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THE RECONCILIATION OF SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL RESPONSIBILITIES: SOME ASPECTS OF THE MONKS OF ST SWITHUN'S AS LANDOWNERS AND ESTATE MANAGERS (*c* 1380–1450)

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ABSTRACT

The monks of St Swithun's cathedral priory, like other medieval monastic communities, led a double life. Their raison d'etre *was the daily round of worship and prayer, but they also had temporal responsibilities in common with their contemporaries in the world. This paper deals with the latter, the role they had to assume as possessors of property from which they derived the revenues required to maintain the cathedral and the monastic building complex and also some of the supplies for kitchen and larder. The task of estate management demanded knowledge of husbandry and the organization of a labour force, with the result that the monks became employers, sometimes on a fairly large scale.*

The wording of the title is intended to draw attention to the fact that the members of the chapter of Winchester cathedral priory before the Reformation were first and foremost men of religion, bound by vows for life to God and to one another. The Rule by which they lived, that of St Benedict (who died *c* 547 AD), and which every novice was obliged to learn by heart, required the monk on the day of his profession to make the threefold promise of stability, conversion of life and obedience, promises that were intended to be constantly borne in mind and daily renewed in the performance of each task assigned (McCann 1952, 131). The primary obligation to which the monk was, and is, committed is the daily recitation of the divine office [the *opus Dei*] at fixed intervals during the day and night, precise directions for which were laid down in twelve chapters of the Rule (McCann 1952, chaps 8–19). The monk is to be regarded, then, as one who believes himself called to this way of life, a life of prayer and worship, of discipline and devotion, of perseverance until death in the community in which he is professed. The truth of these observations should not be affected by our awareness that many medieval monks failed to live up to their high calling, that friction and even bitter disputes divided the brethren, that laxity and a deadly lukewarmness or *accidie* sometimes penetrated the cloister. Thus, we should not be surprised to find episcopal injunctions frequently condemning these failures and commanding a return to stricter observance. Bishop Wykeham, for example, was highly critical of St Swithun's in the late fourteenth century and prescribed a reform programme for the monks covering all their activities, from the manner of their performance of the divine office to the repair of buildings and the supervision of manorial estates (BL Ms Harley 328, fos 1–11^{v}). It must have been a relief to the monks to learn that, after a monastic visitation by the abbot of Hyde in 1423, the offences uncovered were reported as few and slight [*pauca erant et levissima*] (Pantin 1933, ii, 143).

St Benedict had provided for his sixth-century disciples to lead a simple life withdrawn from the world; but such an existence was only possible when communities were small and all their needs could be supplied by the labours of their own hands: tilling the soil, tending their own poultry and livestock, making their own clothing (McCann 1952, 153, 127). However, this, perhaps ideal, situation could not and did not last. Early surviving chronicles and charters from the late Anglo-Saxon and early Norman periods record gifts of land from kings and bishops, pious relatives and friends to provide sustenance and income for monastic establishments such as Winchester; in the twelfth century some of the

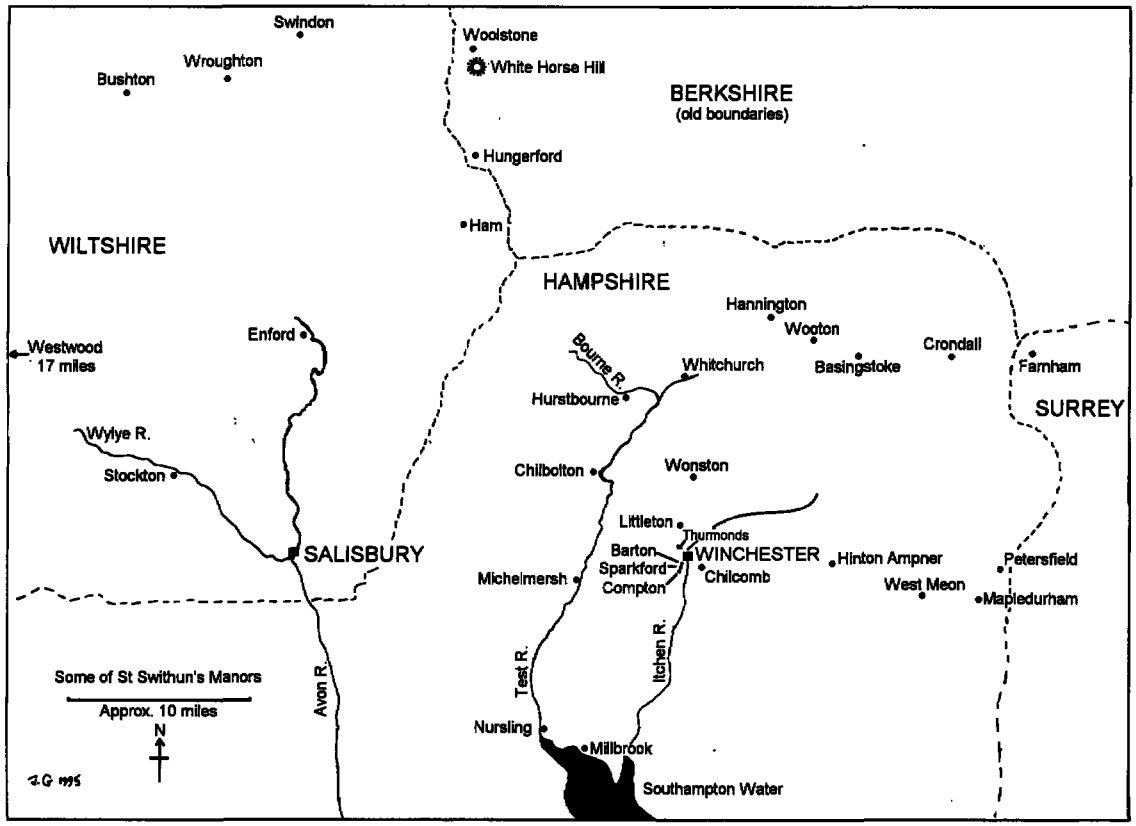

Fig. 1 Location of some of the manors of St Swithun's.

donations to St Swithun's were specifically earmarked for the food and clothing of the monks and some for other purposes like the writing of books and repair of organs (Goodman 1927, nos 9, 10). In return the benefactors received spiritual benefits in the form of perpetual remembrance in the monks' prayers and masses. Although small sums of money were also received in alms, in offerings at shrines and altars, in legacies, and through the sale of corrodies, these were in general negligible in terms of what was required to support a monastic community and cathedral the size of St Swithun's, which before the Black Death numbered over sixty (Deedes 1915, 556–7). With the gradual acquisition of property in the late Anglo-Saxon period and during the first two centuries after the Conquest came the burden of new responsibilities and the accompanying necessity of developing new skills in the operation of large scale husbandry and the oversight of rural settlements.

Over the same period the internal organization of the Benedictine or Black Monk houses also gradually adapted to new needs and circumstances; by the time of Lanfranc, the first Norman archbishop of Canterbury (1070–1089), to Benedict's few monastic officials (cellarer, guestmaster, infirmarer and kitchener) there had been added a precentor, chamberlain, almoner and sacrist, some of whom were, no doubt, in

existence before the Conquest. These officials, or obedientiaries, so named because their appointments were received under obedience, came to have clearly defined duties; some of them were responsible for accounting for the revenues from specific endowments: thus the Winchester almoner's concern was Hinton Ampner (Hinton of the almoner) from which his income was mainly derived; the anniversarian was in charge of the Wiltshire manor of Bisshopeston (now Bushton), and the chamberlain of West Meon and of Ham, Wiltshire. The earliest extant manorial accounts of St Swithun's, which date from the mid-thirteenth century, indicate what must have been by then well established practice, namely, that these obedientiaries, along with the receiver/treasurer and the hordarian, who were the most senior obedientiaries at Winchester after the prior and subprior, were obliged to make regular and sometimes frequent visits to their scattered properties in order to supervise the sowing and reaping operations, the repair of buildings, the inspection and transfer of stock, and also to collect rents and dues and hold courts. In the performance of these duties they found it necessary to employ lay officials and servants, who accompanied them on their rounds and at times deputized for them. Unlike some Benedictine houses like Canterbury and Ely, there never seems to have existed a monk steward with overall charge of the estates; the office, whenever names are recorded, was given to prominent laymen in the city or county.

It is worth noting the diversity of activity within the cloister at Winchester, as elsewhere, in which monks and craftsmen and their assistants and servants were constantly engaged; these ranged from intellectual pursuits and study and various forms of artistic and musical endeavour to repairs to the cathedral fabric and work in kitchens and larder. Although little evidence remains to indicate the Winchester monks' involvement in spiritual affairs beyond the monastic enclosure, there is little doubt that here, as in other cathedral priories like Worcester, they were employed as preachers, teachers and confessors, and at times served in parishes (Kirby 1899, ii, 107, 186); they also had full responsibility for all the ceremonies and services in the cathedral in which the residents of the city of Winchester and parishioners throughout the diocese were accustomed to participate. It follows that all of these occupations and many more, like the feeding and accommodation of the monks themselves and of their employees, corrodians (resident pensioners), boys of the almonry school, guests and strangers, provided work for a large number of people. There is no support for Dean Kitchin's unduly disparaging remark that the Winchester cloister was a place of untroubled idleness for some, bordering on torpor, and that there was no concern shown for the spiritual or temporal welfare of those in the world outside the gates (Kitchin 1892, 21, 95, 92).

With these introductory and cautionary remarks behind us we may now turn to the subject of our present inquiry, which is to follow the monks in their daily pursuit of their mundane affairs outside the precincts, where, like other men in the world, they were occupied with the practical organization of their properties. The aim of their labours was to supply the monastic larder and kitchens and to assure for themselves an adequate income, from rents and sale of stock and produce, for the purchase of the various other necessities of life. It should be noted, however, that among recent scholars and writers only a few have studied the manorial records of St Swithun's, which Professor David Knowles described in 1950 as a neglected house (Knowles 1948, i, 316, note 1). The *English Historical Review* published J.S. Drew's 'Manorial Accounts of St Swithun's Priory, Winchester', in 1947 (lxii, 20–41) which broke new ground, but most of his work, like the translations of accounts and court rolls of a number of manors, remains only in typescript. We are indebted to Barbara Turnbull for drawing attention to his impressive contribution to the study of the cathedral manors in a preceding volume of this venerable Society (1993, xlviii, 161–179). Mrs Hanna edited and transcribed the rental and custumal of St Swithun's as an M.A. thesis for the University of Southampton in 1954; and a new edition of the cathedral charters has been prepared by Nicholas Vincent for publication in the Hampshire Record Series. In addition, and at long last, a definitive catalogue/calendar of the obedientiary accounts

and of the manorial account and court rolls is now in the final stages of preparation by Caroline Humphreys of the Hampshire Record Office. Finally, a project has recently been launched with the aim of calendaring two more of the extensive collection of pipe rolls of the bishopric. It is to be hoped that, when these guides are available in print, they will serve to encourage further research into the rich sources bearing on St Swithun's medieval past.

In 1284, a lasting settlement between the bishop of Winchester, John of Pontissara (or Pontoise) and his cathedral chapter brought to an end the long and unedifying controversy over the division of the ecclesiastical estates between them. When this agreement was confirmed in 1300, the royal charter listed twenty-three manors in Hampshire, thirteen in Wiltshire, one in Somerset and one in Berkshire as those which belonged to the monks. All of them occur in the priory custumal; and the court and account rolls of the period under examination in this paper include manorial records of about twenty of these, whose location will now be briefly described.

Let us begin with Crondall, which is situated close to the Surrey border and the town of Farnham, about twelve miles south-west of Basingstoke; it was a hundred comprising some 29,000 acres and a manor, both under the prior's jurisdiction. About six miles in a north-westerly direction from Basingstoke lies Hannington, with Wootton its near neighbour half way between; these two manors were closely associated for administrative purposes, and the prior and convent were patrons of both parish churches in addition to being lords of both manors. By 1432 the latter was known as Manydown or Wootton Manydown and today it is Wootton St Lawrence. Whitchurch, the only free borough on the priory estates, was located on the river Test approximately ten miles south-west of Wootton and thirteen miles due north of Winchester. The manor of Hurstbourne (Priors) was barely two miles south-west of Whitchurch and on the river Bourne close to its junction with the Test, while Chilbolton was on the Test some six miles further downstream. The latter manor was linked with Wonston, five miles to the east across the downs and about seven miles from St Swithun's along the Roman road; it was used by the monks as one of their favourite country resorts, to which they paid frequent visits. The few remaining account rolls of Littleton, which was only a short distance beyond the northern outskirts of Winchester, show that it was closely affiliated with the manor of Barton and the Barton satellites of Chilcomb, Compton, Sparkford and Thurmonds, which together almost encircled Winchester on the southern half of its periphery. Barton, or Prior's Barton, as its name suggests, lying on the southern outskirts of the city was the site of the home farm of St Swithun's. The manor of Silkstead was an easy ride or pleasant walk of about three miles to the south of the city, to which the monks had frequent recourse throughout the year. Unfortunately, the manors of Nursling and Millbrook on the northern approaches to Southampton, which provided revenue for the obedientiary known at Winchester as the *custos operum*, are poorly documented because few medieval records survive. Hinton Ampner, about eight miles east of Winchester, and West Meon, some four miles further to the south-east, also lack most of their account and court rolls; however, Mapledurham, which now exists as only a house by that name, a good twenty miles east of Winchester and close to Petersfield, is blessed by the survival of 21 account rolls for our period, all but one of them in the British Library. Dean Kitchin was perplexed about the location of this manor (1892, 225 note), and others have identified it with the sixteenth-century house of this name on the Thames near Reading; few seem to have been aware of its correct location, although Kirby supplied it in a footnote in *Wykeham's Register* (1896, i, 47 note 1).

By 1316 most, if not all, of the Wiltshire properties held by St Swithun's were listed as within the priory hundred of Elstubb (later referred to as Elstubb and Everleigh). As a hundred Elstubb must have proved convenient, at least for purposes of jurisdiction, although the manors were widely scattered as well as distant from Winchester; and it is not difficult to appreciate why the demesnes of three of them were farmed out by and possibly before 1419. Westwood, for example, is close to Bradford-on-Avon and 35 miles north-west of Salisbury, and

well over 50 miles from Winchester; it was let out to farm in the late thirteenth century and also from 1381 onwards (Goodman 1927, no 248; WCL Ms). For Wroughton, more than 35 miles north of Salisbury and just south of Swindon, and Ham, five miles south of Hungerford, few records, mainly court rolls, survive. The anniversarian's manor of Bisshopeston which was five or six miles south-west of Wroughton is better documented, with seven or eight accounts still in their original home with the cathedral muniments and an additional ten accounts recently located among the muniments in the library of Worcester cathedral (WCM C. 1, 2, 531–537). Two other Wiltshire estates are a more rewarding study: Enford, which lies in the vale of Avon fourteen miles north of Salisbury and approximately 20 miles west of Whitchurch, and Stockton, on the river Wylye about twelve miles west of Salisbury. In 1400 a John Mascal, the father of Brother Ralph Mascal (monk between *c* 1412 and 1447), farmed the demesne at Stockton; after his manumission in 1417 he retired, in 1420, and went to live in the precincts of St Swithun's where he was granted a corrody that provided board, lodging and clothing charged to the Stockton account (Greatrex 1978, nos 178, 188). Woolstone (Wolricheston) the single priory manor in what used to be Berkshire is over 40 miles from Winchester and about twelve miles east of Swindon, close to the White Horse Hill. Its rents went to the support of the hordarian's office; but its extensive run of accounts in the Public Record Office has escaped the notice of most Winchester historians, despite the fact of its use by Miss Lodge in 1907 in an essay on the Black Death in Berkshire (Lodge 170), and by Miss Levett in 1938 in her work on the financial organization of the manor (Levett 52, 64).

Although the cathedral priory is fortunate in the survival of an impressive collection of manorial accounts and records of manorial court proceedings extending over almost three centuries (*c* 1261 to 1540), there are few unbroken series of either which span more than a twenty-year period; this limitation poses problems for the kind of research and analysis that require continuity in order to permit the evaluation and comparison of trends and patterns of development, following the current model for many regionally based studies of the medieval economy. I am not yet prepared to assess the overall competence of the St Swithun's monks in manorial administration nor to compare their methods and practice with those of other contemporary landowners, religious or lay – although these are important questions which need to be asked and answered – nor have I probed more deeply than J. S. Drew into the mysteries of medieval accountancy and must refrain from judgement on the financial acumen of the Winchester *seniores* who controlled the business affairs of the monastery. In this paper I propose to confine myself to three other questions that I believe to be of equal importance, interest and relevance in that they are essential aspects of any consideration of medieval landowning and land management: first, who were the clerical and lay officials employed by the monks to assist them in the supervision of their lands; next, what can be learned about the relationship between the priory and the manorial servants and tenants; and finally, how were the manors exploited as the priory food farm?

It is not surprising to find many references to the monks themselves, with their *socii* and clerical and lay servants, paying regular visits to the manors; reasons were sometimes stated in order, no doubt, to explain to the auditors the various expenditures in cash and kind, for men and horses, which were charged to the manorial account during their stay. In addition to the regular entries referring to holding courts, receiving rents and dues, inspecting stock or a general supervision of the manor, other reasons were occasionally given, for example: presiding over the appointment of a new reeve, fishing, convalescing from illness.

A few examples of individual monks in action on the manors will serve as introduction to a scrutiny of their assistants. When Ralph Basyng, for example, held the office of hordarian between 1378/9 and 1404/5 he was constantly purchasing horses and riding equipment, probably because of his frequent journeys, including the long ride to Woolstone every year, where he arranged for the sale of wool, a task in which he was aided by a manorial steward (PRO SC6/757/7–21). The receiver/treasurer often made the rounds of the

manors in person for purposes of general supervision and for the collection of revenues; thus, in 1385 John Langreod, treasurer, stayed at Wootton long enough to cost the manor 5s 4d, and he returned to Winchester with the sum of £5 13s 4d (WCL Ms account roll). For the next ten years records remain to show that he and his successor in office, Thomas Ware, continued these visits for supervisory and financial purposes (WCL Ms account rolls). It is worth noting that even when farmers had come on the scene and most of the demesnes had been leased, both receiver and treasurer, as well as other monk officials, remain in view wherever there are surviving documents to provide this information. While the monks themselves never ceased to keep in personal contact with their manors in the period prior to leasing, they also relied on a more or less permanent staff of experienced administrative officials, who seem to have been entrusted with all of the duties that they also continued to perform. There seems to have been little or no noticeable relinquishment of their active participation in manorial affairs, but rather a sharing of responsibilities with a small, select group trained in the role of assistants and deputies, a group to which we will now turn our attention.

The most prominent of these was the steward, *senescallus domini*, who was in a different category from the others, both socially and economically, and who had a prominent seat on the prior's advisory council. This representative of prioral authority appears occasionally on manorial accounts inspecting stock, but more frequently on court rolls presiding in the name of the lord prior, settling disputes, passing judgement and levying fines, and examining individuals who petitioned to take on or give up a holding. He was often a man of prominence in the local community and county; Robert atte More and Edward Coudray, for example, are known to have served as high sheriffs for Hampshire and both were summoned to parliament between *c* 1390 and 1420 (PRO *Lists and Indexes* 1898, 55; *Parliaments of England*, i, 256, 263, 1878).

However, the permanent nucleus of administrative experts included other men of some standing in the locality, who were also sometimes named as prior's counsellors. One of these was John Greenfield from 1411 to 1447; he was favoured with eight grants of land during his years of service, and thus appears to have been managing his own sizeable properties as well as supervising those of St Swithun's (WCL Ms Cathedral Records, iii, nos 1, 2, 11–16). In 1427 he was given room and board in the monastery *pro suo bono servicio*; in this same year he is found turning over stock to a new farmer at Wonston, while, during the previous year, he had stayed at Hannington to supervise the drawing up of a new rental (WCL Ms accounts). In 1430 he spent some time at Mapledurham where he was in charge of the measuring of the demesne lands prior to preparing a new rental there; and in 1446 he was again at Mapledurham to audit the account of the previous year (BL Add. Rolls 28106, 28125). Robert Hayhod, styled *clericus domini*, was active on most of the Hampshire and Wiltshire manors over a 38-year period during which some 50 of his manorial visits are recorded on the surviving accounts (WCL Ms account rolls).

The stipends of this group were made up of payments from several manors: Greenfield and one of two men called John Mounter receiving 40s *per annum* from Crondall on several accounts and half a mark from Wootton and Mapledurham. The two Mounters, who were seldom distinguished from one another, occur in the service of the priory between 1377 and 1434; they were probably both also *clerici domini*, and in the latter year one of them was receiving what may have been a retirement pension of 20s *per annum* from Crondall. There was also a John Brygger, *clericus*, who must have belonged to the permanent group of senior officials because his sphere of duty covered nine of the Hampshire estates in the years between 1381 and 1405. At Woolstone in 1398 he was named as supervisor of the lord's stock; and in 1405, also at Woolstone, one of the Mounters was similarly addressed (PRO SC6/757/19, 21). These few examples have been singled out because their names occur frequently, along with informative details. It should be noted that there were many others who, like Thomas Brygge or Brygger, brother of the monk hordarian Ralph Basyng, were

probably employed only on a part time basis and only at one or two manors; Brygge occurs only at Woolstone where he received an annual stipend of 20s when he supervised the stock there in the 1380s and 1390s (PRO SC6/757/7–19). The names of 37 employees, excluding the stewards and bailiffs, sergeants and reeves, have come to light in this 70-year period.

Some of the prior's own household or *familia* are among this group which, however, at Winchester is not easily identified, either in terms of size or of individual members. When names and identity are provided, they are also found on the manorial circuit, accompanying the prior or commissioned to perform specified duties which the accountant has occasionally noted for the auditors' benefit. Thus, John Brygger, who supervised the stock at Woolstone in the 1390s, is listed among the prior's *familia* staying at Crondall in 1384 and 1400 (WCL Ms account rolls); Henry Colyns also accompanied the prior to Crondall in 1400 and four years later was sent to Stockton to look for a runaway serf (BL Add. Roll 24399). Walter Wyccher is described as a member of the prior's *familia* on the Hurstbourne account roll of 1391 where his duty with others was to arrange a lease (WCL Ms account roll); he had previously been a serf belonging to Crondall who was manumitted in 1386 (Greatrex 1978, no 21).

Among St Swithun's manorial *servientes* were some known to have been local residents who were employed for particular tasks. Robert Kyllyngale was one of these; his sphere of duty included the manors of Wootton/Manydown and Mapledurham between 1425 and 1450; but he first appears at the hock court at Mapledurham in 1419 seeking permission to marry Joanna Mounk, widow, and have access to her holding. His chief recorded task was to collect pannage money and rent; but he also went to London on at least one occasion on the lord's business [*in negocio domini*] (BL Add. Rolls 28086, WCL Ms account, Crondall). In 1442 his services were rewarded by the grant of a tenement in Winchester for the token rent of one rose, and he and his wife were received into the monastic confraternity (Greatrex 1978, no 269). John Dollyng occurs between 1385 and 1403 on six of the manors, always in connection with shearing (WCL Ms accounts, Hannington, Hurstbourne, Littleton, Silkstead, Wonston, Wootton). William Haiward was sent to Wonston in 1448 to work with the farmer there in writing up the account, and to Mapledurham two years later to draw up an agreement with its farmer concerning repairs to the kitchen (WCL Ms accounts, BL Add. Roll 28129).

From his studies Drew concluded that by 1330 each of the St Swithun's manors was in the sole charge of one man who was named as either a sergeant or a reeve, an arrangement that generally replaced the bailiff and reeve combination of the thirteenth century, with a few exceptions where bailiffs continued to have special jurisdiction (Drew 1947, 23). The reeve was, without doubt, the most important official resident on the manor for he was in effect the demesne farm manager. He was normally a villein holding a virgate or so of land, either elected by his fellows or appointed by the prior and his council; evidence is lacking on the St Swithun's court rolls to show which procedure was the more common, but approval and confirmation would certainly have had to come from the priory. As payment he received acquittance of his rent and customary works, the value of which ranged from 5s at Whitchurch (in 1386), Enford (in 1403) and Wonston (1381–1383) to 12s at Mapledurham (in 1400) (WCL Ms account rolls, BL Add. Roll 28067). In addition, there were often reductions for extra duties like the collection of rents and the supervision and feeding of hired labourers at harvest time.

The reeve's responsibilities included the oversight of the manorial full time servants or *famuli* most of whom, by the late fourteenth century, were paid annual stipends; some of them were customary tenants who may have benefitted from rent free tenure while they were employed in the manorial *curia* (Postan 1954, 16). Those most frequently listed on the accounts are carters, oxherds, shepherds, ploughmen, swineherds and dairywomen, whose labours had to be organized and assigned by the reeve according to seasonal requirements under direction from the priory. It is worth noting that among the first farmers of the Winchester demesnes were a number of former

reeves whom we have shown to be men of humble, sometimes unfree, origin. In contrast, a substantial proportion of those who took on leases of the archbishop of Canterbury's demesnes were described as gentlemen (Du Boulay 1966, 232).

The evidence available suggests that the sergeants on the cathedral manors comprised a group of able and intelligent men, a few of whom at least were transferred (promoted) from one manor to another and from one post to another. Benedict atte Mersh, for example, first appears as sergeant of Wootton in 1383 and two years later as sergeant of both Wootton and nearby Hannington; by 1391 he had moved on to become bailiff of Hurstbourne; finally, in 1398, after obtaining his manumission, he was described as a tenant of the priory manor of Michelmersh where he had probably retired (WCL Ms account rolls, Greatrex 1978, no 25). John Newman, who served as reeve of Wootton in 1398 is probably the sergeant of that name who was at Crondall between 1406 and 1428 (WCL Ms account rolls), while others like Robert Voke, reeve of Whitchurch manor from 1405 to 1418, and John Brown, reeve of Wootton/Manydown from 1432 to 1444, became farmers of the demesnes which they had previously managed (WCL Ms account rolls).

It seems reasonable to assume that continuity in office implies satisfaction on the part of both employer and employed. Indeed, the final reckoning on the yearly accounts in the period under investigation does suggest that, despite indisputable evidence of the relentless scrutiny of the monastic auditors, the computants were treated with justice, not infrequently tempered with mercy. Explanations for failure to achieve the estimated yield of grain, for unusually high harvest expenses, or for heavy losses of animals were sometimes accepted and some allowances made. In 1406, and other years, the reeve of Woolstone sought to impress the auditors and forestall queries by including among the entries under the section of the account headed 'Instaurum', 'as the stock supervisor has verified' [*ut testatur per supervisorem instauri*] (PRO SC6/757/22).

Nevertheless, the Winchester monks as landowners subscribed to the prevailing agricultural policy that the lord must suffer no loss and, therefore, that the farm manager should be held responsible for any excess of expenditure over receipts. It should be borne in mind that this attitude reflects the principle on which medieval accounting was based, namely, on charge and discharge rather than on profit and loss. It speaks well for St Swithun's and its reeves that many remained in office at a time when monastic and lay landowners were keeping a tight rein because of dwindling markets, shortage of labour and the other concomitants of a declining economy. It also suggests that farm managers, like John Newman at Crondall, who seems to have paid sizeable sums levied against his accounts, must have been successfully advancing their own financial interests at the same time (Drew 1947, 39).

This critical situation was also reflected in the peasants' increasing restlessness and discontent and their more forceful pressing for the commutation of all customary services in favour of money payments. And yet a careful study of the St Swithun's court rolls in these unsettled years fails to reveal any open hostility to the lord despite the lengthening list of defective rents on the account rolls. In fact there are sufficient examples of the lowering or waiving of entry fines and the cancelling of heriot payments to warrant the conclusion that the monastic official or steward was adhering to a policy of consistent moderation in the face of hardship and poverty. To give but two examples, William Colles of Woolstone was excused from payment of his fine by the court at Woolstone in 1370 and for the next five years because of his inability to pay [*quia impotens*] (PRO SC2/154/79); William Barber, who paid 18d heriot at Mapledurham in 1424, had his money returned for two reasons: because of his poverty and because he was employed on the manor (BL Add. Roll 28094). Sergeants, reeves, *famuli* and customary tenants were all recipients of the lord's justice, many of them benefitting from a severity modified by restraint, as well as from various small rewards in cash and kind; the evidence at our disposal suggests that the unfree tenantry were not oppressed, while the rise in the amount of cash payments in lieu of services implies that their financial condition was

improving, as the landlords were gradually being reduced to the status of employers, hiring and paying wages to the very people who had formerly performed the customary works.

Although precise figures as to the amounts and kinds of grain and stock delivered to the priory are recorded on the dorse of every surviving manorial account, the task of determining the total quantity of any particular commodity supplied in any given year is impossible to ascertain. Not even rough estimates can be calculated because of the patchy survival of accounts. What were the deciding factors that lay behind the arrangements whose results appear on these accounts? It is not surprising that discernible patterns in this period are difficult to trace. If the annual targets for the minimum issue of some produce on some manors, which Drew observed in the mid-fourteenth century, still applied, these are largely hidden by frequent apparent fluctuations; and if there were fixed quotas for deliveries from manor to priory these too are rarely visible. From a surviving stock book we know that the number of pigs sent to St Swithun's from eighteen manors in 1390 was 499 and in the following year 469 (WCL Ms). A comparison between the totals for individual manors on these two dates and the totals for the same manors in later years reveals an appreciable variation in the number of pigs delivered; and it is to be noted that small numbers were still being supplied in 1450, some, as at Wootton/Manydown, in accordance with the terms of the lease.

Dairy products in the form of milk, cream and butter were supplied by the home farm at Barton, although after 1402 all references to butter cease; perhaps it was purchased in the city market. Large quantities of cheese must have been consumed by the monks to whom it was sent from at least nine manors, the largest recorded amounts being from Hurstbourne which provided 826lbs in 1391, Crondall 644lbs in 1387, and Barton 721lbs in 1402 (WCL Ms account rolls). Eggs were transported to Winchester from many, even distant manors; Mapledurham, for example, sent 500 in 1400 (BL Add. Roll 28067). Even so, with an average of 750 eggs consumed weekly in the refectory, as itemised in a late fifteenth-century diet roll (Kitchin 1892, 307–330), large quantities must have been obtained by other means, some presumably from a flock of resident poultry within the monastic precinct.

Barton delivered large numbers of sheep each year to the main kitchen, with two regularly allocated to the infirmary kitchen: a total of 100 in 1402 and 12 lambs to the prior's kitchen, only 49 *in toto* in 1428; the farmer at Silkstead sent 59 in 1414 and 36 in 1452, while Littleton provided 24 sheep in 1400 and 3 lambs to the prior, and Whitchurch 20 in 1416 and 38 in 1446 (WCL Ms account rolls). In 1436, Prior William Aulton's table was graced by a boar sent from Woolstone where it had been taken by the court as heriot (PRO SC6/758/10). Swans were kept on three of the manors; in 1433 a total of 18 found their way on to the monastic menu, 15 from Chilbolton and 3 from Whitchurch; for lack of evidence it is impossible to say whether this was an unusual or a frequent occurrence (WCL Ms account rolls).

Many of the cartloads of provisions for the priory were delivered to the curtarian, an obedientiary like the hordarian who was unique to Winchester; his duties were similar to those of the cellarer and on some accounts he is given both titles. However, a distinction is made between the two in the case of wheat and barley delivered to the monastic stores; for example, the carter from Barton in 1402 brought 121 quarters of wheat for the curtarian and only 12 for the cellarer; and in the same year he delivered 20 quarters of barley to the curtarian and 198 to the cellarer. The quantities of grain supplied to St Swithun's were subject to fluctuations before the demesnes were leased, at which time, in several cases at least, specified amounts of grain and often some poultry were imposed on the farmer as part of the agreement. These were relatively small in size and number: at Chilbolton in 1445 it was limited to 20 quarters each of wheat and barley, 9 quarters of oats and 12 each of geese, capons and fowls (WCL Ms account roll); at Enford in 1433 John Gervays, the farmer, was required to provide 40 quarters of wheat, 50 of barley, 6 of oats and 10 of the mixture known as dredge; 12 each of geese, capons and fowls were also included (BL Harley Roll X.8).

Despite the problems presented by both the

surviving evidence and the lack of it, problems of interpretation on the one hand and problems resulting from loss and destruction of much of the cathedral archive on the other, there is abundant scope for further research in what remains; the results of such an enterprise would provide grounds for a comparison with the pioneering work on Canterbury cathedral priory (Smith 1943) and more recent research on other medieval ecclesiastical estates like Westminster (Harvey 1977) and Worcester (Dyer 1980) and would be a valuable contribution to monastic and to regional economic studies.

A final word of recapitulation by way of conclusion. The monastic landowner was gradually losing out to the peasantry in the changing economic and social conditions of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and the shift in position came about partly because each could supply the other with the commodity most in demand, the assets of the monks being in land and of the peasantry in an increasing amount of cash. In their capacity as monastic landlords and estate managers I would suggest that the prior and convent of St Swithun's appear to have been rather more humane and reasonable than stern and oppressive; an understanding of human nature is all that is required to explain the reason that there was a degree of exploitation on both sides, a fairly strict exaction of manorial rights and dues on one side and a certain amount of resentment and attempted evasion on the other; but no evidence of direct confrontation at Winchester has come to light.

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Abbreviations
BL = British Library
PRO = Public Record Office
WCL = Winchester Cathedral Library
WCM = Worcester Cathedral Muniment

Manuscript Sources
BL Add. Rolls, Mapledurham and Stockton account and court rolls (numbers given in text).
BL Ms Harley 328, Injunctiones W. Wykeham.
BL Rot Harl., Enford account rolls (numbers given in text).
PRO SC6/757/7–, Woolstone account rolls.
WCL Account and Court Rolls of Barton, Chilbolton, Crondall, Hannington, Hurstbourne, Littleton, Silkstead, Whitchurch, Wonston, Wootton.
Note: the name of the manor and date of the account are given in the text so that no further reference is necessary.
WCL Cathedral Records, a collection of documents pasted into three large volumes.
WCL Stock Book of the Manors, 1390–92.
WCM C. 1, 2, 531–7, Bisshopeston (Bushton) account rolls.

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