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English Pories and the Reign of Edward III

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HONORS THESIS ABSTRACT

This paper examines the seizing and treatment of the alien priories in England during the first phase of the Hundred Year's War (1337-1360). Using English contemporary government finance records called the *Calendar of Fine Rolls*, I argue that the Crown's interference with the priories during this time was necessitated by the needs of the war. The argument has three main points. The first looks at changes in priory tax rates, called *farms*, and the second examines the custodianship arrangements imposed on the priories by the crown. The third point takes the information from the previous points and places it in the greater context of what was happening at that time during the Hundred Year's War, demonstrating that the changes in payment and custodianship imposed by the crown were dictated by the needs of the war. This demonstrates that the eventual demise of the priories in the next century was in no way intended when the Hundred Year's War began, making them another casualty of the conflict. The accompanying map depicts some of the changes referenced in the *Calendar of Fine Rolls*, including ownership changes and which priories were affected during the greatest single instance of priory *farm* changes in 1342.

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Explanation of the Map Creation Process

The map for this project was created at the Department of Geography's Cartography Lab using the Adobe Illustrator 4 computer program. First, a base map was obtained. For this project, I used an old highway map of England, Wales and Scotland which the Lab has on file. Once this was loaded into the Illustrator program, significant features such as shorelines, county borders and cities were traced, each as an independent layer. The base map was removed once the map was completed.

At this point, I had to do further research to determine exactly which priories had changes in *farm* rates and custodianship. For the research paper, I had been looking for general trends, but to portray them visually, I needed specific details. After this information had been analyzed, symbols were created for each priory depicting the changes each priory endured. These were placed on the map.

As an additional component, I investigated the various religious orders practiced by each priory and its mother abbey, and included this information on the map. With the priory information in place, I created a legend, compass arrow, scale, and all other necessary details to make the map presentable on its own without the paper.

The map itself exists in several different forms. It was printed out at full size, several feet per side. In addition, it is saved as a PDF, from which regular paper-sized copies can be printed.

The Handling of Alien Priories in England, 1337 to 1360

Patterns in Priory Treatment Early in the Hundred Year's War

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History 491 Section 4

Professor Smalley

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Abstract

This paper examines the seizing and treatment of the alien priories in England during the first phase of the Hundred Year's War (1337-1360). Using English government finance records from the time called the *Calendar of Fine Rolls*, I argue that the Crown's interference with the priories during this time was necessitated by the needs of the war. The argument itself has three main points. Point one looks at payment. Here, I examine changes in the amount of money owed by the priories to the English Crown, and whether this money was paid as *farms*, tithes, or both. The second point is about changes in priory custodianship, and looks at what circumstances caused priors to lose control of their priories, how often the king's clerks stepped in to run priories, and the influences of nobles on priory management roles. The third point of this paper takes the information from the previous two points and places it in the greater context of what was happening at that time during the Hundred Year's War, to show that the changes in payment and custodianship imposed by the crown were in response to the needs of the war. This demonstrates that the eventual demise of the priories in the next century was in no way intended when the Hundred Year's War began, making them another casualty of the conflict.

The Hundred Years War between England and France in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is often associated with Joan of Arc, Agincourt and Henry V, the Battle of Crecy, longbows, and the beginnings of English and French national identities. Less well known are the ‘alien priories’¹ in England, and the challenges they faced during this same time period.

Following the success of the Norman Invasion of England in 1066, Norman nobility and religious orders gained influence on both sides of the English Channel. Monasteries and abbeys based in Normandy acquired and then developed lands in England. These territories were sometimes as small as a single manor house, or as large as a priory, with several monks there leading a conventual life.² These newly founded priories and abbeys contributed a portion of what they earned back to their mother abbeys in France.³

By the fourteenth century, the king of France had conquered Normandy, and the violent conflicts between the French and English monarchs became more frequent. As a result, the position of English priories owned by French monasteries became increasingly problematic. King Edward I of England cited the possibility of treason by alien religious personnel when he became the first king to seize direct control of the priories in 1295, during a war with France. Though ostensibly out of fear of their questionable loyalties, King Edward was likely more interested in using the income from the priories to fund his ongoing wars in France and Scotland. The term “alien priories” was developed under King Edward I, and was intentionally inexact.

¹ A priory is a Roman Catholic institution, similar to a monastery, but smaller in scale. It is a place where several monks or other religious personal live, work, and pray. The group is often led by a prior, which is just below an abbot in the Catholic hierarchy.

² Conventual life includes daily Mass, frequent prayer, and other activities practices by monks. Additionally, monks often carried out some kind of economic activity, such as agriculture.

³ Donald Matthew, *The Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 43-44.

“Alien priories” was used as a “political label which was attached to any property in the ownership of foreign ecclesiastics,” regardless of size. This gave the crown a lot of potential territory it could take. Once obtained, the priory lands were *farmed*, with the profits going to the king, or given out as rewards to the king’s associates, instead of to the priory’s parent-abbey.⁴

By the time Edward’s grandson Edward III seized the alien priories in 1337 at the beginning of the Hundred Year’s War between England and France, the procedure for the taking and treatment of the alien priories was well established.⁵ The king would claim to be holding the alien territory for the duration of the war with France, and collect all income that would otherwise have been sent abroad. However, the alien priories did not survive the Hundred Year’s War. By the time that conflict ended in 1453, virtually all the priories that had been owned by foreign monasteries belonged to either English monasteries or became permanent territory of the king.⁶

How deliberate was the eventual demise of the alien priories? Was King Edward III actively trying to increase royal authority over foreign-owed territory? Or was his seizure of the priories just the harnessing of another resource for the Hundred Year’s War? If the crown was legitimately using the priories to meet the needs of the Hundred Year’s War, then the changes in priory regulation should change in response to England’s fortunes in the conflict. Based on the evidence provided by the *Calendar of Fine Rolls*,⁷ it is clear that the English crown altered priory

⁴ Matthew, *Norman Monasteries*, 81-84.

⁵ Crown-control of priories occurred in 1295-1303 and 1324-1327.

⁶ Matthew, *Norman Monasteries*, 81, 85, 88, 90; M. M. Morgan, “The Suppression of the Alien Priories,” *History*, 26, (Dec. 1941): 205.

⁷ The *Calendar of Fine Rolls* are English government records. They were originally paper documents attached together to form rolls. The information in them is concerned with debts, payments, taxes, duties, and any other financial dealings that involved the crown. Regarding priories, the *CFR* contain information about who was

payments and custodianship in response to the events of the Hundred Year's War, not as part of a greater plan for priory dissolution.

The history of the suppression of alien priories during the Hundred Year's War is largely a product of twentieth century historians. In the introduction to his 1916 dissertation on the topic, Chester William New noted that "the only other work on alien priories [to that time was] published in 1779," and was from the point-of-view of the mother abbey's in France. The dissertation provided an overview of priory history from their origins to the final confiscation by Henry V in 1414. Assertions about the 1337-1360 period were limited to how it mirrored the 1295 priory interference by Edward I and the total amount of money Edward III collected from the priories. While it was not central to his arguments, New did claim in his conclusion that eventual permanent confiscation of the priories "had been gathering impetus for some time."⁸

In the 1940s, Marjorie Morgan penned two works on alien priories that are still being cited by historians today. One of these was the monograph case study *The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec*, which examined the holdings of a single French monastery from their origins to the 1414 confiscation. Her emphasis on the 1337-1360 confiscations focused on how they impacted the priories themselves, not so much how they benefited Edward III. In addition to the monograph, Morgan wrote an article specifically about the confiscation and eventual demise of the priories. In "The Suppression of the Alien Priories," Morgan noted that many of the circumstances that characterized the harsher treatment of priories later in the Hundred Year's War, such as the involvement of lay personal in the administration of priory territories and the

responsible for which priories, how much the priories were expected to pay to the crown, and any changes in the status of either. Volumes 4 (1327-1337), 5 (1337-1347), 6 (1347-1356), and 7 (1356-1368) are used here.

⁸ Chester William New, "History of the Alien Priories in England to the Confiscation of Henry V" (PhD Diss., University of Chicago, 1916), iii, 53, 65-69, 83.

selling off of priory lands by priors to meet *farm* payments, were taking place before 1360. In addition, she argued that the initial seizing of the priories by Edward I in 1295 was in large part influenced by security concerns, and as a result, so were the subsequent priory confiscations by Edward III that followed the same procedure.⁹

Medieval Historian Alison McHardy has been perhaps the most prolific contemporary writer on the alien priories. Much of her work focuses on the priories later in the war, though the often-cited “The Effects of War on the Church” examines how the priories challenges changed from 1337 to 1453.¹⁰ Her main assertion in this piece is that the demise of the priories was drawn out over the course of the Hundred Year’s War, with no really significant “landmarks.” McHardy also notes that all the work done thus far on the priories has “not exhausted the rich sources for study” of the alien priories.¹¹

The most recent work concerning the plight of the alien priories is that done by J.S. Bothwell in *Edward III and the English Peerage*. He places the priories in the context fourteenth century peerage and land gifts. Since Bothwell’s work is focused purely on the financial and economic aspect of the priories contributions to the war effort, he simply cites the works of

⁹ Marjorie Moran, *The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1946), “The Suppression of the Alien Priories,” 205.

¹⁰ Allison McHardy, “The Effects of War on the Church: The Case of the Alien Priories in the Fourteenth Century,” in *England and her Neighbors, 1066-1453*, ed. Michael Jones and Malcolm Vale (London and Ronceverte: The Hambledon Press, 1989), 278-280 ; “The Alien Priories and the Expulsion of Aliens from England in 1378.” (*Studies in Church History* 12, 1975); with Nicholas Orme, “The Defense of an Alien Priory: Modbury (Devon) in the 1450s” (*Journal of Ecclesiastic History*, vol.50, no.2; Cambridge University Press, April 1999).

¹¹ McHardy, “Effects of War,” 277, 287.

McHardy and Morgan for contextual information about the priories, rather than putting forth his own argument about why the priories were seized.¹²

By focusing on the 1337 to 1360 period, I hope to provide some insight on the reasons behind crown regulations of the priories during this time. Examining the *Calendar of Fine Rolls* is a good way to go about this because it provides information on new priory debts to the crown, crown-imposed changes in priory management, and the dates of such debts and changes. Given the importance of money and funding to any war, Edward III's fortunes in the war should in some way be reflected in the *Calendar of Fine Rolls*. This will demonstrate that the crown was not just trying to maximize priory profits for the duration of the 1337-1360 phase of the conflict, but changed its demands based on the needs of the conflict.

Payments to the Crown

The amount of money the crown demanded from the alien priories, and the form of such payments, was dictated by the course of the war. When the Hundred Year's War began in 1337, the crown seized nearly all alien priories in England. Once the priories were in the king's hands, he assigned them to custodians on the condition that they pay yearly *farms* to the Exchequer, rather than making payments back to their parent monasteries or abbeys. The amount each priory owed was dependent upon its size. Some were assigned *farms* of as little as 5 marks, while others had to pay several hundred.¹³ These totals were paid in two portions per year near the equinoxes.¹⁴

¹² J.S. Bothwell, *Edward III and the English Peerage: Royal Patronage, Social Mobility, and Political Control in Fourteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004).

¹³ Clifford J. Rogers in *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III, 1327-1360* describes the English money system of the fourteenth century, and a summary of his note is appropriate here. "In England, the basic

The amount paid in the *farms* changed over the course of the conflict in response to the course of the war, and other events. In the months leading up to an English campaign on the continent, *farms* would be raised. Also, in reaction to the devastation wrought by the Black Death, priory *farms* were decreased significantly, and debts forgiven.

One such campaign that brought about an increase in *farm* prices was English involvement in the Breton Civil War in 1342. King Edward III had signed a treaty with the French in 1340, ending three years of conflict. The outbreak of a succession struggle in Brittany gave Edward III the opportunity expand his base of influence in France, bringing English intervention in mid 1342. This coincided with a planned expiration of the 1340 truce, and allowed the English time to prepare by raising the funds necessary for an expedition.¹⁵

This need for funding in 1342 resulted in *farm* increases for just about every priory. The *Calendar of Fine Rolls* documents a multitude of priory price increases. On February 5 of that year, the crown issued a new *farm* to the “prior of Eccesfeld, 30 marks, to wit, 20 marks and 10 marks of increment,” raising its *farm* from 20 marks per year to 30 marks per year.¹⁶ This was one of seven priories to face *farm* increases that day. Neots priory faced “170l., to wit, 160l., and 10l. of increment” while the “prior of Merseys, 55l., to wit, 50l., and 100s. of increment” on

monetary units were the silver penny (abbreviated “d.”...) the shilling (abbreviated “s.” and worth 12d.), and the pound sterling (£), worth 20s., or 240 pence. A mark was worth 2/3 of a pound (i.e. 13s. 4d.). An idea of purchasing power can be gained by considering that the daily wage for a farm laborer in the 1330s was under 2d.” xiii.

¹⁴ McHardy, “Effects of War,” 281.

¹⁵ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 216.

¹⁶ *CFR*, 1337-47, 272.

February 12.¹⁷ Through the end of March, over thirty priories had their *farms* raised, though rarely by more than a quarter of what they were already paying.

In addition to raising *farm* prices, the crown would also lower them if priory incomes were not essential to the war effort at the moment. The greatest instance of this occurred in the aftermath of the Black Death. This outbreak of Bubonic Plague had a profound impact on the alien priories and on the Hundred Year's War in general. Edward II had been waging a successful campaign on the continent since 1346, winning the Battle of Crecy that year and capturing the port of Calais the next. It is likely that Edward III was making preparations for another campaign in France for 1349, though these plans would have been put on hold as a result of the Black Death. Edward III was not able to lead another force to France until 1355 as he waited for the effects of the plague to die down. However terrible the plague was, it did allow for some priories to see reductions in their *farms* in the early 1350s.¹⁸

The *Fine Rolls* demonstrate a dramatic rise in instances of priors dying and being replaced, beginning soon after the plague arrived in England in 1348, though instances of *farm* price reductions did not begin to occur until the next year. Even then, they were not as frequent as the *farm* increases in 1342. On June 10th, 1349, while bestowing "to the prior and convent of Rameseye of the guardianship of the abbey of Rameseye," the crown notes that "because of the depression of the abbey through the present pestilence, the guardianship is granted to them for a smaller sum" than the previous holders.¹⁹ On July 30th of that same year, when granting

¹⁷ *CFR*, 1337-47, 272.

¹⁸ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 285.

¹⁹ *CFR*, 1347-56, 140.

administration rights “of the prebend²⁰ of Bere and Chermynstre in the church of St. Mary, Salisbury, which an alien dwelling beyond the seas holds, to the king’s clerk, Thomas de Brembre...he rendering 100 marks a year,” instead of the normal 250 marks a year, “the king taking note of the mortality of men in the said parts through the present pestilence is so great that the lands of the prebend lie untilled and other profits are lost,” hence the price reduction.²¹ More price decreases occurred in the following years. In March of 1351, “brother William Pelliparii, prior of Bergeveny” was granted care of that priory for ten marks a year, down from twelve marks, “remission to him of the remaining 2 marks on account of the poverty of the priory owing to the last pestilence,” demonstrating the crown’s acknowledgement that some priories could not keep up with demand due to losses inflicted by the plague.²² While there were not that many price reductions, the fact that there were no *farm* increases in this time means that the general trend was downwards, and as was noted in each entry, it was a result of disruption from the Black Death.

In addition to the *farm* payments, the priories were subjected to a number of other, more encompassing fees. Church property was already subject to tithes imposed by the crown on their counties (called ‘tenths’) and on their towns (called fifteenths). There were also government imposed wool quotas, and after the war began, fees for coast watching that the priories were responsible for. Separate from payments to the crown, priories were also expected to honor debts to the Pope and their parent monasteries. McHardy notes that the *farm* payments from the priories were a flexible way for the king to show favor, since he could assign the payments of a

²⁰ A prebend is a kind of land gift that was given to the church.

²¹ *CFR*, 1347-56, 198.

²² *CFR*, 1347-56, 283.

specific *farm* to a specific individual. As a result, allowing the priories to forgo their other obligations and focus on meeting the *farm* payments was advantageous to for the crown. And if the crown was really in need of funds, it could just reinstate the other fees and expect the priories to pay them, and the *farms*.²³

The first instances of allowing priories to forgo their tithes, quotas, and other fees occurred at the same time the *farm* prices were being raised on the priories in 1342. On February 5th, while granting prior Guychard de Caro Loco responsibility for Wenlock priory, the crown grants “also to the prior that he be quit of tenths and fifteenths, wool and all other quotas granted to the king by the clergy or the commons of the realm...or to be granted hereafter, or imposed or to be imposed by the Pope,” though the priory was still expected to pay the knights’ fees.²⁴ Even though this occurred just prior to the English involvement in the Breton Civil War, when the crown was otherwise trying to raise funds to pay for the expedition, having the priors pay *farms* rather than other fees gave Edward III the flexible kind of income that McHardy describes.

From February 1342 onward, nearly every instance of a change in the *farm* price or a change in the position of priory administrator was accompanied by a reminder that they were exempt from certain fees. An entry for May 5th, 1345 regarding Mersea priory ends with “grant also that he [the prior] be quit of tenths etc. as above,” allowing this prior to be free of the same fees and tithes as Wenlock priory.²⁵ The exemptions from the extra fees were included, in the

²³ McHardy, “Effects of War,” 281.

²⁴ *CFR*, 1337-47, 258.

²⁵ *CFR*, 1337-47, 421.

form of the single line quoted above, in nearly every priory *farm* reprising and change of administration for the duration of the first phase of the Hundred Year's War, through 1360.²⁶

Although the priors were instructed to not pay the tenths, fifteenths, etc after February 1342, there was one instance in which all alien priories were ordered to pay their hitherto-exempt fees. In addition, there were several occasions where certain dioceses were instructed to collect the tenths from the churches, priories, and other religious buildings in their diocese. Just as with the *farm* increases of 1342, these demands for previously-exempt tithes came as Edward III was preparing for another phase of quest for the crown of France.²⁷

The first such occasion occurred in late 1345, as Edward was preparing for his campaign in France, slated for the following year. This would be his third expedition to the continent, and just as before, paying for the army was an issue. In order to help secure the funds for the following year's campaign, the king ordered the Exchequer, on November 28, 1345, "to be levied without delay the tenth which certain alien priories...payable at Martinmas last," and threatened to turn the priories over to the other administrators if they refused to pay.²⁸ Note that they were only requesting a single instance of the tenths be paid, specifically the one due most recently.²⁹ This did not apply to every tithe and tax from which the priories were exempt, only the tenths, but it did demonstrate that the crown was willing to push the alien priories harder to meet its financial needs.

²⁶ *CFR* 1337-47, 295, 330, 364, 402, 433, 495, *CFR* 1347-56, 35, 77, 137, 173, 220, 307, 367, 446, *CFR* 1356-68, 1, 37, 69, 112, 147 are just a few instances.

²⁷ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 217-218.

²⁸ *CFR*, 1337-47, 449.

²⁹ Martinmas, the feast of Saint Martin, November 11.

The other instances of requiring the previously- exempted tenths were more limited in scope. They occurred in June 1348, just before the Black Death arrived in England, when Edward III was likely planning to follow-up on his success of the previous two years.³⁰ On the June 8th, 1348, the crown ordered “J.[hon] bishop of Hereford...to cause to be levied in his diocese with all speed the arrears of the tenth for two years,” effectively requesting two years worth of back- tithes. This must have been a heavy demand for the bishop, as the order continues, “do this as he loves the king and his honour and the furtherance of the king’s affairs, and as the king trusts in him” to carry out this task. The *Fine Roll* entry for that date also notes that similar orders were given “to the several bishops of the province of Canterbury”, showing that it was an entire province of churches and priories that were subjected to the back-taxes.³¹

The second round of the invocation of back taxes occurred a week later. On June 15th, 1348, a similar order was given to “to Th.[omas] bishop of Ely...to depute trustworthy men forthwith to levy in his diocese the tenth for the two years,” and was again accompanied by reminders of how the bishop loved the king. In addition to the bishop of Ely, the bishop of Lincoln and the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield received similar orders. These two instances of demanding back-tithes, just a week apart, demonstrate the financial needs of Edward III in mid 1348. Whether or not Edward III would have demanded further back-tithes from other dioceses to further capitalize on his 1346-1348 military successes will never be known. It should be noted that this method of raising funds was not tried again for the remainder of the first phase of the Hundred Year’s War.³²

³⁰ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 285.

³¹ *CFR*, 1347-56, 86.

³² *CFR*, 1347-56, 87.

The amount of money the crown demanded from the alien priories, and the form of such payments, was dictated by the course of the war, and other events. When Edward III needed a more flexible form of income to fund English involvement in the Breton War of Succession in 1342, he raised the *farming* payments required of them, but also exempted them from several kinds of royal and clerical tithes and quotas. In 1348, he made a limited attempt to re-impose some of these tithes potentially to fund further wars in France, but this plan was cut short by the arrival of the Black Death that summer. Finally, in response to the Black Death, and the turmoil this caused for priories, he allowed some *farm* prices to be reduced.

The Keepers of Alien Pories

The English Crown assigned responsibility for the priories as it saw fit in response to the requirements of the war with France. Actual ownership of the priories changed little from 1337 to 1360, though the changes that did occur paralleled events in the Hundred Year's War. Similarly, the custodians the crown assigned as keepers of the priories also changed to suit the needs of the conflict. The crown was generally content with letting the original priors remain as keepers, but when it was desperate for funds, the king's clerks intervened to see that *farm* payments were met. In addition, members of the English royalty and nobility influenced decisions about priory custodianship during this time.³³

The priories spent much of this period owned by the crown. The nearly constant warfare between England and France meant that the previously French- owned monasteries and priories spent much of this time as the property of the English king. Though they were the property of the king after 1337, he usually did not meddle with them, aside from imposing and adjusting *farms*,

³³ McHardy, "The Effects of War," 283-284.

and granting priory custody to others if necessary. Matthews asserts that “it was the king’s intention to allow the monks to *farm* their own lands,” and notes that many priors “offered a fine for permission to receive custody” of their priories, which the king usually granted. Even though the king held the priories, others were given the responsibility of managing them.³⁴

The priories were first taken by the crown at the outbreak of war in mid 1337.³⁵ When assigning custody for the “Upchirche” in Kent, the *Calendar of Fine Rolls* for July 27 of that year recorded that “the king has caused to be taken into his hand the [property] of certain religious and other aliens,” including priories.³⁶ The next ten pages of *Fine Rolls* list well over one hundred instances of priory management assignments from that summer, most to their original priors.³⁷ The *farm* income from these priories provided Edward III with some of the funding used for his campaigns in France through 1340, and a source of land to reward his friends.³⁸

In 1340, as Edward III was trying to scrape together funding for that year’s campaign in France, he made a deal with over twenty priors. Each prior would be given his prior back, “to hold it as he held it before it was taken it into the king’s hand,” in exchange “for a prompt subsidy to be granted for the expedition of arduous business of the king,” in reference to the

³⁴ Morgan, *English Lands of the Abbey of Bec*, 119; Matthews, *Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions*, 90.

³⁵ Matthews, *Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions*, 90.

³⁶ *CFR*, 1337-47, 27 (This entry refers to the church in the village of Upchurch).

³⁷ *CFR*, 1337-47, 27-36.

³⁸ Bothwell, *Edward III and the English Peerage*, 85.

coming military venture.³⁹ In detail, this meant that the priors promised advanced payments of their next two *farms*, and a further agreement to pay the king any money that would have otherwise been sent overseas to their parent abbey. This was the price for restoring ownership of their priories. Through April and May of 1340, over twenty priories were returned to their original owners under such terms.⁴⁰ They got their beloved priories back, and Edward III received a quick infusion of cash to support the war efforts. Since England and France agreed upon a truce soon after this campaign, Edward III did not miss the *farm* payments.⁴¹

The situation changed again for these priories in 1342, as England was preparing for involvement in the Breton Civil War. Beginning in late 1341, and continuing through March of 1342, most of the priories that had been freed 2 years earlier were retaken by the crown. The *Fine Rolls* documented that “the king, believing that the war would not last longer, restored to the prior [his priory in 1340]; in which restitution, as it seems to the king and council, the king was deceived, because the war still endures and it is feared will endure for a long time, wherefore...the king resumed” his hold on the priory in question. Edward III never again allowed priors this degree of freedom and ownership of their priories until a conclusive truce with France in 1360 ended the first phase of the Hundred Year’s War.⁴²

In contrast to priory ownership, which only saw minor adjustments at a few priories in 1340 and the subsequent undo two years later, the position of priory manager, the individual assigned custody for the priory, changed much more often, and like the *farm* payments, usually

³⁹ *CFR, 1337-47, 175*; many of the priors were also desperate to escape the damaging activities of some of the king’s ministers, who committed “many damages...on the ground that the priory was in the king’s hand.”

⁴⁰ *CFR, 1337-47, 175-177.*

⁴¹ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 216.

⁴² *CFR, 1337-47, 254, 258, 266, 268, 270, 277.*

was changed in response to the demands of the conflict. After 1337, when the crown assumed ownership of the alien priories, it preferred to have the prior remain as the keeper of the priory, whether the *farm* payment was destined for the king or assigned to someone else as a gift from the king. However, the priories were at times handed over to non-religious individuals, if the crown was not pleased with the prior's performance.⁴³

Aside from the priors themselves, the king's clerks were the most frequently assigned custodians of priories. The clerks would step in for any number of reasons. Historians have already noted that the *Calendar Roll* orders assigning clerks to priories why specific priors were not allowed to remain in control of their priories, and these reasons included: "the prior could not cope; the prior had gone to France and stayed there; or the prior's leprosy prevented him from ruling."⁴⁴ A variant on the last reason became common after 1348, as the Black Death worked its way through the population. On those occasions, the clerks became involved just because the prior was dead or sick, not necessarily doing anything else wrong.⁴⁵

However, the most common reason for clerical interference was a failure by the priors to meet the required *farm* payments. The clerks were busy intervening when priors "refused to pay a suitable increment" of *farm* increase throughout the war, though the instances of clerks taking over for priors unable or unwilling to pay became more common in the aftermath of the 1342 *farm* repricing.⁴⁶ If a prior in any way tried to excuse himself from *farm* payments or claim that his priory was not up to the task of meeting the *farm* payments, the king did not hesitate to send

⁴³ McHardy, "The Effects of War on the Church," 282.

⁴⁴ McHardy, "The Effects of War on the Church," 282.

⁴⁵ *CFR*, 1347-56, 105, 138, 140, 198.

⁴⁶ *CFR*, 1337-47, 261, 268, 269, 271, 279, 296.

in one of his clerks to oversee the priory.⁴⁷ This was the case in 1342 as priories struggled to meet the new *farms*. The crown needed the higher payments, and the clerks were sent in when the priors failed to deliver.

Occasionally, the crown would find reason to reassign custody of priories that were meeting their *farm* payments without issue. In these cases, the changes occurred as a reward for someone, for strategic reasons, or due to the influence of powerful individuals. *Farm* payments played a role in the English peerage system a source for annuities to pay Edward III's supporters. Additionally, the beneficiaries of these payments were at times allowed to oversee their assigned priories directly, meaning they were given the right to keep any profit they could wring from them, in addition to the *farm* the priory was already responsible for. Much like the assignment of clerks in response to missed *farm* payments or dead priors, these interventions were dictated by the needs of the crown.⁴⁸

While the king's clerks were often assigned responsibility for making under-performing priories meet their *farm* goals, they would sometimes receive successful priories as compensation for losses sustained in the war, or work-related expenses. In July of 1345, clerk "Henry de Greystok, for good and gratuitous service and for the costs incurred by him in prosecuting the affairs" of his post was granted the portion of Mapeldurham church which had previously belonged to the abbess of Claruissel, living in France. In early 1340, clerk Thomas Crosse was granted responsibility for several priories "for good services and in recompense of the losses sustained by him in the king's service and specially beyond seas." This suggests that

⁴⁷ Matthew, *Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions*, 91.

⁴⁸ Bothwell, *Edward III and the English Peerage*, 85; McHardy, "The Effects of War on the Church," 282.

Thomas Crosse was probably with Edward's army in France and the Low Countries the previous year.⁴⁹

Laymen would sometimes be sent to oversee a priory that was militarily important, or located in a strategic position geographically. For example, the fortifications at St. Michael's Mount priory was used to justify the intervention by lay persons as keepers of the priory.⁵⁰ In addition, since the crown had initially seized them as over security and espionage concerns (at least it claimed) the loyalty of priors in vital locations could not be risked.⁵¹ In 1344, Roger de Cloune was granted joint control of Sherborne priory "for the greater security of that priory."⁵² This priory was located along England's southern coast, near Southampton, closer to France.

The titled individuals also influenced priory control, either by receiving the priories directly, or requesting that certain people be made responsible for them. The earl of Derby, Henry de Lancastre, received several priories from 1341 to 1342, simply replacing the priors already holding them.⁵³ The earls of Chester, Huntingdon, Devon, and March also accepted "farms of alien religious lands [as the source for] payment of annuities."⁵⁴ Other nobles just influenced who would be controlling specific priories. On two occasions, in 1340 and 1348, the

⁴⁹ *CFR, 1337-47, 428.* The church in question is 'Mapledurham;' *CFR, 1337-47, 165.*

⁵⁰ Matthew, *Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions*, 109. Saint Michael's Mount was exchanged four times from October 1337 to October 1338, with custody switching between the knight Ralph Bloyou and the priors. They seemed to reach a final settlement in which the priors would control the priory itself, and the knight received the walls and fortifications surrounding it, but ultimately, it was all given to the duke of Cornwall in 1339. *CFR, 1337-47, 46, 70, 88, 96, 141.*

⁵¹ McHardy, "The Defence of an Alien Priory," 303 (*sic*).

⁵² *CFR, 1337-47, 371.*

⁵³ *CFR, 1337-47, 231, 261, 281.*

⁵⁴ *CFR, 1337-47, 141, 267; CFR, 1347-56, 205, 470; CFR, 1356-68, 17, 50; Bothwell, Edward III and the English Peerage, 58.*

prior responsible for Arundell priory was chosen “at the request of Richard, earl of Arundel.”⁵⁵

King Edward III’s mother, Queen Isabella, did both. She was twice granted care of Deerhurst priory, and requested numerous other prior appointments.⁵⁶ When the territory of the alien priories became available to Edward III as peerage, many of his nobles either influenced who ran them, or were granted direct control of the land by the king.

Like the *farm* payments priories were subjected to, custodianship of the priories changed to suit the needs of the crown. If the king needed to enforce higher *farm* payments, or the priories were beset by trouble, clerks assumed responsibility for them. Other priories that were faring better became subjected to clerks or other laymen because of their strategic or military value. Additionally, nobles and even royalty became closely involved in priory custody and prior appointments. The changes in prior custody were made to suit the needs of the crown for fighting the Hundred Year’s War.

Correlations between Priory Interventions and the Hundred Year’s War

Finally, by looking at changes in priory debt to the crown and custodianship in correlation to the events of the Hundred Year’s War, it is evident that this meddling was dictated by the needs of the conflict, not as part of a greater plan for priory submission and dissolution. During periods of truce or minimal fighting, the pressure on the alien priories declined. When the fighting became more intense, the demands placed upon the priories became greater.

⁵⁵ *CFR*, 1337-47, 172; *CFR*, 1347-56, 67.

⁵⁶ McHardy, “Effects of the War on the Church,” 282; *CFR*, 1337-47, 268, 297, 298, 347, 419, 473; *CFR* 1347-46, 47, 78; *CFR* 1356-68, 2 Matthew described her as “a friend to the monks”, and had connections with the abbess of Caen going back to the 1290s. Matthew, *The Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions*, 90.

The Hundred Year's War began in 1337. That summer witnessed the seizing of property belonging to "religious and other alien" by the crown, though little else.⁵⁷ Edward III was not able to bring his army to the Low Countries to meet with allied princes until the following summer, and it was another year after that before he is able to invade France. It was during this time that the guardianship of Saint Michael's Mount priory was being sorted out.⁵⁸ *Farm* rates remained the same as those established during the 1324 seizing of the priories.⁵⁹ There were some instances of clerks and other lay individuals controlling priories, but not in any way unusual when compared to the rest of the war.⁶⁰ With moderate *farm* prices and stable custodianships, the early years of the war, while not exactly easy for the priories, did not witness the strain that was to beset them later in the conflict.

The next significant events for the priories occurred in 1340, which coincided with important events on the continent. Edward III declared himself to be the king of France in January of that year to secure the loyalty of his Flemish allies. Meanwhile in France, after King Phillip VI had successfully avoided major battles with Edward III's army since 1338, the French king led his armies on the offensive against Edward's allies in the Low Countries in May, though this too did not result in a decisive contest between the kings. In June of 1340, the English achieved a victory at sea in the Battle of Sluys, effectively giving them control of the English Channel, and the next month, Edward III continued his attempts to force a confrontation with Phillip. Again, no epic battle was forthcoming, and the kings signed the Truce of Epslechin in

⁵⁷ *CFR, 1337-47, 27-36.*

⁵⁸ *CFR, 1337-47, 46, 70, 88, 96.*

⁵⁹ Matthew, *Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions*, 91.

⁶⁰ *CFR, 1337-47, 37-175.*

September. Both sides had gained and lost territory as a result of the truce, though the debt Edward III acquired for no net territorial gains earned him criticism in England.⁶¹

Edward's need for funding in 1340 is evident from the changes in priory ownership that occurred that year. April, May and June saw the outright return of over twenty alien priories to their original owners in exchange for advanced *farm* payments. By this time, Edward had been funding an army on the continent since late 1338, and was committed to paying large sums to his allies. The need for immediate funds from the priories outweighed the long-term benefits of keeping them as flexible sources of income. Edward continued to receive the payments from these priories that would otherwise have gone to their parent abbeys in Normandy, but this degree of control over them was small compared to the outright ownership he had previously enjoyed. The critical need for money in 1340 resulted in the only occasion during the 1337 to 1360 phase of the Hundred Year's War where actual ownership of the priories was returned to their priors.⁶²

The two years following the Truce of Epslechin lacked direct confrontation between Edward and Philip, though the Breton War of Succession gave them an opportunity to continue their struggle through proxies after 1341. The French sent forces to support their candidate for Duke of Brittany. Late the following year, the English also became directly involved in the conflict when Edward III led an army to Brest to oppose the French, though by January 1343 the Truce of Malestroit with Philip VI reduced the conflict to minor skirmishes between the ducal

⁶¹ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 147, 187-189, 198, 208-209, 211, 214-216.

⁶² *CFR*, 1337-47, 175-177

candidates. The English maintained garrisons in Brittany after the truce, and effectively controlled much of the province, making the conflict a win for Edward.⁶³

Since Edward was still contending with the costs run up by his 1338-1340 expedition, any attempt to intervene in Brittany would require additional sources of funding. One of these sources was the priory *farms*. From February through July of 1342, nearly every priory had its *farm* price raised in preparation for Edward's expedition in November.⁶⁴ Edward anticipated that this could be hard on the priories, so he made them exempt from paying the special taxes that had been invoked at the start of the conflict.⁶⁵ However, this increase in *farm* prices was problematic for some priors, as it resulted in a sharp increase in clerk custodianship of priories in 1342, threefold over the previous year.⁶⁶ In addition, Edward was forced to retake the priories he had returned in 1340. Edward III's preparations for involvement in the Breton War of Succession led to increased *farms* and the greatest amount of clerical control for the priories between 1337 and 1360.

1346 to 1348 proved to be highly successful years for Edward III in the war. He spent the time from 1343 to 1346 reorganizing his resources for another campaign on the continent, this time in northern France. Although a truce was in place after 1343, fighting continued between French and English lords in France, but this did not entail the direct involvement of either Edward or Philip. Direct confrontation between the kings resumed in 1346. It proved to be the

⁶³ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 216.

⁶⁴ *CFR*, 1337-47, 272-275.

⁶⁵ *CFR*, 1327-37, 504; *CFR*, 1337-47, 258.

⁶⁶ Twelve priories were assigned to clerks in 1342, four in 1341, and no more than three in any other year between 1337 and 1360. *CFR*, 1337-47.

'year of miracles' for Edward.⁶⁷ His army landed in northern France in July, and again tried to force a battle with Philip. Unlike in 1340, he succeeded. At the Battle of Crecy in August, the outnumbered English scored a resounding victory over the French.⁶⁸ From there, Edward laid siege to the port of Calais on the English Channel in September, which capitulated the following August. Once captured, Calais served as a base of English campaigns in France for the rest of the Hundred Year's War and for another century after that.⁶⁹

For the priories, the year of miracles became the year of heightened expectations. While there were no changes in *farm* rates, or extensive interventions by clerks or nobles at this time, the special taxes that the priories had been made exempt from in 1342 were temporarily re-imposed on the priories. In 1345, as Edward was preparing for his campaign, some of these taxes were reinstated. By the middle of 1348, to fund the ongoing operations, the alien priories in specific dioceses were ordered to pay the previous two years of taxes. While this was not accompanied by an increase in clerk-maintained priories, it demonstrates the continued importance of the priories for the funding of Edward's struggle for the French crown.⁷⁰

The summer of 1348 brought the Black Death to England and Northern France. The Black Death entered southern Europe in 1347, and by its end in 1351, had killed around half the population of Europe (estimates vary). The French king, Philip VI, died in 1350. England had

⁶⁷ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 273.

⁶⁸ The much more famous Battle of Agincourt in 1415 played out similarly to the Battle of Crecy.

⁶⁹ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 217, 222, 271, 273, 282-285.

⁷⁰ *CFR*, 1337-47, 449; *CFR*, 1347-56, 86, 78.

seen the worst of the plague by the end of 1349, though its lasting effects prevented Edward III from launching any major campaigns against France for seven years.⁷¹

The priories suffered through the Black Death along with the rest of England, though the lack of expensive military campaigns in France did grant them a respite from possible further demands by the crown. Clerk intervention continued much as it had since the war began (except 1342), with most vacancies from the plague being replaced with other priors. There were some instances where the crown even allowed the future priors to be designated before the serving prior had died, and some instances of *farm* reductions. But overall, the period from 1348 to 1356 was as devoid of excessive priory meddling as the war was of decisive campaigns during the same time.⁷²

Despite the lack of direct participation by Edward III and the effects of the plague, there was ongoing violence from 1348 to 1355, but it was led by local lords, and consisted primarily of raids on French territory. The first major campaigns after the Black Death did not come until 1355. That year, Edward III led a campaign in northern France from Calais, and his son, Edward of Woodstock, known as the Black Prince, fought his way across much of southern France, inflicting great damage. In 1356, the Black Prince led another campaign into France, and scored a crushing victory at the Battle of Poitiers in September, which resulted in high French casualties, much like at Crecy, but also the capture of the new king of France, John II. Serious negotiations of a lasting peace treaty began after Poitiers, though Edward III invaded France a final time in 1359, in addition to several smaller campaigns, to ensure that the negotiations continued favorably for him. While Edward did not receive the French crown he had been

⁷¹ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 286, 287, 294.

⁷² *CFR*, 1347-56, 105, 110, 139, 140, 164.

seeking since 1337 from the Treaty of Bretigny in 1360, his extensive gains made the 1337-1360 phase of the Hundred Year's War an English victory.⁷³

When the Black Prince began his raid in France in 1355, priories were still being forgiven debts as a result of losses inflicted by the Black Death. For the campaigns after 1355, Edward III was not as reliant on the alien priories for income, as is evident by the lack of *farm* increases or attempts to reinstate tithes and collect back taxes, and the decrease in clerical holdings of priories from 1355 to 1360.⁷⁴ Some priories continued to see their *farms* reduced during this time, and others saw their debts forgiven. One of the trends that characterized the eventual collapse of the alien priories later in the Hundred Year's War began to show itself late in this phase of the conflict. The prior of Pontefract was able to have his priory's debts forgiven and the *farms* reduced by half after proving that "he and all the monks there are denizens," and not aliens at all, though why the priory still had to pay a *farm* once it became English property is unclear. The priories were returned to their original owners after the 1360 treaty.⁷⁵

Nine years later, the fighting between France and England resumed, and the priories were seized again, this time for good. In addition to *farms* and clerical custodianships, Parliament also became involved in their regulation.⁷⁶ After an expulsion of aliens in 1378 and an official

⁷³ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 294, 304, 348, 386, 422, 431.

⁷⁴ Three clerk assigned priories in 1356, two in 1357, only one after 1357; *CFR*, 1356-68, 12, 17, 25, 55, 105.

⁷⁵ *CFR*, 1347-56, 431, 436; *CFR*, 1356-68, 53, 91, 97, 100, 105.

⁷⁶ Matthew notes the correlation between the stronger kings that kept the priories for themselves and the weaker kings that let the priories be distributed to the aristocracy later in the war. Matthew, *The Norman Monasteries and the English Possessions*, 134, 140-141.

confiscation in 1414, there was little chance of the priories returning to the positions they enjoyed before the war.⁷⁷

Royal interference in both priory fees and custodianship reflected the demands of Edward III's prosecution of the Hundred Year's War. Entries in the *Calendar of Fine Rolls* demonstrate that the demands on the priories increased when England faced extended campaigns in Brittany, Normandy, or the Low Countries. Similarly, the predicament of the priories was somewhat alleviated in the face of interruptions in the conflict, such truces with the French, or the lull in fighting that followed the Black Death. While there is no doubt that the priories often struggled to make their *farm* payments, this was not a constant condition for them after 1337. The priories did eventually succumb to royal abuse, but it was abuse with a purpose, orchestrated by a desperate king trying to secure his hold of a greater crown in France. Edward III probably had no intention of ending the tradition of Norman, and other alien, owned religious institutions in England, but his need for funding put the priories on a path to ruin. The fact that the crown did let up on the priories during less violent times in the conflict may demonstrate a very real concern for the priories condition, or at least a concern that they be able to reliably provide *farm* payments later on. Although harsh at times, the crown was a bit more delicate with the alien priories than it is generally given credit for.

The alien priories were just one more unfortunate casualty of the Hundred Year's War. Edward III did not set out to destroy the priories when the war began in 1337. He needed every resource at his disposal in the conflict, and that is what the priories were to him, nothing more. The demands on the priories shifted with the fortunes of the war. The changing *farm* rates and clerical interventions were necessary for Edward's pursuit of the French crown. The Hundred

⁷⁷ McHardy, "Suppression," 133; "Effects of War," 278.

Year's War brought about the unintentional demise of many hallmarks of the Middle Ages. Just as the ideal of chivalry met its end on the bloody fields of Agincourt and Crecy under a hail of arrows, the alien priories died to the sound of scratching pens in the halls of the Exchequer.

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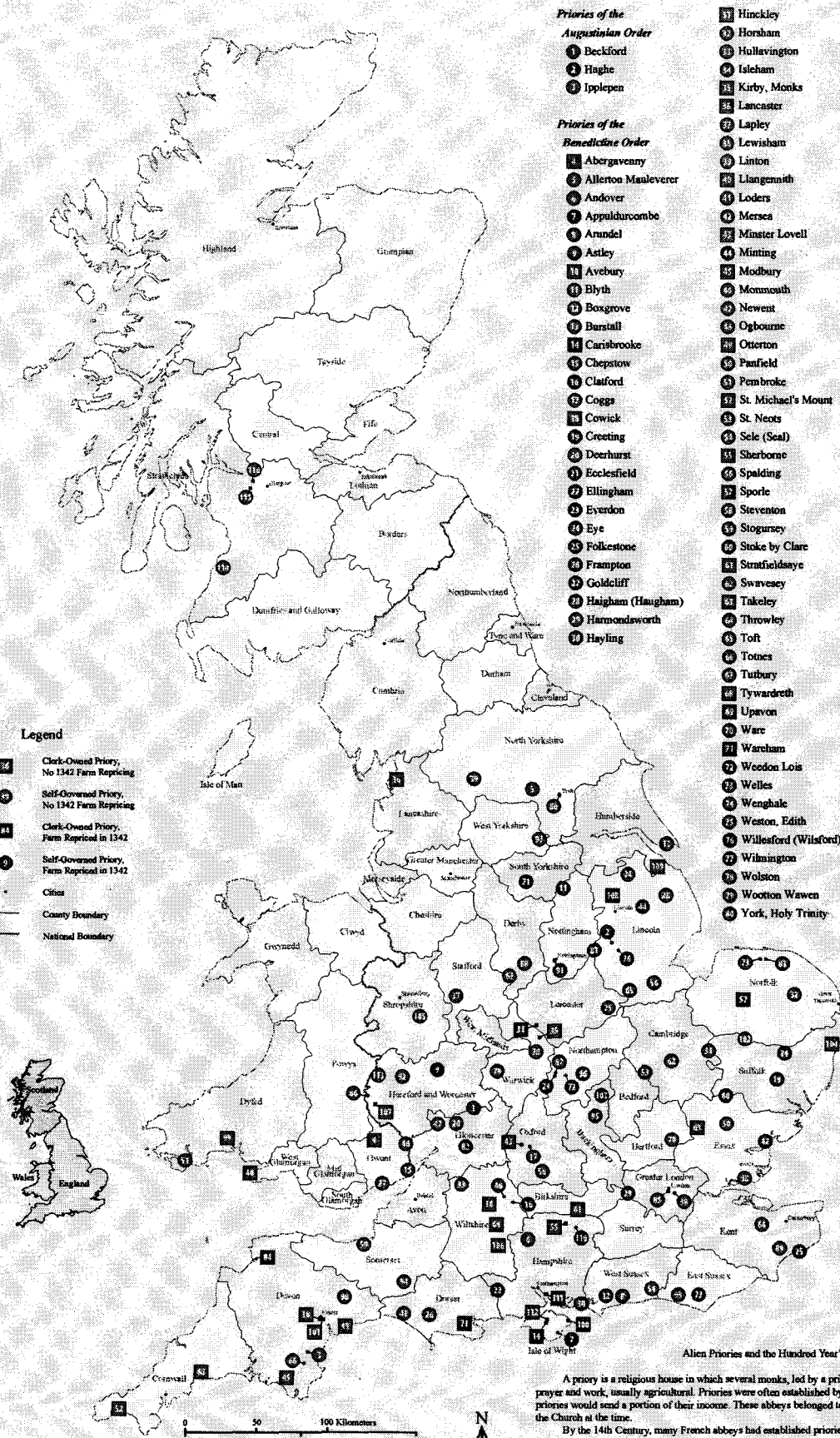
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Alien Priors of Great Britain in the Reign of Edward III



Priories of the Augustinian Order

- 1 Beckford
- 2 Haghe
- 3 Ipplepen

Priories of the Benedictine Order

- 4 Abergavenny
- 5 Allerton Mauleverer
- 6 Andover
- 7 Appuldurcombe
- 8 Arundel
- 9 Astley
- 10 Avebury
- 11 Blyth
- 12 Boxgrove
- 13 Burstall
- 14 Carisbrooke
- 15 Chepstow
- 16 Claford
- 17 Coggs
- 18 Cowick
- 19 Creting
- 20 Deerhurst
- 21 Ecclesfield
- 22 Ellingham
- 23 Eyerdon
- 24 Eye
- 25 Folkestone
- 26 Frampton
- 27 Goldcliff
- 28 Haigham (Haugham)
- 29 Harmondsworth
- 30 Hayling

- 31 Hinckley
- 32 Horsham
- 33 Hullavington
- 34 Isleham
- 35 Kirby, Monks
- 36 Lancaster
- 37 Lapley
- 38 Lewisham
- 39 Linton
- 40 Llangemith
- 41 Loders
- 42 Mersea
- 43 Minster Lovell
- 44 Minton
- 45 Modbury
- 46 Monmouth
- 47 Newent
- 48 Ogbourne
- 49 Otterton
- 50 Panfield
- 51 Pembroke
- 52 St. Michael's Mount
- 53 St. Neots
- 54 Sele (Seal)
- 55 Sherborne
- 56 Spalding
- 57 Sporre
- 58 Steventon
- 59 Stogursey
- 60 Stoke by Clare
- 61 Stratfieldsaye
- 62 Swrveacy
- 63 Tukeley
- 64 Throwley
- 65 Toft
- 66 Totnes
- 67 Tutbury
- 68 Tywardreth
- 69 Upavon
- 70 Ware
- 71 Warcham
- 72 Weedon Lois
- 73 Welles
- 74 Wenghale
- 75 Weston, Edith
- 76 Willesford (Wilsford)
- 77 Wilmington
- 78 Wolston
- 79 Wootton Wawen
- 80 York, Holy Trinity

Priories of the Cistercian Order

- 81 Bonnington, Long
- 82 Brimpsfield
- 83 Dalling, Field

Priories of Cluny Abbey of the Benedictine Order

- 84 Barnstaple
- 85 Bermondsey
- 86 Clifford
- 87 Daventry
- 88 Derby
- 89 Horton
- 90 Kerswell, Abbots
- 91 Lenton
- 92 Leominster
- 93 Lewes
- 94 Montacute
- 95 Newton Longville
- 96 St. Andrew's
- 97 Pontefract
- 98 Prittlewell
- 99 St. Clears
- 100 St. Helen's
- 101 St. James, Exeter
- 102 Theford, Monks
- 103 Tickford
- 104 Wangford
- 105 Wenlock

Priory of the Fontevrault Order

- 106 Amesbury

Priory of the Grandmontine Order

- 107 Cranswell

Priories of the Premonstratensian

- 108 Cammeringham
- 109 Ravendale

Priories of the Tiron Order

- 110 Andwell
- 111 St. Andrew at Hamble
- 112 St. Cross, Isle of Wight
- 113 Tisbury

Cluny Abbeys in Scotland

- 114 Crossraguel
- 115 Paisley
- 116 Renfrew

Legend

- 84 Clerk-Owned Priory, No 1342 Farm Repricing
- 85 Self-Governed Priory, No 1342 Farm Repricing
- 86 Clerk-Owned Priory, Farm Repriced in 1342
- 87 Self-Governed Priory, Farm Repriced in 1342
- Cities
- County Boundary
- National Boundary

0 50 100 Kilometers
0 50 100 Miles

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Alien Priors and the Hundred Year's War

A priory is a religious house in which several monks, led by a prior, reside and practice a monastic lifestyle of prayer and work, usually agricultural. Priors were often established by a parent abbey, to which the monks of the priories would send a portion of their income. These abbeys belonged to one of several religious orders dominant in the Church at the time.

By the 14th Century, many French abbeys had established priories throughout Great Britain. When the Hundred Year's War broke out in 1337 between England and France, these priories were declared 'alien priories' due to their affiliation with the enemy. King Edward III of England ordered that these priories be seized and their income used for the war effort.

Over the course of the conflict, the tax rate placed upon these priories, called a farm, changed based on the income needs of the king. When a priory failed to pay the farm, one of the king's clerks was assigned to oversee the priory to improve productivity. A clerk could also be assigned to oversee a priory in a strategic location, such as on the coast. The clerks were active throughout the conflict, and many priories were placed under clerical control at some point.

In 1342, following a two-year truce with the French, Edward III was preparing for another campaign on the continent. To help pay for this, the farm rates on many priories were increased. The priories saw the farm rates change over the course of the conflict, but this was the greatest single instance of farm increases from before the peace treaty of 1360 returned most of the priories to their original owners.

Scotland also contained a number of priories owned by French abbeys. However, since Scotland was not under English control at the time, they escaped the hardships of the war suffered by the English and Welsh priories.

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REQUEST FOR UNIVERSITY HONORS INDEPENDENT STUDY LEADING TO THE
COMPLETION OF THE HONORS CAPSTONE PROJECT

COVER SHEET

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English Priors and the Reign of Edward III

Last spring, I wrote a senior history thesis entitled “The Handling of Alien Priors in England, 1337 to 1360: Patterns in Priory Treatment Early in the Hundred Year’s War.” Priors were a kind of church where monks lived and worked, often performing some kind of economic activity, supported by a parent monastery in France. During the Hundred Year’s War, the king would seize the priors and confiscate any profits they made to put towards the war effort. My thesis tracked changes in who was responsible for each priory under crown control and how much money each priory was expected to contribute. Ultimately, I was able to demonstrate in my paper that the demands placed on the priors changed in response to the needs of the conflict, meaning that the eventual demise of the priory system in England several decades later was a consequence of the war, not a royal plan for priory dissolution.

Over the course of my research, I was always frustrated by the lack of a map showing where the priors were located throughout the England. The locations of the priors are known, and in many cases, the ruins are still visible. My proposal is to create a map of England and Wales depicting the locations of these priors. Additionally, some of the changes in priory treatment that I detail in the thesis will be included in the map, such as which priors changed custodianship more frequently, or faced a higher tax rate.

As an added research component for the project, I shall determine which priors were own by which monastic orders, such as the Benedictine or Cluny orders. Though this ownership did not factor into my research paper, I think this additional information would be an interesting addition to the project.

One of the advantages to this approach for a project is that most of the research has been already done. For primary source material, I referenced the *Calendars of Fine Rolls* located in Founder's Library. These are collections of English government financial records that go back to the early 14th century. In the early 20th century, they were transferred from paper rolls to book volumes. It is the book form the university possesses. My secondary sources include several pieces by Alison McHardy including "The English Clergy and the Hundred Year's War" and "The Effects of War on the Church." In addition, "The Suppression of the Alien Priorities" and *The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec* by Marjorie Morgan were also useful, among others. These secondary sources were used primarily for context information in the thesis, and to provide the framework of events taking place in the Hundred Year's War, which I was then able to compare the priory data from the *Fine Rolls* with.


The actual research itself was pretty straightforward. I just went through the *Fine Rolls* noting any entry involving a priory and what happened to it. After that, I found "concentrations," such as several priorities having their tax rate changed in a short time, or having new custodians assigned at similar times. These concentrations were then correlated to events taking place in the Hundred Year's War and King Edward III's fundraising efforts. With all this information already, the only further work I need to do is determine the locations of the priorities based on nearby towns.

The thesis class was broken into weekly meetings. Every week, progress was measured according to steps in the historical process, such as finding primary sources, secondary sources, analyzing the sources, constructing an argument, applying data to the argument, section rough draft, and finally the completed paper. For the creation of the

map, I propose to have the coastline and any rivers or other natural features completed by the end of February, the priorities included by the end of March, and all additional information in place by the end of April.

The main classes that I have taken in preparation for this project have been History 491, the senior thesis class, and History 391, Historical Methods, which was designed to prepare students for the thesis project. However, the multitude of history classes I have taken contributed to the development of research skills and critical thinking. Also, Geography 256 provided a useful introduction to cartography for purposes of the final map project.

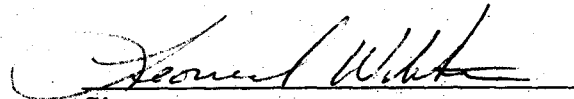
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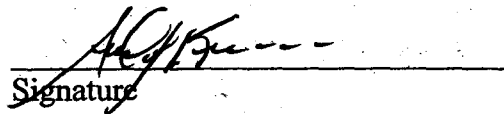
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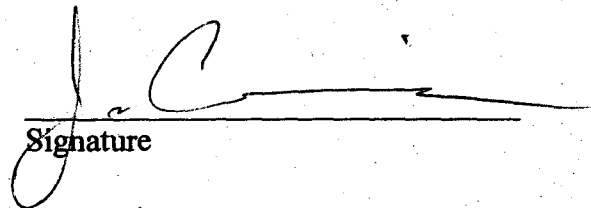
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2/16/11
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