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Chapter 16

The Military Orders in Wales and the Welsh March in the Middle Ages¹

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In the later medieval centuries the Hospitallers' estates in Wales were among the most extensive of any religious corporation there. In 1535, just before the dissolution of the monasteries, the commandery at Slebech was the third richest monastic house in Wales, after the Cistercian abbeys at Tintern and Valle Crucis. The next richest house after Slebech was another Cistercian house, Margam Abbey, followed by the Benedictine priory at Abergavenny.² Slebech was also wealthy by comparison with other Hospitaller houses in England and Wales. In 1338 it received the largest income of any Hospitaller house in England and Wales, apart from the main house at Clerkenwell just outside London,³ while in 1535 it had the fourth highest net value of the Hospitallers' twenty-two houses in England and Wales, after Clerkenwell, Buckland and Ribston.⁴ With such comparative wealth, we might expect the Hospitallers to have held great authority and power in Wales, and their Welsh property to have been very significant within the Order.

In contrast, the Templars held very little property in Wales. In 1308, when the Templars in the British Isles were arrested on the order of King Edward II of

¹ I am very grateful to Philip Handyside, Kathryn Hurlock and Paul Sambrook for their assistance with certain points in this paper.

² The annual net income of Slebech was £184, after Tintern's £192 and Valle Crucis's £188; the annual net income of Margam was £181 per annum, while Abergavenny's was £129. D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales*, 2nd edn (London, 1971), pp. 52, 114, 301; cf. R.K. Turvey, 'Priest and Patron: A Study of a Gentry Family's Patronage of the Church in South-West Wales in the Later Middle Ages', *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History*, 8 (1991), 7–19, here p. 9; G. Williams, *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation* (Cardiff, 1976), p. 563.

³ Figures in *The Knights Hospitallers in England, Being the Report of Prior Philip de Thame to the Grand Master Elyan de Villanova for AD 1338*, ed. L.B. Larking, intro. J.M. Kemble (Camden Society, 1st ser., 65) (1857), summarized in S. Phillips, *The Prior of the Knights Hospitaller in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2009), p. 21.

⁴ G. O'Malley, *The Knights Hospitaller of the English Langue, 1460–1565* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 362–3. By 1540, when the Order was dissolved, Slebech had slipped to ninth place out of a total of 21.

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England, no Templars were arrested in Wales.⁵ It is doubtful whether there had ever been any Templars in Wales itself for any length of time. However, the Templars did hold more extensive estates in the Welsh March, where seven Templars had been living prior to the arrests.⁶ When in the mid-fourteenth century the officials of the borough of Montgomery compiled a collection of the statutes of England, starting with King Edward I's reissue of the Magna Carta, they included a copy of King Edward II's statute of 1324 stating that Parliament had agreed that all the properties formerly belonging to the Order of the Temple should be assigned to its sister Order, the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem (in accordance with the papal bull of 1312).⁷ Clearly the Templars' estates in the Montgomery region were sufficiently extensive for the question of who owned them and who had taken over the Templars' rights and duties after their dissolution in 1312 to be important to the people there.

The historiography of the military orders in Wales and the Welsh March is slender. The work of William Rees, professor of History at Cardiff University, entitled *A History of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in Wales and on the Welsh Border, including an account of the Templars* (Cardiff, 1947), has not been superseded. However, Rees did little to situate the orders in Wales within their operations within the rest of Britain, let alone within their respective order as a whole, and neither did he compare them to the other religious orders within Wales. There have been some studies of individual houses in Wales and the March, especially Slebech.⁸ Most recently, Greg O'Malley's study of the Hospitallers'

⁵ *Fœdera, conventiones, litteræ, et cujuscunque generis acta publica, inter reges Angliæ et alios quosvis imperatores, reges, pontifices, principes, vel communitates: ab ingressu Gulielmi I. in Angliam, A.D. 1066. ad nostre usque tempora habita aut tractata*, eds T. Rymer and R. Sanderson, new edn eds A. Clark, F. Holbrooke and J. Caley, 2.1 (London, 1818), pp. 23–4; H.J. Nicholson, *The Knights Templar on Trial: The Trial of the Templars in the British Isles, 1308–1311* (Stroud, 2009), pp. 205–17.

⁶ Two were arrested at Lydley: Henry de Halton, lieutenant commander, and Stephen de Stapelbrugge. Eileen Gooder, *Temple Balsall* (Chichester, 1995), p. 149. However, according to Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 454, fol. 115v, there were normally three brothers there: these were probably Henry de Halton, Stephen of Stapelbrugge (commander, see MS Bodley 454, fol. 96v) and Michael de Karvile (MS Bodley 454, fol. 144v). Two were arrested at Garway – MS Bodley 454, fol. 58v: Philip de Meux, knight, and William de Pökellington; and two at Upleadon – MS Bodley 454, fol. 58v: Thomas of Toulouse, the commander, a knight-brother, and Thomas the Chamberlain.

⁷ 'Statuta Angliæ: leges et consuetudines de Montgomery', Cardiff City Library MS L.385, fols 293v–299v; for description see N.R. Ker and A.J. Piper, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* (Oxford, 1969–92), 2, pp. 350–53. See also the enrolled copy of this statute, translated in *Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward II, 1323–1327* (London, 1898), p. 91.

⁸ J. Evans, 'Ysphyty Ifan, or the Hospitallers in Wales', *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 3rd ser. 6 (1860), 105–24; J. Rogers Rees, 'Slebech Commandery and the Knights of St John', *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 14 (1897), 85–107, 197–228, 261–84; 15 (1898),

English *langue* included an assessment of the Welsh commanderies within the context of the whole *langue*.⁹

The sources of information for the military orders in Wales are a number of bishops' confirmations of earlier donations, notably Bishop Anselm of St Davids in 1230;¹⁰ a few surviving charters of donation, some of which are in the Glamorgan Archives,¹¹ part of the cartulary of Slebech commandery that is preserved in the National Library of Wales,¹² and a report that Philip de Thame, then prior of the Hospital in England and Wales, sent to the Order's headquarters on Rhodes in

33–53; 16 (1899), 220–34, 283–98; E. Hermitage Day, 'The Preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers at Dinmore, Co. Hereford', *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club* (no volume number) (1927), 45–76; J. Fleming-Yates, 'The Knights Templar and Hospitallers in the Manor of Garway, Herefordshire', *ibid.*, pp. 86–101; W. Rees, 'The Templar Manor of Llanmadoc', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 13/3 (1949), 144–5; E.J.J. Davies, 'The Church of St John the Baptist, Ysbyty Ifan', *Caernarvonshire Historical Society Transactions*, 56 (1995), 37–46; J.M. Parry, *The Commandery of Slebech in Wales of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem* (no place, 1996); H.J. Nicholson, 'Margaret de Lacy and the Hospital of St John at Aconbury, Herefordshire', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 50 (1999), 629–51, repr. A. Luttrell and H.J. Nicholson (eds), *Hospitaller Women in the Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 153–77; R. Thomas, 'Slebech: A Study of a Commandery of the Order of St John in Wales', unpublished MA thesis, Cardiff University, 2002; H. Nicholson, 'The Sisters' House at Minwear, Pembrokeshire: Analysis of the Documentary and Archaeological Evidence', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 151 (2002), 109–38. Also, see now Philip Handyside, 'The Hospital of St John in Wales: Donors and Properties', unpublished MA thesis, Cardiff University, 2009.

⁹ O'Malley, *passim*. There is also some discussion of the Templars in Wales and the March in E. Lord, *The Knights Templar in Britain* (Harlow, 2002), pp. 110–17, and of the Hospitallers in Wales by H. Nicholson, 'The Knights Hospitaller on the Frontiers of the British Isles', in J. Sarnowsky (ed.), *Mendicants, Military Orders and Regionalism in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 47–57.

¹⁰ Cardiff City Library MS 4.83 (was Middle Hill MS 19880); also copied by Richard Fenton and printed by Rogers Rees (1897), pp. 99–102; *St Davids Episcopal Acta, 1085–1280*, ed. Julia Barrow (Cardiff, 1998), no. 108, pp. 123–8, and see index, p. 193.

¹¹ I am grateful to Philip Handyside for the following references: Cardiff, Glamorgan Archives, CL/DEEDS I/3656 (formerly Pembroke Deed 1053 in Cardiff Library): Reimundus fitz Martin gives to the Hospitallers of Slebech land around Beneg[er]duna and Minwear (no date); CL/DEEDS I/3658 (formerly Deed 1055), Walter Marshal, earl of Pembroke (d. 1245), grants liberties to the Hospital of St John the Baptist; CL/DEEDS I/3667 (formerly Deed 1063): John Bonesant, son of Philip from Patrick's Mount, gives to the brothers of the Hospital of St John of Slebech all the interest that accrued to him from the death of Joan, daughter of his brother Philip, in a moiety of land in Patrickshill in the tenement of Marteltwy: 1 May 1273.

¹² Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Slebech: Estate and family records of Barlow, Phillips and de Rutzen of Slebech, Co. Pembroke, nos. 233, 283, 869, 3139, 3144, 3146, 11438, 11477.

1338.¹³ There is also a history of the Hospitallers written in 1434 by the Hospitaller John Stillingflete that lists a number of donations to both orders in Wales and the Welsh March.¹⁴ In addition, there are also the inventories that the royal officials took of the Templars' lands in 1308 when the Templars were arrested and their subsequent accounts for these lands – but very little actually relating to Wales¹⁵ –, a rental of the Hospitallers' commandery of Dinmore and Garway from 1505,¹⁶ various references in the English government records, and the record made in 1535 just before the dissolution of the monasteries in England and Wales, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*.¹⁷

This paper will assess what property the Hospitallers and Templars held in Wales and the Welsh March, review motivations for donation, and consider how these orders made use of their properties here.

The Military Orders' Estates in Wales and the Welsh March

The Hospitallers and Templars had received their first donations of land in Wales and the Welsh March before 1150. The precise date of the Hospitallers' first acquisition is unclear. Sometime between 1176 and 1198, Bishop Peter of St Davids confirmed all the gifts to the Hospitallers within his diocese, and mentioned that his three predecessors, Wilfrid, Bernard and David, had allowed the Hospitallers to remove any chaplain or clerk from their churches. This could indicate that the Hospitallers had received responsibility for churches in south-west Wales by 1115, when Bishop Wilfrid died.¹⁸ This was only two years after Pope Paschal II had acknowledged the Hospital of St John as a religious order; the Hospitallers did not

¹³ *Knights Hospitallers in England*, pp. 30–33 (Dinmore), 34–7 (Slebech), 38–40 (Halston), 195–200 (Upleadon, Garway and Stanton Long), 213 (Lydley and Pencarn).

¹⁴ John Stillingflete, 'Liber Johannis Stillingflete de nominibus fundatorum Hosp. S. Johannis Jerusalem in Anglia', in *Monasticon Anglicanum*, eds W. Dugdale *et al.* (London, 1846), 6.2, pp. 831–9. Dinmore appears on pp. 836 and 839, and Slebech pp. 826–7.

¹⁵ Kew, The National Archives: Public Record Office (hereafter cited as TNA: PRO), E358/18, rots 2, 44; E358/19, rots 25, 47d, 50–51 (Garway and Upleadon); E358/18, rots 4, 54; E358/19, rot. 36; E358/20, rots 5–6 (Lydley, Cardington and Stanton Long); E358/20 rot. 10 (Llanmadoc); SC 6/1202/3 (Llanmadoc).

¹⁶ Hereford Record Office, A63/III/23/1: Rental of Dinmore and Garway, 20 Henry VII.

¹⁷ Slebech: *Valor Ecclesiasticus temp. Henr. VIII auctoritate Regis institutis*, ed. J. Caley (London, 1810–34), 4, pp. 388–9; Halston is at 4, pp. 455–6. O'Malley (p. 71) notes that the entry for Dinmore is missing.

¹⁸ Rogers Rees (1897), pp. 106–7 n. 9; Rees, *History*, p. 25, both citing Cardiff Library MS 4.83 (was Middle Hill MS 19880); *St Davids Episcopal Acta*, nos. 21, 37, 45, 46, pp. 49–50, 61–2.

begin to receive gifts of land in England until 1128.¹⁹ Yet it is not impossible that the Hospitallers had received some gift in Wales by 1115, for, as Anthony Luttrell has shown, the Order had received donations in southern France very soon after the First Crusade.²⁰ However, without other evidence, it is most likely that there is an error in Bishop Peter's confirmation, and that the Hospitallers obtained their first properties in Wales in the 1130s and 1140s.

Their earliest acquisitions were in south-west Wales, and were small manors and parcels of land and churches, given by local small landowners with Norman names, such as Philip de Kemeys and Richard son of Tancred.²¹ The Hospitallers already had a fine scattering of possessions in Morgannwg and Pembrokeshire in south Wales by the time they received the lands that formed the bases of their two centres in the Welsh March (Fig. 16.1): at Dinmore in Herefordshire, in the 1180s, and at Halston in Shropshire, perhaps before 1187.²² The Templars arrived later than the Hospitallers: in Shropshire at Lydley and Cardington, immediately to the south of Lydley, in the late 1150s; in Llanmadoč in the Gower in 1156; and at Garway in Herefordshire in the 1180s.²³

The military orders' lands were clustered in the areas of Wales that were settled by the Normans, English or Flemish: that is, south Wales and the Welsh March. The Hospitallers also received some properties in the parts of central Wales that were temporarily under Norman domination, and a little in north-west Wales, which remained under Welsh lordship. However, while the Hospitallers were building up the estates of Slebech in south-west Wales to become one of the wealthiest religious houses in Wales, the Templars received very little land within Wales. Even when they were given land here they did not develop it.

For example, the Templars had 40 acres at Caerwigau, part of the fee of Bonvilston, now in the Vale of Glamorgan. This is in the River Ely valley, on a local communications route and a short distance from the old Roman road, which runs to the south. The Templars rented this land out to the Cistercian monks at Margam, and by the end of the twelfth century had transferred the land to the Abbey.²⁴ They received some land at Pencarn, now near Newport, on the west bank

¹⁹ Pope Paschal II, *Pia postulatio voluntatis* (15 Feb. 1113), *CH*, 1, pp. 29–30, no. 30; M. Gervers, 'Donations to the Hospitallers in England in the Wake of the Second Crusade', in (ed.), *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians* (New York, 1991), pp. 155–61.

²⁰ A. Luttrell, 'The Earliest Hospitallers', in B.Z. Kedar, J. Riley-Smith and R. Hiestand (eds), *Montjoie: Studies in Crusade History in Honour of Hans Eberhard Mayer* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 37–54, here p. 49.

²¹ Rees, *History*, pp. 105–6.

²² Rees, *History*, pp. 120, 127; Knowles and Hadcock, pp. 303–4.

²³ Rees, *History*, pp. 124, 126–7; Knowles and Hadcock, p. 294.

²⁴ See the confirmation charter by Countess Isabel of Gloucester, 1189–99, *Earldom of Gloucester Charters: The Charters and Scribes of the Earls and Countesses of Gloucester to A.D. 1217*, ed. R.B. Patterson (Oxford, 1973), no. 137. In 1203 Pope Innocent III confirmed to Margam all its possessions, including the 40 acres that the abbey had received from the Templars. Rees, *History*, p. 53.

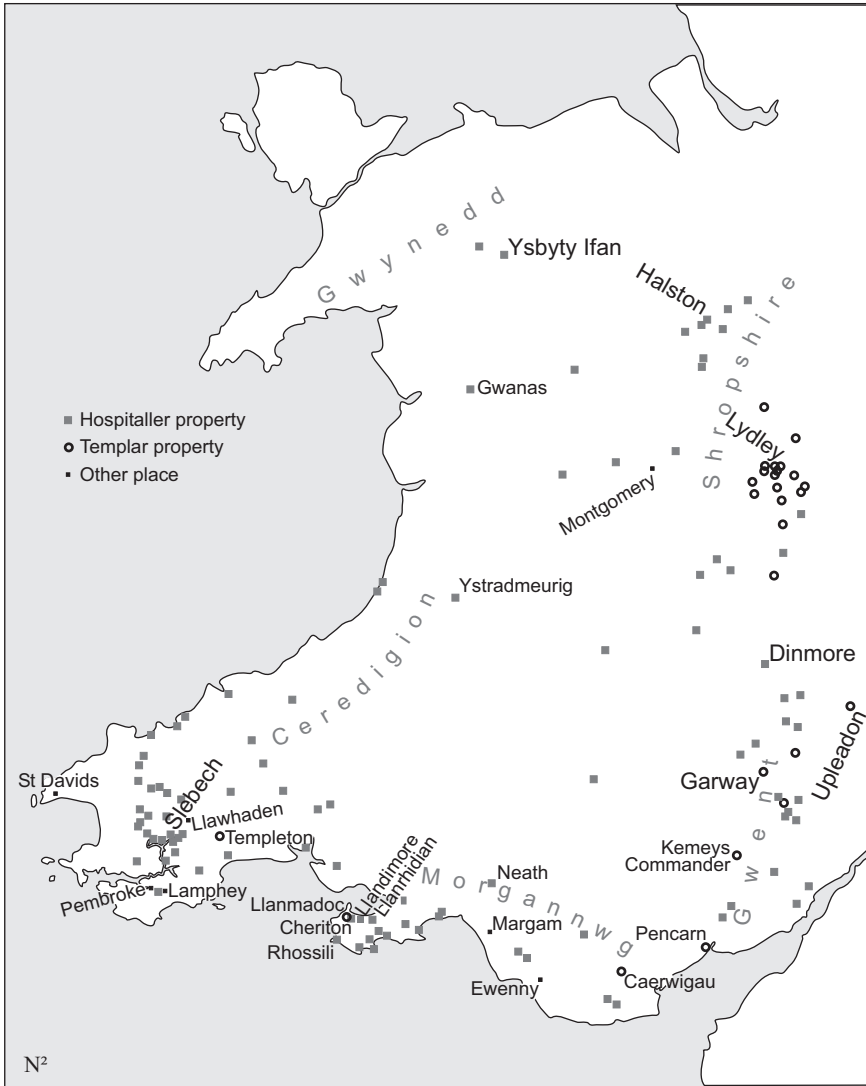


Figure 16.1 The military orders' properties in Wales, indicating the places mentioned in the text. Based on the maps by William Rees, *A History of the Order of St John in Wales and on the Welsh Border, including an account of the Templars* (Cardiff, 1947) (graphics: N² Productions)

of the River Ebbw where the Roman road forded the river. Yet there is no mention of this in any surviving Templar records, and the first evidence that the manor had been held by the Templars appears in 1338 when the Hospitallers complained that it was being held by the earl of Gloucester.²⁵ The Templars did maintain the church they had received at Kemeys Commander, at a crossing point on the River Usk in Gwent, although they did not develop any significant settlement there.²⁶ They also received land at Templeton, a new town founded in Pembrokeshire in the twelfth century, on the land of the lords of Narberth. In 1283 Templeton was called *villa Templariorum*, and was described as a possession of the late Roger Mortimer, lord of Narberth. The name implies that it had or did belong to the Templars, but either it was no longer a Templar property by 1283 or they held it by rent, not in full right. In any case, there is no record that it was administered by royal officials after the arrest of the Templars in 1308, and it did not pass to the Hospitallers with the Templars' other estates.²⁷ Finally, the Templars held the church of Llanmadoc in the Gower and maintained a small house there, which was apparently let out to tenants at the time of the Templars' arrest in January 1308. In addition to rent from tenants, they had a water mill, some arable land and some pasture, and received some court fees. At Michaelmas 1308, the sheriff reported receipts since January of thirteen pounds, seven shillings and five pence.²⁸ In 1338 (under the Hospitallers) its annual gross income, including income from the mill and court fees, was ten pounds, sixteen shillings and fourpence;²⁹ in 1505 the Hospitallers' income from rents, the mill and the church amounted to five pounds, thirteen shillings and three pence.³⁰

The Templars' estates in England were generally in low-lying or gently rolling farming country, where they grew large quantities of grain and kept sheep and cattle.³¹ Perhaps the Welsh terrain was not suitable for their farming needs; or perhaps the Welsh and the Anglo-Norman or Cymro-Norman families of Wales were not interested in giving to them. I will return to this point later.

By the end of the thirteenth century, the Hospitallers had commanderies at Slebech in south-west Wales, 'North Wales' (based at Ysbyty Ifan in the Welsh kingdom of Gwynedd) and Halston in Shropshire – by 1338 these two were administered as one commandery –, and Dinmore in the Welsh March on the

²⁵ *Knights Hospitallers in England*, p. 213; Rees, *History*, p. 53.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52 for the crossing point. Note the pattern of public rights of way on the Ordnance Survey map.

²⁷ *Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward I, AD 1279–1288* (London, 1902), p. 200; Rees, *History*, p. 55; R.F. Walker, *Pembrokeshire County History, 2: Medieval Pembrokeshire* (Haverfordwest, 2002), p. 143.

²⁸ TNA: PRO E358/20, rot. 10 and SC 6/1202/3; ed. and trans. Rees, 'Templar Manor of Llanmadoc'.

²⁹ *Knights Hospitallers in England*, p. 197. Note that the church itself was not mentioned in 1308 or 1338.

³⁰ Hereford Record Office, A63/III/23/1, fols 33r–34r.

³¹ Nicholson, *Knights Templar*, pp. 218–49; TNA: PRO E358/18–20.

Gwent/Herefordshire border. The Templars had three commanderies in the Welsh March: at Lydley in Shropshire, Upleadon in east Herefordshire, and Garway on the Gwent/Herefordshire border, from which they administered their property in south Wales.

In his bull *Ad providam* of 2 May 1312 Pope Clement V declared that all the Templars' properties, except for those in the Iberian Peninsula and Mallorca, should pass to the Hospitallers.³² In England and Wales, this bull was not put into statute until 1324, when Parliament agreed that all the properties formerly belonging to the Templars should indeed be assigned to the Hospitallers.³³ Even following this statute the Hospitallers were not able to obtain all the former Templar estates: those at Lydley, for example, were taken back into the hands of the FitzAlan family, which originally gave Lydley to the Templars.³⁴ The Hospitallers administered the remaining properties and churches that had belonged to this commandery from Upleadon.

Initially the Hospitallers continued to maintain the former Templar commanderies at their original status, listing them separately in their records.³⁵ Commanders of Garway were appointed until 1337;³⁶ and Upleadon was a commandery until at least 1381.³⁷ During the course of the fourteenth century the Hospitallers rationalized their administration in Wales and the March. Garway was amalgamated with Dinmore – for obvious reasons, as the two were very close together – and by the end of the fourteenth century Upleadon was also amalgamated with Dinmore.³⁸

³² M. Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2006), p. 271.

³³ Cardiff City Library MS L.385, fols 293v–299v.

³⁴ *Victoria County History: Shropshire*, ed. C.R.J. Currie (Oxford, 1998), 10, pp. 27, 89.

³⁵ See, for example, the list of 1319–22, published by J. Miret i Sans, *Les cases de Templers i Hospitalers a Catalunya: aplec de noves i documents històrics*, new edn with introduction by J.M. Sans i Travé (Lleida, 2006), pp. 400–401, in which Denemoz (Dinmore), North Uuallia (North Wales) and Slebethe are listed with other Hospitaller properties and 'Garellzy' (mistranscription of Garway) is listed at the end with the former Templar properties); and AHN OO.MM Sección de Codices 602B (= Registro Amposta, iv), fols 10v–12, a document of 1357 in which Dynemor (Dinmore), Norwalles (North Wales) and Slebech are listed with the Hospitaller properties and Garway at the end, with the former Templar properties (I am very grateful to Dr Antony Luttrell for drawing my attention to the former and supplying me with a transcription of the latter).

³⁶ On 16 October 1337 Robert Cort was commander of Dinmore and Garway (at the General Chapter of that year: NLM, Archives of Malta (henceforth AOM), 250 fol. 42r).

³⁷ 18 Nov. 1381 Robert Hales died still holding, among others, the prioral commandery of Upleadon: the grand master gave this and his other bailies and commanderies to John Radington: NLM, AOM 321, fol. 145r–v. On 16 July 1399 William Hullus was commander of Temple Combe and 'Hopdelm' (possibly a variant spelling of Upleadon): NLM, AOM 330, fol. 71r (new foliation).

³⁸ O'Malley, p. 62, n. 17; Phillips, p. 134.

Donors

Some donations to the Hospitallers and Templars in Wales and the Welsh March came from the English monarch. In the 1180s King Henry II of England gave the Templars land at Garway and allowed them clear forest here and at Botewood in Shropshire; he also gave the Hospitallers some land at Dinmore. His son Richard I gave the Hospitallers a hospital at Hereford – and, according to the Hospitaller historian John Stillingflete, writing in the 1420s, he was responsible for endowing the Hospitallers with the bulk of their land at Dinmore.³⁹

William Rees's study of donors to the Hospitallers and the Templars in Wales, revealed that the majority of donations were from donors with Norman, English or Flemish names.⁴⁰ Motivations for donation are notoriously difficult to gauge, but it is clear that, because the military orders were religious orders, donors gave them gifts for the same pious reason that all religious orders received gifts. The military orders were also relatively cheap to endow – they would accept small parcels of land, small money gifts, even horses, armour and clothing – and this would have made them attractive to the relatively poor landowners of Wales. The military religious orders' particular appeal lay in their involvement in helping pilgrims to the Holy Land and in crusading campaigns. Those who had been on pilgrimage to the East or on crusade would give them gifts in thanks for their help; those who could not go – because they were too poor, or could not leave home for security reasons – could nevertheless assist the cause by making a donation.⁴¹ While the Holy Land was seldom specifically mentioned in donation charters as a motivation behind a gift, donors may have considered it too obvious to mention. The military orders' role in protecting pilgrims to the Holy Land and helping crusaders was the obvious motivation for the donations by William Marshal (who had been to the East in the mid-1180s) and his family, and those by an earl and countess of Warwick.⁴²

³⁹ Rees, *History*, pp. 44, 47, 51, 120–21, 126; John Stillingflete, pp. 836, 839.

⁴⁰ Rees, *History*, pp. 104–28 (list of donors).

⁴¹ For donations and motivation see, for example, M. Barber, *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 13–14, 19, 24–7.

⁴² D. Crouch, 'Marshal, William (I), Fourth Earl of Pembroke (c.1146–1219)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison (Oxford, 2004) (hereafter cited as *ODNB*), 36, pp. 815–22. Donations by the Marshal family: Knowles and Hadcock, p. 193; Rees, *History*, pp. 52–3, 55, 105, 107, 117; *Records of the Templars in England in the Twelfth Century: The Inquest of 1185 with Illustrative Charters and Documents*, ed. B.A. Lees (London, 1935), p. 142. A privilege by Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke and great-grandson of William Marshal (d. 1324) to Slebech in 1323 survives in National Library of Wales, Slebech MS 11438. See Richard Fenton, *Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire*, 2nd edn (Brecknock, 1903), p. 326. Earls of Warwick and crusades, see E. Mason, 'Fact and Fiction in the English Crusading Tradition: The Earls of Warwick in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of Medieval History*, 14 (1988), 81–95.

However, for some noble donors there was no obvious crusading motivation. For example, the de Clares – an important Anglo-Norman noble family with several branches, holding the earldoms of Hertford, Pembroke and later Gloucester – were not a great crusading family, but had long been donors to religious institutions and had taken up the new religious movements of the twelfth century, the Augustinian canons, the Cistercians and the military orders; in the thirteenth century they took up the new orders of friars. Roger de Clare, earl of Hertford, his parents, his cousin Richard Strongbow, earl of Pembroke, and Roger's wife Matilda, daughter of James de St Hilaire and a major landowner in England and Brittany, gave property to the Hospitallers in eastern England, Ireland, Ceredigion and elsewhere.⁴³ The Clares' endowment of the Hospitallers may have been initially inspired by their work in the Holy Land, but there is no specific evidence for this.

Ceredigion had been captured by Roger de Clare's grandfather Gilbert de Clare in the early twelfth century. In 1136 the Welsh recaptured it, but Roger recovered it in 1158. He then gave some land there to the Hospitallers, perhaps as a thanks-offering to God. There was also the possibility that, even if the Welsh should attempt to recover the land, the Hospitallers would continue to support the earl's interests there. In the event, Prince Rhys ap Gruffudd of Deheubarth, Prince of South Wales, recovered Ceredigion in 1164 and confirmed the Hospitallers' holdings, thereby strengthening his own hold on the region.⁴⁴

The majority of donations came from local lesser nobility, notably in the Gower of the de Turbervilles, who were also donors to the Cistercians at Neath.⁴⁵ The Turbervilles gave the Hospitallers the churches of Llanrhidian, Landimore and Cheriton, and Rhossili.⁴⁶ Again, here there was no obvious active crusading connection. Even though many people from the Marches and Wales took the cross during Archbishop Baldwin's preaching tour of 1188, so far as is known no one

Donations, see Rees, *History*, pp. 115, 127. My thanks to Philip Handyside for discussions on this point

⁴³ J.C. Ward, 'Fashions in Monastic Endowment: The Foundations of the Clare Family, 1066–1314', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 32 (1981), 427–51, here pp. 443–5; family trees in M. Altschul, *A Baronial Family in Medieval England: The Clares, 1217–1314* (Baltimore, MD, 1965), following p. 332.

⁴⁴ *The Acts of Welsh Rulers, 1120–1283*, eds H. Pryce and C. Insley (Cardiff, 2005), pp. 166–7; R. Mortimer, 'Clare, Roger de, Second Earl of Hertford (d. 1173)', *ODNB*, 11, pp. 767–8, citing J.E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 3rd edn (1939; repr., 1988).

⁴⁵ Glamorgan Archives, DXGC 115/1: Gilbert de Turberville to Neath Abbey; DXGC 115/2: a second grant to Neath Abbey. I am very grateful to Philip Handyside for these references and for allowing me to read his copies of these charters. See also D. Crouch, 'Turberville Family (per. c. 1125–c. 1370)', *ODNB*, 55, pp. 570–71.

⁴⁶ Rees, *History*, p. 116.

from this region actually travelled to the Holy Land at that time.⁴⁷ Perhaps they gave to the Hospitallers instead of joining the crusade.

Welsh Donations

The Welsh were great pilgrims to the East, but generally did not join crusades: in her study of Wales and the crusades, Kathryn Hurlock has identified only a handful of Welsh people who actually joined crusades to the Holy Land.⁴⁸ William Rees identified thirteen donors to the Hospitallers in Wales and the March who had Welsh names, ten of whom were in the commandery of Slebech, one in Shropshire, and two in Gwynedd.⁴⁹ Most of these donors were men unknown elsewhere. The only certain princely donor was Rhys of Deheubarth, who supported the Hospitallers of Slebech.⁵⁰ There was a possible strategic advantage for him in fostering the Hospitallers' presence in this disputed region, but it is also possible that he specifically wished to support the Hospitallers' work helping pilgrims to the Holy Land.⁵¹

It is further possible that Prince Llywelyn ab Iorwerth 'the Great' of Gwynedd was a patron of the Hospitallers, as a charter survives of around 1225 in his name to 'the house of the Hospital of Jerusalem and the brothers serving God and St John there'. However, the validity of the charter is not certain: Huw Pryce, in his study of the acts of Welsh rulers 1120–1283, argued that the donation might be genuine but the style and dating clause are suspect.⁵²

⁴⁷ P.W. Edbury, 'Preaching the Crusade in Wales', in A. Haverkamp and H. Vollrath (eds), *England and Germany in the High Middle Ages: In Honour of Karl J. Leyser* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 221–33.

⁴⁸ K. Hurlock, *Wales and the Crusades, c. 1095–1291* (Cardiff, 2011), pp. 214–32. I am very grateful to Dr Hurlock for her help with this point.

⁴⁹ Anarawd ap Gruffydd (Rees, *History*, p. 107: Benegerdune, nr Minwear); Maelgwn ap Maelgwn (ibid., p. 117: Merthyr Cynlas on the Eastern Cleddau, downstream from Minwear); Owain ap Gruffudd (ibid., pp. 113, 118: land in Ceredigion at Moyl'on and at Riostoye – both unidentified); Cadwgan ap Gruffudd (ibid., p. 114: the land of Betmenon – unidentified). In Rhadnorshire: Meurig ab Adam (ibid., p. 115: the church of Llanfihangel nant Melan); at Swansea, Einon and his brother Goronwy, sons of Llywarch, gave the burgage of William fitz Palmer (ibid., p. 115); John Blaencagnel (ibid., p. 119: church of Penmaen in the Gower, and land); Gruffydd Goch or Madoc of Sutton (ibid., p. 128: the church of Kinnerley in Shropshire); Prince Llywelyn ap Iorwerth of Gwynedd and Ifan ap Rhys (ibid., p. 128); for donations by Prince Rhys of Deheubarth see the following note.

⁵⁰ *The Acts of Welsh Rulers*, pp. 166–7; Rees, *History*, pp. 28, 112, 113; H. Pryce, 'Rhys ap Gruffudd (1131/2–1197)', *ODNB*, 46, pp. 614–16.

⁵¹ Gerald of Wales, 'Itinerarium Cambriae', ed. J.F. Dimock (London, 1868), in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, eds J. Brewer *et al.*, RS 21 (London, 1861–91), 6, p. 15; Rees, *History*, pp. 28, 112, 113.

⁵² Ibid., p. 63; *The Acts of Welsh Rulers*, pp. 419–21; A.D. Carr, 'Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (c.1173–1240)', *ODNB*, 34, pp. 180–85.

The Roles of the Military Orders in Wales and the Welsh March

Military

Because they were military–religious orders, some writers have assumed that the Hospitallers and Templars must have played a role in the wars of Wales during the Middle Ages. In fact the evidence for the orders' involvement in military activity is sparse, and limited to the wars of King Edward I in Wales. On 24 May 1282, Brother Richard Poitevin, then lieutenant-commander of the Temple in England, was granted by King Edward I 'protection with clause *nolumus*, with reference to the king's army in Wales', which suggests that he was involved in military action for the king in the war against Llywelyn ap Gruffudd.⁵³ In December 1294 and January 1295 Brother Odo de Nevet or Ednyfed, commander of the Hospitallers' commandery of Halston, and Madoc ap Dafydd of Hendwr were reimbursed a total of £500 from the King's Wardrobe for paying a force of infantry stationed at Penllyn in Merioneth. It appears that the Hospitaller commander had been involved in putting down the Welsh rebellion in that year.⁵⁴

The Hospitallers and Templars did not own any castles in Wales or the Welsh March, and none of their properties in the region shows any indication of having been fortified. Considering that other religious did fortify their dwellings in Wales – such as the Benedictine priory at Ewenny, in the Vale of Glamorgan, and the bishops' palaces at Lamphey and at Llawhaden in Pembrokeshire – this could be regarded as surprising. The tower of the Templars' church at Garway was originally built freestanding, separate from the church, and it is sometimes suggested that this was so that it could be used as a defensive building; but it was not unusual in that region for church towers to be freestanding. Other church towers built separately from their churches include those at Ledbury, Bosbury and Ewyas Harold (now joined to the main church) in Herefordshire, Westbury on Severn and Berkeley in Gloucestershire, and – on the other side of England – East Dereham in Norfolk.⁵⁵ While it is not clear why this was done, clearly it was not for some military purpose specific to the Templars.

⁵³ *Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward I, AD 1281–1292* (London, 1893), p. 24; apparently acting as lieutenant for grand commander Robert of Turville, who had gone to Scotland on 16 May (p. 20). However, he is not mentioned by J.E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901), pp. 154–85.

⁵⁴ *The Book of Prests of the King's Wardrobe for 1294–5, Presented to John Goronwy Edwards*, ed. E.B. Fryde (Oxford, 1962), pp. xx, 58, 59, 61, 186 n. 3. I am very grateful to Adam Chapman for these references. For Odo as commander of Halston, see *Calendar of Chancery Warrants Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1, 1244–1326, Prepared under the Superintendence of the Deputy Keeper of the Records*, ed. R.C. Fowler (London, 1927), p. 45. For the uprising of 1294 see Morris, pp. 240–66.

⁵⁵ The renowned architectural historian Nicholas Pevsner wrote of Ledbury that the reason for the tower being built separately 'remains obscure' (N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire* (Harmondsworth, 1963), p. 125). His colleague David Verey

In 1338 the Hospitallers of Halston recorded that they were incurring a cost of 100 shillings a year (five pounds) giving ‘gifts to various lords and their seneschals and officials for having and maintaining the Hospital’s liberties and having and expediting their aid and favour and friendship’. Again, at Slebech the Hospitallers paid four pounds a year to ‘two magnates of Wales, for maintaining and protecting the *bailie* from the bandits and malefactors in Welsh parts, who are fierce there: viz., forty shillings to Richard Penres and forty shillings to Stephen Perot’.⁵⁶ It is clear that the Hospitallers in Wales were not a regular military force, as in 1338 they were unable to defend themselves with weapons and had to bribe powerful officials not to attack them or to protect them. That said, Roger Turvey has pointed out that forty shillings a year would have been a welcome income to the Perot family income, as would the prestige of being appointed protector of this wealthy commandery of an influential supra-national religious order.⁵⁷

Lordship

The Templars were not supported by the princes of Wales, but did receive generous donations from the kings of England. Their major holdings in the Welsh March were around Garway, most probably given to them by King Henry II.⁵⁸ Garway and its dependent church at St Wolstan are on the ridge that runs north-west along the east bank of the River Monnow, forming a physical barrier along the border between Wales and England. The royal castles of Skenfrith, Grosmont and White Castle are nearby. It is possible that King Henry II established the Templars here as part of his strategy of controlling this area. The Templars were close to the king – Templars were regularly at his court and acted as his advisers, as messengers, and provided financial services.⁵⁹ Henry could have located them here as men he knew he could trust, to represent royal interests in this frontier area. His major concern

considered that the separate towers at Berkeley and Westbury were for defensive purposes: at Berkeley ‘[t]he tower was placed on the N side of the churchyard to minimize danger if it should be captured’ while at Westbury the tower ‘was built c. 1270 as a garrison or watch-tower’ (D. Verey, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire, 2: The Vale and the Forest of Dean*, ed. N. Pevsner (Harmondsworth, 1970), pp. 98, 399). None of these churches had any connection to a military religious order.

⁵⁶ ‘Et in donis datis ibidem diversis dominis, et eorum senescallis, et eorum secretaries, pro libertate hospitalis habenda, et manutenenda, et eorum auxiliis, et favour, et amicitia habenda et expedienda’. *Knights Hospitallers in England*, pp. 39–40; ‘Et soluto ij magnatibus Wallie, ad maintenendam et protegendam bajuliam, pro insidiatoribus et malefactoribus in partibus Wallie, qui sunt ibidem feroces; videlicet, Ricardo Penres xl s. et Stephano Perot xl s.’. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵⁷ Turvey, p. 9.

⁵⁸ Rees, *History*, p. 52; *Knights Hospitallers in England*, p. 197.

⁵⁹ See, for example, M.L. Bulst-Thiele, ‘Templer in königlichen und päpstlichen Diensten’, in P. Classen and P. Scheibert (eds), *Festschrift Percy Ernst Schramm* (Wiesbaden, 1964), 1, pp. 289–308.

in this region would not have been the Welsh princes, whose powerbases were more to the west and north, but rather the Anglo/Cymro Norman marcher lords such as the de Clares, the de Lacys and the de Braoses.

This close relationship between the kings of England and the Templars – which until the 1250s was much closer than their relationship with the Hospitallers⁶⁰ – may cast light on why the Templars received so few gifts within Wales itself, and none in Welsh Wales, while the Hospitallers were more generously endowed. Because the Templars were servants of the kings of England, a gift to the Templars was – whether the donor wished it or not – effectively a gift in support of English royal authority. Neither the Welsh nor the Anglo/Cymro-Normans would have wished to give the king of England any more power than necessary within Wales. Those who wished to support the crusade therefore gave to the Hospitallers rather than to the Templars.

Hospitality

Another reason for choosing the Hospitallers in preference to the Templars was the Order's vocation. The Hospitallers were established to care for the poor and sick, and while the original establishment was specifically for the poor and sick in Jerusalem, Grand Prior Philip de Thame's report of 1338 reiterates that the houses of the Hospital in England and Wales were bound to help the poor, 'per ordinationem fundatoris dictorum locorum ex antiquo' (through arrangement by the founder of the said places, from antiquity), or 'prout ordinatum est per fundatores domus' (as was ordained by the founders of the house).⁶¹ So a patron who set up a house of the Order of St John in Wales might expect to be establishing a hospice for poor travellers and the sick (Fig. 16.2). The Templars had no such obligation, although the report of 1338 mentions that eight former Templar houses did give hospitality, one of which was Garway, which in particular cared for many from Wales. Unlike other houses, there is no mention of the expense of caring for these travellers' horses, so presumably the Welsh travelled on foot. At Willoughton and Bruer in Lincolnshire, the obligation to supply hospitality was 'prout fundatores domus ordinauerunt' (as the founders of the house ordained), but not elsewhere.⁶²

⁶⁰ H. Nicholson, 'The Military Orders and the Kings of England in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in A.V. Murray (ed.), *From Clermont to Jerusalem: the Crusades and Crusader Societies, 1095–1500* (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 203–18.

⁶¹ *Knights Hospitallers in England*, pp. 5, 8, 12, 14, 15, 18, 22, 25, 28, 39, 36, 43, 47, 50, 61, 76. Stanton in Hertfordshire may also have lodged travellers, as a possible hospice has been identified. R. Gilchrist, *Contemplation and Action: The Other Monasticism* (London, 1995), pp. 90–3; *Victoria County History, Hertfordshire*, ed. W. Page, 3 (London, 1912), p. 349.

⁶² *Knights Hospitallers in England*, pp. 137, 149 (Willoughton), 155 (Bruer), 158, 164, 186, 192, 198 (Garway).



Figure 16.2 Hospitaller houses in England and Wales that lodged travellers in 1338, according to Philip de Thame's report (graphics: Helen J. Nicholson and N² Productions)

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So, while a patron setting up a Templar house might expect the brothers to give hospitality to travellers, the obligation was not as strong as in the Hospital.

The Hospital received several gifts of small properties on roads where the most obvious function of the Order would be to provide hospitality for travellers. Some of these travellers would have been pilgrims on their way to St Davids, Strata Florida and other holy sites. The complaints of the Hospitallers of Slebech in 1338 that they were suffering from

pluribus aliis supervenientibus de Wallia, qui multum confluunt de die in diem, et sunt magni devastatores, et sunt inponderosi.⁶³

(many others coming over from Wales, who rush in every day, and devastate the place, so that the expense that they cause cannot be calculated),

probably refer not to Welsh raiders, but pilgrims to St Davids.⁶⁴ The report implies that the commandery at Slebech had to cater for enormous crowds arriving at the house on a daily basis, eating the brothers out of house and home, taking anything that they needed on the excuse of taking charity, and disturbing the administration of the house and the running of its estates. For this reason, I have suggested elsewhere that the pilgrims were lodged on the south bank of the river, away from the main house.⁶⁵

Pilgrims also travelled to the Order's houses on pilgrimage. The fifteenth-century Welsh poet Lewys Glyn Cothi (or Llywelyn y Glyn) wrote a poem stating that he was going to the house or Hospital of St John on pilgrimage, mentioning Slebech by name.⁶⁶ Dafydd Nanmor, writing in around 1460, cited the Hospital of St John as an example of generous hospitality.⁶⁷

Other sites held by the Hospitallers in Welsh Wales may have cared for travellers, although precise evidence is lacking. Ystradmeurig in Ceredigion, donated to the Hospitallers by Roger de Clare and confirmed by Prince Rhys of Deheubarth, was only five kilometres west-south-west of the Cistercian monastery and pilgrim centre of Strata Florida, and so could have acted as a pilgrim hospice. Gwanas, now in Gwynedd, North Wales, lies on the junction of two important routes through the Cambrian Mountains, where it could have functioned as

⁶³ Ibid., p. 35.

⁶⁴ Rees, *History*, p. 33.

⁶⁵ Nicholson, 'Sisters' House'.

⁶⁶ Lewys Glyn Cothi, 'Mal Enlli amla' unllwybr', in *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, ed. D. Johnston (Cardiff, 1955), no. 91, p. 208, and see also 'Am eni sacariās' (in praise of St John the Baptist, patron of the Hospital of St John), in *ibid.*, no. 2, pp. 17–18; cited in G. Hartwell Jones, *Celtic Britain and the Pilgrim Movement* (London, 1912), pp. 138–9.

⁶⁷ 'Megis ysbytau Ieuan / Yw i dai o fwyd i wan': Dafydd Nanmor, 'Rhys orau 'nhir Is Aeron', line 5, in T. Roberts and I. Williams (eds), *The Poetical Works of Dafydd Nanmor* (Cardiff, 1923), p. 1, and p. 122, n. on line 5; lines quoted in Evans, 'Ysbytty Ifan', p. 109.

a hospice for travellers. It is mentioned in Philip de Thame's report of 1338 as contributing forty shillings a year to the incomes of Halston commandery, but the report gives no further details of its function.⁶⁸ After 1338 no other sources mentioned it until the dissolution of the monasteries in England and Wales.⁶⁹

Ysbyty Ifan ('St John's Hospital'), originally Dolgynwal in Gwynedd, comprised a hospice and church near a ford on the River Conwy on an important route from north to west Wales. Philip de Thame's record in 1338 that the Hospitallers at Halston and Dolgynwal had to bribe various local lords and officials 'to have their aid, and favour, and friendship', indicates that this was a dangerous area, where travellers would have valued a safe place to stay. During the revolt of Owain Glyndwr, the hospice was burned down and never rebuilt, but the location continued to be a place of refuge, including – according to local complaint in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – for bandits.⁷⁰

William Rees and other scholars have also suggested that Ysbyty Cynfyn in Ceredigion belonged to the Hospitallers and lodged travellers, specifically pilgrims en route south to Strata Florida, but there is no documentary evidence of this.⁷¹

The Significance of the Military Orders' Welsh Properties to the Orders

Some of the churches that were entrusted to the Hospitallers and Templars, such as Slebech and Garway, became the centre of a commandery while also remaining the parish church. The brothers' responsibility was to keep the church in good repair and to appoint and support the priest. They could receive all the spiritual dues from the parish – in particular the tithes – that in 1338 were an important source of income for the Hospitallers' commanderies. Slebech, for example, received over £200 after expenses that year from its churches, their lands and associated revenues.⁷²

However, the Hospitallers, with their interests extending across Christendom, did not always give priority to local parish responsibilities. In the late fourteenth century, when the Order's resources were focused on campaigns against the Ottoman Turks in the Balkans and Asia Minor, the bishop of St Davids noted that the Hospitallers' church of Llanrhidian in Gower was in such poor repair that 'for

⁶⁸ *Knights Hospitallers in England*, p. 38.

⁶⁹ Rees, *History*, pp. 66, 128 (quoting *Knights Hospitallers in England and Valor Ecclesiasticus*, 4, p. 455).

⁷⁰ Davies, 'Church of St John the Baptist'; Evans, 'Ysbyty Ifan'; Rees, *History*, pp. 63–7, 128.

⁷¹ Knowles and Hadcock, pp. 339, 409, citing W. Rees, [Ordnance Survey map of] *South Wales and the Border in the Fourteenth Century*, N.W. Sheet (Southampton, 1932). Rees does not repeat this suggestion in his *History*. I am very grateful to Paul Sambrook for his help with this point.

⁷² *Knights Hospitallers in England*, pp. 34–6.

a long time it had not been possible for the divine offices to be celebrated with due honour'. The bishop complained that at a previous visitation he had sternly warned the commander of the Hospital at Slebech to make the repairs, but as this had not been done, the bishop sequestrated the revenues of the rectory.⁷³ In 1397 the parishioners at Garway complained that although their priest worked hard, serving both Garway and Wormbridge with daily services, he could not perform his office properly because he could not speak Welsh and most of his parishioners could not speak English.⁷⁴

Item quod Ricardus, capellanus ibidem, celebrat bis in die, viz. hic apud Garwy et alibi apud Wormbrugge, et recipit duplex salarium. Item quod idem dominus est inhabilis ad gerendum curam animarum ibidem, quia nescit linguam Wallicanam et quia plures parochiani ibidem nesciunt linguam Anglicam.⁷⁵

As the priest would have been appointed by the grand prior and his chapter at the Hospital's major English house at Clerkenwell near London, presumably they had not realized the importance of installing a Welsh-speaking priest.

It is interesting to note which brothers were promoted to being commanders of the Hospitallers' and Templars' houses in Wales and the March, as this gives some indication of the status of these houses within the orders as a whole. In particular, Slebech became a commandery held by Hospitaller brothers who were headed for high office in the Order, or who already held high office. Philip de Thame held the commanderies of Slebech and Sandford after he gave up the grand priory of England, until his death in 1358.⁷⁶ In 1338 John Frowyck was commander of Slebech; he was prior of Ireland 1356–59.⁷⁷ In 1358 Robert Hales, *socius* or personal aide of the grand master of the Order on Rhodes, was made commander of Slebech, an office he held until his death in 1381. After 1365 he also held Upleadon and Cardington. From 1372 he was grand prior of England.⁷⁸ John Weston was commander of Slebech in 1476, and continued to hold it after he

⁷³ Williams, *Welsh Church*, p. 167, quoting *The Episcopal Registers of the Diocese of St Davids, 1397–1578*, ed. R. F. Isaacson, Cymru Record Series, 6 (1917–20), 1, pp. 174–6, 269.

⁷⁴ L.B. Smith, 'A View from an Ecclesiastical Court: Mobility and Marriage in a Border Society at the End of the Middle Ages', in R.R. Davies and G.H. Jenkins (eds), *From Medieval to Modern Wales: Historical Essays in honour of Kenneth O. Morgan and Ralph A. Griffiths* (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 64–80, here p. 72, citing A.T. Bannister, 'Visitation Returns of the Diocese of Hereford in 1397', *English Historical Review*, 44 (1929), 279–89, 444–53 and 45 (1930), 92–101, 444–63, here 44, p. 289.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁷⁶ NLM, AOM, 316, fols 199r–v.

⁷⁷ *Knights Hospitallers in England*, p. 37; C.L. Tipton, 'The Irish Hospitallers during the Great Schism', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy C*, 69 (1970), 38.

⁷⁸ NLM, AOM, 316, fols 199r–v, 200r–v, 201r, 202r; NLM, AOM 319 fols 175r, 176r–v, 177r–178r, 179r; NLM, AOM 321, fols 145r–v.

became prior of England in 1477;⁷⁹ from 1485 until his death in 1513 it was held by Robert Evers, who was prior of Ireland from 1497.⁸⁰ From 1514 to 1540 it was held by Clement West, who became turcopolier of the Order in 1531, the highest office open to a brother of the English tongue.⁸¹

Conclusion

While an obvious motivation for donating to the military orders in Wales was to support the crusade and pilgrims to the Holy Land, it appears that donations were also made with regard to local patterns of power and authority, as donors within Wales – both the Anglo-Norman marcher lords and the Welsh – preferred not to give to the Templars, who were very close to the king of England, but gave instead to the more independent Hospitallers. The donations in Ceredigion by both the Anglo-Norman de Clare family and Prince Rhys combined piety with a strategic aim: the need to establish reliable men, on whose support they could rely, in a disputed area. There was also an immediate charitable aspect to donations: the Hospitallers were originally set up to care for Christian travellers to the Holy Land, and to judge from the report of 1338 they also took on this duty in England and Wales. So they were a suitable order for running hospices for travellers in remote areas. The Templars, in contrast, when they were given land in remote areas, did not develop it and sometimes gave it away. They did, however, lodge travellers at Garway on the Welsh/English border.

The military orders do not appear to have had a great deal of active power in Wales; in 1338 the Hospitallers complained about bandits and being imposed upon by numerous travellers, and having to pay protection money to local lords. On the other hand, they were clearly valued by those travellers and local lords. The Hospitallers' houses in Wales and the Welsh March were important to their Order, producing significant income towards the Order's work in the East. It is notable that, at least from the fourteenth century, the commandery of Slebech – the richest commandery in Wales – was usually entrusted to a brother who was headed for high office within the Hospital. Hence, although Wales and the Welsh March were geographically remote from the Hospital's centre of operations in the eastern Mediterranean, they were significant within the *langue* of England.

⁷⁹ O'Malley, pp. 45, 46.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 50, 173, 311, 349.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 50.

