Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey, c.950 – c.1200

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

This thesis contains not more than 80,000 words, including appendices but excluding footnotes, references and bibliography.

Emily Mitchell

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the Benedictine abbey of Barking in Essex from the tenth to
the twelfth centuries. It is based on a wide range of published and unpublished
documentary sources, and on hagiographic texts written at the abbey. It juxtaposes the
literary and documentary sources in a new way to show that both are essential for a
full understanding of events, and neither can be fully appreciated in isolation. It also
deliberately crosses the political boundary of 1066, with the intention of
demonstrating that political events were not the most significant determinant of the
recipients of benefactors' religious patronage. It also uses the longer chronological
scale to show that patterns of patronage from the Anglo-Saxon era were frequently
inherited by the incoming Normans along with their landholdings.

Through a detailed discussion of two sets of unpublished charters (Essex Record
Office MSS D/DP/T1 and Hatfield, Hatfield House MS Ilford Hospital 1/6) I offer
new dates and interpretations of several events in the abbey's history, and identify the
abbey's benefactors from the late tenth century to 1200. As Part III shows, it has been
possible to trace patterns of patronage which were passed down through several
generations, crossing the political divide of 1066. Royal patronage is shown to have
been of great significance to the abbey, and successive kings exploited their power of
advowson in different ways according to the political atmosphere of England.

The literary sources are discussed in a separate section, but with full reference to the
historical narrative. I offer new interpretations of the hagiographic works of Goscelin
of St-Bertin written for Barking in the late eleventh century, suggesting they were
intended to promote the abbey's interests and attract new donors, and that the choice
of Latin for these works was intended to be politically neutral. I propose new dates for
both the Anglo-Norman *Life of St Catherine of Alexandria* and the *Vie d'Edouard le
Confesseur* written at late twelfth-century Barking, suggesting that they may have
been far more politically motivated than previously thought, commissioned by Abbess
Matilda to defend and promote her own family lineage.

The thesis concludes that royal interest and interference in Barking's affairs was a
continuous factor throughout the period of the study; that aristocratic patronage often
followed royal fashions, but in Barking's case also frequently had more personal
motivations; and that Barking's literary activity can only be fully understood within
the context of its political atmosphere, and should not be studied in isolation.

Acknowledgements

Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey, c. 950 – c. 1200

Abbreviations

Adam of Cockfield: C.R. Hart, 'An early charter of Adam of Cockfield, 1100-1118', EHR 72 (1957) pp. 466-9

Aldhelm: Aldhelm, Prosa De Virginitate vol II: Textus, ed. S. Gwara (2 vols. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, vol. 124A. Turnhout, 2001)

ANL: R.J. Dean and M.B.M. Boulton, Anglo-Norman literature: A guide to texts and manuscripts (Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications 3. London, 1999)

ANS: Anglo-Norman Studies (formerly Proceedings of the Battle Conference)

Apprenticeship: W. MacBain, 'The literary apprenticeship of Clemence of Barking', Journal of the Australasian Universities Modern Language and Literature Association, 9 (1958) pp. 3-21

ASC: The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, ed. G.N. Garmonsway (London, 1953)

ASE: Anglo-Saxon England

Barlow: F. Barlow, Edward the Confessor (new ed. Yale, 1997)

Baronies: I.J. Sanders, English baronies: A study of their origins and descent 1086-1327 (Oxford, 1960)

Bascombe: K.N. Bascombe, 'Two charters of King Suebred of Essex', in K.J. Neale (ed.), An Essex tribute: Essays presented to Frederick G. Emmison, (London, 1987) pp. 85-96

Bede: Bede, Ecclesiastical history of the English people, eds. and trans. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford, 1969)

Bloch: 'La vie d'Edouard le Confesseur par Osbert de Clare', ed. M. Bloch, Analecta Bollandiana 41 (1923) pp. 5-63

Catherine: Clemence of Barking, The Life of St Catherine by Clemence of Barking, ed. W. MacBain (Anglo-Norman Text Society vol. 18. Oxford, 1964) (quoted by verse)

CCR: Calendar of Charter Rolls in the Public Record Office (6 vols. London, 1916)

Clanchy: M. Clanchy, From memory to written record, England 1066-1307 (2nd edn. Oxford, 1993)

Clapham: A.W. Clapham, 'The Benedictine Abbey of Barking: A sketch of its architectural history and an account of recent excavations on its site', TEAS NS 12 (1913) pp. 69-87

Colker: M.L. Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury which relate to the history of Barking Abbey', Studia Monastica 7 (1965) pp. 383-460

Crick: J. Crick, 'The wealth, patronage, and connections of women's houses in late Anglo-Saxon England', Revue Bénédictine 109 (1999) pp. 154-85

Dalton: P. Dalton, 'Eustace Fitz John and the politics of Anglo-Norman England: The rise and survival of a twelfth-century royal servant', Speculum 78 (1996) pp. 358-83

DB: A. Farley (ed.), Domesday book. seu liber censualis Wilhelmi primi Regis Angliae (2 vols. London, 1783)

De translatione 1: Longer version of the 'De Translatione vel elevatione sanctarum virginum Ethelburgae, Hildelithae ac Wlfhildae', Colker pp. 435-52

De translatione 2: shorter version of 'De translatione vel elevatione santarum virginum Ethelburgae, Hildelithae ac Wlfhildae', Colker pp. 435-52 (parallel with De translatione 1)

ECBA: C.R. Hart (ed.), The early charters of Barking Abbey (Colchester, 1953)

ECEss: C.R. Hart (ed.), The early charters of Essex (Leicester, 1971)

Edouard: O. Södergård (ed.), La vie d'Edouard le Confesseur: poème anglo-normand du xiie siècle (Uppsala. 1948)

EHR: English Historical Review

Fowler, Barking: R.C. Fowler, 'Barking Abbey', in W. Page and J.H. Round (eds.) Victoria County History of Essex vol. II (London, 1907) pp.115-22

Fowler, Ilford: R.C. Fowler, 'The hospital of Ilford', in W. Page and J.H. Round (eds.) Victoria County History of Essex vol. II (London, 1907) pp.186-8

Gwara: Aldhelm, Prosa De Virginitate vol I: Praefatio et Indices. ed. S. Gwara (2 vols. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, vol. 124. Turnhout, 2001)

Hart, Charters: Charters of Barking Abbey, ed. C.R. Hart (Anglo-Saxon Charters. Oxford, forthcoming)

Henry II: W.L. Warren, Henry II (new ed. Yale, 2000)

HRH 1: D. Knowles, C.N.L. Brooke and V.C.M. London(eds.), The heads of religious houses England and Wales. 940-1216 (2nd ed. Cambridge, 2001)

HRH 2: D.M. Smith and V.C.M. London (eds.), Heads of religious houses vol. II: England and Wales. 1216–1377 (Cambridge, 2001)

HSJ: Haskins Society Journal

Ilford Cartulary: Hatfield, Hatfield House MS Ilford Hospital 1/6

LH: Aldhelm, 'De Virginitate' in M. Lapidge and M. Herren (eds. and trans), Aldhelm: The prose works (Ipswich. 1979) pp. 51-132

Lockwood: H.H. Lockwood, 'One thing leads to another: The discovery of additional charters of Barking Abbey', Essex Journal (1990) pp. 11-13

Lockwood and Howson: H.H. Lockwood and J. Howson (eds.), Barking Abbey 1300th Anniversary: An exhibition at Barking central library 3-22 October 1996 (London Borough of Barking Libraries, 1966)

Loftus and Chettle: E.A. Loftus and H.F. Chettle, A history of Barking Abbey (Barking, 1954)

MRH: D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, Medieval religious houses: England and Wales (London. 1971)

New charters: N. Vincent, 'New charters of King Stephen with some reflections upon the royal forests during the anarchy', EHR 114 (1999) pp. 899-928

Ordinale I: J. Tolhurst (ed.), The ordinale and customary of the Benedictine nuns of Barking Abbey Vol. 1. Temporale (Henry Bradshaw Society vol. 65. London, 1927)

Ordinale II: J. Tolhurst (ed.), The ordinale and customary of the Benedictine nuns of Barking Abbey Vol. 2. Sanctorale (Henry Bradshaw Society vol. 66. London, 1928)

Osbert: Osbert of Clare, Letters of Osbert of Clare. ed. E.W. Williamson (London, 1929)

Peerage: G.E. Cokayne (ed.), The complete peerage (13 vols. new ed. Stroud, 2000)

RRAN I: Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum Vol. 1: Regesta Willelmi Conquestoris et Willelmi Rufi. 1066- 1100. ed. H.W.C. Davis (Oxford, 1913)

RRAN II: Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum Vol. 2: Regesta Henrici primi 1100-1135. eds. C. Johnson and H.A. Cronne (Oxford, 1956)

RRAN III: Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum Vol. 3: Regesta regis Stephani ac Mathildis imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici ducum Normannorum 1135-1154. eds. H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1968)

S: Numbers assigned to charters in P.H. Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon charters: An annotated handlist and bibliography (Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks vol. 8. London, 1968)

Saints' lives: J. Wogan-Browne, Saints' lives and women's literary culture c.1150-1300: Virginity and its authorizations (Oxford, 2001)

Stafford: P. Stafford, Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and women's power in eleventh-century England (Oxford, 1997)

TEAS: Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society

TRHS: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

Veiled women I: S. Foot, Veiled women I: The 'disappearance' of nuns from later Anglo-Saxon England (Aldershot, 2000)

Veiled women II: S. Foot, Veiled women II: Female religious communities in England, 871-1066 (Aldershot, 2000)

Vision: Goscelin of St-Bertin, 'Recital of a vision', Colker pp. 452-4

Vita Edwardi: F. Barlow (ed. and trans), The life of King Edward who rests at Westminster, attributed to a monk of St Bertin (Oxford Medieval Texts. 2nd edn. London 1992)

VLHD: Clemence of Barking, 'The Life of St. Catherine', in J. Wogan-Browne and G. Burgess (eds.and trans.), Virgin lives and holy deaths: Two exemplary biographies for Anglo-Norman women (London, 1996) pp. 1-48 (quoted by page)

VStE: Goscelin of St-Bertin, 'Vita et virtutes sanctae Ethelburgae virginis', Colker pp. 398-417

VStW: Goscelin of St-Bertin, 'Vita et virtutes santae Wulfhildae virginis', Colker pp. 418-34

Whitelock: D. Whitelock (ed. and trans.), Anglo-Saxon wills (Cambridge, 1930)

Women religious: S. Thompson, Women religious: The founding of English nunneries after the Norman Conquest (Oxford, 1991)

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Introduction

The study of religious houses and the context within which they functioned have been
popular amongst both political and religious historians for many centuries. As the home
of the educated men who produced the great majority of documentary material from the
middle ages, monasteries are relevant to the study of any topic in medieval history
whether or not it is explicitly religious in tone. The clerks and monks who recorded
royal charters and wrote chronicles were religious men, and the documents kings and
individuals made were generally stored at religious houses, being suitable permanent
homes for these records of events. Indeed, the eternal nature of the memorialising role
monastic houses fulfilled in the middle ages made them the ideal homes for any
personal or official document an individual wished to preserve for posterity. Nunneries
also played a role in this realm of preservation, but they have only more recently come
to the attention of historical scholars. The study of religious women essentially began
only a century ago, and much work has been done since then on individual religious
women and their lives, as well as on some of the greater and better-recorded nunneries.
The first historians to tackle monastic houses focused on them in terms of their
relationships with the kings and queens of the day, and as the origin of theologians and
authors. More recently the socio-economic side of monastic activity, and the role of
abbots and abbesses as wealthy feudal landlords, has been studied as part of the growth
of history 'from below'. I believe that a combination of these two approaches provides a
valuable point of access to the study of a religious community, considering its
relationship with the royal house but also focusing on more local relationships with its
own patrons and those who were involved with its activities on a day-to-day basis.

Barking Abbey in Essex, around 8 miles east of the medieval City of London, is one of
the better recorded of the medieval nunneries, having a history which stretches back to
the earliest days of Christianity in England. Several archives of information survive
giving details of benefactors to the abbey and detailing members of the community. It

has no 'cartulary' in the official sense, but instead there are separate bodies of evidence covering different periods of its history. I believe the large amount of information in these documents deserves thorough analysis, and this is the aim of the present study. Barking appears to have received a great degree of attention from members of the royal family and local aristocratic dynasties, and it is possible to trace connections to the abbey which lasted several centuries. The local families which supported Barking should not be studied in isolation from either their other religious patronage choices or the political environment within which they operated. There were many different motivating factors behind any benefaction to a religious community, and all of these factors, spiritual, financial and social, should be included in the analysis of a patronage event. As Innes has written in his study of German monastic patronage, 'given sufficient contextual knowledge it is possible to be very specific about the social mechanics of patronage'.[1] The intention of this study is to give that contextual knowledge, and to analyse the history of benefactions to and benefactors of Barking Abbey within their wider social and political surroundings.

This study of Barking is intended to bring new light upon its history through several new analytical approaches to the available sources. Firstly I consciously work across the political divide of 1066, studying the abbey's history for over a century on each side of this date. I believe previous studies of monasteries and nunneries have used this political divide in an inappropriate way: Barking Abbey was a religious community, and the nature of religious houses was to provide an eternal service of remembrance to patrons, whatever the political circumstances. The evidence also points to a considerable degree of continuity in patronage across the whole period of this study. Kings and queens supported the abbey from its earliest days until its dissolution in 1539. This royal patronage led to the adoption of the house by members of the local aristocracy, and both Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman men and women chose Barking as recipient of their benefactions. I hope to show that while the nationality of Barking's patrons did indeed change gradually after 1066, its status as royally- and

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[1] M. Innes, State and society in the early middle ages (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4th ser. vol. 47. Cambridge, 2000) p. 21.

aristocratically-patronised house did not. I propose a new chronology for the study of this religious community, which may be a useful tool of analysis for other religious houses, based not on the reigns of kings but on events in church history which played the greater role in determining the course of monastic and spiritual life in England.

Secondly, I use literary material as a major source for this study. Barking Abbey was the originator of a large number of hagiographic texts in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and these works display a considerable amount of political motivation. The texts have been studied previously by literary and linguistic scholars, but the context of their composition, which is of vital importance for an understanding of each work, has not been fully analysed. These texts described historical figures, and the difficulties of using hagiographies as historical sources has long been known: I intend to show that the works illuminate the historical context in which they were written to a greater degree than has previously been appreciated. I will argue that the abbey commissioned Latin texts on its own Anglo-Saxon saints at the end of the eleventh century to attract patronage at a time of financial and political uncertainty, and that the choice of Latin for these texts was highly significant. At the end of the twelfth century the lives of a historical figure (Edward the Confessor) and a mythical virgin martyr (St Catherine of Alexandria) were composed in Anglo-Norman, the aristocratic vernacular. Through a close study of these two texts within the immediate milieu of twelfth-century Barking, I propose that both the choice of subjects and the presentation of those subjects may have been politically coloured by the wish of the patron abbess to promote her own lineage. By the end of the period of this study, Barking's financial status was secured, and it was possible to use literature as a subtler tool of propaganda for more personal reasons.

Finally, I have used a new archive of documentary evidence which has not been analysed in detail before. The recently re-discovered Hatfield House, MS Ilford Hospital 1/6 (the Ilford Cartulary) contains a huge amount of information relating to the history of a hospital founded by the abbey in the twelfth century, and reveals much about the abbey's relationship with the people who lived in the immediate area. It contains several previously unknown Anglo-Saxon charters, which can be used to

propose a new chronology for the early double monastery and the tenth-century re-growth of the nunnery. Charters in this manuscript throw new light on royal administration of land in the twelfth century, as well as giving important new information about the relationship between Barking Abbey and its dependent hospital at Ilford. I have only been able to use around one quarter of the information contained within this manuscript; it is an extremely rich source of new evidence for Barking Abbey, and much remains to be done on the later years it covers.

I hope in this thesis to suggest new dates for several events in the abbey's history, and to offer a new interpretation of its status as one of the most important nunneries of medieval England. Patronage and politics were closely intertwined across the whole period of this study, and I will argue that the evidence of Barking Abbey points towards a somewhat selfish, politically motivated exploitation of the abbey by successive kings during times when England was suffering political instability. At times of relative peace, the abbey was the recipient of more beneficial patronage and support from kings and queens. I hope that this case study of one nunnery will show that a religious house, despite its supposed separation from the world, can be used as a finely-tuned political barometer for tenth- to twelfth-century England.

Part I: Historiography and Sources

Chapter 1: Historiography

a) Nuns and 'women's history'

The study of nunneries as distinct from 'monastic houses' in general is a relatively young discipline. Monasteries have long dominated the study of religious houses, and some of the most fundamental works on the subject of religious life make hardly any reference to nunneries. The classic study of the development of religious life in England, Knowles' *Monastic Order in England* (1940, second edition 1976), for example, devotes only three pages from a total of nearly 700 to a study of 'The nunneries', and each of the major houses is mentioned only once or twice; Knowles' statement that 'the whole of the eleventh and twelfth centuries... passed without giving birth to a single woman religious who attained any wide celebrity' is perhaps one reason explaining his disregarding of the nunneries.[1] As with most history of the early twentieth century, scholars of monasticism were primarily interested in 'great men and women', and since the nunneries did not produce a Lanfranc or a William of Malmesbury, they were deemed unworthy of attention. The sole exception was Eileen Power's work on the nunneries of England from the thirteenth century to the Dissolution (1922); this work was rather pessimistic in its views of nunneries, however, considering the great majority to be economically moribund, morally lax and intellectually weak.[2] Lina Eckenstein's study, the first major work on women religious (1896) covers the English nunneries briefly, but is primarily interested in the growth of continental monasticism; nevertheless it remains a useful, if outdated introduction to the subject.[3]

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[1] D. Knowles, The monastic order in England: A history of its development from the times of St Dunstan to the fourth Lateran Council. 943-1216 (second edn. Cambridge, 1976). The section on the nunneries, pp. 136-9, covers only the years 1066-1100, and Barking is mentioned only once, in a list of the holdings of monasteries and nunneries at Domesday (p. 702).

[2] E. Power, Medieval English nunneries c. 1275 to 1535 (Cambridge. 1922). Her general attitude appears to be taken from using prescriptive source material such as bishop's visitation reports as an accurate reflection of life, and comparing the financial situation of nunneries unfavourably to that of monasteries without fully investigating the reasons for their relative poverty. Despite these faults, however, Power's book was groundbreaking in its time, and remains a very useful source of factual information, as long as the reader is aware of the negative light in which much evidence is given.

[3] L. Eckenstein, Woman under monasticism (New York, 1896).

Aside from these three early works, nuns and women in general remained essentially outside the boundaries of acceptable subjects for historians, until the growth of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. The ensuing academic reaction to the 'great man' theory of history initiated a period in which women's history was studied as a subject independent of men's history, and many feminist historians attempted to depict women as a historical force in isolation, and to prove that women in the past had been as independent and powerful as women in the twentieth century.[4] This feminist growth in women's history can be compared with the growth in America of black history as a consequence of the civil rights pressure groups led by figures such as Martin Luther King: it has been argued that people take an interest in the history of current issues, and the current development of gay history resulting from gay rights disputes in western Europe is another example of this.[5] The 1960s also saw the development of the new discipline of social history, initiated by Peter Laslett and the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, which began to show that history 'from below' was a new and valuable structure of historical analysis; kings and queens may have been the most prominent figures of the past, but the farmers and factory workers had their history too. New histories of 'society' as a historical construct were written to counterbalance the purely political history beloved of the Victorians, and to allow a new perspective of the past which included those who worked in the fields, and not just those who owned them.[6]

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[4] See, for example, S. Rowbotham, Hidden from history: 300 years of women's oppression and the fight against it (London, 1976), R. Bridenthal, S.M. Stuard and M.E. Wiesner. Becoming visible: Women in European history (1977. 3rd edn. Boston, 1998), and J. Mitchell and A. Oakley, The rights and wrongs of women (Harmondsworth. 1976).

[5] H. Smith, 'Feminism and the methodology of history', in B.A. Carroll, Liberating women's history (Urbana, Illinois, 1976) pp. 368-84 at p. 368.

[6] The first such book to discuss in detail the lives of those 'below' is Laslett's classic, The world we have lost (London. 1965) and revised edition, The world we have lost: Further explored (London, 1983). The next authoritative textbook, E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield's The population history of England 1541-1871: A reconstruction (London, 1981) remains a fundamental work for students of social history, and has only been superseded by the same authors' recent work, taking into account newer methods of statistical analysis and approaches to evidence, English population history from family reconstitution, 1580-1837 (London, 1997). The lack of substantial evidence for the period before c.1500 means that there have been fewer studies of population during the middle ages; the best introduction is B.S. Campbell (ed.), Before the black death: Studies in the 'crisis' of the early fourteenth century (Manchester, 1991).

This new approach gave equal value to the everyday lives of the great majority of the population who had so far failed to be acknowledged, and gave women in particular a greater role as players in their own lives. The separatist attitude of the earlier feminist historians has now been modified to a more inclusive approach, in which women are studied within their own context; it is anachronistic to assume that a medieval woman was able to take control of her own life in the same as a woman at the beginning of the third millennium, but that does not mean that her experiences should be devalued or ignored.[7] Contemporary historians now attempt to include women in all stages of their work, and social history in particular, tending to focus on families and kin networks, gives more scope for the inclusion of women; the more inclusive attitude of modern historians is easily visible in recent literature.[8]

The most recent developments in historiography have been away from the divisive approach of 'women's history' and towards the use of gender as a category of analysis. After the 'masculinist' backlash which attempted to counterbalance feminist history by presenting men as equally oppressed through sociological gender stereotypes, a tentative balance has been reached in which gender is included as a factor in most historical discussions in the same way as race, nationality or political alignments.[9] Religious history has benefited from this initially separatist and now inclusive approach, and religious women are now considered equally as valuable a topic for study as monks and friars. The previous neglect of women's religious lives means that there is a great

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[7] A good general history is the 5 volume History of women in the West , general eds. G. Duby and M. Perrot (London, 1992-94) which covers classical antiquity to the modern day; the middle ages are covered by volume II, Silences of the middle ages. ed. K. Klapisch-Zuber (London, 1992),

[8] For example, R.H. Hilton's 1973 Ford lectures, published as The English peasantry in the later middle ages (Oxford, 1975) had a primarily economic focus, and included one lecture entitled 'Women in the village'. B. Hanawalt's recent work The ties that bound: Peasant families in medieval England (Oxford, 1986) included chapters on inheritance, childhood, marriage and the surrogate family, in all of which women were equally as important as men.

[9] Examples of the reaction to feminist history are H. Brod (ed.), The making of masculinities: The new men's studies (London, 1987), and J. Mangan and J. Walvin (eds.), Manliness and morality: Middle class masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940 (Manchester, 1987), a collection of essays by male authors only, further evidence for Smith's suggestion that one takes an interest in one's own history (see n. 5 above). The move towards gender studies, rather than either women's or men's history, is exemplified by A. Fletcher, Gender. sex and subordination in England 1500-1800 (London, 1995), which discusses the effect of patriarchy on both men and women, and analyses constructions of masculinity as well as the role of women.

cache of material to be studied, and many houses which have yet to be investigated in any detail at all.[10] Medieval history too has seen a growth in studies of the women who span while their husbands delved; the nature of the existing source material has meant that this is mainly focused on urban women, and those of the upper classes, but nevertheless the last two decades have seen many studies of the lifestyles of medieval women, and new academic courses on gender as a category of historical analysis applied to the middle ages as well as the modern period of history.[11]

b) Medieval religious women

The growth of 'women's history' has led to the study of nunneries as a separate topic within religious history as a whole. The most common approach of medievalists writing general studies of nunneries has been to discuss them either before 1066, or after, using a political event as a borderline in the history of religious institutions.[12] It is my aim in this study to show that this imposed boundary may not be as valid as previous historians have assumed. If we are intending to investigate the motivations of patrons (rather than merely their identity), we shall see that they remain essentially the same; the desire to gain prayers for one's own soul and that of one's predecessors, and the wish to show loyalty to one's feudal lord by following his patterns of patronage. A wider-ranging chronological approach than that ending or beginning in 1066 tends to be found only in specific case studies of individual nunneries, which use all available material to cover a

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[10] See the following paragraphs for the historiography of nunneries.

[11] Good general studies on women in the middle ages include S. Shahar, The fourth estate: A history of women in the middle ages (London. 1983) and E. Amt (ed. and trans.), Women's lives in medieval Europe: A sourcebook (London, 1993) both of which discuss western Europe. For the earlier period a recent and useful introductory text is L.M. Bitel, Women in early medieval Europe 400-1100 (Cambridge, 2002). For women in England, see P. Coss, The lady in medieval England 1000-1500 (Stroud, 1998) which focuses on the aristocracy, and for the earlier period, C. Fell, C. Clark and E. Williams, Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the impact of 1066 (London, 1984). Useful collections of essays include K.J. Lewis, N.J. Menuge and K.M Phillips (eds.), Young medieval women (Stroud, 1999); J. Carpenter and S.-B. MacLean (eds.), Power of the weak: Studies on medieval women (Urbana. Illinois, 1995) and D. Baker (ed.), Medieval women: Dedicated and presented to Rosalind M.T. Hill on the occasion of her seventieth birthday (Oxford, 1978) which despite its age remains a useful source.

[12] Two classic examples of this are Veiled women I and Veiled women II. and Women religious. The main exception to this is a wide-ranging study by J.A.K. MacNamara, Sisters in arms: Catholic nuns through two millennia (Harvard, 1996), which covers women's religious communities from the early church up to the modern day; she places an emphasis on the later centuries, no doubt because of the

particular period. It is this longer chronological approach which I see as the most
valuable, and especially for Barking. It must be remembered that there were fewer than
ten nunneries in existence before 1066 which survived until the Dissolution of the
monasteries (the majority of which took place between 1536 and 1540); this relatively
small number of potential subjects for study makes it all the more surprising that so few
of them have been discussed in any detail. Those nunneries which have been studied
seem to have been chosen primarily because of the survival of an archive of material
relating directly to that house. The cartularies of Chatteris and Shaftesbury have been
published, and some of the other Wessex nunneries have been discussed, but the
majority of nunneries have been neglected, seemingly due to a lack of sufficient direct
evidence.[13]

The earliest form of religious life for women in England, the double monastery, is
usually discussed in isolation from the later, post-Viking communities, since the double
monastery remained a unique form of religious life until the development of the
syneisactic orders of the late twelfth century.[14] The exception to this trend is Gilchrist's
1994 study of the archaeological remains of nunnery buildings which includes the very
earliest pre-Viking age houses.[15] The invasions by the pagan Danish kings and the so-
called 'Dark Ages' brought religious life almost to a complete halt in England, and the

distribution of evidence.
[13] C. Breay (ed.), Cartulary of Chatteris Abbey (Woodbridge, 1999). Shaftesbury, as the wealthiest and
perhaps best recorded of the English nunneries, has been studied more than others, although S.E. Kelly
(ed.) Charters of Shaftesbury Abbey (Anglo-Saxon Charters vol. 5. Oxford, 1996) covers only the
Anglo-Saxon period; K. Cooke, 'Donors and daughters; Shaftesbury Abbey's benefactors, endowments
and nuns c.1086-1130', ANS 12 (1989) pp. 29-45 picks up the history after the Norman Conquest. L.
Keen (ed.), Studies in the early history of Shaftesbury Abbey (Dorchester, 1999) is a collection of useful
essays on the pre-Conquest history. For a general discussion including the Nunnaminster and Wherwell,
see D.K. Coldicott, Hampshire nunneries (London, 1989)
[14] For an overview, see B. Mitchell, 'Anglo-Saxon double monasteries', History Today 45 (1995) pp. 33-
9. A more detailed discussion is given in D.B. Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon women in the religious life. A
study of the status and position of women in early medieval society' (unpublished PhD. thesis, University
of Cambridge, 1985). See also M.A. Meyer, 'Queens, convents and conversion in early Anglo-Saxon
England', Revue Bénédictine 109 (1999) pp. 90-116 which provides a useful table (pp. 114-16) of the
early communities, noting their foundation status (royal or noble) and other features such as proximity to
Roman roads or location in a royal vill.
[15] R. Gilchrist, Gender and material culture: The archaeology of religious women (London, 1994) esp. fig.
2 p. 26 which shows all the known Saxon double houses.

regeneration of corporate religious activity in the late ninth and tenth centuries is often used as a starting point from which to discuss nunneries as institutions independent from monasteries. The distribution of nunneries after the Viking age is extremely interesting, and a strong reflection of the changing prominence of the different kingdoms of England; a comparison of the two maps given by Gilchrist of pre-and post-Viking age religious centres shows a move away from the east of England (where there had been many double communities, such as those at Ely, Thanet, Lyminge and St Albans) and towards Wessex, where six of the longest-surviving nunneries were founded in the tenth century (in order of foundation Shaftesbury, Wilton, Winchester, Romsey, Amesbury and Wherwell).[16] It is interesting that this very clear geographical shift has been discussed so little by most scholars; it is recognised that Wessex was the heart of the tenth-century reformation, but there has been no major discussion of the reasons behind the relative absence of religious communities in the rest of the country. Indeed, if we make a comparison of the distribution of Saxon nunneries, and those founded as a result of the twelfth century 'reformation' and the introduction of new religious orders, we note that in the empty spaces of the north of England (where there was no evidence for women's corporate religious life in the ninth to eleventh centuries) the greatest growth in numbers took place, especially in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire which between them saw the foundation of some fifty new women's communities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[17]

Most studies focus, perhaps understandably, on the 'big eight' nunneries, those which were founded before 1066 and survived until the Dissolution (the six in Wessex named above, plus Barking in Essex and Chatteris in Cambridgeshire); such a concentration, however, often leaves the smaller, often transient communities out of the picture. This can give the false impression that the wealthy pre-Conquest nunneries were in fact the only ones in existence; Foot's timely work discussing all of the known Anglo-Saxon foundations provides a valuable contrast to this trend.[18] Another work looking at some

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[16] Gilchrist, Gender and material culture, figs. 2 and 3, pp. 26 and 27.
[17] Compare Gilchrist, Gender and material culture, fig. 3 p. 27 and Women religious, fig. 1 facing abbreviations.
[18] Veiled women I discusses the historical patterns behind the foundations of different kinds of

of the less well-known nunneries is Stafford's interesting analysis of three small pre-Conquest communities which were disbanded, and their lands used to endow the new royal foundation at Reading (founded 1121).[19] A useful, if brief, introduction to the new gender-segregated forms of religious life emerging in the tenth century, including a discussion of women's patronage of male communities, is Halpin's 1994 article on religious women in the later centuries of Anglo-Saxon England.[20] In this article she disputes the argument that the main effect of the invasions of pagan Vikings, bringing to an end the 'golden age' of English nunneries, was the end of women's significance in the Anglo-Saxon religious sphere. What Halpin suggests, and as Foot's work shows in greater detail, is that women may have become more generous donors to male rather than female houses in the post-Viking age, and that the abbesses of the new nunneries may have been less powerful than those of the earlier double houses, but that nevertheless women's religiosity continued to be expressed; it was simply expressed in less formalised ways.

Within the body of work on the pre-Conquest 'big eight' nunneries, most studies focus in particular on the Wessex group (Shaftesbury, Wilton, Winchester, Romsey, Amesbury and Wherwell), with Barking and Chatteris in East Anglia often neglected. This may be a simple function of their geographical distance from the Wessex group; Barking was a small village to the east of London, sufficiently far from the city to be considered rural in the period of this study. Chatteris suffered doubly by being in Cambridgeshire, even further distant from the main centres of political and religious activity, and by being a very young house, founded only in the early eleventh century. It may also be because they are not considered part of the royal foundations of the post-Viking age, since Barking lacks an overt royal 'founder' in the tenth century, while

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communities, including not just the major nunneries but also single women living alongside monasteries, and other forms of religious life. Veiled women II gives information about each of the known sites at which religious life occurred in some form. Foot's classification of evidence is very useful; houses attested only by antiquarians, or which are mentioned only in post-conquest sources, are included in the discussion, but the source materials are carefully evaluated.

[19] P. Stafford, '*Cherchez la femme*. Queens, queens' lands and nunneries: Missing links in the foundation of Reading Abbey', History 85 (2000) pp. 4-27.

[20] P. Halpin, 'Women religious in later Anglo-Saxon England', HSJ 6 (1994) pp. 97-110.

Chatteris was founded by Eadnoth, Bishop of Dorchester (1007x9-1016).[21]
Nevertheless, studies which look exclusively at the royally-founded houses, or which
use geographical criteria for considering which houses are significant, lose the valuable
potential for comparison with Barking and Chatteris.[22] Meyer includes Barking in his
study of the Wessex royal nunneries, because he considers its royal connections more
important than its geographical location; Crick suggests the opposite is true, that
Barking's distance from the other nunneries' networks of power was of greater
significance than royal connections.[23] Determining the exact status of Barking as a
primarily royal or primarily aristocratic house is one of the main aims of this thesis, and
I hope to show that Barking was important to successive royal houses throughout the
period c.950-1200.

The politically-determined chronology given by most studies means that they either
begin or end in 1066. Foot ends her analysis of the Anglo-Saxon houses in 1066, while
the next wide-ranging study of nunneries, Thompson's *Women Religious*, begins in that
year.[24] Other works focusing on the later period tend to be based around the new
religious orders of the twelfth century, the Gilbertines, Fontevraldines, Cistercians and
so forth, sometimes at the expense of the established Benedictine order and houses.[25]
This leads to the impression that the older houses were no longer of such significance to
patrons, a suggestion which is easily disproven; these houses continued to receive

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[21] On the foundation of Chatteris, see Breay, Cartulary of Chatteris pp. 8-9.

[22] See for example B. Yorke, ' "Sisters under the skin"? Anglo-Saxon nuns and nunneries in southern England'. Reading Medieval Studies 15 (1989) pp. 95-117, which rather arbitrarily excludes Barking because it was not south of the River Thames.

[23] M.A. Meyer, 'Patronage of the West Saxon royal nunneries in late Anglo-Saxon England', Revue Bénédictine 91 (1981) pp. 332-58 esp. p. 335-6. Crick focuses on the Wessex nunneries as being the only ones with royal founders; my interpretation of the evidence is different, and indeed the importance of royal patronage to Barking is one of the main arguments of this thesis. Crick, esp. pp. 173-4 for her discussion of Barking.

[24] Veiled women I and II, and Women religious.

[25] Women religious is a clear example of this; Thompson analyses the new continental religious orders and their appeal to founders, and the newly founded Benedictine houses are left out of the main part of the discussion. On the Gilbertines, see B. Golding, Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine order c.1130-c.1300 (Oxford, 1995). On Fontevrault, B.M. Ker, Religious life for women c.1100-c.1350: Fontevraud in England (Oxford. 1999). On the Cistercians, whose communities made up the greatest part of the houses for women of the new Continental orders (see the list in Women religious p. 95 n.7), see the collection of essays in J.A. Nichols and L.T. Shank. (eds.), Hidden springs: Cistercian religious women (Kalamazoo, 1995).

benefactions, and to take in royal and noble daughters as members, and the Benedictine order was dominant amongst the wealthiest houses until the Dissolution.[26] Discussions of patronage after the conquest are also often limited either solely to the monasteries, or to houses patronised directly by members of the royal family; this too gives an unbalanced view of the relative status and importance of these communities.[27] As Christopher Holdsworth pointed out in his paper on medieval patrons (although again looking only at the monasteries), to assume that donors gave only to one house, or indeed to only one order, would mean an ignorance of the awareness medieval monks and patrons had of the non-exclusive nature of patronage, and to misunderstand the power on both sides of the benefactor/recipient equation.[28] The growing inclusion of lesser nobles and even the upper peasantry amongst the potential body of donors is an influence on patronage which is often overlooked, but which became increasingly significant, especially in the twelfth century as large numbers of new religious houses were founded with a local focus by men and women of non-royal blood.

c) Patronage

The definition of patronage and the meanings attached to it by those involved are of fundamental importance to this study. The expectations of the patron and recipient in each transaction show clearly that the act of patronage was much more than the simple giving of a gift. The idea of gift and counter-gift was at the heart of any act of patronage, although the donor ostensibly gave freely and without obligations being placed on the recipient. This was in fact merely a reference to the lack of financial

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[26] The richest houses at the Dissolution of the monasteries were Syon (a house founded by Henry V in 1431 with considerable endowments), Shaftesbury, Barking and Wilton – the oldest houses remained the wealthiest, perhaps simply because they had been able to gain endowments in the days when there was less competition for the attention of benefactors. For a discussion of factors affecting the wealth of these Anglo-Saxon houses, see Crick, pp. 161-4.

[27] E. Cownie, 'The Normans as patrons of English religious houses 1066-1135', ANS 18 (1995) pp. 47-62, for example, is in fact exclusively a discussion of the monasteries. Her arguments are useful for comparison to nunneries, but nevertheless she does not include any in her study. E. Hallam, 'Aspects of the monastic patronage of the English and French Royal houses c.1130-1270' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1976) likewise interprets 'monastic' as referring solely to monasteries and not including nunneries.

[28] C. Holdsworth, The piper and the tune: Medieval patrons and monks (Stenton Lecture 1990: Reading, 1991), with the discussion of 'non-exclusive' donation at p. 25-6.

payment made for lands or other benefactions which would have transformed it into a purchase. The donor expected benefits of a less tangible kind, be they spiritual, social, or sometimes political, and this counter-gift by the recipient was an equally essential half of the equation. A modern economic analysis of medieval patronage might assume that assumption that the donor held all the power in these transactions, through providing the financial and material means by which religious communities sustained their daily lives. This would overlook the great value attached by contemporaries, however, to the services which religious communities rendered in return for such gifts. A local lord expected some form of benefit from his grant of significant portions of a family estate, or a certain amount of his farm's produce; it would be wrong to assume that medieval society was significantly more altruistic about such things than modern society. The difference lies in twenty-first century western society being based on a primarily materialistic economy, whereas the power of the spiritual economy was far greater in the middle ages, and the counter-gifts a donor would have received are not quantifiable in modern financial terms. This does not negate their value to a medieval person, however, and several analyses have been made of the ways in which donor and recipient negotiated a balance of power in each transaction.

Recent analyses of the different roles of patron and recipient in medieval Europe have been based primarily on anthropological concepts of gift-giving, and these theories can be applied clearly to the actions of Barking's benefactors. A standard argument such as that set out in White's study of religious giving in western France bases the anticipated return to the benefactor in set categories of spiritual benefit: prayers for the soul of the departed benefactor and his or her kin; burial rights within the grounds of a religious community; commemoration through confraternity, so that the dead were not forgotten; and sometimes the promise of a place within the community for the benefactor or their children.[29] White discusses the role of a religious community as the earthly representative of the saints in Heaven, and the eternal nature of gifts made to these

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[29] S.D. White, Custom, kinship and gifts to the saints: The *Laudatio Parentum* in western France, 1050-1150 (Chapel Hill, NC, 1989)

representatives; such gifts were not made lightly, and a donor expected to receive effective intercessions in Heaven in return for earthly generosity.[30]

A different approach is found in Rosenwein's 1989 discussion of the property of Cluny in the heart of France, looking at the relationship between the monks of Cluny and those around them in wider society.[31] Her discussion centres on the concept of patronage as an act which indirectly involved the whole community, and thus that its significance extended beyond the close circle of benefactor-kin-recipient at the base of most discussions of patronage.[32] A donation of land involved the kinsfolk of the donor, and also affected those around him or her, by bringing the patron saint and ultimate recipient of the gift (St Peter in the case of Cluny) into direct contact with members of the secular community; he was considered to be present as actual neighbour and member of that community through ownership of lands.[33] In order to gain these benefits for one's community, it was important to note that gifts were made to the patron saint of a religious house, and not merely the earthly members of it; the saint was, after all, the only one who could intercede directly with God, and it was necessary to encourage monks and nuns, as the saint's worldly representatives, to remind him as often as possible of the generosity of their benefactors and thus the worthiness of their souls for a place in Heaven. The symbolic counter-gift of spiritual benefits was thus assured for the patron, even if it was not possible to enjoy those benefits during the mortal life.

Patronage was not, then, an act whose significance was limited only to the donor and the recipient. It reflected upon other members of the community, and indeed was sometimes used to show both one's membership of a given community, and the eternal nature of that membership. Families passed on their patterns of patronage through several generations, and requesting that the benefits of a gift were extended to one's

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[30] White, Custom, kinship and gifts. chapter 1 pp. 19-39.
[31] B.H. Rosenwein, To be the neighbour of St Peter: The social meaning of Cluny's property. 909-1049 (Ithaca, 1989).
[32] Rosenwein, To be the neighbour. chap. 1 pp. 35-48.
[33] On the concept of the heavenly recipient as member of the community, see Rosenwein, To be the neighbour. p.75.

ancestors and descendants was common practice.[34] It was also common to follow the patterns of patronage of one's feudal lord, both at a local level and a national one, with royal patrons making certain religious houses fashionable amongst the wealthier members of society. Some historians have argued that patterns of patronage could be inherited along with lands. Mason suggests that the post-Conquest holders of Anglo-Saxon estates adopted the religious patronage of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, but that by the late twelfth century these land-based ties had been lost, and more personal and often materialistic motivations were coming to the fore.[35] While patronage as a conceptual action was hard to quantify, the physical act of making a gift to a religious community was a highly significant occasion, and one which was carefully planned. It involved many members of a family and the religious community who were receiving the gift, and was often made on a significant date (the patron saint's feast day, for example, or another anniversary).[36] A documentary record was made as a reminder of the action, and it should be remembered that the giving itself was made by the speaking of words; the document was merely an aide-memoire for when the witnesses could not be consulted.[37] Indeed, a gift to the church was significant on many levels, in which 'social, legal and spiritual factors were simultaneously operative'.[38]

Literary patronage was a part of a slightly different gift economy, in which the benefits to the patron could be seen more directly and immediately.[39] Nevertheless, it remained an exchange between the benefactor (who paid an author for their work) and the recipient (an author who praised his or her benefactor in glowing terms for all to see). Since this did not involve the protection of one's soul, it was possible to be more openly materialistic about the activity, and indeed literary patronage frequently required little more than a payment for work done. Writers may have been involved in active

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[34] See Chapters 4 and 5 on the networks of family patronage at Barking.
[35] E. Mason, '*Timeo barones et donas ferentes*', in D. Baker (ed.), Religious motivation: Biographical and sociological problems for the church historian (Oxford, 1978) pp. 61-75.
[36] See White, Custom, kinship and gifts, chap. 1 pp. 19-39.
[37] Clanchy, pp. 253-60.
[38] Innes, State and society, p. 17. This is a discussion of the Rhine Valley in the eighth and ninth centuries, but its theoretical points are equally applicable to England in the tenth to twelfth centuries.
[39] For a fuller discussion of literary patronage, see Part IV.

patronage, where a patron approached them and requested the composition of a certain text, or prospective patronage, when an author write a piece praising a certain (usually wealthy) figure, then offered them the work in anticipation of a reward.[40] While certain texts such as chronicles or histories were produced as panegyrics with obvious motivation, it was also possible for a patron to show off their wealth through patronising the production of elaborately decorated bibles and prayer-books. While these texts may have appeared neutral, and thus hard to use for the praise of one's patron, many such books were illuminated with portraits of the patron and their kin; these were just as much intended to show off the importance of a certain individual as were biographies and chronicles.[41] The composition of a literary text sought the immediate praise of one's contemporaries for a patron, rather than the eternal protection of their soul. Indeed, the authors of such texts often took the opportunity to ask for prayers for themselves as creators of the work, as did Clemence in her *Life of St Catherine*.[42] Literary patronage, then, was as important in encouraging the intellectual growth of English society as religious patronage was for its spiritual growth.

d) Chronological questions

The classification of historical periods in the study of medieval religious communities is almost always, as shown above, based around political events; before 1066, after 1066 or during the reign of specific kings. I believe this approach leads to a distortion of the available evidence, and a strong tendency to see political events as the determining factor behind religious patronage and activity. I propose that a more constructive method of analysing medieval religious history would be to use religious events as markers, since they played a more direct role in influencing the extent of established

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[40] I. Short, 'Patrons and polyglots: French literature in twelfth-century England', ANS 14 (1991) pp. 229-50 at pp. 231-2

[41] For example Henry of Chichester who was depicted praying before the Virgin and child in a missal produced for him before 1227. Robert Brunyng, Abbot of Sherborne (1385-1415), one of the two patrons of the Sherborne Missal, appears over 100 times in illuminations of the text. R. Marks and N. Morgan, The golden age of English manuscript painting 1200-1500 (London, 1981) pp. 54, 94, plates 8 and 28.

[42] 'I pray and beseech all who will hear this book and who will listen to it with a receptive heart to pray to God on my behalf, that he may place my soul in paradise and guard my body while it is alive'. Catherine. vv. 2693-8: VLHD p. 43.

religious life, and the forms which it took. The status of the church in England seems a more valid determinant by which to judge those events which took place within it; this less directly political approach allows patronage to be considered within a longer-term context in which the personal and spiritual motivations of benefactors remained essentially constant, no matter who occupied the throne at the time. The main influence on the ways in which benefactors were able to express these motivations was the range and variety of communities available to be patronised, and thus the most important factors were the developments of the religious life after the reforms of the tenth century, and the theological reformation of the twelfth century. It might be more useful, then, to analyse events in the history of religion according to these defining events, rather than the reigns of kings: I will propose below a preliminary account of how this analysis might be organised.

If we consider religious life in England until the end of the first Viking age, we see that there were essentially two forms of community; the monasteries, and the double houses for both men and women. The period of the Viking invasions was one in which religious houses were vulnerable to attack and destruction, but with the active involvement of Christian kings and queens from the tenth century monasteries and nunneries began to grow in number and strength. This was a time of flexibility in the approach taken to lives dedicated to religion; the prayers of informal gatherings of women and individual women were considered equally as valid as those of women in the larger nunneries and men in established monasteries. The capacity for benefaction was opened to a wider range of people across the whole country, as there were religious communities of different types in different areas, making it possible for less wealthy people to support the efforts of their local religious women and men.[43]

The first major event affecting the practise of religious life was the programme of reforms encouraged by King Edgar (959-75) and his bishops, culminating in the writing of the *Regularis Concordia* (c.973).[44] This led to the focusing of benefactors' attentions

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[43] Veiled women I. Map 1 shows the distribution of religious women in England before 1066.
[44] A useful collection of essays discussing this period is D. Parsons (ed.), Tenth century studies: Essays in

on the reformed houses, and especially those centred around the royal heartlands of Wessex.[45] Consequently many of the smaller, less well-patronised houses fell by the wayside, and religious life (for women at least) became concentrated in only a handful of communities. The royal and aristocratic nature of these major houses and the location of the majority of them in Wessex meant that for many people either their own relative poverty or their distance from a suitable religious house meant that their patronage was limited to the less formal, more transient communities, and this patronage may seem less effective to modern eyes.[46] With less evidence for such patrons, it is also possible to disregard them, as many studies have done, and focus only on patrons of the 'great' reformed Benedictine houses. This state of religious life, with a few major wealthy houses and many smaller, transient communities, continued until the next change in religious observance in the twelfth century. Patterns of patronage also remained fairly stable, and studies which begin or end in 1066 without taking account of a slightly wider context can easily assume that the arrival of a Norman king meant the complete exchange of the body of religious benefactors from Anglo-Saxon to Norman. This approach fails to consider the ongoing patronage of the Anglo-Saxon nobility, which Barking shows clearly was a continuing factor for several decades.[47] Indeed, recent studies of the patronage of the Normans in England has shown that it took at least a generation before the Normans transferred their allegiance to the Anglo-Saxon foundations.[48]

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commemoration of the millennium of the Council of Winchester and the _Regularis Concordia_ (London, 1975) and see also M.A. Meyer, 'Women and the tenth century monastic reform', Revue Bénédictine 87 (1977) pp. 34-61, which discusses the role of queens and noblewomen in encouraging and patronising the newly reformed houses. On the influence of continental developments, an interesting recent study is V. Ortenberg, The English church and the Continent in the tenth and eleventh centuries; Cultural, spiritual and artistic exchanges (Oxford, 1992).

[45] Veiled women I. pp. 87-96.

[46] Veiled women II discusses all the locations at which women's vowed religious activity, in whatever form, was known to have existed in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

[47] No major study has yet been undertaken of the religious patronage of the surviving Anglo-Saxon nobles after the Conquest, and this would be an extremely interesting topic. The best study of the effect of 1066 on the native population is A. Williams, The English and the Norman Conquest (Woodbridge, 1995).

[48] For example E. Cownie, Religious patronage in Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1135 (London, 1998) in which she argues that most Normans in England continued to give to houses in Normandy for at least one generation after 1066, and for longer in many cases, before beginning to patronise the houses of their new homeland.

The next major development in the organisation of formal religious life in England was highly significant because it allowed members of the lower levels of the nobility and upper peasantry to take a more active role in both patronage and membership of monasteries and nunneries. The twelfth-century growth in England of the continental religious orders offered a range of new possibilities for founders, and also offered new potential to enter a community for those not considered sufficiently aristocratic to join Benedictine houses. Despite their attempts to avoid accusations of simony that went along with accepting dowries from entrants, the Benedictine order remained essentially the preserve of the wealthy aristocratic class, and the new orders provided the first real alternatives.[49] The Cluniacs, Cistercians, Fontevraldines and Gilbertines all had their own approach to the religious life, their own variations on the rule of St Benedict and their own differing appeal to potential founders and benefactors.[50] Combined with the newer, more personal theological ideas developing in the twelfth century, the individual was able to have a far closer relationship with both God and his representatives in the vowed religious life; this development should be considered a turning point in the relationship between the English people and the established church.[51] A life dedicated to the church became accessible to many more classes of society, and hence religious communities were founded and endowed by a far wider range of people than under the stricter Benedictine rule.[52] As a result of this analysis, I propose that a more useful way to divide studies of religious life in England would not be 'Before 1066' and 'After 1066', but 'Before the Council of Winchester (973)', 'Between the Council of Winchester and the late twelfth century', and 'From the twelfth century reformation to the Dissolution'. This gives a greater significance to the patrons and members of a community and their motivations, rather than to political events as prime movers in religious activity.

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[49] Women religious. chaps. 5-8, and also pp. 187-9 for a brief discussion of dowries.
[50] G. Constable, Cluniac studies (London, 1980), Nichols and Shank Cistercian religious women. Ker, Fontevraud in England and Golding, The Gilbertine order.
[51] G. Constable, The reformation of the twelfth century (Cambridge, 1996) discusses the changing ideas presented by influential theologians including Bernard of Clairvaux and Honorius Augustodunensis (both of whom influenced Clemence of Barking). See also G. Constable, Three studies in medieval religious and social thought (Cambridge, 1995) pp. 3-141 in which he discusses the eleventh and twelfth-century development of the idea of Mary as superior to Martha, and the holy life as superior to the worldly.
[52] Women religious. Appendix A lists the founders of nunneries in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.

A longer time-scale for the study of religious communities allows for a greater sense of continuity than has sometimes been acknowledged, and perhaps removes some of the prominence that has been given to the pre-Conquest nunneries as the most important ones. Their longevity is certainly an important factor in their prominence, but to consider their survival beyond 1066 as the main determinant classifying them as 'successful' can give an unbalanced view. Barking Abbey's importance and wealth in the centuries up to its dissolution in 1539 were based on several different factors, of which its historical tradition, rather than merely its age, may be considered a significant one. By this I mean that we should remember that Barking is unique amongst the pre-Conquest foundations in being the only one based upon a pre-Viking age community; it remained unique in this way through the foundation of many new nunneries during the twelfth century and indeed maintained this status until the Reformation.[53] It is not necessarily the case that there was total continuity between the Saxon double house originally sited at Barking and the later nunnery, and indeed as we shall see, archaeological evidence suggests the use of two separate sites.[54] Nevertheless I believe it is significant that Barking was one of the earliest communities founded in the newly converted England of the seventh century, and remained the site of an important religious community for nearly 1000 years. This difference is perhaps what makes Barking such an interesting topic of study, as is shown, if not openly acknowledged, by the number of studies made of it since the eighteenth century, and it is to these previous studies we shall now turn.

e) Barking Abbey, chroniclers and antiquaries

Barking Abbey is one of the best known and best studied of the nunneries of medieval England. That this should be the case, and yet that there remains so much to be said

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[53] Compare Veiled women I. Map 3, p. 38, 'Female religious houses c.630 -c. 900', and Women religious, map facing abbreviations, 'English nunneries founded after the Norman Conquest'. See also MRH. map after index, 'The nuns in England and Wales'. Several sites of pre-Viking age nunneries were later colonised by monks, such as Folkestone, St Osyths, Thorney, Ely and St Albans, to name some locations close to Barking.

[54] See S. Foot, 'Remembering, forgetting and inventing; Attitudes to the past in England at the end of the first Viking age', TRHS 6th ser. 9 (1999) pp. 185-200, esp. pp. 194-5 where she argues that there was no

about it, is indicative of the great amount of research that has still to be done on the other similarly wealthy and important nunneries of the period, especially those in Wessex.[55] Barking Abbey was exceptional in the quantity of literary activity which took place there in the twelfth century and later, which I discuss in detail in Part IV below.[56] It has a remarkably well-preserved archive of thirteenth and fourteenth century charters, which have been studied from an economic angle.[57] Many of its Anglo-Saxon charters have been studied and edited, and there are a further nine recently discovered Anglo-Saxon charters awaiting publication.[58] Yet despite this considerable amount of scholarly attention, the political history of Barking has only been studied briefly, and the abbey's connections to major local families and the crown have not been thoroughly investigated. This thesis is intended to fill that gap, and to shed a new light on the established histories of the abbey by discussing the documentary and literary sources in conjunction with each other, rather than in isolation.

The first 'historian' of the abbey was of course Bede (673-735), who wrote about the early foundation of a double house at Barking by St Erkenwald for his sister St Ethelburga. While being a primary source himself for modern historians, Bede is careful to note his own sources to validate the authority of his stories about several miracles which took place at the abbey. He refers to 'signs and miracles… which have been written down by those who were acquainted with them', and to 'the book from which I have made these extracts'.[59] The utility of Bede as a historical source has long been debated, since he was heavily dependent upon his sources and took his self-imposed task as historian very seriously, describing events as the fulfilment of God's will or divine retribution, but nevertheless he remains our only close contemporary source for

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continuity between the two communities located at Barking.

[55] The few nunneries to have received any significant scholarly attention are those for which a considerable archive of material has survived; see n. 13 above.

[56] I do not propose to discuss these sources here, as they are of a different nature to the documentary material and require their own introduction; see Part IV.

[57] The Petre archive of charters at the Essex Record Office, MSS D/DP T1. This was studied in W. Sturman, 'Barking Abbey: A study in its external and internal administration from the Conquest to the Dissolution' (unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of London, 1961).

[58] ECBA. and more recently the Ilford Cartulary. Hatfield House MS Ilford 1/6, discussed in detail in Chapter 2 part b) below.

[59] Bede, pp. 365, 357.

the early history of Barking.[60] Beyond this, there is no narrative historical account of Barking until the work of antiquarians in the early modern era. Barking did not attract a chronicler, or produce its own history in a pure 'historical' sense; the hagiographical works written by Goscelin of St-Bertin in the late eleventh century are not contemporary with the events they describe, although he too claims eyewitness reports of the events he describes. Goscelin's work was also commissioned by the abbey in order to promote its saints, and is best described in conjunction with the twelfth-century hagiographies written at the abbey.[61]

The first modern account of Barking was the brief discussion in the *Monasticon* by William Dugdale (1605-86), which published several useful extracts from primary source material but does not give a very accurate account of the narrative history of the abbey.[62] The first full history was by the antiquary Smart Lethiullier (1701-60), who bought the lordship of the manor of Barking in 1754 for the substantial sum of £40,000.[63] He wrote a history of Barking Abbey in c. 1750, which is now in the Essex Record Office, and which is valuable to modern historians, in its description of many sources which must now be assumed to be lost.[64] He transcribed many segments of earlier documents, such as the *Antiphona Beata Ethelburga* found in the Bodleian Library MS Digby 38 and the description of the role of the cellaress from British Library MS Cotton Julius D VIII, and certainly took the approach that using the original sources was the best way to study a topic; he appears to have visited many of the major

[60] Recent authoritative discussions are J. Campbell, 'Bede I' and 'Bede II' in J. Campbell (ed.), Essays in Anglo-Saxon history (London, 1986) pp. 1-28 and 29-48, two essays emphasising Bede's religious viewpoint and the prominence given to events in the church over political ones. Despite its age, A.H. Thompson (ed.), Bede: His life, times and writings (Oxford, 1935) remains useful, especially W. Levison, 'Bede as historian', pp. 111-51. Most recently see the account in B. Ward, The venerable Bede (London, 1998).
[61] For Goscelin, see Chapter 8 below.
[62] W. Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum (8 vols. new edn., London 1817-30) vol. I pp. 436-46.
[63] H.H. Lockwood, 'Sources and development of local historical studies in the Barking and Ilford area', Transactions of the Ilford and District Historical Society 1 (1973) pp. 1-29 at p. 6. See also the account of Lethiullier in L. Stephen (ed.), Dictionary of national biography (58 vols. London, 1885-1900) vol. 33 p. 132.
[64] Lethiullier's A history of Barking (London, c. 1750) survives in one manuscript copy in the possession of the Marquess of Breamore, although there is a microfilm copy at the Essex Record Office, MS T/P 93/3. There is also a typescript copy (without original page numbering) held at the Dagenham Valence Library, 3 miles north-east of the abbey site.

libraries and archives in existence at the time of writing. Of especial relevance to modern historians are his rather frustratingly imprecise references to some of his sources, identifying them as, for example, a book containing 'anything relating to barking', 'an MSS [sic] book on parchment', and especially 'An ancient MSS [sic] on parchment in the hands of Crisp Gascoyne Alderman of London'.[65] The latter is almost certainly a reference to what is now known as the Ilford Cartulary, a rich resource for Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman and medieval historians, containing charters and lists covering the history of the abbey from its beginning to the dissolution in 1539 and continuing with later records of the Ilford Hospital.[66] His transcriptions were not always completely accurate, and much of his chronology has been corrected over the 250 years since he wrote, but he was the first historian to note the importance of the abbey and its significance to many successive Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings and queens.[67] His statement about Matilda, daughter of Henry II who was abbess 1177x9-1198, that 'None of our historians have ever mentioned this daughter of the king's', remains true, and he has a charming turn of phrase, describing the reign of Guthrum over the East Angles as 'this melancholy cloud of Total Suppression'.[68] Lethiullier's history was used as the basic narrative by most of the historians who immediately succeeded him, and as such should not be 'Totally Omitted and forgott', as Lethiullier himself said about Maud, daughter of King John and abbess of Barking. [69] Accounts by the great antiquaries Morant (1700-70) and Lysons (1762-1834) are almost verbatim copies of Lethiullier, and there was no substantial new work done on the abbey until the beginning of the twentieth century.[70]

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[65] Lethiullier, History of Barking. p. 156 of typescript.

[66] This source is described in detail below pp. 38- 43.

[67] ECBA. p. 8, criticises Lethiullier's transcript of Erkenwald's charter from London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian A ix. ff.112-13 as 'very badly copied… mentioned only to condemn it for use as a primary source'.

[68] Lethiullier, History of Barking. typescript pp. 26, 51.

[69] Lethiullier, History of Barking. typescript p. 54.

[70] P. Morant, The history and antiquities of the county of Essex (2 vols. London, 1768) vol. 1. pp. 2-3. D. Lysons, The environs of London vol. IV, Hertfordshire, Essex and Kent (London, 1796) pp. 58-70.

f) Modern studies of Barking

Barking Abbey, like so many other religious houses, benefited greatly from the
publication of the *Victoria County History*, which was the first systematic study of the
known published materials for each county.[71] The account given in this early twentieth
century volume is now rather dated, but gives a useful basic narrative and directs the
reader to the majority of printed source materials. The *Victoria County History* also
gives an account of the Ilford Hospital which was founded by Abbess Adelidis in the
1140s and survived the Dissolution as a charitable institution independent of the
nunnery.[72] Beyond these accounts, there are brief discussions given by the editors of
some of the less well-known primary sources originating at the abbey, such as the
Ordinale and the Account Book of the cellaress; these are discussed below in Chapter 2.
Power's work on nunneries focused mainly on the 250 years before the Dissolution, but
makes frequent reference to the visitation report of Archbishop John Peckham dating
from 1279.[73]

The first thorough modern case study of Barking Abbey was written in 1954, when
Loftus and Chettle produced a narrative of the abbey covering the earliest days of the
double house and continuing until its dissolution in 1539.[74] This history is divided into
two sections, before and after 1066, and finishes with a discussion of daily life at the
nunnery taken primarily from the sources used by Power. This was based mainly on
printed sources, but included the first analysis of the Petre archive of unpublished
charters housed at the Essex Record Office.[75] This gives the history a strongly economic
focus, discussing land transactions and the administration of the estates, and little is said
about the politics affecting the abbey. Loftus and Chettle follow the 'questionable but

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[71] The Victoria County History for Essex has now reached ten volumes, and is still in active progress.
Fowler, 'Barking'.

[72] Fowler, 'Ilford'.

[73] Peckham's visitation report was first printed in John Peckham, Regestrum epistolarum fratris Johannis
Peckham Archiepiscopi Cantuarensis ed. C. Trice Martin (3 vols. Rolls Series 1882-85) vol. I pp.81-86.
For references to this text see Power, Medieval English nunneries. pp. 258, 320, 347, 359 etc.

[74] Loftus and Chettle.

[75] Essex Record Office MSS D/DP T1. These charters are discussed below in Chapter 2 part b).

established convention' of naming both Queen Matilda II, wife of King Henry I, and Queen Matilda III, wife of King Stephen, as abbesses of Barking in the twelfth century, without discussing the exact nature of the relationship between these women and the abbey.[76] This relationship and the nature of the connections between Barking Abbey and the successive royal houses of England form a key section of my argument, and my conclusions are different to those reached by many of the earlier historians.

The 1960s saw the writing of two new works on Barking, which are each valuable for different reasons. Lockwood and Howson produced the catalogue of an exhibition which took place in 1966 to celebrate the 1300th anniversary of the assumed date of the founding of the double house at Barking.[77] This describes many of the primary source materials relating to the abbey, and includes photographs of some of the items, including manuscripts written at the abbey and texts which were then held in private archives.[78] The most significant scholarly work devoted Barking Abbey was the doctoral thesis written in 1961 by Sturman on the administration of the abbey and its estates from 1066 to the Dissolution; this remains the most detailed study of the nunnery written to date, but sadly none of her research has been published.[79] Sturman's focus was exclusively upon the economics of the nunnery, and the ways in which it made the best use of its spiritual and material incomes. The nature of the materials used also focused her work mainly on the later medieval period. By making a detailed study of the Petre archive of charters of donation to the abbey, a collection which contains some 50 documents relating to Barking dating from the late twelfth to the mid-fourteenth century, Sturman gave a detailed discussion of the abbey's relationships with certain local families. Her work offers a full and interesting account of the economic history of the abbey, but is primarily narrative in nature, and lacks any detailed analysis of the political influences which came to bear on the house. Her study was also made

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[76] Loftus and Chettle p. 29.

[77] Lockwood and Howson.

[78] For example, the manuscript Welbeck I.C.1 containing the lives of St Catherine of Alexandria and St Edward the Confessor was at the time held in private hands by the Duke of Portland, and photographs of it were included in the exhibition; it is now in the British Library, MS Additional 70513, but at the time it would not have been accessible to scholars.

[79] Sturman, 'Barking Abbey'.

before the discovery of the Ilford Cartulary, which provides a considerable amount of new information about the hospital and the abbey, and which might have influenced some of her arguments; this material is of key significance to my study.

Since Sturman's work, Barking has not been the subject of a direct study. It has been included in works comparing the Anglo-Saxon nunneries, such those by Foot and Crick, but the main recent work has been based on the archaeological evidence discovered at the site, and in works editing primary sources relating to the abbey. The archaeological investigation of Barking began in as long ago as the eighteenth century, when Smart Lethiullier undertook the first excavations at the site, but he did not include any information about this in his history of the abbey.[80] Since then the site was left essentially untouched until the late nineteenth century, when investigations by a local headmaster digging in his back garden found a tomb containing a female skeleton; it was later concluded that this was an abbess, buried under the high altar of the abbey church.[81]

The first major excavation of the site of the abbey was undertaken by Clapham in 1910, and his plan of the buildings remains authoritative.[82] It should be remembered that there were perhaps as many as three separate Barking Abbeys: the double house which was supposedly destroyed by the Vikings in the ninth century; the new buildings constructed to house the tenth-century nunnery; and the eleventh- and twelfth-century major reconstruction initiated by Abbess Ælfgyva in order to translate the relics of the abbess-saints Ethelburga, Wulfhilda and Hildelith. The later buildings are the best known, and they were exceptional; Barking had the longest nunnery nave in medieval England at nearly 103 metres, and was the only nunnery to have divided water courses running through its latrines for greater hygiene.[83] Clapham's article describes and illustrates several artefacts discovered on the site of the excavations, including a twelfth-century

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[80] Lockwood, 'Sources and development of local historical studies', p. 7.

[81] K. MacGowan, 'Barking Abbey', Current Archaeology 149 (1996) pp. 172-8

[82] Clapham.

[83] For the length of churches, see Gilchrist, Gender and material culture, p. 45, and for the latrines and a copy of Clapham's plan of the abbey, pp. 113-14.

abbess' ring with a large crystal stone, and the base of an Anglo-Saxon stone cross.[84] Since then, two further major excavations have been undertaken at the abbey site, in 1985 and 1990, which suggest that the locations of the Anglo-Saxon and medieval buildings may not have coincided exactly, but certainly shared the same site.[85] These investigations turned up a large number of Anglo-Saxon coins and decorative articles which suggest that the site was occupied by wealthy women in the eighth and ninth centuries, as well as mill timbers and the remains of a well which can be dated to the early tenth century.[86] Further excavations undertaken at Nazeing give evidence of a double house there in the seventh century, and it has been argued that this might be a very early cell dependent upon Barking Abbey.[87] It is perhaps unlikely that there will be any more great archaeological discoveries at the site of Barking; all that remains of the foundations of the twelfth-century buildings are part of a park maintained by the local council, while the site of the most recent excavations has now been covered by an electrical goods warehouse.[88]

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[84] Clapham, pp. 86-7.

[85] MacGowan, 'Barking Abbey', especially the plans at p. 172.

[86] MacGowan, 'Barking Abbey', p. 178. See also L. Webster and J. Backhouse (eds.), The making of England: Anglo-Saxon art and culture AD600-900 (Toronto, 1991) pp. 88-93 for photographs of many of these items.

[87] P. Huggins, 'Nazeingbury 20 years on, or "Where did the royal ladies go?"', London Archaeologist 8 (1997) pp. 105-111, at pp. 110-11. On this suggestion, see also the brief discussion in Lockwood, and Gilchrist, Gender and material culture, p.30.

[88] MacGowan, 'Barking Abbey', p. 172 has a photograph of part of the old abbey site as it is currently preserved.

Chapter 2: Sources

This study is based on a wide variety of sources, both published and unpublished, some of which have been used extensively by historians and others which have not been well known until recently. I intend to discuss only the documentary sources here; there is a full introduction to the literary sources (letters and saints' lives) in Part IV below. The unpublished material in particular is very interesting since it combines to give a picture of the local history of Barking within a national context, and much of it has not been used before in either major national or local studies. The majority of published material has been established as reliable by generations of scholars, and does not need much introduction. It is the two main archives of material at the Essex Record Office and Hatfield House which are the most interesting, and which provide the new perspectives upon which this study is based.

a) Published

Many of the sources used in this study have been widely known for many years, and relied on by generations of historians to give details about national events and figures. The standard handbooks listing materials emanating from the royal courts and chancery are all well-known, and provide the evidence at the heart of any study involving royal benefactions to religious houses; these documents have been used in all the major studies from Lethiullier (who was fortunate enough to be able to work from the originals) to Sturman (based on the printed works available to her at the time).[1] The Anglo-Saxon charters listed by Sawyer, and published in many different collections, are the key evidence for the earlier period of this study; the discovery of the Ilford Cartulary is very exciting in adding to this corpus.[2] For the Anglo-Norman kings, the essential work is the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, used in conjunction with the later inspeximuses of these documents found in the Calendar of Charter Rolls.[3] The last years

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[1] Lethiullier, History of Barking: Sturman, 'Barking Abbey'.
[2] P.H. Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon charters: An annotated list and bibliography (Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks 8. London, 1968).
[3] RRAN vols I-III; D. Bates (ed.) Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum: the Acta of William I, 1066-1087

of this study are covered by the incomplete handlist of acta of Henry II and Richard I.[4]
In progress at the time of writing, the British Academy-sponsored project entitled 'Acta
of Henry II and his family, 1154-1204' is creating a complete account of the documents
of the second half of the twelfth century to replace the current incomplete edition.[5] The
publications of the Pipe Roll Society provide information about the administration of
Barking's lands during periods of royal control in vacancies between abbesses, as well
as details about their elections.[6]

At a more local level, the Feet of Fines for Essex give details for the later years of this
study of the abbey's relationships with its tenants and the way in which it administered
its lands.[7] For the Anglo-Saxon period, information about the abbey's relationship with
its patrons is found in the wills of local aristocracy and members of influential families.[8]
These wills are extremely useful in providing detailed information about successive
generations of families which had connections to Barking, as well as their own
networks of kinship throughout Essex. East Anglian historians are fortunate in having a
large number of surviving Anglo-Saxon wills upon which to work, and this evidence
should be considered exceptional in its scope and detail. Evidence with such
concentrated and detailed information does not emerge again for Barking Abbey until
the twelfth century; we are equally fortunate in having a number of personal charters
from about 1150 onwards which were preserved by the post-Dissolution owner of the
lands to which they refer.[9] The early charters of the abbey have been the cause of much
scholarly debate, and deserve describing here in some detail.

(Oxford, 1998): CCR.

[4] J.C. Holt and R. Mortimer (eds.), The acta of Henry II and Richard I (List and Index Society Special
Series, No. 28. London, 1986).

[5] The collection is held at the Faculty of History, West Road, Cambridge, and I refer to the indexes and
notes as Acta of Henry II ref. 123H, and so forth. I am grateful to Dr Judith Everard for her assistance in
using the indexes to this archive of material.

[6] Pipe Roll Society, various volumes.

[7] R.E.G. Kirk (ed.). Feet of Fines for Essex. 10 vols (Colchester, 1899-1910)

[8] Whitelock.

[9] See discussion of the Petre Archive below, pp. 36-7.

Evidence for the earliest years of the abbey's history, in its form as a double house, is found in a set of three seventh-century charters, all of which have been studied extensively and which remain the subject of academic debate.[10] These are known as Erkenwald's charter (London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian A ix ff.112-3, S. 1246, dated to 687), Hodilred's charter (London, British Library MS Cotton Augustus ii 29, a seventh century single sheet charter, S. 1171, dated to c.685-7) and the Battersea charter (London, Westminster Abbey Muniments I, S. 1248, dated 13 June 693). These charters are all printed and discussed extensively in Hart's *Early Charters of Barking Abbey*, in which he assesses them as broadly authentic.[11] Erkenwald's charter, which survives only in a sixteenth century transcription by the antiquarian John Joscelyn (1529-1603), is a collection of confirmations of earlier gifts, including those recorded in Hodilred's charter and the Battersea charter.[12] It contains details of eight separate gifts of lands in London and Essex made by six individuals, five of whom can be identified securely with known historical figures. It is internally dated by the description Erkenwald makes of a visit to Rome 'ten years ago in the year AD 677', when several of the gifts his charter recites were confirmed by Pope Agatho.[13] Since Agatho was not made pope until 678, this dating clause might be used to suggest that the entire charter was fraudulent, but Hart notes that it is possible that Erkenwald did indeed go to Rome in 677, and remained there until the following year when Agatho was consecrated and Erkenwald received papal confirmation of the charters he carried with him.[14] The witnesses of the charter are all identifiable, and fit with the suggested date of 687, and Hart uses this and several other details of the charter to argue that it is authentic.[15]

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[10] The most up-to-date account of the literature surrounding each of these charters is to be found in the online version of Sawyer's Anglo-Saxon charters, the 'Electronic Sawyer' accessible at http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/eSawyer.99/eSawyer2.html (maintained by S.D. Keynes, last updated January 1999). This site is the basis for a forthcoming revised print edition of Sawyer's Anglo-Saxon charters.

[11] ECBA.

[12] Joscelyn's role as Latin secretary to Archbishop Matthew Parker undoubtedly gave him access to an unprecedentedly wide range of materials relating to both Anglo-Saxon and religious history; we should be very grateful to him for preserving copies of many texts, such as Erkenwald's charter, which have subsequently been lost. Stephen, Dictionary of national biography vol. 30, pp. 204-5.

[13] ECBA, p. 11.

[14] ECBA pp. 12-13.

[15] See, however, M. Gelling, (ed.), Early Charters of the Thames Valley (Leicester, 1979) no. 310, where the discussion is more sceptical.

Hodilred's charter (BL MS Cott. Aug. ii 29) , which is itself recited in Erkenwald's charter, is one of only two seventh-century charters to have survived to the present day (the other being a charter of King Hlothere of Kent).[16] Hodilred (or Ethelred, as his name might be interpreted) does not occur outside the context of Barking, but identifies himself as 'parens Sebbi', kinsman of Sebbi the king of Essex (c.664-694). He may have been a member of that family, since Sebbi and his two sons Suebred and Sigiheard all witness the charter. His charter grants to Barking a number of estates at what are now Dagenham and three unidentifiable locations in Essex, meaning unfortunately that we are unable to trace the successive history of these estates. Hodilred's charter can be dated to approximately 685-7, and is considered by Hart to be 'unquestionably authentic'.[17] Whitelock is slightly more sceptical, but notes that the witness list is similar to those of contemporary charters of King Cædwalla, and that bishops Wilfrid and Erkenwald, who both witness the charter, were in London in 686-7 at the command of Bishop Theodore, suggesting the charter might be datable to this time.[18] The last four lines of text and the witness list are written in a different hand to the main text, and may have been added up to a century after the body of the charter, meaning the witness list may have been fabricated to appear genuine; nevertheless, the charter and its witnesses are widely considered to be authentic.[19]

The third in this group of texts, the Battersea charter (Westminster Abbey Muniments I) has a complex history, being an eleventh-century copy of a deed internally dated to 693, with the names of the donor and recipient erased but bearing fifteenth-century endorsements to the effect that these gaps should be filled with names assigning the land to Westminster Abbey. Further, the gift of 68 *cassatae* at Battersea, purporting to

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[16] See Webster and Backhouse, The making of England. pp. 43-4 for Hlothere's charter, and pp. 44-5 for Hodilred's charter, with photographs of both. The attestations on the reverse of Hodilred's charter, including the three kings Sebbi, Suebred and Sigiheard are illustrated in ECBA. facing title page. The text of the charter is printed in ECBA pp. 27-28, and the most recent translation is in D. Whitelock, English historical documents I c.500-1042 (2nd ed. London 1979) no. 60 pp. 487-8.

[17] ECBA. p. 31.

[18] Whitelock, English historical documents. p. 486.

[19] Webster and Backhouse, Making of England. p.44-5, and the photograph p. 45 which shows clearly the different hands of the charter. See Whitelock, English historical documents p. 486 for an argument

date from 693 and witnessed by King Æthelred of Mercia (675-704), is also recorded in Erkenwald's charter of 687. Hart offers an explanation for this apparent anomaly, suggesting that the document dated to 693 and copied out in the eleventh century was based upon a genuine gift made in the 680s by King Cædwalla of Wessex (c.685-88).[20] Cædwalla made his gift in the 680s as king of Wessex. When Mercia gained ascendancy over the southern kingdoms a new charter was required showing the approval of King Æthelred, the new ruler; this was composed in 693, recording Cædwalla's earlier gift but with the new overlord's express consent. The lands Cædwalla gave at Battersea passed in the eleventh century to Westminster Abbey, leading to the 'creation' of a new version of the charter (what exists today as the Battersea charter), intended to prove that Westminster had always owned the lands. When this charter was discovered in the fifteenth century, it was believed to constitute a challenge to Westminster's ownership of Battersea, hence the scribal erasures and re-assignation to Westminster Abbey. If the gift had not also been recorded in Erkenwald's charter, the deception might have succeeded. Fortunately for our knowledge of Barking Abbey, both the Battersea charter and Erkenwald's charter survive to provide the full story. All three seventh-century charters together give a useful account of the early interest of a variety of royal figures in Barking Abbey, and while they fall outside the main scope of this study, nevertheless I discuss the evidence they provide as a valuable background to the history of the abbey from the ninth to twelfth centuries.

Barking Abbey itself produced a number of other pieces of evidence relating specifically to its own history, which are of considerable interest. Of these perhaps the best known is the *Ordinale* of the abbey, dedicated in 1404 to Abbess Sybil Felton, whose crest it bears and in whose honour it is inscribed on fol. 6rv; 'Memorandum quod Anno domini Millesimo quadringentesimo quarto domina Sibilla permissione divina Abbatissa de Berkyng hunc librum ad usum Abbatissarum existencium in dicta domo in

against the charter's authenticity.
[20] ECBA. pp. 20-6. See, however, D. Whitelock, 'Some Anglo-Saxon bishops of London', Chambers Memorial Lecture 1974, printed in D. Whitelock, History. law and literature in 10th - 11th century England (London, 1981) no II. pp. 3-34, at p. 7-8, which suggests the charter is a later conflation, but essentially reliable. On the historians of Anglo-Saxon Westminster, see J. Crick, 'St Albans, Westminster and some twelfth-century views of the Anglo-Saxon past', ANS 25 (2002) pp. 65-83.

futurum concessit, et in librario eiusdem loci post mortem cuiuscumque in perpetuum commemoraturum ordinavit'.[21] This text, contained in Oxford, University College MS 169, comprised both the *Sanctorale* and *Temporale* calendars of services, as well as lists of abbesses, and orders of service for a variety of specific needs, from the admission of a widow to the nunnery to the appointment of a new abbess.[22] The editor of this text gives a useful brief introduction to the abbey, and the notes to the text are primarily useful in explaining points relating to the patterns of life in a medieval nunnery which a modern reader might not understand. A second set of notes on the *Ordinale* serves to add more information about religious observance, and provides a context within which to examine the specific details of the Barking material.[23]

Evidence of a more secular nature is found in the *Office of the Cellaress* of the abbey, a text which describes the daily duties of the cellaress, and provides such information as the foods eaten by the nuns at different seasons of the church year.[24] The text was first edited by Dugdale in the *Monasticon*, but its content had not been fully discussed until Power's work in the early twentieth century.[25] It is also useful to compare to this text to a much later surviving account book of the cellaress, dating from the reign of Henry VIII and giving details of the exact expenditure of the abbey on religious and practical matters.[26] A first glance might suggest that these two documents contain nothing of interest outside the purely domestic sphere, but a scholarly comparison could make much of the changing diets of the women, and the different prices of the goods they consumed, to take only the potential economic use of these texts. Further details about life at the abbey, albeit in the form of a very critical account, come in Archbishop John Peckham's visitation report from the late thirteenth century; he found many faults with the life of the nuns, and expected them to follow his instructions and mend their ways.[27]

[21] Ordinale I, p.13.
[22] Ordinale I and II.
[23] F.J. Brand, Barking Abbey services (Ilford. 1939).
[24] This text is edited in Power, Medieval English nunneries. Appendix I pp. 563-68.
[25] Dugdale, Monasticon vol. I, pp. 442-45. Power, Medieval English nunneries. pp. 563-8.
[26] J.E. Oxley, Account book of the cellaress. Barking and District Archaeological Society Transactions 3 part 1 (1956) and part 2 (1958).
[27] John Peckham, Regestrum vol. I, pp. 81-6.

Other archbishops wrote letters to abbesses of Barking, generally in resolution of disputes but also on more personal, pastoral subjects. More subjective information is found in the letters written by archbishops to abbesses, and in reports made by visiting bishops to the abbey in later centuries.[28]

b) Unpublished sources

i) The Petre archive

The Petre archive, held at the Essex Record Office, comprises a wide-ranging collection of single-sheet charters relating to the estates of William Petre, receiver of the abbey's lands at its dissolution and important Essex landowner in the sixteenth century.[29] This collection of nearly 2100 original single-sheet charters, many of which still bear their seals, covers some of the most important ecclesiastical estates in Essex and Suffolk, and has a chronological range from the late twelfth century to the late sixteenth. The collection emanating from to Barking is one of the largest sections of the archive, numbering nearly fifty documents covering the centuries between the abbacies of Matilda, daughter of Henry II (1177x9-1198) and Isabella Montagu (1352-58). They are primarily related to the abbey's estates at Ingatestone, since in a letter of 15th December 1539 that estate was granted by King Henry VIII to William Petre, and hence he kept the abbey's charters relating to his own holdings.[30] The charters touch on other smaller holdings as well, and give a good idea of the relationship the abbey had with both its local patrons and the neighbouring religious houses it may have considered to be competition for the generosity of donors.

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[28] See, for example, the letter to Barking printed in Letters of John of Salisbury vol. 1 The early letters. eds. W.J. Millor, S.H. Butler and H.E. Butler, rev. C.N.L. Brooke (Oxford Medieval Texts, Oxford, 1986) no. 69, p. 111.

[29] Essex Record Office, MSS D/DP T.

[30] See Lands of dissolved religious houses: Bedfordshire - Huntingdonshire (Public Record Office Lists and Indexes SS vol. 3. London, 1964) p. 145; the manor is called Ginge Abissa there. On the lands Petre received which had belonged to other East Anglian religious houses, J.L. Fisher, 'The Petre documents', TEAS NS 23 (1942-45) pp. 66-90 at pp. 66-7.

These documents were first calendared by Canon Kuypers in the nineteenth century, and descriptions of some of the more interesting items are given in Fisher's account of the archive from the 1940s.[31] The main interest in these charters is in the detailed witness lists appended to almost every document, naming stewards, chaplains and other abbey staff as well as those who were present at the abbess's court as secular witnesses. They also give the names of benefactors to the abbey and, for the thirteenth century onwards in particular, can be used to create a detailed picture of the interactions between the abbey and those benefactors, through documents detailing the receipt and lease of a number of specific estates, primarily those at Hanley and Ingatestone in Essex. There are also interesting clues about conflicts the abbey had with two neighbouring religious houses at Thoby and Blackmore over certain estates; some of these could not be settled locally and were taken to the high authority of the Bishop of London and other church authorities.[32] The collection also includes some fourteenth and fifteenth-century court rolls relating to manors of the abbey of Barking at Ingatestone, Bulphan and Barking, but since these lie outside the chronological scope of this study, I have not looked at them in detail.[33] All of these sources were studied closely by Sturman in her 1961 thesis on the administration of the abbey's estates in the middle ages, and she provides the best account of the information held in the archive.[34] Many of these documents bear the original seals of the parties involved, including some abbey seals, but unfortunately several of these have suffered damage over time, making them hard to read clearly.[35] The earliest surviving abbey seal is affixed to an agreement datable to 1221-28. [36]

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[31] Kuypers' calendar is ERO MS D/DP/Z15/A. Fisher, 'The Petre documents' includes illustrations of several of the seals on the documents.

[32] For example ERO MS D/DP T1/692, the settlement by Gilbert Foliot of a dispute between Abbess Matilda and the rector of the parish church of Buttsbury over rights at Ingatestone, printed in Z.N. Brooke, A. Morey and C.N.L. Brooke (eds.) The letters and charters of Gilbert Foliot (Cambridge, 1967) no. 351, pp. 401-2. A conflict over tithes with the prior of Blackmore evidently reached such levels that the Pope intervened to appoint judges in the case; ERO MS D/DP T1/691.

[33] ERO MSS D/DP/M177, D/DP/M1-54, D/DSg/M1-4, D/DP/M187, D/DP/M55-89.

[34] Sturman, 'Barking Abbey'.

[35] In approximate chronological order of the dates of the charters, those bearing seals are ERO MSS D/DP T1 694, 351, 692, 690, (all from the twelfth century), 654 1582, 676, 1588 (bears abbey seal), 691, 670, 681, 659, 1552 (bears abbey seal), 1587, 656, 665, 1586, 672, 682, 658, 696, 671, 674, 663, 700. The fact that half of the collection of 50 documents relating to the abbey still bear their seals suggests that the archive was looked after very carefully.

[36] ERO MS D/DP T1/1588. The seal of the abbey bears a robed figure holding a book and the partial

ii) The Ilford Cartulary

The 'Ilford Cartulary' is the name which has been given by scholars to Hatfield House MS Ilford 1/6 in the archive of the Marquess of Salisbury, a collection of charters and other records copied into one volume in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and supplemented with later entries over the following 300 years. This document was brought to light in the 1960's by the Essex historian Herbert Lockwood while he was studying the landholdings of the Marquess of Salisbury, whose ancestors had been owners of the hospital; the Ilford Hospital remained active despite the dissolution of its parent institution, Barking Abbey, and the book of deeds relating to the hospital's landholdings was passed on to successive masters of the charitable institution.[37]

The book was first described in 1600 in a paper presented to the Society of Antiquaries by Arthur Agarde (1540-1615), who mentions 'an abstracte oute of the lygar-book of Barking nonnery in Essex, in a gentleman's hand now died'.[38] We may assume that Agarde's 'gentleman now died' copied directly from the original cartulary, and what Agarde saw was the edited version now extant in the Ilford Cartulary (see discussion in the next paragraph). This phrase is also used about a cartulary of Abbotsbury Abbey which now exists only in copies; a seventeenth century antiquary made copies 'out of the liedger of th'abbey of Abbotsbury', and mentions 'the Lidger Boocke which proveth the Libertyes', that is to say which confirms the possessions and

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motto of Abbess Mabel on the front; the back features a standing figure holding a staff; perhaps St Ethelburga? This charter and its seals is illustrated in R. Powell, 'The making of Essex parishes', Essex Review 62 (1953) pp. 6-17. According to Fisher, 'The Petre documents', the abbey seal was also attached to ERO MS D/DP T1/691 (dated 1228) when he studied the archive in the 1940s, but since then it has been damaged and lost.

[37] Lockwood. A basic account of the history of the hospital is given in Fowler, 'Ilford'. Two local histories, which rely heavily on previous scholars but which contain some useful illustrations, are S.H. Waterman, The story of St Mary's hospital chapel, Ilford (Westcliff-on-Sea, 1936) and P. Foley, The hospital chapel of St Mary the Virgin and St Thomas the Martyr of Canterbury, Ilford, Essex (private press, no date).

[38] A. Agarde, 'Of the antiquity of epitaphs in England', in T. Hearne (ed.), A collection of curious discourses written by eminent antiquaries (2 vols. 2nd ed. 1771) vol. I pp. 246-51. On Agarde, see M. McKisack, Medieval history in the Tudor age (Oxford, 1971) pp. 85-93.

rights of Abbotsbury Abbey.[39] Lethiullier almost certainly refers to the Ilford Cartulary
when he lists among his sources 'An ancient MSS on parchment in the hands of Crisp
Gascoyne Alderman of London'.[40] Crisp Gascoyne (1700-61), later Lord Mayor of
London, bought the mastership of the Ilford Hospital in 1727, and in 1721 had married
the daughter and heiress to the second Marquess of Salisbury, adding the hospital to his
inheritance which eventually passed to the present sixth Marquess.[41] Between
Lethiullier's transcription of some of the documents within, and Lockwood's
rediscovery of the manuscript in 1963, it had lain virtually untouched; a few later notes
were added to the pages, but it was essentially a lost document. Its rediscovery is of
immense value not only to historians of Barking, but to Anglo-Saxonists, social
historians and anyone interested in the administration of religious institutions.

The manuscript is made up of 21 bifolia, with what would be fols. 22-31 being tabs, the
rest of the pages having presumably been cut out at some point after the sheets were
stitched together. Fols. 3-19 are all written in the same hand, and were probably copied
into the manuscript at the same time. According to the records of a law suit over
disputed tithes in 1593, a manuscript of documents relating to the history of Ilford
Hospital was brought into court which one of the witnesses, James Armorer, had copied
on the instruction of a Mr Vaughan, the master of the hospital between 1558 and 1577.[42]
Armorer stated that he copied selected details 'out of a more ancient writing which was
somewhat defaced'; this was presumably the Great Register which is referred to in an
internal note on fol. 4 of the Ilford Cartulary next to a charter copied 'E magno registro
Barking'.[43] Barking Abbey itself was dissolved in 1539 but the Hospital continued, so it
may have been considered necessary to copy out only those documents which related to
the lands of the hospital; those relating to the abbey, whose lands were now in secular
hands, could be discarded. The internal evidence certainly points to the existence of an

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[39] See S. Keynes, 'The lost cartulary of Abbotsbury', ASE 18 (1989) pp. 207-43 at p. 215.
[40] Lethiullier, 'History of Barking', p. 156 of typescript.
[41] Crisp Gascoyne bought the mastership in 1727, and his great-granddaughter married the second
Marquess of Salisbury in 1821; Lockwood, p. 11, and the entry on Gascoyne in Stephen, Dictionary of
national biography vol. 21, pp. 47-8.
[42] Lockwood, p.11, and see also Bascombe, p. 85.
[43] This was first noted in Lockwood p. 11.

earlier cartulary, perhaps made because the original abbey documents were falling into disrepair, and that it was this first cartulary which James Armorer used to make his second, abridged copy for the master of the hospital.

There are many internal notes in the manuscript describing its original source, most of which have not yet been noted by the few scholars to have looked at the manuscript. Perhaps most significant, the first item in the manuscript to be written by a different scribe to that of the main body of contents is a list on fol. 20 of 'The tytle of th'abbes of Berkynge to the patronage of the Hospitall of Ilford', which refers to a variety of sources from which its information is taken. Firstly, we are told about the foundation charter of the hospital, 'an oulde evidence sealed with the Convente seale'; this may mean an original twelfth-century charter produced at Barking survived beyond the dissolution of the abbey. A foundation document, or list of early endowments, would certainly be a useful document for any religious institution to have.[44] Further notes in this list on fol. 20 refer to 'an oulde evidence' and 'a greate booke or lidger perteyninge to the said monastery wherin it is written the actes done in everie abbesses dayes'; this lost text is as close as we are likely to come to an early history of Barking Abbey, either a chronicle or perhaps simply a collection of copies of the charters of the abbey. It must, regrettably, be assumed to be lost, but the discovery of the Ilford Cartulary after centuries might lead us to hold out hope for its being found one day.

As well as explicit references to the existence of a previous 'great register', there are further notes on several folios which suggest they were copied from another, larger manuscript. On folio 23, next to a brief account of the Anglo-Saxon period of the abbey's history, is a note 'Ex foll. 1° pag.1', presumably referring to the first side of the first folio of the original manuscript from which it was copied. Just below on the same page, next to a letter from John Spencer 'armiger' about the appointment of a new vicar of Barking, is a similar note saying 'Ex foll. 2° pag. 1 & 2' implying presumably the

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[44] The exact nature of the 'foundation charter' of Abbess Adeliza is uncertain; this is discussed in detail below in Chapter 5 part c). See V.H Galbraith, 'Monastic foundation charters', Cambridge Historical Journal 4 (1934) pp. 205-22, esp. p. 220 where he explains that so-called foundation charters were often in fact drawn up 'when everything had been at last satisfactorily settled'.

recto and verso of the page. When compared to the texts in the extant manuscript, folio 1 does indeed contain the same brief history of the abbey, which is copied twice into the manuscript without any immediately obvious changes to the text; the version of fol. 1 is in a later hand to the main body of text on fols. 2-19, suggesting the first page may have been left blank and filled in at a later date with this history of the abbey. Folio 2 of the Ilford Cartulary is a list of lands belonging to the abbey in the fourteenth century, and not John Spencer's letter as noted in the margin of fol. 23 as described above. From this it is reasonable to conclude that John Spencer's letter appeared on fol. 2 of the original manuscript, and that it was copied into the current manuscript at a later date than the main body of charters, suggesting that the earlier 'cartulary' was in existence beyond the copying out of the main text in the late sixteenth century by John Armorer, the witness on whose testimony we rely for information. At the foot of fol. 19v there is a note 'fol. 22', and at the foot of fol. 21v another note 'fol. 38', further suggesting that these deeds had a different position in the exemplar cartulary from which they were taken, and possibly that they were copied out in a different order to the original as each deed was required; this could obscure some of the connections between land parcels and chronological entries. The deed on fol. 21v is dated 9th April 1462, suggesting that if entries in the original cartulary used by John Armorer were added chronologically, by 1462 the document had at least 38 pages and probably more were added during the last 80 years of the abbey's existence. There may have been many more deeds relating directly to the abbey which have been lost; nevertheless we should be grateful that so many have survived in the Ilford Cartulary.

The manuscript of the Ilford Cartulary has received a certain degree of attention from scholars in the years since its discovery, primarily because of the nine new Anglo-Saxon charters it contains.[45] Nevertheless, given the large amount of other information held within its pages, it is remarkable that so little work has been done on it. The first reference to this material is in Bascombe's 1987 essay discussing the two charters of King Suebred, but is limited solely to those two charters.[46] It is unsurprising that the

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[45] Ilford Cartulary, fols. 15v-18v.
[46] Bascombe.

discovery of nine new charters adding to an extant corpus of only around 1500 should have gained a positive reaction from historians, Keynes calling it 'a most remarkable discovery', but what is surprising is that so little work has been done on them.[47] The two charters of Suebred along with seven others by Æthelstan, Eadred and Æthelred have been assigned preliminary Sawyer numbers, and Dr Cyril Hart, the authority on early Essex charters, had edited the texts, but they remain 'forthcoming'.[48] Some of these early charters have been referred to in passing, but very little of great significance has yet been written; it seems that scholars are awaiting the publication of Hart's edition, or they may simply be unaware of the depth and importance of the material available.[49] The most thorough account to date is that in Foot's 2000 discussion of Anglo-Saxon Barking, in which she is very cautious about how closely to link the charters to Barking; several of them grant lands which later belonged to the abbey, but without mentioning it by name as recipient.[50] Crick also discusses these charters in her 1999 study of the late Anglo-Saxon nunneries, but is also cautious, identifying the royal charters but still considering Anglo-Saxon Barking to be a non-royal nunnery.[51]

The Anglo-Saxon charters in the Ilford Cartulary are clearly an extremely interesting discovery, but the rest of the cartulary should not consequently be ignored. The manuscript contains a new charter of King Stephen; grants of lands by Abbess Adelidis to the hospital she founded; confirmations by many of her successors; contracts and settlements between various priors of the hospital and their respective abbesses; and notes made by the receivers of the abbey at its dissolution. To date the only of these texts to be discussed in any detail is Stephen's grant of the assart of Hainault forest to the work of Ilford Hospital; this has been studied in relation to other charters of Stephen

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[47] Keynes, 'The lost cartulary of Abbotsbury', p. 243 n. 170.

[48] Hart, Charters. The 9 charters fit into the Sawyer scheme as numbers S. 65a, 65b, 418a, 517a, 517b, 522a, 552a, 931a and 931b.

[49] For example S. Keynes, 'Regenbald the chancellor (sic)', ANS 10 (1988) pp. 185-222 at p. 186 n. 5 refers to S. 418a, Æthelstan's grant of ?Bowers Gifford in Essex to his abbot Beorhtsige, while N. Brooks, 'The career of St Dunstan' in N. Ramsay (ed.), St Dunstan: His life, times and cult (Woodbridge, 1992) pp. 1-23 at p. 7 n. 24 refers to S517a and 517b, Eadred's charters to Æthelgifu and Eawynne (two religious women).

[50] Veiled women II, pp. 27-31.

[51] Crick, p. 169. I draw different conclusions to Crick and Foot; see Chapter 6.

referring to the forest.[52] The survival of the manuscript was probably assured when the ownership of the hospital passed out of the nunnery and into secular hands, but the actual significance of the book may not yet have been fully realised. According to notes on the last folio of the manuscript, it remained in active circulation, and may have been used in the seventeenth century as the text for a reading test; 'This booke was shewed unto Thomasina Warde widdowe the 2nd day of June in the year of our lord 1659 at the tyme of the takkynge her examination before me'. It was used for the same purpose again in 1711.[53] A book which had been used to prove the ownership of estates in charters from 1000 years earlier was being used as a text for literacy tests; we should be glad that it remained useful for something, otherwise it may have been lost for good and the records of Barking Abbey and Ilford Hospital would have been much less substantial.

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[52] New charters.
[53] Ilford Cartulary fol. 30v.

Part II: A narrative history of Barking patronage

As with so many religious communities, it is very hard to separate out the different aspects of the narrative of Barking Abbey, that is to say the internal and external events of its history. I have attempted to separate the story of Barking into two sections, to simplify some of the more complex relationships between families and the nunnery. Firstly, I give an account of what might be considered the political history of the community; the women who were abbesses and nuns there, and their activities in the religious and political spheres. Secondly, in Chapters 4 and 5 below, I discuss the more socio-economic aspects of the house's history; its relationships with its benefactors, and the dynamics motivating those benefactors, be they personal or familial influences. There is obviously a great deal of overlap between these sections, but I have tried to keep repetition to a minimum. Those families whose daughters became abbesses (and therefore became part of the 'internal' history) were frequently the same families who donated lands to the community (part of the 'external' history). The effect of having an ancestor at a nunnery was often to encourage descendants into benefactions to that house, through links of confraternity. This has the result that some information which is given in Chapter 3 is explained in fuller detail in Chapters 4 and 5, and vice versa; in these cases I refer the reader to the relevant argument, and give here only the basic facts necessary for the current discussion.[1]

The sources used in each part bring their own particular requirements of interpretation, as explained in Chapter 1 above. The events in the history of the abbey as seen from within are taken primarily from narrative sources, such as chronicles and hagiographies (on which see Part IV below), and from royal documents appointing abbesses. The information on the abbey's relationships with the outside world discussed in Chapter 4 and 5 is taken mainly from more local source materials; charters emanating from the abbey itself, the Feet of Fines for Essex, and personal documents relating to the families of benefactors. Rather counter-intuitively, it is necessary to study what might be considered 'national' sources, that is royal chancery documents and chronicles of the whole country, to find out about the events which took place within an enclosed community. The dates of many events in this narrative are approximate, due to the

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[1] Figures 1, 2 and 3 are intended to illustrate the more complex inter-relations.

nature of the evidence. I have attempted to justify each date I assign to events, some of which are different to established histories.

Chapter 3: Abbesses and nuns

a) Barking as a double house

The earliest history of Barking can be established mainly from narrative sources, with a few charters to offer confirmation of the narratives. Bede, writing in c.731, informs us that :

> Before he was made bishop, [Erkenwald] founded two famous monasteries, one for himself and the other for his sister Æthelburh [Ethelburga], and established an excellent form of monastic Rule and discipline in both. His own... was at a place called Chertsey. His sister's monastery he established at a place called Barking in the kingdom of the East Saxons where she was to live as mother and nurse of a company of women devoted to God. When she had undertaken the rule of this monastery, she proved herself worthy in all things of her brother the bishop, both by her own holy life and by her sound and devoted care for those who were under her rule; and of this heavenly miracles were the witness.[2]

This tells us all we know about the foundation of Barking Abbey in its first incarnation. It is interesting that Bede here describes a company of women only, since as we shall see from his later accounts of miracles, there were also men living and praying at Barking. Erkenwald was appointed bishop of London in approximately 675, and this date can be assumed to be the *terminus post quem non* for the foundation of Barking, since as quoted above Bede notes that this occurred 'before he was made bishop'. The Chertsey Register dates the foundation of the male house at Chertsey to 666, and this date has often been applied to Barking as well, although there is no direct evidence to support this assertion.[3] It has even been suggested that the nunnery was founded in c.660, and that the plague Bede later describes was that which occurred in 664; this

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[2] Bede, book 4 chap. 6, pp. 354-7. His account of Barking is in book 4 chapters 6-10, pp. 354-65. On the early foundation at Barking, see also Veiled women I. pp. 53-4. I reach different conclusions to Foot on some points, which are explained in full in this study.

[3] London, British Library MS. Cotton Vitellius A. xiii, at fol. 19. The date of 666 has been applied to Barking's foundation by many historians beginning with Lethiullier's History of Barking in 1750 (p. 22 of typescript), and continuing to Loftus and Chettle p. 13 and ECBA. p. 5.

seems to be based on the mistaken identity of a phantom king Suidfrid.[4] Charter evidence shows that the nunnery was definitely in existence by 687, when Bishop Erkenwald (as he then was) granted the abbey several estates of lands given to him by kings and nobles to be given to the nunnery.[5] This may suggest a foundation date closer to c. 675 (when Erkenwald became bishop of London) than to 666 when he founded Chertsey; he may have used the male community to attract donations for the endowment of a house for women. Erkenwald's charter was witnessed by Sebbi, king of the East Saxons (c. 664-c.694), and the two kings Sigiheard and Suebred, his sons (ruled jointly c. 694 - before 709).[6] This was the earliest royal line to take a significant interest in the abbey. This is further illustrated by two new charters of King Suebred contained in the Ilford Cartulary, in which he grants lands to a religious woman named Fymme; one of these charters is witnessed by his brother Sigiheard.[7] The exact significance of these charters is not clear; Suebred states that Fymme is to use the lands for sustaining a religious life, either in community or alone, possibly at Nazeing (Essex) where 30 *manentes* of land were given.[8] It is possible that there was a house at Nazeing founded as a dependent cell of the early double house at Barking, implying that Barking became

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[4] This suggestion is raised in D.P. Kirby, The earliest English kings (2nd ed. London, 2000) p. 83, based on B. Yorke, 'The kingdom of the East Saxons', ASE 14 (1985) pp. 1-36 at pp. 5, 19.

[5] 'Erkenwald's charter', as it is known, exists only in a transcription made in the sixteenth century in London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian A ix f.112 rv. For a detailed discussion of this charter , which is described as 'wholly authentic' (ECEss. p. 10), and its possible date, see ECBA. pp. 5-16 where Hart lists the witnesses and land gifts in the charter. See also the discussion below, pp. 87-90.

[6] For the complex chronology of these three men, see below pp. 90-91.

[7] The two charters are found in the Ilford Cartulary, f. 15v, S. 65a and 65b. They are printed and discussed in Bascombe; he considers them to be authentic (pp. 86-7). They are to be included in Hart, Charters, nos. 3 and 4, where he transcribes the king's name as Swæfred. In the endorsements to the original seventh century charter of Hodilred, however, and in the charters copied into the Ilford Cartulary, his name is written as Suebred.

[8] "... ut habeatis et possideas tam tu quam posteri tui in sempiternum tulit et eo solo modo ut ibi aut tu ipse si pietas aleret [...] domum dei erigas aut ad hanc utilitatem alio cuicumque desideras annorum tuorum tradas ut dei sit et eius voluntati solidetur iugiter'; Ilford Cartulary, f. 15r, as printed in Bascombe pp. 86-7. Bascombe's translation shows that Fymme was ideally to have the land to set up a religious house ('domum dei'), and otherwise to sustain her own religious vocation. The intention was perhaps for her to found a small cell, but to live alone if that was the only possible action.

successful very rapidly.[9] Yorke suggests that the lands of Nazeing were used to endow the hospital at Ilford founded some 500 years later by Abbess Adelidis of Barking.[10]

Aside from these charters, the main informant about the history of Barking in the earliest years remains Bede; he relates the story of several miracles which occurred during the lifetimes of the first two abbesses Ethelburga and Hildelith.[11] These stories may be based on true events, but at the same time we should recall that 'Bede and his contemporaries were impressed with royal abbesses and nuns who were linked to extensive social and political networks'.[12] Erkenwald was reputed to have royal blood, which would mean that his sister Ethelburga also did, and a royal origin would have certainly added to her power as abbess of a new and wealthy community.[13] Bede may have been influenced by this royal connection, if indeed there was one, in his presentation of Ethelburga as a paradigmatic figure of the perfect abbess; as Bede admits, he has related the story of miracles which occurred at Barking 'as an edifying memorial for succeeding generations', and he might thus be expected to have exercised a little poetic licence.[14]

Despite noting that Erkenwald's foundation for his sister was intended to house 'a company of women', from Bede's descriptions we may conclude that this early incarnation of Barking was a double monastery, since he makes references to 'that part of the monastery occupied by the men', and 'the servants of Christ' as distinct from his handmaidens.[15] It is not clear exactly what role the men played in the community. The

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[9] Bascombe suggests the possibility that Nazeing was a cell of Barking; Bascombe, p. 94. The idea is mentioned briefly in Lockwood at p.13, and developed more fully in P. Huggins, 'Nazeingbury twenty years on, or "Where did the royal ladies go?"', London Archaeologist 8 (1997) pp. 105-11. See also Gilchrist, Gender and material culture. p. 30.

[10] B. Yorke, Kings and kingdoms of early Anglo-Saxon England (London. 1990) pp. 54-5.

[11] Bede, book 4 chaps. 7-10, pp. 356-65.

[12] Meyer, 'Queens, convents and conversion', p. 108.

[13] It is suggested by Loftus and Chettle p. 14 that Erkenwald and Ethelburga were descended from Wuffa, founder in c.630 of the East Anglian dynasty. There is no mention of this possible royal blood, however, in the most recent account of Erkenwald's life; E.G. Whatley, The Saint of London; The life and miracles of St Erkenwald (New York, 1989) chap. 4, 'The cult of St Erkenwald in the middle ages', pp. 57-70. See also Yorke, Kings and kingdoms. pp. 55-6, 110.

[14] Bede, book 4 chap. 7, pp. 356-7.

[15] Bede, book 4 chap. 7, pp. 356-7. Veiled women I. pp. 49-56 discusses the early double houses in England.

only occurrence of them in a directly religious context is as indirect witnesses to a miracle.[16] At some point during Abbess Ethelburga's life, a great plague came and killed many members of the male part of the community. Ethelburga asked the sisters where they wished to be buried, should the plague spread to their part of the abbey. The sisters of the convent had 'finished their Mattin psalms', and had left the church to visit the graveyard to pray for the souls of the dead. When a divine light shone from Heaven to show them where their departed sisters should be buried, it was witnessed by 'one of the older brothers, who was in the oratory at the time with another younger brother'. This suggests that the men may have worshipped in a different part of the church to the women, or that they may have prayed at different times. It is interesting to note here that while the men were the victims being 'daily carried away into the presence of the Lord', no questions were asked about where the men wished to be buried. Abbess Ethelburga's successor Hildelith ordered that all the bones of members of the abbey, 'the servants and handmaidens of Christ', should be placed into a single tomb within the church itself, suggesting they may previously have been buried in two separate areas.[17] We also note the miracle of a young boy named Esica, who was under three years old and being looked after and taught by the nuns rather than the men. The sisters may have been taking in children as a charitable act, or as extremely young oblates. It seems more likely that a young boy would have been sent to a monastery if he was to be oblated to the religious life, so Esica may simply have been an orphan who found his way to the nunnery.[18]

Bede acknowledged his debt to previous historians, by mentioning 'the book from which I have made these extracts', and by retelling those stories which were relevant in the context of his history.[19] This book, which we may assume is now lost, was based on firm authority; 'in this monastery many signs and miracles were performed which have

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[16] Bede, book 4 chap. 7, pp. 356-9, from which the quotes in the remainder of this paragraph are taken.

[17] Bede, book 4 chap. 10, pp. 362-5.

[18] See however M. de Jong, In Samuel's image: Child oblation in the early medieval West (New York, 1996) p. 49 where she suggests that Esica was an oblate, and the sister Edith for whom he called when at the point of death from the plague was his own nurse.

[19] Bede, book 4 chap. 10, pp. 364-5.

been written down by those who were acquainted with them'.[20] Bede chose to show that his source, while second-hand, was nevertheless informed by first-hand witnesses, to claim authenticity. Bede was then used as a source by Goscelin of St-Bertin for his *Vita Sancti Ethelburgae* and *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha*.[21] Abbess Ethelburga reigned for an unknown number of years; she is mentioned by the twelfth-century historian John of Worcester in the year 675, and was alive in c.687, when a certain Hodilred made his grant of lands to her as abbess, but we can put no more precise date to the end of her life than 'after 687'.[22]

The second abbess of Barking after Ethelburga, sister of the founder Erkenwald, was a woman named Hildelith. We know neither the date of her accession to the abbacy or her death, but Bede notes that she 'presided over the monastery for many years until she was extremely old'.[23] It is stated in several modern histories, from no identified authority, that Hildelith had been brought from Faremoutiers-en-Brie to educate Ethelburga in the religious life; at a time of much missionary activity this is possible, but there is no evidence to support the assertion.[24] Hildelith was the recipient of the treatise *De virginitate* by Aldhelm (c.640-709), who named in his dedication several other nuns at the house; they included two women named Cuthburga and Eadburga.[25] It has been suggested that the Eadburga named in Aldhelm's preface became abbess of Barking, but there is no evidence to support this claim.[26] It is also possible that this list of names provides evidence of early royal links to the abbey. According to the twelfth-century account of William of Malmesbury, Cuthburga the sister of Ine of Wessex, who went on to found a minster at Wimborne, was prior to that a nun at Barking; 'primo

[20] Bede, book 4 chap. 7, pp. 356-7.
[21] VStE and LStH. The texts are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8; here their information will be taken as based primarily on fact.
[22] John of Worcester, The Chronicle of John of Worcester II: 450 – 1066, eds. and trans. R.R. Darlington, J. Bray and P. McGurk (Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford, 1995) p. 112. For Hodilred's charter, ECBA, pp. 27-31. Loftus and Chettle, p. 13, date her death to 693, while Fowler, 'Barking', p. 120 suggests only a date around that time.
[23] Bede, book 4 chap. 10, pp. 362-3.
[24] On Hildelith's supposed continental origins, see for example Loftus and Chettle, p. 14, and Fowler, 'Barking', p. 116.
[25] Aldhelm; LH.
[26] Loftus and Chettle, p.14, citing H. Howarth, The golden days of the English Church vol III p. 232 (I have been unable to locate a copy of this text).

apud Berkingum sub abbatissa Hildelida, mox ipsa magistra regulae Wimburnae Deo placitam vitam transegit'.[27] As Foot points out, however, the two occurrences of the name need not refer to the same woman.[28]

According to Bede, Hildelith 'was most energetic in the observance of the discipline of the rule and in the provision of all such things as were necessary for the common use.[29] It was she who ordered that the bones of the departed brothers and sisters of the monastery should be buried together inside the abbey church, at which site, according to Bede's source book, 'how often the brightness of a heavenly light, how often a wonderful fragrance and other signs appeared'.[30] It is frequently suggested that Hildelith was alive until at least c.716, when a letter of Boniface to Eadburga of Thanet discusses the miracles which took place at Much Wenlock as they were 'related to me by the venerable Abbess Hildelida'.[31] This need not mean that she was still alive in that year, merely that she had told Boniface the story in recent years. Goscelin tells us very little about this saint; his main text on her is a set of lessons relating to her translation rather than a narrative of her life .[32]

Beyond the evidence that Hildelith was probably still alive in the early eighth century, we know very little about the history of the abbey in the eighth and ninth centuries from documentary sources. Archaeological evidence provides us with some information about the occupation of the earliest site of the abbey. The first major excavation of the main abbey site was undertaken in 1911.[33] We know, however, that Abbess Ælfgyva (1064/5 – before 1118) re-sited the nunnery in the eleventh century, and therefore the majority of excavations undertaken in the early twentieth century were not of the

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[27] William of Malmesbury, Gesta regum Anglorum. eds. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford Medieval Texts. 2 vols. Oxford, 1998-99) vol. 1 pp. 52-3. Yorke, Kings and kingdoms. p. 56 is the most recent author to suggest this link.
[28] Veiled women I, p. 41.
[29] Bede, book 4 chap. 10 pp. 362-3
[30] Bede, book 4 chap. 10 pp. 364-5
[31] Veiled women II. p. 27. Boniface, 'Epistolae' in E. Dümmler (ed.), Epistolae merowingici et carolini aevi vol. I (Berlin, 1892) p. 252, translated in The Letters of Boniface trans. E. Emerton, introduction by T.F.X. Noble (New York, 2000) p. 3.
[32] LStH.
[33] Clapham. This article includes the first ground plan of the abbey's later buildings, and has generally

earliest nunnery.[34] More recently digs have been undertaken on sites which may be closer to that of the original double monastery. An excavation in 1985-86 found timbers dated to c. 705 AD, within two generations of the foundation of the community, and considerable evidence for the activities of the inmates.[35] Amongst the items found were manicuring sets and gold threads, indicating perhaps that the lifestyle of the nuns and monks was not completely spartan, and may have justified the criticism levelled by Aldhelm that some monks and nuns were dressing themselves in fine clothing and decorating their hair and clothes in ways unsuitable for those dedicated to a religious life.[36] Evidence for musical activity at the early community comes in the form of a bone whistle and tuning pegs from stringed instruments, and the discovery of several styli confirms Aldhelm's statement that the nuns were active in writing.[37] There is also evidence of 2 mills and a well on this early site, which in conjunction with the presence of a large number of coins from c.710-730 may suggest that the early abbey engaged in economic activity to provide additional income on top of that received from its land endowment.[38]

After this early period of activity as a double monastery, there is a gap in our information of some 200 years. The next evidence for activity at the abbey is from the early tenth century, and for the intervening period during the first Viking age, Barking along with most other communities faded from the documentary record. The only evidence we have of this period in the abbey's history is found in the hagiographies written by Goscelin of St-Bertin in the eleventh century which must be handled with

been accepted as authoritative.

[34] Goscelin of St-Bertin described Ælfgyva's rebuilding programme in detail in his longer version of the 'Account of the translation of Saints Ethelburga, Hildelitha and Wulfhilda'; De translatione 1, chap. 3 pp. 437-8. The shorter version simply states 'Iam devota mater monasterii novum templum amplioribus spatii extulerat, cui vetus monasterium cum memoratis virginibus in ipso quiescentibus obstabat'; De translatione 2, chap. 2 p. 438.

[35] K. MacGowan, 'Barking Abbey', Current Archaeology 149 (1996) pp. 172-8.

[36] Aldhelm, p. 735: LH, pp. 127-8. This criticism may in turn have given rise to the highly elaborate clothing depicted in some manuscripts of Aldhelm's text; see J.A. Kiff-Hooper, 'Class-books or works of art?: Some observations on the tenth-century manuscripts of Aldhelm's *De Laude Virginitatis*', in I. Wood and G.A. Loud (eds.), Church and chronicle in the middle ages: Essays presented to John Taylor (London, 1991) pp. 15-26 at p. 21.

[37] MacGowan, 'Barking Abbey', p. 175-7.

[38] MacGowan, 'Barking Abbey', p. 174 discusses the coins. For photographs of many of the items found on the site, see Webster and Backhouse, The making of England, pp. 88-93.

great care.[39] He implies that the abbey remained active until 870 (the year King Edmund was martyred), when it met an infamously terrible fate; 'Ut autem multa pretereamus posteritatis merita, nonnumquam etiam tota congregatio sacrarum virginum cum sua matre in hac sancta ecclesia a paganis est concremata, tempore videlicet quo beatus rex Aedmundus ab his immolatus est Dei hostia'.[40] According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle this destruction took place across the country; 'In this year the host went across Mercia into East Anglia... and they slew the king [Edmund, 855-70] and over-ran the entire kingdom, and destroyed all the monasteries to which they came'.[41] The identity of the mother abbess at this time is unknown, and neither is it clear if the nuns were indeed killed by the Danish invaders. It is possible that there was no such dramatic event at Barking, and that Goscelin simply took his inspiration from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; William of Malmesbury describes the destruction of Chertsey in the ninth century but does not suggest that Barking suffered the same fate.[42] Indeed, William's account implies that some form of observance, whether formal or informal, must have continued at Barking, since he states 'it was through the prayers of such women [as the saintly abbesses] that the convent was never completely destroyed'.[43] Foot points out that many double houses were already falling into decline from the mid-eighth century, which may mean that Barking was not such a large and important community by the late ninth century when the Danish attacks were at their most severe.[44] Alternatively, the nuns may have taken refuge in London, which they later did during King Ethelred's reign (978-1016) and later still at the time of the Norman Conquest, according to Goscelin.[45] On both occasions the nuns appear to have sought protection within the city

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[39] See the discussion of Goscelin in Chapter 8.

[40] LStH. chap. 2 p. 455.

[41] ASC. E text s.a. 870.

[42] William of Malmesbury, Gesta pontificum Anglorum. ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton (Rolls Series. London, 1870) p. 143 (Chertsey). See also Veiled women II. p. 28 n. 5.

[43] William of Malmesbury, Gesta pontificum. p. 144. The translation is taken from William of Malmesbury, The deeds of the bishops of England. trans. D. Preest (Woodbridge, 2002) p. 94.

[44] Veiled women I. pp.63-84, and especially pp. 71-8 on the period of the Danish raids, where Foot suggests that while the Viking armies undoubtedly damaged the strength of religious communties in England as a whole, it is very hard to pin down specific examples of houses destroyed by the attackers. See also her article 'Remembering, forgetting and inventing: attitudes to the past in England and the end of the first Viking age', TRHS 6th ser. 9 (1999) pp. 185-200.

[45] VStE. chaps. 13, 20, pp. 412-3, 416.

walls from armies which were in the vicinity of Barking.[46] We do not have any conclusive evidence about the activities of the nuns until the middle third of the tenth century, when documentary and archaeological evidence points to a resurgence in activity at Barking.

b) The tenth century religious renewal

The tenth century saw a revival in religious life in England, primarily under the influence of King Edgar (959-75), St Dunstan (d. 988) and Bishop Ethelwold (d. 984).[47] Religious life had continued in various forms during the era of the Danish attacks, but it was only when peace was restored that established communities flourished again, beginning in the reign of King Alfred (871-99). The Continental reform movement was already gaining strength in England by the time King Edgar took the throne aged only 16, and enthusiastically encouraged this development and especially the observance of the reformed Benedictine role, as set out in the *Regularis Concordia*.[48] The growth in numbers of established monasteries and nunneries took off from the mid-tenth century onwards, with some 16 houses founded for women between 871 and 1066, although not all of these survived permanently.[49] The existence of these houses suggests a degree of continuity in religious observance which was not totally disrupted by the Vikings. The

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[46] We should compare this to the claim of William of Poitiers that in the winter of 1066/67 William the Conqueror (1066-87) spent time at Barking with his court. William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi, eds. and trans. R.H.C. Davis and M. Chibnall (Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford, 1998) pp. 160-2. See also below p. 61 for this period of the abbey's history.

[47] For a general survey of the tenth-century reforms, see the collection of essays in D. Parsons (ed.), Tenth-century studies: Essays in commemoration of the millenium of the Council of Winchester and the Regularis Concordia (London, 1975). Useful biographies of two of the key episcopal figures and the context within which they worked are B. Yorke, Bishop Ethelwold: His career and influence (Woodbridge, 1988) and N. Ramsay (ed.), St Dunstan: His life, times and cult (Woodbridge, 1992) The most thorough discussion of the effect upon the nunneries is Veiled women I chap. 4, 'Women and the tenth-century monastic revolution' pp. 85-110. On the role of royal women in particular, see M. Meyer, 'Women and the tenth century English monastic reform', Revue Bénédictine 87 (1977) pp. 34-61, and P. Stafford, 'Queens, nunneries and reforming churchmen: Gender, religious status and reform in tenth- and eleventh-century England', Past and Present 163 (1999) pp. 3-35.

[48] T. Symons (ed. and trans.), Regularis Concordia: The monastic agreement of the monks and nuns of the English nation (London, 1953).

[49] Veiled women I pp. 156-62, and Map 6 p. 158, which shows how strongly concentrated in Wessex these new nunneries were. Foot also lists another 13 pre-Viking age houses which survived beyond 870 but had been abandoned by 1066: Veiled women I. pp .148-156, and Map 5 p. 150. The locations of these houses were much more widely spread than the tenth-century foundations, and reflect the waning

tenth century saw many old religious houses for men reformed under Dunstan's guidance, while others were founded afresh. In the case of the nunneries at least, the majority of new foundations were made in Wessex, under the patronage of the West Saxon royal family.[50] Barking was unusual therefore in being outside this sphere of West Saxon influence, perhaps because it was the only major nunnery of the ninth century to have its roots before the Danish invasions.

The earliest evidence of post-Viking age activity at Barking is archaeological; there is evidence of glass-making activity on the earliest abbey site in the first half of the tenth century.[51] This may not necessarily have been activity undertaken by the nuns themselves, but was possibly an indication that people on the site were engaged in production of goods for trade. The first evidence of royal interest in the re-growing house comes from two charters preserved in the Ilford Cartulary datable to 946, in which King Eadred (946-55) gave lands to two religious women named Eawynne and Æthelgifu.[52] Domesday Book shows that the lands named in these charters had been transferred to Barking by 1066, since they were listed as having belonged to the abbey in the time of King Edward and always, hence the relevance of these charters to the early history of the nunnery.[53] Foot argues that we should not assume these women were linked in any way to what later became the established community at Barking.[54] I suggest, on the contrary, that the fact their lands became part of Barking's property, and that Eadred granted lands to the community itself by name a mere three years later, may

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importance of the Kentish royal family, and the rise of the Wessex dynasty.

[50] The primary article on this subject is M. Meyer, 'Patronage of the West Saxon royal nunneries in late Anglo-Saxon England', Revue Bénédictine 91 (1981) pp. 332-58, which concluded that the royal family took over from the aristocracy as primary founders and patrons of religious houses, and made it almost impossible for the aristocracy to be involved with nunneries except through royally-approved houses. More recently the Wessex nunneries have been discussed by Yorke in ' "Sisters under the skin"?: Anglo-Saxon nuns and nunneries in the south of England', Reading Medieval Studies 15 (1989) pp. 95-117. See also Crick and Veiled women I. pp. 162-5.

[51] MacGowan, 'Barking Abbey', pp. 175-8. See also C. Hart, The Danelaw (London, 1992) p. 598 where he suggests this evidence may mean 'some form of corporate activity had been revived at Barking during the 930s'.

[52] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 18rv, S517a and 517b, to be printed in Hart, Charters. nos. 6 and 7; nos. 4 and 5 in the Calendar, Appendix 3 pp. 174-280 below. These are the Anglo-Saxon names of the women as written in the charters themselves.

[53] The estates at Hockley and Tollesbury: DB vol. II fol. 18b.

[54] Veiled women II. p. 31.

mean that these women were amongst the earliest of the vowed women who came together to establish the formalised community at Barking. In 947 Eadred also gave other lands to his minister Ælfstan, which likewise found their way to Barking Abbey before 1066. This gift is recorded in another of the new Anglo-Saxon charters in the Ilford Cartulary.[55] Eadred's interest in the abbey itself as a formal community dates to 950, and is the earliest known royal gift to a monastic community at Barking by that name. In that year he granted lands at two unidentified estates (*Lippanwelle* and *Ciricdune*) to the community in a charter witnessed by a considerable group of royal, ecclesiastical and aristocratic figures.[56] Since they concern donations to the abbey, these four charters are discussed in more detail in Part 2 below, but here they illustrate my theory that the burgeoning nunnery was attracting considerable attention from members of the royal house. We also know from the will of Ealdorman Ælfgar (c.946x51) that the local Essex aristocracy was taking an interest in the nunnery early after it began to be active again, since he and his two daughters both left lands to Barking Abbey in the tenth century.[57]

Internal events at Barking in the tenth and early eleventh centuries are hard to assess accurately, since the only source materials we have are the hagiographic texts composed in the late eleventh century by Goscelin of St-Bertin.[58] The first evidence of royal intervention in Barking's affairs comes from his account of the life of St Wulfhilda, who was appointed by King Edgar (959-75) in the 960s.[59] Goscelin wrote that the abbey of Barking was 'given' to Wulfhilda by Edgar, as penitence and reparation for his alleged attempts to seduce her as a girl, while she was a nun at the abbey of Wilton.[60] Goscelin claimed that Edgar also 'gave' her five other monasteries, at Horton, Wilton, Shaftesbury, Wareham and Southampton, although the nature of her relationship with

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[55] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 15v-16r, S 522a, Hart, Charters. no. 8; Calendar, no. 6. DB vol. II, fol. 18.
[56] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 17v-18r, S 552a, Hart, Charters. no. 9; Calendar, no. 7.
[57] The wills of Ælfgar and his two daughters Ælfflæd and Æthelflæd are discussed in more detail below in Chapter 4 part c) i). They are printed in Whitelock, nos. 2, 14 and 15.
[58] See Chapter 8 part d) for further analysis of Goscelin's texts.
[59] VStW. This text was first edited by M. Esposito, 'La Vie de Sainte Vilfilde par Goscelin de Cantobery', Analecta Bollandiana 32 (1913) pp. 10-27 but has been superseded by Colker's edition.
[60] VStW. chaps. 2-3, pp. 420-3.

these houses is not made clear.[61] The date of Wulfhilda's appointment is unknown, but if we follow Goscelin's chronology she must have been abbess by 969 at the latest. According to Goscelin, Wulfhilda was expelled from Barking for 20 years by Queen Ælfthryth (wife of King Edgar), but the queen allowed Wulfhilda to return to the abbey after this time, and she lived another seven years before dying in 996.[62] Goscelin wrote, as we have seen, some hundred years after the events he described, and to give credence to his narrative he claimed that one of his sources of information about Barking was a nun named Wulfruna who had been educated by Wulfhilda during her rule as abbess.[63] Since Wulfhilda died in 996, and Goscelin wrote this text after 1086 (when its dedicatee Maurice was made Bishop of London), this is possible, if Wulfruna lived to a very advanced age.[64]

During the late tenth century, then, it is possible that Abbess Wulfhilda ruled for a while over the abbey of Horton rather than her own community at Barking. Goscelin's suggestion that this is the case is corroborated by the presence of an abbess of Horton named Wulfhilda amongst the *feminae illustres* in the *Liber Vitae* of Hyde Abbey, who must be identified with Barking's Wulfhilda.[65] In an interesting exchange of personnel, Goscelin suggests in his narrative of St Edith, later Abbess of Wilton, that she may also have ruled the community at Barking for an unidentified period, as well as a third, unnamed nunnery; 'In monasterium quoque Berkinga dictum, in terciam etiam promota est patrocinium'.[66] It should be noted that there is no evidence to support this claim in

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[61] VStW. chap. 4 p. 424. Crick suggests that this may be an anachronistic attempt by Goscelin to claim Barking had some form of control over the Wessex nunneries; Crick, p. 170 n. 91.

[62] VStW. chaps. 9 and 10, pp. 428-30. She died while preparations were being made for the translation of St Ethelwold in September 996.

[63] 'Notissima est adolescentoribus eius sanctimonialis discipula Vulfruna, Iudith cognominata, a primevo flore sub ipsa educata, quae ad nostri regis Vuilelmi supervixit sceptra'; VStW. Preface p. 418.

[64] In the Dublin manuscript of the works, the text is dedicated 'Quae pia sunt fidis capiat pietatis amicus: Mauricus iugi vivat calamo Gosceline'; VStW. p. 418. On Maurice and his relationship with the abbey and Goscelin, see P. Hayward, 'Translation-narratives in post-Conquest hagiography and English resistance to the Norman conquest', ANS 21 (1998) pp. 67-93, at pp. 81-3, and the discussion in Chapter 8 part d) below. Maurice was appointed on 25th December 1085, but was not consecrated until January 1086, so I take his episcopacy as beginning in 1086.

[65] S. Keynes (ed.), The *Liber Vitae* of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester (Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile, vol. 26. Copenhagen, 1996) plate Fol 26r, pp. 95-6. See also Foot's discussion of Horton in Veiled women II. pp. 101-102.

[66] Goscelin, 'La legende de Ste Edithe en prose et vers par le moine Goscelin', ed. A Wilmart, Analecta

contemporary tenth-century material, or in any of the narratives written about Barking itself. If Edith did indeed exercise 'patronage' over Barking, as Goscelin suggests, it must have been during the time of Wulfhilda's exile and thus probably concurrent with Queen Ælfthryth's 'rule' over the nunnery.[67] Crick suggests that Edith's relationship with Barking, and the Nunnaminster which she supposedly also ruled, probably extended no further than taking the revenues of the house, and did not involve any pastoral or religious role.[68] These early examples of royal women ruling over Barking, or at the very least claiming its revenues in exchange for a form of royal protection, are the beginning of a pattern which was to continue at Barking over the next 250 years, and which, as I shall show, became especially prominent in the twelfth century. The motivations behind successive kings' actions in allowing their queens to rule Barking are very interesting, as I discuss in Chapter 6, and may not have been as hostile as the nuns themselves believed.

After Wulfhilda's return to Barking, twenty year rule and death in 996, Goscelin gives an account of an abbess named Leofflæd, for whom he is our only source. She has frequently been overlooked, presumably because she is not attested in documentary sources.[69] According to Goscelin's account, some of which was told to him by his witness Wulfruna, Leofflæd came from a distinguished family line, yet was full of humility and longed to devote her virginity to God.[70] Her parents wanted her to marry, but she turned for advice to Wulfhilda who advised her to promise herself to Christ, in the knowledge that Wulfhilda had foreseen her becoming abbess later in her life. According to Goscelin the prophesy was fulfilled when, after Wulfhilda's death, Leofflæd did indeed succeed to the abbacy of Barking.[71] Some thirty years after Wulfhilda's death in 996 it was proposed that her relics should be moved to a greater tomb by the high altar of the abbey church. Appearing in a vision to Wulfruna (who

Bollandiana 56 (1938) pp. 5-101, 265-307 at pp. 76-7.
[67] Goscelin, 'La legende de Ste Edithe', pp. 76-7. Edith died in 984, and Wulfhilda was in exile between 969 and 989.
[68] Crick, p. 174.
[69] She is not mentioned by Lethiullier, who usually takes Goscelin's accounts at face value, nor in Loftus and Chettle, nor in Veiled women, being three of the most thorough accounts.
[70] VStW, chap. 7, p. 427.

according to her own testimony to Goscelin had been educated by Wulfhilda), Wulfhilda that Leofflæd cover her body with a blanket so it should not be seen by the general public. Nevertheless, when the tomb was opened Wulfhilda's body was found to be incorrupt, and it was moved with great ceremony by Leofflæd to a position of splendour, next to the bodies of her two predecessors St Ethelburga and St Hildelith.[72]

If this account is correct, Leofflæd was probably abbess from the late 990s until at least 1030; Goscelin's story is primarily a hagiography of Wulfhilda, so he does not narrate events outside the immediate relevance to her story, and all he tells us is that Leofflæd was abbess thirty years after Wulfhilda's death. It should be noted, however, that according to the ordering of Goscelin's narrative Wulfhilda appointed Leofflæd as her successor before her twenty years in exile. If so, Leofflæd would have been of marriageable age in or before 969 (since she spoke to Wulfhilda about her fear of marriage before she was was sent into exile), and still alive in c.1030 well into her 70s; this would have been a remarkable lifespan for a medieval woman, but not impossible, especially given the relatively comfortable standards of living within a religious community. Goscelin's text provides the only extant account of Abbess Leofflæd, but this does not mean we should disregard it as unreliable. He was writing about a figure within living memory, and one whom his witness Wulfruna describes; he would have no reason to fabricate a character in his story, especially one who had supposedly lived so recently. I place her within the chronology of Barking Abbey on the grounds that Goscelin followed information provided to him by the nuns who had little to gain by inventing an abbess who did not exist.

c) Anglo-Saxon survival

After the lives of St Wulfhilda and Abbess Leofflæd, described by Goscelin of St-Bertin, there is another gap in our knowledge about Barking until the middle of the eleventh century. The next abbess for whom we have evidence is Ælfgyva, who was

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[71] VStW. chap. 13, pp. 431-2.
[72] VStW. chaps. 13-14, pp. 432-3

appointed before the Norman Conquest and whose Old English name strongly suggests that she was of Anglo-Saxon origin. Once again the evidence for her abbacy comes primarily from Goscelin of St-Bertin, whom she commissioned to write the texts on the abbey's saints. He informs us that she grew up at the abbey, and had been 'infantula Deo decreta', a little girl decreed to God; this may mean she had been oblated by her family as a child.[73] Ælfgyva was appointed abbess at the age of 15 during the reign of Edward the Confessor, and during the episcopacy of Bishop William of London who was elected in 1051, giving a range of 1051-66 (more realistically 1051-65) for the beginning of her rule.[74] Goscelin's text suggests that she was still alive aged 50 at the time of his composition of the Barking texts, stating 'Monasterium curam ... suscepit per regem Eadwardum quindecennis puella, quam adhuc tenet mater quinquagenaria'.[75] Goscelin may not have been strictly accurate in this description of her age; 'quinquagenaria' probably served to mean around fifty, covering anything between 45 and 60. This approximate noting of ages was common, particularly for women; in the *Rotuli de Dominabus*, produced in 1185, Agnes de Valognes (née fitzJohn, sister of the twelfth-century abbess of Barking Adelidis fitzJohn) is listed variously as 50 years old, 60 years old and 60 years old 'et eo amplius', suggesting that once the end of childbearing was reached, precise details were no longer important.[76] I suggest we may be able to date Ælfgyva's life fairly closely, thanks to a reference to King William (probably William II) in the preface to the *Vita Sancti Wulfhildae*.[77] I would suggest Goscelin was writing in around 1086-95, and that Ælfgyva was still alive aged around 50 at this time.[78] This would mean she had been born in around 1040, and elected abbess aged around 16 in the last years of Edward the Confessor's reign, c.1064-65.

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[73] De translatione 2. chap. 3, p. 437. On oblation, see de Jong, In Samuel's image.

[74] Since Edward the Confessor was ill for much of late 1065, and died on January 5th 1066, it is reasonable to assume the appointment of any abbots or abbesses would probably not have occurred after the autumn of 1065.

[75] De translatione 2, chap. 3, p. 437.

[76] J.H. Round (ed.), Rotuli de dominabus et pueris et puellis de XII comitatibus (Pipe Roll Society vol. 35. London, 1913) pp. 67, 77, 87. Agnes fitzJohn and her marriage to Roger de Valognes are discussed in further detail below, pp. 125, 132.

[77] See, however, C.H. Talbot, 'The *Liber Confortatorius* of Goscelin of St-Bertin', Studia Anselmiana 37 (1955) pp. 1-117 at p. 9 who suggests this is a reference to King William I, meaning Goscelin must have been at Barking before 1087.

[78] Goscelin dedicated VStE and VStW to Maurice, Bishop of London (1086-1107) and his last datable works are from after 1091, perhaps 1094; it is likely, then, that his Barking works were written between

The Abbess Ælfgyva described by Goscelin can almost certainly be identified as the abbess 'A' who received a charter from William the Conqueror confirming her rights and customs within and without the city of London, and stating that whoever did anything to harm the abbey was harming the king himself; 'Et omnibus prohibeo tam Francigenis quam Anglis ut nullus ei iniuriam faciat. Et qui ei iniuriam fecerit michi fecerit'.[79] This charter is the only eleventh-century royal charter in favour of Barking to have survived, and the wording of a confirmation grant made by Henry I referring only to rights granted 'sicut pater meus concessit et precipit per breve et sigillum suum', may imply that there were no charters or grants issued in favour of Barking by King William II.[80] William of Poitiers informs us that William I stayed at Barking after Christmas in the winter of 1066-67, during the construction of the Tower of London, and the natural assumption might be that he stayed at the abbey.[81] We should consider, however, the assertion of Goscelin of St-Bertin that the nuns themselves took refuge in the City of London away from the Norman army, as they had done previously during the reign of King Ethelred and during the incursions of the pagan Danes; 'Concesserta virginum chorus cum hac matre quae adhuc prestat ecclesiae in vicinam urbem Lundoniae, ut supra memoravimus a facie belli solitas fuisse'.[82] This does not, of course, preclude the presence of the king at Barking: it may be that the royal party took advantage of the facilities of the abbey while the nuns were absent, or indeed that it was the arrival of the king and his men that motivated the nuns to seek refuge elsewhere.

If Goscelin is correct that Ælfgyva was still alive at the time he wrote, we know her abbacy extended until at least c.1090, and involved some rather stormy times in both

1086 and the mid-1090s. On the chronology of Goscelin's works, see Vita Edwardi. Appendix C, 'Goscelin of St-Bertin and his works' pp. 146-9. His latest datable works, from c. 1094, were composed for St Augustine's Canterbury; Vita Edwardi. p. 147. Colker, p. 387 notes that it is possible Goscelin referred to King William II rather than William I.

[79] RRAN I, no. 240, Bates Acta of William I. no. 10, ECEss. no. 79. This charter can be dated no more precisely than to 1066x87.

[80] RRAN II, no. 798, CCR V, p. 286.

[81] William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi. ed. and trans. R.H.C. Davis and M. Chibnall (Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford, 1998) pp. 160-62.

[82] VStE. p. 416.

her internal administration of the abbey, and her external relations with new ecclesiastical officers. She evidently found herself in conflict with members of her own community in the late 1080's, when Archbishop Lanfranc (1070-89) wrote to Maurice, Bishop of London (1086-1107) to ask him to intervene in the abbey's affairs. Lanfranc reiterated a request made repeatedly to Maurice to go to Barking and adjudicate in a dispute between the abbess and the prioress; 'As in previous letters we again enjoin, require and … direct that if you have the opportunity you go to Barking, and when you have heard both sides of the dispute, order the abbess to be an abbess and the prioress a prioress… Let the nuns, clergy and laity both within the convent and beyond serve and obey them'.[83] The letter was written between 1086 (Maurice's consecration) and 1089 (Lanfranc's death), by which time it is possible that members of the local Norman incoming aristocracy had begun to send their daughters to Barking. The arrival of members of the new ruling class may have led to disputes over authority between the Norman arrivals and the incumbent Anglo-Saxon women, and this may have been the explanation for the dispute referred to in Lanfranc's letter about Barking.

Around this time Ælfgyva found herself in direct dispute with the same Bishop Maurice. He disagreed with her initial plans to have the relics of the three saints Ethelburga, Wulfhilda and Hildelith translated to a greater shrine, but after some miraculous interventions by the saints themselves, he consented.[84] This less than cordial relationship may have been one of the motivating factors behind Maurice's reluctance to intervene in the internal affairs of the abbey despite Lanfranc's repeated reminders. It seems from other evidence that their relationship improved, although we have no details of the events of Ælfgyva's reign and any clue about the possible reconciliation. An engraved stone, found on the site of the later abbey buildings, bears the inscription '[M]AURICII. EPI. LONDONENSIS. ALFGIVAE. ABBATISSAE'.[85] The beginning of the inscription is missing, leaving the rest of the text open to interpretation, and two

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[83] Lanfranc, The letters of Lanfranc. Archbishop of Canterbury. eds. and trans. H. Glover and M. Gibson (Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford, 1979) no. 59, pp. 174-5 (dated 5 April 1086- 28 May 1089).

[84] On this story, and Ælfgyva's relationship with Maurice, see Hayward, 'Translation-narratives' pp. 81-3, and Chapter 8 part d) below.

[85] Clapham, p. 86; See also M. Christy, 'Three more Essex incised slabs', TEAS 12 (1913) pp. 315-22, at 316-18, with a photograph at p. 316.

suggestions have been made as to what the missing text might say. Firstly, it is suggested by Loftus and Chettle that it may have read "Orate pro animabus Mauricii episcopi Londonensis et Ælfgivae Abbatissae".[86] This would mean simply that the stone was engraved after their deaths, perhaps intended as a posthumous appeasement. Secondly, Hart suggests that it may have recorded an event which took place in the time of Bishop Maurice and Abbess Ælfgyva ('[tempore M]auricii... [et]... Ælfgyvae'); this could perhaps be a reference to the translation of the abbesses into the newer church buildings.[87] The second explanation seems more likely; the translation of the saints' relics did take place, after all, despite Maurice's initial objections, and Ælfgyva may have wished to show her gratitude by marking the event with a permanent memorial.

Ælfgyva's main action as abbess was to begin the reconstruction of the abbey's buildings, in order to rehouse the relics of the three abbesses Ethelburga, Hildelith and Wulfhilda. As we have seen, it took several intercessions by the saints themselves before Bishop Maurice of London would approve the works. Ethelburga herself appeared in a vision to one of the nuns, a teacher of the novices of good intelligence and thus presumably a reliable source, telling her the current tomb was too small and the old church must be destroyed to make way for a new one.[88] The building works are not described in detail, but Goscelin praises Ælfgyva's achievements as equal to those of Dido in her foundation of Carthage, or Semiramis in the construction of Babylon.[89] Very little physical evidence remains of the abbey buildings themselves; much of what does remain can be dated to the twelfth century and the works begun by Ælfgyva.[90] The other events of Ælfgyva's abbacy remain undescribed, with the exception of a miracle which took place effected jointly by St Ethelburga and St Erkenwald. The twelfth-century *Miracula Sancti Erkenwaldi* describes the cure of a lame nun at the abbey, the

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[86] Loftus and Chettle, p. 22.
[87] ECEss. p. 35
[88] Goscelin devoted an entire work to this miracle; Vision.
[89] De translatione 2, chap. 3, p. 438.
[90] See Clapham, including the plan facing p. 69 showing the relative ages of different parts of the nunnery.

daughter of 'a very wealthy citizen of London', suggesting that the abbey was attracting the elite of society within its walls.[91]

We know Ælfgyva was dead by 1122, when her name headed Barking's list of departed nuns to be prayed for in the mortuary roll of Vitalis, abbot of Savigny.[92] Other evidence for her lifespan may suggest that she did not live much beyond 1100. Firstly we should consider that Ælfgyva was still alive in the early twelfth century to receive a gift of land made to the abbey by a man named Adam of Cockfield.[93] This gift granted certain tithes to 'domina abbatissa Ælfgyva', no doubt the same women we have been discussing. Hart uses evidence of Adam's later career to propose that he would not have been of age to grant lands before 1100.[94] I suggest the charter was probably granted soon after this date, since we know Ælfgyva was probably born in around 1040, meaning she would have been in her sixties in the first decade of the twelfth century.

We do not know the year of Ælfgyva's death, but we know the approximate date: the calendar of the abbey's *Ordinale* records it on May 10th while the martyrology of St Augustine's Canterbury notes in on May 11th.[95] Evidence in the Canterbury manuscript strongly suggests a confraternal relationship between St Augustine's and Barking, since Barking is the only nunnery whose abbesses' obits are recorded alongside those of male royal and ecclesiastical figures.[96] This manuscript contains details of the prayers and hospitality to be exchanged between the monks of St Augustine's and a variety of other insular and continental houses.[97] The third house to be named in this list, and the only

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[91] Whatley, The Saint of London. pp. 160-1.

[92] Rouleau mortuaire du B. Vital, abbé de Savigni, ed. L. Delisle (Paris, 1909) plate 25.

[93] Recorded on the flyleaf of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 155, a tenth century gospel book. The entry is in an early twelfth-century hand. In Adam of Cockfield Hart transcribes the Latin text of the charter, while Loftus and Chettle, p. 21 give a translation, but suggest the deed was copied into the manuscript in the early thirteenth century. The document is also discussed in D.C. Douglas, Feudal documents from the abbey of Bury St Edmunds (London, 1932) p. xlii, because many of the witnesses are associated with the history of that abbey in the late tenth and early eleventh century.

[94] Adam of Cockfield. pp. 467, 468. For a more detailed discussion of this charter and the family of Adam, see Chapter 4 part c) below.

[95] Ordinale I, p. 5. The St Augustine's martyrology, composed in the late 12th century, is London, British Library MS Cotton Vitellius C xii fols. 114-157, with the entry for Ælfgyva at fol. 128v.

[96] The obits of Abbesses Adeliza (25th January, fol. 117) and Agnes (26th March, fol. 124) are added to the martyrology, as well as a nun named Benedicta on 22nd February, fol. 120.

[97] BL Cotton Vitell. C. xii fols. 155- 156v, from which the subsequent quotes in this paragraph are taken.

nunnery, is Barking and the 'sanctimonialibus bercingensis ecclesie'. The details of hospitality were generous, as explained for the monks of Glastonbury: 'Si contiguit aliquem ex nostris fratribus ad illos venire recipietur sicut monachus eiusdem ecclesie. Idem faciemus suis ad nos venientibus. Panis vero et cervisia elemosine [...]'.[98] A similar degree of hospitality was also to be offered to the nuns of Barking, with the exception of the bread and ale; 'eodem modo sicut pro fratribus sancte Marie Glestonie fiet. Excepto pane et cervisia'. No doubt the monks would have insisted that any visiting nuns took their meals in guest quarters, away from the eyes of the brothers for whom they could be a source of temptation.[99] No such relationship existed between Barking and the other Canterbury house, Christ Church; the only Barking abbess to be mentioned in their lists of commemoration was Mary, sister of Thomas Becket, no doubt for her family connections.[100] The nature of the link between Barking and St Augustine's deserves further investigation, and is an example of what Johnson calls the elitist nature of confraternity; wealthy houses only associated with other wealthy houses, with the gender of the inmates less important than their social status.[101]

It is likely that Ælfgyva was the last of the Anglo-Saxon abbesses to have ruled over Barking. It has been suggested that there was another Anglo-Saxon woman ruling over the abbey after Ælfgyva, who would have to have been appointed by William I or William II, but who was not a member of the new Norman ruling class.[102] I find this unlikely, and will propose that this woman has been invented as the result of a mis-

[98] The end of the line is not legible due to damage to the manuscript.
[99] On provision of monastic hospitality, studying primarily male houses, see J. Kerr, 'Monastic hospitality; The English Benedictines c. 1070-1245' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 2000). On women in the sacred spaces of male communities, L. Hicks, 'Women and the use of space in Normandy, c. 1050-1300' (unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2003) chapter 4 pp. 177-206, particularly the discussion of male houses at p. 202-6. She does not, however, discuss nuns as visitors to male communities.
[100] London, British Library MS Cotton Nero C ix fol. 2 (renumbered 4 in MS). R. Fleming, 'Christchurch's sisters and brothers: an edition and discussion of Canterbury obituary lists', in M.A. Meyer (ed.), The culture of Christendom: Essays in medieval history in commemoration of Denis L.T. Bethell (London, 1993) pp. 115-54 contains an edition of this text, and a brief discussion of the use of obituary lists. A similar study of the several hundred entries in the St Augustine's manuscript may give interesting information about the confraternity of St Augustine's.
[101] P.D. Johnson, Equal in monastic profession: Religious women in medieval France (Chicago, 1991) pp. 98-9.
[102] Loftus and Chettle pp. 21-23.

identification of Ælfgyva. The first argument for her existence, presented by Loftus and Chettle, is that the Ægelwine who witnesses a late eleventh century list of lands copied into the end fly-leaf of the abbey's tenth-century gospel book may be the abbess Alwine who occurs in other sources (discussed in the following paragraph).[103] Since Ægelwine is a male name, this argument can be disregarded as incorrect.

A second theory supporting the possible identification of an Abbess Ælwynn is based on material chronologically distant from the events it describes, although it was produced at Barking. The abbey's *Ordinale* (Oxford, University College MS 169, dated 1404) contains several references to an abbess 'Aluine' (the French spelling of the name Ælwynn). Tolhurst edited the manuscript and transcribes the name as Aluine in three places: firstly in an obit on May 10th of the calendar and secondly a reference to her place of burial, 'en larche devers le haut auter'.[104] The third occurrence of her name is in a list composed by order of Abbess Anne de Vere (1295-1318) of those abbesses who, having died more than 100 years ago (that is, before c.1200), were no longer to have their anniversaries celebrated 'propter maiorem allevacionem conventus'.[105] Capgrave's *Nova Legenda Angliae*, compiled in the fourteenth century, places an Abbess Alwine after Hildelith, but this seems very unlikely.[106]

Loftus and Chettle raised the possibility that Abbess Ælfgyva and Abbess Aluine (as they transcribe her name) might be the same person, but discount this on the grounds that the two names are too different.[107] My own examination of the manuscripts in which 'Aluine' occurs leads me to offer a new theory reconciling the apparently contradictory accounts of her. In MS Univ. Coll. 169 (the *Ordinale*) her name appears to read 'Alviva', but this may be read as 'Alvina'. It is possible that in the years

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[103] Oxford, MS Bodley 155 fol. 196v. Printed ECBA, pp. 35-36; ECEss. p.106; trans. Loftus and Chettle, p. 21. Hart dates the document to 1090 or ten years either side; ECEss. p. 45.

[104] Ordinale I, p.5, 2 p. 362. The manuscript was dedicated to Abbess Sybil de Felton and dated 1404: Ordinale I, p. 13.

[105] Ordinale II p. 359. Despite this injunction, the names of many pre-1200 abbesses appear in the calendar, so it may be that in times of better financial health Abbess Anne's ruling was overturned.

[106] C. Horstmann (ed.), Nova Legenda Angliae, collected by John of Tynmouth, John Capgrave and others (Oxford, 1901) vol. 1 p. 393.

[107] Loftus and Chettle, pp. 21-3.

between the eleventh and fourteenth century, Abbess Ælfgyva's name became Normanised, and was spelled Alviva, which could be mis-read as Alvina; her name is given as Alviva by Goscelin of St-Bertin, so the nuns had a precedent for using this version of the Anglo-Saxon name Ælfgyva.[108] It was then assumed by the scribe of the *Ordinale* that the woman named as Ælfgyva in earlier sources could in fact be Alvina, hence the transcription of the name as the French Aluine. This would mean that all the extant sources naming a woman Aluine or Alviva were referring to the same Ælfgyva who is well known to us.

Whether this interpretation is correct or not, it seems most likely that there was no abbess Ælwynn, and that Ælfgyva ruled without a break until the early twelfth century. We should also consider that by the late eleventh or early twelfth century, when a vacancy arose at Barking, the king (William Rufus or Henry I) would be unlikely to appoint another Anglo-Saxon woman to the abbey if it were possible to appoint a Norman woman, either brought from abroad or more likely a member of a family which had emigrated. Having allowed the Anglo-Saxon abbess to live out her natural course, it would have been more acceptable (and perhaps economically wise, from the abbey's point of view) to pass custody of the abbey to a member of the new ruling class of Normans. The likelihood is that Ælwynn was never an abbess, and was simply a phantom figure created through the mis-reading of a name with many variant spellings across 300 years and three languages.

d) <u>Norman dominance</u>

We can be more confident about our knowledge of events which took place at Barking during the twelfth century than about events over the previous 150 years, because of the increase in both production and preservation of documents.[109] Ælfgyva was almost certainly the last of the Anglo-Saxon abbesses, and it seems that there was a vacancy

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[108] <u>De translatione 2</u>. p. 437. Indeed, an early scholar of Goscelin's text misread this name as Alvina, so the two names Alviva and Alvina are evidently frequently confused; M. Esposito, 'Analecta Varia', <u>Hermathena</u> 15 (1911) pp. 73-99 at p. 90.
[109] Clanchy, pp. 57-62 and fig. 1, p. 60.

after her death before a suitable successor could be found. It has frequently been asserted that Queen Matilda II (d.1118), wife of Henry I, had a custodial relationship with the abbey and indeed ruled over it for a period of time. This is suggested by a charter of King Stephen (1135-54) datable to 1136, shortly after his accession, in which he gave his own wife Queen Matilda III custody of the abbey as her aunt had held it; 'Scias quia concedo Matilde regine ut habeat abbatiam de Barchinga in custodia sua sicut Matildis regina amita sua unquam melius habuit'.[110]

The exact nature of the relationship between Matilda II and Barking Abbey is not clear, and probably amounted to little more than the queen acting as custodian of the abbey's lands for a short while, and consequently benefiting from the incomes of those lands. There was, as we have seen above, precedent for queenly involvement with Barking, beginning with Queen Aelfthryth's twenty-year rule over the community. I will suggest in Chapter 6 below that royal custody was intended to protect the abbey at times of weakness or vulnerability, and this period may have been such a situation. The death of the last Anglo-Saxon abbess might have left the community feeling under threat from the new Norman lords, particularly since Ælfgyva had been such an active defender and promoter of the abbey's interests. In such a situation the queen, as the most powerful woman in the country, would have been an ideal protector; no local lord would have dared try to invade the abbey's lands if the queen was guarding them. I suggest therefore that Queen Matilda II probably did have custody of the abbey at some time between the early twelfth century and 1118; she should not, however, be called 'abbess' in the same way as a fully professed nun would be.

After this period in the custody of Queen Matilda II, the next appointed abbess was a woman named Agnes, appointed by King Henry I in a charter of 1114x22, perhaps 1121.[111] Her name suggests that she was a Norman, and by this time, two generations after the Conquest, it is likely that many members of Barking came from the new

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[110] RRAN III. no. 31.
[111] RRAN II, no. 1242; CCR V, p. 284-5. The deed was witnessed at Westminster, and a royal council was held there on 7th January 1121.

Norman and inter-married Anglo-Norman aristocracy.[112] The abbey's entry in the mortuary roll of Vitalis, Abbot of Savigny dating to 1122 names Matilda, Mabilia and Emma amongst the nuns, and these Norman names suggest that the abbey was rapidly attracting members of the new elite class, and those who aspired to emulate them by adopting their names for their daughters.[113] Unfortunately Agnes' name is almost the only information we have about her, and we know nothing of her family background or how long she had been at the abbey. The date of her death is given differently in two sources; the abbey's own *Ordinale* lists her obit on 3rd of April in its calendar.[114] The martyrology of St Augustine's, Canterbury, which concurs with the Barking calendar for the deaths of both her predecessor Ælfgyva and successor Adelidis, however, records Agnes' death on the 26th of March.[115] I would be more inclined to believe the Canterbury text, since it was compiled in the late twelfth century, whereas the Barking calendar, while no doubt based upon earlier sources, was dedicated in 1404 and thus was produced some 250 years after the deaths of these women.[116]

Henry I granted a confirmation of rights some five years after the appointment of Abbess Agnes in a charter dating to 1114x33, probably 1126.[117] In this deed Henry confirms the rights and lands to Abbess Adelicia. The editors of the *Regesta* suggest that the name Adelicia is probably an incorrect expansion of 'A. abbatissa' by the copyist who compiled the charter roll in 1383; since he knew there was a later abbess by

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[112] On the slow spread of continental names amongst women in England, see C. Clark, 'Women's names in post-Conquest England; Observations and speculations', Speculum 53 (1978) pp. 223-51, especially pp. 236-7, 246-50 where she argues that the spread of continental names (as recorded in source materials) was slower amongst women than men, and was frequently a sign of aspirational adoption of the continental names of local Norman lords by Anglo-Saxon families, rather than a direct sign of inter-marriage. She also notes (p. 249) that in the early twelfth century the name Agnes was 'fashionable', so our abbess may have been from an Anglo-Saxon family with intentions towards climbing socially.
[113] Delisle, Rouleau mortuaire plate 25.
[114] Ordinale I, p. 4. There was no other abbess by this name, so it must refer to the early twelfth-century Agnes we discuss here.
[115] BL Cott. Vitell. C xii fols 117 (Ælfgyva, 10th May), 128v (Adelidis, 25th January) 124 (Agnes). The entry for Agnes, noted during my study of the manuscript, was added on the basis of my information to the second edition of HRH I. p. 290.
[116] Ordinale I, p. 13 gives the dedication to Abbess Sybil de Felton and the year, 1404.
[117] RRAN II, no. 1453; CCR V, p. 285. The range of dates rests on the witness of William de Albini *Brito*, a Lincolnshire eyre judge. See RRAN II, p. 199, which suggests it may be datable to 1126.

this name, it might seem reasonable to add this expansion.[118] Abbess Agnes seems to have ruled for around another decade after this, although we have no further evidence for her reign. In 1136x7 King Stephen granted the custody of the abbey to Queen Matilda III, as her aunt Queen Matilda II had held it in her time.[119] Custody of the abbey probably involved little more receiving the revenues of the abbey's estates, in the same way as when an abbey was 'in the king's hand' during a vacancy. Nevertheless, this role as royal guardian was sanctioned by the *Regularis Concordia*, which instructed that queens should act as 'protectress and fearless guardian of the communities of nuns'.[120] Huneycutt suggests that Barking 'became a customary holding of queen consorts after the Conquest as well [as before]', and the granting to Matilda III would certainly be an example of this.[121] It is possible that Matilda III had already been associated with the abbey before she became queen in 1135, since she inherited the title Countess of Boulogne from her father Count Eustace III (d. c. 1125), and the fief of Boulogne extended across much of Essex.[122] The queen seems to have encouraged members of her circle to take an interest in the abbey; in 1140x54 her servant Edward made a grant of land to Barking which the king confirmed.[123] Matilda III's 'reign' over the abbey was brief, since soon afterwards Stephen granted the abbacy to Adelidis fitzJohn.[124]

Adelidis fitzJohn was a member of an 'up-and-coming' Anglo-Norman family, and her brothers were being promoted rapidly through the royal court.[125] The family were not

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[118] RRAN II, p. 199.

[119] RRAN III no. 31, suggesting that the charter was granted before Stephen went to Normandy in March 1137. See also p. 68 above.

[120] T. Symons (ed.), Regularis Concordia: The monastic agreement of the monks and nuns of the English nation (London, 1953) p. 2

[121] L. Huneycutt, Another Esther in our own times: Matilda II (1100-1118) and the development of medieval queenship (forthcoming) seen in typescript, quote at p. 109.

[122] On Matilda's career and links to Essex, see Tanner, H., 'Queenship: Office, custom or ad hoc? The case of Queen Matilda III of England (1136-52)', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, (eds.) Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and lady (New York, 2003) pp. 133-58. Practical control of the county was taken by her husband the king, however, and in 1147 he conferred it upon their son Eustace, presumably with her consent; see D. Crouch, The reign of King Stephen, 1135-54 (Harlow, 2000) p. 245.

[123] RRAN III. nos. 37 and 38.

[124] RRAN III. no. 32.

[125] On this family, see especially Dalton. For the early years of the family, L. Landon 'The Sheriffs of Norfolk', Norfolk Archaeology 23 (1929) pp.147-65, appendix 'Further note on Waleran the Sheriff' at

one of the richest in the country, but from the reign of King Henry I onwards Adelidis'
brothers Payn, Eustace and William made themselves prominent in local courts, and
rapidly became part of the entourage of King Henry I and then King Stephen.[126] I
suggest it is possible to date Adelidis' appointment closely through an examination of
the charter evidence. Her brother Payn had been present at Oxford in 1136x7 when
Stephen had granted the abbey to Queen Matilda III, but was not at Clarendon to
witness the charter appointing his sister abbess.[127] The charter explicitly identified
Adelidis as 'soror Pagani filii Johannis', and is witnessed by Eustace fitzJohn. We know
that Payn was killed on 10th July 1137 fighting for King Stephen's cause in Wales.[128]
After Easter 1138, however, Eustace had rebelled against King Stephen, and gone over
to King David of Scotland.[129]

I would suggest that we may use this information to date the charter to after Payn's
death in July 1137 but before Eustace's rebellion in spring 1138. If we consider that the
charter granting the abbey to Adelidis was granted at Clarendon, in the west country
heart of Payn's lands and influence, we might expect him to have been present if he
were still alive. The itinerary of King Stephen proposes that there may only have been a
few days between the charter for Queen Matilda, recording an event at Oxford, and that
at Clarendon in favour of Adelidis.[130] This seems unlikely, especially since Payn
witnessed the first charter but not the second. I propose instead that Adelidis was made
abbess after Stephen had returned from spending most of 1137 in France. By this date
Payn fitzJohn had been killed but Eustace was still loyal to Stephen. According to this
scenario, while the king was abroad he left the abbey safely in the hands of Queen
Matilda III. Upon his return from Normandy he discovered that one of his key

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161-65, and especially C.T. Clay, 'The origin of Eustace fitzJohn', Peerage 12 part II, Appendix B pp. 7-
11. This family is discussed in detail below, pp. 123-30.

[126] See S.L. Mooers, 'Familial clout and financial gain in Henry I's later reign', Albion 14 (1982) pp.
268-91 at pp. 287-290; the fitzJohns were not of the top rank of aristocracy with the Warennes and
Beaumonts, but were rapidly gaining membership of the rank of the better known Clare, Aubigny and
Chester families.

[127] RRAN III. nos. 31, 32.

[128] K.R. Potter (ed.), Gesta Stephani (Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford, 1976) p. 24.

[129] Richard of Hexham, 'De gestis Regis Stephani', in R. Howlett (ed.), Chronicles of the reigns of
Stephen, Henry II and Richard I vol. III (Rolls Series. London, 1886) pp. 139-78 at p. 158.

[130] RRAN III. p. xl: the reconstructed itinerary suggests that the first charter was 'before 26th April' 1136

supporters, Payn fitzJohn, had been killed fighting for the royal cause, and granted the abbey to Payn's sister, perhaps as a reward for his loyalty, and also seeing her as a woman whose family links would guarantee her own loyalty to the king.[131] As a new king wishing to consolidate his power, Stephen would have realised the strategic importance of the abbey, and thus left it in the hands of his queen as guardian until he could find a suitable abbess. The itinerary constructed in the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* suggests Stephen was in the north of England in February, but back in the south after Easter, which fell on April 3rd: it is possible he granted the charter at Clarendon around this time. I propose, then, to assign the appointment of Adelidis fitzJohn to March or early April 1138. This tactical appointment of religious leaders was shown similarly in Stephen's choice of the brother of Richard de Lucy, one of his leading courtiers, to the abbacy of Battle, also in 1138.[132]

Adelidis was an efficient and busy abbess. She received Stephen's court at her abbey on at least two occasions, and may have applied pressure to the king make grants to the abbey. In a charter of 1140x52, Queen Matilda III and several other key members of the royal court were at Barking to witness King Stephen's grant to the abbey of the income of Barstable hundred in Essex, and his symbolic gesture of placing a knife of the abbey church's altar to represent the grant.[133] King Stephen also granted a charter reducing the abbey's liability for hidage at Weston (Surrey) at the abbey.[134] Adelidis appears to have been aware of the power she could wield, as the sister of men close to the king and as a member of an important local dynasty. In the early years of her reign, Adelidis founded a hospital on the abbey's lands at Ilford, gaining donations from local men and women for it and receiving a grant from King Stephen of forest lands to add income to the hospital's endowment.[135] This hospital was to become very important for the history of

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and the second 'c. 29th April'.

[131] This is, of course, speculation, but it fits with the chronology of events and the pattern of royal concern for Barking which has already been established.

[132] Crouch, King Stephen. pp. 300-1 and n.16.

[133] RRAN III, no. 34; 'Et hanc donacionem meam optuli super altare Beate Marie et Beate Aethelburgae in ecclesia de Berchinga per unum cultellum'.

[134] RRAN III. no. 33.

[135] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5 for Adelidis' own grant, and fol. 5v for Stephen's grant; Calendar, nos. 10 and 11. The latter is printed in New charters. p. 921. These are discussed in detail in Chapter 5, part c) below.

the abbey; without the preservation of charters relating to the hospital's possessions in the Ilford Cartulary, many details about the Abbey's own past would have been lost.

During Adelidis' reign we begin to find out more about the members of the abbey, and it seems that the royal involvement with the abbey which began with Queen Matilda II's custodianship (and perhaps Queen Ælfthryth's before that) became closer. There is no evidence that King Henry I's second wife, Adeliza of Louvain (married 1121, died 1151), took on the role of guardian of the abbey, perhaps because there were no vacancies during her time as queen, but we know that her niece Ida was a member of the abbey in the mid-twelfth century. This Ida received a letter from the churchman Osbert of Clare on the subject of virginity, in which she was placed under the protection of her patron Saint Ethelburga, and assured that her earthly nobility was nothing compared to the eternal place that was being prepared for her in heaven as a devoted lamb of Christ.[136] Osbert also wrote an extended letter to Abbess Adelidis entitled *De armatura castitatis,* which was a narrative on saints and their virtues.[137]

Adelidis received another letter of a rather more personal nature from Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury (1139-61). In this letter, she was criticised for bringing the name of the nunnery into disrepute because of 'your notorious familiarity and cohabitation with Hugh your officer, who is an offence and scandal to all religion'.[138] Theobald certainly believed something very serious was going on; 'Thus far we have been able to endure your scorn of our command as best we may, thus far we have grieved the peril to your soul and reputation; and we shall without delay cause you to grieve, unless you change your life for the better and study by prompt correction to reform the reputation of your house'. This Hugh is almost certainly the same man as the Hugo of Barking who gave account for the abbey as steward in Michaelmas 1169, and the Hugo *dapifer* who gave lands to the newly-founded hospital at Ilford.[139] Theobald is

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[136] Osbert, no. 40.

[137] Osbert, no. 42.

[138] John of Salisbury, Letters of John of Salisbury vol. 1 The early letters, eds. W.J. Millor, S.H. Butler and H.E. Butler, rev. C.N.L. Brooke (Oxford, 1986), no. 69 p. 111.

[139] Pipe Roll 15 Henry II p. 135; Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5 (Abbess Adelidis' charter).

careful not to make any specific accusations of impropriety, but the implication seems
to be that Adelidis was having some kind of affair with Hugh. We should bear in mind
that abbesses could not completely avoid contact with men, both as priests and to
engage in the practical administration of the abbey in matters relating to the outside,
secular world, and that Adelidis would have had to have at least a working relationship
with the steward of her abbey.[140]

A possible motivation behind Theobald's critical letter is that it was written deliberately
to discredit Adelidis. Another letter of Archbishop Theobald, written in c.1160 to Pope
Alexander III (1159-81), complains that she had delayed coming to court to bear
witness in a dispute over the tithes of Ingatestone (a parish some 15 miles north-east of
Barking).[141] Theobald wrote that Roger, priest of Ingatestone had claimed his rights to
the tithes of Ingatestone, which the abbess had 'unlawfully appropriated', in the court of
the bishop of London, but when a decision was imminent the abbess appealed to the
authority of the Pope (then Adrian IV, 1154-59). She delayed several times and failed to
make a representation, and by the time she finally did send her proctors to present her
case, Pope Adrian had died, hence Theobald was writing to Pope Alexander III. It is
possible that Theobald wished to discredit Adelidis and thus boost the case of Roger of
Ingatestone, and so was spreading rumours about her behaviour.[142] Roger's case was
certainly not a strong one; according to Theobald's account of events, the abbess
pointed out that Roger 'had no legal title to the property which he sought to extort from
her by false accusation, and that she was protected from him by more than thirty years'
possession'.[143] The abbey had owned the manor of Ingatestone in 1086, and several
times in subsequent years abbesses went to court to argue their rights over the income of
the parish church there.[144]

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[140] S. Elkins, Holy women of twelfth-century England (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988) p. 148 discusses this.
[141] Letters of John of Salisbury vol. I. no. 132, pp. 238-9.
[142] This argument is suggested in V. Morton, Guidance for women in twelfth-century convents
(Cambridge, 2003) p. 20-21and referred to in Saints' lives. pp. 195-6 and n. 16.
[143] Letters of John of Salisbury vol. I. p. 239.
[144] DB vol. II, fol. 18. See also later disputes, for example the dispute over Ingatestone settled by Gilbert
Foliot in 1177x80; ERO MS D/DP T1/ 692, printed in A. Morey and C.N.L. Brooke (eds.), The letters

Whatever her moral or personal weaknesses may have been, Adelidis was certainly a successful leader for her house, and Henry II seems to have accepted her when he succeeded to the throne in 1154. She appears to have lived out her years fairly quietly, aside from the two disputes mentioned above. After her death, however, Henry does not seem to have moved rapidly to fill the vacancy left; going against the pattern set by his predecessors Henry I and Stephen, he did not place his wife Queen Eleanor in custody over the abbey (despite, or indeed perhaps because of, his extended absence in Normandy until 1170).[145] Indeed, the house lay vacant for 6 years after Adelidis' death in 1166, and the abbey's accounts were rendered in the pipe rolls by stewards of the house.[146]

Before moving on to the next woman who was definitely abbess, I will refer briefly to the possibility suggested in the most recent edition of the *Heads of Religious Houses* that there was an Abbess Ermelina at Barking at some point between 1152 and 1166, possibly between two separate abbesses named Adelidis.[147] This assertion rests on the occurrence of Ermelina in a Canterbury charter, Canterbury Cathedral MS Cartae Antiquae M.245. There are two main arguments against the suggestion that Ermelina was abbess of Barking, however. Firstly, the charter cited does not in fact mention any Ermelina, or indeed Barking Abbey.[148] Secondly, for her to have occurred at a date between 1152 and 1166 would have meant she must have been abbess during a brief vacancy after Adelidis' death, and before the beginning of the kings' administration of the abbey. It is possible that Adelidis died soon after receiving her letter from Osbert of Clare (probably in 1158-63), and that Ermelina ruled for a short period. If we couple the problem of the inaccuracy of the charter cited in the *Heads of Religious Houses*, however, with the total absence of a woman named Ermelina in any other Barking

and charters of Gilbert Foliot (Cambridge 1967) pp. 401-2.
[145] R.W. Eyton, Court, household and itinerary of Henry II (London, 1878) pp. 91 (departure from England), 134 (return from Normandy).
[146] Pipe Roll 15 Henry II, p.135; Pipe Roll 18 Henry II, p.45. The steward for the three years and nine months immediately after Adelidis' death was Hugh of Barking, probably the same man discussed above to whom Archbishop Theobald's letter referred.
[147] HRH 1, new ed. p. 290.
[148] I have not seen the charter in person, but had the text read over the telephone by a member of the archives staff.

material, we may assume that she was simply a phantom abbess assigned to Barking as the result of an error by the editors.[149]

After Adelidis' death in 1166 and the six years without an abbess at Barking, the next woman to be appointed abbess was of considerably humbler origins than Adelidis. In July-August 1173 King Henry II granted the abbey of Barking to Mary Becket, sister of the martyr Archbishop Thomas Becket (1118-70).[150] This was perhaps not Henry's own ideal candidate for such an important position, and we know she was suggested for the position by Odo, prior of Christ Church Canterbury (1167/8-75).[151] We know very little about Mary's rule over the abbey, except that it was relatively short, for her successor was appointed in 1177x9. During her reign King Henry II granted the abbey a basic charter of freedoms, but this was the only royal grant of her reign.[152] Mary's name occurs in charter material only once, as a witness to a deed for Westminster Abbey.[153] This charter was the grant of a church in London to one James, nephew of the late Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury. It is witnessed by 'Maria abbatissa de Berking', as well as another kinsman of hers named Theobald, 'nephew of the archbishop'. Another kinsman, Stephen 'nephew of St Thomas' witnessed a charter of William de Vesci granting lands to Abbess Matilda, Mary's successor as abbess of Barking in 1177x9-83.[154]

[149] Professor C.N.L. Brooke has noted that he could not trace his exact source of the information regarding Ermelina, and that it could certainly simply be a mistake; personal communication.
[150] CCR V, p. 285: Acta of Henry II ref. 1193H.
[151] Gervase of Canterbury, The historical works of Gervase of Canterbury vol. 1: The chronicle of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I, ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series. London, 1879) p. 242.
[152] CCR V, p. 285: Acta of Henry II ref. 662H.
[153] E. Mason (ed.), Westminster Abbey charters 1066-c.1214 (London Records Society Publications vol. 25. London, 1988) p. 208.
[154] Feet of fines for Essex vol 1 ed. R.E.G. Kirk (Colchester, 1899) p. 25. ERO MS D/DP T1/694, a charter which is no later than 1183 since William de Vesci, the donor, died in that year. The family evidently maintained links with the abbey after Mary's time, since in 1220 one Theobald de Helles, kinsman of Agnes Becket, Abbess Mary's sister, gave lands at Great Wigborough to the abbey of Barking. Feet of fines for Essex 1 p. 57-8. This ongoing link to the abbey is a very interesting one, which unfortunately falls outside the scope of the current study, but which I discussed in a paper entitled '*Pro me et heredibus meis*: Family connections to Barking Abbey in the 12th and 13th centuries' at the 2003 Leicester University conference 'The religious and the laity: Europe c.1000-1300'.

There is very little evidence for Mary Becket's activity at Barking Abbey itself. She was involved in the composition of a text on her brother's life by the poet Guernes de Pont-Saint-Maxence, but aside from this we know very little of her abbacy.[155] I would suggest that the end of her reign was caused by her death or retirement due to old age, rather than her deposition, as she was probably already at a fairly advanced age when she became abbess. Her brother was born in around 1120, and Mary would probably have been born around a similar date.[156] It has been suggested that Gilbert, their father, was born in around 1090, and this would mean Mary was almost certainly born after at least 1105, probably after 1110 and probably before around 1140.[157] This would make her anywhere between 30 and 60 years old when she became abbess, although she would probably have been a similar age to Thomas. The day of her death is recorded as 21st January in the abbey's own calendar, as well as in the Christ Church Canterbury necrologium, and I suggest that it is likely she died before 1179, the latest date for the appointment of her successor.[158] Her sister Rohese died in around 1184, and Agnes probably after 1190, meaning we might expect Mary's death to fall within a decade or so of her sisters', assuming they died of natural causes.[159]

After Mary Becket's reign as abbess, Henry II returned to the pattern set by his predecessors, and appointed another woman of royal blood to the abbey, although this time as professed abbess rather than custodian. In a charter of 1177x9, witnessed by three bishops and several members of his royal court, Henry granted Barking Abbey to 'my most dear daughter Matilda', with full confirmation of rights and properties.[160] An

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[155] Guernes de Pont-Saint-Maxence, La Vie de Saint Thomas le Martyr, ed. E Walberg (Lund, 1922). This text is discussed below pp. 240-41.

[156] Assuming a 25-year childbearing period for her mother, if Mary was the oldest sibling she could have been born as early as 1095, or as late as 1145 if the youngest. Dr. R.M. Smith, Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, personal communication. For Thomas' year of birth, see F. Barlow, Thomas Becket (London, 1986) p. 11. D. Knowles, Thomas Becket (London, 1970) p. 3 suggests that he was born in 1118; we are concerned with Mary, however, and so need only give a range of possible years around this general time.

[157] Barlow, Thomas Becket p. 11.

[158] Ordinale I, p. 1. BL MS Cott. Nero C ix fol. 2; Delisle, Rouleau mortuaire, plate 25.

[159] See the discussion in J.H Round, revised and completed by W.R. Powell, 'Thomas Becket's sisters, and other studies', Essex Archaeology and History 31 (2000) pp. 154-60 at pp. 154-5. The date of Agnes' death is proposed in Barlow, Thomas Becket, p. 14.

[160] CCR V, p. 286.

illegitimate daughter, she should not be confused with Henry's legitimate daughter Matilda who was born in 1156, married Henry, Duke of Saxony and bore him two sons before her death in 1189. A deed in the Ilford Cartulary identifies Matilda's mother as Joanna, a name which may suggest she was a French woman or a member of a Norman family in England.[161] Henry travelled frequently between England and the continent as a teenager, so either nationality is possible.[162] It is perhaps more likely, however, that Joanna was of Norman descent living in England, since Matilda was made abbess of an English monastery which suggests an English rather than continental upbringing. We may assume that Matilda was conceived before Henry married Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152, at the age of 19. Two of Henry's better-known illegitimate sons are assumed to have been born as the result of his youthful behaviour, and it is generally accepted that once married Henry remained faithful to Eleanor of Aquitaine until at least 1170, so we may assume that Matilda too was born before 1152.[163] Matilda was acknowledged as sister by King Richard I (1189-99), who called her 'soror nostra' in a charter of May 1198 granting the abbey 60 shillings annually from the hundred of Becontree.[164] He did not grant her a confirmation charter on his accession to the throne, suggesting perhaps that she was confident and secure in her position some ten years after her appointment.

Matilda seems to have been an active abbess in comparison with her predecessors, although this is probably in part a result of the survival of greater amounts of documentary material from the later years of this study. Matilda confirmed the grants of her predecessor Adelidis to the Ilford Hospital and was also active at a more parochial level, engaging in land disputes with several neighbouring religious communities and winning battles over tithe rights.[165] She defended the abbey's rights and incomes at Ingatestone, in a dispute which was finally settled by Gilbert Foliot.[166] She was also

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[161] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 15. Extracts are printed below in Appendix 4, no. 5, p. 283

[162] On Henry's travels, see A.L. Poole, 'Henry Plantagenet's early visits to England', EHR 47 (1932) pp. 447-52

[163] See Henry II. p. 119 on the two sons, Geoffrey 'Plantagenet' and William 'Longsword', and pp. 118-19 for Henry's early faithfulness to Eleanor.

[164] CCR V, p. 287.

[165] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5v (Calendar, no. 15) confirming the grants made by Abbess Adelidis to the Ilford Hospital.

[166] ERO MS D/DP T1/692 (Calendar, no. 14), printed in Gilbert Foliot, Letters and charters, pp. 401-2.

engaged in a dispute with the brothers of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem over the tithes and income of Hanley, a small parish near Ingatestone around 15 miles north east of Barking. This argument was taken to Pope Clement III (1187-91), whose delegates adjudged in the nuns' favour, granting them the incomes of Hanley in return for a payment of one mark of silver to the brothers, which mark the nuns themselves received from the Augustine canons of St Mary Overy, Southwark in rent on a certain messuage in London.[167] Soon after, in a move which may have been pressed upon them, the brothers of the Hospital promised 'in the name of fraternity' to Bishop Richard fitzNeal of London (1189-98) that they would no longer require the nuns to pay them that mark of silver which they used to give 'in the name of the fraternity of the hospital'.[168] This very cordial-sounding concession may have been less friendly in reality; the brothers were being coerced by the bishop to relinquish what was essentially a rental payment in exchange for the tithes of Hanley, and call it a payment in confraternity which could be more easily given up, in episcopal eyes at least.

Matilda herself witnessed two charters for the nuns of St Mary, Clerkenwell, perhaps simply because of the proximity of that community of nuns to her own.[169] It might also be because the sisters of Clerkenwell owned considerable amounts of land in Mountnessing, near to Ingatestone where Barking had an interest.[170] A third connection between the houses comes in the name of her steward, Reginald de Fonte, who with his brother Alexander was a frequent witness for the sisters.[171] If we consider that the full name of the house was St Mary de Fonte (of the well, as in Clerkenwell), it may simply mean that these men were local to that nunnery and Reginald's position as steward at Barking brought the two houses into contact. Aside from these worldly activities, Matilda's most interesting actions belong to the field of literary patronage; I will suggest in Chapter 9 that she commissioned both the *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* and

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[167] ERO MS D/DP T1/693; Calendar, no. 17.

[168] ERO MS D/DP T1/690; Calendar, no. 18. This charter can be dated to c.1192-95; it is witnessed by Peter of Waltham, archdeacon of London (c.1192-95).

[169] Cartulary of St Mary Clerkenwell, ed. W.O. Hassall (Camden Society 3rd Series vol. 71. London, 1949) pp. 61, 93-4.

[170] See Henry II's confirmation of the abbey's properties, Cartulary of St Mary Clerkenwell, p. 12 (the estate is named as 'Ginges').

the *Life of St Catherine of Alexandria* to promote her own paternal family lineage. Her death occurred on the 17th August, probably in 1199; the day of her death is recorded in the calendar of the abbey's *Ordinale*.[172] The abbey's accounts were rendered by the steward, Reginald de Fonte, for the half year from St Ethelburga's day (11th October) to 21st April 1200, suggesting that Matilda probably died in the summer of 1199.[173] She was still alive until at least the spring of 1198, when she was named in an Essex fine.[174]

The last abbess of Barking to be discussed here began her rule in around 1200, and remains relevant to this study as the last to be chosen directly by the king. As we have seen, until the spring of 1200 Barking's accounts were rendered by its steward, and in a charter of 1200-1201 (2 John) it is represented in a lease of lands by 'C. ministra'.[175] This 'C' is most likely the Abbess Christina who appears in an Essex fine of 1202, and three undated charters in the Petre archive.[176] While no appointment charter survives, we may assume that she was appointed by King John (1199-1216). In the abbey's *Ordinale*, she is named as 'Christina de Valoniis', and can probably be identified as a member of a branch of the Valognes family which grew to middling prominence during the twelfth century.[177] As I will suggest in Chapter 5, Christina was probably related to Roger de Valognes (d.1141) who married Agnes fitzJohn, the sister of Abbess Adelidis of Barking (c.1137-66). Three charters originating at Barking exist for Christina's abbacy, all of which were land transactions; it appears that Christina's abbacy was a fairly uneventful one.[178] The Magna Carta rebel Robert fitzWalter held a tenancy from her in 1205, and other evidence suggests that his sister may have been a member of the community, as I shall explain shortly.[179] Christina was probably dead by 1213; she was

[171] Cartulary of St Mary Clerkenwell. pp. 30, 93, 146, 203.

[172] Ordinale 1, p. 8

[173] Pipe Roll 2 John, p. 265-6

[174] Feet of fines for Essex vol. 1 p. 13.

[175] ERO MS D/DP T1/695; Calendar, no. 20. At this date the steward of the abbey was Ralph fitz Salomon, suggesting it must have been after Easter 1200 when Reginald de Fonte was named as steward in the Pipe Rolls; see n. 173 above.

[176] Feet of fines for Essex vol. 1. p. 26, Michaelmas 4 John. The undated charters are ERO MSS D/DP T1 60, 654, 1582, none of which can be dated more closely than to Christina's abbacy.

[177] This family is discussed in detail below pp. 129-132.

[178] See n. 176 above.

[179] Feet of fines for Essex vol. 1. p. 36. See the following paragraph for Robert fitzWalter's sister.

certainly so by January 1214, when King John intervened in the election of her successor.

The vexed issue of free elections to abbacies had caused King John to come into repeated dispute with Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), and his obstinacy is shown clearly in the issues around the election of Abbess Christina's successor. In 1208 King John had insisted that royal intervention in the appointment of abbots and abbesses was an old English tradition and should be allowed to continue, an insistence for which there was precedent, since King Edgar had decreed in the *Regularis Concordia* of 970 that 'the election of abbots and abbesses should be carried out with the consent and advice of the King and according to the teaching of the Holy Rule'.[180] He was also following the practice of his predecessors, since in 1173 Henry II famously wrote to the monks of Winchester 'I order you to hold a free election, but nevertheless forbid you to elect anyone except Richard my clerk, archdeacon of Poitiers'.[181] John finally conceded to papal pressure and allowed the 'consent and advice' of the *Regularis Concordia* to be downgraded to merely consent, when in November 1213 (according to the Annals of Dunstable) he granted free elections to several monasteries, and that St Albans, Battle, Selby, Barking and 'Alnestow' took advantage of this right.[182] We may assume that Christina de Valognes was dead by this date, and hence Barking attempted to take the opportunity to elect an abbess of its own choice. In 1214 John made a formal declaration granting freedom of election to all abbeys and bishoprics, and the Fourth Lateran Council confirmed free election as a universal right of the whole church in 1215.[183]

The documentation surrounding this supposedly free election, which in fact suffered considerable intervention from the king, is very useful to us as it reveals the identity of

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[180] Symons, Regularis concordia. p. 6. For the 1208 dispute with the pope, see D. Knowles, 'Essays in monastic history 1066-1216: 1: Abbatial elections', Downside Review 49 (1931) pp. 252-78 at p. 269.
[181] E. Berger and L. Delisle (eds.), Recueil de actes de Henri II (Paris, 1914) p. 587.
[182] H.R. Luard (ed.), Annales monastici II (Dunstable) (Rolls Series. London, 1866) p. 40.
[183] W. Stubbs (ed.), revised H.W.C. Davis, Select charters (9th ed. Oxford, 1913) pp. 282-4. For the universal grant of freedom of election, see D. Knowles, The monastic order in England: A history of its development from the times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 940-1216 (2nd ed. Cambridge,

several women who were nuns at Barking. John wrote to the abbey in January 1214 suggesting that Sarah de Walebr', a nun at the abbey, should be elected abbess if the abbey wished to maintain its friendly relationship with the king, a slightly veiled threat; 'Rogamus vos attencius quatinus dominam Sarram de Walebr' monialem et sororem vestram in Abbatissam vobis preficiatis, preces nostras ita efficaciter exaudientes, sicut volueritis nos preces vestras in agendis vestris expediendis exaudire et libertates vestras ubique defendere et manutenere'.[184] The nuns could elect whomsoever they wished, as long as it was the king's suggested candidate. This Sarah de Walebr', identified as 'monialem et sororem vestram', was perhaps the Sarah Walbrok whose obit is listed in the abbey's calendar on 9th April.[185] If so, it is possible that she was indeed elected but died soon after, for again in 1215 John wrote to Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester (1205-38) informing him that it was his duty to ensure the correct candidate was chosen;

> Mandatum est domine P. Wint[onensis] episcopo quod omnen curam et solicitudinem apponat ut amita Roberti de Ros monialem de Berking' promoveatur in Abbatissa ejusdem domus, et si hoc non potest quod soror Johannis de Bassingeburn', Priorissa de Elleschirch' promoveatur in Abbatissa, et si neutra illarum possit promoveri, quod priorissa ejusdem domus in Abbatissa promoveatur, et quod nullo modo permittat quod soror Roberti filii Walteri in Abbatissam ejusdem domus promoveatur.[186]

This letter gives the names of possible candidates as the aunt of Robert de Ros, the sister of John de Bassingburn and the unidentified prioress of Barking; the identification of Robert fitzWalter's sister is also significant.

1976) pp. 399-400.

[184] T.D. Hardy (ed.), Rotuli litterarum clausarum in Turri Londonensi asservati (2 vols. London, 1833-44) vol. 1 p. 181. 'We ask you most attentively to place in authority as your abbess Sarah de Walbr', nun and your sister, hearing our prayers so effectively as you wish us to hear yours in expediting your business and defending and maintaining your liberties everywhere'; translated in J. Ward (ed. and trans), Women of the English nobility and gentry 1066-1500 (Manchester Medieval Studies Series vol. 7. Manchester, 1995) p. 209.

[185] Ordinale I, p. 4.

[186] T.D. Hardy (ed.), Rotuli chartarum in Turri Londinensi asservati (London, 1837) p. 202. 'Lord P[eter] Bishop of Winchester is ordered to apply all care and solicitude so that the aunt of Robert de Ros, nun at Barking, be promoted as abbess there, and, if this cannot be done, that the sister of John de Bassingeburn, prioress of 'Elleschirch' [Elstow?] be promoted as abbess, and if neither of them can be promoted, that the prioress of Barking be promoted as abbess, and that you do not allow the sister of Robert fitzWalter to be promoted as abbess there'; translation from Ward, Women of the English nobility, p. 209.

Two of the women named in John's letter of 1215 were related to important rebels against the king, Robert de Ros and Robert fitzWalter, although Robert de Ros had been a member of the king's party. Robert de Ros was clearly a royal favourite at the time John intervened in the election at Barking, since his unnamed aunt was the king's first choice candidate as abbess, and in 1214 he had been referred to by the king as 'dilecto nostro'.[187] By 1216, however, Robert de Ros had rebelled against the king, and had his lands removed by royal decree.[188] John de Bassingeburn must have been another favourite with the king, since his unnamed sister was nominated to be moved from her own abbey (possibly Elstow) to Barking if Robert de Ros' aunt could not be elected. Indeed, in 1212 we note that John was holding Hereford Castle, which had been confiscated from Robert fitzWalter.[189] Robert fitzWalter was one of King John's bitterest enemies, and a key member of the group of barons who forced Magna Carta on the king.[190] John was in no way willing to allow a relative of one of his enemies to be placed in power over such an important abbey as Barking. It is thus very interesting to note that Robert fitzWalter was married to a relative of Adelidis fitzJohn, Abbess of Barking from 1138 to 1166.

[187] Hardy, Rotuli chartarum. p. 207.
[188] Hardy, Rotuli chartarum. p. 246.
[189] Loftus and Chettle, p. 31.
[190] J.C. Holt, Magna Carta (2nd ed. Cambridge, 1992) pp. 226, 478.

Chapter 4: Patrons in the tenth and eleventh centuries

The previous chapter discussed the history of Barking as seen from within, and
identified those women who were members of the abbey and described their actions and
influence over the community. I will now turn to the relationships Barking had with the
outside world, and identify the people who chose to associate themselves with the abbey
as benefactors. Many of them were known at a local level, and occur exclusively in the
Barking source material and only on rare occasions in documents relating to other Essex
religious houses; it is hard to establish anything more about them outside the context of
Barking Abbey. A few were noblemen, and occasionally noblewomen, who can be
more easily identified through their appearances in other sources such as chronicles or
royal charters. Their associations with the abbey are particularly interesting, as certain
families appear in a chronologically long range of records relating to the abbey, which
suggests a long-standing loyalty to and friendship with the house. It is also interesting to
analyse the particular choices families made in their religious patronage; in many cases
individuals gave to a wide range of religious communities and orders, so the choice of
Barking is especially interesting. It may be that these donors wished to give to as many
different religious orders as possible, to maximise the variety of intercessions made on
their behalf to God. It is also possible, however, that Barking's eminent history and
prestigious status in comparison to other nunneries made it the only suitable choice for a
noble family.[1]

By emphasising the continuity in patterns of donation, I hope to show that in the context
of patronage, the political events of 1066 were not a dividing line in the case of Barking
Abbey. The Norman holders of Anglo-Saxon estates appear to have inherited not only
the land, but in several cases also the religious loyalties of the previous owners; in at
least one case, the twelfth-century holders of an estate with pre-Conquest connections to
Barking made gifts to the abbey in their own time. I will firstly discuss the evidence
relating to Barking as a double monastery, since I believe its pre-Viking age origins

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[1] The motivations of donor families are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7 below.

were a very important factor in Barking's wealth and status from the tenth century onwards, and are thus of considerable relevance to this study. For the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries I discuss royal and aristocratic benefactors separately; I hope to show that royal giving to the abbey was of great influence in making aristocratic donors interested in the abbey, and through attracting the emulation of those who wished to show their loyalty to the crown by supporting the royally-favoured religious communities. I have deliberately not used 1066 as a division in the narrative, because the evidence shows that Anglo-Saxon patrons maintained their links to the abbey until the late eleventh century, if not longer, with at least one generation after the Norman Conquest showing significant patronage from Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. I will thus discuss the tenth and eleventh centuries together, and show that Anglo-Saxon patronage did not simply end in 1066.

I will argue that the incidence of patronage and the factors influencing that patronage remained similar from Barking's re-emergence as a nunnery in the mid-tenth century until 1200, the end of the period of this study. The supposed 'great divide' of 1066 may have meant a gradual change in the nationality of donors from Anglo-Saxon to Norman and Anglo-Norman, but the social standing of these donors remained similar; Barking attracted donations from the royal family and members of the upper local aristocracy, frequently the same families whose daughters entered the abbey. The transition from Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman donors was a slow process, and by the early twelfth century donors with Anglo-Norman names were beginning to appear in the Barking sources.[2] By the mid-twelfth century the abbey appears to have established its position as an important nunnery for both royal and noble benefactors, and its wealth continued to grow with small donations made by local freemen. Some of these men and women had links to other local religious houses, but for many the connection did not extend further than Essex.

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[2] On the slow replacement of Anglo-Saxon benefactors with Norman figures, see for example E. Cownie, 'Religious patronage at post-Conquest Bury St Edmunds', Haskins Society Journal 7 (1995) pp. 1-9, and her book Religious patronage in Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1135 (London, 1998), and on a nunnery, K. Cooke, 'Donors and daughters: Shaftesbury Abbey's benefactors, endowments and nuns c.1086-1130', ANS 12 (1989) pp. 29-45

a) Early patrons

While they fall outside the date range of this study, I believe a brief discussion of the
pre-Viking age benefactors to Barking Abbey as a double houses is useful to give a
context to the later history of the house. We are extremely fortunate that several early
charters from this period of the abbey's history survive, to add further detail to Bede's
narrative, and give an indication of the interest the abbey was attracting from royal and
noble donors in its earliest days. Until recently only three extant charters describing the
abbey's early benefactors were known. These charters describe the grants and gifts
being made at the date of each charter's composition, while one also contains
confirmations of the gifts recited in the other two. Bede informs us that Erkenwald
founded Barking before he was made Bishop of London in c.675, and all three charters
are from after this date; we do not have a 'foundation charter' as such, but records of
gifts made at later dates to support the young community.[3] The three texts are known as
Erkenwald's charter (British Museum MS Cotton Vespasian A ix ff.112-3, S. 1246,
dated to 687), Hodilred's charter (British Museum MS Cotton Augustus ii 29, an
original seventh century charter, S. 1171, dated to c.685-7) and the Battersea charter
(Westminster Abbey Muniments I, S. 1248, dated 13th June 693) and all three have
complex histories.[4] The history and dating of these three deeds was discussed in
Chapter 2 above, and it will suffice here to say that they are believed to be generally
authentic, based on genuine material if not themselves original texts, and that the
information contained in them dates to the last third of the seventh century.[5] Recently
these three charters have been supplemented by two further late seventh-century
charters in the Ilford Cartulary (Hatfield House, MS Ilford Hospital 1/6, f.15v), which

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[3] See V.H. Galbraith, 'Monastic foundation charters', Cambridge Historical Journal 4 (1934) pp. 205-222,
for the argument that many early 'foundation charters' were in fact a record made some years into the
existence of an institution, after a religious community had received its key endowments, marking the fact
that it was strong enough to be considered a permanent institution and require a charter confirming its
lands.
[4] A detailed discussion of all three can be found in ECBA. and their dates are discussed at pp. 12-14
(Erkenwald's charter), 30-31 (Hodilred's charter), and 25-6 (the Battersea charter). See however D.
Whitelock, English historical documents I c.500-1042 (2nd ed. London 1979) p. 486 for Hodilred's
charter, and M. Gelling (ed.), Early charters of the Thames Valley (Leicester, 1979) no. 310 (Erkenwald's
charter) and 313 (the Battersea charter) which dispute their various authenticities.
[5] See pp. 32-4 above.

together suggest that the early abbey may have been sufficiently wealthy and powerful to found a dependent cell within 30 years of its own foundation.

The first patrons of the abbey were kings and bishops, who gave lands to Bishop Erkenwald of London (c.675-90), the founder of both Barking and a monastery at Chertsey, to be transmitted to the community he had founded. Erkenwald's own charter stated 'I transfer to you all the lands which have been conceded to me by the gifts of kings in the name of this monastery, so that you shall enjoy them lawfully and in peace, intact and in the same state as they were given, as set out in the charters of donation', showing that he was not the primary donor but the intermediary through which the lands were transmitted.[6] Erkenwald appears to have encouraged two separate kings each to endow one of his two monasteries, with King Egbert of Kent (664-673) supporting the foundation of Chertsey and King Suebred of Essex (c.694-before 709) providing the endowment for Barking.[7] This geographical focus would have been important in gaining the protection of each king for the new monasteries. It also allowed the kings the opportunity to show their dedication to the Christian religion, still young and perhaps insecure in Essex which had been converted only as recently as 653 under King Sigeberht (c.653-664) .[8] The land upon which Barking Abbey was sited was given by Suebred, son of King Sebbi of Essex (c.664-c.694), comprising 40 *cassatae* in Barking and *Beddanhaam,* granted to Erkenwald for the use of the abbey he was founding for his sister Ethelburga.[9] Barking and *Beddanhaam* appear to have been synonymous, perhaps referring to different localised areas of the same community; Hodilred's charter calls the abbey *Beddanhaam* rather than Barking.[10]

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[6] ECBA. pp. 9-11 gives the Latin text and the translation cited here.

[7] This is implied by the charter (S. 1165) of Frithewald, subregulus of King Wulfhere of the Mercians, which grants certain lands to Chertsey 'for increasing the monastery which was first constructed under King Egbert'; Whitelock, English historical documents. no. 54 p. 479.

[8] Bede, book 3 chapter 22. See also J. Campbell, The Anglo-Saxons (Oxford, 1992) pp. 45-6

[9] This gift is recited in Erkenwald's charter, and Hart suggests that it was made at around the same time as the foundation of Chertsey in 666; ECEss. p. 9.

[10] ECBA. p. 28.

Hart suggests that Suebred's gift of lands at Barking and *Beddanhaam* was made in 666, assuming that Barking and Chertsey were founded simultaneously.[11] I am not convinced by this assumption, and suggest that Barking was in fact not founded until some years later. Suebred's status at the time of his donation is unclear; he is called 'Suidfrido regis' in Erkenwald's charter. Confusingly, Suebred and his brother Sigiheard and his father Sebbi all refer to themselves as 'rex' in the charter. The chronology of their reigns is not entirely clear, as it seems that Sigiheard and Suebred ruled together (c. 694-709). It is likely that the 'King Suebred' of Erkenwald's charter of 687 was known by an honorific title, rather than actual ruler over the kingdom.[12]

I suggest that Erkenwald founded the monastery at Chertsey, on the border between Surrey and Kent, as his first action as religious patron, since Christianity was more secure in that part of the country and a religious house there was more likely to survive, and that he subsequently used that community to raise interest in the possible foundation of a double house elsewhere in the country.[13] We should consider that King Sebbi's reign as king of Essex also included a short period of control over Kent, and that his third son Swæfheard was ruler of Kent in the late 680's-early 690's.[14] I propose that Sebbi's family may have taken an interest in the religious activities occurring in Kent and encouraged similar activities in their own kingdom of Essex. Further, I suggest that Erkenwald may have discussed the possibility of founding a double house with these men, and that Suebred offered land at Barking; Erkenwald grasped the opportunity, and placed the house on an available endowment of land. Erkenwald's charter confirming the initial grants to Barking was composed and witnessed in 687, referring to his visit to Rome approximately ten years previously when Pope Agatho (678-81) had approved the earliest grants made to the abbey.[15] As Hart suggests, the apparent discrepancy in dates need not detract from the evidence of

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[11] ECBA, p. 5
[12] The complex history of the Kings of Essex is discussed in B. Yorke, 'The kingdom of the East Saxons', ASE 14 (1985) pp. 1-36. For Sebbi, Suebred and Sigiheard see Figure 1, p. 17, and pp. 20-2, 29, 33.
[13] Kent had been the first kingdom to receive Augustine's mission, and the establishment of the bishopric of Canterbury gave the faith a safe base in Kent; Campbell, The Anglo-Saxons. p. 45.
[14] Yorke, 'Kingdom of the East Saxons', pp. 17, 21, 29.
[15] 687 was in fact in the fifth indiction, not the first, but Hart suggests that this kind of confusion was

the charter itself; it is possible that Erkenwald went to Rome in 677, and remained until 678 when Agatho was consecrated. I propose that this chronology implies Barking was founded between 666 and 675 (between the foundation of Chertsey and Erkenwald's appointment as Bishop of London) and probably towards the end of that range of dates, upon lands given by King Suebred, and that his gift was confirmed by his father Sebbi and brother Sigiheard in 687.

After Suebred's initial donation, the abbey attracted a number of gifts from other kings and nobles, whose donations were recorded in Hodilred's charter and the Battersea charter, and recited in Erkenwald's charter. We should note here that the discussion in Erkenwald's charter of certain gifts being confirmed by Pope Agatho can only refer to those granted before 678, the date of Agatho's consecration and the approximate date of Erkenwald's visit to Rome. I shall discuss these gifts first, then the other grants made after 678 which Erkenwald also included in his confirmation charter. An early supporter of both of Erkenwald's foundations was King Wulfhere of Mercia (657-674) who according to Erkenwald's charter granted a *manens* of land near London to Barking. He had also confirmed the gift by his subregulus Frithewald of lands to Chertsey, suggesting a precedent for involvement with Erkenwald's religious activity.[16] King Æthelred of Mercia (674 –704), successor to Wulfhere, made two separate gifts. The first was of 53 *manentes* at Isleworth (Surrey). The second was 40 *cassatae* at Swanscombe and Erith (Kent), which may at the time have been under the control of Suebred of Essex, since after his invasion of Kent, Æthelred granted control of part of the kingdom to Suebred.[17] If this is the case, it is possible that Suebred encouraged Æthelred to give lands to Barking, and persuaded him to grant estates already administered by the King of Essex, meaning the local ruler (Suebred himself) would be able to protect them on behalf of the nunnery.[18] The last donor in this first group is the

common in early charters. ECBA. p. 9.

[16] S. 69, W.G. Birch, Cartularium Saxonicum vol. 3 (London, 1893) no. 33. Frithewald's own gift is S. 1165, Birch no. 34.

[17] Yorke, 'Kingdom of the East Saxons', p. 29.

[18] Isleworth had belonged to Earl Alfgar *tempore regis Edwardi*, and in 1086 it belonged to Walter of St Valery. The Bishop of Bayeux owned Swanscombe, with no record of the previous holder. Erith is not recorded in the Domesday Book. DB vol.I, fols. 6, 130.

first female benefactor of Barking Abbey, a woman named Quoengyth, who granted 10 *manentes* in some unidentified part of London.[19] She is named in the charter as the wife of '...ald'; the antiquary John Joscelyn who made the sixteenth century transcription of the original charter was unable to make out her husband's name. Nevertheless, it shows is that women too were taking an interest in the early community, and granting lands to a double house may have been the only way to support the female religious life at the time.

The later gifts to Barking are recorded independently as well as in the confirmation section of Erkenwald's charter. King Cædwalla of Wessex (685-688) gave 68 *cassatae* at Battersea in Surrey, a gift which was confirmed by King Æthelred of Mercia (674-704) in the Battersea charter.[20] Since Cædwalla did not become king until 685, we must assume that his gift was one of those which was added to the earliest benefactions but not confirmed by Pope Agatho in 678. The lands later passed out of the abbey's hands, and were part of the royal estates in 1066. Domesday Book records that King Harold held 72 hides at Battersea, while the Battersea charter refers to a gift of 68 *cassatae*, and Erkenwald's charter to 70 *manentes*; it is very likely that these refer to the same estate.[21] King William I gave the estate to Westminster Abbey, hence the survival of the Battersea charter in their muniments.[22] Hodilred, a man who is unknown outside the context of Barking Abbey, gave a total of 40 *manentes* spread across Barking, Dagenham, Wyfields and the unidentified locations named *Ricingahaam* and *Angenlabesham*; the same lands were listed as covering 65 hides in Erkenwald's charter, although this is a later transcription and may be incorrect.[23] Hodilred's charter listing these gifts bears the signs of three kings of Essex, Sebbi and his two sons Sigiheard and Suebred, as well as Bishop Erkenwald himself, suggesting that Hodilred

[19] ECBA. pp. 17-18.
[20] This gift is confirmed in the Battersea charter (dated to 693), the complex history of which is discussed in ECBA. pp. 19-26, and see also pp. 33-4 above. The donation is mentioned in Erkenwald's summary charter as a gift of 70 *manentes*.
[21] DB vol. I, fol. 32 and see ECBA. pp. 9, 20 for Erkenwald's charter and the Battersea charter.
[22] RRAN I, no. 45
[23] Hodilred's charter, being an original, may be considered more reliable than the 16th-century transcription of Erkenwald's charter; see the facsimile of Hodilred's charter, ECBA, facing p. 27. ECBA, pp. 36-44 discusses the locations of these settlements.

may have been an important Essex nobleman. As Yorke points out, the amount of land given in his grant was considerable, and he is identified as Hodilred 'parens Sebbi', suggesting he may have been related to the royal family; we cannot be certain of this, but he was certainly a wealthy man.[24] Hodilred also gave 10 *manentes* called *Celta*, which may have been close to the manors of Warley and Bulphan owned by the nunnery in 1086; if so, this would be one of the longest lasting endowments in the abbey's history.[25]

The interest taken in Barking by King Sebbi and his sons Suebred and Sigiheard appears to have been remarkably keen. Two charters of Suebred recently discovered in the Ilford Cartulary show that he may also have provided the land for the foundation of a dependent cell of the abbey at Nazeing. In the first charter Suebred granted a certain religious woman named Fymme 30 *manentes* of land at Nazeing, approximately 15 miles north of Barking, in order to found 'a house of God' (*domum Dei*) or otherwise to devote her life to the service of God.[26] The second charter is similar, granting to Fymme 'for the same use' a further 10 manentes at *Ettunende Obre*, which Bascombe suggests might be Roydon, next to Nazeing, although this is a tentative identification.[27] Both charters can be dated only to 693x709, the dates of Suebred's reign. The charter granting land at *Ettunende Obre* is witnessed by a long list of people including Sigiheard, Suebred's brother and co-regent, a woman named Eadburga, and significantly, a man named Hodilred. It is very likely that this Hodilred was the same man who granted land to Barking himself, and whose charter was confirmed in Erkenwald's charter.

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[24] Yorke, 'Kingdom of the East Saxons', p. 21.

[25] ECBA. p. 35-6 suggests that *Celta* was a stream flowing through the parish of Childerditch. The parishes of Bulphan and Warley both border this parish, suggesting the identification of *Celta* with Childerditch is likely.

[26] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 15v, S 65a, Hart, Charters. no. 3; Calendar, no. 1. Printed with translation in Bascombe, pp. 86-7. This charter and Suebred's second charter to Fymme are discussed briefly in Lockwood, pp. 11-13

[27] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 15v, S 65b, Hart, Charters. no. 4; Calendar, no. 2. Printed with translation in Bascombe, pp. 86-7. He suggests the identification of *Ettunende Obre* with Roydon at pp. 92-3.

The presence of a woman in the witness list of Suebred's second charter to Fymme is very interesting. It is possible that this woman named Eadburga was the same Eadburga, abbess of Minster in Thanet who in 716 received a letter from Boniface mentioning a vision he had been informed about by Hildelith, then abbess of Barking.[28] She may also perhaps be identifiable with another Eadburga, possibly connected with Wimborne, who corresponded with Boniface.[29] Yorke has recently suggested that the religious communities instituted by Erkenwald may have influenced the growth of women's monasticism in Wessex.[30] The presence of Eadburga of Wimborne as witness to a Barking charter would certainly support this theory; Yorke does not refer to the Nazeing charter witnessed by Eadburga, so does not make this connection. Archaeological evidence points to the existence of some form of community at Nazeing in the late seventh and early eighth century, shown by the skeletons of a large number of women who had not gone through childbirth.[31] If this community represented the 'domum Dei' of Fymme, founded on lands given by Suebred, it is possible that she was indeed setting up a cell of Barking Abbey in the early years after its own foundation. This possibility deserves further investigation, as it would suggest that the early nunnery at Barking was much more wealthy and secure in its endowment than previously suggested. It must be acknowledged, however, that none of the extant material emanating from Barking itself, such as the texts by Goscelin of St-Bertin on the saints of the pre-Viking institution, make any reference to a cell at Nazeing; it may be that it was only short-lived.[32]

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[28] See p. 51 above.

[29] B. Yorke, 'The Bonifacian mission and female religious in Wessex', Early Medieval Europe 7 (1998) pp. 145-72 at pp. 150-2 for Eadburga of ?Wimborne.

[30] Yorke, 'The Bonifacian mission', p. 163 for the possible influence of Barking over Wessex religious life.

[31] Huggins, 'Nazeingbury twenty years on', and see also Bascombe, p. 89.

[32] On the loss of early memories of religious communities, see S. Foot, 'Remembering, forgetting and inventing: Attitudes to the past in England and the end of the first Viking age', TRHS 6th ser. 9 (1999) pp. 185-200, which argues that the lack of evidence surrounding pre-Viking age religious communities for women was not the sign of deliberate 'forgetting' by later writers, but a reflection of the increased vulnerability of women's communities to attack, and thus a greater loss of their means of corporate memory.

b) Royal patrons

The 're-foundation' of Barking Abbey has often been ascribed to King Edgar (959-75) and the religious reform movement he sponsored, but this assumption is not accurate.[33] Firstly, the suggestion that there was a formalised 're-foundation' of the nunnery assumes that all activity there was completely extinguished during the years of Viking raids, and that the community was restarted from nothing by a new founder. I would argue that the reappearance of religious life on exactly the same site as that where it had previously occurred suggests that there was if not complete continuity then at least a kind of localised memory and commemoration of the old double house, based around its saints Ethelburga and Hildelith who were buried there.[34] Indeed, William of Malmesbury suggests that it was thanks to the prayers of those saints that 'the convent was never completely destroyed'.[35] Secondly, there was considerable evidence for the abbey's existence before Edgar succeeded to the throne of England, suggesting he could not have been the founder but certainly could have been a donor. The assignation to Edgar is based on Goscelin of St-Bertin's statement that Edgar 'gave' the nunnery to St Wulfhilda and thus it has been assumed that he was also the founder.[36] All Goscelin notes for Edgar in the realm of benefaction is a rather imprecise statement, not corroborated by charter evidence or notes in any Barking documents, claiming that he returned it to the great and glorious state of the days of St Ethelburga.[37]

The first royal figure to take an interest in the nascent nunnery at Barking was in fact Edgar's predecessor King Eadred (946-55). Three new charters of King Eadred dating between 946 and 950 show him granting estates which in 1086 were recorded as having always belonged to the abbey, while a fourth charter is the first to name the community

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[33] See for example Fowler, 'Barking Abbey', and B. Venarde, Women's monasticism and medieval society: Nunneries in France and England, 890-1215 (London, 1997) p. 26. More thorough recent histories have taken into account the wills of Ælfgar and his daughters, which are discussed below.
[34] On the survival of memories of pre-Viking religious communities, see Foot, 'Remembering, forgetting and inventing'.
[35] William of Malmesbury, Gesta pontificum, p. 144: Preest, Deeds of the bishops of England, p. 94.
[36] VStW, p. 423.
[37] VStW, p.423.

at Barking formally (the latter is discussed separately below).[38] The first charter, dated 946, granted 4 hides at Tollesbury in Essex to 'cuidam sancte monialis femine vocitate nomine Ethelgife', a religious woman named Æthelgifu.[39] The second, also dated 946, makes a similar grant of 19 hides at Hockley in Essex to 'cuidam religiose sanctae conversacionis moniali femine vocitato nomine Eawynne'.[40] These two estates found their way into the hands of Barking Abbey by the eleventh century, with Domesday Book listing a holding of seven and a half hides at Hockley and 8 hides at Tollesbury, both of which had been held always.[41] I suggest that the two women named Æthelgifu and Eawynne were amongst the first members of an informal gathering of women on the site of the old double monastery, who gathered endowments until they were materially secure enough to identify themselves as a community.[42] The third charter of this period, dated 947, records Eadred's grant to his 'faithful minister' Ælfstan of an estate of 17 *manentes* at Wigborough; by 1086 Barking held 11 ½ hides there.[43] It is not obvious if Ælfstan subsequently granted part of the estate given to him by King Eadred to the abbey, but he seems to have shown an interest in the king's grants to religious women. The witness list to Æthelgifu's charter 'Elstan minister'; we might identify this man as the Ælfstan who received lands from the king. Interestingly, we should note also that Ælfstan's own charter from the king was witnessed by Eadgifu, 'eiusdem regis mater', that is, the mother of King Eadred. She witnessed frequently as Queen Mother, and the pattern of her witnessing is significant. Stafford notes that between 940 and 946 she 'appeared overwhelmingly in charters granting land to ecclesiastics rather than laypeople'; this grant to a layman from 947 would fit this pattern.[44] Stafford also

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[38] Ilford Cartulary, fols. 17v-18v, S. 517a, 517b, 522a, 552a; 17v-18, S. 552a; Hart, Charters. nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9; Calendar, nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7.

[39] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 18v, S. 517a; Hart, Charters. no. 7; Calendar, no. 5. Tollesbury is around 40 miles north-east of Barking. The charter itself refers to 'Tollesfuntum', which could be either Tollesbury or Tolleshunt (also in Essex), as noted in Veiled women II p. 31 and Hart, notes to Charters. no. 7. There are no records of the abbey ever holding lands at Tolleshunt, so the association between Barking Abbey and Æthelgifu's estate at Tollesbury seems more likely.

[40] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 18v, S. 517b, Hart, Charters. no. 6; Calendar, no. 4. Hockley is around 30 miles east of Barking.

[41] DB vol. II, fol. 18b

[42] Veiled women II. p. 31 points out that these women may have had no connection with the abbey; nonetheless, the fact that their lands found their way into the abbey's estates should be noted.

[43] Ilford Cartulary ff.15v-16r, S. 522a: Hart, Charters. no. 8; Calendar, no. 6.

[44] Stafford, pp. 199-204, at p. 203.

suggests that Eadgifu was more commonly present as witness to deeds which concerned royal lands associated with the queen, and that her witness was needed to grant authority to any charter concerning such lands; might it be that Wigborough had at one time been associated with the queen?[45]

An earlier grant copied into the Ilford Cartulary which should be mentioned at this stage is slightly out of place amongst the other charters associated with Barking Abbey. In 932 King Æthelstan (924-40) granted to Abbot Beorhtsige a total of 10 hides of land at *Bura*, perhaps Bowers Gifford in Essex some twenty miles to the east of Barking, near to the estates it later owned at Horndon and Bulphan.[46] This charter was witnessed at Exeter by the archbishops of York and Canterbury, and a further seventeen bishops, all but four of whom can be identified, suggesting that it may have been written at one of the church councils which Æthelstan held regularly.[47] The only figure currently known with this name is the Beorhtsige who was bishop of Rochester between 946x9 and 955x64. Since there were only some ten monasteries in existence at the time of Æthelstan's charter, he must have been abbot of one of these houses; five abbots witnessed the charter.[48] The manor of Bowers Gifford belonged to the brothers of Westminster Abbey by 1066, but it is not clear when they were given; perhaps Beorhtsige himself made a grant soon after receiving the lands from the king.[49] That this charter was preserved in the Ilford cartulary suggests the lands may have belonged to Barking Abbey at some point before 1066, but no further details can be established.

After three grants made to persons possibly associated with Barking, the first example of a royal donation to nunnery in its modern form occurred in 950, when King Eadred gave 8 *manentes* at *Lippanwelle* and *Ciricdune* (neither have yet been identified) to

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[45] Stafford, pp. 202-3.
[46] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 16rv, S. 418a; Hart, Charters no. 5; Calendar, no. 3. This charter is discussed briefly in S. Keynes, 'Regenbald the chancellor (sic)', ASE 10 (1987) pp. 185-222 at p. 186 n. 4.
[47] F. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England (3rd ed. Oxford, 1971) pp. 349-52, and map p. 350.
[48] This number is taken from the list in MRH. pp. 52-8 (post-Viking re-foundation dates before 930).
[49] They held 50 acres there, while smaller portions were also held by Ranulf Peverel, Walter the Deacon and Grim the Reeve: DB vol. II, fols. 14, 71b, 86, 98.

what was now called a 'monastice conversationis familia in bercingum'.[50] This began a long and distinguished association between successive royal houses and the abbey of Barking. This close connection may have developed for two reasons. Firstly, Barking Abbey was the only nunnery in Essex in the tenth century, and thus had something of a captive audience of potential benefactors. Secondly, and perhaps more significant over the long term, its earlier associations with the mid-Saxon royal family meant there was a precedent for royal giving, encouraging later kings and queens to emulate the religious patronage of their predecessors as a way to identify with the status and legitimacy of those predecessors. We should recall as well that Barking was the only one of the double monasteries to be revived in the tenth century as a community for women; this made it the only community available as recipient of patronage for those individuals who wished to both identify with earlier royal donors, and simultaneously support female religious life.[51]

After the donations made by Eadred, we are told that Edgar involved himself in the affairs of the house, restoring it to its former glory although not, we note, leaving any lasting land donations.[52] Indeed, there is no evidence of direct donation to Barking by any of the last Anglo-Saxon kings of England. This may simply be because of a lack of surviving evidence; of those kings who left substantial charter evidence as noted in Sawyer's handlist, there are only four charters of Æthelred to nunneries, none survive from the reigns of Cnut or Harthacnut, and Edward the Confessor appears to have made only one grant to a nunnery, and that was simply a grant of privileges to Horton, not land.[53] There are two further grants of King Æthelstan recorded in the Ilford Cartulary,

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[50] Ilford Cartulary, fols. 17v-18, S. 552a; Hart, Charters. no. 9; Calendar, no. 7.

[51] This simple fact is often overlooked, yet its importance is vital to any study of the history of Barking; Yorke, for example, states "none of [the double monasteries] survived on any scale as nunneries into the later Saxon period when the kings of Wessex became kings of England, and none of them appear as nunneries in the Domesday book". Yorke, ' "Sisters under the skin?"' p. 97. She does state that her study is limited to only those houses south of the River Thames, but to exclude Barking simply because it lay a few miles north of the river removes the opportunity for a very valuable comparative study. For a clear illustration of Barking's geographical uniqueness as a surviving house, see Gilchrist, Gender and material culture. figs. 2 and 3, pp. 26 and 27. These illustrate "Distribution of Saxon double houses" and "Distribution of Saxon nunneries", and Barking is the only house to appear in both diagrams.

[52] VStW. chap. 4.

[53] S. 850, 881, 899, 904 (Æthelred to Shaftesbury, Wilton, Shaftesbury again and Wherwell), and S.1032 (Edward to Horton). For Shaftesbury, see however S. Kelly, Charters of Shaftesbury Abbey (Anglo-

however, which should be noted. In two charters of 1013 King Æthelstan gave his minister Sigered an estate of twenty hides at Hatfield Broad Oak, and five hides at Horndon (both in Essex) [54] These estates belonged to the king and Swein of Essex respectively in 1086, and do not appear to have been owned by Barking Abbey before the Conquest.[55] Later evidence, however, suggests that the abbey had an interest in these manors. According to the lists of property owned by the house in 31-32 Henry VIII, Barking received income from the farm of Hatfield 'Bradocke alias Hatfield Regis', and from the farm of the rectory of Horndon.[56] Indeed, in 1291 the abbey is listed in the Taxation of Pope Nicholas as receiving income from the parish of Abbess Roding, close to Hatfield Broad Oak, and also from Mucking, which was the parish neighbouring Horndon.[57] The abbey owned lands at Mucking in 1086, and had owned certain lands at Abbess Roding which Geoffrey de Mandeville had appropriated but returned soon after.[58] Of course, receipt of the ecclesiastical income of a church does not always mean the ownership of lands there as well. Nevertheless, it is possible that this is the reason the nunnery preserved records relating to the estates granted to Sigered; they wished to show that they were associated with those estates and the earliest owners of them.

Despite the lack of records showing grants made to Barking by the late Anglo-Saxon kings, it would be reasonable to assume that some of these kings did make grants to the abbey. By the time of the Domesday survey the abbey owned estates in Essex, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Surrey, Middlesex and the city of London, with a total

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Saxon Charters vol. 5. London, 1996) which notes a new grant of Cnut to the abbey, no. 30.
[54] Ilford Cartulary, fols. 16v-17r, S. 931a and 931b; Hart, Charters, nos. 10 and 11; Calendar, nos. 8 and 9. See also the comment in Keynes, 'Regenbald the chancellor (sic)', p. 186 n. 7.
[55] Swein of Essex held 5 hides at Horndon which can probably be identified with this estate. DB vol. II, fol. 42. The king held 20 hides at Hatfield: DB vol. II, fol. 2.
[56] List of the lands of dissolved religious houses, Bedfordshire – Huntingdonshire (Public Record Office Lists and Indexes SS 3. London, 1964) pp. 145-6.
[57] Taxatio ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate P. Nicholai IV c. 1291 (London 1802) pp. 24-5.
[58] Mucking, DB vol. II, fol. 17b. DB vol. II, fol. 57b notes [Abbess] Roding was held by Geoffrey de Mandeville, but 'This land was in the possession of the abbey of Barking, as the hundred testifies, but he who held this land was only the man of Geoffrey's predecessor and could not put this land in the possession of anyone but the abbey': translation from A. Williams and G.H. Martin (eds. and trans.), Domesday Book (London, 2002) p. 1012.

value of around £165.[59] Some of these estates may have been given by modest local benefactors, but the considerable wealth the abbey owned, making it the third richest nunnery in 1086, suggests that some substantial gifts had been made by what must have been rich and generous donors.[60] Foot argues that the evidence suggests that Barking lay 'at the margins of royal concern', meaning the lack of royal donations signalled a lack of interest from the Wessex-based royal house, and this may be true for the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.[61] I would strike a note of caution, however, and point out that none of the other major Wessex nunneries appear to have been especially well-patronised by the royal family; they certainly lack charter material in the same way as Barking.[62]

The paucity of evidence of royal donations to Barking between the late tenth and early twelfth centuries should not be taken as a sign that royal involvement with the house faded during these years; Barking remained part of the royal sphere of activity, if not as beneficiary then as host to the kings' court. William the Conqueror set up camp at Barking in the winter of 1066/7 during the construction of the Tower of London, and it would be reasonable to assume that he would have used the convenient buildings of the abbey as host, and confirmed the abbey's land and privileges in return for this hospitality. [63] We should consider, however, that the nuns themselves supposedly took refuge within the city walls of London at the same time; there need not have been any direct contact between the abbey and the new king.[64] The absence of evidence of royal donations in the mid-eleventh century does not mean that none were made; if we

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[59] W. Sturman, 'Barking Abbey', p. 38 gives a figure of £162.19s.8d, while Crick, p.162 suggests a total of £168.4s.4d; there are a variety of methods for calculating Domesday values. The exact value is not as important here as the fact that the abbey was the third richest of the nunneries, and wealthier than half of the male religious houses. See also Appendix 2, Barking's estates in 1086.

[60] Crick, Table 1 pp. 162-3. Barking was around £100 poorer than Wilton and Shaftesbury, but in turn it was nearly twice as rich as Romsey and the Nunnaminster, and Wherwell, Amesbury and Chatteris brought up the rear with estates worth below c. £50.

[61] Veiled women II, p. 33

[62] The majority of evidence for Wilton, for example, comes from the life of St Edith rather than charter material, and that for Romsey from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; see Veiled women II, s.n. Wilton, Romsey. None of the nunneries are well-documented in charter material, meaning it is sometimes necessary to rely on narrative sources which can be less objectively accurate.

[63] William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi. pp. 160-2.

[64] VStE. p. 416.

compare Barking's lands described in the Domesday survey in 1086 with those for which we have documentary evidence before that date, of eighteen named estates we can link only one directly to Barking, and three indirectly.[65] Furthermore, since lands were appropriated from Barking in a further six estates, we may reasonably assume that they had been owned *tempore Regis Edwardi*.[66] King William I may have felt that his generosity in allowing religious communities to keep the majority of their estates was sufficient to exempt him from having to make any further grants to them. He also used lands as a political tool, granting estates to his Norman settlers in England in order to ensure their loyalty and to suppress the power of Anglo-Saxon landholders. This meant that religious houses were not the most important priority in his redistribution of lands after 1066. He confirmed the Abbess of Barking's rights and privileges, 'sicut umquam eas melius habuit altera abbatissa in isto monasterio sancte Marie in tempore Edwardi regis', as he did also for Peterborough Abbey, Bury St Edmunds, St Augustine's Canterbury, Chertsey and St. Peter's Westminster, to name only a few of the monastic houses.[67] There is no record of a similar confirmation to any of the other nunneries, but this may be a result of their being less well documented. It should be noted that neither William I nor William II made great numbers of land grants to the established English monastic houses and nunneries; the only grants to nunneries are considered spurious.[68]

William I's confirmation of rights for Barking concluded 'Et omnibus prohibeo tam francigenis quam anglis ut nullus ei iniuriam faciat. Et qui ei iniuriam fecerit michi fecerit', a phrase which suggests a protective attitude to the community. This may mean

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[65] If Hart is correct and the 'Budinhaam' of Erkenwald's charter can be identified with Barking itself, this is the only estate for which we have direct evidence of a gift to Barking; ECBA p. 37. Three others are mentioned in grants in the Ilford Cartulary but not as gifts to Barking itself (S. 517a, 517b, 522a); these are the estates at Tollesbury, Hockley and Wigborough granted to Eawynne, Ælfgifu and Ælfstan as discussed above pp. 95-6. See Appendix 2, Barking's estates in 1086.

[66] Geoffrey de Mandeville took away certain lands belonging to the abbey at Abbess Roding, which are not recorded as belonging to the abbey again until 1543, when the lists made of its lands after the surrender of the estates name two manors there; List of the lands of dissolved religious houses, p. 145 and DB vol. II fol. 57b. The following estates also suffered incursions: Bulphan (Ravengar took 24 acres); Mucking (Turold de Rochester took 30 acres); Tollesbury (Odo took 10 acres); Barking itself (Goscelin the Lorimer took 24 acres) and Stifford where William de Warenne held 30 acres which he claimed were by exchange. DB vol. II, fols. 17b – 18b.

[67] RRAN I, no. 8, 12, 13, 14, 17 etc. His charter to Barking is RRAN I, no. 240, Bates Regesta, no. 10.

[68] RRAN I, nos. 306 and 309, in favour of Armathwaite and Shaftesbury.

that it was granted during the early years of the reign, when incursions upon the lands of religious houses were a constant risk and the women themselves, Anglo-Saxons under a new Norman regime, may have felt particularly vulnerable. I propose it may have been during William's time at Barking in the winter of 1066/7 that he offered this protection to the nunnery, perhaps while the nuns were seeking refuge within the city of London. In the absence of the religious women themselves to provide a spiritual disincentive to potential aggressors, the king showed his strength by protecting the nunnery near to whose lands he was camped. This grant of protection was the only evidence of direct royal patronage of Barking during the decades immediately after the Norman Conquest; it was not until the twelfth century when the political situation had stabilised a little that royal grants were made again in significant numbers to religious communities.

c) Aristocratic patrons

i) The family of Ealdorman Ælfgar

Evidence of major benefactions to Barking Abbey in the late Anglo-Saxon period come almost exclusively from members of one family, the descendants of Ealdorman Ælfgar of Essex. The nature of the evidence here is somewhat limiting, since all we have by way of record is a set of wills, but these can nevertheless be extremely informative about family connections and loyalties. I will discuss this family first, covering the full chronological range of its involvement with the abbey, then give an account of the other donors known to have been involved in a concluding section. Since the surviving evidence relates almost entirely to this one family, it is easy to assume that they were the only donors; it is highly likely, however, that many other donors existed, for whom all evidence has been lost. I do not intend to over-emphasise the importance of this family, but nevertheless since they are the best recorded, and show extensive long-term commitment to the abbey, I believe they deserve a thorough analysis.[69] As Crick has

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[69] L. Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society II', British Journal of Sociology 9 (1958) pp. 359-77 gives an analysis of family relationships as shown by the evidence of wills such as these. See also M.A. Meyer, 'Land charters and the legal position of Anglo-Saxon women' in B. Kanner (ed.), The women of England from Anglo-Saxon times to the present: Interpretive bibliographical essays (London, 1980) pp.

pointed out, the nature of evidence was very different in East Anglia to Wessex, with wills surviving in greater numbers for the former and royal documents more numerous for the latter.[70] We should also bear in mind that while these wills signify intention, they should not be considered a record of events which subsequently took place; as we will see, Barking did not receive the lands intended for it.[71]

The most well known of the series of East Anglian wills are those wills of Ælfgar, Ealdorman of Essex, written in 946x51, and of his two daughters Æthelflæd (will dated to 975x91) and Ælfflæd (will dated to 1002).[72] Related to these are the two wills of Leofflæd (early eleventh century) and Thurstan (c.1043), which are less well known but equally important for the history of Barking.[73] These wills combine with information from a variety of narrative sources to give a detailed account of one family's connection to Barking Abbey over 5 generations, from Ælfgar before 946 to Thurstan in 1043.[74] This family was of great importance in East Anglia, firstly through Ælfgar's role as Ealdorman of Essex , and secondly through the two daughter's marriages. Æthelflæd was the second wife of King Edmund (939-46) and then herself married for a second time to Æthelstan 'Rota', the ealdorman of south-east Mercia. Ælfflæd, presumably the younger daughter since she is mentioned second in Ælfgar's will, married Byrhtnoth, the warrior hero of the Battle of Maldon in 991. Leofflæd and Thurstan were descendants of Byrhtnoth, but not from his marriage to Ælfflæd, although they appear to have adopted some of the patterns of patronage from the family of their step-mother. Byrhtnoth's descendants unsurprisingly had close links to Ely, but their connections to Barking are also significant.

57-82, which focuses particularly on women as holders of bookland from the king
[70] Crick, p. 164.
[71] J. Crick, 'Women, posthumous benefaction and family strategy in pre-Conquest England', Journal of British Studies 38 (1999) pp. 399-422 at p. 404.
[72] These three wills are printed and translated in Whitelock, nos. 2 (pp. 6-9), 14 (pp. 34-7) and 15 (pp. 38-43)
[73] Leofflæd's will is copied into the *Liber Eliensis*; E.O. Blake (ed.), Liber Eliensis (Camden 3rd ser. vol. 92. London, 1962) p. 83. Thurstan's will is Whitelock, no. 31, pp. 80-5
[74] The family is discussed in C. Hart, 'The Ealdordom of Essex' in K. Neale (ed.) An Essex Tribute: Essays presented to Frederick G. Emmison (London, 1987) pp. 57-84 esp. 66-73, and in M.A.L. Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth and his family' in D. Scragg (ed.), The Battle of Maldon AD 991 (Oxford, 1991) pp. 253-62. For Thurstan, see J.L. Fisher, 'Thurstan, son of Wine', TEAS NS 22 (1940) pp. 98-104.

The will of Ælfgar, written in 946x51, is well known as (until recently) the first source to mention the re-established tenth century religious community at Barking. In this will Ælfgar grants an estate at Baythorn to his daughter Æthelflæd, then to his second daughter Ælfflæd, and to any children they might have, and finally if neither daughter has any children, 'it is to go to St Mary's foundation at Barking for the souls of our ancestors'.[75] This occurrence of the nunnery is certainly one of the earliest, and the only text which may have predated it was the grant made by King Eadred, internally dated to 950, giving land to 'the monastic community at Barking'.[76] The other communities Ælfgar supported were major religious houses, both local and national, and a family foundation. The majority of his grants were lifetime grants to his daughters with reversion to the religious communities; Bury St Edmunds, Christ Church Canterbury, St Paul's London, a church in Mersea and the family foundation at Stoke were to receive lands or incomes directly, all for the sake of his family's souls.[77]

We may assume that Æthelflæd was Ælfgar's elder daughter, since she is the first to be mentioned in his own will, and by name, whereas Ælfflæd is described only as 'my other daughter'.[78] Æthelflæd's own will, written between 975 and 991, essentially follows her father's requests in directing the majority of estates to their intended religious recipients.[79] It is presumed that she wrote as a widow after the death of her

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[75] Whitelock, no. 2, pp. 6-9. All quotes from Ælfgar's will in succeeding paragraphs are taken from this edition.

[76] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 17v-18r, S. 552a; Calendar, no. 6

[77] The exact identity of the foundation at Stoke is unknown; Whitelock, p.105 suggests that it might be Stoke-by-Nayland (OS ref. TL 986363) as this is 'near to Polstead and many of Ælfgar's other estates' (although Polstead first appears in Æthelflæd's will, not Ælfgar's). This opinion is shared by Hart, 'Ealdordom', p.69. The other possibility is Stoke-by-Clare (OS ref. TL 741434), near to Baythorn, an estate promised by Ælfgar to Barking, where a religious community was later founded by Ælfric son of Wihtgar. None of the estates granted by Ælfgar and his family belonged to this community at any later dates, however; they do not occur in C. Harper-Bill and R. Mortimer (eds.), Stoke by Clare Cartulary. BL Cotton Appendix XXI (3 vols. Suffolk Records Society Suffolk Charters vols. 4-6 Woodbridge, 1982 - 4). It seems to be the case that the foundation at Stoke patronised by Ælfgar and his family, whether church or community, was short lived and may not have lasted long enough to receive the gifts intended for it.

[78] Whitelock, p. 7.

[79] Whitelock, no. 14, pp. 34-7. All quotes from Æthelflæd's will are taken from this edition. Whitelock notes that the will must be written before 991, as it refers to Byrhtnoth as alive, and probably after the death of King Edgar in 975, since Æthelflæd makes a grant for his soul as well as King Edmund's.

second husband Æthelstan 'Rota', a Mercian ealdorman, since he does not occur as intended recipient of any lands after her death. The *Liber Eliensis*, a twelfth century source based on contemporary materials, notes that she outlived her husband Æthelstan and lived as a widow, but it is remarkable then that she asks for no prayers for his soul.[80] It is usually assumed that Æthelflæd was married firstly to King Edmund, then after his death made her second marriage to Æthelstan 'Rota'.[81] Whitelock notes that it is surprising that Æthelflæd's marriage to King Edmund is not mentioned in the *Liber*, but if she married the king shortly before his death it may not have seemed significant to the Ely scribe when compared to her long marriage to Æthelstan.[82] Stafford has recently proposed the contrary argument, that Æthelflæd was probably married to Æthelstan first, as the remarriage of a royal widow would have been frowned upon.[83] I think this unlikely however, as Hart shows that Æthelstan was Ealdorman between 955 and 970, and thus must have been married to Æthelflæd after the death of King Edmund in 946. Æthelflæd's first husband King Edmund is remembered in her will ('for King Edmund's soul and for my soul'), perhaps because a royal husband was of higher status than an ealdorman but perhaps simply because it was important to remember the soul of one's king and lord.[84] She also bequeaths an estate to Glastonbury for her the benefit of the souls of herself and King Edmund and King Edgar (959-79), her own step-son.[85] It might be possible to date her will to before 978, the year Edward the Martyr died, since she does not offer any lands for the protection of his soul as well as the other two kings; Edward was the son of Edgar, and thus related distantly to Æthelflæd, and might be expected to feature in the will if family links were proving very strong. I would not wish to place too much emphasis on the absence of Edward in the will, however, or attempt to use it as specific grounds for dating the will to before 978.

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[80] Blake, Liber Eliensis. pp. 136-7.

[81] See for example Hart, 'Ealdordom' p. 58, and Whitelock, p. 138.

[82] Whitelock, p. 138.

[83] Stafford, p. 134 n. 200

[84] A. Wareham, 'The transformation of kinship and the family in late Anglo-Saxon England', Early Medieval Europe 10 (2001) pp. 375-99 at pp. 381-2 notes that from the 960s onwards it was increasingly common to associate one's own salvation with that of the royal family, through bequeathing estates to the king or to royally-patronised religious communities.

[85] Edgar was King Edmund's son by his first wife Ælfgifu.

Æthelflæd's will obeyed her father's wishes in essence, but with a slight variation. She granted the majority of her estates to her sister Ælfflæd for her lifetime, and only after Ælfflæd's death were they to be passed to the religious communities Ælfgar had originally intended them for. She did not mention the estate at Baythorn which her father had given to Barking, but instead made a new grant of her own. In the third gift written in her will (after a grant of part of her *morgengifu* of Damerham to Glastonbury and the estate of Ham to Christ Church Canterbury) she gave 'the estate at Woodham to the Ealdorman Brithnoth and my sister for her life; and after her death to St Mary's church at Barking'.[86] The later descent of this estate is particularly interesting, and is discussed further below with Ælfflæd's will. The absence of Baythorn from her will need not mean, as Lancaster suggests, that the estate was lost; since it returned in the will of Ælfflæd, it seems more likely that Æthelflæd's will mistakenly omitted the estate.[87]

Many of the grants made in Æthelflæd's will followed the pattern of the grant to Barking; estates were bequeathed to a certain religious house, but with usufruct granted to Ælfflæd. Ælfgar's will granted the estate at Cockfield, for example, firstly to Æthelflæd, 'and then after our [ie. Ælfgar's and Æthelflæd's] lifetime … to St Edmund's foundation' at Bury. When Æthelflæd wrote her will, she granted Cockfield 'to the Ealdorman Brithnoth [sic] and my sister for her life; and after her death to St Edmund's foundation'. Æthelflæd's will granted several other estates to her sister in this way, perhaps providing for Ælfflæd where she felt her father had not. Lavenham, Peldon, Mersea and Greenstead were all given in the same way to 'the Ealdorman Brithnoth [sic] and my sister' and then to their respective religious recipients, sometimes specifically for Ælfflæd's lifetime only and sometimes after the deaths of both Ælfflæd and her husband. The naming of the Ealdorman first may be a sign of respect, since Byrhtnoth was Ealdorman of Essex and a highly influential man in the area where the family held their estates. It may also symbolise the way in which

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[86] King Edmund had granted her Damerham with reversion to Glastonbury (S. 513), and it is from this estate that the name Æthelflæd 'atte Damerhame' given to her in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle came; ASC D text s.a. 946.

[87] Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon society', p. 366.

Æthelflæd subconsciously followed her father's wish to keep family estates in family hands; she primarily granted these lands to religious communities and Byrhtnoth was only to be a temporary tenant.

Ælfflæd, the younger daughter, wrote her will in c.1002.[88] England was under the rule of King Æthelred (978-1014), and the reform movement of the tenth century had seen the foundation of many new monasteries and nunneries around the country. Ælfflæd's husband Byrhtnoth had died as a hero at the Battle of Maldon in 991, leaving her a widow and the last of her bloodline; as far as we know she bore no children in over 40 years of marriage, and after the death of her sister Æthelflæd she was the sole heiress to the lands left by her father Ælfgar. Ælfflæd's will is the last from a blood member of this family, and shows loyalty to her father's wishes, as well as a few decisions made on her own behalf. The majority of her will followed the requests of her father, and included several requests for the protection of the family foundation at Stoke. She appears to have been quite concerned for this community, asking both the Ealdorman Æthelmær and King Æthelred to protect the foundation.

With regard to the grant to Barking Abbey, her will did not follow precisely the requests of her father and sister. Ælfflæd's will granted two estates to Barking, the first namely Baythorn being one which her father had left, and the second, Woodham, inherited from her sister. Ælfflæd's will includes the grant of Baythorn amongst a list of 'the estates which my ancestors bequeathed to other holy places… the estate at Baythorn for the use of the community at Barking'. Ælfgar seems to have intended this estate primarily as a basis of the family lands, given without immediate reversion to a religious community after the lifetime of the recipient: it was to go to his daughters and any grandchildren, and only if there were no grandchildren was Barking to receive it. Lancaster suggests that Ælfflæd's grant of Baythorn was unconnected to Ælfgar's grant of an estate by that name, and that the land passed out of the family since Æthelflæd does not mention it in

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[88] Whitelock, no. 15, pp. 38-43. All quotes from her will are taken from this edition. Whitelock's dating is based on the death of Queen Ælfthryth in 1002, who was alive at the time Ælfflæd wrote. More recently, however, it has been suggested that Ælfthryth may have died in 1000 or 1001; Stafford, p. 216 and n. 39.

her will.[89] This is possible, in which case when Ælfflæd regained the estate she may have directed it to Barking in order to fit with her father's original plan.

Ælfflæd's grant of Woodham is the most interesting of all of the family's bequests to Barking. Her sister Æthelflæd had given Ælfflæd and Byrhtnoth the estate at Woodham for Ælfflæd's lifetime, with reversion to St Mary's church at Barking. Ælfflæd, however, wrote in her own will 'I grant Woodham after my death to Ælfthryth, my lord's mother, and after her death it is to go to St Mary's foundation at Barking just as it stands, with the produce and the men'. Ælfthryth was the widowed queen of King Edgar, and mother of the ruling king, Æthelred. She was related through marriage to Ælfflæd, and this family connection may have prompted the gift.[90] The granting of lands to a member of the royal family was not in itself unusual; many of the surviving Anglo-Saxon wills include gifts to the king or on behalf of his soul.[91] It is the choice of Woodham as the estate bequeathed to Queen Ælfthryth which is significant. At this point we recall that (according to Goscelin of St-Bertin) it was Ælfthryth who when queen imposed herself upon Barking Abbey for 20 years, having conspired to expel the rightful abbess Wulfhilda and take control of the abbey.[92] Indeed, it was during this 20 year period, from approximately 969-89, that Æthelflæd wrote her will, granting the abbey the lands at Woodham after her sister's death. We do not know the exact nature of Ælfthryth's rule over the abbey, but Ælfflæd would definitely have been aware of the nature of the queen's relationship to the abbey. By the time Ælfflæd wrote her will, Ælfthryth was no longer directly involved with the abbey, so it cannot be the case that in granting this estate to the queen as 'custodian' of Barking, Ælfflæd was following her sister's request and effectively giving usufruct of the estate to Barking through Ælfthryth. It is perhaps possible that Æthelflæd, the elder sister, was concerned for the

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[89] Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon society', p. 366.

[90] Queen Ælfthryth was the second wife of King Edgar, the son of King Edmund from his first wife Ælfgifu. After Ælfgifu's death, Edmund married Æthelflæd, making her the step-mother of Edmund and thus mother-in-law to Ælfthryth when she married Edmund. Ælfflæd was thus linked to the queen through a rather complex kinship, but nevertheless one which would be noted by each party in a gift such as this.

[91] See the discussion on the increased number of bequests to the royal family from the mid-tenth century onwards in Wareham, 'The transformation of kinship' pp. 381-2.

[92] VStW. chap. 9 pp. 428-9.

welfare of Barking Abbey while it was under the rule of the queen, and thus made the bequest of Woodham as a supplement to that of Baythorn made by her father. In the fullness of time, despite the sisters' attempts to grant Woodham to Barking, there is no record of it ever being part of the abbey's holdings. Queen Ælfthryth died soon after Ælfflæd wrote her will, so she may never have held the lands either. Ælfthryth was probably younger than Ælfflæd, although would still have been over at least 50 when Ælfflæd wrote her will, and Ælfflæd may have expected her to get several decades of use from the lands before they would revert to Barking.[93] This temporary diversion of lands may not have seemed significant to Ælfflæd, although the nuns of Barking would probably have felt somewhat disappointed at the loss of an anticipated endowment.

After the three wills of these three close members of one family, it is possible to trace later involvement of members of later generations of descendants through marriage. As we have seen above, Ælfflæd was married to Byrhtnoth, the hero of the Battle of Maldon. The will of Byrhtnoth's daughter Leofflæd is recorded in the *Liber Eliensis*, and suggests that she was not a blood relative of Ælfflæd; she did not appear to have inherited any of the lands Ælfgar had bequeathed for the use of his daughters' children.[94] Leofflæd's own will did not mention Barking Abbey, but notes that she had three daughters named Æthelswyth, Ælfwynn and Leofwaru, and a son Ælfwine. Æthelswyth was living a form of non-enclosed religious life, and is recorded as giving the monks of Ely certain richly embroidered gold cloths, presumably for use during religious services, as well as certain lands.[95] Ælfwine, the son, was a monk at Ely, further cementing the family link to the house where his grandfather Byrhtnoth was buried.[96] Ælfwynn may have been a nun; a woman by this name had been the tenant of Westminster Abbey in lands at Datchworth and Watton in Hertfordshire, and committed them to Abbot Edwin (occ.1049) before 1049 when they occur in a charter of King Edward the Confessor.[97] This woman is also often identified with the same Ælwynn or

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[93] She married King Edgar in 964, and was thus probably born before 950.
[94] Blake, Liber Eliensis. pp. 157-8.
[95] Blake, Liber Eliensis. pp. 293, 294.
[96] Blake, Liber Eliensis. p. 139.
[97] S. 1123. King Edward notes that the lands had been given to the abbey by King Edgar, and that he now confirms the monks as owners, while Ælfwynn had been tenant.

Aluine who appears in several Barking-produced texts, including the list of abbesses'
obits and burial places. As argued above, I believe that Aluine was a mis-translation of
Abbess Ælfgiva's name, and thus that Ælfwynn was not an abbess at Barking.[98]
Leofwaru was the only one of Leofflæd's children to produce offspring herself and
continue the family line.

In Leofflæd's will, Leofwaru is granted a family estate at Wetheringsett on the
condition that she was chaste until marriage, and did not stain the family's reputation
with infamy. The estate was then to be passed to her own children.[99] She married a man
named Lustwine, and they had a son named Thurstan, whose will written in 1043x5
survives, and contains a bequest of lands to Barking, providing the link between this
branch of the family and Barking Abbey.[100] Thurstan left various lands to family
members, and also bequeathed several estates to Ely and other local religious
communities. The most interesting for this study is Thurstan's instruction that the
family estate at *Bidicheseye* was to be sold, and the money resulting from the sale to be
used for heriot and some personal gifts to kinsmen, 'and what is left over, the heirs are
to distribute it for the sake of [his partner Ulfketel's] soul... except that the outermost
mill is to go to St Æthelburg's at Barking'.[101] If, as Fisher suggests, this may be
identified with the Domesday manor *Bodichesa* held by Earl Harold, it is the modern
manor of Bottisham in Cambridgeshire.[102] This manor contained four mills in 1086, so
it is quite likely to be one of these which Thurstan intended for Barking. Barking owned
no lands in Cambridgeshire at the time of the Domesday survey, and its only twelfth-
century possession there was a manor at Babraham near Cambridge which first occurs
in 1130.[103] It seems that none of the three bequests at Baythorn, Woodham and

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[98] See above, pp. 65-7.
[99] Blake, Liber Eliensis, p. 157.
[100] Blake, Liber Eliensis, p. 158. Chapter 89 lists lands left to Ely by Lustwine 'amico nostro' and his wife Leofwaru. Thurstan's own will is Whitelock, no. 31 pp. 80-85. This will and Thurstan himself are discussed in Fisher, 'Thurstan, son of Wine'. The outer dates of his will are determined by bequests to Bishop Stigand of Elmham (elected 1043) and Abbot Leofsige of Ely (d. 1045); Whitelock, p. 192.
[101] Whitelock, p. 81.
[102] Fisher, 'Thurstan son of Wine', p. 101 suggests this identification. DB vol. I, fol. 196, with the identification as Bottisham in Williams and Martin, Domesday book, p. 534.
[103] W. Farrer, Feudal Cambridgeshire (Cambridge, 1920) p. 52.

Bottisham intended by the descendants of Ælfgar were ever owned directly by Barking, but the fact that this family had such long links to the abbey is of great interest, and the motivations behind these gifts are discussed in detail in Chapter 7 below.

ii) Heirs to Ælfgar

The later history of the two identifiable estates at Baythorn and Woodham is of significance to this study in that Woodham provides a connection to a man with close links to Barking over a century after the Domesday survey. I will discuss this man, Robert fitzWalter, in Chapter 5 on twelfth-century benefactors of Barking Abbey, but the provenance of his estates deserves discussing within the context of eleventh-century England. Baythorn is listed in the Domesday Book as having belonged *tempore regis Edwardi* to a man named Ingvar, while in 1086 it was part of the estates of Ranulf brother of Ilger. Ranulf was a neighbour of Barking Abbey elsewhere in Essex, holding lands at Ingatestone and Parndon where the abbey had estates both *tempore regis Edwardi* and in 1086.[104] The history of Woodham is a little more complex. Woodham today forms three separate parishes, Woodham Mortimer, Woodham Ferrers and Woodham Walter all lying around 30 miles to the east of Barking. Their modern identifications come from the names of their medieval owners, and it is not immediately obvious which of the three parishes was the one Ælfgar had intended to go to Barking, or if indeed he had owned and bequeathed all three.[105] It is the history of Woodham Walter which is relevant to the current study.

Tempore regis Edwardi the manor identified with the modern Woodham Walter had been held by a free woman named Leveva. In 1086 it was held by Ralph Baynard,

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[104] DB vol. II, fols. 79b, 80.
[105] P.H. Reaney, The place names of Essex (English Place-Name Society. Cambridge, 1935) p. 231 gives 1248 as the first date when the three Woodhams were identified separately by their modern names. Woodham Ferrers takes its name from its Domesday holder, Henry de Ferrers: DB vol. II, fol. 57. Woodham Mortimer had belonged to Ranulf Peverel in 1086, but after his family line died out in the thirteenth century it was passed to the Mortimers of Attleborough, hence the modern name: DB vol. II, fol. 73, and Baronies. p. 120.

sheriff of Essex (1072x6, 1080).[106] Ralph was a neighbour of Barking Abbey, holding a hide of land at Leyton, next to the abbey itself, as well as substantial estates elsewhere in Essex and Suffolk. The estates granted to Ralph Baynard, being worth around £450 a year, would put him into Class B of Corbett's well-established classification of post-Conquest nobles.[107] His inheritance of an estate originally intended for Barking is interesting in two ways. Firstly, an analysis of the lands he was given by King William I suggests that his holdings were made up of the estates of many smaller Anglo-Saxon landholders rather than the direct inheritance of one Anglo-Saxon individual's entire property. This division of holdings was fairly common, in order to avoid any one person becoming too powerful and possibly a risk to the authority of the king.[108] A total of 31% of Ralph Baynard's holdings in 1086 had previously been owned by an Anglo-Saxon woman named Ailid, or Æthelgyth.[109] This Æthelgyth can be identified with the wife of Thurstan, who occurs in his will named clearly as 'my wife' and the recipient of all his lands in Norfolk, previously given as her *morgengifu*.[110] As we have seen above, Thurstan was a donor to Barking Abbey, bequeathing the nuns the mill at Bottisham, and a descendant of the early eleventh-century donor Ælfflæd. The Anglo-Saxon holder of a further 10% of Ralph's Domesday holdings was a man named Thorth, the son of Æthelgyth's brother Ulfketel, and thus Thurstan's nephew.[111] We can thus see that Ralph

[106] DB vol. II fol. 69. J. Green, English Sheriffs to 1154 (Public Record Office Handbooks vol. 34. London, 1990) p. 39 gives Ralph's dates as sheriff. Baynard was sheriff of Essex after Geoffrey de Mandeville, and after him the post was held by Peter de Valognes; it was a significant position and these men were members of important local families. For a detailed discussion of Baynard's life and importance, see R. Mortimer, 'The Baynards of Baynard's Castle' in C. Harper-Bill, C.J. Holdsworth and J.L. Nelson (eds.), Studies in medieval history presented to R. Allen Brown (Woodbridge, 1989) pp. 241-54.

[107] W.J. Corbett, 'The development of the duchy of Normandy and the Norman Conquest of England', in J.R. Tanner, C.W. Previté-Orton and Z.N. Brooke (eds.), The Cambridge medieval history vol. V: Contest of Empire and papacy (Cambridge, 1926) pp. 481-520 at p. 511. For the value of Ralph Baynard's estates, see Mortimer, 'The Baynards', p. 241.

[108] R. Fleming, 'Domesday Book and the tenurial revolution', ANS 9 (1986) pp. 87-102 argues that many of the major Anglo-Saxon estates were broken up in this way. The opposite argument is presented in J.A. Green, The aristocracy of Norman England (Cambridge, 1997) p. 48 where she suggests that antecessorial succession, the inheritance of an entire undivided estate, was more common than division.

[109] Mortimer, 'The Baynards', pp. 248-9.

[110] Whitelock, p. 83. Mortimer, 'The Baynards', p. 249 compares the lands she owned in 1066 with those mentioned in Thurstan's will, and concludes that she must be the same woman.

[111] See the table in Mortimer, 'The Baynards', p. 249. The family relationships are established from evidence in the wills of Thurstan, of Wulfgyth (the mother of Æthelgyth and Ulfketel) and Ketel, another brother to Æthelgyth and Ulfketel: Whitelock, Anglo-Saxon wills nos. 31, 32, 34, pp. 80-7, 88-91.

Baynard inherited some 40% of his estates from members of a family which had for several generations had a positive patronage relationship with Barking Abbey.

The twelfth-century fate of Ralph Baynard's estates provide a second connection to Barking Abbey, and one which explains the name of the third Woodham parish, Woodham Walter. The heart of Ralph's holdings were in the village of Little Dunmow in north Essex, and King William I made him Lord of Little Dunmow. He died without children, and his heir as Lord was his brother Geoffrey. After Geoffrey's death the lordship passed to his son William, Ralph's nephew.[112] In 1110, William rebelled against King Henry I and his lands and lordship were forfeited.[113] King Henry gave the Baynard estates and lordship to Robert, the younger son of Richard fitzGilbert de Clare.[114] Robert's eldest son and heir to the barony of Little Dunmow was Walter, founder of the fitzWalter dynasty.[115] Walter was loyal to the crown, and served as royal steward to King Stephen, who was happy for him to succeed to the title of Lord of Little Dunmow on his father's death in 1137.[116] Walter was evidently very long lived, for he did not pass on the lordship of Little Dunmow to his son, Robert fitzWalter, until around 1198.[117] Robert, the infamous 'marshal of the army of God' and leader of the barons who rebelled against King John and were signatories to the Magna Carta in 1215, had substantial connections to Barking Abbey in his own time, both as tenant and as relative of a woman who was nun at the abbey.[118] I will argue below that Robert's patronage of Barking Abbey may have come as part of the inherited patterns of patronage which came with the estates he had inherited. As the holder of Woodham, he owned lands which had some 250 years earlier been bequeathed to Barking: I propose

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[112] See Figure 2, 'Heirs to Ælfgar: The holders of Æthelgyth's lands, c. 1040-1215'.

[113] The E text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle s.a. 1110 notes 'In this year Phillip de Braiose, William Malet and William Bainart were deprived of their lands'. D.C. Douglas, (ed.) Domesday monachorum of Christ Church Canterbury (London, 1944) pp. 60-1 also gives a brief discussion of the history of the Baynards after Ralph.

[114] R. Mortimer, 'The beginnings of the honour of Clare', ANS 3 (1980) pp. 119-41. The significance of this recipient for Ralph's lands is discussed below, pp. 176-8.

[115] Baronies. p. 129.

[116] RRAN III, p. xviii and n. 1.

[117] The date of his death is given in the 'Chronicle of the priory of Little Dunmow', printed in Dugdale, Monasticon vol. 6.i p. 147.

[118] This is discussed in detail below, pp. 131-3.

that the nuns themselves may have known this, and pressured Robert into making a gift of own to them in recompense for the lands at Woodham which they never ultimately received.

iii) Adam of Cockfield

The descendants of Ælfgar were important, then, for the history of tenth- and eleventh-century Barking. There is also evidence for another pre-Conquest family taking an interest in Barking after 1066, although without such a long tradition of patronage. Women with Norman names soon became members of the abbey, and by 1123 it was already necessary for the nuns to ask prayers for departed sister with the Norman names Matilda, Mabilia and Emma.[119] In the early twelfth century, probably close to 1100, a member of an Anglo-Saxon family gave a tithe to the abbey on behalf of his sister. The charter of Adam of Cockfield is found written into the back of the abbey's tenth-century Gospel book, Oxford Bodleian Library MS Bodley 155, and was witnessed by the last Anglo-Saxon abbess Ælfgyva.[120] In the charter, Adam son of Leomar 'cum matre mea Sagiva' gave two parts of his tithe at Lindsey (Suffolk) to Barking 'in perpetual possession on behalf of my sister Edith' (pro sorore mea).[121] Hart dates the charter between 1100 and 1118 (the assumed death of Abbess Ælfgyva who witnesses the charter), and later rather than earlier. He suggests that since Adam died in c. 1160, he cannot have been born before 1080 (since a lifespan of over 80 years would have been remarkable), and would not have been of age to grant lands before 1100.[122] As discussed above, however, I believe this charter to be datable to the earliest years of the twelfth century, firstly because the charter is witnessed by Abbess Ælfgyva who had been ruling over Barking since c.1065. Secondly, I will argue, Adam may have granted

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[119] Delisle, Rouleau mortuaire. plate 25. This roll was circulating England in around 1123, suggesting that these women had been members of the abbey in the late eleventh and early twelfth century.
[120] Adam of Cockfield. with the text edited at p. 469.
[121] The translation is taken from Loftus and Chettle, p. 21. See also Douglas, Feudal documents p. clxiii: many of the witnesses are associated with Bury St Edmunds. On the vocabulary of gifts made 'pro' a specific individual, see B.H. Rosenwein, To be the neighbour of St Peter: The social meaning of Cluny's property. 909-1049 (Ithaca. 1989) pp. 38-43.
[122] Adam of Cockfield. p. 468.

earlier in his life than Hart believes. This depends on the interpretation of Adam's role as donor in this transaction, and to understand this it is necessary to undertake an analysis of all the members of Adam's family involved in the gift.

The charter is granted by Adam on behalf of his sister Edith, 'pro sorore mea', and with his mother Sagiva, 'cum matre mea'. The exact vocabulary used in the charter is significant; it has been suggested that Edith was entering the nunnery, and that the grant of tithes was as her entry gift to the community.[123] It is also possible that Edith had died and was buried at the abbey, and the land was intended to pay for materials for masses on her behalf; this was another common motivation for donations to religious communities.[124] We should here consider Thompson's suggestion that phrases such as 'cum filia mea' or in this case 'cum matre mea' were often used in charters to signify that certain gifts were being made as entry gifts on the reception of a member of a religious community, while avoiding accusations of simony.[125] A possible interpretation is that it was Sagiva, as a widow, was entering Barking Abbey as a widow, and who was to say prayers for the soul of her daughter Edith. Other parties to the charter among the witnesses were 'Rogerius frater Rodberti vitrici mei' and 'Fulco et Rogerus fratres mei de matre mea'. Adam's father Leomar must have died some years earlier, since Sagiva had married again to a man named Robert, whose brother Roger witnesses this charter. Her sons Fulco and Roger from her marriage to Robert must have been of sufficient age to witness the charter, and Adam clearly identifies them as his half-brothers. We note here that while Adam's mother and father both had Anglo-Saxon names, her new husband and step-sons had emphatically Norman names. That she was married to a Norman may suggest that she was an eligible land-owning widow, and one who was a valuable bride for an incoming Norman social climber.

To return to the charter, the fact that Adam's mother's brother-in-law (the brother of her husband) and Adam's two half-brothers witness the charter, but not his step-father

[123] Adam of Cockfield. p. 466.
[124] Adam of Cockfield. p. 466.
[125] Women religious pp. 187-8.

Robert, suggests that Robert was himself probably dead by the date of this charter. He would certainly have taken an interest in the disposition of property and incomes by his step-son, had he been alive, and the presence of his brother and sons points to a family concern for Adam's actions, as well as Sagiva's. Hart's dating of this charter relies on the premise that Adam would not have granted tithes independently until the age of at least 20, and thus that having been born no earlier than 1080, could not have granted this charter until the later years of the early 1110s.[126] I propose that he may have been born later than Hart suggests, but that the sudden death of his step-father made it necessary for him to intervene as the oldest male in the family (he must have been older than his half-brothers). Whether Adam was granting lands with his mother as an entry gift for his sister, or for his mother to say prayers on behalf of his sister, we note that it may be the females of the family who provide the link to Barking Abbey, which is kept up by Adam as heir of an Anglo-Saxon line, with the agreement if perhaps not encouragement of his new Norman step-family.

The significance of this charter, whatever its precise dating, lies in the fact that Adam was a member of a well-established Anglo-Saxon family which went on to marry incoming Normans and maintain its power and local importance. Another of the witnesses to the charter, Wulfric, may be identified as Adam's grandfather Wulfric of Groton, who appears in documents relating to Bury St Edmunds and who was an established pre-Conquest landholder.[127] It has been suggested that Adam's step-father Robert may be Robert 'Blond', a sheriff of Norfolk who owned lands near Cockfield.[128] The family went on to have connections to Chatteris Abbey, the only other pre-Conquest nunnery in East Anglia to survive until the dissolution, probably because its location in Cambridgeshire placed it nearer to Cockfield (Suffolk) than Barking.[129] Adam was the last of the Anglo-Saxon-descended donors to appear in the Barking

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[126] Hart's dating of Adam's birth to 'no earlier than 1080' is formulated from his last known witnessing in a charter of 1156x80, but that his son Robert witnessed alone in a charter of 1156x60, thus that Adam died in around 1156x60 and cannot have been born earlier than 1080; Adam of Cockfield. p. 468.

[127] Douglas, Feudal documents. p. 120

[128] Adam of Cockfield. p. 467, and Green, English sheriffs. p. 60.

[129] Adam, grandson of the Adam of this charter, occurs in three charters of the late twelfth century. C. Breay (ed.). Cartulary of Chatteris Abbey (Woodbridge. 1999) nos. 73, 186, 204, pp. 196, 294, 307-8.

Abbey material. The two families who came to great prominence in Barking's affairs in the twelfth century were both descended from men who came from Normandy after 1066, and intermarried only with other immigrant continental families. Barking's status remained strong, however, probably due to the speed with which it was adopted by the royal family and William I's kinsmen. Its Anglo-Saxon donors faded away, and the new men took over as prominent supporters and providers of women to populate the abbey. The twelfth century was a time of great growth in the religious life in England, but as I hope to show, Barking's tenth-century roots gave it a resilience which could not be damaged by the foundation of many new religious communities nearby.

Chapter 5: Patrons in the twelfth century

The twelfth century was a time of considerable growth in access to monastic religious activity (as opposed to simple church-going) for all classes of society. The growth of the new continental religious orders offered the possibility for less formalised religious life to those who were not considered aristocratic enough to join an established Benedictine house. The increasing numbers of smaller communities throughout the country also provided opportunities for those who did not wish to devote themselves completely to God but to serve in other ways through charitable works in hospitals or through giving to localised religious houses, whose relative poverty meant that small donations could make a greater difference. It was common practice for benefactors to give to several houses of different orders, to ensure as great a variety as possible of intercessory prayers for their souls, and this dilution may have led to a slight diminution of the value of each individual gift made, although not the overall generosity of donors. Royal benefactors continued to maintain the links of their ancestors to the great royal foundations of the pre-Conquest Benedictine houses, but also founded new communities of their own, some belonging to the new orders, such as Henry I's foundation of a Cluniac abbey at Reading, and Stephen's foundation of a priory of nuns at Lillechurch in Kent. Barking continued to receive generous donations from both royalty and members of the aristocracy, and as with the earlier periods of this study, the nature of the source material tends to lead to a focus on certain individual estates and families. Aside from the royal donors to the abbey, many of Barking's benefactions for which evidence survives came from members of two intermarried families, both of which had come over from Normandy in the decades after the Conquest, and which gradually climbed up the ladder of royal service. Barking also took on the role of patron itself, when Abbess Adelidis (1138-66) founded a hospital for sick brothers at Ilford. This new foundation, part of the blossoming of religious and charitable activity in the twelfth century, attracted its own donors and supporters, and indeed outlived the abbey itself by many years, surviving today as a chapel and almshouses.

a) <u>Royal patrons</u>

Evidence suggests that the late eleventh century did not see any royal donations to Barking Abbey. King William I confirmed the abbey's rights and privileges, but there is no surviving evidence from his successor King William II.[1] Indeed, the only charters granted to the abbey by King Henry I were confirmations, and the first refers to rights granted 'sicut pater meus concessit et precepit per breve et sigillum suum'.[2] This suggests that he referred only to the charters of his father, and not his immediate predecessor and brother William II. There is a relatively small number of surviving charters to religious houses from William II's reign, and no land grants to English nunneries. He made a gift to Holy Trinity Caen, and confirmed the act of his bishop Gundulf who founded a nunnery at Malling.[3] His only two charters to English nunneries are considered to be spurious.[4] William II has been criticised for exploiting the income of abbeys during vacancies, and failing to make an effort quickly to appoint new heads to vacant religious houses, but the growth of religious life in the twelfth century is taken as proof that 'William had not done the monasteries irreparable harm'.[5]

The first gift of land received from a royal donor was in fact from a queen, fitting the pattern established in Part 1 above of the interest taken by queens in Barking. According to the evidence of an inquisition of 1304, Queen Matilda II had given certain lands and rents to the Abbess of Barking to pay for the upkeep of a bridge across the River Thames at Stratford-atte-Bow.[6] According to the inquisition Queen Matilda had 'hoped that the support and repair of [the bridge] would be done better and more securely by religious persons, if they were charged to do so, than by secular persons', and as Barking was the nearest religious house at the time, she gave the responsibility to the

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[1] <u>RRAN</u> I, no. 240; Bates <u>Acta of William I</u>. no. 10.
[2] <u>RRAN</u> II, no. 798, with the full text in <u>CCR</u> V, pp. 285-6.
[3] <u>RRAN</u> I. nos. 324. 484.
[4] <u>RRAN</u> I, no. 307, a spurious foundation charter for the nuns of Armathwaite, and no. 309, a 'spurious or grossly inflated' grant to Shaftesbury.
[5] F. Barlow. <u>William Rufus</u> (London. 1983) p. 185.
[6] A. Hills, 'The bridge at Stratford', <u>Essex Review</u> 39 (1930) pp. 190-4.

abbess there.[7] In 1135 the abbey of Stratford Langthorne was founded by William de Montfitchet (an ancestor by marriage of Robert fitzWalter, the early thirteenth-century donor to Barking) and since it was closer to the unidentified lands Queen Matilda had given to Barking, the abbot bought the lands from Barking and with them the responsibility for the upkeep of the bridge.[8] The abbey of Stratford was to pay the nunnery of Barking 4 marks a year for the lands, but in return they were able to keep all income relating to the lands and the bridge itself.[9] Queen Matilda's original gift is unfortunately not recorded in any contemporary deeds, but the report of a later legal dispute is likely to be based in truth. An apocryphal story recorded in the seventeenth century suggests that Matilda was particularly keen that this bridge should be well maintained because she had herself fallen through the old broken bridge into the water of the Thames below, and 'had been well washed in the water'.[10]

Aside from this grant of lands for upkeep of a bridge, there is no evidence of royal giving to Barking in the twelfth century until 1138 when King Stephen (1135-54) granted the abbey of Barking to Adelidis fitzJohn, and in his charter appointing her abbess stated 'reddo et concedo ecclesie Berkingie et Abbatisse Add' omnes boscos et terras suas de Leschold et alias quas Henricus rex afforestavit ut illas excolat et hospitetur'.[11] This made a direct reference to lands which Stephen's uncle King Henry I had established as part of the royal forest, and was thus probably not a new grant but a re-grant of lands which had previously belonged to the abbey but which Henry had taken for himself. Indeed, the specific use of the phrase 'omnes boscos et terras *suas*'

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[7] A. Burges, 'Account of the old bridge at Stratford-le-Bow in Essex', Archaeologia 27 (1838) pp. 77-95, at pp. 82-3.
[8] Hills, 'The bridge at Stratford', p. 192: Burges, 'Account of the old bridge', pp. 83-4. William de Montfitchet was the brother-in-law of Richard fitzGilbert de Clare, great-grandfather of Robert fitzWalter: J.H. Round, 'The abbeys of Coggeshall and Stratford Langthorne', TEAS 5 (1898) pp. 139-43 at p. 141.
[9] Court records suggest that the abbots of Stratford had been failing to keep their end of this bargain, and claimed that responsibility for the bridge, which had become derelict, in fact lay with Barking Abbey. The case was finally settled in 1315 when the abbot of Stratford agreed for ever to maintain the bridge, in return for a payment of 200 pounds of silver from the Abbess of Barking, although he promised that his successors would always pay the four marks rent in return. Burges, 'Account of the old bridge', pp. 94-5
[10] Matilda's fall is first recorded in Stow's Annals of 1631, and may well be an inflation of a myth: Burges, 'Account of the old bridge', p. 80.
[11] RRAN III. no. 31.

(my emphasis) suggests that this was indeed a restitution, rather than a new gift, and that Stephen was perhaps not being as generous as he might have wished to appear. Leschold, also spelled Hestholte, can be identified as part of the modern forest of Hainault in Essex, to the north of Barking. Stephen's grant returning the forest to the Abbey was followed in 1152-54 by a charter found in the Ilford Cartulary, in which Stephen grants assart at Ilford to Abbess Adelidis 'ad opus infirmorum hospitali de Illeford'.[12] I will discuss this charter below within the context of the foundation of the hospital by Adelidis, since the chronology of its foundation is rather complex.[13] The details of the dating of this charter and of Stephen's earlier re-grant of forest lands in 1137 are very interesting, suggesting that Stephen simply resigned his rights in these assarts to the abbey, rather than making a completely new grant.[14]

Royal grants of new areas of land remained thin on the ground until the end of the twelfth century. Stephen granted the abbey the income of the hundred of Becontree in Essex worth seventy shillings a year.[15] We note that in 1198 Richard I made a similar grant of sixty shillings income from the same hundred of Becontree, however, suggesting that Stephen's grant may not have been successfully maintained by the abbey.[16] Stephen also gave the abbey the income of the hundred of Barstable in return for a rent of sixteen pounds a year, and reduced its liability for hidage in Weston and Mitcham, both in Surrey.[17] The abbey had owned 7 hides at Weston in 1086, and was assessed at 3 hides and 1 virgate at that time. Stephen's charter values it at the lower amount, suggesting that the nuns had been liable for payment on a greater area in the intervening years. The charters granting Barstable hundred and the reduction of hidage were made at Barking itself, and the Barstable grant made by the symbolic placing of a knife upon the altar of the abbey church. None of these grants were in the form of additions to the abbey's landed endowment. Nevertheless by either increasing the

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[12] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5v, printed in New charters. p. 921; Calendar, no 11, and Appendix 4, no. 2.
[13] See Part c) below.
[14] A full discussion of the implications of this grant is in Chapter 6 below.
[15] RRAN III, no. 35, datable only to 1139-52. This charter is also found in an extended form in RRAN III, no. 36.
[16] CCR V p. 287.
[17] RRAN III. nos. 33. 34.

abbey's income from fines and duties, and decreasing its own liability to payments, these would have provided useful financial resources for the abbey at a time of expansion. We should note that it was during the reign of Stephen that Abbess Adelidis founded the Ilford Hospital, and until the hospital was well-established enough to attract its own benefactors, the abbey's role as patron might have been a financial burden.

The only known land grant made during Stephen's reign by a member of the royal circle was a gift of 3 hides at Woolston in Essex, by Edward, a servant of the queen.[18] Soon after taking the throne King Henry II confirmed the possessions of the abbey as his grandfather Henry I had done, but did not augment the abbey's holdings.[19] He reconfirmed the abbey's rights and privileges on the appointment of Mary Becket as abbess in 1173, and gave a further general confirmation of rights and liberties at around the same time his own daughter Matilda became abbess in 1177x9.[20] Aside from Richard's re-granting of the income of Becontree in 1198 mentioned above, there were no further royal gifts of lands or income; the responsibility for benefactions appears to have been taken over by members of the local aristocracy, and it is to them that I shall now turn.[21]

b) Aristocratic patrons

The history of Barking in the twelfth century came to be dominated by members of two intermarried aristocratic families, the fitzJohns and the Valognes. The direct evidence for these families' involvement is minimal, consisting only of a few charters, but the long-term implications of their donations are of much greater significance than the amount of evidence would suggest. As well as providing donors, members of both these families became nuns at the abbey, and indeed both Adelidis fitzJohn and Christina de Valognes (probably a kinswoman) were abbesses. These two families were both immigrants from Normandy, who had arrived as modestly wealthy tenants-in-chief, but

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[18] RRAN III, no. 37, confirmed no. 38.
[19] CCR V, p. 286, Acta of Henry II ref. 1194H.
[20] CCR V, pp. 285, 286-7; Acta of Henry II refs. 1193H, 662H.
[21] See n. 16 above.

made a greater place for themselves through diligent royal service and tactical marriages into several of the more important Anglo-Norman dynasties. They also made names for themselves politically, with at least 5 members of the kin group of Abbess Adelidis being signatories of the Magna Carta. I will discuss the evidence for the benefactions of these two families first, then give a summary of the history of each family and how they may have come to choose Barking as recipient of their religious patronage. The motivations behind each gift are closely linked, I believe, to the presence of family members at the abbey, and these motivations are discussed in detail in Chapter 7 below. At the same time, we should consider Barking Abbey's own role as patron during the twelfth century, as a result of Abbess Adelidis' foundation of a hospital for sick men at Ilford. This attracted a number of donations, from royalty as well as aristocrats, and became very well-patronised in the later middle ages. Indeed, there are some 110 summarised notes of land transactions relating to the hospital found in the Ilford Cartulary, requesting prayers for donors or giving details of rentals and other transactions.[22] The great majority of these lie outside the scope of this study, and much work remains to be done on the history of the hospital in the light of this new material. I discuss the foundation and gifts to Ilford Hospital in a separate section, since the chronology of the foundation is quite complex and deserves independent analysis.

The donations made by members of the fitzJohn and Valognes families were not especially significant within the context of the abbey's endowment, but as part of only a limited number of grants made in the twelfth century, the fact that they come from members of an intermarried dynasty has not been noted before and is very interesting. The direct evidence comes from a variety of different sources, some emanating from Barking and other being royal documents, and relate to a number of different estates.[23] The sources for this evidence are an Essex fine, a charter in the Ilford Cartulary, a charter in the Petre archive, and a confirmation from the Percy family cartulary.[24]

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[22] These entries cover fols. 6v-13v and 19. The majority are undated, but those which are dated are from range from 1286 to 1396, mostly from around 1305-60.

[23] The great majority of material in the Petre archive is based on the abbey's estates at Ingatestone, since this estate was sold in 1539 to William Petre who thus kept only the documents relating to his own holdings: see pp. 36-7 above.

[24] Extracts from the unpublished charters are given in Appendix 4 below.

The evidence itself is straightforward. We are told that shortly after 1157 William de Vesci, the son of Eustace fitzJohn, held lands in fief of the Abbess of Barking.[25] In 1177x9-83 the same William de Vesci granted the abbey all his rights and lands in Hanley (Essex).[26] At a date some time in the second half of the twelfth century Thomas de Valognes is specifically named as having been tenant of certain lands (probably in Barking) which were given to Ilford Hospital.[27] Finally, in 1205 Gunnora de Valognes and her husband Robert fitzWalter, tenants of six virgates of land in Barking, leased them to the steward of Barking in return for a peppercorn rent.[28] These four documentary sources combined with the knowledge that Adelidis fitzJohn and Christina de Valognes were abbesses of Barking strongly suggests that there was some connection, perhaps on a superficial level, between these families and Barking Abbey. A detailed exploration of the deeds of the two women in the context of their relatives' patronage, however, will reveal a complex relationship which lasted several generations between the most important nunnery in the East of England and two new post-Conquest dynasties.

i) The fitzJohn family

William de Vesci held lands of the abbess of Barking in fief: he also gave the abbey certain lands in Hanley and 16 acres which had been held by a man named Erkenbrichtus. This information comes from two sources, both of which are near-contemporary to the events the describe. Firstly, in a charter granted by King Henry II in 1157, the king confirmed and granted to William de Vesci all the lands and rights which had belonged to his father Eustace fitzJohn.[29] Secondly, in 1177x9-83 William de

[25] M.T. Martin (ed.), The Percy chartulary (Surtees Society vol.11. London, 1911) no. 1259, pp. 291-4 (a royal confirmation charter). The document itself is from the Public Record Office Chancery Miscellanea, presented at a court case in 1316 but probably created at the time of the events it describes. It is included in the edition of Percy cartulary as relevant to the later history of that family's estates.

[26] Essex Record Office MS D/DP T1/694. The charter can be dated by the abbacy of Matilda daughter of King Henry II (1177x9-98) and the death of William de Vesci in 1183.

[27] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5 (a gift recited in a charter copied in the late sixteenth century). I will discuss this grant in detail in part c) below.

[28] Feet of fines for Essex vol. 1, p. 35.

[29] Printed in Martin, The Percy chartulary. pp. 291-4 with the list of witnesses at p. 294 n. 8. The date is suggested in the notes to Acta of Henry II ref. 2051H.

Vesci made an independent grant of lands in Essex to the abbey.[30] The history of William's paternal family is very interesting, not least because his aunt Adelidis was abbess of Barking in the mid-twelfth century.

To understand the background to William de Vesci's twelfth-century inheritance, it is necessary to begin in pre-Conquest Normandy. In a dispute over a mill granted to the abbey of St Stephen's Caen, we hear of a man named Ranulf the Moneyer who had illegally been sold the mill by the abbot of St Stephen's. His son Waleran sold the mill back to the abbey in 1061, with the confirmation of Duke William of Normandy.[31] We also hear of a John, son of Waleran, who in 1076 seized the same mill claiming it was his father's, and William, now King William I of England, intervened to adjudge that the mill rightfully belonged to St Stephen's Caen.[32] Ranulf the Moneyer was father of four sons, two of whom died without male heirs.[33] Waleran and another son Richard both had sons named John who occur in the Domesday Book as East Anglian landholders. Waleran's son John had considerable estates in Cambridgeshire, Essex and Suffolk, while Richard's son John held primarily in Norfolk, and to a lesser extent Essex and Cambridgeshire.[34] The Domesday evidence suggests that Waleran was the eldest son, since he appears to have succeeded his father Ranulf as moneyer and continued the career in England after 1066. The Domesday record for Essex notes that 'the burgesses of Colchester and Maldon pay £20 for the mint: Waleran arranged this'.[35] There is no other Waleran mentioned in the Domesday records of Essex, and his son John was a Colchester landholder in 1086, so we may surmise that this Waleran was the same son of Ranulf the Moneyer who occurred in the dispute over the mill.[36] Both of

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[30] ERO MS D/DP T1/694; Calendar, no. 13, and Appendix 4 no. 6 below.

[31] J.H. Round (ed.), Calendar of documents preserved in France (London, 1899) no. 711 p. 253. See also C.T. Clay, 'The origin of Eustace fitzJohn', in Peerage 12 Part 2, Appendix B, pp. 7-11.

[32] Round, Calendar of documents. no. 712, pp. 253-4.

[33] The sons who died without male heirs were named Conan and Osbern; Conan may have had a daughter. See Peerage 12 part 2, pp. 268-70 s.n. Vesci.

[34] Much of the information in this paragraph is taken from the account in L. Landon 'The Sheriffs of Norfolk', Norfolk Archaeology 23 (1929) pp.147-65, appendix 'Further note on Waleran the Sheriff' at 161-65. DB vol. II, fols. 84, 84b, 94b, 265b, 266, 435b and N.E.S.A. Hamilton (ed.), Inquisitio comitatus cantabrigiensis (Inquisitio Eliensis) (London, 1876) pp. 133, 140, 141, 194 for estates held in Cambridgeshire of the Abbot of Ely.

[35] DB vol. II, fol. 107b.

[36] John son of Waleran held one hide in Colchester, and had three houses there: DB vol. II, fols. 104,

Ranulf's grandsons John were referred to as kinsmen of Waleran, further implying that he was the elder; John son of Richard was known as John nephew of Waleran, suggesting that Richard did not come to England and that Waleran was considered the head of the family in this country.[37]

We know nothing more about the family of John, son of Waleran, and it may be that he had no heirs himself. The fitzJohn name which was so prominent in the twelfth century, but which lasted only one generation, identified the children of John, nephew of Waleran, the other grandson of Ranulf the Moneyer. John, nephew of Waleran had five children, although the identity of his wife is not known. He had three sons, Payn, Eustace and William, and two daughters named Agnes and Adelidis. It is possible that Agnes was the elder daughter, since she was married while Adelidis entered the religious life, becoming abbess of Barking in 1138 as we have seen. At an unknown date Agnes was married to Roger de Valognes, but was widowed in 1141/2 and lived until at least 1185 without remarrying.[38] Agnes and Roger had five children, and it is their descendants who provide the link to the Valognes family, from where we find the tenants Thomas and Gunnora; this family is discussed in detail below.[39] William was the least well documented of John nephew of Waleran's sons; he was named by Orderic Vitalis as one of the twelve barons who opposed King Stephen in 1138, and we also know that he played a role in the court of King Henry II, witnessing charters for the king alongside his brothers.[40] We know nothing else about him, and he does not seem to

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106b. The link to Waleran the moneyer at Colchester has not been noted before.

[37] W. Dugdale, The baronage of England (2 vols. London, 1675-6) vol. 1 p. 90 suggests that John nephew of Waleran may have been known as Monoculus (one-eyed), but this seems to be a confusion. Clay notes that it was his son Eustace who was described as 'luscus' and 'vir strenuus ac nobilis licet monoculus', but Dalton's study does not mention this handicap. Clay, 'The origin of Eustace fitzJohn' p. 11, citing Roger of Hoveden and the Alnwick Chronicle.

[38] In 1185 she was named as Agnes de Valeines or de Valuines, aged sixty 'et eo amplius', and held certain lands which had been confirmed to her husband Roger by the Empress Matilda. J.H. Round (ed.), Rotuli de dominabus et pueris et puellis de XII comitalibus (Pipe Roll Society vol. 35. London, 1913) pp. 67, 77, 87. See also W.P. Hedley, Northumberland families (2 vols. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1968-70) vol. 2 pp. 33-5.

[39] See pp. 129-32.

[40] Orderic Vitalis, The ecclesiastical history of Orderic Vitalis. ed. and trans. M. Chibnall (Oxford Medieval Texts. 6 vols. Oxford, 1968-80) vol. 6 pp. 518-9. Dalton, pp. 360-1, 370-1. G.J. White, Restoration and reform. 1153-1165: Recovery from civil war in England (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. Cambridge, 2000) p. 187 notes that William was recorded as acting as royal justice in

have had any surviving children, since all of John nephew of Waleran's estates were accounted for by his other two sons.

The majority of John nephew of Waleran's Domesday estates went to his eldest son Payn, who became a royal justice and sheriff in the south west of England and made a profitable marriage to Sybil de Lacy, daughter and heiress of William I de Lacy of Herefordshire.[41] They had two daughters named Cecily and Agnes, both of whom made good marriages. Cecily was married to Roger, earl of Hereford who died in 1155, leaving her childless, and she did not marry again before her death which occurred after 1197.[42] Agnes, no doubt named after her paternal aunt, was married to Warin de Montchesney, with whom she lived in Norfolk. They had three sons and two daughters, and the eldest son William de Montchesney appears to have been the major heir to his grandfather Payn, holding the majority of John nephew of Waleran's Domesday estates in the late twelfth century.[43]

Eustace fitzJohn, who was probably the middle son, made the more profitable marriage, to Beatrice the daughter and heiress of Ivo de Vesci, baron of Alnwick. It has been noted that while John nephew of Waleran was not a particularly wealthy man, 'a measure of his respectability – or rather acceptability in the eyes of his contemporaries – is to be found in the marriages of his sons'.[44] Eustace was a member of the royal

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the Abingdon Chronicle. See also Henry II. p. 285.

[41] Peerage vol. 9, pp. 424-6 s.n. Munchesney gives an account of Sybil de Lacy, and see also W.E. Wightman, The Lacy family in England and Normandy (Oxford, 1966) pp. 175-79 and fig. 'The Herefordshire branch' after p. 260.

[42] See Wightman, The Lacy family. p. 175.

[43] See Round, Rotuli de dominabus. p. 50 where Agnes is identified as daughter of Payn fitzJohn, and her three sons Radulf and William (both knights) and Hubert (a cleric) and her two daughters are mentioned. The daughters are identified only as being married to Stephen de Glanville and William Paynel. Stephen was a kinsman of Theobald de Valognes, a member of the extended family into which Agnes fitzJohn (aunt of the current Agnes) had married; see R. Mortimer, 'The family of Ranulf de Glanville', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 54 (1981) pp. 1-16 at p. 2 and the genealogical diagram at p. 10. For William de Montchesney as heir to John nephew of Waleran, see Landon, 'The sheriffs of Norfolk' pp. 163, 165.

[44] Wightman, The Lacy family. p. 177. According to the Chronicles of Alnwick Abbey, Ivo de Vesci gained his wealth through his wife, the daughter of William Tyson who was 'given' to him by William the Conqueror along with the baronies of Alnwick and Malton (Northumberland) in return for his services: W. Dickson, 'Chronicles of Alnwick Abbey', Archaeologia Aeliana 3 (1844) pp. 33-45 at 33-4. This is not accurate, however, and all that may be said certainly is that Ivo de Vesci was the first baron of

courts of King Stephen and then King Henry II, and was present as witness to the act by which Stephen appointed his sister Adelidis as abbess of Barking.[45] He died in 1157 while campaigning on the king's behalf in Wales; this fate was very similar to that of his brother Payn who was killed in battle while fighting for King Stephen in 1137. Eustace and Beatrice had one son, William, who took his mother's more prestigious name. We will note here that the fitzJohn name survived only one generation, despite the prestige of those who held it: Payn fitzJohn had only daughters, and Eustace allowed his first son and heir to take his mother's family name.[46] William de Vesci is the man who occurs twice in Barking Abbey sources, as both tenant and benefactor. His inheritance came mainly from his mother's family and included estates in Northumberland and Yorkshire, as well as a small number of estates which had belonged to his father. As the younger son, Eustace fitzJohn was given only a small part of the paternal inheritance, which amounted to a small manor in Saxlingham (Norfolk) held as a fief of the abbey of St Benet's Holme.[47] This one manor was clearly significant to the family, however, since it can be traced through several generations to Eustace fitzJohn's great-great-grandson, William de Vesci III who held it until his death in 1297.[48]

William de Vesci I is of great significance to Barking Abbey, since he was both tenant and benefactor. We know that he, and his father Eustace before him, held certain unidentified lands in fief of the Abbess of Barking. This is revealed in the charter King Henry II granted to William soon after the death of his father in 1157. This is an unusual charter, couched in terms which are more often used in charters of gift than of confirmation, almost suggesting that it was the king himself who was giving the lands to

Alnwick, and that through his daughter and heiress Beatrice his barony found its way to Eustace fitzJohn. A more accurate account of the marriage is found in Hedley, Northumberland families vol. 2, pp. 273-4, and see also C.T. Clay (ed.), Early Yorkshire Charters 12 : The Tison fee (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Records Series ES 10. Wakefield, 1965) pp. 1-4, 15. For the early history of the Vesci family, see Baronies, p. 103.

[45] RRAN III, no. 32. Eustace's career is discussed in detail in Dalton.

[46] After Beatrice's death before 1130 Eustace married again to Agnes, daughter of William Lord of Halton, and the son she bore him took the name fitzEustace. Wightman, The Lacy family, fig. 'The Pontefract branch' after p. 260, and Dalton, p. 362.

[47] Dalton, p. 359 n. 5.

[48] Landon, 'The sheriffs of Norfolk', pp. 162-3, 165.

William rather than their being an inheritance from his father: 'Sciatis me rededisse et concessisse et prefata carta mea confirmasse Willelmo de Vesci in feodo et hereditate omnes terras et tenuras Eustachii filio Johannis patris sui'.[49] The personal nature of this detailed charter is symbolic of the high status to which Eustace and his family had risen within the royal court, but also as a reflection of the early years of King Henry's reign when he was careful to show his authority over the magnates who had previously supported King Stephen.[50] Amongst the estates and fiefs listed, we learn that William inherited from his father 'quicquid tenuit de abbatissa de Birkinges et de feodo suo'.[51] Since the great majority of Barking's lands lay in the south of England, it is puzzling to find one of its fiefs listed amongst the estates of a barony based primarily in the north of England. If we consider, however, that the abbess of Barking in 1157 was Adelidis fitzJohn, the sister of Eustace and aunt of William de Vesci, the grant becomes more interesting. We know that William inherited all his lands from his father Eustace, and this suggests that Eustace had been holding lands as a tenant of his own sister. The significance of this tenancy is discussed in detail in Chapter 7 below. Here I will note only that the grant may have originally been a dowry given with Adelidis fitzJohn when she entered Barking Abbey, and that she may as abbess have leased the land to her own brother Eustace, so that the value of the land remained within the family. Further support for this interpretation comes from the fact that among the witnesses to Henry II's confirmation charter to William de Vesci was Geoffrey de Valognes, son of Agnes fitzJohn and Roger de Valognes and thus nephew to Adelidis and cousin to William de Vesci, who may have had to give his consent.[52]

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[49] Martin, The Percy chartulary. pp. 291-2. The charter can be dated to 1157, since it was witnessed at Rhuddlan and Robert of Torigny tells us that King Henry was there in that year: Robert of Torigny, 'Chronicle', in R. Howlett (ed.), Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I vol. IV (Rolls Series. London, 1899) p. 195.

[50] See White, Restoration and reform. pp. 100-112 on Henry's policy towards baronial succession and confirmations of grants which had been made during Stephen's reign; he generally allowed familial inheritances to remain, but otherwise attempted to undo grants made by Stephen in order to return the country to the state it had been under Henry I. See also p. 128 no. 276 on the vocabulary used in grants.

[51] Martin, The Percy chartulary. p. 293.

[52] See discussion of the Valognes family below pp. 130-4. Geoffrey witnessed six charters for King Henry II. One of these, a grant to Furness Abbey, was also witnessed by William de Vesci in his capacity as Sheriff of Northumberland: Acta of Henry II ref. 14H.

We know that William de Vesci had been a tenant of Barking Abbey, although we do not know the identity of the estates he held from the abbess his aunt Adelidis fitzJohn. Some twenty years after receiving this confirmation from the king, William made his own grant to Barking Abbey under Abbess Matilda, daughter of King Henry II. This charter is a contemporary single-sheet charter bearing William's own seal, and has not been discussed before, despite its considerable interest for Barking Abbey.[53] It can be dated to between1177x9 and 1183, and is the first occurrence of what was to be in the thirteenth century a particularly actively-managed manor.[54] William's charter states that he quitclaimed 'universum ius meum de Hanlega [Hanley] et quicquid habebam in Hanlega. Et terram illam quam tenuit Erkenbrichtus circiter xvi acras in Berching'. There is no earlier record of a member of the Vesci or fitzJohn family holding lands or having incomes from Hanley, a small hamlet in Essex which formed part of the manor of Ingatestone, a small group of hamlets known in the Domesday Book only as 'Inga', where Barking held three and a half hides.[55] It has been suggested that the Barking 'Inga' may be identified with what was later known as Hanley, although it is not clear when the name changed; it is possible that William's charter is the first recorded use of the name Hanley to specify this hamlet.[56] We do not know when William gained rights and incomes at Hanley, but I will suggest below that it may have been leased to him by his own aunt, Adelidis fitzJohn who was abbess of Barking until 1166.[57] Likewise we know nothing about Erkenbrichtus, the tenant at Barking whose sixteen acres William gives to the abbey, or how his lands came to be in William's hands. There is no tenant named Erkenbrichtus in any of the Barking material, and we do not know if he was a

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[53] ERO MS D/DP T1/694. It bears a large round seal bearing clearly the motto 'Sigillum Willelmi Vesci'. C.H. Hartshorne, Feudal and military antiquities of Northumberland (London, 1858) p. 145 illustrates a seal of William de Vesci with a shield, which must have been that of a later member of the family. See Appendix 4, no. 6 below.

[54] The outside dates are the appointment of Abbess Matilda and the death of William de Vesci: in the pipe rolls for 1184 William's estates are accounted for by one William de Carduis: Pipe Roll 31 Henry II 1184-85 (Pipe Roll Society vol. 34. 1913) p. 9.

[55] DB vol. II, fol. 18.

[56] For the identification of the Barking 'Inga' with Hanley, see A. Christy, 'The "Ings" and "Gings" of the Domesday survey, especially Fryerning', TEAS NS 12 (1913) pp. 94-100, at p. 99. The first occurrence of the name Hanley in Reaney, Place names of Essex is in 1248 (p. 254), and it is quite possible that William's charter is the first to call this hamlet by its current name of Hanley.

[57] See below pp. 182.

twelfth-century man with an Anglo-Saxon name, or if William was referring back to a much earlier holder of lands.

William's grant states explicitly 'ideo volo et firmiter precipio nequis heredum meorum predictum monasterium de his tenementis vexare presumat'. We must ask who the heirs were that William referred to, and why he felt the need to protect the abbey from any encroachment by them. William first married a woman named Agnes who bore him a son who died young and two daughters who were both married to northern landholders.[58] His second marriage was to Burga de Stuteville, daughter of Robert lord of Cottingham (Yorkshire). This marriage produced two sons, Warin and Eustace: Eustace was later to become famous as one of the rebel baron signatories of the *Magna Carta*.[59] We know that in 1185 the elder son Eustace was aged 14, and thus was born in 1171, making him between six and twelve years old at the time of William's grant to Barking.[60] William may have been concerned that his son might in due course have attempted to make a claim on this land, hence the strict instructions to his heirs that the estate was to be held by the abbey without any interference.

ii) The Valognes family

William de Vesci was a member of one great dynasty with extensive connections to Barking Abbey in the twelfth century, the fitzJohns. The second family, into which the fitzJohns married, was named Valognes, another new arrival from Normandy which made careful inter-marriages to secure its place as one of the middle-ranking families of Anglo-Norman England. The members of this family who occur in the history of Barking are: Thomas de Valognes, a tenant whose name is specifically recorded in documents relating to the Ilford Hospital; Gunnora de Valognes, a tenant and sister-in-law of a nun in the early thirteenth century; and Christina de Valognes, who was abbess

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[58] See Hedley, Northumberland families vol 2, p. 201 for a genealogical table of the Barons of Alnwick, including the descendants of William de Vesci.

[59] On Eustace see Holt, Magna Carta. pp. 109, 226, 478.

[60] Round, Rotuli de dominabus. p. 9 notes that the heir to William de Vesci in Lincolnshire was fourteen years old, and in the custody of the king. His father had died in 1183, so he would have become a royal ward.

from 1202 until 1214. I shall discuss Thomas's donation in the section below on the foundation of the Ilford Hospital. Christina de Valognes does not appear to fit into any of the established genealogies of the Valognes, but nevertheless I believe she was a kinswoman of this important dynasty. Gunnora de Valognes was not only a member of the family but also provided a connection, through her husband Robert fitzWalter, to the Anglo-Saxon family of Ælfgar which had such a longstanding patronage relationship with the abbey. As with the family of William de Vesci, to gain a full understanding of this family it is necessary to return to the Domesday survey and the arrival of the Valognes family in England.

The Valognes dynasty was descended from Peter de Valognes, a Norman who came to England after 1066 and was a considerable landholder in the East of England. He is listed in 1086 as holding estates in Essex, Hertfordshire and Norfolk and served as sheriff in Essex and Hertfordshire.[61] He was made Lord of Benington in Hertfordshire, and cemented his status in East Anglia through marriage to Albreda, sister of the tenant-in-chief Eudo *dapifer* who was lord of Walkern, very close to Peter's own base at Benington.[62] Their two daughters, one of whom was named Muriel, married into prominent East Anglian families, and shared a common patronage of the Benedictine priory of Earls Colne (Essex).[63] Peter's eldest son Roger inherited the barony of Benington after his father's death after 1109, and it is this Roger who was married to Agnes fitzJohn, sister of Abbess Adelidis and the link between the two great dynasties.[64] Roger and Agnes in turn had five sons, and I shall discuss here only those

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[61] DB vol. I, fols. 140b-41b, vol. II, fols. 78-9b, 256-58b, and Green, English sheriffs. pp. 39, 47. His nearest estate to Barking was a three hide manor at Leyton.

[62] For an account of the lands given to Eudes, see W. Farrer, Honours and knight's fees (3 vols. Manchester 1923-25) vol. 3 pp. 164-295. Baronies. p. 92 describes the barony of Walkern. For a brief discussion of the castles of Benington and Walkern, as well as a map showing their proximity, see R. Bartlett, England under the Norman and Angevin kings 1075-1225 (Oxford, 2000) pp. 271-5.

[63] Muriel was the second wife of Hubert de Montchesney, who by his first wife fathered Warin de Montchesney who had married Agnes, daughter of Payn fitzJohn: Peerage vol. 9, pp. 411, 418-9. Muriel is identified as 'Muriel uxore mea' in a charter of Hubert de Montchesney to Earls Colne; J.L. Fisher (ed.), Cartularium prioratus de Colne (Essex Archaeological Society Occasional Publications vol. 1. Colchester, 1946) no. 64 p. 33. A second unnamed daughter of Peter de Valognes married Alfred of Attleborough, a Norfolk landholder: see the account of him in K. Keats-Rohan, Domesday people 1: Domesday book (Woodbridge, 1999) p. 140, and Fisher, Cartularium prioratus de Colne, no. 2 p. 3 for the donation of *Aluredus vicecomitis*.

[64] The last deeds Peter witnesses are dated to 1109: RRAN II, nos. 913, 914. Keats-Rohan, Domesday

children who are relevant to the current study. Roger and Agnes' eldest son Peter died without children in 1158, leaving the next son Robert as heir to the barony (see the following paragraph).[65] Geoffrey was granted the Lordship of Newham in Scotland, and held knights' fees in Essex and Suffolk in 1166.[66] We should recall that this Geoffrey de Valognes was a witness to King Henry II's charter for William de Vesci.[67] The last son Philip became Lord of Panmure in Scotland, and married his son William to Loretta, the daughter of Saher de Quency the Magna Carta baron.[68]

Robert de Valognes, the heir to his father Peter's barony of Benington, married a woman named Hawise, and had only one child, a daughter named Gunnora. This Gunnora provides the direct link between the Valognes family and Barking Abbey through a tenancy held of the abbey and passed on to the abbey's steward in 1205. She married twice, her first husband Durand de Osteill dying in 1194 without having fathered any heirs.[69] Her second husband, whom she married before 1199, was Robert fitzWalter, Lord of Little Dunmow and infamous 'Marshal of the Army of God' and leader of the Magna Carta barons in 1214. This marriage produced two daughters, Maud and Christina, who married the brothers Geoffrey and William de Mandeville.[70] Geoffrey de Mandeville, like his father-in-law Robert fitzWalter, was one of the Magna Carta barons, and these brothers were related by marriage to another three barons

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people. pp. 322-3 suggests that Peter had another son named William, but he must have been a younger son or died young since we know nothing else of him.

[65] Robert is named as the holder of several knights' fees in Hertfordshire in 1166: H. Hall (ed.), Red book of the exchequer, part 1 (Rolls Series. London, 1896) pp. 360-1.

[66] He died in 1169 leaving no heirs. Hall, Red book. pp. 349, 361, 407 and Hedley, Northumberland families vol. 2, p. 33.

[67] See p. 127 above.

[68] Hedley, Northumberland families vol. 2, pp. 33-35, and G.W.S. Barrow, The Anglo-Norman era in Scottish history (Oxford, 1980) pp. 23-4.

[69] Hedley, Northumberland families vol. 2, p. 35.

[70] Geoffrey (d. 1216) who married Maud and William (d. 1227) who married Christina were successive Earls of Essex. See R.V. Turner, 'The Mandeville inheritance 1189-1236: Its legal, political and social context', Haskins Society Journal 1 (1989) pp. 147-72 and genealogical table p. 169. Christina was the ultimate heir to the whole barony of Benington, and after her death in 1233 the barony was divided amongst the three grand-daughters of her great-uncle Philip de Valognes: J.H. Round, 'Comyn and Valoignes', The Ancestor 11 (1904) pp. 129-35, and J. Greenstreet, 'The extinction of the barony of Valoigns', Notes and Queries 6th ser. 5 (1882) pp. 142-3.

(Geoffrey de Say, Robert de Vere and Henry de Bohun), bringing the total membership within the extended kin group to seven of the twenty-five.[71]

Gunnora de Valognes provided a close link to Barking Abbey, remaining faithful to the East Anglian roots of her wealth and that of her husband Robert fitzWalter of Little Dunmow. In a fine dated Michaelmas 7 John (1205) we find that Robert fitzWalter and his wife Gunnora were engaged in a dispute with Ralph fitzSalomon, the abbey steward, over six virgates of land in Barking.[72] Ralph fitzSalomon had witnessed as steward of Barking in a charter of 1200/01, and was still actively holding land of the abbey in a fine of 1220.[73] Ralph had claimed to be tenant of the land, but the assize decided that Ralph and Gunnora were the rightful tenants, holding the land for a rent of 20 shillings a year. They then leased the land back to Ralph, who gave them a rent of a gilt spur a year and promised to do the service to the abbey in their stead, as he had already been doing. While this is not evidence of patronage in the form of a financial gift to the abbey, nevertheless the fact that Gunnora and her husband were engaged in land transactions with the steward of the abbey suggests a degree of close involvement. We should also recall that the abbess in 1205 was Christina de Valognes, probably a kinswoman of Gunnora. A further examination of the landholdings of Robert fitzWalter and his wife is of significance here, when we consider that he was the distant successor to a pre-Conquest Essex landholder and benefactor of Barking Abbey.

Robert fitzWalter was descended from Richard fitzGilbert of Clare, a Domesday tenant-in-chief in Essex and Hertfordshire.[74] Richard fitzGilbert's eldest son Roger inherited the family estates in Normandy, while the second son Gilbert was granted the family's

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[71] We recall that Eustace de Vesci was also one of the barons, while one of Gunnora's cousins William was married to the daughter of Saher de Quency. For the three barons related by marriage to Geoffrey de Mandeville, see F.M. Powicke, Stephen Langton (Oxford, 1928) p. 213, 'Table to illustrate the connexion between some of the twenty-five'.

[72] Feet of fines for Essex vol. 1, no. 189 p. 36.

[73] ERO MS D/DP T1/695, Calendar, no. 20; a charter of 2 John witnessed 'Rad. Fitz Salom. tunc senescall'. Feet of Fines for Essex vol. 1, Trinity 4 Henry III no. 65, pp. 57-8, concerning a carucate of land in Barking and another in Warley.

[74] For the early history of Richard fitzGilbert and his family in England, see Mortimer, 'The beginnings of the honour of Clare'.

English honours of Clare and Tonbridge.[75] The third son Richard entered the religious life, and became abbot of Ely (1100-1107).[76] The two youngest sons, Walter and Robert, were 'left to make their own fortunes as knights'.[77] It is the fate of Robert which interests us, since he was the grandfather of Robert fitzWalter, husband of Gunnora de Valognes. In 1110 Henry I made Robert fitzRichard Lord of Little Dunmow and gave him the lands confiscated from the rebellious William Baynard, nephew of Ralph Baynard who had been a Domesday tenant-in-chief in Essex.[78] The lordship of Little Dunmow then passed directly from father to son, firstly from Richard fitzGilbert (d.1132) to his son Walter (d.1198) and finally to Robert fitzWalter. As we noted above, some 30% of Ralph Baynard's Domesday lands were inherited from a woman named Æthelgyth, wife of Thurstan who had left a mill to Barking in his will dated 1043.[79] Thurstan was a benefactor of Barking Abbey, and also the great-great-grandson of Ælfgar, the first known aristocratic donor to the post-Viking age nunnery at Barking.[80] We also know that Robert fitzWalter's sister was probably a nun at Barking, since King John's letter of 1215 to Barking about the 'free' election of a successor for Christina de Valognes stated in clear terms that under no circumstances was the sister of Robert fitzWalter to be elected as abbess.[81] The choice of Barking Abbey for his sister is of considerable significance when examined in conjunction with his other religious patronage, which is discussed below.[82]

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[75] Gilbert was the father of the family's best known branch, the Clare lords of Hertford. The history of Gilbert and his descendants is discussed in M. Altschul, A baronial family in medieval England: The Clares. 1217-1314 (Baltimore. 1965) in the introduction covering 1066-1217, pp. 17-28.

[76] HRH 1. p. 45.

[77] J.C. Ward, 'Royal service and reward: The Clare family and the crown, 1066-1154', ANS 11 (1988) pp. 261-78 at 275. This article contains a useful genealogical table at p. 263, focusing on the Hertford branch of Richard fitzGilbert's descendants but also showing the marriages made by his daughters into other prominent Norman families.

[78] Mortimer, 'The Baynards'.

[79] See discussions above pp. 109-12. Thurstan's will is Whitelock, no. 31 pp. 80-85.

[80] See Figure 1, The descendants of Ealdorman Ælfgar, c. 950 – 1100.

[81] Hardy, Rotuli chartarum. p. 202.

[82] See pp. 178-9 below.

c) The Ilford Hospital

The Ilford Hospital was founded in the mid-twelfth century by Adelidis fitzJohn, abbess of Barking, and attracted its own benefactors in significant numbers. Amongst these was Thomas de Valognes, a kinsman of Roger de Valognes and his wife Agnes fitzJohn, and thus indirectly a kinsman of Adelidis, the founder of the hospital. Several other figures appear in the early history of the hospital as granting lands and incomes, often in charters with religious motivations stating that a certain gift is intended to pay for a lamp on the high altar of the hospital chapel or similar. The foundation of this hospital, dependent upon the abbey, suggests that by the mid-twelfth century Barking was confident not only of its own benefactors, but also of its ability to attract other donors for a subsidiary charitable foundation. The majority of information about this institution comes from the Ilford Cartulary, a sixteenth-century copy of earlier documents, based on what I believe was the original medieval cartulary of the hospital.[83] There are copies of the earliest charters of confirmation by Abbess Adelidis, as well as over one hundred summarised notes of donations made in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The hospital of St Mary was founded at Ilford on lands which must have been given by one of the early benefactors of the institution. Barking did not own any land there in 1086, and there are no records of gifts of land there in the following century. The hospital must have been in existence by 1152-54 when King Stephen made a grant 'ad opus infirmorum de Hospitali de Illeford', and was probably founded in the 1140s.[84] Records within the Ilford Cartulary itself suggest a somewhat confused chronology, with an account of the abbess's right to the patronage of the hospital beginning 'In primis afore the Conqueste or soone upon one Aeliza then Abbess of Barkinge founded the same hospitall giving to the same divers landes and tenements and certen tytles as by an oulde evidence sealed with the Convente seal appeareth'.[85] It is possible that the

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[83] See Chapter 2 part b) ii.
[84] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5v, and New charters. pp. 911, 921.
[85] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 30.

'oulde evidence' referred to here was an early version of the charter which was later copied into the Barking 'lygar-booke', the 'more ancient writing which was somewhat defaced' which was itself copied out as the Ilford Cartulary which survives today.[86] Abbess Adelidis' own charter granting lands to the hospital was confirmed soon after her death by Bishop Gilbert Foliot, and then again by Abbess Matilda the daughter of King Henry II (1177x9-99). These charters contain slightly different accounts of the hospital's endowment, and it is necessary to describe each one in detail to understand the order in which the lands were given.

A version of Abbess Adelidis' charter was copied into the Ilford Cartulary in the late sixteenth century.[87] It lists the initial gifts to the 'pauperis infirmis de Illeford' as: 1) 120 acres of assart at Hestholte (Hainault); 2) a mill at Ilford, the construction of which was paid for by the brothers (*de pecunia eorum*, referring back to the sick paupers); 3) half of the income of the parish church of Barking, that part which had belonged to Thomas de Valoniis (Valognes); 4) the tithe which had been Christoferno's from the abbesses' holdings; 5) two sheaves from the tithe of Warley; 6) all the tithe which had belonged to Hugo dapifer in Warley and 7) in Barking; 8) all the lands which had belonged to Helti fitzRichard; and for the cost of their robes, 9) the tithes of the mills in Barking and 10) the tithes which had belonged to Osbert *camerarius*. Several of these grants occur elsewhere within the cartulary, suggesting that they were made to an informal institution and Adelidis' charter was a summary confirming those gifts which had already been made. Indeed, she mentions that these gifts are made as the original charters of the donors testify.

The first confirmation of this charter was made soon after Adelidis' death, and is recorded in an inspeximus made by Archbishop Hubert Walter (1193-1205). Bishop

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[86] This description of the original manuscript was given by James Armorer who copied out certain charters into the Hatfield House manuscript for a sixteenth century lawsuit. See the account of the creation of the Ilford Cartulary in Lockwood, and my additions to this above pp. 38-43. The reference to 'the lygar-booke' is from A. Agarde, 'Of the antiquity of epitaphs in England', in T. Hearne (ed.), A collection of curious discourses written by eminent antiquaries (2 vols. 2nd ed. 1771) vol. 1 pp. 246-51 p. 249. Agarde's paper was first read to the Society of Antiquaries in 1600.

[87] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5; Extracts from the text are given below, Appendix 4 no. 1.

Gilbert Foliot (1163-87) confirmed to the hospital all the gifts mentioned in Adelidis' charter, with the exception of the mill at Ilford and the identification of Thomas de Valognes as previous tenant.[88] His charter explains clearly that it was the abbey and convent who gave the 120 acres of Assart at Hainault: 'c et xx acras essartorum de Escholte quas Adelicia abbatissa et totus conventus de Berkinge eius dedit in perpetuam elemosinam et carta sua confirmavit'. The omission of the mill and Thomas' name may be due to the chronology of the three charters to the hospital, as I will explain below. Gilbert's charter can be dated to between 1166 and 1173 by the witnesses; this is the precise period during which the abbey lacked an abbess, and the hospital may have felt vulnerable without its patron and in need of confirmation of the gifts made to it.[89]

The second confirmation was made by Abbess Matilda, daughter of King Henry II, and follows the account of the hospital's endowment almost verbatim from Adelidis' charter, including all ten grants.[90] She states that she confirms all gifts made by 'pie recordacionis Adelicia ecclesie nostre abbatissa et eiusdem ecclesie', with no reference to Abbess Mary Becket who had come between the two; it is possible that Mary did not confirm Adelidis' gifts, or make any grants of her own. Matilda's confirmation charter can be dated fairly closely by its witnesses, who include Radulf, abbot of St Osyth (1184x92-1205) and John, prior of Blackmore who was acting as steward to the abbey.[91] We know that by 1228 the abbey had been in conflict with the canons of Blackmore (Essex) over the tithes of Hanley, because the dispute reached the ears of Pope Gregory IX and was finally settled by a court of London ecclesiastics.[92] At this early stage, however, they seem to have been on more cordial terms. Other witnesses to the deed include Reginald de Fonte *clericus*, who occurs in another charter of 1190x95

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[88] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 3r, printed in F. Neininger (ed.), English Episcopal acta vol. 15: London, 1076-1187 (Oxford, 1999) no. 124, pp. 80-81, and Appendix 4, no. 3 below.

[89] The witnesses include Richard archdeacon of Colchester (elected 1166) and Robert archdeacon of Oxford (was promoted to bishop of Hereford in 1173). Neininger, English episcopal acta, p. 124 points out the almost exact correlation between the dates of this charter and the vacancy at Barking.

[90] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5v; Appendix 4, no.4 below.

[91] For Radulf, HRH 1, p. 183. He occurs as 'R' in a charter of 1184x94, and by name in 1192.

[92] ERO MS D/DP T1/691, dated to 1228. The conflict was settled in the abbey's favour by Martin, dean of St Paul's, Geoffrey, archdeacon of London and Reginald, archdeacon of Middlesex, and bears their seals.

as cleric, but in 4 Richard I (1192-3) as Reginald de Fonte *tunc senescall*.[93] I suggest
this may mean that Reginald de Fonte was promoted from clerk to steward of the abbey
in 1193, but that prior to this date this role was vacant, hence the need for an outsider
(such as John, prior of Blackmore in this instance) to act as steward temporarily. If this
argument is true, we can date Matilda's charter to between c.1184 (the appointment of
Radulf as abbot of St Osyth) and 1193 (the promotion of Reginald de Fonte to steward).

An analysis of each donor and gift in turn will help to explain the discrepancies between
the charters of Abbesses Adelidis and Matilda and the charter of Gilbert Foliot. The first
gift, and the most generous, is that of 120 acres of assart in the forest of Hainault,
granted by the nuns of Barking. This grant is undoubtedly giving away the same lands
which were mentioned by King Stephen in his charter appointing Adelidis abbess in
1138, where he stated 'Reddo et concedo ecclesie Berkingie et abbatisse Adelide omnes
boscos et terras suas de Leschold et alias quas Henricus rex afforestavit' (Leschold,
Hestholte and Estholt are all variants on the name of the modern forest of Hainault).[94]
More interesting, however, is a second charter of Stephen found in the Ilford Cartulary,
in which he gives and grants to the abbey of Barking 'totum essartum de Estholt ad
opus infirmorum de hospitale de Illeforde'.[95] Vincent suggests from the witnesses that
this charter might be datable to 1152x4, and is certainly before King Stephen's death in
1154, meaning the hospital must have been founded by Adelidis before this date.[96]
Since Adelidis had already granted the 120 acres at Hainault to the hospital, we must
assume that Stephen had not fully relinquished his rights in the land, despite the promise
of his charter of 1138. The later gift may have been his opportunistic attempt to gain
spiritual benefits by formally resigning the lands to the charitable work of the hospital.[97]

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[93] The first charter is ERO MS D/DP T1/690, datable by the witness of Peter of Waltham, archdeacon of
London (occ. 1190-95): J. le Neve, Fasti ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066-1300 vol. I, St. Paul's, London, ed.
D.E. Greenway (London, 1968) pp. 9-10. There is no steward of the abbey amongst the witnesses to this
deed. The second charter, which is dated to the fourth year of King Richard, is ERO MS D/DP T1/1690.
[94] RRAN III. no. 34.
[95] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5v. This charter is printed in New charters. p. 921, with a discussion of the
implications for forest laws at pp. 910-12, and see also Appendix 4 no. 2 below.
[96] New charters. p. 911.
[97] This charter and its relation to other forest charters in the twelfth century is discussed below, Chapter 6
pp. 151-5.

It is possible that Stephen's grant was made in 1152-54 once the hospital was in existence, and was not part of Adelidis' original endowment. This would entail the gift being added to her charter at a later date, but before the confirmation made by Gilbert Foliot in 1166-73, but since it is the first and most important gift named in her charter, I suggest that this is unlikely.

The second gift, that of a mill at Ilford which was to be constructed at the cost of the brothers, does not occur in Gilbert Foliot's confirmation made soon after the original charter purpoted to be written. I would suggest the following chronology to explain the discrepancy between the different accounts. At the time of Adelidis' first grant to the hospital, perhaps recorded in the 'oulde evidence sealed with the Convente seale' referred to elsewhere in the cartulary, the mill at Ilford had not yet been constructed.[98] Abbess Adelidis' original charter was then confirmed in 1166x73 by Gilbert Foliot. At some point between Gilbert's confirmation and Abbess Matilda's confirmation in 1184x93, the brothers constructed a mill on their own lands at Ilford. To validate this change, it was added to Adelidis' original charter to suggest that they had been part of the hospital's original endowment. Abbess Matilda's confirmation of 1184x93 was a confirmation of the amended version of Adelidis' charter. When the various charters were copied into the 'lygar-booke', the amended version of Adelidis' charter was copied and the original charter 'sealed with the convente seale' perhaps kept with it. When the 'lygar-booke' was itself in turn copied out into the Ilford Cartulary, some 50 years after the dissolution of the Abbey, it is possible that the original mid twelfth-century charter had been lost, and so the version given in the 'lygar-booke' was accepted at face value.

The construction of a mill would have been very useful to the brothers, to enable them to process their own grain and also to gain income by charging others for the service of the mill. We may assume that it was a water-mill, since the hospital was located on a crossroads near to the River Roding which continued onwards through Barking until it

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[98] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 20.

reached the Thames.[99] It has been noted that hospitals and leper-houses were often situated near rivers, because of the association with the cleansing effects of the waters of baptism.[100] The only later reference to a mill in the records of the hospital is in a list dating to either 1385 or 1401 (it is dated both 1401 and 8 Richard II) entitled 'Theise been the landes that tyth to the Ospitall of Ilforde that ys to sey a plase of the Abbas of Barking called Estbury'.[101] Among the list of crofts, tenements and parcels of acres is 'a percell lying in the mylle mede', in the meadow by the mill; this need not of course refer to the same twelfth century mill, but it is likely.

The third grant listed in Adelidis' charter was the first major gift made by the abbey on its own behalf, comprising half of the income of the parish of Barking, granted by the abbess and convent. We know that by 1254 there were two parish churches in Barking, one in the Southstrete and one in the Northstrete, suggesting it was a well populated parish and the income would have been sufficient that giving half to the hospital would have provided a considerable amount.[102] It is noted that this gift comprises 'partem illam scilicet quam habuit Thomas de Valoniis', that part which had been held by Thomas de Valognes. His name is not mentioned in the confirmation by Gilbert Foliot, but does occur in Abbess Matilda's later confirmation. If we follow the suggested chronology above the physical creation of these documents, we may be able to explain the appearance of this tenant in the abbey's records. Thomas is the only tenant, rather than donor, to occur in the documents, and this suggests that he was considered important enough to be mentioned by name. If we move forwards to 1202, we see that the successor to Abbess Matilda was a woman named Christina de Valognes, who may have been a nun when Abbess Matilda drew up her confirmation of Adelidis' charter. I suggest that as a probable kinswoman of Thomas, Christina may have wished to

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[99] See the map dated 1738, 'Survey of part of the hospital estate in Great Ilford Essex, the property of Crisp Gascoyne esq.', in Sage Collection Hist. Barking vol. 1. Item 65. This book is a collection of assorted documents relating to the history of Barking and Ilford, which are not catalogued separately by the Essex Record Office. The modern map of Ilford has Chapel Road marking the site of the chapel.

[100] R. Gilchrist, Contemplation and action: The other monasticism (London. 1995) chapter 2 'Houses of mercy: the archaeology of medieval hospitals' pp. 8-61 and particularly p. 39-43.

[101] This list is copied into the Ilford Cartulary, fol.2 under the Latin heading 'Decimale et rentale hospitale Beate Marie et Sancte Thome martyris de magna Hylforde'.

[102] W.E. Lunt (ed.), The valuation of Norwich (Oxford, 1926) p. 333 lists two separate parish churches.

emphasise her family's longstanding connection to Barking, and noted that her ancestor had held lands from the abbey and thus was partly, if rather tenuously, responsible for its economic wellbeing. An investigation of Thomas's family will suggest further links. No man named Thomas appears in the genealogies of the to the main branch of the family which descended from the Domesday lord Peter de Valognes of Benington in Hertfordshire. It is possible, however, that he was a member of a second branch of the family which was based around the Lordship of Parham in Suffolk. This family was descended from Hamo de Valeines, a Domesday tenant of Count Alan at Parham, and it is likely that he was the father of Theobald I de Valognes who held lands in Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and Yorkshire in the early twelfth century (the names appear to be synonymous, as in the Rotuli de Dominabus where Agnes de Valognes is named 'de Valeines').[103] The Parham branch of the Valognes family is of especial importance to this study, since in c.1195 Theobald II de Valognes, grandson of Theobald I, founded a nunnery at Campsey Ash (Suffolk) for his two sisters Joan and Agnes.[104] The significance of Campsey Ash lies in its ownership of a manuscript of saints' lives intended for reading at mealtimes, which contains all three of the Anglo-Norman saints' lives associated with twelfth-century Barking: the *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* by an anonymous nun, the *Life of St Catherine* by Clemence and the *Vie de Saint Thomas le Martyr* by Guernes de Pont-Saint-Maxence.[105]

Mortimer states that there is no link between the Valognes of Parham and the Valognes of Benington, the established family of Barking patrons, but I would suggest that there may be a connection through their descent from a relative of Peter de Valognes of

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[103] DB vol II, fol. 296. Clay, Early Yorkshire charters vol. 5, pp. 234-5. See also the account of the family in R. Mortimer, 'The family of Rannulf de Glanville', pp. 7-10, and particularly the genealogical table p. 10. Agnes de Valognes is identified as 'de Valeines' in Round, Rotuli de dominabus. pp. 67, 77, and as 'Agnes de Valuines' p. 87. This family is well recorded because one of Theobald I's daughters married Ranulf Glanville and another married Hervey Walter and was the mother of Hubert Walter. Mortimer, 'The family of Rannulf Glanville' pp. 8-10 and C.R. Cheney, Hubert Walter (London, 1967) pp. 16-17.

[104] Women religious pp. 178, 219. Joan was the first prioress, and on her death after 1231x2 was succeeded by her sister Agnes; HRH 1. p. 210, HRH 2. p. 548.

[105] On this manuscript and its contents, see Saints' lives. p. 171 which lists the lives contained in the Campsey manuscript, and the discussion of its context in chapter 5.1 'Isabella of Arundel, her literacies, her saints' pp. 151-76.

Benington.[106] According to a charter copied into the cartulary of Binham priory in Norfolk (founded by Peter de Valognes before 1093), Roger de Valognes, son of Peter and husband of Agnes fitzJohn, confirms a gift made by his kinsman Walter whom he describes as *nepos*. This Walter, who may have been Roger's nephew or grandson, had at least two daughters.[107] It is therefore possible that the Parham branch of the Valognes family was descended from this Walter, and that Hamo who is mentioned above was related to Walter. There were several other Valognes males in the late twelfth century who appear as witnesses to royal charters of Henry II and John Count of Mortain, including another Hamo, an Alan, and a Nicholas, suggesting that the extended family was considerably larger than the established genealogies suggest.[108] It is likely that our donor Thomas was related in some way to the better known men and women who shared his name. Hence it is likely that his name was added to a confirmation charter as a distant kinsman of Abbess Matilda, cementing her link to the past of the abbey as well as offering a small form of commemoration for her ancestor.

The next gifts made in the charter were of tithes, a useful way to provide immediate income to the brothers of the fledgling hospital at Ilford. The fourth gift is rather hard to identify, comprising only a gift by Christoferno (perhaps Christopher) of the tithes he received from the abbess's demesne. This may have been another tithe from Barking, or from elsewhere in the abbess's holdings. The fifth item was a grant from the abbess, comprising 'duas garbas decimarum nostrum de Warlea'. This has often been translated as 'two portions' or 'two thirds' of the tithe of Great Warley (Essex), but it seems more likely that this was a use of the specific word *garba* meaning sheaf of corn.[109] This

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[106] Mortimer, 'The family of Rannulf de Glanville' p. 8 n. 60.

[107] Roger confirmed the gift made by Walter his *nepos* of lands at Barney (Norfolk) to the priory of Binham. Walter's daughters are discussed in the context of this donation and a later inheritance issue in J. Green, 'Aristocratic women in early twelfth-century England', in C. Warren Hollister (ed.), Anglo-Norman political culture and the twelfth-century Renaissance: proceedings of the Borchard Conference on Anglo-Norman history 1995 (Woodbridge, 1997) pp. 59-82, Appendix, 'The *statutum decretum*, Barney and Binham priory' pp. 79-82. See also J.C. Holt, 'Feudal society and the family in early medieval England IV; The heiress and the alien', TRHS, 5th ser. 35 (1985) pp. 1-28 at pp. 9-14.

[108] See the indexes to the Acta of Henry II project. Hamo in particular was a prominent member of John's court, and was granted the lordship of Waterford in Ireland by John: British Library Landsdowne Charter 33, Acta of Henry II ref. 9J. See also R.B. Patterson (ed.), Earldom of Gloucester charters (Oxford, 1973) index s.n. Hamo de Valognes for over 20 instances of Hamo as witness to royal charters.

[109] For this translation, see New charters. p. 911 and Neininger, English episcopal acta. p. 80 in the rubric

would be a practical gift which would help the brothers before any of their own lands had begun to produce food, as well as providing further income if it was sold. It is noted in 1212 that the abbess of Barking held Warley, 'nescitur cuius dono', although the abbey is recorded as holding three hides there in 1086 and *tempore Regis Edwardi*.[110] The tithe of sheaves occurs in an inquiry on ecclesiastical income in 1254, where under Great Warley it is recorded 'Warle abatissa appropriata monialibus de Berkyng... Leprosi de Ileford habet decimarum, videlicet ii garbas de toto dominico abbatisse'.[111] The total income of Warley is assessed at ten marks, and the income of the brothers from their two sheaves at three marks.

The ninth item on the list in Adelidis' charter was probably another gift from the nuns and abbess, since it was a tithe of all the mills of Barking to be put towards the costs of the vestments of the brothers ('assignavimus etiam eisdem ad vestimenta sua decimam omnium molendinorum Berkingie'). The abbey owned two mills in Barking in 1086, and there may have been more by the time of this grant to the hospital.[112] These various gifts of tithes were recited in a conflict of 1219 between the abbess and the brothers of the hospital over the costs of building a bell tower at the cemetery in Barking, perhaps that of the abbey itself ('ad faciendum clocharium cimiterii de Berkinge de quo orta fuit controversia inter abbatissa et predictos leprosos').[113] The settlement charter began by reciting those gifts which the brothers (now specified as lepers rather than sick brothers) had owned in the times of Abbess Matilda and Abbess Christina. It begins with all the tithes of their demesne of Barking, 'tam decimas bladi quam decimas minutas', and their tithes of Warley likewise. Abbess Mabel (1215-47) then gave to the brothers a great number of extra tithes and incomes, including 'undecimam partem bladi de molendinis de Berkinge sicut prius illud habuerunt', presumably referring back to the tithe of the mills which had been granted originally to the hospital.

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to the confirmation by Gilbert Foliot; on p. 81 he gives the correct interpretation as 'sheaves'.
[110] Book of fees, commonly called Testa de Nevill (2 vols, London, 1920-23) vol. 1 p. 122.
[111] Lunt, Valuation of Norwich. p. 335.
[112] DB vol. II, fol. 17b.
[113] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 26v. The deed is dated in the 21st year of Bishop William of London (1199-21).

The remaining four grants recited in Abbess Adelidis' charter, numbers 6, 7, 8 and 10 of the list given above (p. 135) are all from identifiable individuals. A man named Hugo dapifer gave all his tithes in Warley and in Barking; this is almost certainly the same Hugh the Steward who gave account for the abbey in the vacancy following Adelidis' death in 1166.[114] It is probably also Hugh the steward with whom Adelidis was accused of 'notorious familiarity and cohabitation' by Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury (1139-61) at an unknown point during her abbacy.[115] It is hard to reconcile this generous-seeming man who acted on behalf of the nuns during a vacancy and gave two separate incomes to the poor brothers of the Ilford Hospital with the man criticised as 'an offence and scandal to all religion'.

The remaining two grants confirmed in Adelidis' charter are recorded elsewhere in the Ilford Cartulary, further suggesting that she had encouraged donors to target the hospital in its young days, and then recorded their gifts as part of its early endowment. In the eighth item of Adelidis' charter a man named Helti fitzRichard gave lands from his fief, which were not identified. Later in the manuscript, however, we come to three more references Helti's gift, identifying the lands and adding some interesting conditions. Firstly it is recorded that he gave two hides of land, one in *Almedelea* (not identifiable) and one in Upminster (Essex), free from all duties.[116] Helti's gift is confirmed by a man named Daniel de Crivecoer, who states that these lands are held in fief of him by Helti and that he willingly agrees to Helti's grant.[117] The extended version of Helti's grant is the most interesting. It records the gift as in the previous two grants, but notes that 'ob hanc terram mundavit [mihi] dominam Aelidis abbatissa Berkingensis ecclesie xx et viii marcas argentum nomine emptionis ad opus predictorum pauperum'.[118] Far from being a gift made in pure and perpetual alms, this was a purchase of land by the abbess on behalf of the brothers, and at the cost of 28 marks for two hides of land.

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[114] Pipe Roll 15 Henry II. p. 135, where Hugh of Barking gives the accounts for the previous three and three-quarter years.
[115] Letters of John of Salisbury vol. 1, no. 69 pp. 111-12.
[116] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 6, fourth item.
[117] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 6, fifth item.
[118] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 6, sixth item.

The last grant recorded as part of the early endowment of the Ilford Hospital was given in Adelidis' charter as 'all the tithe of Osbert *camerarius*'. We may cast light upon this rather unspecific grant by reference to another note in the cartulary, in which it is recorded that Osbert gave his land at 'Pinchemars que iacet iuxta boscum domini Alexandri' in return for a rent of 12d per year.[119] I have been unable to identify *Pinchemars* amongst any of the holdings of the hospital; it probably represents the local name for a field or other area of land.[120] Neininger has suggested that this donor may be the Osbert *camerarius* who was canon of St Paul's, and whose first occurrence as canon is dated 1184x5.[121] He also appears as benefactor in a charter to St Paul's dated 1202-4.[122] If he gave lands to Barking Abbey before the death of Abbess Adelidis in 1166, we must surmise that Osbert lived at least another forty years before making his grant to St Paul's. I would suggest that this leads us to one of two possibilities. Firstly, the Barking Osbert was not the same man as the St Paul's Osbert. Secondly, it may be possible that Osbert did not make his grant before Adelidis granted her original confirmation charter. His grant must have occurred by 1166x73, however, since it is confirmed by Bishop Gilbert Foliot between these dates. This still leaves us with the dilemma of Osbert's long life of land-granting maturity. I propose that we may have to disagree Neininger's suggestion, and conclude that Osbert *camerarius*, 'the chamberlain' who gave to the Ilford Hospital, was not the same man who then served as canon at St Paul's cathedral.

All these donors to the Ilford Hospital, and the more than one hundred whose gifts were recorded in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, gave their patronage to the hospital for sick brothers in preference to the abbey. The exact nature of the hospital is not specified in Adelidis' charter, but it is clearly identified as a hospital 'for sick paupers'. Later

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[119] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 3v, second item.

[120] Many such names are given in the fourteenth-century list of the hospital's holdings, Ilford Cartulary, fol. 2. The location and modern identity of Mowmede, Wolf Hythe, Cleekys Croft, Stotfolds and many other small holdings given to the hospital must remain unknown until another scholar analyses the later material in the Ilford Cartulary.

[121] Neininger, English episcopal acta. p. 81.

[122] M. Gibbs (ed.), Early charters of the cathedral church of St Paul's, London (Camden Society 3rd ser. vol. 53. London, 1939) no.70, pp. 56-7.

accounts have assumed that it was always a leper hospital, but this is incorrect.[123] The grants by Osbert *camerarius* and Helti fitzRichard which are given in detail in the Ilford Cartulary refer specifically to 'infirmis fratribus', as indeed do the majority of later grants which mention the inmates of the hospital. It is their poverty which is of greater concern to these charitable donors than the specific illness from which they suffered. The first specific reference to the inmates of the hospital as lepers is in the 1219 settlement of a dispute over incomes between the abbess and the brothers. In this settlement various rules were set out for the running of the hospital and the incomes granted to the hospital.[124] It was agreed that the brothers would receive an income of 40 shillings annually from the vicar of Barking. We recall that in 1254 there were two vicars, one for the Northstrete and one for the Southstrete, but neither is specified here, so we may infer that in 1220 there was only one church in Barking.[125] There should always be thirteen brothers, chosen from among the poor of the abbey's demesne, and if the number fell below thirteen the abbess was free to choose any others to make up the full complement. If the master of the hospital died, the brothers could choose three from among their number as nominees, and the abbess had the right to choose the new master. The brothers were obliged to swear obedience to the abbess, and were not to have the right of sepulture within the abbey grounds except if they devoted their life to the service of the abbey. Presumably those brothers who became well enough to live independently lost this right.

There is only one charter addressed from the brothers to the abbey preserved in the Ilford Cartulary, but it contains some uniquely interesting information. This charter, issued by Prior Philip, was almost certainly produced at the same time at Abbess Matilda's confirmation of the hospital's properties, as it bears exactly the same witness list.[126] Prior Philip of the Ilford Hospital promised that the brothers would perpetually

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[123] See for example Fowler, Ilford. which refers to the hospital as housing lepers from its institution.
[124] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 26v. The case is summarised in Lethiullier, A history of Barking. appendix A.
[125] Lunt, Valuation of Norwich. p. 333 and p. 139 above.
[126] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 15rv; Calendar, no. 16. As explained above, the presence of John prior of Blackmore as steward and Reginald de Fonte as *clericus* suggests that it may be dated before 1192. The presence of Radulf, abbot of St Osyth sets the *terminus ante quem non* at 1184x92. See Appendix 4, no. 5 below.

provide the food and vestments for a chaplain to say mass every day for the souls of Abbess Matilda and for all the convent of Barking. Most significantly, after the death of Abbess Matilda the chaplain would say masses for the soul of Abbess Matilda, and for the soul of King Henry II, and 'pro anime Joannis matris sue': for the soul of Joanna, the mother of Abbess Matilda. This is the first and only reference to Abbess Matilda's mother, and confirms what was already known, that she must have been an illegitimate daughter of the king.

As well as the hospital at Ilford for sick men, it has been suggested that the nuns of Barking founded a second institution in Barking itself, specifically for sick women. Records from the fifteenth century refer to a 'Spitell' in Barking located near to the site of the Abbey. This has been identified with the later Hospital of St Laurence which was mentioned in a survey of 1609.[127] The sixteenth-century account book of the cellaress includes references which may indeed suggest that the abbey was patron of an institution for sick women. Payments were made for 'eggs and lenten herring to the prioress of the hospital', and a weekly allowance of food was to be delivered to 'the sisters of the hospital'.[128] The exact relationship between the abbey and this institution is not clear, and it does not occur in any other materials. It was almost certainly not in existence during the period covered by this study, and we may assume that the patronage exercised in the twelfth century was directed entirely to the Abbey and to the Ilford Hospital.

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[127] K. Glenny, 'The forgotten benefactor, John Wilde', Essex Journal 10 (1975) pp. 129-33, a discussion of records relating to 'Wilde's charity' which funded almshouses in early modern Barking. He refers to the Hospital at pp. 129, 133. See also the more recent account in H.H. Lockwood, 'Barking almshouses reconsidered', Essex Journal 30 (1995) pp. 16-19, which suggests that the hospital may have survived well beyond the dissolution, whereas Glenny suggests its lands may have been sold and the hospital dissolved.

[128] J.E. Oxley (ed.), 'Account book of the Cellaress', Barking and District Archaeological Society Transactions 3 Part I (1956) p. 9.

Part III: The politics of patronage: Analysis

Chapter 6: Royal patronage

a) Endowments

The earliest donors to Barking as a double house were members of different royal houses across Anglo-Saxon England. The charter of Bishop Erkenwald names amongst the donors to his early foundation the kings of Essex, Wessex and Mercia, as well as an unknown, but certainly wealthy woman named Quoengyth.[1] It would appear that from its earliest days Barking was receiving gifts from both members of the local royal house and from kings based further afield. Its position as one of the first major nunneries in England, preceded perhaps only by Lyminge and Folkestone, would have made it an obvious recipient for the generosity of kings newly converted to Christianity.[2]

Whether the community at Barking was completely dispersed during the Viking invasions is, as we have seen, not clear; but like other double houses it had certainly lost its male inmates by the tenth century. The regrowth of religious life under King Alfred (871-99) saw men and women divided for the first time, and this fundamental change formed the pattern for segregated religious life in England until the emergence of the syneisactic orders of the twelfth century.[3] Religious life in England was re-invigorated in the early to mid-tenth century based upon the model of the reforming male continental houses, attempting to remove the secular canons from cathedrals and to put an end to the abuses of 'family monasteries' which led to monastic estates being treated

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[1] The donors in Erkenwald's charter are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, pp. 87-91.

[2] Hagiographic evidence suggests that Folkestone may have been founded in the mid-seventh century by Eanswith, daughter of Eadbald (King of Kent 616-640); Veiled women II. p. 89. Lyminge was founded in 633 as a royal minster for both men and women: Veiled women II. p. 111-12. The *Vita* of St Osyth suggests that she may have founded a nunnery at Chich in Essex in 653, but there is no documentary evidence to support this: Veiled women II. p.160.

[3] Alfred's foundation of a monastery at Athelney and a nunnery at Shaftesbury set the tone for men and women living separate religious lives. On Athelney, MRH. p. 59. On Shaftesbury, Veiled women II. pp. 165-7.

as personal property.[4] Archbishop Dunstan and King Edgar are usually given the majority of credit for the English adoption of the reformed Benedictine rule, since it was they who oversaw the composition of the *Regularis Concordia,* but evidence suggests that Edgar's predecessors had already taken an interest in encouraging the re-growth of religious life. Individual nuns appear as beneficiaries several times in the charters of Kings Æthelstan (925-40), Edmund (940-6), Eadred (946-55) and Eadwig (955-59) suggesting that where there were not established houses for women, kings were actively encouraging individuals living a secluded religious life.[5] Interestingly, these kings gave several gifts to religious houses for men but to no individual male religious, suggesting perhaps that it took longer for women's communities to recover than men's after the Viking invasions.[6] Cubitt's statement that 'the reform movement's greatest patron was not King Edgar but a woman, the Virgin Mary' may help to explain this promotion of women's religiosity: Mary's representatives on earth were these chaste women devoting themselves to God.[7]

This royal encouragement of individual religious observance seems to have preceded the formalised nunnery at Barking. King Eadred gave lands to two religious women named Eawynn and Æthelgifu in the mid tenth century, and we may infer that they were among the earliest members of the community at Barking, since lands they received from Eadred were included among the abbey's lands at the Domesday Survey.[8] Shortly

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[4] D.A. Bullough, 'The continental background of the reform', in D. Parsons (ed.), Tenth-century studies: Essays in commemoration of the millennium of the Council of Winchester and the Regularis Concordia (London, 1975) pp. 20-36 esp. pp. 28-29.

[5] Grants by Æthelstan were made to Shaftesbury (S. 419, 429), Wilton (S. 424, 238), and to religious women named Eadwulfu (identified as a nun, S. 448) and Wulfswith (*ancilla Dei*, S. 449). Grants were made by King Edmund to individual religious women only, and not nunneries (S. 464, 465, 474, 482,485, 487, 493). Eadred made by grants to religious women (S. 534, 535), a nun at Wilton (S. 563), and a grant to a priest with reversion to the nunnery of Winchester (S. 526). Grants by Eadwig were to the nuns of Wilton (S. 582), to Ælfswith 'the faithful woman' (S. 593), and to Shaftesbury (S. 630).

[6] Edmund made grants to Hyde Abbey, Christ Church Canterbury, Glastonbury and 'baederioces wirde' (perhaps Bury St Edmunds: S. 470, 477, 515, 507). Eadred made grants to Ely, Christ Church Canterbury, Crowland and Glastonbury (S. 572, 537, 546, 538, 553). Eadwig was considerably more generous to male houses than female religious; his grants were to Abingdon, Bath, Glastonbury, Malmesbury, Worcester and the New Minster Winchester (S..583, 584, 605, 607, 658, 663, 610, 643, 664, 626, 629, 633, 648, 660).

[7] C. Cubitt, 'Virginity and misogyny in tenth- and eleventh-century England', Gender and History 12 (2000) pp. 1-32, at p. 1.

[8] S. 517a, 517b. See, however, Veiled women II. p.31 and Crick, p. 169 for the argument that these

after in 950 Eadred granted land to the 'monastice conversationis familia in bercingum'; this grant coincides with the will of Ealdorman Ælfgar bequeathing lands to '[sancte] Marie Stowe at Berkynge' in around 951.[9] The community was evidently fairly well established by the time King Edgar (959-75) became involved, and he should not be considered as founder. Goscelin of St-Bertin, writing in the 1080s in the *Life of St Wulfhilda,* stated that Edgar 'gave' to Wulfhilda the 'monasterium Berkingum', and while he evidently supported the abbey financially and restored it to its earlier glory, he did not leave it any permanent endowments.[10] It is likely that the eleventh-century nuns may have wished to emphasise their connection to an Anglo-Saxon king, creating the precedent for royal protection and promotion of the house particularly at a time of political upheaval in England.

Although there is no direct evidence of royal giving to Barking between the mid-tenth century and the early twelfth, this does not mean that kings did not take an interest in Barking. William the Conqueror stayed there in the winter of 1066/7, and his confirmation of the abbey's rights and privileges may have been in recompense for this imposition.[11] There must have been many more gifts made than the few for which evidence survives, looking at the abbey's Domesday holdings. Of 18 named estates owned by the abbey in 1086 we have charter evidence for only one, while three estates can be linked indirectly.[12] Some of the remaining estates may have been granted by members of the local aristocracy, but is seems unlikely that they could have provided the whole pre-Conquest endowment of the abbey.

The majority of charters granted to Barking in the early years of the Angevin era were confirmations rather than new gifts of land. This may be a reflection of the relatively unstable atmosphere in post-Conquest England, and the importance successive kings

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women need not be connected to Barking at all.

[9] S. 931a. Ælfgar's will is discussed in Whitelock pp. 6-9, 103-108.

[10] By this I mean there is no charter evidence or other record of any land gifts made by Edgar. Given the large number of new royal charters in the Ilford Cartulary, one might expect any such grant to have been recorded there.

[11] RRAN I, no. 240: Bates, Regesta. no. 10, and see above pp. 61-2.

[12] See Appendix 2, and pp. 98-99 above.

placed on using land as a tool with which to gain the loyalty of aristocratic figures. While the religious houses were powerful landholding institutions and feudal lords of their own tenants, an abbot or abbess was much less likely to rise up against the king and rebel against his authority. Henry I confirmed the abbey's rights 'sicut pater meus concessit et precepit per breve et sigillum suum', and also granted two further confirmations to Abbess Agnes.[13] This re-confirmation of one's predecessor's gifts was quite usual, especially on the accession of a new king. It is also entirely fitting that a son should confirm the gifts of his father, and a brother likewise the gift of his brother. After the relatively straightforward successions of the early twelfth century, however, the country fell into a period of political disarray. During the reign of King Stephen the giving of lands and privileges became as vexed an issue as that of the crown itself, with reversals of earlier gifts and appointments showing that Stephen and the Empress recognised the political power and significance of the rulers of the wealthy old monasteries.[14]

Before the discovery of the Ilford Cartulary, the affairs of Barking Abbey in the twelfth century seemed to be fairly straightforward. As we have seen, King Stephen had granted the abbey the income of the hundreds of Barstable and Becontree, reduced the abbey's liability for hidage at Weston and Thames Ditton (Surrey), and confirmed the gift of lands at Woolston (Essex) by the servant of his wife, Queen Matilda III.[15] In his charter appointing Adelidis fitzJohn abbess in 1138 he also stated 'reddo et concedo ecclesie Berkingie et Abbatisse Add' omnes boscos et terras *suas* de Leschold et alias quas Henricus rex afforestavit ut illas excolat et hospitetur' (my emphasis).[16] This referred to the abbey's own woods at *Leschold* (Hainault) and to further unidentified lands which his uncle Henry I had absorbed into the royal forest. Despite the statement of his coronation charter that 'By the common council of my barons I have retained the forests

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[13] RRAN II, nos. 798, 1242, 1453. For the texts, CCR V, pp. 284-6, nos. 10, 11 and 14.

[14] The idea of anarchy was first introduced by H.W.C. Davis in his 1903 article 'The anarchy of Stephen's reign', EHR 18 (1903) pp. 630-41. After a century of discussion over exactly how anarchic the period of civil war was, more recent scholars are concluding that Stephen's reign was not one of total disorder and chaos; see for example D. Crouch, The reign of King Stephen, 1135-54 (Harlow, 2000).

[15] RRAN III. nos. 34, 35, 37.

[16] RRAN III. no.31

in my own hands as my father did before me', Henry I did increase the area of land under royal forest law.[17] Forest laws were a very contentious issue, and while there had been land set aside as royal forest under Cnut (1016-35) and Edward the Confessor (1042-66), it was only the introduction of forest laws and duties under William I (1066-87) which was resented by the native population.[18] Cnut's laws stated 'It is my will that every man shall be entitled to hunt in the woods and fields on his own property. But everyone, under pain of the full penalty, shall avoid hunting on my preserves wherever they may be'.[19] This was considered a fair request for the king to make of his people, but the extension of the forest and the stricter administration of it under William I caused resentment. Indeed, according to the regretful statement of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, William II (1087-1100) attempted to gain the support of the English on his succession to the throne by granting them freedom of the forests, 'but his promises were short-lived'.[20]

King Stephen's Oxford Charter of 1136, intended to state his desire for fairness at the beginning of his reign, had noted 'Forestas quas Willelmus avus meus et Willelmus avunculus meus instituerunt et habuerunt mihi reservo. Ceteras omnes, quas rex Henricus superaddidit, ecclesiis et regno quietas redo et concedo'.[21] This strongly suggests that that King Henry I did not keep the promise of his coronation charter. Indeed, in a charter of 1100-1106 Henry had granted Barking Abbey its rights and freedoms, 'et ita bene habeat silva sua sicut habuit tempore patris mei', but evidently did not keep to his word.[22] It seems that Stephen's own intention to restore forests to religious houses was not entirely successful, since he had to restate the specific grant to Barking. This charter was given in 1138, soon after Stephen's accession, so it may be that he simply wished to emphasise the more general grant. Some years later in 1146x8,

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[17] W. Stubbs, rev. H.W.C. Davis, Select charters (9th ed. Oxford, 1913) p. 119, and see C.W. Hollister, Henry I (London, 2001) p.111.
[18] M. Clanchy, England and its rulers, 1066-1272 (2nd edn. Oxford, 1998) p. 33.
[19] A.J. Robertson. The laws of the kings of England from Edmund to Henry I (Cambridge. 1925) p. 215.
[20] ASC E text s.a. 1087.
[21] Stubbs, Select charters. p.143-3 (this charter is not included in RRAN. as it is Stephen's charter to the whole country rather than a specific recipient).
[22] RRAN II, no. 798, CCR V, p.286.

however, it was necessary for him to make a similar grant to Wenlock Priory, quitclaiming to the monks 'all assarts which the monks and their men made after the death of King Henry from their demesne woodland... which my uncle King Henry had afforested'.[23] This and the grant to Barking in itself would be very interesting as two of the first royal acts of disafforestation.[24]

Two newly rediscovered charters in the Ilford Cartulary throw new light on Stephen's policies towards the forests and on the possible timescale of afforestation during Henry I's reign. The forest lands referred to in Stephen's charter to Barking of 1138, which are not discussed in any of the existing literature, are at 'Leschold', (Hainault), part of the royal forest of Waltham north of Ilford.[25] Stephen noted that the lands at Hainault and elsewhere to be used for cultivation and storage of grain ('ut illas excolat et hospitetur'), and thus would be useful to allow the abbey to supply some of its own needs, and grow produce to sell. The first new grant discussing this land is Adelidis' own grant of lands in the early 1150s to her foundation of Ilford Hospital, in which she gave, among other lands, 'totum assartum nostrum de Hestholte; scilicet c et xx acr' cum molendino'.[26] The wording of this grant implies that the land at Hainault was already assarted when she gave it to the hospital, and also that it was the abbey's own to give. It would thus be a reasonable assumption that Stephen's first grant of 1138 restored the land to the abbey after its afforestation by King Henry I, and that Adelidis passed it on to the hospital at a later date.

The second grant concerning the forest is a charter in the Ilford Cartulary, dated by Vincent to 1152-54, records Stephen's 'gift and grant' ('dedi et concessi') to the nunnery of St Ethelburga of all the assart of Esholt (Hainault) 'ad opus infirmorum de

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[23] Crouch, King Stephen, p. 46 and n.50.
[24] J.H. Round, 'The forest of Essex', Journal of the British Archaeological Association NS 3 (1897) pp. 36-42 discusses Stephen's charter to Barking.
[25] H.H. Lockwood, 'Claybury and the survival of the golden woods', in K. Neale (ed.), Essex heritage: Essays presented to Sir William Addison as a tribute to his life and work for Essex history and literature (Oxford, 1992) pp. 83-118, at p. 85-87.
[26] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5.

hospitali de Ileford'.[27] As we have seen, Adelidis had already given the assart at Hainault to the hospital, suggesting that Stephen may have not fully resigned his rights in the land despite two charters (the Oxford Charter of 1136 and the specific grant to Barking of 1138) stating that all assarts were to be returned to the abbey.[28] It is possible he saw this as a good opportunity to gain some spiritual benefit by allowing the lands to be alienated from the nunnery, over which he might feasibly have had a degree of control, to the hospital which was considerably more independent. Lockwood suggests that this is illustrative of Stephen's generosity towards the church in granting freedoms from forest duties, and the charter does state the land is to be held 'in perpetuam elemosinam libere et quiete ab omnibus placitis essartarum'.[29] It is also possible that the nuns sought protection from the overly enthusiastic exercising of the foresters' powers, and simply asked Stephen to provide a charter confirming the hospital's possessions and defending its interests .

Moreover, the identity of the lands themselves is revealing of the process by which successive kings reversed each other's decisions (in this instance, with regard to afforestation) as part of a policy of emphasising their control over the country. The land at what is now known as Hainault is named 'Leschold', 'Estholt' and 'Hestholte' in various charters in the Ilford Cartulary, but by the early 14th century this name was given as 'Hineholt'.[30] Hart suggests that 'Hineholt' is a variant form of the Old English 'Higna Holt', meaning 'farm of the monastic community'.[31] Given the wide area of woodland which Barking owned at the Domesday Survey and before, it is possible and indeed likely that they already owned lands within the forest of Hainault, which were used as assart for growing crops and feeding animals.[32] If this is the case, the pattern of ownership revealed is significant. I suggest that Barking may have owned the land in

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[27] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 5v, printed in New charters. p.921. For the suggested date, New charters. p. 911
[28] I discuss the chronology of the foundation in Chapter 5 part c) above.
[29] Lockwood, 'Claybury and the survival of the golden woods', p. 90.
[30] Reaney, Place names of Essex. p. 2 gives the name as Henehout in 1221, and Hineholt in 1323. The spelling changed to Hainault through a fictitious link to Philippa of Hainault
[31] C Hart, 'The St Paul's estates in Essex', in C. Hart, ed., The Danelaw (London, 1992) pp. 205-20, at p. 208 n.5 and p.215.
[32] The abbey owned woodland for 1,000 swine and 100 acres of meadow at Barking, for example, and woodland for 300 swine at Mucking: DB vol. II, fol. 17b. None of the named lands lie within the modern

the eleventh century and used it for assart. Henry I then included that land in his general expansion of the royal forest during his reign (1100-1135), but within the space of some 35 years by the time Stephen restored it to the abbey, it would not have become too heavily wooded, if indeed it had been planted at all. Stephen's grant of 1138 then truly was granting the abbey 'omnes boscos et terras *suas* de Leschold' (my emphasis), returning to a religious community lands which he had promised to return in any case in the Oxford Charter.

The exercise of royal patronage by giving and restoring lands to one's favoured houses, then, was a tactic employed by successive kings. Stephen's actions in reversing Henry I's afforestation was not a political action with any specific target in mind, but one which was for the general benefit of religious houses. This would of course have indirectly gained support for Stephen through the kinsmen of members of these religious houses, who would have found their economic circumstances much easier after the restoration of lands. In Barking's case it seems to have been especially fortunate, as an act of restoration of what may have been a pre-conquest landholding. It is possible that Stephen gave Abbess Adelidis fitzJohn the successive grants of income (from the two hundreds of Barstable and Becontree) and of lands at Ilford to show gratitude to the fitzJohn family, whose members Payn and Eustace had been prominent in his service.[33] It is also possible that he used these grants to Barking as a way of buying the favour of that family, and ensuring the continued support of members of the dynasty. A much more direct way in which kings and queens expressed their power and influence was in the exercise of advowson, the right of appointing an abbot or abbess to a religious house, and it is to this that I will now turn.

b) Appointments of abbesses

The role of patron usually brought with it the right to exercise influence over the choice of leader of a religious community. In the case of houses founded as part of the twelfth

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boundaries of Hainault forest, but it may have extended much further in the middle ages.
[33] See the account of their careers in Dalton.

century growth in monasticism, we often have clear evidence that lay founders placed a member of their own family at the head of a newly founded house, and continued to have a decisive role in the appointment of successors.[34] Those who gave lands to religious communities did so with the expectation that their successors would have a continuing role in the interests of a house, both financial and spiritual.[35] This ongoing relationship was one of the key motivations behind an act of patronage, and in return for a grant of land it was expected that many members of the granting family, both living and dead, would receive the spiritual services offered by a religious community. The ongoing role of the founder or patron as protector, passed down through successive generations, had developed from the sense that the church was 'a feudal benefice'; the patron was a feudal lord who both protected and profited from the houses under his wing.[36] The king, as secular guardian of the church, was considered an ideally strong lord and one whose patronage was often actively sought.[37] The case of Barking is unclear, as it lacked a royal founder in the strictest sense. Nevertheless it was the subject of considerable of royal interest across the whole period under consideration. It seems that successive kings recognised its strategic importance. As the richest and oldest nunnery near London, its abbesses held considerable power in East Anglian politics, and hence royal control over the appointment of abbesses became a tool of considerable political significance.

Royal intervention in the appointment of abbesses at Barking was intended to gain loyalty to the king in two ways. Firstly, some kings appointed members of their own family as abbess when there was an extended vacancy or other difficult situation at the

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[34] Women religious. pp.184-6

[35] See C. Holdsworth, The piper and the tune: Medieval patrons and monks (Stenton lecture 1990) (Reading, 1991), and the discussion of patronage as a historical event in Chapter 1 part c) above.

[36] E. Hallam, 'Aspects of the monastic patronage of the English and French royal houses, c. 1130 – 1270' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1976) pp. 8-9.

[37] For example the monks of Malmesbury, who offered themselves to King David of Scotland after the death of his sister Queen Matilda II; 'While she lived, our church enjoyed in full measure complete honour, unsullied holiness, loving and unstinting generosity… To imitate her goodwill will befit your kingly spirit and noble purpose… And the best way to accomplish this will be to follow what she so admirably did'. They also requested the patronage of the Empress Matilda, to whom they dedicated the History of the English commissioned by Matilda II. William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum, eds. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford Medieval Texts. 2 vols. Oxford, 1998-9) vol. 1 pp. 5, 7-9.

abbey. This gave the king direct control over the abbey, and had the added benefit of providing royal income without outwardly being seen to delay election and thus exploit any vacancy.[38] Secondly, some appointments were made for overtly political reasons, whether to reward a member of a favoured family or to exclude those women whose kinsmen the king did not trust. Both forms of appointment benefited the king, both politically through ensuring the abbey was always in the control of a woman over whom he had influence, and financially through ensuring that the abbey was economically healthy enough to pay him the various duties it owed.

i) Royal abbesses

The earliest abbesses we know about, St Wulfhilda and Queen Ælfthryth, were both royal kinswomen appointed by King Edgar. The evidence of these appointments is rather ambiguous, primarily because our only source is Goscelin of St-Bertin who was writing on behalf of the late eleventh-century nuns of Barking and presented their viewpoint. According to the *Vita Sancti Wulfhildae*, King Edgar 'gave' the abbey of Barking to Wulfhilda, later St Wulfhilda, in reparation for his amorous pursuance of her while she was a young nun at Wilton.[39] Internal evidence given by Goscelin suggests that this appointment must have been made between 963 and 969, by which date the refounded nunnery at Barking was at least 15 years old.[40] As a woman who had grown up at the nunnery of Wilton, Wulfhilda would have known about the ways in which a community needed to organise itself, and would thus have been a wise choice as abbess. She was a kinswoman of the king (the cousin of St Wulfthryth, concubine to King Edgar and mother of St Edith) and this personal link as well as the wider loyalty owed to the king would have given Edgar a considerable degree of influence over her.[41]

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[38] Kings were sometimes criticised for leaving abbeys vacant for an unnecessarily long time in order to receive their income through royal administrators: see for example F. Barlow, William Rufus (London, 1983) pp. 181-3.

[39] VStW, chap. 4 p. 423.

[40] On the beginnings of the tenth-century nunnery, see pp. 54-6 above.

[41] VStW, chap. 4 p. 424 notes that she was 'propinquior' (kinswoman) to Wulfthryth. See also Crick, pp. 172-3.

Soon after her appointment to Barking, Wulfhilda was ejected by Edgar's wife Queen
Ælfthryth, who took over the abbey herself according to Goscelin of St-Bertin.[42] He
claims that Wulfhilda was ruling over successful nunneries at both Barking and Horton,
which Edgar had supposedly also given to her, but that the officers of Barking
'invidiosa ambitione' rebelled against her and turned to Queen Ælfthryth for support.[43]
Goscelin's version, at the behest of his patrons at late eleventh-century Barking,
claimed that the heroine Wulfhilda was unfairly ejected from her nunnery, and sent into
exile for 20 years (between c. 969 and 989) during which time Queen Ælfthryth abused
the nunnery for her own profit.[44]

This negative account of Queen Ælfthryth as despoiler of Barking, however, fails to
consider several points in her favour. If Edgar had considered her imposition on
Barking wrong, he could have intervened and refused to allow his wife to remove
Wulfhilda, his own chosen abbess. Instead, he showed no opposition; if he had, we
might expect Goscelin to report this as further evidence of Ælfthryth's sinful behaviour,
since Edgar had already been portrayed as supporting the abbey in penitence for his
attempted seduction of Wulfhilda. Indeed, it was around this time that the *Regularis
Concordia* was written, stating famously that Ælfthryth 'should be the protectress and
fearless guardian of the communities of nuns; so that [Edgar] himself helping the men
and his consort the women there should be no cause for any breath of scandal'.[45] It is
stated by Æthelwold that 'in some places also [Edgar] established cloistered women and
entrusted them to his consort Ælfthryth, that she might help them in every necessity'.[46]
Some ten years after her imposition upon Barking Ælfthryth was also involved in the
founding of the nunneries at Wherwell and Amesbury, possibly in reparation for her
involvement in the death of her son Edward the Martyr (d. 978).[47] If we consider that

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[42] VStW, chap. 9 pp 428-9.
[43] He calls Horton 'hereditarium monasterium suum', VStW. p. 428.
[44] This interpretation has been accepted at face value by several modern historians; see for example
Loftus and Chettle, p. 20.
[45] Symons, Regularis Concordia, p.2
[46] Æthelwold, 'An account of King Edgar's establishment of monasteries' , in D. Whitelock (ed. and
trans.) Councils and Synods I A.D. 871-1204 (Oxford, 1964) p.150.
[47] See Veiled women II. pp. 21-25, 215-19

these four nunneries (Barking, Wherwell, Amesbury and the Nunnaminster) were among the richest in England at both the Domesday investigation and the Dissolution of the monasteries, Ælfthryth's influence can hardly have been as detrimental as Goscelin would like us to believe. As Stafford points out, it seems that the houses which survived the difficult tenth century were those which had a powerful abbess at critical moments in their early incarnations.[48] It is obvious that Goscelin, as hagiographer of the abbess St Wulfhild, would wish to paint Ælfthryth in a bad light, but it is remarkable that modern historians have accepted Goscelin at face value, without taking into account the positive evidence relating to her actual efficacy as a protector of nunneries. The nuns at tenth-century Barking seem to have accepted Queen Ælfthryth as ruler over them, whether in a positive or merely passive way.

A less direct form of rule was exercised by later queens, appointed by their husbands to protect the abbey (and gain its income) during periods of vacancy. Both Queen Matilda II, wife of Henry I, and Queen Matilda III, wife of King Stephen appear to have acted in some custodial role for the abbey in the twelfth century. King Stephen's charter states that it was definitely custody rather than the abbacy Goscelin ascribed to Queen Ælfthryth: 'Scias quia concedo Matildi regine ut habeat abbatiam de Barchinga in custodia sua sicut Matildis regina amita sua unquam melius habuit'.[49] Some historians have taken this rather literally, and claimed that both Queen Matilda II and Queen Matilda III had been abbesses in the same way as professed nuns, but this clearly cannot have been the case.[50] Matilda II had a history of stepping in to assist abbeys at times of need, as with the monks of Malmesbury who wrote 'by royal gift she possessed our church', probably implying a similar custodial role to that at Barking.[51] She was a generous benefactor to the abbey, according to a letter from the monks to her brother

[48] P. Stafford, '*Cherchez la femme*. Queens, queens' lands and nunneries; Missing links in the foundation of Reading Abbey', History 85 (2000) pp.4-27, at p. 18
[49] RRAN III. no.31.
[50] This is the approach taken by the antiquarian Lethiullier, but has been followed by recent accounts such as that in Fowler, Barking Abbey: Loftus and Chettle in 1954 were rather more circumspect, noting that Matilda II's name appears 'by a questionable but established convention' in the lists of abbesses; Loftus and Chettle, p. 29. Neither woman's name appears in any of the lists of abbesses produced at Barking itself: Ordinale II, pp. 359, 361.
[51] William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum. vol. 1 p.4-5.

King David: 'While she lived, our church enjoyed in full measure complete honour, unsullied holiness, loving and unstinting generosity'.[52] This mutually beneficial relationship appears to have been mirrored at Barking. As we have seen, Matilda II gave lands to the nuns to pay for the repair of a bridge over the River Thames at Stratford-atte-Bowe near the abbey.[53]

Stephen's charter does not make it clear when Matilda II was supposed to have been appointed to rule the house, although we may assume it was in a vacancy after the death of the previous abbess Ælfgyva, who was still alive after c.1100 when she received a gift of tithes.[54] We must assume that Queen Matilda II's custody occurred some time between c. 1100 and her death in 1118.[55] Ælfgyva was an Anglo-Saxon, allowed to remain in power by William I after the Conquest, and she seems to have been a successful abbess, keeping the majority of the abbey's estates during the transfer of Anglo-Saxon lands into Norman hands. It may be that after her death King Henry I needed a while to choose her replacement, and that the only suitable way to deal with a prolonged vacancy was to put his own wife into position as 'protectress and fearless guardian of the communities of nuns'.[56]

King Stephen's wife Queen Matilda III in her turn too acted as custodian over Barking for a short time. She was appointed in a charter of 1136x7, soon after King Stephen took the throne and at a time when his rule was not yet secure. Barking remained the only sizeable nunnery in Essex, and the home to the daughters of important local aristocrats, making it an important place to have on the 'right' side.[57] Placing his wife Matilda of Boulogne in control over the abbey was a shrewd move, since she already had a good degree of influence in Essex as hereditary holder of the honour of Boulogne,

[52] William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum. vol. 1 p.4-5.
[53] A. Hills, 'The bridge at Stratford', Essex Review 39 (1930) pp. 190-4, and see pp. 117-8 above.
[54] Adam of Cockfield. p. 467. Hart suggests that the deed can be placed later in the possible date range than earlier; I would suggest the opposite, given that Ælfgyva would have been at least 68 in 1118; see pp. 114-5 above.
[55] RRAN II, no.1242. See also HRH 1. pp. 208, 290 for Agnes' dates.
[56] Symons, Regularis Concordia. p. 2.
[57] The only other nunnery in Essex at this time was Wix, in the far north of the county. The closest nunneries were Stratford at Bow, founded ~1122, and Clerkenwell, which had been founded only as

and would have probably already been familiar with the families of women who were members of the abbey.[58] The appointments of Queen Matilda II and Queen Matilda III during extended vacancies were intended to cement the royal link with Barking as well as to provide protection for the nunnery in vulnerable periods. The indirect benefit this also gave the crown, in gaining income from the abbey and promoting a sense of loyalty amongst the abbey's members and tenants, should not be overlooked as a motivating factor.

The last royal woman to be appointed to the abbey during the period under consideration was Matilda, the illegitimate daughter of King Henry II. I suggest that she shows most overtly the royal policy of choosing women who could both rule the abbey according to the king's will, and gain the loyalty of the members of the abbey and their kinsmen. As we have seen, and as will be discussed further below, Mary Becket (sister of the martyr Thomas) was abbess of Barking between 1173 and 1177x9, and Henry must have been very keen to get the abbey 'back on side'. After the troubled early years of his reign, it became even more important to have an ally in control of such a wealthy institution as Barking Abbey. The choice of his own illegitimate daughter was ideal. We do not know Matilda's age on becoming abbess, but as I suggested above it is likely that she was born before Henry's marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152.[59] It is highly likely that Matilda was put into a nunnery at a young age, since we know nothing of any marriage negotiations she might otherwise have been entered into. Indeed, if Matilda was born in the early years of Henry's marriage to Eleanor, it would have been diplomatic to put her in a nunnery for a few years at least, rather than enter into marriage negotiations before the royal bed had produced any daughters of its own. The extensive royal connections to Barking over the twelfth century would make it a likely home for such a temporarily inconvenient daughter. By making her abbess, Henry was able to guarantee the loyalty of the house to his own will, and through her also

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recently as 1141x4; Women religious pp. 229, 225

[58] H. Tanner, 'Queenship: Office, custom or ad hoc? The case of Queen Matilda III of England (1136-52)', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, (eds.) Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady (New York, 2003) pp. 133-58 at p. 137.

[59] See above, pp. 77-8.

encourage the loyalty of her many tenants. No wise landholder would attempt to defraud the king's own daughter, and this also added the benefit to the king of ensuring a healthy economic situation for the house, gaining himself further income through taxes and duties.

ii) Aristocratic abbesses

From the middle of the twelfth century, when England was divided and the political situation more volatile, the choices of abbess made by King Stephen and King Henry II were strongly political, whether to reward the loyalty of certain followers or punish the disobedience of others. The abbey was granted successively to the sister of one of Stephen's key supporters, to the sister of the recently martyred Thomas Becket, and to Henry II's illegitimate daughter. Even without a detailed study of the circumstances surrounding these grants, it is clear that the successive choices made by the twelfth-century kings were not simply neutral promotions from within.

Early in 1138 King Stephen granted the abbey to Adelidis fitzJohn, sister of Payn fitzJohn who was one of his keenest supporters.[60] I have argued above that this appointment can probably be dated to after Payn's death in 1137, but before his brother Eustace's rebellion at Easter 1138, and that the award of such a prestigious abbey was made as a sign of gratitude for Payn's loyalty. It is also possible that Stephen wished to grant the abbey to a woman whose family were loyal to the king; such an important nunnery as Barking could not be in the hands of a potential enemy. Adelidis' brother Eustace fitzJohn was less loyal to the royal cause than Payn, and he is named as one of the barons who rebelled against the king in spring 1138. He did not, however, actively align himself with either the Empress Matilda or Henry until Henry was formally named as Stephen's successor in the winter of 1153.[61] Once Stephen had appointed Adelidis, the rebellion of her brother was not sufficient reason to have her removed from office, and Eustace was reconciled to the king after his rebellion which would have secured his

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[60] RRAN III. no. 32.
[61] Dalton, p. 371.

sister's position further. Indeed, as we have seen Stephen offered the abbey financial support and patronised Adelidis' new hospital at Ilford as well. The years of civil war were not as disastrous for many religious houses as the chroniclers suggested, and Barking managed not only to survive and benefit for itself but also to found a charitable institution, the Ilford Hospital. Indeed, it has been suggested that the years of anarchy were more than usually fruitful in terms of religious patronage communities, as men with battle-scarred consciences founded new houses (some 100 were founded between 1135 and 1154) to try and gain protection for their souls.[62]

Adelidis fitzJohn had been abbess of Barking for around 15 years when King Henry II took the throne, and he accepted many of the abbots and abbesses his predecessor had appointed. She remained abbess for a further 12 years after Henry's accession, and after her death in 1166 the abbey remained vacant for six years.[63] Henry did not follow the earlier royal precedent of making his queen custodian of the abbey in the vacancy between abbesses, perhaps because he did not consider Eleanor of Aquitaine a suitable protector of such an important house. It is also likely that her pregnancy (their son John was born in 1167) would have made her presence, whether physical or symbolic, as abbess of a nunnery uncomfortable for all parties.

Barking was not the only religious house to lie vacant for an extended period during Henry II's reign. This may be because Henry was out of the country and appointing new abbots and abbesses was not a high priority. Between spring 1166 (Adelidis' death) and 1173 when he made Mary Becket abbess, King Henry spent only about 12 months in England; the rest of the time was spent in Normandy.[64] During this period many religious communities which fell vacant remained so: Abingdon was in the custody of a

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[62] T. Callahan, 'The impact of anarchy on English monasticism 1135-54', Albion 6 (1974) pp. 218-32 suggests that only 10 per cent of religious communities actually suffered quantifiable damage during the years 1135-54, and that those which were already wealthy may have become more prosperous.
[63] The abbey's accounts were rendered by stewards during these years: Pipe Roll 15 Henry II, p.135, Pipe Roll 18 Henry II, p. 45.
[64] R.W. Eyton, Court, household and itinerary of Henry II (London, 1878) pp. 134, 138, 160, 167. Henry was in England between March and June 1170, and again from August 1171 to May 1172. The charter appointing Mary abbess was made during a brief visit to England in July 1173; Acta of Henry II note to ref. 1193H.

bishop from 1166-75; Battle was in the king's hand 1171-75; Glastonbury was vacant 1171-73; St Benet's Hulme was in the king's hand 1168-75, to choose a few examples from the male Benedictine houses.[65] Henry was occupied with other matters during these years, and may also have found the income received from such communities useful and wished to retain it.

The woman Henry finally appointed to fill the vacancy was chosen for the most explicitly religious motivation of any appointment to Barking. In a charter of July-August 1173, Henry appointed Mary, sister of Thomas Becket to the abbey of Barking.[66] This appointment was made at the suggestion of Odo, prior of Canterbury.[67] Odo himself had not been popular with Becket, so this may have been his way of showing repentance after Thomas' death.[68] Henry was certainly genuinely shocked by Thomas' death, and made very public gestures of grief.[69] This was one of the few appointments to Barking for which the motivation was essentially unambiguous; Henry intended to do penance for the death of Thomas, and when it was suggested by the prior of Canterbury that this promotion of Thomas' sister might be a suitable gesture, Henry willingly agreed. Nevertheless, as we saw above, he equally willingly took the opportunity at the end of Mary's reign to appoint his own daughter to Barking and regain the favourable personal relationship with the abbey which was so important.

The exercise of the power of advowson was generally used by kings as a positive reward to those who supported him, in cases such as the appointment of Adelidis fitzJohn. It could also, in contrast, be used to ensure that one's enemies did not gain power. King John's intervention in the supposedly free early thirteenth century election at Barking showed this motivation clearly. As we have seen, in a letter of 1215 he stated

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[65] HRH 1. pp.25, 29, 51, 68. The evidence for female religious communities is much more fragmentary, meaning it is more difficult to trace a full series of abbesses across the eleventh and twelfth centuries; the material for Barking is unusually complete.

[66] CCR V. p.285.

[67] Gervase of Canterbury, The historical works of Gervase of Canterbury vol. 1: The chronicle of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series. London, 1879) p. 242.

[68] Barlow, Thomas Becket. p. 176 notes that Thomas was displeased with Odo's election, which did not follow canonical rules, and refers to him as an 'enemy of the saint', pp. 271-2 and n. 38.

[69] Henry II. p. 520.

that his preferred candidate for the abbacy of Barking was the aunt of Robert de Ros (one of his supporters).[70] If she could not be appointed, the sister of John de Bassingeburne (another member of the royal party) should be appointed. His third choice was the prioress of Barking. Under no circumstances was the sister of Robert fitzWalter, leader of the rebel barons, to be elected. The absolute insistence that Robert's sister should not be appointed abbess shows how powerful an abbess was in the middle ages. John was not willing for any relative of one of his enemies to have control of a wealthy religious community whose landholdings spread far across East Anglia.

After this supposedly free election, John's third choice, the current prioress Sybil, was duly elected, but resigned soon after, perhaps in protest at the interference in her abbey's affairs.[71] She is referred to only as Sybilla 'electa', and does not appear in the list of abbesses 'qe ount estee depuis la fundacion del hospital de Illeford', suggesting she probably never served actively as abbess.[72] Despite John's promise of free elections without royal interference, one has to wonder how coincidental it is that in 1247 his own illegitimate daughter Matilda was made abbess of Barking.[73] This girl, like her later twelfth-century aunt and namesake Matilda daughter of King Henry II, was a proudly acknowledged carrier of the blood royal. Her half-brother King Henry III gave her certain silver vessels for the use of the abbey, which her immediate successor Christina de Bosham then sold, much to the king's anger:

> Mandatum est Waltero de Rudham, custodi abbacie de Barking', quod quedam vasa argenta alienata et vendita per Cristianam nuper abbatissam ejusdem domus, et que rex prius dederunt sorori regis quondam abbatisse predicte domus ad usum abbatisse future et succedentium abbatissarum ejusdem loci, revocari faciat et salvo custodiri faciat.[74]

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[70] T.D. Hardy, Rotuli litterarum chartarum in Turri Londinensi asservati (London, 1837) p. 202; the charter is addressed to the Bishop of Salisbury, who played a similar role in elections at several other abbeys. N. Vincent, Peter des Roches: An alien in English politics 1205-1238 (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 4th ser. vol. 31.Cambridge, 1996) p. 94.

[71] HRH 1. p. 208.

[72] Ordinale II, pp. 359 and 361.

[73] Calendar of Patent Rolls 1232-47, pp. 505-7

[74] Close Rolls Henry III 1256-59, pp. 464-5

c) <u>Conclusion</u>

Royal intervention in the control of Barking Abbey took two forms. In the early pre-Conquest years, when it was a young community in need of a strong leader, King Edgar kept women of the royal circle in control of the abbey, both offering it protection and ensuring that the burgeoning community was loyal to the king. This kind of positive intervention was seen again in the years after the Norman Conquest, when new leaders were needed to encourage the Anglo-Norman aristocracy into adopting Anglo-Saxon religious communities and giving them patronage. Placing a queen as custodian of an abbey ensured that it would be in safe hands from attack by less scrupulous nobles trying to gain easy riches in Essex, while simultaneously showing royal support for a house which had been a prominent part of the old regime, and now equally prominent under the Norman kings.

In the more peaceful years of the early twelfth century, queens were appointed over the abbey primarily as stop-gaps in extended vacancies between abbesses, to protect the abbey's property and maintain its economic functions. This had the added bonus of an extra income received directly to the king's purse, even if only briefly. King Stephen appointed his wife Queen Matilda III as temporary custodian of the abbey in the early years of his reign, to keep it under his control before he could find a suitable permanent abbess. Towards the end of the twelfth century, King Henry found it necessary to use his own daughter to counteract the negative influence of Mary Becket over the abbey, and to bring the nuns and their families back to his own side.

After the relative peace and security of the early twelfth century, the political landscape of England was once again complicated by rivalries and battles, with consequences which reflected upon Barking, showing the fluidity of the relationship between the secular and monastic spheres of life. During the decades after 1135, while one side and then another in the battle between Anjou and Blois took prominence, Barking saw its abbesses chosen for political and personal reasons which had the kings' interests at heart, and which used the abbey as a tool to gain loyalty from local aristocratic families.

That Adelidis fitzJohn proved to be such a pro-active, successful abbess was more the result of good luck for the abbey than of Stephen's direct intent. She was chosen because her brother had been loyal to the royalist cause, and it was her family connections which were to become so valuable to the abbey in bringing it into a wealthy network of religious patrons. Mary Becket might be the only example we have at Barking of an abbess chosen purely for spiritual motivations, yet this too would have reflected back well upon the king. By showing how genuinely penitential he was, he helped to disprove the suggestions of those who believed he had desired the murder of Becket, and boosted his own reputation amongst the religious leaders of England. King John was faced with an influential opponent in Robert fitzWalter, but the king was able to show his power by denying fitzWalter's sister the control of Barking.

As a tool for expressing political power, control over religious houses was of great importance to the kings of England in the tenth to twelfth centuries, and Barking Abbey's wealth and status made it one of the most important houses to successive kings. Whether appointing members of their own family or kinswomen of families whose loyalty they needed to guarantee, the kings of England from 950 to 1200 showed clearly that Barking could not be allowed to fall into the wrong hands, and that they would take almost any necessary steps to ensure their chosen candidate was in control of the abbey.

Chapter 7: Aristocratic patronage

Aristocratic patronage of Barking was expressed most clearly through the giving of lands and income to the abbey, sometimes in association with the entry of a family member to the community. Aristocratic girls were placed in the abbey and sometimes appointed to positions of power within the community, and although the patronage of local families could not extend to appointing the abbesses and prioresses of the abbey, the choice of the most prestigious local nunnery was in itself a sign of political loyalties. Throughout the period of this study there is clear evidence that certain families felt a lasting sense of loyalty to the abbey, expressed through grants made and confirmed over several generations. The assumed divide of 1066 can perhaps be seen more clearly here than in the patterns of royal patronage, but to say that the arrival of the Normans created a completely different style of patronage would be wrong. We should once again look at patterns of giving and involvement with the abbey across the whole period, and see that Barking's position as the pre-eminent nunnery of the East of England remained constant from 950 to 1200. Several new houses were founded near Barking, especially in the twelfth century, but this did not affect its income. Indeed, several of these houses were founded by families with extensive connections to Barking. I will argue that the abbey retained its position as the wealthiest and most important house in East Anglia through a combination of factors; family loyalty was perhaps the most important of these. Secondly, the simple fact of geographical proximity played a role, although the proliferation of new houses did not lead to a diminution in giving to Barking. Finally, there was also a level of royal influence on aristocratic giving; a house which was popular with the royal family would also be popular with those who wished to remain in favour with the king. The easiest way to show the connections of local families is to take a chronological approach, but I hope to show that 1066 should not be considered as a dividing line.

a) Family connections

Barking Abbey was the wealthiest and largest of the nunneries of late Anglo-Saxon East Anglia. It did not face a large amount of competition for local aristocratic donors who wished to support female religious life, and the only houses near it were small communities at Eltisley, St Albans, Standon, and perhaps St Osyth.[1] The majority of evidence suggests that Barking in fact shared its donors with the most prestigious of the nearby male communities including Ely, St Paul's London, Bury St Edmund's and Ramsey. This points towards Barking's later status as the most successful nunnery in East Anglia as having a solid base in pre-Conquest wealth. It also suggests that once donor families had established links to a powerful religious community, the appearance of other, smaller communities was unlikely to draw away their generosity.

Barking Abbey's links to local aristocracies had roots in its pre-Viking age incarnation, described in Bede's account of 'a nun of noble family' who experienced a miracle through the intercession of St Ethelburga.[2] Even in its earliest years Barking was attracting members of the wealthiest local families. As we have seen, the first evidence for later interest in the abbey as a nunnery is found in the wills of Ealdorman Ælfgar and his descendants.[3] As kin of the famous Ealdorman Byrhtnoth, the connections and loyalties of this family have been studied by many scholars of Anglo-Saxon history, although their links to Barking have so far not been looked at in any detail.[4]

Ælfgar's will bequeathed an estate at Baythorn to 'St Mary's foundation at Barking'.[5] The other communities Ælfgar supported were major religious houses (Bury St Edmunds, Christ Church Canterbury, St Paul's London) and a family foundation at

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[1] Veiled women II, pp. 75-7, 158-9, 183-6 and 159-62.
[2] Bede, book 4 chap. 9.
[3] Whitelock, nos. 2, 14 and 15.
[4] See, for example, L. Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon society II', in British Journal of Sociology 9 (1958) pp. 359-77; M.A.L. Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth and his family' in D. Scragg, ed., The Battle of Maldon AD 991 (Oxford, 1991) pp. 253-62; C. Hart, 'The Ealdordom of Essex' in K. Neale, ed., An Essex tribute: Essays presented to Frederick G. Emmison (London, 1987) pp. 57-84 esp. p.66-73. Whitelock's own notes on the wills also discuss the family and its extensive connections.
[5] Whitelock, no. 2 pp. 6-9.

Stoke. The choice of Barking as the only female religious community (bearing in mind, however, that we know nothing about the status of the foundation at Stoke) was probably influenced by its proximity to Ælfgar's landholdings. Stoke was evidently the house where his wife and son were buried, and hence his attachment to this house and its occurrence in the wills of daughters.[6]

Ælfgar's daughter Æthelflæd's will, written between 975 and 991, essentially followed her father's requests, but with several interesting variations. Æthelflæd showed a strong devotion to the family foundation at Stoke, giving four new estates to assist this establishment.[7] Almost all of these estates, however, were to be held by Ælfflæd and Byrhtnoth during their lifetimes; this suggests that she felt the foundation was not in such urgent need that it must receive the lands immediately after her death. Æthelflæd's decision to grant lands to Stoke only after her sister's lifetime was mirrored in almost all her other donations to religious houses. She made grants to Barking, Bury St Edmund's and St Peter's, a church at Mersea, all with the usufruct to Ælfflæd and Byrhtnoth. It appears that Æthelflæd was giving immediate support to younger foundations in her local area, but was confident in the survival of Stoke as the family foundation. Barking was to receive its lands at Woodham after only Ælfflæd's lifetime; Æthelflæd evidently believed that the nunnery was reasonably well endowed to survive another few years without the benefit of the lands at Woodham.

At this point we should bear in mind what Whitelock and other historians did not know; according to the charter in the Ilford Cartulary, King Eadred gave lands to Barking in 950, and Æthelflæd had been married to Eadred's brother Edmund.[8] We know that her father gave land to Barking in his will; might her family have influenced the king in his

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[6] His will specifies prayers to be said 'for my soul and ... [Æthelflæd's] mother's soul and ... her brother's soul', and they are probably the Wiswith and Æthelweard for whose souls lands were given to Stoke: Whitelock, pp. 7, 9.

[7] The family estates at Lavenham, Peldon, Mersea and Greenstead were all granted to Stoke in accordance with Ælfgar's wishes, but after the lifetimes of Ælfflæd and Byrhtnoth. Æthelflæd made independent gifts of Polstead, Withermarsh, Stratford and Balsdon to Stoke, all except Withermarsh being held by Ælfflæd for her lifetime. Whitelock, pp. 35-37.

[8] Ilford Cartulary, fol. 17v-18r, S. 552a.

own patronage choices? As an important local aristocratic family, Ælfgar and his daughters would have taken an interest in religious communities founded in Essex. I suggest that Æthelflæd may have used her powerful position as queen consort to influence her husband and his younger brother in their religious patronage. She would certainly have known about the royal grant of 8 hides of land (approximately 960 acres) to Barking by her brother-in-law, and may have assumed that this was easily sufficient for the needs of a young religious community.

The third will in the series was that of Ælfgar's younger daughter Ælfflæd.[9] The majority of her will follows the requests of her father, and shows a considerable degree of concern for the family foundation at Stoke. She asked both King Æthelred and the Ealdorman Æthelmær to protect Stoke after her death, and granted it a further five estates on top of those already given by her father and sister. Hart suggests that her concern for the welfare of Stoke may be well founded.[10] We do not know the exact status of the foundation, but it was probably a small collegiate community. Between the writing of Ælfgar's will and the writing of Ælfflæd's, the great fen monasteries of Thorney, Ramsey, Peterborough, Crowland and Ely had been founded or re-founded, and competition for patrons in East Anglia became intense. Indeed, there is no evidence that anyone outside Ælfgar's family ever made a donation to Stoke.[11]

Ælfflæd's will granted two estates to Barking, firstly passing Baythorn on to the nunnery as her father had intended. She also bequeathed Woodham, as her sister had intended, but as we have seen, with an interesting grant of the usufruct to Queen Ælfthryth. Ælfthryth, the widowed queen of King Edgar, and mother of King Æthelred, was related through marriage to Ælfflæd, and this family connection may have prompted the gift.[12] We recall that it was during the period of Ælfthryth's twenty year

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[9] Whitelock, no. 15.
[10] C. Hart, 'The Mersea charter of Edward the Confessor', Essex Archaeology and History 12 (1980) pp. 94-202 at pp. 96-7.
[11] It must be noted here that, had the foundation survived, records of its property would have provided copies of any donation charters, and we would be more aware of its circle of patronage.
[12] Queen Ælfthryth was the second wife of King Edgar, the son of King Edmund by his first wife Ælfgifu. After Ælfgifu's death, Edmund married Æthelflæd making her the step-mother of Edmund, and thus

rule of Barking that Æthelflæd wrote her will granting this new estate to the nunnery. I suggest that Æthelflæd may have been concerned for the welfare of Barking during the period of rule by the queen, and hence made the grant of Woodham to supplement that of Baythorn by her father. Ælfflæd then wished to gain favour with her royal kinswoman, so granted the queen use of this particular estate because of her association with Barking.[13]

The patronage of Ælfgar and his daughters can be traced through two further generations of his family. Ælfflæd's step-daughter Leofflæd had three daughters, of whom two lived a religious life, one associated with Ely and the other unknown.[14] Æthelswyth retired to Coveney near Ely, probably influenced by the fact that her grandfather Byrhtnoth was buried there.[15] It has been suggested that Ælfwynn may have been a nun at Barking, but I believe this is a case of mistaken identity.[16] As we have seen, Leofflæd's grandson named Thurstan (son of her third daughter Leofwaru) left a mill at Bottisham to Barking Abbey.[17] It is the only nunnery amongst the houses he chose to support, the others being Christ Church and St Augustine's Canterbury, Bury St Edmund's, Ramsey, St Benet's Holme, and Ely. With the exception of the great Canterbury foundations, these were all local communities; the great fenland monasteries were beginning to exercise their influence over members of the local nobility.

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mother-in-law to Ælfthryth when she married King Edmund. Ælfflæd was thus linked to Queen Ælfthryth through a complex kinship, but nevertheless one which would be noted by each party in a gift such as this.

[13] P. Stafford, 'Kinship and women in the world of Maldon: Byrhtnoth and his family', in J. Cooper (ed.), The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and fact (London, 1993) pp. 225-35 discusses this grant and shows that Ælfflæd cannot have given the land to Queen Ælfthryth as representative of Barking, but suggests that the connection to the abbey probably influenced the choice of estate.

[14] Whitelock p. 141-2; if Leofflæd had been Ælfflæd's daughter, she would have received many lands intended by Aelfgar for his grandchildren. It must be presumed that she was a step-daughter only to Ælfflæd. Details of Leofflæd's will are copied into the Liber Eliensis. book II chap. 88, pp.157-8. For these daughters, see Figure 1 below.

[15] Æthelswyth is recorded in the Liber Eliensis as the donor of several highly elaborate embroidered cloths, which she produced with a group of women she had gathered around her. Her religious activity is described in book II chap. 88, p.158, and her gifts of 'i candida infula bene brusdata' and 'i pretiosa dalmatica' recorded at book III chap. 50, pp. 293 and 294.

[16] Loftus and Chettle, p. 23; as I explained in Chapter 3 above, I believe this assumption has come about due to a confusion of the spelling of her name.

[17] Whitelock, no. 31. The manor is identified there as *Bidicheseye*, and it has recently been suggested that

The patterns of donation of Ælfflæd's step-family show a shift in loyalty to the house patronised by Byrhtnoth, the patriarch of this side of the family tree. Ælfflæd's will shows that she supported the houses patronised by her father and elder sister. Byrhtnoth, however, was a benefactor to Ely, Ramsey and Christ Church Canterbury only.[18] His daughter Leofflæd followed her father's patronage only, and did not give to the houses patronised by her step-mother Ælfflæd. Nevertheless the evidence suggests that the descendants of Byrhtnoth, who were not related by blood to Ælfflæd and her kin, did not feel the same imposed loyalty to Stoke and Barking as the blood relatives. The choice of Barking as the only nunnery in Thurstan's will is thus significant, and may have been due to the influence of the nuns of Barking themselves. A comparison of the houses patronised by Ælfflæd, Byrhtnoth and Thurstan shows that he returned to a pattern of donation closer to that of his step-great-grandmother than his blood ancestor.

	Ælfflæd	Byhrtnoth	Thurstan
Barking	X		X
Bury St Edmunds	X		X
Christ Church Canterbury	X	X	X
Ely	X	X	X
Ramsey		X	
St Benet's Holme			X
Stoke	X		

We do not know anything about the identity of Leofflæd's biological mother and thus Thurstan's blood great-grandmother, but it seems that he adopted the patronage of Leofflæd's step-mother Ælfflæd. Ælfflæd herself had no children, and of Leofflæd's children Thurstan's mother was the only one not to enter the religious life. This left Thurstan as the sole beneficiary of a family inheritance dating back some hundred years. With this would have come an awareness of, if not necessarily direct loyalty to, the connections and responsibilities of that inheritance to religious communities. I would suggest he may have returned to a family patronage choice as a form of reparation for the estates at Woodham and Baythorn, bequeathed by his great-

this may be identified with Bottisham (*Bodichesham*) in Cambridgeshire: p. 109 above.
[18] He did not leave a will, but is mentioned in lists of benefactors at each of these houses: Hart,

grandmother, which never reached the nuns at Barking. Indeed, giving a mill to the abbey would have proved a source of very useful income, while as we have seen the lands at Baythorn and Woodham were both many miles away from the abbey. It is highly likely that if the nuns knew they had been bequeathed lands in the tenth and early eleventh century, they would have followed up the successors to these benefactors and claimed reparation in some form. The memory of these gifts was more likely to be held by the religious community, which had the facilities for such memory-keeping, than by the members of the family themselves.

b) Inherited loyalties

When the Normans came to England over the decades after 1066, they did not immediately choose to patronise the religious communities of their new land. As several studies have shown, it took at least a generation before the newcomers felt sufficiently settled to transfer their loyalties to English monasteries and nunneries.[19] Those men and women who came to England found themselves newly wealthy in England, while often wishing to maintain links with their Norman roots, and had to find the best protection for their souls from the wide range of options available. The evidence for Barking suggests that the choices of patronage may have been related more closely to land than to nationality or family; as Mason has it, links to a religious house were 'maintained by territorial successors of its early patrons'.[20]

The Anglo-Saxon families with links to Barking Abbey disappear from the records in the late eleventh century. A study of the evidence, however, will show that the connections made by patrons in the tenth and eleventh centuries continued to influence the choices of those who took over the Anglo-Saxon land holdings after 1066. It is

'Ealdordom of Essex', p. 70.

[19] E. Cownie, 'The Normans as patrons of English religious houses, 1066-1135', ANS 18 (1995) pp. 47-62; K. Cooke, 'Donors and daughters: Shaftesbury Abbey's benefactors, endowments and nuns c.1086-1130', ANS 12 (1989) pp.29-45; and E. Mason, '*Timeo barones et donas ferentes*', in D. Baker (ed.), Religious motivation: Biographical and sociological problems for the church historian (Oxford, 1978) pp. 61-75.

[20] Mason, '*Timeo Barones*', p. 65.

unfortunately not possible to find out any detail about the families who patronised Barking immediately after 1066, or to see how long it took for Normans to take an interest in the house. The earliest evidence of a family connection to the abbey after 1066 is of an old Anglo-Saxon family which rapidly intermarried with the Normans, and was granted some of its lands by specific order of Henry I.[21] This family link is shown in a charter of Adam of Cockfield, datable to 1100-1118, in which Adam 'cum matre mea Sagiva' grants two parts of his tithe at Lindsey in Suffolk 'in perpetual possession on behalf of my sister Edith' (pro sorore mea).[22] Adam's children and step-family had Norman names, showing an integration into or adoption of the culture of the conquerors, and by the reign of Stephen his descendants were holding certain lands as knight's fees.[23] Adam's sister Edith was either a nun at Barking or was buried there, suggesting a link to the abbey which was expressed through the female line. If we consider also that Cockfield, where Adam's family was based, was an estate owned in the late Anglo-Saxon period by the Barking patrons Ælfgar, Æthelflæd and Ælfflæd, it is possible that a link to Barking Abbey was established by the feudal lords of Cockfield and followed in the patronage choices of their tenants.[24]

The later patrons of Barking Abbey had complex connections, as we saw in Chapter 2 above. Ralph Baynard, the distant ancestor to Robert fitzWalter (the early thirteenth-century benefactor) received estates with several degrees of connection to Barking. Ralph Baynard's estates came from 4 major pre-conquest landholders. The most significant of these was a woman named Ailid, or Æthelgyth, whose lands contributed 31% by value of Ralph's estates, and whose estates Ralph received in their entirety, in a case of what Green calls 'antecessorial succession'.[25] The others were Aelfric 'Camp',

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[21] Adam's step-father Robert may be Robert 'Blond', the sheriff of Norfolk; Adam of Cockfield p. 467, and see p. 116 above.

[22] Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley MS 155, fol. 196v.

[23] See W. Farrer, Honors and knight's fees (3 vols. Manchester, 1923-5) vol. III p. 360. Breay, Cartulary of Chatteris. p. 45 notes that Adam II, grandson of Adam I of the Barking charter, was of knightly status when he was a donor to Chatteris in the late twelfth century.

[24] See above p. 105.

[25] See Mortimer, 'The Baynards of Baynard's Castle' pp. 248-50. Green, The aristocracy of Norman England p. 81 discusses the inheritance of Anglo-Saxon landholders' estates by 1086; in East Anglia she suggests that many were simply handed over in their entirety to new owners. The recent argument put forward in R. Fleming, 'Domesday Book and the tenurial revolution', ANS 9 (1986) pp. 87-102 suggests

primarily an Essex landholder, Thorn, whose lands were in Norfolk, and Thorth, whose lands were mainly in Suffolk. Mortimer has shown through a study of Anglo-Saxon wills that this Æthelgyth was the wife of Thurstan, the donor to Barking Abbey who we have already met and discussed.[26] Thorth, another major contributor to Ralph's wealth, was the son of Æthelgyth's brother Ulfketel, and thus Thurstan's nephew.[27] Ralph Baynard, then, neighbour to Barking Abbey and holder of an estate intended for it in the eleventh century, received many of his lands from an Anglo-Saxon patron of Barking Abbey and his kinsmen. The subsequent history of his estates shows a considerable degree of persistence by Barking in chasing the holders of lands it felt it was owed.

Ralph Baynard's lands eventually found their way into the hands of Robert, son of Richard fitzGilbert of Clare.[28] Ward suggests that this was a tactical move on King Henry I's part, since Baynard's Castle, towards the west of London, was the city stronghold of this lordship, and he needed to keep it in the hands of a man who would be loyal.[29] Richard fitzGilbert's family had long shown their loyalty to the crown, and by granting such a powerful lordship to Robert, Henry all but guaranteed the support of the younger son who had no independent wealth. Robert continued to be an important member of the royal court, acting as steward to King Stephen and witnessing some 30 of his charters.[30]

The final holder of these estates in the period covered by this study was Robert fitzWalter, the enemy of King John and Magna Carta ringleader. While Robert was the first family member to have shown an interest in Barking Abbey, there is evidence to suggest that his predecessors took on the other religious patronage which came with

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that with more significant landholders this was not the case, and William I deliberately divided up the largest states of the most significant landholders, in order to avoid any competition from holders of large consolidated estates. It is likely that Aethelgyth's estates were not large enough to warrant this division.

[26] Mortimer, 'The Baynards', pp. 247-50, and see above p. 111. It is very interesting to note also that some of Thorth's lands passed to Peter de Valognes; his descendants are extremely important to Barking, and are discussed below.

[27] Mortimer, 'The Baynards', p. 247

[28] See p. 111 above, and Figure 2: Heirs to Ælfgar: The holders of Æthelgyth's lands, c. 1040- 1215.

[29] J.C. Ward, 'Royal service and reward: The Clare family and the crown, 1066-1154', ANS 11 (1988) pp. 261-78 at pp. 272-3.

[30] See RRAN III, p. xviii, and no. 944 where he witnesses as Robert fitz Richard 'dapifer'.

their land holdings. In 1106 Geoffrey, the son of Ralph Baynard, had installed
Augustinian canons at the church of Little Dunmow, making it into a priory dedicated to
the Virgin Mary.[31] When King Henry I gave Robert fitzRichard the barony forfeited by
Geoffrey's son William, he also gave the advowson of the priory. Robert appears to
have accepted this willingly, as he not only confirmed the priory's holdings but granted
it several other estates. Robert's son Walter added the incomes of three churches, and
chose to be buried in the choir of the priory church, suggesting he truly felt it was a
'family foundation' in the sense of a religious community to which his family were
devoted above any other, even if not founded by a blood relative. Robert fitzWalter also
chose to be buried there as well, cementing the fitzWalter link to the community and
emphasising the acceptance of a religious duty which came along with the estates
surrounding Little Dunmow priory.

Robert fitzWalter's connections to Barking Abbey show themselves in two ways.
Firstly he and his wife Gunnora de Valognes were tenants of the abbey in 1205 and
leased their holding to the abbey's steward, Ralph fitzSalomon.[32] Secondly, we know
that Robert's sister was a nun at Barking because her name occurs in King John's letter
of 1214 suggesting successors to Abbess Christina de Valognes.[33] Since the abbess
during these years shared Gunnora's name, and may well have been a relative, it is
possible that we may see here another instance of the females of the family providing a
connection to Barking Abbey. Robert's family seat was at Little Dunmow in the north
of Essex, and the closest nunnery to this was at Castle Hedingham, founded only
recently by a member of the De Vere family, earls of Oxford based at Earls Colne in
Essex.[34] Given that his two daughters Matilda and Christina were married into the
extended family of the earls of Oxford, one might expect Robert to have curried favour

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[31] For this, and the following information about Dunmow, see W. Page and J.H. Round (eds.), Victoria
County History of Essex vol II (London, 1907) pp. 150-154, and the chronicle of Little Dunmow printed
in the Monasticon at pp. 147-8. This text, begun in the late thirteenth century, listed dates of interest about
the priory's history up to the early sixteenth century.

[32] Feet of fines for Essex 7 John, no. 189, p. 36.

[33] Hardy, Rotuli chartarum, p.202.

[34] Women religious, pp. 180 and 220. The nunnery was in existence by 1191.

with his powerful relatives by sending his sister to this closest nunnery.[35] Instead, he sent her to a more distant nunnery in the south of Essex, but one with considerable royal clout and where a relative of his wife was abbess. Likewise it is possible that his wife's kinsowman, who found in their favour in the dispute over the six virgates of land in Barking, may have encouraged them to lease it to the abbey's steward as a sign of generosity towards the house. Since Ralph fitzSalomon, the steward, became the new holder of the land in return for a only pair of silver spurs payable to Robert and Gunnora, we see that they offered him a very good price for what must have been a valuable estate. While the abbey did not necessarily benefit financially from this transaction, it was a way for Robert and Gunnora to display their loyalty and generosity on a social level, and possibly gain spiritual benefits in enriching the abbey through the financial good health, and thus ability to serve effectively, of its steward.

There was a form of connection between the religious communities at Barking and Little Dunmow, perhaps solely in the identity of their patrons, which may have originated with one of Robert's predecessors. According to the Valuation of Norwich in 1254, Barking's assets included 20 marks income from lands at Henham (less than 5 miles north-west of Little Dunmow), and the abbess also received 20 shillings from the Prior of Dunmow 'pro decimis dominico Gilberti Pecche'.[36] Henham was not listed amongst the abbey's possessions in 1086, and does not occur in any charters before 1254, so the date at which it was acquired must remain unknown. Gilbert Pecche, lord of Bealings (Suffolk) may have been a donor to Little Dunmow as well; he was married to Alice, daughter of Walter fitzRichard and sister of Robert fitzWalter.[37] The assignation of the 20 shillings income to Barking may be a manifestation of remorse on Robert's part at the loss of valuable pre-Conquest lands intended for the nunnery; he may have encouraged his brother-in-law to adopt his patronage of the community. It is of course equally possible that he was neither aware of nor concerned about any such

[35] The genealogical table in F.M. Powicke, Stephen Langton (Oxford, 1928) p. 213 shows that Matilda and Christina married the brothers Geoffrey and William de Mandeville, earls of Essex whose great-great-uncle Geoffrey I de Mandeville married the sister of Aubrey de Vere, first earl of Oxford and close relative of, if not himself, the founder of Castle Hedingham.
[36] W.E. Lunt (ed.), The valuation of Norwich (Oxford, 1926) p. 351.
[37] Baronies, p. 48.

loss, but the family's closeness to Barking cannot be denied. Robert's relationships with other houses in East Anglia were less cordial; he was accused in 1212 of trying to besiege Binham priory, of which he claimed patronage, and King John intervened to protect the monks.[38] Robert did have a tenuous link to this house, because it was founded by the Domesday tenant-in-chief Peter de Valognes, great grand-father of Robert's wife Gunnora.[39] This may have been caused by financial need, since at this time Robert was supposedly leading a rebellious plan to kill King John, with the help of a fellow East Anglian baron, Eustace de Vesci.[40] This was the beginning of John's animosity towards fitzWalter, and his later relationship with the baron is emphasised by his refusal to allow Robert's sister to gain high office in an important and wealthy nunnery.

c) Adoption by newcomers

By the twelfth century, many Norman families who had come over with the Conqueror were making their own links to local religious communities, in order both to cement their connections with the land and people upon whom they imposed themselves, and to establish themselves as patrons in their own right. Barking Abbey prospered in the twelfth century from its relationship with two wealthy and important families, the de Valognes and the fitzJohns, which were linked through marriage with each other and many of the other major baronial families in England.[41] As Figure 3 shows, these networks of family influence extended through several generations, with many of the most powerful names of twelfth-century England occurring amongst the large number of marriages contracted between sons and daughters.[42] Indeed, Robert fitzWalter who

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[38] L. Marr, Binham Priory: A guide to the priory church of St Mary and the Holy Cross, Binham, Norfolk (Private press, n.d.) p. 8.

[39] Several charters by members of the Valognes family to Binham are printed in Dugdale, Monasticon vol. iii.

[40] W.L. Warren, King John (new ed. Yale, 1997) pp. 212-3.

[41] One branch of the fitzJohn family took the name Vesci; Eustace fitzJohn married Beatrice de Vesci, and their children took the name of her higher-status dynasty.

[42] As Mooers points out, the influence of royal patronage or favour on a distant cousin or someone related only by marriage could lead to benefits for a large number of individuals within the kin group; S.L. Mooers, 'Familial clout and financial gain in Henry I's later reign', Albion 14 (1982) pp. 268-91 at p. 275. Figure 3 below, A simplified genealogy of the fitzJohn and Valognes families, c. 1060-1235.

was discussed above, was part of this family kin group, being married to Gunnora de Valognes. These families made their own religious patronage, by founding and supporting religious communities, but also showed their interest in the older, well-established houses through their patronage of Barking and other Anglo-Saxon houses.

Robert fitzWalter, the heir to many Anglo-Saxon estates, sent his sister to Barking in the early thirteenth century. With his wife Gunnora de Valognes he had two daughters, Maud and Christina, who married brothers from the rich and powerful Mandeville family, reflecting the status the Valognes had achieved by the early thirteenth century.[43] It is interesting to note that the Mandeville family may have been coerced by Barking into a restitution of lands which had been taken away at the Conquest. Geoffrey I de Mandeville, the Domesday lord of High Easter in Essex and great-great-great-grandfather of the brothers, is listed in 1086 as holder of a manor of 3 virgates at (Abbess) Roding, which 'was in the hands of Barking Abbey, as the Hundred testifies. He who held this land was only the man of Geoffrey's predecessor; he could not dispose of that land to any place except the Abbey'.[44] By 1254, however, this manor was back in the abbey's hands, perhaps though the influence of Maud or Christina, the two daughters married to the two Mandeville brothers.[45] These sisters may have been encouraged by their aunt, the nun at Barking to whom King John denied promotion, to regain lands which had been stolen from the abbey over 150 years ago; the spiritual benefits received for such a gift or restitution would have been even greater than those gained in an ordinary quitclaim.

In the early thirteenth century, then, Gunnora de Valognes with her husband was showing a significant interest in Barking Abbey, and her sister-in-law became a nun

[43] Their marriages were to Geoffrey (d. 1216) and William (d. 1227) de Mandeville, successive Earls of Essex. The brother were connected through marriage of kin to a further 3 of the Magna Carta barons, Geoffrey de Say, Robert de Vere and Henry de Bohun; see F.M. Powicke, Stephen Langton (Oxford, 1928) p. 213 'Table to illustrate the connexion between some of the twenty-five'.

[44] DB vol. II, fol. 57b. Geoffrey and William were the sons of Geoffrey fitzPeter, the husband of Geoffrey I de Mandeville's great-great-granddaughter. R.V. Turner, 'The Mandeville inheritance 1189-1236: Its legal, political and social context', HSJ 1 (1989) pp. 147-72 ' Appendix A gives a useful diagram.

[45] Lunt, Valuation of Norwich. p. 337. It was known as 'Roding Abbatissa' by this time, so may have belonged to the abbey for some years. Alternatively, it may simply have been to distinguish it from the

there. There are two other members of this family with links to the abbey, although cannot be placed in the main genealogies, either of the Scottish lords or the Benington lords. Firstly, we know that one Thomas de Valognes was a tenant of the abbey in the mid-twelfth century, on lands which which were used by Abbess Adelidis to endow her new foundation, the hospital at Ilford.[46] Aside from the unidentified Christoferno, he is the only tenant whose name is not recorded elsewhere in the Ilford Cartulary, and the only one whose name is recoreded in full. This may suggest that Adelidis, his kinswoman, may have wished to record his name for posterity. Christina de Valognes, abbess between 1202 and 1213, was also related to this family, although she like Thomas does not appear in any of the main genealogies. To a third branch of this family based in Parham, Suffolk, belonged Theobald de Valognes who founded a nunnery at Campsey Ash in the late twelfth century. As we shall see in Part IV, this nunnery was linked to Barking through networks of literary patronage, and provides a further connection between the Valognes family and Barking.

The second family with extensive links to Barking was that of the descendants of John nephew of Waleran. Adelidis fitzJohn was abbess of Barking from 1138 to 1166, perhaps as a reward from King Stephen for the loyalty of her brother Payn. Payn and her other brother Eustace did not make any direct gifts to the abbey where their sister developed such power and influence, but instead exercised their religious patronage in other parts of the country. They inherited a tradition of religious patronage from their ancestors in both England and Normandy. As Cownie suggests, the first generation of Norman settlers tended to patronise houses in Normandy, or to found alien priories dependent on Norman houses.[47] This is shown clearly in the gifts made by Waleran, great-uncle of Payn, Eustace and Adelidis.[48] He owned several estates in Essex, and granted three manors there to St Stephen's abbey, Caen in his homeland.[49] He had,

other Rodings; there were 8 separate parishes by the thirteenth century.
[46] Ilford Cartulary fol. 5.
[47] Cownie, 'The Normans as patrons'.
[48] Waleran was probably the main representative of the family line in England, since Payn, Eustace and Adelidis' father was known as John 'nephew of Waleran' rather than by reference to his own father Richard. See pp. 123-4 above.
[49] L. Landon, 'The sheriffs of Norfolk', Norfolk Archaeology 29 (1929) pp. 147-65, esp. 161-5.

however, been involved in a conflict with the abbey of Mont St Michel over a mill at Veims, which had been sold to Waleran's father against the monks' wishes.[50] He also 'took away' a house in Colchester which had belonged to the monks of St Ouen, Rouen which Edward the Confessor had given to them.[51] Barking Abbey too had owned three houses in Colchester in 1066, but by 1086 the abbess no longer paid the customary due for them.[52] We note here that John, son of Waleran held three houses in Colchester which had been held by two burgesses before 1066; I suggest that these men had been tenants of the Abbess of Barking, and that John had taken advantage of the distance between Barking and its houses in Colchester in the same way Waleran had done to St Ouen.[53] Their descendants, however, engaged in much more positive patronage of the abbey.

As we saw above, according to the charter granted in 1157 by King Henry II to William de Vesci, son of Eustace fitzJohn, Eustace fitzJohn was holding lands in fief of the Abbess of Barking, who was as we have seen his own sister.[54] I suggested that these lands may have been given as the dowry on Adelidis' entry to Barking, and then leased to Eustace fitzJohn, and his son William de Vesci in turn. In a later grant datable to 1177x9-83, William de Vesci made an independent gift to Barking of all his lands and rights at Hanley and 'that land which Erkenbrichtus held, being around 16 acres in Barking'.[55] It is possible that William was simply resigning his claim to a geographically inconvenient estate in the south of England, a long way from his base in the north, and gaining spiritual benefits at the same time. I suggest that it is possible William was granting the same lands held of his own aunt, Abbess Adelidis, and that such notable generosity may have had a deeper motivation which we cannot fully understand. These were the last years of his life, and he entered the abbey at Alnwick as

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[50] J.H. Round, Calendar of documents preserved in France (London, 1899) p. 253-4, and C.T. Clay, 'The origins of Eustace fitzJohn', Peerage 12 Part 2, Appendix B pp. 7-11 at p. 9.
[51] DB vol. II, fol. 22.
[52] DB vol. II, fols. 106b, 107.
[53] DB vol. II, fols. 106b, 107.
[54] M.T. Martin (ed.), The Percy chartulary, no. 759 pp. 291-94.
[55] ERO MS D/DP T1/694.

a monk in his old age.[56] He granted them certain lands, and it is possible he took the opportunity at the same time to give lands away to Barking, the nunnery which had housed his aunt and from which he had himself held lands.

The more pro-active side of the fitzJohns' religious patronage is shown in Eustace's founding of several religious houses. Together with his second wife Agnes fitzWilliam, he founded a Premonstratensian abbey at Alnwick, and two Gilbertine priories at Watton and Malton.[57] These were all in the north of England, where Eustace's estates lay, and suggest that he felt more loyalty to his own area of the country than the area where his father had been based. The choice of religious orders is interesting, and Dalton suggests Eustace may have followed the influence of his feudal overlord Earl William of York.[58] Despite this geographical distance, however, Eustace maintained the link to Barking Abbey through his sister, and his son William adopted the nunnery in his own time, perhaps though the influence of his aunt Abbess Adelidis.

The two families of the Valognes and the Vescis, then, had connections to Barking which lasted over several generations. The link made through the marriage of Roger de Valognes and Agnes fitzJohn may have led to the sharing of religious patronage, although it is more likely that Gunnora de Valognes was equally influenced by her husband Robert fitzWalter in developing an interest in Barking Abbey. Despite the distance which divides them on a genealogical table, and the physical distance between the East Anglian Valognes and the northern Vescis, it is apparent that they were in regular contact. William de Vesci had a son, Eustace II, who conspired with his kinsman Robert fitzWalter against King John in 1212, and took a significant role amongst the Magna Carta barons.[59]

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[56] W. Dickson (ed.), 'Chronicles of Alnwick Abbey', Archaeologia Aeliana 3 (1844) pp. 33-45 at p.35 states that William de Vesci 'habitum nostrum circa finem suum sumendo' gave certain lands to the abbey.

[57] See Dalton, p. 375-7. For Watton, Women religious. pp. 143 and 230.

[58] Dalton, p. 375.

[59] Warren calls them 'the chief agitators and promoters of rebellion'; Warren, King John p. 230.

d) <u>Conclusion</u>

The Anglo-Saxon donors to Barking Abbey left a long-lasting legacy of religious patronage. The Norman holders of their lands took on the patterns of patronage which their estates brought, and carefully maintained the links their Anglo-Saxon predecessors had established, either as tenants, benefactors, or providers of daughters to the abbey. Several members of these families also inherited the legacy of grants which were never received by the abbey. As a result, the tenacious nuns of Barking took advantage of kin connections to the families of their earliest donors, and pressed their successors to make good the debts that were owed. The events of the decades after 1066 may have led to some of the losses which Barking suffered, but did not mean a permanent loss of benefactors. The significance of the later donors to Barking becomes much more interesting when viewed from a longer term perspective, and it is this approach which I have deliberately taken. If we were to look only at the donors to Barking before or after 1066, we would not see these patterns of adopted patronage.

The new donors of the twelfth century took several decades to adopt Barking as part of their circle of patronage. The Anglo-Norman families who patronised Barking Abbey also took an interest in other religious communities, but as founders rather than donors. The examples of Peter de Valognes and Binham, Eustace de Vesci and the Gilbertine houses, and Theobald de Valognes and Campsey Ash were signs that these men and their kin felt sufficiently settled to expend effort and money in enriching the religious life of their new home. Their main intentions were to gain prayers and spiritual benefits, and if one's successors failed to keep up the connection, these benefits would be lost, so it was vital for a founder to impress upon his children the importance of treating such a house well.[60] This was not always the case; in the mid-thirteenth century Agnes de Vesci, great-grand-daughter of Eustace fitzJohn, was accused of exploiting the

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[60] Mason *'Timeo Barones'*, p.73.

hospitality of the communities at Watton and Malton.[61] Nevertheless, these families all appear to have taken on the religious responsibilities of their predecessors in terms of their relationship to Barking Abbey. Lands were given in reparation for hundred-year-old thefts, and women of the family were sent to Barking over any other nunnery. Cownie suggests that donations to a nunnery 'did not tie families in the same way as those given to a monastery'; Barking seems to disprove this suggestion.[62] The status of the house, as the wealthiest and most important nunnery in East Anglia, would have naturally made it attractive to men and women wishing to gain the most efficacious prayers for their souls, and perhaps also the most comfortable lifestyles for their sisters. Royal interest also no doubt helped in making the abbey fashionable. I would suggest, however, that a real sense of loyalty developed in these families, inherited from pre-Conquest men and women and increased with each passing generation.

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[61] R. Graham, St Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertines (London, 1901) pp. 83-5.
[62] E. Cownie, 'Gloucester Abbey, 1066-1135: An illustration of religious patronage in Anglo-Norman England', in D. Bates and A. Curry (eds.), England and Normandy in the Middle Ages (London, 1994) pp. 143-58 at p.153.

Part IV: Literary patronage

Chapter 8: Latin literature

Barking Abbey had a long and distinguished history of Latin literary and theological activity, from its very earliest days as a double monastery until what might be considered its peak years in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Nuns at the abbey corresponded with eminent churchmen, and commissioned the writing of texts about its abbess saints from Goscelin of St-Bertin, one of the most prolific Latin hagiographers of the eleventh century. It is only relatively recently that scholars of the literature of the late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods have paid particular attention to women's literary activity, since it was commonly believed that most nuns were capable only of reciting prayers rather than actively reading and writing

a) Latin texts and female consumers: Historiographical introduction

i) Nuns

The great majority of religious communities for both men and women in the early and high middle ages followed the Benedictine Rule, which stated that edificatory reading, whether of the Bible or other religious texts, was part of the daily religious duty of a professed monk or nun; 'From Easter until September the fourteenth... from the fourth hour until about the sixth let [religious men and women] apply themselves to reading. After the sixth hour... if anyone wishes to read by himself, let him read so as not to disturb others'.[1] Despite this injunction, it has often been assumed that the majority of nuns were not actually able to read these texts themselves, and that their knowledge of prayers and Biblical stories was based upon a mimetic learning rather than a thorough personal comprehension of the material. The first major study of nunneries suggested that nuns were forced into developing a vernacular literacy, because their Latin was so poor, while as recently as the 1980s it was claimed that most nuns recited the Latin offices 'parrot-fashion', without a genuine understanding of what they were saying.[2]

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[1] The Rule of St Benedict in Latin and English, ed. and trans J. McCann (London, 1952) pp. 110-11.

[2] E. Power, Medieval English nunneries c.1275 to 1535 (Cambridge, 1922) pp. 246-55; S. Shahar, The

This rather pessimistic attitude seems to be based on the injunctions of bishops' visitation reports, which tend to focus on deficiencies, and fails to take into account the evidence suggesting that many religious women were indeed highly literate in Latin and capable not only of reading the language and speaking it in church, but also of writing in terms both of copying manuscripts and composing texts.

The definition of literacy is one with many different interpretations; does it mean the ability to read, to comprehend what is read, or the ability to compose one's own texts? As women, nuns were unable to claim for themselves the (almost exclusively male) status of the *clericus* as opposed to the *laicus*, the terms being almost synonymous with *litteratus* and *illiteratus* by the twelfth century.[3] Contemporaries believed that clerisy, the ability of the educated cleric to read to his flock, was limited to men, and that for women the ability to read was not necessary. As Clanchy notes, religious women were often considered to be of a neuter gender as they were no longer living the marriage-childbirth-motherhood cycle of secular women, and their religious lifestyles were modelled upon male monastic rules; this did not extend, however, to an expected ability to read.[4] We should bear in mind that those men who were literate, the vast majority of them being religious men or upper aristocracy, were themselves exceptions, and should be viewed as such.

A useful modern classification of Latin literacy is given by Bell in his study of the books known to have been owned by nunneries.[5] He gives four different levels of literacy, which could equally be applied to vernacular literacy: the ability to read the words of a text without understanding them; the ability to understand simple liturgical

fourth estate: A history of women in the middle ages (London, 1983) p. 50.

[3] For an explanation of the terms *clericus* and *laicus* see Clanchy, pp. 226-30.

[4] Clanchy, p. 252. This theory worked in reverse for men, and monks and scholars were considered 'soft' according to a fourteenth century text on the humours which determined a person's gender. 'Children, women, eunuchs, phlegmatic or effeminate men... scholars, bourgeois, monks, and all those who spend most of their time in the shade, leading a quiet and leisured life' were all considered to be alike according to the fourteenth-century author Henri de Mondeville, quoted in R. Gilchrist, 'Ambivalent bodies: Gender and medieval archaeology' in J. Moore and E. Scott, Invisible people and processes: Writing gender and childhood into European archaeology (London, 1997) pp. 42-58 at p. 43.

[5] D.N. Bell, What nuns read: Books and libraries in medieval English nunneries (Cistercian Studies Series vol. 158. Kalamazoo, 1995) p. 50.

texts, such as those said every day as part of the offices; a capacity to understand more complex texts such as hagiographies and theological works; and the ability to compose one's own texts in Latin. Shahar's opinion, as quoted above, seems to be that nuns reached only the first of these levels, and rarely the second.[6] This may be true for some nuns, but it is unlikely that an abbess would incur the costs involved in purchasing an illuminated manuscript of Latin texts if none of her nuns was able to read it. Likewise, the existence of a large number of Latin letters written to and by women (some religious, some secular) shows that in the twelfth century there was a small but significant body of women who were able to enter into complex correspondences with spiritual and political mentors.[7]

Literary activity was not limited to just the older, well-established nunneries. There is evidence from a variety of nunneries, both pre-Conquest Benedictine houses and twelfth-century priories of the newer orders, suggesting that book ownership was not exclusively limited to the richest communities.[8] The survival of books from the middle ages may present an unbalanced view of the actual holdings of communities; the prayer books for everyday use were likely to be worn out more quickly, and replaced more often, than highly elaborate books of hours which were considered as things of beauty in their own right and protected more carefully.[9] The majority of evidence which survives is, it must be admitted, from the wealthier houses; this may simply be because ephemeral foundations saw their books passed on to other houses, or destroyed, and also because the larger houses had better storage facilities. Manuscripts from Barking and

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[6] See n. 2 above.

[7] E.K. Bos, 'Gender and religious guidance in the twelfth century' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1999) Appendix A lists some 175 Latin letters written to female recipients. Many of them contain internal evidence implying that the women had written back answering and asking questions of their correspondents, and did not merely recieve letters they were unable to comprehend.
[8] See in particular Bell, What nuns read. which has a useful introduction discussing the issues surrounding female literacy. Useful reference books are R. Sharpe, J.P. Carley, R.M. Thompson and A.G. Watson (eds.), English Benedictine libraries: The shorter catalogue (Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues vol. 4. London, 1996) which covers both nunneries and monasteries. For a full list of books owned by religious communities, although without commentary, see N.R. Ker (ed.), Medieval libraries of Great Britain. A list of surviving books (Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks vol. 3. 2nd ed. London, 1964) and A.G. Watson (ed.). Supplement to the second edition (Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks vol. 15. London, 1987).

[9] Bell, What nuns read. p. 35, and for examples of the type of books which have survived, see R. Marks and N. Morgan. The golden age of English manuscript painting 1200-1500 (London, 1981).

Campsey bear shelf marks which suggest the existence of a formally organised library, while at Barking the specific role of Librarian is recorded.[10] Campsey Ash remained a small community, yet books belonging to it bore the shelf marks O.E.94, and D.D.141, suggesting a substantial collection divided up into different categories according to content.[11]

Evidence of Latin literacy amongst nuns comes in several forms; firstly, the existence of prayer-books, missals and books of hours which we may assume at least some of the members of each community were able to read. Secondly, there is evidence of the commissioning and writing of works by nuns about the history of their own communities and the saints of their houses. Goscelin of St-Bertin was an especially prolific hagiographer for religious houses after the Norman Conquest, writing works for Wilton, Ely and Ramsey as well as Barking.[12] Later evidence confirms the ability of members of some of the more prestigious nunneries to read and understand Latin: in 1191-92 Cecily, the abbess of Elstow, ordered copies of Latin works to be made 'in eruditionem et projectum conventus sui et ceterorum inspicientum' (for the instruction and advancement of her convent, and of others who consult it).[13] In his narration of the miracles St Ethelburga worked at Barking Goscelin describes the theft of a missal book which had been copied out by a nun named Wulfruna.[14]

Confraternity books and mortuary rolls provide further evidence of differing levels of Latinity at nunneries. One of the earliest and most comprehensive mortuary roll was that circulated after the death of Matilda, abbess of La Sainte Trinité, Caen (d. c 1113).[15] This contained 253 entries from continental and insular houses, including Barking, Wherwell, Amesbury, Wilton, Shaftesbury, Malling and Romsey.[16] The roll of Vitalis,

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[10] Ordinale I, pp. 67-8.

[11] Bell, What nuns read, p. 43, and on Campsey see also Saints' lives. p.7

[12] For a full discussion of Goscelin and his works, see below, part d).

[13] London, British Library MS Royal 7 F.iii fol. 196v, transcribed in Bell, What nuns read. p. 137.

[14] VStE. chap. 20, p. 416. The miraculous intervention of St Ethelburga assured the return of the volume.

[15] L. Delisle, Rouleaux des morts du XIe au XVe siècle (Paris, 1866) no. 36, pp. 117-279. He mistakenly identified Matilda as a daughter of William the Conqueror, but see F. Barlow, William Rufus (London, 1983) p. 442 which suggests she was not.

[16] The Barking and Romsey entries listed only the name of the house, while the others included the names

Abbot of Savigny (d.1122) included several poems praising him, including a fourteen line verse by the nuns of Wilton.[17] Delisle, editor of the text, considers the poem to be a rather feeble piece of work, although he is equally critical of poems written by male communities and appended to their entries.[18] Perhaps the most well-circulated of the medieval mortuary rolls was that of Ampheliza, prioress of Lillechurch in Kent (occ. 1198, d. c. 1208-21) which has over 370 entries, including an entry for Barking with an extended prayer for Ampheliza but no names of Barking members.[19] Clark suggests that it may have been male clerks at the female religious houses who wrote these poems and inscribed names upon the mortuary rolls.[20] The Wilton entry, however, appears to include the names of men to be remembered as an afterthought; if the men had written it, they would surely have been careful to include their names in the main body of the entry.[21]

Finally, it should not be forgotten that nunneries needed several members with a working knowledge of Latin in order to carry out dealings with the secular world. Legal documents such as land charters and rentals would have been written in Latin, and court proceedings, even if they took place in Old English or Anglo-Norman, were almost

of abbesses and nuns to be remembered along with Abbess Matilda of Caen. Delisle, Rouleaux des morts. no. 36, entries 234 (Barking), 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 55, 242. That several of the Wessex nunneries were successive entries clearly illustrates the way these rolls were passed around between neighbouring religious communities.

[17] The roll was in England in c. 1123, and is printed in L. Delisle, Rouleau mortuaire du B. Vital, abbé de Savigni (Paris. 1909).

[18] Delisle, Rouleau mortuaire. p. 22. The Wilton entry appears at the top of plate 38.

[19] Cambridge, St John's College MS 271. C.E. Sayle, 'The mortuary roll of the abbess of Lillechurch, Kent', Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society 10 (1902-4) pp. 383-409 at p. 385 suggests it was created in around 1300, but Women religious. p. 11 n. 26 notes that it must be the first prioress by this name who is referred to in the roll, not the late thirteenth-century one.

[20] C. Clark, 'After 1066: The factual evidence', in C. Fell, C. Clark and E. Williams, Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the impact of 1066 (London, 1984) pp. 148-71 at p. 164.

[21] Delisle, Rouleau mortuaire. plate 38. The poem and the names of nuns to be prayed for are entered neatly in one well-presented paragraph, while the names of the four chaplains Ernulf, William, Godric and Odbright, and a Count Robert who was presumably a patron, are entered separately next to paragraphus marks; two secular women, Matilda and Mabel (both countesses) are also in the main text, although on a separate line to the abbesses, prioresses and nuns. It was long believed that Muriel, one of the earliest known authoresses in England was a nun at Wilton, but recently it has been argued that she was probably a member of Le Ronceray d'Angers, and was a continental rather than English nun: G. Signori, 'Muriel and the others... Or poems as pledges of friendship' in J. Haseldine (ed.), Friendship in medieval Europe (Stroud. 1999) pp. 199-212 esp. pp. 199-201.

always recorded in Latin, as the language of authority.[22] Cartularies remain for several

of the wealthier and better-recorded communities, and individual charters from almost

all the nunneries of medieval England.[23] While it is possible that these were all written

by male clerks, it is equally possible that either the cellaress, who had to deal with the

practicalities of daily life, or the precentrix, who had to be able to read Latin, might

have written out these texts. An abbess or prioress would have presided over abbey

meetings and represented her community at the king's itinerant court, accompanied by

her steward, and would have had to understand the content of documents to which she

affixed her seal. This day-to-day literacy was of at least as much significance to the

abbey than was the ability of every nun to read her prayer books. The value of a prayer

for the soul of a benefactor was the same whether it was recited or read out, but an

abbess was in charge of the financial survival of a community and presented its public

face. It should be recalled at this stage that many abbesses and prioresses were of

aristocratic or royal blood, and may well have been educated before they entered the

religious life. Indeed, this advanced ability to deal with the outside world was probably

an important factor in the appointment of a new head to a religious community.

ii) Secular women

The evidence for secular women as consumers and authors of Latin texts is less

substantial than for nunneries, but proves that Latin remained an important language to

the aristocracy even as the vernacular tongue of the upper class changed from Old

English to Anglo-Norman.[24] Royal and noble women commissioned texts about their

own family members in much the same way as abbesses did for their own saints,

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[22] On the use of Latin as a written language in comparison to spoken vernaculars, see Clanchy, pp. 206-11.

[23] See, for example, W.O. Hassall (ed.), The cartulary of St Mary Clerkenwell (Camden 3rd Series vol. 71. London, 1949), C. Breay (ed.), The cartulary of Chatteris Abbey (Woodbridge, 1999) and S.E. Kelly (ed.), The charters of Shaftesbury Abbey (Oxford, 1996) for evidence from a small city nunnery, a rural community which remained poor, and one of the best-patronised nunneries of the middle ages respectively. G.R.C. Davis, Medieval cartularies of Great Britain (London, 1958) discusses their use as evidence.

[24] On the late Anglo-Saxon period, see M.P. Brown, 'Female book-ownership and production in Anglo-Saxon England: The evidence of the ninth century prayerbooks', in C.J. Kay and L.M. Sylvester (eds.), Lexis and nexis in early English: Studies presented to Jane Roberts (Amsterdam, 2001) pp. 45-67.

presenting a picture of their virtues and good deeds for posterity in a language which would never go out of use. Among the best known patrons from the Anglo-Saxon royal family were Queen Emma (queen firstly to King Æthelred, 1002-13, then to King Cnut, 1017-35, she d. 1052), who commissioned the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, and Queen Edith (1045-66) who had the *Vita Edwardi Confessoris* written to exonerate her own family in the events of the Norman Conquest.[25] In later years Queen Matilda II (1100-1118) had the story of her mother St Margaret of Scotland (d.1093) written probably by the author Turgot of Durham, and Queen Matilda III (1135-52) commissioned a life of her grandmother Ida of Boulogne.[26] Queen Adeliza, second wife of Henry I, commissioned the translation into French of the bestiary of Philip de Thaon (ANL 347). While this may not seem relevant to a discussion of the Latin patronage of secular women, as Clanchy argues it is significant that Queen Adeliza wanted the text written down at all. In order to read a text in the vernacular, she was almost certain to be able to read it in Latin as well, if it was she herself who was to be the active reader of the text and not merely a listener.[27] During the period covered by this study, the evidence suggests that patronage amongst women was essentially limited to royalty and the very upper echelons of society. It was only in later centuries that more women (and men) developed the ability to read and became active patrons on a wider level; this development was probably less to do with the fact that they were female than with the spread of literacy through society, and it would be wrong to lay too much emphasis upon the gender of the reader.[28] The choice of language for an author in the years after

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[25] A. Campbell. (ed.), Encomium Emmae Reginae. supplementary introduction by S. Keynes (Camden Classic Reprints vol. 4. Cambridge, 1998); Vita Edwardi. On these two women and their texts, see Stafford, pp. 28-52.

[26] On women as commissioners of texts and the gender-based differences between male and female patrons, see E. van Houts, Memory and gender in medieval Europe. 900-1200 (Basingstoke, 1999) pp. 71-3. On the patronage of Matilda II, D. Baker, ' "A nursery of saints": St Margaret of Scotland reconsidered', in D. Baker (ed.), Medieval women (Oxford, 1978) pp. 119-141, and more recently L. Huneycutt, 'The idea of the perfect princess; the life of St Margaret in the reign of Matilda II (1000-1118)', ANS 12 (1989) pp. 81-98. On Matilda III, R. Nip, 'Godelieve of Gistel and Ida of Boulogne', in A.B. Mulder-Bakker, Sanctity and motherhood: Essays on holy mothers in the middle ages (New York, 1995) pp. 191-223.

[27] Clanchy, pp. 217-18.

[28] On the later middle ages in particular, a useful overview is C.M. Meale, ' "…alle the bokes that I have of latyn, englisch, and frensch"; laywomen and their books in late medieval England', in C.M. Meale (ed.), Women and literature in Britain. 1150-1500 (2nd ed. Cambridge, 1996) pp. 128-58. For the view that vernacular literacy was more important to lay women that Latin literacy, see S.G. Bell, 'Medieval

the Norman Conquest was potentially a difficult one, as writing in either the vernacular of England (and the native population) or of Normandy (and the conquerors) could carry strong political resonance. Latin was acceptable to both the incomers and the existing English population, and carried no risk of alienating any of one's potential benefactors; as the political situation in England stabilised and the Normans and English inter-married, the use of a vernacular, generally Anglo-Norman, became more acceptable, but Latin would always be considered a 'safe' language.[29]

b) Barking Abbey's literacy: Physical evidence

Tracing the books which belonged to Barking is fairly straightforward, although there is no extant library catalogue. The list given by Ker and supplemented by Watson identifies fourteen books which can be shown to have belonged to the abbey at some point.[30] Of these, only three survive from the period of this study. The earliest book is a tenth century manuscript of the Gospels (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 155) which contains the texts of two important eleventh-century land charters on the flyleaf.[31] Perhaps most interesting for this study are two twelfth century manuscripts, which may have belonged to the abbey before 1200. Cardiff, Central Public Library MS 381 ff. 81-146 contains Goscelin's *Life of St Ethelburga* and *Lessons on St Hildelith*. Various short marginalia point out the important Barking figures in each text, and there are some intriguing notes alongside certain sections of narrative.[32] Fol. 90v, for instance, a chapter on miracles which took place after Ethelburga's death, has markings drawing the reader's attention to the words 'lupus', 'ursus' and 'leo'.[33] Oxford,

women book owners: Arbiters of lay piety and ambassadors of culture', in M. Erler and M. Kowaleski, Women and power in the middle ages (London, 1988) pp. 149-87.

[29] I. Short, '*Tam Angli quam Franci*: Self-definition in Anglo-Norman England', ANS 18 (1995) pp. 153-75 discusses the politicisation of language after the Norman Conquest. He notes that by the mid-1100s Anglo-Norman was developing as the language of the aristocracy distinct from continental Old French, but that Old English was still seen as a lower class language by the ruling aristocracy.

[30] Ker, Medieval libraries. p. 6 and Watson, Supplement. p. 2. See also Bell, What nuns read. pp. 107-16 which describes the manuscripts in further detail.

[31] The two notes are the description of the lands of Gilebeard of Stifford, and the charter of Adam of Cockfield granting lands to Barking Abbey. Adam of Cockfield: ECBA pp. 35-36.

[32] It is described in Cardiff Libraries, Catalogue of manuscripts, books, engravings etc relating to St David (Cardiff, 1927) pp. 1-5.

[33] There are many other notes in this manuscript which deserve further study. It has not been possible to

Bodleian Library MS Laud Latin 19 is a glossed text of the Song of Songs.[34] This is of considerable interest, since Clemence of Barking's *Life of St Catherine* shows the influence of Bernard of Clairvaux's commentary on the Song of Songs.[35] This manuscript contains an early thirteenth century anathema, presumably written by one of the nuns herself, which reads 'Hic est liber sacratissime dei genetricis marie et beate æthelburge virginis berkingensis ecclesie. Quem qui abstulit aut super eo fraudem fecerit anathematis mucrone feriatur'.[36]

A manuscript not mentioned by Ker, but which may have belonged to Barking, is Dublin, Trinity College MS 176, a manuscript containing the texts of Goscelin of St-Bertin's works written for Barking Abbey.[37] Written in the margin of this manuscript in a hand of c.1200 is a prayer reading:

> O adonay domine deus mangne [sic] et mirabilis, qui dedisti salutem in manu sancte marie virginis, et per uterum et vicera [sic] dulcissime matris tue et per illud sanctissimum corpus quod ex illa sumsisti, exaudi preces meas et inple desiderium meum in bonum et libera me de omni tribulacione et angustia et ab insidiis omnium michi nocere cupiencium et a labiis iniquis et a linguis dolosis et ab omnibus malis amen.[38]

This prayer, with its emphasis on the Virgin and her unpolluted body, seems likely to have been the work of a female author, and if the manuscript did indeed belong to Barking as Colker suggests, it is possible to imagine Clemence of Barking or one of her contemporaries writing this prayer as a personal act of devotion. Goscelin of St-Bertin tells us that the nun Wulfruna copied out a missal, presumably in a similar act of devotion, but that the book was stolen by a priest.[39] This book does not survive, but thefts of books were common in the years after the Conquest, so we need not doubt Goscelin's story.[40]

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analyse them within the scope of my current research.
[34] N.R. Ker, 'More manuscripts from Essex monastic libraries', TEAS 23 (1945) pp. 298-310 at p. 305.
[35] C. Batt, 'Clemence of Barking's transformations of *courtoisie* in *La Vie de Sainte Catherine d'Alexandrie*', in R. Ellis (ed.), Translation in the Middle Ages (New Comparisons vol. 12. Essex, 1991) pp. 102-23 at p. 113.
[36] Ker, 'More manuscripts', plate facing p. 305.
[37] Colker, p. 393 suggests that it may have belonged to Barking.
[38] Dublin, Trinity College MS 176 fol. 41v, transcribed in Colker, p. 393.
[39] VStE. chap. 20, pp. 416-7.
[40] D.N. Dumville, 'Anglo-Saxon books: Treasure in Norman hands?', ANS 16 (1993) pp. 83-99, which

Other notes written by nuns during the period of this study are found in several mortuary rolls, listing members of the community to be remembered in confraternity with other houses. The entry in the roll of Vitalis, Abbot of Savigny which circulated in England in around 1123 reads 'Titulus Sancte Marie et sancte Æthelburge berkingensis ecclesie. Anima eius et [anime omnium; text obscured by fold] fidelium defunctorum requiescant in pace. AMEN. Orate pro nostris Alfgyva abbatissa. Lucia priorisse. Petronella priorisse. Scholastica, Perpetua, Matilda, Athelidi, Mabilia, Emma, et pro omnibus aliis nostris defunctis'.[41] Some hundred years later the mortuary roll of Lucy, first prioress of Castle Hedingham (occ. 1198) contained another detailed entry written by a representative of Barking. Written in a small and neat hand, it reads: 'Titulus sancte Marie et sancte Æthelburge virginis berkingensis ecclesie. Anima domine Lucie Priorisse de Heengeliam [sic] et anime omnium fidelium defunctorum per dei misericordiam requiescant in pace. Amen. Concedimus ei commune beneficium ecclesie nostre. Oravimus pro vestris, orate pro nostris'.[42]

Later manuscripts belonging to Barking Abbey fall outside the scope of this study, but several are worthy of note because of inscriptions they contain. Abbess Sybil Felton's name is found in four books belonging to the abbey, including Oxford, University College MS 169, the *Ordinale* she commissioned for the use of her nuns, which was dedicated to her in 1404.[43] The use of books as items of patronage to gain remembrance for the donor is shown clearly in Oxford, Magdalen College MS Latin 14, a fifteenth-century manuscript of the works of Bernard of Clairvaux, St Augustine and others, which was inscribed 'Memorandum that Elizabeth Veer sumtyme countes of Oxford the

mainly covers the theft of valuable illuminated books and their removal to the continent.
[41] Delisle, Rouleau mortuaire. plate 25. The Barking entry is the last on the plate.
[42] London, British Library MS Egerton 2489, a roll of some nineteen feet in length which circulated in around 1230.
[43] Ordinale 1, p. 13. Her name is also found in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodleian 923 (the *Clensyng of mannes soul*); Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Fr. 1038 (*Vies des pères*), and the former Beeleigh Abbey *Mirror of the Life of Christ*. The manuscript was part of the collection of William Foyle, which was until his death held at Beeleigh Abbey in his private library. The collection was auctioned in July 2000 at Sotheby's, and it has not been possible to find out the buyer of the manuscript

xxvi daye of Feverer the yere of lorde mcccclxxvii yave this Boke to the monasterye of Berkyng on whos sowle oure lorde have mercy amen'.[44]

Thanks to an unusually detailed account of book distribution, it is possible to establish that Barking had a nun in the role of *libraria*, and an *armarium* in which the books were kept, presumably a locked cabinet or trunk. According to the abbey's *Ordinale*, the following ritual took place on the first Monday of Lent, when the Rule of St Benedict decreed that all religious people should be given a worthy book to occupy them during the hours of educational reading:

> Post terciam dum missa canitur capitalis, libraria in medio capituli extendat tapetum, libros omnes de armario super-ponentes. Cumque missa finita fuerit una queque liber qui sibi anno preterito commisse fuerant, secum deferat in capitulum.... [the name of each nun is read out, she returns her book to the librarian and bows to the cross] Omnes qui libros suos perlegerint eodem modo ad crucem inclinent et redeant. Omnes qui libros suos non perlegerint prostrate coram abbatisse veniam petant, dicentes *Mea culpa...*[45]

The abbey had to have enough books for each nun to have one, but very few survive from the earlier years of its existence. The collection of books at Barking must also have included prayer books and books of hours, and the necessary service books and music books for the effective running of the daily offices.

c: Barking Abbey and Latin writing

i) The letters of Aldhelm

Barking Abbey was active in the literary arena within a few decades of being founded as a double monastery in the mid-seventh century. In around 675-80, nuns from the community were engaged in correspondence with Aldhelm, the theologian and author,

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[44] A.I. Doyle, 'Books connected with the Vere family and Barking Abbey', TEAS 25 (1958) pp. 222-43 at p. 235. The interesting later history of this manuscript is discussed in M.C. Erler, 'Exchange of books between nuns and laywomen: Three surviving examples', in. R. Beadle and A.J. Piper (eds.), New science out of old books: Studies in manuscripts and early printed books in honour of A.I. Doyle (Aldershot, 1995) pp. 366-73.

[45] Ordinale I, pp.67-8.

and were addressed with one of his most well-known works, the prose version of his tract *De virginitate*.[46] This long text discussing the virtues and good deeds of exemplary virgins was addressed to Abbess Hildelith, and several other of the nuns under her rule. This work has been the subject of several interesting recent discussions on its origin. Lapidge has suggested that the nuns may have commissioned the work from Aldhelm, since he wrote 'You were good enough resolutely to elicit the preceding text of this little book with many repeated letters'.[47] In contrast Gwara, the most recent editor of Aldhelm's work, suggests that the women named in the preface were not nuns of Barking but the abbesses of other nunneries, and that the piece was addressed 'to West Saxon abbesses generally'.[48] This is possible, but seems to disregard the fact that the most clearly identifiable of the women named, Hildelith of Barking, was herself not a West Saxon abbess. Given that the text suggests these women had been in contact with Aldhelm previously, it seems more likely that they were inmates of one religious community rather than several.

In the list of women at the beginning of the text, and in the various addresses Aldhelm wrote to his readers, there is no mention made of the presence of men at the monastery, despite its syneisactic nature. This is an interesting aspect of the work, and deserves further discussion. Despite being addressed only to women, however, the long list of exemplary virgins given by Aldhelm includes both male and female saints, and covers a wide range of different sanctities. Some were martyrs, others were teachers, some had remained virgin since birth and others left marriages to adopt a chaste lifestyle.[49] The saints are segregated by gender, with most of the males discussed first and the group of females second, with a final selection of five male saints to finish. Hollis suggests that this was intended to emphasise the complementary role of men and women in the double monasteries; the male saints represented the foundations 'supporting the edifice

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[46] Aldhelm; LH.

[47] M. Lapidge, 'Artistic and literary patronage in Anglo-Saxon England' in M. Lapidge, Anglo-Latin literature 600-899 (London, 1996) pp. 37-91 at p. 77. Aldhelm, p. 755; LH, p. 131.

[48] Gwara, pp. 48-55, quote from p. 55.

[49] Lapidge and Herren suggest that Aldhelm may simply have chosen those saints whose stories were available to him; nevertheless, they were all relevant in different ways to the audience at Barking. LH, p. 57.

of chaste behaviour', while those at the end were symbolic of the protective, enclosing role of the men in a double house.[50] Hollis' discussion of the double house is interesting for the suggestion that the development of non-segregated religious communities was a consequence of contemporary ideas about the role of the church. Placing religious men and women in close proximity to each other showed understanding of 'the perception of frailty as a shared human condition', and avoided the later emphasis on women as the cause of men's sin.[51]

In his discussion of the role of virginity in the salvation of the individual soul, Aldhelm was sensitive to the needs of his audience, and did not wish to offend any of his readers by suggesting, as later theologians did, that physical virginity was the only way to guarantee salvation. He noted carefully that 'The sublimity of praiseworthy virginity… does not shine so resplendently that the strict moderation of chastity, which is the second grade, is scorned as completely inferior and grows vile; or so that the legitimate fertility of marriage, undertaken for the issue of children, becomes perceptibly foul'.[52] He reassured his readers that 'we do not consider that the immaculate cohabitation of matrimony and the legitimate union of wedlock is to be scorned, as the heretics blather'.[53] Indeed, virginity could lead to the risk of spiritual pride, which was a worse sin than living chastely; having known the pleasures of the flesh and forsaken them for God was more praiseworthy than simply glorying 'in the integrity of the flesh alone', and Aldhelm placed virgins who had left marriages and women who had been mothers amongst his pantheon of saints.[54] Interestingly, in each of the two versions of the texts (the prose and metrical versions) Aldhelm puts different emphases on the importance of virginity, and the prose version includes a greater amount of didactic material; Hollis suggests that unlike the metrical version, the prose text was intended solely for an

[50] S. Hollis, Anglo-Saxon women and the church: Sharing a common fate (Woodbridge, 1992) chap. 4, 'Aldhelm's De Virginitate: Soldiers of Christ and brides of the lamb', pp. 75-112 esp. pp. 105-11.
[51] Hollis, Anglo-Saxon women and the church. p.105.
[52] Aldhelm, pp. 109-11; LH, p. 66.
[53] Aldhelm, pp. 89-91; LH, p. 64.
[54] Aldhelm, p. 115; LH, p. 67.

audience of nuns, hence the strong focus on chaste religious life as equal in virtue to physical virginity.[55]

Aldhelm noted that alongside chaste wedded women, widows were to be considered virtuous, as long as they dedicated their lives to God. In a tripartite model which was later to be developed into the well-known three-fold scheme of virginity, chastity and widowhood, Aldhelm admitted the need for marriages which produced children, but only if they were spiritual and pure marriages. Instead of the later theological conception of the reward of the widow being thirty-fold that of the married woman, that of the chaste woman sixty-fold, and that of the virgin one hundred-fold, Aldhelm used beautiful imagery to describe the three states; 'virginity is the sun, chastity a lamp, conjugality darkness . . . virginity is a queen, chastity a lady, conjugality a servant . . . virginity is the royal purple, chastity the re-dyed fabric, conjugality the undyed wool'.[56] This would have been especially pertinent in the early years of a religious community before child oblation became common and many members of nunneries might have been widows or left marriages to become nuns. Indeed, in Barking's fourteenth-century there is a specific office 'ad benedicendum viduam que fuerit professa castitatem'.[57]

The evidence of Aldhelm's work points to the nuns of Barking being highly educated and intelligent, and remarkably literate even at such an early stage in the abbey's existence. It is not clear if the nuns were educated before they entered the convent, or if they received their education once there, but some must be assumed to have been able to comprehend complex texts and a sophisticated style of Latin writing. Corresponding with theologians and religious advisors was a common way for religious men and women to gain a deeper understanding of the life they were entering, especially in countries where the Christian faith had only recently been introduced.[58] Aldhelm's letter

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[55] Hollis, Anglo-Saxon women and the church, p. 82 n. 44.
[56] Aldhelm, pp. 219-21; LH, p. 65.
[57] Ordinale II, p. 355.
[58] Radegund of Poitiers (c.518-87) was engaged in correspondence with Caesarius of Arles (c. 470-543), while Boniface wrote to many religious women in Wessex. J.A.K. MacNamara, Sisters in arms: Catholic nuns through two millenia (Harvard, 1996) pp. 136-7, and B. Yorke, 'The Bonifacian mission and female religious in Wessex', Early Medieval Europe 7 (1998) pp. 145-72.

to Barking suggests that the nuns wrote to him several times, and with great style, although he may have wished to flatter his correspondents and be deferential towards them as aristocratic women. Hildelith and her nuns were highly praised in the letter as 'scholarly pupils' and Aldhelm notes rather enthusiastically that 'In your writing... the mellifluous studies of the Holy Scriptures were manifest in the extremely subtle sequence of your discourse... I very much admired the extremely rich verbal eloquence and the innocent expression of sophistication'.[59] Whether this is a strictly accurate reflection of the nuns' ability to write is perhaps not certain, but nevertheless they were able to understand Aldhelm's own Latin, which considering its complexity and sophistication was in itself quite an achievement.

The *De virginitate* became popular again in the tenth century as a result of the reforms of the church, and many of its surviving manuscripts date from this time.[60] Later manuscripts may point to a wider awareness of the political manoeuvrings going on at Barking, as suggested by a recent study of extant versions of the text. Kiff-Hooper proposes that one of the manuscripts (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 577, produced at late tenth-century Christ Church Canterbury), which contains an illustration of an abbess (no doubt intended to be Abbess Hildelith) receiving the text from its author, is making a political statement about the abbey to whom the text was dedicated. The nuns surrounding the abbess in question appear to come from a single body with many heads. Kiff-Hooper suggests this may be intended as 'some now obscure reference' to the abbess and nuns of the abbey.[61] Given that this manuscript was illustrated at around the time Abbess Wulfhilda had been forcibly removed from office and replaced by Queen Ælfthryth (between c. 969 and 989), supposedly with the support of the clerks and nuns, I propose that the image may be a statement of the unity of the body of nuns being more powerful than the abbess herself. It should be noted, however, that this particular manuscript contains the metrical rather than prose version

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[59] Aldhelm, pp. 29-31, 761; LH, pp. 64, 67.
[60] J.A. Kiff-Hooper, 'Class books or works of art? Some observations on the tenth century manuscripts of Aldhelm's *De laude virginitatis*', in I. Wood and G.A. Loud (eds.), Church and chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays presented to John Taylor (London, 1991) pp. 15-26 at pp. 19-21.
[61] Kiff-Hooper, 'Class-books or works of art?', p. 20.

of the text, which as we have seen was aimed primarily at secular readers; it may have been a subtle way of showing the outside world that the monks of Canterbury, as well as perhaps other religious houses and secular figures, knew exactly what was going on at Barking, and the disputes that were taking place there between the nuns, the abbess and the queen.

ii) The letters of Osbert of Clare

After the golden age of the double house and its well-read abbesses and inmates, there is a period of some 400 years in which there is very little evidence for intellectual activity at the abbey. The years after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 brought new needs and priorities, and it was during this time that the nuns commissioned the Flemish monk Goscelin of St-Bertin to write the lives of the abbess saints Ethelburga, Hildelith and Wulfhilda; these are discussed in detail in Part d) below. The nuns' letter-writing activities presumably continued, as members came to the abbey from different families and possibly even different countries, and in the mid twelfth-century a correspondence similar to that with Aldhelm was taken up, this time with the monk Osbert of Clare. Osbert was prior of Westminster Abbey (c.1134- after 1153), perhaps best known for his efforts in promoting the case for the canonisation of King Edward the Confessor, but also a forger of charters and, briefly, an exile from his own religious community.[62] Osbert's *Vita Edwardi Regis* is of particular interest to this study, since he may have been the conduit through which the cult of the royal saint was brought to pre-eminence at Barking, resulting in the composition of the anonymous *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* discussed in detail below.[63] During his long and active career Osbert wrote letters to a variety of lay and religious recipients, of which over 40 survive.[64] Four of these are addressed to nuns at Barking. Margaret and Cecilia are identified as his sister's daughters, and he addressed an extended tract entitled *De armatura castitatis* (The

[62] A brief account of his career is given in Osbert, pp. 1-20, and on Osbert as forger of documents, see P. Chaplais, 'The original charters of Herbert and Gervase, Abbots of Westminster (1121-1157)', in P.M. Barnes and C.F. Slade (eds.), A medieval miscellany for Doris Mary Stenton (London, 1962) pp. 89-110 at pp. 91-3.

[63] This text is edited in Bloch. See Chapter 9 part c) below.

[64] Osbert.

armour of chastity) to Abbess Adelidis; the fourth nun was named Ida and may have been the niece of Queen Adeliza of Louvain.[65]

In 1139-40, around the time of his visit to Rome as part of his campaign for the canonisation of Edward the Confessor, Osbert wrote letters to his two nieces Margaret and Cecilia, who were nuns at Barking under the tutelage of Abbess Adelidis. He described them in his letter to Adelidis as 'carnis et sanguinis mei participes... natae sororis meae', and addressed each of them as 'my most beloved niece', suggesting that he was close to his nieces, and their family relationship did not end when the girls entered the religious life.[66] Nothing is known of Osbert's family, except that he took the toponymic surname 'of Clare'. Osbert may have been a distant member of the well known Clare family based in Suffolk, in which case we may assume that whichever of Osbert's sisters was the mother of Margaret and Cecilia, she too would have come from the same area, and it is interesting that the community chosen for the daughters' religious career was Barking.[67] If the girls' mother was from Suffolk, she might have been expected to choose a more local house such as the recently founded Benedictine house at Redlingfield (Suffolk), or indeed the highly prestigious community at Elstow (Bedfordshire), founded by Judith, niece of William the Conqueror.[68] It may be that the family wanted to put their daughters into a house with a long established history, or chose the house favoured by King Stephen in order to remain fashionable; an alternative explanation may simply be that Osbert recommended the house because he, being based at Westminster, knew it as the closest female community to his own, and one where he could keep a watchful eye on his kinswomen.[69]

[65] Osbert, nos. 21, 'To his niece Margaret' (pp. 89-91); 22, 'To his niece Cecilia' (pp. 91-6); 40, 'To Ida, a nun' (pp. 135-40); and 42, 'To Adelidis, abbess of Barking' (pp.153-79). These letters and several others have been translated in V. Morton (trans.), Guidance for women in 12th-century convents (Woodbridge, 2003).

[66] Osbert, pp. 89, 91, 187.

[67] On this family see J.C. Ward, 'Royal service and reward: The Clare family and the crown, 1066-1154', ANS 11 (1988) pp. 261-78, and M. Altschul, A baronial family in medieval England: The Clares, 1217-1314 (Baltimore, 1965) pp. 17-28.

[68] Women religious, pp. 167, 228.

[69] It is also possible that Osbert was not related to this family. His toponymic surname may have come from having begun his monastic career at the Benedictine priory of Stoke by Clare in Suffolk.

The letters sent by Osbert to his nieces Margaret and Cecilia reported his own personal news and gave encouragement for their religious vocations. Margaret's letter, written probably in 1139, described Osbert's preparations for his forthcoming journey to Rome, and then explained the glories of virginity and the good example of Margaret's namesake saint.[70] Indeed, Osbert noted with regret that he was unable to seek St Margaret in Antioch, but was instead going to Rome to pray before the tomb of St Cecilia.[71] Cecilia's letter, written probably in 1140, began with a report of that visit to Rome, including the account of a miraculous appearance of St Laurence there, which Osbert used as an introduction to an exposition of the virtue of following the saint's example of strenuous devotion to God.[72] Osbert's main intention in each of these letters seems to have been to encourage the women to follow the examples of their virgin martyr namesakes, with the emphasis firmly on virginity and not on martyrdom. He used quotes from the biblical Song of Songs to show the more tender side of God's love, and perhaps to reassure the two women that their life in a nunnery need not lack the emotional comforts of a life in the secular world; the letters are written in an encouraging and gentle tone, rather than as forceful didactic treatises.[73] The Song of Songs had recently been re-interpreted as a hymn of praise to the Virgin Mary by the theologian Honorius Augustodunensis (c. 1070-1139), and its themes were to be taken up by Clemence of Barking in her re-working of the *Life of St Catherine of Alexandria*; Osbert was using a text well suited to the theological and romance-literary environment of the day.[74]

We do not know if Margaret and Cecilia wrote back to their uncle, but we may conclude that another nun at the abbey was engaged in correspondence with Osbert. His letter

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[70] Osbert, no. 21.

[71] Osbert, p. 91.

[72] Osbert, no. 22.

[73] For example Osbert, p. 90, quoting Song of Songs chap. 4 v. 7, 'Tota pulcra es, amica mea, et macula non es in te' (Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee), and p. 92, Song of Songs chap. 2 v. 9, 'ipse stat post parietem tuum respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per cancellos' (Behold [my lover] standeth behind the wall, he looketh forth at the window, showing himself at the lattice).

[74] Honorius' *Sigillum Beatae Mariae* was one of the first works to see the Song of Songs as a hymn to the Virgin; he later re-interpreted the text with a focus on its eschatological aspects, and put less emphasis on the Marian potential of the text. Honorius Augustodunensis, 'Sigillum Beatae Mariae', in Opera omnia ed. D. Pezius, Patrologia cursus completus (Series Latina vol. 172. Paris, 1854) cols. 494-518 and

addressed simply 'to Ida' was written at her request; 'Cogit me sanctum desiderium tuum... ut tibi vel breviter aliquid scribam unde religiosi pectoris studium ad amorem supernae glorificationis accendam'.[75] Ida has been identified as a nun of Barking by most scholars on the evidence of a passage saying that she will be taken into heaven under the protection of her patroness Ethelburga, the first abbess of Barking ('ut ad nostrae inhabitationis nativum solum recurramus, eo beata Æthelburga te suam Christo reconsignabit oviculam cuius sub praetextu religionis te profiteris alumnam').[76] This passage is the only evidence connecting Ida to Barking, but given Osbert's relationship with Barking through his nieces, it seems likely that he would have written to other women there if asked by them to do so. Ida is identified in the letter as a niece of Queen Adeliza, presumably referring to Adeliza of Louvain who was the second wife of King Henry I ('ibi enim non diceris neptis reginae Adelidis').[77] Barking would certainly have been a suitable community for a kinswoman of the queen, especially if we consider that both King Henry I's first wife Matilda II and King Stephen's Queen Matilda III had acted as custodians of the house in vacancies between abbesses.

The exact identity of Ida is not clear, and neither is the date of the letter. The name Ida was common amongst members of the Louvain- Bouillon aristocracy, however, beginning with St Ida of Boulogne (1040-1113), and there is no reason to doubt Osbert in his identification. I suggest the nun Ida may have written to Osbert for moral guidance, given the content of the letter, perhaps being worried about her life before entering the nunnery. In the text, Osbert praised Ida for having chosen the heavenly bridegroom (Christ) rather than an earthly husband, but that if there was any possibility she was not a virgin, she should not be too concerned as long as she henceforth lives chastely; 'Gaude ergo, filia Syon, si te Christo sponso conservasti virginem et innuptam. Tantum deinceps satage ut in floribus vivas castitatis, hoc est in pudicitia mentis et corporis'.[78]

'Expositio in Cantica Canticorum', op. cit. cols. 347-496.

[75] Osbert, no. 40, p. 135.

[76] Osbert, p. 140.

[77] Osbert, p. 139.

[78] 'Rejoice if you have preserved yourself a virgin and unmarried for the bridegroom Christ, yet you ought not to despair if you do not know yourself to be incorrupt, only from now on take trouble that you

Osbert's letter to Ida was, much as were his letters to Margaret and Cecilia, primarily a tract on virginity, and he recommended several female virgin saints as exemplars for her. Those named who would welcome her into heaven alongside her patron St Ethelburga were Agnes, Cecilia, Agatha, Lucy, Faith, and most interestingly for this study, Catherine.[79] An interesting aspect of these saints in particular is that they were all either young girls, or wealthy influential young adults; in this they are a direct reflection of Ida herself. Osbert refers to Ida's high birth, as a kinswoman of the queen and born of dukes and counts ('de ducibus namque et consulibus carnis'), and the choice of saints may have been intended to show his awareness of the nobility of his reader.[80] Nevertheless, he informs Ida that her status in Heaven will be even greater after death than on earth, and she will be more precious than any earthly noblewoman: 'Ibi non vocaberis Ida, sed viventis dei filia gloriosa; ibi non diceris neptis reginae Adelidis, quae cunctis terrarum reginis longe pretiosor et nobilior apparebis'.[81] It has also been noted that he uses more high-flown language than usual in this letter, implying that 'he made special efforts to impress his illustrious reader', and showing Osbert as perhaps more susceptible to the powers of earthly glory than he would like to admit.[82]

The most lengthy of the surviving letters Osbert wrote to the nuns of Barking was his tract to Abbess Adelidis (1138-66) entitled *De armatura castitatis*, written in either early 1156 - spring 1157, or summer 1158 - spring 1163.[83] This text was a lengthy exposition on chastity and authority, intended as a gift to the abbess to honour her and thank her for the hospitality she had shown to Osbert during a visit to the abbey, perhaps to see his nieces: 'Apponatur cum gratia et salute recentes hodie tibi deliciae; ad quas, femina virtutis, ne formides manus extendere, quia nos hesterna solidasti

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live in flowers of chastity, that is in purity of mind and body'. I am grateful to Laura Napran for her helpful discussions of the letter to Ida; the translation of the Latin text is hers.

[79] Osbert, pp. 139-40. See the discussion of the cult of St Catherine below pp. 228-9, 233-4.

[80] Osbert, p. 135.

[81] Osbert, p. 140.

[82] Bos, 'Gender and religious guidance', p 60.

[83] Osbert, no. 42. The date relies on the statement that Osbert was making preparations to go and visit the king (Henry II) who was abroad; Henry spent these periods in Normandy. Osbert, pp. 157 and 225, and for Henry, R.W. Eyton, Court, household and itinerary of Henry II (London, 1878) pp. 16 (departure to

refectione, refecisti mentem non ventrem, nec eduliis sed obsiquiis oneratum remisisti'.[84] It is likely that Osbert intended this letter to reach the nuns as well as Abbess Adelidis, and like the work of Aldhelm some 450 years earlier, he was careful to note that chaste widows could be equally as virtuous as mere physical virgins. He was no doubt aware that some of his audience may have been married before entering the religious life, and allowed them a claim to Heaven as well, as long as they observed holy chastity. Wogan-Browne gives a useful analysis of the different saints he presents for Adelidis' edification, who included an abbess (Etheldreda of Ely), a wife (Cecilia), a mother (Silva), a chaste widow (Judith), and St Ethelburga of Barking herself, Adelidis' predecessor.[85] These saints, some legendary and some historical, would have provided Adelidis and her nuns with such a variety of figures that all could have found one to emulate. The personal significance to Adelidis of the discussion of Abbess Ethelburga would also have been unmistakeable.[86]

In his writing to Adelidis, Osbert does not give the impression of attempting to teach her but rather to engage her in a form of discussion, and indeed in many of the letters analysed by Bos, the relationship between spiritual mentor and pupil is a fairly equal one. The women engaged in these spiritual relationships were frequently those who had already shown themselves to be independent of the standard role of humble wife which was expected at the time; they were religious women, widows, and noble figures who had escaped the control of their father or husband.[87] As a monk of Westminster, Osbert was a member of a similarly prestigious community to Adelidis, and there was no need for one to be deferential to the other. The relationship between these individuals was similar to that between the religious houses themselves; wealthy and prestigious

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Normandy), 25 (return to England), 40 (departure) and 58 (return).

[84] Osbert, p. 154. Bos points out that it need not have been a recent visit, but perhaps one made some years earlier during one of Osbert's periods of exile from Westminster; Bos, 'Gender and religious guidance', pp. 48-9.

[85] Saints' lives. pp. 194-6.

[86] Osbert, pp. 175-7.

[87] Bos, 'Gender and religious guidance', pp. 230-8.

communities associated with other wealthy and prestigious communities, with gender being less important than status in determining these relationships.[88]

Osbert's letter to Adelidis carries extra resonance if we consider it in conjunction with the letter she received from Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury (1139-62), probably in the later years of her reign.[89] As we have seen, Theobald wrote a strongly worded letter to Adelidis in which he denounced her immoral behaviour which had supposedly reached the ears of the Pope himself.[90] His letter implied that Adelidis was having some kind of affair with Hugh, steward of the abbey. As discussed previously, however, it is possible that this letter was sent with the intention of discrediting Adelidis in the eyes of the ecclesiastical authorities, since she was in engaged in a land conflict with a priest whom Archbishop Theobald supported.[91] This rather mercenary, sordid explanation seems more plausible than Adelidis' moral laxity. It might also mean that Osbert was writing the text praising Adelidis and describing the benefits of the chastity she already exercised, in order to defend her against the scandal that was being raised against her. I find this a more persuasive argument than the assumption that Osbert's tract was intended as an ironical comment on her sexual impropriety.

d) The *Vitae* by Goscelin of St-Bertin

As well as engaging in correspondence, the nuns of Barking also engaged in active patronage of literary texts in both Latin and Anglo-Norman. Soon after the Norman Conquest Abbess Ælfgyva was involved in the composition by Goscelin of St-Bertin of *Vitae* and *Miracula* of three early abbesses of Anglo-Saxon Barking, St Ethelburga, St Hildelith and St Wulfhilda.[92] In the decades immediately after the Norman Conquest, it

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[88] 'Although confraternity was not divided by gender lines, it tended to be elitist; wealthy and powerful houses usually prayed for similar establishments'; P.D. Johnson, Equal in monastic profession: Religious women in medieval France (Chicago, 1991) pp. 98-9.
[89] W.J. Millor, S.H. Butler and H.E. Butler (eds.), rev. C.N.L. Brooke, Letters of John of Salisbury vol. I: The early letters (Oxford, 1986) no. 69.
[90] See the discussion above, pp. 73-4.
[91] Letters of John of Salisbury vol. 1, no. 132.
[92] VStE; VStW; De translatione 1 and 2; Vision; and LStH

was vitally important for the leaders of the Anglo-Saxon foundations to attract the financial patronage of the new Norman lords who had replaced their previous benefactors, whilst trying to maintain the favour of the local populace of Anglo-Saxon landowners.[93] Many houses produced new and impressive versions of the lives of their patron saints, in order to show their worthiness as guardians of the souls of their hoped-for Norman benefactors. This often accompanied the translation of relics to new and illustrious homes, intended to prove to the Normans that these saints were not simply hangers-on from the Anglo-Saxon era but vital and relevant figures whose protection could be earned through carefully directed patronage.[94] Early analyses of this period of history concluded that the Normans, and Lanfranc in particular, were hostile towards the old Anglo-Saxon saints, and that (for example) 'the production of a *Life* and *Miracles* of St Etheldreda [of Ely] are testimony less to a lively cult of the saint that of the doubts and disrespect of the generations of monks and laymen in the century after the Norman invasion'.[95] More recent arguments have taken the view that whatever their personal loyalties, the newly appointed Norman abbots and abbesses would have been aware of the importance of a patron saint and cult to a religious community, and that 'the Norman churchmen had nothing to gain by rendering their institutions incapable of functioning properly'.[96] Indeed, the rejuvenation of Anglo-Saxon cults in some areas

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[93] It has generally been concluded that it took two or three generations for the Normans to transfer their loyalties from the religious communities of their native land to those of their new home. Recent studies of this topic include E. Cownie, 'The Normans as patrons of English religious houses, 1066-1135', ANS 18 (1995) pp. 47-62, and K. Cooke, 'Donors and daughters: Shaftesbury Abbey's benefactors, endowments and nuns c.1086-1130', ANS 12 (1989) pp. 29-45.

[94] Discussions of the post-Conquest use of hagiography include B. Abou-el-Haj, 'Saint Cuthbert: The post-Conquest appropriation of an Anglo-Saxon saint', in P. Szarmach (ed.), Holy men and holy women: Old English saints' lives and their contexts (New York, 1996) pp. 177-206; S.J. Ridyard, '*Condigna veneratio*: Post-Conquest attitudes to the saints of the Anglo-Saxons', ANS 9 (1986) pp. 179-206; and P.A. Hayward, 'Translation-narratives in post-Conquest hagiography and English resistance to the Norman Conquest', ANS 21 (1998) pp. 67-93, which focuses in particular on the work of Goscelin of St-Bertin.

[95] E.O. Blake (ed.), Liber Eliensis (Camden 3rd ser. vol. 92. London, 1962) p. xlix. This negative attitude was expressed most influentially in D. Knowles, The monastic order in England: A history of its development from the times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 940-1216 (2nd ed. Cambridge, 1976) p. 539. This seems to have been based on an incorrect interpretation of the saints present in various monastic calendars; see E. Bishop and F.A. Gasquet, The Bosworth Psalter (London, 1908) p. 31, and the re-interpretation of the evidence in R. Pfaff, 'The calendar', in M. Gibson, T. Heslop and R. Pfaff, The Eadwine psalter: Text. image and monastic culture in twelfth-century Canterbury (London, 1992) pp. 62-87 at p. 85.

[96] Ridyard, '*Condigna veneratio*', p. 205.

was so closely linked to the accession of Norman bishops and abbots that those houses whose Anglo-Saxon leaders survived a long time were somewhat left behind.[97]

Part of this great movement towards adoption and promotion of the Anglo-Saxon saints involved writing new texts about those patron saints. Goscelin of St-Bertin, who came from Flanders to England in about 1058, made himself a good living writing texts for a large number of houses who sought such texts, writing at least twenty authenticated saints' lives and histories, and a further eleven texts have been attributed to him.[98] He wrote texts on St Edith for the nuns of Wilton, and also wrote his famous *Liber Confortatorius* to Eve, a nun there.[99] He wrote a large number of works for St Augustine's Canterbury, and was also involved with compositions for the monks of Ely. It has been suggested that Goscelin was one of the most non-political authors of his age, writing only what was asked of him by his patrons, and that 'he not only believed what he read or was told, but reported it faithfully'.[100] Whether this is strictly true remains to be seen; it is certainly unlikely that he can have had strong personal feelings about the subjects of every one of his works, but it is equally unlikely that he can have written totally neutral work without any form of authorial signature appearing in the texts.

The works which interest us are those he produced for Barking in the 1080's, probably towards the end of the decade. He wrote a text on the life and miracles of St Ethelburga; a life of St Wulfhilda; a longer and shorter account of the translations of all three abbesses; the recital of a vision of St Ethelburga; and lessons on the translation of St

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[97] Worcester, where the Anglo-Saxon Wulfstan remained bishop for thirty years after the Conquest (1062-85), did not benefit from this procedure of promotion. M. Brett, 'The use of the Universal Chronicle at Worcester', in J.-P. Genet (ed.), L'historiographie mediévale en Europe (Paris, 1991) pp. 277-85 at p.280.
[98] Accounts of Goscelin's career are given in the introduction to 'The *Liber Confortatorius* of Goscelin of St-Bertin', ed. C.H. Talbot, Studia Anselmiana 37 (1955) pp.1-117 at pp. 5-22, and the account in R.C. Love, Three eleventh-century Anglo-Latin saints' lives (Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford, 1996) pp. xci-ci. The most recent discussion of the works by and attributed to him is M. Lapidge and R.C. Love, 'The Latin hagiography of England and Wales (600-1550) in G. Philippart (ed.), Hagiographies vol. III (Turnhout, 2001) pp. 203-325 at pp. 224-54.
[99] Talbot, '*Liber Confortatorius*', and see also A. Wilmart, 'Eve et Goscelin I', Revue Bénédictine 46 (1934) pp. 414-38, and 'Eve et Goscelin II', Revue Bénédictine 50 (1938) pp. 42-83. The *Vita Edithae*, written in around 1080, is edited in A. Wilmart, 'La legende de Ste Edithe en prose et vers par le moine Goscelin', Analecta Bollandiana 56 (1938) pp. 5-101, 265-307.
[100] Vita Edwardi, p.144.

Hildelith (he wrote no full text on her life).[101] His name occurs in the dedication of the *Vita Ethelburgae,* while the *Vita Wulfhildae* names him in both the dedication and a concluding poem, finishing 'Fratrem perpetuum vos hinc nostis Goscelinum'.[102] The Barking works are crucial sources for the history of the abbey, and as we have seen are the only sources for many of the events they describe. Goscelin's work gives the only extant information about the life of Wulfhilda, and in this it is difficult to know exactly how much credence to give to his stories. He is careful to describe his own sources, and claims authority from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* for the lives of the earlier saints Ethelburga and Hildelith, and from a living eye-witness for the events of the life of Wulfhilda.

The patronage of the texts is important in judging how much access Goscelin might have had to the oral histories and knowledge held by the nuns at Barking. Two of the texts, the lives of Ethelburga and of Wulfhilda, are dedicated to Maurice, Bishop of London (1085-1107), but it seems highly unlikely that they were written at his instigation.[103] According to the story given by Goscelin, Abbess Ælfgyva (c.1065 – after 1100) had intended to move the bodies of her predecessors the saints Ethelburga, Hildelith and Wulfhilda, to a new church which she was constructing. Maurice, Bishop of London stood in her way, however, and attempted to stop the translation taking place. After a meeting with her nuns, it was suggested to Ælfgyva that the saints did not wish to be moved by the Norman newcomers, but only by the nuns themselves, their own servants. Ethelburga appeared in a vision to confirm this, and the saints were moved successfully into their new home.[104] Interestingly, Goscelin suggested that it would be considered wrong to disturb the ancient church 'of the foundress Ethelburga and her brother Erkenwald', despite having previously claimed that the first foundation had

[101] The texts were all edited in the 1960s by Colker. The *Life of Wulfhilda* was previously edited by M. Esposito, 'La vie de sainte Vilfilde par Goscelin de Cantobery', Analecta Bollandiana 32 (1913) pp. 10-26. Selected extracts are translated in Morton, Guidance for women. pp. 144-55
[102] VStE. p. 398, VStW. pp. 418, 434.
[103] The *Life of Ethelburga* is prefixed 'Mauricio summo sacrat hec Goscelinus ab imo', VStE. p. 398, and the *Life of Wulfhilda* prefixed 'Quae pia sunt fidus capiat pietatis amicus; Mauricius iugi vivat calamo Gocelini'. VStW. p. 418.
[104] De translatione 1 and 2, Vision.

been burnt to the ground by the Danes.[105] We should be wary of accepting this story at face value, as Goscelin's account is the only source for the dispute over the translations, but the essential elements of the tale appear plausible. It is possible that it was as a conciliatory gesture to Maurice that the *Vitae* of both Ethelburga and Wulfhilda were dedicated to him, in gratitude for his allowing the translation to take place.[106]

It is not clear why Maurice was initially hostile to the idea of translating these saints, especially since he was a supporter of several other locally-based cults including that of Erkenwald at St Paul's, and St Osyth's cult in Suffolk.[107] Maurice did not attend the translation-ceremony of the Barking saints himself, and Goscelin notes that he sent the archdeacon of London instead as his representative. This was probably Archdeacon Edward, who died before 1096; we note that he has an Old English name, and might have been a better communicator with Ælfgyva, herself an Anglo-Saxon woman.[108]

Goscelin claimed direct patronage from Abbess Ælfgyva in three of the texts, and thus almost certainly had her consent to interview the nuns of the abbey as sources of information.[109] He describes events which took place within the nunnery that only members of the community would have known about, such as the meeting of the nuns at which St Ethelburga appeared, and is careful to note his sources for this information. Most important amongst these is the nun Wulfruna (also known as Judith), who had copied a missal book for the abbey which was supposedly stolen by a Norman priest, and who had known St Wulfhilda.[110] Wulfruna, 'Iudith cognominata', had been a young

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[105] The destruction of the abbey is described in LStH. chap. 2, while the ancient church is described in De translatione 2. chap. 3.

[106] This episode is discussed in detail in Hayward, 'Translation-narratives', pp. 81-83, where he concludes that Goscelin is treading a careful path between pleasing his patrons at Barking, and possibly incurring the displeasure of the bishop by showing him in a bad light.

[107] See the discussion in Hayward, 'Translation-narratives', pp. 81-83. See also however J. Zatta, 'The *Vie Seinte Osith*: Hagiography and politics in Anglo-Norman England', Studies in Philology 96 (1999) pp. 367-93 at p. 373, which suggests Maurice and his successors were financially hostile towards the religious community at Chich (St Osyth).

[108] J. le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066-1300 vol. I, St. Paul's, London, ed. D. Greenway (London, 1968) p. 8.

[109] VStE. chap. 20; De translatione 1, chap. 1, De translatione 2. chap. 2.

[110] 'Hic relictum librum missalem, quem memorabilis Vulfruna scripserat, presbiter, raptorum comes, clam abstulit et in suam parrochiam trans mare asportavit'; VStE. chap. 20, p. 416. His attitude to this plundering priest is quite clear, and it may well be that the abbey was still smarting at the theft of its

girl at the abbey during Wulfhilda's abbacy (c. 696-996), and she provides much of the information upon which the *Vita Wulfhildae* is based.[111] Wulfruna had been educated by Abbess Wulfhilda, and seems to have had a particularly close relationship with the abbess which extended beyond Wulfhilda's death, since it was through Wulfruna that she asked for her mortal remains to be hidden from the prying eyes of the public.[112] Having a direct and living contact with the subject of his works was a clear advantage to Goscelin, who otherwise did not have any first-hand source for the life of Wulfhilda. A female informant was not ideal, as women's testimony was considered inferior to that of men, despite their primary role as memory-keepers in the middle ages, but having a source who was both close in time to the events she described, and a first-hand witness, made up for this perceived deficiency of gender.[113] As an ecclesiastical figure, her witness was considered more reliable than that of a laywoman, and she also fell within the effective boundary of a century which was applied by medieval authors as a reasonable period to maintain the validity of oral traditions.[114] Goscelin's information on the lives of Ethelburga and Hildelith was taken primarily from Bede, who as we have seen was himself re-telling stories he had read in an old book of stories about Barking.[115]

Goscelin's texts were strongly flavoured, then, by his informants and their versions of the stories they told. Hayward suggests that Goscelin may have been influenced by his monastic patrons into exaggerating events in order to present them in the best possible light, and sometimes even inventing narratives.[116] Goscelin was thus careful to

book, so wished the priest to be vilified despite having returned the book. The tale of his sin occupies a whole chapter of the story; he prayed to St Ethelburga for forgiveness and returned the book, but his act of sacrilege was still recorded for all to see. On the theft of Anglo-Saxon books by Normans, see Dumville, 'Anglo-Saxon books'.

[111] VStW. preface, p. 418.
[112] 'Nota est adolescentibus eius sanctimonialibus discipula Vulfruna, Iudith cognominata, a primevo flore sub ipso educata', VStW. preface, p.418. The vision of Wulfhilda is described in VStW. chap. 13.
[113] van Houts, Memory and gender. pp. 19-39 gives seven classifications of witness, beginning with the author him or herself as direct witness, through to events distant in time and place from the author. In this classification, Wulfruna was in the second category, that of first-hand witness.
[114] van Houts, Memory and gender. p. 36-8 discusses the belief that information was considered accurate for three or four generations, around 100 years.
[115] VStE. preface, p. 398. Bede, book 4 chaps. 7, 10.
[116] He suggests that the use of stories given by concerned abbots and abbesses attempting to promote their patron saints is 'analogous... to the process of forging ancient charters in the hope of having dubious

emphasise that his informants were of the highest respectability in order to prove the veracity of their writings.[117] If we accept that the narrative given by Goscelin about the Barking saints is essentially true but with some embellishment, the particular treatment of the subjects becomes more interesting. If they did add extra miracles, or present events in a certain way, why did they choose one story over another and one narrative impression over another?

The Barking narratives contain several protection miracles, suggesting that the house felt (not unreasonably) under threat from potentially hostile foreigners such as Bishop Maurice, who might attempt to take lands away from the house or otherwise damage it. There are also a number of hospitality miracles, in which the saints provide for their nuns in a time of need and display a generosity which could be extended to potential benefactors: the saints looked after their own kind, but also extended their hand to others who wished to help them. In one miracle, Wulfhilda miraculously provided a robe for the nun Wulfruna, Goscelin's source for the saints life, showing charity and concern for the women of her nunnery.[118] Providing for strangers was also shown as a virtuous power of the abbess saints; Wulfhilda miraculously refilled the glasses of guests at a meal at the abbey.[119] Accounts of hospitality and protection miracles were increasingly common in the hagiographies produced in the decades after the Conquest, signifying a need in the commissioners of these texts to portray their saints as both generous and caring, whether to an established Anglo-Saxon benefactor or a potential new Norman one.[120]

The Barking nuns showed themselves as open and willing to listen to their predecessors in a way they may have felt Bishop Maurice and his colleagues were not. They could claim that they were simply obeying the wishes of the abbess saints in translating their

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rights confirmed by bishops and kings'. Hayward, 'Translation-narratives', p. 89.
[117] He emphasised witnesses such as Wulfruna, who had herself witnessed the events she described; her gender made her less reliable than a male witness, but her status as religious woman compensated for this.
[118] VStW. chap. 15, p. 433. On hospitality miracles in the narratives of other abbess saints, see Saints' lives, pp. 212-15.
[119] VStW, chap. 6, p. 426.
[120] The *Life of St Cuthbert of Durham* written in c.1100, for example, contained several cases of the saint

bodies, yet if the nuns had not recited this story, there would have been no need for the translation to take place. It is possible to interpret these *Vitae* as the nuns' way of informing Maurice that they would translate their saints if they wished, despite his disapproval, by projecting their own wishes onto their predecessors and using them as justification for their actions; after all, what authority could Bishop Maurice claim when faced with that of a saint? The nuns also presented their patron saints as charitable, humble, and obedient (if only to the divine power of the saints over the head of episcopal, earthly authority), and lay strong emphasis on these qualities in the *Vitae*. This re-focusing of one's own past was common, especially during times of disruption such as the post-Conquest decades, and by describing miracles which were taking place contemporaneously with the writing of the texts, monastic literary patrons like the Barking nuns showed that their saints remained powerful and relevant even at a time when worldly authorities were undergoing crises and uncertainties.[121]

The late eleventh-century representation of the abbess saints of Barking was coloured by the nuns' desire to present themselves and their community as charitable, dependable and well-protected, and this was easily done by inserting extra miracles into the lives of each of the saints and presenting them in a clearly positive light. A more directly political motivation, however, can clearly be seen in the account of St Wulfhilda's ejection from the abbey by Queen Ælfthryth (d. c. 1002) for twenty years in the late tenth century.[122] The story was essentially told as a hagiographic account of Wulfhilda's youth as a nun at Wilton, King Edgar's attempts to seduce her, and the king placing St Wulfhilda over the abbey of Barking as reparation for this immoral act.[123] According to Goscelin's account Edgar 'gave' to Wulfhilda the abbacy of Barking, despite the lack of

intervening to guard the lands and property of his abbey. Abou-el-Haj, 'Saint Cuthbert' pp. 194-9.
[121] S. Millinger, 'Humility and power; Anglo-Saxon nuns in Anglo-Norman hagiography', in J.A. Nichols and L.T. Shank (eds.), Distant echoes: Medieval religious women (Cistercian Studies Series vol. 71. Kalamazoo, 1984) pp. 115-29 is a very interesting discussion of this re-focusing.
[122] VStW. chap. 9, pp. 428-9.
[123] An interesting new interpretation of the story of Edgar's attempted seduction of Wulfhilda sees the story as a metaphor for the hunt, with Wulfhilda as the prey. It also notes the strong emphasis on Wulfhilda's purity in maintaining her virginity. When Edgar pursued her, she escaped through a privy, and it is noted that 'This is the way by which she arrived at the gate of life uncontaminated'. P. Pulsiano, 'Blessed bodies: The *vitae* of Anglo-Saxon female saints', Parergon 16 (1999) pp. 1-42. The quote is taken from p. 22 n. 39, citing VStW. chap. 2.

any other evidence connecting him to the nunnery. It is likely that the nuns would have claimed this patronage from the royal mover behind the late tenth-century monastic reform movement whether or not it had happened in quite the way their story explains.[124] By claiming patronage from Edgar the nuns also suggested that a precedent had been set for royal protection of the abbey, perhaps subtly showing the Norman kings their obligation towards the house as new rulers of England.

In Goscelin's text we are told that after several years ruling the abbey, Wulfhilda was ejected from office by Queen Ælfthryth, in conspiracy with the abbey clerks and nuns. It is especially interesting to note that the two women were kin, and no doubt would have been aware of this; Wulfhilda was cousin to St Wulfthryth, the concubine of King Edgar (and later abbess of Wilton c. 965-1000), while Ælfthryth was his second and supposedly much less holy wife.[125] The tenth-century inmates of Barking would have been aware that their holy abbess had been removed from office by a member of her own family, which was almost certainly considered a worse sin than if Ælfthryth had been a complete stranger.

Some hundred years later, however, when Goscelin was writing about these events, the most important offence the nuns felt they had suffered was that Queen Ælfthryth had caused financial problems for their house: 'Alftrudis vero regina cum relictum ipsius locum quasi propriam possessionem frequentasset et vineam Domini custode vacantem devastasset'.[126] This offence was no doubt exacerbated by the immediate post-Conquest uncertainty about their physical and material well-being. The family connection was no longer important as the abbey was becoming more independent of royal control (for the time being at least, until the early twelfth century), and no attention was paid in Goscelin's text to the kinship bond between the two women. As Stafford points out, the time which had passed since Ælfthryth's death (she died in c.1002) left the nuns fairly free to paint a negative picture of her as despoiler of a

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[124] Veiled women II. p. 32
[125] Crick, pp. 172-3 and Stafford, pp. 257-8. VStW p.424 notes that Wulfhilda was 'propinquior', kinswoman, of Ælfthryth.
[126] VStW. chap. 9, pp. 428-29.

religious community.[127] The fact that it is her financial harm to the house which received the most emphasis is very revealing of the nuns' fears and preoccupations at the time the text was composed.

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[127] P. Stafford, 'The portrayal of royal women in England, mid-tenth to mid-twelfth centuries' in J.C. Parsons (ed.), <u>Medieval queenship</u> (Stroud, 1994) pp. 143-67 at pp. 151-3.

Chapter 9: Vernacular literature

a) Vernacular texts and female consumers: Historiographical introduction

It is generally accepted that vernacular languages were used for oral communication on a day to day level in England in the Middle Ages, whether Old English or Norman French or Anglo-Norman. Latin was rarely spoken outside the reciting of religious offices and occasionally in a court case or dispute which needed 'official' status.[1] While daily conversations amongst the native population took place in Old English, and amongst the aristocracy in French or Anglo-Norman, the majority of written documents were in Latin; it remained 'the indispensable language of lordship and management', a universally understood equivalent to English in the modern business world.[2] The choice of a vernacular language for one's written text, whether land charter (as in the note made in Old English at the end of a Barking Gospel book recording the lands of Gilebeard of Stifford in the late eleventh century) or religious office (as in the detailed French prayers written into the Barking *Ordinale* in the early fifteenth century) or a romance or hagiographic text, was a significant statement about one's self-identity and native loyalty, and sometimes a statement about one's attitude towards Latin as a language of authority.[3] It would be wrong to assume that Latin was equated with 'religious' and vernacular equated with 'secular', since the two forms of language were used interchangeably.[4] It does appear, however, that vernacular texts were patronised more frequently by secular than religious figures, probably as part of the gradual expansion of literacy outwards from religious communities to the wider breadth of society.

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[1] Clanchy, chapter 6 and especially pp. 206-11 on the variety of spoken languages.
[2] Clanchy, p. 214.
[3] Gilebeard of Stifford's charter, see ECBA. p. 35-6. The abbey's *Ordinale* contains a few French prayers and orders of service alongside the Latin majority, although this text was an early fifteenth-century production and thus outside the scope of the present study. Ordinale I, p. 69, Ordinale II, pp. 355-59.
[4] M.R. Godden, 'King Alfred's *Preface* and the teaching of Latin in Anglo-Saxon England', EHR 117 (2002) pp. 596-604 discusses the use of languages in the pre-Conquest period.

i) Nuns

Religious women would have spoken Old English or French on a daily basis, according to their social class and nationality. In the decades after the Conquest the aristocratic Anglo-Saxon women remained in the wealthiest nunneries, only slowly being replaced by Norman women and later the daughters of inter-married native and continental nobles. These women may have been educated in their lives before entering nunneries, especially those who were widows, and were a prime audience for the secular romances and poetry so popular from the twelfth century onwards. Once inside a religious community, their reading was supposedly limited to religious and theological texts, and occasional letters and philosophical works. In this arena a hagiographical text, with its adventures and excitements alongside the didactic message at its heart, would have no doubt been a welcome alternative to the more strictly religious glossed bibles and philosophical meditations.

While nuns were expected to be literate in Latin in order to perform the offices of daily worship, they would most likely have accompanied this with a literacy in their mother tongue. Hearing a text read out and following the words was the first step towards an ability to read, and it would be much easier to learn to read in one's spoken language than to learn the complexities of Latin on top of the initial difficulties of reading. Nuns who were able to read Latin would almost certainly have had a reasonable degree of understanding of the written vernacular. Applying Bell's classifications of Latin literacy to vernacular texts, we class the ability to compose a grammatically correct and interesting text as the highest level.[5] It is likely that this level of vernacular fluency of composition may have been easier to attain than the equivalent Latinity. The survival of vernacular texts from the 150 years after the Norman Conquest suggests that there was a growth in the patronage of vernacular writing, but primarily in the secular sphere.[6] Indeed, the number of texts written by vernacular authors on religious subjects was

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[5] Bell, What nuns read, p. 50.
[6] M.D. Legge, Anglo-Norman literature and its background (Oxford, 1963) gives a good general introduction.

considerably less than the number of Latin works produced across the same period. It is possible that they they have not survived as the language they were written in was superseded by Middle English and fewer readers were able to understand the texts. It is also possible that the political implications of using either Old English or Old French in the politically charged atmosphere of post-Conquest England made the more cautious authors stick to Latin, a 'neutral' language. The use of Anglo-Norman by religious writers was in at least one case an attempt to ingratiate the author with his patron, but proved less practical than a Latin or Old English text would have done.[7]

Anglo-Norman texts written by nuns exist in small numbers for the period of this study, and indeed there are only three surviving saints' lives written in the language by women.[8] These are the *Life of Catherine of Alexandria* by Clemence of Barking (ANL 567), the *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* by the anonymous nun of Barking (ANL 523), and the *Vie d'Audree* by Marie (? Cf Chatteris, ANL 566).[9] The choice of language made by these women should not be seen as an admission of an inability to write in Latin; indeed, the fact that they translated Latin texts into the vernacular is in itself a sign of impressive ability.[10] The approach to the subject matter shown by female authors was notably different to that of male ones, especially in writing about love and the relationship of the individual to Christ. These female authors were able to empathise

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[7] Philippe de Thaon's treatise on the computus (ANL 346), which was less use to its readers in Old French than a simple Latin text would have been: A. Williams, The English and the Norman Conquest (Woodbridge, 1995) pp. 216-17. ANL numbers have been assigned to all known Anglo-Norman texts in R.J. Dean and M.B.M. Boulton, Anglo-Norman literature: A guide to texts and manuscripts (Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications vol. 3. London, 1999). These numbers are used for reference in the same way as BHL numbers listed in the equivalent catalogue of Latin texts, Société des Bollandistes (ed.), Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis. (Brussels, 1898-99) and the Novum supplementum ed. H. Fros (Brussels, 1986)

[8] See W. MacBain, 'Anglo-Norman women hagiographers', in I. Short (ed.), Anglo-Norman anniversary essays (London, 1993) pp. 235-50. He also includes the text on St Patrick's Purgatory which has been attributed to Marie de France, but as this is not strictly a hagiography, I have not included it in the current discussion.

[9] Catherine; Edouard; Marie, La vie Seinte Audree: poeme Anglo-Normand du xiiie siècle, ed. O Södergård, (Uppsala, 1955). I refer to the *Life of St Catherine* in English, since the primary manuscript of the text does not have a vernacular title, and simply goes directly into the first line of the text; Catherine. p. xv and 1. The *Vie d'Edouard*, in contrast, begins 'Ici comence le romanz de Saint Edward le confesseur', and so I use the vernacular title; Edouard. p. 109.

[10] J. Wogan-Browne, 'Wreaths of thyme; The female translator in Anglo-Norman hagiography', in R. Ellis and R. Evans (eds.), The Medieval Translator 4 (Exeter, 1994) pp. 46-65, especially the discussion at pp. 54-7.

with both the Virgin Mary and the figure of the Church as bride of Christ, which gave their work an immediacy male authors were unable to achieve in writing about female figures.[11] The twelfth century theological developments which emphasised the individual's relationship with God gave further power to female authors in particular. Vernacular hagiographic texts have been studied by many scholars in recent years, and I do not intend to go over ground which has already been thoroughly discussed.[12]

The most useful discussions of these texts focus on the use of marital imagery (Mockridge), the approach by female authors to the personal relationship with Christ (Wogan- Browne), and the authority female religious authors were able to gain through adopting (traditionally male) clerisy as a narratorial motif (Uitti).[13] A subject which has been especially fruitful is the development of the 'hagiographic romance' in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in which authors took the courtly love imagery of secular romance lyrics and troubadour poetry and applying it to religious subjects. A fundamental introduction to the concept of hagiography as romance literature is Cazelles' work on thirteenth-century texts, although her focus is very much on the physical nature of virgin sanctity and its expression in hagiographies, possibly because she studies versions of the saints' lives written by men and does not include Clemence of Barking and Marie (? of Chatteris) who gave a more subtle interpretation of their subject matter.[14]

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[11] D. Mockridge, 'Marital imagery in six late twelfth- early thirteenth century vitae of female saints', in L. Coon, K. Haldane and E. Sommer (eds.), That gentle strength: Historical perspectives on women in Christianity (Charlottesville, VA, 1990) pp. 60-78 is an extremely interesting discussion of this topic, comparing Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions of saints' lives.

[12] For an introduction to the range of subjects, see A.T. Baker, 'Saints' lives written in Anglo-French; their historical, social and literary importance', in E. Gosse (ed.), Essays by divers hands. Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom 4 (London, 1924) pp. 119-56, and more recently the overview survey 'Angleterre 1066-1400 (anglo-normand)' by M. Thiry-Stassin, in G. Philippart (ed.), Corpus Christianorum Hagiographies I (Turnhout, 1994) pp. 407-28. J. Wogan-Browne, '*Clerc u lai, muine u dame*: Women and Anglo-Norman hagiography in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in Meale, Women and literature pp. 61-85 at p. 76 n. 3 lists the known extant verse hagiographies in Anglo-Norman which number over 55 different texts on some forty different saints.

[13] See Mockridge, 'Marital imagery'; Wogan-Browne, 'Wreaths of thyme'; J. Wogan-Browne, 'Saints' lives and the female reader', Forum for Modern Language Studies 27 (1991) pp. 314-32; K.D. Uitti, 'The clerkly narrator figure in Old French hagiography and verse romance', Medioevo Romanzo 3 (1975) pp. 394-408; and S. Gaunt, Gender and genre in medieval French literature (Cambridge Studies in French vol. 53. Cambridge, 1995).

[14] B. Cazelles, The lady as saint: A collection of French hagiographic romances of the thirteenth century

Several studies have been made of the different texts of the *Katherine Group,* a manuscript containing Middle English versions of the lives of Sts Catherine, Margaret and Juliana as well as two didactic texts on virginity, being one of the first collections of saints' lives in the form of romances.[15] Despite being in Middle English, studies of these texts remain relevant to the current study because of their subject matter and the comparisons that can be made to Clemence's uniquely female perspective on the *Life of St Catherine.* It is interesting to note that St Margaret and St Juliana were both very 'corporeal' virgin martyrs, Margaret being tortured and even swallowed by a dragon, while Catherine's sanctity remained rooted in her intellectual powers and conversion of pagans through spoken evangelising rather than stoic suffering. A useful study of the physical emphasis in the narratives of many virgin martyrs is Gravdal's classic work on rape in medieval romances.[16] Her view has recently been counterbalanced by Stuart's study showing the misogynistic, rather than lustful intentions of many of the pagan tyrants presented in these stories.[17] Many of the issues surrounding these texts are equally applicable to secular readers of saints' lives, so I shall now discuss secular women as patrons and consumers of vernacular works.

ii) Secular women

The ladies of the Norman and Anglo-Norman aristocracy were prime consumers of vernacular texts; with plenty of leisure time and frequently well educated, these ladies were voracious readers of romances and poems, often produced at their own request and

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(Pennsylvania, 1991) The most recent work on this subject is by Wogan-Browne, in the chapter 'Virgin passions; Romance, raptus, ritual' pp. 91-122 of her Saints' lives. See also R. Dalrymple, 'The literary use of religious formulae in certain Middle English romances', Medium Aevum 64 (1995) pp. 250-63 discussing the two-way transmission of ideas between the hagiographic and romance genres.
[15] On the Katherine Group, see the edition by N. Ker, Facsimile of MS Bodley 34: St Katherine. St Margaret. St Juliana. Hali Meibhad. Sawles Warde (Early English Texts Society vol. 247. London, 1960), and the discussions in A. Savage and N. Watson, Anchoritic spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and associated works (Mahwah, NJ, 1991). K. Winstead. Virgin martyrs: Legends of sainthood in late medieval England (Ithaca, NY, 1997) discusses later uses of these texts.
[16] K. Gravdal, Ravishing maidens: Writing rape in medieval French literature and law (Pennsylvania, 1991).
[17] E. Stuart, Spitting at dragons: Towards a feminist theory of sainthood (London, 1996) notes 'as with all rape the motive is not principally sexual desire but lust to control the independent woman', p. 25.

circulated amongst family members.[18] They were able to read 'recreational' texts more openly than nuns were able to do, and had the full range of literature and religious writing open to them. Romances, troubadour poems, *Lais* such as those of Marie de France, and courtly handbooks were all amongst the manuscripts owned by aristocratic women in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The choice of vernacular language for recreational texts was logical for women who had probably received no formal training in Latin beyond that required to follow a prayer book.

Given the high status of Latin as a language and the ability of Latinate clerics to use their language as a way of limiting knowledge to the elite, one might have expected them to attempt to limit the use of vernaculars; we see this attitude as part of the counter-arguments to the Reformation, with clerics claiming that the Bible should remain in Latin so that only priests (who had received sufficient training in theology) could understand it. With regard to less formal texts, however, twelfth- and thirteenth-century religious figures were sometimes more open to making their material accessible to all. Abbot Samson of Bury St Edmunds (1182-1211) encouraged the use of vernaculars, saying that sermons should be written and read in French or English, 'so as to be edifying rather than showily learned'; the intention was that the audience should understand the content of a sermon or text and not be left ignorant.[19] The Anglo-Norman author of the *Vie de St Clement Pape* explicitly stated his opinion that translation of texts was essential to allow secular, non-Latinate people to learn from them and was critical of the exclusive attitude of some of his contemporaries;

> Clerks of the schools who have learnt so much that they understand something exert themselves making books and discussing opinions at length, in order to show their knowledge and have the world's praise... [they] are not specially apt or ready to teach the unlettered and to make... the books they have written understood in the common language... it would be much better and turn out to greater profit if the books of antiquity... were turned into a language in which more people could have the benefit of them. I am not one of the learned who are thoroughly grounded in clerisy; nevertheless the little that I know I intend to

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[18] On noble women as readers and owners of books, see P. Coss, The Lady in medieval England 1000-1500 (Stroud, 1998) pp. 71-72; C.Meale, ' "... alle the bokes that I have" ', and S.G. Bell, 'Medieval women book owners: Arbiters of lay piety and ambassadors of culture', in M. Erler and M. Kowaleski (eds.), Women and power in the middle ages (London. 1988) pp. 149-87.

[19] Quoted in A. Williams, The English and the Norman Conquest (Woodbridge, 1995) p. 213.

write with such effect that clerks and lay-people who hear it will be well able to understand it.[20]

The explicit reference to lay-people in this text shows that hagiographical works were intended not just for a religious audience, but aimed clearly at the wider society who could learn from the examples of a saint. Both the surviving Barking texts show that they too were intended for reading by lay-people, through the imagery used as well as through direct references to the outside world and the readers the authors had in mind.

Secular women occasionally commissioned texts in their mother tongues, and the prevalence of aristocratic women amongst patrons (due probably to financial considerations) meant that the great majority of texts surviving from after the Norman Conquest were in Anglo-Norman or Old French. To commission a text one needed the money to pay not only for the author's time, but his (for most authors were male) materials and often the production of a luxury manuscript of the text when completed. It has been suggested that a lack of available funding meant that even a figure as wealthy as Queen Matilda III was unable to patronise literary texts for a period of some years since her money was being diverted to military expenses: if a queen could not afford to have writers work for her, the costs involved must have been remarkably high, and out of the reach of all but the highest echelons of society.[21] Since the language of the upper classes was Old French and later Anglo-Norman, this is the language in which the majority of vernacular texts survive. If we consider, however, that the dominant popular language to develop in medieval England was Middle English rather than French, this must mean that the underlying 'Anglo' aspect of the language was more important than the 'Norman'; the great majority of the population remained English natives under the control of a foreign elite, but that elite was unable to impose its language upon the populace.

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[20] N. Willson, 'A critical edition of the Vie de St Clement Pape' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1951) vv. 1-6, 14-18, 27-30, 33-40.

[21] H. Tanner, 'Queenship: Office, custom or ad hoc? The case of Queen Matilda III of England (1136-52)', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, (eds.) Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady (New York, 2003) pp. 133-58, n. 75.

The texts read by these women were mainly recreational books for pleasure, and reflected their interests and social status. Romance stories such as the tales of Tristan and Havelock, and the romance of Horn were tales of women admired from afar by lovers they could never be with, for family or class reasons.[22] These escapist stories were the medieval equivalent of modern-day Mills and Boon romances, but of a much more high-flown and courtly nature. The twelfth century saw the beginnings of what was to develop into full-blown chivalric romance, the worship of one's Lady as exemplified in the stories of such figures as the Knight of the Tower. Andreas Capellanus' treatise *The Art of Courtly Love*, written in the 1180's, would have been familiar reading for these ladies, and the concept of placing a woman on a pedestal seen as a virtuous action.[23] Modern scholars have turned this assumption on its head, arguing that far from empowering women it made them into objects with no self-volition or control.[24] Most recently this argument in turn has itself been criticised, with Weiss's analysis of the historical context of some of these romances showing that they were patronised by powerful aristocratic women, who wanted depictions of similarly strong-willed heroines.[25] Despite this disenfranchisement of their female characters these texts were extremely popular with medieval women readers, and the imagery from them crossed over into religious texts and hagiographies, as discussed above.[26] Vernacular texts were more easily accessible to secular women than those in Latin, and authors were willing to meet that need in many different ways, through providing a wide variety of texts in different languages and with differing degrees of complexity. There were very few female authors, however, making the Barking texts all the more remarkable. I shall now discuss the *Life of St Catherine of Alexandria* and the *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* in detail, and show how the author(s) adapted their Latin originals to suit a female readership with very distinct tastes. It is often assumed that the anonymous *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* was written before *the Life of St Catherine*, but I will discuss

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[22] A very useful chronology of texts and their approximate dates is given in Meale, Women and literature, pp. xi-xxxviii, which also shows the gradual dominance of Middle English over Anglo-Norman.
[23] Andreas Capellanus, The art of courtly love, ed. J. J. Parry (New York, 1990).
[24] R.H. Bloch, Medieval misogyny and the invention of Western romantic love (Chicago, 1991).
[25] J. Weiss, 'The power and weakness of women in Anglo-Norman romance', in Meale, Women and literature, pp. 7-23.
[26] Dalrymple, 'Literary use of religious formulae'.

Catherine first. I believe the two texts may have been written within around ten years, and it is more logical firstly to discuss the work of a known author, then secondly the possibility that the anonymous writer may have been the same woman.

b) The *Life of St Catherine of Alexandria* by Clemence of Barking

St Catherine of Alexandria was a very different type of saint from the Anglo-Saxon abbesses written about by Goscelin of St-Bertin. She was a virgin martyr of the early church, who may have been a historical figure or may be the conflation of several different myths into one.[27] The accepted narrative of her life was that she lived in the early fourth century AD in Alexandria, the daughter of a king who inherited all his wealth but had converted to Christianity and devoted her life to evangelising and giving to the poor. She had been very well-educated by her father, and one of her iconographic emblems is a book (the other being a wheel in reference to her torture). When the pagan Emperor Maxentius ordered all his citizens to sacrifice animals to the pagan gods, Catherine refused, and engaged his philosophers in an extended debate about the virtues of Christianity over paganism. Her erudition and arguments convinced the philosophers, who converted to Christianity along with the emperor's wife and his chief of guards. Maxentius' anger was so great that he had Catherine tied to a complex bladed wheel torture mechanism, but before Catherine could be harmed an angel broke the wheels and the resulting explosions killed many of the pagan onlookers. Catherine's martyrdom eventually came through a simple beheading, and her body was taken by angels to rest at Mount Sinai. The basics of this story appear in the earliest known lives of the saint, while later authors added their own interpretations and extra details to suit the audiences for whom they wrote.[28]

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[27] The earliest reference to a historical figure who may have been Catherine was given by Eusebius, writing in the early fourth century: 'Alone amongst those whom the tyrant tried to seduce at Alexandria, a Christian woman of great eminence and distinction won the victory by her heroic spirit over the lustful and wanton soul of Maximin. Famed for her wealth, birth and education, she put everything second to modesty'. Eusebius, The history of the church from Christ to Constantine, ed. and trans. G.A. Williamson (rev. ed. London, 1989) p. 276. The editor suggests that this woman may have been named Dorothea, but the similarity to Catherine is notable.

[28] The earliest known life of St Catherine was a Latin *Passio* (BHL 1663, known as the Vulgate version of the life) which was probably composed in the early eleventh century, although evidence suggests the

As a saint who lived in the distant past, unlike the abbesses of Barking of whom there was living memory and a deeply personal significance for the nuns, St Catherine offered in effect a blank template upon which authors could build their own story. She was, however, very different to many of her contemporary virgin martyrs such as Sts Juliana and Margaret whose lives were also found in the 'Katherine Group' manuscript.[29] St Catherine's sanctity, in Clemence's presentation at least, was based not on physical resistance to torture or an enforced marriage, and her virginity was never threatened. The focus of her life is on the intellectual ability which so infuriated Emperor Maxentius, and on her refusal to capitulate to his desires in making sacrifices to pagan gods. Unlike many virgin martyrs who are almost silent throughout the accounts of their lives, speaking only a prayer before their death or discussing their love of Christ, St Catherine spoke extensively, debating with philosophers and defeating the emperor in an argument. These factors of her life are of particular relevance to the nuns of Barking, as I will show below.

i) Background to the work

The earliest and most widely spread version of the *Life of St Catherine* was the Latin Vulgate *Passio* (BHL 1663), written in the early eleventh century. [30] The cult developed firstly in Normandy around Rouen where a relic of the saint was held.[31] The cult then

saint's cult existed before this date; I discuss the chronology below.

[29] The 'Katherine Group' manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 34, was written in the early thirteenth century and contains the Lives of Sts Katherine, Juliana and Margaret, and the didactic texts *Hali Meiphad* and *Sawles Warde*. Ker, Facsimile of MS. Bodley 43. with extracts translated in B. Millett and J. Wogan-Browne (eds.), Medieval English prose for women: selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene wisse (rev. ed. Oxford, 1992).

[30] Of twelve eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts of the text, only one is known to have belonged to an English monastic house. A list of known manuscripts is given in G. Bronzini, 'La leggenda di S. Caterina d'Allessandria: Passioni greche e latine', Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei 8th ser. 9 (1960) pp. 257-416, at pp. 303-5. The English manuscript is London, British Library MS Cotton Caligula A viii. E. Einenkel (ed.), The Life of St Katherine from the Royal MS 17 A xxvii (Early English Texts Society vol. 80. London, 1884) p. xii suggests that this manuscript is from the mid-eleventh century. More recently, however, it has been considered to be a twelfth-century production, 'undoubtedly of English provenance'; S. d'Ardenne and E. Dobson (eds.), Seinte Katerine re-edited from MS Bodley 34 and the other manuscripts (Early English Texts Society SS vol. 7. London, 1981) p. 133

[31] A. Poncelet, 'Sancta Catharinae virginis et martyris; Translatio et miracula Rotomagensia saec. XI',

came to England from Northern France, probably through Normandy. The first occurrence of St Catherine's name in an insular monastic calendar (which would almost certainly have post-dated her first celebration and a fairly wide-spread knowledge of her existence) is in a manuscript produced at Winchester Old Minster in around 1060.[32] This suggests that St Catherine was known in England considerably before the Norman Conquest, and it is possible that Edward the Confessor heard about her during his exile in Normandy between 1016 and 1041.[33]

The first vernacular text and the earliest extant Anglo-Norman version of the *Life of St Catherine* is found in Manchester, John Rylands Library MS French 6 (known as the Manchester Fragment, ANL 658) written in the early twelfth century.[34] It has been argued that this text must be the base which Clemence professed to replace because it is 'held in low esteem, for it is somewhat defective in places', since the Manchester Fragment is the first known Anglo-Norman version.[35] If, however, the Manchester Fragment was indeed Clemence's original base text, 'she has so elaborated it that now only a few words and phrases remain to suggest that she used it at all'.[36] While Clemence claims to replace an extant vernacular text, her work is in fact much closer to

Analecta Bollandiana 22 (1903) pp. 423-38 describes the miraculous healing of a Rouen monk by the oils which oozed from the saint's body. R. Fawtier, 'Les reliques Rouennaises de Sainte Catherine d'Alexandrie', Analecta Bollandiana 41 (1923) pp. 357-68 and C. Jones, 'The Norman cults of Sts. Catherine and Nicholas, saec. XI', in G. Cambier (ed.), Hommages à André Boutémy (Brussels, 1976) pp. 210-29 discuss the growth of the cult in Normandy.

[32] London, British Library MS Cotton Vitellius E xviii, in F. Wormald, (ed.), English Benedictine kalendars before 1100. (Henry Bradshaw Society vol. 72. London, 1934) pp. 156-67 at p. 166. I discussed the chronology of the early English cult in my MPhil dissertation, 'The historical context of the *Life of St Catherine of Alexandria* by Clemence of Barking' (unpublished MPhil dissertation, Cambridge University, 1999) pp. 7-23.

[33] Barlow, pp. 36, 51-2.

[34] The Manchester Fragment, 201 lines in varying rhyme schemes, is discussed in R. Fawtier and E. Fawtier-Jones, 'Notice du MS French 6 de la John Rylands Library, Manchester', Romania 49 (1923) pp. 321-42, and the full text is printed in R. Fawtier, 'Les vies de Sainte Katherine en ancien Français I', Romania 56 (1932) pp. 80-104 at pp. 88-94. This is an incomplete version of the text, beginning at the visit of the Empress to Catherine in her prison cell.

[35] Catherine. vv. 43-4; VLHD. p. 3. For the argument that the Manchester Fragment must have been Clemence's source, see Fawtier-Jones, 'Les vies de Sainte Katherine I' p. 100-2, Legge, Anglo-Norman literature. p.69: VLHD. pp. xxviii-xxix.

[36] Catherine. pp.xiii-xiv.

the *Passio* than to the Manchester Fragment.[37]

ii) Author and manuscripts

The *Life of St Catherine* can be ascribed to Clemence, a nun of Barking Abbey, on good grounds. At the end of the text the author inserts her own name, stating 'I who have translated this life am called Clemence by name. I am a nun of Barking, for love of which I took this work in hand'.[38] Nothing more is known about her, and no Clemence appears in any of the contemporary sources from Barking, but this is no reason to disbelieve her. Her name suggests that she came from a family with continental background, or an English family which adopted continental names in order to advance socially in the aristocratic milieu of Anglo-Norman England.[39] Her excellent grasp of Anglo-Norman, however, exemplified by the use of clever word-plays and puns, suggests that Anglo-Norman and not Old English was her first language, and thus that she was probably descended from a continental or mixed rather than purely insular family.

The *Life of St Catherine* survives in three manuscripts. The earliest of these (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS nouv. acq. fr. 4503), dates to around 1200 and thus was produced within a few decades of Clemence's composition of the text. This manuscript also contains the Anglo-Norman *Voyage of St Brendan* by Benedeit (ANL 504), dedicated in turn to Henry I's two queens Matilda and Adeliza, suggesting it may have been compiled for a royal or aristocratic figure.[40] This manuscript, being the closest in date to the composition of the work, is used as the base text by MacBain who first

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[37] Catherine. p. xiv.

[38] Catherine. vv. 2689-92; VLHD. p. 43.

[39] C. Clark, 'Women's names in post-Conquest England; Observations and speculations', Speculum 53 (1978) pp. 223-51 especially pp. 236-7, 246-50 on the slow spread of continental names amongst socially aspirational insular families.

[40] This manuscript is described in Catherine. p. xv-xvii. The *Voyage of St Brendan*, commissioned by Queen Matilda II, is dedicated in some manuscripts to Queen Matilda and in others to Queen Adeliza; Williams, The English and the Norman Conquest. p. 216 suggests that the dedication was transferred to Henry's second wife on his marriage. The text is edited in I. Short and B. Merrilees, The Anglo-Norman voyage of St Brendan by Benedeit (Manchester. 1979).

edited the complete *Life* in 1964.[41] It is, however, a slightly abridged version of the main text, meaning the other manuscripts were required to create an edition of the full text. The second extant manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fonds français 23112) is a mid-thirteenth century translation of the text into the Picard dialect, in which the scribe has attempted to follow Clemence's original rhyme scheme.[42] This choice of language is interesting, since the Picard region was the origin of the counts of St Pol, an important and influential family in medieval England, who also commissioned a prose version of the anonymous Barking nun's *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*.[43]

The third manuscript, London, British Library MS Additional 70513 dating to the late 1270s, gives the fullest version of Clemence's text, written in verse, but is the furthest by date from the composition of the text; MacBain used it as his supplement to the earliest manuscript when editing the text. The manuscript is a uniquely useful source for Anglo-Norman hagiographies, containing thirteen saints' lives.[44] It is also especially relevant to this study of Barking, since it contains not just the *Life of St Catherine* but also the anonymous Barking nun's *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*; the *Vie de St Thomas le Martyr* by Guernes de Pont-Saint-Maxence (ANL 508) patronised by his sister Mary Becket, abbess of Barking (1173-1177x9) and the *Vie d'Audree* by Marie (?of Chatteris: ANL 566), the third hagiographic text written by a twelfth-century female author.[45]

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[41] Catherine. p. xx. MacBain's edition was reviewed in J. Monfrin, 'La vie de Sainte Catherine par Clemence de Barking', Zeitschrift fur romanische philologie 82 (1997) pp. 132-5, which adds a few grammatical corrections.

[42] Described in Catherine. pp. xviii-xix.

[43] See P. Meyer, 'Notice du MS Egerton 745 du Musée Britannique', part I, Romania 39 (1910) pp. 532-69, and part II, Romania 40 (1911) pp. 41-69. W. MacBain, De Sainte Katerine: An anonymous Picard version of the Life of St Catherine of Alexandria (Fairfax, VA, 1984). It is not obvious if the St Pol family were directly involved in the commissioning of the work, but it is an interesting coincidence.

[44] The manuscript was previously known as Welbeck I C 1, in the ownership of the Duke of Portland. It was first described in L. Karl, 'Notice sur l'unique manuscrit français de la bibliothèque du Duc de Portland à Welbeck', Revue des Langues Romanes 54 (1911) pp. 210-29. Saints' lives, chap. 5 pp. 151-88 discusses the relationships between the subjects of the various saints lives, and gives a useful description of the content of the manuscript in fig. 1 p. 8. A map of the sites connected to the subjects and authors of the texts can be found in fig. 7 p. 173.

[45] Wogan-Browne, 'Wreaths of thyme' gives a good overview of the three female Anglo-Norman hagiographers of twelfth-century England. MacBain, 'Anglo-Norman women hagiographers' suggests that *St Patrick's Purgatory* (ANL 547) should be included with the previous three. The common attribution to Marie de France is questionable, however, and he acknowledges that is possible that this

BL MS Add. 70513 belonged to the nunnery of Campsey Ash in Suffolk, which was founded in c. 1195 by Theobald de Valognes, whom we have met before as kinsman of several Barking Abbey members and donors.[46] It contains the inscription 'Ce livre deveiseie a la priorie de kanpseie de lire a mengier' (This book belongs to the priory of Campsey for reading at mealtimes).[47] Clemence wrote that she wished her text to be 'more pleasing to those who hear it'; she wrote in verse so that the text might sound better when read out to an audience and addresses her readers as 'all who will hear this book and who listen to it with a receptive heart'.[48] As well as the saints mentioned above, the manuscript contained a further eight Anglo-Norman hagiographies. The saints occurring in the collection seem to have been chosen for their local popularity. Several of the lives were related to houses founded by intermarried noble families, as well as from those houses with connections to Barking and Chich, either through the subject matter or the authors of the texts. While Sts Osyth, Faith, Edmund of Canterbury and Audrey of Ely (ANL 581, 570, 521 and 566) were venerated around the sites of their lives in the south east of England (and specifically East Anglia), the lives of foreign, mythical saints (Paphnutius, Paul the Hermit, Catherine of Alexandria, ANL 538, 539, 567) were written by local authors.[49]

Only the three manuscripts named above survive as records of the *Life of St Catherine* by Clemence. It is highly likely, however, that the life was much more widely circulated than the evidence suggests. We know that it was translated at least once, into the dialect of Picardy in Northern France, suggesting that the text was read on the continent as well as by insular audiences. I will now turn to the significance of the choice of St Catherine as subject of a vernacular text, and her popularity as example and inspiration to a variety of groups within Anglo-Norman society.

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work was also written by the Marie who wrote the *Vie d'Audree;* p. 235.
[46] See above pp. 140-1.
[47] BL MS Add. 70513 fol. 265v.
[48] Catherine. vv. 34, 2693-5.
[49] Saints' lives, pp. 170-5 and fig. 7 p. 173. The texts on Paphnutius and Paul the hermit were by Bozon, a monk who trained at Nottingham, while the *Life of Catherine* was by Clemence of Barking. The *Life of Mary Magdalene*, also found in the Campsey manuscript (ANL 579) was by William, a monk associated

iii) St Catherine and women

St Catherine of Alexandria was first known in England shortly before the Norman Conquest when her name appeared in the calendar of Winchester Old Minster, produced in c.1060.[50] Thereafter her cult grew rapidly in popularity in England from centres at Canterbury and St Albans. The Canterbury calendar contained a detailed mass for St Catherine as early as 1100-1120, including a prayer which referred to her angelic translation to Sinai; from Canterbury the cult spread extremely rapidly around the country.[51] Goscelin of St-Bertin, who retired to Canterbury in around 1091, mentioned the saint's name in his *Liber Confortatorius* composed for Eve of Wilton in about 1082, alongside the better-known saints Thecla, Agnes, Cecilia and Argive.[52] Goscelin may have expected Eve to know Catherine in association with the other virgin saints. If not, he was perhaps showing off his knowledge of a very recent arrival in the calendar of the English church.[53] We recall that in the late eleventh century Goscelin had worked with the nuns of Barking in writing the lives of the abbey's saints Ethelburga, Wulfhilda and Hildelith, and it is possible that he may have introduced them to the cult of St Catherine. A local cult also developed not far from Barking at St Albans, where a monk named Richard wrote the first insular Latin *Passio Sancte Katerine* in c.1140-80. This text, extant only in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 375 (dating to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century), is a rather verbose expansion of the standard Vulgate *Passio*, but Bray notes that it was the first attempt by any author to produce 'a life worthy of the patron saint of learning, and thus to show himself a scholar worthy of her patronage'.[54]

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with Kenilworth priory near Coventry.

[50] See n. 32 above.

[51] M. Rule (ed.), The missal of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury: MS CCCC 270 (Cambridge, 1896) with the prayer at p. 15.

[52] Talbot, '*Liber confortatorius*', p. 115.

[53] Very little is known about St Argive; her cult evidently faded during the middle ages and she fell into obscurity. It is possible that Goscelin heard about St Catherine during his early life in Flanders before coming to England, and bypassed the Norman base of the cult.

[54] Bray, 'Legend of St Katherine' pp. 53-6 discusses this life, with the quote on p. 56. Fol. 43 of this manuscript contains an illumination of St Catherine standing amongst the four wheels upon which she was to be tortured, while a hand beckons to her from Heaven; she appears to be unafraid and looks upwards rather peacefully with her hands raised in supplication. The date is suggested in M.R. James, A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (2 vols. Cambridge, 1912) vol. I pp. 219-20.

From Canterbury and St Albans St Catherine's name and fame spread, and by the middle of the twelfth century she became popular amongst lay founders and patrons across the country.[55] The presence of several foundations dedicated to her in the mid-twelfth century point to the knowledge of St Catherine being widespread before Clemence wrote her work. Her name appeared in almost every monastic calendar by the late twelfth century, and she is named alongside Leonard, Nicholas and Mary Magdalene as one of 'the modish feasts' of the early twelfth century.[56]

It may be, then, that in the 1180s Clemence chose to write about St Catherine as the subject of a relatively new and rapidly growing cult.[57] I suggest, however, that a close study of the characteristics that distinguished St Catherine from her fellow virgin martyrs will show that she was particularly attractive for both the religious audience of nuns at Barking and elsewhere, and for secular women. To begin, St Catherine's attraction to nuns is undeniable. She was the daughter of a king, and thus from the upper levels of her society, as were most nuns in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, particularly in the older Benedictine houses. For the saint, the only suitable husband was Christ whose love was not ephemeral; Marie de France wrote of the secular world that 'refined loving is only possible between people of equally refined birth', and for nuns too the choice was between taking a mortal (and therefore inferior) lover, or becoming a bride of Christ and being married eternally to the only husband worthy of their love.[58] In contrast to contemporary texts such as the *Ancrene Wisse* and *Hali Meiþhad* which described the horrors of childbirth and marital duties in an attempt to dissuade women

[55] The chapel of Hylton Castle, Durham was dedicated to her before 1160: F. Arnold-Forster, Studies in church dedications, or England's patron saints vol I (London, 1899) p. 120. A Benedictine priory at Blackborough (Norfolk) and a house of Gilbertine canons at Lincoln were dedicated to her in around 1150. Blackborough was initially a foundation for men, but had become a nunnery by 1220: MRH. pp. 20, 260, 198. Only one nunnery was dedicated to her in the twelfth century, at Polsloe in Devon: Women religious. pp. 227, 250.

[56] Gibson, Heslop and Pfaff, The Eadwine psalter. p. 85. For calendars, see those published in F. Wormald (ed.), English Benedictine kalendars after AD 1100 Vol. I, Abbotsbury – Durham (Henry Bradshaw Society vol. 77. London, 1939) and Vol. II, Ely – St Neots (Henry Bradshaw Society vol. 81. London, 1946).

[57] See p. 241 for my suggestion of this date for the work.

[58] Marie de France, paraphrased in E. Williams, 'After 1066; The literary evidence' in C. Fell, C. Clark and E. Williams (eds.), Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the impact of 1066 (London, 1984) pp. 172-94 at p. 177.

from marriage and frighten them into a life dedicated to God, St Catherine makes a positive case for the appeal of 'career virginity' as bride of Christ, a husband who would never make physical demands of his brides.[59]

From a young age St Catherine spurned earthly riches in favour of a heavenly reward, and scorned the secular obsessions with status, power and appearance. Many medieval religious women were the widows of wealthy husbands, who left their riches to their children and decided on a life of relative poverty in their widowhood. In the twelfth century a number of wealthy widows used their riches to found nunneries of the new continental orders.[60] As we have seen, Barking had a number of aristocratic women among its members, and it is likely that a reasonable proportion of its population was made up of widows who had left the secular world. It is not known what proportion of nuns at this time were child oblates, but to the women who had made a conscious choice to enter the religious life St Catherine would have been an encouragement and comfort.

By far most interesting aspect of St Catherine's life in comparison to her fellow virgin martyrs is that her sanctity was based on her intellectual ability and unwavering faith, not on her physical virginity. Unlike most female virgin martyrs who were only distinguishable from each other by the method of their martyrdom, St Catherine used her intellect rather than her physicality to persuade others towards the Christian faith.[61]

She was highly educated, as were many women in nunneries, and especially as we have already seen those at Barking, who regularly corresponded with theologians and read and wrote literary texts.[62] For women who may have been widows or left marriages to join a nunnery, this intellectual and spiritual sanctity would have been reassuring in the face of the pantheon of silent virgins whose holiness relied on their physical integrity.

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[59] The phrase is taken from Wogan-Browne, '*Clerc u lai*', p. 68.

[60] Veiled women 1, chap. 5, pp. 111-44, and Women religious. pp. 167-72. DeAragon's study of dowager countesses suggests that at least ten per cent of this elite group of women opted to enter a religious community rather than marry again and maintain a position of secular power: R. deAragon, 'Dowager countesses, 1069-1230', ANS 17 (1997) pp. 87-100 at p. 94.

[61] Winstead, Virgin martyrs. p. 3 points out the homogeneity of most early church virgin martyrs.

[62] See Chapter 8 parts b), c) and d) above.

The portrayal of St Catherine was particularly pertinent to the twelfth-century acceptability of chastity as a virtuous state alongside virginity. As long as one devoted one's life to God and lived chastely, the fact that one might not be a virgin was no longer of primary importance.[63] Indeed, if Ida of Boulogne (the grandmother of Queen Matilda III) could become a saint on account of the Christian kings of Jerusalem she bore, married women and mothers could surely gain their place in heaven through living a chaste monastic life. As Nip writes, 'Virginity is not a prerequisite for sanctity, but chastity is'.[64]

For secular women, St Catherine presented a model of chaste behaviour and the wise use of wealth. While it would be unreasonable to expect an aristocratic woman who chose to remain in the world to give up all her wealth, nevertheless St Catherine's generosity towards the poor could easily be copied by any secular figure. St Catherine also spoke out about her beliefs and was enthusiastic in sharing her good news of Christ with others. This could be transformed into the patronage of a religious house in order to benefit the local community, or into the founding of a hospital to help others while praising God through the act of charity: Bishop Herbert Losinga (1110-19) exhorted his congregation to 'Abound in the works of mercy; find opportunities for almsgiving, because alms extinguish sin as water does fire'.[65] Secular women may not have been able to identify with St Catherine's physical virginity, but they could look to her virtues and attempt to emulate her generosity and kindness. They could also restrict their sexual activity to mere procreation: some 400 years earlier Aldhelm had written that 'the legitimate fertility of marriage, undertaken for the issue of children' was an acceptable expression of one's marital affection, and that 'we do not consider the immaculate cohabitation of matrimony and the legitimate union of wedlock is to be scorned'.[66]

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[63] Bos, 'The literature of spiritual formation' for women in France and England, 1080 to 1180', particularly pp. 207-8.
[64] Nip, 'Godelieve of Gistel and Ida of Boulogne', p. 219.
[65] Quoted in C. Harper-Bill, 'Searching for salvation in Anglo-Norman East Anglia', in C. Harper-Bill, C. Rawcliffe and R.G. Wilson (eds.), East Anglia's history: Studies in honour of Norman Scarfe (Woodbridge, 2002) pp. 19-40 at p. 21. This article discusses the motivations of sin and fear behind many religious benefactions. See also C. Rawcliffe, 'Learning to love the leper: Aspects of institutional charity in Anglo-Norman England', ANS 23 (2001) pp. 231-50.
[66] Aldhelm, pp. 109-11; LH, p. 66.

Those women who struggled with faith could take comfort in the character of the Empress, whose conversion saved her soul after a lifetime of paganism. St Catherine evidently became very popular amongst laywomen, for her story appers in more manuscripts owned by private households than any other saint, and 'served the twin purposes of education and entertainment admirably'.[67]   St Catherine could thus act as role model for both nuns and laywomen, but it is Clemence's presentation of the saint in a vernacular language which made the story resonate more strongly in the minds of her audience. I will now discuss the specific changes Clemence made to her base text, and show how she adapted the story to suit contemporary needs and aspirations.

iv) Treatment of the subject

Clemence was quite clear in her intentions as an author. Because of the mercy God had shown to her, she I intended 'to tell of someone who truly loved him and to translate her life, transposing it from Latin into the vernacular [en rumanz], so that it will be more pleasing to those who hear it'.[68] She stated her desire to use her intelligence to tell others about the goodness of God, in much the same way that Catherine herself did, saying at the very beginning of the piece that 'All those who know and understand what is good have a duty to demonstrate it wisely, so that by the fruit of its goodness others may be encouraged to do good deeds and to want what is good, as far as they are able'.[69]

Clemence explicitly stated that she intended to bring the life of St Catherine up to date, in order to meet the exacting standards of a contemporary audience: 'people [in the past] were not so hard to please or so critical as they are in our day, and will be even more so after we are gone'.[70] Clemence took advantage of the many speeches and

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[67] K.J. Lewis, 'Model girls? Virgin martyrs and the training of young women in late medieval England', in K.J. Lewis, N.J. Menuge and K.M. Phillips (eds.), Young medieval women (New York, 1999) pp. 25-46 at p. 32-3.

[68] Catherine, vv. 30-34; VLHD, p.3.

[69] Catherine, vv. 1-6; VLHD, p. 3.

[70] Catherine, vv. 37-40; VLHD, p.3. Anglo-Norman prologues frequently bemoaned the critical nature of contemporary society, the decline in moral values and the transience of worldy power, all themes which

debates in St Catherine's story to fill her text with contemporary theological ideas, taken from Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), Honorius Augustodunensis (fl. 1106-35) and Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). Wogan-Browne has discussed Clemence's use of Anselm and Honorius.[71] Clemence took from Bernard of Clairvaux's *De diligendo Deo* the concept of God's love as infinite, and the inability of humanity, even a saint such as Catherine, to return that love as it it ought to be. Bernard wrote that 'My love is less than your due, yet not less than I am able, for even if I cannot love you as much as I should, I cannot love you more than I do', and again in his commentary on the Song of Songs that 'Even though [man] loves less because [he] is less [than God], nothing can be lacking in completeness if [he] loves with all that [he] has'.[72] Clemence reflected this in telling her readers 'no one loves Him as He ought to be loved or in accordance with what He deserves', and that 'this lady loved him well and with her love rewarded him as far as she had the power to do so; no part of her love remained unexpressed'.[73]

The most well-studied aspect of Clemence's transformation of her Latin base text is the inclusion of contemporary literary conceits from the popular romance texts. In the late twelfth century the languages of secular romance and hagiography became almost interchangeable, and Clemence shows a clear awareness of the ideas developing in romance texts, as Batt showed in her classic study of Clemence's use of courtly imagery.[74] By writing in the vernacular, and using the less formal language of

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were fitting to the story of St Catherine. A.R. Harden, 'The *Ubi Sunt* theme in three Anglo-Norman saints' lives', Romance Notes 1 (1959) pp. 63-4, which discusses the lives of Sts Osyth, Alban and Laurence.

[71] Saints' lives. pp. 229-40 on Anselm, and VLHD. pp. 70-71 on Honorius. See also F. Griffiths, 'Herrad of Hohenbourg: A synthesis of learning in the Garden of Delights', in C.J. Mews (ed.), Listen, daughter: The Speculum Virginum and the formation of religious women in the middle ages (Basingstoke, 2001) pp. 221-43 for a discussion of the use of Honorius by Clemence's contemporary Herrad, abbess of Hohenbourg (c.1176-96), and Griffith's doctoral thesis 'Female spirituality and intellect in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: A case study of Herrad of Hohenbourg' (unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1998)

[72] Bernard of Clairvaux, On loving God. ed. and trans. E. Stiegman (Cistercian Fathers Series vol. 13B. Kalamazoo, 1995) p. 19, and the quotation on the Song of Songs taken from M. Casey, Athirst for God: Spiritual desire in Bernard of Clairvaux's 'Sermons on the Song of Songs' (Cistercian Studies Series vol. 77. Kalamazoo, 1988) p. 198.

[73] Catherine. vv. 2677-2684; VLHD. p.43.

[74] Batt, 'Transformations'. See also MacBain, 'Anglo-Norman women hagiographers'; D. Robertson,

recreational romance texts, Clemence was able to say things her audience might otherwise have refused to hear; she was 'sugar-coating her bitter truths in the language, rhetoric and… emotions of the highly popular Tristan romances'.[75]

The one area where Clemence carefully resisted the use of courtly ideas was her discussion of St Catherine's torture. As a woman and a nun, she may have found the salacious accounts of rape so common in courtly literature too explicit, and where later authors dwell on the strippings and beatings of virgin martyrs, Clemence gave only the details essential for the narrative.[76] Instead of attempting to rape or sexually abuse St Catherine, the Emperor Maxentius transferred his anger onto his wife, having her breasts ripped out before her execution; the punishment for Catherine's insolence was still performed upon a woman.[77] Even in the hands of a female author such as Clemence, female sinfulness is continually linked to the body. Nevertheless, it is at this point in the narrative that Maxentius' behaviour is finally seen as unacceptable, and he is asked 'King, what are you thinking of? Demons have driven you crazy'.[78] Clemence is almost implicitly supporting the idea that while domestic violence cannot be tolerated, torturing a saint is permissible as a preamble to sanctity. The Empress could be considered to have crossed the boundary from wife to martyr, by converting to

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'Writing in the textual community: Clemence of Barking's *Life of St Catherine*', French Forum 21 (1996) pp.5-28, which is a little anachronistic in suggesting that Clemence wrote in the vernacular as an expression of 'the "feminist" mission of the abbey', p.7, and Saints' lives. pp. 227-45.

[75] On the interaction and similarities between romance and hagiography, see Dalrymple, 'The literary use of religious formulae'. The quote is W. MacBain, 'Five Old French Renderings of the *Passio Sancte Katerine Virginis*', in J. Beer (ed.). Medieval translators and their craft (Studies in Medieval Culture, vol. 25. Kalamazoo, 1989) pp. 41-65 at p. 60.

[76] Gravdal, Ravishing maidens remains the classic study of the frequency of rape scenes in courtly literature and hagiography, especially chap. 1, 'Plotting rape in the female saints' lives', pp. 21-41 . See also E.J. Burns, Bodytalk: When women speak in Old French literature (Philadelphia, 1993) chap. 3, 'Beauty in the blindspot: Philomena's talking hands', pp. 115-50 on rape and murder in these works.

[77] Catherine. vv. 2305-12; VLHD. p.37. J. Wogan-Browne, 'The virgin's tale', in R. Evans and L. Johnson (eds.) Feminist readings in Middle English literature: The Wife of Bath and all her sect (London, 1994) pp. 165-95 at pp. 175-80 discusses the transference of Maxentius' anger onto his wife, but based on a Middle English version of the *Life of St Catherine* which does include a public stripping of the saint. We should consider the different views of the sexualization of violence which would be held by a male author and a female author; I believe Clemence's deliberate avoidance of sexual violence is significant.

[78] Catherine. vv. 2361-2; VLHD. p. 38.

Christianity against her husband's wishes, and thus to have made herself eligible for the torture she could not have suffered while a pagan wife.[79]

Finally, as a nun Clemence may have identified personally with St Catherine, for whom imprisonment was a siginificant event. Catherine was imprisoned for twelve days, but was comforted in her seclusion by God. Enclosure was a common motif in the lives of virgin martyrs at this time and as Wogan-Browne points out, even Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine (d. 1204) was imprisoned for fifteen years in the late twelfth century, meaning secular women too would have understood the relevance of the enclosure motif.[80] Clemence's *Life of St Catherine* clearly had many resonances with both secular and religious women, but I would suggest that there was also a possible political resonance in the text which would have been specific to Barking Abbey under Abbess Matilda (1177x9-1199). The text can only be fully understood within its political and social context, and I will now discuss this new theory and show the links it is possible to make between the *Life of St Catherine* and late twelfth-century England.

v) St Catherine and twelfth-century Barking Abbey

The *Life of St Catherine of Alexandria* was written by the nun Clemence at Barking Abbey at an undetermined point in the last decades of the twelfth century. It has not been discussed within the political context of its composition, but I believe a detailed study will cast new light on the work, and reveal it as a politically significant as well as theologically advanced piece of writing. The work is generally dated within the period c.1170-1200.[81] It has been suggested that Clemence was influenced by Thomas of Britain's *Tristan*, which was written c. 1170-80, and this may help to further narrow the range of dates for composition.[82] I would suggest, however, that scholars have failed to

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[79] I am grateful to Eve Salisbury for her constructive comments on this idea after her paper 'Female saints and domestic violence', given at the Leeds International Medieval Congress, 1999.
[80] Saints' lives. p. 31 and n. 47.
[81] The earliest manuscript (BN nouv. acq. fr. 4503) dates to around 1200, and MacBain suggests that there might have been at least one intermediary copy of the text between Clemence's autograph and this manuscript: Catherine. pp. xix-xx, xxiv-xxvi.
[82] Thomas of Britain, Tristan. ed. S. Gregory (New York, 1991) pp. xi-xii, and MacBain, 'Five old French

take full account of the milieu within which Clemence wrote, and that we can identify certain direct influences at Barking Abbey in the late twelfth century which enable us to date the work more precisely.

The last three decades of the twelfth century at Barking Abbey were, as we have seen, a time of considerable politicised activity, which may also have influenced its literary activity. Between 1173 and 1177x9 the abbess was Mary Becket, sister of St Thomas, who may have been appointed as part of King Henry II's penance for his involvement in the martyr's death.[83] Early in her abbacy Mary and the nuns offered hospitality to Guernes de Pont-Saint-Maxence, a travelling author in the mould of Goscelin of St-Bertin. Guernes began writing a life of Thomas Becket in around 1172, with a completed version finished in around 1174 (ANL 508).[84] One of the extant manuscripts of this text (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fonds français 13513), dated to the first half of the thirteenth century, contains an epilogue which thanks 'the abbess, Saint Thomas' sister' for her hospitality while he stayed at the abbey, and for giving him a fine horse and a generous welcome.[85] It is not clear exactly how long Guernes may have been at the abbey, or whether he was invited there by Mary or went of his own volition. It is possible that Guernes went seeking a patron for his work, and Mary was willing to take on that role; this was a form of 'prospective' rather than 'active' patronage, where the writer produced a text flattering to his potential patron and then offered it to them in return for support.[86] The economy of exchange involved in such an act of patronage is clearly set out in the epilogue, in which Guernes wrote 'It was a fair throw of the dice which sent me to her house – and she does not do badly out of it either, for I shall repay her by singing her praises to everyone I meet, great and small'.[87] While Guernes' reference to Abbess Mary cannot be taken as explicit evidence for Mary's literary

renderings', p. 60.
[81] See pp. 76-7 above.
[84] Guernes de Pont-Saint-Maxence, La vie de Saint Thomas le martyr. ed. E. Walberg (Lund, 1922) pp. xix-xxv; J. Shirley (trans.), Garnier's Becket, translated from the twelfth-century Vie de saint Thomas le Martyr de Cantobire (London. 1975) p. 165.
[85] Guernes, La vie de Saint Thomas. p. 210; Shirley, Garnier's Becket. p. 165.
[86] See the discussion in Short, 'Patrons and polyglots'.
[87] Guernes, La vie de Saint Thomas. p. 210; Shirley, Garnier's Becket. p. 165.

patronage, it certainly suggests an atmosphere which was positive towards Thomas Becket, which could easily have been exploited for the purposes of patronage by an author seeking a commission.

After Mary Becket's abbacy, Barking Abbey underwent a major change in personnel when Matilda, the illegitimate daughter of King Henry II by a woman named Joanna was appointed abbess in 1177x9.[88] She remained abbess until her death in 1199, and it is almost certainly under her abbacy that Clemence of Barking wrote the *Life of St Catherine*. I suggest in Part c) below that Matilda also patronised the *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*, that Clemence was the author of both texts, and that the *Vie d'Edouard* was written in the early 1180's. If we accept these suggestions, and the suggestion that Clemence wrote the *Vie d'Edouard* before the *Life of St Catherine*, we may be able to narrow down the dates of composition of the *Life of St Catherine* to the last two decades of the twelfth century.[89] I would like to suggest that the *Life of Catherine* was written under the 'active' patronage of Abbess Matilda, inspired by the potential of St Catherine to be identified with her blood grandmother the Empress Matilda, mother of King Henry II. While the choice of St Catherine may have been made for many reasons, as we have seen above, there are certain aspects of Clemence's work which link the saint to the Empress through shared characteristics. I suggest that Abbess Matilda may have recognised these parallels, and encouraged Clemence to give a nuanced account of St Catherine which emphasised the similarities.

The possible identification of St Catherine as a retrospective role model for the Empress Matilda begins with factual similarities between the two women. Catherine was an only child, who inherited her father's empire and wealth in its entirety. The Empress Matilda was Henry I's sole legitimate heir after the death of her brother William the Ætheling in the White Ship disaster of 1120, and Henry made his barons swear loyalty to her as his successor.[90] While Matilda never inherited the crown of England or succeeded to her

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[88] See pp. 77-8 and 146-7 above.

[89] Apprenticeship suggests that Clemence wrote the *Vie d'Edouard* as a practice for the *Life of St Catherine*, although I differ from MacBain on the dating of both texts.

[90] C.W. Hollister, Henry I (London, 2001) pp. 308-10; M. Chibnall, The Empress Matilda (Oxford, 1991)

father's legacy, nevertheless she was the only legitimate child of the king, and thus like St Catherine was in the unusual position of being a female heir. The Empress Matilda and St Catherine both played active parts in the realms of society which were usually limited to men only; for Matilda, the world of the political (and sometimes physical) battlefield, and for St Catherine the debating chamber in which women were not expected to speak. Indeed, St Catherine's achievement in silencing the pagan philosophers is met with shock on the grounds of her sex; the Emperor Maxentius berated his clerks 'Why are you struck dumb on account of a woman? ... you are all incapable of defending yourself against a weak young girl'.[91] The Empress, while never entering directly onto the field of battle, nevertheless involved herself in supplying soldiers and engaging in military tactics with her illegitimate half-brother, Earl Robert of Gloucester.[92]

Both women were very determined. St Catherine devoted herself to evangelising the Christian faith in the face of great opposition, both institutional and personal, but was able to persuade others to accept her beliefs and adopt them. The Empress Matilda devoted her life to gaining the throne of England, firstly for herself and later, when it became obvious that this effort was doomed, for her eldest son Henry. She refused to submit to the wishes of her opponents as a woman was meant to do, and was able to gain a great amount of support from the people of England for her cause. The Empress Matilda engaged in battles over the succession to the throne of England, while St Catherine's debated were presented as metaphorical battles with the philosophers; Clemence describes 'the battle she had begun', and St Catherine names Christ as 'him for whose love I am placed in the field, and for whom I have undertaken this battle'.[93] It should be noted that both women ultimately gained their aim, but only after a great deal of sacrifice. Henry Plantagenet did gain the throne of England in 1154, several years after his mother had retired to Rouen where she remained until her death in 1167. St

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pp. 52-3; Henry II. pp. 18-20.
[91] Catherine. vv. 1059-63; VLHD. p.19.
[92] Chibnall, Empress Matilda. p.97 for her supplying besieged soldiers, and also Henry II. pp. 12-36.
[93] Catherine. vv. 2008, 655-66; VLHD. pp. 33, 13.

Catherine achieved the conversion of many pagans to the faith, but only through her torture and death.

As well as choosing a female saint whose life story contained similar dedication and self-belief to that of the Empress, Clemence's presentation of St Catherine alludes in several ways to characteristics which are similar to those for which the Empress Matilda was bitterly criticised. St Catherine is presented as manly and assertive in her behaviour, in contrast to the many passive female virgin martyrs who simply accepted their fate. While many of the Christian men who lived in Alexandria submitted to the order of the Emperor Maxentius to sacrifice to his pagan gods, St Catherine was 'confident in God and her own intelligence, [and] entered the temple without fear'.[94] Clemence further emphasised out this distinction between St Catherine and her fellow virgin martyrs in her account of the company of heaven. Female saints were identified only as 'the choir of young women, virgins and chaste maidens who despised mortal lovers choosing instead the chaste love of God'.[95] The martyrs St Catherine was about to join, however, were seen in very distinctly masculine terms; 'the young men and noble knights who, as holy martyrs, conquered death and suffered it for God'.[96] This masculine, fearless behaviour is presented by Clemence as entirely acceptable, and indeed advisable if one wished to join the army of God.

For a saint such behaviour was acceptable; for a mortal woman it was clearly not so wise. The impression given by most twelfth-century chroniclers discussing the Empress was of masculinity as a negative property. According to the pro-Stephen propagandist author of the *Gesta Stephani*, Matilda 'put on an extremely arrogant demeanour, instead of the modest gait and bearing proper to a gentle woman', and she spoke 'not with unassuming gentleness but with a voice of authority'.[97] Queen Matilda III, the wife of King Stephen, was also active during the battles over the succession to the English

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[94] Catherine. vv. 193-4; VLHD. p. 6.
[95] Catherine. vv. 1779-83; VLHD. p. 30.
[96] Catherine. vv. 1773-6; VLHD. p. 30.
[97] K.R. Potter (ed.), Gesta Stephani (Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford, 1976) pp. 78, 80. See also J.M. Truaux, 'Winning over the Londoners: King Stephen, the Empress Matilda and the politics of personality', HSJ 8 (1996) pp. 43-61 at pp. 44-50 for the attitudes of chroniclers to the Empress.

throne, taking control of the army when Stephen had been taken prisoner and engaging in diplomatic activities with the military leaders.[98] Indeed, at one point when King Stephen, Henry Plantagenet and Robert of Gloucester were all imprisoned, negotiations over their release were made by women alone, Queen Matilda III, the Empress, and the Countess of Gloucester.[99] The author of the *Gesta Stephani* notes flatteringly that Queen Matilda III had 'a man's resolution', and was able to 'forget the weakness of her sex and a woman's softness, [and bear] herself with the valour of a man', but the Empress who was 'superior to feminine softness' was criticised for it.[100] It should be remembered that Queen Matilda III was acting as consort in the king's unavoidable absence, and thus might have been permitted as substitute for the king to show 'male gendered qualities of manliness, strength and courage' exeplified by *virtus*. The Empress, in contrast, was attempting to use her masculine strength to gain power for herself and her son through the power of military control and command, *imperium*.[101] It may be that this was what contemporary writers found so distressing; a woman could be powerful alongside a man, but not in her own right.

If we compare the two characters of St Catherine, a semi-mythical saint who lived some 800 years before Clemence wrote, and the Empress Matilda who had died only a few decades earlier, it is possible to identify several parallels. St Catherine, a remarkably fashionable saint, was presented as a strong, independent, wilful woman who was prepared to make sacrifices to reach her goal. Her manly qualities were promoted as virtues, on the condition that that masculine determination was directed towards a worthy aim (in this case, the conversion of pagans to the true faith of Christ). The particular presentation of St Catherine given by Clemence may have had resonances for people who knew about the history of the Empress Matilda and her controversial life. Is it anachronistic to see these similarities between the two women, or might

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[98] H. Tanner, 'Queenship: Office, custom or ad hoc? The case of Queen Matilda III of England (1135-52)', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, (eds.) Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady (New York, 2003) pp. 133-58 at p. 140
[99] Tanner, 'Queenship' p. 140
[100] Potter, Gesta Stephani, pp. 81, 89.
[101] On the distinction between *virtus* and *imperium* in the queen's coronation *ordo*, Tanner, 'Queenship' pp. 133-4.

contemporaries also have been struck by the correspondence of the two narratives? I would like to propose that Abbess Matilda of Barking, as granddaughter of the Empress, would have been amongst those who would have known the Empress' story better than most, and may have noticed retrospectively that St Catherine could be portrayed in ways that would emphasise these similarities. If we accept these arguments, it is likely that we can date the composition of the *Life of St Catherine* to the time of Abbess Matilda, 1177x9-99. The Empress Matilda had been reviled by contemporary chroniclers, yet it is possible that a religious woman used subtle methods to present a strong, powerful woman like her grandmother as a positive role model for other women, in an attempt to revitalise and restore the damaged reputation of her ancestor.

c: The *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur*

As we have seen, St Catherine of Alexandria was a very different type of saint to the Barking abbesses Ethelburga, Hildelith and Wulfhilda. Edward the Confessor (1041/2-1066) was in turn very different to St Catherine. Firstly, he was a historical character, and not a semi-mythical figure like St Catherine. He was mentioned in chronicles and histories, charters and letters bearing his seal were still in existence (no doubt in greater numbers than today), and his sanctity, while not based on mythical events, was proving itself on a regular basis through miracles, one of which happened at Barking itself, the home of the author of the Anglo-Norman *Vie d'Edouard*. Secondly, he was male. This fact should not be disregarded; Clemence could empathise with St Catherine at a fundamental level through their shared gender. The anonymous nun of Barking, however, could not place herself in the shoes of a king or indeed any other man, and the empathy with a character in the story could not easily reach such levels as those in the *Life of Catherine*. I propose below that the anonymous nun chose to highlight the figure of Queen Edith, Edward's wife, since the role of Edith as a chaste woman is unusually well developed in this story. Finally, we should consider that Edward's sanctity was based almost entirely on his chastity. He did not, like St Catherine, convert pagans to Christianity, or meet an unpleasant and gruesome martyrdom. He was generous to the poor, and endowed the monks of Westminster Abbey, but these acts did not in themselves guarantee canonisation. It was only after the discovery that his body was incorrupt in 1102 that a real campaign for his canonisation could begin; until then, he had simply been a very good king. Edward's cult relied on a vigorous posthumous campaign by the monks of Westminster who guarded his relics and could profit greatly from a saintly patron.

i) Background to the work

The *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* by an anonymous nun of Barking (ANL 523) was one of several lives of King Edward written in the twelfth century, as part of the campaign

for his canonisation.[1] It was almost certainly the first to be written by a woman, however, and in this its value is considerable. The king had died only around 120 years before the Barking nun wrote her version of his life, but in the intervening period a great number of stories and myths had grown up around his life. The basic narrative of his life was interesting to people of the late eleventh century for his involvement in the Conquest, but by the twelfth century campaigners for his canonisation had added miracles and other signs of his sanctity which blurred the story. He was born in 1003, the son of King Ethelred (979-1013) and his second wife, the Norman Emma, and was brought up in England.[2] During the reigns of the Scandinavian kings Swein (1013-14) and Cnut (1016-35) he was exiled in Normandy, but ultimately took the throne of England himself in 1042 as successor to his half-brother Harthacnut (1040-42). His marriage to Edith, daughter of Earl Godwine of Wessex, was supposedly a chaste one. The resulting absence of heirs caused the only controversy of his reign, which came about at the end of his life. The political implications of his childless death, and the subsequent events of 1066, have been studied many times, but they do not have a direct bearing on the current discussion.[3]

The first known text on the life of Edward was begun during his lifetime; the *Vita Edwardi Regis* (BHL 2421) was written at the instigation of Edward's queen Edith by an unknown monk of St-Bertin.[4] The text is a narrative of Edward's life, alternating between prose and verse, written for his queen in order to praise and honour her and her family, the descendants of Godwine. This text is generally believed to have been begun in 1065 and completed by 1067.[5] The *Vita Edwardi Regis* was essentially a narrative of

[1] Edouard. The work has not been translated into English, with the exception of a few well-known passages. Translations of the text are my own unless specified otherwise.
[2] She took the Anglo-Saxon name Ælfgifu on her marriage, but is generally referred to by historians as Emma: Stafford, p.ix. A comprehensive account of Edward's life is Barlow, and on his youth, S. Keynes, 'The Æthelings in Normandy'. ANS 13 (1991) pp. 173-205.
[3] The updated bibliography to Barlow, pp. 350-55 gives an introduction to some of the key works on this subject.
[4] Vita Edwardi. The work is often attributed to Goscelin of St-Bertin, but may have been by his compatriot Folcard, abbot of Thorney (1068-1085/5): Vita Edwardi. pp. xliv-lix
[5] Bloch, pp. 20-44 esp. p. 44 suggests unconvincingly that the text may have been written in 1103-20 at Wilton where Edith retired as a widow.

the King's mortal life with a few posthumous miracles, and reveals Queen Edith's intention to have her family praised.

Sixty years later Osbert of Clare, whom we have already met as a correspondent of several nuns at Barking, composed the *Vita Sancti Edwardi Anglorum Regis et Confessoris* (BHL 2422).[6] Osbert was one of the prime movers in the campaign for Edward's canonisation, and as prior of Westminster (c.1134- after 1153) where the king's body lay, this is not unexpected.[7] Osbert's text, written by 1138, was a conflation of two main sources, the anonymous *Vita Edwardi Regis* and the events of Edward's life narrated in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*.[8] Osbert's was the first version of Edward's life to include a detailed account of his posthumous miracles: they do not survive in the extant version of Osbert's text, but were been in the source text used by Ailred of Rievaulx when he re-wrote Osbert's *Vita* in 1163.[9] Two of these miracles appear to have directly involved Osbert, as witness to one miracle and recipient of the healing power of another.[10]

One of the miracles added by Osbert is especially relevant to the current study, since it concerns a nun of Barking Abbey. She suffered a quartan fever, but was cured through her faith without needing to visit the king's shrine at Westminster.[11] This miracle has not yet received the attention it deserves. It becomes significant when we recall that two of Osbert's nieces were nuns at Barking.[12] We know that he wrote letters to them in 1139-40 regarding his journey to Rome to plead the case for Edward's canonisation with the Pope, and he may have dicussed his interest in the saint with them before the

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Bloch. On Osbert's letters, see pp. 202-8 above.

'A sketch of Osbert's career', in Osbert, pp. 1-22. It has been suggested that Osbert's enthusiasm for the cult of Edward led him to forge several charters supporting his case: Chaplais, 'The original charters of Herbert and Gervase', esp. pp. 91, 93. See also J. Crick, 'St Albans, Westminster and some twelfth-century views of the Anglo-Saxon past', ANS 25 (2002) pp. 65-83 at pp. 67-70.

Vita Edwardi fig. 2 p. xl for a stemma connecting various extant versions of the saint's life, and Appendix A pp.128-30 comparing Osbert to the *Vita Edwardi Regis* and William of Malmesbury.

See Vita Edwardi, pp. xxxviii and 157-9.

[10] Vita Edwardi, pp. 158-9, Ailred of Rievaulx, 'Vita Sancti Edwardi regis et confessoris', in J. Migne (ed.), Patrologia cursus completus, series Latina vol. 195 (Paris, 1855) cols. 737-90, at col. 784. The miracles are referred to from Ailred's version of the text, but he copied them from Osbert of Clare.

[11] Vita Edwardi, p. 157, Ailred, 'Vita', col. 787.

[12] See pp. 203-4 above.

composition of the *Vita*.[13] It seems likely that he may have heard the story of the Barking nun's miracle from one of his nieces, and that he may have followed the example of Goscelin of St-Bertin in explicitly asking the nuns of Barking if they knew of any miracles occurring there.[14] Since he also corresponded with the abbess, Adelidis fitzJohn, he may have discussed or verified the event with her.[15] Whether any of the women witnessed this miracle themselves is not clear; all we know is that it was the healing of 'a nun' of the abbey, and that it would have taken place between the discovery of Edward's incorrupt body in 1102 and Osbert's writing of the *Vita* in 1138. The Barking nuns would have constituted a near-contemporary authority for the miracle, well placed within the time limits placed upon the reliability of oral evidence.[16]

The next version, and the one which became the main source for the vernacular version by the nun of Barking, was the *Vita Sancti Edwardi Regis* by Ailred of Rievaulx (BHL 2423), written over the years between 1161 and 1163 and dedicated to Abbot Lawrence of Westminster (1158-73).[17] Ailred's *Vita* was written to mark the translation of the saint's relics to a new and larger tomb at Westminster Abbey. It relied heavily on Osbert's text, while intending to simplify his language. The content was rather more hostile to Edith and the family of Earl Godwine. If we consider that Osbert wrote under King Stephen (1135-54), while Ailred wrote under King Henry II (1154-89), the possible political motivation behind his text will become more clear. Ailred showed his hostility to Godwine unambiguously. Queen Edith could not fully escape her descent from the Earl who rebelled against his rightful king, but Ailred allows a degree of mercy to the queen, describing her as the rose which came forth from the thorns, 'sicut

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[13] Osbert, nos. 21 and 22.

[14] Osbert, p. 23 suggests that the nun may have been one of Osbert's friends, but this is the only instance of the provenance of this story being discussed.

[15] Osbert, no. 42.

[16] Medieval authors considered the maximum time an oral tradition remained accurate and valid to be three or four generations, or around 100 years; van Houts, Memory and gender, pp. 36-7. See p. 259 below, however, for the account of the anonymous Barking nun who claimed to have spoken directly to the nun who was miraculously healed.

[17] Ailred, 'Vita'.

spina rosam, genuit Godwinus Edivam'.[18]

Ailred was the first author to interpret St Edward's vision of the Green Tree in terms of the legitimisation of King Henry II's succession, through using the vision to link King Henry to St Edward through his blood line. In this vision, Edward saw a green tree which was removed three furlongs from its root, but which miraculously returned to that root, blossomed, and bore fruit.[19] Ailred (writing during the reign of Henry II) interpreted this vision as justifying King Henry II as rightful king and heir to King Edward.[20] The green tree was the true Anglo-Saxon line of kings. It was removed three furlongs from its root by the reigns of the 'interlopers' Harold, William I and William Rufus. When Henry I married his queen Edith/Matilda, the great-great-grand-daughter of King Æthelred, the tree was re-grafted to its root. Matilda the Empress, daughter of this marriage, was the blossom of the newly grown tree, and her son King Henry II was the fruition of the tree, and the fulfilment of Edward's prophecy. We note that King Stephen did not feature in this genealogy; as an author writing under King Henry, Ailred probably considered it best to omit him from the panegyric to Henry. Ailred's *Vita* became the standard upon which most later authors based their texts, although it was not translated into a vernacular until the anonymous Barking nun wrote her work.[21] Later kings also wished to claim for themselves the reflected glory of the saint. The mid-thirteenth century *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* (ANL 522), for example, written by Matthew Paris for Eleanor of Provence, queen of Henry III (1216-72) claimed that it was Henry III who was the fruit of the tree of Edward's prophecy.[22] Although the Barking life follows Ailred's work closely, the treatment of the subject reveals subtle differences, as we shall see in the next section.

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[18] Ailred, 'Vita', col 747.

[19] William of Malmesbury, Osbert of Clare and the anonymous author of the *Vita Edwardi Regis* all saw this as a confusing episode referring to an unknown event, perhaps a premonition of the Norman Conquest: Vita Edwardi. Appendix B pp. 131-2.

[20] Ailred, 'Vita', cols. 773-74.

[21] G.E. Moore. The Middle English life of Edward the Confessor (Philadelphia. 1942) pp. xxxiii- lv gives a useful summary of the lives written up to the late thirteenth century version in the South English Legendary.

[22] Matthew Paris, La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei. ed. K. Young-Wallace (Anglo-Norman Text Society vol. 41. Oxford, 1984) The allegory of the Green Tree is explained at vv. 3805-58. See also P. Binski, 'Reflections on *La estoire de Seint Aedward le rei*: Hagiography and kingship in thirteenth-

ii) Author and manuscripts

The author of the *Vie d'Edouard le Confesseur* identifies herself at the division of the
narrative between Edward's mortal life and the miracles he performed after his death.
The well-known passage identifies the author as a nun of Barking, and explains the
anonymity of the author as a result of her modest wish not to put her name next to that
of a saint;

> En Berkinges en l'abeïe
> Fut translatee ceste vie;
> Pur amur saint Edward la fist
> Un ancele al dulz Jhesus Crist.
> Mais sun num n'i vult dire a ore,
> Kar bien set n'est pas digne unkore
> Qu'en livre seit oï lit
> U si tres saint num ad escrit.[23]

The standard modesty topos is followed by an apology for the nun's gender and a
request that her audience does not scorn her work or the saint of whom she writes on
account of her being female;

> Si requierz a toz les oianz,
> Ki mais orrunt cest soen rumanz
> Qu'il ne seit pur ço avilé
> Se femme l'ad si translaté.[24]

One manuscript of the text contains a prologue in which the author famously offers an
apology for any grammatical errors she may be about to make, because hers is not true
French but its English variant;

> Si joe l'ordre des cases ne gart
> Ne ne juigne part a sa part,
> Certes n'en dei estre reprise,
> Ke nel puis faire en nule guise.

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century England', Journal of Medieval History 16 (1990) pp. 333-50.
  Edouard. vv. 5304-11. 'In the abbey of Barking this life was translated; out of love for St Edward a
handmaid of sweet Jesus did it, but she does not wish her name to be stated [yet] for she well knows that
she is not worthy that her name should be heard or read in a book where is written the holy name of
Edward': translated in Moore, Middle English life. p. 1.
  Edouard, vv. 5312-15. 'She begs that all those who read this life will not think the saint's name
dishonoured by the fact that a woman has written it': translated in Moore, Middle English life. p. 1.

> Qu'en latin est nominatif,
> Ço frai romanz acusatif.
> Un faus franceis sai d'Angletere,
> Ke ne n'alai ailurs quere.
> Mais vus ki ailurs apris l'avez,
> La u mester iert, l'amendez.[25]

This modesty topos should not be taken at face value, as a sign that the author was indeed embarrassed about naming herself or that she felt her work was less worthy than that of a male author. The thirteenth-century *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* contains a very similar modesty topos, in which Matthew Paris, an accomplished author, apologises for his use of language and begs correction from his readers.[26]

This routine apology for any defects in one's work was intended to show the reader that an author was not excessively proud of his or her own work, or writing for their own glorification. Wogan-Browne suggests that the modesty topos is particularly fitting in the case of the Barking *Vie d'Edouard*, as it adopts the humility for which the saint was renowned and associates the anonymous nun with that virtue.[27] Furthermore, the very fact that the nun knew such detail about the grammar of both Latin and French proves that she was literate in both languages. The reference to those who will 'hear' her text, combined with the use of a rhyme scheme that was pleasing to the ear, suggests strongly that this text was intended for reading out loud, and its presence in the Campsey Ash manuscript annotated specifically 'for reading at mealtimes' confirms this suggestion.[28]

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[25] Edouard, vv 1-10. 'If I do not keep to the order of the cases, nor join part to its part, I must certainly not be blamed for it, because I can do it no other way. What in Latin is nominative will be accusative in this poem. I know a 'false French' of England because I have not been elsewhere to learn it, but you who have learnt it elsewhere, correct it where it is necessary': translated in Moore, Middle English life p. l. This prologue is not found in any of the main manuscripts of the poem but in a thirteenth century fragment of the text discussed by A.T. Baker, 'Fragment of an Anglo-Norman *Life of Edward the Confessor*', Modern Language Review 3 (1907-8) pp. 374-5

[26] Matthew Paris, La Estoire. vv. 89-96. 'Now I pray each one who reads and hears this treatise, if in any word I mistake, that he be willing to correct it; for there is no man who slumbers not. Language varies in countries; If I speak the language of France I ought not to be blamed by people of the neighbouring country', translated pp. 181-2. On the differences between Continental French and Anglo-Norman with particular reference to *Edouard*, see L. Spetia, ' "... un faus franceis sai d'Angletere"', Cultura Neolatina 59 (1999) pp. 131-57. Short, *'Tam Angli quam Franci'*, discusses the use of Anglo-Norman by the aristocracy.

[27] Wogan-Browne, 'Wreaths of thyme', pp. 50-1.

[28] BL MS Add. 70513 fol. 265v. M.D. Legge, 'Anglo-Norman as a spoken language', ANS 2 (1980) pp. 108-17 at p. 108.

The author did not wish to give her name 'yet' because she was not confident in her abilities as a translator. The existence of two Anglo-Norman hagiographies written at Barking Abbey in the late twelfth centuries has led many historians to the conclusion that both texts must have been written by the same woman; the classic argument is given by MacBain who suggests that the *Vie d'Edouard* was written as the work of an 'apprentice', while the *Life of St Catherine* was the product of an experienced author proud to record her name for posterity.[29] His analysis is based almost entirely on a linguistic comparison of the two texts, noting in particular the use of a doxology which was identical in the two texts ('Ki regne et vit et regnera/ E est e ert e parmaindra').[30] As Legge noted, it is possible that this was simply a set phrase at Barking, or that one author copied the work of the other for this concluding section of the prayer.[31] Nevertheless, it is entirely plausible that Clemence did indeed write both texts, her style developing from the relatively straightforward translation of the *Vie d'Edouard* to the more complex and confident *Life of St Catherine*. There were few female authors in the late twelfth century, although it may be that more works have not survived. To assume that there can have been only one nun engaged in translation at Barking Abbey is not unreasonable, but we must not ignore the possibility that there may have been other authors there whose work has been lost. Ultimately it is likely that MacBain is right, and that Clemence was indeed the author of both texts. Since we cannot prove this, however, I will continue to refer to the author of the *Vie d'Edouard* as the anonymous nun of Barking.

The *Vie d'Edouard* survives in three manuscripts. The oldest is Vatican Library MS Reg. Lat. 489, dating to the thirteenth century, and is the main text used by Södergård in his edition.[32] The second is the best known of the manuscripts, the early fourteenth century BL MS Add. 70513 which we have met before, being the Campsey Ash collection of saints' lives.[33] The third and final manuscript of the full text is a translation

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[29] Apprenticeship.
[30] Edouard, vv. 5333-5; Catherine, vv. 2699-700.
[31] M.D. Legge, Anglo-Norman in the cloisters (Edinburgh, 1950) p. 50.
[32] This manuscript also contains a Latin *Vita* of Edward, based on Ailred's version. Edouard, pp. 43, 48.
[33] Edouard, p. 46-47. It was used as the main source for P. Abson, 'Anglo-Norman didactic literature of the thirteenth century. An Anglo-Norman Life of Edward the Confessor' (unpublished PhD. thesis,

into a North French dialect, in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fonds français 1416; this manuscript is datable to 1292 by an inscription.[34]

There are two further manuscripts of the text which can be useful in establishing the popularity of the text. The only manuscript to contain the ten-line prologue in which the author apologises for her 'defective' grammar seems to have been lost since 1908, when Baker recorded the prologue.[35] Finally there is London, British Library MS Egerton 745, which contains a prose version from the mid-fourteenth century.[36] This manuscript deserves our attention since the text was commissioned by the counts of St Pol, perhaps Guy de Châtillon who died in England in 1360 and whose family was based in the Picardy region of Northern France.[37] As we saw above, the *Life of St Catherine* was translated into the Picard dialect in the mid thirteenth century.[38] It may be that this region of France had particularly close links with Barking, or it may simply be evidence of a link between the family and East Anglia.[39] An investigation into this thirteenth century link may turn up more evidence, but it lies outside the scope of the current study.

iii) Treatment of the subject

The anonymous nun of Barking did not make many major changes to the Latin text she used in composing her *Vie d'Edouard*. Unlike the *Life of St Catherine*, this work was essentially a translation, rather than a re-writing, and shows less awareness of contemporary theological and literary developments. Those changes she did make are interesting because they seem to be gendered. They clearly differentiate this text, the work of a woman, from the previous texts which were all by male authors. *The Vie*

University of Sheffield, 1921), the first edition of the text. This manuscript is discussed in detail above, p. 231.

[34] Edouard, p. 48.

[35] Baker, 'Fragment', pp. 374-5, which frustratingly does not identify the manuscript. See also Edouard p. 49.

[36] Edouard, p. 49 and Meyer, 'Notice du MS Egerton 745' parts I and II.

[37] Meyer, 'Notice du MS Egerton 745', part I, p. 537.

[38] See above p. 230.

[39] On the early history of the counts of St Pol, see J.H. Round, completed by W.R. Powell, 'The counts of

d'Edouard put a greater emphasis than previous ones on the role of Queen Edith in Edward's life. It also contains a more direct account of the miracle which took place at Barking, giving the work a sense of immediacy and personal importance to the author which comes across in her writing.

The Barking text gave Edith a voice absent in the texts by Osbert of Clare and Ailred of Rievaulx, and indeed even the *Vita Edwardi Regis* patronised by the queen herself, particularly with regard to Edith's acceptance of Edward's wish to live chastely and preserve his purity for God.[40] The *Vita Edwardi Regis* notes that Edith allowed the king to be chaste, and that 'she seemed more like a daughter than a wife, not so much a spouse as a good mother'.[41] The *Vita* also recounts a vision in which Bishop Brihtwold (c.1005-45) prophesied that Edward would remain chaste, and as Stafford has pointed out the decision to include this vision lay with Edith, perhaps as a way to abdicate responsibility for the childlessness of the marriage.[42] The lives by Osbert and Ailred both follow the pattern set in the *Vita*, stating simply that Edith accepted Edward's decision.[43] As a modest wife this was considered acceptable and indeed wise behaviour, and canon law stated that Edward would not have been permitted to enter into a chaste marriage without his wife's permission.[44] According to the anonymous nun, however, Edith shared Edward's decision to live chastely, and indeed welcomed it. Why did she present this new image of the queen? I suggest it was the author's status as a chaste woman, and the similar profile of her expected audience of readers at Barking, which offered her a degree of empathy with Edith.[45]

We do not know if the anonymous nun had been married before entering the nunnery, or had always been a member of a religious community. Either way, she was writing as

St Pol in Essex and Kent', Essex Archaeology and History 27 (1996) pp. 193-201.
[40] On the growth of the importance of chastity to Edward's claims for canonisation, see E. John, 'Edward the confessor and the celibate life', Analecta Bollandiana 97 (1979) pp. 171-8, which is intended to question the assumptions about Edward's cult in the first edition of Barlow.
[41] Vita Edwardi, pp. 24-5.
[42] Vita Edwardi. pp. 14-15. Stafford, pp. 47 and 260-1.
[43] Ailred, col. 748. Bloch, p. 75.
[44] J.Y. Noonan, 'Power to choose', Viator 4 (1973) pp. 419-34.
[45] Wogan-Browne discusses the imagery of chastity in the *Vie d'Edouard*, and was the first to point out

member of a community which comprised women of differing ages who had vowed themselves to a life of chastity. As women who had committed themselves to a life without physical affection, whether through choice or parental decision (in the case of child oblates), they might have taken a rather more sympathetic attitude to Edith and the difficult position she found herself in as childless widow. It must have been hard for her to admit that the childlessness of her marriage to Edward led indirectly to the chaos of the end of Edward's reign and the trouble over appointing a successor.[46] William of Malmesbury's account went so far as to suggest that Edward was so disgusted by Edith's carrying the blood of the traitor Godwine that he did not wish to consummate the marriage and risk fathering a child of that lineage, thus almost blaming Edith for the absence of heirs.[47] To claim that it was her saintly husband who insisted on a pure marriage would have removed some of the possible guilt from Edith's shoulders. The Barking life took a more pro-active approach, and allowed Edith a retrospective degree of choice in the chastity of her marriage.

The *Vie d'Edouard* was, as we have seen, based on the *Vita* by Ailred of Rievaulx. In this text, Ailred skirted rather awkwardly around the issue of the activity (or presumably inactivity) of the royal bedchamber. As an abbot (of Revesby, 1143-47 and Rievaulx, 1147-67) with responsibility for the welfare of many souls, Ailred may well have wished to avoid discussing this topic which might have led his monastic readers into speculation about what one did or did not do in a marital bed. He stated only that Edith and the king agreed to live chastely and retain their respective virginities: 'Fit illa conjux mente, non carne; ille nomine maritus, non opere. Perseverat inter eos sine actu conjugali conjugalis affectus, et sine defloratione virginitatis castae dilectionis amplexus'.[48] This account of the queen's passivity was copied in later texts on Edward, characterising Edith as 'somewhat vapid' and directionless.[49] This may be due to the fact that those lives for which we can identify an author were all written by religious

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the positivity of Edith's attitude to chaste marriage: Wogan-Browne, '*Clerc u lai*', esp. pp. 68-73.
[46] Barlow, pp. 80-84 discusses this period.
[47] Stafford, p. 260.
[48] Ailred, 'Vita', col. 748.
[49] Binski, 'Reflections', p. 343.

men, who might have wished to present the queen as a perfect example of feminine humility.

The account given by the Barking nun sees Edith embracing chastity alongside her husband, and even claiming that she had always desired to offer herself to God rather than a mortal man. When Edward tells his wife that she will be highly honoured in Heaven if she remains chaste on earth, she replies:

> Bel duz sire, tres chier ami,
> Ou tut mon quer vus rend merci
> De la deseree request.
> A granter me troverez prest
> Kar ceo ai tuz jurz desiré
> D'offrir a Deu ma chasteé...[50]

This almost seems like a case of 'the lady doth protest too much', especially when we consider that Edith would have been a young woman, perhaps only just old enough to marry, when in 1045 she was wed to a man of nearly forty.[51] It is probable that Edith encouraged the author of the *Vita Edwardi Regis* to present their childless marriage as the king's choice in order to protect her own reputation, and that the anonymous nun developed this wish further. By presenting Edith as an active participant in Edward's chastity, the anonymous nun created a role model of holiness and obedience to God's will which was well suited to an audience of religious women such as the nuns at Barking and Campsey Ash.

As well as the new treatment of Edith's chastity, the anonymous nun added her own interpretation of another significant event. She benefited from a much more personal perspective on the story of the nun who received a miraculous healing from Edward than her exemplar, Ailred of Rievaulx. Ailred, following his own source Osbert of Clare, narrated the tale of 'sanctimonialis quaedam femina in monasterio

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[50] Edouard. vv. 1371-5. 'Sweet lord, most dear friend, I thank you with all my heart for this request which I desire. You will find me quick to grant it, for I the one thing I have always desired is to offer to God my chastity'. See also Wogan-Browne, '*Clerc u lai*', p. 70.
[51] Stafford, pp. 265-7.

Berchingensis', who was cured of a quartan fever by her faith.[52] The anonymous nun of Barking, however, was able to claim direct authority from the nun who received the miraculous cure, for she states that it happened to 'a lady of our abbey which is called Barking'.[53] This nun was still alive, living in great honour at the nunnery, and was a first-hand narrator of her own story from whom the anonymous nun heard the tale:

> Iloec esteit nunein velee
> E unkore est tresqu'a cest jur
> En sancté et en grant valur,
> Certes, e de li oï ai
> Cest miracle que vus dirai,
> E nepurquant anceis l'esscrist
> Cil ki la vie en Latin fist.[54]

The nun, being able to record an eyewitness account, gives greater authority and immediacy to the story than Ailred and his source, Osbert of Clare. Since this miracle was recited by Osbert who wrote before 1138, we must assume that the nun was very long-lived. She may have been a teenager at the time of her healing, and have been in her 70s or 80s when the anonymous nun wrote in the 1180s. The dating of the anonymous *Vie d'Edouard* to the second half of the twelfth century has generally been accepted, but I believe internal evidence combined with a close study of the political context in which it was written will help re-interpret this date, and give a new angle upon the presentation of the subject.

iv) St Edward and twelfth-century Barking Abbey

The *Vie d'Edouard* has almost without exception been assigned a date before 1170, on the grounds of certain sections in the text praising King Henry II. Internal evidence provides us with a *terminus ante quem non* of 1163 (when Ailred presented his *Vita Edwardi Regis* upon which the *Vie* is based) and a *terminus post quem non* of 1189 (when King Henry II died). The end of the date range is provided by several verses

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[52]Ailred, 'Vita' col. 787-8

[53] 'une dame en nostre abeïe, ki Berkinges est apelee'. Edouard. vv. 6443-4.

[54] 'In that place [Barking] she was a veiled nun, and remains so even to this day in health and high esteem. Indeed, I heard from her the miracle I shall tell you, which nonetheless was told before by him who wrote the life in Latin'. Edouard. vv. 6445-51

which refer to King Henry II as alive, and which wish good fortune and health on him
and his heirs:

> ... le glorïus rei Henri
> Ki de ceo seint lignage eissi
> Et ore Engletere a franchie
> Et religïun enrichie...
> Mes Deu, par ki ad la bunté,
> Lui doint lunge vie et santé
> Et si sun pople guverner
> K'en ciel ou Deu puisse regner.
> En tere ait pais, plenté, salu,
> Et a ses heirs doinst Deu vertu
> Ke si terre puissent tenir
> Ke il a Deu seit a pleisir.
> Tel sens lur doint et tel valur
> Cum orent lur bon anceisur...[55]

The verses quoted above are used as the only evidence by which to date to the *Vie
d'Edouard*, and the majority of modern scholars have agreed with the editor of the text,
Södergård, who asserts that the anonymous nun must have written before 1170.[56]
Firstly, he argues for a date before 1170 since in that year Thomas Becket was
murdered, supposedly at the order of King Henry II, and as he puts it 'il nous paraît
impossible que notre religieuse eût pu s'exprimer d'une façon si bienveillante à l'égard
d'Henri II après 1170'.[57] His second and more developed argument is based on the state
of conflict which existed between Henry II and his sons in the years 1172-89, which
would have made it impossible for an author to wish good things for Henry's sons:
'pendant cette période s'accomplissait le destin des Plantagenets, qui voulait que le frère
haïsse le frère et que le fils se tourne contre son père'.[58] These two arguments have been

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[55] '... the glorious king Henry, who came from this holy lineage [of St Edward] and has freed all England and enriched the religious life... May God, from whom he has virtue, grant him long life and good health and so govern his people that he may reign with God in heaven. May there be peace, plenty and safety in the land, and may God give to [Henry's] heirs strength so that they may rule the land in a way that gives God pleasure. May he give them such wisdom and esteem as their great ancestors had...'. Edouard. vv. 107-10, 112-22.

[56] Edouard. p.18-26. Wogan-Browne, '*Clerc u lai*', p. 83 n. 40 states 'The two Barking lives must have been produced under the abbacy of Mary Becket or her immediate predecessor Adeliza'. See also Apprenticeship, p. 3, and Legge, Anglo-Norman literature, p. 60.

[57] Edouard, pp. 23-4.

[58] Edouard. p. 20.

almost universally accepted, and the date of composition generally given as somewhere between 1163 when Ailred wrote the Latin exemplar and 1170 when Thomas Becket was murdered.

In order to appreciate the context of the composition of the *Vie d'Edouard*, we should first recall the history of Barking Abbey during the reign of Henry II, when the text must have been written. The abbess at the time of Henry's accession to the throne was Adelidis fitzJohn, member of a prominent Anglo-Norman noble family. After an extended vacancy following Adelidis' death in 1166, Thomas Becket's sister Mary was elected abbess in 1173, perhaps as recompense for the death of her brother. Mary ruled over the abbey for only a few years, and in 1177x79 Henry appointed his own illegitimate daughter Matilda to the abbacy, and she ruled until her death in 1199. Against this background, we may now re-consider the dating of the *Vie d'Edouard*, and the way in which the subject matter was presented.

Firstly I will address Södergård's argument that the murder of Thomas Becket would preclude any possibility of a positive picture being presented of Henry II after 1170. To fully understand the implications of this suggestion it is important to consider a third text patronised by Barking Abbey in the twelfth century. The *Vie de Saint Thomas le Martyr*, composed by Guernes de Pont-Saint-Maxence, was composed in 1184 very soon after Thomas' canonisation, and was extremely critical of King Henry II for his involvement in Thomas' death.[59] As we have seen above, this text was patronised by Abbess Mary Becket, Thomas' sister, and her nuns.[60] Guernes' presence at the abbey during the composition of his text may have led to his being influenced not only by the general mood of anger at King Henry II after Becket's death, but also the personal grief and reactions of the martyr's sister. As Södergård rightly points out, Mary Becket 'n'aurait certainment pas permis l'une de ses religieuses de parler avec tant de

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[59] Guernes, La Vie de Saint Thomas. The editor suggests a date of 1174 for the completion of the piece (p. xxv).
[60] See above pp. 240-1.

bienveillance [as did the author of the Vie d'Edouard] de l'instigateur du meutre de son frère'.[61]

The years of Mary Becket's rule over Barking (1173-1177x9) would, we agree, have been an unsuitable time for the composition of a life of Edward praising his descendant King Henry II. Mary's support for the composition of a text vilifying Henry suggests the exact opposite, and so we may safely discount the period between 1173 and 1177x9 for the possible composition of the *Vie d'Edouard*. Södergård also assumes that the text must have been written before Thomas' death in 1170. What has been disregarded by him and every scholar to come after him, however, is the fact that after Mary Becket, the next abbess to rule over Barking was Matilda, the illegitimate daughter of King Henry II. I would like to suggest that as Henry's flesh and blood, Matilda's natural instinct would be to attempt to defend her father's reputation. She was clearly aware of her parentage, and as an illegitimate daughter her connection to the royal blood line might have been considered more tenuous, perhaps making her even more determined to protect not only her father's reputation but her own.

Matilda became abbess in 1177x9, after the rule of a woman who was undoubtedly hostile to Matilda's father the king. If Matilda had been a nun under Mary Becket before her promotion to abbess, she would have been uncomfortably aware of Mary's ill feelings towards her father. If Matilda was appointed from another convent, or even from the secular world, she might have been viewed with suspicion by the nuns over whom she was placed. The desire to rehabilitate her father's reputation at the abbey would have been an entirely natural one, and I suggest that she, like Mary Becket before her, used the medium of literature to present her preferred image of her kinsman to both her nuns and the wider world. For this reason, I suggest it is the patron of the *Vie d'Edouard* who is more significant than the identity of the woman who wrote it. This would offer a new range of dates for the work, between 1177x9 and 1189, during Henry's lifetime and the abbacy of his daughter at Barking. Södergård refused to take into consideration the dates after 1170, ignoring the only scholar to mention this

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[61] Edouard. p. 24.

possibility in a little-known article from 1924, based upon the first edition of the text by Abson.[62] Abson suggested that the popularity of St Thomas may have led to the wish to promote Edward's cult in the face of competition, but fails to make the connection to Abbess Matilda as kinsman of King Henry II.[63] Elsewhere I reinvestigated this suggestion, by expanding it further in the light of my research on late twelfth-century Barking.[64] Wogan-Browne refers to the possibility that the text may have been written after the time of Mary Becket, but she too misses the link to the abbacy of Henry's daughter Matilda, which I will show is the key to a new interpretation of *Edouard*.[65]

The second argument Södergård offers for his dating of the text to before 1170 is that the troubled relationship between King Henry II and his sons would make it impossible for an author to praise them all and wish them a good future. He suggests that the second half of Henry's reign, after 1172, was so full of strife and dissent that no author could justifiably write positively about Henry's sons and their roles as heirs to the noble lineage through which Henry was linked to St Edward.[66] These years were indeed difficult, but we should consider the possibility that the text may have been written towards the end of Henry's reign, under the patronage of a member of Henry's own bloodline who wished to defend her own honour and that of her half-brothers. The years after the death of Henry the Young King in 1183 were relatively peaceful, and outward gestures towards reconciliation presented the image of a family rather more at peace than it had been over the previous decade.[67] Queen Eleanor's captivity was made less strict, and she was allowed greater freedom to travel with the royal court and more especially with her children.[68] The last years of Henry's reign were much more conducive to positive depictions of the family than the strife-filled earlier decades; they were years of 'comparative peace and tranquillity, with the bickering of [Henry's] sons

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[62] Baker, 'Saints' lives written in Anglo-French', p. 146.

[63] Abson, 'Anglo-Norman didactic literature', p. 13.

[64] E. Mitchell, 'Patrons and politics at twelfth century Barking Abbey', Revue Bénédictine 113 (2003) pp. 347-364, based on a paper presented at the Haskins Society Conference 2001.

[65] Saints' lives, pp 251 n. 84 and 252 n. 88.

[66] Edouard, p. 20.

[67] Henry II. chap. 16, 'The end of the reign', pp. 594-630.

[68] Henry II. p. 600-602. J. Martindale, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine: The last years', in S.D. Church (ed.), King John: New interpretations (Woodbridge, 1999) pp. 137-64 discusses her life after Henry's death.

little more than a distressing undercurrent'.[69] This would present the perfect opportunity
for a daughter of King Henry to patronise a text describing her father in glowing terms,
as a propaganda document to counteract the effect of Mary Becket at Barking and to
rehabilitate Henry's image in the world at large.

A final possible motivation of the presentation of Henry II in the *Vie d'Edouard*, which
has not been investigated before, is the legitimisation of him as heir to St Edward, and
thus also the legitimisation of his daughter Abbess Matilda. The interpretation of
Edward's green tree prophecy, as explained by Ailred as the first writer about Edward
under the rule of King Henry II, was that Henry was the ultimate successor to King
Edward's throne, and the rightful king of England through his descent from the Anglo-
Saxon bloodline of King Edward.[70] The anonymous Barking nun used the explanation
of this prophecy as an opportunity to praise King Henry and emphasise his great
lineage, as well as the virtue of his mother the Empress Matilda through her role in this
story:

> Quant l'empereriz d'eos nasqui,
> L'arbrë a certes dunc fluri.
> Mais dunc porta veirement fruit,
> Dunt la tere confort reçuit,
> Des que li glorius rei Henri
> De ceste empereriz nasqui...
> Or ad la tere seignurage
> E rei de l'ancïen lignage,
> Del boen Edward, le Deu ami
> E Deu duinst que toz jurs seit si
> Que ses eirs i puissent regner,
> Tant cum li mund purat durer.[71]

Abbess Matilda was, we must remember, the illegitimate daughter of King Henry II,
and thus was herself a daughter of this great and noble lineage. By emphasising Henry's
legitimacy and role as heir to the saint about whom the *Vie* was composed, Abbess

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[69] Henry II. p. 601.

[70] For a full explanation of this prophecy see p. 250 above.

[71] 'When the Empress [Matilda] was born from them [Edward and Edith/Matilda] the tree certainly
flowered, but it only truly bore fruit, through which the land is comfotrted, since the time when the
glorious king Henry was born from that Empress... Now the land has lordship, and a king from the
ancient lineage of great Edward the friend of God, and may God grant that it will always be thus, that

Matilda counteracted her illegitimate birth by her blood connection to St Edward. As well as this personal link, Matilda also had reason to be grateful to her father for appointing her abbess of Barking, and making her ruler of one of the wealthiest nunneries in England. While the text is not explicitly dedicated to the king, it nevertheless presents him in a positive light, and offers him the best possible wishes as ruler of England.[72] Matilda may have commissioned the text from her apprentice translator with the intention of rehabilitating her father's image at Barking, while simultaneously expressing her gratitude to him for promoting her to high office. She was not married to a prince or nobleman as her half-sisters were, but she reached the highest position available to a monastic woman, that of abbess.[73]

This very personal motivation for the *Vie d'Edouard*, combined with the wish to present her own family and her father in particular as peaceful and successful rulers of England, leads me to suggest that Södergård and those who follow his argument may be wrong in dating the text to before 1170. I would like to suggest instead that it may have been composed between 1177x79 (the appointment of Matilda to the abbey of Barking) and 1189 (Henry II's death), as a piece of propaganda for the Angevin family line, and as a way to boost Henry II's acceptability after the canonisation of Thomas Becket. The presentation of the subject matter is less subtle in the *Vie d'Edouard* than in the *Life of St Catherine*, implying that *Edouard* may have been (as first suggested by MacBain) a juvenile work by Clemence of Barking, making a rather obvious point about the ancestry of her abbess. Some years later when she was a more accomplished writer, Clemence was able to make a more discreet case for the Empress Matilda through her presentation of St Catherine as a manly, courageous figure similar to the Empress. This argument remains conjecture, since we can never fully know the circumstances of the

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[Edward's] heirs may reign for as long as the earth lasts'. Edouard. vv. 4985-90, 4992-8.

[72] Legge, Anglo-Norman literature. p. 63 suggests that the text may have been addressed to King Henry and Queen Eleanor, but I disagree. The sections describing the king are in the third person, rather than the first, and there is no obvious dedication which might be expected if the text was intended to gain some kind of financial patronage from the king and queen.

[73] We note that her illegitimate half-brothers Geoffrey 'Plantagenet' and Morgan were also given high office in the religious world, as bishop-elect of Lincoln then archbishop of York (1189-1212) and bishop-elect of Durham respectively. On Geoffrey and the failure of his illegitimacy to prevent high office, R. Bartlett, England under the Norman and Angevin kings 1075-1225 (Oxford, 2000) p. 567. For Morgan,

text, but I believe I have shown that this possibility should be considered alongside other interpretations of the two texts.

d) Conclusions

All three hagiographic texts directly patronised by Barking Abbey reveal contemporary political sensitivities. Immediately after the Norman Conquest, when there was the potential for financial disaster and loss of security for the abbey, Goscelin of St-Bertin was commissioned to write texts about saints who had lived at the abbey and watched over it, performing miracles for those who were generous towards the nuns. Goscelin's *Vitae* portrayed the nuns of Barking as generous and hospitable, and their abbesses as strong protectors who were willing to look after the new Norman arrivals through their petitions in Heaven. Goscelin wrote in Latin to avoid any chance of alienating potential benefactors; Latin was, and remained, a neutral language associated with the church and the royal court. These texts also avoided any directly politicised comment, by focusing only on pre-Conquest events and omitting any reference to the dramatic events of recent years. Goscelin's works were the most directly related to the history of the abbey, since they narrated events which took place there, but had the least subtle motivation, inspired by the immediate need to gain patronage through presenting the abbey's saints as worthy recipients of financial support in exchange for spiritual benefits for the souls of the benefactors.

Some hundred years later the political situation of England had become more settled, the Normans had intermarried with the wealthiest of the native Anglo-Saxons, and Barking Abbey had secured its place as the wealthiest nunnery in the East of England. There was no longer such an imperative need to seek patronage for the abbey, and there was greater freedom to use literature as a source of pleasure as well as financial support. In this more culturally conducive atmosphere it was possible for Matilda, illegitimate daughter of King Henry II and abbess of Barking, to commission one of her nuns to write texts about saints who were more historically distant and less directly related to

C. Given-Wilson and A. Curteis, The royal bastards of medieval England (London, 1984) p. 99.

the nunnery. St Catherine and St Edward may have been chosen not just for their contemporary popularity but also for the potential within their lives to insert subtle and less subtle propaganda about that abbess's own family. I suggest that the *Vie d'Edouard* was composed first, in the early years of Abbess Matilda's reign when she wished to consolidate her authority as abbess of Barking. She needed to counteract the influence of her predecessor, Mary Becket, who would have been hostile to Matilda's father and may have made Matilda's position at the abbey initially uncomfortable. Some years later, perhaps after the death of her father in 1189, once Matilda had promoted her family line as legitimate, and her father and brothers as peaceful rulers, I suggest she turned again to her talented author Clemence, and commissioned her to write another text, this time rehabilitating the image of her grandmother, the Empress Matilda. The parallels between the character of St Catherine and the character of the Empress Matilda may have been deliberately emphasised, in order persuade the both the nuns of Barking and the secular audience who read the text that the Empress was in fact a brave and determined woman, who like St Catherine should be admired for her strength of will rather than vilified.

All these texts, then, may have been politically motivated. It is not possible to state dogmatically that this is true, but the use of literature as propaganda was a widespread and acceptable political tactic. As members of a religious community, the successive nuns and abbesses of Barking need not have been hidden from this by their enclosed life; they were members of aristocratic families, and would have been aware of events in the world outside the nunnery walls. By using literature to put across their own points of view, these women left for posterity texts which were not only remarkable works of intellect and poetic ability, but which also can give a valuable insight into the political atmosphere of England in the late eleventh and late twelfth centuries.

Part V: Conclusions

Conclusions

The intention of this study was to bring a new sense of cohesion and a more wide-ranging approach to the history of Barking Abbey, and to show that 1066 did not mean the end of one form of patronage and the beginning of another. Through an analysis of the material in royal charters, the Petre archive and the 'Ilford Cartulary' I have traced the patterns of patronage of both royal and aristocratic figures, and shown that Barking remained significant to both successive royal dynasties and members of the East Anglian aristocracy for many years. It was also intended to integrate literary and documentary sources in a new way, to show that the nuns themselves were aware of the power of literature as one of their few available tools of expression.

By offering a revised chronology, I have been able to show that the Anglo-Saxon patrons of Barking Abbey remained significant until the early twelfth century, perhaps suggesting that a greater prominence should be given to them in other studies of religious patronage. Instead of looking only at those donors who occurred up to 1066, or only those whose names appear after, it has been possible to trace Anglo-Saxon families whose connections to the abbey did not simply stop when the Conqueror arrived. In much the same way as studies which have shown that the Normans did not immediately give all their patronage to religious houses in England, I have shown that Anglo-Saxon patronage continued for some time until the Normans took over the role of wealthiest and best recorded-donors. An analysis of pre- and post-Conquest materials at other nunneries may reveal a similar pattern.

I have also shown that there may have been a sense of duty attached to the lands received by Normans after 1066. Robert fitzWalter, the heir to the lands of Aelfgar who was the earliest known aristocratic donor to Barking, gave lands to the abbey in the early thirteenth century, and his sister was a nun at the abbey. William de Vesci, nephew of Abbess Adelidis, may have been aware of the possible theft by his ancestor of houses belonging to the abbey around the time of the Conquest, and gave lands himself as well as inheriting a tenancy from his father, Adelidis' brother. It is of course

possible that these grants were completely unrelated to the earlier holders of these lands and their patronage of Barking. I believe, however, that it is possible that the nuns of Barking used their powers of spiritual pressure to 'encourage' distant heirs of their Anglo-Saxon patrons to make reparation for wrongs done to the abbey over one hundred years earlier. The power of the monastic remembrancer was greater than a modern mind might believe, and the threat of having one's name on an abbey's blacklist for all eternity would have been sufficient to coerce a donor into making a gift.

Royal patronage of the abbey has been shown to have been more or less constant, and the power of kings to appoint abbesses has proven the most interesting aspect of this. Appointments were made for different reasons at different periods in the abbey's history, and political motivations were more evident at times of national political instability. Royal queens were often placed over the abbey at times when it needed a strong protector; the allowing of Ælfthryth to control the abbey in the tenth century is an example of this, as is the custodianship of Queen Matilda II in the early twelfth century, to fill the vacancy left by the death of the abbey's last Anglo-Saxon abbess. Across the course of the twelfth century, however, when successive royal houses battled over control of the country, aristocratic women from closely-linked families seem to have been chosen to ensure that the king could guarantee control over the wealthy and important nunnery of Barking. Adelidis fitzJohn was appointed as a reward for the loyal service of her brother Payn, but also so that King Stephen could feel confident in the loyalty of the abbess to his own cause during the early, less secure years of his reign. King Henry II appointed his own daughter Matilda to counteract the influence of Mary Becket, an abbess who had been forced on him in an act of religious penance. In the early thirteenth century, King John used the power of advowson in a strongly political way to show his anger with Robert fitzWalter, by denying his sister the role of abbess of Barking.

The literary patronage of Barking Abbey itself had not previously been fully analysed within this context, and I believe my study has enabled me to offer some new interpretations of the texts written for the nuns and abbesses. The eleventh-century Latin

Vitae by Goscelin of St-Bertin were used to present a powerful image of the abbey's past, coloured by the contemporary values the nuns wished him to portray. In order to encourage the patronage of the new Norman ruling class, Sts Ethelburga, Wulfhilda and Hildelith were depicted in hospitality miracles offering generous care for their successors at Barking, and implying that this generosity could be extended to benefactors and friends of the abbey. They were immediate, living saints who had recently appeared to plead the case for their translation to a new church, and thus might be expected to appear again to intervene should the nuns need their help. Goscelin's texts were written at a time of financial and material uncertainty for the abbey, and his choice of Latin, a politically neutral language, was intended to avoid alienating either the abbey's existing Anglo-Saxon benefactors or the new Norman potential donors.

By the late twelfth century Barking had secured its economic welfare, and indeed had become a patron itself through the founding of the Ilford Hospital. I have argued that the writing of the two Anglo-Norman lives of St Edward the Confessor and St Catherine of Alexandria was a political act of literary patronage similar to that of Goscelin's works, but of a more subtle nature. By studying the immediate milieu of twelfth-century Barking I have offered new dates and interpretations of both these texts. I suggest that the *Vie d'Edouard*, with its panegyric to King Henry II and interpretation of a vision linking him to St Edward and the legitimate pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon kings, was intended by Abbess Matilda, daughter of King Henry II, to offer a show of support and gratitude to her father. The nuns at Barking might have been strongly influenced by Mary Becket, sister of St Thomas, and this text told the nuns in no uncertain terms that King Henry was a good man, blessed by God, and thus (implicitly) that the death of Thomas should not be held too hard against him. The *Life of St Catherine* may have been written as an example of a strong, determined, intelligent woman, reminiscent of the abbess's grandmother Empress Matilda.

This study has also provided fresh interpretations of existing documents, and brought new material to light. By juxtaposing the newly found documentary material with literary texts, I hope to have shown that the history of Barking Abbey is of considerable

political significance, and that studies which neglect to analyse the political context of a religious house risk failing to understand the interplay between politics and religion in many areas of medieval life. Nunneries and monasteries offered their patrons a sense of spiritual security, in return for which the patrons guaranteed the material well-being of the religious community. Kings and queens, aristocrats and servants, men and women from Barking itself, all were involved in the history of this nunnery and none should be disregarded as insignificant. I believe that the inclusive approach of this study, and its cross-1066 chronological range, may provide a new way to analyse the history of religious houses, and hope that the remaining years of the abbey's history might be studied in a similar way. The Petre archive and the 'Ilford Cartulary' both contain a great number of documents which it has not been possible to include in the current study, and which are deserving of close analysis. Barking Abbey's position as the wealthiest and most powerful nunnery in East Anglia did not end in 1200, and I hope that the work begun in this thesis will be continued, to show that Barking Abbey was indeed a place of great political importance in medieval England.

Appendix 1: Abbesses and Custodians of Barking Abbey, c. 670 – 1215

c. 670 – after 687	St Ethelburga
after 687 – c. 716	St Hildelith
before 969 – 996	St Wulfhilda
[c. 969 – 989	Queen Ælfthryth]
c. 996 – c. 1030	Leofflæd
1065 – after 1100	Ælfgyva
[early twelfth century	Queen Matilda II]
7th Jan 1121 – 26 March ?1136	Agnes
[before 26 April 1136 – early 1138	Queen Matilda III]
March/ early April 1138 - 25 January 1166	Adelidis fitzJohn
1166 – 1173	vacant
July/ August 1173 – Before 1177x9	Mary Becket
1177x9 – 17 August 1199	Matilda, daughter of King Henry II
1199 – 1201	vacant
1201 – 1213	Christina de Valognes
1215 (resigned)	Sybil, prioress of Barking

Appendix 2: Barking's Estates in 1086

Essex:

1: Mucking. 7 hides, Turold de Rochester took 30 acres

2: Bulphan. 7 hides, Ravengar took 24 acres

3: Fanton. 40 acres.

4: Parndon. Half a hide

5: Barking. 30 hides, Goscelin the Lorimer took 24 acres

6: London. 28 houses

7: Wigborough. 11 ½ hides and 13 acres

8: Warley. 3 hides

9: Stifford. 40 acres, 30 acres 'exchanged' with William de Warenne

10: Fryerning and Ingatestone. 3 ½ hides and 10 acres

11: Fristling. 1 ½ virgates

12: Hockley. A manor and 7 ½ hides

13: Tollesbury, A manor and 8 hides, Odo took 10 acres

Buckinghamshire

14: Slapton. 6 hides

Bedfordshire

15: Lidlington. 10 hides

Middlesex

16: Marylebone. 5 hides

Surrey

17: Weston. 3 hides and 1 virgate

18: Wallington. 2 hides.

Appendix 3: Calendar of unpublished charters of Barking Abbey, 693x809 to 1215

Nos. 1-9 are forthcoming in Hart, Charters: the texts are curently available for consultation at http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/users/sdk13/chartwww/barking.html, from where the following details are taken.

1: 693x709

Grant by Suebred, king of the East Saxons, to Fymme: Of 30 hides at Nazeing for the endowment of a religious house.

No attestations

Source: Hatfield, Hatfield House MS Ilford Hospital (Ilford Cartulary) fol. 15v. S 65a.

Printed: Bascombe, p. 86

2: 693x709

Grant by Suebred, king of the East Saxons, to Fymme: Of 10 manentes at *Ettunende obre.*

Attestations: Suebred, king of the East Saxons; Archbishop Waldhere; Sigiheard; Eadburga; Offa; Abbot Justus; Abbot Ethelred; Abbot Francus; Abbot Addanus; Hodilred; and 8 other men.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 15v. S 65b.

Printed: Bascombe, p. 86

3: 932, 9th November

Grant by King Æthelstan of Wessex to abbot Beorhtsige: Of 10 hides at Buram (?Bowers Gifford).

Attestations: Æthelstan; 3 subreguli; 19 bishops; 5 abbots; 8 nobles; 10 ministers; and a further 20 men.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 16rv. S418a.

Dated 932, 9th November.

4: 946

Grant by King Eadred to Æthelgifu, a religious woman: Of 4 hides at Tollesfuntum (probably Tollesbury).

Attestations: Eadred, king of the English; 6 bishops; 4 nobles; 9 ministers; and one other man.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 18v. S 517a.

Dated 946.

5: 946

Grant by King Eadred to Eawynne, a religious woman: Of 19 hides at Hockley.

Attestations: Eadred, King of the English; 6 bishops; 4 nobles; 9 minsters; and one other man.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 18r. S 517b

Dated 946; the attestations are similar, but not identical, to those in no. 4 above.

6: 947

Grant by King Eadred to Ælfstan, his minster: Of 17 hides at Wigborough.

Attestations: Eadred king of the English; Eadgifu, mother of the king; 9 bishops; 6 nobles; 3 ministers.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fols. 16v-16r. S 522a.

Dated 947

7: 950

Grant by King Eadred to the monastic community at Barking: Of 8 hides at *Lippanwelle* and *Ciricdune* (unidentified).

Attestations: King Eadred; Eadgifu; Ælfgar *princeps*; Howel *regulus*; 2 archbishops; 4 bishops; 4 abbots; 7 priests;14 nobles and knights; 4 thegns.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fols. 17v-18r. S 552a

Dated 950.

8: 1013, 18th April

Grant by King Æthelred to Sigered: Of 20 hides at Hatfield Broak Oak.

Attestations: Ethelred king of the English; Wulfstan archbishop of York; 6 bishops; 2 nobles; 7 abbots; 2 ministers; and 5 other men.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 17rv. S 931a

Dated 1013, 18th April.

9: 1013, 20th April.

Grant by King Æthelred to Sigered, his minister: Of 5 hides at Horndon.

Attestations: Ethelred, king; Archbishop Wulfstan; 8 bishops; 4 nobles; 11 abbots; 11 ministers.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fols. 16v-17r. S 931b.

Dated 1013, 20th April.

10: 1140s (possibly edited later), Barking

Gift in perpetual alms by Abbess Adelidis and the convent of Barking to the sick paupers of the hospital of Ilford: Of 120 acres at Estholt [Hainault] with a mill to be paid for by the paupers; half of the income of the parish of Barking, that is to say the part which Thomas de Valognes had held; that part of the tithes which had belonged to Chrostoferno; two tithes of sheaves from the abbey's land at Warley; all the tithe of Hugo *dapifer* in Warley and Barking; the land which is of the fief of Helti fitz Richard; a tithe of all the mills of Barking; and the tithes of Osbert the Chamberlain.

No witnesses

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 5.

Probably in the early years of Abbess Adelidis' reign.

11: ?1152x54

Notification by King Stephen addressed generally: That he grants to the church of St Ethelburga of Barking all the assarts of Estholt [Hainault] for the use of the sick of Ilford Hospital, free from any duties.

Witnesses: Roger de Fraxinet and Warner de Lusors

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 5v.

Printed: Vincent, 'New charters of King Stephen' p. 921.

Shares witnesses with a charter for Clerkenwell of 1152x54; RRAN III no. 203.

12: 1167x8 – 1173

Confirmation by Gilbert Foliot of Abbess Adelidis' grants made to Ilford Hospital: Of 120 acres of assart at Esthole [Hainault]; half the income of the parish of Barking; that part of the tithe which Cristoferno had held from the abbess; two tithes of sheaves from Warley; all the tithe which Hugo dapifer had held in Warley and in Barking; the land which is of the fief of Helti fitz Richard; a tithe of all the mills of Barking, and all the tithe of Osbert the Chamberlain.

Witnesses: Robert archdeacon of Oxford, Walter archdeacon of Hereford, and Richard archdeacon of Colchester.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 3r.

Printed: Neininger, English episcopal acta 15. London 1076-1187, pp. 80-81.

Richard, archdeacon of Colchester first occ. 1167x8, Robert was archdeacon of Oxford until 1173.

13: 1177x79 – 1183. Barking.

Quitclaim by William de Vesci to Matilda, daughter of King Henry and the abbess of Barking: Of all his rights and lands in Hanley, and also 16 acres in Barking which Erkenbricht had held.

Witnesses: Robert of Wigborough, steward; Master Nicholas of Canewdon; Master Gregory of London; Peverell of Barking; Henry of Dagenham; Stephen nephew of St Thomas, and 22 other men.

Source: Chelmsford, Essex Record Office (ERO) MS D/DP T1/694. Bears seal of William de Vesci

William de Vesci died in 1183.

14: 1177x79 – 1180. probably 1179

Gilbert Foliot's settlement of a dispute between Abbess Matilda and the convent of Barking on one side, and R. deacon of Avranches, the rector of Buttsbury on the other, over the tithes of Ingatestone and Hanley. The tithes are awarded to Abbess Matilda and the convent, and the abbess' choice of rector is to be installed, for an annual pension of 2 wax candles each weiging 4lb to be given on the feast of St Ethelburga.

Witnesses: Nicholas archdeacon of London; Ralph Diceto archdeacon of Middlesex; Master Henry of Northampton; Master Richard Stortford; Master Ralph de Altaripa; Gilbert Foliot; Ralph of Chilton; Richard of Salisbury; Walter *elemosinario* and Lodevic the clerk.

Source: ERO MS D/DP T1/692

Printed: Brooke, Morey and Brooke, Letters and charters of Gilbert Foliot no. 351 pp. 401-402.

15: 1184 – 1199. Barking

Abbess Matilda confirms Abbess Adelidis' grants to the Ilford Hospital: Of 120 acres at Estholt [Hainault] with a mill to be paid for by the paupers; half of the income of the parish of Barking, that is the part which Thomas de Valognes had held; that part of the tithes which had belonged to Christoferno; two tithes of sheaves from the abbey's land at Warley; all the tithe of Hugo *dapifer* in Warley and Barking; the land which is of the fief of Helti fitz Richard; a tithe of all the mills of Barking; and the tithes of Osbert the Chamberlain

Witnesses: Ralph abbot of St Osyth; John prior of Blackmore, steward of Barking; Hugo and Sanarius the chaplains; Reginald de Fonte the clerk; Ralph of Wakering; and Augustine, Richard, Walter and Bartholomew the clerks.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 5v

Radulf, abbot of St Osyth was appointed 1184: Abbess Matilda died in 1199.

16: 1184 – 1199

Charter of Philip, Prior of Ilford Hospital and the brothers of the hospital, to Abbess Matilda; Confirmation that they will provide clothing and vestments for a chaplain to

celebrate mass for the benefit of her soul and that of the convent of Barking, and after her death for her soul and that of King Henry II and Joanna, her mother, and the convent of Barking.

Witnesses: Ralph abbot of St Osyth; John prior of Blackmore, steward of Barking; Hugo and Sanarius the chaplains; Reginald de Fonte the clerk; Ralph of Wakering; and Augustine, Richard, Walter and Bartholomew the clerks.

Source: Ilford Cartulary fol. 15v.

Probably simultaneous with no. 15; the witness lists are identical.

17: 1192 – 1195, perhaps 1192

Notification by Richard, Bishop of London, R dean and P archdeacon of London, delegated by Pope Clement, in adjudication of a dispute between the brothers of the hospital of Jerusalem on one side, and Abbess Matilda and the convent of Barking on the other, over the tithes, parishioncrs and parocjhial right of Hanley: That the brothers renounce all claims, and the rights are granted to the convent of Barking. In return the abbey gives to the hospital a mark of silver; the same mark which they receive from the canons of St Mary, Southwark, paid in rent by Sybil sister of Richard fitz Rainer on a messuage in London.

Witnesses: Master Richard Stortford; Master Alard; John at Witeng [sic] the canons; Master Roger; Alan, Berengar and Richard the chaplains; William of Ely; Master Alexander; Ralph of St Paul's; John of Waltham the clerk;Alphege the chaplain; Reginald de Fonte; Master Roger; Laurence the clerk.

Source: ERO MS D/DP T1/693.

Richard fitzNeal was Bishop of London from 1189, Peter of Waltham occ as archdeacon of London 1192 – 1195. Pope Clement died in 1191, so perhaps closer to this date than 1195.

18: 1192 – 1195, London?

Confirmation by Richard, Bishop of London: Of a promise made by the brothers of the Hospital of Jerusalem that they will no longer demand from the Abbess of Barking a mark of silver they used to recive from her 'in the name of the brotherhood of their

hospital'.

Witnesses: Peter archdeacon of London; Master Richard Stortford; Master Alard; Richard of Winsor the canon; Master Roger; Alan, Richard and Berengar the chaplains; Reginald de Fonte the clerk; Master Roger of London; Laurence the clerk.

Source: ERO MS D/DP T1/690

Peter of Waltham was archdeacon 1192 – 1195.

19: 1192-3. Barking

Lease by Matilda, daughter of King Henry II and Abbess of Barking, to Richard parson of Barton; Of her hamlet of Hanley, at a rent of 50 shillings per annum; also various assarts in Bulphan for 15 shillings and 5 pence; the gersuma for both is ten marks of silver.

Witnesses: Reginald de Fonte the steward; Alphege, Benedict, Hugo and Richard the chaplains; Nicholas and Geoffrey the deacons; Walter the parson of Wigborough; Stephen of Barking; Gilbert of Dagenham; Ralph fitz Salomon, and 6 other men.

Source: ERO MS D/DP T1/1690

Dated 4 Richard 1, 1192-3.

20: 1200-1201. Barking

Lease by C ministra and the convent of Barking to Master Ralph de Alcrug and his brother Richard; Of all the hamlet of Hanley with its appurtenances, for the lives of the two brothers, at a rent of 50 shillings per annum; and a tenement in Ingatestone at a rent of 6 pence; and all the assart of Bulphan which Richard the parson of Barnton held, for a rent of 14 shillings and 20 pence per annum; the gersuma for all these is 10 marks of silver.

Witnesses: Jacob, Benedict, Richard and Henry the chaplains; Ralph fitz Salomon the steward; Stephen of Barking, and 8 other men.

Source: ERO MS D/DP T1/695

Dated 2 John, 1200-1201.

21: 1228. London?

Award by Martin dean of St Paul's, Geoffrey archdeacon of London, and Reginald archdeacon of Middlesex, appointed by Pope Gregory IX, in settlement of a dispute between Abbess Mabel and the convent of Barking and Alexander, rector of the church of Ingatestone on one side, and Prior William and the canons of Blackmore on the other, over the tithes of Hanley: That the tithes are conceded to the church of Ingatestone, and the canons of Blackmore will renounce their claims.

Witnesses: Roger archdeacon of Colchester; Henry chancellor of St Paul's; Master William of P[urley?]; Henry prior of Ingatestone; Roger deacon of Chelmsford; Master Hugh of London; Master S of Stortford; Master William of Lichfield; Adam and Robert chaplains of Barking; T steward of Barking; and 6 other men.

Source: ERO MS D/DP T1/691

Dated 1228.

Appendix 4: Extracts from key charters referred to in the text

1: Abbess Adelidis's charter to Ilford Hospital (calendar no.10)

In nomine patris et filii et spiritu sancti amen. Aeliza Dei patentia Berkingensis ecclesie abbatissa et totus eiusdem loci conventus universis sancte matris ecclesie filiis in Christo salutem. Scripture sacro attestatione ammonemur, elemosinam que plus prodest danti quam accipienti infirmis pauperis abscondere, et miseros in Domino odit misericordiam suscipere et amplecti. Inde est quod pauperibus infirmis de Ileforde ad victus sustentationem donavimus et concessimus in perpetuum elemosinam totum essartum nostrum de Hestholte [Hainault]. Scilicet c et xx acras cum molendino quod de pecunia eorum apud Ilefordiam constructum est, libere et solide et quiete possidendum. Dimidium quoque beneficium parochiane ecclesie de Berkynge, cum omnibus obventionibus et suis accessionibus, partem illam scilicet quam habuit Thomas de Valoniis, et illam portionem decimacionem quam habuit Christoferno de dominio nostro, preterea donavimus eisdem duas garbas decimarum dominium nostrum de Warlea, et totam decimam Hugonis dapiferi tam de Warleia quam de feodo suo de Berkynge, et terram que est de feodo Helti filii Ricardi, cum omnibus libertatibus et quietanciis quam carta eiusdem testificatur. Assignavimus etiam eisdem ad vestimenta sua decimam omnium molendinorum Berkingie cum universam decimam Osberti camerarii.

2: King Stephen's grant of assarts to Ilford Hospital (calendar no. 11)

Stephanus rex Angorum episcopo Londonensis et justiciis et vicecomitibus et forestariis et ministriis suis et fidelibus suis de Essex salutem. Sciatis quod dedi et concessi et inperpetuam elemosinam Deo et ecclesie sancte Edelburge de Berkinge totum essartum de Estholt ad opus infirmorum de hospitali de Ilforde, et volo et precipio quod predicti infirmi teneant et habeant prefatum essartum cum appendiciis suis in perpetuam elemosinam libere et quiete ab omnibus placitis essartorum sicut elemosinam meam dominicam.

3: Extract from Gilbert Foliot's confirmation of Abbess Adelidis's charter (calendar no. 12)

Proinde infirmis fratribus de Ilford c et xx acras essartorum de Escholte [Hainault] quas Adelicia abbatissa et totus conventus de Berkinge eis dedit in perpetuam elemosinam et carta sua confirmavit, dimidium quoque beneficium parochiane ecclesie de Berkinge cum omnibus obventionibus suis, et portionem illam decimationum quam habuit Cristoferno de dominio eiusdem abbatisse, et duas garbas decimarum dominici eius de Warleia, et totam decimam Hugonis dapiferi tam de Warleia quam de terra sua de Berkinge, et terram que est de feodo Helti filii Ricardi cum omnibus libertatibus et quietanciis, decimam etiam omnium molendinorum de Berkynge et totam decimam Osberti camerarii, que sicut ex autenticis donatorum scriptis cognovimus eisdem sunt in perpetuam elemosinam assignata, concessa nobis a domino episcopali auctoritate concedimus et committimus et sub huius scripti testimonio imperpetuum confirmamus.

4: Extract from Abbess Matilda's confirmation of Abbess Adelidis's charter (calendar no. 15)

Universitati vestras notum fieri quod nos concessisse et presenti scripto confirmasse infirmis fratribus de Ileford qui Deo adiutore in tuitione nostra sunt, omnes terras et beneficias qua pia recordacionis Adelicia ecclesie nostre abbastissa et eiusdem ecclesie a temporis iam dictis fratribus concesserunt, dederunt et assignaverunt. Scilicet totum essartum nostrum de Estholt [Hainault] centum usque et xx acras cum molendino quod de pecunia eorum apud Ileford constructum est, libere solide et quiete possidendum. Dimidium quoque beneficionem parochiane ecclesie de Berkynge cum omnibus obventionibus suis et accessionibus, partem illam scilicet quam habuit Thomas de Valoniis, et partem illam portionem decimatorum quam habuit Christoferus de dominio nostro, preterea concedimus etconfirmavimus eisdem duas garbas decimarum dominium nostrum de Warleia et totam decimam Hugonis filii Ricardi cum omnibus libertatibus et quietanciis quam carta eiusdem testificatur. Concedimus etiam et confirmavimus ad

vestimenta sua decimam omnium molendinorum Berkingie cum universam decimam Osberti camerarii.
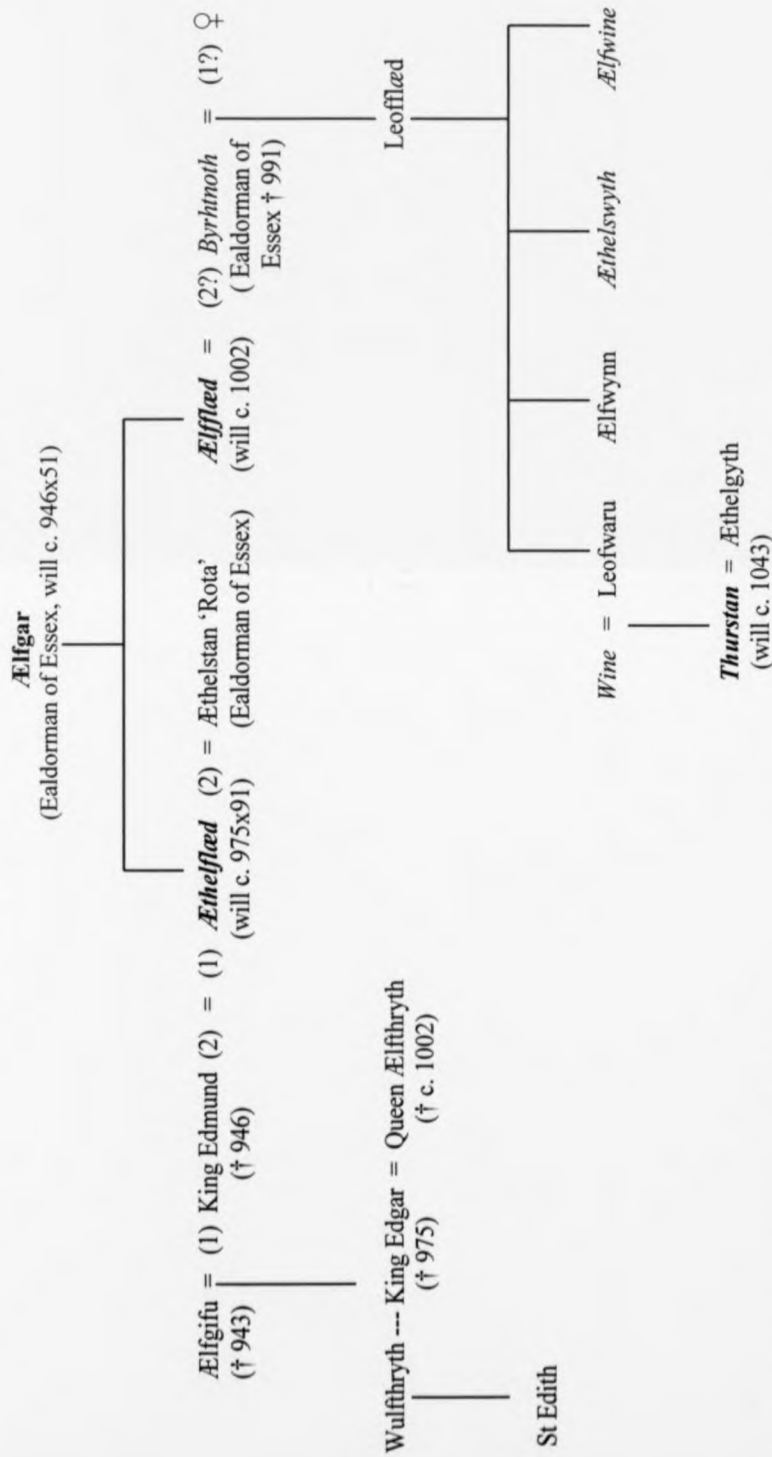
5: Extract from Prior Philip's charter to Abbess Matilda (calendar no. 16)

Sciant presentes et futuri quod ego Philippus Prior hospitali de Illeforde et universi fratres ibidem conmorant concessimus et hac carta nostra confirmavimus Matilde Henrici Regis secundi filie abbatisse Berkingensis quod nos inperpetuum ministravimus victum et vestitutum uni capellani qui singulis diebus vite prenominate abbatisse celebrabit singulis diebus dominice missam de Sancta Trinitate et secunda tercia et Quarta feria de sancto spiritu et quinta feria et Sabbato de beata et gloriosa virgine Maria et Sexta feria de sancta Cruce pro salute ipsius et totius conventus de Berkinge monasterii, et post decessum ipsius singulis diebus celebrabit missa pro fideliis et commendationibus et placebo et dirige pro salute anime ipsius et pro salute anime Henrici rege secundi et pro anime Joanne matris sue et totius conventus de Berkinge.

6: William de Vesci's quitclaim to Matilda, daughter of Henry II of all his rights and lands in Hanley, and 16 acres which Erkenbricht had held (calendar no. 13)

Universis sancte matris ecclesie filiis tam presentibus quam futuris ad quos presens carta pervenerit, Willelmus de Vesci salutem. Noverit universitas vestra me in presentia domine M. H. Regis Anglie filiae Abbatisse de Berching' et in presentia totius conventus eiusdem loci presente curia, eiusdem Abatisse refutasse in manu eius et clamasse quietum universum ius meum de Hanlega et quicquid habebam in Hanlega. Et terram illam quam tenuit Erkenbrichtus circiter xvi acras in Berching' Deo et ecclesie Sancte Marie virginis et Sancte Athelburge de me et heredibus meis inperpetuum. Et ideo volo et firmiter precipio nequis heredum meorum predictum monasterium de hiis tenementis vexare presumat.

Figure 1: The descendants of Ealdorman Ælfgar, c.950-1050

Ælfgar
(Ealdorman of Essex, will c. 946x51)

Ælfgifu = (1) King Edmund (2) = (1) **Æthelflæd** (2) = Æthelstan 'Rota'   **Ælfflæd** = (2?) *Byrhtnoth* = (1?) ♀
(† 943)   († 946)   (will c. 975x91)   (Ealdorman of Essex)   (will c. 1002)   (Ealdorman of
                                                                                                    Essex † 991)

Wulfthryth --- King Edgar = Queen Ælfthryth
              († 975)   († c. 1002)

St Edith

                                                                      Leofflæd

                    Wine = Leofwaru   Ælfwynn   Æthelswyth   Ælfwine

                    Thurstan = Æthelgyth
                    (will c. 1043)

Key: **Aelfgar**: Linked to Barking Abbey only
        Leofflaed: Linked to Ely Abbey only
        Thurstan: Donor to both Barking and Ely

Figure 2: Heirs to Ælfgar: The holders of Æthelgyth's lands, c. 1040-1215

Æthelgyth   =   *Thurstan*
(great-great-grandson of Ælfgar by
marriage; will c. 1043)

Ralph Baynard   **Geoffrey Baynard**
(Lord of Little Dunmow 1086)   (heir to Ralph, † 1101)

William
(estates forfeited 1110)

Richard fitzGilbert
(Tenant-in-chief 1086)

Gilbert fitzRichard   **Robert fitzRichard**
(Lord of Little Dunmow 1110, † 1137)

Clare Lords of Hertford   **Walter fitzRobert**
(† 1198)

♀   **Robert fitzWalter** = *Gunnora*
(nun at Barking c. 1205-1214)   *de Valognes*

Key: **Ralph:** Holder of Æthelgyth's lands
         Thurstan: Donor to Barking Abbey

Figure 3: A simplified genealogy of the fitzJohn and Valognes families, c. 1060 – c.1235
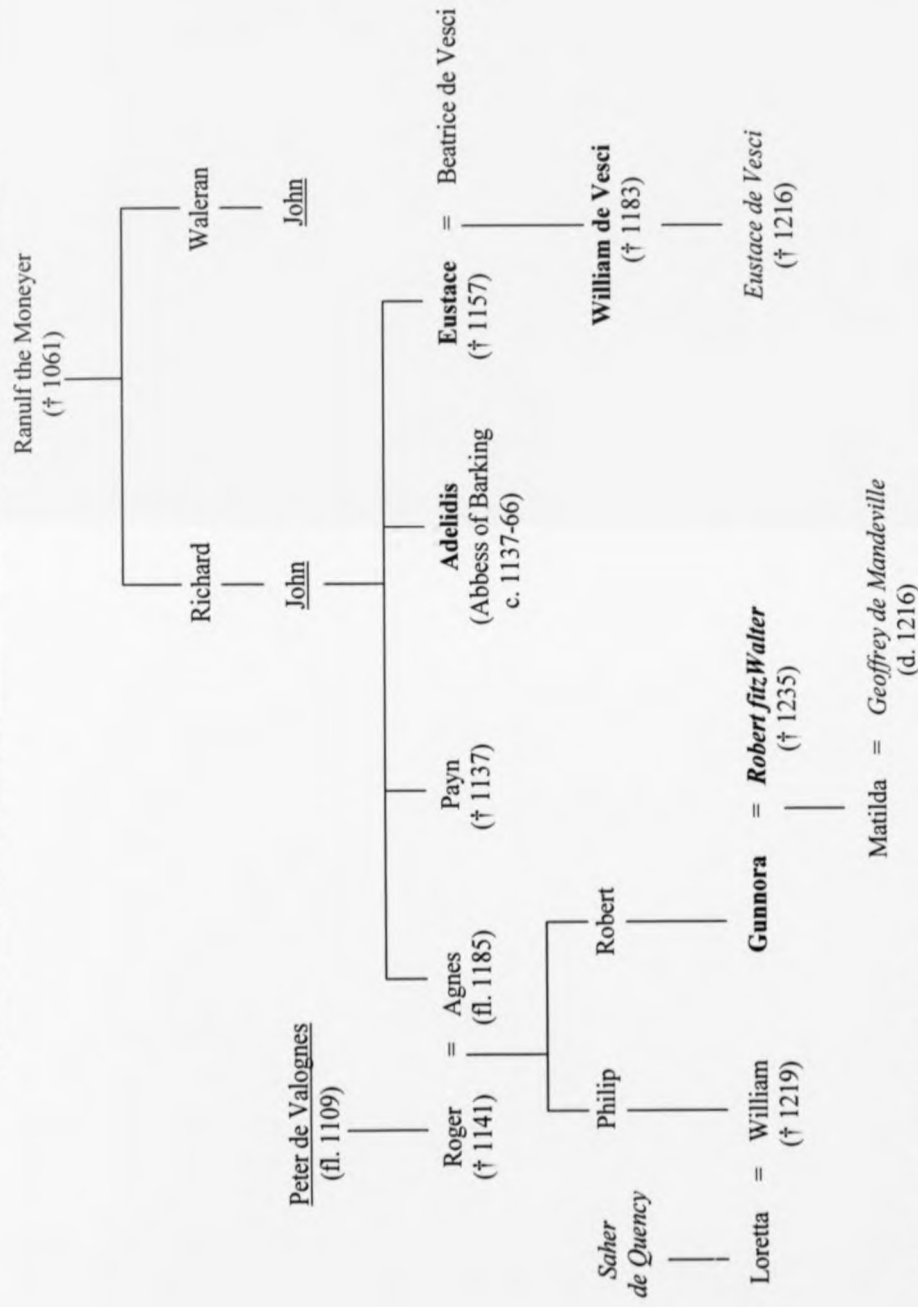
Key: **William**: Links to Barking Abbey
Geoffrey: One of the 25 Magna Carta barons
John : Held lands in Essex in 1086

Note: Only those persons of direct relevance to the current study have been shown. Children are not necessarily in birth order.

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