

Dating Exercise

(a) Memorandum that the Thursday after the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the 8th year of King Richard II the abbot of Byland was accused in the wapentake court held at Pickering.

The eighth regnal year of King Richard II ran from 22 June 1384 to 21 June 1385.¹ The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is an immoveable feast day, celebrated on 15 August.² Therefore this document must refer to the year 1384 in order to allow this saints day to fit in with the regnal year dates. The date 15 August 1384 fell on a Monday.³ Therefore the Thursday after this date occurs three days later, that is, 18 August 1384. In conclusion, the date referred to in this document is 18 August 1384.

(b) Confirmation by Bishop Anian of St Asaph of the charters for Shrewsbury Abbey issued by his predecessors Bishops Reiner, Abraham, and Hugh. Given at Shrewsbury the day after St Mary Magdalene in the first year of his pontificate.

The diocese of St Asaph is located in North East Wales. Consulting the list of bishops for this diocese during the medieval period reveals that there were two bishops named Anian.⁴ Anian I (Einion) was consecrated in November 1249 and died on 29 September 1266. Anian II was consecrated on 21 October 1268 and died on 5 February 1293. The document refers to Bishop Anian's predecessors as being Bishops Reiner, Abraham, and Hugh. These three bishops are shown as a contiguous run spanning 1186 through to 1240 on the list of bishops for St Asaph.⁵ It is

1 C. R. Cheney and Michael Jones, *A Handbook of Dates for Students of British History*, New edn revised by Michael Jones. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 35.

2 C. R. Cheney and Michael Jones, *A Handbook of Dates* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 78.

3 Medieval Genealogy, <http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/cal/augmos.htm> [accessed 30 October 2020]

4 E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenway, S. Porter, I. Roy, eds, *Handbook of British Chronology*, 3rd edn (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society : University College, 1986), p. 295.

5 *ibid.*

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therefore more likely this document refers to the pontificate of Anian I who was consecrated in 1249 because it is confirming charters issued by these three bishops. The saints day for St Mary Magdalen is an immovable feast, celebrated on 22 July.⁶ The first year of Anian I's pontificate began in November 1249 and so this allows the document to be dated to 22 July 1250.

Alternatively, if the document refers to Anian II then his pontificate began on 21 October 1268 and so the alternative date for the document is 22 July 1269. In conclusion, there are two possible dates for the document, namely, 22 July 1250 and 22 July 1269.

(c) Downham: court held on Thursday the day after Ash Wednesday in the fourth year of the reign of King Edward and the first year of the episcopate of John de Ketene [Ketton]

The first difficulty is deciding which king is being referred to in order to obtain the correct regnal dates. The name John de Ketene suggests an association with Ketton in Rutland, which narrows down the list of bishoprics to examine in the first instance. The bishopric of Ely has a John Ketton consecrated bishop on 28 October 1302 who died 14 May 1316.⁷ King Edward II reigned from 8 July 1307 to 20 January 1327 and so he must be the Edward referred to in the document.⁸ The fourth year of the reign of Edward II corresponded to 8 July 1310 through to 7 July 1311.⁹ In 1311, Easter Sunday occurred on 11 April.¹⁰ When Easter Sunday falls on 11 April, Ash Wednesday occurs on 24 February 1311.¹¹ Therefore the court was held on Thursday 25 February 1311. In conclusion, the date referred to in the document is 25 February 1311.

6 C. R. Cheney and Michael Jones, *A Handbook of Dates* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 78.

7 E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenway, S. Porter, I. Roy, eds, *Handbook of British Chronology* (Offices of the Royal Historical Society : University College, 1986), p. 244.

8 C. R. Cheney and Michael Jones, *A Handbook of Dates* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 34.

9 Ibid.

10 Medieval Genealogy, <http://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/cal/key14.htm> [accessed 30 October 2020]

11 C. R. Cheney and Michael Jones, *A Handbook of Dates* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 196-7.

(d) Henry, king of the English, greets the bishop of Lincoln and Earl David and the earl of Leicester, and Earl Rannulf of Chester, and all the barons and lords of whom Geoffrey Ridel held lands, and all the sheriffs within whose jurisdiction he held them. Know that I have given to Richard Basset the daughter of Geoffrey Ridel to wife, and the custody of Geoffrey Ridel's land until Robert Ridel can be made a knight and marry the granddaughter of Ralph Basset, namely the daughter of one of his daughters. ... And this gift and compact have been made at the request and with the advice of Rannulf, earl of Chester, and William his brother, and Nigel d'Aubigny and Robert Ridel's other kin and Geva his mother, and Geoffrey the earl's chancellor, and Simon, dean of Lincoln, and William, son of Rannulf, and Thomas of St John and Geoffrey de Clinton, and Payn son of John, and William d'Aubigny and Humphrey de Bohun and Robert Musard and Robert Basset and Osmund Basset and Thurstan Basset and William, constable of Earl Rannulf of Chester, and Ralph, son of Norman, and Hugh Maubanc. At Woodstock.

Examining the table for the earldoms for Chester reveals two instances of Earl Rannulf.¹² The earldom for Ranulph le Meschin was created 1120-1121 and he died circa 1129. Ranulph 'de Gernon' was born before 1100 and died on 16 December 1153. This means the king being referred to must be Henry I because he reigned from 5 August 1100 to 1 December 1135.¹³ Earl David is mentioned early in the document, likely indicating his importance. There was a David associated with Henry I who became King of Scotland in 1124.¹⁴ This indicates the year when David would have been elevated from the earldom and would likely have no longer been in England. These important personages appear to have been gathered together as a consequence of the death of Geoffrey Ridel who was a royal justice during the reign of King Henry I. He was killed following

12 E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenway, S. Porter, I. Roy, eds, *Handbook of British Chronology* (Offices of the Royal Historical Society : University College, 1986), p. 454.

13 C. R. Cheney and Michael Jones, *A Handbook of Dates* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 32.

14 Robin Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles 1100-1400* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 257.

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the wreck of the White Ship in 1120.¹⁵ This shipwreck took place on the 25 November 1120.¹⁶ King Henry lost his son, a daughter, together with friends and members of his household in this disaster.¹⁷ Therefore it is unlikely that this meeting of the nobility took place before early 1121. Humphrey de Bohun, mentioned in the document died circa 1123, which reduces the upper date limit down from that established by Earl David.¹⁸ It is also known that Henry departed for Normandy in 1123 and did not return until 1126.¹⁹ A further refining of this upper limit is provided by the death of the Bishop Robert Bloet of Lincoln on 10 January 1123.²⁰ He was consecrated on 22 February 1094 and so must have been the bishop referred to in this document. In conclusion, the document likely dates somewhere between early 1121 and late 1122, with absolute outside dates of between 25 November 1120 and 10 January 1123.

15 Judith Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 170.

16 C Warren Hollister, and Amanda Clark Frost, *Henry I* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008) p. 276.

17 Judith Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 16.

18 Graham White. (2012, May 24). Bohun, Humphrey de (b. before 1144, d. 1181), constable to Henry II. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. < <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-2774> > [Accessed 31 October 2020].

19 Judith Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 45.

20 Judith Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 45.
E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenway, S. Porter, I. Roy, eds, *Handbook of British Chronology* (Offices of the Royal Historical Society : University College, 1986), p. 255.

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