

New Light on Master Alexander of Swerford (d. 1246): The Career and Connections of an Oxfordshire Civil Servant¹

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SUMMARY

New evidence, chiefly from college muniments in Oxford and Cambridge, sheds fresh light on the career of Alexander of Swerford, a prominent royal clerk and compiler of the Red Book of the Exchequer. Almost certainly he was a native of Swerford in Oxfordshire, where he may have begun his career as a rural dean. Though in orders he fathered at least one and possibly several children. For a time he held office in plurality as archdeacon and as treasurer of St. Paul's cathedral, and he seems to have been a competent canon lawyer with wide intellectual interests. Two key documents concerning Alexander's daughter, one a marriage contract and the other containing an important list of Exchequer officials, are here printed for the first time.

Master Alexander of Swerford is a familiar character in the history of 13th-century government, worthy of commemoration as one of the first official 'archivists' in English history. His career has been studied in detail by Hubert Hall, and more recently by A.B. Emden, both of whom accepted the longstanding tradition that it was Alexander, active as a baron of the royal Exchequer in the 1230s and 1240s, who was responsible for compiling the famous *Red Book of the Exchequer* together with a number of other surveys and memoranda. It is Alexander who deserves the credit for preserving the few surviving copies of the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* by Richard fitz Neal, our chief source of information on 12th and 13th-century Exchequer practice.² By the same token, through his compilation of the *Red Book*, edited in the 1890s by Hubert Hall, Alexander can be said to have given rise to one of the most bitter squabbles in modern historical literature: the epic dispute in which Hall's editorial failings were ridiculed by the poisoned pen of John Horace Round. Round's assault upon the scholarship of Hubert Hall was devastating. However, his attempt at the same time to impugn the reputation of Alexander of Swerford has proved less enduring, so that today Alexander can still be

¹ For help in the writing of this paper, I am indebted to the Marquess of Anglesey, Catherine Hall, John Maddicott and Malcolm Underwood. The charters printed below are published by courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College Cambridge.

² *The Red Book of the Exchequer*, ed. H. Hall, Rolls Series (1896), i, pp. xxxv–xlix; *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. L. Stephen and others (1885–99) *sub* Swerford, with minor corrections suggested by A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, iii, p. 1832.

regarded as one of the more intriguing and influential figures in the history both of the medieval Exchequer and of official record keeping.³ The biographical framework for Alexander supplied by Hall and Emden rules out the need for any detailed new survey of his career, but nonetheless leaves various questions unanswered. Some of these can now be solved, with the help of evidence recently brought to light in the college archives of Oxford and Cambridge. In particular, by alerting us to the fact that Alexander fathered at least one child, this new evidence provides us with an insight into clerical marriage and the enforcement of celibacy amongst the higher clergy of 13th-century England.

In all likelihood Alexander was a native of Swerford in Oxfordshire. Hubert Hall suggested that he was born at some time in the late 1170s, and that by 1200 at the latest he had entered service at the royal Exchequer, acting as clerk to the king's treasurer William of Ely.⁴ He appears to have remained active as an Exchequer clerk until 1220 or so, during which time he began his work of collecting and codifying the ancient Exchequer records.⁵ It was by this means that he established contacts with another of the king's financial officers, William of Cornhill, elected bishop of Coventry in 1214.⁶ Alexander is found as a clerk in Cornhill's service from before 1214, and by 27 November 1218 had been promoted by Cornhill as archdeacon of Shropshire.⁷ Thereafter, his duties as archdeacon carried him away from the Exchequer, although he continued on occasion to be described as king's clerk. In 1221/2 he is said to have played a part in obtaining quittance for the bishopric of Coventry from liability for *murdrum* fines, and in 1228 and 1231 he was dispatched on missions to Rome and the Welsh Marches, all of which suggests continued contact with the court and the central government.⁸ Throughout this period, he retained personal interests in London and the home counties. He had been granted houses in London by the abbot and convent of Westminster as early as 1210, and by 1214 had been promoted to the Hertfordshire living of Tewin.⁹ By 1218 he

³ In essence, Round suggested that Alexander had misunderstood and misrepresented many of the 12th-century records from which he was working; J.H. Round, *Studies on the Red Book of the Exchequer* (1898), pp. 67–91. In general, for the dispute between Hall and Round, see D. Knowles, *Great Historical Enterprises* (1963). For a modern assessment of Alexander's work at the Exchequer, see for example R.C. Stacey, *Politics, Policy and Finance under Henry III 1216–1245* (1987), pp. 41–2.

⁴ *Red Book*, ed. Hall, pp. xxxv, xxxviii–ix, 4, and see *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the 16th year of the reign of King John*, ed. P.M. Barnes (Pipe Roll Soc. n.s. xxxv), pp. xxvi, 7; H.G. Richardson, 'William of Ely, the King's Treasurer (1195–1215)', *Trans. Royal Historical Soc.*, 4th ser. xv (1932), pp. 48–9, 54, 87, 89; *Westminster Abbey Charters 1066–c.1214*, ed. E. Mason (London Record Soc. xxv), nos. 335, 346, 423–4, 426, 439, 480.

⁵ He is probably to be identified as the Alexander clerk of the Exchequer, serving as an attorney at the Bench in the Trinity term of 1220: *Curia Regis Rolls*, ix, pp. 9, 102.

⁶ For Cornhill's service at the Exchequer, see S. Painter, *The Reign of King John* (Baltimore 1949), pp. 86, 270.

⁷ *The Cartulary of Bradenstoke Priory*, ed. V.C.M. London (Wiltshire Record Soc. xxxv), no. 660; *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T. Duffus Hardy (1835), pp. 166b, 176; *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the 5th year of the reign of King Henry III*, ed. D. Crook (Pipe Roll Soc. n.s. xlviii), p. 3, and for his first recorded appearance as archdeacon of Shropshire, in November 1218, see British Library, MS. Cotton Tiberius C v (Register of St. Thomas' Acon) fo. 152v. (156v.).

⁸ For the quittance from *murdrum*, see a schedule attached to a charter of Richard I in favour of the see of Coventry, now held by the Marquess of Anglesey at Plas Newydd: *adquietatum est murdrum per cartam trium libertatum in Staffordshir anno regni regis Henrici terti v' in tribus maneriis episcopi per manum A(lexandri) archidiaconi Salop'bir'*. For Alexander's diplomatic and other missions, see *Patent Rolls 1225–32*, pp. 169, 453; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1232–47*, pp. 75, 82, 106–7; *Close Rolls 1227–31*, pp. 141, 467; Emden, *Biographical Register*, p. 1132; *Calendar of Liberate Rolls 1226–40*, pp. 15, 42, 80, 88, 98, 113, and see British Library, MS. Harley Charter 49.D.46, where as Alexander (of Swerford) archdeacon of Shropshire, he witnesses a private charter in company with Walter Mauclerk the royal treasurer (1228 × 1233) and various leading royal judges.

⁹ *Westminster Charters*, ed. Mason, no. 327; *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, pp. 279, 281; xiv, nos. 45, 387, 1484. Part of his London property, situated outside Ludgate, he transferred between 1218 and 1232 to a man named Master Roger of Worcester: London, Guildhall Library MS. D. & C. St. Paul's 25121/296 (with title as archdeacon of Shropshire).

had also been granted the prebend of Consumpta-per-Mare in the cathedral church of St. Paul's, and at some time between 1221 and 1224, as archdeacon of Shropshire, he is to be found witnessing charters of bishop William of London, another one-time financial officer of the court.¹⁰ In 1232 he took up residence as treasurer of St. Paul's, and at the same time received promotion to the two churches of Brent Pelham and Pelham Furneaux in Hertfordshire, annexed to the office of treasurer since the 1160s.¹¹ He was subsequently to resign the archdeaconsry of Shropshire, but at least for a time he held both the treasurership of St. Paul's and the archdeaconsry of Shropshire in plurality, a most unusual and, some would argue, canonically irregular arrangement.¹² In 1234 he was admitted to sit as a baron of the Exchequer, and it was upon the Exchequer that his interests focused for the remaining twelve years of his life. There he took an active role in the auditing of accounts and the compiling of memoranda and records, continuing the work which he had begun as an Exchequer clerk under King John.¹³ He died in 1246, probably on 19 or 22 October.¹⁴ During his lifetime he had built up a substantial property holding of his own, including houses and estates in London, at Milton Bryan in Bedfordshire, Bix in Oxfordshire, Tewin, Hoddesdon and Pelham in Hertfordshire, Sutton in Middlesex, Fobbing and Roydon in Essex, and Talworth in Surrey.¹⁵ Part of this estate was used, before his death, to endow chantry chapels and obituary celebrations in the cathedral of St. Paul's and the London priory of St. Bartholomew.¹⁶ Of his other ecclesiastical benefices, besides his prebends at London and Lichfield, it is possible that he was also a canon of Hereford, since he gave the dean and chapter there an otherwise unidentified book, probably a Bible, and 5 marks towards the cathedral fabric, mentioned in a Hereford obit list.¹⁷ Besides this, he held the two churches of Pelham attached to his office as treasurer of St. Paul's, the church of Tewin in Hertfordshire, and a perpetual vicarage in the Oxfordshire church of Swerford, assumed to have been his birthplace. In 1228, after

¹⁰ *Early Charters of Waltham Abbey 1062-1230*, ed. R. Ransford (1989), nos. 551-2, and for his prebend, see John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066-1300*, revised edition by D.E. Greenway, 5 vols. (1968-), i, p. 43. The lands of the prebend originally lay in the parish of Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex, but had later been washed away by the sea. Hence the name of the prebend, which in effect consisted of a cash bursary from the cathedral chapter.

¹¹ Emden, *Biographical Register*, p. 1132; *Fasti*, ed. Greenway, i, p. 22; and for the churches of Pelham Furneaux and Brent Pelham, see *The Early Charters of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's London* ed. M. Gibbs (Camden Soc. 3rd ser. lviii), nos. 191-3, 231, 328; *V.C.H. Hertfordshire*, iv, pp. 98, 106.

¹² For his witnessing with his joint title in April 1232, and still with title as archdeacon as late as 1 July 1232, see *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1300-1326*, p. 407; *The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey*, ed. U. Rees (1975), i, pp. 66-7 nos. 63-4.

¹³ *Red Book*, ed. Hall, pp. xliii-ix.

¹⁴ *Fasti*, ed. Greenway, i, p. 22, and see P.R.O., CP25(1)/85/21, no. 329, which proves that he was dead by 25 November 1246.

¹⁵ *Red Book*, ed. Hall, pp. xlv-viii; *Liber Feodorum. The Book of Fees commonly called Testa de Nevill* (1920-31), ii, pp. 829, 833, 887; *Westminster Charters*, no. 327; *Curia Regis Rolls*, xiv, no. 45; xvi, nos. 691, 876, 994, 2278; *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the 4th year of the Reign of King Henry III*, ed. B.E. Harris (Pipe Roll Soc. n.s. xlvii), p. 148; *Feet of Fines for Essex, volume 1 (A.D. 1182-A.D. 1272)*, ed. R.E.G. Kirk (1899-1910), pp. 111 no. 492, 146 no. 770; *Charters of St. Paul's*, ed. Gibbs, pp. 162-4 no. 207; *The Domesday of St. Paul's of the year MCCXXII*, ed. W.H. Hale (Camden Soc. lxxviii), pp. 95-6; *V.C.H. Hertfordshire*, iii, p. 439; iv, pp. 95-6. and see below.

¹⁶ *Red Book*, ed. Hall, pp. xlv, xlviii; *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard (Rolls Series 1864-9), iii, p. 171; *9th Rep. Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (1883), appendix p. 40b; *V.C.H. Hertfordshire*, iii, p. 486, citing the charter of Peter prior of St. Bartholomew's, now Guildhall Library, MS. D. & C. St. Paul's 25122/1452; and for the Tewin and Hoddesdon lands, see also P.R.O., CP25(1)85/20, nos. 305-6, 311, 313; CP25(1)/85/21, no. 329.

¹⁷ R. Rawlinson, *The History and Antiquities of the City and Cathedral of Hereford* (London 1717), appendix p. 26, commemorating Alexander of Swerford *thesaurarius London' qui contulit presenti ecclesie unam bibliothecam et operi eiusdem ecclesie quinque marcas, et in vita sua excommunicare fecit omnes qui dictum librum a presenti ecclesia alienarent*. As John Maddicott has pointed out to me, the word *bibliotheca*, here used of a book rather than a library, almost invariably refers to a Bible.

several years as vicar, he was promoted rector of Swerford at the presentation of the canons of Osney.¹⁸

Thus far, the facts of Alexander's career have been adequately if not comprehensively surveyed by Hubert Hall and his successors. However, there are various additions that can now be made to this basic outline. The first concerns Alexander's parentage and his early years. Whilst acknowledging that Alexander was in all likelihood a native of Swerford, Hall could discover little else of his origins, save that he was possibly related to a woman named Emma of Swerford, a benefactor of Tewkesbury abbey. Hall suggested that Emma was Alexander's mother, noting a reference in the royal plea roll for 1200 to an Alexander fitz Emma active in litigation over land in Gloucestershire and Warwickshire.¹⁹ However, in this he was almost certainly mistaken, since the plea of 1200 to which he refers can be traced back to a final concord of 1195 in which the Alexander in question is named as the son of Emma de Brade-weia and William Parfei.²⁰ The Emma of Swerford who served as a benefactor of Tewkesbury, although almost certainly a kinswoman of Alexander of Swerford, can hardly have been his mother. She is recorded from 1221, when she was in dispute over property at Arlington in Gloucestershire, until 1241, when she was in possession of the manor of Milton Bryan in Bedfordshire and called Master Alexander of Swerford, the Exchequer clerk, to warrant her title there, said to have been granted to Alexander by Hubert de Burgh.²¹ By 1241, Alexander must have been at least sixty years of age and probably considerably older, so that whilst Emma could have been his sister, cousin or possibly even his daughter, it seems most unlikely that she was his mother.²²

Whatever her exact relation to Alexander, Emma of Swerford does at least substantiate a connection between Alexander's family and the West Country, particularly Gloucestershire. As Hall noted, before 1218 Alexander received a grant of tithes at Chesterton near Cirencester from the monks of St. Peter's abbey Gloucester, subsequently transferred to Osney abbey, the patrons of Swerford church.²³ At much the same date he is to be found witnessing grants of

¹⁸ *Cartulary of Osney Abbey*, ed. H.E. Salter (Oxford Historical Society lxxxix-xci, xcvi-viii, ci), iii, pp.60-1; *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles Episcopi Lincolnensis A.D. MCCIX-MCCXXXV*, ed. W.P.W. Phillimore and F.N. Davis (Canterbury and York Society i, iii, iv), ii, pp. 29-30.

¹⁹ *Red Book*, ed. Hall, p. xxxvii, citing *Annales Monastici*, i, p. 129; *Rotuli Curiae Regis*, ed. F. Palgrave (London 1835), ii, p. 234.

²⁰ *Feet of Fines in the Public Record Office of the reign of Henry II and of the first seven years of the reign of Richard I* (Pipe Roll Soc. xvii), p. 55, no. 67. As we shall see, Alexander of Swerford was probably the son of a man named Henry, and it is tempting to identify his parents as the Henry and Emma de . . . ford (rest of name illegible) mentioned in the course of a Warwickshire plea in 1200: *Rotuli Curiae Regis*, ii, p. 169. However the original MS. of this plea (P.R.O., KB26/16 m.3), leaves little hope that the mutilated toponym . . . ford could ever have been written as Swerford, whilst, as we have seen, there is now no reason to suppose that Alexander's mother was named Emma. The lordship of the manor of Swerford belonged to Henry de Oilly until c. 1223, when he granted it to Peter fitz Herbert, together with the service of William fitz El(l)ias for half a knight's fee in Tiddington (*Totendon*), Richard de Beaufort for 2 fees in Waterperry (*Pery*), and Reginald fitz Jordan for 1 fee in Ascott (*Escot*), all held from the barony of Hook Norton, in exchange for Peter's manor of Watlington; Taunton, Somerset Record Office, MS. DD/SAS SX132 (Moleyns cartulary), fo.147v., an award witnessed by Fawkes de Bréauté and by Richard of Brackley as sheriff of Oxfordshire.

²¹ *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre . . . for Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire*, 1221, 1222, ed. D.M. Stenton (Selden Soc. lix), no. 79; *The Oxfordshire Eyre, 1241*, ed. J. Cooper (Oxfordshire Record Society lvi), no. 291; G.H. Fowler, 'Rolls of the Justices in Eyre, 1240', *Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, ix (1925), p. 137, no. 216; and see *Curia Regis Rolls*, xvii, no. 1888. Besides the manor of Milton, Alexander had also come into possession of Bryan family land at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire, subject to litigation in 1243: P.R.O. CP25(1)/85/20, no. 306; and see *V.C.H. Bedfordshire*, iii, p. 418.

²² Emma might just possibly be identified as Emma, widow of Walter of Tew, seeking dower at Swerford and Tew in 1221, with a son and heir then living at Buckland Priory in Somerset; *Curia Regis Rolls*, x, pp. 142-3.

²³ *Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae*, ed. W.H. Hart (Rolls Series 1863-7), i, pp. 257-8 (without title as archdeacon acquired in 1218).

property in London by the prior of Kenilworth and the abbot of Winchcombe.²⁴ In 1222 he was appointed one of the executors of Master Robert of Gloucester, late chancellor of Chichester and archdeacon of Stafford, and he was succeeded in a prebend he held at Lichfield in October 1235 by a nephew named Master Simon of Gloucester.²⁵

As yet, Alexander's exact origins remain obscure. Our evidence is still far from sure, but there is one rather intriguing possibility that can now be advanced. To begin with, we should note that many of the early deeds of the small Augustinian priory of Cold Norton in Oxfordshire are witnessed by a man named Alexander (rural) dean of Swerford.²⁶ In the same series of charters, none of which can be dated with any precision, but which appear on palaeographical grounds to belong to the late 12th or early 13th centuries, we find witnesses named variously Alexander dean of Banbury, Alexander of Swerford, Alexander parson of Swerford and Alexander clerk of Ralph fitz Ygain of Swerford. Some or all of these references may apply to one and the same man.²⁷ The same Alexander dean of Swerford occurs as witness to an Osney abbey charter, tentatively dated to the late 1180s, and to a series of charters, dated to some time between 1206 and 1231, relating to the property of Reading abbey at Showell in Swerford. In one of these witness lists, Alexander the dean is joined by his son, also named Alexander.²⁸ Professor Brian Kemp, the editor of the Reading charters, has suggested that Alexander the dean may be identified with Master Alexander of Swerford of Exchequer fame. There is nothing inherently impossible in this identification. It was by no means unknown for a clerk to begin his career as a rural dean, and from there to rise to much higher promotion. For example, at roughly the time that Alexander of Swerford was entering service at the royal Exchequer, his close contemporary, Master Robert of Clipston, appears to have been promoted from a rural deanery in Gloucestershire to serve as official of three successive bishops of Worcester and to act as a leading papal judge delegate.²⁹ Superficially, it may be hard to believe that a rural dean, found on numerous occasions in residence within his Oxfordshire deanery, could also have spent prolonged periods of activity at the king's Exchequer. Moreover, since Alexander the dean may have held office from as early as 1189, and since Master Alexander of Swerford died as late as 1246, for the dean and the Exchequer clerk to be one and the same person we would need to assume that Master Alexander remained in active employment at the Exchequer until his late seventies. But neither of these objections is entirely conclusive. To add ten years or so to the age of Master Alexander at the time of his death is hardly to exceed the bounds of possibility. As for the question of residence, and bearing in mind that Alexander the dean had witnessed many of the early deeds of Cold Norton priory, we find an Alexander of Swerford, without title as dean, appearing in 1213 alongside Samuel prior of Cold Norton as witness to a charter relating to the London property of Winchcombe abbey, almost certainly drawn up in London and hence possibly witnessed by Alexander during his period of residence at the Exchequer.³⁰ An alternative

²⁴ *Cartulary of St. Bartholomew's Hospital*, ed. N.J.M. Kerling (London 1973), nos. 194, 839.

²⁵ P.R.O., C60/18 m.10; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1232-47*, p. 120.

²⁶ Brasenose College muniments, Dunthorpe Charters nos. 5-7, 12; *ibid.* Retcombe Charters, no. 2*; *ibid.* Rollright Charters, nos. 2, 3, 5.

²⁷ Brasenose College muniments, Levescombe Charters, no. 1; *ibid.* Lidstone Charters, nos. 1, 2, 4, 15.

²⁸ *Osney Cartulary*, iv, pp. 333, 374-5; *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, ed. B.R. Kemp (Camden Soc. 4th ser. xxxi-ii), i, nos. 530-1; British Library, MS. Add. Charter 19613. One of the Osney charters, awarding the church of Waterperry, can be dated 1189 on the basis of the entry in *Annales Monastici*, iv, p. 43.

²⁹ *The Letters and Charters of Cardinal Guala Bicchieri, Papal Legate in England 1216-1218*, ed. N. Vincent (Canterbury and York Society, 1996), no. 9n.

³⁰ *Cartulary of St. Bartholomew's*, no. 839, misdated and with a false identification of the abbot of Wynch' as abbot of Winchester rather than Winchcombe.

possibility would be that the Alexander of Swerford who compiled the *Red Book of the Exchequer* should be identified not with the rural dean of Swerford but with the dean's son, another Alexander, who occurs as witness to one of the Showell charters of 1206 x 1231. Such an identification would allow us to picture Master Alexander as a member of a clerical dynasty, the son of a rural dean. More than this, it might suggest that he went on to inherit his father's parish church of Swerford, first as vicar and after 1228 as rector. However, as we shall see, Alexander of Swerford, the Exchequer clerk, was in probability the son of a man named Henry. If we are to accept any sort of connection between the dean of Swerford and the author of the *Red Book*, we must either reject the identification of the Exchequer clerk Alexander with Alexander fitz Henry, an unappealing prospect, or accept that Alexander the dean is one and same man as Alexander of the Exchequer.

As for Alexander fitz Henry, his story begins with a series of deeds preserved at Westminster abbey. These record the activities of a man named Alexander clerk of the Exchequer, or Alexander son of Henry, who around the year 1210 was engaged in property transactions within the vill of Westminster. Part of this estate he used to endow lights at the altar of the Virgin Mary in Westminster abbey, a gift made for the souls of himself and his ancestors, and the soul of a woman named Edith daughter of Geoffrey de la Barre by whom Alexander had fathered various children (*pueri*). The terms of this award, and their failure to describe Alexander and Edith as in any sense man and wife, suggest that Alexander's liaison may have been an illicit one, most probably because he was a clerk in holy orders, and hence debarred from marrying.³¹ Can the Exchequer clerk Alexander fitz Henry, the father of Edith's children, be identified with Alexander of Swerford? The chief support for such an identification comes from yet another series of deeds, this time to be found amongst the muniments of Corpus Christi College Cambridge.

The first of these newly discovered charters takes the form of a contract made in the name of Alexander of Swerford, treasurer of St. Paul's, for the marriage of his kinswoman (*consanguinea*) Agatha.³² Let alone its significance for the biography of Swerford, the contract would in any case merit our attention, since documents of this sort survive only rarely from so early a date. Drawn up on 9 October 1240, the contract allows for an alliance between Agatha the kinswoman of Alexander treasurer of St. Paul's and Henry the eldest son of Walter the Chamberlain of Brent Pelham in Hertfordshire, a parish in which Alexander of Swerford held the living as an integral part of his office as treasurer. Henry and Agatha, the contract announces, are to be betrothed at the end of the year 1242, and married six years afterwards. On the day of their betrothal, Alexander will release all the land he holds at Pelham from Agnes de Wauncy, to serve as Agatha's marriage portion and to be held henceforth by Henry and Agnes from Alexander and his heirs and assigns for an annual rent of 2 shillings. In the meantime, from October 1240 until the day of the betrothal, the land is to be handed over to Walter the Chamberlain in custody, so that he may apply its proceeds to the needs of Henry and Agatha. Walter undertakes that on the day of the betrothal, he will allow Henry free power to grant Agatha dower in a third of all Walter's lands and rents, and that three years after the marriage has taken place, should Agatha and Henry wish to live together outside the care of Walter, Agatha will receive custody of her marriage portion together with

³¹ *Westminster Charters*, ed. Mason, nos. 413, 414.

³² Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, muniments XXIV.A.34, printed below appendix 1. This and the accompanying collection of Pelham deeds came into the possession of the college together with an estate at Landbeach, granted to Corpus Christi by the Chamberlain family in the 14th century: *V.C.H. Cambridgeshire*, ix, pp. 141-2. I wish to thank Catherine Hall, the college archivist, for her assistance in tracing these documents.

a third of £10 in lands and rents which Walter controls at Tickhill in Yorkshire, and a third of Walter's estate at Pelham. Should Henry refuse to proceed with either the betrothal or the marriage, Agatha may nonetheless be betrothed and married to Walter's younger son Theobald, on the same terms as she would have been betrothed and married to Henry. Should Agatha, Henry or Theobald die before betrothal has taken place, Walter is to continue to enjoy the income from Agatha's marriage portion for 12 years after 1240, with reversion thereafter to Alexander and his assigns, save for the service of a villein and 3 and a half acres of land in Pelham, which Alexander has granted Walter in return for a quitrent.

A second charter, issued in July 1249 by Fulk Basset bishop of London, proves that the marriage between Henry and Agatha did indeed take place, and that Agatha gained possession of her marriage portion, described as 100 acres of land in Pelham formerly held by Alexander of Swerford from Agnes de Wauncy, hereby confirmed to Henry and Agatha, husband and wife, in return for an annual rent of 2 shillings and service to the bishop of London, presumably acting in his capacity as Alexander's heir and assign.³³ The bishop's award is witnessed by an impressive array of dignitaries, including the treasurer of the royal Exchequer and three other Exchequer barons, the chancellor of the Exchequer, the king's justices sitting in eyre at the Strand, and by the dean and several canons of St. Paul's. Some indication of the gravity conferred on the charter by this assembly of witnesses is provided by the fact that an abstract of the charter was entered on the royal pipe roll for the year 32 Henry III (1247/8). Merely for its list of Exchequer officials, the charter would merit publication.³⁴ Beyond this however, it adds a crucial piece of evidence to the biography of Alexander of Swerford. In the marriage contract of 1240 Agatha is described by Swerford simply as his kinswoman. In the charter of 1249 she is described unequivocally as Swerford's daughter.

So Alexander of Swerford, author of the *Red Book* and treasurer of St. Paul's, fathered at least one daughter. The age of this child, Agatha, cannot be established with any certainty, but given that she was expected to take possession of her marriage portion in 1249, the likelihood is that she was born at some time in the late 1220s. We know nothing definite of the identity of her mother, but it is at least a plausible suggestion that Agatha was one in a succession of children said to have been fathered by Alexander the clerk, alias Alexander fitz Henry by his companion Edith the daughter of Geoffrey de la Barre, a liaison which had already produced more than one child by 1210 or so. We might go even further than this, and suggest that Alexander of Swerford, alias Alexander the clerk or Alexander fitz Henry, is the same man as Alexander the rural dean of Swerford mentioned in the records from the 1180s onwards, known to have fathered a son and namesake, Alexander, found witnessing in company with Alexander the dean at some time after 1206. Agatha of Swerford's husband, Henry the Chamberlain, was heir to a minor landholding in Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and elsewhere, first recorded in the early years of the 13th century.³⁵ Henry the Chamberlain himself has left little impression on the records, and was dead by 1256 when the king gave the wardship of his heir and the marriage of his widow, presumably Agatha of Swerford, to

³³ Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, muniments XXIV.A.34.1, printed below appendix 2.

³⁴ For a collection of similar lists, from the 1180s onwards, see N. Vincent, 'The Origins of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer', *English Historical Review*, cviii (1993), pp. 106-7, 118-21, and another since noted in *The Thame Cartulary*, ed. H.E. Salter (Oxfordshire Record Society xxv-vi), pp. 137-8, no. 195.

³⁵ *V.C.H. Cambridgeshire*, ix, pp. 56, 141-2; *V.C.H. Hertfordshire*, iv, pp. 95-6; W. Farrer, *Feudal Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge 1920), pp. 35, 165, 189-90; *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, iv, nos. 109, 110. The estate near Tickhill in Yorkshire, mentioned in the marriage contract of 1242, cannot be identified with any certainty, but see possibly *Books of Fees*, pp. 1100, 1104, 1461.

the Poitevin courtier Guy de Lusignan.³⁶ Henry's son Walter fitz Henry, presumably Alexander of Swerford's grandson, who occurs from the late 1250s onwards, appears to have enjoyed a rather unsavoury reputation, being accused of complicity in the murder of a Cambridgeshire man whose estate at Landbeach the Chamberlain family were in the process of purchasing.³⁷ Henry's younger brother Theobald, mentioned in the marriage settlement of 1242 as a potential husband for Agatha of Swerford, entered the church and survived until the mid 1260s when he was succeeded as rector of Landbeach by another brother, John the Chamberlain.³⁸

What does Alexander of Swerford's possession of a mistress and children tell us of clerical celibacy in general? It would be possible to argue that the children born before 1218, when Alexander received promotion as archdeacon of Shropshire, represented no great scandal. The church's insistence upon clerical celibacy was directed chiefly towards the higher clergy, and hence it may have been by no means unusual for a parish priest, or even for a rural dean, to have fathered children when in orders.³⁹ However, for Alexander's daughter Agatha, almost certainly born after her father's promotion as archdeacon, there can be no such special pleading. Alexander of Swerford may well have lived in concubinage, and he certainly fathered children, grave offences in the eyes of church reformers. This state of affairs may even have been the subject of gossip amongst his contemporaries. The chronicler Matthew Paris, who made use of Swerford's collection of Exchequer records, including various of the materials used for the Exchequer *Red Book*, refers in his obituary of Alexander to the fact that he left behind him no equal 'in handsomeness of body, beauty of face or learning in many fields'.⁴⁰ Alexander's handsome exterior may well have been the starting point of his extra-marital liaison and hence as much a curse as a blessing.

According to the standard accounts, celibacy amongst the higher clergy in England became the norm rather than the exception towards the end of the 12th century. At the cathedral church of St. Paul's, for example, the episcopate of Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London (1163–87) appears to have been crucial in ending the ancient abuse whereby the canons of London lived very much as seculars, with their own households, wives and families, often passing on their prebends from father to son over more than one generation. Alexander of Swerford made no attempt to bequeath his ecclesiastical benefices to his children, unless we are to assume that his *nepos* Master Simon of Gloucester, heir to his prebend at Lichfield, was actually Alexander's son. Nonetheless, it is surely instructive that as late as 1249 the bishop of London, Fulk Basset, appears to have felt no compunction in referring openly to the fact that Alexander had fathered a daughter. Elsewhere, from the early years of the 13th century, we find a canon of Hereford and royal justice, Master Robert of Haseley, openly acknowledging his paternity of a daughter named Griselda, in a marriage settlement similar in some respects to that of Swerford's daughter Agatha.⁴¹ Recent research has brought to light several cases of clerical

³⁶ *Close Rolls 1254–6*, p. 441. Guy passed on his rights in the ward and widow to one of his men, who in turn sold them to John de Lymar for a fine of £40.

³⁷ *V.C.H. Cambridgeshire*, ix, pp. 141–2; *Close Rolls 1256–9*, p. 403; *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1247–58*, pp. 626–7; 1258–66, p. 29.

³⁸ *V.C.H. Cambridgeshire*, ix, p. 151, citing the evidence in British Library, MS. Add. 5837 (Cole's transcripts), fo. 48v.

³⁹ See, for example, Henry (rural) dean of Haddon in Northamptonshire and Henry his son, witnesses to a grant to the Premonstratensian abbey of Sulby, c. 1180; Taunton, Somerset Record Office, MS. DD/SF/1646.

⁴⁰ Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard (Rolls Series 1872–83), iv, pp. 587–8, and for Paris' use of materials also found in the *Red Book*, see R. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (2nd ed. 1979), pp. 17–18.

⁴¹ *Landboec sive Registrum de Winchelcumba*, ed. D. Royce (Exeter 1892–1903), ii, p. 262.

incontinence in the first half of the 13th century, including examples in which bishops and cathedral canons fathered children, and at least one notorious case in which a parish church was passed on from father to son over several generations.⁴² No doubt there are other such cases which still await discovery, perhaps a great number given the frequent occurrence in charters and cartularies of names in which paternity is ascribed to a particular named *magister*, 'John son of Master John' and so on, the title *magister* or Master being usually, although not universally, reserved for clerks in holy orders.⁴³ To take only one such example, the Master Simon of Walton, who in April 1243 entered into a contract for the marriage of his son John to Elizabeth daughter of Sewal fitz Henry of Ettington, a prominent Warwickshire knight, can almost certainly be identified as Master Simon de Wauton, royal justice elected bishop of Norwich in 1257.⁴⁴ Besides his son, Master Simon may also have fathered a daughter, Agnes, married to Sewal of Ettington's son James, progenitor of the Shirley family of Derbyshire.⁴⁵ It is possible that Simon had fathered both of these children before taking holy orders. In the same way, probably before entering the church, Philip Lovel, a kinsman of the Lovels of Minster Lovell, is known to have fathered at least two sons and a daughter. Like Simon of Walton and Alexander of Swerford, Philip went on to enjoy a prominent career in royal service, as canon of London and royal treasurer 1252–58, his children apparently presenting no hindrance to his promotion.⁴⁶ In all of this, there appears to have been a considerable disparity between the practices and the theoretical precepts of the church.

In contemporary church statutes, such as the constitutions of bishop Stainsby for the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield where Alexander of Swerford held his archdeaconry, or the statutes of Fulk Basset for the see of London where Swerford resided for much of his life, clerical

⁴² J. Barrow, 'Hereford Bishops and Married Clergy, c. 1130–1240', *Historical Research*, lx (1987), pp. 1–8, citing numerous examples of concubinage and at least one clerical dynasty in the chapter of Hereford as late as the mid 13th century; B.R. Kemp, 'Hereditary Benefices in the Medieval English Church: a Herefordshire example', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, xliii (1970), pp. 1–15, citing family succession to the church of Eye in Herefordshire, only eradicated towards the end of the 13th century; D.E. Desborough, 'Politics and Prelacy in the late twelfth century: the career of Hugh de Nonant, bishop of Coventry, 1188–98', *Historical Research*, lxiv (1991), pp. 12–14, citing the evidence for a man named Philip openly acknowledged as the son of bishop Hugh of Coventry; *English Episcopal Acta VIII: Winchester 1070–1204*, ed. M.J. Franklin (Oxford 1993), pp. liii–iv, listing the sons fathered by Godfrey de Lucy bishop of Winchester (1189–1204), Herbert Poer, bishop of Salisbury (1194–1217), and his brother Richard, bishop of Chichester (1215–17), Salisbury (1217–28) and Durham (1228–37), were the sons of Richard of Ilchester, bishop of Winchester (1174–88).

⁴³ For previously unrecognized examples of clerical marriage or concubinage, see for example *Curia Regis Rolls*, x, pp. 326–7 (illegitimacy of the son of a deacon); xvii, no. 210 (hereditary succession to the church of Gatton in Surrey); P.R.O. KB26/143, m.31d (allegation that Alice wife of John de Vautort, supposedly the daughter of a layman John Belet, was in fact the daughter of Philip de Braose canon of Hereford fl. c. 1230).

⁴⁴ London, College of Arms, MS. Vincent 113 (Vincent's transcripts from the charters of the Shirley family, 1618/19), p. 82, with a further contemporary copy from the same source in Northampton, Northamptonshire Record Office, MS. Finch-Hatton 123, p. 301: a contract of 26 April 1243, by which Sewal and Master Simon grant their children land at Hoga and Tysoe in Warwickshire, and Balcott in Oxfordshire, Master Simon agreeing to discharge Sewal's debts to the Jews. The contract, which I hope to publish elsewhere, implies that both children were under the age of 21. For a charter suggesting that Simon bishop of Norwich was a native of Walton Mauduit in Warwickshire, see Warwick, Warwickshire Record Office, MS. CRR133/5.

⁴⁵ See *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, Vol. 7: Richard I, 1195–12 Edward I, 1284, ed. E. Stokes and F.C. Wellstood (Dugdale Society xi, 1932), no. 674, which demonstrates that James son of Sewal was married to a woman named Agnes de Wauton c. 1247. Both Dugdale and Vincent, who may have had access to documents now lost, describe Agnes as the daughter of Master Simon of Walton: London, College of Arms, MS. Vincent 113, p. 86; W. Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (London 1730), pp. 619–20, 622.

⁴⁶ N. Vincent, 'Philip Lovel', *New Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, forthcoming).

marriage was strictly prohibited.⁴⁷ When contemporary chroniclers wished to blacken the reputation of a bishop or clerk, accusations of incontinence were a frequent resort. Hence, for example, the apparently groundless accusations made by the chroniclers Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris that Peter de Rivallis, royal treasurer 1232–4, was the son, rather than the nephew, of the great courtier bishop of Winchester, Peter des Roches.⁴⁸ From the mid 12th century, and with a vengeance after the Lateran Council of 1215, incontinence, marriage and the fathering of children had come to be regarded, at least in theory, as well beyond the clerical pale. However, as Julia Barrow and others have pointed out, the persistence of marriage, even amongst the higher clergy, was no simple matter of abuse versus the correct enforcement of reform. Children born before a man entered holy orders were exempt from scandal, provided that the clerk was a widower, or that his wife had also taken the religious habit. Contemporary writers were uncertain as to whether celibacy should be applied to all in holy orders, or merely to those in the orders of priest. Moreover, the social status of a clerk's wife could determine whether a man acknowledged his marriage to a respectable woman, or sought to conceal his liaison with a low-born concubine.⁴⁹ The protection afforded Alexander of Swerford's daughter by the bishop of London suggests that Alexander's liaison was not entirely outside the bounds of social respectability even as late as 1249. Forty years earlier, when Alexander's liaison with Edith was openly acknowledged in their property transactions, we can assume that even less stigma attached to this and to other such extra-marital relationships.

There are one or two further points that can be made before we close this brief survey. Firstly, whilst commentators have made much of Alexander's work at the Exchequer in collecting and codifying royal records, they have tended to ignore the relevance of this aspect of his career for his later activities as treasurer of St. Paul's. Yet in many ways Alexander's duties at the Exchequer and at St. Paul's cathedral were complementary to one another. As cathedral treasurer, Alexander would have been chiefly engaged in supervising the running expenses of St. Paul's and in the custody of its financial and other records. The treasury over which he presided had been used as a repository of written records since at least the late 12th century.⁵⁰ As a result, it may be no coincidence that the codification of the records of St. Paul's appears to have improved in the 1230s and 1240s, at a time when Alexander was still treasurer, when the records of the cathedral were employed to compile *matricula*, listing the churches of the diocese of London.⁵¹

Secondly, whilst Alexander is chiefly remembered as a financial expert and compiler of records, these were not his only areas of expertise. As Matthew Paris noted, Alexander was 'learned in many fields'. Paris himself refers to Swerford's knowledge of ancient British history, from which he was able to assert that King Offa had ruled over nine shires before he acquired

⁴⁷ *Councils and Synods with other documents relating to the English Church, II, 1205–1313*, ed. F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney (Oxford 1964), part i (1205–1265), pp. 212, 219, 631–2, although Stainsby's prohibition is directed specifically towards those in priestly orders, rather than to all in holy orders. As an archdeacon, Alexander of Swerford may just possibly have been a deacon rather than a priest. See also *ibid.*, p. 333 for statutes of bishop Roger of London (1229 × 1241), directed more against lay than secular morals, but allowing for general excommunication against those who give shelter to fornicators, adulterers or notorious prostitutes.

⁴⁸ For de Rivallis and des Roches, see N. Vincent, *Peter des Roches, an Alien in English Politics 1205–1238* (Cambridge 1996), pp. 293–4.

⁴⁹ Barrow, 'Hereford Bishops', pp. 3–4.

⁵⁰ *Charters of St. Paul's*, ed. Gibbs, pp. xxxi–ii, xxxv–vi; J.E. Sayers, *Papal Judges Delegate in the Province of Canterbury 1198–1254* (Oxford 1971), pp. 247, 331–2.

⁵¹ In general, see C.R. Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries 1100–1250* (Manchester 1950), pp. 113–14, and for various of the texts, *The Domesday of St. Paul's*, ed. Hale.

the government of all Britain, and that it was Offa who had introduced the payment of Romscot, to finance the needs of visitors to an English school in Rome.⁵² Beyond this, a document discovered amongst the muniments of St. John's College, Cambridge, suggests that Alexander may have been a competent canon lawyer as well as a financier and historian. The document in question, dated at St. Paul's cathedral on 23 November 1238, records a settlement drawn up in Alexander's name, acting as principal papal judge delegate in a dispute between the nuns of Lillechurch in Kent and their mother house, the abbey of Saint-Sulpice-la-Forêt in the Breton diocese of Rennes, the dispute having been deputed to the prior of Holy Trinity London and Alexander in his capacity as treasurer of St. Paul's by papal letters of 1 December 1235.⁵³ The settlement itself is a fairly standard affair, confirming the rights of the abbess of St. Sulpice to provide the blessing to newly elected prioresses of Lillechurch, to visit Lillechurch with a retinue of ten or twelve horses once a year for a period of up to four days at the priory's expense, to be received with due deference and the ringing of the priory's bells, and to correct whatever abuses her enquiries might reveal. Beyond this, however, there is one feature that merits particular attention. Besides the right of the mother house to nominate two nuns of St. Sulpice to reside at Lillechurch, Alexander's judgement refers to the right of the abbess and the prioress between them to select two chaplains to serve the priory's altar and church. Of these, at least one must be an Englishman, 'familiar with the English language, fit to hear and understand the confessions of the nuns and household (of Lillechurch)'.⁵⁴ This is one of the earliest references in an English source to confessions being taken in the vernacular, and as such deserves to be widely noted by ecclesiastical and linguistic historians alike. It may well be no coincidence that this particular ruling was inspired by a group of English nuns, since there is considerable circumstantial evidence, including the early 13th-century English translation of the *Ancrene Wisse*, to suggest that English women religious of the period enjoyed a poor command of either Latin or French.⁵⁵ Beyond this, the Lillechurch settlement, together with a scattering of the other documents noted above, provides us with a potentially useful bench-mark which might eventually be applied to test the proposition that the *Red Book* and the *Black Book of the Exchequer* are partly written in Alexander's own hand.⁵⁶

The lives of 13th-century clerks make dry but instructive reading. We still know virtually nothing of Alexander of Swerford the man, but of the public figure recorded in charters and lawsuits, we now know a little more; enough at least to suggest, however tentatively, that he began his career as a rural dean in Oxfordshire, that he went on to father at least one and possibly several children, that for a time he held office in plurality as both archdeacon and cathedral treasurer, and that his professional interests extended beyond the records of the royal Exchequer to include the history of the Anglo-Saxon kings and at least a grounding in canon law. It is upon such small details that our understanding of medieval men and women depends.

⁵² Paris, *Chronica Majora*, vi, p. 519n., noted by Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 14. The information supplied by Swerford on Offa appears to have informed others of Paris' remarks in his general chronicle: *Chronica Majora*, i, pp. 331, 360-1; v, p. 563. In turn, it may have been incorporated into Paris' separate life of Offa, the supposed founder of Paris' abbey of St. Albans: *Vitae Duorum Offarum*, ed. W. Wats (London 1644); A. Todd, 'The Vitae Duorum Offarum', unpublished M.Phil. thesis (Cambridge 1991).

⁵³ St. John's College, Cambridge, muniments D10.29, which preserves the seals of St-Sulpice and Lillechurch, but not that of Alexander. I am grateful to Malcolm Underwood for his help with this charter.

⁵⁴ ... *Erit autem unus illorum (capellanorum) Anglicus sciens ydionia Anglicum ut sic sit ydoneus ad audiendas et intelligendas confessiones monialium et familie domus si fuerit necesse.*

⁵⁵ A point first drawn to my attention by John Maddicott.

⁵⁶ For other documents drawn up in Alexander's name, and therefore potentially in his autograph, see below appendix no. 1: Guildhall Library, MS. D. & C. St. Paul's 25121/296.

APPENDIX

1. Contract between Alexander (of Swerford) treasurer of London, and Walter the Chamberlain of Brent Pelham, for the marriage of Alexander's kinswoman Agatha to Henry, Walter's eldest son

9 October 1240

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Muniments XXIV.A.34. Original indenture, endorsed: *Pelham* (s.xviii). Approx. 208 x 100 +13mm. Sealed *sur double queue*, slits for a single tag, tag and seal impression missing. Briefly noticed from the original in London, British Library MS. Additional 5806 (Cole's transcripts, 1743) fo.23v (22v).

CYROGRAPHUM

Hec est conventio facta inter Alexandrum thesaurarium London' et Walterum camerarium de Pelham' Ars de sponsalibus et martimoniis contrahendo inter Henricum primogenitum dicti Walteri et Agatham consanguineam dicti thesaurarii, videlicet quod dictus thesaurarius et dictus Walterus consenserunt et inter se firmarverunt quod sponsalia inter dictas personas contrahantur si vixerint anno domini m^occ^oxl^o secundo completo, et postmodum matrimonium anno sexto post sponsalia contracta. Die autem quo contrahantur sponsalia dabit dictus thesaurarius dicto Henrico in liberum maritagium cum dicta Agatha totam terram suam in Pelham Ars quam tenet de feudo Agnetis de Wauncy cum omnibus suis pertinentiis, habendam et tenendam dictis Henrico et Agathe et eorum heredibus de ipsis duobus procreatis libere et quiete, integre et plenarie in omnibus de predicto thesauro et suis heredibus vel assignatis, faciendo inde servitium quarte partis unius militis et solvendo duos solidos per annum pro omni servitio, consuetudine et demanda, per quod servitium dictus thesaurarius et sui heredes vel assignati adquietabunt dictam terram cum pertinentiis versus capitales dominos in perpetuum, comissa interim terra predicta predicto Waltero in tenentiam et custodiam ut inde omnes fructus habeat et dictis Henrico et Agathe necessaria inveniet. Dictus autem Walterus concessit et iuravit quod die dicta sponsaliorum dabit et confirmabit predicto Henrico filio suo quod liberam et plenam habeat potestatem dotandi dictam Agatham de tertia parte omnium terrarum, reddituum, servitiorum suorum ubicumque dictus Walterus illa habuerit. Anno vero post matrimonium contractum completo recipient dicti Henricus et Agatha si voluerint simul morari extra custodiam dicti Walteri a predicto Waltero sine difficultate et contradictione aliqua integre totum maritagium dicte Agathe assignatum et insuper tertiam partem omnium terrarum, reddituum, servitiorum que dictus W(alterus) habuit in partibus Tykehull' anno domini m^occ^oxl^o in festo sancti Dionisii, que etiam idem W(alterus) estimat ad valentiam decem librarum per annum, et insuper tertiam partem omnium terrarum, reddituum, servitiorum suorum que habuit in Pelham' Ars anno domini predicto, vel assignabit integre totam tertiam partem prenominarum terrarum pro quantitate omnium si maluerint in terris suis de Pelham Ars ad se ipsas sustentendas salva dote Matillidis uxoris sue si supervixerit. Quod si dictus Henricus superstes per pravam consilium diuerterit se et noluerit contrahere sponsalia termino statuto vel forsitan non possit ut si fuerit in alterius custodia et similiter matrimonium tempore predicto assignato ad matrimonium contrahendum, non valeant conventiones omnino in hoc instrumento conscripte, et consensus est etiam ex parte predictorum Walteri et thesaurarii quod si moriatur predictus Henricus ante sponsalia contracta quod omnia procedant in persona Thebeldi alterius filii dicti W(alteri) in omnibus et dicte Agathe que supradicta sunt inter eas et concessa a dictis thesauro et Waltero circa persona dicti Henrici. Convenit etiam quod si moriatur dictus Henricus et Theobaldus et dicta Agatha circa matrimonium solemniter contractum, quod dictus W(alterus) et sui assignati habeant omnes exitus predicte terre a festo sancti Dionisii anno domini m^occ^oxl^o quo dictus thesaurarius dictam terram ei tradidit usque in duodecim annos completos, salvo eo quod terram illam non deteriorabit nec incumbrabit ad nocumentum dicti thesaurarii vel suorum assignatorum. In fine autem dictorum xii annorum revertetur dicta terra dicto thesauro vel suis assignatis soluta et quiete in omnibus absque omni contradictione dicti Walteri vel suorum assignatorum preter Willelmum Wigge cum terra sua et omni sequela sua quem idem thesaurarius dedit et concessit dicto W(altero) et heredibus suis in perpetuum cum tribus acris et dimidiam que iacent inter mansum Willelmi militis et boscum dicti thesaurarii, faciendo inde servitium calcariorum deauratorum ad festum sancti Michaelis per annum dicto thesauro et suis assignatis, et sciendum quod dictus Walterus omnes premissas conventiones et terrarum assignationes terminis suprascriptis dictis Henrico et Agathe vel Teodbaldo

et Agathe ex conventionione adimplebit et ea fideliter et sine fraude et dolo tenenda tactis sacrosanctis iuravit, submittens se iurisdictioni cuiuscumque iudicis quem dictus thesaurarius vel predicta Agatha elegerint ad distrigendum se ad observationem predictae conventionis, renuntians in hiis omnibus appellationi, constitutioni, exceptioni que possit obici in factum vel in personam. Act' anno domini m^occ^oxl^o apud Pelham in festo sancti Dionisii. Hiis testibus: Willelmo filio Petri, Rogero le Gray, Galfrido le Sarners, Ricardo Banastre, Willelmo de Alneto, Roberto Payn, Nicholao de Stauntun' et aliis.

2. Confirmation by Fulke (Basset) bishop of London, to Henry son of Walter the Chamberlain of Brent Pelham and Agatha daughter of Alexander of Swerford, Henry's wife, of 100 acres of land in Brent Pelham 1 x 15 July 1249

A = Cambridge, Corpus Christi College muniments XXIV.A.34.1. Endorsed: *Ista carta inrotulatur ad scaccarium domini regis in magno rotulo xxxii post Sussex' et Surr'* (s.xiii med.); various post medieval endorsements. Approx. 190 x 106 + 15mm. Perished on the right hand side. Sealed *sur double queue*, slits for 2 tags, both tags and seal impressions missing. B = PRO E372/92 (Pipe Roll 32 Henry III) m.3d, abstract only, noting that Henry camerarius and Agatha de Swerford his wife gave half a mark to have the charter of bp Fulke, made before the barons of the Exchequer, recorded on the pipe roll, noting witnesses as follows: William de Haverhull the king's treasurer, John le Fraunceis, Edward of Westminster et aliis nominatis in carta.

Omnibus Cristi fidelibus ad quos presens scriptum pervenerit Fulco Dei gratia London' episcopus salutem in domino sempiternam. Ad universitatis vestre notitiam volumus pervenire nos de communi assensu et voluntate Henrici decani et capituli sancti Pauli London' concessisse et hac carta nostra confirmasse Henrico filio Walteri camerarii de Pelham Ars' et Agathe filie Alexandri de Swerford' uxori sue quod iidem Henricus et Agatha et heredes ipsius Agathe habeant et teneant de nobis et successoribus nostris et ecclesie nostra London' in perpetuum pro homagio et servitio suo centum acras terre cum pertinentiis suis in Pelham Ars' quas prefatus Alexander prius tenuit in eadem villa de Agnete de Wauncy domina de Stokenepelham per liberum servitium duorum solidorum per annum et servitium tertie partis feodi unius militis pro omni servitio et exactione, sicut in cyrographo inter dictum Agnetem et dictos Henricum et Agatham in curia domini regis confecto plenius continetur. Et nos et successores nostri de assensu et voluntate predictorum decani et capituli warrantizabimus, acquietabimus et defendemus eisdem Henrico et Agathe et heredibus ipsius Agathe totam predictam terram cum omnibus pertinentiis suis per predictum servitium duorum solidorum per annum et servitium tertie parte feodi unius militis sicut predictum est contra omnes gentes in perpetuum. Et ut hec nostra concessio, confirmatio, warrantia, acquietantia et defe[n]sio perpetue^a firmitatis robur optineant, sigillum nostrum una cum sigillo predictorum decani et capituli apponi fecimus. Hiis testibus: [Henrico de Corn]hull^b tunc decano sancti Pauli London', Willelmo de Haverhull' tunc domini regis thesaurario, Ricardo abbate Westm', Iohanne le Frau[n]ceis^c, . . . vel tunc baronibus de scaccarii, Eadwardo de Westm' cancellario scaccarii, Henrico de Baton', Alano de Wassaund, [Willelmo de Wilton]^c, Willelmo Britone et Reginaldo de Cobbeham tunc iusticiis domini regis itinerantibus in comitatu Middelsex' apud Stranda, [magistro Roberto]^d de Barton' precentore London', magistro Stephano de Sandwic' tunc officiali nostro, magistris Ricardo de Sta[n]ford^d, [Ricardo de Wendo]vere^d, Iohanne Belemains et Willelmo Faceto tunc canonicis sancti Pauli Lond' residentibus, Rogero de Witcestr', . . . de Laufar', Petro de Haverhull', Willelmo de Alneto, Ricardo de Hereford' clerico et aliis. Dat' apud . . . gratie m^occ^o quadragesimo nono, pontificatus nostri anno quinto.

^a Letters in square brackets supplied from B, perished in A. ^b Letters in square brackets supplied, illegible in A, cf. *Fasti*, ed. Greenway, i p.7. ^c Letters in square brackets supplied, illegible in A, cf. D. Crook, *Records of the General Eyre* (London 1982), pp.112, 115. ^d Letters in square brackets supplied, illegible in A, cf. *Fasti*, ed. Greenway, i, pp.24, 30-1, 76

To be dated to the session of the Middlesex eyre which met at the Strand after 25 June 1249, probably between 1 and 15 July 1249 when final concords were issued before the justices named as witnesses above (Crook, *General Eyre*, 115).

The Society is grateful to the Greening Lamborn Trust for a grant towards publication of this paper.