

"THE EPISCOPATE OF WALTER LANGTON, BISHOP OF
COVENTRY AND LICHFIELD, 1296-1321, WITH
A CALENDAR OF HIS REGISTER"

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MAP OF THE DIOCESE OF COVENTRY AND LICHFIELD

This map is contained in the pocket inside the rear mill board.

ABSTRACT.

This thesis produces for the first time a calendar of the episcopal register of Walter Langton, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield 1296-1321. The whole of the register is produced with the entries calendared in the order in which they appear and numbered serially. Latin transcripts of at least one example of each type of entry have been given.

This thesis studies the administration of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield by a bishop who rose through Edward I's service to become treasurer in 1295 and was thus the most important and influential government minister until the end of the reign. His career reached its zenith after his elevation to the episcopate in 1296, which can be seen as the ultimate reward for his loyal service to the crown. Although Langton's position changed dramatically with the accession of Edward II, he remained politically active until his death. Langton's episcopate thus illustrates the inter-relationship between the medieval church and central government.

Langton's register is the earliest extant register for the diocese and its study has thrown light upon the administration of the diocese, the recruitment of clergy, patronage and the state of religious life at this time. Moreover, the register contains important information concerning

the bishop himself. Because of his political involvement and personal vicissitudes, Langton has been criticised for neglecting his diocesan duties. His register, however, shows that this was not the case and that he was a conscientious bishop.

The thesis discusses Langton's episcopal register, the diocesan administration and bishop Langton in turn.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance and encouragement given to me during the four years I have worked on this thesis and record my thanks for this help: to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield for permission to transcribe the sequestrator's account roll for the year 1301; to the University of Oxford for permission to refer to the B.Litt. thesis of Miss H. Jenkins; to Research Publications of Reading for permission to reproduce sections of their microfilms of episcopal registers; to Mrs J. Hampartumian, archivist at Lichfield Joint Record Office, and her staff for their assistance on my many visits; to Dr. R.N. Swanson of the University of Birmingham for kindly supplying a reference verifying Langton's paternity; to Dr. D.M. Smith, Director of the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, for his advice regarding letters in the register; and to Professor M.C. Jones of the University of Nottingham for his clarification of French place-names.

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Finally, I would like to thank my husband Peter, without whose support and computer knowledge this thesis would never have been completed.

Any errors and weaknesses that remain, whether in substance or in typing, are entirely my own responsibility.

NOTE ON EDITORIAL METHOD.

This edition of the register of Walter Langton gives, in as concise a form as is consistent with clarity, all the essential information from the register, including all personal and place-names. The whole of the register has been reproduced and the entries calendared in the order in which they appear in the original, without omission or re-arrangement, and all are numbered serially. The year has been taken as commencing on 1 January, whereas in the original it begins on 25 March.

Latin transcripts with English summaries of at least one example of each type of entry have been given. In transcripts uncertain Latin words are signified by single inverted commas; abbreviations and contractions are expanded, with the exception of place-names, 'etc' and 'Dat'; the gemipunctus '..', used before the title of a high dignitary or office-holder, is omitted; 'c' and 't' are interchangeable in the register, for example, 'negotium' is usually given as 'negocium' and 'administrationem' as 'administracionem', and the original spelling of such words is given without comment.

In calendared entries the honorific or knightly title 'Dominus' or 'Sir' is omitted; first-names are modernised; surnames are given in their original form and uncertain surnames are

signified by single inverted commas; place-names are given in modern form and, where these differ from the original, the original spelling is given in parenthesis, with the exception of the common place-names of Coventry (*Coventr'*, *Coven'*), Lichfield (*Lich'*, *Licch'*, *Lych'*), Derby (*Derb'*, *Derbei*), Chester (*Cestr'*), Shrewsbury (*Salop'*), Stafford (*Staff'*), York (*Ebor'*) and London (*Lond'*, *London'*); unidentified place-names are signified by single inverted commas; additional marginal information is underlined and given in parenthesis at the end of the calendared entries; a note that the archdeacon or his official was mandated to induct incumbents instituted to benefices, although only recorded with any regularity after folio 34, is shown by 'Ind.: archd.'; the columns of names in the ordination lists are identified as 'Col. a, b or c'.

ABBREVIATIONS.

I. Words.

abp.	archbishop
appx.	appendix
archd.	archdeacon
bp.	bishop
Br., Brs.	Brother, Brothers
Cal.	Calendar
cath.	cathedral
ch.	church
col., cols.	column, columns
coll.	collegiate
conv.	convent
D.C.L.	Doctor of Civil Law
D.Cn.L.	Doctor of Canon Law
dioc.	diocese
ed.	edited
edn.	edition
Fo., fos.	Folio, folios
Ind.	Induct
knt.	knight
lett. dim.	letters dimissory
M.	Master
m., mm.	membrane, membranes
ms., mss.	manuscript, manuscripts
n., nn.,	note, notes
no., nos.	number, numbers
O.F.M.	Order of Friars Minor
O.F.P.	Order of Friars Preachers

port.	portionary
preb.	prebend, prebendary
pres.	presented, presentation
r.	rector
reg.	register
subd.	subdeacon
t.	title
t. pat.	title of patrimony
v.	vicar
vac.	vacant
vol., vols.	volume, volumes

II. Publications, repositories and manuscripts.

Beardwood,

Records

Records of the Trial of Walter
Langton, Bishop of Coventry
and Lichfield, 1307-1312, ed.

A. Beardwood (Camden, 4th
series, 6, 1969).

Beardwood, Trial
of Langton

Beardwood, A., 'The Trial of
Walter Langton, Bishop of
Lichfield, 1307-1312,
Transactions of the American
Philosophical Society, 54,
part 3 (1964), pp. 5-45.

BL

British Library.

Cal. Inq. P.M.

Calendar of Inquisitions
Post Mortem.

CCR

Calendar of Close Rolls.

CChW

Calendar of Chancery Warrants.

CFR

Calendar of Fine Rolls.

Churchill, Canterbury

Admin.,

Churchill, I.J., Canterbury
Administration: the
Administrative Machinery of
the Archbishopric of
Canterbury Illustrated from
Original Records, 2 vols.
(London, 1933).

Councils and Synods

Councils and Synods with other Documents Relating to the English Church, II, i, 1205-65, II, ii, 1265-1313, ed. F.M. Powicke, C.R. Cheney (Oxford, 1964).

CPL

Calendar of Papal Letters.

CPR

Calendar of Patent Rolls.

Davies, Baronial

Opposition

Davies, J.C., The Baronial Opposition to Edward II, its Character and Policy: a Study in Administrative History (Cambridge, 1918).

Denholm-Young, Liber

Epistolaris

The Liber Epistolaris of Richard de Bury, ed. N. Denholm-Young (Roxburghe Club, 1950).

Denton,

Winchelsey

Denton, J.H., Robert Winchelsey and the Crown 1294-1313 (Cambridge, 1980).

DNB

Dictionary of National Biography.

Edwards, Political

Importance

Edwards, K., 'The Political Importance of the English

- Bishops during the Reign of Edward II', English Historical Review, 59 (1944), pp. 311-47.
- Emden, Oxford Emden, A.B., A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1957-9).
- Extra 'Decretalium Gregorii Pape IX Compilatio' in Corpus Juris Canonici, ed. E. Friedberg, 2 vols. (Graz, 1955).
- Fasti John le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1300-1541, 12 vols. (London, 1962-7).
- Fasti, 1066-1300 John le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1066-1300, 3 vols. (London, 1968-77).
- Flores Historiarum Flores Historiarum, iii, ed. H.R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1890).
- Foedera Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Acta Publica, ed. T. Rymer, 4 vols. (Record Commission, 1816-69).
- Haines, Worcester Haines, R.M., The Administration of the Diocese of Worcester in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century

- (London, 1965).
- Hamilton Thompson,
English Clergy Hamilton Thompson, A., The English Clergy and their Organisation in the Later Middle Ages (Oxford, 1947).
- HBC Handbook of British Chronology, ed. E.B. Fryde, D.E. Greenway, S. Porter, I. Roy, 3rd edn. (London, 1986).
- Jenkins,
Lichfield Cathedral H. Jenkins, 'Lichfield Cathedral in the Fourteenth Century' (Unpublished B.Litt. thesis, University of Oxford, 1956).
- L.J.R.O. Lichfield Joint Record Office
- Maddicott,
Lancaster Maddicott, J.R., Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-1322. A Study in the Reign of Edward II (Oxford, 1970).
- MRA The Great Register of Lichfield Cathedral known as Magnum Registrum Album, ed. H.E. Savage (William Salt Archaeological Society, 1924).
- Parl. Writs. Parliamentary Writs and Writs

- of Military Summons, ed. F. Palgrave, 2 vols. (Record Commission, 1827-34).
- Prestwich, Edward I
 Prestwich, M.C., Edward I
 (London, 1988).
- PRO Public Record Office
 Reg. The Register of Walter
 Langton, L.J.R.O ms. B/A/1/1.
- Reg. Boniface Les Registres de Boniface
VIII, ed. G. Digard, M. Faucon, A. Thomas, R. Fawtier,
 4 vols. (Ecole Francaise de Rome, 1907-39).
- Reg. Corbridge The Register of Thomas
Corbridge, Lord Archbishop of
York, 1300-1304, vol. i, ed. W. Brown, vol. ii, ed. W. Brown, A. Hamilton Thompson
 (Surtees Society, 138, 141, 1925-8).
- Reg. Gandavo Registrum Simonis de Gandavo,
Diocesis Saresberiensis, A.D.
1297- 1315, ed. C.T. Flower, M.C.B. Dawes, 2 vols.
 (Canterbury and York Society, 40, 41, 1934).
- Reg. Greenfield The Register of William
Greenfield, Lord Archbishop of

York, 1306-1315, ed. W. Brown,
A. Hamilton Thompson, 5 vols.
(Surtees Society, 145, 149,
151-3, 1931-40).

Reg. Halton

The Register of John de
Halton, Bishop of Carlisle
A.D. 1292-1324, ed. W.N.
Thompson, 2 vols. (Canterbury
and York Society, 12, 13,
1913).

Reg. Martival

The Registers of Roger
Martival, Bishop of Salisbury,
1315-1300, vol. i, ed. K.
Edwards, vol. ii, ed. C.R.
Elrington, vol. iii, ed.
S. Reynolds, vol. iv, ed. D.M.
Owen (Canterbury and York
Society, 55-9, 68, 1959-75).

Reg. Romeyn

The Register of John le
Romeyn, Lord Archbishop of
York, 1286-1296, ed. W. Brown
2 vols. (Surtees Society, 123,
128, 1913-17).

Reg. Sandale & Asserio

The Registers of John de
Sandale and Rigaud de Asserio,
Bishops of Winchester (A.D.
1316-1323), ed. F.J. Baigent
(London and Winchester, 1897).

- Reg. Sutton The Rolls and Register of
Bishop Oliver Sutton, 1280-
1299, ed. R.M.T. Hill, 8 vols.
(Lincoln Record Society, 39,
43, 48, 52, 60, 64, 69, 76,
1948-86).
- Reg. Winchelsey Registrum Roberti Winchelsey
Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi,
ed. R. Graham, 2 vols.
(Canterbury and York Society,
51, 52, 1952-6).
- Robinson,
Ordinations Robinson, D., 'Ordinations of
Secular Clergy in the Diocese
of Coventry and Lichfield,
1322-1358', Archives, 17, 73
(April, 1985), pp. 3-21.
- Robinson, Staffs.
Hand List Robinson, D., Staffordshire
Record Office Cumulative Hand
List, Part 1 Lichfield Joint
Record Office: Diocesan,
Probate and Church
Commissioners' Records, 2nd
edn. (Staffordshire County
Council, 1978).
- Rot. Parl. Rotuli Parliamentorum, 7 vols.
(Record Commission, 1783 -
1832).

- Sext. Decret. 'Sexti Decretalium' in Corpus Juris Canonici, ed. E. Friedberg, 2 vols. (Graz, 1955).
- Smith, Registers Smith, D.M., Guide to Bishops' Registers of England and Wales (London, 1981).
- Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959) Storey, R.L., Diocesan Administration in Fifteenth-Century England (St Anthony's Press, York, 1959).
- Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972) Storey, R.L., Diocesan Administration in Fifteenth-Century England, 2nd edn. (St Anthony's Press, York, 1972).
- Taxatio Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicholai IV circa A.D. 1291, (Record Commission, 1802).
- Tout, Chapters Tout, T.F., Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England, ii (Manchester, 1920).
- Treaty Rolls, i, 1234-1325 Treaty Rolls, i, 1234-1325, ed. P. Chaplais (London, 1955).

VCH

Victoria County History.

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1. THE REGISTER.

I. THE FIRST LICHFIELD EPISCOPAL REGISTER.

The episcopal register of Walter Langton, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, covering the period 1297-1321, is the earliest surviving register for the diocese.¹ There is, however, evidence that at least until the early fifteenth century a register dating from the episcopate of Langton's predecessor, Roger Meuland or Longespée (1258-1295) was still extant. On folio 204v of bishop John Burghill's Lichfield register (1398-1414) is an entry noting the ordination of Cheadle church by bishop Meuland in 1260 taken '*de uno rotulorum domini Rogeri Meuland' quondam episcopi Co. et Lich'*'.² However, this entry is written by what seems to be a sixteenth century hand, one which differs considerably from that of the neighbouring entries but closely resembles the hand which copied charters into Langton's register; these charters have been attributed to the sixteenth century.³ Possibly Meuland's register survived until then.

1. L.J.R.O. ms. B/A/1/1; Smith, Registers, p. 53; C.R. Cheney, English Bishops' Chanceries (Manchester, 1950), p. 148; Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 4; HBC, p. 253.

2. Smith, Registers, p. 53, n. 2; L.J.R.O. ms. B/A/1/7 (The register of bishop John Burghill, 1398-1414); HBC, p. 253.

3. Reg. nos. 149, 216, 275, 321; Smith, Registers, p. 54.

In 1361 and 1375 the registers of bishops Meuland, Langton, and that of Langton's successor, Roger Northburgh (1322-1358), were examined.¹ In 1375, however, in addition to these registers, only original ordination documents of 1231, belonging to bishop Alexander Stavensby (1224-1238), and of 1247, belonging to bishop Roger Weseham (1245-1256), were produced.² This suggests that Meuland's was the first Lichfield register, which may seem rather surprising given the fact that registers of episcopal business had been kept in the dioceses of Lincoln and York from about 1214 to 1215 and 1225 respectively.³ It has been suggested that Meuland's register may have dated from 1280, when archbishop Pecham appointed a suffragan bishop and coadjutor in the diocese,⁴

1. VCH Stafford, iii, p. 26; HBC, p. 253; Cheney, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 148; Smith, Registers, p. 53; Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 4, n. 1; HBC, p. 253; The Registers or Act Books of the Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield. Book 5, being the second register of Bishop Robert de Stretton, A.D. 1360-1385: an abstract of the contents, ed. R.A. Wilson (William Salt Archaeological Society, new series, 8, 1905), pp. 96-7, 127.

2. Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 4, n. 1; Cheney, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 148; Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 127; HBC, p. 253.

3. D.M. Smith, 'The Rolls of Hugh of Wells, Bishop of Lincoln 1209-35', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, 45 (1972), pp. 168-170, argues that Wells' rolls may have been begun in 1214-15; Cheney, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-5 & n. 2 considers it unlikely that the Lincoln rolls are much earlier than 1217; Smith, Registers, pp. viii, 106-7, 234.

4. VCH Stafford, iii, p. 26.

but the entry in Burghill's register shows that a register was kept from about 1260. It is thus possible that Meuland's register dated from the beginning of his episcopate. Nevertheless, his register, probably the first Lichfield register, was not begun until about forty-five years after the appearance of the first English episcopal register. This does seem a considerable time, but it is generally accepted that the rolls of bishop Wells at Lincoln and those of archbishop Gray at York were the first, as well as being the now earliest extant episcopal registers and that other bishops followed their example, albeit only slowly. Other dioceses may not have begun to keep registers of episcopal business until about the same time as Lichfield appears to have done; for example, the first extant register for the diocese of Bath and Wells dates from 1265 whilst that for Exeter dates from 1258.¹

The evidence cited from the register of bishop Burghill suggests that the format of Meuland's register was enrolled, with more than one roll being used. If this entry was made in the sixteenth century the fact that the copy was taken from an enrolled register may have seemed unusual to the scribe, hence the comment '*de uno rotulorum*', whereas in 1375, when no comment was

1. Cheney, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-8; Smith, Registers, pp. viii, 31 (Bath and Wells), 77 (Exeter).

made as to the format, an enrolled register may not have seemed so strange. Other information concerning the format of Meuland's register occurs in December 1295 when, during of the vacancy of the see following Meuland's death, archbishop Winchelsey issued mandates addressed to the official of the late bishop, the archdeacon of Derby, acting as coadjutor, the prior and convent of Coventry and the dean and chapter of Lichfield ordering them to hand over the seal, rolls, registers and other muniments of the officiality to the newly appointed acting official.

'Registers', however, could mean either rolls or books; thus the question of the format of the register is not clarified further, especially as the mandate would seem to have been in common-form; similarly-worded mandates were issued to the dean of Wells in 1302 and to the dean and chapter of Chichester in 1362.¹

The evidence does suggest that at least part of Meuland's episcopal register was enrolled but it is possible that rolls and books were used concurrently, as was the practice at Lincoln under bishop Oliver Sutton (1280-1299).² Sutton's register clearly illustrates the transition from

1. Reg. Winchelsey, i, pp. 59-60, 439-40; Churchill, Canterbury Admin., i, p. 165 & n. 4.

2. Smith, Registers, pp. 108-9; Reg. Sutton, i, pp. xiii, xiv; HBC, p. 255.

the enrolled format used for the two earliest extant episcopal registers at York and Lincoln to that of the quire or book.¹ An enrolled register would not have been easy to consult but the system of enrolment was not changed in favour of the quire until 1266 at York and 1290 at Lincoln.² At York this change can be attributed to the new archbishop, Walter Giffard (1266-1279), who had used the quire format for his register during his short tenure of the see of Bath and Wells.³ External influences were surely similarly behind the gradual change of format from roll to quire at Lincoln.⁴ Thirteenth century episcopal and papal registers on the continent are usually in the form of books. Thus the structure of the early English enrolled registers may have been experimental, imitating the format of royal chancery rolls before changing to conform with continental practice.⁵ However, rolls continued to be used in English dioceses, not as drafts of episcopal registers but for other types of record which would not necessarily be preserved, especially

1. Smith, Registers, pp. 106, 234.

2. Smith, Registers, p. 109 for Lincoln, p. 234 for York.

3. Smith, Registers, pp. 31, 234; HBC, pp. 228, 282.

4. Smith, Registers, p. ix.

5. M.T. Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307 (London, 1979), p. 54.

lengthy, routine, business such as visitations, accounts and ordinations.¹

The question of the format of Meuland's register cannot be answered with any certainty. However, if it was enrolled then Langton can be credited with completing the transition to the book format for the episcopal registers at Lichfield; there are parallels for this change both at York and Lincoln.² In this connection it is interesting to note that books began to be used for some records of the royal wardrobe during Langton's keepership between 1290-1295; rolls continued to be used for the working records of the wardrobe from which information was copied into books as the definitive copy.³ Was the adoption of the book format made in response to the changes taking place in contemporary bishops'

1. For visitation rolls see L.J.R.O. ms. D30 AA3; Smith, Registers, p. x, n. 11; for sequestrators' account rolls see L.J.R.O. mss. D30 M4, D30 M5, D30 M7, D30 M9; C. Morris, 'The Commissary of the Bishop in the Diocese of Lincoln', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 10 (1959), p. 54, n. 1; Lincolnshire Archives Office ms., D & C/Bj/5/17(2); for rolls of ordinations see Smith, Registers, p. x, n. 11.

2. Smith, Registers, pp. 31, 234, 109-10.

3. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9; The Book of Prests of the King's Wardrobe for 1294-5, ed. E.B. Fryde (Oxford, 1962), p. xii; HBC, p. 79; List of Various Accounts (PRO Lists and Indexes, xxxv), pp. 220-70. For example, see bundle 353, no. 17, 21 Edward I, daily expenses of the household, 31 membranes, and bundle 354, no. 10, 24-35 Edward I, an account book of imprests of the wardrobe, 44 pages.

registers? The quires of a register were not usually bound together until the end of an episcopate, thus facilitating greater flexibility in arrangement and ease of use.¹ Langton must have realised this and thus his administrative expertise may have influenced his choice of quire for the format of some of the wardrobe records. He may similarly have brought his secular administrative experience to bear upon his episcopal chancery.

1. Smith, Registers, p. x; Cheney, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

II. THE CONDITION OF THE REGISTER.

The volume known as Langton's register contains 216 folios of which the first 142 pertain to Langton's episcopate, the remaining folios being the register of ordinations of bishop Roger Northburgh. The register was re-bound in 1976. It is written in brownish-ink in hands which are characteristic of the period. Modern foliation, in Arabic numerals, has been added to the top right-hand corner of each folio. The folios are of parchment and are slightly irregular in size, measuring approximately 20 x 30 cm. The parchment is of medium quality and there are some natural holes.¹ There were tears on some folios that have now been repaired.² The condition of the register is, however, generally good and is, in the main, quite legible, though there is a lot of staining, due to contact with water, and the edges of some of the folios are rubbed to such an extent that some words are illegible given the facilities available at the Lichfield Record Office. Most of the folios have margins at both the outer and inner edges, with a wider margin being generally provided at the outer edge.³ Some folios have

1. There are holes in the parchment on fos. 4, 5, 101, 106, 107, 128, 131, 146.

2. For example, on fos. 96, 98, 106, 107.

3. See pp. 42-3 for details of the marginalia.

ruled lines.¹

1. For example, fos. 5, 5v, 8, 8v, 9, 12, 12v, 18v, 19, 21, 21v.

III. THE STRUCTURE OF THE REGISTER.

i. THE FIRST FOUR FOLIOS.

The first four folios, the first quire of the register, present something of an enigma. The institution and collation entries, of which there are 41 out of a total of 86 entries, together with two letters regarding a presentation and an induction, are subsequently duplicated in the register; the 34 institutions, one collation and the two letters are found again in the first archdeaconry sections (folios 5-19v) and six of the collations are similarly re-registered in one block on folio 21 of the short collation section.¹ One licence for study granted to Simon de Hegham, rector of Barton Blount, Derbys., on 26 March 1299 has been entered twice on the first four folios; firstly as part of his institution entry (no. 37) and again as a licence only (no. 79). The record of his institution, including his licence to study, was subsequently duplicated as entry no. 228. It is interesting to note that the institutions recorded on the first four folios have abbreviated forms of the archdeaconry names to which they pertain written in the margins (*Cestr'* for Chester, *Cov'* for Coventry, *Derb'*

1. Smith, Registers, p. 54; see appx. A for a list of the duplicated entries and appx. B for photocopies of some of these.

for Derby, *Staff'* for Stafford and *Salop'* for Shrewsbury) in addition to the customary marginal notation of the name of the church, chapel, or vicarage. The subsequent duplication of these entries suggests that these additional archidiaconal notations were made as part of a deliberate selection process by the registry clerks to assist them in the re-grouping of these entries in the five subsequent archdeaconry sections. Why should these entries have been re-copied?

It is possible that the first four folios formed part of a once larger working register. Most of the entries are in chronological order, suggesting that copies of these letters were recorded at their time of issue. There are, however, exceptions to the general chronology, thus these letters may have been registered from initial drafts or brief notes.¹ The earliest entry (no. 4) is dated 16 June 1298 and the others date from 24 September 1298 (no. 1) to 31 January 1300 (no. 84); the last entry on these folios has been added later and is an undated memorandum of the sequestrator's account for the period 24 November 1297 to 1 November 1298 (no. 86). Other entries also depart from the general order of date; no. 48 is three months earlier than its closest entries,

1. Smith, Registers, p. xi; Cheney, *op. cit.*, p. 103

no. 79 is some seven months earlier than its immediate neighbours and four entries are undated (nos. 75, 77, 85, 86). In addition to no. 86, four other entries were also added at the foot of some folios, nos. 27, 67, 77 and 85, of which no. 67 actually cuts entry no. 66 in two as no. 66 continues onto the next folio. However, the five entries recorded later (nos. 27, 67, 77, 85, 86), together with the additions made to nos. 11, 24, 37, 44, 45, 53, 67, 75, 80, 82, 84 and 86, the shorter of which are inserted above the line of writing or in the margin, whilst the longer additions are literally squeezed into the available spaces, suggest that these folios were indeed part of a working register. Furthermore, entry no. 41 has been cancelled by the scribe '*quia alibi*'; this letter is a cancelled copy of entry no. 30 which is subsequently duplicated (no. 282).

This theory does not explain the 41 entries on folios 1-4v that are not duplicated in the main body of the register. Nineteen are of a routine nature, being grants of custodies, licences and letters dimissory.¹ The remaining entries, however, are very diverse in subject-matter and

1. Reg. nos. 2, 5, 9, 13, 15, 36, 40, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 58, 59, 66, 74, 83, 84; reg. no. 79 is a licence for study but has been discounted as this was incorporated in reg. no. 37 and was subsequently duplicated as reg. no. 228.

must be considered in detail: a commission concerning a papal provision (no. 69); a resignation (no. 64); a grant *in commendam* (no. 8); the grant of houses to Walter de Thorp, Langton's sometime vicar-general and official, (no. 39); a letter concerning the enthronement of Langton (no. 63); Langton excusing himself from attending a convocation of canons (no. 27); and the renewal of a collation (no. 61). The remaining unduplicated entries on folios 3 to 4v are the most interesting. The majority concern financial business: pensions (nos. 62, 76, 77); an obligation for 40 marks made by Langton (no. 65); payments (no. 85), for land (nos. 67, 68, 71), by Langton for the manor of Hinton Waldrist, Berks., (no. 80); debts (nos. 70, 72); copies of letters to monasteries concerning payments for wool (no. 73); money due from the farmers of a church (no. 75); instructions to the sequestrator (no. 81); and a summary of a sequestrator's account (no. 86). If the first four folios did once form part of a working register why were these 41 entries, some clearly of great importance, not copied into the definitive register with the routine institutions and collations?

There are two possible explanations; either part of the definitive register is now lost or, the registry clerks did not complete the re-copying process and thus the first four folios are

not a chance survival from a working register but were deliberately retained. These will be considered in turn.

It is evident that some of the register covering the very beginning of Langton's episcopate, from 23 December 1296, is now lost. The earliest entry, in the collation section, is dated 3 February 1297 (no. 375), whilst the earliest institution is simply dated as 1297 during the bishop's first year of consecration (no. 151) and the first precisely dated institution is 25 February 1298 (no. 233); clearly a number of institutions are missing. The first ordination list (no. 1285) is dated June 1300, thus earlier ordination lists are now lost, there are no lists for 1313 and that for March 1314 (no. 1310) is clearly incomplete, as is the last ordination list for April 1321 (no. 1329);¹ other sections of the register may also not have survived. Thus it is possible that at least some of the entries which are recorded only on folios 1 to 4v may have been copied into the final register but are now lost; the grants of custodies and licences recorded here pre-date those in the subsequent custody section of the register on folios 22 to 24v.²

1. See below pp. 45-6.

2. See below p. 37.

A second explanation is suggested by the York register of archbishop William Wickwane (1279-1285) and the contemporary Salisbury registers of bishops Simon of Ghent (1297-1315) and Roger Martival (1315-1330). Wickwane's register survives in two versions which are now bound together. One register (fos. 1-96) was copied from the other (fos. 97-200) at a later date. It is interesting that the second part of the register contains more entries than the first and from its format it is evident that this was a working register; there are large spaces on some folios, and some consecutive blank folios, for entries to be added at a later date. The fair copy was obviously never completed.¹ This suggests an answer to the enigma of the first four folios of Langton's register; his clerks similarly may not have completed the re-copying process. This would explain why these folios contain entries that are not duplicated in the register.

Thus, it is possible that the first four folios are not a chance survival from a working register but were purposefully retained by the registry clerks as being the only written record of these 41 unduplicated entries; as previously noted, the grants of custodies and licences

1. Smith, Registers, pp. xi, 234-5; Borthwick Institute of Historical Research ms. BI, Reg. 3 (Wickwane), consulted on microfilm.

recorded here pre-date those in the subsequent custody section. There are examples of the deliberate retention of working quires in the registers of bishops Ghent and Martival.¹

Furthermore, in the first working quire of bishop Martival's register of Inhibitions and Acts sufficient space was not always left for adding entries which were sometimes squashed into spaces left at the bottom of the folio.² As already noted, there are direct parallels for this on the first four folios of Langton's register.³ Although some of Langton's register is certainly lost it is probable that the first quire of his extant register was once part of a larger working register from which only some entries were copied; because of this these folios were retained.

The headings on folios 1 and 5 suggest that the definitive register began on folio 5. Although worn and stained, the heading on folio 1 is written in normal script occupying one line only and may thus have been added later, '*Registrum domini Walteri Langton unacum nominibus clericorum ordinatur et per alia*', whereas that on folio 5 is elaborately written in a large script with many embellishments, '*Registrum W[alteri] Coventren*' et

1. Reg. Gandavo, i, p. lv; Reg. Martival, iv, p. xxiii.

2. Reg. Martival, iv, p. xxiv.

3. See above p. 12.

*Lich' episcopi a festo Purificacionis anno Domini
M^{mo} CC^{mo} nonagesimo sexto et consecracionis
ejusdem episcopi primo'*. Moreover, the date of the
second heading, 2 February 1297, pre-dates by one
day the earliest entry in the register, a
collation made by the bishop on 3 February 1297
and recorded on folio 21 (no. 375).

Evidence elsewhere in the 'definitive'
register suggests that the use of working
registers was well-established in Langton's
episcopal chancery. Duplication of another group
of letters occurs later in the register; on folio
116, which is a single piece of parchment in the
ordination section of the register, are six
cancelled letters (no. 1308) which duplicate entry
nos. 588 to 593. The only marginal notation
pertaining to the cancelled letters on folio 116
is *Staff'*; they are previously recorded on folio
32v which is the Stafford archdeaconry section of
the register of M. Ralph de Leycestria, Langton's
vicar-general in 1312-1313.¹ Obviously a registry
clerk was using up this piece of parchment, in the
interests of economy, to record some ordinations
(no. 1309). It is thus probable that folio 116 is
a chance survival from this vicar-general's
working register.

1. See appx. C for photocopies of reg. nos. 1308,
588-593; Smith, *Registers*, p. 55; for Leycestria
see Chapter 2, pp. 155-60.

An examination of the register of the previous vicar-general, M. Robert de Redeswell, suggests that he too used a working register. During his first commission as vicar-general, from 16 September 1307 to 9 November 1308, Redeswell kept a separate register of the business transacted by him.¹ Most of the letters in his register are in chronological order, the exceptions being nos. 499, 506 and 541, and appear to have been written by the same hand and at one time; there is no obvious change in ink. This suggests that the letters were copied from a working register. One letter in Redeswell's register (no. 511) has an interesting addition; Thomas Crok was granted possession of the vicarage of Prees, Salop, by proctor on 30 December 1307 and was ordered to travel to Lichfield personally before 2 February 1308 to receive institution. The letter continues, written contemporaneously and by the same hand, that Thomas did not go to Lichfield, nor received institution, and thus the vicarage was granted to another; John de Pritwell was subsequently instituted on 1 July 1308 (no. 531). The date of the institution of the substitute vicar indicates that entry no. 511 was not written until after 1 July 1308. This again suggests that the letters in Redeswell's separate

1. Smith, Registers, p. 55; for Redeswell see Chapter 2, pp. 150-5.

register were initially recorded in a working register and it is possible that they were not copied into his definitive register until after his commission had ended on 9 November 1308.

When Redeswell was vicar-general for a second time, in the summer of 1309, the register records only four letters arising from the business transacted by him which were copied into the relevant archdeaconry sections of Langton's register. On this occasion Redeswell may have considered it unnecessary to record such a small amount of business separately.

Some letters in Langton's register have had additional information of a later date added to them, suggesting that the definitive register was sometimes used as a working record. However, examination of the entries indicates that this may not have been the case but rather an attempt to collate information relating to one incumbent. This again suggests that each piece of information was entered initially in a working register. Three examples will be considered. Entry no. 261 has been recorded at the top of folio 14r and all the entries on this folio appear to have been written by one hand and at one time; there is no apparent change in ink. Entry no. 261 initially recorded the grant of the custody of the church of Aston on Trent, Derbys., to John de Sandale on 3 November 1304. Subsequent entries on this folio run in date

order. Sandale was instituted to this church on 1 October 1305 but, instead of recording this in date sequence on the folio next to entry nos. 268 or 269 which are also dated 1 October 1305, the clerk chose to enter this information in the space he had left at the head of the folio, that is before the grant of the custody.

Two institution records, nos. 109 and 175, have also had additions made to them at a later date. These institutions occur in the first Coventry and Chester archdeaconry sections of the register contained within folios 5 to 19v. The additions duplicate two licences found in the first miscellaneous section of the register (fos. 20-25v), nos. 445 and 430 respectively. However, errors were made by the scribe or scribes on both occasions; licence no. 430 is for one year whereas this was copied as being for three years in entry no. 175, and licence no. 445 is dated 1 July 1301 but when this was added to the rector's institution (no. 109) it was dated as '*nonas Augusti*', that is 5 August. Why these licences should have been added to the institution records is unclear. The only other licences which appear on folios 5 to 19v are those which were originally part of institution entries on folios 1 to 4v;¹

1. Reg. no. 82 is duplicated as no. 162; nos. 37 and 79 are duplicated as no. 228; no. 45 is duplicated as no. 236.

all other licences dated before 1307 are found only on folios 1 to 4v and 22 to 24r whereas those granted after 1307 are scattered throughout folios 27r to 91v.

However, if this additional information was added to these entries in order to collate information, this was not carried out universally in the register. For example, when Sandale was granted custody of Stoke on Trent, Staffs., and Solihull, Warwicks., on 20 January 1305 and 5 August 1311 respectively, his subsequent institutions to both churches were recorded in separate entries in date order in the same archdeaconry sections; no attempt was made here to link the custodies and the institutions.¹ Thus, the fact that only some entries in Langton's 'definitive' register have additions may, perhaps, be attributed to the working methods of different scribes.

Langton's register provides other evidence that working records were used in his chancery. The register contains two fragments of parchment, the first of which, folio 65A, appears to have been a working record, whereas the second, folio 99, appears to be a fair copy of three of the bishop's charters.² Folio 65A is a piece of

1. Reg. nos. 298, 302, 634, 638.

2. Reg. nos. 949-50, 1291-3.

parchment about one-third the size of a normal folio and its appearance indicates that this was the working record of Langton's injunctions to be issued following his visitation of Haughmond abbey, Salop; the folio contains numerous erasures and alterations. It was not usual to preserve such injunctions if these were issued during the actual visitation of a house. However, a fair copy of the injunctions for Haughmond abbey may not have been made and, perhaps, this working record was incorporated into the register simply because it survived; the register does contain fair copies of the bishop's injunctions to other religious houses written in the form of letters.¹

The structure of folios 20r to 25v, which comprise one gathering of six folios, suggests that groups of letters were copied from a working record at periodic intervals. For example, entry nos. 415 to 440 on folios 22v to 23v, which date from 17 December 1300 to 22 April 1301, appear to have been written by one hand and at one time.² A similar practice occurs on folio 82r which is part of one of the Derby archdeaconry sections of the register. Entry no. 1167 commences as a grant in *commendam* dated 10 March 1319 to which has been

1. Reg. nos. 949-50; Reg. Sutton, iii, p. lxii; for other injunctions to religious houses see reg. nos. 809-812.

2. See below pp. 34-5.

added by another hand that the same clerk was instituted to the church on 17 May 1319. This addition was written by the same hand which copied the following entry (no. 1168) dated 11 June 1319, thus indicating that the addition to no. 1167 was not made until after 11 June.

The evidence for the use of working registers in Langton's episcopal chancery is important as it sheds light upon the administrative methods employed by his registrars and helps to explain how this type of record was made. Moreover, the registrars of other Lichfield bishops may have used working registers. Lichfield, however, may not have been unique in this; the use of working registers was, perhaps, a characteristic of all English dioceses for which one or two examples will be examined. The evidence for Lichfield will be considered first.

Dr Davies, the editor of the Staffordshire section of bishop Northburgh's register, notes that the entries do not always follow in strict chronological order and suggests that the scribes used a day book or copied up the entries from previously written separate sheets.¹ Moreover, Dr. Robinson has noted that grants of licences and

1. R.A. Davies, 'A Calendar of the Archdeaconry of Stafford Section of the Register of Roger Northburgh, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, with some discussion of its contents' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1986), p. 8.

dispensations for non-residence or absence, which are recorded in the archdeaconry sections of Langton's register after 1307, are 'entered untidily' in the front of the registers of bishops Northburgh and Robert Stretton (1360-1385) on folios of a smaller size. This section of Stretton's second register is now bound separately.¹ Dr. Robinson suggests these sections were not intended for permanent preservation, as subsequent Lichfield registers do not always record such grants.² It is thus possible that these sections were working registers.

The general appearance of folios 4v to 15v in Northburgh's register certainly give the impression of being a working register; the entries, covering almost the entire episcopate, are in chronological order but seem to have been written in a sporadic manner by many different hands with corresponding changes in ink,

1. Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 3; L.J.R.O. ms. B/A/1/2, (reg. Northburgh), fos. 4v-15v; L.J.R.O. ms. B/A/1/5i, (reg. Stretton), fos. 3-39v. Stretton's register is printed, The Registers or Act Books of the Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield. Book 4, being the register of the guardians of the spiritualities during the vacancy of the see, and the first register of Bishop Robert de Stretton, 1358-1385: an abstract of the contents, ed. R.A. Wilson (William Salt Archaeological Society, new series, 10, part 2, 1907), referred to henceforward as reg. Stretton, book 4. For Stretton's second register see p.2, n. 1, referred to henceforward as reg. Stretton, book 5, where fos. 3-39v are printed on pp. 6-90.

2. Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 3.

suggesting contemporaneous registration. It is noteworthy that the entries on folio 7r have the archdeaconry names to which they pertain written in the margin, as do the duplicated entries on the first four folios of Langton's register.

Northburgh's main register follows the format of Langton's and is divided into archdeaconry sections; my own preliminary examination has shown that each section also contains grants of licences and dispensations. It has been impossible to locate any of the licences on folio 7r in the relevant archdeaconry sections and only a detailed study of the whole register would show whether or not any of the entries on folios 4v to 15v are duplicated in the main register. However, as the archdeaconry sections contain similar material to that found on folios 4v to 15v, it is possible that these folios were once a working register.

In contrast, folios 3r to 39v of Stretton's small register appear to be a fair copy, having a far neater appearance and considerably fewer changes in hand and ink; large sections seem to have been written by one clerk from material previously recorded. The entries are again in chronological order and cover almost the whole episcopate. This volume contains almost all the licences and dispensations for the episcopate; only two licences of any kind have been noted in Stretton's first, large, register. Both are

licences to study and only one of the recipients is mentioned in the small register of licences and dispensations; this was Hugh Hykelyng who was granted subsequent licences to study, letters dimissory, and licence to be absent and to farm his church.¹ The absence of licences and dispensations in Stretton's large register, and the general appearance of the small register containing only such material, suggests that the small register is the definitive copy, and, as such, was intended for preservation.

Comparison of these sections in Northburgh's and Stretton's registers suggests that the former is a working copy and the latter is a fair copy. Thus it is possible that the registry clerks of both bishops also used working registers. The identity of Langton's registrars is not known but the last registrar and his clerks probably continued to work in Northburgh's registry for it has been well illustrated that diocesan officers enjoyed a considerable degree of stability in the tenure of their offices which gave continuity to the administration of the diocese.² Both Northburgh and Stretton, as newly appointed

1. L.R.J.O. ms. B/A/1/5i; reg. Stretton, book 5, pp. 6-90. For the two licences in reg. Stretton, book 4, see Hugh de Hykelyng p. 81, & Alexander de Dalby p. 162; both received licences to study for two years. For Hykelyng's subsequent licences see reg. Stretton, book 5, pp. 21, 43 bis, 53.

2. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), pp. 11-12.

bishops, would have been dependent upon the resident diocesan administrators at the beginning of their episcopates; thus their respective chanceries may have continued to use current working practices.

The use of working registers at Lichfield was not unique or exceptional; as previously noted, working registers were used in the chanceries of archbishop Wickwane at York and of bishops Ghent and Martival at Salisbury.¹ Their use continued at York until the early sixteenth century; this evidence will now be considered.

The use of working registers appears to have been a well-established practice at York, with further evidence surviving from the fourteenth to the early sixteenth centuries. The *sede vacante* registers for 1315-1317, 1397, 1398, 1423-1426, 1464-1465, 1480, 1500-1501, 1507-1508 and 1514, together with part of the register of archbishop Thomas Rotherham for 1480-1500, survive in duplicate. It does seem that it was customary for the dean and chapter of York, the custodians of the spiritualities during vacancies of the archbishopric, to compile first a working register and then for a fair copy to be made. One copy, probably the fair copy, was presumably handed over to the incoming archbishop and his registrar,

1. See above pp. 15-16.

whilst the dean and chapter retained the working copy.¹ The working register for the 1315-1317 vacancy will be considered in detail as this resembles the first four folios of Langton's register in composition.

This York register survives in two parts; a working register and a definitive copy.² The working register has its entries arranged chronologically, without any subject or geographical divisions, but against each entry is an abbreviated marginal note indicating into which section the entry should be placed in the definitive register. There are seven different notations, five of which refer to the archdeaconries; *Eb* for York, *No* for Nottingham, *Ry* for Richmond, *Est* for the East Riding and *Cly* for Cleveland. The two remaining notations are *Ca* for the section relating to the chapter of York and *Suff* for the section pertaining to the suffragan see of Durham which was vacant in 1316-1317. Each entry in the working York vacancy register has one of these extra marginal notes, whereas only the institutions, one collation and two letters regarding a presentation and induction on the

1. Smith, Registers, pp. 232-3.

2. Smith, Registers, p. 237; Borthwick Institute of Historical Research ms. BI 5A, consulted on microfilm, fos. 192-220 for the working register, fos. 119-141 & 175-186 for the definitive register.

first four folios of Langton's register are similarly marked, suggesting that a far more methodical approach was employed in the selection process at York. It is noteworthy that the clerks at York were not infallible; some of the sections of the York definitive register do not have a heading to enable the reader to distinguish at a glance one from the other, whereas all the separate sections in Langton's register are clearly marked.¹ However, the similarities in the chronological arrangement and the method of marking the entries to facilitate ease of selection in the York working register and on the first four folios of Langton's register suggest a direct parallel.

Evidence from the fifteenth century shows that working registers continued to be used at York and suggests that they may have been used at Durham. In addition to the working registers surviving for some of the later York vacancies it does seem that this practice continued also during archbishop Thomas Rotherham's tenure of the see. Two registers survive for his archiepiscopate, the smallest of which duplicates to 1487 some parts of the larger register; this small register is

1. See appx. D for photocopies illustrating the working and definitive parts of the York register. The sections in the definitive register that are without a heading are fos. 119-125v; 128; 132.

probably another working register.¹ Evidence from earlier in the century at Durham also suggests that more than one register was used during the episcopate of Thomas Langley (1406-1437). In Langley's register there is a single mention of at least one other register in addition to the definitive copy. The bishop '*inspectis registris nostris*' found an instrument '*ut in registro papireo*'.² This may refer to the notary's register, a predecessor's register, or, perhaps, a working register.

It is noteworthy that the working quires in the registers of bishops Ghent and Martival, of archbishop Rotherham and those in the York vacancy register of 1315-1317 are all remarkably neat and closely resemble the definitive quires, whereas those in the register of archbishop Wickwane offer a sharp contrast to the more carefully compiled fair copy.³ The workmanship of the first four folios of Langton's register is also of a good

1. Smith, Registers, pp. 245-6; Borthwick Institute of Historical Research mss. BI, Reg. 23, BI, Reg. 24, consulted on microfilm. Reg. 24 was probably the working register.

2. The Register of Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham, 1406-1437, ed. R.L. Storey, 6 vols. (Surtees Society, 164, 166, 169, 170, 177, 182, 1956-70), i, p. xxxviii, ii, no. 376.

3. Reg. Gandavo, i, p. lv; Reg. Martival, iv, p. xxiii; Borthwick Institute of Historical Research mss., BI, Reg. 23 (reg. Rotherham), BI, Reg. 3 (reg. Wickwane), consulted on microfilm; appx. D for examples from the York vacancy register, 1315-17.

standard and appears to have been undertaken by two hands only; the numerous additions and the duplicated entries, however, strongly suggest that this was a working quire.

Thus, working registers may have been fairly commonplace, with clear evidence for their use at Salisbury and York. The close similarities between the working York vacancy register of 1315-1317 and the first four folios of Langton's register suggest a direct parallel. The structure of the registers of Langton's last two vicars-general and the cancelled letters on folio 116 strongly suggest that they too used working registers. As the entries on folio 116 are dated some twelve to fourteen years later than those on the first four folios it would seem that the use of working registers became a well-established practice at Lichfield. This thesis is strengthened by the possibility of the continued use of working registers in the chanceries of bishops Northburgh and Stretton. Thus, we may conclude that Langton's registrar did use a working register and chose to retain part of this, the present first four folios.

ii. THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE REMAINDER OF THE REGISTER.

As in the contemporary registers of the other large dioceses of Lincoln and York the remainder of Langton's register has a more structured format with some distinction being made according to subject matter or archdeaconries, with separate quires being used for these sections.

Henceforward, institutions and other matters, including, after 1307, grants of custodies and licences, are recorded in the relevant archdeaconry sections; Chester, Coventry, Derby, Shrewsbury and Stafford.¹ However, unlike the archdeaconry divisions in the contemporary Lincoln register of bishop John Dalderby (1300-1320) which each cover almost his entire episcopate,² the Lichfield archdeaconry sections are in varying time-spans within three separate groups; fos. 5 - 19v, February 1298 - April 1307, fos. 34 - 48v and 56 - 77r, May 1307 - February 1321, fos. 78 - 91v, March 1317 - October 1321.

1. Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 4; Smith, Registers, pp. 109-10 for Lincoln, pp. 235-7 for York, pp. 54-5 for Coventry and Lichfield; L.J.R.O. ms. B/A/1/1 gives a plan of the folios of Langton's register.

2. Smith, Registers, pp. 109-10; Lincolnshire Archives Office mss. Episcopal Registers II, III, consulted on microfilm. Dalderby's institutions are arranged under pontifical years within each archdeaconry section.

The other sections of the register are arranged around these; the registers of M. Robert de Redeswell and M. Ralph de Leycestria, vicars-general in 1307-8 and 1312-13 respectively, occupy folios 27 to 30r and 31 to 33r, and there are two gatherings of miscellaneous business on folios 20 to 26v and 49 to 55v. The ordination lists from both Langton's and Northburgh's episcopates occupy folios 92 to 141v and 143 to 216v respectively.¹

The plan of the folios, preserved at the back of Langton's register, shows that folios 20 to 25v comprise one gathering of six folios: folios 20 to 20v, mostly financial business; folios 21 to 21v, collations to prebends; folios 22 to 24r, grants of custodies and licences; folios 24v to 25v, various business including notes of when some vicarages and churches became vacant and copies of two bulls of Boniface VIII regarding the dispute over Pagham church, Sussex. Folio 26r, which is a single piece of parchment, also records collations to prebends which continue in date order from those on folios 21 to 21v;² it is thus probable that folio 26 has been placed out of sequence in the register and should have been bound between folios 21v and 22.

Folio 20 has as its heading 'Foreign matters

1. Smith, Registers, pp. 54-5; Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 4.

2. Smith, Registers, p. 54.

which do not pertain to the bishop's jurisdiction' and this business continues onto folio 20v.¹ Two entries have been added to the foot of folio 20 (nos. 364, 365) and thus cut entry no. 363, which continues on folio 20v, in two. However, entry nos. 364 and 365 appear to have been written in the same hand as the remainder of folios 20 to 20v and may have been added here to obviate the use of an additional folio; the appearance of these folios suggests they were fair copies.

The custodies and licences recorded on folios 22r to 23v are on a single piece of parchment. However, the fact that this business continues to folio 24r shows that the gathering had been pieced together at the time; the other half of folio 24, folios 21r to 21v, records collations to prebends, including those previously recorded on the first four folios.

The appearance of folios 22r to 24r suggests that groups of entries were registered at different times from working records. Folio 22r has been written by one hand, 'A', folio 22v by two hands, 'A' and 'B', folio 23r by hand 'A' alone, folio 23v by four hands, 'A', 'C', 'D' and 'E', whilst folio 24r has been written by hands 'A' and 'F'. The changes in hand coincide with changes in the dates of the entries; folio 22r,

1. Smith, Registers, p. 54; Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 4; reg. nos. 361-374.

written by hand 'A', has entries dating from 26 December 1299 to 15 March 1300 (nos. 399-408), whilst on folio 22v hand 'A' has written the first four entries (nos. 409-12), dating from 5 May 1300 to 24 May 1300, and hand 'B' then copied the next two entries (nos. 413-4), both dated 18 October 1300. Hand 'A' then resumed the registration of the subsequent entries (nos. 415-22) which date from 17 December 1300 to 1 February 1301. Hand 'A' continued to write the whole of folio 23r, where the entries (nos. 423-38) date from 4 February 1301 to 21 April 1301, and began folio 23v with two entries dated 22 April 1301 (nos. 439-40). A new hand, 'C', copied the next entry (no. 441) dated 25 April, then hand 'A' resumed the registration of the next eight entries (nos. 443-50), dating from 4 May to 10 July 1301. Another new hand, 'D', recorded entry nos. 451-2, dated 23 August 1301 and a further new hand, 'E' completed the folio with entry no. 454 which was dated much later on 18 November 1306. Hand 'A' resumed work on folio 24r, copying the first five entries (nos. 455-9) dating from 28 October 1301 to 12 April 1302, and another new hand, 'F', completed the folio and the custody section with entries dating from 15 August 1302 to 16 December 1306 (nos. 460-4).

Most of the entries are in chronological order, the exceptions being nos. 403, 436, 448,

449 and 454. Folio 24r records grants of custodies made by M. Thomas de Abberbury when vicar-general in 1301-2 and by the papal administrators when the see was sequestered by the pope in 1302-3; thus these officers followed the then contemporary practice of recording custodies in this separate section of the register.¹ On folio 22r a space of about five lines has been left for the completion of entry no. 404 which was, however, never finished.

The change to recording custodies, licences and grants of prebends in the appropriate archdeaconry sections of the register, instead of in a separate section, appears to have been a gradual process. The custodies on the first four folios date almost consecutively from 1 October 1298 to 31 January 1300 whereas those on folios 22 to 24r date from 26 December 1299 to 10 November 1306, suggesting that these folios may have been intended to be bound together.² Only three custodies are recorded on the intervening folios 5 to 19v; two custodies granted by Langton in April 1304 and January 1305 were recorded in a Stafford archdeaconry section, whilst another granted by Abberbury in March 1306, during his third commission as vicar-general, was registered in a

1. Reg. nos. 456-461; for Abberbury and the papal administrators see Chapter 2, pp. 141-3, 192.

2. Reg. nos. 2, 84, 399, 464.

Chester archdeaconry section.¹ Most of the custodies recorded on folios 22r to 24r belong to the years 1301 and 1302. However, one is dated October 1303 and three belong to the year 1306.² From May 1307 custodies were recorded on subsequent folios, in the archdeaconry sections of the register or in the separate registers of the vicars-general.³

Grants of licences, similarly, run consecutively from folios 1 to 4v and folios 22r to 24r, where they date from 22 February 1299 to 19 November 1299 and from 15 January 1300 to 1 July 1301 respectively.⁴ It is interesting that two licences from folios 23r and 23v (nos. 430, 445) have been duplicated in the Chester and Coventry archdeaconry sections within folios 5 to 19v by being added to the rectors' institution records (nos. 175, 109). However, errors were made by the scribe or scribes on both occasions; licence no. 430 is for one year whereas this was copied as being for three years in entry no. 175, and licence no. 445 is dated 1 July 1301 but when this was added to the rector's institution (no. 109) this was dated as '*nonas Augusti*', that is 5

1. Reg. nos. 297, 298, 208.

2. Reg. nos. 462, 454, 463, 464.

3. Reg. nos. 603, 523, 528, 577.

4. Reg. nos. 48, 83, 402, 445.

August. Apart from one grant concerning non-residence made by M. Thomas de Abberbury when vicar-general in 1305-6, the only other licences recorded on folios 5 to 19v are those which have been copied from the first four folios as part of institution entries.¹

Grants of prebends do not occur on folios 5 to 19v; those recorded on the first four folios are subsequently duplicated on folios 21r to 21v. Thus folios 21r, 21v and 26r contain the earliest grants of prebends, dating from 3 February 1297 to 15 January 1306. Again, Abberbury, when vicar-general in 1306, and the papal administrators of the see recorded their grants of prebends in this section.² All subsequent grants of prebends are found in the relevant archdeaconry sections of the register or in the registers of the vicars-general.

The second section of the register containing miscellaneous business, folios 49r to 55v, has as its heading 'Enfeoffments made by the bishop in his bishopric of wastes and escheats and other foreign matters'.³ Unlike the earlier miscellaneous section, the entries here appear to

1. Reg. no. 206; part of no. 82 is duplicated as no. 162; nos. 37 and 79 are duplicated as no. 228; no. 45 is duplicated as no. 236.

2. Reg. nos. 375, 486, 391.

3. Smith, Registers, p. 55; Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 4.

have been written by only two hands; folio 49r by one and folios 49v to 55v by a second. Folio 49 is a single piece of parchment whereas folios 50 to 55 comprise a gathering of six folios. This miscellaneous section includes copies of twelve of Langton's charters granting lands to various people,¹ injunctions issued to religious houses following the bishop's visitations,² copies of Clement V's two bulls allowing Langton to grant dispensation to ten of his clerks regarding plurality, defects of age and holy orders, with three grants being made by the bishop³ and a variety of other matters.⁴ It would, perhaps, have been more appropriate if the two fragments of parchment, now numbered folios 65A and 99, had been included in this miscellaneous gathering instead of in a Shrewsbury archdeaconry section and the ordination section of the register: folio 65A appears to be the working record of injunctions issued after Langton's visitation of Haughmond abbey, Salop, and folio 99v has copies of three of Langton's charters granting land and the advowson of the church of Adlingfleet, Yorks.,

1. Reg. nos. 785-7, 792-6, 802, 804, 807-8.

2. Reg. nos. 809-12.

3. Reg. nos. 788, 797, 798.

4. Reg. nos. 789-91, 799-801, 803, 805-6, 813-7.

to Selby abbey.¹

The first folio of each section of the register has a clear, contemporary, heading enabling the reader to differentiate one from another. At the head of some of the folios within each section the name of the archdeaconry has been added by another contemporary hand.² The headings 'Stafford' added to folios 22v, 23r and 24r are erroneous as these folios contain grants of custodies and licences in each of the five archdeaconries. Contemporary thumb-tabs were attached to folios 18 (Stafford archdeaconry), 34 (Coventry archdeaconry), 41 (Stafford archdeaconry), 56 (Chester archdeaconry) and 92 (the ordination section), making the reader's selection of these sections even easier. The thumb-tabs are now preserved at the back of the register. All are well-worn and appear to have been cut from used parchment as there are scraps of writing on the dorse as well as the intended heading on the front. Two of the tabs, from folios 18 and 92, are so worn that they are illegible, but those from folios 34, 41 and 56 bear the titles *Coven*, *Stafford* and *Cestrie* respectively. As two of the extant thumb-tabs are for different Stafford archdeaconry sections there may have been

1. Reg. nos. 949-50, 1291-3.

2. For example on fos. 10, 11, 13, 14.

tabs for other sections of the register which have not survived. However, the condition of the register is such that it has been impossible to determine whether or not tabs were stitched to the relevant folios.

IV. THE MARGINALIA.

The majority of the folios have margins at both the inner and outer edges, with a wider margin usually found on the outer edge of each folio, that is the right-hand side on the recto and the left-hand side on the verso. The appropriate heading for each entry is usually written in the outer margins. These either summarise the content of the entry, as in no. 127, '*Admissio regiminis hospitalis de Bretteford*', or give the name of the church, chapel, or vicarage in question, as in no. 160, '*Vicaria de Weverham*'. However, some *marginalia* appear in the inner margins, particularly on the recto of some of the folios: the additional archidiaconal notations for the institution entries on folios 1 and 2 are written in the inner margin, whereas on the dorse of these same folios this information is written with the rest of the *marginalia* in the outer margin; on folio 7 some entries have the note '*debet feodum*' or '*solvit feodum*';¹ and on folio 68 all the contemporary *marginalia* are written in the inner margin even though a wider margin was provided on the outer edge.

Other notes recording whether or not a rector paid the fee for the registration of his institution appear periodically in the margins of

1. For example see reg. nos. 132, 140, 141, 142.

the register.¹ Sometimes this is abbreviated to 'debet' or 'nihil' (nos. 648-650). Occasionally, however, more information is given such as 'nihil pro feodo quia pauper' (no. 954), 'cancellarius relaxavit feodum' (nos. 109, 110), 'feodum relaxavit ad instanciam domini Rogeri le Brabazon' (no. 43),² 'solvit dimidiam marcam' (no. 696), or 'debet dimidiam marcam pro feodo episcopi' (no. 317). Other entries confirm that half a mark was the usual registration fee.

Other *marginalia* occur periodically. Of chief interest are the drawn hands pointing to entries on folios 4, 6, 11, 20, 32 and 142v and the notes on folios 34v, 41v, 56, 64 and 70 recording the release of Langton from prison on 9 November 1308, '*Registrum post egressum episcopi a carcere*'. The years, which run from 25 March to 24 March, are noted with the words '*Incipit annus Domini...*' next to which the years have been written in Arabic numerals by perhaps the same hand that added the modern foliation. Additionally, other notes have been added by later hands, including those made whilst compiling the sixteenth - seventeenth century index which is now at the front of the volume.

1. For example see reg. nos. 30-35, 198-200, 257, 313, 314, 317, 1042-1044, 1046-1048.

2. See appx. B.

V. THE ORDINATION LISTS.

As in the contemporary Lincoln register of bishop Oliver Sutton the lists of ordinations in Langton's register were written on separate quires and thus formed a separate section in the register; they have been bound at the back of the register. This pattern was maintained in subsequent Lichfield registers except for the ordination lists for Roger Northburgh's episcopate which have also been bound in Langton's register.¹

There are two small pieces of parchment included in the ordination section that are anomalous. The first, inserted between folios 98v and 100, forms an additional half-folio. This has been numbered folio 99, yet the recto is blank. On the dorse are copies of three charters issued by Langton granting land and the advowson of the church of Adlingfleet, Yorks., to Selby abbey.² The second, at the end of Langton's ordination section and inserted between folios 141v and 143, is only one-third of the size of a normal folio. This has been numbered folio 142 and again the recto is blank. On the dorse is an extract from a letter of pope Boniface VIII allowing friars to be

1. Reg. Sutton, vii; Smith, Registers, pp. 109, 55-62.

2. Reg. nos. 1291-3; see Chapter 3, pp. 198, 330-2, for a discussion of these charters.

ordained by any Catholic bishop.¹ Why these folios were inserted here is unclear.

Ordination lists do not survive for the whole of Langton's episcopate; the first ordination list is dated 4 June 1300 (no. 1285) and the last, dated 18 April 1321 (no. 1329), is incomplete. However, an entry in Sutton's Lincoln register shows that ordinations were celebrated in the diocese on 21 December 1297 in St Chad's church, Shrewsbury, by the bishop of St Asaph 'acting by the authority and on behalf of the bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.'² The table of ordinations³ shows that only one or two lists have survived for most of the years between 1300 and 1321; the exceptions are for 1310 and 1320 (four each) and for 1316, 1317 and 1319 (three each). No lists survive for 1313. In his comprehensive study of the ordination lists from both Langton's and Northburgh's episcopates Dr. Robinson concludes that the lists show no obvious signs of incompleteness except in the recording of regular clergy between 1307-1314 and in the absence of lists of deacons and priests, and perhaps some

1. Reg. no. 1330.

2. Reg. Sutton, vii, p. 111; HBC, p. 295, Llywelyn de Bromfield was bishop of St Asaph.

3. Appx. E.

subdeacons, ordained in March 1314 (no. 1310).¹ Langton's ordination lists are collections of individual quires and folios and Dr. Robinson suggests these were written during the service and only later bound together; some quires and folios may thus be lost.² It is more probable, however, that the names of the ordinands were written on rolls at the ceremony itself, as the working record, and were later copied onto folios as the definitive record. This thesis is suggested by the addition of the names of five religious subdeacons after the names of deacons in column 'a' of list no. 1321, which are linked to the previous subdeacon section in the column by a line drawn in the left hand margin.³ Thus, it is possible that the copy of the last ordination list dated 18 April 1321 (no. 1329) was not begun until after Langton's death on 9 November 1321 and, for some reason, was never completed; a memorandum elsewhere in the register does state that John de Schiringham was ordained to the diaconate on 18 April 1321, although his name is not recorded on the ordination list.⁴

1. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 4 states, incorrectly, that the lists of deacons and priests are missing from the list for Advent 1314.

2. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 4.

3. Reg. no. 1321, fo. 135, col. a.

4. Reg. no. 1181.

The names of the ordinands are arranged in either two or three columns in the lists. The names of acolytes do occur,¹ but the usual practice is to record the names of those ordained only to the major orders of subdeacon, deacon and priest. However, in some later lists these categories are further subdivided to distinguish the religious from the secular clergy, and on one occasion a category of beneficed clerks, both secular and religious, occurs.²

According to canon law, ordinations could be celebrated on six Saturdays during the year; those at the *Quatuor tempora*, the Ember days at the four seasons falling after the first Sunday in Lent, Whit-Sunday (Trinity), Holy Rood Day, St Lucy's Day,³ Easter Saturday and the Saturday before Passion Sunday, known as *Sitientes*.⁴ It was lawful

1. Reg. nos. 1286, 1290, 1302, 1309.

2. For example, for religious subdeacons see reg. no. 1324, fo. 137, col. b, reg. no. 1325, fo. 137v, col. b; for religious deacons see reg. no. 1325, fo. 138, col. a; for religious priests see reg. nos. 1320, fo. 134v, 1323, fo. 136v, 1326, fo. 139v; for beneficed clerks see reg. no. 1320, fo. 134.

3. Handbook of Dates for Students of English History, ed. C.R. Cheney (London, 1978), p. 59. If Holy Rood Day and St Lucy's Day fall on a Wednesday, the Ember days begin on the Wednesday following.

4. Haines, Worcester, p. 165; H.S. Bennett, 'Medieval Ordination Lists in the English Episcopal Registers' in Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. J. Conway Davies (London, 1957), p. 21.

for bishops to ordain to the lesser orders of acolyte and below on Sundays and feast days but only the pope could ordain to higher orders at other times of the year, although the pope could authorise a bishop to hold additional ordinations.¹ Langton's ordinations were held only on the six authorised Saturdays during the year, only one of which was celebrated at *Sitientes*, although the scribe wrongly called this the *Quatuor tempora*, and five were celebrated on Easter Saturday.² One of the ordinations held at the *Quatuor tempora*, on 21 September 1308 (no. 1300), is not dated as such by the scribe but is dated as Saturday, the feast of St Matthew.

Dr. Robinson has stated that, during the period 1300 to 1312, it was usual to hold one large ordination service in the diocese each year, with another small service being held in many years.³ This generalisation is true for some years but on the whole it is misleading and depends upon what we classify as large. For example, in 1300, on 4 June (no. 1285) at Eckington, Derbys., Langton ordained 30 subdeacons, 47 deacons and 87 priests, a total of 164, whereas on 17 December (no. 1286), in the conventual church of Burton on

1. Haines, Worcester, p. 165, n. 6.

2. Appx. E.

3. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 6.

Trent, Staffs., he ordained 157 acolytes,¹ 37 subdeacons, 58 deacons and 95 priests, a total of 347. In 1306, however, on 19 March (no. 1296), in the church of the Friars Preachers at Derby, the suffragan bishop of Whithorn ordained 23 subdeacons, 73 deacons and 48 priests, a total of 144, and on 17 December (no. 1297), in the church of the Friars Minor at Stafford, he ordained only eight subdeacons, six deacons and nineteen priests, a total of 33.

Other lists confirm that the number of clergy ordained at different services varied greatly: on 23 December 1301 (no. 1287), the only list for that year, John Halton, bishop of Carlisle, ordained at Derby only 22 subdeacons, sixteen deacons and 27 priests, a total of 65, and on 22 September 1302 (no. 1288), again the only list for that year, he ordained, also at Derby, 42 subdeacons, 27 deacons and 65 priests, a total of 134. These figures cannot be classified as large when compared with those for the service held on 17 December 1300, detailed above, and some subsequent services: on 17 May 1315 (no. 1312), in the prebendal church of Colwich, Staffs., Langton ordained 61 subdeacons, 196 deacons and 110 priests, a total of 367; and on 20 December 1315

1. The name of one acolyte, Robert de Hunnesworth, has presumably been listed twice on fo. 95, at the bottom of col. a and the top of col. b; this name has been counted once only.

(no. 1313), in the conventual church of Ranton, Staffs., even this number was surpassed when 104 subdeacons, 106 deacons and 174 priests, a total of 384, were ordained. However, the largest number of clergy to be ordained during Langton's episcopate was at the service held on 20 September 1309 (no. 1301) at Colwich, by the suffragan bishop of Annaghdown, when 222 subdeacons, 167 deacons, and 88 priests, a total of 477, were ordained.

By contrast, a small number of clergy presented themselves for ordination at some services: on 20 December 1309 (no. 1302), again in the conventual church of Ranton, Langton ordained three acolytes, three subdeacons, three deacons and two priests, a total of eleven; on 13 June 1310 (no. 1304), in the conventual church of Coventry, he ordained six subdeacons, seven deacons and thirteen priests, a total of 26; whilst on 19 September 1310 (no. 1305), in the prebendal church at Bishops Itchington, Warwicks., he ordained six subdeacons, thirteen deacons and 25 priests, a total of 44.

The ordination services detailed above, except for that held on 19 March 1306, were all held at the *Quatuor tempora* showing that services held even at these times could be both on a small as well as a large scale. Nor does the place where the ordination services were held offer an

explanation for the variations in the numbers of clerks ordained; both small and large scale services were held in the conventual church of Ranton. The variations in the numbers of ordinands was surely due to a number of factors, not least of which may have been how wide knowledge of the forthcoming service was within the diocese. It may simply have been that on some occasions only a small number of clergy wished to be ordained for whatever reason, perhaps personal illness or adverse weather conditions.

If we collate information about the weather with the number of clergy ordained during certain years it may be possible to ascertain if this factor did have a significant influence. The numbers ordained are tabulated below for ease of reference:

REG. NO.	DATE		TOTAL ORDAINED
1285	June	1300	164
1286	Dec.	1300	347
1287	Dec.	1301	65
1288	Sept.	1302	134
1296	March	1306	144
1297	Dec.	1306	33
1301	Sept.	1309	477
1302	Dec.	1309	11
1303	March	1310	476
1304	June	1310	26
1305	Sept.	1310	44

1306	Dec.	1310	164
1311	Dec.	1314	160
1312	May	1315	367
1313	Dec.	1315	384
1314	March	1316	24
1315	June	1316	195
1316	Dec.	1316	199

In the summers of 1300, 1302, 1309 and 1310, which were very dry, when travelling would have been relatively easy, the number of ordinands were 164, 134, 477 and 26 respectively.¹ The harvests of 1308-1310 were poor, resulting in a dearth in some parts of England,² which may explain the small number ordained in June 1310 but does not account for the record number of ordinands in September 1309. Comparison of these figures with the numbers ordained in the wet or severe winters of 1309, 1310, 1314, 1315 and 1316, when dearth and famine persisted,³ and when travelling would have been more difficult, show no significant fall in the total number of candidates with the exception of

1. J. Titow, 'Evidence of Weather in the Account Rolls of the Bishopric of Winchester 1209-1350', Economic History Review, 2nd series, 12 (1959-60), pp. 381, 383; C.E. Britton, A Meteorological Chronology to A.D. 1450 (London, 1937), p. 130.

2. I. Kershaw, 'The Great Famine and Agrarian Crisis in England 1315-1322', Past and Present, 59 (1973), p. 6.

3. Britton, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-3; Titow, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-6; Kershaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 10, 11, 13.

the eleven ordained in December 1309; 164 in December 1310, 160 in December 1314, 384 December 1315 and 199 in December 1316. It is possible that the adverse weather and accompanying dearth or famine did influence the low attendance of ordinands in December 1309, June 1310, September 1310 and March 1316, but this does not explain why Langton, in perhaps the wettest year of his episcopate, 1315, when parts of the diocese were certainly flooded,¹ ordained his greatest number of candidates; 367 in May and 384 in December. The bad weather of the period must surely have affected the lives of the clergy but the figures from the ordination lists do not support any positive conclusions regarding the numbers ordained at any one time. It may, however, be significant that the ordination services at which only a small number of clergy were ordained were, with one exception, preceded by services when large numbers attended;² a decision may thus have been made by the diocesan administrators to try to consolidate the number of services held in any one year during the bad weather.

The name of the celebrant who conducted the

1. H.J. Hewitt, Medieval Cheshire, an Economic and Social History of Cheshire in the Reign of the Three Edwards (Manchester, 1929), p. 32.

2. The service when 33 clerks were ordained in Dec. 1306 was preceded by a relatively short service when 144 were ordained (reg. nos. 1297, 1296).

first two ordination services is not given in the register, but letters elsewhere in the register show conclusively that these were taken by Langton himself. The first service, celebrated on 4 June 1300 (no. 1285), was held at Eckington, Derbys., where, on the same day, the bishop instituted two clerks to benefices.¹ Similarly, on 17 December 1300, at Burton on Trent, Staffs., in addition to the ordination service (no. 1286), the bishop granted two licences for absence to study, the custody of a church and instituted a rector.² Dr. Robinson has stated that Langton celebrated only half the ordinations personally, but this is not the case.³ Though our information is incomplete, of the 41 ordinations of which we have knowledge Langton was unable to celebrate ordinations personally on only ten occasions.⁴ Thus 31 services were taken by the bishop himself, certainly not the act of a 'neglectful' prelate considering that some of the services would have been very long. He was the celebrant in June and December 1300, September 1303, March and December 1304, and from December 1309, with one exception when he was at the papal court in 1312, at all the

1. Reg. nos. 104, 331.

2. Reg. nos. 415, 416, 417, and 174, although no. 174 does not specifically mention the bishop.

3. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 6.

4. Appx. F.

ordinations for which records have survived. These were held in a variety of churches in the diocese, suggesting that the bishop visited at least the southern part of his diocese regularly, including the conventual churches of Lilleshall, Salop, Kenilworth and Coventry, Warwicks., Burton on Trent, Ranton, and Sandwell, Staffs., St Thomas's, Stafford, and Darley, Derbys. Other ordination services were held by him in a variety of churches: in the parochial churches of Eckington, Derbys., Abbots Bromley, Penn, and Chebsey, Staffs., and Hillmorton and Southam, Warwicks.; five times in the cathedral church at Lichfield; in the prebendal churches of Eccleshall, Staffs., Bishops Itchington, Warwicks., where Langton had manors, and Colwich, Staffs.; and in the collegiate church of Gnosall, Staffs.¹ Moreover, Langton was licensed to hold ordination services in the archdiocese of York after 29 May, 13 October and 29 December 1298, in the church of the Friars Minor, York, on 21 February 1304, and after 24 May 1311.² Although no ordination lists have survived, Langton's itinerary shows him to have been in York at about these dates, suggesting that he may have ordained there. Acting upon the faculty dated 24 May 1311 Langton could have

1. Appx. F.

2. Reg. Romeyn, ii, p. 248; Reg. Corbridge, ii, p. 154; Reg. Greenfield, iv, no. 2339.

ordained at York on 5 June 1311 (Trinity), but a letter in his register dated 5 June explains that he was unable to ordain Geoffrey de Vilers to the priesthood at York, as previously arranged, because of ill-health; the bishop did, however, grant a licence and institute a rector on this day.¹ Langton was later licensed by the archbishop of Canterbury to hold an ordination service in the conventual church of Blessed Mary, Southwark, on 20 September 1316, during the vacancy of the see of Winchester, when he ordained fourteen acolytes, 21 subdeacons, 27 deacons and 28 priests from numerous dioceses, including his own.²

Other bishops, some acting as suffragans, were appointed to celebrate ordinations, and presumably carry out other sacramental duties, in the diocese when Langton was unable to officiate. Unfortunately, no commissions are recorded in the register but the faculty to ordain is incorporated into the heading of each ordination list. One letter in the collection of very interesting Lichfield letters in the *Liber Epistolaris* of

1. Appx. H; reg. nos. 633, 861, 951; Langton may have been a prisoner at York by 5 June 1311, see Chapter 3, pp. 272-4.

2. Churchill, Canterbury Admin., i, p. 98, n. 3; Lambeth Palace Library ms., Register of Walter Reynolds, fos. 174v-175v, consulted on microfilm; this ordination list is printed in The Registers of John de Sandale and Rigaud de Asserio, Bishops of Winchester (A.D. 1316-1323), ed. F.J. Baigent (London and Winchester, 1897), pp. 347-9.

Richard de Bury sheds light upon the work and character of one suffragan bishop, Thomas de Kirkcudbright, and supplements the information in the ordination lists.¹ The letter, probably written by Thomas de Abberbury when acting as vicar-general for Langton in March 1306, admonishes the bishop of Whithorn for remaining in Chester abbey instead of busying himself as suffragan; numerous churches in the diocese were awaiting consecration and holy orders were due to be celebrated. The clergy of the diocese had been summoned, by letter, to appear at Derby on 19 March 1306 to receive the orders appropriate to their benefices. Thus, Abberbury, on behalf of Langton, required the bishop of Whithorn to proceed to Derby to celebrate the ordinations lest the clergy should travel there in vain (no. 1296). The letter implies that the bishop of Whithorn was rather lax by nature, preferring to enjoy the comforts of Chester abbey rather than carrying out his duties as suffragan. Nevertheless, the register records that he celebrated orders, as suffragan, on two other occasions; in the parish church of Colwich, Staffs., on 18 December 1305 (no. 1295) and in the church of the Friars Minor, Stafford, on 17 December 1306 (no. 1297).

The evidence already cited from Sutton's

1. Denholm-Young, Liber Epistolaris, p. 292, no. 23.

Lincoln register shows that Llywelwyn de Bromfield, bishop of St Asaph, celebrated ordinations at Shrewsbury on 21 December 1297, whilst the ordination lists show that John Halton, bishop of Carlisle, deputised for Langton on three occasions.¹ The bishops of Carlisle held the church of Melbourne in Derbyshire and had a palace there.² Thus it would have been convenient for bishop Halton to ordain by faculty when in the diocese and he celebrated ordinations in nearby Derby: the first service, in the church of All Saints on 23 December 1301 (no. 1287), was by licence of the vicar-general; the second, again in the church of All Saints, on 22 September 1302 (no. 1288), was by commission of the administrators appointed by Boniface VIII when the pope sequestrated the see; and the third was, presumably, again by licence of the vicar-general, although the register does not state this, and was held in the church of the Friars Preachers on 23 December 1307 (no. 1298).

The second of the two suffragans employed was Gilbert O'Tigernaig, the Franciscan bishop of

1. Reg. Sutton, vii, p. 111; appx. F.

2. VCH Derby, ii, p. 4; Reg. Halton, i, p. 88, n. 1. The itinerary in Reg. Halton, ii, pp. 239-242, does not show that Halton was in Derby on the three dates given in Langton's register. Halton's register does not record the faculties authorising him to ordain in the diocese, nor lists the clergy ordained by him.

Annaghdown.¹ He celebrated orders at Berkswell, Warwicks., on 8 June 1308 (no. 1299), at Chester on 21 September 1308 (no. 1300), at Colwich, Staffs., on 20 September 1309 (no. 1301) and at Tamworth, Staffs., on 23 December 1312 (no. 1309). On the first two occasions, and the last, he was commissioned by the vicar-general; on the third occasion he ordained by Langton's authority as the vicar-general's commission had lapsed by this time.² An entry on a fragment of a Lichfield sequestrator's account roll for the period Michaelmas 1309 to Michaelmas 1310 records that the bishop of Annaghdown was paid 40s. for his work in the diocese.³ He was later employed as a suffragan in the dioceses of Winchester, Worcester and Hereford.⁴

Candidates for orders would know at which times of the year to present themselves but not necessarily where. Abberbury's letter to the bishop of Whithorn in the *Liber Epistolaris* shows that the clergy of the diocese had been summoned, by letter, to appear for ordination at Derby. Notice of where an ordination was to be held would be published, about one month in advance, by the

1. HBC, p. 330.

2. See Chapter 2, p. 162.

3. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M5, m. 1d.

4. HBC, p. 330; Haines, Worcester, pp. 166, 310.

bishop's official who contacted the various archdeacons, or their officials, who, in turn, informed the rural deans.¹

Before ordination candidates had to submit to an examination, being asked such questions as those given in the admonition read at the service held in December 1315.² Candidates' 'titles' were certainly examined and the importance of these is shown by the fact that most of the ordinands have their titles recorded in the lists and on some occasions it is recorded that these titles were approved.³ A letter elsewhere in the register notes that when letters dimissory were granted to William and Henry Overa, their letters had an additional clause 'provided that they will show sufficient title to their ordainer.'⁴ The ordination lists provide evidence that titles were investigated; the title of Walter de Cokton of Worcester diocese, presented by the vicar of High Ercall, Salop, was found to be inadequate and Richard de Norton, presumably another patron,

1. Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

2. Bennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25; reg. no. 1313 and see pp. 67-8 below for details of the admonition.

3. For example see reg. nos. 1288, 1289.

4. Reg. no. 1029.

'manucepit pro sufficientiori'.¹

Titles guaranteed financial support sufficient to maintain the dignity of the recipients' orders.² A decree of the Third Lateran Council in 1179 prohibited bishops from ordaining anyone without a title. If a bishop ordained a man to grades higher than acolyte without a title then he was bound to sustain him.³ Those ordinands who held a benefice, which was sufficient title in itself, have this recorded after their name; thus in list no. 1295 M. John de Burton is recorded as being rector of West Felton and Richard de Abberburi as rector of Rodington. The vow of poverty taken by ordinands from religious orders was also deemed to be sufficient title. However, the name of the house from which the religious came is not consistently recorded. For example, in list no. 1321 Br. William de Hatern and Br. William de Schepey, with other religious, were ordained to the priesthood without their house being noted, whereas in list no. 1289 when Br. Adam de Burton, Br. William de Wodecote and Br. John de Bourchale received the same order they

1. R.N. Swanson, 'Titles to Orders in Medieval English Episcopal Registers' in Studies in Medieval History Presented to Ralph Davies, ed. H. Mayr-Harting (London, 1985), p. 237, n. 23; reg. no. 1322, fo. 135v, col. b, deacons.

2. Swanson, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-4.

3. Councils and Synods, I, ii, p. 1064 & n. 1; VCH Warwick, ii, p. 15.

were grouped together as belonging to the Cistercian abbey of Combermere.

Dr. Robinson has calculated that in the early years of Langton's episcopate almost all the unbeneficed secular clergy were ordained to patrimony titles, and that over the whole episcopate almost half were ordained to such titles.¹ Most of the remaining unbeneficed clergy presented titles derived from individual patrons. These patrons could be either relatives, laymen, or religious houses. An example of the variety of titles presented is shown by three consecutive entries in the ordination list for September 1309 (no. 1301);

Henricus dictus Faber de Coventr' ad titulum patrimonii

Johannes de Asthul ad presentacionem Henrici le Bret

*Walterus filius Radulphi Giffard de Chylinton ad presentacionem abbatis et conventus de Lilleshul.*²

Occasionally, unbeneficed ordinands presented a title of either a pension or a sum of money: John de Brendemor was ordained to the subdiaconate 'ad titulum pensionis perpetue' granted to him by Walter called Clericum of Preston (no. 1311); John

1. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 10.

2. For an example of a father as patron see reg. no. 1311, fo. 119, col. a, subd., Thomas and Robert de Caverswell; Robinson, Ordinations, p. 11.

called le Fox was ordained subdeacon to a title of 40s. (no. 1313); and again, Richard de Braydeston was ordained subdeacon to a title of 40s. from William de Braydeston (no. 1327). When Richard was ordained deacon (no. 1329) the register records only that this was at the presentation of William. His title on both occasions may have been the 40s., but it was recorded in a different manner in the register.¹ However, when John le Leche of Draycott was ordained to the diaconate his title was simply recorded as being adequate, '*ad titulum sufficientem*' (no. 1312).

Dr. Robinson has calculated that during Langton's episcopate fewer than one secular ordinand in ten presented a title derived from a religious house. During the early years these titles were uncommon and Dr. Robinson suggests that they may have been suspect; for example, when Richard de Peverwyche was ordained subdeacon on 21 September 1303 it is noted in the register that this was '*ad titulum abbatis de Cumbermere quem probavit*' (no. 1289).² However, all prospective ordinands would show their letters of title to the examiners and, as already noted, the register records that a number of ordinands did so; it is doubtful whether these were also suspect. The fact

1. For a similar instance see Robinson, Ordinations, p. 11, Robert de Seckinton.

2. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 13.

that the notation '*quem probavit*' is added to some entries and not to others is probably due to the idiosyncrasies of Langton's chancery clerks. There was a small increase in the number of titles derived from religious houses after 1314, but even Dale abbey, the most active house in this respect, only granted titles to 34 clerks during Langton's episcopate.¹ However, from 1325 there was a sharp increase in the number of titles granted by religious houses in the diocese, which may reflect a diocesan preference for ecclesiastical sponsorship.²

Candidates from other dioceses would have been ordained by letters dimissory although this is not always recorded, presumably because of a clerical error, as when Robert son of Adam de Walseken of Norwich diocese was ordained to the diaconate (no. 1320). Occasionally it is recorded that letters dimissory contained candidates' titles as when Thomas Abel of Leicester and Hugh de Blatherwik, both of Lincoln diocese, were ordained to the priesthood (no. 1320). The majority of letters dimissory, however, are recorded as, for example, on each occasion when

1. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 13, gives the number of individual clerks as 26.

2. Robinson, Ordinations, pp. 13, 20; Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 242; D. Robinson, Beneficed Clergy in Cleveland and the East Riding 1306-1340 (St Anthony's Press, York, 1969), p. 9 & n. 32, p. 11.

Robert called Scot of Langton, of Lincoln diocese, was ordained to the orders of subdeacon, deacon and priest (nos. 1302, 1303, 1304). Robert probably came from one of the five Langton villages in Leicestershire, the area where bishop Langton was born, and may have been in the bishop's employ.¹ Letters dimissory were thus often issued to candidates working in other dioceses, obviating the necessity to travel to their native dioceses to receive ordination, or to those from places near the borders of the diocese.²

Some of the ordinands have additional notations written against their names in the lists which suggest that either letters of orders or letters testimonial were issued by the bishop. For example, in the first ordination list (no. 1285) some of the priests ordained have '*habet litteram*' or simply '*habet*' written after their name. Conversely, the words '*sit littera*' occur in other lists, either in the margin or as part of the entry, for example, in list no. 1303 on folio 110v. Other entries give more information and suggest that letters of orders were given to, presumably, the patrons of the ordinands; William de Elmeden, priest, '*habet litteram et*

1. See Chapter 3, pp. 199-200, 311.

2. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 21.

cancellarius illam dedit nuncio prioris Coventr' and William de Lillington, priest, '*cancellarius dedit suppriori de Stone*' (no. 1285, fo. 92). Unfortunately, neither ordinand occurs elsewhere in the register, thus there is no means of knowing if the letters were in fact given to their patrons. A different notation against another name in the same list suggests that the letter was given to the ordinand; Thomas de Bromelee, priest, '*habet et dedit ad instanciam prioris de Ronton*'. An interesting variation of these notations occurs in the same list, suggesting once again that either letters of orders or letters testimonial were given by the chancellor to the ordinands John de Scutard and William de Claverlee, priests; '*cancellarius dedit litteras apud Solihull ii trusscitoribus*'. However, whereas John de Willugby, ordained priest at the same time, had a letter confirmed or sealed, '*littera sigillatur*', Simon de Sutton, deacon, and William de Prenesthorp, priest, appear not^{to} have received letters but to have had these confirmed, '*non habet litteram sed sigillatur*'.

That letters of orders and letters testimonial were given is shown by entries elsewhere in the register. When William de Nostrefeld was presented to the church of Colton, Staffs., the inquiry held concerning the vacancy and William's character and condition said it had

no knowledge of his orders, but William proved that he had been ordained to the priesthood by producing his letters testimonial. He was then admitted to the benefice (nos. 686, 687). Geoffrey de Caldecote, priest, showed that he had been canonically ordained to all holy orders by the bishop of St Asaph (no. 1286, fo. 95), whilst Ralph de Longedon had his letters of ordination examined by suitable witnesses on 7 June 1312 (no. 588); he had been ordained to the priesthood on 22 September 1302 (no. 1288). Unfortunately, his name in the ordination list does not have the notation '*habet litteram*'.

It is noteworthy that at the beginning of five ordination lists a copy of an admonition read to the ordinands, detailing the legal requirements for ordination, is given in full.¹ The first of these was read at the ordination service celebrated on 20 December 1315 (no. 1313) and this is given in full in the Calendar. The main points of this admonition are that no-one should be ordained unless [1] examined by the examiners; or, [2] if from another diocese, without letters dimissory; [3] if bigamous or married to a widow; [4] if married; [5] by omission of a degree of ordination; [6] by simony; [7] if of illegitimate

1. Reg. nos. 1313, 1320, 1321, 1323, 1324; Robinson, Ordinations, p. 6, states, incorrectly, that only two addresses are given in Langton's register.

birth without dispensation; [8] if of servile status; [9] they should not receive more than one holy order at any one time; [10] or be a murderer; [11] or be ordained to holy orders without sufficient title; [12] or be ordained from a royal chapel in the diocese without the bishop's special licence.

The subsequent addresses are variants of this and thus only the differences have been noted in the Calendar. Most of the points of the admonition are the normal requirements of canon law.¹

Statements preceding eight other services held from June 1316 to December 1320, informing the reader that similar addresses were read, suggest that such warnings may have been given before all ordinations were celebrated, although why they have only been recorded in the register from December 1315 is unclear.²

The last point in the admonition, detailed above, concerns what Dr. Robinson has termed 'a peculiarly local problem', that no clerk from a royal chapel in the diocese should be ordained without the bishop's special licence. This clause is reiterated in all the five addresses in the register and two of these additionally mention

1. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 6; Councils and Synods, II, i, p. 248, II, ii, pp. 59-69, 1000-1.

2. Reg. nos. 1315, 1316, 1317, 1318, 1319, 1325, 1327, 1328.

candidates from prebends in the diocese.¹ Two instances when special notice was taken of an ordinand from a royal free chapel have been identified by Dr. Robinson: in September 1309 (no. 1301, fo. 108v) William son of Oliver de Wystwych was ordained to the diaconate '*per dimissorias decani de Tetenhale*'; and in March 1314 (no. 1310, fo. 118) William, son of William Ricardi de Stretton, '*in libera capella domini regis*', was ordained to the subdiaconate '*per litteras dimissorias comissarii decani sui ad titulum patrimonii*'. When these two clerks were ordained to the subdiaconate, diaconate and priesthood no mention was made of similar permission from the authorities of the peculiar; they were simply ordained to titles of patrimony.²

Dr. Robinson's study of the ordination lists suggests that, although the lists are probably substantially complete, some are lost; 78% of the

1. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 6; reg. nos. 1321, 1323 have the addition regarding prebendaries.

2. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 6; Dr. Robinson has mis-read 'de' for 'di', the abbreviation for dimissorias, in the entry concerning William son of William Ricardi de Stretton (no. 1310), who was ordained deacon on 21 Dec. 1314 (no. 1311) as William de Stretton, '*ad ti' pa'*', and as priest on 17 May 1315 (no. 1312). Dr. Robinson wrongly states that William son of Oliver de Wystwych was ordained subdeacon in Sept. 1309, he was actually ordained deacon on that date (no. 1301). When ordained subdeacon on 21 Sept. 1308 (no. 1300) he was called William de Whitewyk, and when ordained priest on 14 March 1310 (no. 1303) he was called William Oliver de Wystewyk.

secular clergy ordained as deacons between 1305 and 1321 can be identified at earlier ordinations as subdeacons, and of those ordained to the priesthood during the same period 75% can be traced as deacons and 64% can be identified both as deacons and as subdeacons. The equivalent figures for the period 1300 to 1304 are much lower, partly because of those ordained to the subdiaconate and diaconate prior to 1300, but there may also be an incomplete survival of the lists for this time. No deacons or priests are recorded in the ordination list for March 1314 (no. 1310), whilst only 29 priests are recorded as being ordained in December 1314 (no. 1311) of whom only two can be traced to lower orders. Similarly, of the 110 clerks ordained to the priesthood in May 1315 (no. 1312) only 54 can be identified in earlier lists.¹

My own examination of the lists also suggests that some are now lost. Taking a sample look at the As and Bs we find that Richard Aboveyewe was ordained deacon on 21 September 1308 (no. 1300) and priest on 19 December 1310 (no. 1306), but there is no record of him being ordained to the subdiaconate; Henry de Alewaston was ordained subdeacon on 21 September 1303 (no. 1289) and priest on 19 March 1306 (no. 1296), but there is

1. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 5.

no record of him being ordained to the diaconate; and John de Baschirche was ordained subdeacon on 14 March 1310 (no. 1303) and priest on 19 December 1310 (no. 1306) but, again, there is no record of his ordination to the diaconate. All could have been ordained to the missing grade in another diocese, but their names do not occur elsewhere in the register; if they had received letters dimissory this is not recorded.

However, using the same method of random selection it is possible to trace the careers of some clerks through the lists: Richard son of John de Abberbur' was ordained subdeacon in December 1300, deacon in December 1305, and priest in December 1307 (nos. 1286, 1295, 1298); Hugh de Acton was ordained subdeacon in September 1308, deacon in September 1309 and priest in March 1311 (nos. 1300, 1301, 1307); Richard de Albryston was ordained subdeacon in September 1309, deacon in March 1310, and priest in June 1310 (nos. 1301, 1303, 1304); and John Boket/Beged/Beket of Shrewsbury was ordained subdeacon in December 1305, deacon in March 1306 and priest in December 1306 (nos. 1295, 1296, 1297). From this small selection it is possible to see that some chose to rise quickly through the orders to the priesthood whilst others preferred to delay this. However, there was good reason for Richard de Abberbur's delay of seven years before being ordained a

priest; on the same day as his ordination to the subdiaconate, 17 December 1300, he was granted licence to study in the schools for seven years, with dispensation that during this time he should not be obliged to receive higher orders (no. 417).

VI. LICENCES FOR NON-RESIDENCE.

Langton's register records that 222 licences for non-residence were issued to the clergy of the diocese, which can be classified under five main headings; absence and where the legal cause is omitted, service of a layman or ecclesiastic, travelling to the Roman curia, travelling abroad and, the most numerous, licences to study.

However, dispensation for absence or travelling abroad may conceal a licence to study. This is suggested by the two licences granted to William de Billema, rector of Hanbury, Staffs., who, on 30 May 1299, received a licence to be absent from his benefice for three years whilst on 18 October 1299 he received a licence to study for the same period (nos. 50, 58). The number of licences in each category are tabulated below:

<u>Absence</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Curia</u>	<u>Abroad</u>	<u>Study</u>
7	6	5	4	200

The majority of the licences were granted to rectors of churches. However, it is noteworthy that five recipients of licences to serve, to travel to the curia and to travel abroad were vicars, dispensed to be absent despite their oaths of continual residence in accordance with the constitutions of the legates Otto and Ottobon

promulgated in 1237 and 1268.¹ William Meverel, vicar of Colwich, Staffs., obtained a licence to serve the Dominican friar M. Thomas Jorz, cardinal priest of St Sabina, from 26 September 1310 until 24 June 1311 with the assurance that he would not be troubled regarding his non-residence (no. 711). Unfortunately, Jorz died at Grenoble on 13 December 1310 on his way as papal envoy to the emperor Henry VII; if Meverel had travelled there with the cardinal he may have accompanied his body back to England before returning to his vicarage.² Richard de Swyneflet, vicar of Whalley, Lancs., was granted a licence to travel to the Roman curia on business concerning his vicarage for one year from 5 June 1311, on condition that his vicarage would not be deprived of divine services and cure of souls (no. 861). However, Robert de Bredbur', vicar of Wirksworth, Derbys., and Robert, vicar of the church of South Wingfield, Derbys., who were each granted respective licences to go to the Roman curia from 15 January until 29 September 1300 and from 28 March 1310 until the feast of

1. Councils & Synods, II, i, p. 249 (clause ten), II, ii, pp. 757-8 (clause nine); R.A.R. Hartridge, A History of Vicarages in the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 64-5; J.R.H. Moorman, Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century (Cambridge, 1955), p. 47; Haines, Worcester, p. 205.

2. J.R. Wright, The Church and the English Crown 1305-1334 (Toronto, 1980), pp. 125, 127, 296; Emden, Oxford, ii, p. 1023.

John the Baptist following, that is either 24 June or 29 August, and William de Lench, perpetual vicar of Blackburn, Lancs., who had a licence to travel abroad for one year from 30 April 1309, apparently had no such provisoes (nos. 402, 1036, 827).

The five remaining licences allowing clergy to be absent from their cures in order to serve patrons, both ecclesiastic and lay, are worthy of consideration. Henry de Berleston, portionary of Darley, Derbys., received a licence in September 1310 allowing him to continue in the service of M. William de Prato, papal nuncio, for one year or longer should Prato continue to require his services (no. 1040). The licence was requested by M. William de Testa, archdeacon of Aran and general collector of papal revenues in England. Testa was in England to collect the tax of annates, the revenues from the first fruits of vacant benefices in England appropriated to Clement V for three years in 1306. Prato, a canon of Comminges, assisted Testa in the collection of annates in the province of York.¹ Berleston had previously been granted a licence to be absent from his cure for one year from 29 September 1308 and subsequently received a licence to study for

1. W.E. Lunt, Financial Relations of the Papacy with England to 1327 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939), pp. 487-90, 621-2.

one year in February 1314 (nos. 522, 1053). The licence dated September 1310 suggests that another for the period September 1309 to 1310, allowing Berleston to serve Prato, has not been recorded in the register; his licence for unspecified absence dated September 1308 may thus also conceal a licence to serve the nuncio. We do not know if Berleston continued to be non-resident from 1311 to 1314. The third licence enabling a rector to serve an ecclesiastic was issued to Conrad Howeschilt of Germany, rector of Fillongley, Warwicks., on 25 September 1314 allowing him to serve Walter Maidstone, bishop of Worcester, for two years. Howeschilt previously received two one-year and one three year licences to study on 17 October 1305, 13 November 1306, and 29 September 1307 respectively (nos. 659, 604-6).

The three remaining licences to be considered in this category allowed rectors to serve lay patrons: Thomas de Acton Rayners, rector of Cound, Salop, was granted a licence to serve his patron lady Matilda Burnell for one year from 18 October 1299 (nos. 59, 323); on 9 February 1301 M. Matthew de Sholure, rector of Prestwich, Cheshire, received a licence to serve Roger de Pilkinton, presumably his patron, until Pentecost, 21 May 1301 (no. 428); and on 22 November 1311 William de Muneworth, rector of a moiety of Kingsbury, Warwicks., was granted a licence either to study

for one year or to serve Henry Spigornel, king's justiciar, at Spigornel's request (no. 640).

Another of the four licences issued to enable ecclesiastics to travel abroad is interesting in that it was granted to the head of a religious house: Br. Walter, prior of Tutbury, Staffs., was granted a licence on 22 April 1301 to travel to his mother house at St Pierre sur Dives in Normandy in order to profess his vows, provided that he returned to England within about eight days of 29 August (no. 439). Br. Walter may have been elected by the monks of Tutbury in 1297, without reference to the rights of the mother house, when the king had confiscated the alien priories due to the war with France. Br. Walter's visit may thus have been to regularise his position in relation to the abbey.¹

The greatest number of licences granted for non-residence were for study. Twelfth and thirteenth century legislation by the church required a basic literacy of its parish clergy; candidates for ordination were required by canon law to be examined with regard to their general learning as well as to their title, legitimacy and character.² Parish priests were responsible for celebrating mass and performing the other

1. VCH Stafford, iii, pp. 334-5, 339.

2. Councils and Synods, II, i, p. 248.

sacraments correctly and they provided a basic education to their parishoners, encompassing instruction in elements of the Faith.¹ Thirteenth century legislation sought to provide clerks with opportunities to study but it was not until Boniface VIII published his constitution *Cum ex eo* on 3 March 1298 that bishops were able to licence their parochial clergy to study at a university for a period of up to seven years for the furtherance of the individual's personal education.² Licences to study issued under *Cum ex eo* imposed conditions upon their recipients: incumbents had to be in subdeacons' orders, or receive that order within one year, and proceed to the orders of deacon and priest within one year of the termination of the licence; the licensed absentees were to receive the fruits of their benefices enabling them to pay for their studies and living expenses at university and to pay suitable vicars who were to be appointed as deputies to exercise the cure of souls and

1. Councils and Synods, II, i, pp. 170, 172, 173, 179, 297-306, 313; M.T. Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307 (London, 1979), pp. 191-4, 188-90, 193; S.C. Townley, 'Patronage, Pastoral Provision and the Secular Clergy in the Dioceses of Worcester and Hereford during the Thirteenth Century' (Unpublished D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1985), pp. 306-7.

2. L.E. Boyle, 'The Constitution "*Cum ex eo*" of Boniface VIII', Medieval Studies, 24 (1962), pp. 263-302; Townley, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

maintain divine services.¹ Only some of the licences granted by Langton and his vicars-general contain the clause that divine services and cure of souls should not be neglected; perhaps it was thought unnecessary to include this with each licence registered as the constitution was well-known.²

Langton's register records that 200 licences for study were granted to 137 individual rectors.³ These are given below;

<u>YEARS: One</u>	<u>Two</u>	<u>Three</u>	<u>Four</u>	<u>Five</u>	<u>Six</u>	<u>Seven</u>
133	33	14 ⁴	2	4	1	4

Nine licences lie outside these categories: five are of unspecified duration (nos. 49, 494, 520,

1. Boyle, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-3; Haines, Worcester, pp. 206-7; R.M. Haines, 'The Education of the English Clergy during the Later Middle Ages: some Observations on the Operation of Pope Boniface VIII's Constitution Cum Ex Eo (1298)', Canadian Journal of History, 4 (1969), pp. 4-5.

2. For example see reg. nos. 498, 503, 605, 715, 716.

3. For each licence see the subject index; Denton, Winchelsey, p. 38, n. 14, states that Langton's register contains over 160 licences for study. Only thirteen individual recipients of licences for study have been located in Professor Emden's biographical registers of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, see reg. nos. 82, 162; 109, 445; 427; 540; 869, 872; 1057; 1075, 1096; 1067, 1074; 1073; 1081; 1136; 1185; 1192, 1209, 1243.

4. A licence for three years study was added to the institution of M. Richard Birchel, reg. no. 175. However, when his licence was recorded elsewhere in the register it was for one year only, reg. no. 430; reg. no. 175 has thus been discounted.

909, 1185); one is for almost five months (no. 1180), one is for about seven months (no. 1234), one is for about one and a half years (no. 625); one is for about five years four months (no. 751). One of the licences of unspecified length was issued to Robert de Dutton, who was under-age when presented to the church of Eccleston upon Dee, Cheshire, on 23 October 1307. He was instructed to study until he attained full age and he presumably attended the schools until he was instituted to this church on 16 December 1310 (nos. 494, 849).

Variations of this last licence are found elsewhere in the register. Custody of the sequestrated churches of Swarkeston, Derbys., Bangor, Wales, Sheinton, Salop, and Bunbury, Cheshire, were granted to diocesan officers or other rectors because the clerks who had been presented were under-age. In each case it was stipulated that the keeper should support the presentee in the schools from the revenues of the church until he could be instituted (nos. 419, 441, 447, 456). These licences to study are not recorded in the register and have not been included in the figure of the total number of licences issued.

Thus, the number of licences granted for non-residence as recorded in bishops' registers cannot

be taken as absolute.¹ Two further licences for study granted by Langton are not entered in his register but are found in the Calendars of Papal Letters: Jordan de Makelesfelle, subdeacon, rector of Mottram in Longdendale, Cheshire, was said to have been licensed by Langton to study for seven years when on 10 May 1308 he received papal dispensation to continue to study canon and civil law for three years without being obliged to receive higher orders;² whilst Reginald de Cusancia, king's clerk, rector of a moiety of Eckington, Derbys., obtained a licence to study for five years within England but apparently went to France and on 19 November 1307 he received papal dispensation to rectify the matter.³ Cusancia received a subsequent licence to study for one year and this is recorded in the register as commencing on 21 February 1309 (no. 1024); this may have been a continuation of his five year licence.

Although we must bear in mind the unreliable nature of the evidence it is, nevertheless,

1. K. Edwards, 'Bishops and Learning in the Reign of Edward II', Church Quarterly Review, 138 (1944), p. 79; C.J. Godfrey, 'Non-Residence of Parochial Clergy in the Fourteenth Century', Church Quarterly Review, 162 (1961), pp. 434-5; Haines, Worcester, p. 209.

2. CPL, ii, p. 39; Boyle, *op. cit.*, p. 280; Emden, Oxford, ii, p. 1200.

3. Reg. no. 252; CPR 1301-7, p. 118; CPL, ii, p. 41; Boyle, *op. cit.*, p. 286 & n. 69.

interesting to compare the number of licences for study issued by other bishops: Simon of Ghent, bishop of Salisbury 1297-1315, granted 308; Walter Stapledon, bishop of Exeter 1308-26, issued 439; Walter Reynolds, bishop of Worcester 1308-13, gave 78; Thomas Cobham, bishop of Worcester 1317-27, issued 155; whereas John Halton, bishop of Carlisle 1292-1324, granted 35 in a small diocese of only 94 churches and Ralph Baldock, bishop of London 1306-13, gave only three.¹ These figures serve to show that Langton, a *curialis* bishop without a university education, was at least as concerned to have a literate clergy as some of his contemporary bishops, both *curiales* and *magistri*.

C.J. Godfrey suggests three classes of clergy who may have sought licences to study: young clerics, granted a licence on the same day or shortly after they received their first benefice; incumbents who, after some years in their parish, desired to acquire knowledge or find relief from 'the tedium of medieval village life'; and the

1. For Ghent and Stapledon see Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 79 & n. 98; *HBC*, pp. 270, 246; for Reynolds and Cobham see Haines, *Worcester*, p. 209, n.1; Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 79, gives 156 licences for Reynolds, whereas Boyle, *op. cit.*, p. 297, gives almost 100 for Reynolds and 146 for Cobham; *HBC*, p. 279; for Halton and Baldock see Godfrey, *op. cit.*, p. 434; *HBC*, pp. 235, 258. Apparently, the 156 licences attributed to Reynolds, quoted by Miss Edwards, refers to the total of years of absence rather than the number of licences granted according to J.R Wright, *The Church and the English Crown 1305-1334* (Toronto, 1980), p. 251, n. 36.

'magistri' or 'professional' students.¹ Professor Boyle has questioned the validity of the second category,² and although clerks in this group probably formed a small percentage of those seeking licences to study, examples can be cited from Langton's register for all three categories: Adam de Mascy received a licence to study for one year on the same day that he was instituted to the church of Lymm, Cheshire, on the condition that he would be ordained to the subdiaconate within that year (nos. 913, 914); Richard de Waleys was instituted as rector of Walton on Trent, Derbys., on 3 July 1306 and received a licence to study for one year in November 1315 when a priest, but he may have obtained licences to study prior to 1315 which are unrecorded (nos. 272, 770);³ and M. William de Blechele was instituted as rector of Waverton, Cheshire, on 19 June 1305 and subsequently obtained licences to study for almost five years from August 1307 until March 1312 (nos. 200, 819, 541, 824, 838, 852).

1. Godfrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 435-6.

2. Boyle, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

3. For another example see Simon de Cotenham, reg. nos. 358, 931, 968.

2. THE DIOCESE.

By the time of Langton's episcopate the location of the see was firmly established at Lichfield and the prelates styled themselves bishops of Coventry and Lichfield, although some contemporary documents, particularly those written in the vernacular, continued to refer to the diocesan as 'bishop of Chester'.¹

I. THE EXTENT OF THE DIOCESE.

The medieval diocese of Coventry and Lichfield was the third largest in England, covering an area of 5,259 square miles, being surpassed only by the sees of York and Lincoln which covered 8,149 and 7,265 square miles respectively. These three dioceses covered almost half the total area of England.² The diocese of Coventry and Lichfield stretched south from the river Ribble in Lancashire to Edgehill in south-east Warwickshire, and from the western borders of the present county of Cheshire, including parts of the former counties of Flintshire and Denbighshire, to the boundary of the diocese of

1. VCH Stafford, iii, pp. 7-8; A. Hamilton Thompson, 'Diocesan Organisation in the Middle Ages: Archdeacons and Rural Deans', Proceedings of the British Academy (1943), p. 165; HBC, p. 253, n. 1.

2. P. Hughes, The Reformation in England, 3 vols. (London, 1950), i, pp. 31-2, whose figures refer to the year 1517; according to Fasti, 1066-1300, iii, p. ix, Lincoln was the largest diocese.

Lincoln.¹

The territorial subdivision of dioceses has been likened to a pyramid comprising archdeaconries, deaneries and parishes.² The geographical extent and the names of archdeaconries became settled about, or soon after, the end of the twelfth century. Deaneries, usually coterminous with hundreds and wapentakes, contained varying numbers of parishes but their territorial names remained fluid for some time.³

The diocese of Coventry and Lichfield was divided into five archdeaconries; Chester, Coventry, Derby, Shrewsbury and Stafford. Of these, Derby and Stafford corresponded approximately to the county boundaries; Chester comprised the whole of Cheshire, Lancashire as far north as the river Ribble, and parts of the old counties of Flint and Denbigh; Shrewsbury contained only the northern part of Shropshire; and Coventry comprised part of Warwickshire.⁴ The archdeaconries were divided into deaneries which

1. See the map of the diocese; Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 1 gives a detailed description of the boundaries of the diocese.

2. R.N. Swanson, Church and Society in Late Medieval England (Oxford, 1989), pp. 2-4.

3. Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 2; Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-4, 177; in 1382 the deanery of Broxton and Nantwich in Chester archdeaconry was renamed Malpas, VCH Chester, iii, p. 11.

4. Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 2; Robinson, Staffs. Hand List, p. 1.

were, in turn, sub-divided into parishes, many of which came within a peculiar jurisdiction.¹ The largest archdeaconry, Chester, was divided into the nine deaneries of Chester, Broxton and Nantwich, Frodsham, Macclesfield, Middlewich, Wirral, all of which were in Cheshire, and Leyland, Blackburn and Manchester, and Warrington in Lancashire.² Coventry archdeaconry comprised the deaneries of Arden, Coventry, Marton and Stoneleigh, all of which were in Warwickshire.³ Derby archdeaconry had the deaneries of Ashbourne, Castillar, Derby, High Peak, Scarsdale and Repton,⁴ and Shrewsbury archdeaconry had only the two deaneries of Shrewsbury and Newport.⁵ In 1291 Stafford archdeaconry comprised the five deaneries of Stafford, Newcastle, Alton and Leek, Tamworth and Tutbury and Lapley and Trysull.⁶ However, by 1301 the deaneries of Stafford and Newcastle had been united reducing the number of deaneries to

1. For peculiar jurisdictions see below pp. 127-33.

2. VCH Chester, iii, pp. 10-11; VCH Lancaster, ii, p. 9; Taxatio pp. 248-9.

3. VCH Warwick, ii, pp. 6, 83; Taxatio, pp. 241-2, 244.

4. VCH Derby, ii, p. 40; for a map of the deaneries see *ibid.*, p. 41; Taxatio, pp. 246-7.

5. VCH Shropshire, ii, p. 4; Taxatio, pp. 244-5, 247-8.

6. VCH Stafford, iii, pp. 92-3; for a map of the deaneries see *ibid.*, p. 139; Taxatio, pp. 242-3.

four.¹

1. VCH Stafford, iii, p. 38; L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M4, m. 5; appx. G.

II. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DIOCESE.

Whether regularly absent or not, all bishops would, on occasion, have to leave their diocese and thus it became essential to the continuity of diocesan administration for each bishop to employ a permanent hierarchy of officers and courts, both in his household and in the diocese. By the time of Langton's episcopate the organisation of the central and local administration of English dioceses was well-established and thus dioceses were able to function with little or no intervention by the bishop.¹ The administration of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield during Langton's episcopate will be considered in two parts; firstly, the local administration by the archdeacons and rural deans, and secondly, the central administration with reference to the vicars-general, chancellor, official, commissary-general and sequestrator-general. The administration of the diocese during the sequestration of the see from 30 March 1302 until 8 June 1303 will be considered separately.

i. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION.

a. THE ARCHDEACONRIES AND ARCHDEACONS.

During the earlier middle ages the archdeacon had been a household officer and the bishop's

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), pp. 1, 3-4, 12.

chief agent in the supervision of his diocese, but by the thirteenth century he had acquired a subordinate jurisdiction over territorial divisions in the diocese, archdeaconries, which became a benefice with recognised privileges and revenues. Thus all archdeacons, by virtue of their office, had a freehold from which the bishop might not normally remove them. All archdeacons, whether absentees or not, had a deputy, an official, to assist in the administration of the archdeaconry. The archdeacon and his official exercised a general supervision, under the bishop, of the clergy in their archdeaconry. Their powers varied but generally included the right to hold chapters of clergy, annual visitations, which were in theory superseded every three years by episcopal visitations, and the oversight of parish churches and their incumbents. In addition, the archdeacon or his official could hear causes of correction and instance, although certain graver crimes were reserved for the bishop's courts and litigants in instance causes could initiate proceedings in the consistory court. Mandates from the bishop to induct incumbents are usually addressed to the archdeacon or his official, although other diocesan officers received such commissions *ad hoc*. The archdeacon and his official thus played an important part in the administration of the

diocese.¹

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), pp. 8-9; K. Edwards, The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages (Manchester, 1949), pp. 248-55; C. Morris, 'A Consistory Court in the Middle Ages', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 14 (1963), p. 155; C. Morris, 'The Commissary of the Bishop in the Diocese of Lincoln', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 10 (1959) pp. 51-2; Haines, Worcester, pp. 39, 40 & n. 2, 44, n. 2, 45; Hamilton Thompson, English Clergy, pp. 60, 62.

THE ARCHDEACONRY OF CHESTER.

The archdeaconry of Chester was in the bishop's collation although no record of such exercise of patronage has survived in Langton's register.¹ Two incumbents of the archdeaconry occur during Langton's episcopate; M. Robert de Redeswell, D.C.L., who had been collated prior to 3 May 1289 and remained in office until his death before 17 January 1315,² and M. Richard de Havering, who was appointed between 19 February and 18 March 1315 and continued in office until his death on 29 January 1341.³ Since the register is silent about Havering, we must assume, particularly in light of his illustrious secular career, that he was largely absent and that his duties were carried out by his official. Redeswell, however, seems to have been resident in the diocese and, presumably, took personal charge of the administration of his archdeaconry, although he too would have delegated much of the routine

1. P. Heath, 'The Medieval Archdeaconry and Tudor Bishopric of Chester', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 20, 2 (1969), p. 247; VCH Chester, iii, p. 9.

2. MRA, nos. 670, 672, M. Jordan de Wimburn was archdeacon in 1280; reg. no. 892; Bodleian Library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 72; Fasti, x, p. 18; Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 2209; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

3. Reg. nos. 893, 895; MRA, no. 675; Fasti, x, p. 18; Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 2181; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

work to his official.¹

By virtue of their office the archdeacons of Chester held the prebend of Bolton le Moors, Lancs.,² and Redeswell also personally held the church of Davenham, Cheshire; in March 1287, as rector of Davenham, he sold his corn for £60 and on 25 December 1290 the king granted him, as archdeacon of Chester, 300 stones from his quarry within Delamere forest for the fabric of the chancel.³ Redeswell received papal dispensation to hold Davenham in plurality on 1 March 1291 as the archdeaconry had 'no house of residence'.⁴ However, his dispensation must have been in question because he, the archdeacon of Derby, and others were charged with pluralism by archbishop Winchelsey in 1296, when judgement was deferred until 'the return from abroad of the bishop elect of Lichfield'.⁵ Nevertheless, Redeswell's personal dispensation suggests that the archdeacon did not have a permanent place of residence in his archdeaconry, the accommodation at Bolton being,

1. Haines, Worcester, pp. 39, 40 & n. 2; Storey, Diocesan. Admin. (1972), p. 9.

2. See below p. 97 and n. 1.

3. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Calendar of County Court, City Court and Eyre Rolls of Chester, 1259-1297, ed. R. Stewart-Brown (Chetham Society, new series, 84, 1925), no. 81; CCR 1288-96, p. 156.

4. CPL, i, p. 529.

5. Reg. Winchelsey, i, p. 120.

presumably, for the vicar there.¹ Evidence from the register supports this; following Redeswell's death in January 1315 M. Richard de Vernoun was instituted to Davenham church on 17 January and on 17 February 1315 a mandate to induct a rector was addressed to him as keeper of the archdeaconry.² However, the *status quo* had been restored by 18 March 1315 when a mandate to induct a rector was once again addressed to the archdeacon of Chester or his official.³ Vernoun is the last recorded rector of Davenham in Langton's register but evidence from the register of Adam de Orleton, bishop of Hereford, shows that he resigned this church on 2 February 1318.⁴ Unfortunately, Langton's register is silent concerning the next archdeacon, M. Richard de Havering, but during his incumbency he does not seem to have held a church in the diocese other than Bolton le Moors.⁵

Redeswell was one of the leading administrators of the diocese; he was an executor

1. Heath, *op. cit.*, p. 244, n. 8.

2. Reg. nos. 892, 893.

3. Reg. no. 895.

4. Registrum Ade de Orleton Episcopi Herefordensis, A.D. MCCCXVII-MCCCXXVII, ed. A.T. Bannister (Canterbury and York Society, 5, 1908), p. 59.

5. Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 2181; Havering held the church of Wem, Salop, but not when he was archdeacon; from December 1309 Wem was held by other rectors, reg. nos. 932, 963, 965, 971, 980.

of bishop Meuland and Langton's vicar-general on two occasions.¹ He appears to have been a conscientious archdeacon and to have been largely resident in office, although he probably travelled abroad at least twice. The first occasion occurred early in 1296 when he, along with Henry Newark, Walter Langton and many others, was appointed proctor by Edward I to treat for peace with France, whilst in September 1301 he was granted protection to go on pilgrimage to Pontigny in France.²

Archidiaconal visitations may have been rare when pope Innocent IV ordered bishop Weseham in 1246 to inhibit the archdeacons from exacting procurations unless they personally visited their archdeaconries.³ Nevertheless, Redeswell held a visitation of his archdeaconry in May 1289 and visited Whalley abbey on 4 May 1296; he may have held other visitations which are undocumented.⁴ However, archidiaconal visitations became rare during the fourteenth century when many

1. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Collections for a History of Staffordshire (William Salt Archaeological Society, 7, 1886), pp. 47-8; see below pp. 150-5.

2. Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 2209; CPR 1292-1301, pp. 178, 213, 609; Treaty Rolls, i, 1234-1325, nos. 266-73.

3. VCH Stafford, iii, p. 31; MRA, no. 397.

4. MRA, no. 670; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; The Coucher Book of Whalley Abbey, ed. W.A. Hulton (Chetham Society, 10, 1847), p. 306.

archdeacons received papal indults to visit their archdeaconries by deputy and receive procurations.¹ During Redeswell's visitation in 1289 the rector of Hawarden, Cheshire, rendered obedience to the archdeacon and to his official in the prebendal church of Tarporley, Cheshire. The rector petitioned the archdeacon that it was difficult for his parishoners to travel to the archdeacon's consistory court in Chester 'on account of intervening streams, hostilities, and other reasons', and was thus commissioned to act for the archdeacon in hearing cases between his parishoners, and in corrections, until Easter. Redeswell also gave the rector authority, for that occasion, to visit Hawarden church on his behalf. In return, the rector swore to pay to the archdeacon 36s. for procurations, synodals and perquisites up to Easter.²

Redeswell was appointed to *ad hoc* commissions by the bishop: he heard, along with M. Luke de Ely, the chancellor of Lichfield cathedral, the case brought by the dean and chapter of Lichfield against Robert de Luggore, rector of Southam, Warwicks., concerning his withholding of a pension, until the matter was referred to the

1. Hamilton Thompson, English Clergy, p. 61; Storey, Diocesan. Admin. (1972), p. 8; for an example in the archdeaconry of Coventry see below p. 104.

2. MRA, no. 670.

court of Canterbury in 1309;¹ and on 22 February 1310 he was commissioned, with John de Shotswelle, to inquire into, and correct and punish, the excesses of both the clergy and the laity in the parish of Shustoke, Warwicks., with power of canonical coercion.²

Redeswell was succeeded in office by M. Richard de Havering, who had a distinguished career in royal and papal government; his appointment followed his provision to a canonry of Lichfield, with expectation of a prebend, in November 1310.³ Little information survives about Havering as archdeacon, but he was at Lichfield on 26 March 1315, 15 August 1318, from 3 to 5 December 1319 and on 1 July 1320.⁴ Havering was a notable pluralist and during his archidiaconate he continued to hold canonries and prebends in Lincoln, Hereford, Salisbury, York and Chichester cathedrals. Thus, as with other successful royal and papal clerks, his interest in his archdeaconry, and his other benefices, was probably only as a source of revenue.⁵

1. MRA, no. 476.

2. Reg. no. 799.

3. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 75; CPL, ii, p. 80.

4. MRA, nos. 675, 272, 571, 561.

5. Fasti, i, p. 25; ibid., ii, pp. 8, 47; ibid., iii, p. 33; ibid., vi, p. 61; ibid., vii, p. 20; Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), p. 8.

In addition to being the largest, Chester became the principal archdeaconry of the diocese and the only one to have a prebend attached to it, that of Bolton le Moors, Lancs.¹ Of all the English dioceses only Coventry and Lichfield and Hereford did not reserve special choir stalls in their cathedrals for their archdeacons unless they held prebends; the archdeacon of Chester thus occupied the seventh stall on the *decani* side of the choir, by virtue of his prebend of Bolton le Moors.² It has been stated that the archdeacon of Chester was thus the only archdeacon of the diocese to be a member of the Lichfield chapter who was not subject personally to episcopal correction until the bishop acquired the right to visit the chapter in 1396.³ However, other archdeacons of the diocese were collated to prebends for their own lifetime and thus they, as members of the Lichfield chapter, would have been equally exempt from the bishop's correction.⁴

1. P. Heath, 'The Medieval Archdeaconry and Tudor Bishopric of Chester', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 20, 2 (1969), p. 244; MRA, no. 487; K. Edwards, The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages (Manchester, 1949), p. 252; VCH Lancaster, v, p. 238; Fasti, x, p. 81 states, incorrectly, that the prebend was Bolton in Tarvin, Cheshire.

2. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

3. VCH Chester, iii, p. 8.

4. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 252; see below under each archdeaconry.

A dispute concerning the extent of archidiaconal jurisdiction in the archdeaconry arose between Langton and Richard de Havering before March 1315. On 26 March 1315, 'in order to avoid the toils of litigation', both parties agreed, for their lives only, that the archdeacon should have the primary hearing of causes, the proving and accounting of wills, synodals, Peter's Pence, and the perquisites of his chapter throughout the archdeaconry, reserving to the bishop his right regarding sequestrations and 'other matters which by custom pertain to him'. In return, the archdeacon undertook to pay £20 annually to the bishop.¹ However, a sequestrator's account roll for the period Epiphany to Michaelmas 1301 shows that the previous archdeacon, Robert de Redeswell, paid the sum of £20 to the bishop at Easter.² Thus there must have been a similar agreement between Redeswell and the bishop, which, in light of the dispute with Havering in March 1315, had been valid for the duration of Redeswell's life only. Commissions dated 14 January 1311 appointing the rector of Coddington, Cheshire, and a monk of St Werburgh's abbey, Chester, as penitentiaries in the archdeaconry for

1. MRA, no. 675; Heath, *op. cit.*, p. 245; VCH Chester, iii, pp. 8-9.

2. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M4, m. 5; appx. G; Heath, *op. cit.*, p. 245; VCH Chester, iii, p. 9, n. 45.

maintaining the service of absolution and penance enjoined upon the populace in cases reserved to the bishop, again show that an agreement had been made with Redeswell when archdeacon.¹ The county of Chester enjoyed palatine status and there is evidence that the bishops of Coventry and Lichfield were unable, without royal support, to cite Cheshire offenders to a court outside the county. But, by granting the archdeacon exclusive primary jurisdiction the bishops overcame this difficulty and thus all Cheshire offenders could be tried within the county palatine.²

The agreement made with Havering in March 1315 reserved to the bishop his right regarding sequestrated churches, and the sequestrator's account roll for 1301 and fragments of other rolls for 1309-1310 and 1315-1317 show that the bishop did receive his due portion.³ Although the archdeacon had custody of the churches of Bangor in 1301, Childwall and Prescott, Lancs., in 1309, and Hawarden, Flints., in 1315,⁴ he did not have custody of all sequestrated property in his archdeaconry; in 1301 the commissary-general had

1. Reg. no. 853.

2. Heath, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-50; VCH Chester, iii, p. 9.

3. L.J.R.O. mss. D30 M4, D30 M6, D30 M9, D30 M5, D30 M7; appx. G.

4. Reg. nos. 441, 835, 826, 897.

custody of Pulford, Cheshire, and in 1302 William de Brikhull had custody of Bunbury, Cheshire, when the respective presentees were under-age.¹

Although archdeaconries gave their incumbents a freehold from which the bishop might not normally remove them, all archdeacons were subject constitutionally to the bishop. Thus there were limits even to the archdeacon of Chester's authority: the archdeacon was collated by the bishop and he and his official swore obedience to him and to the mandates of his officers; the archdeaconry was subject to episcopal visitation, during which the bishop's officers could try causes of first instance; parishoners could appeal to the bishop against the archdeacon; and the archdeacon could have his powers suspended.²

The archdeacon held considerable land by virtue of his office. As prebendary of Bolton he held two acres of land in Little Lever, Lancs., with 'the common pasturage and easements of that vill, and all appurtenances and franchises of the said land and of the vill of Lever'. The archdeacon also held houses in Bacon Street, Lichfield, and land near the cathedral Close.³

1. Reg. nos. 452, 456.

2. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), p. 8; Heath, *op. cit.*, p. 247; VCH Chester, iii, p. 9.

3. MRA, nos. 666, 121, 124, 671.

THE ARCHDEACONRY OF COVENTRY.

There were five archdeacons of Coventry during Langton's episcopate; M. Robert de Stafford, M. Peter de Insula, Gregory Giudice de Alatri, Richard de Anibaldis, son of Anibaldus Riccardi de Urbe, and John Gaetani de Urbe. The information that survives concerning these archdeacons suggests that, in varying degrees, each was an absentee. The archdeaconry was in the bishop's collation until November 1299 but from about 1302 until 1355 archdeacons of Coventry were provided by the pope. Moreover, the archdeaconry of Stafford appears to have been filled by papal provisors for the whole of Langton's episcopate. An archdeaconry was easily served by a deputy, the archdeacon's official, and was ideal for an absentee incumbent; thus the rise in the number of papal provisions during the fourteenth century is reflected in the diocese.¹

Robert de Stafford was appointed archdeacon of Coventry towards the end of the episcopate of Langton's predecessor, Roger Meuland. He is first mentioned as archdeacon on 1 December 1295 when he received papal dispensation to hold the churches of Tibshelf, Derbys., and Checkley, Staffs.,

1. Fasti, x, p. 14; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 76; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 31; Fasti, x, pp. 18-19; Sir R. W. Southern, Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages (Penguin, 1970), pp. 161-2.

together with his archdeaconry, in plurality. In 1299 he also held a prebend in the royal free chapel of St Michael, Penkridge, Staffs.¹ It thus seems that he did not hold a church in his archdeaconry. Stafford is only mentioned once in the register. On 30 March 1299 Langton granted him a licence to travel to the papal curia for two years to settle his affairs, during which time he could continue to receive the fruits and revenue of his archdeaconry and of his other benefices, provided that he sent his proctors and ministers to the bishop and to his official as divine services and cure of souls in these benefices should not be diminished.² Stafford subsequently received royal protection to travel abroad on 26 May 1299. He died whilst overseas and on 31 October 1299 his prebend in the chapel of Penkridge was granted to another.³

Langton collated the next archdeacon, M. Peter de Insula, D.Cn.L., shortly afterwards on 14 November 1299. Insula is not mentioned again in the register. He held no prebends or churches in the diocese but from 1294 until at least October 1300 he was rector of South Kilvington, Yorks.,

1. M. William de Kilkenny occurs as archdeacon on 28 June 1293, CPR 1292-1301, p. 29; Meuland died 16 December 1295, HBC, p. 253; CPL, i, p. 561; CPR 1292-1301, p. 450.

2. Reg. no. 66; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 31.

3. CPR 1292-1301, pp. 400, 450.

and on 26 October 1301 he was collated prebendary of Bole, Yorks.¹ This suggests that Insula was mostly absent from his archdeaconry. He vacated the archdeaconry of Coventry before 10 May 1302 and was subsequently collated archdeacon of Carlisle in November 1302 which he held until his death before 26 November 1311.²

The archdeaconry of Coventry was occupied by alien papal provisors from May 1302, although it was not highly remunerated; the archdeacon of Coventry's portion in the deanery of Coventry was said to be £6 13s. 4d. in 1291.³ Gregory Giudice de Alatri was apparently the next archdeacon of Coventry but the only information concerning him is notice of his death when Richard de Anibaldis, son of Anibaldus Riccardi de Urbe, was provided by the pope on 10 May 1302. Gregory Giudice died at the papal court, presumably without entering office.⁴

Richard de Anibaldis held the archdeaconry until 29 August 1320 when he exchanged this for a canonry and prebend in Rheims cathedral with John

1. Reg. nos. 60, 387; Fasti, vi, p. 34; Emden, Oxford, ii, p. 1003.
2. Fasti, x, p. 14; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 76; ibid., appx. F; Fasti, vi, p. 101; Emden, Oxford, ii, p. 1003.
3. VCH Stafford, iii, p. 31; Fasti, x, p. 14; Taxatio, p. 244.
4. CPL, i, p. 602; Fasti, x, p. 14; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 76.

Gaetani de Urbe.¹ Anibaldis was a pluralist and an absentee: his bull of provision also granted him dispensation to hold canonries and prebends at the Lateran, Cambrai, Lincoln and Tournay, although he was under age and not in orders; and on 7 February 1303 and 24 December 1310 he received indulgences to visit his archdeaconry by deputy for five years and three years respectively.²

The archdeaconry was thus probably administered by Anibaldis' official who, presumably, dealt with the *ad hoc* commission from Langton in December 1308. The prior and convent of Arbury, Warwicks., had presented William de Knyghtecote, clerk, to the vicarage of Chilvers Coton, Warwicks. The archdeacon, or his official, was ordered to make certain inquiries concerning the vicarage and the presented clerk in the full chapter of rectors and vicars of the archdeaconry. They were to ascertain whether or not the vicarage was vacant, and if vacant, from what date; who was the true patron, who made the last presentation, and at whose presentation the last vicar was admitted; whether or not the vicarage was the subject of litigation; whether or not a pension was payable, and if so, to whom, for how much, and

1. Reg. no. 1144.

2. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 76; ibid., appx. F; Fasti, x, p. 14; ibid., i, p. 92; CPL, i, pp. 602, 608; ibid., ii, p. 81.

at whose valuation; the character, learning, age, and orders of the presented; if free and of legitimate birth; whether or not he was beneficed elsewhere, and other customary points. The bishop ordered that the result of the inquiry should be communicated in writing, under the seals of those by whom the inquiry will have been made.¹ Although this commission was common in form, this is the only example given in the register.²

Some of the results of the inquiry are given in Knyghtecote's subsequent institution as vicar by Langton at Theydon Mount, Essex, on 20 December 1308; the vicarage of Chilvers Coton was vacant by the death of M. Roger, the last vicar, who died on Tuesday, 22 October 1308, and presentation to the vicarage belonged to the prior and convent of Arbury. The inquiry also found that Knyghtecote was in priests' orders and the fact that he was instituted shows that he had been found to be a suitable candidate.³

In 1312 the archdeacon's official dealt with the case of Robert de Luggore, rector of Southam, Warwicks., accused of perjury in a suit brought against him by the dean and chapter of Lichfield

1. Reg. no. 609.

2. Haines, Worcester, pp. 55-6; J.W. Gray, 'The Ius Praesentandi in England from the Constitutions of Clarendon to Bracton', English Historical Review, 67 (1952), pp. 508-9.

3. Reg. no. 608.

concerning the withholding of a pension due from his church. The case was referred to the court of Canterbury and on 20 June 1312 the examiner-general announced to the archdeacon's official that the rector had been convicted of perjury and that sentence was to be published at such times and places as the dean and chapter should request. In October the official of the archdeacon reported to the official of the court of Canterbury that Luggore's perjury had been proclaimed 'in all the general chapters recently held in the archdeaconry, and before the whole body of the clergy in holy synod assembled, and in several parish churches'. Luggore was subsequently deprived of his church and Thomas de Langeton was instituted.¹

Anibaldis may have been in England from August to October 1315 when he received royal protection for two years to travel abroad and letters nominating two attorneys.² He was still abroad in August 1318 when Adam de Erington, canon of Warwick, and William de Herle, 'the appointed representative of the archdeacon of Coventry, now abroad', requested that the dean and chapter of Lichfield confirm letters issued by Langton,

1. MRA, nos. 478-80, 484, 482; no reference to this has been found in Reg. Winchelsey; reg. nos. 649, 655.

2. CPR 1313-17, pp. 345, 363; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

confirming a grant of his predecessor, bishop Walter Durdent, whereby the church of Fenny Compton, Warwicks., was granted to the church of St Mary and All Saints, Warwick. All the parties involved agreed to respect the rights of the archdeacon in this matter.¹

On 29 August 1320 Richard de Anibaldis exchanged the archdeaconry with John Gaetani de Urbe, cardinal deacon of St Theodore's, for a canonry and prebend in Rheims cathedral. This exchange is recorded in Langton's register; Langton had received the original letters of the pope concerning the exchange and Gaetani was admitted and collated to the archdeaconry in the person of Nicholas Ciceronis, his proctor. Gaetani held the archdeaconry until 1335 and was, presumably, another absentee; on 1 March 1325 he received an indult to visit his archdeaconry by deputy for five years and receive procurations.²

1. MRA, nos. 274, n. 1, 272; for Herle see DNB, ix, p. 699, he was appointed justice of Common Pleas on 6 August and 16 October 1320, CPR 1317-21, pp. 503, 508.

2. Reg. no. 1144; Fasti, x, p. 14; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 76; ibid., appx. F; J.R. Wright, The Church and the English Crown, 1305-1334 (Toronto, 1980), pp. 299-300; CPL, ii, p. 242.

THE ARCHDEACONRY OF DERBY.

There were two incumbents of the archdeaconry of Derby during Langton's episcopate; M. Elias de Napton, who occurs as archdeacon in July 1281 and remained in office until his death on 12 July 1311,¹ and M. Geoffrey de Blaston, who was collated archdeacon by Langton on 19 December 1311 and remained in office until his death in February 1328.²

The careers of both Napton and Blaston suggest that they were leading administrators in the diocese, trusted by Langton, and that they were resident in office. Napton was a pluralist; in addition to his archdeaconry he held the church of Warmington, Warwicks., and prebends in Derby, Eccleshall, Staffs., and St John's collegiate church, Chester.³ In 1296, together with M. Robert de Redeswell, archdeacon of Chester, M. Adam de Walton, precentor of Lichfield, and M. Luke de Ely, chancellor of Lichfield cathedral, Napton was charged with pluralism by archbishop Winchelsey

1. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 78; ibid., appx. F; Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis, ed. C.T. Martin, 3 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-5), i, p. 205; MRA, no. 643; reg. no. 635; Fasti, x, p. 16; Bodleian Library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 71v.

2. Reg. no. 1050; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 78; ibid., appx. F; Fasti, x, p. 16; Bodleian Library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 72.

3. Reg. nos. 635, 866; Fasti, x, p. 34; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Bodleian Library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 71v.

when judgement was deferred until Langton, then bishop elect of Lichfield, returned from abroad. The outcome of this case is not documented.

However, judgement must have been in Napton's favour as he continued to hold his churches, in plurality, until his death.¹

Napton was prominent in the diocesan administration. In July 1281 archbishop Pecham appointed him coadjutor to bishop Meuland. He probably held this position until the bishop's death in December 1295 as this would explain why he, together with the late bishop's official, the prior and convent of Coventry and the dean and chapter of Lichfield, was ordered by archbishop Winchelsey to deliver the seal, rolls, registers and other muniments of the officiality to M. William de Staundone, acting as official in the diocese *sede vacante*.² Later, on 30 March 1302, Napton was appointed one of three papal administrators when Langton was suspended from episcopal office and the see placed under sequestration by the pope; he may have been appointed at Langton's nomination.³

1. Reg. Winchelsey, i, p. 120; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

2. Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis, ed. C.T. Martin, 3 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-5), i, p. 205, ii, p. 727, iii, p. 946; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Reg. Winchelsey, i, p. 59.

3. See below p. 188.

Napton died at Eccleshall on 12 July 1311 and his will was proved later that month before the Lichfield chapter. When his prebend in St John's, Chester, was granted to another clerk in September 1311 we learn that Napton had neglected his prebendal house there; Langton ordered the dean of the collegiate church to sequester the revenues belonging to the archdeaconry in respect of the prebend, ascertain the defects in Napton's prebendal house, and notify the bishop quickly as to the valuation of the same.¹

The archdeaconry was vacant for about five months, during which time Langton would have received the revenues, before he collated Geoffrey de Blaston as archdeacon on 19 December 1311; he was inducted by the bishop's sequestrator.² Blaston had a long career in Langton's administration; he was one of the bishop's clerks by 1300 and may have been a member of his council of advisers by April 1310, and was his commissary-general before and possibly during his archidiaconate, the grant of which was probably his reward for loyal service.³ Blaston also was a

1. Bodleian Library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 71v; reg. nos. 635, 866.

2. Reg. no. 1050.

3. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; reg. no. 622; for Blaston as commissary-general see below p. 174.

pluralist: he was instituted as rector of Quainton, Bucks., on 14 September 1302 at the presentation of Langton, but resigned on becoming archdeacon; on 28 March 1304 he was collated prebendary of Bishopshull, Staffs., but had vacated this by at least 29 December 1311; by 1 August 1318 he was prebendary of the royal free chapel of Wolverhampton, Staffs.; and he was prebendary of Tarvin, Cheshire, in October 1319 and at his death.¹ He may have received Tarvin about 24 August 1311 when, as canon of Lichfield, he was granted a house in the cathedral Close at Lichfield for his lifetime. This house had been occupied by M. Walter de Clipston, the bishop's nephew, and prebendary of Tarvin; if this house was the prebendal house for Tarvin, Blaston may have succeeded Clipston in the prebend by that date also.² It may have been no coincidence that the vicar of the prebendal church of Tarvin was Nicholas de Blaston, who had been presented by Clipston in September 1308; Nicholas may have been

1. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; G. Lipscomb, The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham, 4 vols. (London, 1847), i, p. 420; reg. nos. 478, 734; Fasti, x, p. 20; CCR 1318-23, p. 4; MRA, no. 571; Bodleian Library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 72.

2. Fasti, x, pp. 20, n. 3, 59 & n.; reg. nos. 396, 803; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

related to Geoffrey.¹ Some interesting details of Geoffrey's house emerge from the grant; it had an upper room, a cellar, kitchen and bakery and the building of a new upper room and a cellar had recently been begun by the bishop. The grant was conditional on Blaston undertaking to have the rooms made good at his expense within four or five years.²

As archdeacon, Blaston received several *ad hoc* commissions from Langton. On 15 January 1314 because he was detained at Kirkstead, Lincs., the bishop commissioned Blaston and M. Philip de Turvill, the bishop's official, to examine the election of Br. John de Colton, canon of Trentham, Staffs., as prior of Norton, Cheshire; they were to examine the form of the election, the person elected, and were empowered to annul or confirm the election, commit the temporalities and spiritualities, and, if the elected should be confirmed, receive canonical obedience from him and induct him in possession.³ Later that same year, on 14 July, Langton was detained in London and he commissioned Blaston to admit and institute

1. Reg. nos. 523, 528, 547, 821; family connections may have played a part in the appointment of both Blastons. Blaston is a town in Leics., near the Langton villages where the bishop was born, see Chapter 3, pp. 199-200.

2. Reg. no. 803.

3. Reg. no. 877.

Gilbert de Mildelton, or his proctor, to the church of Whittington, Derbys., provided that the inquiry concerning the vacancy and the presentee proved satisfactory.¹ As Langton's special commissary in May 1320 Blaston instituted the rector of Edgmond, Salop, and the institution was later confirmed by the bishop.² In December 1318 the bishop, again prevented personally from attending to the matter, commissioned Blaston together with M. William de Bosco, chancellor of Lichfield cathedral, and M. Philip de Turvill, to attend to the re-organisation of the collegiate church of St Thomas the Martyr at Upholland, Lancs., as a monastery under the Benedictine rule. However, on 26 January 1319 Blaston notified his fellow commissioners that he was unable, through ill health, to take part in the investigations planned for 26 and 27 January, and they proceeded without him. Blaston resumed this commission in May when he, Bosco and Turvill admitted and instituted the prior 'under the authority of the bishop committed to them in this behalf'.³ Following the long process of the election of M. Stephen de Segrave as dean of Lichfield cathedral, Langton confirmed his election on 21 September

1. Reg. no. 1058.

2. Reg. no. 1014.

3. MRA, nos. 328, 333, 375, 329.

1320 and then commissioned Blaston to induct him.¹

1. MRA, nos. 571, 574, 575, 577, 579.

THE ARCHDEACONRY OF SHREWSBURY.

Little information survives concerning the remaining archdeaconries of Shrewsbury and Stafford and their incumbents. The archdeaconry of Shrewsbury was in the bishop's collation. The first known archdeacon of Shrewsbury, M. Philip de Cornubia, was collated by Langton on 15 January 1304 but he died shortly afterwards, before 21 January. The sequestrator-general, John Pupard, was then keeper of the archdeaconry until the next archdeacon, M. Richard de Bernard, was collated on 24 March 1304. Bernard remained in office throughout Langton's episcopate.¹

It is possible to piece together some information about the archdeaconry prior to Cornubia's collation. According to the register of Richard Swinfield, bishop of Hereford 1283-1317, the archdeacon of Shrewsbury in January 1299 was 'Master C.', who had been sent by Langton to confer with the bishop.² The Lichfield sequestrator's account roll for the period Epiphany [6 January] to Michaelmas [29 September] 1301 shows that the archdeaconry was vacant during some of this time: the sequestrator received 20s.

1. Reg. nos. 395, 398, 339, 341, 342; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 79; Fasti, x, p. 17.

2. Registrum Ricardi de Swinfield, Episcopi Herefordensis, A.D. MCCLXXXIII-MCCCXVII, ed. W.W. Capes (Canterbury and York Society, 6, 1909), p. 349.

7d. from one Nicholas Pollard and Jacob the apparitor during the vacancy.¹ An archdeacon may have been appointed by 31 January 1301 when a mandate was issued to the archdeacon to release the custody of the chapel of Eaton Constantine, Salop. However, an archdeacon was in office by 18 July 1301 when Langton granted the custody of the sequestrated church of Sheinton, Salop, to the archdeacon of Shrewsbury because the presentee, John de Sheynton, was under age. The archdeacon was to support Sheynton in the schools from the revenue of the church; this would explain why the same sequestrator's account roll records that only 11d. was received from Sheinton church by the sequestrator up to 29 September 1301. This unknown archdeacon presumably died or resigned his office prior to Cornubia's collation on 15 January 1304.²

Only a few details are known about Philip de Cornubia, who was presumably a Cornishman. He had been a clerk of archbishop Pecham and in December 1280 he completed the archbishop's visitation of Coventry and Lichfield diocese. He was prebendary of Ryton, Salop, by 1297. Cornubia died before 21 January 1304, shortly after receiving his archdeaconry, when his prebend of Ryton was

1. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M4, m. 6; appx. G.

2. Reg. nos. 420, 447, 338; L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M4, m. 6; appx. G.

granted to another.¹

The archdeaconry was vacant until 24 March 1304 when Langton collated M. Richard de Bernard. He was apparently rector of Newport, Salop, about 1290 but for how long is uncertain. Only two incumbents of Newport are recorded in Langton's register; Thomas de Coventry resigned as rector on 3 May 1320 and was replaced by Thomas de Neuville. Bernard was still archdeacon in September 1327 and presumably remained as archdeacon until about September 1332 when another was collated.²

In January 1305 Bernard and M. Geoffrey de Blaston, the bishop's commissary-general, were appointed to an *ad hoc* commission following visitations of Haughmond abbey, Salop, by Langton and other commissaries; they were ordered to arrange the dispersal of five brothers, who were behaving contrary to the rule, to five different Augustinian houses in the diocese. If any of the five brothers presumed to disregard the bishop's decrees regulating their future conduct they were to remain in a secure place where they should receive only bread and water until the bishop

1. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 79; ibid., appx. F; Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis, ed. C.T. Martin, 3 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-5), i, pp. 154, 180; reg. no. 398.

2. Reg. nos. 342, 1013; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 79; ibid., appx. F; Emden, Oxford, i, p. 178; CPL, ii, p. 271.

ordained otherwise.¹

1. Reg. no. 473.

THE ARCHDEACONRY OF STAFFORD.

The archdeaconry of Stafford appears to have been occupied by alien papal provisors for the whole of Langton's episcopate: M. Rayner de Vichio, papal chaplain, died as archdeacon before 6 June 1301 when John de Brunforte was provided; Brunforte resigned on 19 January 1322.¹

Rayner de Vichio was in priest's orders by 15 May 1290 when he was granted dispensation to retain the rectory of Hayes, Middlesex, as well as that of Herringswell, Suffolk, which was valued at seventeen marks, on condition that he resigned Herringswell within one year. It is uncertain when Vichio became archdeacon of Stafford but he was prebendary of Gaia Minor and canon of Lichfield by 13 January 1295. On 22 May 1301, shortly before his death, he was granted papal licence to make a will.²

The papal bull providing John de Brunforte as archdeacon of Stafford on 6 June 1301 shows that he also succeeded Vichio as prebendary of Gaia Minor; 'Provision of John... of the canonry and prebend of Lichfield and archdeaconry of Stafford, void by the death of M. Rayner de Vichio...'. Brunforte was granted dispensation to hold the

1. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. E, p. 80; Fasti, x, pp. 18-19; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 31; CPL, i, p. 596.

2. CPL, i, pp. 514, 561, 596.

same as he was about twelve years old and had received only the first tonsure; he was ordered to receive higher orders at the proper age. Brunforte was the son of Octavian de Brunforte, a member of Boniface VIII's household and nephew of Reginald de Brunforte, knight. On 27 April 1309 a benefice in the diocese of Fermo was reserved for him to be held in addition to his archdeaconry and prebend in Lichfield.¹ He remained as prebendary of Gaia Minor until 9 February 1325 when he exchanged this with M. Robert de Patrika, who also succeeded Brunforte as archdeacon, for the prebend of Pipa Parva.²

Neither Vichior nor Brunforte are mentioned in Langton's register but the archdeacon's official is; we must thus assume that each was an absentee and that the archdeacon's official administered the archdeaconry. In July 1311 the official of Stafford archdeaconry is named as M. Adam de Byrom, when he was appointed to an *ad hoc* commission by Langton; he may have held that office in May 1308 when he was commissioned by the then vicar-general, M. Robert de Redeswell, to sequester the goods of Tutbury priory, Staffs., and it was presumably he who, as official of the

1. CPL, i, p. 596; ibid., ii, p. 76; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

2. Fasti, x, pp. 42, 50; CPR 1321-4, p. 41; for Patrika see Emden, Oxford, iii, pp. 1434-5.

archdeaconry in May 1310, was ordered to take custody of the sequestered church of Swynnerton, Staffs. The archdeacon or his official had had custody of Swynnerton church previously in November 1306 when a mandate was issued for this to be released to Richard de Swynnerton.¹

1. Reg. nos. 726, 524, 709, 454.

b. THE RURAL DEANS.

The rural deans of the diocese will be considered collectively as little information survives regarding individual office-holders. Pope Innocent III decreed that bishop and archdeacon should appoint and dismiss rural deans jointly but it is clear that, in England, local custom prevailed and that generally either the bishop or archdeacon, or both together, made the appointments.¹ In the diocese of Bath and Wells in 1319 rural deans were said to be elected annually by the clergy of their deanery, and by the early fifteenth century, both here and in the diocese of Exeter, the beneficed clergy held the office in turn.² In the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield rural deans in the archdeaconries of Coventry, Derby, Shrewsbury and Stafford were probably appointed by the bishop during pleasure, but in the archdeaconry of Chester their appointment was the prerogative of the archdeacon alone. However, in 1325 the commissary-general was authorised to appoint and dismiss rural deans and in 1360 the sequestrator-general was empowered to appoint rural deans and apparitors 'whose appointment

1. Haines, Worcester, p. 66; Councils and Synods, II, i, p. 553, n. 2.

2. Haines, Worcester, pp. 67, n. 1, 73, n. 10; R.W. Dunning, 'Rural Deans in England in the Fifteenth Century', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, 40 (1967), p. 209.

belongs to the bishop', but these were probably only temporary concessions.¹

Rural deans were beneficed locally and their duties generally included the supervision of the clergy and their churches and the welfare and morals of all persons within their deanery and they held chapters of clergy, probably at monthly intervals and possibly by archidiaconal authority, at which episcopal mandates would be read.²

Because their offices were so territorially localised rural deans played an important role as administrative agents of the bishop. Contemporary rural deans at York received revenue for the archbishop such as fines, probate charges, Peter's Pence, receipts from occasional taxes and *ad hoc* sequestrations, whilst at Worcester they were often appointed custodians of sequestrated

1. VCH Stafford, iii, pp. 35, 36, 38-9; VCH Lancaster, ii, p. 9; VCH Chester, iii, p. 10; C.A. Haigh, 'Finance and Administration in a New Diocese: Chester, 1541-1641' in Continuity and Change: Personnel and Administration of the Church of England, 1500-1642, ed. R. O'Day and F. Heal (Leicester, 1976), p. 147; Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959), p. 15; The Registers or Act Books of the Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield. Book 5, being the second register of Bishop Robert de Stretton, A.D. 1360-1385: an abstract of the contents, ed. R.A. Wilson (William Salt Archaeological Society, new series, 8, 1905), pp. 3-4.

2. Haines, Worcester, pp. 50, 51, n. 4, 65, 73; A. Hamilton Thompson, 'Diocesan Organisation in the Middle Ages: Archdeacons and Rural Deans', Proceedings of the British Academy (1943), p. 185.

property.¹ Letters in Langton's register suggest that rural deans in all five archdeaconries were appointed to *ad hoc* commissions, particularly to induct incumbents; however, because of the unique status of the archdeacon of Chester in the diocese at this time rural deans there may not have acted in financial matters for the bishop.²

The sequestrator's account for 1297-8 suggests that rural deans were appointed *ad hoc* custodians of sequestrated property,³ although Langton's register gives only three instances of this. In March 1299 the bishop wrote to the dean of High Peak, Derbys., ordering him to grant the custody of the church of Eyam, Derbys., to Roger le Wyne, then dean of St Edith's secular college, Tamworth, Staffs. The rector of Eyam must have been old and infirm for we are told that he suffered '*notabiles defectus*' and that he needed the counsel and help of another. The rural dean was to enjoin upon Roger that divine services and cure of souls should not be neglected and that Roger should pay 100s. to the bishop annually for the duration of the custody. Roger's custody was renewed directly by the bishop in April 1301 when

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959), p. 12; Haines, Worcester, pp. 66, 71.

2. MRA, no. 675; for examples of mandates to deans to induct see reg. nos. 153, 669, 671, 905, 1045, 1240, 1264; reg. no. 86.

3. Reg. no. 86.

he was enjoined to distribute 100s. to the poor of the parish each year.¹ Similarly, in April 1302, when the then vicar-general, M. Thomas de Abberbury, sequestered the vicarage of Sutton, Salop, he ordered the dean of Newport to ensure that the vicarage would be well-kept and properly served from the revenue,² whilst in August 1315 a mandate to release the custody of the sequestered church of Compton Verney, Warwicks., was addressed to the dean of Stoneleigh or the sequestrator.³

Rural deans also acted in testamentary matters in the diocese. In January 1308 the then vicar-general, M. Robert de Redeswell, commissioned the rural dean of Derby, together with the vicar of Alvaston, Derbys., and Thomas Pouchier, to administer the goods of Thomas de Osmundeston called Bercar who had died intestate.⁴ In February 1311 the bishop granted to each rural dean in the archdeaconries of Coventry, Derby, Shrewsbury and Stafford the right to grant the probate of wills valued below 100s. within their jurisdictions, paralleling the position of their counterparts in the diocese of York.⁵ The rural

1. Reg. nos. 36, 438.

2. Reg. no. 459.

3. Reg. no. 668.

4. Reg. no. 515.

5. Reg. no. 719; Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959), p. 11.

deans of Chester archdeaconry are excluded from this grant because of the unique status of their archdeacon who had the sole right to prove and account the wills within his jurisdiction.

However, by the fifteenth century, if not earlier, they too had acquired the right to prove the wills of those who died with goods valued at less than £40, excepting clergy and esquires.¹

Rural deans are mostly anonymous characters in bishops' registers, being referred to chiefly as dean of their deanery. This is true of Langton's register; the name of only one rural dean is mentioned, Richard, vicar of Spondon, Derbys., who was rural dean of Derby in January 1308. A sequestrator's account roll for 1315-1317 informs us that the anonymous dean of Alton and Leek, Staffs., was fined 13s. 4d. '*pro contemptu*'; it would be most interesting to know what he had actually done.²

1. MRA, no. 675; VCH Chester, iii, p. 11.

2. Haines, Worcester, p. 72; reg. no. 515; L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M7 r.

c. EXEMPT JURISDICTIONS.

The administrative hierarchy of bishop, archdeacons and rural deans was punctuated by the existence of 'peculiar' or exempt jurisdictions. The extent to which an individual peculiar jurisdiction was independent from this administrative hierarchy varied: royal free chapels were totally exempt; the dean and chapter of Lichfield had ordinary jurisdiction in some churches appropriated to the common fund, but others were subject to episcopal and archidiaconal visitation; whilst some Benedictine and Augustinian houses were subject to episcopal visitation but little more. Almost every peculiar jurisdiction had its own courts although their competence varied. The holder of the peculiar jurisdiction thus exercised the equivalent of episcopal or archidiaconal functions over his area; a considerable portion of the diocese was thus outside the bishop's control.¹

Royal free chapels and their parishes in the diocese were exempt from episcopal jurisdiction. By compositions made in 1281 between bishop Meuland and the deans and chapters of St Mary's, Stafford, All Saints, Derby, Penkridge, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, Bridgnorth and St

1. Haines, Worcester, pp. 13-14; R.N. Swanson, Church and Society in Late Medieval England (Oxford, 1989), pp. 18-19.

Mary's, Shrewsbury, it was agreed that the deans, canons, servitors, ministers and parishoners of their churches and chapels should remain exempt from all ordinary jurisdiction and that they should be subject to the church of Rome. The bishop, however, still had the right to be received if he should pass through the deaneries, and by the good grace of the deans and canons he might preach in their churches, celebrate orders, bless the oil and chrism and confirm children.¹ The town of Shrewsbury had, in addition, two smaller royal peculiars which are not mentioned in this composition; the chapels of St Juliana and St Michael.² Royal free chapels thus enjoyed an independent quasi-episcopal jurisdiction, evidenced by their power to issue letters dimissory; Langton's register shows that the collegiate churches of Tettenhall and probably Penkridge, Staffs., issued letters dimissory to ordinands. That the peculiar jurisdiction of royal free chapels was problematical for Langton is shown by copies of admonitions preserved with five ordination lists in his register which include the statement that clerks from royal free chapels in

1. J.H. Denton, English Royal Free Chapels 1100-1300: a Constitutional Study (Manchester, 1970), pp. 108-9; ibid., appx. vii; MRA, no. 525; VCH Stafford, iii, pp. 29-30; VCH Shropshire, ii, p. 6.

2. Denton, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

the diocese should not be ordained without the bishop's special licence.¹

The royal free chapel of All Saints, Derby, was in the immediate possession of the dean of Lincoln cathedral but despite the agreement made in 1281 the jurisdiction at Derby had been divided between the bishop and the dean; the bishop had the right to collect synodals, celebrate orders and to make corrections concerning the chaplains, clergy and parishoners of the deanery, whilst the dean instituted to the chapel's prebends.² The dean of Lincoln also held the rectoral tithes and was patron of the churches of Chesterfield, Wirksworth and Ashbourne as well as being patron of other churches in Derbyshire including Matlock, Darley, Bonsall, Whittington, Thorpe, Brampton and Kirk Ireton.³ On 1 October 1305 M. Jocelin de Kirmington, the new dean of Lincoln, swore canonical obedience to Langton by proxy for the churches of Chesterfield, Wirksworth and Ashbourne which the bishop had placed under sequestration; we are told that Langton, as an act of grace, delayed receiving the dean's obedience for the

1. Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Robinson, *Ordinations*, p. 6 & n. 7; reg. nos. 1313, 1320, 1321, 1323, 1324; see Chapter 1, pp. 68-9.

2. Denton, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-12; two ordination services were held at All Saints, reg. nos. 1287, 1288.

3. *VCH Derby*, ii, p. 4; reg. nos. 242, 222, 240, 239, 241, 263, 262, 251.

church of All Saints, Derby, because this had been omitted from the proxy through negligence. The sequestration of the three churches was then relaxed.¹ The obedience of a later dean of Lincoln, M. Henry de Mammesfeld, is also recorded in the register under the date 4 February 1316 when he swore obedience for only the named churches of Wirksworth, Ashbourne and Chesterfield, appropriated or annexed to the dignity of his office, and unspecified other churches in the diocese belonging to him.²

The church of Gnosall, Staffs., with its prebends, churches and chapels, had been a royal free chapel but was given to the episcopal church of Lichfield by king Stephen and it remained in the hands of the bishop despite attempts made by Edward I to recover the patronage. The church of Gnosall was too small to be a fully developed college, but the bishops of Coventry and Lichfield acted as dean of the chapel and had exclusive spiritual jurisdiction in the church.³

In addition to Lichfield cathedral and its Close, large parts of the diocese were subject

1. Reg. no. 268; M. Jocelin de Kirmington was elected dean of Lincoln on 27 September 1305, Fasti, i, p. 3.

2. Reg. no. 1083. The obedience of M. Roger Martival, dean of Lincoln 1310-15, has not been recorded in the register, Fasti, i, p. 3.

3. Denton, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71; MRA, no. 171.

immediately to the dean and chapter or prebendaries and were practically exempt from the jurisdiction of the bishop and his officers.¹ At the time of Langton's episcopate there were 30 prebendal churches in the diocese, eleven of which were acquired in the thirteenth century and remained subject to ordinary jurisdiction, but the nineteen original prebends were all in the jurisdiction of the prebendary and the chapter; each prebendary had archidiaconal jurisdiction over his church and its parishes and the chapter heard matrimonial causes and other causes coming before it on appeal.²

Additionally, eight of the churches appropriated to the common fund were in the peculiar jurisdiction of the dean and chapter, these being Bakewell, Hope, Tideswell and Kniveton, Derbys., Cannock, Harborne and Rugeley, Staffs., and Arley, Worcs.³

The dean of Lichfield cathedral had jurisdiction over the common fund churches, the

1. K. Edwards, The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages (Manchester, 1949), p. 126; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 30.

2. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, p. 162; ibid., appx. C; Statutes of Lincoln Cathedral, ed. H. Bradshaw, C. Wordsworth (Cambridge, 1897), II, i, p. 24; the prebendal churches under ordinary jurisdiction were Bolton le Moors, Bubbenhall, Dasset, Dernford, Flixton, Pipa Parva, Ryton, Sandiacre, Tarvin, Wellington and Wolvey.

3. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. B; ibid., pp. 116, 130-1; MRA, no. 440.

city and churches of Lichfield and he could visit the prebendal churches and receive procurations every three years and hear the causes of parishoners devolving to him by appeal; only when the deanery was vacant did its jurisdiction lapse to the bishop as happened between October 1319 and September 1320. There had been a protracted dispute between Langton and the dean and chapter of Lichfield concerning the visitation of certain prebends and this may have prompted the bishop to declare in 1318 and 1319 that no clerks from prebendal jurisdictions in the diocese should be ordained without his special licence.¹

The church of Melbourne, Derbys., was in the peculiar jurisdiction of the bishops of Carlisle who had a palace there.²

The Benedictine abbey of Burton on Trent, Staffs., claimed exemption from episcopal visitation but was unable to substantiate this; Langton held an ordination service there in December 1300 and visited the abbey on 15 January 1319. However, the abbot of Burton exercised a peculiar jurisdiction in the parishes of Mickleover, Derbys., and Burton on Trent and Abbots Bromley, Staffs., despite having this

1. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, p. 35; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 30; Bradshaw and Wordsworth, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 26, 27; MRA, nos. 571, 579, 743; Robinson, Ordinations, p. 6; reg. nos. 1321, 1323.

2. VCH Derby, ii, p. 4.

challenged by the archdeacons.¹ The Augustinian houses of Rocester, Stone and Trentham, Staffs., had similar privileges.² In 1283, following a dispute lasting 50 years, the bishop was allowed to visit the Benedictine priory of Coventry; however St Werburgh's abbey, Chester, did not secure papal exemption from archiepiscopal, episcopal, or archidiaconal jurisdiction until 1345.³

1. Appx. H; R. N. Swanson, Church and Society in Late Medieval England (Oxford, 1989), p. 20; VCH Stafford, iii, pp. 32, 209-12.

2. VCH Stafford, iii, pp. 29, 241, 247, 256.

3. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, p. 35; MRA, nos. 466, 643; VCH Chester, iii, p. 139.

ii. THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION.

a. THE VICARS-GENERAL.

The vicar-general deputised for an absent bishop and, although the extent of his powers could vary from commission to commission, he generally supervised the day to day running of the diocese and proceeded with all matters which would have been dealt with by the bishop had he been in residence and for which episcopal orders were not required. During the early fourteenth century the practice followed in most English dioceses was for the diocesan not to appoint a vicar-general to cover temporary absences in England but only if he went abroad, whereas by the beginning of the fifteenth century a vicar-general was appointed to deputise for a bishop whenever the prelate left his diocese, even for a short period.¹ Although a vicar-general's appointment was temporary and occasional at the time of Langton's episcopate, he was the most important officer in the diocesan administration.²

Langton followed the contemporary practice and did not appoint a vicar-general when he left

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), p. 5; Haines, Worcester, pp. 99 & n. 3, 100; Reg. Gandavo, i, pp. xv, xxix & n.1, ii, pp. 596, 837; Reg. Halton, i, p. 228, ii, p. 152; Hamilton Thompson, English Clergy, p. 46.

2. A permanent vicar-general gradually superseded the temporary officer, Hamilton Thompson, English Clergy, pp. 46-7; Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), p. 5.

his diocese temporarily but only to cover two long absences in England and when he went abroad. Many of Langton's letters in his register are dated at places outside the diocese, with both London and York figuring prominently.¹ These letters show that he personally dealt with much routine diocesan business when outside his diocese, including the institution of rectors to benefices; it must have been a great inconvenience for these rectors to travel to places as far afield as London and York to receive institution. Whether because of prevailing custom or from personal choice, Langton assumed personal charge of the administration of his diocese for most of his episcopate and thus does not deserve to be criticised, in various ways, for being a 'neglectful' prelate.² That Langton did not employ a vicar-general during temporary absences from the diocese is underlined by *ad hoc* commissions in his register; for example, one to the archdeacon of Coventry, one to the archdeacon of Derby and to Langton's official, an additional commission to the archdeacon of Derby alone, one to the prior of Repton, Derbys., and M. Adam de Byrom, the official of the archdeacon of Stafford, and one to

1. Appx. H.

2. See Chapter 3, pp. 268-309.

the archdeacon of Chester.¹ In three of these commissions Langton explains that he is unable to act personally because he is detained elsewhere.²

The register records that Langton employed four different vicars-general during his episcopate, M. Walter de Thorp, D.Cn.L., M. Thomas de Abberbury, M. Robert de Redeswell, D.C.L., and M. Ralph de Leycestria, D.Cn.L.; unfortunately no commission survives in the register.³

All vicars-general kept registers and, although Langton's first two vicars-general would have kept separate working registers of the business transacted by them, the definitive copies of these were later incorporated into the bishop's register; their acts are recorded between those of the bishop in the relevant archdeaconry sections of his register. However, a change in the way such records were preserved occurred in September 1307; henceforth separate definitive registers of the vicars-general were made and these were later bound with that of the bishop. Ordinations of clergy celebrated during their commissions are recorded with the other services

1. Reg. nos. 609, 877, 1058, 726, 728.

2. Reg. nos. 726, 877, 1058.

3. For their careers see Emden, Oxford, i, p. 2, ii, p. 1141, iii, pp. 2209, 2222; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; for a typical commission see Haines, Worcester, pp. 326-8; Hamilton Thompson, English Clergy, pp. 189-91.

held during Langton's episcopate in the separate ordination section of the register.¹

Only one specific act by Langton's first vicar-general, Walter de Thorp, has survived in the register; the institution of John de Leges, rector of Dalbury, Derbys., at Lichfield on 25 February 1298.² Here Thorp is styled '*vicarium domini episcopi ipso in remotis tunc agente*'. However, the earliest institution in the register (no. 151) is simply dated as 1297; '*anno Domini M^o CC^o nonagesimo septimo et concecracionis episcopi primo*'. This institution thus took place after 25 March and before 22 December 1297, during which time the bishop was mostly abroad,³ and may, perhaps, have been made by Thorp. As already noted, some of the register pertaining to the beginning of Langton's episcopate is now lost. However, Thorp was acting as vicar-general on 20 June 1297 when the Patent Rolls record that he confirmed the election of the prior of Trentham.⁴ The Close Rolls additionally record that a mandate was sent to Langton's 'viceregent' on 15 May 1297, as the bishop was abroad, and although Thorp is

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), p. 6; Smith, Registers, pp. 54-5.

2. Reg. no. 233.

3. Appx. H.

4. See Chapter 1, p. 14; CPR 1292-1301, p. 253.

not named he was probably the recipient.¹ Bishop Sutton's Lincoln register shows that the vicar-general had issued letters dimissory to the same John de Leges, whom he subsequently instituted in February 1298, and to Richard de Molineus who were ordained subdeacon and deacon respectively on 21 September 1297 at Leicester.²

Consideration of Langton's movements will help to determine the dates of Thorp's commission. Prior to Langton's consecration as bishop of Coventry and Lichfield at Cambrai on 23 December 1296 the vacant see was administered by M. William de Staundone who had been commissioned to act as official by archbishop Winchelsey on 22 December 1295.³ After his consecration Langton did not return to England until about 10 January 1297, and was abroad again by about 4 March. The bishop could have commissioned his diocesan officers, including the vicar-general, at any time between his consecration and March 1297. Although Langton personally collated to a prebend on 3 February 1297 when he was outside his diocese at Walsingham, Norfolk, it is possible that Thorp's commission had already begun; in 1313 the then vicar-general's commission continued when the

1. CCR 1296-1302, p. 113.

2. Reg. Sutton, vii, pp. 95, 96.

3. Reg. Winchelsey, i, p. 58.

bishop had returned to England.¹ Langton's itinerary shows that he had returned to England by about 19 November 1297; however, the bishop of St Asaph celebrated ordinations in the diocese on 21 December 1297.² Langton is known to have been at Langley, Herts., on 3 January 1298 but he may then have gone abroad once more as the register records Thorp acting as vicar-general on 25 February 1298.³ However, Thorp's commission had ended by 27 February 1298 when the bishop personally instituted a rector at London. The bishop then seems to have remained in England, and in personal charge of the administration of his diocese, until about June 1300, when Thomas de Abberbury is found acting as vicar-general.⁴ Thorp was active as Langton's official both during and after his commission as vicar-general, from at least 15 July 1297 until 28 February 1299.⁵

The register records that Abberbury was vicar-general for three distinct periods; 7 June 1300 to 26 September 1300, 12 November 1301 to 12 April 1302, and 28 October 1305 to 31 March 1306. However, the precise dates of his terms as vicar-

1. Appx. H; reg. no. 375; see below pp. 156-7.

2. Appx. H; Reg. Sutton, vii, p. 111.

3. Appx. H; reg. no. 233.

4. Appx. H.

5. See below p. 168.

general can only be approximated from his letters in the register and by consideration of Langton's movements at these times.

Abberbury's letters for his first term as vicar-general date from 7 June to 26 September 1300.¹ Langton appears to have remained in England for most of this period, although he may have been abroad from about 11 to 27 September.² The register records that Langton was at Lichfield between 27 and 30 May and at Eckington, Derbys., on 4 June 1300. There is then no mention of him in the register until 6 October 1300, when he instituted a rector at York.³ Between these dates he was probably fully occupied with affairs of state, in his capacity as Edward I's treasurer, as the king was embarking upon another campaign against the Scots; Langton may thus have met the king at Pontefract on 7 June, the date of Abberbury's first letters as vicar-general, and then accompanied him to York.⁴ Langton appears to have remained initially at York, where the

1. Reg. nos. 238, 283, 284, 330, 107, 170, 169, 285, 105, 106, 239, 286, 108.

2. Appx. H; PRO, K.R. Memoranda Rolls (E 159), 73, mm. 61, 51, 61d; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 22, 23.

3. Appx. H.

4. Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 490-1; The Itinerary of Edward I, Part II: 1291-1307 (List and Index Society, 132, 1976), pp. 156-162; CCR 1296-1302, pp. 354, 401; CPR 1292-1301, p. 513; appx. H; reg. nos. 238, 283, 284, 330.

exchequer was now temporarily based, being there on 14, 15, 19 and 20 June, 6 and 11 July and 24 August 1300.¹ Dr. Beardwood, in her study of the bishop, has stated that Langton was abroad between September and November 1300; he may, however, have been abroad during September only. The bishop was said to be abroad on 27 September, whilst on 11 and 24 September Philip de Willughby was acting as the treasurer's deputy at York.² According to Langton's register Abberbury's commission as vicar-general seems to have lapsed after 26 September with the bishop assuming control of his diocesan administration from York by at least 6 October. Langton dated letters in his register at York also on 14, 18, 20 and 27 October, on 9, 11 and 20 November and on 4 December 1300.³ Thus, Abberbury's first term as vicar-general ended some time between 26 September and 6 October 1300, when the bishop decided that he could once again give sufficient of his time to diocesan affairs.

Abberbury's second term as vicar-general, from about 12 November 1301 until about 12 April 1302, was when the bishop went to the papal court

1. PRO, K.R. Memoranda Rolls (E 159), 73, mm. 31, 50d, 61, 51, 61d; CChW 1244-1326, p. 110.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 10, 22, 23; PRO, K.R. Memoranda Rolls (E 159), 73, m. 51; Willughby was chancellor of the exchequer 1283-1305, see HBC, p. 79.

3. Appx. H.

on both personal and state business.¹ Langton received protection, for one year, to travel to the court of Rome on 27 September 1301, but he was still at York on and shortly after 15 November 1301 when the king wrote asking the bishop to show his letters of power to the queen when she passed through York on her journey north.² Thus Abberbury's second term as vicar-general must have begun whilst the bishop was still in England and continued until at least 12 April 1302 after the pope had suspended Langton on 30 March, placed the see under sequestration and appointed Abberbury one of three papal administrators.³

The papal administrators continued their commission until at least 16 June 1303, the date of their last letter. Langton was restored to his see on 8 June 1303 whilst he was at the curia, but it is not clear when he returned to England; his first letter after his suspension was rescinded is dated at London on 1 September 1303.⁴ No letters survive in the register for the period 17 June to 31 August 1303; there is thus no record of who was

1. Reg. nos. 249, 117, 119, 250, 177, 120, 178, 179, 456, 475, 122, 457, 458, 180, 181, 124, 476, 459; see Chapter 3, pp. 231-4.

2. Appx. H; CPR 1292-1301, pp. 607, 609; CChW 1244-1326, p. 146.

3. See below pp. 186-97.

4. Reg. nos. 186, 392; appx. H.

in charge of the diocesan administration at this time. It is, however, possible that Abberbury resumed his commission as vicar-general until Langton returned to England.

Abberbury's last term as vicar-general, from about 24 October 1305 until about 31 March 1306, was when the bishop was in France; he attended the coronation of pope Clement V at Lyons on 14 November 1305 whilst taking part in negotiations for the king.¹ Langton left London on 24 October 1305 and was in France on the 26th. Thus, although the date of Abberbury's first letter is 28 October, his commission probably commenced on the 24th.² The vicar-general's last letters of this term are dated 31 March 1306 when Langton was back in England.³ On 2 April Langton is found acting as vicar-general for Antony Bek, bishop of Durham.⁴ Bek received protection to travel to France on 5 November 1305 and was at the curia on 5 March 1306; it is thus probable that the two prelates met there and made arrangements for Langton to act as Bek's vicar-general.⁵

1. Reg. nos. 353, 308-11, 146, 204, 205, 147, 312, 206, 486, 355, 207, 314, 315, 356, 208; Appx. H; see Chapter 3, pp. 235-9.

2. Appx. H; reg. no. 353.

3. Reg. nos. 208, 356; appx. H.

4. Reg. Halton, i, p. 250.

5. C.M. Fraser, A History of Antony Bek, Bishop of Durham, 1283-1311 (Oxford, 1957), p. 200.

Langton probably assumed control of his own diocesan administration at the beginning of April 1306 and had certainly done so by 12 April, but Abberbury was still acting in some administrative capacity, probably as chancellor, for the bishop on 30 April when he wrote, with the bishop's knowledge, to John Pupard, the sequestrator.¹ As Bek did not return to England until about 17 May 1306 we must assume that Langton continued to act as his vicar-general until then, administering both the see of Durham and his own diocese.²

Abberbury did not keep a separate definitive register of the business transacted by him but recorded his acts in the relevant archdeaconry sections of Langton's register. Forty-nine letters pertaining to Abberbury's three terms as vicar-general survive in the register,³ 41 of which concern institutions of clergy to benefices, the 'staple' of bishops' registers. One of the letters of institution gives some additional information which, when supplemented from the Patent and Close Rolls, make it noteworthy. On 7 December 1301 Abberbury instituted Robert de Askeby to the church of Thornton le Moors, Cheshire, at the presentation

1. Reg. nos. 208, 463; appx. H.

2. Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

3. See pp. 140, 142, 143 and nn. 1 for Abberbury's letters.

of the king, who was patron by reason of his custody of Peter, then a minor, the son and heir of the late Ralph le Ruter, tenant in chief. However, according to the Patent Rolls this presentation was initially made on 3 January 1296, thus almost six years had elapsed before Askeby was instituted. We learn the reason for this from the Close Rolls; the king had recently recovered his presentation to the church from William de Venables, Katherine his wife, and Peter le Ruter. From this source we also learn that there was 'such a lay force and resistance of rebels in the church' that the vicar-general could not exercise the duties of his office and maintain and protect Askeby in possession of the church. The Close Rolls thus elaborate upon the letter in the register which, as it continues, does suggest that there had been some difficulty in the vicar-general being able to institute the rector and that the king's right to present had had to be determined. We are told that John Droxford (de Drokenesford) had considered the counsel of the justices of the Bench, the barons of the Exchequer and John Langton (de Langeton), the chancellor. Droxford and the chancellor wrote, advising the vicar-general that he should admit Askeby in order to avoid being in contempt of the king and of the king's son, who was also the earl of Chester, and whose faction the king was supporting, and to

avoid loss to the bishop. To strengthen his authority in this matter Abberbury received letters close from the king.¹

Letters in the *Liber Epistolaris* of Richard de Bury further illustrate Abberbury's role in the diocesan administration at Lichfield. Dr. Denholm-Young, the editor of the *Liber Epistolaris*, suggests that some of the Lichfield letters may have been taken from originals written by Abberbury 'at a time when he appears to be running the diocese', a time which the editor considers likely to belong to a period beginning 30 March 1302 when the see was sequestered by the pope.² However, as Dr. Denholm-Young himself notes, the majority of the letters copied into the *Liber Epistolaris* are undated and the names are reduced to initials, but he considers that most belong to the year 1306 or possibly earlier. Abberbury was vicar-general until at least 12 April 1302 following the sequestration of the see by pope Boniface VIII on 30 March when the pope appointed him one of three administrators of the diocese; his commission as vicar-general was thus

1. Reg. no. 177; CPR 1292-1301, p. 181; CCR 1296-1302, p. 579; Droxford was keeper of the wardrobe at this time, HBC, p. 79; for the chancellor see ibid., p. 85.

2. Denholm-Young, Liber Epistolaris, p. 285.

rescinded.¹ As Abberbury was only a joint administrator of the sequestrated see, and with the date suggested by Dr. Denholm-Young in mind, it seems unlikely that the letters in the *Liber Epistolaris* were written during the period of sequestration, that is from after 12 April 1302 until about 16 June 1303, the last time the administrators are recorded as acting in that capacity after Langton's suspension was relaxed. The letters in the *Liber Epistolaris* are more likely to belong to a period when Abberbury was acting as vicar-general, when he would indeed have been 'running the diocese', rather than when he shared this responsibility as a papal administrator.

It is perhaps possible to date one letter in the *Liber Epistolaris*, that written to the bishop of Whithorn, a matter already outlined above, and to determine its author.² The letter is from 'T. de B.' to 'domino T. Dei gracia Cand[ide Case] episcopo'. The author, 'ex parte domini episcopi', admonishes the bishop of Whithorn for remaining at Chester when numerous churches were awaiting consecration and holy orders were due to be celebrated in the church of All Saints, Derby, on

1. Denholm-Young, *Liber Epistolaris*, p. xi; reg. no. 459; see below pp. 186-7.

2. Denholm-Young, *Liber Epistolaris*, p. 292, no. 23; see Chapter 1, pp. 56-7.

the Saturday on which *Sitientes* is sung. Dr. Denholm-Young has identified the bishop of Whithorn as Thomas de Kirkcudbright who was bishop from 1294 to 1324/6.¹ However, the *Victoria County History* for Derbyshire summarises another copy of the same letter and states that this was written by Thomas de Baliol, papal penitentiary, 'towards the end of the thirteenth century', and that the bishop of Whithorn was employed as a result of 'the frequent absence of Bishop Longespee, of Coventry and Lichfield, on the continent'.² This statement clearly is incorrect. The source for this statement gives, in English, a summary of another copy of the letter in the *Liber Epistolaris* with only the initials of the letter's author; 'T. de B. to the Bishop of ... (Cand)'.³ If the author of the letter was a papal penitentiary he would not refer to the diocesan bishop as '*noster episcopus*'. The author writes with the authority of one in charge of the administration of the diocese; only a vicar-general would have such authority during the bishop's absence. T. de B. is thus probably a scribal error for Thomas de Abberbury. The

1. Denholm-Young, *Liber Epistolaris*, p. 292; *HBC*, p. 310.

2. *VCH Derby*, ii, p. 90.

3. *Fourth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London, 1874), i, p. 393.

identification of the suffragan bishop as Thomas de Kirkcudbright and the fact that Dr. Denholm-Young considers that he acted as Langton's deputy, places the date of the letter within the period of Langton's episcopate. The ordination lists show that only one service during Langton's episcopate was celebrated at *Sitientes*; this was taken by the bishop of Whithorn at Derby on 19 March 1306. However, the ordination list gives the venue as that of the church of the Friars Preachers, a church wholly distinct from that of the church of All Saints, which was a collegiate church.¹ There are three explanations for the discrepancy; the venue for the service may have been changed at the last moment, or the name of the church may have been recorded incorrectly in either the register or the *Liber Epistolaris*. However, the fact that the service held on 19 March is the only service recorded as being held at *Sitientes*, that it was the bishop of Whithorn who celebrated this service, and that at this same time Abberbury was acting as vicar-general, strongly suggests that the author of this letter was Thomas de Abberbury and that it was written shortly before 19 March 1306.

Two other letters in the *Liber Epistolaris* show that Langton considered Abberbury's services to be indispensable and again suggest that they

1. Appx. E; reg. no. 1296; *VCH* Derby, ii, pp. 78, 87.

belong to one of the three periods when Abberbury was vicar-general. In the first, Langton writes to Simon of Ghent, bishop of Salisbury, referring to their 'special friendship', and states that as he is so busy in the king's service he cannot dispense with the services of Abberbury, 'his familiar clerk', without grave loss. The second letter, from Abberbury to bishop Ghent, concerns the same matter and explains that he cannot go to Abingdon, Oxon., 'without great difficulty and perhaps great damage'.¹

Robert de Redeswell, archdeacon of Chester, was Langton's third vicar-general and he is recorded as acting in this capacity for one long period between 16 September 1307 and 9 November 1308, when the bishop was in prison, and for some indeterminate time between about 10 June and 4 July 1309. During his first term as vicar-general Redeswell kept a separate register of the business transacted by him, although a letter addressed to him from the bishop, dated 17 July 1308 (no. 1027), was recorded in one of the Derby archdeaconry sections in Langton's register. Redeswell's register was written on separate quires which were later bound with the bishop's

1. Denholm-Young, Liber Epistolaris, pp. 293-4, nos. 25, 26; there is nothing regarding this in Reg. Gandavo.

register.¹

The dates of the commencement and termination of Redeswell's first term as vicar-general can be accurately determined from his register which has as its heading, '*Registrum sub discreto viro magistro Roberto de Redeswell archidiacono Cestrie venerabilis patris domini Walteri Dei gracia Coventr' et Lich' eo in remotis agente vicario a xvi kalendas mensis Octobris anno Domini CCC^{mo} septimo usque [...]*'. The last letter in Redeswell's register is dated 9 November 1308 and marginal notations elsewhere in the bishop's register confirm that Langton was released from prison on this date and was thus then able to resume his episcopal responsibilities.² It is interesting that although Langton was arrested sometime after 7 August 1307 Redeswell did not begin his commission until 16 September. Langton was in personal charge of his diocese whilst a prisoner at Wallingford castle, Oxon., on 27 August and, presumably, he remained so until 15 September by which time he must have realised his imprisonment would not be brief.³

The contemporary marginal notation on folio

1. Reg. nos. 489-551, 1027, 701, 618, 702, 834; Smith, Registers, p. 55.

2. Reg. fo. 27; reg. no. 551; reg. fos. 34v, 41v, 56, 64, 70.

3. Reg. no. 819; appx. H.

42v of Langton's register, '*Registrum archidiaconi Cestr' vicarii episcopi*', which is attached to a letter dated 10 June 1309 by a drawn line (no. 701) and three additional letters (nos. 618, 702, 834) show that Redeswell acted as vicar-general for a second time, from before 10 June until at least 4 July 1309. These four letters are recorded in the relevant archdeaconry sections of Langton's register and all except the first (no. 701) state that the bishop was '*in remotis*' at this time. Langton had been summoned to the papal court in February 1309 and was certainly in France between about 18 July and 7 August.¹ However, it is not clear when he went to France or when he returned. Letters in his register show that Langton instituted rectors at London on 13 May (no. 832) and at Pentlow, Essex, on 7 September 1309 (no. 1030). Although the bishop was unable to celebrate the ordination service held at Colwich, Staffs., on 20 September 1309 (no. 1301), the suffragan bishop of Annaghdown ordained by Langton's faculty, not by Redeswell's. Thus Redeswell's second term as vicar-general must have begun between 13 May and 10 June and had probably lapsed by about 7 September 1309.

Twenty-eight of the 62 letters in Redeswell's register concern institutions of clergy to

1. Beardwood, *Trial of Langton*, p. 14; *CPL*, i, pp. 49, 57, 58; appx. H.

benefices, three of whom were instituted by deputy and special mention was made that a copy of the proxy was to be kept in the bishop's chancery.¹ Two letters concern the admission of clergy to benefices,² one of which (no. 494) stipulates that the clerk should study in the schools until he attained full age. At least sixteen licences for absence to study were granted by Redeswell.³ By contrast, when Abberbury was vicar-general no licences for study-leave appear to have been issued.

There are four notations in the bishop's register that direct the reader to Redeswell's separate register. Three of these appear to indicate that business transacted whilst Langton was in prison in 1307-8, will be found in the vicar-general's register; '*Querere registrum archidiaconi ...*'.⁴ The fourth notation, however, appended to entry no. 849, seems to be a cross-reference to no. 494, noting that a curate was granted to Robert de Docton by Redeswell when vicar-general on account of his being under age, '*ut patet registro ejusdem*'; when Docton was admitted to the church of Eccleston upon Dee on 23

1. Reg. nos. 504, 526, 539.

2. Reg. nos. 494, 495.

3. Reg. nos. 493, 494, 498, 501, 503, 506, 512-4, 517, 518, 520, 536, 540, 541, 550.

4. Reg. fos. 34, 34v, 56.

October 1307 he was a minor and was enjoined to study in the schools until he reached full age (no. 494).

Even though Langton was in prison during Redeswell's first term as vicar-general he remained in contact with his diocese and made his wishes known. Redeswell had placed the spiritualities of Tutbury priory, Staffs., under sequestration in May 1308. Langton wrote to Redeswell from prison on 17 July enjoining him to appoint a suitable person as prior of Tutbury. Redeswell acted quickly and installed a new prior '*per temporis lapsum*' on 20 July.¹ Other letters show the extent of Langton's involvement in diocesan affairs at this time: a prebend in the collegiate church of Gnosall, Staffs., was conferred on William de Eston, one of the bishop's most trusted clerks, '*ad jussum et mandatum domini episcopi*'; a licence to study was granted to William de Walingford '*ex speciali injuncto domini episcopi*'; and possession of the vicarage of Prees, Salop, was granted to the proctor of Thomas Crok '*ad nominacionem et mandatum speciale domini W[alteri] Dei gracia Coventr' et Lich' episcopi*'.²

A letter from Edward II to Redeswell, as vicar-general of the bishopric, is preserved on

1. Reg. nos. 524, 1027, 533.

2. Reg. nos. 539, 517, 511.

the Close Rolls. In January 1308 the king ordered Redeswell to be at the exchequer at Westminster on 9 February 1308 'to hear and execute the things that shall be enjoined upon him' by Walter Reynolds, the king's treasurer, 'whom the king has enjoined to communicate to him certain things by word of mouth'.¹ It would be most interesting to know what Reynolds told the vicar-general; we can only assume that the 'certain things' concerned the finances of the see during the time that the bishop was in prison.

The commission of Ralph de Leycestria, the last vicar-general employed by Langton, commenced on 12 May 1312 and lasted until about 21 July 1313 whilst the bishop was once again at the papal court in France, transacting both personal and state business.² Langton left for France after 1 May 1312 and had returned to England by at least 10 July 1313.³ According to an entry in the cartulary of Tutbury priory Langton sealed a composition at Tutbury on 24 April 1313, but this cannot be the case. On 30 April 1313 Langton received royal protection until Michaelmas as he

1. CCR 1307-13, p. 51.

2. Reg. fo. 31; reg. no. 573; appx. H.

3. Appx. H.

was detained at the curia on the king's business.¹ Moreover, it appears that whilst at the curia Langton pressed his case with the pope to succeed Winchelsey as archbishop of Canterbury. Winchelsey did not die until 11 May 1313; Langton must thus have been at the curia for some time after this.² Langton was still abroad on 16 June 1313 when Leycestria was ordered to send the money collected for the subsidy of 4d. in every mark of the spiritualities in his diocese, granted by the clergy in the provincial council at London, to London before 1 July 1313 in order that the army due to depart for Scotland could be paid.³ Thus, the composition in the cartulary of Tutbury priory cannot belong to April 1313. The cartulary is not contemporary with Langton's episcopate but was written in the 1450s, suggesting that an incorrect date was then attributed to the composition.⁴ It is not certain when Langton returned from France but this may have been just before 10 July when he was at Hackington, Kent; on this date the bishop

1. The Cartulary of Tutbury Priory, ed. A. Saltman (Staffordshire Record Society, 4th series, 4, 1962), no. 245; CPR 1307-13, p. 566; appx. H.

2. J.H. Denton, 'Canterbury Archiepiscopal Appointments: the Case of Walter Reynolds', Journal of Medieval History, 1 (1975), pp. 323-4; HBC, p. 233.

3. CCR 1307-13, p. 538; HBC, p. 594, the provincial council was held at London between March and May 1313.

4. Saltman, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

collated Leycestria to the prebend of Stotfold.¹ Leycestria continued to act as vicar-general until at least 21 July, probably because Langton was detained at parliament in London which sat until the 27th.²

Like Redeswell, Leycestria also kept a separate register of the business transacted by him, and, again, this was written on separate quires which were later bound with the bishop's register. The heading of Leycestria's register again specifies the date that his commission commenced; '*Registrum venerabilis patris domini W[alteri] Dei gracia Coventr' et Lych' episcopi de tempore magistri Radulphi de Leycestria ejusdem patris ipso in remotis agente vicarius³ in spiritualibus generalis, a die Lune iiii^{to} idus Maii anno Domini M^o CCC^{mo} duodecimo et consecracionis dicti patris xvi^{mo}*'.⁴ Notations on folios 37v, 60 and 73 of Langton's register advise the reader that business for the year 1312 is to be found in the vicar-general's register.

Leycestria's register shows a far greater degree of organisation than does that of Redeswell; it contains copies of all his surviving

1. Appx. H; reg. no. 742.

2. CCR 1307-13, p. 584; reg. no. 573; HBC, p. 553.

3. *Sic* for vicarii.

4. Smith, Registers, p. 55; reg. fo. 31.

letters, which are arranged in largely chronological order in separate archdeaconry sections. As already discussed above, the six letters in Leycestria's Stafford archdeaconry section survive in duplicate, suggesting that he too used a working register.¹ Fifty letters are preserved in Leycestria's register, the majority of which are again institutions; 40 record the institutions of clergy to benefices and one records the institution of the prior of Colwich, Staffs.² The date of one of these letters is suspect; no. 576 is dated '*viii nonas Julii*', but there is no such date. It is possible that the scribe intended to write *viii idus Julii* which would date this letter 8 July 1312.³ Two of the letters of institution are somewhat distinctive: Henry de Longedon was instituted to the vicarage of Shirley, Derbys., '*ad nominacionem domini episcopi*'; and seven clerks were instituted to prebends in the chapel of Upholland, Lancs.⁴ One letter records the induction of Nicholas de Derleye to the church of Haversage, Derbys., '*auctoritate apostolica*' directed to the bishop by

1. See Chapter 1, p. 17.

2. Reg. nos. 552-4, 556-62, 565-76, 578, 582-87, 589-600.

3. Handbook of Dates for Students of English History, ed. C.R. Cheney (London, 1978), p. 79.

4. Reg. nos. 567, 583.

M. William de Testa.¹ Leycestria granted only four licences to rectors for absence to study, compared with fifteen granted by Redeswell over a comparable period of time.² His other letters concern a grant made *in commendam*, later changed into sequestration by the bishop, a custody of a sequestered chapel, the institution of the prioress of St Mary's, Chester, and record that a clerk had had his letters of ordination examined by suitable witnesses.³

However, two acts by Leycestria as vicar-general are not recorded in his register, nor elsewhere in the bishop's register. The first, the confirmation of the election of Thomas de Warmyngton as prior of Kenilworth, Warwicks., we learn of from the Patent Rolls, where it is recorded that on 5 September 1312 the king ordered the escheator to restore the temporalities of the priory of Kenilworth to the newly elected prior.⁴ The second, the provision of Br. William de Bloxam as prior of Arbury, Warwicks., is known from Langton's confirmation and ratification of this

1. Reg. no. 564; for Testa see W.E. Lunt, 'William Testa and the Parliament of Carlisle', English Historical Review, 41 (1926), pp. 332-57.

2. Reg. nos. 563, 579, 580, 601.

3. Reg. nos. 555, 577, 581, 588.

4. CPR 1307-13, p. 490.

appointment on 27 March 1315.¹ The Coventry archdeaconry section of Leycestria's register, in which both items should have been recorded, contains copies of only eight letters which occupy less than half of the folio; the remainder of the folio was used in the sixteenth century to record a copy of a composition.² If Leycestria did use a working register, as seems probable, it is possible that the working copies of these two letters were lost and thus failed to be copied into his definitive register.

Vicars-general could not undertake the sacramental duties of the absent diocesan bishop unless they were in bishop's orders themselves, and this was rare. However, when Langton was vicar-general for Antony Bek, bishop of Durham, from about 2 April until about 17 May 1306 when Bek was in France receiving the titular dignity of patriarch of Jerusalem from the pope, he did not personally celebrate the service held to ordain clergy at Newcastle upon Tyne on 2 April 1306 but commissioned John Halton, bishop of Carlisle, to do so. Unfortunately, Bek's register has not survived and thus there is no way of knowing the extent of Langton's commission and his involvement

1. Reg. no. 667.

2. Reg. fo. 33, no. 602; Smith, Registers, p. 55.

in the diocese of Durham at this time.¹

Whether in episcopal orders or not, it was the responsibility of all vicars-general to see that the sacramental duties of the absent diocesan bishop such as the ordination of clergy, consecration of churches and churchyards, confirmations, reconciliations of consecrated sites polluted by bloodshed and benedictions of religious houses were performed, if necessary, by other bishops deputed to the task. Abberbury's letter to the bishop of Whithorn in the *Liber Epistolaris* underlines this aspect of his commission; he was not afraid to admonish a seemingly lax suffragan bishop.²

Ordinations of clergy celebrated by deputed bishops during the commissions of the vicars-general are recorded with the other services held during Langton's episcopate in the ordination section of his register, even though Redeswell and Leycestria kept separate definitive registers of most of the business transacted by them.³ The faculty for these bishops to ordain in the diocese is incorporated in the heading of each list. Three

1. C.M. Fraser, A History of Antony Bek, Bishop of Durham, 1283-1311 (Oxford, 1957), pp. 2, 248, 114-5, 200-1; Reg. Halton, i, p. 250; Smith, Registers, p. 266.

2. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), p. 6; Denholm-Young, Liber Epistolaris, p. 292, no. 23.

3. Appx. F.

ordination lists are extant for the periods when Abberbury was vicar-general. The first states that the service held on 23 December 1301, taken by John Halton, bishop of Carlisle, was '*de licencia T[home] de Abburburia vicarii*' (no. 1287). However, the lists recording the services held on 18 December 1305 and 19 March 1306 do not state by whose authority the bishop of Whithorn ordained, but simply that they were taken '*a domino Dei gracia Candide Case episcopo domini W[alteri] eadem gracia Coventr' et Lich' episcopi suffraganeo ...*' (nos. 1295, 1296). The list for the first ordination service held during Redeswell's first commission as vicar-general has a similarly worded heading to this, with bishop John Halton being referred to as '*episcopo ...suffraganeo*' (no. 1298). The lists recording the two subsequent services held during Redeswell's commission state, more specifically, that the bishop of Annaghdown ordained '*auctoritate et commissione magistri R[adulphi] de Redeswell archidiaconi Cestr' domini Coventr' et Lich' episcopi eo extra diocesim suam agente vicarii*' (nos. 1299, 1300). The last time that the bishop of Annaghdown celebrated orders in the diocese, on 23 December 1312, was again by commission of the then vicar-general, Ralph de Leycestria (no. 1309).

b. THE CHANCELLOR.

A bishop's chancellor was the most important member of the central administration although little information survives concerning individual office-holders in bishops' registers of the period. The chancellor originally was in charge of a bishop's secretariat and had custody of a bishop's seals;¹ Langton's register, however, indicates that his chancellor also dealt with financial matters.

Langton's chancellor is named only once in the register; M. Thomas de Abberbury was in this office on 18 March 1300 when Eudes de Derb' acknowledged that his seal had been placed upon a certain letter in which he was bound to the bishop for 50 marks for the fruits of the church of Heanor, Derbys., which he was holding in *commendam*.² Abberbury is mentioned in connection with financial matters both before and after this date. In February 1299 he paid money from the bishop's hanaper for land sold to Langton and his brother, Robert Peverel, whilst in April and November 1300 he again paid money from the bishop's hanaper to other clerks in Langton's employ.³ An undated letter added to the same folio

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), pp. 4-5; Haines, Worcester, pp. 124-5.

2. Reg. nos. 366, 8, 219.

3. Reg. nos. 67, 368, 370.

on which the letters for 1300 are registered, a folio which concerns mostly financial matters, records that Abberbury paid ten marks, again from the bishop's hanaper, to Galhard de Pursato and John de Corbino, papal nuncios, a payment which probably represents an instalment of Langton's common service tax levied by the pope for his confirmation as bishop.¹ A note, added to this memorandum, records that he later paid 40s. to lady Lucy de Devorcis.² Another undated memorandum added to folio 4v of what is probably an extant working quire of the register, notes that the chancellor again paid 20s. from the bishop's hanaper to Richard de Lymodeshei on Langton's order.³ Abberbury was, presumably, chancellor on each occasion. Marginal notations against four other entries in the register confirm that the chancellor was concerned with fiscal matters in the diocese; he relaxed the customary fee when clerks were instituted to benefices in May 1299 and June, September and October 1300.⁴

Notations added to some names in the ordination list for 4 June 1300 suggest that the chancellor issued letters of orders or letters

1. Reg. no. 364; see Chapter 3, pp. 226-7.

2. Reg. no. 364.

3. Reg. no. 85.

4. Reg. nos. 46, 170, 109, 110.

testimonial to candidates or their patrons.

William de Elmeden, priest, 'habet litteram' which the chancellor gave to the nuncio of the prior of Coventry, and a letter for William de Lillington, priest, was given by the chancellor to the subprior of Stone, whilst John de Scutard and William de Claverlee, priests, were given letters from two bundles by the chancellor at Solihull.¹

Abberbury may have continued to hold the chancellorship until his death at about the beginning of May 1307; it is thus possible that he held this office and, when commissioned, that of vicar-general concurrently. He was certainly acting in some administrative capacity for Langton on 30 April 1306, by which time his last term as vicar-general had ended, when he wrote, under his own seal and with the bishop's knowledge, to John Pupard, the sequestrator. Thus it appears that the chancellor had his own seal of office and did not use the bishop's seal *ad causas*.²

A copy of an undated letter from Langton to the chapter of York in the *Liber Epistolaris* of Richard de Bury refers to Abberbury as 'our chancellor'. Dr. Denholm-Young, the editor of the *Liber Epistolaris*, considers Abberbury to have been chancellor of Lichfield cathedral thus

1. Reg. no. 1285, fos. 92, 92v.

2. Reg. no. 463; Storey, *Diocesan Admin.* (1972), p. 4; Haines, *Worcester*, pp. 124-5.

holding 'a lesser dignitary than the Precentor, to which office Mr. Thomas was collated on 1 September 1303'. However, there is no evidence that Abberbury was chancellor of Lichfield cathedral; he must have been the bishop's chancellor. Thus this letter in the *Liber Epistolaris* cannot be dated before 1 September 1303 but could belong to any time before Abberbury's death.¹

Evidence from another extra-register source shows that M. Robert de Weston was Langton's chancellor in December 1317, when he accompanied the bishop on a visitation of the archdeaconry of Coventry. Unfortunately, Weston does not occur in the register, but a man of the same name witnessed an agreement made by Langton on 6 May 1317. If it was the same man on both occasions then Weston may have been in the bishop's employment at least from the earlier date.²

1. Denholm-Young, *Liber Epistolaris*, p. 301, no. 38; Jenkins, *Lichfield Cathedral*, appx. F; Emden, *Oxford*, i, p. 2; *Fasti*, x, p. 9.

2. T. Madox, *Formulare Anglicanum* (London, 1702), pp. 11-12; *CCR* 1313-18, p. 470.

c. THE OFFICIAL.

The official was the senior member of the central diocesan administration and, next to the chancellor and with the exception of the vicar-general whose appointment was temporary and limited by the period of the bishop's absence, he was the most important household officer and the bishop's general deputy, being frequently appointed to *ad hoc* commissions. The official presided in the consistory court, which was usually held in Lichfield cathedral, as the judicial deputy of the bishop, either in person or by commissary, and appeals from this court went directly to the court of the Arches.¹

Only two officials are named in Langton's register, M. Walter de Thorp, D.Cn.L., and M. Philip de Turvill. Both were active in the judiciary of the archbishop of Canterbury: Thorp had left Langton's service by 1303 when he is found as Dean of the Arches and he remained in the Canterbury courts until at least May 1308; Turvill, on the other hand, began his career in the Canterbury courts, being an auditor of causes between 1308 and 1310, prior to entering Langton's service in 1313. Both Thorp and Turvill continued

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), p. 5; Haines, Worcester, pp. 105-6; C. Morris, 'A Consistory Court in the Middle Ages', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 14 (1963), pp. 151-2; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 37.

to hold benefices inside and outside the diocese until their deaths in 1321 and 1337 respectively.¹

Thorp occurs as Langton's official between 15 July 1297 and 28 February 1299 and for much of this time he was also vicar-general.² The earliest mention of Thorp as Langton's official is made retrospectively in a letter dated April 1321 concerning the ordination of the vicarage of Grandborough, Warwicks. This refers to Thorp's agreement, '*tunc officialis nostri*', on 15 July 1297 to a composition which the prior and convent of Ranton, Staffs., to whom the vicarage was appropriated, made with the vicar and to which all parties affixed their seals. At this time Thorp was also acting as vicar-general.³

Thorp is recorded as having received two *ad hoc* commissions as Langton's official after his term as vicar-general had ended. In October 1298 he and the archdeacon of Chester were ordered to institute the vicar of Hartington, Derbys., and in February 1299 he alone was commissioned to inquire into the presentation of Thomas de Charnes to a

1. For Thorp see Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 2222; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Churchill, Canterbury Admin., ii, p. 239; for Turvill see Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 1918; Jenkins, ibid.; Churchill, ibid., i, pp. 10, 562 & n, ii, p. 242.

2. Reg. nos. 1154, 6, 224, 22, 156, 69, 233.

3. Reg. no. 1154.

portion of the church of Condover, Salop.¹ This matter had been complicated by the papal provision of another rector, John de Shelton, in opposition to Charnes. Thorp was to ascertain the merits of the provision and if he established that it should not stand he should admit and induct Charnes, saving to the bishop the later institution. Thorp must have found in Charnes' favour as he is subsequently found as rector of the moiety, paying an annual pension to Shelton in recompense.²

Turvill was appointed as official on 22 November 1313 and is last mentioned in the register on 27 March 1316, but from at least October 1319 he was a resident canon of Lichfield cathedral.³ His commission as official is recorded in the register; he was empowered to hear and determine causes, to inquire into and punish all excesses and crimes, and to suppress *contradictores* and rebels by ecclesiastical censure.⁴ This commission thus complied with the ruling by pope Boniface VIII that the appointment of an official did not empower him to act in

1. Reg. nos. 6, 224, 69.

2. Reg. nos. 77, 327, 416, 938.

3. Reg. nos. 757, 877, 880, 653, 657, 973, 760, 767, 773; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; MRA, no. 571.

4. Reg. no. 757; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 33; for a comparable commission see Haines, Worcester, pp. 331-2.

causes of correction unless a specific grant of such power was made.¹

Turvill also was appointed to a number of *ad hoc* commissions by Langton: in January 1314 he and the archdeacon of Derby were ordered to inquire into the election of the prior of Norton, Cheshire; in March 1314 he was to inquire into reports about the infirmities of the rectors of Baginton, Warwicks., and Wybunbury, Cheshire, and assign suitable coadjutors; later, in March 1316 he himself was appointed coadjutor to the rector of Lillington, Warwicks., who had poor eyesight.² Some commissions concerned the admission of vicars and rectors and show that the authority granted to him varied considerably: in October 1315 he was simply authorised to admit and institute the vicar of Alstonfield, Staffs; but in September 1314 he had been given more extensive powers to examine the presentation of a vicar to Chilvers Coton, Warwicks., approving this if it was lawful, and admitting the presented, ensuring that he should take the oath of residence '*juxta formam constitutionis*', and receive canonical obedience from him, making letters of institution and induction. A similar commission concerning a portion in the church of Wroxeter, Salop, gave

1. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

2. Reg. nos. 877, 653, 880, 773.

Turvill additional powers to institute or deprive,
sequesterate, or grant *in commendam*.¹

1. Reg. nos. 767, 657, 973.

d. THE COMMISSARY-GENERAL AND SEQUESTRATOR-GENERAL.

Although in the later fourteenth century the offices of commissary-general and sequestrator-general were often combined, Langton's register shows that in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield during his episcopate a distinction was made between the two, even though there was some overlap in aspects of their work, particularly with regard to *ad hoc* commissions.¹ The issue is complicated further as the duties of the commissary-general often seem to be indistinguishable from those of the bishop's official. The earliest extant commission of a commissary-general in the diocese occurs at the beginning of bishop Northburgh's episcopate in 1322 when he was authorised to hear and conclude causes of correction and instance, to investigate and correct crimes and excesses, to issue letters dimissory and to do all that pertained to the office; clearly some powers of his office were well-established by this time. This commission was extended in 1325 to include jurisdiction over all cases in the bishop's consistory court at Lichfield, the appointment and removal of apparitors and rural deans, the issue of citations

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959), pp. 8-16; C. Morris, 'The Commissary of the Bishop in the Diocese of Lincoln', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 10 (1959), p. 55.

and power to remove clerks from their benefices.¹

A copy of a letter in Langton's register shows that his commissary-general was a judicial officer. In January 1310 Langton absolved Richard de Leghton, knight, from a sentence of excommunication imposed by the bishop's commissary in the consistory court at Lichfield, '*propter multiplicatas contumacias*', enjoining him to travel to Rome and offer twelve pounds of waxen candles to both the church of St Peter and the church of St Paul there, under pain of 40 marks.²

Evidence from an extra-register source again shows that the commissary-general was a judicial officer; in April 1302 M. Simon de Shirleye, Langton's then commissary-general, pronounced sentence in favour of the abbot and convent of Burton on Trent, Staffs., in a suit brought by them against the rector of Leigh, Staffs., concerning the arrears of a yearly payment due from his church. However, a similar case between Burton abbey and the rector of Ridware Hamstall, Staffs., in May 1293 was heard by the bishop's official and underlines the similarities between

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959), p. 15; Hamilton Thompson, English Clergy, p. 52, n. 1; Haines, Worcester, pp. 129-30; Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 55; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 35; L.J.R.O. ms. B/A 1/3, fos. 1, 13.

2. Reg. no. 935.

his work and that of the commissary-general.¹

On 3 February 1311 the commissary-general was granted testamentary jurisdiction by Langton; M. Geoffrey de Blaston was empowered to receive the probate of wills of deceased persons whose goods were valued under £30, to grant to the executors of the deceased free administration of the goods, to hear the accounts of the executors concerning these goods and to grant and make letters of quittance concerning the accounts rendered by the executors.² It has been questioned whether or not this was merely a personal grant made to Blaston, but as a similar grant made to M. Richard de Norhampton, who was probably the bishop's sequestrator-general at this time, is appended to Blaston's in the register this is doubtful.³ It does seem strange that Langton should grant his commissary-general and sequestrator-general the same testamentary jurisdiction and it does not help to clarify the powers that each officer had; perhaps there had been rival jurisdiction in this field and an agreement was reached whereby each should have an equal share in this aspect of the diocesan administration.

1. Descriptive Catalogue of the Muniments Belonging to the Marquis of Anglesey, ed. I.H. Jeayes (Staffordshire Record Society, 1937), pp. 116, 87.

2. Reg. no. 719.

3. VCH Stafford, iii, p. 35.

The commissary-general and sequestrator-general received similar types of *ad hoc* commission in the register: both instituted rectors and inducted incumbents to benefices; on one occasion either one or the other was ordered to induct the archdeacon of Shrewsbury, and later the sequestrator-general inducted Blaston, who was possibly commissary-general at the time, as archdeacon of Derby; and whilst the sequestrator-general was ordered to visit the priory of Norton, Cheshire, the commissary-general was told to organise the dispersal of five brothers from Haughmond abbey, Salop, to other Augustinian houses in the diocese.¹ Richard de Dolaby, the then sequestrator-general, accompanied Langton on a visitation of the archdeaconry of Coventry in December 1317.²

The sequestrator's main sphere of action is indicated by his title, the custody of sequestrated benefices, although the commissary-general, archdeacons and rural deans were also granted such custodies *ad hoc*.³ Sequestrations

1. Reg. nos. 207, 1047, 342, 395, 1050, 859, 473.

2. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959), p. 15 & n. 77; T. Madox, Formulare Anglicanum (London, 1702), pp. 11-12; Dolaby does not occur in the register.

3. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959), p. 10; for example see reg. nos. 36, 405, 419, 420, 441, 447, 452, 454, 459, 463, 634, 668, 714, 750, 835, 922, 963, 1055, 1056.

fell into one of two categories; benefices were either sequestrated by the bishop as a means of canonical coercion or as a matter of course whenever they fell vacant. It was the duty of whoever was appointed custodian of the sequestrated benefice to ensure that the day to day administration and cure of souls continued as normal. Often Langton granted the custody of a sequestrated benefice to a clerk as a temporary measure, a means of extending his patronage, and instructions were then issued to the sequestrator, or *ad hoc* custodian, to surrender it.¹

A summary of the account of M. William de Swepton, sequestrator for the period 24 November 1297 to 1 November 1298, is given in Langton's register and, although this is damaged, it does show the total of money received by him but there are no details of individual amounts: the sequestrator received £201 2s. 10 3/4d. from which he paid £159 6s. 8d. to the receiver, leaving £41 16s. 2 3/4d. also to be paid to the receiver. Additionally, the sequestrator had the names of those who ought to pay him £93 14s. 2 1/2d. and there were other undetermined amounts from sequestrations which he should be paid by the rural deans [...]; total sum £294 17s. 1 1/4d.²

1. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959), p. 10; for example see reg. nos. 36, 81, 634, 668.

2. Reg. no. 86.

Later Lichfield sequestrators' account rolls for 6 January 1301 to 29 September 1301, two fragments for April 1309 to Michaelmas 1310 and a fragment for 1315 to 1317 give more detailed information about monies received and paid by the sequestrator.¹ The earliest account roll lists visitation receipts under separate headings for the archdeaconries of Coventry, Stafford and Shrewsbury, with those for the archdeaconry of Derby being included in a composite section which has the marginal notation '*correctiones visitaciones*', whilst the archdeaconry of Chester is excluded; probates of wills; synodals and perquisites at Easter term in each deanery in the archdeaconries of Coventry, Shrewsbury, Stafford and Derby, Chester again being excluded by an agreement made with the archdeacon whereby he paid a £20 pension to the bishop which is included in the account; Peter's Pence, synodals and perquisites at Michaelmas term in each deanery of the archdeaconries of Coventry, Shrewsbury and Stafford, with only Peter's Pence and perquisites being given for Derby archdeaconry; money due from the vacant archdeaconry of Stafford; Peter's Pence from prebends; and money from sequestrated

1. L.J.R.O. mss. D30 M4, D30 M9, D30 M5, D30 M7; appx. G; R.N. Swanson, 'Episcopal Income from Spiritualities in Later Medieval England: the Evidence for the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield', Midland History (1988), pp. 13-15.

benefices in all five archdeaconries.¹

This account roll is endorsed '*annus primus*' and Dr. Swanson suggests that this account relates to a period when Langton was not personally responsible for the administration of his see and would thus coincide with the bishop's absence from the diocese begun in January 1301 when he attended the Lincoln parliament and the events which eventually led to his suspension from episcopal office in March 1302.² However, as has been shown elsewhere, Langton remained in charge of the administration of his diocese until about 12 November 1301 when M. Thomas de Abberbury began his second term as vicar-general.³ The endorsement '*annus primus*' is written by a different hand from that of the rest of the account roll and could have been added at any time; Swepton, sequestrator during the period November 1297 to November 1298, whose account is summarised above, must have kept such a roll or rolls which are now lost; perhaps the account roll for 1301 is so endorsed because it is the first extant account roll for the diocese.

The 1301 account roll simply lists the vicarage or church sequestrated in each of the

1. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M4; appx. G.

2. Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 15 & n. 110.

3. See above pp. 141-2; appx. H.

five archdeaconries, giving no dates but only the amount due from each with a sub-total of the receipts.¹ However, from letters in Langton's register it has been possible to determine the dates of the vacancies of some of the benefices: a moiety in the church of Staveley, Derbys., became vacant on 22 December 1300 and a rector was instituted on 9 February 1301, thus for a vacancy of approximately seven weeks the bishop received 21s. 4 1/2d.;² the vicarage of Chesterfield, Derbys., was vacant from 18 December 1300 until a vicar was instituted on 3 February 1301, a total of six weeks five days, for which was received 27s. 10d.;³ whilst the church of Birmingham was vacant from 4 December 1300 until a rector was instituted on 14 February 1301, a total of ten weeks two days, for which was received 12s. 11d.⁴

The visitation receipts on the account roll for 1301 total £321 19s. 7d., more than half of the total of the account of £598 1s. 1 3/4d.⁵ The amounts of the fines vary considerably from 12d. to 60 marks with, unfortunately, no explanations

1. Appx. G, m. 6; Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

2. Reg. nos. 468, 243; appx. G, m. 6.

3. Reg. no. 465; appx. G, m. 6.

4. Reg. nos. 466, 113; appx. G, m. 6.

5. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M4, mm. 1-4; *ibid.*, m. 6d. gives the total of the account as £598 0s. 13 3/4d; appx. G; Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 14 gives the total of the account as £598 13s. 03/4d.

given. Dr. Swanson's suggestion that the 60 marks received from the rector of Uttoxeter, Staffs., might represent a payment due at institution is based on his misreading of an abbreviated marginal entry in Langton's register, '*di' marc*', relating to the institution of John de Hungeford as rector of Uttoxeter in 1306; Hungeford did not owe 60 marks for his institution but half a mark. Other entries in the register confirm that this was the usual fee.¹

The two account roll fragments dating from April 1309 to Michaelmas 1310 show that changes had been made in the way information was recorded by this time:² sequestrations were now listed with the synodalia and perquisites grouped under each archdeaconry, identified by a marginal notation '*sequestr*', and give far more information, including some dates. For example, from the sequestrated vicarage of Walsall, Staffs., which was vacant from 30 April 1309, the bishop's portion was 14s. 5d., but from the church of Wem, Salop, nothing was received because the bishop

1. Appx. G, mm. 1-4; Swanson, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15 & n. 109; for examples of the half-mark fee see reg. nos. 3, 7, 8, 187, 317.

2. L.J.R.O. mss. D30 M9, D30 M5; Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 16, n. 4.

granted the custody to M. John de Sancto Amando.¹

The small fragment of the account roll for 1315-1317 gives similar details to the 1309-1310 fragments. On the dorse of the later fragment are a group of entries recording that nothing was received from certain sequestrated benefices in the archdeaconry of Chester, some of which can be confirmed by letters in Langton's register. Nothing was received from Barthomley church, Cheshire, because Langton had granted the custody to the then rector; letters in the register confirm that custody was granted on 16 August 1315 to William de Praers and he was instituted on 25 October 1315.² Similarly, nothing was received from the church of Hawarden, Flints., because the bishop granted the custody to William de Melton; Langton's register confirms that Melton received custody on 24 May 1315 and he presumably held this until another clerk was granted the church *in commendam* on 6 May 1316.³

Entries on the recto of this account roll show that accounting procedures in 1315-1317

1. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M9, m. 1; reg. no. 701, Walsall was filled on 10 June 1309; for Wem see L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M5, m. 1; Amando's name is supplied by reg. no. 932, he received Wem on 18 December 1309.

2. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M7d; reg nos. 896, 898.

3. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M7d; reg. nos. 897, 904; Melton became archbishop of York on 25 September 1317, HBC, p. 282.

remained virtually unchanged from those used in 1309-1310, except that in two instances the length of the vacancy of sequestrated vicarages was given, although there appear to be errors in both examples. Nevertheless, this may have been an attempt by the Lichfield clerks to emulate the accounting procedures employed in the diocese of Lincoln, discussed below. The 1315-1317 account roll informs us that the vicarage of Alton, Staffs., became vacant on the Friday after the feast of St Mary and remained so until the Monday before the feast of St Gregory [8 March 1316] from which the bishop received nothing because the income was needed to pay the chaplain; however an entry in Langton's register records that a vicar was instituted on 7 March.¹ Secondly, the sequestrated vicarage of Milwich, Staffs., became vacant on the Sunday before the feast of Simon and Judas [26 October 1315] and remained so for fifteen [sic] days, from which the bishop's portion was 8d, but Langton's register records that a vicar was instituted on 7 November 1315, making the length of the vacancy not fifteen days but twelve.²

Comparison of these Lichfield fragments with a fragment of a sequestrator's account from the

1. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M7r; reg. no. 772; Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

2. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M7r; reg. no. 769.

diocese of Lincoln for the year 1314 shows that accounting procedures at Lincoln were far more organised. The Lincoln account gives greater detail about the revenue and expenditure of each church, with the length of each vacancy calculated to the number of days. For example, the church of Loughborough, Leics., was vacant from 28 April until 5 June 1314, for five weeks and three days, during which time 6s. was received for the burial of the rector, 13s. 4d. for candles, and 19s. 10d. for oblations; total 39s. 2d. From this total the chaplain was paid 7s. 8d., wine for masses amounted to 4d. and synodalia 6d.; total 8s. 6d, leaving a difference of 30s. 8d.¹

The amount a prelate received from sequestrated benefices varied considerably but could be greatly increased if the vacancy spanned the autumn to include autumnal fruits. In his discussion of episcopal income from sequestrated benefices in his article 'Episcopal Income from Spiritualities in Later Medieval England...' Dr. Swanson states that autumnal fruits were sold for 46 marks at Penn in 1316-17 and for £13 6s. 8d. at Eyton in 1301. There are errors in both statements; the autumn fruits at Penn, Staffs., amounted to only eighteen marks, and the £13 6s.

1. C. Morris, 'The Commissary of the Bishop in the Diocese of Lincoln', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 10 (1959), p. 54, n. 1; Lincolnshire Archives Office ms. D&C Bi/5/17(2), r.

8d. was not received from Eyton, Salop, but from the vicarage of Acton, Cheshire.¹

THE PERSONNEL.

THE COMMISSARY-GENERALS.

M. Simon de Shirleye occurs as commissary-general on 11 April 1302. He was granted custody of the sequestrated churches of Swarkeston, Derbys., on 26 December 1300 and of Pulford, Cheshire, on 23 August 1301 but whether he was commissary-general at this time we cannot be certain.²

M. Geoffrey de Blaston, occurs as commissary-general on 23 January 1305 and 3 February 1311. He may have held this office from about January 1304 when he or the sequestrator were ordered to induct the archdeacon of Shrewsbury. Blaston was collated archdeacon of Derby on 19 December 1311 and he may then have held both offices concurrently.³

THE SEQUESTRATOR-GENERALS.

M. William de Swepston occurs as sequestrator between 24 November 1297 and 1 November 1298, and again on 5 November 1299.⁴

M. John Pupard occurs as sequestrator on 24 March

1. Swanson, *op. cit.*, p. 14; L.J.R.O. mss. D30 M7r, D30 M4, m. 6; appx. G, m. 6.

2. Reg. nos. 419, 452.

3. Reg. nos. 473, 719, 395, 1050.

4. Reg. nos. 81, 86.

1304, 31 May 1304, 30 April 1306 and on 8 June and 7 December 1307.¹

M. Richard de Norhampton occurs as sequestrator on 4 April 1311, 5 August 1311, 31 August 1311, 18 and 19 December 1311, 14 November 1313 and 5, 9 and 24 June 1314. He was probably in office before 29 April 1310 but he had left by at least 17 December 1317 when Richard de Dolaby is found as sequestrator.² According to Langton's register Norhampton died on 11 June 1319.³

1. Reg. nos. 342, 463; Beardwood, Records, pp. 155, 75, 22.

2. Reg. nos. 859, 634, 1047, 955, 1050, 963, 750, 1055, 1056, 840, 715, 719; T. Madox, Formulare Anglicanum (London, 1702), pp. 11-12.

3. Reg. no. 1008, but see Bodleian Library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 72 where the date of his death is given as May 1318.

III. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DIOCESE DURING THE SEQUESTRATION OF THE SEE, 30 MARCH 1302 - 8 JUNE 1303.

It was most unusual for the pope to suspend a prelate from office but this happened both to Walter Langton and to archbishop Robert Winchelsey during the first decade of the fourteenth century; Langton was suspended from the administration of his diocese from 30 March 1302 until 8 June 1303¹ whilst Winchelsey was suspended from his primacy for almost two years from 12 February 1306 until 22 January 1308.² The administration of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield during the period of Langton's suspension will be considered by comparison with the arrangements made for the subsequent administration of the sequestered see of Canterbury.

When pope Boniface VIII suspended Langton from episcopal office on 30 March 1302 the diocese was governed by three administrators appointed by the pope; Philip de Everdon, M. Elias de Napton, and M. Thomas de Abberbury. Abberbury was

1. CPL, i, pp. 601, 610; MRA, nos. 5, 305; W.E. Lunt, Financial Relations of the Papacy with England to 1327 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939), p. 503 gives the date of Langton's suspension as 8 March 1302; for the background to his suspension see Chapter 3, pp. 328-9.

2. Churchill, Canterbury Admin., pp. 567-8; Reg. Winchelsey, i, pp. xvii, xxiii-xxvii; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 211-247; Smith, Registers, p. 4, n. 10.

Langton's vicar-general when the see was sequestrated and the last recorded letter of his commission is dated 12 April 1302. The first letters of the papal administrators are dated 26 July 1302; Abberbury's commission as vicar-general was thus replaced by that of the papal administrators between these two dates. The commission of the administrators continued until at least 16 June 1303, the date of their last letter.¹ It is not clear who administered the diocese between 17 June and 31 August 1303 as no letters survive in the register for this period; Langton's first letter after his suspension was rescinded is dated at London on 1 September 1303.² We must thus assume that Abberbury resumed his commission as vicar-general until the bishop returned to England.

Everdon, Napton and Abberbury were trusted administrators of bishop Langton. Everdon had been cofferer of the wardrobe during Langton's keepership, was prebendary of Wellington, Salop, having been collated by Langton in February 1299, and was subsequently granted houses in Lichfield cathedral Close by the bishop in June 1300; he

1. Reg. nos. 459, 182, 292, 337.

2. Reg. no. 392; appx. H.

died in November 1304.¹ Napton was archdeacon of Derby and Abberbury was Langton's vicar-general, and probably chancellor, at the time of the sequestration of the see.² The administrators were commissioned to act, under apostolic authority, in all matters spiritual and temporal, except as regards any alienation of their property, and they were ordered to provide sufficient maintenance for their diocesan.³

Thus, from Langton's point of view, Everdon, Napton and Abberbury were well-suited to their appointed task. This was probably not accidental. We might have expected the pope to instruct archbishop Winchelsey to appoint administrators for his suffragan see of Coventry and Lichfield, yet the pope organised these appointments through his own officers. Langton was at the papal court ~~when~~ when he was suspended from episcopal office; thus the method of appointment and choice of the Coventry and Lichfield administrators suggests that the pope was not personally hostile to Langton and that he may have allowed the bishop to choose who was appointed to administer his

1. Book of Prests of the King's Wardrobe for 1294-5, ed. E.B. Fryde (Oxford, 1962), p. 228; reg. nos. 31, 385, 412, 480; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Bodleian Library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 71v.

2. See above pp. 108-9, 141-2, 163-4.

3. MRA, no. 5; CPL, i, p. 601.

diocese. It is thus probable that Langton continued to have influence over whom the administrators presented to benefices in his patronage.¹ By contrast, during archbishop Winchelsey's suspension, pope Clement V appointed papal agents as administrators of the spiritualities and, eventually, of the temporalities of the see of Canterbury, after agreement had been reached with Edward I; William Testa, archdeacon of Aran and papal collector of taxes, and William Geraud de Sore, canon of Rouen, papal chaplain. Geraud was later replaced by Peter Amauvin, canon of Bordeaux, papal chaplain.² For the benefit of their future careers Everdon, Napton and Abberbury would have been careful not to harm their diocesan by exploiting the revenues of the bishopric for personal or papal profit; such considerations would not have restricted Testa and his colleagues with regard to the revenues of the see of Canterbury.

By virtue of Langton's suspension the see of Coventry and Lichfield was, theoretically, vacant, but despite the crown's claim to the temporal revenues of vacant sees Edward I appears to have accepted that the temporalities of the diocese

1. Appx. H; reg. nos. 391, 460.

2. Churchill, Canterbury Admin., p. 568; Reg. Winchelsey, i, p. xxv; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 239-41; F.M. Powicke, The Thirteenth Century, 1216-1307, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1962), p. 718.

should be managed by the papal administrators; there is no record of the king appointing his own keeper of the temporalities.¹ When Winchelsey was suspended from office in 1306 Clement V appointed none other than Walter Langton to administer the temporalities of Canterbury. However, on this occasion the king was unwilling to accept the appointment of anyone, even his treasurer, deputed by the pope to administer temporalities in his realm and he initially committed the custody of the temporalities of the see of Canterbury to Humphrey de Waledon. Edward eventually conceded that the temporalities should be administered by Testa and his colleague in March 1307. The king probably granted the temporalities of both Coventry and Lichfield and Canterbury to the pope in order to foster good Anglo-papal relations, especially with regard to taxes.²

Although the evidence is sparse, consideration of the changes known to have been made to the Canterbury administrative personnel by the papal administrators at the time of the sequestration may shed light upon this aspect of the activities of the administrators in the

1. M. Howell, Regalian Right in Medieval England (London, 1962), p. 1; Lunt, *op. cit.*, p. 503; CCR 1296-1302, p. 603; Denton, Winchelsey, p. 240, n. 247.

2. Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 240-2; Lunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 369, 503-4; CFR 1272-1307, pp. 538, 542, 543.

diocese of Coventry and Lichfield. When Testa and Geraud took charge of the see of Canterbury the official and the Dean of the Arches gave up their seals of office and a new commissary-general and official were appointed. The administrators ordered a new seal for their use with the legend '*Sigillum administratorum spiritualium Cant' per dominum papam deputatorum*'.¹ The evidence from the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield suggests that the commission of the vicar-general, at least, lapsed during the period of sequestration and that the administrators assumed a comparable role. Abberbury probably continued to act as chancellor but as the administrators had full authority over all matters spiritual and temporal they may have assumed the roles of some of the other diocesan officers, such as that of the commissary-general and the official. However, the register affords no evidence for this. Thus they too may have made new appointments to key positions in the central diocesan administration or, more probably, may have simply re-commissioned the resident officers to act for them. The evidence from Canterbury suggests that the Coventry and Lichfield administrators would also have had a new seal made for their use.

The register of archbishop Winchelsey shows

1. Reg. Winchelsey, i, p. xxv.

no positive evidence of his suspension and does not record the acts of the administrators. Fortunately, presentations made by the prior and chapter of Christ Church, Canterbury, to the administrators are recorded in the prior's register.¹ The administrators of Coventry and Lichfield, by contrast, recorded the business transacted by them in the relevant sections of Langton's register, between similar business carried out prior to, and after, the sequestration of the see. The administrators are mentioned only fourteen times in the register, which seems rather surprising given the fact that they were active in the diocese for a period of about fourteen months; by comparison, Thomas de Abberbury in his second documented commission as vicar-general, between 12 November 1301 and 12 April 1302, is recorded as acting in this capacity eighteen times.²

The administrators seem to have acted with an authority comparable to that of a vicar-general. They thus commissioned John Halton, bishop of Carlisle, to celebrate the ordination service held at Derby on 22 September 1302.³ Presumably other sacramental duties would have been performed by either bishop Halton or by a suffragan bishop

1. Churchill, Canterbury Admin., pp. 568-9; Smith, Registers, p. 4.

2. See above, p. 142, n. 1.

3. Reg. no. 1288.

appointed for the task.

Of the fourteen entries documenting the activities of the administrators in the register thirteen are of a routine nature; eight institutions of rectors, two grants of custodies of churches, one admission to and one grant of the mastership of hospitals, the grant of a prebend and one ordination service.¹ Two contemporary bishops' registers show that the administrators also issued letters dimissory to candidates for orders; Hugh de Roucestre, was ordained acolyte by bishop Halton at the service held in Carlisle cathedral on 1 June 1303 and William de Stretton was ordained priest by bishop Gainsborough of Worcester at Bromsgrove parish church on 23 December 1303.²

Two grants of benefices in the bishop's patronage were made by the administrators; a prebend in the college of St Chad, Shrewsbury, and the custody of the hospital of St Andrew, Denhall, Cheshire.³ During vacancies of the see the king exercised the right of presentation, but not

1. Reg. nos. 125, 126, 127, 182, 183, 186, 251, 252, 292, 337, 391, 460, 461, 1288.

2. Reg. Halton, i, p. 186; The Register of Bishop William Gainsborough, 1303 to 1307, ed. J.W. Willis Bund (Worcestershire Historical Society, 1907), p. 126.

3. Reg. nos. 391, 460; VCH Shropshire, ii, p. 115; VCH Chester, iii, p. 185; St Chad's was in the bishop's collation, see reg. no. 923.

collation, to St Chad's, Shrewsbury;¹ the bishop's patronage may thus have passed to the administrators for the duration of the sequestration. Langton was in England when these two grants were made on 15 August 1302 and, presumably, he remained in contact with his diocese throughout his suspension from episcopal office.² It is thus probable that the bishop retained his influence over who was presented to benefices in his patronage, especially when we consider that the clerk who received St Chad's, Richard Abel, was only ten years of age and was the son of John Abel, escheator south of Trent,³ whilst M. Simon de Shirleye, who received the mastership of Denhall, was the bishop's commissary-general.⁴

Three of the institutions and the remaining letter to be considered are most interesting as they shed light upon the administrators' activities and the extent of their authority. Of these, entry no. 183 is the most important as it shows that Thomas de Abberbury considered the

1. J. H. Denton, English Royal Free Chapels, 1100-1300 (Manchester, 1970), p. 122, n. 2.

2. Appx. H.

3. Reg. no. 391; Emden, Oxford, i, p. 3; VCH Shropshire, ii, p. 115; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

4. Reg. no. 460; VCH Chester, iii, p. 185; CPL, ii, p. 70.

matter in question too grave for him to make a sole decision. The letter commences as a normal record of an institution; M. William de Rodyerd was instituted to the church of Grappenhall, Cheshire, on 9 October 1301. The letter then continues, written contemporaneously and by the same hand, noting that on 17 December 1302 William went personally to Steeple Aston, Oxon., where Abberbury held a manor, and sought letters dimissory from the administrator to enable him to be ordained to the priesthood. However, Abberbury denied William's request as one year had lapsed during which he should have been ordained to the priesthood and because his fellow administrators, '*college sui*', were not there to be consulted. William appealed against this decision. The register does not record whether or not William did receive letters dimissory or was ordained to the priesthood, but he remained as rector of Grappenhall until he resigned his benefice on 19 October 1311.¹

Thus, Abberbury considered that William's request, complicated by a breach of canon law, merited a collective decision by the administrators. However, the administrators did

1. Churchill, Canterbury Admin., p. 55 & n. 2, p. 296, the Council of Lyons II, 1274, required those who received a benefice with cure of souls to be ordained to the priesthood within one year; reg. no. 870.

act independently of one another in more routine matters. The earliest of their documented acts, three institutions of rectors, were performed on the same day, 26 July 1302, in two different locations; Banbury, Oxon., (nos. 182 and 292) and Lichfield (no. 337). It is probable that it was Thomas de Abberbury, from nearby Adderbury, Oxon., with his manor not too great a distance away, who was at Banbury on that day, and that either Philip de Everdon or Elias de Napton, or both, remained in Lichfield.

The letters of the administrators show that they did not always remain in the diocese. Besides being at Lichfield and Banbury on 26 July 1302 and at Steeple Aston on 17 December 1302, some of the administrators were at York on 3 and 23 October 1302 (nos. 251 and 461); at Haughmond, Salop, on 19 March 1303 (no. 252); at Southam, Warwicks., on 12 April 1303 (no. 126); at Abingdon, Oxon., on 22 April 1303 (no. 127); and again at Lichfield on 15 August 1302 (nos. 391 and 460), 13 March 1303 (no. 125) and 16 June 1303 (no. 186).

Most of the letters documenting the acts of the administrators refer to them anonymously as '*administratores episcopatus*',¹ or as '*custodes episcopatus deputatos per sedem apostolicam*'.²

1. Reg. nos. 125, 127, 251, 252.

2. Reg. nos. 337, 292, 182.

Only one letter (no. 186) names Philip de Everdon and Elias de Napton as '*Coventr' et Lich' episcopatus administratores per sedem apostolicam tunc temporis deputatos*'. It is interesting that letters in the register of the prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, refer to the Canterbury administrators in similar terms, as '*administratoribus spiritualitatis archiepiscopatus Cantuariensis per summum pontificem deputatis*'.¹

1. Churchill, Canterbury Admin., p. 568.

3. WALTER LANGTON.

I. LANGTON'S FAMILY BACKGROUND.

Langton's paternity has, until the present study of his register was undertaken, remained obscure; historians have reiterated that he began life as a poor clerk, that from his youth he was in Edward I's service, and that, although his brother was Sir Robert Peverel, knight, and his heir was Robert's son, Edmund Peverel, his connections with this knightly family were far from clear.¹

Langton's register clarifies the bishop's connections with the Peverel families of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and shows that he was a Peverel by birth. Copies of charters preserved in his register, by which Langton granted land and the advowson of the church of Adlingfleet, Yorks., to Selby abbey, clearly state his paternity; Langton names himself as the son and heir of Simon Peverel.² Verification of this is found in a fourteenth-century abbatial register of Selby abbey recording the subsequent dispute over the patronage of the church. This very

1. K. Edwards, 'The Social Origins and Provenance of the English Bishops during the Reign of Edward II', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 5th series, 9 (1959), pp. 62-3; DNB, xi, p. 570; Tout, Chapters, ii, p. 15 & n. 2; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 6, 38; VCH Leicester, v, p. 206; The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough, ed. H. Rothwell (Camden, 3rd series, 89, 1957), p. 382.

2. Reg. nos. 1291, 1292, 1293.

interesting account records Langton's acquisition of the advowson of Adlingfleet and also illustrates the fluidity of names in this period: Sir John Lovetot, knight, enfeoffed Simon Peverel of Langton with the advowson of Adlingfleet; he, as Simon Peverel of Ashley, enfeoffed the advowson on bishop Langton. After Peverel's death, Langton, his son and heir, transferred the advowson *in mortmain* to Selby abbey.¹ Bishop Langton also had connections with Ashley, Northants., holding land there until his death.²

Surnames in this period which include a place-name usually indicate the bearer's birthplace.³ Thus, Langton's surname is a toponymic and a substitute for Peverel; he is said to have been born at West Langton or Church Langton, Leics.,⁴ but he may have been born in any

1. BL Cotton ms. Vit. E. xvi, fos. 107v-108, 111; I wish to thank Dr. R.N. Swanson for this reference.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 33; PRO, Feet of Fines (CP 25/1), 175/56, no. 274; ibid., 175/57, no. 329; CPR 1281-92, pp. 388, 477; PRO, Inquisitions ad quod damnum (C 143), 17,17; ibid., 14/4; Cal Charter Rolls 1257-1300, p. 481; ibid., 1300-26, p. 77; Cal. Inq. P. M., vi, p. 196.

3. D. Robinson, Beneficed Clergy in Cleveland and the East Riding 1306-1340 (St Anthony's Press, York, 1969), p. 15, n. 50.

4. DNB, xi, p. 570; VCH Leicester, v, pp. 193, 195; J. Nichols, The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester (London, 1798), II, ii, p. 674; J.H. Hill, The History of Langton (Leicester, 1867), p. 15; Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 6.

of the five Langton villages prefixed by East, West, Church, Thorpe and Tur, and known collectively as the 'Langtons', which lie in close proximity to one another some four miles north of Market Harborough. Langton had connections with the Langton villages until his death. By Easter 1290 he was the principal tenant of the Basset fee in Langton and Thorpe Langton obtaining from Richard de Pydyngtone all the lands and tenements Pydyngtone had received there by hereditary right on the death of Ralph Peverel, his kinsman. For this Langton undertook to pay a peppercorn rent of 1d. *per annum* for the remainder of Pydyngtone's life.¹ The same year Pydyngtone also granted Langton one messuage, one mill, two carucates of land, sixteen acres of parkland, fifteen acres of wood, 102s. rent and half the advowson of the church in Ashley, Northants., a village about four miles from the Langton villages, for an annual rent of £10 for Pydyngtone's life. Pydyngtone's chancery recognizance to Langton for £200 made in May 1290 may have been surety for these grants.² In 1293 Langton received, for himself and his

1. VCH Leicester, v, p. 206; Leicestershire Record Office, George Farnham's Manuscript Notes on Leicestershire Villages; PRO, De Banco Roll (CP 40), 82, Easter 18 Edward I, m. 104.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 33; PRO, Feet of Fines (CP 25/1), 175/56, no. 274; CPR 1288-96, p. 126, Beardwood, ibid., states, incorrectly, p. 128 as this reference.

heirs, a quarter of a knight's fee in Thorpe Langton by grant of William Burdet of Lowesby, for which Langton gave Burdet £20 sterling; in 1309 seisin of this was granted to another by Edward II.¹ In 1300 and 1306 the bishop received grant of free warren in all his demesne lands including those of Langton and Thorpe Langton.² Langton's mother, Amicia Peverel, was buried at Langton which suggests that the bishop may indeed have been born in one of the Langton villages,³ and Langton's bequest in his will of his breviary or service book to the church of Langton supports this theory.⁴ Obviously the prefix of the Langton villages was deemed to be largely unimportant. Bishop Langton did, however, hold three acres of land in Church Langton at his death and this may indicate his place of birth.⁵

The date of Simon Peverel's death is uncertain, and, as the copies of Langton's charters in his register are undated, the only indication of a date for his death is that it

1. Leicestershire Record Office, Farnham's Manuscript Notes; PRO, Feet of Fines (CP 25/1), 123/39, no. 203; Cal. Inq. P.M., iv, p. 260; VCH Leicester, v, p. 206; CCR 1307-13, p. 101.

2. VCH Leicester, v, p. 206; Cal. Charter Rolls 1257-1300, p. 481; ibid. 1300-1326, p. 77.

3. Reg. Sutton, vi, p. 8.

4. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 39, 40.

5. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Cal. Inq. P.M., vi, p. 196.

occurred prior to November 1304 when Selby abbey undertook to buy the advowson of Adlingfleet.¹ Langton's mother, Amicia Peverel, died before 26 June 1297.²

Robert Peverel is referred to in Langton's register as the bishop's brother, his '*frater*' and his '*germanus*', suggesting that they were full brothers, having the same mother and father.³ As Langton was Simon Peverel's heir this further shows that Robert Peverel was the bishop's younger brother. An interesting connection between Robert Peverel and the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield occurs early in Langton's episcopate. Peverel was the patron of M. Ralph de Leycestria and presented him to the church of Church Brampton, Northants., in March 1297. Leycestria may also have held the church of Southam, Warwicks., in 1297 and was Langton's vicar-general in 1312-13; he may thus have come to Langton's attention and joined his diocesan administration through his patron, Peverel.⁴

1. See below, pp. 330-2.

2. Reg. Sutton, vi, p. 8.

3. Reg. nos. 67, 68; see also Beardwood, Records, pp. 283-4 where Peverel is called '*frer le dit Evesque...*'.

4. Reg. Sutton, ii, p. 138; J. Bridges, The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire, ed. P. Whalley, 2 vols. (1791), i, p. 490. Emden, Oxford, ii, p. 1141; CPR 1292-1301, p. 283; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

The relationship between Langton and Peverel, as brothers, appears to have been close; Peverel was Langton's attorney in 1312 and is referred to as his 'familiar' or 'abrocour'.¹ Langton transferred Castle Ashby and Brington, Northants., to his brother by 1316.² After Edward I's death, Langton, anticipating Edward II's actions that led to his arrest, ordered his clerk John Langton to disperse some of his treasure; 1000 marks was left at Robert Peverel's house in Northampton until this was redistributed.³ Peverel was indicted for murder in 1307 and was protected by Langton until the bishop's own arrest later that year, when it was said that Peverel fled the country with some of the bishop's treasure. Peverel was, however, in Northampton castle jail in 1310 but was obviously pardoned by May 1312 when he was acting as Langton's attorney; in 1311 Peverel's wife, Alice, petitioned the king which may have been a preliminary to a pardon.⁴ Peverel was probably murdered at Castle Ashby, Northants., by 1317 but another Robert Peverel was alive in

1. CPR 1307-13, p. 458; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 38; Beardwood, Records, p. 304.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 38 & n. 2; Bridges, *op. cit.*, i, p. 472.

3. Beardwood, Records, p. 243; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 25.

4. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 38; CPR 1307-13, p. 458; CChW 1244-1326, p. 379.

August 1320. Langton's brother was dead, however, by the time of the bishop's own death in November 1321, as Edmund, Robert Peverel's son, was his heir.¹

It has been suggested that Alice Peverel, Robert's wife, may have been Langton's sister.² This, however, would make Robert the bishop's brother-in-law whilst the letters copied into Langton's register suggest they were full brothers. Alice was still alive when Langton died in 1321 and his heir was Alice's son, Edmund; if Alice had been the bishop's sister she would have been his heir unless all the lands in question were entailed on male heirs only.³ Edmund was a minor, aged fourteen or fifteen years, when Langton died and in July 1322 Alice, as the 'nearest' of Edmund, received custody of the lands which the bishop held.⁴ Edmund was his father's heir as well as Langton's. Later, in February 1323, the lands of both Robert Peverel and Langton were granted to Robert de Insula, during Edmund's

1. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 38; CPR 1317-21, pp. 176, 539; Cal. Inq. P.M., vi, pp. 194-7.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 38; VCH Leicester, v, p. 206.

3. F. Pollock, F.W. Maitland, The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I, 2nd edn., 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1952), ii, p. 17.

4. Cal. Inq. P.M., vi, pp. 194-7; CCR 1318-23, p. 569.

minority.¹ Langton's will does not stipulate that Edmund Peverel was to be his heir;² this suggests that, unless the lands were entailed on male heirs, the normal laws of inheritance applied. Thus Alice would have been Langton's sister-in-law.

Langton had two nephews, Walter and Robert de Clipston, sons of Robert de Clipston, who, it has been suggested, may have been married to a sister of the bishop.³ The family came from Clipston, Northants., a village about eight miles from the Langton villages in Leicestershire.⁴ In October 1298 bishop Langton was licensed by Henry Newark, archbishop of York, to ordain Walter and Robert, then aged about seven and five years respectively, to all minor orders. Later, in June 1303, Langton received faculty to grant dispensation to his Clipston nephews to hold a benefice each and before 1308 he paid for them to study in Paris.⁵

Walter de Clipston was a Master when he died

1. CPR 1321-4, p. 237; Cal. Inq. P.M., vi, p. 187.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 39-40.

3. CPL, i, p. 611; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 38; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

4. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

5. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 27, 38; Reg. Romeyn, ii, p. 248; CPL, i, p. 611; Beardwood, Records, pp. 185-6.

on 21 December 1310, aged about 20 years.¹ In January 1304 Langton collated him prebendary of Tarvin, Cheshire, and it was, presumably, as prebendary that he occupied a house in the cathedral Close at Lichfield.² Clipston presented Nicholas de Blaston to the prebendal vicarage of Tarvin in September 1308. Nicholas may have been related to M. Geoffrey de Blaston, who succeeded Clipston in his prebend in 1311, and was later archdeacon of Derby and one of the leading administrators in the diocese.³ Clipston was rector of Croston, Lancs., from about 1303, a benefice which Langton himself had held during his early career.⁴ He was also prebendary of Buckland Dinham in the diocese of Bath and Wells.⁵

Walter's brother Robert had a long career in the diocese and died about 1356, aged approximately 63 years.⁶ His career can be

1. Reg. no. 851; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Calendar of the Register of John de Drokenesford, Bishop of Bath and Wells (A.D. 1309-1329), ed. E. Hobhouse (Somerset Record Society, 1, 1887), p. 37; Fasti, viii, p. 20.

2. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Fasti, x, p. 59 & n.; reg. nos. 396, 803.

3. Reg. no. 547.

4. Reg. no. 851; Jenkins., Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 38, n. 12; CPL, i, pp. 519, 525, 529, 550; Beardwood, Records, pp. 47 & n. 2, 153, 154.

5. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Fasti, viii, p. 20; Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

6. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

documented from June 1305 when Langton collated him, as his familiar clerk, to the prebend of Flixton which he held until September 1305 when he received the unidentified prebend vacated by John Langton's consecration as bishop of Chichester. He then held the prebend of Stotfold from September 1312 until he was collated to the prebend of Handsacre in March 1313, which he held until 1356. In October 1313 he was collated prebendary of St John's, Chester, and in February 1314 he received the prebend of Gnosall, both of which he also held until his death.¹ He was rector of St Mary's, Chester, and Penn, Staffs., from April 1314 and October 1315 respectively. Clipston's uncle, Robert Peverel, presented him to Church Brampton, Northants., in December 1314, whilst Langton presented him to the church of Brington, Northants., in January 1315, before he transferred the advowson to Robert Peverel.² He succeeded his brother as prebendary of Buckland Dinham.³ Custody of the hospital of St Leonard, York, was granted to Clipston on 30 January 1318 at the request of Langton, following the bishop's resignation as keeper. The custody was granted for

1. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; reg. nos. 482, 485, 739, 741, 874, 748.

2. Bridges, *op. cit.*, pp. 490, 473; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; reg. nos. 885, 768; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 38.

3. Fasti, viii, p. 20; Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

life on 24 February 1318 but was revoked by Edward II in August on the grounds that Clipston was inefficient and unfit to govern the hospital.¹ Clipston received a licence to study for seven years in April 1314, but is rarely called Master.² He did, however, progress through the orders to the priesthood, being ordained a deacon in December 1316 and a priest in April 1317.³

Ties of kinship between Walter Langton and John Langton, chancellor of Edward I 1292-1302 and bishop of Chichester 1305-37, have been suggested by Dr. Edwards in her study of the social origins and provenance of English bishops, whereas Dr. Beardwood in her study of Walter Langton concludes that they were probably not related; the name John Langton is fairly common in contemporary records and it is difficult to determine whether any were the future chancellor and bishop of Chichester.⁴ It is thus necessary to review the relevant evidence. In October 1286 an agreement was reached between a John de Langton, clerk, plaintiff, and M. John de Kyrkeston, defendant, concerning one

1. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; CPR 1317-21, pp. 75, 197, 105, 196; CChW 1244-1326, p. 501.

2. Reg. no. 885; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

3. Reg. nos. 1316, 1317.

4. Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-4; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 39; HBC, pp. 85-6, 239.

messuage and one virgate of land in West Langton, Leics.;¹ in 1287 an Inquisition *ad quod damnum* found that there would be no damage caused to any person if a John de Langton, king's clerk, was to enclose a certain road lying within his court at West Langton;² from 20 April 1290 a John de Langton held half a knight's fee in West Langton;³ and in 1294 a John de Langton was described as brother of a Walter de Langton.⁴ Were these John Langtons one and the same? If so, was he also the future bishop of Chichester? It was obviously another John de Langton, clerk, who accompanied the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield to the papal court in the autumn of 1305; if this John had been the then bishop of Chichester he would surely have been accorded this title on the Patent Rolls.⁵ This John was probably the rector of Langton, Leics., and familiar clerk of bishop Walter Langton who worked closely with William de Eston,

1. Leicestershire Record Office, Farnham's Manuscript Notes; PRO, Feet of Fines (CP 25/1), 123/37, no. 155.

2. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 64 & n. 3; PRO, Inquisitions *ad quod damnum* (C 143), 11, 3; CPR 1281-92, p. 334.

3. Leicestershire Record Office, Farnham's Manuscript Notes, quoting PRO, De Banco Roll (CP 40), 37, Michaelmas 18 Edward I; this roll is badly damaged and I have been unable to locate this reference; Cal. Inq. P.M., iii, pp. 20, 22.

4. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 39.

5. CPR 1301-7, p. 387.

another of the bishop's trusted clerks.¹ A John de Langeton, rector of Finmere, Oxon., was ordained to the priesthood by letters dimissory of the diocese of Lincoln by Langton in June 1300 but, although the bishop held the manor of Finmere until 1300 or 1301, there is no evidence that this John was his familiar clerk.² After Edward I's death, and in anticipation of Edward II's actions, Langton ordered John to distribute 3000 marks from his treasure. Orders for John's arrest were issued on 27 September 1307 and much of the money he had dispersed had been recovered by 7 October.³ This same John de Langton, clerk, was probably the bishop's attorney in May 1312, acting with Robert Peverel.⁴ He was probably also one of the executors of Walter Langton's will; if the executor had been the bishop of Chichester we would again expect him to have been named as such, especially as another executor, M. Gilbert de

1. Beardwood, Records, pp. 17, 18, 27, 75, 95, 113, 125, 126, 129, 132, 147-8, 170, 174, 184, 190, 193, 237, 243.

2. Reg. no. 1285; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 19-20, 33.

3. Beardwood, Records, p. 243; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 11, 25.

4. CPR 1307-13, p. 458.

Bruera, is described as 'canon of Lichfield'.¹

Although there is no firm evidence, it is possible that there were ties of kinship between John Langton, the chancellor and bishop of Chichester, and Walter Langton, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. The chancellor seems to have spent his early career in the royal household, as did Walter Langton; on his appointment as chancellor in 1292 John Langton was described as a simple clerk of chancery;² this would tie in with the evidence previously cited for the king's clerk enclosing a road in West Langton in 1287. Ties of kinship were important in the recruitment of clerks in the royal administration, when appointments were often made by personal recommendation.³ The same was surely true of ecclesiastical preferments; Walter Langton was succeeded in his prebend of Fridaythorp at York by John Langton, the chancellor, on 3 December 1296

1. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 64; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 39, 40; CCR 1288-96, p. 316; CCR 1296-1302, p. 478; Langton's executor may have been the same John de Langton, clerk, who granted land *in mortmain* to bishop Langton in 1321, CPR 1321-4, p. 12; PRO, Inquisitions ad quod damnum (C 143), 149, 13; The Register of Thomas Cobham, Bishop of Worcester, 1317-1327, ed. E.H. Pearce (Worcestershire Historical Society, 40, 1930), p. 104.

2. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 62; 'Annales Dunstaplia' in Annales Monastici, ed. H.R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1864-9), iii, p. 373.

3. J.L. Grassi, 'Royal Clerks from the Archdiocese of York in the Fourteenth Century', Northern History, 5 (1970), p. 15.

and he held this until he became bishop of Chichester in 1305.¹ Moreover, Walter Langton collated his nephew Robert de Clipston to the prebend which John Langton held at Lichfield the day following his consecration as bishop of Chichester on 19 September 1305.² If there were ties of kinship between the two bishops it is possible that Walter Langton decided to collate another kinsman to this prebend.

1. Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 64 & n. 2; Reg. Romeyn, ii, p. 12 & n. 1, p. 219 & n. 1; CPR 1292-1301, p. 223; CPR 1301-7, p. 378.

2. Reg. no. 485.

II. LANGTON'S EARLY CAREER.

Langton's secular career in the government of Edward I, culminating in his appointment as treasurer of the exchequer on 28 September 1295, has been documented by Professor Tout in his study of the administrative history of medieval England;¹ only a brief resume is thus required. From his youth Langton had been in Edward's household and may have accompanied him on crusade. He became clerk to Thomas Gunneys, controller of the wardrobe from 1272-1283, and continued in service as a wardrobe clerk, being appointed cofferer from at least 1 July 1288, controller from May 1290 and keeper from 20 November 1290 until his appointment as treasurer in 1295.² At some time during his early career Langton was clerk to Robert Burnell, bishop of Bath and Wells, chancellor of the exchequer.³ Langton served as treasurer until he was removed from office by Edward II, probably ceasing to act on 19 July 1307

1. Tout, Chapters, ii; HBC, p. 104; CPR 1292-1301, p. 149.

2. Tout Chapters, ii, pp. 15-16, 17-18; Foedera, i, p. 596; HBC, pp. 79, 104; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 6.

3. PRO, Ancient Correspondence (SC 1), 23/4, is undated; ibid., 24/202i names Burnell's clerk only as 'de Langeton' and is dated 23 February, with no year given, but according to List of Ancient Correspondence (PRO, Lists and Indexes, xv), p. 376, this letter is from John de Langeton and is dated 1292; HBC, pp. 79, 85; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 6, states Langton was Burnell's clerk before 1282.

but remaining formally in office until 22 August. Finally restored to the king's favour, Langton was formally pardoned on 22 January 1312 and the following day was re-appointed as treasurer 'until the next parliament'. His appointment was renewed on 14 March although he was soon prevented from acting as treasurer by the Ordainers. He was removed from office before 17 May 1312 and held no formal government office again.¹

Langton's career was, until 1307, thus 'typical of the orderly advancement of the successful official of Edward I's reign'.² Also typical of the favoured king's clerk was Langton's accumulation of ecclesiastical benefices, the normal means of remuneration for servants of the crown and diocesan officers.³ Langton has been criticised for being non-resident in his benefices.⁴ He would, however, have had to provide a suitable deputy to serve each benefice with cure of souls. Professor Tout has attributed one benefice, the deanery of St Martin le Grand,

1. HBC, p. 104; CPR 1307-13, pp. 412, 413; CCR 1307-13, p. 395; CPR 1307-13, pp. 440, 459; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 50-1, 266; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 10, 14.

2. Tout, Chapters, ii, pp. 17-18.

3. Haines, Worcester, pp. 90-1; Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), p. 8; A. Hamilton Thompson, 'The College of St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth, with some account of its Deans and Prebendaries', Archaeological Journal, 84 (1927), p. 8.

4. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 8.

London, to Langton in error; M. William of Louth (de Luda) was dean.¹

Langton's ecclesiastical preferments have been listed by Dr. Beardwood in her study of the bishop and by Professor Hamilton Thompson in his study of the college of St Mary Magdalen, Bridgnorth.² However, in a number of cases their work is open to revision; thus for clarity Langton's benefices will be given again in approximate chronological order.

Professor Hamilton Thompson has given Langton's earliest benefice as the church of Askham Richard, Yorks., which he maintains Langton held from August 1286. This, however, appears not to have been the case; a Walter Langton was rector of this church from October 1268 until August 1319, when he died. The rector of Askham Richard thus must be distinguished from the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield.³

Langton's first documented benefice was St Michael on Wyre, Lancs., which he held before 13 December 1289 when he received papal dispensation

1. Tout, Chapters, ii, p. 15, n. 1; CCR 1279-88, p. 230; VCH London, i, p. 564.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 8-9; Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-9.

3. Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 67; K. Edwards, 'The Social Origins and Provenance of the English Bishops during the Reign of Edward II', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, 9 (1959), p. 62, n. 4; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 39.

to hold an additional benefice.¹ This second benefice was probably Croston, Lancs., as a second papal dispensation dated 10 October 1290 states that he obtained St Michael on Wyre and Croston by an earlier dispensation. He must have received Croston before 4 April 1290, the date of his institution as rector of Nether Wallop, Hants., as the dispensation in October 1290 states he accepted Nether Wallop after Croston.² On 9 June 1290 Langton was presented to the prebend of West Thurrock, Essex, in the royal chapel of Hastings, by John de Britannia, the king's nephew, who had custody of the lands of the late Bartholomew de Brianzon.³ Langton's papal dispensation in October 1290 allowed him to retain St Michael on Wyre, Croston and West Thurrock, resigning Nether Wallop. However, on 16 April 1291 Langton was granted a licence to farm Nether Wallop for five years by his diocesan, but he had vacated this church by 28 June 1292 when M. Nicholas de Lovetot was instituted.⁴ On 13 February 1291 Langton was

1. CPL, i, p. 508.

2. CPL, i, p. 519; VCH Lancaster, vi, p. 87; Registrum Johannis de Pontissara, Episcopi Wintoniensis, A.D. MCCLXXXII-MCCCIV, ed. C. Deedes, 2 vols. (Canterbury and York Society, 19, 30, 1915-24), i, p. 37; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9.

3. CPR 1281-92, p. 362.

4. Deedes, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 47, 55; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9 implies that Langton resigned Nether Wallop in October 1295.

granted a papal indult to retain St Michael on Wyre and Croston for five years without residing or being ordained to the priesthood, the churches being served by vicars.¹

After Langton's appointment as controller and keeper of the wardrobe in May and November 1290 respectively he acquired more benefices. By November 1290 he was rector of Hillingdon, Middx., a church conceded to the bishops of Worcester by the abbot and convent of Evesham for the loss of episcopal jurisdiction in the Vale of Evesham.² Langton was presented by the king to the treasurership of Llandaff cathedral on 18 September 1290 and to the deanery of the royal chapel of Bridgnorth, Salop, on 20 December 1290.³ The dean's prebend at Bridgnorth consisted of the church of Claverley, with the manor of Ludstone and various tithes, and the churches or chapels of Quatford and Bobbington.⁴ On 28 November 1296, when bishop-elect of Coventry and Lichfield, Langton received a royal grant to retain

1. CPL, i, p. 525.

2. Episcopal Registers, Diocese of Worcester: Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard, September 23rd 1268 to August 15th 1301, ed. J.W. Willis Bund, 2 vols. (Worcestershire Historical Society, 15, 1898-1902), ii, p. 387; Haines, Worcester, pp. 17, n. 1, 143; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9; Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-8.

3. CPR 1281-92, pp. 387, 410; Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 67; VCH Shropshire, ii, p. 128.

4. Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Bridgnorth for five years, provided he obtained papal dispensation. However, Amadeus of Savoy succeeded him as dean on 8 April 1298.¹ It may have been in order to receive Bridgnorth that Langton resigned as dean of the royal collegiate church of St Michael, Tettenhall, Staffs., before 16 January 1291 when the king appointed another dean.² According to the *Taxatio*, Langton was one of four portionaries of Darlington church, Co. Durham, in 1291, but there appears to be no other record of this appointment. It is interesting to note that a fellow portionary, John de Metyngham, was a king's clerk and royal justice and later received Langton's fealty, as bishop-elect, to Edward I.³ On 25 November 1291 Langton acquired the York prebend of Fridaythorp, which he resigned prior to 3 December 1296.⁴ By 12 February 1292 he had obtained the churches of Kirkoswald, Cumberland, Bolden, Co. Durham, Wimpole and Rampton, Cambs., Wickham, Kent, and Rothing in London when he received papal dispensation to hold

1. CPR 1292-1301, pp. 230, 339; VCH Shropshire, ii, p. 128; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9.

2. CPR 1281-92, p. 416; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 320; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9.

3. Taxatio, pp. 315-6; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9, n. 65, has taken this reference to mean that Langton may have held Auckland from 1291; CPR 1292-1301, p. 188

4. Reg. Romeyn, ii, pp. 12 & n. 1, 219 & n. 1; CPR 1292-1301, p. 223; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9.

St Michael on Wyre, Croston, Nether Wallop, West Thurrock, Bridgnorth, Kirkoswald, Bolden and Fridaythorp. The dispensation did not cover Wimpole, Rampton, Wickham and Rothing which, presumably, Langton had to resign.¹ He resigned Wickham during 1293 and Kirkoswald on 18 March 1293.²

On 5 February 1292 Langton was presented to the church of Adlingfleet, Yorks., by his patron Sir John Lovetot, knight. On 6 December 1293 he was granted the first fruits of the church. He held Adlingfleet until his consecration.³ On 22 April 1293 Langton was instituted as prebendary of Howden, Yorks. Afterwards, he was allowed to receive the fruits of Hemingborough church, Yorks., until 15 May 1294 and was appointed rector of this church by at least 2 October 1295.⁴ By 14 January 1293 Langton was prebendary of the collegiate church of St Andrew in Auckland, Co. Durham, where his vicar was to be a priest,

1. CPL, i, p. 550; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9.

2. Reg. Halton, i, p. 3; Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 68; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9 implies he resigned Kirkoswald in October 1295.

3. Reg. Romeyn, i, pp. 117, 134; BL Cotton ms. Vit. E. xvi, fo. 108; Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 68, gives the date of institution as 8 February.

4. Reg. Romeyn, ii, pp. 40-1; Reg. Boniface, i, no. 415; CPL, i, p. 559; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9.

receiving five marks a year as his stipend.¹ The mastership of the hospital of St Leonard, York, was granted to Langton for life on 19 May 1293 by Edward I. On 28 November 1296 the king granted that Langton could retain the mastership for life after his consecration if he obtained papal dispensation. He subsequently received the mastership for life on 8 April 1298 and held this until his arrest after 7 August 1307.² Edward II then granted the mastership to Gilbert de Stapledon on 20 August 1307.³ Langton was re-appointed as master, again for life, on 28 January 1314, being replaced by John de Hotham on 12 March 1315, but was reinstated on 7 August 1316, finally resigning in favour of his nephew Robert de Clipston, who was granted custody on 30 January

1. Records of Antony Bek, Bishop and Patriarch, 1283-1311, ed. C.M. Fraser (Surtees Society, 162, 1947), no. 37; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9.

2. CPR 1292-1301, pp. 15, 230, 340; Langton was removed from the treasurership on 22 August which may indicate a date for his arrest, HBC, p. 104; two chroniclers, however, suggest he may have been arrested at Waltham Abbey about 7 August, Flores Historiarum, iii, p. 138, and 'Annales Paulini' in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-3), i, p. 257; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 11; Langton's itinerary places him at Loughborough, Leics., on 7 August, see appx. H; P.H. Cullum, 'Hospitals and Charitable Provision in Medieval Yorkshire, 936-1547' (Unpublished D. Phil. thesis, University of York, 1989), p. 144.

3. CPR 1307-13, p. 2; Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

1318.¹

Langton occurs as prebendary of Holborn, London, about 1294.² Prior to October 1295 he had acquired the churches of Elsdon, Co. Durham, Bedale, Yorks., and Manchester and had resigned Elsdon, Boldon and St Michael on Wyre. On 2 October 1295, now a papal chaplain, he received papal dispensation to retain for two years the churches of Adlingfleet, Bedale, Hemingborough and Manchester, the mastership of St Leonard's hospital and prebends in Auckland, Chichester, Dublin, Howden, Lanchester, Co. Durham, Lichfield, St Paul's, London, Salisbury and Wells.³ At Lichfield Langton held the prebend of Sandiacre, Derbys.; after his consecration he collated John de Benstede to this benefice on 3 February 1297.⁴ Langton resigned Manchester before 20 June 1296 and vacated all his benefices, except the deanery of Bridgnorth and the mastership of St Leonard's, York, on becoming bishop.⁵

1. CPR 1313-17, pp. 80, 260, 301, 526; CPR 1317-21, pp. 75, 105, 197; Cullum, *op. cit.*, p. 145; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 9, 12; Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 69, states Langton held the mastership until his death.

2. Fasti, 1066-1300, i, pp. 55, 99.

3. Reg. Boniface, i, no. 415; CPL, i, p. 559; Fasti, 1066-1300, i, p. 55.

4. John le Neve, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, ed. T.D. Hardy, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1854), i, p. 624; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9; reg. no. 375.

5. CPR 1292-1301, p. 190.

Professor Hamilton Thompson has estimated that Langton's annual income from his benefices at the time he became treasurer in September 1295 was approximately £1000.¹ At an unknown date Langton received a licence to farm Manchester church. An undated entry in his register shows that the farmers owed him £36 6s. 10 3/4d. net and other amounts totalling £10 6s. 8d. for a three year period covering the time he was rector and during the subsequent vacancy until a new rector was appointed on 20 June 1296.²

It is possible to trace Langton's progression through the orders from the subdiaconate to the priesthood. By at least 5 February 1292 he was a subdeacon.³ He received the diaconate on 12 June 1294, being ordained by bishop Sutton of Lincoln under licence from Richard Gravesend, bishop of London, in the chapel of the Old Temple, London, to a title of patrimony in the diocese of Lincoln.⁴ Dr. Beardwood has stated that Langton was still a deacon when he became bishop in 1296, but this is not the case; bishops had to be in priests' orders. Boniface VIII duly arranged for

1. Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

2. Reg. no. 75; CPR 1292-1301, p. 190.

3. Reg. Romeyn, i, p. 117.

4. Reg. Sutton, vii, p. 53; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9, states Langton received the diaconate before October 1295.

the bishop of Albano to ordain Langton as priest before his forthcoming consecration, notifying Langton of this on 31 October 1296.¹

1. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9; Reg. Boniface, i, no. 1380.

III. LANGTON'S ELECTION AS BISHOP.

Following the death of bishop Meuland on 16 December 1295 the prior of Coventry sought a licence from Edward I to elect his successor on 7 January 1296.¹ This was granted on 12 January 1296.² On 20 January the prior and convent of Coventry and the dean and chapter of Lichfield arranged for the election to be held in Lichfield cathedral on 20 February.³ We are told by the Lichfield Chronicle that the election was both amicable and peaceable; the two chapters thus appear to have observed the agreement regarding episcopal elections reached in 1255 which ended a protracted dispute over their respective electoral rights.⁴ Although Langton held the prebend of Sandiacre in Lichfield cathedral at the time of

1. PRO, Ecclesiastical Petitions (C 84), 12, 26; Fasti, x, p. 1; HBC, p. 253.

2. CPR 1292-1301, p. 182; MRA, no. 4; Fasti, x, p. 1.

3. Lichfield Cathedral Library ms. Magnum Registrum Album, fo. 255, gives the date of election as Monday before the feast of St Peter in Cathedra, that is 20 February, see Handbook of Dates for Students of English History, ed. C.R. Cheney (London, 1978), pp. 58, 90; whereas the printed edition, MRA, no. 642, gives the date as the Monday after the feast, 27 February; the Lichfield Chronicle, BL Cotton ms. Cleopatra .D. ix, fo. 74v gives the date as *x kalendas marci*, that is 20 February, see Cheney, *op. cit.*, p. 76; Fasti, x, p. 1, quoting this Cottonian ms., gives the date as 19 February, as does HBC, p. 253.

4. BL Cotton ms. Cleopatra .D. ix, fo. 74v; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, pp. 28-31; VCH Stafford, ii, pp. 8-14.

his election as bishop, doubts have been raised as to whether his election was the 'free and spontaneous choice of the monks and canons' which it appears to have been.¹ It is probable that Edward I, wishing for his treasurer to receive the ultimate reward for loyal service to the Crown, exerted some influence over the election.

Royal assent to Langton's election was granted on 25 April. On 11 June archbishop Winchelsey added his confirmation and released the spiritualities. Five days later John de Metyngham, royal justice, received Langton's fealty to the king and the temporalities of the bishopric were released on the same day, a sign of Edward's favour.² Langton, abroad on diplomatic business concerning the war with France, was consecrated at Cambrai, France, on 23 December 1296 by Berald de Got, cardinal bishop of Albano, after a long dispute with Winchelsey who was reluctant to have his suffragan bishops consecrated away from

1. Reg. no. 375; CPR 1292-1301, p. 188; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 14.

2. CPR 1292-1301, p. 188 bis; Reg. Winchelsey, i, pp. 111-113; MRA, no. 607; PRO, Ancient Correspondence (SC 1), 27/100; CPR 1292-1301, p. 193; Fasti, x, p. 1.

Canterbury and by any person other than himself.¹ Langton still had to profess his obedience to the see of Canterbury and, according to the continuator of Gervase of Canterbury, this took place during the first week in Lent 1297, that is between 3 and 9 March, when the bishop had returned from France. Langton's itinerary shows that he came to England before 10 January and went abroad once again before 4 March 1297; his profession of obedience may thus have taken place immediately before his departure. Langton's profession was made twice, once in the cathedral church of Canterbury, where he placed a copy of his profession upon the high altar 'as if on that day he had been consecrated there', and, secondly, before Winchelsey at the archbishop's manor of Teynham, Kent.²

An undated memorandum added to folio 20 of Langton's register notes that Thomas de Abberbury paid ten marks from the bishop's hanaper to Galhard de Pursato and John de Corbino, papal

1. G.P. Cuttino 'Bishop Langton's Mission for Edward I 1296-1297', Studies in British History (University of Iowa, 11, 2, 1941), pp. 147-83; BL Cotton ms. Cleopatra .D. ix, fo. 74v; BL Cotton ms. Vespavian .E. xvi, fo. 33v; HBC, p. 253; Fasti, x, p. 1; Req. Boniface, i, nos. 1186, 1380; CPL, i, p. 567; Req. Winchelsey, i, pp. 127-9, 143-4; ii, 522-4; Denton, Winchelsey, p. 51; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9.

2. Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 51-2; The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1879-80), ii, p. 314; Cheney, *op. cit.*, p. 130; appx. H.

nuncios, for the 'creation' of Langton as bishop.¹ Abberbury was Langton's chancellor and was also vicar-general in 1300, 1301-2 and 1305-6; he died in May 1307.² Pursato and Corbino were papal nuncios in England in 1306-7; the payment was thus made before May 1307. The ten marks paid to the nuncios probably represents an instalment payment of the fees charged by the pope for Langton's confirmation as bishop, the common service tax paid by new prelates set at one third of the estimated value of the payer's gross income for one year. Unfortunately, the total amount of Langton's common service tax does not appear to have been recorded.³ Common services were, however, very substantial and payment seems to have been arranged on an instalment basis; this entry in Langton's register thus represents one of many regular payments otherwise not recorded.⁴

Langton was not enthroned as bishop until January 1299 because of pressing government

1. Reg. no. 364.

2. See Chapter 2, pp. 139, 163-4; Emden, Oxford, i, p. 2.

3. W.E. Lunt, Financial Relations of the Papacy with England to 1327 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939), pp. 557, 461, 467, appx. ix; Pursato and Corbino were otherwise known as Gaillard de Gazaco and John de Feraria, CPR 1307-13, p. 7.

4. I wish to thank Dr. D.M. Smith for his advise regarding this entry; W.E. Lunt, Papal Revenues in the Middle Ages, 2 vols. (Columbia University Press, 1934), i, pp. 82-87.

business; he arranged for his enthronement to take place at Coventry on 4 January and at Lichfield on 11 January 1299.¹ According to letters in his register this was the first time in his episcopate that Langton visited these diocesan cities; he stayed at Coventry until at least 6 January and was at Lichfield on 8 January, remaining there at least until the day after his enthronement.² However, this should not be taken as an indication that Langton neglected his diocese. As has been shown in a previous chapter, ample provision was made for the administration of the diocese with the bishop personally resuming charge of diocesan affairs from about 28 February 1298.³

1. Reg. no 63; for the general political background see Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-98 in England, ed. M. Prestwich (Camden, 4th series, 24, 1980); Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 412-35.

2. Appx. H.

3. See Chapter 2, p. 139.

IV. LANGTON, THE DIPLOMAT AND POLITICIAN.

Appointed treasurer of Edward I on 28 September 1295, Langton was thus the most important and influential government minister until the end of the reign.¹ His career reached its zenith after his elevation to the episcopate in December 1296 when he can be aptly described as Edward I's 'right hand man'. His position, however, changed dramatically with the accession of Edward II; he was removed from the treasurership and was arrested after 7 August 1307, released from prison on 9 November 1308, re-arrested in the summer of 1311, finally being restored to royal favour and pardoned on 22 January 1312. Although he was re-appointed treasurer on 23 January 1312, he remained in office only a short time, being removed under pressure from the Ordainers before 17 May.² Despite these vicissitudes Langton remained politically active until his death. His episcopate thus illustrates the inter-relationship of church and state in medieval government. Langton's diplomatic activities will first be considered.

Langton was attending a peace conference at

1. HBC, p. 104; Flores Historiarum, iii, p. 280; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, p. 36; A. Hamilton Thompson, 'The College of St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth, with some account of its Deans and Prebendaries', Archaeological Journal, 84 (1927), p. 67; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9.

2. See above pp. 213-4.

Cambrai as part of an embassy for Edward I when he was consecrated on 23 December 1296.¹ Langton, Amadeus, count of Savoy, and Otto de Grandisson had been sent overseas in June 1296 in the second diplomatic initiative to end the war with France. They were joined by Hugh Despenser and John Berwick after the parliament held at Bury St Edmunds in November.² In May and November 1296 the envoys were issued with letters authorising the negotiation of an armistice and peace but by February 1297 they were further authorised to settle the disputes between England's allies and construct a chain of alliances against France.³

The envoys did not stay together as one group; Langton travelled extensively visiting France, Bourbonnais, Cambresis, Flanders and Brabant, returning to England twice, in November

1. See above p. 225; G.P. Cuttino, English Diplomatic Administration 1259-1339, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1971), p. 181.

2. For the background to the war with France see Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 376-91; Cuttino, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-13; J.R. Strayer, The Reign of Philip the Fair (Princeton, New Jersey, 1980), pp. 317-9; Treaty Rolls, i, 1234-1325, nos. 404-9; Foedera, I, ii, pp. 838-40; HBC, p. 550; M.C.L. Salt, 'List of English Embassies to France, 1272-1307', English Historical Review, 44 (1929), pp. 271-2; for Otto de Grandisson's career see C.L. Kingsford, 'Sir Otho de Grandison 1238?-1328', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 3rd series, 3 (1909), pp. 125-95.

3. Treaty Rolls, i, 1234-1325, nos. 282, 404-9, 295-30, 303-6, 324, 338, 419-21, 433-9, 446; Foedera, I, ii, pp. 837, 838, 849, 857-9; Salt, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

1296, to attend the Bury parliament, and from January until the end of February 1297.¹ Langton's account book for this embassy shows that he and the wardrobe played a vital role in securing and paying allies including the counts of Savoy, Holland, Bar, Flanders, Hainault, the dukes of Brabant and Lorraine, the archbishop and dean of Cologne and the bishops of Liege and Utrecht. Langton's account shows that his embassy ended at Bruges on 1 August. Between then and mid-November he remained abroad to conclude embassy business and finalise his accounts, probably joining Edward I in November at Ghent, where the wardrobe was based, to inform him of the position of the alliances.²

Langton does not appear to have taken part in the continuing negotiations for peace with France until after 30 November 1301 when he left England for the papal curia, where he had been summoned in May to answer the charges levied against him by

1. Prestwich, Edward I, p. 391; Cuttino, *op. cit.*, p. 180; G.P. Cuttino, 'Bishop Langton's Mission for Edward I 1296-1297', Studies in British History (University of Iowa, 11, 2), pp. 180-1; appx. H.

2. Cuttino, 'Diplomatic Administration', pp. 177-80, 182, 183, Langton's account book is printed on pp. 224-50; Treaty Rolls, i, 1234-1325, nos. 334-350; Foedera, I, ii, pp. 857-60; Tout, Chapters, ii, p. 46; appx. H.

John Lovetot.¹ Langton, the count of Savoy, Otto de Grandisson and Gerard de Wyppeyns, archdeacon of Richmond, were appointed on 24 August 1301 to continue the negotiations for peace with France at the court of Rome; they were later joined by Henry Lacy, earl of Lincoln, and John Berwick and were authorised to establish a truce with the Scots.² A royal mandate issued one day later, granting letters of protection and general attorney for Langton, confirms that the bishop thus had at least a dual mission at the papal curia; the king's message to the pope regarding peace with France and his own personal business. It is, however, possible that Langton may have been additionally involved in negotiations with Boniface VIII regarding the triennial tenth, collection of which was suspended by Edward I at about the time of the bishop's departure overseas.³

Langton was present, and may have led, the negotiations with the French culminating in the

1. Appx. H; Reg. Winchelsey, ii, pp. 740, 600-1, 602; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 7-8; for Lovetot see pp. 328-31.

2. Foedera, I, ii, p. 935; CPR 1292-1301, pp. 616, 617; Salt, *op. cit.*, p. 274; Wyppeyns was a nephew of Otto de Grandisson, see Kingsford, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

3. CChW, i, p. 134; CPR 1292-1301, pp. 606, 607, 608, 609, 615, 616; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 7; W.E. Lunt, Financial Relations of the Papacy with England to 1327 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939), pp. 366-9.

treaty of Asnieres on 25 December 1301 and a truce in the war with the Scots in January 1302.¹

Langton was at the papal court embroiled in his personal business with Lovetot when he and Gerard Wyppeyns were appointed by Edward I to hear the pope's final pronouncement concerning peace with France on 5 March 1302.² Shortly afterwards, on 30 March, the pope suspended Langton from episcopal office and appointed administrators to run his diocese.³ Langton continued to play some role in the continuing negotiations with France; arrangements were made for the bishop, the earl of Lincoln, the archdeacon of Richmond and John Berwick to be at Montreuil on 6 May 1302 to meet the French ambassadors. It is probable that Langton did go to Montreuil; Nicholas de Lovetot, who was accompanying the bishop, was said to be still abroad on this date.⁴

Langton had, nevertheless, returned to England by 1 July 1302 and remained there until

1. Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland, i-iv, ed. J.S. Bain (Edinburgh, 1881-8), ii, pp. 323, 326; Treaty Rolls, i, 1234-1325, no. 376; CPR 1301-7, p. 10; Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 495-6; Salt, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

2. CPL, i, p. 607; MRA, no. 5; Reg. Winchelsey, ii, pp. 648-50; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 7-8; CPR 1301-7, p. 24; CCR 1296-1302, p. 580; Salt, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

3. MRA, no. 5; see Chapter 2, pp. 186-97.

4. Bain, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 326; CChW, i, p. 154; CPR 1301-7, p. 59.

about mid-February 1303 when he again left for the papal court on the king's and his own affairs; letters of protection and safe-conducts for him and those accompanying him were issued in January and February.¹ It is probable that the king's affairs were still connected with the negotiations for peace with France; on 10 January 1303 Edward I had appointed the count of Savoy, the earl of Lincoln and Otto de Grandisson to make a treaty of peace with Philip IV. Langton, having to return to the curia to hear the pope's pronouncement regarding Lovetot's charges against him, would thus have been the king's ideal messenger to inform the pope of developments in the peace negotiations, especially as the pope had earlier taken a leading role as intermediary in the war. On 20 May 1303 a final peace was agreed in the treaty of Paris, temporarily restoring the position between England and France to that which had existed prior to the outbreak of war in 1294.²

When Langton was at the papal curia early in 1302 Edward I was involved in a wrangle with Boniface VIII over the triennial tenth which had been imposed upon the English clergy by a bull

1. Appx. H; CPR 1301-7, pp. 103-9, 115, 116.

2. Foedera, I, ii, pp. 947, 952-4; CPR 1301-7, p. 105; Strayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-4; Prestwich, Edward I, p. 397; Salt, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

dated 26 February 1301. Following negotiations between king and pope it was agreed that half the proceeds of the new tax should go to Edward, although the pope's bull to the clergy did not state this; the clergy were thus forced to pay a tax to the king, despite *Clericis Laicos*. The first instalment was collected on the due date of 30 November 1301, by which time Langton was abroad.¹ However, four days earlier the king ordered the collection of the tenth from clerical temporalities to be suspended; the king had his own designs on taxing all the temporal possessions of the clergy, approximately one third of their assessed income.² The order for direct taxation of a fifteenth on clerical temporalities was, however, difficult to enforce. It is thus probable that Langton was involved in negotiations at the papal curia concerning the pope's formal declaration of the king's right to half the proceeds of the tenth; this was issued on 12 March 1302, eighteen days before Langton was suspended from episcopal office. On 7 May the collection of the tenth on temporalities resumed.³

1. Lunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 366-7; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 80-99, 199-201; Reg. Winchelsey, i, p. 425; appx. H.

2. Lunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-8; CCR 1296-1302, p. 570; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 201-2.

3. Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 202-3; CPL, i, p. 599; CPR 1301-7, p. 62; MRA, no. 5; Lunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-9.

Langton's next diplomatic mission occurred in the autumn of 1305 when he and the earl of Lincoln, Hugh Despenser, Otto de Grandisson, John de Benstede, chancellor of the exchequer, Amanieu d'Albret, Philip Martel, William Gainsborough, bishop of Worcester, and Bartholomew de Ferentino, formed an embassy sent to Lyons for the coronation of pope Clement V on 14 November. Letters of protection and attorney for Langton and those accompanying him were issued in October and the embassy departed for the papal court on 24 October, arriving there on 12 November; fortunately, John de Benstede's account for this embassy has survived and this gives the parties' movements to and from the curia in considerable detail.¹ Papal bulls, issued whilst the envoys were at the curia, reveal that the chief purpose of the embassy was the removal from office of archbishop Winchelsey. Winchelsey had been a thorn in Edward I's side for some years with his resistance to clerical taxation, his demand for confirming the charters, his insistence on visiting royal free chapels and his opposition to

1. Denton, Winchelsey, p. 224; CPR 1301-7, pp. 385, 387-8; CCR 1302-7, pp. 351, 353; Salt, *op. cit.*, p. 277; J.H. Denton, 'Pope Clement V's Early Career as a Royal Clerk', English Historical Review, 83 (1968), p. 312; C.L. Kingsford, 'John de Benstede and His Missions for Edward I' in Essays in History Presented to R.L. Poole, ed. H.W.C. Davis (Oxford, 1927), pp. 338-9, 354-8; for the parties' movements see appx. H.

the non-residence, plurality and non-ordination of royal clerks. There is, however, no evidence that the alleged personal antagonism between Langton and Winchelsey, which some historians have propounded to explain events in the bishop's life, played a part in the archbishop's suspension.¹

The embassy achieved its objective. Linked to Winchelsey's eventual suspension on 12 February 1306 was the countering by the pope of the archbishop's opposition to royal policy; Clement V had already granted Edward a tax of a tenth of the income of the English church on 1 August 1305 for the next seven years; then, on 29 December 1305, as a direct result of this embassy, the pope released Edward from his oath to observe the *Confirmatio Cartarum* of 1297; on 1 January 1306 protection of the king's person and his chapels from sentences of excommunication, suspension or interdict except by the pope's authority was announced; on 1 February 1306 *Clericis Laicos* was revoked; and bulls granting dispensation for plurality, non-residence and non-ordination were issued to king's clerks, one of which was granted

1. Denton, *Winchelsey*, pp. 52-4, 222-7; F. M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1962), pp. 717-8; Lunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 488, 503; *Councils and Synods*, II, ii, pp. 1229-30; Edwards, *Political Importance*, p. 315; Beardwood, *Trial of Langton*, p. 6.

to John de Benstede on 20 February.¹ Langton himself received two papal bulls on 22 February 1306 allowing him to grant dispensation to ten of his familiar clerks for either plurality or age default.²

Some of the envoys had a two or three-fold mission whilst in France. The treaty of Paris, ending the war with France in May 1303, had provided for the settling of claims for damages incurred by merchants before the outbreak of war and during periods of truce. Nothing had come of this until December 1305 when we learn that the envoys sent to the pope were treating with Philip IV or his envoys on this matter. Shortly afterwards, the court of claims was established at Montreuil in the summer of 1306 by an ordinance of Clement V, although little was achieved before the proceedings were abandoned in 1311.³

Prior to his departure Langton had been additionally authorised with the earl of Lincoln, Hugh Despenser, Otto de Grandisson and John de

1. Reg. Winchelsey, i, p. xxiii; Councils and Synods, II, ii, p. 1230; Churchill, Canterbury Admin., pp. 567-8; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 228-31; Denton, 'Pope Clement V's Early Career', pp. 312-3; Lunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 382-4; CPL, ii, pp. 3-12, for Benstede's dispensation see *ibid.*, p. 4.

2. Reg. nos. 788, 797; Denton, 'Pope Clement V's Early Career', p. 313, n. 4.

3. Prestwich, Edward I, p. 397; Powicke, *op. cit.*, pp. 657-8; CCR 1302-7, p. 358; Salt, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

Benstede to treat with John and Erard of Bar about their past and future service in Scotland and elsewhere and about the coming to England of Joan, daughter of Henry, count of Bar, the king's niece.¹ We later learn that the meeting took place at Lyons where the parties agreed that John of Bar would be paid 3,000 marks to remit the king's former grant made to him in November 1298 of lands in Scotland worth 1,000 marks a year.²

When Langton next went to France after 14 May 1309 this was simply in response to a papal citation, dated 5 February 1309, ordering him to appear at the curia within two months to answer some 'alleged crimes' against the pope, of which he was absolved by Arnaud d'Aux, bishop of Poitiers, in August; the bishop's relationship with Edward II at this time meant that he was in no position to act in a diplomatic capacity.³

Langton's last visit abroad, which began in May 1312, again concerned his own and the king's business. Langton was excommunicated by archbishop Winchelsey before 1 May 1312 for refusing to attend a provincial council and for infringing the Ordinances. The provincial council was to be held

1. CPR 1301-7, p. 386.

2. CPR 1301-7, pp. 432-3; CCR 1302-7, p. 443.

3. J.R. Wright, The Church and the English Crown 1305-1334 (Toronto, 1980), p. 321; Reg. Winchelsey, ii, pp. 1049-50; CPL, ii, pp. 49, 57, 58; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 14.

on 18 April 1312, but some 'positive opposition' was encountered and thus it was reconvened for 8 May and continued until 14 May. The chronicler Adam Murimuth states that Langton was excommunicated before 14 May. However, a royal letter requesting the pope to revoke the excommunication shows that the sentence was levied prior to 1 May; it thus seems that Langton refused to attend the initial council meeting in April.¹

Langton thus had to journey to the papal curia in France to seek absolution from the sentence of excommunication. Whilst there he took the opportunity to bring a suit against the king's bankers, the Frescobaldi, who owed him 1,000 marks and 2,000 gold florins,² and he may have pressed his case with the pope that he was a suitable successor to archbishop Winchelsey, who died on 11 May 1313 when Langton was still at the curia.³ Langton also transacted some business for the

1. Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum, ed. E. M. Thompson (Rolls Series, 1889), p. 18; Councils and Synods, II, ii, pp. 1356, 1364-5, 1371-2; Foedera, II, ii, p. 167; CPR 1307-13, p. 458; CCR 1307-13, p. 459; Flores Historiarum, iii, pp. 148-9; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 50-1, 266-7; Edwards, Political Importance, p. 323; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 10, 14.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 10, 27; CPR 1307-13, p. 177.

3. J.H. Denton, 'Canterbury Archiepiscopal Appointments: the Case of Walter Reynolds', Journal of Medieval History, 1 (1975), pp. 322-4; H.G. Richardson, 'Clement V and the See of Canterbury', English Historical Review, 56 (1941), pp. 97-103; Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

king.¹ Edward II's business with the pope can only be determined by consideration of the complex political situation in England before and after the bishop's departure.

Edward II had no intention of adhering to the Ordinances, published on 27 September 1311, with a second set issued in late November, by which the Ordainers sought to establish sound rule and achieve the perpetual exile of Piers Gaveston, the king's favourite. Edward soon began to consolidate his position. Although Gaveston was exiled abroad for a third time on 4 November 1311 he was said to have returned to England by the end of the month. Edward then began to restore his favourite's position; on 18 January 1312 Gaveston's exile was declared to have been against the laws and customs of the land and all the sheriffs were ordered to accept him as a good and loyal subject; two days later all of Gaveston's lands, which were lost by his exile, were returned to him. Other favours followed culminating in the favourite's re-appointment as justice of the Forest north of Trent on 2 April.² Edward and Gaveston were,

1. CPR 1307-13, p. 458; CCR 1307-13, p. 459; Foedera, II, ii, pp. 166, 171, 178.

2. Maddicott, Lancaster, pp. 116-7, 121-2; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 264-5; Foedera, II, i, pp. 153, 154, 158, 160, 163; J.S. Hamilton, Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall 1307-1312: Politics and Patronage in the Reign of Edward II (London, 1988), pp. 91-3, 95.

however, unable to maintain their opposition to the Ordainers and Gaveston was executed on 19 June 1312.¹

Linked to Edward's plan to oppose the Ordainers may have been Langton's restoration to royal favour and his appointment as treasurer in January 1312; according to the *Flores Historiarum* this was because the bishop revealed the Ordainers' deliberations to the king.² If this was the case, Langton's disclosure must have taken place after the Ordinances were published in September 1311. Although Edward ordered Langton to be admitted to the council on 23 October, another three months elapsed before he was pardoned; if he had disclosed the Ordainers' plans prior to the publication of the Ordinances we would have expected him to have been restored to royal favour at an earlier date. Langton had again been in prison about June and July 1311 and his final release may have been achieved with the help of the Ordainers. Moreover, one of the additional Ordinances issued in November 1311 requested the king to do right to Langton concerning his lands and goods. It is thus unlikely that he would cross the Ordainers prior to his restoration to royal

1. Maddicott, *Lancaster*, pp. 128-9; Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-9.

2. Davies, *Baronial Opposition*, p. 389; Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 89; *CPR 1307-13*, pp. 412, 413; *Flores Historiarum*, iii, pp. 148-9.

favour, which was probably the result of royal initiative alone. Once this had been achieved, Langton, perceiving that his own interests would be best served by loyalty to the crown, refused to attend the provincial council on 18 April, for which he was excommunicated.¹

After his restoration to royal favour, Langton was said to be the king's 'closest man' after Gaveston.² In this capacity he may have had a two-fold royal mission to the curia; to seek papal mediation for Edward at this time of political crisis and financial assistance. By September 1312 Arnold, cardinal of St Priscilla, and Arnold, cardinal bishop of Poitiers, papal nuncios, with Louis of Evreux, Philip IV's brother, had arrived in England to conduct peace negotiations between the king, his supporters and the Ordainers.³ Whether the mediators' arrival was due to Langton's visit to the curia or, as Dr. Maddicott has suggested, the result of the earl of Pembroke's mission to France between 5 and 19

1. Davies, Baronial Opposition, pp. 389-90; Edwards, Political Importance p. 321; 'Annales Londonienses' in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-3), i, p. 200; Maddicott, Lancaster, p. 122; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 10; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 265-6.

2. Maddicott, Lancaster, p. 122.

3. Maddicott, Lancaster, p. 134; Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 104; Denton, Winchelsey, p. 268.

August, we cannot say with certainty.¹ However, Langton must have informed Clement V of the political situation in England. It is thus possible that the nuncios' arrival may have been the result of Langton's mission whilst that of the French king's brother was the result of Pembroke's.

Langton was said to be still conducting the king's business at the curia in April 1313.² It is thus possible that he took part in the initial negotiations with papal agents which resulted in financial assistance being granted to Edward in the form of a personal loan from Clement V of £25,000, which was conditional upon the royal revenues of Gascony being granted to the pope. Langton returned to England by at least 10 July 1313 and, although the contract was not announced until 28 October 1313, he may have initiated the matter for the king.³

After 1313 Langton's diplomatic activity seems to have ended. He did, however, continue to have some political influence until his death;

1. Maddicott, Lancaster, pp. 132, 133, 134.

2. CPR 1307-13, p. 566; Foedera, II, ii, p. 209.

3. Foedera, II, i, pp. 231-2; Maddicott, Lancaster, p. 157; T.F. Tout, The Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History (Manchester, 1914), pp. 217-8; W.E. Lunt, Financial Relations of the Papacy with England to 1327 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939), p. 417; appx. H.

this aspect of his career will now be considered.

As Edward I's treasurer, Langton was the most influential figure among the king's ministers, a position which he maintained until the king's death on 7 July 1307. His political activities were not diminished by his consecration, which can be seen as the ultimate reward for his loyal service to the crown. However, this should not be taken as an indication that Langton neglected his diocese; he successfully combined both offices, neglecting neither.¹

After his diplomatic mission ended in November 1297 Langton returned to England with the *Confirmatio Cartarum* issued by the king at Ghent on 5 November.² The year of Langton's first embassy as bishop, 1297, had been a particularly difficult one, politically, for Edward I with mounting lay and clerical opposition to demands for military service, prises and taxation created by wartime circumstances, which eventually led to compromise by confirming Magna Carta and the

1. A. Hamilton Thompson, 'The College of St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth, with some account of its Deans and Prebendaries,' Archaeological Journal, 84 (1927), p. 67.

2. Prestwich, Edward I, p. 429; The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft in French Verse from the Earliest Period to the Death of King Edward I, ed. T. Wright, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1866-68), ii, p. 307.

charter of the forest.¹ Langton's role in the crisis appears to have been slight as he was abroad for much of the year. He did, however, attend the parliament at Bury St Edmunds in November 1296 when the clergy of the southern province, led by archbishop Winchelsey, refused to grant Edward a tax of a fifth to finance the war with France. Although the clergy of the northern province acceded and granted the tax, Winchelsey cited the papal bull *Clericis Laicos*, promulgated in February 1296, to defend his stance. Winchelsey subsequently held a church council at St Paul's, London, on 13 January 1297 to discuss the matter. It is not certain which prelates attended but Langton had returned to England in January 1297 and was in London on the 14th; he thus probably attended this council. With the other prelates who were, or had been, royal clerks, Langton would have supported the king's request for a tax. Nevertheless, the tax was refused and Edward placed the clergy outside of his protection on 30 January. It was then announced that the king's protection could be bought by payment of fines equivalent to the sum which would have been paid if the tax of a fifth had been granted; Langton, with other members of the king's council, devised

1. Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 401-35; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 100-176. M. Prestwich, Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-8 in England (Camden, 4th series, 24, 1980).

the procedures by which this could be done.

Langton obviously paid his fine before returning abroad; protections were issued for him and those accompanying him in February.¹

Lay opposition to Edward in 1297 was led by Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, and Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, both of whom had personal grievances against the king, and centred upon the demand for military service overseas and taxation. Matters were brought to a head in 1297 as neither barons nor knights wished to serve the king overseas in Flanders and Bigod and Bohun, as hereditary marshal and constable respectively, refused to draw up a muster list for July. They were then removed from their hereditary positions. Other grievances concerned the the burden of taxation, including the *maltolt* of 40s. on each sack of wool exported, two seizures of wool, ordered at Easter and in July, and prises of foodstuffs.

Taxes and prises affected lay and clerical subjects equally; the ordinance relating to the second prise of wool in July simply stated that the poor should not be burdened. Merchants were appointed to carry out the enforced purchase and then arrange its export for sale on the

1. Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 406, 414-6, 440; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 95-9, 100-109; Prestwich, 'Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-98', no. 5; appx. H; CPR 1292-1301, pp. 234-5.

instructions of Langton and John Berwick, who were then abroad.¹ An interesting letter dated 2 July 1299 copied into Langton's register may refer to one of the seizures of wool in 1297. In a letter to the prior of Witham Langton explained that the king was bound to James Pilat, merchant of Douai, Flanders, for a large sum of money, which he was unable to pay. As Pilat owed money to the prior for wool he had received, Langton asked the prior for this money for the king, promising recompense at the opportune time. At the end of the letter are notes recording that similar letters were sent to the abbots of Cleeve and Boxley and the prior of Hempton for James Pilat, and to the abbots of Dunkeswell and Buckfast for Bernard Pilat.² This letter survives in the 'working' quire of Langton's register and no other reference to this matter has been found.

Langton, as Edward I's principal minister, was naturally a member of the king's council, a body which provided the king with expert advice and counsel. His attendance at particular meetings is recorded but when he was with the king he must

1. Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 418-9; Prestwich, 'Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-98', pp. 9-11, nos. 97, 120, 125.

2. Reg. no. 73.

have been called upon constantly to give advice.¹ He thus attended parliament regularly. Only one instance of Langton attending parliament by proctor has been found. This was at the Lincoln parliament which began on 27 January and ended on 20 February 1316. However, in his letter of proxy Langton does say that he hopes the king will excuse his absence which will be for a few days only; his itinerary suggests that he may thus have attended this parliament after the opening as he was at Bracebridge, near Lincoln, on 2, 3, 4, 11, 20 and 21 February.² At the earlier Lincoln parliament of January 1301 and the Carlisle parliament of January 1307, the king stood by his treasurer when complaints were brought against him.³

At the Lincoln parliament the chronicler Pierre Langtoft informs us that Langton was accused of overthrowing the ancient customs and laws of the exchequer, and it was requested that Edward dismiss him and by common assent appoint

1. Prestwich, Edward I, p. 440; Prestwich, 'Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-98', no. 5; Parl. Writs, i, pp. 61, 369, 163, 180; ii, p. 280.

2. PRO, Parliamentary proxies (SC 10), 7/222, I wish to thank Mr. D. Johnson of Exeter College, Oxford, for this reference; HBC, p. 553; appx. H.

3. HBC, pp. 551, 552; Parl. Writs, i, pp. 89, 182, 184; Rot. Parl., i, pp. 188, 189.

another.¹ Years later, when Henry Keighley had been identified as the presenter of the bill of complaints placed before this parliament and imprisoned, Edward ordered that he should receive courteous treatment and that this should appear to have been arranged by Langton.² Although Langton and archbishop Winchelsey represented different political viewpoints, there is no evidence to show that it was Winchelsey who demanded the treasurer's dismissal.³ Edward considered Langton to be too valuable a minister to lose and took no action. Throughout the parliament Langton was busy as treasurer; the Calendar of Patent Rolls record that he received fines and tested writs during his stay.⁴

A letter from Edward to the pope in March 1303, supporting Langton when he was suspended from episcopal office, indicates the grounds for the disaffection towards the treasurer in 1301. Langton's actions as treasurer were said to have inspired wrath, hatred and enmity; he removed

1. The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft in French Verse from the Earliest Period to the Death of King Edward I, ed. T. Wright, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1866-8), ii, pp. 329-31; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 6-7; M. Prestwich, War, Politics and Finance Under Edward I (London, 1972), p. 271.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 6.

3. Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 52-3 & n. 74; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 6.

4. CPR 1292-1301, pp. 564, 568-73, 575, 576, 625.

useless personnel from the household, he did not pay to others their wages, he did not answer the earls, barons and others assisting in the king's wars for what was said to be due to them and he spared no-one from the rigid exactions of taxation. Such a list seems out of place in a letter of support. However, Edward clearly thought such actions by the treasurer were pardonable when he explained that the king's necessity excused Langton everything.¹ Earlier baronial distrust of the treasurer may have prompted the appointment of a special commission comprising John de Langton, the chancellor and Walter de Beauchamp, seneschal, in April 1300 to audit Langton's overdue and unbalanced wardrobe accounts for the period 1291-95, which were not rendered to the exchequer until 13 January 1300. If the accounts had been audited in the exchequer, Langton, as treasurer, might have been thought to influence the outcome. The accounts were approved nevertheless.²

Serious charges of a more personal nature were made against Langton early in 1301 by John Lovetot, junior, the son of his former patron,

1. CCR 1302-7, pp. 81-2; M. Prestwich, War, Politics and Finance Under Edward I (London, 1972), p. 153.

2. PRO, K.R. Memoranda Rolls (E 159), 73, m. 31; Tout, Chapters, ii, pp. 90-1 & n. 2; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 6; Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 548-9.

John Lovetot, which led to the bishop's eventual suspension from episcopal office by pope Boniface VIII on 30 March 1302. Although Langton was accused of murder, immorality, performing homage to the devil, simony, pluralism and the sale of papal constitutions, his predicament prompted letters of support from the king to the pope in August 1302 and, as already noted, in March 1303.¹ The accusations made against Langton at this time echo those levied against Robert Burnell, bishop of Bath and Wells 1275-92, who, as chancellor of the exchequer from 1274-92, enjoyed a similar position of trust and intimacy with Edward I in the first part of his reign. Burnell too had been accused of immoral conduct and pluralism but Edward was as unconcerned about his chancellor's personal behaviour as he was about Langton's.² Lovetot's accusations against Langton were eventually found to be groundless and the bishop was restored to his see on 8 June 1303.³

In the parliament at Carlisle in 1307, charges of champerty were brought against Langton

1. See below, pp. 328-9; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 6-8; CCR 1296-1302, pp. 603-4; CCR 1302-7, pp. 81-2; Foedera, I, ii, p. 956.

2. Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis, ed. C.T. Martin, 3 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-5), i, pp. 46-7; Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 234, 549, 551; HBC, pp. 85, 228; Tout, Chapters, ii, pp. 13, 215.

3. MRA, no. 305; CPL, i, p. 610; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 8.

by John de Ferrers. Champerty, the illegal maintenance or support of a suit in consideration of a share in the proceeds, had been made a statutory offence for king's officials by clause 25 of the first statute of Westminster in 1275. Clause 49 of the second statute of Westminster of 1285 further forbade royal ministers, including the treasurer, to uphold for the sake of champerty any plea that was pending in the king's courts.¹ At Carlisle, John de Ferrers petitioned that although litigation was being conducted in the court of common pleas between himself and William de Ferrers, his cousin, concerning the manor of Newbottle, Northants., Langton bought the manor. Langton's acquisition of Newbottle was achieved by playing-off William against John, whereby William finally made a recognizance for £200 to Langton and enfeoffed him with the manor. John was unwilling to allow this arrangement to stand and thus brought his petition.²

Henry Lacy, earl of Lincoln, was appointed to hear and judge the petition. Langton appeared in court and denied the charge. Both parties accepted trial by jury. However, this did not take place

1. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 14; Statutes of the Realm (Record Commission, 1810), i, pp. 33, 95; Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench Under Edward I, iii, ed. G.O. Sayles (Selden Society, 1939), pp. lvi, 175-8.

2. Sayles, *op. cit.*, p. lvi; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 14-15; Prestwich, Edward I, p. 550.

until after parliament had dispersed as Ferrers' petition was not made until the close of the session when there was insufficient time left for jurors to travel from Northamptonshire. The case was heard in King's Bench, but Langton did not attend and was eventually granted a royal pardon. Langton was thus acquitted and Ferrers was left without redress.¹

At the same Carlisle parliament Langton was sent 'unwillingly' to the king by prince Edward to ask that Piers Gaveston be created count of Ponthieu; the king was so outraged that Gaveston was exiled.² The prince must have known that such a request would provoke the king's anger; perhaps he was trying to seek revenge for the dispute he had had with Langton in 1305 when the king sided with the treasurer. On 14 June 1305 prince Edward was reported to have insulted Langton, perhaps because the treasurer had accused the prince of breaking into one of his woods. The prince was banished from court and orders were given that he should receive nothing towards the upkeep of his household. The estrangement between the king and

1. Sayles, *op. cit.*, pp. lvi-lvii, 175-8; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 15; Prestwich, Edward I, p. 550.

2. J.S. Hamilton, Piers Gaveston Earl of Cornwall 1307-1312: Politics and Patronage in the Reign of Edward II (London, 1988), pp. 34-6; Prestwich, Edward I, p. 552; The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough, ed. H. Rothwell (Camden, 3rd series, 89, 1957), pp. 382-3.

his son lasted until 12 October when they were finally reconciled.¹ This incident must have helped to ferment the hatred which prince Edward clearly felt for Langton in later years and may have caused the prince to send Langton to the king at the Carlisle parliament. As soon as prince Edward became king he wasted no time in taking his revenge and ordered Langton's arrest.

Langton's activities as treasurer of Edward I are evidenced throughout the Memoranda Rolls and the Calendars of Patent, Close and Fine Rolls for the period he held office.² It is interesting that in June 1306 John son of Robert Havekeserde was pardoned for counterfeiting Langton's privy seal.³ For much of his treasurership Langton was concerned with the financing of, and provisioning for, Edward's wars against the French and Scots. Taxes and prises for the wars, which brought the country to the edge of civil war in 1297, made Langton extremely unpopular, which the king

1. H. Johnstone, Edward of Carnarvon 1284-1307 (Manchester, 1946), pp. 97-102; 'Annales Londonienses' in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-3), i, p. 138; Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 549-50.

2. PRO, K.R. Memoranda Rolls (E 159); CPR 1292-1301, passim; ibid., 1301-7; CCR 1288-96; ibid., 1296-1302; ibid., 1302-7; CFR 1272-1307.

3. CPR 1301-7, p. 444.

acknowledged in 1303.¹ The exchequer was based at York between 1298 and 1304, conveniently placed for the campaigns against the Scots, and Langton's itinerary shows that, during these years, he spent a great deal of time at York and at his nearby manor of Acomb. However, it was only during the Scottish campaign mounted between July and October 1300 that Langton employed a vicar-general to administer his diocese; at other times he dealt with government and diocesan business concurrently.² When Edward was planning the seige of Stirling in March 1304 he sent for Langton personally to bring 'a good sum of money' and arrange for provisions to be forwarded.³ Langton was at Stirling on 28 April and it is notable that he also transacted diocesan business whilst there; he granted the church of Birmingham *in commendam* to M. Stephen de Segrave.⁴ On 2 July 1306 Edward appointed William Greenfield, archbishop of York, and Langton to be keepers of the realm during his absence in Scotland for the campaign planned for that summer. However, Edward was ill and the main

1. M. Prestwich, War, Politics and Finance Under Edward I (London, 1972), pp. 89, 99, 102, 126, 132, 136, 215; CCR 1302-7, pp. 81-2.

2. Tout, Chapters, ii, p. 75; Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 469-516; appx. H.

3. J. Stephenson, Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1870), ii, p. 475.

4. Reg. no. 131.

army, which left Carlisle in July, was thus commanded by prince Edward. The king did travel towards Scotland but decided to spend the winter at Lanercost priory in October; Greenfield's and Langton's appointment must have then ended.¹

Nevertheless, Edward must have relied heavily upon Langton during his last long illness in 1306-7 when he remained at Lanercost and in the north of England. Although Langton received protection on 24 April 1307 until 31 July to remain with the king, he had left Edward before 19 May to travel south, arriving in London by at least 5 June, presumably to transact government business. Edward died at Burgh-on-Sands, Cumberland, on 7 July when Langton was probably still in London. Langton performed his final services for Edward by returning north to accompany the dead king's body from Ripon, Yorks., on 31 July on its journey to Waltham abbey and by acting as one of the executors of the king's will. Langton was arrested at Waltham between 7 and 27 August on Edward II's orders.²

1. CPR 1301-7, p. 448; Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 506-7.

2. J.R.H. Moorman, 'Edward I at Lanercost Priory 1306-7', English Historical Review, 67 (1952), pp. 161-74; CPR 1301-7, pp. 507, 520, 537; appx. H; it is not proposed to discuss the events between the date of Langton's arrest in August 1307 and his release from prison in November 1308 as Dr. Beardwood has studied this period in detail, see Trial of Langton, pp. 10-38.

The downturn in Langton's political career from the accession of Edward II initially appeared to have ended with his restoration to royal favour in January 1312. The first indication of Edward's change of heart towards Langton came on 23 October 1311 when the bishop was admitted to the king's council; he appears to have remained a councillor until he was ejected at the Westminster parliament of February 1315.¹ Nevertheless, Langton's position must have still been uncertain because one of the additional Ordinances issued in November 1311 asked the king to do right to Langton about his lands and goods. It was not until 11 January 1312 that Edward ordered the keeper of the great seal to inform Langton in whose hands his lands and goods were, which the king had returned to him.² On 22 January 1312 Langton's restoration to favour was completed by the grant of a royal pardon. The next day he was appointed treasurer 'until the next parliament', a means of circumventing the Ordinances; his appointment was renewed on 14 March on the same

1. Davies, Baronial Opposition, p. 390; Edwards, Political Importance, p. 329; Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-3), ii, p. 209.

2. Edwards, Political Importance, p. 321; 'Annales Londonienses' in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-3), i, p. 200; Davies, Baronial Opposition, pp. 384, 390, appx. 57; CPR 1307-13, p. 413.

terms.¹

Langton's appointment was probably linked to Edward's determination to oppose the Ordainers; the bishop was an experienced official, with a thorough knowledge of exchequer business. That Langton appears to have been a strong royal supporter from this time suggests that he thought his personal interests would be best served by appearing to be loyal to the crown.² However, the Ordainers were determined not to allow Langton to act in office. On 3 April the earls of Pembroke and Hereford and others entered the exchequer and charged Langton with taking the office of treasurer against the Ordinances, the appointment of whom should have been made with the assent of the baronage in parliament. They further forbade the chamberlains of the exchequer to pay out money or treasure to any enemy of the realm. On 13 April Edward instructed Langton to execute the duties of his office, 'notwithstanding the threats of any persons', and one day later ordered the bishop to join him to give his counsel concerning the king's

1. CPR 1307-13, pp. 412, 413, 440; Davies, Baronial Opposition, pp. 389-92; T.F. Tout, The Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History (Manchester, 1914), pp. 97-8; Maddicott, Lancaster, p. 122; Edwards, Political Importance, p. 323; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 10; Denton, Winchelsey, p. 265; HBC, p. 104.

2. For the question of Langton's loyalty see below pp. 263-7.

affairs.¹ It has been suggested that Langton held office in name only and that Walter of Norwich, the baronial nominee, acted as treasurer from October 1311 to May 1312. However, writs recorded on the Calendars of Patent and Close Rolls between 20 January and 16 March, issued on Langton's information, suggest otherwise.² On 17 May 1312 Walter of Norwich was instructed to continue to act as treasurer as Langton, 'for divers reasons', was prevented from doing so. Langton never held government office again.³

He did, however, continue to be politically active until his death. He was one of seventeen bishops who mediated between the earl of Lancaster and the king at various times from 1317 until 1320. It has been argued that these prelates formed an alliance with the earls of Pembroke and Hereford and Bartholomew Badlesmere, an alliance which has been termed the 'middle' party.⁴ Professor Davies considers that the 'middle' party was the 'creation more of Pembroke than of any

1. CCR 1307-12, pp. 417, 458; Davies, Baronial Opposition, pp. 390-1, appx. 16.

2. Tout, *op. cit.*, p. 332, n. 1; Edwards, Political Importance, p. 323; CPR 1307-12, pp. 413-6, 442, 470; CCR 1307-12, pp. 395, 397, 401, 403-5, 410, 413-5, 418.

3. CPR 1307-12, p. 459.

4. Edwards, Political Importance, pp. 331-2; Maddicott, Lancaster, pp. 214-29; Davies, Baronial Opposition, pp. 425-43; Tout, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-21.

other person'.¹ Professor Phillips, however, in his study of the earl of Pembroke, questions the validity of the term 'middle' party. He argues that Pembroke was not the leader of the 'middle' party but was an influential member of the king's council and that clerical initiative inspired the negotiations between the king and Lancaster.²

Nevertheless, a group of mediators emerged in which certain prelates were prominent. Langton took part in some of the negotiations which the mediators undertook to make terms of peace with Lancaster on behalf of the king, culminating in the treaty of Leake on 9 August 1318.³ The chroniclers do not name him as being present at the important meeting between the mediators and Lancaster held at Leicester on 12 April 1318, although Knighton does say that all the bishops of the southern province attended. Langton's itinerary is, unfortunately, lacking in detail for

1. Davies, Baronial Opposition, p. 425.

2. J.R.S. Phillips, Aymer de Valence Earl of Pembroke 1307-1324: Baronial Politics in the Reign of Edward II (Oxford, 1972), pp. 141, 163, 153.

3. Edwards, Political Importance, pp. 331-2; Maddicott, Lancaster, pp. 214-29; Davies, Baronial Opposition, pp. 425-43; Phillips, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-177; J.G. Edwards, 'The Negotiating of the Treaty of Leake, 1318' in Essays in History Presented to R.L. Poole, ed. H.W.C. Davis (Oxford, 1927), pp. 360-78; B. Wilkinson, 'The Negotiations Preceding the 'Treaty' of Leake, August 1318' in Studies in Medieval History Presented to F.M. Powicke, ed. R.W. Hunt, W.A. Pantin, R.W. Southern (Oxford, 1948), pp. 333-53.

this time.¹ He was, however, involved in negotiations held in June 1318. Langton's name is endorsed to a document dated at Westminster on 2 June 1318 urging Lancaster to come to terms with the king.² On 11 June Roger Damory, Hugh Audley, the younger, and others undertook that they would in no way impede or threaten Lancaster when he came to make his peace with the king. We are told that this undertaking was made with the king's permission and at the request of the cardinals and prelates, including Langton, who promised to see that the guarantee was upheld.³ Langton was present at Leake, Notts., when the treaty was finally signed.⁴

The work of the mediators, propounded in the treaty of Leake, was completed at the parliament held at York from 20 October 1318, when Langton was added to the standing council which had been

1. Flores Historiarum, iii, pp. 183-4; 'Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon Auctore Canonico Bridlingtoniensi' in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-3), ii, p. 54; Chronicon Henrici Knighton Monachi Leycestrensis, ed. J.R. Lumby, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1889-95), i, p. 412; appx. H.

2. Phillips, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-1, 320-1; Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 339-42; E. Salisbury, 'A Political Agreement of June 1318', English Historical Review, 33 (1918), pp. 78-83.

3. Phillips, *op. cit.*, pp. 164, 321-2.

4. Appx. H; Rot. Parl., i, p. 454; Foedera, II, i, p. 370.

established by the treaty.¹ This parliament was one of several that the bishop attended after his release from prison in November 1308.² At two assemblies he was appointed a trier of petitions: at the York parliament of October 1318, Langton, with the bishops of Exeter and Bath and Wells, was appointed to hear the petitions of Gascony; and at the parliament which opened at Westminster on 6 October 1320 he was one of many appointed to give answers to the petitions of England and Wales.³

As noted above, Langton was thrown out of the king's council at the Westminster parliament of February 1315.⁴ He was, however, a king's councillor once again by at least 24 August 1316 and may have remained so until at least April 1317; a meeting of the council was called from 15 April and Langton's itinerary shows him to have been in London from 18 April until 19 May 1317.⁵

Langton has been praised for his unstinting

1. Davies, Baronial Opposition, pp. 450-68; Tout, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-32; Maddicott, Lancaster, pp. 229-33; Edwards, Political Importance, pp. 332-3.

2. Appx. H.

3. Parl. Writs, ii, p. 182; Rot. Parl., i, p. 365; Davies, Baronial Opposition, pp. 452, 470-1; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 10.

4. See above p. 258.

5. CPR 1313-17, pp. 603, 634; CCR 1313-18, p. 389; appx. H.

loyalty to the crown.¹ This is unquestionable for Edward I's reign when his political career was at its height. It is, however, difficult to believe that he could have been as loyal to Edward II after enduring the king's enmity until 1312 and the humiliation of imprisonment at the beginning of the reign, and again in 1311. It is equally difficult to understand how Edward II could embrace Langton as a close ally in January 1312, putting behind him the obvious hatred which he had felt for the bishop prior to this time.² The motivation for the apparent reconciliation between the two must have been self-interest, with each using the other in an attempt to restore their power and influence rather than from any personal regard for each other.

A question-mark must be placed against Langton's apparent loyalty to Edward II by his probable meeting with the earl of Lancaster at Pontefract, Yorks., on or about 25 May 1321. The bishop instituted a rector to Hartshorne church, Derbys., whilst at Pontefract on this date; the patron of the church was Hugh de Meignyl, one of Lancaster's retainers, and the institution took place the day after the meeting Lancaster held with the northern barons in the chapter house of

1. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 38; Edwards, Political Importance, p. 346.

2. Maddicott, Lancaster, p. 122.

Pontefract priory when they agreed to enter into a league for mutual defence. Did Langton attend this assembly or did he meet with Lancaster alone one day later? The Bridlington chronicle, the only source of information for the assembly on 24 May, does not record Langton's presence, nor that of Meignyl; in fact the chronicler records Langton's death as occurring prior to the Pontefract meeting. The barons decided, however, that they should obtain the advice of a greater number, and especially of the prelates. Lancaster thus wrote to archbishop Melton of York and summoned him and bishops Halton of Carlisle and Beaumont of Durham to Sherburn-in-Elmet on 28 June.¹

It is almost certain that Langton met Lancaster on or about 25 May; why else would the bishop travel from London to Pontefract and back within the space of about eighteen days at this late stage in his life? We can only speculate as to the bishop's purpose in meeting the earl and assume that his presence at Pontefract was intended to be kept secret; he may thus have met Lancaster when the other barons had departed. Lancaster may have asked Langton to support his

1. Appx. H; reg. no. 1183; Davies, Baronial Opposition, pp. 477-8; Maddicott, Lancaster, pp. 41, 269-79; 'Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvon Auctore Bridlingtoniensi' in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882-3), ii, pp. 61-2; Edwards, Political Importance, p. 337.

plan for an alliance between his own men, the northerners and the lords of the Welsh marches against the Despensers and thus cause their downfall; by the autumn of 1320 the schemes of the elder and younger Hugh Despenser had begun to split the court and their ambitions in Wales eventually forced the marcher barons to side with Lancaster.¹ Langton had good reason to support such a plan and thus maintain good relations with the earl; the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield lay between the Lancastrian lands in Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Lancashire and Welsh border lands, and contained the Lancastrian honours of Tutbury and Duffield and the castles of Kenilworth and Melbourne.² Lancaster was thus a powerful influence in the diocese.

At the Sherburn meeting in June Lancaster aimed to broaden the base of his movement by appealing to particular groups which had a grievance against the king or favourites.³ The earl was well aware that Langton had good reason to feel aggrieved; was he thus appealing to Langton on the same terms in May? Other bishops

1. Edwards, Political Importance, p. 337; Maddicott, Lancaster, pp. 259-68, 289; J.C. Davies, 'The Despenser War in Glamorgan', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 3rd series, 9 (1915), pp. 21-64.

2. Maddicott, Lancaster, pp. 9-10.

3. Maddicott, Lancaster, p. 289.

changed allegiance to the baronial cause in 1321, swayed by family, territorial or personal reasons; Henry Burghersh, bishop of Lincoln, supported his uncle Bartholomew Badlesmere, Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford, sided with his friend and patron Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, whilst John Droxford, bishop of Bath and Wells, also supported the baronial cause.¹ Langton too may have been influenced by his territorial links with Lancaster. If Langton did agree to lend Lancaster his support then the bishop's loyalty to the crown is in question; he may have finally decided to take his revenge on Edward II for his earlier humiliation and imprisonment.

1. Edwards, Political Importance, pp. 335-6.

V. LANGTON, THE BISHOP.

Langton has been criticised for being a 'neglectful' and 'negligent' prelate;¹ for not being a 'very spiritually minded ecclesiastic';² for being 'always an administrator rather than a churchman';³ and for having a 'limited' impact on the diocese.⁴ This is not the case and the aim of this chapter is to refute these statements.

Langton's itinerary shows that he spent much of his episcopate out of his diocese.⁵ However, copies of letters in his register reveal that he was a conscientious bishop and transacted diocesan business himself whenever possible. Whether through personal choice or prevailing custom, Langton only employed vicars-general when he went abroad and to cover two absences in England; from about 7 June to 26 September 1300 when Edward I was embarking upon a campaign against the Scots, although he may have travelled abroad during September, and from 16 September 1307 until 9 November 1308, during which time he was imprisoned by Edward II.⁶

1. Tout, Chapters, ii, pp. 16, 21.

2. VCH Lancaster, ii, p. 32.

3. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 8.

4. VCH Stafford, iii, p. 26.

5. Appx. H.

6. See Chapter 2, pp. 134-57.

For these absences Langton appointed a vicar-general to supervise the administration^{of} the diocese, ensuring that this would not be neglected. It is interesting, however, that the bishop appears to have remained in touch with his diocese during four of these commissions as well as when the diocese was sequestered by the pope in 1302-3; the papal administrators may have been appointed at the bishop's nomination and benefices in his patronage may have been filled by clerks suggested by him.

The first occasion occurred early in his episcopate, on 18 October 1297, when, as his itinerary shows, Langton was concluding his first embassy abroad as bishop; he granted John Picard a prebend in the collegiate church of St John, Chester, and Nicholas le Mareschal a prebend in the collegiate church of St Chad, Shrewsbury. Unfortunately, the place where the two letters were dated is not given, but this may have been Ghent, where the wardrobe was based at this time.¹ The second instance was when Langton was at the papal curia at Lyons, where he had travelled for the consecration of pope Clement V on 14 November 1305, and he contacted M. Thomas de Abberbury, during his third term as vicar-general, ordering

1. Appx. H; reg. nos. 376, 377; Tout, Chapters, ii, p. 46.

him to grant a prebend.¹ During his last stay at the curia in 1312-1313 Langton again remained in contact with his diocese and made his wishes known to his vicar-general, M. Ralph de Leycestria, regarding certain benefices.² The bishop himself exercised his patronage by collating clerks to three vacant prebends; his nephew, Robert de Clipston, received two prebends, Stotfold on 19 September 1312 and Handsacre on 3 March 1313, whilst Henry de Bluntesdon was granted the prebend of Gaia Major on 17 January 1313.³

During Langton's two terms of imprisonment in 1307-8 and in 1311 he again remained in contact with his diocese, and appointed a vicar-general only for the first occasion. Although Langton was arrested sometime after 7 August 1307, it is interesting that M. Robert de Redeswell did not begin to act as vicar-general until 16 September. A letter in Langton's register shows that the bishop was still in charge of his diocesan administration on 27 August, even though he was then imprisoned in Wallingford castle, Oxon. It is difficult to believe that it would take about one month to commission a vicar-general. Perhaps Langton initially thought his imprisonment would

1. Reg. no. 486; appx. H.

2. Reg. nos. 555, 567, 590.

3. Reg. nos. 739, 741, 740; appx. H.

only be temporary; when he realised that this would not be the case he then appointed Redeswell.¹ During this first term of imprisonment a prebend in the bishop's patronage was conferred according to Langton's wishes; a licence for study and possession of a vicarage were granted on his orders; and Redeswell was commissioned to appoint a prior for Tutbury priory.²

When Langton was re-arrested and imprisoned at York in 1311 he may have considered that this would only be a temporary state of affairs as he did not appoint a vicar-general but continued to transact diocesan business himself; as in 1307-8, there is no record that he was deprived of the spiritualities of his see. The dates of his arrest and release are uncertain; Langton's itinerary shows him to have been in York from at least 13 April until 24 August 1311. He was, however, free before 31 August when he was in Gainsborough, Lincs.³ Dr. Beardwood states that Langton was arrested before June 1311.⁴ Her source for this statement, the *Records of the Northern Convocation*, gives a copy of a letter from the register of bishop Kellawe of Durham, asking the

1. Reg. no. 819; appx. H.

2. Reg. nos. 539, 517, 511, 1027.

3. Appx. H.

4. Beardwood, *Trial of Langton*, pp. 14 & n. 54, 23 & n. 159; Beardwood, *Records*, p. 1, n. 4.

king to release Langton from prison in York castle. This letter is dated *iii nonas Junii*, or 3 June, whereas in the introduction to this volume the editor states that Convocation intervened on Langton's behalf in July 1311.¹ Kellawe's register dates the same letter as *iii nonas Julii*, that is 5 July, as does another source.² Thus it appears that 5 July is the correct date for the northern prelates' appeal on Langton's behalf. A letter from Langton at York, dated 5 July, explains that he was then detained outside his diocese.³ Langton is known to have been a prisoner in York castle on 1 and 2 July also: on 1 July archbishop Greenfield commissioned Thomas de Kirkudbright, bishop of Whithorn, to petition the king and his justices to transfer Langton from the royal prison to the archbishop's prison;⁴ one day later the bishop of Whithorn, William Sothill, canon of Beverley, and John de Hemyngburgh, dean of the Christianity of York, were commissioned to petition for the

1. Records of the Northern Convocation, ed. G.W. Kitchin (Surtees Society, 113, 1906), pp. 53-4, xli.

2. Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense, The Register of Richard Kellawe, Lord Palatine and Bishop of Durham, 1311-1316, ed. T.D. Hardy, 4 vols. (Rolls Series, 1873-78), i, pp. 38-9; Historical Papers and Letters from the Northern Registers, ed. J. Raine (Rolls Series, 1873), pp. 199-200.

3. Reg. no. 726.

4. Reg. Greenfield, v, p. xlv, no. 2549; Foedera, II, ii, p. 138.

release of Langton and John Hotot, clerk, who had been imprisoned on charges of murder, before the justices Henry de Scrop', John de Insula, Thomas de Fyssheburne and John de Doncastria.¹ Langton's register records that the bishop instituted rectors and a prior at York on 24 May and on 5, 10, 18, 20 and 30 June; it is not clear whether or not he would have been able to institute whilst a prisoner in York castle. Until the end of June, however, he may have been detained in more comfortable surroundings, awaiting trial.² It may be significant that Langton's first letter after June, dated 5 July, appointed commissaries to arrange an exchange of benefices in the diocese and to institute and induct the incumbents *ad hoc*, whilst other letters dated by him in July and August record a collation, a custody and a grant of houses; there were no institutions by the bishop.³ On 24 May 1311 Langton was authorised by archbishop Greenfield to ordain in the diocese of York; we would not expect such a faculty to be granted if he was in the king's prison. This ordination service could have been held on 5 June (Trinity) but a letter of this date in Langton's

1. Reg. Greenfield, v, no. 2551.

2. Reg. nos. 631 (24 May), 951 (5 June), 1046 (10 June), 862 (20 June), 724 (18 June), 725 (30 June); I wish to thank Professor R.L. Storey for his advise concerning this matter.

3. Reg. nos. 726, 864, 634, 803.

register explains that the bishop was unable to ordain at York because of ill-health, an excuse which may conceal another reason for his inability to act as he did grant a licence and institute a rector on this day.¹ Perhaps he did not have access to a consecrated building.

Langton had no obvious reason to remain at York for more than four months at this stage in his life; he was not reinstated to the mastership of St Leonard's hospital in the city until January 1314. Thus, he may have been detained from April but not moved to York castle until 1 July, the date of the archbishop's appeal to the king. The date of his release is equally unclear, but this was probably shortly after 24 August, the date of his last letter written at York in this period; we would have expected him to leave the city as soon as he was able and he was in Gainsborough, Lincs., on 31 August.² On 5 August Langton may have been trying to influence Edward II regarding his release from prison when he granted the custody of the sequestered church of Solihull, Warwicks., to the king's treasurer, John Sandale.³

Greenfield's commission to the bishop of

1. Reg. Greenfield, iv, no. 2339; Handbook of Dates for Students of English History, ed. C.R. Cheney (London, 1978), table 21; reg. nos. 633, 861, 951.

2. Reg. nos. 803, 1047.

3. Reg. no. 634; HBC, p. 104.

Whithorn and others on 2 July 1311 clearly states the reason for Langton's arrest; '*pro homicidio*'.¹ Thus his second term of imprisonment appears to have been connected with the death of Richard Wyles, for which he was indicted by 17 September 1310, when Thomas de Fyssheburne, one of the justices involved in 1311, was commissioned to investigate the matter but failed to appear on the appointed day.² The chronicler Adam Murimuth records that Langton was imprisoned at York by two brothers, J. and R. de Feltone. Murimuth, however, places this incident under the year 1307; during his first term of imprisonment Langton was held in the south of England, not in the north. It is thus possible that, as Dr. Beardwood has suggested, the chronicler may have been referring to the bishop's second arrest in 1311.³

The complicated case involving Langton's indictment for Wyles' murder began in September 1300 when Adam Silkeston was murdered at York; Wyles was one of those appealed for the murder. Silkeston had been a servant of the hospital of St Leonard, York, of which Langton was master. Langton was not involved in this incident but he

1. Reg. Greenfield, v, no. 2551.

2. CChW, i, p. 326; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 14, 22, 23.

3. Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum, ed. E.M. Thompson (Rolls Series, 1889), p. 11; appx. H; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 14 & n. 53.

probably later intervened on account of his position at the hospital. Some of those accused of Silkeston's murder revived the case during Langton's trial in 1307-8, which led ultimately to the bishop's arrest for Wyles' murder in 1311. Although Langton received a royal pardon on 22 January 1312, certain proceedings against him continued until 1319.¹

As bishop of Coventry and Lichfield Langton attended parliament regularly. However, this did not prevent him from transacting routine diocesan business, including granting licences and instituting clerks to benefices.² Moreover, when he was treasurer of Edward I and Edward II, Langton successfully combined this office with his episcopal duties, neglecting neither. For example, Langton attended the parliament held at Lincoln in January 1301, when his dismissal as treasurer was demanded,³ joining the king at nearby Nettleham on 28 January and remaining in the area until Edward

1. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 22-4; Beardwood, Records, pp. 319-36; CPR 1307-13, p. 412.

2. Appx. H.

3. HBC, p. 551; Parl. Writs, i, 89; Rot. Parl., i, p. 357; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 6; Denton, Winchelsey, pp. 52-3; The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft in French Verse from the Earliest Period to the Death of King Edward I, ed. T. Wright, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1866-68), ii, pp. 329-31.

departed on 2 March.¹ Throughout this time he was busy as treasurer; the Calendars of Patent, Fine and Close Rolls record that Langton received fines and tested writs during his stay.² Letters in his register show that the bishop stayed at nearby Repham from at least 29 January until 14 February. From this base he also attended to diocesan business, instituting five clerks to benefices, relaxing a sequestration, granting one custody and eight licences.³ After parliament had ended Edward and Langton appear to have gone their separate ways, meeting again at Hailes, Glos., on 23 March. Both then stayed at Evesham and Feckenham, Worcs., with Langton leaving the king on at least two occasions to visit nearby Offenham and Stock Wood. Langton stayed with Edward until at least 7 April after which date he left the court to journey north to Acomb. During his time in Worcestershire Langton again combined the offices of treasurer and bishop, advising the king and receiving fines, instituting four clerks to benefices, granting

1. Appx. H; The Itinerary of Edward I, Part II: 1291-1307 (List and Index Society, 132, 1976), pp. 168-9.

2. CPR 1292-1301, pp. 564, 568-73, 575, 576, 625; CFR 1272-1307, p. 437; CCR 1296-1302, pp. 419, 420, 475, 478.

3. Reg. nos. 333, 420-30, 242, 243, 474, 175, 113.

four licences and one custody.¹

As has been shown in a previous chapter, the bishop personally conducted the majority of ordination services held in the diocese, some of which would have been very long; had he been a 'neglectful' or 'negligent' prelate he would have employed a suffragan bishop more frequently.²

The second criticism levied against Langton was that he was not a very 'spiritually-minded' prelate. However, a bishop was responsible for seeing that canon law was observed throughout his diocese and thus had to understand it himself.³ Langton had not attended university, but if we accept Professor Denton's suggestion that a letter from pope Clement V to Edward II regarding a successor to archbishop Winchelsey does refer to Walter Langton, then he was considered to be a man notable for his knowledge of letters.⁴ As was customary, the leading administrators in the diocese were Masters, four of whom are known to

1. Appx. H; The Itinerary of Edward I, Part II: 1291-1307 (List and Index Society, 132, 1976), pp. 170-1; CPR 1292-1301, pp. 581, 582, 584, 586, 626; reg. nos. 114, 334, 432, 436, 433, 288, 246, 434, 435.

2. See Chapter 1, pp. 51-2, 54; appx. F.

3. Reg. Sutton, iii, p. lxxvii.

4. J.H. Denton, 'Canterbury Archiepiscopal Appointments: the Case of Walter Reynolds', Journal of Medieval History, 1 (1975), pp. 322-4; H.G. Richardson, 'Clement V and the See of Canterbury', English Historical Review, 56 (1941), p. 102.

have graduated in canon or civil law; M. Peter de Insula, archdeacon of Coventry, and M. Walter de Thorp and M. Ralph de Leycestria, vicars-general, were Doctors of canon law, whilst M. Robert de Redeswell, archdeacon of Chester and vicar-general, was a Doctor of civil law.¹

Langton's concern that canon law was observed is illustrated by the publication of the legal requirements for the ordination of clergy in the diocese. Although the statements outlining canon law with regard to the ordination of clergy have only been entered in the register with ordination lists from the year 1315,² most of the clauses had been propounded in thirteenth-century English synodal statutes and would thus have formed the basis of the examination which all candidates for orders would have undergone.³ We may thus presume that earlier ordination services would have been preceded by such statements, though why they have been omitted from the register is unclear.

Langton's concern for the quality of pastoral care in his diocese can be illustrated by consideration of the number of licences for study granted and by the visitations he appears to have

1. Emden, Oxford, ii, pp. 1003, 1141; iii, pp. 2209, 2222.

2. See Chapter 1, pp. 67-8; reg. nos. 1313, 1315-21, 1323-5, 1327, 1328.

3. Robinson, Ordinations, p. 6; Councils & Synods, II, i, pp. 24-5, 59-61, ii, 1000-1.

undertaken throughout his episcopate.

Two hundred licences for study are recorded as being granted to 137 rectors for periods up to seven years in accordance with Boniface VIII's constitution *Cum ex eo* published on 3 March 1298. These figures compare favourably with the number of licences for study granted by contemporary bishops and thus show that Langton was aware of the advantages of having a literate and educated clergy. The individual's parish would not have been deprived of services as the licensed absentee had to provide a suitable deputy.¹ In contrast, only 22 licences for absence for other causes are recorded as being granted during Langton's episcopate, although some of these may conceal licences for study, suggesting that requests for such licences were regarded less favourably by the bishop.²

Langton's interest in the quality of pastoral care provided by his clergy and the general spiritual welfare of his diocese is shown by the visitations which he appears to have undertaken throughout his episcopate. The whole diocese should have been visited every three years.³ However, in a diocese the size of Coventry and

1. See Chapter 1, pp. 77-80.

2. See Chapter 1, p. 73.

3. Reg. Sutton, iii, p. xxiv.

Lichfield this was impossible given Langton's role as Edward I's treasurer, his activities as diplomat and politician and his personal vicissitudes in life. Although evidence of his visitational activity is fragmentary, letters and ordination services recorded in his register indicate the bishop's movements in the diocese, suggesting that at least on some of these occasions he held a visitation.¹ Visitation fines recorded on the sequestrator's account roll for January to September 1301 were probably imposed during visitations held by the archdeacons or their officials as Langton was outside his diocese for most of this period.² Fortunately, some of Langton's visitations are documented in the register and elsewhere. Certain visitations of religious houses are known by the injunctions written in the form of letters once the bishop had left the house in question; a bishop's injunctions made at the time of visitation were not normally preserved in his register.³ Only one, now damaged, visitation roll from Langton's episcopate has survived, presumably because such documents were

1. Appx. H; appx. F.

2. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 M4, mm. 1-4; see appx. G for this account roll; appx. H.

3. Reg. Sutton, iii, p. lxii.

generally thought to be of transitory importance.¹

Langton probably travelled on horseback during his visitations and he was entitled by canon law to seek hospitality for himself and a retinue restricted to thirty clerks and officials. The necessary records were probably carried on packhorses.² The visitation roll from Langton's episcopate indicates average daily travel of about ten miles which would have left sufficient time for the business of visitation, which was both judicial and pastoral. Before a visitation of an archdeaconry, notice would have been issued to the archdeacon or his official, and sometimes to the rural deans, ordering them to summon the clergy and certain members of the laity to undergo visitation. Archidiaconal jurisdiction was suspended for the duration of the visitation. On the arrival of a bishop the clergy and laity were examined, corrected and, if necessary, punished, documents relating to benefices and their incumbents were examined and church buildings inspected. A bishop may also have taken the opportunity to preach, to ordain clergy, baptize or confirm children, consecrate altars or

1. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 AA3; Haines, Worcester, p. 148; Reg. Sutton, iii, pp. xxix, xlii.

2. Reg. Sutton, iii, pp. xxvi-xxvii; Haines, Worcester, p. 149.

reconcile cemeteries.¹

Langton's visitation roll records that he visited the deanery of Tamworth and Tutbury, in the archdeaconry of Stafford, from Tuesday 9 to Wednesday 17 January, probably in 1319. On 9 January he visited Sandwell priory, where he spent the night. ^{HE MAY HAVE CHOSEN WALSALE AS HIS BASE THE FOLLOWING DAY AND CERTAINLY SPENT THE NIGHT THERE.} From here he travelled about ten miles to Canwell priory on the 11th, staying overnight at Shenstone, three miles away. From Shenstone he rode five miles to Farewell priory on the 12th, spending the night at Lichfield, another five miles distant. From here Langton went to the collegiate church of Tamworth on the 13th, a distance of about seven miles, staying overnight, then to the parish church of Harlaston on the 14th, passing through Lichfield, a journey of fourteen miles, staying overnight at Clifton Campville, three miles away. On the 15th he rode ten miles to Burton abbey, staying the night, departing on the 16th for Barton under Needwood, five miles away. From here he travelled three miles to Tatenhill, where he remained overnight, departing on the 17th for the priory of Tutbury, some five miles distant.²

Although the editor of the catalogue of the

1. Haines, Worcester, pp. 148-9; J.R.H. Moorman, Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 191-6.

2. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 AA3; appx. H.

muniments of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield suggests a date of about 1305 for this undated visitation roll,¹ the days and dates given on the roll limit the choice of possible years to 1302, 1308, 1313 or 1319.² In January 1302, 1308 and 1313 Langton was either abroad or in prison; these years can thus be discounted.³ It has been possible to trace only three names on the visitation roll in Langton's register: M. Jordan de Caunvyle, rector of Clifton Campville, Thurstan de Holand, rector of Hanbury, and Br. Thomas Campion, vicar of Walsall.⁴ Caunvyle was instituted on 2 January 1299, Holand on 8 February 1314, whilst Campion resigned before 22 December 1315 when Br. Henry Derham was instituted.⁵ Holand's institution indicates a date for the visitation roll after February 1314, that is 1319; Campion's resignation before 22 December 1315, however, suggests otherwise. Perhaps Campion was later re-instituted as vicar and the record of this has not survived in the register. Langton's

1. Catalogue of the Muniments and Manuscript Books Pertaining to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield, ed. J.C. Cox (William Salt Archaeological Society, 6, part 2, 1886), p. 30.

2. Handbook of Dates for Students of English History, ed. C.R. Cheney (London, 1978), pp. 146, 130, 132, 118.

3. Appx. H.

4. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 AA3.

5. Reg. nos. 19, 749, 771.

register supports the evidence which dates the roll to January 1319; the bishop's visitation of Tamworth on 13 January, where he spent the night, is confirmed by a letter in his register dated there on 14 January 1319, whilst another letter given at Lichfield on 14 January must have been dated as the bishop made a detour on his way from Tamworth to Harlaston.¹ The visitation roll thus belongs to the year 1319.

The visitation roll shows that Langton visited the parish churches of this deanery, not from a single church, as appears to have been the custom in the archdiocese of York,² but from three separate bases: whilst at Canwell priory on 11 January Langton also visited the churches of Drayton Bassett and Shenstone; at the church of Harlaston on the 14th the visitation included the churches of Elford, Thorpe Constantine, Clifton Campville and their chapels; and whilst at Barton under Needwood on the 16th his visitation included the churches of Tatenhill, Rolleston, Hanbury, Tutbury, Hamstall Ridware, Yoxall and Burton on Trent, with their chapels. The monasteries of Sandwell, Burton on Trent and Tutbury were

1. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 AA3; reg. nos. 1205, 1170; MRA, no. 326; appx. H.

2. The Register of William Wickwane, Lord Archbishop of York, 1279-1285, ed. W. Brown (Surtees Society, 114, 1907), p. 174; Haines, Worcester, p. 150.

given one full day each for their visitations on the 9th, 15th and 17th of January, as was the collegiate church of Tamworth on the 13th, whereas the visitations of Canwell and Farewell priories on the 11th and 12th occupied only part of each day.¹

The visitation roll lists the clergy and laity present from each church or chapel visited. For example, at Hamstall Ridware the rector was Richard Oweyn, the chaplain was Henry de Ridewar, the celebrant was Simon de Ridewar and the parishoners present were Thomas Kaa, John Faber, Robert le Wodeward, Robert Molend[inarius] and John Symond, whilst at Yoxall John Russel was rector, John de Ilam was chaplain and William de Burton was the celebrant, and the parishoners present were Roger le Gard[inarius], Geoffrey Wele, John de Scheyle, Richard Park[arius], Richard . . .ot and Richard son of Theke.² It is unfortunate that such records were considered to have little importance by those who made them, for not only does the roll give us some idea of the ratio of clergy to laity but tells us of the occupations of some of the parishoners.

Some documentation has survived about Langton's visitations of archdeaconries other than

1. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 AA3; appx. H.

2. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 AA3.

that of Stafford in January 1319. An undated letter copied into the register between letters of April and November 1300 refers to Langton's earlier visitation of Grandborough, Warwicks., in the archdeaconry of Coventry, when John de Pavely, rector of Ladbroke, Warwicks., confessed that he owed Adam Absolon, a citizen of London, twelve marks and undertook to pay this in instalments.¹ The bishop's visitation probably took place at the beginning of March 1300; his itinerary places him at Eccleshall, Staffs., on 28 February, at Kenilworth, Warwicks., on 1 March and in London on 15 March.² Langton again visited the archdeaconry of Coventry in December 1317, on this occasion accompanied by his sequestrator-general; he held an ordination service at Hillmorton church, Warwicks., on the 17th.³ Similarly, Langton held at least two visitations in the archdeaconry of Chester, one in June 1317 which included a visitation of Whalley abbey, discussed below, and another in November and December 1315. A letter recording an institution to the church of Mottram in Longdendale, Cheshire, dated 4 February 1316, refers to the bishop's recent visitation of the

1. Reg. no. 369.

2. Appx. H.

3. Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1959), p. 15 & n. 77; T. Madox, Formulare Anglicanum (London, 1702), pp. 11-12; reg. no. 1319.

archdeaconry. The letter states that the last rector, M. Jordan de Maclesfeld, resigned after proceedings to deprive him of his benefice were begun by Langton during the visitation.¹ This visitation was probably held between about 17 November and 15 December 1315.²

Greater detail of Langton's visitations of religious houses has survived, through the subsequent injunctions issued, than of benefices. Visitations of religious houses involved a bishop preaching a sermon to the assembled community in the conventual church or chapel, interviewing each member of the community, a tour of inspection of the buildings to see if they were in good repair and measures designed to ascertain whether the rule was being observed.³ Langton visited the Augustinian abbey of Haughmond, Salop, at least twice and probably on three occasions. The first visitation took place before January 1305 when Langton wrote to M. Geoffrey de Blaston, commissary-general, and M. Richard Bernard, archdeacon of Shrewsbury, referring to recent visitations of the house made by the bishop and by commissaries. Blaston and Bernard were ordered to arrange for five monks, found to be behaving

1. Reg. no. 901; Emden, Oxford, ii, p. 1200.

2. Appx. H.

3. Reg. Sutton, iii, p. lviii.

contrary to the rule of the order, to be dispersed to different houses in the diocese.¹ This visitation may have taken place in either March 1304, when Langton was in Shropshire, or in December 1304 when he was elsewhere in the diocese.²

Langton's visitational activity is better documented from 1315. On 10 June 1315 the bishop again visited Haughmond abbey, the record of which is preserved on a small, damaged, piece of parchment containing many erasures and additions, which may have been a working record of the visitation.³ On this occasion Langton forbade the custom of the house which allowed each canon a certain sum of money for shoes and clothing and ordered that these items should henceforth be provided by the chamberlain;⁴ on 2 July 1315 the bishop assigned the fruits, revenue and appurtenances of Cheswardine church, Salop, with rents in Naginton and Hisland, to the abbey in order that the chamberlain should have sufficient funds for this.⁵ Another concern of the visitation

1. Reg. no. 473.

2. Appx. H.

3. Reg. nos. 949, 950.

4. Reg. no. 949; VCH Shropshire, ii, p. 66.

5. Reg. no. 984; The Cartulary of Haughmond Abbey, ed. U. Rees (Shropshire Archaeological Society and University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1985), no. 452; VCH Shropshire, ii, p. 66.

was the resignation of the abbot, Br. Gilbert de Caumpedene, and of the provisions made for his future support, which are set out in considerable detail.¹ Similar regard for the retiring abbot of Darley, Derbys., Br. William de Alsop, was shown when Langton held a visitation of this house on 17 June 1316; once again, the subsequent provisions made for the abbot's sustenance are given in detail.²

Langton was at Haughmond for a third time on 25 November 1316 when he granted a licence for study to M. Robert de Preston, rector of Fitz, Salop, a church in the patronage of the abbey.³ He may have then held another visitation of the abbey.

Grouped together in the register are four sets of injunctions issued after other religious houses were visited by the bishop; St Werburgh's, Chester, on 1 December 1315, Wombridge, Salop, on an unknown date, and Gresley and Repton, Derbys., on 9 and 10 June 1316.⁴ It is possible that Wombridge priory was visited at about the same time that the bishop was at Haughmond, in June

1. Reg. no. 950.

2. Reg. nos. 811, 815.

3. Reg. no. 988.

4. Reg. nos. 809-12.

1315.¹ It is notable that 25 injunctions were issued to St Werburgh's abbey whilst Wombridge received eight, Repton six and Gresley only two. Each set of injunctions generally concern financial matters and enjoined a stricter observance of the rule; common to all are clauses that privileges, pensions or liberties were not to be sold without episcopal licence.² The injunctions for St Werburgh's, in particular, shed light upon life in a house which was apparently heavily in debt; the abbot appears to have enjoyed good food, wine and buying legal books at the expense of the house, pleasures which were now to be curtailed, whereas the prior apparently favoured hunting beasts of the forest with bow and arrows, a pastime which was henceforth forbidden.³

Two further episcopal visitations of religious houses are known from extra-register sources. Shortly before 20 June 1317 Langton visited Whalley abbey, Lancs., when he examined the muniments, accounts, rights and appropriations of the churches of Eccles, Rochdale, Whalley, Blackburn and their chapels, appropriated to the

1. Appx. H.

2. Reg. nos. 809-12.

3. Reg. no. 809.

monastery, confirming these on 20 June.¹

Although the Benedictine abbey of Burton on Trent, Staffs., claimed exemption from episcopal visitation, Langton held an ordination service there on 17 December 1300 and instituted a rector whilst there on 20 August 1305; he may thus have visited the abbey on each occasion.² The visitation roll shows the bishop to have visited Burton abbey again on 15 January 1319.³

An undated letter from Langton to the abbot and convent of Burton has been included by Sir William Dugdale in his *Monasticon Anglicanum*. Dugdale suggests a date of about 1300 for the letter.⁴ This may, however, have been written in October or November 1320, after the episcopal visitation of the abbey in January 1319. In his letter the bishop admonishes the abbot and convent for the decline of discipline in the house, for the ruin of their possessions and for disregarding the decrees issued by him following his last visitation. Langton refers to a letter he received from the king, dated at Fulmer, Bucks., on 17 August last. According to Edward I's itinerary the

1. The Coucher Book of Whalley Abbey, ed. W.A. Hulton (Chetham Society, 1st series, 10, 1847), pp. 307-10.

2. VCH Stafford, iii, p. 29; reg. nos. 1286, 351.

3. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 AA3.

4. Monasticon Anglicanum, ed. Sir William Dugdale, 6 vols. (London, 1817-30), iii, p. 46.

king was was not at Fulmer on such a date.

However, Edward II was there on 18 August 1320; he may also have been there on the 17th.¹ Langton's letter was written at London and he asks the abbot to respond by 23 November. The bishop's itinerary places him in London from 6 October until 16 November 1320, suggesting that his letter to the abbot may have been written during this time.²

The two remaining criticisms levied against bishop Langton, that he was always an administrator rather than a churchman and that his impact on the diocese was limited, are equally untrue and will be considered together.

Of Langton's contemporary episcopal colleagues eleven had been royal clerks at some point in their careers; Walter Reynolds, bishop of Worcester and archbishop of Canterbury, John Sandale, bishop of Winchester, John Langton, bishop of Chichester, William Greenfield and William Melton, archbishops of York, Ralph Baldock, bishop of London, John Hotham and William Louth, bishops of Ely, William March and John Droxford, bishops of Bath and Wells, and Walter Stapeldon, bishop of Exeter.³ There was thus

1. The Itinerary of Edward I, Part II: 1291-1307 (List and Index Society, 132, 1976), pp. 103, 132, 135; CPR 1317-21, pp. 538, 540.

2. Dugdale, *op. cit.*, p. 46; appx H.

3. HBC, pp. 79-80, 85-86, 104-5.

nothing unusual in a royal administrator being appointed to the episcopate or for a bishop to continue in the king's service. The obvious parallel between Langton's secular career with that of Robert Burnell's earlier in Edward I's reign has been drawn by Professor Tout, who classified both as 'negligent' and 'neglectful' prelates.¹ Langton does not deserve to be thus criticised. His background as a royal clerk had certain advantages for the diocese. He was an able administrator, and as such, was well-suited to oversee the management of a large diocese such as Coventry and Lichfield in all matters spiritual. Moreover, through his position as Edward I's treasurer, Langton was able to secure valuable privileges for his see, privileges which might not have been forthcoming had he not been the king's principal minister.

It may have been Langton's experience in royal government which led him to introduce changes in the working practices of his episcopal chancery on becoming bishop; he may have instigated the use of the quire format for his register, replacing the rolls of his predecessor, Roger Meuland, and he probably introduced the use of a working register, one quire of which has

1. Tout, Chapters, ii, pp. 13, 215, 16, 21.

survived.¹

A survey of episcopal estates in the diocese was undertaken after Langton became bishop, providing evidence that he was as efficient in administering his *temporalities* as he was in discharging his ecclesiastical responsibilities. The 32 folio survey is dated 2 March 1298 and gives the extent of the manors of Lichfield and Longdon, Staffs., Bishops Tachbrooke, Bishops Itchington and Chadshunt, Warwicks, Sawley, Derbys., Brewood, Eccleshall, Rugeley, Cannock, Great Haywood and Berkswich, Staffs., Prees, Salop, Burton, Cheshire, Farington, Lancs., and Chester and Wybunbury, Cheshire. On folio 32 is a now badly stained copy of Langton's charter confirming to all his tenants their lands, tenements and appurtenances.²

Unfortunately, the first folio of the survey is also badly stained thus much information relating to the manor of Lichfield is illegible though the manor did have, for example, 46 1/2 acres of pasture in le Redemore, 200 acres of common pasture in Fisherwick and one water mill valued at £33 6s. 3d. a year. The survey contains many details which are of interest and deserves greater consideration than can be given here. For

1. See Chapter 1, pp. 10-16.

2. Stafford Record Office, ms. D (W) 1734/J 2268.

example, at Sawley the bishop's manor comprised a chief messuage with gardens, buildings and houses, said to be worth 13s. 4d. *per annum*. More details of the manor's buldings and appurtenances are then given; there were two granges worth 3s., a sheepfold and cowshed, 3s., stables, 12d., a dovecot, 3s., a ferry and fishery, 40s., and two water mills at Long Eaton and Church Wilne valued at £18 3s. 4d. *per annum*. The boundary of Cannock wood is given in detail, the circuit of which was ten miles, whilst at Cannock there was a chief messuage with garden, surrounded by park, valued at 26s. 8d. a year, a water mill worth 53s. 4d. and a coal mine which was said to be worth 48s. a year, provided that the working of the mine was not hindered by bad weather.¹

Through his position as treasurer and trusted minister of Edward I Langton secured valuable privileges for himself and his successors in the see. On 18 April 1299 'in consideration of the good service rendered by him both before and since his elevation to the bishopric', Langton and his successors were granted the franchise of return of all the king's writs, pleas of withernaam, chattels of felons and fugitives and the fines and amercements of all their men and tenants to be levied by the bishop, his bailiffs and servants

1. Stafford Record Office ms. D (W) 1734/J 2268 fos. 1, 9v-10, 20, 21v.

without being impeded by the king, his heirs, justices, sheriffs, bailiffs or ministers.¹ This was one of only twelve such grants made by Edward I who later decreed in 1306 that they would henceforth be restricted to members of his family.² This charter was thus so important that two copies of it were entered in Langton's register, with a note that the charter was also enrolled on the memoranda roll under business for Easter 27 Edward I.³ The bishops of Coventry and Lichfield now had a substantial liberty comprising an aggregate of royal privileges.⁴

Preceding both copies of the charter in Langton's register are lists of episcopal tenants with the amounts each were fined and amerced, accounts of which were rendered by the sheriffs then paid to the bishop by virtue of the charter. The first list appears to have been copied from the roll of fines and amercements for Shropshire dated 27 Edward I, made during an assize held by justices Adam Crokedayk and William Inge on 3 and

1. PRO, K.R. Memoranda Rolls (E 159), 72, m. 29d; Cal. Charter Rolls 1257-1300, p. 476; VCH Stafford, iii, pp. 17-18; M.T. Clanchy, 'The Franchise of Return of Writs', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, 17 (1967), pp. 59-82.

2. Clanchy, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-8.

3. Reg. nos. 813, 814; PRO, K.R. Memoranda Rolls (E 159), 72, m. 29d.

4. VCH Stafford, iii, pp. 16-18.

7 September 1299.¹ An assize roll for this session by Crokedayk and Inge has survived but, unfortunately, the names recorded in Langton's register do not appear on this roll.²

Nevertheless, Langton's register records that a total of 24s. 2d. was received in fines and that this was paid to the bishop in accordance with the king's charter.³ The second list of fines paid by episcopal tenants is said to have been accounted for by the sheriff, Roger de Cheygny, and taken from two rolls, an assize roll for Staffordshire dated 8 Edward II (1314-1315) and a roll of amercements placed before the barons of the exchequer concerning the administration of writs at Hilary term 4 Edward II (13 January 1311). Unfortunately, assize rolls for these dates have not survived for the county. Langton's register gives the total sum received as £11 19s. 8d. which was paid to the bishop in accordance with Edward I's charter.⁴

Langton received other charters from Edward I, and from Edward II when restored to this king's favour, for the benefit of his cathedral, the city

1. Reg. no. 813.

2. PRO, Assize Rolls (Just. 1), 743, mm. 6-10.

3. Reg. no. 813.

4. Reg. no. 814; List of Plea Rolls (PRO, Lists and Indexes, iv), p. 158; List of Sheriffs (ibid., ix), p. 117.

of Lichfield and his episcopal manors. On the same day that Langton received the charter granting the return of all writs, 18 April 1299, Edward I also granted him pavage for seven years in order to finance the paving of the city of Lichfield and the enclosure of the bishop's and canons' houses in the cathedral precinct with a stone wall. The grant authorised Langton to levy tolls on goods brought into the city for sale over a seven year period; for example, on every horse, mare, ox or cow sold, 1/2d. could be levied, on a cart bringing meat, salted or fresh, 1 1/2d., on a cask of honey, 2d. and on 1000 herring 1/2d.¹ This grant was renewed on 4 October 1306 for another seven years to include the pavage of the town of Eccleshall, Staffs., and this grant was, in turn, renewed by Edward II on 13 March 1312 for a further seven years to run from 4 October, but was limited to the city of Lichfield only.²

The royal grant dated 18 April 1299, allowing the houses within the cathedral precinct to be protected by a stone wall, was extended two days later so that the walls could be crenellated 'for the security and quiet of the canons'. On 19 June 1305 Langton received another royal grant that he

1. CPR 1292-1301, p. 62; MRA, no. 292, where the items on which tolls could be levied are given in detail.

2. CPR 1301-7, p. 463; CPR 1307-13, p. 440.

might crenellate his houses in the parish of St Mary in the Strand, without the Bar of New Temple, London, as well as those in his bishopric.¹

Langton made other improvements to his episcopal manors. On 18 September 1299 he received licence to impark his wood at Tarvin, Cheshire, adjoining Delamere forest and to build there a deer-leap 200 feet broad.² An undated agreement between Langton and Hugh le Despenser, though probably made at about this time, allowed the bishop to close a deer-leap in his park at Tarvin which led into Despenser's adjoining park at Great Barrow. This agreement was, however, for Langton's lifetime only.³

Langton received grants of land thus extending some of his episcopal estates, benefitting himself and his successors. He received two grants *in mortmain* extending his episcopal manor in the parish of St Mary in the Strand, London. The first, made by M. Thomas de Abberbury, the bishop's chancellor and sometime vicar-general, granted Langton a messuage, valued at half a mark *per annum*. This grant was licensed by the king on 7 July 1305. However, there had obviously been a dispute between Abberbury and the

1. CPR 1292-1301, p. 409; CPR 1301-7, p. 367.

2. CPR 1292-1301, p. 439.

3. MRA, no. 225.

bishop over the rightful ownership of another messuage in the same parish which ended on 6 October 1305 when Langton acknowledged this to rightfully belong to Abberbury and restored it to him.¹ At the end of his episcopate in 1321, the bishop acquired a further piece of land to the east of his manor, measuring seven perches by four, worth 12d. *per annum*, from John de Langeton, king's clerk, who held this of the bishop of Worcester. A mortmain licence for this grant was issued on 4 August 1321.² In January 1307 Langton received a pardon for acquiring in *mortmain*, without licence, various parcels of land in Longdon and Rugeley in exchange for other parcels of land.³

The bishop received valuable grants of fairs and markets for himself and his successors, thus adding to the extensive grant made to bishop Roger Meuland on 2 June 1259. On 18 September 1299 Langton was granted the right to hold a weekly market each Thursday and an annual fair from 24 to 26 July at his manor of Burton, Cheshire, whilst on 28 January 1307 he was granted a weekly market

1. PRO, Inquisitions ad quod damnum (C 143), 53, 4; CPR 1301-7, p. 373; MRA, no. 680.

2. PRO, Inquisitions ad quod damnum (C 143), 149, 13; The Register of Thomas Cobham, Bishop of Worcester, 1317-1327, ed. E.H. Pearce (Worcestershire Historical Society, 40, 1930), p. 104; CPR 1321-4, p. 12.

3. CPR 1301-7, p. 489.

to be held on Wednesdays at his manor of Prees, Salop, and two annual fairs to be held at his manor of Lichfield, one on the morrow of Whitsunday and for fourteen days following and the other from 2 to 9 November.¹

Langton's greatest contribution to the diocese, however, was in his generous patronage of the cathedral Close. Although the chapter had jurisdiction within the Close and was in charge of the cathedral building itself, the land within the Close was in the bishop's custody and he thus assigned the houses therein to the canons. During his episcopate Langton exerted a great influence over changes made to the cathedral fabric; the chapter, however, directed the work that was carried out.² His position as Edward I's treasurer gave Langton the opportunity to acquire, through his uncanonical money-lending activities, a huge personal fortune some of which he used to finance the building of a new episcopal palace and the work undertaken to enlarge the cathedral of St

1. Cal. Charter Rolls 1257-1300, pp. 18-19, 479; ibid. 1300-26, p. 78.

2. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, pp. 16, 32; reg. no. 803; MRA, no. 728.

Chad.¹ The bishop's patronage of the building work undertaken in the cathedral Close has been studied in detail by Dr. Maddison who has concluded that Langton was 'one of the foremost patrons of religious architecture in early fourteenth century England'.²

Langton's royal grant in April 1299, enabling him to have a wall built to enclose the cathedral precinct, probably marked the start of the building of his new episcopal palace in the north-eastern corner of the Close, as the palace formed an integral part of the new wall. The new palace was to replace the existing dilapidated residence in the north-western corner of the Close.³

Langton's palace was a smaller version of Caernavon castle, having an eastern wall standing over 30 feet high and articulated polygonal towers

1. R.H. Bowers, 'From Rolls to Riches: King's Clerks and Moneylending in Thirteenth-Century England', Speculum, 58 (1983), pp. 67-71; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 25-38; Beardwood, Records; Prestwich, Edward I, pp. 278-9; The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough, ed. H. Rothwell (Camden, 89, 1957), p. 383, according to Guisborough Langton had lands worth 5000 marks a year and had silver worth £50,000, besides gold, jewels and precious stones in 1307; however, for a more conservative estimate see CCR 1330-3, p. 182, when Langton's executors in 1331 valued the bishop's goods and chattels at £20,000 and more.

2. J.M. Maddison, 'Decorated Architecture in the North-West Midlands; an investigation of the work of provincial masons and their sources' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, School of Architecture, 1978), p. 142.

3. Maddison, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-7; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 150; MRA, no. 646.

of which the northern tower stood 52 feet high; the surviving lower part of one angle tower is an enlarged version of Caernarvon's eagle tower chapel vault. As keeper of the wardrobe and as treasurer, Langton would have been familiar with the Edwardian castles being constructed in Wales and was in a position to use the services of royal masons; it is possible that the bishop employed Henry Ellerton, who succeeded James of St George as master of the king's works, as his master mason at Lichfield.¹ The interior decoration of Langton's new palace was, apparently, as impressive as the building itself; the large hall had murals depicting the coronation, marriage, wars and funeral of Edward I, with writing explaining the work, a fitting tribute to the bishop's greatest patron. No wonder that Langton's episcopal palace was said to be the most magnificent in England.²

Prior to his arrest in August 1307 Langton commissioned from goldsmiths in Paris a marble shrine, adorned with gold and precious stones, to house the relics of St Chad. He must have visited

1. Maddison. *op. cit.*, pp. 107-8, 182; it appears that James of St George may have been responsible for only part of the building of Caernarvon castle and that Walter of Hereford should be credited with the essentials of the design, see A.J. Taylor, 'Master James of St George', English Historical Review, 65 (1950), pp. 441-2.

2. Maddison, *op. cit.*, p. 108; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 159; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, p. 38.

Paris often during his diplomatic missions in France and he certainly passed through the city in 1305 and 1306. Langton's bankers, the Ballardì of Lucca, paid an unspecified amount for the shrine, but in 1345 a cathedral inventory valued this at £2000.¹

During Langton's episcopate the fabric of the cathedral was greatly improved by the addition of the two western steeples, the crossing tower and its spire, the eastern extension, including the re-modelling of the choir and the commencement of a new Lady Chapel. This work was probably not begun until the bishop had had his temporalities returned by Edward II in 1312. The construction of the Lady Chapel probably began towards the end of his episcopate as Langton bequeathed all his florins, his vessels of gold and silver and all his plate, which were kept at Eccleshall, to finance its completion. His will stipulated that neither his executors nor the dean and chapter of Lichfield were to divert these funds for any other use. However, in 1322 Edward II forced a loan of 904 marks from the dean and chapter, the entire sum reserved for the completion of the chapel.

1. Maddison, *op. cit.*, pp. 154, 166; J. Austerberry, Chad, Bishop and Saint (Derby, 1984), p. 12; appx. H; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 27; Catalogue of the Muniments and Manuscript Books Pertaining to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield, ed. J.C. Cox (William Salt Archaeological Society, 6, part 2, 1886), pp. 199, 207.

Langton's Lady Chapel was more ambitious than most in its construction and appears to have been consciously modelled on the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, with which the bishop would have been familiar.¹

During all this building activity Langton showed concern for the vicars of the cathedral who were lodging outside the Close, possibly in nearby Gaia Lane. The increase in the number of non-resident canons in the fourteenth century created the problem of where to house the vicars if common halls of residence had not been provided. Many vicars thus lodged without supervision outside the precincts of their cathedral to the consternation of the cathedral chapters who were concerned about the behaviour of their vicars, particularly with regard to the vow of chastity. Thus, common halls of residence were provided in all English secular cathedrals during the fourteenth century. In January 1315 Langton granted the vicars of Lichfield a place in the north-western corner of the Close with all the houses built thereon, excepting the dovecot and grange, that had formerly belonged to M. Thomas de Abberbury, the

1. Maddison, *op. cit.*, pp. 142, 143, 150, 154-5, 158-9, 160, 166-7; Bodleian Library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 9v; CPR 1321-4, pp. 119, 180; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 39, 40; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 153; but see Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, pp. 12-13, who argues that the construction of the Lady Chapel was not begun until 1322.

bishop's former chancellor and vicar-general, who had died in 1307. The vicars henceforward lived in common.¹

Because of his patronage of his cathedral, Langton appears to have enjoyed good relations with the dean and chapter of Lichfield, although he was unsuccessful in his attempts to visit the chapter, the common churches of the chapter and the prebends, possibly because of the unusually powerful position of the dean. He did, however, visit the chapter of Coventry without difficulty. No bishop of Coventry and Lichfield succeeded in visiting the Lichfield chapter until bishop Scrope did so in 1397; however, a formal agreement about episcopal visitations was not reached until 1428.²

The bishop himself held no prebends and thus was not a regular member of the Lichfield chapter; he could, however, attend chapter meetings on special occasions. Episcopal statutes were made in conjunction with, or with the consent of, the chapter.³ Fortunately, a sixteenth-century copy of earlier Lichfield episcopal statutes was made, including statutes promulgated by Langton on 28

1. K. Edwards, The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages (Manchester, 1949), pp. 282-3; L.J.R.O. ms. D30 K2; MRA, nos. 94, 207; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 156.

2. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, p. 34; MRA, nos. 466, 643, 743; Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 133; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 155.

3. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, pp. 33-4.

May 1300 in the chapter house of the cathedral.¹ Several of Langton's statutes were addressed to the dean. [1] On the two major feasts of St Chad (2 March) and the assumption of the Virgin Mary (15 August), the dean or his deputy, who was to be a canon of the cathedral, not a vicar, was to celebrate divine service and mass. Following the Use of Lichfield, the dean was to feast with the whole choir, or at least the canons, for eight days before each major feast or entertain each canon in his house. [2] Henceforth, no vicar was to be dismissed by the dean alone; this was to be done jointly by the dean and chapter. [3] The dean was to give proper notice of his visitations of prebendal and common fund churches, limiting his retinue to ten mounted men, and [5] he was instructed not to re-commence his casual visitations. [7] The dean was reminded that jurisdiction over the ministers and parishoners in the prebendal churches and the churches of the common fund belonged to the dean and chapter, not to him alone. [4] Due honour was to be given to the cathedral by the ringing of bells before vespers and matins. [6] Henceforth, only the treasurer was to have a key to the treasury, not the dean or any official he associated with, and the office of treasurer was to be distinct from

1. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 XIII, fos. 5v-6, 18v-19.

other offices.¹

The remaining statutes concerned the chapter. [8] The chapter was to elect three or four canons who were to have responsibility for the water supply from the conduit to the houses of the canons.² [9] Henceforth, a canon wishing to reside had to give 40 days notice of this intention and, [10] moreover, on account of the burdens of residence he would not be allowed to reside unless he was able to spend £40 a year beyond his commons. The cost of hospitality in a secular cathedral was great and the money distributed from the common fund was probably inadequate to meet the needs of all the residentiary canons. Thus Langton, in conjunction with the chapter, was attempting to limit the number of residentiary canons by imposing a monetary qualification.³

1. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 XIII, fos. 18v-19; Monasticon Anglicanum, ed. Sir William Dugdale, 6 vols. (London, 1817-30), vi (3), p. 1261; VCH Stafford, iii, p. 153.

2. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 XIII, fos. 18v-19; Dugdale, *op. cit.*, p. 1261; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, p. 59.

3. L.J.R.O. ms. D30 XIII, fo. 18v-19; Dugdale, *op. cit.*, pp. 1261-2; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, pp. 67, 70; Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-5.

VI. LANGTON'S USE OF HIS EPISCOPAL PATRONAGE.

Magnates used their patronage to create goodwill, establish favour and reward and provide for those with whom they were closely associated or sought to influence. Langton was no exception; he exercised his episcopal patronage to favour his relations, his familiar clerks and their kin, and king's clerks or servants of the crown and their relatives. Episcopal and king's clerks collated by a bishop were not expected to be resident in their benefices, which they regarded purely as a source of income.¹ A bishop's fund of patronage was extended by the grant of pensions, licences for absence and the temporary custody of sequestrated benefices. Langton's collation to benefices and his grants of custodies, pensions and licences will be considered in turn.

The patronage Langton bestowed upon the only relatives of whom we can be certain, his nephews Walter and Robert de Clipston, has already been discussed above.² A Thomas de Langeton occurs in the register and he too may have been related to the bishop. Thomas was first of all presented to the church of Harley, Salop, by Sir Richard de Harle, knight, holding this from 10 July 1305 until he resigned in October 1313. On 27 November

1. Haines, Worcester, pp. 94-7; Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-1; Storey, Diocesan Admin. (1972), p. 8.

2. See above pp. 205-8.

1313 Langton collated Thomas, by then a priest, to the church of Southam, Warwicks., which had devolved to the bishop's collation by lapse of time. Although the *Taxatio* values Southam at £6 13s. 4d, Thomas was ordered to pay an annual pension of 30 marks to the dean and chapter of Lichfield.¹

Ordinands originating from the Langton villages in Leicestershire were ordained in the diocese by letters dimissory; they may have had some connection with the bishop. John de Langeton, rector of Finmere, Oxon., was ordained to the priesthood in June 1300. The bishop held the manor of Finmere until 1300 or 1301; if he also held the advowson of the church he may have been John's patron, but there is no evidence that this John was the bishop's familiar clerk.² Nicholas Broun of Langton also received the priesthood in June 1310.³ Robert called Scot of Langton was ordained to the orders of subdeacon, deacon and priest at consecutive services held in December 1309 and March and June 1310.⁴ Robert de Langeton, rector of Trimley, Suffolk, received the orders of subdeacon, deacon and priest in December 1318 and

1. Reg. nos. 349, 964, 648, 654; *Taxatio*, p. 241.

2. Reg. no. 1285; Beardwood, *Trial of Langton*, pp. 19-20, 33; see above pp. 208-10.

3. Reg. no. 1304.

4. Reg. nos. 1302-4.

April and June 1319 respectively.¹ Another Robert de Langeton was ordained to the subdiaconate in June 1300, although there is no mention of his letters dimissory.² A William de Langeton was ordained to the order of subdeacon in December 1318 and he may have received the priesthood as William de Thorp juxta Langeton in December 1319.³ Alexander de Langeton received the orders of subdeacon and deacon in the diocese in December 1317 and June 1318 and, presumably, it was he who, as Alexander son of Richard de Thorp Langeton, was ordained to the priesthood in December 1318.⁴ Simon de Langeton received the order of priest in December 1316.⁵

Of the five archdeaconries, Chester, Derby and Shrewsbury were in the bishop's collation for the whole of his episcopate, Coventry was in his patronage until November 1299, with the archdeacons being provided by the pope from May 1302, whilst Stafford appears to have been occupied by alien papal provisors for his entire episcopate.⁶ Thus the rising tide of papal

1. Reg. nos. 1321-3.

2. Reg. no. 1285.

3. Reg. nos. 1321, 1324.

4. Reg. nos. 1319-21.

5. Reg. no. 1316.

6. See Chapter 2 under each archdeaconry.

provisions in the fourteenth century is reflected in the diocese; an archdeaconry was ideal for a papal provisor, being easily served by a deputy, the archdeacon's official.¹

The leading administrators of the diocese were well-provided for by Langton. The careers of the archdeacons have already been discussed.² M. Walter de Thorp, Langton's official in 1297-99 and the first vicar-general to be commissioned in 1297-8, had left the bishop's service by 19 July 1303 when he was appointed Dean of the Arches.³ However, Thorp continued to hold benefices in the diocese until his death. He was collated rector of Astbury, Cheshire, on 5 January 1299 as the patronage had fallen to the bishop by lapse of time and was later instituted on 17 May 1300, presented by the abbot and convent of St Werburgh, Chester. He resigned Astbury on 16 June 1320, exchanging this for the church of Worfield, Salop, to which he was collated on 7 July 1320, holding this until his death in January 1321.⁴ Thorp was collated prebendary of Dernford on 24 May 1298 which he held until 16 June 1298 when he received

1. Sir R.W. Southern, Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages (Penguin, 1970), pp. 161-2.

2. See Chapter 2 under each archdeaconry.

3. See Chapter 2, pp. 137-9, 168.

4. Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 2222; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; reg. nos. 22, 156, 165, 1269.

the prebend of Weeford. He exchanged Weeford for the prebend of Dasset Parva on 17 December 1320, which he held until his death.¹

M. Thomas de Abberbury was Langton's chancellor possibly until his death in May 1307, was vicar-general on three occasions, in 1300, 1301-2 and 1305-6, and was one of the papal administrators of the diocese when the bishop was suspended from episcopal office by the pope in 1302-3.² Abberbury was presented by Edward I to the church of Sudborne, Suffolk, on 24 April 1298 on Langton's information, an example of the bishop using his position as the king's treasurer for the benefit of a familiar clerk. He was prebendary of Wellington until he was collated to the prebend of Berkswich on 17 December 1298 and he vacated this prebend when collated precentor of Lichfield on 1 September 1303. He held the precentorship until his death.³

It is possible that Richard son of John de Abberbur' was related to Thomas. Langton granted Richard custody of the sequestered church of Rodington, Salop, on 2 August 1299. He was then instituted as rector by Thomas, in his capacity as

1. Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 2222; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; reg. nos. 378, 4, 382, 1274.

2. See Chapter 2, pp. 139, 163-4, 186-7.

3. Emden, Oxford, i, p. 2; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; CPR 1292-1301, p. 345; reg. nos. 31, 18, 384, 392.

vicar-general, on 7 June 1300, presented by the abbot and convent of Shrewsbury. When he was ordained to the subdiaconate by Langton on 17 December 1300, Richard was also granted a licence to study for seven years with dispensation that during this time he should not be obliged to receive higher orders; Richard was subsequently ordained deacon in December 1305 and priest in December 1307.¹

The career of M. Robert de Redeswell, archdeacon of Chester until his death in January 1315 and vicar-general in 1307-8 and 1309, has already been discussed.² He was related to Simon de Redeswell who was instituted as rector of Whitnash, Warwicks., on 4 June 1300 on the presentation of the prior and convent of Kenilworth. Simon resigned Whitnash prior to his institution as rector of West Kirby, Cheshire, on 4 March 1302. On 4 June 1300 Langton granted him a licence to study for seven years and he was a Master by at least 3 April 1317 when he received a pardon for being non-resident in his cure at West Kirby since 1310, a concession perhaps made in light of Robert de Redeswell's loyal service to the diocese.³

1. Reg. nos. 399, 330, 417, 1286, 1295, 1298.

2. See Chapter 2, pp. 91-3, 150.

3. Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F under Robert de Redeswell; reg. nos. 104, 124, 180, 806.

Langton's last vicar-general, M. Ralph de Leycestria, who was commissioned in 1312-13, may have come to the bishop's notice on the recommendation of his first patron Sir Robert Peverel, knight, the bishop's brother; Peverel presented Leycestria to Church Brampton, Northants., on 9 March 1297, which he held until 1313.¹ Leycestria may have been rector of Southam, Warwicks., by April 1297; however, Gilbert de Hamelhamste was instituted to this church on 5 April 1298.² Leycestria was one of Langton's clerks from at least 23 January 1299.³ He was collated prebendary of Stotfold on 10 July 1313 immediately after Langton's return from France, presumably as a reward for his work as vicar-general, the commission of which was about to end. He vacated Stotfold by 4 December 1319.⁴

M. Philip de Turvill was collated Langton's official on 22 November 1313, the culmination of a career which began in the courts of Canterbury

1. See Chapter 2, p. 155; Reg. Sutton, ii, p. 138; Emden, Oxford, ii, p. 1141.

2. Emden, Oxford, ii, p. 1141; CPR 1292-1301, p. 283; reg. no. 89.

3. Reg. nos. 30, 67, 69.

4. Reg. no. 742; MRA, no. 571; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; Fasti, x, p. 55.

where he was auditor of causes in 1308-10.¹ Turvill was associated with the diocese from birth; he was the son of Robert de Turvill, lord of Bedworth, Warwicks., and he was presented to the church there on 26 September 1300, not by his father but by William de Charneles, then said to be lord of Bedworth. Before receiving Bedworth he had been rector of Grendon, Warwicks., from at least 19 May 1296.² He obtained a licence to study for three years on 1 July 1301. Turvill resigned Bedworth before 4 July 1309 when he was made prebendary of Curborough by Redeswell, the vicar-general, holding this until his death in May 1337.³ Langton collated him prebendary of Colwich on 27 March 1315. However, there appears to have been some dispute over the patronage of this prebend and another prebendary occurs in September 1316.⁴

William de Eston was one of Langton's most trusted clerks and was closely associated with the bishop's financial dealings. When Langton was imprisoned by Edward II in 1307-8 he kept in touch

1. Reg. no. 757; Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 1918; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; see Chapter 2, pp. 167-8, 169.

2. Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 1918; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F; reg. no. 109; VCH Warwick, vi, p. 27; Reg. Winchelsey, ii, p. 909.

3. Reg. nos. 445, 618, 702; Fasti, x, p. 27; Bodleian library ms. Ashmole 794, fo. 72v.

4. Reg. no. 760, Fasti, x, p. 24.

with his diocese. One of his mandates addressed to his vicar-general, M. Robert de Redeswell, during this period ordered him to grant a prebend in the church of Gnosall, Staffs., which was in the bishop's patronage, to Eston. It was, presumably, in order to receive the prebend in Gnosall that Eston resigned his prebend in St John's, Chester, which Langton personally collated to on 6 December 1308.¹

When Langton was suspended from episcopal office by the pope in 1302-3 it is possible that the three administrators appointed to run the diocese may have been nominated by the bishop; M. Elias de Napton, archdeacon of Derby, M. Thomas de Abberbury, chancellor and vicar-general, and Philip de Everdon.² It is thus possible that the bishop had some say in whom the administrators presented to the two benefices in his patronage which fell vacant during the sequestration: M. Simon de Shirleye, commissary-general, was granted the mastership of the hospital of St Andrew, Denhall, Cheshire, on 15 August 1302 and was still master in July 1310 when he received papal

1. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 12, 25, 27; Beardwood, Records, pp. 10, 17, 18, 27, 33, 75, 85, 95, 113, 126, 129, 147, 156, 157, 170, 174, 184, 185, 189, 193, 198, 237, 243-5, 257, 283, 338; reg. nos. 71, 366, 368, 371, 372, 539, 820.

2. See Chapter 2, pp. 186-9.

confirmation of his benefices;¹ and Richard Abel was granted a prebend in the college of St Chad, Shrewsbury, on the same date. Abel was apparently only ten years old at this time; his grant may thus have been made at the request of his father Sir John Abel, knight, escheator south of Trent, who must have been in Langton's acquaintance.² Langton continued his patronage of Richard Abel; on 29 December 1311 he was collated prebendary of Bishopshull, holding this until his death in 1327.³

Prominent among the recipients of episcopal patronage outside the circle of diocesan administrators was Otto de Grandisson, nephew of his famous namesake who accompanied Langton on certain diplomatic missions for Edward I. The younger Otto was presented by the king to the church of Manchester on 18 November 1299, a benefice which Langton had held prior to his consecration. Grandisson received two licences to study, one for two years from the date of his institution and another on 29 March 1300 for five years; he was a scholar at Cambridge in June 1301. He had a distinguished career becoming bishop of

1. Reg. no. 460; VCH Chester, iii, p. 185; CPL, ii, p. 70.

2. Reg. no. 391; VCH Shropshire, ii, p. 115; Emden, Oxford, i, p. 3; Jenkins, Lichfield Cathedral, appx. F.

3. Reg. no. 734; Emden, Oxford, i, p. 3.

Toul in 1306 and was bishop of Basle from 1306-9.¹

Many important king's clerks received benefices in the diocese, two of whom, John de Berwick and John de Benstede, also accompanied Langton on diplomatic missions for Edward I. Berwick held only one benefice in the diocese, the prebend of Stotfold which he occupied until his death prior to 2 July 1312. He was, however, a notable pluralist and held prebends in St Paul's, London, and in the dioceses of Salisbury, York, Bath and Wells and Exeter until his death.² Benstede was controller of the wardrobe 1295-1305, keeper of the wardrobe 1307-8 and justice of common pleas 1308-20.³ Langton collated him to the prebend of Sandiacre on 3 February 1297, a prebend which the bishop had held prior to his consecration.⁴

Other prominent king's clerks included John Droxford, controller of the wardrobe 1290-5,

1. C.L. Kingsford, 'Sir Otho de Grandison 1238?-1328', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 3rd series, 3 (1909), pp. 184-5; reg. nos. 82, 162; A.B. Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 267, 676; CPL, i, p. 594; CPR 1292-1301, p. 440.

2. Reg. no. 739; Fasti, x, p. 55; v, p. 31; iii, p. 36; vi, p. 48; viii, p. 48; ix, pp. 23, 24.

3. HBC, p. 80; DNB, ii, pp. 261-2; C.L. Kingsford, 'John de Benstede and His Missions for Edward I' in Essays in History Presented to R.L. Poole, ed. H.W.C. Davis (Oxford, 1927), pp. 332-59.

4. Reg. no. 375.

acting treasurer before Langton's appointment to that office on 28 September 1295, keeper of the wardrobe in 1295-1307 and 1308-9 and bishop of Bath and Wells 1309-29. He was collated prebendary of Dernford on 24 September 1298, vacating this on his acceptance of the prebend of Berkswich on 21 January 1304 which he held until he became bishop.¹ He was instituted rector of Childwall, Lancs., before December 1307, a church in the patronage of Robert de Holand, one of Thomas, earl of Lancaster's retainers, and he resigned this on 6 October 1309 prior to his consecration on 9 November 1309.²

Another influential servant of the crown was John Sandale, treasurer 1310-11 and 1318-19, acting treasurer in 1312, chancellor 1314-1318 and bishop of Winchester from 1316 until his death in November 1319.³ Langton granted him custody of three sequestrated churches; Aston on Trent, Derbys., on 3 November 1304, Stoke on Trent, Staffs., at the presentation of Thomas, earl of Lancaster, on 20 January 1305 and Solihull, Warwicks., on 5 August 1311; Solihull may have been granted in an attempt to influence Edward II

1. HBC, pp. 79-80, 104, 228; DNB, vi, pp. 19-20; reg. nos. 3, 383, 479, 397; Fasti, x, pp. 31, 66.

2. Reg. nos. 509, 836; HBC, p. 228; Maddicott, Lancaster, p. 62.

3. HBC, pp. 104, 86, 277; DNB, xvii, pp. 739-40.

regarding the bishop's release from prison at York. Sandale was subsequently instituted to Stoke on Trent on 20 April 1305, to Aston on Trent on 1 October 1305 and to Solihull on 29 October 1311.¹ In January 1306 and August 1307 he received papal dispensation to hold his benefices, including Aston and Stoke, in plurality. However, Sandale had resigned Aston before 21 August 1311 and in December 1313 received a further papal dispensation to hold benefices, including Stoke, Solihull and the treasurership of Lichfield, in plurality.² Archbishop Winchelsey had collated him treasurer of Lichfield on 12 January 1311 after the previous incumbent, Thomas de Neville, had been deprived by the archbishop on the grounds that his collation had been made uncanonically. Sandale resigned the treasurership on 6 August 1316 after his election as bishop of Winchester.³

Other prominent king's clerks collated by Langton included Philip Willoughby, Ingelard Warley, John Hotham and William Melton. Willoughby, keeper of the wardrobe 1272-1274, chancellor of the exchequer 1283-1305 and dean of Lincoln 1288-1305, was collated prebendary of Bubbenhall on 28 February 1300, vacating this

1. Reg. nos. 261, 298, 634, 302, 638.

2. CPL, ii, pp. 9, 27, 88, 119-20.

3. Fasti, x, p. 11; Reg. Winchelsey, ii, pp. 1198-1201; reg. nos. 274, 689, 778.

prior to his collation to the prebend of Ryton on 21 January 1304. He held Ryton until his death before 1 August 1305 after which Langton collated M. Thomas de Goldbourgh, nephew of Antony Bek, bishop of Durham.¹

Ingelard Warley, keeper of the wardrobe in 1309-1311 and 1312-1314 and chief baron of the exchequer 1316-17, received two churches in *commendam* during Redeswelle's commission as vicar-general in 1307-8; Albrighton, Salop, on 30 November 1307 and Mucklestone, Staffs., on 10 June 1308. He was subsequently instituted by proctor to both churches, receiving Albrighton on 26 May 1308 and Mucklestone on 12 September 1308; he may have held these churches throughout Langton's episcopate as neither are mentioned in the register again. He received papal dispensation to hold Albrighton and Mucklestone, and benefices in other dioceses, in plurality in March 1308 and May 1310. Warley resigned his prebend in the college of St Chad, Shrewsbury, which was in the bishop's collation, before 19 February 1310 when his brother Philip de Warle was collated.²

John Hotham, treasurer 1317-13, chancellor 1318-20 and bishop of Ely 1316-37, was collated to

1. HBC, p. 79; Fasti, i, p. 3; reg. nos. 388, 477, 398, 484.

2. HBC, p. 80; reg. nos. 505, 529, 526, 544; CPL, ii, pp. 23, 39, 72; reg. no. 939.

the prebend in St John's, Chester, formerly held by Elias de Napton, archdeacon of Derby, on 11 September 1311, vacating this by 7 August 1316 after his election as bishop.¹ William Melton, controller of the wardrobe 1307-14, keeper of the wardrobe 1314-16, future treasurer 1325-6 and archbishop of York 1317-40, received custody of the sequestrated church of Hawarden, Flintshire, on 24 May 1315. The letter of custody was renewed on 21 August when Langton ordered that he should not be bound to render an account for his administration of the church. It is not certain how long Melton had custody of Hawarden but another clerk was granted this church *in commendam* on 6 May 1316.²

Langton extended his fund of patronage by granting pensions and licences for absence. Richard Wolvy, clerk, was granted an annual pension of five marks in October 1299 until such time that he should be provided to a benefice worth 60 marks annually by the bishop or by others. It is possible that Wolvy's expectation of a benefice was made by papal provision. However, this is not recorded in the Calendars of Papal Letters and Langton's register does not record

1. HBC, pp. 104, 86, 244; reg. nos. 866, 779, 908.

2. HBC, pp. 80, 105, 282; reg. nos. 897, 904.

that Wolvy received a benefice in the diocese.¹

Other pensions granted by the bishop were to clerks and advocates who may have been retained as legal counsel at the Court of the Arches, London.² On 11 November 1298 M. William de Fodringeye was granted a pension of six marks, to be paid in two instalments on 2 February and 29 August, whilst M. John de Bruton was to receive five marks and M. Henry de Derb' 40s. No further information appears to have survived about Fodringeye; Bruton, however, was later appointed chancellor of the archbishop of Canterbury in 1316 and archdeacon of Canterbury in 1323, whilst Derb' was an auditor of causes in 1308 and 1310.³ An undated letter from Langton entered in the register between business dated June 1307 and May 1309 again grants pensions of 40s. to M. Geoffrey de Eydon, M. John de Bloye and Andrew de Brugg, the bishop's advocates at the Court of the Arches and for as long as they served him as such; Eydon was later appointed Dean of the Arches and commissary-general of the archbishop in 1327, Bloye became official of the court of Canterbury in 1328, whilst Brugg was an auditor of

1. Reg. no. 76.

2. N. Ramsey, 'Retained Legal Counsel, c. 1275 - c. 1475', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th series, 35 (1985), pp. 95-112.

3. Reg. no. 62; Churchill, Canterbury Admin., i, pp. 17, 46, 308, 10, 569; ii, pp. 244, 242.

causes in 1308.¹ However, when M. Philip Martel was appointed as Langton's advocate in the court of Canterbury in London or elsewhere on 5 November 1299 it was agreed that he should be paid a fee of five marks a year for his services, not a pension.²

Grants of licences for absence formed an important part of a bishop's patronage as they were another means of showing favour, both to the recipient and to his patron. For example, William Meverel, vicar of Colwich, was granted a licence to serve M. Thomas Jorz, cardinal priest of St Sabina, who was an influential envoy of both Edward I and Edward II.³ Langton granted five similar licences to incumbents allowing them to serve prominent patrons, both ecclesiastic and lay.⁴ Licences for absence to study form the largest category of licences granted by the bishop. According to the terms of Boniface VIII's constitution *Cum ex eo* a bishop could grant a licence for absence to study for a maximum of seven years. Most of the licences issued during

1. Reg. no. 791; Churchill, Canterbury Admin., i, pp. 432, 437, ii, pp. 239, 237, 242; Emden, Oxford, i, pp. 205-6.

2. Reg. no. 363; Emden, Oxford, iii, p. 2196; Churchill, Canterbury Admin., i, p. 562 & n; ii, p. 121.

3. Reg. no. 711; for Jorz see Emden, Oxford, ii, p. 1023.

4. See Chapter 1, pp. 74-6.

Langton's episcopate were for one year only, although some incumbents accumulated a number of licences for one or more years. For example, Thomas Trussel, rector of Warmingham, Cheshire, received four licences totalling seven years; a two year licence on 5 January 1308, a one year licence on 22 November 1309, a three year licence from 25 December 1310 and a further licence for one year on 29 December 1313.¹ It is noteworthy that only four full seven year licences were granted by Langton and that three of these were issued to clerks closely associated with him: Robert de Clipston, the bishop's nephew; Simon de Redeswell, a relative of M. Robert de Redeswell, archdeacon of Chester and vicar-general; and Richard de Abberbur', who was probably related to M. Thomas de Abberbury, Langton's chancellor and vicar-general.² The fourth recipient, Robert de Basinges, rector of Stockport, Cheshire, had an important patron which may account for the grant of his licence; he was presented to Stockport by Sir William de Morleye, knight, who had custody of John, son of the late Sir Richard de Stokport, knight, who was under age.³

1. See Chapter 1, p. 79; reg. nos. 512, 837, 847, 884.

2. Reg. nos. 885, 104, 417.

3. Reg. nos. 173, 448; Basinges may have been at Oxford from 1312-15, see Emden, Oxford, i, p. 128

VII. LANGTON'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOVETOTS AND
THE CONNECTION OF THIS WITH HIS SUSPENSION IN
1302-3.

During the course of his political career Langton faced serious charges about his professional conduct when treasurer of Edward I and again when he briefly held this office under Edward II. However, charges of a more personal nature were brought against him by John Lovetot, junior, prior to 6 February 1301 which led to Langton's suspension from the administration of his diocese by pope Boniface VIII from 30 March 1302 until 8 June 1303 whilst an investigation was undertaken. The background to and the events during Langton's suspension have been discussed by Dr. Beardwood in her study of the bishop:¹ Langton was accused of committing adultery with Lovetot's stepmother, Joan de Brianzon; of strangling Lovetot's father, John Lovetot, senior, in bed with Joan's assistance; of rendering homage to the devil; and of simony, pluralism and the sale of papal constitutions.² Lovetot's accusations were

1. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 6-8.

2. The Chronicle of Lanercost 1272-1346, ed. Sir H. Maxwell (Glasgow, 1913), pp. 172-3; CPL, i, p. 607; MRA, no. 305; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 7; Prestwich, Edward I, p. 549; A. Hamilton Thompson, 'The College of St Mary Magdalen, Bridgnorth, with some account of its Deans and Prebendaries', Archaeological Journal, 84 (1927), p. 69 states, incorrectly, that Langton was accused by John Lovetot, senior, his former patron.

eventually found to be groundless and were probably, as Dr. Beardwood concludes, the result of 'a personal affair'.¹ It is on this personal aspect of the episode, Langton's relationship with the Lovetot family, that this chapter will focus.

The elder Sir John Lovetot, knight, was Langton's patron and presented him to the church of Adlingfleet, Yorks., on 5 February 1292. Langton remained as rector until he became bishop.² When presented to Adlingfleet, Langton was described as Lovetot's clerk. Although Professor Hamilton Thompson has pointed out that the use of such a term as '*clericum suum*' does not necessarily imply a special relationship between the presentee and the patron,³ this may explain why Langton referred to Lovetot as his lord and special friend in a letter to John Langton, the chancellor.⁴ Langton may have come to Lovetot's attention through the latter's position as justice of Common Pleas. However, Lovetot had an earlier connection with the Peverel family and had been

1. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 7.

2. Reg. Romeyn, i, p. 117; BL Cotton ms. Vit. E. xvi, fo. 108; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 9; ibid., p. 7, states, incorrectly, that Langton was presented to Adlingfleet in 1291.

3. BL Cotton ms. Vit. E. xvi, fo. 108; Hamilton Thompson, op. cit., p. 28.

4. PRO, Ancient Correspondence (SC 1), 27/78; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 7, n. 29, incorrectly states this reference to be 37/78.

keeper of the honour of Peverel in Nottingham in the year 1259-60.¹ Lovetot, with other justices, was tried for corruption in 1289 and fined 2000 marks. In 1293 Langton and Robert Tybertot, stood surety to have Lovetot before the exchequer to pay the fine. Lovetot died before 5 November 1294.²

Among the lands which Lovetot held at his death were a toft and 20 acres of land in Adlingfleet, with the advowson of the church, of John Deyvile who held the same of Roger de Moubray. His son, John Lovetot, knight, was his heir.³ The younger Lovetot enfeoffed the land and advowson to Simon Peverel and he, in turn, enfeoffed his son Walter Langton, when bishop. Following Peverel's death, Langton, as heir, granted the advowson *in mortmain* to Selby abbey.⁴ However, Joan, widow of the younger John Lovetot, claimed the toft, the 20 acres of land and the advowson of the church of Adlingfleet to her dower

1. J.T. Godfrey, The Court and the Honour of Peverel in the Counties of Nottingham and Derby (Nottingham, 1882), pp. 6, 25.

2. Prestwich, Edward I, p. 340; State Trials of the Reign of Edward the First 1289-93, ed. T.F. Tout, H. Johnstone (Camden, 3rd series, 9, 1906), pp. xiii, xxxii; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 7 states the fine was 1000 marks; Godfrey, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Beardwood, *ibid.*, p. 8, n. 42, states, incorrectly, that Lovetot died before 5 November 1284.

3. Cal. Inq. P. M., iii, p. 134.

4. BL Cotton ms. Vit. E. xvi, fo. 108; reg. nos. 1291, 1292, 1293; PRO, Inquisitions ad quod damnum (C 143), 52, 9; CPR 1301-7, p. 342.

by her husband's gift and in November 1315 she and her then husband, Francis Bachinus, quitclaimed this to Selby abbey, for which the abbot gave them £5.¹

Joan's grant was probably spurious as Selby abbey previously undertook to buy the advowson from bishop Langton for 1800 marks.² This sum was the total of two recognizances, one for 1600 marks dated 1 November 1304 and one for 200 marks, dated Easter 1306.³ The abbey thus agreed to pay a considerable sum to Langton before the king's licence under *mortmain* was granted; the Inquisition *ad quod damnum* was held in March 1305 and the *mortmain* licence was granted on 9 May 1305. If Joan's grant was genuine did the abbey buy the advowson from Langton for a number of years only? The Inquisition valued the church of Adlingfleet at £40 *per annum*; thus, according to this valuation, the abbot and convent of Selby may have bought the advowson for 30 years. The *Taxatio* of 1291, however, valued the church at £153 6s. 8d.; the advowson may thus have been bought for

1. The Coucher Book of Selby, ed. J.T. Fowler, 2 vols. (Yorkshire Archaeological Association Record Series, 10, 13, 1891-3), ii, p. 330. This Joan cannot have been Joan Brianzon, former wife of the elder John Lovetot, as she died prior to August 1302, CPR 1301-7, p. 56; Joan, former wife of John Lovetot, received protection to travel abroad in December 1309, CPR 1307-13, p. 200.

2. BL Cotton ms. Vit. E. xvi, fo. 111.

3. Fowler, *op. cit.*, i, p. 62.

only about eight years.¹ The copies of Langton's charters, however, indicate that the grant was intended to be perpetual and Selby abbey considered this to be the case; the abbey's cartulary records in detail the dispute that arose between Selby and Langton over the payment of the 1800 marks, the outcome of which showed that the money had been paid in full by 1318. Nevertheless, Langton's executors, who still had the recognizance in 1329 even though it had been annulled in the exchequer, tried to collect 1600 marks of the alleged debt and 1000 marks damages.²

Thus, Joan and Francis Bachinus' grant to Selby abbey in 1315 cannot have been genuine, although they may have believed it to be. Unfortunately no Inquisition *post mortem* survives for the younger Lovetot but he may have led Joan to believe that the land and advowson in Adlingfleet belonged to her dower. The confusion may have arisen from Lovetot's animosity to Langton, the probable cause of which was his indebtedness to the bishop for at least £964 by October 1300; he owed Langton £342 13s. 4d. in October 1295, £121 10s. in the name of Joan Brianzon, his step-mother, in May 1297, and £500

1. PRO, Inquisitions ad quod damnum (C 143), 52, 9; CPR 1301-7, p. 342; Taxatio, pp. 298, 323.

2. Reg. nos. 1291, 1292, 1293. Fowler, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 60-3; Beardwood, Records, pp. 15-17, 17, n. 1; CCR 1318-23, p. 32; CPR 1327-30, p. 488.

by a statute merchant recognizance in October 1300.¹ Lovetot may thus have enfeoffed Peverel with the advowson of Adlingfleet in order to satisfy Langton regarding some of his debts, but why did he not enfeoff Langton directly? Lovetot previously transferred the manors of Walton on Thames, Surrey, and Upware, Cambridgeshire, to Langton in 1297 in connection with his debts and in 1305 Joan Brianzon's son, William, transferred to Langton the manors of Aveley, Wakering and Famburg in Essex for two years for the same reason; Langton had previously had custody of these manors from August 1302 during William's minority. Thus it is probable that the grant of Adlingfleet to Peverel was made in connection with Lovetot's debts to Langton. The rancour between Lovetot and Langton lasted until Lovetot's death in 1302 or 1303.²

Despite this, Langton appears to have been on good terms with John Lovetot's younger brother M.

1. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 7; CPL, i, p. 607; Beardwood, Records, pp. 50, 37, 207; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 7, n. 35, gives the sum for October 1295 as £341 13s. 4d.; A. Beardwood, 'Bishop Langton's Use of Statute Merchant Recognizances', Medievalia et Humanistica, 9 (1955), p. 64.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, pp. 7-8, 35; Beardwood Records, p. 37; CPR 1301-7, p. 56; CCR 1302-7, p. 280; Beardwood, 'Bishop Langton's Use of Statute Merchant Recognizances', p. 64, n. 6, states Lovetot died in 1302; see also DNB, xi, p. 571; however, a safe conduct was sought for Lovetot on 20 February 1303, Reg. Winchelsey, ii, p. 773.

Nicholas Lovetot. Nicholas was Langton's predecessor as rector of Adlingfleet having custody of the sequestered church from 23 December 1289 when his initial presentation by his father was opposed. Nicholas was later instituted as rector on 10 May 1290 and in August he received a licence to study for three years, his father being allowed the autumn fruits of the church.¹ The abbatial register for Selby abbey, however, states that Nicholas died thus creating the vacancy which Walter Langton filled in February 1292; unless there were two Nicholas Lovetots, which is doubtful, this statement must be erroneous and Nicholas merely resigned Adlingfleet.²

Langton had connections with Nicholas Lovetot until the latter's death before 17 October 1316. Langton is said to have succeeded Nicholas as prebendary of Holborn, London, and Nicholas succeeded Langton as rector of Nether Wallop, Hants., in June 1292 and Kirkoswald, Cumberland,

1. Reg. Romeyn, i, pp. 92-3, 99, 101.

2. BL Cotton ms. Vit. E. xvi, fo. 108; Registrum Henrici Woodlock, Diocesis Wintoniensis, A.D. 1305-1316, ed. A.W. Goodman, 2 vols. (Canterbury and York Society, 43, 44, 1940-1), i, p. xxxvii.

in March 1293.¹ He accompanied Langton to the papal court following the accusations made by his brother John Lovetot, departing about mid-November 1301 and returning to England before July 1302. Nicholas accompanied Langton on his return journey to the curia in February 1303, returning by May 1303.² Thus, despite the animosity between John Lovetot, junior, and Langton, the bishop maintained good relations with Nicholas, even though Nicholas was in debt to Langton for £300, payment of which was pursued for a number of years.³ Nicholas appears to have been a notorious debtor owing money to numerous people, including £600 to his father, part of which his father's executors pursued until Nicholas's death.⁴

1. Fasti, 1066-1300, i, p. 55; Reg. Halton, i, pp. 3, 4 & n. 1, 127; Registrum Johannis de Pontissara, Episcopi Wintoniensis, A.D. MCCLXXII-MCCCIV, ed. C. Deedes, 2 vols. (Canterbury and York Society, 19, 30, 1915-24), i, p. 55; Goodman, *op. cit.*, i, p. xxxvii.

2. Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 7 states, incorrectly, that Langton departed in October 1301; see appx. H for Langton's itinerary; CPR 1292-1301, p. 615; CPR 1301-7, pp. 59, 50, 43-48, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 116, 117.

3. Goodman *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 931, 940; Reg. Halton, i, pp. 301, 327; ii, p. 61; Beardwood, Records, pp. 81-82. The Register of Walter de Stapeldon, Bishop of Exeter (A.D. 1307-1326), ed. F.C. Hingeston-Randolph (London and Exeter, 1892), pp. 413, 414, states the amount to have been £500.

4. Goodman, *op. cit.*, i, pp. xxxvii; ii, p. 898; Reg. Halton, i, pp. 9, 23, 313, 326; ii, pp. 16-17, 60-1, 70-1, 82-3, 92; Hingeston-Randolph, *op. cit.*, p. 413, no. 2, p. 414, nos. 11, 14, p. 415, nos. 28, 29.

VIII. EPILOGUE.

Langton died in London on 9 November 1321 and his body was then brought north to Lichfield. His will stipulated that he should be buried 'in the new work where I have ordained', that is in the Lady Chapel which was then under construction.¹ His episcopate of almost 25 years exemplifies the inter-relationship between the church and medieval government; Langton successfully combined secular and ecclesiastical office without neglecting either.



1. Appx. H; Fasti, x, p. 1; BL Cotton ms. Cleopatra D. ix, fo. 75; BL Cotton ms. Vespasian E. xvi, fo. 33v; Beardwood, Trial of Langton, p. 40; J.M. Maddison, 'Decorated Architecture in the North West Midlands; an investigation of the work of provincial masons and their sources' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, School of Architecture, 1978), p. 154.