

The Acquisition and Administration of Spiritualities by Oseney Abbey

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SUMMARY

Oseney Abbey, like other houses of Austin Canons, acquired much spiritual property in the 12th century in the form of tithes and appropriated rectories and livings. The slow evolution of canonical rules governing appropriated spiritualities allowed Oseney to determine their use, although the reforming episcopacy of the early 13th century introduced some regulation. The Abbey continued to exploit its spiritualities as a form of property, sometimes barely differentiated from temporal property. These spiritualities made a significant contribution to the resources of the house, both directly (in income) and indirectly (as, for example, patronage).

The advent of the Austin Canons into England coincided with the restitution of spiritualities, which had been appropriated into lay hands, to the religious. Whereas these spiritualities had previously belonged to the secular clergy, however, they were returned in the 12th century to the new Orders of regular canons, particularly the Augustinians. Spiritual property – in the form of advowsons, appropriated livings, and tithes – thus came to comprise a principal form of the endowments of houses of Black Canons, and their administration sometimes became a cause of contention.¹

Spiritual property was an important element in the endowment of Oseney Abbey, although the house was not quite as acquisitive as the two largest houses of the Order, Leicester and Cirencester abbeys.² By 1291, Oseney had appropriated sixteen parish churches and instituted vicarages, a figure which might be compared with the eleven of the relatively minor house of Breedon.³ Leicester ultimately controlled some fifty livings. The acquisition of advowsons by Oseney occurred mainly before 1200. Consequently, most of the churches which appeared in the *Taxatio* of 1291–2, had been enumerated in the *capitula* of the projected cartulary of c. 1217–27, only Fulwell and Cornwell being acquired after that date.⁴ Indeed, the acquisitions were largely complete by 1189. The foundation had included the advowsons of seven churches; the advowson of Forest Hill was acquired before 1142 by the gift of an important honorial baron of the d'Oillys, Hugh de Tew.⁵ The advowsons of the Gloucestershire churches of Bibury,

¹ H.M. Colvin, *The White Canons in England* (1951), 272–88; J.C. Dickinson, *The Origin of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England* (1950), 229 et seq.; R.A.R. Hartridge, *Vicarages in the Middle Ages* (1930), 162–88; B.R. Kemp, 'Monastic Possession of Parish Churches', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xxxi (1980), 133–60; Giles Constable, *Monastic Tithes* (1964), 153–60.

² A.H. Thompson, *The Abbey of St. Mary in the Meadows* (1949), 5–8; C.D. Ross, *The Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey*, i (1964), xxv.

³ John Rylands University Library, Manchester, Lat MS.222, f.7 r.

⁴ Bodl. Bodley MS.477, ff. 1 r–v.

⁵ H.E. Salter (ed.), *The Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* (hereafter *Oseney Cart.*), iv (Oxford Hist. Soc. xcvi, 1934), 334–5, 343; Rylands Eng. MS. 714, pp. 161–70 (Farrer's papers on the Oilly barony).

Turkdean and Rissington were received by the middle of the 12th century, through the benefactions of Ralph Basset and the bishops of Worcester.⁶ Soon afterwards, Ralph Danvers conferred the advowson of Cowley.⁷ The two decades 1170–90 produced a flurry of gifts of advowsons: Waterperry, Great Barton, Hampton Gay, and Black Bourton.⁸ Some advowsons had earlier been received through the appropriation of the college of secular canons at St. George in the Castle, in 1149, including the borough church of St. Mary Magdalene, whilst another borough church created in the late 12th century, St. Thomas, also fell into the gift of Oseney. By the end of the 12th century, consequently, Oseney had accumulated a significant interest in spiritual property.

The pattern of acquisition conformed to three stages. The original nucleus of benefactions came from the founders and patrons, the d'Oilly family, and some of their honorial baronage. The appropriation of St. George's in 1149 augmented the interest, through the further benefaction of the d'Oillys. This donation comprised a further transfer of spiritualities away from the secular clergy into the control of the regulars. Finally, in the late 12th century, the knights of Oxfordshire contributed to the endowments of the house, not through the donation of temporal property but through the more expedient path of transferring appropriated spiritualities.

The accumulation of the spiritual property was not without its difficulties, however, particularly the problem of obtaining seisin. The emphasis placed on seisin by Henry II's assizes applied equally to advowsons, for which a new possessory assize was introduced.⁹ Although a written *donatio* of the advowson had been made for the house, yet the house had to await the next vacancy to obtain an effective seisin. The introduction of the assize coincided with the concentration of gifts of advowsons by knights to Oseney in c. 1170–90. The Abbey thus had to wait several years after the original gift, to confirm its right by seisin. For example, the advowson of Waterperry was donated in c. 1175–80, but seisin first acquired in 1189; Hampton Gay was given in 1170 and seisin obtained in c. 1185–9. The new assize facilitated the process, and, indeed, Oseney was first amongst those to avail themselves of the writ of *darrein presentment* (*de ultima presentatione*). In 1179–80, Ralph Murdac and Hugh de Burtuna each gave their moiety of the advowson of Black Bourton, whereupon the Abbey sued out a writ of *darrein presentment*, compromised the action by a final concord, and thus secured its title to the advowson.¹⁰

The benefits of the new assize may be illustrated by comparing earlier difficulties in securing advowsons. The church of Watlington was included in the endowment at the foundation, but the Abbey could make no presentment before the death of Robert II d'Oilly, the founder. D'Oilly lost the manor of Watlington by his political affiliation to the Empress and defeat at Winchester. The Abbey only regained the advowson through the generosity of the intruded mesne tenant at Watlington, Alan de Bidun.¹¹ The outcome was not always favourable, as is illustrated by the failure to retain advowsons given by Ralph Basset. Before Oseney could present to the livings, Basset alienated them to other religious houses.¹² Differences between chief lord and mesne tenant might

⁶ *Oseney Cart.* v (Oxford Historical Society, xcvi, 1935), 1–60; H.R. Luard, (ed.), *Annales Monastici*, iv (Rolls Series, 1869), 26; *Oseney Cart.* vi (Oxford Hist. Soc. ci, 1936), 129 et seq.

⁷ *Oseney Cart.* iv, 361.

⁸ *Ibid.* iv, 152–9, 373, 476–8; vi, 40–7; *Annales Monastici*, iv, 43.

⁹ S.E. Thorne, 'Livery of Seisin', *Law Quarterly Review*, lii (1936), 345 et seq.

¹⁰ *Oseney Cart.* iv, 475–8; R.C. Van Caenegem, *Royal Writs from the Conquest to Glanville* (Selden Soc. lxxvii, 1958–9), 333.

¹¹ *Oseney Cart.* iv, 405.

¹² *Ibid.* vi, 129 et seq.

also complicate gifts. Robert II d'Oilly endowed Oseney with the advowson of Shenstone, and subsequently enfeoffed a mesne tenant in the manor, Ralph de Brai, whose right descended to his nephew, William de Brai.¹³ William professed to have a reserved right in the advowson as the *dominus fundi*, compelling the institution of his nephew, Hugh de Brai, to the living. Only when Roger de Brai later quitclaimed his right did the Abbey acquire an unqualified title, upon which a vicarage was instituted.¹⁴ Other gifts of advowsons were ineffective because of the donor's defective title, such as the gift of Ibstone by Roger II d'Oilly.¹⁵ Unusually, in 1186, the house forewent the assize of darrein presentment, preferring to resort to the Courts Christian to secure an advowson: something of an irregularity, considering that since the compromise of Avranches at least, advowsons had become acknowledged as the province of the royal courts and process in ecclesiastical courts could be abated by the writ of prohibition. The first vacancy at Stone occurred in that year, whereupon the donor's heir came into the synod of the archdeacon of Buckingham at Aylesbury *et uiua uoce confirmauit et ratam habuit et exinde cartam suam eis dedit*.¹⁶ By the end of the 12th century, the legal interest of the Abbey in its parish churches had been completed.

Once its interest was confirmed, the Abbey acted quickly to institute vicarages, an action which was facilitated by the imprecision of the diplomatic of the charters, an uncertain attitude towards advowsons, and the easy-going approach of the episcopacy before the reforming bishops of the 13th century. In the 12th century the concept of, and relationship between, advowsons and vicarages was still undeveloped and blurred. Charters of donors referred not to the advowson, but to the gift of the church and its fabric.¹⁷ In the mid 13th century Bracton could make a fine distinction between the two, but his judgement proceeded from the reforming attitude of the early 13th century, a world unknown to the late 12th. Oseney, as impropiator, thus achieved almost unfettered institution of vicarages in its parish churches. The bishops of Worcester were implicated in this development, their charters or *acta* referring simply to the gift of the *ecclesia*.¹⁸ Confirmation charters of the bishops of Lincoln and other Ordinaries also confirmed the *ecclesia*, to be *in* (or *ad*) *proprios usus*.¹⁹ The bishops of Worcester went further in allowing some of the churches in their diocese to be administered as priories with cure.

The accession of the reforming bishops of the 13th century could not reverse these institutions, although strenuous efforts were made to regulate the vicarages. Hugh de Welles, bishop of Lincoln, grasped the opportunity to regulate many of the vicarages in parish churches in the gift of Oseney, when a vacancy occurred at Hook Norton. Vicars would receive a pension of two marks *ad vestitum suum*, all oblations, a corrody (*victualia in mensa canonicorum ubi canonici moram faciunt*), a clerk, a groom, and a horse. The Abbey would be responsible, as rector, for maintaining the fabric and furniture. Welles also

¹³ Rylands Eng.MS. 714, pp. 216-19.

¹⁴ *Oseney Cart.* v, 60-74.

¹⁵ *Oseney Cart.* iv, 441-3; see also *Curia Regis Rolls*, xii, 313-14; F.W. Maitland, (ed.) *Bracton's Notebook*, iii (1887), No. 1688.

¹⁶ *Oseney Cart.* v, 141, 144-5; F. Pollock & F.W. Maitland, *The History of English Law* (2nd edn. 1968), 125-6; G.B. Flahiff, 'The Writ of Prohibition to Court Christian in the Thirteenth Century', *Medieval Studies*, vi (1944), 261-313, and idem, 'The Use of Prohibition by Clerics', *ibid.* iii (1941), 101 et seq. A final concord had also been levied at Stone, however.

¹⁷ For example, *Oseney Cart.* iv, 11 (*et istas ecclesias*), 361 (*ecclesias de Coueleia que in feodo meo sita est*), 373 (*ecclesia de Perre*); these could be compared with the gifts of the early 13th century: *Oseney Cart.* iv, 332; v, 407 (*quantum ad patronam pertinet; cum aduocatione*; relating to Cornwell in 1215 and Fulwell in 1205).

¹⁸ For example, *Oseney Cart.* v, 1-2.

¹⁹ For example, *ibid.* iv, 15, 20, 22, 384-5, 478.

intervened in a dispute concerning the chapelries of Ledwell and Sandford with the mother church of Great Barton to define all these livings, as he did also at Black Bourton. The vicar of Barton would have all oblations, a half-hide of glebe and a manse; the incumbents of the dependent chapelries were to have all oblations, the small tithes, four and half acres of glebe, and a third of the tithes of *Grave*.²⁰ In some cases, such as Shenstone, the living was actually augmented. A dispute *sede vacante* between Oseney and the vicar of Shenstone was removed to the metropolitan court of Archbishop Kilwardby in 1296, whose sentence in favour of the vicar added the tithes of the mill, a larger corrody, and cartloads of straw, hay and forage.²¹ Although Grosseteste permitted the appropriation of Fulwell, the tendency was now towards closer definition of vicarages.²²

The declining revenues of some houses in the 14th and 15th centuries induced them to further appropriations and vicarages, a recourse precluded to Oseney since it had already instituted vicarages in most of its churches. As an alternative, Oseney resorted to the farming out of some rectories. There was a precedent for this action in the farming out of rectories to the relatives of donors who were in orders; John de St. John, *clericus*, had received the farm of the rectory of Great Barton in c. 1186, which had been given to the house by John de St. John.²³ Farming out in the 14th century, however, was an entirely financial transaction. The rectory of Hook Norton, less the reservation of rectorial tithes and mortuaries to the Abbey, was leased in 1337 to the vicar, Thomas de Bannebury, as it had been farmed out to his predecessor.²⁴ Farming out became more prevalent in the 15th and 16th centuries, the rectory of Watlington being leased in 1489, the rectorial tithes of Hook Norton in 1521, the rectory of Stone in 1474 for a lucrative farm of £20.²⁵ Simultaneously, the Abbey supplicated for the consolidation of some vicarages and rectories, on the profession of the poverty of the house. This consolidation was achieved at Shenstone in 1514, and Hook Norton and Kidlington c. 1520, and Chastleton in 1459.²⁶

This consolidation had, in some sense, brought the circle full turn to the Abbey's serving some churches in the late 12th century with canon-vicars. The canons regular, particularly the Black Canons, had originally been conceived as a preaching order, with the ideal of serving in parish churches as well as being under a rule. Oseney, like some other houses of the Order, showed signs initially of intending to serve its parish churches. A papal privilege, obtained in 1147, allowed the institution of canon-vicars and the service of churches as priories with cure.²⁷ This bull of Eugenius was vague on detail, but a confirmation by Urban III permitted the house to serve four specific churches: Waterperry, Hampton Gay, Stone and Great Barton. These parishes were to be served by a priory with cure comprising a canon-vicar with three or four resident *socii*.²⁸ The elaboration that the canon-vicar had to be accompanied by colleagues may

²⁰ W.P. Phillimore (ed.), *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles*, i (Lincoln Rec. Soc. iii, 1912), 18-19; *ibid.* ii (Linc. Rec. Soc. vi, 1913), 21, 81; *Oseney Cart.* iv, 158, 495.

²¹ *Oseney Cart.* v, 78.

²² F.N. Davis (ed.), *Rotuli Roberti Grosseteste* (Linc. Rec. Soc. xi, 1914), 461.

²³ *Oseney Cart.* iv, 154-5.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 289-90. For a similar lease by Nostell Priory of its cell of Skewkirk, described as a *manerium*, to the vicar, John Elys, in 1393: Rylands Lat. MS. 225, fos. 26v-27r.

²⁵ *Oseney Cart.* iv, 290-1, 425-6; v, 170-3.

²⁶ *Ibid.* iii, 356-8; iv, 330-2, v, 79-80.

²⁷ *Ibid.* iii, 371-2; for a similar bull for St. Frideswide, S.R. Wigram (ed.), *The Cartulary of St. Frideswide*, i (Oxford Hist. Soc. xxviii, 1894), 27.

²⁸ *Oseney Cart.* iii, 374.

have persuaded the Abbey against persisting with the idea of the priory with cure, since it may have made the undertaking more expensive than instituting a secular clerk. The only churches which may have been served by canon-vicars were Bibury and Kiltenan, in Gloucestershire and Ireland respectively. The papal edict seems to have been evaded, for the canons presented to the livings evidently resided without *socii*. The arrangement also neglected the wishes of the donor of Kiltenan, Roger de Wigornia, who had required the service of that church as a priory with cure by three canons.²⁹ The decision to serve these two churches, for some time at least, by canon-vicars, may have been influenced by their distance from the house, especially in the case of Kiltenan, and by the special need to have a member of the convent there to supervise the Abbey's property, an economic as well as a spiritual consideration.

With the exception of Bibury and Kiltenan, the Abbey had determined on the institution of secular clergy. This approach had, in any case, a number of benefits. The presentation of secular clergy was a valuable source of local patronage; the lists of presentations in the bishop's rolls and registers reveal that the Abbey used its vicarages to patronise the local families. The toponymic *cognomina* of the clerks presented by Oseney show that the majority came from villis where the Abbey held land.³⁰ Presentations were also used to retain or reward canon lawyers as counsel to the Abbey. Ad hoc advice might also be anticipated from dignitaries presented to a rectory, which might help to explain the presentation of Alexander Swereford to the rectory of Swereford in 1228.³¹ Moreover, the increasing demands of the Crown, at least from the reign of Edward I, for the house to provide livings for some of the King's clerks, was a duty which had to be acquitted by Oseney as well as by many other religious houses.

The relationship between Oseney and its secular clergy was generally harmonious, especially after the subsidence of the disputes over livings in the early 13th century. The vicars were frequently benefactors of the house, making small oblations for their personal salvation. John de Weston gave a half virgate, receiving it back as a termor for life. Henry, his successor at Weston-on-the-Green, gave rents and four acres of meadow. Richard, vicar of Great Barton, alienated to the Abbey a villein and his *sequela*. Many vicars appeared amongst those who loaned money to the Abbey's building fund in the 13th century: Hereward, vicar of Great Barton, 5 marks; Thomas, the chaplain of Sandford, 50s. Roger, vicar of Stone, made a loan in consideration of a pension of 10s, the pension to be directed to the maintenance of a chantry after his death. Henry, vicar of Weston, and John, vicar of Watlington, also established chantries at Oseney.³² Only occasionally were these harmonious relations interrupted by disputes over the detention of tithes.³³

Some of the incumbents played an additional role in the supervision of husbandry on the Abbey's properties, acting as local officials in assisting the bailiffs. Henry, the vicar of Waterperry, supervised the shearing of sheep.³⁴ Giles, vicar of Stone, acted in

²⁹ Ibid. v, 123; presentations of canons to Bibury are in J.W. Willis Bund (ed.), *Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard* (Worcs. Hist. Soc. 1898-1902), 14, 545; J.W. Willis Bund & R.A. Wilson (eds.), *Register of William de Geynesburgh* (Worcs. Hist. Soc. 1907-29), 161, 179; R.A. Wilson (ed.), *Register of Walter Reynolds* (Worcs. Hist. Soc. 1928), 34, 153; see also *Oseney Cart.* v, 9-10, 27-8, 37-8.

³⁰ See also David Robinson, 'Ordinations of Secular Clergy in the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, 1322-1358', *Archives*, xvii (1985), 16-17.

³¹ *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles*, ii, 39; *Oseney Cart.* iii, 61; for Swereford, R.L. Poole, *The Exchequer in the Twelfth Century*, (2nd edn. 1973), 14, and *Rotuli Normannie* (Record Commission 1835), 63, 108.

³² *Oseney Cart.* iii, 57, 74; iv, 169, 415; vi, 18-21.

³³ For example, Bodl. d.d. Christ Church Oseney Roll 62: *et non plus quia vicarius recepit iij.s. et iniuste*; *Oseney Cart.* iv, 199-200.

³⁴ Bodl. d.d. Christ Church Oseney Roll (hereafter Ch.Ch.O.R.) 51.

two consecutive years as granger during the harvest period, and also supervised the winnowing. He also made loans in cash and grain to the *custos* or canon-warden, John de Poignant. He also received a tithe piglet *quia modici valoris*, as an increment to his corrody. Exceptionally, he had some independence of the bailiff. The bailiffs were usually responsible for the finances and maintenance of the parish church, but Giles was allowed to collect the *prouentus ecclesie* and also paid the wages of his clerk and groom. On one occasion, he also collected the *liberatio denariorum*, which was normally delivered to the steward.³⁵

Despite these concessions to Giles, the parish church was normally the responsibility of the bailiff, whose accounts included paragraphs for the *prouentus ecclesie* and the *custus ecclesie*. The parish church was administered simply as another part of the Abbey's property in the vill. The items of the *custus* were mainly recurrent: the annual procuration of the archdeacon (often 7s 7½d); annual synodals of 3s; the repetitious payment of 5d for each clerical proctor sent to Parliament and the expenses of the knights of the shire.³⁶ In the 15th century, however, the Sacristan exercised a more centralised control over the churches. A central account of c. 1412 includes the paragraph *Ecclesie*, recording the payment of the stipends of vicars.³⁷ The Sacristans' rolls of the later 15th century include the paragraph *Prouentus ecclesiarum*, comprising mortuaries and oblations.³⁸ The central control of the Sacristan may have resulted from the leasing out of manors and rectories in the 15th century, whilst, in the 13th and 14th centuries, when demesnes were in hand, the bailiffs may have had an integral responsibility for the churches, and the Sacristans mainly for the church at the Abbey.

There was undoubtedly a tendency, however, to regard spiritual property as an integral part of temporal property, or, at least, not to differentiate too finely between the two. The appropriated glebes of many of the parish churches were integrated into the Abbey's demesne, a fairly characteristic action of the Austin Canons.³⁹ Equally, receipts from tithes comprised a significant contribution to the Abbey's exploitation of its estates. Oseney could not match the spectacular receipts of tithe by Leicester Abbey, Bolton Priory, or Southwick Priory, all houses of the same order, but the tithes were nonetheless important in the economy of some properties of the house.⁴⁰

The collection of tithes was sometimes determined by local agreement, which became prescriptive custom. According to some customs, it was incumbent on the lord of the manor to arrange for tithes of the seignorial demesne to be carted to a central barn for the benefit of the Abbey. Margaret de Rivers had to build a barn which the canons would be allowed to use for tithes during harvest. The Abbey would be permitted use of the barn for threshing and winnowing, although Margaret would keep the straw. Simon de Maidwell gave a curtilage *ad construendum domum ad decimas suas reponendas*. Local custom often asserted that the lord should collect the tithes of grain at his or her own cost in a barn where the canons would collect. John de Cherbourg was constrained to acknowledge this custom, *qua domini loci illius ab antiquo faciebant eas deferri in uehiculis suis*

³⁵ Ch.Ch.O.R.35-38.

³⁶ Ch.Ch.O.R.39, 50, 51, 52, 53, 62, 63, 64; E. Clark Lowry, 'Clerical Proctors in Parliament and Knights of the Shire', *Eng. Hist. Rev.* xlviii (1933), 433-55.

³⁷ Bodl. MS. Oxon. Oseney Roll 46.

³⁸ Bodl. MSS. Oxon. Oseney Rolls 29 and 30.

³⁹ T.A.M. Bishop, 'Monastic Granges in Yorkshire', *Eng. Hist. Rev.* li (1936), 193-214; R.H. Hilton, *The Economic Development of Some Leicestershire Estates* (1947), 36 et seq.; I. Kershaw, *Bolton Priory*, (1973), 22 et seq.

⁴⁰ Hilton, *op.cit.* note 39; Kershaw, *op.cit.* note 39, 63-7; for the Southwick manor of Stubbington, Winchester College Muniments 15376-15387.

*cum blado suo usque ad hostia grangiarum suarum et ibi decimari et saluo custodiri usque ad adventum collectoris decimarum eorum.*⁴¹

The tithes of other parishioners were collected in the fields, almost exclusively by contractual wage labour, hired tithe collectors. The 'villein tithe collector' was an unusual figure on the estates of Oseney Abbey, although there had almost certainly been one at Haselden in the 12th century. The demesne tithes of Haselden had been given to the Abbey *cum dimidia virgata terre ad eandem decimam pertinente*, and when the Abbey quitclaimed its right in the tithes to Kingswood Abbey, it included *dimidia virgata terre ad decimationem de Haseldene pertinente*. The tenant of this holding probably owed a service principally for the collection of tithes, a customary service tenure.⁴² Elsewhere, the collection of tithes was entrusted to wage labourers hired during the harvest period. These collectors received a wage which increased from 1s 6d in 1279 to 2s by 1320, and a corrody of one bushel of grain per week. The corrody comprised mixed grain at Forest Hill and Stone, rye or barley at Watlington, but the more valuable wheat at Waterperry. As was normal, the tithes were collected from amongst the sheaves in the fields.⁴³

The collection of tithes was related to the continuation of direct demesne exploitation. As demesnes and manors were gradually leased in the later middle ages, so it became uneconomic to collect tithes. Demesne tithes, which were less valuable than parochial tithes, were leased first. Demesne tithes were often from villis where the Abbey had no other property or did not own the parochial tithes, and thus burdensome to collect. Moreover, the proscription of demesne tithes as uncanonical in the 12th century induced numerous disputes with rectors, as did novial tithes on expanding demesnes.⁴⁴ Consequently, although their collection was worthwhile whilst the economy was expanding, their value became less clear as contraction set in. In 1395, the demesne tithes of Thenford were farmed, followed by those of Northbrook in 1413, Shirburn in 1414, Horspath in 1417, Ardington and Betterton in 1435, Barford in 1436, and Stratford, Westbury, Duns Tew, and Heyford Warren in mid-century.⁴⁵

Throughout their administration by the Abbey, spiritualities, such as tithes, had not been differentiated from temporal property. The acquisition of spiritual property had taken place against the backcloth of the expected reform by the introduction of the canons regular. Spiritual property which had earlier been appropriated into lay hands, was returned to the religious, but to the canons regular, not the secular clergy. Oseney benefited like many other houses of Austin Canons, and, like those houses, proceeded to disappoint the reformers. Like other houses of the Order, Oseney treated its spiritualities as an economic asset.

⁴¹ *Oseney Cart.* iv, 215-16, 299-300, 502; vi, 28-9.

⁴² *Oseney Cart.* v, 38-9; R.V. Lennard, 'Villein Tithe Collectors', *Eng. Hist. Rev.* lxxix (1954), 580-96.

⁴³ Ch.Ch.O.R. 35: *in campis de Ston' et Bishop*; Ch.Ch.O.R. 52: *in campis de Thomele et Pur*; Ch.Ch.O.R. 32: *quia stetit in campo per totum diem*.

⁴⁴ For disputes concerning demesne and novial tithes: *Oseney Cart.* iv, 367 et seq., 443 et seq.; v, 319 et seq.

⁴⁵ *Oseney Cart.* iv, 218, 246-8, 303-4, 370-2, 426-7, 458-9; v, 431; vi, 100.

TABLE 1
The Tithes of Wool, 1278-1345ⁱ
Issue of fleeces

	Demesne	Tithe
<i>Chastleton</i>		
1278	—	53
1279	—	45
1333	—	92
1335	—	?
1337	—	54½ (sic)
1339	—	73
1340	—	58
<i>Stone</i>		
c.1280	302	98
1321	28	32
1325	3	25
1326	8	64
1327	145	70
<i>Watlington</i>		
c.1280	—	158
1328	—	207
1339	—	151
1342	20	143
1345	91	228
<i>Forest Hill</i>		
1279	99	37
1304	46	8½ (sic)
1322	160	33
<i>Bibury</i>		
c.1280	180	65
<i>Hampton Gay</i>		
c.1280	229	7
<i>Weston on the Green</i>		
c.1280	289	25
<i>Watereaton</i>		
c.1280	511	13
<i>Great Barton</i>		
c.1280	236	77

- i. Demesne and tithe issues are not always distinguished in the accounts. The figures in this and the ensuing tables are abstracted from Bodl. d.d. Christ Church Osney Rolls and MSS. Oxon. Osney Rolls, as listed by N. Denholm-Young, *The Mediaeval Archives of Christ Church* (Oxford Historical Society xcii, 1929), 13 *et seqq.* The figures for c. 1280 are from *Osney Cart.* vi, 184-207. Dates given relate to the end of the year of account: e.g. 1327 represents the account for Michaelmas 1326 to Michaelmas 1327.

TABLE 2
Abstract of Tithe Collectors, 1277-1345

	No. of weeks	No. of collectors	Wage ⁱ
<i>Forest Hill</i> ⁱⁱ 1277-1322	3-6	2 or 3	1s. 6d. from 1277 to 1318, but 2s. in 1322.
<i>Stone</i> ⁱⁱⁱ 1320-43	4-5	6 or 7	2s. to 2s. 6d., but occasionally higher (2s. 8d.).
<i>Waterperry</i> 1280-1345	4-6	3 or 4	1s. 6d. in 1280, but 2s. from 1328-45.
<i>Watlington</i> ^{iv} 1328-45	5-6	6 or 8	1s. 8d. to 4s., according to no. of weeks employed.

- i. The corrody was constant at 1 bs. of grain.
- ii. Collectors from Forest Hill collected from Forest Hill, Woodperry, Stodley and Beckley.
- iii. Collectors from Stone collected at Stone, Bishop's Stone, Marsh, Southrop, Southcote and Hertwell.
- iv. Collectors from Watlington collected at Watlington, Shirburn, S. Weston, Watcombe, Brightwell and the Queen's demesne in Watlington.

These figures are abstracted from Bodl. d.d.Ch.Ch.O.R. and MSS. Oxon. Osney Rolls, as listed by N. Denhom-Young, *Mediaeval Archives of Christ Church* (Oxford Historical Society xcii, 1929), 13 *et seqq.*

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