

NOTES

ESTIMATES OF HARVEST ON OSENEY ABBEY MANORS

The techniques of management employed by medieval lords in the administration of their estates have been understood for some considerable time, not least the methods of accountancy and the scrutiny of manorial officials. One strategy not quite as evident is the estimate of grain before harvest, which had, perhaps, a dual purpose: first, to keep control over the accounting by the grange officials and reeve; and second, to plan for the requirements of consumption.¹

Bodleian MS. d.d. Christ Church Oseney Roll 132 is a centrally enrolled account of estimates of the harvest on some properties of Oseney Abbey.² The officials of the abbey (probably the steward and his clerk) visited the properties before Michaelmas (29 September), when the grain had been gathered into the barns or granges, but still largely lay unthreshed, to estimate the size of the harvest before threshing. This timing of the visit is revealed in the entry for Fulwell. The estimates for each property seem then to have been enrolled together, although this document comprises only some, not all, of the abbey's properties. From the size of the stacks of unthreshed grain, the officials could estimate the quantity of the harvest, from the experience of threshing of similar stacks in previous years and from rules of thumb. This practice was in accord with the suggestion of the anonymous author of *The Hosbondrye*.³ It was a procedure also advocated in another treatise of the mid 14th century:

Ad estimacionem grangie. Memorandum quod una meya frumenti in grangia que grangia est latitudinis xxx pedum in uno spacio inter duo [sic] furcos longitudine xv pedum et altitudine parietum x pedum continebit communiter xl quarteria.⁴

[For the estimate of the grange. Note that one stack of wheat in the grange, which grange is 30 feet wide in one place between two forks, in length 15 feet, and in height up the walls 10 feet, will hold altogether 40 quarters.]

Although the document is undated, the hand indicates an early 14th-century date, and the inclusion of Sibford further suggests that it was compiled before 1337 when the demesne there was divided up into customary holdings.⁵ The document is a roll, written as a fair engrossment on the face only, and is 56 cm. x 17 cm.

¹ For example, J.S. Drew, 'Manorial Accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester', *English Hist. Review*, lxii (1947), 20-41; E. Stone, 'Profit-and-loss Accountancy at Norwich Cathedral Priory', *Trans. of the Royal Hist. Soc.* 5th ser. xii (1962), 25-48; P.D.A. Harvey (ed.), *Manorial Records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire circa 1200-1359* (Hist. MSS. Comm. JP 23, 1976), *passim*, and for examples of estimates of harvest on Merton College manors, pp. 117 (no. 29), 126 (no. 32) and 136 (no. 38).

² I am grateful to Christ Church for allowing access to and publication of this document and to the helpfulness of the staff of the Bodleian Library.

³ D. Oschinsky (ed.), *Walter of Henley and other Treatises on Estate Management and Accountancy* (1971), 420-1 (c. 5).

⁴ *Ibid.* 475.

⁵ H.E. Salter (ed.), *Oseney Cartulary*, iv (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xcvi), 322-3.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF HARVEST ESTIMATES (IN QUARTERS)

Property	Rye	Wheat	Barley	Dredge	Oats	Pulses
Black Bourton		166	160 (a)	16 (b)		40 (c)
Aldsworth		17.5	40	40	20	
Bibury		80	220	200	20	
Turkdean		50	30	30 (d)		
Chastleton	40 (e)			20	24	30
Hook Norton	310 (f)			210	100	106 (g)
Sibford	27 (h)			12	10	16
Fulwell	180 (i)			240	30	48 (j)
Little Barton		43		10	40	23 (k)
Claydon	60	40			160	56 (l)
Stone	1	60		160		108 (m)

- (a) 160 qtrs. of barley and dredge.
 (b) 16 qtrs. of dredge (a mixture of barley and oats) and oats.
 (c) 36 qtrs. of black pulses and 4 qtrs. of pulses.
 (d) 30 qtrs. of dredge and oats.
 (e) 35 qtrs. of wheat and rye and 5 qtrs. of wheat seed.
 (f) 25 qtrs. of wheat seed, 185 qtrs. of wheat and rye mixed, and 100 qtrs. of wheat.
 (g) In two different stacks.
 (h) 27 qtrs. of wheat and rye.
 (i) 100 qtrs. of wheat, 60 qtrs. of wheat and rye mixed, 6 qtrs. of wheat, and 14 qtrs. of rye already sown.
 (j) Peas and vetches.
 (k) Peas and vetches.
 (l) 50 qtrs. peas and 6 qtrs. vetches.
 (m) 100 qtrs. peas and 8 qtrs. pulses.

Bodl. MS. d.d. Christ Church Oseney Roll 132

< > represents superscript material with a caret.

[] material interpolated by the editor.

Bourton' In magna grangia ibidem sunt .ij. meye frumenti plene usque ad paruas trabes et medietas tercię meye usque ad magnas trabes cum .j. cantello frumenti anterius continentes per estimacionem in toto .Cxl. quarteria. Item in alio capite eiusdem grangie sunt due meye ordeı et drageı usque ad paruas trabes continentes per estimacionem .Cxx. quarteria. Item in parua grangia seminali est una meya frumenti seminalis continens per estimacionem .xxvj. quarteria. Item in alio capite eiusdem grangie est una meya ordeı et drageı continens per estimacionem .xl. quarteria. Item in parua domo est una porcio drageı et auene continens per estimacionem .xvj. quarteria. Item exterius sunt .ij. tassi quadr' nigri puls' continentes per estimacionem .xxxvj. quarteria. Item iuxta magnam grangiam est .j. tassus de puls' continens per estimacionem .iiij. quarteria.

[Black Bourton. In the great grange there are 2 stacks of wheat full up to the small [collar] beams and half of a third stack up to the great [tie] beams with 1 cauntle of wheat in front containing by estimate in all 140 qtrs. Item at the other end of the same grange are 2 stacks of barley and dredge up to the small

beams containing by estimate 120 qtrs. Item in the small grange for seed is 1 stack of wheatseed containing by estimate 26 qtrs. Item at the other end of the same grange is 1 stack of barley and dredge containing by estimate 40 qtrs. Item in the small building is 1 part of dredge and oats containing by estimate 16 qtrs. Item outside are $2\frac{1}{4}$ stacks of black pulses containing by estimate 36 qtrs. Item next to the great grange is 1 stack of pulses containing by estimate 4 qtrs.]

Aldswurth' In inferiori grangia est dimidia meya frumenti fere usque ad magnas trabes continens per estimacionem .xvj. quarteria. Item ibidem est alia medietas eiusdem meye de auena continens per estimacionem .xx. quarteria. Item in alio capite est una meya ordeī excedens altitudinem murorum continens per estimacionem .xl. quarteria. Item in grangia superiori est .j. Stak' frumenti continens per estimacionem .xij. bussellos frumenti. Item in eadem grangia sunt due meye drageti excedentes altitudinem murorum continentes per estimacionem .xl. quarteria.

[Aldsworth (Glos). In the lower grange is half a stack of wheat almost up to the great beams containing by estimate 16 qtrs. Item there is there the other half of the same stack of oats containing by estimate 20 qtrs. Item at the other end is a stack of barley reaching above the height of the walls containing by estimate 40 qtrs. Item in the upper grange is 1 stack of wheat containing by estimate 12 bs. of wheat. Item in the same grange are 2 stacks of dredge reaching above the height of the walls containing by estimate 40 qtrs.]

Bibury. In magna grangia ibidem in capite orientali est .j. meya frumenti excedens altitudinem murorum cum .ij. cantellis frumenti antierius continentes per estimacionem in toto .iiij.^{xx} quarteria frumenti. Item in capite occidentali eiusdem grangie est .j. meya larga ordeī plena cum .ij. magnis cantellis eiusdem grani continentes in toto per estimacionem .CCxx. quarteria. Item in minori grangia sunt .iiij. meye drageti usque ad magnas trabes et medietas tercie meye eiusdem altitudinis et grani continentes in toto per estimacionem .CC. quarteria drageti. Item ibidem est unus cantellus auene continens per estimacionem .xx. quarteria.

[Bibury (Glos). In the great grange there at the east end is 1 stack of wheat reaching above the height of the walls with 2 cauntles of wheat in front containing by estimate in all 80 qtrs. of wheat. Item at the west end of the same grange is 1 wide, full stack of barley with 2 great cauntles of the same grain containing in all by estimate 220 qtrs. Item in the lesser grange there are 3 stacks of dredge up to the great beams and half a third stack of the same height and grain containing in all by estimate 200 qtrs. of dredge. Item there is there a cauntle of oats containing by estimate 20 qtrs.]

Turkeden' In superiori grangia sunt .ij. meye frumenti plene continentes per estimacionem .L. quarteria. Item in inferiori grangia est una meya ordeī usque ad magnas trabes continens per estimacionem .xxx. quarteria. Item in eadem est alia meya drageti et auene continens per estimacionem .xxx. quarteria [et] extendit se usque ad paruas trabes.

[Turkdean (Glos). In the upper grange are 2 full stacks of wheat containing by estimate 50 qtrs. Item in the lower grange is 1 stack of barley up to the great beams containing by estimate 30 qtrs. Item in the same is another stack of dredge and oats containing by estimate 30 qtrs. [and] it reaches up to the small beams.]

Chastelton' In grangia ibidem in capite boreali est .j. meya usque ad magnas trabes frumenti et Siliginis mixti continens per estimacionem .xxxv. quarteria. Item antierius est .j. cantellus frumenti seminalis continens per estimacionem .v. quarteria. Et in capite occidentali eiusdem grangie est .j. meya usque ad magnas trabes drageti et auene et continens dragetum .xx. quarteria. Et auenam continens .xxiiij. quarteria. Item est .j. meya de puls' fere usque ad paruas trabes cum .j. magno cantello eiusdem grani ante hostium continens in toto per estimacionem .xxx. quarteria.

[Chastleton. In the grange there at the north end is 1 stack of mixed wheat and rye up to the great beams containing by estimate 35 qtrs. Item in front is 1 cauntle of wheatseed containing by estimate 5 qtrs. And at the west end of the same grange is 1 stack of dredge and oats up to the great beams and containing dredge 20 qtrs. And containing oats 24 qtrs. Item there is 1 stack of pulses almost up to the small beams with 1 great cauntle of the same grain before the door containing in all by estimate 30 qtrs.]

Hogenorton' In grangia seminali est una meya frumenti seminalis excedens altitudinem murorum continens per estimacionem .xxv. quarteria. Item in alio capite eiusdem grangie sunt .ij. meye usque ad magnas trabes et tercia usque ad altitudinem murorum frumenti et Siliginis mixti continentes in toto per estimacionem .Lv. quarteria. Item in magna grangia ibidem in capite occidentali sunt .ij. meye frumenti quarum una extendit ad paruas trabes et alia excedit altitudinem murorum continentes per estimacionem .C. quarteria. Item in alio capite sunt due meye plene et alia usque ad altitudinem murorum frumenti et Siliginis mixti continentes per estimacionem .Cxxx. quarteria. Item in alia grangia in capite orientali sunt due meye drageti quarum una plena et alia fere usque ad magnas trabes continentes per estimacionem .CCx. quarteria. Item in alio capite sunt .ij. meye excedentes altitudinem murorum quarum medietas est auene que continet per estimacionem .C. quarteria. Et alia medietas est puls' que continet per estimacionem .Lx. quarteria. Item exterius est [sic] unus tassus quadr' et .ij. cantelli de puls' in utraque grangia et continet per estimacionem in toto .xlvj. quarteria.

[Hook Norton. In the grange for seed is 1 stack of wheatseed reaching above the height of the walls containing by estimate 25 qtrs. Item at the other end of the same grange are 2 stacks of wheat and rye mixed up to the great beams and a third up to the height of the walls containing in all by estimate 55 qtrs. Item in the great grange there at the west end are 2 stacks of wheat one of which reaches to the small beams and the other reaches above the height of the walls containing by estimate 100 qtrs. Item at the other end are 2 full stacks of wheat and rye mixed and another up to the height of the walls containing by estimate 130 qtrs. Item in the other grange at the east end are 2 stacks of dredge one of which full and the other almost up to the great beams containing by estimate 210 qtrs. Item at the other end are 2 stacks reaching above the height of the walls half of which is of oats which contains by estimate 100 qtrs. And the other half is pulses which contains by estimate 60 qtrs. Item on the outside is 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ stack and 2 cauntles of pulses in each grange and they contain by estimate in all 46 qtrs.]

Sibforde In grangia ibidem est una meya frumenti et Siliginis fere plena continens cum .j. cantello seminali .xxvij. quarteria. Item in alio capite est .j. meya drageti usque ad paruas trabes et auene <et> continet dragetum .xij. quarteria et continet auenam .x. quarteria. Item sunt ibidem .ij. cantelli de puls' continentes per estimacionem .xvj. quarteria de puls'

[Sibford Gower. In the grange there is 1 almost full stack of wheat and rye containing with 1 seed cauntle 27 qtrs. Item at the other end is 1 stack of dredge up to the small beams and it contains dredge 12 qtrs. and it contains oats 10 qtrs. Item there are there 2 cauntles of pulses containing by estimate 16 qtrs. of pulses.]

Folewelle In superiori grangia ibidem in medio sunt .ij. meye de frumento usque ad magnas trabes continentes .C. quarteria. Item in alio capite versus orientem in eadem grangia est una meya frumenti et Siliginis pro liberacione famulorum fere usque ad magnas trabes continens .Lx. quarteria. Item in eadem grangia in capite occidentali est .j. meya de pisis et vecches continens .xlviij. quarteria et seminantur ibidem ante diem estimacionis .vj. quarteria frumenti et .xiiij. quarteria Siliginis videlicet ante octauas Sancti Michaelis. Item in inferiori grangia sunt .iiij. meye plene drageti excepta tercia parte unius meye que est auene cum paruo cantello anterius continentes .CCxl. quarteria drageti et .xxx. quarteria auene.

[Fulwell. In the upper grange there in the middle are 2 stacks of wheat up to the great beams containing by estimate 100 qtrs. Item at the other end towards the east in the same grange is a stack of wheat and rye for the livery of the famuli almost up to the great beams containing 60 qtrs. Item in the same grange at the west end is 1 stack of peas and vetches containing 48 qtrs. and 6 qtrs. of wheat and 14 qtrs. of rye are sown there before the day of the estimate that is before the Octaves of Michaelmas. Item in the lower grange are 3 full stacks of dredge except the third part of a stack which is of oats with a small cauntle in front containing 240 qtrs. of dredge and 30 qtrs. of oats.]

Barton' parua Ibidem in grangia in medio grangie est .j. meya usque ad magnas trabes continens cum uno paruo cantello anteriori pro semine et frumento seminato ante estimacionem factam .xl.ij. quarteria. Item in eadem grangia in alio capite est .j. meya et dimidia de drageto et auena unde interior est ad magnas trabes et anterior fere ad magnas [trabes] continens .xl. quarteria auene et .x. quarteria drageti. Item in eadem grangia ex alia parte frumenti est .j. meya de vecches ad magnas trabes continens .xv. quarteria. Item in Bercaria est .j. meya plena de vecches et pisis continens per estimacionem .v.ij. quarteria.

[Little Barton. In the grange there in the middle of the grange is 1 stack up to the great beams containing with a small cauntle in front for seed and wheat sown before the estimate [was] made 44 qtrs. Item in the same grange at the other end is 1½ stack of dredge and oats the further of which is to the great beams and the nearer almost to the great [beams] containing 40 qtrs. of oats and 10 qtrs. of dredge. Item in the same grange on the other side of the wheat is 1 stack of vetches to the great beams containing 15 qtrs. Item in the sheepcote is 1 full stack of vetches and peas containing by estimate 8 qtrs.]

Cleydon' In magna grangia est .j. meya Siliginis usque ad magnas trabes cum uno cantello ante meyam continens per estimacionem cum blado triturato .Lx. quarteria. Item in media grangia est .j. meya de frumento ad inferiorem partem dil [sic] Brestlace continens per estimacionem cum blado triturato .xl. quarteria. Item in alia parte medie grangie est .j. meya pisarum continens per estimacionem .L. quarteria. Item unus cantellus de vecches continens per estimacionem .xj. quarteria. Item .j. meya auene fere usque ad magnas trabes continens per estimacionem .CLx. quarteria.

[Claydon (Bucks). In the great grange is 1 stack of rye up to the great beams with 1 cauntle in front of the stack containing by estimate with threshed grain 60 qtrs. Item in the middle of the grange is 1 stack of wheat to the further part of the Brestlace containing by estimate with threshed grain 40 qtrs. Item on the other side of the middle of the grange is 1 stack of peas containing by estimate 50 qtrs. Item one cauntle of vetches containing by estimate 6 qtrs. Item 1 stack of oats almost to the great beams containing by estimate 160 qtrs.]

Stone In magna grangia est .j. meya interior plena frumenti continens per estimacionem .xl. quarteria. Item alia meya ad magnas trabes continens per estimacionem cum blado triturato .xx. quarteria. Item in eadem grangia est .j. cantellus Siliginis continens per estimacionem .j. quarterium. Item .j. cantellus de puls' continens per estimacionem .v.ij. quarteria. Item in alia grangia sunt .iiij. meye continentes per estimacionem .CLx. quarteria drageti. Et sunt ibidem .ij. tassi quadr' cum uno rotundo pisarum continentes per estimacionem .C. quarteria.

[Stone (Bucks). In the great grange is 1 full, further stack of wheat containing by estimate 40 qtrs. Item another stack to the great beams containing by estimate with threshed grain 20 qtrs. Item in the same grange is 1 cauntle of rye containing by estimate 1 qtr. Item 1 cauntle of pulses containing by estimate 8 qtrs. Item in the other grange are 4 stacks containing by estimate 160 qtrs. of dredge. And there are there 2¼ stacks with one roll of peas containing by estimate 100 qtrs.]