THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF FEMALE PIETY:

Gender, Ideology and Material Culture

in Later Medieval England.

(c 1050 - 1550)

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ABBREVIATIONS

Augustinian (A)

Abbey (Ab)

Benedictine (B)

Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM)

Cistercian (C)

Cluniac (Cl)

Domesday Book (DB)

Franciscan (F)

Fontevrault (Fo)

Gilbertine (G)

Historia Ecclesiastica (HE)

number (size of sample) (n)

Priory (Pr)

Saint John of Jerusalem (SJ)

Valor Ecclesiasticus (VE)

DECLARATION

Some ideas outlined in Chapter 4.2 were first explored in an earlier publication, "Medieval English nunneries: a research design," (Gilchrist 1989a). The ethnographic case study in Chapter 6.1 was published more fully as "Community and self: perceptions and use of space in medieval monasteries," (Gilchrist 1989b). A brief summary of results for Chapter 6.2 appeared in "The spatial archaeology of gender domains: a case study of medieval English nunneries," (Gilchrist 1988).

ABSTRACT

     This thesis considers the role of gender in structuring the material
culture of medieval monasticism, in particular the maintenance of gender
identity within English nunneries, c1050 - 1550. The study aims to develop a
dialogue between medieval archaeology and branches of archaeological theory.
Emphasis is placed on the dynamic relationship between ideology and material
culture. This has led to the inclusion of sources and approaches from many
disciplines, among them anthropology, history, art history and literature.

     The principal data considered concern the archaeology of medieval English
nunneries. Sources are reviewed for religious provision for women in pre- and
post-Conquest England, with comparisons drawn with male houses in terms of
numbers of foundations and inmates, distribution, status and patronage. For the
first time, the archaeology of nunneries is presented with regard to their
landscape situation, economic production, planning, architecture and spatial
patterning. Comparisons are made with alternative settlements for religious
women - beguinages, hospitals, anchorages and hermitages - with emphasis placed
on the iconography which was active in constructing identities for religous
women.

     It is suggested that nunneries were accorded passive religious and economic
roles, in keeping with the gender relations of medieval society. Monastic
identities were forged with reference to common interest groups, especially the
social estate from which the founders and inmates of nunneries tended to
originate. Nunnery architecture and planning corresponded closely with that of
secular settlements; in many respects, nunneries were integral to the gentry
society with which they were allied.

"For the soul of Philip Sparrow
 That was late slain at Carrow,
     Among the Nunes Black.
   For that sweet soules sake,
   And for all sparrows' souls
      Set in our bead-rolls,
         Pater noster qui,
         With an Ave Mari."

(Skelton, Philip Sparrow. c1508)

Chapter 1

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF FEMALE PIETY

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the reciprocal relationship between ideology and material culture in the construction and maintenance of gender in medieval English monasticism. The archaeology of medieval English nunneries and double houses (c1050-1550) forms the subject of the analysis; comparisons are drawn with other categories of female religious community, and with monasteries for men. Gender is studied as a comparison between male and female cultural categories within medieval society. Here emphasis is placed on the meanings given to these comparisons, and the resultant social expectations. When these cultural meanings are transferred to biological sexual differences, the consequent gender relations are active in the orchestration of power. In medieval England this power was constituted by religious and secular ideologies. It was arbitrated through contact with the material world, through which individual gender identities were created.

Constructions of female piety could be both passive and active. Passive female piety included the theological sanctioning of roles for female religious (in nunneries, double houses, hospitals and anchorages); and the definition in form and function of women's communities determined by founders and patrons. Active female piety was demonstrated through women's participation in sanctioned and unorthodox institutions (beguinages, hermitages), their benefaction of religious communities, and changes brought about through active female agency in the structural traits and material culture of women's communities.

Gender was ordered differently at various social levels, so that definitions of masculinity and femininity were bound by social and economic parameters. The social value invested in male and female religious can be estimated through a study of religious provision in medieval England (Chapter 2). Religious and economic expectations of male and female communities are reflected in topographical setting and intensity of economic production (Chapter 3). Male and female liturgical roles can be explored through the forms taken by monastic architecture (Chapter 4), its iconography (Chapter 5), embellishment and spatial configuration (Chapter 6). These meanings have been examined at the

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institutional level, defined by particular settlements, to allow comparisons with male communities and forms of alternative female religious expression (Chapter 7). The relationship between institution and individual experience, or structure and subject, is explored through the dynamics of gender, ideology and material culture in the construction of gender identity.

This archaeological evaluation of female piety serves as a case study in gender theory. An attempt is made to identify theoretical objectives which will contribute to:

1) theoretical applications to medieval archaeology

2) the development of gender archaeology

3) current debates on the relationship between ideology and material culture. The thesis makes use of many forms of material culture, and does not purport to deal with all of these exhaustively. Instead material is chosen selectively in order to demonstrate the feasiblity of a multi-disciplinary, theoretically oriented approach to medieval material culture. In this way the study aims to unite theoretical objectives with the testing of new approaches. In addition, a large body of data on medieval English nunneries, a relatively unknown monument type, has been collated. These data provide an archive of knowledge, although no attempt has been made to provide a thorough catalogue of their remains.

In this chapter a framework of analysis for integrating archaeology and history is outlined. These aims are then located within the context of the archaeologial debates on gender, ideology and material culture.

1.2 Medieval Archaeology: Theory and Practice

It is generally agreed that the theoretical content of medieval archaeological research is under-developed (Rahtz 1987; Driscoll 1987). Archaeologists of the early medieval period have attempted to unite New Archaeological method with a history of innovative, historically attested individuals (Hodges 1982), or to separate history from archaeological enquiry through the adoption of substantivist anthropological models (Arnold 1988) or the testing of general structuralist principles (Pader 1982). Later medieval archaeology has, for the most part, been accorded a secondary role to historical documentation, being used as an illustrative or descriptive companion to historical readings of medieval life (for example, Clarke 1984; Steane 1985). The most significant archaeological contributions to medieval studies have been

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in the fields of landscape studies; environmental archaeology, economic and
demographic history. The topic of social archaeology, however, has remained
largely unexplored.

The problematic marriage of history and archaeology has included both
the identification of general aims and the accepted methods for the treatment of
sources. Medieval archaeologists themselves have used historical narratives to
define excavation objectives and to interpret archaeological material. More
recent approaches advocate the integration of historical and archaeological
sources only at the stage of synthesis, where each discipline acts as an
independent source (Rahtz 1987, 110). A contradictory view suggests that any
degree of integration of the two sources leads to circularity of argument, and
that a material approach to the past would identify its own "less sophisticated
aims, but more practical intentions" (Reece 1987, 116). Archaeologists remain
divided on the issues raised by historical archaeology but they would now agree
that historical sources should not be used to date or explain material evidence
(ibid. 114) and that our understanding of history must move beyond a
concentration on persons and events to an understanding of source criticism.

Later medievalists have integrated written sources and archaeology in
thematic enquiries, such as the nature of the medieval countryside (Astill and
Grant 1988). Astill's work has emphasised a multi-disciplinary approach in which
the sources of each discipline are critically evaluated and used to compensate
for deficiencies that each encounters alone (ibid. 6). Others have attempted to
set up rules for integration through the classification of archaeological and
documentary sources. Andrén (1985, 247-8) for instance, distinguished between
"manifest" and "latent" archaeological data, or deliberately versus less
consciously disposed material.

Possibly because of the quantity and complexity of integrating
archaeological and written sources, later medieval archaeologists have been
reluctant to engage in the debates of theoretical archaeology. Medievalists are
expected to develop the skills of the polymath, who is equally comfortable with
the methodologies of several disciplines. In volume of material and complexity
of methodology, therefore, the medievalist is at a disadvantage over the
prehistorian. Further, students of medieval Christian society are hindered to a
greater degree by their own cultural baggage. For medievalists, the hermeneutics
of critical archaeology (Shanks and Tilley 1987a and 1987b) is made more
complicated by necessity of commentating upon an ongoing cultural tradition in

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which the interpreter participates. For this reason integration of history and archaeology must also proceed at the level of theory and epistemology, in debates concerning the nature of historicity, objectivity and the nature of explanation.

For all archaeological theorists the tenets of post-processualism, which deny any objectivity, have caused a crisis of inference. Emphasis on contextualism, in which data are evaluated according to social and historic context, has questioned the use of analogy in interpretation. The issue of our own subjectivity has cast doubt on any form of explanation, be it the analogy of ethnographic parallels or the use of extant documents. Prehistorians and medievalists are united in the need to develop dialogues between archaeology and its sources of analogy.

Documents and archaeological data are best used as sources of contemporary analogy. They are integrated not to provide illustration or explanation, but to link themes between media. This method of **contextual analogy** can be used to set up thematic, problem-specific enquiries between disciplines.

It may be asserted that any social enquiry into the medieval past must strive to incorporate all forms of available evidence. Before any integrated approach can be facilitated, however, the structure of the relevant historical and material forms must be appreciated. While it is true that texts, artefacts and architecture are generated by human agency, they each require different analytical and interpretive techniques. A united theory for the study of material culture may indeed be desirable, but will not be possible until separate categories of historical and material data are recognised and analysed accordingly.

The array of data which constitutes medieval material culture has the potential to communicate at several levels which cut across the boundaries of academic disciplines. Certain categories of artefact within medieval material culture hold a greater potential for communicating their cognitive content. This representation of deep structure depends firstly on factors intrinsic to the artefact, and secondly, on factors subject to our interpretations. The direct cognitive content of an artefact results, first, from the processes of its production, especially its form and degree of decoration; and second, from the conditions of its use, including its visibility, and duration and extent of circulation. Although all medieval material culture may be characterised as deeply structured texts, some forms are more overt and offer greater prospects

for comprehension. In this way, medieval material culture can be seen to operate at higher and lower levels. Within this spectrum of signification it may be possible to identify the level at which a category of material culture operates, so that it may be isolated in order to answer a specific enquiry.

In an attempt to order levels of medieval material culture, distinctions may be drawn according to processes of production, conditions of use and possibilities for statistical quantification. Through their form, decoration, visibility and duration, certain categories of material offer better expression of signification and construction of belief. These include artefacts, architecture, literature and narrative, or products of cultural deposition which contain behavioural elements - like mortuary practice and refuse disposal. A second type of evidence may provide better opportunities for quantification, in an effort to present its explanative content. For example, while wills, charters, contracts and laws may indeed contain covert motives beneath those which are stated, their format allows the quantification of statements concerning production and use. These categories, in addition to the non-intentional deposition of art/ecofacts and the functional distribution of settlements, form the second type of material studied (lower level).

The first category of cognitive material (higher level) must be studied with reference to its specific contextualist content of meaning. In addition to the issues of post-deposition or survival rate of a sample, material forms must be assigned a data-sensitive methodology which acknowledges the functional properties of the medium, method of manufacture, distribution and use, and chronological range. Narrative and literary sources must be located within the rules of textual criticism, by observing formulae for the internal structure of specific source forms. These data sub-types are examined for similar and oppositional themes, motives of commission and life-span. The interacting themes and structure of the first type (higher level) of material may often be explained through reference to forms of the second type (lower level). These latter data are distinct in their observable factual content, and may provide an element of explanation for observed structural patterns.

The range of material forms to be considered within this framework may be said to extend beyond medieval archaeology to a social anthropology of medieval monasticism. However, archaeological data provide the basis of this enquiry, with comparative material drawn from historical and literary texts. Further, the exercise is made distinctively archaeological both through the choice of

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questions put, and the treatment of data. The framework of analysis, despite its contextualist approach, is grounded in the theoretical issues defined by broad archaeological and anthropological research. The issues are tested on deeply cognitive types of material culture with respect to their specialised internal structure and content of meaning. The results are correlated by the statistical examination of lower level material culture.

1.3 The Archaeology of Female Piety

Female piety, it may be recalled, includes the passive element of theologically constructed roles for religious women and the influence of patrons in determining the form of their communities, and the active participation of devout women in ecclesiastical institutions, benefaction and material changes brought about by female agency. Female piety was translated through material culture - as a medium which both mirrors and actively constructs and renegotiates social reality. From our collective knowledge of the medieval world and of western Christianity, it is possible to isolate types of material culture for study which may satisfy both active and passive gender/ideology discourses. The primary evidence chosen here includes: the topographical setting and form of religious settlements, and religious architecture, in its iconographic and spatial aspects.

These data represent forms of material culture which may simultaneously reflect, perpetuate and transform ideology. Religious architecture may instruct and reflect societal beliefs, thus constructing passive female piety. In addition it provides a medium for the female agent to achieve active female piety through affirmation or renegotiation of relevant ideologies. The iconography of religious architecture may have operated at many levels of society. In an institutional, or monastic, context it served an instructive function in disseminating dominant theological constructs of passive female piety. At a more popular, or parish level, it may also have been possible for some women actively to construct subordinate ideologies through the act of benefaction. The textual material can be divided into two levels of operation. High religion, or high theology, contained in treatises and rules, can be distinguished from popular piety executed through sermons, saints' lives, Mary legends, songs and drama (McLaughlin 1974, 214). Higher level material culture to be considered includes the archaeology of male monastic houses, nunneries and

double houses; including their seals and religious iconography. Comparative lower level material culture includes nunnery liturgy, mystic literature, saints' lives, monastic rules and theological treatises.

The content of meaning of the primary, higher level material will be assigned through a historically derived understanding of the motives and organisation of commission, production and use. In this way it may be possible to invoke contextual analogy in order to achieve the wide multi-disciplinary approach to medieval material culture which has recently been called for (Butler 1987, 212). A content of meaning is given to the textual sources through an understanding of their context of production - motives of commission, standing of author, potential audience and literary models. Representations of women in medieval textual sources are selective and ambivalent, so that no value judgements should be made in terms of positive/negative images or the general status of women (Gold 1985, xx). Most importantly, the motives of feminist research and their impact on scholarship must be scrutinised. The validity must be questioned of ascribing Freudian sexual/psychological interpretations to medieval female religious themes (Warner 1976; Carroll 1986), or of equating women's pious asceticism with modern female psycho-physiological disorders (Bynum 1987; Bell 1987).

At the same time, it is possible to harness the subjectivity of feminist research to good effect. Post-processual archaeology is often explicitly political and value-committed. It has been noted that the contribution of feminist archaeology to this movement is surprisingly underdeveloped (Shanks and Tilley 1987b, 191). Feminists have concentrated on critique, at the cost of celebrating their own creative subjectivity. Such an endeavour might be envisaged as a feminist analysis of power relations, in which gender is examined in reference to patriarchal structures. Much has been written concerning the political subjectivity of archaeologists, and the appropriation of archaeological research for political use. The subjectivity of feminist archaeology is underpinned by the freshness of topics studied and interpretations presented. However, feminist archaeology is itself vulnerable to ideological appropriation - witness the use of theories presented here to support studies in feminist theology (Byrne 1989, 71-2 commenting on Gilchrist 1988).

Feminist post-processualism concentrates on the relationship between material culture as signifying practice, social institutions and individual

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agency. In studying the archaeology of female piety the decision has been made to reject theory rooted only in literary criticism, in favour of feminist anthropological, art historical and sociological theory devoted to human spatial behaviour and expression (Moore 1986; Pollock 1988; Deegan and Hill 1987). These approaches are considered as forming more appropriate comparisons than those based primarily on the analogy of text (for example Hodder 1989; Tilley 1989; Barrett 1988).

The archaeological study of space is based on the premise that space and behaviour are mutually dependent. Henrietta Moore, in <u>Space, Text and Gender</u>, proposed that space reproduces social order as a metaphoric extension or transformation of societal divisions (1987, 88). There is a general consensus within archaeological theory that spatial analysis is an important, if not the most important, method for approaching social formations. This notion has been more simply put by Hillier and Hanson, in <u>The Social Logic of Space</u>, "the ordering of space in buildings is really about the ordering of relations between people" (1984, 2). In the study of monastic space, group membership and encounter are structured according to divisions between seculars and religious, categories which are composed of sub-groups defined by sex and either religious rank or secular social status.

Moore suggests a conceptualisation for space which has proven useful here. She distinguishes between the physical movement through space (as a mnemonic which informs and reinforces social action) from the activity of interpreting spatial orientation (1987, 81). Her work is based on Ricoeur's semantics of language and texts, in which symbols are understood to have primary and secondary meanings produced through interpretation (Moore 1990). Meaning is constructed through a creative process in which the participant observer refers to the myths and metaphors of his/ her own culture. The emphasis is on the action and interpretation of individual social actors in an historical context. This framework rejects the a-historical structuralist approach to spatial analysis and allows the study of male and female agency. This is not a celebration of the primacy of the individual; the subject of the analysis is the social construction of sexual difference.

In this study, categories for spatial analysis are based on a differentiation between physical movement through space versus the action of interpreting space. Movement, examined in Chapter 6, encompasses the study of access to and segregation within monasteries. Active interpretation of space

includes the form and function of monastic architecture and the meanings invoked
by its producers and observers. This approach owes much to Krautheimer's
iconography of medieval architecture (1942), but respects Moore's use of
distanciation (after Ricoeur 1981), which concentrates on the relationship
between the intention of the producer and the perceived meanings of the cultural
product. These themes will be examined in Chapters 4 and 5. The general aim of
the work is to determine the construction of gender identity in a monastic
context through the processes of building commission, construction,
embellishment, occupation and maintenance.

It is only through the formulation of explicit theoretical objectives and
rules for the inter-use of material cultural forms that inter-disciplinary
research should be conducted. This archaeological study of female piety will
explore the levels of ideology which operated within medieval English society -
in particular as gender ideology and as the basic structuring principle
constructed and instilled through belief. The nature of material culture,
whether active or reflective, will be pursued through its creation and
maintenance of active and passive female piety. In addition it will be possible
to analyse the interaction of types of material culture, in terms of chronology
and theme, and to examine the reflective or recursive relationship between the
material world and the written word. The historical setting of the study allows
testing of the contextual analogy approach, in an attempt to contribute to
current theoretical debates of gender, ideology and material culture.

1.4 Gender

Recently the topic of gender has been transported from the status of a
(so-called) fringe concern (Hodder 1982; 1986) into that of mainstream
archaeological theory. What began as a feminist criticism of androcentricism, or
male-bias, in archaeological interpretation (Conkey and Spector 1982) has
developed into the branch of theory known as gender archaeology (Arnold et al
1988). Gender archaeology, and indeed the feminist theory to which it is allied,
is not characterised by a single body of thought. The study of gender in past
societies is distinct from forms of feminist revisionism which refocus
archaeological thinking onto the activities of women. Gender archaeology, as put
forward in this study, classifies male and female activities, roles,
relationships and cultural imagery according to the social and sexual divisions

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of a given society. These gender relations are not simply biologically determined or static. They are socially negotiated and transmitted. Far from being the product of an historic context, gender relations can generate dynamic historical forces (Barrett 1988, 13). It has been suggested that gender archaeology will increase the division between theoretical and practical archaeology (Sørensen 1988). To the contrary, gender archaeology - which often focuses on the day to day playing out of domestic roles - may constitute theoretical archaeology on a more human scale. Its importance may lie in narrowing the gap between theorist and practitioner, and between academic interpretation and presentation of the past to the public.

Within archaeology a conflict of interests has emerged between those who study women in the past, and those who study gender relations in past societies. This dichotomy was felt earlier in the branch of historical thinking concerned with medieval women. Some historians have chosen to study medieval women as a discrete topic (Labarge 1986; Fell 1984; Power 1975). Feminists have concentrated on women as a 'fourth estate' which formed a distinct social grouping united by their universal inequality with men (Shahar 1984, 250). Hilton summarised the theoretical division which has been created through the writing of separate histories for women: "Whether or not we believe that all women through history have constituted a class oppressed by all men or whether we believe that women's class position was more important than their sex" (Hilton 1975, 95). The approach advocated in this study is one which considers the structures of gender and class, or social rank, through the social institutions by which human reproduction, the social division of labour, property and inheritence were organised. It remains a question whether gender determines, or is determined by, the socio-economic forces of a specific historical context.

Before proceeding it may be useful to define terms. **Gender** refers to the socially created distinctions between femininity and masculinity. **Gender ideology** is the social classification of male and female roles and relationships (Conkey and Spector 1982). The resulting **gender relations** inform attitudes and relations between the sexes and are linked to a wider framework of social relationships which structure society. Recent research in gender archaeology has argued the case for the study of gender as a structuring principle basic to every society (Barrett 1988; Arnold et al 1988) in the same way that social rank is always a major topic for analysis. But to the sceptical, the question has

remained, 'how can gender be studied archaeologically?'.

Archaeology encompasses the study of material culture, which is absolutely fundamental to the construction of gender roles and gender indentities. **Gender role** refers to culturally specific normative expectations of men and women. **Gender identity** is the private experience of gender role which expresses an individual's maleness or femaleness, social definitions which are produced through human action and the process of signification achieved through material culture. Gender is learned social behaviour associated with each sex. It is not biologically predetermined - a fact confirmed by the existence of transsexualism (Cahill 1987, 83). Gender identity is a process of self-classification in which each actor is taught meanings for gendered behaviour which are constantly reaffirmed throughout their lives. In this way individuals construct, maintain, and reconstruct social institutions and meanings through the use of symbolic gestures (Deegan 1987, 4). These symbolic gestures are made through reference to the material world and provide a common sense knowledge of how to proceed as a man or woman in one's society. Gender, in other words, is an informing ideology which is communicated and reproduced through a process of socialisation or enculturation in which material culture plays an active role.

Within feminist anthropology, gender has been studied either as a symbolic construction or as a social relationship (Moore 1988, 13). Symbolic studies of gender have focused on the concepts of man and woman as symbolic categories, often expressed as sets of opposed pairs. Concentration on binary opposites denies alternative constructions of gender identity through homosexuality and transexualism, or through the acknowledgement of a third gender, such as the eunuchs of medieval Byzantium, who occupied their own convents (Patlagean 1987, 597). Studies of gender as social role have concentrated on the relationship of women to the means of production. An attempt is made to evaluate womens' status according to their access to resources, the conditions of their work and the distribution of the products of their labour. Few studies have combined the symbolic and sociological perspectives.

Similarly, work in feminist archaeology and gender archaeology has concentrated on gender as a symbolic construction expressed through oppositions (Moore 1982; Braithwaite 1982; Sørensen 1987; Gibbs 1987). The analysis of gender as a social relationship has only just begun in archaeology, although these studies should benefit from the decades of feminist research which preceeded the appearance of gender on our theoretical agenda. In addition, the

discipline's general awarenesss of the ethnocentricity of interpretation has resulted in a reticence to examine women's status or "essential womanhood" across boundaries of time, region and social class. The resulting aim of gender archaeology is not to study women, in compensatory or revisionist histories, but to study gender - the activities, relationships and sexualities of men and women in past societies.

Gender archaeology should be attempted through a combined symbolic and sociological approach, in which the symbolic negotiation of gender through social interaction and enculturation is examined. This approach complements recent post-processualist work on the recursive role of material culture and the duality involved in the structuring of social institutions. Gender identity (the process of self-classification) is the product of a society's gender ideology, which informs a set of gender relations. But at the same time, gender identity perpetuates the predominant gender relations of a given society. A restructuring of social institutions may be achieved through a renegotiation of gender identity. Primary to this conceptualisation is the position of material culture in the construction of gender identity.

In later medieval England gender relations were organised from within the family, a dynastic institution which transmitted property primarily through male lines of inheritence. Male and female roles were idealised by a religious doctrine which elevated monogamy and the ideals of female chastity and fidelity. Gender identities in any society are maintained by ideology as a common sense knowledge of how to proceed as a male or female in one's community. In medieval society this common sense gender ideology was made more complex by the ideology of a formalised religion which was sexually divisive and, perhaps, misogynistic. Examples of theological treatises and biblical exegesis are thought to have conveyed negative perceptions of women and of female sexuality (Armstrong 1986; McNamara and Wemple 1978).

Knowledge of the formal teachings of the church would have varied according to levels of education and instruction. At a general level Biblical standards established normative gender roles through explicit Pauline teachings on female behaviour (Harris 1984, 47). At a higher social level, and degree of education, theological sermons and treatises depicted female role models (Maltz 1978, 27) like the opposite figures of the Virgin Mary and Eve, and Mary Magdalene and Martha. The gender relations relevant to later medieval monasticism originated with the Patristic writers who formulated a dualistic psychology in which women

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were hated while virgins were praised (Ruether 1974, 150). The Augustinian view
of the Creation equated humanity's maleness with the soul, spirit and
intellectuality, whereas woman was the body, carnality and sinfulness. Patristic
theology placed women below man in the natural order "as flesh must be subject
to spirit in the right ordering of nature" ([Augustine] ibid, 156). This
theological understanding of woman's natural inferiority was developed in the
thirteenth century by Thomas Aquinas, who justified the application of different
moral standards for both sexes by isolating the rationale for women's existence
only for biological reproduction (Ferrante 1975, 105; McLaughlin 1974, 214).
Woman's corporeal nature excluded her from the sacramental and teaching function
of the priesthood. But virginal monasticism offered the potential for individual
spiritual equality. Christianity held the promise of sexual equality in
salvation through acceptance of a code of social inferiority and subordination
of women within Creation (Warner 1976, 72).   Studies of iconography, secular
literature and art, however, suggest that no coherent positive or negative
attitude toward women was formulated (Gold 1985; Sekules 1987). These sources
reflect both the contradictory feelings toward women and the diversity of female
experience in medieval life.

Art historical approaches to the analysis of gender-related medieval
material have adopted intuitive assessments of both the contemporary motives in
commissioning female images and in the stylistic treatment of female
physiological traits (see Sekules 1987, 42; Harksen 1975). Their conclusions are
neither formally derived nor statistically valid, and seldom consider male and
female material together. Studies of the iconographic treatment of women, in
particular the Virgin Mary, have generally attempted to illustrate chronological
patterns in religious imagery (Gold 1985; Clayton 1988; Berger 1985, 112). No
systematic study of any single artefact type or group has been attempted, so
that the relationship between plastic media of expression has never been
adequately considered.

No methodology exists to make gender visible within the archaeological
record. Instead, conceptual advances are required to locate the gender debate
within mainstream archaeological theory. To date archaeological approaches to
gender have included:
1. the identification and classification of male and female artefact types based
in implicit assumptions concerning the sexual division of labour (Clarke 1972;
Flannery 1976), or in correlations between objects associated with

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anthropologically sexed skeletons (Gibbs 1987; Brush 1988).

2. an assessment of the quantity of female representations appearing within a
spatially or temporally defined archaeological unit, in the belief that the
number of female images in some way reflects attitudes toward gender roles
(Gibbs 1987).

3. the observation of binary oppositions contained within archaeological
material, which are interpreted as representing male/female dichotomies such as
public/private, political/domestic, and culture/nature
(Therkorn 1987; Sørensen 1987; McGhee 1977).

Many of these studies are characterised by circular reasoning, with the
archaeological context of the material being used both to define the patterns of
male/female types and to interpret them. The problematic issues of
anthropological sexing and analysis of mortuary context have been
under-emphasised, and the ethnocentricity of interpretations concerning the
sexual division of labour has only recently been acknowledged. Generally a
direct relationship between artefact types and social relations is assumed as
self explanatory, with no exploration of the structuring of gender and material
forms (although see Sørensen 1987).

It is suggested here that archaeologists have not produced any adequate
understanding of the relationship between gender, ideology and material culture,
nor has a framework been developed for integrating a variety of data in a social
enquiry into the medieval period.

1.5 Ideology and Material Culture

In archaeological literature the notion of ideology has frequently served
as a blanket-term referring to the systems of belief which determine the
symbolic codes of ritual in its material form (Kristiansen 1984). The term
ideology can, however, signify a variety of sociological concepts, all of which
have been used by archaeological theorists. In particular the term has been used
to encompass: false-consciousness, common sense, religion and power.

Ideology in its original Marxist sense was viewed as an essentially
negative force. As false-consciousness ideology is seen to conceal societal
contradictions, in turn contributing to their reproduction and serving the
interests of a ruling class. As the notion of ideological superstructure it can
refer more generally to the totality of social consciousness. Gramsci identified

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the operation of four levels of ideology: philosophy, religion, common sense and folklore (Gramsci 1971).

Archaeologists have recently adopted the Althusserian definition of ideology as the practical unconscious organisation of daily life (Shanks and Tilley 1982). Bourdieu (1977) has developed this approach through the concept of habitus, an unconscious, practical logic which is socially transmitted through a process of enculturation - ordered materially through objects and space.

The term ideology is sometimes interchanged with an equally ambiguous one, religion. Engels defined the purpose of religion as satisfying humanity with ideas of exclusion from reality; it results with the veiling of the irrationality of the system of production (Bottomore 1983, 414). Marxists have come to view religion as a system of symbols orienting action with reference to ultimate ends and to a higher order reality (Feuchtwang 1975). The origins of religion have been studied with reference to its operation as a system of socio-economic control through the monopolisation of access to the divine (Godelier 1982). These definitions of religion assume a coherence of shared experience and goals that may characterise institutionalised or denominational religion. They neglect, however, an appreciation of religion as a loosely-knit set of beliefs or attitudes in which individuals may choose to demonstrate faith, or as a context in which abstract spirituality or piety is experienced personally (such as medieval mysticism).

The operation of religion at a systemic level must be distinguished from the subjective experience of the agent engaging in religion in its broader sense. This definition would include magic, superstition and private and group heterodoxies (Obelkevich 1979, 4) and incorporates the elements of folklore, philosophy and religion which Gramsci defined as ideology. Religion, in its broad sense of the word, does not imply a society-wide conformity of belief. Popular religion can exist in addition to institutionalised forms which may represent a dominant ideology. A dominant ideology is thought to arise when the division of labour produces a specialist group of ideologues who implement the interests of the ruling class (Wolff 1981, 52). Dominant ideology, or institutionalised belief, is never fully pervasive. Residual or emerging alternative ideologies are negotiated through opposing or challenging the dominant ideology, or by co-existing as an alternative. Religion cannot be studied as a static or singular set of beliefs. It responds to shifts in social structures and is articulated through symbols which may fluctuate in their

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meanings.

Gramsci developed the concept of ideology as hegemony: an encoded value system which is maintained through institutional and individual action. In medieval England, monasteries were part of the church and state apparatus for marshalling hegemony. But was hegemony fully pervasive? Common interest groups, such as women of a particular estate, may have conducted their own silent discourses. The hegemony of patriarchy is structural, supported through institutional and personal agency. Individual action is considered to have been constrained by the nature of institututions. In this study individual agency and identity is related to the institutional structures of estates, families, monastic orders and particular convents. Thus ideology is studied by dissolving the distinction between the social and economic (Shennan 1986).

Giddens (1981) commented upon the masking function of ideology through its representation of sectional interests as universal, thus denying societal contradictions. In traditional Marxist thinking, these group interests are defined by relations of economic production and are bounded by opportunities for social mobility (closure). Giddens distinguished further between "distributive groupings" defined by common patterns of the consumption of economic goods, and the Weberian term "status group" which implies the existence and application of social judgements, like honour or prestige (Giddens 1982, 161). In addition to the social divisions imposed by relations of production and consumption, interest groups can be formed on the basis of attitudes toward age, sex and ethnicity (Wolff 1981, 53). An individual, therefore, might belong to more than one interest group, so that a conflict of priorities might be observed. Membership of an interest group would necessitate an awareness of one's personal credentials, but does not presuppose the organisation of sectional interests which characterises the class consciousness of capitalism.

Perhaps the most important factor in all of these definitions of ideology, and the one which relates most directly to archaeological issues, is that the realm of ideas and beliefs is systematically related to the material conditions of existence. The concept of material culture denotes any aspect of the material world which has been altered, manipulated or produced by human action. It includes strategies for the collection or manufacture, distribution and disposal of artefacts and ecofacts, in addition to the patterns of construction and disuse of buildings, boundaries and controlled spaces. It may be debated whether the nature of material culture is active or reflective in relation to

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ideology.

Post-processualists assign an active role to material culture in structuring social relations. In addition, post-processual scholarship has purported that meaning constructed through material culture is not fixed or singular. In other words, landscapes, artefacts, monuments or post-depositional sequences have meanings specific to their time and place; these patterns would not necessarily signal the same meanings to all people in a society, nor will they remain static. Archaeological data are seen to have no universal meaning. Rather, they are explored as possessing overlapping, multiple meanings. This plurality of meaning (or the polysemy of material culture) allows us to consider meanings specific to common interest groups. For example the iconography intended by a building's form, such as the orientation of a cloister (Chapter 5.6) or the message of a two-storey refectory (Chapter 4.2), may have held various interpretations for nuns, monks, patrons and masons.

Central to post-processual debate is the issue of the subjectivity of the individual engaged in signifying practices. Individual experience and action are viewed as socially constructed with reference to the material world. For instance, children are enculturated by their societies through the construction of buildings and space, and the coding of dress, food and social activities. The individual, thus schooled, is able to perpetuate the structural relations of his or her society, and possibly to introduce change through the categorisation of the material world - the world which we examine through archaeological data.

Ideology is transmitted through enculturation and through the teaching of beliefs and attitudes encompassed by religion. In this way material culture is both reflective and active in perpetuating social reality. In periods of social contradiction, ideology would be renegotiated through the medium cf material culture and would, therefore, actively contribute to the achievement of social change. Structuration - in which social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise (Giddens 1984, 25) - emphasises the role of individual human agency in constructing and reproducing deep social structures. As a conceptual framework it facilitates the examination of female action, in contrast to previous approaches which have classified women in prehistoric societies as objects to be controlled and exchanged (Braithwaite 1982).

1.6 The Construction of Gender Identity in Medieval Nunneries

The impulse to assert a self-image is a central human characteristic. One's personal identity is formed in reference to social identity, which is related to group membership (Wiessner 1989, 57). Gender identity is the private experience of gender role, although constructions of masculinity and feminity will be expressed within the social conventions particular to an historic context. Within patriarchal societies femininity is encoded with reference to a norm which is male (Weedon 1987), thus creation of the female self is a form of alienation, or reification.

Upon entering a monastic community, personal identity is structured through two stages: denial of one's previous identity, and construction of an alternative, new sense of self. The taking of monastic vows involves renunciation of personality, sexuality and social status. For example, the Rule of St Benedict comments on the rejection of private property and personal pride upon induction into a community, "thenceforward he will not have disposition even of his own body" (The Rule c58, McCann 1952). This process was engendered through the structuring of selfhood in relation to time, space, ceremony, and material culture; identities were created in relation to sexuality, liturgical roles and power.

The control of sexuality by institutions has been studied by Foucault (1979). Institutions (such as medieval monasteries) discipline an individual's mind, body and emotions according to appropriate hierarchical relations, such as gender, social rank or religious status. Power is exercised though force relations which classify the preferred form of subjectivity. Foucault has studied such power relations by isolating discursive fields, such as madness, punishment and sexuality.

Subjectivity was achieved in medieval monasteries through the discourse of celibacy, often involving the stripping away of sensuality. Brown (1987, 267-70) has commented on the removal of male sexuality upon taking monastic vows. The tonsure was a symbolic negation of personal sexuality. The celibacy which followed created a public space within the body; celibate priests became accessible to others through the creation of public space where personal sexuality had previously resided. Here it is suggested that when medieval nuns embraced celibacy their bodies became private spaces. In contrast to the asexuality of celibate priests, nuns committed their virginity to the Church as Brides of Christ. Nuns gave up possession of their own bodies; equally they

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became private spaces inaccessible to others. Sensuality, by contrast, was sometimes retained. Writings of the female mystics remind us that this could be redirected through meditations on Christ.

Construction of gender identity began with a ceremony in which the postulant donned bridal garments to commit her virginity to Christ. This union was symbolised by the wearing of the nun's finger-ring. Afterwards, the nun's hair, as a symbol of sensuality, was cut, and she adopted the uniform common to each member of her order. Henceforward the nun shared a common identity with her sisters. Individuality was rejected through the renunciation of private property (a vow later compromised by many monastic houses) and the wearing of identical dress. Where jewellery has been recovered from nunneries, this too reflected a common commitment to Christ. A fourteenth/ fifteenth century bronze strap-end of a woman's girdle, recovered from Blackborough (Norfolk), was inlaid with the inscription IE XCE (Jesus Christ) (Norfolk SMR). Uniformity was reinforced through the ordering of time, as each member of the community observed the strict monastic timetable (horarium).

In situations of extreme conformity individuals are thought to differentiate themselves through non-verbal behaviour, such as facial expressions and spatial gestures (Wiessner 1989, 57). While personal gestures most often elude the archaeologist, collective spatial gestures may be indicated through the development of nunnery plans (Chapter 4.3). Particular communities may have constructed collective identities through their dress and the forms taken by their buildings; these group identities may have been individualistic or conformist. For instance, the Yorkshire Cistercian nunneries were not recognised by the order to which they were committed (see Chapter 2.3). However, the nuns expressed their filial allegiance through the wearing of white habits (Elkins 1988, 86).

The nun exchanged her former family relationships for the hierarchy of the monastic community. Authority within the house was articulated through spatial delineation (Chapter 6.1). An abbess's personal power was reflected in the crozier which accompanied her burial (for example as excavations have shown at Winchester, Qualman 1986) and by representations of croziers on graveslabs (rare examples survive at Romsey, Hants).

Nuns possessed no recognised liturgical identity, so that no correlate is known for the chalice which accompanied priests' burials and was depicted on their coffin-lids. However, nuns were occasionally recorded as acting as

sacristans, for example at Romsey in 1372 (Coldicott 1989, 61); and the Gilbertines regularly acknowledged a female sacristan (Elkins 1988, 141). Power (1922, 64 FN 6) noted that in lists of inmates of nunneries, some nuns' names were accompanied by the title of "chaplain", for example at Campsey Ash (Suffolk), Redlingfield (Suffolk), Elstow (Bedfords), and Barking (Essex). Clearly certain nuns were recognised as fulfilling a liturgical role within their communities. It is possible that the relatively frequent occurrence at nunneries of graveslabs showing chalices may refer to female sacristans or chaplains, rather than to male priests.

Gender identity in medieval monasteries was de-personalised. Monastic institutions nullified the private experience of selfhood through the construction of collective identity. In principle, each member of the monastic community had renounced kin relations, which were structured according to age, gender and marriage, in favour of the monastic hierarchy which was articulated through authority. Gender identity was informed by institutional traits, by the collective identity of a common interest group represented by the monastic order and each convent.

This thesis is concerned with exploring the links between individual and institutional identities. It addresses the dynamics of structuration between individual agency and social structure, and between action and the archaeological record. A post-processual concern with signifying practices is combined with a Marxist emphasis on the study of structures, such as monastic settlements and orders. In this way it is intended that the symbolic and sociological will be united with the ecological and economic.

Chapter 2

A GEOGRAPHY OF MEDIEVAL ENGLISH NUNNERIES

2.1 Previous Historical and Archaeological Research

In comparison with contemporary monastic institutions, medieval English
nunneries have been little studied. Together with hospitals and anchorages, they
were examined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by women
historians whose work coincided with the era of suffrage[1] (for example,
Eckenstein 1896; Bateson 1899; Graham 1903; Clay 1909 and 1914; Power 1922;
Bourdillon 1926). For decades these pioneering works remained unsurpassed.
Within the last decade, however, a fresh wave of scholarship has emerged, once
again side by side with a rekindled interest in women's history. Power's
excellent work on nunneries has been supplemented by Burton's study of the
Yorkshire nunneries (1979), Thompson's consideration of Cistercian nunneries
(1978), and her examination of the level of literacy within nunneries (1984).
More specific historical studies have been conducted for Hampshire nunneries
(Coldicott 1989), Clementhorpe Nunnery in York (Dobson and Donaghey 1984),
Marrick Priory (N Yorks) (Tillotson 1989), and Stixwould (Lincs) (Graves 1984).
Graham's study of the Gilbertines has been superseded by Elkins's (1988).
Comparable updating has been carried out for hospitals (Cullum forthcoming;
Rubin 1987) and anchorites (Warren 1985).

The paucity of archaeological scholarship is striking. To date, no works of
synthesis exist for the archaeology of nunneries, hospitals or anchorages. A
gazetteer has been compiled for the English Cistercian nunneries (Nichols
1982a), but this lacks comprehensive descriptions or bibliographies. Most
excavations were conducted by local antiquaries, for example those at the
nunneries of Nunburnholme (N Yorks) (Morris 1907), Goring (Oxfords) (Stone
1893), Kirklees (W Yorks) (Armytage 1908), Hampole (W Yorks) (Whiting 1938).
Their results may not always be trusted. Armytage, for example, interpreted

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1.Where biographical notes exist for these historians, they seldom include
political details. Rose Graham's scholarship may be tentatively linked to the
practical concerns of suffrage. Her mother was involved in acquiring better
educational facilities for women; Rose Graham herself was one of the first two
women to be elected Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries in 1920 (Clapham

series of walls according to an earlier sixteenth century plan of Kirklees (now lost), with little discussion of sequences encountered in the actual excavations. The majority of nunneries were excavated during the "Golden Age" of monastic architectural investigations when interest in monasteries was at its most vigorous (Butler 1987,172).

Butler (forthcoming b) has outlined the chronology and limitations of monastic archaeology. He recognises two broad periods of activity, 1878 - 1918, and 1918 - 1939, associated with the careers of the antiquary William St John Hope, and professional architectural historians Charles Peers and Alfred Clapham, respectively. The nunneries investigated during these periods, in common with all monasteries, were viewed as static monuments of a single phase. Their initial construction was charted by diagnostic architectural features, and a plan of ground features was produced. Subsequent occupation layers, sequences of use and the majority of finds were never recorded. The major proponents of this early monastic archaeology produced a great number of the nunnery reports available for discussion. Foremost are those of St John Hope, Brakspear, and, latterly, Clapham and Peers. St John Hope (1901) conducted work at Gilbertine Watton (Humbs). Brakspear excavated at the Augustinian nunneries of Lacock (Wilts) (1900), Burnham (Berks, formerly Bucks) (1903) and Kington St Michael (Wilts) (1922). Clapham investigated the Benedictine Abbey of Barking (Essex) (1913), the Dominican nunnery at Dartford (Kent) (1926), and the remains of St Helen's Bishopsgate, London (1924). Peers excavated the small nunnery of Little Marlow (Bucks) (1902).

While nunneries with substantial remains were described and/ or excavated by eminent antiquaries, few nunneries benefitted from the phases of monastic archaeology which followed. Butler (forthcoming b) describes how during the inter-war years large scale monastic ruins were taken into state care. After World War II, excavation concentrated on bomb-damaged urban sites. Due to the spartan nature of their initial construction, often largely in timber, few nunneries boast substantial surviving architectural remains. Lacock (Wilts) was in private hands (now National Trust); St Radegund's Cambridge had been preserved as Jesus College; Burnham (Berks) and Malling (Kent) had been reinstated as convents. The largely rural situations of nunneries had protected

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(Footnote 1 continued from previous page)
1950).

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them from bomb damage. Only the church of the Minories (London) was destroyed.
Medieval walls were recorded, but no excavation was carried out before clearance
(Collins 1961). Few nunneries, therefore, were subject to more modern
archaeological attention. As a category of monument, nunneries never attracted
the intense interest directed towards other classes of monastic site, in
particular Cistercian abbeys. In result, their particular character has remained
enigmatic. Few attempts have been made to describe nunneries as a distinct
class. Where this aim has been stated (Cook 1961; Tester 1980), it remains
unfulfilled: the results do not embrace or adequately recognise the various
regional, economic and filial types of nunneries.

Nunneries have been the subject of excavation fairly frequently within the
last thirty years. Some of the larger projects have been conducted privately:
for example, Elstow (Bedfords) (Baker 1971) and Romsey (Hants) (Medieval
Archaeol 18 1974,189). In consequence, post-excavation work has been slow, and
publication delayed. More often excavation has been on a small area of a
threatened site, with publication seldom proceeding beyond a brief interim
statement. Nevertheless, in towns, piecemeal excavation has provided a
basis for understanding a handful of nunneries. Many excavations are
fragmentary, for example, St Mary's Chester (Rutland 1965); or confined largely
to Dissolution and post-Dissolution material, for example White Ladies Worcester
(Whitehead 1962). Several excavations have, however, provided evidence for a
small area of the nunnery. The churches of the Minories, London, St Mary's
Winchester, and Carrow Priory, Norwich have been partially excavated. Outer
court and industrial areas have been examined, most notably at Elstow (Baker and
Baker 1989), but also at Clerkenwell in London (Medieval Archaeol 26 1982,194),
the Minories in London (Medieval Archaeol 31 1987,128), St Helen's, Bishopsgate
in London (DUA 1990), Godstow (Oxfords) (Medieval Archaeol 5 1961, 313) and
Nuneaton (Warwicks) (Andrews et al 1981). The reredorter was excavated at
Polesworth (Warwicks) (reported in Mytum 1979). At Clementhorpe in York the
nunnery cemetery was excavated, associated with foundations of stone structures
(Dobson and Donaghey 1984). At Polsloe, near Exeter, the complete cloister
adjacent to the standing west range was excavated (Medieval Archaeol 24 1979,
250-1).

Rural nunneries have been more extensively excavated, in particular Denney
(Christie and Coad 1980), Campsea Ash (Sherlock 1970), Higham (Tester 1967) and
Davington (Tester 1980). Details of church development have been written for a

number of sites, notably Malling (Biddle unpublished), Sopwell (Medieval Archaeol 10 1966, 177-8) and Hinchingbrooke (Medieval Archaeol 12 1968, 166). Small finds and pottery are seldom published in full. Exceptions include appendices accompanying reports for Denney, Waterbeach (Cra'ster 1966), and Campsea Ash. The full publication of the pottery, ceramic tiles and small finds from Polsloe (Allan 1984) has been completed, with which the Elstow material will form an important comparison. Skeletal assemblages from Carrow, Elstow, Polsloe, Winchester and Clementhorpe remain unpublished. Only a single substantial animal bone assemblage has been published, Polsloe (Levitan 1987; Levitan 1989), with which groups from Clerkenwell and Elstow may eventually be compared. It remains to evaluate the results of excavation, and to combine these with details of extant structures in order to produce a better understanding of nunneries as a class of monument (Chapter 3 and 4).

2.2 Women and the Religious Orders in England

Nunneries form a relatively unfamiliar monument type; hence, archaeological traits which are specific to them can only be identified in comparison with the better known male houses, and (to a lesser extent) the alternative forms of female religious institutions, in particular hospitals. Such a study of monastic settlement explores forms of material culture and behaviour alternative to the norms established for male religious. By setting up comparisons for nunneries within the well-studied context of medieval male monasticism, it is hoped that the forms and functions of nunneries can be given meaning according to the gender relations of medieval society.

Before considering morphological characteristics, it is useful to review the numbers and institutional traits of medieval English nunneries and monasteries (Figures 2a and 2b). Such a study of religious provision sheds light on the social and economic expectations placed on communities of religious men and women. Wherever possible, these patterns will be compared with those observed for Scotland, Ireland and Wales. English monasteries for men were more

numerous. Minimum estimates are 736 monasteries for men[2], 153 nunneries, 18
double houses, 6 nuns' cells attached to male houses and 4 'quasi-double' houses
(Knowles and Hadcock 1971). Nunneries were occupied solely by women, whether
nuns, lay-sisters, corrodians or servants. They were presided over by a prioress
or abbess. Chaplains, priests, and, more seldom, canons, celebrated services for
the nuns in their church. The wealthy Wessex nunneries of Wilton, Winchester,
Romsey and Wherwell appear to have had colleges of secular canons attached
(ibid), in an arrangement similar to that observed in larger French nunneries,
such as Ronceray and Nyoiseau (Diocese of Angers) (Avril 1989, 38). Mendicant
nunneries, such as the Franciscan Minories (London) and Dominican Dartford,
provided accommodation for a small group of friars adjacent to the nuns'
cloister (Carlin   1987, unpub; Clapham 1926). Occasionally chantry priests were
later attached to a nunnery through a private foundation, for example at Campsea
Ash (Suffolk) in 1347 (Knowles and Hadcock 1953, 227). During their occupation,
many nunneries changed the order to which they were committed. Some began as
double houses, later to become nunneries. Some, like the 10 nunneries of St John
of Jerusalem, were short-lived. In their case, the nuns from 10 houses were
gathered together to form one double preceptory at Minchin Buckland (Somerset).
When nunneries are considered by order, therefore, some may be counted several
times. Up to 119 nunneries claimed at some time to be Benedictine, 34
Cistercian, 4 Cluniac, 10 St John of Jerusalem, 4 Premonstratensian, 1
Dominican and 5 Franciscan (Knowles and Hadcock 1971). Overall, about 150 sites
were occupied as later medieval English nunneries.

Along with the nunneries may be considered the double houses. These were
monasteries which housed men and women, but in which the two sexes were
segregated. Often the community was made up mainly of religious women, with a
smaller number of canons to celebrate divine services, and lay-brothers to carry
out manual tasks. These houses can be considered primarily as nunneries; indeed
Elkins (1988, xviii) considers the term double house inappropriate. Here, the
term is used to distinguish mixed institutions according to their morphological

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2.Minimum estimates of foundations from surviving documents are 163 Benedictine,
44 Cluniac, 77 Benedictine Alien Priories, 6 Augustinian Alien Priories, 4
Tironian, 13 Savignac, 75 Cistercian, 29 Gilbertine, 23 Arrouaisian, 11
Victorine, 6 Canons of the Holy Sepulchre, 45 Premonstratensian, 3 Grandmontine
and 225 Augustinian (Knowles and Hadcock 1971; Robinson 1980).

and economic traits. Within this category were 4 houses of the alien order of
Fontevrault, 12 Gilbertine double houses and 2 Bridgettine houses. Occasionally
primarily male monasteries were planned with a small community of nuns within
the precinct, over which the canons or monks would supervise. This type of
double house was rare, with two examples of Benedictine (Blackborough, Norfolk,
and Blithbury, Staffs), one Augustinian (Marton, N Yorks), one Cistercian
(Catesby, Northants), one Arrouaisian (Harrold, Bedfords) and one
Premonstratensian (Broadholm, Notts). Generally, these evolved into single sex
establishments fairly soon after being founded. Blackborough, Blithbury,
Broadholme, Harrold and Catesby developed into nunneries; Marton became a fully
fledged male institution. In addition, four 'quasi' double houses seem to have
existed. These houses are generally known as Cistercian nunneries, although
from about 1200 to the mid-fourteenth century they accommodated
Premonstratensian canons as well as Cistercian nuns. A small number of alien
priories and preceptories may have accommodated individual religious women. A
royal nun of Fontevrault appears to have kept her own household at Grove Priory
(Bedfords) in the twelfth century. Perhaps more remarkable is the case of Joan
Chaldese, a woman following the Templar rule and possibly residing in their
preceptory at Saddlecombe, Sussex (VCH Sussex II 1907, 92). Similar cases have
been reported for the French diocese of Limoges, where individual noble women
took nuns' vows and installed themselves in monasteries or houses of Fontevrault
(Becquet 1989, 69).

Contemplative communities observed the Rule of St Benedict, with additional
tracts, notably by St Augustine, St Bernard of Clairvaux and Norbert of Xanten,
practised by the reformed orders. The relative popularity of the orders between
monasteries and nunneries cannot be precisely gauged. Filiation was generally
more fixed for male houses, although some male orders were short-lived, for
example the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre and the Sauvignacs. Clearly the
flexible organisation of the Benedictines, in which each house was autonomous,
appealed to male and female houses, but represent a greater relative proportion
of nunneries. Quantifying Cistercian nunneries is problematic, a matter of
definitions, since only two were officially recognised by the order, Tarrant
Keynes (Dorset) and Marham (Norfolk) (Thompson 1978). The remainder were small,
fluid institutions. Their organisation was idiosyncratic, often incorporating

lay-brothers in their early years[3] and swapping allegiance between Benedictine and Cistercian. This somewhat fickle situation resulted from the nuns observing the Rule to which their chaplains were pledged (Brooke 1985,115).

The pattern of founding nunneries in Scotland seems to have been little influenced by those in England. Of only 13 nunneries founded, 7 were Cistercian (53.8%) (Cowan and Easson 1976). Ireland had four Cistercian nunneries (6.4% of the total number of nunneries). Of the four nunneries established in Wales, 3 were Cistercian and one was Benedictine. Butler (1982) noted that royal Welsh support for the Cistercians may have expressed opposition to the Norman penetration. Usk (Monmouths) was the only Welsh Benedictine nunnery; the order may have had strong Norman associations. Welsh Cistercian monasteries were sometimes located at sites with early Christian memorial stones (ibid). The Cistercian nunnery at Llanllyr was one of these. A cross-decorated stone with a Latin inscription, dated to the seventh-ninth centuries, may commemorate an earlier religious community on the site.[4]

The most notable discrepancy in the balance of filiation between monasteries and nunneries can be observed for the Augustinians. While the informal structure of the Augustinian Rule might be expected to attract followers among nunneries, *only about 24 examples, approximately one sixth of the total, can be detected.* In contrast, over one third of the monasteries for men were Augustinian. This order frequently included pastoral obligations within its observances, hence, perhaps, making it an inappropriate choice for female houses. Nevertheless, affiliation with the Augustinians may on occasion have been deemed acceptable, especially where a nunnery superseded or maintained a community with parochial functions. Blair (1986, 194-7) has suggested that the foundation of the Augustinian nunnery at Goring (Oxfords) was of this nature. The nuns seemed to have shared the parish church before having their own church and cloister added (c1170-90). Blair suggests that the nuns

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3.Among Cistercian houses with brethren or lay-brethren recorded (up to the fourteenth century) are Baysdale, Esholt, Gokewell, Heynings, Nun Cotham, Rosedale, Wykeham, Swine and Catesby. Lay-brothers were recorded at the Augustinian house of Goring and the Benedictine houses of Yedingham, Marrick, Nunburnholme, Nunkeeling and Thicket (Knowles and Hadcock 1971).

4.Nash-Williams (1950, 26) classifies the Llanllyr pillar-stone as a cross-decorated example with a special formula, "Tesquitus ditoc Madomnuac occon filius asartgen dedit", translated as 'the small waste plot of Ditoc which Occon...gave to (Saint?) Madomnuac'.

"may have succeeded some non-regular establishment with parochial

functions, the former community of priests being either devolved to

chapelries or allowed to co-exist with the nuns."

Support for this argument may come from the positioning of the parish church at

Goring in relation to the excavated cloister (Stone 1893). The parish church

formed the north range of the nunnery cloister, with the nuns' church (attached

to the east) projecting beyond the eastern line of the cloister. Lay-brethren

were recorded at Goring up to 1304 (Knowles and Hadcock 1971).

The small number of Augustinian nunneries in England forms an interesting

comparison with Ireland, where of 62 nunneries, 8 were Augustinian and 43 were

Arrouaisian (following the Augustinian Rule). In total, therefore, c82% of

Ireland's later medieval nunneries followed the Rule of St Augustine. This

pattern has been interpreted as the result of a single initiative by St Malachy,

who founded many nunneries after a visit to Arrouaise in 1139-40 (Gwynn and

Hadcock 1970, 307). It may have been more usual for the Irish nunneries to

perform some aspect of pastoral work.

Few nunneries of the mendicant orders were established in England (5

Franciscan; 1 Dominican). Friaries - communities of male mendicants - were

generally established with an evangelical mission in mind. About 189 friaries

existed in medieval England[5]. Due to Pauline prohibitions against women

preaching and the greater degree of enclosure expected of religious women (see

Chapter 6), few mendicant nunneries were founded. Despite the work of early

Franciscan and Dominican nuns in preaching and education (Brooke and Brooke

1978; Leclerq 1982, 12), by the time of the English foundations the mendicant

nuns were strictly enclosed. Religious women did, however, support an initial

wave of male mendicancy. The nunneries of Clementhorpe (York), Moxby (N Yorks)

and Markyate (Herts) bolstered new friaries with gifts of food (Martin 1937,7).

The English mendicant nunneries had little or no function of practical or

charitable ministering. In Ireland, the situation developed along very different

lines. The general lack of formally established nunneries is thought to have

been compensated for by the activities of the Tertiaries, or Third Order of

Franciscans. These were unenclosed mendicants whose vocation lay in missionary

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5.From documents it can be estimated that in England there were 60 Franciscan
friaries, 50 Dominican, 41 Carmelite, 39 Austin Friars, 9 houses of Crutched
Friars, 17 houses of Friars of the Sack, 3 houses of Pied Friars and 6 houses of
Strict Franciscans (Knowles and Hadcock 1971).

service (Neel 1989, 321). Ireland and Scotland were similar to England in having few houses of mendicant nuns. Ireland had 4 Franciscan nunneries; Scotland had 2 Franciscan and 1 Dominican (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970; Cowan and Easson 1976).

2.3 Numbers and Status of Foundations

Long before the monastic geography of later medieval England was set, there were settlements of religious women. In early medieval England two main initiatives for founding nunneries can be identified. The first institutions were seventh and eighth century double houses: communities of men and women living under some sort of monastic rule, with the abbess of the female religious presiding over the whole (fig 2c). Out of the tenth century monastic reform came a very different institution: nunneries which were entirely female (fig 2d).

Double houses could be settlements containing areas for both men and women, or they could be twin male and female foundations. Twinned houses were fairly common. Examples include Helenstow and Abingdon; Barking and Chertsey; Pega's Peakirk and Guthlac's Crowland. Pre-Conquest double houses are recognised by references in saints' lives, charters, chronicles and narratives (Appendix A). Several are attested by references in sources nearly contemporary to their foundations (Bede's <u>Historia Ecclesiastica</u>; charters; material incorporated in the ninth century <u>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</u>). Others are known from the later <u>vitae</u> of their founding saints (especially Mildretha, Sexburga, Milburga, Werburga and Frideswide), lists of saints' resting places, and chronicles of later monastic houses.

The idea of the double house, generally a royal foundation, seems to have originated in Merovingian Gaul (Rigold 1968,27). Such institutions were founded in England between the end of the sixth and eighth centuries. Hitherto they have only been distinguished from other types of community when a specific written reference to women survives. In addition to this form of monastery, a number of double minsters may have existed. A 'minster' (from <u>monasterium</u>) was a royal or magnate church with resident priests attached. Often this may have fulfilled pastoral functions, resembling a college of secular canons. Blair (1987,88) has suggested that many seventh and eighth century minsters were mixed communities of nuns, monks and priests. St Frideswide's (Oxford) for example, was a minster which included women. Evidence from the <u>Vita Frideswid</u> indicates that these nuns may have had a retreat house at nearby Binsey (ibid,92). If Blair is correct,

our image of the double minster/monastery must expand to include an aspect of parochial ministry. The existence of two types of professed religious women at this time is confirmed by the Penitential of Egbert (766 - 791). He distinguished between religious women according to, "whether in Orders or not, married or single, virgin or woman, canoness or nun"[6]. Contemporary differentiation between _canonica_ (woman living under a rule), and _sanctimonialis_ (nun), may imply the vocations appropriate to minsters and monasteries.

A more casual form of religious community for men and women may have been run by lay-people as family monasteries. Our knowledge of these is slight (Bede, _Epistola ad Ecgbertum_). Many monasteries may have alternated between being predominantly male or female institutions. In eighth century Yorkshire, for example, Stonegrave, Coxwold and _Donaemuthe_ passed from the hands of an abbess to an abbot (Morris 1989, 121; Whitelock 1979, EHD 1, 830).

The list of documented double houses may be increased by additions of houses known from archaeology (Appendix A; fig 2c). Impressions of double houses are very occasionally recognised through skeletal remains, artefacts and iconographic sculpture. Excavations at Nazeingbury (Essex) uncovered a cemetery of c150-200 skeletons associated with two phases of (possible) timber churches (Huggins 1978). Radiocarbon determinations upon the skeletons gave date ranges between the seventh and ninth centuries. Skeletal evidence revealed a high number of women (c84 women to 37 men). It might be argued that investigations at this incompletely excavated cemetery had uncovered a section given over to the burial of a community's women. Two further factors, however, indicate a population made up mainly of celibate women. The women showed no increased mortality around childbearing years, and there was no observed notching of the pre-auricular sulcus of the pelvis which occurs in childbirth.

The nature of the supposed religious community excavated at Nazeingbury may be elucidated by a charter of King Suebred (or Swaefred) which survived within a later cartulary of Barking Abbey (Bascombe 1987). Suebred granted land at _Nasingum_ (probably Nazeing),

"Therefore for the salvation of my soul I grant to you _ffymme_ my rights in
30 _manentes_ of land in _Nasingum_... with all things appertaining to it,
fields, woods, meadows, pastures and fisheries,... for the purpose that you

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6."in gradu positum vel sine, in conjugio vel sine, inter virginem et feminam, canonicum vel sanctimonialem" (Haddan and Stubbs 1967,417).

may share in erecting there a house of God" (trans Bascombe 1987,87).
It has been suggested that _ffymme_ is a female name (ibid). The possibility of a
female founder, and therefore a double house, is strengthened by the burial of
two women within the east end of the earlier timber church - an appropriate
position for a founder or first abbess. Suebred's charter can be dated by its
attestation by Waldhere, bishop of London (693 - 709). This date of _c_700 is
within the range suggested by radiocarbon dating for the skeleton of the
?founder at Nazeingbury. Bàscombe has presented evidence for _Nasingum_ as having
been a cell of Barking. When considered with the topographical evidence
identifying this house as Nazeing, the charter may corroborate the
archaeological evidence for a primarily female house.

Recent excavations at Flixborough (Humbs) have recorded middle Saxon
remains possibly of a monastic character (Humbs Archaeol Unit 1990, unpub). The
monastic character of the site is suggested by its vallum ditch, and interior
features linked by metalled paths. The presence of a church or churches is
attested by window glass and unused lead cames, possibly produced on site. The
literacy of the community is indicated by styli, an alphabet ring and an incised
lead plaque, bearing male and female names. A group of ten excavated skeletons
were predominantly female; the high incidence of female - associated artefacts
is reminiscent of the assemblage from Whitby. Flixborough has yielded keys,
combs, rings, strap ends and a large number of high quality straight pins. The
pins were of the sort which may have served to fix women's veils (Owen-Crocker
1986, 52). Textile working is suggested by spindle whorls, pins, loomweights,
needles and shears.

At least two sites, Hovingham (N Yorks) and Wirksworth (Derbys), could be
considered as double houses on the strength of their sculpture. Sites yielding
sculpture of the eighth or ninth centuries are often termed 'monastic', although
only a broad definition of monasticism, including regular, lay or episcopal
establishments, may be applicable (Wood 1987,26). The Hovingham 'frieze', or
slab, dated to around 800, is divided vertically into panels. Depicted in the
panels are scenes of the Annunciation, the dialogue between Elizabeth and Mary,
and the three Maries at the Sepulchre (plate 1-2). Such iconography could be
appropriate for the casket or reliquary of a woman, abbess, or female saint
(Bailey unpub). Further credence is lent when Hovingham is considered as a
possible twin house with nearby Stonegrave, a monastery less than 3.22 km away
which was noted in a letter of Pope Paul I in 757-8, as being formerly under the

direction of an abbess (Whitelock 1979, EHD 1, 830). At Wirksworth a panel of
eighth or ninth century sculpture is divided horizontally by a raised band, with
panels forming parallel upper and lower registers. These parallel story lines
have been interpreted as male and female, an appropriate medium for a double
house (Jane Hawkes pers com). Eight panels survive in total, with the upper and
lower registers dominated by images of Christ and the Virgin, respectively.
Upper register scenes include Christ washing the Disciples' feet, the cross
surmounted by the Lamb of God, and possibly the Massacre of the Innocents
(Kurth 1945, 17). The lower register scenes include the central Ascension and
the Annunciation to the Virgin, with the leftern most panel interpreted as
either the three women at the Sepulchre (Marucchi 1924, 154) or a Nativity scene
with two midwives flanking the Christ child (Harbison 1987, 37). The lower right
hand panel is thought to depict either the Presentation in the Temple, with
Joseph, Mary and Anne (Kurth 1945, 117) or the Adoration of the Magi (Harbison
1987, 38). Wirksworth is not far from the double monastery of Repton. A charter
of 835 indicates that Wirksworth was held by Abbess Cynewaru (Sawyer 1968, no
1624).

Double houses, like many monasteries for men, are thought to have fallen
into disuse during the ninth century. It is unclear whether Viking attack or
disintegration of monastic life was the causal factor in most cases. In the
tenth century, southern England enjoyed a monastic revival. During this time, a
considerable number of nunneries were established. These were strictly for
religious women. In 965 and 975 the Regularis Concordia, a standardised monastic
rule, was compiled at Winchester. This document contained a section strictly
prohibiting men from nunneries, and warning spiritual advisors to take care not
to disrupt the regular observances of nuns. Clearly, the character of womens'
religious communities had changed. Foundations continued to be of royal
initiative. Double houses, however, were comprehensively replaced by nunneries
(fig 2d). No formal religious provision was made for lower status women,
although their interest in the reformed monasteries is confirmed by gifts to
male houses made by peasant women[7].

The majority of late Saxon nunneries were established in Wessex:
Shaftesbury, Winchester Nunnaminster, Romsey, Wherwell, Wilton and Amesbury.

7.Women gave gifts of land to Ely and Ramsey. The Liber Eliensis notes the
benefaction of peasant women who owned 15 to 20 acres (Pauline Stafford, work

Smaller numbers are known from Mercia: Polesworth (Warwicks), Stone (Staffs) and
Berkeley (Gloucs). Isolated nunneries are recorded for Sussex (Chichester),
Essex (Barking) and East Anglia (Chatteris, Cambs). Smaller nunneries may have
existed, but have few or no references surviving them. In 1001 AEthelred gave
the vill of Bradford-on-Avon to the nuns of Shaftesbury (Sawyer 1968, no 899).
Bradford was established as a refuge for the nuns, and for the relics of St
Edward of which they were guardians. It was also intended that a small permanent
cell of nuns be founded. In discussing the rediscovered Saxon chapel at
Bradford, Gem (1978,110) has suggested that it was the nunnery church. He
proposes that its short rectangular body, with porticus to the east, north and
south, appears to be a choir without nave: an appropriate form for a small Saxon
nunnery. Its close proximity to the minster church at Bradford would have
made priests easily available for the celebration of the nuns' offices.

A nunnery may have existed at Lyminster (Sussex). It was recorded as
Nonneminster at Domesday although the earliest record of nuns was 1263 (Knowles
and Hadcock 1953, 214). Much of the Saxon church survives, constructed in flint
with brown sandstone side alternate quoining (Taylor 1965 I, 409-11). The church
has the thin, high walls which are held to be typical of Saxon construction
(0.76m thick; 6.09m high). Its dimensions are unusually long and narrow, but in
this respect Lyminster parallels the demolished Saxon nunnery church of Wareham
(Dorset). Both churches had naves roughly 19.8m long, and chancels 15.2m long.
Wareham differed in that its nave appears to have been flanked by rows of
lateral chambers (porticus) (Taylor 1965 II, 635).

Domesday Book hints at the presence of a considerable number of nunneries
which are less formerly defined. Communities of religious women were
accommodated in the male houses of Evesham, Bury St Edmund's, Ely, and St
Albans. At Bury St Edmund's, for example, 28 nuns and poor people were noted who
prayed daily for the king (DB Suffolk II fo 372 R). AEthelswite was given land
at Cweney (Cambs) near Ely, where she practised needlework with her 'puellulae'
(little girls) (Liber Eliensis). Such provision for women at these reformed
monasteries may indicate that more casual women's communities existed elsewhere.
Nuns held land in at least nine counties at Domesday: Gloucestershire (Cwnhild
fo 170 v); Warwickshire (Leofeva fo 244 R); Worcestershire (AElfeva fo 173 v;

(Footnote 7 continued from previous page)
in progress).

and Edite fo 173 v); Essex (Leofhild II fo 57 v); Lincolnshire (Alswite fo 337 v; and Cwenthryth fo 370 v); Somerset (Edith fo 91 v); Middlesex (Estrild fo 130 v); Hertfordshire (Eddeva fo 136 v); and Norfolk (II fo 26 v). In addition, women and the category of free woman (_libra femina_) held land from the king in alms (_de rege in elemosina_) in Berkshire (Aldeva, Aldrith and Edith, fo 63 v) and Middlesex (Aelfeva and Edeva, fo 130 v).

Some women held land but did not necessarily live on it. For example, Edite, a nun, held land at Knightwich (Worcs) which she returned to a male house. In several cases, however, the holding may suggest an informal religious house for women. The entries for Somerset, for instance, would be appropriate for a monastic house (fo 91 v):

"Edith, a nun (_monialis_) holds 12 acres of land in alms from the king. She has woodland and pasture, 80 acres. 4 cattle; 4 pigs; 11 sheep. value 5s.

Two nuns (_duae nonnae_) hold 2.5 virgates of land in ?Holnicote in alms from the king. Land for 2 ploughs. Meadow, 5 acres. value 5s" (Thorn 1980).

Most references to nuns holding land describe the woman as _monial_, a term which, from about the late ninth century, seems to imply a professed nun (Latham 1965). One Lincolnshire nun, Cwenthryth, is termed _monacha_ - literally the feminine of monk[8]. King AEthelred's Laws of 1008 explicitly state that two classes of religious women were known, nuns (OE _mynecena_) and women dedicated to God (_nunnan_) (Whitelock _et al_ 1981, 347; AEthelred 4.1). Somerset DB lists _monialis_ and _nunnae_ in the same folio, indicating that these perceived classes of religious women are not a product of regional variations in terminology. Yorke (1989, 108) suggested that AEthelred's Laws were distinguishing between nuns and vowesses, the latter being widows who took vows of chastity in order to avoid the obligation to remarry. These women are not believed to have lived communally, hence the _duae nonnae_ of Somerset cast doubt on Yorke's distinction.

The nomenclature of these sources makes two valuable points. First, at least two classes of religious women can be identified, so that corresponding levels of ecclesiastical sites may therefore be expected. Formal communities (for _monialis_, _monachae_, _mynecena_) may have been better documented, and

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8.Bede's Penitential (731 - 734) uses this term for nun, _"Si monachus cum monacha"_ (III De Fornicatione. 11) (Haddan and Stubbs 1964, 328).

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consequently known to us, but not necessarily more numerous than the less formal communities of nunnan. This category of religious woman may have been predominant in late Saxon England. The term nunnanhad is used in AElfic's Pastoral Letter for Wulfsige III (993 - c995) to denote the nuns' order comparable to the monks' and abbots' orders (Whitelock et al 1981, 205). A nunne has previously been defined as a woman who took vows of chastity without entering a community (ibid, 347 FN 4). The holdings of the two Somerset nonnae, however, suggest that these women did sometimes live communally.

Second, the naming of religious women within the sources implies communities where none have previously been known to have existed: for example, the house of the monacha in Lincolnshire. The Northumbrian Priests' Law (c 1008 - 1023) notes penalties for lying with nunnan (63.1 Whitelock et al 1981, 466). Communities of religious women seem to have existed even in the north of England, where no real effort toward monastic refoundation had been made.

Further nunneries are implied by place-names recorded in 1086. Especially significant are the elements 'cwene', women[9], and some occurrences of names containing 'nun'. Nunney (Somerset), DB Nonin, may refer either to the island of the nuns, or Nunna's island. Nunwell Park (Isle of Wight) results from DB Nonoelle, Nunna's or the nuns' spring. The 'cwene' element is fossilised in Quendon (Essex), DB Kuenadana, the women's valley; Quinton (Warwicks), DB Quinentune, manor of the women; and Quenington (Gloucs), DB Quenintone, the women's tun (Ekwall 1960; Moore 1982). Particularly strong candidates for nunneries are Quenington and Quinton. Quenington church possesses a pair of unusually fine Norman tympana. One of these, the Coronation and Assumption of the Virgin, is iconographically innovative (plate 42). As only the second rendering of the Coronation to survive in England (Zarnecki 1950), Quenington was graced with sculpture more appropriate to a monastery than an ordinary parish church. The site of the church, in the valley bottom, next to the river, is typical of an early monastery. The Coronation theme would be especially apt for royal religious women (see Chapter 5.4). Quinton was held by thanes at the time of Domesday (DB Gloucester fo 169 v), but it became a holding of Polesworth Nunnery. Did "the manor of the women" make Quinton an inspired endowment to this later nunnery?

Nunneries founded after the Conquest are documented fairly reliably. The

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9.Cwene (women) should not be confused with cwēne (queen).

Norman baronial class imprinted a new pattern of monasticism on the English landscape. The first century of Norman settlement saw a wave of new foundations for Benedictines, Cluniacs, alien priories[10], and, slightly later, the Augustinians and Cistercians (figure 2a). In sharp contrast, only seven or eight nunneries were founded before 1100, mainly in the south-east of England. One purpose for founding Norman monasteries may have been to consolidate the new system of landholding. Whatever the motive, the plantation of nunneries was considered extraneous to it. During previous initiatives to found monasteries, notably during the tenth century, an impetus for establishing nunneries had been realised. In the Regularis Concordia the duty to protect and patronise nunneries was recognised as a function of Anglo-Saxon Queenship (Meyer 1977). Nunneries relied upon Saxon royal widows and queens. This precedent would be followed by a small number of Anglo-Norman aristocratic women, but only after the main ronastic landscape had crystallised.

The small number of Anglo-Norman nunneries might reflect an absence of interest on the part of religious women. Alternatively, pious women may have found places in mixed religious communities. Like the double minsters of the seventh and eighth centuries, certain Anglo-Norman houses were flexible enough to accommodate nuns. Some of the male communities listed at Domesday continued to exist alongside small numbers of nuns. The Benedictine monastery of St Albans, for example, had a group of nuns added by their third abbot, Wulsig (c940). His successor Wulnoth moved the nuns to the almonry. There they remained until 1140 when they were moved to Sopwell (Knowles and Hadcock 1971, 75). Many of the later Saxon minsters seem to have have included both men and women, in a tradition that was carried through the eleventh century. For a brief time, the delineation of male and female communities may have blurred. When Norman monasteries were founded, it may sometimes have been a case of regularising existing communities of men and (or) women.

When comparing the number of monastic foundations by decade (figures 2a and 2b), it is evident that the timing differed between monasteries for men and for

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10.Alien priories were dependent on a mother house in France. Their aim was not always that of a full conventual house; some were houses of estate managers. Perhaps because of this, alien priories for nuns were rare (with the exception of houses of Fontevrault). One possible example is Minchinhampton (Gloucs). The site, with its prefix mynecen, OE 'nun', belonged to la Trinité, Caen. Lyminster (Sussex) was a nunnery dependent on Almeneches; Higham (Kent) was dependent on St Sulpice, Rennes.

women. Enthusiasm for the establishment of Benedictine monasteries for men peaked between 1080-1110. Benedictine nunneries reached their height of foundation much later, in the years either side of 1160. A similar discrepancy can be observed for the Augustinians, whose male houses reached a climax in foundations c1130-40; female houses achieved their modest peak c1180. Cistercian monasteries for men were most successfully founded c1130-1150; similarly, the 'unofficial' Cistercian nunneries were founded mainly in the decades c1130 and c1160. Those nunneries recognised by the order, however, were founded considerably later. Tarrant Keynes was founded sometime before 1199. Marham was established before 1249. Both nunneries were formally incorporated into the order only by 1250 (Thompson 1984, 251).

The overall pattern in the founding of nunneries is one of time lag, or a delayed response. This trend must be mainly a product of choices made by patrons. Only for the Cistercians can the evolution of the order itself be considered as the major factor. The earlier tendency for setting up male houses may be based in economic and political motivations. The greater political power of a male house would render it a better ally for a Norman baron. The productive aspects of rural monasteries for men, especially where land reclamation was initiated, made them a better financial prospect. Those who could afford to set new trends in religious foundations opted for male institutions. The establishment of a nunnery was seldom an innovation in pious benefaction. Where women patrons felt inclined to initiate new types of religious community, they too directed their efforts toward male foundations[11]. Patrons felt compelled to found nunneries only a generation after new fashions in endowment had been forged for male communities. Nunneries were founded in a second, delayed wave of endowment, a situation very much a product of the social identity of their

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11.Joan Fossard, for example, founded the first of the three English Grandmontine monasteries (at Grosmont, N Yorks) in 1204 (Graham and Clapham 1924,171). Ela, Countess of Salisbury, founded Hinton Charterhouse (Somerset) in 1227. Hers was only the second Carthusian monastery to be founded in England; a third would not appear until 1343 at Beauvale (Notts) (Thompson 1930). The first Trinitarian house in England was founded by Margaret de Moddenham, Abbess of Malling, in 1224 at Moatenden (Kent) (Gray forthcoming). This house was a recruiting centre, so that the lay-sisters admitted to some Trinitarian houses were never present. Queen Maud (first wife of Henry I) founded St Giles leper hospital at Holborn (Middlesex) in 1101, making it the third Norman hospital to have been established (Clay 1909,71). Her foundation was, however, for male lepers and brethren, with sisters attached to the house some time later (Knowles and Hadcock 1953, 278).

founders (see Chapter 2.5-6).

It has often been said that later medieval English nunneries were poor
(Thompson 1984; Power 1922). Many parallels for this poverty can, of course, be
cited for male houses, especially the smaller cells, retreat houses and
hermitages. Levels of wealth between male and female communities may be compared
through a fiscal assessment, or estimate of size (number of inmates). The best
guide to a monastery's financial status comes from the _Valor Ecclesiasticus_[12]
(1535). A reliable census of inmates is more problematic, since the Dissolution
produced three sets of totals. The most trustworthy of these was taken 1534-5,
when monasteries subscribed to the king's supremacy. From that time until the
general Dissolution, numbers of inmates may have been reduced by up to 25%
(Knowles 1955, 257). In some ways more useful are the poll taxes of 1377, 1379
and 1380-1 (Robinson 1980). An attempt has been made to compare assessed wealth
and numbers of inmates for Benedictine nunneries and male houses, using the best
figures available for each house (Knowles and Hadcock 1971). Benedictines have
been chosen for providing the largest sample of nunneries (n=71) with which to
c mpare monasteries for men (n=123)[13]. For each criterion considered as affecting
ma e and female houses, statistical significance has been corroborated by means
of a chi-square test (Tables 1-3). These tests confirm that there is significant
evidence for an association between the sex of a monastery's inmates, and the
relative proportion of values at the Dissolution; numbers of inmates per house;
and wealth per inmate.

When wealth is considered alone (Fig 2e), it is indeed apparent that there
were a greater number of wealthy male Benedictine houses. Monasteries for men
show a greater spread of wealth, whereas nunneries are valued mainly between £10
- £100. It may be noted, however, that the male houses have a greater percentage
valued under £10. Figure 2f confirms that there were a greater number of large
monasteries for men (30+ inmates). Again, a greater spread of values can be
observed for the male houses, whereas the nunneries had mainly between 5 and 20
inmates. The unexpected finding is that, in comparison with nunneries (n=8;
11.3%), a greater relative proportion of Benedictine male houses had under 5

12.For some houses, for example Norton (Cheshire), _Valor_ is a less reliable
source than the later records of the Court of Augmentations (Greene 1989).
For purposes of general comparison _Valor_ is, however, more easily applied.

13.This figure does not include Benedictine alien cells or granges.

inmates (n=44; 35.7%).

The most revealing comparison is made when value and number of inmates are considered together. Figure 2g charts the approximate value per individual inmate for each house in the sample. The real poverty of the nunneries cannot be disputed. The histogram produced for nunneries is a positive skew, with numbers of houses decreasing as value per inmate increases. Just over 50% of the nunneries can be estimated at under £5 per inmate; no nunnery achieves a score over £30. The monasteries for men, in contrast, have highest scores between £10 and £25, with houses well represented up to £50 per inmate.

The relative status of monastic houses has frequently been measured by the dimensions of certain of their buildings (Cook 1961; Robinson 1980). The cloister garth is the indicator most often used. Robinson (ibid,163) has suggested, however, that the effort involved in extending a cloister makes this the least sensitive measure of changes in a monastery's fortunes over time. More likely to reflect the developed status of the house is the total length of the church.

Appendix B lists some dimensions of nunnery buildings. The cloister dimensions are graphed on Figure 2h. A considerable proportion of nunneries in the sample had cloister areas of c200 - 330 square metres (n=13); with the majority under c550m. No meaningful comparison can be made between the nunneries and the large Cistercian, Benedictine or Cluniac male houses. A more appropriate scale for comparison is with the orders of canons, particularly the Augustinians. Only 4 Augustinian monasteries fall within the range of cloister areas up to 330 m2. Towards the top of this range are the houses of Penmon, Selborne, Shulbrede and Weybourne (Robinson 1980 ii, 398). A larger number are known to fall within the category up to c550 m2 (ibid).[14] The mean for total length of nunnery churches is 49.9m. Several of the smaller canons' churches were of similar length (ibid). Nunnery buildings were not, then, built to a scale below that recognised for male houses. Their average standards were equivalent to a small, modestly constructed Augustinian monastery.

2.4 Distribution and Patronage

14.These are Bolton, Buscough, Haverfordwest, Lanercost, Launceston, Leighs, Mottisfont, Newstead (Notts), Norton, St Olave's and Woodspring.

Nunneries were founded throughout England. Yet certain areas are richer in
nunneries. Figure 2i, a distribution map of nunneries, demonstrates that in the
north of England they tend toward the east coast, and are almost absent from the
west coast. Concentrations of nunneries occur in the south-east (around London
and in Kent), East Anglia (with clusters in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and
Norfolk), the West Midlands, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Hampshire. They are
largely absent from the south-west of England. Gilbertine double houses and
'quasi-double houses' hug the eastern coast of England (Fig 2j). In comparison
with the distribution of male Benedictine, Cistercian and mendicant houses,
there is a marked tendency for nunneries to cluster in certain regions, beyond
the concentrations to be expected in areas of greater population. Clustering is
particularly prevalent towards the east coast. This phenomenon is paralleled by
the Scottish nunneries. Nine of Scotland's 13 nunneries are sited toward the
east coast, and 2 on the south-west coast. Clusters are apparent in the Berwick
and Lothian regions.

One explanation for the relatively dense occurrence of nunneries in certain
areas may be their relatively late dates of foundation. Competition between male
houses for large tracts of land may have left only certain areas amenable to new
monastic foundations, for example the Yorkshire Dales and areas of the midlands.
This does assume, however, that nunneries were established with the same aims as
other monasteries: an assumption which will be questioned throughout this study.
Rather than reflecting competition for land, the distribution of nunneries may
relate to their social function.

The clustering of nunneries may have respected earlier traditions in female
piety. Nunneries in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset are mainly refoundations of
the tenth century royal nunneries of Wessex. Some nunneries may have evoked
nostalgic memories of Saxon double houses (see Chapter 5.3), particularly in
Kent and East Anglia. One concentration can be attributed to locally based
support for the order of Gilbertines. St Gilbert of Sempringham (Lincs)
established the only monastic order to have originated in England. All but one
of the Gilbertine double houses were founded during Gilbert's lifetime. Their
distribution may reflect the popular support he received from his baronial peers
within the locality.

Robinson (1980, 45-6) has noted that, like the nunneries, small Augustinian
houses were founded fairly late (after 1100) and have a tendency to cluster in
some regions (notably East Anglia). The patterns for both categories of site

signal a change of preferences in monastic benefaction. During the twelfth
century it became appropriate for small local landowners to endow their own
religious houses. Previously this had been the privilege of the episcopal and
baronial classes. Lower gentry had made unremarkable gifts to powerful abbeys.
Weary of appearing unattractive suitors, the minor landowners established a rank
of monastery over which they would weald greater influence. The clusters,
therefore, may denote a number of religious houses founded at a similar social
level. Figure 2k shows the distribution of nunneries according to their status
at the Dissolution. Houses valued over £200 cluster in southern England (Wessex
and the south-east). Nunneries valued between £100-200 have a wider occurrence,
taking in isolated examples in the south-west, midlands and East Anglia. More
likely to occur in close association are those valued £50-100, accounting for
virtually all the northern English nunneries. In these regions it was possible
for minor gentry to establish a greater number of more modest religious houses.

Monasteries were founded for a plethora of motives - both pious and
political. An individual might endow a religious house as a form of spiritual
insurance; as penance; or as a substitute for crusade or pilgrimage. A sense of
piety could be heightened by one's own illness and impending death, or by the
death of a loved one, sometimes resulting in a form of commemorative monastic
foundation. Monasteries were founded as chantries: for perpetual prayer devoted
to the benefactor. This would have been rare in the case of nunneries, since
female prayer was judged to be less potent than male (Burton 1979,2). Chantry
chapels were somtimes added later to nunnery churches, for example at Campsea
Ash (Sherlock 1970, 121), St Helen's Bishopsgate (London), Haliwell (Shoreditch,
London), Barking and Lacock (Cook 1947, 25-6). Land may have been given to
monastic houses as a financial investment. In this way marginal land, especially
in Lincolnshire, was reclaimed, cleared, drained and enclosed by monasteries
(Owen 1981, 57). In England, founding a monastic house was a method of laying
claim to insecure or threatened estates (Burton 1986, 35). This can occasionally
be demonstrated as a motive in the founding of nunneries, for example Keldholme
(N Yorks) (Rushton 1965).

Nunneries clustered because of the motivations and social links between
their founders. In some areas the process of establishing small nunneries became
a family concern. This can best be demonstrated with reference to a group of
Yorkshire nunneries, established by the families of de Arches and de St Quintin.
Nunkeeling (Humbs) was founded 1143 - 1153 by Agnes de Arches (Burton 1979), the

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widow of Herbert de St Quintin. Between 1147 and 1153 the de Arches established

a nunnery at Nun Monkton (N Yorks) (ibid). Meanwhile the nunnery of Nun Appleton

(N Yorks) was set up by Eustace de Mercia and his wife, Alice de St Quintin.

Alice's son-in-law was founding Bullington (Lincs) at roughtly the same time

(1148 - 1154) (Elkins 1988, 94). It has also been suggested that Keldholme (N

Yorks) and Rosedale (N Yorks) shared founders in the Stuteville family (VCH

Yorkshire N Riding I 1914, 454; Rushton 1965, 20; Midmer 1979, 269)[15].

The concerns of founding families could, therefore, result in the

clustering of nunneries to certain regions. The motives involved in setting up

the nunneries were also, at times, rooted in family ties. At Nun Monkton, the

founder's daughter became the first prioress (Burton 1979, 20). At Marrick (N

Yorks) the daughters of the founder, Roger de Aske, entered the nunnery

(Tillotson 1989, 4), and at Wykeham the founder's granddaughter entered (Elkins

1988, 97). Outside Yorkshire, some nunneries remained under a family's influence

beyond their early years. At Minchin Barrow (Somerset) the patron's permission

remained necessary for the election of the prioress. In 1316, a member of the

founding family of de Gournay was elected prioress - even though she was not, at

the time, a professed nun (Hugo 1867, 11). At Shouldham (Norfolk) in the

fourteenth century, and Esholt (W Yorks) in the fifteenth, nunneries served as

repositories for female members of the families Beauchamp and Ward, respectively

(Tillotson 1989, 4).

At a higher social level, particular families, or dynasties, were

responsible for introducing women's religious orders into England. The

Fontevraultine houses in England can be traced to the individual interests of

Eleanor of Aquitaine. After her marriage to Henry II, he founded houses of

Fontevraultine nuns at Westwood (Worcs) and Amesbury (Wilts). Henry's steward,

Robert of Leicester, founded Nuneaton (Warwicks). Plantagenet associations with

Amesbury remained strong. The wife of Henry III and the daughter of Edward the I

both entered the house (Boase 1971). A similar process can be traced for the

Franciscan nuns. The first English house[16] of the Minories (1293-4; at Aldgate,

London) was established by Blanche, Queen of Navarre. Blanche was relative of

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15. Burton (1979,9) disputes this. A later charter of King John notes William
FitzTurgis of Rosedale as founder of Rosedale Nunnery.

16. Knowles and Hadcock note the possiblity of an earlier short-lived house at
Northampton (c1252) (1953,232). This may have been an informal group attached to

Isabella, the original patron of the order (Bourdillon 1926). Denney (Cambs) was founded by Mary de St Pol, Countess of Pembroke, who was related to the foundresses of both nearby Waterbeach[17] and the Minories. The Duke of Clarence established Bruisyard (Suffolk) in 1364-7 for his mother-in-law, Maud, who was a granddaughter of the foundress of the London Minories.

2.5 The Archaeology of Patronage

In addition to their distribution, aspects of patronage may have affected the material culture of nunneries. Where a male house was founded, especially within the Cistercian order, the patron's role was limited to supplying land and starting endowments (Brooke 1986, 11). Evidence suggests that for some Yorkshire houses, notably Meaux, Kirkstall and Roche, the monks selected the precise location of the monastery within a general area offered by the founder (Burton 1986, 35). Since nunneries were affiliated to monastic orders on a much more casual basis, the role of patron may have been more fundamental in determining the location and architectural form of the house. It is sometimes possible to recognise the impact of an individual patron's taste on the architecture of a male house. The influence of Roger Bigod at Tintern is a case in point (Coldstream 1986,157).

A similar case might be constructed for only one nunnery. Around 1090, Gundulf, the first Norman Bishop of Rochester, founded a Benedictine nunnery at West Malling (Kent). Today the site is again used as a nunnery. During rebuilding in the 1960s, part of the site became available for excavation. From Martin Biddle's plan of the excavated church (unpub), it seems that the church began as a long, narrow, aisleless cruciform layout which was at least c60.8m long and c11.6m wide. Projecting from the original east end is a smaller square chamber, c5.2 X 5.2m. It has been suggested (Newman 1969, 602) that the design of the first church was modelled on the Norman plan of Rochester Cathedral, the seat of Malling's founder. Unfortunately, the footings of the east end were robbed, so that its relationship with the square projection is uncertain. Biddle has suggested the the chamber is a secondary construction, possibly of the

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(Footnote 16 continued from previous page)
a friary.

17.Waterbeach was set up in 1294 and superseded by Denney by 1342-51.

twelfth century. It is uncertain, therefore, whether the founder was himself
responsible for the unusual configuration of Malling's east end, or whether a
later initiative of building emphasised a connection to the nunnery's founder
and see.

Links to a particular patron or benefactor are often fragmentary. In
excavated material this is most frequently represented through heraldic devices
on ceramic tiles, for example those of the Uffords at Campsea Ash (Sherlock
1970.133). The Augustinian nunneries of Goring and Burnham have both yielded
tiles bearing the arms of Richard of Cornwall, the founder of Burnham who
installed nuns from Goring to Burnham. Extant stained glass is rare, but at St
Helen's Bishopsgate there is a group of fifteenth century roundels, including
those of the merchant Sir John Crosby and his wife, and the Grocer's company.
Bishopsgate boasted unusual patronage for a nunnery: it was supported by
London's merchants, mayors and guilds.

Monastic patrons had the privilege of burial within the monastery to which
t ey were affiliated: a custom with direct archaeological implications. Families
were frequently buried at a particular house, with any transferral of the chosen
p ace of burial being viewed as an act of disaffection. Extant wills have
provided examples of men of baronial rank arranging for their wives to be
buried at nunneries of modest means. William III, son of Walter Beauchamp,
bequeathed monies to Cook Hill Nunnery (Worcs), where his wife Isabel was buried
(Golding 1986. 66). Geoffrey fitzPeter, an Earl of Essex, buried his wife at
Gilbertine Chicksands (Bedfords) and then had her remains reinterred at his own
Gilbertine foundation at Shouldham (Norfolk) (ibid. 64). Joan, Queen of Scotland
(sister of Henry III), requested her own burial at Tarrant Keynes and bequeathed
land to the house. Excavations at Higham Nunnery (Kent) revealed a twelfth
century coffin (with raised cross-head lid) reburied in the eastern cloister
alley (Tester 1967). Its primary burial was of a male 25-35 years old. A male
commanding burial in an impressive coffin, within the cloisters of a nunnery,
must have been a noteworthy benefactor of the house. Excavation in the church at
Campsea Ash produced a high quality fourteenth century Purbeck marble tomb
(Sherlock 1970). Its stylistic date may support a tentative connection to the
Earls of Ufford, known patrons of the house. At the Minories, excavations of the
church uncovered a tomb known to be that of Anne Mowbray (Ellis 1985). Grave
slabs, coffins and tombs excavated from English nunneries seldom provide the

inscriptions necessary to identify the individuals commemmorated as nuns[18] or
patrons, although a considerable number of priests' slabs, with chalice
depicted, survive (for example at Marrick, N Yorks, and Brewood, Shrops). This
is in contrast to the excavated Scottish nunnery, Elcho (Perths), which yielded
a portion of grave slab with a band lettered "ICHONUNO", presumably identifying
a nun of the house (Reid and Lye 1988). Excavations at the church of a French
nunnery, Fontenelle in Mainge, produced several funerary monuments with
inscriptions, including an abbess and female patrons (Beaussart and Maliet
1983).

It has been suggested elsewhere that female religious patrons would have
preferred burial in a nunnery, rather than in a male community (Hirst and Wright
1983, 62). If such a pattern can be proven through sexing of excavated
skeletons, it may equally have been a preference on the part of monasteries for
m n not to accept women patrons for burial.[19] The skeletal population of a
nunnery church and cemetery may represent any combination of individuals who
were nuns, lay-sisters, servants, patrons, children attending a nunnery school,
and relatives of the nuns. Hitherto only the nunneries of St Mary's Winchester
and Clementhorpe (York) have provided large assemblages of skeletons[20] which have
been scientifically studied. While recent research in physical anthropology has

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18 An exception is the coffin lid at Romsey of Abbess Joan Icthe (d. 1349).
Nuns' monuments sometimes survive after their removal to a parish church.
A thirteenth century slab to Dame Maud de Merrette, nun of Cannington,
survives in Combe Flory church (Somerset). A brass to Margaret Dely, nun of
Syon (d. 1561) is in Isleworth Church (Middlesex); a nun's brass was recorded
at Clerkenwell before its demolition. Effigies of abbesses survive from
Sinningthwaite (Bilton parish church, N Yorks), Polesworth (parish church
Warwicks), and Wherwell (parish church Hamps). A slab to Elizabeth Pudsey,
last prioress of Esholt, is built into the eighteenth century house.
Fragments of mortuary slabs associated with Minchin Buckland (Somerset)
survive (Burrow 1985).

19. Certain orders resisted allowing women into the monastic church. Cistercian
Meaux and Abbey Dore were relaxing these prohibitions only by the fourteenth
century (Coldstream 1986,158). The Grandmontines allowed women only as far as
the pulpitum (Graham and Clapham 1924,191). Most strict were the Carthusians. In
1438 Mount Grace refused permission for women to enter the church (Hogg
1987,66). London Charterhouse had a special chapel to the west of the nave for
use by women (Thompson 1930).

20. Assemblages from Elstow, Polsloe and Carrow await completion. Excavations at
Usk (Gwent) yielded 72 inhumations north of the buried chancel (Medieval
Archaeol 32 1988,312).

questioned the precision of current methods for ageing skeletal material, methods used to determine sex are still considered reliable (Cox 1989). Burials from within the church of St Mary's Winchester showed fairly equal proportions of male (n=8) and female (n=11) (Brown 1986, unpub). The cemetery area of Clementhorpe produced 139 adult skeletons of which 67% were female (n=89) and 33% were male (n=43) (Dawes unpub). Because the Clementhorpe assemblage derives from the cemetery, it might be expected to represent a more diverse social group than the sample from St Mary's Church, containing, for example, female servants of the nunnery. Both sites have higher proportions of males than might be expected, and provide comparisons with the predominantly male assemblages from ma e religious institutions. Examples of the latter include Bordesley Abbey; H lton Abbey; and the friaries of the Oxford Dominicans, Oxford Franciscans and Guildford Dominicans, where the ratio of men to women was roughly 5:1 (Lambrick 1985, 203). Proportions of children at Winchester and Clementhorpe were low, 20% an 15%, respectively, to be expected in a monastic assemblage. Some degree of s tial distinction between social groups may be suggested for both sites. At W nchester, female skeletons in elaborate chalk and limestone coffins were situated towards the east end. An abbess, buried with crozier, was located in th south aisle. Male graves occurred in the north aisle in a neat N-S row. A similar spatial pattern may be suggested for Carrow Priory (Norwich), where nine burials were excavated in the choir and side chapels. All of these were adult women (Medieval Archaeol 26 1982, 196). Burials at Clementhorpe took place in coffins, or shrouds, and in two cases stone cists were used. The large group from Clementhorpe is said to fit into two zones: one ordered and one disordered (Dawes unpub). The more ordered area may represent burial within the nunnery church, possibly corresponding with areas of the nave, aisles and chapels. A larger proportion of male and children's graves occur in the disordered area, whereas the ordered area contained ten skulls with bands of bronze staining, which Dawes suggests may have been caused by the headress fastening worn by a nun.

Within nunneries it seems that more equal proportions of male and female patrons were accepted for burial, although certain areas were designated only for the burial of women (possibly nuns). These spatial distinctions, in addition to the observed differences between groups buried in a church and cemetery, may be further elaborated with reference to funerary monuments in extant nunnery churches. Several churches became fully parochial at the Dissolution. Some of

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these retained the nuns' church. St Helen's Bishopsgate possesses _in situ_
funerary monuments of the nuns' and parish churches. In the nuns' church are
medieval brasses of priests (Nicholas Wotton 1482; John Breux c1500); a lady in
heraldic mantle with cross, c1535; and a full length armoured effigy of John
Leventhorpe, 1510. While priests and individuals were buried and commemorated in
the nuns' church, married couples were remembered in chapels of the parish
church (for example, Thomas and Margaret Williams, 1495; civilian and wife,
c1450). Extant wills occasionally record a testator's chosen place of burial
within a nunnery church. Most often chapels are cited, although a chaplain of
Wherwell requested burial in the nave (Coldicott 1989, 107). Three testators
associated with Clementhorpe requested burial before the altar of the Blessed
Virgin Mary, situated in the nuns' choir (Dobson and Donaghey 1984, 23); another
chose to be buried in the cloister of the nunnery near the grave of her sister.

Founders concerned with promoting a particular order may have ensured that
t e design of a nunnery followed filial guidelines. Nuneaton (Warwicks) mirrors
t e mother church of Fontevrault in layout. Fontevrault church was completed
c1150 in the Angevin style. Its wide unaisled nave met the crossing tower of a
c uciform church (Boase 1971). Similarly, Nuneaton was built as an unaisled
cruciform church with crossing tower. Much of the church was rebuilt in the
thirteenth century, and again by Brakspear in the nineteenth. Enough survives,
however, to indicate that the arrangements were dissimilar to those established
for the English double houses of the Gilbertines, or standard nunnery churches
(see Chapter 4.1).

Excavation of the church of the Minories in London has revealed that it
possessed an unusual semi-octagonal east end (Ellis 1985). The Franciscans
displayed no filial control over the design of friary churches. Their
characteristic traits were limited to a long preaching nave divided from the
friars' choir by a walking place. The closest analogy for the Minories church,
however, is Winchelsea Franciscan Friary (Sussex), founded about thirty years
previously. When Blanche of Navarre established her Franciscan nunnery, she may
have looked for architectural prototypes from within the order. Excavations at
Denney (Cambs) (Christie and Coad 1980) have shown that the Countess of

Pembroke altered the arrangements of an existing monastic complex[21] to institute an open court cloister typical of Franciscan architecture. The nuns' refectory may have incorporated the pulpit required in mendicant dining practices, from which readings would take place. Above the north doorway is a blocked aperture which corresponds with a north annex shown on an eighteenth century engraving by Buck (Poster and Sherlock 1987, 79), and interpreted as a possible pulpit and gallery.

Similarities might be expected between nunneries founded within the same family, for example those of the de Arches in Yorkshire. The landscape situations of Nun Monkton, to the north-west of York, and Nun Appleton, to the s uth-west, are markedly similar. Both are fairly inaccessible, approached by long roads which lead to no other settlement. Both nunneries are sited on slight rises, surrounded by flat, low-lying marshy land, and adjoining rivers: N nkeeling (N Humbs) was perched above the marshy surrounds of Holderness. Much of the church of Nun Monkton survives as a parish church in use. Like many nunnery churches, it is an aisleless parallelogram. It possesses fabric of exceptional quality for a Yorkshire nunnery (plate 3). The west front consists of a fine doorway of five orders, flanked by double niches to either side, decorated by waterleaf capitals. Above are three long Early English lancets, incorporating dog-tooth ornament. The west tower rises above the top of the west gable, but is included within the west bay of the nave. The entire church is constructed in fine limestone ashlar. The west front was apparently executed in at least two phases: the lower stage c1170, topped by a phase of c1220-40. Recent excavations at Nun Appleton (W Yorks Archaeol Service 1988, unpub) have revealed foundations of stone buildings to the north and east of the seventeenth century house. The monastic cemetery was located in association with a possible church. This E-W orientated structure had substantial foundations of large, finely-tooled limestone blocks. Fragments of worked stone recovered include keeled capitals and a water-holding base _in situ_ (c1180-1200) (plate 4). The excavated structures and quality of finish are comparable to the fabric at Nun Monkton. While the region possessed a number of sources for limestone (Senior

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21. Denney was established first as a house of Benedictine monks (1159). It was passed to the Knights Templar (1170), during which time it served as their main English infirmary. When the order was suppressed in 1308, the property passed to the Knights Hospitallers, from whom the Countess purchased it in 1324.

1989, fig 1), these were seldom exploited for building nunneries. Most, for example Wilberfoss and Arthington, were constructed largely in timber. An engraving of Nunkeeling made in 1784 (fig 21) shows the parochial church before it was rebuilt. It is not clear whether this was the remainder of a crossing and aisled nave, or the original east end of the church. The late moulded capitals of the northern arcade were re-incorporated into the rebuilt (and now ruined) church (plate 5). The quality of work at Nun Monkton, Nun Appleton and Nunkeeling, and their topographical similarity may be linked to their familial tie.

In summary, certain tendencies have been observed in the provision made for religious women, and in the institutional character of nunneries. Nunneries were relatively rare in later medieval England, being outnumbered by monasteries for men and friaries by six to one. Nunneries and double houses show many features in contradistinction to monasteries for men. Saxon and Anglo-Norman religious provision may have tolerated a greater degree of informality, including spontaneous (non-regular) foundations and a more casual approach to mixed reformed communities.

The filiation of nunneries was insecure. Filial preferences differed from male houses especially with regard to the Augustinians, whose pastoral o ligations may have been considered inappropriate to nunneries. The largely Benedictine identity of English nunneries contrasts with the smaller nunnery populations of Scotland and Wales, which were predominantly Cistercian; and Ireland, where most nunneries followed the Rule of St Augustine. The fashion for founding English nunneries peaked about a generation after their male counterparts. This was largely due to the social and economic identity of nunneries and their founders. In certain regions, especially Yorkshire and the Midlands, nunneries proliferated where lesser gentry had opportunities to establish modest religious houses. These nunneries, when considered according to the numbers of inmates that each house was responsible to support, were substantially poorer than monasteries for men. It is usually not apparent whether founders and benefactors of nunneries imprinted their own tastes on the architecture of the house.

Regarding burial, secular patrons, relatives, servants and pupils of nunneries do appear to have been buried within their precincts. Where evidence exists, it seems that funerary arrangements were the reverse of those operating within monasteries for men - adult women were buried in the east end of the

church, with mixed burials in the nave, and more equal proportions of male burials in the cemetery outside. Burial at nunneries was less sexually exclusive than that at male religious institutions. Lay support for nunneries came from specific social groups, rather than from women representing all levels of society. Equally, pious women at the highest social level more often chose to support male (rather than female) monasteries. Benefaction of medieval religious houses observed no clear boundaries according to the sex of either patron or inmates.

Figure 2a

Foundations
of Monasteries
after the
Conquest

Figure 2b
Foundations
of Nunneries
after the
Conquest

Figure 2c

Distribution of Pre-Conquest
Double Houses

● double house

○ possible double house

Distribution of Late
Saxon Nunneries

● documented

○ place-name

▲ cell at male house

■ DB

Figure 2e

Value of Benedictine
Houses in 1535

(£)

800 - 1200 (2 8%)
450--800 (2.8%)
300--450 (4.2%)
200--300 (5.6%)
100--200 (7.0%)
0--10 (2.4%)
10--20 (22.3%)
nuns
50--100 (25.1%
25--50 (27.9%)

1200+ 13.0%)
0--10 (3.3%)
10--20 (6.5%)
800--1200 8.9%)
25--50 (14.6%)
450--800 (11.4%)
monks
50--100 (10.6%)
300--450 (6.5%)
200--300 4.9%)
100--200 (20.3%)

Figure 2f   Numbers of Inmates in
              Benedictine Houses

30+ (7.0%)   0-5 (11.3%)   nuns
20-30 (5.6%)

6-10 (32.8%)

10-20 (43.4%)

30+ (16.2%)   monks

0-5 (35.4%)

20-30 (16.2%)

10-20 (18.6%)   6-10 (13.7%)

Figure 2g   Approximate Value per

Inmate in Benedictine Houses

Figure 2h Dimensions of Nunnery Cloisters

Distribution of Later Medieval Nunneries

Holystone
Guyzance

Lambley
Newcastle

Armathwaite

Neasham
Handale
Baysdale
Marrick
Arden
Rosedale
Ellerton
Keldholme
Seton
Moxby
Wykeham
Yedingham
Nun Monkton
York
Wilberfoss
Nunkeeling
Sinningthwaite
Nunburnholme
Arthington
Thicket
Swine
Esholt
Nun Appleton
Kirklees
Gokewell
Nun Cotham
Grimsby
Hampole
Heynings
Orford
Wallingwells
Fosse
Legbourne
Greenfield
Broadholme
Stainfield
Chester
Stixwould

Stone
Derby
Blithbury
Langley
Blackborough
Brewood (Staffs)
Stamford
Marham
Carrow
Farewell
Grace Dieu
Brewood (Shrops)
Polesworth
Crabhouse
Bungay
Nuneaton
Flixton
Henwood
Rothwell
Chatteris
Redlingfield
Denney
Thetford
Wroxall
Hinchingbrooke
Swaffham Bulbeck
Bruisyard
Westwood
Northampton
Limebrook
Pinley
Harrold
Cambridge
Campsea Ash
Whistones
Catesby
Elstow
Ickleton
Cook Hill
Sewardsley
Elstow
Aconbury
Studley
Flamstead
Markyate
Castle
Wix
Hedingham
St Mary de Pré
Usk
Godstow
St Margarets
Cheshunt
Clerkenwell
Littlemore
Sopwell
Bishopsgate
Little Marlow
Barking
Minories
Goring
Kilburn
Stratford
Bristol
Kington St
Michael Burnham
Minster
Ankerwyke
Lacock
Dartford
Higham
Davington
Barrow Gurney
Wintney
Broomhall
Malling
Amesbury
Wherwell
Canterbury
Cannington
Winchester
Rusper
Buckland
Wilton
Romsey
Easebourne
Canonsleigh
Ilchester
Shaftesbury
Tarrant
Polsloe

Cornworthy

Figure 2j

Distribution of Post-Conquest Double Houses

■ Marton

● Watton

○ Swine

Tunstall ●   North Ormsby

Heynings ○Sixhills● ● Alvingham

Broadholme ■   ○ Legbourne

Bullington ● ○ Stixwould

● Catley

Haverholme ●

Blithbury ■

Sempringham ●

■ Blackborough

◉ Shouldham

● Nuneaton

Catesby

Westwood ●   ■   ■ Harrold

● Chicksands

Syon
●

● Kintbury

● Amesbury

● Buckland

● double house

○ quasi double house

■ temporary double house

Figure 2k

Status of Nunneries
at the Dissolution

● £50

○ £50 - 100

■ £100 - 200

▲ £200

Figure 21 . Engravings of Swine

and Nunkeeling (1784)

PRIORY CHURCH OF S.t MARY, SWINE, FROM THE N.W.

As it appeared 1784.—From Dade's Plate.

NUNKEELING PRIORY CHURCH, FROM THE N.E.

As it appeared 1784 from Dade's Plate.

(from Poulson 1840)

Chapter 3

NUNNERIES AS SETTLEMENTS

3.1 The City a Desert?

Certain patterns may be discerned in the placement of nunneries in relation
to other settlements. Butler (1987, 168) has noted that of the c150 nunneries
in England and Wales only 25 may be termed in any sense urban. Few of these
were within the heart of towns; the minority which were so tended to be
pre-Conquest nunneries of Wessex that had attracted commerce and settlement,
like Shaftesbury, Romsey, Wimborne, Wilton and Amesbury. Post-Conquest
foundations were mainly suburban, either on the fringes of towns or further out
in the surrounding fields. The exception was the Benedictine nunnery of Usk,
placed in the centre of the town near the market place.

The location of a nunnery in relation to a medieval town is sometimes
indicated by early maps, for example John Speed's The Theatre of the Empire of
Great Britaine (1611-12). Urban nunneries were generally on the outer limits of
settlement, at least as such limits stood at the end of the Middle Ages.
Nunneries at Norwich (Carrow), Stamford, Cambridge and Derby are among those
which occupied such positions. Speed showed the nunnery of St Sepulchre,
Canterbury, located on the Dover road to the south-east of the town. Its
situation was not uncommon, according to Speed about 270 paces from the city
gate: just beyond the urban fringe. Clementhorpe (York) was to the south of the
medieval city, contained in a bend of the River Ouse. Nunneries within city
walls were rare. St Mary's Chester was in the south-west angle of the walls
inside the perimeter of the castle. The nunnery of Ilchester (Somerset) was
surrounded by the town wall; this house seems to have been founded as a hospital
around an existing parish church (Hugo 1867, 15). A similar detachment was
observed in the siting of Scandinavian nunneries. For instance St Peter's Lund,
(modern Sweden) was located at the western perimeter of the medieval town. At
Roskilde (Denmark) the Cistercian Fröaekloster was at the southern limit of the
town, and the Franciscan nunnery of St Clare stood at its north-west periphery.

Within their suburban context, nunneries maintained a further sense of
separation. St Radegund's, Cambridge, was founded within a bend of the River Cam

to the north of the town. In the thirteenth century St Radegund's remained the
least populated parish in Cambridge (Rubin 1987, 107). Such severence could have
social implications. Taxation lists from fifteenth century Winchester indicate
that St Mary's Abbey provided a haven for a large community of women who

> "were employed by nuns or were attracted to that quarter of the city,
> where Colebrook Street itself houses a topographically enclosed community
> on three sides of the abbey, by piety or in search of security" (Keene
> 1985, 388).

More common were the extramural nunneries sited in fields beyond the town (de la
pré), such as Derby Kings Mead, Polsloe (near Exeter), Northampton de la Pré and
St Mary de Pré (St Albans). The London nunneries were located in open fields on
the margins of settlement. The Minories was founded on the site of a Roman
cemetery (Collins 1961); Clerkenwell shared an ecclesiastical enclave with St
John's (Hospitallers) and the Charterhouse. Godstow was sited in the Port Meadow
to the north-west of Oxford. Whistones was in the northern suburbs of Worcester
with the manor of Ladies Aston (Knowles and Hadcock 1953, 227). The nunnery at
Bristol was placed on St Michael's Hill, by the side of the road running north
out of the city.

Urban nunneries retained their separateness despite the growth of towns.
Suburban and extramural nunneries were often on the rivers and roads which
formed main routes of communication into towns. They were distinct, yet
dependent on the nexus of the market. Their placement outside the protection of
the city walls may seem surprising, for superficially this could be thought to
be the most vulnerable location for a house of religious women. But the tendency
for nunneries to distance themselves from towns had precedents.

In France the earliest recorded nunneries, more accurately described as
sixth century double houses, were suburban. Caesarius's foundation at Arles was
moved from its original position in the suburbs to within the walls; similarly
St Salaberga's moved from outside Langres to within Laon (Schulenberg 1989, 274
FN 27)[1]. It has been assumed that these nunneries were relocated to provide
greater physical protection (ibid). Similar uprooting may have occurred at early
English houses. There is some disagreement, for example, over the original
location of the nunnery at Bath. It is generally assumed that the seventh
century house lay inside the walls near the later site of St Peter's. But an

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1.MGH: Scriptorum Rerum Merovingicarum 3:467; 5:56-7.

alternative siting has been postulated outside the walls, in the area of the unenclosed Roman settlement. Although Cunliffe (1984, 348) has dismissed the alternative site as less likely, such a location would parallel the first positions of sixth century Merovingian nunneries.

With the acceleration of urban growth in the ninth and tenth centuries the process of relocation was reversed, with nunneries seeking greater security in the isolation of the fields beyond towns. This process is demonstrated by the late Saxon nunnery at Chichester. This brief and little known foundation was displaced in 1075 when the cathedral moved from Selsey to Chichester (VCH Sussex II 1907, 47). Urban growth and male clericalism left little opportunity for the isolation required by women's religious communities. More conducive surroundings might be found in the medieval countryside.

3.2 In a Wilderness

"It seemed to [the first prioress] that Brian de Retteville's choice of site had been unrealistically too close to the mind of Saint Benedict - since it was a nunnery he had founded. Men with their inexhaustible interest in themselves may do well enough in a wilderness, but the shallower egoism of women demands some nourishment from the outer world..."

In her novel The Corner that Held Them (1948, 8) Sylvia Townsend Warner described life in a small medieval nunnery. Her imagined house was perched on a slight rise amidst fenland, tucked in the loop of a river - a prospect uncannily close to the majority of rural nunneries. Many were at home in waterlands, sited at the highest points of marshes (Minster in Sheppey, Kent; Barking, Essex; Swine and Nunkeeling, Humbs, before the eighteenth and nineteenth century draining of Holderness) or fenland (Crabhouse, Norfolk; Denney and Waterbeach, Cambs). Likewise the double houses of the Gilbertines were set in the Lincolnshire fens or the uplands bordering the fens. Houses like Denney, on the fen edge, and Little Marlow (Bucks), atop a sandy rise in marshy land, conveyed an impression of being islands. Nunneries were frequently partially surrounded by rivers given to flooding. When viewed from their long, isolated approaches (for example, Nun Monkton [plate 7] and Nun Appleton, N Yorks) these flooded places were islands. Some nunneries were placed on tongues of higher land in flood meadows (for example Godstow, Oxfords; Yedingham, N Yorks; Lyminster,

Sussex; Kington St Michael, Wilts). Others, such as Moxby (N Yorks), used natural or diverted water courses to form two or three sides of the precinct.

Isolation was sometimes achieved in the desolate surroundings of the moors, for example at Handale, Baysdale, Arden, Thicket and Rosedale (N Yorks). Hill-top nunneries asserted their own type of apartness. Minchin Barrow (Somerset) was on the crest of a hill above a valley; Shaftesbury (Dorset) commands lofty views over the downs. The Welsh nunnery of Llanllugan (Montgom) was set on a high river cliff overlooking the Rhiw streams.

Occasionally nunneries occupy classic monastic sites. Minchin Bucklard (Somerset), Brewood (Shrops) [plate 6], Marrick (N Yorks) and Orford (Lincs), for example, are set in the sides of river valleys. Flat sites lying on river valley bottoms include Catesby (Northants), Wykeham (N Yorks) and Burnham (Berks). These flat sites were often moated, providing drainage of lowland sites underlain by clay, and precinct boundaries that offered symbolic and limited defensive merits. A considerable number of nunneries were moated - possibly a reflection of their social origins within the gentry. Moat construction expanded 1150 - 1200 when many of these nunneries were founded (for example, Cook Hill, Worcs, Sinningthwaite, N Yorks, and Pinley, Warwicks), and peaked 1200 - 1325 (Le Patourel and Roberts 1978, 46), taking in moated foundations such as Bruisyard, Flixton (Suffolk) and Waterbeach (Cambs). The labour expenditure required in moat construction made them an aristocratic symbol to which the gentry increasingly aspired (Dyer 1989, 107).

Medieval nunneries were liminal places - located at the physical and psychological margins of society. To a degree their prospects resemble the places craved by early medieval ascetics. In Britain the solitude and penitence of desert eremiticism was translated into surroundings of marsh, fen and moor. The ascetic tradition had always included women, metaphorically in the lives of Mary of Egypt and Pelagia, and the apocryphal life of Mary Magdalene; materially in the Saxon hermitages of the women Pega (Peakirk, Cambs) and Modwen (Andressey Island, River Trent)[2]. Were the later medieval nunneries sited in recollection of such asceticism? Or, as recent feminist interpretations suppose, in order to protect the virginity of their inmates (Schulenberg 1984; 1989, 285)? In

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2.Felix's Life of Guthlac records Pega's eighth century fenland hermitage;
Modwen's ninth century chapel and well to St Andrew are noted in the Vitae
Modwenae (-1151) (BM Royal MS. 15 B. IV) by Abbot Geoffrey Malleterres of
Burton Abbey, which incorporated four earlier lives of St Modwen (Rye 1902,38).

actuality this treasured chastity was normally left undefended. Only Shaftesbury (Dorset) applied for a licence to crenellate their church and belfry (Coulson 1982, 94). Moats and walls were seldom built to defensive specifications. Border nunneries, like Ellerton (N Yorks) and Holystone (Northumb) were sacked and burnt. Previously where the marginal nature of nunneries has been observed, it has been explained with reference to economic constraints. For example, Thompson (1984, 133) states simply that "[nuns] were ... less fortunate in their choice of sites than their brothers". The nuns occasionally complained of their lot. In 1411 Easebourne (Sussex) cited "the sterility of the lands, meadows and other property of the priory, which is situated in a solitary, waste and thorny place" (Power 1922, 177).

It is likely that patrons determined the situation of nunneries, according to an accepted social norm. Monasteries for men were sometimes endowed with marshy, inhospitable holdings. Where this happened, in contrast to the nunneries, male houses initiated programmes of land reclamation. At Oseney Abbey (Oxfords), for example, the outer court area was reclaimed from marsh in the twelfth century, and the initially constricted precinct was developed by drainage of lands (Sharpe 1985). English nunneries do not appear to have practised land reclamation. Where flooding of the site could not be tolerated, it was periodically abandoned (for example, Crabhouse), or, less often, transferred to a new site (for example, Waterbeach to Denney). Similar marginal sites were chosen for French nunneries, although excavations at Coyroux (Diocese of Limoges) have revealed a more active approach to site management. Successive sequences of terracing and flooding absorbed most of the nunnery's resources (Bond and Maines 1988, 800; Barrières 1984).

Certain orders provided explicit statutes requiring the isolation of nunneries. In 1216 the Cistercian general chapter laid down that a nunnery must be at least six leagues from a male abbey and ten from another nunnery (Williams 1975, 155). But the Cistercian statutes were largely irrelevant to conditions in England, as those nunneries which had fashioned themselves according to Cistercian principles had already been founded in isolation. In France and Ireland, to the contrary, Cistercian nunneries had sprung up beside male houses (Berman 1988, 44; Stalley 1987, 45-6). Unofficial twin houses were established at Mellifont and Jerpoint. In 1228 the monks were warned by Stephen of Lexington to remove the nuns, "for as long as they remain next to the abbey, we shall place the whole monastery under interdict" (Stalley 1987, 45-6). It is likely

that the nuns at these houses had churches separate from the monks. At Jerpoint a rectangular structure c182m north of the abbey church, assumed to be a capella ante portas (ibid, 247), may originally have served this function. In 1137 the General Chapter of the Premonstratensians, originally an order of double houses, decreed the separation of men's and women's houses (Bolton 1983, 84). In England the unofficial twin houses had already disbanded. For example, the cell of nuns beside Benedictine St Albans had been removed to Sopwell by 1140. The nuns from Augustinian Marton had moved to nearby Moxby (N Yorks) by c1167 - 1180. Associated houses of male and female Hospitallers continued to be founded, for example Countess Maud's Norfolk foundations at Carbrook Parva (-1180: sisters) and Carbrook Magna (1182: knights) (LeStrange 1973, 34-5). Hospitals served by sisters were established near preceptories: a possible extant hospital chapel survives associated with Clanfield (Oxfords) (Blair 1985, 213). Shortly after 1180 the sisters from all English Hospitaller houses were removed to Minchin Buckland (Somerset). Once established, the spatial and administrative relationship of nunneries to male houses generally remained remote. Most often their contact was competitive, with the nunneries engaged in litigation to retain advowsons appropriated by monasteries for men (Graves 1984, 22-2; Nichols 1984, 242-3).

Although nunneries remained distant from both towns and male houses, they often had close topographical and social links to villages. Occasionally an early nunnery began life in isolation, only to attract village settlement to it. Chatteris (Cambs) is an example. Some of the northern nunneries appear to have been planned in conjunction with, or incorporating, villages. Nun Monkton village lay with the apex of the green at the gate of the nunnery precinct (plate 7). Nunkeeling (Humbs) was established immediately to the south of an existing village. Field survey has recognised a village street and tofts to the south of the precinct at Stainfield (Lincs) (Everson 1989 fig 1). To the east of the precinct of Orford (Lincs) stretches a single-sided village settlement (ibid, fig 2).

Many rural nunneries were sited at the periphery of a village. This enabled the nunnery to share its church with a parochial congregation (Chapter 4.1), and provided a source of labour for the nunnery. In addition to hiring in occasional labour for a harvest or shearing, nunneries like Minster in Sheppey (Kent), Nun Cotham (Lincs), and Polesworth (Warkwicks) employed whole villages (Power 1922, 159). These villages were not entirely agricultural. Weavers, tailors, a wright

and a smith were taxed at Nun Monkton in 1334 (Beresford and St Joseph 1979,
11).

3.3 The Nunnery Estate

Like any monastery, nunneries were in possession of parcels of land and
holdings which made up their estate. Ideally a monastic estate was composed of
both upland and lowland components, resulting in a balanced and integrated
variety of agricultural activities. Like any secular manor, the nunnery estate
was an administrative unit, and not necessarily a cohesive areal entity. But
its constituency was more secure than that of a secular estate, since
transferral through marriage and inheritence was not an issue (Moorhouse 1989).

Monastic estates included the 'home farm' adjacent to the religious house,
and more distant holdings which could include granges, fisheries, mineral
workings and mills. In general, a grange may be defined as a consolidated block
of monastic demesne land, varying from c30 ha to c2000 ha or more in size,
organised as an estate farm. Granges often served specialised functions. These
included: agrarian farms, bercaries (sheep farms), vaccaries (cattle ranches),
horse studs and industrial complexes (mining and iron workings). A well-planned
and managed monastic estate would include several types of out-station or
outlying grange, in addition to the home farm. Together the granges provided
food and raw materials consumed by the religious house, and produced surpluses
for sale as profit. From its appearance in the twelfth century, the monastic
estate system aimed to enable at least the self-sufficiency of rural
monasteries. Norton Priory (Cheshire), for example, was self-sufficient in most
foodstuffs, water, fuel (wood) and building materials (clay, marl, sand,
stone). Materials sought from beyond the area immediately adjacent to the manor
included lime, slate, lead and iron (Greene 1989, 60-2). Nunneries were
similarly equipped, if on a smaller scale. Quarries were held by Marrick, and
Kirklees (W Yorks) at Stone House. Esholt (W Yorks) leased out its quarries at
Stone Top from 1360 - 1440 (Stephen Moorhouse pers com).

The monastic estate can be studied according to the composition of its
holdings, the process and sequence of their acquisition and strategies of
subsequent management (Platt 1969; Moorhouse 1989; Biddick 1989). Outlying
holdings and specialist granges generated records of management by the

monastic landlord[3]. The home farm generated little documentation, since transfers to the monastic kitchen or cellar could go unrecorded. Its proximity to the religious nucleus, however, allows easier identification on the ground. Thus, the home farm can often be best studied archaeologically. Sources for the nunnery estate, therefore, must include a document-based assessment of outlying holdings, and archaeological survey of extant outer court areas.

The slight survival of documents associated with nunneries (Thompson 1984) has hindered assessments of their economy. The major synthesis was provided by Power (1922); more detailed studies of individual nunneries have appeared more recently. Hitherto, historians have in general examined nunnery estates as components within the overall income of the nunnery (temporalities), with little emphasis on the actual make up and workings of the landscape.

Power used two main sources: Valor Ecclesiasticus, and account rolls of several individual houses. These sources are strongly biased in two ways. First, the account rolls and Valor are dated from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, respectively, so that nunnery estates were studied only in their latterday form. Hence, their primary nature and early development were neglected. Second, the survival of documents corresponds roughly to the status of the nunnery (Thompson 1984, 140). This means that those nunneries with extant account rolls tend to be the small minority of wealthy communities (for example Syon, Barking and Catesby). From the 100 nunneries surveyed in Valor, Power observed that the geographical spread of a nunnery's holdings had a direct relation to its status; and that although 22 nunneries owned urban property, about 90% of the assessed value of urban property controlled by nunneries was held by the London houses. In order to balance Power's analysis, more recent approaches have studied extant cartularies and early endowments.

The largest monastic landholders tended to be pre-Conquest foundations (Butler 1987, 167). Nunneries were no exception. Holdings of these abbeys were recorded as manors in Domesday Book. Wherwell's (Hants) possessions were all within a ten kilometre radius of the abbey (Coldicott 1989, 27). This distribution reflects an initial endowment of consolidated blocks of land. Winchester Nunnaminster and Romsey (Hants), in comparison, had more scattered holdings, possibly acquired piecemeal. Chatteris (Cambs) held lands in Suffolk,

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3.A terminus ante quem for grange buildings may be established through monastic chronicles, account rolls and manorial documents. A terminus post quem is

Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire in 1086. Few new holdings were added in the next 200 years, and virtually none subsequently (VCH Cambs II 1948). Wealthy southern nunneries held large arable farms, often at a considerable distance from the house itself. These were productive units in addition to serving as collection points for renders. Linked with Shaftesbury, for example, are the stone-built tithe barn and grange at Bradford-on-Avon (Wilts) (plate 8), and the manor and grange of Tisbury, which includes a great barn, an external and internal gatehouse and the original domestic range (Platt 1969). Smaller nunneries may have commanded one or more less specialised granges. Grace Dieu (Leics), for example, held Merril Grange, within the original lordship of Belton that was granted to the house. The 1539 inventory of Merril suggests a mixed arable and pastoral economy. The grange itself housed cattle, pigs and horses, and provided storage for barley, peas, oats and hay (Hartley 1987, 10). Nunneries sometimes had satellites held as rectories. Yedingham (N Yorks) held the church at Sinnington, where a large stone-built hall stands to the north of the church (plate 9). The hall incorporates fabric of the late twelfth century (wall and window) (plate 10) and later work. Its scale suggests a substantial residence which served as collection and staging point to the nunnery.

For the majority of nunneries initial endowments were by any standard small. Barking, a Benedictine nunnery of exceptional wealth, held 13 manors (Power 1922, 563). Peterborough Abbey, which might be considered its male equivalent, held 27. Urban nunneries such as Clementhorpe were recipients of grants of small, scattered parcels of land (Dobson and Donaghey 1984, 14). These were difficult to manage, and offered only low financial yields. Northern rural nunneries generally had concentrated local estates. These were acquired soon after the foundation of the house, representing limited donations from the founder's family (Burton 1979, 11). As a result their most substantial holdings were worked as home farms. Marrick, for example, worked the majority of its holdings as home farms at Marrick and Stainmore. A vaccary at Owlands was added by an early grant (Tillotson 1989, 9;11). The Yorkshire nunneries were most commonly granted 'pasture land' in twelfth century charters (Burton 1979, 13). These houses relied heavily upon sheep-farming. Such over-specialisation must

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(Footnote 3 continued from previous page)
sometimes provided by charters, cartularies, registers and coucher-books.

have brought about the nunneries' reliance on marketed foodstuffs. Revenues came from advowsons and rights of multure (Burton 1979, 15); mills were granted in addition to those at the home farm.

Yorkshire nunneries are characterised by their concentrated holdings, their specialisation in wool, and the fossilisation of their possessions early in the history of each house. In contrast, Yorkshire's monasteries for men were more active in instigating their own long-term programmes of land acquisition (Moorhouse 1989). Their estates were widely dispersed and divided into upland and lowland components. Animal husbandry was more diverse. Bolton, for example, had bercaries, vaccaries and produced pigs. Jervaulx was famous for its horse stud-farms. Mineral-rich land was sought for mining and industrial workings, such as Fountains's water-powered bloomery at Bradley (Walton 1931). Permanent iron-working complexes were run by Fountains, Rievaulx, Byland, Selby and Kirkstead (Moorhouse 1981). Coal mining was linked to several houses in South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire (for example, Beauvale Charterhouse).

Certain midland and northern nunneries may have been exceptions to the pattern because of the status of their founders and the original composition of the house. Stixwould (Lincs) was founded 1129 - 1135 by the widow Lucy, Countess of Chester, a noblewoman tenant-in-chief (Graves 1984, 217). Its extant cartulary and twelfth and thirteenth century documents suggest that Stixwould maintained a well-balanced economy of eight granges, involving arable farming, livestock, salt-production and fisheries (ibid, 224). This integrated economy may reflect the original endowment of Stixwould as a 'quasi' double house. In common with lesser northern nunneries, Stixwould was granted land by patrons connected to the founder, and within two generations of the foundation of the nunnery. Likewise the wealthy nunnery of Denney (Cambs) received its grants in a short period. Between 1342 and 1416 this Franciscan nunnery received four manors. After this time land grants ceased (Bourdillon 1926, 29).

Female houses seldom participated in the active acquisition of lands[4]. Their estates were composed largely of twelfth century land grants. Male houses continued to consolidate their holdings into the thirteenth century. From the

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4.During the fourteenth century some nunneries obtained licenses to acquire small parcels of land or rent, for example Pinley in 1328 (VCH Warwicks II 1908, 82), Ickleton in 1393 (VCH Cambs II 1948, 223), Swaffham Bulbeck (ibid, 227), and Higham in 1346 and 1392 (VCH Kent II 1921, 145). These were not programmes organised to control blocks of land.

early fourteenth century many monasteries began to withdraw from direct farming of their estates. Later labour shortages were countered by leasing entire granges to lay-tenants. Many male houses selectively retained arable granges to use as retreat houses. Nunneries leased out all granges and mills other than the home farm (Power 1922, 100; 107 FN 1).

3.4 Home Farms and Outer Courts

The nunnery consisted of the precinct, made up of an inner area of claustral buildings (Chapter 4) and an outer court for subsidiary structures, in addition rural nunneries had associated agricultural settlements known as the home farm. The home farm of a nunnery is likely to have been represented by a number of appurtenances near the outer court, so that the two entities are not always easily distinguished. Entry to the outer court was marked by a gatehouse, such as the extant fifteenth century examples at Canonsleigh and Cornworthy (Devon). Some, like Malling (Kent) and Polesworth (Warwicks), contained the usual separate entry arches for carts and pedestrians. Chapels were sometimes contained above (for example the chapel of the Holy Rood at Barking, Essex), or projecting from the main gatehouse (for example Malling). These were for the use of secular visitors or the priests of the nunnery. Upper chambers were appropriate places for priests or confessors; the gatehouse to the west of the church at Minster in Sheppey (Kent) is recorded as having served this function (Walcott 1868, 301). A single gatehouse appears to have been favoured over the inner and outer gatehouses provided for Cistercian male houses. Almonries, which commonly occur at the gates of monasteries for men, are rarely associated with nunneries. An exception may be Wilton (Wilts), where a fourteenth century section of walling known as 'the Almonry' survives to the west of the present house (Pevsner 1975, 585). Hospitals were occasionally maintained outside the precinct, for example across from the abbey gate at Wilton and Barking (Essex). The spatial relationships between hospitals and precincts at Aconbury (Herefords), and Wherwell (Hants) are unknown (see Chapter 7.2).

The outer court housed guests and servants. Recorded in visitations at Godstow (Oxfords) were the steward, bailiff, rent collector and gatekeeper (Ganz 1972, 152). Subsidiary structures integral to the nunnery were placed here. Excavations at Kirklees (W Yorks) uncovered a stone-built range with the foundations of a circular oven, possibly a brewhouse and bakehouse (Armytage

1908). A late sixteenth century plan of Marrick (N Yorks) shows outbuildings
surrounding three sides of the cloister (fig 3a). While the plan itself refers
to post-Dissolution use of the nunnery, the outbuildings may have retained some
of their original functions. To the west were stables, a pigsty, dovecote,
kennel and slaughter houses; a southern block contained a bakehouse, milk house,
storehouse and workroom. An Elizabethan plan of Chester (fig 3c) shows
arrangements in an urban nunnery. Despite pressures on space which may have
existed within the town walls, Benedictine Chester was provided with a cloister
and two courts. Few of the buildings shown on the plan were labelled. However,
doorways were marked, so that functions can be attributed according to access to
the nuns' cloister. A walled space to the east of the church, communicating with
the dormitory, may have been a private garden for the convent. A large court to
the west of the church was probably a guest court, with entry through a
gatehouse at the western entrance to the precinct. An eastern entry led to a
passage north of the church and to two chambers in the guest court, possibly for
priests. A smaller court west of the nuns' cloister may have accommodated
subsidiary structures.

In principle the monastic home farm enabled the self-sufficiency of the
religious community, producing meat, bread, beer, vegetables and dairy produce
(milk, eggs, cheese and poultry). From extant accounts Power surmised that only
fish and spices needed to be bought in (1922, 119). 'Spices' included imported
foodstuffs like dried fruit (currants, dates, figs, prunes, raisins), almonds
and rice (Dyer 1989, 62). Accounts of the Dissolution surveyors sometimes list
components of the home farm. These often include barns, outbuildings, dovecotes,
orchards, gardens, closes, pasture, meadows and mills. Occasionally the
outbuildings of nunneries survive. Medieval barns are extant at Malling (Kent)
and Barrow Gurney (Somerset), with fragments of a stone-built barn at Minchin
Buckland (Somerset). Wealthier nunneries commanded additional features, for
example the vineyard planted at Wherwell (Hants) (Coldicott 1989, 80). The
extent of the area and features associated with the nunnery can be elucidated
archaeologically. Sources for the study of this area include aerial photography,
field survey and excavation of monastic outer courts.

Aerial photography

   Aerial photographs can assist in precisely locating monastic sites, and

sometimes give an indication of the range of associated features. Nunburnholme
(N Yorks), for example, can be identified beyond the eastern edge of the present
village (plate 11). A light covering of snow reveals a large rectangular
enclosure (an outer court?) with ridge and furrow cultivation to the north, and
a mass of small buildings platforms to the south. A smaller square enclosure to
the south-west may represent the nuns' cloister. Aerial photography can be
useful in identifying the boundaries of nunneries. Grace Dieu, for example, lay
at the foot of a north-facing slope. Its north and west sides were bounded by a
brook (Knowles and St Joseph 1952). The area of earthworks extends approximately
350m E-W X 200m N-S. Earthworks and cropmarks sometimes reveal appurtenances,
especially fishponds and mills, and associated features, including house
platforms and field-systems. Precise dating of these features is seldom achieved
without excavations. For example, platforms adjacent to the cloister at Kirklees
(W Yorks) and to the north-west, south and east of Swaffham Bulbeck (Cambs), may
be post-medieval structures. It has been suggested that the ladder-shaped series
of ditched enclosures at Nun Appleton might represent an earlier medieval
village (plate 12). A series of very large rectangular enclosures adjacent to
the nunnery of Wykeham (N Yorks) could be related to the post-medieval
landscaping of the park (plate 13). These may also, however, be considered as
candidates for medieval stock enclosures.

Certain features are more likely to be contemporary with medieval
nunneries. For example, the supposed dam at Marrick is likely to have assisted
in powering the mill of the home farm. Arable farming at Rosedale (N Yorks) is
suggested by a field of ridge and furrow cultivation to the immediate south-east
of the nunnery precinct (plate 14); a block of fields showing ridge and furrow
is associated with Nun Appleton (plate 15). Small fishponds are sometimes
associated with nunneries, for example Aconbury (Herefords), Bruisyard
(Suffolk), Denney (Cambs) and Grace Dieu (Leics).

More prominent features are often associated with double houses. Fishponds
can be observed at Sempringham, Haverholme, Alvingham (all Lincs), Nuneaton
(Warwicks) and Catley (Lincs). Cropmarks observed at Shouldham (Norfolk) reveal
fishponds within the ditched enclosure (Edwards 1989). Minchin Buckland
(Somerset), arranged as a double preceptory of the Hospitallers, canalised and
diverted a stream for three terraced fishponds (Burrow 1985). The 'quasi' double
house of Swine (Humbs) has a series of fishponds to the west of the extant
church, and a row of narrow rectangular platforms to the north-west (plate 16).

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Swine operated a turbary which produced peat-blocks. Its estate appears to have been equipped with a park-mount - a form of look-out associated with deer parks and secular estates - constructed in peat and clay between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries (Varley 1973, 144-6). The precinct area of Gilbertine Bullington (Lincs) is similar to that of many nunneries, approximately 213m E-W X 260m N-S (Hadcock 1937). Some of the walls of the supposed nuns' cloister can be discerned on aerial photographs. A 30m strip contained within the southern precinct boundary is thought to represent the area of the canons' cloister (ibid). Along the eastern precinct boundary is a series of enclosures, perhaps garths; larger enclosures, possibly for stock, are to the west of the precinct. Fishponds lay within the north-west angle of the precinct, and the remains of structures are indicated about 55m to the north of the cloisters. To the east of the precinct is a moated enclosure.

Field Survey

More detailed evidence is provided by field survey of surviving earthworks. Most easily defined are those precincts bounded by moats, including Flixton (Suffolk) 125m E-W X 175m N-S; Bruisyard (Suffolk) 125m E-W; Waterbeach (Cambs) 152m E-W X 122m N-S; and Sinningthwaite (N Yorks) 190m E-W X 225m N-S. The rectangular moat at Sinningthwaite contains two inner enclosures, tucked into the north-east and south-east corners. These were distinct from the claustral buildings in the centre of the moat, one of which survives. The original entrance to the complex is not clear; several small ponds join the moat around its perimeter.

Comprehensive field survey has been undertaken only at very few nunneries, although recently the RCHME has included a number in its survey programme. Earthworks at Moxby (N Yorks) are likely to represent outer court features. Mackay and Swan (1989) identified three major components: a series of irregular compounds, a moated enclosure and one side of a mill dam. The overlapping compounds were enclosed by low banks; one has a funnelled entrance possibly used in stock control. The mill is associated with features representing a complex system of sluices and by-pass channels. Survey at Stainfield, Orford and Heynings (Lincs) (Everson 1989) suggested precincts on a larger scale than the moated sites listed above, approximately 400m E-W X 250m N-S, 240m X 300m and 180m X 290m, respectively.

Little comparative material exists for double houses. Surveyed earthworks to the east of the church at Nuneaton (Warwicks) appear to be divided by a low ridge running E-W (Andrews et al 1981, 60-2). To the south of the ridge are flat rectangular areas (c25m sq), with hollows, possibly fishponds, to the south. These areas may represent enclosures or garths associated with outbuldings.

Survey at Marton (N Yorks) provides an example of a short-lived double house, which developed into a monastery for men (Mackay and Swan 1989, fig 1). The area of the precinct (170m X 250m) is comparable to those of nunneries, but the density of earthwork features is much greater. Here the River Foss was harnessed for a mill complex to the north-west of the precinct, and a mass of ponds ran in a north-south line to its west. Within the northern boundary of the precinct is a series of enclosures.

Projecting beyond the southern boundary of the canons' precinct at Marton is a moated enclosure, c50m X 15m, set high into the side of the valley (fig 3b). Monastic moats might be used as fishponds or to enclose particular features, such as gardens or orchards (Bond 1990). At Marton the moated area was separate from the spur of land on which the canons' cloister was situated, but near a point where the two areas may have been linked by a ford or causeway. In the north-east corner of the moated enclosure is a building platform with stone rubble foundations. This small self-contained area may have been provided as the nuns' enclosure. It would have been inaccessible from the outer court, approached only by a bridge or causeway from the canons' precinct. The moated area apparently fell into disuse during monastic occupation of the site (ibid). It is suggested that this secluded, self-contained enclosure would have provided ideal accommodation for the nuns, who were removed to Moxby, 2.8 km south, between 1165 - 1180 (Elkins 1988, 118). Moated enclosures associated with other nunneries and double houses may have accommodated specific elements within the community, such as lay-religious or servants. Examples include Sinningthwaite, Bullington, and Nunkeeling (Humbs), where a moated area survives to the south of the cloister.

Excavation

The value of archaeological investigations in outer court areas has been recognised only in recent years. Hence, few nunnery outer courts have been studied. Nevertheless when patched together their findings represent domestic,

service and light industrial activity. The precise function of excavated

structures and their location in relation to the cloister, especially where

urban sites are concerned, is sometimes difficult to determine. At Clerkenwell

(London) an excavated structure with an associated yard surface of rammed gravel

can be identified only as a general service building of the nunnery (Medieval

Archaeol 26 1982, 194). Its replacement by a later chalk cellar, or undercroft,

possibly of the fifteenth century, nevertheless indicates the changing nature of

this area of the nunnery, even if the character of previous use remains

undefined. An excavated two-cell building at the Minories (London) is thought ∟o

have been located in an area to the west of the south range of the cloister. A

stone flag floor sealed a hearth, stone base and lead water pipe. It has been

suggested that this structure functioned as a laundry (DGLA 1986 archive).

The dynamic character of outer court areas is to some extent demonstrated

by excavations at Godstow (Oxfords) and Elstow (Bedfords). A group of

outbuildings to the north of the cloisters at Godstow underwent three major

periods of development (Medieval Archaeol 5 1961, 313). Two timber buildings,

possibly relating to initial phases of the nunnery's occupation, were

constructed in a ditched area. These were replaced by stone structures with a

series of gravel floors and floodsilts. A subsequent rearrangement introduced a

long stone building on a new alignment, and a substantial enclosure wall

containing a row of narrow buildings[5]. At Elstow, stone outbuildings stretched

from the dormitory of the nuns' cloister to a possible jettied structure toward

the stream. Only the excavated stable might be described as an agricultural

building. Service buildings are suggested by drains, sloping stone floors, water

tanks and wells. Others certainly had a domestic purpose, indicated by hearths

and latrines (Baker and Baker 1989, 267). The functions of these buildings may

have changed over time; by the later phases Elstow's outbuildings were taking on

a domestic appearance.

Very little industrial production has been recognised at nunneries.

Elstow's outbuildings produced copper alloy trimmings (ibid). Near the excavated

structures at Clerkenwell, a Kingston Ware crucible (dated to 1270-1350) was

discovered. Intruding into the plough horizons at the Minories was a large

circular bell-casting pit. Contained within it were smashed pieces of clay mould

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5.The excavator dated these phases according to documented events, leading him
to suggest an absence of activity for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

and fourteenth century pottery (Medieval Archaeol 31 1987, 128). Little evidence exists for the production of pottery and tiles, the only proven instance is the Scottish Cistercian nunnery at North Berwick, where an excavated kiln yielded ornamented relief tiles (Richardson 1928; illustrated in Norton 1986, pl 110).

Production may have been on a greater scale in the outer courts of double houses. Stone buildings to the south of the cloisters at Haverholme (Lincs) yielded spindlewhorls, bone bodkins and bobbins, possibly representing weaving and bone-working (Jones 1963 unpub). Tile kilns associated with Haverholme and Shouldham (Norfolk) have been excavated (Smallwood 1978). To the south of the cloister at Nuneaton a possible malthouse/ brewhouse was excavated (Andrews et al 1981, 64). Here, a mortar-lined sunken vat emptied from a chute through an iron pipe in the wall. This structure was not dissimilar to those from male monastic sites. Its location was, however, unusually near the cloisters (ibid).

The features which occur at nunnery home farms (for example, fishponds, stock enclosures, arable fields) and outer courts (timber and stone buildings, vats) are within the range of components associated with male monasteries and secular settlements. But the scale of economic activity which they represent appears to have been insignificant. This remains true even when the components of nunneries are compared with those of fairly modest male counterparts. Field survey at Bordesley Abbey, for example, revealed a precinct area approximately twice that expected for nunneries. The area of the precinct, and the diversity of activities conducted within it, was increased by redirecting the course of the river (Aston and Murton 1976). Large-scale land management and reclamation has not, to date, been demonstrated for nunneries. Excavations in monastic outer courts (for example Thornholme Priory (Lincs) and Grove Priory (Bedfords)) have yielded evidence for a greater range of functions and density of features, with more emphasis on frequent renewal and site re-organisation (Coppack 1989; Baker and Baker 1989). Within nunneries, by contrast, the outer court was characterised partly by domestic occupation. In comparison to male houses, the nunnery was compact. The outer court areas at Nuneaton and Elstow were unusually close to the claustral buildings. A greater variety of features and activities can be put forward for double houses, such as Shouldham, Bullington and Haverholme. Perhaps appropriately, their scales of production were between those recognised for male and female houses.

3.5 Production, Consumption and Labour in Medieval Nunneries

From her knowledge of monastic economies, Power supposed that nunneries, like their male equivalents, produced foodstuffs sufficient to feed the community - in addition to a surplus for sale as profit (1922, 109). In her chosen example of Catesby (Northants), however, the accounts of 1414-5 indicate that profits were made from the sale of wool pells and timber (ibid, 111). Food crops, which included wheat, barley, oats and peas, were stored, consumed, given in alms and kept for seed (ibid, 109). Catesby did not produce surplus food for sale, despite its relatively well-endowed status (initially a house of nuns and canons). The account rolls of Catesby (1414-15) record incoming animals and grain from the home farm (ibid, 333). Additional purchases included beef, eggs, oil, salt fish, pepper, salt, saffron, fat and garlic. Power assumed that the home farm achieved self-sufficiency at least in vegetables, but such small expenditures may not have appeared in accounts (Dyer 1988, 31). Tillotson (1989, 15-6) has provided positive evidence for vegetable gardens at Marrick, Sinningthwaite (N Yorks), Stainfield and Nun Cotham (Lincs); Elkins adds Keldholme to this list (1988, 93). Where nunneries held fishponds their projected yields would not have met the needs of the house, with the exception, perhaps, of Clerkenwell (C K Currie pers com). Hence, it must be concluded that even self-sufficiency cannot always be assumed, and production of surplus can seldom be demonstrated.

Levels of production must have altered dramatically from the first centuries of a nunnery's occupation to the period reviewed in Power's study. During the thirteenth century monasteries increasingly complained of debt (Dyer 1989, 93). The "structural indebtedness" of larger abbeys, like Peterborough, was combatted by increased scales of production (Biddick 1989, 51). Management of the nunnery estate was contingent upon factors such as the availability of labour. The nuns themselves did little or no manual labour. Periodically they may have assisted in reaping and binding sheaves during the harvest (Power 1922, 382). Perhaps up to the fourteenth century, nunneries worked their own demesne lands. During this time many nunneries included lay-brethren within their community who would have worked the estates with tenurial and hired labour. This home labour force dissolved when the tendency to lease out estates increased. As labour shortages loomed, production gave way to cash economies. Increased circulation of coinage and reliability of local markets (Astill and Grant 1988,

228) led to a greater proportion of food being bought. By about 1400 it was not uncommon for lay and monastic manors to rely on market commodities (Dyer 1988, 25), although smaller gentry with only one manor may have remained self-sufficient (Dyer 1989, 68). Despite their largely gentry status, the economic and labour restrictions placed on nunneries appear to have precipitated market-dominated management. Archaeological evidence suggests that nunnery home farms were not capable of feeding the community; outer court areas took on an increasingly domestic character. Nunneries had shifted from small scale production to an emphasis on cash income from temporalities and spiritualities. To a great extent internal production appears to have been replaced by marketed food stuffs. Indeed, the inmates of certain nunneries, including Stamford (Lincs) and St Mary de Pré (St Albans) were expected to purchase their own meat and vegetables with an allowance from the common coffers. The house provided only beer and bread (Power 1922, 382).

Our knowledge of nunnery economies is still impressionistic. For instance, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which nunneries participated in trade. Saxon double houses were often sited on coasts or the heads of waterways in order to benefit from trade and tolls (Yorke 1989, 103). But what commercial role was expected of post-Conquest nunneries? Some held urban properties, sold wool and received imported pottery - activities generally supervised by male bailiffs. The nuns themselves may have marketed embroideries, although Power noted that references to sales in accounts were surprisingly rare (1922, 257). Occasionlly commissions for needlework were received, for example by the Cistercian nuns of Wintney (Hants) in 1265 (Coldicott 1989, 83). Excavation may yield additional evidence, like that recorded at Wienhausen in Germany, where thimbles, scissors, spindles and small weaving frames were discovered beneath the floor of the nuns' chapel (Moessner 1987, 164-5). On the whole, however, commercial enterprise on the part of nunneries appears limited, and may reflect the passive economic role deemed appropriate to religious women. Nuns were prohibited from engaging in commerce from their earliest rule, the sixth century writings of Caesarius of Arles (McNamara and Wemple 1977, 96).

The predominant economic role for nunneries was therefore one of a consumer. Excavated sites have yielded substantial proportions of imported pottery, for instance at Waterbeach (Cra'aster 1966), Denney (Christie and Coad 1980) and Polsloe, where 25% of the total assemblage recovered largely from

kitchen/refectory areas was made up of imports[6] (Allan 1984, 104). At Nuneaton

the assemblage was dominated by table ware, in preference to storage and cooking

vessels (Andrews et al 1981). The importing of food stuffs is attested by

excavated environmental material. At Denney latrine deposits were associated

with the converted south transept, which may have served as the foundress's (and

later abbess's) lodgings (Christie and Coad 1980, 155). The remains of

elderberry, blackberry, figs and grapes were recovered, of which the latter two

are likely to have been purchased as spices. Although the excavators suggested

that this was not "the sort of diet likely to have been provided for the nuns",

the abbey of Barking is known to have supplemented its lenten fare with large

quantities of figs (Power 1922, 566). The composition of the deposit from Denney

matches the soft fruit assemblages typical of medieval castles and high status

sites[7]. The Minoresses, in common with other wealthy nunneries, enjoyed an

aristocratic diet. Excavations at St Mary's Nunnery, Winchester, produced animal

bones representing farmed and wild game (rabbit, fallow and roe deer), 20 types

of fish and 26 species of birds (Coldicott 1989, 77-8). While diversity in fish

and bird species is recognised as an aspect of urban monastic diet, St Mary's

had access to rare species including sturgeon, porpoise, crane and whooper swan.

Perhaps more representative of the majority of nunneries is the excavated

site of Polsloe, near Exeter (Devon), where fifteenth and sixteenth century

deposits containing bird and fish bones were dominated by domestic fowl, goose,

ling, conger eel and hake (Bruce Levitan, pers com). Considerations of monastic

diet have often led archaeologists to scrutinise excavated human skeletons and

animal bone assemblages for indications of diet which are in accord with the

ideals expressed in monastic rules. Yet given the fluctuations

in the population and observances of any single house, a more fruitful approach

may be to consider patterns of food acquisition, preparation and disposal.

Possibly due to their rigorous standards of sanitation, few excavated

monasteries have yielded more than a few hundred fragments of animal bone.

Excavations at Polsloe, by contrast, produced about 10,000 animal bones, most of

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6.Allan (1984, 104) has noted that secular sites in Exeter produced lower
percentages of imports in comparison to Polsloe (c20%), whereas sixteenth
century pottery from male monastic houses was made up of c40% imports.

7.Similar soft fruit assemblages have been recovered as waterlogged or
mineralised deposits from the Palace of King's Langley (Herts), Barnard's
Castle (co Durham), Norwich Castle and Dryslwyn Castle.

which related to sixteenth century monastic occupation (Levitan 1989, 168). The size of the assemblage compares favourably with those studied from male houses, including Austin Leicester (Mellor and Pearce 1981), Gilbertine York (O'Connor 1990) and Dominican Beverley (Gilchrist 1989 A M Lab Rep). When proportions of species are compared between monastic sites, regional patterns become apparent. For northern monasteries the importance of sheep as a dietary source increased over time (York, Beverley, Pontefract); other monasteries saw increased consumption of beef (Oxford Dominicans, Leicester, Polsloe). More significant patterns can be observed for a monastery within its own urban setting. When compared to secular sites in Exeter (Exe Bridge), Polsloe's increase in beef to mutton may be unusual (Levitan 1987). This disparity between monastic and secular sites contrasts with the assemblages from York and Beverley, where monasteries shared the town's market sources from the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries (O'Connor 1990). The discrepancies in proportions of species between Polsloe and Exe Bridge may have been due to sample bias; but further differences in proportions of skeletal elements present could have resulted from the domestic nature of Polsloe, in comparison to the industrial character of Exe Bridge (Levitan 1987, 73).

Levitan (1989) suggests that Polsloe Nunnery bought in whole and/ or halved caracasses, with much secondary butchery conducted at the priory. At the male houses of Gilbertine York and Dominican Beverley, in contrast, partially dressed carcasses were procured from the towns' markets. Polsloe's siting outside Exeter, in a position typical of nunneries, may have encouraged processes of food acquisition which differed from those that operated at urban male houses. However, the necessity for secondary butchery on Polsloe's meat also has interesting implications for the labour requirements of the nunnery. The boning and jointing of carcasses required a variety of specialist butcher's tools. The apprenticeship and tool-kit necessary made the butcher's trade one entirely associated with men. Polsloe's suburban position and food requirements, therefore, obliged the nunnery to maintain male servants. Indeed, Power noted the tendency for nunneries to employ male cooks (1922, 150).

Polsloe differs from urban male communities in one further aspect: the deposition of food waste. Bone assemblages recovered from Gilbertine York and Dominican Beverley, for example, represent a brief period immediately before and after the dissolution of the house. Polsloe's bone deposits, on the other hand, have been assigned the greater date range of 1500-1530. Bone from the male

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houses was retrieved from areas beyond the cloister - near the kitchen or little cloister. Bone from Polsloe was recovered from kitchen and garden areas, but also from the cloister garth and buildings such as the dorter. Could it be that the greater enclosure of female religious resulted in less regular clearance of domestic waste, and lower standards of sanitation?

Comparison of the vitae of medieval male and female saints has led Bynum to suggest that female spirituality was strongly linked to food practices (1987, 84). At an institutional level, food asceticism may have been a factor in supplying nunneries. Archaeological and documentary sources suggest that the richer nunneries enjoyed an aristocratic diet of imported fruits and rare birds and fish. Smaller nunneries, like Marrick (N Yorks), observed a diet closer, perhaps, to that of better-off peasantry (Tillotson 1989, 16). Although their precise meat intake is unknown, these nunneries consumed the bread, vegetables and beer associated with peasant fare (Dyer 1983). Only the few very wealthy nunneries received quantities of wine and spices proportional to those recorded for Selby Abbey (Tillotson 1988) and Battle Abbey (Searle 1974). Bynum suggested that the sin of gluttony was more likely to occur in monasteries for men due to their greater wealth (1987, 80). Hatcher's study of the cellarer's accounts from Christ Church Canterbury referred to the potential health risks suffered by the monastery's over-indulgence (1986, 34); a skeletal condition possibly connected to obesity has been tentatively linked with a number of male monastic houses (Stroud forthcoming). The lower status nunnery diet may have been a product of its economic position, or the ascetic vocation of the inhabitants, or both.

3.6 Conclusion: Isolation and Dependence

Nunneries were set in liminal places, with regard to both the natural landscape and the topography of towns. Their economic aspirations were never great - programmes of land reclamation and acquisition were beyond their resources. It remains a question whether nunneries were expected to reach levels of economic self-sufficiency, or to produce surplus for sale as profit. Their estates were generally either constricted, and therefore over-specialised, or made up of small, scattered parcels, resulting in low financial returns. We have seen that the nunnery home farm and outer court was compact, with little evidence for industry or storage facilities. Double houses fared slightly

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better. They enjoyed well-balanced initial endowments and a greater range of economic activities.

When the isolation of nunneries is considered beside their apparent economic passivity, a dichotomy may be perceived. Communities of religious women were placed in vulnerable surroundings, but without the means by which to achieve their autonomy. The opposite was true of rural hermitages and male communities which were expected to be self-sufficient. Hence, nunneries were liminal, yet dependent. They were supported through cash rents from temporalities, spiritualities, dowries and benefactions. Frequently they appealed to secular and ecclesiastical authorities to alleviate their poverty. To some extent the dichotomy affected the placement of nunneries. Their dependence on others for both labour and the saying of religious services led to the juxtaposition of nunneries with parish churches and villages.

An eremitic vocation for women is suggested by the locations of nunneries. Godstow was established after its founder, Lady Ediva, spent a period in solitary retreat in which a vision prompted her to set up the nunnery (Clark 1905, 26). Some nunneries developed from their own eremitical origins. Nunneries which began life as cells may have closely resembled hermitages, such as Henwood (Warwicks), Cambridge, Flamstead (Herts) and Bretford (Warwicks, which later passed to Kenilworth). In the twelfth century four groups of female hermits - unenclosed religious women - were recorded. In each case these small groups were regularised into nunneries by the heads of male houses. The duae sanctae muliereres near St Albans had a nunnery built for them at Sopwell (Bedfords) by Abbot Geoffrey (c1135) (Warren 1984, 200). The same abbey encouraged the regularisation of the women followers of Christira of Markyate (Herts) in 1145 (ibid). Kilburn Priory (Middlesex) began as a hermitage owned by Westminster Abbey. The three women at Kilburn were given a male warden, and refounded as a priory by 1139. Later in the twelfth century, a community grew up at Crabhouse (Norfolk) around the hermit Lena. They were granted a hermitage by the prior of Ranham; Crabhouse was established as a priory c1180 (ibid). Groups of religious women gathered spontaneously to form communities at Ankerwyke (Bucks) and Limebrook (Herefords) (Thompson 1984, 141) and were duly formalised.

Warren (1984, 201) noted that references to women hermits (virago: ancilla domini) had ceased by the end of the twelfth century. Male clerics encouraged female hermits to accept a communal lifestyle. For male hermitages, a more

organic evolution was recorded. Charismatic hermits often attracted a following,
so that eventually an institutional framework emerged with the adoption of a
rule and order (Leyser 1984, 3).

The leap from community of women hermits to nunnery was accelerated by
ecclesiastical intervention. Warren suggested that female communities were
regularised in order to eliminate the danger of women living unprotected,
solitary lives. It is equally possible that the lifestyle of the hermit was
considered inappropriate for English religious women. The isolated surroundings
chosen by hermits necessitated their self-sufficiency. They adhered to
principles of manual labour - clearing land, building and farming to support
themselves (Leyser 1984, 57-8). Economic independence and physical labour for
women hermits were removed by their enclosure as nuns. An ideal emerged for
nunneries in which isolation was coupled with dependence on institutional
structures for labour, religious services, market commodities and cash gifts. It
is this paradox of isolation and dependence which sets nunneries apart in the
study of medieval monastic settlement.

Figure 3a Sixteenth Century Plan of Marrick

the plott of the late
priory of Marrigge/

- gatehouse
- outhouse
- stranger's stable
- churchyard
- ?chaplains
- parish church
- orchard
- chancel
- fat pig
- nuns' choir
- bellhouse
- chancel
- gelding
- little court (cloister)
- vestry
- closet
- dovehouse
- cloister
- storehouse
- wall door
- old dorter
- brewhouse
- dogs
- hall
- parlour
- work house
- great court
- entry
- soke house
- hall door
- little garden
- milkhouse hall
- lambs
- gate - nuns' court
- nuns' court
- little garden
- bakehouse
- garner
- slaughter house
- milkhouse

Figure 3b   Survey Plan of Marton

suggested site of nun

enclosure

(RCHME)
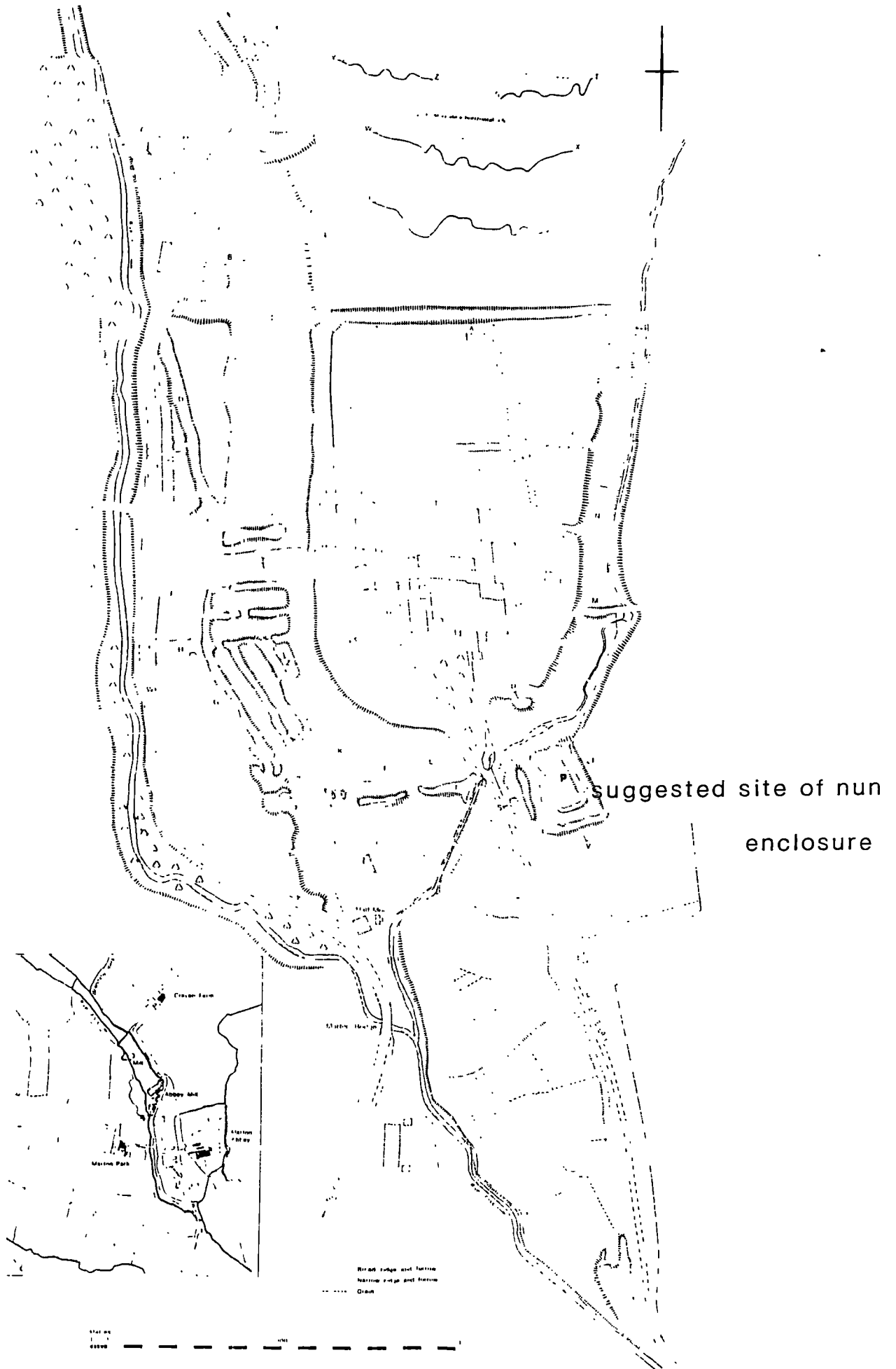
Figure 3c Elizabethan Plan of Chester

gate

guest court

priests?

A

church

private garden?

outer court

dormitory

B

C
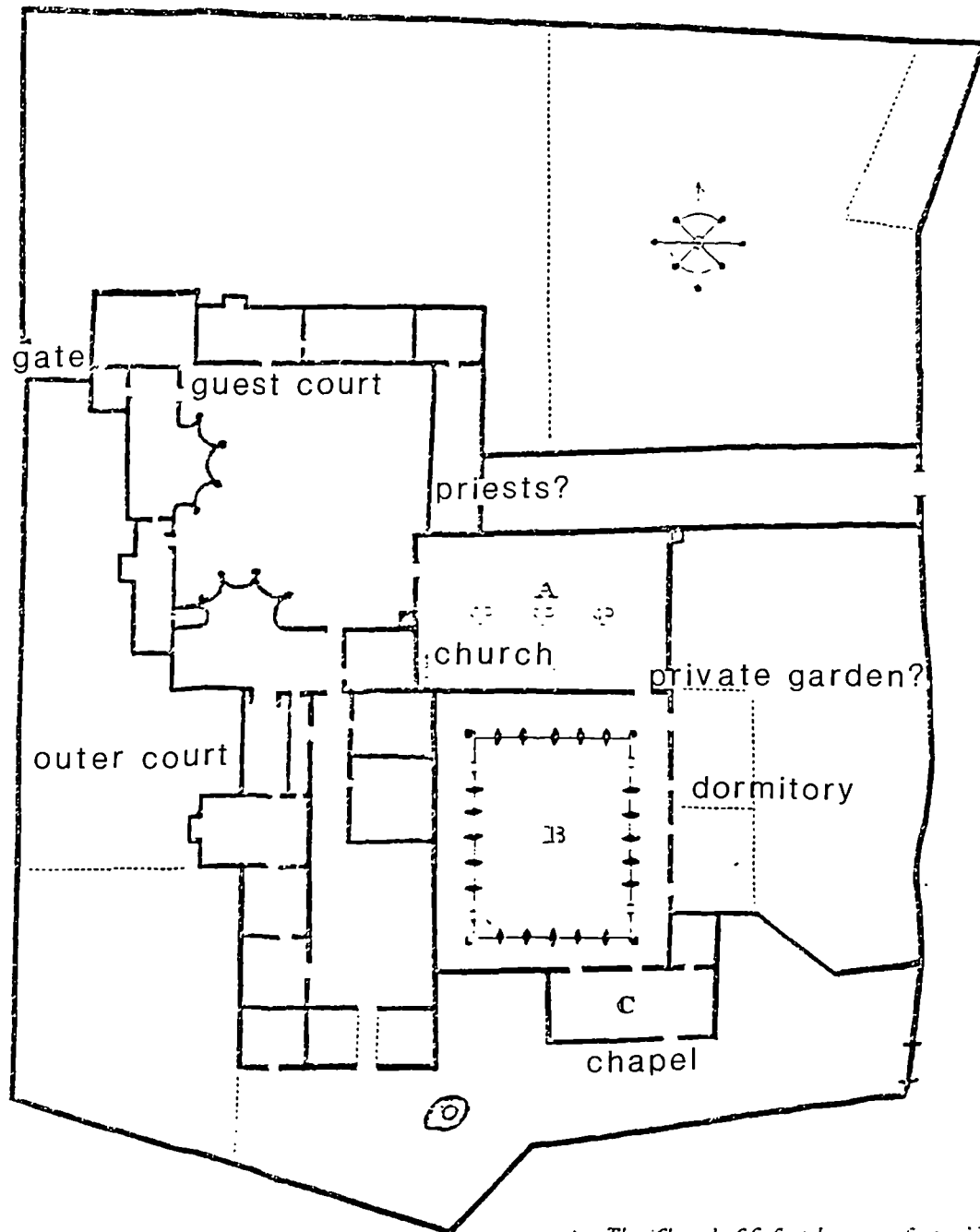
chapel

A. *The Church 66 feet long 45 feet wide.*
B. *The Cloisters 90 feet long 60 feet wide.*
C. *The Chapel 27 feet long 24 feet 3 inches wide.*

BM Randle Holmes MSS (Harl. 2073)

Chapter 4

IN THE CLOISTER

4.1 Standard Plans

To a great extent the layout of nunnery buildings was consistent across
filial boundaries, with the arrangement of structures varying according to the
precise religious function to which a house was committed. Nunneries observed
the standard monastic precedent in which a central complex of buildings
was grouped around a cloister. This format originated at least with Carolingian
monasteries, if not earlier in Merovingian examples[1]. It provided a community
with maximum seclusion, accessibility between principal structures, and order.
The cloister plan is based on the three ranges of buildings which together form
a u-shape which abuts the church (Horn and Born 1979). The enclosure thus formed
is the cloister yard which is composed of an open garth, flanked by alleys which
run concentrically within and provide access to the ranges.

It is not clear when the cloister began to dominate English monastic
planning. Excavation of middle Saxon double houses indicates that their
arrangement was less formal. At Whitby (N Yorks) stone structures were arranged
around the edges of blank linear features, perhaps paths, in a roughly
rectilinear pattern (Cramp 1976; Rahtz 1976). The layout of the earthfast timber
buildings at Hartlepool (Cleveland) might be distinguished from secular sites
only by the high proportion of small buildings and their density of distribution
(Cramp and Daniels 1987, 428). At Barking (Essex) a number of timber halls
appear to have grouped together; one was characterised by a fine plaster finish
(MacGowan 1987).

Late Saxon nunneries may have been planned more formally. Excavation of the
tenth century Nunnaminster (Winchester) suggested an apsed stone church aligned
in orthodox E-W fashion (Qualman 1986). Post-Conquest eleventh century
foundations, such at Malling (Kent), observed a cloister plan.

Later medieval nunneries generally centred on a single cloister. Double
houses required domestic buildings which ensured sexual segregation, yielding a

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1.Extant masonry and post-medieval illustrations have suggested to some that
Merovingian Chelles was based around a central cloister.

variety of different arrangements. The Gilbertines favoured two discrete cloisters for each house, with the nuns' cloister abutting either side of the main conventual church. The canons' cloister was some distance away. It had its own chapel and was divided from the nuns' cloister by a wall and ditch. At Watton (Humbs) this boundary was traversed by the window house: a structure approached by passages from each of the cloisters, which provided communication via a small turning window (fig 4a) (St John Hope 1901).

At Nuneaton (Warwicks), of the order of Fontevrault, the nuns' cloister was to the south of the church. Detailed contour, auger and geophysical survey has revealed several possible positions for a monks' cloister (Andrews et al 1981, 62). The most likely position may be an enclosed area to the south-east of the nuns' cloister, where the drain of the nuns' reredorter could have been used by a second group of domestic buildings. At Amesbury (Wilts), of the same order, the nuns occupied a standard self-contained cloister to the north of the supposed prioress's lodge, which stood until the mid-seventeenth century. The canons were accommodated in buildings adjoining the parish church, some 275m SSE of the nuns' cloister. Their lodgings appear to have been to the north of the chancel, with access to the north transept by a pentice along the nave (RCHME 1987, 235).

Details of male accommodation for the 'quasi' double houses are not yet clear. At Minchin Buckland (Somerset), a double preceptory of the Knights Hospitaller, the preceptor's house, lodgings and dovecote are documented to the north of the nuns' church (Larking 1857). It seems that smaller groups of monks or lay-brothers attending a nunnery were provided with informal lodgings, possibly within moated enclosures (Chapter 3.4). The Bridgettines, who founded two English houses in the fifteenth century, rarely placed their buildings around a cloister (Gilyard-Beer 1958, 44; Nyberg 1965, 11). Buildings of the nuns and canons were placed on opposite sides of the conventual church. Conventual buildings at Syon are represented by an undercroft of a single medieval building (RCHME 1937, 86).

Siting of a monastic cloister took into account general topographical factors such as level and drainage, in addition to considering sources of water supply (Chapter 5.1). Nunnery cloisters were often placed in relation to the parish church. Occasionlly the two were entirely separate, such as Barking (Essex). More often a nunnery church was shared by a parochial congregation, thus affecting the monastic layout. An extreme example is Godstow (Oxfords), where

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the shared church was placed outside the nunnery enclosure to the north (Ganz 1972). At Goring (Oxfords) and Clerkenwell (London) the cloister itself abutted the parochial nave in a reversal of the usual arrangement (Stone 1893; DGLA 1987 archive).

The various groups accommodated within double houses - nuns, canons, lay-sisters, lay-brothers - made the spatial relationship to the parish church more complex. Within one precinct it was possible to have three churches. At Watton (Humbs) separate churches were provided for the nuns and canons; the parish church stood to the south. Monastic and parochial churchyards overlapped at Gilbertine Alvingham (Lincs). This grouping of churches resembles the 'families' of churches typical of early medieval monasteries (Taylor 1978, 1020-1). Such sites possessed two, three or more small churches, often built on a single axis. Dedicated to different saints, such churches may have fulfilled separate functions: for example as cemetery chapel, baptistery and shrine(s). Alternatively each member of the family of churches may have been used by a specific group within the monastery. At the double house of Nivelles (Belgium), for example, the three or four churches may have been required for segregation of male and female religious, lay and secular groups. Families of churches at later medieval double houses represent a continuation of this tradition.

4.2 Form and Function of Nunnery Buildings

Cloister dimensions varied according to the land and building resources available to a nunnery, with most clustering within the range 15 - 20m sq (Figure 2h; Appendix B). Garths were intended to be kept clear of structures, and were used instead as gardens or cemeteries. In some cases cloisters may have been simple pentices around the ranges. The south wall of the church at Aconbury (Herefords) retains corbels for the upright and angle supports of a pentice (plate 17). Freestanding stone cloisters survive at Lacock (Wilts) (plates 18-19) and St Radegund's, Cambridge, where the cambered open timber roofs of c1500 survive largely intact (RCHME 1959, 86). Fragments from cloister arcades have been recorded from Stixwould (Lincs) and Marrick (N Yorks)[2] (D Stocker pers com; C P Graves pers com). As a measure of economy many nunneries,

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2.Recent discoveries at Marrick include at waterleaf double capital from a late twelfth century arcade, which is likely to have formed part of the

such as Grace Dieu (Leics), placed cloister alleys as passages within the main walls of buildings, with the upper rooms projecting over. Cloister alleys did not contain the study carrels which are associated with male houses. They were simply walkways which sometimes served as places of burial for monastic inmates and patrons (for example Higham, Kent) (Tester 1967).

The cloister and ranges might be built in stone or timber with the exception of the church, which was invariably stone-built. Timber or half-timber claustral buildings on stone foundations seem to have been fairly common, and may be suggested at Brewood (Shrops), Ellerton (N Yorks), Wilberfoss (N Yorks) and Arthington (W Yorks)[3]. Later additions may have used newly available materials, such as Cook Hill's (Worcs) half-timber ranges which were cased with brick (VCH Worcs III 1971, 419). Particularly poor nunneries may have built in cob, as excavations at Fosse Nunnery (Lincs) have indicated (Barley 1964).

The north range of the cloister was generally the church, although a considerable number of nunneries placed the church on the south (Chapter 5.1). In plan nunnery churches are either cruciform or parallelogram, with the latter type by far the most numerous (c60% of known examples; Appendix C). Nuns' churches were frequently narrow aisleless rectangles, since there was little demand for additional altars to be housed in side chapels. In appearance these churches are unusually tall and thin, often with west towers. Some, including Irish Cistercian nunnery churches, were also fairly long (Stalley 1986, 133). Liturgical arrangements within the parallelograms were simple; dissolution surveys of the Yorkshire nunneries suggest that in addition to the high altar there were two altars in the choir and one in the nave (Brown 1886, 200). Excavations at Lacock revealed no structural division between presbytery, choir and nave (fig 4b) (Brakspear 1900). At Polsloe a single screen divided the church into aisleless eastern and western sections (fig 4c) (Medieval Archaeol 24 1979, 250-1). Similarly, extant remains at Guyzance (Northumb) suggest a parallelogram bisected by a stone wall into equal western and eastern parts.

(Footnote 2 continued from previous page)
cloister (Marrick Priory Project 1990, unpub).

3.The Dissolution survey confirms the timber construction of Wilberfoss. The absence of ashlar or worked stone re-incorporated into the later house at Arthington could suggest a predominantly timber cloister; the survival of onlythe churches at Brewood and Ellerton argues for timber claustral ranges, although stone foundations for timber superstructures may survive as earthworks

Further sub-division is likely to have been provided by hanging cloths and tapestries, such as those described in the inventory from Minster in Sheppey (Kent) (Walcott 1868, 290-1), in addition to portable screens and reredos, like the surviving example from Romsey (Hants). Areas within the church were sometimes delineated by patterns in ceramic tile floors, shown in excavations at Campsea Ash (Suffolk) (Sherlock 1970). These may have been enhanced by corresponding schemes in wall-painting, stained glass and misericords. Misericords survive from Swine (Humbs), St Helen's Bishopsgate (London) and Farewell (Staffs). Within parallelograms the nuns' choir and stalls would be expected in the eastern arm of the church. Occasionally aumbries, sedilia, piscinae and Easter sepulchres survive in fragments of ruined walls, for example at Marrick (N Yorks) and Burnham (Berks). Earthenware vessels have been recorded from the choirs of St Radegund's, Cambridge (Gray 1898, 66) and Farewell[4], presumably placed in an effort to increase resonance for the singing of the nuns' offices (Harrison 1968). However, there was no uniformity of liturgy in English nunneries, either in design or practice (Chadd 1986, 309).

Arrangements within cruciform churches were less predictable. The location of the choir might be in the eastern arm, crossing or first bay of the nave, according to local preference. The cruciform church at Little Marlow was bisected by a pulpitum which crossed the nave in line with the west wall of the north transept (fig 4d) (Peers 1902, 319). At Shaftesbury (Dorset) the choir and nuns' stalls were placed in the eastern bay of the nave until the fourteenth century (RCHME 1972, 59). The return stalls backed against the pulpitum, which crossed the nave between the first pair of piers. The rood screen stood between the second pair of piers with a rood altar against the west face.

Where monasteries shared their churches with parochial congregations, it was common for the monastic eastern church to be separated from the western parochial nave. Cruciform churches were sometimes split into two parts by a crossing tower, for example at Polesworth (Warwicks) and Usk (Gwent) where parochial naves are extant (plate 20). Occasionally the parish may have been given a transept. This arrangement may be postulated for Thetford (Norfolk) where a wide south crossing arch on scalloped capitals marks the entrance to the

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(Footnote 3 continued from previous page)
at the latter site.

4.Illustrated by R Green, 1747, Gentleman's Magazine 4, 59.

south transept. Parallelograms were divided by screens and use of ornamentation. At Nun Monkton (N Yorks) the junction of the nave and choir is marked by a corbel in the form of a female head (plate 21), the only anthropomorphic example of the series. At this point the nave and choir are marked by distinctions in fabric. The windows of the choir are distinguished from those in the nave by subtle differences in proportion and scale (plate 22). Those in the choir are marked by three attached shafts, rising from corbels, with annulets. Decoration in the double arch within the wall passage consists of well-spaced nailhead. In the nave the nailhead is coarser, and the foliage capitals of the choir are replaced by bell capitals. In the choir the moulded stringcourse is continued from the outer wall into the window at the springing point of the arch. These distinctions may mark a break in the fabric caused by a pause in the work, or the fabric may be a single programme which correlated architectural detail with the ritual divisions of the church (such as the piers at Norwich Cathedral: Fernie 1977).

The standard monastic arrangement was occasionally reversed in nunnery churches, so that the parish was accommodated in the eastern part of the church and the nuns occupied the west end. This was fairly common in continental nunneries, particularly with German Cistercian houses (Gilyard-Beer 1958, 19), and consistent with practices observed in Crusader Palestine[5]. A late sixteenth century plan of Marrick (N Yorks) indicates a western nuns' choir (fig 3a). Similar traditions are recorded for Davington (Kent) (Tester 1980), Nunkeeling (Humbs) and Swine (Humbs). The two latter nunneries originally included a male component within their population; possibly the brethren occupied the eastern part of the church, which transferred to parochial control upon their removal. Eighteenth century drawings of Swine show that the church was originally cruciform, with a Romanesque crossing arch marking the entrance to the western nuns' church (fig 21). Subsequent demolition of the western annexe and transepts has given the parish church the appearance of a parallelogram with western tower (plate 23).

Like the 'quasi' double house of Swine, the cruciform church at Fontevraultine Nuneaton (Warwicks) was transected laterally with the western part serving the convent. Amesbury (Wilts) provided separate cruciform churches

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5.At Bethany the pilgrimage church of SS Mary Magdalene and Martha was to the east of the site; the twelfth century nuns' church of St Lazarus, and their

for the nuns and monks. The monks shared their church with the parish, which occupied an autonomous south aisle built in the fifteenth century (RCHME 1987). The Bridgettines had a single church with segregation achieved by split-level worship. The canons served altars at the groundfloor level and the nuns occupied first floor galleries (Gilyard-Beer 1958, 44). The Gilbertines preferred parallelogram churches split longitudinally by a median wall into two wide aisles. At Watton (Humbs) the nuns occupied the north aisle, adjacent to their cloister (fig 4a). Their nightstair was indicated by buttresses in the north-east angle of the presbytery (St John Hope 1901). If the nuns sat in the east end of the north aisle, the lay-sisters may have been seated in the west end, with access from their quarters in the west range of the nuns' cloister. When the canons attended the main conventual church, they entered the south aisle. They were able to pass pax and holy water to the sisters by a turning window in the median wall. Study of the Institutes of the Gilbertine order suggests that the arrangement of the nuns' church precluded them from witnessing the elevation of the host (Elkins 1988).

In southern and eastern England similar parallel aisle divisions segregated nuns from parishioners. The resulting symmetrical arrangement is indicated at St Helen's Bishopsgate (London) (plate 24), Minster in Sheppey (Kent), Higham (Kent), Easebourne (Sussex), Ickleton (Cambs) (fig 4e) and Wroxall (Warwicks) (VCH Warwicks III 1945, 216). The two churches were separated by a screened arcade. At Minster the nuns' church is distinguished by a hood mould to the north side of the arcade. Chantry chapels were built onto the parochial aisle, such as the Chapel of the Holy Ghost at Bishopsgate, a perpetual chantry founded by Adam Franceys in 1371 (Cook 1947, 25). If arrangements within the parallel aisle churches were similar to those followed by the Gilbertines, the nuns may have been denied witness to the moment of transubstantiation, possibly resulting in a downgrading of the quality of their religious experience.

Occasionally the establishment of chantries at nunnery churches resulted in a proliferation of chapels, such as the aisle chapels at Carrow (Norfolk). Nunneries were infrequently favoured as the recipients of chantries, however, since the saying of the masses required the employment of an additional priest. Where chantries were founded, a separate chapel was not always constructed. At

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(Footnote 5 continued from previous page)
conventual buildings, were to the west (Pringle 1986, 356).

Barking, masses were sung at existing altars (ibid, 26). Chantries could be established partly to alleviate the poverty of nunneries. In 1369 a chantry was founded in the church of St Sepulchre, Canterbury, which provided the nuns with their only daily mass (ibid).

The prioress sometimes had exclusive use of an apartment adjoining the church. A watching closet is noted in the dissolution survey of Nunkeeling, and at Wilberfoss, located above the chapter-house (Brown 1886, 200). This function was suggested for a small timber adjunct excavated to the north of the church at Kirklees (W Yorks) (fig 4f) (Armytage 1908). But such apartments may be easily confused with anchorages (Chapter 7.3).

Secular female lodgers were frequently noted in bishops' visitations to nunneries. Where there was no parish church, these occasional visitors or permanent corrodians required their own place within the church. Long-staying guests would expect to attend services, and to witness the elevation of the host. Yet they were prohibited from sitting in the nuns' choir (Power 1922, 404). Compromise was found by constructing viewing galleries for seculars at one end of the church. At Burnham entrance to an east gallery is marked by an upper storey doorway in the southern wall of the east range (plate 25). It has been suggested that at Minster in Sheppey seven square recesses in the upper part of the east wall of the nuns' choir are remnants of a gallery (Cave-Brown 1897, 152). At Lacock the west bay of the church may have been filled by a gallery carried by a screen, inserted where quoins of the vaulting shaft were cut away (Brakspear 1900, 135). A second gallery was erected along the north wall of the nave, blocking earlier windows (ibid, 132). A west gallery at Aconbury was entered through the west range by an upper storey doorway in the south wall of the church (plate 26). A west gallery may be suggested over the nuns' choir at Marrick (N Yorks), where joists survive in the east face of the west tower. The exterior east face shows a doorway above an earlier roof line. This may indicate an entrance to a gallery. A large medieval trefoil window (now reset) may have lit the gallery (plate 27). Similar over-sized sexfoil windows survive at Lyminster (Sussex) and Marham (Norfolk), which also retains a large quatrefoil. These unusual features may have been intended to light upper galleries entered from the upper storey west range, an appropriate place for secular guests.

The number of groups which required segregated areas within a nunnery church might include nuns, lay-brothers, lay-sisters, women lodgers, secular men and women, and possibly children and servants. The provision of galleries would

have afforded ease of segregation. They were commonly used in Bridgettine houses
and in German and Scandinavian nunneries, where the nuns' choirs were positioned
in the galleries. A western gallery-choir at the Augustinian nunnery of Asmild
(Viborg, Denmark) was entered from the second storey of the west tower
(Kristensen 1987, 127). Similar arrangements may be discerned at St Peter's
nunnery, Lund (Sweden), and the Cistercian nunnery at Roskilde (Denmark), where
evidence for western gallery-choirs survives. Galleries were used to segregate
men and women in church worship from an early date. In 562 Silentarius made
several references to galleries as the women's place when commenting upon Hagia
Sophia, Justinian's church at Constantinople (Mainstone 1988, 230). In England
west galleries were fairly common in the churches[6] of pre-Conquest religious
communities. They may have been places for secular people, among them women, as
illustrated in the tenth century Benedictional of AEthelwold (Taylor 1975, 166).
It appears that English nunneries most often used galleries to accommodate women
lodgers, although the nuns may have had galleries within the parochial section
of the church. An example may be Swine, where a blocked opening with nailhead
decoration survives in the south wall of the north aisle of the parish church.
This opening may indicate an external doorway to a gallery over the east end of
the parochial chancel.

Next to the church was the sacristy, or vestry, where sacred vessels and
vestments were stored. Few early twelfth century nunnery plans included
sacristies although some, like Davington (Kent), Polsloe (Devon) and Easebourne
(Sussex), were later modified to include one. A sacristy was added at Brewood
(Shrops) between the angle of the presbytery and north transept (Fig 4e; plate
28). Late twelfth century rebuilding around the south choir aisle at Elstow
(Bedfords) may have been to integrate a sacristy. Some nunneries added
sacristies on the side of the church opposite that of the cloister, including
Little Marlow (Bucks) and Kington St Michael (Wilts) (fig 4g). Late twelfth/
early thirteenth century foundations, such as Lacock (Wilts) and Bishopsgate
(London), had sacristies integral to their plans, placed between the church and
chapter-house. Lacock's sacristy was more elaborate than the usual single
chamber. It was of three bays, and divided from two chapels at its east end (fig
4b). These were decorated with black five-rayed stars painted onto the vault

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6.These include Deerhurst, Brixworth, Dover, Jarrow, Ledsham, Wearmouth,
Tredington and Wing (Taylor 1975).

(Brakspear 1900, 140). A reconstructed plan of the fourteenth century Minories (London) suggests a sacristy located over the chapter-house (Carlin 1987 unpub). Rooms were sometimes provided over the sacristy (for example at St Radegund's, Cambridge, and St Helen's, Bishopsgate), where a squint allowed sight of the high altar.

The appearance of the sacristy corresponds with increased formalisation of liturgy and emphasis on the eucharist, in addition to greater regulation of the separation of male and female religious. Within nunneries the sacristy represented the male liturgical space. As such it was accessible from the nunnery precinct, as a Burnham (Berks), without ingress to the nuns' cloister (fig 4h; plate 29). Male houses were sometimes provided with sacristies, although these became redundant as increasing numbers of monks were ordained, and they often eventually served only as a through passage (Gilyard-Beer 1958, 46). Dissolution surveys of the Yorkshire nunneries suggest that they did not include sacristies. Instead priests' chambers were provided in the outer court at Thicket, Wilberfoss, Arthington, Baysdale, Wykeham and Swine (Brown 1886).

In addition to the sacristy, the ground floor level of the east range contained the chapter-house, and possibly a parlour and warming room. The chapter-house was the focus of the daily meetings of the community. It was normally structurally distinct from the rest of the east range, although in smaller houses (for example Higham and Little Marlow) it was partitioned by timber screens. Stone benching for the seating of the chapter generally surrounded the interior of the room. The head of the house would occupy a raised seat at the east end. These arrangements survive at Lacock and Cambridge. Excavations at Higham (Kent) revealed a well-defined rectangular area of chalk rubble that supported the prioress's seat in the east end (Tester 1967, 14). In common with other monasteries, the entrance to the chapter-house from the nunnery cloister was generally prominent. At Lacock an entrance of three arches of four members each was decorated with colour. Cambridge boasts a similarly elaborate entrance of three arches. Burnham (Berks) was entered by a single archway at the west end (plate 30). Smaller nunneries, such as Higham and possibly Wroxall (Warwicks), contained the length of the chapter-house within the east range. Most extant examples extended the chapter-house past the limit of the range, as a single projection breaking forward beyond the outer line of the cloister. Chapter-houses were appropriate places of burial for the heads of monastic houses. Coffins were excavated at Lacock; at Burnham slab-covered

graves were arranged in pairs down the centre of the chapter-house (Brakspear 1900; 1903).

Additional east range components might include a parlour, where daily silence could be broken, and a warming room, recognised by its fireplace. In smaller nunneries a single chamber may have served both functions, or a slype next to the chapter-house may have sufficed as the parlour (for example at Davington, Little Marlow and Higham). At Burnham two rooms are apparent, with the warming room at the north end of the range separated from the parlour by a passage through the range to the infirmary. A similar passage survives at Lacock, which provided the only entrance to the warming house.

The length of the east range projected beyond the cloister only in larger houses, such as Elstow, Barking and Nuneaton. The upper floor of the east range generally contained the nuns' dorter, or dormitory. Access to the church was often by a single stairway for day and night use, contained within the thickness of a wall. At Burnham, Bishopsgate and Lacock these stairs descend near the west entrance to the sacristy. The dormitory was initially an unpartitioned chamber lit by small windows, like the extant example at Burnham (plate 31). The end of the range communicated with the reredorter, which frequently resembled a domestic garderobe. At Denney and Higham garderobe pits were sunk in gravel or flagstone floors (Christie and Coad 1980; Tester 1967, 149). At Lacock the garderobe perched over the main drain (Brakspear 1900, 149). L-shaped reredorters were flushed by drains at Little Marlow, Burnham and Elstow (Peers 1903; Brakspear 1903; Baker 1971). Only Barking was provided with a more elaborate system of sanitation, where a great culvert was split into two channels beneath the range (Clapham 1913, 84). Drinking water was supplied by a number of possible sources: a separate stream, rainwater collected from roof-eaves, or a well, such as that excavated in a room south of the west range at Polsloe (Medieval Archaeol 24 1979, 250-1). The siting of urban and suburban nunneries may have demanded better planned water supplies. Arrangements for Clerkenwell are partially depicted on the fifteenth century plan of the underground supply to London Charterhouse, showing Clerkenwell's conduit-head, cisterns and piped supply (Bond forthcoming).

The range opposite the church contained the frater, or refectory. At the entrance from the cloister was the lavatorium, a washing place. This normally took the form of a recessed trough, such as the trefoil headed example at Davington. The partially extant example at Lacock is east of the refectory door;

a projecting trough and pedestal were set in the surviving recess, which
consists of two parallel compartments with paintings above fifteenth century
cornices. Both compartments are decorated with painted abbess figures with
croziers. The refectory itself was seldom a simple single-storeyed building,
although exceptions were Wilberfoss, Nunkeeling (Brown 1886), Little Marlow
(Peers 1902) and Elstow (Baker 1971). Excavations within the extant single
storey refectory at Denney have provided details of arrangements and decoration
(Poster and Sherlock 1987). A drain running N-S across the building may have
come from a <u>lavatorium</u>. Footings for fixed benching along the north and south
walls were paralleled by platformed foot rests. The eastern end was raised for
the high table. The floor was tiled in a chequer pattern; early drawings suggest
lozenge wall-paintings and wooden panelling. Separate doors in the west and east
ends of the south wall were for the use of the nuns and abbess (or foundress),
respectively. A pulpit projected from the north wall; a similar feature at
Elstow was reached by stairs within the thickness of the wall (Baker 1971, 59).

Two-storey refectories are suggested by dissolution surveys at Wykeham,
Kirklees, Thicket and Handale (Brown 1886, 201); eighteenth century drawings of
Clementhorpe, York (Stocker 1984); extant examples at Cambridge (plate 32),
Kington St Michael, Lacock, Easebourne, Burnham (plate 33), Chicksands
(Bedfords) and Sinningthwaite (Nichols 1982b); and excavations at Goring (Stone
1893) and Watton. The upper storey held the refectory, reached by stairs, with
the cellarage used for storage. Internally there may have been a western gallery
and a pulpit projecting externally from the range, for example at Kington St
Michael and Lacock, where the arched entrance to the pulpit remains in the north
wall. Lacock's ground floor space was divided into two parts by a crosswall,
with the western half possibly used as an inner parlour (Brakspear 1900, 151).
The west bay at Easebourne communicated with the kitchen by a slanting hatch,
through which food would be served (VCH Sussex IV 1953, 47).

Double-storey refectories are typical of nunneries, and are frequently
associated with orders of canons; occasionally they were constructed for
Cistercian monasteries. Fergusson (1986, 173-4) has commented on the
iconographic content of this architectural form, postulating an apostolic
significance for the upper storey refectory, which refers to the "upper room"
which contained the Last Supper (Mark 14. 12-16). A more appropriate context for
female houses may be the "upper room" which housed the Apostles, the Virgin
Mary, Mary Magdalene and the other Holy Women, after Christ's death (Acts 1.

13-14). The _coenaculum_ - the upper chapel at St Mary Mount Sion (Palestine),
identified with this event - received much attention and rebuilding in the
eleventh and twelfth centuries (Pringle 1986, 345). Its restoration may have
influenced the building of English nunnery refectories, which appear to have
been the only monastic setting in which the preaching of women was encouraged,
and in which scriptural learning was fostered. Its iconographic archetype,
therefore, may refer to the early stages of the Church at Jerusalem, which met
in the home of Mary, and acknowledged the participation of women in the
Pentecost (Acts 2. 1-4; 17-18).

Adjacent to the refectory was the kitchen. This was often sited off the
cloister, where incoming supplies could be received from the outer court, and
from whence food could be served to both the south and west ranges of the
cloister. Excavations at Polsloe revealed a detached kitchen south of the west
range, next to a possible garden, later occupied partly by timber structures
(_Medieval Archaeol_ 24 1979, 250). Excavations at Little Marlow revealed a
kitchen at the junction of the south and west ranges, which also allowed easy
access to the infirmary, to the south. The kitchen's function may be attributed
by three excavated hearths and a central fire (Peers 1902). Structural evidence
for kitchens seldom survives above ground. Despite the risk of fire, nunnery
kitchens may have been partly constructed in timber. Only their entrances may be
traced in the stone walls of other ranges, for example at Kington St Michael and
Cambridge. Excavations at Kirklees (W Yorks) yielded ambiguous results regarding
the placing of the kitchen (Armytage 1908). Brakspear and St John Hope argued
that its only possible position was on the upper floor of the west range (1907,
185), and that smaller nunneries would have disregarded monastic planning in
favour of ordinary domestic arrangements appropriate to that section of the
population which overlapped lower aristocracy and elite peasantry. The paucity
of extant and excavated kitchen remains may support their claim. Equally,
double-storey refectories may have been most easily served from kitchens on the
upper floor of the adjacent range.

The west range of the nunnery fulfilled a combination of functions which
might include: guest house, prioress's lodge, offices of the obedientiaries, and
storage facilities. Its south end was sometimes partitioned for a buttery, for
example at Cambridge, where a rotating hatch received food from the kitchen (fig
4i). At Kington St Michael the remainder of the ground floor was taken up by a
guest hall, screened from the buttery and with its own entrance concealed by a

porch (fig 4g) (Brakspear 1922). An upper floor room with a fireplace was considered by Aubrey to have been the priest's chamber (ibid). The ground floor of Lacock's west range was divided into three apartments with fireplaces. Brakspear suggested some were chaplains' rooms (1900, 153), although their placing may have been more appropriate to serve corrodians. The upper floor was the abbess's lodging, with a private stair to the church. Her lodgings in the southern end were partitioned from a guest hall, which was entered by a separate porch. The west ranges of nunneries were often modelled on secular manor houses. Davington was arranged like a ground-floor hall, with a private parlour, central hall and domestic offices (fig 4j) (Tester 1980, 210). Likewise, a range of c1500 built at Pinley (Warwicks), was originally a three-room hall adjoining the north-west corner of the church (VCH Warwicks III 1945, 148). The extant west range at Polsloe is closer in form to secular two-storey halls. It was bisected at ground floor level by a stone wall (Everett 1934), providing two chambers for the convent's use. The upper floor was divided into three sections. A northern chamber with a fireplace is partitioned from the main stairs of the range by a cob wall. Its proximity to the church suggests it was used by the prioress. A central hall was entered by an external staircase to the west, possibly access for guests. The hall is terminated on the south by a wooden screen, which partitioned the southern chamber and stairway to the kitchen. This last chamber contained the stairway flanked by two chambers: it functioned partly as a buttery to the guest hall. Nunnery west ranges generally acted as guest houses. The importance placed on hospitality is revealed in the quality of west range work. Excavations at Little Marlow concluded that this range contained the highest quality masonry in the nunnery (Peers 1902).

Detached prioress's lodges were rare. At Watton (Humbs) a self-contained prior's lodge included a private chapel and guest quarters. No such provision was made for the nuns' cloister. A sixteenth century prioress's lodge survives at Carrow, which, according to Pevsner "in its sumptuousness and worldliness almost seems to justify the Dissolution" (1962, 286). However, its positioning, parallel to but not joining the west cloister alley and perpendicular to the church, suggests that this structure was built to replace an earlier west range. Resistivity survey, indeed, has suggested that the earlier west range, on a different alignment, was demolished in a re-arrangement of the cloister (Atkin and Gater 1983, unpub). A separate entrance led to the guests' hall, and the

prioress occupied the northern end, closest to the church. The foundress of Denney had her own self-contained apartment constructed from the existing nave, upper part of the crossing and south transept of the cruciform church of an earlier community. A suite of rooms at first floor level was approached by a private stairway to the west; a watching chamber in the crossing viewed the nuns' church. The accommodation was used by subsequent abbesses, who modified access by providing a doorway into the nave which connected with a pentice walkway, and a nightstair which communicated with the west end of the nuns' church and the nuns' dormitory (Christie and Coad 1980, 156).

Beyond the cloister, generally to the east, was the infirmary. This positioning facilitated use of the main reredorter and drain. A passage sometimes led to the infirmary through the east range, for example at Lacock and Carrow. The infirmary consisted of an open hall with a chapel in the east end, and reredorter at the west, such as the extant structure at Burnham (plates 34-5). A misericorde, or meat kitchen, was occasionally provided to adminster the supplemented diet of the infirm. Excavations at Barking suggested its position at the western end of the hall, where a large hearth was screened from the main infirmary (Clapham 1913, 85).

Additional features within the inner court might include wells, near the kitchen; freestanding crosses, such as those associated with the churches at Marrick and Kirklees (Armytage 1908, 25); and chapels, for instance the example shown on the sixteenth century plan of Chester (fig 3c). An extant chapel at Godstow (Oxfords) is tucked in the south-east corner of the nunnery's inner court. This may have been the nuns' private chapel, distinct from the shared church to the north of the enclosure (plate 36). The chapel was two storeyed at its west end and abutted a building to the north, from which a view into the chapel could be gained from a squint. To the north, a doorway through the enclosure wall may have admitted priests.

4.3 Development and Change

Before taking up residence in the cloister, monastic communities were accommodated in temporary timber structures (for example those excavated at Norton Priory, Cheshire (Greene 1989)). To date there is no evidence for female communities having been provided with temporary lodgings. This impression may be a result of the piecemeal nature of most monastic excavations. Excavations at

Polsloe suggested fragments of a temporary chapel and structures preceding the nuns' cloister, although these have not been firmly linked to monastic occupation of the site. Refounded nunneries might have used earlier buildings for temporary accommodation. Peers suggested that the sequence adopted in constructing Romsey's Norman church respected existing domestic structures to the south (1901, 320). Nunneries established at existing parish churches, such as Bishopsgate (London), Marrick (N Yorks), Wothorpe (Northants), Swaffham Bulbeck (Cambs) and Davington (Kent), would have been able to give priority to the construction of domestic quarters.

Elsewhere cloisters developed slowly, according to the predetermined cloister plan. Polsloe developed around a courtyard from c1160, but only received a cloister and walkways c1300. Excavations at Sopwell (Herts) were less conclusive, although the developed cloister plan was recognised only in the final structural phase (Medieval Archaeol 10 1966, 177-8). At Elstow excavation suggested a significant interval between the construction of the church and the earliest cloister ranges, the walks of which were probably in timber (Baker 1971). Complete cloisters may not always have been achieved. For instance, there was no continuous south range at Kington St Michael (Wilts). Instead a two-storey refectory was situated towards the west (Brakspear 1922). The Elizabethan plan of Chester (fig 3c) indicates a similar arrangement, with discontinuous west and south ranges. Later foundations may not have adhered strictly to traditional planning. Denney loosely observed an open court plan. Spatial constraints on the Minories (London) resulted in the shifting of components to an upper storey level, or wherever space could be found. In result a garderobe was positioned adjacent to the nuns' chancel. To the west of the nuns' buildings were the friars' complex and guest court (Carlin 1987 unpub). From his excavations at the Dominican nunnery at Dartford (Kent), Clapham suggested a church projecting from the east range (1926, 77). The stratigraphic relationship of this structure to the later royal manor house is unclear. However, support for its function as a monastic church comes from parallel arrangements at the French Franciscan nunnery of Provins, and the Irish Augustinian nunnery at Monastirnegalliach (Limerick).

Once established, nunnery plans remained largely static throughout their occupation. This has been indicated by excavations at Davington, Little Marlow and Higham. Even the wealthy house of St Mary's, Winchester, appears to have seen few structural alterations from the twelfth century until the Dissolution

(Qualman 1986). Following their initial construction, nuns' churches seldom gained significant new architectural features. Nun Monkton, for instance, is essentially a twelfth century building, as St Radegund's, Cambridge, is of the thirteenth century (though much restored) (plate 37). Certain features were retained after they had passed out of fashion, such as the ambulatory plan of Romsey's church[7]. Similar layouts were, however, remodelled at Barking (Clapham 1913) and Elstow (Baker 1971). Architectural fragments reveal small programmes of rebuilding, such as the excavated thirteenth/ fourteenth century voussoirs from Nun Appleton (N Yorks). Existing buildings were sometimes extended in the fourteenth century, for example the east end of the church at Burnham (Brakspear 1903). Chapter-houses were extended at Cambridge, Easebourne and Burnham. Major rebuildings were less common, although additions to the cloister and chapter-house were made to Malling (Kent) in the late fourteenth century, and a new gatehouse and guest house were constructed (New 1985, 248-9). Elstow was substantially rebuilt in the mid-fourteenth century, with refectory and dormitory ranges planned simultaneously (Baker 1971).

Fifteenth and sixteenth century remodellings were rare, although exceptions include the nuns' church at Bishopsgate which received new clerestory windows and a west door. At many houses the west range guest hall and prioress's lodge continued to be developed. For example, the extant west range at Kington St Michael contains fifteenth century features. Sixteenth century ranges sometimes broke with claustral planning, for example the lodge at Carrow which may have overlapped an earlier west range, and the west range at Pinley with its axis aligned E-W rather than the usual N-S (VCH Warwicks III 1945, 148).

Additions to the initial plan were generally stimulated by secular or parochial interest. In the fourteenth century the parochial south aisle at Ickleton (Cambs) was widened (Radford 1967, 229). The parochial north aisle was extended at Romsey c1400, where a new doorway joined the enlarged Lady Chapel (Medieval Archaeol 1974, 189). The early fourteenth century Lady Chapel at Lacock (Brakspear 1900, 132) was built jointly by the convent and John Bluet, who regarded it as his chantry chapel (Cook 1947, 26). Fifteenth century porches were added to parochial naves at Usk (Gwent) (plate 38) and Bungay (Suffolk),

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7.The eastern arm of Romsey consists of a square-ended choir with ambulatory carried round it, with chapels projecting east of the ambulatory; apsidal chapels at the ends of the aisles were entered from the ambulatory (Clapham 1934, 45).

which also received a late west tower to the parish church. Increasingly, new
building was dominated by parochial needs - possibly accompanied by the
rearrangement of internal space. The wealthy nuns of Shaftesbury, for example,
were obliged to move their stalls eastward to increase the space available to
the parochial congregation (RCHME 1972, 59).

Perceptions and use of space within monastic cloisters altered over time.
In male and female houses communal areas were reduced in favour of private
spaces. Hence dormitories were partitioned or rebuilt to house separate
cubicles. The fifteenth century east range at Littlemore (Oxfords) was divided
into two rows of chambers (approximately 2.4 by 3m each) lit by small windows
(Pantin 1970). But the need for individual privacy was not apparently felt at
all nunneries. Burnham, for instance, retained a communal dormitory and
infirmary.

Instead of individual spaces, nunneries more often splintered into smaller
groups within the house. Bishops' visitations reported a gradual neglect of the
frater in favour of several private messes, much like the private chambers which
were replacing secular dining halls. These familiae developed into distinct
households within the nunnery (Power 1922, 317)[8]. Such disintegration had
architectural implications. A number of possible arrangements have been
suggested for the accommodation of Elstow's familiae: in converted outbuildings,
a partitioned refectory, or timber-framed buildings just outside the precinct
(Baker and Baker 1989, 270). More drastic rearrangements were carried out at
Godstow (Oxfords), where the extant walls of the inner court mark an enclosure
devoid of claustral buildings. Here three households replaced the traditional
cloister. These were described and drawn in the seventeenth century (Ganz 1972).
The households were concentrated in the southern part of the enclosure, towards
the chapel. Two parallel ranges were aligned E-W to flank the main conduit
running through the south of the enclosure (plate 39); one survives as a
depression to the north of the conduit. A third building, aligned N-S, abutted
the outer court, where a single buttress survives to indicate its northern limit
(plate 40).

Cloisters were further compromised by the encroachment of outer court

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8.Households appeared in injunctions from the late thirteenth century and were
prevalent by the fifteenth, including those recorded at Elstow, Catesby,
Stixwould, Nuncoton, Stamford, Stainfield, Gokewell, Langley, Grace Dieu,
Godstow and Legbourne.

activities. Dissolution surveys reveal that breadhouses, breweries and dairies
became commonplace features in the cloisters of small nunneries like Wilberfoss
(N Yorks); west ranges amd refectories were used as granaries at Wykeham,
Handale and Thicket (Gilyard-Beer 1958, 46-7). Further departures from monastic
planning may have been curtailed by the Dissolution. French nunneries continued
to develop new spatial arrangements. At Marcigny (Diocese of Autun), for
example, a private church was built communicating with the nuns' chapter-house,
a configuration which one scholar described as "une fantaisie féminine" (Monery
1922, 71).

4.4 Conclusion: Characteristics of Nunnery Planning

Nunneries are distinct from monasteries for men in the placing and internal
divisions of the church. It was noted above (Chapter 4.1) that double houses
resulted in 'families' of monastic and parochial churches. Smaller nunneries of
all orders shared their churches with rural or urban parishes, so that nunneries
were seldom liturgically self-contained. In their tendency to locate alongside
parish churches, nunneries resemble secular manor houses and monasteries not
dedicated to a regular conventual life, in particular preceptories and alien
priories, such as Cogges (Oxfords) (Blair and Steane 1982). Where Benedictine
and Augustinian male monastic churches were shared, it was customary for the
parochial element to be contained in the nave or in an aisle. Arrangements
within nunneries may have been more diverse, with parishes occasionally
occupying the east end or transepts. Autonomous nunnery churches were
predominantly aisleless parallelograms, often divided by a single screen.
Secular groups were often accommodated in galleries. This method of segregation
differed from arrangements preferred in male houses, such as Cistercian Buildwas
(Shrops), where the lay-brothers' nave was screened from the aisles and choir of
the monks. The split-level segregation adopted in nunnery churches was closer to
that of some manorial chapels, where the family of the manor sat in upper
galleries or pews, for example at Newbury Court and Blackmore Farm (both
Somerset) (Barley 1986) and Calverley (W Yorks).

Liturgical prohibitions placed on nuns influenced the design of their
churches. Without the increased demand felt in male houses for more altars and
side chapels, the parallelograms retained their simplicity. Nunneries were
favoured less often with chantries, and the new chapels and subdivisions with

which they were associated. The reliance of nuns on male clerics for the saying of masses resulted in the construction (and retention) of the sacristy as a male presence within the cloister. Male clerics were accommodated in the outer court or in chambers above the gatehouse. Male stewards and bailiffs may have resided in the outer court.

If the church and sacristy signalled the liturgical passivity of nuns, the characteristic double-storey refectory hinted at a more positive role. As an iconographic prototype for twelfth and thirteenth century refectories (Chapter 4.2 above), the coenaculum referred to the participation of women in the early Church. Its message was appropriate to this area of nunneries, where preaching and scriptural readings took place. Excavations in the fourteenth century refectory at Denney confirmed that at frater the community was spatially delineated according to seniority, with separate entrances and a high table for the abbess. Rank was also observed in the seating of the chapter-house, where the head of the house occupied an elevated seat at the east end. While monastic hierarchies were certainly maintained, the female communities appear to have been less stratified than their male counterparts. This is strongly suggested by the paucity of detached prioress's lodges. In contrast to male heads, who often kept distinct households supported by their own portions of the monastic estate (Lawrence 1984, 233), prioresses were admonished to keep common dorter with their nuns (Power 1922, 62). Only aristocratic abbesses of the wealthiest nunneries, such as St Mary's Winchester and Romsey (Hants), could expect to command a separate house (Coldicott 1989, 46). In contrast, detached lodges were maintained even at relatively poor male houses of Cistercians (Netley, Hants; Croxden, Staffs), Augustinians (Haughmond, Shrops), Premonstratensians (Easby, N Yorks) and Benedictines (Finchale, co Durham).

The poverty of nunneries was felt in slow initial building compaigns, limited rebuilding, and departures from standard monastic planning. Some buildings were in timber, or cob on stone foundations, much like lesser gentry houses (Le Patourel 1973, 68-70). Small nunneries incorporated features more often associated with secular domestic contexts, such as garderobes and upper storey kitchens. West ranges were planned along the models of gentry houses, as double ended halls. Service wings were added to existing nunnery ranges, such as that which extended from the west range at Kirklees, much as cross-wings were attached to earlier manor houses. Nunneries and gentry complexes shared distinctive features of planning, especially where a courtyard surrounded by

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discontinuous ranges was contained within a moat. Such features were equally suited to nunneries and manor houses, such as Penhallam (Cornwall) (G Beresford 1979). Exceptionally wealthy nunneries, such as Shaftesbury, Barking, Elstow and Malling, were planned and comprehensively rebuilt in a manner more closely approximating that of male houses. In such cases the status of the founder and inmates placed the nunnery outside accepted notions of the form and function of female houses.

Sixteenth century manor houses and nunneries made greater provision for storage than previously. Nunnery ranges were given over to use as granaries (for example at Wykeham, Handale and Thicket, N Yorks). Gentry houses placed greater emphasis on provisions for the service end. Likewise at nunneries, domestic and service activity was intensified, with the encroachment of bye industries into the cloister. At Kirklees the service-wing extending from the west range accommodated the brewhouse and bakehouse, with its excavated oven. The west range contained the boulting house and breadhouse. At Wilberfoss the ground floor of the west range was taken over by woodstores and butteries; the south range by kitchens, larders and stores; and the east range by the brewhouse, stores and dairy.

Certainly in smaller nunneries much of the cloister began to acquire the service functions which elsewhere are more usually associated with secular or outer court contexts. The proportion of space given over to monastic and service activities may be roughly quantified by considering the surface areas of the groundfloor and upper storeys. Both Wilberfoss and Kirklees gave up about 40% of the space within the cloister to domestic services. At Wilberfoss a further 15% was made up by private chambers in the upper storey - communal, monastic space was diminished as a result.

The increasingly domestic personality of nunneries was accompanied by the social and spatial breakdown of the community into households (_familiae_). Smaller groups may have been favoured over the individual space emphasised in male dormitories and infirmaries from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This fragmentation into households forms another aspect of the domestic nature of nunneries, since gentry and aristocratic women often lived segregated lives in the 'inner' household, accompanied by a small number of female companions (Dyer 1989, 50). At the highest social level these female households were contained in separate dwellings, such as the queen's parlour and chamber within the inner bailey at Corfe Castle and the queen's courtyard complex built at

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Windsor (Barley 1986, 90; Colvin 1976, 864-6; 866-88; see Chapter 6.4).

Differences between the initial planning of nunneries and monasteries can
be traced partly to the social origins of founders and inmates. Hence nunneries
possessed features of gentry houses, such as moats, discontinuous ranges grouped
round courtyards, upper storey kitchens and garderobes. Certain features
resulted from the frequent contact between nunneries and gentry society, in
particular the provision of galleries and west range guest halls. The
increasingly domestic character of nunneries was most strongly felt in the
breakdown of the community into households - an identification, perhaps, with
the lifestyles of secular women.

Figure 4a   Excavation Plan of Watton
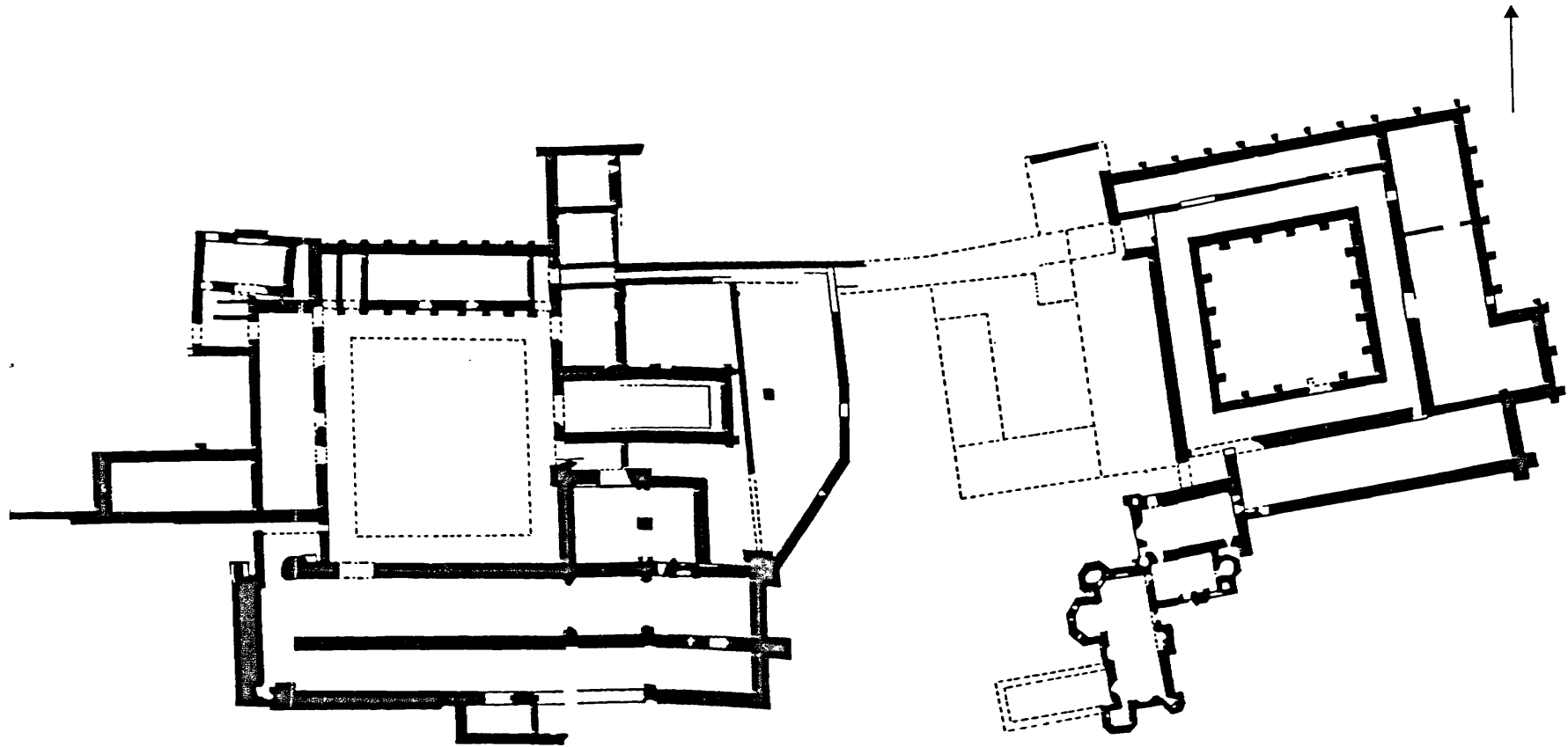
(after St John Hope 1901)

Figure 4b   Plan of Lacock

13th century
14 - 15th
post-Dissolution

0 3 6 9
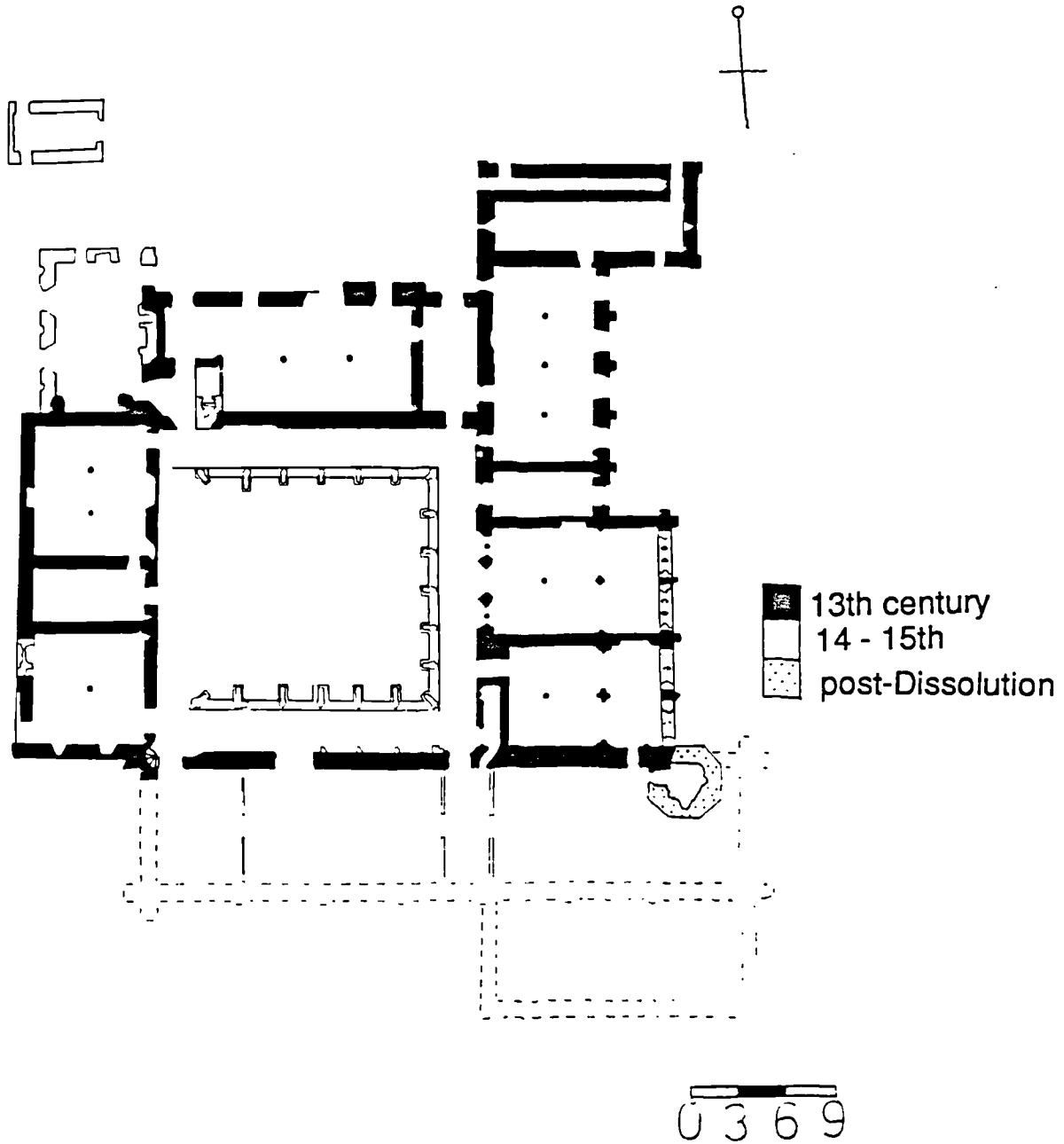
(after Brakspear 1900)

Figure 4c

Excavation Plan of Polsloe

A

0   METRES   20

1
c.1160

2

3

4
after 1250

5

6
c.1300

7

8

9
c.1500

10
after 1538

11
after 1600

New   Retained   Stage uncertain   Conjectural   Drains, pits etc

0   METRES   40
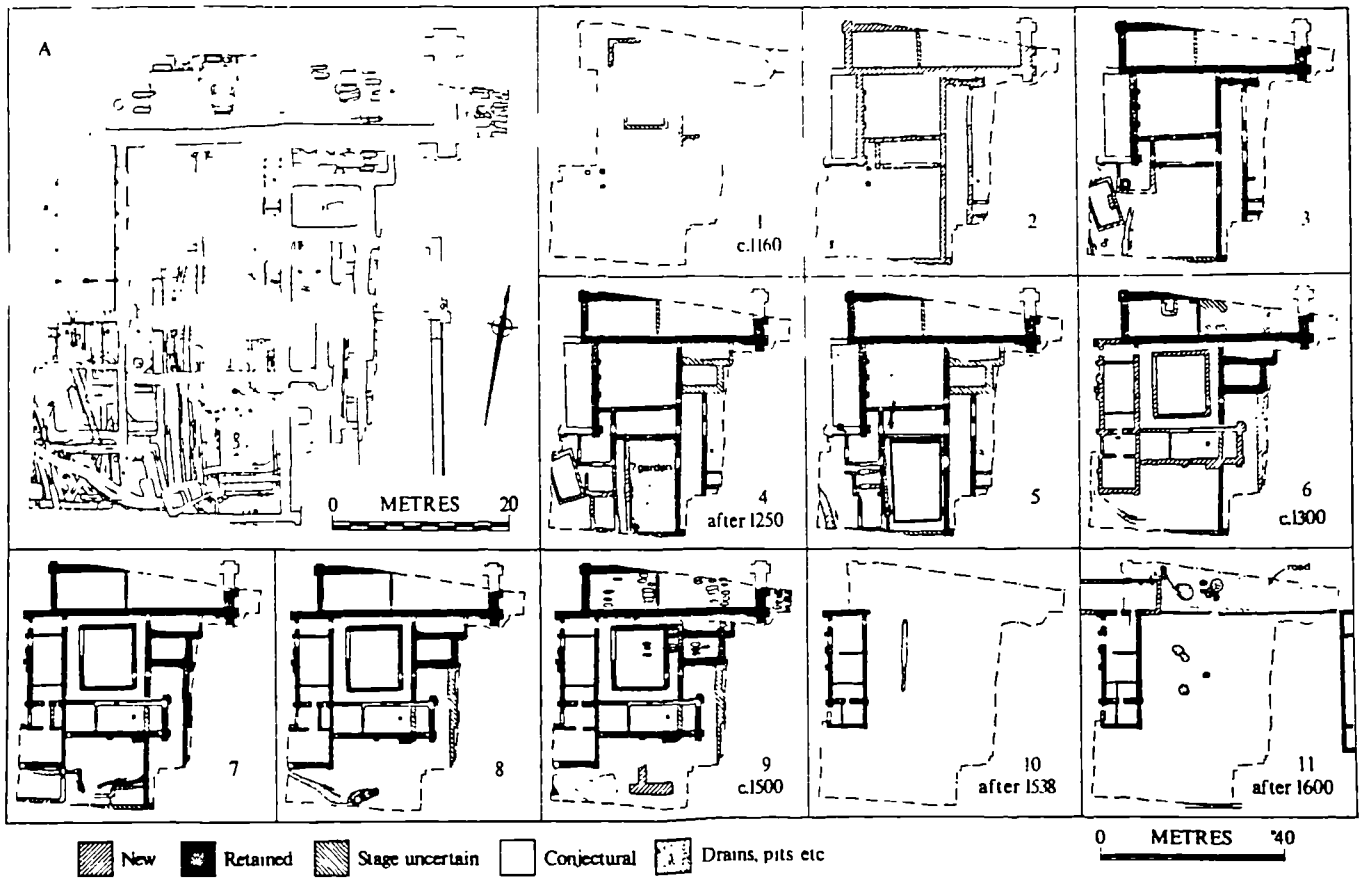
(Allan 1979)

Figure 4d Excavation Plan of Little Marlow
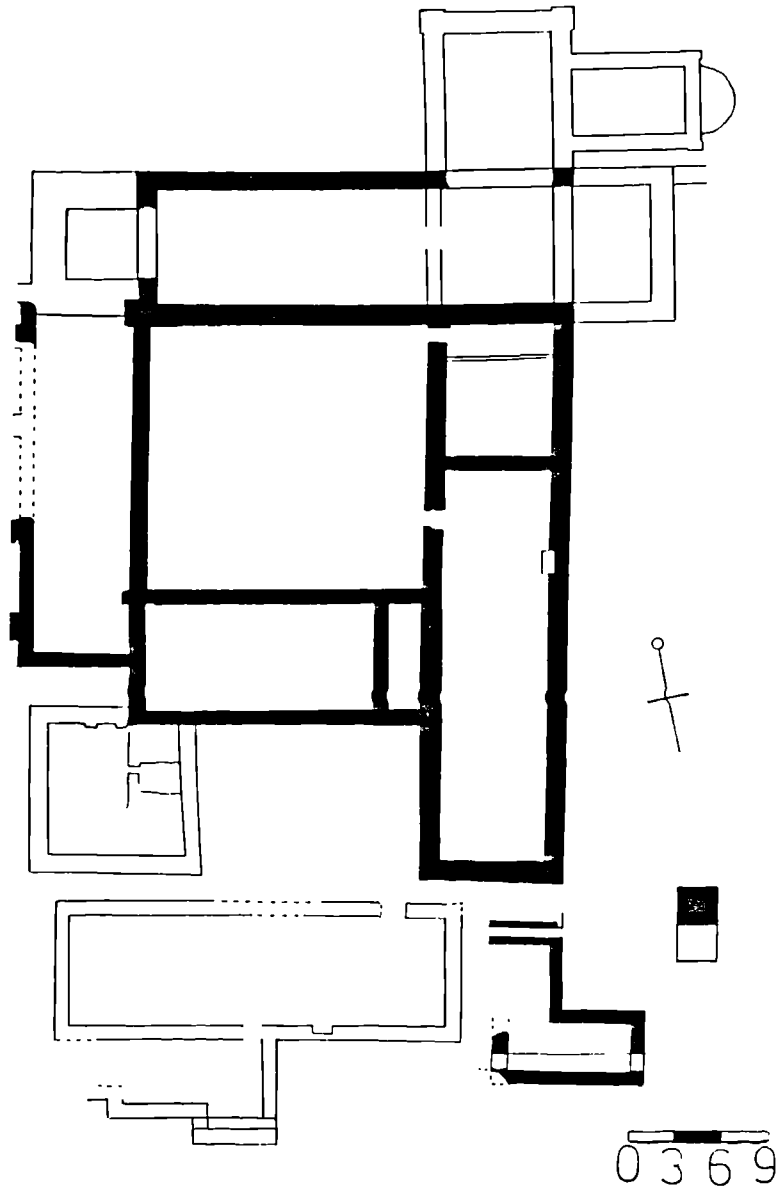
(after Peers 1902)

Figure 4e Church Plans

Brewood Shrops

Ickleton
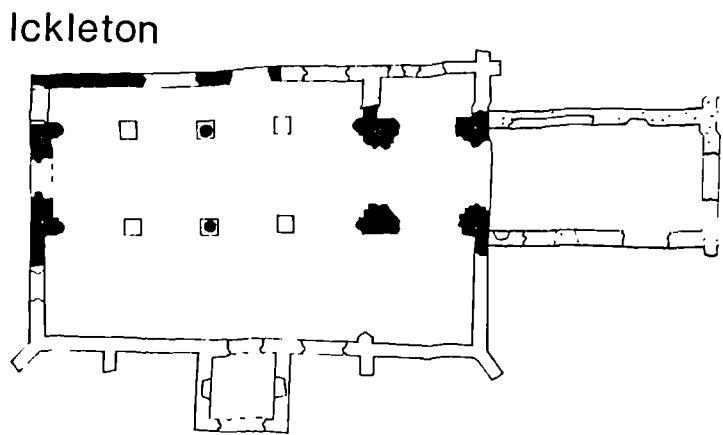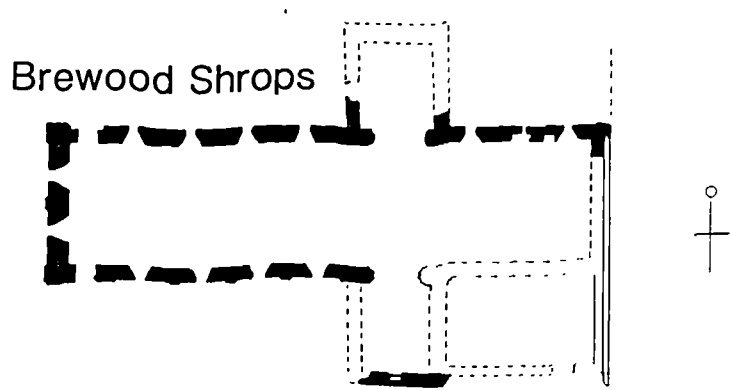
10-11th century
12-13th
14-15th
modern

Easebourne
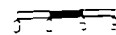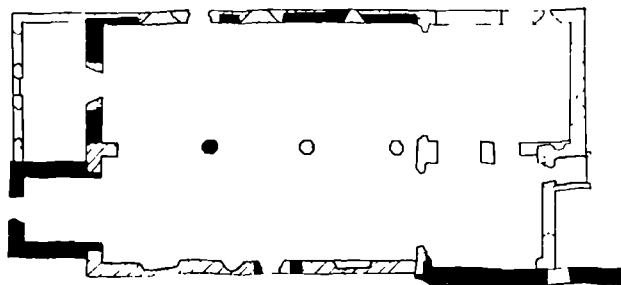
(after Weaver 1987; Radford 1967; VCH 1907)

Figure 4f   Excavation Plan of Kirklees

foundations (1904-5)
extant walls

0 3 6 9
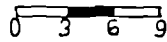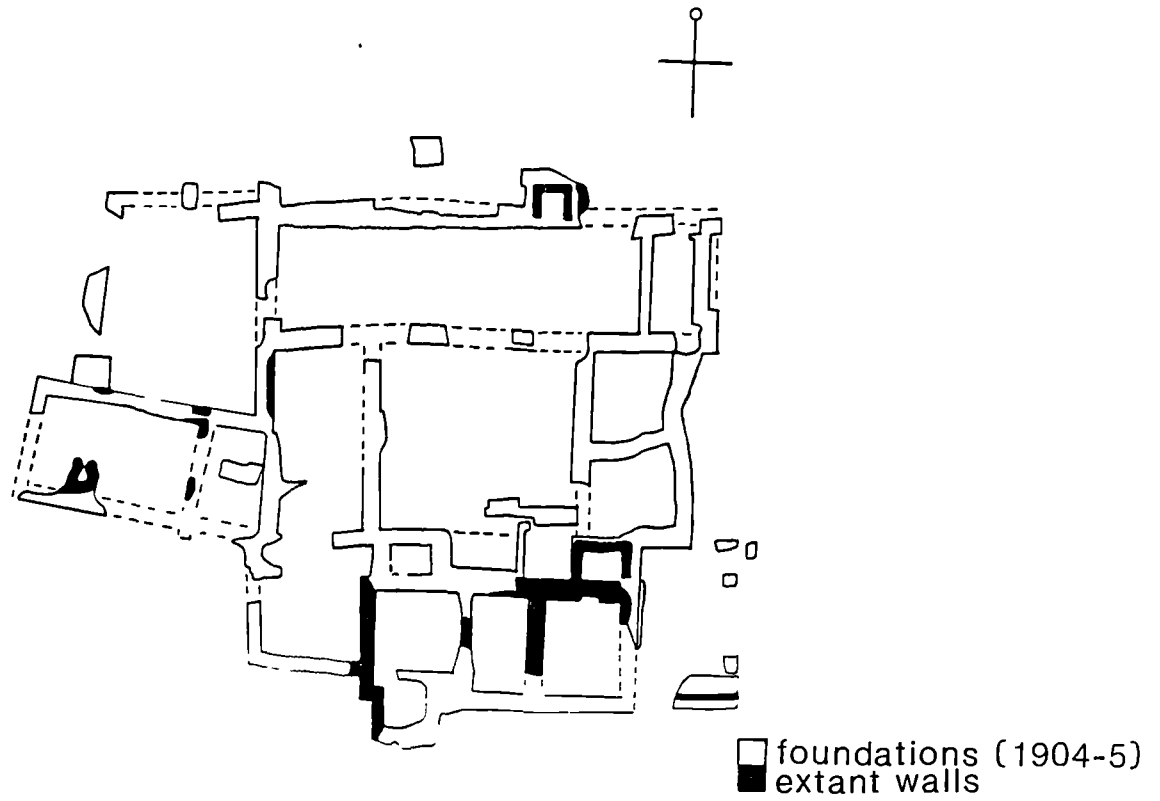
(after Armytage 1908)

Figure 4g   Plan of Kington St Michael

12 - 13th century
15th
post-Dissolution

0 3 6 9
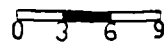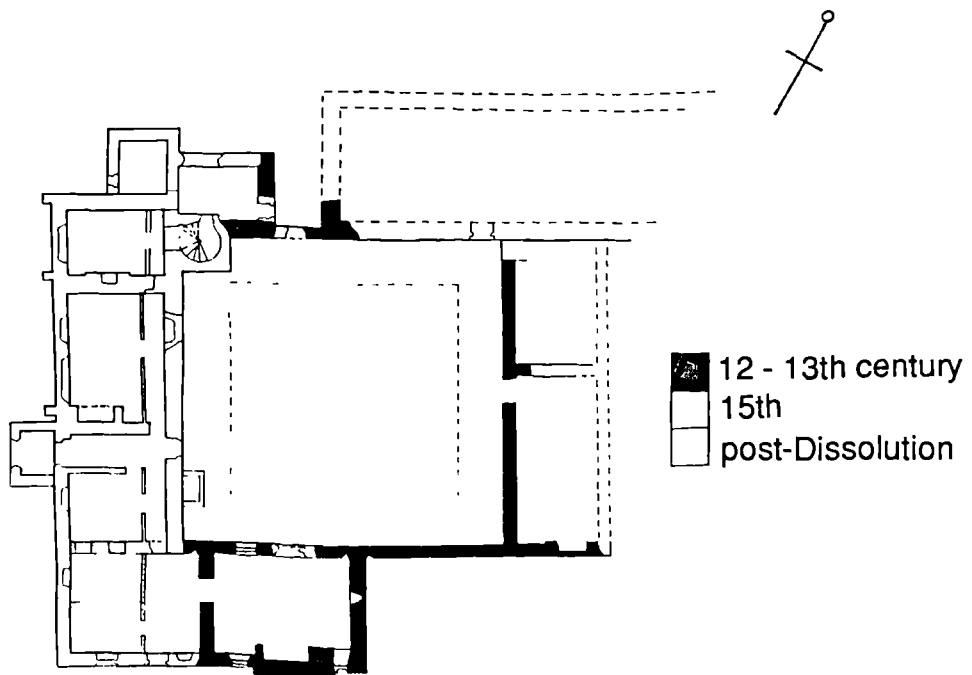
(after Brakspear 1922)

Figure 4h   Excavation Plan of Burnham
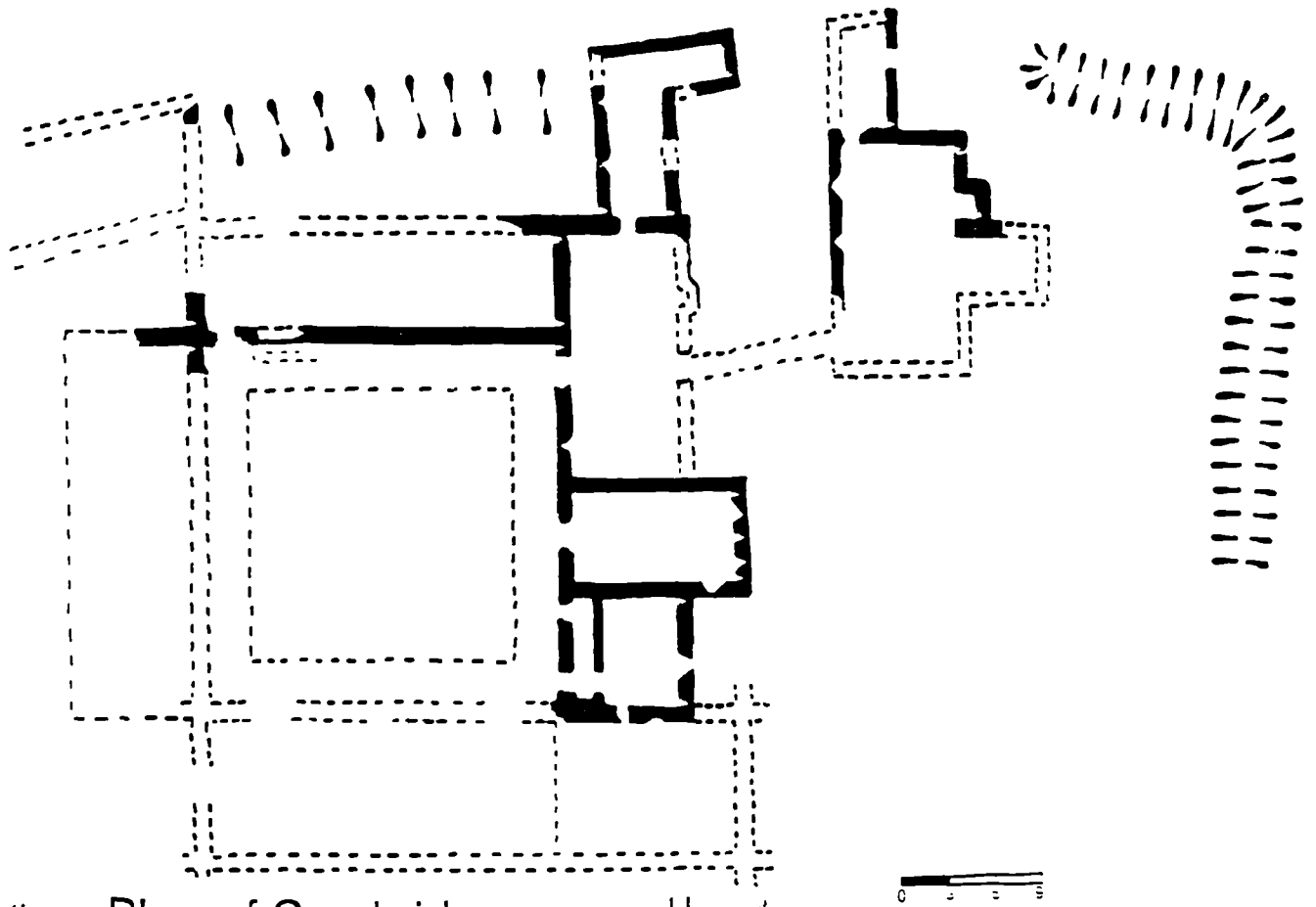
Figure 4i   Plan of Cambridge

(after Brakspear 1903; Miller 1985)

12th century
13th
15 - 16th

(after RCHME 1959)
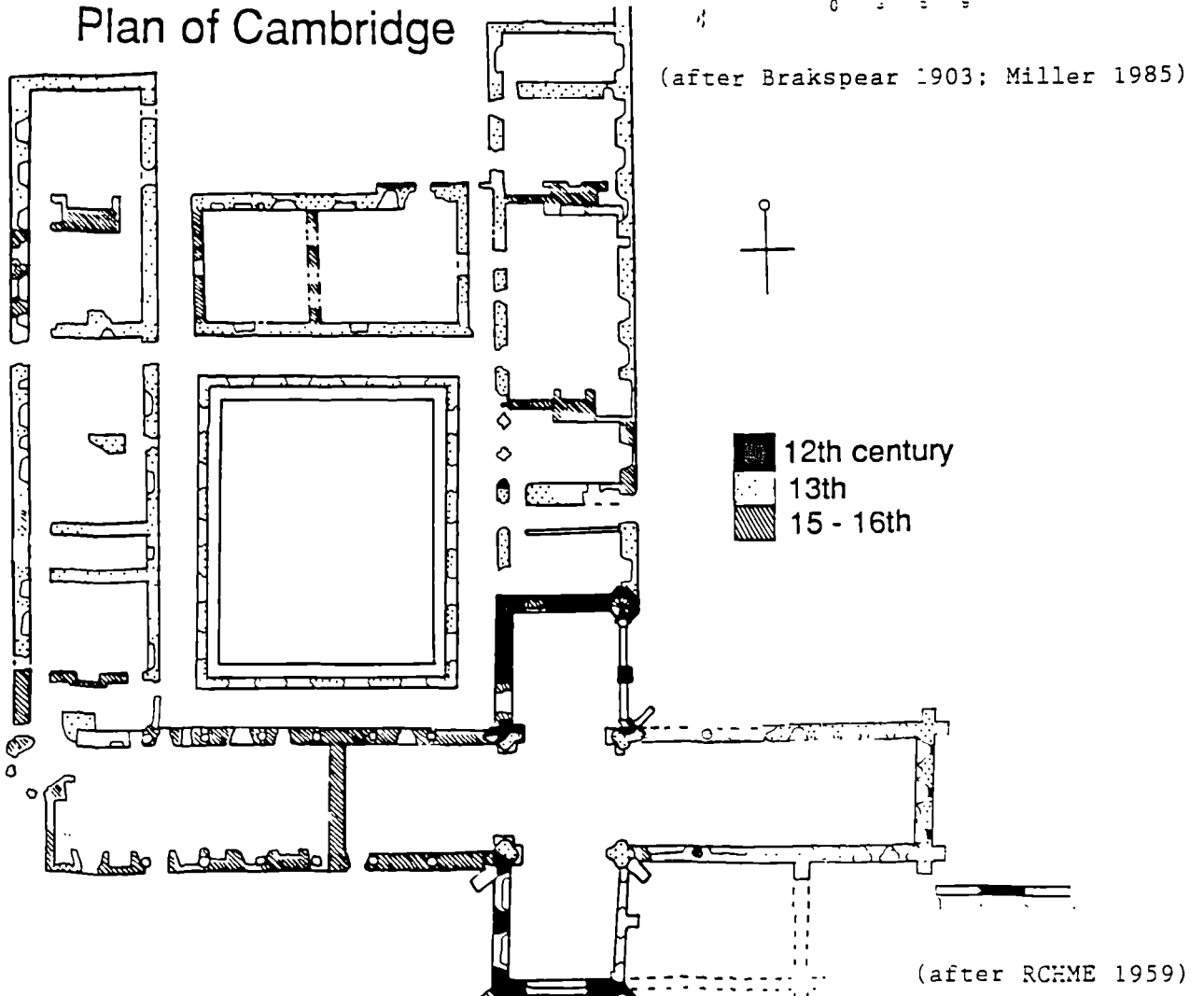
Figure 4j Plan of Davington

12 - 13th century
14 - 15th
(excavated) primary
(excavated) secondary

0 3 6 9
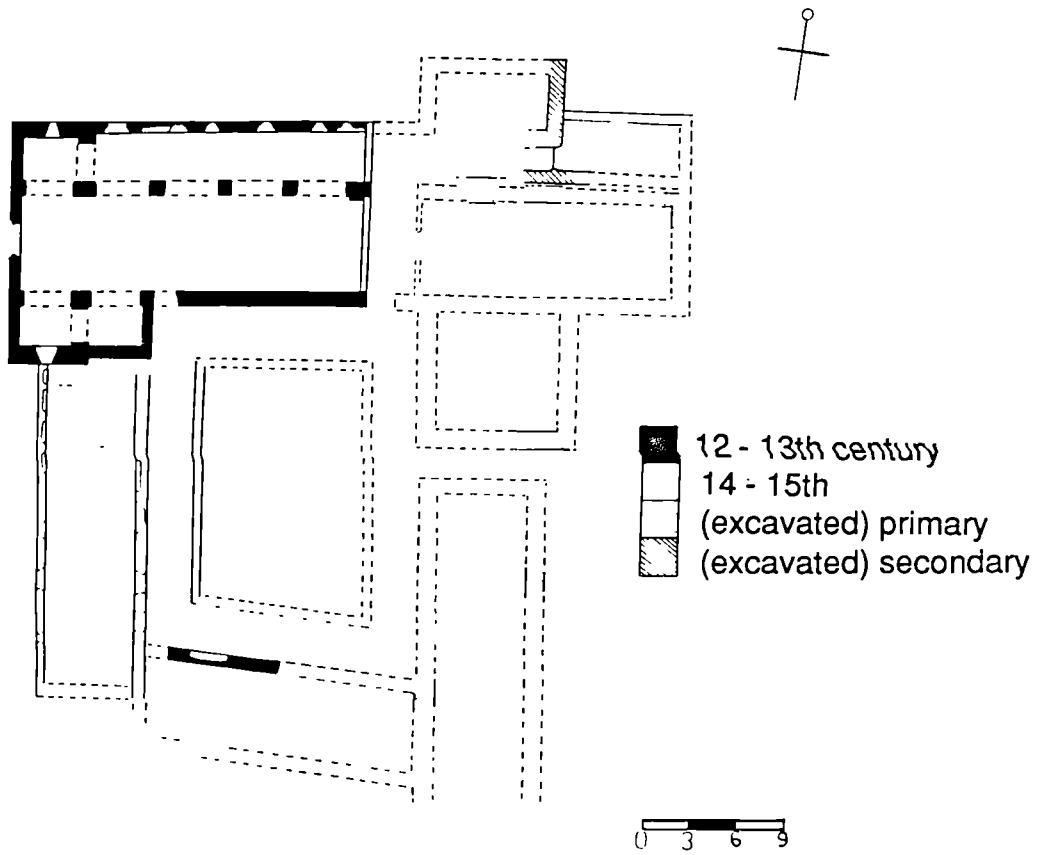
(after Tester 1980)

Chapter 5

ICONOGRAPHIES OF MEDIEVAL NUNNERY ARCHITECTURE

5.1 Orientation of Nunnery Cloisters

The preceding chapter has shown that a characteristic nunnery architecture can be recognised which was gender specific within the rules of monastic planning. An aspect of this vocabulary of nunnery forms is the high incidence of unorthodox cloister orientation. Possible meanings of this pattern, which is derived inductively, will be tested through forms of contextual analogy, in particular alternative material culture (manuscript illumination, stained glass, sculpture, seals), descriptive historical data (charters, cartularies), liturgy and literature. The significance of the cloister orientation will be explored in terms of the motives affecting monastic patrons (see Chapter 2.5 above), planners and inmates. Particular regard is given to the role of female agency in nunnery planning and the relationship of architectural form to active and passive female piety. Passive female piety, it may be recalled, includes the sanctioning of female religious roles and the forms of their communities; active female piety was demonstrated through women's participation in unorthodox religious movements, benefaction and structural change brought about through their agency.

Of the approximately 150 nunneries and 20 double houses known to have existed in England, the orientation of the nuns' cloister can be identified for 58. Many of these orientations have been verified by excavation: Barking (Essex), Campsea Ash (Suffolk), Davington (Kent), Denney (Cambs), Elstow (Bedfords), Goring (Oxfords), Higham (Kent), Kington St Michael (Wilts), Little Marlow (Bucks), Malling (Kent), Winchester (Hants), Polsloe (Exeter, Devon), Shaftesbury (Dorset), Sopwell (Herts), Watton (N Humbs), through early maps of the sites (Chester (Cheshire), Clerkenwell (London), Kirklees (W Yorks), Marrick (N Yorks)) or through the Dissolution survey accounts (Arthington, Baysdale, Esholt, Handale, Nunkeeling, Rosedale, Thicket, Swine, Wilberfoss, Wykeham and Yedingham (Yorks) and Chatteris, (Cambs)). Others can be observed in standing remains: Burnham (Berks), Cambridge, Carrow (Norwich, Norfolk), Chicksands (Bedfords), Delapré (Herts), Easebourne (Sussex), Grace Dieu (Leics),

Hinchingbrooke (Cambs), Lacock (Wilts), Littlemore (Oxfords), Seton (Cumb), Thetford (Norfolk), Wroxall (Warwicks)) or inferred from the ordinance of surviving churches (Aconbury (Herefords), Bishopsgate (London), Brewood (Shrops), Bungay (Suffolk), Ickleton (Cambs), Llanllugan (Montgom), Minster in Sheppey (Kent), Polesworth (Warwicks), Romsey (Hants)) or the interpretation of earthworks (Bullington (Lincs), Catesby (Northants), Godstow (Oxfords), Marham (Norfolk), Pinley (Warwicks).

Twenty-nine per cent of the houses (sample = 17 N:41 S) were planned with their cloister to the liturgical north of the church. Ideally cloisters would have been placed to the south of a church. It has generally been assumed that this was to achieve maximum light and warmth (Cook 1961, 59). In male monasteries exceptions to this rule of planning can ususally be understood according to the functional limitations of the site. Rochester and Waltham, for example, had north cloisters due to the restricted nature of the sites. Tintern and Buildwas adopted north cloisters due to the position of their rivers (Gilyard-Beer 1958, 23). Of the seventeen nunneries with north cloisters, only Barking may have been planned according to the restricted nature of the site (but see below). The site of Franciscan Denney had been planned by earlier male houses of Benedictines and Knights Templar. Excavation has shown that in the former phase, a north cloister could have existed (Christie and Coad 1980). Nonetheless, in their fourteenth century re-organisation of the site the Minoresses chose to adopt or retain an open court north cloister.

It is assumed that the most significant factor in the planning of monastic sites was drainage. Running water was needed behind the dormitory (dorter) for the garderobe (reredorter). Hence, the location of the dormitory would probably have determined the position of the cloister. Houses with wealth or influence may have had the resources to adapt a site's condition, for example by diverting watercourses. But poorer, lower status communities may have been forced to accept the natural limitations of a site.

The lower social and economic level of the nunneries (see Chapter 2.3) may have been reflected in their inability to alter unsuitable sites - and perhaps also in the likelihood of their receiving them. The high proportion of north cloisters could be the product of functional planning restrictions. This may be tested by mapping the water sources of the north and south cloister nunneries in the sample. If a nunnery's water source was located to the north of the site available, its cloister was more likely to have been positioned to the north of

the church. Table 4 lists the water sources in relation to the known sites of the nunneries. In the group of north cloister houses only 23.5% (n=4) had water sources to the north, whereas 47% (n=8) had their water sources to the south[1]. In the south cloister group 19.5% (n=8) had water sources to the north and 41.5% (n=17) had their water sources to the south. The results of the mapping indicate that a higher proportion of north cloister nunneries than south cloister ones actually had water sources to the south of the site.

The correlation between low socio-economic level and restrictions in planning may be examined further through the cloister orientations of the nearest male monastery to each of the nunneries. Table 4 lists the cloister orientation for a male monastery of comparable value and date within close proximity to the nunnery[2]. For the north cloister group 82.3% (n=14) of the nearest male houses have south cloisters; 87.8% (n=36) of the nearest male monasteries to the south cloister group have south cloisters.

Mapping of the water sources and the male monastery proximity test indicate that the the north cloister nunnery plan was not the product of functional restrictions. It may be suggested that for c30% of English nunneries the north cloister was specific to the architecture of religious women.

The significance of the figure of 29.3% for north cloisters is clearly dependent on the reliability and representativity of the sample. The relative proportion of north/south cloisters will alter as more excavation and research on medieval nunneries is undertaken.

Nevertheless, when the total sample of 58 is mapped (Fig 5a) a distinctive pattern can be observed. The south cloisters are evenly distributed across England, whereas the north cloister type cluster into regional groups. Three discrete clusters can be identified in:

1) the south-east (Barking, Bishopsgate, Burnham, Clerkenwell, Minster in Sheppey)

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1. Some nunneries had a number of possible water sources. Arthington, for example has the river Wharfe running to the north of the site (which may have been used to flush the reredorter drains) and a fresh water spring running from the ridge to the south which would have supplied drinking water. Wherever possible the major water source for drainage is listed.

2. The sample of male monasteries has been limited by the availability of plans and, in some regions, the absence of male houses of comparable status to the nunnery. In these cases, the male monastery of closest proximity and status with known groundplan has been listed.

2) Cambridgeshire (Cambridge, Chatteris, Denney, Hinchingbrooke, Ickleton)

3) Yorkshire and Humberside (Arthington, Thicket, Watton, Wilberfoss).

Pinley and Brewood (Shrops) may form an associated midlands pattern. Lacock,
however, is geographically isolated from other north cloister nunneries. It
falls within a group of north cloister monasteries in the Avon Valley of
Wiltshire, which includes the male houses of Malmesbury, Stanley and Bradenstoke
(discussed below).

Consideration of the foundation date, or refoundations in certain cases,
reveals that the north cloister pattern does not correspond with a particular
period; they span the eleventh to fourteenth centuries. Figure 5b illustrates
their chronological distribution. Half of the sample clusters between 1133-1155
but this corresponds with the densest period of monastic foundation in general
(see Chapter 2.2 above). The north cloisters do not reflect a centrally planned
filial trait - although it may be suggested that Augustinian nunneries showed a
preference for north cloisters (4 N:3 S) and Cistercian nunneries generally
chose against them (1 N:8 S). The tendency for regional clustering rather lends
support to the argument that the north cloister feature was a deliberate choice
on the part of planner or patrons. The clusters represent the process of
adopting or copying fashions in architecture which conveyed a specific social or
iconographic message.

5.2 Structural Oppositions: North/South

If the correlation between nunneries and north cloisters is accepted, it is
necessary to examine the evidence for linking cloister orientation to the sex of
the monastic inhabitants. For example, is the north cloister nunnery a mirror
image of the south cloister male monastery? A structuralist interpretation would
assign meaning through the spatial opposites observed within the code of
monastic architecture. Deep level structure is assumed to be bound together by
binary oppositions, such as north/south, which are thought to comprise the
underlying schemes for the organisation of material culture. Archaeologists and
anthropologists have frequently identified structural dichotomies as
representative of a male/female contradiction. This application denies the
contextual nature of material culture and assumes a universal means of
expressing gender identities. In his study of the Berber house, Bourdieu (1973)
observed that space is often reducible to simple rules of opposition, like

north/ south, but that these oppositions must be explained by the social and economic rules which governed the practical knowledge of the actors. The meanings invoked by spatial oppositions, in other words, will depend on the intentions of, and interpretations by, medieval religious and their patrons. It is well established that a male/female duality was intrinsic to medieval Christian philosophy (Ruether 1974, 156) in which man represented the spiritual soul and woman represented the corporeal body.

Christian symbolism recognised certain opposites in the attributes of north and south. Generally the north of a church was associated with the characteristics of night and cold, whereas the south of a church was viewed as the region of warmth and light (Ferguson 1966, 43-44). The north part of a church was given over to symbolism of the Old Testament, in contrast to the New Testament association of the south (Bucknell 1979, 29; Ferguson 1966, 44). The observation of opposite attributes included a symbolism of the sun and moon, based on classical representations of pagan sun gods and personified as male and female respectively (Hall 1974, 86). The associations of classical gods were reproduced in later medieval exegesis and vernacular literature[3]. Augustine formed the view that the sun and moon symbolised the prefigurative relationship between the Old Testament (moon) and New Testament (sun) (ibid).

A correlation appears to have developed for north/moon/female/Old Testament and south/sun/male/New Testament. It may be significant that the Old Testament abounds with female metaphors, such as God the mother and the Wisdom of God as a feminine principle, whereas female imagery is absent from the New Testament (Bynum 1982, 125). It may be asked whther this symbolism of opposites and philosophy of duality could have been reflected through a monastic architecture of mirror imagery. But the inconsistency of the north cloister orientation, representing only 29.3% of the total sample, suggests that a more subtle and specific meaning may have been intended.

5.3 Royal Female Piety: the Saxon Monastic Tradition

It has been possible to examine certain social factors characteristic of the north and south cloister groups through the analysis of descriptive

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3.In Chaucer's Knight's Tale there is a description of lists for the tournament. Within a circular circuit of three temples to Diana, Venus and Mars, the temple

historical data (Table 5). These data are derived from cartularies, visitation accounts, Dissolution surveys and deeds of surrender (summarised in Knowles and Hadcock 1971; Power 1922). In this study they are treated as quantifiable multiple attributes of two artefact groups (N/S cloisters) (Table 6). The attributes considered include: order, social level of patron (whether royal, ecclesiastical or secular), sex of patron (whether male, female or joint foundation between a male and female), number of monastic inmates and value at the Dissolution. These factors indicate the preferences of certain social groups for a particular reformed order and the architectural form chosen for their foundation, in addition to the house's continuing ability to attract dowered novices and bequests.

It is immediately apparent that the north cloister group was composed of a higher proportion of royal patrons (23.5%, n=4), whereas the south cloister group had a slightly higher incidence of ecclesiastical patrons (12%, n=5). The preference shown by ecclesiastical patrons for south cloister foundations may reflect their support for orthodox monastic planning. The royal association with the north cloister type is perhaps more significant, representing an innovation to be emulated by nearby lower status foundations. The north cloister group has a slightly higher proportion of male patrons (70.6%, n=12) than the south cloister group (63.4%, n=26), whereas the south cloister group had a higher incidence of female patrons (21.9%, n=9) than the north cloister group (11.8%, n=2). Both groups are diverse in their representations for number of inmates and value at the Dissolution. The north cloister group, however, appears to have included a higher proportion of wealthier houses (concentrations at stages 1, 2, 4, and 5) in addition to a large number of houses valued between £10-20. The south cloister group had proportionately fewer wealthier houses. Classification of the group according to the value at the Dissolution reveals a pyramid structure with the largest group (£10-20) at the bottom, decreasing regularly toward the top (£450+). The north cloister nunneries appear to have housed slightly larger groups of inmates, with concentrations at stages 2 (20-30) and 3 (10-20). The south cloister houses were for 10-20 inmates (stage 3) with a large number for fewer than 10 (stage 4).

In each of the three clusters of north cloister nunneries is at least one

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(Footnote 3 continued from previous page)
to Diana, the goddess of chastity, is located to the north.

originally pre-Conquest foundation which was re-established after a period of abandonment. Within the south-eastern cluster were two Saxon nunneries: Barking and Minster in Sheppey. The best known of all the early houses is Barking, a seventh century nunnery which was praised by Bede (HE IV.6-10).

Within the northeastern cluster is Watton, thought to be the successor of the seventh century nunnery Wetadun where, according to Bede, St. John of Beverley wrought a miracle (HE V.3). Excavations at the twelfth century Gilbertine monastery of Watton were conducted in the late nineteenth century (St. John Hope 1901). Any pre-Conquest fabric was missed or not recorded.

Although none of the north cloister nunneries in the Cambridge group was reconstructed on the sites of earlier double houses, Chatteris was founded c1006-16 and Hinchingbrooke was the refoundation of an earlier establishment at Eltisley. Eltisley was a pre-Conquest nunnery associated with the ninth century saints Pandon and Winfrith, whose burial place of Eltisley was noted in the Chronicle of Hugh Candidus of Peterborough[4]. From the distribution of their estates made in 1228, it seems that the Benedictine nuns of Eltisley moved to Hinchingbrooke to establish a nunnery, perhaps around an existing church building of c1100 (Haigh 1988, 41). The standing remains of Hinchingbrooke include the north wall of the church, containing late twelfth to early thirteenth century windows, and a semi-circular arch of the chapter-house entrance, c1200 (Medieval Archaeol 12 1968, 166-7). These remains, in addition to the distribution of Eltisley's estates in 1228, support a refoundation date at Hinchingbrooke of the later twelfth to early thirteenth centuries, contrary to the tradition that Hinchingbrooke was founded c1087 by William the Conqueror.

Four south cloister nunneries had pre-Conquest origins (Winchester Nunnaminster, Polesworth, Romsey, Shaftesbury). Unlike the refounded middle Saxon houses of the north cloister group, these south cloister houses were all late Saxon foundations with histories of continuous occupation of the same

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4. This chronicle was completed in or after 1155. It contains entries for saints' resting places which do not appear in either the Secgan be þam Godes sanctum þe on Engla lande aerost restom (completed by 1031) or Anglo-Norman French lists. Among these is a reference to Pandouna and Windfritha at Eltisley, taken to indicate that an earlier version of the Secgan or another source existed. Additions to a Latin text of the Secgan (Harley MS 3776, margin of folio 118) notes Pandouna at Eltisley (Rollason 1978, 72).

site[5]. These late Saxon nunneries may be distinguished from earlier houses of the seventh to ninth centuries which functioned as double houses.

The areas with high densities of early double houses correspond with the regions of north cloister groups (southern England, Cambridgeshire, Yorkshire/Humberside) (fig 2c). The north cloister group includes a high proportion of larger, royal foundations. It may be suggested that the north cloister orientation identified with the Saxon tradition of the double house which signified royal female piety.

Saxon double houses that were refounded as north cloister nunneries may have been part of the cult of royal Saxon ladies promulgated by Bede's _Historia Ecclesiastica_. Although Watton, or _Wetadun_, may have received only passing interest, Book IV of the _HE_ deals in some detail with the abbesses and houses of Barking, Minster in Sheppey and AEthelthryth's monastery in the district of Ely (_HE_ IV. 19). The concentrations of refoundations in Kent and Cambridgeshire may relate to the Anglo-Saxon cults of royal ladies. Ridyard (1988, 241) suggests that these cults may originally have been created by the individual house to which an abbess-saint was connected, through the writing of _vitae_ and a cult of relics. It appears that Anglo-Saxon cults were not destroyed by the Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical administration. Instead, Ridyard suggests that some monasteries recalled the status of their saint-patrons in order to define themselves and attract endowments (1988, 152). It may be suggested that houses refounded on sites of earlier double houses used a north cloister to invoke associations of the royal Saxon lineage of their abbess-founders, in an attempt to redefine their collective identities and attract continuing patronage.

Support for this argument comes from the double houses which were refounded as monasteries for men. These refoundations were often articulated through a north cloister, for example, at Chester, Repton Priory and Gloucester. The Benedictine grange at Minster in Thanet, in fact a monastery in miniature, had a cloister to the north of its chapel (Platt 1969, 18). The north cloister monastery for men at Malmesbury was refounded on the site of a seventh century double house. The tradition of this house may have formed the focus of the Avon Valley group of north cloister monasteries (Malmesbury, Stanley, Bradenstoke, Lacock), none of which were planned according to functional restrictions. The

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5.The nuns of Polesworth were removed to Oldbury for approximately 50 years, but returned to Polesworth c1130 (Knowles and Hadcock 1953, 217).

Avon Valley group also occurs in a region with a high occurrence of pre-Conquest double houses.

The morphology of the Saxon double house has not yet been fully elaborated by archaeological excavation (Chapters 2.3 and 4.1). It is apparent, however, that these early sites may have had two or three churches, and that separate domestic compounds and cemeteries were provided for the male and female components of the house. This format of multiple churches and segregated domestic quarters was emulated by post-Conquest English double houses. The twelfth century Gilbertine double houses were planned with the nuns' cloister adjoining the major conventual church. Gilbert's original foundation at Sempringham (I) enclosed the nuns in buildings to the north of his parish church (Graham 1903). At Watton, the most fully excavated later medieval double house, the nuns' cloister was to the north of the conventual church. Later medieval monastic architecture may have translated the early medieval double house tradition into a cloister format, where female religious were symbolised by a cloister orientation alternative to the standard male monastic plan.

Further evidence of this comes from the arrangement of Gilbertine churches, with their parallel aisles for the nuns and canons. A similar early medieval arrangement is recounted in Cogitosus's account of the Life of St. Brigit, dated to the second quarter of the seventh century. He described the timber church at Kildare with its sarcophagi of Bishop Conlaed and Brigit to the south and north of the altar. A dividing wall bisected the nave into a northern half for the women, associated with Brigit, and a southern half for the men[6]. The median wall met a transverse chancel wall which ensured complete sexual segregation. The men's and women's parts of the church were entered through separate south and north doors (see reconstruction plan in Thomas 1971, 145)[7]. It seems that certain patterns emerged for the segregation of men and women during early medieval communal church worship. For the reception of the eucharist, Alcuin noted the proper positioning as..."men in the southern part, women in the

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6.It must be noted that Cogitosus differentiates between right and left doors (in relation to the altar), rather than north and south.

7.An alternative reconstruction of Kildare (Radford 1977) suggests that the choir would also have been divided into two by a low screen. Thomas's reconstruction is closer to the arrangement followed in later medieval Gilbertine churches, where the nuns and monks occupied the bisected nave, with lay-sisters and lay-brothers toward the west end.

northern part" (De Offici Liber III.2).

It seems that early medieval double monasticism associated women with the north part of the church during communal worship. A later medieval attempt to identify with or respect this tradition may have initiated an architecture characterised by north cloisters. The north cloister nunneries occur in the regions with the highest densities of middle Saxon double houses. The earliest house in each cluster was a refoundation or re-establishment of a pre-Conquest double house. Of the south-eastern group, Barking was refounded by Edgar c965-75, and completely rebuilt c1180 (Clapham 1913). Minster was re-edified as a priory in 1130, although its reoccupation may have predated formal recognition. Clerkenwell was founded after 1145, Bishopsgate before 1216 and Burnham in 1266. The Yorkshire group may have reproduced the pattern set by Gilbertine Watton's nuns' cloister, placed immediately to the north of the church, founded in 1150 and followed by Wilberfoss (-1153), Arthington (1155) and Thicket (-1180). The Cambridgeshire group may have respected Eltisley, located in the centre of a region formed by Chatteris (c1006-16), Hinchingbrooke (late twelfth to early thirteenth century), Denney (1342), Cambridge (1133-8) and Ickleton (-1154).

The clusters of north cloister nunneries may have aggregated around one pre-Conquest refoundation which was emulated by surrounding houses in an effort to convey social prestige and royal Saxon piety stemming from the Saxon monastic tradition of abbess-saints. The re-establishment was part of a nostalgic movement to identify with Saxon monasticism initiated in the tenth century monastic reform. It was perpetuated by the Anglo-Norman hagiography of Goscelin which included vitae of Wulfhild of Barking and Sexburga of Minster in Sheppey (Millinger 1984, 125 FN 5). These sentiments were fossilised in the later medieval north cloister plans of the refounded houses and their surrounding facsimiles.

5.4 Iconographic Architecture: The Passion of Mary and the Queen of Heaven

In the context of ecclesiastical building the north cloister nunnery may have had a special religious significance. As an architectural image the north cloister may have symbolised an idea. The iconographic analysis of religious architecture deals with the message contained within a structure's design. It presupposes a contemporary familiarity with specific themes or concepts as

transmitted through written sources or oral tradition. The cloister orientation may be studied according to Krautheimer's approach to the iconography of medieval architecture (1942). This method is based on the premise that geometrical forms were reproduced in order to signal a particular conceptual content. The symbolic subject matter of medieval religious architecture is understood to have operated at two distinct levels (Gem 1983, 1). Original construction of a building would be influenced by the symbolic content intended by the designer - as something which accompanied the particular form chosen for the structure (Krautheimer 1942, 9). After its construction, a level of symbolism would be imposed on the building by its observers.

To the medieval mind the dedication of a religious building was of paramount significance (ibid, 15). The dedications of the churches associated with the north and south cloister groups can be divided into: single dedications to Mary, single or compound dedications to female saints and single or compound dedications to male saints. Not surprisingly, approximately half of each group are single dedications in honour of the Virgin. A larger percentage of the north cloister group were dedicated to female saints (29.4%, n=5) than to male saints, whereas a larger proportion of the south cloister churches were dedicated to male saints (28%, n=11.5) than to female saints.

Devotion to saints may have been reflected in the relics kept by a house, some of which were listed in the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535 under the heading Superstitio (Power 1922). Some correlation may be seen between north cloister houses and relics associated with the Virgin. Arthington claimed to have a portion of the Virgins's girdle. A cross in Barking's rood-loft, associated with a rood-screen decorated with the Virgin, was attributed with healing. South cloister nunneries were more frequently linked to the relics of male saints,[8] although Baysdale was reputed to have some of the Virgin's milk. The altar at Catesby was a place of pilgrimage associated with St Edmund. The nuns of Grace Dieu had the girdle and part of the tunic of St Francis. In monasteries for men, the dedications of chapels sometimes respected a female/ north: male/ south alignment. At London Charterhouse, fifteenth century documents confirm that the altars of the chapels in the north of the church were dedicated to St Katharine and St Agnes. Those to the south commemorated St John the Evangelist and SS

8.This correlation may have been a late medieval one. Biddle has noted that late Saxon Romsey and the Nunnaminster, both south cloister houses, were the

Jerome and Bernard, and SS Michael and John the Baptist (Knowles and Grimes 1954). Are these further indications of a symbolism of opposites linked to a male/female duality? Or is it perhaps possible that specific liturgical requirements made female saints and female worship appropriate to the northern regions of churches?

There is some evidence to suggest that the north/south: female/male association was present in early medieval communal church worship. From Cogitosus's account of the church at Kildare (above) and Alcuin's instructions for the proper positioning for the reception of the Eucharist, "men in the southern part, women in the northern part", it seems that the distinction may have been related to eucharistic liturgy. The developing late medieval connotations of female/north must therefore be examined in terms of eucharistic imagery.

Bynum (1987, 81) noted the iconographic association of female saints with the eucharist. A particular correlation has been observed between eucharistic iconography and St Barbara, between fasting and Mary Magdalene, and between the Virgin Mary and tabernacles associated with consecration and incarnation. Park (1987, 313) has commented on the eucharistic significance of certain thematic wall paintings, especially of the Crucifixion. Elsewhere he has noted the relevance of the Crucifixion and Resurrection for thematic iconography associated with the north transept area of churches (1983, 50 FN 105). Easter liturgy, sepulchres and Holy Sepulchre chapels received an appropriate northern location.

The Easter dramas carried out in the northern parts of churches became juxtaposed with the scene of the Holy Women at the Sepulchre. The Regularis Concordia describes how three brethren "vested in copes and holding thuribles in their hands" assumed the roles of the women: "Now these things are done in imitation of the angel seated on the tomb and of the women coming with perfumes to anoint the body of Christ" (RC 51-2; cited in Parsons 1989, 16). These associations are demonstrated by the Easter sepulchre at Sibthorpe (Lincs), which shows the two Maries swinging censers and dressed in male clerical garments (ibid, 18), thus confirming the connections between the north, Easter, and women.

(Footnote 8 continued from previous page)
resting places of royal female saints (Biddle 1986, 9; 11).

Bynum (1982;1987) has examined the writings of medieval religious men and women in order to assess the nature of piety. She has identified a particular eucharistic emphasis in thirteenth century female devotion (1982, 256) and provided two possible interpretations. Bynum's earlier work (ibid) defines women's eucharistic concern as an aspect of active female agency in which women emphasise the reception and adoration of the eucharist as a "substitute for clerical experience". In this framework female religious compensate for their clerical impotency by savouring the eucharist as the only repeatable and controllable moment of union with God. In her later interpretation, Bynum (1987, 277) concentrates on a medieval female understanding of the eucharist as food. She argues that medieval cultural stereotyping linked women with food - as a resource controlled by women through food asceticism, charitable distribution and food-related miracles (ibid,87). In the mass, a symbolic reversal was achieved whereby the male priest prepared and presented Christ as food to the female recipients (ibid,278).

It is important to determine whether the correlation of female worship with the eucharist and the northern regions of churches was a product of passive or active female piety. Bynum's interpretations place emphasis on female action in constructing alternative strategies of belief. The very fact that the correlation can be detected in nunnery planning, however, suggests that it was to some extent a mainstream interpretation verified by patrons and masons. Whether the cloister iconography represented passive or active female piety, that is whether it was instructive or constructive of belief, is a matter which can be tested throughout the range of nunnery evidence and across the spectrum of contemporary ecclesiastical imagery. Among the little surviving liturgical evidence for English nunneries is a processional associated with the Benedictine nunnery at Chester. This fifteenth century text gives an account of the nuns' service for Palm Sunday. The priest and chanters begin while the nuns exit the quire. An anthem is said from outside the church door. They proceed singing, with the "prestes before theym" to the high cross in the churchyard. A deacon reads a gospel while they stand "on the northe halff" of the high cross (Legg 1899, 6). At this south cloister nunnery, the Easter liturgy incorporated a location described as north of the crucifixional symbol.

The suggested correlation of north/easter/female saints was also expressed outside specifically female architectural milieux. The twelfth and thirteenth century wall-paintings in Winchester's Holy Sepulchre Chapel, for example,

devote great prominence to the crowned Virgin (Park 1983, 45) in scenes appropriate to Easter/north contexts (plate 41).

The possible eucharistic and Crucifixional association of the northern areas of churches may relate directly to the most basic level of the iconography of church architecture. The cruciform ground plan was the image of Christ crucified. His head was represented by the chancel and the transepts were his hands. The Crucifixion image was the principal theme in Christian art from the ninth century (Schiller 1972, 99). Until the thirteenth century it was most commonly portrayed with the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist flanking the cross (Schiller 1972, 101) in reference to a passage from John (19.26-27), "Jesus saw his mother, with the disciple whom he loved standing beside her".

When translated to the format of the cruciform church building, the traditional position of the figure of the Virgin Mary was at Christ's right hand - the northern region of the church. It has been suggested that the figures beneath the cross were part of an artistic tradition of right/left symbolism of the sun and moon, (ibid,109). In this sense the iconography of the Crucifixion corresponds with the opposition north/moon/female/Old Testament and south/sun/male/New Testament. English manuscript illuminations respected these oppositions from as early as the eleventh century[9]. This is demonstrated by the Crucifixion illumination in the Judith of Flanders Gospels, dated to the second quarter of the eleventh century, which depicts the veiled face of the moon, the Virgin and the kneeling female donor[10] to Christ's right and the veiled sun and John the Evangelist to his left (Ohlgren 1986, 257-8). Further insight is given by the Virgin's gesture in the scene. She is shown wiping the wound in Christ's right side (the northern region of a cruciform building). The wound was said to have issued blood and water, so that it came to represent the eucharist and Baptism (Hall 1974, 85). Roberts (1985, 141) has noted that the wound became linked to Easter liturgy through a paraphrase of Ezekiel, "I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple, and all they to whom that water came were saved". Relics associated with the wound came to be housed in areas to the right

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9.The earliest surviving English ivories to portray the Virgin and the Evangelist flanking the cross date from c1130-40, as shown on portable altars (Lasko 1984, no 203) and carved panels (Warner 1976, fig 37).

10.Ohlgren (1986, 257-8) suggests that the kneeling figure clutching the foot of the cross is the donor or Judith of Flanders, although the figure could represent Mary Magdalene.

of the altar. At Westminster Abbey, where the True Blood of Christ was kept,
Christ was depicted gesturing to his wound on a central portal of the north
transept (ibid).

According to the iconography of the cruciform building, therefore, the
association of the north transept area with the Crucifixion and eucharist must
relate to the wound. In the iconography of the Passion Cycle the Virgin Mary was
portrayed tending the wound, which itself came to symbolise the birth of the
Church, the 'Bride of Christ', from the wounded side of the dying Christ (Lucas
1983, 7). In late medieval imagery the Virgin came to represent both the Bride
of Christ and the personification of the Church (Hall 1974, 75). Is it possible,
then, that the northern parts of churches were associated not only with female
saints and female worship in general, but more specifically with the Virgin Mary
at Christ's right hand?

The New Testament yielded little evidence for the life of the Virgin. Old
Testament themes were borrowed for Marian devotion as early as the fourth
century (Ruether 1974, 178). Israel's personification as the Bride of Yahweh in
the Covenant, for example, could be taken to refer to Mary as the Bride of
Christ. Equally the image of Sophia was pertinent to Mary (Sir.14-20 - 15:8; Wis
8:2)

> "She is the Wisdom of God, the daughter of Yahweh, who sits at **his right**
> **hand** and is the mediatrix of all redeeming knowledge."

Iconography associated with the Marian cycle was derived either from the
apocryphal texts of pseudo-Melito and pseudo-Matthew, or from Old Testament
events which were thought to foreshadow Mary's life. This juxtaposition of Old
and New Testament, or 'type' and 'antitype', is particularly relevant to the
last scene in the cycle of the Virgin - her coronation. The Old Testament type
for the episode refers to Solomon (I Kings 2.19)

> "And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down
> on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother, and she
> sat on **his right hand**."

These types are in keeping with the Old Testament associations of the northern
parts of churches in general. The image of Mary on Christ's right hand is
consistent with her positioning in Crucifixion and Coronation scenes
contemporary to the north cloister constructions. Her association with the north
transept area, therefore, might have accompanied the basic iconography of the
cruciform plan.

It was noted above that an early depiction of the crowned Virgin appeared in a wall-painting at the northern Easter Sepulchre at Winchester. At Canterbury Cathedral, thirteenth century stained glass in the north-west transept includes the "Seven Joys of the Virgin" as its middle range. Among the images is the Grande Maria sponsa dei. Fifteenth century glass in the north transept of Great Malvern Priory Church (Worcs) depicts the "Eleven Joys of the Virgin". Dominating this scene is the Coronation, contained in three lights (Caviness 1981).

It would be difficult to estimate which aspect of Marian symbolism, either the Passion or the Coronation, was most significant to the planners and observers of the north cloister nunneries. It is certain, however, that Marian symbolism was prevalent in English monastic contexts long before the cult's explosion of popularity in the thirteenth century. A nimbed, seated Mary and Child were engraved on the late seventh century coffin of St Cuthbert (Mayr-Harting 1972, pl.14). An Annunciation scene is clearly depicted in the first two panels of the mid-ninth century Hovingham slab (plates 1-2). Tenth century Winchester manuscripts (benedictionals associated with Bishop Aethelwold (971-984) and Robert of Jumieges c980) portray the Assumption of the crowned Virgin (Clayton 1988, 13-14). In late Anglo-Saxon England the cult of the Virgin may have been principally monastic and high status, but not necessarily linked to female piety.

The Coronation of the Virgin made an early appearance in English iconographic media. It predated the French 'Triumph' of the Virgin on the Senlis Tympanum (c1170) and is said to portray Mary in a more passive posture in which she is crowned by Christ instead of being seated in equal majesty (Gold 1985, 53). Zarnecki (1950, 12) traced the origins of the Coronation in English art to the Winchester illuminations of the Assumption (above). Our earliest surviving representation in plastic media is the Coronation on a capital from Reading Abbey, c1130 (ibid, 4). Its inspirational source was perhaps shared by the first known parochial rendering of the theme, in the northern tympanum at Quenington church (Gloucs), c1150 (plate 42). Quenington may have been the site of a late Saxon nunnery (Chapter 2.3). Stone (1972, 242 FN 8) suggested that shared iconographic themes at Quenington and Reading were most probably due to a transfer of Reading masons to St Frideswide's, Oxford. The appearance of the Coronation of the Virgin on monumental art certainly coincides with the densest chronological group of north cloister nunneries, c1130-55, representing half of

the sample. The monastic connotations of the Mary cult, and more latterly the
Coronation, were strong at this time. English devotion to Mary was burgeoning
generally with Holy House built at Walsingham c1130, to the north side of the
nave (Robinson 1980, 160), and William of Malmesbury's _Miracles of the Blessed
Virgin Mary_, written c1140 (Warner 1976, 353). Three thirteenth century examples
of Walsingham ampulla depict the Coronation of the Virgin[11], in contrast to the
fourteenth century Walsingham ampulla devoted to the Annunciation (Alexander and
Binski 1987, 223, cat.nos. 71-74). The Coronation retained high status
associations extending to the fourteenth century commemorative art of tombs and
brasses (Binski 1985, 2).

The iconographic and liturgical implications of the Crucifixion and the
popularity and chronological suitability of the Coronation suggest that the
patrons and designers of the north cloister nunneries may have been alluding to
either theme. The first level of the iconography of medieval nunneries, that of
the symbolism intended in their construction, may have referred to a collage of
female worship and Marian devotion. The second level of symbolic subject matter,
that imposed on the building by its observers, may be examined through
contemporary iconography and mystic literature.

From the north cloister nunnery of Barking, a Rood screen of the late
twelfth to early thirteenth century survives (RCHME Essex II 1921, 9). It must
have been associated with the first later medieval rebuilding of the church.
During its incorporation into the fifteenth century 'Fire-Bell Gate' the screen
was partially damaged. The scene depicted on the screen is still clear, and
consists of the Crucifixion flanked by the figures of the Virgin to Christ's
right and John the Evangelist to his left (ibid, pl.6). Details of the internal
fittings of a north cloister church can be extrapolated from the surviving
Dissolution inventory of Minster in Sheppey (Walcott 1868). In the upper part of
the quire "a cross of silver and gilt with the Crucifix, Mary and John" was
recorded (ibid, 290). Before the Rood over the high altar was a painted cloth of
the Resurrection, and in the "nether part of the quire" were alabaster and
painted "images of our Ladye" (ibid, 291). From the surviving and described
iconography it is possible to recognise the north centred themes of the
Crucifixion/Resurrection and Marian devotion.

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11.These were recovered during excavations at Bull Wharf, London; High Street,
Perth; and Swan Lane, London.

Petroff (1986, 19) has noted a consistency in the writings of twelfth century female mystics (including the English Christina of Markyate) to visualise Mary in her role as queen of heaven:

"they now see the whole of heaven, all neatly and hierarchically arranged, with two equal thrones in the most important position and they witness the crowning of the Virgin over her triple kingdom of heaven, hell and earth."

We have no evidence for the imagery prevalent in the liturgy of twelfth and thirteenth century English nunneries. From the sixteenth century Bridgettine text The Myroure of Our Ladye, however, we find that a woodcut of the Coronation of the Virgin accompanies the Masses. Phrases in praise of the Virgin refer to her as "Thou that syttest at the righte syde of the fader", "the meke mother whose trone is in heuen" and "quienne of heuen" (Blunt 1873, 293;97;308).

It may be recalled that 23.5% of the north cloister nunneries were royal foundations (4:17) in contrast to 12% of the south cloister type (5:41). Warner has suggested that the image of a crowned Mary as queen of heaven would assist in ratifying the secular hierarchical order. This imagery justified medieval kingship as divinely approved and "the honour payed Mary as queen redounded to the honour of queens" (1976, 104). The stained glass Coronation scenes in the north transepts of Canterbury Cathedral and Great Malvern Priory were both royal donations (Caviness 1981, 253). Coronation imagery may indeed have appealed to royal patrons of nunneries and a crowned Mary on Christ's right hand may have provided an appropriate scene for royal or highly born novices and nuns to contemplate. But it may not be possible to recover the specific symbolism intended by patrons and designers. Nevertheless the imagery prevalent during the life of a nunnery was reflected in the iconography of its seal.

5.5 Nunnery Seals: "Blessed Art Thou Among Women"

Monastic seals were distinctive marks used by a house in closing and authenticating agreements. Seals in general were never an innovative medium since the image had to be immediately understandable within a pre-existing vocabulary (Heslop 1987, 116). During the twelfth century historical and allegorical narratives became popular topics for iconographic seals (Heslop 1984, 299). The topic chosen for representation reflected the dedication of the church and the image of authority chosen to represent the house.

It has been possible to tabulate the iconography of 136 nunnery seals

spanning the twelfth to sixteenth centuries (Appendix D). There is some evidence
to suggest that the nunneries formed a distinct group, outside filial unities,
in their usage of seals. It seems that filial allegiances on earlier seals were
demonstrated through size rather than design (Heslop 1986, 281) but this may
not have been the case with nunneries. In his study of the seals of religious
houses in Yorkshire, Clay (1928, 77) noted that the Cistercian nunneries
disregarded official statutes against the use of conventual seals (Ellerton,
Esholt, Kirklees, Nun Appleton, Swine). At the Cistercian nunnery of Catesby
(Northants) an apparently secular seal, depicting a hare within a beaded circle,
was used in 1354 and described as the common seal (Ellis 1986, 20).

Certain regional patterns can be observed in the shape of nunnery seals.
The Yorkshire nunneries showed a preference for round seals (Arthington,
Ellerton, Esholt, Kirklees, Swine, Yedingham) which is rarely seen in either
Yorkshire monasteries for men or in nunneries of other regions. Some
neighbouring nunneries shared unusual themes. For example, Benedictine Bungay
and nearby Augustinian Flixton, Suffolk, both had seals depicting the Agnus Dei:
in addition they had the only nunnery seals which represented Christ crucified.
The social status and wealth of a nunnery seems to have been reflected in the
detail given to its seal. Attention was given to the number of decorative fields
on one or two sides of the seal and the complexity of allegorical themes or
number of individuals depicted. Houses with the rank of abbey possessed seals
with a high degree of ornamentation and complexity of theme represented
(Malling, Polesworth, Godstow, Syon, Winchester, Shaftesbury, Barking).
Shaftesbury and Barking, for example, both had elaborate seals with three
lateral and longitudinal fields. In their choice of iconographic themes the
nunneries can be understood in terms of chronology and status.

Relatively few of the seals are devoted to the imagery of Christ (n=14 or
10.3%). Houses dedicated to patron saints, rather than to the Virgin, frequently
depicted the patron on the conventual seal. These are mainly Benedictine houses
and make up 18.4% of the sample (n=25). Over half of the seals relate to the
life of the Virgin. To some extent their imagery follows general chronological
patterns in the iconography of Mary. Some of the twelfth century seals depict
the Virgin alone, either enthroned (n=5) or standing (n=3). By far the largest
group (n=48) display the crowned Virgin enthroned with the child resting on her
(left) knee. A study of French Cistercian seals (Bony 1987) has shown that the
seated Virgin and Child was the only image depicted on Cistercian seals. In the

thirteenth century, architectural frames and the standing Virgin were added to the repertoire. By the mid-fourteenth century the Cistercians incorporated into their seals the Virgin as 'protectorix', with members of the order kneeling beneath her outstretched mantle (Bony 1987, 202). The 'Throne of Wisdom', was the most familiar twelfth century portrayal of the Virgin. This Romanesque treatment was as an hieratic icon - to inspire worship and awe (Gold 1985, 67). From the thirteenth century the Gothic images which dominate Marian iconography were the Virgin standing with the Child in her arms or the Coronation of the Virgin (Gold 1985, 65).

Wherever possible seals are dated from the earliest documents with which they are associated, so that dates given may sometimes refer to the use of the seal and not its production. Personal seals are dated according to the reign of office of a particular abbess or prioress. The nunnery seals responded to the Romanesque/Gothic transition to a small degree. Six seals, dating from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, portray the standing Virgin with Child. The eight Coronation seals all date from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. The popularity of the 'Throne of Wisdom', however, never waned. It was maintained as the major symbol of conventual and prioress's seals right up to the sixteenth century. Its usage spanned filiation, status, geographical and temporal space.

Gold (1985, 49) interprets the 'Throne of Wisdom' as a statement of Christ's humanity and divinity through the Incarnation. Mary's role in the scene is as a mother within the context of the Infancy cycle - not within the Marian cycle. Similarly the five seals depicting the Annunciation illustrate Mary in reference to Christ's birth. Only the Coronation seals indicate devotion to Mary in her own right. Only two of the sample of eight Coronation seals came from north cloister houses. But all of these houses did indeed have royal affiliations, thus confirming the significance of the Coronation image to royal patrons, abbesses and prioresses. The imagery pertinent to this group of houses can be explored further through surviving manuscript illuminations. The Shaftesbury Psalter (c1130-40) and the Amesbury Psalter (c1250-55) derive from houses which adopted Coronation seals. They contain eight and four full page miniatures, repectively, in which the imagery of the Virgin can be examined (Kauffmann 1975, 82; Morgan 1988, 59). The earlier of the two Psalters, from Shaftesbury, exhibits the familiar Romanesque image of the enthroned Virgin and Child with an abbess kneeling at her feet. The Gothic Amesbury Psalter depicts the seated Virgin suckling the Child with a nun kneeling to her right. In both

Psalters Marian imagery of motherhood predominates. Coronation imagery is absent.

In considering the role of female agency in the symbolism of nunnery seals it is necessary to ask how medieval nuns would have related to the various images of Mary. Gold (1985, 72) has suggested that the Gothic images of the Coronation and standing Virgin with Child acted as models for female virtue. Religious women would have identified with the attributes of humility and submission embodied by the Coronation and the aspects of tender motherhood demonstrated in the standing figures (ibid). The Romanesque seated Virgin and Child was a portrayal of Mary's singularity - her perfection that set her apart from all other women. This hieratic image recalled Elizabeth's words to Mary...

"Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb" (Luke 1.42).

The consistent popularity of this image on the nunnery seals, in addition to the maternal imagery of the illuminations, may suggest that it was in her unique position as Virgin mother that the nuns celebrated Mary. The seals from north cloister nunneries show no awareness of a Marian iconography linked to the Crucifixion or Coronation. If this symbolism was intended it was by the patrons or designers of nunnery architecture. Its connotations were not maintained throughout the 300-400 years of a nunnery's occupation. It has been suggested elsewhere (Bynum 1982, 141) that female and Marian imagery were actually more attractive to religious men than women. It seems that Marian iconography was chosen as a suitable theme by those who commissioned nunnery architecture. The north cloister nunneries, it may be recalled, had a higher proportion of male founders (70.6%) than the south cloisters (63.4%) and a considerably lower proportion of female founders (11.8%) than the south cloisters (21.9%). Hence it may be concluded that the iconography of the north cloister nunnery was a product of passive, instructive piety, not of active, constructive piety.

5.6 North Transept Imagery - the Web of Meanings.

It has been demonstrated that the association of female symbolism with the northern regions of churches could be a product of the following factors:
1) A series of structural oppositions intrinsic to Christian art which followed Classical traditions and maintained a duality between north/south, female/male, moon/sun and Old Testament/New Testament.

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2) A concerted effort on the part of monastic patrons and planners to identify
with a tradition of Saxon double monasticism linked to royal female piety, which
was subsequently emulated by surrounding foundations.

3) An early medieval practice (perhaps originating in Judaism) for the
segregation of men and women during communal church worship, in which women
receive the eucharist in the north of the church.

4) A by-product of the iconography of the cruciform church building in which the
Virgin Mary was associated with the north transept due to her position flanking
the cross, her tending of the eucharistic wound and her personification as the
Church and Bride of Christ.

5) An architectural rendering of the Coronation of the Virgin contemporary to
the theme's appearance in other media and particularly appropriate to the higher
proportion of royal houses in the north cloister sample.

Contemporary iconography and liturgy identify Mary's position at the
Crucifixion as the dominant theme. Female religious writings and related
artistic media, however, confirm that the Coronation was also a suitable image
in terms of themes which were current when these houses were founded.
It may have been appropriate to the north cloister sample, which was higher in
royal foundations. The chronology and overlap observed in Marian devotional
media began with references in the Apocryphal texts and was transferred first to
manuscript illumination, then to sculpture, wall-paintings, iconographic
architecture and stained glass. The images appeared in mystic writings and were
observed in monastic contexts until their appearance in surviving late nunnery
liturgy.

The correlation of female symbolism with the north transept area may have
originated in expressions of Christian duality and the practice of segregated
worship. It was developed further in reference to themes of Saxon royal female
piety and the tradition of double houses. The feminine connotation was retained
as the northern region acquired orthodox liturgical associations with the
Crucifixion/Resurrection/Easter/Eucharist. This imagery was developed as an
aspect of Marian iconography which was considered appropriate to nunneries.

Iconographic architecture signalled and constructed a variety of
overlapping, multiple meanings. The north cloister orientation may reflect a
number of associations linked to female worship, symbolism and Mariology which
were interwoven into an imprecise web of meanings that represented female piety
to certain social (or common interest) groups, in particular high status or

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royal males. As passive female piety, nunnery architecture operated as a form of material culture which simultaneously reflected belief but yet also actively constructed and renegotiated belief. The nunneries demonstrated female agency in maternal Marian imagery in their seals and illuminations, which contradicted the iconographic architecture commissioned for them.

Figure 5a

Distribution of North and South Cloisters

○ north cloister

● south cloister
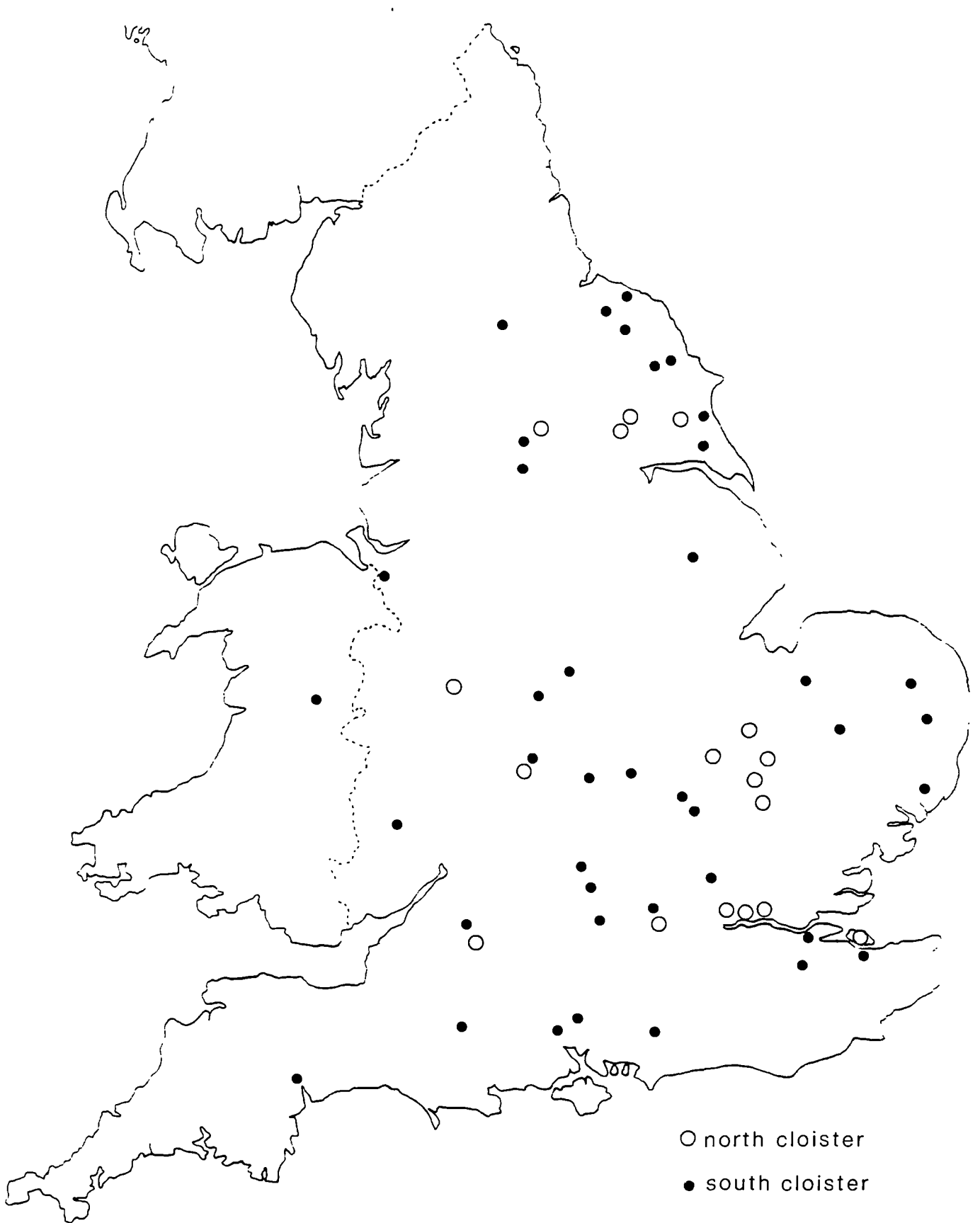
Figure 5b Chronology of Cloister Orientation

North Cloister   South Cloister

Chapter 6   .
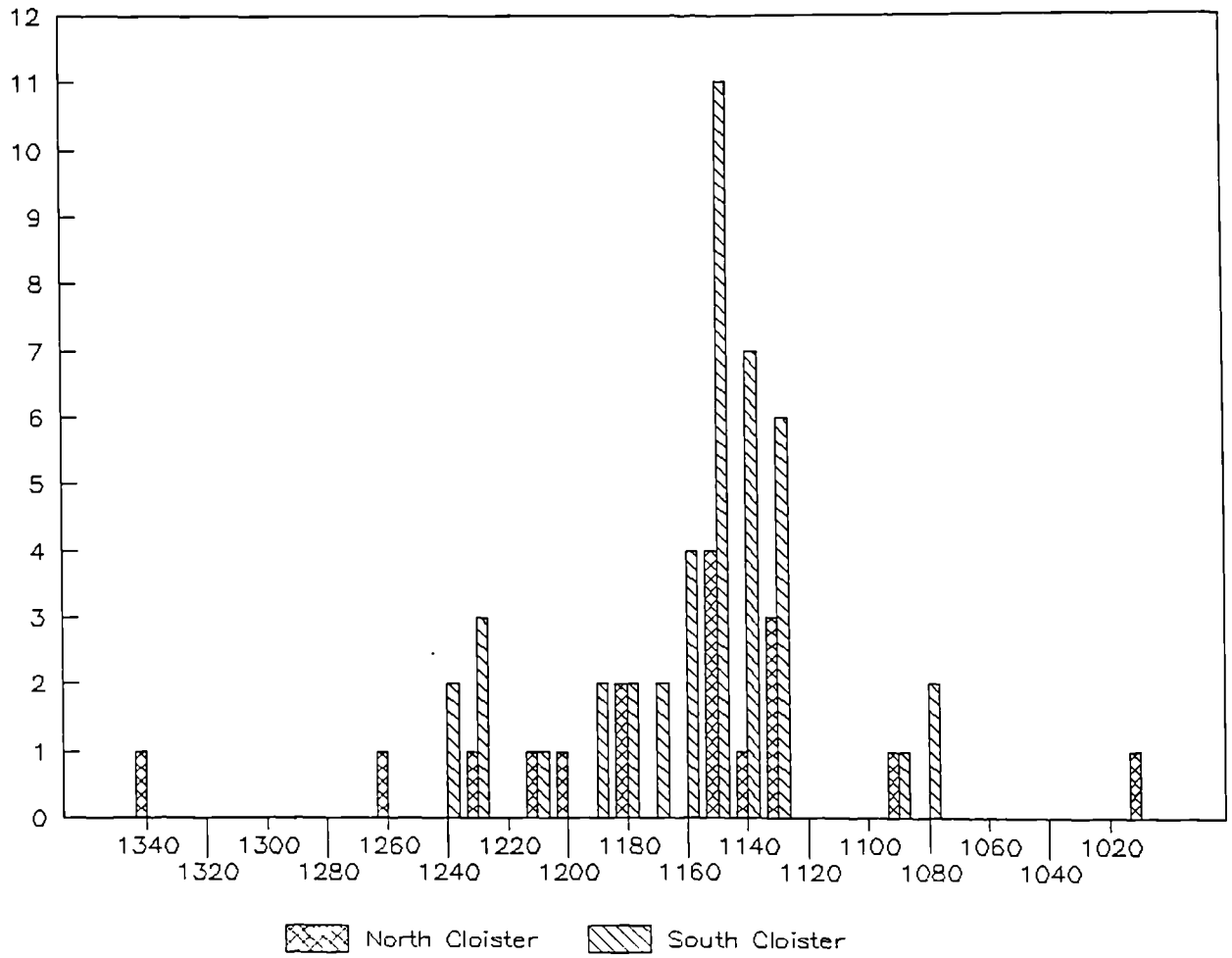
SYMBOLISM AND SECLUSION

6.1 The Social Analysis of Space

    Space is a medium through which social relationships are negotiated. Its
analysis highlights gender relations by examining the ways in which space is
used to unite and divide male and female activities and domains. These
relationships are expressed through the construction of architecture and bounded
spaces. The resulting maps embody discourses of power maintained by dominant and
subordinate roles and group membership. Gender identity is played out in
reference to spatial action, along with additional aspects of an individual's
social persona: age, religious status, occupation, ethnicity and social rank.

    Space may be studied as the activity of interpreting spatial orientation, or
by observing physical movement through space (Chapter 1.3, after Moore 1987). In
the previous chapter the iconography of nunnery architecture was studied as the
activity of interpreting spatial orientation. Here a more formal analysis is
made of physical movement through monastic space, participation by medieval
religious which informed and reinforced their social actions (after Moore 1987,
81).

    Monastic perceptions of space are informed by boundaries, which in
character may be both symbolic and actual. Thus the precinct boundary had legal
significance, but it also idealised the division between secular and religious
domains. Space was used to regulate encounters between groups. The precinct was
separated into an outer court, which was accessible to seculars and served
non-religious functions, and the inner religious cloister. This inner area was
constructed to manage contact between groups of differing social, religious and
gender identities. Such control was achieved through the physical manipulation
of space through which the inhabitants travelled (Chapter 6.3 below), and by
conceptual spatial divisions inherent to monastic ideals. Attitudes toward space
were created through shared knowledge and transmitted through sermons, written
liturgy and rules. This codified behaviour informed attitudes toward space, thus
reproducing the social order of the nunnery.

    Upon entering a nunnery an individual would assimilate explicit and
unconscious rules for spatial ordering. Attitudes toward access and movement

within a monastic context can be understood through the anthropological study of modern contemplative monasticism (for example, Williams 1975; Campbell-Jones 1979). Drawing on direct historic analogy, medieval monasteries can be interpreted through the observation of modern enclosed communities. Here this ethnoarchaeological approach to monasticism is based on the Convent of the Precious Blood (Burnham, Berks): a modern contemplative house living in a restored medieval nunnery and following the Augustinian Rule to which the community was originally committed (Gilchrist 1989b). The ethnoarchaeological study was based on interviews and reference to plans and standing buildings (fig 6a).

Novices learn the spatial orientation of monastic ideals during a three month postulancy and two year novitiate. During this period they occupy separate quarters and are restricted from some parts of the garden. Seniority within the house is demonstrated by processional order and by seating during offices and in the _frater_. In the chapel, novices are seated in the front of the double row of stalls, towards the altar. As members of the community gain seniority, they move westwards toward the Reverend Mother and Assistant Superior, seated in the return stalls. In the refectory, a top table is occupied by the senior sisters.

Provision for the authority structure is made within the Augustinian Rule. The superior should "be obeyed like a mother, with all due honour" (Baxter 1953, 403, para 15). Augustine advised "much more should you obey the priest who has charge of you all" (ibid). The priest's access to the modern convent is limited to secular areas, except for the sacristy, where he celebrates a private mass for the nuns.

Communication with the secular world is addressed formally through the portress at the gatehouse. Secular guests are lodged near the entrance to the abbey, and have access to the chapel, where a screen divides the nuns' choir from the visitors' nave. Seculars enter the chapel through the north door. The sisters have their own south door which communicates with the cloister, sacristy and modern refectory. Secular guests are received in a parlour of the gatehouse but are prohibited from the nuns' enclosure area of their dormitory, refectory, common rooms and garden.

Social order is punctuated by short-term references, such as daily routine. Monastic time is as closely structured as space. In the modern convent the dimensions of space and time are interwoven: communal areas and activities are distinguished from solitary times and individuals' spaces. Daily routine is

conducted according to rules for space and time; these dimensions are sharpened by the requirement for silent times and areas. Silence corresponds with the temporal dimension and is required between Compline and Lauds (approximately twelve hours), and with the spatial dimension, observed in the chapel and cells of the dormitory. Periods given to individual prayer are often spent in corresponding silent areas.

Ethnographic study of a modern Augustinian convent confirms that monastic space is perceived as being hierarchically ordered. Observation of a modern community can be used to set up categories for the analysis of medieval monastic space. It is suggested that space is structured according to the internal hierarchy of the nunnery, male and female liturgical roles, the distinction between secular and religious, and the dimensions of individual and communal time and space. These categories for spatial patterning can be used to interrogate the spatial organisation of the medieval nunnery of Burnham (fig 6a). Bishops' visitations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Power 1922) suggest that important guests and adult males were accommodated in the west range. Children and female corrodians slept in the nuns' dormitory, probably at its southern end, where an extant doorway indicates a watching gallery over the nuns' choir (plate 25). The nuns' dormitory was never partitioned into individual cells, as was common elsewhere. By the sixteenth century the abbess had adopted her own separate lodgings, presumably in the west range.

Studies of female monastic enclosure have emphasised the strict, perpetual enclosure of nuns within their cloister (for example, Hunt 1967). Previously the spatial distinction between seculars and inmates of nunneries has been characterised by rules for "passive cloister" - that is, regulations against the intrusion of strangers into the nunnery - and "active cloister", prohibitions placed against nuns leaving their cloisters (Schulenburg 1984, 60). But ethnography, extant rules and visitation accounts suggest a more subtle categorisation of cloister space through which individual and group identities were forged.

6.2 Religious Imagery and the Delineation of Space

It is likely that hierarchical spatial divisions were emphasised by the embellishment of architectural features. In this way space becomes a matrix constructed by the location and form of images (after Pollock 1988).

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Iconographic themes are built through sequences of related sculpture, glass, wall-paintings and ceramic tiles. The patterning of such images would help to establish and cement hierarchical relations.

Excavations at nunneries have produced images divorced from their context, such as the stained glass Old Testamant prophet from Denney (Christie and Coad 1980). Ceramic tiles often refer to the patron saint of the house's dedication, for example the unique Catherine wheel tiles from Polsloe (Exeter) (Allan 1984), and those from Campsea Ash (Suffolk) bearing "BM", *Beate Maria* (Sherlock 1970, 133). Occasionally, stone sculpture may signal particularly female religious associations. For instance, a carved sacred heart recovered from Dartford Dominican Nunnery (Garrod 1980) may be noted as an early occurrence of an image which achieved widespread attention in the seventeenth century. In addition, the heart may be considered especially appropriate to female devotion, such as that practised by thirteenth century German nuns and Flemish holy women (Bynum 1987, 56). Religious women contemplated the heart and blood of Christ in relation to the chalice and wine of the mass - corporate symbols which featured in the visions of women like Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) and Mechtild of Hackeborn (d. 1298) (ibid. 62). To the well-educated nuns of Dartford, the carved sacred heart represented a tradition of female worship linked to the eucharist, which predated the image's wider popularity.

Particular meanings are best read within their original spatial context. Despite the paucity of standing structures and modern excavations, certain spatial patterns can be explored in relation to nunneries. Images placed at entrances may have been intended to inform the perceptions of secular guests and parishioners. For example, the west window of Aconbury's church (Herefords) is marked by a single, veiled female head topping the hood mould. Of the four image niches at the west end of the church at Nun Monkton (N Yorks), two contain remains of their statues. The figure in the extreme southern niche is relatively complete (plate 44), and appears to depict a female saint. The northern niche contains a smaller fragment of a figure's bare feet. The niches may have contained the four cardinal virtues - justice, prudence, fortitude and temperence - which would have been personified as bare-footed figures. However, perhaps more likely may be Mary Magdalene and the Holy Women, as shown on the north tower at Wells Cathedral. These sculptures do not appear to have referred to the indentity of the nunnery held in its dedication (to the Virgin Mary). Instead these female representations, whether saints or virtues, acted as

signifiers in constructing the perceived sexuality - or rather asexuality - of the inmates.

Messages to the nuns were apparent inside the cloister. Over the entrance into the extant refectory at Cistercian Sinningthwaite (N Yorks) is a twelfth century stone sculpture of a serpent holding an apple (Nichols 1982b). This may be read as a reminder to the nuns of the temptation and fall of Eve, which prefigured the redemption of women through the Virgin Mary. Alternatively, the serpent may be the personification of prudence, reminding the nuns to "be wary as serpents" (Matthew 10.16).

The sacristy may be associated with eucharistic references to the sacrifice of Christ. The north-east capital of the sacristy at Lacock (Wilts) depicts the nimbed lamb of God (plate 43): the _Agnus Dei_ with its connotations of eucharistic sacrifice. In a similar spatial context, a wall-painting in the north transept of Marcigny in France (diocese of Autun) shows the lamb (Monery 1922, 66). Rubble infill from the eastern section of the north wall of the church of the Minories (London) included a quatrefoil, possibly the top of a shrine or sedile, which contained a black line painting of the _Agnus Dei_ (Collins 1961, 161). From the same context a painted female sculpture was thought to be Synagogue (Evans and Cook 1956). If this attribution is correct, the provenance of the sculpture may be questioned, since depictions of Synagogue generally occur in contexts of particularly high status, such as cathedrals.

Glass in the private chapel of the abbess at Lacock was recorded in 1684 (Brakspear 1900, 156). The saints Bartholomew, Bernard and Christopher were depicted, possibly respecting the nunnery's composite dedication to St Bernard and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Bernard was particularly known for his devotion to the Virgin as the mother of Christ (Bynum 1982); and Christopher repeated the Virgin's role as the bearer of Christ. Wall-paintings in the southern apartment of the west range show St Andrew, the first to follow Christ (John 1.40-41), and St Christopher, the Christ-bearer. Like nunnery seals (Chapter 5.5), wall-paintings and stained glass referred to devotion to Christ, or the Virgin as mother.

Carvings within cloisters did not always represent scriptural or apocryphal iconography. Capitals from monasteries and nunneries might also depict animals, foliage and the heads of secular men and women (for example, those excavated from Norton Priory, Greene 1989). Their messages were linked to movement within the cloister, in particular the sensation of travelling from one spatial region

to another. At Lacock, the capitals survive in situ in the sacristy,
chapter-house and parlour. Their subjects change as the observer moves from the
sacristy, the region of the priest, towards the domain of the nuns (fig 6b).
Capitals in the sacristy include the lamb (n=1), foliage (n=2), birds (n=1) and
male heads (n=7) (plate 45). The chapter-house capitals show male heads (n=3)
and female heads[1] (n=2). Within the parlour only two decorated capitals stand at
the east end, both female heads. The next room to the north-east, the warming
room, contains no human representations.

The male representations within the cloister at Lacock are most numerous in
the sacristy, a room predominantly used by the priest. Male figures occur in
smaller numbers in the chapter-house, where men would occasionally be admitted
(for example, patrons and clergy during the profession of an abbess). The deeper
space of the nunnery contains no secular male representations.

Embellishment of the cloister reinforced the particular devotional
practices of a house and confirmed its identity through reference to its
dedication. Group membership and segregation were signalled by a spatial matrix
which constructed meaning through the location and content of images.

6.3 Formal Spatial Analysis of Nunneries and other Monasteries

Within the convent, contact between social groups (nuns, clerics,
corrodians, seculars) was regulated through the manipulation of spatial
components in their placement and routes of access. These mechanisms may be
understood through a formal analysis of monastic space. Methods of formal
spatial analysis are based in the structuralist premise that space is
constructed as a language, following rules which correspond with social
categorisation. Spatial patterns are thought to be generated, and made subject
to decoding, through rules of grammar (for example, Glassie 1975; Hillier and
Hanson 1984). Spatial analysis frequently emphasises the coherence and stability
of social space (Moore 1986, 74). In order to compensate for the static
impression given, formal analysis must be made in conjunction with a study of
contradiction and change in settlement form (Chapter 4.3).

Studies of religious space have often focused on the interface between

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1.Male and female heads have been distinguished according to chinstraps and
headgear (other than crowns), rather than simply on the basis of facial

sacred and profane, locating symbolic and physical progression to a ritual centre, for example in studies of Buddhist monasteries (Khosla 1975; Bandaranayake 1989). However, monasteries were also living spaces which accommodated various religious and secular groups. Encounters between these groups may be studied according to the boundaries and entrances through which social space was categorised. The significance of gender as a structuring principle within monastic space can be evaluated through the comparative formal analysis of nunneries and monasteries for men. The method chosen follows the syntactic access analysis presented by Hillier and Hanson (1984).

While rejecting the interpretive claims of the syntactic model, that spatial form directly reflects social organisation, its descriptive properties can nevertheless be harnessed to great effect. Access analysis maps the arrangement of spaces as levels of permeability. Each component and entrance is represented as a node connected by lines to other components to which it has access. The resulting network of nodes and lines forms an unjustified access map. This product is justified, that is calibrated, according to the position of the observer, placed at any single point outside or within the complex. The Hillier and Hanson method has been verified by ethnographic and computer simulated studies (Yiannouli and Mithen 1986) and applied to a number of extant and excavated settlements (for example, Foster 1989).

Nunneries with the widest possible range of foundation date, status and filiation were chosen, each fulfilling the requirement that entrances and partitions within claustral ranges are known or can be reconstructed. Plans were studied in their final phase of development, before structures fell into disuse or changed function from that to which they were originally put. Such a state of development may be given a general date between the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. The following nunnery plans were analysed : Watton (fig 4a), Cambridge (fig 4i), Davington (fig 4j), Lacock (fig 4b), Burnham (fig 4h), Little Marlow (fig 4d), Kirklees (fig 4f) and Polsloe (fig 4c). A comparative sample of monasteries for men was chosen[2]: Watton canons' cloister (Humbs) (fig

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(Footnote 1 continued from previous page)
features.

2.The chosen sample of nunneries was dictated, to some extent, by the relatively small number of fully extant or excavated examples. The monasteries selected for comparison represent a range of types including a Gilbertine canons' cloister (Watton), a wealthy Cistercian house (Roche), a modest Augustinian

4a), Roche Abbey (S Yorks) (fig 6c), Lanercost Priory (Cumb) (fig 6d), Chester Abbey (Cheshire) (fig 6e), Finchale Priory (co Durham) (fig 6f), Waverley Abbey (Surrey) (fig 6g), Leiston Abbey (Suffolk) (6h) and Walsingham Friary (Norfolk) (fig 6i).

Access analysis was used to determine the relative degrees of monastic enclosure experienced by nuns and monks. Justified access (gamma[3]) maps were prepared using the precinct (the outer, carrier space) as the point of departure for routes of access to the cloister (figs 6j-y). These maps reveal the levels of permeability of certain components within nunneries and monasteries. The levels, or stages of access, of the components can be used for two further methods of analysis. An equation for relative asymmetry measures the degree of integration or segregation of a component from the cloister as a whole. In this way it may be determined which components represent the least and most easily accessible parts of nunneries and monasteries. A second equation, for relative ringiness, measures the dimension of distributedness of a component, that is the number of loci of control, or points of access, to it. Appendix E lists the equations, with results and means calculated for justified gamma maps taken from points of the precinct (carrier space), sacristy, cloister walks, dormitory, and chapter-house for each of the sixteen plans.

The justified gamma maps (figs 6j-y) show that the number of levels of permeability (stages of access from the precinct) was higher for nunneries than monasteries. The nunneries also had a higher relative asymmetry from their precincts than the monasteries. In other words, it was more difficult to gain access to the nuns' cloisters from surrounding precincts. The greater enclosure of religious women was guarded by a higher number of physical, as well as ideological, barriers.

Between nunneries and other monasteries the most segregated component of the cloister differed. In nunneries the dormitory (dorter) was located at the highest level of permeability, whereas male communities were more likely to reserve the deepest space for the chapter-house - the heart of monastic

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(Footnote 2 continued from previous page)
monastery (Lanercost), a Benedictine abbey with a north cloister (Chester), a Benedictine priory which had evolved from a hermitage (Finchale), a southern Cistercian house (Waverley), a rural mendicant monastery (Walsingham) and a Premonstratensian house (Leiston).

3.Terminology follows Hillyer and Hanson (1984).

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community and daily routine (for example Roche Abbey [fig 6s], Waverley Abbey [fig 6w], Leiston Abbey [fig 6x] and Walsingham Friary [fig 6y]). The mean relative asymmetry of the sacristy was higher in nunneries, reflecting its separation from with the rest of the cloister. Sacristies of nunneries were in shallow space, thus limiting the area to which the priest had access. Where sacristies occur in monasteries, they were part of a deeper space, accessible from fewer loci of control (lower mean relative ringiness), and more representative of their function of storing sacred vessels and vestments (for example Leiston Abbey [fig 6x]).

The impermeability of sacristies and chapter-houses within monasteries was suggested elsewhere (Cromwell 1987), in a study using Hammond's method of calculating central accessability (1972). Sacristies and chapter-houses were shown to be the least accessible parts of Cistercian monasteries in Yorkshire, where space was used to filter lay-religious from parts of the cloister (Gilchrist 1989b). In Cistercian monasteries, spatial categorisation was concerned with maintaining boundaries between groups of differing religious status. Benedictine monasteries for men used spatial divisions to reinforce the structure of authority operating within the community. In these houses, the abbot's lodge forms a discrete area apart from the main complex (for example at Chester [fig 6u] and Finchale [6v]). In nunneries, emphasis was on the construction of gender identity through the strict enclosure of nuns, and in demarcating male and female liturgical roles. In the Gilbertine double house of Watton, sexual segregation is apparent in the level of permeability of the window-house, where the nuns and canons could exchange speech, food and household objects. This component was placed in the deepest space in relation to both the nuns' and canons' cloisters (figs 6j and 6r).

Distance placed between the nuns and secular groups is demonstrated by the position of naves and guest halls, at the first or second level of permeability. The maps resulting from the spatial analysis give a graphic indication of this segregation. At Little Marlow (fig 6o) and Polsloe (fig 6q), for example, the guest hall and nave form discrete trajectories to the left of the map, with no access to the nuns' cloister. Service areas were similarly excluded from the cloister. At Polsloe (fig 6q) the kitchen was isolated from other components,

in a position suitable for distancing male servants from the nunnery[4], and at
Kirklees (fig 6p) the ancillary structures were accessible only from the
precinct and entry. Space in certain nunneries was used to divide (male or
female) servants from religious women, just as the Cistercians segregated
lay-brethren into a non-religious area of the precinct (for instance at Rievaulx
and Roche (Yorks) [fig 6c], Coppack 1986, 130).

6.4 Sexual Segregation and Gender Domains

The strict enclosure of female religious, and the partitioning of nunneries
into areas of male and female space, may be likened to gender domains. These
gender-specific locales encompass sets of activities and priorities which are
contained within male and female spatial zones of control. They are often
perceived as linking women with the domestic arena, and men with a wider public
stage (for example, Fowler 1984; Kennedy 1985). The female domestic domain is
not fixed across cultures or time, but may be socially constructed through
the family, within which women assume particular responsibilities linked to
motherhood (Moore 1988, 22). Women are associated with the domestic domain
through the gender relations of the family, as an institution which integrates
human reproduction with social relations and economic production (Gilchrist
1988). In later medieval England these gender relations were organised from
within the dynastic family, which transmitted property through male lines of
inheritence. Gender ideology was constructed with reference to a mesh of
religious teachings which helped to define the expectations placed on men and
women. Female monogamy, chastity and fidelity were reinforced by gender roles
which limited women's spatial mobility. The restriction of women to domestic
domains can be observed in many highly stratified societies which are powered by
a state religion. The processes by which these domains were constructed have
been the subject of much feminist research.

Spatial gender domains are sometimes viewed as a response to hierarchical
sexual divisions of labour, which accompany increasing productiveness,
specialisation and social complexity (Hartmann 1982). Absolute gender domains
are symptomatic of vigorous social ranking and its legitimation through male

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4.In Chapter 3.5 it was suggested that interpretation of the animal bone
evidence from Polsloe supports the theory that nunneries employed male

lines of inheritence: a social division of labour which intensifies gender roles. According to an evolutionary model of sexual differentiation (Coontz and Henderson 1986), women's identity within the domestic domain becomes absolute and devalued only within state societies, such as medieval England. A patriarchal state orders human reproduction and inheritence through the organised expropriation of female sexuality. Women are segregated within the household, thus restricting their mobility and independent access to resources. For example, the architectural seclusion of women within Classical Greek society expressed social status (Walker 1983); and within Muslim households women are traditionally segregated in mashrabiyyas, balconies which remove them from view. The spatial confinement of women sometimes becomes a symbol of rank, expressing status through the development of architecture which facilitates segregation, and by demonstrating the surplus labour of women who are alienated from their role in economic production.

From cross-cultural comparisons, absolute gender domains are seen to be exclusively associated with higher status gender roles; with those who can afford to release female labour or limit it to the private household. In medieval English society, high status secular women operated within their own sexually exclusive domains. The queen maintained a separate household within the castle (documented, for example, at Corfe and Windsor, Colvin 1976, 864-6). Women in castles were restricted to the residential quarters and the chapel, such as the West Tower at Helmsley Castle, N Yorks, and the New Hall at Pickering, N Yorks, where Countess Alice (c1314) had private access to the chapel. Within the domestic accommodation, women's quarters were often the most secluded, for instance the ladies' solar at Castle Bolton (N Yorks), which had private access to a western gallery pew in the chapel. The ladies in the castle described in <u>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</u> (c1400) had their own sitting room (<u>chambre</u>) (line 975) and quarters in the upper reaches of the castle (line 1373). In the chapel, the lady of the household had her own "handsome enclosed pew" (<u>cumly closet</u>) (line 933), which she shared "with many fair maidens" (line 938) (trans Barron 1974).   household.

Aristocratic women were associated with the domestic domain of the 'inner'/ Aristocratic men confirmed their gender identities through the mobility of the

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(Footnote 4 continued from previous page)
cooks and kitchen servants.

'riding' household, and the public domain of tournaments, duels and orders of knighthood. Aristocratic women were prohibited from public display. Their identities were bolstered by management of the household and maintenance of daily social routine, as shown, for example, in the Paston letters (Maddern 1988). At public events, such as entertainments and banquets, men and women were often separated, with the women watching the proceedings from galleries (Bynum 1987, 191). The lives of artistocratic men and women culminated in a public display, in the heraldic funerals supervised by the College of Arms. The sexes were segregated in the funeral feast and procession, and it was customary for the deceased to be mourned by members of their own sex (Gittings 1984, 174). Protocol required that the chief mourner, the principal mourners in the procession, and even the poor attending the funeral, should be of the same sex as the deceased. Private and public lives were conducted within a high degree of sexual segregation.

These gender specific secular domains were mirrored by the greater enclosure of female religious (Chapter 6.3 above); both secular and monastic women demonstrated constructions of female sexuality which centred on monogamy and chastity achieved by segregation. In contrast, peasant women, and those working in towns, participated in a more fluid division of labour, in which sexual and spatial domains were less strictly perceived (Hanawalt 1986; Howell 1986, 10).

The strict, perpetual enclosure of medieval nuns may be seen as an extension of the segregation of aristocratic and gentry women within a domestic domain. Despite their religious status, the identity of medieval nuns was constructed primarily with reference to their position as women of a particular class, or estate.[5] The existence of a collective consciousness shared by a common interest group made up of women of certain estates cannot be dismissed. This gender-awareness, or construction of femininity, may have been perpetuated by the greater architectural segregation of medieval nuns in comparison to monks, and was actively sought through female agency in the development of households within nunneries (Chapter 4.3). Such enclosure and segregation of

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5. In a study of documents associated with French medieval nunneries, Johnson (1989, 242) remarked that the nun's self-image was based foremost on her position as a religious person. However, she concluded that this positive image was based in the original social position of individual women, in blood ties and family loyalty which continued after entering the nunnery.

women precluded independent access to economic resources and confirmed reliance on the existing institutional structure: a strategy maintained through the placement and economic functions of nunneries (Chapter 3).

KEY TO JUSTIFIED GAMMA MAPS

1 outer court

2 gate

3 gatehouse

4 nave

5 entry

6 guest hall

7 prioress's/ prior's camera

8 prioress's/ prior's lodging

9 cellarage

10 refectory (frater)

11 warming house

12 parlour

13 garderobe/ (reredorter)

14 chapter-house

15 dormitory (dorter)

16 subdorter

17 sacristy

18 choir

19 chapel

20 transept

21 antechapel

22 vestibule

23 passage

24 slype

25 kitchen

26 cloister

27 inner court

28 bakehouse

29 infirmary

30 brewhouse

31 larder

32 bultynge house

33 gyle house

34 brede house

35 chambers

36 camerae

37 tower

38 pentise

39 bridge

40 crossing

41 porch

42 calefactory

43 almonry

44 cook's chamber

45 vestry

46 novices' dorter

47 yard

48 window-house

49 outer parlour

50 abbot's kitchen

51 meat kitchen

52 lay-dorter

53 lay-frater

54 lay-infirmary

55 infirmarer's lodge

56 chancel

57 stairs

58 parish church

59 buttery

60 canons' porch

61 cemetery

62 south aisle

63 canons' choir

64 presbytery

65 lane

66 little cloister

Figure 6a Spatial Analysis of Burnham

Medieval

Kitchen

Refec.

Warm. H.

Infirmary

Above

Chapter H.

Abbess

Nave

Choir
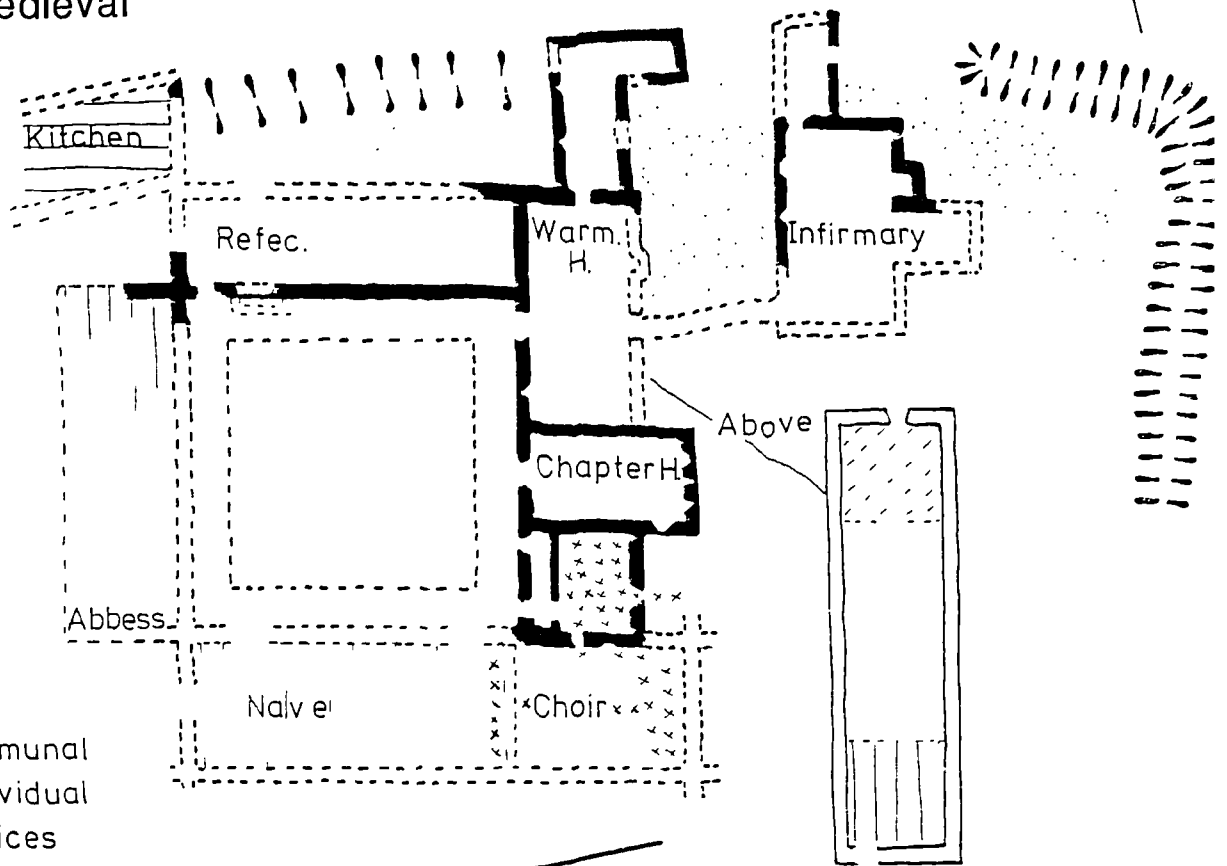
Communal
Individual
Novices
Priest
Secular (guest)
Secular (worker)

Modern

Guest House

Barns

Chapel

Above

Refec.

Rev Mother

0 3 6 9m
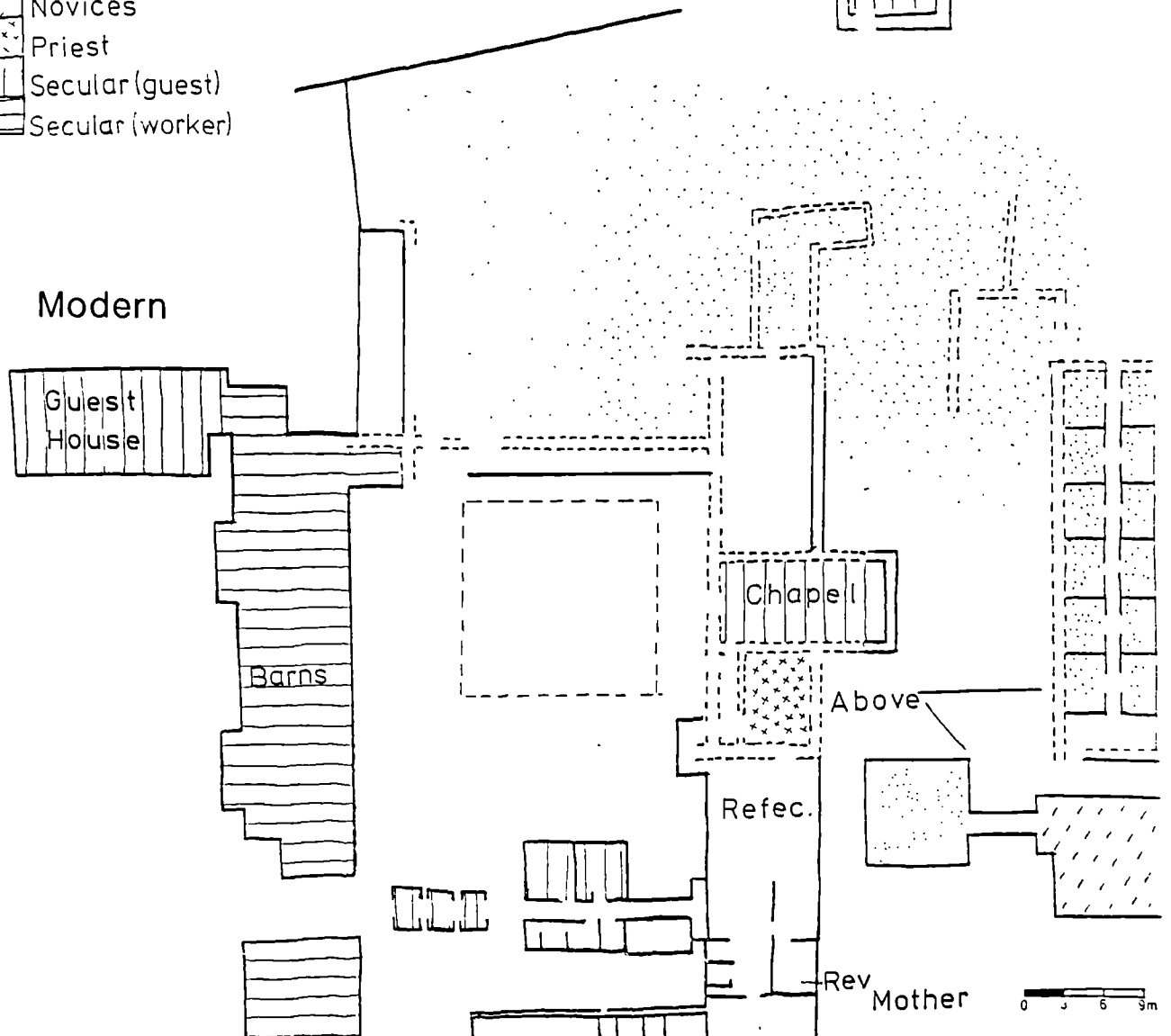
Figure 6b　Symbolism of Lacock Capitals
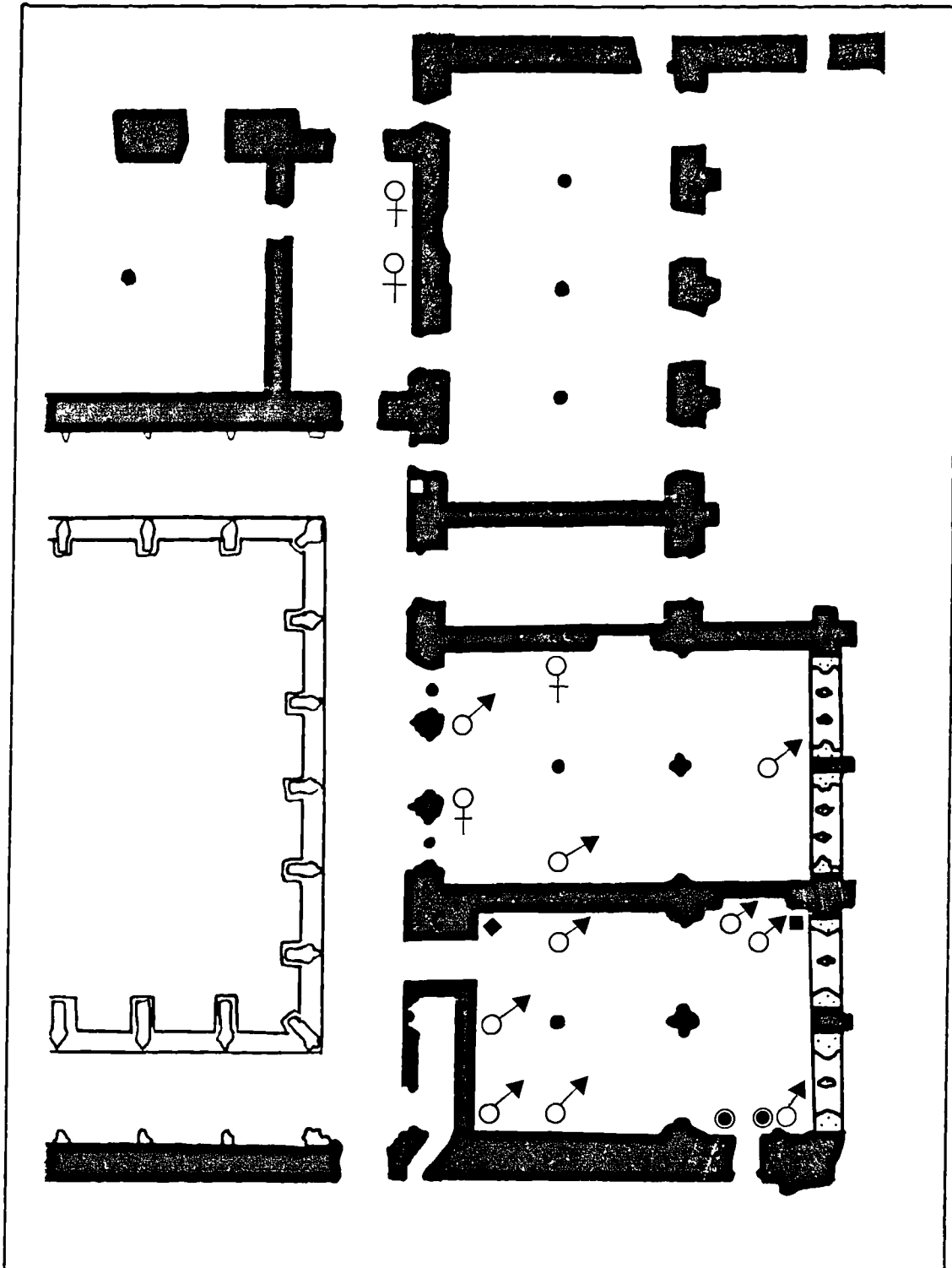
■ lamb

◉ foliage

◆ bird

♀ female

♂ male

Figure 6c   Plan of Roche
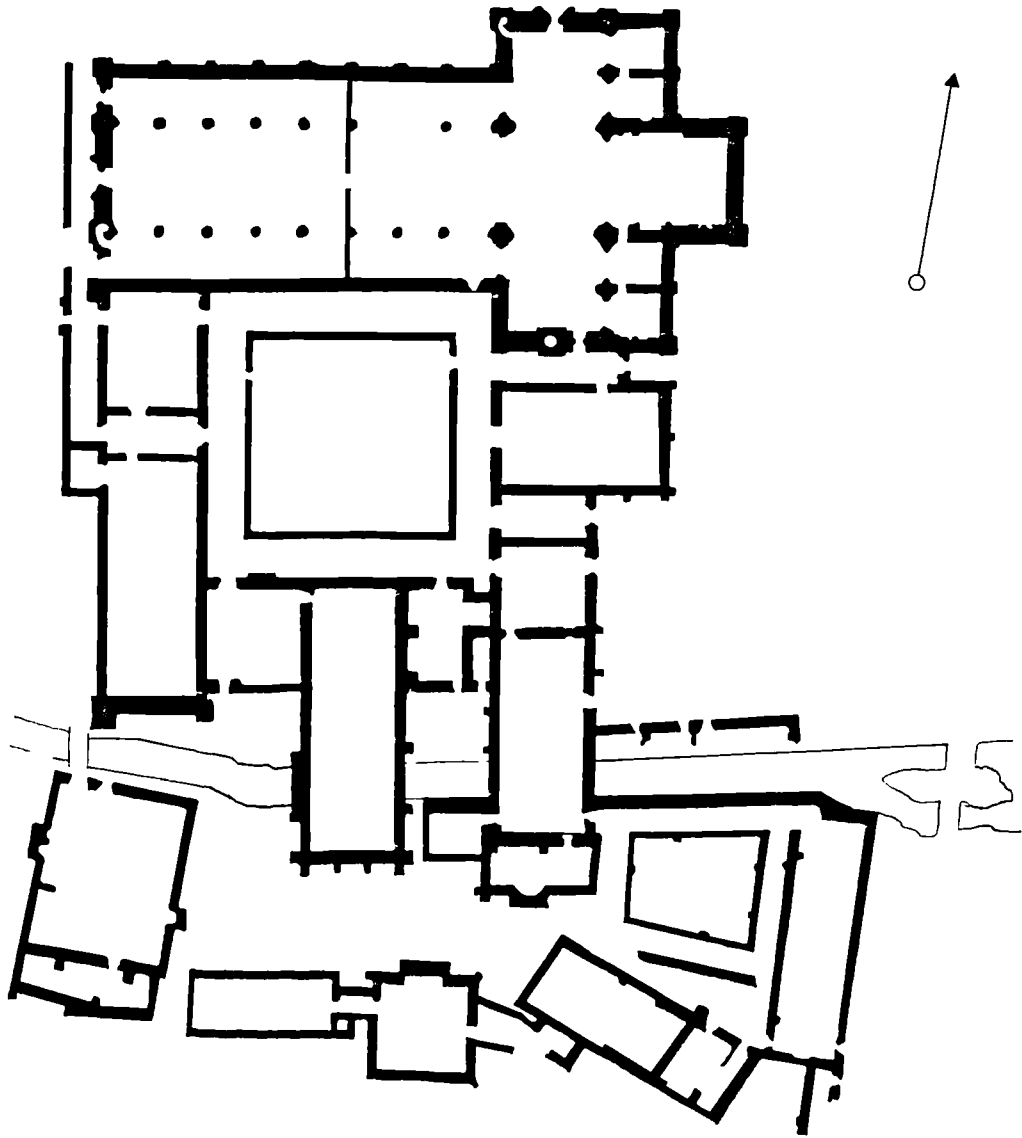
0 3 6 9

(after Gilyard-Beer 1958)

Figure 6d   Plan of Lanercost
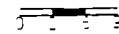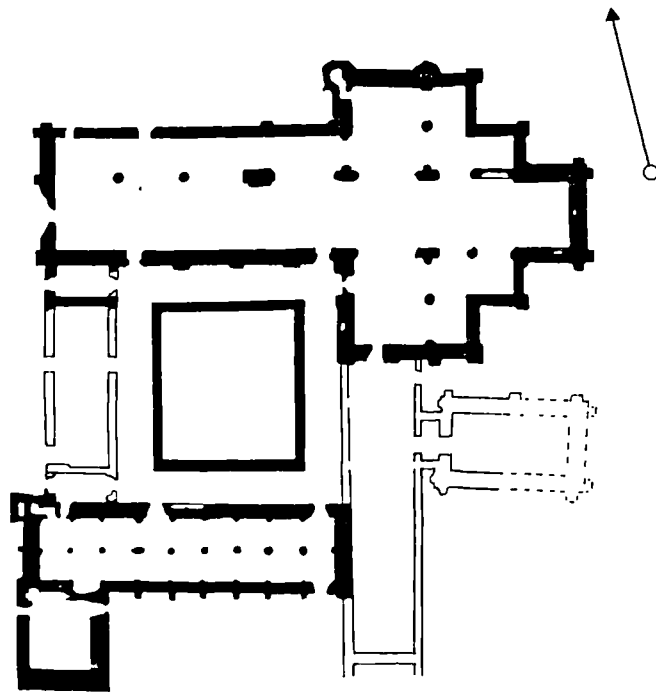
(after Gilyard-Beer 1958)

Figure 6e   Plan of Chester
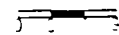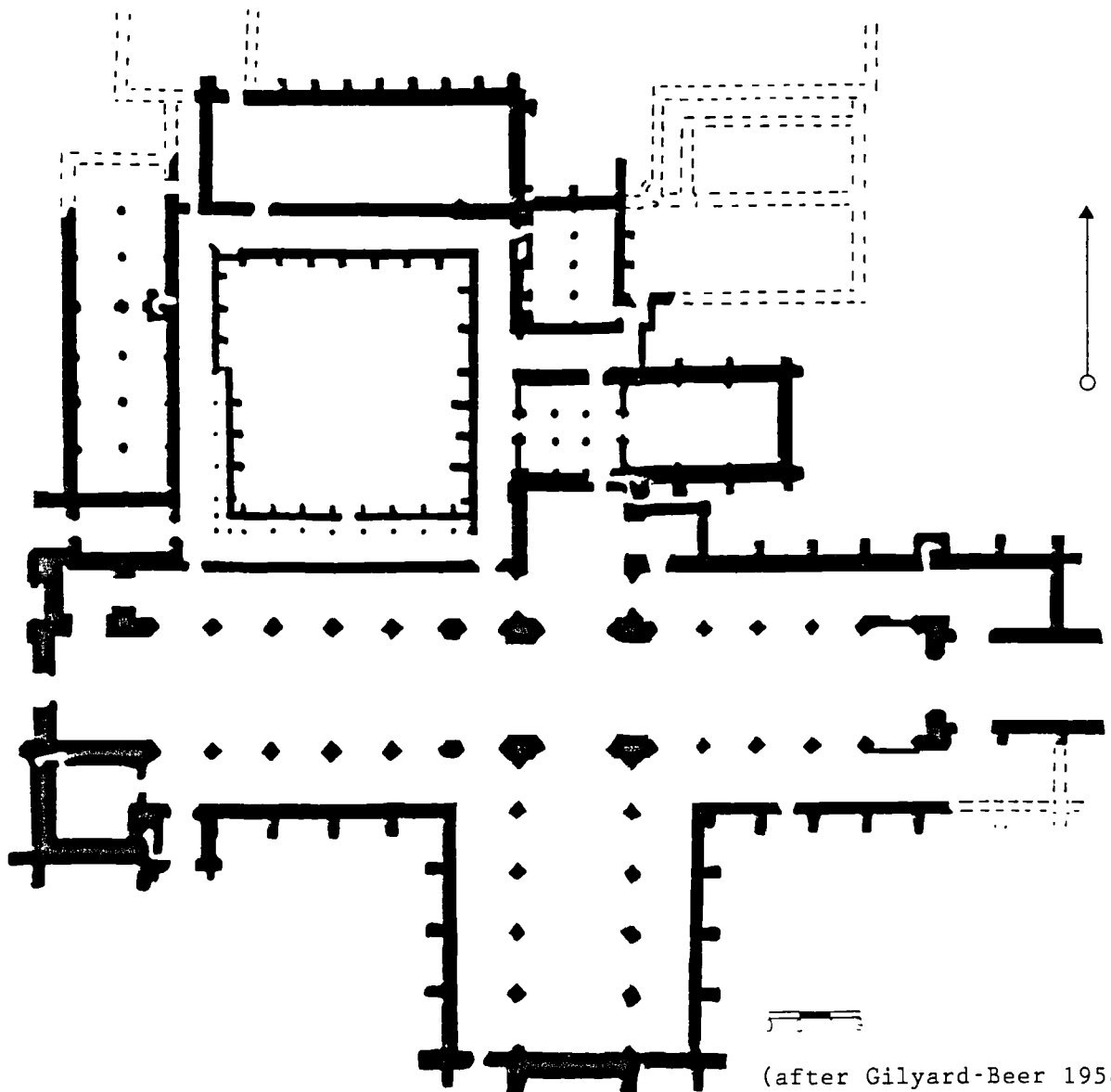
(after Gilyard-Beer 1958)
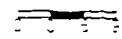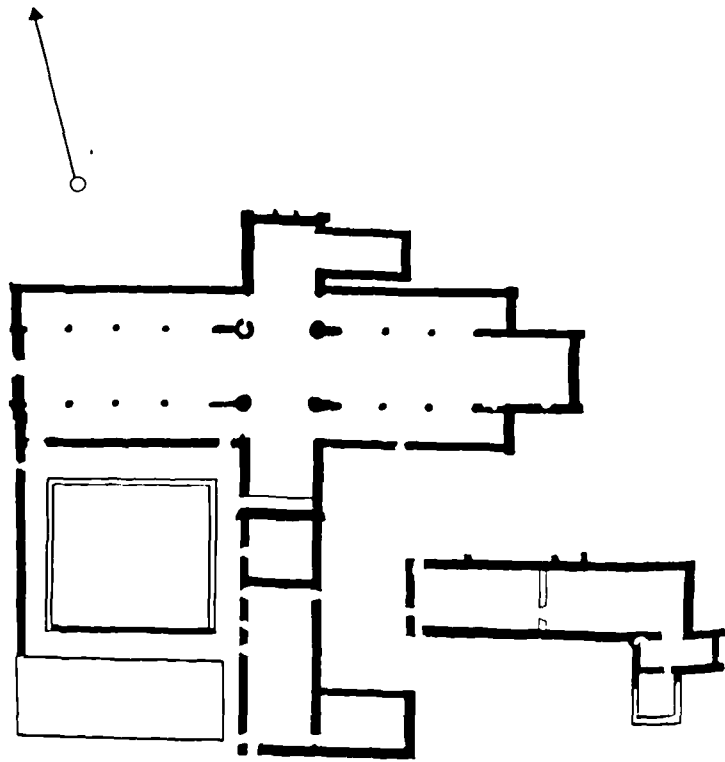
(after Gilyard-Beer 1958)

Figure 6g **Plan of Waverley**
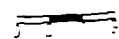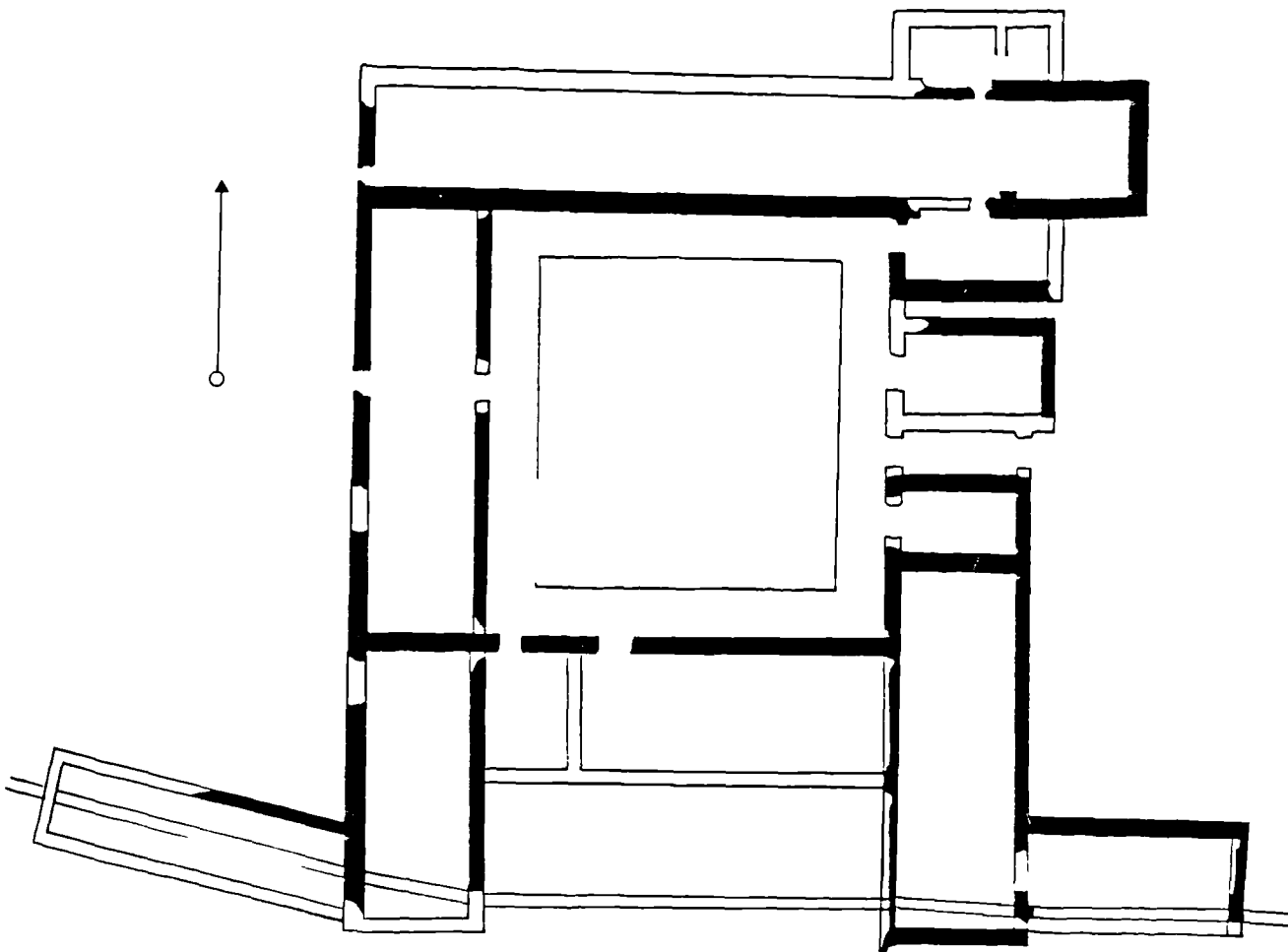
(after Gilyard-Beer 1958)

Figure 6h Plan of Leiston
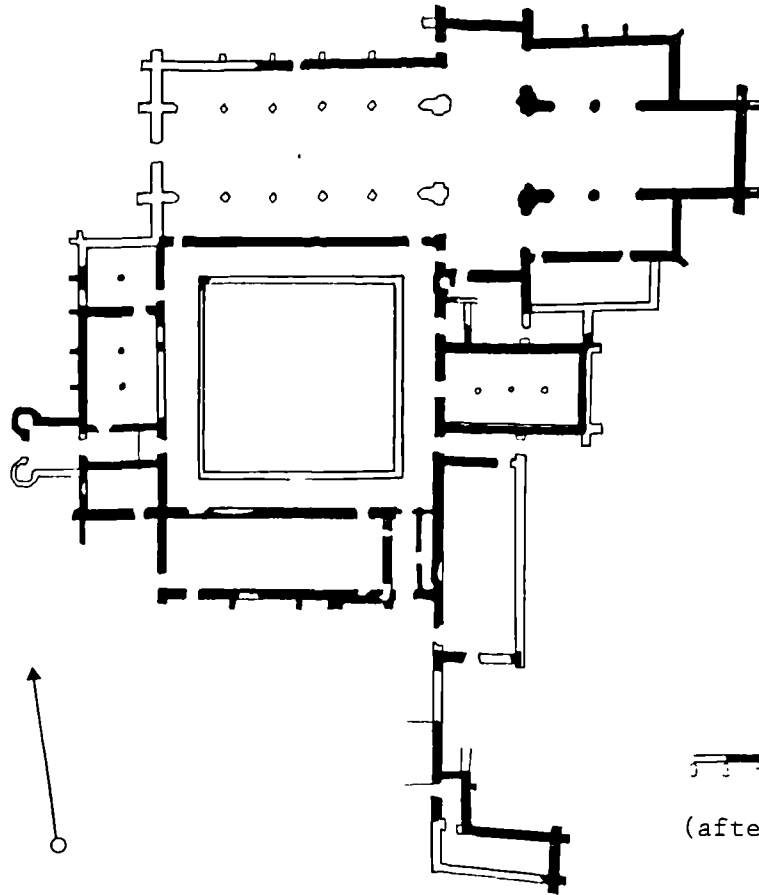
(after Gilyard-Beer 1958)

Figure 6i Plan of Walsingham
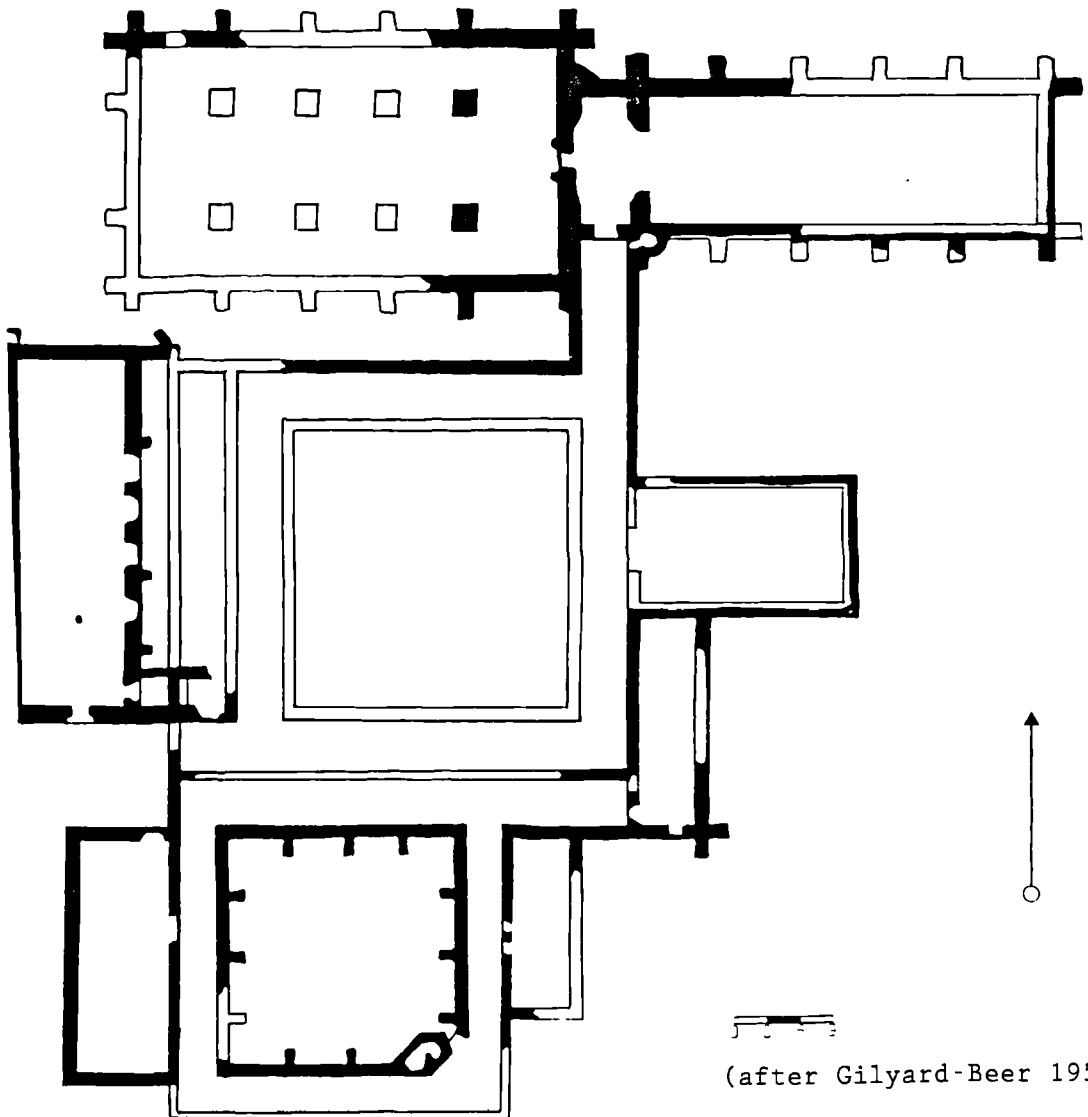
(after Gilyard-Beer 1958)

Figure 6j Watton Nuns' Cloister
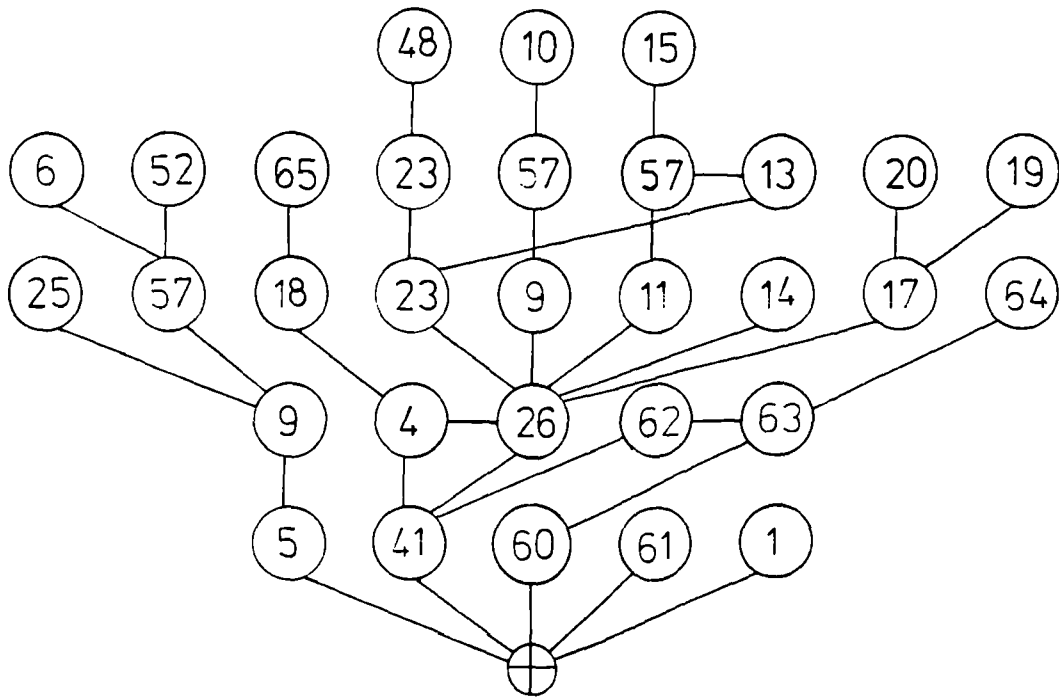
Figure 6k Cambridge
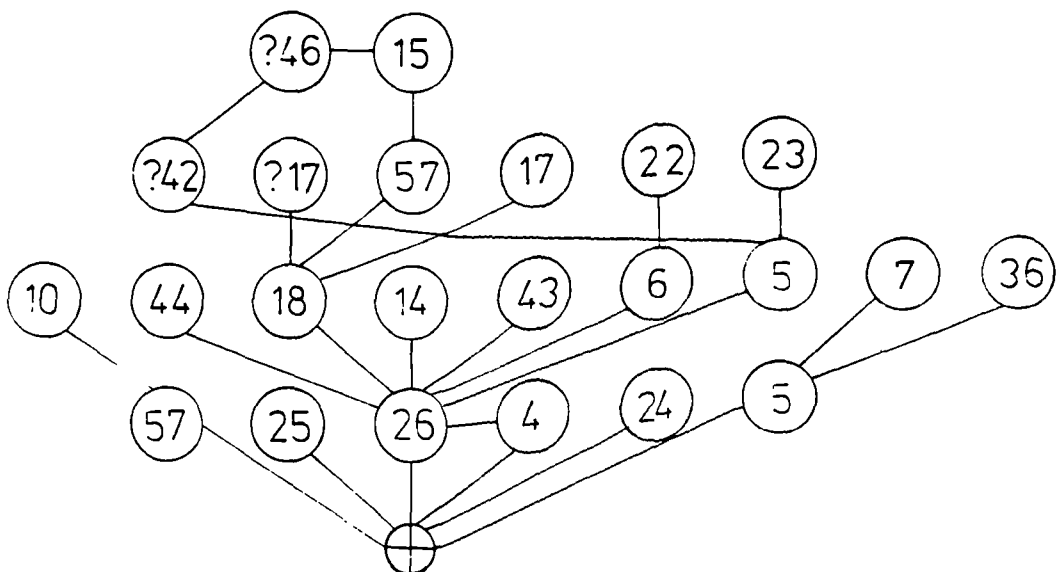
Figure 6l   Davington
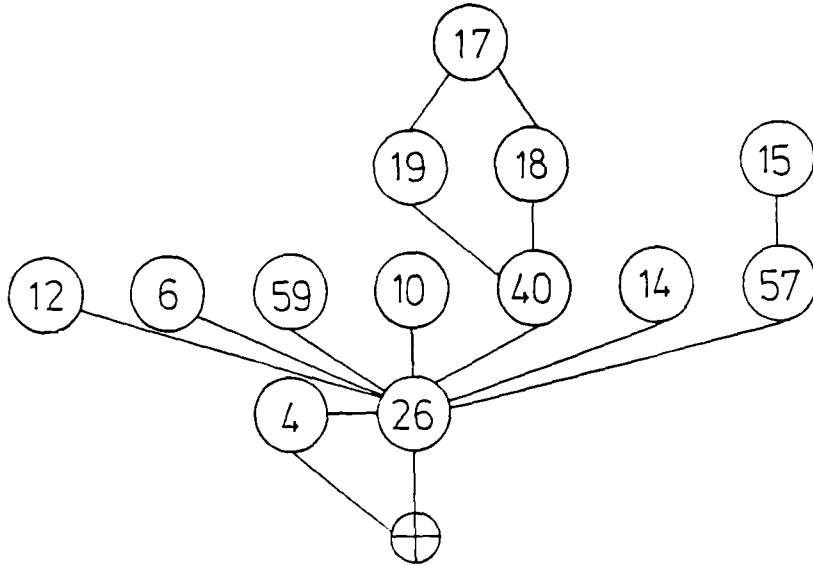
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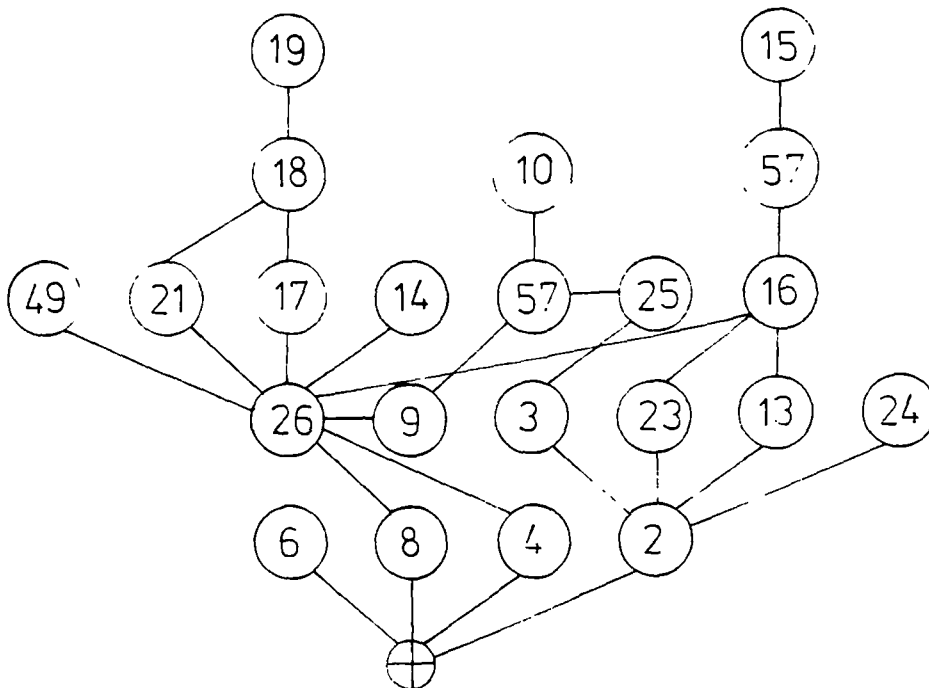
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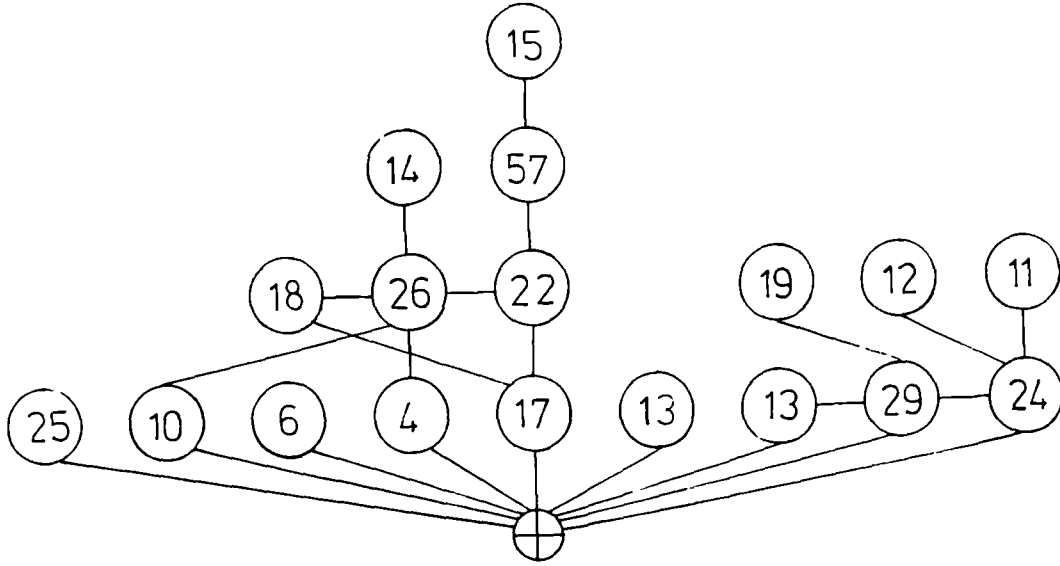
Figure 6o   Little Marlow
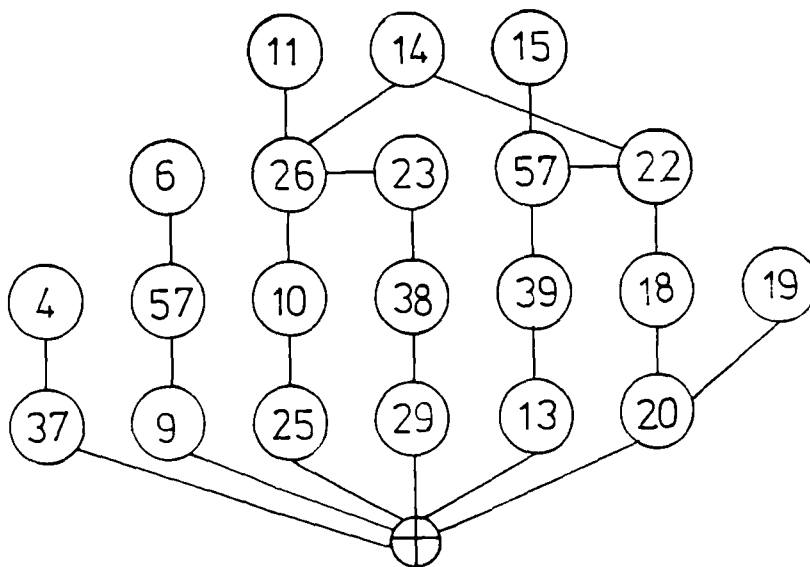
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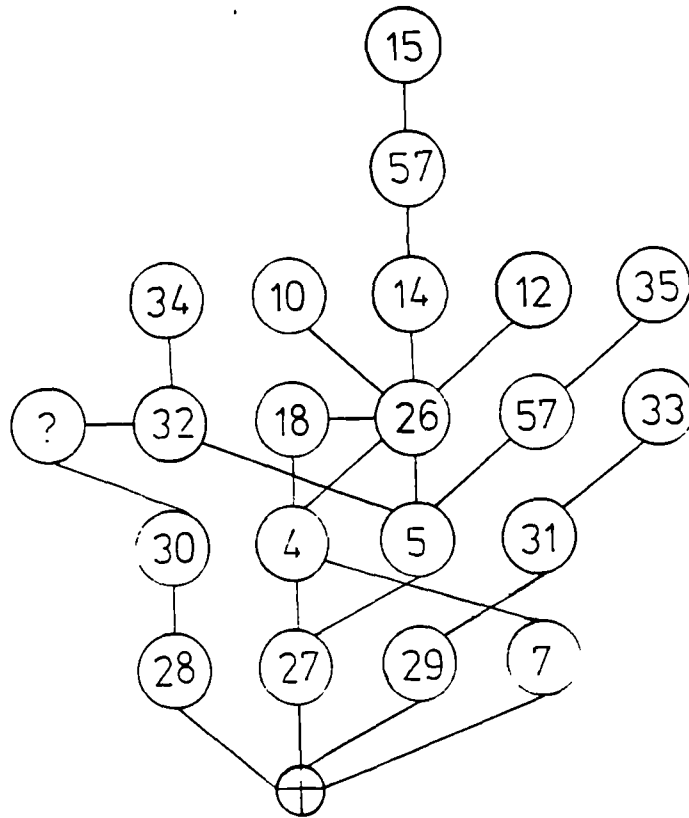
Figure 6q   Polsloe
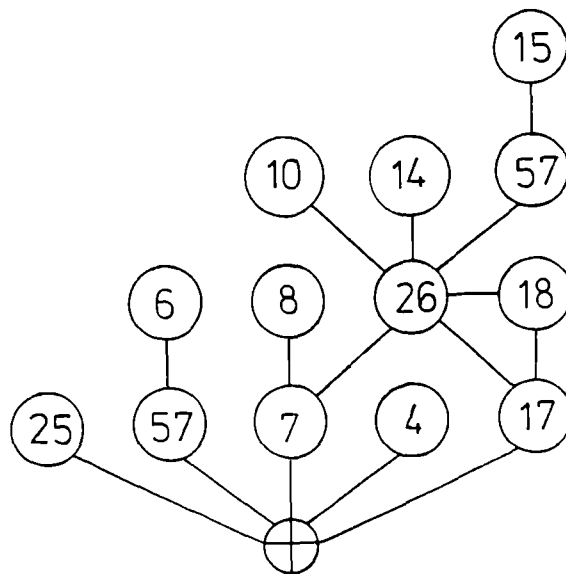
Figure 6r   Watton Canons' Cloister
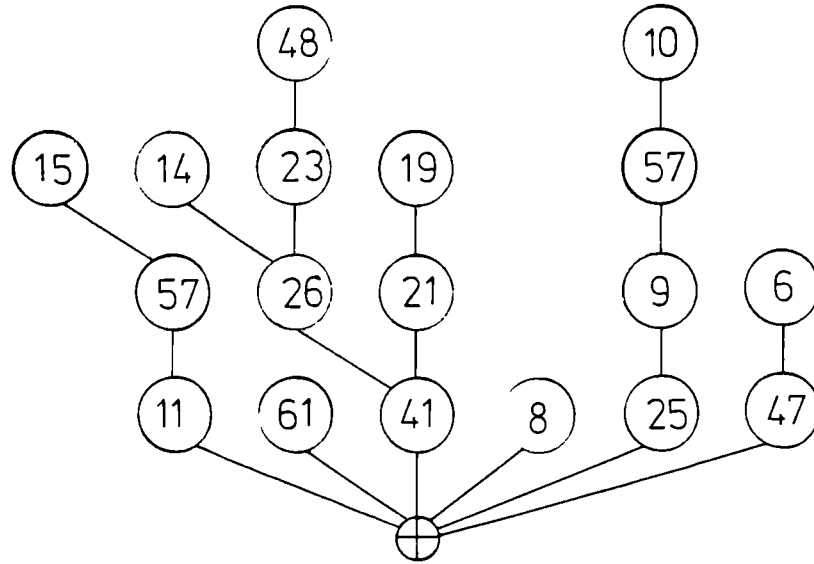
Figure 6s   Roche
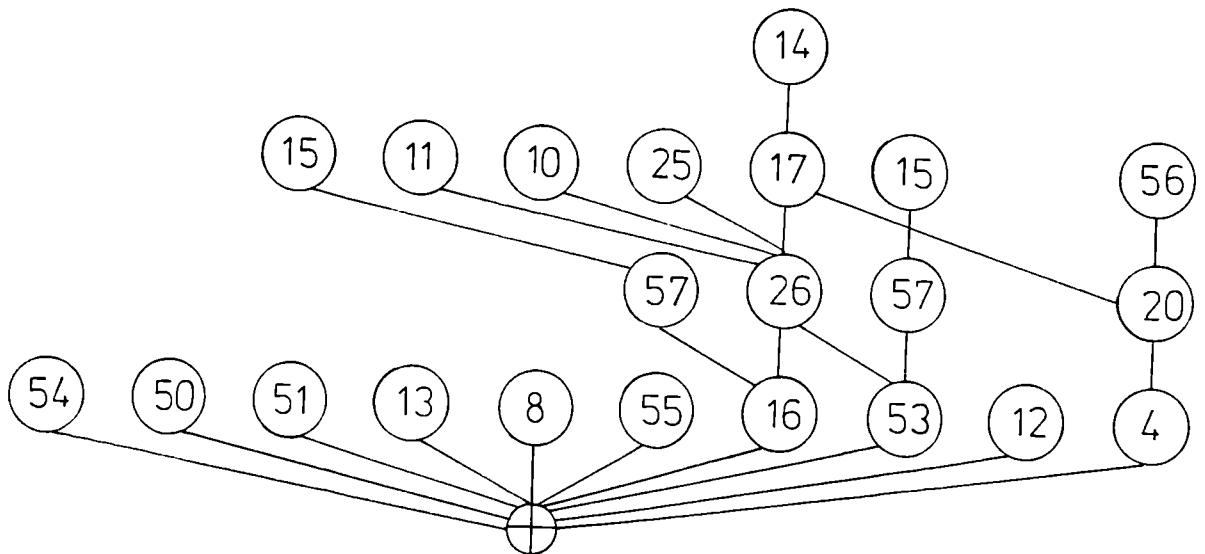
Figure 6t   Lanercost
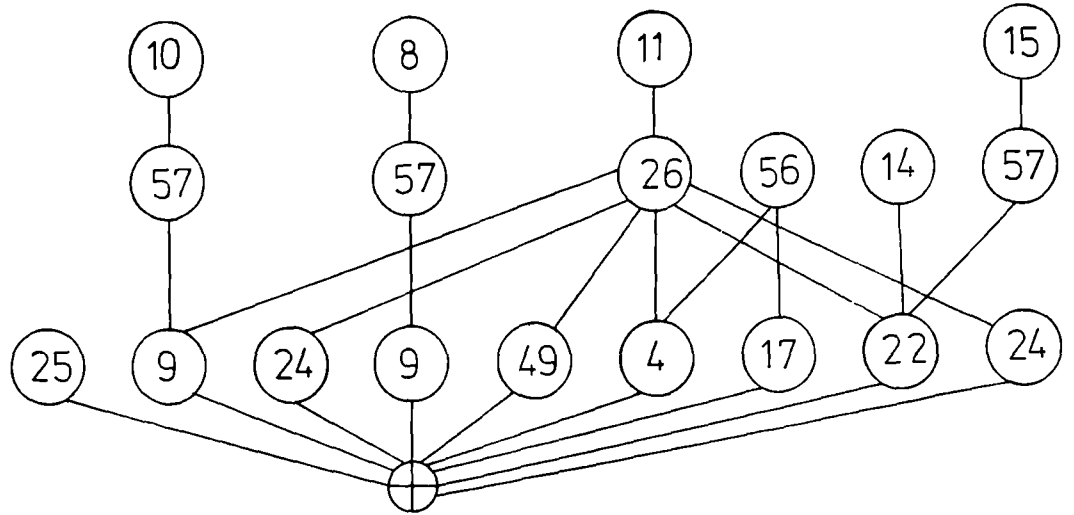
Figure 6u   Chester
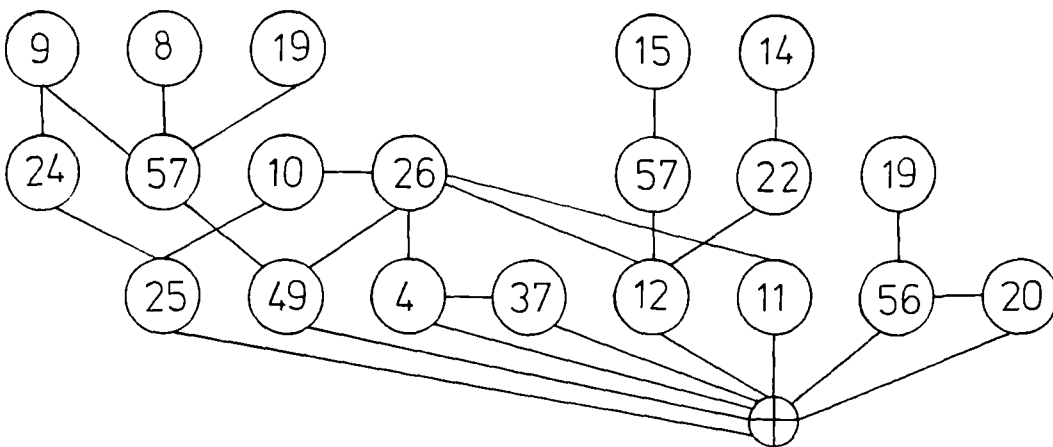
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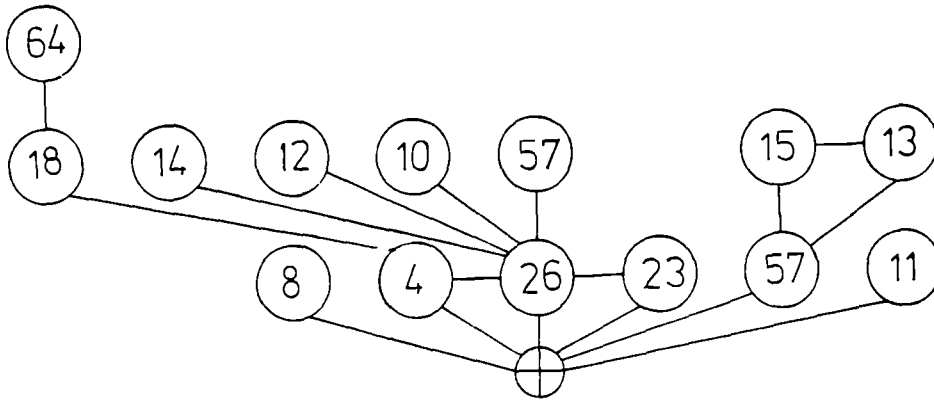
Figure 6w   Waverley
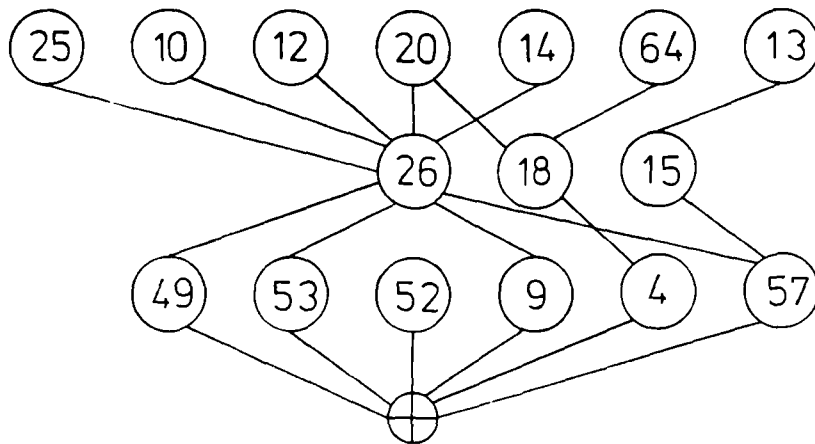
Figure 6x · Leiston
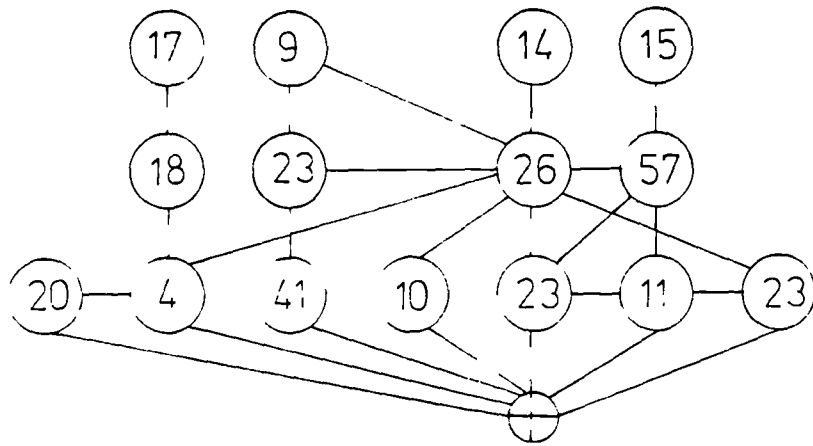
Figure 6y Walsingham

Chapter 7
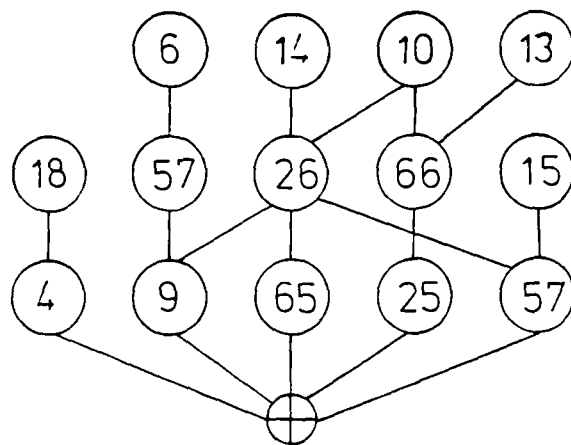
AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF ALTERNATIVES

7.1 Beguinages

"And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner" (Luke 7.37).

The paucity of women's religious communities in medieval English towns
forms a stark contrast with our perceptions of towns of the Low Countries,
northern France, and the Rhine valley. Within the walls of Amsterdam, for
example, women's houses accounted for fifteen of the eighteen monasteries built
in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Carasso 1985, 11). True, these houses
are considered to have been only semi-monastic; they were beguinages established
by, or for, lay-religious women. This spiritual movement grew from the
thirteenth century onwards, when groups of secular women banded together in
order to serve the poor and sick (Neel 1989, 322). They established informal
communities supported through their own labours and begging for alms (Lawrence
1984, 322). The voluntary poverty embraced by these women represents a female
form of the Vita Apostolica (Devlin 1985, 184). Even granted the quasi-monastic
commitment which the continental beguinages appear to represent, the scale upon
which they were established appears, at first sight, to be appreciably larger
than anything to be seen in Britain.

Historians have used the term beguinage to describe any informal or
spontaneously founded community of religious women, but few were directly
associated with the formal order of the Beguines. Informal communities of
lay-religious women were described as béguinage, maison, couvent, hôpital,
beginenhaus and begignhuis; those formally associated with the Beguines were
described as cour de béguinage, grand béguinage, beginenhof and begijnhof
(Delmaire 1989, 126). Of the fifteen in Amsterdam, for instance, only the
Begijnhof was a true Beguinage. The lifestyle of the Beguines was between two
worlds, via media, and combined the secular with the regular religious
(McDonnell 1954). The constituency of the Beguines was drawn from the new
bourgeoisie or lower aristocracy of the towns; older nobility continued to
support traditional monastic structures (Bynum 1987, 18). Women attracted to

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this life sought evangelical poverty, self-sufficiency, and a flexible vocation
which included active charity. In other words, continental beguinages aimed to
be the antithesis of formal nunneries, which remained situated in rural contexts
and served the needs of the traditional upper classes.

By the fourteenth century, however, Beguinages were enclosed communities
which relied on patronage for their subsistence. Efforts were made to enclose
the beguines which culminated in the Council of Vienne (1312). In Belgium the
curtes were generally built just outside the city walls (McDonnell 1954, 479).
There was no standard arrangement for planning, although the central focus was
normally the church, around which the community developed. Younger sisters were
segregated in special streets, away from the individual houses of the older
women (ibid). These houses were built by widows who joined the order, so that
the plan of the curtis, court or curia evolved organically[1].

Although formal Beguinages never developed in England, there is some
evidence for similarly informal, spontaneous communities of religious women.
These communities have occasionally been recognised through charitable
provisions made by urban testators. In fifteenth century Norwich, for example,
two separate groups of sisters dedicated to charity lived in tenements within
the city (Tanner 1984, 65). Links to the continental tradition are especially
strong for the later example, which was established in a tenement owned by a
merchant formerly of Bruges (ibid). These communities received rare bequests
from lord mayors, their wives and the clergy. They were short-lived and situated
in ordinary urban houses.

Tanner noted a third group of semi-religious women in Norwich: those living
in a house in the churchyard of St Peter Hungate (ibid). Similar communities
were known elsewhere, for example in the churchyard of All Saints Pavement,
York, and are generally assumed to be maisons dieu (P Cullum pers com). But to
what extent did the form and functions of maisons dieu and informal beguinages
(maisons) overlap? Maisons dieu, established to relieve the poor, were often set
up in the founder's house; early beguines, who were devoted to active charity,
lived in their own houses. Poor women living in maisons dieu were provided for

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1.Arrangements varied from buildings attached directly to a church, such as
Anderlecht, to the courtyard layout of St Elizabeth, Bruges. A large
Beguinage consisted of a church, cemetery, hospital, public square and streets,
and possibly a brewery and mill. At Ghent, the Great Beguinage was enclosed by
walls and moats (McDonnell 1954, 479).

in return for their prayers, just as bequests were made to poor women in French beguinages[2]. Where urban charity has been studied, it appears that provision for poor women increased from the fourteenth century, for example at York St Andrewgate, St Nicholas (from 1380) and Ousebridge maison dieu (1433-5) (P Cullum 1990). It may be asked whether these urban women engaged, to any degree, in voluntary poverty, thus rendering English maisons dieu for women closely cognate with beguinages of the Low Countries and northern France, informal German communities[3], and Italian _penitente_ or _pinzochere_: households of women living pious domestic lives[4] (McLaughlin 1989, 298)? If so, the numbers of women in English medieval towns who conducted semi-religious lives of voluntary poverty or charity, may have been seriouly under-estimated by historians of medieval piety.

Informal beguinages were not characterised by particular forms which might be easily recognised archaeologically. However, beguinages and maisons dieu for poor women should figure within the range of functions to be considered for structures excavated in urban churchyards (for instance at Barton on Humber (Rodwell and Rodwell 1982); St Mary in Tanner Street, Winchester (_Antiq J_ 55 1975); and St Helen, York (Magilton 1980).

7.2 Hospitals

"Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment..." (Matthew 26. 6-8).

Pious women resided informally in maisons dieu established in ordinary houses or churchyards, but English women seeking a more regular life were attracted to hospitals. There, a semi-religious life could be found which closely approximated the _via media_ of the Beguines. An unknown number of smaller

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2.For example, "à pauvre béguines puses dans les couvents du beguinages", or "béguines sans rente" (Delmaire 1989, 139).

3.German lay-religious women resided in small groups within ordinary houses (McDonnell 1954, 480).

4.In 1216 Jacques de Vitry commented on the _Humilitati_, poor religious women of Milan, who lived either at home or in small communities (Bolton 1973, 81).

hospitals was established, such as the house recognised at Stow (Cambs), where young women in habits of russet garments lived around a chapel from c1250:

"A semi-religious group of women lived in it and ministered to the poor - such undertaking of charitable devotion by widows or young unmarried women being a phenomenon well known in the thirteenth century" (Rubin 1987, 136). This particular house survived for at least 100 years, and like others documented in Lincolnshire, served a variety of charitable functions (Owen 1981, 55-6).

Like monasteries, hospitals were founded in response to a variety of motives. The act of founding such an institution brought benefactors a degree of public recognition, while the prayers of the inmates were viewed as a form of religious intercession on behalf of the founders' souls. As altruistic gestures, hospitals for the poor, sick and aged met a real urban need - they represented welfare as well as religious provision. The social position of a hospital's founders varied according to its function. Leprosaria might be established by municipal corporations; hospices by the military orders; houses for the poor by individuals, guilds and fraternities. Clay (1909, 71-9) noted the particular concern shown by royal women and queens for founding hospitals and leprosaria. Cullum has commented upon the special responsibilities assumed by women in administering charity (1990).

The term hospital encompasses several distinct types of charitable institution. Medieval canonists divided hospitals between those which provided physical relief (hospitale simplex; locus privatus) and those which provided a religious element (locus religiosus) through the mass, confession and facilities for burial (Rubin 1987, 104). In practice, all hospitals were at least semi-religious due to the believed connection between spiritual and physical disease. The locus religiosus was properly monastic, and frequently followed the Rule of St Augustine. These hospitals were often established or run by monastic houses. Several nunneries actually evolved from hospitals, including St Mary de Pré (St Albans), Ilchester (Somerset), Thanington (Kent), and possibly Carrow (Norwich). However, in general the relationship between the running of hospitals

and nunneries was remote[5]. Hospitals were established by Wimborne (Dorset),
Wilton (Hants), Romsey (Hants) and Marrick (at Rerecross, N Yorks); Shaftesbury
(Dorset) and Barking (at Ilford, Essex) maintained hospitals for male inmates
only. The Gilbertines demonstrated a greater concern for active charity. Two
double houses outside Lincoln evolved into eleemosynary institutions, and
almonries were maintained by male houses at Malton, Ellerton (N Yorks) and
Fordham (Cambs). Infirmaries and pilgrims' hospices run by the Hospitallers and
Trinitarians were serviced by sisters or lay-sisters, for example at Thelsford
(Warwicks) sisters were mentioned in 1300 and 1473 (Gray forthcoming).

Autonomous, semi-monastic hospitals were founded between 1100 - 1250. Rubin
(1987,1) has estimated that a minimum of 220 hospitals were established in
twelfth century England, and 310 in the thirteenth century. From the fourteenth
century, smaller hospitals were founded by rich merchants, lay fraternities and
guilds. At the Dissolution, approximately 800 hospitals were documented, and
perhaps a further 300 are known to have previously fallen into disuse (Clay
1909; Knowles and Hadcock 1953; 1971). Most examples are assumed to have been
mixed communities of male and female inmates, although 119 are recorded as being
for men only, and 37 for women only (ibid). The greater number of male
institutions may reflect their dual purpose as hospitals and chantries, since
many later foundations were private chantries which were combined with relief of
the poor (Rubin 1987, 145).

The earlier group of regular hospitals - organised along monastic
lines - provided an alternative vocation for religious women. Mixed, or double,
hospitals were presided over by a master and staffed by lay-brothers and sisters
who cared for male and female inmates. The male and female staff were assisted
by servants of both sexes. Occasionally a hospital was made up predominantly of
sisters with only a few brothers among the inmates, for instance the Sustren
Spital, Winchester (Keene 1985, 979). In some hospitals there were hierarchies
for both sexes which observed differences in religious vocation and social
background. In some mixed hospitals, such as St Laurence, Canterbury, a prioress
ruled over the female section of the house (Rubin 1987, 168). The sisters

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5.Grace Dieu (Leics) appears to have had a hospital for 12 poor people within
its precincts (Knowles and Hadcock 1953, 274); the Hospital of St Laurence,
East Street, was situated outside the precinct at Barking; Nunkeeling
(N Humbs) maintained a house for poor folk (Tillotson 1989, 22). These
examples were, however, rare exceptions.

divided into those who wore habits and made regular religious observances, and those who worked in the hospital (Cullum forthcoming; Clay 1909, 152). The will of the poet Gower distinguished between two groups of sisters at St Thomas's, London: "professed" and "nurses of the sick" (Clay 1909, 154). The professed women possessed a more contemplative vocation, such as those described at St John's, Reading: "certyn relygyous women, wydowes in chast lyvngg in God's servyce praying nygt and day" (ibid, 26). Women of lower birth appear to have assisted with nursing, for example at Bridgwater (Somerset) (ibid, 153). A possible third category, that of serving woman, or "sister-huswiff", is referred to at Heytesbury (Wilts) (ibid, 156). Occasionally, female administrators are differentiated according to their task, much like the female officials who presided over German hospitals (Wiesner 1986, 39). At Northallerton (N Yorks), for example, two sisters cared for the sick, and a third looked after household affairs (Clay 1909, 153). Mixed hospitals were able to provide a greater range of services than male-run houses; in particular they cared for pregnant women and ran orphanages (Rubin 1987, 158).

In smaller mixed hospitals, like St John the Baptist, Winchester, the dividing line between the brothers and sisters and their supporting servants was not always clear (Keene 1985, 816). It seems, however, that the permanent residents of the hospital undertook "an act of religious or contemplative devotion as well as simple acceptance of charity" (ibid). They received their food, accommodation and clothing in return for caring for the short-term patients.

Hospitals offered medieval English women a more flexible religious life than did nunneries. Their observances were less formal, more actively charitable, and available to a wider social spectrum of women. The differing roles and relationships between nunneries and hospitals may be glimpsed from the patterns of distribution of the two types of institution. Hospitals, in contrast to nunneries, were normally located near, or in, towns, and thus provided a religious life for urban women.

When the distribution of regular and large mixed hospitals (fig 7a) is compared with that of nunneries (fig 2k), it is noteworthy that regular hospitals are sparse where smaller nunneries are abundant, especially in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and East Anglia - possibly indicating that regular hospitals and smaller nunneries served similar social functions. In areas dominated by wealthier nunneries, in particular southern England, the

corresponding density of regular hospitals represented semi-religious communities for women of lower social status.

Like the monasteries to which they were akin, hospitals were laid out to fairly standard ordinances. The degree of formality engaged varied according to the function of the hospital, and the number of social groups which required segregation. The largest regular hospitals consisted of several cloisters serving specific groups within the community. For example, the sisters of St Leonard, York, had their own lodgings and refectory by 1364 (Cullum forthcoming). Hospitals of this size may have had a number of chapels, and a larger conventual church reserved for the monastic community. At St Leonard's the western part of the conventual church was reserved for the sisters (ibid), in an arrangement which closely resembled that of the 'quasi' double houses of Swine and Nunkeeling (N Humbs) (Chapter 4.2).

Where remains of hospitals survive, they are generally represented by the infirmary hall which housed the inmates. The hall had a chapel at its eastern end, so that in plan the two buildings were similar to the nave and chancel of a parish church. The inmates' beds were placed in the aisles of the building with the central space left clear for the movement of the staff. At Ospringe and Strood (Kent) the hall was divided into two aisles by a central arcade; the aisles were further subdivided into bed-recesses, or cubicles, possibly by partitions supported by a slot and post, as excavations at Cirencester (Gloucs) suggested (Leech and McWhirr 1982).

A number of double- or twin hospitals survive which were arranged to segregate male and female inmates (Godfrey 1955). At St John's, Canterbury, a long hall was divided into two equal parts, with access from both parts into a double chapel joined at right angles to the hall. The chapel was centrally partitioned to correspond with inmates coming from the two halls. To the north were separate latrine blocks serving the men's and women's sides of the hall (Tatton-Brown 1984). Strood's hall was centrally divided, with double doors entering a shared chapel (Harrison 1970). Alternative means of segregation were provided by parallel infirmary halls. At St John's, Winchester, two halls separated by a spinal wall shared a common chapel (Medieval Archaeol 26 1982, 185) (fig 7b). St Nicholas, Salisbury, retains evidence for twin halls and chapels arranged in parallel (Godfrey 1955, 34) (fig 7b). The infirmary hall(s) generally formed one side of a quadrangle, close, or cloister. At Salisbury the halls were to the south of the quadrangle, and an extant north range may have

accommodated staff. Excavations at Ospringe (Kent) showed that the main buildings were arranged around a close (Smith 1980). The western range was made up by a common hall with chapel; to the south were the church and private chapel attached to a hall and gatehouse. To the north of the close is a four bayed hall over an undercroft. To the west a separate close contained service buildings.

Variations on the mixed and double hospital plans included two-storey hospitals. These are apparently later infirmary halls, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which segregated male and female inmates on two floors which communicated with the same chapel. This arrangement may be suggested for SS John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, Sherborne (Dorset), Leicester Hospital, and All Saints, Stamford (Lincs). Godfrey (1955, 44) suggested that some hospitals were re-ordered in the fifteenth century in arrangements which accentuated detached chapels. Where detached chapels have been recognised through excavation, for instance at St Mary's, York (Richards 1989), and St Bartholomew's, Bristol (Price 1979), two-storey hospitals may, in fact, be apparent. Both York and Bristol were loosely arranged around a quadrangle, with the central space intruded upon by small, short-lived timber structures. Both had kitchen areas adjacent to the chapel, perhaps indicating the positioning of the infirmary hall above the chapel. At Bristol, there were two medieval domestic ranges, one of which has been recovered by excavation. It has been postulated that these corresponded with the documented male and female separate dormitories.

Arrangements at mixed rural hospices are suggested by excavations at St Giles, Brough (N Yorks). In the late thirteenth century St Giles was transformed from a male to a mixed community. This change was roughly contemporary with a re-organisation of the hospital, with a stone-built detached chapel positioned in relative isolation from the timber or half-timber domestic halls (Cardwell 1990).

From extant documents, architecture and excavated remains, it seems that mixed hospitals segregated male and female staff and inmates in separate closes or halls. In common with nunneries and double houses, efforts to separate the sexes during worship involved delineation of vertical and horizontal space. The much larger number of hospitals in comparison to nunneries, and their greater variation in function and status, provided an alternative outlet for practical religious (or semi-religious) commitment on the part of medieval English women.

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7.3 Anchorages

"Mary has chosen the better part and it shall not be taken from her" (Luke 10.42).

Large numbers of religious women lived solitary lives as anchoresses attached to monastic or parish churches. Male and female anchorites were common from the twelfth century. They can be seen as part of a larger eremitic movement which encouraged individual religious experience. Anchorites chose to live on the margins of society - in emulation of the desert tradition. Thus their cells were positioned in liminal places. Many chose cemeteries, or the north sides of churches (Clay 1914).

Anchoritic solitude was reinforced by a vow of permanent enclosure. To be immured in a cell represented a separation from the world and a symbolic death. But many anchorites appear to have combined a contemplative, solitary life with an intercessory role. From their cells some attracted local reputations for counselling, healing and prophesying. Others observed more formal isolation attached to nunneries[6], monasteries, hospitals and friaries. To some extent anchorages were regarded as monastic; their inmates followed a daily monastic timetable and cells were dissolved at the Reformation.

By tabulating references to anchorites, Warren (1985, 20) has demonstrated that English recluses were predominantly women. This trend is particularly strong for the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, the ratio of female to male in each century being 4:1, 5:2 and 5:3, respectively. The social backgrounds of these women are only rarely apparent, since the anchoress was seldom referred to by her former identity. Nevertheless, from what is known about the social groups from which they were drawn, these appear to have been diverse. Some of the women were previously nuns, although this, too, can be difficult to ascertain (Warren 1984). Others were vowesses - widows who took vows of chastity upon their

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6.For example, anchoresses were supported at Hampole, Nun Appleton, Clementhorpe (Yorks), Carrow (Norwich), Polesworth (Warwicks) and Davington (Kent), and in the parish churches adjacent to nunneries at Barking (Essex), Wareham (Dorset) and Tarrant Crawford (Dorset).

husband's death[7].

Warren has also shown that anchoritism began as a rural phenomenon, which became increasingly urban from the thirteenth century (1985, 38). She suggests that large numbers of women were drawn to anchoritism because the more unorthodox alternatives, such as beguinages, were unavailable to English women (ibid, 22). It has also been postulated that recluses were ethnically Anglo-Saxon, and that their piety appealed to those who did not wish to support the Anglo-Norman religious establishment (Holdsworth 1978, 203). However, female recluses were not specific to medieval England. Thirteenth century beguines cf northern France, who lived alone or in small groups, have been likened to recluses living in their own homes and supported by servants or companions (Delmaire 1989, 127). Female anchoritism was not peculiarly English, nor was it comparable to the actively charitable vocation of the Beguines. Only in England, however, did the movement for independent ascetic life remain formalised, and widespread, into the sixteenth century.

The enclosure of an anchoress was supervised and confirmed by the ordinary in each diocese. Her spiritual and physical well-being were tested; guarantees were sought for financial support and the suitability of the cell (Warren 1985, 53). Patrons provided the recluse with her anchorage, and with food, clothes, fuel, servants and confessors for the period of enclosure. Benefactors might be royal, aristocratic or of the gentry, but urban anchoresses appear to have been supported by smaller bequests from individuals or trade guilds (Tanner 1984; Warren 1985).

From the few surviving anchorholds, it seems that scale varied from a single room (for example Leatherhead, Surrey), possibly with an upper storey (such as Compton, Surrey), to the two-storey, four room structure at Chester-le-Street (co Durham) (Clay 1914, 83-4). Occasionally group anchorages were recorded, such as the trio of women at Tarrant Crawford (Dorset), each of whom in the fourteenth century occupied her own cell, and shared a male servant (Warren 1985, 33). Anchorages have not been subject to modern archaeological excavation: as a result the standards maintained for anchorages are not yet clear, in particular whether servants' accommodation was expected, and whether

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7.Most vowesses were not expected to be permanently enclosed. The legend surrounding the brass of Dame Joan Clopton (Quinton, Gloucs) suggests that she observed anchoritic enclosure: "Que tibi sacrata clauditur hic vidua milite defuncto sponso pro te ihu fuit ista".

cooking and privy facilities were usual. The cell's basic requirement was a window or squint from which to observe the mass, and a grilled or shuttered window through which the confessor communicated. Anchorites' squints sometimes survive, for instance the cross-shaped opening on the north side of St John the Baptist, Newcastle upon Tyne, through which Christina Umfred (c1260) may have viewed the high altar (Clay 1914, 82).

Churches with anchorages may have emphasised the delineation of sacred space. At Lindsell (Essex), for example, an anchorite's window survives to the north of the chancel, and an inscription survives over the south entrance to the nave which warned of spatial prohibitions placed on laymen[8]. The placing of the cell in relation to the church may have varied according to the sex and clerical status of the anchorite. This pattern is suggested by the rules observed in a twelfth century enclosure ceremony. The position at which the postulant lies prostrate varied from mid-choir for clerics, entrance to the choir for unordained men, to west end of the church for women (Wilson 1910, 243-4). This orientation appears to have been maintained in the placing of cells, suggested by extant anchorages for women. For example, the opening to Celia Moys' cell at Marhamchurch (Cornwall) (1403 - 5) can still be identified in the west wall of St Marwenna's, where a window with cusped head and transom has a lower part divided by a mullion (Pevsner 1970, 114). Emma de Raughtone's (c1430) cell at All Saints North Street, York, was built at the southern limit of the west end of the church. At the ground floor level is a small oblong opening with chamfered reveals and remains of the original wrought-iron grill; above this is an an archway. Earlier this century, a third opening was unblocked at the upper-storey level, positioned to observe the high altar (RCHME York III 1972, 6).

Churches which supported anchoresses may have developed particular concerns for the female piety and mysticism with which the tradition was connected. These concerns would have been translated into the material culture of the church or cell. For instance, an antiquary's description of remains at Hampole (W Yorks) in 1831, may relate to the cell of the well-known mystic Richard Rolle (d 1349), or anchoress Margaret de Kirkeby, both of whom resided at the nunnery (d 1401 - 5). Wall-paintings were described of the emblems of the Passion and the

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8.Cancellos laycos prophyybet scriptura sedere/ Qui legat aut cantet aut efferet egrediatur. Translated as, "The scripture forbids laymen to sit in the chancel.

Five Wounds with the heart in the centre (Whiting 1938). These were appropriate symbols for mystical contemplation which concentrated on Christ's suffering. The mystic tradition may have been fostered where anchoresses were attached to parish churches. Roughly contemporary with the cell at All Saints North Street, York, was the commissioning of the unique stained glass window, The Pricke of Conscience. This was a visualisation of the most popular poem of the fifteenth century, at which time it was ascribed to Richard Rolle[9]. The parishioners who maintained the anchoress may have held the renowned mystic Rolle in special regard, due to his authorship of a rule for anchoresses, The Form of Living (c1348).

An early copy of another rule, the Ancren Riwle[10], was translated by Bishop Simon of Ghent (1297 - 1315) for his sisters, who were anchoresses at Tarrant Crawford (Dorset) (Clay 1914, 98). Their group anchorage appears to have adjoined the parish church on the south wall of the thirteenth century nave, where an absence of windows suggests a former structure (RCHME Dorset IV 1972, 86). The nave retains an unusual group of fourteenth century wall-paintings. Thirteen panels depict scenes from the life of St Margaret of Antioch (Tristram 1955, 255). This iconography may have sounded particular resonance for female religious, an idea confirmed by the liturgy of the nearby Cistercian nunnery at Tarrant, which included the Passio of St Margaret of Antioch (Chadd 1986, 309). Margaret was a saint favoured by women in childbirth, a juxtaposition resulting from her own legendary escape from the belly of the dragon. Her relevance to celibate women may appear remote. However, maternal imagery is prevalent in writings associated with anchoresses, such as Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love and the vita of Christina of Markyate.

One version of the life of Margaret seems to have been particularly aimed at celibate women. This was contained in the Katherine Group, associated with

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(Footnote 8 continued from previous page)
Anyone who read, sings or speaks must go out" (Pritchard 1967, 74).

9.Allen (1927, 387) suggested that the Pricke contains no internal evidence to support Rolle's authorship. However, the majority of extant fifteenth century manuscript editions cite Rolle (ibid, 374).

10.The earliest copy of the Ancren Riwle has been attributed to Brian of Lingen (Dobson 1976). It is presumed to have been written for anchoresses at Limebrook (Herefords) in the parish of Lingen, where remains of a single E-W structure survive with north and south doorways (RCHME Herefords III

the _Ancren Riwle_, and included an additional speech by the dragon regarding the dangers of sexual temptation (Elkins 1988, 159). Margaret's struggle with the dragon was paralleled by the story of St George. It may be significant that wall-paintings of St George at Hardham (Sussex) were roughly contemporary to an anchorite (of unknown sex) recorded in 1253. Margaret's life was sometimes interchanged with that of Pelagia (the actress of Antioch), the desert recluse who disguised herself as a monk and lived a penitential life in a solitary cell (Ward 1987, 60). Margaret's iconography may have referred to the desert tradition of the female recluse, in which Pelagia, Mary of Egypt and the Virgin of Jerusalem assumed male identities in order to undertake the anchoritic life. The English recluse Christina of Markyate donned male clothing in her struggle to protect her virginity.

Wall-paintings at Faversham (Kent) repeat the themes of motherhood and the potential swapping of male and female religious identities. Anchoresses were recorded at Faversham from the fifteenth century, although others may have been in place contemporary to the fourteenth century execution of the wall-paintings. These are located on the south-east column of the north transept, and consist of three tiers of scenes. The lower and middle tiers deal with Christ's birth and childhood: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Adoration of the Magi, the Nativity, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, and the Presentation in _the Temple_. The top tier is concerned with Christ's death: the Cruxifixion and the Maries at the Tomb (Tristram 1955, 171-2). This iconographic scheme of Christ's birth and death takes on the connotations of Easter, which may be expected in the north transept area of churches. The position of the Holy Women in the Easter drama has already been discussed (Chapter 5.4), with the implications for cross-dressing which are apparent for priests participating in the drama, and for representations of the Maries at the Tomb [11]. Iconography in the setting of an anchoress's cell observed general patterns for female associations, and the mystics' prediliction for maternal imagery and the suffering of Christ. In addition, references to Margaret and the Maries may have signalled cross-dressing to some observers - a reminder of the male identity assumed by

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(Footnote 10 continued from previous page)
1934, 136).

11.Male and female figures at Faversham are depicted in white tunics with coloured mantles.

anchoresses of the desert tradition, and of the self-renunciation demanded by the anchoritic vow.

7.4 Hermitages

"[Martha] had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word" (Luke 10.39).

Although spontaneous foundations for female hermits were quickly regularised into nunneries (Chapter 3.6), and women did not figure among the large number of unenclosed solitary hermits, some communal hermitages may have accommodated women. Later medieval group hermitages - or eremitic monasteries - were often exemplary institutions which eventually adopted a monastic rule, or were absorbed into reformed monastic orders (for example, the male houses of Nostell, Fountains, Kirkstall (Yorks) and Llanthony (Monmouths). Other communal hermitages continued to be founded, either as ascetic houses supported by secular patrons, or as retreat houses of monasteries. Privately founded hermitages attracted the patronage of women, demonstrated, for instance, by the benefactress's effigy in the tomb chapel at Warkworth cave hermitage (Northumb). The informality of privately founded hermitages may have allowed, or encouraged, the participation of religious women as inmates. Glimpses of previously unrecognised double, or predominantly female, hermitages can sometimes be found in documents and place-names associated with excavated sites.

Grafton Regis (Northants) is the only excavated example of a private, communal hermitage (Medieval Archaeol 10 1966, 202-4). Documents associated with the site indicate that Grafton was a double hermitage, occupied by "brothers, sisters and other ministers of the house"[12] (Parker 1982, 250). Its unorthodoxy resulted from continued private patronage by the Woodville family, who retained the right to elect the master (ibid). Excavations showed that Grafton was arranged similarly to a small nunnery, with a small thirteenth century cloister to the north of the church (fig 7c). The church contained burials in the east end, and was screened into a short chancel and a long aisleless nave. It was joined to the south by a square cell which also contained burials. The resulting arrangement somewhat resembles the parallel aisle churches of double houses and

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12.Lincoln Record Office, Bishop's register 2, fo 125v.
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twin-hospitals. Two domestic ranges flanked the north and east sides of the cloister. A staircase in the east cloister walk led to upper storeys, and a square external projection appears to have been a _reredorter_ with drain.

To the west of the cloister were domestic structures, possibly arranged around a close or outer cloister. These contained ovens, hearths, a vat and kiln. Their separation from the main cloister is suggested by the alignment of the precinct wall, which bisects the complex into religious and service areas. Positioned on the wall, to the south-west of the cloister, was another range. This building was placed to allow access to the parallel aisle of the church, and to the dovecote and service buildings. Such a combination of religious observances and domestic duties may have been appropriate to sisters or lay-sisters of the house. Leyser (1984, 49) has described the sexual division of labour in continental hermitages, where men administered the sacraments and provided protection, but women did a great deal of manual labour. Arrangements at Grafton, in common with all mixed monasteries, emphasised the spatial segregation of groups within the community.

A second hermitage site is suggested by its place-name, and antiquaries' descriptions. At Chew Valley (Somerset) there were earthworks known as Nunnery Fields, and medieval ruins known as St Cross Nunnery (Rahtz and Greenfield 1977, 124). Dugdale's _Monasticon_ recorded a nunnery at Chewstoke (Somerset), which Collinson's _History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset_ (1791, II) described as a cell for four nuns.

Excavations at the site were interpreted as revealing structures of a secular manor or grange (Rahtz and Greenfield 1977, 125). However, the excavated structures at Chew were equally characteristic of a small nunnery (Chapter 4.4). St Cross was sited on a sandy prominence, where three enclosures were formed by moats, one of which contained a series of twelfth century timber structures on stone foundations, with an associated drainage system. Later stone buildings formed 11 units, or rooms, not necessarily joined into ranges (ibid, 127). Separate units would be consistent with the _familiae_ recognised in nunneries from the fourteenth century, or with the self-contained huts present in communal hermitages of the south-west (for example St Helens, Scilly, O'Neill 1964). An unstratified artefact associated with the site was interpreted as a medieval nun's finger-ring (Rahtz and Greenfield 1977, 326).

Ownership of the site at Chewstoke has been linked to the Santa Cruce family, who may have played a role similar to that of the Woodvilles at Grafton

Regis. In 1325, Agnes de Sancta Cruce was prioress at Barrow Gurney (also known as Minchin Barrow, Somerset) (ibid, 122). Indeed a relationship may be postulated between Barrow and Chewstoke, in which the latter served as a hermitage and retreat house to the former nunnery.

In his _Itinerary_, Leland listed three further nunneries for which no definite records survive: Maggotsfield (Gloucs), Marshfield (Gloucs) and Sandwich (Kent). These too may have been double or female hermitages, supported by private sponsorship. Clay's survey of medieval hermitages listed 42 sites as private foundations, including at least one mixed community at Stratford Saye (Loddon, Hants) of "_inclusus et heremita_" and brethren (Clay 1914, 219).

The private, non-regular nature of these sites is reminiscent of the family monasteries of the sub-Roman and early medieval periods. Like them, the hermitages of Grafton Regis and Chewstoke were family concerns which easily reverted to secular occupation. Excavations at both have suggested the cessation of monastic activity by or during the fifteenth century. It is precisely this flexibility of observances and fluidity between secular and religious, which provided an alternative lifestyle for religious women.

7.5 Conclusion: Patterns in Alternative Female Piety

To some extent religious women arrived in beguinages, hospitals, anchorages and hermitages as a result of the opportunities open to them. Certainly beguinages and hospitals accepted a greater social range of women than nunneries, and hospitals offered a greater number of places. The largely urban siting of beguinages, hospitals and anchorages was in contrast to the rural character of nunneries, and provided openings in centres of densest population.

The enclosed, contemplative life of the nunnery is in contrast to the active charity of the beguinages and hospitals. The opportunity - or choice - of vocation in Leah over Rachel, or Martha over Mary, created an alternative religious role for women. Hermitages and anchorages served women more ascetic in their outlooks than those in nunneries. These eremitic women chose strict enclosure and a form of contemplation more closely linked to spiritual learning. Anchoresses were strongly linked to mysticism, both in the books that they owned, (Clay 1953), and in their own visionary writings. Devotional meditations were a natural form of worship for religious women, who were excluded from the formal Latin offices of the church (Petroff 1986, 9). Their mystic and ecstatic

experiences may have resulted from their physical isolation as ascetics, and their pyschological alienation from mainstream secular and religious concerns.

The four differing lifestyles are drawn together by their penitential strand. Women in beguinages, hermitages, and possibly some maisons dieu, chose the voluntary poverty of the Vita Apostolica. Twelfth century hermits were particularly concerned with private sin and its expiation. Their emphasis on penance and contrition gave a central place to Mary Magdalene (Leyser 1984, 64), a sinful woman "healed of evil spirits and infirmities ... out of whom went seven devils" (Luke 8.2). Churches linked to traditions of female eremeticism may have given special prominence to Mary Magdalene, for instance wall-paintings at St Pega, Peakirk (Northants) include a Passion cycle culminating with the Noli me tangere, Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene (Rouse 1953, 140).

Women administering to the poor and sick in hospitals were expected to encourage physical and spiritual healing. While sickness continued to be linked with sin, hospitals were places of prayer and penance (Rubin 1987, 151). Mary Magdalene was linked to healing through the episodes of annointing, her special place at the Resurrection, and the association of Mary of Bethany with the house of Simon the leper and the illness of Lazarus. Through a conflation of the Biblical Maries, Mary Magdalene became a popular saint for the dedications of hospitals, particularly leprosaria (Rubin 1987, 113 FN 82; Clay 1909, 252). Representations of Mary Magdalene formed the subject of wall-paintings commissioned for hospitals, for example at Durham (Clay 1909, 163).

The anchoress identified with early Desert ascetics, whose caves represented penitential prisons. Lives of the Desert Fathers and Harlots emphasised sequences of repentance and conversion. The women were generally reformed prostitutes, who achieved sanctity through the acceptance of mercy (Ward 1987, 7). The main role model was, of course, Mary Magdalene. In her apocryphal life she lived the penitential existence of a solitary recluse in the caves at Baume (Provence). Similarly much of the Ancren Riwle concentrated on penance; and the enclosure ceremony for anchoresses included a gospel reading of Luke 10, referring to the better part of Mary over Martha (Elkins 1988, 151-2).

The four vocations for religious women are outwardly diverse, but bound together by their emphasis on penitence - a religious theme embodied by Mary Magdalene. Such imagery is in sharp contrast with that observed by cloistered nuns, religious women who celebrated the unique status of the Virgin Mary as mother of Christ and Queen of Heaven (Chapters 5.4-5; 6.2). This contrast is in

keeping with the semi-religious nature of the alternative vocations, lifestyles
which were at once active and contemplative, worldly and apart.

Figure 7a

Regular and Large

Mixed Hospitals
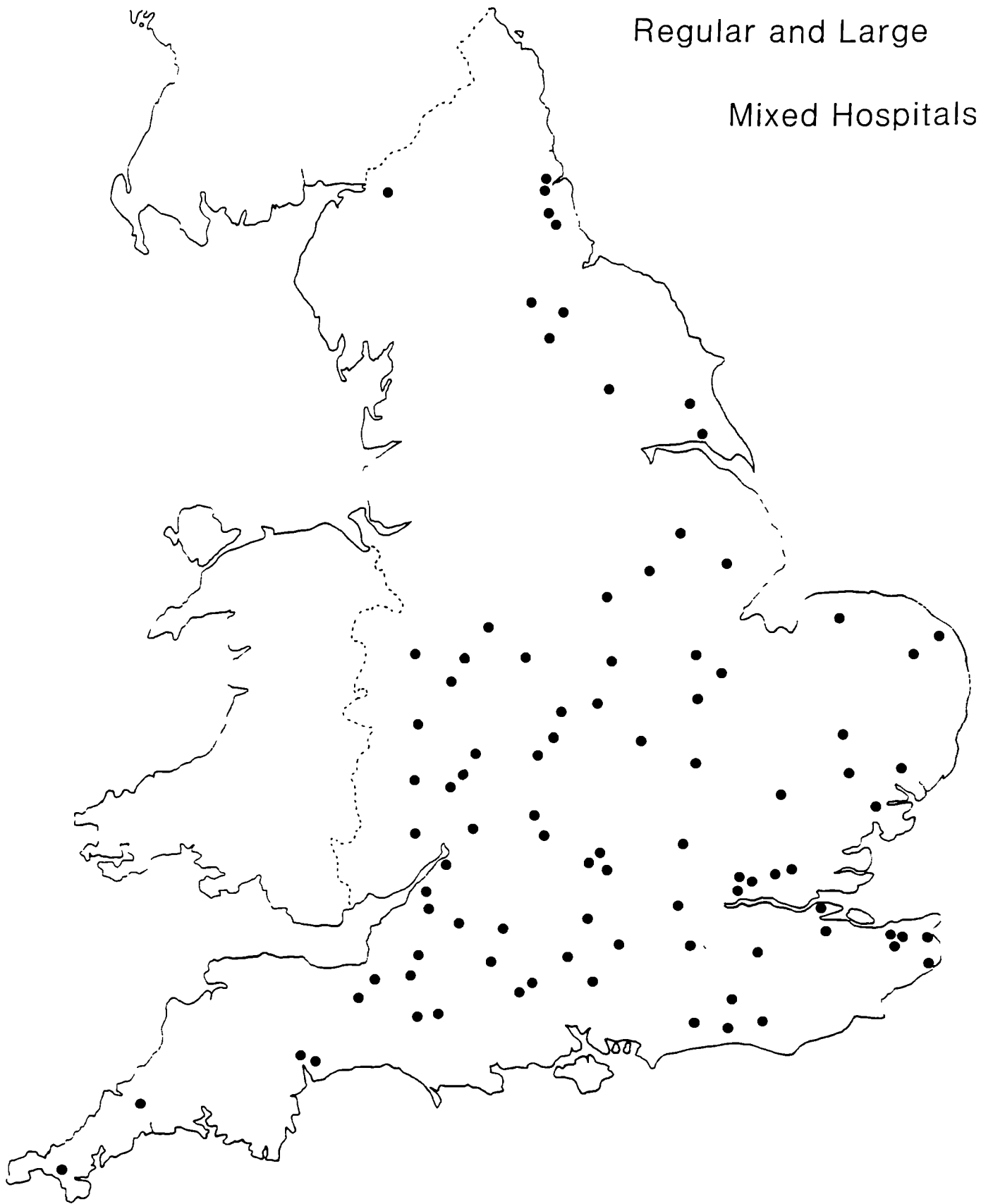
Figure 7b   Double Hospital Plans

St Nicholas Salisbury
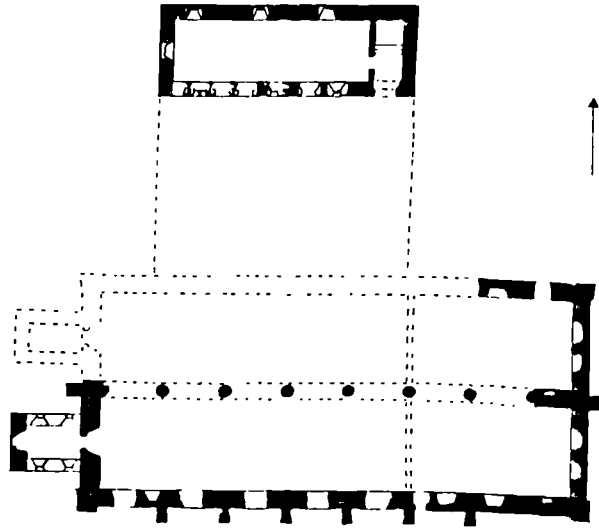
St John Winchester
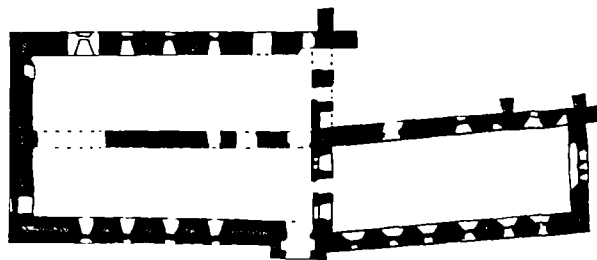
0 3 6 9

(after Godfrey 1955)

Figure 7c   Plan of a Double Hermitage:

Grafton Regis

■ 12 - 13th century
□ 14 - 15th

0 3 6 9
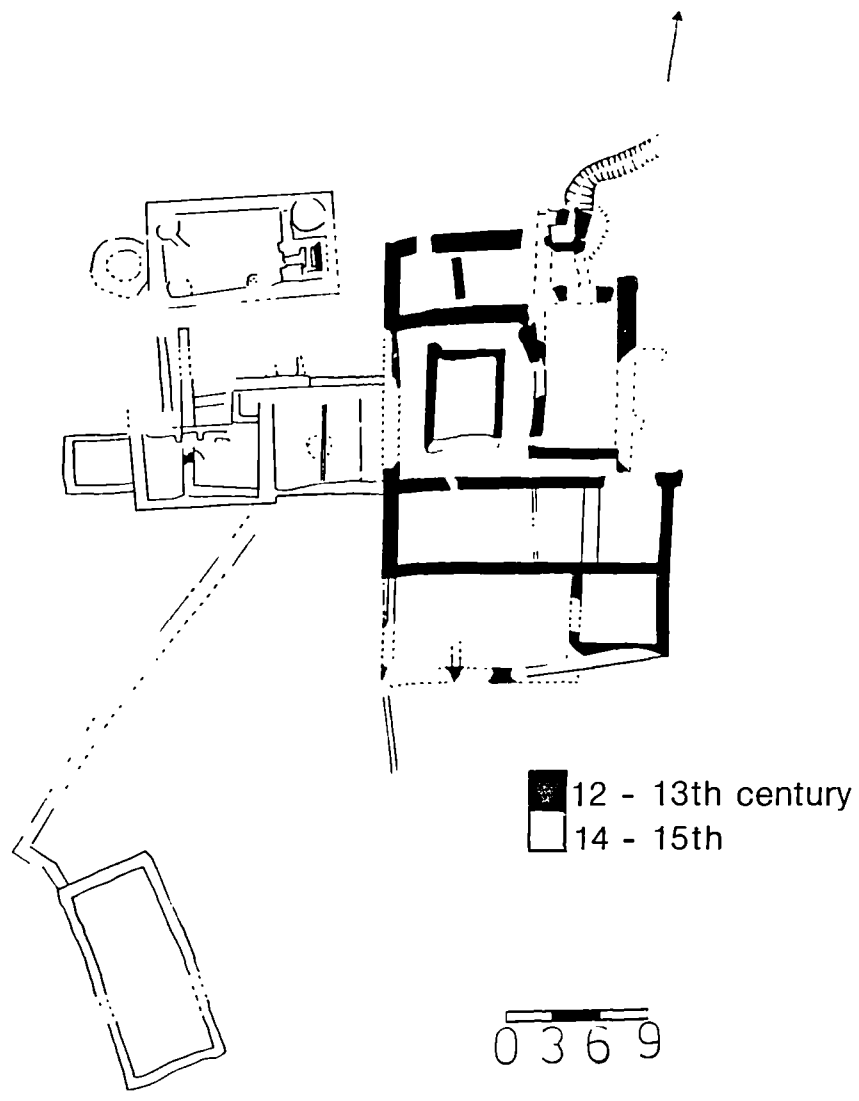
(source: Medieval Archaeol 10 1966)

Chapter 8

CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Gender, the Individual, and Collective Identities

This thesis has explored the construction of gender identity in relation to active and passive female piety. Gender, it will be recalled, is understood to refer to socially created distinctions between feminity and masculinity. Here, gender has been studied as the social and religious roles expected of nuns and monks, and the economic parameters set for their settlements. Gender identity is the private experience of gender role, in which an individual expresses maleness or femaleness through action and signification.

Within the context of medieval monasticism, gender identities were forged with reference to religious roles (or vocations). Particular roles were personified by biblical persons or saints, who were earthed to the material world through the vocabulary of their iconography. In the construction of one's own identity, a medieval religious man or woman would identify with a particular religious role and the saint by which it was characterised. The appropriate iconography and religious metaphors would be invoked as a type of short-hand, which signalled messages, in varying degrees of subtlety, to different social groups.

Occasionally the expressions of particular individuals can be read through representations on personal seals (Appendix D), coffin-lids, and jewellery. In constructions of active and passive female piety, however, religious women modelled themselves according to a religious role and the cultural imagery attached to it. These religious expectations were arbitrated through material culture in the creation of gender identity. Meaning was provided through the organisation of religious space, and the embellishment of features which demarcated it. The reading of such meanings varied according to the social position and religious knowledge of the observer. For example, in the context of the anchoress's cell (Chapter 7.3), certain observers may have linked the writings of anchoresses, the stories of the Desert Harlots and the iconography of wall-paintings, with the liturgy appropriate to the northern position of the cell. Together these elements suggest cross-dressing and the male identity

assumed by the anchoress. Her chosen vocation broke with the gender roles of medieval society. Her new identity represented the equality of male and female souls found after her symbolic death and enclosure.

In taking monastic vows, the individual aims to renounce self in favour of collective identity. Such identities may refer to institutional traits: for instance the monastic order to which a nunnery was pledged. Filiation was expressed through the habit which a community chose to adopt (p 19), and sometimes though the commissioning of specific architectural forms (pp 26-7). The identity of a particular convent was articulated through its dedication and seal (Chapters 5.4-5); the nature of its piety - whether active or contemplative - was linked to its siting within the landscape and the topography of towns (Chapter 3.1-2).

Collective identity was built in relation to common interest groups. For example, the patronage of specific families could connect nunneries. This can be seen in their siting and material culture, as suggested for Nun Monkton, Nun Appleton (N Yorks) and Nunkeeling (N Humbs) (pp 48-9). Nunneries shared a common interest group with the social class from which its inmates were drawn. In result they shared principles of planning with categories of secular settlement. Smaller nunneries were equipped with attributes more in keeping with gentry houses, such as moats, garderobes, service wings and split-level chapels (pp 93-6). Interest groups can be recognised by common patterns of consumption (p 16). Wealthier nunneries, such as Denney (Cambs) can be linked to high status castles and settlement by the composition of food remains recovered by excavation (pp 69-72). Smaller nunneries are documented as having subsisted on the same food stuffs that formed the basis of the peasant diet (ibid).

Perhaps the strongest common interest was shared with secular women of the estate from which the nuns had originated. Women in secular and religious contexts shared a high degree of seclusion, whether in castles or nunneries (Chapter 6.4). The association of women with a domestic gender domain may account for the presence of outer court activities within nunnery cloisters, such as baking, brewing and dairying (pp 92-3). The breakdown of communal spatial order into _familiae_ occurred mainly in wealthier nunneries (Chapter 4.3 FN 8, p 92). It may be suggested that these smaller households of women identified closely with the lifestyles of secular women in manor houses and castles.

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8.2 Ideology and Material Culture

Identities were reaffirmed through ideology: as the formal teachings of the church, and as gender ideology which provided the knowledge of how to proceed as a man or woman within a monastic context. The institution of the church constructed individual identity and gender relations through the force relations of celibacy. This was achieved through the segregation of men and women in nunneries, double houses, hospitals and monasteries for men. The manipulation of space was combined with the embellishment of architectural features in order to highlight male and female spatial zones of control (Chapter 6.2-3; fig 6b).

Identity was reinforced by the monastic structure of authority. An individual's former kin relations were renounced, and replaced by the knowledge of one's niche within the hierarchy of the convent. The authority of the abbess or prioress was exemplified through her seal, her crozier (which accompanied her burial and appeared on her coffin-lid), and representations which underpinned the stature of her office, such as the abbess figures which appear in the wall-paintings over the _lavatorium_ at Lacock (Wilts). Hierarchy was managed through the medium of space, in seating in the refectory (for example at medieval Denney, p 86), position within the choir (as detailed at modern Burnham, Berks, Chapter 6.1; fig 6a), and the special location of novices' quarters and superiors' _camerae_. Despite their special authority, the heads of nunneries seldom splintered the community by adopting a a separate lodge. In contrast to male houses, communal space appears to have been better guarded against the encroachment by the desire for privacy (pp 88-9).

Space within the nunnery reproduced divisions created through hierarchy. In addition, space was used to separate male and female groups and to delineate liturgical roles, for instance in the positioning of the sacristy as the male presence within the nunnery (pp 83-4). Further divisions were made between the nuns and seculars, especially in the provision of west galleries within nunnery churches. Segregation of religious men and women was felt equally in hospitals (Chapter 7.2) and mixed hermitages (Chapter 7.4). Only in secular contexts were the sexes allowed to mingle in their religious observances. For instance, fraternities encouraged mixed celebrations, such as the _Corpus Christi_ feast in which brothers and sisters processed, attended mass, feasted at mixed tables and finally dispersed in couples to distribute food to the poor (Rubin 1986, 107).

The architecture of the nunnery was active in constructing images of female

spirituality. Observers would have been drawn into a process of interpretation, in which a building's form or spatial orientation was given meaning. The primary meaning engaged by the patron or convent may have referred to a prototype, or particular iconographic message, for example in the coenaculum suggested by the two-storey refectory (pp 86-7). The perceived meaning of an architectural form may have altered over time, and certainly differed according to the social identity of the observer. An example is the iconography of the north cloister. The particular message intended may have varied according to the status of the patron, whether royal, episcopal or lay. This message appears to have been rejected or misunderstood by subsequent generations of inmates of nunneries, who commissioned seals which expressed a different collective identity (Chapter 5). A building's iconography signalled overlapping, multiple meanings. The message intended at any time, or directed towards any specific group, can sometimes be better understood in conjunction with other media, such as manuscript illumination, stained glass, wall-painting and sculpture. The ambiguity of the iconography of medieval architecture highlights the need for such multi-disciplinary studies.

8.3 Female Piety

Gender role for religious women was defined by active and passive constructions of female piety. As set out above (p 1), passive female piety included the theological sanctioning of roles for female religious, and the definition in form and function of women's communities determined by founders and patrons. Included within this function were the social and religious expectations placed on female communities. In this, nunneries were passive in that they seldom dispensed charity or provided hospitals (Chapter 7.2 FN 5), they appear to have had little pastoral function (pp 27-8), and they were only rarely endowed with chantries that served an intercessory purpose. In addition, nunneries were accorded a passive economic function. They did not initiate programmes of land reclamation or acquisition; their esates were often small and over-specialised, with home farms and outer courts which were constricted, and lacking large-scale industrial activity and storage facilities (Chapter 3.2-6). Female communities were rendered passive by their strict enclosure and the resulting reduction in access to social and economic resources, for example in the regularisation of communities of female hermits (pp 73-4). Greater control

over religious women seems to accompany the increased institutionalisation of religion, or the transition from sect to denomination, for example in the enclosure of monastic women in fourth century Byzantium (McNamara 1984), and the gradual reduction of women's religious roles in nineteenth century Nonconformity (Werner 1984, 140).

Active female piety has been taken to include women's participation in sanctioned and less orthodox religious movements, their benefaction of religious communities, and changes brought about through their agency in the structural traits and material culture of women's communities. Although female benefaction has not formed a major theme of the thesis, it has been noted that women set new trends in founding male houses of Carthusians, Grandmontines and Trinitarians (Chapter 2 FN 11, p 37), and in establishing hospitals, leprosaria, maisons dieu and hermitages (Chapter 7.2/4). Female agency is apparent in the choice of institutional identity asserted by the conventual seal (Chapter 5.5), and in changes brought about in nunnery plans and architecture, in particular the familiae which replaced claustral layouts (for example at Godstow, Oxfords) and in the domestic offices which engulfed certain Yorkshire nunneries (Chapter 4.3-4). In addition it may be suggested that iconographic architectural forms signalled a more active female spirituality, for instance the two-storey refectory which invoked the coenaculum of the home of Mary, where women participated in the early Church at Jerusalem (Chapter 4.2, pp 86-7).

8.4 Contextual Analogy

A method of contextual analogy has been outlined (p 4), in which forms of material culture and texts are integrated to link themes between media. Data are used as sources of contemporary analogy to elucidate meaning derived from historic and social context. Throughout this study, archaeological patterns have been recognised using both inductive and deductive approaches. Forms of analogy have been sought to enhance the relationships between media and observed patterning. No form of analogy will provide final explanations, nor should they be used merely as illustration or colouring for the final interpretation.

Here, texts have been used to elaborate themes recognised through medieval material culture. For example, women's writings and vitae have been introduced to evaluate the significance of aspects of Marian iconography (Chapter 5.3, pp 113-4), the meaning of a carved sacred heart (Chapter 6.2), and the perceptions

of themes exercised through wall-paintings (Chapter 7.3). Documents have been used as a type of lower level material culture, in which statements may be quantified to form correlates to assist in explanation (p 5). For instance, statistical treatment of statements made in cartularies, charters, deeds, and surveys has provided evidence for the relative status of monasteries and nunneries (Tables 1-3), and the social attributes of north cloister nunneries (Tables 5-6).

Likewise physical evidence has been quantified to serve as a correlate, such as the topography of water supply to nunneries (Table 4), the iconography of nunnery seals (Appendix D), and the spatial rules which operated in the planning of monasteries and nunneries (Appendix E).

All forms of medieval material culture can be studied as either lower or higher level, according to the nature of the specific enquiry. As types of contextual analogy, categories of material culture may be used to set up thematic, problem-specific research between disciplines. Explanation is provided by the relationships interpreted between the sources of contemporary analogy, according to their differences and similarities.

8.5 Female Piety and the Monastic Hegemony

Ideology is constructed through hegemony, a set of shared beliefs which is maintained through institutional and individual action. The medieval monastic hegemony was instilled through the organisation and teachings of monastic orders, and through gender identity: the process of self-classification by which individuals identified themselves as religious men and women. This hegemony was supported by enculturation - a process of social orientation conducted with reference to one's material surroundings - which included the ordering and embellishment of monastic space.

Gender identity was created in relation to one's awareness of common interest groups. It was suggested above (p 20) that medieval nuns engaged primarily in the collective identity of a particular monastic order or convent. But this monastic hegemony was not fully pervasive. Nunneries can be seen to have shared in common interest groups bound by families, social class and gender.

The construction of femininity within patriarchal societies is believed to be achieved according to a norm which is male (Weedon 1987). Social expectations

placed on nunneries, therefore, would have been formed with respect to the functions of monasteries. Indeed, modern scholarship frequently evaluates nunneries according to the religious and economic activities of a gauge set by male monasteries (for example Butler 1989; Thompson 1984). This thesis argues that women's monastic communities were established to fulfill very different social, religious and economic functions from those of their male counterparts.

Constructions of female piety, or spirituality, were not created in relation to a norm which was male. Instead, a range of specifically female religious roles existed which were erected as oppositions to the orthodox nun. Alternative vocations, such as beguine, sister in a hospital, anchoress and female hermit, were constructed according to different cultural and iconographic metaphors from that of the cloistered nun.

Material culture associated with nunneries has suggested that nuns celebrated devotion to Christ, and to the Virgin Mary as Mother of Christ (Chapter 5.3-5; Chapter 6.2). Women participating in the alternative pious roles, however, identified more strongly with the figure of Mary Magdalene (Chapter 7.5). These oppositions were at the root of their spirituality: repentence versus the purity of the nun; penitence versus the contemplation of the cloister.

It has been argued throughout this study that visual representations, architecture and spatial organisation have an active role to play in the construction of sexuality and gender identity. The iconography of particular female saints and biblical persons was bound to corresponding religious roles. Representations of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene did not represent real women in medieval society; rather, these women acted as signs for the particular life and ideals to which a religious woman aspired. Forms of female piety, and their corresponding institutions and settlements, were characterised by specific symbolic and material codes, and operated within well-defined social, religious and economic expectations set by the gender relations of medieval society.

Double Houses (seventh to ninth centuries)

Abingdon, Berks	Helenstow Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon
Bardney, Lincs	Beardaneu HE III.2
Barking, Essex	HE IV.7; twin to Chertsey
Bath, Somerset	charter of Osric 676 (Sawyer no 51)
Castor, Northants	Vita Mildrethae[1]; Chronicle of Hugh Candidus; John of Tynemouth (C14)
Coldingham, Berwicks	"Coludesbyrig" HE IV.19
Cookham, Berks	minster given to Abbess Cynethryth, 798 (Sawyer no 1258)
Eastry, Kent	Vita Mildrethae; Vita Mildgithae (Goscelin)
Ely, Cambs	HE IV.19
Folkestone, Kent	Vita Mildrethae
Gloucester, Glouc	charter of Osric 671 (Sawyer no 70)
Hackness, N Yorks	HE IV.23
Hartlepool, Cleveland	Heruteu HE III.24
Hoo, Kent	charter of Caedwalla 687 (Sawyer no 233)
Kaelcacastir (Tadcaster?, N Y)[2]	HE IV.23)
Leominster, Herefords	Vita Milburgae
Lyminge, Kent	'Privilege of Wihtred' 697-8 (Sawyer no 20)
Malmesbury, Wilts	HE V.18
Minster in Sheppey, Kent	'Privilege of Wihtred'
Minster in Thanet, Kent	'Privilege of Wihtred'
Oxford, St Frideswide's	Vita Frideswide

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1. The earliest Vita Milrethae is tenth or eleventh century, based on an eighth century text. The Vita Milburgae was written in the late eleventh century at Cluniac Much Wenlock.

2. It has been suggested that Heui's monastery was at Healaugh, 5 km north of Tadcaster. In the mid-nineteenth century a possible Anglian inscribed stone was recovered from Healaugh parish churchyard, with the names "Madug" and "Hei" recorded (Yorks Archaeol and Topogr J 3 (1875).

Peakirk, Northants	Felix's _Vita Guthlac_
Repton, Derbys	_Vita Guthlac_
St Alban's, Herts	_Gesta Abbatum_: Matthew Paris
St Bees, Cumbria	_Vita Bega_[3]
Wareham, Dorset	_Anglo-Saxon Chronicle_ 876
Watton, Humbs	_Wetadun_ _HE_ V.3
Weedon, Northants	_Vita Werburgae_[4]
Wenlock, Shrops	_Vita Milburgae_
Whitby, N Yorks	_Streanaeshalch_ _HE_ III.24
Wimborne, Dorset	_Anglo-Saxon Chronicle_ 718

Possible Double Houses

Chester	first monastery of St Werburgh's seems to have been for nuns
Chichester, Sussex	possibly nuns (Sawyer no 47)
Crayke, N Yorks	_Historia de Sancto Cuthberto_ notes the head as "Geva" (female name)
Coxwold, N Yorks	letter of Pope Paul I describes as having been previously held by an abbess (757-8) (EHD1, 830)
Dereham, Norfolk	associated with Wihtburh
Dunaemuthe	letter of Pope Paul (757-8)
Ebchester, Durham	_Vita Ebbe_[5]
Eltisley, Cambs	Chronicle of Hugh Candidus
Flixborough, Humbs	high incidence of female skeletons and female artefacts (pins, loomweights) comparable to Whitby
Hanbury, Worcs	possibly nuns (Sawyer no 190)
Hovingham, N Yorks	sculpture; possible twin to Stonegrave
Nazeingbury, Essex	skeletal evidence (Huggins 1978); charter of

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3. A twelfth century or later life.

4. Morris (1989,68) suggests that Werburga's monastery is more likely to have been located at the hilltop site of Stow-Nine-Churches.

	King Suebred 693 - 709 (Bascombe 1987)
Pectanege	minster given to Abbess Cynethryth 798 (Sawyer no 1258)
Penitanham Worcs?	Oshere to Cuthswith 693 (Sawyer no 53)
Reading, Berks	conjectural[6]
Stonegrave, N Yorks	letter of Pope Paul (757-8)
Tetbury, Gloucs	the place-name Tettan monasterium suggests that land held by Aldhelm (Sawyer no's 71 and 73) was given to Abbess Teta of Wimborne[7].
Thornbury (Binsey, Ox)	retreat house of St Frideswide's (Blair 1988)
Wytham, Berks	retreat house of Helenstow (Chronicon Abingdon)
Winchcombe, Gloucs	abbey annals c1150
Withington, Gloucs	held by Abbess AEthelburh (Sawyer no's 1429 & 1255)
Wirksworth, Derbys	sculpture; associated charter of 835 (Sawyer no 1624)
Worcester	St Peter's familia: possibly mixed

5.Late twelfth century life by Reginauld of Durham.

6.Supposedly founded by Elfrida (VCH Berks II 1972, 62).

7.Stenton (1943) noted that women's names were coumpounded with burgh to denote monastic sites at Tetbury and Fladbury (Worcs). He suggested a number of sites which may be considered on this basis: Bibury (Gloucs), Harbury (Warwicks), Heytesbury (Wilts), Alderbury (Wilts), Adderbury (Oxfords), Bucklebury (Berks), Queniborough (Leics), Alderbury (Shrops).

Some Dimensions of Nunnery Buildings

Cloister	dimensions (m) (E-W X N-S)	area	source
Shaftesbury[1]	35.5 x 108	3841	Sydenham 1959
Nuneaton	41.5 m sq	1722.3	Andrews 1981
Barking	30.2 m sq	912	Clapham 1913
Watton	26.2 x 32.3	846.3	St John Hope 1901
Easebourne	27.4 m sq	750.8	VCH
Goring	26.2 m sq	686.4	Stone 1893
Syon	c25.9 m sq	670.8	RCHME
Gokewell	27.4 x 24	657.6	Nichols 1982a
Lacock	24.3 m sq	590	Brakspear 1900
Elstow	23 m sq	529	Baker 1971
Cambridge	22.6 m sq	510.8	RCHME
Burnham	21.9 m sq	479.6	Brakspear 1903
Higham	21.3 m sq	453.7	Tester 1967
Delapré	20.4 m sq	416	Clapham 1913
Thicket	18.3 m sq	334.9	Brown 1886
Wilberfoss	18.3 m sq	334.9	Brown 1886
Wykeham	18.3 m sq	334.9	Brown 1886
Chester	16.8 x 18.9	317.5	Rutland 1965
Davington	15 x 20	300	Tester 1980
Kington St Michael	17.5 x 16.6	290.5	Brakspear 1922
Polsloe	16.6 m sq	275.6	Medieval Archaeol 24
Denney[2]	16 m sq	256	Christie & Coad 1980
Little Marlow	15.2 m sq	231	Peers 1902
Baysdale	15.2 m sq	231	Brown 1886
Sopwell	15.2 m sq	231	Medieval Archaeol 1966

1.The E-W dimensions were established by early excavations. The southern limit of the cloister may, however, be conjectural.

2.open court cloister

Wroxall	15.2 m sq	231	VCH
Chicksands	14.6 m sq	213.2	VCH
Kirklees	14.3 m sq	204.5	Armytage 1908
Nunkeeling	14.3 m sq	204.5	Brown 1886
Carrow	10.7 m sq	114.5	Clapham 1913

Total length church	length (m)	source
Barking	102.9	Clapham 1913
Romsey	78	Cook 1961
Shaftesbury	76.2	RCHME
Nuneaton	70.5	Andrews 1981
Elstow	64	Baker 1971
West Malling	60.8	Biddle unpublished
Watton	61	St John Hope 1901
Carrow	59.3	Clapham 1913
Cambridge	57.7	RCHME
Lacock	43.6	Brakspear 1900
Brewood (Shrops)	40	Weaver 1965
Polsloe	39	Medieval Archaeol 24
Davington	38	Tester 1980
Bishopsgate	36.6	Clapham 1924
Ellerton[3]	35.8	Nichols 1982a
Dartford[4]	31	Clapham 1926
Denney	31	Christie and Coad 1980
Burnham	29.2	Brakspear 1903
Wykeham	27.4	Brown 1886
Easebourne	25.9	VCH
Kirklees	24.4	Armytage 1908
Little Marlow	23.7	Peers 1902
Cornworthy	21.3	Pevsner
Pinley	19.5	VCH
Guyzance	18.6	OS card
Littlemore	18.6	Pantin 1970
Baysdale	18.3	Brown 1886
Thicket	18.3	Brown 1886

3.The dimensions and configuration of remains at Ellerton should be approached with some caution. Much of the present structure may represent a reconstructed folly.

4.Clapham's 1926 excavations revealed a building aligned E-W which may have been

Wilberfoss	18.3	Brown 1886
Chester	17.7	Rutland 1965
Aconbury	17	RCHM
Nunkeeling	14	Brown 1886

mean 49.9m

standard deviation 22.8m

range 88.9m

(Footnote 4 continued from previous page)
the nuns' church.

Chapter-house	dimensions (m)	source
Burnham	21.5 x 12.5	Brakspear 1903
Shaftesbury	40.4 x 11.3	Sydenham 1959
Kirklees	4.9 m sq	Armytage 1908
Cambridge	11.3 x 7.6	RCHME
Little Marlow	5.2 x 5.5	Peers 1902
Easebourne	7 x 11.6	VCH
Carrow	3.65 x 2.19	Clapham 1913
Watton	20.1 m sq	St John Hope 1901
Nunkeeling	4.9 x 3.7	Brown 1886
Thicket	3.7 x2.4	"
Wilberfoss	6 x 4.9	"
Wykeham	6 x 2.4	"
Barking	18.4 x 7.2	Clapham 1913
Polsloe	38 x 12	Medieval Archaeol 24
Higham	28 x 28	Tester 1967
Elstow	19 x 6	Baker 1971

Refectory	dimensions (m)	source
Lacock	24 x 8.2	Brakspear 1900
Kirklees	10.4 x 5.5	Armytage 1908
Wykeham	11 x 3.7	Brown 1886
Denney	40.8 x 11.6	Poster & Sherlock 1987
Elstow	22 x 7	Baker 1971
Polsloe	20 x 5	Medieval Archaeol 24
Sinningthwaite	15.8 x 7.9	Nichols 1982a

Appendix C

Groundplans of Nunnery Churches

Despite the disproportionate survival of high status cruciform examples (n=18, 40.9%) the majority of known groundplans represent parallelogram churches (n=26, 59%).

cruciform

Amesbury, Hants

Barking, Essex

Brewood, Shrops

Cambridge, Cambs

Carrow, Norwich, Norfolk

Denney, Cambs

Elstow, Bedfords

Goring, Oxfords

Ickleton, Cambs

Malling, Kent

Marham, Norfolk

Nuneaton, Warwicks

Polesworth, Warwicks

Romsey, Hants

Shaftesbury, Dorset

Swine, Humbs

Thetford, Norfolk

Winchester, Hants

parallelogram

Aconbury, Herefords

Bishopsgate, London

Burnham, Berks (formerly Bucks)

Chester, Cheshire

Dartford, Kent

Davington, Kent

Delapré, Northants

Easebourne, Sussex

Ellerton, N Yorks

Guyzance, Northumb

Higham, Kent

Kington St Michael, Wilts

Kirklees, W Yorks

Lacock, Wilts

Little Marlow, Bedfords

Littlemore, Oxfords

Marrick, N Yorks

Minster in Sheppey, Kent

?Nun Monkton, N Yorks

Polsloe, Exeter, Devon

Sempringham, Lincs

Sopwell, Bedfords

Watton, Humbs

Wix, Essex

Wroxall, Warwicks

Wykeham, N Yorks

Appendix D

Iconography of Medieval English Nunnery Seals[5]

(sample = 136)

Fleur-de-lis

Bullington (G) C13

Eagle

Hampole (C)
Crabhouse (A) C13

Falcon and Lady

Cook Hill (C)

Closed Door Shrine

Littlemore (B)

Church

Chester (B) early C13

Archbishop

Kirklees (C) early C12

5.Information collated from Victoria County Histories (texts and plates), Ellis
(1986) and Clay (1928). The name of the house is followed by its order and
wherever possible, a precise date from an associated document or a stylistic
date of the seal. The prefixed (Pr) and (Ab) distinguish a prioress's or
abbess's seal from the conventual seals.

Trinity

Ankerwyke (B) C12

Abbess/ Prioress

(Ab) Wilton (B) C13
(Ab) Winchester (B) 1285
(Ab) Barking (B) C14
(Ab) Denney (F) 1400
(Pr) Nuneaton (Fo) 1337-45
(Pr) Aconbury (A) 1447
(Pr) Amesbury (Fo) 1337-45
(Pr) Catesby (C) 1496

Agnus Dei

Esholt (C) C12
Godstow (B) C12; C14
(Ab) Godstow (B) 1539
Kilburn (B) 1258
Bungay (B) c1300
Flixton (A)
Ellerton (C) C13
(Pr) Stamford (B) 1422
Lambley (B) 1323
Nun Cotham (C) 1539

Patron Saints

(Pr) Stamford (B) 1371
Whistones (C) C15
Polesworth (B) C12
Arden (B) C12
Moxby (B) late C12

Nunkeeling (B) C12; C13

Cambridge (B) C12

Wroxall (B) C12

Romsey (B) late C12

Godstow (B) C12+

Minster (B) early C12

Clementhorpe (B) C12; C13

Wilton (B) C13

Henwood (B) C13

Bungay (B) c1300

Fosse (C) C15

(Ab) Minories (F) C16

Bishopsgate, London (B)

Thimbleby (B?)

Elstow (B)

Polsloe (B) C16

Stratford at Bow (B) C13

Broomhall (B) 1392

Dartford (D) 1370; 1534

Stamford (B) C13

Wintney (C) c1330

Christ enthroned

Markyate (B) mid-C12
Grace Dieu (A) C13

Hare

(Pr) Catesby (C) 1354

Tower

Cornworthy (A)

Christ Crucified

Bungay (B)

Flixton (A)

8 pointed star

(Pr) Stamford (B) 1527

BVM seated

Baysdale (C) 1323

Markyate (B)

Swine (C) C12

Chatteris (B) C12

Studley (B)

Crowned Virgin, enthroned with Child on knee

Chester (B) late C12

Goring (A) C12

Redlingfield (B) C12

Carrow (B) C12; C13

Canonsleigh (A) 1539

(Pr) Flamstead (B) 1296

Stainfield (B) C12; C13

Haverholme (G) C12

Bullington (G) C12; C14; C16

(Pr) Bungay (B) c1200

Wix (B) C13

Holystone (A) 1323

Langley (B) 1284

(Pr) Grace Dieu (A) C13

Heynings (C) C13

Alvingham (G) C13

Sixhills (G) C13

North Ormsby (G) C13; C16

(Pr) Langley (B) C13: 1542   .

Orford (P)

Catley (G) C13

(Pr) Nuneaton (Fo) C14

Campsea Ash (A) 1352

Fosse (C) C15

Malling (B) C15

Brewood, Staffs (B) C16

Hampole (C)

Marrick (B)

(Pr) Swine (C)

Watton (G)

Wykeham (C)

Barking (B)

Chicksands (G)

Easebourne (A)

Catesby (C)

Crowned BVM standing

Arthington (C) C13

Nun Appleton (C) C12

Yedingham (B) C12

Standing Virgin holding Child

Elstow (B)

Tarrant Keynes (C) C13

Polesworth (B) C14

Denney (F) C15

Minories (F) 1371

(Pr) Clerkenwell (A) 1530

Annunciation

Studley (B) C12-14

Chicksands (G)

Sempringham (G)

Sixhills (C) 1538

Westwood (Fo)

Coronation of the Virgin

Shaftesbury (B) C13

Denney (F) C14

(Pr) Amesbury (Fo) C14

(Ab) Minories (F) C16

Delapré (Cl)

Burnham (A)

Dartford (D) 1422-8

Sopwell (B)

Appendix E

Formal Spatial Analysis of Medieval Nunneries and Monasteries for Men

Method (after Hillier and Hanson 1984)

RA = Relative Asymmetry

1) assign values to each node for depth from carrier space

2) sum of values (x)

3) divide sum by total number of points in system - 1

4) $\dfrac{2x\ (x-1)}{\text{total no of points} - 2}$

RR = Relative Ringiness (of any one node)

RR = $\dfrac{\text{actual no of rings}}{\text{max no of rings}}$

= $\dfrac{x}{p - 1}$

Key

+ carrier space (precinct)

s sacristy

cl cloister

d dorter

ch chapter-house

Gamma Analysis of Medieval English Nunneries

pt	depth	RA	RR	house
+	0	0.133	0.16	Watton
s	2	0.152	0.064	(Gilbertine)
cl	2	0.096	0.225	
d	4	0.270	0.032	
ch	3	0.202	0.032	
+	0	0.114	0.217	St. Radegund,
s	3	0.201	0.043	Cambridge
cl	1	0.067	0.347	(Benedictine)
d	4	0.272	0.043	
ch	2	0.153	0.043	
+	0	0.205	0.153	Davington
s	4	0.41	0.076	(Benedictine)
cl	1	0.438	0.153	
d	3	0.358	0.076	
ch	3	0.269	0.076	
+	0	0.160	0.181	Lacock
s	3	0.151	0.045	(Augustinian)
cl	2	0.112	0.5	
d	5	0.272	0.09	
ch	3	0.168	0.045	
+	0	0.110	0.5	Burnham
s	1	0.149	0.111	(Augustinian)
cl	2	0.117	0.388	
d	5	0.470	0.05	
ch	3	0.228	0.05	
+	0	0.128	0.285	Little Marlow

s	4	0.171	0.142	(Benedictine)
cl	3	0.219	0.190	
d	4	0.271	0.095	
ch	4	0.176	0.095	
+	0	0.190	0.190	Kirklees
s	-	-	-	(Cistercian)
cl	3	0.161	0.285	
d	6	0.438	0.047	
ch	4	0.266	0.095	
+	0	0.166	0.384	Polsloe
s	1	0.166	0.230	(Benedictine)
cl	2	0.179	0.461	
d	4	0.435	0.076	
ch	3	0.423	0.076	

Gamma Analysis of Medieval English Monasteries for Men

pt	depth	RA	RR	
+	0	0.137	0.333	Watton
s	-	-	-	Canons
cl	2	0.111	0.388	Gilbertine
d	4	0.436	0.055	
ch	3	0.209	0.111	
+	0	0.090	0.454	Roche Abbey
s	3	0.180	0.090	(Cistercian)
cl	2	0.116	0.318	
d	3	0.276	0.045	
ch	4	0.264	0.045	
+	0	0.081	0.473	Lanercost
s	1	0.174	0.105	(Augustinian)
cl	2	0.127	0.368	
d	3	0.326	0.052	
ch	2	0.228	0.052	
+	0	0.089	0.4	Chester
s	-	-	-	(Benedictine)
cl	2	0.105	0.35	
d	3	0.310	0.05	
ch	3	0.231	0.05	
+	0	0.098	0.428	Finchale
s	-	-	-	(Benedictine)
cl	1	0.065	0.642	
d	2	0.252	0.214	
ch	2	0.208	0.071	

+	0	. 0.141	0.375	Waverley
s	-	-	-	(Cistercian)
cl	2	0.091	0.562	
d	2	0.216	0.125	
ch	3	0.183	0.062	
+	0	0.228	0.466	Leiston Abbey
s	3	0.361	0.066	(Premonstrat.)
cl	2	0.085	0.533	
d	3	0.294	0.066	
ch	3	0.218	0.066	
+	0	0.141	0.357	Walsingham
s	-	-	-	(rural
cl	2	0.109	0.428	Friary)
d	2	0.318	0.071	
ch	3	0.126	0.071	

Mean Relative Asymmetry (sample = 8; 8)

	Nunneries	Monasteries
+	0.150	0.125
s	0.2	0.238 (sample = 7/3)
cl	0.173	0.101
d	0.348	0.292
ch	0.235	0.208

Mean Relative Ringiness (sample = 8; 8)

	Nunneries	Monasteries
+	0.258	0.410
s	0.101	0.087 (sample = 7/3)
cl	0.318	0.448
d	0.063	0.084
ch	0.064	0.066

TABLE 1: <u>Chi-square for Value of Benedictine houses at the Dissolution</u>
(where O = values for Figure 2e)

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E)2	(O-E)2 E
2	2.2	-0.2	0.04	0.01
16	8.9	7.1	50.4	5.66
20	14	6	36	2.57
18	11.4	6.6	43.56	3.82
5	11	7	49	4.45
4	3.7	0.3	0.09	0.02
3	4	-1	1	0.25
2	5.9	-3.9	15.2	2.57
2	4.8	-2.8	7.8	1.62
0	5.9	-5.9	34.8	5.89
4	3.8	1.8	3.2	0.84
8	15.2	-7.2	51.8	3.4
18	24	-6	36	1.5
13	19.6	-6.6	43.56	2.2
25	18.9	-7.9	62.4	3.3
6	6.3	-0.3	0.09	0.01
8	6.9	1.1	1.2	0.17
14	10	4	16	1.6
11	8.2	1.8	3.2	0.39
16	10	6	36	3.6

x2 = 43.87

degrees of freedom = (2-1)(10-1)

= 9

5% significance level for one-tailed test = 16.919 (Robson 1983)

therefore x2 is significant

TABLE 2: <u>Chi-square for Numbers of Inmates per Benedictine house</u>
(where O = values for Figure 2f)

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E)2	(O-E)2 E
8	18.9	-10.9	118.81	6.28
23	14.56	8.44	71.23	4.89
31	19.66	11.34	128.59	6.54
4	8.73	-4.73	22.37	2.56
5	9.1	-4.1	16.81	1.84
44	33	11	121	3.66
17	25.43	-8.43	71.06	2.79
23	34.33	-11.33	128.36	3.73
20	15.26	4.74	22.46	1.47
20	15.89	4.11	16.89	1.06

$x2$ = 34.82

degrees of freedom = (2-1)(5-1)

$\qquad$ = 4

significance level = 2.776, therefore $x2$ is significant

TABLE 3: <u>Chi-square for Value per Inmate in Benedictine Houses</u>
(where O = values for Figure 2g)

O	E	(O-E)	(O-E)2	(O-E)2 E
36	15.29	20.71	428.9	28.05
18	10.92	7.08	50.12	4.59
8	10.19	-2.19	4.79	0.47
5	8.37	-3.37	11.35	1.35
3	8.01	-5.01	25.10	3.13
1	4.73	-3.71	13.76	2.90
0	13.47	-13.47	181.44	13.47
6	26.7	-20.7	428.49	16.04
12	19.07	-7.07	49.98	2.62
20	17.8	-2.2	4.84	0.27
18	14.62	3.38	11.42	0.78
19	13.98	6.98	48.72	3.48
12	8.26	-6.26	39.18	4.74
37	23.52	13.48	181.71	7.72

x2 = 89.61

degrees of freedom = (2-1)(7-1)

= 6

significance = 12.592 therefore x2 is significant

TABLE 4: <u>Cloister Orientation: Topography and Male Proximity Test</u>

Nunnery	£ (VE)	N/S	Water	Male Monastery	£ (VE)	N/S
Barking	862	N	W	Waltham	900	N
Bishopsgate	320	N	S	East Minster	?	S
Cambridge	75	N	N/W	Walden	372	S
Chatteris	97	N	W?	Ramsey	1716	S
Ickleton	71	N	N	Walden	372	S
Sheppey	129	N	?	Boxley	204	S
Wilberfoss	21	N	S	Kirkham	269	S
Thicket	20	N	S	Malton	197	S
Hinchingbrooke	17	N	S	Sawtrey	141	S
Clerkenwell	262	N	S	St Bartholomew's	693	S
Burnham	51	N	E/S	Hurley	121	N
Lacock	194	N	N/E	Stanley	177	N
Brewood	17	N	N	Lilleshall	229	S
Denney	172	N	S	Anglesey	124	S
Pinley	23	N	S	Thelsford	24	S
Arthington	11	N	N	Kirkstall	222	S
Watton	360	N	S	Meaux	298	S
Shaftesbury	1166	S	?	Sherbourne	698	N
Marrick	48	S	S	Coverham	160	S
Wroxall	72	S	S	Stoneleigh	151	S
Little Marlow	23	S	S	Hurley	121	N
Nunnaminster	179	S	E	Waverley	174	S
Elstow	284	S	S	Warden	389	S
Carrow	64	S	N	Langley	104	S
Polsloe	164	S	N/E	Torre	396	S
Easebourne	?	S	S	Shulbrede	72	S
Polesworth	87	S	S	Merevale	254	S
Sopwell	40	S	W	Missenden	262	S
Catesby	132	S	N/S/W	Canons Ashby	119	S
Davington	41	S	N/E	Faversham	286	N

Chester	66	S	?	Basingwerk	150	S	
Kington	25	S	S	Stanley	177	N	
Bungay	61	S	?	Langley	104	S	
Godstow	275	S	E	Notley	437	S	
Yedingham	21	S	S	Malton	197	S	
Malling	218	S	N/E	Bayham	125	S	
Higham	26	S	N/W	Prittlewell	155	S	
Handale	13	S	W	Byland	238	S	
Nunkeeling	35	S	N	Meaux	298	S	
Thetford	40	S	N	Thetford Priory	312	S	
Seaton	12	S	N	Lanercost	77	S	
Littlemore	33	S	S	Thame	256	S	
Romsey	393	S	N/W	Netley	100	S	
Goring	60	S	E	Poughley	71	S	
Gracedieu	92	S	N	Ulverscroft	83	S	
Campsea Ash	200+	S	S	Sibton	250	S	
Kirklees	19	S	S	Roche	224	S	
Marham	39	S	S	West Acre	260	S	
Llanllugan	22	S	S	Strata Marcella	64	S	
Rosedale	37	S	N	Byland	238	S	
Esholt	13	S	S	Bolton	213	S	
Wykeham	25	S	S	Kirkham	269	S	
Baysdale	20	S	N/E	Byland	238	S	
Swine	82	S	N/W	Meaux	298	S	
Delapré	119	S	N	Canons Ashby	119	S	
Aconbury	67	S	S	Abbey Dore	101	N	
Chicksands	212	S	S	Woburn	391	S	
Bullington	158	S	N	Barlings	242	S	

TABLE 5: <u>Descriptive Historical Data for North and South Cloisters</u>[1]

House   Order Date[2] Patron[3] Inmates[4] Dedication   Value

NORTHERN CLOISTERS

House	Order	Date	Patron	Inmates	Dedication	Value	
Barking	B	1180	R/M	37	Ethelburgha	Ab	862
Bishopsgate	B	-1216	S/M	26	Helen	Pr	320
Cambridge	B	1133-8	E/M	11	Radegund & BVM	Pr	75
Ickleton	B	-1154	S/?	9	Mary Magdalene	Pr	71
Minster	B/A	1130?	E/M	7	Mary & Sexburgha	Pr	129
Wilberfoss	B	-1153	S/M	20	Mary	Pr	21
Thicket	B	-1180	S/M	12	Mary	Pr	20
Hinchingbrooke	B	-1228	?	4	James	Pr	17
Chatteris	B	-1016	E/JT	15	BVM	Ab	97
Clerkenwell	A	1145+	S/M	17	Mary	Pr	262
Burnham	A	1266	R/M	20	Mary	Ab	51
Lacock	A	1230	R/F	22	Bernard & BVM	Ab	194
Brewood, Shrop	A	1199	?	9	Leonard	Pr	17
Denney	F	1342	R/F	41	James & Leonard	Ab	172
Pinley	C	-1135	S	7	Mary	Pr	23

1.Data for the cloister orientation are taken from survey, excavation, aerial photography, cartographic sources and Dissolution accounts.

2.The date of foundation refers to the first record of the house. In the case of refoundations, an approximate architectural date for post-Conquest re-building is given.

3.Patron refers to royal, ecclesiastical or secular patronage, in addition to the sex of the specific patron (male, female or joint foundation).

4.Wherever possible figures for the number of inmates have been taken from the 1377 census figures; otherwise the number of inmates at the Dissolution, or statutory numbers for the house are given.

Arthington	Cl	1155	S	12	Mary	Pr	11
Watton	G	1150	S	61	Mary	Pr	360

SOUTHERN CLOISTERS

Shaftesbury	B	c1080	R/M	100	Edward	Ab	1166
Marrick	B	1154-8	S/M	16	Mary	Pr	48
Wroxall	B	c1135	S/M	9	Leonard	Pr	72
Little Marlow	B	-1218	?	13	Mary	Pr	23
Winchester	B	c1123	R/JT	39	Edburgha	Ab	179
Elstow	B	c1078	S/F	19	Mary & Helen	Ab	284
Carrow	B	c1146	E/F	11	Mary	Pr	64
Polsloe	B	-1160	S/M	16	Catherine	Pr	164
Easebourne	B/A	-1248	S/M	10	Mary	Pr	?
Polesworth	B	c1130	S/M	14	Editha	Ab	87
Sopwell	B	1140	E/M	19	Mary	Pr	40
Catesby	B/C	c1175	S/M	9	Mary & Edmund	Pr	132
Davington	B	1153	S/M	14	Mary Magdalene	Pr	41
Chester	B	c1140	S	13	Mary	Pr	66
Kington St M	B	-1155	S	10	Mary	Pr	25
Bungay	B	c1185	S/M	16	Mary & Holy Cross	Pr	61
Godstow	B	1133	R/F	17	Mary & John B	Ab	275
Yedingham	B	-1163	S/F	13	Mary	Pr	21
Malling	B	1080	E/M	11	Mary	Ab	218
Higham	B	1148	R/F	15	Mary	Pr	26
Handale	B/C	1133	S/M	10	Mary	Pr	13
Nunkeeling	B	1152	S/F	12	Mary & Helen	Pr	35
Thetford	B	c1160	E/M	2	George	Pr	40
Seaton	B	lt C12	S/M	2-3	Mary	Pr	12
Littlemore	B	-1154	S/M	7	Mary, Nich, Edm	Pr	33
Romsey	B	lt C11	R/M	18	Mary & Elfleda	Ab	395
Goring	A	midC12	S/M	36	BVM	Pr	60
Grace Dieu	A	c1239	S/F	16	Mary & Holy Trin	Pr	92
Campsea Ash	A	1195	S/M	19	Mary	Pr	200

Kirklees	C	-1138	S/M	8	BVM & James	Pr	19
Marham	C	-1249	S/F	15	M. Barbara, Edm	Ab	39
Llanllugan	C	-1236	S/M	3	?	Pr	22
Rosedale	C	-1158	S/M	8	Mary & Laurence	Pr	37
Esholt	C	C12	?	11	Mary & Leonard	Pr	13
Wykeham	C	c1153	E/M	14	Mary & Michael	Pr	25
Baysdale	C	c1162	S/M	12	Mary	Pr	20
Swine	C	-1153	S/M	9	Mary	Pr	82
Delapré	Cl	c1145	S/M	8	Mary	Ab	119
Aconbury	SJ	1237	S/F	15	John B	Pr	67
Chicksands	G	c1150	S/JT	18	Mary	Pr	212
Bullington	G	c1148	S/M	14	Mary	Pr	158

TABLE 6: <u>North and South Cloister Tabulations</u>

(total sample = 58)
(North = 17; South = 41)

PATRON

	Royal	Eccles	Secular	?
N cloister	4 23.5%	2 11.7%	8 47%	3 17.6%
S cloister	5 12.1%	5 12.1%	29 70.7%	1 2.4%

	Male	Female	Joint	?
N cloister	12 70.6%	2 11.8%	-	3 17.6%
S cloister	26 63.4%	9 21.9%	2 4.8%	2 4.8%

INMATES

	30+	20-30	10-20	5-10	-5
N cloister	3 17.6%	2 11.7%	8 47%	3 17.6%	1 5.8%
S cloister	3 7.3%	-	29 70.7%	7 17%	2 4.8%

VALUE

	£450+	£300-449	£200-300	£100-200
N cloister	1 5.8%	2 11.7%	1 5.8%	3 17.6%
S cloister	1 2.4%	1 2.4%	5 12.1%	5 12.1%

	£50-100	£25-50	£10-25	?
N cloister	4 23.5%	-	6 35.2%	-
S cloister	9 21.9%	11 26.8%	8 19.5%	1 2.4%

ORDER

	B	A	C	Cl	G	SJ	F
N cloister	9 52.9%	4 23.5%	1 5.8%	1 5.8%	1 5.8%	-	1 5.8%
S cloister	25 60.9%	3 7.3%	8 19.5%	1 2.4%	2 4.8%	1 2.4%	-

DEDICATION[5]

	Mary	Female St	Male St	?
N cloister	8 47%	5 29.4%	4 23.5%	
S cloister	21 51.2%	7.5 18.2%	11.5 28%	1 2.4%

5.Because the dedication of Marham was to Mary, Barbara and Edmund, 0.5 value has been given to the male and female saints' dedications.

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1   The Hovingham slab (N Yorks) , c800, represents one side of a slab- built
shrine. Depicted from left to right is the Annunciation, the dialogue between
Elizabeth and Mary, and the three Maries at the Sepulchre.

2   Hovingham slab: detail of the Annunciation. Gabriel, with his staff (left panel), appears to Mary while she sits spinning (right panel), with a distaff at her feet.
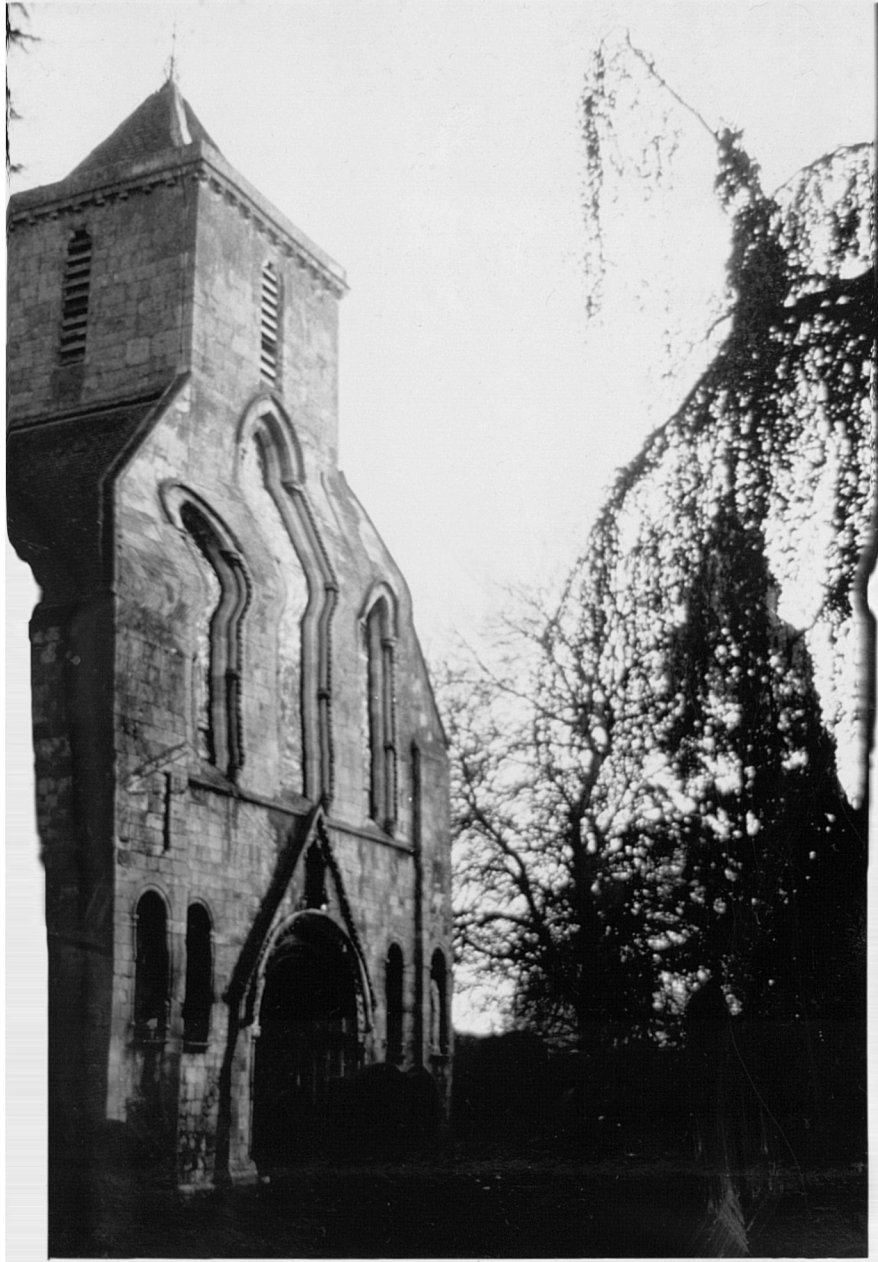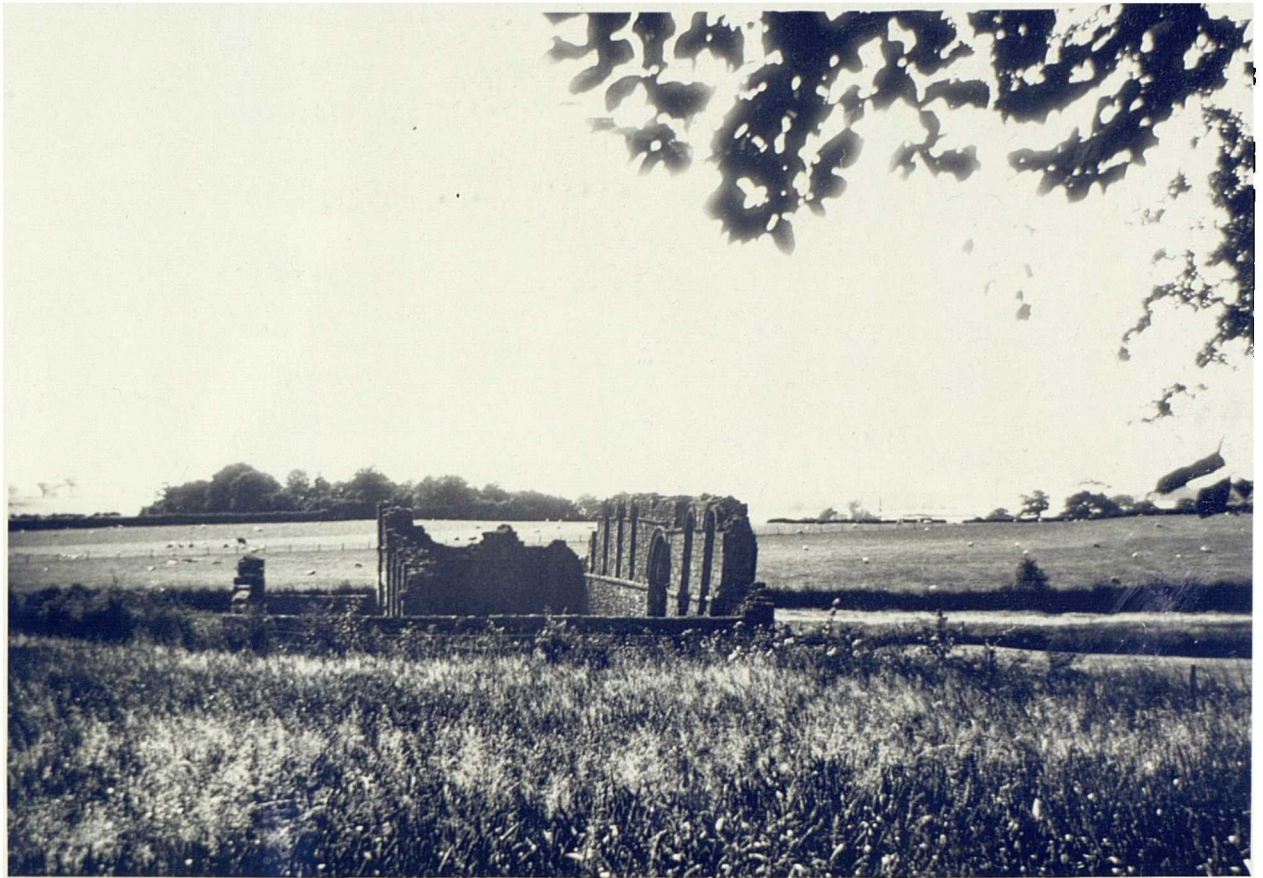
3   West front of Nun Monkton church (N Yorks): lower stage c1170, topped by a phase of c1220-40.

4   Excavations at Nun Appleton (N Yorks). Note water-holding base _in situ_ in foreground.

5   Nunkeeling ruined church (N Humbs). Detail of medieval nave arcade reset as chancel arch.

6   Brewood (Shrops) occupies a classic landscape situation for a medieval monastery, set in the side of a gently sloping valley.

7   Nun Monkton (N Yorks). Nunneries frequently shared close spatial relationships with villages. Nun Monkton village was arranged with the apex of its green at the gate of the nunnery precinct.

8   Bradford-on-Avon (Wilts) stone-built tithe barn. A rare example of a substantial arable based grange held by a nunnery (Shaftesbury, Dorset).

9   Sinnington grange (N Yorks). Located to the north of the parish church, this medieval hall was held by Yedingham Nunnery.

10 The hall at Sinnington retains fabric of the late twelfth century,
contemporary to Yedingham's possession of the church.

11 Nunburnholme (N Yorks) under covering of snow. A large rectangular enclosure
is bounded by ridge and furrow cultivation to the north, and a mass of smaller
buildings to the south. To the south-west, a smaller square enclsoure may be the
cloister.

12 Nun Appleton (N Yorks): a series of ditched enclosures may represent settlement predating the nunnery.

13 Wykeham (N Yorks): the large enclosures may relate to medieval stock-keeping, or to landscaping of the later park.

14   On the very edge of the North Yorkshire Moors, the site of Rosedale Nunnery retains a field of ridge and furrow cultivation to the south of the rebuilt church.

15   A patchwork of ridge and furrow fields is associated with Nun Appleton (N Yorks).

16 To the west of Swine church (N Humbs) may be seen fishponds, with a row of narrow rectangular platforms further north.

17 The south wall of the church at Aconbury (Herefords) retains corbel supports from the pentice roof of the cloister.

18 The free-standing cloister at Lacock (Wilts) was reused as the groundfloor
of the later house.

19 Interior of cloister at Lacock (Wilts): one of only two extant examples of
English nunnery cloisters (the other being Cambridge).

20 Usk church (Gwent). In the eastern face of the original crossing tower may
be seen the roof line of the demolished chancel, and the blocked archway to the
eastern arm of the nuns' church.

21 A corbel in the form of a female head marks the junction of the nave and choir at Nun Monkton (N Yorks).
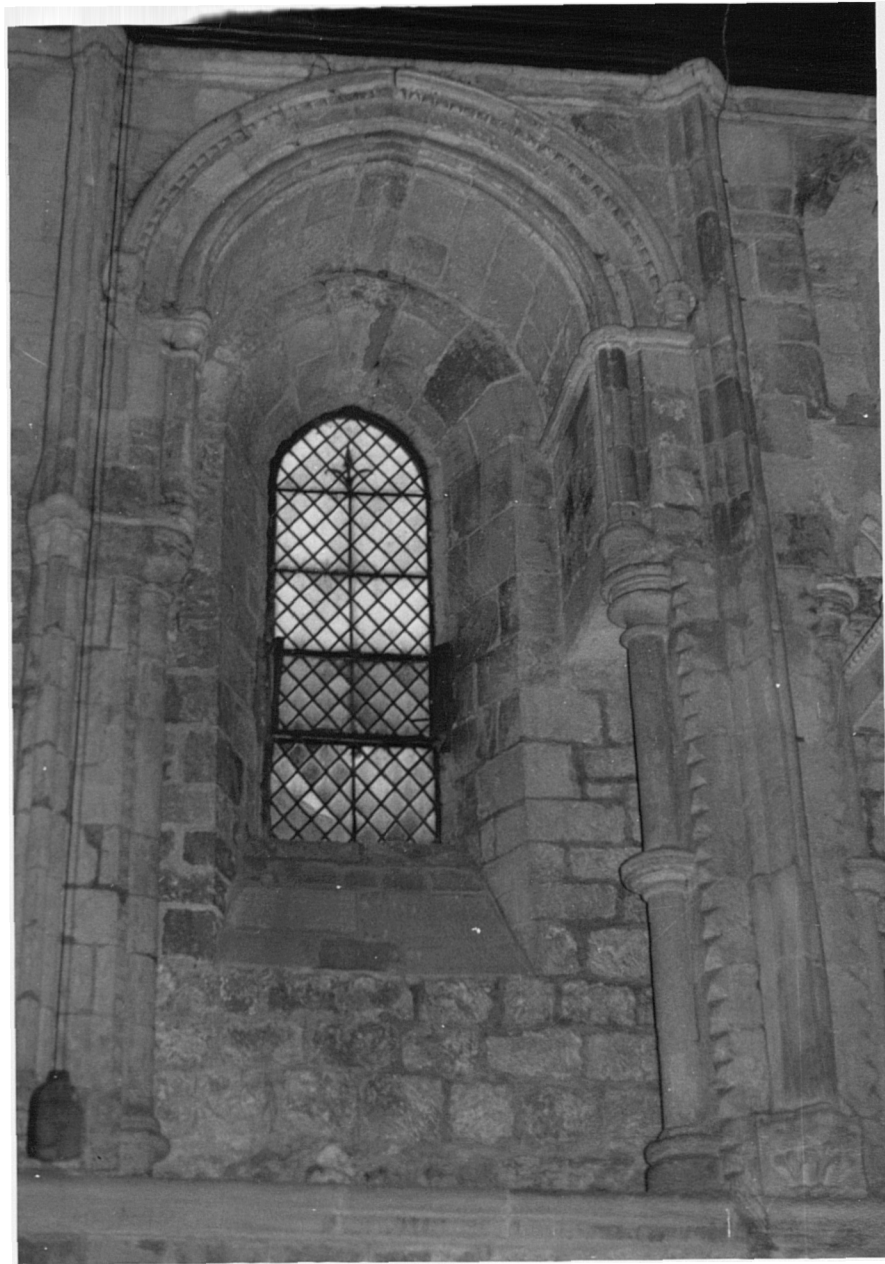
22 Nun Monkton (N Yorks): windows in the choir are distinguished by three attached shafts rising from corbels, with annulets; the double arch within the wall passage is decorated by well-spaced nailhead; the moulded stringcourse is continued from the outer wall into the window at the springing point of the arch.

23 The originally cruciform church of Swine (N Humbs), survives as a parallelogram with west tower (after demolition of western annexe and transepts).

24 Bishopsgate, London, where parallel aisle churches share a west front (nunnery north; parish south).
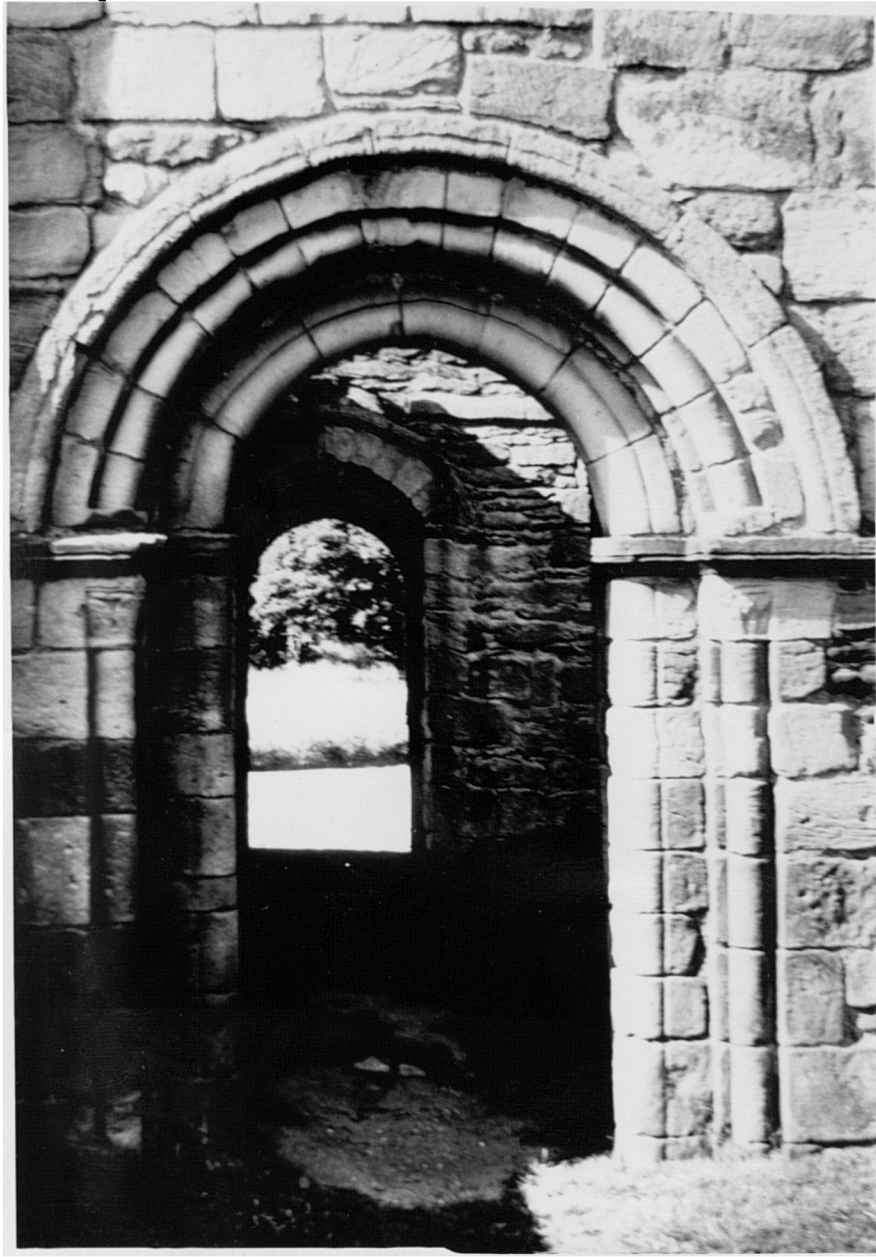
25 Blocked doorway from the east range to a gallery over the choir at Burnham (Berks).

26 Blocked doorway to a western gallery from the west range at Aconbury (Herefords).
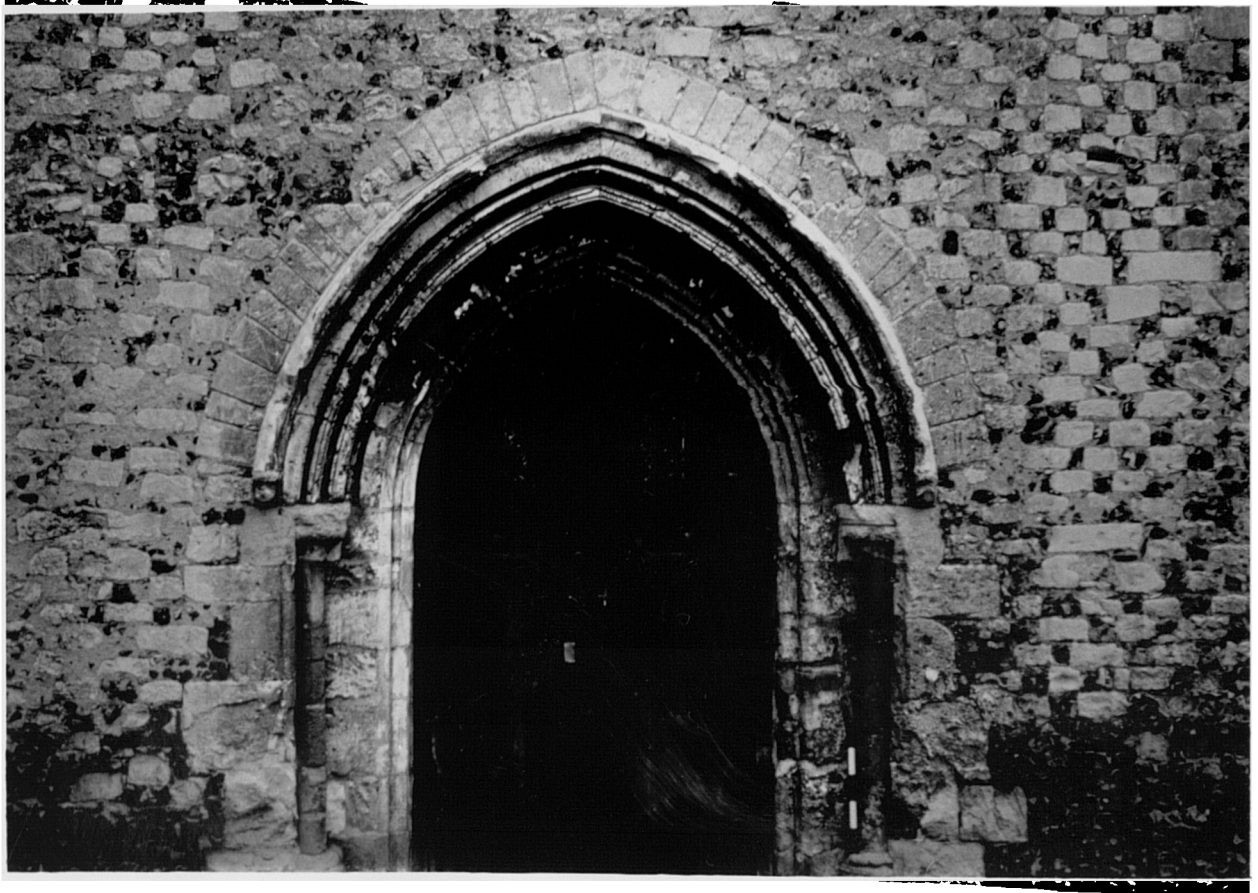
27 The rebuilt church at Marrick (N Yorks) retains evidence for a blocked
doorway in the east face of the tower, and a reset trefoil (possibly for
lighting a gallery) over the south door.

28 Entrance to the sacristy at Brewood (Shrops).

29 Blocked entrance from the precinct to the sacristy at Burnham (Berks).

30 Chapter-house entrance, Burnham.

31 East range Burnham: groundfloor sacristy, chapter-house, parlour and warming
house, with dormitory over.

32 Two-storey refectory at St Radegund's, Cambridge (Jesus College).

33 Remains of two-storey refectory at Burnham (junction of north and east ranges).

34 Burnham infirmary hall from north.

35 Burnham infirmary hall interior from east, with door to <u>reredorter</u>.

36 Godstow chapel (Oxfords): the structure was two-storeyed at its west end,
and abutted a structure to the north from which a squint allowed observation.

37 The church of St Radegund's, Cambridge, retains thirteenth century lancet
windows.

38 The fifteenth century porch at Usk (Gwent) was added to the parochial nave.

39 Godstow (Oxfords) from the west. Only the enclosure walls and chapel remain upstanding. The conduit may be seen in the centre of the photograph, around which _familiae_ ranges were aligned.

40 An extant buttress at Godstow, where the third range abutted the enclosure
wall to the outer court.

41 Wall-paintings at the Holy Sepulchre Chapel, Winchester Cathedral. These
twelfth/ thirteenth century scenes link the crowned Virgin to Easter scenes.

42 Quenington church (Gloucs): the northern tympanum is one of two earliest
English depictions of the Coronation of the Virgin (c1150).

43 Lacock (Wilts) _agnus dei_ corbel in sacristy.

44 Nun Monkton (N Yorks) west front image niche: statue of a female saint or virtue.

45   Lacock (Wilts) corbel in the form of a male head.