

Assessment 3 – 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 date of this document is 18 August 1384

- Richard II acceded to the throne on 22 June 1377, therefore the 8th year of his reign is from 22 June 1384 to 21 June 1385 ¹
- The Assumption of the Virgin Mary was celebrated on 15 August ²
- 15 August in 1384 was a Monday ³, therefore the Thursday after was 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 date of this document is probably 23 July 1250, but it could be 23 July 1269

- There were two Bishop Anians at St. Asaph. Anian I was consecrated in November 1249 and Anian II was consecrated 21 October 1268.⁴ Therefore the first years of their pontificates would be Anian I – November 1249 to November 1250
Anian II – 21 October 1268 to 20 October 1269
- Reiner, Abraham and Hugh are predecessors of both bishops but closer chronologically to Anian I (just one bishop, Hywel, between the three named bishops and Anian I)
- The festival of St. Mary Magdalen is 22 July, therefore the day after is 23 July. It seems most likely that the document is from the pontificate of Anian I, in which case the date is 23 July 1250, but it is also possible that it is from the time of Anian II, in which case it dates to 23 July 1269. From 1269 to 1272 Anian II was involved in conflicts with several abbeys, including Shrewsbury, supporting John FitzAlan in his suit against Shrewsbury Abbey for the patronage of Oswestry.⁵ This makes it slightly more likely that the bishop question in the manuscript is Anian I

¹ E.B.Fryde, D.E.Greenway, S.Porter and I.Roy, *Handbook of British Chronology*, 3 edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 40.

² Cheney/Jones, *A Handbook of Dates: for students of British history*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.55

³ <<https://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/>> [accessed 29 October 2020]

⁴ *Handbook of British Chronology* p.295

⁵ John Lloyd, *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* () <https://biography.wales/article/s-ANIA-NII-1293?&query=rhuddlan&sort=sort_name&page=1> [accessed 30 October 2020].

- 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 date of this document is Thursday 25 February 1311

- John de Ketene (Ketton) was Bishop of Ely, consecrated 6 September 1310 and died 14 May 1316. This was found by doing an internet search, which identified the bishopric as Ely, then finding the entry under Ely in the Handbook of British Chronology. Scanning through the other entries in HBC confirmed that there were no other bishops by the same name. The first year of his episcopate was 6 September 1310 to 5 September 1311.⁶
- Therefore, the King Edward in question must be Edward II (1307 – 1327)⁷
The fourth year of Edward II's reign is from 8 July 1310 to 7 July 1311. Although this information is not necessary in working out the document's date, it is a useful cross-check for the accuracy of the dating information given in the manuscript.
- Easter in 1311 was on 11 April.⁸ Ash Wednesday is held 46 days before Easter, therefore Ash Wednesday in 1311 was held on 24 February⁹
The day after Ash Wednesday was Thursday 25 February 1311.

- 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.*

This document dates from after 26 November 1120 when the king returned from Normandy and before 10 January 1123 when the Bishop of Lincoln died.

- This document was clearly written after the death of Geoffrey Ridel. Judith Green in The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography states that a Geoffrey Ridel, described by the chronicler Henry of Huntingdon as "justice of all England" was married to Geva and was a

⁶ Fryde, Greenway, Porter, Roy, *Handbook of British Chronology* p.244

⁷ Cheney/Jones, *A Handbook of Dates* p.20

⁸ Cheney/Jones, *A Handbook of Dates* p.158

⁹ *A Medieval English Calendar* () <<https://www.medievalgenealogy.org.uk/cal/febmos.htm>> [accessed 2 November 2020].

colleague of Ralph Basset.¹⁰ This must, therefore, be the Geoffrey Ridel named in the manuscript. He died 25 November 1120, so the document post-dates that date.

- The king in 1120 was Henry I, who died 1 December 1138. Henry I returned from Normandy 26 November 1120 and was absent in Normandy 11 June 1123 to 11 September 1126, therefore the document must have been written after 26 November 1120 and before 11 June 1123.
- Ralph Basset is also identified in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography as one of Henry I's chief justiciars. He probably died in 1127 and certainly by 1130.
- The Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Bloet, was consecrated in February 1094 and died 10 January 1123.¹¹
- Earl David was the king's brother-in-law¹² whose title changed to 'King of Scotland' in April 1124.¹³
- William d'Aubigny became the earl of Arundel and so changed his title in 1139 – '41¹⁴
- Humphrey de Bohun is recorded in William of Malmesbury's '*De Gestis Reg. Angl.* (Rolls Ser.) as fortifying Trowbridge Castle for Empress Maud in 1139¹⁵ therefore he was clearly still alive in that year.
- Earl Rannulf of Chester – there were three Earls called Rannulf, but the date identifies Ranulph de Meschin as the one named in the document. He became earl 1120 – 1121 and died c.1129.¹⁶ Therefore the document dates from after he became earl, but we can't pinpoint the date.
- The Earl of Leicester was Robert de Beaumont 2nd who was earl from 1118 – 1168.¹⁷

Conclusion

The document clearly post-dates the death of Geoffrey Ridel 25 November 1120 and the return of the king from Normandy the following day. The latest date it could have been written was 10 January 1123 when the Bishop of Lincoln died. If a record of the marriage of Richard Bassett and Geoffrey Ridel's daughter could be found, this would certainly narrow the date down further.

However, this presupposes that the document is genuine. It has been argued that it is actually a fake, written at a later date and intended to ensure that Geoffrey Ridel's property passes down through Richard Bassett's line in perpetuity.¹⁸

¹⁰ J.Green, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography - Geoffrey Ridel* (2008) <<https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23617?rskey=kKClpK&result=1>> [accessed 2 November 2020].

¹¹ Fryde, Greenway, Porter, Roy, *Handbook of British Chronology* p.255

¹² *David I* (May 2020) <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/David-I>> [accessed 2 November 2020]

¹³ Fryde, Greenway, Porter, Roy, *Handbook of British Chronology* p.57

¹⁴ *Ibid* p.449

¹⁵ H F Chettle, W R Powell, P A Spalding and P M Tillott, 'Parishes: Trowbridge', in *A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 7*, ed. R B Pugh and Elizabeth Crittall (London, 1953), pp. 125-171. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol7/pp125-171> [accessed 2 November 2020].

¹⁶ Fryde, Greenway, Porter, Roy, *Handbook of British Chronology* p.454

¹⁷ *Ibid* p.468

¹⁸ D.X.Carpenter, 'The marriage of Richard Basset: an undetected forgery in the name of Henry I.', *Historical Research*, 91.No.252, (2018), (p. 399-406), in <<https://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=46b5fa47-5704-4cc4-a257-38ba4c61aa88%40sdc-v-sessmgr02&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=129077621&db=hus>> [accessed 1 November 2020].