custodian appointed was an episcopal clerk or neighbouring rector; although even custodies could be kept in the family, and in 1312 the presentation of John de Cheyne to Easthope by Roger de Cheyne was followed by the temporary granting of the church in commendam to John's uncle Reginald de Haubdine[2].

The reasons for such leniency give food for thought. Certainly Swinfield was not afraid to refuse, on grounds of age, a request from Edward I that he should find a benefice or canonry for a clerk who was only ten years old[3] - although it has been suggested that bishops frequently did feel the need to accomodate the wishes of powerful laymen[4], and given that many of these under-age clerks were presented by families of above average influence, such as the Beauchamps, Mortimers, Berkeleys or Corbets, this may well have been a consideration. However it also seems likely that bishops recognized the dilemma of patrons possessing only limited patronage, and saw no virtue in rejecting out of hand candidates who, if given a few years' leeway, might very well make perfectly good parish priests - especially as the period of custody could be put to very good use.

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1. Reg. Swinfield, pp.525,526 and n.2,527 and n.9,531,536-42,544. Roger Mortimer, presented to Richard's Castle, was only 14: L.E. Boyle, 'The Constitution Cum ex eo of Boniface VIII: Education of Parochial Clergy', Medieval Studies, xxiv (1962), 281.
2. Reg. Swinfield, p.540; see Eyton, iv.120.
3. Reg. Swinfield, pp.1-2.
4. Above, pp.159-61.

William de Sudleg', presented to Childs Wickham in 1277, was to be kept and instructed by his custodian until he came of age, in the meantime receiving the fruits of the church save what was set aside for the custodian; while William de Stawell, presented to Tormarton in 1290 and aged over 22, was to be given an exhibition in school by the custodian Thomas de Cantok. He was subsequently instituted in 1293, when he would have reached the correct canonical age of 25.[1]

So far as the pastoral suitability of lay presentees in general is concerned, there is little to distinguish them from those of any other patronage-owning group. Certainly a number appear in episcopal registers accused of various misdemeanours, ranging from failure to be in the correct orders[2] and unlicensed pluralism[3] through to more serious offences such as sexual incontinence and, on one occasion, murder and theft[4]; while Hugh Mortimer, the pluralistic and non-resident rector of Bisley, evidently continued to pursue the traditional pastimes of the gentry and in 1270 received a royal licence to hunt with dogs in the forests of Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire[5]. None of these things was particularly common however, nor were they confined to laymen's presentees. As late as 1312 M. Robert

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.91,246,247,346,433.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.127,297,355,447,480; Reg. Cantelupe, p.30.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.487; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.127,145,150,152,159.
4. Reg. Giffard, ii.109,114,425; Reg. Swinfield, pp.282,526.
5. Cal. Pat. R. 1266-72, p.494; and see Reg. Giffard, ii.166 and (on clerical discipline generally) below pp.311-12, 319-24.

de Wychio,a prominent episcopal clerk beneficed by Bishop Giffard at Alvechurch, was accused of concubinage, non-residence and unlicenced pluralism, and admitted to having been incontinent in the past. Reference has already been made to Godfrey de Crombe's conduct following his collation; and in the whole of Giffard's register, covering a thirty-three-year episcopate, the only reference to a clerk possibly being deprived on account of insufficient learning concerns Gregory de Ludlow, presented by Lanthony Priory[1].

As with ecclesiastical patronage there were, as we have seen, a number of benefices habi tually held by non-resident pluralists, these including at the upper end of the social scale family careerists as well as absentee administrators and royal clerks. Ilmington, for instance, a Warwickshire church under the patronage of de Montforts of Beaudesert, was consecutively held between 1277 and 1294 by two royal clerks and by two family members of whom at least one was non-resident[2] - although generally there appears to have been less consistency in the churches most frequently used to provide for such clerks, no doubt reflecting the more limited patronage available to even the most well-endowed laymen. While this points once again to the vital importance in local religious life of the unbeneficed clergy who served these churches however, this did not in itself mean that the parish would necessarily be any less well served; and generally there

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1. Reg. Reynolds, p.47; Reg. Giffard, ii.248; above, p.160.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.93,282,384,452,465; Cal. Pap. L. i.533.

is nothing to indicate that the standard of pastoral provision in a parish under lay patronage was likely to be any different from elsewhere.

(v) External patronage: Crown and Papacy.

At different times the advowsons of twenty-three churches in the area were held by the king in his own right - although of these only 5 remained under constant royal patronage throughout the period[1] while several, such as Kemerton, Chetton, Lydham and Willey, were held for only very brief intervals[2]. This represented however only a fraction of the patronage actually available to the Crown in the area. Hartridge estimated that of nearly a thousand royal presentations listed in the patent rolls during the reign of Edward I, barely a twelfth were made pleno jure, the remainder arising from voidances of religious houses and bishopries or (most frequently) through the minority of tenants-in-chief and custody of their lands[3]; and although the evidence from our own region suggests that these figures were probably exaggerated, nevertheless the picture is borne out in general terms. Of 46 recorded presentations to churches in Worcester diocese throughout the century, only 21 (46 per cent) were to churches of which the king owned the advowson; and although the proportion at Hereford

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1. Holy Trinity and St. Mary de Grace, Gloucester, St. Nicholas, Gloucester, Ford (Shropshire) and Lugwardine: Cal. Pat. R. 1216-25, pp.323,589; Ibid., 1225-32, p.425; ibid., 1232-47, p.468; Reg. Giffard, ii.67; VCH Shrops, viii.234.
2. VCH Gloucs. viii.211,216; Eyton, i.176-9, ii.56-8,59; xi.279-82; Cal. Pat. R. 1247-58, p.618. Eight advowsons were given to religious houses during the period (above, pp.77-8), while 3 other churches only achieved independence after 1200 (above, pp.37,41).
3. R.A.R. Hartridge, 'Edward I's Exercise of the Right of Presentation to Benefices as shown by the Patent Rolls', Cambridge Historical Journal, ii. No.2 (1927), 171.

was higher, still well over a quarter of royal presentations similarly arose from voidances or minorities[1].

In addition, more than any other advowson-owning body the Crown sought to increase its access to parochial patronage by exerting pressure on other patrons. Bishops at Hereford seem to have suffered particularly badly in this respect, largely on account of their right of collation to the prebends in Hereford Cathedral, and in 1287 Swinfield was driven to complain that the pressure was such that he could scarcely provide for his own clerks. At the time he was fending off royal requests and a papal provision on behalf of three separate claimants, all for one prebend which had only just fallen vacant; and his register contains copies of at least another four such mandates[2]. Similar requests however were made throughout the century to bishops at Worcester and to local religious houses; and it is possible that some of the royal clerks beneficed by laymen in the region were also presented following direct demands from the king, although there is no actual evidence of this[3].

In reality therefore the Crown's influence on the composition of the beneficed clergy was totally disproportionate to the number of advowsons held. How was this influence exercised? At least 59 (48 per cent) of those presented were, as we might expect, royal clerks active in some aspect of royal government. Some,like William de

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1. i.e. 22 out of 77 recorded presentations.
2. Reg. Swinfield, pp.1-2,7-8,135-6,150-2,286,443; and see p.483.
3. Above, pp.170,180 . As Prince of Wales, Edward II sent 64 such mandates in one year alone: W.A. Pantin, The English Church in the Fourteenth Century (Cambridge, 1955), p.34.

Haverhill and Thomas de Wymondeham, both royal treasurers, or Martin of Pateshall, the royal justice, were particularly eminent[1], while others were comparatively obscure and appear in the patent and close rolls only in various general capacities - although nearly all were pluralists and enjoyed other royal preferment elsewhere[2]. Of the remainder, 11 were probably kinsmen of royal clerks[3], while a further 11 had professional or family ties with prominent ecclesiastics or laymen - a reminder that the Crown itself was not immune to requests from dependants or influential men on behalf of particular clerks, and was very much part of the complex framework of interdependence within which parochial patronage operated[4]. William of Cleobury for example, presented to Church Stretton in 1309, was a clerk of Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, while M. Peter Caroli was a kinsman of M. Rostand, Adam de Eglesfeld was one of the bishop of Albano's chaplains, and Ranulf Buchard, presented to Holy Trinity, Gloucester in 1231, was a clerk of Reginald de Pons[5] - although it is of course possible that some of these men were also engaged in royal service. For only a handful of clerks is there no

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1. Cal. Pat. R. 1225-32, p.268; 1258-66, pp.116,310,350,421,605; 1232-47, p.426; Book of Fees, ii.1342.
2. e.g. Peter son of Gwillelma, Richard le Rous, John de Middleton, William de Ippel, Roger de Sutton, Maurice de Pissiaco: Cal. Pat. R. 1232-47, pp.290,303; 1258-66, pp.40,55,87,138,273,369,408,511; 1272-81, pp.185,365,369; 1292-1301, pp.70,438,590; 1302-7, pp.25,290.
3. Cal. Pat. R. 1225-32, pp.27,268,418; 1232-47, p.468; possibly ibid., 1258-66, pp.140-1; 1266-72, p.611; 1292-1301, p.602; 1307-13, p.117; Rot. Litt. Pat. (Rec. Comm. 1835) i.105b; Reg. Giffard, ii.345; Reg. Swinfield, p.543. (Surname evidence only).
4. See Cal. Pat. R. 1232-47, p.482; 1266-72, p.119; Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, No.381, for pressure exerted on the Crown.
5. Cal.Pat. R. 1247-58, p.650; 1225-32, pp.383,396-7,425,438; 1307-13, p.186; Reg. Gainsborough, p.151; Cal. Pap. L. ii.27;BL(HM)1240,f.54v.

obvious evidence of administrative employment, important family ties or at least a university education; and it seems likely that a wider search of all the relevant materials would reduce the number yet further. Very occasionally however, there is some positive indication that a royal presentee may have been a comparatively obscure clerk somehow brought to the king's attention. Thus in 1282 Richard de Strech' was presented to Upper Swell church, in the king's gift through the voidance of Evesham Abbey - John de Strech' being one of the monks who had informed the king of the abbot's death[1].

Given their background and widespread activities, it seems extremely unlikely that the majority of royal presentees ever kept permanent residence - although by the end of the period, when episcopal registers first appear, local bishops were trying hard at least to regulate their non-residence, and to ensure that nothing was done contrary to canonical statutes. In 1277 Reymund de Bovill, presented to Montgomery by the king in 1251, was cited for failing to reside and the fruits of his benefice were sequestered, following which he was granted an episcopal licence for two years' non-residence provided that certain sums were spent on poor relief and on the upkeep of buildings and vestments[2]. Most attempts at rigid enforcement however were met by angry complaints from the king, who maintained that clerks in his service were exempt from residence and ordination requirements,

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1. Cal Pat. R. 1281-92, p.32.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.137,168,302; Cal. Pat. R. 1247-58, p.107.

and generally bishops do not seem to have pressed the point further. Proceedings against Stephen de St. George, a portionist of Burford, were dropped by Thomas Cantelupe following a complaint from Edward I, and Swinfield similarly abandoned his proposed deprivation of Philip le Waleys in 1283 as a result of royal pressure[1].

The reason may in part have been simply the power and authority of the English Crown, especially under Edward I - although Cantelupe in particular acquired something of a reputation for standing up against powerful lay interests, while Swinfield too resisted royal demands on several occasions[2]. Bishops can hardly have had any fundamental objections to such a use of patronage or to its repercussions however. The principle that benefices could be used to provide for non-resident administrators, at least in an ecclesiastical context, was one which bishops at Worcester and Hereford both accepted and themselves put into practice as we have seen; and so long as pastoral care was not neglected they were likely to be largely sympathetic to the needs of such professional bureaucrats - particularly as in the thirteenth century most were as active in ecclesiastical as in secular government. Many of the bishops in our own region had begun their careers in royal service[3]; and of the clerks beneficed locally by the king during the period, several

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.141,169-70; Reg. Swinfield, pp.3-5,6; Eyton, xii.29.
2. Above, pp.160-1; Reg. Swinfield, pp.1,7-8,135-6,286,421,432-6,443-5.
3. e.g. Mauger, Walter and Thomas Cantelupe, Giffard, Giles de Braose, Peter de Aquablanca (DNB).

subsequently became bishops[1], while Robert de Fangefos, presented to Lydham in 1265, was a future archdeacon of Gloucester then in the service of the bishop-elect of Bath and Wells[2], and several held ecclesiastical office elsewhere[3]. While bishops' main priority continued to be that churches should be adequately served therefore, it would be misleading to draw too firm a line between the needs of Church and State in this respect, or to suggest with Hartridge that such a use of patronage necessarily constituted an abuse which 'allowed the fruits of the Church to be diverted for the payment of a host of chancellors, sheriffs and wardrobe clerks'[4]. The fact remains however that the impact of these clerks on local religious life must, as in the case of other non-resident administrators, have been extremely limited; and while vicarages were ordained in some of the churches under royal patronage at different times, the onus of pastoral provision must, once again, have rested primarily with the unbeneficed chaplains who served them on a daily basis[5].

There remains the question of papal provision, which like royal preferment represented an external source of patronage imposed on the area rather than operating within it. The true extent of this is difficult to gauge. There is evidence for around 35 provisions - 24 at

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1. e.g. Richard de Marisco, Walter Giffard: VCH Worcs. iii.431; Cal. Pat. R. 1232-47, p.510; DNB.
2. Cal. Pat. R. 1258-66, pp.319,501; Reg. Giffard, ii.252,318.
3. Cal. Pat. R. 1232-47, pp.190,210; 1281-92, p.421; Reg. Giffard, ii. 383; Chtrs. & Recs. Heref., ed. Capes, p.87; Rot. Litt. Pat. (Rec. Comm., 1835), i.113b.
4. Hartridge, 'Edward I's Exercise of the Right of Presentation', p.177.
5. See below, pp.212 ff.

Worcester and 11 at Hereford - throughout the century, all to benefices under ecclesiastical patronage; although those recorded in the papal registers by no means represent the total number, while references in diocesan registers, which cover only the final quarter of the thirteenth century, are largely incidental, and the true figure is almost certainly higher[1]. Nevertheless it is clear that provisions operated on a much smaller scale than royal patronage; and while they continued to represent a threat to ecclesiastical patrons, their overall impact on the composition of the beneficed clergy was probably minimal[2].

It is not always clear in what circumstances particular provisions were made. At least 5 and probably nearer 10 were to specific churches or prebends following the death or resignation of a previous incumbent at Rome[3], although most were simply reservations ordering either the diocesan or a religious house to find preferment for a particular clerk, usually in the next vacant benefice[4]. It should be emphasised however that by no means all the clerks concerned were Italians, or represented the pope's personal choice. Of the 24 recorded provisions to churches in Worcester diocese, at least 5 followed requests from influential ecclesiastics or laymen on behalf of particular clerks, most (though

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1. See Haines, Admin. Dioc. Worcester, p.215; C.H. Lawrence, The English Church and the Papacy in the Middle Ages (London, 1965), p.147-8.
2. Especially at Hereford, where half the recorded provisions were to Cathedral prebends: Cal. Pap. L. i.277; Reg. Swinfield, pp.141,440, 528,530.
3. Cal. Pap. L. i.245,277,346,559; Glouc. Cart. i. No.306; Reg. Giffard, ii.121,272,273,276,278,506,517; Reg. Swinfield, pp.141,528,530.
4. PRO C115 K2/6683, f.125r-v; Cal. Pap. L. i.235,361, ii.20; Reg. Giffard, i.27,98; Reg. Swinfield, pp.402-3,521; Landboc Winch. i.305; Ann. Mon. i.74-5.

not all) of whom were English and at least one of whom was a local man. Thus John of Stratford was presented to Great Badminton church by Lilleshall Abbey in 1292 following a papal mandate issued at the request of William de Montfort, an influential pluralist and son of Peter de Montfort of Beaudesert in Warwickshire; while in 1285 Ralph of Oxford was similarly instituted to Mickleton following a request on his behalf from Hugh of Evesham, cardinal priest of S. Lorenzo in Lucina as well as archdeacon of Worcester[1]. Similarly a benefice in the gift of Worcester Priory was reserved for John Boter at the request of powerful lay relatives[2]; and altogether at least 14 of the clerks beneficed in either diocese through papal provisions were English, several coming from the diocese in question[3].

Neither this nor the comparatively small scale of papal (as against royal) interference, however, served to defuse the resentment which patrons evidently continued to feel against the usurpation of their rights; and throughout the period there were sporadic attempts at resistance, apparently irrespective of whether the beneficiary was a local clerk or an Italian. Following John of Stratford's provision to Great Badminton, Lilleshall Abbey tried to present their own clerk John of Borham, who was involved in litigation with his rival the following year, while in 1284 Bishop Giffard similarly contested the collation of Philip de Croft

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.272-3,395,427.
2. Cal. Pap. L. ii.20; above, p.173 ; and see Cal. Pap. L. i.361.
3. Cal. Pap. L. i.277,368, ii.20; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.125r-v; Liber Albus, ed. Wilson, No.446; Reg. Giffard, i.27, ii.121,272, 278,330,427; Reg. Swinfield, pp.521,530.

to Blockley by the archbishop, on whom the right had been bestowed by the pope following the previous incumbent's death at Rome; and in 1259 Bishop Peter Aquablanca of Hereford - himself a foreigner - was accused of injustly depriving M. Gervase of London of his benefices in Hereford diocese, which had been granted him through papal provision[1]. In most other instances where provision was followed by litigation or outright defiance however, the beneficiary was a foreigner and in at least two instances a papal kinsman; and in such circumstances it is impossible to separate justifiable frustration at losing a valuable presentation from the more general antipathy towards Italians and other foreigners which was so prevalent in thirteenth-century England[2]. Thus in 1249 the abbot of Tewkesbury refused to admit the pope's nephew to Thornbury church despite warnings from the bishop, and instead bestowed the church on John de Noble, one of the abbey's pensioners; and similar disputes followed provisions to Cam, Painswick, and Stottesdon[3].

The resentment felt was evidently shared by some of the bishops, who were repeatedly accused by the papacy of obstruction or indifference. M. Baudinus, granted Painswick church in 1235, was said to have been deprived on the orders of Bishop William de Blois[4], while in 1286 Bishop

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.121,222,427,433; Cal. Pap. L. i.368.
2. H. Mackenzie, 'The Anti-Foreign Movement in England, 1231-2', Anniversary Essays by students of C.H. Haskins (Boston,1929), pp. 183-96,199-200; and more generally M.T. Clanchy, England and its Rulers 1066-1272 (Fontana Hist. of England, Glasgow, 1983), pp.241-62.
3. Ann. Mon. i.135,138-9,143;Reg. Giffard, ii.134,310; Cal. Pap. L. i.486-7; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.295r; Eyton, iv.157-8.
4. PRO C115 K2/6683, f.295r.

Giffard was all but accused of supporting Thomas de Stok's claim to Cam against Opizan de Lavania, and had apparently not conducted the proper enquiries to ensure that the church was vacant prior to Thomas's institution. Two years later he was again in trouble for ignoring Francis of Naples' provision to the archdeaconry of Worcester, and for bestowing it instead on Ralph de Hengham[1].

But although there was a certain amount of (usually unsuccessful) resistance to papal provisions, there is little evidence of serious physical violence against Italian incumbents in particular or provisors generally, save for occasional and ambiguous references in the papal registers to the 'molestation' of Italian clerks[2]; and judging from the silence of local monastic annals, the dioceses do not seem to have become embroiled in the widespread violence against Italians during the early 1230's[3]. This possibly reflects the apparent absence of provisions to benefices under lay patronage - although lack of positive evidence does not of course preclude the possibility that some such provisions were made, particularly during the period between John's capitulation to Rome and Gregory IX's concession of 1232 which (theoretically) safeguarded laymen's rights against usurpation[4]. At Hereford however dislike of foreigners found a much more immediate focus in the Savoyards promoted by Peter Aquablanca; and it was they,

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1. Cal. Pap. L. i.486-7,495; and see also Reg. Cantelupe, p99; Yates, 'Aquablanca', pp314-6.
2. Cal. Pap. L. i.213,368; and see ibid., ii.18.
3. Mackenzie, 'Anti-Foreign Movement', pp.194-6.
4. Reg. Walter de Gray, ed., J. Raine (Surtees Soc., lvi, 1872), pp.166-7; Mackenzie, 'Anti-Foreign Movement', pp.183-4,202.

rather than Italian provisors, who were most subjected to molestation by laity and fellow-clergy alike during the 1260's and beyond[1].

A further reason for the lack of friction may have been that nearly all the Italians provided with local benefices were apparently non-resident; and this also suggests that their impact on local religious life must have been extremely limited. This was certainly true of Theodosius de Lavania at Ombersley, who in 1279 was granted a papal indult to serve the church through a vicar and whose personal impact was such that in 1283 he was actually presumed to be dead - although he was quickly rejuvenated when faced with the wrongful occupation of his rectory, and actually came to England to re-secure possession[2]. So far as English provisors are concerned, it is possible that some played a more direct role in parish life. John Everard, a poor clerk presented to Berkeley by Bristol Abbey in 1269 following a papal mandate, must certainly have been resident since Berkeley was a vicarage, and the same is probably true of any other obscure clerks beneficed through provisions in forma pauperum[3]. The remainder however were apparently all well-connected pluralists, often involved in official duties elsewhere, and including several university graduates[4]; and although some may have maintained links with their parishes it

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1. Yates, 'Aquablanca', pp.303,312-17; above pp.63,141-2.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.107,204,264,284,299.
3. Reg. Giffard, i.27. For vicarages and residence requirements see above, pp.130,157,172.
4. e.g. M. Richard de Vienn' (Bishop Giffard's proctor), M. Peter of Radnor (archdeacon of Salop, Cov. and Lich. Diocese), M. Gervase of London: Reg. Giffard, ii.91,140,168,195; Cal. Pap. L. i.277,346.

seems unlikely that they ever resided.

Although papal provisions remained a volatile and controversial subject so far as patrons were concerned therefore, their effects on local religious life were negligible - particularly as the churches to which provisions were made, predominantly rich rectories such as Blockley, Ombersley, Thornbury and Stottesdon, were precisely the churches to which non-resident pluralists were most frequently presented by the usual patrons[1]. Indeed where provisions were contested, the rival presentee was himself nearly always a pluralist administrator or lawyer. Thomas de Stok', who contested the provision to Cam in 1286, was Bishop Giffard's official, while John de Noble (who contested Thornbury) was a proctor and former pensioner of Tewkesbury Abbey, William Scot (who contested Painswick) was archdeacon of Worcester, and John Mansel (who contested Stottesdon) was a prominent royal clerk[2]. In none of these instances therefore can papal interference have made much difference to the quality of pastoral care.

(vi) Conclusions.

In the course of this chapter an attempt has been made to examine the beneficed clergy in relation to their type of preferment, and to ascertain the ways in which patrons' concerns and preoccupations affected the structure of the beneficed clergy as a group. A number

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1. Above, pp.157, 172-3.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.310,352; Ann. Mon. i.131,135,138; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.295r; Eyton, iv.157-8.

of themes emerge. First, the conception of benefices as a source of income which could legitimately be tapped by those not actually engaged in serving the church was common to popes, bishops, monasteries and laymen alike. In the case of bishops in particular, this acceptance was necessitated by the need to provide for an ever-increasing body of clerical administrators for whom the Church's economic structure did not otherwise cater, while monasteries took advantage of these conceptions not only to provide for their own clerical retainers and advisors, but also to patronise a wide circle of well-connected administrators, lawyers and justices, thus extending their own social and legal connections and spheres of influence. Similarly provision for kinsmen was common to all advowson-owning groups, although only in the case of the laity does this appear to have been an overriding concern, given the need in a society based on primogeniture to provide for non-inheriting sons and brothers. Yet no group of patrons exercised its patronage completely in isolation, and a good deal of influence and direct pressure was exerted on, by and between all patronage-owning groups, and in particular by the Crown, which drastically increased its access to parochial patronage by these methods. It is not always clear therefore that a recorded presentation represents the independent choice of the patron, with requests for preferment sometimes being passed on several times, while the extent and effectiveness of the influence exercised by the laity suggests that the Church was not always so independent of lay control and interference as some of its

bolder pronouncements might imply. Despite these pressures however, the use of patronage for such ends was largely confined to the richer rectories; and a large number of presentees, particularly in the vicarages and poorer benefices, were apparently near-anonymous clerks with no special qualifications, so that to a limited extent there was in operation a form of selection by merit involving some social mobility.

To this extent, the structure of the beneficed clergy reflected the preoccupations of the different patronage groups; although there is no evidence that these preoccupations seriously affected the quality of local religious life, or that this would have varied according to the type of patronage. Presentees of different patronage groups were not sharply defined in terms of conduct, nor even in terms of educational qualifications, since the most highly-educated clerks preferred by bishops, religious houses or laymen were predominantly non-resident, and their cures entrusted to vicars and assistant clergy. This in turn raises the question of the recruitment, quality and background of these unbeneficed clerks; and these are the subject of the following chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Unbeneficed Clergy.

(i) Introductory.

We have so far been concerned solely with the recruitment of beneficed clergy. Surviving ordination lists from Worcester, Hereford and elsewhere however show clerks far in excess of the number of available benefices being admitted to major orders every year, on a scale which meant that the unbeneficed clergy must have represented a numerically significant element within local society; while what has already been said about non-residence and about the role of sub-parochial chapels suggests that they were equally significant within the structure of pastoral provision. It is with this important group therefore that the present chapter is concerned. Evidence is, however, sporadic and uneven. Most ecclesiastical records were predominantly concerned not with the mass of unbeneficed clerks but with the incumbent parish clergy; and only the ordination lists copied into episcopal registers from the later thirteenth century deal systematically with those newly entering the clerical labour market. Much of what follows inevitably draws heavily on the evidence of these lists therefore; and a brief discussion of their content, limitations and reliability is thus called for by way of introduction.

At Hereford, no lists survive for Richard Swinfield's thirty-five-year episcopate, save for a fragment containing ordinations of clerks in other dioceses; while the register of his predecessor Thomas Cantelupe

records only six ordination ceremonies from the years 1277-80, which, given the usual practice of holding at least four ceremonies a year at each of the four ember seasons, must represent a fraction of the actual number[1]. These particular ceremonies were however recorded fully and systematically. Not only were acolytes' names included, which is unusual, but in particular the titles to which candidates were ordained were noted consistently for each of the higher orders - the title representing a guarantee that the clerk possessed sufficient means for his own upkeep, and would not become a burden on the Church. For an unbeneficed clerk this might consist of privately held lands, rents or other income - in which case the clerk was ordained ad titulum patrimonii - or alternatively it might be granted by a corporate or individual benefactor, who undertook to support the candidate until he found employment; although whatever the source, possession of some form of title was a canonical prerequisite of ordination, and any bishop who ordained a clerk without one could be held personally responsible for his upkeep and preferment[2]. Evidence of titles thus constitutes one of the most valuable features of the lists, insofar as they indicate not only financial means and social origins, but also connections with potential patrons or employers.

At Worcester the earliest extant register, that of Godfrey Giffard,

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1. Reg. Swinfield, pp.548-50; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299-312; H.S. Bennett, 'Medieval Ordination Lists in the English Episcopal Registers', Studies presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson (Oxford, 1957), p.21.
2. Extra, I, 14, c.13; and see ibid., III, 5, c.23.

although containing no lists for the first fourteen years of the episcopate, includes an apparently unbroken sequence from 1282 until the bishop's death in 1302. Here however the amount of information recorded varied considerably. For only a few ordination ceremonies of any size were ordinands' titles noted consistently, rendering any thorough-going statistical analysis impossible; although as at Hereford references to beneficed ordinands and to letters dimissory - which were issued by bishops to clerks seeking ordination outside their own dioceses - appear with sufficient regularity to imply that these were recorded fairly systematically, and the totals can probably be accepted as reasonably accurate.

The terminology of the lists involves a number of problems requiring elucidation. Where details are given, candidates were generally ordained to a particular title (ad titulum); although they also appear as being ordained ad presentacionem, ad instanciam and occasionally cum litteris of particular individuals or corporations[1]. The precise meaning of these terms, and how far they were interchangeable, is uncertain. It appears however that candidates were generally 'presented' to the bishop for ordination by a corporate or individual sponsor in much the same way as candidates for a benefice were presented by the patron, the presenter similarly being expected

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1. e.g. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299,304; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289-92, 565, 676-80 (f.149r-150v, 287r, 342v-344r). The calendared ordination lists in the printed edn. of Reg. Giffard are unreliable, and all references to the Worcester lists in this chapter are to the MS.

(although not legally bound) to check that the candidate was reasonably suitable with regard to age, literacy and possession of title before presenting him[1]. Although the presenter was apparently not, of necessity, always the same as the person or body granting the title[2], in most instances this seems to have been the case. In 1276 John Beaufitz wrote to Bishop Giffard presenting Adam Beaufitz for ordination, and guaranteeing him an income of 60 shillings yearly from his chamber until he should find a benefice; while in 1317 Bishop Orleton of Hereford ruled that John de Schyrebourne, who had been ordained 'at the presentation' of John of Kempsey, should continue to be supported by Kempsey's executors[3]. Similarly in 1287 Bishop Quinil of Exeter expressly forbade secular clerks and religious to 'present' candidates for ordination unless they were both willing and able to provide a sufficient and permanent title; and other episcopal statutes against the procuring of fraudulent deeds of title also suggest that such documents - fraudulent or otherwise - were generally provided by the presenter[4]. Even if, in some cases, the candidate may have already possessed a title from some other source, by the act of presentation the presenter was evidently deemed to have taken

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1. e.g. Councils and Synods, i.644 (London II, c.50).
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.744 (f.376v) (John de Hodyngton); Reg. Cantelupe, p.312 (Richard de Sancto Petro).
3. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.117-8; Reg. Orleton (CYS, v, 1908), p.40; and see Reg. Cantelupe, p.306; Register of Walter Giffard, ed. W. Brown. (Surtees Soc., cix, 1904), pp.190-1 (including one ordination 'ad presentationem patrimonii proprii').
4. Councils and Synods, ii.1001; i.373-4, 644.

upon himself the obligation of ensuring that the candidate remained adequately provided for[1]. To this extent presentation of a candidate for ordination was tantamount to the granting of a title, even if this was not explicitly mentioned; and in the analyses of title-grantors undertaken below, those described as 'presenting' ordinands, along with those at whose 'instance' candidates were ordained, are accordingly grouped with those expressly said to have bestowed titles.

In addition, there is the question of toponymics. The extent to which these indicated place of origin in the thirteenth century has already been discussed; but insofar as much of what follows concerns the provenance of clerks in various connections, it is worth drawing attention to further evidence in the lists themselves, which again suggests that toponymics derived from candidates' places of origin were deliberately and systematically employed. Not only are the overwhelming majority of names recorded of this type, but ordinands are frequently followed in the list by others merely denoted as being 'of the same place'[2]; while occasionally a descriptive topographic element has been added to surnames which apparently no longer related to provenance, or which were of other types[3].

Finally, how reliable are the lists? The numbers involved - almost

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1. Reg. Orleton (CYS, v, 1908), p.40; John de Burgo, Pupilla Oculi (Strasbourg, 1514), VII. 3.H.
2. e.g. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.412, 460 (f.210v, 234v).
3. e.g. Reg. Cantelupe, p.299 (William Philippi de Lodelawe); HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.779 (f.394r) (Bartholomew de Durham de Bristoll'). On toponymics generally, see above, pp.175-6.

5,000 separate ordinations being noted in Giffard's register - suggest the possibility of error; and in the Worcester lists especially the frequency with which names appear twice under the same heading could equally reflect carelessness on the part of the scribe, or simply the prevalence of certain common toponymics and even more common Christian names[1]. On the other hand, in the apparent absence of letters of ordination such lists remained the bishop's prime source of reference regarding the status of ordained clergy well into the fourteenth century[2]; and for that reason alone it is unlikely that errors were allowed to creep in on any scale. In any case the entries which leave room for doubt are not sufficiently numerous as to affect the overall picture.

Such is the basic source material for the present study - although more isolated references to unbeneficed clerks, and to their functions and positions within local society, are scattered throughout a much wider range of medieval records. How far and in what ways, then, was this vast body of ordained clergy absorbed into the parish structure, what functions did they perform and how else were they supported or employed; how were they recruited; and finally what can be said of their social background?

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1. e.g. Richard de Wykewane, John Brian of Hampton, William de Amen': HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289-90,412 (f.149r-v,210v). That some names are subsequently duplicated again in lists for higher orders suggests the latter solution.
2. R.M. Haines, The Administration of the Diocese of Worcester in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century (London,1965), pp.168-70.

(ii) The Clerical Labour Market: (a) Preferment.

It has long been recognized that the number of clerks admitted to higher orders in thirteenth century England far exceeded the number of ecclesiastical benefices available. Moorman calculated that upwards of 1,300 clerks a year were being newly ordained in the country as a whole, of whom more than half subsequently proceeded to major orders[1]; and the figures in our own region are no less striking. In the Worcester diocese, the lists contained in Bishop Giffard's register - which with a few exceptions do not include acolytes - record almost 5,000 ordinations over a twenty year period, involving well over 2,000 individual ordinands. On average therefore more than a hundred clerks a year were being newly admitted to major orders in the diocese[2] - the majority of whom ultimately proceeded to the priesthood, often at consecutive or near-consecutive ceremonies. Of 242 unbeneficed seculars admitted to the diaconate or subdiaconate at Worcester in September 1282, 104 - 43 per cent - proceeded to higher orders in the next major ceremony at Campden in 1283[3]; and overall, around 90 per cent of those admitted to the subdiaconate during the period apparently proceeded to full

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1. J.R.H. Moorman, Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century (Cambridge, 1945), pp.52-3.
2. It is difficult to be exact about the number of individuals since two or more men often shared the same name, while others reappear under pseudonyms; but overall Moorman's estimate (Church Life, p.52) that 110 clerks a year were being newly ordained is probably conservative, while unrecorded acolytes would swell the numbers even more.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289-92, 360-1 (f.149r-150v,184v-185r).

orders[1]. In the neighbouring diocese the situation was similar, the lists in Thomas Cantelupe's register - which as we have seen are probably incomplete - containing details of 319 ordinations to higher orders, involving 220 clerks, over a three-year period[2]. Given the more fragmentary nature of the Hereford lists, it is difficult to trace the progress of individuals; although the overall figures, involving 121 ordinations to the subdiaconate, 89 to the diaconate, and 83 to the priesthood, suggest that here too around two thirds of those admitted to the subdiaconate ultimately proceeded to full orders. There can be little doubt therefore that the number of newly-ordained clerks entering the clerical labour market each year was far in excess of the number of benefices likely to fall vacant during the same period - there being just over 400 parochial benefices in the diocese of Worcester and under 300 in that of Hereford, inclusive of all moieties, portions and chapels under independent patronage[3]. In reality the ratio of clerks to available benefices was further increased by the incidence of pluralism, particularly in the richer rectories[4]; while even in poorer churches and vicarages incumbencies of twenty years or more were not uncommon.

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1. Overall there were recorded 1,554 ordinations to the subdiaconate (some of which are missing, e.g. p.833, f.403r), 1,734 to the diaconate, and 1,612 to the priesthood (and not as tabulated in Reg. Giffard (WHS), i.cv).
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299-312. There were also 102 ordinations to minor orders.
3. See above pp.70,75. This excludes the Hereford Cathedral prebends.
4. See above pp.146-55, 163-74, 180, 197, 199-202, 208-9.

So far as the fortunes of individual ordinands can be traced, these bear out such statistical speculations. Of 338 unbeneficed seculars ordained by Giffard in September 1282, the first of his ceremonies for which there is evidence, only 48 (slightly over 14 per cent) had possibly acquired benefices in the dioceses of Worcester or Hereford by the end of the period. In several instances the identification is far from certain, and often involves a time-lag which at the very least suggests that the clerk concerned must have relied on alternative means of support for many years[1]. In the Hereford diocese the success rate was similar, no more than 29 (or 13 per cent) of the 220 clerks admitted to major orders between 1277 and 1280 being beneficed locally by 1317[2]. It is, of course, difficult to know how many may have found preferment elsewhere, although the number is unlikely to have been very great. The ordination lists themselves suggest that clerical migration between different dioceses was minimal, while we have already seen that the more obscure incumbent clergy were usually local men[3]; and of the 77 ordinands possibly beneficed within our region, all but 15 found preferment within their own diocese.

The inevitable conclusion is that in practice as well as in theory, the overwhelming majority of those admitted to higher orders were unlikely to obtain a benefice. Certainly acquisition of a title, even

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1. e.g. Thomas de Beuleye, Thomas de Clyve: HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.290,291 (f.149v,150r); Reg. Swinfield, p.541; Reg. Giffard (WHS) ii.531.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299-312 and passim: Reg. Swinfield and Reg. Giffard, passim.
3. See above, pp.176-9, below, pp.269-76.

from a benefactor possessing large reserves of patronage, was in itself no guarantee of future preferment - although failure to secure a benefice is not, of course, proof against some other form of employment by the grantor. Nevertheless of 25 ordinands for whom a non-patrimonial title is recorded and who were subsequently beneficed in the region, only 3 were presented by the same institution which had granted their title[1], while William of Marcle, presented for ordination by Bishop Cantelupe's sister Lady Juliana Tregoz, was subsequently collated to Pixley by the bishop in 1278[2]. In some instances a more tenuous connection is possible. John Irish of Gloucester for example, presented for ordination by R. Housom in 1282, was subsequently beneficed at Doynton by Lanthony Priory, the church having been previously held by Thomas and William Housom respectively - although his connection with the Housoms, and theirs with the priory, is unclear[3]. In the majority of cases however there is no obvious connection between title and subsequent preferment. Indeed many of those obtaining benefices had been ordained to the title not of a religious house or individual patron but of their own patrimony; while conversely many of those who did acquire monastic or secular titles remained unbeneficed. For the most part therefore there is little to indicate that possession of a title in any way enhanced the chances of future preferment; and

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1. Andrew of Leigh, Richard of Acton, Nicholas Champiun: HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.814 (f.438v); Reg. Cantelupe, pp.210,308,311; Reg. Swinfield, p.525; Reg. Giffard (WHS), ii.544.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.161,300.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.291(f.150r);PRO C115 K2/6683,f.277r; Reg.Giffard (WHS), ii.259,295,341. The Lanthony cartularies shed no further light on the relationship.

whatever his title, an obscure clerk still had little hope of obtaining a benefice unless he could recommend himself in some other way.

The Clerical Labour Market: (b) Chaplains and assistant clergy.

Such were the chances of ordinands joining the ranks of the beneficed clergy; although exercise of a parochial cure was of course only one of many functions served by the secular clergy in the thirteenth century. In what ways might the remainder have been absorbed, and how far do the ordination lists show recruitment in action?

The number of clerks capable of being absorbed into the official parish structure clearly far exceeded the number of benefices; although to what extent depends in the first instance on the size of staff employed in the average parish church. That this should ideally be as large as possible was emphasized repeatedly in synodal statutes of the period. In 1229 Bishop William de Blois ruled that in all parish churches 'quarum parochia est diffusa', there should be at least two chaplains in permanent residence, 'ne forte..egrotante uno capellano aut alias debilitato, parochianis infirmantibus...officia debita subtrahuntur'[1]. This was in addition to assistant clerks in lesser orders, as the statutes of Walter Cantelupe, his successor at Worcester, make clear, similarly recommending that wherever possible 'plures...sacerdotes et clericos, utpote dyaconos et subdyaconos' should be employed in churches serving a large area[2]. This in turn echoed Grosseteste's

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1. Councils and Synods, i.181.
2. Councils and Synods, i.309.

statutes for Lincoln, which ruled that all churches with sufficient means should have a deacon and subdeacon to minister as fitting, and that others should have at least one adequate and suitable clerk to assist in the divine offices[1]. These were however merely ideal recommendations, generally qualified by an acknowledgement that the reality would vary according to the size of the parish and in particular the wealth of the church. What evidence is there for the numbers of assistants employed in practice therefore?

Employment of at least one assistant, usually in deacon's orders, was strictly enforced. In 1280 Thomas Cantelupe, having discovered during a visitation of Churcham that the vicar had failed to provide a deacon as required, demanded that this be rectified under pain of a 20 shilling fine[2]; and several casual references to the deacons of local churches occur in both dioceses[3]. Staffs were often larger however. In particular references to 'parochial chaplains' or 'parish priests' - in circumstances where the incumbent is clearly not meant - are sufficiently numerous as to suggest that employment of an assistant in full orders was fairly common[4]. In the parishes of Withington, Kidderminster, St. Nicholas's Warwick and possibly Berkeley and Slimbridge there were evidently two such chaplains in addition to the

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1. Councils and Synods, i.273.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.237-9.
3. e.g. Reg. Giffard, (WHS), ii.73,388; Glouc. Cart. ii.No.789; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.44-5; Reg. Swinfield, pp.218-9; BL(AM)37503,f.44r.
4. Capellanus or presbyter parochialis: e.g. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.151,153, 164-5,217,241; AASS(Oct.I), p.643; BL(AM)18461,f.34r,35r,37v-38r; BL(HM)3586,f.133r,137v; and see Reg. Giffard (WHS) ii.67,76,82,113, 123,224,225,312; Heref. Cath. Muns. i.174.

incumbent, and in 1295 there may have been as many as four in Dumbelton, a Gloucestershire parish of only average size[1]. At Longdon and All Saints Bristol, the staffs also included a subdeacon, as well as the obligatory deacon and an assistant chaplain[2]; while the incorporation of triple sedilia into the thirteenth-century chancels of Kempsey, Ombersley and Stoke Prior similarly suggests that in these cases a staff of at least three, comprising priest, deacon and subdeacon, was considered normal[3].

It is generally only in vicarage ordinations that we catch an overview of the entire staff envisaged for a parish church however; and these confirm that in some instances staffs could be quite large. Provision was made for two assistant chaplains at Leominster on account of the size of the parish, for an assistant chaplain and clerk at Prestbury, and for a chaplain and deacon at Alberbury and at Dilwyn[4]; while the vicar of St. Mary de Lode, Gloucester, was to be kept at the abbot of Gloucester's table on certain feast days 'cum uno capellano, uno diacono, et duobus clericis' - a staff of five all told[5]. Other vicarage ordinations refer only to an assistant deacon or clerk, or to the vicar's general obligation to ensure that the church was

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1. Reg. Giffard (WHS), ii.312; Descriptive Catalogue of the Charters and Muniments...at Berkeley Castle, ed. I.H. Jeayes (Bristol,1892), Nos. 57,79; BL(AM)37503,f.44r; PRO E164/22,f.57v; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.871 (f.396r).
2. VCH Worcs. iv.117; E.G.C.F. Atchley, 'Some Documents relating to the Parish Church of All Saints, Bristol', Archaeological Journal, lviii (1901), 150,162.
3. VCH Worcs. iii.433,466,530.
4. BL(CM) Domit. A.iii, f.58v,102r; BL(HM)3586,f.135v-6r; PRO C115 K2/6683,f.131r; Reg. Swinfield, pp.217-8.
5. Glouc. Cart. iii. No.973; Reg. Glouc. No.8.

'adequately' served. It is clear however that such stipulations represented simply a minimum requirement, referring only to obligatory assistants whose incomes were provided for within the terms of the vicarage ordination, and that in reality much was left to the incumbent's discretion. Ordaining a vicarage in Wolford church in 1322, Bishop Cobham ruled that the appointment and dismissal of an assistant clerk should rest with the vicar, 'quociens necesse fuerit et eidem vicario pro utilitate ecclesie videbitur expedire'[1]; while a century earlier the abbot of Gloucester clearly envisaged the vicar of Churcham hiring additional labour at his own cost, stipulating that although he was to be kept at the abbot's table 'cum diacono suo... si alios superduxerit eis refectionem de proprio providebit'[2]. How far this was actually done is difficult to determine. We have seen that the vicar of Churcham neglected even to provide a deacon, apparently to save money - although in this instance the fault lay partly with Gloucester Abbey which had reduced his portion, and Cantelupe's swift reaction suggests that such abuses were rare[3]. Certainly a rector of Stanley St. Leonard is said to have appointed clerks as required in just such a fashion for over thirty years during the mid-twelfth century[4]; and it seems likely that in most churches the size of staff would have fluctuated from year to year, according

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1. Reg. Cobham (WHS), p.137.
2. Glouc. Cart. i. No.209.
3. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.237-9.
4. Heref. Cath. Muns. i.9-10 (No.775).

to the incumbent's needs, capabilities and resources.

Such evidence as there is therefore suggests that many parish churches would provide employment not only for one assistant (preferably in deacon's orders), but also for at least one parochial chaplain and a variable number of clerks in lower orders. In addition there were lesser offices such as that of holy water clerk, which bishops both at Worcester and elsewhere urged should be given to poor clerks, probably in minor orders, studying in local schools[1]; while in 1275 Thomas Cantelupe's vicarage ordination for Aymestry even included provision for a bell-ringer (campanarius)[2]. In the light of this J.W. Willis Bund's estimate, in his introduction to Giffard's register, that the diocese's 500 benefices would provide employment for about 1,000 clerks must be a grave underestimate[3].

Nor did this exhaust the possibilities for employment in the parish church. Bishops were adamant that priests alone were competent to celebrate mass and hear confession[4]; and however numerous the assistant staff, in the absence of a resident incumbent in full orders, it was essential that a replacement be swiftly drafted in. We have seen that many of the richer rectories, particularly those under ecclesiastical or royal patronage, were habitually held by pluralist

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1. Councils and Synods, i.174,309,514. (Worc.II,c.20;III,c.53;Salis.III, c.13).
2. Reg. Cantelupe, p.44; cf. Court Rolls of the Manor of Hales, 1270-1307, ed. J. Amphlett and S.G. Hamilton (2 vols, WHS, 1910-12), i.137 and n.5.
3. Reg. Giffard, (WHS), i.ciii.
4. Councils and Synods, i.309 (Worc.III,c.51).

or non-resident administrators[1]; and even where a perpetual vicarage was not ordained, this must have involved near-permanent employment for an assistant chaplain. There were however many other reasons for temporary absence. During the last quarter of the thirteenth century over 100 licences of non-residence for purposes of study were issued at Worcester and Hereford[2], while dispensations were also granted for vicars as well as rectors to go on crusade[3], to prosecute lawsuits at Rome[4], or to attend upon powerful relatives or patrons[5]. More unusually Feckenham church was served by unbeneficed chaplains for five months during 1282 while the vicar was in prison, while in 1269 the rector of Stowell was granted leave of absence because of the improverishment of his church during the barons' wars, and in 1284 the vicar of Sherborne, who had fled from the church through fear of his enemies, was similarly dispensed to remain absent and to install a suitable chaplain[6]. Finally there were the opportunities afforded by illness and old age. The registers of Giffard, Swinfield and Thomas Cantelupe show custodians being appointed to fifteen parish churches held by aged or incapacitated incumbents[7]; although in cases of less serious or temporary illness, rectors and vicars may well

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1. Above, pp. 144-55, 162-74, 199-203.
2. See below, p. 309.
3. Reg. Giffard (WHS), ii.384; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.6,290; Cal. Pat. R. 1266-72, pp.440,480.
4. Reg. Giffard (WHS), i.29.
5. Reg. Giffard (WHS), i.3,23,48,120; Reg. Cantelupe, p.194.
6. Reg. Giffard (WHS), i.23, ii.212,221,242.
7. Reg. Giffard (WHS), i.25, ii.86,96,149-50,152,192,246,262,276,373, 508,512,518; Reg. Swinfield, pp.85,116.

have appointed their own assistants as required.

It should be added that even where incumbents resided, they were not always in full orders. True, following the second council of Lyons in particular bishops in both dioceses took rigorous action against those failing to be ordained within twelve months of institution[1]; although even so clerks were frequently admitted in minor orders, and only progressed to the priesthood over several months. The ordination lists themselves provide ample evidence of this situation. Those in Giffard's register include 170 ordinations of clerks already beneficed, not a striking proportion of the total (scarcely 3 per cent), but in this context significant nonetheless - especially considering that 57 of these ordinations were to the diaconate, and 39 only to the subdiaconate[2]. At Hereford the proportion was even higher, 23 ordinations (a proportion of 5 per cent) involving beneficed clerks, of which at least 3 were to the diaconate and 4 to the subdiaconate; while on one occasion the actual ordination list was followed by a list of 96 incumbents who had failed to appear[3]. This puts the whole question of the recruitment of beneficed clergy into a different perspective; for while we might expect

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1. See below, p.312.
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.290,301,360,371,380,444,484,490,507,547, 561,565,567,569,571,577-8,583,588,590-1,595,622,640,646-8,664,691, 724,731,736,744,754,764,722-3,779,834,849,814,830,907-9,101, 301,395,438,644,(f.149v,159r,184v,190r,194v,226v,246v,249v,258v, 278r,285r,287r,288r,289r,290r,293r-v,296r,298v,299v-300r,302v, 315v,324v,327v-328v,336v,350r,366v,370r,372v,376v,381v,386v, 390v-91r,394r,403v,411r,438v,444v,453r-454r,55r,155r,202r,223v, 326v). These figures exclude clerks beneficed outside the diocese and ordained with letters dimissory, for whom see below, pp.272-3.
3. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299-312 (and see n.2).

to find mainly newly-ordained priests entering the market for benefices, with those in lesser orders seeking employment as assistants, the situation must often have been reversed, with incumbent deacons, subdeacons and even acolytes requiring assistant priests to fulfil the functions they were not allowed to undertake. Thus the vicar of Leominster was on one occasion ordered to provide three chaplains instead of the usual two 'donec ipse ordinetur, propter parochianorum dispersionem'.[1]

Finally there was in both dioceses an extensive network of sub-parochial chapels. Leaving aside those of semi-independent status which had their own advowsons, there were in the region as a whole at least 290 such chapels by the end of the century, the likelihood being that others existed which have left no trace[2]. Not all of course required a permanent, full-time staff - Blackwell (Warws.) for example being served on specified days by a chaplain from the mother church of Tredington, while the chaplain of Clunbury, one of eight chapels in the Shropshire parish of Clun, also served the nearby chapel of Sibdon in the thirteenth century[3]. We have seen however that in pastoral terms many chapels functioned little differently from fully independent parish churches[4], and must certainly have required at the very least

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1. BL(CM) Domit. A.iii,f.63r.
2. See above, pp.13-24. The figure given is based on evidence derived from cartularies, episcopal registers, court rolls and VCH, which is, however, unlikely to be exhaustive.
3. Registrum...Prioratus Beatae Mariae Wigorniensis, ed. W.H. Hale (Camden Soc., xci,1865), p.64b; Reg. Trillek (CYS,viii,1911-12), p.39.
4. Above, pp.24-32.

a chaplain in permanent residence, who in many cases may have had his own assistant clerk as at Mitton, Norton, Westmancote and Charingworth[1].

It is clear therefore that the official parish structure required a far greater number of clerks to secure its effective operation than the number of benefices alone would indicate - although the evidence is generally too vague to suggest a universally applicable multiplier, and in any case the numbers required probably fluctuated according to individual needs. How far then do the ordination lists substantiate this picture and show recruitment in action?

Particularly suggestive in this context is the number of ordinands, especially in the diocese of Worcester, given titles or presented for ordination by incumbent rectors or vicars, as Table IV, (p.231) indicates[2]. We have seen that vicars were often responsible for finding their own clerks; and in general bishops saw recruitment of assistants as best left to the incumbent wherever possible, recognizing that the local network was likely to be more efficient in this respect than was the central administrative machinery. Walter Cantelupe, in his statutes for the Worcester diocese, ruled that where necessary adequate bodies of priests, deacons and subdeacons should be provided through his archdeacons and officials 'nisi forte hoc rectores ecclesiarum celerius exequantur'[3]; and it was in fact usual practice to charge

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1. Reg. Giffard (WHS), i.4, ii.388.
2. In 67 cases grantors are so described in the lists, the grantors in the remaining 46 cases being shown by references elsewhere to have been beneficed: Reg. Cantelupe, Reg. Swinfield, Reg. Giffard, passim.
3. Councils and Synods, i.309 (Worc.III, c.50).

N°. Ordinations To Title Of	Worcester		Hereford		TOTAL	
Incumbent Clerk	96	(35%)	17	(9.6%)	113	(25.0%)
Family	2	(0.7%)	2	(1.1%)	4	(0.9%)
Other Named Individuals	33	(12.1%)	18	(10.2%)	51	(11.3%)
Religious House (incl. Secular Colleges)	23	(8.4%)	23	(13.0%)	46	(10.2%)
Chantry	-	-	7	(4.0%)	7	(1.6%)
Own Patrimony	120	(43.8%)	110	(62.1%)	230	(51.0%)
Total For Which Title Specified.	274	(100%)	177	(100%)	451	(100%)

TABLE IV: Titles to which unbeneficed clerks were ordained in the dioceses of Worcester (1282-1301) and Hereford (1277-80).
(Figs. represent number of ordinations to a title rather than number of individuals, since clerks were not always ordained to the same title when appearing for the second or third time).

incumbents with the provision of assistants both in the parish church and in outlying chapels[1]. Where incumbents are found sponsoring clerks for ordination therefore, it may well be this local recruitment network in action that we are witnessing - particularly since the majority of those so ordained were drawn from the vicinity of their benefactor's church. Thirty-four at least came from the village in which the church stood, another twenty-seven being drawn from within a ten-mile radius, although distances of two to three miles were common, and several came from nearby settlements containing outlying chapels. John de Northon' for example, presented for ordination by the vicar of Bromsgrove in 1282, was presumably a native of King's Norton, a dependent chapelry some seven or eight miles to the north-east; while John and Robert of

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1. e.g. Reg. Giffard(WHS), i.4; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.44-5,151; Reg. Swinfield, pp.123-4,346-7,390-2,455; Heref. Cath. Muns. ii.486; Worc. Reg. I, No.246; Glouc. Cart. ii. No.789; Ann. Mon. iv.439.

Aldsworth, given titles by the canons serving Bibury church, and John of Upleadon, presented for ordination by the rector of Rudford, similarly came from nearby villages which had their own dependent chapels[1].

Whether these ordinands were indeed destined for service in their benefactor's church or in a local chapel, as seems likely, can unfortunately not be proved. Assistant clergy, even in outlying chapelries, are seldom referred to by name, and none of the clerks so ordained subsequently appear in such capacities in our region. The likelihood is strengthened however by an examination of precisely which incumbents were granting these titles. At least one,Hugh de Babington, who in 1294 presented Walter of Long Compton for ordination to the priesthood, was himself not in full orders, being ordained to the diaconate at the same ceremony; and this may have been true in other cases[2]. Several others served parishes which were particularly scattered or contained several outlying chapelries. That of Bibury, covering over 6,000 acres, was one of the largest in the diocese, containing several hamlets and three chapels of which two were served from the mother church[3]. Bromsgrove was even larger, the vicar again being responsible for staffing two of its three chapels[4]; while the parishes of Standish, Leigh, Hampton Lucy, Martley, Cropthorne, Leominster, Churcham and Westbury on Severn, the incumbents of which all presented candidates for ordination[5], were

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1. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.290,413(f.149v,211r); Reg. Cantelupe, p.309.
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.744(f.376v).
3. VCH Gloucs. vii.11,19,21,38,42.
4. VCH Worcs. iii.19,31,127,189.
5. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289,290,744,834(f.149r,149v,376v,403v); Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299,307,310.

similarly either particularly large, included several chapelries or contained multiple townships[1].

Most striking of all is the large number of beneficed title-grantors who were also non-resident administrators or pluralists, particularly in the diocese of Worcester where twenty, between them sponsoring forty-eight clerks for ordination, were heavily involved in diocesan administration. In particular Robert de Wychio, Richard de Vienn', Nicholas de Wodeford, John de Farleg' and Thomas de Stok', the archdeacon of Gloucester's official, who between them granted 15 titles, were amongst the most prominent of Godfrey Giffard's familiar clerks, and received several benefices, often in plurality, in reward for their services[2]. In addition the rector of Minchinhampton, who presented two clerks for ordination in 1292, was the abbess of Caen's steward and proctor and made frequent trips to Normandy[3]; while the rector of St. Andrew's Droitwich may have been in the service of the prior of Deerhurst[4], and two other of the benefices involved were frequently held by non-resident magistri during the thirteenth century[5].

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1. VCH Glouc. x.11-12,15,26,46-7,79-80,230-1,239; VCH Worcs. iii. 322-3,329, iv.101,290-1; VCH Warws. iii.100; Reg. Giffard(WHS), i.44, ii.115,261,371; Tax. Nich. p.161; Cal. Clo. R. 1259-61, p.469; above, pp.15-16, 18-19.
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289-91,427,561,565,583,648,744(f.149r-150r, 218r,285r,287r,296r,328v,376v); above, pp.144-50; and see Reg. Giffard (WHS), i.35, ii.132,515.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.700(f.354v); Charters and Custumals of the Abbey of Holy Trinity, Caen, ed. M. Chibnall (Records of Social and Economic Hist., n.s.v, London and Oxford, 1982), p.xliv and n.
4. Reg. Giffard(WHS), i.12,48, ii.158,163; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289, 291(f.149r,150r).
5. Cropthorne and Himbleton: HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.290,561(f.149v, 285r); Ann. Mon. iv.428,446-7,506,539,548.

While assistants were required in every parish therefore, many of the incumbents found presenting clerks for ordination may have had a particular need for large numbers of assistant clergy to serve outlying areas or to fulfil their own obligations at the parish church; the implication being that behind the granting of titles as recorded in the ordination lists lies the recruitment of local clergy to meet these ends[1].

It should be added that the evidence is by no means consistent or evenly spread. In the Hereford diocese, although incumbents are similarly found presenting clerks for ordination, the number of cases recorded is far lower than at Worcester, and does not include the same preponderance of pluralist rectors - almost two-thirds of the incumbents involved being vicars. Admittedly the Hereford lists cover only a three-year period and are probably incomplete, so that they may not be typical in every respect. Nevertheless the inconsistency is striking; and given that so many of the titles recorded at Worcester came from pluralistic episcopal clerks, the contrast may be partially due to the comparative infrequency of pluralism amongst such administrators at Hereford[2]. More problematic are inconsistencies within the Worcester lists themselves. Although titles granted by incumbent clergy occur throughout the period, most are concentrated in the lists for one particular ceremony, that of September 1282, which is exceptional in

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1. Cf. the ordination in 1289 of 'quidam vicarius magistri Roberti de Wychio in ecclesia prebendali de Westbur', (HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.569,f.289r).
2. See above, pp.146 ff.

that only a handful of those ordained were not presented for ordination by beneficed clerks[1]. Bishops occasionally held special ordinations for particular groups, notably religious candidates or those already beneficed[2], and it is possible that this ceremony was similarly limited in scope - although if so it was of a most unusual kind. On the other hand, with one or two exceptions titles were only sporadically and inconsistently recorded at Worcester as we have seen- and this is perhaps a more likely explanation for the apparent inconsistency. Whatever the case ordination lists remained an important source of reference for bishops until the fourteenth century[3], and it seems unlikely that the information given is in any way suspect.

These inconsistencies notwithstanding, if titles granted by beneficed clerks may indeed be taken as indicative of future employment, then a substantial number (possibly as high as 25 per cent) of those ordained, and whose titles were recorded, were destined for service in local churches or chapels. Indeed there are indications that some ordinands had already found such employment. Those ordained to the priesthood included, in 1290, Henry 'the deacon of Westbury', in 1292 William 'the deacon of Fairford', and in 1299 John of Malvern 'of the Carnary (Chapel) of Worcester'[4], while several other ordinands were

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1. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289-92(f.149r-150v).
2. e.g. Reg. Swinfield, pp.2-3; Register of William Wickwane 1279-85, ed. W. Brown (Surtees Soc., cxiv,1907), pp.18,41,49; Reg. Cantelupe, p.307; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.301(f.155r).
3. Above, p.217.
4. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.640,702,814(f.324v,355v,438v).

described as the 'clerks' of various places[1]. In addition the Robert son of Henry de Kynton ordained priest by Giffard in 1282 may well be the same Robert de Kyngton who appears as parish priest of Long Compton ten years later[2]; while John Legat, ordained subdeacon by Bishop Cantelupe in 1279, was subsequently appointed guardian to the vicar of Lydbury North, who was mentally afflicted[3].

But if large numbers of ordained clergy were being absorbed into parish work, how far was this a stepping-stone to further advancement? Very occasionally, assistant clerks referred to by name subsequently appear as beneficed. R. de Saunforde, the parochial chaplain of Pontesbury in 1277, may be the Robert de Staunford later presented to Tasley by the Corbets, who were overlords in both manors; while in 1285 Worcester Cathedral Priory presented a chaplain of Broadwas to their nearby church of Hallow, and Philip of Barrington, a chaplain of Little Barrington in the mid-thirteenth century, was subsequently beneficed at Windrush and St. Owen Gloucester - all three churches being held by Lanthony Priory[4]. The implication therefore is that patrons sometimes drew on those already serving in their churches in assistant capacities - although this might not necessarily involve promotion within the same church. Nor did this exhaust the opportunities for promotion. John of Sutton, the parish priest of Kings

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1. Ibid., pp.700,731,736,722,907(f.354v,370r,372v,390v,453r).
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.292,720(f.150v,364v).
3. Reg. Cantelupe, p.308; Reg. Swinfield, p.116.
4. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.153,156; Ann. Mon. iv.491; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.72v-73v,193r.

Pyon in 1311, was the following year presented to a chantry in the church by the rector and parishioners; while in 1280 the parochial chaplain of Hartlebury was presented to a perpetual vicarage in the church by the non-resident rector[1].

Patrons were not however under any obligation to promote clerks ordained to the title of their churches at the incumbent's presentation, unless this had been done with their explicit approval[2]; and generally the ordination lists do not suggest that service under a beneficed clerk was especially likely to lead to preferment. Of the 113 clerks presented for ordination by local rectors or vicars, only 8 at most were beneficed by the end of the century - none in the churches of which the incumbents had granted them titles, although in a few cases a more tenuous connection is possible. William of Leigh, presented for ordination by his local rector in 1282, was subsequently beneficed at Cowley by Pershore Abbey, lords and patrons at both Cowley and Leigh; while Walter of Buckland, granted a title by the rector of Buckland, was similarly presented to Holme Lacy by the abbot of Gloucester - again the patron of both churches[3]. Whether their preferment was the outcome of their earlier patronage by, and possibly service under, the local rectors is uncertain however; and in fact even the experience of successfully serving an entire parish for several months clearly did not guarantee

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1. BL(HM)3586,f.137v; Reg. Swinfield, pp.471,541; Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii.123.
2. Extra, III,38,c.30.
3. HWRO Reg. Giffard, pp.289,648(f.149r,328v); Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii. 98,146,382; Reg. Swinfield, p.530; Glouc. Cart. iii.2,31.

promotion to a benefice. Few of the unbeneficed clerks appointed to serve under incapacitated rectors, or in churches which were vacant through litigation or following the presentation of unsuitable candidates, subsequently appear as beneficed, either at the churches concerned or elsewhere[1]; and to this extent, although large numbers of clerks may have found employment within the parish structure, it would appear that social connection was still more important than experience in obtaining preferment, and that whatever their merits the majority of these clerks were destined to remain unbeneficed wage-earners.

The Clerical Labour Market: (c) Private Employment.

We have so far been concerned with the ways in which ordinands were absorbed into the official parish structure. Equally important however were the chantries, oratories and private chapels founded by religious corporations or laymen. How many of these existed in the region by the end of the century is impossible to say with any precision. Around thirty private chapels on lay estates have left visible remains or were noticed in cartularies by religious eager to protect their rights[2]; although the majority are unlikely to have left any trace and the actual number must have been far greater. The chantries founded in chapels, parish churches and monastic houses are even harder to trace, at least

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1. e.g. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.164-5; Reg. Swinfield, pp.85,116; Reg. Giffard (WHS), ii.152,512. Exceptions are Geoffrey de Kyngesleya and Malcolm de Harleya: Reg. Giffard (WHS), ii.192,270,276,441-2.
2. e.g. VCH Worcs. iii.16,18,110,346, iv.110,212,259; VCH Warws. iii.119, v.57,107,175; VCH Gloucs. vi.176, viii.23; Eyton, v.111, xi.148; Ann. Mon. i.81; M.G. Cheney, Roger, Bishop of Worcester 1164-79 (Oxford, 1980), pp.234-5; PRO E315/61, f.106v,114r; BL MS. Arundel 19, f.36v; BL(CM) Domit. A.iii,f.77r-v; Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS.271,f.55v.

before Edward I's mortmain legislation in the later thirteenth century; although again the number must have been considerable, and (in theory at least) was swelled by the attitude of the Church, which sought to prevent individual priests from taking on more masses than they could hope to celebrate[1]. What evidence is there therefore for the extent to which local clerks were drawn into this type of employment, and how were they recruited?

Turning once again to the ordination lists and to the social connections implied by grants of titles, we find that laymen sponsored clerks for ordination in both dioceses, albeit on a small scale. At Worcester, 7 of the 33 titles granted by private individuals came from prominent lay lords, amongst them the earl and countess of Warwick, Lady Matilda Mortimer and Sir John Giffard, and the grantors of another eight titles were possibly also laymen[2]. At Hereford about a dozen titles came from secular lords, the grantors again including local magnates such as Robert Corbet and Lady Juliana Tregoz[3]. Clearly this in itself cannot be taken as proof that the clerks concerned were drawn into private employment - especially since many of these families, in particular the Beauchamps, Mortimers and Giffards, possessed advowsons on a large scale[4]. Since no more than four of the clerks ordained to these titles subsequently appear as beneficed in the region

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1. Councils and Synods, ii.895-6 (Lambeth, c.2).
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289-91,677,699,700,744,814,833 (f.149r-150r,343r,354r-v,376v,438v,403r).
3. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.300-2,309-11.
4. See above, pp. 83, 91-2.

however, none through the patronage of the family which sponsored them for ordination, the possibility remains that some were destined for service as chantry priests or as private chaplains in the households of their benefactors.

The lists similarly show 10 per cent of the titles for which the grantor is specified to have come from local religious houses. (See Table IV, p.231). This is a much lower proportion than in some thirteenth-century dioceses[1], and once again, given the scale of monastic advowson ownership in our region, does not in itself pose any problems - the obvious explanation being that these clerks had been adopted by the houses concerned through the monastic schools[2] or perhaps in return for some clerical service[3], and would ultimately be provided for with a benefice. Thus in 1299 the monks of Pershore granted a title to Andrew of Leigh, a native of one of their manors whom they subsequently presented to St. Peter's Worcester; and on two further occasions ordinands were similarly beneficed by the religious corporations which had sponsored their ordination[4]. None of the remaining 43 clerks ordained to monastic titles appear to have obtained benefices by the end of the period however, and an alternative explanation for their sponsorship must be sought. Nor was the pattern

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1. The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton. vii: Ordinations 1290-99, ed. R.M.T. Hill (Lincoln Record Soc., lxix,1975), pp.xii-xiv.
2. See below, p.308.
3. Cf. Reg. Sede Vacante (WHS), p.57 (although here the prior was only giving a testimonial to a clerical employee who already had a sufficient title).
4. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.814(f.438v); Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii.544; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.210,308,311; Reg. Swinfield, p.525.

of titles granted by individual houses wholly consistent with the distribution of advowson ownership, as Table V (below), indicates.

Type of House	No. Titles recorded in: Diocese of Worcester	Diocese of Hereford	TOTAL
Benedictine	15	4	19
Cluniac	-	2	2
Augustinian	2	4	6
Cistercian	-	2	2
Hospital	4	4	8
Knights Templars	1	5	6
Secular College	1	2	3
	23	23	46

TABLE V: Titles Granted to Secular Clerks by Religious Houses in the Dioceses of Worcester (1282-1301) and Hereford (1277-80).

Leaving aside for a moment the preponderance of Benedictine titles at Worcester, it is particularly striking that during the short three-year period covered by the Hereford lists, as many titles were granted by the Hospitallers as by the Benedictines or Augustinians, with even more coming from the Knights Templars of Lydley Heys, Upleadon and Garway[1]. Even at Worcester a total of 5 titles came from local hospitals or preceptories; while in both dioceses titles were also granted by secular colleges including, at Hereford, the secular cathedral

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.300-12.

chapter[1]. Although most of these institutions had access to parochial patronage none, with the exception of the cathedral chapter, owned more than a few advowsons locally[2]. They did however require secular clerks for their internal functioning, which suggests an alternative and perhaps more likely destination for some of the clerks ordained to these titles. Hereford Cathedral alone required a permanent staff of over twenty vicars choral and a similar number of chantry chaplains, mostly appointed by the dean and chapter[3]. The Hospital of St. James Westminster, which in 1280 presented John of Berkhamsted for ordination, similarly included four priests amongst its staff of eight brothers and sixteen sisters[4]; while in 1259 the foundation deed for St. Mark's Hospital in Bristol made provision for three chaplains and three clerks in holy orders in addition to the master and five lay brethren[5]. The hospital subsequently bestowed a title on William de Kelmscot - probably at the instance of John de Kelmscot, himself a chaplain of the hospital in 1286[6].

Monastic houses also required ordained seculars, albeit not on the

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1. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.413,561,677,798(f.211r,285r,343r,431v); Reg. Cantelupe, pp.306,309. The chancellor of Hereford Cathedral presented another 4 candidates in his own right: ibid., pp.300,301, 306,311.
2. See above, Table II, p.72.
3. K. Edwards, The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages (Manchester, 1949), pp.259,263-4,296. Two Hereford ordinands were already vicars choral in the cathedral: Reg. Cantelupe, p.311.
4. Reg. Cantelupe, p.312; D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales (2nd edn., London, 1971), p.402.
5. The Cartulary of St. Mark's Hospital, Bristol, ed. C.D. Ross (BRS., xxi,1959), No.9; see Reg. Giffard(WHS), i.15-18.
6. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.561(f.285r); Cart. St. Mark's, Bristol, ed. Ross, No.16.

same scale, and this may similarly explain some of the Benedictine, Cistercian and Augustinian titles. Chantries existed in several local houses, monastic and otherwise[1]; and although these duties could be undertaken by religious in holy orders[2], as the number of yearly obits rose it must have become increasingly necessary, as in the secular cathedrals, to depute such tasks to specially employed secular chaplains if disruption of the liturgical life of the monastery was to be avoided[3]. Indeed in some of the more elaborate chantry foundations this was obligatory. In 1224 Ralph de Wylintone established a chantry in Gloucester Abbey, for which a chapel was specially constructed in the abbey cemetery and for which the abbot was to find two secular chaplains and one clerk in perpetuity, none of whom were to assume any additional responsibilities[4]. More generally, in 1321 a chaplain in Worcester Cathedral Priory was granted a corrody in return for celebrating mass daily as directed by the convent[5]. In addition, chaplains were sometimes required in private monastic oratories. That founded by Fontevrault Abbey in Tetbury parish early in the thirteenth century was to be served through the nuns' chaplains unless they were indisposed or absent, in which case mass could be

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1. e.g. Cirenc. Cart. ii. No.396; Heref. Cath. Muns, i.329,332; BL(HM) 1240, f.44v; Reg. Swinfield, p.22; below n.2, n.4.
2. Reg. Giffard (WHS), ii.252; Descriptive Catalogue of the Charters and Muniments...at Hagley Hall, Worcs., ed. I.H. Jeayes (London,1893), No.40.
3. Edwards, English Secular Cathedrals, pp.291-2,295-8.
4. Glouc. Cart. i.27, iii. No.1029.
5. The Liber Albus of the Priory of Worcester, ed. J.M. Wilson (WHS, 1919), No.940.

celebrated by religious or by chaplains from Tetbury parish church; and some other monastic chapels, particularly those belonging to nunneries or hospitals, may have been similarly served[1]. The heads of religious houses, like other magnates, also required chaplains for their personal needs; and in 1278 the abbot of St. Augustine's Bristol was ordered by Bishop Giffard to reduce the number in his household, which had grown too large, to one or two[2].

It should be added that although the responsibility of staffing sub-parochial chapels usually lay with the rector or vicar of the mother church[3], where large numbers of chapels were still subject to a monastic house as at Wenlock, Leominster or Morville, the recruitment and dismissal of chaplains sometimes remained with the monks themselves[4]. This may equally account for some of the titles granted by religious houses therefore, and in particular may help to explain the large number granted by Winchcombe Abbey, which provided no fewer than half of the Benedictine titles recorded at Worcester[5]. Clearly this preponderance is largely due to the unevenness of the evidence, most of the Winchcombe titles appearing in the lists for two particular ceremonies at Campden and Blockley which happen to have been recorded in detail. On the other hand the abbey was

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1. Eynsham Cartulary, ed. H.E. Salter (2 vols, Oxford Hist. Soc., xlix, li, 1907-8), ii. No.714,
2. Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii.102.
3. Above, pp. 225, 230-1.
4. See below, pp.298, 301; and for the survival of these large monastic parochiae, above, pp. 17-24.
5. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.648, 677, 744(f.328v, 343r, 376v).

responsible for finding chaplains at Charlton and at other chapels within its vast parochia[1]; and this could equally have been the ultimate destination of some of the nine clerks whom it sponsored for ordination, none of whom subsequently appears as beneficed in the region.

Mention should perhaps be made at this point of the religious ordinands who occasionally appear in the ordination lists - although in neither diocese were they recorded systematically, and those included must represent a fraction of the actual number[2]. Some of these could conceivably have been destined for service actually within the parish structure. The Augustinians and Premonstratensians certainly undertook limited pastoral work in churches under their ownership[3], and at Horsley, Wheatenhurst and Bibury a succession of canons from Bruton Priory and Osney Abbey respectively were instituted and given cure of souls[4] - although they may not have exercised the cure alone, and the canons of Bibury granted titles to several secular clerks who may, as suggested above, have been employed as assistants in the parish church or in one of its outlying

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1. Landboc Winch. i.26-7,86-7,144; and see above, pp.23-4.
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.744(f.376v); Reg. Cantelupe, pp.307-12; and see R.M. Haines, The Administration of the Diocese of Worcester in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century (London,1965), p.168 note 1.
3. J.C. Dickinson, The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England (London,1950), pp.224-41; H.M. Colvin, The White Canons in England (Oxford, 1951), pp.277-80.
4. Two Cartularies of the Augustinian Priory of Bruton and the Cluniac Priory of Montacute (Somerset Rec. Soc., viii,1894), p.79 (No.322); The Cartulary of Oseney Abbey, ed. H.E. Salter (6 vols, Oxford Hist. Soc., lxxxix-xci, xcvii-viii,ci,1926-36), v. Nos.520,560B; Reg. Giffard(WHS), i.14,15, ii.545; and see Cirenc. Cart., i. No.150.

chapels[1]. So far as the Benedictines and other monastic orders are concerned however, it is unlikely that they exercised parochial cures or undertook general pastoral work by this date. In our own region nearly all the churches in their possession were served by perpetual vicars in the thirteenth century, while the few exceptions- mostly conventual parish churches - seem usually to have been staffed by unbeneficed secular chaplains appointed by the brethren[2]. That is not to deny that ordained monks might occasionally have celebrated public masses in the churches appropriated to their houses - although it has been pointed out that even in the eleventh century this did not necessarily involve the performance of any wider pastoral functions, and in our own period, when the priest's parochial duties had become far more extensive, the likelihood of monks themselves undertaking general parish work is even more remote[3]. Unfortunately the religious order to which those ordained belonged is never specified in the lists - religious candidates usually appearing in the general sequence and only being distinguished by the prefix frater. In the light of this, while some could conceivably have been regular canons destined for parochial service, the possibility remains that many of these too were ordained solely with a view to private monastic service, whether in a monastic oratory or chantry chapel or in the

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1. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289,413(f.149r,211r); above, pp.231-2. and see Colvin, White Canons, p.279 and note 2.
2. Below, pp.297-9.
3. M. Chibnall, 'Monks and Pastoral Work : a problem in Anglo-Norman History', J. Eccl. H., xviii (1967), 167,170-1; and see below, pp.306, 316-8.

conventual church itself.

So far as the fortunes of individual ordinands, secular or religious, are concerned, much of this must remain speculation. In one or two instances however, the lists give a more specific indication of a clerk's future employment. At Hereford seven clerks were ordained to the title of chantries in local churches - not an insignificant proportion considering the narrowness of the evidence, and the fact that these represented only those who had succeeded in securing such employment while still in lesser orders, and in one instance while still an acolyte[1]. With one exception, all were natives of the villages in which they were appointed - two being presented for ordination by their fellow-parishioners, who had presumably founded and endowed these chantries collectively and were responsible for finding a chantry priest[2]. To this extent we must beware of assuming that employment was necessarily conditional on securing links with beneficed clerks or with powerful monasteries and laymen - although in other cases, as at Mamble, the chantries concerned had been founded by a lord of the manor whose descendants retained the patronage[3]. In the Worcester lists there are no explicit references to chantries providing titles - although full information on such matters was, as we have seen, only sporadically recorded. Nor would we expect the majority of chantry priests to have

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299,301,302,305,311.
2. For examples of this, and for parishioners' involvement in recruitment of clergy generally, see below pp.325 ff.
3. Reg. Swinfield, p.543.

been officially appointed before their promotion to full orders; and despite the absence of firm evidence therefore, the likelihood remains that at Worcester too at least an equivalent proportion of those ordained would have been drawn into this type of service.

Such were the most common forms of employment outside the official parish structure: although the ordination lists also suggest other possibilities. Two of the Hereford ordinands, while seculars at the time of their ordination, were bound by oath to enter the religious houses which had granted their titles within two years, and in the meantime were possibly employed by their benefactors in one of the ways described above[1]. More intriguing are references in the lists of both dioceses to hermits - Gilbert the hermit (heremite) of Warwick being ordained to the subdiaconate by Bishop Giffard in 1283, and Brother Richard of Chadlington heremita being ordained by Thomas Cantelupe in 1280[2]. Assuming that these are more than nicknames, both men had presumably already been enclosed - the implication being that they intended to undertake some additional priestly or clerical functions. Richard may have been an anchorite, in which case he could conceivably have offered occasional assistance within the church to which he was attached; although Gilbert probably occupied the hermitage at Guy's Cliff near Warwick[3], and the most likely explanation is that they

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.300,305,306,309.
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.360(f.184v); Reg. Cantelupe, p.310.
3. R.M. Clay, The Hermits and Anchorites of England (London, 1914; reissued Detroit, Michigan, 1968), pp.34-5,250-1. There are no references to a recluse at Chadlington.

desired to celebrate private masses for themselves (and possibly for passing travellers) in their hermitages[1]. Rather less problematic are ordained priests who subsequently chose the eremetic life, of which there are several examples in our area during the thirteenth century; and although this would clearly not appeal to the majority, here nevertheless was a further possibility for devout secular clerks who either could not find alternative employment or who, like one of Peter of Wick's private chaplains in the early thirteenth century, were drawn to a more ascetic existence[2].

Beyond this, the lists themselves give little indication as to the ultimate destinations of the clerks recorded. Should any have failed to obtain even short-term piece-work as parish assistants or chantry priests, literacy itself was no doubt a marketable asset which might provide a stopgap and lead to wider social connections. Amongst the witnesses to a mid-thirteenth-century charter issued by the Hospital of St. John of Redcliffe was one James the deacon 'qui hoc scriptum fecit', while about the same time a Roger de Doni't, chaplain, similarly wrote and witnessed a charter granting lands to St. Peter's Ledbury - although clerks might be adequately literate without being capable of acting as professional scribes[3]. Other chaplains no doubt served in a variety of menial and (in a modern sense) 'clerical' capacities. Walter de la

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1. See Clay, Hermits and Anchorites, pp.xvii,36,44,69-70. Occasionally hermits presumed - illegally - to undertake wider pastoral duties: ibid., p.66.
2. Clay, Hermits and Anchorites, pp.16,92; Beauch. Cart. No.129.
3. Cart. St. Mark's, Bristol, ed. Ross, No.108; Heref. Cath. Muns, i.309 (No.1801); M.T. Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record (London,1979), p.183.

Haye of Withington, ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Giffard in 1286, is probably the same Walter of Withington who subsequently held land at Upcote of the bishop for the service of bearing episcopal writs throughout the diocese. He was released from the service (although apparently kept the land) in 1288, along with John called Stabulo who was also a chaplain; although whether this involved promotion to a more elevated position is unknown, and neither clerk subsequently appears as beneficed[1].

The opportunities for some form of employment, either within the parish structure or outside, were not therefore so narrow as might be assumed; and despite the fact that in both dioceses there were large numbers of ordained clergy concerning whom it is impossible to acquire further information, the possibility remains that virtually all those promoted to major orders may have found work. That is not to say that all would be constantly employed. Assistants in parish churches were, as we have seen, probably very often hired on an ad hoc basis as required; while even chantries sometimes involved only temporary employment, the will of Roger de Clifford for example providing for ten chaplains to celebrate a daily mass for his soul for a period of three years[2]. Many unbeneficed clerks therefore must have been involved in a constant search for new (and preferably more secure) employment - in lean times possibly having to fall back, where this

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1. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.490,500(249v,254v); The Red Book of Worcester, ed. M. Hollings (4 parts, WHS, 1934-50), iv.364-5.
2. Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii.283; above pp.225-6,227-8.

was feasible, on the titles to which they had been ordained[1]. There are hints of this situation in the occasional appeals made to their bishops, or even to Rome, by 'poor clerks' who had failed to obtain preferment. Thus in 1285 Bishop Swinfield of Hereford promised to find a suitable vicarage for John of Bristol, a priest of Worcester diocese, on account of his good qualities and because he had not yet managed to secure a benefice; while about the same time the bishop of Coventry requested information from Bishop Giffard concerning the background of William de Bosco, a poor clerk again from the Worcester diocese, who had asserted to the pope that he had no ecclesiastical benefice and desired one in the gift of Shrewsbury Abbey[2].

While this illustrates the difficulty of obtaining a permanent parochial cure however, it nevertheless seems unlikely that large numbers of ordinands were unable to obtain any work; and certainly there is little evidence of the social unrest which this would probably have created. True, ordained clergy were occasionally involved in occupations of churches or seizure of ecclesiastical goods; and in some cases this may have resulted from failure to obtain secure and remunerative employment. In 1285, those accused of dwelling unlawfully in the house of Luke de Hercy, the aged and incapacitated rector of Pillerton Hersey, included a priest from nearby Tredington

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1. For the possibility of fictive titles, see below, p.264.
2. Reg. Swinfield, p.66; Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii.275.

who does not appear as beneficed; while the rival supporters of Adam of Avebury and Edmund Mortimer, who from 1281 were involved in a protracted dispute for possession of Campden church, and who resorted to intrusion and physical occupation on more than one occasion, may similarly have included unbeneficed clerks, perhaps hoping for remunerative employment from the victor as a reward[1]. These are isolated instances however; and beyond this there is little evidence for widespread clerical discontent at least in the thirteenth century[2].

There is moreover one intriguing piece of evidence which, if it can be trusted at all, suggests very strongly that the overwhelming majority of ordinands, at least in the Worcester diocese, were subsequently absorbed into more or less permanent employment. In 1307, Clement V released Bishop Gainsborough of Worcester from the obligation of providing benefices for some 2,000 clerks said to have been ordained without titles by his predecessor Godfrey Giffard and by other prelates[3]. The figure as it stands cannot possibly be correct, and would suggest a laxness on Giffard's part which is equally incredible -

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1. Reg. Giffard (WHS), ii.139-40,144,187-8,224,246,265; and see ibid., ii.142,152,155 (Mickleton).
2. The economic contraction of the early 14th cent. may have altered the picture somewhat; although if (as has been suggested) there was an increase in the death rate this could, as during the Black Death, have created a shortage of clerical labour and actually reduced the pressure on benefices and other positions: see A.H. Thompson, The English Clergy and their Organization in the Later Middle Ages (Oxford,1947), p.123 note 1; I. Kershaw, 'The Great Famine and Agrarian Crisis in England 1315-1322', P. & P., lix (1973), 3-50, and literature there cited.
3. Cal. Pap. L. ii.26.

particularly since some of the ordinands in his lists are specifically said to have produced testimonies regarding their titles[1]. Conceivably the figure should have read 200 or even 20, which over a thirty-three-year episcopate would not be unreasonable[2]; although even so the results could clearly have been extremely serious, with an at best embarrassing and possibly catastrophic number of demands for benefices raining down on the bishop. That this appears to be the only reference to any difficulties in the diocese may consequently be the strongest indication yet that the majority of those ordained subsequently found satisfactory employment through their own connections and initiative.

(iii) Maintenance, Patrimony and Social Origins.

We have so far been concerned with the ways in which unbeneficed clerks were absorbed into local society, and to this end the titles to which they were ordained have been examined solely with regard to social connections with prospective employers. Of what these titles consisted, and the implications of this for the social and economic status of the unbeneficed clergy, remains to be seen. Moreover, although titles granted by beneficed clerks, private individuals and religious houses or derived from chantries between them accounted for 217 separate ordinations, 48 per cent of the total for which details are known, an

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1. Below, p.264; although the fact that titles were so inconsistently recorded may or may not support the contention that they were not always checked.
2. Especially given the possibility of fraud: see below p.264.

even greater number of clerks, as Table IV (p.231) indicates, were ordained to titles of patrimony - that is they possessed sufficient private means to guarantee them an adequate income irrespective of employment or donations from a corporate or individual benefactor. Clearly the fact that so many ordinands were apparently self-sufficient has important implications regarding their social origins; and the proportion could, in fact, be much higher, since receipt of a title from another source is no proof that a clerk did not already possess sufficient means in his own right. William of Pershore for instance, ordained to a title of patrimony in 1277, was subsequently promoted to the priesthood to the title of the Sacrist of Bromyard; while Hugh of Clun, one of the chantry priests mentioned above, was in 1278 explicitly ordained 'ad titulum patrimonii sui et servicium Beate Marie de Clone'[1]. It is thus time to consider the evidence of titles not as indicators of social connection, but rather of wealth, income and social origin.

Clerks ordained ad titulum patrimonii were not, in fact, a homogenous group. Patrimony could, of course, consist of rents or lands, inherited or acquired; although the term evidently extended to pensions, allowances and corrodies of which the candidate was already in possession, and which in effect amounted to 'titles' in all

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.300,305,309.

but name[1]; while the size of the endowment was clearly likely to vary. It is not enough therefore to know how many clerks were ordained to patrimonial titles: equally we need to know the content of this patrimony and how it had been acquired. Unfortunately the lists are seldom explicit. On six occasions patrimonies were defined in purely monetary terms, the most usual (and average) amount being 50 shillings a year - although Roger of Castle Goodrich and Henry de Malleye, both ordained at Leominster in 1277, possessed titles of 60 shillings and 40 shillings respectively[2]. Fifty shillings was also the average at Lincoln, according to the far more detailed lists of Oliver Sutton[3], and to this extent is probably fairly typical. In theory it guaranteed a reasonable if by no means luxurious standard of living, being marginally above the 3 marks which Bishop William of Blois had stipulated in 1229 as the minimum stipend for an assistant chaplain - although there are signs that by the end of the century this was no longer regarded as sufficient, and in 1276 Thomas Cantelupe even expressed some doubt as to whether an annual income of 60 shillings was acceptable as a title[4]. Comparisons with wage-earners from other walks of life are difficult, since wages often consisted largely of victuals; although it has been estimated that a skilled craftsman such as a carpenter would earn on average about

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1. Reg. Sutton, ed. Hill, vii. xi,5,17; and see Reg. Cantelupe, pp.301, 312 (David of Ashperton), 308,311 (Richard of Acton).
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299,301; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.291,438 (f.150r, 223v).
3. Reg. Sutton, ed. Hill, vii.p.xi.
4. Councils and Synods, i.175 (Worc. II,c.26); Reg. Sutton, ed. Hill, vii. p.xi; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.117-8.

3d. a day without food[1]. If we propose a working year of around 250 days[2] this comes to rather more,amounting to just over 62 shillings per annum; although it must of course be remembered that unlike a lay craftsman, a celibate cleric had no family to support.

In only two instances are we told anything about the nature of this income however - Robert de Norwyco receiving 50 shillings in annual rent from the rector of Wichenford, and William of Dymock possessing patrimony of 50 shillings 'in dominico'[3]. In the remaining four cases there is no indication as to whether the patrimony consisted of lands, rents or pensions; and more useful from the point of view of identifying social origins are those instances where ordinands are explicitly stated to have held their own lands. Walter of Bourton, ordained to a title of patrimony in 1291, possessed one virgate, which in the west midlands was usually between 25 and 30 acres, and represented the typical holding of the well-to-do peasant[4]. In the western diocese, Simon of Clun and William of Chirbury similarly possessed 30 acres apiece, William also owning a third part of a mill; while Adam de Syreburne, who owned a carucate of land in Bromsberrow, was rather better endowed - a carucate consisting of eight bovates, or about 100 acres[5]. Two other ordinands owned burgages, implying

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1. R.H. Hilton, A Medieval Society (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1983), pp.5, 111-2.
2. See C.R. Cheney, 'Rules for the Observation of Feast Days in Medieval England', Bull. Instit. Hist. Research, xxxiv(1961),136-7,144.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.291,438 (f.150r,223v).
4. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.677(f.343r); Hilton, A Medieval Society, pp.114-5.
5. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299,308,312.

an urban element which is of interest in itself and as such is discussed below[1]. In addition Robert of Fownhope, ordained 'ad hereditatem patris sui', and William of Yarpole, ordained to a title of patrimony 'cujus heres est' had probably also inherited lands; while the titles which John Gowry, Adam of Wigmore and Walter Evere were said to have at Ledbury, Ludlow and 'Evere' (Over?) respectively may similarly have consisted of property[2]. Amongst the small number of ordinands whose patrimonies are actually described therefore, possession (and probably inheritance) of land does not appear to have been unusual; while the size of the holdings involved, where this is given, suggests that these clerks were mostly drawn from the better class of free peasantry, ranging through to rather more substantial smallholders. How typical were they?

At Lincoln Bishop Sutton's ordination lists, although fuller and more systematic, seldom describe patrimony in anything other than monetary terms; although occasionally there are signs that this was probably derived from land, either in rents or through direct cultivation. John de Reston's patrimony in the villages of Lubbenham and Reston was 'estimated' at 60 shillings a year by the archdeacon of Leicester's official and by the prior of Northampton, implying that it did not consist of fixed and easilycertifiable income such as a pension or corrody; while the patrimony of Roger de Barkstone was explicitly stated to

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1. pp.265-9.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.305,306,307,308.

consist of 60 shillings' annual rent[1]. Where extents of land were given, a carucate appears to have been the most common unit, while another ordinand held two virgates and two messuages in the fields of Lubbenham, and yet another one messuage and four bovates or half a carucate[2] - holdings which suggest that Adam de Syreburne, representing a more prosperous class of smallholders amongst the Hereford ordinands, was perhaps not so unusual.

Outside the ordination lists there are countless examples of unbeneficed clerks holding small amounts of land, although in most cases it is difficult to know whether these represented an inheritance or had been acquired following ordination, possibly in return for clerical or priestly services. Occasionally however, clerks are explicitly said to have inherited small holdings. In 1221 Walter son of Hugh, chaplain, was found to have inherited a virgate of land in Moreton, which he demised to his younger brother Reginald as custodian while he was on pilgrimage, but recovered on his return[3]. Robert the chaplain, son of Richard the miller of Eastleach, had also inherited the land (with its mill and other appurtenances) which he held in Eastleach of Gloucester Abbey and subsequently returned to the monks; while Robert Boke, Henry son of John de Welles, Thomas son of Reginald de Forthey and possibly Aluricus son of Aluricus of Ledbury, all chaplains, similarly inherited small though unspecified

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1. Reg. Sutton, ed. Hill, vii.24,48.
2. Reg. Sutton, ed. Hill, vii.8,9,13,23,30,59,63.
3. Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Gloucs, Warws and Staffs, 1221-2, ed. D.M. Stenton (SS,lix,1940), No.200.

amounts of land from their parents[1]. On other occasions, successive chaplains seem to have belonged to small land-holding dynasties. Early in the thirteenth century Adam, the chaplain of Coates had four sons by his servant Emma of Gildenbridge, each of whom subsequently inherited tenements at Gildenbridge in Cirencester (though apparently through their mother) and one of whom, Geoffrey of Cirencester, succeeded his father as chaplain of Coates, while another may have been chaplain at Stratton about two miles away[2]. A little later one Richard of Leigh made a series of small land grants to Pershore Abbey, Richard being himself a 'clerk', the son of Walter the priest, and possibly connected with Lady Constance of Leigh who held Eckington of Pershore and subsequently made numerous grants (including the advowson) to the abbey. He may also have had a son, Andrew, who held some lands; although unfortunately his grants are fragmentary and give no indication of the extent of his possessions[3].

It is not unusual therefore to find unbeneficed clerks possessing small amounts of land, often through inheritance; and to this extent the Worcester and Hereford ordinands with holdings of 20 or 30 acres or more were far from unique. There are however some important considerations to bear in mind when assessing such unsystematic

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1. Glouc. Cart. i.No.220, ii.No.792; Heref. Cath. Muns. i.298,303; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.111v; Oxford, Bodl. L. MS. Film Dep.912 (microfilm of Bristol cart.), f.180r.
2. Cirenc. Cart. i.Nos.297,299-301.
3. PRO E315/61, f.50r-v,53r; VCH Worcs. iv.69-70,75.

evidence, and attempting to estimate just how prevalent private landownership amongst unbeneficed secular clergy really was. In the first place it is all too easy to distort the overall picture by undue concentration on those who did possess their own property; for it is of course precisely these clerks who will have left private charters and found their way into contemporary records, while their landless counterparts are unlikely to have left much (if any) trace. Indeed the very sources which yield examples of landed chaplains equally warn us against assuming that this was necessarily typical - the curia regis rolls for example containing several instances of chaplains being distrained for various offences and subsequently reported to have no lay fee[1].

Secondly, in the absence of conclusive evidence it does not seem especially likely that a majority of ordinands would have been drawn from amongst those who already possessed private means of support, irrespective of clerical employment. We have already seen that many of those presented to local benefices through family preferment were apparently younger sons, brothers and nephews who had inherited no property, and that the use of family benefices as a second inheritance to provide for such dependants was widespread[2]. It might similarly be expected therefore that large numbers of those seeking ordination,

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1. e.g. Cur. Reg. R. xiii.185, xiv.9,14, xv.114-5. They could, of course, have possessed lands in different counties, although if they held none near their place of origin this seems unlikely.
2. Above, pp.189-95.

and particularly those from a humble background, would also be non-inheriting sons, forced by economic necessity into a search for alternative support. Such an economic motive is not, of course, incompatible with a religious or vocational one, and we must not be too cynical - some of those ordained clearly being elder sons who also inherited family holdings and even, on occasion, entire manors[1], while others apparently turned to the priesthood rather later in life, in some cases after raising a family[2]. On the other hand the universality of primogeniture at all levels of thirteenth-century society must, in an age of general population increase, have produced vast numbers of landless or near-landless younger sons and brothers, and it is from this section of society that we might expect many of those choosing ordination to be drawn. True, recent research has demonstrated that the younger sons of peasants were not necessarily forced to migrate or remain as landless and unmarried wage-earners in the village, as used to be thought, but were often provided for out of the family holding, and in particular out of any additional land acquired through marriage or purchase[3]. This did not alleviate the underlying problem of land-hunger however, while the new holdings so created were often extremely small, sometimes only a few acres, and would probably not

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1. Above, p.192 ; Reg. Sutton, ed. Hill, vii.80.
2. Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Lincs. 1218-19 and Worcs. 1221, ed. D.M. Stenton (SS, liii, 1934), No.163.
3. Z. Razi, Life, Marriage and Death in a Medieval Parish. Economy, Society and Demography in Halesowen 1270-1400 (Cambridge, 1980), pp.50-64.

have sufficed as a patrimonial title in any case. Many of those ordained to titles from religious houses, beneficed clerks or private patrons were almost certainly of this type; and given the ambiguity with which 'patrimonium' is used in the lists[1], the same may well be true of many of those ostensibly ordained to titles of patrimony. Certainly it cannot be assumed that all those so ordained had necessarily inherited their own lands, let alone possessed substantial holdings of 30 acres or more.

Non-inheriting sons seeking ordination may not always have been left to find titles from local patrons however, and several were ordained to titles from family members - no doubt a useful compromise, in that while provision could thus be made for the clerk until he was beneficed or otherwise employed, this did not involve any partition of family holdings. We have already seen that in 1276 Adam Beaufitz was presented for ordination by John Beaufitz, who undertook to pay him a yearly allowance of 60 shillings until he should find a benefice; and Adam de Wyltone, Roger Heved of Cirencester and Henry Bryton of Gloucester were similarly granted titles by their respective fathers[2]. On other occasions chaplains held lands of their brothers - possibly in response to the same problem. M. Nicholas, rector of Down Hatherley in the mid-thirteenth century, held lands and tenements in Gloucester of his brother Alexander for 50 shillings annual rent;

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1. Above, p.254.
2. Above, p.215 ; Reg. Cantelupe, p.308; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.561 (f.285r).

while before 1304 Thomas de Pyrcote, chaplain, actually purchased burgage lands in Halesowen from his brother Henry[1]. Some of the patrimonial titles recorded could conceivably have been of this type therefore - the lands concerned being granted or rented by an elder brother, possibly for life, or possibly until the ordinand found alternative employment.

While an uncertain proportion of those ordained certainly inherited holdings which put them amongst the richest of the free peasantry therefore the likelihood, despite the large numbers ostensibly ordained ad titulum patrimonii, is that many more did not; although whatever the source of their income they were evidently expected to receive the equivalent of at least 40 or 50 shillings a year, and in some cases rather more. How rigorously was this actually enforced however, and what is the likelihood that some of those ordained may not, in reality, have possessed any guarantee of a secure income?

There are occasional examples in both dioceses of clerks being openly ordained without titles, although in all these cases they were required to swear an oath that they would make no claim on the bishop or his successors[2]; and generally the obligation incumbent upon bishops to support and find preferment for anyone ordained with an inadequate title[3] was probably sufficient safeguard against negligence

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1. Glouc. Cart. ii. No.806; Charters and Muniments at Hagley Hall, ed. Jeayes, No.51; and see Cat. Anc. D. i.352.
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.151,191,677(f.80r,100r,343r); Reg. Cantelupe, pp.303,306.
3. Extra, I,14,c.13.

or undue leniency. The lists for both dioceses contain references to titles being 'testified' by third parties, and to ordinands being required to swear oaths, while on some occasions documentary proof was deposited with the bishop or his officials for future reference[1]. The problem however was not really one of laxity on the part of bishops so much as deliberate fraud on the part of candidates. In 1308 two Hereford priests were dispensed for having falsely sworn at their ordination that they possessed sufficient patrimonies[2] - the implication being that there were other instances of perjury which never came to light. Even where independent testimonies were produced, these could not necessarily be trusted; and the synodal statutes of several English dioceses refer to the practice whereby an aspiring clerk negotiated a fictitious deed of title with a monastic or secular patron, on the understanding that following ordination this would be returned and no claim lodged[3].

Faced with such practices bishops, however conscientious, were put into an impossible situation. The vast numbers seeking ordination at every ceremony must have precluded all but the most cursory and routine examination[4]; and in the majority of cases the diocesan was probably able to do little more than to ensure that his own indemnity was safeguarded and to accept at face value the oaths, documents

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1. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.744(f.376v); Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299-302, 305-9.
2. Reg. Swinfield, p.442.
3. Councils and Synods, i.373-4,644; ii.1000-1.
4. Cf. John de Burgo, Pupilla Oculi (Strasbourg,1514), Vii,3,G (referring to examination of literacy and lifestyle, which were probably examined more rigorously than titles).

and testimonies which were proferred, punishing any transgressions as they came to light. As a result, it seems almost inevitable that some clerks with inadequate or non-existent titles would have slipped through the net - although their numbers are impossible to gauge. We have seen that in 1307, it was said that upwards of 2,000 clerks had been ordained without titles in the diocese of Worcester, and although the figure itself seems impossibly large, if there is any truth at all in the statement this seems the likeliest explanation - the fault lying not so much with the bishops as with the impossibility of checking rigorously every assertion of title[1]. Whatever the case, there are no recorded examples of destitute clergy; and if large numbers were ordained without private means of support then they must, as suggested above, have been fairly easily absorbed into either parochial or private employment[2].

There remains the question of how far ordinands were drawn from an urban rather than rural background. Clearly the west midlands and marches were, in the thirteenth century, predominantly rural areas; although the diocese of Worcester nevertheless included Bristol, then the second largest town in the country, as well as the moderately sized but well-developed county towns of Worcester, Gloucester and Warwick, and a host of smaller market towns. The neighbouring

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1. Above, pp.252-3. In case of fraud the bishop could presumably not be held responsible, although he might nevertheless have felt the need to cover himself against any possible claims.
2. Above, pp.222-53.

diocese of Hereford, although less well-developed, similarly contained several small boroughs centred on the border castles along its western fringe and elsewhere, as well as the thriving free borough of Hereford itself[1]. We have already seen that two of the clerks ordained in the Hereford diocese to titles of patrimony were possessed of burgages, one in Leominster and the other at Ledbury, while some other of the clerical holdings referred to above also consisted of burgages and urban tenements[2]. How far then can the ordination lists be used to evaluate the urban element amongst the ordained clergy of the region?

Turning to the Worcester lists, an analysis of the toponymics recorded for two of Giffard's largest ceremonies, those held at Campden in 1291 and at Worcester in 1292[3], yields the following picture. (See Table VI, p.267). Of 855 separate ordinations, only 23 (2.7%) involved clerks from Bristol, Worcester, Gloucester or Warwick (of whom 10 came from Bristol); while the more important market towns accounted for another 79[4]. Cirencester in particular provided a large number of ordinands on both occasions, as did Droitwich (one of the main national supply centres for salt and 'a genuine, purely industrial town'), Stratford (with its newly established borough) and Fairford[5]. Overall however, although clergy were

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1. See above, pp.2-5,7-8.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.308,311; Charters and Muniments at Hagley Hall, ed. Jeayes, No.51; Heref. Cath. Muns, i.303.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.676-80,699-702(f.342v-344r,354r-355v).
4. The towns listed were all taxed on more than £100 worth of goods in 1334: see Hilton, A Medieval Society, pp.172-3.
5. On these centres see Hilton, A Medieval Society, pp.175-6,190-2.

Place Of Origin/Residence	Campden, 1291		Worcester, 1292		Total	
	N° Clerks	% Total N° Ord'd	N° Clerks	% Total N° Ord'd	N° Clerks	% Total N° Ord'd
Worcester	2	0.4	5	1.3	7	0.8
Gloucester	1	0.2	1	0.3	2	0.2
Warwick	2	0.4	2	0.5	4	0.5
Bristol	7	1.5	3	0.7	10	1.2
Cirencester	9	2.0	9	2.2	18	2.1
Droitwich	5	1.1	5	1.3	10	1.2
Campden	3	0.7	4	1.0	7	0.8
Stratford	4	0.9	5	1.3	9	1.1
Tewkesbury	2	0.4	-	-	2	0.2
Winchcombe	2	0.4	3	0.7	5	0.6
Stowe-in-the-Wold	3	0.7	4	1.0	7	0.8
Fairford	4	0.9	7	1.7	11	1.3
Tetbury	1	0.2	2	0.5	3	0.3
Lechlade	3	0.7	3	0.7	6	0.7
Marshfield	-	-	1	0.3	1	0.1
Evesham	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	48	10.5	54	13.5	102	11.9

TABLE VI : Clerks of 'Urban' Origin ordained in the diocese of Worcester, 1291-2.

consistently drawn from such relatively urbanized centres, their numbers did not amount to a notably higher proportion than might be expected, while at Hereford the proportion was predictably lower[1]. Nor is there any evidence that the beneficed clergy of the towns tended to be recruited

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1. Around 45 (10 per cent) of those in Cantelupe's lists came from commercial centres, mostly castle-boroughs such as Ludlow, Clun, Wigmore, Montgomery and Cause: Reg. Cantelupe, pp.299-312.

exclusively or even predominantly from urban clerks. The toponymics of a sample of those beneficed in Bristol show them to have been drawn just as frequently from surrounding (and often more distant) villages, some of which admittedly had their own commerical elements[1] - although assistant clergy may more frequently have been local men, recruited through the incumbent priest as in the purely rural villages[2].

The fact remains that a number of ordinands came from a comparatively urban background. What can be said of their social origins? Some, as we have seen, held land through burgage tenure; although there is no reason to suppose that this was any more prevalent amongst urban clergy than was the possession of sizeable amounts of land amongst the rural majority. For the rest, we are forced back onto the occupational surnames under which some of those ordained were recorded. Clearly these cannot be taken as a literal description of the occupation pursued prior to ordination, although in the thirteenth century, and at this level of society, such names are unlikely to have been hereditary for long and are probably at least broadly indicative of social status[3]; while in the case of 'John son of the baker of Dursley' and 'John son of the smith of Clyve'[4] the description can most likely be taken literally. Turning to the Worcester lists therefore we find that occupational epithets are given on 36 occasions, comprising

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1. e.g. Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii.78,296,297,316,326,447,462.
2. See above, pp.230 ff.
3. P.H. Reaney, A Dictionary of British Surnames (2nd edn., London, 1976), pp.xxxvii-xxxviii, xli-xlv.
4. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.677,700(f.343r,354v).

8 'smiths', 4 'millers', 3 each of 'bakers','tailors' and 'fullers'[1], 2 'weavers', 2 'carpenters', 2 'masons', and one each of 'drapers', 'coupers', 'spicers', 'porters','tanners', 'chaloners' and 'goldsmiths', with even one 'fisherman' and one 'champion'[2]. Not all of these are exclusively urban occupations of course, nor were the bearers of these names exclusively from urban centres. Bristol, Worcester and Gloucester between them appear 5 times, and while there is a fair showing of smaller boroughs and market towns such as Chipping Campden, Stratford on Avon, Fairford, Kidderminster, Pershore, Dursley and Bromsgrove, purely rural villages such as Butlers Marston, Northleach and Broadway also appear. On some occasions, no toponymic element is given. If these names can be taken as evidence of at least broad social origins however, they clearly indicate a small group of ordinands drawn in part from the skilled artisan classes such as masons, carpenters and smiths, but also including a fair proportion with commercial connections (drapers and tailors and the like), and extending to a lower class of rural industry - milling, tanning and fulling.

(iv) Clerical Migration and Letters Dimissory.

There remains the question of how far migration was a general feature of the thirteenth century clerical labour market - 'migration'

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1. Two of whom came from Sherborne, site of a 13th cent. fulling mill: Hilton, A Medieval Society, p.210; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.701,764 (f.355r,386v).
2. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.289,291,438,500,561,592,638,676-8,691,699-702,722,764,779,834,798,830-1(f.149r,150r,223v,254v,285r,300v,323v, 342v,343r,343v,350r,354r-v,355r-v,386v,390v,394r,403v,431v,444v, 445r).

in this context meaning not so much local movement around the diocese, but rather the influx of clerks from other dioceses into the Worcester and Hereford labour markets. In part this process is traceable through surname evidence, although more specific is the incidence in the ordination lists of letters dimissory. By the thirteenth century no clerk could canonically seek ordination outside his own diocese without having first procured this document, which consisted of a general dispensation by his local bishop that the bearer could be ordained by any of the bishop's fellow suffragans, and possession of which was duly noted in the ordination lists. Here then is the most reliable record of which clerks had originated outside the diocese; while the regularity with which such notices occur in the Worcester and Hereford lists suggests that with a few exceptions[1] they were fairly consistently and systematically recorded.

Turning to the frequency with which letters dimissory from different dioceses were noted, we find the following situation (See Table VII, p.271).

Clearly the catchment area for both dioceses was very wide, the greater number of dioceses from which immigrant clerks are recorded at Worcester no doubt being accounted for by the much larger sample available. At Worcester, the surrounding dioceses of Coventry and Lichfield, Lincoln and Salisbury in particular feature prominently; although sees as far away as Llandaff, York and Norwich also appear,

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1. Very occasionally ordinands whose names imply an origin outside the diocese appear without reference to letters dimissory, e.g. John of Berkhamsted, Reg. Cantelupe, p.312.

	No. Ordinations With Letters Dimissory From:																		
	Hereford	Worcester	Lincoln	Salisbury	Coventry	Exeter	Chichester	Durham	York	Norwich	Bath & Wells	Llandaff	London	St. Davids	Winchester	Rochester	(St. Albans)	Unknown	TOTAL
Dioc. Worcester	10		38	25	23	6	1	3	6	3	6	6	1	4	1	-	1	29	163
Dioc. Hereford		4[a]	12[b]	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	21

(a) Plus uncertain number of Friars Minor (Reg. Cantelupe, p.307).

(b) Including one Religious. (Reg. Cantelupe, p.310).

TABLE VII: Ordinations with Letters Dimissory.

and the exempt monastery of St. Albans also sent one candidate. At Hereford by far the largest number came from the diocese of Lincoln - separated from that of Hereford by the Worcester diocese. More significant however is the fact that although ordinations with letters dimissory represent a fairly consistent feature of the Worcester lists in particular, they by no means accounted for a significant proportion of the total - in neither case more than 5 per cent. This in turn raises the questions firstly of how typical this small group of migratory clerks was, and secondly why they found it necessary or desirable to seek ordination outside their area of origin.

Turning first to Hereford, it is striking that of the 19 clerks ordained with letters dimissory[1], 10 were already beneficed, while another, Richard of Chadlington, was both a religious and a hermit. Moreover, 13 were ordained by Cantelupe at an apparently extraordinary ceremony held at Tottenham in the diocese of London, which included only another 7 clerks actually from his own diocese[2]. At Worcester the picture was rather less extreme, 20 out of 163 ordinations of clerks with letters dimissory involving beneficed clergy - although this still represents a proportion of marginally over 12 per cent, as against the 3 per cent already beneficed out of the total number of ordinands[3]. To this extent these migratory clerks were quite untypical; and herein

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1. William of Pershore and Richard of Acton appear twice: Reg. Cantelupe, pp.204,301,308,309,311.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.303-4,310,312.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.291,565,591,647,664,680,691,702,736,764,723, 779,833(f,150r,287r,300r,328r,336v,344r,350r,355v,372v,386v,391r, 394r,403r); above, p.228.

lies one possible reason for the need to seek ordination in an alien diocese. We have seen that when there was some urgency to ordain a particular group, for example religious or beneficed clerks, bishops often held special ordinations, sometimes outside the stipulated quatuor tempora[1]; and given the high concentration of incumbent clergy amongst this group, their ordination at Worcester or Hereford may simply have represented a favour bestowed on a fellow suffragan, perhaps unable through illness or absence to hold an extraordinary ceremony at that point, but having in his diocese nevertheless a number of clerks whose ordination in the near future was a matter of some urgency. This would also explain the fact that several clerks from a particular diocese were sometimes ordained at the same ceremony[2]; and certainly John of Monmouth, the bishop of Llandaff, undertook many such favours for Bishop Giffard towards the end of the latter's episcopate, when Giffard was no longer able to cope with his full round of responsibilities. On these occasions Bishop John held the ordination ceremonies actually within the diocese of Worcester - although presumably only because the arrangement was permanent and he was dealing with large numbers of candidates[3].

In addition several of the clerks concerned, particularly at Hereford, were university graduates[4]. Some at least of these were

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1. Above, p.235.
2. e.g. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.764,779(f.386v,394r); Reg. Cantelupe, pp.303-4.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.849,797,814,830,907,(f.411r,431r,438v,444v,453r); cf. Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii.517-8;and Reg. Swinfield, pp.548-50 and p.548 n.2.
4. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.303-4;HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.588,702,814(f.298v, 355v,438v).

very likely pluralist administrators or lawyers, perhaps involved in royal or episcopal government or retained by secular or ecclesiastical magnates[1]; and in such cases it seems feasible that ordination outside their own diocese was necessitated by a heavy administrative workload which involved moving around the country. In 1277 Bishop Giffard granted a licence of non-residence and letters dimissory to Ralph de Alemann', then rector of Aston Cantlow and in the queen's service, while an entry in Swinfield's register notes the holy orders received in various dioceses by John of Newland, similarly presented to Minsterworth through royal patronage[2]; and no doubt this also explains the ordination with letters dimissory of a clerk of the bishop of Bath and Wells in 1297[3].

There remain however a number of immigrant clerks, particularly in the more extensive Worcester lists, who do not appear to have borne administrative responsibility or to have had any obvious distinguishing characteristics; and in these cases the lists contain few indications as to what had drawn these men to the area. In 1291 William of Charlton, a clerk from the Salisbury diocese, was ordained to a title from the rector of Campden, who was himself a native of Upavon in Wiltshire[4]; and although their titles are seldom recorded, some other migrants may similarly have been recruited by patrons or benefactors in the diocese who had connections or interests outside. Yet others could conceivably

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1. See above, pp.145, 162-4, 180-1, 199-201.
2. Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii.93; Reg. Swinfield, p.514.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.647(f.328r).
4. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.676(f.342v); Reg. Giffard(WHS), ii.233,246.

have been landless younger sons in search of preferment - although as the ratio of ordained clerks to available benefices was evidently similar in most English dioceses[1], there was little incentive to move around, particularly since preferment (and, in fact, titles) most usually came from local patrons[2]. Moreover the system of letters dimissory was itself clearly designed to discourage such practices. Thirteenth-century bishops were as concerned to regulate and monitor the lives of the unbeneficed clerical masses as they were to discipline their beneficed counterparts[3]; and it was thus clearly in their interests similarly to limit and regulate migration between different dioceses, since uncontrolled clerical vagrancy would have rendered their task infinitely more difficult. In this they seem to have been largely successful; for despite this smattering of unexplained migratory clerks, the overall level of clerical migration evidently remained minimal. Not only were ordinations with letters dimissory comparatively rare, but as we have already seen both assistant parish clergy and the more obscure beneficed clergy were most frequently drawn from within our region, and often from within a few miles of the church itself[4]. Despite occasional examples of clerks illicitly seeking ordination in other dioceses without their diocesan's permission therefore, either through guile or ignorance[5], most clerks continued to rely for their

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1. Moorman, Church Life, pp.52-3.
2. Above, pp.176-9,231-2; and see Reg. Sutton, ed. Hill, vii. p.xiv.
3. See below, pp.314-5, 320-1.
4. Above, pp. 176-9, 231-2.
5. e.g. Reg. Giffard(WHS), i.2,4, ii. 71,170; Reg. Cantelupe, pp.161, 230; Reg. Swinfield, p.87.

advancement on purely local patronage networks - migration being largely confined, with some exceptions, to those with wider interests and connections.

(v) Conclusions.

We have been concerned in this chapter with the ways in which the vast numbers of clerks ordained in the thirteenth century were absorbed into local society, and with their backgrounds and social origins. Most were apparently natives of the diocese in question; although within it they were drawn from a wide area, their numbers including a small but consistent urban element. Some had inherited or otherwise acquired small amounts of land which put them amongst the more prosperous free peasantry and smallholders; although it has been suggested that at least as many had not, and were forced to rely on support from other sources before securing employment. The opportunities for employment however, despite the small number of parochial cures in relation to the numbers ordained, were very wide; and it seems unlikely that large numbers of ordinands were unable to find at least temporary work. Private chaplains and chantry priests were required not only by lay and ecclesiastical magnates but equally by religious houses and secular communities - the recruitment of ordinands into such service being partially discernible in the grants of titles recorded in ordination lists. In particular, the parish structure itself required far greater numbers of clerks to ensure its effective operation than the number of benefices alone would indicate. Although the numbers required in a given parish at any one time probably

varied, assistants in full, major and minor orders - usually recruited locally by the incumbent himself - were constantly needed to staff the vast substratum of sub-parochial chapels, to ensure that those living in more isolated corners of the larger parishes were not deprived of pastoral care, to assist the incumbent at the parish church, and often to act on behalf of absent, incapacitated or unordained rectors and vicars. To this extent the unbeneficed clergy fulfilled a pivotal role within the structure of pastoral provision, the central importance of which must not be obscured by the legalistic preoccupation of episcopal registers and other ecclesiastical records with those actually possessed of benefices.

CHAPTER FIVE

Priests and People: the secular clergy in local society.

(i) Introductory.

We have so far been concerned with the mechanisms by which the secular clergy, beneficed and unbeneficed, were recruited, and with their social origins. In the present chapter some attempt is made to examine their place within local society and their relationship with the laity, the enquiry falling into three broad areas. First what was the social and economic position of the clergy actually employed within the parish structure? Second, how far were they capable of fulfilling the clerical functions outlined in thirteenth-century statutes, and to what extent did their education and general conduct actually set them apart from the laity in the ways intended by thirteenth-century reformers? Finally how far was the quality and nature of pastoral provision affected by the requirements and expectations of the laity themselves, and how much can be determined about the relationship between laity and local clergy in practice, whether as pastors, landowners or neighbours?

(ii) Income and Economic Status.

The clergy's position amongst the people was determined in the first place by the size and type of their income, and by the priest's social and economic status within the community. Some attempt has already been made to assess the social and economic backgrounds of the local

clergy prior to ordination or preferment[1]; although we are here concerned with something rather different, that is with the artificially-created social and economic position into which the priest stepped by virtue of obtaining a benefice or other employment within the pastoral hierarchy. That this should be in keeping with the dignity and status of the secular clergy as emphasized and newly defined in twelfth and thirteenth century decretals and synodal statutes was clearly a matter of considerable importance to the Church. The impetus behind the vicarage system itself, well established by 1215, had been the desire to ensure that those providing pastoral care should be suitably (congrue) provided for; and throughout the thirteenth century repeated efforts were made, in our own region and elsewhere, to enforce suitable minimum stipends not only for vicars, but equally for chaplains and assistant clergy[2].

These developments should not be seen in isolation. Theologically the acceptance of the doctrine of transubstantiation raised the dignity of the priestly office to new heights, the priest alone being qualified to celebrate the Eucharist, which was increasingly felt to be a sacrament of such sanctity that its exact formula should not be divulged in the vernacular[3]. More generally, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

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1. Above, pp.156-7, 175 ff., 253-69.
2. Extra, III,5,c.30 Councils and Synods, i.56,175,178,309,314 (Worc. I, c.11;II,c.26,c.48;III,c.52,c.74); R.A.R. Hartridge, A History of Vicarages in the Middle Ages (Cambridge,1930), pp.20-1; C.R. Cheney, From Becket to Langton (Manchester,1956), pp.131-6.
3. Councils and Synods, i.309 (Worc.III,c.51); B.L. Manning, The People's Faith in the Time of Wyclif (Cambridge,1919),p.9; J. Bossy, 'The Mass as a Social Institution 1200-1700', P&P, c(1983),33; C.N.L. Brooke, 'Gregorian Reform in Action: Clerical Marriage in England 1050-1200', Medieval Church and Society. Collected Essays (London,1971),72-3.

the parish clergy became ever more central to the whole ecclesiastical reform movement, insofar as it was primarily through the parish priest that the laity were to be instructed and disciplined and the ideals of reforming bishops implemented[1]. Against this background the Church sought to mould the clergy into a disciplined and authoritative elite, set apart from the laity in their education, lifestyle and even in their dress and physical appearance - concerns which after 1215 were given a new impetus by competition from the friars - while at the same time, and as a corollary of these aims, reformers were equally concerned to secure total control over their own agents, and to free the clergy from all outside (and especially lay) influence[2]. Economic self-sufficiency and a reasonably dignified standard of living amongst the resident parish clergy were clearly fundamental to these aims therefore; and documents concerning clerical income frequently invoke the need to maintain the dignity of the priestly office. Appropriations to religious houses habitually stipulated that the portions reserved for the chaplain or vicar should be 'suitable' or 'decent' (honestus), while in 1269 Bishop Giffard allowed the rector of Stowell to farm out his benefice since it had been reduced to poverty through the wars in the area, and he could not be expected to remain 'nisi cum....scandalo manifesto'.[3]

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1. See below, pp.306, 316-8.
2. See above, pp.96-8; below pp.306ff, 318ff; and (for the impact of the friars) D. Knowles, The Religious Orders in England (3 vols, Cambridge, 1948-59), i.183-8; J.R.H. Moorman, Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century (Cambridge, 1945), pp.79-81, 370-1, 390-3.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.32(f.19v).

The secular clergy were not, however, a homogenous group. Amongst beneficed clerks only rectors enjoyed the whole of the church's endowment, save for pensions and any tithes alienated to religious houses during the preceding centuries; while the vicars instituted under non-resident rectors or in appropriated benefices received only varying portions, their incomes being regulated by the bishop. In addition there were those who, although technically unbeneficed, nevertheless held key positions within the pastoral structure, either as chaplains under absentee or unordained rectors or in sub-parochial chapels. The relative positions of these clerics were very different, and must be discussed separately.

The only records to deal systematically with clerical income in the thirteenth century were those produced for taxation purposes in 1254 and especially in 1291. Their usefulness is limited since they record only a monetary total for each church listed, while the figures given are in any case not completely reliable and apparently involved serious underassessment[1]. As a basis for overall comparison they are, nevertheless, invaluable, the range of net rectorial income which the taxation of 1291 reveals in the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford[2], once all portions, pensions and appropriated tithes had been sub-tracted, being summarized in Table VIII (p.282). It will be seen that rectors' incomes in the Hereford diocese were consistently lower than

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1. See Moorman, Church Life, p.135.
2. Tax. Nich. pp.157-77,216-40.

Incumbent's Income	Rectories				Vicarages			
	Dioc. Worc.		Dioc. Hereford		Dioc. Worc.		Dioc. Hereford	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
less than £4	12	(3.9)	63	(30.6)	-	-	40	(46.5)
£4-£4-19-11	44	(14.1)	24	(11.7)	21	(48.8)	18	(20.9)
£5-£5-19-11	43	(13.8)	20	(9.7)	9	(20.9)	10	(11.6)
£6-£6-19-11	37	(11.9)	33	(16.0)	5	(11.6)	6	(7.0)
£7-£7-19-11	20	(6.4)	-	(-)	1	(2.3)	1	(1.2)
£8-£8-19-11	21	(6.7)	14	(6.8)	3	(7.0)	4	(4.6)
£9-£9-19-11	11	(3.5)	3	(1.4)	-	(-)	1	(1.2)
£10-£10-19-11	27	(8.7)	14	(6.8)	2	(4.7)	2	(2.3)
£11-£11-19-11	7	(2.3)	-	(-)	-	(-)	1	(1.2)
£12-£12-19-11	9	(2.9)	2	(1.0)	2	(4.7)	-	(-)
£13-£13-19-11	9	(2.9)	8	(3.9)	-	(-)	3	(3.5)
£14-£14-19-11	6	(1.9)	1	(0.5)				
£15-£15-19-11	8	(2.6)	1	(0.5)				
£16-£16-19-11	8	(2.6)	4	(1.9)				
£17-£17-19-11	4	(1.3)	1	(0.5)				
£18-£18-19-11	4	(1.3)	-	(-)				
£19-£19-19-11	-	(-)	-	(-)				
£20-£20-19-11	12	(3.9)	5	(2.4)				
£21-£21-19-11	1	(0.3)	1	(0.5)				
£22-£22-19-11	2	(0.6)	-	(-)				
£23-£23-19-11	1	(0.3)	3	(1.4)				
£24-£24-19-11	4	(1.3)	-	(-)				
£25-£25-19-11	1	(0.3)	1	(0.5)				
£26-£26-19-11	7	(2.3)	4	(1.9)				
£27-£27-19-11	-	(-)	-	(-)				
£28-£28-19-11	3	(1.0)	-	(-)				
£29-£29-19-11	1	(0.3)	-	(-)				
£30-£39-19-11	7	(2.3)	2	(1.0)				
over £40	2	(0.6)	2	(1.0)				
TOTALS	311	(100%)	206	(100%)	43	(100%)	86	(100%)

TABLE VIII: Incomes of Beneficed Clergy in the Dioceses of Worcester and Hereford, as assessed for Papal Taxation in 1291.

(Note: Totals given do not represent the actual number of rectories and vicarages, which was much higher. Not all these appear in the Taxatio, while many entries do not list the incumbent's income separately, the revenues of churches, chapels, portioners, rectors and vicars often being combined).

in that of Worcester, the proportion of rectories assessed at under £4 being almost eight times that recorded in the neighbouring diocese. How far short these benefices fell there is no way of knowing, and allowing for underassessment it is still possible that many rectors received more than the 5 marks a year stipulated as the minimum vicarial stipend in 1222[1] - although from this they would have to meet various outgoings such as upkeep of the chancel, possibly upkeep of books, vestments and ornaments, and assistants' stipends[2]. In both dioceses however well over half the local rectories were assessed at between £4 and £10, with a substantial proportion - 13 per cent at Worcester and just under 9 per cent at Hereford - being assessed at over £20, and 2 per cent in both dioceses at over £30. There was thus a vast range in rectorial incomes throughout the region - the richest rectories often being Domesday or pre-conquest churches such as Ripple (worth over £26 in 1291), Fladbury or Bitterley[3].

Nor did these figures necessarily represent the full extent of a rector's income. Although pluralism was commonest amongst the better-connected and often university-trained rectors in the richer benefices[4], even lesser incumbents could occasionally supplement

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1. Councils and Synods, i.112(c.21).
2. Responsibility for these costs varied, but most often rested with the rector: Councils and Synods, i.175,309,314,512-3,600; ii.1003 (Worc.II,c.26;III,c.52,c.70; Salisbury III, c.8; Wells, c.16; Exeter II, c.9); BL(AM)37503, f.44r; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.706 (f.357v); Reg. Cantelupe, pp.195-6,241.
3. Tax. Nich. pp.166,218; VCH Worcs. iii.363,495; Eyton, iv.371.
4. See above, pp.146-7, 153, 172-3, 209.

their income by combining it with other employment, like a late twelfth-century rector of Sudley who was also his lord's private chaplain.[1] Others, even from modest backgrounds, occasionally held lands in their own right, sometimes through inheritance as we have seen, but also through purchase or grant, and in some instances possibly through similar service as private chaplains[2] - although clearly this cannot be assumed in the majority of cases. From what, however, was the rector's official income derived?

It is not surprising to find that rectors in the richer churches were sometimes landholders on a large scale. The rectory estate of Kidderminster, appropriated to Maiden Bradley at the start of the century but subsequently lost by the priory and valued at over £20 clear in 1291, included the nearby 'manor' of Hurcott, with its customary and rent-paying tenants and its own mill[3]. The glebes of Down Ampney (valued at 40 marks in 1248) and Hartlebury (worth £20 clear in 1291) each included at least one hide of land - technically the equivalent of four peasant yardlands and probably between 100 and 120 acres in this region - while those of Ombersley and Pillerton Hersey (respectively worth £33 and £13 in 1291) included at least half a hide[4]. Most of these rectors, like the rector of Kidderminster,

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1. Landboc Winch. i.80. A 13th cent. vicar of Doynton similarly combined these functions: PRO C115 K2/6683, f.276v.
2. e.g. Cat. Anc. D. i.289-90, ii.316, iii.413; PRO CP25(1) 73/7/97; Worc. Reg. I, No.388; Bodl. L. Ms. Film Dep. 912 (microfilm of Bristol Abbey cart.), f.37r, 174r,191v; above, pp.192, 256-9.
3. BL(AM)37503, f.30r-32v,43r-v; Tax. Nich. p.217.
4. Cur. Reg. R. iii.279, xi.296,397; Worc. Reg. I, No.268; BL(CM) Vesp. B. xxiv, f.26v; Book of Fees (3 vols, HMSO, 1920-31), ii.1406; Tax. Nich. pp.216,217,219.

were also landlords, most of their glebes being held by either rent-paying or customary tenants. In 1224 part of the half hide belonging to Pillerton was held of the rector for 5 shillings yearly, while at Tredington six tenants jointly held two virgates and three messuages and curtilages of the church for 28s. 4d. rent, and at Ombersley another half hide was held of the church by six villeins[1]. The status of these rectors as landlords was accentuated by the fact that seigneurial privileges such as the assize of bread and ale were sometimes included as an integral part of the glebe. The parson of Bromsgrove enjoyed this right until 1232, when it passed with the rectory estate to the priors of Worcester, and in 1292 the parson of Stoke Edith similarly claimed this privilege against the king 'tanquam liberam elemosinam pertinentam ad ecclesiam suam'.[2]

Most of these churches however were almost certainly held by non-resident rectors for much of the thirteenth century. We have seen that it was primarily the richer rectories of both dioceses which were most consistently used, by laity and ecclesiastics alike, to provide for non-resident administrators, this being especially true of rectories under royal or episcopal patronage such as Fladbury, Withington, Hartlebury or Down Ampney[3]. The rectors concerned can consequently have had little direct impact except as absentee landlords, being only

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1. Cur. Reg. R. xi.296,397; The Red Book of Worcester, ed. M. Hollings (4 parts, WHS,1934-50), iii.290; BL(CM)Vesp. B.xxiv,f.26v.
2. Worc. Reg. I, Nos.330,539; PRO Just. I/302, m.39d.
3. See above, pp. 153, 157, 172-3, 199-202.

indirectly involved in the day-to-day provision of pastoral care; and in such cases it was the resident vicars or parochial chaplains who represented the most important link between Church and local community.

In the case of the more modest rectories, it is often difficult to determine exactly the extent of the parson's landed resources, there being no pre-reformation sources which deal systematically with the size of church glebes in the area. The endowments of churches given to religious houses during the eleventh or twelfth centuries were sometimes described in the donor's charter however; and although few of these churches were held as rectories in the thirteenth century, having been appropriated or reduced to chapelries, this at least gives some indication of what constituted a typical endowment in this region. Almost without exception, glebes are described in terms of virgates, the most common endowment being a single virgate with a house, croft, and various appurtenances. In the west midlands, this was the typical holding of the well-to-do peasant, and in Warwickshire and Worcestershire was most generally between 25 and 30 acres - although it could be more, and in the case of the Shropshire chapel of Aston Eyre, endowed with a virgate at its dedication in 1138, apparently measured 60 acres[1]. Along with several churches or chapels not taxed separately in 1291, those of

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1. The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey, ed. U. Rees (2 vols, Aberystwyth, 1975), ii.No.346; R.H. Hilton, A Medieval Society (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1983), pp.114-5.

South Cerney, Taynton, Ocle Pichard, Willersey, Offenham and Exhall, all valued at between £5 and £10, each possessed glebes of one virgate with varying appurtenances[1]; while the rectory of Budbrooke (worth £10 13s. 4d. in 1291) was slightly better endowed, holding 60 acres of inland with a house and appurtenant croft in the twelfth century[2], and the chapels of Postlip, Alvington, Oldbury, Astley and Aldon each possessed half a virgate[3]. The more fragmentary references to rectors' glebes in thirteenth-century assizes utrum and other disputes suggest that such endowments were fairly typical for the broad mid-range of churches - although the lands involved did not necessarily represent the whole of a church's endowment, nor is it always certain that they were claimed as appurtenant to the church rather than in a private capacity. The rectory of Tytherington, however, valued at £9 6s. 8d., included at least one virgate, and that of Siddington (worth £7 6s. 8d.) at least two. The rector of Turnastone - a church worth only £4 - recovered 15 acres in 1292[4].

The majority of rectors thus lived on holdings roughly equivalent in size to those of the local peasantry, albeit very often the richest

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1. Glouc. Cart. i.No.168; The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot, ed. A. Morey and C.N.L. Brooke (Cambridge, 1967), No.304; Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS.271,f.16r; BL(HM)3763,f.73v,80r; BL(HM) 3650,f.44r; Tax. Nich. pp.160,218,219,222,223; and see Landboc Winch. i.144; BL(AM)15668,f.52r,71v; PRO C115 K2/6683,f.50v-51r; Ann. Mon. i.144.
2. PRO E164/22,f.8v; Tax. Nich. p.218.
3. Landboc Winch. i.81; Cart. Shrewsbury, ed. Rees, ii.Nos.299b, 333,348; PRO C115 K2/6683,f.91v; Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS.1, f.5r.
4. PRO CP25(1) 74/26/597; Ibid., 75/30/18a; PRO Just. I/302, m.26d; Tax. Nich. pp.159,220,221.

peasantry. Their actual economic position, even in the case of half-virgaters, was however markedly higher, partly because they had no family to support[1], but most especially in that this land represented only a small proportion of their revenues. At Kidderminster annual income from the rectorial manor of Hurcott amounted to £8 1s. 9d. in the early fourteenth century, inclusive of all rents and appurtenances, and the actual produce of the demesne at only 30 shillings - the remainder of the church's gross annual income of £43 4s. 10d. being derived from various tithes and oblations[2]. Almost £5 came from (technically voluntary) offerings made at Lent following confession, and from obventions of wax. Another £4 consisted of unspecified 'altarage' (oblaciones altaris), some of which was presumably derived from the compulsory offerings made on the day of the church's dedication, the local saint's day, and at Christmas and Easter[3], although the figure may also have included other casual and voluntary offerings made during the Sunday mass or on the occasion of marriages, funerals, anniversaries and trentals[4]. These were, in fact, frequently included in the detailed breakdowns of clerical income made prior to vicarage ordinations - implying that while such payments were theoretically the result of spontaneous piety on the part of parishioners, in reality they were

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1. See below, pp.318 ff.
2. BL(AM)37503, f.43r-44r.
3. See Councils and Synods, i.180 and n.3,334; Moorman, Church Life, p.126 and n.4.
4. For these offerings (which in theory had to be voluntary if simony were to be avoided) see Moorman, Church Life, pp.127-9; Cheney, Becket to Langton, p.161; Councils and Synods, i.116,174,304,310 (Oxford, c.31; Worc.II,c.19,III,c.33,56); Extra, v,3,c.42.

sufficiently rooted in custom as to be predictable on a yearly basis along with the rest of the church's revenues[1]. Even more important at Kidderminster however were the annual tithes, which were collectively valued at well over £16 - the tithes of wool and rye alone accounting for £9[2]. In the more modest church of Hadzor the proportion was equally striking; and of corn left by the rector on his death in 1300 and valued at £8 10s., £5 worth had come from tithes[3].

The chief factor determining the wealth of local churches was not the size of the glebe therefore so much as the size of the parish itself, which largely accounts for the wealth of churches such as Kidderminster or Bishop's Cleeve with their large (probably pre-conquest) parochiae and appurtenant chapelries[4]; while the most immediate problem facing rectors in the poorer churches was not the size of their lands so much as the need to collect efficiently their parishioners' tithes and oblations. There is, for the thirteenth century, no evidence of serious opposition to either type of payment amongst the laity, most tithe disputes resulting from confusion over boundaries or ownership rather than from attempts at evasion[5],

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1. e.g. Newland, Churcham, Dilwyn, Stokesay: Reg. Swinfield, pp.411-12; Glouc. Cart. i.No.176; BL(HM)3586,f.135v-6; Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS.1,f.207r. At Awre (on the Severn estuary) offerings made before the statue of the B.V.M. by merchants about to set sail were similarly estimated at 2 marks yearly in 1354: PRO C115 K1/6681,f.207r.
2. BL(AM)37503,f.43r-44r.
3. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.897(f.448r); and more generally see Moorman, Church Life, pp.114-5.
4. VCH Worcs, iii.158,175; VCH Gloucs. viii,2,23; above, pp.13-15,16ff.
5. See G. Constable, 'Resistance to Tithes in the Middle Ages', J. Eccl. H., xiii(1962), 172-4,178-80,184-5.

while the detailed and comprehensive guidelines for payment promulgated by bishops in synodal statutes must have helped to close many of the loopholes available for petty fraud[1]. A more serious problem was the diversion of tithes to local religious houses as a result of twelfth- or eleventh-century alienations; and here the losses could be quite substantial. At Colesbourne two-thirds of the demesne tithes were held by the priory of Lanthony Secunda, which in 1291 drew £2 6s. 3d. from the church, leaving the rector with marginally over £4 from which, presumably, he had to maintain the chancel and furnishings and pay assistants[2]. On at least two occasions during the thirteenth century rectors attempted to repossess the tithes by force or litigation, and in 1301 the priory granted their portion to Ralph of Norton for the duration of his incumbency[3]. This was however apparently a purely private arrangement between the rector and the canons; and unless established rights were to be overturned bishops remained powerless to intervene on the rector's behalf in such circumstances.

Perpetual vicars were in a rather different position insofar as their income was more directly regulated by the bishop. Theoretically

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1. Councils and Synods, i.176-7,180 and n.3,310,315,512,600 (Worc. II, c.33-4,36,64; III, c.56,c.76-9; Salisbury III, c.4; Wells,c.18). Gerald of Wales cites instances of priests exploiting the laity's readiness to give voluntary offerings by multiplying the gospels during mass: Giraldi Cambrensis Opera, vol.ii, ed. J.S. Brewer (Rolls Ser.,xxix,1882), ii.126-9; and see Councils and Synods, i.309 (Worc.III,c.50).
2. PRO C115 K2/6683,f.17r,261r-v; Tax. Nich. p.223; above, p.283.
3. PRO C115 K2/6683,f.261r-v,262v,268r.

therefore they were less at the mercy of the accidents of endowment - although even so the vicarages in our region display a vast range of wealth, as Table VIII indicates (above, p.282). Once again the incomes recorded for the Hereford diocese were consistently lower than in that of Worcester, nearly half the vicarages in the western diocese being assessed at under £4 and exempted - although in both dioceses the majority were assessed at under £6. Conversely a handful of vicars received substantially higher portions, and were certainly better off than the poorest rectors, nearly 5 per cent in both dioceses receiving over £11 annually. The value of vicarages in the area thus closely reflected the gross value of local churches generally, with bishops being severely constrained in the case of poorer benefices, but prepared to allocate larger portions where possible - although in neither diocese were any vicarages ordained at over £14[1].

Once ordained, vicarages remained subject to episcopal review, which in theory should have meant that vicars' portions, more so than rectors' endowments, would keep pace with inflation or other changing circumstances. Several adjustments were made during the period, all involving an increase in the vicar's portion - although in only a few instances does this seem to have occurred spontaneously following a visitation. In 1280 Thomas Cantelupe discovered that the

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1. Vicars were usually expected to receive at least a third of the revenues: Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B.329,f.164v-165r; York, Borthwick Instit., microfilm of Dom Lenoir MS.xxiii,No.85.

vicar of Churcham had no accommodation near the church and ordered that Gloucester Abbey, as appropriators, should restore his right to reside in their manor or provide him with timber and a plot of land on which to build a house[1]. In 1301 Archbishop Winchelsey similarly found that the rectorial portion of St. Mary de Lode, habitually given to the vicar, had been withdrawn, and ordered that it be restored; while in 1274 his predecessor Robert Kilwardby, also on visitation, ordered that the vicar of Lydney's portion be increased within fifteen days, and authorized an enquiry into the vicar of Wenlock's portion[2]. In other cases, adjustments were only made following litigation by the vicar and, in the case of Winchcombe, the eruption of armed violence[3]. Thus in 1272 the vicar of Holme Lacy secured additional tithes in the village following litigation against St. Guthlac's Priory; and similar disputes produced augmentations of vicarial portions at Wick Episcopi, Mansell Gamage, Leominster, Beckford, Wollaston and Stokesay[4].

Just as important as the size of vicarial portions, however, was the type of income. It is striking that out of 46 vicarage ordinations in the area during the thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries, for which

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.237-9.
2. Reg. Glouc. No.5; Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B.329,f.164v-165r; Bodl. L. MS. Top. Salop. d.2,f.147r.
3. Landboc Winch. i.269-71.
4. Oxford, Balliol Coll. MS.271,f.7r,73r; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.304 (f.156v); BL(CM) Domit. A.iii, f.58v; BL(AM)15668,f.53v-54r; BL, MS. Arundel 19,f.32r-v,36v; Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS. 1,f.207r-v; and see PRO C115 K2/6683,f.43r-v; Balliol Coll. MS.271, f.7v; Glouc. Cart. iii.No.973.

the full details are known, 21 (or 45 per cent) included no landed endowments whatsoever. Instead the priest's income was derived from a mixture of specified tithes and offerings, supplemented where necessary by corrodies and cash payments, while at Halesowen the entire portion of 10 marks was to be paid in sterling from the abbot's chamber[1]. Of the remainder, in only about a dozen cases did arable lands form a substantial part of the endowment, the vicarages of Withington, Bold, Brailes and Ocle Pichard including a virgate each, those of Holme Lacy, Stokesay and Prestbury half a virgate, and that of Longborough two virgates, while at Upton Bishop the vicar apparently held all the glebe[2]; although in most cases the lands involved consisted only of small amounts of pasture or meadow[3].

This conceivably reflects a deliberate policy - especially when we consider that in ordaining perpetual vicarages, bishops had a greater degree of control over the nature of clerical income than in any other context. Heavier pastoral demands on the priesthood meant that the distraction of attending to a large glebe, whether as a

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1. Reg. Swinfield, pp.9,411-12,487-8; Reg. Gainsborough, pp.1-2; Glouc. Cart. i.No.260,262,iii.No.973; Reg. Glouc. No.95; Worc. Reg. I., Nos.460,471; Landboc Winch. i.270-1; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.56,193, 766(f.31v,101r,387v); BL(CM) Domit. A. iii,f.58v,62v-63r,71r,102r-v; BL(AM)15668,f.66r; BL(HM)3586,f.135v-136r; BL, MS. Arundel 19, f.32r-v; PRO C115 K2/6683,f.296r; Oxford, Balliol Coll.MS.271,f.7v.
2. Reg. Swinfield, pp.458-9; Reg. Cobham(WHS),p.198; BL(HM)3650,f.46v-47r; PRO C115 K2/6683,f.131r; Oxford, Balliol Coll.MS.271,f.18r,54r-v; Bodl. L.MS. Rawl. B.329,f.171v; Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS.1,f.207r; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.649(f.329r).
3. Reg. Cantelupe, p.44; Reg. Swinfield, pp.123-4,134-5,390-2,455, 492-3; Glouc. Cart. i.Nos.176,209,306, ii.Nos.789,800; PRO E315/61, f.101v-102r; PRO C115 K2/6683,f.34v; BL(AM)15668,f.65r; Oxford, Balliol Coll.MS.271,f.73r; Bodl.L.MS. Top. Salop. d.2, f.147r; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.382(f.195v).

cultivator or as a landlord, was increasingly undesirable. Moreover, such menial tasks were increasingly seen as being incompatible with the dignity of the priestly office as defined in decretals and synodal statutes; and as early as 1229, Bishop William de Blois forbad priests to undertake 'opera servilia et ordini incongrua' [1]. To this extent the emphasis on payments in cash or in kind rather than on landed endowments should perhaps be seen as part of an attempt to professionalise the clergy, and to enable them to fulfil their newly and more rigorously defined pastoral duties comparatively free from distraction - a policy which also served to set the priest further apart from the local peasantry, who relied directly on the produce of their own holdings.

In addition, by introducing monetary payments bishops were helping to adapt the vicars' income to the needs of the thirteenth century. Throughout the period cash was increasingly the main requirement of estate holders and people of property[2], and the incumbents of churches were no exception. Both rectors and vicars were generally responsible not only for recruiting assistant clergy but also for paying their stipends, while other frequent monetary requirements included the purchasing of books, vestments, ornaments and lights and the upkeep of the chancel[3]; and in many instances much of the tithe, far in excess of the incumbent's

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1. Councils and Synods, i.174 (Worc.II,c.17).
2. See Hilton, A Medieval Society, pp.75,79; above pp.129-30.
3. See above, pp.225,230-1,283 ; below pp.300-303.

personal needs, was apparently sold in exchange for ready cash[1]. It should be added however that reliance on fixed monetary pensions also made vicars more vulnerable to the serious inflation of the period; and in this lies one possible reason for the poverty of some vicarages by the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries[2].

We have so far only been concerned with those who were technically beneficed however, and whose income, endowment and terms of tenure were consequently enshrined in legal documents and were subject to episcopal enforcement. In addition there were large numbers of clergy engaged in pastoral work who were not technically beneficed, whose position and income was less rigidly defined, but who were no less important to the structure of pastoral provision. What can be said of their economic situation?

The position of chaplains serving under absent or indisposed rectors varied. In churches where rectors were habitually non-resident - for example in those under episcopal patronage - perpetual vicarages were often ordained as we have seen[3], and in these circumstances the chaplain enjoyed security of tenure and income. Such arrangements were adopted during the century in over thirty

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1. Early Compotus Rolls of the Priory of Worcester, ed. J.M. Wilson and C. Gordon (WHS,1908), pp.23,40; The Liber Albus of the Priory of Worcester, ed. J.M. Wilson (WHS,1919), No.296.
2. For inflation and its effects, see P.D.A. Harvey, 'The English Inflation of 1180-1220', P&P, lxi (1973),3-30; P.R. Coss, 'Sir Geoffrey de Langley and the Crisis of the Knightly Class in England', P&P, lxviii (1975),27-8.
3. Above, p.153.

churches under both lay and ecclesiastical patronage as well as in a number of dependent chapelries to which rectors owned the advowsons. There was however some opposition to the establishment of vicarages amongst rectors themselves, who did not wish to see their profits reduced, and even amongst patrons[1], while Swinfield evidently felt that such arrangements contravened ecclesiastical statutes concerning divided rectories[2]; and several vicarages were remerged with the rectories during the course of the century[3]. In such circumstances a promise of residence was generally extracted from the rector concerned, although this did not of course guard against future (and quite possibly legitimate) non-residence by subsequent incumbents; while in cases of temporary absence - for purposes of study for example[4] - the ordination of a vicarage was seldom considered necessary. The result was that many parishes must have been served for long stretches by unbeneficed stipendiary chaplains appointed by the rector. In such cases there is little specific evidence of the size of their stipends - although they probably received at least the 5 marks a year laid down as the minimum vicarial stipend at the Council of Oxford in 1222[5]. Beyond that, their position must have rested largely on the generosity and conscientiousness of the absent rector, who was

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1. e.g. BL(AM)15668,f.48r (Suckley).
2. Reg. Swinfield, p.160; cf. Councils and Synods, i.250-1.
3. e.g. Reg. Giffard, ii.108,136; Reg. Reynolds, p.60; BL(AM)18461, f.32r-33r,37r; above, pp.153-4.
4. See below, p.309.
5. Councils and Synods, i.112. Even the infamous Bogo de Clare paid his chaplains this amount: Moorman, Church Life, p.27 note 5.

generally required to see only that the cure was 'adequately' served[1]. Thomas Cantelupe, during his days as a non-resident pluralist, is said to have taken a keen interest in the efficient serving of his parishes, making frequent visits, keeping the buildings in good order and supplying his chaplains with clothes and vestments; although in this as in many other respects, Cantelupe may not be typical[2].

In appropriated benefices, it was rare to find unbeneficed chaplains charged with the cure of souls by the thirteenth century. This was, after all, the situation which the vicarage system had been designed to prevent, since there was otherwise nothing to prevent unscrupulous monasteries from casually hiring priests on inadequate stipends and removing them at will. Even before the Fourth Lateran Council's legislation on the subject - what Hartridge termed 'the Magna Carta of the parish priest' - the vicarage system was already established in practice[3]; and bishops in our region were generally quite scrupulous in this matter. There were exceptions however. Bishop Silvester of Worcester twice neglected to ordain vicarages in newly appropriated churches, referring only in passing to 'adequate' provision for the chaplains serving them[4]; while at Claines the vicarial portion and some of the great tithes were given to the nuns of

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1. e.g. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.6-7,45,101,168-9; and see V.F.M. Garlick, 'The Provision of Vicars in the Early Fourteenth Century', History, xxxiv(1949),15-27, for the obligations of absentee rectors generally.
2. AASS(Oct.I), p.550; but see Walter Cantelupe's complaints concerning stipends, Councils and Synods, i.309 (Worc. III,c.52).
3. Hartridge, Vicarages, pp.20-1; Cheney, Becket to Langton, pp.131-6.
4. Worc. Reg. I, No.58; Cirenc. Cart. ii.No.409; see above, p.126.

Whistones, who had to provide a chaplain with an adequate but unspecified portion. In 1291 this was assessed at £2 13s. 4d. - a fraction above the 3 mark minimum for assistant chaplains stipulated by William de Blois sixty-two years earlier, but below the 5 mark vicarial stipend fixed at Oxford in 1222[1]. In the Hereford diocese, the dean and chapter's refusal to allow the institution of vicars with adequate stipends in their churches was one of the points at issue in their dispute with Peter Aquablanca in 1253; and although they were subsequently forced to comply the church of Putley - worth under £4 in 1291 - may have continued to be served by chaplains appointed by the chapter, since no institutions are recorded[2].

Where the parish church was actually the conventual church of a monastery or priory, resistance to episcopal interference was even stronger; and although by the late thirteenth century perpetual vicarages had been established in many conventual parish churches, others continued to be served through chaplains with unspecified incomes appointed by the abbot or prior. At Tewkesbury, Walter Cantelupe's attempt to establish a vicarage in 1242 was foiled by the production of papal privileges[3]; and parochial chaplains of uncertain status and income similarly continued to serve the parishes of Pershore (Holy Cross), Westwood Park, Deerhurst and Cirencester and

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1. VCH Worcs. iii.306; Tax. Nich. p.239; Councils and Synods, i.112,175.
2. Heref. Cath. Muns. i. 394-6(No.1408); Charters and Records of Hereford Cathedral, ed. W.W. Capes (Hereford, 1908), pp.95-101; Tax. Nich. p.158.
3. Ann. Mon. i.126.

(probably) Evesham, Horsley and Morville[1].

It was above all in sub-parochial chapelries however that the pastoral structure continued to rely on unbeneficed chaplains of ambiguous status. For a variety of reasons both dioceses, as we have seen, contained large numbers of such chapels, which far from representing mere appendages to the parish structure continued to play a vital role within the network of pastoral provision throughout the thirteenth century[2]. Not all were of identical status, and the incumbents of some were certainly rectors in all but name[3]; while others, even in chapels which were unambiguously dependent, possessed independent endowments which meant that economically they enjoyed parity with at least the poorer rectors. The chaplains of Kimbolton in the vast parish of Leominster and of Offenham in the Vale of Evesham, for example, each held a virgate of land in addition to specified tithes and offerings, Offenham being separately taxed in 1291 at £5 6s. 8d.[4]. It was rare however for such chaplains to hold any land independently, and most received only varying and often quite small portions of the oblations and offerings[5], while

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1. VCH Worcs. ii.386, iii.237, iv.162; VCH Gloucs. viii.44; VCH Salop. ii.29; The Miracles of Simon de Montfort (with The Chronicle of William de Rishanger), ed. J.O. Halliwell (Camden Soc., xv, 1840), p.94. Horsley was possibly served by the prior or one of the canons: above, p.245.
2. Above, pp.13-32.
3. Above, pp.26-7, 30.
4. BL(CM) Domit. A.iii, f.103r; BL(CM) Vesp. B.xxiv, f.52r; Tax. Nich. p.219.
5. e.g. Eyton, Miles Hope, Lucton, Orleton, Middleton on the Hill, Yarpole, Brimpsfield, Grafton next Bromsgrove: BL(CM) Domit. A.iii, f.102v-103v; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.706(f.357v).

several still relied solely on unregulated stipends from the corporate or individual rectors who appointed them. In 1336 the chaplain of Over Mitton was receiving an annual stipend of £2 13s. 4d. from the rector of Kidderminster - only 13s. 4d higher than the minimum stipulated by William de Blois over a century earlier - and unofficially appointed stipendiary chaplains apparently also served the chapels of Bretforton, Lemington, Tredington, Hopton Cangeford and Stitt throughout the period[1].

Even where chapels had originally been endowed with independent lands or tithes by the founders, these were usually engulfed by the mother church or (if it had been appropriated) by the appropriating monastery, leaving the chaplain again on a stipend or negotiated portion. Thus while the chapel of Postlip was given to Winchcombe Abbey in the mid-twelfth century with a glebe of one virgate, a house and rights of common pasture, as the mother church the abbey appropriated the land and appurtenances to its own use, and in 1255 exchanged it with John de Solers for rents elsewhere[2]. The chapels of Adlestrop, Charlton Abbots, Alvington and Benthall, all originally possessed of half a virgate or more, similarly lost their glebes to their mother churches before 1300[3].

More important than the type or even the size of income is the

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1. Councils and Synods, i.175; BL(AM)37503,f.44r; BL(HM)3763,f.154r; VCH Gloucs. vi.219,viii.234; Eyton, v.14-15; Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS.1,f.210v.
2. Landboc Winch. i.81,87.
3. Landboc Winch. i.144; VCH Gloucs. vi.15; BL(HM)3763,f.81r; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.91v-92r; Bodl.L.MS. Top. Salop. d.2, f.147r.

fact that these portions and stipends, indeed the chaplains' rights generally, remained largely unregulated and outside episcopal control, general statutes about minimum wages notwithstanding. The twin pillars of the vicarage system were regulation of income and security of tenure; yet we have seen that the recruitment, hiring and payment of assistant chaplains was generally left to rectors and vicars[1], who were obliged only to see that chapels were adequately served and, presumably, to observe general legislation about clerical stipends. Beyond this there is little sign of direct episcopal involvement, or interest; and it is uncertain how far uninstituted chaplains even enjoyed any security of tenure. Early in the thirteenth century the rector of Overbury had to resort to litigation in order to remove a chaplain whom he had previously appointed in the chapel of Berrow, although this at least implies that he assumed the right to be his; while as late as 1180 Bishop Robert Foliot accepted that the new chapel of Stitt should be served through a chaplain appointed by the abbot of Haughmond and removable at will[2]. Chaplains' portions were apparently determined on similarly informal lines; and although the portions of those serving particular chapels are occasionally described in detail in monastic cartularies, these apparently refer to customary practice rather than statutory duty[3]. Any adjustments were usually the result of private negotiation between chaplain and

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1. Above, pp.225, 230-1, 283, 300.
2. Worc. Reg. I, No.246; Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS.1, f.210v.
3. e.g. BL(CM)Domit. A.iii, f.102v-103v; BL(HM)3763, f.73v-75r, 79v, 81r; and see HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.706(f.357v); Eyton, xi.340.

rector. Thus in 1295 the chaplain of Offenham exchanged rights of common pasture for a virgate of meadowland and two selions at 'Fokemulle', in a purely private arrangement with the abbot of Evesham[1].

Where the mother church was subject to a vicarage ordination, the position of chaplains serving outlying areas could occasionally be strengthened, and brought more directly within the orbit of episcopal control. That for Dilwyn fixed the stipend of the chaplain who served Chadnor on Sundays at 10 shillings, while that for Lindridge guaranteed the chaplains serving Knighton on Teme and Pensax rent-free accommodation in the priest's houses there[2]. More usually however appropriation of the mother church had the opposite effect, the vicarage ordination turning all the proceeds (including houses and any other independent endowments) over to the appropriating monastery or to the vicar, who was charged with seeing that the chapels were adequately served, but failing to give any detailed stipulations as to what the chaplain's stipend or position should be. Thus the small tithes and offerings from the chapels of Aldeswell, Dowdeswell and Little Colesbourne were in 1290 turned over to the vicar of Withington, who was simply to find chaplains 'as hitherto' (prout hactenus); and similar arrangements were made in the ordinations for Wolford, Lydney, Churcham, Bromsgrove, St. Owen

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1. BL(HM)3763, f.188v.
2. BL(HM)3586, f.135v-136r; Reg. Swinfield, p.455.

Gloucester, Leominster, Wollaston and Stokesay[1].

The result was that even by the end of the thirteenth century large numbers of parochial clergy, integral to the pastoral network and some of them serving areas of several thousand acres, remained outside the structure created by the vicarage system. In theory they were protected by general episcopal legislation concerning minimum wages, and where customary stipends and portions are recorded, these generally conform with the regulations. Whether the regulations themselves were adequate by the end of the century is doubtful however[2]; and there are no recorded instances of chaplains' stipends being increased on episcopal authority. To this extent the vicarage system itself remained undermined and partially incomplete. It should be added that assistant clergy actually employed in the parish church remained in an equally uncertain position - although where vicarages were ordained they too were occasionally brought within the orbit of episcopal control and enforcement, sometimes sharing corrodies with the vicar, or receiving a stipulated stipend[3]. Where additional help was hired at the incumbent's discretion on an ad hoc basis however, as was clearly envisaged in a number of cases[4], it

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1. HWRO, Reg. Giffard, pp.56,649(f.31v,329r); Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B329,f.164v-5r; Glouc. Cart. i.No.176; Worc. Reg. I, No.460; PRO C115 K2/6683, f.34v; BL(CM)Domit. A. iii, f.58v; BL, MS Arundel 19, f.32r-v; Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS. 1, f.207r.
2. The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton, vol.vii. Ordinations 1290-99, ed. R.M.T. Hill (Lincoln Record Soc., lxix,1975),p.xi.
3. Glouc. Cart. i. No.209, iii.No.973; BL(CM)Domit. A. iii,f.58v,102r; BL(HM)3586,f.135v-6r.
4. See above, pp.225-6.

must have been extremely difficult to regulate the size of income or the terms of employment - despite the fact that parochial chaplains in particular played an important pastoral role, sometimes serving outlying chapels on particular days or even celebrating in the parish church if the rector was absent or not in orders[1].

There remains the question of how far any of the local clergy, beneficed or unbeneficed, actually cultivated their own lands in the thirteenth century[2]. Incumbents in the richer churches clearly did not do so; and in 1336 the rector of Kidderminster's expenses unambiguously included 50 shillings 'in expensis autumpnalibus pro blado et feno colligendo apud Horkote', while at Pillerton Hersey the rector had his own reeve[3]. For the poorer clergy evidence is scarce and usually ambiguous. A list of chattels which vicars in the Vale of Evesham churches were supposed to leave for their successors included several agricultural items, ranging from a fully equipped plough and cart to a fork, spade, wooden rake, scythe and winnowing fan, although it is uncertain whether these were intended for their own use; while in an assize utrum in 1224 the chaplain of an unnamed Gloucestershire church, subsequently described as 'pauper', informed the court that he had ploughed and seeded the disputed acre of land

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1. Above, pp.226-30.
2. For opposing views, see G.C. Homans, English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century (Harvard, 1942), p.385; Hilton, A Medieval Society, p.63.
3. BL(AM)37503, f.44r; Roll of the Justices in Eyre for Glouc, Warws and Staffs 1221-2, ed. D.M. Stenton (SS, lix, 1940), No.822.

('terram illam aravit et seminavit') before his opponent's intrusion - although again it is uncertain whether he had physically done this himself[1]. We have seen however that vicars and unbeneficed chaplains frequently did not even possess substantial arable lands, while even rectors relied most heavily on the tithes and offerings of their parishioners. Their well-being thus turned primarily on the direct exploitation not of their landed resources but of these revenues; and even in the poorer benefices glebes were not always held in demesne. Taynton was given to Gloucester Abbey in the twelfth century with an appurtenant virgate of land, the villein who held it and all his progeny, while in 1261 various free tenants were holding two virgates of Siddington church for 13 shillings a year, and in 1269 it was found that half a virgate had similarly been held of Tytherington church by James de la Warre for an annual rent - all of these churches being assessed at under £10[2]. Parts of the glebelands appurtenant to St. James's Warwick, St. Aldate's Gloucester and possibly Whatcote were similarly farmed out[3] - implying that the rectors were less interested in the direct exploitation of their lands than in quick cash returns, which perhaps better suited their immediate requirements in the thirteenth century. While the possibility remains that some of the

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1. BL(HM)3763,f.187r; Cur. Reg. R. xi.497.
2. Glouc. Cart. ii.No.650; PRO CP25(1) 74/26/597; PRO Just. I./275-6, m.38d; Tax. Nich. pp.160,220,221.
3. PRO E164/22,f.37r; The English Register of Godstow Nunnery, ed. A. Clark (3 vols, Early English Text Soc., orig. ser. cxxix,cxxx, cxlii,1905-11), i.No.177; Warws. Feet of Fines, vol.i, ed. E. Stokes and F.C. Wellstood (DS,xi,1932), No.892.

poorer clergy remained 'deep in the husbandry of the village'[1] and cultivated their own lands therefore, by the later thirteenth century it seems equally possible that many others, although probably keeping some livestock[2] and tending the gardens and curtilages appurtenant to their houses, subsisted primarily on tithes, offerings, rents and other payments in cash or kind - leaving them freer to fulfil the increasing pastoral burdens incumbent upon the clergy during the period.

(iii) Conduct, Education and Pastoral Functions.

Throughout the thirteenth century, the pastoral and sacramental duties of the parish clergy were defined with a new rigour in episcopal statutes. Those for Worcester were typical, requiring priests not only to celebrate mass and perform the other sacraments conscientiously and correctly, which included hearing confessions and imposing suitable penances according to the theological groundrules, but also to instruct their parishioners in the elements of the Faith, to teach them the creed, ten commandments, Pater Noster and Ave Maria, and to impress upon them their own religious obligations[3]. How far were the local clergy capable of fulfilling this role?

Given the facilities which existed for the education of parish clergy

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1. Homans, English Villagers, p.385.
2. e.g. Red Bk. Worc., ed. Hollings, ii.125,176, iii.243; Landboc Winch. i.274-7; HWRO, Reg. Giffard, p.897(f.448r); PRO Just. I/ 275-6, m.17d. Several vicarages included pasture rights (above, p. 293 and note 3), although in one instance this was only for the vicar's horse: Glouc. Cart. ii. No.789.
3. Councils and Synods, i.170,172,173,179,297-300,301,302,303-6,313, (Worc.II, c.1,8,10,13,16,58; Worc.III, c.6-7,12,14-15,19,25,31-8, 68); and see ibid., ii.900-1,1076.

in our region by the later thirteenth century, the level of learning required was probably not unattainable. In the first place, as Dr. Clanchy points out the role of parish priests themselves in imparting basic literacy and clerical learning to the sons of local peasantry, and thus in preparing the next generation of parish clergy, has almost certainly been underestimated[1]. This had in fact been a requirement of canon law since the ninth century[2]; and there are several references to priests in our region having pupils or proteges (alumni), while in 1200 the vicar of Ludlow, M. Philip, was in charge of the 'schools' there[3]. In most cases such tutoring must have been extremely elementary; although this at least gives some indication of how so many clerks from a peasant background were able to reach the standard required for ordination and, in many cases, institution[4].

In addition, there were schools at Gloucester, Worcester, Warwick, Shrewsbury and probably elsewhere[5], while Hereford Cathedral especially was an important centre of learning during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries[6]. How far these were accessible to aspiring

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1. M.T. Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1307 (London,1979), pp.191-4, and see pp.188-90.
2. Ibid., p.193.
3. Glouc. Cart. i.No.103; The Cartulary...of the Cistercian Abbey of Flaxley, ed. A.W. Crawley-Boevey (Exeter,1887), No.49; PRO C115 K2/6683,f.113v; C.R. Cheney, English Bishops' Chanceries 1100-1250 (Manchester,1950), pp.157-8. In one instance the priest's 'alumnus' was apparently his son: Bodl.L.MS.Film Dep.912(microfilm of Bristol Abbey cart.), f.181v.
4. See above, pp.156-7, 175 ff., 253-69.
5. PRO C115 K2/6683,f.33r-v,40r; Reg. Giffard, ii.91,395; PRO E164/22, f.8v; Cal. Pat. R. 1225-32,p.506.
6. K. Edwards, The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages (Manchester,1949), pp.189-91; M.T. Clanchy, England and its Rulers 1066-1272 (Glasgow,1983), pp.177-8; and see Chtrs. & Recs. Heref., ed. Capes, p.85.

clerks from humble backgrounds who did not yet have the financial security of a benefice is debatable; although we have seen that in theory all clerks seeking ordination had already acquired a 'title' making them economically self-sufficient[1], and on occasion candidates were explicitly required to stand 'in scolis' for a specified time before being accepted[2]. Certainly both William de Blois and Walter Cantelupe apparently expected local schools to be frequented by unemployed clerks in minor orders, stipulating in their synodal statutes that the office of holy-water clerk in churches situated near to civil schools should be reserved for the poor scholars studying there[3]. Local religious houses too continued to play an educational role. James de Berkeley, a younger son of Thomas de Berkeley beneficed at Slimbridge and later rising to become bishop of Exeter, is said to have been 'bred a scoller under the Abbot of Kingswood' before going on to Oxford[4]; and some of the more obscure clergy beneficed or granted titles by local abbeys and priories[5] may also have received at least a rudimentary education in conventual schools prior to their preferment.

By the end of the century, an institutional framework had been established which allowed some beneficed clerks access to more

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1. Above, p.213.
2. Introduction to Reg. Gainsborough (WHS, 1929), p.lvi.
3. Councils and Synods, i.174,309 (Worc.II, c.20;III, c.53); and see ibid., i.514.
4. The Berkeley MSS: The Lives of the Berkeleys...by John Smyth of Nibley, vol.i, ed. J. Maclean (Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc., 1883), pp.215-8.
5. See above, pp.175-9, 240-5.

advanced education. The constitution Cum ex eo of 1298 guaranteed incumbents the right to up to seven years' absence for purposes of study, during which time they could receive the fruits of their benefices provided that they were so licensed by the diocesan, proceeded to the subdiaconate within a year, and saw that their church was suitably served. Boniface VIII thus put the system of licensed non-residence on a firm footing and in particular removed the restrictions and ambiguities introduced by his predecessor Gregory X; although a similar system had operated in one form or another throughout the period, and as early as 1219 Honorius III ruled that promising clerks should be sent to the universities on full income to study theology[1]. Episcopal registers in our region show ninety-five such licences being issued at Hereford between 1275 and 1317, and another fifty-seven at Worcester between 1268 and 1301, some to incumbents with powerful connections or who were already magistri, but more to obscure clerks of apparently limited means[2]. A number were educated in local schools, although several went to Oxford or Paris from where periodic reports on their progress were sent to the bishops concerned[3].

For the more minimally-educated majority, there were available

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1. L.E. Boyle, 'The Constitution Cum ex eo of Boniface VIII: Education of Parochial Clergy', Medieval Studies, xxiv (1962), 263-302.
2. Reg. Swinfield, pp.545-6; Reg. Cantelupe and Reg. Giffard passim; and see above, pp.156-7, 175-9.
3. e.g. Reg. Giffard, ii.91; Reg. Cantelupe, p.45; Reg. Swinfield, pp.396,545.

by this period a variety of manuals of instruction geared specifically to the parish priest's needs, many though not all produced on episcopal initiative, of which the most important for our purposes is the treatise on confession composed by Walter Cantelupe in 1240 and published with his synodal statutes for the diocese of Worcester[1]. This was to be copied by all chaplains and, along with a copy of the statutes themselves, was to be proclaimed and discussed in ruridecanal chapters, learnt by rote, and a copy preserved in every church of the diocese - anyone found lacking being subject to a fine of half a mark for negligence[2]. How far this was enforced is uncertain - registers at Worcester, unlike those for Exeter, do not contain explicit examples of incumbents being required to learn episcopal statutes and treatises within a given time - although the parish church of All Saints Bristol certainly possessed copies both of the treatise and of the statutes in 1270[3]. Unfortunately no copies have survived; although it almost certainly followed a similar format to those produced by Stavensby at Coventry and by Quinil at Exeter[4]. The former not only listed the seven sins one by one, commenting, introducing biblical and patristic references and giving the exact vernacular

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1. Councils and Synods, i.305. For other 13th. cent. manuals, see W.A. Pantin, The English Church in the Fourteenth Century (Cambridge, 1955), pp.192-4,219; L.E. Boyle, 'The Oculus Sacerdotis and some other Works of William of Pagula', TRHS, 5th. ser., v(1955),81-3,93.
2. Councils and Synods, i.305,319-21 (Worc.III,c.35,94,97,102).
3. 'The Will of William Selk, Vicar of All Saints, Bristol, 1270', ed. J. Maclean,TBGAS, xv (1890-1), 313; Councils and Synods, ii.1077 note 1.
4. Councils and Synods, i.207-26, ii.1060-77.

equivalents, but also included a step-by-step guide as to how to go about hearing confession, what questions should follow what answers, and what penances were suitable for what types of sin. Quinil's treatise added an exposition of the ten commandments and details of how the confessional should be used for instructing the laity. They were thus in the form of practical handbooks or reference works, offering a potted summary of difficult scholastic precepts insofar as this affected the parish priest, but attempting to relate them to the everyday situations with which he would be familiar and accompanying this with practical advice and guidelines. In addition, it has been suggested that most parish churches in the thirteenth century would have possessed collections of homilies containing suitable sermons for each Sunday and Holy Day of the year - enabling the priest to fulfil his preaching obligations satisfactorily even with little biblical knowledge or theology[1].

The possibility thus exists that most parish clergy were able to meet the minimum requirements; and the evidence of episcopal registers, once these begin, suggests that this was probably the case, at least by the later thirteenth century. At Worcester Giffard's register, covering a thirty-five-year period, contains only one explicit instance of a clerk being refused institution on the grounds of insufficient learning[2]; yet at the same time the bishop was taking

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1. D.W. Robertson, 'The Frequency of Preaching in Thirteenth Century England', Speculum, xxiv (1949), 376-7.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.248.

rigorous action against unlicensed pluralism and non-residence and, following the second council of Lyons, against those who failed to be in full orders within twelve months of institution[1]. The same is true of Cantelupe and Swinfield at Hereford, who continually hounded recalcitrant pluralists, absentees, and those in minor orders - including royal servants on several occasions - and generally seem to have acted promptly against the more serious abuses occasionally discovered on visitation[2]. This being so, it seems unlikely that serious shortcomings in the level of clerical literacy or in priests' ability to carry out their statutory functions were being overlooked or ignored; and the implication is that by this late period, although there was undoubtedly room for improvement, bishops were on the whole reasonably satisfied with the standards they encountered.

Indeed literacy was not even included amongst the long list of potential abuses to be investigated by archdeacons which Godfrey Giffard drew up in 1276, the list including pluralism, failure to be in correct orders, the adequacy of stipends, the maintenance of church buildings and priests' houses, venality and the contraction of clandestine marriages[3]; while even episcopal statutes themselves, despite their frequent complaints about the simplicity of parish

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1. Reg. Giffard, i.41, ii.90,103,127,144,171,174,192,193,297,299,302,355, 447,480,487,506,514ff,519,539.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.25,30,78,88,111,125-6,127,136,137,138,141,145, 150,151,152,155,156-7,159-60,237-9 etc; Reg. Swinfield, pp.2-3,4-5, 161-2,377-8,457,493-4.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.90.

clergy, contain indications that the situation had improved. In 1240 Cantelupe was demanding that any priests of insufficient learning who were ignorant of his statutes and penitential should be reprimanded, fined and ordered to learn them by advent. Thirty years later Peter Quinil at Exeter could unequivocally stipulate that any incumbents insufficiently versed in the ten commandments, the seven sacraments and the articles of the faith, or failing adequately to instruct their parishioners in these matters, should be summarily suspended - a threat which could not have been made realistically unless it was envisaged that those offending would represent but a small minority[1].

Nor is this true only of those technically beneficed. It was a canonical requirement that clerks seeking ordination should be examined with regard to their general learning as well as to their title, legitimacy and good character[2]; and although the ordination lists for Worcester and Hereford, in contrast to those of some other dioceses[3], do not contain explicit references to the systematic examination of candidates, it seems unlikely that bishops in our region would have been any laxer than their colleagues in this matter. Indeed on at least one occasion Giffard refused to ordain a clerk to the diaconate on account of his want of learning, while

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1. Councils and Synods, i.320-1 (Worc.III,c.97,102), ii.1017-8.
2. Councils and Synods, i.248; Extra, I,14,c.14.
3. The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton, vol.vii. Ordinations 1290-99, ed. R.M.T. Hill (Lincoln Rec. Soc., lxix,1975), pp.ix-x; The Register of Walter Giffard, Archbishop of York, ed. W. Brown (Surtees Soc., cix,1904), pp.194,196.

William de Donamen', who had illicitly obtained deacon's orders outside the diocese, was dispensed only on condition that he would be personally examined by the bishop before receiving full orders[1]. The registers of Giffard's successors at Worcester similarly contain numerous references to candidates being required to 'stand', sometimes 'in scolis', before reseeking ordination[2].

Moreover, before clerks were admitted to any positions of responsibility it is likely that some further examination was conducted. In the Worcester diocese even private chaplains were forbidden to hear confession unless specifically admitted to cure of souls - and presumably examined - by the bishop, while Walter Cantelupe further ordered that the names of all those authorized to celebrate divine service within the diocese should be recorded in writing, a separate list being compiled of those of dubious repute[3]. There is, admittedly, little concrete evidence of priests being systematically examined before their employment in outlying chapels or under non-resident rectors, although one such example is recorded in Simon of Ghent's register at Salisbury, and as there is nothing to indicate that the circumstances were in any way unusual this may well have been done in other dioceses on other occasions[4]. Certainly bishops were keen

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1. Reg. Giffard, i.32, ii.345.
2. Introduction to Reg. Gainsborough (WHS,1929),p.lvi; Reg. Reynolds, pp.xviii,xx,60; and see Councils and Synods, i.180,317 (Worc.II, c.61;III,c.88).
3. Councils and Synods, i.179,314,320(Worc.II,c.57;III,c.72,98).
4. Garlick, 'Provision of Vicars', p.18.

to include unbeneficed clerks within the general disciplinary apparatus of the diocese[1], and it was common practice, on visitation, to examine not only the incumbent rector or vicar of a parish, but also his entire staff and the chaplains of any outlying chapelries[2]. To this extent assistant clergy are as unlikely as their beneficed counterparts to have fallen seriously below what was demanded - although the standards required were of course rather lower in the case of an assistant deacon or clerk.

Nor is this an unreasonable supposition. The facilities for some very basic clerical training almost certainly existed at parochial level as we have seen, and very occasionally there are more positive indications of the general level of literacy amongst the local clergy. As a non-resident pluralist Thomas Cantelupe is said to have appointed to his benefices only chaplains who knew how to preach[3]; and it is interesting that of the local clerics who gave evidence to the ecclesiastical commissioners prior to his canonization forty years later, nearly all testified in French, in contrast to their parishioners who are almost exclusively described as speaking English only. Not all were beneficed, their number including the chaplain of Ashperton (in Stretton Grandison) and the parochial chaplain of Castle Frome[4]. Knowledge of French did not of course have any direct bearing on their

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1. See below, p.320.
2. Moorman, Church Life, pp.92-3; and see Reg. Cantelupe, pp.237-9.
3. AASS(Oct.I), p.551.
4. AASS(Oct.I), pp.618, 642-4. Only one parishioner testified in French: ibid., p.644.

ability to carry out their clerical functions; although it does imply both a certain degree of education and literacy[1] and that standards generally had improved since the early twelfth century, when the rector of Haselbury Plucknett complained of his inability to understand French in the presence of the archdeacon[2].

It should be added that the role of the parish clergy was not confined to performance of the sacraments and religious instruction, but embraced a wide spectrum of social, educative and disciplinary functions. Priests were expected to dispense alms and provide hospitality, to publicize and enforce local holidays and festa ferianda, and to instruct their parishioners in matters of everyday concern such as the dangers of nurses overlaying young children or of death through drunkenness[3]. In addition, although their own disciplinary powers were limited - they could suspend offenders from entry to the church but could not subsequently relax the penalty, and were authorized to deal personally only with simple fornication and lesser offences - they nevertheless had the important duty of feeding the consistory and ruridecanal courts by reporting offenders to the bishop or rural dean[4]. There is little reason to suppose that these

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1. Clanchy, Memory to Written Record, pp.151-4; W. Rothwell, 'The Role of French in Thirteenth Century England', Bull. John Rylands Library, lviii (1975-6), 445-66.
2. H.M.R.E. Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse', History, lx(1975),344.
3. Councils and Synods, i.220,302,311,318,513, ii.907,1079; B. Harvey, Work and Festa Ferianda in Medieval England', J. Eccl. H., xxiii (1972), 308.
4. Councils and Synods, i.175,302,303 (Worc.II,c.28-9;III,c.23,30), 385-6,411.

functions were generally neglected, especially if, as has been suggested, the clergy's purely religious and sacramental duties were on the whole being adequately (if basically) performed - although almsgiving, as bishops recognized, could only be undertaken according to the church's means, and in many cases must have been minimal[1]. Occasionally there are glimpses of the priest's role as an arbitrator and figure of authority within the village. When a violent argument erupted between the prior of Wootton Wawen and one of his monks one evening in 1281, the prior's groom made straightway for the vicar's house, asking him to intervene and prevent further bloodshed; and in the subsequent enquiry it emerged that the prior's servants were in the habit of appealing to the vicar whenever the prior - who was generally drunk and pugnacious - maltreated them[2]. Generally however it is only the disciplinary functions which have left any record, and those only sporadically - although in 1283 several members of Sir Henry Huband's household were cited for having eaten meat during a period of prescribed fasting contrary to the warnings of their parish priest, and two parishioners of Blockley excommunicated for withholding tithes were presumably also reported by the priest[3]. Surviving fragments from a Droitwich ruridecanal court roll of 1300 similarly show local parishioners of humble status, charged mostly with adultery, being hauled before

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1. Councils and Synods, i.513, ii.907,1079.
2. Reg. Giffard, ii.129-30.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.215,282, and see ibid., p.76.

the dean and subsequently disciplined, usually by corporal punishment; and although the fragment gives no indication of how they had been detected it seems likely that many had similarly been reported by their priests from local gossip[1].

The Gregorian reform went beyond a more rigorous definition of the clergy's pastoral duties and a raising of educational standards however, embracing a more fundamental redefinition of the clergy's position within society. The main objectives were vigorously restated in 1215 by the Fourth Lateran Council, itself drawing on earlier decretals, which emphasized that the parish clergy were to be distinguished from the laity not only by their functions, but equally by their appearance, conduct and lifestyle, and in particular by strict adherence to celibacy[2] - precepts which were restated and amplified in subsequent diocesan statutes in our own region as elsewhere[3]. How far were these aims - which in the context of the twelfth-century Church amounted to a 'devastating social revolution' as Professor Brooke points out[4] - fulfilled in our region during the

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1. 'Records of a Ruridecanal Court of 1300', ed. F.S. Pearson (WHS Collecteana, 1912), pp.73-9. The Roll, the earliest to survive, is discussed by J. Foster, 'The Activities of Rural Deans in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries' (Manchester Univ. M.A. thesis, 1955), pp.138-41; Hilton, A Medieval Society, p.265; J. Scammell, 'The Rural Chapter in England from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth centuries', EHR, lxxxvi (1971), 13.
2. Extra, III, 1, c.13,14,15; III,50,c.9.
3. Councils and Synods, i.174,175,301,306-8,311-13,319,320 (Worc.II, c.17,25; III, c.19,39-45,62-6,69,95,99-100).
4. C.N.L. Brooke, 'Gregorian Reform in Action: Clerical Marriage in England 1050-1200', Medieval Church and Society. Collected Essays (London, 1971), p.69.

thirteenth century?

Throughout the period we find examples of 'married', cohabiting and incontinent priests, several of them beneficed or otherwise employed within the pastoral network[1]; and it seems likely that at the lowest levels this continued throughout the medieval period. Even hereditary benefices occasionally survived into the early or mid-thirteenth century, the church of Eye remaining in the hands of successive members of the same family for over a century until 1254, some of whom were apparently never presented[2]. As with clerical education however, the evidence of episcopal registers suggests that by the end of the century the situation was under control. Giffard's register contains two examples of beneficed clerks being illegally married, while in 1300 one of the matters before his council concerned the rector of Broadway who had sent his pregnant concubine to the parish priest of Astley, and some years later Robert de Wychio - one of Giffard's own clerks, beneficed in several local churches - admitted to having once been found guilty of incontinence, but said he had subsequently been corrected[3]. In the Hereford diocese the incumbents of Churcham and Tedstone Wafer

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1. e.g. PRO Just. I./300, m.22d; Heref. Cath. Muns., i.259 (No.2012); Cirenc. Cart. I.Nos.296-302; Descriptive Catalogue of the Charters and Muniments...at Berkeley Castle, ed. I.H. Jeayes (Bristol, 1892), Nos.340,342; The Vita Wulfstani...and the Miracles and Translation of St. Wulfstan, ed. R.R. Darlington (Camden Soc., 3rd ser., xl,1928), pp.175-6; below pp.319-20,322.
2. B.R. Kemp, 'Hereditary Benefices in the Medieval English Church: a Herefordshire Example', Bull. Instit. Hist. Research, xliii (1970), 1-15.
3. Reg. Giffard, ii.109,114,428,517,544; Reg. Reynolds, p.47.

were similarly accused of sexual relations with local women in 1280 and 1292 respectively, and Girard de Ogina, the Savoyard rector of Colwall, had a daughter[1]. These hardly amount to a vast number of cases during a period of over thirty years; and if the type of business recorded in episcopal registers may be taken as indicative, the most persistent problems facing bishops by this date seem to have been not lack of sexual restraint so much as unlicensed non-residence, pluralism and failure to be in full orders - all of which, as we have seen, were being vigorously tackled at both Hereford and Worcester[2].

Problems amongst the unbeneficed clergy - or at least amongst unbeneficed clerks employed within the pastoral network - are unlikely to have been much greater. Bishops were keen to include this sector within the disciplinary apparatus of the diocese, emphasizing in their statutes that stipulations concerning clerical conduct applied equally to those without benefices, who would not be ordained or considered for institution unless the requirements were met - as well as examining assistant clergy on visitation, and keeping written records of all those authorized to celebrate divine service in the diocese as we have seen[3]. The problem of enforcement was facilitated by what, in effect, amounted to a system of mutual surveillance. In the Worcester diocese assistant chaplains were

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1. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.86,239; Reg. Swinfield, pp.215,282.
2. Above, pp.311-12.
3. Councils and Synods, i.306-7; above, pp.314-5.

required to live with the resident rector or vicar and to be kept at his table, ostensibly to provide testimony of their employer's general conduct and residence record; although the system must have worked both ways, particularly as rectors were held responsible if they knowingly caused their churches to be served by incontinent priests[1].

Nor should we be particularly surprised if clerical concubinage and even incontinence had apparently ceased to be widespread in the later thirteenth century. By the 1260's and 1270's, the period from which episcopal registers in our region commence, over half a century had elapsed since the Fourth Lateran Council, during which time new ideas about clerical celibacy and conduct had been constantly and vigorously impressed on two or three generations of clerks and laymen. Consequently ideas which may still have seemed newfangled or revolutionary in 1215, and certainly in the late twelfth century, and which undoubtedly caused much resentment, were probably already coming to be seen as normal by clergy and laity alike. How far attitudes amongst laymen had changed by the mid-fourteenth century is well illustrated by a deed endowing a chantry in St. Augustine's Abbey in Bristol, in which the donor, Thomas de Berkeley, outlined the chaplain's obligations in terms which strongly recall thirteenth-century episcopal statutes. The chaplain was to live chastely and honestly; he was not to go to markets or taverns

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1. Councils and Synods, i.179,313-4 (Worc.II,c.52;III,c.70).

more than necessary; nor was he to frequent plays or unlawful games[1]. This contrasts strongly with the early thirteenth century, when a local knight, Henry of Belbroughton, was prepared to marry one of the parson of Alvechurch's daughters - suggesting that even by this date cohabiting clergy and their progeny were still considered respectable in knightly society[2].

The intervening revolution in social attitudes cannot have been achieved easily however. No doubt developments in secular law, which automatically classed the children of clerics as illegitimate and disqualified them from inheriting land[3], went some way towards undermining clerical marriage as a normal social institution; but even in the thirteenth century some compromise and accommodation was required to smooth the transition. Thus about 1206 Bishop Giles of Hereford instituted a son of the previous incumbent to Allensmore church at the presentation of the dean and chapter - apparently preferring this compromise to an outright attack on hereditary benefices, so long as everything was done legitimately and through the correct channels[4]. Although clerical marriage was already under attack long before 1200, and by the end of the period had apparently been all but eradicated as a normal, widespread and

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1. Charters and Muniments...at Berkeley Castle, ed. Jeayes, No.521.
2. Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Lincs. 1218-19 and Worcs.1221, ed. D.M. Stenton (SS, liii, 1934), No.948.
3. Ibid., No.163; Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Glouces, Warws and Staffs, 1221-2, ed. D.M. Stenton (SS, lix, 1940), No.1077.
4. Cur. Reg. R. ix.171, 310; x.100-1.

socially acceptable institution, nevertheless the thirteenth century was a period of slow and painful transition.

So far as the other aspects of this clerical revolution - in dress, lifestyle and general conduct - are concerned, there is virtually no positive evidence; although the arguments invoked above regarding standards of literacy and celibacy hold equally true in this context, and insofar as lesser misdemeanours were apparently being detected and dealt with, the silence of the registers on such matters can probably be taken as indicating that bishops were reasonably satisfied, at least so far as the beneficed clergy are concerned. The sole exception is the continuing predilection for hunting amongst the more aristocratic clergy, and it is puzzling that Godfrey Giffard, whose register contains references to at least four beneficed clerks being fined by the king for poaching, appears to have taken no disciplinary action on these occasions - on the contrary going to great lengths to ensure that Ralph Bagot, the rector of Morton Bagot, could pay his fine of 50 marks, and diverting parish revenues to this end[1]. This seems completely out of character, and possibly represents yet another example of deference to social rank; although it is also tempting to see in this leniency a reflection of bishops' own passion for hunting[2]. So far as other details of ecclesiastical discipline are concerned however it seems unlikely

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.68,166,172,210,212,263,293,305.
2. See AASS (Oct.I), pp.563-4; Reg. Giffard, ii.411; Moorman, Church Life, p.177 and n.6.

that a bishop such as Thomas Cantelupe, who while still a student at Paris insisted on wearing clerical dress on account of his being archdeacon of Stafford[1], would have tolerated any laxity; although it must be conceded that the further down the ecclesiastical hierarchy we go, and particularly outside the parish structure, effective detection and enforcement must have become increasingly difficult.

(iv) The impact of the laity.

We have so far examined the secular clergy almost exclusively from an ecclesiastical viewpoint. Given the nature of much of the evidence this is inevitable; but it must be remembered that the relationship between priest and parishioner was a two-way one, and we must not be misled into assuming that the parish clergy and pastoral care were merely imposed by the Church on a passive laity. Certainly this was a situation which the Church strove hard to create. The Fourth Lateran Council stated unambiguously that the laity's lot was to obey, and the twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw a steady erosion of laymen's rights regarding the foundation and ownership of churches, the appointment of clergy, and active participation in religious life, leaving only a residue of largely financial obligations[2]. In reality, however, the laity were not necessarily as passive as ecclesiastical pronouncements might suggest. In what ways were they involved in local religious life,

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1. AASS (Oct.I), p.552.
2. Extra, III, 13, c.12; above pp. 96-7; and see Councils and Synods, i.389,496-7,512-3,600, ii.896-7,1020-1; E. Mason, 'The Role of the English Parishioner 1100-1500', J. Eccl. H., xxvii (1976), 17-21.

and to what extent did their requirements and expectations affect the quality of pastoral provision and even the recruitment of local clergy?

In the first place these financial obligations themselves involved the laity in the running of the parish church, albeit in a limited and rather involuntary fashion. Parishioners were almost invariably charged with upkeep of the nave, and occasionally with the provision of bells, oranments and even books[1]; and it has been suggested that their involvement in such matters, combined with the communal organization which this necessitated, was one of the main catalysts behind the emergence of churchwardens and the development of a more active role during the early fourteenth century[2]. Religious activism amongst the laity manifested itself in other, more spontaneous ways however. We have seen that on several occasions clerks were presented for ordination by groups of parishioners to the title of a local chantry[3], and there are a number of examples of parishioners banding together to found chantries in their local church. In 1269 Walter Hestod, Stephen son of Adam, William son of Herbert, John Mermyn, William de la Kalewe and Adam Germeyn, parishioners of Wellington, collectively endowed a chantry of the Blessed Virgin in Wellington church with a messuage and thirty acres of land, while in 1312 a new chantry priest was admitted at

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1. Councils and Synods, i.512-3,600, ii.1003; Reg. Cantelupe, p.48.
2. Mason, 'Role of the English Parishioner', 23-6.
3. Above, p.247.

King's Pyon 'ad presentacionem, instanciam et rogatum rectoris et parochianorum dicte ecclesie' [1]. The impetus behind a chantry foundation at Dymock apparently also came from the parishioners, since they gave 2 marks sterling to Robert Doding in return for his endowment of land and buildings[2]. The founders of such chantries were, moreover, prepared to vindicate their communal rights as jealously as any knightly patron; and in 1287 the co-founders of the Wellington chantry or their heirs challenged the rector's claim to custody of the episcopal ordinance confirming the foundation, which they said should remain in their possession 'eo quod patroni essent predicti servicii'[3].

This dynamism was not confined to the founding of chantries however, and made its influence felt even in the structure of pastoral provision. We have seen that on several occasions the parishioners of outlying chapelries pressed for an expansion or vindication of their rights, and that this could occasionally produce concessions, if not in the status of a particular chapel, then at least in the range of pastoral functions which the chaplain was allowed to perform[4]. In such instances the local village community was often drawn very closely into the financing and running of the chapel. Following a dispute with the vicar in 1317 ten named inhabitants of Aldon, a

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1. Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B.329, f.15r; Reg. Swinfield, p.471.
2. BL(AM)15668, f.35v; and see Reg. Giffard, ii.99 (Berkeley).
3. Bodl. L. MS. Rawl. B329, f.11v-12v.
4. Above, pp.38-9.

village in Stokesay parish, agreed to provide books, ornaments and vestments for their local chapel and to take responsibility for the fabric and the altar, in return for being allowed to have mass celebrated there three days a week[1]. In a similar agreement between the vicar of Leominster and the villagers of Stoke Prior, Wigton and 'Estebur' in 1272, the villagers undertook to make annual payments to the vicar in kind and to provide certain books in return for hearing mass at Stoke on specified days; while at Shipston on Stour (in Tredington parish) the villagers paid part of the chaplain's stipend, and in 1334 the inhabitants of King's Caple (in Baysham) were found to bear sole responsibility for the upkeep and furnishings of their chapel[2]. As a result such chapels virtually took on the character of community churches - the impetus behind them coming primarily from the parishioners themselves, who took a keen and active interest in the way it was served and were often directly involved in its upkeep and furnishing[3].

This close involvement sometimes extended even to the parish church itself. In 1318 the chief parishioners of Madley claimed the right to dispose of offerings made in the church before the statue of the Virgin, and although on this occasion they were overruled by the dean and chapter of Hereford and the bishop's official, at Wolford it

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1. Shrewsbury Local Studies Library, MS. 1, f.4v-5r.
2. BL(CM) Domit. A. iii, f.59r; VCH Worcs. iii.523; Reg. T. Charlton (CYS, ix,1913), p.70; and see VCH Warws. iii.188; Councils and Synods, ii.1003.
3. Cf. C.N.L. Brooke, 'The Missionary at Home. The Church in the Towns, 1000-1250'. SCH, vi (1970), 77-83.

was clearly accepted that the parishioners should share responsibility for maintaining an assistant clerk, should one be appointed, 'si consuetudo loci exigat'[1]. Most instructive of all is the case of Childs Wickham. In 1303 or 1304 the vicar employed a clerk in minor orders as his assistant - an appointment which the bishop, although he had heard rumours that certain people objected, subsequently approved. The murmurings evidently persisted however, and in 1305 the bishop was forced to withdraw his concession following an enquiry initiated by the parishioners, which proved that from time immemorial it had been customary for the priest's clerk to be a deacon. As a result it was now ruled that henceforth no assistant clerk should be admitted to the church without having been so ordained, unless the parishioners should at any future time be content with a clerk in minor orders[2]. Here, no less than in the case of petitions on behalf of outlying chapels, is a palpable example of the impetus behind adequate pastoral provision coming not from reforming bishops but from the parishioners themselves; while the episode also illustrates the extent to which the functioning of the parish church and even the recruitment of its staff remained matters of grave concern to the local community, which was both ready and able to make its voice heard and its influence felt. Indeed on some occasions local laymen may have played an even more direct role in

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1. Chtrs. & Recs. Heref., ed. Capes, p.183; Reg. Cobham (WHS), p.137.
2. Reg. Gainsborough, p.2; The Liber Albus of the Priory of Worcester, ed. J.M. Wilson (WHS, 1919), Nos.405-6.

the recruitment of assistant clergy. Although in most instances where groups of parishioners presented clerks for ordination the candidate was explicitly ordained to the title of a local chantry[1], on 3 occasions there is no indication of the presentee's ultimate destination, while in 1280 Robert of Eardisley was presented for ordination by his fellow-parishioners simply 'ad celebrandam missam'[2]. The point is probably unprovable: but given the more general evidence for lay involvement in the running of local churches, it is not inconceivable that such clerks were destined for service in the parish church itself or in an outlying chapelry, having been locally adopted - and perhaps granted a collective title - by some of the parishioners themselves[3].

The laity's impact on religious life extended beyond this close involvement with the local church, and parishioners continued to take an active interest in the popular practices and devotions of the parish generally. In 1315 for instance, when building works at Chirbury Priory blocked the routes traditionally taken on religious processions in the parish, it was with the parishioners that the canons (as rectors of Chirbury) agreed the new routes to be taken, as well as responsibility for repairing the damage caused to the walls of the nave[4].

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1. Above, pp.247,325.
2. Reg. Cantelupe, pp.305,310(bis),311.
3. For further examples of lay initiatives and collective action by parishioners, see S. Reynolds, Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900-1300 (Oxford, 1984), pp.90-100, which appeared when this chapter was already in first draft.
4. VCH Shrops, ii.60, citing PRO E315/53/239.

It should be added however that this popular fervour and dynamism was not always channelled into practices condoned by the Church, and occasionally found expression outside the officially recognized structure of religious life. There is evidence of several extremely localized and apparently unofficial miracle cults emerging in our region at different times during the century, which unlike those of St. Wulfstan at Worcester or St. Thomas Cantelupe at Hereford were neither encouraged nor condoned by the ecclesiastical hierarchy[1]. Indeed amongst the rural masses it was not unknown for popular devotions to spill over into animism or sorcery proper. In 1240 Walter Cantelupe condemned one particular cult involving fountain worship which had sprung up at North Cerney and at another Gloucestershire village[2]; and more generalized injunctions against the veneration of fountains, rocks and trees, the misuse of holy water for magical purposes, and the practice of sorcery, were commonplace in the episcopal statutes of every diocese[3].

In the face of any such deviations, the priest's responsibilities as the local representative of orthodoxy and of the Universal Church were made abundantly clear. Not only was he expected, as a

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1. AASS (Oct.I), p.639; Reg. Giffard, ii.110-11,113; Glouc. Cart. i.32; Ann. Mon. i.155, iv.510, and see ibid., iv.550. For official stimulation of the larger cults, see R.C. Finucane, Miracles and Pilgrims. Popular Beliefs in Medieval England (London,1977), pp. 130-1,174-83.
2. Councils and Synods, i.303 (Worc. III, c.30).
3. Councils and Synods, i.68,88,146,210,214,453,518,622,632,635, ii.1044, 1349 etc.

matter of course, to challenge the most common superstitions surrounding the sacraments through constant preaching, and to report to the bishop anyone suspected of sorcery or similar practices, but he was also to take action against any unauthorized popular cults such as the one at Cerney[1]. Given that the more general disciplinary and educative functions of the clergy were apparently being performed[2], the majority of priests most likely complied in these matters; and certainly when a crippled woman from Clifton in Worcestershire went to Leintwardine parish church in 1287, having heard popular rumours of miracles being performed there through the Blessed Virgin, the rector denied all knowledge of the affair and refused to let her remain in the church[3].

Very occasionally however, there is evidence that far from helping to suppress such popular impulses, the parish clergy were actually implicated, illustrating the extent to which some of them remained a part of local society, closely involved with their parishioners. In 1279 a certain William de Lay was dragged from sanctuary in the churchyard of SS. Philip and James, Bristol on the orders of the constable of Bristol Castle, taken to the castle gaol and subsequently beheaded, following which rumours of miracles swiftly started to circulate; and soon after Bishop Giffard ordered an enquiry as to whether anyone had gone to the body 'ut sanctum', asserting that

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1. Councils and Synods, i.179,297,303,305-6 (Worc.II,c.55;III,c.6, 30,37-8).
2. Above, pp.311-8.
3. AASS (Oct.I), p.639.

he was a martyr, or had composed songs about him. The rector of St. Mary's, speaking for himself and his brother Richard, subsequently admitted both that he had heard rumours of miracles being performed, and that his brother had been responsible for spreading some of these; and he was later named along with the rector of SS. Philip and James (his brother?) as one of those found guilty of stirring up scandal and errors in the town with regard to William de Lay[1]. Clearly the manner of William's death was unusual, and it seems likely that the popular feeling giving rise to rumours of sanctity had some political dimension, especially in the light of the bishop's concern over a certain 'libellous song' relating to the incident which was affixed to a public notice-board[2]. This does not detract from the essential point that here was an apparently spontaneous popular cult, rooted in local passions, in which the local clergy was heavily implicated. Their subsequent reprimand illustrates the difficult and ambivalent position of the parish clergy - on the one hand required to enforce compliance and orthodoxy as representatives of the Church at large, but on the other very often remaining a part of local society, involved in village affairs and identified with popular passions.

In addition it must be remembered that the relations between laity and parish clergy were not confined to such matters as pastoral care, performance of the sacraments and participation in popular devotions.

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1. Reg. Giffard, ii.110-11,113.
2. Ibid., ii.113.

Simply as a landholder, the priest was deeply enmeshed in the local secular land structure, and was inevitably forced into close relations with his lay neighbours over the most mundane matters. Frequently these took the form of litigation over land rights, indistinguishable from the similar petty disputes between lay neighbours which abound in the secular court rolls. On the other hand the parson's interests as a landholder occasionally coincided with those of his parishioners, so that we find them acting together - most frequently where rights of common were involved. In 1233 William Kersewell, Taillefer de Eyse, Walter Child and the rector of Kempsey together defended their right to common pasture in the abbot of Pershore's woods and lands at 'Wurtelegh', while in 1248 the parson of Aston, Roger of Aston and Thomas de Baledon together vindicated their claim to rights of common at 'Killycot'. A few years later the parson of Putley was impleaded along with five laymen for having disseised Nicholas Gualak of his free tenement at Woolhope, and in 1241 the parson and free tenants of Newnham were involved in a dispute with Worcester Cathedral Priory concerning an assart at 'Cornwode'[1]. At such times the priest's relation to his parishioners was predominantly that of a neighbour and fellow-landholder; and it is meaningless to attempt to separate this aspect of the local relations between the laity and the parish clergy from the purely religious aspect.

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1. Cur. Reg. R. xi.54; PRO Just. I./273, m.8; PRO Just. I./300(c), m.3; Ann. Mon. iv.432-3.

(v) Conclusions.

We have seen that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Church attempted to revolutionize the social and pastoral position of the parish clergy amongst the laity. How far and in what ways had this attempt succeeded by the end of the thirteenth century? It has been suggested that most of the clergy were probably capable of fulfilling their newly-defined pastoral functions at least to a minimum standard; while the level of episcopal surveillance and the vigour with which episcopal registers, once these appear, show even lesser misdemeanours being detected and effectively dealt with suggests that the basic requirements of appearance and general conduct were probably also being met. In particular clerical marriage (or rather concubinage) had apparently been all but eradicated as a normal, widespread and socially acceptable institution by the early fourteenth century - although isolated instances of sexual incontinence amongst the clergy almost certainly persisted throughout the medieval period, and in all disciplinary matters detection and enforcement must have become more difficult at the lowest levels of the clerical hierarchy, and particularly amongst casually employed wage-earners. Economically, the beneficed clergy became increasingly separated from the peasantry in the type (and sometimes in the size) of their income. Even rectors relied most heavily on tithes and offerings, often farming out part of the glebe, while many vicars subsisted wholly on regular payments in kind or cash and possessed at most small

amounts of pasture land - although it must be remembered that large numbers of parishioners in our area were habitually served not by beneficed priests but by unbeneficed chaplains, and insofar as many of these continued to subsist on stipends or portions not directly regulated by the bishop, and may not even have enjoyed security of tenure, the vicarage system and the objectives behind it remained partially compromised.

Despite these far-reaching changes however, the parish clergy were clearly never fully severed from local society. Not only were many beneficed priests and assistant clerks local men[1], but as landholders even on a minimal scale, charged with the general well-being of their parishioners, they inevitably became enmeshed in the local land structure and in local disputes, sharing local passions and sometimes even becoming caught up in popular devotions condemned by the Church. Moreover, the laity themselves were not always so passive as ecclesiastical pronouncements might suggest, often taking a keen interest in the serving of their church or chapel, in the provision of services and sacraments, and even in the recruitment of its staff, so that to this extent the local church and its affairs remained rooted in local society, rather than representing something merely imposed and controlled from above by an omnipotent Church hierarchy. There is, inevitably, far less evidence concerning

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1. Above, pp. 156-7, 176-9, 231-2.

this aspect of the relationship between clergy and people; although such evidence as there is suggests that it is of no less importance if we are to understand the character of religious life at village level, and the nature of the relationship between the priest and his parishioners.

Conclusions

A number of themes emerge from the preceding study. First is the central importance within the pastoral structure of the unbeneficed clergy, who not only served as parochial assistants and as chaplains under incapacitated or non-resident rectors and vicars, but who in this region were also responsible for staffing a particularly extensive network of sub-parochial chapels. Far from representing a mere appendage to the pastoral structure, these continued, for a variety of reasons, to play a vital pastoral role, often discharging a wide range of pastoral functions and not infrequently catering for several centres of settlement; while in certain conventual and other parish churches in which no vicarage had been ordained, unbeneficed clerks continued to serve entire parishes. The result was that even at the end of the thirteenth century many parishioners were still being served on essentially twelfth-century lines by informally-appointed stipendiary priests with unregulated incomes and possibly with no security of tenure; and to this extent, despite the initiative of bishops as early as the mid-twelfth century in creating perpetual vicarages in appropriated parish churches, as late as 1300 the vicarage system remained compromised and only partially effective.

That is not to deny the very palpable changes which the Church succeeded in bringing about during the period, and which by 1300 had transformed the secular clergy and fundamentally altered their

position amongst the laity. Clerical marriage in particular was, by the end of the century, apparently all but eradicated as a normal, widespread and socially acceptable institution - a development which in itself revolutionized the position of the clergy within local society. Standards of clerical education, although in most cases probably still minimal by the end of the century and, indeed, long after, nevertheless continued to rise throughout the period, and by 1300 were apparently considered generally acceptable by local bishops, who by now were more preoccupied with the eradication of lesser (and more recently-defined) abuses such as failure to take full orders, or unlicensed non-residence. By the same token standards of general clerical conduct and even dress most probably approximated, by 1300, to the requirements laid down in thirteenth-century synodal statutes - at least when compared to what might have passed as normal a hundred years earlier.

To this extent the Church was, on the whole, remarkably successful in its attempts to reform the secular clergy, and to remould them into an authoritative and disciplined elite set apart from the laity in their education, physical appearance and lifestyle. Where it was perhaps less successful was where its concern to emancipate the clergy from external (and especially lay) influence brought it into open conflict with the interests and aspirations of the laity - whether in its attempts to dismantle the rights of patrons over the churches which they or their ancestors had built, or in its more general attempts to reduce

the laity as a whole to a position of passive and unquestioning compliance. In fact parishioners continued to be more directly involved in local religious life than the Church's more pretentious statements might imply, taking an active interest in the running of local chapels and churches, in the services maintained, and even in the provision and recruitment of clergy; while amongst secular patrons there survived vestiges of an anachronistic attitude towards the churches on their fees which was faintly reminiscent of proprietary right. This evidently carried some weight even in the royal courts, and lay behind many of the advowson suits prosecuted during the thirteenth century; while even the Church itself apparently felt it necessary to accommodate lay feeling on this issue up to a point, bestowing on patrons social privileges denied to other laymen, and continuing to seek their consent on a variety of issues affecting the church.

This was, however, only one notable aspect of a more general deference to social rank and influence which, whatever the Church's official stance, recurs in practice time and time again. Thomas Cantelupe might impose a humiliating penance on Roger de Clifford, or burst unexpectedly from Ledbury woods in full episcopal regalia to excommunicate the earl of Gloucester[1], acquiring in the process a saint's reputation for fearless integrity; but on the whole the more powerful laity were treated with some deference and indulgence -

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1. AASS (Oct. I), pp.561-2, 563-4; and see above, p.160.

a fact which is illustrated by the influence (both direct and indirect) which prominent laymen, from local gentry through to the king himself, exerted over the exercise of parochial patronage by monasteries, lesser laymen and, indeed, by bishops. To this extent the influence of powerful laymen on the composition of the beneficed clergy, and ultimately on the quality of pastoral provision, although technically subject to the bishop's power of veto in the thirteenth century, continued to extend beyond the legitimate exercise of parochial patronage.

Finally, these points must be put into some sort of geographical context. As with any local study, the picture which emerges may not by typical in every respect, and there are important regional distinctions to bear in mind. We have seen that to the east and in parts of the north, where the influence of powerful ecclesiastical corporations and of a strong episcopal authority had, in the pre-conquest period, been comparatively less marked, the parochial structure developed relatively free from constraint, and there we would not expect sub-parochial chapels to have retained as much importance within the pastoral network. Then again, it has been suggested that the contrast between the comparatively insular nobility of the west midlands and marches and those more closely involved in royal administration may have affected the uses to which parochial patronage was put - partially explaining the emphasis in this region on provision for kinsmen rather than

administrative retainers[1]. Yet when these caveats have been made, the most striking feature of the picture which emerges from the Worcester and Hereford evidence is its consistency - this despite the demographic, economic and political contrasts which characterized the region as a whole. We have seen that in terms of settlement, landownership, monastic influence and general economic development the two dioceses were sharply (though not always consistently) demarcated; yet at both Hereford and Worcester the attitudes of patrons towards advowson ownership and its uses, the successes achieved and problems faced by the Church, and indeed the essentials (albeit for slightly different reasons) of the pastoral network itself were remarkably similar. The implications of this are two-fold. In the first place it is clear that, however unique the Marches socially and politically, in an ecclesiastical context the diocese of Hereford was no backwater, and that under bishops such as Thomas Cantelupe, Richard Swinfield and, indeed, Peter Aquablanca, the see was very much a part of the ecclesiastical mainstream. More generally, it would appear that by the later thirteenth century, the success of the Church's reform programme - and the nature and scope of the problems which remained - were not primarily conditioned by purely local circumstances, social, economic or political. To this extent some aspects of the situation described above, despite the localized nature

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1. Above, pp.186-7.

of the evidence, may perhaps have a more general application outside the region.

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