

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.

Answer: Thursday 18th August 1384.

The eighth year of the reign of Richard II began on 22nd June 1384 and ended 21st June 1385.¹ The date of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is always the 15th August as this feast is not a movable feast so this can be dated to the Thursday after the 15th August 1384.² Using Table 20 in the chapter 'Calendars for all possible dates of Easter, AD 400-2100' of *A Handbook of Dates: For students of British history*, it is possible to determine that the Thursday following the Assumption was 18th August.³

(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.

Answer: Tuesday 23rd July 1269.

The feast day of Saint Mary Magdalene is 22nd July.⁴ According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* Anian was consecrated as bishop of St Asaph's on 21st October 1268.⁵

¹ C. R. Cheney (ed.), *A Handbook of Dates: For students of British history*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 35

² Cheney, (2005), p. 78

³ Cheney, (2005), p. 195

⁴ Cheney, (2005), p. 78

⁵ J. B. Smith, 'Anian [Einion ab Ynyr]', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (23 September 2004) <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-24830?rskey=cYjq1w&result=1>>, para. 2

According to Table 3 of the chapter 'Calendars for all possible dates of Easter, AD 400-2100' of *A Handbook of Dates: For students of British history*, 23rd July was a Tuesday.⁶

(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]

Answer: Thursday 25th February 1311.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* John de Ketene, also known as John Ketton, was bishop of Ely between 1310 and 1316.⁷ Edward II was king between 8th July 1307 and 20th January 1327.⁸ His fourth regnal year ran from 8th July 1310 to 7th July 1311.⁹ The first Ash Wednesday of John de Ketene's episcopate was, therefore, in 1311. According to Table 21 of the chapter 'Calendars for all possible dates of Easter, AD 400-2100' of *A Handbook of Dates: For students of British history*, Ash Wednesday in 1311 was 24th February, thus, the following day was 25th February.¹⁰

(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

⁶ Cheney, (2005), p. 160

⁷ D. N. Lepine, 'Ketton, John', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (23 September 2010) <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-95141?rskey=X6zVe0&result=1>>, para. 1

⁸ Cheney, (2005), p. 34

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Cheney, (2005), p. 196

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.

Answer: sometime between January 1121 and 10th June 1123.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* there were two Geoffrey Ridel's in the twelfth century: one a justice, died 1120 when the White Ship sank off the Norman coast, and the other an administrator and bishop, died 1189.¹¹ However, the first Geoffrey Ridel had a daughter who married a Richard Basset who then inherited his estate, and is therefore the more plausible candidate.¹² Richard Basset was a justice of Henry I and this dates this marriage to his reign as he ruled from 5th August 1100 to 1st December 1135.¹³ The entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* details that Richard Basset married Matilda, daughter of Geoffrey Ridel, sometime between November 1120 and April 1123.¹⁴ The date of the sinking of the White Ship gives a *terminus ad quo*: 25th November 1120.

Rannulf, Earl of Chester, is likely to be Ranulf le Meschin, the third earl of Chester. Rannulf died in January 1129 so this does not narrow the date further.¹⁵ According to his entry in the *Oxford*

¹¹ A. J. Duggan, 'Ridel, Geoffrey', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (22 September 2004) <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23618?rskey=D6VZoO&result=2>>, para. 1; Judith A. Green, 'Ridel, Geoffrey', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (24 May 2008)

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23617?rskey=D6VZoO&result=3>>, paras. 1 and 3

¹² Judith A. Green, (2008), para. 3

¹³ Judith A. Green, 'Basset, Richard', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (22 September 2004) <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-1647>>, para. 1; C. R. Cheney (ed.), *A Handbook of Dates: For students of English history*, (London: Butler & Tanner Ltd., 1970), p, 18

¹⁴ Judith A. Green, (2004), para. 1

¹⁵ Edmund King, 'Ranulf (I) [Ranulf le Meschin], third earl of Chester', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (23 September 2004)

Dictionary of National Biography William d'Aubigny, died 1139, was a witness to multiple royal documents during the reign of Henry I.¹⁶ The dates of these men did not prove useful in narrowing down the three year window for the document. As such, further investigation was required into the known movements of the king following the sinking of the White Ship and the details surrounding the marriage of Richard Basset and Matilda.

Henry I left England for Normandy on 10th June 1123.¹⁷ During this absence from England his brother-in-law, Earl David, addressed here by Henry, was made king of Scotland.¹⁸ This means that the *terminus ad quem* for the dating of this writ is 10th June 1123.¹⁹ In his paper, *The marriage of Richard Basset: an undetected forgery in the name of Henry I*, from 2018 David Carpenter states that Henry I resumed his “business” in early 1121.²⁰ Carpenter gives the earliest possible date for the writ as being January 1121.²¹

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23127?rskey=gzmbi9&result=1>>, para. 7

¹⁶ J. F. A. Mason, 'Aubigny, William d' [William de Albin; known as William d'Aubigny Pincerna]', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (23 September 2004)

<<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-47244?rskey=12Gq6g&result=4>>, para. 4

¹⁷ David Carpenter, 'The marriage of Richard Basset: an undetected forgery in the name of Henry I' in *Historical Research*, 91.252 (2018), pp. 399-406, p. 399

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

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