



NUI MAYNOOTH

Oifscóil na hÉireann Mhá Nuad

**A monastic landscape:
The Cistercians in medieval Leinster**

by

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This study endeavours to discuss the Cistercian monasteries of Leinster with regard to their physical location in the landscape, the agricultural contribution of the monks to the broader social and economic world and the interaction between the cloistered monks and the secular world. The various lands granted to the Leinster houses are identified, discussed, and where possible mapped. This theme is the subject of three different chapters. The lands at foundation are examined then the additional grants and privileges included. The seventh chapter investigates the dissolution of the religious houses. The extents of the monastic possessions that were drawn up at this time permitted a detailed examination of the lands held by the Leinster houses. This chapter also provides a template for a study of the physical, economic and agricultural state of the monasteries. The main overall findings of the thesis relate to the uses and makeup of the Cistercian lands in addition to the situation of these monasteries in the landscape of Leinster. All monasteries of the order in Leinster were found to be situated in close proximity to road and other route ways in addition to territorial and physical boundaries. At dissolution the land of the Cistercians was overwhelmingly under arable cultivation with a figure of 84% arrived at which compares to 72% for lands outside Leinster and 82% for all monasteries recorded in the extents. On the whole the monasteries of Leinster were found to have been in a good state of

repair and were still in production in the mid sixteenth century. It is also stated that the total acreage of the Cistercians in medieval Ireland was in excess of 500,000 statute acres. Perhaps significantly the situation with regard to the Cistercian order post dissolution was discussed in the final chapter. It is clear that the Cistercians maintained a presence in Ireland throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries until the Order was re-established

This work is dedicated to
My grandparents,
Joe, Ellen, Dick and Stasia
who are always with me.

And to my family and friends who have given me so much.

'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work...and he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.'¹

¹ John 4, 34, 36.

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Abbreviations:

- AC *Annals of Connacht, A.D. 1224-1544*, ed. A.M. Freeman (Dublin, 1944, repr. 1996)
- AI *Annals of Inisfallen*, ed. and trans. Seán Mac Airt (Dublin, 1951)
- Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske charters'
Butler, Constance and Bernard, John, 'The charters of the Cistercian Abbey of Duiske in the county of Kilkenny', *R.I.A. Proc.*, 35 C (1918-20) pp 1-188
- Cal. docs. Ire.* *Calendar of documents, relating to Ireland, 1171-1307*, ed. H.S. Sweetman (5 vols, London, 1875-86)
- Carrigan, Ossory Carrigan, William, *The history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory* (4 vols, Dublin, 1905)
- Clyne, Kells Priory *Kells Priory, Co. Kilkenny: archaeological excavations by T. Fanning and M. Clyne* (Archaeological Monograph series: 3, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin, 2007)
- I.H.S. *Irish Historical Studies*
- Ir. Monastic possessions* *Extents of Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541*, ed. N.B. White (Dublin, 1943)
- Irish Fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*
Irish Fiants of the Tudor sovereigns during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary, and Elizabeth I (4 vols, Edmund Burke, Dublin, 1994)
- J.R.S.A.I. *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*
- N.L.I. National Library of Ireland
- O.K.R. *Old Kilkenny Review*
- Ormond deeds* *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. Edmund Curtis (6 vols, Dublin, 1932-43)
- R.I.A. Proc.* *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*
- Statuta* *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*, ed. Joseph Canivez (8 vols, Louvain, 1933-41)
- Townland index* *General alphabetical index to the townlands and towns, parishes and baronies of Ireland.* (Dublin, 1861, repr., Baltimore, MD, 1995)

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Review of the major sources

The Annals

The various Irish Annals consulted were an essential source, but as always, must be used with caution, as they were not necessarily compiled contemporaneously with the events recorded. The use of the annals in this thesis was in relation to references of famine, plague, diseases etc. and the entries were plentiful. The entries in the 1951 edition of the *Annals of Inishfallen* edited and translated by Seán Mac Airt, end in the early fourteenth century, and as such, were of limited use here. The *Annals of Connacht* edited by A.M. Freeman, the second edition of which was published in 1996 provided many references for this topic but the same could not be said for the *Annals of Ulster* as the record ends prior to the necessary time period. In 2007 the edition of the *Annals of Ireland: by Friar John Clyn*, which was edited and translated by Bernadette Williams, was published. This edition provided many references, particularly in relation to the arrival of the Black Death, occurrences of disease in animals and fluctuations in market prices. On the whole the Annals were of great value to this work but only because of the time period covered in the thesis. If the fifteenth century was the relevant period the Annals would not have proven to be so helpful.

Papal letters

The lack of references to specific events in the many volumes of the Papal letters was somewhat surprising and as such, although consulted, they do not appear among the many footnotes.

Ormond deeds and Duiske charters

These two sources may be discussed together as much of the information contained in 'The charters of the Cistercian Abbey of Duiske in the county of Kilkenny' published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* in 1918 and compiled by Constance Butler and John Bernard comes from the Ormond Deeds. The charters of Duiske provide an unparalleled image of the foundation and make-up of a Cistercian monastery in Leinster certainly, and probably in the whole of Ireland. The detail offers a glimpse of the template which all monasteries probably followed in relation to choosing a site to settle and beginning the construction and expansion of the monastery and lands. From the charters much information about the impact of the economic and social changes of the period on this particular monastery can also be ascertained.

The six volumes of the *Calendar of Ormond Deeds* were edited by Edmund Curtis and published in 1932-43. This is a vital starting and reference point for any Kilkenny, or Ormond, based study of the medieval period. Without the deeds it is probably certain that the foundation charter of Killenny Abbey would never have survived and the same may be said for much of the contents. This

source is almost as valuable for what is not listed as for what is and the few references that exist for Jerpoint, Kilenny and Kilcooley Abbeys in the period between foundation and dissolution are to be found almost exclusively in the Ormond Deeds. The problem, of course, is that if the monastery did not come into the possession of the earls of Ormond until after dissolution then the records of that monastery will not be contained within and it is only the documents that were still extant in the sixteenth century that will be listed in the calendar.

Calendar of documents relating to Ireland

The *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1171-1307*, edited by H.S. Sweetman and published in five volumes in London between 1875-86, was of great use. The main chapter where this source was utilised was in chapter six which dealt with the economic and social life of the fourteenth century. From the calendar national events and trends could be used to make sense of local events and many times the Cistercian houses were mentioned in relation to trade, visitations and other social functions. The volume of entries is perhaps prohibitive but overall this was a very useful source and one that was consulted many times.

Letters of Stephen of Lexington

The only major source that deals with the Irish Cistercians during the thirteenth century are Stephen of Lexington's *Letters from Ireland, 1228-1229*. These letters were edited by B.W. O'Dwyer and published in 1982.¹ The letters of Stephen of Lexington, abbot of Stanley, sent to Ireland by the General Chapter of the Order have an important place as a source. These letters were written in the last years of the period known as the 'Mellifont Conspiracy' which ran from 1216 to 1228. When dealing with the events of the conspiracy the letters are totally biased in favour of the Anglo-Norman houses but they do record various items that are relevant to this study. Stephen's account of his visit is, in many cases, the only reference to a particular Cistercian house in the thirteenth century. Particularly important information is contained in letter eighty which deals with a monastery, which could be either Jerpoint Abbey or Duiske Abbey, while it is generally accepted that the letter refers to Jerpoint it is important to note the possibility that it may relate to Duiske.

While not used as a major source in this paper the *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*, edited by Joseph Canivez and published in eight volumes in Louvain in 1933-4, was utilised for two reasons. The first use of this text was in relation to the period covering the Mellifont Conspiracy and secondly in relation to the post dissolution situation. The use of the volumes is somewhat limited as it was never translated from Latin. However, in any study of Irish

¹ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters from Ireland, 1228-1229*, ed. B.W. O'Dwyer (Michigan, 1982)

Cistercian history from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, this must be an essential source. In many situations the fact that a monastery was listed in the proceedings is of significance.

Dissolution extents

This thesis could never have even begun without the 1943 edition of the *Extents of Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541*, which was edited by N.B. White. The detail and extent of the publication is an absolutely essential source for any study of monasticism in medieval Ireland. In this particular case chapter seven depends principally on the contents of this edition and the fact that the Leinster houses were so well surveyed was what initially led to that province forming the core of the study. It is this source also that facilitated the breakdown of land type and as such allowed us to develop a deeper understanding of the role that the Cistercians played in agriculture and land ownership. This volume also allowed an insight into the physical remains of the monasteries at dissolution to be gleaned and also provided information on the activities of various Irish families.

Of course, as a source, it is not without fault, and from the entries in the *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns*, particularly under the records from the reign of Elizabeth I, one finds many possessions which were not listed in the extents taken at dissolution. The other main problem is that the survey did not cover the entire country and as such every monastery is not recorded.

Fiants of the Tudor sovereigns

The *Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns* proved to be an invaluable source in relation to the land question. Although the published fiants cover the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip and Mary and Elizabeth I, only those relating to Henry and Elizabeth were utilised extensively.

While a separate index appears for each sovereign it is very difficult to determine exactly the references to each monastery. The best way to ensure all references to a particular monastery is found is to read the entire text and while this is very laborious at least all placenames associated with the relevant houses can be determined.

The main strength of this text as a source in this context was two fold. The contents listed under Henry VIII could be used to support the information found in the *Extents of Irish monastic possessions* while those listed under Elizabeth indicated what was not listed in the *extents*.

Post-dissolution

Two main sources apply to this period. The *Wadding papers, 1614-38* edited by Brendan Jennings and published in 1953, provides a tantalising glimpse into the post-dissolution period. The publication contains names of abbots of Irish houses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries along with references to Cistercian abbots who were raised to the level of bishop. The main

problem is that it is just a glimpse and very little additional information is contained within this source. However when used in conjunction with the *Triumphalia chronologica monasterii Sanctae Crucis in Hibernia* edited and translated by Denis Murphy its use is strengthened somewhat. The *Triumphalia* covers the entire period of the Cistercian involvement in Ireland up to the seventeenth century but its greatest accuracy and strength lies in the post-dissolution period. In all these, and the *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*, or decisions of the General Chapter, provide the framework for the study of the period from the mid sixteenth century. The biggest problem is that two of the sources remain predominantly in Latin and the use of each individual source is limited.

Cartographic evidence

Maps appear in the closing section of this thesis but are referred to in the three chapters that deal with land use. The main maps used are the 1950s townland maps printed by the Ordnance Survey. The reason that these particular maps were used lies in the fact that the townland boundaries are marked. While this enabled a more accurate image of the land holding of the Irish Cistercians to emerge perhaps ironically this is also the greatest weakness of the source. The weakness is due to the scale, necessary to show the townlands, but meant that pages overlapped in many cases. The land holdings from some

monasteries were spread over four or five maps and this was unhelpful when trying to present the images to the reader.

William Petty's *Hiberniae Delineatio* was also used. While these Petty maps did not appear in the thesis their main use was in relation to townland names, where particular names appear on these seventeenth century maps but the placename has been lost in the interim and as such could not be located on the 1950s maps. As the Petty maps did not show the townland boundaries their use in this study was limited.

Introduction

This thesis is primarily a study of the various aspects of the use and situation of the land which the Cistercian order held in medieval Leinster. A number of key topics will form the central elements of this dissertation. These include an examination of the physical landscape into which the Cistercian order settled and the changes which occurred within that landscape during the later medieval era. It is proposed to try to determine whether the location of the monasteries indicates any underlying nuances or were the monks happy to settle wherever they were given land. The involvement of the Cistercian order in the agricultural and economic life of Leinster is also an area of interest. It is hoped to try to determine a breakdown of the acreage and land type that the monasteries possessed. The final element is to determine the state of the monasteries immediately prior to the dissolution of the religious houses in the period 1536-41. The areas of interest here are in relation to the physical remains of the monasteries, the productivity or otherwise of the associated lands, the organisation and location of that land and the general attitude of the Cistercian monks at that particular time in history.

There are many different areas of study that need to be examined. These include the identification of the lands, the land type and trends or differences in this type when compared with other parts of the country. The organisation of the land and the uses of it in relation to the monastery must be an essential

aspect of the work and it may be possible to identify economic and social change when the uses of the land are discussed. The identification of granges and grange buildings was not originally intended as part of this work, however, research has allowed some evidence to emerge in relation to these buildings and is included.

In relation to the approach, it is necessary to include a short chapter outlining the origins of monasticism and the emergence of the Cistercian Order. A brief outline of the governing rules of the Cistercians is included in chapter one as is a short discussion on the spread of the order up to its arrival in Ireland. The second chapter is merely intended to give an idea of the pattern of the distribution of the Cistercian monasteries in Ireland. Most of the information is in table form giving the monastery, its location, date of foundation and founder. From this a number of observations will be made. The principal area of study is Leinster, therefore chapter three will deal with this territory, discussing its boundaries, both internal and external and the kingdoms which made up medieval Leinster. For this particular study, the kingdom of Meath will be included and the reasons for its inclusion will be made clear.

The fact that the monasteries of Leinster were situated in very well defined territories means that although the study is of Leinster as a whole these smaller, somewhat independent units were still an important element in both the landscape and the social framework of the period. As such, it will be necessary to ensure that each of these units is represented in any category of study this

means that a balanced view of the types and uses of the lands should emerge and it should become clear whether these internal boundaries of Leinster held any importance during the medieval period.

The location of the monasteries will be the focus of the second portion of chapter three. Both the natural and man made features of the landscape will be examined here. The proximity of road and route ways to the monasteries will be mapped and discussed and any trends or patterns commented upon

Chapter four will deal with the monastic complex and the expected associated features. It will discuss the way in which the monastery and its lands were organised and the reasons for this. This chapter will deal more with the day to day requirements of the monks and should indicate how both the land and the buildings within the complex were equally important and key elements in the functioning of the monasteries.

Following from chapter four, and keeping earlier comments in mind, the next portion of the work will deal with other land that particular monasteries may have held at any time from foundation up to the time when the extents of the monastic possessions were drawn up. Instead of looking at each monastery individually, it has been decided to take one monastery from each of the earlier territories within Leinster and allow this to be representative of that kingdom. By doing this, it will negate the need for a long and tedious list of locations and instead, will allow a clear and concise image of the activity within the territories to emerge. It is hoped that this will show any trends which may be evident. At

completion it should also become clear when the period of peak land ownership in Leinster lay. The reasons for the decline in greatest ownership will be examined in chapter six. This chapter will also include a detailed analysis of the economic and social conditions and changes of the period, the types of practices which would have impacted on the Cistercians and the overall situation which the monks would have faced in the medieval period.

It is felt that, as the main focus of the study is land and its uses the seventh chapter will deal with the period in the sixteenth century which encompasses the dissolution of the religious houses. Chapter seven then will allow a picture of the situation, amount, type and productivity or otherwise of the land held by the Cistercians in Leinster to emerge. Any relevant trends will be identified and comparisons made between the monasteries of Leinster and other parts of the country.

In order to complete this study of aspects of land ownership of the Cistercian order in medieval Ireland, the fate of the lands after the monasteries were dissolved must be discussed. Chapter eight will deal with this question, and will also briefly comment on the fortunes of the monks and the Order in post sixteenth-century Ireland.

The study of the medieval religious orders in Ireland has primarily concentrated on their history and architectural remains. The Irish monasteries do not have comparable works such as their English and Welsh counterparts with excellent studies carried out by persons such as James Bond, Colin Platt,

Mick Aston and David Williams. The latter has published extensively on the Welsh Cistercians discussing their land holdings, systems of organisation and agricultural production to mention just a few areas while Platt's work in relation to the monastic grange and its production is invaluable.

In Ireland the examination of the monasteries and their situation in the landscape is a newer study, one which was pioneered by Colmcille Conway through his various articles and books. With the publication of their study in 1918 Butler and Bernard made available the texts that facilitated a more in depth consideration of the monasteries of Duiske and Killenny and, to a lesser extent, Jerpoint. In the same way the monastic registers of St Mary's Abbey and its daughter house of Dunbrody, published through the Irish manuscripts commission, facilitated additional study of those two houses. Save for these and N.B. White's edition of the *Irish monastic and Episcopal deeds* and the *extents of the Irish monastic possessions* few other publications are available to aid the researcher in this area. The extents are probably the most useful source for this study in that they cover a larger area than that confined to the other sources listed above.

However, while these sources have been available for some time little use has been made of them. As mentioned above Colmcille Conway's work has, for a long period been the only real study of the Cistercian Order in Ireland but this certainly does not exclusively deal with land holding. Geraldine Carville through her study of the impact of the Cistercians on the landscape has also contributed to the area of study. Of particular importance is the work of Anngret

Simms, especially in relation to her paper outlining the workings of the monastic estate at Duleek, published in *studies presented in honour of F.X. Martin*. Two more recent historians have also contributed greatly to the general subject in the guise of Billy Colfer and Arlene Hogan. While Colfer's work on land holding in Wexford during the medieval period included a more in depth look at the Cistercian lands in that county, greater relevance to the functioning and organisation of the monastic estates is to be found in Hogan's publication. This book published recently, details the Irish element of the lands, patronage and politics associated with the priory of Llanthony Prima and Secunda during the period 1172-1541 and fills a void which existed within published material on this particular topic.

The present composition endeavours to contribute to these works by examining the Cistercian monasteries and their situation in the landscape of Leinster. The impact of that landscape on the working of the monastery, the effects of the monks on the landscape, along with the broader social and economic world within which the monks of medieval Ireland lived will all be presented.

Chapter 1

Foundation and early development of the Cistercian Order

Having thus 'put off the old man', they rejoiced in having 'put on the new'.¹

It is necessary to begin the study of a monastic order by first briefly examining the origins of, and reasons, for monasticism. It has been stated that 'the attraction of monasticism grew in proportion to political and social disorder'.² While this is true, it is probably an oversimplification of a complex and very personal journey in faith of each individual. In the fourth century, this gave rise to the hermit movement in Egypt and the monastic life soon spread from Egypt to Palestine.

St Paul, known also as Paul the Hermit is generally accepted as the first Christian hermit. Paul, after seeking a temporary refuge in the desert of Thebes decided to live the remainder of his life there. Paul lived for the next ninety-eight years in a cave near a date tree and a well.³ St Anthony the Great, or Anthony abbot was born in Upper Egypt into a noble and Christian family. As the future saint turned eighteen he divested himself of all his worldly goods and went into the desert to join with hermits already there. For the next twenty years

¹ *Exordium parvum* Chapter xv 4. In reference to the founders of the Cistercian Order.

² Norman Davies, *Europe a history* (New York, 1996), p. 266

³ Donald Attwater and C. R. John, *The Penguin book of Saints* (London, 1995), 3rd ed., p278; George Ferguson, *Signs and symbols in Christian art*, (New York, 1954), p. 138.

Anthony practised self-denial and spiritual growth as he lived alone in a cave near the river Nile. Anthony is regarded as the father of Christian monasticism.⁴

St Pachomius was a fellow-countryman of St Anthony and he is also regarded as another father of monasticism. While the life of Anthony was filled with asceticism, praying and fasting and was essentially the life of a hermit, Pachomius founded monasteries. Pachomius had been a soldier and in the 320s he founded monasteries on the banks of the Nile. Hundreds of monks lived in these monasteries.⁵ The brethren had to be literate, sensibly restrained in their self-denial and willing to engage in manual labour. The monasteries were rigidly organised and were surrounded by high walls.⁶ In the following century the desert became unsafe for the monks because of the activities of bandits and raiders therefore many of the hermits, monks and nuns moved to the north into Palestine and Syria.⁷ John Cassian was one of these hermits associated with the monasteries founded by St Pachomius. John Cassian founded monasteries near Marseille and committed his memories of the lives of the saints and the conversations of the desert fathers to the written word.⁸

About the year 410, a man named Honoratus was so inspired when he came in contact with a reading of the life of St Anthony that he founded the

⁴ Ibid.; David Edwards, *Christianity the first two thousand years* (London, 1997), p. 63.

⁵ Edwards, *Christianity*, p. 63.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p. 64.

monastery of Lérins. The monastery was situated on the island of the same name looking onto the coast of the French Riviera.⁹

Constantine the Great proved to be the link that would bind the Church and the Roman Empire. Through the influence of Constantine, Christianity became the seed for a new Mediterranean civilisation. This civilisation would spread from Spain to Palestine under the control of the Roman Emperor. As some elements of the Roman Empire were falling into decline, Constantine sought to reverse this decline through the institutions of Christianity.¹⁰ In 325, Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in order to define the divinity of Christ and the Trinity. Theodosius the Great convened another council at Constantinople in 381. From this gathering, a creed emerged and the council declared faith in 'one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church'.¹¹ Following this agreement Theodosius gradually forbade all pagan sacrificial worship and all assemblies of Christian heretics.¹² Pagan temples were closed and subsequently destroyed by order of Theodosius.

It was through such actions that the Roman emperors established themselves as defenders of orthodoxy. From the early fourth century onwards, a power struggle existed between religious and political hierarchies that used Christianity as a reason for this split. During this time also, a Christian form of monasticism developed under the rule of Constantine. Circa 395 the Roman and

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Jean-François Leroux-Dhuys, *Cistercian Abbeys; history and architecture* (Paris, 1998), p. 13.

Byzantine empires split. This impacted hugely on the West. With the addition of the Gaelic culture to the Pax Romana a new Christian religion emerged. Throughout this period, many changes in architecture may be identified.

Although the idea of Christian monasticism originated in the fourth century, the greatest influence on the development of European monasticism came with Benedict of Nursia. Benedict was born into an upper class family around the year 480 and was well educated. It would appear that Benedict was more inclined for the life of a hermit, and it was as a result of this inclination that he founded a hermitage at Subiaco. The life at Subiaco was not what he desired so he instituted a group of anchorites. Benedict utilised the important and symbolic figure of twelve in the organisation of his community and established twelve houses of twelve monks. In 529, this community transferred to the new monastery of Monte Cassino.¹³ (Figure 1)

Soon after the foundation of this famous monastery, in 534, Benedict formulated the monastic rule that would be the foundation for monastic observance from the sixth century to the present day. This rule known throughout history as the Rule of St Benedict was based principally on the teachings of the bible and it expounds the monastic life. The rule reaffirms the ideals of the fourth-century Basil of Cesarea - that through a community, ordinary monks can pray and obtain salvation together.

¹¹ Edwards, *Christianity*, p. 101.

¹² Ibid.

The principal vows of the Benedictines, those of obedience and moral conversion follow on from this ideal. In addition to those vows, the rule of St. Benedict enshrines the vows of silence and manual labour. Therefore, the monk devotes himself to the *lectio Divinia* – spiritual reading and the *opus Dei* – the work of God. At about the same time, as Benedict was drawing up the rule, Sister Scholastica, his twin sister, founded female monasticism while St. Columbanus founded the monasteries of Luxeuil in central Europe and Bobbio in Lombard.¹⁴ The proximity to Rome of the latter monastery is especially worthy of note, as is the rule which he established, a rule which, but for its severity, may have surpassed the use of Benedict's rule.¹⁵

The organisation of the Benedictine monastery gave rise to a new form of monasticism – the monastery would not be dependant on any other, save its own abbot and therefore the monastery is to be regarded as an independent unit. In the early days the Benedictine monasteries were small and compact units of up to twenty monks, they were self sufficient as far as possible and did not engage in general society.¹⁶ Over time, the monasteries grew into large complexes with many ancillary buildings. Each monastery had its own building for the monks, the novices and the elderly, a guesthouse and quarters for the work force and servants. In Germany and France, each monastery became what could be termed

¹³ Leroux-Dhuys, *Cistercian Abbeys*, p. 14.

¹⁴ Clare Stancliffe, 'Jonas's life of Columbanus and his disciples' in John Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain (eds), *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and scholars* (Dublin, 2001), pp 189-220 at p. 189.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

a civic centre which supported a large population. In many cases, the monastery would house relics which led to numerous visitors and this in turn enabled the surrounding town to grow.¹⁷

One of the main ideals of St Benedict was self-sufficiency through manual labour. However, as the monasteries and towns grew manual labour was cast aside and the monks became traders and landowners. Many of the Benedictine monks became disillusioned and from this disillusionment sprang reform. Four main reform orders of the Benedictines will be discussed here.

Around the year 1105, St Vital of Mortain and his companions founded the monastery of Savigny in the forest of the same name in the diocese of Avranches. Savigny became the head house of a group of monasteries officially known as the congregation of Savigny in the order of Tiron. The order followed the rule of St Benedict and the monks wore a grey habit. The congregation of Savigny was assimilated into the Cistercian order in 1147-48.

St Bernard of Tiron was a Benedictine abbot, a preacher and on occasion a hermit. St Bernard was abbot of the monastery of St Cyprian de Poitiers from c. 1202-1205 when he and members of the community left that monastery and settled in the forest at Savigny. After a time Bernard and his companions travelled to Tiron and established what would become the head house of a large order. The order originally included Savigny and the other reforms founded

¹⁶ Uinseann O'Maidín, lecture given at Jerpoint Abbey September 2002.

¹⁷ Ibid.

from both orders. In 1147 when the houses of Savigny became Cistercian, those of Tiron continued as an independent order.

The order of Cluny was founded in 910 by Guillaume le Pieux count of Auvergne. St Berno was the first abbot of Cluny Abbey. St Berno insisted on the strict observance of the Benedictine rule. He brought in many reforms and Cluny became well-known for services of inhumane length. One of the greatest legacies of the Cluniac order was the introduction of the idea that the abbot had authority over all the daughter houses, which were founded, or co-opted, from his house. This was in effect the first monastic order. (Figure 2)

In the year 1098, Robert, the abbot of Molesme, became disillusioned with life in his monastery and sought to reform monasticism by returning to the original ideals of St Benedict as stated in his Rule. Robert and a group of twenty-one monks from Molesme, settled in the diocese of Chalons, in an area of marshland upon which they built a simple wooden monastery which would become the mother house of hundreds of monasteries across medieval Europe. The order would take its name from the area in which this first house was established, that of Cîteaux or in Latin Cistercium. The legal and symbolic date of the foundation of the Cistercian order is 21 March 1098 - St Benedict's day.¹⁸

The order experienced its first crisis when the Pope decreed that Robert should return to the monastery of Molesme. In August 1099 Alberic, who had been a member of the community at Molesme replaced Robert as abbot. From

this time onwards, the monks began to reclaim the marshlands of Cîteaux and restored the monastic balance of *lectio Divinia* and *opus Dei*. Pope Paschal II granted 'Roman privilege' to the novum, thus the abbey was placed under the direct protection of the Holy See without being removed from Episcopal jurisdiction; this probably dates from 19 Oct. 1100.¹⁹ About 1101, the monks moved from the original site to where the monastery still stands today because of a donation of new land made by Odo I, duke of Burgundy. In return for his patronage, the monks agreed to bury Odo in the abbey church.

In January 1109, the Englishman Stephen Harding replaced Alberic as abbot. Stephen's abbacy was vital for a number of reasons. Stephen decided to encourage and accept donations and as a result of this Cîteaux obtained fifty major donations between 1109 and 1119.²⁰ These land grants formed an extensive domain for Cîteaux and because of this, Stephen realised that the monks could not fulfil the dual vows of self sufficiency and the *lectio Divinia*, therefore he introduced the concept of lay brothers into the community. These men were largely uneducated and while they were treated as full members of the monastic community, it was the lay brothers who engaged in most of the manual labour. The best record of the introduction of these men is preserved in Chapter xv of the *Exordium Parvum*:

¹⁸ Leroux-Dhuys, *Cistercian abbeys*, p. 25.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

They decided therefore to receive, with the bishop's permission, bearded lay brothers, whom they would treat as themselves in life as in death – the status of monk excepted – and also hired men, for they did not see otherwise how they could observe fully, day and night, the precepts of the Rule.²¹

The Exordium also states that the monks would accept land, vineyards, meadows, forests, and streams where they could build mills, and house horses and other types of animals all solely for their own use in isolated places, away from human habitation.²² The document also discusses the establishment and organisation of the Cistercian granges where it states:

And since they had set up farmsteads here and there for cultivation of the land, they decided that the aforesaid lay brothers, rather than the monks, should administer these farms, because monks, according to the Rule, should live within their cloister.²³

The lay brothers will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter of this work.

The second major achievement of Stephen's abbacy was the writing of the Carta Caritatis 'the Charter of Divine Love'. The Carta Caritatis along with the Rule of St Benedict became the governing legislation of the order. One of the main elements of the charter is the principle of the founding of daughter houses and the annual visitation of the daughter houses by their mother house. In this legislative text, one also finds the framework for the annual General Chapter which was to be held each year at Cîteaux. At the same time Stephen wrote the Exordium Cisterciensis Coenobii in order to record the foundation of the Cistercians and the ideals of the founders. The Carta Caritatis was approved in

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Sept. 1119 by the first official gathering of the General Chapter. On 23 Dec. in the same year, the Pope Calixtus II, was given the text of both the Carta Caritatis and the Exordium Cisterciensis Coenobii. With the Pope's issuing of the bull Ad hoc in apostolici, the Cistercians as an Order, or the Order of Cîteaux was officially born.²⁴

The last of what may be termed the 'Founding Fathers' was Bernard of Fontaine better known to history as St Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard joined the Cistercian Order in 1113 as a novice together with four of his brothers, his uncle and some friends.²⁵ Soon after the arrival of these men Abbot Stephen was faced with a problem - too many monks were now in the monastery of Cîteaux. The decision was taken to establish daughter houses and four were founded between 1113 and 1115. These four - La Fertè, Pontigny, Clairvaux and Morimond would be known in documents throughout the medieval period as 'the four main daughter houses'. It was at this time in the early development of the Order that Stephen wrote the Carta Caritatis. Bernard was the founding abbot of the new monastery of Clairvaux.

Of the four reforms, only the Cistercians flourished. Although only founded in 1098, over 350 houses had already been established across Europe by 1153. The question therefore must be asked, why did the Cistercian order flourish while the other three reforms of the Benedictines did not. It would

²⁴ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

appear that the governing legislation of the Cistercians allowed the order to grow, expand and develop without undermining the overall organisation. It was because the Cistercians adopted change, embraced it, and grew as a result of changes that it was able to maintain its status in the medieval period. The three fundamental elements necessary for a foundation - human skill and labour, materials and patronage were not lacking within the Cistercian Order.

Intimately connected with the arrival of the Cistercians is the reform of the Church in Ireland. The beginnings of this reform coincided with the arrival of the Scandinavian adventurers better known as the Vikings. These Hiberno-Scandinavians were instrumental in the establishment of many cities in Ireland and during this same period many Irish monasteries were administered by lay people and a growing secularisation developed.²⁶ This secularisation probably reached its zenith in the early eleventh century when the Viking king of Dublin Sitric Silkenbeard went on pilgrimage to Rome. It is important to note here that Sitric was grandson of the King of Leinster and was married to the daughter of Brian Bóruma, testimony to the many alliances which were in place among the two peoples. Upon his return he established a bishopric in Dublin with Dúnán becoming its first bishop. He was succeeded, upon his death in 1074, by Patrick.²⁷ Bishop Patrick had been trained as a monk at Worcester and was consecrated at Canterbury.

²⁶ A.J. Otway-Ruthven, *A history of medieval Ireland* (London, 1968), p. 37.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

The arrival of Bishop Patrick in Ireland was important, because he brought with him, letters from Archbishop Lanfranc to the kings of Dublin and Munster. The king of Munster in this period was also the High King with opposition – Turlough O'Briain grandson of Brian Bóruma.²⁸ Lanfranc, in his letter to Turlough, requested that he reform abuses in Ireland by convening a Synod of the bishops and religious men.²⁹ While nothing seems to have happened immediately, the seed of reform was sown. This seed was nurtured by the consecration of such men as bishop Maol Muire Ua Dunáin bishop of Meath, Domnall Ua hÉnna bishop of Munster and Malchus first bishop of Waterford, the consecration of the latter was ensured by the active support of Ua Briain.

Maol Muire Ua Dunáin presided over the first Synod of Cashel in 1101. In this year Maol Muire was papal legate of Pope Paschal II.³⁰ It was during this Synod that Muirchertach Ua Briain gave Cashel to the church. Whether this was a cunning plan on the part of Muirchertach or not is unclear today but within ten years Cashel would be the seat of an archbishopric.³¹ The counterpart of Cashel would be Armagh in the north of the country, where Murchertach's forefather, the famous Brian Bóruma had placed gold as an offering on the high altar. It was while in Armagh that Brian was entered into the *Book of Armagh* as 'Emperor of the Irish'. At this first Synod of Cashel eight decrees were passed. The first was in relation to simony, the second to the payment of rent and/or tribute, the third

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

to the abuse of lay interference with ecclesiastical property and jurisdiction. The fifth decree stated that 'no urenagh of a church in Ireland should have a wife' while the sixth relates to the right of sanctuary.³² The seventh of the decrees relates to the misdemeanour or share of poets and clerics while the final decree prohibited marriage within close blood relations.³³

It can be seen that the first Synod was not huge and far-reaching in its decrees - many of them had been discussed previously. Within ten years however the church in Ireland would be revolutionised. Before the year 1111 Gilbert, Bishop of Limerick wrote the treatise *De statu ecclesiae*, which was to be used in the training of the Irish clergy. This treatise set out the diocesan structure of the church with each diocese ruled by a bishop and divided into parishes. The dioceses were now grouped under an archbishop.³⁴ In very many cases the boundaries of these parishes and dioceses followed the borders of earlier Gaelic territories.

At the Synod of Rath Breasil in 1111 the dioceses of Ireland were established - twelve in the southern half and twelve in the northern which included two in Meath. This system appears to have been based on the divisions in England, twelve dioceses under Canterbury and twelve under York.³⁵ Three years after the death of Malachy of Armagh, Cardinal Paparo, sent by Pope

³⁰ Aubry Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the 11th and 12th centuries* (Dublin, 1992), p. 156.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., p. 158.

³³ Ibid., p. 168.

³⁴ Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 39.

Eugene III brought with him the four pallia to the Archdioceses of Armagh, Cashel, Tuam and Dublin. However, it was not until later in 1151 that the Cardinal managed to deliver his sacred cargo.³⁶

The Synod of Kells was held, probably in March of 1152. At this time the Papal Legate to Ireland was Christian Ua Conairche, Bishop of Lismore. Christian had been one of the men who remained at Clairvaux Abbey and was trained as one of the first group of Irish Cistercians. At Clairvaux one of his fellow monks was the future Pope Eugenius III. Pope Eugenius chose Christian as his permanent legate in Ireland. Christian had come to his See in Lismore with Cardinal Paparo who held a general synod in Mellifont and established four archbishoprics and distributed the palls of Armagh, Cashel, Tuam and Dublin.³⁷

In tandem with these changes within the church was the arrival in Ireland of the continental Orders. A house of Savigny was founded in Inch, Co. Down, in 1127 and another was established just outside of the city of Dublin in c.1139 but perhaps the most important event in relation to this was the foundation of the first Cistercian monastery in Ireland at Mellifont, Co. Louth about 1142.

The question of the social situation and the distribution and use of land is critical to this thesis. To determine the impact that the Cistercians made, it is necessary to first examine the country into which they came. From the information presented above, it is clear that the old monasteries were still quite

³⁵ Aubry Gwynn, *The Irish Church*, p. 181.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

strong and powerful and Cathedral Chapters were still being organised as the Cistercians began to spread across the country. While the basic parochial system was in place the Anglo-Normans continued to form boundaries and would add substantially to the earlier system.

On his arrival in Ireland the Anglo-Norman chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis stated that

the country was mountainous and hilly, watery, wooded and boggy, a hostile terrain ... fertile, with rich crops, though more pastoral than agricultural, and sustained plenty of cattle and wild beasts.³⁸

A Franciscan, Master Laurence of Summercot, was sent to Ireland in 1254 in order to collect papal taxes for the crusades. In 1256, while still in Ireland, he wrote

When I get back to England, do with me as you please, for I am ready to go to prison rather than be crucified again for this crusade-business in Ireland.³⁹

Master Laurence goes on to tell how his successor should go about collecting the tax in his place.

[he] will have to collect the legacies and other crusade-offerings from the Irish towards the end of autumn and the beginning of winter, while they have something; for, after that date, very many of them have little left. For that which they collect slenderly enough, they consume most inordinately; and, while any of their meagre substance is left, they give it away liberally – nay rather, as it mostly befalleth, they carelessly dissipate and scatter it abroad.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid., pp 218-9.

³⁸ Giraldus Cambrensis[Gerald of Wales], *The history and topography of Ireland*, ed. J.J. O'Meara (Portlaoise, 1982), pp 34-5; Kevin Down, 'Colonial society and economy' *A new history of Ireland*, p.40.

³⁹ G.G. Coulton, *Medieval village, manor, and monastery* (London, 1960), 2nd ed., p. 102.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Chapter 2

The arrival of the Cistercian order in Ireland

The main aims of this chapter are to examine the rate of the foundation of the Cistercian houses in Ireland in the medieval period to identify the monasteries that were founded, their location, the identity of the founder and the date of foundation, along with a brief description of the physical setting within which the monasteries were situated. Foundation charters are extant for a number of houses and these charters will be examined with regard to the reasons which the patrons expressed for the foundation. The rights and privileges which were granted to particular houses at foundation will also be studied. Through an examination of these privileges, the power and position of the monasteries within the higher social ranks of the day will become clear. It is proposed to present the monasteries in chronological order of foundation.

The table included provides information pertaining to the date of foundation, founder, mother house and title of the founder. It must be noted however that the foundation dates for some of the monasteries cannot be fixed with absolute accuracy. In many cases the date of colonisation differs from that of foundation and this discrepancy has often been taken to mean that members of the Benedictine order occupied a particular site until the Cistercians took over. While it is possible that this may be true for some sites, there is no indication of this trend being as widespread as previously believed.

Table 1: Table of Cistercian monasteries founded in medieval Ireland, including founder.

Monastery	Fd.	Mother	Founder
Mellifont	c. 1142	Clairvaux	Donough O'Carroll
Bective	1147	Mellifont	Murchad O'Melaghlin
Erenagh	1127	Tiron	Unknown
St Mary's Abbey	1139	Savigny	Unknown
Inishlounaght	1147	Mellifont	Donald O'Brien
Baltinglass	1148	Mellifont	Dermot Mc Murrough
Boyle	1148	Mellifont	Mc Dermotts
Monasternenagh/Maigue	1148	Mellifont	Turlogh O'Brien
Abbeyshrule,	1150	Mellifont	O'Farrell's
Killbeggan	c.1150	Mellifont	Mac Coghlan
Newry	1153	Mellifont	Donat O'Kearwell
Abbeydorney, Odorney	1154	Monasternenagh	Unknown
Jerpoint	c.1160	Baltinglass	Donal Mac Giolla Pátric
Killenny/Glandv	c.1162	Jerpoint	Dermot O'Ryan
Fermoy	c.1170	Inishlounaght	Donal Mór O'Brien
Abbeymahon/Maure	c.1172	Baltinglass	Dermot Mac Cormac Mac Carthy
Dunbrody	c.1175	Buildwas/St Mary's	Hervey de Monte Marisco
Assaroe	1178	Mellifont or Boyle	Flaherty O'Muldorrey
Monasterevin	c.1178	Baltinglass	Dermot O'Dempsey
Chore, Middleton	c.1179	Monasternenagh	Barry's
Holy Cross	1180	Monasternenagh	Donal Mór O'Brien
Iniscourcey, Inch	1180	Furness	John de Courcy
Kilcooley	1184	Jerpoint	Donal Mór O'Brien
Abbeyleix	1184	Baltinglass	Connor O'More
Glennewardan/Suir	1185	Inishlounaght	Prince John
Abbeyfeale	c.1188	Monastern/ Abbeydorney	Brien O'Brien
Abbeyknockmoy	1190	Boyle	Cathal Crovderg O'Connor
Grey Abbey	1193	Holmcultram	Africa de Courcy
Kilmonaster	1194	Assaroe	E. O'Doherty
Corcomroe	c.1195	Inishlounaght	Donal Mór O'Brien
Kilshane	1198	Corcomroe	Donnchad Cairbreach O'Brien
Cumber/Comber	1200	Whitland, Wales	Brien Catha Dun
Tintern	1200	Tintern, Wales	William Marshal
Duiske Abbey	1204	Stanley	William Marshal
Abington, Owey	1204	Wyresdale/L.shire	Theobald Walter
Abbeylara/Granard	c.1210	St Mary's	Richard Tuit
Moycosquin	c.1218	Morimond, France	Unknown
Tracton	c.1224	Whitland, Wales	Odo de Barru
Clare Island	c.1224	Abbeyknockmoy	Unknown
Hore Abbey	1272	Mellifont	David Mac Carwill
Abbeystowry	Failed by 1281	Abbeymahon	Unknown
Beaubec		Furness in 1332	Walter de Lacy

In relation to the above comment it is more likely that, where reference is made to a later date being associated with a particular monastery, this date refers to either a confirmation of the initial foundation grant, the beginning of the construction of the monastery or a large endowment. In other cases, most notably that of Jerpoint Abbey it is clear that the Cistercians must have been in possession of the monastery as early as 1170, and so the common held belief that the Cistercians did not colonise the site until 1180 must finally be abandoned.

From table one it is clear that the first Cistercian house established in Ireland was Mellifont Abbey. The foundation date is generally accepted as being about the year 1142 and the founder was Donough O'Carroll of Airgialla.¹ Unfortunately the foundation charter is not extant. The land grant was presumably substantial as Mellifont was always considered to have been one of the best endowed of the Irish houses throughout the medieval period. This is borne out right through this work by the many references to the taxations and land holdings of the monasteries.

From the attendance at the consecration of the abbey church in 1157 it would appear that the presence of the order in Ireland was already both well received and held in very high esteem. Those present on that day included such people as the high king Murtagh Mac Loughlin, Donough O'Carroll and Dervorgilla the wife of the king of Meath, along with a huge amount of clergy which included the papal legate, three archbishops and eighteen bishops along

¹ Patrick Power, *History of the Irish Cistercians*, typescript prepared for the community of Mt. Melleray Abbey, Co. Waterford (c.1952), p. 121.

with 'all the abbots of the land'.² This consecration would have been seen as an opportunity for the guests to ply the new foundation with gifts. Land, cattle, money and valuables were all endowed on the new monastery. It is recorded that the King of Meath granted 140 cows to the monastery in addition to various lands within his kingdom, along with sixty ounces of gold.³ Donough O'Carroll, the founder of the monastery, granted another sixty ounces of gold as did Dervogilla of Breifne along with a gold chalice and linen for the nine altars. The display of the high king endowing the new order with gifts must have been seen as both symbolic and highly important, and as such gave both the Cistercian Order and Mellifont a national status.⁴

Two facts serve to demonstrate the impact that this new foundation had on the church and the wider social community. Firstly, only ten years after its foundation, Mellifont was the setting for one of the sessions of the Synod of Kells and this clearly shows the impact that the foundation had on the church. The second fact lies in the colloquial name for the monastery, an Manistir Mór, the great monastery. This name arises from the fact that the monastery was the largest building constructed in Ireland up to that point in the twelfth century and so this colloquialism helps to give us some idea of the impact that this foundation had on the surrounding area.

The speed of the spread of the new order must have been astonishing for the secular community to witness. Within eleven years Mellifont had already founded eight daughter houses situated at Bective, Clonmel, Baltinglass, Boyle,

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Roger Stalley, *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland* (London and New Haven, 1987), p. 13.

Limerick, Abbeyshrule, Kilbeggan and Newry. Of these, seven were founded within a three year period. In addition to these eight houses, the two existing monasteries of Erenagh and had by this time come under the remit of the Cistercian Order. The size, layout and architecture of these new houses were completely different to the pre-existing Gaelic monasteries. The huge tracts of land associated with the Cistercian holdings; the impact of the order on the social, agricultural, economic and architectural life of twelfth century Ireland is difficult for us to imagine. The fact that Mellifont was in a position to have established these daughter houses within such a short time, indicates that the new monastery had no problem with attracting manpower.

By examining the dates of foundation the rate of the expansion becomes clearer. Between 1142 and 1153 Mellifont was the mother house of eight new monasteries. The following year the expansion took on a new dimension, where a new generation of monasteries began with Abbeydorney the first monastery founded by a daughter house of Mellifont. A slight hiatus occurred for six years until Baltinglass and Jerpoint both founded daughter houses. Again, these were significant foundations as Jerpoint was a daughter house of Baltinglass, and only about two years after its foundation, in a position to establish the monastery of Killenny. It was through the construction of this monastery that Jerpoint began the third generation of Cistercian houses in Ireland, a mere twenty years after the foundation of Mellifont.

For eight years no other house was founded and then, in the seventh decade of the twelfth century another rapid expansion occurred. In that decade

six more monasteries were founded, these were situated in Cork, Wexford, Kildare and Donegal. Of course by that time the Anglo-Normans had arrived on Irish shores and it is interesting to note that no new monastery was founded in Leinster between 1162 and 1175, a period which encompassed the arrival and early expansion of the Normans. 1175 is also significant, as this year denotes the first foundation of a Cistercian monastery by the Anglo-Normans when Dunbrody abbey was endowed by Hervey de Monte Marisco. Although it was initially subject to Buildwas Abbey in Shropshire, this monastery soon came under the control of St Mary's abbey near Dublin. Assaroe and Monasterevin were both founded in 1178 and both were of the Mellifont filiation. The expansion did not show any sign of waning in the 1180s with another six houses founded, five of which were Irish foundations. Another five monasteries were to follow before the close of the twelfth century, only one of which was a non Mellifont house which was Grey abbey, founded from the Welsh monastery of Holmcultram.

The thirteenth century opened with another wave of Cistercian expansion. Most of the new monasteries were however, of English or Welsh origin during this period, with all five monasteries founded in the first decade of the new century being non Mellifont houses, a trend which continued with the next three monasteries. Two more Mellifont houses were founded in the thirteenth century, Clare Island was established about the year 1224. Founded from Abbeyknockmoy it is debatable whether this was ever much more than a cell of the larger house. Hore abbey was the last Cistercian foundation in medieval

Ireland and was established in 1272 by David Mac Carwill, Archbishop of Cashel. Two more monasteries require mention, one of each filiation. Abbeystrowry was founded from Abbeymahon and while the foundation date and the identity of the founder are unknown it is clear that the monastery had failed by 1281. The monastery of Beaubec was founded by Walter de Lacy and while the foundation date is unclear, the monastery was made subject to Furness in 1332.

In total then, it can be stated that at least forty-two Cistercian monasteries were founded in medieval Ireland in a period spanning one hundred and thirty years. The time of least expansion in the twelfth century was the sixth decade, with only two monasteries founded, however these two do mark the beginning of a new dimension within the expansion of the order in Ireland. Of the overall total, twenty eight monasteries were founded from Irish houses with Mellifont itself founded from Clairvaux. Two other monasteries were founded from a French house, these being Beaubec and Moycosquin. Four of the forty two had Welsh mother houses and seven were founded from English houses.

With regard to the founders of the twenty-nine Irish houses, including Mellifont, all were either Gaelic kings or chieftains. Donal Mór O'Brien, king of Thomond was the most prolific founder of Cistercian houses as he was associated with the establishment of five monasteries with his son, and successor founder of one. Family names of O'Carroll, McMurrrough, McDermott, O'Farrell, O'More, O'Neill and O'Connor among others are a virtual who's who of twelfth-century Ireland, with territories such as Uriel, Thomond, Moylurg, Annaly,

Ossory, Idrone and Tirconnel all represented. These names offer a final glimpse of Ireland on the cusp of change in a period when the Anglo-Norman adventurers arrived and the earth trembled under their advance. The country would change forever and this is perhaps nowhere more remarkable than in the foundation charters of the Irish Cistercian houses. In these charters many of the placenames associated with the specific foundation bear no resemblance to the names offered in the sixteenth century.

In relation to the changes which were wrought in the social, economic, agricultural, architectural and archaeological spheres of life and indeed on the landscape itself during this period, perhaps no better example may be presented than the province of Leinster. This is a territory which witnessed the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and the establishment of their power base within its borders, a territory which shifted and changed as if to adapt itself to all the new dwellers, and a territory whose landscape was changed forever by their exploits, and by the impact of the silent order of white monks as they established their monasteries, tilled their fields and prayed for all.

Foundation charters

The second part of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, a number of foundation charters will be examined and the type of information contained within will be discussed. The primary area of interest for this work will be charters where information pertaining to the lands granted to a particular house at foundation are detailed. This information will help to set the parameters for the area of

study in this thesis. Where possible, the lands will be identified and mapped and it is hoped that this will then allow for comparison with later land information for a particular house or houses. Secondly, information other than that relating to land will be discussed. This will cover the liberties and customs granted to particular monasteries at foundation.

Without a foundation charter any identification of the early lands associated with a monastery could only be a less than accurate study. The monasteries which have foundation or re-confirmation charters extant will form the central area of study, with information from other houses used as required. When this distribution of charters is studied, it is clear that the area of Leinster and Meath along with a small number of houses in Munster and Ulster hold the total number of foundation charters issued. This means that the principal area of study will encapsulate the modern province of Leinster, with information used from outside this area when required.

The charters that do survive include those for Mellifont, Maigue, Newry, Inishlounaght, Jerpoint, Killenny, Holy Cross, Dunbrody, Kilcooley, Tintern, Duiske and Abington. Of the twelve, seven were situated within the modern province of Leinster with Kilcooley located on the borders of that territory, four of the monasteries were situated in Munster and one in Ulster. As the main area of study in this paper is Leinster, it is not necessary for all of the other charters to be examined in detail and so only Kilcooley, because of its proximity to Leinster and Maigue will be discussed. The reason for the inclusion of Maigue is to do with the placenames listed and their elements.

Mellifont Abbey

While the foundation charter for this monastery is not extant, it is known that in 1253, the king granted certain liberties to the monastery and this was in essence a re-confirmation of liberties which had been granted by King Henry II and King John. A second deed lists liberties granted to the monastery by Henry III, all of the freedoms will be discussed in more detail below.⁵ The King also confirmed the grant of lands made to the abbey at foundation, each parcel of land is named and so fifteen placenames are listed. The placenames listed are Culbundi and Muingatran, Mell, Drogheda, Rathmullan and Finavir. Thaghlynny is presumably Tullyallen while Rosmaring, Cullen, Cnogvam' Kelkalma, Thuelag'hnacornair, Collon, Kerchork, and Fynnavir were all listed but not all identifiable today.⁶ It is possible that Thuelag'hnacornair is Townleyhall, when the accompanying maps are consulted it is clear that this grant was a sizeable one and included land which not only surrounded the monastery but appears to have remained in the abbey's possession until dissolution. (Figure 3) Townleyhall is alone in a whole parcel of Mellifont lands and this more than the name would indicate its situation as part of the grant. However, as this is not certain it was not highlighted on map 3b. Presumably the names which cannot be identified have, over time been assimilated into the other named possessions.

⁵ *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1252-84, pp 25-6, 169, 170, 172.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26, 171.

Maigue

This is one of only two non Leinster houses included here and the reason for its inclusion is due to the rich and varied list of placenames associated with the monastery. The content of the re-confirmation charter which was issued in 1200 by King John, lists the ninety-one placenames as part of the possessions of the abbey, these are listed in full in appendix 1.

The land associated with this monastery was said to have extended from the site of the monastery to Loughgur, and southward by Knockainey to Darragh. A number of interesting points arise from this charter. Firstly, the number of places listed is quite high and this would suggest pre-existing settlement, in addition to those settlements being quite small and dispersed. Secondly, the charter dates to about fifty two years after the foundation of the monastery and, judging from the placenames listed, the Cistercians wasted no time in making their mark on the area. The element 'grange' is listed eight times, and this indicates the importance of this out farm system on the organisation of the lands. The granges must have been seen as integral to the functioning of the monastery, and must have been established in tandem with the construction of the monastery.

The use of the term 'grange' also indicates the impact of the Order on the surrounding area with regard to placenames. Names which may have been used in relation to a specific area for a number of years or generations were changed with the arrival of the Cistercians. A mere half a century after the foundation of the monastery, 'grange' is an element of eight of the ninety-one names used, as

three of the names referred to rivers or a ford, then eighty-eight names related to places. In addition, by 1201 the Cistercians also changed the name of the site of the monastery since foundation, and so nine of the eighty-eight places had been changed in only fifty years equating to 10.2% of the overall total.

The names also help to give an indication as to the type of area into which the monks settled. The word 'cluain' meaning meadow is listed five times and the use of this word could either indicate the presence of cultivated parcels of land prior to the arrival of the order, or may show the speed of the monks in organizing and setting the land.

Jerpoint

The extensive remains of this monastery sit on the banks of the Little Arrigle river in a small valley. Thomastown is presently the nearest urban centre but that was not founded until about 1202. The abbey had a second urban settlement located close by known as Newtown Jerpoint. This settlement was founded about the year 1200 by William Marshal and is only separated from the Cistercian house by the Little Arrigle river. (Figure 4) While any information about the interaction between the two settlements is unknown, it is unlikely that none took place. It is important to note that the building phases of the existing structure of St Nicholas' Church mirror the building phases of the monastery, however the reasons for the building phases in Jerpoint Abbey, as discussed later in this work would hold true for Newtown also. Although the towns were established c.1200, the abbey predates these by about forty years and the reasons

for such a foundation date have been discussed above.

The re-confirmation charter quoted by John contains seventeen place names, and although most of them are obsolete, some are identifiable. Among the names recorded in the foundation charter are Bali Longsin, Ballynarich, Baleycheebani, Burbili, Cassel, Corbrin and Cassleremaich. Of these, Bali Longsin is readily identifiable as Ballylinch, whilst Burbili is presumably Dunbell, a townland separated by the townlands of Bennettsbridge and Ballyredding from the large section of lands already mentioned. The land of Cassel Corbrin may perhaps be identified with Castlecosker in the parish of Jerpoint West. The charter expressly states that the site of the monastery lay in Bataoch-ellam, which must therefore have been the original name of the townland now called Jerpoint Abbey. (Figure 5)

Of the unidentified ones, it is probable that the greater number are those of denominations now contained in the civil parishes of Jerpoint Abbey, Jerpoint West, Ballylinch and Woolengrange. Geraldine Carville in her book *The impact of the Cistercians on the landscape of Ireland* suggests that these parishes had been formed from the monastic lands and constituted a single tract of land 6,000 acres in extent.⁷ The parish of Jerpoint Abbey consists of 1008a 0r 23n, Jerpoint West 5515a 4r 74p, Ballylinch 1167a 1r 24h with Woolengrange accounting for 1663a 2r 25m.⁸ The major problem here is that the total acreage for these four parcels of land comes to over 9,353 statute acres, well in excess of the stated 6,000 acres. While it is possible that some of these lands did form part of the original grant it

⁷ Carville, Geraldine, *The impact of the Cistercians on the landscape of Ireland* (Ashford, 2002), p. 17.

⁸ *Townland index*, pp 543, 94, 903.

is not feasible to say definitively that these four parishes account for the total amount of land granted at foundation. Perhaps the problem lies in stating that it is the whole parish which was incorporated, it is more likely that, in this case, the acreages of the townlands with the same names are what should be included not the parishes. The exception to this survey would have to be Wollengrange, as the whole parish takes its name from the Abbey grange and therefore it is acceptable to include the acreage of the whole parish. By doing this, a figure of 3,643 statute acres would be arrived at for just four placenames. By identifying the other townlands and establishing their acreages, a more accurate estimate of the number of acres granted to Jerpoint at foundation would be arrived at.

Killenny

It is from the king's confirmation charter that the fourteen place names may be listed. These fourteen are Duninni, Ceall Mochomoc, Muleann Morain, Ardsemdilli, Bale O'Chianugain, Rath Inphoboil, Breslach, Ceall Nisi, Bale meic Marcaig, Druim ro, Bale meic Laurada, Bale Ogaillin, Baile Omaille and Leis Meic Mellelua.⁹ Dermot O'Ryan was chief of Idrone, therefore it is to be presumed that the location of the new foundation would be found in that territory.

The territory of Idrone is today part of the county of Kilkenny but is close to the Carlow border. No physical remains of the monastery stand, but it is assumed that the location was near the river bank in the townland of

⁹ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske charters', pp 1-188 at p. 5.

Barrowmount, an tSeanmainister, previously known as Old Abbey.¹⁰ This would be the ideal location for the foundation of a Cistercian house, but there is evidence to suggest that this monastery was also situated close to the Bealach Gabhran, which will be discussed in the next chapter. This bealach seems to have been one of the major boundaries of Leinster in the twelfth century. It is also worth noting that the foundation of this house predates the arrival of the Anglo-Normans to Ireland. The confirmation charter for this monastery was 'datum apud Belachgaurain'.¹¹

Of the fourteen place names listed, Duninni may be identified as Doningh or Duninga, a townland in the parish of Grange Silvae, and Druim Ro is Mount Loftus in the parish of Powerstown.¹² Indeed, the very name of the parish of Grange Silvae indicates the presence of a monastery as the name incorporates two elements associated with such a building. The term 'grange' has already been discussed, but it is worth noting that this is a word which has particular associations with a Cistercian monastery. The word 'silvae' comes from the latin word silva meaning wood and the place name would indicate the presence of a wood grange associated with a Cistercian house. (Figure 6)

Dunbrody

The lands for Dunbrody Abbey were originally granted to Buildwas for the purpose of the construction of an abbey. It appears to have been a common

¹⁰ Carrigan, *Ossory*, i, p. 23; Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske charters', p. 6; Eoin O'Kelly, *The place-names of county Kilkenny* (Kilkenny, 1985), pp 76-7.

¹¹ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske charters', p. 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

practice for a delegation to be sent from the mother-house to determine the suitability of the land offered, and this inspection is best described by the record which remains of the visit of the delegation from Buildwas. In this case, a lay brother named Alan, was delegated with the responsibility of visiting the site and the story goes that having found the site for the monastery to have been 'a solitary waste', he 'took up his dwelling in a hollow oak' and set the boundaries of the land granted before returning to Buildwas. Upon his return, he informed the community of 'the waste of the place, the sterility of the lands and the wildness and ferocity of the neighbouring barbarians'.¹³ The monks in Buildwas decided to quit-claim the new foundation to St Mary's and the agreement was finalised at Dublin on November 1 1182 by Ranulph, Abbot of Buildwas and Leonard, Abbot of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin.¹⁴ The Abbey church was consecrated in 1201 by Herlewyn, Bishop of Leighlin who had previously been a Cistercian monk at Dunbrody.¹⁵

The actual foundation charter issued by Hervey lists about twenty placenames and most are still identifiable. For the present work, the most interesting fact to emerge from the charter itself is that roads and rivers were used to form most of the boundaries. The charter expressly states that

Ardfithen and Crosgormos [are granted] and with the plain and the Grove there by the flowing water, and so upwards by the water ... as far as the same torrent ... by the road which goes to Theachmun ... and so by the rushing stream may be the boundary of their land ... and thence the public road ... is to be the boundary between them and the Black Monks¹⁶

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 37-8.

As stated, the charter lists many placenames, Ardfithen is most likely the area of high ground lying to the south of the monastery. Crosgormos is probably the location where the monastery stands, the fact that the charter states that the plain and Grove and 'flowing water, and so upwards by the water which is called Kempul' would support this. A wood still stretched from the abbey to the river on the north side and to Dunbrody Castle on the east in 1682.¹⁷ Kempul is, of course, Campile. The land granted to the monastery also stretched to the stream of Ballykeerogue where it joined the Campile river at the bridge. The land followed the road to Taghmon, this road is said to have passed over Tinnock Hill and on to Burkestown. The charter states that this grant incorporates the lands of Calatrum, Cusduff, Raidcru, Koillache, Urbegan, Lesculenen, Urgoueran, Kuilleskerd and Ballygoue. Calatrum may be identified as Killesk, Cusduff may be Black Knocks, Koillache is Coole and Urbegan is now Shelbeggan. Lesculenan is not identifiable, Tirgoueran is said to incorporate the modern townlands of Saltmills, Nuke, Grange, Kilhill and Ballyhack. Kuilleskerd may be identified as Clonard, with Ballygoue now Ballygow.¹⁸ The grant goes on to say that the lands follow the stream to Dungulph, and that this stream will be the boundary both at Dungulph and where it enters the river at Bannow. Hore states that this is the river which flows between Battlestown and Winnington past the chapel of Poulfur.¹⁹ The foundation charter states clearly that this river is to form a boundary between the monks of Dunbrody and the

¹⁷ P.H. Hore, *History of the town and county of Wexford* (2nd ed., 6 vols, Dublin, 1979), iii, p. 37.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Black Monks.²⁰ (Figure 7)

The Black Monks may refer to Benedictines or Bernardines, it is possible that the reference is to monks from Canterbury which was a Benedictine house and it is to this monastery that the lands for Tintern were granted. There is nothing to suggest that a religious order had not been established in the area of Tintern prior to William Marshall's foundation charter. The fact that the Black Monks are specifically mentioned must be taken literally to mean that a foundation was present in the area prior to the establishment of Dunbrody Abbey. Both woodlands & roadways are mentioned in the charter with the woodlands forming the dividing boundary. Dunmechanan which is now Mersheen and Dunbrodik were also granted as was two carucates of land on the Island and 'four heilandos' nearby.

Kilcooley

The foundation charter for the monastery of Kilcooley is still extant and may be found in the Ormond Deeds. The charter is stated to be issued in reverence of Gregory Olanan, coarb of Muoygarib and the charter lists a number of placenames. From the charter, it is evident that the site where the monastery stands was known originally as Kilchule.²¹ Kilcolman, Kilchoayn, Kilmoischy, Kildavchy, Dromlonayn, Kilwracha, Kiligynnammenew, Clonomylchon, Chuilinhuir were all granted to the monastery.²² The deed goes on to say that the King, Donald O'Brien, founder of the monastery 'perambulated and rode' over

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *Ormond deeds, 1171-1350*, no. 4.

²² Ibid.

these lands which formed the grant and that he went over the 'mountains and hills and woods' which formed the boundaries of the lands. These boundaries were named in the charter as Ivirard, Greynmuygarib, Ballynscrayth, Ballychonli, Mongynd, Sliebytamygh, Glenanchordh, Cnokany, Dulii, Belanamoyle, Cnokelegayn, Moynnegollan, Awillcharaigh, Tibrunygerothy, Hachnahoyne and 'by the fosse to the royal road'.²³ The boundary was said to have continued by this road to Raht Ronan and Leynhys and then from the fosse to Freuruch and to Knocynstawyll.

The identification of the placenames provides a challenge but this is eased somewhat by the additional naming of some of the places by the editor of the deeds. Kilmoischy is said to be partially preserved within Graigaheesha, in Kilcooley parish while Kildavehy was also known as Polnadawehey.²⁴ Kilwracha may be identified as Kilbraugh in Boulick parish while Clonomylchon equates to Clonamicklon also in Boulick. Some of the places listed as forming the boundaries are also identified with Ivirard named as Urard, Fennor parish, Greynmuygarib is listed as Grane in Tubridbritain parish and Ballynscaryth is in the same parish but is better known as Ballynascarry. (Figures 8 and 9)

Most of the locations listed are situated in the county of Tipperary, however, some such as those in the parish of Tubridbritain are in the barony of Crannagh which is a Kilkenny barony. This, along with the proximity of many of the other placenames to the border between the counties of Tipperary and Kilkenny yet again underlines the fact that many of the monasteries were

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

situated in boundary areas. Indeed, the whole setting for the monastery and lands of Kilcooley is border and frontier territory with the Slieveardagh hills protecting the way between the two territories. The reference to the King's road is significant as firstly it indicates the presence of the roadway but the route of that road can also be followed for a portion. What is in effect a village street can be followed at Kilcooley with the cottages mentioned in the dissolution extents situated on either side of this roadway.

Tintern de voto

This reasoning of the foundation of a house in thanksgiving or in supplication is very common among the remaining foundation charters but perhaps the story of the foundation of Tintern is the most dramatic of these. The abbey was founded by one of, if not the most important and influential people in Ireland, excepting the king, in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century and takes its name 'de voto' in memory of the vow made. In the foundation charter, Marshal stated that he was founding the monastery 'for the love of God and for the health of my soul and of Isabella my wife and our children, and for the souls of all our ancestors and successors'.²⁵ This dedication helps to give an insight into the mind of the founder but also to the importance which was based on such an action. In a world where the church was extremely important and powerful and the belief in the afterlife was absolute, Marshal, by founding the house, was securing entry to eternal life for all of his immediate family, their ancestors and descendants. The power which went with this assurance must have been most

²⁵ Hore, *Wexford*, ii, p. 18.

significant.

The charter of foundation was confirmed by Richard II in June 1382 and from this confirmation the lands granted at foundation are listed. In 1200 Marshal granted three carucates of land which were situated beside Bannow along with a small portion of Balienner which may be identified as Ballinruane. The location for this parcel is stated to have been opposite the monastery and on the brow of the hill where the land descends to the water.²⁶ The whole of Balicros, or Ballycross was granted as was the land situated to the west of the Owenduff river which had previously been in the possession of Meiler, the Serjeant.²⁷ Rathubenai, presumably Rathunmey, with its appurtenances along with all of Dunmain and all of the land which belonged to 'William of the Irish' which was beside Geoffrey de Mora's land also formed part of the holding.²⁸ The whole of Aketiper with its appurtenances and one burgage in Wexford and one in Ross formed the final portions of land. Aketiper has evaded identification but the place-name appears to translate to 'field of the well'.²⁹ (Figure 7)

Duiske

This monastery and its positioning may be used to highlight the foresight which was required in order to settle in the 'correct' location. Stanley Abbey in Wiltshire was the mother house of Duiske and it is from here that the monks left with the intention of beginning the construction of the monastery. A second

²⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

group, who had gained the authorisation of the chapter first settled at Loughmeran, about two miles north of Kilkenny city.³⁰ This land appears to have been part of Marshal's castle farm and it is unclear what the reasoning in settling in such an unsatisfactory location was, perhaps it was only intended as a base until the men could survey their lands. From Loughmeran they moved to Annamult, situated about six miles south of Kilkenny and to the west of the river Nore. This location could have been no more suitable than the previous one as it was situated only a few miles from Jerpoint Abbey. Moreover Annamult formed an isolated island stranded within the holdings of Jerpoint and so it was a doubly unsuitable location in which to settle. The third location tried was a little to the north-west at Grange Castri near Tulachany which forms part of the parish of Grange beside Castleinch.³¹ This location would have not had any considerable river access. By 6 June 1204, a cemetery for the monks was consecrated at Graiguenamanagh and so the construction of the monastery must have been underway at that time.³² Butler and Bernard suggest that the monks may have used some of the other sites listed above as temporary locations in which to live while the abbey was under construction, but the considerable distance from these locations to the monastery would surely not support this theory.³³ (Figure 5)

From various sources, it is known that the lands of Duiske and Annamult were quit claimed to William Marshal by Geoffrey FitzRobert and Adam

³⁰ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske charters', p. 13.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., pp 14, 23.

³³ Ibid., p. 14.

FitzSinnott for the abbey 'to be founded' about the year 1204.³⁴ Part of the quit-claim with FitzSinnott stated that the family 'may forever appoint a monk to the said abbey, who can speak the English tongue.'³⁵ This stipulation points to a distinction existing between the Anglo-Norman and Mellifont houses from foundation and also points to the increase in the use of the English language at the beginning of the thirteenth century. From the foundation charter, dated to 1207 and re-confirmed on 10 Aug. 1252, it is known that eleven carucates at Annamult, ten carucates held by Stephen de Valle near Kilkenny and three burgages, one in Kilkenny, one in Wexford and the third in the Island were all granted to the abbey.³⁶ The land held by Stephen de Valle was situated at Tulachany or Grange and has already been mentioned as one of the locations chosen prior to settling at Graiguenamanagh. The Island was part of the parish of Kilmokea in the barony of Shelburne in Wexford, while it is referred to as the island it is no longer separated from the mainland.

In relation to the monasteries founded from Welsh or English houses, hereafter known as those of the Anglo-Norman filiation, a huge amount of information may be gleaned from the foundation charters issued to these houses. These charters, in addition to the usual list of placenames granted, also record the privileges granted to these Cistercian houses which in turn go a long way toward explaining the power and respect which they commanded. The fact that the liberties and freedoms granted to Tintern comprise the most extensive list it is this which will be dealt with first, and with liberties from other houses will

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 14, 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³⁶ *Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, pp 10-11, 70; Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske charters', p. 17.

follow. The liberties will be listed first with each individual right explained.

Liberties granted to monasteries

The liberties granted to Tintern at foundation by William Marshal include soke and sac, tol and theam, infanganthef, they were free from geld and danegeld and murder and theft, free from money of murder and theft, free from the payment of cows which were to be given for the heads of outlaws. The monks were free of scutage, hidage, carucage, cornage, summage, hue and cry, hundreds, suits of shires and of hundreds, they had freedom of armies and assizes and summonses, freedom of bringing treasure and of aids of Sheriffs and all their serjeants and all other aids. In addition, other freedoms granted were those of works of castles and bridges, parks and walls and vivaries, or fish ponds, and they were free from the mercy of the country court, of tollage, pontage, pannage, passage, lastage, stallage, of enclosures, of wardpenny, haverpenny, tithing-penny, blodwire, fictwite, hengwite and flemenerwite.³⁷ The abbey was also to be outside of the laws of the forest and the monks were allowed to whatever they wanted with regard to wood and water, they were to be free of all vexation and were to be outside the danger and all exactions of the foresters and all other serjeants of the land with regard to feeding. The abbey was exempt from all plaints, tributes and customs, in addition to all servile work and secular exaction. The monks were allowed all manner of forfeiture of their own men except for the justice of life and limbs which were to be retained by

³⁷ Hore, *Wexford*, ii, pp 20, 22.

Marshal alone.³⁸ Marshal granted the monks pasture throughout all of his forests and were granted quittance of their beasts and whatever they deemed necessary for burning and building. The charter stated that Marshal prohibited the malicious vexation of the monks, their servant's goods or possessions or disturbance in any thing.³⁹

'Soch' or 'soke' was the lord's right of command over the district which was attached to his manor. It included the right to receive fines and other dues, and the exclusive right to mill corn within a particular district.⁴⁰ This mill was usually both built and held by the lord as a way of gaining extra income. Sach, more commonly entered as 'sake and soke' allowed the granter to seize fines and profits which would usually be destined for payment to the king.⁴¹ The fines and profits would have originated from within the estate. The rights of tholl and theam are more correctly known as the collective term of 'toll and team', these were wide-ranging rights of a lord. 'Toll' was often the right to take a commission on the payment of the sale of cattle and goods within the estate where 'team' was the right to take fines from those accused of stealing cattle.⁴² Team also gave the lord the power to oversee the presentation of evidence of the right to sell goods which were presented for that purpose.⁴³ 'Infangen-theof' was the right granted to a lord to pursue and hang a thief who was caught in the

³⁸ Ibid., p. 23.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Christopher Corèdon and Ann Williams, *A dictionary of Medieval Terms and Phrases* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2005), p. 262.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 245.

⁴² Ibid., p. 276.

⁴³ Ibid.

possession of stolen goods.⁴⁴ Danegeld was a type of tax, in the late eleventh early twelfth centuries this was a tax paid to the king in order to uphold the litesmen of the king's fleet.⁴⁵ These were warriors who manned the standing fleet.⁴⁶ Scutage was a fine or money paid in lieu of military service.⁴⁷ Hidage was a taxation placed on approximately 120 acres. A hide was the area calculated to be sufficient for one family and/or ploughable by an eight-ox plough team in a year.⁴⁸ Carucage is a tax fixed on a carucate of land.⁴⁹ A carucate is comparable to a hide. The word comes from the latin *caruca*, the latin term for a plough, usually a heavy plough which was drawn by eight oxen.⁵⁰ Cornage was a rent paid for grazing rights.⁵¹ Summage is possibly *summagium* which was the obligation to supply pack horses for carrying loads but if a fine was paid the term *prosummagio* was used.⁵² Hue and cry was the general call to chase a scoundrel, the term also related to the pursuit itself. This was usually proclaimed in order to alert people to the crime. Public support in the pursuit and arrest of the criminal was obligatory.⁵³ The hundred was the administrative district within the Shire from which representatives met each month. The district held its own judicial court.⁵⁴ Suits of shires and hundred was probably the obligatory attendance at shire and hundred gatherings armies, assizes, of

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp 162-3.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp 98, 178.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 252.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 154.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 61.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 87.

⁵² Ibid., p. 267.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 159.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

bringing treasure and the aids of Sheriffs and their sergeants. Pontage was the right to charge tolls to cross a bridge. In return the toller was required to maintain the bridge.⁵⁵ Pannage was the right to feed pigs in a wood on beech-mast and acorns in autumn, also the fodder itself.⁵⁶ Lastage is defined as the tax paid on goods and merchandise such as wool or grain which were sold in units of lasts.⁵⁷ Wardpenny was a payment made in lieu of performing guard duty.⁵⁸ Blodwite is a penalty imposed for the shedding of blood.⁵⁹ Fictwite is possibly the same as fihtwite which was a fine for fighting.⁶⁰ Hengwite is defined as the failure to raise the hue and cry. In Chester an ordinary citizen was fined 10s, with an earl or king's reeve fined 20s.⁶¹

Liberties of Mellifont

The monks of Mellifont were granted freedom throughout the realm from toll, passage, pontage, geld, lastage, on all articles sold by them or bought for their use, and they were not to be impeded with regard to their tenements.⁶²

Liberties of Dunbrody

From a charter of protection of the abbey issued by Prince John in 1185 the monks were also exempt from ferry dues, pontage and lastage. In addition they were not required to pay stallage, this was the rate charged to erect stalls in a fair

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁶² *Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, pp 25-6, 170, 172.

or market and the community was to be free from duties on any articles bought or sold for their own uses and purposes.⁶³

These exceptions raise a number of interesting points – the exaction of toll from markets and stallage shows that the monks were, if not selling goods at fairs and markets, they were granted the licence to do so. To have been exempt from ferry dues and lastage would appear to indicate that the monks were actually ferrying goods whether for re-sale or for the purpose of purchasing goods for their own use is not clear.

Interestingly the final portion of land was granted with fisheries, salt pits, fishing weirs, ponds for lands and grist mills, meadows, pastures, roads, paths, land and sea, pasture and plain, in addition they were granted wood for their houses, free toll from the markets and the authority to hold their own Court.⁶⁴ From the wording of the charter, it would appear that all of these elements were considered to be standard requirements for the foundation of a Cistercian house. The charter also states that the monks of Dunbrody had their own wood and they were allowed to take timber for their houses through all of the forests of the founder, Hervey de Monte Marisco.⁶⁵

At its foundation, the monastery was also granted the privilege of being a place of sanctuary for any offender, and it is possible that it is from this allowance that the monastery was often known as the Abbey of St Mary of Refuge. Following from John's re-confirmation charter in 1185, he also issued a charter of protection in the same year. It was within this charter that the Prince

⁶³ Corèdon and Williams, *Dictionary of Medieval terms and phrases*, p. 40.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

granted the monastery the freedom from toll, ferry dues, pontage and lastage throughout the whole of his land.⁶⁶ In the confirmation charter, he mentioned mills, warrens, fishing in rivers and fishing rights in addition to all the rights that Hervey had allowed.⁶⁷

Liberties granted to Duiske

In addition, these lands were 'to be held with churches and chapels and all liberties and free customs, soch, sach, tholl, theam and infangenetheof with freedom in land and water'.⁶⁸ The 'monks ... themselves, their men and servants' were exempt from geld, denegeld, fines, and 'payment of cows for heads of outlaws.'⁶⁹ The abbey and its tenants were also exempt from forest regulations and the monastery had free pasture for their hogs and materials for building and firing throughout all of Marshal's forests.⁷⁰ The list of exemptions is long and detailed and helps to explain just why the monasteries and the monks living in them were so powerful.

The above grants and privileges serve to demonstrate the areas in which the monks could exert the power of the monastery. The monks could exact a commission from the sale of animals and goods of the lay-people and were the only persons within the estate allowed to hold a mill and grind the corn. The monks could revoke the right of an individual to sell goods at market and had the ultimate right over those who stole – the right to hang. A common thread

⁶⁶ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p.47.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske charters', p. 17.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

runs through all of these rights and privileges and that is the involvement of the secular world. It could be argued that the founders and patrons were only granting to the monasteries the rights that they as owners and feudal lords would expect to use themselves. Conversely, it can be stated that the inclusion of the rights does indicate that some of the Cistercian monasteries at least were established with the probability of having lay people living on their lands from foundation and not just from the fifteenth century onwards. It does seem that Duiske Abbey was founded with all of the rights and customs of an estate and this does call into question both the role of self sufficiency and the remoteness of that monastery.

These rights in effect allowed the monasteries to be self governing units. The control which they had over the roads, waterways and bridges was extensive. If this control extended to borders and across territories this could indicate a significant political element in the role of the white monks in medieval Ireland.

Chapter 3

The boundaries of Leinster and its physical features

The primary aim of this chapter is to set the parameters for the physical area of principle study. This demarcation of the territory will provide a template into which the study and research will be based and will allow a more in depth examination of the terrain to be undertaken. A number of questions which are central to this thesis may be posed and answered either in the affirmative or negative during the course of this chapter. The questions posed deal with the identification of the type of topography into which the monks settled, the proximity or otherwise of the Cistercian monasteries to road and waterways, and the propinquity of those same houses to any internal territorial boundaries within the province.

Although the main area of study will be the lordship of Leinster, the other counties which presently form part of that province will also be used for comparison purposes, and as such the ancient province of Meath will also be examined. As will be seen, medieval Leinster included the ancient kingdom of Ossory, which later became incorporated into Kilkenny, in addition to the territories of Wexford, Wicklow and Kildare. The changing borders of Ossory also impinged on parts of Waterford so these changes will necessitate examination. In addition, by the sixteenth century the counties of Laois, Offaly,

Wicklow and parts of Meath were either established or incorporated into Leinster. Due to the political and physical nature of the period, boundaries changed over time, therefore the territory of Leinster at a number of times in history will be discussed. The period in question stretches from the arrival of the Cistercian order in Ireland circa 1140 up to the Dissolution of the Religious Houses circa 1540.

As the boundaries and internal topographical features of Leinster will be the main area of study, it is proposed to map and discuss these main features of the landscape of the period in order to determine the type of land in which the monks of the order chose to settle. All roadways which can be located, will also be mapped in order to identify the proximity of the Cistercian monasteries to these major routeways. It is hoped that by taking all of the available evidence into consideration and by plotting all relevant features the main questions in this work will be answered and those answers supported.

Prior to the arrival of the Normans circa 1170, written documentation recording the boundaries of Leinster is scant. Upon the arrival of Strongbow to Ireland, and his subsequent inheritance of the kingdom of Leinster from Diarmait MacMurrough, the first real glimpse of the settlement of Leinster in the 12th century emerges. Sometime between the arrival of Strongbow and the death of his son-in-law William Marshal, the ancient kingdom of Ossory became incorporated into Leinster. This may well have happened nearer to the 1170 date as the Gaelic king of Ossory Domnall Mac Giolla Pátraic was a known enemy of

Diarmait MacMurrough. Presumably, the Gaelic kings of territories such as Ossory and other Irish/Gaelic strongholds would have combined forces in order to try to stop the spread of power of the Normans. From the partition of Leinster in 1247, we can be sure that the medieval counties of Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Kildare covered the area now encompassed by those four counties plus Laois, Offaly, Wicklow and part of Meath. It will be seen that the boundaries of this 13th century Leinster are more or less those mentioned by Alfred Smyth in his book *Celtic Leinster*. During the 14th century, while some of the boundaries of the shires within the lordship changed, the boundaries of Leinster still followed those of the 13th century. By the mid 16th century, Kings County and Queens County had been established, with the creation of Offaly and Laois and the internal boundaries of Leinster changed yet again. These changes will all be examined in some detail below.

It will be seen that the physical features of Leinster included woodland, bogs, mountains and rivers. The geology varied from limestone to granite and the land was partially badly drained and partly good pastureland. Roadways and river crossings were an essential element of the medieval landscape and provided communication routes as well as being defensive. Many references occur in Giraldus Cambrensis accounts of the Norman advance in the thirteenth century, where he states that roads and passes were widened and then fortified to form a defense against the natives, where relevant these entries will be

included. These physical and man-made features, along with the boundaries will be the central focus of this chapter.

Development of Leinster

Traditionally, it has been stated that Ireland in the medieval period consisted of 5 major territories or provinces - Leinster, Munster, Connaught, Ulster and Meath. It has been suggested that three other territories namely Ossory (Osraige) in the south, Airgialla in the north and Brega in the east for all practical purposes were significant territories in their own right.¹ The main areas of interest for the purpose of this chapter are the kingdom of Ossory and the province of Leinster into which the former was merged in the medieval period. Owing to the fact that the modern province of Leinster incorporates the earlier kingdom of Meath it is necessary to examine this smaller territory to some extent in order to draw parallels between the houses of the Cistercian order situated there.

During the fourth decade of the twelfth century when the first Cistercian outpost was established in the kingdom of Meath Leinster was relatively calm and united under Toirdelbach O'Connor, king of Connacht and high-king of Ireland. This union was to last until his death in May 1156 and his passing created a vacuum whereupon much strife and warfare surfaced.² O'Connor had

¹ A. P. Smyth, *Celtic Leinster towards an historical geography of early Irish civilization A.D. 500-1600* (Dublin, 1982), p. 7.

² Emmett O'Byrne, *War, Politics and the Irish of Leinster 1156-1606* (Cornwall, 2003), p. 5.

carried the mantle of high-kingship from, among others, his maternal grandfather and uncle, Toirdelbach O'Brien and Muirchertach O'Brien of Thomond, members of that most powerful dynasty created by Brian Bóruma.³ Previous to O'Connor's high-kingship the O'Brien's had sought dominance in Leinster and they achieved this through the weaknesses caused by the inter-tribal warfare between the Uí Dúnlainge and Uí Cheinnselaig clans who O'Byrne refers to as Leinster's 'two competing royal dynasties'.⁴

The Uí Dúnlainge tribe was dominant in Ossory and it is from this powerful clan that Felix, first abbot of Jerpoint and later Bishop of Ossory came. Interestingly the foundation of Jerpoint dates to this period of strife and warfare. Perhaps some political undertones may be found in the foundation of Jerpoint Abbey by the Mac Giolla Pátraic kings of Ossory and the abbacy and bishopric of Felix Uí Dúnlainge. The power base of Felix's clan, by the twelfth century, was situated in Upper Ossory, mainly due to the dominance of the Mac Giolla Pátraic's in the rest of that same territory.

The Uí Cheinnselaig king of Leinster in 1072 was Diarmait mac Máel na mBó and his defeat in that year by Conchobhar O'Melaghlin, king of Meath 'left the province disorientated and defenceless ... reducing Leinster to the level of a

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

client state'.⁵ It is from Diarmait's son Murchadh that the MacMurrough kings subsequently took their name.⁶

The territory of the O'Connor's of Connacht stretched along the river Shannon and this obviously caused strife between themselves and the O'Brien's of Thomond, which resulted in a spate of wars between the two families in the last two decades of the eleventh century.⁷ This impacted on Leinster as part of the lands which they ruled stretched across the hinterland of the Shannon and into that province.

After the death of the O'Connor king of Connacht, Muirheartach O'Loughlin waged war on that province. O'Loughlin was king of the northern Uí Neill almost constantly from 1136 to 1156. Immediately after the demise of O'Connor his longstanding rival O'Brien marched on Leinster where he took hostages from Diarmait MacMurrough, restrained the Mac Giolla Pátraic of Ossory and burned Durrow.⁸

It is obvious from this brief look at the political situation within Leinster that the province was far from united and this is a situation which prevailed across Ireland in the twelfth century and may have been one of the factors in the arrival of the Anglo-Normans to the country in the later part of that century. The clans mentioned above are just some of those who were dwelling in the Leinster

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., pp 5-6.

of the period and they will be looked at in more detail in a later part of this chapter.

The question of the boundaries of Leinster previous to the arrival of the Normans poses some difficulties. Primary sources are lacking, and it may be surmised that the boundaries were fluid and usually included a number of physical features. This appears to be supported by many of the foundation charters for the monasteries of the Cistercian Order where the boundaries of the land granted to the monastery were delineated by rivers and other natural boundaries. Perhaps the best example of this method is found in the foundation charter of Dunbrody Abbey in the present county of Wexford where it is stated the monastery is granted the lands of

Ardfithen and Crosgormos [are granted] and with the plain and the Grove there by the flowing water, and so upwards by the water ... as far as the same torrent ... by the road which goes to Theachmun ... and so by the rushing stream may be the boundary of their land ... and thence the public road ... is to be the boundary between them and the Black Monks.⁹

Ossory

This section will begin by establishing, as far as possible, the boundaries of the kingdom of Ossory prior to the arrival of the Normans. Ossory may be stated to have extended from Mullinahone eastwards to Old Leighlin, westwards from the river Nore to the Suir and southwards to the sea. Ossory also included

⁹ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, pp 37-8.

the part of Munster known as Magh Femin.¹⁰ This territory included the whole barony of Middle Third, which is incorporated into the modern county of Tipperary. Carrigan states that this territory stretched from Corca Eathrach or Machaire Chaisil on the north, to the river Suir on the south. Corca Eathrach is stated to have extended in length from Tripartfarran near the Cistercian foundation of Holy Cross as far south as Dumha n-Dreas and Knockgraffon, which is situated about three miles from Cahir.¹¹ On the north side of the territory, the boundary extended from the river Nore and followed the Dromdelgy hills to Kilcooley and onwards until it met the river Suir.¹² The tribe of the Ossorians were expelled from Magh Feimhin by the Deices tribe in the mid fifth century, from then until the seventh century the Deices tried to gain control of parts of central Ossory. In the 8th century the Ossorians gained control again.¹³

Although Ossory became assimilated into Kilkenny it still exists to the present day in the form of the Roman Catholic diocese of Ossory. It was at the synod of Ráth Bressail in 1111 that the diocese was established and it practically followed the boundaries of the ancient kingdom of Ossory. William Carrigan, writing in the late nineteenth century, claims that the diocese of St Kieran was called after that clan from which the saint came, and that the diocese as it was

¹⁰ John Hogan, *Kilkenny: the ancient city of Ossory, the seat of its kings, the see of its bishops and the site of its cathedral* (Kilkenny, 1884), pp 57-58; Carrigan, *Ossory*, i, p. 2.

¹¹ Carrigan, *Ossory*, i, p. 2.

¹² Hogan, *Kilkenny*, pp 57-58.

¹³ Carrigan, *Ossory*, i, p. 2.

when Kieran died remained almost unchanged until the nineteenth century.¹⁴ This is borne out by the fact that the diocese of Ossory in the 21st century still includes the Gaelic territories of the Mac Giolla Pátraics and the O'Brennans. The 43 parishes of the 19th century Ossory still consist of approximately six parishes which are in the present county of Laois and one parish in Offaly. Four parishes which are within the county of Kilkenny are part of the diocese of Leighlin, and one in the diocese of Cashel. This distribution of parishes indicates the extent of the kingdom of Ossory in the medieval period. From an examination of the church diocese, a clear indication of the medieval territorial borders may be ascertained, for example the parish of Aghaboe is situated in the county of Laois but Aghaboe was in the late medieval period, a portion of the Mac Giolla Pátraic territory of Upper Ossory. Aghaboe was also the seat of the diocese of Ossory until the seat was transferred to the city of Kilkenny. This is also the reason why Seir Kieran is still part of Ossory although situated in county Offaly.

As stated above, by the late twelfth century changes were taking place in Leinster which would impact hugely on the social, religious, economic and cultural life of the area. About the year 1156 Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair died, leaving the way clear for Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair to become king of Connaught, and Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn became the most powerful king in Ireland. Diarmait Mac Murchada gave hostages to Mac Lochlainn and, in return for this

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

submission, Mac Lochlainn granted Leinster to MacMurchada.¹⁵ In 1165, events gave Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair a chance to assert his supremacy and also allowed Tigernán Ua Ruairc to cause trouble for his old enemy Diarmait Mac Murchada. Ua Conchobair and Ua Ruairc combined forces and marched through Meath, Dublin, Mellifont and thence to Leinster taking hostages and seeking submission from various kings.¹⁶

In 1166, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair deposed Diarmait as king of Leinster.¹⁷ Although Ua Conchobair did not recognise Diarmait as king, he did not remove from him his hereditary lands at Okinselagh or Uí Chennselaig, an area comprising of the modern baronies of Forth, Bargo and Shelburne in the present county of Wexford.¹⁸ By this time, Diarmait was abandoned not only by his Ostmen allies but also his allies in Ossory and north Leinster and by his protector in the northern part of the country. In addition to this, Tigernán Ua Ruairc and Diarmait O'Melaghlin of Meath joined forces and, along with some of the Ostmen from Dublin made a move on Diarmait's own territory.¹⁹ It is at this time that Diarmait traveled to Bristol and France in search of military support in order to regain his kingdom. This help subsequently arrived between 1167 and 1171 and is known to history as the Norman invasion of Ireland.

¹⁵ G.H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans 1169-1333* (3rd ed., Dublin, 2005), p. 17.

¹⁶ Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, p. 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Upon the arrival of the Normans in 1167, Diarmait granted the southern part of his territory of Uí Chennselaig to the leaders.²⁰ Wexford town he granted to Robert fitz Stephen and Maurice fitz Gerald and they immediately set about establishing a castle at Carrick.²¹ Diarmait granted 'the two cantreds which border on the sea and lie between the two cities of Wexford and Waterford' to Hervey de Montmorency, these consist of the modern baronies of Bargy and Shelburne, it is here that the Cistercian monastery of Dunbrody is situated.²² Ossory was not so easy to subjugate, and Giraldus Cambrensis stated the following in relation to the physical landscape which the adventurers came upon when they tried to march into Ossory

To begin with they did not penetrate far into Osraige, but even at the very fringe of the area, in places that were restricted, and impassable because of woods and bogs, they found that the men of Osraige were no weaklings in defense of their homeland.²³

1169 and 1171 witnessed the arrival of more Normans. These appear to have arrived in two waves, one group led by Raymond (le Gros) fitz William which made land at Baginbun. The second, larger one, under the leadership of Richard Fitz Gilbert de Clare, perhaps better known as Strongbow, landed in Waterford Harbour at Passage.²⁴ At this time, Diarmait regained the kingship of Leinster and his daughter Aífe was given in marriage to Strongbow, thereby

²⁰ Billy Colfer, *Arrogant trespass; Anglo-Norman Wexford 1169-1400* (Wexford, 2002), p. 30.

²¹ Ibid. 30; Giraldus Cambrensis, [Gerald of Wales] *Expugnatio Hibernica the conquest of Ireland* (Dublin, 1978), p. 35; Evelyn Mullally (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland* (Dublin, 2002), pp 88-9.

²² Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 30; Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 35.

²³ Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 37.

²⁴ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, pp 31-2.

cementing the alliance between Diarmait and the Norman leaders.²⁵ Upon his death in 1171, Diarmait's lands passed into the ownership of de Clare through Aife.

The following are just some of the grants of land that were made to Normans by Strongbow after the death of Diarmait. While these are just a portion of the grants made, it does indicate the extent to which the settlement patterns and the social and cultural life of the native Irish people changed forever due to the arrival of the Normans. These changes in land ownership must be noted in order to gain an insight into the make-up of Leinster in the medieval period, their full significance may only become apparent when all of the information presented here is discussed.

After Strongbow inherited Leinster, King Henry II thought it prudent to visit Ireland and did so in October 1171. During this visit he sought submission from his Norman lords, Gaelic kings and Irish bishops.²⁶ During this visit Henry also received the submission of Strongbow. The king removed Dublin and the coastal towns from the control of Strongbow, but the latter did retain Leinster.²⁷ During this visit by the king, he also retained the lands of Wexford from Robert fitz Stephen but upon his departure from Ireland Henry appointed control of Wexford to William fitz Aldelin and a garrison.²⁸ Richard de London, who had been part of the King's retinue, was granted the manor of Rosegarland in Uí

²⁵ Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 67; Mullally, *Deeds of the Normans*, p. 92.

²⁶ Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 67

²⁷ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 33; Mullally, *Deeds of the Normans*, p. 120.

²⁸ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 33; Mullally, *Deeds of the Normans*, p. 123; Gerald, *Expugnatio*, p. 105.

Chennselaig. This land was situated between the rivers Corock and Owenduff.²⁹

And so the native Gaelic dominance of the territory was no more.

Strongbow retained the manor of Ross as his demesne land and after 1173 he also held Wexford town.³⁰ Around the year 1175, Strongbow granted ten carucates and one burgage situated between Ferns and the river Bann to the Knights Hospitallers.³¹ This grant is significant because it indicates that Strongbow took over control of MacMurchada's power base during Diarmait's lifetime. Of the other adventurers, Maurice de Prendergast was granted the territory of Fernegenel which was most probably situated south of Enniscorthy and stretched from the Slaney to the sea.³² Gilbert de Boisrohard was granted the area known today as the Murroes, this was the territory of Uí Felmeda which is situated to the north of Prendergast's land but still borders the sea.³³ Maurice fitz Gerald was granted the area of Uí Enechglais which was situated south of Arklow and comprises of the modern parishes of Inch and Kilgorman.³⁴ This grant is later than those mentioned above but is significant because it meant that the coastal route to Dublin was protected by a Norman lord through a grant of land which came directly from the king. The land had initially been in the possession of Maurice fitz Gerald, son of the abovementioned Maurice.³⁵ In the

²⁹ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 34.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 35, 39; Mullally, *Deeds of the Normans*, p. 127.

³¹ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 40.

³² *Ibid.*, pp 43-4.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

words of the *Song of Diarmait and the Earl* in order to 'appease the Irish' Strongbow granted the kingdom of Uí Chennselaig to Muirchertach Mac Murchada, nephew of Diarmait Mac Murchada, and the 'pleas of Leinster' were granted to Domhnall Caomhánach, Muirchertach's son.³⁶ Two points are immediately evident, firstly a huge number of Gaelic clans must have been forced from their territories and had lost their kingships and secondly the Mac Murchada family remained loyal to the Normans and not to their homeland.

Strongbow died in 1176 and it is at this time that King Henry II styled John, his youngest son, as lord of Ireland. William fitz Aldelin was given the custody of Wexford by the King at the same time.³⁷ Meanwhile Isabella de Clare, daughter of Strongbow and Aífe, had inherited Leinster upon the death of her father in 1176. The fortunes of Leinster were about to change rapidly. Isabella heiress of Leinster, married William Marshal in 1189.³⁸ John granted the manor of Arklow to Theobald Walter but it was stipulated that the land be held of Marshal.³⁹ In 1199, Marshal was created Earl of Pembroke and probably made his first journey to Ireland in 1200. It is most likely during this visit that the foundations of both Tintern Abbey and Duiske Abbey were made by the earl, in addition to the foundation of the port of Ross and the lighthouse at Hook Head. From this time until 1207, William was exiled from Ireland and during this

³⁶ Ibid; Mullally, *Deeds of the Normans*, p. 109.

³⁷ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 46; Orpen, *Normans*, p. 154.

³⁸ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 46; David Crouch, *William Marshal: court, career and chivalry in the Angevin empire 1147-1219* (London, 1990), p. 61.

³⁹ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 46; Orpen, *Normans*, p. 140; *Ormond Deeds 1171-1350*, no. 17.

period of exile, Geoffrey fitzRobert remained in Ireland in charge of Leinster.⁴⁰ In 1208 Marshal returned to Ireland and established his stronghold at Kilkenny from where he controlled Leinster and his castles in Offaly.⁴¹ In 1210, the central and southern portion of the ancient kingdom of Ossory was made shire-land, and became known as Kilkenny.⁴² The Mac Giolla Pátraics were expelled from their former territory and established a settlement in what then became known as Upper Ossory, which is situated in the present county of Laois and is still part of the diocese of Ossory. During the period of William's leadership Leinster was stable and the settlement of Kilkenny began to thrive.⁴³

Between 1200 and 1208 Leinster was divided into four shires, or counties in order to facilitate administration. These four shires, Kilkenny, Carlow, Kildare and Wexford constituted the territory of Leinster in the early thirteenth century. By this time too, the monasteries of the Cistercian Order situated within the province were well established. Unfortunately many of the grants of land made about this time are not extant so we must turn to later documentary evidence in order to determine the boundaries of the territory.

The first major series of references to the boundaries of the territory of Leinster comes after the death of William Marshal the younger and the subsequent division of land. In 1233 Richard succeeded to William's lands. Richard was in his castle in that year of 1233 when he granted the wood of

⁴⁰ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 46.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Carrigan, *Ossory*, i., p. 2.

⁴³ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 71.

Duncannon to the Cistercians of Dunbrody Abbey.⁴⁴ During this time he also set the boundaries of the forest on the manors of Old Ross and Taghmon.⁴⁵ In April 1234, Richard Marshal died from wounds received at the battle of the Curragh, therefore the land had to be divided between the five daughters of William Marshal. This division was made on 03 May 1247 at the King's court at Woodstock.⁴⁶

The land was divided into five equal shares, each with an estimated annual value of £343 5s 6½d.⁴⁷ From this, it may be estimated that the annual value of Leinster was £1,716 7s 8½d. Each of the five shares included a chief borough and a 'body of the county', the latter may be defined as either a tract of land or the actual landholders living upon it.⁴⁸ The land included in the division more or less consisted of the land which today makes up the counties of Carlow, Wexford, Kilkenny and Kildare and also included the territory around the O'More stronghold at Dunamase, presently part of county Laois.⁴⁹ Therefore, it can also be assumed that at least during the early period of Norman occupation this abovementioned territory completed the lordship of Leinster.

The five daughters among whom the land was divided were Matilda or Maud, Joan, Isabel, Sibyl and Eva. The lands which each inherited are shown in

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; J.T. Gilbert (ed.), *Chartularies of St Mary's Abbey Dublin* (2 vols., London, 1884-6), i, p. 160; Hore, *Wexford*, iii, pp 60-61.

⁴⁵ Colfer, *Arrogant trespass*, p. 154.

⁴⁶ Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, p. 319.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

the tables below. Two lists of names appear, the first is the place name as listed in its thirteenth century form, the second is the modern place name as listed in the 2005 edition of Goddard Orpen's work *Ireland under the Normans*.⁵⁰

Table 2: Portion of land granted to Matilda Marshal in 1247

Thirteenth century place name	Modern place name
Katherlak burgus	The town of Carlow
Corpus comitatus cum assisis et perquisitis	
Ballidunegan (Ballidongan <i>Babc</i>)	Dunganstown or Bestfield nr Carlow
Futhered (Fothyrd <i>Bbc</i>)	<i>Fortha ui Nualláin</i> Forth and part of Rathvilly
Tamulyn (Thamolyn <i>Ba</i>)	St Mullins
Castrum de Ros	Old Ross
Elurgus de Ros	New Ross
Insula	Great Island
Balisex	Ballysax

Thus, the lands granted to Matilda consisted of portions stretching from the north to the south of the territory. Matilda inherited the land of Carlow town and this would have included Carlow castle. Bestfield was, at the time of the partition, the park of the manor of Oak Park demesne. The barony of Forth was also included in her possessions as was a portion of Rathvilly in the present county of Carlow. Matilda therefore, was granted most of the land from Carlow stretching eastwards to the base of the Wicklow mountains on the southern end. These mountains mark the division between the Gaelic territory of *Uí Chennselaig* and the area now known as Carlow. St Mullins, the former great ecclesiastical centre became, in this period, a centre of Norman power as testified by the presence to the present day, of a substantial motte and other associated

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 320-21.

settlement features. St Mullins is situated on the strategic river Barrow and is stated to have had the only ferry crossing on the river. This site along with both Old and New Ross became part of the possessions of Matilda. The river Barrow from Carlow to St Mullins to New Ross connected her possessions, Great Island is also situated on this route. Not only did the Barrow unite her holdings but the river was also a major territorial division dividing on the northern side the shires of Kilkenny and Wicklow, and on the southern side the shires of Wexford and Waterford before the river entered the sea at Waterford harbour.⁵¹

The acquisition of the town of the port of New Ross would have had huge economic benefits as the port of Ross was possibly the largest port in medieval Ireland in terms of trade and excise. Matilda's lands also included the area known today as Great Island. This land is situated on the strategically important Hook peninsula which was home to the two Cistercian monasteries of Tintern and Dunbrody. In addition to this, the Knights Templar owned land at their manor at Ballyhack and the Knights Hospitallers were in possession of their manor at Kilcloggan and Templetown. The tip of this peninsula was guarded by the Hook Lighthouse which had been built on the command of her father William Marshal before 1240. The peninsula lies opposite the entrance to Waterford Harbour and its waters mark the division between the territories of Wexford and Waterford and the lordships of Leinster and Munster. The final portion of land that Matilda gained possession of was what is now the parish of

⁵¹ Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, pp 320-21.

Ballysax, situated in the county of Kildare south of the Curragh. This was a detached manor.

Table 3: Portion of land granted to Joan Marshal in 1247

Thirteenth century place name	Modern place name
Weseford burgus	Wexford
Corpus comitatus, ut supra	
Odoch (Odogh in com. Kilken. <i>Bb</i>)	Odagh, near Kilkenny
Rosclar	Rosslare
Karrec (Carryk: <i>Ba</i>)	Ferry Carrick
Fernes	Ferns
Banno	Bannow Bay
In the vill of Taminie (Taghmone <i>Ba</i>) from the surplus of Kildare	Taghmon

Joan Marshal gained possession of the town of Wexford, along with Rosslare, FerryCarrick, Ferns, Bannow Bay and Taghmon all in Wexford with an outlying manor situated at Odagh. The last place name mentioned, Odagh, is situated about five miles north of Kilkenny city, the mote here is thought to date from the late twelfth century.⁵² FerryCarrick was the site of one of the first castles constructed by the Normans upon their arrival in Ireland in the late 12th century.⁵³ The castle at Carrick was built to defend the area south to the settlement of Wexford which the Normans held. By inheriting Carrick and Ferns, Joan was strengthening the Norman hold over the territory of Uí Chennselaig. Ferns had been the centre of Diarmait MacMurragh's kingdom and by inheriting her great grand-fathers estates Joan was in the position to assure loyalty from the Gaelic Irish inhabitants. Not only was this inheritance a

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁵³ Mullally, *Deeds of the Normans*, p. 89.

financial windfall, it held huge political clout and was potentially the most divisive and therefore most important of all the inheritances. Taghmon bordered her possessions in Wexford town and would also connect with the holdings of her above-mentioned sister Maud. The other property of which she took possession was all situated in the east and south of Wexford.

Table 4: Portion of land granted to Isabel Marshal in 1247

Thirteenth century place name	Modern place name
Kilkennyly burgus	Kilkenny
Corpus comitatus, ut supra	
Dunfert	Danesfort
Locmadran (Loghmethran Ba, Loghmera Bbc)	Loughmerans in St John's parish Kilkenny
Grenan (Brenan Bab, Brenan Bc)	Grenan, Thomastown
Callan	Callan

Kilkenny is the location of most of the land which was inherited by Isabel. The settlement of Kilkenny itself along with land to the west and south stretching to the presently named town of Thomastown was included in this inheritance. These possessions must have bounded the monastic lands of Jerpoint Abbey and Kells Priory and the Carmelite foundation at Knocktopher along with the manor of Knocktopher to the south and the Augustinian foundation at Callan would have bounded the land to the west. Obviously then, by 1247, the former kingdom of Ossory had become incorporated into the lordship of Leinster. The above-mentioned holdings now mark the western boundary of Leinster. Isabel

was a widow at this time and her representative was Hugh le Despencer, it was Hugh, who in 1391 sold the castle of Kilkenny to James, Earl of Ormond.⁵⁴

Table 5: Portion of land granted to Sibyl Marshal in 1247

Thirteenth century place name	Modern place name
Kildar burgus	Kildare
Corpus comitatus, ut supra	
Karberie	Carbury
Ballimadan	Maddenstown, Ballysax parish
Mon	Moone
Kumbre	Castlecomer
Tamminie (Thaghmon, <i>Ba</i>)	Taghmon
Clumena (Clonmen, <i>Ba</i>)	Clonmines

To Sibyl was granted two portions of land with one outlying manor, the two portions were in Kildare and Wexford. The lands of Kildare included Moone, and the area covered by the parish of Ballysax along with the town of Kildare. Situated a short distance west of Kildare town was the Cistercian monastery of Monasterevin. Sibyl shared the manor of Taghmon with her sister. Clonmines borders the lands of Bannow Bay which was in the possession of her elder sister Joan.

Table 6: Portion of land granted to Eva Marshal in 1247

Thirteenth century place name	Modern place name
Dummas burgus	Dunamase
Obboy (Oboy <i>Bab</i>)	Ballyadams
Achkbo	Aghaboe
Karnebo (Carneboth comitatus Weysford <i>Babc</i>)	Carneboth
Vill of Ballysax of the surplus of Katherlak	Ballysax

⁵⁴ Carrigan, *Ossory*, i, p. x; Julian Munby, *Heritage Conservation Plan 11: Newtown Jerpoint* (Dublin, 2007), p. 27.

Vill of Kallan of the surplus of Kilkenny	Callan
Vill of Mon of the surplus of Kildar	Moone

Eva's inheritance covered the territory around Dunamase which would later become part of the county of Laois. Laois, Leix or Queens's County was, as the latter name suggests, established at the behest of a Queen, Mary I. The county or shire then only came into existence after the dissolution of the monasteries was completed in the sixteenth century. For the purpose of this study, the area around Dunamase was part of Leinster but the later county into which it was incorporated did not exist at this time.

Aghaboe was part of the territory of Upper Ossory, by the time of the division of Leinster in 1247, this area was the Mac Giolla Pátraic heartland. Although today Aghaboe is part of the county of Laois, it still is a part of the Diocese of Ossory. The monastery here was the location of the seat of the diocese of Ossory up to the late eleventh century, when that seat was transferred to the settlement at Kilkenny.

Carneboth, this parcel of land appears to have been situated on the borders of Wexford and Carlow. Presumably it is Carnew which in the modern period is divided between the two counties of Wexford and Wicklow. This indicated the extent of Carlow in the medieval period. In 1473, this land was granted to the Abbey of Duiske by Donnell Reagh Kavanagh Mac Murrough.

Ballysax was situated in the county of Kildare, south of the Curragh, the manor of Ballysax was granted to Eva's oldest sister so it may be assumed that Eva only inherited a portion of the lands of Ballysax.

Callan is situated in west Kilkenny, part of Callan had again been granted to an elder sister of Eva's, however it is styled 'of the surplus of Kilkenny' so again one may presume that this is a portion of a larger grant. Part of the surplus grant of Kildare is granted to Eva.

In addition to the parcels of land in Kildare that were distributed at the partition of Leinster, virtually all of the rest of the county of Kildare was granted to Margaret Countess of Lincoln, widow of William the younger.⁵⁵ This land also included ten librates in Kildare that were assigned to Agnes de Vescy.

Thus, between the arrival of the Normans and this division of land in the thirteenth century, the external borders of Leinster did not change markedly but the internal borders did not.

A number of points arise here in relation to the situation of the monasteries of the Cistercian Order within these portions of land. It is obvious that the monastery of Monasterevin was situated just within the boundary of Leinster and it and Abbeyleix monastery were almost equidistant from the rock of Dunamaise, they also were situated close to major physical features which will be discussed in more detail below. While Monasterevin was part of the portion granted to Sibyl, Abbeyleix, which virtually straddled the border between what

⁵⁵ Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, p. 329; *Cal. docs. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos. 2949, 2988.

became Laois and the territory of upper Ossory was part of Eva's inheritance. The area around the monastery of Jerpoint which was granted to Isabel must have been the most southerly of her holdings and the abbey lands must have been used as the boundary here. Carneboth which demarcated the extent of Eva's inheritance again bounded the holdings of Duiske Abbey. The lands were so close to the boundary that the area even came into the monastery's holdings in the fifteenth century. Both Matilda and Sibyl's land in Moone and Ballysax must have bordered that of Baltinglass Abbey while Sibyl's portion in Wexford, which included Taghmon and Clonmines was beside the lands of Tintern Abbey. Joan also held land in this area which again must have bounded the land of Tintern. Some of the outlying land of Dunbrody would not have been very far removed from Joan's portion on the east side with Matilda's portion incorporating some areas where Dunbrody held land nearer to the monastery on the western side of the peninsula. Obviously when the lands of Leinster were divided attention was given to the location of the Cistercian monasteries and it does appear that their lands were used as boundary areas and perhaps as buffer zones.

With reference to the internal boundaries of the province from other sources, the Book of Rights mentions the Laighin tuath Gabhair and the Laighin deas Gabhair as being two separate place names, both referring to Leinster. In this instance, the word Gabhair obviously represents a place of great importance. From the way the word is used, Gabhair must be a division of some sort, a line whether physical or mental which divided Laighin into two distinct areas of

North and South Leinster.⁵⁶ It is possible to identify Gabhair as the mountain ridge which stretches from Athy to Gowran. Bealach Gabhrúain is the pass or mouth of the Gabhair, and this pass is situated on the south side of the Sliabh Margy mountains. It is this mountain range which separated the kingdom of Ossory from the kingdom of Leinster and the above-mentioned pass was a strategic entry and exit point into the kingdom of Ossory.⁵⁷ The area north of this mountainous division that is North Leinster, coincides with the modern areas of south Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare. Although the area of South Leinster is roughly the equivalent of the ancient kingdom of Ossory, as we have seen above Ossory was larger than the modern county of Kilkenny which superseded it.

With the death of Strongbow, the Mac Giolla Pátraic's appear to have retained possession of the greater part of Ossory, while MacMurrough maintained most of north and west Wexford. By this time, only the extreme outer areas of Leix had been touched.⁵⁸ However, by the late twelfth century all of this land was taken over by the king and a new governor appointed for the country. The king sent such men as John de Courcy, Robert FitzStephen and Miles de Colgan to Ireland in order to exercise the control of the monarch over the country.⁵⁹ By May 1177, various changes were made at Oxford which

⁵⁶ Hogan, *Kilkenny*, p. 53.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁵⁸ Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 57.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

indicates that the main aim was to divide the country into various lordships which would be either Irish or Norman, but that the O'Connor would remain as the principal Irish ruler.⁶⁰ The obvious reason for this division was to ensure that no one lord or vassal would be in a position to dominate great parts of the kingdom. At this time also John, the youngest son of Henry II was created lord of Ireland.⁶¹

At this time too, a partition of Leinster was decreed with William fitzAudelm taking custody of Wexford and its caput along with the modern county of Carlow, the southern portion of Kildare and Leix. As part of the division, the kingdom of Ossory was separated from Leinster and attached to a part of Waterford.⁶² When Ossory was attached to Waterford, that part of the county extended to the Blackwater near Lismore and this whole area was under the custody of the marshal, Robert le Poer.⁶³ North Kildare, Meath and Dublin were all under the service of Dublin and given into the custody of Hugh de Lacy.⁶⁴ Another division of Leinster took place, although following on from the 1247 division in that the four shires of Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Kildare remained, a fifth portion was created. This fifth part consisted of the lands in the modern counties of Leix and Offaly. These new divisions were not styled as shires in their own right and were still considered to be part of Kildare as the

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

profits from its court and the administration of the new territory were still conducted through county Kildare. Therefore, Leinster was divided into four liberties, each one with an independent government structure within.⁶⁵

The political and administration situation of the area known as the shire of Kilkenny was a peculiar one. The fact that Ossory incorporated parts of Munster in addition to Leinster in the medieval period, is reflected in the fact that a stipulation of Kilkenny county officials was often to oversee shires of Munster, including Waterford, and Cork. The assize court was another area where Kilkenny could appear to be once a part of Leinster and during the next circuit witnessed as being a part of Munster.⁶⁶ Whatever the political reason for this, it is the natural landscape to which we must now turn to answer the question of why Kilkenny came to be so important in this period? It is the physical situation of Kilkenny that caused the settlement to prosper, while reasonably well defended by the natural barriers of the surrounding hills and mountains, it was well supplied by river and road access. The settlement was sustained from the produce afforded by the hinterland. In the words of David Edwards, the Butler Earls of Ormond, by establishing their seat at Kilkenny

controlled a critical avenue between the two most densely populated provinces of Ireland. It followed logically that, should the need to do so ever arise, by threatening to cut this avenue off, the dynasty could hold the Dublin executive to ransom and exact guarantees for the maintenance of its powerful position.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp 187, 209.

⁶⁶ David Edwards, *The Ormond lordship in county Kilkenny, 1515-1642* (Dublin, 2003), p. 12.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Kilkenny is Ireland's largest inland city and it maintained its status as the second town in Leinster until modern times.⁶⁸ It was the dominance of Cerball mac Dúnlainge and his successors the Mac Giolla Pátraic's, of the river valleys during the late ninth century that gave them the power to continue to dominate life in Ossory until the arrival of the Norman adventurers in the twelfth century.⁶⁹

Ormond power was re-established in 1515 and in that year Thomas, the seventh Earl of Ormond held between 40 and 45,000 acres of land whilst this figure was increased by another 19,000 acres when Piers Ruadh became earl in 1538.⁷⁰ This re-establishment of power led to dissent among the Gaelic Irish of the area that may be termed as 'Upper Ossory'. The Mac Giolla Pátraics, the O'Brennans and earls of Kildare all rose up against the Earls of Ormond and this conflict caused the boundaries of the shire to change. From the thirteenth century the northern portion of the shire had been in the shape of a long strip of land, almost identical with the diocese of Ossory. The territory extended as far north as Slieve Bloom.⁷¹ In the sixteenth century the area became shorter but broader, the borders of counties Laois and Carlow changed forever.⁷² From the second decade of the sixteenth century, Upper Ossory functioned as an independent territory, remaining Gaelic and autonomous, it was a kingdom in its own right set apart from the shire and the power of those who ruled it. It was

⁶⁸ John Bradley, *Kilkenny (Irish historic towns atlas, No. 10, Dublin, 2000)*, p. 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Edwards, *Ormond lordship*, p. 13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 18; Eric St. John Brooks, *Knight's fees in counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny, 13th-15th century* (Dublin, 1950), pp 227, 265, 270-2.

⁷² Edwards, *Ormond lordship*, p. 17.

not until the opening of the seventeenth century that this area of Upper Ossory became part of the county of Laois.⁷³ In the words of David Edwards

After 1515 the boundary that separated it from north Co. Kilkenny soon became a hard frontier made up of a series of woodlands and man-made ditches stretching from Coolnacrutta through Coolcashin to Kilmenan and Loughill.⁷⁴

This border was something of an enigma, while it was a political border it appears that inhabitants of either side could cross over at will and instead of being a sectarian flashpoint, it was a location that embraced the cultural and ethnic diversity from which it was created.⁷⁵

Another Gaelic stronghold was situated also in north Kilkenny, that of the O'Brennans of Idough. The fate of this territory was opposite to that of the Mac Giolla Pátraic's, while the latter was no longer part of the shire of Kilkenny the former did become part of that shire.⁷⁶ By the mid sixteenth century the O'Brennan clan was powerless against the relentless onslaught of the Butlers and instead of opposing the earls, some of the clan fought with their forces.⁷⁷ It must be stated that some native inhabitants of the old Gaelic territory still fought against Ormond dominance until the 1590's when they eventually gave in to the power of the earls.⁷⁸ By 1595 the Earl of Ormond had acquired in excess of 5,000 acres of former O'Brennan land in Idough.⁷⁹ Around the year 1605 the former

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 18; *Ormond deeds, 1584-1603*, Appendix 1.

⁷⁵ Edwards, *Ormond lordship*, p. 18.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.; *Ormond deeds, 1509-1547*, nos. 89 (2), 99.

Gaelic stronghold was incorporated into the county of Kilkenny forming part of the barony of 'Fassadinin and Idough'.⁸⁰

By incorporating Idough into Kilkenny and Upper Ossory into Laois this obviously caused the boundaries of Kilkenny, Laois and Carlow to change.⁸¹ Edwards states that 'as no history of Irish county boundaries yet exists, some comments about how this transfer was viewed by the government may be useful. All the more so as the assignment of the Barrow area reveals much about the change in royal attitudes towards the Ormond Butlers that took place after 1603.'⁸² Prior to 1603 the Earls of Ormond were in a strong position because of their connections with the Crown, this status would no doubt have enabled them to change the boundaries as they required.⁸³

All of these changes and internal strife must have had a knock on effect and one area which was affected was in relation to the valuation of land. The townlands of Rosconnell, Loughill and Ballyoskill, were situated next to the border with Laois, in what could only be termed as frontier land. The land was owned by the St Ledger family and from five leases made between circa 1495 and circa 1539, it is evident that the value of this land achieved an eight-fold increase within about a forty-year period.⁸⁴ By the 1560s, land prices in Kilkenny varied considerably. The land in the northern baronies, in areas such as Rosconnell and

⁸⁰ Edwards, *Ormond lordship*, p. 20.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22; *Ormond deeds, 1509-1547*, no. 4 (1)-(5).

Ballyoskill land was only achieving rents of £5 per annum. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the rent had increased to £20 per annum. The price of land in the midland basin was far in excess of the land in the northern region, the border region being approximately three times more expensive. The land of the midland region was better agricultural land, however only small pockets in the northern area were areas of poor production. By the second half of the sixteenth century, the valuation of land in the northern region reached a maximum of 3l 7d per acre. In the same period, land in the Ballyfoyle area was worth circa 5d per acre. By the early 1560's, land in north Crannagh was valued between 2l 9d and 3l 6d. This land was close to Mac Giolla Pátraic territory in Upper Ossory, and was close to county Laois.⁸⁵

The expulsion and re-distribution of the land of the religious orders inevitably led to huge changes in the sixteenth century. It would not be possible for a huge section of a society, especially a section that held so much land, power and wealth to suddenly disappear without some form of knock-on effect. From the rents listed above, it is clear that the value of land per acre fluctuated hugely between areas. In 1560, twenty years after most of the religious houses in the area were dissolved, the most expensive land was to be found in Callan followed by Ballybur, Ballymack and Kilkenny, all of which were situated in the fertile midland basin, other property here included much land from the dissolved houses. Land in the northern and southern uplands did not compare favourably

⁸⁵ Edwards, *Ormond lordship*, p. 23.

with the midland value and the only other region to come close with the midland was the southern lowlands, again this comprised of much of the land of the dissolved monasteries.⁸⁶

In relation to the Cistercian monasteries the two situated within this region were Jerpoint and Duiske. As discussed above the valuation of the land of Duiske in the mid sixteenth century was only a fraction of the price which should have been expected for this monastery. The total valuation for Duiske was 32l 33s 4d with the figure for Jerpoint standing at 67l 17s 4d, bearing in mind that the former monastery held 1642 acres and the latter 1903 acres the difference in the value is significant.⁸⁷ The explanation of course lies in the fact that Jerpoint returned no waste while waste land was recorded at Duiske Abbey. It is evident then that extremely different valuations were present and the usefulness of the land varied considerably even over a relatively small geographic distance. It is clear that by the mid sixteenth century the land in the east of Kilkenny, near to the Black Stairs mountain range and the territory of Uí Cheannselaig was of much lesser value than that in the centre of Kilkenny in the ancient kingdom of Ossory. The blame must lie with the Gaelic clans who laid waste to that land and who were presumably more active when the stabilizing influence of the monasteries was removed.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 24-5.

⁸⁷ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 197, 184.

With the Earl receiving so much of the land from the dissolved religious houses it is clear that the rise in Ormond power was as a direct result in the decline of the religious orders. This power change led to conflict and violence between other families, which, although important in their own right were somewhat left behind as a direct result of the Ormond rise. These families had no choice but to seek help from the Earls of Ormond, in turn granting even more power to the Butler family which enabled them to continue as the dominant landowners in Kilkenny well into the seventeenth century.⁸⁸

The Butler, Earls of Ormond became the dominant force in the shire of Kilkenny and controlled vast amounts of land in the southeast region. By the seventeenth century, the old Gaelic clans had all but disappeared and were almost indistinguishable from the old English families. People such as the Wandesfords now controlled most of the land in the old O'Brennan heartland of Idough and this land was essentially turned into an English manor.

At the synod of Ráith Bressail in 1111, the diocese of Kildare was established. With the establishment of the diocese came the first historical evidence for the boundaries of Kildare. In the early 12th century, Kilcullen was established as a diocese. Later in the same century, the territory of Kildare was divided among the Norman adventurers. Meyler fitz Henry was granted the barony of Carbury, Maurice fitz Gerald received Naas and Offalia, Robert fitz Hereford was granted Narragh, and Salt or Salmon Leap was granted to Adam

⁸⁸ Edwards, *Ormond lordship*, p. 25.

FitzHereford. About the year 1210, the 'liberty of Kildare' was established as one of the original twelve Norman counties of Ireland. In the partition of Leinster in 1247, Kildare was granted to Sybil Marshal. The lands of Kildare at this time also included the modern counties of Laois and Offaly. Agnes de Vesci daughter of Sybil inherited the territory and upon her death in 1290, the land was passed to her son William. Seven years later, William granted the territory to the English crown. At this point 'County Kildare' was established by an act of Edward I. Shortly afterwards, William fled to France and the fitz Geraldts of Maynooth succeeded to the lordship of Kildare. John fitz Thomas Fitzgerald was created first Earl of Kildare on 14 May 1316. The fitz Geraldts remained Earls of Kildare until the Silken Thomas rebellion of 1534-6.

After the failed rebellion and the execution of nine fitz Geraldts, the old Gaelic order collapsed. The buffer zone which the fitz Geraldts had created or maintained between the Gaelic midlands and the English Pale now ceased. From this time onwards, the midlands were open to the ingress of the English administration. It must also mean that an increase in unrest within the Gaelic clans was to be expected as removing the ruling clan must have paved the way for others to try to increase their status. Much of the unrest noted in chapter seven in relation to the Irish clans and destruction of land may have its foundation in this action.

In 1836, the current borders of County Kildare were assigned. When the crown succeeded to the lands in 1297, Kildare included the modern counties of

Offaly and Laois. In 1556, the latter two territories were shired and became known as Kings and Queens Counties. Queens County is so called because it was shired during the reign of Queen Mary I. Kings County is called after the Spanish King Philip II. The river Barrow forms the eastern boundary of Laois from Lea Castle as far south as Castle-Reban. West of here was inhospitable and included uncultivated lands such as 'the great wood' or the bog of 'Moenfanan'.⁸⁹ Two Norman castles, Morrett and Dunamase respectively mark the beginning and end of the great heath of Maryborough. The heath was probably the largest area of completely open ground in the region. The land from the heath to the Slieve Bloom mountains became increasingly hilly and barren to the west and 'the white bog' was situated just to the north of this.⁹⁰

The boundary of the Pale incorporated the outer perimeter of Kilcock, Clane, Kilcullen and Naas.⁹¹ The medieval town of Naas was fortified and enclosed with a circular wall and gatehouse, tolls were charged upon admission to the town.⁹² In 1297, Dublin was established as a county in itself with a separate sheriff and a county court at Kells.⁹³ By the end of the reign of Edward I only two liberties remained in Leinster, those of Wexford and Kilkenny along with half of Kildare, the rest of Leinster came directly under the royal

⁸⁹ Vincent Carey, 'The end of the Gaelic political order: the O'More lordship of Laois 1536 -1603' in Padraig Lane and William Nolan (eds.), *Laois history and society interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1999), pp 213-156 at p. 213.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ M.A. Lyons, *Church and society in county Kildare, c. 1470-1547* (Dublin, 2000), p. 24.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp 24-25.

⁹³ Orpen, *Normans*, p. 330; Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 213.

government.⁹⁴ During the reign of Edward II Carlow and Kildare once again reached the status of liberty and under Edward III Tipperary, Kerry and Lough were all created as new liberties.⁹⁵

During the fifteenth century a maghery was established, this was an area comprising of the Pale and its marcher lands.⁹⁶ By 1488, the Act of Marches and Maghery fixed the boundaries of the maghery as extending from Dundalk to Dalkey and inland for a distance of twenty miles. The boundary of the maghery was, over time enclosed by ditches and castles, these fortifications were used to defend the area against incursions from the Irish. In 1495 Poyning's parliament stated that the inhabitants of the area should construct a double rampart and ditch on the line of the boundary of the march with the maghery and additional ditches between the marches and the Irish. About 1460, orders were issued from the crown for the construction of towers on bridges at Kilmainham and Lucan while a tower was erected 'alongside the walls of St. Mary's abbey to protect Fingal from raiders'.⁹⁷

Boundaries of Leinster

The boundaries of Leinster which follow are mostly drawn from Alfred Smyth's book *Celtic Leinster*. Although based on Smyth, the boundaries listed concur with other sources and physical boundaries and barriers. As will be seen

⁹⁴ Otway-Ruthven, *Med. Ire.*, p. 213.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ S.J. Connolly (ed.) *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1998), pp 424-5.

⁹⁷ Emmett O'Byrne, *War, politics and the Irish of Leinster* (Dublin, 2003), p. 135.

later in this chapter road and route ways were examined and mapped and the roads, particularly in the region of the northern limits of Leinster would seem to support the boundaries as set by Smyth.

The boundaries of Leinster in the period after the arrival of the Normans but before the creation of the Pale consist of the following areas. The northern boundary of Leinster stretched to the mud flats of the Liffey estuary at Dublin Bay.⁹⁸ These mud-flats were said to have been a 'treacherous entrance or exit to an invading army'.⁹⁹ From Dublin, the border went west, following the valley of the river Liffey and then followed the river Rye until it joined the headwaters of the Boyne.¹⁰⁰ Where the rivers join marks the border of the counties of Meath and Kildare and here, in the region of Cloncurry was the site where Leinster was most exposed to Uí Néill incursions. Cloncurry and Dublin appear to be the only regular crossing points between Leinster and Uí Néill territory.¹⁰¹

From just west of Cloncurry, the impassable Bog of Allen set the border of Leinster before it passed west into the modern county of Offaly.¹⁰² The Bog of Allen covers an area of 958 sq km or 370 sq miles. On the Meath side the border appears to have followed the line of bogland along the modern Offaly-Westmeath border, before turning south following diagonal strips of bog across

⁹⁸ Smyth, *Celtic Leinster*, p. 10

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

modern Offaly until it reached the Slieve Bloom Mountains.¹⁰³ From the Slieve Bloom's the border ran East along the upper reaches of the Nore basin, then through the forest and bog which gave protection from Ossory, to the Slievemargy hills, near Castlecomer. The Slievemargy's helped protect the Barrow valley in Carlow from both Ossory and Munster.¹⁰⁴

Again from the Slievemargy's the border followed a line due south along the hills to the west of the Barrow and across the Pass of Gowran to join the Barrow around St Mullins. This border across the hills is the same as the *Gabhair* mentioned above which demarcated the division between North and South Leinster. The Pass of Gowran is the *Bealach Gabhruain* also included above which was situated on the south side of the Sliabh Margy mountains.¹⁰⁵ The Pass of Gowran was the only natural entry point into Leinster and was therefore a major 'frontier post' of the Leinstermen. The *Bealach Gabhruain* is recorded by Gerald de Barry as being an extremely important frontier post for the men of Ossory and this pass or way was very heavily defended against the Normans during their advance in the 1170's. The tidal river which passed through St Mullins isolated Leinster from Munster for a distance north of St Mullins to Hook Head. The only crossing on the Barrow until the bridge at New Ross was by ferry at St Mullins.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Physical landscape

The landscape of the sixteenth century had been moulded by millennia of activity. The principal orogenies that influenced the physical landscape of Ireland were those of the Caledonian and Armorican phases, which also underpin the geology of most of north-western Europe.¹⁰⁶ Of the entire country three-quarters lies below the 150m contour line, with only five per cent rising above 300 metres.¹⁰⁷ It is the westerly winds, blowing in from the warm North Atlantic that are prevalent in Ireland and this gives the mild, wet, temperate climate that sustains good arable growth.¹⁰⁸ Extremes of temperature and huge amounts of rainfall are rare as are heavy snowfalls and harsh frosts. The levels of rainfall are higher in the West, and over all altitudes the fall is greater from West to East, therefore the East coast is the driest part of the country.¹⁰⁹ It is this factor combined with its close proximity to Britain and continental Europe which caused the Eastern part of the country to become predominant. The land varied in quality from some of the richest farmland in the whole island in Kildare, to the most desolate heights of exposed granite on the Wicklow hills, and to basin peat in the Bog of Allen.¹¹⁰

For the purpose of this study, it is essential to note that the majority of the monasteries of the Cistercian order are situated in this portion of the country,

¹⁰⁶ F.H.A. Aalen, Kevin Whelan and Matthew Stout (eds), *Atlas of the Irish rural landscape* (Cork, 1997), p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Smyth, *Celtic Leinster*, p. 12.

east of the Shannon. The lordship of Leinster, the area under examination, lies in the heartland of this fertile east coast. Of the four main soil types, Leinster is predominantly composed of two main types; the North and Western portions of Leinster are mostly composed of grey-brown podzolics, the East and Southern portion predominantly acid brown earths and peats. Peaty gleys are limited to the upper mountainous regions and gleys are situated in the extreme east of the lordship. These peaty soils are very wet due to poor leaching of moisture and obviously do not support much growth. Grey-brown and brown podzols cover a quarter of the country and include the most fertile type of soils. The gleying increases towards the wetter North and West. The most favoured location would be one where this soil type further changes into brown earth of still higher fertility. These brown earth and brown podzolic soils are most frequently found in the south and east of Ireland because of the dryer conditions and better-drained sub soils. They support a wider land use capability and will produce both good grass and arable land. Therefore, it is this area which enables crop rotation and causes the farmers of these soils to be more adaptable to changes in the market.¹¹¹

In all parts of Ireland the dominant economy is livestock production. In the south east of Leinster, tillage is the most notable form of production. Therefore, in the area under study, the land use capability is predominantly wide and four agricultural regions can be identified. Dublin and its hinterland is a

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

mixed agricultural region leading on the north west into midland grazing region, counties Kildare, Carlow, Wexford and Laois predominantly support livestock and arable, while the ancient kingdom of Ossory would predominantly be dairy and cattle rearing.

Gerald de Barry, in his *Topographia Hiberniae*, presents an interesting vision of Ireland in the twelfth century. The country is one of long magnificent rivers, beautiful lakes a country abounding in sea-life, with hawks, falcons and the majestic eagle gracing the skies above.¹¹² Cranes, peacocks, falcons, barnacles, ospreys, kingfishers, swans, storks, and crows abound.¹¹³ Stags, boars, hares, badgers, wolves, foxes and mice are all present but wild goats, hedgehogs, polecats and reptiles are absent.¹¹⁴ The climate is described as temperate with little snow and moderate winds.¹¹⁵ Gerald states that 'the meadows are not long out for fodder nor do they ever build stalls for their beasts' and furthermore states that a spring-like season prevails for most of the year.¹¹⁶ The rain is plentiful with much cloud and fog and it is rare to have three consecutive days without rain.¹¹⁷ When writing of the dress of the natives he indicates that they used very little wool in their clothing and that what they did use is nearly always black as most of the sheep were that colour.¹¹⁸ The country thus described

¹¹² Giraldus, *Topography*, pp 36-40.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp 40-50.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

appears to be a haven for birds and animals, the landscape beautiful and the natives barbarous, rough and uncouth. What then of the landscape, people, practices and organisation of the sixteenth century? This was a period, comparable to that when Gerald was writing a period of unrest, massive social and political change and a time when the ownership of huge amounts of land changed due, principally, to the dissolution of the monasteries.

Rivers

From the supporting maps it is evident that the extent of the territory of Leinster coincided to a large extent with the drainage basins of the Barrow, Liffey, Slaney and Avonmore rivers.¹¹⁹ Leinster contains five major rivers, the three sisters of the Nore, Suir and Barrow, along with the Slaney and Liffey. It is prudent to note that each of the monasteries were situated on rivers.

Mountains

Leinster is divided by huge granite mountain ranges. Two main ranges exist, one in the north Wicklow region which virtually cuts off north Wicklow from south Dublin. This range runs from Wicklow southwards as far as Tinahely. The second range, the Blackstairs mountains runs south from the Myshall, Kildavin area of Carlow through the present county of Wexford as far south as the once major sea port of New Ross.

¹¹⁹ Smyth, *Celtic Leinster*, p. 12.

These two mountain ranges essentially cut off the ancient territory of Uí Chennselaig from the rest of Leinster. In addition it forms a huge natural barrier between the ancient territories of Uí Chennselaig and Ossory, a barrier that is reinforced by the presence of the rivers Barrow and Slaney. It is interesting to note that no Cistercian monastery is situated in this region of Uí Chennselaig, although they did hold land there. Two monasteries, Tintern and Dunbrody, are found further south past the mountain granite barrier and a further two, Duiske and Killenny, were situated on the Barrow just to the west of the Blackstairs with Baltinglass situated on the western side of the Wicklow mountains. The aerial view of Baltinglass shows clearly the close proximity of the monastery to these uplands. (Figure 11)

The mountains belong to the period of Caledonian folding as is evident from the north-east to south-west direction in which they lie.¹²⁰ Both ranges developed on a granite mass which originally encroached into overlying Ordovician strata, however denudation over the millennia exposed the granite. This granite, in the present day, as it did in the sixteenth century, forms the most extensive continuous tract of high ground in the country.¹²¹ It is this mass that formed a huge natural barrier between the areas lying to the east and west of the mountain range. Between the two ranges of the Wicklow and the Blackstairs

¹²⁰ Aalen et al., *Atlas of the Irish rural landscape*, p. 13.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

mountains flows the river Slaney in its own valley, this valley is the only lowland route through these mountains.¹²²

The northern portion of these granite uplands is drift-free and rolling, mostly lying above 300 metres.¹²³ The land is difficult to access and, because of the presence of much blanket bog is really only suitable for sheep.¹²⁴ Nestled here, is the early Christian monastic site of Glendalough with its associated buildings. Access to the monastery from the east was situated the mountain pass of the Sally Gap which still exists to the present day. On the southern end, in county Wexford, the mountain gives way to a fertile lowland which is essentially bog free and well-drained.¹²⁵ This area is long renowned for high quality farming. Two Cistercian monasteries are situated here.

The Slievemargy hills guarded the heartland of the Leinster of the sixteenth century and also provide the natural boundary of Ossory on the northern side. These hills stretched from Timahoe in county Laois as far south as Kilkenny city. The Slieveardaghs offered protection to the city and its hinterland on the west with Slievenamon and the Comeragh mountains further to the south. Thus the ancient kingdom of Ossory was protected by mountains on three sides and stretched to the sea on the fourth, the south. The heartland of Kilkenny, and the most fertile part of the territory, developed on Carboniferous limestone

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 14.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

overlain with glacial till.¹²⁶ The plain stretched to the Castlecomer Uplands on the north east side and extended on the south side to the Walsh mountains.¹²⁷ This area included most of the land owned by Jerpoint Abbey. The plain on the west side reached to the Slieveardagh Hills and on to the boggy area that delineates the boundary between Leinster and Munster.¹²⁸

The Slieve Bloom Mountains, which form the western boundary of Leinster running south from Meath are formed on anticlinal inliers of old red sandstone and silurian slates and shales which underlie the carboniferous limestone.¹²⁹ These mountains support uplands, lowlands, and broad valleys, the area is well-drained and almost bog free and is the home of the richest pasture land in Ireland as exemplified by the term the 'Golden Vale'.¹³⁰

Wood cover

In the early Christian period, very little of the primeval forest remained undisturbed and most of the woodlands which were destroyed in this period were of secondary and tertiary growth.¹³¹ Historical evidence suggests that the extent of the Norman invasion and settlement was closely related to the woodland cover of the period. This woodland, during the early days of the

¹²⁶ Bradley, *Kilkenny*, p. 1.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Aalen et al., *Atlas of the Irish rural landscape*, p. 12.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Frank Mitchell and Michael Ryan, *Reading the Irish landscape* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1998), p. 248.

invasion was used in the construction of defensive features as Giraldus Cambrensis recorded.

Meanwhile, as the earl was making his way to Wexford, the army of the men of Leinster advanced to engage him in the pass of Uí Dróna. The natural situation of this place made it narrow and impassable, but it had in addition been very much strengthened by artificial means, using felled trees.¹³²

So he [Diarmait] retreated with his followers within an area not far from Ferns which was sealed off from all sides by very thick forests, steep mountains, rivers and bogs, and which the nature of the terrain and its position made extremely inaccessible. Here with FitzStephen's help he set about felling trees, made the woods impenetrable from all sides with fallen trees and logs joined together, broke up the level ground with deep pits and trenches, prepared for their own sallies hidden and narrow entrances and exits by tortuous routes, and in short made the terrain passable for himself and his followers and impassable for the enemy, thus greatly increasing its natural difficulty by artificial means.¹³³

As the Normans settled, they cleared large areas of woodland and instead utilised the area as agricultural land. Save for cartographic evidence, very few sources remain to enable the historian to build a picture of the woodland cover from this period until the close of the sixteenth century. Eileen McCracken in her article 'The woodlands of Ireland circa 1600' states that the proportion of woodland cover in Ireland at the end of the sixteenth century was probably one eighth.¹³⁴ The woodland cover seems to be more dense in the southern and north eastern portions of the country; Cork, Kerry and Clare along with Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford carried the greatest density of woodland cover and in the south east, this concentrated particularly along the rivers Barrow and Slaney. However, the most extensive area of woodland in Ireland appears to be the oak

¹³² Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 87.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹³⁴ Eileen McCracken, 'The woodlands of Ireland circa 1600' *I. H. S.*, xi (1959), pp 271-314, at p. 274.

forests of Killetra, Glenconkeyne and Monterivelin all situated on the north west of Lough Neagh and stretching northwards towards Coleraine.¹³⁵

Woods in county Limerick stretched eastwards from Rathkeale and joined a long area of forest situated between Charleville and Kilmallock before meeting the Shannon at Pallaskenry. This forest was known to the Elizabethans as May or Maie and filled the valley of the Maigne river. This is the location of the Cistercian monastery of Maigne. Many Elizabethan military reports of the sixteenth century referred to this area as the 'great wood'.¹³⁶ Sir Peter Carew ignored advice and entered into the wood which was 'lined with Irish musketry' where he was killed in 1580.¹³⁷ Woods stretched westwards from Dungarvan to join with the woods of the Blackwater and stretch northwards to the valley of the Colligan river. The upper areas of the Mahon river around Kilmacthomas in county Waterford were also wooded. Woods which lay to the south of Waterford city followed the course of the river Suir to the Tipperary border and from Portlaw, which was situated in the Wood of Kilconish stretched as far westwards as the Comeragh mountains. It is probable that in the Comeragh mountains, these woods filled the narrow gap of Barnakill between the Comeraghs and the Monavullagh mountains and continued down the Nire valley.¹³⁸ On the southern banks of the Suir in Clonegar parish an oak wood was

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 279.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 283; *Civil survey*, vi, pp 90, 93-5, 100, 102, 104, 107-15, 137, 151, 164-5, 182, 190; Charles Smith, *The ancient and present state of Waterford* (2nd ed., 1774), p. 72.

still standing in the mid eighteenth century. Gerald of Wales writing in the twelfth century records the presence of woods in Waterford when he stated

...the plain of Waterford and went a little way into the woods, and there, at the very edge of the woods, lay concealed in an ambush...right into the woodland thickets.¹³⁹

The river Barrow seems to have been wooded for almost its entire length, there was probably a break in these woods at Athy and in the fifteenth century, two monasteries were built, one at either side of the Barrow at the entrance to large woods. Up to the mid eighteenth century the woods at Monasterevin are recorded as still standing, in Carlow it is possible that the Barrow valley had open ground to the north of Leighlinbridge but from the hills on the western boundary of the valley, it was forested. Woods stretched from Leighlinbridge southwards to the sea.

From Tullow in Carlow to the harbour at Wexford, the river Slaney was wooded on either side with the greatest extent being the wood of Coillaughrim situated between Enniscorthy and the Carlow border.¹⁴⁰ The Civil Survey records almost ten thousand acres of wood in the Slaney valley with six hundred acres of underwood. This was the greatest concentration of woodland in the country. These woods extended northeastwards to Wicklow and the oaks of Shillelagh were situated on this Wicklow Wexford border. Oaks from this wood were used in the roofing of both Westminster Hall and St Patrick's Cathedral

¹³⁹ Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 137.

¹⁴⁰ McCracken, 'Woodlands of Ireland', p. 284.

Dublin. In 1654, a forestry department is recorded for Wicklow and Wexford, six employees are recorded; a wood reeve earning one hundred pounds a year, four assistants earning twenty six each and a clerk earning twenty pounds. Similar arrangements were in place for counties Carlow and Kildare.¹⁴¹ The presence of the Shillelagh woods was still recorded in 1661 where merchants were contracted to convert great amounts of timber into pipe-staves.¹⁴² A wood still stretched from Dunbrody abbey to the river on the north side and to Dunbrody Castle on the east in 1682.¹⁴³

Portions of woodland cover are recorded along the western side of the Wicklow mountains. These woods in the Wicklows, and the woods of the Barrow valley gave way to the wide open plain of the Curragh and from the west side of the Curragh stretched the impassable physical barrier of the Bog of Allen.¹⁴⁴ On the north of the Bog of Allen patches of wood stretched to the outskirts of Dublin.¹⁴⁵ This may well be the forest that Giraldus Cambrensis recorded in the twelfth century when he stated that

All were routed and scattered across the plains, and the slaughter continued on a massive scale right up to the edge of the distant forests [outside Dublin]¹⁴⁶

Woodland in the upper levels of the Boyne Valley provided fuel for the iron-working which took place in Clonard and Slaney.¹⁴⁷ These woods still existed in

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 285.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 293.

¹⁴³ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p. 37.

¹⁴⁴ McCracken, 'Woodlands of Ireland', p. 285.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid; *Civil Survey*, vii, pp 191, 223-5, 241; *Civil survey*, v, pp 84, 90, 102, 108, 116, 149, 173, 186, 189-90, 204, 351.

¹⁴⁶ Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, p. 117.

1650 as Cromwellian soldiers are recorded as killing 140 Irish here.¹⁴⁸ A wood, known as 'the great wood of the Picts' was situated near Tara, Robert the Bruce is recorded as passing through here in the fourteenth century but by the sixteenth century this wood was no longer.¹⁴⁹

Sir Henry Piers, writing in the mid-seventeenth century, stated that the only thing in which Westmeath was deficient was 'timber of bulk with which it was formerly well stored'.¹⁵⁰ At the opening of that century woodland in Westmeath stretched in a narrow strip from Lough Sheelin in the northern portion of the country to Kilbeggan which is situated on the southern border. A Cistercian monastery was situated at Kilbeggan. Woods also were to be found around Lough Ree.¹⁵¹

Longford probably had little wood cover by the sixteenth century and certainly by the late seventeenth century only two baronies, those of Clanhugh and Fermoy (Cala) are recorded as having any areas under wood.¹⁵² In 1618 the country is recorded as having 8,400 acres of profitable timber and 12,500 acres of unprofitable wood and bog.¹⁵³ Of the total figures above 5,000 acres of profitable and 9,300 acres of unprofitable wood were situated to the north of

¹⁴⁷ McCracken, 'Woodlands of Ireland', p. 285.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 286.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

Longford town.¹⁵⁴ A wood is also recorded as standing in Killashee on the east shore of Lough Ree and another in the valley of the Inny river near Ballymahon.¹⁵⁵ The area between the Slieve Bloom, the Silvermine and the Galty mountains along with Slieve Felim, lies mostly between 300 and 600 feet and woods lay on the slopes of these mountains with a little in the lowland regions.¹⁵⁶

Seventeenth century military records state that the Irish had resisted the invaders because they took refuge in the bogs and woods as far as possible. Within these woods, it was then difficult for the English cavalry to manoeuvre and it was dangerous for small infantry units to travel through. The passes, it is recorded, were only wide enough for horses to move through in single file.¹⁵⁷ In 1601, it is recorded in 'A Discourse of Ireland' that

the woods and bogs are a great hindrance to us and help to the rebels, who can, with a few men, kill as many of ours in a wood... It would have been a better course to have burnt down all the woods...¹⁵⁸

In 1625, a commission was established to inquire into the waste of woods and this commission was told that Chichester had cut 600 oak trees with which to build his two houses in Carrickfergus and Belfast. Oak had also been cut for the roofs of both Grey Abbey and Comber Abbey.¹⁵⁹ Approximately forty years later in 1661, the crown ordered that woods should be inspected before any felling

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 287.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 286

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp 287-8.

¹⁵⁹ McCracken, 'Woodlands of Ireland', pp 289-90; R.M. Young, *Historical notes of old Belfast* (1896), p. 41.

could take place.¹⁶⁰ By the year 1700 it is recorded that wood for the purpose of construction in Ireland was being imported from Scotland.¹⁶¹ Timber for casks for the exportation of such products as salted foods had to be imported from as far away as the Baltic and America.¹⁶²

Although woodland cover had been much depleted by the sixteenth century, Ireland is stated to have been heavily wooded up to the close of that century.¹⁶³ The presence of forests is recorded in many early documents and hagiographies. The *life of St Moling* tells of 'dense forest in a very rugged valley' in the vicinity of his monastery at St Mullins.¹⁶⁴ Presumably, this refers to Glyn on the eastern side of the river Barrow. It is known that much of the western bank as far as Slievemargy was heavily wooded.¹⁶⁵ Roscore Wood south of Rahan, Fid Elo near Lynally and Coill an Cláir, Kilclare are all recorded in the *Life of St Colmán*.¹⁶⁶ The life of St Kevin of Glendalough records the presence of large areas of woodland in Early Christian times. In the north western area of Seirkieran a forest blocked the path of a Munster army.¹⁶⁷ It falls to both place name and cartographic evidence to record the presence of a large forest covering the foothills of the Slieve Bloom mountains while on the same map the 'Great wood'

¹⁶⁰ McCracken, 'Woodlands of Ireland', p. 293.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 293.

¹⁶³ Kenneth Nicholls, 'Woodland cover in pre-modern Ireland' in Patrick Duffy, David Edwards and Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (eds) *Gaelic Ireland land, lordship and settlement c.1250-c.1650* (Dublin, 2001), pp 181-206 at p. 181.

¹⁶⁴ Smyth, *Celtic Leinster*, p. 25.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

of Laois was recorded as lying at Kilberry, north of the Barrow.¹⁶⁸ The Annals of Ulster tell us that the fitz Gerald Earls of Kildare had cut down much of this wood as early as 1514. The reason was to break the natural defences of the Gaelic kingdom in which it was situated.¹⁶⁹ The forest of Offaly survived into the sixteenth century, where it is recorded as stretching west from the bank of the Barrow across Meath and Offaly to the foothills of the Slieve Bloom mountains.¹⁷⁰ Many areas of Laois and Offaly must once have been under woodland as the presence of so many 'ros' and 'derry' placenames suggest, the former translating as 'forest', the latter 'oakwood'.

From such an extensive list, it would be expected that the overall figure for woodland cover within the Cistercian monasteries in Leinster would be higher than the 2% found. The overall figure from the houses listed at dissolution was also 2%. When the Leinster figure is broken down by each monastery in Leinster Abbeyleix was found to have by far the largest amount of woodcover recorded at 74%, this was the only monastery within the territory to have a figure of over 3% of the overall land associated with the monastery. Baltinglass returned a figure of 3% with Jerpoint, Mellifont and Tintern both recording 2% each. Outside of Leinster, the figures were only marginally higher with Inishlounaght giving a value of 5% and Fermoy 4%, Kilcooley, Maure, Dunbrody and Bective all record a nil return.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

Roadways

The positioning of monasteries of the Cistercian Order within the physical landscape is a critical part of this study. As such, not only is it important to examine the locations in a physical sense but the situation in relation to man made features must also be essential. St Benedict, in his Rule stated that the monasteries should be situated 'far from the conversations of men' in remote areas away from the hustle and bustle of life in the medieval world.

This section of research is to determine if, in fact that was what did happen. It is obvious from the record above that the monasteries were situated close to many of the boundaries discussed, both the internal and external limits of Leinster appear to be inextricably linked with the lands and monasteries of the Cistercian order. This portion of the study will determine if the same can be stated in relation to road, route and waterways.

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to firstly plot any roads which existed prior to the arrival of the White Monks in Ireland in the twelfth century. Detailed sources for the situation of roads prior to the eighteenth century are not abundant. Therefore, this part of the paper will depend on two main sources. The first, and most modern, is an article by Colm Ó Lochlainn of University College Dublin, which was published in 1940 entitled 'Roadways in Ancient Ireland'. The author based his findings on entries in the various Annals which related to roadways or passes, either river crossings, or passes through mountain or bog. Place name evidence was used also and any place name with

an element meaning 'a ford', 'a bridge', 'a breach or gap', 'a passage', 'a road', 'a wattled path', 'a foot-path', 'a high road' among other elements was included.¹⁷¹ Ancient Royal seats of power were consulted, as were known places of pilgrimage in order to find evidence of roadways. Hagiographies, and other written evidence was consulted, evidence such as the *Táin Bó Cuailgne*, the *Book of Lismore* and *Mesca Uladh* to mention but a few.¹⁷² These sources together, enabled the author to compile a list of roadways which existed in ancient Ireland. The first five roads listed are known as the 'Five Great Roads'. For the other list of roadways that follow, beginning at number six, the heading in each case denotes the literary source from which the list was compiled. As this study is principally concerned with Leinster, the roadways within that province will provide the focus with the research extended to other areas for comparison purposes.

It should be noted here that many of these roads predate the Cistercian monasteries and as such when reference is made to a monastery it is to the location and not the actual monastery that the reference is made. This also indicates that where a name, for example Mellifont, is listed this does indicate that the monastery was constructed at this location with the knowledge that a roadway was passing close by. It is also noteworthy that the lists in appendix 2 contain a large number of placenames and some are separated by a large distance. Where this occurs the accompanying maps indicate the most likely

¹⁷¹ Colm Ó Lochlainn, 'Roadways in Ancient Ireland', in John Ryan (ed.), *Féil-sgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill: Essays and studies presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill* (Dublin, 1940), pp 465-474 at p. 466.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 467.

route which was followed but these are not necessarily totally accurate. The roadways are mapped on the accompanying fold out maps figures 12-16 and listed in full in Appendix 2..

The most important point here is that Monasterevin, Abbeyleix, Mellifont, Bective, Baltinglass, Killenny, Abbeylara and Granard are all listed as locations where these roads passed through, with some recorded as being on multiple roads, St Mary's situated as it was on the outskirts of Dublin would have been well supplied with roads. In relation to the other Leinster houses the Slighe Chualann would have been a little distance away from Duiske and Jerpoint but must have passed within a few miles of these monasteries. It is known that a major roadway connecting Dublin and Waterford passed in close proximity to Jerpoint. The river Barrow would have been the main route connecting Jerpoint, Duiske, Tintern and Dunbrody and this of course also gave direct access to the ports of Waterford and New Ross. The situation of these monasteries to their respective river routes is clearly visible in figures 17-20.

Outside of Leinster, Boyle, Macosquin, Comber, Newry, Knockmoy, Monasternenagh, Kilcooley and Hore were all positioned in close proximity to various roadways with Holy Cross a little distance from the nearest.

Slí

A number of Slís are also listed in *Celtic Leinster* written by Alfred Smyth in 1982. This list amounts to seventeen roadways, included, as above, are passes

and river crossings. This list is focused on Leinster only. While there is some overlap between both records, these are few so the author has decided to list both in their entirety from each respective publication. When the accompanying maps are consulted, it becomes immediately obvious where this overlap occurs.

1. Many square miles of basin peat surrounded Clonmacnoise with a narrow access route in excess of 10 miles in length that led along a limestone gravel esker into Meath. In the later medieval, this became known as the Pilgrim's Road.¹⁷³

2. At Glendalough, St Kevin's Road was used by pilgrims to cross the mountains from the Kildare Plains.¹⁷⁴ It connected the lands of the Curragh and Knockaulin hill-fort with Glendalough and thence to Arklow through the Avonmore valley.¹⁷⁵

3. The Sligh Dála or Road of Assemblies joined Roscrea with the Plain of Liffey.¹⁷⁶ This has been discussed above.

4. The Slige Mór or Great Way ran from Brega to Athlone, Rahugh lay near this Slí. Rahugh also lay on the only major route from Northern Ireland into Munster which passed near Durrrow, Tihilly, Lynally, Drumcullen, Kinnity, Seirkieran, Roscrea and Birr.¹⁷⁷ The full route of this road had been outlined previously.

¹⁷³ Smyth, *Celtic Leinster*, p. 29

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 29

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

5. The Sally Gap connected the eastern Liffey with the upper areas of the Vartry and the Avonmore.¹⁷⁸ (Figure 21)
6. The Slige Chualann or the Cualu Road was situated on the western side of the Wicklow hills.¹⁷⁹ This has been included above.
7. The Scullogue Gap also known as Berna an Scala was a pass high in the Blackstairs south of Mt Leinster which led to the forested areas of Bantry and Ross.¹⁸⁰ This gap would have held great significance for the monks of Duiske as the monastery held land on both sides of the mountain range. (Figure 22)
8. The pass from Mag Ailbe in northern Carlow into Wexford passed between Clonegall and Bunclody and led from Rathvilly down the Slaney valley to Wexford. The ancient Fid Dorcha or Dark Forest later known as the 'fastness of Leverocke' guarded the way to southern Uí Chennselaig.¹⁸¹ This cordon of forest and mountain completely sealed off Wexford from the rest of Leinster.¹⁸²
9. Two trackways joined the monastery of Kildare and the plain around it with the ancient Mag Rechet in Laois. One was from Monasterevin to Coolbanagher.
10. The other crossed the Barrow further south and entered the Great Wood. (Figure 23) This pass then entered the Great Heath of Maryborough also known as Mag Rechet which provided easy access to Coolbanagher, Dysart, and the Rock of Dunamase. From Mag Rechet, the way went through both bog and

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

wood to Clonenagh and then through Mountrath to Clonfertmulloe and further south through a pass between the Slieve Bloom's and Silvermines into Roscrea.¹⁸³

This way was probably the Belach Mór Maige Dála which was one of the Five Roads which legend says converged on Tara.¹⁸⁴ Obviously, this would have been of great significance to the monks of Monasterevin and Abbeyleix.

11. The Slighe Dála Meic Umhoirwas was an ancient road that ran from Dublin to Kildare passing through Monasterevin, Togher, Rathleague, Ballyroan, Abbeyleix, Shanahoe, Aghaboe, Borris and Ballaghmore to Roscrea.¹⁸⁵

12. A way connected Mag Rechet in Laois to Geashill in Offaly and continued from there to Daingean and Croghan or Cruachán in north Offaly.¹⁸⁶

13. A pass linked Rathangan in Offaly with the Drumcooly, Cowley area in north Offaly, this may be the Tuath dá Mag.¹⁸⁷

14. The Slige Mór or Great Way passed along the southern border of Westmeath and Meath.¹⁸⁸

15. The Pass of Kilbride, joined Fir Bile to Fir Tulach.

16. Tyrell's Pass, joined Fir Tulach to Cenél Fiachach.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 72

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 74

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

17. The monasteries of Rahan, Durrow and Lynamally were situated in Mag Lena and were connected by a system of passes with Killeigh in Offaly and ultimately Mag Rechet in the heart of Leinster.

William Carrigan in his monumental work *the history and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory* also lists a number of roads and routeways. These, again, are given in full.

1. The road of blood

This road is said to begin at the monastic site of Aghaboe, and continue through Monahincha, the Bog of Allen, Kilmartin, under the church of Skirke, Clonaghdden, then continued between the townlands of Munnia and Barnasallagh before coming to Britthance well in Ballybrophy. The road continued through Doon, Moonfad, Grange, Lismore, Machaire na Sceach which is now Bushfield and returned to Aghaboe.¹⁹⁰

2. A road began at Roscrea and continued, across the old bridge at Munniamore over the river Nore at the bridge at the west end of Borris town and turned left between the town and the river, it continued on by the north side of Derrin castle to Cashel, Rushall, Castletown and Mountrath.¹⁹¹

3. An ancient road led from county Tipperary over a togher at the well of Rathnaleugh and then continued through Rossmore.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Carrigan, *Ossory*, ii, p. 240.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 139.

4. St Kieran's Road. This road began at Boher and continued through Kierawnin, Fertagh, Borrismore, Adamstown rath, Ballintarsne, where a portion of the road is still visible. From here it passed by Rathealy church, Lisnalea and Callan.

Giraldus Cambrensis also made references to the presence of routeways in his record of the conquest of Ireland. Giraldus also describes how the invaders created their own passes through hostile terrain.

Now Diarmait knew that the citizens of Dublin had called almost all the inhabitants of Ireland to help in its defence and had blocked with armed men all the approach routes round the city, were wooded and narrow of access.¹⁹³

Next day they detailed men to defend Dublin and turned their standards, crowned with the victor's laurel, towards Wexford, advancing by the high route through Uí Dróna.

Meanwhile, as the earl was making his way to Wexford, the army of the men of Leinster advanced to engage him in the pass of Uí Dróna. The natural situation of this place made it narrow and impassable, but it had in addition been very much strengthened by artificial means, using felled trees.¹⁹⁴

He [the king] then returned to Waterford by way of Tibberaghny.¹⁹⁵

Having plundered and ravaged the city and territory belonging to it [Lismore], they brought immense quantities of booty back to Waterford by the coastal route.¹⁹⁶

...abandoned the siege and come to block his path in the pass of Cashel.¹⁹⁷

So he [Diarmait] retreated with his followers within an area not far from Ferns which was sealed off from all sides by very thick forests, steep mountains, rivers and bogs, and which the nature of the terrain and its position made extremely inaccessible. Here with FitzStephen's help he set about felling trees, made the woods impenetrable from all sides with fallen trees and logs joined together, broke up the level ground with deep pits and trenches, prepared for their own sallies hidden and narrow entrances and exits by tortuous routes, and

¹⁹³ Cambrensis, *Expugnatio*, p. 67.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

in short made the terrain passable for himself and his followers and impassable for the enemy, thus greatly increasing its natural difficulty by artificial means.¹⁹⁸

The road leading from Dublin through Maynooth, Innfield, Moyvalley, Clonard and Kinnegad appears to follow the boundary of Leinster as was demarcated in the period before the construction of the pale. A number of roadways seem to have stretched across the territory of Leinster, the one mentioned above joined in with other roads at Moate and continued westwards. A second road followed the line of the abovementioned from Dublin to Cloncurry, and from Cloncurry passed through Carbury which is mentioned twice in the partition of Leinster, onto Edenderry and eventually turning southwards at Birr. This road also follows the division between the kingdom of Leinster and the kingdom of Mide. A road began at Dublin, went through Lucan, Celbridge, Timahoe, Edenderry, passed near Clara and continued west towards Ballinasloe, but four roads led from Dublin southwards to various parts of southern Leinster.

One road passed through Naas which was the major outpost of the pale in the 16th century and continued southwards through Kilcullen, Moone, Castledermot, Carlow, Leighlinbridge and into Gowran. From Gowran, this road went west to Kilkenny, continued through Kilmanagh and Ballinunty into Cashel and onwards through Tipperary, this road must have passed very close to Hore Abbey. It passed to the south of the Slieveardaghs with Kilcooley Abbey

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

situated on the north of these hills and it passed approximately ten miles south of Holy Cross Abbey. The second road passed from Dublin, out through Tallaght, Saggart and Rathcoole and turned south through Ballymoreeustace, Dunlavin and Baltinglass where the Cistercian monastery was situated. This road also passed through Rathvilly which again was mentioned in the partition of Leinster, on through Tullow, Leighlinbridge and then hugged the river Barrow through Goresbridge past Ullard and into Graiguenamanagh. Between Goresbridge and Graiguenamanagh, it would have passed close to two Cistercian monasteries. From Graiguenamanagh, the road must have crossed the Barrow as it also passes through St Mullins, possibly using the ferry which was mentioned above. St Mullins is again mentioned at the partition, the road then passed on through New Ross and into Waterford. The fourth road seems to have originated at Celbridge and continued due south to Rathmore and Baltinglass where it made an obvious diversion to Rathangan and turned back to Tullow where it appears to have terminated. These roadways along with the Slaney, Nore and Barrow rivers insured that the central area of south Leinster by this stage including Ossory, was fairly easily accessible. Again, the area east of the Slaney was left without a sizeable network of routeways, save for some passes over the mountains as mentioned above. Presumably, the fact that this area was easily traversed is one of the main reasons in addition to the physical factors which enabled this central Leinster area to grow and prosper.

The foundation charter of Dunbrody Abbey included a reference to

...the road which goes to Theachmun... and so by the rushing stream may be the boundary of their land ... and thence the public road ... is to be the boundary between them and the Black Monks...¹⁹⁹

In addition the road is said to have passed over Tinnock Hill and on to Burkestown.

What is obvious here is that a huge number of roads, passes and ways existed in the medieval period. When these, along with the rivers, are taken into consideration, it is impossible to say that any of the monasteries were very remote and cut off from general society or from each other. While this may be somewhat opposed to what would have been expected from the text of the rule of St Benedict, it does indicate the forward thinking of the monks and while they may not have constructed the roadways, the men of the Cistercian order appear not to have shied away from the presence of these roads but rather chose to construct their monasteries in close proximity to them. Leinster in particular, was well appointed with access to virtually all areas within the province and while Meath was a separate entity for much of the period under examination, the physical and man-made features examined above seem to have made its inclusion into Leinster an obvious choice. Although many physical features, boundaries of territories and internal divisions are evident, it is clear that people sought to work together to create passes and ways through and around these barriers where they were needed and allowed the boundaries to be guarded on

¹⁹⁹ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, pp 37-8.

other occasions. It is also very clear that the territories of Uí Chennselaig and the homelands of the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles were very much cut off from the rest of Leinster, due particularly to the presence of the Black Stairs mountains. Throughout the period under examination, warfare and strife were constant elements within the lives of these tribes.

It is clear then, that while the boundaries of Leinster did not change very much in the period under discussion i.e. 1140-1540, the area within the lordship of Leinster changed dramatically and on numerous occasions. Two main overall changes occurred firstly when the kingdom of Ossory was assimilated into the province in the late 12th or early 13th century and the second came with the arrival of the Anglo-Normans.

Ossory itself, originated as the territory of the Gaelic clan of the Ossarige and at one point included the Barony of Middle Third in the county of Waterford. In the mid 12th century, at the time of the arrival of the Normans, Leinster did not include Ossory but did include what would later become the counties of Carlow, Kildare, Wexford, Laois, Offaly and Dublin. The territory of Dublin for the purpose of this study was not examined in any great detail except to establish the boundaries of the English Pale and the subsequent formation of the separate entity of Dublin. Prior to the mid 12th century, Wexford was dominated by Diarmait MacMurrough and the territory was known as Uí Chennselaig. The area was bordered by the Wicklow mountains on the north and the river Barrow on the west with the sea forming the boundaries on the

south and east. Immediately after the arrival of Strongbow, many of the territories of the four counties which constituted Leinster were subdivided and became centres of English control. About 1210, the 'liberty of Kildare' was established and this territory included the modern counties of Laois and Offaly, eighty years later County Kildare was formally created by an act of Edward I. Laois and Offaly had to wait another three and a half centuries to be declared counties, this occurred in 1556 during the reign of Mary I and Philip of Spain.

The sources from which to establish the boundaries of Leinster in the 12th and early 13th centuries are sorely lacking. The dominance of Strongbow and his son in law William Marshal meant that a certain amount of written documentation remains but it is not until 1247 that any major sources date from. Upon the death of William Marshal, his son did inherit the lordship of Leinster, but as he died shortly afterwards and no other male heir remained alive, the lordship was divided among William's five daughters. In 1247, the date of the partition of Leinster, only two of his daughters remained alive, so their share was inherited by their sons and or daughters. In one case, the lands were divided in seven ways. In this period, Kildare incorporated the lands of the two counties which would later be known as Laois and Offaly, and it was not until the 16th century that these two counties originally known as Queen's and King's Counties respectively were established by writ of Queen Mary I.

In addition to the above the geological and natural landscape was also examined and comparisons made between the writings of Giraldus Cambrensis

in the 12th century and the physical landscape of the mid 16th century. As part of this examination, the course of the main rivers was established and the type of land and its underlying characteristics were discussed.

It has been suggested that the failure of the Normans to establish complete control over Ireland, is directly related to the natural and physical environment in which they found themselves. The fact that the Gaelic Irish were familiar with the physical features such as bog, mountains and woodland cover meant that they could lure the unwitting Normans into areas in which they were unable to defend themselves. The nature of the landscape was such that only natives could fully utilise the land. The question of how this impacted on the Cistercians was posed and the answer found that the Cistercians settled in areas which were on the borders or periphery of territories and appear to have maintained good relationships with the founding clan and the natives living in the area. It should also be remembered that the monks were native men themselves and as such were in an excellent situation to realise the full productivity from the land. In many cases too these men must have been members of the ruling clans and this would have had obvious advantages, or, in some cases, disadvantages. By using the knowledge of the native dwellers, and introducing new farming techniques and practices, the Cistercians were over time able to turn what would have been considered to be bad land into good agricultural land. The theory that the Cistercian monasteries may have been purposely sited near these contested areas has been presented. It is possible that the opposing clans felt that by inviting the

Cistercians to settle in these areas, controlled by them, it removed the probability of attack from neighbouring and rival clans. When the power of the church in the medieval period is considered, it is conceivable that the presence of the Cistercians in contested areas would have provided a certain stability in addition to effectively closing the land to travellers, as it is highly unlikely that the secular community would traverse Cistercian lands without permission and with impunity. The fact that many of the monasteries had been granted tollage meant that the monks had the right to say who passed through their lands.

The situation of the monasteries of the Cistercian order in Leinster was established. In all cases, the monasteries were found to be positioned in areas of strategic importance and areas which were bounding different territories. Most of the monasteries were positioned on or near major rivers thus insuring that the monks could transfer their produce easily. The roadways, *slís* and passes of the period up to the 12th and subsequent centuries were also examined. As far as possible, these features were mapped and the position of Cistercian monasteries on or near to these roadways was commented upon.

The primary aim of this chapter was to set the parameters for the physical area of principal study. This demarcation of the territory provided a template into which the study and research can be based and allowed a more in depth examination of the terrain to be undertaken. The topographical landscape into which each of the monasteries was situated was established and discussed, it was found that all Cistercian monasteries within Leinster were situated close to route

ways and were also found to be positioned close to internal territorial boundaries within the province.

When the numbers of houses of the Cistercian order in this area are examined, numerous facts come to light. The wealthiest monasteries of the Cistercian order are in Leinster. For the purpose of this thesis, the monasteries included within the territory of Leinster as described in the 15th and 16th centuries, that is, the period immediately before and leading up to the dissolution of the religious houses are: St Mary's, Mellifont, Monasterevin, Baltinglass, Abbeyleix, the former lands of Killenny, Kilcooley, Duiske Abbey, Jerpoint Abbey, Dunbrody and Tintern. Of these eleven monasteries, only those of Tintern and Dunbrody are any great distance from one of the roads mentioned above, Jerpoint was virtually on the banks of the river Nore.

The lands of the former monastery of Killenny are situated due north of Duiske Abbey. The monastery appears to have been situated very close to the river Barrow and appears to have had a roadway pass very close. It was also situated just outside Goresbridge which is less than ten miles from Gowran. It is as yet unclear as to whether Gowran or Goresbridge was the site of the great pass of Gowran which marked the boundary of Ossory and Leinster. If Goresbridge was the site of the pass, then the situation of Killenny becomes more important and the 13th century dispute between Duiske and Jerpoint over the ownership of Killenny may have to be viewed in a new light. Baltinglass Abbey appears to

have been situated next to two roads, one of which makes an obvious diversion toward the east from Baltinglass. The situation of Baltinglass on the river Slaney also indicates a trade route and Baltinglass was founded in the strategically important position of being the first settlement at the foot of the Wicklow mountains from the north side.

Abbeyleix is again situated directly on at least one roadway and is close to the headwaters of the Nore. The monastery at Abbeyleix was founded just south of a great bog which stretched from the great heath of Maryborough to Abbeyleix. The site of the monastery was nestled between the Slieve Bloom mountains on the north west and the Slievemargys on the south east. The river Nore passes close to the monastery and the nearest modern county boundary is situated to the south near Ballinakill at a distance of approximately three miles. The county boundary divides Laois from Kilkenny, however, the diocese of Ossory and the pre-cursor of the county of Kilkenny was situated immediately west of the monastery. The boundary of Laois and Tipperary is approximately ten miles to the west of Abbeyleix and the boundary of Carlow is about the same distance on the east. In the medieval period, Abbeyleix was well supplied with roadways.

The Cistercian monasteries of Abbeyleix and Monasterevin appear to be equally distant from the rock of Dunamaise, therefore both of the monasteries must be in borderland areas. Abbeyleix marks the end of the territory of Dunamaise and the beginning of the kingdom of Ossory. Monasterevin is

situated at the northern most point of the territory of Dunamaise and marks the end of Leinster of the 15th century. To the west, Dunamaise is bordered by the Slieve Bloom mountains and on the east by the river Barrow. From Carlow to Kilkenny, we find the Slieveaughty mountain range which marks the physical boundary which demarcated the territory of Ossory.

Monasterevin lies on the banks of the river Barrow. It would have been situated in a densely forested area, and is just north of the great Norman fortress of the rock of Dunamaise. In the medieval period, it was situated on a number of roadways as have been mentioned above. The monastery is situated just outside the western extremity of the Pale, and the land in this particular area is noted for being very fertile. The monastery lies approximately one mile east of the border with Kildare and Laois, while the borders of Kildare, Laois and Offaly meet approximately two miles north of Monasterevin.

Baltinglass Abbey is situated on the river Slaney in county Wicklow at the foot of the Wicklow mountains. The border of Kildare and Wicklow is due east of the monastery, and the borders of the modern counties of Wicklow, Wexford and Carlow all lie approximately two miles south of Baltinglass. Again, this area was well supplied with roads.

Kilcooley Abbey, in the medieval period was situated in the county of Kilkenny and the lordship of Leinster. Today, it is situated in the county of Tipperary in the province of Munster. The monastery is about two miles to the west of the Kilkenny Tipperary border, it lies on the north side of the Slieve

Ardagh hills and is situated near the Munster river. A roadway is said to have passed immediately in front of the monastery.²⁰⁰ In addition to this the foundation charter issued by King Donald O'Brien referred to the 'fosse to the royal road'.²⁰¹

Although the exact location of the monastery of Killenny is unclear, local opinion is that the monastery was situated in the present parish of Goresbridge, in the townland of Grangesilvia. The monastery was situated beside the river Barrow which is the natural boundary between the counties of Carlow and Kilkenny. Goresbridge is situated in the county of Kilkenny in the diocese of Leighlin, however for a time during the medieval period, it was situated in the kingdom of Ossory. The Slievemargy mountains are on the north side of the monastery and the above mentioned Bealach Gabhair leads from the mountains into either Goresbridge or Gowran.

Duiske Abbey is situated in the present town of Graiguenamanagh and its situation with regard to the county boundaries is the same as that of Goresbridge, i.e. situated beside the river Barrow which is the natural boundary between the counties of Carlow and Kilkenny. Duiske had access to two routeways, one a road and one a river. The road appears to have diverted in order to pass through Graiguenamanagh.

²⁰⁰ W.G. Neely, *Kilcooley: land and people in Tipperary* (Kilkenny, 2005), p. 6.

²⁰¹ *Ormond Deeds, 1171-1350*, 4, p. 2.

Jerpoint Abbey is situated on the little Arrigal which joined the Nore about probably within the complex of the abbey, although Jerpoint is not near any county boundary, it was situated in the heartland of Mac Giolla Pátraic territory before they were moved to upper Ossory by the Normans. Just south of Jerpoint lie the Walsh mountains. These mark the division between north and south Kilkenny in the modern period and presumably was seen as a natural division in the medieval period also.

In County Wexford, two monasteries are situated on either side of the hook peninsula. Dunbrody lies on the west side of the peninsula a very short distance from the confluence of the three rivers; the Barrow, Nore and the Suir at Cheekpoint and these rivers mark the divisions of counties Wexford, Kilkenny and Waterford. From a Charter of protection of the abbey of Dunbrody issued by Prince John in 1185 the monks were also exempt from ferry dues in addition to pontage and lastage.²⁰²

Although outside the kingdom of Leinster, it is interesting to note that Mellifont Abbey, Bective Abbey, Kilbeggan, Abbeyshrule, Abbeylara, Hore, Maigne, Macosquin and Boyle are all situated on or very close to roadways. Grey Abbey is situated on the eastern side of Strangford Lough and a road leads directly to the west side of the lough. A road passed to within the vicinity of Abbeyknockmoy, Kilcooley, Holycross, Tintern, and Dunbrody. Inislounaght and Jerpoint are both situated on main rivers with a greater distance away.

²⁰² Corédon and Williams, *Dictionary of Medieval Terms*, p. 40.

It is evident from looking at these roads plotted on the accompanying maps that Ireland was well appointed with roadways and slíís across the country. Some of these roads may have been to enable farmers bring their produce to the fair, as at Clonmacnois or they may have been the route for invading or retreating armies. Whatever the purpose of the road it is essential to this study to note the presence of so many Cistercian monasteries either situated on or very close to these organised routeways. It is possible that monks in at least some of the monasteries were exacting tolls from persons who were traversing the roadway which passed near the monastery. If the monks were not doing so it was a conscious decision on their part because from the foundation charters of Mellifont, Duiske, Tintern and Dunbrody Abbey's it is known that those monasteries were granted the privileges of tollage and pontage. As seen earlier, pontage was the right to charge tolls to cross a bridge. In return, the toller was required to maintain the bridge.²⁰³

As can be seen from these, many of the monasteries are situated on or very close to, modern county boundaries. In many cases, these modern boundaries follow on from these earlier territorial divisions. The monasteries are mostly situated in areas of extremes within the physical landscape, either at the foothills of mountains as is the case of Baltinglass and Duiske or at the edge of a bog like Abbeyleix or Monasterevin. With this variation of landscape, the land type and quality also changed. This will be the subject of chapter seven.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 223.

Chapter 4

The monastic complex

The main aim here is to place the information in the preceding chapter in focus. As the details of the amount of lands that the monasteries owned, the situation, land type and other associated buildings and possessions has emerged, the next task is to discuss the uses of these possessions. The function of land-holding within the ethos of the Order during the medieval period will be examined. The chapter also seeks to deal with the basic but essential elements of daily life that include the production of food and the fulfilment of the vows of self-sufficiency.

The surviving primary sources will be used and through these documents an image of the organisation of the land and associated structures will be built up. Other sources include studies from disciplines such as archaeology, architecture and landscape archaeology, all of which will be consulted. Again the extents compiled in the mid sixteenth century will be used as a major source.

Sources

In addition to the dissolution extents, the very fact that the Cistercian Order lived within a very tight system of rules and regulations means that, in theory, what applies to one monastery should broadly apply to others, accepting regional, or practical differences. The general outline of Cistercian monasteries follows the pattern laid down in the plan of Saint Gall and this plan must be a

fundamental source when dealing with the fabric and make-up of the monastery, as are the Rule of St Benedict, the *Carta Caratitas* and the *Exordium Parvum*.

In many cases, at some time between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, particular portions of land were, for a time, in the possession of a particular monastery but the ownership had passed to others before the dissolution. In these cases, placename evidence, or local tradition could indicate that the land had been in the ownership of the monks or a particular monastery. While this will be more of an element in chapters six and seven the *Fiant rolls* of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, but more particularly of Queen Elizabeth I, contain many references to lands and other possessions which were, at one time, part of the possessions of the Cistercian houses so these provide a strong primary source.

The letters of Stephen of Lexington, abbot of Stanley, sent to Ireland by the General Chapter of the Order have an important place as a source. These letters were written in the last years of the period known as the 'Mellifont Conspiracy' which ran from 1216 to 1228. When dealing with the events of the conspiracy the letters are totally biased in favour of the Anglo-Norman houses but they do record various items which are relevant to this study. Stephen's account of his visit is, in many cases, the only reference to a particular Cistercian house in the thirteenth century. Particularly important information is contained in letter eighty which deals with a monastery, which could be either Jerpoint Abbey or Duiske Abbey, while it is generally accepted that the letter refers to Jerpoint it is important to note the possibility that it may relate to Duiske.

The Rule of St Benedict

As previously stated, the men and women of the Cistercian Order were bound to live within the instructions enshrined in the Rule of St Benedict. This point is critical to the understanding of the use of land and the amount of land held by the Order. It is as a direct result of this rule that, not alone were the monks required to live by the Rule, but the Order had chosen to live by the strictest interpretation of that Rule, thereby setting themselves apart from other orders of religious men and women, that the need for land arises. It is through an understanding of both the Rule, and the practice of the everyday life of the people of the medieval period, that we can deduce the reasons for, and uses of, the lands and resources of the monasteries. In order to be sure of these functions and ideas it is necessary to examine the physical landscape with its archaeological remains, the vestiges it holds of structures, enclosures, road and route ways which have long gone. It is only through the exploration of the many facets that constitute the landscape in which we live, that we can gain a better understanding of the way in which the Cistercian Order required, used and transformed that same landscape.

Requirements for land

A monastery is defined as a space where people come together to live and worship, therefore it comprises many buildings and structures. The needs of a self-sufficient order of monks were obviously greater than that of, say, the

mendicant orders and, in order to ensure self-sufficiency, land was required. The land was used to rear livestock, provide stone and timber for the construction of the monastery, and fulfill many other requirements. It is through an examination of these same needs that we piece together the types of land and associated structures that the monks required. James Bond, in his studies on the monastic landscape, has calculated the average acreages of foodstuffs required to support a community of monks.¹ When this acreage is considered, in addition to the three year crop rotation plus areas under wood, quarry, river and the actual complex an idea of the size of the area required by the monastery becomes clearer.

Foundation of monastery

If initial foundation grant for the monastery was accepted a number of monks would move to the site of the new monastery and build temporary wooden accommodation while beginning the construction of the monastery proper. Documentary evidence from the Cistercian house of Meaux in Yorkshire provides an image of how the monks began their building and proves the presence of these wooden temporary structures. The site for Meaux was selected by Adam, a monk of Fountains Abbey and the community

caused there to be built on the spot where the bakehouse is now sited, a certain large house (although of base mud) in which the convent which was about to arrive might live until he could provide for them more adequately. He also built a certain chapel

¹ James Bond, *Monastic landscapes* (Stroud, 2004), p. 44.

near his house where the cellarer's chamber is now, where all the monks might sleep in the lower chamber and devoutly say the divine office in the upper one.²

Evidence of timber construction has been discovered at Fountains Abbey where the remains of two wooden buildings were discovered under the south transept of the present church.³

The legislation of the Order stated that before a site could be occupied it had to consist of a church, refectory, dormitory, guesthouse and accommodation for a porter. There is nothing to suggest that these buildings had to conform with the layout of the actual monastery. In tandem with the construction of temporary shelter this first phase would have included the clearing of the site, the laying out of the monastery and the sourcing of stone and timber in order to commence the building.

Natural resources

It is known that the foundation charter often either noted the inclusion of a quarry and/or, a wooded area to provide the raw materials for the building. To give some Leinster examples it is known that in the thirteenth century Stephen of Lexington states that at Jerpoint or Duiske

At least two suitable seculars of the monastery shall be deputed to guard the woods and cornstalks of the monastery lands, and no standing trees shall be cut down for burning while there is so much fallen timber.⁴

² Janet Burton, *Monastic and religious orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1995), p. 135; Peter Fergusson, *Architecture of solitude; Cistercian abbeys in twelfth century England* (Princeton, NJ, 1984), pp 24-5.

³ Burton, *Monastic and religious orders in Britain*, pp 135-6.

⁴ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters from Ireland, 1228-1229*, ed. B.W. O'Dwyer (Kalamazoo, 1982), p. 158.

It is known that Jerpoint Abbey was in possession of a wood called *Grdhcyndrum Rahyn* in 1268.⁵

If a wood was not included among the possessions granted at foundation the charter might include permission for the monks to take what was required from other properties. The foundation charter of Dunbrody Abbey stated that the monks could use the wood of its founder, Hervey de Montmorency. As part of the foundation charter for Duiske Abbey the monks were granted rights to free pasture for their hogs and materials for building and firing throughout all of William Marshall's forests.⁶ In addition it is also stated in the charter that the monks not be made subject to forest regulations.⁷ In a later grant to the same monastery the monks were given the liberty to have wood for buildings and licence for feeding forty hogs in addition to pasture for twelve cows.⁸

Monastic complex

The following description is based on written and archaeological evidence. It is necessary to point out that while the complex of each monastery would not be identical most of the elements listed below would be found to have been necessary for all houses. Many of these elements are to be found in the various plans included in figures 19-24 which depict the plans of St Gall and

⁵ N.L.I. D. 208; *Ormond Deeds 1171-1350*, deed 146.

⁶ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske Charters', p. 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Cluny II along with the Cistercian foundations of Clairvaux, Fountains and Kirkstall respectively.

The monastic complex may be defined as the monastery proper, that is, the church, cloister and accompanying claustral buildings plus the area incorporated by the outer wall and all of the buildings and features within the circumference of that wall, as seen in figure 23. The monastery itself was usually surrounded by two outer walls, both of which incorporated gatehouses. Usually the gatehouse was a two storey building, as testified by the entry in the extents stating that a granary was situated in the upper storey of the gatehouse in St Mary's Abbey.⁹ The structure also would have had to be wide enough to allow carts to pass through.¹⁰ A gate-house remains at Boyle Abbey today although this is dated to the sixteenth or seventeenth century while the structure at Mellifont is dated to the fifteenth or sixteenth century. One of the gate houses at Kirkstall is easily identifiable and it is recorded as being situated 350 feet from the guest house. (Figure 24) Remains of two gate houses survive from the Llanthony grange of St Michael at Duleek.¹¹ Remains of a spiral stairs in the west gate indicate an upper chamber while a stairs chamber, chimney flue and fireplace all remain in the eastern gatehouse.¹²

⁹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 1.

¹⁰ Burton, *Monastic and religious orders in Britain*, p. 146.

¹¹ John Bradley, 'Archaeological remains of the Llanthony granges at Duleek and Colpe' *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F.X. Martin*, ed. idem (Kilkenny, 1988) pp 291-326 at p. 320.

¹² *Ibid.*

Between the inner and outer walls would be positioned various workshop type buildings where people such as the smithy, carpenter, cobbler, tailor and mason could work.¹³ In many cases, once the monasteries were well established the lay-brothers and monks had their own set of craftsmen.¹⁴ Stephen of Lexington makes this clear when he makes reference to 'the lay-brother cobbler'.¹⁵ Areas were also required to build stables, store farm implements as well as stone and wood to aid in the construction of the monastery. The plan of Kirkstall depicts a stable at the guest house. (Figure 24)

Between the monastery and the inner wall were situated the main ancillary buildings such as the brew house, the bake house and an infirmary. These are clearly seen in the accompanying plans. From the letters of Stephen of Lexington it is known that an infirmary for monks and another for lay-brothers, with a third for lay-people was expected to be situated here.¹⁶ About the year 1220 an infirmary is recorded as being among the buildings at Killenny Abbey. A fish-pond was granted to this infirmary by Alan Beg in that year.¹⁷ A guest house for high status guests was probably in this inner courtyard also, along with various gardens, the monk's graveyard and sundry other enclosures and buildings. In letter 80, Stephen of Lexington refers to a guest-house at one of the Irish houses and states clearly that 'no guest was to spend the night within the

¹³ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, pp. 170, 161.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹⁵ Burton, *Monastic and religious orders in Britain*, p. 146.

¹⁶ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, pp. 158, 164-5.

¹⁷ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske Charters', p. 11.

inner courtyard, except only Count Marshall [sic] as a mark of respect', in the same letter he refers to both the 'guest-house kitchen' and kitchens in the infirmary.¹⁸ It is obvious then that a guest-house was to be situated in the outer court-yard. At another point in the same source Stephen stated that

It is strictly decreed that all exits and entrances between the outer and inner courtyard be completely closed up, apart from the large gate which is near the kitchen.¹⁹

Divisions were in existence between various parts of the inner and outer courtyards. Stephen refers to this when he states that

The house where the press was set up is to be divided from the courtyard of the sick with a solid, high fence, and both the rear of the servants quarters and the gate nearest the lay-brothers infirmary shall be completely closed in...²⁰

Presumably the 'press' referred to is a wine press. Stephen also makes reference to a 'middle courtyard'.²¹ Allusion is made to buildings outside the gate-house that the Abbot of Stanley wanted either removed or very carefully controlled and in addition a cottage was situated within the monastery precincts which he wanted closed for the near future.²²

References to enclosing walls at the dissolution

Since the enclosing walls are what defines the extent of the monastic complex it is appropriate to begin by examining the references to walls and associated towers which are listed in the extents which were drawn up at the

¹⁸ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, pp 158, 164, 169.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

²² *Ibid.*, pp 167-8.

dissolution. There are only two references to walls or gatehouses found in the extents, and these are as follows. Baltinglass Abbey is recorded as having a 'curtilage with stone walls'.²³ The entry for Mellifont states that 'the church and divers houses and mansions on the site with certain towers and fortalices are built of stone and surrounded with stone walls'.²⁴ It would be expected that many other walls and towers would have been in existence by the sixteenth century but the evidence indicates otherwise. Perhaps by taking a particular example the lack of walls and other features may become more apparent. Stephen of Lexington made a number of references, in the early thirteenth century, to 'the gate-house', which was situated at either Jerpoint or Duiske, also stating that the porter may give money to the poor from the alms-box, which is situated in the gate-house.²⁵

The monastery

The most obvious and important building located within this complex and around which everything else revolved was of course the church and claustral buildings. It is really only necessary here to point out the fact that virtually all Cistercian monasteries utilize the same layout. Figure twenty five is remarkable in that, although based on St Gall, could be used as a plan for virtually any

²³ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 126.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

²⁵ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, pp 158, 165.

Cistercian house. Immediately surrounding the monastery were situated the ancillary buildings.

Monk's graveyard

The monk's graveyard was often situated outside the eastern end of the church. The exact location of any medieval Cistercian monastic graveyard in Ireland is not certain because the monks were buried without coffins or large stone monuments. However a small number of references are extant which record the presence of a graveyard at a particular monastery. It is known that the monk's cemetery at Duiske was consecrated on 6 June 1204 by Bishop Albin O'Molloy, Bishop of Ferns.²⁶ This bishop was previously Abbot of Baltinglass and served as bishop of Ferns from 1186 until 1223.²⁷ During the dispute between Jerpoint and Duiske abbeys over the lands of Killenny it was stated that the bodies of monks were exhumed from the graveyard at Killenny and re-interred at Duiske abbey.²⁸ Cemeteries are recorded at Abbeyleix and Duiske Abbeys at the dissolution of both monasteries.²⁹ Many abbey churches also had what was known as a 'porte de mort' or death door. This door was usually situated in the north transept, opposite the night stairs and gave access to the graveyard from the church.

²⁶ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske Charters', pp. 14, 23.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁸ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 148.

²⁹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 136, 193.

Abbot's house

According to the Rule of St Benedict the abbot slept in the dormitory with the rest of the monks and no distinction was made between him and the rest of the brethren with regard to things such as bedding and heat. However, it appears that by the fifteenth century, if not before, it was common for the abbot to construct a house on the grounds of the monastery, within the walls. In addition to his duties within the monastery the abbot would be required to welcome and entertain guests and often high status visitors would stay for a time at the monastery and dine at the abbot's table.³⁰ Some of the abbots in the Irish houses had been summoned to parliament because of their prominence as estate owners.

Few references to abbot's lodgings exist in Ireland and it is unknown just how common this idea of building a separate house was within the Order in general, and Ireland in particular. A record for St Mary's Abbey in Dublin states that at dissolution

a mansion [is situated] in the precincts called the Abbotts lodgyng, with all the buildings appertaining to it, together with the Abbotts Garden, the Comyn Orcherde, a close called Asshparke, a granary over the outer gate, the Abbotts Stable, and a close of pasture cont. 3 acr. called Ankerest parke, facing the monastery-wall on the north.³¹

It is possible that the upper floor of the fifteenth-century tower in Jerpoint Abbey was used by the abbot as his private quarters but it is unlikely that the abbot would place himself in a room directly above the abbey's bells and much more

³⁰ Price, *The plan of St Gall in brief*, pp 38-41.

³¹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 1.

conceivable that, if an abbot wanted a private dwelling at the abbey it would be situated at ground level. The *archaeological inventory of county Wicklow*, published in 1997 states that the 'abbot's castle' at Baltinglass Abbey was only demolished in 1882 to provide materials for the construction of the nearby rectory, obviously it is possible that this was a residence for the abbot.³² It has been suggested that the 'mansion', recorded at Mellifont at dissolution was the abbot's residence but there is no evidence to support this theory.³³ An Abbot's house is clearly depicted on the plan of Fountains Abbey (Figure 22). The recently published archaeological report of the findings at Kells Priory, Co. Kilkenny records the presence of 'the Prior's tower' which appears to have been a fifteenth century construction.³⁴ This report also mentions other such buildings constructed at various locations in Ireland.³⁵

Gardens

The plan of St Gall shows that an area within the precinct was set aside for various gardens including physic, herb, kitchen and ornamental.³⁶ Each of these gardens had a specific location usually close to a building where these raw materials would ultimately be used. In total the gardens of the monastery could

³² Eoin Grogan and Annaba Kilfeather, *Archaeological inventory of county Wicklow* (Dublin, 1997), p. 187.

³³ Rachel Moss, 'Mellifont: from monastery to mansion' in *Irish Arts Review*, Autumn 2007, vol. 24, no. 3, pp 85-7 at p. 86.

³⁴ Clyne, *Kells Priory*, p. 508.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 508-9.

³⁶ Price, *The plan of St Gall in brief*, pp 10-11.

cover up to ten or twelve acres and were usually enclosed with walls, hedges or wicker fences. On some occasions the garden could have had water pipes and drains installed. If the abbot had his own house, a garden would often be attached to this. Nine Cistercian monasteries are recorded as having gardens at dissolution. These nine houses accounted for a total of fifty gardens. In addition, two monasteries are recorded as having had orchards. It is possible that the cloister garth, situated in the very centre of the monastery, may have incorporated an herb garden, this was probably a feature of most houses.

Bees

Many of the monasteries would have kept bees and the hives would have been placed in, or near, gardens. In an age when sugar had not yet been introduced into the diet, honey would have been much sought after. The antiseptic properties of honey were probably well known, and drinks such as mead could be produced. Mead may have played an important role in some monasteries where it was drunk on feast days in place of ale.³⁷ Large amounts of bees would be required in order to produce and maintain supply of candles within the monastery. The honey could be sold if the monks so wished.

³⁷ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 162.

Orchards

Orchards were used to grow various types of fruits and would have been a common sight in the medieval monasteries. The plan of Saint Gall shows apples, pears, plums, peaches, mulberries, figs and cherries among other fruits growing in the cemetery garden. Presumably at least some of these fruits would have been grown in Ireland, possibly other fruits such as raspberries, strawberries and in times of warmer phases grapes were to be found also. The Plan indicates that, in St. Gall at least, the monks graveyard was incorporated within the orchard. The cemetery had thirteen planting areas and fourteen burial plots.³⁸

It is conceivable that some of the monasteries may have produced cider if they had good crops of apples. Beaulieu Abbey, Battle Abbey and Abingdon Abbey are all recorded as producing cider in the 13th and 14th centuries. Warden Abbey in Bedfordshire was first to propagate and grow the Warden pear which was widely cultivated in the 13th century, and these were used particularly for baking in pies.³⁹

Hazel

It is well known that hazel was utilised in the construction of the barrel vaulted ceilings in many of the Irish Cistercian houses. Examples of the wicker

³⁸ Price, *The plan of St Gall in brief*, p. 67.

³⁹ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 164.

work centring may still be found in the sacristy and transept chapels of Jerpoint Abbey. The hazel nuts could be harvested and eaten by the monks and it's possible that they sold some of the surplus. Hazelnuts were determined in the sample of plant remains at Kells Priory.⁴⁰

Produce

Although Cistercian houses were self sufficient and thus the produce of each monastery would have varied depending on soil types, climate etc, a number of general observances can be made in relation to the species of plant produced. The plan of Saint Gall shows eighteen different beds of vegetables and pot herbs which included such varieties as onions, leeks, shallots, celery, parsley, coriander, beet, dill, cabbage, fennel, lettuce, poppy, radishes, garlic and parsnips and most of these could have grown in Ireland in the medieval period.⁴¹ (Figure 26) If space was limited, a large kitchen garden may not have been required instead the monks could have placed small, cultivated plots, in between the buildings as happened at Beaulieu abbey.⁴² A list of instructions which were issued to the Augustinian canons of Barnwell stated that the infirmarian was to administer sage and parsley washed with saltwater to canons who had been bled; the fraterer provide flowers, mint and fennel which were used to scent the

⁴⁰ Clyne, *Kells Priory*, p. 500.

⁴¹ Price, *The plan of St Gall in brief*, p. 69.

⁴² Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 154.

refectory and the almoner was to provide peas and beans for the poor.⁴³ Pottage was frequently used as the first dish at dinner and its basic ingredients were a combination of leeks, coleworts, peas, beans and oatmeal which was all boiled in a stock to which was added onions, shallots, garlic, parsley and other herbs.⁴⁴ Many monasteries would also grow flax and hemp in addition to gallium which was used for dying cloth.⁴⁵

Physic Gardens

The plan of Saint Gall lists sixteen medicinal herbs which include climbing bean, rose, pepperwort, costmary, greek hay, rosemary, mint, sage, rue, iris, pennyroyal, water cress, cumin, loveage, and fennel.⁴⁶ (Figure 27) It is known that Norwich abbey grew rhubarb, peony, fennel and squills or sea onion, opium poppy was purchased on one occasion.⁴⁷ Peony was recorded in the Glastonbury leech book as a cure for sciatica.⁴⁸ Poisonous plants which may have been used for anaesthetic or analgesic purposes were often grown in enclosed gardens to prevent any risk to livestock. Waltham abbey grew henbane and hemlock.⁴⁹ Reference is made to a 'courtyard of the sick' at Jerpoint Abbey in 1228.⁵⁰ Near to Jerpoint grows the winter flowering crocus. This plant is extremely rare and

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Price, *The plan of St Gall in brief*, p. 33.

⁴⁷ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 158.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 159.

despite efforts by the National Botanic Gardens will not grow anywhere but its current locations. It is possible that the monks at Jerpoint cultivated this plant and one of its properties is said to be a cure for goitre.

Garden buildings and equipment

Most gardens would have required some building nearby in which to store tools and equipment. An inventory from Abingdon abbey in 1389 lists such items as vine-props, ladders, an axe, a saw, three augers, a sieve and riddle, rope, 'two harrows with iron teeth', two pitch forks, a seed basket, a bushel measure, a mallet, a trowel, two pairs of shears, a scythe for the grass and two harvest sickles, three spades, three shovels, two rakes for gathering moss, a dungpot, fishing equipment, wine and cider making equipment.⁵¹

Gardens at granges

It is safe to assume that the granges would also have had gardens attached. A situation whereby members of the Order were staying at a location removed from the abbey precinct and still living by the self-sufficient part of the rule must have meant that items such as vegetables and water would have to be sourced at that location.

Even though the Cistercians in Ireland still held fifty-two gardens in 1540, it is safe to assume that the monasteries held hundreds of gardens at their peak

⁵¹ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, pp 159-60.

with each grange having at least one vegetable patch, which, for this instance may be counted as a garden. Presumably also the meditative lifestyle of the monks would indicate that a garden would be an ideal setting for a monk to spend time communicating with God.

The use of herbs

In a period when medicine was not a generally understood or accepted phenomenon, herbs would have been an essential element within the monastery. These herbs would have been used to combat all kinds of illnesses. Some of the herbs, shown on the plan of St Gall would have been grown in Ireland in the medieval period. Most herbs had multiple uses and those such as fennel, savory and penny-royal were particularly useful for a community of ageing men.

Fennel could be used to

break wind, provoke urine, ease the pains of the stone and help to break it. The seeds, boiled in water, stays the hiccough and soothes the stomach of sick and feverish persons. The seed boiled in wine is good for those that have eaten poisonous herbs and mushrooms. The seed, or roots, help to open obstructions of the liver, spleen and gall, and ease painful and windy swellings and help the yellow jaundice, the gout and cramps. The seed helps shortness of the breath and wheezing, by stopping the lungs. The leaves, seeds and roots are much used in drink or broth to make people lean that are too fat. The distilled water of the whole herb dropped into the eyes cleanses them from mists and films that hinder the sight.⁵²

Savory could be used to expel 'tough phlegm from the chest and lungs'. It was also used, if the juice was heated with Oil of Roses, to 'ease the ears of noises in them and deafness'. If applied to the outer body as a poultice with wheat flour it

⁵² David Potterton (ed.), *Culpepper's colour herbal* (3rd ed., London, 1997), p. 71.

could ease 'sciatica and palsied members'. Another of its qualities was to ease the pain from stings of wasps and bees.⁵³

Pennyroyal was used to 'stay the disposition of vomit', to 'void phlegm out of the lungs and purges by stool'. If applied to the 'nostrils with vinegar it revives those who faint and swoon'. This herb was also used to cleanse ulcers and take away the marks of bruises, blows and burns on the face. It was used to ease headache along with pains in the chest, belly and gnawing of the stomach, clear eyesight, help jaundice and dropsy.⁵⁴

It can be seen, by taking just three examples, the range of uses and cures covered by these herbs. Interestingly, a number of the herbs listed in the garden at St Gall were widely used in women's health. Mint was used to repress the milk in women's breasts, taken in wine as an aid in childbirth while Tansy was used to stop all fluxes and sage was used to 'bring down women's courses and expels the dead child'.⁵⁵ While not necessarily suggesting that the monks administered these herbs to women, it would be plausible that the herbalist or infirmarian might, on occasion, either pass on such information or give some of these herbs to women in need, perhaps women staying in the monastery's guest house.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 166.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 142.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp 71, 125, 189, 162.

Particular herbs

The *colticum atumnale* or meadow saffron crocus, which still grows in the vicinity of Jerpoint Abbey was probably used for treating gout. (Figure 28) The tubour of the plant, when exposed, had the appearance of a toe with gout, and resembles a toe with a nail attached. It was through the Doctrine of Signatures that the plant was supposed to cure the disease because it looked so much like it. Whether this species was introduced by the monks or not is unknown, but it would seem realistic to assume that if the herb was growing in the area during the lifetime of the monastery then the monks would have utilized it. The plant was only found near to water meadows. It probably grew in many parts of the country but today the growth area is limited to certain locations along the river Nore. The plant, which flowers at the end of summer, is a protected species and the both the National Botanic Gardens and the botanical department of Trinity College, Dublin have been instrumental in both protecting and preserving this species.⁵⁶

Records of gardens in Irish houses

Gardens are recorded within the precinct of St Mary's abbey and at some of the parishes and granges attached to this monastery. The presence of the garden within the precinct is recorded as follows

⁵⁶ Dr. Matthew Jebb, Taxonomist, National Botanic Gardens, telephone conversation 29 Jan. 2007.

Message and garden within the precinct with a chapel adjoining the message and the green adjoining the monastery.⁵⁷

Twenty nine gardens are listed for the monastery but in addition to these are listed the 'Abbot's garden', the 'convent garden' and the 'Comyn Orcherde'.⁵⁸ Baltinglass Abbey held five gardens and one orchard within the precinct and the orchard covered one acre.⁵⁹ In addition, the monastery also held three more gardens on its grange of Rathbran and Bylston.⁶⁰ Tracton is recorded as having three small gardens and Fermoy had two, with Abbeymahon being in possession of the 'Divers Gardens'.⁶¹ Jerpoint Abbey held eight gardens, two of which were in Thomastown and five were attached to a burgage in Newtown Jerpoint the value of the burgage was 4s 8d.⁶² The final garden was situated in the abbey precinct and an orchard was located here too.⁶³ Duiske abbey also had a garden and orchard within the precinct, in addition it held a garden in Kilkenny.⁶⁴ Mellifont was in possession of 'the old orchard' and a garden both of which were within the precinct and it held another garden with a house in the west street of Drogheda town.⁶⁵ Inishlounaght had a garden on the island that the monastery

⁵⁷ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1586-1603*, fiant 6034.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 5936; *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1558-1586*, fiant 3228, 4575.

⁵⁹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 126.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp 143, 145, 151.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 182, 183.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 193; *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1586-1603*, fiant 5854, *Ormond deeds, 1584-1603*, 146.

⁶⁵ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 213, 220.

owned along with a garden at the west gate in Clonmel.⁶⁶ Kilcooley Abbey had two gardens within the precinct, twelve in the Vill of Kilcooley, four in the Vill of Gragehyse and five in the Grange of Kilcooley.⁶⁷ The entry for Hore Abbey indicates that the monastery held a total of twenty-one gardens which were distributed among its holdings and in addition, it was in possession of 'gardens' within the precinct of the monastery, they also held two small parks in the Vill of Hore.⁶⁸ Dunbrody had a small orchard situated in the precinct and ten gardens in the town of New Ross.⁶⁹ Tintern Abbey had a garden consisting of half an acre situated within the precinct.⁷⁰

In excess of 109 gardens, six orchards and two small parks were in the possession of the Irish Cistercian monasteries when they were dissolved. The figures above are exclusive of some of the houses which were not dissolved in the mid sixteenth century therefore the number of gardens owned by the Cistercians during the medieval period would have been above these figures.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 338; *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1558-1586*, fiant 2971; *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns 1586-1603*, fiant 5591.

⁶⁷ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 323.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 325-7; *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1558-1586*, fiant 2968; *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns 1586-1603*, fiant 6923.

⁶⁹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 353, 5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

Water requirements

Drainage system

Today when one explores the ruins of a monastery and, if lucky, finds the line of the drain, it can be difficult to imagine anything other than a sluggish stream flowing beneath the domus necessarium. The line of the drain then usually disappears under the wall of the refectory, if that wall remains, and generally then the boundary is lost behind the site of the kitchen. This drain is clearly visible in the plans of the various monasteries which are included in figures 19 to 24. The main problem in trying to visualise a strong flow of water in this drain is because of the lie of the landscape in the present day. Usually when a visitor looks at the ground level surrounding these medieval buildings today what they see is an accumulation of half of a millennia of soil and rubble, and that is only the time which has elapsed since most of the monasteries closed. One needs to try to peel away these subsequent layers and try to visualise a river with a strong flow and steep gradient. From documentary sources and archaeological remains it is possible to reconstruct the general appearance and function of these drains.

Domus Necessarium

It is known that generally what was diverted was, in essence, a river. It is probable that the river usually ran in a westerly direction from the north side of

the monastery thus flowing in a specially constructed channel, directly beneath the southerly end of the monk's dormitory. The drain may have had different gradients or might have incorporated a type of dam system whereby water was allowed to build up before being released in a flush system. Once the water passed from beneath the monk's domus necessarium the drain appears to have carried on outside the calefactory, unless the calefactory projected out further than the southern wall of the dormitory, as indicated on the monastic plan at Fountains. (Figure 22) If the latter is the case, then it is possible that the blood, let four times per year from each monk, was discarded into this drain, this last point is however merely conjecture.

The drain also ran under the refectory and it was usual for openings to be found in the floor of that room with large grids placed over them at floor level. This allowed the monks to cast any waste from the table into the pits to be carried away by the running water. The waste could include bones and other food debris and it is through an examination of some of this waste, discovered through archaeological excavations, which allows us to know some of the dietary habits of the monks. From the refectory the river passed behind the kitchen probably allowing the kitchener to throw any waste from the kitchen into the drain. After passing under the lay-brothers dormitory the drain then joined the second river. It is assumed that the monk's incorporated some sort of filter system into the drain before it joined this second river. Beds of shells or reeds

would have been sufficient in collecting some of the more solid debris and the technology was known at the time.

Remains of the drainage system

Remains of the monastic drains survive from a number of monasteries with those of Grey, Tintern and Jerpoint quite easy to follow. From the excavations at Tintern it is known that, internally, the domus measured eight metres in width.⁷¹ It is further known that the drain continued in an east west direction and this was constructed to an average width of 2.4 metres.⁷² Evidence of water sorting or filtration was evident with an upper layer, predominately of shale giving way through sand to silt and clay.⁷³

Other requirements for water within the monastery

Water was required for other obvious functions as part of the day to day life within the monastery. A well was often incorporated into an area of the monastery for fresh water and it is reasonable to assume that a number of diversions may have been made from the river which ran on the north side of the monastery. Water was also required in the lavabo. The lavabo was used by the monks for the ritual washing of the hands before and after eating. The word comes from the Latin word lavo meaning 'I wash'. The lavabo may have been a

⁷¹ Ann Lynch, Tintern Abbey, Co Wexford excavations 1982-4, p. 77.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 79.

large free-standing structure, as at Mellifont Abbey, or may have been a simple affair situated in a niche in the wall of the refectory where the monks had to pass when making their way into the refectory. Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire still has the remains of what could be described as a trough running the length of the exterior north wall of the refectory. This lavabo appears to have had water piped into it as did many others by the fourteenth century.

The Lavabo

Examples of a lavabo survive in many monasteries across Europe. The finest example in Ireland is at Mellifont Abbey where approximately half of the stone structure survives. (Figure 29) It is possible that the upper level of this structure may have been added post dissolution.⁷⁴ This *lavabo* shares many similarities with others found across the continent and it would seem that, while it was not a standard plan to which all of the monasteries subscribed, this general type of structure must have been quite common across the Cistercian world. Comparable examples still survive in monasteries such as Poblet in Spain, Valmagne, in the Languedoc region of France, Heiligenkreuz Abbey, Austria, Maulbronn in Germany, Santes Creus, Spain, Le Thornet and Valmagne, both in France. The remains of a structure, roughly circular in shape, also exist at Dunbrody Abbey, county Wexford and its position within the cloister garth and

⁷⁴ Roger Stalley, 'Decorating the Lavabo: late Romanesque sculpture from Mellifont Abbey', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 96 C (1996), pp 254-5.

the shape of the outline would suggest the site of a lavabo. At Kells Priory the lavabo was situated in the south ambulatory beside the doorway leading into the refectory.⁷⁵ This as a common location in which to find the lavabo.

Water requirements within the complex

Other uses of water within the monastery include the activation of bellows in the forge, the turning of mill-wheels and the filling of fishponds. For these, and the uses listed above, some monasteries built what were essentially canals. These waterways were sometimes cut through mountains as was the case in Obazine, Limousin, and thus was obviously stone lined. Other diversions, while possibly not as substantial as this, must have taken an amount of time to complete and is testament to the engineering prowess of the monks.

Other buildings within the walls

A large number of other buildings would have been situated within the walls of the complex. Various workshops to produce such items as the monk's habits, footwear, drinking vessels were required as was space to store stone and timber while the monastery was under construction. Items were needed to transport these materials and would have required storage space also. Stables, cart-sheds, houses for various types of equipment and poultry-houses were all

⁷⁵ Clyne, *Kells Priory*, p. 495.

needed.⁷⁶ These were probably situated between the outer walls along with the larger industrial and agricultural buildings. These may have included mills, a tannery, smithy and glazier and plumbing workshops.⁷⁷ Within the inner wall one would have expected to find the infirmary, the bake house, brew house, laundry, granaries, mill, stables and storerooms along with the monks graveyard and other main ancillary buildings.⁷⁸ The plan of St Gall records the presence of areas for grain storage, grinding and crushing.⁷⁹ From the 1381 manorial extent of the Llanthony cell at Duleek Anngret Simms states that the emphasis on storing and grinding grain was very clear.⁸⁰ Many houses record the presence of a mill within the complex.

Mills

One area where the Irish abbeys can not be found wanting is in the area of mills and the associated production. From the list of monastic possessions compiled at the Dissolution it is known that the remains of twenty-five mills existed at that time. Of the total, one was a salt mill, situated at Dunbrody

⁷⁶ Price, *Plan of St Gall in brief*, pp 71-2.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 52-6; Burton, *Monastic orders in Britain*, p. 148.

⁷⁸ Price, *Plan of St Gall in brief*, pp 48-9, 57-59; Burton, *Monastic orders in Britain*, p. 146.

⁷⁹ Price, *Plan of St Gall in brief*, pp 60-3.

⁸⁰ Simms, Anngret, 'The geography of Irish manors: the example of the Llanthony cells of Duleek and Colp in Co. Meath' in Bradley (ed.) *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland: studies presented to F.X. Martin* (Kilkenny, 1988), pp 291-326 at p. 295.

Abbey and five are recorded as simply 'mills', one at Kilcooley, three at Tintern and one at Furness.⁸¹ The other twenty-two mills are all recorded as watermills.

Abbeyleix, Fermoy, Chore, Bective and Granard all had one watermill each with Baltinglass and Inishlounaght in possession of three, Jerpoint held two and Duiske had four, with Mellifont recorded as owning six mills.⁸² Tintern Abbey held a water mill at its grange at Kilmore, but in addition had two other mills close to the monastery; one was termed as a 'See Mylle', it is possible that this was a salt mill or it may have been a sea mill, the second mill was called the 'Over Shott Mylle'.⁸³ These mills were located right across the lands owned by the monasteries but in many cases, at least one mill was situated close to the complex if not within the walls. The list compiled, is, as stated, a record at dissolution, it is known that many of the monasteries were in possession of other mills in the centuries prior to the decline. Records of additional mills are also to be found in the *Fiant Rolls* of both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. The fiants often provide names for these mills as well as the location.

Three references are made in the *Ormond Deeds* to mills belonging to Jerpoint, but as they refer to the 'mill of Jerpoint' and twice to the 'mill of Jerpoint and Bennettsbridge' respectively, so it is possible that the three references are to the same mill.⁸⁴ A watermill was recorded as part of the possessions of the 'Vill of Jerpounte' in the dissolution extents so it is possible

⁸¹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 354, 323, 358-9.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp 136, 145, 150, 267, 281, 126, 338, 182-3, 195, 213, 216-8.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

⁸⁴ *Ormond deeds, 1547-1584*, no. 59

that the four references are all recording the presence of two mills.⁸⁵ The earliest deed relates to rents received in May 1307 and the second and third deeds both relate to the Earl of Ormond granting the mill of Jerpoint to Oliver Grace on 08 Feb. 1557.⁸⁶ Deed 1743 is in relation to a grant made to the monks of Jerpoint on 05 March 1451, as part of this deed a mill in Maddockstown was listed and this same mill is recorded in the possessions of 1540.⁸⁷

The names of some other mills survive, St Mary's abbey, Dublin was in possession of the 'mill of Clonliff' along with a mill in Ballinecurre, county Meath and 'Kilcraghe and two water mills' in Dublin.⁸⁸ In addition to these it appears that the abbey was renting the mill of 'Duibbildey' for a sum of half a mark per year in the late thirteenth century.⁸⁹ Of these five mills none were recorded at dissolution. Mellifont Abbey had Browns mill which was listed as a water mill and a mill in Rathmoylan, while Furness Abbey held 'Furnys Innes with mill'.⁹⁰ Kilbeggan's mill was situated on the river Brosimagh and the presence of a mill is mentioned a second time, whether this reference is to the same mill twice, or a second mill, is not clear.⁹¹ The fiant rolls of Elizabeth I also record two watermills as part of the possessions of Inishlounaght, stating that these were

⁸⁵ N.L.I. D509, D2616-17.

⁸⁶ *Ormond Deeds, 1547-1584*, no. 59

⁸⁷ N.L.I., D1743.

⁸⁸ *Irish Fiant of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1586-1603*, fiant 6796, 6644, 5780; White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 2, 8, 10, 11, 13-4, 16-7, 21-2.

⁸⁹ *Cal. doc. Ire. 1285-1292*, pp 19, 150.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*; White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 217.

⁹¹ *Irish Fiant of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1558-1586*, fiant 3224, 3348, 3349; *Irish Fiant of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1586-1603*, fiant 5322.

situated in county Waterford.⁹² The only actual reference to a salt mill is documented for Dunbrody Abbey and a tidal mill is also mentioned as being at this site.⁹³

In 1235 the monastery of Duiske was granted permission to construct a mill at Tulachany in return for which the monastery was to grind twenty crannocks of corn for the house of William St Ledger each year.⁹⁴ On 11 Nov. 1259 Thomas Fitz Milo ratified a grant made by his father Alan whereby certain lands and a mill were granted to the monastery.⁹⁵ Although the situation of the mill is not given the accompanying lands were probably in the region of Ballytarsna and Carrowanree in county Wexford.⁹⁶ 22 Feb. 1273 witnessed the granting of the 'millpond of Villa Batthe' to the monastery of Duiske and it is presumed that this situation was not far from Tullow, county Carlow.⁹⁷ On 04 May 1440 Philip, Abbot of Duiske leased lands in Annamult to Thomas White, the lease also included half the profits of the mill and Thomas was to bear 'half the cost of repairing the mill and the whole cost of repairing the road thereto'.⁹⁸ It is evident then that, of the last fifteen mills mentioned, ten were not listed in the extents at dissolution but are to be found among the fiant rolls or the Ormond Deeds. It can be stated that twenty eight mills may have been in the

⁹² *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1586-1603*, fiant 5591.

⁹³ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1558-1586*, fiant 39, 1654; White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 354

⁹⁴ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske Charters', p. 74.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

possession of the Order during the period 1536-41 when the extents were compiled, but at the very least another eleven had been in the possession of the monasteries at some time prior to their closure. The total number of Cistercian mills at the peak of the thirteenth century must still have been in excess of thirty nine. An even higher figure is to be expected as each monastery would have required a mill somewhere on its property. At Kells priory fifteen mill stones were recorded two of which dated mid to late thirteenth century and the rest were 'medieval to modern'.⁹⁹

Flour mills

Most of the above thirty-nine mills are entered as just that, 'mills'. It is important to note that these may have performed different functions in diverse ways. Most of the mills listed above were used in the production of flour which was a main ingredient in bread and this bread was probably *the* staple food of the period. This fact raises a number of important points.

The mills were very important within the monastery's holdings and they must have been in an area where they could be supervised to some extent and not standing alone out on unmanned areas of the estates. The flour produced in the mills on Cistercian lands was for the express use of the monastery but it would be very interesting to have documentary evidence of whether the monks would grind corn for lay people. If they did it would be an obvious source of

⁹⁹ Clyne, *Kells Priory*, pp 437-8.

income for the monastery but it would also indicate interaction with lay people and in turn show people were living on, or near, to the monastic houses. Perhaps the answer lies in the social changes and periods of unrest which the people found themselves in. It would be much more likely that the monks would help people in times of war, trouble or distress, rather than spurn them because they were not supposed to have contact with them. By the fifteenth century it is known that the Cistercians had tenants on their land and it is assumed that they did have access to the mills.

Horizontal and vertical mills

The mills listed above were mainly water mills of which there were two types, horizontal and vertical. The horizontal mill incorporated a horizontally mounted wheel which allowed water to fall onto paddles which were placed at an angle, therefore causing a vertical spindle to rotate which was in turn fixed to the upper stone. Evidence suggests that this type of mill did not exist much after the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁰ The vertical mill consisted of a vertical wheel which was driven by a mill race which was flowing at a controllable level and this was the common type of mill used during the period.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 313.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Horse mills

Horse mills were also utilised in the medieval period and the Cistercian house of Beaulieu is recorded as having one in 1270 with the smithy keeping the horse.¹⁰² The horse mill of Vayle Royal Abbey was situated at Kirkham and reference was made to its presence in 1337.¹⁰³ It is known that Thomas Burton, Abbot of Meaux had a horse mill built within the precinct of that monastery at some time between 1396-99, the timber used in the construction of the mill was unseasoned and the result was that the structure did not last very long.¹⁰⁴ In the early sixteenth century it is known that Fountains Abbey had a horse mill on or near its grange at Warsill.¹⁰⁵ St Mary's Abbey, Dublin was in possession of a horse mill. Both a horse mill and a watermill are recorded as being 'within the precincts at the outer gate' when the extent for the abbey was drawn up on 23 Oct. 1540.¹⁰⁶ An example of this type of mill is included in figure thirty.

Tide mills

One tide mill is recorded for the Irish Cistercian houses and it was part of the possessions of Dunbrody Abbey.¹⁰⁷ The tide mill was used in Ireland since at least the seventh century and is based on the principle of ponding back the

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 311.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *White, Jr. Monastic possessions*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1558-1586*, fiant 1654.

incoming tide in coastal creeks to turn mill wheels on the ebb tide.¹⁰⁸ Since it is the ebb and flow of the tide which is required for this type of mill few examples would be expected to be found in Ireland. The only monasteries which could utilise the sea were those of Dunbrody, Tintern, Corcomroe, St Mary's Dublin, Maure and Duiske. Tracton and Inch abbeys may fit into this category also. Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight is recorded as having a tide mill in the fourteenth century and a corn mill at Beaulieu is thought to have been of this type also.¹⁰⁹ Maintenance of this form of mill must have been expensive because of the force of nature it required to work and they must have been dangerous to construct and maintain, again, owing to the presence of the sea. An example of this can be presented in the form of the tide mill of Christ Church, Canterbury which was situated at Lydden, near Sandwich. This mill was rebuilt after it had been destroyed in the 1290s at a cost of £143 13s. After flooding in 1316 £74 13s 4d was spent to move the mill to a safer location. However, in 1326 it was again ruined by the sea and subsequently abandoned.¹¹⁰ An image of a floating mill utilized in Paris in the fourteenth century is included in figure thirty one.

Salt mill

Dunbrody is also the only Abbey which is recorded as possessing a salt mill. The place name 'saltmills' does exist today in an area very close to the site

¹⁰⁸ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 319.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 319-20.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

of Tintern Abbey but this is not necessarily evidence of the monks constructing such a building. Salt was used in the preservation of foodstuffs such as fish, meat, butter and cheese and was used in the preparation of leather and in other crafts.¹¹¹ The commodity was obtained by evaporating water or brine, and in the case of Dunbrody sediments may have been scraped from tidal flats in summertime. The product was then deposited in a filtering trough where the brine was washed out and the waste sediment dumped with the salt extracted by boiling the brine in lead pans in salthouses.¹¹² Presumably the monks traded in the end product.

Other types of mills

Other types of mill included fulling mills, iron mills, bark mills and windmills. No specific references to any of these four types exist in relation to Irish Cistercian houses, however due to the lack of water at Tulachany it is possible that the mill there was a windmill. The most likely other type to have been present is the fulling mill because of the huge role which the Cistercians played in the wool industry. The order was at the forefront in inventing the hammer which was used in these mills and it is quite probable that at least one such mill did exist on a Cistercian monastery in Ireland in that period. As part of the process, cloth was scoured and pounded in water which contained a

¹¹¹ Burton, *Monastic orders in Britain*, p. 239.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 350.

Other buildings within the walls

Limekilns were required by the monasteries in order to produce lime for the mortar and for the lime washing of the buildings. Some houses utilized bricks and they would have to have had access to brick kilns. Many of the monasteries had tiled floors and therefore either had a source to purchase the tiles from or had a kiln on site. Earthenware pots, jars and containers were commonplace in the period and, again the monks would have needed to be able to produce these pieces. From excavations at Duiske it is known that such items were produced there in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Iron forges would have been a necessity as the monks had to produce farm implements, as well as horse shoes and iron, all of which would have had many uses both within the complex and on the granges. A tannery was required for various uses and St Mary's Abbey, Dublin is recorded as still having a 'tan house' as part of its possessions in 1540.¹¹⁷ Each monastery had bells with which to call the monks to prayer and, in theory the monasteries must have had some system of bell-founding. Many of the monasteries had lead in the roofs and some possibly in the windows so this, along with glass, where used, also had to be produced. Stephen of Lexington stated that 'only solid roofing shall be constructed in any monastery in future', obviously wood or thatched roofs were in evidence in Ireland prior to 1228.¹¹⁸ Salt pans would have been essential in many of the

¹¹⁷ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 160.

monasteries as a form of preservation of various foodstuffs and cloth weaving and dyeing workshops would have been required as were tanneries. While every monastery would not have had an example of each type of manufacture area mentioned above some of the large monasteries may have had many of these types. It is plausible that some monasteries would have pooled their resources and perhaps indulged in a type of barter system, thereby being self-sufficient within the Order on a wider remit. A salt house is mentioned in the list of extents for Mellifont Abbey.¹¹⁹

Prisons

Another common structure within the complex would have been the monastic prison. Few records remain in relation to such a structure but it is known that both Jerpoint and Dunbrody Abbey's did have prisons.¹²⁰ In 1390 it is recorded that David Esmond, a commissioner of Richard II accused the monks of Dunbrody of assailing him with force of arms, seizing the Royal letters which he held and then held him, chained and shackled to a pillar in the Abbot's prison for sixteen days.¹²¹ A second reference to the same incident states that he was held in the abbey prison.

¹¹⁹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 1.

¹²⁰ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, pp 105-6.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Outside the walls

The acreages and breakdown of land type will be discussed in detail in chapter seven but some general observations may be made here. In a broad sense the land appears to have consisted of a large tract of arable and pasture land with small acreages of wood, meadow and mountain mentioned in some cases. Not all houses included pasture land within the demesne, neither did all houses have what was termed 'demesne land' rather the area which was nearest the monastery at a number of houses was what was termed as a vill. These villis usually contained a number of cottages, houses or tenements and in some cases the rent was payment in kind. From the extents villis were recorded at seven houses, Abbeyleix, Chore, Jerpoint, Duiske, Bective, Hore and Tintern Abbey with cottages recorded at two monasteries, Jerpoint having eight and Duiske, twenty-two.¹²² In this case the demesne land appears to refer to an amount of land which was situated close to the monastery as opposed to the entire lands associated with the manor which would be the usual definition. It is probable that the demesne land was set aside in order to allow the monks to engage in manual labour but still be close enough to the monastery to be able to return at the designated times for the divine offices.

¹²² White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 136, 150, 181, 193, 267, 325, 358.

Demesne lands at Mellifont

With regard to the actual make up and appearance of the demesne land the record for Mellifont is probably the most comprehensive. Within the demesne lands were situated four dovecotes, a water-mill, a garden, an orchard and a close pasture, all of which covered two acres, in addition to this was a close containing eight acres, two meadows one of nine acres, the other of ten along with a close of four acres, a wood of sixty acres, a wood of twelve acres, a mansion and house of inhabitants and a common pasture of twenty acres.¹²³

Records of mills and weirs on demesne lands at dissolution

Of the other monasteries listed at dissolution six, Baltinglass, Chore, Jerpoint, Duiske, Bective and Tintern, all had mills on the demesne lands with four having weirs.¹²⁴ Chore held a salmon weir, Maure, a weir, Duiske had three eel-weirs and Bective held a fishing weir.¹²⁵ It may be significant to note that, at the dissolution, except for Hore Abbey, each of the other six monasteries which recorded 'vills' also held a mill on the demesne lands, presumably to allow the lay people to either grind their own corn or pay the monastery to do so.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 136, 150, 181, 193, 267, 358.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 150, 193, 267.

Other possible buildings required

It is probable that hay-barns, granaries and woolhouses would have been situated somewhere close to the complex and on some of the granges but very little evidence of either of these two buildings appear within the Irish context. St Mary's Abbey did have 'a granary over the outer gate', but this is the only reference to such a building in the dissolution record.¹²⁶ Stephen of Lexington stated, in 1228, that among other buildings, a barn was to be constructed at granges.¹²⁷

The most likely probability of physical remains of a medieval grain barn in Ireland is a structure situated in Annamult, county Kilkenny.¹²⁸ This land was possibly part of the possessions of Jerpoint Abbey which may have been given to Jerpoint's daughter house of Killenny at its foundation. The land at Annamult is specifically mentioned as belonging to Killenny when that monastery was suppressed in the thirteenth century.¹²⁹ The subsequent arguments between Jerpoint and Duiske Abbey, to which had been granted Killenny as a grange, continued until 18 March 1362 when the two larger monasteries agreed a

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹²⁷ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 161; It is possible that a barn existed at Kilcooley Abbey, this is referred to in W.G. Neely, *Kilcooley land and people in Tipperary* (Belfast, 1983), p. 13. Here Neely discusses 'the monastic barn at Grange with its castle', however no other reference to this building has been located.

¹²⁸ Niall Brady, *Exploring Irish medieval landscapes* (Dublin, 2003), p. 24.

¹²⁹ N.L.I., D359, D1070.

compromise.¹³⁰ The land at Annamult is listed at the dissolution of Duiske Abbey as part of that house's possessions although interestingly Annamult is also probably the location of one of the attempts of Duiske to settle before building in Greuignamanagh.¹³¹ As the building style is later than the thirteenth century it is probable that the building was erected by the community of Duiske.

Other foodstuffs produced on monastic lands

Rabbits

Rabbits are among the list of animals introduced to Ireland by the Normans. The animals were prized for both their meat and fur and thus were bred by the monks. Again, the dissolution extents and *fiant rolls* can give an indication of the prevalence of this practice within the Irish Cistercian houses. Only two monasteries are recorded as having a rabbit warren in the sixteenth century and these are Hore Abbey, with an entry in the *faints* stating that the monastery was in possession of 'lands and warren of conies in Hore', and the house held 'a rabbit-warren called the connygarthe'.¹³² St Mary's Abbey had a rabbit warren in the Vill of Portmirnocke.¹³³

¹³⁰ N.L.I., D1070.

¹³¹ Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval houses Ireland*, p. 127, 133.

¹³² *Irish Fiantes of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1558-1586*, *fiant* 2968; White, *Extents*, p. 325.

¹³³ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 13.

Dovecotes

Dovecotes appear to have been quite a popular sight on monastic lands in the medieval period.¹³⁴ Three Irish Cistercian houses held dovecotes, St Mary's, Mellifont and Kilcooley although the dovecote at Kilcooley is not recorded in either the dissolution extents or the fiant rolls. St Mary's had two, one of which was to be found at its vill of Dibbre while the second was in the Vill of Lucan. Mellifont held four dovecotes, all of which were situated within the demesne lands. The dovecote at Kilcooley still stands today and is situated a short distance to the north of the monastery. (Figure 32) These structures were used usually only in winter as the stock foraged for food at other times of the year. Presumably for an order of monks who could not eat the flesh of four-footed animals, doves and pigeons may have been a common element of the monk's diet.

Dovecotes were usually free-standing circular structures with the number of nest-holes within the structure varying from a couple of hundred to over a thousand, as can be seen from the accompanying illustration from the plan of St Gall. (Figure 33) The roof of these structures was usually a conical timber-framed form with a turret at the apex or, as was common in the west of England and Wales, a domed corbelled roof with a central aperture.¹³⁵ A straw thatched

¹³⁴ Price, *Plan of St Gall in brief*, pp 71-2.

¹³⁵ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 149.

dovecote is recorded as part of the possessions of Llanthony priory at Duleek.¹³⁶ In this particular instance a water mill is recorded in the same meadow.¹³⁷ The circular plan of the dovecotes allowed the squabs to be collected by means of a potence. From a surviving example at Kinwarton monastery it appears that this was a device which comprised of a ladder mounted to spars which were fixed at the top and bottom of a central post which revolved on iron bearings.¹³⁸

In addition to providing food the dovecotes also produced a number of byproducts. The bird's feathers were used for mattresses and the droppings could be used for fertilizing the gardens, for softening leather and in the preparation of parchment.¹³⁹

Fish and the monasteries

The consumption of fish played an important role in the lives of the Cistercians. In addition to poultry the other main replacement for meat in the monk's diet was fish. The large number of feast and fast days in the medieval period also meant that meat could not be served in the monastic guest house on a considerable number of days throughout the year, further increasing the demand for fish. Both sea and freshwater fish were present in the diet but, as was always the case with the Cistercians, whatever was most readily available was used, and

¹³⁶ Arlene Hogan, *The priory of Llanthony Prima and Secunda in Ireland, 1172-1541* (Dublin, 2008), p. 348.

¹³⁷ Simms, 'Llanthony cells of Duleek and Colp', p. 299.

¹³⁸ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 148.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

as such one would expect a difference between the diet of the coastal and inland houses.

Types of fish consumed

Records are not plentiful enough for the Irish houses to allow an exhaustive list of the fish consumed to be drawn up. Fortunately the cellarer's accounts are extant for some English houses and they can be used to gain an insight into the range of species of fish that could be expected to have been consumed in Ireland. Durham priory records sixty-five different types of marine life, included here were herring and varying types of cod which included haburden, keeling and milwell, these made up the bulk of the whole.¹⁴⁰ Eel, salmon, pike, pickerel, roach, perch and trench would all have been expected to have formed part of the diet of the monks.¹⁴¹ As mentioned above some monasteries would have had much more access to fish because of their coastal location and it is probable that shellfish may have been consumed on these sites also.¹⁴² Oyster, cockle and mussel shells along with unidentified fish bones were located at the thirteenth century level of the excavations at Kells Priory.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Clyne, *Kells Priory*, p. 477.

Methods of preservation

Herring and other oily fish were unsuitable for drying and by the late thirteenth century an alternative way of preserving these species was to hang them in specially constructed chimneys and smoke them to produce 'red herrings'.¹⁴⁴ Smoking and salting were, of course, the most common methods of preservation. Reference is made to salted beef in the thirteenth century at Maigne Abbey.¹⁴⁵

Records of weirs in Irish Cistercian houses

A number of salmon and eel weirs are recorded as part of the possessions of the Irish Cistercian houses in the sixteenth century and presumably these were even more common prior to the closure of the monasteries. One fishing weir worth 6s 8d was in the possession of Maure Abbey, Cork while Mellifont had a salmon weir worth 53s 4d at Oldbridge and had a fishing weir at Stalleen which was worth 60s.¹⁴⁶ A third weir which was also a salmon weir called Monkton Weir was situated on the abbey's lands at Rosnaree, and this weir had a pool adjacent from which the monastery received half of the number of salmon caught and four out of every five caught in the weir.¹⁴⁷ A fishing weir called Browns Weir was situated at Newgrange, and a fishery was located here also, the value

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 188.

¹⁴⁶ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 151, 216.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 218.

of both was set at 4li 6s 8d.¹⁴⁸ A fishery and a boat for salmon fishing was located at Rathmullan Co. Meath and this was valued at 66s 8d.¹⁴⁹ In addition to the salmon weir at Oldbridge, sixteen fishermen held sixteen boats and they paid 13li 6s 8d to the monks.¹⁵⁰ It would seem that by the mid sixteenth century the monks were either leasing the use of some of these weirs to tenants, or had sold the weirs and were receiving payments in kind.

St Mary's Abbey held a salmon fishery worth 30s on the Liffey in the parish of St James on St Thomas street.¹⁵¹ They also held a mill in Co. Meath and Mr. John Nugent paid a sum of money and 100 fresh eels as part of the rent.¹⁵² Chore Abbey Co. Cork had a salmon weir, the rent on which was 6s 8d.¹⁵³ Jerpoint held a fishery worth 20s at Kylgrellan and had a fishing weir which was worth 6s 8d at Rathlong.¹⁵⁴ Duiske had three eel weirs which were worth 13s 4d in the vicinity of Duiske, and also had an eel weir at Oldabbey.¹⁵⁵ Bective Abbey was in possession of a fishing weir on the river Boyne worth 6s 8d.¹⁵⁶ Granard held three weirs on the river Inny at Monkstown and these were called 'Gleweres' and were valued at 20s while Kilbeggan had two eel weirs on the river

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 182-3.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

Brosnagh.¹⁵⁷ The dissolution extent for Dunbrody states that the monastery still held three weirs, 'Scarre Ware', 'Goddiswere' and 'Ebbe Weare'.¹⁵⁸ In addition to this, the monks held a fishing weir at Duncannon.¹⁵⁹ The fiant rolls of Queen Elizabeth record five weirs which had, at some time, been in the possession of Inishlounaght, these were three eel, one salmon weir and the 'weir of Glanbane', all except the last were included in the dissolution extents.¹⁶⁰ It is unclear what form these weirs took, they may have been stone, perhaps only incorporated nets to catch the fish, or may have integrated a fish trap constructed from green willow or osier.¹⁶¹

Fishing rights

On 29 Sept. 1352 a ratification was issued by the Earl of Ormond of the grant by Henry Fitz Henry Roche which gave fishing rights to the monastery of Duiske extending from Poulmounty to Thomastown.¹⁶² About 1285 the monastery was also granted rights to fish from Polmuntath to Portegrenan.¹⁶³ Dunbrody Abbey owned nine tenements and eight cottages in Ballyhack, the tenements were occupied by fishermen and these nine men had two boats.¹⁶⁴ The men and

¹⁵⁷ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Soverigns, 1558-1586*, fiant 4725, 4381; *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Soverigns, 1586-1603*, fiant 5322.

¹⁵⁸ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 354.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Soverigns, 1558-1586*, fiant 4141; *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Soverigns, 1586-1603*, fiant 5591.

¹⁶¹ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 194.

¹⁶² N.L.I. D 991; Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske Charters', p. 134.

¹⁶³ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske Charters', p. 111.

¹⁶⁴ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 355.

...all fishing boats of strangers coming to land at 'le key'', were 'bound to render, when coming from fishing of large fish, one fish called a mylner; from fishing hake, one hake; and from fishing of smaller fish, one penny-fish ...

The value of this custom was set at 13s 4d.¹⁶⁵

Fishponds

Fishponds were used by the order throughout the period and these may have taken two forms, one, a *rivaria* was a pond where fish were bred and grown, while a *servatoria* was smaller and was used to keep live fish prior to consumption, chains of these type of ponds would not have been uncommon.¹⁶⁶ In his book *Monastic landscapes* James Bond, while relying on the work of Chris Currie, calculates that for a monastery of ten monks to be self-sufficient in fish for one year they would need to be able to produce 850lb per year and this would require an area of 21 acres under water while a house of 40 would require 90 acres.¹⁶⁷ A fish pond was recorded as part of the possessions of Mellifont at Rossnaree, where the pool was beside the salmon-weir, Monkton Weir.¹⁶⁸ When the dissolution extent was drawn up, the pool was held by Richard Calffe who gave the monastery half of the salmon which were caught in the pool.¹⁶⁹ About the year 1220 Alan Beg granted a fishpond to the infirmary at Killenny.¹⁷⁰ In 1233 'the fish-pond called Cordredan with its liberties' was granted to Duiske

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 198; Burton, *Monastic orders in Britain*, p. 239.

¹⁶⁷ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 209.

¹⁶⁸ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 218.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske Charters', p. 11.

and in 1288 a reference was made to the granting of half the pool of Cordredan to that monastery.¹⁷¹

Location of fishponds

Some of these ponds may have been within the complex, but considering the size of the ponds it is probable that they would be situated somewhere close to the abbey but just outside the walls. The very fact that the servatoria were used to keep fish just before consumption it is evident that these would be within the vicinity of the monastery. Taking into the consideration the form of structure it is likely that these ponds would have been railed off to avoid animals wandering into the ponds, or predators stealing fish. Considering the importance of fish in the diet of a self-sufficient order of monks in the medieval period it is highly probable that every monastery had some sort of access to fish whether this was in the form of weirs on rivers, fish ponds or coastal fishing.

Outlying lands

Many of the Cistercian monasteries held vast amounts of land, and this land could have been quite a distance away from the complex. The actual organisation of the land was in theory dependant on the grants of land that the monks received. It is a long held belief that monasteries often traded parcels of land which may have been situated at a distance away from the monastery itself

¹⁷¹ Ibid., pp 68, 110.

and if the houses both agreed, this allowed them to consolidate their holdings. From the extents drawn up at dissolution combined with other sources for the earlier period, it seems that the preferred organisation was to have one huge block of land owned by a particular monastery and in a number of cases, the monastery itself would have been somewhere near to the centre. The fact that this land today is bounded in many cases by new roads, rivers and railway lines testifies to the belief that the monasteries used natural landmarks as their boundaries. It depended on who the patrons were whether the lands were crossing political or territorial boundaries and this study shows that in many cases, the monastic lands follow or cross these boundaries.

Granges

In order to guarantee a successful return from the land the monks needed to be sure that certain areas were not being underutilised. In one of his letters Stephen states that 'no structure shall be built in the granges, apart from a barn and shelter for animals, until the house is discharged from the burden of debt'.¹⁷² In the same letter he orders that the carpenter be appointed to the grange of the castle and that the cobblers-stall be completely moved to the same location.¹⁷³ With these functions in mind, and because of the great distances of some of the lands from the monastery it became common practice to formulate granges.

¹⁷² Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 161.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

These were, in effect, out-farms which were worked by lay-brothers with a monk in attendance.

The granges appear to have specialised in a particular type of farming, sometimes they were sheepgranges or irongranges, *grangesilvia* incorporates the latin word for wood *silva* therefore this must have been a grange which specialised in growing or cutting wood. What is very interesting is that the foundation charter for Owey Abbey, also called Abington and de Magio, county Limerick lists nine places with the term 'grange' incorporated. This is something of a surprise as it indicates the presence of specific monastic settlement patterns prior to the arrival of the monks in the area. This can have only one of two explanations, either the land had previously been settled by an order of monks before and then subsequently granted to the Cistercian Order, or the charter is not actually the foundation charter but in actual fact is a re-confirmation charter. The latter would account for the fact that the grange element is used because the land had been settled by the monks and then confirmed, using the placenames that the monks were used to. However, this charter is listed in the Ormond Deeds as being a foundation document.

The organisation of the granges is central to understanding the success of the Cistercians as it is this system which sets them apart from other Orders and it also allowed them to push the boundaries of agriculture and technology. The very fact that the Cistercian lands were organised in this way allowed the monks

to experiment, and to divide the production centres. The grange system will be examined in more detail in chapter seven.

Livestock

Cattle

When the monks received their foundation charter, it was customary that the patron would either include a quarry and a wooded area among the lands granted or would allow the monastery to draw timber and stone from his own lands. It was essential that the monastery be built near to rivers, both for sanitation purposes and to aid in the transportation of stone and produce to and from the monastery. Once the initial building phase was either well underway or completed, the monks had to begin to think about food. In the early days in Ireland, particularly in areas of Gaelic dominance, it can be assumed that cattle were plentiful and were the most common type of animal to be found on the estates. These animals provided meat for those in the guesthouses, for the infirm and for visitors and in addition, provided leather, fat for candles and the milk from cows was used for various purposes. In this period, cattle were four times more valuable than sheep except in relation to the wool trade.¹⁷⁴ In the north of England, many of the Cistercian houses had specialised dairy farms, and cattle

¹⁷⁴ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 55; Burton, *Monastic orders in Britain*, p. 236.

breeding stations which were known as vaccaries.¹⁷⁵ These were often formed at the head of the dales which utilised both hay meadows and fells for grazing. They could also be situated near to marshland grazing areas or in forests which had good pasture nearby.¹⁷⁶

Although Cistercians did not eat meat as a rule, in 1336 Pope Benedict XII issued an edict which allowed the Benedictines to eat meat four days each week.¹⁷⁷ Stephen of Lexington makes two references to cattle in letter 89 when writing about Maigne Abbey, the monks here had

thirty head of cattle, slaughtered and salted down, under the dormitory... they brought thirty head of cattle on the hoof into the cloister, grazing them on the grass there and on hay stored in the church.¹⁷⁸

It appears that by the close of the fourteenth century many Cistercian houses had abandoned the strict diet but did continue to observe fast days right up to the mid sixteenth century.

A number of references to cattle rearing and the valuation of these animals are to be found for the abbey of Dunbrody. It is known that in 1281-2 the Abbot received 20s for two heifers and the same sum was paid to him for two cows while 60s was paid for seventy-two hoggets.¹⁷⁹ This obviously underlines the higher monetary value which was placed on bovines in this period. Further information from Dunbrody is available from the same time period due to the

¹⁷⁵ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 55.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁷⁸ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 188.

¹⁷⁹ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p. 74.

fact that a number of animals were forcibly removed from the Abbey's grange at Cul now known as Coole in county Wexford. Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk appears to have ordered the removal of these animals and the information is gained from the *Plea Roll* to King Edward I, obviously the monastery sought to instigate proceedings against the earl for his actions. From the roll we learn that, in the year 1281-2 on the lands of Dunbrody Abbey an oxen was valued at one mark, three cows were valued at 20s and horses were valued at 20s each.¹⁸⁰ Three oxen, thirteen horses and three cows are listed as the animals which were removed from the grange.¹⁸¹ In addition to these figures it is known that in the same year the monastery sold four ewes for 10d each.¹⁸² From another source at the same time bullocks were valued at 13s 4d, cows at 6s 8d and horses at 20s.¹⁸³

Table 7: Valuation of animals on the lands of Dunbrody Abbey 1281-2.

Animal	Valuation
72 hoggets	60s
1 ewe	10d
1 cow	6s 8d - 10s
1 heifer	10s
1 bullock	13s 4d = 1 mark
1 ox	13s 4d = 1 mark
1 horse	20s = 1l

The valuation is interesting, the least value was given to the hoggets, these two-year-old sheep were not at all valuable in their own right, their value lay in their wool. The ewe could be used for milk and cheese but was principally used for

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

breeding. The cow and heifer were valued at almost the same, these animals were used for meat for the guests and used as a source of milk, leather and tallow. A bullock and ox were useful for breeding but used primarily for work and as such were very valuable. The highest valuation is retained for horses and while this is not unusual what may be surprising here is the number of horses mentioned in the plea roll. Thirteen horses were removed from the grange of the monastery and as all of the monasteries horses would be expected to be found at a central location, particularly a grange, it may be assumed that the monastery owned many more than thirteen horses.

Horses

Obviously horses would have been the main mode of transport for the monks. Stephen of Lexington, when writing to the abbot of Holy Cross in reference to an upcoming visitation ordered that the abbot

... be present and to provide a suitable place for us and the other abbots who are coming there, and also other necessities for us and our horses.¹⁸⁴

In another letter he reveals that the horses of the abbot of Owney were secretly stolen.¹⁸⁵ In the same letter Stephen tells that the abbot of Baltinglass was thrown from his horse and in letter eighty states clearly that

... it is strictly decreed for the avoidance of the possibility of scandal that whoever is required to go to town on any matter shall go by horse.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

Stephen goes on to say that monks who travel by horse must observe the vow of silence.¹⁸⁷ Letter 87 was written by Stephen to Pope Gregory in it he outlines the habits of the Irish monks to which he was not agreeable. One of the issues he had was with the men who

... all reside together in threes and fours, each of them having a horse along with his own boy-servant.¹⁸⁸

Reference also appears to a lay-brother having a horse while the 'Abbots stable' at St Mary's is referred to in the extents at dissolution.¹⁸⁹ In 1363 the community of Dunbrody gave the King's commissioner a horse valued at twenty marks.¹⁹⁰

Sheep

Sheep and their wool will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, but in addition to the wool, sheep were kept for milking, their dung was used for fertiliser and skins were used for the production of vellum. The most important use of sheep was to make the monks habits from the undyed wool, this of course being where the term 'the white monks' comes from. The monks used undyed wool as a symbol of their humility and austerity. The wool was also used to make their socks and blankets. The fact that the numbers of sheep far outweighed those of cattle on the Cistercian farms is solely because of the wool trade. The larger houses in Ireland must have had vast numbers of sheep each

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 185; White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 1.

¹⁹⁰ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p. 101.

year. When the wool production was at its peak and the management of the flocks was an important business, in many cases the flocks were moved during the summer into upland pastures where the healthier weathers were left to overwinter while the ewes and younger sheep were brought down to the lower ground.¹⁹¹ This system of transhumance was commonplace in the Cistercian world of Western Europe and the milder winters in Ireland would have lent itself to this practice, much like the booleying of cattle. This theory of the movement of sheep is supported by the placename evidence.

Placename evidence

The term 'sheepwalk' is found for two monasteries, Chore, county Cork and Mellifont, in its lands in county Louth. Mellifont also held land known as 'Shep Grange', today known as Sheep Grange, again in Louth, along with 'Shep Howse' or Sheep House in Meath.¹⁹² Jerpoint Abbey had land in 'Gylbon Shephouse', or, Gibbon Shephouse and in 'Woolgrange', now Wollengrange, both in Kilkenny.¹⁹³ Kilcooley Abbey, Tipperary had land in *Foilacamin*. This word is, in Irish, *Faill an Chaimín* or Cliff of the Shepherd's Crook. 'Rathnegerragh' in Wexford, translated as Rath of the sheep and was part of the

¹⁹¹ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 60.

¹⁹² White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 214, 216.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

holdings of Tintern Abbey and 'Ramysgrange', again in Wexford was part of the possessions of Dunbrody Abbey.¹⁹⁴

From this evidence we can surmise that some monasteries had particular tracks which were used over a considerable period as a walk, or a way, used to transfer some of the flock from one holding to another. The term 'grange' is, as already discussed, a type of out farm and obviously some were used for the express function of keeping sheep. Wollengrange may have either been a grange for storing wool or an area used for shearing the sheep and Ramysgrange must have been a grange used for either breeding or for keeping rams only. The term 'Sheephouse' is found twice, once in Mellifont and once in Jerpoint with the latter having a family name attached. A sheep house is recorded on the plan from St Gall.¹⁹⁵ The one referred to in Jerpoint may refer to an actual structure which housed sheep or perhaps housed wool. Gibbon may have been the name of an individual who gave this land to the monastery or may have been a member of the community, of course it is possible that the name belongs to a person who had no association with the monastery but became associated with the land in later years. The very descriptive name of 'Cliff of the Shepherd's Crook' in Kilcooley may not necessarily refer to a place which had a particular association with a shepherd but might refer to some geological or other natural

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 355, 359.

¹⁹⁵ Price, *Plan of St Gall in brief*, p. 7.

feature which resembled the crook of a shepherd. The placename Rathnegerragh in Wexford points towards the use of pre-existing features.

Sheepcotes

Evidence from a number of the English houses indicates that the sheepcotes were a way of housing the animals during the winter months. These structures were often of wooden construction and sat on low stone sill walls.¹⁹⁶ The sheepcotes were usually thatched and incorporated a hay loft to store feed for the winter.¹⁹⁷ Evidence suggests that the sheepcotes in remote areas were often surrounded by either a hedged or walled enclosure which was used for controlling and sorting the sheep.¹⁹⁸

Goats

Goats were kept for their milk and cheese and were probably more plentiful in the West of Ireland than the East.

Pigs

Pigs have been discussed above, they were not labour intensive and their meat was used in the guesthouses.

¹⁹⁶ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 144.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

Horses

Horses were used for harrowing, ploughing and transport and were essential for hauling timber and stone especially during the construction phase of the monastery, but because of the expense of keeping horses, they were never overly plentiful within the complex.

Excavations

From the excavations at Kells Priory the fourteenth to fifteenth century remains indicate that cattle and sheep/goat were more important than pig.¹⁹⁹ At Tintern it was found that sheep/goats dominated at this site also.²⁰⁰

Uses of arable land by the Cistercians

Grain

The other major land type required by the monasteries was arable. The arable land was essential for the production of the two staple foods of the monastic diet; bread and ale. The daily allowance of bread was one pound to each monk. Several grades of bread were produced with the finest being consumed by the abbot and his guests, the next highest grade was used for the infirmary and brown bread was the monk's regular type with the coarser bread used for the lay brothers and later for the hired labourers. This last bread was

¹⁹⁹ Clyne, *Kells Priory*, p. 477.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

often made partly from oatmeal, rye or barley flour. The standard loaf of bread weighed two pounds after baking and James Bond has calculated that this one loaf of bread would require about three acres of land per year. Therefore, in a community of one hundred men, about one hundred and fifty acres of land would have been required to produce this one element of their meal. Taking the three year crop rotation into consideration, this would mean that four hundred and fifty acres of land would be utilised to produce the bread alone, and this does not take into consideration any additional bread which may have been served in the guesthouses or given to the poor.

Beer

The monks were allowed to drink up to one gallon of beer per day. Beer was the standard drink of the period. Wine was too costly and the production of milk was too labour intensive. Malt was the main ingredient and barley the preferred cereal, but wheat, oats and dredge which is a mixture of oats and barley was also used. Bond calculates that the production of ale utilised two to three acres of land per person, so this would require another three to four hundred and fifty acres giving a total of approximately nine hundred acres of land which would have been set aside for the production of bread and ale for the monks for one year. The beer was a small beer and was usually brewed for three days, it had the consistency of soup.

Other crops produced

Wheat, oats, barley, rye, flax, hemp, peas and beans would all have been part of the produce of the monastic estates. Flax and hemp would have been utilised in the manufacture of ropes, these crops would have primarily been grown in marshy areas where water was available for retting. This process involved separating the fibres by soaking the plants, after harvesting, for a number of weeks.²⁰¹

Wheat was grown principally for the production of bread but rivet, or cone wheat may also have been produced. This cone wheat produced a softer, mealy grain which was utilised in the production of biscuits and gruel.²⁰² Oats were used mainly in animal feed for horses, poultry and other livestock. At times when wheat was not abundant oats could be used for malting or be converted to meal or flour and used in gruel, pottage or porridge.²⁰³ Oats would have preformed well in colder, wetter areas. Rye would have been produced in areas of light soils but would have been the least produced of the four cereals. Peas and beans were used on the monk's table but also would have accounted for some of the animal feed, particularly for horses, pigs and pigeons.²⁰⁴ These pulses were often dried and used throughout the year and played a major role in the crop rotation system by introducing nitrates into the soil and inhibiting weed growth.

²⁰¹ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 51.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Wheat and rye were sown in the winter, barley and oats in the spring. James Bond suggests that the crops would usually be sown 2-3 bushels per acre and barley would have been expected to produce eight-fold, rye sevenfold, peas and beans sixfold, wheat five and oats fourfold.²⁰⁵

A list of the crops to which reference was made on the monastic estates may be composed from the dissolution extents. On the lands of St Mary's Abbey references are made to grain, wheat, oats, barley-malt, oat-malt, hay and turf.²⁰⁶ Wheat, oats, grain, oat-malt and hay are all recorded as being grown on the lands of Baltinglass Abbey but the record at dissolution shows that much of the land is waste and not producing.²⁰⁷ Beer and grain are recorded in Abbeyleix.²⁰⁸ Reference is made to the production of barley, corn and oats on the lands of Tintern Abbey with corn and oats being grown at Dunbrody.²⁰⁹ Corn and oat-malt are among the tithes mentioned in relation to Kilcooley Abbey with hay and turf recorded for Bective.²¹⁰ Only turf and grain are recorded for Mellifont while corn and oats are each mentioned numerous times under the possessions of Duiske Abbey.²¹¹ Many of the other houses either had too much land laid waste to be in a position to produce or were well supplied with foodstuffs as part of the payments in kind or the tithes. In the thirteenth century grain, hay, flour all

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 49-50.

²⁰⁶ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 8-14, 22

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 126, 128-9, 132.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 360, pp 354-5.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 323, 268.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp 218,9, 214, 194-6.

receive mention among the letters of Stephen of Lexington.²¹² At Kells Priory the predominance of wheat and oats over barley was noted.²¹³ The possible presence of peas at Kells fits in with earlier comments in this work because their incidence emphasises the shift to arable cultivation.²¹⁴ Legumes were used as part of the crop-rotation system.

Hunting

Many records exist which refer to abbots and monks hunting on their lands. The ecumenical council of Pope Innocent III forbade the practice of clergy keeping hounds and hawks in 1215, but the practice seems to have continued in some monasteries at least.²¹⁵ For some of the larger houses it was probably expected that the abbot, when entertaining certain guests, would indulge in one of the most widespread sports of the period and some houses did keep hounds and horses for hunting practices. The very fact that the Cistercians held so much land would also mean that they would be open to trespass by others and presumably quite an amount of poaching took place on some monastic lands. From the Ormond Deeds it is known that John de Rupe, son of William de Rupe was caught trespassing in the wood of Grohcyndrum Rahym in 1268 which Jerpoint Abbey owned.²¹⁶

²¹² Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 188.

²¹³ Clyne, *Kells Priory*, p. 483.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Bond, *Monastic landscapes*, p. 171.

²¹⁶ *Ormond deeds 1171-1350*, deed 146.

Other endeavors of the monks

Mining

As early as the twelfth century the Cistercians were exploiting the mineral resources of the Burgundy and Champagne regions. The monks were themselves working in the mines and extracting and smelting the ore, and not only were they using the iron for the tools that they would require within the monasteries, but they were selling on the excesses which they had produced.²¹⁷ The White Monks did not have a monopoly here however because they were entering into a market which already contained representatives from other orders, namely the Carthusians and the Knights Templar. Nonetheless they managed to gain a reputation as leaders in the field of metal mining, production and working, and were at the cutting edge of the invention of new equipment such as the water-powered hammer which revolutionised the fulling industry.²¹⁸

In other areas of the Cistercian world, the monks also indulged in metalworking and associated practices. In Bohemia, now the Czech Republic, the monks at Sedlic abbey mined silver while in Scotland coal was mined by Newbattle abbey, Culross abbey exported coal with the aid of 170 ships and the monks of Fountains abbey mined lead in its mines.²¹⁹ In the thirteenth century

²¹⁷ Leroux-Dhuys, *Cistercian Abbeys*, p. 107.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*; Burton, *Monastic orders in Britain*, p. 240.

Margam Abbey received the right to mine coal, lead and iron.²²⁰ The monks at Byland and Rievaulx produced pig-iron in their smithies and both Tintern and Grace Dieu were involved in the iron industry in the Forest of Dean.²²¹

²²⁰ Burton, *Monastic orders in Britain*, p. 239.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

Chapter 5

Additional grants obtained by monasteries between foundation and dissolution

This chapter aims to enumerate any additional grants which the various monasteries received in the intervening period between foundation and dissolution. This picture should provide an image of the rate of increase of the holdings of the monasteries. Any trends, such as the type of land, proximity to the monastery and identity of the patron will be commented upon. The monasteries will be presented with the same enumeration as used previously.

Mellifont /

From entries in the *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland* under the date June 1258, it is known that the abbey of Mellifont was considered as tenant of three carucates of land at Mulygadaveran and Thulachalyn and almost five other carucates at a location not named.¹ It would appear that the monastery probably owned this land. Presumably the second name relates to Tullyallen.

Bective

During the rebellion of Lambert Simnel the abbot of Bective, James of Castlemartin, took part with the other Anglo-Irish lords, and in 1488, received

¹ *Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-84*, deed 582, p. 95

pardon from Henry VII.² In the late fifteenth century the abbey was in possession of twenty messuages and twelve hundred acres of arable and pasture land.³ (Figure 34) The abbot sat as a spiritual peer in parliament.⁴

Inishlounaght/Suir

The Annals of Innishfallen record that, in 1237 Archbishop Marianus Ua Briain died at this monastery.⁵ Gleeson claims this was in fact the following year but he goes on to state that in 1239 a new community was sent from Furness Abbey to take charge of Inishlounaght.⁶ Unfortunately he does not state what he uses as a source for this information but it is plausible that some monks may have been sent from the English house to the Irish following from the break-up of the Mellifont filiation.

In February 1282 and in May 1283 the abbey was known to be in possession of land at Tachkerach also known as Tacherath and Tachkerath, the possession of this land led to court proceedings of which reference is made in the *Calendar of documents*.⁷ In 1311 nine acres of arable and four turbary was recorded at Lithbalyfufue.⁸ In 1317 a bond was paid to one Richard Walsh to the value of

² Ibid., p. 118.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Gwynn and Gleeson, *A history of the diocese of Killaloe* (Dublin, 1962), p. 239.

⁶ John Gleeson, *Cashel of the Kings, a history of the ancient capital of Munster from the date of its foundation until the present day* (Dublin, 1927), p. 268

⁷ *Cal. doc. Ire. 1252-84*, deed 1898, 2081, pp 412, 482.

⁸ W.P. Burke, *History of Clonmel*, (Waterford, 1907), p. 409.

£255 for his services in the war against Robert Bruce.⁹ The bond was given by the monastery to the 'Merchants of the Society of Ricards de Luca' who passed it to the king.¹⁰ The value of the taxation of the monastery in 1306 was £50.

On 10 December 1519 the monastery leased the grange of Loughkyrraghe to Thomas Butler for a period of sixty years. One condition was stipulated and that was that, in addition to rent, Thomas would construct a chapel in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, presumably at this location.¹¹ Burke states that 'as Henry's main object was to get hold of the monastic property, the monks had their revenge by alienating as much of their estates as they could'.¹²

Baltinglass

For the date 27 July 1252 it is recorded that the manor of Wamoelan was owned by the monastery of Baltinglass. This land was taken into the King's hands in 1252 because of the 'transgression of some of its brothers'.¹³

Monasternenagh/Maigue

In January 1201 Pope Innocent III commissioned the bishops of Killaloe and Kilfenora along with the abbot of Maigue to execute the terms of sentence which the Pope had passed against the bishop of Ross and the bishop elect of

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Burke, *Clonmel*, p. 410.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp 410-11.

¹³ *Cal. doc. Ire. 1252-84*, deed 64, p. 10.

Emly.¹⁴ In 1227 the king granted protection to this monastery.¹⁵ Two years later saw the beginning of a lawsuit between the monastery and Maurice of London over two knight's fees in Glenogra.¹⁶ Five years later the case was to be heard at the King's Court in Limerick but, through a plea from the abbot the case was referred to the General Chapter. In this setting the lands were referred to as Ballihoder, Enaghculy, Culether, Kalmarkan and Granginhava.¹⁷

Newry

In 1237 Hugh de Lacy, Earl of Ulster, granted more privileges and lands on the Abbey, in addition the Abbot of Newry was said to have been 'constituted a mitred abbot' and as such was endowed with many privileges and powers.¹⁸ In the taxation of 1306, the Abbot of Veride Lignum assessed at 20 marks, while in the valuations made in 1422 and 1546 the Vicar of Viride Lignum likewise appears among the Dromore clergy and is assessed at one mark.¹⁹

Jerpoint

The first abbot of Jerpoint was Felix O'Dullany and what is generally accepted as being his effigy is still to be seen near to where he was buried in the chancel of the monastery. Felix was an important figure in the early monastery -

¹⁴ Gwynn and Gleeson, *Killaloe*, p. 172.

¹⁵ John Begley, *The diocese of Limerick ancient and medieval* (Dublin, 1906), p. 342.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ E.D. Atkinson, *Dromore, an Ulster diocese* (Dundalk, 1925), p. 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

a monk at Baltinglass he was sent as the founding Cistercian abbot of Jerpoint. He was also a significant figure in the church of Ossory in the late twelfth century and to this day is still the only Cistercian monk to have been installed as Bishop of Ossory. Felix's name also appears on some other charters of this period and as such this testifies to his importance and that of his monastery and diocese. Prior to his death around 1202 Felix made one very significant donation in relation to land in Jerpoint.

Felix was promoted to the Bishopric of Ossory around 1178 and during his episcopate he granted the vill of Kell Rudi, later known as Grange Kilree, and now as the townland of Kilree near Bennetsbridge to the abbey of Jerpoint.²⁰ This grant is listed in John's confirmation charter.²¹ The name Kilree is a corruption of the Irish Cill Ruidhehi (latinized Kell Rudi in the charter). Grange Kilree is also a parish name and the parish includes the whole townland of Kilree and part of the adjoining townland of Wallslough.

In his charter confirming the grants made to the monastery by Donaldus, King of Ossory, John also granted to the monks 'every other gift which had been lawfully and properly granted to the abbey since the first arrival of the said Earl, and particularly those of the English'.²² It is obvious from this quotation that some Anglo-Normans also bestowed land on the monastery after its foundation. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the charter lists grants from

²⁰ Carrigan, *Ossory*, iv, p. 287.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

Manasser Affic or Arsic, Richard, son of Falcon, Falcon, and John de Lenhal who granted the lands of Dadurtes in Uthoh or Odogh, the lands of Ballemacgillcreneig in Arewey, the lands near the Grange of Raichellela, the entire town of Clohan or Duncrohi in Congtella and the land of Raithdoni-nail respectively.²³

By 1260 the wool trade was up and running in Ireland. A deed of that date is to be found among the Ormond deeds which states that a bond was agreed between David, archbishop of Cashel and the abbot of Jerpoint where the archbishop will 'save the abbot harmless' against Reyner and the merchants and citizens of Lucca for ten sacks of wool.²⁴ This wool was to be paid for from the farm of Drongan or Drangan, from the reading of the text it would appear that the monastery owned the said land, but the archbishop was either in possession of the land or was renting it from the abbot and community.²⁵

The next mention of lands held by the monastery is to be found in a bond now in the National Library of Ireland dated 20 Aug. 1268 which tells of an agreement on behalf of John de Rupe son of William de Rupe to the Abbot of Jerpoint for trespassing in the abbey's wood called Grdhcyndrum Rahyn.²⁶ The record goes on to state that the bailiff of Kilkenny was to be paid a cask of wine as was the Abbot and convent, 'in case of any injustice or injury done to them'.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Ormond deeds, 1171-1350*, 132, p. 59.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ N.L.I. D. 208; *Ormond deeds. 1171-1350*, 146, p. 65.

This bond was 'given at Jerpoint'.²⁷

By 1374 the monastery was in serious financial trouble and this is testified by the fact that the men of Jerpoint abbey stated that at that time their 'possessions, rents, offerings ... have been so diminished by continual war between English and Irish ... that they are no longer able to maintain hospitality and other due charges'.²⁸ As a result of this harsh reality the monks requested that the rectory of the church of Blanchevillestown be given to them for ever, this request was accepted and the date of acceptance was 12 Aug. 1374.²⁹ Another reference was made to Jerpoint in October 1388 when Henry Lang, chaplain, vicar of Jerpoint granted all his lands tenements, ponds and fisheries to Thomas Seys and Robert King, both chaplains and to John Shorthall and Roger Ragget.³⁰

On 16 July 1391 the King granted charge of the lands of 'le Moretoun' near Kylleryn to the monastery, this is better known as Kilkieran.³¹ In 1396 Jerpoint was granted the parishes of the Rower and Blanchvillestown with the monastery already being in possession of the parish of Rathelc de Grangia which Carrigan identifies as Grangemacomb. Grangemacomb parish comprises of 3,486 acres 3 roods and 37 perches, the Rower 10,758 acres 0 roods and 20 perches with Blanchvillestown holding 854 acres 1 rood and 4 perches.³²

King Henry IV issued a writ for the restitution to the Abbot and Convent

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ormond Deeds, 1350-1413*, 194, p. 137.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 288, p. 209.

³¹ *Carrigan, Ossory*, iv, p. 289.

³² *Townland index*

of Jerpoint of certain lands in Smithestown and Killelne which had been forfeited to the late King under the Statute of Mortmain on October 22 1400.³³

James Butler Earl of Ormond leased Denneslond in Trendyneston to Thomas the Abbot of Jerpoint on 10 April 1407. Two other grants for the same land were issued at later dates with both granting the land in question to Abbot David, these were dated 04 March 1431-2 and 04 May 1449.³⁴ On 12 Jan. 1422 Nicholas Sweetman granted one messuage, forty acres of arable land, four of meadow and four of moor in Gebonneschepous to Robert Folyng.³⁵ At dissolution Jerpoint held one messuage, sixteen acres of arable and four of pasture at Smithstown and Gibbon Sheephous.³⁶ The Abbey was granted land of Clonynstollane and other lands by Richard Walshe on 09 March 1445-6.³⁷

Land in Gybboneshephan and Lesmenan was granted to the monastery by Robert Folyng in 1450-1, and it is clear from the document that David Mortymer was Abbot at this time. On 30 May the abbey was given seisin of the Robert's mill in Madokeston.³⁸ It also appears that the same Abbot David was called upon to intervene in a marital dispute as his commissary passed a sentence of divorce between Ellan Walshe and William Connelle.³⁹

These land grants would have amounted to a considerable increase in the

³³ N.B. White ed., *Irish Monastic and Episcopal deeds AD 1200-1600* (Dublin, 1936), A11 [15], P. 13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, A12 [18] I&II, P. 15.

³⁵ *Ormond deeds*, 1413-1509 no. 50.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ White, *Monastic and Episcopal deeds*, A26 [38], pp. 28-9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, A28 [40] pp 31-2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, A30 [42] pp 32-3.

abbey's holdings. However by 1500 a change is evident as now it is the Abbey which is leasing out her land not increasing her holdings. 20 Feb. 1501-2 the Abbey leased the vill of Cloghran to Oliver, Bishop of Ossory.⁴⁰ In 1513 (Aug. 3) the same vill was leased by the Abbey to William Brennan and Margaret Den his wife.⁴¹

In 1518 Nicholas Baron, abbot, leased one acre of land with a fishery in Dunbell to Robert Roth for a period of thirty-one years, five years later Robert was leased the town of Kilrey for sixty years.⁴² Thady McMorieth and his wife Isabella Sweetman were leased the lands at Yagyston or Jackstown c. 1530.⁴³ While on 22 Oct. 1532 Philip Lonogran, Abbot leased the water of Skerdan to Thomas Fossard merchant of Thomastown.⁴⁴ In 1530 Oliver Grace, abbot, leased all of the tithes and altarages of the churches of Cloghran and Gauran to Nicholas Moting, Chancellor of St. Canices' Cathedral, Kilkenny. Oliver also granted the mill of Dunbell to Master Adam Walsh 'as a compensation for his good advice' and for the money advanced by him for the abbot. One gets the impression that the abbot is possibly showing his appreciation for work or help given before an event will negate his position to offer thanks. In addition to these leases Oliver granted the townlands of Smithstown and Gibbon Sheepphouse to Simon Cradock and Edward Grace for a period of thirty-one

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, A45 [62] pp 54-5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, A47 [72] pp 63-5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, A48 [75] pp 65-6; Carrigan, *Ossory*, iv, p. 289.

⁴³ White, *Monastic and Episcopal deeds*, A50 [88], p. 68.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, A51 [90], pp 68-70.

years.⁴⁵ Thomas Purcell of Kilkenny was leased the tithes of Kilree on 16 April 1533.⁴⁶ Between 1530 and 1537 at least seven of the abbey's holdings were leased to others, whether this was to gain money, get rid of land or a combination of both is not clear. It must be noted that Jerpoint is not the only house that resorted to this practice of leasing out lands. Brendan Bredshaw in his book which deals with the dissolution of the religious houses states that '... it was necessary to resort to subterfuge to make quick gains. This usually took the form of granting long leases on favourable terms, compounding several years of the rent for an entry fine.'⁴⁷ While it is not possible to know the extent or the terms of these agreements it is clear, from the evidence presented here, that the Cistercian houses indulged in this practice.

Killenny

About the year 1200 the town of Techomichan was granted to the monastery by Miles Fitz Bishop, Miles, or Milo was the son of David Fitz Gerald, Bishop of St. David's in Wales.⁴⁸ This same Miles came to Ireland in 1169 with the first group of Normans and was granted land at Overk in Ossory by Strongbow.⁴⁹ Around two years later the abbey was granted protection, confirmation and freedom from tithes. The lands listed in that charter are as

⁴⁵ Carrigan, *Ossory*, iv, p. 289.

⁴⁶ White, *Monastic and Episcopal deeds*, A52 [91], pp 70-1.

⁴⁷ Brendan Bradshaw, *The dissolution of the religious orders in Ireland under Henry VIII* (Digitally printed version, Cambridge, 2008), p. 28.

⁴⁸ Butler and Bernard, 'Duiske charters', p. 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

follows: 'Cellonascaik acum omnibus pertinentiis suis, Gra[n]gia Cellainni cum suis pertinentiis, Grangia Mulendinum Morain cum suis appenditiis, Grangia Cech Meccuain cum suis appenditiis, Grangia Cellachadcona cum suis appenditiis'.⁵⁰

In relation to the buildings within the complex it is known that the monastery had an infirmary by 1220 when Alan Beg granted a 'fishpond to the infirmary of the convent'.⁵¹ The location of the monastery so close to the river would indicate the presence of a mill and it is reasonable to assume that the complex would not have differed much from the layout of the other houses of the order. Unfortunately not much else is known about the layout or lands held by the monks at Killenny for on 22 July 1227 the Abbot of Froidmond reduced the monastery to the status of a grange and made it subject to Duiske Abbey.⁵² These actions caused much discontent within the order in Ireland and came at a time of much upheaval and dissatisfaction which culminated in what was known as the Mellifont Conspiracy.

Dunbrody

Prince John's charter of protection issued to Dunbrody in 1185 mentions a number of places which obviously belonged to the monastery by that year but are not listed in the foundation charter. These include five carucates which were

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

granted by Gilbert de Essex, unfortunately no location is given for this land. Clinanfada was granted by Eli, son of Aiols, Gillon granted five carucates of land which are said to adjoin part of the original grant. One messuage at Tachmolin was granted as was one burgage in Waterford and one messuage close to the castle of Richard de London.⁵³ Gilbert de Essex granted five carucates of land at Crook in County Waterford, it is this land which was central to the dispute between the Cistercians and the Knights Templar throughout the thirteenth century.⁵⁴

About 1200 William Marshall took the Abbey under his special protection and that charter states that the monks would not be allowed to

suffer from exactions by foresters or other officials, or to be impeded in enclosing their lands and woods and making fosses⁵⁵

This is an important entry as it obviously means that the monks created boundaries other than natural ones and were allowed to, and presumably did, create fosses and banks.

About the year 1200 one John Tuluse quit claimed the land of Colkinglas, which Hore identifies as Knockanduff, and granted this land and all liberties and free customs with right to entrance and exit to the monks. This is a significant grant because this is the most southerly of the holdings associated with

⁵³ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p. 50.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-1284*, deed 666, 667, pp 328-333.

⁵⁵ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p. 58.

Dunbrody and must border the estate of the Knights Templars centred at Kilcloggan.

In 1232 the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order decreed that the monastery of Ghinewadan be suppressed as a monastery and become a grange of Dunbrody.⁵⁶ The following year Richard Marshall, Earl of Pembroke issued a charter restoring the wood of Duncannon to the community of Dunbrody. William Marshall, Richard's father had taken the wood in pledge from the monks.

In 1240-1 the Court of the Earl, Roger Bygod, 4th Earl of Norfolk at Wexford reached a decision on the monastery gaining or losing 24 acres of land with its belongings in Balyenneri. The Court ruled in favour of the monastery against Maurice of London.⁵⁷ Unfortunately the location of the land cannot be identified at the present time. About this time, a final agreement was reached between the Abbot of Dunbrody and Marjorie, wife of Giles for the lands of Tyrbegan and Kyllunskerd.⁵⁸

In addition to other grants issued between the years 1241-5 Walter Marshal, son of William, also granted 2 carucates and 240 statute acres with their belongings in Baligoue and Edergeuel to the monastery.⁵⁹ Neither of these locations can be identified today.

⁵⁶ *Cal. Doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, deed 1993.

⁵⁷ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p. 59.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 64-6.

By 1240, the monastery held the priory of Saint Saviour at Ross.⁶⁰ The next numbers of years were focused mostly on land disputes between the monks at Dunbrody and the Knights Templars at Kilcloggan. The Knights Templar were introduced into Ireland by King Henry II and were responsible for protecting the major waterway to ensure that vessels and their goods would find safe passage to the important ports of Waterford or New Ross. The location of the monastery on the east side of the Hook peninsula, with land stretching down the coastline past Duncannon and bordering the lands of the Knights Templar is interesting. The Cistercians of Dunbrody were bordering their lands and the two entered into a long and involved dispute over land on the Waterford side of the harbour. If the monks of Dunbrody owned the land in Crook it would be directly opposite other Cistercian lands and one must question if this fact would have given the Cistercians any additional rights to duties or levies. The amount of land in question in Crook was a significant one; 5 carucates or about 600 statute acres.

Another dispute arose in 1279 between the Cistercians of Dunbrody and the Knights Templars of Kilcloggan over ownership of the grange of Kilbride. The Master of the Templars in Ireland claimed ownership of 7 carucates, 840 statute acres of land.⁶¹ Finally an agreement was reached between the Master of the Templars in Ireland and the Cistercians that saw the Cistercians keeping

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁶¹ Billy Colfer, *The Hook peninsula* (Cork, 2004), p. 49. *Cal S.P. AD 1279-80*, no. 164, 7, p.335.

ownership of one and a half carucates. An argument again broke out over the same lands in 1332 with the dispute being finally resolved in 1334 when the Knights Hospitallers who had taken over at Kilcloggan agreed that the land was in fact Dunbrody's.⁶² This resolution is contained in Rawlinson MS, B494 in the Bodlean Library, Oxford and the same manuscript contains information pertaining to an agreement in respect of the monk's water mill in Ballykeeroge, certain lands near Kinnagh, Tintern Parish, the church at Rathcro and a charter of Stephen of York in respect of the bog or marsh of Killesk along with two references to lands in Kilmannock.⁶³ By 1280, the monastery must have held land at Coole, Camplie, Killesk parish. This was part of the grange of Tyrbegan or Sehlbaggan a reference is also made to the grange of Ruas which is possibly Rosetown.⁶⁴

Isabella, daughter of Andrew Palmer, New Ross granted 1 virgate (c. 24 acres) in the street of St. Saviours to the monastery of Dunbrody in 1284. This grant adjoined land that had been given to the monastery by her father.⁶⁵ A Thomas Russell granted a certain fishery in Ofathe County Waterford. William de Cogen granted 2 carucates in Baliokeroc, Robert the son of Robert Comin granted half a carucate of land in Duncannon and one carucate at Grannath and two burgages at Kallan, and the Abbot of Inishlounaght issued a charter to the

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, pp 86.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp 74-5.

⁶⁵ Ibid., iii, p. 77.

Abbot and community of Dunbrody in respect of quarries and caves.⁶⁶ Lord Miles de Cogan granted Knockmurryn and about the same time the prior of Inistiogue and the abbot of Dunbrody reached a settlement whereby the abbot renounced all claims to the grange of Balymol in the diocese of Lismore.⁶⁷

From a grant issued by Lord William and John de Cogen we learn that the monastery held land in Portumna Co. Galway. Richard de Burgh Earl of Ulster and Lord of Connaught confirmed the grant of the church of the Blessed Peter and Paul of Portumna and the church of Saint Michael of Lykmeless and the tenement of Montermolenam. It appears that this land later became part of the possessions of the Dominican Order and this was confirmed in a letter written by Pope Martin V on 8 Oct. 1426.⁶⁸

1321 saw Richard Whitley quit claim one carucate and 60 acres of wood with their belongings in Rathcastlemere, half a carucate and belongings each in Balistra and Duncanan along with half a carucate in Balahist to the monastery of Dunbrody.⁶⁹ A castle still stands at Rathcastlemere, near Kilmore today. Between 1334 and 40 Ralph Stamer issued a charter in which he granted a total of five virgates of land in Ross to the community along with 40d. in silver annually.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 78-9.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

The Priory of St. Saviour's Ross with its lands and churches in Wexford became part of the possessions of Dunbrody in 1371-2. This included the lands at Killesk and Clonsharrah (Duncannon). The King, in his letter states that the monks will acquire twenty librates of land, Hore states that one librate was 4 ox gangs, an ox gang generally taken to be 15 acres or the amount of land that can be ploughed by one ox in one year.⁷¹ Therefore the monks gained c. 1,200 acres and all tithes and appurtenances.

Hore states that from a Royal confirmation of the abbey's charters in 1402 it is stated that the possessions of the monastery include an area of four square miles, containing twenty-five townlands and part of three others in addition to much land in other counties.⁷² About 1416 the possessions of the Abbey were valued at £26 13s 4d.⁷³ The chapel of Rathroe, in the present parish of Ramsgrange, was granted to the Abbey by Robert, Bishop of Ferns in 1453.

On 10 May 1522 Alexander Devereux, Abbot of Dunbrody, granted to one Stephen Devereux 'the town of Battlestown, the villages of Great and Little Haggard, (probably Ramsgrange) Ballygow and Ballycorean with all the towns and lands extending from the water of the Great Moor of Clonard to that of the Bishop's lands, thence to that which runneth to Dungulph, and so on to the mearings of Ballymathy within the barony of Dunbrothy, for the full term of 61

⁷¹ Ibid., p.103.

⁷² Ibid., p. 109.

⁷³ Ibid.

years, at the annual rent of 22 marks'.⁷⁴ This action would appear to mirror a trend which is evident in many of the other monasteries at this time, and even earlier in the same century, when the monks appear to be setting aside large tracts of land to lay people. Whether this action was in order to receive payment or carried out with the thought of protecting abbey lands is not yet clear.

On 1 Jan. 1541 Dom. Alexander Deveraux surrendered the Cistercian monastery of Dunbrody to the crown. In relation to the Dissolution of Dunbrody Baron Finglas wrote a report on the state of the area in 1553 in which he stated that the abbey's which were situated in, or near settlements of Irish men appear to have been aiding and supporting the said Irish and more than the King and his subjects. Hore suggests that this practice may have been a principal factor in the closure of these monasteries.⁷⁵

Holy Cross

Geoffrey de Marisco granted lands in Arad to the monastery of Holy Cross between the years 1217 and 1220. Lestiakardin, Killcomyn and Ballmacroy were granted to the monastery and these were said to have stretched on the west of the river called Tirkyvnay and rising by the mountains on the south as far as the stones known as Firbragy from where they stretched up the mountains to Belanyn and Comyryntybyn.⁷⁶ During his visitation to Ireland in the 1220's

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁷⁶ Gwynn and Gleeson, *Killaloe*, p. 183; *Ormond deeds 1350- 1413*, pp 2-3.

Stephen of Lexington stated that the abbey was in possession of thirty ploughlands.⁷⁷ As a ploughland was the equivalent of a carucate this would equate to 3,600 medieval acres or 9,000 statute acres.

The land of Culletti was listed as part of the portion granted to Holy Cross at foundation, in a deed dated between 1263 and 1285 it appears again, this time the monastery is allowing Theobald Walter, Butler of Ireland, to farm half a carucate of land at Culletti.⁷⁸ This land is said to be situated between the river of the same name and Ardmale or Ardmayle which is recorded as the lordship of Theobald.⁷⁹

In 1267 Bishop O'Gormacain of Killaloe resigned his Bishopric and became a member of the community of monks.⁸⁰ In 1278 Peter O'Connings Abbot granted the Grange and mills of Ballycorkeran, along with the rents from Tippergeel, Bridgeton, Rathkenen and the Great Grange which was situated near to Bridgeton to Laurence, son of Jacob.⁸¹ This entry is worthy of mention as it goes against the general pattern of the monasteries holding their own lands throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In general the leasing out of lands appears not to have been commonplace until the late fifteenth century reaching its peak in the early to mid sixteenth century. The usual trend is evident again when, on 9 March 1364 William son of Robert Hacket granted the rectory

⁷⁷ Stephen of Lexington, *Letters*, p. 36.

⁷⁸ *Ormond deeds, 1171-1350*, 139, p. 63.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Gwynn and Gleeson, *Killaloe*, p. 246.

⁸¹ Gleeson, *Cashel*, p. 260.

of the church of Borrisnafearney (Burgagenefarne) to the monastery of Holy Cross. In 1458 the prior of Monaincha was executor of letters of inquiry which were made into a complaint made by a monk of Holy Cross against the abbot of Duiske.⁸² This testifies to the turbulent nature of the times and the uneasy co-existence which many of the monasteries experienced. The last record of possessions granted to the monastery is to be found on 10 June 1485 when David, Archbishop of Cashel granted the vicarage of Gleankin to Holy Cross.⁸³

Inch

Inch was thoroughly anti-Irish; so much so, that it was one of the two monasteries which were complained of in the *Querimonia*, which Donald O'Neill and the other Irish chiefs addressed to the Pope in the year 1318.⁸⁴ In 1389 Parliament enacted a law whereby no mere Irishman should be permitted to make his profession in the Abbey of Inch. A further note of interest may be obtained from this entry as it was recorded that 'the Abbey of Inch is exempted, for that is the Cistercians, and the parish church of the Abbey owes Proxies, 10s; Refections, 10s; Synodals 2s'.⁸⁵

⁸² Gwynn and Gleeson, *Killaloe*, p. 471.

⁸³ Gleeson, *Cashel*, pp 258-9.

⁸⁴ James O'Laverty, *An historical account of the diocese of Down and Connor* (5 vols., Dublin, 1878-80), i, p. 324.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

Kilcooley

Little is known of the history of Kilcooley, it is only occasionally mentioned in the Ormond deeds and even less in the record of the general chapter. In 1377 Thomas O'Shee leased the manor of Kilcooley from the monks followed by Richard O'Shee and Donald O'Shee who both leased half of the manor in 1450 and 1544 respectively.⁸⁶

The major event which is well known is the burning of the abbey by a group of armed men in 1445. It appears that the abbey suffered serious damage, so much so that the community sent a plea for assistance to the Pope and the Abbot, Philip, and two monks fled to England to supposedly save themselves from starvation.⁸⁷

A number of points may be raised here. Obviously the reason for the burning of such a building, especially by armed men must be queried. Secondly, it is strange that the men felt the need to undertake the arduous journey to another country in order to eat. One would imagine that the men would have had a better chance of producing food from their own lands, or seeking shelter in another monastery, particularly the mother-house of Jerpoint, than traversing to England. The answer may lie in the fact that within eighteen years of the incident the Abbot was dead but had been able to rebuild the monastery with a huge amount of decoration which was carried out to a high standard.

⁸⁶ Neely, *Kilcooley*, p. 9.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Presumably then Abbot Philip O'Lonan went to England with the intention of fundraising. The Abbot's effigy is still to be seen in the abbey church.

The monastery was situated in a strategically important position, all gaps and ways across the Slieveardagh hills were protected and many were guarded by tower houses. The main road from Kilkenny to Cashel is said to have passed literally in front of the monastery and the abbey itself was fortified.⁸⁸ Therefore it is probable that the monastery was burned as a reprisal for other such events or to undermine the protection work going on in the area.

Kilcooley then may have been one of the monasteries to have gone against the general trend during this period. Many of the houses reached their peak in the thirteenth century and then had a second highpoint in the early fifteenth century before the final downturn which brought the monasteries into the dissolution period. Kilcooley had its bad time in the mid fifteenth century but it appears to have prospered into the sixteenth century. The fact that many of the tombs in the abbey date to this period, are inscribed in english and not latin, and that the families memorialised in the church are mostly Cantwells and Butlers all indicate a huge influx of Anglo-Norman wealth into the area.

⁸⁸ Neely, *Kilcooley*, p. 7.

Glanwadyn

A reference to the absence of the abbot from the General Chapter in 1208 proves the existence of the abbey.⁸⁹ Canon Power has shown that the monastery of Glenragh (Gleann Gradha, in Latin de Valle Caritate) was the parish of Monksland, near Bunmahon in Co. Waterford, the very name monksland (Fearann na Manach) remaining to show that this was once a monastic parish. (Figures 35-6) Glenragh was not the only daughter of Inishlounaght which was, in fact, the mother of no less than three monasteries, namely, the one just mentioned in Co. Waterford, the abbey of Fermoy in Cork, and the abbey of Curcomroe in Co. Clare. The monastery was one of those suppressed in the thirteenth century and was made subject to Dunbrody Abbey however it appears listed under the extents of Inishlounaght at dissolution.

Abbeyknockmoy

Over a period of 150 years eleven charters were granted to the monastery some of these granted land and tithes others were confirmation grants.⁹⁰ In 1275 the Archbishop of Tuam, Thomas O'Connor, granted the church and parsonage of Idermoda to the monastery.⁹¹ A later Archbishop about the year 1292, gave the Abbey the rectory of Kilfege or Killascobe.⁹² Charters were also given by the

⁸⁹ Burke, *Clonmel*, p. 107.

⁹⁰ E.A. D'Alton, *History of the Archdiocese of Tuam* (Dublin, 1928), p. 208.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

bishops of Killala, Elphin and Kilmacduagh, and one by the Red Earl of Ulster but what they gave in each case does not appear.⁹³

From two Royal charters of the reign of James I it appears that the monastery held in the region of 2,000 acres of land in addition to tithes and the right of promotion to the parishes of Killascobe and Idermoda, of Oranbeg, near Oranmore, and the 'rectory and vicarage of Galway.'⁹⁴

Abbeyknockmoy also had a daughter-house at Clare Island it is debatable whether this should be termed as a monastery or a cell, probably the latter. While this may never have been a monastery proper or held much land or personnel its major significance lies in the presence of the fantastic wall-paintings which adorn the walls of the church. Perhaps this cell, more than any other Cistercian building in Ireland may provide the physical image of the core beliefs and ideals of the Cistercian Order in this country and at that time - to be alone with God and to praise Him through decoration and artwork. In the troubled times of the thirteenth century it is this kind of hermitage type of existence which the monks tried to revert to. It also bears a striking resemblance to the early Christian church in Ireland and to the physical form that this faith found in the gold and silver decoration of the many national treasures of this country.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Grey Abbey

In the year 1380, Walter Barnwood held two carucates of land in Holmgrange (Tollumgrange in Lecale?) from the Abbot of Grey Abbey for ten years, at an annual rent of five marks.⁹⁵ During the clearing of the grounds within the remains of Grey Abbey in 1842 the Episcopal seal of Radulph Irton, Bishop of Carlisle, was unearthed.⁹⁶ The seal is of lead and thin but was said to have been well preserved at the time of discovery. The seal bears the inscription - Rudolphus Dei Gracia Karleolensis Episcop. - (Radulph, by the grace of God, Bishop of Carlisle).⁹⁷ Radulph was appointed to the see of Carlisle in 1280. The existence of the seal so far from Carlisle is accounted for by the fact that Grey Abbey was supplied at its foundation with monks from Holm Cultram in the diocese of Carlisle and may have kept up an intimate connection with the mother house.⁹⁸

Tintern

In 1233 Richard Marshal, Earl of Pembroke issued the charter of deforestation of the area and within this the monks of Tintern, among others, to reclaim, enclose and fence the lands which lie within their domain and these

⁹⁵ O'Laverty, *Down and Connor*, i, p. 434.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 439.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

lands were then held outside of the constraints of the forest.⁹⁹ The right to chase the 'savage beasts' remained with the Earl.

In 1245 the community and chapter of Christ Church, Canterbury granted to Tintern the lands which Hervey de Montmorency had previously granted to Canterbury. This grant included the whole of Kilmore, Kilturk, two caucates in Bannow and all of Christ Church's rents and rights in Thamasre which may be identified as Tomhaggard.¹⁰⁰ (Figure 7) Tintern also received the rents and rights from Kylbogan or Kilcowan and the island of Banewe, probably Bannow, along with the two islands of the Saltees.¹⁰¹ These lands were granted to Tintern for an annual rent of ten marks and were bound to serve the churches included on the lands with 'fitting and honest persons'. In addition to serving the churches the monks were to provide a chaplain who would 'continually celebrate mass for the dead in the chapel of the blessed Brandan at Bannow'.¹⁰² From a later confirmation of this grant in the churches and chapels of Kilmor, Thamagre, Banewe, Karrec, now Carrick, Omacchus of Finnor, Kilcogan now Kilcowan and Kenturch are all mentioned as being part of the agreement.¹⁰³

By the early fourteenth century the abbot appears to have been somewhat lax in his duties towards the lay community in the area. In 1305 a mandate was issued to the Sheriff of Wexford to distraint the lands and goods of the abbot for

⁹⁹ Hore, *Wexford*, ii, p. 24.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 27, 32.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

the sum of £16 10s for the dowry of the wife of Richard Whittey.¹⁰⁴ Two years later another such request was made this time for the sum of forty two marks for the daughter of the late Gilbert de Sutton.¹⁰⁵ It would appear that the abbot was named as one of the executors of the will of de Sutton and must have failed in his capacity as he was ordered to pay £28 15s 4d into the 'hands of the king' by 1312.¹⁰⁶ The abbot had, the previous year, been ordered in court to pay £44 4s. 8d to the named persons by Michaelmas 1312.¹⁰⁷

Around 1309-10 the abbey must have owed money for 30 crannocks of corn as Theobald de Wykys called the abbot to account over this. The king ordered his treasurer and barons of the Exchequer to receive payment of £12 from the attornies of the abbot for this corn.¹⁰⁸

By 1328 the abbey was behind in the payment of the ten marks which was due to be paid annually to Christ Church and in this year the General Chapter intervened and ordered the payment with arrears. Although a receipt of the payment was issued in the following year by Canterbury it would appear the arrears were not paid in full until 1331.¹⁰⁹ References to the failure of Tintern to pay Christ Church are to be found again and again throughout the documents of the fourteenth century.¹¹⁰ This trend in failing to pay debts and fulfill duties may

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 51-2.

indicate unwillingness on the part of the Abbot to carry out his duties or it could be an indication that the financial situation in Tintern Abbey was mirroring what has been seen to have happened at so many other Cistercian foundations by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Perhaps the reason why the abbey did not pay the debts it owed was because it simply could not afford to do so.

The presence of lay persons on the abbey estate is indicated by 1334 when a plea at the court in Wexford named one Nicholas, the son of Robert Bossher, of Tintern. It could be assumed that this Nicholas was a lay-brother but as he is not named as being of Tintern Abbey it can probably be assumed that he was either employed by the abbey or was a tenant of the monastery.¹¹¹

The trend of leasing out land to lay people by the beginning of the sixteenth century can be identified at Tintern Abbey also. Three years before the close of the fifteenth century, on 27 Feb. 1497 the Abbot and community of Tintern leased to Sir Tomas Blake, Vicar of Bannow and Patrick Blake sixty acres in le Grange and twenty acres in Pollyngton, now Pullington both situated in the parish of Kylmore. The possessions of these lands include various types of agricultural land but listed specifically are rabbit warrens, heriots, affrays and clamors, effusion of blood but the mill is excluded from the possessions.¹¹²

In 1533, all of the land of the parish of Kylmore, half of the little saltees and half of St Patrick's Bridge which connected this island with the mainland but

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

is now no longer visible was leased to James Keatinge.¹¹³ In 1537, one Thomas Power along with the servants of John Power abbot of Tintern is accused of robbing the town of Cullenstown and causing damage to a value of £100.¹¹⁴ In the following year 1538, Tintern Abbey was dissolved.¹¹⁵

In William Marshal's foundation charter for Tintern Abbey it states that he granted thirty carucates to the monastery, this translates to 9,000 statute acres of land. The problem here is that the statute acreage today of the locations listed in the foundation charter only adds up to about 3,000 acres. The 'lands of William the Irish' and Aketiper are not identified nor are the 'lands to the west of the Owenduff', presumably when these are all identified and included 9,000 acres will be arrived at.

The importance of local information and traditions also has a place within the study of history particularly when the landscape and placenames are involved. When dealing with these two issues in particular the survival of these names is dependant on farmers or people who have longheld connections with an area. In the past farmers tended to use names to refer to their fields and features within the enclosures were always an important element. This particularly comes into play in such a work as this when it is locally accepted that a particular portion of land was owned by one of the monasteries but no documentary evidence can be presented. It is acceptable to use the local

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 73.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

information as long as it is used with caution and an awareness that no written or cartographic evidence is available to substantiate the claim.

Duiske Abbey

Shortly after foundation Marshal issued another grant to Duiske, this time including the lands of Tulachany with Clundaf, Kilmeggeth and Liscrithan.¹¹⁶ It appears that Tulachany and its appurtenances consist of all of the modern parish of Grange, Kilmeggeth, is now Kilmogg, or the Race Course.¹¹⁷ (Figure 5) About the year 1209 the tithes of Annamult were granted to Duiske for the rent of one silver mark annually.¹¹⁸ Sometime between the issuing of the above charter and 1218 Odo, dean of Kilkenny and his chapter granted the vill of Tikerlevan with the church for an annual rent of twenty shillings.¹¹⁹ The rent was to be paid half-yearly to the cathedral of St. Canice. Tikerlevan or Ti-kerlevan may be identified as Stackmakerlevan near Coppengagh in the parish of Graiguenamanagh.¹²⁰ A further agreement over this land records the fact that the church and fifteen acres of land in Tikerlevan along with the tithes of the crops of the monks and one acre of meadow for the tithes of the hay of their farmers is what is included in the grant.¹²¹ Two more acres of land at the same location were granted to the monastery by Richard of Flanders about 1221. The grant states that the land

¹¹⁶ Constance and Butler, 'Duiske charters', p. 21.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

adjoined the abbey lands and was bounded on the west by the land of William de Valle.¹²²

As was customary, following the death of the founder, in this case William Marshal, his son re-confirmed all of the grants which his father had made. The re-confirmation for Duiske Abbey is dated to 1223 and confirms the granting of the lands of Duiske, Annamult, Tulachany, Clandaf, Kilmeggeth, Liscrithan with burgages in Kilkenny, Wexford and the Island.¹²³ In the same year two carucates of land in Bantry were granted to Duiske.¹²⁴ These lands had previously been part of the possessions of the Benedictine house of Glasscarrig, near Gorey and had been given by Adam de Caunteton but were transferred to Duiske in 1223.¹²⁵ Probably in the year following the monastery received another grant, this time from Alan Beg where he granted the church of Duntnactathec with twelve acres of consecrated ground.¹²⁶ This land was situated in Idrone. Beg also granted the chapel of Rathkenny, again with consecrated ground, and the chapel of Rathsenboth which was located in Forth, Wexford.¹²⁷ The last grant again had twelve acres of consecrated ground attached. These grants were confirmed twice, in 1249 and again in 1262. It is probable that Duntnactathec is Ballyellin near Ullard, Rathkenny appears to have been on the estate of Nicholas le Petit in 1229 and is situated in county Meath and it is possible that the last placename is

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

to be identified as Templeshanbo in county Wexford.¹²⁸ In 1224 Alan Beg also granted half of the church of Ullard with all of the tithes from his holdings to the monastery.¹²⁹ In the following year a confirmation of two parcels of land consisting of two and four acres which had been granted by Richard and Matthew of Flanders was issued.¹³⁰ Three carucates of land near Rathboghal were granted to Duiske by Richard de Marisco about the year 1226, the grant also included liberty to the foundation to have wood for the buildings and licence for feeding forty hogs and pasture for twelve cows.¹³¹ Orpen states that Rathboghal may be identified as Monksgrange, ten miles from Enniscorthy, however in charter 17 it is stated that this land was situated in Bantry which may be taken as Fassaghbentry which is situated near to Dunbrody Abbey.¹³²

In 1227 Peter, bishop of Ossory confirmed the grant of the church of Tulachany, along with the chapels of Annamult and Grange Castri for an annual rent of one mark.¹³³ After the suppression of the smaller monastery Duiske came into the possession of the abbey lands and in June of the year 1228 it leased out portions of this. Two carucates which had previously been owned by Killenny were involved here. The Bishop of Leighlin had previously held one of these carucates from Killenny and the monastery of Duiske granted this to the bishop again. The second carucate mentioned extended by the banks of the Barrow and

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp 35, 39-40.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp 40-41.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

was near the manor of Fynnore. The land had been held by William Crauss but seems to now be granted to the bishop of Leighlin.¹³⁴ Interestingly in the same charter the monastery of Duiske was to be freed forever from procurations and exactions, as part of these exemptions the monastery was bound to construct a church 'in the territory of Killenny', this church was to have the services of a secular chaplain.¹³⁵ Whether this church was ever constructed or not is unknown.

In Feb. 1236 the monastery held the church of Dunmatatheg in Idrone and in the following year was granted the chapel of Dengheneagnach along with its tithes and obventions and those of Acherloski.¹³⁶ In circa 1230 Adam de Sumeri granted the tithes and obventions of his lands which were situated at Deneghen and Acherloski to the monastery of Duiske. The position of this land appears to be within the county of Cork, near Fermoy.¹³⁷ Denghen or Dengheneagnach may be identified as Ballindangan near Glanworth and Acherloski or Acheradloski in the same parish. Why this land was not granted to Fermoy or at least one of the Cork monasteries is not clear but it does indicate close connections between Cork and the region. It is probable that some of these grants refer to the same land. About the same time John St. John, bishop of Ferns granted 'all of the land of Kilalchuy' with its appurtenances to the monastery for

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp 76, 78.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 62.

a rent of 10 shillings per year.¹³⁸ The land in question is probably Killalligan in the parish of Monart in the barony of Scarawalsh, county Wexford.¹³⁹

About 1233 Robert de Cardiff granted three acres of meadow near Seskin free of rent to Duiske.¹⁴⁰ About two years later William de St. Leger granted to the monastery the river dividing his land of Tullaghanbrogue from its land at Tulachany. The monks were given leave to construct a mill at this site on the condition that twenty crannocks of corn were to be ground for the house of St. Leger each year at no cost to the patron.¹⁴¹ Richard, the son of Alan de St. Florence granted half a carucate of land at Makarne to the monastery of Duiske. This land was situated between the Spring of Athboly with Moelmethe and Lynans on the east, Brethgortyn on the north and on to the boundary of Grathsighan. From here the boundary continued on to 'the place where the Templars formerly erected a cross between their land of Adkelthan and the convent land', then to Baliosowisky, Rathgory and back to the Spring.¹⁴² Many of these placenames can be identified and most of them lie in the barony of Shelburne in Wexford. Makarne also known as Ballymacarne is in the barony of Forth, Athboly is probably the village of Boley in the parish of Owenduff.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 84.

Abington

The advowson of the parish of Borriskane was found to be part of the possessions of the monastery of Abington at dissolution.¹⁴³ In the mid thirteenth century Robert Travers was listed as a witness to an agreement whereby the monks at Abington obtained a release in relation to certain lands in the parish of Nenagh.¹⁴⁴

Tracton

In the Calendar of Documents, under the year 1251 the abbey is recorded as loosing half a carucate of land at Kilmeaton.¹⁴⁵ In the following year, on July 30 the same amount of land was granted to the monks, this land was situated at Killenekolm, it is very probable that both grants relate to the same piece of land.¹⁴⁶ Twelve day's later the carucate was granted in frankalmoign to the abbot and convent, on this occasion the placename was styled Kilmekolme.¹⁴⁷ Also on 30 July 1251 a mandate was issued to John FitzGeoffrey, justiciar of Ireland which ordered him to take security from the abbot of Tracton for the payment of sixty marks to the king. The money was paid at the exchequer at Dublin.¹⁴⁸ In 1297 the abbot recovered the 'right of presentation' to Clontead from Philip Mac

¹⁴³ Gwynn and Gleeson, *Killaloe*, p. 172.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 234; *Ormond deeds, 1171-1350*, p. 22.

¹⁴⁵ *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, deed 3151.

¹⁴⁶ Evelyn Bolster, *A history of the diocese of Cork* (Shannon, 1972), p. 144;

¹⁴⁷ *Cal. doc. Ire. 1252-1284*, deed 66.

¹⁴⁸ Bolster, *Cork*, p. 144; Denis O'Sullivan, 'The Cistercian Abbey of Tracton, County Cork' in *Cork Historical Society Journal*, xlv (1939), pp 1-15 at p. 3

Owen Barry.¹⁴⁹ In 1301 the abbot was indicted and fined £40 for harbouring his nephew Maurice Russell.¹⁵⁰ Russell was charged with the crime of rape.¹⁵¹ In the same year the chapels of Grenagh, Kresdynre and Clonmede were alienated the abbot is recorded as paying five marks for a reprieve until the feast of Saint Michael.¹⁵² Bolster identifies Grenagh as the townland of Granig which lies to the north of the abbey while Kresdynre is possibly Kinure.¹⁵³ Thomas, the abbot of Weyme sued the abbot of Tracton for one acre of turbary and forty acres of pasture at Kilmoney.¹⁵⁴

In 1311 it was enacted at Kilkenny that no Irishman or enemy of the king should be professed in any of the English religious houses. The enactment included a list of these houses and Tracton was named among them.¹⁵⁵ In 1340 the abbot of Tracton sued Philip de Midia for having devastated the woods of Leighmoney.¹⁵⁶ The previous abbot, Owen had leased this wood to de Midia. In 1350 Richard Brayghnock was prior of the monastery he was indicted in that year for having murdered one of the monks of the community. Brayghnock was later acquitted but this in itself is interesting as he was pardoned for 'all transgressions, felonies and breaches of the king's peace in Ireland committed by

¹⁴⁹ Bolster, *Cork*, p. 144.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 144-5.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

him up to the 13 Aug. in the 24th year of the reign of Edward III', this would equate to the year 1350.¹⁵⁷

By 1363 all was not well in Tracton abbey and the events of 1350 may have been part of a series of events which may be said to highlight the inappropriate behaviour which was apparent by the later date. In 1363 Richard Graynell was appointed abbot and deposed in that same year while David de Cornwalshe abbot of Dunbrody was appointed by the mother-house Alba Landa to visit Tracton to investigate and reform abuses in the said monastery. When Abbot Cornwalshe arrived at the abbey he found the monks in open rebellion against the abbot Richard. It is recorded that Graynell 'was far from being of the character of his predecessor' and he tried to bribe Cornwalshe with the sum of £10 and a horse valued at twenty marks. The community however produced the sum of £20 and the abbot of Dunbrody found in their favour. Cornwalshe departed Tracton on the horse he had acquired from Graynell, who he had now ordered to be deposed and, presumably, with the £20 from the community on his person.¹⁵⁸ In 1365 Abbot David Cornwalshe was convicted of bribery from the visitation to Tracton. The abbot was pardoned by royal mandate on the payment of a fine of one mark.

In 1375 King Edward III issued a grant of protection and defence to the monastery and its community but more importantly from that time the abbot

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

was accorded manorial status and became a spiritual peer of parliament.¹⁵⁹ In that same year the abbot was ordered to attend parliament which was sitting in Dublin.¹⁶⁰ In the first year of the reign of Richard II the abbot was summoned to parliament which was sitting in Tristledermot and in Sept. 1380 and April 1381 he was likewise ordered to attend.¹⁶¹ In 1377 the abbot was fined £10 for failing to attend parliament.¹⁶² At the 1381 parliament the abbots of Tracton and Gill Abbey's were appointed as collectors of a special levy for the king.¹⁶³

A number of churches were impropriate to Tracton Abbey, these were Ballyfoyle, Ballyfeard, Clontead, Ballymodan, Ballyspillane in the diocese of Cloyne, Kinure and a portion of Belgooly. Records for 1489 and 1493 indicate that Abbot Raymond Barry 'bound himself for the rectories of the parish churches of Innishannon and Dunderrow'.¹⁶⁴ By the late fifteenth century the by now familiar statement that the monastery was suffering severe financial hardship may be stated in relation to Tracton Abbey. In 1463 Miles Roche, serving as abbot of the house for the second time, reputedly stated that the monastery had been 'richly endowed at its foundation and used to abound in fruits' but that its assets were, by 1463, reduced to sixty marks sterling.¹⁶⁵ He declared this amount to be insufficient to 'keep up his estate and that of the

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

convent, repair its buildings and bear its other burdens, on account of the abundant hospitality which is given to princes, dukes, barons, knights and other noble guests and also the poor without distinction of persons'.¹⁶⁶

All abbots of Tracton, save one, were either English or from English families and from 1483 until the dissolution the abbacy was held by the Barry's, descendants of Odo de Barry, founder of the monastery.¹⁶⁷

Bolster, in her history of the Diocese of Cork states that to the south-east of the monastery 'was an elevation called Knocknamanagh', perfect evidence both of the presence of monks and their impact on the landscape and the subsequent social history.¹⁶⁸

Hore

In 1341 Thomas O'Rourke, Abbot, along with Richard O'Brennan, Gerald Olycan and William de Lisnemuck are recorded as seizing the chattels of James, son of Laurence Warner at Drumlonam.¹⁶⁹ Presumably the monastery continued the possession of this portion of land. David MacCarwill founded Hore Abbey and was buried either in the monastery or in the Cathedral on the Rock of Cashel in 1289.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 141.

¹⁶⁹ Gleeson, *Cashel*, p. 240.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp 187-8.

Beaubec

In 1322 Edward III granted a license to the abbot of Beaubec in Normandy, to assign to the abbot of Furnes in Lancashire, the manor of Beaubec, near Drogheda, together with three messuages, sixty acres and a half of land along with 57s 9d annual rent.¹⁷¹ This rent was from Marinerstown (now Mornington), Rennelas, and Drogheda in addition to a fishery on the Boyne, presumably this refers to the fishery granted at foundation.¹⁷²

In 1348, Edward III, in a charter dated 4 May, recites and repeats the grant of Walter de Lacy, and says, moreover, that King Henry III had confirmed the same, and that the abbot of Beaubec, of the Cistercian Order, had afterwards, with the king's license, granted the aforesaid manor of Beaubec to the abbot of Furnes.

¹⁷¹ Cogan, *Meath*, i, p. 172.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

Chapter 6

The monastic economy and agriculture

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the role of the Cistercian Order in relation to economics and agriculture. The time period examined in this chapter will be the fourteenth century and the agricultural, economic and social history of the period, along with the impact of various natural occurrences, will form the core of the chapter. The emergence of the Italian merchant bankers in Europe and the involvement of the Cistercians with the wool trade will receive special consideration. As will be seen this was a century of great change and adversity, and the adaptability of the people of the period, especially of the White monks, to cope with the huge changes which threatened to engulf them will all be examined.

Demographics

By the end of the 13th century there are indications which suggest that production may have been failing to keep pace with continued population growth. In such circumstances the standards of living of very large sections of the community were almost inevitably forced downwards.¹ John Kelly states that 'compared to the resources available to the population, the continent [of

¹ Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England-rural society and economic change 1086-1348* (New York, 1978), p. xv.

Europe] had become dangerously overcrowded.' Kelly goes on to say that, because the balance between these two elements had become so close the people of the period were in a position where it was increasingly difficult for them to be able to feed, clothe and house themselves.²

Land ownership

It is important to remember that the peasant community both in Ireland and England was not only a community of tenants it was also a group of small-scale producers. Consequently, the village communities of the time included men with a fair amount of land, enough to live on or more, but at the same time they also included men with far smaller holdings, perhaps no more than a cottage and a croft, who must also have relied on supplementary earnings.³ Despite the expansion of urban settlement the population was predominately rural.⁴ In 1300 England at least four fifths of the population lived in settlements with no urban attributes.⁵

When opportunities presented themselves villagers might also move in search of work in local industries on a seasonal basis.⁶ The inevitable consequence of such a move was a fall in the average amount of land per head and, in the words of Miller and Hatcher when for most people land meant their

² John Kelly, *The great mortality: an intimate history of the black death* (2nd ed., London, 2006), p. 16.

³ Maitland F.W. *Domesday book and beyond: three essays in the early history of England* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 23.

⁴ Richard Britnell, *Britain and Ireland 1050-1530: Economy and society* (Oxford, 2004), p. 158.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Maitland, *Domesday and beyond*, p. 44.

daily bread, competition for it was invariably heightened.⁷ Britnell underlines this when he states that particularly after 1160 one of the most striking features of life was the growing reliance of the population on exchange of goods even though more money was in circulation.⁸

Seignorial charges forced most peasants to market everything they did not themselves consume, and it is evident that even great lords seem not to have carried the surplus of one year to the next. In such circumstances, especially for that large section of the population existing on or below the subsistence margin, a bad harvest would have been disastrous.⁹ A number of these potentially catastrophic situations may be identified as occurring in 1248, 1253, 1258, 1272, 1289, 1297, and above all in 1308-19.¹⁰

Settlement in Ireland

Prior to the mid twelfth century the island was sparsely populated and the economy a predominantly pastoral one with the settlements scattered and temporary.¹¹ In this period the country was almost in its entirety divided into a network of named and defined land units, and it is these divisions that laid the framework for the modern townland.¹² In many cases the boundaries are still

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁸ Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 158.

⁹ Maitland, *Domesday and beyond*, p. 57.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.58.

¹¹ Kenneth Nicholls, 'Gaelic society and economy', Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A new history of Ireland vol ii Medieval Ireland, 1169-1534* (Oxford, 1987), p. 397; Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 158.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 407.

consistent without too much change. In the words of Anngret Simms 'the *rural* settlement ... which emerged in Ireland under the manorial system of land-holding owed a lot to the pre-existing pattern of territorial boundaries.'¹³ In addition she also comments on the fact that the townland units must have predated the coming of the Normans as they utilised this system in the layout of their manors.¹⁴

Cereal production

Large quantities of grain were grown in Ireland in the medieval period. This practice, some would say was introduced to the country by the Anglo-Normans but it may be the case that monastic orders, such as the Cistercians, began to grow and utilise cereals prior to the arrival of the Normans. Whoever is responsible for the introduction, in the period under examination it was the well-drained areas of Leinster and east Munster which were the principal producers. Counties Dublin, Louth, Meath and parts of Westmeath seem to have been at the head of the production.¹⁵ The two and three-year crop rotation system was observed and it was probably in part due to this that the yield was low. Simms states that there is clear evidence of this rotation system being used in Ireland in the fourteenth century this evidence comes from the manorial extents of the

¹³ Simms, 'Llanthony cells of Duleek and Colp', p. 291.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

¹⁵ Timothy O'Neill, *Merchants and mariners in medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1987), p. 20.

manor of the Archbishop of Dublin.¹⁶ Some sources indicate that on the best farms a return of five times the amount sown was the average for wheat, slightly less for oats, barley about half again.¹⁷ On the whole it has been stated that medieval harvests were between four and seven times less than those of the modern period.¹⁸

In the mid-fourteenth century a change was evident with a decline in the acreage under corn and an increase in pastoral farming. This may have been influenced by the fact that the cow was not as affected by climatic and other natural changes. This change is particularly perceptible in the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary. At the same time fluctuation in the prices of cereals can be identified.

Reasons for price fluctuation

The evidence presented above indicates that something was occurring in the fourteenth century which was causing prices to fluctuate. The fact that prices were increasing points to a reduction in the production of grain and other associated crops or it may indicate an increased demand for this product. In order to understand this change it is necessary to turn to perhaps one of the finest collections of sources available for medieval Ireland, the Annals. While many of the Annals which are extant today may not be contemporary with the

¹⁶ Simms, 'Llanthony cells of Duleek and Colp', pp 297-8.

¹⁷ O'Neill, *Merchants and mariners*, p. 20.

¹⁸ M.D. O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers in Ireland in the thirteenth century* (Dublin, 1962), p. 113.

actual events recorded they were transcribed by those who had access to earlier documents and therefore are an acceptable source to use, but must be used with caution.

Annalistic entries

The following are just a few of the many entries which may be found in the annals and that indicate that all was far from well in fourteenth century Ireland.

In 1315 the Annals of Connacht record

Many afflictions in all parts of Ireland: very many deaths, famine and many strange diseases, murders, and intolerable storms as well.¹⁹

'Great famine this year throughout Ireland' is recorded in 1317.²⁰ Under 1318 the

following is entered in relation to the Bruce's in Ireland:

Edward Bruce, he who was the common ruin of the Galls and Gaels of Ireland, killed at dundalk by dint of fierce fighting. Mac Ruaidri, king of the Hebrides, and Mac Domnaill, king of Argyle, and their Scots were killed with him; and never was there a better deed done for the Irish than this, since the beginning of the world and the banishing of the Fomorians from Ireland. For in this Bruce's time, for three years and a half, falsehood and famine and homicide filled the country, and undoubtedly men ate each other in Ireland.²¹

War, famine and disease are all present in the records of the early years of the fourteenth century. The last may be further subdivided into disease within humans, animals and crops. These three will be dealt with in order below and each impacted significantly on the holdings both physically and economically of the Cistercian monks.

¹⁹ A.C., p. 241.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 251.

²¹ Ibid., p. 253.

Wars and the imposition of taxes

Wars were common and sustained in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and with these increases in demand for money came an increase in taxations. In addition taxes known as the 'tenth' and 'fifteenth' were imposed by the Pope and King Henry III respectively. Particularly in relation to the latter the taxation was to raise funds to support his army in Ireland. Many references to both taxations are to be found in the records of the period and it is clear that these were required to raise money for the treasury. It is noteworthy that during this time vast sums of money were also passing out of the Irish treasury and into the wardrobe.

Export of crops

In addition to the imposition of the fifteenth the impact of war was felt in another way in thirteenth and fourteenth century Ireland when huge amounts of food were exported from the country in order to feed the troops fighting in Scotland, in the words of M.D. O'Sullivan

Ireland became something of a granary for neighbouring countries, and particularly it was the granary for the armies of Henry III, Edward I, and Edward II campaigning in Wales, Gascony and Scotland.²²

It is obvious that all of these exports must indicate that the foodstuffs were not readily available in England. Presumably what was being imported to the

²² O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 113.

larger country from Ireland was used as a substitute for food that was no longer available in England, this supply had been exhausted first. From the following licenses it can be seen that monastic houses from Scotland and England sought permission to source grain in Ireland as did officials overseeing the labourers building the castles of Wales.²³ On 24 April 1225 the Master of the Knights Templar in Ireland received a license from Henry III to convey his wheat wherever he wished throughout Ireland for trading purposes for a period of five years.²⁴ On 08 July 1252 the abbot and monks of St Wivin of Coningham were granted a licence to buy three shiploads of corn in Ireland and to bring them to Scotland for their use.²⁵ One month later on 7 Aug. the abbot of Furness was granted a licence to purchase in Ireland 'all kinds of victuals and convey them by land or sea to his abbey'.²⁶ On 11 Oct. in the same year it was the turn of the monks of Glenluce in Galloway to be granted a licence to purchase a ship-load of wheat in Ireland each year for seven years and to transport it to the monastery in Scotland.²⁷ 17 Aug. 1259 saw a mandate issued to the justicar of Ireland to allow Alexander, steward of Scotland, to send serjeants (sic) to Ireland in order to buy 'victuals and other necessaries in Ireland until Easter next year and to take them to Scotland; on condition that they are not taken to the king's rebels of Wales or others.' The abbot of Dernhal Cheshire was granted permission to purchase corn

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1171-1251, no. 1276.

²⁵ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 114; *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1252-1284, no. 61.

²⁶ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 114; *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1252-1284, no. 68.

²⁷ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 114; *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1252-1284, no. 100.

in Ireland on 10 Dec. 1276.²⁸ The king's men of Cardigan received a licence to 'purchase in Ireland 2 ship-loads of corn and other grain for their own use...' on 28 Dec. 1252.²⁹ 1283 saw the issuing of a licence for the abbot of Stanlowe to buy corn and victuals in Ireland for the 'maintenance of his house'. In 1292 a mandate was issued to the bailiffs in Ireland not to 'molest' John de Sumersete, whom the king had given permission to bring 100 quarters or 200 crannocks of wheat out of Ireland for sale in the realm.³⁰ Two months later, in April, Henry le Mareschal and Robert de Wyleby, citizens and merchants of Dublin were granted a license to bring another 200 crannocks of grain to England to sell.³¹

All of these references cover a period from 1225 to 1292, a period of time that would constitute roughly two generations of people. These facts indicate that, for the vast majority of the thirteenth century, the production of wheat and corn was unable to keep up with the demand. It is probable that something was affecting the amount of cereal available and therefore members of the monastic orders and merchants were forced to turn to Ireland for the produce. This obviously would have had a knock-on effect, causing the demand on the cereals to be increased and therefore driving up the price leaving the least well off in society to feel the increase more than others.

²⁸ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 114; *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1252-1284, no. 1307.

²⁹ *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1252-1284, no. 131.

³⁰ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 114.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Demands from Ireland

In the 1240s, King Henry III demanded massive quantities of supplies from Ireland while he was campaigning in Wales, but this increased hugely in the next decade when both the King and prince Edward requested enormous amounts of wheat, oats and hogs to be sent to Gascony. While their demands may not have been met fully at all times, they did receive substantial amounts.³² The quantities supplied to the King appear to have reached its peak during the reign of Edward I particularly in the last decade of the thirteenth century. During this period, Edward was involved in wars in Scotland, Wales and Gascony and it seems that no limit was set for the target of supplies expected from Ireland.

Money was also required to sustain the war in Wales and so on 7 May 1283 Master William de Luda, the king's clerk and keeper of the wardrobe, was given power until Midsummer to secure a loan from 'the merchants beyond the seas' for the Welsh expedition.³³

Exports from Ireland

Obviously the entries for the port towns were the main areas where the export of provisions would be recorded, furthermore, it would be likely that

³² *Ibid.*, p. 118; *Cal. Doc. Ire.*, 1171-1251, nos 2687, 2696, 2733, 2768.

³³ *Ibid.*

most of these supplies would be exported through the larger ports therefore the records of New Ross and Waterford require particular attention.

From the entries for the port town of New Ross we find that in 1299 William Seynde and Bernard Mey paid the sums of £95, £200, and £100 for the purchase of wheat, oats, barley, wine, meat and fish to be sent to Carlisle via Skymburness to aid in the war with Scotland.³⁴ In 1301 John Lanthym and presumably the same Bernard Mey as above paid £160 11s 11d to provide meat and corn to again be sent to Scotland.³⁵ Thirteen years later the Sovereign and Bailiffs of New Ross were ordered to arrest the ships of John de Founte and Richard Harding, burgesses and, if the ships were found suitable, they were to be ordered to carry 45 casks of wine and other provisions which were purchased in Waterford City to Scotland in order to assist the soldiers there.³⁶ Two years later on 05 Feb. 1316 Thomas de Warilon was decreed to provide corn, wine, and other victuals at New Ross and Waterford in order to help sustain the army in Carlow who were in the process of expelling the 'Scotch and Irish felons in those parts'.³⁷ In 1361 a number of shipments of wine for the Kings use were recorded. A ship was to carry 40 casks from New Ross and another from Waterford was to carry 80 casks, both to England.³⁸

³⁴ Hore, *Wexford*, i, p. 165.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

Scotland

As seen above in addition to the exports of grain to France, huge amounts were also sent to Scotland in the same years. For the duration of Edward I's wars against William Vincent Wallace, Ireland provided a constant supply of food to his troops in Scotland.³⁹ After Edward's victory at Falkirk, the Scottish rebels settled on a 'scorched earth' policy and the King was almost entirely dependent on Ireland during this period. Between 1299 and July 1304, the flow of supplies was consistent.

In July 1304 Stirling Castle was captured and Wallace was executed shortly afterward. Subsequent to this, there was a temporary lull in the war until Robert the Bruce took over the command of Scotland and resisted the English forces and so dependence on Ireland continued.⁴⁰ By this time the Irish treasury was empty. However, Edward II carried on the war with Scotland until his defeat at Bannockburn in 1314 and during those years, he continued to demand grain, wine and other provisions from Ireland.⁴¹

The Bruces in Ireland

The arrival of Robert Bruce in Ireland began a significant period in Irish history and was recorded in many of the Annals. Two years later, Edward,

³⁹ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 119; *Cal. doc. Irl.*, 1293-1301, nos 523, 524, 534.

⁴⁰ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 119; *Cal. doc. Irl.*, 1302-7, nos 500-505, 506, 514, 550-2, 579-82.

⁴¹ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 121.

brother of the Scottish king landed at Carrickfergus with 6,000 men.⁴² The *Annals of Connacht* record the event as follows:

Edward son of Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick, came to Ireland, landing on the coast of North Ulster with the men of three hundred ships, and his warlike slaughtering army caused the whole of Ireland to tremble, both Gael and Gall ... and the Ulstermen consented to his being proclaimed King of Ireland, and all the Gaels of Ireland agreed to grant him lordship and they called him King of Ireland.⁴³

Under the advance of the Bruces property was burned, livestock destroyed and lands laid waste.⁴⁴ In some areas the attacks were so severe that progress was put back over a generation and as a result of all of this activity the economy contracted severely.⁴⁵

Famine and Plague

Perhaps the most noticeable thing about the entries in the *Annals* for this period is the increase in references to weather, famine, plague, disease, sickness and yields from the late thirteenth century onwards.

Between the years 1172 and 1199 the *Annals of Inisfallen* contain eight references to weather and or famine. Of these eight entries two record 'a great yield of mast' but one entry from 1172 bears the chilling claim that 'the greater part of the cattle of Ireland' were killed due to very bad weather. The following

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ A.C., p. 231.

⁴⁴ Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 492.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

year it is recorded that there was 'a great pestilence this year, which killed a great number of people.'⁴⁶

In the next century nineteen entries deal with the same topic, again two references, in the years 1200 and 1267, record 'a very abundant crop of the mast'. Of the other nineteen references one records a hot summer in 1252 and the entry for 1284 records 'extremely bad weather' at the beginning of the year.⁴⁷ Three entries record pestilence while an earthquake (1249), a cough which affected humans and horses (1259) heavy snow (1270, 1280, 1282, 1296, 1297) and references to cattle and other animals dying are all to be found.

Under the year 1330, John Clyn in his *Annals of Ireland*, stated that many died from hunger, he also commented on the high prices sought for food.⁴⁸ In 1338 the same author records the occurrence of a great flood and further states that the year was 'excessively stormy and harmful to men and animals'.⁴⁹ It is clear that the high costs were still an issue in 1346 and production had fallen dramatically.⁵⁰

The *Annals of Inisfallen* end in the early part of the fourteenth century but three entries, dealing with weather and plague exist. 1305 records 'a great hardship at the beginning of the summer', 1310 finds a reference to violent winds

⁴⁶ A.I., pp 305-37.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp 355, 387.

⁴⁸ *Annals of Ireland: by Friar John Clyn*, ed. and trans. Bernadette Williams (Dublin, 2007), p. 200.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 224; Williams, *Annals of Clyn*, p. 246.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 238.

and a 'great crop of mast, apples and nuts' and in 1321 'a great murrain of the cows of Ireland...and a great famine' are recorded.⁵¹

The *Annals of Connacht* contains seventeen references in the thirteenth century, twenty-five in the fourteenth, seventeen in the fifteenth and four in the sixteenth centuries all dealing with weather, plague, famine and murrains.⁵² It is evident from these records that the people of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries faced a difficult task in order to continue to produce from their land and to keep themselves and their animals alive, to say nothing of thriving. When referring to the famines of 1315-18 Britnell puts the events into stark reality when he claims that the food shortages experienced at that time 'have no parallel in British history'.⁵³

The Black Death

In the years 1348-9 the first Irish entries are found which relate to the Great Plague or Black Death.⁵⁴ From the entries in the Annals mentioned above it is clear that the early fourteenth century was not a period of prosperity in Ireland. Before the Black Death was visited upon the country military and natural problems had already been felt by the Irish. The country had been in decline before the advent of the disease, and the plague, it is fair to say, intensified the decline. It is essential to note that the outbreak of plague was not

⁵¹ *A.I.*, pp 395-435.

⁵² *A.C.*, pp 19-689.

⁵³ Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 491.

⁵⁴ *A.C.*, p. 303

limited to this one event in the fourteenth century. The *Annals of Ireland* record further occurrences of plague in 1362, 1373, 1382 and 1391.⁵⁵ Known outbreaks in England during the same and subsequent period can also be dated, these occurred in 1384, 1392-3, 1398-9, 1401, 1404, 1408, 1414 and 1419.⁵⁶ Events in Scotland followed a similar pattern with outbreaks of plague dated to 1361-2, 1379-80, 1392, 1401-3, 1430-2, 1439 and 1455.⁵⁷

Climatic changes

The climate changes resulted in colder and wetter weather from the end of the thirteenth century, getting worse in the 1330's and 1340's with storms and floods becoming common. Particularly harsh winters are recorded for the years 1338 and 1339, and from pollen records it can be seen that cereal growing began to contract about the year 1300.⁵⁸ The 1320's and 1330's saw ruined harvests and crop failures, and the great famine of 1294 - 6 was followed by another in 1308-10. In addition the great European famine struck between 1315 and 1318 coinciding, in Ireland, with the Bruce Wars which also caused much destruction.⁵⁹ Grain production peaked about 1300 and in many areas the

⁵⁵ Williams, *Annals of Clyn*, pp 253-4.

⁵⁶ Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 498.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Maria Kelly, *A History of the Black Death in Ireland* (Great Britain, 2001), p. 76.

⁵⁹ Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 491.

amount of land under arable cultivation contracted after 1315.⁶⁰ This, of course, followed both the famines of 1315-18 and the warfare discussed above.

Effects of the climatic changes on the plague

A second important factor in relation to the climatic changes is that they would have encouraged the spread of pneumonic plague because colder temperatures encouraged the bacillus yersinia pestis to replicate. Warmer temperatures lessen its rate of growth and as such August usually saw the lowest death rate from the plague.⁶¹ This theory is supported by Benedictow when he states that the epidemics raged from spring to late autumn.⁶² In addition to the climatic changes, famines and Bruce Wars, a series of cattle and sheep murrains along with epidemics of smallpox, typhoid and other diseases were recorded in the same period.⁶³ Not only did the Black Death come at the end of a very trying period but the Death's high mortality rates may have been directly as a result of the above factors. People were probably susceptible to the disease as their immune systems were presumably quite weak after the lack of food and from consuming diseased animals. In addition to all of these environmental factors the subsequent increase in prices would have all played their part contributed to high mortality rates.

⁶⁰ Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 388.

⁶¹ Edward Marriott, *The plague race* (Kent, 2002), p. 79; Christopher Dyer, *Lords and peasants in a changing society- the estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680 - 1540* (Cambridge, 1980), pp 226-7.

⁶² Ole Benedictow, *The black death 1346-1353: a complete history* (Suffolk, 2004), pp 9-10, 24; Britnell, *Economy and society*, pp 491-2.

⁶³ Kelly, *Black death*, p. 77.

Mortality rates

The actual mortality rate of the Black Death is difficult to calculate because of differences in farming practices, living conditions and dearth of records in many areas, particularly in Ireland. The most severely affected areas were those which were low-lying and which engaged in arable farming as these tended to be more densely settled than pastoral or highland areas. The reason for this is that the bacillus had to be passed from one host to another, and although the infected fleas – the primary hosts, were carried on infected black rats the secondary hosts, it would have been more effective for the bacillus to be passed from human to human as this would have increased the rate of infection.⁶⁴ Therefore the more densely settled the area the faster the spread of the plague the higher the rate of mortality, the opposite then for the sparsely populated areas. As the Anglo-Normans had settled in towns they seem to have been harder hit by the plague than the Gaelic Irish in their more upland less densely populated areas; the plague rarely surpassed an altitude of 7,200 feet.⁶⁵ This would leave the way clear for the Gaelic clans to re-organise and possibly pose a threat to the Norman ruling families. While no definitive figure in relation to an overall mortality rate in Ireland during this period has been established a figure of 40% mortality is

⁶⁴ Benedictow, *The black death*, p. 25; John Kelly, *The great mortality: an intimate history of the black death* (2nd ed., London, 2006), pp 18-20.

⁶⁵ Marriott, *The plague race*, p. 25; Kelly, *The great mortality*, p. xv; Rosemary Horrox, ed., *The black death* (3rd ed., Manchester, 1996), p. 82.

suggested for rural Ireland.⁶⁶ Britnell and Benedictow have both carried out studies on this question of mortality rates. Britnell, from a number of individual studies, presents mortality rates ranging from 42-57% with a rate of 40-45% for the larger monasteries.⁶⁷ Benedictow suggests an average figure of 55% mortality across Europe with a figure of 62.6% for England.⁶⁸ It must be assumed that the overall Irish figure would lie somewhere near the European average.

Worst affected areas and the subsequent impact

The fact that the Anglo-Norman areas seem to have been worst hit from a mortality aspect, led to a change in the status quo. The Gaelic now began to regroup and a re-Gaelicisation of Ireland began. The Anglo-Norman advance slowed in the thirteenth century mainly because of the Wars of the Roses and thus the Irish began to regain large tracts of their original holding across the country.⁶⁹ In Leinster the Irish re-occupied large parts of the present counties of Laois and Offaly and eventually took the Anglo-Norman strongholds of Dunamase and Lea in county Laois.⁷⁰ By the mid thirteenth century the Irish had taken control of much of north Tipperary from the Butler, Earls of Ormond and it

⁶⁶ Maria Kelly, *Black death*, p. 80.

⁶⁷ Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 494.

⁶⁸ Benedictow, *The black death*, p. 382.

⁶⁹ Rolf Loeber 'An architectural history of Gaelic Castles and settlements, 1370 - 1600' in Duffy et al, *Gaelic Ireland*, p. 279.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

appears that through this period the Butlers lost about half of their lordship.⁷¹ These changes are reflected in the many references to Gaelic clans in the dissolution records.

Norman colony in Ireland

The fifteenth century had witnessed the reduction of the Anglo-Norman colony in Leinster to a z-shaped piece of land stretching from Greencastle county Down to Waterford city.⁷² The Gaelic culture and language experienced a revival and the Irish Brehon Laws were used once again over much of Ireland. In an attempt to prevent the Irish gaining too much control Edward III in 1341 declared that none but English born should hold office in Ireland and in 1366 the famous Statutes of Kilkenny were issued from a Parliament summoned by Lionel, Duke of Clarence. Among the decrees issued under these Statutes were those stating that the English in Ireland should not marry or sell armour or horses to the Irish and that they were to speak English and follow English laws and customs in Ireland. Furthermore the Irish were forbidden to enter Cathedrals, Abbeys and Churches in English lands.⁷³

In relation to Leinster which is the focus of this study it is important to note that the Mac Giolla Pátraic stronghold of upper Ossory remained very Gaelic in many different ways throughout the later medieval period. From the

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp 171-3

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁷³ John Hunt, *Irish medieval figure sculpture 1200 – 1600* (Dublin, 1974), i, p. 10.

10th century the Mac Giolla Pátraics were a vital element of Ossory. It is thanks to that clan that the city of Kilkenny was founded originally and prospered until the Anglo-Norman's took control of the Hightown there in the later 12th century. It was a Mac Giolla Pátraic too that had founded the Cistercian abbey of Jerpoint and another established a Dominican monastery in 1382 in the previously established economic settlement of Aghaboe. Indeed Aghaboe remained an important centre and in 1534 secured the status of a Gaelic town when Brian Mac Giolla Pátraic received a grant from Henry VIII to hold a market there every Thursday.⁷⁴ The clan remained very Gaelic in most aspects and in the early 17th century the farming practices of Upper Ossory were still pasture and cattle, wealth was measured in that most Gaelic of ways, by the number of head of cattle they owned.⁷⁵ It was not until the foundation of an English colony at Borris-in-Ossory in the 1620's that this part of the shire had any English settlers, prior to this date the inhabitants were uniformly native Irish.⁷⁶ The Gaelic system of landlord-tenant relations and estate management lasted in Upper Ossory until the reign of James I.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ David Edwards 'Collaboration without Anglicisation: the MacGiollapadraig lordship and Tudor reform', in Duffy et al., *Gaelic Ireland*, p. 82.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.84.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Impact of war, famine, plague on monasteries

It is evident that by the late fourteenth century life had changed for almost every person and the monks of the Order of Cîteaux would have felt these changes perhaps in a more fundamental way than most others for a number of reasons.

Obviously the increased demand for grain and foodstuffs would have placed a burden on the monasteries but also, in a spiritual sense the people of the period needed guidance and support and looked to the church for it. Many saw the bad harvests and famines of the fourteenth century as a message from God that He was displeased with His people. The rise in elaborate funerary monuments such as mensa tombs or cadaver tombs, along with an increase in depictions of the Mater Dolorosa and the Danse Macabre may be viewed as a reaction, an attempt by lay people to atone for their sins. Patrons of monasteries were probably at the forefront of this movement as they would have had both the finances and access to skilled masons to construct such pieces. Within the Cistercian monasteries in Ireland some still have remains of decorated mensa tombs extant. Fine examples are to be found at Jerpoint and Kilcooley Abbeys, both of which enjoyed patronage from the Butler family.

The second and major difference was due to the high mortality rates of the fourteenth century. The deaths affected the monasteries in two ways firstly the numbers who would have been due to enter the order as lay brothers were just not sustainable. Secondly because the numbers of lay brothers fell the monks

simply did not have the manpower they required and so they began to employ lay-people and lease out lands. Employing skilled labourers such as carpenters and stonemasons was made more difficult because fewer people were available to carry out the same, or perhaps even more work and could charge whatever rates they chose. This last point is borne out by the fact that it became necessary for the King to issue a law in order to try to stabilise the economic conditions that such huge mortality rates had caused. The knock on and very real effects from so many deaths were far reaching but one possibly effect had much more of an immediate impact than others. The fact that so many people had died meant that there were less people to carry out the same, or arguably more work, than there had been fifteen years previously. In turn those with trades could charge whatever they liked for their services because there was virtually no competition from others. In effect the king needed to stabilise the labour market and this he tried to do by issuing the act entitled the '*Ordinance of Labourers*' in 1349. The main aim of this act was to ensure that labourers were only paid at the rates that existed before the Black Death. The act states that a labourer

... shall be bounden to serve him which so shall him require; and take only the wages, livery, meed, or salary, which were accustomed to be given in the places where he oweth to serve, the twentieth year of our reign of England, or five or six other commone years next before.

This statute sought to provide stability in the hugely important area of labour and covers virtually all labourers employed in the medieval period.

Wages

By the fifteenth century, craftsmen earned an average of 6d per day.⁷⁸ In 1374, one Richard Tailor was a ploughman who earned 4d per day which was, in that year, the same rate as a skilled craftsman. Dyer states that he may have earned as much as 15s for his work in Aug. and Sept. of that year but a ploughman would have been lucky to receive a yearly wage of 13s 4d, which is equivalent to 2d per day. This clearly shows the fluctuation in wages after the black death.⁷⁹ Grain prices fell in 1375 and so wages increased because although the population had decreased the area under the plough remained more or less the same. After the bad harvests of the mid fourteenth century, corn became plentiful and the actual buying power of wages increased. This increase may have been as much as 40% between the period 1340 and 1380.⁸⁰ Another factor here must be the impact of the mortality in the rural areas, cattle required less man-power than cereal production. By the early fifteenth century, because so many labourers had emigrated to England, the Parliament of 1409-10, while referring to Ireland, declared that

the husbandry and tillage of the land is on the point of being altogether destroyed and wasted.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Christopher Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages; the people of Britain 850-1520* (London, 2003), p. 267.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Sheep/Wool trade

The monks of the Cistercian Order realised the benefit of keeping sheep early in their existence. Sheep were needed in order to provide wool for the monk's habits and for the garments worn by the lay brothers.

One of the major factors in turning Ireland from a pastoral to arable producer was the utilisation of sheep. Land was constantly in use due to the three year crop rotation idea introduced to Ireland in the twelfth century. The nutrients were returned to the soil in the third year by the planting of leguminous crops. An increased amount of manure was inserted into the land whereby animal and vegetable manure was mixed, and after this, was added to the soil. Sheep were brought in to 'fold' the manure into the ground for a period of eight weeks. Sheep manure was in turn utilised by adding this to the soil in the winter period and the sheep themselves killed weeds and worked the roots of the grass into the soil where the larger animals would have just torn up the land.⁸² Therefore the keeping of sheep and the use of land for tillage went hand in hand. Also during this time the use of the hoe and spade or iron plough drawn by teams of horse or oxen were introduced to Ireland by the Anglo-Normans.⁸³ Taken together these changes revolutionised farming in Medieval Ireland and the Cistercian monasteries were at the forefront of this.

⁸² O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 113.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

Although the monks and monasteries of the Cistercian Order were to be self sufficient the monks also saw the benefit of selling the wool from their flocks and this was to be the greatest source of income for the White monks, it would also lead to a huge amount of problems for them in the late thirteenth century. The monks where possible sought limestone areas in which to build their monasteries and this type of land provided the best possible grass for sheep to graze, this, along with the increase in land under crops ensured that the Cistercians and their sheep would enjoy a prosperous relationship.

By 1242 Henry III needed funds in order to continue the war with France and the fact that he ordered his justiciar to seek a subsidy from all the abbots of the Cistercian and Premonstratensian Orders indicates that the monasteries were functioning well at this time. The fact that the king sought the subsidy and 'in lieu thereof the king would willingly receive from each of these abbots a year's wool' shows just how large and important a business the wool trade was by the mid thirteenth century.⁸⁴ Britnell provides two interesting references in relation to the wool trade from Britain during this time. Firstly states that 'at all times up to the fourteenth century Britain was more conspicuous on the international scene for the export of its raw wools than for its manufacture of cloths'.⁸⁵ Secondly he says that it is 'likely that an accelerated growth of wool exports after about 1160 made a major contribution to the profits of agriculture and the stock

⁸⁴ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 123; *Cal. Docs. Irel.*, 1171-1251, deed 2586.

⁸⁵ Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 126.

of bullion available to British mints'.⁸⁶ These statements help to give an insight into the importance of the Cistercians in the role of the wider economy and society of the period.

Feb. 1244 saw the Bull of Pope Innocent IV issued which ratified the exemption of the Cistercians from payment of tithes from sheep and any of their produce.⁸⁷ This is followed on 02 May 1257 with a Bull of Pope Alexander IV exempting the Order from payments of tithes from land cultivated or leased by them. The same Pope on 02 July the same year also exempted Cistercians from tithes from grass or hay.⁸⁸ These exemptions may not have been well received by others and in 1333 the abbots of the order were discussing the content of the 1244 Bull with the Pope. In June of that year Meyler, bishop of Leighlin and Nicholas, bishop of Waterford issued a letter which set out the situation.⁸⁹ Although the monks had received the exemption 'rectors of churches in whose parishes their {the Cistercian's} sheep are grazed ... exact tithe of the wool, milk and lambs...' from the monks. As this practice was contrary to the initial Bull it was stated to be 'severely forbidden'.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p. 68; *Ormond Deeds, 1171-1350*, no. 656.

⁸⁸ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p. 70.

⁸⁹ *Ormond Deeds, 1171-1350*, no. 656.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Sale of wool

By the second part of the thirteenth century the monks were fore selling wool. In real terms this allowed the monks to receive cash from the Italian merchant bankers and gave them a year in which to collect the wool and thereby pay off their debt. As is obvious this would work fine until the day when the monks could not come up with the required amount of wool. The occurrences of plague and famine that are recorded in the *Annals* did not only affect humans but a murrain within the sheep is also recorded. This of course resulted in a reduction in the amount of wool that the monks could provide in a particular year and this meant that they would be forced to carry over the debt to the following year thereby getting into even more financial trouble. The other major factor here is that the monks would have had the money in their possession one year before they had to pay the loan back and while it would not have taken long to spend the money the debt remained for the entire duration of the year.

Sales from Welsh and English houses

While a great amount of figures are not available in relation to the level of exportation of wool from the Cistercian monasteries in Ireland a comment on the trade from the Welsh and English monasteries may be of benefit. The Welsh houses of the Order are comparable in size and date to the Irish houses and also faced discipline from the General Chapter in the thirteenth century. Grey Abbey in Co. Down was a daughter house of one of the Welsh foundations, Holm

Coltrum and monks from the Irish house went on to become Abbots of the Welsh mother house. Until the early 1270's most of the wool exports were directed towards Flanders and it is here that the houses of Ghent and Douai exported their wool.⁹¹

From the late thirteenth century it was the Italian merchants who dealt with most of the wool exports from the monastic houses and in 1277 the merchants of Lucca brought twenty sacks of wool bought from the monastery of Aberconwy to Chester.⁹² Records from the Welsh Cistercian houses suggest that all but two of the houses exported wool in the thirteenth century.⁹³ Of these, five exported at least fifteen sacks with each sack containing about 340 lbs or 150 kg. The English monastery of Fountains exported seventy six sacks but the wool of Tintern Abbey was well known for its superior quality and it is this wool which obtained the highest price for monastic wool in Britain achieving twenty eight marks per sack.⁹⁴ It has been estimated that, at its peak, the Welsh monasteries of Margam and Tintern received about £167 and £150 per year respectively from the export of their wool.⁹⁵

In England wool exports peaked in 1304-5 with an export of 46,382 sacks and the average export figure between the years 1315 and 1327 remained

⁹¹ David H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians* (Bodmin, 2001), p. 258.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 258-9.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

between 20 and 30,000 sacks.⁹⁶ Between 1327 and 1332, 5,700 sacks of wool and 36,100 hides were exported per annum.⁹⁷ By the early 1340s, this figure had reduced dramatically with 2,450 sacks of wool and 17,900 hides being exported.⁹⁸ By 1370, the figure had increased again with 7,360 sacks of wool and 39,500 hides exported.⁹⁹

The scale of peasant sheep-keeping can be appreciated from the total of 46,382 sacks of wool exported from English ports in 1304-5, the peak year. If each sack contained 260 fleeces, the wool came from at least 12 million animals. It has been estimated that at least two-thirds of wool production for export came from peasant flocks. Interesting figures are available for East Meon in Hampshire where, in 1302, the lord kept 1,300 adult sheep, which in the course of the year had produced 555 lambs. In the same year, the rector of the parish collected in tithes 150 new lambs, implying that 1,500 had been born in the parish. The peasant flocks in the parish therefore contained a cumulative total of about 4,000 adult animals.¹⁰⁰ Between 1395-6, one Emma Earle was a major cloth dealer in Wakefield in Yorkshire and she sold 48 cloths worth at least £50.¹⁰¹ In 1548 100 stone of wool in New Ross was valued at £20, about 4s per stone.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages*, p. 252; Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 307.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Dyer, *Making a living in the middle ages*, p. 252.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

¹⁰² Hore, *Wexford*, i, p. 243.

Scottish wool exports reached their highest in 1370-4 with 7,360 sacks exported, by 1400-5 this figure had fallen to 1,840 sacks.¹⁰³ A recovery can be identified by 1424-9 when 3,760 sacks were exported with a dramatic increase noted over the following five years with 3,020 sacks were exported in the period 1430-4.¹⁰⁴

The cloth industry

The wool trade was the most lucrative trade of the medieval period. The massive cloth industry of Italy was heavily dependent on wool from England and Ireland. It is known that English wool was superior to any other available, and it was a rule of the *Arte della Lana* of Florence that only English wool should be used in the manufacture of their best cloth.¹⁰⁵ Good quality wool was also imported into Italy from Spain and North Africa, but the English wool was most sought after.

Irish wool was coarser than English, it was bulkier and it weighed heavier so that the custom upon it was 10s instead of the usual half a mark which was on the English wool.¹⁰⁶ A complaint was lodged by the Irish which stated that English wool although of less weight was of equal value and the duty was reduced to half a mark. Though the quality of Irish wool was inferior to that of

¹⁰³ Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 497.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 122.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 124; *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1252-1284, no. 1305.

the English, the Irish wool was in high demand in order to make up the bulk of the English supply.

Sheep diseases in England

Between 1280 and 90, the first and most virulent of sheep scab is recorded in England and it had a devastating effect on the flock.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the Italians turned to Ireland to help make up the losses. The seriousness of the scab is reflected in the command of Edward I to his bailiffs and subjects of Ireland in 1280 - 82 to allow Baroncinus Walteri, Richard Guy, Reyner Maggaori and their associates who were merchants of Lucca to export out of Ireland until the feast of all saints wool and other merchandise for profit provided they paid due custom.¹⁰⁸ The merchants bought wool wherever they could find it and in 1282-3 exported at least 600 sacks of wool. One of the deals struck during this time is perhaps the earliest record of Cistercian monasteries fore selling wool to the Italians.

Sales of wool from Ireland

However as early as 1216, Henry archbishop of Dublin sold 51 sacks of wool to Flemish merchants, this wool was to be exported in payment of a loan.¹⁰⁹ In 1217, Florentine merchants were exporting wool from Ross in the payment of

¹⁰⁷ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, pp 124, 113.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124; *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1252-1284, no 1934.

¹⁰⁹ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 122; *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1171-1251, no 712.

a loan made by them to Henry III, this loan was to meet his debts to the king of France.¹¹⁰ In 1231, Walter de Lacy exported wool from Ireland to merchants in London, and in the fourth decade of the thirteenth century, Fulk of Newcastle was supplying wool to London and Gascony.¹¹¹

The prominence of the firms of the Italian merchant bankers is reflected in the number of entries relating to the said groups in the *Patent Rolls, Chancery Rolls* and *Documents relating to Ireland*. From the *Patent Rolls*, one learns that the merchants of Lucca were paying vast sums into the wardrobe on behalf of the Irish treasury. Merchants were appointed as the collectors of the king's prises of wine and masters of the mint in Ireland. By the late thirteenth century the members of the Ricardi of Lucca were appointed as the kings' bailiffs and collectors of the duties and they were also appointed as collectors of both the great custom and the 'fifteenth' which was sanctioned by parliament that same year.¹¹² Due to the collection of these finances, the Ricardi were able to loan to the king huge sums of money in order to fight in Wales, France, Flanders and Scotland.

Custom on wool

Irish wool was exported right thorough the thirteenth century but in 1275, the magnates of Ireland granted the 'great new custom' on wool, woolfells and

¹¹⁰ *Cal. doc. Ire., 1171-1251*, nos 800, 801, 802.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, nos 1875, 2826, 2987.

¹¹² O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 66.

hides to the king.¹¹³ The wool export trade came under the total control of the Italian merchant bankers who came to prominence in the second half of the thirteenth century. Principally they had appeared as traders and agents of the pope, and some even attained positions as sheriff in Cork and Limerick.¹¹⁴ It was after the abovementioned duties were extended to Ireland in 1275 that their power came to be seen and felt.¹¹⁵

Italian merchant bankers

It is known that the wool trade was important in the medieval period, but wool was possibly the most important item in international trade during this time with the customs from its export accounting for almost half of the royal income. The importance then of the collectors of that custom can hardly be over emphasised. The fact that the firms of Italian merchant bankers had operations across Europe meant that they were the perfect people on whom to lay the responsibility of collecting the duties from 1275 onwards.¹¹⁶

The Italians were officially in charge of the customs in Dublin and had extensive powers at all the chief ports. The bankers had agents across the country purchasing wool from manors, from lesser tenants and from monastic houses, in particular Cistercian foundations.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 123; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1252-1284*, no 1968; Britnell, *Economy and society*, p. 127.

¹¹⁴ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 63.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 60-1.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

Irish Cistercians and sheep

In relation to the Irish Cistercians specifically it can be stated that soon after their arrival c.1142 they were quick to continue the precedent that other monasteries of the order had begun and were among the main producers of wool in Ireland in the medieval period. Wool was traded by the sack, one sack was a standard weight of 364 lbs. of shorn wool, this from about 250 sheep.¹¹⁷ By the fifteenth century a decline in the export of raw wool from both Ireland and England was evident. A shift toward exporting cloth is perceptible this probably because the tax on wool exports was running at 33% while the tax on cloth was less than 5%.¹¹⁸ It is quite probable that this change came about because of the decline in manorial farming, especially in the south-east. However the high mortality rates of the fourteenth century probably had had an effect here because the production of cloth for export was labour intensive as the wool had to be shorn, washed, prepared, carded, combed then spun into yarn.¹¹⁹ Another point which may be of relevance is recorded by Friar John Clyn, when in 1338, it is documented that 'sheep were almost wiped out ... scarcely one in seven sheep escaped but there was an even greater mortality of lambs'.¹²⁰ Obviously this would have greatly affected the monastic flocks.

As discussed the Italian merchant bankers were very much involved in the wool business so much so that they supervised the work of the customs

¹¹⁷ O'Neill, *Merchants and mariners*, p. 58.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Williams *Annals of Clyn*, p. 224.

officers at the ports. The money going through their hands allowed the bankers firstly to have a monopoly on the wool trade and secondly to be in a position to advance loans against wool. This practice of fore-selling the wool impacted greatly on noblemen, the king and the monastic houses.

Debts of Irish Cistercian houses

From the Ormond Deeds it is known that Jerpoint Abbey owed 640 marks to the Ricardi of Lucca in 1289. In 1299 Duiske abbey owed £466 to Gerard Chimbardi of Dublin and his firm the Ricardi of Lucca for a quantity of wool.¹²¹ Duiske reached an agreement with the king, Edward I, in relation to the above debt in 1301 whereby the abbey paid £114 for 6 men-at-arms and horses, 12 hobelarii and 62 footmen and in return the debt to the Ricardi of Lucca was extinguished.¹²² In 1300 Duiske again was in debt, this time to the exchequer but in relation to a loan made by the Ricardi. The monastery was to pay the loan back at a rate of £100 per year to be paid in half yearly instalments.¹²³ From the above figures it is possible to get a rough estimate of the numbers of sheep which the two monasteries had without taking any taxes or wages into consideration and by using the value per fleece which was used in England in 1383. Working with the theory that one fleece was worth 10s 4d, one sack of wool contained an average of 250 fleeces and knowing how much money the monasteries owed the

¹²¹ Letter D. 428 N.L.I.

¹²² Letter D. 453 N.L.I.

¹²³ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 125; *Cal. doc. Ire.*, 1293-1301, no. 734.

bankers it is estimated that Duiske owed for the clip of 902 sheep and Jerpoint owed for the clip of 840 sheep. While only serving as a rough estimate it is clear from these figures just what an extensive business sheep farming had become by the turn of the 14th century. These debts may be the only documented ones but it is certain that the monasteries owned much more sheep than those calculated above and so they must have had thousands of sheep on the monastic farms.

Another monastery to fall into financial difficulty because of the wool trade was that of Woney, County Limerick. In 1275 the monastery owed £1,000 to Chimbard, Malesard, and Rupundi, all merchants of Lucca. The abbot granted the church of Thurles and the chapels of Codach and Caprach as security for the debt. The Italians foreclosed on the loan and leased the churches to the monastery at a rate of 40 marks per year.¹²⁴ In 1301 the monastery of Monasternenagh, again in County Limerick, was heavily in debt to the Italians.¹²⁵ The following year it was the turn of Baltinglass abbey, county Wicklow to owe money to the bankers, this time the Ricardi were owed 278 marks, 8s 4d.¹²⁶

The year 1305 witnessed the Abbot of Dunbrody undertaking, at the Pleas in Ross, to pay the 10 marks he owes to Robert Russell of Ross for wool.¹²⁷ In 1309 the community was summoned by the Seneschal of Wexford to repay to Andrew Gerrard an unstated sum for 134 crannocks of wheat and oats.¹²⁸ In

¹²⁴ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 125.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126; *Cal. doc. Ire., 1302-1307*, no. 101.

¹²⁷ Hore, *Wexford*, iii, p.91

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92

1347-8 the King seized the temporalities of the Abbey for a time following complaints that the community did not exercise hospitality or 'distribute sufficient alms'. Sir Ralph Meyler of Duncormick, Chief Commissioner and some gentlemen of the county were installed as custodians, shortly after the custody was transferred to the Abbot of Buildewas.¹²⁹ This last entry is significant because it corresponds with the date of the arrival of the Great Plague or Black Death into Ireland. It is now generally accepted that one of the points of origin for the plague was the thriving medieval port of nearby New Ross. The Abbot of Dunbrody had complained to the King in 1287 that the Abbey had been reduced to extreme poverty because of the long and expensive legal battle with the Knights Templar over the disputed lands.¹³⁰ The last number of entries above would seem to verify the fact that the monastery was in serious financial difficulty.

In 1397 an entry of a different kind is found when five bales of cloth each worth £40 and one bale of 'batry' worth 100s from the cargo of a ship called '*la Maria de Kynsale*' which was forfeit to the King came into the possession of the Abbot of Dunbrody. The Abbot was required to travel to Dublin to have the case against him heard, a jury was called and the case adjourned.¹³¹

By the late thirteenth century David, bishop of Emly and Matthew, bishop of Killaloe had borrowed £100 from Mons Lombard and William and

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 97-8.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp 107-8.

Chinus his sons on the security of Peter Oconyng, abbot of Holy Cross.¹³² Before the debt was paid both bishops had died and the Italians sought the money from the guarantor who was unable to pay. The abbot in an attempt to settle the debt gave to the bankers the manor of Coulety and Grangecorkeran, part of the abbey's possessions. The rent on this land would have been 50 marks per year and the abbot granted the land to the Italians for 50 years. However, the abbot had no legal standing to give this land, a fact which was not lost on the bankers and so they sold the land in question to David, archbishop of Cashel for the sum of 300 marks. In addition to this sale the Lombards also 'borrowed' 43 oxen, 32 bullocks, 300 sheep, and 7 afers, or common horses. As the monastery was under the King's protection and thus the abbot had no right to sell the land without the King's permission an enquiry was established. This enquiry sat in 1297 and the abovementioned animals had not, at that time, been returned to the abbey. During the enquiry the Italians admitted that they knew the monastery did not have the right to sell the land but took it nonetheless and, by selling the land to the archbishop, achieved a profit of approximately 150% on the original loan.¹³³

¹³² O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 126.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp 126-7.

Change in export trend

In the fourteenth century the native cloth industry expanded because of the increase in the demand for mantles. The Irish sheep of the period grew a long rough fleece and this was ideal for the heavy mantles, rugs and faldings.¹³⁴

The fifteenth century saw a decrease in the export of raw wool from Ireland and England. It is possible that this downward trend was influenced by the decline in manorial farming in the south east of the country. It is also possible that the wool was used to produce cloth because it was more profitable to export cloth than wool, the tax on wool exports being in the region of 33 per cent while it was just 5 per cent on cloth.¹³⁵

By the sixteenth century the manufacture of cloth was such an important industry that the Government intervened in order to maintain supplies. The Irish parliament passed an act in 1522 forbidding the export of wool and 'flocks' out of Ireland.¹³⁶

The demise of the Italian bankers

At the death of Edward I the king owed in excess of £118,000 to the Italians and this debt, among others, was passed on to his son king Edward II.¹³⁷ Instead of lessening the loan, due to a number of reasons, the king only managed

¹³⁴ O'Neill, *Merchants and mariners*, p. 68.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70;

¹³⁷ O'Sullivan, *Italian merchant bankers*, p. 22.

to add to the debt and at his own death the Italians were owed over £400,000 by the monarch. By the year 1340 king Edward III owed Florentine bankers £1,000,000 and the only option available to him was to declare the monarchy bankrupt.¹³⁸ This action obviously caused reverberations to be felt across Europe and sounded the death knell for the Italian merchant bankers. The impact on the men and women of the Cistercian order must have been huge. Although in some cases the monks may have breathed a sigh of relief to know that they did not have to pay off a particular loan it would seem that many cases were left without a suitable conclusion. As has been seen above on some occasions the bankers unlawfully took possession of monastic lands and leased this out or sold it on to new owners so it is safe to assume that in some cases the bankers left land disputes in their wake. It is probably true to say that some of the monasteries must have found it very difficult to continue trading in wool after the fall of the bankers because it meant that they did not have the financial power which the Italians had assured them.

This, on top of so many other changes brought about by both war and famine ensured that the fifteenth century would be a very different time for the Cistercians and it is certain that the only way in which the Order in Ireland could continue to exist, to say nothing of flourishing, was to meet these changes head on and to adapt their ways in order to survive.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

The impact of the fourteenth century changes on the Irish Cistercians

A case study: Jerpoint Abbey

It is obvious that if the monasteries were in financial trouble before the 1315 famine and the Black Death so these natural disasters could do nothing but cause extreme difficulties for the people of the period.

Art and architecture

The impact of the Black Death and the trials of the fourteenth century on the art and architecture of the great stone buildings is still visible on the Irish landscape. The twelfth-century Cistercian monastery of Jerpoint two kilometers south of Thomastown may be used as an example here. After the initial building phase and the adherence to the Rule of St Benedict, and reflecting the austerity and simplicity of the Cistercian Order, little decoration would have been visible in the abbey church and even less outside the church. By the thirteenth century the abbey was quite powerful, held thousands of acres of land, and had witnessed the foundation of the two towns of Newtown Jerpoint and Thomastown not far from the complex. By 1217 the Cistercian Order revoked the statute that had forbidden the burial of lay people within the abbey church. This would inevitably lead to decoration because, in return for their patronage, individuals would request fine effigies and tombs. In Jerpoint in the fourteenth

century two stone effigies and a carving in relief of two Norman soldiers were present, save for the decoration on the capitals and the sedillia this would have been the extent of decoration.

No records remain that mention the period of the early to mid fourteenth century, which covers such events as the Black Death, mortality, loss of harvests, or increase or decrease in benefactors, but it is safe to assume that the abbey would have been hit by the natural disasters considering that Cistercians were reliant on their crop production. In the words of Roger Stalley

The Black Death was one more catastrophe which, by reducing the labouring population, inhibited levels of agrarian output. Political instability and economic decline together brought medieval Ireland to the verge of ruin.¹³⁹

The fabric of the building

In a letter written in 1374 the community of Jerpoint complained to the bishop of Ossory that the abbey was so impoverished by the war between the Irish and English in the area that it could not afford to fulfill her obligations of hospitality.¹⁴⁰ This is a particularly interesting claim because one of the cornerstones of the Cistercian Order was the provision of guesthouses, and the care of persons who would seek refuge within the monastic enclosure. It is stated in the Rule of St Benedict, by which the monks lived, that a person seeking refuge in a monastery was to be considered and treated as if it was Christ Himself seeking help. Therefore if Jerpoint could not provide for her guests the situation must

¹³⁹ Stalley, *Cistercian monasteries*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁰ N.L.I., D. 1167; *Ormond deeds 1350-1413*, 137; Stalley, *Cistercian monasteries*, pp 21-22.

have been serious indeed and would seem to indicate that the supply of grain to provide bread and the vegetables and meat to be served in the guest house was inadequate. This could also be an indication of the effect of mortality, probably more among the lay-brothers than the choir monks because perhaps the reason they could not provide food was because they did not have the man-power to produce food nor to see to the needs of their guests. It is known that the nearby Kells town and Priory was burned in 1252 but that may not have had a direct impact on Jerpoint.¹⁴¹ It is interesting to note that much of the claustral ranges were re-roofed at Kells in the late fourteenth century.¹⁴² It is recorded in the archaeological report that slate quarries had been granted to the priory 'at the time of the Black Death and therefore may not have been exploited for some time afterwards'.¹⁴³ The quarries have been identified as those at Knockroe, Co. Kilkenny and it appears that slate from these quarries were used in the re-roofing programme at Kells in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries.¹⁴⁴ This ties in well with events at Jerpoint abbey.

In Jerpoint the fabric of the building was in a poor state of repair by 1390 when the church and cloister were said to be in a 'ruinous condition'. The pre-plague numbers of lay-brothers was never again reached and almost no building work was carried out in the fourteenth century. By 1400 the cloister needed to be re-built, the tower was constructed, probably after 1440 and new windows

¹⁴¹ Clyne, *Kells Priory*, p. 493.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 495.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

were opened in the transept chapels at some time in the fifteenth century. The windows pose an interesting question because they are quite crude and possess none of the style, symmetry and proportions which the rest of the abbey can boast.

A second point relates to the introduction of the machicolation over the doorway in the north wall of the abbey church. The fact that a doorway was opened in the north wall of the church suggests that the monks were digressing from some of the strict points in the Rule. It may indicate, although there is no evidence, that lay people were gaining access to the abbey church by the fifteenth century. If this is the case what may be extrapolated is that lay people were having a much larger involvement within the life of the monastery. The addition of the machicolation at Jerpoint is a minor construction in comparison with the huge series of additional fortifications which were erected at Kells Priory during the same time period.¹⁴⁵

From this same phase, two letters exist, one of which is mentioned above and this states that at some point between 1390 and 1440 both the church and the cloister were in a ruinous condition. It would seem plausible that if the church was in such a state of disrepair, the rest of the complex must have been in an equally ruined state. Obviously the monks would not have maintained the outer complex and allow the abbey itself to fall into disrepair, therefore it can be

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 507.

assumed that the whole complex was in a major state of disrepair in the early fifteenth century.

Reasons for increased building

A great dearth of building work is evident in Jerpoint abbey in the fourteenth century and yet the fifteenth century witnessed a major building boom. This is a situation that is echoed in the physical remains of many of the Irish Cistercian houses and only Mellifont is known with certainty to have embarked on a building programme in the fourteenth century.¹⁴⁶ The boom of the following century occurred right across western Europe and a number of reasons may be used to explain why this happened. Firstly, the population, which had been decimated, was now beginning to recover and the impact of the Statute of Labourers was felt. In short, society was not quite as skewed as it was immediately after the events of the mid fourteenth century when such dramatic mortality rates resulted in all sorts of knock on effects. Secondly, emerging as they did from almost a century of death, disease, famine and the subsequent lawlessness that was inevitable, the people of the fourteenth century were emotionally deeply scarred. In a period when the church was of great importance anyway it would hold no surprise that new benefactors would emerge after the Black Death. Many saw the plague as a sign from God, therefore it would make sense for the people to patronise the church.

¹⁴⁶ Stalley, *Cistercian monasteries*, p. 22.

Changes in imagery and new artistic pieces

Such feelings found an outlet in art and the two main depictions which seem to emerge from the period were the mater dolorosa and the danse macabre. The danse macabre usually portrays death as a skeleton dancing or playing an instrument and focuses on the egalitarianism of death and its inevitability.¹⁴⁷ No known example of this art type exists in Ireland and very few appear in England but it was popular on the Continent.¹⁴⁸

Among burial monuments the artistic types to appear were the cadaver and mensa tombs. However, in the words of John Hunt

The century after the Black Death of 1348-49 has left behind little funeral sculpture in Ireland, and this is partially explained by the native Irish revival and the concomitant dwindling of the English colony as well as by the devastating effects of the Black Death itself.¹⁴⁹

Mensa tombs are plentiful in Ossory. Examples can be found in St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, St Mary's church, Kilkenny, St Mary's church, Gowran and Jerpoint Abbey to mention but a few (Figures 37-8). Many of the tombs are products of the O'Tunney school of masons who may have had their workshop in Callan, Co. Kilkenny.

These changes and the Cistercian Order

Prior to his death in 1153 St Bernard, in his *Apologia* to Abbott William stated quite clearly that monasteries of the Cistercian order across Europe were

¹⁴⁷ Maria Kelly *A history of the Black death in Ireland*, pp 62 -3.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁴⁹ John Hunt, *Irish medieval figure sculpture 1200 - 1600* (Dublin, 1974), i, p. 5.

not to indulge in paintings, carvings and other forms of artwork that could distract the monks from their prayer. The Order at its foundation was shunning the outward signs of wealth and power along with excessive decoration that had become standard in many of the Benedictine houses. This lack of decoration is one of the most notable features of the Cistercian monasteries but by the fifteenth century, decoration had begun to creep in. Jerpoint abbey is a perfect example of this.

A wall painting, mensa tombs, a stone tower and a decorated cloister all exist at Jerpoint and each of these must be dealt with in turn in order to decide why the decorative phase was so elaborate and important in the fifteenth century. Quite simply the main question is whether the monks abandoned the rule of the Order or not?

Wall painting

The definitive dating of the wall painting has evaded experts. The best indications are that it belongs to the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries.¹⁵⁰ The remains comprise three significant areas of plaster, the largest area holds the heraldic shields.¹⁵¹ Two distinct phases of decoration can be identified and these

¹⁵⁰ Mark Perry, *Jerpoint Abbey, Co. Kilkenny; wall painting condition survey and specifications, report for the Office of Public Works (2008)*, p. 5.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

are separated by a thin coat of lime mortar.¹⁵² Heraldic shields are the subject of both layers. Karena Morton, in her report states that some of the coats of arms are common to both phases.¹⁵³ Interestingly it has been found that although some of the shields are the same in both paintings the colours are not.¹⁵⁴ As no great time difference is evident it is possible that the second painting was carried out very soon after the completion of the first. This would indicate either that something required correction in the first phase or, considering the subject matter, patrons changed or their shield did, possibly because of a marriage or some other event.

In a recent report commissioned by the Office of Public Works Mark Perry suggests that the sixteenth century date is more likely due to the secular subject of the paintings, indeed he goes so far as to suggest that they are post-Dissolution.¹⁵⁵ However, a series of fifteenth century heraldic plaques survives at St Patrick's church, Trim.¹⁵⁶

Four shields are partially visible. The sinister (heraldic left, viewer's right) shield has the least remaining. Remains of a red chevron and possibly four black ermine can be seen. This shield would appear to be identifiable as part of the Holden family shield and bears many similarities with a cloister piece. The

¹⁵² Ibid; Karena Morton, Jerpoint Abbey, Co. Kilkenny, Wall paintings on the north wall of the chancel; condition and first aid report prepared for Dúchas - The Heritage Service (Now Office of Public Works, 2002), p. 2.

¹⁵³ Morton, Wall paintings; condition and first aid report, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Perry, Wall painting; survey and specifications report, p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Potterton, *Medieval Trim, history and archaeology* (Dublin, 2005), pp 288, 406-8.

second shield is the largest and consists of three red discs. The third shield comprises of three wild boars the two on the upper half are facing west and the third, situated in the lower half is facing east. The animals are yellow on a red ochre backing. The final shield is very fragmented, one yellow scallop shell is clearly visible as is a yellow bar running horizontally below, more hints of red and yellow are visible on the lower half but no other pattern is visible. The shields are mapped with incised lines and a stencil may have been used in the application.¹⁵⁷ (Figures 39-40) In addition to the yellow, black and red ochre already mentioned, lime was used for the white colour.¹⁵⁸

The main families names associated with Jerpoint Abbey through the centuries include Mac Giolla Pátraic, Brenach (Breathnach or Walsh) and Butler with lesser mentions of Blanchfield, Roth, Moting and Cradock among others. David Mac Carwill, Archbishop of Cashel, in the thirteenth century petitioned the General Chapter to have masses celebrated for the souls of his parents in Jerpoint and also intervened in relation to debts of the abbey and the merchant bankers.¹⁵⁹ Carrigan states that Maurice, son of Thomas, earl of Desmond was interred in the abbey church in 1529.¹⁶⁰ Abbots of Jerpoint include family names of Delaney, Grace and Baron.

As the result of a request from the Office of Public Works the Chief Herald of Ireland, Fergus Gillespie, has, up to recently been unable to identify with

¹⁵⁷ Morton, *Wall paintings; condition and first aid report*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Carrigan, *Ossory*, iv, p. 285; *Ormond deeds, 1171-1350*, no. 132.

¹⁶⁰ Carrigan, *Ossory*, iv, p. 289.

absolute certainty any of the four shields, however this is a work in progress.¹⁶¹ A shield of James Linhanie, mayor of Waterford in 1649 bears many similarities with one of the shields but it is not identical.¹⁶² The main heraldic devices of both are boars but on the Linhanie shield all three face the dexter (heraldic right, viewers left) side and this is not the case in the Jerpoint example. In the Waterford case a red chevron is visible but in Jerpoint it is a yellow bar.

In their article on the O'Malley family shield, Gillespie and Ó Comáin state that 'beasts of prey are common as charges in heraldry but the boar may also reflect one of the many sovereignty myths found in early Irish texts'.¹⁶³ This may indicate a family of Gaelic origin as opposed to Norman.

Jerpoint Abbey is not the only Cistercian house to have remains of a wall painting extant. Extensive remains of a hunting scene are to be found at Holy Cross, while Abbeyknockmoy and Clare Island also having paintings. Of the four, three are situated in the chancel with the painting at Holy Cross in the north transept. A painting that has been identified as a bowman at Clare Island bears striking similarities to one of the cloister figures at Jerpoint.¹⁶⁴ In fact many parallels can be drawn between the styles of both forms of artistic work. In addition Morton states that

¹⁶¹ Report of the Chief Herald of Ireland to the Office of Public Works re wall painting at Jerpoint Abbey, 2008.

¹⁶² *The great parchment book of Waterford; Liber Antiquissimus Civitatis Waterfordiae*, ed. N.J. Byrne (I.M.C., Dublin, 2007), p. 270, plate xvi.

¹⁶³ Fergus Gillespie and Micheál Ó Comáin, 'The Ó Máille memorial plaque and its heraldic achievement' in Conleth Manning, Paul Gosling and John Waddell (eds), *New survey of Clare Island, vol iv, the abbey* (R.I.A., Dublin, 2005), at p. 41.

¹⁶⁴ Karena Morton and Christoph Oldenbourg, 'Catalogue of the wall paintings', in Manning et al, *Survey of Clare Island*, at p. 80.

The Clare Island paintings offer a comprehensive iconographic programme that ranks with the cloister arcade at Jerpoint Abbey in terms of the number and range of motifs.¹⁶⁵

Morton also associates the paintings with patronage and states that the 'location of tombs of founders or benefactors with associated wall paintings' are found at Abbeyknockmoy, Jerpoint and Corcomroe.¹⁶⁶ By saying this she obviously considers the Jerpoint painting to be pre-Dissolution in date. Phase two of the Clare Island paintings has been dated to between c. 1400 and c. 1450 with a possible time difference of one decade between phases one and two which would place phase two nearer to the beginning of the century.¹⁶⁷

Roger Stalley, when setting the paintings of Clare Island in context, brings this one step further by suggesting that if the vault over the chancel in that small abbey church was so decorated than it is quite possible that the same activity took place in the larger Cistercian monasteries of Ireland.¹⁶⁸ He also suggests that the painter(s) at Clare Island were familiar with the painting in the chancel of Abbeyknockmoy and so this must be earlier in date than those at the island.¹⁶⁹ All of this evidence would seem to place the Jerpoint painting in a similar time period and raises the strong possibility that the heraldic shields are only a small remaining portion of an originally painted chancel. Away from the location of the wall painting paint pigment is visible in the chancel of Jerpoint. The fact too

¹⁶⁵ Karena Morton, 'Iconography and dating of the wall paintings' in Manning et al, *Survey of Clare Island*, at p. 97.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

¹⁶⁸ Roger Stalley, 'The abbey in its later gothic context' in Manning et al, *Survey of Clare Island*, at pp 138-9.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

that the existing barrel vault over the chancel in Jerpoint dates to the fifteenth century would further strengthen the argument for a date of that same century for the wall painting.

Tower

In 1157 the General Chapter forbade the construction of stone bell towers.¹⁷⁰ By 1240 'wooden towers of immoderate height' were also prohibited.¹⁷¹ Towers were forbidden by the early Cistercians because they were seen as outward displays of wealth and power and this was totally opposed to Cistercian ideals. Towers were constructed at some English houses in the twelfth century and this is a theme of the Anglo-Norman houses in Ireland where, with the exception of Boyle all of the early towers are from that filiation. Stalley dates the construction of many of these early examples and states that the tower at Duiske dates to c.1204-40, this means that feature was built as an integral part of the abbey church and not added later.¹⁷² The tower at St Mary's is dated to pre 1235, Tintern c. 1300 and, perhaps, surprisingly it is suggested that one may have been incorporated in the mid-thirteenth century remodelling of Mellifont.¹⁷³ A tower was constructed at Boyle Abbey in the thirteenth century but the main period of tower construction dates to the fifteenth century. The tower at Holy Cross is stated to be part of the rebuilding which began c. 1431 but may be as late

¹⁷⁰ *Statuta*, i, 61, no. 16; Stalley, *Cistercian monasteries*, p. 141.

¹⁷¹ Stalley, *Cistercian monasteries*, p. 141.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pp 142-3.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

as 1460-1500.¹⁷⁴ The towers at Kilcooley and Hore are dated to c. 1450-1500, that at Jerpoint constructed probably after the granting of an indulgence for repairs to the abbey in 1442 and the tower at Tintern is placed in or very near to the same decade.¹⁷⁵ (Figure 41) These constructions all point to a period of huge activity in the mid-fifteenth century and while the reasons for such activity is not clear for each monastery it is suggested that due to the lawlessness of the period defence may have played a part. The other point is that it was an ideal way for an abbot to assert his authority over the surrounding area.¹⁷⁶ This last point, taken with the fact of the reduction in the numbers of lay-brothers and the increase in tenants may all be factors here.

Cloister arcade

The dating of the cloister at Jerpoint Abbey along with the identification of the carved figures of the arcades is most problematic. The main problem is the lack of any written evidence for either. The best documentation is in the form of the letters, previously mentioned where the cloister was said to be ruinous. These date to between 1390 and 1440. Roger Stalley dates the decorated cloister arcade to c. 1390-1400 which he says is the earliest known example of the 'dumb-bell' type of colonette.¹⁷⁷ Stalley further states that the style of the construction is archaic with round arches recalling the Romanesque architecture, which, he says,

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

would have been out of place by 1300.¹⁷⁸ Stalley, when discussing this last point, also raises an interesting theory that fits in well with what was discussed above when he states that

This [style of construction] is often taken as an illustration of the retrospective flavour of later medieval culture in Ireland, an indication too of the Gaelic revival.¹⁷⁹

This, coupled with the Chief Herald's comments about the possible Gaelic connotations of the boar could be taken as indicators of strong Gaelic support or patronage of Jerpoint by the fifteenth century.

Conversely Stalley also considers the fact that such a forward thinking Order, and a monastery situated so close to the 'power base of the earls of Ormond' would have been more advanced in their style of decoration. Perhaps a case can be made then for the cloister being earlier than first thought and that the work carried out in the early fifteenth century was a continuation project not a beginning. Stalley makes allusion to this when he says that 'it is possible that the construction of the cloister began in a piecemeal fashion'.¹⁸⁰ Jerpoint, Inch and Dunbrody all have similar dumb-bell colonettes. Some carvings survive from the Irish houses during the period of the fourteenth century, most notably the corbel tables at Tintern and Grey and the window and carved angel from Jerpoint. (Figure 42) However, in the words of Roger Stalley 'none of these minor

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

carvings prepare us for the Cistercian *tour de force* of the later middle ages, the cloister at Jerpoint.¹⁸¹ A small segment of the cloister is visible in Figure 43.

Perhaps an examination of the carvings may give an indication of the date. Comment has already been made about the stylistic similarities between the figures of the wall painting at Clare Island and the cloister figures at Jerpoint. The wall-painting, as stated, can be dated to the early to mid fifteenth century. John Hunt also places the date of the cloister at c. 1400.¹⁸² For the purpose of this thesis the most important figures are those of the knights because it is possible that an identification of these may point towards the patrons of the monastery. In total at least nine of these knight figures were originally carved for the cloister.¹⁸³ One complete figure remains today with fragments of six others still extant at the abbey. Of the seven, six are to be found in the re-constructed cloister but one, seen here in Figure 45 is not on permanent view to the public. Two other figures are recorded by Carrigan. These figures were both on one colonette and when Carrigan was writing in the early twentieth century were said to have been at Piltown Co. Kilkenny.¹⁸⁴ Today these are in the Heritage centre at Carrick-on-Suir however plans are well underway that will see this piece returned to Jerpoint Abbey in the very near future.

Hunt states that the complete carving 'presents us with a good picture of an armour as worn by the Anglo-Irish nobility and knightage of the Pale in the

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² John Hunt, *Irish medieval figure sculpture 1200-1600* (2 vols., Dublin, 1974), i, p. 53.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid; Carrigan, *Ossory*, iv, p. 220.

late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries'.¹⁸⁵ Probably the most important part of the armour is the barbut helmet, one of the only two known examples from Ireland and the Jerpoint example appears to be the earliest.¹⁸⁶ (Figure 45) Hunt acknowledges that a later date for the cloister has also been suggested but he states that 'the date of the cloister arcade can be accepted on architectural grounds as within a few years either way of 1390.'¹⁸⁷

The complete knight carries a shield and on this is carved the chief indented of the Butlers. Members of the Butler family were earls of Ormond but it is probable that all members of the family were entitled to carry this coat of arms, not just the earl. Instead the specific relationship between a member of the family and Jerpoint must be determined in order to identify the individual. The many references to the *Ormond deeds* throughout this work are mostly in relation to the three Kilkenny monasteries of Jerpoint, Duiske and Killenny but the surviving documents went to the earls post-Dissolution and no references are extant which would necessarily suggest patronage of the earls throughout the existence of any of these monasteries. In fact the total lack of any reference to patronage by the main branch of the family suggests that none was forthcoming. The published charters of Duiske abbey do not mention any grant by the Butlers to that house. If nine knights were depicted on the cloister this indicates either substantial patronage from one family or from a number of families and this

¹⁸⁵ Hunt, *Figure sculpture*, i, p. 53.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

leads one to wonder why the earls would allow this and not themselves be involved, especially when the monastery was in an area of their dominance as is clearly seen from the accompanying map. (Fig 46) One other point must be made in relation to the possibility of this figure representing an Earl. On the sinister side of the knight is a carving which has been identified as a barbary ape. On the reverse of the knight is a lady and an ape is also depicted beside her. This has been identified as part of the Fitzgerald coat of arms the implication being that the lady is a Fitzgerald wife of a Butler knight. Edwin Rae in his article suggests that this is Margaret Fitzgerald and Piers Rua Butler.¹⁸⁸ If this is the case it would date that particular part of the cloister to considerably later than 1485. It must be noted that the style of the carving of the ape is very crude in comparison with the complete figures and may well be a later insertion. The lady here wears a dress which, with the other details suggests a date of 1370-90.¹⁸⁹ The chief indented is also extant on a double ogee headed window head in Jerpoint, further strengthening the idea of a strong association with a branch of the family in the fifteenth century. (Figures 47-8) However, the fact remains that during much of this period the earls were resident in France and not Ireland. Added to this the implication of no direct reference of any patronage of Jerpoint by the earls is surely telling and would point to patronage by a Butler branch but not the main line of the family.

¹⁸⁸ E.C. Rae, 'The sculpture of the cloister of Jerpoint abbey', *J.R.S.A.I.*, 96, 1966, 64, pp 54-91 at p. 72.

¹⁸⁹ Hunt, *Figure sculpture*, i, p. 56, ii, plate 122.

A tomb slab in the abbey does have a Butler connection where Peter fitzJames Butler of Oihyll and his wife Isabella Blanchfield were buried in the abbey church in 1492.¹⁹⁰ Pierce fitzOge Butler was buried in Kilcooley abbey, daughter house of Jerpoint in c.1526 this could strongly point to a link in patronage. One further link can be identified here as the Kilcooley piece is of the O'Tunney school, indeed it could be argued that both were carved by Rory O'Tunney. Rory certainly signed the effigy of the knight in Kilcooley and the styles of the Jerpoint base would suggest that he was the sculptor of this piece also.¹⁹¹ The only problem here is that it is not certain that the Jerpoint base and slab are from the same tomb although they are contemporaneous. Another O'Tunney piece may be identified in the form of a second mensa tomb with nine apostles depicted, this has been dated to c. 1500. Possibly family members of the Peter Butler buried at Jerpoint employed the O'Tunneys to carry out this work. An association has also been made with the effigy of a harper and his wife which, for many years was placed on top of the mensa tomb which supports the apostles. This harper may have had a connection of some sort with Peter Butler. These links can only be tenuous at best as it is unclear whether the top slabs actually belong to the bases or not.

What is clear is that Rory O'Tunney carved what is known as the Walsh tomb in Jerpoint as he also carved his signature on the shaft of the eight pointed

¹⁹⁰ Carrigan, *Ossory*, iv, p.296.

¹⁹¹ Hunt, *Figure sculpture*, i, p. 228, ii, plate 278.

cross which is carved in relief on the top slab and dates to 1501.¹⁹² The piece also bears the Walsh family shield as does the smaller Walsh tomb situated to the south of the larger, a passion shield is also visible on the earlier tomb. (Figures 49-50) These tombs are significant because the Walshs did grant land to Jerpoint in the fifteenth century. Perhaps then it is the Walshs who employed the O'Tunneys and had the mensa tombs carved. If this is the case though one would expect that the Walsh family would want to be buried within the mensa tombs and this does not appear to be so. It seems more probable that the O'Tunneys were employed by different families, one of whom was the Walshs, another may have been Butlers. It is worth listing the names and dates here to see if this can be further determined.

Walter Brenach (Walsh) and Katherine Poher (Power) are commemorated on the 1501 slab which bears the O'Tunney signature. On the south side of the tomb chest the dedication is to Walter Brenach (Walsh) and Katherine Butler, this is not dated but, as the lettering is similar it suggests that the dedications must be near contemporary.¹⁹³ Another fact supporting this lies in the decorative north and south panels both of which bear striking similarities with the nearby O'Tunney pieces.¹⁹⁴ This coupled with the signature on the top slab points to all five elements of this tomb dating to the earliest part of the sixteenth century and being products of the hand of Rory O'Tunney. The smaller Walsh tomb dates to

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, i, p. 177.

¹⁹³ Carrigan, *Ossory*, iv, pp 297-8.

¹⁹⁴ Hunt, *Figure sculpture*, i, p. 177.

1476 and is dedicated to Edmund Walsh and his wife Johanna le Boteller (Butler).¹⁹⁵ The Walsh family shield comprising of a chevron between three pheons, although much worn, is still visible on this tomb as is a passion shield. On 9 March c. 1445-6 Richard Walsh granted land to the monastery, this land was situated close to the family holdings at Rossinara Demesne.¹⁹⁶ One other piece of evidence must be presented and this is in relation to the cloister. Mention was made above of one of the carvings of a knight presently in Carrick-on-Suir, this knight bears a shield upon which is some decoration. Two knights are depicted, one of which bears the Walsh arms.¹⁹⁷ It is the knight on the reverse who carries the Holden arms which are probably the same as one of the shields on the wall painting, i.e. a chevron and ermine.¹⁹⁸ The two knights must have had a close association to have been carved on the same colonnade and local tradition refers to the Holdens being of Castlehale which is situated very near to the ancestral Walsh home at Rossinara. The two families were supposedly blood relatives.

From this it is clear that the three families, Walsh, Holden and Butler, must have been interrelated and what we see is that together they employed the O'Tunneys and may also have been the main patrons of the cloister arcade and were associated with the wall painting.

¹⁹⁵ Carrigan, *Ossory*, iv, p. 296.

¹⁹⁶ White, *Monastic and Episcopal deeds* A26 [38] pp 28-9.

¹⁹⁷ Hunt, *Figure sculpture*, i, p. 54.

¹⁹⁸ Peter Harbison, 'An illustration of the lost Walsh knight from the Jerpoint cloister arcade', in *O.K.R.*, no. 25 (1973), pp 13-15 at p. 13.

The chronology then may be as follows, the cloister is the earliest of this new phase of decoration and must be dated to c. 1390-1400, all evidence points to the construction of the tower beginning after 1442 and presumably being completed within that fourth decade of the fifteenth century. The wall paintings appear to fit in between both events the closest dates appear to be c. 1400-1450 and the barrel vault in the chancel was probably completed around the same time and may have been painted also. When all of this work was completed the three O'Tunney tombs were carved in a period of no more than two decades beginning c. 1492 and ending c. 1510 at the latest. The Walsh, and Butler families, and to a lesser extent the Holdens appear to have been patrons of the monastery throughout this period, the patronage presumably beginning at some point near 1400 at the latest and continuing through the other named members of the family, which brings the date to the early sixteenth century. The Walsh grant of 1445 and the dating of the tower to the same decade may be significant. A change was already evident by the sixteenth century that coincided with the passing of the Walsh's when the abbey began to lease out lands and the Graces appear to become very involved with the running of the monastery, which carried on right up to dissolution and beyond. The identity of the brothers, represented in the thirteenth century incised carving presently in a chapel in the south transept of the abbey church, remains an enigma but the family of the young men must have given some form of patronage during that same period.

One final piece of evidence must be presented here in relation to the Butler connection. The inscription on the 1492 tomb slab refers to 'Oichyll'. It was believed for a time that this was part of the Cahir branch of the family who were descended from the illegitimate James 'Galda' of which Piers fitzJames Butler of Cahir was a notable figure. The involvement of this Piers and his sons and grandsons with the areas around Carrick and Cahir could point to a connection between these men and the Pierce fitzOge Butler buried in Kilcooley.¹⁹⁹ However, a branch of the family originated in 'Owles and Achill' County Mayo and this may be the Oichyll on the Jerpoint tomb.²⁰⁰ The 'Placenames database of Ireland' available under the auspices of the Department of Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs confirms that Oichyll is Achill.²⁰¹ These Butlers are of a territory anciently called Umall i.e. O'Mally's country or Hy Many which are now the baronies of Borreshoole and Murriske County Mayo.²⁰² This territory appears to have been granted to Henry le Boteler or Butler and in 1273 the family was expelled from there.²⁰³ This branch of the family were driven out of Connaught in the mid fourteenth century and had land in Island Molash, Co. Cork which they surrendered to the earl of Ormond in 1380 in exchange for

¹⁹⁹ C.A. Empey and Katherine Simms, 'The ordinances of the White Earl and the problem of coign in the later middle ages' in *Proc. R.I.A.*, vol. 75, C, (1975), pp 161-187, at pp 165-6.

²⁰⁰ Pedigree of the Butlers of Owles and Achill, Co. Mayo, section 2, p. 9. Given to the author and kept at Jerpoint Abbey Visitor Centre.

²⁰¹ See www.logainm.ie

²⁰² Pedigree of the Butlers of Owles and Achill, Co. Mayo, frontispiece; Orpen, *Normans*, p. 392.

²⁰³ Orpen, *Normans*, p. 392.

lands in the barony of Kells, Co. Kilkenny.²⁰⁴ In 1420 John, late earl of Desmond held the manor of Owlis as heir of Edmond de Burgo.²⁰⁵ On 14 July 1512 'Theobald son of Nicholas Butler of the race of Owles' granted Killmacoliver and other lands in Kells, Co. Kilkenny to William Walsh fitzRobert'.²⁰⁶ In 1585 Thomas, earl of Ormond and Ossory was seized of forty quarters of land which was part of the manor of Burrishoole.²⁰⁷ This Achill and Kilkenny connection could indicate the reasons for the striking similarities between the figures of the Clare Island wall painting and the cloister arcade at Jerpoint Abbey. The comments of the Chief Herald in relation to the boar were in relation to the O'Malley plaque on Clare Island, as the Achill connection can be confirmed from information obtained from the Placenames Commission then the boars of the Jerpoint painting could take on new significance.

Decoration and the Cistercians

While the obvious dramatic increase in decoration has been taken by many as proof that the Order was again in dire need of reform an opposing view also deserves attention. It is entirely plausible that the Order managed to survive the disastrous fourteenth century and the changes of the fifteenth century by facing the challenges and not seeking to live totally within the cloister. The

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Pedigree of the Butlers of Owles and Achill, Co. Mayo, section 2, p. 9.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Orpen, *Normans*, p. 392.

monks were only too well aware of the changes that had occurred, particularly in relation to population, and found it very difficult to recruit not just new novices but lay brothers in particular. An Order that was dependent on self-sufficiency would have realised that they just could not survive without adapting to the circumstances in which they along with society in general found themselves.

It would appear that in the fifteenth century the Cistercians in Jerpoint abbey accepted an increase in patronage and this increase would have benefited both sides. The monks would have gained money, land or materials and the benefactor could rest assured that their soul and the souls of their families would be saved. It can be assumed that part of the deal was that the monks would either incorporate the family shield as is the case with the wall painting or allow their dead to be buried within the abbey church. The family or families of patrons may also have been granted permission to have their family shields depicted in the chancel. The conundrum here was probably simple in the end, if the monks wanted the patronage they would have to display the wall paintings, tombs and decorated cloister, if they were not willing to have the decoration then the patronage would not be forthcoming. Again, this supports the idea quoted above of the inter-relationship of the three strata of medieval society. In reality, as is always the case, the truth is probably somewhere in the middle.

Obviously the monks chose the patronage and this is probably one of the main reasons which allowed the monastery to continue to flourish until the sixteenth century.

Chapter 7

Lands held at Dissolution

It is difficult for us today to fully realise the implications that the dissolution of the religious houses caused for the people of the period. It has long been assumed that the secular and monastic worlds had become inextricably linked by the sixteenth century. It is true that the same can be said for any period during which the monastic movement flourished but by the later century an image of a more intense interdependency can be gleaned. The dissolution of the religious houses must have sent shockwaves through the communities both who dwelt within the religious foundations and those of the secular world who depended on the monks for work, shelter and food among other things. The interrelationship between the two worlds has already been discussed in this thesis in relation to the changes which occurred in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but it would be interesting to gain, if possible, a more detailed picture of that relationship as it existed on the eve of the dissolution of the religious houses. Fortunately the extents of the possessions of the Irish monasteries includes information relating to the numbers of lay people living on the land of a particular monastery in addition to records of the types of service and customs which were owed to the monasteries by their tenants. From

these documents a picture of the intensity of this association between the two groups should emerge and this will be one focus of the chapter.

The second main focus will be in relation to the lands which the monasteries held. While the many factors which contributed to the closure of the religious houses are not central to this work the question of the amount of land which the religious houses held control over is. One major theory suggests that while the treasury, and by extension the monarch was broke, the monasteries still held huge tracts of land which the king could call his own by proclaiming himself to be head of the church. In this way Henry could then proceed to lease this former monastic land to the major magnates who remained loyal to him in a particular area. While it is accepted that the reasons for the passing of both Acts of Dissolution were manifold it is generally agreed that the land question was a central reason. As such the second part of this chapter will deal with this question of land ownership and try to determine a figure of the overall total amount of land which the Cistercian Order held in Leinster at the beginning of the reformation.

In order to determine this figure of total acreage the list of the remaining possessions of each monastery in the province will be examined and listed. Trends which may be apparent will be commented upon and the acreages for each house will be divided into land types, such as arable and pasture. From the lists of possessions it is expected that information in relation to the organisation of the lands of each house will become apparent with a possibility that the

granges may be listed. Where possible these granges will be discussed in more detail and information such as the location of these and their distance from the monastery will be determined as far as possible. It is also intended, if the information will allow, to ascertain if the granges comprised of a set amount of land or was this up to the discretion of each monastery.

Following from this the next element of this particular section of the study will use the Irish portion of the *Fiant rolls of the Tudor sovereigns* in order to determine if any other placenames, which have not already been listed in previous chapters are listed as being part of the possessions of a particular monastery. In that way it is hoped, as far as possible, to be able to identify all of the portions of land which made up the possessions of the Cistercian monasteries of Leinster in the medieval period.

Following from this the land acreage and total valuation of the Leinster houses will be tabulated and the results commented upon. It is expected that in both sections the monasteries of Mellifont and St Marys will be found to be at peak ownership.

Prior to beginning the examination of the possessions as listed at dissolution it is important to point out that not all of the religious houses were dissolved during this period. Particular houses, such as Holy Cross, Tipperary were allowed to continue to function, in one form or another, for at least another century. Other houses continued to operate, presumably without permission

from the king, and evidence would suggest that this continuation was supported by the General Chapter.

The beginning of this chapter will examine the Leinster houses that are listed within the *Extents of Irish monastic possessions* as being dissolved in the general dissolution which took place between 1536 and 1541. Other sources consulted during the course of this chapter will include Diocesan histories, local history papers and private family papers, as well as Papal registers and *Fiant* and *Patent Rolls* of the relevant monarch. Some monasteries were dissolved in the 1536-40 period but are entered in the *Extents* as having 'no receipts' although their lands at dissolution are tabulated in other publications, this will also be worthy of comment. Two points are worthy of note, the term 'customs' is used in relation to the lay tenants, this term refers to services which were owed to the monastery. Secondly, the term 'waste' is used a number of times when recording lands, in this context it usually refers to land being laid waste, usually burned, as opposed to land which cannot support growth.

Although the remit of the study is the territory of Leinster, it is necessary to include information from some houses outside the province for comparison purposes. The *extents of Irish monastic possessions 1540-41* records the possessions of twenty Cistercian monasteries that were dissolved in the period between 1536 and 1541. Those twenty were, St Mary's, Dublin, Baltinglass, Abbeyleix, Tracton, Fermoy, Chore, Maure, Monasterevin, Jerpoint, Duiske, Mellifont, Bective, Granard, Abbeyshrule, Kilbeggan, Kilcooley, Hore, Inishlounaght, Dunbrody

and Tintern Abbeys. In addition, a number of houses that had been reduced to grange status during the thirteenth century may be identified as parcels of lands of some of the abovementioned houses. These include the monastery of Killenny, whose lands are among those of Duiske Abbey and Glanwadyn, which was made subject to Dunbrody but, whose lands at the dissolution appear under the possessions of Inishlounaght. Of the twenty houses which were listed in the extents, fourteen were to be found in the modern province of Leinster. When the possessions of Glanwadyn and Killenny are included this number is increased to sixteen which amounts to almost half of the overall number of Cistercian houses which continued throughout the medieval period.

The possessions have been broken down into various groups that reflect the agricultural endeavors of the monks and the physical landscape within which the monasteries of the order settled in Ireland. The land is divided into six categories - arable, pasture, wood, moor, meadow and mountain. In particular areas the land type overlaps and where this happens the land is included under the lead heading. In addition, headings such as the numbers of weirs, watermills, houses, tenements, cottages, gardens, orchards, castles and waste that each monastery held at dissolution will be examined. As stated above the level of lay-involvement within the monasteries at this time can also be determined from these extents because the number of cottagers and the days and customs owed to each monastery by the local secular community can be established.

Presumably each monastery will not have entries in every category and some have very few extents listed. The lands of St Mary's Abbey may be presented as an example here as its location, close to the city of Dublin would imply that it may not hold vast amounts of diverse types of lands. Where the possessions vary from the norm, or what the expected results might be will warrant particular mention.

The calculation of the acreages of the lands held is not straightforward. Various measurements are used with the terms 'greater measure', 'lesser measure', 'terre', 'stang' all used in addition to acres. An acre is defined as a piece of arable, tillable land, the actual measurement of which was 4,840 sq yards.¹ 'Greater measure' is a figure which must be multiplied by four to give the figure for standard acres of the period. The acreages in this chapter will be presented as they were in the period under examination. However comment will be made at the end of the chapter about conversion to statute acres.

The format of the presentation of the acreages in the list of extents warrants a mention. It appears that regional differences in land measurement are reflected in the work of the jurors whose task it was to record the lands held by each monastery. General measure was used in Baltinglass, Abbeyleix, Duiske, Kilcooley, Hore and Inishlounaght abbeys. 'Lesser measure' was utilized at Tracton, Kilcooley and Baltinglass and the term 'terre' meaning 'of land' was used in Dunbrody, Tintern and Tracton abbeys. A 'stang' also appears in

¹ Corèdon and Williams, *Dictionary of medieval terms and phrases*, p. 4.

relation to some houses. This is a measure of land which is the equivalent of 0.6694085 acres. 'Quarters' are referred to in relation to the holdings of Granard, it is stated in the text that a quarter is equivalent to 'about 30 acres'.

Before looking at the actual acreages it is worthwhile examining what the extents say about the fabric of the buildings which make up the monastic complex, what state of repair the monastery was in and if any of the outer buildings had survived until the mid sixteenth century. When this information is compared with that of earlier periods the state of the upkeep of the buildings can be determined. This information in turn should give an indication of the maintenance of the entire land holding as a dilapidated monastery would surely be surrounded by unkempt lands and the reverse would surely be also true. This is borne out by the fact that of the twenty houses no receipts were returned for four; Monasterevin, Monasternenagh, Abbeyshrule and Kilbeggan. Nothing remains today of Monasterevin or Kilbeggan, but recent work by Professor Roger Stalley of Trinity College Dublin has uncovered the layout of Kilbeggan monastery in the form of a geophysical survey. (Figure 51) The evidence confirms that Kilbeggan conforms to the general layout of the Cistercian houses and the fact that the layout is visible from the geophysical survey may indicate that the remains of the monastery are lying, not far below the surface. The remains of Abbeyshrule, and to a lesser extent Monasternenagh, are not extensive. (Figure 52) The other sixteen houses listed seem to have suffered a diversity of fates and were in varying states of repair, presumably translating to

the equivalent financial state of the monastery, and in turn speaking volumes about the social and economic situation of the particular area.

It is also interesting to note that the four houses who return no receipts are all situated in Leinster thus the number of houses in the province for which detailed information is available in the extents is reduced to ten. Other sources must be consulted in order to try to gain more information pertaining to these particular four monasteries.

Where possible the townland names will be presented in the standard form as listed in the *General alphabetical index*. It is essential to note that some placenames are just not identifiable in the modern period and as such the spelling as listed in the extents will be retained.

St Mary's

The extents are listed in alphabetical order by county and so the first Cistercian house listed is St Mary's Abbey near Dublin. From the entry in N.B. White's presentation it can be calculated that the monastery was in possession of 5,937 medieval acres of land which was spread over four counties those of Dublin, Meath, Louth and Kildare.² In addition to this land the monastery also held 89.5 messuages, 73 houses, 51 cottages, 34 cottagers and in excess of 30 gardens. The monastery was also in possession of 66 tenements, 9 shops, 12

² White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, pp 1-23

watermills and one horse mill, one salmon fishery, two dovecotes, one rabbit-warren, three plots and '169 copps'.

A number of interesting points may be made in relation to these holdings. No distribution pattern is immediately evident in relation to the land holding, the arable and pasture lands do not appear to follow any specific pattern, presumably this is due to the location of the monastic lands, the monks at St Marys would not have had the same freedom as some of the other monasteries in relation to swapping parcels of land in order to consolidate their holdings. Arable land was overwhelmingly predominant with 4,465 acres of the overall total belonging to this category with only 621.5 acres of pasture land listed, a figure which included 191 acres of common pasture. Only forty-four acres were under woodland cover with ash, fir and broom listed while 99.5 acres of meadow were recorded. It is evident that the economy of the monastery was not based on dairy farming but cereal production must have played a major role with so much land under arable cultivation and thirteen mills under the direct ownership of the monastery. On the whole most of the agricultural land must have been in production as very little is listed as waste.

Eleven granges are listed as part of St Mary's, they were situated at Clonliffe, St James' street, Ballichelmer. Ballichelmer is later listed under the name Newgrange. Other granges include the Marshe, Carybrynan which was also known as Monketon, now Monkstown, Ballybaghill, Drishoge, Portmarnock and Clonsilla all of which were situated in Dublin. Only one grange was listed

outside of Dublin with Monketown grange located in county Meath. Of the granges the actual grange building at Carybryan or Monkeston county Dublin must have been a substantial structure as the record states that three towers and stone walls were standing at dissolution. The grange also comprised of a garden, a close containing five acres of pasture in addition to 120 acres of pasture and six acres meadow, as well as tithes and two cottages.³ Mansions were recorded at four other granges those of Ballybaghill and Clonsilla with a capital mansion listed for Monketown, Co. Meath with a mansion each at Termonfeckin, county Louth and at the rectory of Follistown. Castles were recorded for the vill of Kilternan and the Vill of Tuburrogan, county Kildare. Today Kilternan is in county Dublin and Tuburrogan is not identifiable. A tower was listed among the monastery's possessions at the Villata of Ballyconre and Disertonlagh county Meath, neither of which are identifiable. With the exception of Clonsilla and Follistown all of the other locations had a considerable amount of land associated with them, most well in excess of one hundred acres. Clonsilla held twenty six acres with Follistown only returning two acres. The last number of entries are not listed as granges but to all intents and purposes may well have been, one would have to wonder what other reason would have required the monks to have established castles and mansions on their lands.

The monastery also held much property other than that relating to agriculture with houses, cottages, tenements and shops totaling 199 premises in

³ Ibid., p. 10.

addition to the 89.5 messuages listed under the holdings of the abbey. Obviously this indicates a huge secular involvement and would indicate that self-sufficiency within a city took on new meaning. Only one fishery and one rabbit-warren with two dovecotes are listed which would all suggest that the monastery was either buying or receiving food as rent in kind as these numbers are just too small to support a community of the size that must have been in residence before dissolution. When dealing with this question of numbers the *Fiants* can be of service as the pensions granted to the monks remaining at dissolution are outlined.

On the dissolution of the monastery Walter Peppard was granted a substantial portion of the lands of St Mary's. On the 20 Sept. 1543 he was granted 'all the lands in the suburbs of Dublin' which had previously belonged to the monastery.⁴ In July of the same year, he was granted the lands of Drishoge near Dublin along with Kilmacodrike and Newgrange or the grange of Ballichelmer, as mentioned previously.⁵ About a year later, Walter is mentioned as being in possession of Culmyne, possibly Coolmine and Ranvelston, both in Co. Dublin along with the castle and land of Kiltiernan.⁶ It is possible that Ranvelston may be Ravensdale in county Louth.

⁴ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 386.

⁵ *Ibid.*, fiant 401.

⁶ *Ibid.*, fiant 446, 449.

A large number of placenames associated with this monastery are to be found in the Fiants of King Edward VI dated to 1552. These are listed in full in Appendix 3.

In 1545 the grange and capital messuage of Carbrynan alias Monkestown and Newtown, are referred to as being held by John Traverse.⁷ Newtown was leased to James Bathe for twenty one years in c. 1549. The cost of the rent was £4 13s 4d.⁸

On 10 March 1540 the following men were granted pensions from the possessions of St Mary's Abbey. Walter Esmonde, Thomas Walsche, John Tirrell, John Whitrell, William Ley, William Walsche, Robert Lide and William Loghan all received pensions of 40s each while Henry Veisen, James Barret, Patrick Bennet, John Festame, Seth Pecoke and John Barret were granted pensions of £3 6s 8d, 53s 4d, 40s, 53s 4d, 40s, 53s 4d respectively in January of that year.⁹ William Launde, the abbot of St Mary's was granted a pension of £50 and Patrick Stackpoll a pension of £4 with Willaim Cottrell, styled a conventual person receiving a pension of £3 6s 8d.¹⁰ From these documents it can be stated that at least seventeen men were present in St Mary's at dissolution.

⁷ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 460.

⁸ *Ibid.*, fiant 539.

⁹ *Ibid.*, fiant 93, 94, 95.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fiant 88.

Baltinglass

The abbey held 1,834 acres of arable land, 53 of pasture, 20 of wood, six of meadow and twelve acres of mountain, four acre of the pasture lands was underwood. This gives a total of 1,925 acres of land. Of the total land 535 acres of arable land was recorded as waste, as was eight acres of pasture, eight acres of wood and four of meadow. (Figure 53) When the extent was made on the 29 Nov. 1540, although the church was still standing it was recorded as being 'very ruinous', as was the castle, 'hall with a chamber' and a kitchen.¹¹ The jurors stated that if the buildings were not repaired quickly they would collapse totally. This would seem to suggest that in the three years since the monks had been forced to leave either the natural elements had ravished the building or other more human forces had impacted on the fabric. Whether this was due to the forces of the crown or the secular community is not immediately evident. As will be seen, much warfare was practiced among members of rival Irish clans in the area and this may have had an impact on the physical building. The hall with a chamber is presumably either a reference to the refectory or an external building possibly either the abbot's quarters or infirmary. The castle must be either part of the gatehouse or some other substantial structure remaining within the precinct.

Although the record states that 'the beasts of the people were enclosed within the precinct wall' this does not necessarily mean that such a practice was

¹¹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 126.

widespread when the monks were still in residence, obviously the walls of the outer precinct were still intact in 1540. The jurors were reporting on the state of the monastery as the situation was witnessed by them three and a half years after the monastery was dissolved.¹² This may also account for the ruinous condition of the church and some outer buildings. The gardens and orchard were said to have been waste for six years, presumably this is since 1534.¹³ Eight of the twenty-four acres of demesne lands are said to have been long waste, with the other lands in secular hands. A watermill, valued at 8 shillings was also situated within the curtilage. The valuation of the mill is quite low and this is presumably due to its bad state of repair. This record of the remaining physical structure of the monastery would seem to support the layout of the complex as discussed in an earlier chapter.

The lands of Baltinglass were organised as vills, granges and manors and was spread across counties Carlow, Wicklow and Dublin. The vill of Baltinglass appears to have been almost totally under the control of the secular community and the customs owed by them to the monastery offer an insight into the interaction between the two. The tenants owed meat-money, plough days, sowing days and weed days, in addition to sheep and pigs at a valuation of 12d each. Butter, beer, hens and cakes were all used as forms of payment in kind and, among other duties, the tenants were bound to cart grain to the haggard

¹² *Ibid.*, pp 125, 131.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

and wood from the forest in autumn.¹⁴ Eight cottagers are known to be living within the vill and these were not paying a financial rent but are recorded as 'paying only works and customs'.¹⁵ This list of secular dues presents an image of a well defined interrelationship between the monks and their lay tenants where both sides manage to get what they want. Whether this is specific to Baltinglass Abbey or was widespread remains to be seen.

Apart from the monastic complex which seems to have been in a fairly bad state by the time the extents were completed much of the land in various other holdings must have suffered the same fate as much is recorded as waste. The land of the Vill of Graungegodlyn is said to have been wasted by the Ó Tuathail's four years previous, this would place the destruction of the land at a very short time prior to the dissolution.¹⁶ This location is presumably identifiable as Grangecon. Hyltonston, Newtown, Newgrange and portions of the land at Sleragh and Tenebran all seem to have followed a similar providence.¹⁷ It is apparent then, from this evidence that the Ó Tuathail's engaged in widespread destruction of the monastic lands at some point just before Baltinglass was suppressed.

Of all of the land that the monks held in this particular portion of county Carlow the only parcels that seem to have been intact in 1540 are those of Ladytowne, Cargyn and Rayghyn with Brannockstown, these were leased out to

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 127.

lay people, Oliver Grace, Theobald Thalon and John McGullogh Phadryk respectively along with two cottagers in Cargyn and one in Rayghyn. The name John McGullogh Phadryk is obviously a corruption of Mac Giolla Pátraic presumably this John is a descendent of the Domhnall who founded Jerpoint Abbey, daughter house of Baltinglass.¹⁸ If this is the case then John is also a member, or perhaps leader, of the family who, until the sixteenth century, ruled the territory of Upper Ossory.

The next parcel of Baltinglass Abbey land listed in the Extents is the manor of Graungeforth, presumably Grangeford which incorporated, among other locations, Chapelston, Clonolsky and Garebroghan with the latter recorded as 'for the last 4 {sic} years wasted by the Irish called the Cavenaghes'.¹⁹ James earl of Ormond is said to hold the manor for 10 li.²⁰ Chapleston, would in the modern period presumably be known as Chaplestown, however the only placename in Wicklow with the element 'chapel' is the townland Chapel in the parish of Redcross and is probably too distant from the monastery to be identified as Chapleston. Many of the names associated with Baltinglass are no longer identifiable and it is probable that, because many were waste at dissolution, they no longer exist as independent townlands but have become incorporated into other placenames in the area.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

The table below indicates the places which were recorded as part of the possessions of the monastery at dissolution along with the acreages listed for each location.

Table 8: Distribution of land of Baltinglass Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acerage
Precint (waste)	4
Demense (32 waste)	96
Baltinglass	
Monketon (waste)	16
Grangecon (waste)	12
Kylmore	20
Holynston (waste)	16
Newton (waste)	4
Ladytowne	8
Sleragh (16 waste)	32
Newgrange (waste)	14
Cargyn	20
Tenebran (8 waste)	56
Rayghyn with Brannockstown	16
Manor of Grangeford	138
Chapleston	48
Clonmolsky, in Odrone	32
Garebroghan (waste)	8
Balyward alias Powerston with Kylcoyte	28
Kylmagobok, Graungemagenny, and the Growe	41
Newhouse in same parish	72
Graungecon	56
Griffenstown (4 waste)	8
Baronstown (waste)	20
Knocwyrk (8 waste)	16
Co. Kildare	
Muchgrange manor, parish of Gilton (87 waste)	174
Gilton (40 waste)	320
Rathergett	80
Littelgrange (96 uncultivated)	120
Downe Crvft and Canycourte (waste)	126
Westerton, Brannockstown and Moryston all held by Sir Thomas Eustas lord of Kilcullen as of the manor of Muchgrange	
Gilton all in the king's hands, Rectory	

Graungerosnalvan, parish of Kylka	200
Co. Dublin	
Roode Towne (8 waste)	16
Mylston alias Tokemyll (waste)	8
Mangertereleggh (waste)	16
Rathbran and Bylston (28 waste)	56
Hookeston alias Ballyhoke (waste)	28
Total acerage	1,925

From this table a very varied distribution pattern is evident. Some of the parcels of land are very small and others quite large. It is possible that some of these portions represent granges which were used for a particular purpose that did not require much land.

From an examination of the lands of Baltinglass Abbey the distribution and uses of granges becomes clearer. Eleven placenames have the element 'grange' incorporated into the name and three names which do not have the element are listed as granges. Of the fourteen two are diminutive terms, one referring to little the other to much or large. Little Grange consisted of 120 acres of lesser measure arable land of which ninety six acres were uncultivated when the extent was drawn up, two cottages and one messuage were also listed for Little Grange.²¹ Much Grange was styled as a manor within the parish of Gilton and comprised of 174 acres of arable, again lesser measure of which eighty seven acres were waste, this time the perpetrators were the Kavanaghs.²² In addition to the arable land the grange included one messuage and a castle with a cartilage.

²¹ Ibid., p. 130.

²² Ibid., p. 129.

Indeed of the fourteen named granges exactly half had a castle on the grange land, Gilton had a castle and a mill and the Newhouse also had a mill and presumably at some point had a house structure. A parish church must have been situated within the grange as the tithes and oblations of that same church are owed to the monastery. Graungemagenny was in possession of a waste mill and three of the fourteen are listed as waste. While it is not named as a grange Knocwyrk had a castle listed as part of its possessions at dissolution.

What is notable here is that the lands of Baltinglass did not possess any mansions are all of the structures are referred to as castles. Taking into consideration the lawlessness which is indicated by the destruction of the abbey lands prior to the dissolution it must be queried whether these castles were defensive structures or were they grange buildings just used for the lay-brothers dwelling. Perhaps the answer may lie somewhere in the middle. In order to try to answer this question it is necessary to consult contemporary records to try to determine if any of these structures have survived to the present day. The two most obvious records are the Sites and monuments record and the recently published archaeological inventory. Grangecon, the possessions for this grange included two messuages, twelve acres of arable land and two acres of pasture, all greater measure, three cottagers dwelt there also.²³ While no castle is recorded as being present at dissolution a castle does stand at the site today. An armorial stone located on the south west wall bears the date 1610 and another inscribed

²³ Ibid., p. 129.

stone from a different part of the structure is inscribed with the date 1625.²⁴ It would appear that the construction of the castle post dates the use of the land as a Cistercian grange nevertheless the presence of the structure is worthy of note. No evidence of the castles associated with the granges listed above have survived into the present day. However, the site of a tower house located near to the abbey is recorded in the inventory. It is stated that this structure, which was known as 'the abbot's castle' was demolished in 1882, some of this stone is said to have been utilized in the construction of the rectory which stands beside the abbey today.²⁵ It is possible that the building was a three or four storey tower house. This may be the castle which is referred to in the extents which was said to have been situated within the monastic complex.²⁶

Perhaps the most noticeable fact in relation to the abbey holdings is the amount of waste land which is recorded. Some of this has been discussed above but, due to the high amount of waste land, it is worth examining this fact a little more carefully. In addition to the destruction of the land of the Vill of Graungegodlyn, Hyltonston, Newtown, Newgraunge, Sleragh, Tenebran, Clonolsky and Garebroghan the lands, castles and messuages of Baltinglass, Grange Godley, Kilmorith, Hiltonston, Sleroath, Newgrange, the Karkyn, Tenewran, Rayhen, Monktown, Redtown, Rathbrenne, Ballyhoke, Tokemyll, Maunger, Tirlegh and Mellistone all suffered at the hands of the armies of

²⁴ *Archaeological inventory of county Wicklow* (Dublin, 1997), p. 189.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

²⁶ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 126.

Terence Ó Tuathail and MacMurrough through war and rebellion. From the dates it would appear that the war between the two families began just before the dissolution of Baltinglass. The way in which the waste lands are listed would seem to suggest that these lands were divided in two portions, those of Baltinglass and Redtown.

Another Gaelic clan is mentioned in relation to land wastage, that of the Ó Mórdha or O'More's. This family is said to live in the district which included the monastic lands of Kylmagobok, Graungemagenny and the Growe, interestingly this land is not recorded as waste but other portions of land in the area are. Presumably these are members of the O'More clan of Laois. From the wording of the document it would appear that the blame for the wastage lies with the Kavanaghs, four years previously.²⁷ It is unclear whether the Kavanaghs were trying to interfere with the O'More's or not, possibly the O'More's were in some way protecting the lands near their homestead, including that of Baltinglass Abbey.

Many other parcels of land are said to be waste but it is not entirely clear whether this is by the impact of the above-mentioned wars or not. What is blatant is that there was widespread destruction of the monastery's land around the time of the dissolution. The house was dissolved on 18 May 1537 and the extent was taken 29 Nov. 1540, the lands which are waste are mostly recorded as waste for a period of four years and this would place the time of destruction at

²⁷ Ibid., pp 128-9.

the early summer of 1536, approximately one year before the monastery was dissolved. What is also evident is that the monastery must have been in a healthy enough position to enable it to maintain the land until 1536. Obviously both the labour force and the financial situation were strong enough to sustain the monastery and its lands until that summer.

Two possible scenarios may be presented here. It is feasible that the wars erupted independently of the monastery and the lands of Baltinglass Abbey happened to provide a canvass for the clans to vent their displeasure. It is also viable that the decision to close the monastery was central to these wars and may have sparked off the disputes. This could have happened in two ways, firstly, the decision by the King to close the monasteries could have caused the clans to try to take land by force before the monastery was actually dissolved, this could have happened because the greater proportion of the monastic community may have already left the monastery and, as in many other cases, only the Abbot and a small number of men remained. The clans may also have initially been trying to prevent the Crown from taking the lands and removing a stabilizing influence in their lives. The last point is especially worthy of note when one considers the number of lay people who appear to have made their homes within the Vill of Baltinglass. Whatever the truth, it is evident that a huge proportion of the land of Baltinglass Abbey was laid waste by local Irish families about one year before the monastery was dissolved and clearly the monks were not in a position to prevent this from happening.

1,925 acres of land are recorded as being part of the possessions of Baltinglass Abbey in 1540, three years after the monastery was dissolved. Many other places are listed as belonging to the foundation, but due to the wars in the area, no acreages are included for these houses. Many of the placenames associated with this monastery are not identifiable in the modern landscape. Particular names are highlighted on the seventeenth century maps of Sir William Petty but cannot be marked on the discovery series of maps and the reverse is true also. Interestingly most of the places which are identifiable on the earlier maps only were listed as waste in the dissolution extent. Presumably this placename has fallen out of use between the mid sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Another point which must be made is in relation to the divisions within places such as north and south Griffinstown. This would seem to indicate that these divisions were much later and that the placename which is referred to in the extent comprises of the whole of this area.

In relation to the fate of the lands of the monastery post dissolution it is evident from the Fiant rolls that in June 1541 Thomas Wstace, presumably Eustace, lord of Kilcullen was granted most of the lands of Baltinglass except the portion which was situated in county Kildare.²⁸ This land was leased to Eustace a second time and that under the later date has a particular stipulation attached. It was decreed that the land was to remain in Eustace's possession on the condition that he and any person occupying the land 'shall observe the statute

²⁸ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 211, 6793.

concerning the English language and dress and forbidding affinity and intelligence with Irish rebels, on pain of forfeiture.'²⁹ Judging from the actions of the native Irish clans as discussed above this would have been no small achievement. The portion of land which was not leased to Eustace in the earlier grant included Much Grange, Little Grange the manor of Graungeforthe and the tithes of Littletown, Ballygory, Glenocke, Rathveon, Clynclolge, in addition to the lands of Gilton all of which were leased to John Traverse on 20 June 1545.³⁰ In May 1550 this latter parcel was among those which Travers alienated to others.³¹ So, by 1550 the lands of Baltinglass had become divided.

Abbeyleix

The extent for this monastery was made at 'Cowlekyll in Ossory in Co. Kilkenny' on 30 Jan. 1541.³² On that day it is recorded that no superfluous buildings were in existence save what were being used by 'the farmer'. The site of the monastery itself consisted of a church, cemetery, dormitory and 'other buildings' and these were worth nothing without some repair work taking place. Obviously then the monastery was not in a good state of physical repair by this time, this would equate well with the fact that no physical remains of the monastery are extant today save for an effigy of the founder.

²⁹ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1586-1603*, fiant 6793.

³⁰ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 460.

³¹ *Ibid.*, fiant 497.

³² White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 135.

With regard to the land, the monastery held 57.5 acres of arable land and 156 acres of wood along with the 1.5 acres within the monastic precinct. In addition, twelve acres are recoded as waste, giving a total of 225.5 acres of land. (Figure 54) The waste land was situated in Kylroshe and it is waste 'by rebellion of those nearby'. Canon Power states that the monastery held over 1200 acres of arable land in addition to rectories, at the dissolution. He goes on to state that in old maps and deeds the lands which lay adjacent to the monastery was called 'Farrenna Manach, the Monk's Farm'.³³ Unfortunately he does not indicate the source of this information. It is clear from the *Extents* that, by 1541 the lay population near to the monastery was both high in numbers and in very close proximity. The entries for Monles and Raylysh both record the payment of customs to the monastery. (Figure 55)

An interesting reference is made to land which the monastery owned situated near to 'the castle of McGilphatrik' obviously this castle was either large in physical stature or imposing in that the family which held it was still powerful. Thirty acres of greater measure land was situated here which translates to 120 medieval acres or in excess of 840 statute acres, amounting to the vast majority of the land held by the monastery. It is noted that the land here is now waste due to the war of the O'Mores.³⁴ An ancestor of these O'Mores is, presumably, the founder of Abbeyleix Abbey and the presumption from the

³³ Power, *History of the Irish Cistercians*, p. 34.

³⁴ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 136.

record must be that the Mac Giolla Pátraics and the O'Mores were engaged in some sort of skirmishes in the area at this time. It would seem, from the lack of customs and/or tithes associated with this land that the area was waste for some time and therefore unable to support any farming activity.

Table 9: Distribution of land of Abbeyleix Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Monastic precinct	1.5
Monles [Abbeyleix]	44
Raylysh	12
Kylroyshe (waste)	12
Near the monastery:	
Ballagh	20
Grallage	16
near castle of McGilphatrik in Noyske	120
Total acreage	222.5

A number of other placenames associated with this abbey came to light when the Fiant records were consulted. Under the record for In 1551-2 it is recorded that Matthew King of Moyclare was granted the site of the monastery of Abbeyleix, 'the two parks and other land in the town of the Abbay of Leise' along with the lands of Dromaclowe in Clonkyne, Ralyshe, Ravele alias Rathvoyle, Lysnebegnet alias Lisvigyn, the half of Clownecore, Clonejohne, Dirrelaen, Clonaghill in Cloghoke, Knockbrake alias Kiltibreny in the parish of Tuadowy and Rahynconoghor Duff called Ollurdluighe to hold for twenty-one years at a rent of £22 4s 9d.³⁵ These placenames evade identification.

³⁵ *Irish Fiant records of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558, fiant 944.*

Tracton

Although it lies outside the direct area of study Tracton abbey was found to have held 1,042 acres of arable and 160 of pasture, giving a total of 1,202 acres of land. Judging from the valuation of the land 940 acres of the arable land was waste at dissolution, along with 100 acres of pasture. 320 acres are recorded as being arable and pasture. (Figure 56)

It would appear that the fabric of the building was pretty sound in 1541 as the monastery church is recorded as being in use as the parish church.³⁶ The buildings surrounding the monastery also must have been in good repair at the dissolution as the record states that they are 'suitable for the necessary uses of the farmer'. This must mean, at the very least, that they were roofed and stable.

The demesne lands of Tracton Abbey were substantial, this land appears not to have been broken up or distributed among the secular community which is a marked difference with the houses in Leinster which have been examined above. The monks must have been in a position to maintain both the building and the demesne lands at least, right up to the dissolution. The lands owned by Tracton seem not to have been divided into smaller parcels, as happened with many other monasteries, instead the monastery maintained a distribution pattern of large areas of arable and pasture land in each area that they are recorded as holding.

³⁶ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 143.

Most of the land of Tracton Abbey is recorded as waste, and what is not is only valued at a fraction of its overall worth, whether this land is also waste or not is unclear. Presumably even if the land itself was not totally waste the surrounding ground would not be worth the same as if all lands were fit for production.

The table below indicates the lands held in each location and the amount of medieval acres attributed to each at the Dissolution.

Table 10: Distribution of land of Tracton Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Monastic precinct	2
Demense lands	160
Tracton (waste)	320
Ballenemanagh (waste)	300
Ballyspellan (waste)	420
Rectories	
Tracton	
Ballyensyll/Ballyenhill	
Ballyfearde	
Clontead	
Ballyvodane	
Kylemore	
Ballyfewan	
Total acreage	1202

Fermoy

Fermoy abbey had 681.5 acres of arable at the dissolution along with 320 pasture and 40 acres of wood, which gives a total of 1,041.5 acres. Of the total figure only 1.5 acres are not recorded as waste. (Figure 57)

The monastery church is, as at Tracton, recorded as being in use as the parish church 'from time immemorial'.³⁷ The record states that none of the outer buildings are surplus to requirements and all are useful to the farmer. Obviously the inference here is that there are buildings within the complex still standing. These structures, along with two gardens constitute 1.5 acres.³⁸

The demesne lands consisted of two large tracts of arable and pasture, 120 acres and 60 acres respectively, all of this land is said to be waste. The villata of Iormoy, or Fermoy comprised of 160 acres of arable and 60 acres of pasture with forty acres of wood and a watermill, again all recorded as waste.³⁹

The distribution of the rest of the lands follows a similar pattern to Tracton with large portions of land associated as happened at Johnstown which consisted of 200 acres arable and 100 acres of pasture. Interestingly a castle is recorded as being on this land. It is possible that this structure is a grange building and both the distance from the monastery and the large amount of land surrounding it would support this idea. Again, the land here is said to have been waste.⁴⁰ Another castle is said to have been standing at Downemaghyn along with 200 acres of arable and 100 acres of pasture land, all waste. This is exactly the same as the previous entry and would appear to suggest a very definite division of land into self-contained granges with grange buildings. It has not been possible to identify Downemaghyn.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 144.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 145.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

From the record of the state of the monastery at dissolution it would appear that it must have been very difficult for the monastery to have been in a position to produce any food or keep any animals and the community must have been very small at this time. Although the extent was taken in 1541 it is not stated how long had elapsed since the monastery was dissolved. If the house had been dissolved a number of years previous it is possible that the widespread destruction of land could have taken place after the monastery had been closed down. As would be expected lay-people are not recorded as dwelling near the abbey, nor is there any record of the land being leased out. Both the monastic buildings and its lands were in a poor state with virtually no secular involvement recorded.

Table 11: Distribution of land of Fermoy Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Monastic precinct	1.5
Demense lands (waste)	180
Fermoy (waste)	260
Johnstown (waste)	300
Downemaghyn (waste)	300
Fermoy, Rectory	
Downenaghyn	
Total acreage	1041.5

Chore Abbey

The monastery was situated near Middleton, is recorded as being in possession of 301 acres, 300 of which is recorded as arable and pasture. Six rectories are recorded as being associated with the monastery.

As with Fermoy, the church of Chore Abbey is recorded as being the parish church. The extent continues by stating that

All the other buildings and houses in the precinct are suitable for the necessary use of the farmer dwelling there...⁴¹

This entry infers that buildings and houses were still standing within the precinct, but perhaps more importantly it records that fact that the farmer is already dwelling there.

The villata of Chore consisted of 180 acres of arable and pasture land, a salmon-weir and a water-mill. Killynnemaragh and Ballygibbon held 120 acres of arable and pasture and both this land and that of Chore is said to have been waste by rebellion.

Again a pattern of holding large tracts of land as opposed to dividing it into smaller holdings is evident for Chore Abbey. The situation of the rectory of St Catherine near Cork can be identified as being on the north side of the city, outside the walls between the North Abbey Square and the modern Churchfield. A reference from 1520 mentions 'the Church of St Catherine on the west, the King's road on the south and west, and from thence to the *great rock* on the

⁴¹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 150.

north'.⁴² A later entry, dating to 1595 makes reference to 'the lane or way leading to Currykippane on the north and east' and in 1629 Windele refers to 'a plot of ground without the north gate, extending from the *Hospitale* on the east to St Katherine's Church on the west'.⁴³

Table 12: Distribution of land of Chore Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Monastic precinct	1
Chore (waste)	180
Kyllynnemaragh & Ballygibbon (waste)	120
Rectories	
Chore	
Downbowlogge (Dower)	
Kylrowayne (Kilruane)	
Kylcollyle	
The Blessed Katherine nr Cork	
Mogeely	
Total acreage	301

Maure

This abbey had 223 acres of arable and 120 acres of pasture long with 580 acres of land which was recorded as being arable and pasture, giving a total land holding of 923 acres. (Figures 58, 60)

In Maure, as with the other houses preceding, the abbey church is recorded as being in use as the parish church. Buildings and gardens within the precinct are recorded, and this area is said to have incorporated three acres of land.

⁴² Bolster, *Cork*, p. 292.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

The demesne lands consisted of sixty acres of arable land and forty acres of pasture along with a weir. Whether this weir is on a river or in the bay is not stated but there is no immediate evidence of a river at the site in the modern period.

The Villata of Mawe consisted of 160 acres of arable and eighty acres of pasture land. The record states that the land was 'under the extortion of the Irish called Manartynaghes', and as such the valuation of the land was reduced from 10li to 60 s.⁴⁴

The reference to Red Barries country appears to indicate the area known today as Barryroe which is situated near to the coast at Courtmacsharry Bay. (Figure 59) The setting for this Cistercian house is not what would be expected. The usual location is in a valley with one or two rivers present but the monastery here, and its cell at Abbeystowry near to Skibereen, are both situated virtually on the edge of their respective bays. Whether this is due to the fact that the ideal location was just not available or that the founder had an input as to the location of the houses is unclear but the diversion from the normal positioning is worthy of note. Two placenames in the vicinity of the monastery are Grange More and Grange Beg.

Table 13: Distribution of land of Maure Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Monastic precinct	3
Demense lands	100
Maure	240
villate Barryroe	580

⁴⁴ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 151.

Abbeystowry	
Maure, Rectory	
Lyslye (possibly Lislevane)	
Total acreage	923

Monasterevin

Monasterevin has no record of any lands held. However a Hugh Dempsey was granted a considerable pension of £15 on 25 Oct. 1549.⁴⁵ It may be presumed that Hugh was the former abbot of the monastery, why he was only granted the pension in 1549 is not clear. It is possible that the monastery had continued to function for a time after dissolution.

Jerpoint

The abbey held 1,372 acres of arable land, 312 of pasture, 39 acres of wood and 180 acres of mountain giving a combined total of 1,903 acres. Of the wood, 23 acres were recorded as wood and pasture, while 30 acres of the pasture land was pasture and mountain. (Figure 61)

The extent for Jerpoint Abbey was taken ten months after the abbey was dissolved. The record begins by stating that 'the roof of the chancel was thrown down before the dissolution'.⁴⁶ The record does go on to note that the nave had been in use as the parish church 'from time immemorial'. Obviously much of the monastery was still intact when the extent was made, the record states that

⁴⁵ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 387.

⁴⁶ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 181.

the cloister, dormitory, and other buildings from the cloister to the orchards can be thrown down...

and continues by providing a valuation for the timber, stones and slates which were part of these buildings. It is possible that these areas which were mentioned above were demolished at the time because these are the very parts of the abbey which did not survive to the present day. Today the monk's dormitory is roofless and the cloister was knocked at some point and re-built in 1953. None of the outer buildings are standing but the foundations of some to the north of the monastery are visible. When Jerpoint was dissolved it must have been a fairly intact building with gardens, orchards and other ancillary buildings all situated within the complex.

The Villata of Jerepounte now Jerpoint consisted of 240 acres of arable land and a water-mill in addition to sixteen messuages and eight cottages. Obviously secular life had come very close to the monastery before the monastery was dissolved and this is further testified by the number of services owed to the monastery by lay-people.⁴⁷ These customs included pigs, sheep, hens and hokedays and obviously these were an excellent source of food for the monks. Ballylenche, now Ballylinch demesne, consisted of 160 acres of arable land and eighty acres of pasture with two messuages and two cottages. Bawne held eighty acres of arable and forty acres of mountain pasture with Wolgraunge or Wollengrange holding 160 acres of arable and forty acres of

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp 181-2.

pasture with three messuages and a water-mill. As the name suggests this land was a grange of Jerpoint which was someway involved with sheep and or the production of wool. Both Staynesland and Merehousseland held the same amount of land with each having sixteen acres of arable and four acres of pasture while Crossteek consisted of twenty acres of arable and ten acres of pasture. The lands which Smithstown and Gibbon Sheephouse consisted of one messuage, sixteen acres of arable and four acres of pasture land. Jackstown held one messuage along with thirty acres of arable and twenty acres of pasture land. Showeleston, Balndolyn and Ardshinnan consisted of two messuages, eighty acres of arable, sixteen acres of wood and 140 acres of mountain pasture, Kilgrellan held five messuages, a fishery, 160 acres of arable and sixteen acres of wood. This land is mapped in Figures 4 and 5.

Jerpoint also held land in Thomastown, Newtown Jerpoint and Kilkenny, all three of which could be considered to be urban areas, in total between the three locations, the abbey owned six messuages, two burgages, nine gardens and twenty acres of arable land.⁴⁸ The monastery also held land in the Grange of Legan which consisted of two messuages, sixty acres of arable and twenty acres of pasture land. Blackrath comprised of one messuage, fifty acres of arable and twenty of pasture while Foroughmore held only seven acres of pasture and wood. Dunbell had six messuages, 160 acres of arable and thirty acres of moor and pasture, a water-mill is recorded at this location also.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Another Grange is mentioned, this time at Kilree and here a castle is recorded, again, it is possible that this is the physical remains of the grange building, four messuages and four acres of arable and forty acres of pasture are recorded for this property. No land is recorded at the monasteries land at Maddockstown but a water-mill is stated to have been present in 1541. The Grange of Legan and Garran comprised of two messuages, forty acres of arable and twenty acres of pasture, along with the Grange of Mokhowne alias Rathlong again holding two messuages this time with sixty acres of arable land and twenty acres of pasture with a fishing-weir. The monastery also had a number of rectories associated with it.

The allocation of lands of Jerpoint Abbey appears to follow both distribution patterns, with some areas consisting of large tracts of arable and pasture and some parts comprising of small parcels of land. The most noteworthy portions are those of Stanyesland, Merehousseland, and Smithstown and Gibbon Sheephouse where each one consisted of sixteen acres of arable land and four of pasture but all other holdings are mixed and probably represent the acreage of each portion granted to the monastery.

Arable, pasture, meadow, moor, wood, fisheries, gardens, burgages, water-mills and fishing weirs are all recorded as part of the possessions of Jerpoint Abbey. What is probably the most noteworthy fact is that the land appears to be in production, most of it is leased and life appears to be flourishing in this area. This is in huge contrast to some of the monasteries

which are noted above where virtually all of the land is waste either by rebellion or other forces and the monks would have been almost incapable of having a living from their lands. Jerpoint gives a picture of a well organized, thriving estate with the monastery almost intact at dissolution and the complex in a reasonable state of repair. The fact that the returns for Jerpoint Abbey are so detailed enables a very clear picture of both the distribution and management of the land to be drawn.

Table 14: Distribution of land of Jerpoint Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Jerpoint	240
Ballylinch demesne	240
Bawn	120
Wollengrange	200
Stanyesland	20
Merehousseland	20
Crosseteek	30
Smithstown and Gibbon Sheephouse	20
Jackstowne	50
Showleston, Balyndolyn& Ardshinnan	236
Kilgrellan	176
Thomastown	20
Newtown Jerpoint	
Grange of Legan	80
Blackrath	70
Forroughmore	7
Dunbell	190
Grange of Kilree	44
Maddockstown	
Town of Kylkenny	
Grange of Legan and Garran	60
Grange of Mokhowne alias Rathlong	80
Rectories	
Rower	
Blanchvillestown	
Town of Ross	
Total acreage	1903

Both Oliver and James Grace were granted pensions on the same day, 28 April 1540. Oliver, late abbot of Jerpoint Abbey was granted a pension of £10 with James receiving a pension of 40s.⁴⁹ From the issuing of other pensions it is clear that four other monks were in Jerpoint at dissolution. These four were Patrick Brenane, Nicholas Fynne, Richard Croke and Thomas Croke and they all received pensions of 40s.⁵⁰ The rectory of Blanchevilleston part of the possessions of Jerpoint was leased to Walter Crowley of Brownstown for 21 years at a rent of 4 marks on the 20 May 1540. On 11 Aug. 1541, James Earl of Ormond was leased the site and entire possessions of Jerpoint Abbey at a rent of £86.⁵¹

Duiske Abbey

Duiske is recorded as having 665 acres of arable land, 138 acres of pasture, ninety two acres of woodland, eight of moor and one of mountain, giving a total holding of 904 acres of land. Eighteen acres of pasture land was situated in mountainous regions while five acres of moor was also pasture land. Portions of the land are recorded as being waste, and, with one exception, this destruction appears to have been caused by either 'rebellion' or 'war' of 'the Kavernaghs'. The lands which are recorded as waste are situated in counties Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford and Cork. All of the lands in the first three counties which are waste are so because of the Kavanaghs, the land in Cork is listed as

⁴⁹ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 133-5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, fiant 135.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, fiant 241.

'waste by rebellion'. Obviously the Kavanaghs were active in the region of the monastery and held sway, or at least tried to, in those parts of the counties mentioned.

The distribution of the land of Duiske Abbey is interesting as most of the land appears to have been divided into equal parcels of land. Nine parcels of land consisting of twenty acres each are recorded, two parcels of forty acres and three parcels each containing sixty acres are listed. Only three portions of land are not following this pattern. Most of this land is shown in figure five.

The site of the complex of Duiske Abbey must have been in bad repair when the jurors took the extent on 4 Jan. 1541 as they state that the church with the cemetery, cloister, orchard and garden, are worth 'nothing above repairs'.⁵² The way the record is worded it is difficult to know whether the acreage given is in reference to the garden or the whole area. Taking into consideration the fact that the amount given is two acres of greater measure which translates to eight medieval acres and over fifty-six statute acres it is unlikely that this refers to a garden. Presumably the acreage refers to the complex and possibly a small parcel of demesne land as this is not mentioned in the extent.

The 'vilata' of Duiske consisted of thirty acres of arable land with twelve of pasture and twenty-five acres of wood, three eel-weirs and a water-mill. This area was obviously a hive of secular activity judging by the amount of days and customs which were owed to the monastery by the tenants. Twenty-two cottages

⁵² White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 193.

are recorded as being present and the customs owed include 'better beer', beef, sheep and pigs.⁵³

The monastery's land at Raheendonore comprised of thirty acres of arable land, fifteen of pasture and fifteen of wood, all greater measure. In addition fourteen cottages were situated here and again a large amount of days were owed to the monastery and, along with beer, sheep and pigs, candles comprised of part of the rent.⁵⁴

The land at Ballyogan included ten acres of arable and ten acres of wood, both of which is recorded as being greater measure land.⁵⁵ Tikerlevan held five acres of arable land, and five each of wood and pasture, again recorded as greater measure. This land included customs of days and this time the only other form of custom mentioned is the provision of hens. The monastery held ten acres of arable and ten of pasture in Coppanagh but this land was valued at only a fraction of its worth because it lay waste due to the war and rebellion of the 'Kavernaghs and other Irish'.⁵⁶ Rayhendonor, or Raheendonore as it is known today translates to ráithín dúin odher or rath of the dun-coloured fort. This fort is listed on the Ordnance Survey sheet as Carraigeen Fort and its significance lies in the fact that the dissolution extents refer to the Grange of William Carraghe, it would seem likely that Carraigeen and Carraghe are the

⁵³ Ibid., p. 194.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

same family name. If this is the case then the grange and the fort must be close to each other.

The extent for Claynehowme lists ten acres of arable, five of pasture and fifteen acres of wood with Kyllen holding ten acres of arable, nine of pasture and one acre of wood, all recorded as greater measure land. Four cottages are listed for this location along with customs of days and hens. The extent for Garvok is identical to that of Kyllen in relation to the land distribution and while no cottages are recorded for Garvok customs in the form of days and hens are listed, supporting the theory that lay people at least used this land even if they did not live there.

Moynentalan comprised of ten acres of arable land, with eight acres of pasture and two acres of wood, all of which was greater measure land. The Grange of Woode ironically did not consist of much woodland with only four acres of land underwood, the holding did include one acre of moor, one acre of meadow and thirty-five acres of arable land. As the name suggests this area must have had something to do with wood, either it had a lot of timber at one stage or wood was worked here at some time previous to the dissolution. Perhaps the large acreage of arable land is actually an area of woodland which had been cleared by the monks. Presumably this is Grangesylvia which was part of the possessions of Killenny before it was reduced to a grange of Duiske. This land was rented out to lay persons as the rent is said to have included measures of corn and oats, along with days and hens owed.

A second grange is mentioned, that of the Grange of William Carragh. As stated above the name is close to that associated with the fort in Raheendonore and this would indicate pre-existing settlement in this location. Whether the fort had been abandoned prior to the arrival of the monks in the area or not is unknown. Whatever the facts about the name, this was a substantial grange comprising of seventy-five acres of arable land along with five acres of moor and pasture, this land is recorded as greater measure therefore it comprised of 320 medieval acres, which translates to in excess of 2,240 statute acres. The acreage today is given as 2,252 statute acres. Eleven cottages are recorded along with customs of days and hens. A third grange called the Grange of Downyng comprised of sixty-one acres of arable, three acres of pasture and one acre of moor. This land also included a water-mill, and its value was listed as '10 pecks of corn and oats each'.⁵⁷

Oldabbey is the next parcel of land recorded and this is presumable the site of the monastery of Glandy or Killenny. This decree sparked off a long and protracted disagreement between Jerpoint and Duiske, to which it had been made subject. The fact that the argument went on for so long meant that it was well into the fifteenth century before Jerpoint finally relinquished all claims to Glandy. The parcel of land listed for Oldabbey included thirty-eight acres of arable land and two acres of wood with an eel-weir and a water-mill. (Figure 6)

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 195.

The Grange of Hanamolyte or Annamult, was also part of the disputed land and it is here that the possible medieval barn mentioned above is situated. No mention of any structure is recorded in the extents but half an eel-weir, a water-mill seventy-six acres of arable and four acres of pasture land are listed for this site. Interestingly the valuation for these two parcels of land were grouped together, obviously a distinction was being made that these two parcels of land were related. The physical location of the two portions is quite distant but it is possible that historically these two places may have been considered as one unit which may well stem from the earlier ownership situation.

The fifth grange to be listed, and the final parcel of land in Kilkenny, is that of the Grange of Tollaghanny which is recorded as comprising of eighty acres of arable land, eleven of pasture, eight acres of wood and one of moor. The site also had twelve cottages and, yet again, the customs were days and hens.

Only one entry is listed for county Carlow and that is lands in Graunge Wate, this comprised of ten acres of arable land and the 'fundum of a water-mill'. It is possible that this land is Grange Waste, and could be a location which the monastery used to place waste material from the building as happened at Jerpoint West, which is actually Waste. However the distance between these two locations would probably not support this thesis.

The monastery's land in county Wexford was situated in the barony of Fassaghbentree and included thirty acres each of arable and pasture land in Garranahell. This land is said to be waste in 1541 because of the war of the

'Cavernars, Towles, Byrnes and other Irish'. The entry for Kyllanne is identical to the preceding one and Kyllalsok held ten acres of arable and eight acres of pasture and mountain along with two acres of wood, again said to be waste. The lands at Rawale, Raywarran and Ballylene are all recorded as waste due to the abovementioned war and consisted of arable, pasture, mountain and wood. None of these locations are identifiable on the Petty map examined, presumably the lands which were recorded as waste in the mid sixteenth century were assimilated into other places by the time the cartography was undertaken.

Duiske Abbey also held land in county Cork but all of this land is waste due to rebellion in that area. The land situated at Ballygawk, comprised of thirty acres of arable and pasture, that at Neronyff consisted of sixty acres of arable and pasture and two rectories are also listed under the possessions of the monastery, those of Kylcombre and Kylcromylassey.

In two separate places arrears for land at the Grange of Hullaughanna also spelt Hillaughanna are noted, there is no reference to this parcel of land in the extents but obviously it must have been part of the abbey lands.⁵⁸ It is probably fair to assume that the unidentifiable lands are incorporated in the modern townlands of Old Grange, Aghclare, Coolroe and Ballynakill. A road is said to have stretched from Cuppanagh Gap to Graighe through Aghclare, Coolroe and

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 197.

Tikerlevan. An ancient church site has been identified to the south of the road in Aghclare.⁵⁹

Table 15: Distribution of land of Duiske Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Precint	8
Duiske	67
Rayhendonor	240
Ballyogan	80
Thekerlevan	80
Coppanaghe (waste)	20
Claynehowme	30
Kyllen	80
Garvok	20
Moynenetalan	80
Grange of Woode, Grangesylvia	41
Grange of William Carraghe	320
Grange of Downyng	65
Oldabbey	40
Grange of Annamult	80
Grange of Tollaghanny	100
<i>Co. Carlow</i>	
Graunge Waste	10
<i>Co. Wexford Fassaghbentree</i>	
Garranahell	60
Kyllanne details same as for the preceeding	60
Kyllalsok	20
Rawle	20
Raywarran	11
Ballylene alias Ballyssylley	20
<i>Plus many tithes for most of above</i>	
<i>Co. Cork</i>	
Ballygawk	30
Neronyff	60
Rectories	
Kylcombre (waste)	
Kylcromylassey (waste)	
Total acreage	1642

⁵⁹ O'Kelly, *Placenames of Kilenney*, p. 74.

The dissolution extents record a 'nil' return for the lands on Monasternenagh, this monastery will be dealt with below.⁶⁰

Mellifont

The monastery held a total of 4842.25 acres of land when it was dissolved on 23 July 1539.⁶¹ Of the total 3,874 acres were arable and 675.5 pasture, however, of the total for arable 350 acres are recorded as arable and pasture, and of the total for pasture 45 are common pasture, 60 is pasture and meadow and 40 gorse and heath. In addition the monastery held 87 acres of wood, 179.75 of moor, 20 acres of meadow and 6 acres of mountain. (Figure 62)

The record of the complex and precinct recorded for Mellifont is probably the most detailed account of the layout of the precinct of any Irish Cistercian house. It is stated that the church in the precinct has, from time immemorial been the parish church, but then the record goes on to refer to a second church which appears to be the abbey church. It is entirely possible that the first church referred to is the *capella-ante-portas* which is believed to be the structure which is still standing near to the remains of the monastery today. It is stated that a church, divers cottages, towers and fortalices are built of stone and surrounded with stone walls so presumably this is the abbey church and the buildings within the inner wall.⁶² It is perhaps interesting that a cloister, dormitories, and

⁶⁰ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 212.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 213.

domestic buildings are not mentioned when there is a huge amount of detail pertaining to the rest of the complex present. This could be an oversight or it may be an indication that some of the monastery was not in use when the monastery was dissolved. The extents also state that the mansion is essential for the 'protection of the inhabitants in time of insurrection and attack by the Irish attempting to prey on that country'.⁶³ Whether the inhabitants referred to above are lay-people or members of the monastic community is not clear. It is possible that, by 1539 the monks of Mellifont were sleeping in this mansion and this may be why no dormitory was listed for the monastery at dissolution.

The precinct and demesne lands contained four dovecotes and a water-mill along with a garden, a close and an 'old orchard', all of which are said to be 'full of thorns' and unoccupied.⁶⁴ Two meadows, two closes and a wood containing sixty acres and another consisting of twelve acres with a common pasture of twenty acres are all listed. The larger wood was reserved for estover (the right to take reeds, heather and bracken as well as to cut and take wood), where the timber is retained for howsebote, plowbote, carrebote and haybote with the timbers of the smaller wood being kept for repairs of the church, the capital mansion and the houses of the inhabitants.⁶⁵ Howesbote allowed tenants to take wood for the repair of houses, haybote allowed tenants to take wood to

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Corédon and Williams, *Dictionary of medieval terms and phrases*, p. 116.

repair their fences.⁶⁶ In all a picture of a well organized if a little run down settlement comes to mind. It is obvious that secular life has come very close to the monastery but at Mellifont an impression of joint understanding is created with the monks setting aside some of their timber for repairs to the inhabitants houses and, perhaps, giving them refuge in the mansion from the marauding Irish.

The rest of the land is, as was the practice within the Cistercian houses, spread out from the complex. (Figures 3a and 3b) The villata of Tholloghallon, may be identified as Tullyallen today and this consisted of seven messuages, 216 acres of arable and half an acre of pasture land with seventeen cottages, each of which was to give a hen at Christmas and a day's reaping. A house which was called the Graunge was situated 'outside the manor' but this is stated to have been burned by 'Onele and other rebels'.⁶⁷ The land at Deveragh comprised of five messuages, 180 acres of arable, thirty of pasture and three acres of meadow. Melle held two messuages, eighty acres of arable land and twenty acres of pasture while Ballymin' also had two messuages with thirty-six acres of arable and twenty-four of pasture. The first of Mellifont Abbey's granges to be listed is that at Sheepgrange, presumably this location played a major role in sheep production or management. The land consisted of seven messuages, 111 acres of arable land and thirty acres of pasture with four acres of meadow and one

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp 150, 160.

⁶⁷ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 214.

cottage. Little Grange held three messuages, forty-eight acres of arable land, twelve of pasture and two acres of meadow. The monastic lands at Begrath comprised of two messuages, forty acres of arable, twenty of pasture and three of meadow, with Coldebuge, possibly Coolfore, containing four messuages, forty-five acres of arable, fifty six acres of pasture and three acres of meadow. Balgatheran was divided into six messuages, sixty-four acres of arable, and the same of pasture while Salthouse had seven messuages 122 acres of arable and 108 of pasture and ten acres of meadow. Stalebon held four messuages, 140 acres of arable and twenty acres of pasture land with seven cottages while Unshoke had just one messuage with thirty acres of arable land, fifty-seven of pasture and three of meadow and five cottages. Mowraghe is not recorded as holding any land but did have eleven cottages. None of the last four names appear in the present landscape.

Belpatrick consisted of one tenement, sixty acres of arable and sixty acres of pasture and meadow with seven cottages. It is recorded that this parcel of land had recently been burned by 'Onele and other rebels'.⁶⁸ The final portion of land listed for Mellifont Abbey in county Louth is that at Calan or Collon today. This parcel did not return any land but had two cottages with a note stating that in 1529-30 there were other cottages but that they had been burnt down in 1539-40. This statement suggests that some sort of return may have been made in

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 215.

1529-30, or that the jurors had access to some of the Abbey's records. A water-mill was also at this location but it too had been 'burnt and destroyed'.⁶⁹

The first record for county Meath is returned for Oldbridge where two messuages, 168 acres of arable land, ten acres of pasture, five acres of enclosed pasture and five acres of meadow were located as was a weir called the 'salmon were'. Sixteen fishermen with sixteen boats or 'corrachs' paid customs to the monastery from this location.⁷⁰ In Sheephouse the monastery had one messuage, one cottage, and sixty acres of arable land, five acres of pasture and five acres of meadow. Rathmullan contained three messuages, 120 acres of arable, twenty acres of meadow and the record continues by stating 'three ...' but not continuing, presumably this is three acres of some other land type.⁷¹ One Patrick Sampson was also mentioned, he holds a fishery and a boat for salmon-fishing which was worth 66s 8d. The monastery's land at Stalleen consists of three messuages, 126 acres of arable land and three closes containing six acres of mountain pasture along with a fishing-weir and a water-mill. The latter is said to be unprofitable for want of repairs. Donore had two messuages, sixty acres of arable land and twenty acres of meadow and pasture, a cottage 'farmed to the chaplain celebrating there' is also recorded. Doo, possibly Dowth as this is alone in a portion of definite Mellifont lands, held two messuages, forty six acres of arable land and two acres of meadow along with eight cottages while Glassallen

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 216.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

had four messuages, thirty nine acres of arable and three of meadow with eighteen cottages.

Another grange is mentioned, this time it is Graungegeeth and it held twelve messuages, 180 acres of arable, ten of meadow and seventeen cottages with Creewood having one messuage forty five acres of arable, fifteen of meadow and pasture and one cottage. Balrenny consisted of four messuages forty eight acres of arable and four acres of meadow, this land also had a farm which contained sixteen acres of arable land but it was waste due to the lack of a tenant in September 1540, nine cottages were situated here also. Part of the lands at Cardrath was waste, again by O'Neill and other rebels and this waste land amounted to one messuage and twelve acres of arable land, a further six acres of arable and another messuage were undamaged in this parcel. Ramyskyn was also known as Monknewtown, presumable the first place name is the earlier and the monks may have established a new town in this portion of its lands hence the change in name. This idea may be supported by the fact that the area consisted of ten cottages, seven messuages, 168 acres of arable, eight acres of meadow and forty acres of pasture, gorse and heath.

Newgrange, one of the best known heritage sites in Ireland, was just that, the new grange of Mellifont Abbey, and this grange consisted of one messuage, one cottage, 120 acres of arable land and a fishing-weir called Brounys Were, presumably Browns Weir along with a fishery and a water-mill called Bowrysmyll or Browns mill. Obviously the name Brown is associated with the

area, whether this family were the patrons who endowed the monastery with the land or not is unknown. Another substantial holding of land was situated at Balfeddock where seven messuages, 227 acres of arable and five acres of meadow along with one cottage could be found. Knoythe, better known as Knowth today, and again part of the major Neolithic site at the bend of the Boyne, was also part of the possessions of Mellifont Abbey. This area consisted of four messuages, 120 acres of arable land and four acres of meadow while Kellystown again had four messuages and four acres of meadow, this time the amount of arable land was sixty six acres. Knockmooney had two messuages, three cottages, sixty acres of arable land and six acres of pasture with four of meadow. The cottagers here were involved in cutting turf, presumably for the monastery. Rossnaree was situated near to the river as testified by the fact that a salmon-weir a fish pool and a water-mill are all recorded as being at this location, in addition to this were four messuages, 174 acres of arable land, seven acres of meadow and seven acres of common pasture.⁷²

The lands at Gilltown comprised of three messuages, 126 acres of arable land and six acres each of meadow and common pasture along with six cottagers, turf cutting was also practiced here. Dromenhall, also known as Newtown of Knokamothan held five messuages, 141 acres of arable land and 8.25 acres of meadow with six acres of common pasture also had eight cottagers. This is the same number as were recorded for Cullen which had three

⁷² Ibid., p. 218.

messuages, 120 acres of arable, six of meadow and six of 'several pasture' and eight acres of common pasture. Radrenoghe, may be Rathdrinagh and this parcel comprised of six messuages, 160 acres of arable land and 4.5 acres of meadow while Starenaghe had three messuages, four cottages, sixty acres each of arable and pasture with four acres of meadow.

A manor of Balyscanlan or Ballyscanlan is referred to, this was situated in county Louth and the extent of this portion was made separately at Carlingford on 4 Oct. 1540. A castle, the fabric of which was in good repair, along with 120 acres of arable and pasture land were presumably situated at Ballyscanlan. Fifty acres of arable and pasture and ten acres underwood was situated at le Krywaghe, while sixty acres of arable and pasture was recorded for each of the following portions of land, Balynkeran, Ballymyconyll and Kyllan. The rebellion of the Hanlos and Oneles affected this manor also.⁷³ Mellifont Abbey had property in Drogheda with a thatched house, and a house with a garden situated 'in the West street'. This was recorded by another set of jurors, the extent being made on 11 Oct. 1540 and it is noted that the abbots of Mellifont used to receive 2s from the mayor and commonalty, presumably each year.

Many tithes were owed to the monastery and it is also evident that the monks had built a number of chapels across its lands and in 1541 these were serviced by former monks of the monastery. These churches were situated at Colaghe Tolaughalyn, Monkenewtone, Graungeythe, Calan, Knockamothan,

⁷³ Ibid., p. 220.

Donnore Stalebone and in Salthouse and the monks were Thomas Bagett, Thomas Alen, Robert Nangeley, William Norres, Peter Rus, John Proote and Patrick Contone respectively.

Two points are worth noting in relation to this. Firstly the monastery had a highly organized system of providing worship across its property for the lay tenants. This practice marks a huge change from the early days of the Cistercians in Ireland, but perhaps this activity is what enabled the Order to survive for so long this ensured that the people were still receiving some sort of religious education. Secondly, the former monks were allowed, under a patent issued by King Henry VIII, to officiate in these chapels, presumably this means that the monks were allowed to continue with the Mass and other Roman Catholic practices. This would oppose the idea that the monasteries were closed because of the religious aspect and would support the notion of the King wanting the lands and underline the financial aspect of the dissolution rather than the religious.

What emerges from an examination of the lands of Mellifont at dissolution is a picture of a well organized property and a landscape which, in many areas was still producing many crops. The land here has not been affected as much as those areas of Cork, Wexford and parts of Kilkenny where virtually nothing can be produced from huge amounts of waste land. In a few areas of the lands recorded for Mellifont the O'Neills are blamed for burning land and property but proportionally this was a very small amount of destruction. Only once is there a

mention of a difficulty in finding a tenant, this was for the sixteen acre farm situated at Balranny. The way the land is organized it is almost like people living in the areas which have cottages or messuages mentioned are farming that part of land. The monastery's lands were made up of forty three separate farms, each of which was run by those living there.

Two very significant points become apparent from an analysis of the lands of Mellifont Abbey. One is the range of land returned, almost every portion had arable, pasture and meadow land indicating that farming and food production was not just continuing on the land but was flourishing and the land was being well maintained. Secondly, nearly every portion of the land of Mellifont had either messuages, houses or cottages and this indicates a long period of lay involvement in the running of Mellifont. It would appear that this arrangement was running quite smoothly at the time of the dissolution of the monastery. A large amount of arrears payment was due to the monastery but it seems that this was not a huge issue within the running of the monastery as a whole, the production must have more than compensated for this shortfall.

Except for three portions of land all are above sixty acres with more than half in excess of 100 acres.

Table 16: Distribution of land of Mellifont Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Precinct	75
Demense lands	125
Tholloghallon	216.5
Deveragh	213

teachings which these men might try to pass on to these parishoners. In many cases the abbey already had churches in these areas and so the religious life of the tenants was probably not much altered.

Bective

At dissolution his monastery held 1206 acres arable and 136 acres of pasture. Of the pasture the vast majority, 112 acres was common pasture. In addition to this the monastery was in possession of 30 acres of moor giving a total acreage of 1,372 acres. (Figure 63) This is a very interesting point as there is also a record of Bective in 1488 holding 20 messuages and 1200 acres arable and pasture so the acreages are quite close only differing by 172 acres of land. If this 1488 record is totally accurate then it is unusual that the amounts of land held by the monastery would be so close with a time lag of almost ninety years. Many of the monasteries had disposed of much of their lands prior to the dissolution for varying reasons but obviously the same cannot be said for Bective.

The monastery was dissolved on 6 May 1536 but the extent was not made until 5 Oct. 1540. In Oct. of 1540 it was stated that the roof of the church and chancel was thrown down and the timbers had been removed and used for repairs at the king's mill in Trim.⁷⁷ A hall, a cloister and 'certain chambers and other buildings' are all recorded. It is stated that the cloister was roofed with tiles but the buildings were said to be so badly in need of repair that they were

⁷⁷ White, *Extents*, p. 267.

worth nothing. Even taking the last point into consideration this would indicate that even four years after the dissolution the monastery was in reasonably good repair.

From a letter dated to 1537 Alen, Master of the Rolls suggested to the commissioners, that as the Deputy or Lord Lieutenant lived for the most part at Trim the castle there be repaired accordingly. The Master went on to state that the timber and stones of the monastery of Bective should be used for this purpose. Materials from St. Peter's and from the Dominican monasteries were also to be considered for this purpose.⁷⁸ Fortunately Bective escaped this suggestion.

The villata of Bective consisted of 250 acres of arable land, seven acres of meadow and twenty three acres of pasture along with a water-mill and a fishing weir situated on the river Boyne, this was also recorded as being the demesne lands. The Grange of Bective consisted of five messuages, four cottages, 170 acres of arable land, twenty one acres of pasture and four acres of meadow. This land was divided between four named people, with a note stating that one portion was waste because of the lack of a lessee. Three portions consisted of a messuage and thirty acres of arable land and the other two amounted to one messuage and forty acres of arable. The twenty acres of common pasture was used by all of the tenants.⁷⁹ (Figure 64)

⁷⁸ Cogan, *Meath*, i, p. 118.

⁷⁹ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 268.

The monasteries land at Balgyll, which is unidentified, was again divided between five people, the portions were not as evenly distributed as above in this case and all but one tenant held a messuage along with both arable land and meadow, as above the common pasture was used by all. One tenant, John Cane, held two parcels of land and on one parcel had the same land types as the others but held three cottages and no messuage. The total amount of land in Balgyll amounted to four messuages, three cottages, twenty acres of common pasture, 160 acres of arable land and four and a half acres of meadow.

Balbradagh was divided into three portions of land, each of which was held by a member of the Cregan family, two of which appear to have been a father and son. The total amount of land here amounted to three messuages, 130 acres of arable, five acres of meadow land and twenty acres of common pasture.

Dyellogh also entered as Syellogh which is probably Dunlough was divided between two tenants, both Redes, between them they had two messuages, seventy three acres of arable one and a half acres of meadow and twenty acres of common pasture, in addition to the Rede's three cottiers are mentioned.

Cloncoillen also known as Cloncorlley again was divided between two tenants and five cottiers all of whom were paying three shillings each. The total amount of land was two messuages, ninety five acres of arable, four acres of meadow and twenty acres of common pasture.

Balbrigh consisted of two messuages and five cottages, two of which are in ruins, along with 128 acres of arable, four acres of meadow and twelve acres of common pasture.

The tenants from the messuages listed above were to cart 'all manner of grain and hay in the demesne', each tenant having a whole plough was bound to give five days ploughing and cart four loads of turf, the people who had half a plough were to give two days labour each. Each tenant was to provide the monastery with five hokes and two hens.⁸⁰

The monastery also owned land in Monkstown, situated near Trim, consisting of one messuage and sixty acres of land, while at the monastery's holding at Balsoon the rector of the parish church there held fifteen acres of land. At the Rectory of Bective the value was given in a list of altarages which were used to cover the curate's pay of 4li. The extent for the lands at Renaghan also spelled Renaghe in county Meath was made at Fore on 06 Oct. 1540, this land was found to consist of a villata of twenty messuages and cottages along with 360 acres of arable and mountain. This location has evaded identification.

The lands of Bective Abbey were, yet again, found to be well organized, this time the land was divided into small portions and it is obvious from the names that sons were living side by side with their fathers, farming the land and paying customs to the monastery. The monks must still have been producing from their land as the manner of the customs would suggest. While the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

distribution pattern here reflects land which has been divided into small parcels it also reflects the fact that the land is predominately arable. No wood, marsh or mountain land is recorded, this reflects well on the agricultural skills of the monks, who over the previous centuries must have farmed well, and turned most of their holding into arable land, thereby fulfilling the Rule and maximizing their yields.

Although a water mill is mentioned among the possessions of the monastery situated at the villata of Bective and there is also passing reference to a mill at the manor of Bective surprisingly few mills are recorded. The very fact that most of the land is under arable cultivation would lead one to expect more mills would have been listed.

Table 18: Distribution of land of Bective Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreages
Demense lands	280
Grange of Bective	195
Balgyll	144.5
Balbradagh	155
Dunlough	94.5
Cloncoillen	119
Balbrigh	148
Customs	
Monkstown near Trim	60
Balsoon	15
Bective, rectory	
Tithes many	
<i>Co. Meath</i>	
Renaghan	360
Total acreage	1571

On 08 Dec. 1545 the site of the abbey of Bective and its lands were leased to Thomas Agarde of Bective. The land was to be held for 'ten years from 1558' at a rent of £80.⁸¹

Granard held 840 acres of arable land and this accounted for the total acreage of the monastery. The method of recording the land is unusual here in that the acreages are listed as 'quarters' where each quarter contains 'about 30 acres'. The acreages are calculated for this monastery by taking the above statement literally and conducting calculations on the presumption that one quarter equals thirty acres as stated in the extent.⁸²

The extent of Granard was conducted on 8 Oct. 1540, interestingly the jurors were the former abbot and prior, Richard O'Ferrall and Thady McGylleno respectively. This same Richard was consecrated Bishop of Ardagh in July 1541.⁸³ The monastery was situated in the Annall, the ancient territory of Annally, stronghold of the O'Ferralls. It has long been stated that the family held control of the monastery and were involved in the appointment of abbots for many years. It is possible, indeed probable, that the last abbot, mentioned above, was a political appointment by the family of one of their own. This is perhaps the first real glimpse of political and dynastic interference by a patron on a foundation as late as the sixteenth century.

⁸¹ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 457.

⁸² White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 281.

⁸³ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 215.

The jurors state that the church is mostly 'thrown down and wasted' and that the site itself consisted of approximately thirty acres. The monastery held eight granges, five of which contained approximately sixty acres of land and three consisted of 180 acres. From the wording of the extent it is difficult to fully understand whether this refers to a total of 180 acres or three portions of 180 acres each. Considering that all of the above lands listed for the monastery are divided into portions measuring sixty acres each it is probably reasonable to assume that the reference relates to three parcels each measuring sixty acres. With the exception of the four granges, few of the placenames listed in the dissolution extent are identifiable today and as such will appear below as listed in the sixteenth century.

Two points are worth noting here in relation to the land. One is the situation of these granges. Derragh, Coolcraff, Cooldoney and Rincoolagh are four portions of land all forming one single bloc which is located much closer to the site of Abbeylara monastery than Granard. (Figure 65) Virtually nothing remains of the monastery at Granard today, this, coupled with the difficulty of identification of the other placenames would seem to indicate that the placenames fell out of use after the dissolution. With the exception of these four granges and the river few of the other placenames can be positively identified and as such will appear below as listed in the sixteenth century document.

The monastery also held 180 acres at Ballynameagh and sixty acres and a water mill at Lickbla. Monketon, presumably Monkton, appears to have been

divided into two, with one messuage and sixty acres in the villata and thirty acres, which at the time the tenants paid for, situated in Dyrkrawe. A Monkstown is situated in Taghmon parish, Westmeath. Three weirs called Gleweres were situated on the river Inny. The extent states that at the dissolution the monastery held lands and spiritual possessions in Clyncolman, Bravyn Obroyn, Calry and Delvyn McCoghlan but that the jurors cannot be sure as to the extent of these properties. It would appear that a parish church was situated in each of the five holdings mentioned above and that the monastery was, at least providing 'parsons' to each of these churches. Tithes were also paid to the monastery from the parish churches of Demor and Balloghere and for the 180 acres of land and certain other lands in Ballemanagh, the monastery held 'certain lands' in Mount Carbre also. Certain lands of Donagh Oherra and all of the land of Maghyrt Granard were also originally held by Granard Abbey. Tithes of the parish churches of Dromlonan, Balmak and the tithes of the rectory of the parish church of Strad, along with twenty acres, and tithes of the parish church of Ballemakynlene in McKernan's country all were portions of the possessions of Granard.

The record of the extent for Granard is very vague, and it would seem that this was purposely so. It is very possible that the appointment of an O'Ferrall abbot was a political move but it would seem that the former abbot was trying to be as vague as possible as to the possessions of the monastery for one of two possible reasons. The abbot and prior may have been trying to keep land either

for the monks or the O'Ferralls. Whatever the reason it is obvious that the jurors were trying to keep the true picture away from the King. Two points are immediately evident; one is that the extent gives no indication whatsoever as to the type of land that the monastery held, or the productivity of that land, the second is the high number of parish churches mentioned. The number of churches listed paints a picture of religious fervor, as almost every parcel of land seems to have had a church.

Table 19: Distribution of land of Granard Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Demense	30
4 granges in Granard	240
Rincoolagh grange	60
Granges of Cooldoney, Coolcraff, Derragh	180
Ballynameagh	180
Lickbla	60
Monketon	60
Dyrkrawe	30
Water of Inny	
Clyncolman	
Bravyn Obroy	
Calry	
Delvyn McCoghlan	
Tithes of churches in	
Demor	
Balloghere	
Dromlonan	
Strad	20
Ballemakynlene	
Balmak	
Tithes of lands in	
Ballemanagh	180
Mount Carbre	
whole of Maghyrt Granard	
Tithes of granges	
Tonaghmore	
Eight granges mentioned above	

Total acreage	1040
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In March 1540 pensions were issued for the monks remaining in Granard, four were issued in all. Thady M'Gillernowe, prior received a pension of 4 marks, with Thomas O'Ferrall, Fergall Crossan and Conacius Gillananewe all issued with pensions of 13s 4d.⁸⁴ The monies were to be paid from the rectory of Strade Innybreccray.⁸⁵

Abbeysrule abbey is recorded as having no land at its dissolution.

Kilbeggan abbey also had no record of any lands attached to the monastery in the *Extents*.

Kilcooley

Kilcooley abbey had 151 acres at dissolution, 116 of which was arable, 26 pasture and 9 moor. (Figure 66) The abbey church at Kilcooley is recorded, at the time the extent was drawn up on 11 Jan. 1541 as being, from time immemorial, in use as the parish church. It is stated that the buildings surrounding the abbey are useful for the farmer and these buildings, along with two gardens and 'other accommodations' take up an area of two acres of land. The demesne lands of Kilcooley Abbey took up thirteen acres of arable land, one

⁸⁴ *Irish Fiantes of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 99.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, fiant 77.

acre of meadow, six acres of pasture and eight acres of moor, in addition to the land a water mill was situated on this demesne land.

The vill of Kilcooley is divided between a number of tenants who pay the rents in a number of different ways, with beer, cakes and candles, pigs, sheep and days being among the most common payments. In total three messuages, three gardens, nine cottages and nine gardens and 72.5 acres arable land was situated here. The vill of Graigaheesha consisted of four messuages, four gardens, thirty four acres of arable and one stang acre, this land was divided between five tenants and again they payments were in kind. One stang is the equivalent of 0.6694 acres. The Grange of Kilcooley consisted of five messuages and gardens, fourteen and a half acres of arable land and twenty acres of pasture and mountain. The land was divided between three named tenants and the rents of this portion mostly consisted of days and hens.⁸⁶

The monastery also held the tithes of the Rectory of Kilcooley, the tithes of the Vill of Graigaheesha, the tithes of the vill of Grange and the tithes of the Rectory of Ballyenlakyng, the last placename evades identification in the modern period. The tithes of the latter rectory had previously been worth more but, owing to the rebellion of the Kavanaghs and other Irish was worth less in 1541.⁸⁷ On 18 April 1540 Thomas Shortall, the last abbot of Kilcooley was granted a pension of £5.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 323.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁸⁸ *Irish Fiantes of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 115.

When the situation of the land at dissolution is examined it appears that the theory of the abbey lands determining the parochial boundaries is upheld for this monastery at least. The land was laid out in four parcels which were separated by other parishes. The most important of these was Ballinalecken, also spelt Ballyenlakyng which is described at the time of the dissolution as having been much reduced in value due to the incursions of the Irish. As a consequence the rent of this land had been reduced by half from £6 to £3 per annum. The other two areas are Mowny near Crohane and Longford Pass. Moyne and Magowry are both placenames in close proximity to Crohane, the placename is more likely to indicate Moyne. (Figures 8-9)

An interesting entry appears near the end of the entry for this monastery which states that the Commissioners sold two silver crosses called '*Holy Crossys*' for 67/6. Presumably these were more than altar crosses and, like the surviving relic at Holy Cross, would possibly claim to contain fragments of the true cross. A chalice and some old vestments were given to the parishioners while the bell, it is recorded, had always been their property. This too is an interesting point, does this mean that it was the lay community and not the monks who provided the bell for the abbey. If this is so surely this would have been a most unusual situation.

In all the land comprised of gardens, two hundred acres of arable land, ten acres of meadow, one hundred acres of pasture, one hundred acres of moor, one orchard and a mill.

Table 20: Distribution of land of Kilcooley Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Precinct	2
Demense lands	28
Kilcooley Vill	54.5
Graigaheesha	34
Kilcooley grange of	34.5
Kilcooley rectory of	
Graigaheesha, rectory	
le Grange	
Ballyenlakynng, rectory	
Total acreage	153

On 18 April 1540, Thomas Shortall late abbot of Kilcooley was issued a pension of £5.⁸⁹ In the same year John Colodan and John Bryte were granted pensions of 40s and 20s respectively while John Colton was made curate of the parish church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Kilcooley.⁹⁰ This last reference would seem to indicate one of two facts, either the abbey church became the parish church, or one of the churches associated with the monastery was named after the abbey and was created the parish church. The former is more probable.

Hore

Again situated in Munster Hore abbey was in possession of 124 acres of arable, 40 acres of pasture, 1 of wood and 14 acres of moor, giving a total figure of 179 acres of land. Of the arable, 10 acres are recorded as arable, pasture, wood and moor. Two parks are also listed. Yet again the abbey church is recorded as

⁸⁹ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 115.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* fiant 143-4.

being in use as the parish church, again the buildings that remain are useful for the farmer and these, along with gardens take up two acres of land. Today much remains, albeit in a fragmentary state, of the monastery proper, particularly the abbey church. (Figure 67)

The villata of Hore is divided into a number of holdings, thirty-eight parcels are listed in total. Some of these consist of just one acre and others are larger holdings with the same individual holding a number of plots. The list for the villata is unusual in that some of the land is listed in greater measure and some not. In total the villata consisted of four tenements, two of which had gardens, two small parks, a rabbit-warren, a messuage with a garden, four cottages each with a garden, twelve other gardens and 433 acres of land.⁹¹ The lands of this monastery are mapped principally in figure eight.

The monastery held land in the town of Cashel, which consisted of two messuages with gardens and thirty-six acres of arable land. The customs included beer, sheep and pigs.⁹² The land at the grange of Irrye, now Erry included just five acres of land which is recorded as being arable, pasture, wood and moor. The monastery's grange at Fydarte is recorded as being exactly the same except this is general measure and so holds twenty acres. Hore Abbey held rectories in Hore and Railstown, along with Ballerety and Ballydooghe, neither of the latter two can be identified, it may be assumed that they are now part of

⁹¹ White, *Extents*, pp 325-6.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 326.

Railstown. The monastery also held the rectory of Lismalin with Cragohe, Moholker, Sikan and part of Rosshallyn. Presumably the last four names are now incorporated in Lismalin with an acreage today of 554 acres 2roods and 20 perches. At the last location the Abbey was also in possession of a mansion and adjacent garden, six messuages and six acres of arable land.⁹³

Table 21: Distribution of land of Hore Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Precinct	2
Demense lands	
Hore	130.5
Cashel, town of	36
Grange of Erry	5
Grange of Fydarte	5
Rectory of de Rupe alias Hore	
Rectory of Railstown, Ballerety, Ballydooghe	
Rectory of Lismalin with its members, viz. Cragohe, Moholker, Sikan (and) part of Rosshayllyn	6
Total acreage	184.5

In the final years of the 1540s the site and lands of Hore Abbey were leased to Edmund Hyffernan at the rent of £15 for a period of twenty-one years.⁹⁴ The lands and possessions listed include those of Hore Abbey, Cashel, Graungeery, little Grange, the rectories of Hore abbey, Graungeery, Little grange, and Lismalin and the vicarage of Railstown. In addition a gallon of ale from each brew of ale available for sale in Cashel, called the Mary gallons, is included in the lease.⁹⁵ Hyffernan was said be a chaplain.

⁹³ Ibid., pp 326-7.

⁹⁴ *Irish Fiant of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 542.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Inishlounaght held 945 acres of arable land along with 263 acres pasture and 68 of wood, giving a total of 1,276 acres of land. 260 acres of the arable land are recorded as arable and pasture. (Figure 68) Again the land here appears to have been distributed in regular portions, in this case plots of 100 acres.

The irony of the record for the monastery is that the church is said to be in existence and 'all the other buildings are still standing as at the dissolution'. The only surviving written reference to glass at any Cistercian monastery in the Extents is recorded for Inishlounaght, in all the monastery appears to have been in good repair in 1541 but nothing remains today from the fabric of the building save, perhaps, for one doorway. The present Church of Ireland building is said to stand on the site of the monastery and this possible medieval doorway is incorporated in this structure. While nothing remains today of the monastic buildings the location does bear all of the hallmarks of the typical Cistercian positioning and the placename evidence would also point to this as being the site.

Inishlounaght is also unusual in that some of the lands of the vill of that name and the demesne lands are situated in two counties, Tipperary and Waterford. The Tipperary portion consisted of 100 acres of arable land with the Waterford portion divided among tenants. Three acres of land was used as a common pasture, with seven messuages and forty-five acres of arable land divided among seven tenants. The customs paid by the tenants included plough,

boon and carting days.⁹⁶ Eleven cottages, two water-mills, three eel-weirs, a salmon weir and a small island with a garden covering one acre are all part of the lands in Waterford. The cottages were most likely unoccupied in 1541 as no rents or customs are recorded.

The identification of many of these placenames was ascertained by Colmcille Ó Conbhuidhe in his book *the Cistercian abbeys of Tipperary* and it is to him that the author defers for the location of the less obvious placenames. (Figures 69-70) The monastery's land at the Grange of Inishlounaght consisted of three messuages, one garden, 360 acres of arable land and 120 acres of pasture while the land at the Vill of Baylyorcley, now Barn held 120 acres of arable and forty acres of pasture the rent here included customs, money for victuals and a hen. The rent for the lands at the Vill of Kylmalasske, which is now Kilmolash and Woodrooff, the Vill of Loghkoragh, or Loughtally, Clashavaddra and Mora, along with the Vill of Grangerwey, which Colmcille could not identify and the Vill of Kilmaveighe, now Dogstown also included money for victuals which consisted of one pig, one sheep and one hen. Each of these four holdings consisted of sixty acres of arable land and forty acres of pasture. Another holding of the monastery was one messuage with a garden which was situated 'at the west side of the town', presumably this refers to Clonmel.

In addition to the portion of the demesne land listed above the monastery owned other land in Waterford. The Manor of Kilnamack comprised of sixty

⁹⁶ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 337.

acres of arable and pasture land and eight acres of wood. The land at the Vill of Glanwydan consisted of 200 acres of arable and pasture with sixty acres of wood, the monastery also held the tithes of the Rectory of Glanwydan. The last two holdings equate to the monastery of Glanwydan or Glandy which was reduced to the status of a grange during the visitation of Stephen of Lexington in 1227-8.

Table 22: Distribution of land of Inishlounaght Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Vill of Inishlounaght	
Of the demense lands in Tipp	100
Mt. land in Co. Wtd	48
Grange of Inishlounaght	240
Vill of Barn	160
Vill of Kilmolash and Woodrooff	100
Vill of Loghtally, Clashavaddra and Mora	100
Vill of [Grangerwey?] not identified	100
Vill of [Kilmaveighe?] Dogstown	100
<i>Co. Waterford</i>	
Manor of Kilnamack	68
Vill of Glandy	260
Rectory of Glandy	
Total acreage	1276

On 30 April 1540, James Butler late abbot of Inishlounaght was made vicar of the church of St. Patrick of Inishlounaght.⁹⁷ On the 20 May 1540, Leonard Grey Knight, Lord Grey, Viscount of Grane was leased the site and lands of Inishlounaght.⁹⁸ From 1562 William Crofton was to hold all of the lands associated with the monastery for a period of thirty-one years at a rent of £45 18s 1d.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 140.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, fiant 150.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, fiant 1142.

The monastery of Inishlounaght was suppressed formally on 06 April 1539 and four days later the commissioners granted pensions of 40s to Willaim Cahill and Matthew Cahill while Maurice Keyny and Edmund Cahill received 20s each. The abbot, James Butler received a pension of £5 6s 8d in addition to the vicarage of the church of St Patrick's Well and other altarages and oblations.¹⁰⁰ From the dissolution record it is evident that the abbey held a considerable amount of land. This land incorporates the whole of the present parish of Inishlounaght which is situated in two counties.

Burke, in his *History of Clonmel* makes a number of references in relation to lands which were once owned by Inishlounaght, he identifies the island as Ilean Tybraghevyne, the weirs of Grenane and Glenbane were, he states, part of the monastic weirs.¹⁰¹ Marlfield and Abbey were also part of the possessions as are some of the areas which now incorporate Farranamanach and Monkstown.¹⁰²

Dunbrody

...all buildings in the preceinct (sic) and circuit are still standing ... and are necessary for the defense of the country and safety of the goods of the inhabitants in time of war of the Kavaners and other Irish.¹⁰³

So begins the entry in the Extents for Dunbrody Abbey. As much remains of the monastery today it would be expected that the physical remains in 1541 must

¹⁰⁰ Burke, *Clonmel*, p. 412.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 413

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 353.

have been extensive and may have even included the precinct walls as the reference to the 'circuit' testifies.

The monastery held 1,210 acres of arable land but except for 90 acres this is all recorded as having elements of wood, mountain and pasture also included. Dunbrody abbey then had a total of 1,210 acres of land at dissolution and this was a mixture of all types of land. Some of the land here lay waste in 1541, sixty acres of land situated in Ballymoy in Connacht is waste because of the 'war of the Irishman ... Gerald McShane'. While land in Ballydoman, again in Connacht, is again recorded as waste however it is not specified who or what caused this. It is possible that some environmental factors were at play here, or the very fact that some of the land is so distant from the mother house may have contributed to this situation.

The Grange of Dunbrody consisted of twenty acres of arable, moor and pasture land, this is also referred to as the demesne land. The Villata of Dunbrody comprised of four messuages and sixty acres of arable, pasture and wood with four tenants and a number of tithes which included 'hokedaes', 'wedying dayes', hens, beer and sheep. Three weirs and a saltmill are all recorded for this location. The monastery's lands at Coole included one messuage and sixty acres of arable, pasture and moor with the rent recorded as money and sheep and the tithes were corn and oats. The return for Shelbaggan and Ballyvadre and Baylestown recorded 120 acres of arable, pasture and meadow for both holdings. Clonard and Kilbride each held sixty acres of arable,

meadow and pasture with Clonard also recording some moor as part of the sixty acres. The monastery's land at Duncannon was eighty acres of arable, meadow and pasture along with a fishing-weir and Clonsharragh comprised of sixty mixed acres of land with Ballygow holding 180 mixed acres. (Figure 7) The land at Nook was arable, pasture and wood and was a small holding of twenty acres while Ballyhack held no farming land but did have ownership of nine tenements in which lived nine fishermen and eight other cottages. It was the monks and the fishermen here who had the agreement that was referred to previously. While there is no reference to the monastery owning a castellated building in Ballyhack it is very possible that the castle, which is referred to as a Knights Templar establishment, was at some time belonging to the Cistercians at Dunbrody.

The lands at Kilhile, Ramsgrange, Boderan and Rosetown were all made up of arable, meadow and pasture and consisted of sixty, 120, sixty and forty acres respectively. The remains of a castle, hall structure are still to be seen at Kilhile, it is possible that this is, in fact the remains of a grange building. Dunbrody Abbey held sixty acres of land in Connacht but this, along with the lands at Ballymader, Ballydoman, Newhagard, Callaghton, Knockansawn and Polmolowehe are all recorded as waste. No figure is provided for the acreages of the last six locations.¹⁰⁴ Dunbrody was also in possession of property in Ross, this constituted thirteen messuages with ten gardens, four chapels and a 'small vacant piece of ground'. The monastery's property in the city of Waterford

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 355.

amounted to three messuages while the Vill of Kylmahowe comprised of thirty acres of land.

Yet again the land appears to have been divided into parcels of factors of twenty acres. It is worth taking this monastery and then examining the acreages of the modern townlands in order to identify the reason for these patterns, perhaps it was the way in which the monks were granted the land, it may have been a more manageable way for them to conduct their affairs or it could simply be that this is the acreage of the townland.

Table 23: Distribution of land of Dunbrody Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
Demesne	
Grange of Dunbrody	20
Villa of Dunbrody	60
Coole	60
Shelbaggan and Ballyvadre	120
Baylestown	120
Clonard	60
Kilbride	60
Duncannon	80
Clonsharragh	60
Ballygow	180
Nook	20
Ballyhack	
Kilhile	60
Ramsgrange	120
Boderanisbusse	60
Rosetown	40
<i>Connacht</i>	
Ballymoy, (waste)	60
Ballymadder	
Ballydoman, (waste)	
Newhagard	
Callaghton	
Knockansawn	

Polmolowehe	
Ross	
Plus in Ross, (4chapels and a small vacant piece of ground)	
3 chapels in rosse are listed in the rents due section	
<i>Co. Waterford</i>	
City of Waterford	
Vill of Kylmahowe	30
Total acreage	1210

The monastery of Dunbrody and the Knights Templar engaged in long drawn out disagreement over the ownership of five carucates of land in Crook.¹⁰⁵

Tintern abbey was, when the monastery was dissolved recorded as being in possession of 2,370 acres, 1,920 of which were arable, 400 pasture and 50 acres were wood. (Figure 71) In all three categories are found elements of the others therefore, like Dunbrody it is not easy to divide this land into the categories. Again, the land distribution pattern is similar to the neighboring house and will be examined in more detail. Much of the land of Tintern Abbey is described as waste, and the perpetrators of this wastage are recorded. In the case of Saint Kierans, Kermore and Saint Leonards, the waste is due to the 'rebellion of the Irishman called Carre McArte', the same man holds the entire barony of Tymolyn, consisting of 700 acres and he pays nothing for the privilege. The wastage of Nash and Gayneston is due to the rebellion of the Kavanaghs. Presumably these are the same family as those that caused much of the land of Duiske to be waste at the recording of the extents.

¹⁰⁵*Cal. docs. Irl., 1285-1292, no. 666, p. 328.*

The extent states that the abbey church has been the parish church from time immemorial and that all of the other buildings within the precinct are suitable for the farmer, a garden which contains half an acre was situated here also. This obviously indicates that a number of buildings were still standing at the dissolution of Tintern.

The record for the Villata of Tintern states that the demesne lands in the Villata comprised of thirty acres of arable land with ten acres under wood, pasture and moor. Two mills were situated at this location, one called the 'see mill' the other called the 'over shott mylle'.¹⁰⁶ The land at Saint Kierans and Kermore was a mixture of arable, pasture, meadow and moor with sixty acres recorded for each location. All of this land was waste in January of 1541 and the blame again lay with Carre McArte'. 120 acres of arable, meadow and pasture-land was located at Bannow, the presence of a ferry is recorded at this site also. Sixty acres of arable, meadow, pasture and wood was situated at St Leonard's and Saynt Brandan's held 180 acres of arable, pasture, wood and moor.

A mill was situated at the Grange of Kylmore along with 120 acres of mixed land while Ballycross with Pollentown held 200 acres of land, again this was mixed. Ballyboght, Castletown, Nash and Gayneston held eighty, sixty and 120 acres respectively with the land at Nash and Gayneston returning customs and was waste by the Cavaners.¹⁰⁷ The monastery's land at Dunmain and

¹⁰⁶ White, *Ir. Monastic possessions*, p. 358.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

Flemyngeston consisted of twenty acres with customs while the land at Rathdoune comprised of twenty acres of arable and forty acres of pasture and moor. The lands at Rathnagerragh, Ballygarvan, Boley, Scarte, Coyndowne, Tobbyrnassan and Ballytarsna, consisted of sixty, thirty, sixty, twenty, ten, thirty and sixty acres respectively, each portion of land held elements of arable, pasture and wood with Ballytarsna also having some meadow land, here and Tobbyrnassan also record customs owed. The land at Coyndowne was recorded as waste. (Figure 7)

On 22 Jan. 1541 Tintern Abbey is also recorded as being in possession of 180 acres of land at Shast. This land was divided into two villates, one consisting of 120 acres the other holding sixty acres. Both parcels held elements of arable, meadow, pasture and wood. Although these are listed as villates there is no mention of secular life on either of the two parcels. The whole barony of Tymolyn was in the possession of Tintern at the dissolution.¹⁰⁸ This barony comprised of 400 acres of arable and 300 acres of pasture and wood, this land is said to be 'detained without right by Carre McArte, who pays nothing'.¹⁰⁹ Tintern Abbey is also recorded as holding a tenement each in the Town of Ross, and the Town of Wexford, the former tenement is said to be waste.

The tithes of various rectories were also held by the monastery, these included the tithes from the Vills of Brandon and Carrick and the chapel of St

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Binok which were situated in Bannow. The tithes of the rectory of Kylcohan included corn, barley, and oats. The rectories of Kiltyrk, Tretyllwards, Nash, Ballygarwan, Clomyn, possibly Clonmines, Tintern, Timolyn, Whitechurch in Fassaghbentre and Killage are all listed in the record made at the dissolution of the monastery. The monastery also held three tenements in city of Waterford, one in the parish of St John's.¹¹⁰

As with the neighboring monastery of Dunbrody, the lands of Tintern appear to have been very mixed with arable, pasture, meadow and wood all forming parts of the lands. Although some of the land is said to have been waste most of the lands of Tintern Abbey appear to have still been both extensive and profitable in 1541.

Table 24: Distribution of land of Tintern Abbey at dissolution

Townland	Acreage
VV Tintern	
Precinct	0.5
Demense lands	40
Saint Kierans (waste)	60
Kermore (waste)	60
Bannow	120
St. Leonard's (waste)	60
Saynt Brandan's	180
Grange of Kilmore	120
Ballycross with Pollentown	200
Ballybought	80
Casteltown	60
Nash and Gayneston (waste)	120
Dounmain and Flemyngeston	60
Rathdoune	60
Rathnagerragh	60

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 361.

Ballygarvan	30
Boley	60
Scarte	20
Coyndowe (waste)	10
Tobbyrnassan	30
Ballytarsna	60
Shast: 2 v.v.. 1 has	120
other has	60
Kyllanke in Fassaghbentre, (all waste)	
Barony of Timolyn, the whole barony (detained without right by Care McArte)	700
Town of Ross	
Town of Wexford	
Rectories	
Bannoo	
Kylcohan (all pay tithes)	
Kilteyrk	
Naah	
Ballygarwan	
Clomyn, possibly Clonmines	
Tinterne	
Timolyn	
Whitechurch in Fassaghbentre	
<i>Co. Waterford</i>	
City of Waterford	
Total acreage	2370.5

There appears to be huge variation with regard to the categorizing of the lands recorded, whether this is a regional difference or not is unclear but it does happen in particular in the two Wexford monasteries. The land distribution is interesting and will be discussed in more detail below but what is perhaps most telling is the amount of land that is lying waste. Many of the monasteries record

the reason for this wastage and in particular the Cork monasteries seem worst hit with regard to this.

Comparison of lands

After taking all of the preceding information into consideration it is possible to tabulate the both the overall acreages for each monastery and the breakdown of this land use. While discussing these figures a number of points must be borne in mind. Firstly three of the monasteries listed for Leinster, Monasterevin, Abbeyshrule and Kilbeggan are recorded as having no returns but this may not actually be the case. Secondly, the figures are being compared with an incomplete list, Leinster is the only province which had all of its monasteries listed in the extents and by comparing the figures for Leinster with the other monasteries listed caution must be exercised. Thirdly these are only the acreages listed for the monasteries at the time of their closure and cannot be taken to indicate peak ownership, however it is most unlikely that Mellifont or St Mary's would have been surpassed by other houses in relation to the amount of land they held. The fourth point to be considered is that the acreages listed are just that, some houses recorded land in a particular place but the extent did not go on to say how much land was present. While this is not expected to skew any results greatly it could change the ranking of one or two of the monasteries.

The first table below indicates the overall acreages of the houses as listed at dissolution. It is clear that what was expected at the beginning of the chapter

held true, that St Mary's and Mellifont would be seen to hold most land. Of the overall total of 28,468.41 medieval acres these two houses held a combined total of 10,914.91 acres which equates to 38.4% of the overall total. When only the monasteries situated in Leinster is examined this figure increases to 48.3%.

Table 25: Table of overall acreages of houses listed at dissolution

St Mary's	5937.00
Mellifont	4977.91
Tintern	2370.50
Baltinglass	1925.00
Jerpoint	1903.00
Duiske	1642.00
Bective	1567.00
Inishlounaght	1276.00
Dunbrody	1210.00
Tracton	1202.00
Fermoy	1041.50
Maure	923.00
Granard	860.00
Monasternenagh	600.00
Hore	364.50
Chore	301.00
Abbeyleix	215.00
Kilcooley	153.00
Monasterevin	0.00

Leaving the two larger monasteries aside for a moment it is evident that Tintern, Baltinglass and Jerpoint abbeys held the next most extensive estates with 2,370.5, 1,925 and 1,903 acres respectively. Duiske and Bective were the next extensive recording values of 1,642 and 1,567 acres respectively. Inishlounaght was the eight largest and is the first non Leinster house listed. This means that the top eight monasteries recorded in the extents held a combined total of

21,598.41 acres of land, when the overall total was 28,468.41 acres this equates to 75.9% of the overall. Considering the fact that of the eight listed seven were situated in Leinster this indicates that the vast majority of the land recorded in the extents as being in possession of the Cistercian houses at dissolution was situated in Leinster. When the non Leinster monasteries are removed from the table the overall total is only reduced by 5,861 acres, this means that the overall figure for the Leinster houses from the extents stands at 79.4% or 22,607.41 medieval acres of land.

In order to gain a better picture of the overall land use, the acreages of each monastery have been broken into the various land uses. Again, an element of caution must be exercised as the record for some houses indicate multiple uses of land. Where this occurs the land has been placed under the lead heading. The table below records the breakdown for each monastery.

From the overall findings it is clear that by 1536-41 the land was predominately under arable cultivation. Of the overall land value of 28,468.41 acres 23,175 acres were returned as arable land. This equates to 81.4% of the total. In relation to pasture the percentage figure is 11.7% or 3,344.5 acres. The figure for the area under wood was 2.4%, with figures of 0.9%, 0.4%, 0.7% and 2.5% for moor, meadow, mountain and miscellaneous respectively. (Figure 72) The figure in the miscellaneous category is high because of the fact that 580 acres from Maure and one hundred acres from St Mary's were not broken down into any land type. In relation to Leinster 84% was returned as arable, 10.7% pasture,

2.5% wood, 1% moor, 0.5% meadow, 0.9% mountain and 0.5% miscellaneous. (Figures 73-4) When compared with the overall figures it can be stated that more arable, wood, moor and meadow land was found in Leinster. The most interesting fact from this information is the absolute preponderance of arable farming right across the monasteries recorded.

From the information provided earlier in this chapter it is clear that some land was recorded as waste, this relates particularly to the monasteries situated outside of Leinster. Houses within the boundaries of that province did not escape without any land being laid waste but the destruction appears to have been confined to the Wexford, Carlow, Kildare region. This means that the rest of the houses of Leinster were still producing from the land and obviously, as extrapolated from the information this production was primarily in the form of crop production and was not animal based.

Statute acres

Colmcille Ó Conbhuidhe in his book *the Cistercain abbeyes of Tipperary* presents amounts in statute acres for the four monasteries of Tipperary. He did this by taking the acreages of the modern townlands which the monasteries held and indeed this is an acceptable and accurate method of establishing the lands held by the monasteries. His figures in statute acres for the four houses are as follows:- Holy Cross c. 12,500, Kilcooley 5,370, Inishlounaght 8,500 and Hore abbey 2,498 acres. He goes on too say that Kilcooley lost approximately half of

its land prior to dissolution and that the figure for Inishlounaght is also a minimum figure. Colmcille goes one step further and calculates the land holding of the Irish Cistercian houses in each province, he calculates that the monks held 199,451 acres in Leinster, 103,528 acres in Munster, 60,538 acres in Ulster and 63,050 acres in Connaght giving an overall figure of 427,447 statute acres.¹¹¹ It must be noted, and was by the author, that these figures are exclusive of lands which the monasteries held but can no longer be identified and also only related to lands actually held at dissolution. Taking all of these facts into consideration it is conservative to say that the Cistercian Order in medieval Ireland would have held in excess of 500,000 statute acres of land at peak ownership.

Reasons why all monasteries are not recorded

While the land ownership and valuation and breakdown of the land type for the monasteries listed in the extents have been discussed in detail above it is prudent to end this chapter with a discussion on the reasons why all of the monasteries have not been recorded.

The lack of references to the monasteries west of the Shannon is significant and a number of points may be made in relation to this. Very few of the monasteries which were situated in areas of Gaelic dominance in the sixteenth century are recorded at all in the dissolution extents while all of the houses which were in the area of English power are recorded in detail. Two main

¹¹¹ Ó Conbhuidhe, *Cistercain abbeys of Tipperary*, p. 90.

reasons may be identified, the land was much better in the eastern side of the country and therefore worth more and the political situation leaned toward the English ways and customs. Throughout the period of the Cistercians in Ireland the main focus was on the houses in the east with some monasteries in the west barley receiving a mention in any record. It is obvious that the wealth and power of the Irish Cistercians was more keenly felt in the east rather than the west. Conversely the impact of the Order on the indigenous population was presumably much greater on the people of the west for these very facts and therefore a much more detailed picture of the actual everyday impact of the Order on the country as a whole would be gained from that part of the country. The fact remains though that the power bases of medieval Ireland were situated in the eastern portion of the island and looked eastward. The more fertile land, easier communication routes and infrastructure and proximity to the main centres of power in late medieval Ireland were all situated in the east of the country in turn making the monasteries situated there more powerful to the rulers at least. It is also probable that many of the houses in the western portion of the country were in dire financial situations by the mid sixteenth century and many of the houses in that part of the country that are recorded in the extents testify to this notion with much of their land recorded as 'waste'.

Four reasons may contribute to the fact that so few Cistercian monasteries in the West of Ireland receive any mention in the extents drawn up at dissolution. Firstly, many of the monasteries may have been in such bad

financial and physical shape that there were no holdings to record. Secondly, the houses in that part of the country may not have had the same political sway and because they were situated outside of the main political and economic areas were not suppressed but allowed to continue pretty much as before. Thirdly, the English may have decided not to stir up the Gaelic Irish by trying to dissolve the houses and just fixed on the much more accessible and pliable monasteries in the east. Fourthly, many of the houses in the west may not have been observing the rules and regulations of the Order as rigidly as should have been the case and many of the Gaelic families had already infiltrated these monasteries. Sources suggest that many of the houses were passing on the abbacy of the houses to members of the ruling Gaelic families in the areas and thus it is these families who had control over the houses thereby effectively cutting off access to the crown unless Henry VIII wanted to take the houses by force.

However, it is not sufficient to say that the monasteries were not dissolved just because the record of dissolution does not appear in the *Extents of Irish monastic possessions*. It is very probable that some sort of record of dissolution would exist in local or diocesan histories of the relevant areas. With this in mind from a combination of sources the following may be stated about the fate of the houses not listed in the extents as falling in the general suppression. The list appears in alphabetical order.

Abbeydorney

An entry appears in the *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, in 1577 telling of a war between members of the Desmond and MacMaurice families and records the involvement of the young abbot of Odorney, who was fighting on the Desmond side, and was 'shot' in the doorway of Lixnaw Castle. Five years after the abbot's death a man from the ClanSheehy was killed in the doorway of the abbey by sons of the Bishop of Kerry.¹¹² Obviously, from this record the monastery had not been suppressed during the 1536-41 period, but judging from the amount of violence and war being conducted in the area it is probably safe to assume that, if the monastery was still in possession of land in the later sixteenth century, it would be either not in a position to hold land for much longer, or the land was probably waste, especially if the Abbot of the house was involved in the war.

Abington

Also known as Maigue Abbey, County Limerick was dissolved in 1540, but does not appear among the Extents. In June 1537 the Lord Deputy received the submission of three chieftans, one Irish and two Norman. Possibly the reason that it does not figure in the list is because it appears to have been allowed to continue as a secular college with the abbot, John Ryane, featuring as provost.

¹¹² Power, *History of the Irish Cistercians* p. 30.

This transformation occurred in May 1540.¹¹³ It is known that the following rectories were associated with the monastery at its dissolution.

Table 26: Rectories associated with Abington/Owney/Woney Abbey at dissolution

Rectories
Thurles
Raheale
Kierin
Twoballysser
Ards
Tullaghfelym
Woney and Cloghan
Kitt
Karkinlisse
Ballenworle
Rajarvan
Kakyrilly
Iohensih-grene
Burres

It is not until 1552 that a list of the possessions of Woney appears. In that year, on 04 June, Walter Ap Howell was leased the site of the abbey and the associated lands from the King. These lands were extensive and are enumerated in full under deed 1020 of the Fiants of Edward VI.¹¹⁴ From the entry it can be stated that the possessions of Abington included Wony, Caslane boenaghe, Killenevnoke, Knocknegurtyn, Ragraige, Anaghe, Kappeynowke, Kappecullyn, and Lisomllan all situated in county Limerick.¹¹⁵ Cloankitt in county Kerry had

¹¹³ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1521-1558*, fiant 149.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, fiant 1020.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

also formed part of the holding as had the rectory of Wony.¹¹⁶ The extent of this rectory is listed, it is stated that the holding extended to the towns of Woney, Anaghe, Keppeynowke, Kappecullyn, Lysmolan, and Clonekitte.¹¹⁷ Presumably Cloankitt and Clonekitte are the same location and so the rectory may be said to have spanned the borders of the counties of Limerick and Kerry. The rectory of Carlynlishe is said to have stretched from Carlynlishe, Brittas and Castelorkyn with the rectories of Killyvoily, Raiordan, Cayrrelly and Thurles also included as possessions.¹¹⁸ The rectory at Thurles is said to have extended to Thurles, Archereston, Brittas, Killenen, Galwolle, Cassesston, and to certain places in Eliogrtie.¹¹⁹ The rectory of Raheille extended from there to Syan and Aenytt with the rectory of Wony Ikirryn encompassing Wony Ikirryn, Twowynne, Monetample, Moyne, Ballyerke and Garrynele.¹²⁰ Twoballyissyn was also a rectory of Abington, this land extended from the said location to Tollo, Ballenetample, Ballynehianes, Ballyneknockan and Clanclenoiske.¹²¹ Two rectories were situated within the lordship of Ormond, these were Enagh which reached Bradir and Tullaghedde and the rectory of Cnoyaghe.¹²² Two more rectories are listed as part of the possessions of Abington and these are Arcloo

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

and Tullaghe.¹²³ Arcloo extended from Kilneyeige and Kilranellaghe with Tullaghe stretching to Tollo, Tankardiston, Rathville, Ramore and Raglass.¹²⁴

In 1552 Richard Butler, knight, viscount Mountgarret leased, among other properties, all the tithes and other properties of the benefices of Woney in Eliogirtie, county Tipperary along with the recrories of Tullaghfelym, Arcloo, Killynvvy, Teample Riany, Ballycoyne and Kilmogige, to hold for twenty one years from 1571 at a rent of eighteen marks.¹²⁵

Monasternenagh Abbey

Situated in county Limerick this monastery is returned in the *Extents* as having no land associated with it. However, a list of possessions for that monastery is included in the 1906 publication *The Diocese of Limerick ancient and medieval*, by Rev. John Begley. This has been included above.

Comber Abbey

Although the dissolution extents of this monastery are not recorded in the *Extents of Irish monastic possessions* a list of the extents may be located in the history of the diocese in which Grey is situated. In the second volume of the publication *An historical account of the diocese of Down and Connor* the list of these possessions is printed. This printed list is taken from an Inquisition which was

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid. fiant 1078.

taken at Ardquin, on July 4 1605 which states that 'John O'Mullegan, abbot of the late abbey of Cumber, in the Upper Clondeboy, at the time of the dissolution of the said abbey, was seized in fee as of right of his abbey, of seven townlands lying around, viz :- Ballymonster (the land adjoining the monastery itself); Balleneyany (called in other Inquisitions Ballengona, now Ballygowan) Ballycarnesmer (Carnasure); Ballengartoige, Ballenecullentre (Cullintra); Ballygaruffe, with their appurtenances, and of all the tithes of said lands.'¹²⁶ It was also found that he was seized of the rectories of Ballymacgeehan, Kilmood, Saintfield, or Tawnaghneev, Kilaney, and Temple Effin, in Island Magee, with the right of nominating the vicars in these parishes; and from each of these parishes he received two-thirds of the tithes.¹²⁷ The author further states that shortly after the monastery was dissolved the buildings were burned, this occurred about the year 1572.¹²⁸ The perpetrator is also named as Sir Brian MecFelim O'Neill and he burned the buildings for fear that they might be fortified by the English.¹²⁹ King James I granted the site of the abbey Along with its possessions to Sir James Hamilton who in turn assigned the site and the most of the possessions to Sir High Montgomery.¹³⁰ These two men appear to have allowed a portion of the abbey church to be used as a Protestant church and probably at the same time the other parts of the abbey were pulled down for the

¹²⁶ O'Laverty, *Down and Connor* , ii, pp 136-7.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

purpose of erecting Mount Alexander House and various buildings about Cumber.¹³¹

Inch Abbey

At dissolution Inch Abbey is recorded as being in possession of the rectories of Ballyoran, Witter, Lignalitter and Portmuck, together with Narrow Water, the Island of Inch and the townlands of Ballyrenan, Ballygally, Finnabrogue, Turmennan, Tullynecrosse (Parish of Inch), the two Woodgranges (Parish of Down), Erenagh, Ballycam, St. John's Point, Ballyviggis and Ballygilbert (Parish of Bright), and the tithes of the townlands of Ravarra and Ballycloghan near Saintfield.¹³²

Grey Abbey

John Casselles was abbot of Grey Abbey at dissolution. The monastery was in possession of much land. This land was comprised of the two townlands of Crossnemuckley and Ballyblack, and the entire modern civil parish of Greyabbey, except the townlands of Blackabbey and Killyvolgan. The monastery also held the rectories of Monkstown near Carnmoney, to which belonged three townlands both in spiritualities and temporalities, and Tollumgrange in Lecale.¹³³

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid. p. 325.

¹³³ Ibid. pp 434-5.

Beaubec

At dissolution of the monastery Henry VIII granted 'Great and Little Beaubec' to Sir John Draycot.¹³⁴

Boyle

Although the possessions of Boyle Abbey are not listed in the *Extents of Irish monastic possessions* fortunately they are to be found in the Fiants of Elizabeth I. In 1569 the site of the abbey was leased to Patrick Cusacke of Gerrardeston, county Meath.¹³⁵ In addition to the site of the abbey Cusacke was also granted the following possessions of the abbey, namely Graunge it is known that, in 1577 Hugh boye m'Ichalloe O Donnell was leased the site of the abbey.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Cogan, *Meath*, i, p. 172.

¹³⁵ *Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns, 1558-1586*, fiant 1455.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* fiant 3160.