BARDNEY ABBEY

Benedictine abbey of St Peter, St Paul, and St Oswald

County of Lincolnshire : Diocese of Lincoln
Founded in the seventh century;
refounded as a Benedictine priory dependent on Charroux ?1087;
raised to the status of abbey ?1115 × 1116

The story of the priory at Bardney, raised in Henry I’s time to an abbey, relies on a good deal of conjectural reconstruction. Writing in 1124, William of Malmesbury tells us that Bishop Remigius of Lincoln (d. 1092) ‘built from scratch the monastery at Stow St Mary and restored a second at Bardney, to which he had long shown favour (ex ueteri fauore suo innouait)’ (Gesta pontificum, IV § 177). William’s source may have been no more than contemporary memory that Remigius had dedicated the church. He says nothing of its founder.

Three deeds have been treated as contemporary witnesses from 1087, 1115, and 1125, but they are far from authentic. The first is a deed in the name of the founder Gilbert de Gant, recording his own gift, with the consent of King William, of lands and churches to re-establish the minster of St Peter and St Oswald which had flourished of old, ‘ut uenerabilis Beda in narratione historie ecclesiastice testatur’. The first witnesses are Archbishop Lanfranc and Bishop Remigius, followed by Robert, William, and Henry, sons of King William I, and William earl of
Chester (an error for William the constable of the earl of Chester). Everything about the deed except the spelling of Gilbert, ‘Giselbrictus’, is anachronistic. It was inspected in 1331 (C53/118 no. 10 (3); CalCh, iv. 235), and it was also recited in a deed in the name of Walter de Gant, Gilbert’s son, dated ‘1115’, whose formulation smacks more of the thirteenth century that the early twelfth.¹ A simpler deed in Walter’s name is dated, impossibly, ‘1125’, at Bardney, in the ‘twentieth’ year of King Henry’s reign (1119–20), when the king was in Normandy, and addressed to Archbishop Ralph (d. 1122) and Bishop Robert Bloet (d. 1123).² These tell how Gilbert first endowed a monasterium. In ‘1115’ Walter made his gifts to the abbot and convent of Bardney, while in ‘1125’ he said that he had raised his father’s monastery into a free abbey (‘in abbatiam liberam promoui’). These forgeries present a false picture of an independent church under the patronage of the Gant family. They cannot be used even to date the several gifts by the Gant family to the abbey, though they may provide a guide to the possessions held by the abbey in the early thirteenth century. The topographical information is discussed by A. H. Thompson, ‘Notes on the history of the abbey of St Peter, St Paul, and St Oswald, Bardney’, Associated Architectural Societies’ Reports and Papers 32 (1913–14), 35–96, 351–402, at pp. 38–44.

A writ-charter of King Henry grants to Ralph, ‘qui fuit prior de Bard(eney), locum et ecclesiam ipsam in abbatiam, precatione Walteri de Gant et concessione abbatis Fulcaldi Carrofensis cuius fuit monachus’ (2) below). This is the only example of a charter that licences the change in status from priory to abbey at the request of the lay founder and with the consent of the mother-house. Dugdale had printed Carnotensis, referring to Chartres, which made no sense, and the reading Carrofensis, Charroux, was restored from the cartulary by Thompson (‘Notes on Bardney’, 40). Modern research has shown that the Poitevin abbey of Charroux had a policy of starting new priories which, on maturity, became independent abbeys. Among the sources from Bardney King Henry’s act alone refers to a dependent priory, and it is the most credible witness. It is backed up by the testimony of a privilege for Charroux from Pope Urban II (JL 5627), datable from its place-date to

¹ Dugdale, i. 142a–143b [from a transcript of the Bardney cartulary], repr. Monasticon, i. 628a–629b (no. ii), Walter de Gant’s deed dated ‘1115’, reciting the deed of Gilbert de Gant.
² Monasticon, i. 630a–b (no. iv), prints the deed of Walter de Gant ‘1125’ from the Bardney cartulary.
within a day or two of 21 March 1096, which includes Bardney and other Lincolnshire churches given by Gilbert de Gant (P. de Monsabert, *Charteres et documents pour servir à l’histoire de l’abbaye de Charroux*, Archives historiques du Poitou 39 (1910), 78–82, at p. 81; see also Charroux headnote).

The most detailed reconstruction and explanation of events is the work of G. T. Beech, ‘Aquitaniens and Flemings in the refoundation of Bardney abbey (Lincolnshire) in the later eleventh century’, *Haskins Society Journal* 1 (1989), 73–90), who, however, did not question the authenticity of the deeds of Gilbert and Walter. The explanation runs that Gilbert de Gant, son of Ralph de Gant, who held the castle of Alost (in Dutch Aalst), near Gent in Flanders, was enfeoffed in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire by King William I. Like so many in such circumstances he chose to found a priory, and the site he picked was Bardney, one of many manors in which his predecessor was Ulf Fenisc (*DB*, i. 354d; Lincs § 24. 17). Bardney was assessed at only two carucates, but it had sokes and its income was £20 together with £30 in *tailla* (‘exactions’), a possible reflection of its former status. The old church, mentioned by Bede, who described the coming of St Oswald’s relics to the royal minster of Bardney (*HE*, III 11), is presumed to have long since decayed.3 The relics had been removed in the early tenth century to a new minster at Gloucester by Æthelflæd, lady of the Mercians, and in Domesday Book, though twenty-five churches are mentioned in Gilbert’s fee in Lincolnshire, no church is mentioned at Bardney. Gilbert obtained the support of the abbey of Charroux, at this date famous for its relics, which between 1079 and 1084 had provided monks for three new priories in Flanders. One of these was at La Beuvrière, from which place Drogo de Bevrere took his name, who was, like Gilbert, a Fleming who was a substantial tenant-in-chief in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. It is possible that Drogo influenced Gilbert to look south to Charroux. These priories in Flanders were expected to mature into independent abbeys, and so it is no surprise that Abbot Fulcaldus should consent to Walter de Gant’s request that Bardney too should become an abbey. The prior, Ralph, a monk of Charroux, became abbot, and there was nothing disruptive about the change in the status of the house.

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3 Henry of Huntingdon includes St Oswald and Bardney (*Historia Anglorum*, IX 12–15, Greenway, 632–7) in a long account of English saints compiled from Bede (ib. IX 8–50); he adds nothing about Bardney in his own time, despite its location within his diocese of Lincoln to which he was deeply devoted.
The foundation of the priory cannot have happened before the Domesday survey, but, on the testimony of William of Malmesbury, the dedication was carried out before the death of Bishop Remigius, so the date-range is 1086 × 1092. The conventional dating to 1087 depends on Gilbert’s purported deed, witnessed by the three sons of King William I, who was by implication king at the time. In 1096 Pope Urban dedicated the new abbey church at Charroux and a few weeks later granted a papal privilege to the abbey, in which are mentioned, ‘in Nicholensi episcopatu [Lincoln diocese] in Anglia monasterium de Bardonaco, ecclesiam de Scantunaco [Scampton], de Stadsumaco [?Stainton], de Curfo [Culpho], de Scatusbeio’ [Skendleby]: Scampton and Skendleby were manors in Gilbert’s fee, both of them with churches in 1086 (DB, i. 354c, 355b; Lincs §§ 24. 1, 46). Culpho was a manor in Suffolk given to Charroux by someone else in different circumstances. Whether Gilbert was still alive in 1096 is uncertain. It was some twenty years later that King Henry confirmed the change in status of the house, for his act is datable with some probability to 1115–16 ([2] below), a date which may have contributed to the date included in the deed forged in the name of Walter de Gant.

King Henry’s role in relation to Bardney and its patron is less clear. It appears that he had already confirmed the gift by Walter and his father Gilbert to the church of Bardney of two minster churches, Barton-on-Humber and Hunmanby ([1]), churches whose property is described in some detail in the forged deed dated ‘1115’ (though Hunmanby is omitted from ‘1125’). If Bardney was a priory still dependent on its lay patrons, then it is surprising that the king should confirm their gifts. Yet at a much later date he confirmed the nomination as abbot of a monk Ivo by Walter de Gant ‘de cuius feodo abbacia est’ ([3]). Where a Benedictine house remained in the fee of its lay patron, it had the status

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4 The donors in this case were Roger the Poitevin and his wife Countess Almodis of La Marche, for whom Charroux was her local abbey in Poitou (discussed in the headnote to Henry I’s charter for Charroux, 000, not in Regesta). The schedule of churches given to the pope for confirmation seems to have mistakenly associated it with Bardney and its dependent churches.

5 A later medieval account of the family, copied in 1640 by Dodsworth ‘in Turri apud Northkyme’ (Monasticon, v. 491), says that he died in the time of William Rufus and was buried at Bardney. He is said to have held his fee for twenty-eight years, leading to a conjectured date of death in or c. 1094 by simple computation from 1066. This source claims that he was son of Count Baldwin [VI] of Flanders and nephew of King William I, while a related genealogy in the Bardney cartulary also refers to the king as Gilbert’s uncle (Ctl. Bardney, fol. 50v (now fol. 54v); Monasticon, i. 631b).
of a priory, and the king had no role. If Bardney were an independent abbey, holding its lands of the king alone, the nomination would have been King Henry’s prerogative, but the charter expressly says that the abbey is of Walter’s fee and that Walter has given and granted the abbey’s lands to Ivo. Bardney had not achieved independence from its patron. Indeed, the third abbot, John de Gant, appears to have come from the patron’s kin. None the less the monks have recourse over their patron’s head to the king.

The evidence for Bardney’s gaining independence from the mother house is more straightforward. Abbot Fulcaldus had consented to independence from Charroux in, as it seems, 1115 × 1116, and the abbey of Bardney would be received into papal protection by Eugenius III in 1147, in the time of Abbot John de Gant, and again by Adrian IV in 1157 in the time of Abbot Walter (JL 9117, 10248; Holtzmann, i. 274–6, 315–17, nos. 40, 66). In 1160, Abbot Jordan of Charroux again granted Abbot Walter and his monks independence from the mother house, an act confirmed by Pope Alexander III (JL 10616; Holtzmann, i. 336, no. 76). In 1178 the same pope confirmed to Bardney abbey its possessions, among them churches given by Gilbert de Gant as founder, Firsby, Skendleby, Partney, Scampton, Barton-on-Humber, Hunmanby, Stainton, and others (JL 13122; Holtzmann, i. 427, no. 155). It appears to have been no more than fossilized repetition that, over the same period, Bardney and some dependent churches were confirmed to the abbey of Charroux by several papal privileges even as late as 1211 (Cheney & Cheney, Innocent III, 147, no. 891). The forged deeds in the names of Gilbert and Walter de Gant were presumably composed at a time when the early connexion with Charroux was suppressed or forgotten.

The first source for documents relating to the early history of Bardney abbey is the cartulary, now BL MS Cotton Vespasian E. xx (Davis 18). This was compiled soon after 1269. The text has not yet been published, but D. M. Smith has an edition in hand (2014). The contents were listed in Monasticon, i. 626–7. This has preserved two of the three acts of Henry I printed below as well as a charter of King Stephen for the abbey’s dependency of Partney (Stel/652; Monasticon, i. 630, no. vi), three charters of Henry II (H2/95–97), three writs of the same king (H2/93, 94, 94a), and episcopal confirmations by Bishop Alexander and by Bishop Robert Chesney (Smith, EEA 1 Lincoln 1067–1185, 13, 47–9, nos. 17, 72). Later royal confirmations provide further evidence. When
King John confirmed the possessions of Bardney in 1205 (RChart, 149a, with the fine recorded in RFine, 269; PR 7 John, 211), his charter made reference to the preceding charters of Henry I and Henry II, confirming gifts of Gilbert de Gant, Walter de Gant, his son Gilbert de Gant (d. 1156), earl of Lincoln, and Earl Gilbert’s son-in-law Earl Simon de Senlis. Henry II’s confirmation of the founders’ gifts as referred to there (H2/98) does not survive, and insufficient is said about Henry I’s charter to be sure whether the reference was to 1 below or a lost act. While the cartulary contains other acts of Henry II (H2/95–97), the absence of his confirmation is striking and suggests that it was already lost before the cartulary was made.

King John’s charter was renewed in 16 Henry III by inspeximus, 20 January 1232 (this was the charter proferred to the justices in 9 Edward I, PQW, 409–10), and on the same occasion a new charter allowed the Sunday market to be moved to Thursday (Monasticon, i. 633, no. xiii; CalCh, i. 147). In 13 Edward I Henry III’s inspeximus of King John’s charter was again confirmed by inspeximus, 27 January 1285 (CalCh, ii. 309). Then in 5 Edward III the charters of inspeximus take on a more unusual appearance. The inspeximus of 13 Edward I was recited, 8 October 1331, now with the additional confirmation of some 150 gifts and quitclaims (C53/118 no. 7; CalCh, iv. 250–57). On the same day Henry III’s charter was directly inspected, accompanied again by the confirmation of another one hundred gifts and more (C53/118 no. 8; CalCh, iv. 246–50). At the same time King John’s charter was directly inspected, accompanied again by a further hundred and more gifts (C53/118 no. 9; CalCh, iv. 240–46). And King Henry I’s charter too was inspected for the first time along with charters of Gilbert de Gant (d. 1156), earl of Lincoln, the founder Gilbert de Gant, and two of Ranulf III, earl of Chester, accompanied again by yet another hundred and more gifts (C53/118 no. 10; CalCh, iv. 235–40). In this way much of the muniment chest was concisely abstracted into four separate royal confirmations, each one headed by a royal act and each dated 8 October 1331. Nearly one third of the deeds abstracted are not represented in the cartulary, though donors’ names suggests that many date from a time before the cartulary was compiled rather than representing later gifts. It may be presumed that the four charters of inspeximus were based on schedules drawn up at Bardney; if the original royal charters were taken to Westminster for inspection, the enrolled copies were evidently not made directly from them.

1 Writ-charter confirming the gift by Gilbert and Walter de Gant to the church of Bardney of the churches of Barton-upon-Humber (Lincs) and Hunmanby (Yorks ER). 1100 × late summer 1115

*CARTULARY COPY*: BL MS Cotton Vespasian E. xx (s. xiii), fol. 38v–39r (now fol. 42v–43r) (‘De ecclesiis Bartonie et Hundemanby’) [B].

*PRINTED*: Farrer, *Early Yorkshire Charters*, iii. 439 (no. 1142) [from B].

*CALENDAR*: Regesta 1098.

\[H(enricus) rex Angl(orum) Os(berto) uicecom(i) et omnibus baronibus suis et fidelibus francis et anglis salutem. Sciatis me concessisse ecclesie de Bard(eney) omnes illas terras et decimas et ecclesiam de Bartona et cum decimis eiusdem uille et ecclesiam de Hundemanby cum decimis eiusdem uille quas Gisleb(ertus) de Gant et filius eius Walterus eidem ecclesie dederunt et concesserunt. T(estibus) Ran(ulfo) Mischin et Will(elmo) conestabil(i) com(itis). Apud Wintoniam.\]

*Henry king of the English to Osbert the sheriff and all his barons and sworn men French and English greeting. Know that I have granted to the church of Bardney all those lands and tithes and the church of Barton together with the tithes of the same vill and the church of Hunmanby with the tithes of the same vill, which Gilbert de Gant and his son Walter gave and granted to the same church. Witness Ranulf Meschin and William the earl’s constable. At Winchester.*

*DATE*: Before the death of Osbert, sheriff of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, whose son was in possession of his lands at the time of the Lindsey survey, August–September 1115.

*ADDRESS*: Osbert was sheriff of both Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. The same writ charter may have been presented to both shire courts.

*WITNESS*: Ranulf Meschin, who held extensive lands in Lincolnshire by his marriage to Lucy, daughter of Thorold of Lincoln. William fitz Nigel was constable to the earl of Chester already in 1086, and he was still in office in 1121 when Ranulf Meschin was invested as earl of Chester. At this date he may be taken to represent Earl Richard in Lincolnshire. William attests Walter de Gant’s ‘1115’ foundation deed as ‘Willelmo
nepote meo constabulario Cestrie’ (Monasticon, i. 629b), and his name must underlie
the attestation of ‘Willelmo comite Cestrie’ in Gilbert de Gant’s deed. He held land in
Yorkshire in the Gant fee.
PLACE: Winchester.
CONTEXT: The wording of the disposition is unhelpful. It is probable but not certain that
the word ecclesia is a sign that the church of Bardney was still the family priory, not yet
an abbey, but there is no mention of the mother house of Charroux. Yet if the church
held only of its patron, Walter de Gant, why was it able to seek the king’s seal? This
document must have been sealed no later than Michaelmas 1115, but the charter that
acknowledged Bardney’s status as an abbey ([2] below), if its dating can be regarded
as valid, was not made before 18 September 1115.

In 1086 Barton-upon-Humber was the most important of the three ferry ports
in Gilbert de Gant’s fee (DB, i. 345c; § 24. 12–14); the others were South Ferriby and
Winteringham. Its population must have been in the hundreds at that date. Domesday
Book refers also to its church and priest, and there still survives the tenth- and eleventh-
century church of St Peter (W. J. Rodwell & K. Rodwell, ‘St Peter’s church, Barton-
upon-Humber: excavation and structural study, 1978–81’, Antiquaries Journal 62
(1982), 283–315). This abuts the manorial enclosure. The manor became part of the fee
of the constable of the earl of Chester. Another deed in the name of Walter de Gant,
with the impossible date 1125, specified his gift as ‘ecclesiam sancti Petri de Bartona
cum terris et decimis suis et capellam Omnium Sanctorum et transitum Humbrie sine
precio abbati et monachis suis cum famulis et equis suis’ (Monasticon, i. 630, no. iv).

Hunmanby was a minster church; its church and priest are referred to in
Domesday Book (DB, i. 326b; Yorks § 20. E1–4). The ‘1125’ deed of Walter de Gant
provides important detail about the church and its dependencies: ‘In Hundemanby
matricem ecclesiam cum capellis eidem pertinentibus, ciuis parochia est Burtone,
Newtune Fordune, Mustune, Folethorpe, Rutune, Barkesdale, et una carucata in Ergum,
in cuius feodo fundata est ecclesia’ (Monasticon, i. 630, no. iv). This church and its
dependencies are discussed by Thompson, ‘Notes on Bardney’, 67–70, and R. K.
Morris, Churches in the Landscape, 134–5, 144.

2 Writ-charter appointing Ralph, prior of Bardney, to hold
his church and its properties as an abbey. September
1115 × 1122, probably 1115–16

CHANCERY ENROLMENT: Charter Roll 5 Edward III, C53/118, no. 10, inspeximus dated
8 October 1331 (CalCh, iv. 235–40) [B, based on a schedule drawn up later than and
arguable from the cartulary].
CARTULARY COPY: BL MS Cotton Vespasian E. xx (s. xiii), fol. 36r (now fol. 40r)
(‘De libertatibus’) [C].
ANTIQUARIAN TRANSCRIPTS: BL MS Add. 31935 (copied by R. W. Eyton, 1815–1888,
Shropshire antiquary), fol. 26r [from B].
PRINTED: Dugdale, i. 143b [from B], repr. Monasticon, i. 629 (no. iii); Thompson,
‘Notes on Bardney’, 40 (in English).
CALENDAR: Farrer 354; Regesta 1097.
H(enricus) rex Angl(orum)\(^a\) Roberto episcopo Lincolie\(^b\) et Walter de Gant et uic(e)comiti et omnibus baronibus francis et anglis de Lincoliascira\(^c\) [tam presentibus quam futuris] salutem. Sciatis me concessisse Rad(ulfo)\(^d\) monacho qui fuit prior de Bard(ene)y\(^e\) locum et ecclesiam ipsam in abbatiam, precatione Walteri de Gant et concessione abbatis Fulcaldi\(^f\) Carrofensis\(^g\) cuius fuit monachus. Et uolo et concedo et firmiter precipio ut bene et honorifice et quiete teneant totam terram et decimas et ecclesias suas de quocunque teneat abbatia cum soca et saca et toll et team et infangentheof et cum omnibus aliis consuetudinis sicut ecclesia unquam melius et liberius et honorabilius tenuit et sicut alie abbatie mee liberius tenent per Angliam. T(estibus) Roberto episcopo Linc(olnensi) et Rogero episcopo Saresberie\(^h\) et Bernardo episcopo de sancto Dauid et Rann(ulfo) episcopo Dunelm(ensi) et Rann(ulfo) canc(ellario) et abbate de †Salesbia\(^i\) et Waltero de Gant et Alano de Perceio et Rad(ulfo) de Gant et Rad(ulfo) de Alost et Rad(ulfo) de Nouauilla. Apud Winton(iam) [in XVI anno postquam rex accepit regnum Anglie].

\(^a\) Angl’ B ] Anglie C \(^b\) Lincolie B] Lincolnie C \(^c\) Lincoliascira C ] Lincoliasira B \(^d\) Rad(ulfo) C ] Radulfo B \(^e\) Bard’ C ] Bardenaio C \(^f\) Fulcaldi C ] Fulcard B \(^g\) Carnotensis Dugdale and Monasticon, misleading Farrer and Regesta into referring to Fulcard, abbot of Chartres, who could not be traced \(^h\) Saresberie B ] de Saresberie C \(^i\) Salesbia B ] Salesb(er)ia C

[C continues:] Rex Stephanus, rex Henricus secundus, rex Iohannes idem confirmauerunt et cartas suas nobis fecerunt.

The two charters of 16 Henry III, dated 20 January 1232, follow.

*Henry king of the English to Robert bishop of Lincoln and Walter de Gant and the sheriff and all barons French and English of Lincolnshire [both present and future] greeting. Know that I have granted to Ralph the monk, who was prior of Bardney, the site and the church itself *<as an> *abbey, at the petition of Walter de Gant and with the grant of Abbot Fulcher of Charroux whose monk he was. And I will and grant and firmly command that they shall hold all their land and tithes and churches well and*
honourably and quietly, of whomsoever the abbey holds them, with sake and soke and
toll and team and infangthief and with all other customs, just as the church ever well
and freely and honourably held and just as my other abbeys freely hold throughout
England. Witness Robert bishop of Lincoln and Roger bishop of Salisbury and Bernard
bishop of St Davids and Ranulf bishop of Durham and Ranulf the chancellor and the
abbot of Selby and Walter de Gant and Alan de Percy and Ralph de Gant and Ralph of
Alost and Ralph de Neville. At Winchester [in the sixteenth year since the king received
the realm of England].

DATE: Formally datable after Bernard was nominated bishop of St Davids, 18
September 1115; before the incapacity and death of Ranulf the chancellor after
Christmas 1122. Regnal years are not used in the king’s charters at this period, but the
date in the last line is plausible: the sixteenth year of the reign began on 5 August 1115.
Fulco had become abbot of Saint-Sauver de Charroux in 1113.

ADDRESS: The shire court of Lincolnshire. This is the only act to address Walter de
Gant, founder of Bardney abbey.

WITNESS: Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln; Roger, bishop of Salisbury; Bernard, bishop
of St Davids; Ranulf Flambard, bishop of Durham; Ranulf the chancellor; the abbot of
an abbey, apparently miswritten and confused with Salisbury, perhaps the abbot of
Selby, at this date Hugh (res. c. 1122), an unusual witness; Walter de Gant; Alan de
Percy; Ralph de Gant; Ralph de Alost; Ralph de Nevill. Alan de Percy is a rare witness,
Abbot Hugh, Ralph de Gant, Ralph de Alost, and Ralph de Nevill attest only here.

PLACE: Winchester.

CONTEXT: The church of Bardney and other churches dependent on it had been held by
the monks of Charroux since the time of Pope Urban II. Gilbert of Gant’s deed,
renewing the minster and increasing its endowment, is not authentic, but it says nothing
about monks and nothing about Charroux. The evidence that Bardney was a priory,
therefore, comes down to the present act which refers to Ralph as prior. The purpose
of the act is explicitly to raise its status from priory to abbey at the request of the lay
patron, now Walter de Gant, and of Abbot Fulcaldus, abbot of the mother house in
France. The wording of the present act, ‘sicut alie abbathie mee liberius tenent per
Angliam’, is reflected in the lengthy foundation deed in the name of Walter de Gant,
dated 1115, which concludes, ‘rex quoque huic abbatie eadem iura concessit que habent
abbatie sue per Angliam’, with a brief movent clause, ‘ad salutem domini mei Richardi
et anime patris et matris mee ac etiam omnium fidelium defunctorum’ (Monasticon, vi.
629b). The forged deed was drafted, therefore, with reference to the king’s act, though
the date of its fabrication is not readily apparent. If the reference to an ‘my lord
Richard’ derived from an authentic deed used by the forger, it must have referred to
Earl Richard of Chester, who died in November 1120.

AUTHENTICITY: The substance of the document presents no difficulty. There are two
deviations from royal style here which could be regarded as no more than creative
copying. The common formula ‘tam presentibus quam futuris’, which goes against the
whole spirit of naming the addressees, is not used by the king’s scribes but would have
been familiar to anyone copying the document. The dating clause, referring to the king
in the third person, cannot be original; it may have been added to the original. What is
difficult is the presence of these features in the charter roll copy as well as in the
cartulary, since one expects the original to have been produced for the making of the
inspeximus. The inspeximus, however, is one of four bearing the same date which
represent a digest of the charters of Bardney, not a digest of the cartulary. Errors in the charter roll, therefore, come from the schedule prepared in 1331, and this no doubt explains inferior readings in B. The inspeximus still has one or two readings better than those in the cartulary, such as ‘Angl(orum)’ and ‘Lincolie’ in the address. Yet their sharing two passages that cannot have been in the original is problematic. What kind of common exemplar can explain ‘tam presentibus quam futuris’? The alternative is that this is a forgery but without substantive flaw, which would be most unusual, and the reference to the priory’s dependent status, which has otherwise been expunged from the record, is surely a strong indicator of authenticity.

3 Writ-charter confirming the nomination by Walter de Gant of Ivo as abbot of Bardney. 1134 × 1135

CHANCERY ENROLMENTS: Patent Roll 3 Richard II, pt 1 (not seen), C66/305, mem. 16, inspeximus dated 2 November 1379 (CalPat 1377–1381, 399) [B].
PRINTED: CalPat 1377–1381, 399.
CALENDAR: Farrer 726; Regesta 1895.

H(enricus) rex Angl(orum) episcopo Lincolniensi abbatibus et uicecomitibus et omnibus baronibus et fidelibus suis et filiis sancte ecclesie de Lincolescira salutem. Sciatis me concessisse Iuoni monacho abbaciam de Bardenay cum terris et hominibus et omnibus possessionibus abbacie cum quibus Walterus de Gant de cuius feodo abbacia est eam ei dedit et concessit. Et uolo et firmiter precipio ut predictus Iuo abbas Bardanensis teneat terras et homines et decimas et omnia iura abbacie cum omnibus rectitudinibus et consuetudinibus et libertatibus abbacie pertinentibus cum quibus predecessor suus liberius tenuit et cum quibus Walterus eam ei concessit. Teste (sic) episcopo Lincolniensi Alexandro et episcopo Iohanne Lexouiensi et Roberto de Haia. Apud Vernolium in expedicione.

Henry king of the English to the bishop of Lincoln abbots sheriffs and all his barons and sworn men and sons of holy church of Lincolnshire greeting. Know that I have granted to Ivo the monk the abbey of Bardney together with the lands and men and all the possessions of the abbey with which Walter de Gant, to whose fee the abbey belongs, gave and granted it to him. And I will and firmly command that the foresaid Ivo abbot of Bardney shall hold the lands and men and tithes and all the rights of the
abbey with all the rights and customs and liberties pertaining to the abbey with which his predecessor freely held it and with which Walter granted it to him. Witness Alexander bishop of Lincoln and John bishop of Lisieux and Robert de la Haye. At Verneuil during military activity.

DATE: After Alexander was nominated bishop of Lincoln, Lent 1123; before the king’s death. Farrer, followed by Regesta, equated the reference here to the king’s presence at Verneuil ‘in expeditione’ to the destruction of Verneuil by fire in early September 1134 (Orderic, XIII 16, ed. Chibnall, vi. 438). Orderic mentions this in the context of fires that destroyed the cathedral of Le Mans on 3 September 1134 and the abbey of Saint-Père at Chartres on 5 September 1134, but these were accidental fires, part of a series of natural disasters that year, and not the consequence of military activity. During 1134 Henry was mostly at Rouen, and Hollister suggests that this act should be dated to autumn 1135 (Henry I, 468). Bishop Alexander of Lincoln travelled to Normandy in 1134 (Henry of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum, VII 43, ed. Greenway, 490), and there is no evidence to show whether or not he stayed there into 1135.

ADDRESS: An unusual address-clause, presumably reflecting unusual circumstances, which includes the abbots of the county. See Context. The plural ‘uicecomitibus’ may be the cartularist’s erroneous expansion of the usual ‘vic’. The words ‘omnia filii sancte ecclesie per Angliam constitutis’, or ‘per Normanniam’ (or in cases from Stephen’s reign a particular shire (Ste/353) or diocese (Ste/434)), are unusual but occur with sufficient frequency in otherwise well-drafted documents that they raise no doubt about authenticity. This was perhaps a scribal quirk seen in some ten acts of Henry I and Stephen in the 1130s.

WITNESS: Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, as visitor of the abbey, has a clear interest in the business; John, bishop of Lisieux; Robert de la Haie.

PLACE: Verneuil-sur-Avre, diocese of Évreux, and close to the French border. See Date.

CONTEXT: This act is unique in confirming the appointment of an abbot chosen by the lay patron of the abbey. It is unclear whether the request was made by the monks or by Walter de Gant, or even, perhaps, by Bishop Alexander. His being in Normandy may have been the occasion for the request, but the king may have expected the donor to be present. There is no sense here that the community sought royal protection from its lay patron. It appears rather that both were content that the king’s involvement was a benefit, endorsing the status of the church. The inclusion of ‘abbatibus’ in an address to the shire court is exceptional, since abbots attended shire courts only as tenants in chief and not as prelates.