

Oseney Abbey Studies

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- Chapter 1 *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 53 (1980), 242-4
- Chapter 2 *Historical Research* 60 (1987), 100-2.
- Chapter 3 *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 29 (1985), 32-43
- Chapter 4 *Archives* 19 (1990), 183-91
- Chapter 5 *Oxoniensia* 51 (1986), 69-77
- Chapter 6 *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 6 (1978), 28-30
- Chapter 7 *Archives* 14 (1979), 75-80
- Chapter 8 *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 54 (1981), 105-10
- Chapter 9 *Oxoniensia* 40 (1976 for 1975), 326-8
- Chapter 10 *Midland History* 4 (1977), 1-14
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- Chapter 13 *Oxoniensia* 49 (1985 for 1984), 141-52
- Chapter 14 *Oxoniensia* 58 (1993), 219-32

Acknowledgements and comment

These papers have been produced over a number of years since 1975. During that time, the context of many of the themes has changed dramatically. It would be impossible to revise all the material to incorporate this more recent research. Much of the progress in the contexts of the articles can be followed through B. M. S. Campbell, *Seignorial Agriculture in England* (Cambridge, 2000), B. F. Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100-1540. The Monastic Experience* (Oxford, 1993), and J. Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (Cambridge, 1994).

Over those years, of course, numerous debts have been incurred. John Blair was a helpful, friendly and sympathetic editor of *Oxoniensia*. Joyce Horn improved my contributions to *Historical Research*. My single contribution to *Nottingham Medieval Studies* was facilitated greatly by that journal's editor, Antonia Gransden. Advice and kindness were constantly offered by Barbara Harvey and Paul Harvey, to both of whom a major obligation is owed. The staff of the Bodleian Library were always courteous. John Burgass at Merton College Library was genuinely kind. The staff of the John Rylands University Library Manchester were exceptionally patient as I rummaged about there during my exile in Rochdale. I am grateful to the Students of Christ Church for permission to use, cite and publish the Oseney rolls which they deposited in the Bodleian Library.

Whilst I was an archivist at Sheffield City Libraries, I received much help from my colleagues, Richard Childs, Ruth Harman and Margaret Turner, and a succession of archives assistants whose collegiality I much enjoyed (Jean, Mary Chesworth, Mary Warhurst, Karen and Julie). The demands of being an archivist are so wide-ranging that it is difficult to maintain competence in all aspects. In 1983 and 1986, during those years as an archivist, I attended the Anglo-American Symposia on the Medieval Economy and Society organized by Bruce Campbell, which fortified me immensely. In 1986 also, St John's College, Oxford, allowed me a summer fellowship which enabled considerable research in the Bodleian, although it was truncated by the death of my father. After I moved to the Department of English Local History in 1988, I paradoxically had less time to devote to the matters in this small book. Notwithstanding that, the late Harold Fox was a constantly stimulating colleague. I also wish to extend back the acknowledgements to a much earlier time when I was an undergraduate: Eric Stone (and Barbara Harvey acknowledged above) first stimulated my interest in these matters.

The research for and publication of the original papers was assisted by the British Academy, the Pasold Research Fund, the W. A. Pantin Trust. I was fortunate too to have the use of Barbara Harvey's house for a week whilst she was on holiday, for which I am much indebted.

When I was an archive trainee at the Bodleian Library, I mentioned to Pierre Chaplais that Oseney might be a suitable case for treatment by someone. He, with his usual acuity, remarked that Herbert Salter had done so much. Despite

his perspicacious advice, I later took to reading the account rolls on late evenings in the Bodleian whilst my wife, Suella, more productively attended a course on local history at Rewley House. Had I joined her, I would have saved myself much trouble and anxiety later. Salter is, of course, an impossible act to follow, but what I have tried to do is to reconstitute a more narrative approach to Osney and a consideration of the economic basis of its existence. By now, my account will appear very traditional and conservative because of the intervening years, but I hope that something may be found in it which is useful and also of interest to a local audience.

Dates of account rolls are given by the closing year of the account.

Throughout, the form ‘Osney’ is employed. Although the modern form of the place-name is Osney, H. E. Salter made ‘Osney’ almost normative for medieval discussions.

The text has been typeset using \LaTeX with the graphical user interface (GUI) \LyX . Many years ago, Richard Mobbs introduced me to the quality of this document processing system.

Abbreviations

Places of publication are London unless otherwise stated.

| | |
|----------|---|
| Bodleian | Bodleian Library, Oxford |
| EHR | <i>English Historical Review</i> |
| OHS | Oxford Historical Society |
| ORS | Oxford Record Society |
| Rylands | John Rylands University Library, Manchester |
| TRHS | <i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i> |

1 The foundation of Oseney Abbey

In his magisterial analysis of the foundation of some houses of Austin Canons, Professor Southern did not refer to Oseney Abbey. Superficially, Oseney does not appear to be connected with the curiales of Henry I. An association did exist, however, and this connection is described below.¹

According to the Oseney Annals, the house was founded as a priory in 1129.² There is, however, no extant foundation charter of that date. The only extant charters of the founder, Robert II d'Oilly, are a charter *de incrementis* of uncertain date, and a charter of general confirmation, which is later, and may be assigned to 1140x1142. It must be assumed that the foundation ceremony involved only an oral disposition. The endowment at the foundation constituted only a first instalment and was enlarged by subsequent gifts from the founder. Finally, an effective foundation charter was issued by the founder in 1140x1142, some ten or more years after the actual foundation of the priory. The presumption that the charter of 1140x1142 was the general charter of foundation is affirmed by charters of confirmation of foundation and endowment issued by the Ordinary, 1143x1147, and by Henry of Blois as papal legate, 1142x1143. The sudden need to provide a formal charter of foundation may have been impressed upon Oilly by the volatile political situation, he himself having just transferred his allegiance from Stephen to Matilda. Oilly died soon afterwards at the battle of Winchester. He may, equally, have been influenced by the change in fashion, the increasing tendency to issue foundation charters.³

Robert II inherited an established, middling barony. The barony of Hook Norton had been created for Robert I d'Oilly, who had accompanied William I, in the company of his brother, Nigel d'Oilly and the redoubtable Roger d'Ivry.⁴ According to Oseney tradition, it was Robert who received the baronies of Hook Norton and Beckley, and invested Ivry with the latter. Oilly and Ivry were frequently associated as joint tenants and as mesne tenants of each other in Domesday Book, and were co-founders of the Castle Chapel of St George's

¹R. W. Southern, 'The place of Henry I in English History', *Proceedings of the British Academy* xlviii (1962), 127-69; J. C. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England* (1950) made only cursory references to Oseney.

²H. R. Luard, ed., *Annales Monastici* (5 vols, Rolls Series, 1864-9) iv, 19. A writ-charter of confirmation by Henry I has been assigned by its place-date to ?1131: C. Johnson and H. A. Cronne, eds, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* ii (Oxford, 1956), no, 1726.

³H. E. Salter, ed., *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* (6 vols, OHS lxxxix, xc, xci, xcvi, xcvi, ci, 1929-36) iv, 11, 15-17, 18; Salter, ed., *Facsimiles of Early Charters in Oxford Muniment Rooms* (Oxford, 1929), nos 64, 69; V. H. Galbraith, 'Monastic foundation charters of the 11th and 12th centuries', *Cambridge Historical Journal* iv (1932-4), 205-22.

⁴Ivry was already constable of the tower of Rouen and butler, and also tenant-in-chief of the barony of Ivry-la-Bataille: L. C. Loyd, *The Origins of Some Anglo-Norman Families* ed. C. T. Clay and D. C. Douglas (Harleian Society ciii, 1951) s.v. Ivry; J. Sanders, *English Feudal Baronies. A Study of their Origin and Descent, 1086-1327* (Oxford, 1960), 9; the Oillys may have originated from near Ouilley-le-Basset: W. T. Reedy, 'The first two Bassets of Weldon: *novi barones* of the early and mid twelfth century', *Northamptonshire Past and Present* iv (1966-71), 243.

in Oxford. Undoubtedly, as builder and constable of Oxford castle, Oilly had the greater interest in the private chapel and college of secular canons.⁵

The creation of the barony of Hook Norton had been protracted. The nucleus of the barony was conferred immediately after the Conquest, and Robert I attested as minister to a writ-charter of 1067. The barony did not achieve its ultimate size until a little before Domesday. Robert I was rewarded with one and a half hides in Ledwell after the siege of Sainte-Susanne in 1083, and he acquired two hides in Lea Marston from Alric the Englishman with royal licence. It is also possible that the acquisition of the large part of the barony accompanied the marriage of Robert I to Matilda, daughter of Wigod of Wallingford, the pre-Conquest holder of the barony. The English connection thus had some importance to the Oillys, and this type of alliance was later equally significant for the foundation of Oseney. At its zenith, the barony comprised lands in nine counties, but with a main concentration in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. In 1086, Robert I was tenant-in-chief or mesne tenant of 262 fiscal hides in Oxfordshire alone.⁶

Robert I exercised some curial influence, and counted amongst the close baronial advisers of William I. He was constable of the household, constable of Oxford castle, and sheriff of Oxfordshire with Warwickshire. The office of constable of the household was close to the heart of the Anglo-Norman kings. Robert I consequently attested innumerable royal writ-charters, and was the recipient of others.⁷ His position was inherited by his brother, Nigel, father of Robert II, and Nigel assumed the offices of constable of the household and constable of Oxford castle.⁸

When Robert II inherited the barony, his position was rather diminished. A substantial part of the barony had been subtracted to the barony of Wallingford, and with it, initially, the constablership of the household, by the marriage of Matilda d'Oilly to Miles Crispin.⁹ Despite this contraction of the patrimony, Robert II still belonged to the old baronage. Henry I was now, however, advancing *novi homines*.¹⁰

Robert II restored his fortunes by the second marriage of the Oillys with an English family. The further significance of the marriage was that it aligned him with these 'new men' of Henry I. His wife, Edith Forne, had been a concubine of Henry I, and had by him an illegitimate son, Robert fitzRoy. Henry I provided

⁵ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 1; *Annales Monastici* iv, 9-10

⁶ H. W. C. Davis and R. J. Whitwell, eds, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* i (Oxford, 1913), no. 10; Rylands Eng. MS 714 (papers of William Farrer for a continuation of *Honors and Knights' Fees*) (Oilly bundle), 108, 214; E. A. Freeman, *History of the Norman Conquest of England* (6 vols, Oxford, 1867-79) iv, Appendix G; *Book of Fees* (3 vols, 1920-31) i, 116; for the general context, F. M. Stenton, 'English families and the Norman Conquest' in R. W. Southern, ed., *Essays in Medieval History* (1968), 95-105.

⁷ *Regesta Regum-Anglo-Normannorum* ii, xv-xvi; *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* i, nos 10, 89-90, 95, 141, 143, 178, 199, 209, 216, 235, 270, 275, 319, 328; Rylands Eng MS 714 (Oilly) 2.

⁸ *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* ii, nos 547, 550, 601-2, 701-5, 758.

⁹ *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* ii, xv-xvi; Rylands Eng MS 714 (Oilly) 9.

¹⁰ Southern, 'The place of Henry I.'

the dower for Edith's marriage to Robert II, the manor of Claydon.¹¹ Edith was the daughter of Forne son of Sigulf, one of Henry's new men, and one of those Englishmen elevated by Henry I.¹² Forne was a local justiciar, and received from the king in 1120x1121 the barony of Greystoke.¹³ The cartulary of Oseney is quite adamant that the priory was founded at the instance of Edith. In her widowhood, Edith gave to Oseney her two hides in Claydon which had been her dower.¹⁴ The connection with the court of Henry I is perhaps also reflected in gifts to Oseney by Geoffrey de Clinton and Alice, widow of Henry I.¹⁵

The foundation of Oseney priory in 1129 also formed part of the movement to supersede colleges of secular canons by houses of regular canons. Colleges of secular canons had attracted some criticism, although many English cathedral chapters after the Conquest retained secular rather than regular clergy. The castle-chapel of St George's at Oxford was established by Robert I in 1074, before the full tide of reform. St George's no doubt provided an inexpensive means to salvation, as well as perhaps a scriptorium or office of clerks.¹⁶ The criticism of secular canons allowed the absorption of the college by Oseney in 1149. A number of other houses of Austin canons were either established in the early twelfth century as refoundations of colleges of secular canons or appropriated one. The refoundation of St Frideswide's in Oxford in 1122 by the king was undoubtedly a precedent fresh in mind. Darley, Barnwell and Leicester (and later Waltham) were all houses of Austin canons established at the expense of colleges of secular canons.¹⁷

¹¹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 206.

¹² Stenton, 'English families and the Norman Conquest'.

¹³ W. Farrer, ed., *Early Yorkshire Charters* (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1915) ii, 505-8; for Robert II, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* ii, nos 1017, 1222, 1241, 1255, 1400-1, 1466, 1277, 1506, 1552, 1641, 1711, 1722, 1737, 1782, 1805, 1850.

¹⁴ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 11; v, 206.

¹⁵ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 60-1, 107.

¹⁶ K. Edwards, *English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages: A Constitutional Study with Special Reference to the Fourteenth Century* (Manchester, 1949), 7-12, and J. H. Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels, 1100-1300* (Manchester, 1970), 135-6.

¹⁷ For example, R. R. Darlington, ed., *The Cartulary of Darley Abbey* ed. (2 vols, Kendal, 1945), i, ii.

2 *Patronus et advocatus noster*: Oseney Abbey and the Oilly family

Patronage of religious houses was theoretically a reciprocal association, involving rights and obligations, and derived partly from a tenurial relationship, albeit one of a specialized nature. During the thirteenth century, patronal relations were defined and regulated, as other tenures and services were, but in the twelfth century they were still inchoate.¹⁸ In some instances, the commitment seems to have been greater on the side of the religious house in the earlier period, whilst the patrons exhibited almost indifference, and this lack of interest may have been more widespread amongst patrons of houses of the new Order of Austin Canons.¹⁹ The connection between Oseney Abbey and its patrons may reflect further on this wider attitude.

The house was founded in 1129 by Robert II d'Oilly and his wife, Edith Forne, who may have been the prime mover, and the substantial endowments were augmented before Robert's death in the cause of the Empress in 1142.²⁰ Robert, however, spread his spiritual insurance widely. Tithes in Chastleton were given to Gloucester Abbey (Benedictine); burgage property in Oxford to the Templars; and all members of his family, senior and cadet, made considerable benefactions to the priory of St Frideswide (Austin Canon) and Eynsham Abbey (Benedictine).²¹ Edith, at whose instigation Oseney was founded, was equally bounteous to other houses, including Eynsham. Principally, however, she endowed Thame Abbey (Cistercian) and her interest in this new foundation was important for its survival. The house was originally founded at Otteley in the parish of Oddington by Roger Gait, c.1137. Edith afforded the foundation in 1137, by consent of her husband, by a gift of thirty-five acres in Weston-on-the-Green. The significance of this gift for the continuance of the house is recorded in Thame's cartulary. Edith, being in the vicinity, ventured to Otteley and sought from her husband thirty acres near the abbey, giving it with great devotion to the new monastery:

Prima itaque die qua conuentus uenit Otteleiam Edith filia Forn, uxor uidelicet Roberti de Oilli, quia in proximo commanebat, impetrauit a marito suo xxxv acras terre proximas sancte abbacie & contulit cum magna deuotione nouo illi conuentui

¹⁸S. Wood, *English Monasteries and their Patrons in the 13th Century* (Oxford, 1955); H. M. Colvin, *The White Canons in England* (Oxford, 1951), 302-4; B. D. Hill, *English Cistercian Monasteries and their Patrons in the 12th Century* (Urbana, Ill., 1968); B. Golding, 'Burial and benefactions: an aspect of monastic patronage in 13th-century England' in W. M. Ormrod, ed., *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Nottingham, 1985), 64-75.

¹⁹For the relationship of the Deyncourts with Thurgarton Priory (Austin Canon), T. Foulds, 'Thurgarton Priory and Nottinghamshire' in N. Mastoris, ed., *History in the Making* (Nottingham, 1985), 7-9.

²⁰See Chapter 1 above

²¹W. H. Hart, ed., *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae* (3 vols, Rolls Series, 1863-7) i, 70; B. A. Lees, ed., *Records of the Templars in England in the 12th Century* (1935), 180-2; S. R. Wigram, ed., *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St Frideswide at Oxford* (2 vols, OHS xxviii, xxxi, 1895-6) ii, 208; H. E. Salter, ed., *The Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham* (2 vols, OHS xlix, li, 1907-8) i, 72-7, amongst other benefactions.

In 1139, the house was refounded by Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, in his park at Thame, and the bishops of Lincoln came to be regarded as the patrons of the house. Edith's interest in Thame had been important for the survival of the nascent house colonized from Waverley.²²

Benefactions by the Oilly family, including the founders of Oseney, were therefore widespread amongst the older Benedictine houses and the new Orders. To some extent, this commitment had antedated the the foundation of Oseney, an aspect reflected in the burial of Robert II at Eynsham Abbey. A note of disappointment can perhaps be detected in the explanation of the Oseney Annals: *eo quod ante fundationem ecclesiae nostrae illic se sepeliendum devoverat* (because he had promised to be buried there before the foundation of our church).²³ It is unlikely that Robert's successor, Henry I, was buried in Oseney either.²⁴ The first Oilly patron to be interred in the conventual church at Oseney was Henry II d'Oilly, in 1232. The joy of the regular canons there is intimated in the Oseney Annals: *cum magna veneratione, ut dignum fuit*.²⁵ Great importance was attached by religious houses to the interment of patrons in the conventual church.²⁶ In the middle of the twelfth century, however, patrons of houses of the new Orders may still have been attracted by burial in the conventual churches of houses of the established Benedictine Order, since the new Orders had not yet established their spiritual credentials and efficacy.

The greater commitment of the later Oilly patrons to the house coincided with the decline of the fortunes of the barony. The first minority of 1142-54 was followed by a longer one from 1163 to ?1182.²⁷ In the later twelfth century, the barony was being fragmented through financial difficulty, and further exacerbated by the later policy of John. The Oilly family became heavily indebted to the Jews of Oxford, the debts being assumed into the king's hands. Simultaneously, the Oillys were unable to acquit scutage. Concurrently, Henry II d'Oilly was almost constantly embroiled in litigation.²⁸ A curious outcome of the financial exigency of the barony was to force Henry into the arms of Oseney, in particular by the sale to the house of the manor of Weston-on-the-Green in 1227.

Et quia dicti canonici neque ingrati neque illiberales erga me patronum suum in necessitate mea inveniri voluerunt, dederunt michi .ccc. marcas et de dura manu David

²² Rylands Eng. MS 714 (Oilly bundle) 16-18; H. E. Salter, ed., *The Thame Cartulary* (2 vols, ORS xxv-xxvi, 1947-8) i, 2-4.

²³ *Annales Monastici* iv, 24.

²⁴ *Annales Monastici* iv, 33.

²⁵ *Annales Monastici* iv, 73; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 2.

²⁶ Golding, 'Burials and benefactions'.

²⁷ Rylands Eng. MS 714 (Oilly bundle) 20-2; G. Rose and W. Illingworth, eds, *Placitorum in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi Asservatorum Abbreviatio* (Record Commission, 1811), 59. Since, however, the young Henry attested a charter of Margaret de Bohun before 1181, the minority might have been shorter: D. Walker, 'Charters of the earldom of Hereford' in *Camden Miscellany XXII* (Camden 4th series i, 1964), 58-9.

²⁸ D. M. Stenton, ed., *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the 10th Year of the Reign of King John* (Pipe Roll Society new series xxiii, 1947), 134, 139; *Curia Regis Rolls* viii, 296; ix, 10, 174-5, 334-6; x, 117, 141-3, 145; xi, 7, 65-6; F. W. Maitland, ed., *Bracton's Note Book* (3 vols, 1887) iii, nos 1363, 1589, 1688; *Calendar of Charter Rolls* i, 48.

judei Oxonie me et terras meas liberaverunt [And since the said canons wanted to be found neither ungrateful nor mean to me, their patron, in my great need, they have given me three hundred marks and rescued me and my lands from the hard hand of David the Jew of Oxford].

The desperate position of Henry is reflected in the warranty clause by which he offered exchange in Hook Norton or Kidlington, the former being the *caput baronie*. Unfortunately for the abbey, Henry's title in Weston was clouded at this time. Firstly, he had granted the manor as the *maritagium* of his daughter, Matilda, on her marriage to Maurice de Gant, but had recovered seisin at Matilda's death in c.1220, though only after some litigation. Secondly, he failed to consult with his mesne tenants, the Amory family, in 1227, and the abbey consequently became involved in litigation which lasted until 1260.²⁹

In 1149, Oseney acquired the chapel of St George in the Castle of Oxford and its endowments. The chapel had been founded by Robert I d'Oilly in the late eleventh century, but with the assistance of Roger d'Ivry. Some of the endowments had been derived from Ivry's barony (the honor of Beckley), which had passed in c.1146 to Reginald de St Walery. As a result of the appropriation of St George's, the St Walerys claimed some patronal rights over Oseney, a pretension which was pressed in c.1166-68 and c.1200, with such vigour latterly that Gilbert Foliot inteceded to advise restraint.³⁰ St Walery was prepared to define the relationship:

Si uero non fuero in Anglia, presentabitur electus abbas senescaldo meo & differet facere fidelitatem usque ad aduentum meum in Angliam, siue heredis mei. Ipse tamen Abbas interim prouidebit quod ipse michi fidelis erit secundum predictam formam [If, however, I will not be in England, the abbot-elect will be presented to my steward and forbear to do fealty until my or my heir's return into England. He the abbot in the meantime will, nevertheless, make sure that he will be faithful to me according to the said form.³¹ Under Oilly patronage, in fact, no vacancy lasted more than months.³²

The patronal relationship changed in the thirteenth century, both because of the general tendency to increased definition, and because patronage of the house passed to the Crown. Patronal rights might have been assumed by the Crown by 1221. It is possible that the house was temporarily in royal hands during the Interdict in 1208, for Gilbert de Hida withdraw his suit against the abbey *quia abbatia est in manu domini regis* (because the abbacy is in the king's hand). There was no vacancy then, but John had recently assumed the debts of Oilly to Simon the Jew. The house might have passed permanently into royal patronage when Oilly proclaimed his *diffidatio* in 1215.³³ Initially, the Crown

²⁹ *Calendar of Charter Rolls* i, 48-9; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 2, 9; Rylands Eng. MS 714 (Oilly bundle) 190-2, 221-5; For the marriage, Rylands Eng. MS 714 (Oilly bundle) 23d-24; *Curia Regis Rolls* viii, 296; ix, 144, 334-6.

³⁰ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 31-2, 57-8.

³¹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 32.

³² *Annales Monastici* iv, passim; Bodleian Rawlinson MS c.939, fo. 164.

³³ *Calendar of Patent Rolls* i, 301; T. D. Hardy, ed., *Rotuli Litterarum Clausurarum in Turri*

attempted to extend its rights, when, in 1254, Henry III tried to exact a cup and palfrey from the abbot-elect, Richard de Apeltre, as heriot for the late abbot, Adam de Berners, but this effort was successfully resisted.³⁴ Thereafter the main issue of the right of patronage, vacancies and custody, followed the pattern of other religious houses, with, ultimately, the introduction of fines to avoid custody. By contrast, the attitude of the earlier Oilly patrons, partly because of the inchoate nature of the concept, perhaps, seemed more dilatory and uninterested, rather than disinterested.

Londoniensi Asservati (2 vols, 1833-44) i, 237, 298, 470b; *Curia Regis Rolls* v, 202; Stenton, *Pipe Roll 10 John*, 139; John Rylands University Library Manchester Eng. MS 714 (Oilly bundle) 23d.

³⁴ *Calendar of Close Rolls* ix, 167; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 10; *Annales Monastici* iv, 212; Wood, *English Monasteries and their Patrons*, 88n.

3 The learning of Austin Canons: the case of Oseney Abbey

Oseney Abbey was founded, as a priory of Austin Canons, in 1129, just outside the walls of Oxford, and was elevated to an abbey in 1154. Like St Frideswide's, the house was adjacent to the nascent schools of Oxford which developed late in the century, the *studium generale ex consuetudine*. From the thirteenth century, Oseney remained the principal lessor of *aule* (halls) and *camere* (chambers) to the scholars.³⁵ Any discussion of the intellectual activity of Oseney must take this relationship into account. It is equally important to assess the internal resources of the house for study and contemplation. The following discussion therefore examines: the varying connection between Oseney and the schools; the attendance by canons at the schools; the internal resources available through the library and the teaching of grammar; and the implication of some vernacular manuscripts for the level of proficiency in the house. For all these aspects, the sources are disparate and fragmentary; the material is less abundant than for many other houses, such as the large Benedictine abbeys. The attempt may, nonetheless, be worth making because not enough is known of medium-sized houses of Austin Canons, and also because of Oseney's interesting location.

Many commentators on the development of the schools have regarded the influence of Oseney as benign, except for Herbert Salter, who viewed it as inimical and adverse. Salter believed that an incipient school at the castle-chapel of St George was abrogated when Oseney appropriated St George's in 1149. The putative founder of this school was Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, with his acolytes, Robert Chesney and Geoffrey of Monmouth.³⁶ Although more than one scholar emanated from this college, it is difficult to accept it as an embryonic school.

There is, moreover, sufficient evidence that Oseney was well informed of the academic events in Oxford at this time. The main source for the teaching of Robert Pullan in 1133 is the Oseney Annals.³⁷ Pullan may have been invited to Oxford by the secular canons of St George's or even by the prior of St Frideswide's, as the first two priors of that house, Gwymundus and Robert Cricklade, were celebrated scholars.³⁸ The interest of Oseney in Pullan is, nevertheless, confirmed by his inclusion in the martyrology of the house as *Robertus*

³⁵ Sir H. Maxwell-Lyte, *History of the University of Oxford* (1886), 8-9.

³⁶ H. E. Salter, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Oxford', *EHR* xxxiv (1919), 382-5.

³⁷ *Annales Monastici* iv, 19. The original MS. was burnt in the Ashburnham House fire. R. L. Poole thought that the reading might have been *Exonia* rather than *Oxononia*. He was followed by Kathleen Edwards. Poole, 'The early lives of Nicholas Brakespear and Robert Pullan' in *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Thomas Frederick Tout* (Manchester, 1925), 63; Edwards, *English Secular Cathedrals*, 193-4. Stubbs was more cautious: *Lectures on Medieval and Modern History* (3rd edn, Oxford, 1900), 151-3, although Fr Courtenay believed Pullan to have been a canon of Oseney. Beryl Smalley discounts the last idea, but considered Pullan to have taught at Oxford: *The Becket Controversy and the Schools* (Oxford, 1973), 39-40. Salter revisited the issue: 'The medieval university of Oxford', *History* xiv (1929), 57-61.

³⁸ For Gwymundus, Wigram, *Cartulary of St Frideswide* i, 9.

Romane ecclesie cancellarius (Robert, chancellor of the Roman Curia).³⁹ Unfortunately, little is known about the priors of Oseney at this time: Ralph had been a canon of St Frideswide's; Wigod, however, may have had a reputation as a scholar.⁴⁰ No conclusive evidence can be adduced that Oseney would have been antipathetic to a nascent school at St George in the Castle, had it existed.

It was in the last decades of the twelfth century that the significant development of the schools occurred. By 1201, a recognisable organization had appeared: 'an organised school with more than one teacher', and with a head, *magister scholarum*.⁴¹ Although from this time Oseney had a strong tenurial relationship with the schools through its leasing of *aule* and *camere*, its interest remained mainly commercial. The real nature of the relationship was demonstrated by Oseney's adverse reaction to the lowering of rents for the schools by the Taxors after the Legatine sentences in 1214 and 1255. The appointment of Oseney and St Frideswide's, also in 1214, to receive the 52s. to be distributed to poor scholars, was simply a matter of convenience, since these two houses were the only convents close enough to fulfill the terms.⁴²

Even so, it was precisely in the late twelfth century that the Austin Canons exhibited an intense interest in learning, in which Oseney fully participated.⁴³ The prelates of Oseney were interested in theology and maintained connections with some celebrated scholars.⁴⁴ Prior Clement addressed a canonical problem to Senatus, prior of Worcester, in c.1189-96. Clement, who became abbot in 1205, questioned Senatus on points of clerical observance, to which Senatus replied ironically that Clement consulted him despite the proximity of Oseney to a city of scholars.⁴⁵ It was not so extraordinary for Clement to refer to Senatus, for Senatus was of sound repute, and Oseney may have had a special connection with the chapter of Worcester and the *familia* (household) of the bishop. Oseney was accumulating spiritual property in that diocese. *Magister* William de Tunebrige, a prominent member of the bishop's distinguished *familia*, died in the *Domus Dei* of Oseney in c.1195-96, where he had probably been residing for some time.⁴⁶ He donated his theological books to the house. The death of another acclaimed theologian in the house, Adam, bishop of St Asaph, seems to confirm Oseney's interest in exegesis.⁴⁷ Shortly afterwards, a constitution on religion compiled at Oseney was commended by Pope Alexander, confirming the

³⁹ Bodleian Rawl MS c.939

⁴⁰ Salter, 'The medieval university of Oxford'.

⁴¹ H. E. Salter, *Medieval Oxford* (OHS c, 1936), 37, 132; J. C. Russell, 'Alexander Neckham in England', *EHR* xlvii (1932), 261-3, but see also H. G. Richardson, 'The schools of Northampton in the later twelfth century', *EHR* lvi (1941), 603n.; D. Callus, 'The career of Robert Grosseteste', *Oxoniensia* x (1962), 42.

⁴² Maxwell-Lyte, *History of the University of Oxford*, 19, 21, 46.

⁴³ R. W. Hunt, 'English learning in the late twelfth century', *TRHS* 4th series xix (1936), 19ff.

⁴⁴ T. E. Holland, ed., *Collectanea* (OHS xvi, 1890), 180-1.

⁴⁵ 2 Samuel c.20, v.18.

⁴⁶ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 78; Salter, *Cartulary of Eynsham Abbey* ii, 325ff.; A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to 1500* (3 vols, Oxford, 1957-9) iii, 1913; Bodleian Rawl MS c.939, fo. 8.

⁴⁷ *Annales Monastici* iv, 39, but see also Richardson, 'The schools of Northampton', 600.

strong interest of Oseney in theology.⁴⁸

Unfortunately, the house seems to have shunned the opportunity of putting its learning into practice. This opportunity arose because Austin Canons were principal amongst those requested to act as Papal judges-delegate in the southern province.⁴⁹ It appears, since an Oxford formulary includes letters requesting the abbot's appointment as a Papal judge-delegate, that on one occasion Oseney was selected.⁵⁰ Only four commissions, however, were apparently issued to canons of Oseney after 1216, presumably because the convent secured an indult for exemption from service.⁵¹ Oseney also obtained an indult limiting the distance its representatives would have to travel as a litigant before judges-delegate, a common practice of the Order.⁵² Oseney's withdrawal from the organization of the judges-delegate may partly have been its reaction to the expense and irritation of the procedure, but it also reflected the predilection of the Austin Canons for convenience and commodious living. The opportunity to apply knowledge to practice was rejected. In the late twelfth century, the house thus had a strong interest in the interpretation of the scriptures and theology, albeit in a conservative vein.

If the attestation of charters is a reliable guide, further light can be shed on the intellectual connections of the house. Innumerable charters, particularly during the prelacy of Abbot Hugh de Buckingham (1184-1205), were witnessed by *magistri*. Many reasons can be evoked for these attestations: *magistri* might attest as neighbours to the property in the disposition; they might have been associated with the other party to the charters (for example, Mr John de Bridport, who attested charters of Reginald de St Walery, was probably a member of Reginald's household);⁵³ they might also have been requested to act as witnesses because they were respected as men of probity, such as attestations by the incumbent of the parish in which the land was situated (although some ambiguity existed in the case of the vicar of St Mary as the living was also in the gift of Oseney).⁵⁴ None of these criteria apply in a significant number of charters, in which the presence of the *magistri* in the list of witnesses emanates from the relationship between Oseney and the *magistri*.⁵⁵ The connection may have been encouraged through the *nepos* of Abbot Hugh, Mr Reginald.⁵⁶ During the subsequent abbacy of John de Leche, *magistri* provided a considerable number of loans to the convent, although it is impossible to discover the real nature of the loans.⁵⁷ By Leche's time also (1235-49), the association between Oseney and the *magistri* was probably centred on a lessor-lessee basis.

⁴⁸ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 348-9.

⁴⁹ J. Sayers, *Papal Judges Delegate in the Province of Canterbury* (Oxford, 1971), 63-5.

⁵⁰ H. E. Salter, W. A. Pantin and H. G. Richardson, eds, *Oxford Formularies* (OHS new series v, 1942), 217.

⁵¹ Sayers, *Papal Judges Delegate*, 122.

⁵² *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 350-1; Sayers, *Papal Judges Delegate*, 64, 143.

⁵³ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* i, 433, 463.

⁵⁴ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* ii, 264, 269, 275-6, 282, 338.

⁵⁵ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* i, 127, 217; iv, 61-2, 100, 241, 339, 375, 378, 405, 422.

⁵⁶ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 68-9.

⁵⁷ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 66-71.

The abbey had its own complement of *magistri*, which may reflect more favourably on the attainments of the house. Mr Walter de Gant, a canon from c.1175, was instituted in 1184 as the first abbot of the refoundation at Waltham.⁵⁸ Mr William de Meisham, a canon, was presented to the vicarage of Shenstone in c.1205-8.⁵⁹ Another canon, Mr Philip de Risendone, was appointed proctor of the house in 1251 and was succeeded in the office by Mr Robert Maynard.⁶⁰ Robert was recruited from the schools as a counsel in canon law, entered the house as a canon in 1281, and was finally elected as sub-prior.⁶¹ Richard de Wrthe was a canon of the house who was instituted as abbot of Dorchester in 1236, and he was probably responsible for the production of a copy of the *prima pars maiorum sacramentorum* of Hugh de St Victor.⁶² The transcription of this work for Oseney firmly places the abbey in the context of the Victorine influence on the Austin Canons in the late twelfth century.⁶³ These associations suggest that Oseney might have belonged to a wider intellectual circle at this time.

Attendance by canons at the University is difficult to assess much further than above. Analysis of Emden's biographical material on the medieval alumni of Oxford has afforded some general conclusions on the performance of the religious orders. In general, the regulars were less conscientious than the seculars. The analysis confirms, moreover, H. M. Colvin's indictment of the White Canons. The Black Monks (Benedictines) were the best of the regulars; 681 Black Monks have been identified as alumni. The number for the White Monks (Cistercians) is 178; the Black (Austin) Canons 128; the White (Premonstratensian) Canons thirteen; Carthusians six; Cluniacs five; and Bonshommes one. The Friars were more impressive: 244 Carmelites; 283 Austin Friars; 487 Franciscans; and 542 Dominicans. The regular canons thus comprised only five percent of the identified alumni in religious orders, but the Austin Canons were the least reprehensible. From the available evidence the Austin Canons seem to have been interested not only in theology, but also canon and civil law. Attendance by the religious orders fluctuated: the high of 1220-39 was succeeded by decline until 1279, whereupon numbers increased from 1280 to 1299, continued at a high (but inconstant) level to 1360, attained a peak in 1360-79, but then declined through the fifteenth century to a trough in 1460-79, although recovering somewhat in 1480-99.⁶⁴

In default of early matriculation registers, it is impossible to assess comprehensively the attendance of canons of Oseney at the schools. Some impressionis-

⁵⁸ *Annales Monastici* iv, 40; Emden, *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford* ii, 749; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 61, 361.

⁵⁹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 64-5.

⁶⁰ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 403, 405.

⁶¹ Emden, *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford* ii, 1250; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* i, 295-6; iii, 43-4; iv, 250, 291; F. N. Davis, ed., *Rotuli Roberti Grosseteste* (Lincoln Record Society xi, 1914), 221, 225.

⁶² *Annales Monastici* iv, 83; Bodleian Bodley MS 477: at fo. 4 is the inscription *De dono Ricardi de Wrthe canonici nostri*.

⁶³ Hunt, 'English learning'.

⁶⁴ T. H. Aston, 'Oxford's medieval alumni', *Past and Present* lxxiv (1977), 3-40, esp. 16-19; H. M. Colvin, *White Canons in England*, 320-1.

tic evidence occurs in the exhortations and admonitions of the Chapters General of the Order to negligent houses. The performance of most of the other houses was abysmal. The aim, at least from 1325, was that each house with more than twenty canons ought to maintain one canon at the schools. The Chapter of 1443 discovered that of forty-four eligible houses, only sixteen maintained a canon for the entire triennial period between Chapters, and twenty had not sent a canon at all. The list of defaulting houses in 1511 reveals little improvement. Oseney appears in neither list of defaulters and is known to have maintained two canons simultaneously at the Oxford schools.⁶⁵

The president of the Chapter of 1443 who pronounced against the negligent houses was Thomas Hooknorton, abbot of Oseney. It was during his prelacy (1430-52) that the abbey achieved its greatest affinity with the schools and enjoyed an intellectual interest not equalled since the late twelfth century. He may have been responsible for the restitution of a college at St George's dedicated to learning. With the abbot of Leicester, he was the main advocate for the foundation of the College of St Mary for Austin Canons at Oxford. In 1446, as president of the Chapter again, he audited the account of the *prior studencium* at Oxford.⁶⁶ More significantly, he exerted great influence over the drafting of the statutes of the proposed college in 1448: *editu a venerabili patre permissione divina Thoma abbate ... Oseneye* (drafted by the venerable father Thomas, by divine grace abbot ... of Oseney).⁶⁷ The extant copy of the statutes is of Oseney provenance and from this it is known that the original statutes were mainly compiled by Hooknorton and written by a canon of Oseney, Robert de Oxunforde. The consequence of the building of the college was to concentrate Austin Canon students at Oxford, since there was no comparable institution at Cambridge. Henceforth, control over the student Black Canons would be exerted by the abbots of Oseney in conjunction with the *prior studencium*, whereas previously this supervision had been the preserve of the prior of St Frideswide's.⁶⁸ Hooknorton's profound interest in the welfare of scholars was further revealed by his rebuilding of the Oseney schools which were leased to the University.⁶⁹

One enigmatic aspect of Oseney's relations with the schools is its provision for 'foreign' scholars. The abbey apparently permitted scholars and students who were not of the house or Order to use the facilities of the convent, principally the refectory and cloisters. Mr Geoffrey Gibewin gave land in Lew to the abbey *in sustentacionem [sic] pauperum clericorum in domo dei que sita est infra portam Oseneie* (for the maintenance of poor clerks in the *domus dei* situated in Oseney gate).⁷⁰ Conceivably he meant the students at the schools in

⁶⁵H. E. Salter, ed., *Triennial Chapters*, 13, 18, 56, 62-4, 66-7, 187, 214; Bodleian Oseney Roll 5 (two canons); A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln* (3 vols, Lincoln Record Society xxxiii, xxxv, xxxvii, 1940-7) iii, 39 (two canons); B. F. Harvey, 'The monks of Westminster and the University of Oxford' in F. R. H. DuBoulay and C. M. Barron, eds, *The Reign of Richard II. Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (1971), 108-30.

⁶⁶Salter, *Triennial Chapters*, 15.

⁶⁷Bodleian MS. Rawl Statutes 34, fos 12-22, esp. 22.

⁶⁸Salter, *Triennial Chapters*, 69 (1371), 185.

⁶⁹Bodleian Twyne MS. xxi, fo. 264.

⁷⁰*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 500-1 (1235).

Oxford. An agreement between Oseney and the cathedral chapter of Salisbury in 1254 provided a similar arrangement for the cathedral's secular canons.⁷¹ The abbey agreed to maintain four *clerici* at Oxford *ad tres annos completos* (for three whole years), perhaps for the duration of the *Trivium*. It seems equally probable that these clerks were students at the schools, especially considering the reputation for learning in the cathedral chapter, even before the foundation of De Vaux College in Salisbury in 1262.⁷² The granting of this kind of facility by the abbey apparently became commonplace towards the end of the thirteenth century, since the abbey's cartulary contains a formulary for a charter of warranty by inceptors who were permitted to use the refectory and cloisters.⁷³ Despite the proffer of these facilities, however, the abbey was very vigilant to exclude the jurisdiction of the Chancellor of the University.⁷⁴ The motives behind the abbey's extending these privileges are not easily discerned. It is noticeable that the beneficiaries seem to have been basically the secular clergy and secular canons, despite there being as yet no college for the Order of Austin Canons at Oxford. The house may have perceived an opportunity for patronage with long-term benefits, since it had livings to which it could present. Alternatively, the abbey might have regarded the facilities as simply an extension to the leasing of the schools.

The provision for the education of the novices and canons inside the house remained fairly satisfactory before the time of Abbot Barton (1505-24). The education was centred on the library and the grammar master, until the unprecedented foundation of the College of St George in c.1429. The composition of the library is obscure, although what little is known shows some of the interests of the house. Unfortunately, no catalogue has survived, in contrast with the exceptionally fine catalogue for Leicester Abbey, a house of the same Order, which lists 940 books.⁷⁵ In the case of Oseney, we are dependent on the subjective observations of Leland and on the more critical identifications by the late Neil Ker. The library of a religious house, as Knowles and Haskins have explained, was sometimes compiled in a haphazard, random fashion. 'After the twelfth century, the growth of a library depended almost wholly upon chance: the tastes or needs of an abbot or an individual monk; the demands of teachers or scholars when monks began to frequent the universities; bequests of all kinds; the changing devotional practices of the community ... Consequently, the monastic library, even the greatest, had something of the appearance of a heap even though the nucleus was an ordered whole; at its best, it was the sum of

⁷¹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 82.

⁷² Edwards, *English Secular Cathedrals*, 194ff.

⁷³ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 87-8 (c.1286).

⁷⁴ *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 1381-1385, 306.

⁷⁵ M. R. James, 'Catalogue of the library of Leicester Abbey', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society* xix (1936-7), 118-61, 378-440, and xxi (1939-41), 1-88; [see now T. Webber, 'The books of Leicester Abbey' and M. Gullick and T. Webber, 'Summary catalogue of surviving manuscripts from Leicester Abbey' both in J. Story, J. Bourne and R. Buckley, eds, *Leicester Abbey. Medieval History, Archaeology and Manuscript Studies* (Leicester, 2006), 127-46, 173-92.]

many collections, great and small, rather than a planned, articulate unit.⁷⁶

The library still reflects, however, the intellectual resources available to the canons at particular times. The lists furnished by Leland and Ker reveal the importance of works of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The library was then probably at its zenith and most active. The basis of the library was probably the glossed scriptures attributed by Ker to Oseney, now in Magdalen College, Oxford. Service books of this kind constituted the nucleus of monastic libraries of that day. The scriptures were divided into parts for individual study, and glossed. The parts which survive from the Oseney library of the twelfth century are separate books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Paralipomena, *Libri Sapientales*, Job, Peter Lombard's *Psalterium* and his Epistles of Paul, Prophets, *Evangelia*, and Acts. Leland's cryptic list of books suggests that Anglo-Saxon hagiography was a principal interest, a predominant aspect also of the libraries of Cirencester and Llanthony II, also of the same Order, although Leland's observations were notoriously subjective.⁷⁷ If Bede comprised the corpus of these Anglo-Saxon texts, this reflects a wider interest of religious houses in the twelfth century. Cirencester, for example, had six twelfth-century copies of Bede. Antonia Gransden has discerned that thirty-one percent of the surviving texts of Bede derive from the twelfth century, and that Bede's reputation was high at that time, both as an historian and a saint and Father of the Church, venerated for his learning in the scriptures.⁷⁸ Such works would also reflect Oseney's interest in theological debate, although of a conservative nature.

In more contemporary vein, the library acquired a copy of a work by Alexander Neckham, who was a major influence on the Order of Austin Canons, to which he was admitted. Neckham (1157-1217) studied at Paris, taught at Dunstable, and became a canon and later abbot of the house of Austin Canons at Cirencester, the largest house of the Order. Neckham fitted into the scientific aspects of the Renaissance of the twelfth century, which were particularly reflected in his interest in lexicography and natural philosophy (*De Natura Rerum*). Unfortunately, Ker has demonstrated conclusively that this copy was almost certainly presented to the house in the fifteenth century by Abbot Hooknorton,

⁷⁶D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England* (3 vols, Cambridge, 1948-59) ii, 331-53, quotation at 332; C. H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (15th edn, New York, 1970), 70-92; N. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* (2nd edn, 1964), 140-1, lists twenty-eight items ascribed to Oseney; R. M. Wilson, 'The contents of the medieval library' in F. Wormald and C. E. Wright, eds, *The English Library before 1700* (1958), 85-111; J. P. Carley and J. F. R. Coughlan, 'An edition of the list of ninety-nine books acquired at Glastonbury Abbey during the abbacy of Walter de Monington', *Mediaeval Studies* xliii (1981), 498-514; R. W. Hunt, 'The library at the Abbey of St Albans' in M. B. Parkes and A. G. Watson, eds, *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker* (1978), 263-8, remarking at 263 on the significant growth in conventual libraries in the late fourteenth century, which Ker associated with the introduction of the *Anglicana* hand: N. Ker, 'Medieval manuscripts from Norwich Cathedral Priory', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 1 (1953), 9.

⁷⁷*Collectanea* iv (1770 edn), 57; Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, 33, 60-2, 78.

⁷⁸A. Gransden, 'Bede's reputation as an historian in medieval England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* xxxii (1981), 397-425.

and so presumably represents the interest of this intellectual prelate at a later time.

The copy of Hugh de St Victor, donated to the library by the canon, Richard de Wrthe, more truly reflects the wide influence of the Victorine Order apparent in the twelfth century. This volume was probably compiled before 1236, possibly before 1227.⁷⁹ Hugh (1096-1141) had a primary concern for the mystical, hidden meaning of the scriptures and his treatise on the sacraments, which de Wrthe presented, was a forerunner in its arrangement of the *Summe* of the thirteenth century. Such a work represented not only the interests of the individual, de Wrthe, at this time, but also those of the house in theological exegesis, and of the Order as a whole.

Other works of the twelfth century confirm the conservatism of the house: Boethius and, very indicatively, a copy of Isidore, whose *Etymology*, compiled in the seventh century, was by then a very conservative compendium.

This haphazard acquisition of books is well illustrated by the *cautiones*, books given to the house as sureties or warranties for leases of *aule* and *camere*. The *liber Phisicorum* received as a *cautio* of Mr William Renham may not have been very edifying for the canons.⁸⁰ Some books may have been accepted as a matter of courtesy, such as the Plato offered by Canon Ralph Bloore. The house did, nonetheless, acquire by gift books of considerable interest to it. Mr William de Tunebrige left his books to the house in c.1195-6 and Mr Adam de Senestan his important collection of theological books in 1268.⁸¹ The obit roll of the house records innumerable gifts of theological works: *Decreta*, *Johannes glossatus*, *Sententiae*, and *Acta Apostolorum*.⁸²

The other internal resource, grammar instruction, was an obligation well performed before Barton. The late Richard Hunt considered that grammar studies in Oxford declined in the late fourteenth century with the consequent introduction of a lesser qualification, the *magister in grammatica*. This interpretation has recently been revised by David Thomson, who suggests that the qualification of M.Gramm. had existed previously, but became more popular in the fourteenth century, especially with those intending to teach in the new grammar schools outside Oxford.⁸³ Oseney continued to employ the Master of Arts until 1495. Whilst it may have been an advance for the laity to resort to M.Gramms., for the extension of literacy, the change from teaching by M.A.s to teaching by M.Gramms. in a religious house would represent a decline in standards of Latinity. When Mr John Cobbow took a lease of Lion Hall from Oseney, he agreed to provide free grammar instruction for one of the canons, an additional resource for Oseney.⁸⁴ Cobbow, however, was one of those grammar instructors who used the vernacular to aid construction. Further assistance was

⁷⁹Bodleian Bodley MS. 477; Haskins, *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, 350-1.

⁸⁰*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 164

⁸¹See above n. 12; *Annales Monastici* iv, 215.

⁸²Bodleian Rawl MS c.939.

⁸³R. W. Hunt, 'Oxford grammar masters in the middle ages' in *Oxford Essays to Daniel Callus* (OHS new series xvi, 1964), 186; D. Thomson, 'The Oxford grammar masters revisited', *Mediaeval Studies* xlv (1983), 298-310.

⁸⁴M. D. Lobel in *Victoria History of the County of Oxfordshire* (London, 1907-) iii, 43.

probably provided by Mr Thomas Thurleby, who retired to the house, where he died.⁸⁵In 1495, the abbey retained Roger Fabelle, M. Gram., who had considerable experience as a grammarian, but his appointment, nonetheless, may reflect a relative decline in standards of Latinity in the house.

This decline in Latin may be detected, moreover, in the production of the English Register of Oseney Abbey. The English Register may have been composed to assist those canons whose Latin was defective. The prologue to the English Register of Godstow nunnery, a Benedictine convent only a few miles to the north of Oseney, signifies the dilemma.⁸⁶A Latin cartulary had been compiled for Godstow in 1404, but only fifty years afterwards it was thought necessary to have a translation, prefaced with a didactic prologue, which explained that ‘women of religion’ were less capable now of reading Latin ‘where it is not her modyr tonge’. ‘Therfor, how be hyt that they wolde rede her bokys of remembraunce and of her munymentys wryte in Latyn for deaute of undyrstondyng they toke ofte tymes grete hurt and hyndraunce ... Hyt wer ryht necessary, as hyt semyth to the undyrstondyng of such relygyous women, that they myght haue out of her latyn bokys, sum wrytynge in her modyr tonge, whereby they myht haue bettyr knowlyge of her munymentys and more clerele yeue informacyon to her seruauntys, rent gedurarys, and receyuowrs in the absent of her lernyd counsell.’ The vernacular register of Godstow is preceded in the volume by vernacular translations of liturgical works, devotional verses and a kalendar, suggesting that the remarks of the ‘welwyller’ were fairly accurate. Similarly, the Oseney register is preceded by a translation into the vernacular of a fragment of Bonaventura’s *Speculum Vitae Christi*, possibly written c.1450. The register is a translation of the second cartulary of Oseney, compiled for Abbot Sutton, c.1280-4. The Oseney register is probably contemporary with the Godstow volume, both being c.1460. Clark suggested that the devotional works were arranged to be read aloud in groups of chapters.⁸⁷ The existence of these liturgical works in the vernacular, bound in with registers, and ostensibly meant to be read aloud, seems to confirm the decline in Latinity about which the Godstow prologue remarks. The Godstow translation was performed by the ‘pore brodur’, not a member of the convent, perhaps implying the inability of the nuns to undertake the work. Clark’s analysis of the translation, however, reveals the imperfect knowledge of Latin syntax and grammar of the ‘pore brodur’ himself. His verdict on the Oseney register was that it was better than the Godstow volume, but still left much to be desired in accuracy. The lack of proficiency and the existence of the vernacular liturgical works strongly implies the decline of Latinity in these two houses. Their geographical proximity may, however, suggest an element of fashion.

A further vernacular manuscript from Oseney rather complicates the issue

⁸⁵ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 251-4; H. E. Salter, ed., *Snappe’s Formulary* (OHS lxxx, 1923), 229; Emden, *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford* iii, 1872.

⁸⁶ A. Clark, ed., *The English Register of Oseney Abbey* (Early English Text Society, 1913) and Clark, ed., *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery* (EETS, 1906-11), esp 25; C. E. Wright, *English Vernacular Hands* (Oxford, 1960), 22.

⁸⁷ Clark, *English Register of Oseney Abbey*, ix.

of Latinity. A rental for Oseney properties in Kidlington, Hampton, Shipton, Hensington and a few other places, recording the rents and some services of miscellaneous tenants, was written in the vernacular, but in a well-defined *textura* hand. The rental can be assigned from internal evidence and palaeographical criteria to the first half of the fourteenth century, possibly *c.*1340. It is in the usual format of a roll.⁸⁸ Surprisingly, it is one of the very few rentals to survive for Oseney properties. This rental is one of the earliest local documents written in the vernacular, displaying the normal features of Oxfordshire Middle English for this period.⁸⁹ The reasons for its composition are enigmatic. It was about this time that John of Cornwall introduced the vernacular into the teaching of grammar at Oxford, but the construction in the rental is very slight and elementary. How it fits into any vernacular tradition is problematic.

Unfortunately, little has been written about the intellectual achievement of houses of Austin Canons. The performance of Oseney cannot therefore be fitted into a known context. It would seem, however, that Oseney's attention to study was more positive than most other houses of the Order, if the *dicta* of the Chapters General are indicative. The relationship of Oseney with the schools of Oxford was usually only a commercial one. Oseney participated fully in the zenith of intellectual activity of the Austin Canons in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and quite possibly forged a reputation then for its study of theology and the scriptures, albeit within a traditional framework. Learning at Oseney received a further stimulus under Abbot Hooknorton, who took a personal interest in the reputation of the Order, and may have been motivated to promote Oseney's own reputation within the Order much as the abbots of Westminster intended to do for their house among the Benedictines.⁹⁰ Curiously, immediately after Hooknorton, the English Register may have been symptomatic of the decline of Latinity in the house.⁹¹

⁸⁸Bodleian Oseney Roll 14.

⁸⁹I am grateful for the advice of Michael Benskin, Molly Barrett and Tilly de la Mare.

⁹⁰Harvey, 'The monks of Westminster'.

⁹¹We are still largely dependent on Dickinson, *Origins of the Austin Canons*. This article was written before the appearance of J. I. Catto, ed., *The History of the University of Oxford: vol. 1. The Early Oxford Schools* (Oxford, 1984).

5 Oseney and its parish churches

The advent of the Austin Canons into England coincided with the restitution of spiritualities, which had been appropriated into lay hands, to the religious. Whereas these spiritualities had previously belonged to the secular clergy, however, they were returned in the twelfth century to the new Orders of regular canons, particularly the Augustinians. Parish churches and their temporalities, in the form of advowsons, appropriated livings, and tithes, thus came to comprise a principal form of the endowment of houses of the Black Canons, so that their administration sometimes became a cause of contention⁹²

Spiritual property was an important element in the endowment of Oseney Abbey, although the house was not quite as acquisitive as the two largest houses of the Order, Leicester and Cirencester Abbeys.⁹³ By 1291, Oseney had appropriated sixteen parish churches and instituted vicarages, a figure which might be compared with the eleven of the relatively minor house of Breedon Priory.⁹⁴ Leicester ultimately controlled some fifty livings. The acquisition of advowsons by Oseney mainly occurred before 1200. Most of the churches which consequently appeared in the *Taxatio* of 1291-2 had been enumerated in the *capitula* of the projected cartulary of c.1217-27, only Fulwell and Cornwell being assumed after that date.⁹⁵ Indeed, the acquisitions were largely achieved by 1189. The foundation had included the advowsons of seven churches; that of Forest Hill was acquired before 1142 by the gift of an important honorial baron of the founders of Oseney, the Oilly family, Hugh de Tew.⁹⁶ The advowsons of the Gloucestershire churches of Bibury, Turkdean and Risington accrued by the middle of the twelfth century through the benefactions of Ralph Basset and the bishops of Worcester.⁹⁷ Soon afterwards, Ralph Danvers conferred the advowson of Cowley.⁹⁸ The two decades of 1170-90 produced a flurry of gifts of advowsons: Waterperry, Great Barton, Hampton Gay, and Black Bourton.⁹⁹ Additional advowsons had been received through the appropriation of the college of secular canons of St George in the Castle in 1149, including the borough church of St Mary Magdalene, whilst another borough church, created in the late twelfth century, St Thomas, also fell in the gift of Oseney. By the end of the twelfth century, therefore, Oseney had accumulated a significant interest in spiritual property.

⁹² Colvin, *White Canons*, 272-88; Dickinson, *Origins of the Austin Canons*, 229ff.; R. A. R. Hartridge, *A History of Vicarages in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1930), 162-88; B. R. Kemp, 'Monastic possession of parish churches', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* xxxi (1980), 133-60; G. Constable, *Monastic Tithes from their Origins to the 12th Century* (Cambridge, 1964), 153-60.

⁹³ A. H. Thompson, *The Abbey of St Mary in the Meadows* (Leicester, 1949), 5-8; C. D. Ross, ed., *The Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey* (2 vols, 1964) i, xxv.

⁹⁴ Rylands Lat. MS. 222, fo. 7r.

⁹⁵ Bodleian Bodley MS. 477, fos 1r-v.

⁹⁶ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 334-5, 343; Rylands Eng. MS. 714 (Oilly bundle) 161-70.

⁹⁷ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 1-60; vi, 129ff.; *Annales Monastici* iv, 26.

⁹⁸ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 361.

⁹⁹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 152-9, 373, 476-8; vi, 40-7; *Annales Monastici* iv, 43.

The pattern of acquisition conformed to three stages. The original nucleus of benefactions derived from the founders and patrons, the Oilly family, and some of their honorial baronage. The appropriation of St George's in 1149 augmented the interest. Significantly, this transfer signalled the further conveyance of spiritualities away from the secular canons into the control of the regular canons. Finally, in the late twelfth century, the knightly families of Oxfordshire contributed to the control over spiritualities exercised by the house.

This acquisition of spiritual property was not without incident or difficulty, especially in the problem of obtaining seisin through presentation. The emphasis placed on seisin by the assizes of Henry II applied equally to advowsons, for which a new possessory assize was introduced.¹⁰⁰ Although a written *donatio* had been made for the house, the abbot had to await the next vacancy to obtain effective seisin. The introduction of the assize coincided with the concentration of gifts of advowsons by Oxfordshire knights to the house in c.1170-90. The abbey thus had to wait several years after each gift to confirm its possession through seisin. The advowson of Waterperry, for example, was obtained in c.1175-80, but seisin first expressed only in 1189; and Hampton Gay was conferred in 1170, but possession only in c.1185-9. The new assize facilitated the process of confirmation, and Oseney was amongst the first to avail itself of the writ of darrein presentment (*de ultima presentacione*). In 1179-80, Ralph Murdac and Hugh de Burtuna each alienated to Oseney the moiety of the advowson of Black Bourton, whereupon the house sued out a writ of darrein presentment, compromised the action by a final concord, and thus secured its title to the advowson.¹⁰¹

The benefits of the new assize may be illustrated by comparing earlier difficulties in securing advowsons. The church of Watlington was included in the endowment at the foundation, but the abbey could make no presentation before the death of Robert II d'Oilly, the founder and donor. Oilly lost the manor of Watlington through his political affiliation to the Empress and defeat at the Battle of Winchester. The abbey only recovered the advowson through the generosity of the intruded mesne tenant at Watlington, Alan de Bidun.¹⁰² The outcome was not always so favourable, as demonstrated by the failure to retain advowsons given by Ralph Basset. Before Oseney could present to the livings, Basset alienated them to other religious houses.¹⁰³ Differences between chief lord and mesne tenant might also complicate gifts. Robert II d'Oilly endowed on Oseney the advowson of Shenstone and subsequently enfeoffed a mesne tenant in the manor, Ralph de Brai, whose right descended to his nephew, William de Brai.¹⁰⁴ William professed to have a reserved right in the advowson, as the *dominus fundi*, compelling the institution of his nephew, Hugh de Brai, to the living. Only when Roger de Brai later quitclaimed his right did the abbey

¹⁰⁰S. E. Thorne, 'Livery of seisin', *Law Quarterly Review* lii (1936), 345ff.

¹⁰¹*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 475-8; R. C. Van Caenigem, ed., *Royal Writs from the Conquest to Glanvill* (Selden Society lxxvii, 1958-9), 333.

¹⁰²*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 405.

¹⁰³*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 129ff.

¹⁰⁴Rylands Eng. MS. 714 (Oilly bundle) 216-19.

finally acquire an unqualified title, upon which a vicarage was instituted.¹⁰⁵ Other gifts of advowsons were ineffective because of the donor's defective title, such as the conferment of Ibstone by Roger II d'Oilly.¹⁰⁶ Unusually, in 1186, the house forewent the assize of darrein presentment, preferring to resort to the Courts Christian to secure an advowson, something of an irregularity, considering that since the compromise of Avranches at least, advowsons had become acknowledged as the province of the royal courts and process in ecclesiastical courts could be abated by the writ of prohibition. The first vacancy at Stone occurred in that year, whereupon the donor's heir came into the synod of the archdeacon of Buckingham at Aylesbury and affirmed the abbey's right and proffered a charter.¹⁰⁷ A final concord was, nonetheless, necessary to confirm the abbey's title. By the end of the twelfth century, the legal interests of the abbey in its parish churches had been completed.

Once its interest was established, the abbey acted quickly to institute vicarages, an action which was facilitated by the imprecision of the diplomatic of the charters, an uncertain attitude towards advowsons, and the laconic approach of the episcopacy before the reforming bishops of the early thirteenth century. In the twelfth century, the concept of, and relationship between, advowsons and vicarages was still undeveloped and inchoate. Charters of donors referred not to the advowson, but to the gift of the church and its fabric: *et istas ecclesias* (and these churches); *ecclesiam de Coueleia que in feodo meo sita est* (Cowley church which is on my fee); and *ecclesia de Perye* (Waterperry church).¹⁰⁸ Such ambiguity can be compared with the precision being introduced in the early thirteenth century: *quantum ad patronam pertinet* or *cum aduocatione* (in so far as it belongs to a patron; with the advowson), referring to Cornwell in 1215 and Fulwell in 1205.¹⁰⁹ In the mid thirteenth century, Bracton could make a fine distinction between the two, but his judgement proceeded from the reforming attitude of the early thirteenth century, a legal precision unknown at an earlier time. Oseney, as impropiator, thus achieved almost unfettered institution of vicarages in its parish churches. The bishops of Worcester were implicated in this development, their *acta* referring simply to their gifts of the *ecclesia*.¹¹⁰ Confirmation charters of the bishops of Lincoln and other Ordinaries in the twelfth century also confirmed the *ecclesia*, to be *in* (or *ad*) *proprios usus*.¹¹¹ The bishops of Worcester went further, allowing some of the churches in their diocese to be administered as priories with cure (see further below).

The accession of the reforming bishops of the thirteenth century could not

¹⁰⁵ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 60-74.

¹⁰⁶ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 441-3; *Curia Regis Rolls* xii, 313-14; F. W. Maitland, ed., *Bracton's Notebook* (3 vols, 1887) iii, no. 1688.

¹⁰⁷ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 141, 144-5; F. Pollock and F. W. Maitland, *The History of English Law* (2nd edn, 1968), 125-6; G. B. Flahiff, 'The writ of prohibition to Court Christian in the thirteenth century', *Mediaeval Studies* vi (1944), 261-313; Flahiff, 'The use of prohibition by clerics', *Mediaeval Studies* iii (1941), 101ff.

¹⁰⁸ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 11, 361, 373.

¹⁰⁹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 332; v, 407.

¹¹⁰ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 1-2, for example.

¹¹¹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 15, 20, 22, 384-5, 478, for example.

reverse these institutions, although strenuous efforts were made to regulate the vicarages. Hugh de Welles, bishop of Lincoln, grasped the opportunity to regulate many of the vicarages in parish churches in the gift of Oseney when a vacancy occurred at Hook Norton. Vicars would receive a pension of two marks for their clothing, all oblations, a corrody (food at the canons' table when they stayed at the property), a clerk, a groom and a horse. The abbey would be responsible, as rector, for maintaining the fabric and furniture. Welles intervened in a dispute concerning the chapelries of Letwell and Sandford with the mother church of Great Barton to define all these livings, as he did also at Black Bourton. The vicar of Barton would have all oblations, a half-hide of glebe and a manse; the incumbents of the dependent chapelries would have all oblations, the small tithes, four and a half acres of glebe, and a third of the tithes of Grave.¹¹² In some cases, as at Shenstone, the living was actually augmented. A dispute *sede vacante* between Oseney and the vicar was removed to the metropolitan court of Archbishop Kilwardby in 1296, whose sentence in favour of the incumbent added the tithes of the mill, a larger corrody, and cartloads of straw, hay and forage.¹¹³ Although Grosseteste permitted the appropriation of Fulwell, the tendency was now towards the greater definition of vicarages.¹¹⁴

The declining revenues of some religious houses in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries induced further appropriations and vicarages, a recourse precluded to Oseney since it had already instituted vicarages in most of its churches. As an alternative, Oseney resorted to farming out (leasing) some of the rectories. There was a precedent for this action in the farming out of rectories to the relatives of donors who were in orders: John de St John, *clericus*, had received the lease of the rectory of Great Barton *c.*1186, which had been given to the house by John de St John.¹¹⁵ Farming out in the fourteenth century, however, was an entirely financial transaction. The rectory of Hook Norton, less the reservation of the rectorial tithes and mortuaries to the abbey, was leased in 1337 to the vicar, Thomas de Bannebury, as it had been leased to his predecessor.¹¹⁶ Farming out became more prevalent in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the rectory of Stone in 1474 for a lucrative farm of £20, the rectory of Watlington being leased in 1489, and the rectorial tithes of Hook Norton in 1521.¹¹⁷ The abbey simultaneously supplicated for the consolidation of some vicarages and rectories, on the profession of the poverty of the house. This consolidation was achieved at Chastleton in 1459, Shenstone in 1514, and Hook Norton and Kidlington *c.*1520.¹¹⁸

This consolidation had, in a sense, brought the circle full turn to the abbey's

¹¹²W. P. Phillimore, ed., *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles* (2 vols, Lincoln Record Society iii, vi, 1912-13), i, 18-19; ii, 21, 81; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 158, 495.

¹¹³*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 78.

¹¹⁴F. N. Davis, ed., *Rotuli Roberti Grosseteste* (Lincoln Record Society xi, 1914), 461.

¹¹⁵*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 154-5.

¹¹⁶*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 289-90; for a similar lease by Nostell Priory of its cell of Skewkirk, described as a *manerium*, to the vicar, John Elys, in 1393: Rylands MS. 225, fos 26v.-27r.

¹¹⁷*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 290-1, 425-6; v, 170-3.

¹¹⁸*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 356-8; iv, 330-2; v, 79-80.

serving some churches in the late twelfth century through canon-vicars. The canons regular, particularly the Black Canons, had originally been conceived as a preaching Order, with the notion of serving parish churches as well as being under a rule. Oseney, like some other houses of the Order, showed signs initially of intending to serve its parish churches. A papal privilege, obtained in 1147, allowed the institution of canon-vicars and the service of churches as priories with cure (of souls).¹¹⁹ This dispensation by Eugenius was vague on detail, but a confirmation by Urban III permitted the house to serve four specific churches: Waterperry, Hampton Gay, Stone and Great Barton. These priories with cure should consist of a canon-vicar with three or four resident colleagues (*socii*).¹²⁰ The prescription that the canon-vicar be accompanied by colleagues may have persuaded the abbey against persisting with the priory with cure, since it may have made the undertaking more expensive than instituting a secular cleric.

The only churches which may have been served by canon-vicars were Bibury (Glos.) and Kiltenan (Ireland). The papal edict seems to have been evaded, for the canons presented to the livings apparently resided without *socii*. The arrangements also neglected the wishes of the donor of Kiltenan, Roger de Wigornia, who had required the service of that church as a priory with cure by three canons.¹²¹ The decision to service these two churches, for some time at least, by canon-vicars, may have been influenced by their distance from the house, especially in the case of Kiltenan, and by the special need to have a member of the convent there to supervise the abbey's property, as an economic as well as a spiritual consideration.

With the exceptions of those two locations, the abbey had determined on the institution of secular clergy. This approach had, in any case, a number of advantages. The presentation of secular clergy was a valuable source for local patronage; the lists of presentations in the bishops' rolls and registers reveal that the abbey used its vicarages to patronise local families. The toponymic *cognomina* of the clerks presented by Oseney show that the majority came from villis where the abbey held land.¹²² Presentations were also used to retain or reward canon lawyers as counsel to the abbey. Ad hoc advice might be anticipated from dignitaries presented to a rectory, which might help to explain the presentation of Alexander Swerford to the rectory of Swerford in 1228.¹²³ Moreover, the increasing demands of the Crown, at least from the reign of Edward I, for the house to provide livings for some of the King's clerks, was a duty which had

¹¹⁹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 371-2; for a similar bull for St Frideswide's, Wigram, *Cartulary of St Frideswide* i, 27.

¹²⁰ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 374.

¹²¹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 9-10, 27-8, 37-8, 123; for presentations of canons to Bibury, J. W. Willis Bund, ed., *Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard* (Worcs. Historical Society, 1898-1902), 14, 545; Willis Bund and R. A. Wilson, eds, *Register of William de Geynesburgh* (Worcs. Historical Society, 1907-29), 161, 179; Wilson, ed., *Register of Walter Reynolds* (Worcs. Historical Society, 1928), 34, 153.

¹²² See also D. Robinson, 'Ordinations of secular clergy in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, 1322-1358'. *Archives* xvii (1985), 16-17.

¹²³ *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles* ii, 39; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 61; R. L. Poole, *The Exchequer in the Twelfth Century* (2nd edn, 1973), 14; *Rotuli Normannie* (Record Commission, 1835), 63, 108.

to be acquitted by Oseney as well as many other religious houses.

The relationship between Oseney and its secular clergy was generally harmonious, especially after the subsidence of disputes over livings in the early thirteenth century. The vicars were frequently benefactors of the house, making small oblations for personal salvation. John de Weston gave half a virgate, receiving it back as termor for life. Henry, his successor at Weston-on-the-Green, gave rents and four acres of meadow. Richard, vicar of Great Barton, alienated to the abbey a villein and his *sequela*. Many vicars appeared amongst those who loaned money to the abbey's fabric fund in the thirteenth century: Hereward, vicar of Great Barton, five marks; and Thomas, the chaplain of Sandford, 50s. Roger, vicar of Stone, made a loan in consideration of a pension of 10s., the sum to be directed to the maintenance of a chantry after his death. Henry, vicar of Weston, and John, vicar of Watlington, also established chantries at Oseney.¹²⁴ Only occasionally were these harmonious relations interrupted by conflict over the detention of tithes.¹²⁵

Some of the incumbents played an additional role in the supervision of husbandry on the abbey's properties, acting as local officials assisting the bailiffs. Henry, vicar of Waterperry, supervised the shearing of sheep.¹²⁶ Giles, vicar of Stone, acted in two consecutive years as granger during the harvest period and also supervised the winnowing. He also made loans in cash and grain to the *custos* or canon-warden, John de Poignant. He received a tithe piglet *quia modici valoris* (because of modest value), as an increment to his corrody. Exceptionally, he had some independence of the bailiff. The bailiffs were usually responsible for the finances and maintenance of the parish church, but Giles was allowed to collect the *proventus ecclesie* (church income) and also paid the wages of his clerk and groom. On one occasion, he also collected the *liberatio denariorum* (cash delivery) which was usually delivered to the steward.¹²⁷

Despite these concessions to Giles, in the fourteenth century the parish church was normally the responsibility of the bailiff, whose accounts included paragraphs for the *proventus ecclesie* and *custus ecclesie*. The parish church was administered as simply another part of the abbey's property in the vill. The items of the *custus* were mainly recurrent: the annual procuration of the archdeacon (often 7s. 7d. three-farthings); annual synodals of 3s.; the repetitious payment of 5d. for each clerical proctor sent to Parliament and the expenses of the knights of the shire¹²⁸ In the fifteenth century, however, the sacristan exercised a more centralized control over the churches. A central account of c.1412 includes the paragraph *Ecclesie*, recording the payment of stipends of the vicars.¹²⁹ The sacristans' rolls of the later fifteenth century include the

¹²⁴ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iii, 57, 74; iv, 169, 415; vi, 18-21.

¹²⁵ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 62: *et non plus quia vicarius recepit .iiij.s. et iniuste* (and not more because the vicar received 4s.); *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 199-200.

¹²⁶ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 51.

¹²⁷ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 35-38.

¹²⁸ E. C. Lowry, 'Clerical proctors in Parliament and knights of the shire', *EHR* xlvi (1933), 433-55.

¹²⁹ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 46.

paragraph *Prouentus ecclesiarum*, comprising mortuaries and oblations.¹³⁰ The central roll of the sacristan may have resulted from the leasing out of manors and rectories in the fifteenth century, whilst, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when demesnes were in hand, the bailiffs may have had an integral responsibility for churches, and the sacristans only for the church at the abbey.

There was undoubtedly a tendency, however, to regard spiritual property as an integral part of temporal property, or, at least, not to differentiate too finely between the two. The appropriated glebes of many parish churches were integrated into the abbey's local demesne, a fairly characteristic response of the Austin Canons.¹³¹

Equally the receipts from tithes comprised a significant contribution to the abbey's exploitation of its estates. Oseney could not match the spectacular receipts of tithe of Leicester Abbey, Bolton Priory, or Southwick Priory, all houses of the same Order, but the tithes constituted an important element in the economy of some properties of the house.¹³² The collection was sometimes determined by local agreement, which became prescriptive custom. According to some customs, it was incumbent on the lord of the manor to arrange for tithes of the seigniorial demesne to be carted to a central barn for the benefit of the abbey. Margaret de Rivers had to build a barn which the canons would be allowed to use for tithes during harvest. The abbey would be permitted use of the barn for threshing and winnowing, although Margaret would keep the straw. Simon de Maidwell gave a curtilage 'to make a building to place their tithes.' Local custom often asserted that the lord should collect the tithes of grain at his or her own cost in a barn where the canons would collect it. John de Cherbourg was constrained to acknowledge the old custom of the lord carrying the tithes of grain in their carts to the door of their granges to be tithed there and kept until the abbey's tithe collector arrived.¹³³

The tithes of other parishioners were collected in the fields, almost exclusively by contracted wage labour, hired tithe collectors. The 'villein tithe collector' was an unusual figure on the Oseney estates, although there had almost certainly been one at Haselden in the twelfth century. The demesne tithes of Haselden had been given to the abbey with a half-virgate of land belonging to the tithes, and when the abbey quitclaimed the tithes to Kingswood Abbey, it included a half-virgate associated with the tithe collection at Haselden. The tenant of this holding probably owed a service principally of collection of tithes, a customary service tenure.¹³⁴ Elsewhere, the collection of tithes was entrusted to wage labourers hired during the harvest period. These collectors received a

¹³⁰ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 29-30.

¹³¹ T. A. M. Bishop, 'Monastic granges in Yorkshire', *EHR* li (1936), 193-214; R. H. Hilton, *The Economic Development of Some Leicestershire Estates in the XIV and XV Centuries* (Oxford, 1947), 36ff.; I. Kershaw, *Bolton Priory: The Economy of a Northern Monastery, 1286-1325* (Oxford, 1973), 22ff.

¹³² Hilton, *Economic Development of Some Leicestershire Estates*, 39; Kershaw, *Bolton Priory*, 63-7; Winchester College Muniments 15376-15387.

¹³³ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 215-16, 299-300, 502; vi, 28-9.

¹³⁴ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 38-9; R. V. Lennard, 'Villein tithe collectors', *EHR* lxix (1954), 580-96.

wage which increased from 1s. 6d. in 1279 to 2s. by 1320, and a corrody of one bushel of grain per week. The corrody comprised mixed grain at Forest Hill and Stone, rye or barley at Watlington, but the more valuable wheat at Waterperry. As was normal, the tithes were collected from amongst the sheaves in the fields.¹³⁵

The collection of the tithes was associated with the continuation of direct demesne exploitation. As demesnes and manors were gradually leased in the later middle ages, so it became uneconomic to collect tithes. Demesne tithes, which were less valuable than parochial tithes, were leased first. Demesne tithes were often from villis where the abbey had no other property or did not own the parochial tithes, and were thus burdensome to collect. Moreover, the proscription of demesne tithes as uncanonical in the twelfth century induced numerous disputes with rectors, as did novial tithes from expanding demesnes.¹³⁶ Consequently, although their collection was worthwhile whilst the economy was expanding, their value became less clear as contraction set in. In 1395, the demesne tithes of Thenford were farmed out, followed by those of Northbrook in 1413, Shirburn in 1414, Horspath in 1417, Ardington and Betterton in 1435, Barford in 1436, and Stratford, Westbury, Duns Tew, and Heyford Warren in mid century.¹³⁷

Throughout their administration by the abbey, spiritualities and parochial temporalities such as tithes, had not been differentiated from seigniorial property. The acquisition of parochial property had taken place against the backcloth of the expected reform with the introduction of the canons regular. Local church property which had earlier been appropriated into lay hands, was returned to the religious, but to the canons regular, not the secular clergy. Oseney benefited like many other houses of Austin Canons, and, like those other houses, proceeded to disappoint the reformers. Like other houses of the Order, Oseney treated its local church property as an economic asset.

¹³⁵ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 32 (*quia stetit in campo per totum diem* - because he [tithe collector] stood in the fields all day), 35 (*in campis de Ston' et Bishop'*), 52 (*in campis de Thomele et Pur'*).

¹³⁶ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 367ff, 443ff; v, 319ff.

¹³⁷ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 218, 246-8, 303-4, 370-2, 426-7, 458-9; v, 431; vi, 100.

Table 1 Issue of fleeces

| Location/date | Demesne fleeces | Tithe issue |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Chastleton | | |
| 1278 | | 53 |
| 1279 | | 45 |
| 1333 | | 92 |
| 1335 | | ? |
| 1337 | | 54.5 (sic) |
| 1339 | | 73 |
| 1340 | | 58 |
| Stone | | |
| c.1280 | 302 | 98 |
| 1321 | 28 | 32 |
| 1325 | 3 | 25 |
| 1326 | 8 | 64 |
| 1327 | 145 | 70 |
| Watlington | | |
| c.1280 | | 158 |
| 1328 | | 207 |
| 1339 | | 151 |
| 1342 | 20 | 143 |
| 1345 | 91 | 228 |
| Forest Hill | | |
| 1279 | 99 | 37 |
| 1304 | 46 | 8.5 (sic) |
| 1322 | 160 | 33 |
| Bibury | | |
| c.1280 | 180 | 65 |
| Hampton Gay | | |
| c.1280 | 229 | 7 |
| West on-on-the-Green | | |
| c.1280 | 289 | 25 |
| Watereaton | | |
| c.1280 | 511 | 13 |
| Great Barton | | |
| c.1280 | 236 | 77 |

For c.1280, *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 184-207.

Table 2 Tithe collectors

| Place/date | No. of weeks | No. of collectors | Wage* |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Forest Hill, 1277-1322 | 3-6 | 2 or 3 | 1s. 6d. to 1318, but 2s. in 1322 |
| Stone, 1320-43 | 4-5 | 6 or 7 | 2s. to 2s. 6d., sometimes higher |
| Waterperry, 1280-1345 | 4-6 | 3 or 4 | 1. 6s. in 1280, 2s. from 1328 |
| Watlington, 1328-45 | 5-6 | 6 or 8 | 1s. 8d. to 4s. |

* Plus a corrody of 1bs. of grain per week

Collections:

Forest Hill: Forest Hill, Woodperry, Stodley, and Beckley

Stone: Stone, Bishop's Stone, Southrop, Southcote, Hertwell

Watlington: Watlington, Shirburn, South Weston, Watcombe, Brightwell

6 The bursary of Oseney Abbey

In the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, some religious houses effected a notable change in their internal financial organization.¹³⁸ The ‘assignation’ method of finance was replaced by more centralized control through either a bursary or a treasury. Treasurers, it seems, controlled all the revenues of a house, whilst bursars supervised only a reserve fund and not the revenues assigned at an earlier stage to the other obedientiaries. The ‘assignation’ method had probably been introduced in part to respect the wishes of donors who had made benefactions for specific purposes. It also had administrative simplicity in ensuring that the offices received sufficient cash for their financing without double counting. Thus the manciple (*coquinarius*) of Oseney collected the rents from the house’s burgage property in Oxford to meet the immense demands of the provisioning of the convent. These burgage rents amounted in gross to £151 9s. 11d. in c.1280 and £181 8s. 11d. in 1360.¹³⁹

By the late twelfth century, benefactions for specific purposes involved, in the case of the new Orders such as the Austin Canons, only small rents charge or parcels of land intended for the infirmary, the pittancer or sacristan. On the other hand, the independence of obedientiaries had allowed some abuse of the ‘system’.

Another influence which may have encouraged central organization was the need for houses of the new Orders of the twelfth century to enter into the land market on a larger scale as purchasers, as the benevolence of the laity relatively declined. Stenton commented on the activities of the Gilbertines in acquiring land in Lincolnshire in the late twelfth century.¹⁴⁰ Between 1146 and c.1200, Rufford Abbey (Cistercian) expended about £85, but the purchase of a few key granges meant that most of the consideration was needed immediately within short periods.¹⁴¹ Oseney itself dispensed at least £848 on the purchase of new rural property between c.1200 and c.1240. The figure is an underestimate for two reasons: first, it is calculated from cash considerations mentioned in charters, and therefore omits concealed purchases; and secondly, it does not take into account the abbey’s substantial acquisition of burgage property in Oxford.¹⁴² Whilst it was quite possible under the ‘assignation’ method for the purchase

¹³⁸R. H. Snape, *English Monastic Finances* (Cambridge, 1926), 34ff.; D. Knowles, ed., *Collected Papers of R. A. L. Smith* (Cambridge, 1947), passim. Both cited evidence exclusively from Benedictine houses, thus distorting the significance of the change. They also failed to emphasize the importance of intervention by the Ordinary to impose the central office on houses with ailing finances. See, for example, Ross, *Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey*, i, xii; Rylands Lat. MS. 226 (Norwich Cathedral Priory); W. D. Macray, ed., *Charters of Selborne Priory* (Hampshire Record Society, 1891), 95ff.; for the intervention of the Crown, Dom. A. Watkins, ‘A fragment of a receiver’s roll’, *EHR* lxi (1946), 89ff.

¹³⁹*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 195, 289.

¹⁴⁰F. M. Stenton, ed., *Transcripts of Charters ... Gilbertines* (Lincoln Record Society 18, 1922), xii.

¹⁴¹C. J. Holdsworth, ed., *Rufford Charters* (2 vols, Thoroton Society Record Series xxix-xxx, 1972), i, xliii.

¹⁴²The figures are aggregated from *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, vols iv-vi.

price of small acquisitions to be paid by an obedientiary, substantial purchases needed much larger reserves, not least when purchase of property was a constant call on liquid capital.¹⁴³

The central office was introduced earliest in Austin Canons houses, it seems, at Waltham Abbey. This house had three treasurers from at least 1191, if not from its refoundation by Henry II in 1174.¹⁴⁴ The institution may have imitated the royal exchequer. Through the intervention of the Ordinary and Metropolitan, and because of the recalcitrance of its principal officers, Cirencester intermittently had treasurers between *c.*1205 and *c.*1230.¹⁴⁵ It was only in 1219, however, that the legislators (*diffinitores*) of a Chapter General of the Order attempted to impose the central office on all houses.¹⁴⁶ The central office was thus a recognized institution in theory if not practice in the Order by 1220. During the thirteenth century, several houses of the Order introduced central control of finances in one form or another (dates are the earliest references): Oseney, 1247; Newstead Priory (1261); Leicester Abbey and Bolton Priory (1286); Bicester Priory (1295); and Dunstable Priory (late thirteenth century).¹⁴⁷

The existence of a bursary at Oseney in the middle of the thirteenth century is only established by incidental references in charters. An undated charter, which can be fairly conclusively assigned to 1247, referred to payment of a rent to Goring Abbey by the hands of the current bursars of Oseney (*per manus Bursariorum Oseney qui pro tempore fuerint*), a phrase reiterated in a charter of 1262.¹⁴⁸ The testators of the first charter included Laurence Wyth, mayor, and Adam *sub muro*, bailiff, who both held these offices in 1247.

The activity of the bursary can be deduced from a substantial fragment of a centrally-engrossed account of *c.*1280.¹⁴⁹ There is no extant enrolment of the bursary account, but the balance of the accounts of the other obedientiaries is struck against the bursar: *et sic debet communi bursario* (and thus he owes to the common bursar); *et sic debet ei communis bursarius* (and thus the common bursar owes him).¹⁵⁰ The chamberlain, manciple and infirmarian had also received cash from the bursar ('foreign' receipts in their accounts). It is evident that, although obedientiaries were to account to the bursar, they still collected the revenues which had customarily been assigned to their office. The bursar just controlled a reserve fund. The nature of this fund can be observed in the enrolments of the ministers' accounts for each of the properties. The discharge of each account contained a delivery of cash to the bursar, which in

¹⁴³For such minor purchases, G. H. Fowler, ed., *A Digest .. of Charters ... of Dunstable Priory* (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society x, 1926), 216 (*per manus cellerarii*) (by the cellarer's hands) (*c.*1225), but other purchases were not defrayed by the offices: 186-7 (100s. and twenty-eight marks).

¹⁴⁴Holtzmann, ed., *Papsturkunden in England* i, 583-4.

¹⁴⁵Ross, *Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey*, as above.

¹⁴⁶Salter, *Triennial Chapters*, 22-3.

¹⁴⁷The National Archives SC6/1257/11-12; T.N.A. SC6/955/11; H. R. Luard, ed., *Annales Monastici* iii (Rolls Series, 1866), 316, 409-10; Kershaw, *Bolton Priory*, 2.

¹⁴⁸Cambridge University Library MS. Dd xiv 2, fo. 128r.; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 39-40.

¹⁴⁹*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 185-207.

¹⁵⁰*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 191, 206-7.

most cases corresponded to the rents of assize in the charge of their accounts. Where there is a difference, as at Hampton, Weston, Great Barton, and Black Bourton, the render in cash was three-quarters of the rents of assize, indicating that, although the full rents were enumerated in the charge, the rents of the final quarter day (Michaelmas) which coincided with the day of the account, had not been collected before the account was struck and the cash delivery due.

This picture of the reserve fund is confirmed in some of the extant original ministers' accounts. The canon-warden (*custos*) of Waterperry accounted in 1279-80: rent of assize sent to the common bursar (*Redditus assise liberatum communi bursario*).¹⁵¹ Similarly the account of Little Tew for 1281-2 contains a paragraph: Cash delivery (*Liberatio denariorum*): he sent to John de Cudelinton' the Bursar (*Johanni de Cudelinton' Bursario*) 4s. 6d. for rent of the terms of St Thomas the Apostle and St John the Baptist.¹⁵² These rents were removed from the local manorial official by the steward who visited the manors twice each year.

Two fragments of bursary accounts may exist, for 1324-5.¹⁵³ The charge of these accounts comprises rents of assize and the perquisites of manorial courts: cash liveries from the manors and properties. The perquisites must have been a recent addition to the bursary fund, for they were designated for the proctor in the enrolled account of c.1280. By the early fourteenth century, the bursary fund thus seems to have consisted of £180, comparable with that of the manciple.

Ultimately, however, it was not the manciple who proved most dangerous to the bursary, but the increasing autocracy of later abbots. A critical conflict over audit procedure occurred between abbot and convent c.1400, in which the antagonists both appealed to the Ordinary and the Curia. The decision of Rome favoured the paternalism of the abbacy.¹⁵⁴ The control of the prelate continued to increase thereafter, culminating in the uninhibited despotism of Abbot William Barton (1505-24) who combined in his own person the offices of steward of the household (*senescallus hospicii*), estate steward (*supervisor omnium terrarum*) and receiver-general (*receptor generalis*).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 44.

¹⁵²Bodleian Osenev Roll 95.

¹⁵³Bodleian Osenev Rolls 39 and 44.

¹⁵⁴*Calendar of Papal Letters* v (1904), 329.

¹⁵⁵Bodleian Osenev Rolls 45-46; Ch. Ch. O. R. 79-81 and 83 cited by Salter, *Cartulary of Osenev Abbey* vi, 208ff., but also Ch. Ch. O. R. 78 and 82; Bodleian Osenev Rolls 33-36.

7 The manorial accounts of Oseney abbey, 1274-1348

It is now many decades since the late J. S. Drew produced a seminal article on the account rolls of the manors of St Swithun's Cathedral Priory, which remains one of the most sympathetic treatments of manorial accountancy. Fifteen years later, Eric Stone contributed a perceptive explanation of the *proficuum* calculations of Norwich Cathedral Priory, which cast into relief the mental attitudes of the lord and auditors. Another fourteen years thereafter, Paul Harvey committed to print his conclusions on the general development of manorial accountancy.¹⁵⁶ The manorial account may appear to be a rather technical affair, but behind it lay the minds of men (sic) and a business attitude different from our own. The first two major contributions so far have been concerned with two Benedictine (regular) cathedral priories, although Professor Harvey conducted a much wider survey of extant manorial accounts. It may be instructive to add to these expositions the development of accountancy and auditing of a smaller institution, another religious house, but of medium status, Oseney Abbey.

The extant manorial accounts of Oseney all belong to Harvey's 'phase 2', which extended approximately from c.1270 through to the middle of the fourteenth century, when local accounts predominated. Initially, there may have been an attempt to impose the central contraol redolent of 'phase 1', for there survives a centrally-enrolled account for c.1280 on which are engrossed both obedientiary and manorial accounts in common form. The central account also bears a calculation of the *proficuum manerii* ('profit of the manor') for each of the properties.¹⁵⁷ This centrally-enrolled account, however, was produced from local accounts which were rendered, so, as Harvey has suggested, 'phases' 1 and 2 were not completely distinct, but overlapped and were sometimes complementary.

The earliest of the extant original, locally-produced manorial accounts survives for Little Tew from 1274. One original roll for Waterperry some six years later is so embryonic in form to suggest that accountancy at Oseney in written form was still in its infancy.¹⁵⁸ It seems quite possible therefore that written accounts were introduced at Oseney by Abbot William de Sutton from c.1270, initially also with some degree of central organization. This central supervision seems to have receded, however, perhaps because subsequent prelates had neither the interest nor the ability of Sutton. Sutton had extensive experience of the abbey's estates under abbot Richard de Apeltre.¹⁵⁹ His attempt to impose degrees of central organization does not seem to have persisted. Thereafter, there survive only locally-produced manorial accounts. Between 1274 and 1348,

¹⁵⁶J. S. Drew, 'Manorial accounts of St Swithun's Priory, Winchester', *EHR* lxii (1947), 20-41; E. Stone, 'Profit-and-loss accountancy at Norwich Cathedral Priory', *TRHS* 5th series xiii (1962), 25-6; P. D. A. Harvey, *Manorial Records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire, c.1200-1359* (Historical Manuscripts Commission JP23, 1976), 12-57.

¹⁵⁷*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 185-207.

¹⁵⁸Bodleian MS. Charter Oxon. Oseney 428b; Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 44.

¹⁵⁹See Chapter 9.

there are about sixty manorial accounts, unfortunately relating to only a few of the abbey's properties and then in broken series.

The abbey's estates were concentrated in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire with outlying properties in Gloucestershire, Ireland and Staffordshire. The organization of the estates passed through several phases. The variation in the size and compactness of properties and their distribution, made it rational and economical to arrange the properties in groups or bailiwicks, as was frequent seigniorial practice. Such an arrangement must have been implemented empirically from the start. An embryonic arrangement is perceptible in the *capitula* (headings) for a projected cartulary, which may be assigned to c.1217-27. The *capitula* are organized in the common form: first, benefactions by the founders and patrons; then the honorial baronage of the founder; the remainder then following more or less topographically. Some groupings familiar at the end of the century were already established: Bibury with Turkdean and Risington; and Waterperry with Thumley. The organization was, nevertheless, not consistent. There was a tendency to arrange some properties by donor or by criteria other than topography: *Carte de terra Hugonis pauperis in Cleind' et quibusdam aliis* (charters concerning the land of Hugh Pauper and some others in Claydon); *Carte diversorum hominum de diversis terris* (charters of several men concerning several lands); *De cartis quas reddidimus monachis de Tiefford* (about the charters which we returned to the monks of Thetford); and *De decimis ad ecclesiam sancti Georgii pertinentibus et secuntur carte quas monachi de Tiefford reddiderunt nobis* (about the tithes belonging to St George's and charters follow which the monks of Thetford returned to us). The grouping of properties, thus embryonic, had not progressed very far.¹⁶⁰

From the second quarter of the thirteenth century, the grouping was consolidated around the *custodia* ('bailiwick'). The *custodia* first appeared in association with parochial livings appropriated by the abbey. The living was, in a few cases, served by a resident canon-vicar, and he supervised a group of properties adjacent to the living. The *custos* seems first to have appeared at Bibury in Gloucestershire in c.1234-1237, although there may have been one at Fulwell in 1226.¹⁶¹ The *custodia* of Hook Norton occurred in a charter of 1254. Although the abbey increasingly presented secular canons to its livings, canon-wardens (*custodes*) were still placed in charge of groups of properties, based by the 1270s on Little Tew, Fulwell, Hook Norton and Chastleton.¹⁶² By the centrally-enrolled account of c.1280, the *custodie* had reached their final form and it is reasonable to presume that the completion of the organization was the work of Sutton, either under Abbot Apeltre or in his own prelacy.¹⁶³ Some adjacent bailiwicks had been further consolidated under a single *custos*: Br W.

¹⁶⁰ Bodleian MS. Bodley 477, fo. 1.

¹⁶¹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 37, 425.

¹⁶² *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 320; v, 117, 429; vi, 144; Bodleian MS. Charter Oxon. Oseney 428b, 429, 430; Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 5.

¹⁶³ For monk-wardens, R. A. L. Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory: A Study in Monastic Administration* (Cambridge, 1947), 100-10; E. King, *Peterborough Abbey, 1086-1310. A Study in the Land Market* (Cambridge, 1973), 129.

Mersche was responsible for both Stone and Oving; Br Ivo for Water Eaton and Handborough; and Br William for Great Barton and Adderbury.

The activities of the *custodes* in the fourteenth century are more difficult to follow. Some canon-wardens can be perceived through the discharge paragraphs of the manorial accounts. Dom. John Poygnaunt was *custos* of Stone (Buckinghamshire) for at least three years between 1320 and 1326. His *custodia* was not particularly successful and he left debts of over £10. In 1330-31, he accounted for the *custodia* based around the Irish property of Kiltenan, reappearing at Waterperry (Oxfordshire) in 1341 where he supervised haymaking.¹⁶⁴

The office of *custos* seems to have lapsed into desuetude or confusion towards the middle of the fourteenth century. Brothers Thomas de Comsgraue and John de Cudelinton accounted for Forest Hill and Stone for two years, but were exceptional. One year coincided with plague (1368-69), and the other account comprised only a half-year, from Lady Day to Michaelmas.¹⁶⁵ The term *custos* also lost some of its precision. Geoffrey Baron rendered three accounts for part-years in 1320-21 (Stone), in which he was successively described as reeve, *custos*, and reeve. The designation as reeve must have implied servile status, yet he was also referred to as *custos*. John de Ledecumbe accounted as both bailiff and *custos* between 1327 and 1330, a layman not a canon-warden.¹⁶⁶ The decline of the *custodes* possibly had several causes. The later abbots might not have shared Sutton's enthusiasm for estate administration. Canons may have objected to the obligation to itinerate to supervise the manorial officials. Perhaps the main cause was the decline in number of the regular canons in the house and also in the number of lay brethren. Whereas there had been fifty canons in 1225, the number had diminished to twenty-five by 1377. The demands of the system, devised in more conducive circumstances, may thus later have become a burden. The supervision of manorial officials thus fell increasingly in the late thirteenth and fourteenth century on the estate steward, who was also usually appointed from amongst the canons of the house at this time.¹⁶⁷

The officials who accounted at manorial level were the bailiff or the reeve, though not conjointly. Reeves were employed only where the abbey had a number of unfree tenants on the property, which was not always the case. Bailiffs were appointed where the abbey had no unfree tenants on the property, particularly to supervise the glebe-demesnes. In manorial accounts of 'phase 2', only one official usually accounted, generally the reeve, in contrast with 'phase 1' accounts where both officials rendered account conjointly.¹⁶⁸ Where, on the Oseney estates, there was a reeve, he accounted alone; where there was a bailiff, as on the glebe-demesnes, the bailiff accounted. It seems very likely, indeed, that on the glebe-demesnes, where there was a bailiff, there was no reeve, for these properties had few, if any, servile tenants.

¹⁶⁴ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 25, 32-35, 37; Bodleian Oseney Roll 16.

¹⁶⁵ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 26 and 40.

¹⁶⁶ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 32-34 and 45-47.

¹⁶⁷ See Chapter 9.

¹⁶⁸ Harvey, *Manorial Accounts of Cuxham*, 33-34, and 'Agricultural treatises and manorial accounting in medieval England', *Agricultural History Review* 20 (1972), 173.

The bailiff was of free condition and often not a tenant on the property which he supervised. The office was that of a free servant of the abbey. Bailiffs moved from property to property, perhaps to prevent that familiarity which might lead to abuse of position. William Alwyt began in 1328 as bailiff of Maids Moreton and subsequently acted for eight weeks in harvest as granger at the tithe barn of Waterperry; he ultimately became bailiff at Forest Hill. John de Aldenestr' on his induction to the bailiwick of Waterperry in 1335 claimed an allowance for 10s. for a robe for last year when he stood in office at Fulwell (*de ultimo anno quo stetit in officio apud Folewell*).¹⁶⁹ Some bailiffs remained no longer than a year at one property, but others, perhaps more reliable, continued in one place for up to three years. A sequence of bailiffs of Waterperry was removed by the stewards. The ostensible reason was indebtedness, although the *debita* may have been caused as much by the financial difficulties of this type of property as any personal shortcomings.¹⁷⁰

The remuneration of the bailiffs was either exclusively in cash or kind. At Forest Hill, the bailiff received a wage of 10s., with only occasional food, such as six cheeses in summer.¹⁷¹ Those at Waterperry and Watlington, in contrast, were compensated with a corrody of grain, calculated at the rate of one bushel per week, but excluding the weeks of harvest when the bailiff stood at the common table. In contrast with the *famuli* (the permanent estate labourers), the bailiff had a corrody of wheat, five or six quarters per annum, rather than inferior mixed grain. Standing at the common table did not imply that the bailiff was servile. The bailiff was required, moreover, occasionally to lend a hand in the fields at the hectic time *in Autumpno* (during harvest), or at least to supervise it closely, receiving gloves with the *famuli* as part of the *Expense autumpnales* (harvest costs). From the numerous *vendiciones super comptum* (charges after the account) imposed by the auditors in the paragraphs relating to small livestock, it seems that the bailiffs were also extracting some unofficial perquisites of office, although they did not venture to defraud the abbey of large stock.

The office of reeve was conscript, imputing the servility of the occupant. Reeves were 'elected' by the servile tenantry in the manorial court, corresponding to the precept of Walter of Henley that the vill or homage ought to be collectively responsible for the misdemeanours of the reeve.¹⁷² The servile status of the reeve was also implicit in his remunerations. At Little Tew, the reeve received an acquittance of rent of assize (3s.), an acquittance from customary ploughing service (valued at 4d.), and relief from tallage (2s. 4d. halfpenny). Satisfactory reeves were retained for a number of years: Robert Akerman for more than a dozen years at Stone (1324-43); and John de Santford between 1284 and 1289 at Great Barton and Little Tew.¹⁷³ The relative absence of fines for exemption from the office suggest that it was not too arduous.

¹⁶⁹ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 28, 49, and 53.

¹⁷⁰ See Chapter 8.

¹⁷¹ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 26.

¹⁷² Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 316.

¹⁷³ Bodleian Oseney Rolls 95 and 97; Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 36-39 and 43.

There was, nevertheless, as on other estates, a constant ‘battle’ over the balance or reckoning of the accounts, the difference between the charge and discharge. The manorial accounts of Oseney, as other lords, were designed primarily to assess the obligations between the accounting official and the lord. The balance of the Oseney accounts, however, differed from those normally encountered on larger estates, consisting in considerable measure of *excessus* balances, by which the lord was theoretically indebted to the local accounting official.¹⁷⁴ The negotiations over the balance continued even in the case of the *excessus*, for it was in the lord’s interest to reduce any obligation to the local official. The auditors therefore attempted to reduce the amount of the *excessus*.

As well as contesting the balance, the auditors revised individual items in the charge and discharge. Disallowances were also invoked from time to time. The auditors disallowed three items in the Waterperry account of 1325-26: *et disallocatur ei xs. quia excessiue expendit* (and he is not permitted 10s. because he spent too much, for the cost of carts); *et disallocatur ei ijs. quia excessiue computat* (and he is not allowed 2s. because he claims for too much, for the cost of horseshoes); and *et disallocatur ei viijs. quia excessiue computat* (and he is not permitted 8s. because he claims too much, for the cost of mowing).¹⁷⁵ The device of the fictitious sale was also employed by the auditors. The bailiff of Forest Hill claimed that there were only eight calves of issue and not more because three cows were sterile (*et non de pluribus quia iij vacce steriles*). The auditors were disinclined to accept this explanation and charged him with two after the account (*ij de exitu super comptum*). They entered the corresponding fictitious sales for 10s. against him: *item in vendicione super comptum ij* (item two sold after the account). As on the estates of St Swithun’s, Winchester, the *venditio super comptum* was deployed rather laconically by the auditors for Oseney in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

The auditors became more stringent about 1335-36 when the fictitious sale was connected to the *responsio* or target. This new method occurred embryonically in a Forest Hill account of (?)1322, in which the auditors noted that the yield of barley with dredge and the yield of oats all fell below the expected level: *defic’ de estimatione ix qr.*¹⁷⁶ Thereafter, the accounts were regularly annotated by the auditors’ estimate of the seed-yield ratios of grain. Oats at Waterperry fell two quarters and one bushel below a threefold yield; the auditors added on the dorse that the bailiff owed that amount of grain to answer for a threefold yield and on the face a sale after the account for 3s. 9d. ([dorse] *item oneratur de ij qr ij bs ut respondeat ad tercium granum ...* [face] *Et in venditione super comptum ij qr ij bs pro iijs. ixd.*). In the following year, when the deficit was one bushel below a threefold yield, the auditors imposed the same procedure: the yield falls one bushel below threefold ... he owes one bushel to answer for a threefold yield ... sold after the account one bushel 3d. (*respondet j bs minus se*

¹⁷⁴ See Chapter 8.

¹⁷⁵ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 51.

¹⁷⁶ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 25. It is dated 16 Edward which Denholm-Young interpreted as 16 Edward III, but it is more likely 16 Edward II because of the embryonic *responsio* and the reference to John de Sutton as estate steward.

*iiij^o... Item oneratur de j bs ut respondeat ad iiij granum ... In venditione super compotum j bs iiijd.*¹⁷⁷ This method of employing the fictitious sale in association with the target was introduced on the manors of St Swithun in 1323-24, Crowland Abbey by 1322-23, and the Merton College manor of Cuxham only in 1358-59.¹⁷⁸ The auditors of Oseney applied it equally to the issue of livestock. Particular attention was paid to dairy produce: *R' suffic' de exitu dayr' videlicet de qualibet vacca iiijs. Et nichil de ouibus matricibus quia non perlact'*; *Memorandum quod R' de qualibet vacca iiijs. sine oneratione* (target is met from the dairy issue, that is, 4s. from each cow. And nothing from the ewes because they did not milk; Memorandum that the target from each cow 4s. without charge).

Was this introduction of a new system of auditing connected with an attempt to appraise an alternative for exploiting the estate? Although Oseney did not generally turn to the farming out of its estates until later, it did abandon direct cultivation of a few properties in the 1330s, most notably Sibford.¹⁷⁹ The abbey may have come to the conclusion that direct demesne exploitation was not fully successful, so tightening up its procedures against its manorial officials. It was one thing to be fairly lax with officials when it was thought, if erroneously, that agriculture was paying its way, but the abbot and convent might have felt less generous when the idea of direct exploitation was no longer entirely a matter of conviction.

¹⁷⁷ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 52-53 (1336-38).

¹⁷⁸ P. D. A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village. Cuxham 1240-1400* (Oxford, 1965), 56.

¹⁷⁹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 322-3.

8 The *excessus* balance in Oseney accounts

The balance of manorial accounts, as is well known, was designed to show the obligations between accounting official and lord, or to answer, in Dr Stone's phrase, the question: are we being cheated?¹⁸⁰ Most manorial accounts in print contain a balance to the cash side which is a *quietus* (*et sic quietus est*) (and he is thus quit) or an *arreragium* (*et debet*) (and he owes).¹⁸¹ In the first case, charge and discharge, *recepta* and *expense* were equal. In the second, the *recepta* exceeded the *expense*. This balance does not seem unusual. More rarely, we encounter the *excessus* balance (*superplusagium*), which presents a somewhat ambiguous picture.

The *excessus* was held to have occurred when the *expense* (discharge) exceeded the *recepta* (charge), which begs the important question: how can the outgoings be held to have exceeded the income? Surely it was impossible for the accounting official to have spent more than he received. The second point of the *excessus* is that it reverses the position of the *arreragium*: no longer is it the official in debt to the lord, but the lord to the official. What we have to decide is if all the items listed in the *expense* were actually paid out before the audit and the striking of the balance.

A series of accounts for properties of Oseney Abbey in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century help to clarify this ambivalence, since a large proportion contain an *excessus* balance.¹⁸² The accounts for Chastleton in particular allow some disentangling of the issues; one of the accounts is printed below.

In the Chastleton account of 1338-39 [printed below], the outgoings exceeded the receipts by almost £4. The balance was then struck with the characteristic form of the *excessus*: *St sic excedunt expense recepta .lxxxix.s.v.d.ob.qua*. The auditors then elaborated: *Set per propriam recognicionem non debet nisi .lviiij.s.ij.d. exceptis .xxiiij.s.vjd. de veteri debito set quibus debent inquirari* [But by his own admission he owes only 58s. 2d. except for 23s. 6d. from an old debt but about which they should enquire]. The key to these debts can be found in the hand of the clerk who wrote the account.

Totalis .viiij.li.xix.s.j.d. et sic excedit .liij.li.ob.qua. Nomina debiti videlicet vicario loci .xxiiij.s.x.d. [sic] ... Item pro stipendiis famulorum per totum annum .xj.s.viiij.d. Item de antiquo debito acomodato per Willelmum Bikenhull [the granger] .xxiiij.s.vj.d. [The whole £8 19s. 1d. and thus it is overspent £4 and three-farthings. The specifics of the debt that is to the vicar 23s. 10d. [sic] ... Item for the wages of the *famuli* for the entire year 11s. 8d. Item from an old debt loaned by William Bikenhull 23s. 6d.]

¹⁸⁰ Stone, 'Profit-and-loss accountancy', 25-6; Drew, 'Manorial accounts of St Swithun's priory'; Harvey, *Manorial Records of Cuxham*, 12-57.

¹⁸¹ Harvey, *Manorial Records of Cuxham*; H. Hall, ed., *Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester for 1208-9* (1903); N. Holt, ed., *Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1210-11* (Manchester, 1964); L. M. Midgley, ed., *Ministers' Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall, 1296-7* (Camden 3rd series lxvi, 1942); For contemporary comment on balances, see the *Regule Compti* of Beaulieu Abbey in N. Denholm-Young, *Seigniorial Administration in England* (Oxford, 1937), 170-1.

¹⁸² The properties are considered in more detail in Chapter 7.

As the discharge has exceeded the charge, the bailiff is indebted to certain creditors. These debts are represented in the *excessus*. The obligation is on the abbot to pay the accounting official this money to acquit his debts. The auditors, nonetheless, attempted to reduce the size of the abbot's obligation by beating down the *excessus*. The memoranda by the clerk equate the *excessus* with specific debts: the vicar's stipend and the wages of the *famuli* [the permanent estate labourers]. These very same items had, however, been included in the *expense* in the *Resoluciones* [remittances] and *Stipendia famulorum* [wages of the *famuli*] paragraphs, although there the vicar's stipend was given as 23s. 4d. Although these items had been included in the *expense*, it is evident that they had not really been paid. What the *excessus* therefore represented was items in the discharge which had not actually been paid.

The same story is told by memoranda on a Waterperry account of similar date: *Et sic excedit .xxij.s.vij.d.ob.qua. et totum debet pro stipendiis famulorum* [And thus overspent 23s. 7d. three-farthings and all is owed for the wages of the *famuli*].¹⁸³ The *expense* of the same account include a *Stipendia famulorum* paragraph where it is purported that the *famuli* had been paid 26s. A further Waterperry account (29 Sept. to 1 Dec. 1339) records:

*Et sic excedunt expense recepta .xxxvj.s.vij.d.ob.qua. Inde debet diversis creditoribus subscriptis .xxij.s.vij.d. et residuum debetur ballivo videlicet .xij.s.v.ob.qua. Et preter hoc petit allocaciones pro servicio suo hoc anno. [And thus the expense exceed the recepta in 36s. 8d. three-farthings. From which he owes several creditors 23s. 8d. and the rest is owed to the bailiff, that is 12s. 5d. three-farthings. And besides that he claims allowances for his service this year].*¹⁸⁴

In this case, the bailiff had seemingly financed the deficit of the manor from his own cash for this quarter year.

In most cases, the auditors tried to reduce the *excessus*, the obligation of the abbey to its official. The balance struck by the auditors record this tale: *Et sic excedit in .xl.s.ix.d.ob.qua. set recognovit de ore proprio de .xxij.s.vj.d. in quibus tenetur omnia debita sua acquietare comptum suum tangentia* [And thus he is overspent in 40s. 9d. three-farthings but he admits from his own mouth that he can acquit all his debts touching his account with 32s. 6d.]; and *Et sic excedit in expensis recepta .C.ij.s.j.d. set per propriam recognicionem non debet nisi .lxxj.s.* [And thus he is overspent in the *expense* over the *recepta* 103s. 1d. but by his own admission he owes only 66s.]; equally *Et sic excedit in expensis recepta in .iiij.li.v.s.v.d.ob. set per propriam non debet nisi .liij.s.x.d.* [And thus he is overspent in the *expense* over the *recepta* in £4 5s. 5d. halfpenny but by his own [admission] he only owes 54s. 10d.]; or *Et sic excedunt expense recepta .vij.li.iiij.s.xj.d.ob. set per propriam recognicionem potest acquietare omnia debita sua per .vij.li.xvij.s.ix.d.* [And thus the *expense* exceed the *recepta* in £8 4s. 11d. halfpenny but by his own admission he can acquit all his debts by £7 18s. 9d.]; and *Et sic excedunt expense recepta .xxvij.s.vij.d. set per propriam*

¹⁸³Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 57.

¹⁸⁴Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 55.

recognicionem potest acquietare omnia debita sua pro xxxv.s. [And thus the *expense* exceed the *recepta* in 37s. 7d. but by his own admission he can acquit all his debts for 35s.]; and *Et sic excedunt expense recepta .iiij.li.v.s.j.d.ob.qua. set per propriam recognicionem potest omnia debita acquietare cum .liij.s.* [And thus the *expense* exceed the *recepta* in £4 5s. 1d. three-farthings but by his own admission he can acquit all debts with 53s.]¹⁸⁵

In a fair proportion of the *excessus* balances then, the auditors successfully beat down the bailiff. Part of this beating down might have been the exercise of arbitrary coercion. There are no overt suggestions that the bailiff had attempted to defraud the abbey, as there are no related cancellations or alterations in the account. One reason why the bailiff might have been so amenable is that the auditors made ‘a sort of cash offer’ as an alternative to money on account.¹⁸⁶ In other cases, the *excessus* was probably carried over to the next account. It is difficult to assess the extent of this carrying forward as the accounts are a broken series. The *excessus* of one Stone account was carried over as well as beaten down. In 1325-26, the auditors concluded the cash side: *Et sic excedit in expensis recepta in .iiij.li.v.s.v.d.ob. set per propriam non debet nisi .liij.s.x.d.* [And thus he overspent in the expense over the *recepta* in £4 5s. 5d. halfpenny but by his own [admission] he owes only 54s. 10d.] In the following year’s account, the *debita acquietata* [debts redeemed] paragraph comprised 54s. 10d. from the last account.¹⁸⁷

The peculiar *excessus* balance reinforces the argument that manorial accounts were almost exclusively concerned with the question of the obligation between lord and official. Great effort was therefore made to preserve some sort of *pro forma*. The *excessus*, much more than the *quietus* or *arrearagium*, compels us to examine the rationale of this accountancy, simply because it begs the fundamental question: how can the official have expended more than he received?

Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 8

[Account of the bailiff of Chastleton, Michaelmas 1338 to Michaelmas 1339]¹⁸⁸

[face]

Chastleton anno xij^o

Chastleton comptus Johannis le Spencer Ballivi ibidem a festo Sancti Michaelis anno regni regis Edwardi tercii post conquestum xij^o usque idem festum proxime sequens anno xij^o per annum integrum

¹⁸⁵In this order: Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 24 (Forest Hill, 1303-4), 25 (Forest Hill, 1321-22), 36 (Stone, 1325-26), 39 (Stone, 1342-3), and 59 (Waterperry, 1344-45).

¹⁸⁶For this, and many other suggestions, I am grateful to Paul Harvey.

¹⁸⁷Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 36-37.

¹⁸⁸Contractions and suspensions have been extended wherever possible, except for sums of money (*ob.* and *qua.* denote *obulus* and *quadrans*, halfpenny and farthing) or weights and measures (*pec’*, *bus*, *qr* refer to pecks, bushels and quarters); *rem’* usually indicates *remanenti*.

REDDITUS ASSISE Item de redditu assise per annum patet Summa xjs.
 VENDITIO BLADI Item respondet de xvijs. ixd. ob. qua. receptis de viij
 qr vij bus frumenti venditis precium qr ijs. ¹⁸⁹ Item de vijs. viijd. de iiij qr
 et dimidio bus siliginis venditis. Item de xiijs. iijd. ob. de x qr vj bus drageti
 venditis precium qr xvd.¹⁹⁰ Item de xs. de viij qr vij bus pisarum venditis
 precium qr xiiij.¹⁹¹ Item de iiijs. de iiij qr avene venditis.
 lijs. ixd. qua. Summa lijs. ixd. qua.¹⁹²
 EXITUS MANERII Item de ijd. de plant' ... ¹⁹³ venditis. Item de ijd.
 de porottis venditis. Item de viijd. de stipula vendita. Item de iijd. de alba
 stramine vendita. Et de xiijs. de feno vendito.
 xvs. iijd. xvs. iijd.
 RECEPTA FORINSECA Item de xxs. receptis de senescallo pro expensis
 autumpni.
 xxs. xxs.
 Totalis iiij li. xixs. qua. Summa totalis recepti iiij li. xixs. qua.
 DEBITA ACQUIETATA ULTERIORIS COMPOTI Idem computat in deb-
 itis acquietatis super ultimo compoto lxvjs. viijd. ob. qua.
 patet Summa patet
 RESOLUTIONES Item resoluti infirmario Oseneye iiijs. Item resoluti vi-
 cario loci per annum de certo suo xxiijs. iiijd.¹⁹⁴
 xxxvijs. viijd. Summa xxvijs. iiijd.
 CUSTUS ECCLESIE Item in procuracione visu archidiaconi vijs. vijd. ob.
 qu. Item in synodalibus solutis per annum iijs. Item in expensis procuratoris
 euntis ad parliamentum London' pro jd. de marca xd. Item pro expensis procu-
 ratoris cardinalis ijd. ob. videlicet quadrans de marca.¹⁹⁵ Item solutis pro
 expensis cardinal' vd. videlicet ob. de marca.¹⁹⁶
 xijs. jd. qua. Summa xijs. jd. qua.
 CUSTUS CARUCARUM Item in ij peciis ferri emptis pro ferramento xiiijd.
 In j ferro pedali empto ijd. ob. qua. In j clava ijd. In j anula empti jd. Item
 in stipendio fabri operantis idem et pro ferrura iij affrorum per annum iijs. vjd.
 Item in ij carucis faciendis et reparandis vd. Item in virgis emptis pro tewes
 faciendis jd. ob. In j auriculo empto jd. Et in j ploubem empto cum stipendio
 fabri appositi idem iijd.¹⁹⁷ Et in j vomere empto xjd.
 vjs. jd. qua. [sic] Summa vjs. xjd. qua.
 CUSTUS CARECTARUM Item in j pari rotarum nudarum empto ijs. Item
 in frettis ad easdem jd. Item in ix cartclutis emptis vijd. ob. In clutnaylis

¹⁸⁹ From *precium* underlined by the auditors.

¹⁹⁰ From *precium* underlined by the auditors.

¹⁹¹ From *precium* underlined by the auditors.

¹⁹² Throughout the sum of each section is inserted on the left side as well as the right, in the same hand.

¹⁹³ One word illegible.

¹⁹⁴ *viijd.* cancelled and *iiijd.* interlined.

¹⁹⁵ From *videlicet* underlined by the auditors.

¹⁹⁶ From *videlicet* underlined by the auditors.

¹⁹⁷ *empto* interlined.

emptis jd. In j pari bassis vd. ob. In carectis axandis jd. Et in stipendio fabri pro diversis bendis apponendis super rotas cumstrakis emptis pro eodem xd.

iiijs. ix. qua. Summa iiijs. ix. qua.

CUSTUS DOMORUM Item in ij hostiis emendandis ijd. In stipendio j hominis punctandi super grangiam ijd. In calce empto ad eandem jd. In sclattis emptis ijd.

vijd. Summa vijd.

CUSTUS SARCLACIONIS Item in diversis liberationibus sarclandis [sic] xiiijd. ob.

patet Summa xiiij. d. ob.

FALCACIO PRATORUM Item in expensis vj hominum falcantium pratum de Langesclade Overmede Nethermede Hildesclade et Grenemor per iij dies ijs. vjd. Et in dicto prato vertando levando et tassando iiijs. vjd. Item in expensis diversorum hominum cariantium fenum de prece xijd. ob. Et in expensis diversorum coadiuuatorum facientium meyas in bercaria viijd. ob.

ixs. ix. d. Summa ix. s. ix. d.

CUSTUS AUTUMPNI Item in omnimodo blado metendo et ligando ad tascham xvjs. vjd. ob. In j carectario locato per vj dies et dimidio ad cibum domini pro blado cariendo ijs. viijd. ob. capiente per diem vd.¹⁹⁸ In carne empta iijd. In carne empta jd. In cervisia xvd. In caseo vd. In cervisia pro tassis pisarum in berton faciendis vjd. Item in j bus frumenti empto pro pane vd. Item dati metoribus¹⁹⁹ domini vjd. Et in stipendiis ij cobularum iiijs.

xxvjs. iijd. Summa xxvjs. iijd.

MINUTE ET NECESSARIE Item in ij bus salis emptis viijd. Item pro marshalso j affri infirmi iij. d. Item in ij cordis pro affris applicandis in pastura ijd.

xiiijd. Summa xiiijd.

STIPENDIA FAMULORUM Item in stipendio j tentoris caruce per annum vs. In stipendio j fugatoris per annum iiijs. Et in stipendio j coci per annum ijs. viijd.

xjs. viijd. Summa xjs. viijd.

Summa totalis expense et liberationis viij li. xviijs. xd. Et sic excedunt expense recepta lxxixs. vd. ob. qua.

Set per propriam recognicionem non debet nisi lviijs. ijd. exceptis xxiijs. vjd. de veteri debito set quibus debent inquirari.

Totalis viij li. xixs. jd. et sic excedit iij li. ob. qua. Nomina debiti videlicet vicario loci xxiijs. xd.²⁰⁰ Item fabro ijs. Item Willelmo Hogies xijs. Item pro expensis autumpnalibus cum stipendio carectarii vjs. viijd. Item pro stipendiis famulorum per totum annum xjs. viijd. Item de antiquo debito acomodato per Willelmum Bikenhull xxiijs. vjd.

[dorse]

¹⁹⁸From *capiente* underlined by the auditors.

¹⁹⁹MS. met'

²⁰⁰*xxiijs. ijd.* cancelled and *xxiijs. xd.* interlined.

Chastelton computus Johannis le Spencer Ballivi ibidem anno xij^o per annum integrum

FRUMENTUM Idem respondet de xxij qr ij bus pec receptis de exitu triturationis ad tascham per j talliam contra Willelmum Bykenulle

preceptum est quod cepit recepta decime a dominico Summa patet

De quibus in semine vj qr. Item in certo vicarii soluto per annum vj qr vij bus. In expensis pratorum iij bus. In expensis autumpni j bus. Et in venditione viij qr vij bus pec.

Summa ut prima. Et nichil remanet

SILIGO Item de xxij qr j bus receptis de exitu triturationis ad tascham per j talliam cum frumento. Et de vj qr receptis ex mutuo.

Summa xxvij qr j bus

De quibus in semine ij qr j bus. Item liberati vicario de certo suo per annum viij qr v bus. Item in liberatione carectariorum per annum viij qr v bus utrique per xij xij [sic] septimanas j qr. In liberatione j coci a festo Sancti Michaelis usque festum natalis Sancti Johannis Baptiste per xxxvij septimanas ij qr iij bus capientis qr ad xvj septimanam. Item in liberatione eiusdem a dicto festo Sancti Johannis usque festum Sancti Michaelis per per [sic] xiiij septimanas j qr j bus dimidius capientis qr ad xij septimanam. Item in liberatione ij cobularum in autumpno j qr. Item in stipendio j mulieris siccande avenam pro farina j bus. Et in venditione iij qr et dimidius bus.

Summa ut prima. Et nichil remanet.

DRAGETUM Item de xx qr ij bus receptis de exitu triturationis ad tascham per j talliam contra dictum Willelmum.

Summa patet.

De quibus in semine ij qr dimidium. Item in certo vicarii loci per annum vij qr. Et in venditione x qr vj bus.

Et nichil remanet.

PISA Item de xij qr dimidio receptis de exitu triturationis ad tascham per j talliam contra dictum Willelmum. Et de xiiij qr dimidio receptis per estimationem in garbis datis ad yemacionem hogerellorum de Hogenorton per talliam.

Summa xxvij qr.

De quibus in semine ij qr. Item liberatum apud Oseneyam j qr per j talliam. Item liberati preposito de Hogenorton v bus per talliam. Item in sustentatione hogerellorum de Hogenorton xiiij qr dimidium per estimationem in garbis. Et in venditione viij qr vij bus.

Summa ut prima. Et nichil remanet.

AVENA Item de xliij qr j bus receptis de exitu triturationis ad tascham per j talliam cum drageto. Et de ij qr dimidio receptis de exitu per estimationem in garbis datis ad sustentacionem bovum per j talliam cum pisis.

Summa xlv qr v bus.

De quibus in semine xiiij qr v bus. Item in farina facta xxij qr dimidium. Item liberata vicario de certo suo per annum ij qr. Item in prebenda bovum per estimationem in garbis ij qr dimidium. Et in venditione iij qr.

Summa ut prima. Et nichil remanet.

AVENARIA Item de vij qr dimidio de exitu xxij qr dimidio avene²⁰¹ ut supra. Summa patet.

De quibus liberata Oseneye vij qr per j talliam cum pisis. Item in potagio famulorum per annum iiij bus.

Summa ut prima. Et nichil remanet.

SAL Item de ij bus de emptione. Et expendit in potagio famulorum per annum. Et nichil remanet.

AFFRI Item de iij de rem. feminis. Et remanent iij affri femini.

BOVES Item de vj de rem. Et remanent vj boves.

VACCE Item de j vacca de rem. Et de j de herietto post vitulationem. Summa ij. De quibus liberata senescallo j. Summa j. Et remanet j vacca.

JUVENCA Item de j iuvenca de herietto. Et computat liberata senescallo. Et nichil remanet.

VITULUS DE REM. Item de j vitulo masculo de rem. Et remanet j modo boviculus masculus.

VITULI DE EXITU Item de j vitulo masculo de exitu. Et remanet j vitulus masculus.

AGNI Item de iiij de decima. Et liberati preposito de Hogenorton iiij per j talliam. Et nichil remanet.

VELLERA Item de lxxij velleribus receptis de decima ponderantibus viij petras. Et computat liberata apud Eton per j talliam. Et nichil remanet.

PELLES AGNORUM Item de j pelle agni recepta de decima. Et liberata preposito de Hogenorton per j talliam cum agnis. Et nichil remanet.

De exitu lactis j vacce nichil hic quia expendit in expensis famulorum.

²⁰¹From *xxij* underlined by auditors.

Chastleton 12th year

Chastelton account of John le Spencer bailiff there from Michaelmas 12 Edward III to the same feast following 13 [Edward III] for a whole year.

RENTS OF ASSIZE Item for 11s rent of assize p.a.

As it appears

Total 11s

SALE OF GRAIN He answers for 17s. 9d. three-farthings received from 8 qtrs 7 bs wheat sold @ 2s qtr. Item for 7s. 8d. from 4 qtrs half bs rye sold. Item for 13s. 3d. halfpenny from 10 qtrs 6 bs dredge sold @ 15d qtr. Item for 10s. from 8 qtrs 7 bs peas sold @ 13d. qtr. Item for 4s. from 4 qtrs oats sold.

52s. 9d. farthing.

Total 52s. 9d. farthing.

ISSUES OF THE MANOR Item for 2d. from [one word] plants sold. Item for 2d. from leeks sold. Item for 8d. from straw sold. Item for 3d. from white straw sold. And for 14s. from hay sold.

15s. 3d.

Total 15s. 3d.

INCOME FROM OUTSIDE Item for 20s. received from the steward for harvest expenses.

20s.

Total 20s.

Total £4 19s. farthing.

Total of the whole income £4 19s. farthing.

DEBTS FROM THE LAST ACCOUNT LIQUIDATED He accounts in debts liquidated from the last account 66s. 8d. three-farthings.

As it appears.

Total as it appears.

PAYMENTS Item sent to Oseney's infirmarer 4s. Item paid to the vicar of the place for his stipend p.a. 23s. 4d.

27s. 8d.

Total 27s. 4d.

COST OF THE CHURCH Item in the procuration of the archdeacon's view 7s. 7d. three-farthings. Item in synodals paid p.a. 3s. Item in costs of the proctor going to a London Parliament for the [subsidy of] 1d in the mark 10d. Item for the costs of the cardinal's proctor twopence halfpenny, that is, a farthing in the mark. Item paid for the cardinal's expenses 5d., that is, halfpenny in the mark.

12s. 1d. farthing.

Total 12s. 1d. farthing

COSTS OF PLOUGHS Item in 3 pieces of iron bought for horseshoes 14d. In one iron ... bought 2d. three-farthings. In one key 2d. In one ring bought 1d. In the smith's wages working the same and for shoeing of 3 affers p.a. 3s. 6d. Item in making and repairing 2 ploughs 5d. Item in rods bought for making 2 tewes 1d. halfpenny. In one ... bought 1d. In one ploughbeam bought with the smith's wages fixing it 3d. And in one ploughshare bought 11d.

6s. 1d. farthing

Total 6s. 1d. farthing.

COSTS OF CARTS Item in one pair of unbound wheels bought 2s. Item in frets for them 1d. Item in 9 cartclouts bought 7d. halfpenny. In cloutnails bought 1d. In one pair of ... 5d. halfpenny. In one cart ... bought 2d. farthing. In grease bought 2d. In cartsouls 1d. In white leather 2d. In ... carts 1d. And in the smith's wage for fixing several bands on the wheels with strakes bought for them 10d.

4s. 9d. farthing

Total 4s. 9d. farthing.

COSTS OF BUILDINGS Item in repairing 2 doors 2d. In a man's wages ...ing on the grange 2d. In chalk bought for it 1d. In slates bought 2d.

7d. Total 7d.

COSTS OF WEEDING Item in several weeding payments 14d. halfpenny.

As it appears. Total 14d. halfpenny.

MOWING OF THE MEADOWS Item in 6 men's wages mowing the meadow of Langesclade, Overmede, Nethermede, Hildesclade and Grenemor for 3 days 3s. 6d. And in turning, lifting and stacking 4s. 6d. Item in the costs of several men carrying hay by boon 12d. halfpenny. And in costs of several helpers making stacks in the sheepfold 8d. halfpenny.

9s. 9d. Total 9s. 9d.

HARVEST COSTS Item in reaping and binding all types of grain for cash 6s. 1d. halfpenny. In finding a carter for 6 and a half days at the lord's table for carrying grain ...s. 8d. halfpenny. taking 5d a day. In meat bought 3d. In meat bought 1d. In ale 5d. In cheese 5d. In ale for making stacks of peas in the barton 6d. Item in 1bs. of wheat bought for bread 5d. Item given to the lord's reapers 6d. And in 2 tithe collectors' wages 4s.

26s. 3d. Total 26s. 3d.

SMALL AND NECESSARY ITEMS Item in 2 bs. salt bought 8d. Item for shoeing one sick affer 4d. Item in 2 ropes for tethering affers in the pasture 2d.

14d. Total 14d.

WAGES OF THE *FAMULI* Item in one ploughholder's wage p.a. 5s. In one plough driver's wage p.a. 4s. And in one cook's wage p.a. 2s. 8d.

11s. 8d. Total 11s. 8d.

The whole total of costs and payments £8 18s. 10d. And thus the costs surpass the receipts 79s. 5d. three-farthings.

But by his own admission he only owes 58s. 2d. other than 23s. 6d. from an old debt about which they should inquire.

Total £8 19s. 1d. and thus it over-runs £4 three-farthings. Details of the debt, that is, to the vicar of the place 23s. 10d. Item to the smith 2s. Item to William Hogies 12s. Item for harvest costs with the carter's wage 6s. 8d. Item for wages of the *famuli* for the whole year 11s. 8d. Item for an old debt loaned by William Bikenhull 23s. 6d.

[dorse]

Chastleton account of John le Spencer bailiff there for the 12th year for a whole year.

WHEAT He answers for 22 qtrs 2bs. 1 peck received from issue of threshing for cash by one tally against William Bykenhulle.

it is ordered that he separates receipt of tithe from the demesne issue Total as it appears

From which in sowing 6 qtrs. Item in the vicar's allowance p.a. 6 qtrs. 7bs. In costs of the meadows 3bs. In harvest costs 1bs. And in sale 8 qtrs. 7bs. 1 peck.

Total as first [above]. And nothing is left.

RYE Item for 22 qtrs 1bs. received from issue of threshing for cash by 1 tally with wheat. And for 6 qtrs received from a loan.

Total 28 qtrs 1bs.

From which in sowing 2 qtrs 1bs. Item given to the vicar for his allowance p.a. 8 qtrs 5bs. Item in payment of the carters p.a. 8 qtrs 5bs., each 1 qtr for 12 weeks. In payment to one cook from Michaelmas to the nativity of St John the Baptist for 38 weeks 2 qtrs 3bs., taking a qtr for 16 weeks. Item in their payment from St John to Michaelmas for 14 weeks 1 qtr 1 and a half bs., taking a qtr for 12 weeks. Item in payment of 2 tithe collectors in harvest 1 qtr. Item in one woman's wage drying oats for meal 1bs. And in sale 4 qtrs and half a bs.

Total as first [above]. And nothing is left.

DREDGE Item for 20 qtrs 2bs. received from issue of threshing for cash by one tally against the said William. Total as it appears.

From which in sowing 2 qtrs and a half. Item in the allowance of the vicar of the place p.a. 7 qtrs. And in sale 10 qtrs 6bs.

Total as first [above]. And nothing is left.

PEAS Item for 12 qtrs and a half received from issue of threshing for cash by one tally against the said William. And for 14 qtrs and a half received from issue by estimate in sheaves given for wintering of the hoggs of Hook Norton by tally.

Total 27 qtrs.

From which in sowing 2 qtrs. Item delivered to Oseney 1 qtr by tally. Item delivered to the reeve of Hook Norton 5bs. by tally. Item for feeding of hoggs of Hook Norton 14qtrs and a half by estimate in sheaves. And in sale 8 qtrs 7bs.

Total as first [above]. And nothing is left.

OATS Item for 43 qtrs 1bs. received from issue of threshing for cash by one tally with the dredge. And for 2 qtrs and a half received from issue by estimate in sheaves given for feeding of oxen by one tally with the peas.

Total 45 qtrs 5bs.

From which in sowing 14 qtrs 5bs. Item in oatmeal made 22 qtrs and a half. Item given to the vicar for his allowance p.a. 2 qtrs. Item in fodder of oxen by estimate in sheaves 2 qtrs and a half. And in sale 4 qtrs.

Total as first [above]. And nothing is left.

OATMEAL Item for 7 qtrs and a half of issue of 22 qtrs and a half of oats as above. Total as it appears.

From which delivered to Oseney 7 qtrs by one tally with the peas. Item in thick soup for the *famuli* p.a. 4bs.

Total as first [above]. And nothing is left.

SALT Item for 2bs. of purchase. And he used [it] in thick soup for the *famuli* p.a. And nothing is left.

AFFERS Item for 3 left [from last year], female. And 3 female offers are left.

OXEN Item for 6 left [from last year]. And 6 oxen are left.

COWS Item for one cow left [from last year]. And for one from heriot after it had calved. Total 2. From which sent to the steward 1. Total 1. And one cow is left.

HEIFFER And for one heiffer from heriot. And he accounts for it sent to the steward. And nothing is left.

CALVES LEFT [from last year] Item for one male calf left [from last year]. And it is left, now a steer.

CALVES OF ISSUE And for one male calf of issue. And one male calf is left.

LAMBS Item for 4 from tithe. And sent to the reeve of Hook Norton 4 by one tally. And nothing is left.

FLEECES Item for 73 fleeces received from tithe weighing 8 stone. And he accounts for them sent to Water Eaton by one tally. And nothing is left.

LAMBS' FELLS Item for one lamb's fell received from tithe. And sent to the reeve of Hook Norton by one tally with the lambs. And nothing is left.

From the issue of one cow's milk nothing here because in the costs of the *famuli*.

9 The estate stewards of Oseney Abbey, c.1245-1340

The estate steward of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is a familiar figure. On lay estates the steward was usually a layman, often a knight holding his own lands, and a 'careerist' administrator.²⁰² Ecclesiastical and religious dignitaries probably appointed this type of man as did the chapters of the large Benedictine houses and cathedrals.²⁰³ Even the English estates of the abbot of Bec were supervised by a steward of knightly status, although at least one of these was not a 'careerist'.²⁰⁴

Management of the estates of Oseney Abbey differed from that pattern, for in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, estate stewards were consistently appointed from amongst the canons of the convent. The estate steward was thus selected from the *maior et sanior pars* (greater and wiser element) of the convent, one of the twelve senior canons. One evident difficulty of appointing canon-stewards was the canonical rule that the religious ought not to travel outside the convent without an accompanying canon. The estate steward, consequently, always itinerated with a *concanonicus* (fellow canon).²⁰⁵ This procedure had, nevertheless, the compensation that it introduced canons to the stewardship, since the duties of the office were partially learned by experience, but it did deplete the number of canons at the house.

Those duties did not differ from those expected of stewards of lay and other religious estates. The steward was responsible for the supervision of husbandry and in particular extraordinary sales of produce. He was involved, for example, in the sale of a stack of beans to a butcher for £7 6s. 8d.²⁰⁶ His warrant was requisite for the sale of a heifer, presumably a sound one, to acquit the cost of reaping.²⁰⁷ His principal obligation, however, was to visit each property at least twice each year to remove cash from the hands of the local official. This livery to the steward usually comprised the rents of assize and the perquisites of court, which were delivered to the bursary of the abbey, but occasionally the amount was swollen by incidental receipts from the sale of grain or from an entry fine.²⁰⁸ The cash was removed from the local official's hands to prevent fraudulent use by the official for his own purposes.²⁰⁹ At the second visit to each property,

²⁰²Denholm-Young, *Seigniorial Administration*, 69-71.

²⁰³For example, the stewards of the abbot of Westminster, B. F. Harvey, ed., *Documents Illustrating the Rule of Walter de Wenlok, Abbot of Westminster, 1283-1307* (Camden 4th series 2, 1965), 25; the list of stewards of Peterborough Abbey in C. N. L. Brooke and M. M. Postan, eds, *Carte Nativorum. A Peterborough Abbey Cartulary of the Fourteenth Century* (Northamptonshire Record Society xx, 1960), Appx II, 266-7.

²⁰⁴M. Morgan, *The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec* (repr., Oxford, 1968), 56-7.

²⁰⁵This rule was reiterated by Wykeham in his injunctions to Selborne Priory, also a house of Austin Canons: W. D. Macray, ed., *Charters of Selborne Priory* (Hampshire Record Society, 1891), 99.

²⁰⁶Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 34.

²⁰⁷Bodleian Oseney Roll 95.

²⁰⁸Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 34 (£7 6s. 8d. from the sale above and £3 9s. 8d. from an entry fine); Ch. Ch. O. R. 38 (£7 8s. 5d.); Ch. Ch. O. R. 43 (£7 6s. 8d.); Oseney Roll 97 (£11 0s. 2d.).

²⁰⁹Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 340.

at or about Michaelmas (29 Sept.), the steward audited the accounts of the local official.²¹⁰ Auditing was a local rather than a centralized procedure, presumably because most of the abbey's property was concentrated in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Nevertheless, the steward's clerk occasionally failed to engross the accounts until Martinmas (11 Nov.).²¹¹

The stewards intervened in the management of the estate. Successive bailiffs of Waterperry were removed (*amoti*) by the steward, whose clerk compiled an inventory of stock on their dismissal.²¹² When it was decided, in 1337, not to retain the demesne of Sibford in hand any longer, it was the steward, William de Abyngdone, who was responsible for the new arrangements. In the event, the demesne was divided into standard virgate holdings and granted out in villeinage.²¹³ It was the steward, William Pencrich, who journeyed via Watlington to receive land at Iver back into the lord's hands.²¹⁴ In this case, Pencrich was acting perhaps as the legal representative of the abbot and it was necessary for stewards to be familiar with common and statute law. Legal representation was generally the business of the house's proctor, but the steward invoked the Statute of Marlborough in 1383 to illustrate why the abbot did not owe suit to the view of frankpledge of Fairford.²¹⁵

The distinguishing characteristic of the estate stewards of Oseney thus resided less in their duties than in their appointment from amongst the canons of the house. Their selection seems to have comprised one part of a policy of self-sufficiency in the administration of the estate in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, demonstrated also in the deployment of canon-wardens (*custodes*) to supervise groups or bailiwicks of properties.²¹⁶ The offices of steward and canon-warden were complementary until the latter was allowed to lapse in the mid fourteenth century, for each provided experience of estate administration. It was customary, therefore, for stewards to have served as canon-wardens. The problem of this method of management was the demand that it made on a convent which in the fourteenth century diminished to about twenty-five canons, but it had no doubt been an attempt to guarantee loyalty amongst administrators.²¹⁷

William de Sutton Steward, 1263-67. Proctor to Abbot Richard de Apeltre, 1254-67; became abbot 1267-84; responsible for the cartulary of rural property

²¹⁰ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 50-52: the *expense senescalli* (steward's costs) paragraph includes the cost of the steward's clerk making the account.

²¹¹ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R.: *ven' ibidem circa festum sancti martini et commorant' per ii. dies pro compoto anni precedentis faciundo* (arriving there about Martinmas and staying two days to make up last year's account).

²¹² Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 49-56.

²¹³ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 322.

²¹⁴ Bodleian MS Oseney Roll 107.

²¹⁵ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 19; Marlborough, 1267, cc. 2, 9.

²¹⁶ For similar use of monk-wardens, Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory*, 100-10; King, *Peterborough Abbey*, 1972), 129ff.

²¹⁷ Oschinsky, Walter of Henley, 264.

c.1280-84; a centrally-enrolled account of c.1280 is extant in which the calculation of *proficuum manerii* is included; perfected the *custodia* organization of the properties when prelate; his ability eulogized by the Oseney annalist. *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 113, 169, 383, v, 105, vi, 184ff.; Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 74; *Annales Monastici* iv, 107, 112, 126-7, 129-30, 208-11, 302-3.

William de Pencrich Steward, between 1276 and 1306 reputed to be sixty years old in 1324; he may have arrived at the abbey through its property at Shenston in Staffs. Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 20; Bodleian Oseney Rolls 95, 97; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 383-4.

William de Bruselingham Steward, 1281-82 (part year). Still a canon in 1314. Bodleian MS Oseney Roll 95; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* ii, 237.

John Poygnaunt Steward, 1284-85 (part year). Canon-warden at Stone, 1316-21, and at Kiltenan (Ireland), 1330-31. Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 32-5; Bodleian Oseney Roll 16.

William de Tettusurthe Steward, *temp.* Edw II and 1330-31. Canon-warden at Kiltenan; proctor in 1324. Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 47; Bodleian Oseney Roll 41; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 138, 383-4.

Thomas de Mamesfeld Steward, 1325-26, 1333-34. Canon-warden at Bibury in 1348 and one of the *maior et sanior pars* in 1360. Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 35, 48; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 9, 140.

John de Sutton Steward, between 1288 and 1326 Reputed to be aged at least sixty in 1324. Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 24-5, 34-5, 43; Bodleian Oseney Roll 43; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* v, 383-4.

William de Abyngdone Steward, 1337-38 Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 52; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 322-3.

John de Waringtone Steward, 1336-37, 1340 Bodleian Oseney Roll 108; Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 51, 63.

10 Problems in the administration of small properties: Oxfordshire glebe-demesnes, 1278-1345

The economic organization of small manors probably differed in quality as well as in quantity from the administration of large manors of both lay and religious. The glebe-demesne was a peculiar type of small non-manorial property which was characteristic of the estates of many houses of Austin Canons. Its prevalence in Austin Canon estates was first discerned, for Yorkshire houses of the Order, by T. A. M. Bishop. R. H. Hilton also remarked upon the high proportion of glebe-demesnes in the estates of Leicester and Owston Abbeys in Leicestershire. More recently, Ian Kershaw discussed the glebe-demesnes in the composition of the estates of Bolton Priory, an Austin Canons house in Yorkshire.²¹⁸

The formation and distribution of this type of small property have thus received considerable treatment, but little has been established about the problems of administering such small properties. To some extent, these problems were identical with those confronting the lord of any small manor. The difficulties of the glebe-demesne were, however, exacerbated by its non-manorial quality. The glebe-demesne was essentially a demesne constructed around the glebe of an appropriated parish church. The appropriated glebe was consolidated by purchase and exchange of property. The glebe-demesne, nevertheless, differed from the small manor, since it comprised no tenant land at all or few tenants. The absence of tenant land accentuated the labour problems of the small property, as well as affecting the level of receipts in rents. The principal problems of the glebe-demesne consisted of the complicated financial organization; a dependence on wage labour; and a shortage of cash.

Some indications of the issues confronting the lord, and also his officials, of the glebe-demesne may be derived from an examination of the glebe-demesnes of Oseney Abbey, an Austin Canon house established just outside the walls of Oxford in 1129. In the case of the Oseney glebe-demesnes, the difficulties above were also affected by the abbey's method of exploitation: production was influenced more by the needs of the conventual household (consumption) than the market economy.

The estates of Oseney Abbey were concentrated in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. As with the estates of most of the houses of the new orders of the twelfth century, the estates of Oseney followed closely the tenurial geography of the founder and patrons, the Oilly family.²¹⁹ Oxfordshire was situated in the 'manorialized' south and west of England, which was dominated by large seignories. In 1279-80, the 'classic' manor, where manor and vill were coincidental, was more prevalent in Oxfordshire than in any other county included in

²¹⁸Bishop, 'Monastic granges in Yorkshire'; Hilton, *Economic Development of Some Leicestershire Estates*, 36ff.; Kershaw, *Bolton Priory*, 22ff.

²¹⁹The best description of the Oilly barony is Rylands Eng MS 714 (Oilly bundle), which consists of a draft manuscript by W. Farrer.

the *Rotuli Hundredorum*.²²⁰

The estates of Oseney Abbey present a contrast with this general pattern of land tenure in Oxfordshire, despite the abbey's position as one of the largest houses of the Austin Canon Order. In c.1200 the abbey's estates were largely composed of small glebe-demesne properties in vills where the house had been able to appropriate the parish church.²²¹ The structure of the estates was modified somewhat by the abbey's entrance on a considerable scale into the land market between c.1200 and c.1240. At least £848 was expended on the purchase of rural property, principally on manorial properties bought from lay lords who were presumably in some financial difficulty. In 1279-80, nonetheless, the glebe-demesnes of the house still constituted a considerable portion of the abbey's estates.

Three archetypal glebe-demesnes of the house in Oxfordshire were located in Watlington, Chastleton and Waterperry, for which there are extant bailiffs' accounts.²²² At Chastleton in 1279-80, the abbey held the advowson with three virgates of glebe-demesne; at Waterperry, it held the advowson, three messuages, three cottages and a virgate. In neither vill had the abbey been able to improve its tenurial position since c.1200. The position at Watlington was slightly different, for here the abbey had acquired at least thirty-four acres of land between c.1200 and 1279, which had included at least three explicit purchases costing a total of twenty-three marks. The glebe-demesne at Watlington thus comprised in 1279-80 the advowson, three virgates of glebe, a plot (*placea*), and two unmeasured furlongs.²²³ Despite its acquisitions in Watlington, the abbey remained one of the inferior free tenants in the vill which was dominated by the immense manor of the earldom of Cornwall and its principal mesne tenants.²²⁴ The relative position of the abbey in Watlington is perhaps best reflected by its holding the two unmeasured furlongs as one of the seven cottagers (*coterelli*) of William de la Ho.²²⁵ The abbey's property in all three locations consisted of a small demesne constructed around a glebe and little or no tenant land.

The abbey's properties which were glebe-demesnes were managed by resident bailiffs who were free servants of the abbey. Each bailiff was despatched to a

²²⁰ P. Vinogradoff, *English Society in the Eleventh Century* (repr. Oxford, 1968), 55-60; F. M. Stenton in *Victoria County History of the County of Oxfordshire* I, 374ff.; R. V. Lennard, *Rural England 1086-1135* (Oxford, 1959), 40ff.; E. A. Kosminsky, 'Services and money rents' repr. in E. M. Carus-Wilson, ed., *Essays in Economic History* II (1962), 36.

²²¹ The process of appropriation is described by Colvin, *White Canons in England*, 272ff.; Dickinson, *Origins of the Austin Canons*, 229ff.; and Hartridge, *A History Vicarages in the Middle Ages*, 162ff.

²²² They were deposited by Christ Church, Oxford, in the Bodleian Library and constitute d. d. Ch. Ch. O. R. c. 26 ff. They were listed by N. Denholm-Young, *Medieval Archives of Christ Church* (OHS xcii, 1929), 13ff. (his references were: Ch. Ch. O. R. 2-9, 44-59, and 62-5).

²²³ *Rotuli Hundredorum* (2 vols, Record Commission, 1818), ii, 725, 729b, 816; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 411-23.

²²⁴ *Rotuli Hundredorum* ii, 816; L. M. Midgley, ed., *Ministers' Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall, 1296-7* (2 vols, Camden Society 3rd series, 66, 1942), i, 84ff. The activities of some of the earl's mesne tenants are illustrated in Merton College, Oxford, MM 817-18, 830-2, 842-4, and 854-6.

²²⁵ *Rotuli Hundredorum* ii, 816.

glebe-demesne for a limited period, usually not exceeding three years, no doubt to prevent that familiarity which might induce abuse of the position. These bailiffs received a wage of 10s. and an annual corrody of grain, and sat at the common table of the manor in autumn (during harvest time). They rendered account for their bailiwicks at or just after Michaelmas (29 September) before the itinerant steward of the estates and his clerk. This audit occurred on the properties, a local audit as opposed to a central one; because of the time involved in visiting each of the properties for this audit, some of the manorial accounts were not finally audited until Martinmas (11 November).

The bailiffs' accounts were the customary charge-discharge type which were designed to assess the obligations between the accounting official (in this case, the bailiff) and the lord, as it was expressed in the balance of the cash part of the account on the face of the rolls.²²⁶ The balances most frequently encountered in manorial accounts was the *quietus* (clear) and the *arraigium* (*et debet*) (and he owes); in the latter, the charge (*recepta*) of the account exceeded the discharge (*expense*) so that the official was deemed to owe cash to the lord.²²⁷ In contrast, the balance which occurred almost consistently in the accounts for Watlington, Waterperry and Chastleton was the *excessus* or *superplusagium*, which resulted because the discharge (*expense*) of the account were held to have exceeded the charge (*recepta*). This *excessus* balance was characteristic of the glebe-demesne properties.

The *excessus* was, nonetheless, probably fictitious in the following sense. The main objective of the charge-discharge account was to preserve a pro forma. In practice it would have been almost impossible for the bailiff to dispense more than he received; it seems then that the real definition of the *recepta* and *expense* is what ought to have been received and disbursed in cash for the management of the property, whether that cash was actually so or not. The phenomenon is well illustrated by two Chastleton rolls of 1339 and 1340, in which schedules of debts at the foot of the face of the rolls consist of the costs and wages of autumn (harvest), the wages of the *famuli* (permanent estate labourers) and the vicar's stipend. These items were obviously not paid out in these years. Those very items were, however, included in the discharge of the account, although they were not actually defrayed. It must then be presumed that they were entered merely to maintain the form of the account.²²⁸

For Waterperry, eight of eleven accounts for 1280 and between 1328 and 1345 contained an *excessus* balance, which ranged between just under 10s. to just over £2 10s. All four accounts for Watlington (1328, 1339, 1342, 1345) conclude with an *excessus* balance of the same order. Six out of seven Chastleton accounts have an *excessus* balance (1278-9, 1335, 1337, 1339, 1340, but with a tiny *et*

²²⁶tone, 'Profit and loss accountancy', for the rationale of the procedures of accountancy.

²²⁷These terms are explained in the treatise for Beaulieu Abbey, the 'Regule compoti', which are printed in Denholm-Young, *Seignorial Administration*, 170-1; for examples of the *quietus* and *et debet*, Hall, *Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1208-9*, passim, and Holt, *Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1210-11*, passim, especially, in this context, for the bishop's large manors in Oxfordshire at Adderbury and Witney which were of an entirely different character to the Oseney properties.

²²⁸For an explanation in greater detail, see chapter 8 above.

debet in 1333). Four of the Chastleton accounts had a *surplusagium/excessus* between just over £2 10s. and just over £4 10s.

The *excessus* may have been aggravated by the abbey's manner of exploitation of its glebe-demesne properties. Production was directed to the provisioning of the convent and manorial costs rather than a market economy. The levels of sales of grain from the glebe-demesnes, with the exception of a few fortuitous years, remained minimal. At Waterperry, the receipt of grain in seven years between 1329 and 1341 ranged from 114 to 194 quarters, a mean of 139 quarters (standard deviation 28.9) and median of 123 quarters. Sales of grain from the property fluctuated, ranging from six quarters (1328) to fifty-seven quarters (1338). The exceptionally low level of sales up to 1337 was succeeded by a period of higher sales: fifteen percent of receipts sold in 1337, fifty percent in 1338 (largely dredge and barley) and twenty-seven percent in 1341 (again mainly dredge and barley). The same pattern can be observed at Chastleton; there sales were insignificant before 1339, but in 1339 and 1340 attained twenty-eight percent and sixteen percent respectively of the grain received.

Perhaps Watlington is most instructive because there is a comparison. The accrual of grain for the abbey at Watlington depended enormously on tithe income, which resulted in large fluctuations. In three years in the early fourteenth century, the grain totals varied startlingly: 135 quarters, 254 quarters and 300 quarters. Considering that most of this income did not require any investment from the abbey as it was tithe receipt, the proportion sold was low: eight percent, twenty-four percent, and thirty percent. Much of the tithe receipt was derived from the demesne in Watlington belonging to the earldom of Cornwall. In 1296-7, the earldom's demesne produced one hundred quarters of wheat, eighty-eight of which were sold; forty of barley, thirty-two of which were sold; and twenty-six of dredge, nineteen being sold. On the adjacent manor of Cuxham, belonging to Merton College, Oxford, 165 quarters of wheat were produced in 1276, 130 of which were sold.²²⁹

The income from sales of grain thus remained particularly low: in ten years at Waterperry in 1280 and between 1328 and 1345, between 13s. 4d. and £8 16s. 6d., but exceeding £5 in only two years; in three years at Chastleton (1337-1340) just over £1, almost £2, and just over £2; at Watlington, somewhat higher, but still not significant, just under £4 in two years, almost £7 in another, and in 1345 over £17 because enlarged by the sale of forty-four quarters of malt.

The actual levels of sales, moreover, were below the raw figures listed above. The *bladum venditum* of some of the bailiff's accounts expressed the reasons for some of the 'sales'. Not all such 'sales' were voluntary nor accrued to clear profit. Innumerable 'sales' were compulsory and appear more in the nature of expenses and costs paid in kind. These sales were effected to raise cash for specific purposes. For example, five quarters of dredge were sold at Waterperry in 1335 to raise cash to defray the archdeacon's procuration. In 1336, a further four quarters of wheat were sold there to find cash to purchase two necessary

²²⁹Midgley, *Ministers' Accounts of the Earldom of Cornwall* i, 88ff.; Merton College, Oxford, MM 5803, m. 3.

plough-oxen. In the following year, the bailiff there sold twelve quarters of oats to acquit some small costs (*ad solvendum pro minutis expensis*). In five separate years, furthermore, the bailiff there was compelled to sell quantities of wheat and oats to raise cash to acquit the wages of the *famuli*, the permanent estate labourers.²³⁰

These expediciencies illustrate the cash shortage which was often one of the principal problems in the administration of small properties. This cash deficiency was intensified by the absolute dependence of the glebe-demesnes on wage or contractual labour, since the abbey had no or very few tenants on these properties. The nucleus of the labour force was, as was normal, the *famuli* who were supplemented for specific tasks (reaping and threshing) and seasons (especially Autumn/harvest) by temporarily hired wage labour (*ad tascham*). Both groups required a cash wage, which presented problems to the bailiffs of the glebe-demesnes.

In normal years, the *famuli* received a cash wage with a corrody of grain. In many years, however, when the bailiffs presumably experienced an acute cash shortage, the *famuli* had to accept a second corrody in lieu of a cash wage. At Waterperry in 1337, for example, the second corrody was paid in sheaves in the fields rather than in threshed grain from the granary. Indeed, similar arrangements were occasionally required at another small property of the abbey at Forest Hill: all the other *famuli* took grain in the fields for their summer wage (*omnes alii famuli ceperunt bladum in campis pro stipendio estiuuali*) and all these *famuli* and two dairy assistants took grain in the fields as it is estimated by the village jurors to the value of their wages (*omnes isti famuli et .ij. daye ceperunt bladum in campis prout estimatum est ad valenciam stipendiorum eorum per iuratos ville*).²³¹ In severe years, the simple solution was to defer the payment of the cash wage altogether. The wages of the *famuli* of Watlington were so detailed by the bailiff there in 1328 and paid in arrears: Item paid for the wages of the *famuli* as is shown by a bill from the time of John Pryngle (the outgoing bailiff) (*Item solut' pro stipendiis famulorum prout patet per dividendam de tempore Johannis Pryngle*). Similarly, the debts of the bailiff of Waterperry constantly included the wages of the *famuli*. In 1339, for example, his debts contained the wages of the shepherd, the dairy assistant, and the swineherd. In the following year, the *excessus* of his balance was qualified: and he owes the whole for the wages of the *famuli* (*et totum debet pro stipendiis famulorum*).

The bailiffs of the glebe-demesnes made efforts equally to avoid cash payments for temporary, hired labour. In the case of the labour required in Autumn (harvest carters, forkers and stackers), it proved impossible to avoid a cash wage. There was, however, a definite tendency to pay threshers and reapers in kind rather than in cash. All reaping and all threshing, except for the minute amount completed by the *famuli*, was accomplished by temporarily-hired wage labour. Reapers were remunerated consistently in kind, receiving a specific portion of

²³⁰ M. M. Postan, *The Famulus*, EconHR Supplement no. 2 (1954).

²³¹ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 23-24.

the sheaves which they bound. By the middle of the fourteenth century, this rate was established as the twentieth sheaf, although it had been higher in the late thirteenth century at the seventeenth sheaf: *totum bladum de dominico mest' est ad .xx.am garbam* (all demesne grain was reaped for the 20th sheaf); *omnia genera bladi manerii metentur ad .xx.am garbam* (all kinds of maorial grain were reaped for the 20th sheaf); *in met' diversorum bladorum nichil in denariis quia omnia blada met' ad .xx.am garbam* (in reaping several grains nothing in cash because all grains reaped for the 20th sheaf); *omnia blada met' ad .xx.am garbam ideo nichil hic in denariis* (all grains reaped for the 20th sheaf therefore nothing here in cash); *in met' bladi nichil hic in denariis quia omnia genera bladi met' ad .xx.am garbam* (for reaping grain nothing here in cash because all kinds of grain reaped for the 20th sheaf); *in blada met' nichil computat quia omnia blada met' ad .xx.am garbam* (for reaping grain he accounts for nothing because all grains reaped for the 20th sheaf) (all Waterperry); *nichil computat in missione bladorum pro eo quod mess' pro .xvii.a garba* (he accounts for nothing for reaping grains because they were reaped for the 17th sheaf) (Forest Hill, 1277).²³² Although threshers were still occasionally paid in cash (*bladum ... triturationum ad tascham pro denariis*) (grain ... threshed by contract for cash), they more usually received payment in kind (*bladum ... triturationum ad tascham pro blado*) (grain ... threshed by contract for payment in kind). By such methods the bailiffs were partially successful in reducing their cash obligations.

Their success was only partial, as is indicated by the straits of the bailiff of Chastleton. He was dependent on 'foreign' receipts of cash from the official of the larger manor of Hooknorton and from the steward of the abbey's estates, to acquit some of his obligations. He particularly needed cash from these external sources to defray the costs of Autumn (harvest). He thus received 26s. from Hook Norton *pro expensis Autumpnalibus*, 20s. from the steward *pro expensis Autumpnalibus*, and a further 10s. from the steward *contra Autumpnum*.

A further reflection of the cash deficiency of these glebe-demesnes was the relative understocking of the three properties. Most importantly, the bovine stock fell far short of the necessary level for replenishment of the plough-teams. The plough-teams on these properties were almost certainly mixed teams of oxen and affers (draught horses). Walter of Henley recommended a mixed team which included two horses, by which we might infer four or six oxen with two leading horses.²³³ This mixed number was certainly the composition of the Osney team on these properties. We can elicit the number of ploughs from the wages of the demesne ploughmen (*stipendia famulorum*). Cross-reference then to the livestock account allows the reconstitution of the plough-team. The full complement at Watlington was probably four oxen and two affers, at Waterperry six oxen and two affers, but four oxen and two affers in three years, and at Chastleton six oxen.

The complement of oxen, however, quite often failed to meet the requirements of the team size. At Watlington, where there was a single plough, the

²³² Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 20.

²³³ Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 318-19 (Walter, c.36).

number of oxen once fell to three (1339). Waterperry required two ploughs, yet the oxen numbered only six on one year. In 1336 when seven oxen died, the stock was only partially replaced, leaving only nine oxen for the two teams. Whilst at Waterperry there had been two teams of two affers and six oxen until 1335, between 1336 and 1338 the teams were reduced to two affers and only four oxen. Only in 1341 was the team restored to two affers and six oxen. This deficiency at Waterperry was exemplified by the necessity of putting cows into the plough-team in two successive years with the disastrous consequence that a calf was lost during pregnancy and the milk yield depleted: *et non de pluribus (sc. vitulis) quia .i. vacca amisit vitulum in labore ad carucam; memorandum quod nichil recept' de lactagio quia .i. vacca fuit continue per tempus compoti ad carucam*. The obvious cause of this measure of understocking was the low number of cows sustained by the abbey on each of its glebe-demesnes. Understocking was not confined to the peasantry in this locality, but sometimes also affected the level of efficiency of the small manor or the glebe-demesne²³⁴

At Watlington, between three and five cows were expected to sustain the team of three or four oxen, requiring a hundred percent successful reproduction. At Waterperry, between two and five cows were maintained to support the two teams of oxen; the number of oxen thus fluctuated between eight (two years) and nine (one year) and twelve to fourteen. At Chastleton, where six oxen were supported, a single cow was maintained. Restocking the plough-team was thus always liable to failure and depended on a hundred percent reproduction and survival of calves, a fallible premiss.

The administration of the glebe-demesne thus suffered from a number of distinct problems, which probably all derived in the last resort from the peculiar financial difficulties. The economic exploitation of the glebe-demesnes of Oseney Abbey was directed to the provision of the convent and manorial needs. In c.1280, the abbey attempted to calculate the 'profit-and-loss' account of individual properties, basically by evaluating the liveries in cash and kind to the house. The membrane containing the calculation for the glebe-demesne of Watlington is extant. The *proficuum [manerii]* for Watlington attained £32, consisting principally of the value of the liveries of grain to the abbey.²³⁵ The glebe-demesne thus had an important role in the economy of the house. This type of property suffered, nonetheless, from a dearth of cash, a lack of investment, and the inherent difficulties of a small seignorial property. The abbey's mode of exploitation of these properties is also a salutary reminder that not all religious houses made a reckless pursuit of profit and intensive agriculture the sole principle of the economic organization of their estates.

²³⁴M. M. Postan, 'Village livestock in the thirteenth century', *EconHR* 2nd series xv (1962), 219ff.

²³⁵*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 201-3.

11 Grain issues from some Oseney properties, 1274-1348

One of the indicators of the efficiency of medieval agriculture is the yield of grain. Much research has been concentrated on this aspect of the medieval economy, with particular attention to the estates of religious houses, for which there is usually more complete data than for the estates of lay lords.²³⁶ Statistics of such yields from the estates of houses of Austin Canons are, however, still rather scarce.²³⁷ Although the Oseney estates included some large manors, the extant ministers' accounts largely derive from the abbey's smaller properties. Some of these smaller properties, such as Forest Hill, Waterperry, Chastleton and Watlington, were really glebe-demesnes or demesnes created from or around an appropriated glebe.²³⁸ Unfortunately, there are no surviving complete accounts for the largest manors such as Hook Norton or Water Eaton. The grain statistics are therefore a little fragmented and weighted.

There does remain, however, a substantial portion of a centrally-enrolled account of c.1280 which provides figures for almost all the manors.²³⁹ The evidence from the fourteen properties represented in this roll confirms some of the trends revealed in the original ministers' accounts of the smaller properties. The total income from the sale of grain of the fourteen properties in this year (including the largest manors of Hook Norton, Watereaton and Weston-on-the-Green) did not exceed £60. This figure is quite derisory when compared, for example, with the £276 received for sales of grain from the fifteen English manors of Abbey of Bec.²⁴⁰ Bec, of course, was an absentee lord and preferred to sell most of its grain from its English estates. Oseney, in contrast, produced most of its grain for direct consumption, either for self-sufficiency on the manor or delivery to the conventual granary.

The abbey employed the conventional methods to try to increase productivity, but was not necessarily inspired by a commercial motive.²⁴¹ The abbey also put into practice the precept that seedcorn should be changed regularly, either through inter-manorial liveries and exchanges or by purchase. The reeve of Little Tew received two and a half quarters of rye for sowing (*ad seminandum*) from the reeve of Great Barton.²⁴² Rye seed was sent from Hampton Gay to Forest Hill *ad seminandum*.²⁴³ The bailiff of Waterperry sent a quarter of wheat

²³⁶ See, for example, the comprehensive analysis of yields on the estates of the bishopric of Winchester: J. Z. Titow, *Winchester Yields. A Study in Medieval Agricultural Productivity* (Cambridge, 1972); and D. L. Farmer, 'Grain yields on the Winchester manors in the later middle ages', *Economic History Review* 2nd series xxx (1977), 555-66.

²³⁷ The fullest series is Kershaw, *Bolton Priory*, 38; more fragmentary is the material at Hilton, *Economic Development of Some Leicestershire Estates*. The series for Bolton, because of the particularities of the region, is concentrated on oats.

²³⁸ See Chapter 10.

²³⁹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* vi, 184ff.

²⁴⁰ M. Morgan, *The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec* (Oxford, repr. 1968), 46.

²⁴¹ See also E. M. Halcrow, 'The decline of demesne farming on the estates of Durham Cathedral Priory', *Economic History Review* 2nd series vii (1955), 345ff.

²⁴² Bodleian Oseney Roll 97.

²⁴³ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 22.

ad seminandum apud middle (Medley) and other seedcorn to other manors.²⁴⁴ The same bailiff, however, constantly purchased seedcorn for sowing at Waterperry and Thumley.²⁴⁵ The reeve of Little Barton sowed seed sent from Fulwell, and seed from Watlington was sown at Holcombe.²⁴⁶ The bailiff of Forest Hill bought three quarters of wheat, two bushels of peas, and two quarters and two bushels of wheat *ad seminandum*, whilst the bailiff of Stone bought five quarters of dredge seed.²⁴⁷ This changing of seed accorded with the maxim of Walter of Henley.²⁴⁸ It was certainly not an influx of seed to remedy a deficiency of seedcorn, although the amounts involved were small.

The rate of sowing varied according to the type of grain. Wheat was sown at a rate of two to two and a half bushels per acre, which Walter regarded as the minimum.²⁴⁹ Oats were sown at a slightly higher rate, usually three bushels, but occasionally four bushels, per acre. Oats were probably more intensively sown as the their seed-yield ratio was usually low. Intensive sowing was one method of counteracting the lowness of yields. In the case of oats, however, it proved to be only partially successful; the ultimate result was that oats were replaced on some properties by other grains (see further below). Dredge, barley and pulses were all sown at a higher rate, three or four bushels per acre. These grains were also the highest yielding.²⁵⁰ Dredge and barley constituted the principal grains sold, but the main reason for the higher rate of sowing was probably the need of the property.

Sales of grain as they appear in the *Bladum venditum* (grain sold) paragraph of the accounts, can be deceptive. The constantly poor yield of oats, for example, made the abbey a purchaser as well as a vendor of grain.²⁵¹ The bare statistics of sales should also be qualified. Some sales of grain were necessary to raise cash to acquit obligations. The urgency of these sales is reflected in the amount of grain sold in the sheaf before threshing, rather than being precisely measured. In some cases, this sale may even have been fictitious; this is especially so for grain supposedly sold in sheaves in the field to acquit the wages of the *famuli*. In such cases, the grain was probably given to the *famuli* in lieu of their cash wage. Five quarters and one bushel of wheat were sold as new grain, cut early, for 2s. per qtr, a low price 'in the field by estimate in sheaves given for the wages of the *famuli* for Michaelmas term' (*in campo per estimacionem in garbis datis pro stipendiis famulorum ad terminum sancti michaelis*).²⁵² Such 'sales' were a frequent occurrence at Waterperry.²⁵³ Other sales were actually made

²⁴⁴ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 47, 54.

²⁴⁵ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 51 (2 qtrs of oats), 58 (2 qtrs of beans, 5qtrs 6bs of oats), 59 (4 qtrs of oats).

²⁴⁶ Bodleian Oseney Roll 19; Ch. Ch. O. R. 62.

²⁴⁷ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 23-25, 35.

²⁴⁸ Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 325.

²⁴⁹ Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 325.

²⁵⁰ Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 418.

²⁵¹ For example, Bodleian Oseney Roll 19: 20 qtrs of oats bought; see also Table 2.

²⁵² Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 53; additionally, in the same account, twelve qtrs and half a bushel of oats were sold for the same purpose. I am grateful to Paul Harvey for the suggestion about the fictitious nature of the sale.

²⁵³ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 52, 58, 59.

to raise cash to defray other obligations. Five quarters of dredge, for example, were sold to acquit the archdeacon's procuration; four quarters and a bushel of wheat to raise cash to buy two oxen; and twelve quarters of oats to acquire the funds to pay small costs (*ad soluendum pro minutis necessariis*).²⁵⁴ Some grain, furthermore, was sold because it was inferior: one and a half quarter of pulses because wet (*quia humidum*) and sixteen quarters of grain because inferior (*quia debilis*).²⁵⁵

Figures for issues in the *Exitus Grangie* (grange issues) paragraph are provided in Table 1. Such figures contain some slight inaccuracies. It is not necessary in most instances to allow for tithes taken in the fields, as the abbey was the rector in most cases.²⁵⁶ It is necessary, however, in the cases of Sibford and Maids Moreton. Reapers were frequently paid in the fields at Forest Hill and Waterperry. At Forest Hill in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the reapers took the seventeenth sheaf. In the fourteenth century at Waterperry, they acquired the twentieth sheaf.²⁵⁷ The grange account completely ignored this prior deduction and consequently the figures for yields in the grange accounts for these two properties are underestimates. The same measures were used in both grange and granary, so that no discrepancy resulted between the two locations. It was customary on Oseney manors to use the strike or levelled bushel in the granary. This measure was also employed in the grange for newly-threshed grain. Accounts of grain threshed constantly refer to the *rasa mensura* (struck measure), although it is also occasionally indicated by measuring *sine cumulo* (without heaping). By using the strike in both grange and garner, the abbey obviated any fraudulence by its officials using heaped measures in the grange and struck measures in the garner.²⁵⁸

Grain, on the other hand, was constantly consumed in the sheaf for diverse purposes, often as livestock feed; for example, an estimated four quarters and six bushels given to the oxen in sheaves.²⁵⁹ In most cases, some estimate was made of the amount of grain. There was a rough calculation that sixteen sheaves contained a bushel: in 690 sheaves for fodder for oxen and it is estimated in sixteen sheaves one bushel; in 116 sheaves given to three oxen and it is estimated in sixteen sheaves a bushel.²⁶⁰ This estimate was duly recorded in the grange account, but it was merely an estimate. When the batches of sheaves amounted to only small quantities, as with livestock feed, the estimate may have been fairly reliable. The accounting official, nevertheless, still might neglect to make

²⁵⁴ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 25, 50-52.

²⁵⁵ Bodleian Oseney Roll 95, Ch. Ch. O. R. 35.

²⁵⁶ R. V. Lennard, 'Statistics of corn yields in medieval England: some critical questions', *Economic History* iii (1934-7), 173ff.

²⁵⁷ For example, Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 20, 22, 47.

²⁵⁸ Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 168, 323, 325; an exception is the granger's use of the heaped bushel in the tithe barn at Waterperry: *de incremento cumulorum de decima* (from the increase of heaped measure of tithes): Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 58.

²⁵⁹ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 37: *Et de iiij qr vj bus receptis de cccccxvj garbis per estimationem datis in prebend' bouum*.

²⁶⁰ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 51: *in vj^c iiij^{xx} garbis ad prebend' Bouum et estimabatur in xvj garbis j bs.; in cxvj garbis datis iiij Bobus et estimabatur in xvj garbis j bs.*

an estimate and the auditors accept it; thus the reeve of Stone claimed: that the rest of the fodder was from pulses in the sheaves and he does not know how much in the sheaves.²⁶¹ When the number of sheaves was larger, moreover, the reliability of the estimate may be less certain. Uncertainty may attach to the case of the fifty quarters of beans sold at Stone *per estimacionem ... in uno tasso* (by estimate ... in a stack).²⁶² The *famuli* were frequently paid in kind (in sheaves) in the fields, especially on smaller properties with a lack of cash: for example, *quia ceteri famuli iste [sic] habuerunt stipendia in campo excepto quod iiij famuli habuerunt de grangia v bs. drag' ... quia insufficientes fuerunt isti [sic] quatuor stipendia in campo* (because the other *famuli* had wages in the field except four had five bushels of dredge from the grange ... because the four wages were defective in the field).²⁶³ When this sort of payment occurred, the grange account took it into consideration, but only as an estimate of quantity.

Estimates of the contents of sheaves were a persistent feature of the grange accounts. The auditors did introduce more precision when the *responsio* ('target') was introduced.²⁶⁴ The *responsio* first appears in full form as the auditors' marginal addition to the accounts in 1335. It had, however, appeared in embryonic form slightly earlier: *defic' de estimatione ix qr* (it falls 9 qtrs below the estimate).²⁶⁵ The target was probably set each year when the grain was in the stalk, perhaps by the itinerant steward.²⁶⁶ When it is recorded, however, the target is simply the threefold yield from seed required by Walter of Henley to break even in any year: *oneratur super compotum quia non respondet ad tercium granum* (he is charged after the account because he did not answer to the third grain); *item oneratur de ij qr ij bus ut respondeat ad tercium granum* (item he is charged for two quarters and two bushels so that he answers to the third grain); and a bailiff was charged for a bushel of barley because the yield fell below threefold.²⁶⁷ The defect of this blanket method was that it did not eliminate the dishonesty of the accounting official if the yield exceeded this low target which was not appropriate to all grains equally, for some grains produced higher yields than threefold.

Relatively few figures can be extracted for acreages and these are mainly for Stone and Waterperry (Table 4). Although wheat was often sown over a larger acreage than any other grain, the main issue consisted of dredge (barley and oats mixed) and (pure) barley. The reason was no doubt the greater seed-yield ratio of these two grains. Winter grain (wheat and rye) was sown over less than half the total acreage sown, so that spring grain (barley, dredge, oats and

²⁶¹ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 34: *quod resyduum prebend' fuit de howes et puls' in garbis set nessit quantum in garbis.*

²⁶² Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 34.

²⁶³ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 34. See also Chapter 10.

²⁶⁴ Drew, 'Manorial accounts of St Swithun's Cathedral Priory'. The 'target' system was introduced earlier on some lay estates elsewhere; for example, East Carlton (Norfolk) and Beaumanor (Leics.) both in 1277-78: Rylands Phillips MS. 17 and Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland DG9/1954.

²⁶⁵ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 25, 49-50.

²⁶⁶ See Chapter 9.

²⁶⁷ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 50, 52, 53.

pulses) combined were sown over a wider area. The spring grains, moreover, were sown more intensively. The high-yielding dredge consisted of more barley than oats, which accounts for the higher yield. On some properties, particularly Little Tew and Stone, oats were in decline, and were being replaced as livestock feed by barley, dredge and pulses. The reason was no doubt that oats were so low-yielding and in some years their yield was so disastrous to require the purchase in of considerable quantities.

Most grain was consumed in manorial obligations or sent to the abbey. Varying amounts of wheat were sold, ranging from a bushel to twenty-three and a half quarters in some years. The wheat sold was usually only a fraction of the issue. The variance of quantities sold from year to year confirms that grain was sold only because it was retrospectively found to be surplus to requirements rather than grown specifically for the market. That regime obtains for barley and dredge which comprised the largest quantities of grain sold. The overall impression is that the grain was produced to meet the needs of consumption. In this, Oseney, a house with a medium-sized estate for a religious house, contrasted quite strongly with those large Benedictine house which operated 'federated grain factories.'²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸P. F. Brandon, 'Demesne arable farming in coastal Sussex in the later middle ages', *Agricultural History Review* xix (1971), 113.

Table 1 Demesne issue (from the *Exitus Grangie*) (to the nearest qtr)

| Property | Date | Wheat | Rye | Barley (b) and dredge (d) | Oats | Pulses | Other | |
|---------------|------------|---------|------|---------------------------|-------|--------|----------|--|
| Little Tew | 1273-74 | 22 | 9 | 67(d) | 3 | 9 | | |
| | 1281-82 | 22 | 3 | 37(d) | | 3 | | |
| | 1284-85 | 23 | | 22(d) | 7 | 5 | | |
| | 1288-89 | 23 | 2 | 34(d) | 7 | 7 | | |
| Watlington | 1305-6 | 34 | | | 10 | | | |
| | 1327-28 | 64 | | 62(b), 81(d) | 35 | 12 | | |
| | 1341-42 | 50 | | 43(b) | 30 | 6 | 1i | |
| | 1344-45 | 82 | 54 | 118 (b+d) | 35 | 11 | | |
| Forest Hill | 1276-77 | 41 | 42 | 58(d) | 12 | 27 | 11i | |
| | 1278-79 | 50 | 47* | 59*(d) | 28* | 49* | 12i | |
| | 1302-3 | 30 | 24# | 52(d) | 22 | 28* | 8i | |
| | 1303-4 | 75 | 52# | 67(d) | 23 | 44* | 4i | |
| Stone | 1320-21 | 85 | 7 | 155(d) | | 101 | 35i | |
| | 1324-25 | 54 | | 57(d) | 2 | 13 | 91i | |
| | 1325-26 | 83 | | 111(d) | | 52 | | |
| | 1326-27 | 50 | 21 | 181(d) | | 31 | | |
| | 1331-32 | 128 | | 206(d) | | 13 | 52i | |
| | 1342-43 | 84 | 19 | 99(b+d) | | 51 | 8i | |
| Sibford | 1277-78 | 1 | 42 | 23(d) | 6 | 18 | 2ii | |
| | 1331-32 | | 17# | 33(d) | 9 | 4 | | |
| Maids Moreton | 1328-29 | 22 | | 10(d) | 20 | | | |
| | 1340-41 | ? | 9 | 6(d) | 28 | 4 | | |
| Waterperry | 1279-80 | 90 | 126# | | 137 | | 63iii | |
| | 1327-28 | 105 | | 109(b) | 30 | 34 | | |
| | 1328-29 | 48 | | 38(b+d) | 25 | 12 | 14i,47ii | |
| | 1329-30 | 49 | | 44(b+d) | 20 | 45 | 5i | |
| | 1332-33 | 68 | | 39(b),24(d) | 35 | 28 | 16i,2ii | |
| | 1334-35 | 31 | | 33(b),15(d) | 30 | 10 | 12i | |
| | 1336-37 | 35 | | 24(b),20(d) | 37 | 29 | | |
| | 1337-38 | 34 | | 36(b) | 25 | 19 | 29i | |
| | 1340-41 | 55 | | 31(b) | 14 | 21 | 6i | |
| | 1344-45 | 55 | | 36(d) | 16 | 33 | 12i | |
| | Chastleton | 1277-78 | 24 | 23 | 10(d) | 47 | 16 | |
| | | 1278-79 | 23 | 33 | 17(d) | 31 | 12 | |
| 1331-32 | | ? | 26 | 17(d) | 39 | | | |
| 1334-35 | | 22 | 40 | 23(d) | 44 | 21 | | |
| 1336-37 | | 26 | 35# | 18(d) | 40 | 23 | | |
| 1338-39 | | 22 | 22 | 20(d) | 46 | 27 | | |
| 1339-40 | | 17 | 21# | 21(d) | 34 | 24 | | |

i New grain

ii Old grain

iii *tramesium*

* includes tithes since only a composite figure was given

mixtil of wheat and rye

Stone includes Upton and Hertwell and Waterperry includes Thumley and Ledhale

Table 2 Sales and purchases of grain (nearest penny)

| Property | Date | Sales | Purchases | |
|-------------|------------|---------------|---------------|--|
| Forest Hill | 1276-77 | £3 11s. 8d. | 6s. 0d. | |
| | 1278-79 | £4 13s. 7d. | 11s. 2d. | |
| | 1302-3 | £2 5s. 0d. | £1 16s. 6d. | |
| | 1303-4 | £4 15s. 4d. | 9s. 7d. | |
| Stone | 1320-21 | £24 11s. 2d. | 17s. 0d. | |
| | 1324-25 | £15 18s. 10d. | £13 13s. 10d. | |
| | 1325-26 | £2 7s. 5d. | | |
| | 1326-27 | £5 15s. 9d. | | |
| | 1331-32 | £4 6s. 0d. | | |
| | 1340-41 | £6 8s. 3d. | £1 0s. 0d. | |
| | Waterperry | 1279-80 | £1 3s. 8d. | |
| | | 1327-28 | 15s. 0d. | |
| 1328-29 | | £2 14s. 6d. | | |
| 1332-33 | | £1 2s. 0d. | | |
| 1334-35 | | 13s. 4d. | | |
| 1335-36 | | £1 16s. 1d. | 4s. 0d. | |
| 1336-37 | | £2 10s. 0d. | | |
| 1337-38 | | £5 13s. 7d. | £1 13s. 3d. | |
| 1340-41 | | £8 16s. 6d. | £2 1s. 8d. | |
| 1344-45 | | £4 7s. 8d. | 8s. 0d. | |
| Watlington | | 1305-6 | £6 18s. 2d. | |
| | 1327-28 | £3 18s. 4d. | | |
| | 1341-42 | £3 19s. 0d.i | | |
| | 1344-45 | £17 2s. 6d.ii | | |

i Includes twenty-two and a half qtrs of malt

ii Includes forty-one qtrs 6 bs of malt

Table 3 Composition of grain sales (to the nearest half qtr)

| Property | Date | Wheat | Rye | Barley (b) and dredge (d) | Oats | Pulses |
|---------------|---------|-------|-----|---------------------------|------|--------|
| Forest Hill | 1276-77 | 7 | | 10(d) | | 3 |
| | 1278-79 | 11 | 4 | 9(d) | | 7 |
| | 1302-3 | 5 | | 10.5(d) | | 4 |
| | 1303-4 | 10 | | 18(d) | | 7 |
| Stone | 1320-21 | 14 | 1 | 73(d) | | 70 |
| | 1324-25 | 14.5 | | 75.5(d) | | 6 |
| | 1325-26 | | | 13(d) | | |
| | 1326-27 | 22.5 | | 21.5(d) | | 1.5 |
| | 1331-32 | 2 | | 13(d) | | |
| | 1342-43 | 10 | | 24.5(d) | | 7 |
| | 1279-80 | 6 | | | | 5* |
| Waterperry | 1327-28 | | | 3(b) | 3 | |
| | 1328-29 | 9 | | | 1 | |
| | 1329-30 | | | 4(b+d) | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| | 1336-37 | | | 10(b+d) | 12 | |
| | 1337-38 | 9.5 | | 34.5(b+d) | 12 | |
| | 1340-41 | 6 | | 21.5(b) | 5.5 | |
| | 1344-45 | 6 | | 20(b) | 5.5 | |
| | 1281-82 | | | | | 0.5 |
| Little Tew | 1284-85 | 6 | 7.5 | | | |
| | 1288-89 | | | | | 3 |
| | 1305-6 | 15.5 | 6i | 9.5(b+d) | | |
| Watlington | 1327-28 | 23 | | 54(b+d) | | |
| | 1341-42 | 0.5 | | 9.5(b) | | |
| | 1344-45 | 23.5 | 8 | 40(b) | | |
| | 1277-78 | | | | | |
| Chastleton | 1278-79 | | | | | |
| | 1331-32 | | | | | |
| | 1334-35 | | 6 | | | |
| | 1336-37 | 2 | 3i | 4(d) | | |
| | 1338-39 | 8 | 4.5 | 11(d) | 4 | 9 |
| | 1339-40 | 0.5 | | 12(d) | 3 | 3 |
| | 1277-78 | | 5.5 | | | |
| Sibford | 1331-32 | | | | | |
| | 1328-29 | | | 2(d) | 2 | |
| Maids Moreton | 1340-41 | 3.5 | | 3(d) | 2.5 | |

i Mixture of wheat and rye

Table 4 Acreages sown

| Property | Date | Wheat | Rye | Pulses | Barley (b) and dredge (d) | Oats | Total |
|-------------|---------|-------|-----|--------|---------------------------|------|-------|
| Forest Hill | 1302-3 | 76 | 16* | 16 | 38(d) | 21 | 167 |
| | 1303-4 | 74.5 | 53* | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Stone | 1320-21 | 80.5 | | 29.5 | 86(d) | | 196 |
| | 1324-25 | 61.5 | | 22.5 | 60(d) | | 144 |
| | 1325-26 | 95.5 | 7 | 43 | 61(d) | | 206.5 |
| | 1326-27 | 95 | 6 | 28 | 55.5(d) | | 184.5 |
| | 1331-32 | ? | | 38 | 84(d) | | ? |
| Waterperry | 1327-28 | 30.5 | | 11 | 13.5(d) | 30.5 | 85.5 |
| | 1329-30 | 36.5 | | 19.5 | 18.5(b+d) | 37.5 | 112 |
| | 1332-33 | 44.5 | | 13 | 21(b+d) | 30 | 108.5 |
| | 1334-35 | 59 | | 9 | 21.5(b+d) | 22.5 | 112 |
| Watlington | 1338-39 | 20.5 | 18 | | 20(b+d) | 15.5 | 74 |

Table 5 Auditors' estimates of yields of grain

| Property | Date | Wheat | Rye | Barley (b) and dredge (d) | Pulses | Oats |
|---------------|---------|-------|-----|---------------------------|--------|------|
| Stone | 1342-43 | 4 | 5 | 3(b+d) | 4.5 | |
| Waterperry | 1335 | | | | 4 | 3 |
| | 1336-37 | 3 | | 5(b),2(d) | 8 | 3 |
| | 1337-38 | 4 | | 3(b+d) | 5 | 3 |
| | 1339-40 | 1 | | 3(b),1(d) | 4 | 1 |
| | 1340-41 | 5 | | | 3 | 1 |
| | 1344-45 | 4 | | 5(d) | 5 | 5 |
| Maids Moreton | 1340-41 | | 7 | 4(d) | 2.5 | 2 |

12 Estimates of harvest on some Oseney Abbey properties

The techniques of management employed by medieval lords in the administration of their estates have been appreciated for some considerable time, not least the methods of accountancy and the scrutiny of manorial offices. One strategy not quite as evident is the estimate of grain before harvest, which had, perhaps, a dual purpose: first, to keep control over the accounting by the grange officials and reeve; and second, to plan for the requirements of consumption.²⁶⁹

Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 132 is a centrally-enrolled account of estimates of harvest on some properties of Oseney Abbey. The manuscript is a roll, written as a fair engrossment on the face only, and measures 56 cm. x 17 cm.

The officials of the abbey (probably the steward and his clerk) visited the properties before Michaelmas (29 September) when the grain had been gathered into the barns or granges, but still largely lay unthreshed, to estimate the size of the harvest before threshing. This timing of the visit is revealed in the entry for Fulwell. The estimates for each property seem then to have been enrolled together, although this document comprises only some, not all, of the abbey's properties. From the size of the stacks of unthreshed grain, the officials could estimate the quantity of the harvest, from the experience of threshing similar stacks in previous years, from rules of thumb, or perhaps even from some trials. This practice accorded with the suggestion of the anonymous author of *The Husbandry*.²⁷⁰ It was a procedure advocated in another treatise of the mid fourteenth century.

Ad estimacionem grangie. Memorandum quod una meya frumenti in grangia que grangia est latitudinis xxx pedum in uno spacio inter duo [sic] furcos longitudine xv pedum et altitudine parietum x pedum continebit communiter xl quarteria.²⁷¹ [For the grange estimate. Note that one stack of wheat in the grange, which grange is 30' wide in one place between two forks, in length 15', and in height up the walls 10', will hold altogether 40 qtrs.]

Although our document is undated, the hand indicates an early-fourteenth century composition, and the inclusion of Sibford further suggests that it was compiled before 1337 when the demesne there was divided up into customary holdings.²⁷²

²⁶⁹Drew, 'Manorial accounts of St Swithun's Priory'; Stone, 'Profit-and-loss accountancy'; Harvey, *Manorial Records of Cuxham*, 117 (no. 29), 126 (no. 32) and 136 (no. 38) being examples of pre-harvest estimates.

²⁷⁰Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 420-1 (c.5).

²⁷¹Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 475.

²⁷²*Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* iv, 322-3.

Table 1 Summary of harvest estimates (in qtrs)

| Property | Wheat | Rye | Barley | Dredge | Oats | Pulses |
|---------------|-------|---------|---------|--------|------|---------|
| Black Bourton | 166 | | 160 (a) | 16 (b) | | 40 (c) |
| Aldsworth | 17.5 | | 40 | 40 | 20 | |
| Bibury | 80 | | 220 | 200 | 20 | |
| Turkdean | 50 | | 30 | 30 (d) | | |
| Chastleton | | 40 (e) | | 20 | 24 | 30 |
| Hook Norton | | 310 (f) | | 210 | 100 | 106 (g) |
| Sibford | | 27 (h) | | 12 | 10 | 16 |
| Fulwell | | 180 (i) | | 240 | 30 | 48 (j) |
| Little Barton | 43 | | | 10 | 40 | 23 (k) |
| Claydon | 40 | 60 | | | 160 | 56 (l) |
| Stone | 60 | 1 | | 160 | | 108 (m) |

- (a) 160 qtrs of barley and dredge (the latter a mixture of barley and oats)
(b) 16 qtrs of dredge and oats
(c) 36 qtrs of black pulses and 4 qtrs of pulses
(d) 30 qtrs of dredge and oats
(e) 35 qtrs of wheat and rye and 5 qtrs of wheat seed
(f) 25 qtrs of wheat seed, 185 qtrs of mixed wheat and rye, and 100 qtrs of wheat
(g) In two different stacks
(h) 27 qtrs of wheat and rye
(i) 100 qtrs of wheat, 60 qtrs of wheat and rye, 6 qtrs of wheat, and 14 qtrs of rye already sown
(j) Peas and vetches
(k) Peas and vetches
(l) 50 qtrs peas and 6 qtrs vetches
(m) 100 qtrs peas and 8 qtrs vetches

Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 132

Editorial notes: <> represents superscript material with a caret; [] material interpolated by the editor.

Bourton' In magna grangia ibidem sunt .ij. meye frumenti plene usque ad paruas trabes et medietas tercię meye usque ad magnas trabes cum .j. cantello frumenti antierius continentes per estimacionem in toto .Cxl. quarteria. Item in alio capite eisudem grangie sunt due meye ordeı et drageti usque ad paruas trabes continentes per estimacionem .Cxx. quarteria. Item in parua grangia seminali est una meya frumenti seminalis continens per estimacionem .xxvj. quarteria. Item in alio capite eiusdem grangie est una meya ordeı et drageti continens per estimacionem .xl. quarteria. Item in parua domo est una porcio drageti et auene continens per estimacionem .xvj. quarteria. Item exterius sunt .ij. tassi quadr' nigri puls' continentes per estimacionem .xxxvj. quarteria. Item

iuxta magnam grangiam est .j. tassus de puls' continens per estimacionem .iiij. quarteria.

[Black Bourton. In the great grange there are two stacks of wheat full up to the small [collar] beams and half of a third stack up to the great [tie] beams with one cauntle of wheat in front containing by estimate in all 140 qtrs. Item at the other end of the same grange are two stacks of barley and dredge up to the small beams containing by estimate 120 qtrs. Item in the small grange for seed is one stack of wheatseed containing by estimate 26 qtrs. Item at the other end of the same grange is one stack of barley and dredge containing by estimate 40 qtrs. Item in the small building is one part of dredge and oats containing by estimate 16 qtrs. Item outside are two and a quarter stacks of black pulses containing by estimate 36 qtrs. Item next to the great grange is one stack of pulses containing by estimate 4 qtrs.]

Aldsworth' In inferiori grangia est dimidia meya frumenti fere usque ad magnas trabes continens per estimacionem .xvj. quarteria. Item ibidem est alia medietatis eiusdem meye de auena continens per estimacionem .xx. quarteria. Item in alio capite est una meya ordei excedens altitudinem murorum continens per estimacionem .xl. quarteria. Item in grangia superiori est .j. Stak' frumenti continens per estimacionem .xij. bussellos frumenti. Item in eadem grangia sunt due meye drageti excedentes altitudinem murorum continentes per estimacionem .xl. quarteria.

[Aldsworth (Glos.) In the lower grange is half a stack of wheat almost up to the great beams containing by estimate 16 qtrs. Item there is there the other half of the same stack of oats containing by estimate 20 qtrs. Item at the other end is a stack of barley reaching above the height of the walls containing by estimate 40 qtrs. Item in the upper grange is one stack of wheat containing by estimate 12bs. of wheat. Item in the same grange are 2 stacks of dredge reaching above the height of the walls containing by estimate 40 qtrs.]

Bibury. In magna grangia ibidem in capite orientali est .j. meya frumenti excedens altitudinem murorum cum .ij. cantellis frumenti antierius continentes per estimacionem in toto .iiij.^{xx} quarteria frumenti. Item in capite occidentali eiusdem grangie est .j. meya larga ordei plena cum .ij. magnis cantellis eiusdem grani continentes in toto per estimacionem .CCxx. quarteria. Item in minori grangia sunt .iiij. meye drageti usque ad magnas trabes et medietas tercię meye eiusdem altitudinis et grani continentes in toto per estimacionem .CC. quarteria drageti. Item ibidem est unus cantellus auene continens per estimacionem .xx. quarteria.

[Bibury (Glos.). In the great grange there at the east end is one stack of wheat reaching above the height of the walls with 2 cauntles of wheat in front containing by estimate in all 80 qtrs of wheat. Item at the west end of the same grange is one wide, full stack of barley with 2 great cauntles of the same grain containing in all by estimate 220 qtrs. Item in the lesser grange there are 3 stacks of dredge up to the great beams and half a third stack of the same height and grain containing in all by estimate 200 qtrs dredge. Item there is there a cauntle of oats containing by estimate 20 qtrs.

Turkeden' In superiori grangia sunt .ij. meye frumenti plene continentes per estimacionem .L. quarteria. Item in inferiori grangia est una meya ordeus usque ad magnas trabes continens per estimacionem .xxx. quarteria. Item in eadem est alia meya drageti et auene continens per estimacionem .xxx. quarteria [et] extendit se usque ad paruas trabes.

[Turkdean (Glos.) In the upper grange are 2 full stacks of wheat containing by estimate 50 qtrs. Item in the lower grange is one stack of barley up to the great beams containing by estimate 30 qtrs. Item in the same is another stack of dredge and oats containing by estimate 30 qtrs [and] it reaches up to the small beams.]

Chastleton' In grangia ibidem in capite boreali est .j. meya usque ad magnas trabes frumenti et Siliginis mixti continens per estimacionem .xxxv. quarteria. Item antierius est .j. cantellus frumenti seminalis continens per estimacionem .v. quarteria. Et in capite occidentali eiusdem grangie est .j. meya usque ad magnas trabes drageti et auene et continens dragetum .xx. quarteria. Et auenam continens .xxiiij. quarteria. Item est .j. meya de puls' fere usque ad paruas trabes cum .j. magno cantello eiusdem grani ante hostium continens in toto per estimacionem .xxx. quarteria.

[Chastleton. In the grange there at the north end is one stack of mixed wheat and rye up to the great beams containing by estimate 35 qtrs. Item in front is one cauntle of wheatseed containing by estimate 5 qtrs. And at the west end of the same grange is one stack of dredge and oats up to the great beams and containing dredge 20 qtrs. And containing oats 24 qtrs. Item there is one stack of pulses almost up to the small beams with one great cauntle of the same grain before the door containing in all by estimate 30 qtrs.]

Hogenorton' In grangia seminali est una meya frumenti seminalis excedens altitudinem murorum continens per estimacionem .xxv. quarteria. Item in alio capite eiusdem grangie sunt .ij. meye usque ad magnas trabes et tercia usque ad altitudinem murorum frumenti et Siliginis mixti continentes in toto per estimacionem .Lv. quarteria. Item in magna grangia ibidem in capite occidentali sunt .ij. meye frumenti quarum una extendit ad paruas trabes et alia excedit altitudinem murorum continentes per estimacionem .C. quarteria. Item in alio capite sunt due meye plene et alia usque ad altitudinem murorum frumenti et Siliginis mixti continentes per estimacionem .Cxxx. quarteria. Item in alia grangia in capite orientali sunt due meye drageti quarum una plena et alia fere usque ad magnas trabes continentes per estimacionem .CCx. quarteria. Item in alio capite sunt .ij. meye excedentes altitudinem murorum quarum medietas est auene que continet per estimacionem .C. quarteria. Et alia medietas est puls' que continet per estimacionem .Lx. quarteria. Item exterius est [sic] unus tassus quadr' et .ij. cantelli de puls' in utraque grangia et continent per estimacionem in toto .xlviij. quarteria.

[Hook Norton. In the grange for seed is one stack of wheatseed reaching above the height of the walls containing by estimate 25 qtrs. Item at the other end of the same grange are 2 stacks of mixed wheat and rye up to the great beams and a third up to the height of the walls containing in all by estimate 55

qtrs. Item in the great grange there at the west end are 2 stacks of wheat one of which reaches to the small beams and the other reaches above the height of the walls containing by estimate 100 qtrs. Item at the other end are 2 full stacks of mixed wheat and rye and another up to the height of the walls containing by estimate 130 qtrs. Item in the other grange at the east end are 2 stacks of dredge one of which full and the other almost up to the great beams containing by estimate 210 qtrs. Item at the other end are 2 stacks reaching above the height of the walls half of which is of oats which contains by estimate 100 qtrs. And the other half is pulses which contains by estimate 60 qtrs. Item on the outside is [sic] one and a quarter stack and 2 cauntles of pulses in each grange and they contain by estimate in all 46 qtrs.]

Sibforde. In grangia ibidem est una meya frumenti et Siliginis fere plena continens cum .j. cantello seminali .xxvij. quarteria. Item in alio capite est .j. meya drageti usque ad paruas trabes et auene <et> continet dragetum .xij. quarteria et continet auenam .x. quarteria. Item sunt ibidem .ij. cantelli de puls' continentes per estimacionem .xvj. quarteria de puls'

[Sibford Gower. In the grange there is one almost full stack of wheat and rye containing with one seed cauntle 27 qtrs. Item at the other end is one stack of dredge up to the small beams and it contains 12 qtrs dredge and it contains 10 qtrs oats. Item there are there 2 cauntles of pulses containing by estimate 16 qtrs of pulses.]

Folewelle. In superiori grangia ibidem in medio sunt .ij. meye de frumento usque ad magnas trabes continentes .C. quarteria. Item in alio capite versus orientem in eadem grangia est una meya frumenti et Siliginis pro liberatione famulorum fere usque ad magnas trabes continens .Lx. quarteria. Item in eadem grangia in capite occidentali est .j. meya de pisis et vecches continens .xlviij. quarteria et seminatur ibidem ante diem estimacionis .vj. quarteria frumenti et .xiiij. quarteria videlicet ante octauas Sancti Michaelis. Item in inferiori grangia sunt .iiij. meye plene drageti excepta tercia parte unius meye que est auene cum paruo cantello antierius continentes .CCxl. quarteria drageti et .xxx. quarteria auene.

[Fulwell. In the upper grange there in the middle are 2 stacks of wheat up to the great beams containing by estimate 100 qtrs. Item at the other end towards the east in the same grange is a stack of wheat and rye for livery of the *famuli* almost up to the great beams containing 60 qtrs. Item in the same grange at the west end is 1 stack of peas and vetches containing 18 qtrs and 6 qtrs wheat and 14 qtrs of rye are sown there before the day of the estimate that is before the Octaves of Michaelmas. Item in the lower grange are 3 full stacks of dredge except the third part of a stack which is of oats with a small cauntle in front containing 240 qtrs dredge and 30 qtrs oats.]

Barton' parua. Ibidem in grangia in medio grangie est .j. meya usque ad magnas trabes continens cum uno paruo cantello anteriori pro semine et frumento seminato ante estimacionem factam .xliiij. quarteria. Item in eadem grangia in alio capite est .j. meya et dimidia de drageto et auena unde interior

est ad magnas trabes et anterior fere ad magnas [trabes] continens .xl. quarteria auene et .x. quarteria drageti. Item in eadem grangia ex alia parte frumenti est .j. meya de vecches ad magnas trabes continens .xv. quarteria. Item in Bercaria est .j. meya plena de vecches et pisis continens per estimacionem .viij. quarteria.

[Little Barton. In the grange there in the middle of the grange is one stack up to the great beams containing with a small cauntle in front for seed and wheat sown before the estimate [was] made 44 qtrs. Item in the same grange at the other end is one and a half stack of dredge and oats the further of which is to the great beams and the nearer almost to the great [beams] containing 40 qtrs oats and 10 qtrs dredge. Item in the same grange on the other side of the wheat is one stack of vetches to the great beams containing 15 qtrs. Item in the sheepcote is one full stack of vetches and peas containing by estimate 8 qtrs.]

Cleydon'. In magna grangia est .j. meya Siliginis usque ad magnas trabes cum uno cantello ante meyam continens per estimacionem cum blado triturato .Lx. quarteria. Item in media grangia est .j. meya de frumento ad inferiorem partem dil [sic] Brestlace continens per estimacionem cum blado triturato .xl. quarteria. Item in alia parte medie grangie est .j. meya pisarum continens per estimacionem .L. quarteria. Item unus cantellus de vecches continens per estimacionem .vj. quarteria. Item .j. meya auene fere usque ad magnas trabes continens per estimacionem .CLx. quarteria.

[Claydon (Bucks.) In the great grange is one stack of rye up to the great beams with one cauntle in front of the stack containing by estimate with threshed grain 60 qtrs. Item in the middle of the grange is one stack of wheat to the further part of the *Brestlace* containing by estimate with threshed grain 40 qtrs. Item on the other side of the middle of the grange is one stack of peas containing by estimate 50 qtrs. Item one cauntle of vetches containing by estimate 6 qtrs. Item one stack of oats almost to the great beams containing by estimate 160 qtrs.]

Stone. In magna grangia est .j. meya interior plena frumenti continens per estimacionem .xl. quarteria. Item alia meya ad magnas trabes continens per estimacionem cum blado triturato .xx. quarteria. Item in eadem grangia est .j. cantellus Siliginis continens per estimacionem .j. quarterium. Item in .j. cantellus de puls' continens per estimacionem .viij. quarteria. Item in alia grangia sunt .iiij. meye continentes per estimacionem .CLx. quarteria drageti. Et sunt ibidem .ij. tassi quadr' cum uno rotundo pisarum continentes per estimacionem .C. quarteria.

[Stone (Bucks.) In the great grange is one full, further stack of wheat containing by estimate 40 qtrs. Item another stack to the great beams containing by estimate with threshed grain 20 qtrs. Item in the same grange is one cauntle of rye containing by estimate one quarter. Item one cauntle of pulses containing by estimate 8 qtrs. Item in the other grange are 4 stacks containing by estimate 160 qtrs dredge. And there are there two and a quarter stacks with one roll of peas containing by estimate 100 qtrs.]

13 The Oseney Abbey flock

Flock management on some seignorial estates altered radically during the late middle ages. On numerous estates, both lay and religious, a policy of centralization gradually replaced the initial local management of the flock. Furthermore, at the same time as arable demesnes were being leased out to *firmarii*, some lords were investing on a greater scale in pastoral husbandry, particularly developing their flocks. Whilst seignorial arable production thus contracted, interest in sheep and wool production was not abated. The more efficient exploitation of wool growing led to centralization of flock management.²⁷³ The whole effort, of course, was probably directed towards the buoyant export market for English woollen cloth.²⁷⁴ The changes of management adopted by Oseney Abbey epitomize this general movement.²⁷⁵

In the late thirteenth century, the flocks of Oseney were managed locally. Each property of the abbey where there was a flock had its own shepherd who was responsible to the reeve or bailiff, depending on the type of property. (On larger manorial properties with unfree tenants, the lead official was the reeve, an unfree tenant, but on different properties such as glebe-demesnes with few or no unfree tenants, the lead official was the bailiff without a reeve, the bailiff being free).²⁷⁶ The reeve or bailiff accounted for the flock and the clip. An incomplete centrally-enrolled account of most of the properties of the abbey in c.1280 discloses 2,818 sheep, so the total complement of the manorial flocks in the late thirteenth century may have exceeded 3,000 animals (Table 1). Forest Hill and Waterperry are missing from this central account, but manorial accounts for these two properties at the time reveal some two hundred sheep at each.

The prominence of Water Eaton appears already in the sheep statistics. In c.1280, Water Eaton supported some twenty percent of the total flocks: 633 sheep. Water Eaton probably also emerged as the central location for the collection of fleeces from all properties at this time. Although the profit (*proficuum*) calculation in the central account refers to the fleeces being despatched to Oseney, the extant manorial accounts divulge that the fleeces were actually sent first to Water Eaton. The entries in the *proficuum* may be a fictitious accounting procedure: the fleeces may have been nominally counted as liveries to the house with an artificial value placed on them.

Table 1 The abbey flocks in c.1280

²⁷³E. Power, *The Wool Trade in English Medieval History* (1969 edn), 28; Denholm-Young, *Seigniorial Administration*, 58-9; F. M. Page, 'Bidentes Hoylandie', *Economic History* i (1926-9), 603-13.

²⁷⁴G. D. Ramsay, *The English Woollen Industry, 1500-1750* (1982).

²⁷⁵A central flock account of 1476-77 is extant and is edited below.

²⁷⁶See Chapter 7.

| Location | Wethers | Rams | Ewes | Hoggs | Total |
|---------------------|---------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Claydon | 48 | 1 | 63 | 38 | 150 |
| Stone | 124 | 3 | 156 | 108 | 391 |
| Hampton Gay | 68 | 4 | 145 | 97 | 314 |
| Oving | - | - | - | - | - |
| Weston-on-the-Green | 91 | 2 | 203 | 126 | 422 |
| Bibury | 41 | 2 | 116 | 157* | 450* |
| Turkdean | 46 | 2 | 86 | * | * |
| Water Eaton | 265 | 4 | 230 | 134 | 633 |
| Handborough | + | + | + | + | + |
| Great Barton | 120 | - | 100 | 81 | 301 |
| Adderbury | - | - | - | - | - |
| Little Tew | - | - | - | - | - |
| Watlington | - | - | - | - | - |
| Black Bourton | 28 | 1 | 85 | 43 | 157 |
| Shenston | - | - | - | - | - |

* Totals included under Bibury

+ Totals included in Water Eaton

In the fourteenth century, Water Eaton definitely became the central collection point for fleeces. It may have been selected because of its convenient position. In the configuration of the Oseney estates it was as central as possible; wool could be conveniently carried overland to Watlington and then on to Henley for transport by water. So the accounts mention fodder for horses carrying wool from Water Eaton to Henley and the costs of nine men and five carts carrying wool to London.²⁷⁷ Much of the clip may have been destined for Italian merchants, for Pegolotti's list includes Oseney for twenty-five sacks for export, a figure which might be an underestimate as the list was concerned only with the Italian export trade. Oseney certainly came into frequent contact with Italian merchants through acting as sub-collector for Papal and royal taxation.²⁷⁸

In the early fourteenth century, the flocks suffered some vicissitudes. The flock at Forest Hill declined seriously; that at Waterperry disappeared from view altogether; the number at Stone collapsed. For example, whereas Stone supported 391 sheep in c.1280, only eleven sheep remained at Michaelmas 1325. At Forest Hill, the flock in 1302-4 comprised less than half the number in c.1280 and appears to have disappeared completely in 1317-18. A critical decision seems to have been taken to restock these properties: Forest Hill, c.1321-22; Stone in 1326-27; and Waterperry in 1329-30. Hitherto, Waterperry had not

²⁷⁷ Bodleian Ch. Ch. O. R. 19, 63 (*Item in expensis Thome Camerarii senescalli venientis cum ix hominibus et v carectis versus Lond' et pernoctantis cum lana*) (Item the costs of Thomas the steward coming with nine men and five carts towards London and staying overnight with wool).

²⁷⁸ W. Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce* (5th edn, 1910), 640; W. E. Lunt, *Financial Relations of England with the Papacy to 1327* (Cambridge, MA, 1939), 651-2, 661.

retained its lambs which were received from tithe. There are no Waterperry accounts extant for the period 1279-1328; the account for 1329-30 mentions a shepherd and a sheepcote, but suggests that the stock was negligible. In 1342, however, the abbey decided to maintain a flock there. The restocking of Waterperry anticipated the future road to specialization as its flock consisted mostly of wethers. After restocking, Stone supported between 213 and 317 sheep, Waterperry 125-230 and Watlington about seventy (figures at year-end).

The final transition to a fully centralized method of flock management must have occurred in the fifteenth century. Unfortunately, the fragmentary survival of the manorial accounts allows no more precision. During the fourteenth century, the management continued to be local: reeve or bailiff and shepherd. Signs of central direction, which there must have been at all times, became more emphatic. Water Eaton firmly became the central collection point for fleeces; some manors specialized in wool production, carrying only wethers; and decisions were made to reconstitute the flocks where they had become depleted. We are then suddenly confronted by the account of 1476-77.

The account presented by Robert Howse, *prepositus bidencium* (sheepreeve), reflects the apogee of central direction of the abbey's flocks. During the course of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the abbey had embarked on the policy of leasing its arable demesnes to *firmarii* (lessees) apart from the home farms at the properties nearest to the abbey. Simultaneously, the abbey decided to retain its flocks in hand at selected properties and to concentrate its activities on sheep farming. The retreat from agriculture by the abbey was therefore not comprehensive, but selective. The entire flock of the abbey became entrusted to a head shepherd, Robert Howse, who controlled a team of (under-)shepherds. This alteration of policy accorded well with the precepts of the contemporary treatises such as *Modo qualiter Clericus sive Expensor* with its specimen account of the *Instaurator bidencium* (stock-manager of the sheep). This advice contrasts strongly with the thirteenth-century treatises which allowed local management of reeve and shepherd.²⁷⁹ Parallel developments took place on other estates. The account reflects not only a high degree of control, but also a high degree of specialization, with different objectives for each property.

The breakdown of the numbers of sheep remaining at the end of the accounting year (Table 2) confirms the specialization which was part of the centralizing policy. Four places were specifically breeding or reproduction centres, where there were only ewes with rams to service them. At Water Eaton the very high number of hoggs can be assumed to be for restocking the ewes. Cowley, Arlington, Water Eaton and Weston were all reproduction centres. By contrast, five other places (Bibury, Black Bourton, Fulwell, Hook Norton and Hampton Gay) had only wethers; these properties probably concentrated on wool production. The precise status of Walton in this arrangement is confusing.

Table 2 Numbers of sheep at year-end 1477

²⁷⁹Rylands Lat. MS. 228, fos 114r-v; Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, 276-9, 422-3.

| Location | Rams | Wethers | Ewes | Hoggs | Total |
|---------------------|------|---------|------|-------|-------|
| Arlington | 2 | 24 | 160 | 11 | 197 |
| Water Eaton | 2 | - | 307 | 250 | 559 |
| Weston-on-the-Green | 2 | - | 208 | - | 210 |
| Bibury | - | 238 | - | - | 238 |
| Black Bourton | - | 183 | - | - | 183 |
| Hook Norton | - | 171 | - | - | 171 |
| Walton | - | 6 | 18 | 150 | 174 |
| Cowley | - | - | 108 | 5 | 113 |
| Fulwell | - | 253 | - | - | 253 |
| Hampton Gay | - | 78 | - | - | 78 |
| Totals | 6 | 953 | 801 | 416 | 2176 |

The arrangement was also reflected in the organization of the shepherds. Howse was the head of the team. Under him, there were shepherds at Arlington, Weston, Cowley, Water Eaton (two), Bibury and Walton. The first four of these places were reproduction centres. It was obviously felt important to have shepherds on the spot in the breeding places, for these accounted for five of the seven shepherds under Howse. Water Eaton had two shepherds, one for the ewes and one for the hogs, which may further emphasize the nodal position of this manor. As it had developed as the central collecting point for fleeces, now it existed as the main breeding centre, the numbers of ewes and hogs far exceeding those at other places. Indeed, it supported twice as many sheep as any other property and its flock comprised more than a quarter of the total flock of the abbey. Another two shepherds were attached to Walton and Bibury. The existence of one at Walton could suggest that this property too was a breeding centre; the ewes may have been depleted in recent years and the hogs intended to restock their complement. The shepherd at Bibury may have been despatched there because this location was an outlying property. Bibury was unusual as it was the only property concentrating on wool production to have a resident shepherd. The other properties with exclusively wethers (Black Bourton, Fulwell, Hook Norton, and Hampton Gay) apparently did not have a resident shepherd. Howse may have been responsible for these flocks. Obviously the abbey believed that a shepherd was necessary on the spot where lambs might be dropped and the number of lambs depended on the welfare of the ewes. Someone, however, must have been employed to care for the wethers elsewhere, even if not a shepherd in the continuous employ of Howse.

Table 3 The organization of shepherds, 1476-77

| Head-shepherd | Under-shepherd | Location | Function |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Robert Howse | John Wrenne | Arlington | breeding |
| | William Busshop | Bibury | wool |
| | Thomas Redhed | Cowley | breeding |
| | Robert Brice | Water Eaton | breeding (ewes) |
| | Thomas Piper | Water Eaton | breeding |
| | John Hycok | Weston | breeding |
| | Thomas Yvis | Walton | ? |

A surprising feature of the breeding centres is the low number of rams to service ewes. It has been suggested that a normal ratio consisted of one tup to thirty-five to fifty ewes, although examples of poor tugging rates are known.²⁸⁰ At Water Eaton, if the account can be believed, a ram was expected to service eighty ewes; a ram at Arlington would need to contend with 150 ewes, and a ram at Weston would have had the slightly less arduous task of acting as sire to a hundred ewes. Perhaps additional rams were hired; otherwise the ewes at Cowley might have become easily frustrated. The abbey may have suffered the repercussions of this unenlightened policy, as the issue of lambs was only 658 although 878 ewes remained from the previous year, augmented by 241 hogs received during the course of the year (Table 4).

Table 4 *Lambs of issue and from tithe, 1476-77*

| Location | Lambs issue | Lambs died (<i>in morina</i>) | Tithe lambs |
|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Arlington | 47 | 36 | |
| Cowley | 167 | 98 | 9 |
| Water Eaton | 236 | 106 | 27 |
| Weston | 208 | 148 | |
| Bibury | | | 79 |
| Watlington | | | 4 |

The change to pastoral husbandry was achieved by the conversion of arable to pasture in selected properties.²⁸¹ In 1517, the abbey was presented to the enclosure commissioners for converting 107 acres in Water Eaton in 1508. This sort of activity might not have constituted a cause of depopulation, but a response to structural changes in the agrarian economy.²⁸² Where Oseney is known to have converted to pasture and engage in sheepfarming in deserted or contracted villages, the depopulation was not uniform. Fulwell had been converted to a grange very soon after its acquisition in 1205. Depopulation at Hampton Gay probably commenced before 1428. At Water Eaton, although the abbey converted tillage to pasture, many tenants remained there throughout the sixteenth century until depopulation by Mr Frere in the late sixteenth century. The changes in teh

²⁸⁰R. Trow-Smith, *A History of British Livestock Husbandry to 1700* (1957), 149-50.

²⁸¹For what follows, K. J. Allison, M. W. Beresford and J. G. Hurst, *The Deserted Villages of Oxfordshire* (Leicester, Department of English Local History Occasional Paper 17, 1966), 38 (Fulwell), 39 (Hampton Gay), and 45 (Water Eaton).

²⁸²C. C. Dyer, 'Deserted medieval villages in the West Midlands', *EconHR* 2nd series xxxv (1982), 19-34.

abbey's exploitation of its property may have been a reaction rather than an initiative.

Bodleian Oseney Roll 26

The account roll of the *prepositus bidencium* comprises a single membrane, written on face and dorse. On the face is the cash account and on the dorse the stock account. It is written in a fair Bastard Secretary hand. At the head of the roll, on the face, the initials of the title are decorated with elaborate strapwork. There is some strapwork on the word *Summa* as it recurs. There are no cancellations, interlineations or alterations. It is clear that it is an engrossed account. This suspicion is confirmed by the *Stipendia* paragraph, which refers to the wage of the clerk for writing the account and for engrossing it. The exception is the very end of the account on the dorse where, almost as an afterthought, there is an account of the fells remaining. The hand of this part seems to be the same as the main account, but this section is written more cursively and hurriedly. The hurried nature of this part is reflected in the omission of figures in the paragraph for *pelles multonum*. The intention here was to give a breakdown of fells remaining on each property, but only the names of the places were entered, not the number of fells.

The account is printed in full below. All words have been extended, except where the extension could be doubtful. The clerk extended some words in some places, but not in others. Throughout, the clerk's extension has been followed, with a note where the clerk has extended the word. The paragraph headings are given in upper case to differentiate them from the main body of the text. The headings are not, of course, in the upper case in the original MS. The short hundred (100) not the long (120) was used by the accounting official.

Osenye De Anno xvij^o Regis Edwardi iiii^o

Compotus Roberti Howse prepositi Bidencium domini ibidem a Festo sancti michaelis Archangeli Anno regni Regis Edwardi quarti Sextodecimo usque ad eundem²⁸³ festum Anno eiusdem Regis Septimodecimo videlicet per unum Annum integrum

ARRERAGIA nulla quia quietus recessit a compoto suo anni precedentis prout ibi patet

RECEPTUM²⁸⁴ DENARIORUM Sed respondet de xiijs. iiijd. receptis de domino Abbate apud Watereton pro xx^{ti} Agnellis emendis de vicario de Weston hoc anno emptis precium capitis viijd.

VENDICIO {MATRICIUM
{AGNELLORUM Et respondet de ijs. ix. receptis de diversis tenentibus apud Watereton ut pro vij matricibus illis venditis hoc anno ut

²⁸³MS. sic; *recte idem*.

²⁸⁴MS *recept'*; as there is only one entry, I have elected for the singular.

extra²⁸⁵ precii capitis vd. minus in toto ijd. Et de xvijjd. receptis de vicario de Watlington ut in precio iiij^{or} agnellorum decimalium dicti domini abbatis ibidem sic sibi venditorum ut extra precium capitis iiijd. ob.

Summa iijs. iijd.

VENDICIO PELLIIUM HURTARDORUM Et respondet de iijd. receptis ut in precio trium pellium lanutarum de hurtardis apud Weston mortuis in morina hoc anno ut extra precium pellis jd. sic venditarum in foro apud Wodestoke.

Summa {Denariorum iijd.

{Hurtardorum iij

VENDICIO PELLIIUM MULTONUM Et respondet de vs. viijjd. receptis ut in precio xvij pellium lanutarum de grege multonum apud Bybury mortuis in morina hoc anno ut extra precium pellis iiijd. sic venditarum Henrico Stodam in foro apud Burford. Et de ijd. ob.²⁸⁶ receptis ut in precio v pellium statim post tonsionem de eodem grege similiter in morina ut extra precium pellis ob. sic venditarum in dicto foro. Et de vs. receptis ut in precio xx^{t1} pellium lanutarum de grege apud Bourton mort'²⁸⁷ in morina ut extra precium pellis iijd. sic venditarum in foro apud Wodestoke. Et de ob. recepto ut in precio unius pellis vocati pellett' de eodem grege necat' ad tonsionem bidencium domini ibidem sic vendite in foro apud Witteney. Et de xvijjd. ob. receptis ut in precio vij pellium lanutarum de grege apud Fullewell mort' in morina ut extra precium pellis ijd. ob. sic venditarum Henrico Shover apud Brakley.²⁸⁸ Et de iijd. receptis ut in precio vj pellium vocatarum pellett' de eodem grege similiter in morina ut extra precium pellis ob. sic venditarum in dicto foro. Et de ijs. viijjd. receptis ut in precio xvj pellium lanutarum de grege apud Hokenorton mort' in morina ut extra precium pellis ijd. sic venditarum in foro apud Wodestoke. Et de jd. recepto ut in ij pellibus vocatis pellett' de eodem grege unde j necat' ad tonsionem bidencium domini Abbatis ibidem et alter mort' in morina ut extra precium pellis ob. Et de ijs. jd. receptis ut in precio x pellium lanutarum de grege apud Hampton' mort' in morina ut extra precium pellis ijd. ob. sic venditarum Johanni Hawkyns de Hampton Poyle. Et de xxd. receptis ut pro x pellium²⁸⁹ de multonibus apud Watereton mortuis in morina ut extra precium pellis ijd. sic vendit' cuidam Cerotecari apud Wodestoke.

Summa {denariorum xixs. jd. ob.

{multonum iiij^{xx} xiiij.

VENDICIO PELLIIUM MATRICIUM Et respondet de iijs. iiijd. receptis ut in precio xj pellium lanutarum de grege matricium apud Alrington²⁹⁰ mortuarum in morina hoc anno ut extra precium pellis iiijd. minus in toto iiijd. sic venditarum in foro apud Cirencestr'. Et de ijd. ob. receptis ut in precio

²⁸⁵ *Ut extra* appears on the face and *ut infra* on the dorse; they refer respectively to the other side of the roll. The use of *ut infra* to refer back from the stock account to the cash account suggests that the stock account was audited first so that any items could be charged against the accounting official by the auditors could be included in the cash account on the face.

²⁸⁶ *ob.* interlined.

²⁸⁷ Here and below, *mort'* should refer to the sheep, not the fells, as also *necat'*.

²⁸⁸ Brackley, Northants.

²⁸⁹ MS. *sic; recte pellibus.*

²⁹⁰ i.e. Arlington with metathesis of *lr.*

vij pellium vocatarum pellett' de eadem grege similiter in morina et pokkis ut extra precium pellis qua. qua minus in toto qua.²⁹¹ Et de vs. xd. receptis ut in precio xxiiij^{or} pellium lanutarum de grege apud Watereton mort' in morina ut extra precium pellis iijd. minus in toto ijd. sic venditarum Johanni Hawkyns de Hampton Poyle. Et de xxs. receptis ut in precio xl pellium lanutarum de grege apud Weston mort' in morina ut extra precium pellis iijd. sic venditarum dicto Johanni Hawkyns. Et de jd. ob. recepto ut in precio iij pellium vocatarum pellett' de eadem grege similiter in morina ut extra precium pellis ob. Et de xxiijd. receptis ut in precio xxiiij pellium de grege apud Coveley²⁹² mort' in morina ut extra precium pellis jd. sic venditarum in foro Abindon.

Summa {denariorum xxjs. vd.
{matricium Cviiij.

VENDICIO PELLIIUM HOGERELLORUM Et respondet de iijs. jd. receptis ut in precio xxxij pellium lanutarum de gregibus²⁹³ hogerellorum unde apud Watereton ut extra xxij et apud Walton x precium pellis jd. sic venditarum in foro apud Wodestoke.

Summa {denariorum iijs. jd.
{hogerellorum xxxij.

VENDICIO PELLIIUM AGNELLORUM Et respondet de viijs. receptis ut in precio xxxij duodenarum iij pellium videlicet CCC iij^{xx} ix pellium provenientium de agnellis domini in diversis locis mortuis in morina ut extra precium duodene iijd. sic venditarum in Oxon' diversis hominibus.²⁹⁴

Summa {denariorum viijs.
{agnellorum CC iij^{xx} ix

Summa {denariorum Ljs. xd. ob.
{Bidencium CCxxxv
{Agnellorum CCiij^{xx} ix

Summa totalis recepti Lxixs. vd. ob. De quibus

EMPCIO AGNELLORUM Idem computans computat in denariis solutis vicario de Weston pro xx^{ti} agnellis ab eo emptis hoc anno precii capitis viijd. xiijs. iiijd.

Summa xiijs. iiijd.

CUSTUS BIDENCIUM Et computat soluti pro tarpic' et reding' emptis pro grege multonum et matricium apud Alrington hoc anno xiiijd. Et in tarpic' et reding' cum unctura emptis pro grege multonum apud Bybury xiiijd. Et in tarpic' et reding' emptis pro grege multonum apud Bourton xiiijd. Et in tarpic' et reding' emptis pro grege multonum apud Fullwell xvjd. Et in tarpic' et reding' emptis pro grege multonum apud Hokenorton xiijd. Et in tarpic' et reding' emptis pro grege multonum apud Hampton ixjd. Et in tarpic' et reding' cum unctura emptis pro grege matricium apud Coveley xiijd. Et in tarpic' <xd.> et

²⁹¹MS. *sic*.

²⁹²Cowley.

²⁹³Throughout, the word is extended in the MS. as *grege*, but occasionally, as here, *gregibus*.

²⁹⁴The short hundred is being used, but the arithmetic is suspect.

reding' <viijd.> emptis pro gregibus matricium et hogere'llorum apud Watereton xvijd. Et in tarpic' et reding' emptis pro greg'²⁹⁵ matricium apud Weston xd. Et in tarpic' cum unctura emptis pro grege hogere'llorum apud Walton iiijd. Et in tribus lagenis uncture emptis in diversis locis ad mixtiliandum cum tarpic' ut pro gregibus matricium et hogere'llorum apud Coveley et Watereton ijs. Et in expensis dicti computantis per totum annum ut in diversis villis mercatis et nundinis ac in fugando bidentes domini de loco ad locum et pellibus supra decimis vendendo ac eciam agnellos et lanas decimales colligendo in diversis locis xs.

Summa xxijs. iiijd.

CUSTUS FALDE Et computat soluti pro xl cladibus emptis hoc anno de Johanne Wat' de Stunsfeld²⁹⁶ pro falda domini apud Coveley precii cladis ijd. vjs. viijd.

Summa vjs. viijd.

EXPENSE NECESSARIE Et computat soluti pro j li. de pakthred empta hoc anno pro pakkyng tempore tonsionis lanarum domini in diversis locis iiijd. Et soluti pro cariagio fenorum decimalium apud Hokenorton iijs. sic conductorum Thome Halle firmario domini ibidem. Et soluti Ricardo Bowell senescallo et Ricardo Perell de Weston pro cariagio pulceti decimalis eiusdem ville sic conducti in grosso ac pro tassacione eiusdem apud lez Shepehowse domini ibidem vjs. viijd. Et soluti dicto Ricardo Bowell pro culminacione et stipulacione eiusdem tasse ixd.

Summa xjs. ixd.

STIPENDIA FAMULORUM Et computat in stipendio Johannis Wrenne bercarii domini apud Alrington hoc anno vs. Et in stipendio Willelmi Busshop bercarii apud Bybury xvjs. Et in stipendio Thome Redhed bercarii apud Coveley xvjs. Et in stipendio Roberti Brice bercarii matricium apud Watereton xvjs. Et in stipendio Thome Piper bercarii hogere'llorum ibidem xiijs. iiijd. Et in stipendio Johannis Hycok bercarii apud Weston vjs. viijd. Et in stipendio Thome Yvis bercarii domini apud Walton per dimidium annum vjs. Et in stipendio dicti computantis hoc anno xxvjs. viijd. Et in reward' clerici scribentis hunc compotum cum iiijd. pro papiro et pergamena eudem compotum faciendi et ingrossandi iijs. iiijd.

Summa Cxs.

Summa omnium {solutionum
{allocationum
{expensarum
viiij li. iijs. Et
sic excedunt iiij. li. xiijs. vjd. ob.

[Dorse]

De anno xvij Regis Edwardi iiij^{ti}
Oseneve

²⁹⁵MS. unextended here.

²⁹⁶Stonesfield, Oxon.

Per Robertum Howse prepositum bidencium domini ibidem Anno regni regis Edwardi iiiij^{ti} xvij^o

Compotus Stauri

HURTARDI Infrascriptus computans respondet de ix receptis de remanenti compoti anni proxime precedentis

Summa ix De quibus

Idem computans computat in mortuos in morina de gregibus hoc anno ut infra ij. Unde apud Coveley ij et apud Weston j.

Summa iij

Et remanet vj. Unde apud {Alrington ij

{Watereton ij

{Weston ij

remanent vj

MULTONES Et respondet de DCCCCxlj receptis de remanenti compoti anni proxime precedentis. Et de CCxxvj receptis de adiunctione ab hogereillis hoc anno ut inferius

Summa M^lClxvij. De quibus

Idem computans computat liberatos ad coquinam monasterij Oseneye de gregibus ut testatur per j talliam contra Johannem Catour Cxx unde post festum sancti Michaelis Archangeli ultimo²⁹⁷ liberatos xx^{ti}. Et necati ad tonsionem bidencium domini apud Bourton et Hokenorton quorum pelles venduntur ut infra ij. Et mortui in morina de gregibus ut infra iiiij^{iiij}xij quorum pelles venduntur ut infra. Unde apud Bybury xxij Bourton xx Fullewell xij Hokenorton xvij Hampton x et apud Eton x

Summa CCxiiiij

Et remanent DCCCCliij

Unde apud {Alrington xxij

{ Bybury Cxxxviiij

{Bourton Ciiij^{xx}iiij

{Fullewell CCluij

{Hokenorton Clxxj

{Hampton lxxviiij

{Walton vj

remanent DCCCCliij multones

MATRICES Et respondet de DCCCClxxviiij receptis de remanenti compoti anni proxime precedentis. Et de CCxlj receptis de adiunctione ab hogereillis ut inferius.

Summa m^lCxix. De quibus

Idem computat liberatas ad coquinam monasterij Oseneye de gregibus ut testatur per j talliam contra Johannem Catour iiiij^{xx}xvj. Unde liberate post festum sancti Michaelis ultimo²⁹⁸ xl. Et necata ad tonsionem bidencium domini

²⁹⁷MS. *sic.*

²⁹⁸MS. *sic.*

apud Weston j. Et mortue in morina de gregibus ut infra ²⁹⁹ Unde apud Coveley Cxvij Eton xxiiij Weston xliij et apud Alrington ³⁰⁰ Et necate de Canibus de greg' apud Coveley xij quorum³⁰¹ pelles nullius valoris. Et in vendicione diversis tenentibus de Eton ut infra v.

Summa CCCxxvij
 Et remanent DCCiiij^{xx}xij
 Unde apud {Alrington Clj
 {Coveley Cvij
 {Eton CCCvij
 {Weston CCvij
 {Walton xvij
 remanent DCCiiij^{xx}xij

HOGERELLI Et respondet de CCCCl receptis de remanenti compoti anni proxime precedentis. Et de CCCiiij^{xx}ix receptis de adiunctione ab agnellis ut inferius.

Summa DCCCxxxix. De quibus

Idem computat in adiunctione cum multonibus ut superius CCxxvj. Et in adiunctione cum matricibus ut superius CCxlj. Et mortui in morina de gregibus quorum pelles venduntur ut infra xxxij. Unde apud Cou[ele] xxij et apud Walton x.

Summa CCCiiij^{xx}xix.
 Et remanent CCCCxvj.
 Unde apud {Alrington xj
 {Coveley v
 {Eton CCl
 {Walton Cl
 remanent CCCCxvj hogerelli

AGNELLI Et respondet de DClviii receptis de toto exitu supradictarum matricium hoc anno. Unde apud Alrington xlvij Coveley Clxvij Eton CCxxxvj et apud Weston CCvij. Et de Cxix receptis de decimis in diversis locis ut inferius videlicet apud Bybury lxxix Coveley ix Eton xxvij et Watlington iiij. Et de empcione ut infra xx.

Summa DCCiiij^{xx}xvij. De quibus

Idem computat liberatos ad coquinam monasterij Oseneye ut testatur per j talliam contra Johannem Catour v. In vendicione ut infra iiij. Et in adiunctione cum hogerellis ut superius CCiiij^{xx}ix. Et in reward' dicti computantis ut de greg' apud Eton et Veston ij. Et in reward' Roberti Brise et Johannis Hycok' bercariorum domini apud Eton et Weston predictas videlicet cuilibet eorum j ij. Et mortui in morina hoc anno CCCiiij^{xx}vij. Unde apud Alrington xxxvj Coveley iiij^{xx}xvij Eton Cvj et Weston Cxlvij. Et necati cum vulpis iiij. Et in Casteling' ij.

Summa que supra. Et equa.

²⁹⁹MS. illegible because of an early repair; the figure must be high; the figure may be that stated on the front of the roll in the *Vendicio pellium matricium*.

³⁰⁰As the previous note.

³⁰¹MS. *sic*.

Summa omnium bidencium M¹M¹Clxxvj

Unde apud {Arlington ij
 {Eton ij
 {Weston ij
remanent vj hurtardi
 {Arlington xxiiij
 {Bybury CCxxxviiij
 {Bourton Ciiij^{xx}iiij
 {Fullewell CCluij
 {Hokenorton Clxxj
 {Hampton lxxviiij
 {Walton vj
remanent DCCCcluij multones
 {Arlington Clx
 {Coveley Cvuij
 {Eton CCCvuij
 {Weston CCvuij
 {Walton xvuij
remanent DCCCj matrices
 {Arlington xj
 {Coveley v
 {Eton CCl
 {Walton Cl
remanent CCCCxvj hogerelli

Summa que supra. Et eque.

PELLES REMANENTES De remanenti non dum vendito pelles matricium apud Coveley ut supra iiiij^{xx}xiiij.

Pelles {Hurtardorum. Et respondet de iij receptis hoc anno ut supra de morina. Que venduntur ut infra. Unde

apud {Coveley ij
 {Weston j

{Multonum. Et respondet de iiiij^{xx}xiiij receptis de morina et necatis ut superius. Que venduntur ut infra. Unde

apud {Bybury
 {Bourton
 {Fullewell
 {Hokenort'
 {Hampton
 {Eton

{Matricium. Et respondet de CCiiij receptis de morina et necat' ut superius.

Unde venduntur ut infra Cvuij.

Et remanent iiiij^{xx}xiiij apud Coveley.

{Hogerellorum. Et respondet de xxxij receptis de morina ut superius ...³⁰²
pelles venduntur ut infra &c.

{Agnellorum. Et respondet de CCCiiij^{xx}viiij receptis de morina ut supra.
Quorum pelles venduntur ut infra.

Oseney For the 17th year of King Edward IV

The account of Robert Howse, the lord's sheepreree there, rom Michaelmas
16 Edward IV to the same feast 17 Edward IV, that is, for a whole year.

ARREARS none because he finished his account for last year quit as it
appears therein.

RECEIPTS OF CASH But he answers for 13s. 4d. received from the lord
abbot at Water Eaton for 20 young lambs bought from the vicar of Weston this
year @ 8d. each.

Total 13s. 4d.

SALE {OF EWES

{OF YOUNG LAMBS And he answers for 2s. 9d. received from several
tenants at Water Eaton as for 7 ewes sold to them this year as over @ 5d. each
less 2d. overall. And for 18d. received from the vicar of Watlington as for the
cost of 4 of the lord's young tithe lambs there sold to him as over @ 4d halfpenny
each.

Total 4s. 3d.

SALE OF RAMS' FELLOES And he answers for 3d. received as the cost of 3
rams' woollfells lost in sickness at Weston this year as over @ 1d. each, sold at
Woodstock market.

Total {cash 3d.
{rams 3

SALE OF WETHERS' FELLOES And he answers for 5s. 8d. received as the
cost of 17 woollfells from sickness of wethers lost at Bibury this year as over @
4d. a fell, thus sold to Henry Stodam at Burford market. And for 2d. halfpenny
received as the cost of 5 fells lost from sickness right after shearing as over @
halfpenny a fell, thus sold in the same market. And for 5s, received as the cost
of 20 woollfells lost from sickness at Black Bourton as over @ 3d. a fell, thus
sold at Woodstock market. And for halfpenny as the cost of a fell called a little
fell killed for the same sickness at shearing of the lord's sheep, thus sold at
Witney market. And for 17d. halfpenny received as the cost of 7 woollfells lost
in sickness at Fulwell as over @ 2d. halfpenny a fell, thus sold to Henry Shover
at Brackley. And for 3d. received as the cost of 6 fells called little fells lost from
the same sickness as over @ halfpenny a fell, thus sold in the same market. And
for 2s. 8d. received as the cost of 16 woollfells lost from sickness at Hook Norton
as over @ 2d. a fell, thus sold at Woodstock market. And for 1d. received as
the cost of 2 fells called little fells killed for the same sickness at shearing the
lord abbot's sheep and another lost as over @ halfpenny a fell. And for 2s. 1d.

³⁰²One word illegible.

received as the cost of 10 woolfells lost from sickness at Hampton as over @ 2d. halfpenny a fell, thus sold to John Hawkyns of Hampton Poyle. And for 20d. received as the cost of 10 wether fells lost at Water Eaton as over @ 2d a fell, thus sold to a certain glover at Woodstock.

Total {cash 19s. 1d. halfpenny
{wethers 94

SALE OF EWES' FELLOES And he answers for 3s. 4d. received as the cost of 11 wolfells lost from the ewes' sickness at Arlington this year as over @ 4d a fell less 4d. overall, thus sold at Cirencester market. And for 2d. halfpenny as the cost of 7 fells called little fells lost from the same sickness and pocks as over @ a farthing a fell less a farthing overall. And for 5s. 10d. received as the cost of 24 woolfells lost from sickness at Water Eaton as over @ 3d. a fell less 2d. overall, thus sold to John Hawkyns of Hampton Poyle. And for 10s. received as the cost of 40 woolfells lost from sickness as over @ 3d. a fell, thus sold to the said John Hawkyns. And for 1d. halfpenny as the cost of 3 fells called little fells also lost from the same sickness as over @ halfpenny a fell. And for 23d. received as the cost of 23 fells lost from sickness at Cowley as over @ 1d. a fell, thus sold in Abingdon market.

Total {cash 21s. 5d.
{ewes 108

SALE OF HOGGS' FELLOES And he answers for 3s. 1d. received as the cost of 32 hoggs' woolfells lost from sickness 22 of which at Water Eaton and 10 at Walton as over @ 1d. a fell sold at Woodstock market.

Total {cash 3s. 1d.
{hoggs 32

SALE OF YOUNG LAMBS' FELLOES And he answers for 8s. received as the cost of 32 dozen and 3 fells, that is, 389 issuing from the lord's young lambs lost in several places @ 3d. a dozen, thus sold to several men in Oxford.

Total {cash 8s.
{young lambs 389

Total of all {cash 51s. 9d. halfpenny
{Sheep 235
{Young lambs 389

Total of the whole receipt 69s. 5d. halfpenny. From which

PURCHASE OF YOUNG LAMBS The same accountant accounts for cash paid to the vicar of Weston for 20 young lambs bought from him this year @ 8d. each

13s. 4d.
Total 13s. 4d.

COST OF THE SHEEP And he accounts paid for tarpic and redding bought for wethers' and ewes' sickness at Arlington this year 14d. And in tarpic and redding with grease bought for wethers' sickness at Bibury 14d. And in tarpic and redding bought for wethers' sickness at Black Bourton 14d. And in tarpic and redding bought for wethers' sickness at Fulwell 16d. And in tarpic and redding bought for wethers' sickness at Hook Norton 13d. And in tarpic and

redding bought for wethers' sickness at Hampton 9d. And in tarpic and redding with grease bought for ewes' sickness at Cowley 12d. And in tarpic <10d.> and redding <6d.> bought for ewes' and hoggs' sickness at Water Eaton 17d. And in tarpic and redding bought for ewes' sickness at Weston 10d. And in tarpic with grease bought for hoggs' sickness at Walton 4d. And in 3 gallons of grease bought in several places to mix in with tarpic for the ewes and hoggs at Cowley and Water Eaton 2s. And in the costs of the said accountant for the whole year as in several villis, markets and fairs, and in driving the lord's sheep from place to place and to sell fells and to collect tithe lambs and wool in several places 10s.

Total 22s. 3d.

FOLD COST And he accounts for 40 panels bought this year from John Wat' of Stonesfield for the lord's fold at Cowley @ 2d. a panel 6s. 8d.

Total 6s. 8d.

NECESSARY COSTS And he accounts paid for 11b. of packthread bought this year for packing the lord's wool during shearing in several places 4d. And paid for carriage of tithe hay at Hook Norton 4s., thus taken to the lord's lessee there, Thomas Halle. And paid to the steward Richard Bowell and Richard Perell of Weston for carriage of that vill's tithe xxx in the whole and for stacking it at the lord's Sheephouse there 6s. 8d. And paid to Richard Bowell for xxx and straw of that stack 9d.

Total 11s. 9d.

WAGES OF THE *FAMULI* And he accounts in the wage of the lord's shepherd at Arlington, John Wrenne, this year 5s. And in the wage of the shepherd at Bibury, William Busshop, 17s. And in the wage of the shepherd at Cowley, Thomas Redhed, 16s. And in the wage of the ewe shepherd at Watereaton, Robert Brice, 16s. And in the wage of the hogg shepherd there, Thomas Piper, 13s. 4d. And in the wage of the shepherd at Weston, John Hycok, 6s. 8d. And in the wage of the lord's shepherd at Walton, Thomas Yvis, for half a year 6s. And in this accountant's wage this year 26s. 8d. And in the payment to the clerk writing this account with 4d. for paper and parchment to make this account and engross it 3s. 4d.

Total 110s.

Total of all {payments
 {allowances
 {costs

£8 4s. And thus he overshoots £4 14s. 6d. halfpenny

[Dorse]

For the 17th year of Edward IV

Oseney

By the sheepreree there, Robert Howse, in the 17th year of Edward IV

RAMS The aforesaid accountant answers for 9 received remaining in last year's account.

Total 9. From which

The same accountant accounts 3 dead from sickness this year as over. Two of which at Cowley and one at Weston.

Total 3.

And 6 remain. Of which at {Arlington 2
{Water Eaton 2
{Weston 2
6 remain

WETHERS And he answers for 941 received remaining from last year's account. And for 226 added from the hoggs this year as below.

Total 1,167. From which

The same accountant accounts 120 sent to the kitchen of Oseney convent, 20 of which after last Michaelmas because of sickness as is attested by a tally against John Catour. And 2 killed at the lord's sheep shearing at Black Bourton and Hook Norton, the fells of which were sold. And 92 died from sickness as over, fells of which were sold as over, 22 of which at Bibury, 20 at Bourton, 13 at Fulwell, 17 at Hook Norton, 10 at Hampton and 10 at Water Eaton.

Total 214.

And 953 remain.

Of which at {Arlington 22
{Bibury 138
{Black Bourton 183
{Fulwell 253
{Hook Norton 171
{Hampton 78
{Walton 6
953 wethers remain.

EWES And he answers for 878 received remaining from last year's account. And for 241 added from hoggs as below.

Total 1,119. Of which

He accounts 96 sent to the kitchen of Oseney convent from sickness as is attested by a tally against John Catour, 40 of which sent after Michaelmas. And one killed at the lord's sheep shearing at Weston. And ... died from sickness as over, of which 117 at Cowley, 24 at Water Eaton, 43 at Weston and ... at Arlington. And 12E killed by dogs at Cowley, the fells of which of no value. And 5 in sale to several tenants of Water eaton.

Total 327

And 792 remain

Of which at {Arlington 151
{Cowley 108
{Water Eaton 307
{Weston 208
{Walton 18
792 remain

HOGGS And he accounts for 450 received remaining from last year's account. And for 389 added from young lambs as below.

Total 839. Of which

The same accounts for 226 added to the wethers as above. And 241 added to the ewes as above. And 32 died from sickness, the fells of which were sold as over, 22 of which at Cowley and 10 at Walton.

Total 499
 And 416 remain
 Of which at {Arlington 11
 {Cowley 5
 {Water Eaton 250
 {Walton 150
 416 hoggs remain

YOUNG LAMBS And he answers for 658 received from the whole issue of the above ewes this year, 47 of which at Arlington, 167 Cowley, 236 Water Eaton, 208 at Weston. And for 119 received from tithes in several places as below, that is, 79 at Bibury, 9 Cowley, 27 Water Eaton, 4 Watlington. And 20 from purchase as over.

Total 797. Of which

The same accounts 5 sent to the kitchen of Oseney convent as is attested by a tally against John Catour. 4 in sale as over. 389 added to the hoggs as above. And 2 at Water Eaton and Weston from sickness in payment to the said accountant. And 2 in payment to Robert Brise and John Hycok, the lord's shepherds at Water Eaton and Weston aforesaid, that is 1 each. And 388 died this year, 36 of which at Arlington, 98 at Cowley, 106 at Water Eaton, 148 at Weston. And 4 killed by wolves. And 3 in casteling'.

Total as above. And equal.

Total of all sheep 2,176

Of which at {Arlington 2
 {Water Eaton 2
 {Weston 2
 6 rams remain
 {Arlington 24
 {Bibury 238
 {Black Bourton 183
 {Fulwell 253
 {Hook Norton 171
 {Hampton 78
 {Walton 6
 953 wethers remain
 {Arlington 160
 {Cowley 108
 {Water Eaton 307
 {Weston 208
 {Walton 18
 801 ewes remain
 {Arlington 11
 {Cowley 5

{Water Eaton 250
{Walton 150
416 hoggs remain

Total as above. And equal.

FELLS REMAINING 94 ewes' fells remaining at Cowley as above not yet sold

{[Fells] of rams. And he answers for 3 received as above by death this year
Which are all sold as over. Of which at {Cowley 2
{Weston 1

{[Fells] of wethers. And he answers for 94 received by death and butchering as above.

Which were all sold as over. Of which at {Bibury
{Black Bourton
{Fulwell
{Hook Norton
{Hampton
{Watereaton

{[Fells] of ewes. And he answers for 203 received by death and butchering as above

108 of which were sold as over

And 94 remain at Cowley

{[Fells] of hoggs. And he answers for 32 received by death as above
... fells were sold as over &c.

{[Fells] of young lambs. And he answers for 388 received by death as above
All of which fells were sold as over