

Hierarchism in Conventual Crenellation

An Essay in the Sociology and Metaphysics of Medieval Fortification

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TO THOSE WHO regard medieval castles *tout court* as 'military architecture', no more and not a whit less, the walls and gates of ecclesiastical establishments are incongruities. For the Romantic medievalist, of the stamp of William Beckford of 'Fonthill Abbey', they lack the melodramatic aura demanded by his fellow novelists, of whom Walter Scott has been the most influential. Both those who regard castles as rational applications of strategic planning, on the one hand, or as lairs of a bloodthirsty baronage, on the other, are disappointed; the former inclined to reject religious closes altogether as 'sham fortifications', and the latter put off by the difficulty of making convincing ogres out of the medieval abbot. In reality, embattled close walls with their often elaborately assertive gateways are entirely characteristic products of the European medieval period. They illuminate fortification, by showing how the lesser dangers of intrusion and mob violence were met by a graduated response, architecturally and symbolically; and they illuminate medieval society, by showing how the *moeurs* of the seignorial *milieu* were adapted by the closed corporations of the Church into forms nearly related but recognizably distinctive. Many of the component issues are bound up with the wider aspects of licences to crenellate, which we must first quickly review because conventual licences are hardly intelligible without their context.¹

THE HONOUR OF CRENELLATION

Between 1200 and 1536 nearly 460 licences to crenellate were issued by the English royal chancery, the great majority as *letters patent*.² They refer to just over 500 different places within the kingdom and its British appendages (new sites, established castles, religious curtilages, towns, town-houses, manors) and were obtained by approximately 380 noblemen, gentry, prelates, clergy and burgesses.³ Over this 335-year span nearly 50 of these sites were licensed a second time, a few as often as three times, renewal on occasion following after a short interval.⁴ A number of the grantees likewise received more than one licence, whether for different manors or successively for the one place. Sometimes licence was issued for a batch of houses and

sites *en bloc* simultaneously.⁵ Very occasionally and generally in exceptional circumstances, *carte blanche* was given to the individual requesting licence, no site being specified. The warlike condition of Ireland under Henry III and the exceptional position, for example, of Walter Langton under Edward I, are both reflected by licences of this type.⁶ Some correlation with regions of danger and with periods of insecurity can be seen in the geographical and chronological distribution of English licences, but it is far from clear or conclusive. Social emulation and the prosperity of the sub-baronial class, lay and ecclesiastical, had more to do with the number and place of licences issued than did fear of physical violence. Licences are almost the trademark of the medieval English *arriviste*. Since the Church was the principal, indeed almost the sole, *carrière ouverte aux talents* the clergy naturally figure prominently among recipients.

From the beginning of the chancery enrolments (recording in abstract the documents sent out) after the accession of King John down to the eve of the Dissolution, 135 licences were obtained for ecclesiastical buildings. Sixty relate to episcopal and abbatial manor-houses and town inns, ten to other clerical dwellings, seven to miscellaneous ecclesiastical sites and 58 to the precincts and buildings of religious houses.⁷ Secular and regular clergy alike were eager to do honour to their sees, prelacies and monasteries (or to signalize their own newly acquired status) by endowing country and urban residences with the castellated allure of a noble seat. To the honour of their patron saint and order, so were also abbots, priors, collegiate heads and cathedral chapters. It might well be done without licence from the king, with very slight chance of interference by royal officials even in so intensively governed a realm as England, but a licence was prestigious and could be had for the asking. Having intimate contacts with the royal court, or easy access to friends there who would pass on their petitions to the people who could put the chancery wheels in motion, most prelates were better placed to get licences than the country gentry who avidly sought the same favour and, under Edward III particularly, were gratified with such prompt patronage. Ecclesiastics certainly secured a disproportionate number. Their opportunities manifestly as *familiars* of the king and courtiers, not in general their necessities, created the demand.⁸ Nor need the process be expensive, even if *douceurs* additional to the official hanaper fee were paid to expedite matters.

The formula of special royal favour in the granting of licences to crenellate, as with other grants, was seldom more than a conventional scribal politeness. With crenellation a largely illusory 'public interest' aspect has lent to it a credibility which might more reasonably have been given to licences to create parks and warrens, or to divert roads. As Denholm-Young has very justly remarked, 'like any medieval licence (e.g. mortmain), a licence to crenellate would be granted to any applicant if he was not openly hostile to the crown, and could afford it'. Among the costs envisaged by an intending builder a licence would be the least and, in fact, there is little indication that an applicant's record was scrutinized in any way. The very number of licences issued shows that the accolade for his lordship-seat was cheap at the price. With few exceptions at times of turbulence, the king's right as overlord to license was a right to grant, not to refuse, permission to crenellate. It was a feudal, not a monarchical, prerogative. Interestingly, no attempt was made to exploit it

fiscally, for which the reason undoubtedly lies in the recognitory nature of licensing so evident in contemporary France. Being more a federation of provinces than a unified kingdom, at least until the start of the Hundred Years War, immediate lordship, and everything which consolidated its bonds, was more conspicuous in France than it was in the precociously centralized realm of England. Across the Channel, the licensing of fortification was exercised at the baronial level or below. To seek licence of a lord was to acknowledge being his vassal, just as the proof of his lordship beyond cavil lay in requisitioning his vassal's fortresses under the customs of 'rendability'. All this makes the feudal basis of licensing stand out more clearly in France, especially prior to the hostilities with England from c. 1336. The war brought about a concentration of powers under the Valois kings such as tends to be regarded as normal and inevitable by students of English medieval history. In fact, seignorial and recognitory motives, not governmental policies of control and regulation, are the clue to understanding licences to crenellate. Initiative lay not with the crown but with the courtier.⁹

Crenellation was so much a *cachet* of gentility (although freely allowed to townsmen, whether as individuals or collectively, by licensing) and the royal overlordship in England was so remote from challenge, that the Commons petitioned in Parliament in 1371 to be dispensed entirely from the formality of applying for a royal warrant. Edward III's reign was the zenith of licences, 169 being issued down to the Black Death (1348–50) and a further 44 to the end of the reign. Although a great many land-holders, particularly in the endangered northern Marches, brusquely neglected this gesture of feudal compliment to their lord the king and crenellated without his licence, we can be thankful that the Commons' petition was not accepted. Nostalgic and merely traditional though they had become, licences continue after 1371 to be a most useful (but far from infallible) means of dating buildings, and are still available (in greatly reduced numbers after 1399) to illuminate the social and seignorial meaning of late medieval and Tudor castellated architecture.¹⁰ In royal patents elevating individuals to earldoms and other high lay dignities of nobility, it was usual to declare the king's interest and duty to strengthen his crown by recruiting the peerage from the most eminent and worthy drawn from the ranks of the commoners. Patronage in this form was shown to the few, of necessity. Edward II and Richard II were accused of cheapening the honour by inappropriate creations. No such limitations applied to the honour conferred by licence to crenellate. Aspiring gentry, ecclesiastics and newly-landed or socially-emergent individuals at all periods successfully obtained the cherished recognition of their standing and affinity with the greatest castle-holding magnates of the kingdom.¹¹

WALLED LORDSHIPS OF GOD

It is the 58 licences issued for ecclesiastical precincts and the buildings within religious enclosures of a communal and corporate nature which form our present subject. They are special in being corporate, not personal, and in this more akin to the lesser number of licences issued to town authorities than to, say, Bishop Robert

Burnell's licence for Acton Burnell (1284), or that of Anthony Bek for Somerton (1281). Being career civil-servants, their motives were little different from those of laymen such as William de Clinton or John de Molyns, under Edward III.¹² But conventual licences had no 'family' motive, in the normal sense, and their seignorial motives were necessarily somewhat different. Although the gulf fixed in law between the clergy as a whole and the laity was as wide as the social divide separating noble from commoner or *roturier*, castellation was the architectural expression of noble rank and the aristocratic proclivities of the higher clergy set them far above the humble chaplain, vicar and parish priest. This tended to dilute any specifically ecclesiastical style in the architecture of their rural manors or urban houses. Prelates tended to be nobles first and ecclesiastics second, in this respect at least. To the medieval mind, God was almost a feudal lord, albeit of transcendent order, whose glory was manifested by the buildings of his vassal cathedral and conventual establishments, in much the same way as were the honour, power and renown of any earthly *seigneur* and king by the castles of his feudatories. Quintessentially, it was the precinct walls and buildings of religious houses which displayed the divine lordship. The great church was its main focus, of course, but the exclusive and walled close as a whole had a symbolism as eloquent as that of the castellated gentry-residence or *Herrensitz*. It asserted and made effective both the seignioriness of God and the seclusion of the ministers there in his service.¹³

It was not fitting that worldly contagion should be allowed to disturb the devotions of cathedral canons and monks or the ordered rhythm of the Rule within abbeys, priories and other houses of the religious orders. Christ's words in cleansing the Temple were constantly quoted: 'It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.' Seclusion was essential, but no easy matter in the case of cathedral churches surrounded by the teeming life of the city, nor for abbeys which had become engulfed in towns, or for the orders of friars who deliberately located their houses to minister to townspeople. Safety as well as privacy was at risk. During the day decorum might prevail in the streets but after dark, when respectable citizens were within doors, fear of night-prowlers and misdeeds often summed up in the pregnant word *immunditiae* distressed the clergy going about their nightly offices. Anxiety and the danger of physical assault reinforced the canonical and seignorial arguments in favour of substantial precinct walls. Edward I's patent (1285) for Oliver de Sutton, Bishop of Lincoln, gives this as the reason for licensing the cathedral dean and chapter 'to enclose the precinct of the said church with a wall, twelve feet high, in suitable places', and authorizing them to close off specific streets and lanes so as to deny or restrict access to the houses and buildings clustering around the cathedral. Such licences were obtained by many religious establishments. The wall at Lincoln, entirely typically, was to be provided 'with sufficient gates with locks, to the custody of which they [the dean and chapter] and their successors shall appoint one of their body to close them at dusk and open them again before sunrise'.¹⁴

The problem was not merely one of nocturnal lawlessness and disreputable behaviour. A letter of Pope Clement IV (1267) concerning the cathedral of Meaux, NE. of Paris, retails a constantly recurring complaint. According to the canons,

'around the cathedral close of Meaux are committed frequent obscenities and indecencies which are horrible to witness and engender serious scandal in the locality'. Clerical decorum and urban recreation at the best were difficult to reconcile. Particularly before the loss of population in the mid 14th-century plagues, open space was scarce in the crowded huddle of the walled town. Waste ground within and without was jealously guarded. Precincts themselves, churchyards, burial grounds and their environs were often places of resort for the poor. Gardens (rural parks in miniature) were confined to the inns of nobles, prelates and the merchant patriciate. Prescriptive rights acquired in this way by habitual use of land belonging in free-alm, as it might be, to the Church were not easily challenged. To do so, or to interfere at all, was to bring down a storm of protest from respectable burgesses, watchful for any encroachment on borough privileges (of which jurisdiction of void plots was often one), as well as trouble with the populace. Meaux was an example of what might occur. Not only did the act of enclosing land with bank and ditch, fence or wall of some kind assert proprietary right to it, but to do so in a manner which could keep out all but the most determined intruder (one using a rope and grapple, or a ladder) went far beyond symbolic demarcations of boundaries to fields, gardens, manor-places and house-plots. Enclosure meant all this. Interestingly, the English form of licence to crenellate used for manors, from the later 13th century (Hood castle, Yorks., 1264), separately authorizes (e.g.) 'enclosure with a wall of stone and lime'. In law it was an act of significance by itself, but a twelve-foot high wall made proprietorship effective and exclusive, not merely symbolic.

No licence could revoke 'easement' rights enjoyed for a long time or appease animosity to ecclesiastical privilege and seeming encroachment. Interests ranged from the rights of way of individuals to the vital communal concern to preserve access to town walls in emergencies to repair and defend them. Ecclesiastical closes, in fact, very often adjoined town walls and questions of access to the wall by townsmen, and through it by postern doorways to the outside by the clergy, occur frequently in the English and French records. At Meaux the resistance to walling the cathedral close had no such justification. From Pope Clement's letter instructing the Bishop of Paris to mediate, we learn that 'when the dean and chapter set about making a certain enclosure about the precinct upon their own ground in order to prevent the improper happenings referred to, the provosts and bailiffs of the city of Meaux, together with a great number of other people, caring nothing for the decorum of the House of God and contrary to both right and justice, had the audacity to obstruct . . . the work, notwithstanding that it would not be detrimental to anybody'. Urban resentment was not to be so easily assuaged. In 1358 the town and still unprotected cathedral area suffered pillage from the mutinous troops of the Regent Charles (V), ruling in place of his captive father King John since the battle of Poitiers two years previously. The serious peasant uprising of the same year, the *Jacquerie*, did further damage. The cathedral clergy lost their treasures, devotional books, vestments, deeds of title and other valuables. Even a modest precinct wall would probably have averted such desecration, indignity and financial damage. After these events, Charles belatedly licensed the dean and chapter expressly to enclose a carefully described area around the cathedral, namely 'with walls provided

with gates, which they may close and keep shut whenever necessary and at their discretion by day as well as during the night'. Consent had undoubtedly been obtained from the citizens beforehand but the close was still incomplete in 1464.¹⁵

A wall of this sort combined a variety of functions. Basically, it ensured the privacy of the clerical enclave and enabled the clergy to interdict outsiders' rights of way at will. Daytime access, despite Charles' charter to Meaux, was apparently normal in Britain and in France, but the porters at the gates facilitated the policing and security of the whole precinct. Admission was no longer automatic. Moreover, through the architectural medium of the portals or gatehouses (among the most ancient of symbols of power and control), the wall expressed and demarcated the jurisdictional peculiar and immunity from lay justice with which nearly all ecclesiastical closes, of whatever rank, were endowed. Walls commonly had this significance. The jurisdiction of the authorities of a chartered borough was delimited by its *enceinte*. At the gates or 'bars' urban privileges were asserted in the form of tolls and dues, including levies for the upkeep of the streets, walls and common facilities. There the person entering stepped out of the *ban* of the lord of the *plat-pays* and into the collective lordship of the mayor and burgesses. It was the crossing of a frontier of secular government. But when one passed through the precinct gates of cathedral or abbey one stepped out of the lay world altogether and into the religious oasis of an ecclesiastical franchise. Gate structures are understandably elaborate to evidence this transition appropriately (e.g. Pl. II, A). At Meaux the extent of the judicial immunity was considerable, but by no means exceptional. 'Within the enclosure', declared the Dauphin's charter of 1358 to the canons, 'they shall have full jurisdiction, namely high justice, middle and low, under the royal bailiff of Paris'. The precinct was separate territory and its gates and wall were its frontier to the outside world. And like the noble castle, it was the base of a lordship extending over the extramural properties of the house and, with cathedrals and some abbeys, of a spiritual authority radiating outwards to the borders of the diocese or liberty.¹⁶

So the power to insulate, isolate and protect possessed by the precinct was due in the first instance to the jurisdictional mantle with which it enveloped the community. Walls and gates symbolized the lordship of the Church and were a reminder of the spiritual sanctions she wielded to protect her own from insult. The battlementing of the wall-tops, which was an habitual feature, merely emphasized the material power on which in the last resort authority depended (e.g. Pl. II, B). A mid 12th-century drawing of the system of water conduits supplying the monastic buildings of Canterbury cathedral priory shows the enclosure, with its gates schematically represented as iron-bound, two-leaf doors. At that period a narrow passage ran between the wall and the city defences on the N. side (carefully annotated *via inter murum civitatis et murum curie*) but the precinct wall, in contrast with the city wall, was evidently not crenellated. The exclusivity of the close then needed no such emphasis. Just outside the city wall on the S., rivalling the cathedral priory by its extent and opulence, St Augustine's Abbey may well have had crenels to its precinct wall in the later 12th century, and certainly had licence for its gatehouse from the crown in 1308. Significantly, when St Mary's Abbey, York, in a similar position outside the city wall, received licence to crenellate in 1318, the precinct was

to be linked to the city defences by a wall only sixteen feet high and without any crenellation. Long jurisdictional tussles with the citizenry, more than fears of endangering the city defences, probably account for this stipulation, since precincts by that period normally were crenellated when surrounding a wealthy and seigniorially pretentious house.¹⁷ Lincoln precinct, for instance, where enclosure had been facilitated by the royal licence of 1285, was again licensed in 1315, more explicitly setting out the reasons of security, and twice again the next year, during the sessions of the Lincoln Parliament. The second of these 1316 licences, issued just three days after the first, expressly authorized crenellation but in terms implying that this had already been licensed by Edward I in 1285. Further enlargements of the close were envisaged but as yet only with the twelve-foot wall as before. Evidently the battlementing was much less important than the stone wall itself, with its gates locked at night. Crenellation was an incidental supplement.

Moral deterrence, seconded by a measure of physical power to defeat intruders, characterizes this level and order of defence. It may, perhaps, be termed 'sub-fortification', but in no derogation of its importance. To this class of buildings belongs a very large number of noble establishments of all kinds throughout medieval Europe, whereas fortresses capable of resisting all-out siege are few and exceptional by comparison. Sub-fortification, moreover, responded to conditions far more common than open warfare with fully-equipped armies. Casual lawlessness, housebreaking and armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom and of women to procure consent to marriage, and all kinds of violent subversion of the rule and machinery of law were, in reality, the prevalent problems of security. Conventual and manorial establishments, in fashion appropriate to their wealth and status, in a graduated and realistic response, displayed the seigniorial and moral power of deterrence through their envelope of walls and boundaries, trusting that their authority physical and metaphysical would be respected.¹⁸

THE CRENELLATED BUILDINGS OF THE CLOSE

At Lincoln we have noted how the cathedral close by gradual degrees expanded and assumed a more pronouncedly castle-like appearance. The preliminary meeting of the Parliament of 1316 took place in the Dean's house on 28th January. Lincoln, the walled city, castle and cathedral area, occupying the dominant site of the Roman *colonia*, became the focus of national interest for a brief two months. The opportunity was not missed by the cathedral clergy at the centre of affairs to perpetuate their renown by adding to the dignity and size of the close. By the late 13th century the great cathedral had completed the expansion eastwards, through the line of the old Roman wall, begun early in the 12th century, and by 1316 its magnificence fully reflected the great importance of the extensive diocese.¹⁹ Naturally, perhaps, the cathedral clergy were tempted to appropriate some of its glory and sacred character for themselves. The great church shed a spiritual lustre, converted by the architectural symbols of worldly lordship into a statement of power. This was a widely prevalent phenomenon of the 14th century, during which all but ten of our conventual licences were issued. Crenellation invaded precincts of all kinds, embell-

ishing and arming not only the precinct walls and gates of cathedrals, abbeys, colleges and houses of the military orders, but also within the walls the churches themselves, prelates' dwellings and palaces, towers, campaniles and, in 1385, even a woman's house within the close of the London Carmelites. This was Mathilda de Well's 'dwelling within her lodging' which she was licensed to enclose with a stone wall, crenellate and hold without impediment, in the standard form used indifferently for urban and country houses, manors and castellated seats, as also for such a great castle as Dunstanburgh (1315) on the Northumberland coast. No house of friars ever directly sought licence to crenellate as such (though numerous licences facilitating the enclosure of precincts), but the Carmelite house in Fleet Street, not far from the crenellated Lancastrian Savoy Palace, was one of their largest and the friars' interest is shown by the provision in the patent that Mathilda should have her crenellated dwelling for life with reversion in perpetuity to the brothers.²⁰

When the formerly ascetic and eremitical White Friars could consort with the symbolism of worldly pomp in this way it is no surprise that the secular clergy of Lincoln Cathedral had long anticipated them. In 1318 a new licence (for which both the 1285 and 1315-16 patents were produced with the petition and duly recited in the new patent) swept away the old height limit of twelve feet for the precinct wall and also authorized towers to be built and crenellated along with the heightened wall. Lincoln thereby stepped out of the ordinary run of cathedral-enclaves. Mural towers (usually *turella* in distinction from the 'great tower') habitually designated the seat of a greater magnate in France, a fashion especially clear in Champagne. It is rare to find them specified in English licences until much later, which enhances their significance here. Certainly, they were not primarily intended to flank the wall, or to section for defence the wall-walk behind the parapets without which crenellation could have no military use. (No English licence mentions allures, essential though they were to defence.) In fact, the building programme outlined by the petition and authorized accordingly was obviously intended to upgrade the precinct; to promote the standing of the cathedral church of St Mary in the eyes of a world which conceived of spiritual hierarchy, as much as it expressed baronial and royal eminence, in terms of architectural symbolism and conspicuous display. To this end, removal of the height-restriction in the twelve to sixteen feet range which, with the absence of towers, typified lesser fortification of all varieties, was an essential preliminary.²¹ It undoubtedly stimulated episcopal rivalry. Bishop Sutton in 1285 had been content to use his influence on behalf of the dean and chapter and for the communal close, shared with them and the church itself. Subsequent licences were obtained by the canons directly without reference to the bishop. In 1320, however, the high-born and aristocratic Henry de Burgerssh became Bishop of Lincoln, perhaps with the help of Queen Isabella, and held the see for twenty years. Long tenure minimized the costs of vacancy and promoted building schemes.

From 1325 an important figure in the main-stream of national politics, he was rewarded for his loyalty to the Queen's party on the overthrow of Edward II, becoming Treasurer and in 1329-30 attaining the supreme position of Chancellor. Whereas a lay magnate, risen to power, would exploit it to achieve wealth and rank which he would seek to perpetuate in his family, ideally with lordship and newly

castellated seat and perhaps a chantry foundation (despite assiduous courting of heiresses established castellaries were acquired only by the fortunate few), the prelatial *arriviste* sought primarily to glorify his church or see, his family only incidentally or not at all. The cathedral of Lincoln being largely complete, as it is today, except for the upper stages of the western towers, Bishop Henry in September 1329 turned to the aggrandisement of his bishopric by building for himself and his successors a palace like no other in England. Episcopal rights in the cathedral church were in any case secondary to those of the dean and chapter. So, as Chancellor, he had issued to himself a licence to crenellate which outlined an ambitious enlargement of the palace which would transform it from an undistinguished dependency of the precinct into a fortified complex in its own right to rival the castellated cathedral close, the walled city and also the ancient but militarily obsolete castle of the de Lacy earls. The licence no less than the proposed building proclaimed de Burgerssh's eminence. It alludes to his great public services and refers to the recent work of crenellating and adding towers to the precinct wall of the cathedral, under the licence of 1318 to the canons. He may well have drafted the document himself. It authorized him and his successors to appropriate the nearby stretch of the city wall, to rebuild or alter it, and to equip the entire new circuit with crenellation and with towers. That the new, exclusive, episcopal enclave should in no wise be inferior in juridical status to the close, the same ecclesiastical immunity was extended to it, including rights of sanctuary. The walls demarcated the canonical peculiar and continued to do so when further extensions were made subsequently both to the palace and to the cathedral close. A franchise delimited by towered and crenellated walls surrounding the cathedral had been aggressively asserted and expanded in the face of the urban lordship represented by the city walls and the comital jurisdiction embodied in the castle. These rivals had lost the initiative but were by no means entirely passive.²²

Lichfield does not bear comparison with Lincoln, for all its attractions, be it in the extent, antiquity or the wealth of the diocese, or in the grandeur of its cathedral church, but for our present purposes it is almost equally notable owing to the importance in the king's counsels of the man who was its bishop from 1296 to 1321 and because of the towered and crenellated precinct wall which was one of his many contributions to the fabric of the cathedral and close. Walter Langton, Treasurer (1295-1307) and trusted servant of Edward I, is among the most remarkable of clerical *arrivistes*. His singularity is fully corroborated by the number, variety and type of licences to crenellate which he secured. Personal power and riches, some of which he contrived to leave to his relatives, was not all he sought to gain, ruthless careerist though he undoubtedly was. He did not neglect to enhance the renown of his cathedral in the fashion initiated by his fellow royal minister (and bishop) Robert Burnell, who in 1286 secured licence to enclose and crenellate both Wells Cathedral precinct and the canons' close. Langton did likewise, in 1299. Such ecclesiastical civil servants could spend little time in their sees but their importance might still shed lustre on their home base, which was to them very much what his ancestral castle represented to the great lay magnate, who lavished treasure on its embellishment accordingly. Both Burnell and Langton, like Burgerssh of Lincoln, naturally

had their personal glorification in mind as well, but it would be a mistake to ignore or deny altogether the motives of altruism which they professed. Personal and vicarious aggrandisement alike were largely acceptable to contemporary morality, in any case.

In the course of a strongly-worded and feeling testimonial sent to Pope Boniface VIII in 1303 to defend Walter Langton against his detractors who sought to harass him in the court of Rome, Edward I made a claim which deserves our attention. Boniface was told that when Langton ‘. . . had acquired special honour, he distinguished his church of Lichfield with various grants of liberties, which the king made to it in consideration of his merits and his devoted service, which he would not have granted to any other; and the bishop constructed costly works about the enclosing of the church of Lichfield and in the manors or places of the bishopric . . . The king is convinced that the bishop has expended much more than he ever received from the bishopric in recovering [*sic*] the ancient liberties of his church . . .’. This last protestation may well owe much to Langton’s influence in the drafting, as well as something to the legal fiction whereunder rights were more properly recovered than created anew, but however the special pleading is discounted an important fact remains. Such clerics as Langton, Burnell, Bek, John of Caen and William Hamilton, who had been of special service to Edward I and were all licensed to crenellate during his reign, wished to share not to monopolize personally the eminence they had acquired. All men sought, who could afford the means, to perpetuate their glory with chantries, charitable foundations and tombs, but immortality was more accessible to the ecclesiastic. To be well-remembered in the annals of cathedral or monastery, or to leave memorials in the fabric itself, was desired by the most apparently self-seeking *nouveau riche*. The results can be seen everywhere. Because of its honourable connotations crenellation was often one of the chosen means, as can be seen at Lichfield.²³

The cathedral close licence was the first which Langton obtained, when he was neither especially prominent nor notorious, in 1299. Remains survive of one or more octagonal towers with ditch and curtain although the patent mentions only a crenellated stone wall. It was issued expressly ‘. . . in honour of the cathedral church of Lichfield and of the saints whose bodies rest there’, using an ancient formula customary in Carolingian charters but almost unique among English licences to crenellate. More typical of enclosure and crenellation patents is the addition ‘. . . for the better security and quiet of the canons and ministers of the church residing there’. At Lichfield, in contrast with Lincoln and Wells but similarly to Salisbury, the townspeople were securely under episcopal lordship. Resentment at the seigniorial pretensions of cathedral clergy was exacerbated at Lichfield because rights of way were diverted on a large scale and, worse still, the work on walling the precinct was partly financed from the proceeds of pavage grants made to the bishop and levied on the trade of the city. This was openly done, since the pavage grant, issued to Langton two days before the licence to crenellate, stated that it was for the purpose of ‘. . . paving his city of Lichfield and building a wall round the houses of him and the canons within the precinct of the cathedral’. Despite the Treasurer’s fall on Edward I’s death this source of funds continued almost without interruption, being

renewed in 1306 and again on his reinstatement to his episcopal revenues in 1312, and once more in favour of his successor in the see in 1322. That the citizens largely paid for it, in one way or another, cannot have improved relations but, thanks to the uninterrupted finance, the precinct was quite effectively fortified. In the crisis of 1317 it was thought important enough to be among the fortresses ordered to be safely guarded. Bishop Langton was made responsible for the episcopal 'castles of Lichfield and Eccleshall', to avert hostile seizure and lodgement of dissidents. During the Lancastrian rebellion in 1322 precautions were taken to ensure that the city '... and especially the enclosure about the monastery' [*sic*] were garrisoned to prevent entry by 'the contrarians'. Only the cathedral precinct can be meant of the various religious houses in Lichfield. These precautions testify to the problems of evicting rebels, not to any exceptional defensibility. Remote in the Fens of Cambridge, the same anxieties persistently focused on the Isle of Ely which had only isolation to attract such seizure.

Emergencies apart, Lichfield conforms to a pattern which suggests that precinct crenellation was an act of seignorial assertion which in turn caused a reciprocal hardening of urban attitudes. Parallels for this in contemporary France are plentiful. Tension between religious and *bourgeois* in Lichfield dating from the walling of the close is confirmed by a patent of 1348 which shows that diversion of rights of way became the focus of attention. The 1299 licence had also effectively authorized the stopping of '... transit through the close of men, carts, wains or horses', except by the canons' men, because the dean and chapter '... after the enclosing of the same ... have hitherto held the close at their will'. Langton had provided a new road and bridges over the stream, but just as privacy and exclusiveness were essential to the honour and decorum of a religious and lordly enclave, so also to the dignity of the townspeople was free access. The bonds of ecclesiastical lordship became less tolerable when so many issues both of pride and of material convenience were bound up with the act of enclosure and crenellation. As late as 1461, and again in 1523, the dean secured corroboration of all the consequences of Langton's licence of 1299 and renewal of the findings of the 1348 enquiry, which (at a cost to the canons of a 20s. hanaper fee), had reaffirmed the inviolate status of the cathedral close.²⁴

If Lincoln is the supreme architectural demonstration of episcopal pre-eminence the still largely intact curtilage of the Bishop's Palace at Wells runs it a close second in the matter of crenellation. Chancellor Burnell's licence of 1286 covered both the cathedral close and the residential complex of the canons and himself situated, as we are told, 'in the city', but closely adjacent. Robert Burnell (bishop 1275-92) planned to share his prestigious enclosure with the chapter of Wells but not until after the issue of a second licence to crenellate, to Bishop Ralph (1329-63) in 1340, was the splendid moated and towered palace (in the words of 1340, *prociuctum [sic] domorum suarum et canonicorum infra civitatem*) completed in substantially its present form. As at Lincoln, the licence was complemented (in 1346) by grant of a measure of immunity from lay jurisdiction within the walls. Some resentment on the part of the citizens of the free borough, who thereby lost land, access to the cathedral and perhaps other amenities apart from some derogation of their status *vis à vis* the cathedral clergy, may again be inferred.²⁵

The ambitious scale of works at Lincoln and Wells was not matched elsewhere by the few episcopal palaces for which licence to crenellate was obtained. In the earliest of them (1271) Bishop Godfrey Giffard's palace was modestly called '... his houses (*domos, rectius* 'buildings') within his close of Worcester'. At Exeter in 1290, four years after the cathedral close was licensed to be walled for its security, Bishop Peter had licence '... to strengthen with a wall and crenellate his Exeter house', which the influential Bishop Walter de Stapeldon had renewed (1322) in grander terms befitting his status as Treasurer (1320–21, 1322–25), namely, '... to enclose with a stone wall the close and dwelling-place of his episcopal palace in Exeter, and to crenellate the same'. Norwich cathedral priory has a fine precinct wall with a number of impressive gates but licence only in respect of the bishop's palace in 1327–28 was issued, without enrolment under the Great Seal, to William Airmyn (bishop 1325–36), who like Burgerssh of Lincoln was sometime Chancellor and strong in the favour of Queen Isabella.²⁶ Undertones of uneasy relationships between the citizens of Norwich and the monks of the cathedral priory are again a factor, but a more classic example of emulation centering around the possession and control of defences is presented by the case of Salisbury.

The new town by the banks of the Avon, having grown under clerical tutelage around the cathedral after it had been transferred (1219–27) from its inconvenient Norman site within the Iron Age hill-fort of Old Sarum, unsurprisingly found its further growth obstructed by the lordship of the bishop. The very continuity and undying determination of ecclesiastical establishments, permanently resident lords watchful against encroachment, and yet eager to expand and acquisitive of privilege, frequently brought conflict. Royal charters of 1306 and 1315 to the bishop and canons had confirmed that New Salisbury '... should be a free city enclosed with dykes', but this appurtenance of free-borough status was understood by the cathedral to confer honour on the church, not self-government on the citizenry. Thus the clergy were the senior partners in obtaining a confirmation in 1328 of the previous licences for themselves and the townsmen, which authorized them jointly '... to enclose, fortify and crenellate the city', and to build towers to the wall for its safe-keeping. No such scheme of masonry defences was, in fact, seriously begun, at this juncture or later. The licence was merely parcel of a range of privileges intended to corroborate episcopal lordship and to make it more acceptable and profitable. The partnership was understandably uneasy. Bishop Robert Wyville in 1337 obtained licence for '... the dwelling-place of his Manor of Salisbury', of which the city was to him a subordinate part. Eight episcopal manor-houses were included in the licence. Bishop Ralph Erghum had this patent confirmed by Richard II's government in 1377 and, significantly, had included an authorization to himself and his successors to wall and crenellate the city. His motive was probably to out-manoeuvre the citizens who had secured licence to do it themselves in 1372. This legalistic shadow-boxing was interspersed with actual violence, but the attack on the cathedral close in 1331, when it was momentarily occupied by the townspeople (described as a 'siege', making the close into 'caves of robbers', in the classic phrase of clerical propaganda), seems likely to have been the culmination of an intense rivalry associated with a licence to crenellate the close obtained in 1327 (see Pl. II).

The times were lawless but the pattern is again one of status-emulation, occasionally breaking out into forcible conflict. The claustral crenellation, in fact, provoked trouble which any resultant defences were quite unable to deter or to defeat. The clergy seem to have over-played their hand. Both sides in 1377–78 secured from the crown power in the public name to repair and fortify the city, simply because this right and duty belonged to lordship, not because it was particularly urgent or militarily desirable. Events at Salisbury compare very closely indeed with several cases of urban-ecclesiastical competition in France, particularly with Noyon, which confirm their nature beyond doubt. In face of conflict of lordship and when seignorial standing was challenged no response was more natural than to establish or assert control over fortifications. In England, a licence to crenellate affirmed lordship and its moral and legal effect could, if necessary and financially feasible, be followed up by actual building. The licence at once sanctioned seignorial right and endorsed its physical demonstration at whatever level was appropriate to the local circumstances; but very often bluster sufficed and no building was done.²⁷

Motives which so deeply imbued secular princes of the Church inevitably came to affect the orders also. In the later Middle Ages the constancy of spiritual purpose envisaged by the Rule of St Benedict, with its many derivatives, despite all the efforts of repeated reform and revival, inexorably became transmuted into the powerful collective capitalism exemplified by the great abbeys. The fact witnesses rather to the power of the seignorial and economic *milieu* than denies the value of constant reform. Cluniacs, Cistercians and the others in turn became almost as enmeshed in the exercise of worldly lordship as an episcopal civil servant. A spirit far removed from the original early 12th-century Cistercian asceticism of Stephen Harding and Bernard of Clairvaux is revealed by the spiteful snobbery in contempt of royal protection which led the abbot and monks of the mother-house, Cîteaux herself, in 1334 to have their men pillage and destroy dwellings of a former abbey serf, together with his turret and dovecot, the symbols of his newly acquired gentility. Economic motives strengthened identification with the lordly class. Having vindicated at law the servile status of William at Ree, the canons of Waltham Abbey applied to have regularized in mortmain their taking over of William's 30-acre holding acquired as a free man. They thought nothing of requesting at the same time a licence to crenellate the belfry of the abbey for a programme of repair work. Mortmain clearance with licence to crenellate tagged on to it in the same patent (1366) was duly issued forthwith. Both items were routine exercise of lordship. In 1369 a licence to crenellate the abbey as a whole was obtained and in 1378, because, we are told, of the abbot's friendship with Richard II and his late father, he received permission for life to hunt 'vermin' and deer in Epping Forest. An abbey of such wealth as Waltham Holy Cross, whose abbot wore the mitre and which asserted its seignorial powers in these ways, was an obvious target for peasant hostility. The rebels of 1381 attacked the house and tried to destroy the title deeds which were the foundation of its position in a way that precinct fortifications, however defensible, could never be.²⁸

Assimilation of the prelacy to the modes and ways of the lay aristocracy was especially conspicuous in France. It spread down the social scale, so that what was characteristic of great prelates like Henry of Blois or Suger of Saint-Denis in the 12th

century was, on a necessarily more modest level, typical of monastic, collegiate and other clergy comfortably far above the subsistence level of the parish priest, during the course of the 13th. Already, in the mid 13th century, we find the monk Galeran of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, who had become chamberlain of the abbey and had acquired a small country property at Couilly, near Meaux, ape the pretensions of his lay counterparts. Around the miniature estate, identified in the record as formerly belonging to Rigeaud the Knight, Galeran was building a wall embellished with *deus petites tourneletes* when he was stopped by the lord of Crécy-en-Brie, Gaucher de Châtillon. Acting on the advice of his brother, the Count of Saint-Pol, Gaucher allowed Galeran to complete the turreted wall on condition that no seignorial rights of 'fortress or defence' should ever be claimed over his people of Crécy in consequence, on pain of demolition of the enclosure. Towers were as potent an emblem of nobility as crenellation was pre-eminently in England. Lords of relatively modest or recently acquired baronial status, like the Châtillons, were naturally the most sensitive to competition from their inferiors. A case brought before the *Parlement* of Louis IX in 1268 illustrates several aspects at once. The Bishop of Nevers cited his vassal, the Prior of La Charité-sur-Loire, for fortifying on a new site at Aubigny. Very possibly at the prior's instigation, he was in turn cited by the royal *bailli* for rebuilding the crenellation on his residence at Nevers, though it was admitted that this was only a work of repair. The dispute is purely one of seignorial right. All special ecclesiastical character has been submerged. The lord could license within his fief and established fortifications, of whatever degree, carried with them the right to maintain and even to up-date the structure, so that acquired status in the feudal hierarchy might be maintained. It was the newcomer who was resisted, be he layman or cleric. The Vicariate of Christ was translated into the papal monarchy and, throughout the Church, the modes and architectural symbolism, even also the values of the lay nobility, permeated the higher clergy.

To these examples might be added that of the Abbot of Saint-Riquier (Somme) who identified himself, and his house, with the lesser nobility of Ponthieu, namely those holding directly of the crown but not vested with rights of high justice, when before the court of Philip III in 1272 he vindicated his, and their, right to fortify without seeking licence of the king as lord of the fief. These cases are on the margin of our present subject by the strictest definition of conventual crenellation, but are at the very heart of it in all other respects.²⁹

Kings of England as dukes in Gascony were careful to license only tenants in chief to fortify, often with a clause (superfluous in England) saving the rights of others, and only places in their immediate lordship. The phrase *quantum in nobis est* acknowledged the French feudal proprieties whereby licensing and 'rendability' were prerogatives of the lord of the fief, much more widely diffused among the strata of tenure. In England matters were much simpler. Licences to crenellate were given to applicants irrespective of their personal or relevant territorial relationship to the king, saving only the Laws of the Marches and the palatine rights of Durham, Lancaster (1351-62; 1377-99) and the intermittently operative rights of the earldom of Chester. English royal licensing is that of a great French *honour writ large*. To see it as 'national' would be quite wrong. Its affinities lie with the Norman and Angevin

patrimonies. The county of Champagne and Brie provides many clues prior to its incorporation into the royal domain (1285). In England, the scope of kingship contrasts with France, where a quasi-national centralization was only temporarily attained during the crises of the Hundred Years War, and where licensing to fortify was primarily demesnal and seignorial.

For this reason, to publicly prominent ecclesiastics and lay magnates in England a licence had the extra *cachet* of royal recognition, acknowledgement and compliment. Unlike other royal patronage it conferred no fiscal advantages whatever, but it was as eagerly sought by the socially ambitious as any lucrative privilege. The unique distinction of a licence to crenellate emerges strongly from the case of Edington College, Wilts., set up as a collegiate chantry by William de Edington in his native village, in 1351. As successively Treasurer (1344–56) and Chancellor (1356–63) and for twenty years bishop of the very rich see of Winchester (1346–66), William rose from humble origins to be one of the century's best ecclesiastical civil servants. To complete the princely endowments bestowed on the rector and brothers it was almost inevitable that he should have procured for them in 1359 a licence to crenellate the dwelling-place of the college. Materialistically significant by the standard of his sumptuous rebuilding of the former parish church, the gesture was the symbolic culmination of a series of exemptions, privileges and donations which ensured the viability, legal quietude and architectural dignity of the house, appropriately commemorating its founder. The busy Chancellor seems to have done it as an afterthought, following more practical matters, and in some haste at Sandwich, when Edward III was about to take ship to cross to France for the campaign which led to the Peace of Brétigny.³⁰

Lesser ecclesiastical ministers, having access to the king's person (a constant theme of licences to crenellate), or to his favourable notice by proxy, conformed to the pattern set by their superiors. Thomas of Bamborough, king's clerk, secured in 1336 for Bolton Hospital, Northumberland, of which he was keeper, payment for sheep taken to victual Edward II's army in 1314, as well as a licence to crenellate. Despite its northerly situation, honour not danger is the probable explanation. Thomas de Orgrave, sometime a chamberlain of the Exchequer, during his Mastership of the Hospital of St James, at Charing Cross, added to its buildings a small stone tower '... for the security of its ornaments', and also a wine-cellar. As William of Edington had done, Thomas secured in 1379 an *ex post facto* licence for crenellating this, the hospital safe-deposit. He may well have copied the nearby Jewel Tower (1365–66) of Westminster Palace, which survives with its moat close by the precinct wall of the Abbey. Protection for charters, on which proof at law of title depended, as well as for jewels, vestments, plate and altar-vessels, was much needed. Burglary and arson were constant threats. Muniments were often special targets of local insurrections, of which the 1381 Peasants' Revolt was the worst and most widespread. Places for their safe-keeping were essential to efficient estate management, for religious houses as much as lay manors. Moreover, personal valuables and occasionally tax proceeds were deposited in monastic and cathedral treasuries for safety, requiring more than spiritual sanctions to be secure. In 1371, the absence of such a 'sure place' in the remote and rural abbey of Croxton Kerrial (Leics.) obliged

the abbot to apply to have 'a strong and sure house' made available to him in the town of Grantham. This highly important if unglamorous aspect of sub-fortification has not received the attention it deserves, but barred widows, masonry walls and perhaps fire-proof vaults and strong doors, to some inconspicuous upper chamber, were of more practical value against robbers, when charters (especially if not duplicated in the Chancery records) and reserves of money in coin or plate were at risk, than any outward show of defence. These covert means of protection were as normal and basic to medieval fortification as the iron skull-caps and padded jerkins of the non-military classes of society are to the history of medieval armour.

Muniments, chalices, altar-pieces, reliquaries and cash along with the persons of the inmates of the close all required protection. Items of value, extrinsic and monetary, concentrated the minds of the ecclesiastic on problems of security. Their 'defended living-space' and the sacred character of the precinct depended primarily, as we have seen, on the metaphysical rather than the military functions of the enclosure. It remains to examine briefly this dimension of physical defence in circumstances of mass-riot, armed insurrection and of actual war.³¹

'CIVIL COMMOTION AND RISE OF THE PEOPLE'

The late J. Goronwy Edwards described Edward I's eight new fortresses in Wales as 'the premium that Edward paid to insure his Welsh conquests against the fire of rebellion'. If the further aim of minimizing any future Welsh contribution to civil war in England (such as in 1264-66 and its aftermath) had been in the king's mind, his expenditure of at least £80,000 over 27 years might seem justifiable. But the political costs of financial crisis, aggravated by his castle-building programme, raise serious doubts. The pure accountancy of cost-benefit analysis would certainly not have justified this exceptional and inordinate outlay only for the sake of the revenue derivable from North Wales. Dr A. J. Taylor's very attractive suggestion that Caernarvon was designed with multangular towers, banded masonry and Eagle Tower as a Roman imperial reminiscence of Constantinople and Magnus Maximus, might be extended in more general terms, to the entire eight. Nothing about them suggests the 'nicely-calculated less or more' of the counting house, whereas the five new fortified dependent towns were a conventional act of capital investment. The implications merit attention.³²

Our study so far suggests that where there is a direct link between mob violence and conventual fortification the connection was psychological and symbolic, not 'military'. In commercial insurance contracts, among the exclusions which rendered cover inoperative, used to be 'act of God', 'restraint of princes' and also 'civil commotion and rise of the people'. These perils were undoubtedly regarded as normal by the medieval ecclesiastic, who provided for each of them appropriately. In architecture as in other activities he usually held the initiative. The whole thrust of conserving, asserting and extending the lordship of a great and undying religious corporation, during centuries not decades, in the face of passive and sullen resentment, occasionally brought to the pitch of open and violent revolt, provides a truer historical context for the pattern of precinct crenellation than does any crude

scenario of *jacquerie* followed by fortifying. Not only does crenellation so often precede uprising but, patently, it could seldom provide adequate protection even for ecclesiastics' persons, and none for their extramural personnel and possessions. It might indeed be argued that, by adopting the assertive seignorial ostentation of the lay aristocracy, the later medieval clergy diminished their moral authority and provoked trouble gratuitously, were it not that crenellation was but one aspect among many (albeit symptomatic) of the social divisions which caused strife. Straightforward solutions, however, always appeal, whether Ockham's Razor is applied or Samuel Johnson's tendency to believe the explanation which requires lengthy argument to prove wrong. The neat nexus of 'military' cause and effect may nonetheless be illusory, and links between outbreaks of violence and crenellation, even if close, can be deceptive. The case of William de Topcliffe's house called *Shoford*, near Maidstone, is a unique and notable instance, though a mere personal dwelling, not a conventual establishment, and thus strictly peripheral to our subject.

William was licensed in 1382, at the request of the new archbishop, William de Courtenay (successor of Simon de Sudbury murdered in London by the rebels) to crenellate and fortify '... a certain small place called *Shoford*, lately thrown down by the common people recently in revolt'. The incident was one of a number of crimes of violence committed by a gang of lawbreakers in the Maidstone district. Subsequent pardons of two of the ringleaders provide the details. Thomas atte Raven and Robert Baker were indicted for riot at Rochester, for 'breaking' the castle there and likewise 'all the king's gaols in Kent', for burning escheatry and other governmental records and for burglaries of a number of manor-houses, all within a short period in early June, 1381. In Maidstone the gang murdered one John Southall and incited the townspeople to rob and burn William's house, destroying property allegedly worth 1,000 marks. Next day they proceeded to North Cray where they burgled and demolished Nicholas Herring's manor-house. Punitive destruction of a townsman's house occurs in many borough customals, and more generally. It was an exemplary derogation of a criminal, in the ordinary way. William de Topcliffe was a man of some standing in East Kent, very probably unpopular because of his involvement with officialdom. He was acting in a supervisory capacity after the Revolt, and probably also beforehand, commissioned (1390) to control repair work upon the keep (*dongeon*) of Canterbury Castle, which was used as a gaol by the sheriff, and he had previously been active upon repairs to the cathedral and the work of walling the city, in association with the master mason and architect, Henry Yevele. This may well have earned him the support of the archbishop. Courtenay pursued the fortification of Canterbury, which Sudbury had begun, with royal help and was soon to build a new gatehouse and other additions to the archiepiscopal castle of Saltwood, near Hythe on the coast. This militant local reaction, whether to peasant disaffection or to the threat of external raids by the French, might seem to be all of a piece.

William's involvement with the sheriff and the cathedral probably explains why his house was the target of popular vindictiveness. When it was all over he may, of course, have felt that a substantial stone-built, crenellated new house (perhaps with parapets to protect the roofs) would reduce the risk of arson and afford him more security in the future. But such dwellings were frequently (in fact, normally) built

without any licence to crenellate. Without doubt, the function of the licence to William was to reaffirm his status and his association with the great. It was an emphatic and demonstrative response to the *menu peuple* who had dared to resent and attack his standing. Ecclesiastics especially reacted in this fashion to insurrections, as we have seen, but William de Topcliffe's licence is unique in having this intimate and direct link with 1381. There is no sign of any general castellation, with or without licence, having been caused by the peasant upheaval in the South-East. Crenellated and moated manor-houses, among them some styled 'castle' and many crenellated under licence, were violently burgled in full daylight over the whole period sufficiently often to show that the deterrent effect of sub-fortification was psychological rather than physical. Crenellation conferred status and a certain aura of *noli me tangere*. If this should be ineffectual it also threatened official reprisals at law; *nemo me impune lacessit*: a magic spell of invulnerability which was broken when the moat was crossed and doors stove in or burned, its credibility gone. This kind of deterrence was within the financial resources of the gentry and proclaimed their aristocracy. Despite the ample wealth of many conventual establishments their castellated architecture in Britain likewise rarely sought to be more than a cloak of visible privilege.³³

Information on the Chancery Rolls about assaults on manor-houses is very subject to the vagaries of record since an *oyer et terminer* investigation might well not be obtained. Riots in towns also impinge erratically on the Rolls as they were usually within the competence (as well as the cognizance) of borough courts, but religious houses naturally and instinctively looked to the Crown for protection and had special advantages in securing official action. From the resulting enrolments the prevalence and precise nature of the problem clearly emerges. At St Frideswide's, Oxford, the attack in 1336 followed a long history of tension dating back at least to 1122 when the Anglo-Saxon secular college was converted to a regular priory of Augustinian canons. Henry I had authorized them to appropriate the roadway running between their house and the town wall and gave them also the right 'of closing or blocking at will all the gates of the Priory'. By 1136-40 the canons had absorbed this section of the town wall into their precinct, had built upon the wall and made a private door-way through it. Effectively, the townsmen had been deprived of their cherished and even vital monopoly of control of their defences. During the troubles of 1264 the canons' close was defensively barricaded. Henry III granted them two oaks for the purpose and, to the townsmen, four oaks 'to make the barriers in their town'. For a whole gamut of reasons, townspeople resented and feared judicially and defensively autonomous enclaves of this sort, particularly when they had separate access from without. In the great enquiry of 1275-76 the jurors recorded the protests of the Oxford burgesses at Walter de Merton's encroachments and appropriations for his new College, including the closure of an access-way to the town walls. They also protested that the prior of St Frideswide's had blocked up the crenels along six perches of the town wall, sometime between the battles of Lewes and Evesham, to the king's detriment and the town's peril.

Endemic friction and continual competition for status and autarchy culminated in the assault of 1336 during which the priory was 'besieged', and the prior and nine

of his fellow canons were kidnapped and imprisoned ' . . . until by threats of burning (the priory) and fear of death they were brought to make oath severally to observe the statutes of the town of Oxford'. The Cistercian abbey of Rewley, near Oxford, despite its foundation in 1281 by Edmund of Cornwall and subsequent royal patronage, suffered a violent break-in and vicious sacking 'so as to do the utmost damage', in 1300 shortly after obtaining licence, with Walter Langton's help, to extend its precinct. Harassment by local officials induced the monks in 1320 to secure a royal patent certifying that they were lawfully possessed of the land and buildings within the abbey enclosure. Defence against usurping urban privilege and occasional mob violence required a firm legal stance first and foremost.

The forceful, and sometimes forcible, assertion and extension of their franchises by the men of Oxford went further. They were deeply implicated in the harassment of Abingdon Abbey which boiled over in the troubled period of Edward II's overthrow and erupted into a full-scale attack. Here too, animosity between clergy and populace was of early origin, dating at least from the reign of King John. Royal protection was accorded in June 1327, the patent stating that the abbey had been abandoned by most of the monks for fear of attackers who had repeatedly broken in, demolished gates and walls, held monks and their servants to ransom and stolen muniments, chalices, vestments and other valuables. Repeated judicial panels of *oyer et terminer* were set up to investigate and, in August 1327, the deserted and 'devastated' abbey was put under two custodians for its protection. In January 1328, a new patent included the information that the prior, lying sick at the abbey, had been taken to Radley wood and forced to make out charters under the conventual seal conceding an elected provost and bailiffs to the town. He died apparently as a result of the treatment he had received. Both the outer and inner gates were forced open and the entire abbey, not excluding the church itself, was overrun. Goods destroyed or plundered were valued, rather tendentiously, at £10,000, later reduced to £6,000. Defiance of the irksome lordship of this wealthy and ancient Benedictine house, controlling the lucrative market and vigilantly repressing any growth in borough rights, spread beyond Abingdon itself to Oxford, whose mayor personally led the townspeople to the attack, making this affair one of the most aggravated cases on record of armed riot, extortion and desecration. It was the high water-mark of a prolonged ground-swell of anticlericalism there.³⁴

The closest parallel is with the long-simmering troubles between the monks and their subject townsmen at Bury St Edmunds. In two assaults, in 1327 and 1334, the abbey gates were burned and the sacristy was damaged during a mass affray, in very similar circumstances. At Bury an impressive new gatehouse was built, admitting to the great court of the abbot's palace, but in leisurely fashion in the years following the insurrection. Its architecture is a classic demonstration of the issues with which we are concerned. The whole, massive, free-standing, squat tower-block, rising over 60 feet to an imposing (but low) battlemented parapet with drip-moulded crenels and merlon-crestings, the merlons pierced by miniature cruciform 'arrow-loops', combines an almost-convincing hint of brute force with a highly artistic and dignified display of ornate canopied niches and emphatic, vertical angle-shafted salients. Within the ogee-headed space above the low-browed segmentally arched

portal with its portcullis, three niches to house statues emblematic of the abbey's spiritual lordship reminded visitors of the authority which the gatehouse represents. The nearby late Romanesque precinct gate-tower of St James held a similar reminder, in the then conventional form of a Christ in Majesty. Unfortunately the tympanum was removed as an obstruction to cart-traffic in the late 18th century. Of the two entrance towers, the 14th-century gate may have a more militant guise, seemingly an iron hand in a velvet glove. It is certainly more seignorially expressive by comparison, somewhat to the detriment of its spiritual quality, but it cannot have served as a tower of refuge, as some kind of 'keep' to the precinct, even had it been more centrally located. Separate defensibility requires much more than an exterior of forbidding elegance. Even as an entry it was only as defensible as the weakest link of the circuit of walls, which here as elsewhere was too extended and much too flimsy to be physically defended.

The architectural response must be seen within its context. The riots at Bury were acts of flagrant insubordination by 'villein' and 'rustic' townspeople. This great and proud abbey reacted to their disobedience and desecration (and, more prosaically, to the cutting off of the monks' water supply conduit) by vindicating its rights at law, identifying the principal culprits and, in the longer term, by reasserting the monastic lordship and authority in the unequivocal architectural language of seignorial symbolism. The hand within the velvet glove is of porcelain, not of iron, but no less eloquent as a result. In contrast with Abingdon, judicial enquiry was sufficient. No royal certificate of seignorial right in the form of a licence to crenellate was sought by the abbot of Bury to corroborate his franchisal power. His grasp of the liberty of St Edmund's was secure enough to need no such affirmation. Proximity to a restive and sizeable town like Oxford and rights of inferior antiquity and scope made Abingdon a rather different case. Because of disputes with the townsmen over the bounds of the ecclesiastical immunity and concerning the monks' rights in the appurtenant but detached church of St Nicholas, coupled with the need to make good monastic control over their dependant but wholly extramural Hospital of St John, engulfed by the town buildings, both church and hospital as well as the entire precinct of the abbey were expressly included in the licence to crenellate, obtained in July 1330. Defence of such an extended area was unthinkable, nor was it remotely intended. By force of this licence and the simultaneous verdict of law, by which the monastic lordship, market and courts were upheld and twelve of the leading contrarians condemned to death and sixty others committed to prison, the whole derogatory episode was meant to be expunged from legal memory. Crenellation or a royal certificate of entitlement, severally or in conjunction, emphasized a legal *fait accompli*, proclaiming the return of the authority of the past and daring the future to defy it again.³⁵

As we have seen, the crenellation of conventual precincts proceeded essentially from intrinsic motives, seignorial and ecclesiastical, rather than being due to extraneous factors. But the assertion of conventual separatism undoubtedly provoked the resentment of the lay commonalty, which in turn frequently produced a hardening of the seignorial stance by the religious house. This sort of reaction to local challenge over a prolonged period must have stimulated crenellation, being prob-

able at Spalding Priory (Lincs.), Guisborough Priory (Yorks.), St Mary's Abbey, York, Whalley Abbey (Lancs.), Worcester Cathedral Priory, Winchcombe Abbey (Gloucs.), Selby Abbey (Yorks.), and at Thornton Abbey (Lincs.), all of which obtained licences to crenellate, chiefly for precinct walls or gates, and against a background of local disaffection of some kind. They corroborate a now familiar pattern. At Spalding, the prior seems to have been as much the initiator as the victim of violence. The influence of Henry of Edenstowe, distinguished as the earliest known clerk of the parliament (1327–39), obtained licence in March 1333 for him and the convent 'to crenellate their priory', at a time when he and the abbot of Croyland were in armed conflict with Thomas Wake, lord of Liddel. Coincidence of timing might be even more striking, but no less equivocal or potentially misleading. The licence accorded to the monks of Selby to crenellate 'the church, close and dwelling-place of the abbey' bears the date 10 November, 1375, just four weeks after the abbot had procured an *oyer et terminer* to investigate an alleged violent intimidation of his men, so severe 'that they dared not leave the abbey'. For the licence to crenellate he paid half a mark hanaper fee and for the commission 40 shillings, which may not unfairly reflect the relative value of the two documents, but they were essentially complementary to each other, both aspects of the same juridical counter-attack.³⁶

Building operations were expensive and lengthy and it is clear that even close links in chronology, which in any case are rare, cannot be assumed to be causative. Suing out a grant of royal protection to avert violence, or a special judicial enquiry after the event, appears to have been the normal response to danger, or certainly so during the 14th century. The monks of Winchcombe, having found a royal protection unavailing to ward off a mob assault incited by the vicar of the parish church, promptly paid 20 shillings for an *oyer et terminer*. This was in 1360. Not until 1373 was their licence to crenellate 'their abbey and the houses and buildings of the same' procured through the good offices of Master John de Blanketre, king's clerk. Crenellation was part of a long-term seignorial strategy and was used by a significant number of houses and prelates, particularly (but not at all exclusively) by the wealthiest and most prestigious. Many religious establishments suffered some form of attack but did not seek licence to crenellate. Despite their unpopularity by the late 14th century, the orders of Friars did not respond in this way. And among the greater abbeys Winchcombe, rather than Abingdon, is typical. The details of the assault here in 1360 conform to the common pattern. The abbot, in his petition for the commission to be set up, alleged that the abbey was initially 'besieged . . . for no small time, so that for fear of death neither he nor his men . . . dared to go out to purchase victuals, and to do other things necessary for him and the abbey'.

Hostile lying-in-wait is all that is implied by 'besiege' in such cases. Deliberately emotive use of language, military metaphor and studied exaggeration is their common feature. One must dismiss images of the fortress *en pays de guerre*. Hampering the normal, everyday extramural activities of estate management and housekeeping could obviously not be countered by the physical barrier of any crenellated close or gates, however conspicuously these might flaunt the greatness of the house and advertise its legal and moral power to avenge insult. Fear was an appurtenance of

power, accepted as proper to the *très puissant et très redouté prince*, but that authority was not in essence military. The small body of resident servants in a monastic or cathedral precinct, to be more specific, was in no sense a garrison. Monks especially were canonically debarred from bearing arms, nor did their men normally carry them, and even in the largest abbeys the inmates' numbers were small, often tiny relative to the large claustral areas. In the phraseology of the commissions of *oyer et terminer* a strong element of stereotype has its own interest, apart from the peculiar idiosyncrasies of the case. Bureaucratic formalism describes these trials of strength as a procession of dramatic scenes. Confrontation between religious within and rabble without is the first stage, termed 'siege' more appropriately for its static than for its warlike quality. If defiance overcame deterrence, the war of nerves, in which only men and goods outside the precinct might be harmed, turned to violence with the forcing of entry to the precinct, normally accomplished by breaking in the gates, as at Winchcombe. Then ensued general robbery and pillage, intimidation (murder is remarkably rare), theft or destruction of seals and documents, accompanied by malicious but undoubtedly exemplary and deliberate damage. This humiliation and loss, deterrence having failed of its effect, crenellation and militant embellishment of the precinct walls, gates and interior buildings were powerless to mitigate.³⁷

There is a demonstrative, almost a ritual quality about these collisions of embattled and legitimate but sectional religious privilege, on the one side, with the arrogated or alternative authority arising from the general concert of citizenry and poor in momentary effervescence, on the other. They were open and public affairs, quite different from some nocturnal or furtive burglary. Although the normal precinct wall could undoubtedly be scaled, or even demolished without much difficulty, assault was constantly directed at the gates, which were usually the most solid part of the circuit, often possessing an apparently quite disproportionate 'strength'. But this would be to mistake their function; gatehouses were built as emblems of authority and attacked and damaged in the same spirit. Without altogether exceptional resources and danger both urgent and precisely predictable, fortification was necessarily piecemeal and progressive, as funds permitted each new campaign of work to be planned and carried out. Great church fabrics everywhere display the sporadic nature of construction imposed by funding out of income. The ecclesiastical lord, individual or corporate, was undoubtedly stimulated to crenellate by his subject's reluctance to accept his authority, but the slow rhythms of architectural construction could not easily be accelerated unless resources were princely. Aborting revolt was hardly possible. Crenellation, rather, was one of a number of ways in which the lordship of a religious house, grounded in lawful title and under the king's protection, might be strengthened by being demonstrated and fully used. Rights must never be allowed to lapse by failure to exercise them. Fortification was the outward and most visible sign of lordly powers for the ecclesiastical hierarchy no less than for the temporal baronage. Applied to the precinct wall, episcopal palace or structurally insignificant hospital or college, its function was to display a seignorial and spiritual untouchability so pronounced as to outface all challenge and to denote a place shielded by this dual aura of power. Conventual crenellation depended primarily, for its protective effect, on this associa-

tion with the metaphysics of authority. Physical and structural force was relatively unimportant, and if some element of bluster must be admitted it was not a bluff based on deception. Prominent among the *banalités* of life, contemporaries knew personally the sanctions which gave precincts their strength.³⁸

In England very few ecclesiastical establishments were fortified with the intention of resisting attack by organized and properly equipped troops, whereas in France, especially during the Hundred Years War, fortified precincts of all kinds made a large contribution to local defence, by receiving refugees with their movables and by serving as army bases. To consider these few exceptions may serve as an epilogue to this paper and as a reminder of the implications of genuine war. Tynemouth Priory, canonically a cell of St Alban's Abbey, is almost the sole example of what was commonplace in France in the *pays de guerre* and it is unique in the English Chancery enrolments. The licence to crenellate issued in the usual English fashion directly to the prior and convent in 1296 might seem to have been defensive rather than honorific in motive and thus again unique, but there are particular as well as general reasons for believing otherwise. It is true that the failure of Edward I's Scottish policy from 1298 began to threaten Northumberland and the March as a whole with Scottish retaliatory and pre-emptive raids. But the monks of Tynemouth had no reason to anticipate this prolonged disaster, nor would they have done it in this fashion. The terms of the licence are as conventional and enigmatic as usual and the king was at Berwick-on-Tweed, where he could conveniently be waited upon and petitioned. In contrast, the Scottish danger may well have prompted the Cistercian monks of Furness Abbey (Lancs.) to combine honour with necessity in procuring licence in 1327 for their refuge-castle or 'peel' on the Isle of Fouldray, and similarly the Cistercians of Holmcultram (Cumb.) in 1348, in respect of their dependency of Wolsty. Both places, to judge from their remains, were capable of affording effective protection but neither makes a figure in the records to rival the military importance of Tynemouth Priory which stands alone for continuous public utility.

In England, instances of royal subsidies for fortifying and garrisoning of strongholds are notably infrequent compared with similar circumstances in France. Royal takeover of seignorial fortresses under 'rendability', likewise very common in France, is also uncommon in England but the more significant when it does occur. Licences to crenellate were the most inexpensive form of patronage to the Crown, whereas grants of cash, and garrisons paid out of public resources, deserve to be taken seriously where defence is in question. By this test Tynemouth Priory's uniqueness among conventual fortifications is abundantly clear since from the aftermath of Bannockburn (1314) onwards it was consistently treated by the Crown as a fortress necessary to the defence of the East March. In 1318, 'for defence against the Scots' and by consent of the mother house, 'the dwelling-place of the priory' (presumably excluding the church and monks' quarters) was placed under a royal custodian. Administration of the lands of the monastic liberty and control of the monastic buildings were restored in 1322 to the prior, subject to his being personally answerable for the defence of the priory and keeping there 'a sufficient garrison of fencible men, both men-at-arms and footmen . . . not permitting the garrison to leave the priory or any of them to go outside the same'. On these conditions the royal

marcher captain was to co-operate, helping the prior to man and provision the fortress and monastery. It became a place of resort and lodging for magnates, soldiers and refugees, fulfilling the duties of an ordinary marcher castle, a fact acknowledged in 1388 when the priory was described as 'in time of war the castle and refuge of the whole country'. In 1390 revenues amounting to £500 over two years were allocated for the repair of the priory walls, great tower and gatehouse. Such measures were of some value, but they could only avert Scottish seizure and use of the place while retaining it for English military support. Fortification was still only a partial solution to the problems of brigandage and could do little to stop the devastation of extramural property and consequent shrinkage of the monks' revenues and numbers. The site was additionally, like nearby Bamburgh, a natural fortress on a coastal promontory, occupied as a place of strength long before the Norman Conquest, but much of its military value was contingent upon the constant maintenance of an expensive field army. As late as 1446 rights of prise were granted to the monks enabling them compulsorily to buy provisions for 'the castle and priory of Tynemouth'. The function even of such an exceptional conventual fortress, however vital, was a humble one.³⁹

Tynemouth Priory is for England a rare glimpse of arrangements normal in France, in fact highly institutionalized, from the post-Poitiers emergency (1356) onwards. Churches, abbeys and cathedrals, even episcopal palaces, were occupied by troops under direct or delegated royal command; were fortified, manned and maintained by *guet et garde* in cash or kind levied from the surrounding *plat pays*; and like any other fortress, these *moustiers forts*, or whatever, received in return refugee peasantry within their walls whenever attack was imminent. Grants of cash from the issues of local war-taxation were regularly allocated to them, as to any other fortress, for guard and upkeep, assimilating them almost entirely to the system of regional defence of the labouring populace and conservation of the means of subsistence on which economic survival depended. Like all other strong-places, again, conventual precincts were liable to be summarily razed (if possible respecting the church and cloister, unless their existence could endanger a nearby fortress) should they be judged too weak in structure or garrisoning potential to resist the attack which concentrations of wealth inevitably attracted. Enemy occupation, levying *appatis* and *rançons* from the defenceless countryside required ruthless prevention.

The legalized brigandage of national and civil war reveals in its true light the seigniorially demonstrative crenellation of English conventual precincts. The latter, in turn, is a world away from the advice given in the Rule of St Benedict: 'Let there be stationed at the gate of the monastery some wise old man who knows how to give and receive an answer and whose age will not allow him to wander from his post'.⁴⁰

APPENDIX

CONVENTUAL LICENCES TO CREPELLATE 1200-1536

NOTES

1. Abbreviations under 'Order' are as used by M. D. Knowles and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses* (London, 1971); (brackets) signify that the convent was not the licensee.
2. Figures under 'Income' are as Knowles and Hadcock at c. 1535 unless otherwise stated.
3. References are to the printed calendar of the appropriate year and excerpts given in T. H. Turner and J. H. Parker, *Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England* (Oxford, 1851-59), (as 'SA'), vol. III, when included in that list. CPR = *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*.
4. Scope of this list: communal ecclesiastical sites as close walls, gatehouses, clergy houses within or adjacent to precincts, hospitals, etc. excluding extramural manor-houses etc. of abbeys, priories, bishoprics.
5. A previous licence for the same (or similar) work is indicated by date under 'Order'.

YEAR	MONTH	CO.	PLACE	ORDER	DETAILS OF LICENCE	INCOME	REFERENCES
1271	Oct.	Worcs.	in Worcester Cath. close	(B)	Bp. Godfrey's 'houses within his close of W.'	(£1290)	CPR 580
1286	Mar.	Som.	Wells Cath. and Canons' close	S	Cath. 'churchyard' and 'Canons' precinct'	£729	CPR 229
1290	Oct.	Dev.	Exeter, Bishop's Palace	(S)	to 'wall, strengthen and crenellate'	(£1179)	CPR 393; SA 403
1293	Dec.	Glos.	in Hailes Abbey	C	'chambers newly built within their abbey'	£120 (1290) £357	CPR 55; SA 404
1296	Sept.	Nbr.	Tynemouth Priory	B	'to crenellate their priory'	£730 (1526)	CPR 197; SA 404
1298	Aug.	Yorks.	in York Minster Close	(S)	'houses of John of Caen in the close'	(£747)	CPR 358; SA 404
1299	Apr.	Staffs.	Lichfield Cath. close	S	'precinct of bp.'s and canons' houses in close'	£275	CPR 409; SA 404
1302	Feb.	Yorks.	by York Minster close	S	Dean's house 'adjoining churchyard'	£747	CPR 19; SA 404
1306	Sept.	Lincs.	Temple Bruer	KT	'to make and crenellate a great gate'	£177 (1308-38)	CPR 462
1308	July	Nhts.	Peterborough Abbey	B	'the gate of the abbey and two chambers'	£1679	CPR 135; SA 406
1308	Oct.	Kent	Canterbury, St Augustine's	B	'a chamber over the gate of the abbey'	£1413	CPR 144; SA 406
1316	Feb.	Lincs.	Lincoln Cath. precinct	S	entire precinct, including a lane etc.	£575	CPR 436
1318	July	Yorks.	York, St Mary's Abbey	B	'to crenellate their abbey' outside city	£1650	CPR 190; SA 408
1318	Dec.	Lincs.	Lincoln Cath. precinct	1316	Feb. 12' limit removed; turrets licensed	<i>supra</i>	CPR 257
1322	June	Dev.	Exeter, Bishop's palace	1290	for 'close and dwelling-place of palace'	<i>supra</i>	CPR 140; SA 408
1327	Aug.	Wilts.	Salisbury Cath. close	S	'to crenellate the close of their church'	£601	CPR 159; SA 408
1327	Oct.	Norf.	St Benet of Hulme Abbey	B	'protect the site . . . with a wall and crenellate'	£583	CPR 183; SA 422
1327-28	—	Norf.	Norwich Bp's palace	(B)	P.S. warrant; palace and manors	(£874)	SA 422
1329	Sept.	Lincs.	Lincoln, Bp's palace	(S)	to extend, raise walls of palace close	(£575)	CPR 453; SA 409

YEAR MONTH	CO.	PLACE	ORDER	DETAILS OF LICENCE	INCOME	REFERENCES
1330 July	Berks.	Abingdon Abbey and St John's	B	'whole site of their abbey' and hospital	£1876	CPR 547; SA 409
1332 May	Worcs.	Evesham Abbey	B	'their house over the gates of the abbey'	£1183	CPR 283; SA 410
1333 Mar.	Lincs.	Spalding Priory	B	'to crenellate their priory'	£933	CPR 411; SA 410
1336 Mar.		Evesham Abbey	1332	also 'chapel and houses by abbey gate'	<i>supra</i>	CPR 230; SA 411
1336 June	Nbr.	Bolton Hospital	H	'to crenellate the dwelling-place'	£31	CPR 279
1337 Aug.	Wilts.	Salisbury (Bp's palace)	(S)	8 extramural manors and 'manors of S.'	(£601)	CPR 498; SA 411
1337 Oct.	Dev.	Buckland Abbey	C	'dwelling-place and church'	£241	CPR 529; SA 412
1338 June	Suss.	Battle Abbey	B	'to crenellate the site of their abbey'	£880	CPR 92; SA 412
1340 Mar.	Som.	Wells Cath. and Canons' close	1286	'churchyard and precinct of houses of Bp. and Canons'	<i>supra</i>	CPR 446; SA 412
1344 July	Yorks.	Guisborough Priory	A	'to crenellate their dwelling-place of G.'	£628	CPR 316; SA 414
1345 Aug.	Kent	Rochester Cath. Priory	B	new crenellated wall extending close	£486	CPR 539; SA 414
1346 Sept.	Norf.	Langley Abbey	P	'a belfry within the abbey'	{ £178 (1291) £104	CPR 164; SA 414
1348 Mar.	Kent	(West) Langdon Abbey	P	'to crenellate the gate or gatehouse'	{ £25 (1291) £56	CPR 38; SA 415
1348 Apr.	Staffs.	Lichfield Cath. close	1299	'so that only the Bp. and canons have transit'	<i>supra</i>	CPR 56
1348 July	Lancs.	Whalley Abbey	C	'their church and the close of their abbey'	£321	CPR 124; SA 415
1357 June	Herts.	St Alban's Abbey	B	'the dwelling-place of their abbey'	£2102	CPR 574; SA 416
1359 Oct. <i>bis</i>	Wilts.	Edington College	AB	pardon <i>and</i> licence; 'dwelling-place'	£442	CPR 290, 297; SA 416
1360 July	Suss.	Lewes Priory	BC	'their priory and the church and houses'	£920	CPR 444; SA 416
1362 July	Yorks.	Drax Priory	A	'to crenellate their church and belfry'	£92	CPR 237; SA 416
1365 Oct.	Hants.	Quarr Abbey	C	blanket licence for close and in I.O.W.	{ £109 (1291) £134	CPR 168; SA 416
1366 Sept.	Essex	Waltham Abbey	A	'the belfry of their abbey partly ruined'	{ £210 (1266) £900	CPR 309
1367 Oct.	Dors.	Shaftesbury Abbey	BN	'to crenellate their church and belfry'	{ £590 (1291) £1166	CPR 10; SA 416
1369 Feb.	Worcs.	Worcester Cath. Priory	B	'their priory and the houses and buildings'	£1290	CPR 216; SA 417
1369 Apr.	Essex	Waltham Abbey	1366	'to crenellate their abbey'	<i>supra</i>	CPR 245; SA 417
1373 Mar.	Gloucs.	Winchcombe Abbey	B	'their abbey and the houses and buildings'	£759	CPR 260; SA 417

YEAR MONTH	CO.	PLACE	ORDER	DETAILS OF LICENCE	INCOME	REFERENCES
1374 Feb.	Yorks.	in Harpham churchyard	—	'a belfry in the churchyard'	N/A	CPR 407; SA 417
1375 Nov.	Yorks.	Selby Abbey	B	'their church close and dwelling'	£606	CPR 192; SA 417
1377 Mar.	Ches.	Chester, St Werburgh's	B	'to crenellate their abbey'	£1003	CPR 442; SA 417
1377 July	Wilts.	Salisbury (Bp's palace)	1337	8 manors, city of S. and 'manor of S.'	<i>supra</i>	CPR 9; SA 418
1377 Nov.	Ches.	Chester, St Werburgh's	1377	'to enclose and crenellate abbey and church'	<i>supra</i>	CPR 56
1379 Feb.	Middx.	Westminster, St James'	H	'pardon' for 'a small tower in Hospital'	£100 (1531)	CPR 325
1382 Aug.	Lincs.	Thornton Abbey	A	'a new house over and beside abbey gate'	£235 (1291) £591	CPR 166; SA 419
1385 Oct.	Middx.	London, in Carmelites' close	FC	M. de Well's 'dwelling in her lodging'	(no inf.)	CPR 42; SA 419
1388 May	Yorks.	Bridlington Priory	A	'to crenellate the priory'	£547	CPR 439; SA 420
1389 May	Lincs.	Thornton Abbey	1382	'to crenellate the abbey'	<i>supra</i>	CPR 28; SA 420
1449 June	Lincs.	Eagle Manor	KH	'to embattle, crenellate and machicolate'	£122 (1308-38) £124	<i>C. Chart. R.</i> , VI, 112-13
1451 Mar.	Som.	Wells Cath. and Canons' close	1340	to carry out incomplete works	1340 <i>supra</i>	CPR 473
1523 June	Staffs.	Lichfield Cath. close	1348	confirmation of 1299 and 1348	<i>supra</i>	Letters and Papers, III, 2, no. 3146 (20)

NOTES

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² Charter Roll licences predominate from shortly after Henry VI's minority (1435) until 1474 (eighteen examples, interspersed with patents), but charters occur sporadically from 1199 without differentiation. They often confer such seigniorial and lucrative rights as parks, jurisdiction and markets. Examples of earlier royal charters including licence to crenellate or fortify are 1127, Rochester 'tower'; 1141, Geoffrey de Mandeville, two sites; 1149, Rannulph of Chester (tower in Lincoln Castle); 1153, Robert fitz Harding (Bitton *alias* Berkeley, Gloucs.) *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, II, 203; *ibid.*, III, 99-103, 64-65, 117. A 'List of English Royal Licences to Crenellate' is in preparation for *Medieval Archaeology*. Formulae are mostly very standardized according to date but the essential for inclusion there (and in this article) is an explicit royal act of approval, anticipatory or *ex post facto*. We are not concerned here with the (dozen or so) palatinate licences of Durham, Chester or Lancaster (after 1351) even when 'royal' (e.g. Doddington, Ches., 1364; *Register of Edward the Black Prince*, III, 469), nor with those prior to enrolment, or Tudor licences after 1535. For a general discussion see C. Coulson, 'Structural Symbolism in Medieval Castle Architecture', *J. British Archaeol. Assoc.*, cxxxii, 1979, 73-90.

³ Counting as one cases of corporate and plural grantees (chapters, townspeople, joint-feeoffees, etc.). Sites outnumber grantees owing to (1) licensing *en bloc* (note 5 below); (2) individuals receiving more than one licence; and (3) owing to sites repeatedly re-licensed (below). The most common aid and approval given to urban fortification was by grant of cash, materials or licence for tolls ('murage'; for quite full list and discussion see H. L. Turner, *Town Defences in England and Wales* (London, 1971), 227-43 *et passim*). Also 25 towns obtained licence (a few issued to the mesne lord) to crenellate in England, Wales, Ireland and the Channel Isles (one example, St Peter Port, Guernsey, 1350, *Calendar of the Patent Rolls* (hereinafter *C.P.R.*), 1348-50, 478). Urban houses, other than those within clerical enclosures to be dealt with below, received nineteen licences, thirteen of these being in London, Westminster and environs.

⁴ Local and national troubles explain Isle of Portland, Dec. 1257 and Nov. 1259; Sedgewick, Sussex, Nov. 1258 and March 1262; Grimston, Notts., Feb. and March 1264; and Perching, Sussex, Feb. and March 1264, Feb. 1268. This place was again licensed in 1329 (*C.P.R.*, 1247-58, 607; *ibid.*, 1258-66, I, 11, 206, 307, 381, 382; *ibid.*, 1266-72, 189; *ibid.*, 1327-30, 357).

⁵ The most comprehensive are the licence for seven episcopal manors, London inn and palace of the bishop of Salisbury of 1337, renewed (July) 1377; Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford's 1347 licence for ten manors; and the bishop of Chichester's block licence for Amberley, Sussex (a renewal of 1377, Dec.) and eleven other manors, in 1447 (*C.P.R.*, 1334-38, 498; *ibid.*, 1345-48, 450; *ibid.*, 1377-81, 76; *Calendar of the Charter Rolls* (hereinafter *C. Chart. R.*), VI, 94-95). Lesser lords also had the royal chancery endorse wholesale and provisional schemes for manorial embellishment.

⁶ Thomas de Brantingham's licence as Bishop of Exeter (Treasurer 1369-71, 1377-81, 1389) in 1379 allowed him to build one *fortalicium* at Chudleigh *vel alibi ubi melius sibi placuerit super terras suas proprias infra episcopatum suum Exonie*. Walter Langton in 1306 had licence for Beadesert (Warks.), Ashby David (Northants.) *et alibi per omnia loca quae idem episcopus habet in Anglia*. He may have been prudently guarding against malicious litigation by his enemies (certainly not their physical attack), such as did ensue after Edward I's death. Hugh Despenser the elder was also exceptionally privileged, obtaining licence in 1311 to crenellate *omnes domos et cameras in quibuscunque maneriis suis in regno nostro*.

⁷ For some statistics of lay grantees see note 11 below. Totals of licences of all kinds per (old) county, with conventional licence totals in brackets, are: Beds. 2; Berks. 8, (1); Bucks. 10; Cambs. 3; Ches. 8* (2); Cornw. & Scilly 6; Cumb. 18; Derbys. 3; Devon 24 (3); Dorset 20 (1); Durham 2*; Essex 19 (2); Gloucs. 14 (2); Hants. 8 (1); Herefs. 7; Herts. 7 (1); Hunts. 0; Kent 31 (3); Lancs. 9* (1); Leics. 8; Lincs. 18 (8); London & Middx. 15 (2); Norf. 18 (3); Northants. 15 (1); Northumb. 26 (2); Notts. 3; Oxon. 15; Rutland 1; Salop. 15; Som. 14 (3); Staffs. 14 (3); Suff. 13; Surrey 6; Sussex 36 (2); Warks. 13; Westm. 3; Wilts. 24 (5); Worcs. 7 (4); Yorks. 70 (8). *Durham and Chester from soon after the Conquest, and Lancaster from 1351, were palatinates issuing their own licences. The total of 562 licences from 1200 until the Dissolution on the Rolls is completed by Channel Isles 1, Wales 4, Ireland 9, Scotland 2 and Gascony 3 (misplaced on the English records) with 4 other English without specified sites. Vagaries of indexing of all sources used have necessitated *extenso* reading.

⁸ A total of 135 out of 562 licences (1 : 4¼ approx.) was issued to clerics down to 1535. Comparison between the king's itinerary and sites licensed reveals a clear link. His presence or proximity evidently stimulated non-courtier licensees lacking petitioning-agents at court (names often given helpfully in patents) to get themselves presented and obtain a licence. Edward I's stay in Gascony in 1289 produced a very large number of licences sought by obscure squires and *donzels* who thronged to meet their now-famous Duke at the height of his prestige and success (Gascon licences to 1317 analysed in C. L. H. Coulson, 'Seignorial Fortresses in France in Relation to Public Policy c. 864-c. 1483', University of London Ph.D. thesis (February 1972), appendix B, 3). Licences are discussed in the context of gentry *moeurs* by N. Denholm-Young in brief notes in his *History and Heraldry* (Oxford, 1965), 77-78, and in *The Country Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1969), 34-38, working from the incomplete list (377 licences) given by T. H. Turner and J. H. Parker, *Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England* (Oxford, 1851-59), III, 401-22 (p. 414 in error gives as a licence to the Augustinians of Shrewsbury what is in fact a mortmain grant covering part of the crenellated city wall with two mural towers, under 1345; *C.P.R.*, 1345-48, 11). Denholm-Young adds a few licences missed by Parker's record-searchers. His comments are often illuminating but betray some unresolved conflict between the quoted remark (text, below; *Country Gentry*, 36) and others implying some crown 'right to control fortifications' (*ibid.*, 35). This fundamental misunderstanding about the relationship of fortresses with the aims of public authority has misled serious scholars (e.g. E. S. Armitage, *The Early Norman Castles of the British Isles* (London, 1912), 377-78) but see W. Mackay Mackenzie's realistic caution, 'on licences to build a tower or fortalice', *The Medieval Castle in Scotland* (London, 1927), app. A, and the measured equivocation of A. Hamilton Thompson, in his brief but valuable discussion of precinct and other licences (*Military Architecture in England during the Middle Ages* (London, 1912), 298-304, 307-08; cf. 89-90).

⁹ The inquisition *post mortem* on Thomas de Gurney in 1343 disclosed that he was paying 6s. 8d. annually for licence to crenellate East Harptree (Som.; *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem* (hereinafter *C. Inq. P.M.*), VIII, 287; cf. *ibid.*, III, 206-07). This is unique. One such payment, on enrolment of the warrant and its release to the grantee, was the rule with only rare exceptions. Hanaper fees made the chancery self-financing and contrast with fines for revenue-raising e.g. for subinfeudation and mortmain licences which paid (erratically) *ad valorem* duties, and were rigorously enforced as a result (e.g. *C.P.R.*, 1313-17, 31. Licence for Yardlington, Som., among a batch of mortmain licences; *ibid.*, 1317-21, 152 *et passim*). The 'control over fortification', exercised by William the Marshall and then Hubert de Burgh during Henry III's minority, was aimed at preserving the peace (won after the battle of Lincoln in 1217), repressing war-like occupation of sensitive places and provocative fortifying by small men beyond their proper station. Illicit wartime seizures and fortifying (namely *castra adulterina*) had to be reversed or regularized to reassert the rule of law. There was no prejudice against seignorial castles as such. The period between the Provisions of Oxford and the fall of Kenilworth (1258-66) and the aftermath of the war is prolific in licences (27 sites 1258-68, out of 50 for 1216-72). Royal orders on the Rolls prohibiting fortifying or crenellation are very scarce after c. 1232. Interference was more likely to be due to local officiousness or resentment, but still highly rare (e.g. *Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III* (hereinafter *Close R.*), XII, 129-30; *ibid.*, XI, 283-84; *ibid.*, XIV, 292; *C.P.R.*, 1247-58, 134; *ibid.*, 1350-54, 218; *Calendar of the Close Rolls* (hereinafter *C.C.R.*), 1374-77, 11; cf. *Rotuli Hundredorum* (1834), I, 436b, 519b, 521a; *ibid.*, II, 7b). A few licences are technically pardons for unlicensed crenellation but the formula should not be taken too literally (see my 'Castellation in the County of Champagne in the Thirteenth Century', *Château Gaillard*, IX-X (1980), 46-62, note 58 *et passim*, forthcoming). Some apparently very restrictive licences may have resulted from halting of unlicensed work, as at Moccas, Herefs., in 1293 (*C.P.R.*, 1292-1301, 23; P.R.O. ref. E159/66, 6340, for

which my thanks are made to Dr H. M. Colvin), but the numbers would still be insignificant relative to 562 issued licences and negligible by comparison with the number of newly fortified sites of the period c. 1180–c. 1550, disclosed by King's work (note 1 above) totalling 830. Moreover, it would be infinitesimal by relation to the number of new and supplementary crenellated works built in the period and falling within the most modest criteria of suppositious 'liability' to licensing. Churches alone, crenellated in some fashion, may well exceed 6,000 (note 12 below). Manors, castles, houses, etc., would have been at least as numerous. The grand total puts even the 562 licences into truer perspective.

¹⁰ *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, II, 307. Comparing licences for the three northern counties with new sites c. 1180–c. 1550 from King's catalogue (note 9 above) produces these totals: Westmorland, new sites 33, licences 3; Cumberland, 107, 18; Northumberland, 271, 26. In reality, no feudal or sub-feudal ruler could either in law or in practice deny to his vassal the protection by self-help fortifying which he, as lord, had failed to provide.

¹¹ Among the 380 recipients of licences (1200–1535) few are of baronial rank but there is an interesting frequency of inheritors of fragments of baronies. Great magnates are few, the majority of licensees being 'new men', but 20 earls and archbishops (some newly created) obtained licence to crenellate.

¹² The conventual licences are given in the Appendix, below. Crenellation of the manors of abbacy or bishopric did enhance the dignity of the incumbent's office, of course, whereas Acton Burnell passed to Robert's relatives and Somerton reverted to the Crown on the death of Bek (Bishop of Durham 1284–1311). Most of the licences to bishops relate to the temporalities of their sees. Only four abbeys had licences for extramural manors; no priories had a licence in this category. Friaries, understandably, received no licence at all.

¹³ The term 'conventual' throughout includes all religious communities, monastic or not; see M. D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, 2nd ed., 1963), down to 1216, and broadly down to Mary Tudor, *The Religious Orders in England* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1960–61). Specific references are too numerous to list, but on canonical exemption, see *The Monastic Order*, ch. 33, and on friction between houses and dependent towns, see *The Religious Orders*, I, ch. 12. Details of houses of all kinds are tabulated in M. D. Knowles and R. N. Hadock, *Medieval Religious Houses* (London, 2nd ed. 1971), used below without further reference. They are located on the *O.S. Map of Monastic Britain* (Southampton, 1953, 2 sheets). An up-to-date synthesis of information is R. Morris, *Cathedrals and Abbeys of England and Wales* (London, 1979), concentrating on 75 greater churches drawn from over 9,000 surviving buildings. Of the total the great majority are solidly built in stone, a high proportion having crenellated features, especially towers. Only one instance has been found on the Rolls of interference with church crenellation (Wigton, Cumb., 1374; *C.P.R.*, 1374–77, 11), when officious action by the escheator, possible corrupt, was promptly over-ruled. Wigton had been expressly 'crenellated for defence'. C. Kelland, 'Ecclesiae Incastellatae: a documentary and architectural study . . .', University of London M.Phil. thesis (pending), will break new ground.

¹⁴ *C.P.R.*, 1281–92, 161. References abound in the Rolls to closing lanes, walling precincts, opening special posterns through town walls and to access through closes to them for defence. Cathedral closes licensed to be walled (effectively but not explicitly with battlements) are Exeter, 1286, 1340 (*ibid.*, 215; *C.P.R.*, 1339–41, 350); London and York, 1285 (*C.P.R.*, 1281–92, 164–65); Hereford, 1389 (*ibid.*, 1388–92, 160). Friars needed privacy no less though their work was among the laity. On friary closes set up in Shrewsbury, Lewes, Oxford, Chester, Winchester, Lincoln, York, and Cambridge see e.g. *Close R.*, IV, 402; V, 207, 311, 339, 445; *C.P.R.*, 1232–47, 447; *ibid.*, 1247–58, 652; *ibid.*, 1281–92, 474, 482; *C. Chart. R.*, II, 12, 112, for the 13th century.

¹⁵ Louis XI confirmed the 1358 charter but in 1478 had to instruct the judges of the *Parlement* to expedite litigation between clergy and city, having augmented the cathedral endowment, 'since the enclosing and jurisdiction of their precinct touches our said donations, our christian devotion and our conscience' (Martène and Durand, *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum* . . . , II (Paris, 1717), cols. 531–32; *Ordonnances des Roys de France* . . . , XVI (Paris, 1814), 264–66; *Lettres de Louis XI* . . . , ed. J. Vaesen and E. Charavay, VI (Paris, 1898), 295–96). The safety of valuables and documents was an important concern of ecclesiastical (and of lay) fortification, see e.g. C. Oman, 'Security in English Churches', *Archaeological J.*, 136 (1979), 90–98.

¹⁶ The problems of the cathedral clergy of Winchester in ensuring the privacy and near-monopoly of use of their close are an instructive parallel with Meaux, and nearly as prolonged (*C.P.R.*, 1348–50, 384–85, 424–26; *ibid.*, 1370–74, 465; *C. Chart. R.*, V, 271; *C.P.R.*, 1494–1509, 344). On gatehouses, lay and clerical, see M. E. Wood, *The English Medieval House* (London, 1965), 155–65. In the great enquiry of 1275–76 the jurors in York alleged that the monks of St Mary had refused entry to the city bailiffs and coroners to investigate a murder in the precinct (*Rotuli Hundredorum*, I, 120a). Sanctuary rights for 'the close of the canons and vicars' of Salisbury were sought successfully in 1317 (*C. Chancery Warrants*, I, 470–71). Criminals admitted to sanctuary might abuse the right, as at Llandaff in 1316, during Llewellyn Bren's revolt (*C.C.R.*, 1313–18, 365). Turner, *op. cit.* in note 3, chapter VI, discusses 'non-military' uses of town defences under the heading 'embattled majesty'. Rights analogous to those of the *ville fermée* attached to the walled free-boroughs of Britain.

¹⁷ Cluny, in Burgundy, Benedictine mother-house of the great monastic organization in the late 10th century, had its own, almost unique immunity in the form of an extensive *banlieue*, about 35 miles by 20, within which all alien castellation was prohibited by conciliar and royal sanction (*Thesaurus . . . Anecdotorum*, note 15 above, IV (Paris, 1717), cols. 73–76; *Catalogue des Actes de Robert II* . . . , ed. R. M. Newman (Paris, 1937), 18–19; also 'Seigniorial Fortresses . . .', note 8 above, app. C(3), 'Regional and particular bans on fortification in France', *passim*). The Canterbury MS. is reproduced in *The Flowering of the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Evans (London, 1966), 55. Rivalry with St Augustine's began to tilt in favour of the cathedral after Becket's murder in 1170. King Stephen may have licensed the close to be crenellated in c. 1135–40 (*Regesta R. A. N.*, note 2 above, III, 59; Coulson, 'Structural Symbolism . . .', note 2 above, n. 34; cf. *Recueil des Actes de Henri II* . . . , ed. L. Delisle, I (Paris, 1916), 208), but Edward I certainly did for the lofty gatehouse fronting towards the cathedral, in 1308 (*C.P.R.*, 1307–13, 144; cf. Turner and Parker, *op. cit.* in note 8, III, 406; viz. *quandam cameram ultra portam abbatae suae quam de novo fieri faciunt*). On St Mary's Abbey see

C.P.R., 1317–21, 190; *Rotuli Hundredorum*, I, 120a; *C.P.R.*, 1348–50, 496–97, 530; *ibid.*, 1350–54, 392–93; *ibid.*, 1354–58, 84–86; A. B. Whittingham, 'St Mary's Abbey, York: an interpretation of its plan', *Archaeol. J.*, 128 (1971), 116–46.

¹⁸ Prior to the 1315 (or possibly the 1316) Lincoln patent, agreement was reached with the citizens, carefully recorded in the 1329 general royal charter. The clergy were buying up property within and adjacent for the extended close. Their reiterated patents (1315, Sept. 1st; 1316, Feb. 21st and 24th) indicate a cautious aggrandisement, territorial and seignorial, in face of townspeople who in 1389 and 1393 rose in serious insurrection (*C.Chart.R.*, IV, 111–12; *C.P.R.*, 1313–17, 361–62, 435–36; *ibid.*, 1391–96, 429; *C.C.R.*, 1389–92, 123, 135). On problems of lawlessness a valuable recent summary is R. W. Kaeuper, 'Law and Order in Fourteenth-Century England . . .', *Speculum*, LIV, 4, 1979, 734–84, using the evidence of commissions of *oyer et terminer*. The 'breaking of the close' of Fulbourn Manor, Cambs., in 1389 using ladders and even a 'gunne', is one of many such incidents (*C.P.R.*, 1388–92, 134, 150).

¹⁹ Morris, *op. cit.* in note 13, 117, 258 on pre-existing Roman walls and the building phases at Lincoln. Already in 1137 the bishop's palace extended to the city wall, upon which Bishop Alexander was allowed by King Stephen to erect 'useful buildings' (platrines), and to pierce entrances through it. Among the charters confirmed in 1329 (Feb. 15th) to Bishop Burgerssh was Henry II's licence of 1155–58 for encroachment upon the bailey of the castle. To build the Angel Choir a section of the city wall was demolished with Henry III's permission in 1255, after inquisition *ad quod damnum*. Renewal for seven years of a murage grant to the citizens (1258) suggests a vigorous response on their part. Notwithstanding the expansion and crenellation of the precinct authorized in 1315–18, in 1327 the dean and chapter were planning further extension at the expense of both city wall and castle bailey.

²⁰ The Savoy Palace was licensed in 1293 to be crenellated by Edmund of Lancaster, perhaps inaugurating a fashion in and around the city. Its 'houses, walls and enclosures' are mentioned in 1324. Henry of Lancaster's inquisition *post mortem* (1362) shows it comprised nine shops and 'the messuage called the "Saveye"'. This 'manor' was burned in the 1381 insurrection but any causal link with Mathilda de Well's licence seems improbable (*C.P.R.*, 1292–1301, 3; *ibid.*, 1324–27, 4; *C. Inq. P.M.*, XI, 232; *C.C.R.*, 1381–85, 7).

²¹ After the troubles of Henry III (e.g. note 9 above) licences explicitly for work of sub-fortification are rare because of the highly standardized phrascology. Twelve feet was specified for York Minster precinct wall (note 14 above), and for Lincoln (1285), sixteen feet for St Mary's Abbey walls adjoining the city defences (note 17 above), and for Rochester priory extension (*C.P.R.*, 1232–47, 477; *ibid.*, 1343–45, 262; 539; *ibid.*, 1467–77, 370–71). In 1256, about fourteen feet was treated as acceptable for the precinct wall of Rouen Cathedral. In 1194 it was razed by the citizens during a riot (*Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, III (Paris, 1875), 314; *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France*, ed. J. H. Round (1899), 18). Sensitivity especially in towns to being overlooked and spied on by the laity reinforced the prestigious motive to build high (e.g. *Close R.*, V, 207, friars in Lewes, 1244; *Recueil . . . Cluny*, V, 821–22, a dispute in 1209 over the height of a Cluniac building in Lyon allegedly injurious to the nearby 'fortification of the close' of the cathedral).

²² Burgerssh was in trouble with Edward II, being forfeited and exiled in 1322, when one Roger de Cave was arrested for wearing the bishop's livery. Temporalities were restored in 1324, including the castles of Sleaford, Newark and Banbury (*C.C.R.*, 1318–23, 451; *ibid.*, 1323–27, 85–86; *C.P.R.*, 1321–24, 195). Not until Edward's overthrow was his-position assured. The castle no less than the city had suffered from the combined pressure of bishop and canons. Though by now militarily irrelevant the castle was still a virile lordship-seat. Thomas of Lancaster's death in 1322 prevented assertion of the earl's rights, but his widow Alice de Lacy secured inquisition and order to the burgesses to observe them in 1331 as Countess of Lincoln (*C.C.R.*, 1330–33, 255). Henry de Lacy, her father, had died in 1311. Alice deserted Thomas in 1317. Over the crucial period of expansion the cathedral clergy met little comital resistance, it would appear.

²³ Despite its modernistic title J. T. Rosenthal, *The Purchase of Paradise* (London, 1972), especially ch. 3 on chantries, comprehensively surveys the sociological aspects of pious bequests of all kinds by the laity 1307–1485. The link between chapel-foundation and castellation deserves attention but is beyond our present purpose.

²⁴ Langton's case dragged on for five years after 1307 but he was cleared in 1312, see A. Beardwood, *Trans. American Philosophical Society*, N.S. 54, 3 (1964), 1–45. His career was a mixture 'of financial acumen, personal attention to the business in hand, and a ruthlessness which, if applied to the king's affairs may have secured results appreciated by the Crown' (*ibid.*, 37–38).

²⁵ In July 1341 the townsmen obtained an extension of their free borough privileges (under charters of 1201, 1293), into which new patent was inserted ' . . . that they may enclose and fortify their said borough according to the ancient bounds thereof with a wall of mortar and stone and with dykes, and may crenellate the wall and so hold the same'. The learned Bishop Ralph of Shrewsbury seems to have applied pressure since this charter was revoked *per considerationem curie* shortly afterwards. This is almost the only instance of quashing of a licence to crenellate (cf. Oxford town, licensed during the Peasants' Revolt). In 1346 ' . . . the palace . . . or any houses within its gates or any houses of the said canons . . . ' were exempted from all intrusion by crown officials whether for holding judicial sessions or 'entertainment', without clerical permission. Legal immunity, as elsewhere, completed the crenellation package. In 1451 the 1340 licence was confirmed, in terms suggesting continuing jurisdictional competition with the city (*C.P.R.*, 1281–92, 229; *ibid.*, 1338–40, 466; *ibid.*, 1381–85, 16; *ibid.*, 1446–52, 473; *C.Chart. R.*, II, 358; *ibid.*, V, 6–7, 52).

²⁶ Some bishops, of course, were already provided for like the see of Winchester with its fortress-palaces of Wolvesey and Bitterne. Godfrey of Worcester may have received an unenrolled licence for Hartlebury in 1268 (but see *C.P.R.*, 1266–72, 704, denying that patents could issue without 'registration') as well as one (enrolled) for Withington. At Exeter the 1290 licence to wall and have gates to the close, shut at night, proved ineffective in excluding malefactors, a problem ordered to be rectified in 1340, with the help of the mayor and bailiffs. Immunity from intrusion by royal officials was granted to the close in 1446. Exeter seems to have been largely free of the tension which embittered city-cathedral relations in Norwich, notably in 1272–76. Bishop John in 1319 had a mortmain licence to acquire land

in the city to enlarge his palace, culminating in Airmyn's Privy Seal licence to crenellate, which also covered the manors of the bishopric (*C.C.R.*, 1272-79, 300-01; *ibid.*, 1339-41, 350; *C.P.R.*, 1272-81, 157; *ibid.*, 1281-92, 393; *ibid.*, 1317-21, 271; *ibid.*, 1321-24, 140; *ibid.*, 1441-46, 451-52; Turner and Parker, *op. cit.* in note 8, III, 422).

²⁷ See M. Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages* (London, 1967), 506-09.

²⁸ In 1229 the Cistercian Chapter-General directed that all abbots should fully use their jurisdiction and in all houses in *quibus fieri poterit, fortes et firmi carceres construantur*, apparently for more than internal discipline (*Thesaurus* . . . *Ancedotorum*, IV, 1350-51; cf. Knowles, *op. cit.* in note 13, *Religious Orders*, I, 93-95). The Cistercians of Coggeshall were licensed in 1204 to enclose and impark (*fossato et sepe vel palicio, et portis et seris*), to fell trees as well as take firewood, and to hunt with unclawed (i.e. fully clawed) hounds. Keynsham Abbey had licence for a rabbit warren enclosed by a stone wall, in 1280 (*Rot. Chart.*, 114b; *C.P.R.*, 1272-81, 371). For other monastic licences to crenellate buildings other than precinct walls or gatehouses (dealt with in the next section), see Appendix.

²⁹ The abbot declared that he had lately built 'a good fortification' in Saint-Riquier Abbey and two more in dependent manors, as the inquisition verified (*Les Olim*, I, 917-18. The calendar by E. Boutaric in *Actes du Parlement*, I, 1, 172, is inadequate and on the Nevers-La Charité case, *ibid.*, 113; cf. *Les Olim*, I, 719-20, seriously misleading).

³⁰ For ducal Gascon licences to fortify 1214-1317 see Coulson, 'Seigniorial Fortresses . . .', *op. cit.* in note 8, app. 8 (3), where tabulated in detail, and thereafter *Foedera*, I, II (1816), 981; *ibid.*, II, II (1821), 856; cf. *ibid.*, III, II (1830), 807. A typical saving clause in Edward I's licence of 1304 (on regaining seisin of the duchy) for Villeneuve near Bourq is . . . *absque juris prejudicio alicujus* (*Rôles Gascons*, III, 428).

³¹ The phrase quoted is that of Sir John Hackett (foreword, R. A. Brown, M. Prestwich and C. Coulson, *Castles, A History and Guide* (Poole, 1980). The concept is outlined by him more fully in his foreword to W. F. D. Anderson, *Castles of Europe* . . . (London, 1970). It applies particularly well to claustral defences. The precise subject of a conventual licence to crenellate (see Appendix) deserves attention. When expressed as relating to the house as a whole (e.g. 'to crenellate their priory', 1333, Spalding; 'to crenellate their abbey', renewed in the same year as 'licence to enclose and crenellate their abbey and church', 1377, Chester) both the close wall and the buildings within it were evidently covered indifferently. In fact, buildings potentially defensible at some level (e.g. *cameræ*, a term often used for detached units; 'chambers over a gate', even 'a great gate' at Temple Bruer 1306; but note the absence of any term for 'gatehouse') are not differentiated from those whose crenellation can only have been ostentatious. Moreover, in modern terminology 'crenels' are the embrasures in a parapet but in the records 'battlementing' as a whole is normally meant, whether defensive or symbolic (for instances see e.g. *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls*, I, 1916, 46, 220, 491; *ibid.*, II, 1930, 218; *ibid.*, III, 1936, 130, 244-45, 332).

³² J. G. Edwards, 'Edward I's Castle-Building in Wales', *Proc. British Academy*, xxxii (1944), 15, 64-65 *et passim*; R. A. Brown, H. M. Colvin and A. J. Taylor, *The History of the King's Works* (London, 1963), 370-71, 1027-28; the link between Caernarvon and the romance of Maccsen Wledig is developed further by A. J. Taylor in *Archaeol. J.*, 132 (1975) 287-89; Beresford, *op. cit.* in note 27, ch. III, 339-47, 348-75, *et passim*.

³³ Nicholas Herring was associated with William in property transactions locally (*C.Inq.P.M.*, XV, 9, 166). He seems to have been less well-placed to respond to the rebels in kind. William was dead by 1393, leaving a son as heir and executor. He may have been in minor (non-celibate) orders. For Yevele's involvement at Cooling, Saltwood and Canterbury see J. Harvey, *Henry Yevele* (London, 1944), 35-42, and *The Medieval Architect* (London, 1972), 185-86, 247-48. Cooling was licensed too early (Feb. 10th, 1381; *C.P.R.*, 1377-81, 596) to be a reaction to the Revolt, while its coastal location and capacious wards despite their weakness support the view that it was meant as a refuge from French raids. But the gatehouse inscription, disavowing self-aggrandisement on Cobham's part, may well be attributable to the popular mood (see e.g. C. Kightly, *Strongholds of the Realm*, London, 1979, 133-34).

³⁴ Had defence been a consideration precincts would not have continually been expanded. A compact area, preferably a refuge-treasury tower (e.g. Gundulf's Tower, Rochester Cathedral), would have been useful but examples in England in our period are very rare. The crenellation of the close at Abingdon could have had no defensive purpose, as usually understood (*C.C.R.*, 1327-30, 201-03, 222; *C.P.R.*, 1327-30, 127, 151, 159, 221-23, 287-88, 344-45, and *V.C.H., Berks.*). Market dues amounting to £200 were also stolen. Gatehouses acquired further significance from the practice during vacancies for the escheator to 'take a simple seisin within the abbey gates at the beginning of each avoidance'. The gate symbolized the entire house and in it the escheator's men were briefly lodged (e.g. 1332 Abingdon; Lenton Priory, Notts., *C.C.R.*, 1330-33, 490, 499).

³⁵ Nevertheless violence recurred in 1348 and 1370. The significance of the licence (*C.P.R.*, 1327-30, 54) is not appreciated in the detailed *V.C.H.* account.

³⁶ It must again be stressed (see note 9 above) that licences to crenellate were never exploited for Crown revenue. C. Platt, *Medieval England* (London, 1978), 115 adopts the inherently implausible view that the licence for Spalding may be attributed to raids by the cattle-rustlers of Deeping. It was rather the expansionist sequel of a licence in 1253, after inquisition *ad quod damnnum* (a procedure significantly not used for licences to crenellate as such), authorizing the monks to extend their close wall to take in an adjacent lane, providing a new way outside. Lord Wake of Liddel's licence for Cottingham, Yorks. (*C.P.R.*, 1327-30, 31) may possibly be linked. Notably, Spalding had no trouble in getting a licence despite being an alien priory, daughter of St Nicholas, Angers 1074-1397 (*C.P.R.*, 1247-58, 182; *ibid.*, 1330-34, 411; *C.C.R.*, 1333-37, 116). Guisborough Priory (1336) was 'besieged . . . for a long time in manner of war', suffering pillage and harassment, and licensed to crenellate the canons' 'dwelling-place' in 1344 (*C.P.R.*, 1334-38, 354-55; *ibid.*, 1343-45, 316). For the competition between St Mary's and the citizens of York see notes 16, 17. Whalley church and abbey *clausum* were licensed in 1348, without reference to the fine gatehouse. In 1363 20s. was paid for investigation of an attack which had 'besieged the monks in their church, cloister and houses', *inter alia* damaging the abbey game preserves. Emulation with Sawley Abbey, unduly near by, may be the clue to both (*C.P.R.*, 1348-50, 124; *ibid.*, 1361-64, 361). In Worcester the problem was jurisdictional conflict between the ancient ecclesiastical liberty and the expansive urban franchise. The prior in 1348 alleged attempts to usurp lordship over

the cathedral. They culminated in an armed assault in which the priory gates were broken, shooting and 'a terrible siege' ensued. In 1369, the convent significantly was licensed to crenellate 'their priory all around and the houses and other buildings within the priory' (Turner and Parker, op. cit. in note 8, III, 417; *C.P.R.*, 1348-50, 245-46; *ibid.*, 1367-70, 216. The bishop's palace had been licensed in 1271, *ibid.*, 1266-72, 580; note 26). For Selby Abbey see *ibid.*, 1374-77, 192, 219-20; Turner and Parker, III, 417. Thornton is well known for its splendid stone-faced brick gatehouse. Its defensive parade, noble in manner as almost wholly in material, is most emphatic but the 1382 licence 'to build and crenellate a new house over and beside their abbey gate' may owe something to the troubles the monks had in controlling their annual fair. In 1389 a second licence was obtained for the abbey as a whole (*C.P.R.*, 1343-46, 671; *ibid.*, 1381-85, 166; *ibid.*, 1388-92, 28; Thompson, op. cit. in note 8, 302-04).

³⁷ Temple Bruer (Lincs.), licensed for a gatehouse with unique precision (1306) viz. 'to make and crenellate a great gate', after it had passed to the Hospitallers, suffered attack in that notorious year 1327 by malefactors who 'entered his (the Prior of St John's) manors at La Bruere and Rouston, broke the doors and windows and carried away the timber, lead and stones therefrom, with other goods' (*C.P.R.*, 1301-07, 462; *ibid.*, 1327-30, 84, cf. 152 omitting Bruer). Knowles and Hadcock, op. cit. in note 13, very seldom mention conventual licences to crenellate and rely in such cases on secondary sources which conventionally attribute them to fear of attack (e.g. Bolton Hospital, *ibid.*, 344). This view is untenable. Religious houses which were attacked seriously but did not obtain (or seek) any licence to crenellate (not already mentioned) include the abbeys of Eynsham, Shap, Tewkesbury (which has a fine gatehouse) and Sulby (*C.P.R.*, 1348-50, 594; *ibid.*, 1364-67, 357, 379-80; *ibid.*, 1391-96, 78).

³⁸ Conversely, modern students have generally failed not only to appreciate the weakness dictated by the cost and consequent abnormality of keeping strong-places garrisoned with adequate forces, but also to understand the vulnerability of the structures themselves.

³⁹ For some French comparisons see the next note. Other daughter houses licensed without reference to the superior are Hailes (1293); Spalding (1333: note 36); Bolton Hospital (1336: note 31. Refounded c. 1336); Buckland (1337); Langley, Norf. (1346); West Langdon, Kent (1348); Lewes (1360. Denized 1351); Quarr (1365). In almost every case convents receiving licence to crenellate were among the oldest, largest and most wealthy of their order. Several were or became 'mitred' (Spalding, Waltham, Winchcombe, Bridlington).

⁴⁰ Quoted in Evans (ed.), op. cit. in note 17, 52; for the Hundred Years War see e.g. *La Guerre de Cent Ans* . . . , P-C. Timbal *et al.* (C.N.R.S., 1961); K. Fowler, *The Age of Plantagenet and Valois* (London, 1967), 165-76 *et passim*; Coulson, 'Seignorial Fortresses . . .', op. cit. in note 8, ch. IV, II; and P. C. Contamine, *Guerre, Etat et Société* . . . (Paris, 1972), *passim*. Comparable English instances, apart from Tynemouth and the one rendability order for Fouldray noted, are the special custody of the fort of the alien priory of St Michael's Mount (Cornwall) ordered in 1338, and the coastal defence value implied or claimed by the Bishop of St David's for his cathedral precinct (Pemb.) under Richard II (*Calendar of the Fine Rolls*, V, 84; *C.P.R.*, 1338-40, 99; *ibid.*, 1391-96, 217; *ibid.*, 1396-99, 218). The precinct walls of Eweny Priory, Glamorgan, and of Quarr Abbey, on the exposed Isle of Wight, of c. 1365 (note 6 for the licence to crenellate) with its very early gun-loops is interesting but very trivial in comparison with the abundant French evidence, structural and documentary, of the warlike adaptation and use of conventual precincts (D. F. Renn, 'The earliest gunports in Britain', *Archaeol. J.*, 125 (1968), 301-03, slightly misconstruing the 1365 licence). On the licences detailed in the Appendix, two final points merit notice. Statistics in the period of and after the Black Death (and ensuing plagues) suggest that Waltham Abbey was not alone in using a licence to crenellate to reassert seignorial powers (note 28). For the slack period 1350-69 there are ten conventual and one other ecclesiastical licence, much above the average ratio to lay licences of one in four and a quarter (19; total 30). Many houses were very severely hit. Of the exceptionally large establishment of 100 monks at St Albans, 48 including the abbot died in the Black Death, so the licence for the abbey in 1357 is notable. Waltham also suffered severely but obtained licences in 1366 and 1369, as noted. At Worcester Cathedral Priory, 32 out of an establishment of 50 monks died by 1364. Licence to crenellate was obtained in 1369. These facts seem very suggestive. Secondly, it is to be remarked that an analysis of the 58 conventual licences by month of issue reveals no correlation with the active building season (about March to October). Problems of travelling to sue out a licence must be the explanation of the lower winter totals; certainly, as is to be expected from the arguments presented in this paper, there is no sign of any bunching of licences in preparation for the start of the building season in the spring. Figures are January 0; February 5; March 8; April 3; May 3; June 6; July 8; August 5; September 5; October 10; November 2; December 2 (plus one unknown, Norwich Palace 1327/28). A larger sample does not yield any more conclusive results.