



Postgraduate/Distance Learning Assignment coversheet & feedback form

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For completion by the student:		
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Module code: AHHI 7016 Module title: Studying the Medieval: Records and Manuscripts	1811277	Educational support needs: Yes/No
Module tutor: Janet Burton		
Assignment due date: 31 August 2019		
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1 st		
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Date:

Exercise in dating records.

(a)

Memorandum 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.

I arrived at this date by referring to the Handbook of Dates for students of English History.

The Assumption of The Blessed Virgin Mary is 15 August.

The 8th year of the reign of King Richard II is between 22 June 1384 and 21 June 1385.

Using Easter table 20 from the Calendars for Easter it can be seen that 15 August 1384 fell on a Monday, therefore the Thursday after would be **Thursday 18 August 1384**.

(b)

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

St Mary Magdalene - 22 July

Bishop of Anian of Asaph was Anian I (Einion) was elected on 2 May, received the temporalities of the see on 27 September and was consecrated November 1249.¹

Assuming Bishop Anian took up his post after consecration his first year would be November 1249 to November 1250. Therefore using Easter table 6 the date of the confirmation of the charter would be **Saturday 23 July 1250**

(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]

¹ Fryde, p. 295.

John de Ketene [Ketton] was bishop of Ely 1310-1360, being consecrated on 6 September 1310. The king can therefore be identified as Edward IV whose fourth year fell between, 8 July 1310 and 7 July 1311. The year must therefore be 1311.

Using Easter table 21 Ash Wednesday was 24 February 1311.

The court was therefore held on **Thursday 25 February 1311.**

(d)

Henry, king of the English, greets the bishop of Lincoln and Earl David and the earl of Leicester, and the 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 knight and marry the granddaughter of Ralph Basset, namely the daughter of one of his daughters.

...And this gift and contract 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 earls chancellor, Simon, dean of Lincoln and William, son of Rannulf, and Thomas of St John and Geoffrey de Clinton and Paynson 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.

To determine the date of the pronouncement it is necessary to establish which king is making the gift and contract, why it was necessary, in whom's interest it was made and its current location.

At first reading and on face value it appears to secure the inheritance of a member of the king's retinue. Henry king of the English was Henry I and Geoffrey Ridel was a member of his court. Geoffrey Ridel, a Royal Justice married to Geva the daughter of Hugh d'Avranches (although there is some debate about her legitimacy), drowned 25 November 1120 aboard the White Ship.

The king was in England between November 1120 and 11 June 1123 therefore it appears that the request and pronouncement by the king would have been made between these dates.² A further search for the original should give a more precise date.

It must be considered that the loss of the White ship was devastating for the king, not only did he lose his heir, William Adelin but two further illegitimate children were also drowned among many nobles and the events that followed turned the king's world upside down. He was left with only one legitimate heir his daughter Matilda so at this time he had matters of his own to contend with.

However further scrutiny of the document does beg more questions. Why was the daughter to be married not named; Maud, Geoffrey's eldest daughter does go on to marry Richard Bassett between 1123-1126 and records show she bears her first child a son in 1125. Robert Ridel, heir apparent is thirteen at the time of his father's death. The arrangements set out could be seen as securing Robert's future and the custody of the lands. A simple guardianship by a member of the family may have been a more straightforward method of doing this. Geoffrey's wife Geva brought important land holdings through her father to the marriage; was the concern and the reason for this act to cover the possibility that if she remarried the land would follow her before the coming of age of Robert?

² Fryde p. 35.

David Carpenter in his paper on Richard Basset draws attention to numerous reasons to believe that the declaration was a forgery used to secure the fee / land of Robert de Bucy which came into the possession of Geoffrey Ridel from his wife's inheritance.³ Examples such as the fact that it was not witnessed but was requested on the advice of interested parties. Also, he points out that wording, forms of address and vagaries all indicate inconsistencies. I have looked for an original degree but have only managed to find a copy in the Chartulary BL Sloane Roll xxxi 4, men. 5r (no 47) the date of which is 1236-1241 drawn up after the coming of age of Robert.

A more in-depth study of the Basset lineage would shine more light on the reasons for the act and give further evidence that it is not what it appears to be. On this evidence given the 'so called act' could bear a date of either between November 1120 and 11 June 1123 when the King was in England or between 1236 and 1241 when the Chartulary was copied.

References

Carpenter, D. A. *The Marriage of Richard Basset: An Undetected Forgery in the Name of Henry I* (Historical Research: Historical Research vol. 91, no. 252, 2018), pp. 399-406

Cheney, C. R., ed. *Handbook of Dates*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Fryde, E B D., Greenway, E, Porter, S. and I Roy, I., eds., *Handbook of British Chronology*, 3rd Edition (London: Royal Historical Society, 1986)

Gervers, Michael (ed) *Dating Undated Medieval Charters* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002)

³found at <https://actswilliam2henry1.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/h1-richard-basset-2018-1.pdf>