A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Manorial Officialdom in the Later Medieval Period

by

Grace Owen

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School of History and Cultures,
Department of History,
University of Birmingham.
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Abstract

This thesis examines the responsibilities, remuneration, roles, and representations of manorial officials, those who were unfree peasants who were elected to manage and supervise the lord's lands and tenants. Using a combination of economic, social, and cultural approaches, this work explores how officialdom on the manors of Glastonbury was influenced by a manor's local structure, such as its degree of rurality, as well as how officialdom changed across the period c. 1250 – 1400.

The source material used in this thesis has been from an examination of the manorial source material from the Abbey of Glastonbury. This has predominantly been the accounts, court rolls, and custumals, for the manors of Ashbury, Ashcott, Damerham, Glastonbury, and Nettleton. This thesis has also utilised a variety of source material beyond the manorial record, such as art, literature, and treatises, in order to explore the wider cultural representations and perceptions of officialdom in combination with the manorial documentation.

Chapter 1 explores the structure of manorial officialdom and the responsibilities of each manorial officer at Glastonbury. Chapter 2 utilises a quantitative methodology to examine how officials were remunerated at each manor. Chapter 3 employs a quantitative and qualitative approach to analyse the activities of officials upon the manor and how they were treated by the hallmoot courts. Chapter 4 explores the variety of ways in which manorial officials were depicted in art and literature in order

to examine the contemporaneous perceptions of officialdom.

A number of key conclusions have been found in this work. The structure of officialdom at Glastonbury was flexible, utilised to adapt to local structures and the impacts of wider socio-economic events in the fourteenth century. Officialdom played a vital role in mediating the carefully negotiated interplay between the central, seigneurial administration and the local manors, and executing important economic and administrative decisions. Officials were both of the peasantry but also distinct in their role as representatives of the seigneurial authority, as is shown in both the manorial record and art and literature of the period. This study has also demonstrated that officialdom can be used as a lens through which to explore and understand the changes and developments on the medieval manor due to external factors.

Declaration

This dissertation is my own work and does not include any work that is the outcome of work done in collaboration. It is not substantially the same as any work that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Birmingham or any other university. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Birmingham or any other university or similar institution. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit of 80,000 words.

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Contents

Introduction **1**

0.1 Historiography 5

0.2 Methodology and sources 17

0.3 Outline of thesis 28

1 Manorial Officials and their Responsibilities on the Manors of Glastonbury **29**

1.1 Introduction 29

1.2 External officials and obedientiaries 31

1.3 Peasant officials – eligibility criteria 37

1.3.1 The reeve 43

1.3.2 The messor 50

1.3.3 The beadle 52

1.3.4 The ripreeve 53

1.3.5 The berebrit 54

1.3.6 The rent collector 56

1.3.7 *The* cadavatores 58

1.4 The *famuli* 60

1.5 Minor officials 64

1.6 ‘Absent’ officers 65

1.7 Overlapping jurisdictions and the impact of the local topography . . . 66

1.8 Tasks in the remit of multiple officials 68
1.9 Office-holding as an adaptation to the local environment 72
1.10 The interactions among the Glastonbury manors 73
1.11 Conclusions 83

2 The Remuneration of Manorial Officials 87
2.1 Introduction 87
2.2 Part One: Remuneration, Recipients, and Rank 90
2.2.1 Forms of remuneration 90
2.2.2 The contrast between the custumals and accounts 95
2.2.3 Recipients 97
2.2.4 The reeve 102
2.2.5 The messor 109
2.2.6 The parker and messor-parker 116
2.2.7 The woodward 119
2.2.8 The beadle 121
2.2.9 The ripreeve 122
2.2.10 The berebrit 125
2.2.11 Conclusions 127
2.3 Part Two: Custom, Continuity, Change, and Compensation 129
2.3.1 The impact of custom and land in determining remuneration . . 129
2.3.2 Receiving remuneration from multiple manors 131
2.3.3 Changes across the period 133
2.3.4 Changes in grain liveries 136
2.3.5 Changes in monetary remuneration 140
2.3.6 Changes in labour service remissions 144
2.3.7 The correlation between types of remuneration 145
2.3.8 Change: the appearance and disappearance of various offices 150

2.3.9 Continuity 153
2.4 Conclusions 155

3 The Roles of Manorial Officials in the Manor Court 159

3.1 Introduction 159
3.2 Officials as plaintiffs and enforcers of seigneurial authority 166
3.3 Attitudes to office-holding and the desirability of office 167
3.4 Obstruction to seigneurial authority 182
3.5 Communal culpability 187
3.6 Case studies 190
3.7 Amercements and pardons 194
3.8 Hierarchy within the court 202
3.9 Exploitation of office 206
3.10 Collusion 208
3.11 Conclusions 213

4 Representations of Manorial Officials and the Peasantry 218

4.1 Introduction 218
4.2 Physical appearance and moral character 223
4.3 Idealised representations 234
4.4 Shifts in representation in the later fourteenth century 242
4.5 William Langland's *Piers Plowman* 247
4.6 Officials as leaders of dissent and the embodiment of poor character . 252
4.7 The dichotomy between manorial officers and the idealised peasant . 256
4.8 Officials as outcasts in the community 264
4.9 The representations and perceptions of manorial officials in agricultural treatises 268
4.10 Conclusions 276

5 Conclusions **281**

Bibliography **293**

Appendices **317**

List of Figures

1 The Manors Belonging to the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Fourteenth Century. 3

1.1 Grain and livestock received by the manor of Glastonbury. 78

1.2 Grain and livestock sent to the manor of Glastonbury. 79

1.3 Grain and livestock received by the manor of Damerham. 80

2.1 Chart showing monetary quittances given to reeves upon all five of the Glastonbury manors. 104

2.2 Chart showing the monetary quittances given to the reeve of Glastonbury. 105

2.3 Chart showing the monetary quittances given to the reeve of Ashcott. 106

2.4 Chart showing the labour service remittances granted to the reeve of Glastonbury. 107

2.5 Chart showing the labour service remittances granted to the reeve of Ashcott. 108

2.6 Chart showing the labour service remittances granted (in acres) to the reeve of Glastonbury. 109

2.7 Chart showing the labour service remittances granted (in acres) to the reeve of Ashcott. 110

2.8 Chart showing the monetary compensation given to the messor of Glastonbury. 113

2.9 Chart showing the grain liveries granted to the messor of Glastonbury. 117
2.10 Chart showing the monetary quittances given to the beadle of Glastonbury. 123
2.11 Chart showing the stipends given to ripreeves upon all five of the Glastonbury manors. 124
2.12 Chart showing the stipends given to berebrits upon all five of the Glastonbury manors. 128
2.13 Chart showing the monetary quittances given to the berebrit upon all five of the Glastonbury manors. 132
2.14 Chart showing the total amount of grain given to the officials, *famuli*, and workers upon all five of the Glastonbury manors. 138
2.15 Chart showing the different types of grain given to all recipients upon the manor of Ashcott. 141
2.16 Chart showing the total sum of the monetary quittances granted at each manor. 142
2.17 Chart showing the total sum of the stipends paid at each manor. . . . 143
2.18 Chart showing the total number of labour services remitted, broken down by official, at the manor of Glastonbury. 145
2.19 Chart showing the total number of acres quit for labour service remissions, broken down by official, at the manor of Glastonbury. 146

3.1 Chart showing the number of cases for each of the five manors by period. 175
3.2 Chart showing the number of cases with the ‘whole hallmoot’ presented as the defendant. 188
3.3 Chart showing the number of cases of ’dereliction of duty’ commmitted by manorial officials at each manor. 205

4.1 “Harry the Haywarde with his dog Talbat” from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford. 225
4.2 “Peter the Pyndare” from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford. 225
4.3 Adam digging (left) and Eve spinning (right), from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford. 227
4.4 The Virgin Mary (left) and John the Evangelist (right), from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford. 228
4.5 Cain killing Abel, from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford. 229
4.6 An official supervising the harvest. From the Queen Mary Psalter, c. 1310-1320. British Library digitised manuscripts. BL Royal MS 2 B VII, f. 78v. 238

List of Tables

1 Court data examined in this study. 27

1.1 Number of different manors that each manor received grain & stock from, 1250-1334. 76

1.2 Number of different manors that each manor sent grain & stock to, 1250-1334. 76

2.1 Number of different types of recipient in each category of remuneration within the manorial accounts (* No information recorded in the surviving source material). 97

2.2 Rent quittances and stipends (in pence) given to the messor, parker, and messor-parker on the manor of Damerham for the period 1257–1335. 118

2.3 Table showing the labour services at Glastonbury that would have been quit but the prospective recipient did not owe the obligation to the lord. 149

3.1 Number of fines paid at each manor by category. 165

3.2 Total number of cases in which officials, *famuli*, and workers were plaintiffs and defendants. 167

3.3 Total number of cases in which each category of official or *famuli* were plaintiffs. 168

3.4 Total number of cases in which each category of official or *famuli* were defendants. 169

3.5 The number of presentments made against the hallmoot and the average amercements given in pence (*d*). 182
3.6 The different offices held by Stephen Dodde. 191
3.7 The different offices held by Richard Fysch. 191
3.8 The number of amercements and pardons for officials and peasants. . 195
3.9 Average amercements in pence (*d*) for the peasantry. 199
3.10 Average amercements in pence (*d*) for officials. 199
3.11 Average amercements in pence (*d*) for cases brought against officials that were not for dereliction of duty. 201
3.12 Average amercements in pence (*d*) for cases of derelection of duty by officials. 201

1 Manuscript information: Ashbury Accounts. 317
2 Manuscript information: Ashbury Court Rolls. 318
3 Manuscript information: Ashcott Accounts. 319
4 Manuscript information: Ashcott Court Rolls. 320
5 Manuscript information: Damerham Accounts. 320
6 Manuscript information: Damerham Court Rolls. 321
7 Manuscript information: Glastonbury Accounts. 322
8 Manuscript information: Glastonbury Court Rolls. 323
9 Manuscript information: Nettleton Accounts. 323
10 Manuscript information: Nettleton Court Rolls. 324

Introduction

"No man could ever catch him in arrears.
He was up to every fiddle, every dodge
Of every herdsman, bailiff, or farm-lad.
All of them feared him as they feared the plague."[1]

This description of the Reeve in the General Prologue of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is one of the most well-known depictions of a manorial official in later medieval England. Chaucer's representation of the Reeve evokes a powerful image of a knowledgeable, self-serving, deceptive and isolated figure, distinct from both the upper and lower strata of society. In comparison, an examination of manorial records can present a different perspective. Manorial officials were integral figures to the function of any manor, charged with serving the seigneurial interest and responsible for the day-to-day management of the lord's property, tenants, livestock, and grain. Officers have a highly visible presence in the manorial documentation, yet there have been few in-depth examinations that focus directly upon them, instead they have predominantly been discussed more tangentially as a component of a wider study. This thesis seeks to obtain a more nuanced understanding of officialdom through an examination of officials on the manors of Glastonbury c. 1250 – 1400, specifically the manors of Ashbury, Ashcott, Damerham, Glastonbury, and Nettleton (as shown in figure 1), and compare how officials were represented and perceived in the wider

1. D. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 18.

literature and imagery of this period.

The structure of the medieval manor necessitated an intricate administrative system that was overseen by a number of different officials. Those who held these positions came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds; they could be professional, socially elevated, free men, or unfree tenants of the lord, who had a customary obligation to hold office. The highest positions of authority on the manor, those who were responsible for managerial decisions or had supervisory oversight, were predominantly held by free men. These roles typically included the steward, seneschal, bailiff, and the cellarer (an obedientiary). The other offices, which had domains of authority that primarily entailed the handling of the day-to-day responsibilities, were more likely to be filled by the unfree tenantry. It is these elected peasant officials that will be the focus of this study. On the manors of Glastonbury the positions of the elected tenantry that were of greatest import were predominantly the reeve, messor, beadle, berebrit, woodward, parker, and ripreeve.[2] There were also a number of other offices and workers on the manors that warrant closer inspection, these being the *famuli*, who were permanent manorial servants and workers on the lord's demesne.[3] The *famuli* was comprised of a number of different animal custodians, dairyworkers, ploughmen, drovers, carters, and servants. There also existed more unique or specialised positions that were only present for certain periods of time or on only a minority of the manors, such as the *cadavatores*, *equitatores*, *pedones*, and *clavigers*. External to these categories of officials and workers, jurors have also been noted to have been influential members of the community upon other manors. However, within the records of the manors of this study there are no details regarding the identity of the jurors and so these roles have not been incorporated into this

2. In the Glastonbury accounts and court rolls the most common terminology was 'messor', with only a few references to a hayward. In contrast, in the custumal, only the term '*haywardus*' was used. 'Messor' has been used in this study as this was the most commonly recorded term.

3. D. Farmer, "The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages," in *Progress and Problems in Medieval England, Essays in Honour of Edward Miller*, ed. R. Britnell and J. Hatcher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 207-36.

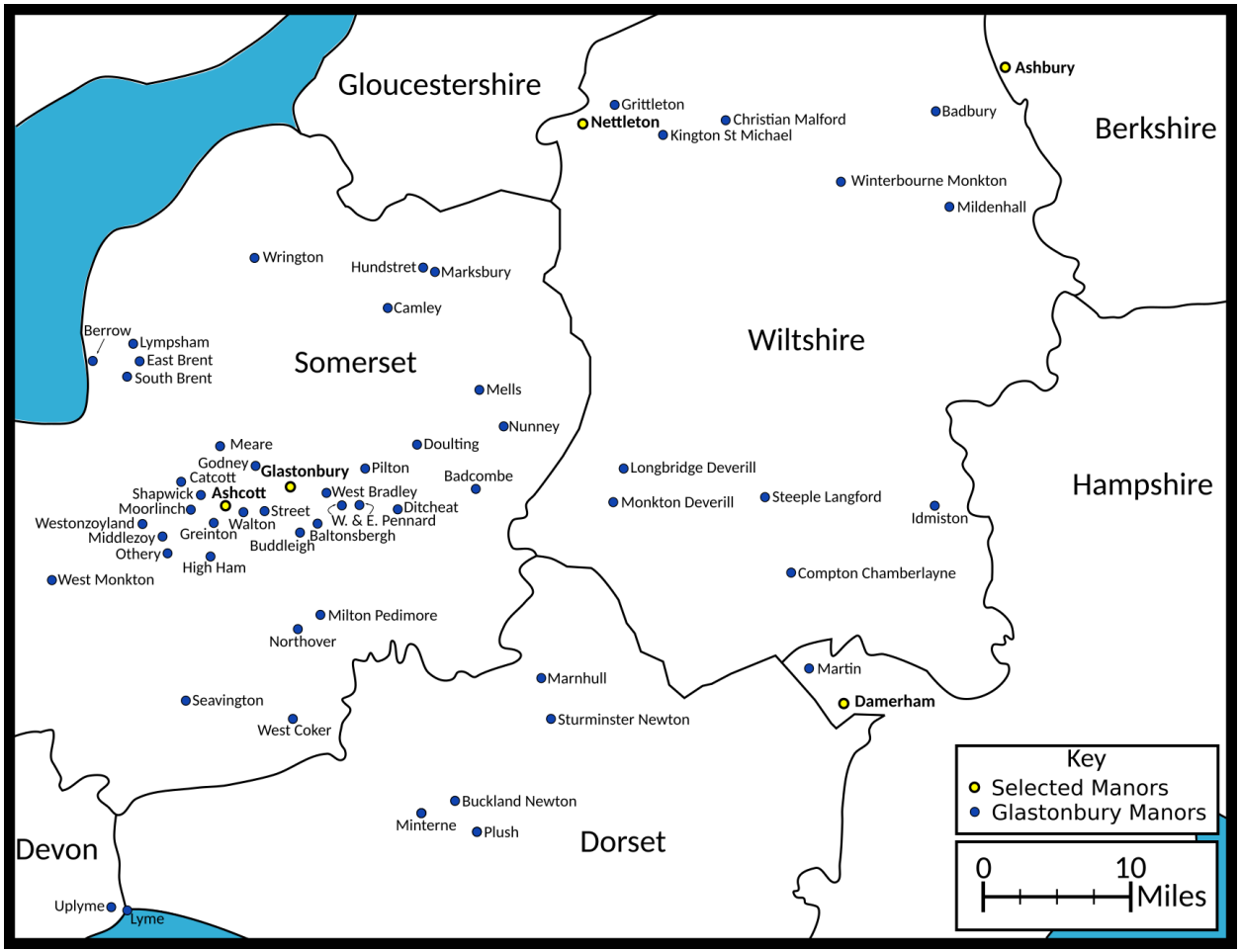


Figure 1: The Manors Belonging to the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Fourteenth Century.[a]

a. Map based upon those provided in I. Keil, “The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages” (PhD diss., University of Bristol, 1964), p. 35.

analysis.[4]

The research questions that this thesis seeks to answer will provide a clearer understanding of the essential vitality and influence of peasant officials upon the manors within the context of the system of manorial estates in fourteenth century England. The question of whether there was a homogeneous purpose of officialdom from the perspectives of the seigneurial authority, the officials themselves, or the wider peasantry provides insight into authority and the stratification and structure of medieval society. This line of questioning allows for more understanding of the power relationships and self-perceptions of the peasantry that often go unrecorded. It also allows for acknowledgement of discrepancies between the different class and pseudo-class interests, particularly that between lords and peasants, which necessarily interweave with other discussions of medieval society. By examining the distinctions between peasants and officials, the differences in treatment, conditions, and status, as well as the extent to which these were aspects of a contemporary understanding, this work will provide a foundation to other discussions of peasant society.

The conception of officials as the mechanism for the exertion of seigneurial authority will also be explored, mediated by an examination of the extent to which these roles can be understood, through contextualisation, as localisation of the manorial estates system. The role of officialdom in the local adaptation of manors is an important factor in understanding other aspects of medieval English society. For this reason, a nuanced analysis of officialdom lends itself to becoming a lens through

4. J. Beckerman, "The Articles of Presentment of a Court Leet and Court Baron, in English, c. 1400," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, no. 47 (1974): pp. 30-4. A. Dewindt and E. Dewindt, *The Lives of an English Fenland Town, 1200-1600* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), pp. 86-117. P. Larson, "Village Voice or Village Oligarchy?: The Jurors of the Durham Halmote Court, 1349 to 1424," *Law and History Review* 28, no. 3 (August 2010): pp. 675-709. M. Mulholland, "The Jury in English Manorial Courts," in *'The Dearest Birth Right of the People': the Jury in the History of the Common Law*, ed. J. W. Cairns and G. McLeod (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2002), pp. 63-78, 68. S. Olson, "Jurors of the Village Court: Local Leadership before and after the Plague in Elllington, Huntingdonshire," *Journal of British Studies* 30, no. 3 (July 1991): pp. 237-56.

which the intersections of seigneurial assertions of power, the society of the peasantry, the geography, and the economics of manorial society can all be understood holistically. This provides a rich understanding of officialdom as a collection of roles with purposes that cannot be trivially simplified or reduced. Furthermore, by questioning the role of officialdom as a response to the differences between manors, and the likely causes and purposes of this variation, the distinction in terms of rural and urban character and socio-economic influences can be clearly defined. This study will present officialdom as an essential component of the manorial system and integral to its longevity.

0.1. Historiography

The importance of manorial officials to the health of the manorial economy and their prominent role in the community has been long acknowledged yet there have been few studies that have explored these positions in detail. Many early studies focused particularly upon the responsibilities and activities of the reeve. Bennett, in 1926, was one of the first scholars to directly analyse manorial officialdom, predominantly reeves, analysing their duties, relationship with the lord, and the process for dealing with arrears in the accounts, however, he does not contemplate the broader social implications of office-holding or their interactions with the peasant community.[5] Similarly, Ault, when examining the manorial vill, outlines a small number of officials generally extant on the manor but the discussion is limited in its depth.[6] Page, in her study of the manor of the Abbey of Crowland, explores a wide range of topics, including administrative structure, tenure practices, and the impact of wider socio-economic

5. H. Bennett, "The Reeve and the Manor in the Fourteenth Century," *The English Historical Review* 41, no. 163 (July, 1926): pp. 358-65.

6. W. Ault, "The Vill in Medieval England," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 126, no. 3 (June 1982): pp. 188-211, 193-4.

events upon the manor.[7] It is within this broader study that Page briefly explores eligibility for office-holding, interactions amongst officials, and progression through different offices.[8] More recent studies have explored topics such as eligibility criteria, responsibilities, and the lord-official and official-peasant relationships.[9] Birrell, in a study of peasant experiences of eating and drinking in manorial custumals, examined how status could be conferred upon peasants, and in particular certain officials, by granting them the privilege of eating at the lord's table during the harvest.[10] Birrell argues that this was not only a practical arrangement but that it was also intended to encourage the reeve to feel closer to the manorial administration and, thereby, more distant and elevated above the other tenants. Studies such as these provide interesting and insightful observations but are limited by their depth and detail due to their discussion of manorial officialdom being incidental to the primary focus. Recent studies have begun to rebalance this, in particular the works of Briggs and Gibbs, which have examined the activities of officials and the social implications that holding office could entail. Each chapter of this work will analyse, respectively, the impacts of the environment and material conditions upon office-holding, how officers were remunerated for their services, the common perceptions of the activities undertaken by office-holders, and how they have been portrayed in sources beyond the manor.[11]

7. F. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934).

8. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

9. For example, see: J. Birrell, "Peasants Eating and Drinking," *Agricultural History Review* 63, no. 1 (2015): pp. 1-18. M. Carlin, "Cheating the Boss: Robert Carpenter's Embezzlement Instructions (1261x1268) and Employee Fraud in Medieval England," in *Commercial Activity, Markets and Entrepreneurs in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Richard Britnell*, ed. B. Dodds and C. Liddy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 183-97. C. Dyer, "The English Medieval Village Community and Its Decline," Vill, Guild, and Gentry: Forces of Community in Later Medieval England, *Journal of British Studies* 33, no. 4 (October 1994): pp. 407-29. E. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely, The Social History of an Ecclesiastical Estate from the tenth to the early fourteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951); E. Searle, *Lordship and community: Battle abbey and its banlieu, 1066–1538* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974).

10. Birrell, "Peasants Eating and Drinking," pp. 1-18.

11. C. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," in *Survival and Discord in Medieval Society, Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer*, ed. R. Goddard, J. Langdon, and M. Müller (Turnhout; Brepols, 2010), pp. 179-195. A. Gibbs, "Manorial Officeholding in Late Medieval and Early Modern England, 1300–1600" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2018).

Due to the reciprocal relationship of office-holding to the manorial economy, examination of officialdom in the fourteenth century must take into consideration the broader socio-economic events and developments that occurred in order to accurately ascertain the significance of any local changes, or lack thereof. Significant debates have surrounded the impact and role of large-scale events, such as the famine, bovine plague, climactic shifts, the Black Death, wars with Scotland and France, as well as local disturbances, in causing changes at a more local level on the fourteenth century manors.[12] However, that there was a confluence of causal factors that led to the period being one of significant societal change is uncontroversial. The hallmark of these changes were trends on a national scale, such as: the decrease in population, a slow shift away from the direct management of manors towards a rentier economy, changes in the lord-tenant and employer-employee relationships, increased labour costs, shifting land:labour ratio in which the peasantry were able to demand higher wages, and the expansion of towns.[13] These broader developments and variations occurred concurrently with local fluctuations in manorial finance, production, and trade. Although there is a general consensus that the plague was a catalyst for an increase in the rate of progression of pre-existing developments, the local response to these changing conditions was distinct and varied between manors. For example, whilst the move away from direct management has been observed as a general trend, the specific change was not ubiquitous. This is illustrated by the contrast between the manors belonging to the archbishopric of

12. A. Bridbury, "Before the Black Death," *The Economic History Review* 30, no. 3 (August, 1977): pp. 393-410. R. Britnell, "English agricultural output and prices, 1350-1450: national trends and regional divergences," in *Agriculture and Rural Society after the Black Death: Common Themes and Regional Variations*, ed. R. Britnell and B. Dodds, vol. 6, Studies in Regional and Local History (Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2008), pp. 2-39, 23. I. Kershaw, "The Great Famine and Agrarian Crisis in England 1315-1322," *Past & Present*, no. 59 (May 1973): pp. 3-50, 10-12, 35. M. Mate, "The agrarian economy of south-east England before the Black Death: depressed or buoyant?," in *Before the Black Death, Studies in the 'crisis' of the early fourteenth century*, ed. B. M. S. Campbell (Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 79-109, 342-50. P. Ziegler, *The Black Death* (London: Collins, 1998), pp. 33, 240, 245.

13. M. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

Canterbury and the Durham Cathedral Priory, which were leased as early the 1370s and 1380s, and the Glastonbury Abbey manors, a number of which remained under direct management until the 1490s.[14]

Chapter 1 will reconcile the broader context with the local or regional variations and peculiarities, such as differences in terminology, custom, and administrative structures. Only the very smallest of manorial estates would have been personally managed by its lord, the majority of manors were administered by a plethora of officials, each of whom had specific domains of authority, responsibility, oversight, and culpability.[15] Local variability was, in part, due to these offices; officials on smaller manors would have undertaken a wider array of duties than their counterparts on larger manors. Certain roles, those superfluous to the administrative requirements of the smaller estates or subdivided between different officials upon larger manors, cannot necessarily be directly compared between manors. Local adaptation ensured that the roles were varied to suit the needs of the manor; larger, more urban manors with markets would have required different officials to the smaller, more rural settlements.[16] As noted by Bennett, large differences between procedures and customs were evident even on manors located only a few miles apart.[17] The significant potential differences between manors, even those under the same lord, means that

14. Britnell, "English agricultural output and prices, 1350-1450: national trends and regional divergences," p. 24. Mate, "The agrarian economy of south-east England before the Black Death: depressed or buoyant?," p. 345; I. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages" (PhD diss., University of Bristol, 1964), pp. 147-8.

15. M. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 100.

16. The differences in responsibilities or which officials were extant on each manor is evident in studies which have focused upon an individual manor: C. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); R. Hilton, *The Economic Development of some Leicestershire Estates in the 14th & 15th Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947); Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely, The Social History of an Ecclesiastical Estate from the tenth to the early fourteenth century*; M. Müller, "The Aims and Organisation of a Peasant Revolt in Early Fourteenth-Century Wiltshire," *Rural History* 14, no. 1 (April 2003): pp. 1-20. M. Thompson, "The Polden Hill Manors of Glastonbury Abbey: Land and People circa 1260 to 1351" (PhD diss., University of Leicester, 1997).

17. H. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937), p. 156.

caution needs to be taken in applying universal definitions or when invoking specific comparisons, even when these are applied over proximal geographic regions.[18]

Chapter 1, in order to address the inconsistency between locales, will explore which offices were present on the Glastonbury manors, eligibility, and the scope of their authority and duties. This allows a more nuanced understanding to be developed into the roles of officials within the structures of the manor, rather than decontextualising them into a broader definition of medieval society, and for the impacts of the local environment upon the nuances of manorial administration to be more closely examined and deconstructed. It will also explore the increased prevalence or disappearance of particular offices in this period and posit why, due to the administrative, economic, and social structures, the Glastonbury manors were, by necessity of their location, rural and urban character, topography, and inhabitants, very different.

The precise distinction between rural, urban, or semi-urban settlements is inexact, sometimes with little to distinguish between a small town and a large village.[19] Potential identifiers of an urban settlement were the relatively large population, diversity of occupations, and the presence of borough tenures, although, as noted by Dyer and Laughton, not all boroughs became towns and many areas achieved urban growth without obtaining borough status.[20] Whilst the precise delimitation between rural and urban is ill-defined, there were observable differences between towns and villages in terms of the administrative structures, population, and the role and status of individual officials. Goddard has argued for the presence of a distinction between towns and villages in the character of the lord-vassal relationship, with there often be-

18. S. Harvey, "The People and the Land," in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, ed. H. E. Hallam, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 45-136, 106-8.

19. R. Goddard, "Small Boroughs and the Manorial Economy: Enterprise Zones or Urban Failures?," *Past & Present*, no. 210 (February 2011): pp. 3-31, 7.

20. J. Laughton and C. Dyer, "Small towns in the East and West Midlands in the Later Middle Ages: A Comparison," *Midland History* 24 (1999): pp. 24-52, 26.

ing more freehold tenures with fewer seigneurial demands in urban environments.[21] The manors of Glastonbury exemplify the overlap between rural and urban characteristics. For example, Damerham, whilst it had an active market and was a large manor both in terms of size and population, had a predominantly agricultural economy and may not have functioned precisely as other towns would have.[22] Notwithstanding this, the urban character of an area could also influence its surrounding regions; close proximity to a town potentially had an impact upon market, production, pricing, mobility, marriage, and social interactions.[23] The records of Glastonbury provide the opportunity to further scrutinise the differences in performance of officialdom under differing environments whilst isolating with respect to the variation caused by the different seigneurial authorities or styles of lordship. The manors examined enable scrutiny of the influence of rural and urban character upon the administrative structure, responsibilities, remunerations, and interactions with both their community and seigneurial authority. These lines of enquiry allow not only for a better understanding of the region-specific variation but also provide greater insight into the requirements created by the different socio-economic environments in which these manorial societies existed. This analysis will be supported by an examination of officialdom as it existed upon multiple manors which had distinct socio-economic environments.

Extensive research has been undertaken into the administrative and economic practices of manors and the costs of wage labour, however, significantly less attention has been given to the remunerations granted to manorial officials.[24] Studies

21. R. Goddard, *Lordship and Medieval Urbanisation: Coventry* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), p. 8.

22. C. Dyer, "Small Towns 1270-1540," in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume 1: 600-1540*, ed. D. M. Palliser (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 505-37, 511.

23. R. Britnell, "The Economy of British Towns 1300-1540," in *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. D. M. Palliser, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 313-34. R. Hilton, *English and French Towns in Feudal Society: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 52-7. E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Medieval England: Towns, Commerce and Crafts 1086-1348* (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 255-9; M. Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," *Past & Present, Supplement* 2 (2007): pp. 115-31, 20.

24. For example, see: Britnell, "English agricultural output and prices, 1350-1450: national trends

analysing how officials or workers were paid have predominantly been focused upon the *famuli.* Rush, in an examination of twenty-three Glastonbury Abbey manors for the years 1302/3 and 1311/12, analysed the relationship between grain commercialisation and the wages that were paid to the demesne labourers from which the *famuli* was comprised. He explicitly states that he excluded the managerial *famuli*, such as the reeve, beadle, and hayward, from the study, noting only that due to their supervisory roles they received higher wages and perquisites.[25] In a similar vein, Farmer, in his extensive survey on the treatment of the *famuli* on 150 manors in the later middle ages, identified how much each type of *famuli* worker was paid and in what form, these categories being primarily grain liveries, stipends, or labour service remissions.[26] Most recently, Claridge and Langdon examined the grain liveries, in terms of both type and quantity, given to the *famuli* as detailed in 400 accounts from manors across England for the period c. 1300.[27] This excluded stipendiary payments that would have also been given and focused solely upon the *famuli*, rather than any higher ranking manorial officials. Although these three studies are highly informative there is a dearth of research into the remunerations of manorial officials. Chapter 2 will seek to redress the paucity of analysis through an examination of how manorial officials, workers, and the *famuli* were remunerated for their services to the lord. An exploration of how officials were remunerated provides insight into their relative valuation, the priorities of the seigneurial authority, the structure of administrative hierarchy, and how these were utilised to respond to changes in the wider socio-economic conditions. This examination affords a broader understanding of the flexibility and adaptability within the system of manorial estates.

and regional divergences"; J. Hatcher, "England in the Aftermath of the Black Death," *Past & Present*, no. 144 (August 1994): pp. 3-35. M. M. Postan, "Some Economic Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages," *Economic History Review* 2, no. 3 (1950): pp. 221-46.

25. I. Rush, "The Impact of Commercialization in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Some Evidence from the Manors of Glastonbury Abbey," *The Agricultural History Review* 49, no. 2 (2001): pp. 123-39, 125.

26. Farmer, "The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 207-36.

27. J. Claridge and J. Langdon, "The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300," *Agricultural History Review* 63:2 (2015): pp. 187-220.

In Chapter 3, the activities of manorial officials and their interactions with the community, as recorded within the manor court rolls, will be explored. The interactions between different members of the peasantry as well as the lord-peasant relationship has been a topic of considerable interest amongst scholars. It has been argued that officials could be placed in untenable positions, risking ostracisation from the community or substantial fiscal amercement due to the mediation between their personal interests, and those of their community, and their responsibilities to the lord.[28] The conflict could be compounded by the influence of local factors, for example, ecclesiastical lords have been found to be more conservative and less willing to negotiate with the tenantry which result in lord-peasant tensions.[29] A number of scholars, notably the 'Toronto School', have sought to understand manorial community relationships, structures, and families through quantiative methods. Influenced by Raftis, several scholars sought to identify social groupings present on the estate of the Abbot of Ramsey, creating categories based upon holding size, work, responsibilities on the manor, and interactions with the wider community.[30] Raftis argued that holding manorial office provided opportunities for social and economic mobility and played a role in influencing the mechanisms and proceedings of the local community.[31] How-

28. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 171. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," pp. 179-80. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation*, p. 68.

29. B. Campbell, "The Agrarian Problem in the Early Fourteenth Century," *Past & Present*, no. 188 (August, 2005): p. 3-70, 38. Dyer, "Small Towns 1270-1540," pp. 505-37, 527; Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," pp. 115-31, 120.

30. E. Britton, *The Community of the Vill: a Study in the History of the Family and Village Life in Fourteenth-Century England* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977); A. Dewindt, "Peasant Power Structures in Fourteenth-Century King's Ripton," *Mediaeval Studies*, no. 38 (1976): pp. 236-67; E. Dewindt, *Land and People in Holywell-cum-Needingworth: Structures of Tenure and Patterns of Social Organization in an East Midlands Village 1252-1457* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1972), pp. 206-33. S. Olson, "Families Have Their Fate and Periods: Varieties of Family Experience in the Preindustrial Village," in *The Salt of Common Life: Individuality and Choice in the Medieval Town, Countryside and Church: Essays Presented to J. Ambrose Raftis*, ed. E. B. DeWindt (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 409-48. J. Raftis, "The Concentration of Responsibility in Five Villages," *Mediaeval Studies*, no. 28 (1966): pp. 92-118. See also: P. Schofield, *Peasants and Historians, Debating the Medieval English Peasantry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 6-8.

31. Raftis, "The Concentration of Responsibility in Five Villages," pp. 98-9.

ever, the techniques employed and specific categorisations have been criticised, in particular the reliance upon assumptions of status, nominative stability, and evidential reliability.[32] Similar approaches can also be found in the work of Hanawalt and Postles, who have argued that office-holding was a mechanism through which the peasantry in the upper echelons of peasant society could exert their will and subjugate the other tenantry.[33] Through their occupation of office and the authority of the manor court, these tenants were able to create hierarchical divisions within the community and promote the interests of their peers above that of the lower-ranking peasantry.

Whilst it is widely accepted that those who held office were selected from the wealthier tenants with larger holdings, Dyer and Müller have both argued that more division and conflict can be seen within the same sub-groupings, that common societal conflict was more likely to occur between neighbours rather than differing socio-economic statuses.[34] The categorisation of medieval peasant society into rigid social structure disregards the fluidity of these communities; differences in amount of land held, professions, families or wealth do not in themselves indicate distinct interest groups.[35] More recently, Briggs has analysed the changes in the fourteenth century in the interactions, presentments, and relationships between the most supervisory officers, primarily the bailiff and reeve, and the wealthier and higher-ranking members of the tenantry.[36] He observes significant differences between the pre- and

32. For more discussion upon this, see: R. Smith, ""Modenization" and the Corporate Village Community in England: Some Sceptical Reflections," in *Explorations in Historical Geography: Interpretive Essays*, ed. A. R. H. Baker and D. Gregory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 140-79. K. Wrightson, "Medieval Villagers in Perspective," *Peasant Studies* 4, no. 7 (1978): pp. 203-16.

33. B. Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 25, 167-77, 261, 267. D. Postles, "Personal Pledging: Medieval "Reciprocity" or "Symbolic Capital"?," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 26, no. 3 (1996): pp. 419-35, 420, 422.

34. C. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon / London, 2000), pp. 1-10. A. Gibbs, "Lords, Tenants and Attitudes to Manorial Office-holding, c. 1300-1600'," *Agricultural History Review* 67, no. 2 (2019): pp. 155-74. **1979**; Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," pp. 122-5, 130.

35. Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," pp. 122-30.

36. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black

post-Black Death period in both the quantity of cases made against officials and the types of outcomes that can be observed. Briggs notes that before the plague officials were infrequently amerced in the court for poor performance of duties but in the later fourteenth century this became much more common. He argues that this was a method through which the seigneurial authority was challenged rather than simply inter-personal disputes.[37] The salient criticisms of the 'Toronto School' and the nuanced understanding of Briggs, Dyer, and Müller highlight the importance of the careful assignation of structure and intent to the interpretation of the actions of officials. In order to avoid over-generalisation, throughout this work officialdom has been examined using different measures in multiple domains in order to analyse the similarities and distinctions between officials and the wider peasantry without presuming that a class distinction is necessarily present.

The nature of the interactions of officials with both the peasantry and the seigneurial authority will be used to determine the extent to which officials can be considered as a distinct grouping or pseudo-class from their fellow tenants. This also provides a natural path to scrutinising officialdom as the intersection point for the interests of lords and those of the manorial inhabitants. Chapter 3 will analyse the activities and role of officials in the manorial community and the extent to which their behaviour and interactions with the peasantry were reflective of peasant perceptions towards manorial officials as representatives of seigneurial authority. This will be done through an examination of the manorial court rolls and the types of cases in which officials and non-officials appeared. The courts held upon the Glastonbury manors examined in this study were primarily hallmoot (held three or four times a year) and thus did not include many cases of inter-peasant litigation. Due to the nature of the surviving court roll material, rather than exploring the interactions between officers and the

Death," pp. 179-195.

37. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," pp. 189-90.

wider community, this thesis will examine how manorial officials comported themselves when in office and how their role as a seigneurial representative impacted their treatment within the court. This chapter will also explore the extent to which officials can be observed to have exploited their positions of authority for personal gain, rather than serving the interests of the lord.

Chapter 4 will compare the actions of officials, as recorded in manorial sources, to the variety of ways in which they were represented in the wider literature and art of the period. There have been few studies that have analysed the depictions of officials, with their discussion being incidental to an examination of the wider peasantry. The approaches utilised in these studies can be broadly divided between two exploratory paradigms: broad-scope thematic interpretation or in-depth examination of a particular source. Freedman's *Images of the Medieval Peasant* has been one of the most influential broad-scope studies which has, through analysis of a plethora of sources, explored the various ways in which the peasantry were depicted and regarded by wider society.[38] This work presents an analysis of the origins and justifications of social inequality for the peasantry, the negative and positive portrayals, and how these depictions changed during periods of upheaval. Similar to Freedman, Salisbury, in a broader study of animals in the middle ages, has looked at the close association between the peasantry and animals. She argues that the association of the peasantry with animals and animalistic-behaviours was used to convey a connection between moral character, bestial imagery, and physical appearance.[39]

Many of the approaches to pictorial depictions or literary descriptions of the peasantry have utilised in-depth examinations of single sources in order to explore the various themes presented within them. Camille has closely analysed the Luttrell Psalter, an early fourteenth century manuscript, to provide valuable commentary

38. P. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (California: Stanford University Press, 1999).
39. J. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2011).

upon the labour scenes, composition, clothing of the peasantry, and the use of idealised representations of the peasantry to support lordship.[40] Friedman has similarly presented a detailed description and discussion of the contents of the Rawlinson D.939 manuscript, a late fourteenth century farmer's almanac. In this analysis, he dedicates some focus upon two officials, Harry the Haywarde and Peter the Pyndare, which touches upon the duties of the hayward and their position within the manorial hierarchy.[41] However, the analysis is weakened by its lack of contextualisation with manorial documentation or consideration of any regional or temporal changes. Similar analysis is often applied to the examination of characters, such as Chaucer's Reeve in the *Canterbury Tales*, whose portrayal was intended to incorporate deliberate metaphorical imagery.[42] Studies that utilise a wide variety of source types provide a comparative discussion of the role of metaphor and common themes within medieval art and literature. However, this form of analysis can lack nuanced discussion of individual sources. In contrast, research that focuses upon one source type or character enables a closer scrutinisation of the variety of imagery associated, although such studies are limited in their exploration of the prevalence of their findings in other sources produced in this period. Chapter 4 will examine how manorial officials were portrayed in medieval art and literature. This tight focus allows for the utilisation of a variety of different source types whilst providing an in-depth analysis and discussion of each source and theme.

Chapter 4 will build upon the understanding of officials constructed in the previous chapters to incorporate literary and figurative portrayals with their representations within manorial documentation. This chapter will explore how officers were

40. M. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998).

41. J. Friedman, "Harry the Haywarde and Talbat his Dog: An Illustrated Girdlebook from Worcestershire," in *Art into Life, Collected Papers from the Kresge Art Museum Medieval Symposia*, ed. C. F. Fisher and K. L. Scott (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1995), pp. 115-53.

42. For example, see: D. Stone, "The Reeve," in *Historians on Chaucer: The 'General Prologue' to the Canterbury Tales*, ed. S. Rigby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 399-419. E. Vasta, "How Chaucer's Reeve Succeeds," *Criticism* 25, no. 1 (Winter 1983): pp. 1-12.

understood by both elites and peasants in order to better examine the position of peasant officials within the context of fourteenth century society. It is necessary to also explore depictions of the wider peasantry in order to understand the cultural and societal context within which officials were placed. To facilitate this analysis, a wide variety of source types have been utilised in constructing this study; a number of different agricultural treatises, images, poems, and literary tracts have been explored. This chapter will examine the thematic and figurative devices used in the works of writers such as John Gower, William Langland, and Geoffrey Chaucer, as well as images from the Luttrell Psalter, Queen Mary Psalter, and Rawlinson D.939 manuscript. These sources, in combination with manorial documentation, allow for a more holistic view of officialdom to be constructed.

0.2. Methodology and sources

Traditional Marxist approaches to history have framed societal progress in terms of material conditions, and chief among these, the relationship of an individual to the means of production, their class.[43] Scholars, such as Hilton and Brenner, utilised a Marxist approach in order to discuss broad questions, such as the nature of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, most notably in the Brenner Debate.[44] The work of these scholars has provided insight into the stratification of medieval society and the lord-peasant relationship, however, whether the application of other societal delineations can provide greater analytic insight than the relationship to the means of production is context dependant.[45] Class provides a powerful tool for historial analy-

43. S. Rigby, "Historical Materialism: Social Structure and Social Change in the Middle Ages," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34, no. 3 (Fall 2004): pp. 473-522. R. Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1985), p. 270.

44. T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin, *The Brenner Debate, Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History*.

45. J. Hatcher and M. Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages: the History and Theory of England's Economic Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 170-3. Hilton, *Class Conflict and the*

sis, however, in the examination of stratification within the peasantry, it can be found that, despite relative consistency in relationship to the means of production, there is diversity.[46] Whilst there is significant variation within the peasantry, in terms of their relationship to the means of production, manorial officials are not distinctly delineated from the wider peasantry in regard to their relations of production. Hence, peasant officials cannot be considered a distinct class from the peasantry. However, their position and power within local social structures is significantly increased. This produces a distinct set of interests and motivators to the rest of the peasantry, which did not arise solely from the relationship to the means of production. This necessitates analysis that deviates away from historical materialism. There was an immaterial aspect to the position of the peasantry within social structures, the societal norms, expectations, authorities, and hierarchies that existed commingled within the broad structure of class-relations.[47]

This thesis will utilise a Marxist framing of the relationship between the peasantry and the seigneurial authority, where the interests of the peasantry and lordship are examined in terms of agreement and opposition. However, because, as argued above, it is important to include the immaterial social relations and influences to develop a more nuanced understanding of officialdom, this analysis will not be limited to a strict Marxist paradigm. Representations and cultural portrayals of officials will be incorporated into a more material-focused analysis to develop a well-rounded understanding of peasant officials within manorial society, uniting the material and immaterial. This presents an understanding of officialdom as a mediator between the conflicting interests of classes, a point of conflict, and a reciprocal channel for the transmission of demands between seigneurial authority and the peasantry. This

Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History; Schofield, *Peasants and Historians, Debating the Medieval English Peasantry*, p. 6.

46. C. Hall, “Marxism and Its Others,” in *Marxist History-writing for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. C. Wickham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 112-139, 118-9.

47. Hall, “Marxism and Its Others,” pp. 119, 125, 139. Rigby, “Historical Materialism: Social Structure and Social Change in the Middle Ages,” pp. 473-522.

analysis suggests peasant officials to be vital to the local adaptation and longevity of the manorial estates system.

In order to address questions and debates around manorial officialdom, the manors of Glastonbury have been selected as a particularly useful case study for comparative analysis. This is due to their geographic and economic diversity, whilst still being under the same estate, as well as the number and quality of the surviving manorial records. The extensive surviving material from the manors of Glastonbury has enabled scholars to examine a wide variety of topics, such as manorialism, demography, the economy, the peasantry, gender, and much more.[48] The abbot of Glastonbury owned over 50 manors in five different counties, amounting to approximately 1,194 hides, predominantly located in Somerset and Wiltshire.[49] It was one of the wealthiest monastic houses in England and was atypical in that it retained direct management of several of its manors until the late fifteenth century.[50] Keil argued that the diverse economies at each of the Glastonbury manors enabled the abbot to benefit from not only a wide variety of grain cultivars and livestock but also to utilise the network of manors to support the abbey.[51] The vast size of the Glastonbury estate meant that the abbot could not be physically present at all of his manors, so in order to ensure that his interests were being protected and to help circumvent fraud, a highly organised administrative system was necessary. This entailed the presence of a substantial number of officials, positions predominantly held by the unfree tenantry.

48. For example, see: D. Farmer, "Two Wiltshire Manors and Their Markets," *The Agricultural History Review* 37, no. 1 (1989): pp. 1-11. L. Gates, "Widows, Property, and Remarriage: Lessons from Glastonbury's Deverill Manors," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 28, no. 1 (1996): pp. 19-35. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages"; Müller, "The Aims and Organisation of a Peasant Revolt in Early Fourteenth-Century Wiltshire," pp. 1-20. Rush, "The Impact of Commercialization in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Some Evidence from the Manors of Glastonbury Abbey," pp. 123-39.

49. W. Page, "A History of the County of Somerset," ed. W. Page, vol. 2 (London: Victoria County History, 1911), pp. 97-8.

50. Harvey, "The People and the Land," pp. 97-8.

51. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 46.

The five manors in this study (Ashbury, Ashcott, Damerham, Glastonbury, and Nettleton) were selected for their varying sizes; location in relation to the central seat of authority, Glastonbury; their rural, urban, or semi-urban character; and the quantity and quality of surviving source material. The topography and history of these manors has been recorded in particular detail in the Victoria County Histories (VCH), a brief summary of which will be provided.[52] Glastonbury was the most urban of all of the five manors, a busy market town with a diverse range of professions.[53] It contained a substantial amount of land, including meadows, ponds, parks, and moorland (the moors were drained in the late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth centuries).[54] Glastonbury had a more complex administrative and judicial system in comparison to that of the other manors because it contained the 'Twelve Hides' which had a distinct set of privileges granted to the abbots. The town and parish were not distinguished in the hundred courts very clearly, and it was not taxed like other fourteenth century towns.

The manor of Ashcott was near Glastonbury, within 5 miles, and was a fairly small village, measuring approximately 4.5 by 5.0 km in the thirteenth century, and contained around 90 acres of woodland and peat moors.[55] The other 3 manors were located at a much greater distance. Ashbury was approximately 50 miles north-east in Berkshire and was a sizeable manor with 667 acres of arable, 129 acres of meadow, woodland, and some moor land, as well as a small orchard, fishpond, dovecot, and mill.[56] Nettleton, in Wiltshire, was around 35 miles away and contained

52. W. Page and P. H. Ditchfield, *A History of the County of Berkshire*, vol. 4 (London: Victoria County History, 1924); W. Page, *A History of the County of Hampshire*, vol. 4 (London: Victoria County History, 1911); W. Page, in *A History of the County of Somerset, 10 Volumes*, ed. W. Page, vol. 10 (London: Victoria County History, 1911-2010); R. B. Pugh and E. Crittall, "A History of the County of Wiltshire," vol. 5 (London: Victoria County History, 1957).

53. D. Shaw, *The Creation of a Community: The City of Wells in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

54. W. Dunning, *The History of the County of Somerset*, vol. 9 (London: Victoria County History, 2006), pp. 6, 16, 30, 47. N. Stacy, *The Surveys of the Estates of Glastonbury Abbey c. 1135-1201, Records of Social and Economic History*, vol. 33 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 9-41.

55. W. Dunning, *The Victoria History of Somerset*, vol. 8 (London: Victoria County History, 2004), p. 13.

56. Page and Ditchfield, *A History of the County of Berkshire*.

approximately 1,940 acres, of which 1,200 was arable, 600 was pasture, and a small amount of woodland.[57] Damerham was a large manor of approximately 52 hides, most of which was arable. There were also over 900 acres of woodland, as well as parks and four mills.[58] Damerham had a number of urban characteristics, such as a large population and active markets, although it remained fairly rural in its economy. That the manors, with different sizes, topography, population, and variety of occupations, all existed under the same lordship provides an invaluable opportunity to comparatively analyse the impacts of factors besides seigneurial authority in manorial administration and office-holding.

The key sources used in this study have been the accounts, court rolls, and custumals for each of the five manors. The period of study, c. 1250–1400, was at what has been considered the 'height of manorialism', due to the number and intricate detail of surviving documentation.[59] Each of the three manorial source types only cover this period intermittently with notable gaps in all three records for the 1270s, 1290s, 1317–1333, and more sparse coverage for the 1370s, 1380s, and 1390s.

Custumals, similar to rentals or surveys, are highly informative sources that detail the names of the lord's tenants, their holdings, the various rents and services that each tenant owed as well as recording how particular officials or workers were to be rewarded.[60] The information in these documents was provided by the peasantry themselves, usually through an elected jury, and not only record the obligations of the tenantry but also the expectations placed upon the lord, such as the provision of a certain amount of alcohol at church ales.[61] The information can be static, particularly

57. Pugh and Crittall, "A History of the County of Wiltshire," pp. 44-71.
58. Page, *A History of the County of Hampshire*, pp. 586-591.
59. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, pp. 21-41. J. Titow, *English Rural Society 1200–1350* (London, 1969), p. 24.
60. J. Birrell, "Manorial Custumals Reconsidered," *Past & Present*, no. 224 (2014): pp. 3-37, 3. N. Hone, *The Manor and Manorial Records* (London, 1925), p. 127. Titow, *English Rural Society 1200–1350*, p. 127.
61. Birrell, "Manorial Custumals Reconsidered," pp. 7, 10.

in comparison to the dynamic nature of court rolls, and may also obscure the number of individuals that sub-let their tenements, the landless, the family members of that tenant, or whether land was held on other manors.[62] This study used the *Custumaria et Rentalia*, which contains two custumals one from the time of Abbot Michael of Amesbury (1235–52) and the other of Roger Ford (1252–61).[63] These date from the very beginning of the time period covered in this thesis, which complements well with both the manorial accounts and court rolls, which begin in the 1250s and 1260s respectively.

The manorial account was one of the most important documents for a lord, covering a year-long period from Michaelmas (September 29th) to Michaelmas, recording the income and expenditure of the manor.[64] Accounts permit historians to reconstruct many aspects of manorial life, economy, geography, agricultural practice, productivity, management, and the activities of officials and other peasants. However, caution must be taken when examining particular topics; for example, some items can be found repeated in successive accounts and loans contracted could be entered as income.[65] Accounts have been an essential source type for this thesis because of the involvement of manorial officials in their compilation as well as the record of the responsibilities, remunerations, and activities of officers. The content of the Glastonbury accounts recorded: the arrears, rents, farming of mill, issues of the manor, sale of grain and stock, perquisites, and then the various expenses of that year, such as quittances, defaults, ploughs, carts, stock, and stipends. This was then followed by the grange account which included an in-depth record of each type of grain and live-

62. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, pp. 31, 42.

63. C. J. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, Michaelis de Ambresbury 1235-1252 et Rogeri de ford 1252-1261 Abbatum Monasterii Beatae Mariae Glastoniae with an Excursus on Manorial Land Tenures by C. J. Elton and Introductory Historical Notes by Right Reverend Bishop Hobhouse and the Honorary Secretary (Somerset: Somerset Record Society, 1891).

64. Bennett, "The Reeve and the Manor in the Fourteenth Century," pp. 358-365. A. Dobie, "An Analysis of the Bursars' Accounts at Durham Cathedral Priory," *The Accounting Historians Journal* 35, no. 2 (December 2008): pp. 181-208.

65. Titow, *English Rural Society 1200–1350*, p. 26.

stock, how many had been sold, born, died, consumed, and sent to other manors.[66]

By the 1330s, the Glastonbury accounts had increased in length significantly, in some cases even quadrupling in length in comparison to the beginning of the period. In the later accounts labour services were also included which detailed the number of works performed at each term as well as how many were commuted and quit. In all accounts the overall profits and expenses were balanced and the amount the reeve owed to the lord was noted. The compilation of the account required a high level of skill in order to maintain an accurate record of each aspect of the manorial economy. It was also a verification mechanism, a check for the seigneurial authority, and, as Bailey notes, its function was to record charge and discharge in order to help ascertain liability for any failings or fraud.[67] These accounts were then audited by non-residential professionals, and the reeve was to answer for any irregularities in the account. The compilation of the account and subsequent audit were checks against deceit by the peasantry and the officials but they also demonstrate the level of trust given to the peasantry in managing the manorial economy and preserving their lord's assets and profits. In this study 91 accounts have been analysed: Ashbury (11), Damerham (11), and Nettleton (9) which cover, intermittently, the years 1257–1335. The accounts for Ashcott (25) and Glastonbury (35) have existing accounts that cover a much longer period, 1257–1395.

Court rolls were the final key manorial record used in this study. They provide a unique opportunity to examine the activities of the lower orders of medieval society and have been one of the most commonly utilised manorial document due to their diversity and depth of information. Court rolls have been used by scholars to examine a wide range of topics such as: lord-peasant relationships, intra-peasant re-

66. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 188.
67. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 100.

lationships, family ties, gender, landholding structures and market, social, economic, and demographic change or trends, material life, work and occupations, leisure, and much more.[68] The court has been seen as an instrument for the lord to control the tenantry, it was itself an example of a manorial fixture that furthered the seigneurial interest, however, this imbalance was not absolute, peasants were able to utilise the court for their own gain.[69] It was an active and complex space in which the lord's tenants were not only presented for a number of different transgressions, such as trespass, damage to the lord's land, and not paying customary dues, but was also a societal mechanism for the mediation of conflict and ensuring that reparations for debts and damages were paid. Tenants could appeal or complain to the lord about damages made in the common land.[70] The value of the court system to the peasantry is clearly demonstrated in the works of Dyer, Müller, and Claridge and Gibbs, who have argued that the utility of the courts to manorial communities extended beyond the needs of lordship.[71] That the courts were seen as capable of the enforcement of

68. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, pp. 193-221. C. Briggs, "Manor Court Procedures, Debt Litigation Levels, and Rural Credit Provision in England, c. 1290-c. 1380," *Law and History Review* 24, no. 3 (2006): pp. 519-55. C. Briggs and P. Schofield, "The Evolution of Manor Courts in Medieval England, c. 1250-1350: The Evidence of the Personal Actions," *The Journal of Legal History* 41, no. 1 (2020): pp. 1-28. L. Bonfield, "The Nature of Customary Law in the Manor Courts of Medieval England," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 3 (July 1989): pp. 514-34. Dewindt, *Land and People in Holywell-cum-Needingworth: Structures of Tenure and Patterns of Social Organization in an East Midlands Village 1252-1457*; **]**; L. Poos, Z. Razi, and S. Smith, "The Population History of Medieval Villages: A Debate on the Use of Manor Court Records," in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, ed. Z. Razi and R. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 298–368; Z. Razi, *Life, Marriage and Death in a Medieval Parish: Economy, Society and Demography in Halesowen 1270-1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Z. Razi, "Struggles between the Abbots of Halesowen and their Tenants in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *Social Relations and Ideas: Essays in Honour of R. H. Hilton*, ed. T. H. Aston et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 151–168; Titow, *English Rural Society 1200–1350*, p. 31.

69. J. Bolton, *The Medieval English Economy 1150–1500* (London: Dent, 1980), pp. 111-3. C. Dyer, *An Age of Transition? Economy and Society in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 86-9. R. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), p. 256. R. Hilton, *The Decline of Serfdom in Medieval England* (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 17-9. S. Rigby, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages: Class, Status and Gender* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995).

70. J. Claridge and S. Gibbs, "Waifs and Strays: Property Rights in Late Medieval England," *Economic History Working Papers*, no. 313 (2020): pp. 1-40.

71. Claridge and Gibbs, "Waifs and Strays: Property Rights in Late Medieval England," pp. 1-40. Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," pp. 129. C. Dyer, "Courts and Urbanisation: Jurisdiction in the Late Medieval Seigneurial Boroughs and

laws, expectations, and norms is particularly well-evidenced by the utilisation of the courts by the tenantry in order to help regulate intra-peasant conflict. Peasant reliance upon the courts indicates that the courts were a societal structure that allowed for the pursuit of their own interests in the resolution of conflict with other peasants.[72]

The information that can be gleaned from court records varied significantly depending upon the types of court and the respective jurisdictions. This in turn was dependent upon what rights had been granted to the lord by the crown. Many manors across England had the right to hold a three-weekly court, often called a principal court, that unfree tenants were obligated to attend, which dealt with issues such as land transfers, the swearing of fealty, inter-peasant disputes, infractions against the lord, levying servile dues, and electing manorial officials.[73] As well as this, a number of manors had the right to hold leet or tourn courts, which were held either once or twice per year; these dealt with a number of issues, such as criminal activities and petty infringements of law and order, the assize of bread and ale, and violence. The distinctions between the leet, customary, baron, and principal courts could be blurred but within each there were defined rules and regulations.[74]

The abbots of Glastonbury were granted by the crown the right to hold a number of different courts but this did not extend to all of the manors of the Glastonbury estate. The abbots were also granted the right to hold hundred courts on all of their manors, which were held twice a year at Hockday and Michaelmas, although there were very few surviving records for this type of court on the manors examined in

Towns," in *Town Courts and Urban Society in Late Medieval England*, ed. R. Goddard and T. Phipps (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), pp. 93-116, 114.

72. Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," pp. 129. Dyer, "Courts and Urbanisation: Jurisdiction in the Late Medieval Seigneurial Boroughs and Towns," pp. 93-116, 114.

73. W. Stephens, *Sources for English Local History* (Sussex: Phillimore, 1994), p. 73.

74. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, pp. 178-82. Stephens, *Sources for English Local History*, p. 75.

this thesis.[75] The predominant surviving court roll type for the five manors in this study was the hallmoot, which appears to have been held up to four times a year (Spring, Hockday, Summer, and Michaelmas). For the larger manors of Glastonbury and Damerham, the hallmoot courts were divided further; at Glastonbury these were sub-divided into Edgarly and West Pennard, and at Damerham it was Merton (or West Merton), Tudeputte, and Damerham, although these were all incorporated within the same court roll. The jurisdiction in these courts was more limited than that of other manors or court types, predominantly restricted to: land transfers and inheritance, customary dues or infractions, control of grazing, repairs to buildings, cases of trespass, straying animals, debts amongst tenants, damage to watercourses, and the activities of manorial officers.[76] The abbot of Glastonbury also had the right to hold tourn courts, county courts, and portmoots (held twice a year at Hockday and Michaelmas), the former evident at Nettleton and the latter two at Glastonbury.[77] Although there were a large number of surviving county courts for Glastonbury there were none for the other four manors and, due to this, they have been excluded from examination.

The court rolls have been analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. 265 court sessions across all manors for the period 1262–1389 were examined, shown in table 1. This number excludes the hundred courts but includes the tourns held at Nettleton as they were held alongside the hallmoot and recorded within the same court roll.

Unlike the manorial accounts, in which the entire surviving material for the chosen period were quantitatively examined, three periods of time for which the major-

75. D. A. Watkins, *The Great Chartulary of Glastonbury*, vol. II (Somerset: Somerset Record Society, 1952), p. 195. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 44.

76. M. Mulholland, "Trials in manorial courts in late medieval England," in *The Trial in History*, ed. M. Mulholland and B. Pullan, vol. 1 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 81-101, 83.

77. Dunning, *The History of the County of Somerset*, p. 34. R. Palmer, *The County courts of medieval England 1150–1350* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 3-17.

Manor	Total Number of Court Sessions (1262– 1389)	Number of Cases Quantitatively Examined	Number of Court Sessions in Quantitative Data-set
Ashbury	49	1049	28
Ashcott	72	856	47
Damerham	56	1747	37
Glastonbury	40	1051	24
Total	265	5564	167

Table 1: Court data examined in this study.

ity of manors had contiguous court rolls were selected for statistical analysis of the court rolls: 1307–1315, 1344–1352, and 1366–1371. Collectively this totalled 5,564 cases that were analysed over 167 court sessions. These three periods were chosen in order to provide in-depth snapshots across the period as well as enable an examination of the changes throughout. The large majority of the court rolls remain in good condition, although a small number were too damaged to be legible.[78] Each case, for officials and non-officials, was given a unique ID number and categorised based upon the date, defendants, plaintiffs, and case type. The cases were divided into broad case types, which were then sub-divided into specific case types in order to further refine the analysis. Fines, amercements and any other outcomes were also recorded. The timescales for plots should be carefully noted, the date ranges may not be consecutive or contiguous as this was dependant upon the available data.

78. There is particular damage to: *Glastonbury Abbey Documents at Longleat.*, Copyright of the Marquess of Bath, sourced from microfilm, 1982, MS 11222, Skin 17, Ashbury, 1349; MS 11223, Skin 38, Ashcott, 1352.; MS 11182, Skin 31, Damerham, 1370.; MS 11222, Skin 18, 1350.; MS 11223, Skin 14, 1351; MS 10636, 1367.; MS 10775, Skin 1, Glastonbury, 1308.; MS 11179, Skin 12, Nettleton, 1348; MS 11179, Skin 28, 1348.

0.3. Outline of thesis

Across four chapters, this study seeks to explore officialdom and use it as a lens through which to deepen understanding of not only officials but also the local administrative structure, economy, responses to change, and attitudes towards seigneurial authority. Using sources beyond the manorial record, it will also analyse the multitude of ways in which the manorial officials were depicted and perceived by wider society. Chapter 1 will examine which officers were present on each manor, who was eligible to hold office, and what were their duties were. It will explore the relationship between the central authority and the local administration, the role that each manor played within the wider Glastonbury network and the fluidity of the structures of each individual manor. The second chapter will analyse the remuneration of manorial officials by examining which officers received payment and in what form and quantity. This will enable for an in-depth exploration of the administrative practices and structure of officialdom, the perceived value of the work of each official, a hierarchy of office through how highly they were compensated, the impact and subsequent response to wider socio-economic change, and the extent to which the local environment influenced how officers were remunerated. Chapter 3 will explore the activities of manorial officials in the court records, examining how holding office impacted their position within the community and their types of interactions they had with both the seigneurial authority and wider society. It will examine attitudes towards office-holding, the types of cases in which officials were involved, their treatment by the court, and the exploitation of office for self-enrichment. The final chapter will analyse sources beyond the manorial record, exploring how the peasantry and officials were portrayed in the wider literature and images of the period. It will examine how often offices were depicted, the variety of different representations of officials, and how these were indicative of perceptions of officialdom in this period.

Chapter 1

Manorial Officials and their Responsibilities on the Manors of Glastonbury

1.1. Introduction

The structure of a manor was highly dependant upon its size, topography, and population, as well as the style of lordship and its administrative and economic framework.[1] Across all aspects of the manorial society and economy, a plethora of manorial officials were required to help maintain and enforce seigneurial authority. The number and type of officials present varied between manors, due to regional variations and peculiarities which resulted in differences in terminology, traditions, rights, and administrative structures. As well as local variation, the responsibilities of each office changed over time, and so, because of this, it is not possible to apply a universal definition of offices or officials across all manors or for all time periods. Due to this inherent inconsistency, in order to gain an understanding of the realities of peasant society during the fourteenth century, it is important to explore which officers were

1. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, pp. 2-10.

present upon the Glastonbury manors and what their duties entailed.[2] Officials were the most present form of authority upon a manor and, as such, a more nuanced understanding provides insight not only into the roles of officials but also how the local environment shaped the administration. In order to better characterise officialdom, this chapter will examine eligibility requirements for office-holding, which offices were present on the manors of Glastonbury, and the respective duties of each office. It will also introduce an exploration of the interactions and negotiations between the central seat of authority and the local manor, the variation between the manors with respect to the implementation of top-down dictates, and how the administrative structure of officialdom was a tool for adaptation and response to the wider socio-economic events in the fourteenth century, which will be further expanded upon in chapters 2 and 3.

Throughout the majority of the period on all five of the manors studied, some offices and workers were found to be consistently present; of these, the reeve, messor, and ripreeve were those that were most frequently recorded within the manorial documentation. Other officials, such as the berebrit, beadle, parker, woodward, and moorward, appear more intermittently or were not recorded at all on some manors.[3] It can also be observed that some offices or workers, such as the *equitators* of Damerham were only present upon a single manor, indicating that they were a product of highly regional specificity. Due to the effects of local adaptation and temporal variation, an examination of the number, type, and remit of each office is highly informative upon the economic structure and topography of the manor itself.

Analysis of distinct offices is somewhat complicated by conflation of the terminology and titles of office. For example, a number of scholars have noted that refer-

2. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 156. P. Larson, *Conflict and Compromise in the Late Medieval Countryside: Lords and Peasants in Durham 1349-1400* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 58-61.

3. Each officer will be defined and examined throughout the chapter.

ences to a bailiff or sergeant could also be talking of the reeve.[4] Furthermore, one office could incorporate the responsibilities that would be divided between several roles upon another manor. Due to these issues with specificity, recorded office titles should be considered to reflect a combination of descriptive and prescriptive categories. Hence, whilst it is useful to analytically divide officialdom into distinct offices, this differentiation and specific classification may sometimes be an abstraction that was not necessarily apparent in the contemporaneous conceptions of manorial administration. Some of the terminology developed across time and it is likely in practice that some tasks were interchangeable between officers; this demonstrates that it is important to not regard the administrative structure as rigid and inflexible.[5] In order to better address the potential conflation, within this work the offices will be defined based upon their duties, domain of influence, and the socio-economic status of those that could hold the office, as well as by utilisation of the applied terminology from the manors under examination.

1.2. External officials and obedientiaries

The positions of authority that composed the highest structure of the manorial administrative hierarchy were held by extraneous unelected professionals, who were not recruited from the peasantry. The most significant of these high-ranking positions were the cellarer, steward or seneschal, chamberlain, and bailiff, who were salaried and not tenants of the manors.[6] Whilst the precise roles of these officials

4. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 156. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," pp. 184-5. R. Evans, "Merton College's Control of its Tenants at Thorncrof 1270-1349," in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, ed. Z. Razi and R. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp.199-260, 222-3. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation*, p. 222.

5. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 178.

6. H. Cam, "Shire Officials: Coroners, Constables, and Bailiffs," in *The English Government at Work, 1327-1336, Volume 3*, ed. J. F. Willard and W. A. Morris, Mediaeval Academy of America (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1950), pp. 143-183. A. Levett, *Studies in Manorial History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 107-115.

or obedientiaries is not clear in the manorial record, they possessed the most authority, oversaw a large number of manors, and decided upon the broad economic decisions of the Glastonbury estate. Although, as Stone has highlighted, whilst large estates could utilise the advice of a 'centralised committee', it is not known to what extent they determined minor agricultural decisions.[7] The direct interaction that the salaried figures had with peasant officials or the wider tenantry of the manor is not clearly described within the record but, in order to develop a clearer understanding of peasant officials, it is necessary to briefly discuss these high-ranking positions so as to outline the administrative structure of the Glastonbury Abbey manors.

The steward, cellarer, and bailiffs would have visited each manor either once or twice a year, held courts, and checked upon the activities of the manorial officials and the tenantry.[8] Rush states that monastic officials visited more frequently the Glastonbury manors that had a relatively higher degree of grain commercialisation and that they can also be observed to have had a greater presence upon outlying manors, rather than those closer to the central seat of authority, in order to ensure rigorous oversight of the operation and production.[9] In contrast to Rush's findings, Keil argues that the central seat of authority was less able to exert its influence upon the manors furthest away, as evidenced by the fact that the Wiltshire manors paid higher wages than those at the Somerset manors.[10] The reality was likely to be a synthesis of these two factors; it seems probable that the abbey administration were aware of the opportunities that officials and tenants living upon the further-flung manors would have had in defrauding and deceiving the abbot, and so would have sought to address this by ensuring that high-ranking officers maintained a semi-regular presence.[11]

7. D. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 12-3.
8. Rush, "The Impact of Commercialization in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Some Evidence from the Manors of Glastonbury Abbey," p. 138.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 170-1.
11. This balance between peasant interests and seigneurial authority will be further discussed in

The cellarer was an obedientiary responsible for food and drink supplies for the manor. As Keil notes, at Glastonbury there were three cellarers, with the external cellarer (*forinsecus cellerarius*) having an important role in both interpreting and implementing agricultural and economic policy through their direction of the steward and the other manorial officials.[12] The precise role that the abbot and other abbey officials had in determining policy, or whether this was largely delegated to the external cellarer, is uncertain.[13] The cellarer's presence in the manorial records is infrequent but, when apparent, their power and influence over the manorial economy appears to have been significant. For example, at Ashbury in 1334/5, the berebrit, who was the keeper of the grange and responsible for storage of grain, was not given any rent remissions because the cellarer had sold all of the grain and, as a consequence of this, the berebrit was not required this year.[14] The cellarer had the authority to significantly influence the movement of large quantities grain which also subsequently impacted the responsibilities and remuneration of peasant officials.

The pattern of absence of high-ranking officials from the manorial record can also be observed for the steward, or seneschal.[15] Keil states that the steward was the chief protector of the lord's interests, with their duties primarily being to ensure that other officials served faithfully, as well as acting as a legal adviser and judge in the manorial courts.[16] They were required to tour the estates, oversee the administrative and economic decisions of the manors, authorize major building projects, negotiate contracts with building workers, order the culling of sheep, purchase the hay

Chapter 3

12. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 53, 63-5. See also: *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources (DMLBS)*.
13. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 53.
14. *Glastonbury Abbey Documents at Longleat.*, MS 10633, Reel 18, Skin 9, Ashbury, 1334/5.
15. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 162.
16. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 63. E. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, ed. E. Lamond (London, 1890), p. 85.

for feeding livestock, and concerning themselves with the marketing of produce.[17] It was a position of very high responsibility that was usually held by men from the gentry, those already of wealth and status.[18] The majority of officials exercised authority over only their local manor, whereas the stewards and bailiffs presided over a number of manors.[19] The steward is predominantly referred to in the Glastonbury records in the detailing of the cash payments made and in the exercise of their duties in holding courts for the lord.[20] They appear occasionally in the court rolls as the authority behind certain presentments, for example, at Nettleton in 1351, the steward and the cellarer presented the messor for a number of faults, such as depasturing the lord's meadow and damaging the land.[21] Whilst their explicit presence in the manorial record is infrequent, with a small number of references in the accounts and even fewer in the court rolls, their over-arching duties and supervisory authority were integral to the effective management of the manor and maintenance of the administrative hierarchy.[22]

The bailiff was usually the highest ranking managerial official that had a frequent presence upon the manor and direct contact with the manorial inhabitants. Scholars have found a close correlation between the roles of bailiff and reeve, including indications that, on some manors, the terminology could be interchangeable, with both *ballivus* and *prepositus* being applied to the same person.[23] Page even went so far

17. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 100. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540*, p. 116. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 13.

18. M. Aston and D. Gerrard, *Interpreting the English Village: Landscape and Community at Shapwick, Somerset* (Oxford: Windgather, 2013), p. 519.

19. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 100. J. Drew, "Manorial Accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester," *The English Historical Review* 62, no. 242 (January 1947): p. 23. Hone, *The Manor and Manorial Records*, p. 68. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation*, p. 30. And *GADL*, MS 5262, Reel 1, Ashcott, 1394/5; MS 10644, Reel 28, Nettleton, 1373.

20. *GADL*, MS 11282, Reel 24, Skin 13-13, Ashcott, 1301/2.

21. *Ibid.*, MS 11223, Reel 35, Nettleton, 1351.

22. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 13.

23. Some scholars have also noted that the distinction between manorial officers and the *famuli*, in particular the offices of the messor, reeve, and bailiff, can be unclear. Even at Glastonbury, whilst the

as to state that *ballivus* could denote any office except that of ale-taster, and may not have been intended to refer to a distinct role.[24] However, Drew argues that these changes were likely to have been a linguistic rather than an administrative decision, noting that although some scribes interchanged *ballivus* and *serviens*, these offices did not coexist.[25] Of the later thirteenth century, Sabapathy states that bailiffs were an intermediary position between the unfree reeve and the free steward.[26] In contrast, there was a clear delineation in both the terminology and roles of the offices of reeve and bailiff on the Glastonbury manors.[27] The bailiffs at Glastonbury were responsible for overseeing a large number of manors whereas the reeve, as shall be discussed below, was a local office with a geographically restricted domain of responsibility. Although Bennett argues that the presence of reeve and bailiff throughout the whole year on all but the largest of manors was considered unnecessary, the reeves of Glastonbury were present on their manor year-round but the bailiffs were not.[28] The bailiff was a salaried official and did not usually live on the manors they supervised, although their personal status is not clear, whereas the reeve was a villein elected from the lord's tenantry.[29]

The bailiff had a number of different responsibilities; they held courts and made presentments, they were expected to know the details within the custumals, what labour services each tenant owed, and also to determine how these would be most effectively utilised.[30] The primary responsibility of the bailiff was that of oversight, en-

bailiffs were free and salaried professionals, the stipend they were given was often recorded alongside the other *famuli* and this is also observed with the elected offices of the messor and ripreeve, who were, similarly to the bailiff, paid alongside the *famuli*. See also: Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 164. Drew, "Manorial Accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester," p. 22. Farmer, "The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages," p. 210. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 58. *GADL*, MS 11215, Reel 15, Skin 44-5, Nettleton, 1305/6.

24. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation*, p. 73.
25. Drew, "Manorial Accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester," p. 22.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-5.
27. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 58.
28. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 162.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
30. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 164. Farmer, "The Famuli

suring that the orders of the cellarer and steward were executed.[31] For, as stated in *Seneschaucie*, a thirteenth century agricultural treatise, the bailiff was to be responsible for the other manorial officials: "… as the bailiff is in the pay of the lord and in commandments and advantages and presents in his head and superior, and ought by his sense and instruction to direct and keep the manor and the provost [reeve] and all who belong to the manor".[32] The bailiff was, alongside the cellarer, also authorised to sell grain or grant permission for the sale of grain by other officials.[33] The extent of their supervisory authority is evident throughout the Glastonbury court rolls, as indicated by the number of amercements of officials and tenants for the performance of actions without first gaining the permission of the bailiff, such as the movement of livestock and grain, acquiring of land and marriage licenses, or the felling of trees.[34] At Ashbury in 1344, Thomas Hobekyns, the reeve, was amerced half a mark for driving 75 sheep from Ashbury to Badbury without the order of the bailiff and because, through his actions, damage was caused to said sheep.[35] A common theme in agricultural treatises, as will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4, is of the necessity of a system of accountability in which the lord was able to determine culpability and exact reparations from damages or failures. The distrust of peasants is an ever-present theme throughout these treatises and so the bailiff, as a non-resident of the manor, was an important figure of high-ranking oversight.[36] They were a mediator of the lord-peasant relationship, their authority pertaining not only to the enforcement of the economic activities on the manor but reinforcing the social stratification of society, the very core of the tripartite system. The bailiff delegated tasks but strictly

in the Later Middle Ages," p. 210. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 58. *GADL*, MS 11215, Reel 15, Skin 44-5, Nettleton, 1305/6; MS 11271, Reel 15, Skin 26-9, Ashbury, 1303/4; MS 11215, Reel 16, Skin 58-60, Ashbury, 1305/6; MS 10654, Reel 24, Ashbury, 1313.

31. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 164. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 62.

32. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, pp. 91, 109. See also: Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, pp. 126, 217.

33. *GADL*, MS 11222, Reel 25, Ashbury, 1349; MS 11251, Reel 25, Glastonbury, 1345.

34. See also: Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 32.

35. *GADL*, MS 10774, Reel 25, Ashbury, 1344.

36. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 32.

oversaw and enforced the seigneurial authority over the manor. They exemplify the pervasiveness of the authority in manorial society even when the primary seat of seigneurial power was significantly geographically removed.

1.3. Peasant officials – eligibility criteria

The vast number of manors owned by the abbey across southern England necessitated the presence of a wide range of officials. As well as the free, unelected, salaried officials, the remainder of the offices were filled by the unfree peasantry of the manor. Bennett even states that eligibility to serve in office was proof of a person's villein status, although Larson noted that at Durham many of the men who held the office of reeve were free but held customary land.[37] Whilst the holding of office may not be specifically indicative of unfree status, at Glastonbury peasant officers were drawn exclusively from the lord's customary tenants. Due to the trust that was necessarily placed in peasant officials by the manorial authority, intricate administrative and hierarchical systems were built, so as to help monitor the behaviour of the peasantry and the officers. In order to maintain control, the seigneurial authority required that certain responsibilities were undertaken, a lord needed to be able to extract economic value from the manor and so ensure that the duties required of officials were fulfilled. The delegation of trust required a structure capable of a certain level of control so that recompense could be exacted for inadequate service. For these reasons, it is likely that the purpose of having the majority of offices filled by the unfree tenantry was, as stated by Walter of Henley in another late thirteenth century agricultural treatise, to: "have no provosts [reeves] or messers except from your own men, if you have them, and that by election of your tenants, for if they do you wrong you shall have

37. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 169. Larson, *Conflict and Compromise in the Late Medieval Countryside: Lords and Peasants in Durham 1349-1400*, p. 59.

recovery from them".[38] This statement reveals that entrusting the majority of offices to villeins, rather than external figures, gave the lord additional power and protection to safeguard against the deceit of the peasantry, strengthening their authority. It also shows that such deceptive behaviour was expected, as the system was essentially enforced by peasants who were sometimes required to act against either their own interests or the collective interests of their community.

There were a variety of ways in which officials might be elected, such as being chosen by either the lord or their fellow tenants, with the lord sometimes making the final selection after the tenants had put forward three candidates.[39] It can be seen at Glastonbury that officers were selected based upon a combination of obligation and eligibility connected to land and elected into office by the 'whole hallmoot'.[40] The possession of land was an important eligibility criterion that determined which villeins were deemed suitable for office-holding. This might have been in order to ensure that the chosen official was a peasant with a demonstrable capability of working the land in a suitable manner. Each position on the manor carried a number of different responsibilities, requiring the tenant who held that office to possess a number of important skills, such as intimate knowledge of the local environment and the administrative processes, organisation, and the capability to monitor, maintain, and enforce seigneurial orders and authority. Those who held land, and in particular larger holdings, were required to not only pay higher rents but were also subject to a greater number of feudal obligations and labour services, as is evidenced in the Glaston-

38. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. 11.

39. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 32. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, pp. 168-71. Drew, "Manorial Accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester," pp. 20-41. P. D. A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 65-6. S. Olson, *A Chronicle of All that Happens: Voices from the Village Court in Medieval England* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 1996), p. 115. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation*, p. 70.

40. For an example of the reeve: *GADL*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1347. For other officials, see: MS 11224, Reel 26, Nettleton, 1356.

bury custumals.[41] The requirement of the possession of land ensured that an officer would have been suitably incentivised to act in accordance with the demands of the seigneurial authority, due to their investment in the retention of their land.

Manorial documents stated the amount of land that tenants needed to hold in order to be eligible for office, with the offices that had the most responsibilities requiring larger holdings.[42] Bennett suggests that the size requirement was because a smallholder may have found it difficult to exert their authority over an individual with larger holdings, especially if they had previously been a labourer in their employ.[43] Larson similarly suggests that those with larger holdings had more authority within the community, which would have made them more effective at enforcing seigneurial authority.[44] The possession of land was also a proxy measure for investment in the manorial system, the risk of losing larger holdings would have encouraged greater adherence with the seigneurial will and so, by drawing officials from tenants with a greater vested interest, these peasants would have been more likely to conform with duties that required action against the wider peasantry. Their relative wealth made the delegation of trust and responsibility safer for the lord. By having officers selected from the tenants with more land, the abbot was able to provide himself with greater surety and potential for compensation in the event of misdoings by his villein officials.

The land requirements for the office of reeve appear to have been smaller at Glastonbury than is recorded for other regions of the country.[45] In the Survey of Hartest, in 1251, the reeve needed to have 15 acre holdings, whereas at Glastonbury, in 1347, Walter le Bole paid for exemption from serving as reeve, berebrit, oxherd, and

41. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, pp. 104-8.
42. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 46.
43. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 169.
44. Larson, *Conflict and Compromise in the Late Medieval Countryside: Lords and Peasants in Durham 1349-1400*, p. 59.
45. C. Bekar and C. Reed, “Land markets and inequality: evidence from medieval England,” *European Review of Economic History* 17, no. 3 (August 2013): pp. 294-317.

other offices but held only one messuage and a ferdel (a quarter of a virgate or 10 acres).[46] In the thirteenth century Glastonbury custumal it is stated that whoever held any land, regardless of size, were eligible to be a messor at Newton.[47] Similarly, at Longbridge Deverill, the exact duties and perks to be given the messor if they were a *cotterel* (small-holder) are stipulated, indicating that these individuals were not *de jure* excluded from office-holding.[48] Those who held office tended to possess substantial holdings, however, the average or required holding sizes differed by manor. For example, at Ashbury, Damerham and Nettleton the reeve almost always held a virgate, whereas at Ashcott it was predominantly half a virgate, and at Glastonbury it was either a ferdel or half virgate. This variation in size indicates that the magnitude of the land-requirement was not necessarily determined by the size of the manor. The flexibility of eligibility requirements, and their decorrelation from manor size, would have allowed for manorial lords to receive greater profits from those that paid fines to avoid office and also ensured selected officials were drawn from a large pool of competent candidates, whilst excluding those deemed unsuitable.

It has been argued that women were either ineligible to serve in office or that their service was a rare exception.[49] A recent study by Forrest has highlighted that, although it was uncommon, a number of women served as reeve.[50] Forrest has challenged the current historical understanding of the position of women in manorial society, arguing that they had integral roles in the manorial administrative system. Through a widespread study of manors across England, he demonstrates that women not only served in office but were accepted as efficient administrators and

46. *GADL*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Glastonbury, 1347. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, p. 250.
47. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, p. 95.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1.
49. J. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside, Gender and Household in Brigstock before the Plague* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 5. For further discussion on this see: M. Forrest, “Women Manorial Officers in Late Medieval England,” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 57 (2013): pp. 47-67.
50. Forrest, “Women Manorial Officers in Late Medieval England,” pp. 47-67.

even re-elected based upon their competence and contribution.[51] At Glastonbury, whilst there were no women who served in office, there were women who paid to be exempted from their obligation. Idonya first appears in the accounts in 1334/5 holding a ferdel of land and paying 7*s* 10.25*d* alongside her husband to commute their servile labour services, obligations of churchscot, and exemption from office.[52] Idonya appears again in 1344/5, this time as a widow, to continue her payments for the commutation of services and exemption from office.[53] More examples of this can be found in other court sessions; Christine, widow of Robert Stephen, held one messuage and half a virgate of land and paid to be exempted from the obligation of serving as the lord's ploughman.[54] These cases demonstrate that women were at least technically eligible to hold positions of authority on the Glastonbury manors, even if they did not do so.[55] Landholding was the determining factor in eligibility to hold office rather than gender. However, it seems likely that, at Glastonbury, women's eligibility to serve was a technicality tied to their land, and they may have been informally expected to pay a fine to avoid office.

The account

The manorial account on the majority of manors throughout England was compiled by either the bailiff or the reeve.[56] Drew, referring to the manors belonging to the Priory of St. Swithun's in Winchester, noted that, although reeves compiled the accounts, very occasionally they would be rendered by a bailiff and a hayward.[57] On all the Glastonbury manors in this study, except for Glastonbury itself, it was only

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-4.
52. *GADL*, MS 11239, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1334/5.
53. *Ibid.*, MS 11227, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1344/5.
54. *Ibid.*, MS 11223, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1351. See also: MS 10644, Reel 28, Damerham, 1373. Both a carter and shepherd had served in their post and then paid an additional fine to longer be in their office.
55. *Ibid.*, MS 11185, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1349/50.
56. B. Campbell, *English Seigniorial Agriculture 1250–1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 27.
57. Drew, "Manorial Accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester," pp. 22-3.

the reeve who compiled the account. At Glastonbury, the reeve composed the vast majority of accounts, either alone or in conjunction with another reeve or official, with only five years in which they either did not create the account or the reeve's account does not survive. There were a number of years in which there is a reeve's account as well as additional accounts compiled by another manorial official or obedientiary. In the years that the reeve did not compile the account it was usually created by religious officials, such as a monk or the chamberlain. Across the period for all five manors, in the 86 accounts that were compiled by reeves, only 13 were done so by two reeves. How the duties of the two reeves were split is not specified, but in the reception of rent quittances and other remuneration predominantly only one reeve was identified as the recipient. In comparison, Drew found a more even split at St Swithun's: 220 rolls by a single reeve and 234 in a 'joint-manager' system of both the reeve and the bailiff.[58] He similarly states that in the reckoning of the debts owed it usually only referred to one reeve. Although not explicitly recorded, it is plausible that each officer may have served for part of the year or that there was an informal hierarchy and one reeve had more responsibilities and authority than the other. This variability suggests that each individual manor could have responded to changing circumstances as needed by adaptations in officialdom, a theme that is found throughout the examination of peasant office-holding.

In 1392/3, at Glastonbury, there were four different accounts: one by the reeve, another by Brother Walter Ofcote the Archdeacon, and two separate rent collector accounts. It is unclear whether these other accounts were less commonly created or have not survived to the present day. It is also unspecified as to how these different records worked in conjunction with each other; the accounts compiled by the chamberlain or other abbey obedientiaries could be very close in structure and content to that of the reeve's. However, those who were given stipends were not the

58. Drew, "Manorial Accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester," p. 27.

usual manorial officials or *famuli*, such as the messor and ploughmen, but servants or workers, such as a *sutorius* or *cissorius*.[59] It seems most likely that these accounts were distinct, separate to those of the reeve and serving a different purpose, but containing some duplicate information. They may have also been used to help monitor the activities of the reeve and the veracity of their account. This interpretation is consistent with Page's findings at Crowland Abbey, where they note that rent collectors' accounts began in the 1340s alongside the main compotus and that there was conflicting and contradictory information in the two accounts.[60] The first surviving rent collector's account at Glastonbury is from 1356, which is concurrent with the increased prevalence of rent collectors receiving remuneration for their services. This correlation suggests that that there was a development in the administrative structure, rather than an artefact of source loss, and was an adaptation to the wider socio-economic changes of the period.

1.3.1. The reeve

The reeve is one of the most visible figures in the manorial record due to the wide variety of responsibilities that they had in the management of the manor.[61] The *Seneschaucie* stated: "the provost [reeve] ought to be elected and presented by the common consent of the township, as the best husbandman and the best approver among them."[62] Choosing an officer that was considered particularly competent and capable was desirable because they were to be entrusted with making important decisions on how best to support the lord's demesne and economy.[63] The reeve was

59. *GADL*, MS 7353, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1309/10.
60. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation*, p. 90.
61. R. E. Lewis, "Middle English Dictionary," Accessed 12 April 2020, 1952-2001, `http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/`.
62. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. 97.
63. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 100. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 13.

the officer responsible for the day-to-day management of the manor, implementing on a local scale the orders from the central authority from the highest ranking officials and obedientiaries.[64] Rush suggests, in reference to the sale of grain, that auditors were responsible for communicating policies to the reeve, who was to then carry it out.[65] Stone has argued that the reeves of Wisbech Barton utilised their knowledge of the markets in determining the agricultural decisions that were made, such as which grains to sow, but that there was also evidence of centralised decision-making.[66] A careful balance was needed between the direction of the central authority and the application of local knowledge that stemmed from the peasant officials. The Glastonbury Abbey estates were vast and it would have been both impractical and expensive to subject the reeve to constant supervision and scrutiny. However, in order to mitigate the potential damages that could be incurred by the exploitation of a lack of oversight, the reeve was held as being culpable for any perceived failings from the perspective of the seigneurial authority. For example, if they were deemed to have sold grain and livestock at too low of a profit then they were answerable for the estimated difference.[67] Even after vacating office, officials were still culpable for transgressions committed during their time serving or for any debts incurred.[68] At Ashcott and Glastonbury, in the later fourteenth century, the accounts began to include a list of the previous reeves and rent collectors alongside the amount of money that they still owed the lord.[69] Throughout the period, the arrears recorded at the end of each account increased significantly; in 1334/5 the reeve of Glastonbury owed 48*s*

64. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 32.
65. Rush, "The Impact of Commercialization in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Some Evidence from the Manors of Glastonbury Abbey," p. 137.
66. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 87.
67. A. J. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2005), p. 47. Rush, "The Impact of Commercialization in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Some Evidence from the Manors of Glastonbury Abbey," p. 137.
68. Rush, "The Impact of Commercialization in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Some Evidence from the Manors of Glastonbury Abbey," p. 138. J. Sabapathy, *Officers and Accountability in Medieval England 1170-1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 62-3.
69. *GADL*, MS 5280, Reel 1, Ashcott, 1360/1.

5.25*d* but by 1365 it had risen to £185 4*s* 8.25*d*.[70] The arrears first rose notably in 1349/50, with the arrival of the Black Death, and remained significantly higher than in the pre-plague period for the remainder of the fourteenth century. The rise in arrears and the inclusion of the debts owed by the various manorial officers is indicative of an increase in the potential burden of culpability associated with incorrect fulfilment of the duties of office-holding.[71]

Beyond the compilation of the account, the other duties of the reeve varied significantly by manor; if they managed a smaller manor with fewer officials then they might have had a larger number of obligations other than oversight.[72] These responsibilities could entail the collection of rents and customary payments; the sending of money, grain, and livestock to other manors or markets; directing how labour services were to be used and ensuring that they were properly performed; the payment of wages and food to other workers, such as the *famuli*; the making of distraints; and to also take custody of stray animals found on the manor.[73] Harvey noted that the reeves at Cuxham, in Oxfordshire, also helped with the ploughing, actively supervised the threshing, and helped to repair the walls of the *curia*.[74] Some of the duties that the reeve had are mentioned only infrequently within the court rolls, which suggests that they may have been an uncommon requirement or were not considered a particularly onerous duty. The latter two of these characteristics would have meant the task would not have been something frequently neglected by the official and so they would have appeared less often in the court records. For example, in an un-

70. Stone similarly notes that there was an increase in the pressure that reeves were under, particularly at the end of the fourteenth century. See: Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 145.

71. C. Nokes, "Agency and the Excessus Balance in Manorial Accounts," *Accounting And Business Research* 21, no. 84 (Autumn 1991): pp. 339-48.

72. R. Britnell, "Minor Landlords in England and Medieval Agrarian Capitalism," *Past & Present*, no. 89 (1980): pp. 3-22, 7-10. R. Britnell, "The Pastons and their Norfolk," *Agricultural History Review*, no. 36:2 (1998): pp. 132-44.

73. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 72. Hone, *The Manor and Manorial Records*, p. 68. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 52.

74. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400*, p. 66.

usual case, the reeve of Ashbury, in 1379, was amerced for not preparing victuals and provisions for the arrival of abbey officials.[75] Such responsibilities may not have been part of the everyday tasks of the reeve but they were expected to do these additional duties when necessary. The reeve was an integral figure to the manor, their importance attested to not only by their many responsibilities but also the power and authority entrusted to them by the lord. How well the reeve performed their duties could significantly impact the health of the manorial economy, which explains why they were subject to potentially significant fiscal amercements for their failures. They were culpable for not only mistakes or poor performance of their duties but also for failure to meet the expected outcomes, such as missing a projected grain yield.[76] Beyond this, the reeve was accountable not only for their own performance but also for that of the other manorial officials and tenants, and the court rolls show a number of cases where both the reeve and the offending officer were amerced.[77]

The unknown author of *Hosebonderie*, written in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, stated: “And make it known that all servants of the court, men and women, ought to obey the provost [reeve], because he must answer for their doings, and the provost must put those in the court for whose doings he will be answerable”.[78] The reeve’s role was often that of over-arching supervision of the many disparate activities that were integral to the running of the manor; numerous cases throughout the period show tenants being amerced for performing tasks, such as ploughing, without the permission of the reeve.[79] Reeves were also to answer for any profits

75. *GADL*, MS 10658, Reel 28, Ashbury, 1379.
76. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 103.
77. *GADL*, MS 10770, Reel 23, Ashcott, 1307.; MS 10025, Reel 23, Ashcott, 1313. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of this.
78. Lamond, *Walter of Henley’s Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste’s Rules*, p. 65. For further discussion on the creation dates, see: D. Oschinsky, “Medieval Treatises on Estate Management,” *The Economic History Review*, no. 3:8 (1956): pp. 296-309.
79. *GADL*, MS 11223, Reel 25, Nettleton, 1351. See also: Larson, *Conflict and Compromise in the Late Medieval Countryside: Lords and Peasants in Durham 1349-1400*, p. 59.

from the confiscation of land and expected to take custody of any livestock taken for heriot.[80] Although evidence for the reeve having responsibility for heriots only exists for Ashcott and Damerham, it seems plausible that the reeve on all of the Glastonbury manors had this duty, as each entry ends with the statement that the profits are to be recorded into the account.[81] To have only the reeve, or very few officers, responsible for the handling and recording of this financial information would have made it significantly easier for the lord to determine culpability and exact reparation in cases of avoidance or dereliction.[82]

The *Seneschaucie*, stated that the reeve should have responsibility for the strays on the manor and ensure that their keepers are attentive to their duties.[83] However, Page noted that, at Crowland Abbey, it was the hayward's responsibility to account for strays in the year that they served.[84] Claridge and Gibbs, in a recent study, found that the responsibility for strays varied significantly by manor, there were a number of different officials and even tenants associated with this obligation.[85] On the Glastonbury manors, it was the reeve who had the sole responsibility for the custody and profits of any strays throughout the entire period; no other officials were recorded to have this duty, except in bringing the matter of a stray to the court.[86] There were notably more strays reported on the manors of Ashcott, Glastonbury, and Damerham than at Ashbury or Nettleton, which suggests that certain duties were more onerous and time-consuming depending upon the manor. Whilst the stated responsibilities of these offices may have been similar, their implementation could vary significantly.

80. *GADL*, MS 10646, Reel 28, Nettleton, 1371; MS 10645, Reel 27, Nettleton, 1369; MS 10683, Reel 23, Ashbury, 1265; MS 1077, Reel 25, Nettleton, 1344.
81. *Ibid.*, 10654, Reel 24, Glastonbury, 1313; MS 11224, Reel 26, Damerham, 1356; MS 10634, Reel 26, Damerham, 1358.
82. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 102.
83. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. 101.
84. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation*, p. 74.
85. Claridge and Gibbs, "Waifs and Strays: Property Rights in Late Medieval England," pp. 1-40.
86. *GADL*, MS 11225, Reel 26, Ashbury, 1365.

That the charge of strays remained a duty of the reeve throughout the 137 year period examined demonstrates a high level of continuity in their role despite the wider socio-economic changes of the fourteenth century. That certain obligations remained in the domain of specific officials shows a consistent overall structure, however, the variation between the manors and the developments across time reflect the adaptability of the manorial system to changes in environment and requirement. Consistency, where appropriate, would have made the tasks of the higher-ranking officials easier, such as the steward and auditors. They did not need to learn the intricacies of office for each manor individually, and so could determine culpability and responsibility for certain duties without having to examine the minutia of the local operation. However, this was balanced with nuance and locally-mediated flexibility, which ensured that the manor had an administrative ability to respond to any demands and requirements.

The reeve was the official who was ultimately responsible for ensuring that reparations were made when the lord's land, property, or livestock were damaged or injured by other tenants, and supervise the maintenance of the buildings on the manor.[87] When necessary, they were also required to make distraints of a tenant's goods or livestocks and seize their land, particularly in cases when it had been sold without a license.[88] The duty to seize land would sometimes be performed by the bailiff or messor, however, this was infrequent and less common.[89] Although there were a number of officials on the Glastonbury manors, it was the reeve who was placed in the most directly conflictual position with the tenantry. The nature of their role was to protect the lord's interests, often to the detriment of their community. These oppositional influences are noticeable in the significant increase in the num-

87. *GADL*, MS 10634, Reel 26, Damerham, 1358; MS 11225, Reel 26, Ashbury, 1365; MS 11253, Reel 24, Glastonbury, 1308; MS 10780, Reel 22, Glastonbury, 1313. Other officials being responsible for this can also be seen in: MS 11182, Reel 27, Ashcott, 1370; MS 10780, Reel 22, Glastonbury, 1313.

88. *Ibid.*, MS 10025, Reel 23, Ashcott, 1313; MS 1182, Reel 27, Damerham, 1370; MS 11182, Reel 27, Ashcott, 1370.

89. *Ibid.*, MS 11212, Reel 29, Ashcott, 1387; MS 10780, Reel 22, Glastonbury, 1313.

ber of properties falling into disrepair in the later fourteenth century on all five of the Glastonbury manors. At Ashcott, Philip Batyn was presented on 20 occasions between 1366 and 1371 for failing to repair his property. Tenants were ordered repeatedly to repair their holdings with the threat of higher penalties for failure to do so. The lord's officials, and particularly the reeve, were the enforcers of these orders, which placed them in the role of arbitrator, balancing their obligations to the lord with the expectations of them from the other members of their community.[90] Whilst these ideas will be expanded upon further in Chapter 3, it should be noted that the holding of office necessitated a change, even if only a temporary one, in the relationships that the officeholder had with their community and their lord, and that in the later fourteenth century the duties of office could be more difficult to fulfil.

On occasion, the court rolls explicitly stated that the reeve was to carry out tasks under the orders of the cellarer, bailiff, or steward. At Damerham, in 1358, the reeve was ordered, under the penalty of half a mark, to ensure that the roof of the chancery at Merton was repaired.[91] The reeve was also expected and advised to work alongside the bailiff, with both officials being ordered jointly to seize lands or distrain goods.[92] Interestingly, there were also occasions when the reeve and the community were to work together by order of the court. In 1370, the reeve of Damerham and the whole hallmoot were ordered to seize the lands of a tenant who had fled.[93] Although one of the reeve's key roles was that of supervision and the monitoring of the activities of others, they were also subject to the scrutiny of not just higher ranking officials but also from other officers and members of the community.[94] In 1356, the

90. Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," p. 126.
91. *GADL*, MS 10634, Reel 26, Damerham, 1358.
92. *GADL*, MS 10774, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1344; MS 11212. See also: Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. 103.
93. *GADL*, MS 11182, Reel 27, Damerham 1370.
94. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, pp. 63, 99.

whole hallmoot of Ashbury was amerced because they had not presented the reeve for threshing and winnowing the lord's wheat without the permission of the lord or the cellarer.[95] Even though manorial officials were elected to supervise, the other tenants also had to ensure this responsibility was fulfilled or risk amercement, they were expected to know about the obligations of officials and that they were being upheld. Despite the administrative hierarchy, the authority and power of the manorial officials was not one-way, officers and the community were liable and accountable for the behaviour of the other.

1.3.2. The messor

The *Seneschaucie* states: "The hayward ought to be an active and sharp man, for he ought to watch and patrol late and early and look after the woods, the corn, the meadows, and all other things which pertain to his office…".[96] After the reeve, one of the most prominent manorial officials was the messor.[97] They had a number of different responsibilities, including: making attachments and impounding animals, sowing grain, supervising the ploughing, summoning tenants to work, overseeing the harvest and how the crops were collected, maintaining hedges and enclosures, keeping cattle on the common, protecting grain from trespass and theft, collecting rents, and looking after meadows.[98] After the harvest, they were to ensure that no

95. *GADL*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Ashbury, 1356. Similarly, at Ashcott in 1313 the messor was amerced 12d for not attaching the reeve for damages he causes with his oxen. See: MS 10025, Reel 23, Ashcott, 1313.

96. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. 103.

97. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," pp. 182-3. Drew, "Manorial Accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester," p. 22. Friedman, "Harry the Haywarde and Talbat his Dog: An Illustrated Girdlebook from Worcestershire," p. 138.

98. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 180. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. 103. Friedman, "Harry the Haywarde and Talbat his Dog: An Illustrated Girdlebook from Worcestershire," p. 116. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely, The Social History of an Ecclesiastical Estate from the tenth to the early fourteenth century*, p. 254.

one stole any of the lord's grain and also to help the reeve with his tallies.[99] On the Glastonbury manors the domain of the messor's responsibilities were largely within that of livestock, particularly presentments in court for the impounding of animals, the supervision of the harvest and labour services, and assisting the reeve in making distraints and presenting cases in the court.[100] The messor of Nettleton also attached those who carried wood from the lord's woodland without permission.[101] Some duties may have been part of their overall responsibilities but did not need to be carried out frequently; for example, at Ashcott in 1344, the messor presented a large number of residents who had been digging peat on the moor.[102] That there was a large number of transgressors in this case suggests that these infractions may have been happening for a long time before they were charged, as opposed to a sudden increase in trespasses. It is also notable that these presentments had been made by the messor, whereas it was the moorward that presented these types of cases for Glastonbury and Nettleton. Some of the responsibilities of officials may have only infrequently been fulfilled and so do not necessarily appear often within the surviving record.

Although the messor had a very wide variety of duties, one person would sometimes hold the office of messor on two manors or serve concurrently in different positions. At Damerham there were a number of years in which the same person served as both the messor and the parker. Similarly, from 1303 until 1334, the messors of Nettleton received half of their stipend and grain liveries from the nearby manor of Grittleton, suggesting that the role of messor of Nettleton included an obligation to fulfil that role for Grittleton too. Whilst these two manors may appear distinct, and compiled separate accounts, there were close economic and administrative links between them. As well as holding office on multiple manors, messors, and sometimes

99. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 180.
100. *GADL*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Nettleton, 1347.
101. *Ibid.*, MS 11182, Reel 27, Nettleton, 1370.
102. *Ibid.*, MS 10774, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1344.

other officials, would perform tasks on other manors. For example, the messors of Shapwyk and Greinton would occasionally undertake enough work at Ashcott that they were entitled to rent quittances in the Ashcott account. The reception of rent quittances at several manors indicates that not only did these tenants hold multiple portions of land but also that the full extent of their responsibilities and activities may be obscured due to the exclusion of these other manors in this study. The fluidity of the role of the messor and their presence on multiple manors also highlights that whilst each manor operated separately, they were part of a larger, inter-connected structure which likely utilised effective officials in more than one locale.

1.3.3. The beadle

The office of beadle has been found by a number of scholars to be closely correlated with that of the messor. On some manors, rather than pay two officers, the roles were combined into one position and the terminology of messor and beadle was synonymous.[103] Whilst this was true for other regions, on the Glastonbury manors the offices of messor and beadle, although closely aligned, were distinct. A mid-thirteenth century custumal for Pilton and Ditcheat, also Glastonbury manors, listed separately the responsibilities and rewards to be given to a messor and a beadle.[104] Similarly, in the court rolls, presentments were made by both the beadle and the messor.[105] The beadle made presentments in court, collected rents and amercements, carried out orders given by the court, and, in some regions, supervised the harvest and rendered their own accounts.[106]

103. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 179. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540*, p. 114. Friedman, "Harry the Haywarde and Talbat his Dog: An Illustrated Girdlebook from Worcestershire," p. 138. Hone, *The Manor and Manorial Records*, p. 69. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely, The Social History of an Ecclesiastical Estate from the tenth to the early fourteenth century*, p. 254.
104. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, pp. 118, 217.
105. *GADL*, MS 11253, Reel 24, Glastonbury, 1308.
106. Drew, "Manorial Accounts of St. Swithun's Priory, Winchester," p. 23. Lewis, "Middle English Dictionary"; Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely, The Social History of an Ecclesiastical Estate from*

The role of the beadle was primarily one of representation and enforcement of seigneurial interests and authority, but they were not present on all of the Glastonbury manors, only at Damerham and Glastonbury. As these were the largest two manors in this study, it may be that on the smaller manors the duties of the beadle were incorporated into the office of the messor. It is unclear how varied their duties on the manors were, they predominantly appear in the court rolls making attachments for *imparcamentum* (impounding). However, their position of authority and supervision is also indicated at Glastonbury itself in 1365 when the beadle was amerced 1*d* for not having their rod in their hands.[107] The use of the 'rod' in the manorial court has often been considered symbolic and ceremonial, an object to demonstrate the power and authority of its wielder; tenants would often 'swear by the rod' as they gave fealty when acquiring new land.[108] That the beadle of Glastonbury was amerced for not having their rod highlights that it was considered an important symbol of seigneurial authority and power as the lord's representative.[109] This suggests that the office of beadle was still expected to represent seigneurial will and, as such, had a duty to show their position in the hierarchy of the manorial system as an officer of the lord.

1.3.4. The ripreeve

The ripreeve was a minor official but present on all five of Glastonbury manors and, although usually elected into office, they only served during the harvest period.[110] Stone notes another close correlation in the various manorial offices between the beadle and the ripreeve, which could also help to explain further the lack of pres-

the tenth to the early fourteenth century, p. 254. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 32.

107. *GADL*, MS 11225, Reel 26, Glastonbury, 1365.

108. M. Müller, *Childhood, Orphans and Underage Heirs in Medieval Rural England; Growing up in the Village* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 79, 136.

109. Birrell, "Peasants Eating and Drinking," p. 16.

110. *GADL*, MS 10646, Reel 28, Ashbury, 1315; MS 10771, Reel 24, Nettleton, 1315.

ence of the beadle on three of the Glastonbury manors.[111] The ripreeve was to assist with oversight of the harvest, ensuring that the work was done diligently and that no one stole or damaged the lord's crops.[112] As with the reeve, tenants were amerced for undertaking tasks without the permission or license of the ripreeve.[113] Their consistent role on the manor is more evident through the accounts than the court rolls, however, notwithstanding this, the ripreeve was another supervisory officer, and can be observed monitoring the behaviour of the lord's other tenants during the busiest time of the agricultural year. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, the remuneration the ripreeve received for the period they served could be considerable but it is unclear what services, roles or occupations they had for the remainder of the year, if any. Yet the significant level of responsibility and trust placed in these manorial officials attests to their importance on the manor and their role in this accountability mechanism.

1.3.5. The berebrit

The berebrit was responsible for the lord's granaries, they supervised the carrying and threshing of crops and how they were stored in the grange.[114] Aston found that their responsibilities were not necessarily limited to only these tasks, as they also helped manage livestock, oversaw property repairs, collected rents, and even arranged sales.[115] How the berebrit was to be remunerated was detailed in the Glastonbury custumals but their duties were not specified.[116] The court rolls show that, at least occasionally, the berebrit made attachments (brought tenants to court) for trespasses committed with animals. As described above, in one unusual year at

111. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 32.
112. Lewis, "Middle English Dictionary"; Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 32.
113. *GADL*, MS 10646, Reel 28, Ashcott, 1371; MS 11212, Reel 29, Damerham, 1387.
114. Lewis, "Middle English Dictionary"; *GADL*, MS 10762, Reel 14, Skin 7, Ashcott, 1257/8; MS 5262, Reel 1, Ashcott, 1394/5. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, p. 247.
115. Aston and Gerrard, *Interpreting the English Village: Landscape and Community at Shapwick, Somerset*, p. 518; *GADL*, MS 11184, Reel 27, Damerham, 1357; MS 11225, Reel 26, Damerham, 1365.
116. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, p. 113.

Ashbury, in the account for 1334/5, the berebrit was given no rent remissions at all, as the cellarer had sold all of the grain and so their duties did not merit remuneration. This suggests that, although their duties could extend beyond that of grange-keeper, this was their primary function.[117]

The presence of the berebrit in the manorial record became noticeably infrequent during the later fourteenth century. At Glastonbury, after 1356/7 the berebrit no longer received rent quittances and their disappearance coincides with the increased prevalence of the rent collector. The change in the presence of the berebrit and rent collector at Glastonbury is consistent with the trends observed at other manors across England, of an increase in pastoral farming and a move away from direct demesne management to leasehold.[118] However, this response was likely a local one, where the duties of the manorial officers were altered and the role recorded differently within the account. In contrast, at Ashcott, the rent quittances given to the berebrit actually increased in the last three decades of the fourteenth century, showing that any change to rent-collection was a local variation rather than an estate-wide change across the Glastonbury manors.[119] The Ashcott accounts also show that the berebrit's duties remained unchanged throughout the period, although they were not always called 'berebrit' and could be referred to as the supervisors of threshing and carrying, a change potentially caused by scribal variation rather than administrative alteration.[120] Although the activities of the berebrit do not feature prominently in the court rolls, the records continued to state who had been elected into the office. Their importance to the manorial economy is shown in an unusual case at Nettleton, in 1356, when the whole hallmoot were amerced 3*s* 4*d* for not having elected a berebrit.[121] Whilst not

117. *GADL*, MS 10633, Reel 18, Skin 9, Ashbury, 1334/5.
118. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, pp. 81-101.
119. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of the events and developments of the fourteenth century.
120. *GADL*, MS 5282, Reel 1, 1345/6.
121. *Ibid.*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Nettleton,1356; MS 11222, Reel 25, Ashbury, 1349 ; MS 11179, Reel

the highest amercement given to the hallmoot, this was not an insubstantial amount, and attests to the importance of the tenantry fulfilling their obligations to the lord by electing a berebrit. The continuity of the role of the berebrit at Ashcott, in comparison to their disappearance in the Glastonbury accounts, demonstrates how administrative structures were localised in order to adapt to regional socio-economic conditions. Whilst there was a central authority with oversight across the whole estate, each manor responded and adapted individually according to its own needs. These alterations also show that the relevance of an office to the manorial administration changed across the period, therefore, caution needs to be exercised in the creation of universal definitions of officialdom even when these are applied to manors under the same seigneurial authority.

1.3.6. The rent collector

Administrative and socio-economic changes at Glastonbury were also evident through the introduction in the later fourteenth century of the office of rent collector. The collection of rents and other customary payments was an important responsibility, the lord needed to employ people that could not only be trusted but would also have the capability to perform the role effectively. Both the reeve and rent collectors undertook this responsibility, although the office of rent collector was a position that did not appear in the manorial accounts until the 1350s.[122] The increased prominence of rent collectors indicates an adaptation to a changing socio-economic climate which enabled Glastonbury Abbey to maintain authority and provide income through different means. In a recent study, Bailey demonstrates that there was a shift towards a rentier economy, with lords leasing out land rather than utilising the demesne. He attributes this to a number of causal factors, including the desire of tenants to not

25, Ashcott, 1347.
122. *GADL*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Ashcott, 1357; MS 11223, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1351; MS 11181, Reel 27, Ashbury,1366.; MS 10646, Reel 28, Nettleton, 1371.

owe services, difficulties in enforcing the performance of duty, and the utility of cash rents as a rapid form of income.[123] He also notes the different methods that manorial lords began to use in order to adjust to the successive outbreaks of plague and climatic fluctuations that significantly impacted the health of manorial agriculture and the economy.[124] Whilst some uniformity was introduced through legislation, such as the Statute of Labourers in 1351, how each lord or manor were impacted, and subsequently responded, differed.[125] Hallam has stated that the Black Death had substantial demographic and socio-economic impacts upon the Wiltshire manors, including those belonging to Glastonbury Abbey.[126] Glastonbury appears more unusual in its response and structure in comparison to other manors across England, even ecclesiastical ones like those belonging to the Bishopric of Durham and Winchester, which began to lease manors from as early as 1380.[127] Many Glastonbury manors continued to extract servile dues and remained under direct management for a significant period of time, some until the 1490s. Many of the changes that can be seen across England, such as the commutation of labour services into cash rents and the emergence of more frequent leasehold tenures, did occur at Glastonbury but emerged later than is observed in other parts of England.[128] For example, Keil notes that it was in the fifteenth century that there was a notable decrease in the use of demesne farming and that the office of the reeve became merged with that of the rent-collector.[129] The alterations in the administrative structure of the Glastonbury manors, the change in responsibilities, the disappearance of some offices and

123. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, pp. 81-101.
124. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
125. S. Cohn, “After the Black Death: Labour Legislation and Attitudes Towards Labour in Late-Medieval Western Europe,” *The Economic History Review* 60, no. 3 (August 2007): pp. 457-85.
126. D. Hallam, “Southern England,” in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, ed. H. E. Hallam, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 341-68, 351-2.
127. Campbell, “The Agrarian Problem in the Early Fourteenth Century,” p. 38. Keil, “The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages,” p. 142; D. Farmer, “Grain Yields on the Winchester Manors in the Later Middle Ages,” *The Economic History Review* 30, no. 4 (November 1977): pp. 444-466, 562. M. Halcrow, “The Decline of Demesne Farming on the Estates of Durham Cathedral Priory,” *The Economic History Review* 7, no. 3 (1955): pp. 345-56, 346.
128. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, pp. 18-9.
129. Keil, “The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages,” p. 67.

the increased prevalence of others demonstrate the efforts made by the seigneurial authority to adapt to the wider socio-economic conditions of the period without destabilising the profitability of the Glastonbury estate.

1.3.7. The *cadavatores*

The role of the *cadavatores* was to inspect animal carcasses and determine the cause of death, whether it was due to natural causes or the neglect and mistreatment by an official, animal custodian, or other tenant.[130] Those who served as *cadavatores* were placed in a position of trust and power and any abuse of their role was harshly punished. It is recorded, at Damerham in 1368, that two *cadavatores* were amerced 20*s* each for falsely presenting the deaths of 20 lambs. The office was slightly unusual in its presence in the manorial record, as it was not until 1365 that they were first given the title of '*cadavatore*', although inspections into the death of livestock were common in the court rolls prior to this. These earlier records did not specify any mechanism as to how these investigations were to be done nor who was to carry them out.[131] Neither the *Seneschaucie* or *Hosebonderie* refer specifically to *cadavatores* but both texts do state that it was important to have someone to inspect and inquire as to how an animal had died before anything could be done with the carcass.[132] Evidence for a pre-existing role for these inspections is shown at Ashcott, in 1356, when John Hobekynes and Walt Hyckes, who were called *supervisores*, presented the deaths of one oxen and 124 sheep.[133] The number of animal fatalities here was particularly high, so it may have been that these men were recruited specifically for the purposes of investigation. It is also possible that previously it was less common to record the name or names of those who carried out the investigations,

130. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources (DMLBS)*.
131. *GADL*, MS 11251, Reel 25, Damerham, 1345.
132. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, pp. 67, 109, 111.
133. *GADL*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Ashbury, 1357.

and that the specific inclusion of these names was to keep a record of culpability should the matter require future scrutiny.

The introduction of the term '*cadavatore*' was almost instantaneous on all five manors, appearing between 1365 and 1366. The increased prevalence of the *cadavatores* in the mid-late fourteenth century is also evident on other manors; in an examination of Dyffryn Clwyd, in Wales, Barrell *et al.* noted the introduction of *coronatores*, later termed *cadaveratores*, who were to present murrains.[134] Similarly, they also state that there had previously been investigations into who was responsible for livestock deaths, and suggest that the introduction of the term into the record alongside elections makes it likely that this was a new position.[135] Although occurring later at Glastonbury, the sudden presence of this terminology in the records is also suggestive of it being a newly defined role with a specified remit, which had been instanced upon instruction from the central authority. The format of the cases remained fairly consistent with those that came earlier, with the exception that it was specified that the *cadavatores* were to be the one to determine cause of death and culpability, although the outcome was almost always that no one was found to be at fault. This indicates that the purpose of the *cadavatore* was to engage in a finding of fact, rather than to seek unjustified recompense for losses to the seigneurial authority.

The widespread introduction of this nomenclature at Glastonbury in 1365/6 does not coincide with a particular increase in the number of livestock deaths in this particular year. The accounts and court rolls for the preceding 3–5 years have not survived, however, it is plausible that there had been an increase in animal murrains and deaths in these years preceding 1365/6 which instigated the need for a change in the administrative structure. In the 1360s there were resurgences of plague, resulting

134. A. Barrell et al., "The Dyffryn Clwyd Court Roll Project, 1340-1352 and 1389-99: A Methodology and Some Preliminary Findings," in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, ed. Z. Razi and R. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 260-97, 279-80.
135. *Ibid.*, pp. 279-80.

in further decreases in the population, as well as climatic fluctuations that caused harvest failures.[136] The cumulative impacts of these environmental influences also occurred within a context of the generalised shift towards pastoral farming, which likely shaped the perceptions of a specific necessity for the introduction of greater scrutiny of animal husbandry. Whilst there were clearly mechanisms in place for investigating the death of livestock prior to the introduction of *cadavatores*, that the change in terminology came at all five manors in the space of a single year suggests that this reflects an actual change in manorial practice. This is an interesting, although uncommon, example of the direct implementation of wider policy by the central authority. This new position of oversight and investigation was likely a reflection of the heightened tensions between the lord and the peasantry in this period, as is shown by the significant increase in the number of cases of obstruction and opposition to seigneurial authority and orders in the court rolls, which will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

1.4. The *famuli*

As well as manorial officials, the seigneurial will was also enacted through the *famuli*, who were responsible for a large number of agricultural tasks on the demesne land, such as ploughing, sowing, and reaping, as well as helping to guard the animals and assisting the other supervisory officials.[137] The tenantry, depending upon the obligations attached to the land that they held, could be required to serve in various *famuli* positions. In comparison to officials, they had more contained domains of responsibility which did not usually extend to supervision of the other tenantry or the presentment of cases in the court, as shall be discussed below. How *famuli* were se-

136. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, pp. 81-101.
137. For further discussion on the *famuli* see: Claridge and Langdon, “The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300,” pp. 187-220.

lected is not detailed in the record, however, there is some indication that they were elected into their role.[138] This is shown at Nettleton, in 1356, when two men were elected to do the ploughing, sowing, harrowing, mowing, gathering of hay, and reaping of corn.[139] Similarly, at Nettleton in 1365, it is stated that the whole homage was amerced because the elected ploughman did not perform his duties adequately.[140] This amercement shows that the fulfilment of the duties of the *famuli* was potentially a responsibility of the wider community, and so their election and selection may also have been considered a duty of the tenantry. Whilst the *famuli* did fulfil functions in the interests of the lord, they will be distinguished from officials in this study as their place in the administrative hierarchy is not particularly distinct from the wider peasantry.

The minimum land requirement to be eligible to serve as *famuli* appears to have been relatively small. The accounts of Glastonbury are less informative than the court rolls upon the background of the individuals who did serve in these roles, stating only the title of the position itself. At Ashcott, in a 1351 court session, when Stephen Seywell acquired one messuage and one ferdel of land, it was part of his agreement that he was to be ploughman if the lord's other ploughmen were unable to work due to injury, death, or their having had vacated the position.[141] Seywell's case is interesting in its implications, that there were contingency plans in place that ensured that if a worker was unavailable or unable to serve the lord, that other tenants would be there to take their place, suggesting a degree of pragmatic flexibility on the part of the manorial administration. The case of Seywell also shows that, unlike Page's findings on the manors of Crowland Abbey, those who served as the *famuli*

138. *GADL*, MS 10771, Reel 24, Ashbury, 1315; MS 11222, Reel 25, Ashbury, 1349; MS 10773, Reel 24, Ashcott, 1340; MS 11179, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1347; MS 11224, Reel 26, Ashcott, 1356; MS 11181, Reel 27, Damerham, 1366; MS 10771, Reel 24, Nettleton, 1315; MS 10774, Reel 25, Nettleton, 1344.
139. *Ibid.*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Nettleton, 1356.
140. *Ibid.*, MS 11225, Reel 26, Nettleton, 1365.
141. *Ibid.*, MS11223, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1351.

at Glastonbury were not necessarily only smallholders.[142] That the *famuli* were not required to possess large holdings is likely a reflection of the small scope for damage and their low degree of supervisory authority.

The *famuli* can be divided into service and stipendiary roles, where the former worked for rent and labour service remissions whilst the latter were given cash stipends and grain liveries.[143] Although they are not officials, the *famuli* were an important component of the manorial economy with close links to officeholders and the seigneurial authority. The composition of the *famuli* varied not only between manors but could be subject to change upon an individual manor each year. This group could comprise of the ploughmen (*carrucarius, fugatores, tentores*, *akerman*), carters, dairyworker, *garciones* (servants), gardener, harrowers, sowers, and numerous animal custodians (cowherd, shepherd, swineherd, gooseherd). The ploughmen were some of the most valuable workers on the manor, they were expected to not only plough efficiently but to maintain and repair their implements and care for the plough-beasts.[144] At Glastonbury, the key terms used were the *carrucarius* and *fugator*, although in the later fourteenth century *akerman* came into more common usage.[145] Not all of the *famuli* were required all year round, a number of them were paid for only a few weeks of work per year.[146] Farmer states that, as well as their specific duties, all workers, except shepherds, were expected to help with the harvest, even when listed specifically in roles such as ploughmen or carters.[147]

The *famuli* usually had responsibilities that did not entail supervisory oversight,

142. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation*, pp. 104-5.
143. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 184. Claridge and Langdon, “The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300,” p. 189. Farmer, “The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages,” pp. 207-36.
144. Lamond, *Walter of Henley’s Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste’s Rules*, p. 111.
145. Lewis, “Middle English Dictionary.”
146. Searle, *Lordship and community: Battle abbey and its banlieu, 1066–1538*, p. 304.
147. Farmer, “The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages,” p. 225.

unlike the other manorial offices. Culpability for the fulfilment of the duties of the *famuli* fell upon the individual and the relevant manorial officer. This is clearly described in *Hosebonderie*, where it states:

"[if there is] a cow which has not calved or a ewe which has not lambed in the year, let it be inquired whose fault this is, either the bailiff's or the provost's or the keeper's, for want of keeping or want of food in the summer or winter, or want of a male, or if the provost could have changed it for another in time and did not, and, if it be found to be any fault of these, let them be fully charged for the issue of its value".[148]

Individual members of the *famuli* were culpable for their own actions but there was also a duty for manorial officials to supervise them in the adequate execution of these tasks. Manorial officials also had the responsibility to ensure that the manor was suitably equipped for these functions to be fulfilled, such as providing sufficient feed for the livestock.[149] This duty of care and oversight is exemplified in a court case at Ashcott from 1344, where the reeve and oxherd were amerced 40*d* and 24*d* respectively for badly ploughing the lord's demesne.[150] It is likely that the reason for the significant difference in the amercements between the reeve and oxherd was because the reeve had a higher ranking, supervisory position. This divergence suggests that those in senior roles were more stringently penalised for their misdirecting or lack of oversight of those that fell under their domain of authority.

148. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, pp. 21, 65, 75.
149. In 1347, the messor of Nettleton was amerced 40*d* for being late and remiss in his supervision of the ploughing, sowing, and harrowing of the lord's land as well as his supervision of the husbandry. *GADL*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Nettleton, 1347; See also: Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400*, pp. 73-4.
150. *GADL*, MS 10774, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1344.

1.5. Minor officials

There were a number of minor officials and workers whose surviving presence in the manorial record is small and their exact roles on the manor are obscure. 'Wykman' appear infrequently in the Glastonbury records; the *VCH* for Wiltshire suggests that it denoted a general 'farm labourer'.[151] Whereas, in slight contrast, the *VCH* for Berkshire stated that 'special customs regulated the status of the "wykemanni" of the manor, viz., the reeve, brewer, hayward, woodward, and shepherd.'[152] At Glastonbury, in the accounts, occasionally one or two 'wykman' were recorded as being given labour service quittances, which would suggest that it was a term denoting a general worker. But in the court rolls, when the tenants paid for exemption from office it usually stated that it was for the positions of reeve, messor and 'other wykman', which implies a broader overall term for offices.[153] It seems then that wykman was a somewhat interchangeable term that could denote either a general worker or a non-specific office and may have perhaps meant something similar to a local worker.

There were some positions that appear to have been temporary, with one or two tenants elected to complete a specific task. For example, at Damerham in 1349, Geoffrey Pylly and Henry atte Welle were elected by the whole hallmoot to investigate the deaths of the lord's sheep.[154] Some of these roles were fairly broad; at Ashbury in 1334/5, Nicholas de Sowy was '*existent supervisor'* of Badbury and Winterborne, two other Glastonbury manors.[155] Although the reeve and messor were often the primary supervisors, there were also occasions in which designated supervisors were elected.[156] At Ashcott, in 1357, two 'ploughing supervisors', Richard le Fysch and

151. H. Chettle et al., "Parishes: Melksham," in *A History of the County of Wiltshire*, ed. R. B. Pugh and E. Crittall, vol. 7 (London: Victoria County History, 1953), pp. 91-121.
152. Page and Ditchfield, *A History of the County of Berkshire*, pp. 503-12.
153. *GADL*, MS 11185, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1348/50; MS 11179, Reel 25, Glastonbury, 1347. and MS 10678, Reel 24, Ashbury, 1308.
154. *Ibid.*, MS11222, Reel 25, Damerham, 1349.
155. *Ibid.*, MS 10633, Reel 18, Skin 9, Ashbury, 1334/5.
156. *Ibid.*, MS 10644, Reel 28, Damerham, 1371; MS 11179, Reel 25, Nettleton, 1347.

Stephen Dodde, were both elected to oversee the ploughing in that year.[157] Election into this role was very unusual, which suggests that perhaps in this year the reeve, messor and other officials required additional support to supervise the tenants, or that the usual supervisory officers had other duties and were not available. This further demonstrates that these systems were not so rigid in their structure as to prevent adaptation and also emphasises that the complexity of the administrative system on the Glastonbury manors was likely due to necessity. A large range of officials and workers, although less significant in the accounts and court rolls, were still integral to the maintenance of the Glastonbury economy, with a core group of supervisory officials maintaining oversight of the overall administration.

1.6. ‘Absent’ officers

There were a number of officials that one might expect to have a more prominent presence in the manorial record but who were absent or appeared only infrequently. For example, at Glastonbury and Ashbury, warreners made presentments for *impar-camentum*, however, there were no references to warreners receiving rent quittances or stipends in the accounts. The lack of remuneration suggests that their roles were considered minor, did not warrant stipulated remuneration, or that how they were paid was not recorded in the main account. Affeerors, who assessed the amounts to be charged as court penalties, and ale-tasters, who made presentments for those who broke the assize of bread and ale, also existed on many manors across England and had an active presence in the court proceedings.[158] These two offices are not present in the records for the Glastonbury manors in this study due to the types of court records examined, rather than because they did not have a role in these

157. *Ibid.*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Ashcott, 1356.
158. J. M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women’s Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 4. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400*, p. 146. Page, *The Estates of Crowland Abbey, A Study in Manorial Organisation*, p. 68.

communities. A limited number of tourn court records survive for Nettleton and these contain numerous cases in which tenants were presented and amerced for brewing against the assize of bread and ale, although no information is given regarding who served as ale-tasters. The jurisdiction of the hallmoot did not cover the assize of ale, so, although these offices were certainly present upon the manor, they are not in the record, which obscures not only aspects of the administrative structure but also the status and roles of these individuals within the community.[159] As the Glastonbury manors were well connected and not all of them had the same legal jurisdictions, it may also be the case that tenants travelled to manors other than those of their residence in order to attend these courts.

1.7. Overlapping jurisdictions and the impact of the local topography

There were a number of offices at Glastonbury which had duties within specific domains but remained closely linked to other positions on the manor. In particular the offices of woodward, parker, encloser, and forester. The assignation of a designated encloser was uncommon on the Glastonbury manors, they appeared predominantly in the early fourteenth century when enclosing works (such as parks) were most frequently undertaken.[160] It was more common for other officials, such as the reeve, to have additional duties to ensure that the lord's lands had been enclosed properly.[161] Other closely connected positions were that of the woodward, who kept the lord's woodland, the parker, who was responsible for the management of the lord's game and land, and foresters, who guarded the lord's forest and also managed the game

159. M. Kowaleski, "Town Courts in Medieval England: An Introduction," in *Town Courts and Urban Society in Late Medieval England*, ed. R. Goddard and T. Phipps (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), pp. 17-36, 29-32.
160. John of Glastonbury, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey, An Edition, Translation and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, ed. James P. Carley and David Townsend (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1985), pp. 13, 233, 265, 267. See also: *GADL*, MS 11181, Reel 27, Damerham, 1366; MS 11274a, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1366; MS 10783, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1305/6; MS 11249, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1312/3.
161. *GADL*, MS 11181, Reel 27, Damerham, 1366; MS 10645, Reel 26, Ashcott, 1369.

and rights of chase.[162] In *The Master of Game*, a late medieval hunting treatise, it advised the Game Master to work in accordance with the "forester or parker", which suggests that, although these were nominally separate offices, there were close similarities in their duties.[163] This interpretation is consistent with the finding that there were no foresters on the Glastonbury manors, it seems likely that their roles were filled by the woodward or parker where necessary. This was arguably a pragmatic structure, it saved the manor money by not spending it on officials whose role was not integral to the manor and whose duties could be subsumed within that of other officers.

The position of parker was only recorded as being occupied upon the manor of Damerham, where it was frequently held in conjunction with the office of messor. The office of woodward was only present in the manorial records for the manors of Ashbury and Damerham. As stated in the introduction, both of these manors had a substantial amount of woodland, Damerham contained approximately 900 acres and Ashbury 275 acres.[164] Unsurprisingly, the large quantity of woodland and parkland at Damerham resulted in the woodward having a much larger presence in the manorial record there than upon Ashbury, particularly in presentments for *imparcamentum*. Furthermore, the woodward received substantial rent quittances and stipends that were equal to, or greater than, the other manorial officers.[165] The various woodland of Ashcott has been detailed in the *VCH* of Somerset and Keil has also noted that Ashcott was the only manor to have demesne wood, although the rights to use wood in common existed on all of the manors.[166] However, no woodwards or park-

162. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 182. Lewis, "Middle English Dictionary."
163. Edward of Norwich, *The Master of Game*, ed. W. A. Baillie-Grohman and F. N. Ballie-Grohman (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), pp. 188-9.
164. Page and Ditchfield, *A History of the County of Berkshire*; Page, *A History of the County of Hampshire*, pp. 586-91.
165. See Chapter 2 for more discussion of this.
166. Dunning, *The Victoria History of Somerset*, vol. 8. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 75.

ers are present in either the court rolls or accounts of Ashcott. It is possible that the responsibilities fell into the remit of the other officials on this manor or even to officials on the other manors that lay in close proximity. Not only did the presence of certain offices vary, but the exact responsibilities of manorial officials was significantly determined by the topography of the local environment. Although restricted by custom, as shall be discussed further in Chapter 2, the Glastonbury manors were also versatile, responsive, and flexible in their administrative responses to socio-economic conditions. This variation in officials was a vital mechanism which allowed for a local–central division of authority that better reflected the needs of a specific manorial economy.

1.8. Tasks in the remit of multiple officials

There were areas of the manorial economy in which a number of different manorial officials and workers had responsibilities, particularly in regards to livestock and the observation and presentment of infringements and trespasses against the lord. Animals frequently feature in the manorial record, appearing as strays, aids to work, the cause of damages, or being utilised as goods with economic purpose. Upon the Glastonbury manors, the responsibility for the various aspects of animal husbandry came within the remit of a number of officials and *famuli,* with certain roles having more prominence or responsibility depending upon the requirements of the estate during a specific period of time or due to the environment of the manor. For example, the thirteenth century custumals stated that various officials were to be in charge of collecting the eggs from the lord's tenants at Easter. This included the messor, woodward, parker, and berebrit, who were to either collect 100 or 200 eggs each. The exact officers specified varied by manor, with a larger number stipulated at Damerham, reflecting the size of its economy as well as the utilisation of different

officials at each manor.

Presentments under *imparcamentum* were another broad area in which a large number of officers had duties. *Imparcamentum* cases predominantly included infractions, such as trespass and damage caused by livestock as well as instances of tenants either being late or not performing their servile duties to the lord. Presentments under *imparcamentum* were always the first items of business in the manorial court, excluding the *capitagium* lists at Easter. However, there was a transformation in how the cases were presented and detailed across the period; earlier court rolls recorded these infractions under a broader title of 'attachments' with a breakdown by each official, who they presented, the charge, and the amercement. Later records generally listed the official and the total sum of their presentments with a few additional case details occasionally included.[167] This makes specific changes difficult to determine as the total amercements collected decreased in the later fourteenth century but it is unclear whether some infringements were detailed and recorded elsewhere in the court rolls.

The officials responsible for presentments under *imparcamentum* differed notably at each manor. Although the reeve was not observed to be involved in presentments for *imparcamentum*, they can still be seen to have presented cases and attached tenants for trespass and damage caused with animals.[168] The messor was involved in making presentments on all five manors, and at Ashcott they were the only officer who did so. In contrast, the other four manors listed the ripreeve, woodwards, parkers, moorwards, *equitators*, warenners, berebrits, and beadles as having made *imparcamentum* presentments.

167. *GADL*, MS 10771, Reel 24, Ashbury, 1315; MS 10771, Reel 24, Ashcott, 1315; *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources (DMLBS)*.
168. *GADL*, MS 10780, Reel 22, Glastonbury, 1313.

Although not all officials were present every year, Damerham had the largest number and widest variety of officers making presentments, which was a reflection of the size and diversity of its economy. There were often two messors, two woodwards, two *equitators*, and either a parker, berebrit, or ripreeve. Within this broader category of *imparcamentum* there was more differentiation in their exact duties and the types and quantity of cases that each officer presented. For example, there were some sessions in which a moorward made no presentments but they were not amerced for poor performance of their duty.[169] In contrast, there were a number of instances in which the messor or woodward were amerced for not making enough presentments or attachments in court.[170] There was an expectation that the peasantry would attempt to commit certain offences, as described in the agricultural treatises, and so a lack of presentments was taken as being indicative of the duty being unfulfilled.[171] It may be the case that the relatively few amercements given to the moorward were because it was understood that, in comparison to the other various manorial officials with similar duties, they had a different geographical jurisdiction under their oversight, with the moor potentially being either more difficult to monitor or less likely to be trespassed upon. Whereas it was deemed unlikely that the tenantry had not committed trespasses or caused damages in the areas under the authority of the messor or woodward. A small number of presentments by either of these officials was understood to be reflective of a lack of due diligence by the officers. From the perspective of the seigneurial authority, it was important that these presentments were made, as it brought the lord additional income and ensured they were reimbursed for trespass against their properties. It also maintained order and deterred other tenants from doing the same.

A number of officials appear in the manorial court records making presentments

169. *GADL*, MS 11225, Reel 26, Glastonbury, 1365; MS 10646, Reel 28, Glastonbury, 1371.
170. *Ibid.*, MS 10770, Reel 23, Damerham, 1307; MS 11251, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1345.
171. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, pp. 7, 11, 33, 35, 83, 85, 131, 141.

pertaining to their duties. Aside from the salaried officers and obedientiaries, it was the reeve, messor, ripreeve and *supervisors* who appeared in the court rolls most frequently as plaintiffs. The *famuli* did not appear to make presentments, which is consistent with their role being limited more to that of a worker rather than having a supervisory capacity. Interestingly, on none of the manors were officials frequently presented by other villein officers, instead, it was either the high-ranking officials, the hallmoot, or included within the presentments made by the *narrator* (the speaker of each court). The responsibility for the presentment of manorial officials had a communal element, although officers maintained and enforced seigneurial authority, the manorial community were also expected to monitor officials and ensure that they performed their duty. The reciprocal character of this enforcement of culpability ensured community and official investment in maintaining and upholding seigneurial authority.

It was the bailiff or steward who usually made presentments against manorial officers, rather than other peasant officials. However, there were a small number of cases where manorial officials made presentments against other officers. At Glastonbury and Nettleton, there was only one instance in which the messor presented the reeve, and the reeve presented a case against the messor. However, this trend is not consistent across the Glastonbury manors as at Damerham there were eleven cases in which the berebrit, messor, parker, and reeve all made presentments against other officials. There were significant differences in the jurisdictions of the officials within the court as well as their wider duties. In terms of numbers, Damerham had the most cases of officials making presentments, as well as the widest variety of case types. This is suggested to be indicative of a greater level of status and responsibility being attached to the roles on Damerham in comparison to the other manors, likely a product of the size of the manor both in terms of population and economic output. This scale increased the relative importance of these domains, when viewed from the perspective of the lord, greater damage to the profitability was possible

by less rigorous enforcement of the duties of these offices than could occur upon smaller manors. It should also be noted that there were fewer surviving court rolls for Glastonbury, which may have decreased the number of instances in which the presentments made by officials against other officers can be observed.

1.9. Office-holding as an adaptation to the local environment

The size, population, urbanisation, and landscape of all five manors were quite distinct and unique to the specific location; the economies of each manor and their requirements were reflected by the structure of their officialdom. For this reason it is unsurprising that there were a number of workers and officials who were only present upon certain manors. Damerham, in particular, had a larger variety of officers that only appear in the records there, although it is possible they existed on the other manors but were not referenced directly within the surviving documentation. However, in this case it could still be understood to suggest a diminished role and reduced importance of these offices to the administration of the smaller manors. There were occasional references to a *claviger*, which Harrison suggests may have been a key-keeper or accountant.[172] They appear only in the accounts for the manor of Damerham but they are consistently given remuneration in the form of stipends and small quantities of wheat. *Pedones* also appear only at Damerham, these were likely not an official but general workers or *famuli* and may have been a manor specific terminology. They appear only in the accounts receiving remuneration and no further information in the records provide an indication as to their responsibilities on the manor. It is plausible that they were some form of foot-worker during harvest, a 'runner' who moved goods, or tithe-collectors that operated specifically during times of harvest in order to collect the ten per cent which was taken directly from the field

172. J. Harrison, "The Composite Manor of Brent, a study of a Large Wetland-Edge Estate up to 1350" (PhD diss., University of Leicester, 1997), p. 254.

immediately after reaping.[173]

Equitators have been defined as horsemen, forest officers, and harvest supervisors.[174] Similar to the *clavigers* and *pedones*, they were only recorded as being present upon Damerham. It is plausible that their responsibilities required them to travel the lord's lands on horses, possibly overseeing and supervising the other tenantry, or acting as messengers. The *equitators* appear in the court rolls making presentments for impounding, alongside the messor and woodward, which suggests a role as a mobile supervisor with a broad domain of authority. Their presence in the court rolls in the first half of the fourteenth century is very limited, appearing only once in 1307 to make attachments, however, they feature much more frequently in the accounts in the reception of rent quittances. No accounts survive for Damerham after 1335, but their presence in the court rolls and the number of presentments they made increased significantly in the mid-late fourteenth century. In 1347, a tenant was amerced for taking the fodder that was to be given to the horse of the *equitator*, and in the same year, Adam le Eir, the *equitator*, presented a tenant for damaging the lord's barley during autumn.[175] Whilst all the manors belonged to the abbot of Glastonbury, the structure of an individual manor could be remarkably different, necessitating distinct administrative hierarchies. Even at the very local level there were notable differences in the responsibilities and activities of manorial officers.

1.10. The interactions among the Glastonbury manors

The Glastonbury Abbey manors formed an economic and administrative network that is particularly noticeable when examining the transportation of grain and live-

173. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 101.
174. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources (DMLBS)*.
175. *GADL*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Damerham, 1347. See also MS 10646, Reel 27, Damerham, 1368: John Clerk, *equitator* of the lord apud Merton, was amerced 6*d* because he was negligent in his office.

stock among the manors. It is within this domain that the influence and control of the central authority, rather than the local, is more evident. What type of goods were moved, the quantity, and value, and to which manors they were sent is highly informative upon the wider economic environments of these manors, and how each of these manors functioned within the overall Glastonbury Abbey economy. It seems likely that the over-arching directive decisions of the manors would have been discussed by the abbey officials, such as the cellarer, the steward, and bailiffs. But, as is shown in the records, it was the reeves who were ordered to carry out these processes and it is they who, in the accounts, are recorded as the recipients and so were responsible for its prudential execution. It was an important responsibility, requiring the reeve to be knowledgeable, organised, and efficient. From the perspective of the seigneurial authority, the employment of the surplus within the estates of the Glastonbury manors, referred to herein as intra-estate exchange, was an important responsibility and so emphasises the high degree of trust that was placed upon peasant officials to execute their duties of office.

At Ashcott, all the manors to which grain was sent, or from which it was received, were within a 10 mile radius, with the exception of Doulting (which was approximately 14 miles away). The most frequent of these were found to be three Glastonbury manors that were within 2 miles of Ashcott. Similarly, it can be observed that, at Ashbury and Nettleton, the movement of goods occurred predominantly between the manors of the estate that were closest to them. Reeves were responsible for ensuring that their operation was effective, not just for the success of the manor upon which they resided but also that of the other manors within the Glastonbury estate. As can be observed by the volume of goods transported, the reeves of Glastonbury and Ashcott would have had particularly important roles in the network of exchange. Their prominence was likely due to the convenience of the location of these manors, as their proximity to the central seat of authority allowed for closer

scrutiny and quicker communication than would have been possible for more distant manors.

Upon all of the Glastonbury manors, it can be observed that grain and livestock were sent to, and received from, other Glastonbury manors. However, there were significant differences in the number of other manors with which close ties can be observed. The reeves at the most northerly of the Glastonbury manors examined within this study, these being Ashbury and Nettleton, both performed the least in terms of intra-estate exchange, with it being notably lesser than that found within the records of Ashcott, Glastonbury, and Damerham (shown in tables 1.1 and 1.2). This is likely because there were fewer Glastonbury estate manors that lay in close proximity and because the northern manors in general were not situated closely together, with their intra-estate exchange distances averaging between 20 and 30 miles. It has previously been argued that the prevalence of carrying-services being utilised for long distance grain transport decreased during the fourteenth century, with grain movement becoming a more local phenomena.[176] This observation is consistent with the general trend for the Glastonbury manors, even those that were situated further away from the central seat of administration, such as Monkton Deverill and Longbridge Deverill.[177] Gemmill has similarly noted that at Durham, although certain items were procured from distant manors, generally the monks bought large quantities of livestock locally because it was cheaper and there was less risk of damage to the goods during transit.[178] By favouring more localised forms of exchange, although still being able to transport goods across greater distances, the abbots of Glastonbury Abbey were able to save money by utilising the vast size of its network to rebalance its broader economy.

176. D. Postles, “Customary Carrying services,” *Journal of Transport History* 5, no. 2 (September 1984): pp. 1-15.
177. Farmer, “Two Wiltshire Manors and Their Markets,” pp. 1-11.
178. E. Gemmill, “Prices from the Durham Obedientiary Account Rolls,” in *Money, Prices and Wages, Essays in Honour of Professor Nicholas Mayhew*, ed. M. Allen and D. Coffman (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 74-93, 86.

Manor	Grain	Stock
Ashbury	2	6
Ashcott	8	7
Damerham	4	22
Glastonbury	15	14
Nettleton	4	4

Table 1.1: Number of different manors that each manor received grain & stock from, 1250-1334.

Manor	Grain	Stock
Ashbury	3	5
Ashcott	12	8
Damerham	3	6
Glastonbury	13	6
Nettleton	4	5

Table 1.2: Number of different manors that each manor sent grain & stock to, 1250-1334.

The intra-estate exchange observed for Glastonbury and Damerham showed different character to that of the other three manors. Glastonbury predominantly sent to, or received from, manors within a ten mile radius, but there were 6 manors beyond this perimeter (figures 1.1 and 1.2). Damerham shows the inverse of the general trend, with the exception of three manors, all the other manors from which it received livestock were over 30 miles away as a radial distance, with some as far as 60 miles (figure 1.3). As the most urban in character, it is unsurprising that the manors of Damerham and Glastonbury had the most intra-estate activity and the highest number of connections, making them hubs for the exchange between manors. When examined in terms of intra-estate exchange, Glastonbury appears the most versatile

of the five manors in that it both sent and received grain from a substantial number of manors, 15 and 13 respectively. It also received significantly more livestock than it distributed. When considering the number of manors with which intra-estate exchange occurred, Glastonbury can be seen to be a significant hub, one that influenced the economic activity of the majority of manors within the estate.

Damerham had an integral role as a hub for livestock, particularly sheep, which can be observed in the large number of manors from which it was in receipt of livestock.[179] This is consistent with the work of Crittall who found that in early accounts for Wiltshire manors, it was common for wool to be sold directly from the demesnes but, during the fourteenth century, it was instead collected at a more central location prior to sale.[180] The records show that 22 different manors, for the years 1250–1335, transported livestock and wool to the reeve of Damerham, whereas, in contrast, Damerham only sent livestock away to 6 other manors. Similarly, Damerham did not send grain to many manors, although when it did transport grain it was usually in larger quantities. Whilst further away from the other manors, the general topography and nature of the manor made it an important part of the overall economy of the Glastonbury estates, likely being the place in which surpluses of grain, wool, and livestock were frequently sold at market. This arrangement of exchange suggests that the estate had within it more commercialised structures, although these may have been more noticeably localised to specific manors. It is an example of the interplay between the central administration and the local, each manor implemented the instructions of the central authority in order to generate profit for the abbots of Glastonbury. The presence of estate hubs supports the concept that the relative importance of more minor officials was increased upon more urbanised manors, as the duties and reliability of peasant officials could have a greater effect upon the health

179. Hallam, “Southern England,” pp. 358-9.
180. E. Crittall, “Medieval Agriculture,” in *A History of the County of Wiltshire*, ed. E. Crittall, vol. 4 (London: Victoria County History, 1959), pp. 7-42.

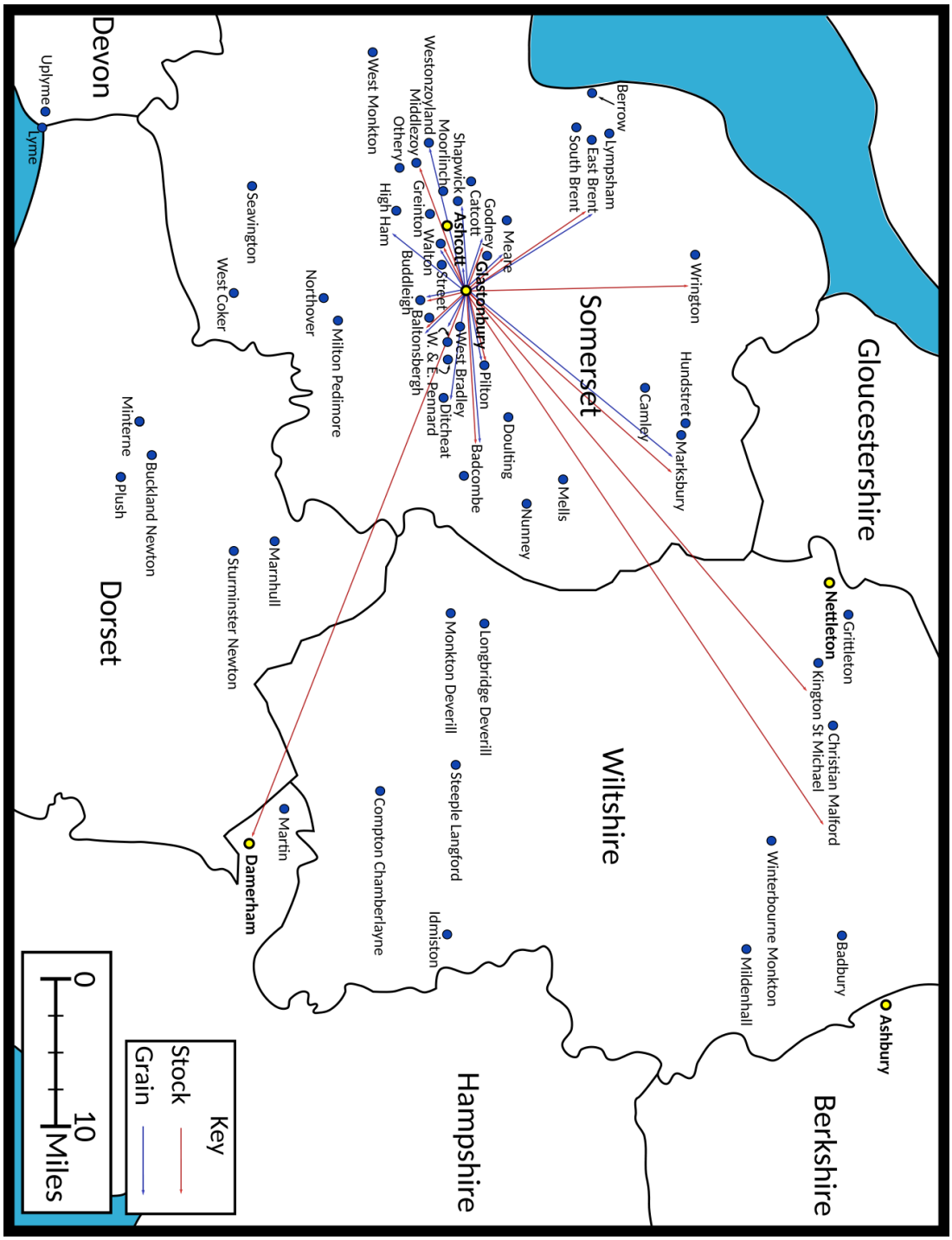


Figure 1.1: Grain and livestock received by the manor of Glastonbury.

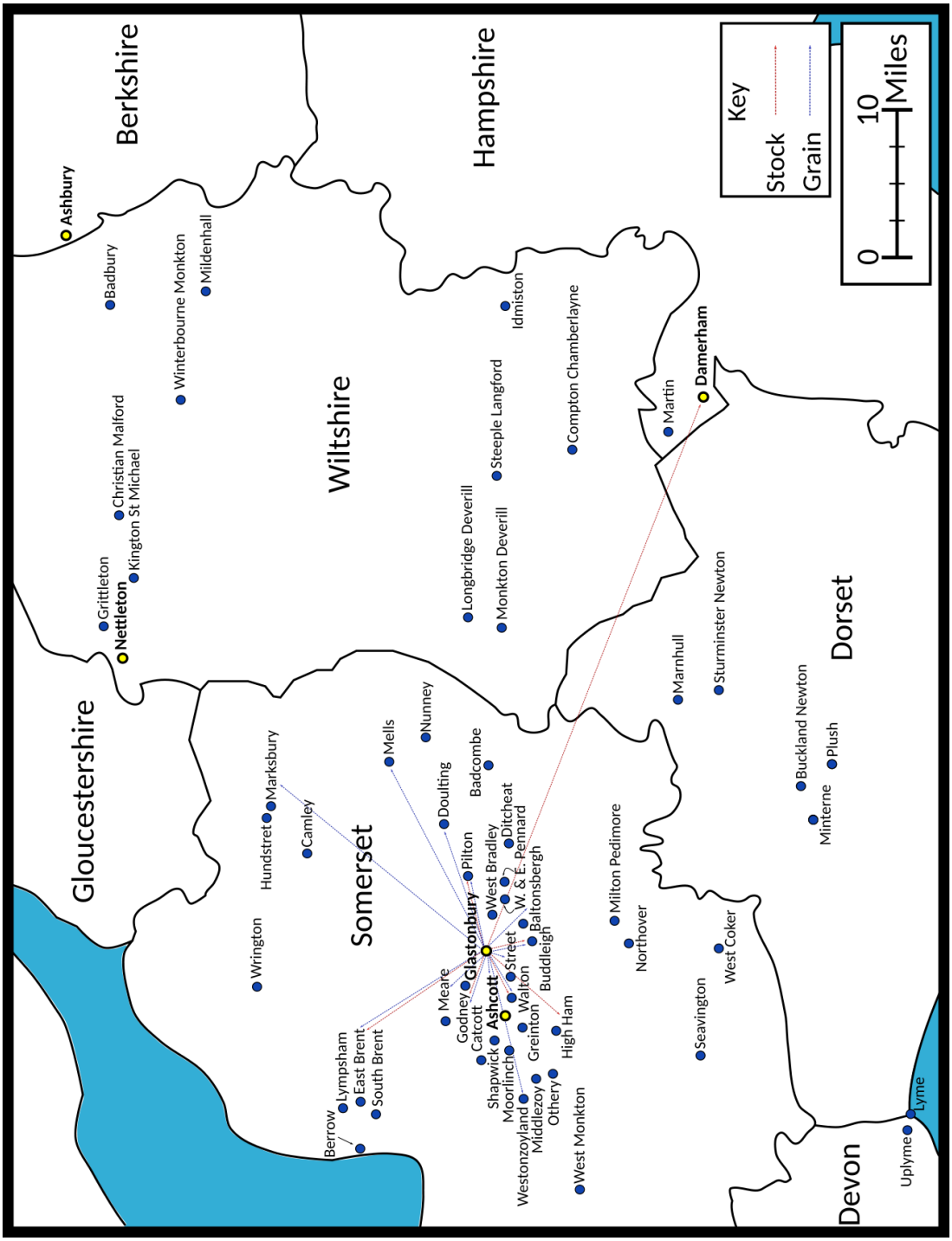


Figure 1.2: Grain and livestock sent to the manor of Glastonbury.

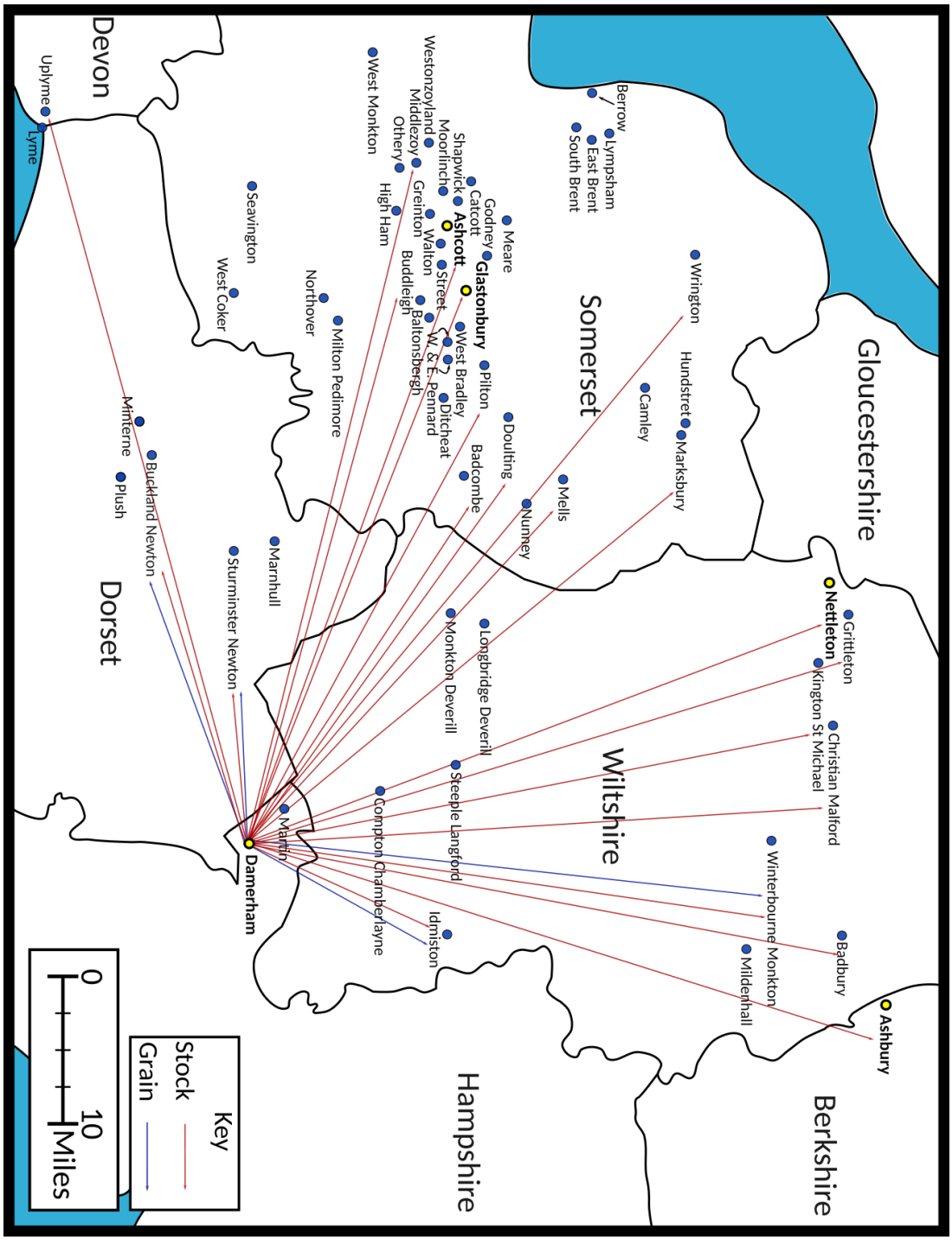


Figure 1.3: Grain and livestock received by the manor of Damerham.

of the estate economy. The importance of delegation likely led to more rigid enforcement and scrutiny of their actions and also stricter systems of hierarchy. Misdeeds or mistakes by officials upon these manors posed a greater threat to the economy of the whole estate than the inadequacies of officials upon smaller manors. For the reeves of Damerham and Glastonbury the responsibility of overseeing the transportation of grain and livestock comprised a much bigger part of their duties than the reeves of Ashbury and Nettleton. Whilst these manors manors may have been under the same seigneurial authority, the different topography and economic roles of each manor necessitated not only different responsibilities for the reeve and other officials but would also have resulted in certain offices being more burdensome.

The most common grains sent in intra-estate exchange were wheat and other cash crops. For livestock and animal products, those most frequently sent were predominantly those used for ploughing or other beasts of burden, such as oxen and horses. An exception to the trends observed on the other manors was the transportation of large quantities of wool to Damerham. The types of livestock and grain, as well as the quantity, that was transported to other manors remained fairly similar across the period. For example, the reeves of Ashbuy predominantly sent plough animals to Badbury, pigs to Winterborne Monkton, and wool to Damerham. The period of surviving material is relatively short for three of the manors but even these short-term consistencies suggest that that these were predetermined decisions, likely dictated by the steward or bailiff and enacted by the peasant officials.

In comparison to Ashbury, it can be observed that the reeve of Ashcott sent grain to a relatively high number of individual manors, with many of these being unique interactions. Nettleton, similarly to Ashcott, sent livestock away to a manor only once, with the exception of Grittleton, and only sent grain to Mells with any frequency. In contrast to this, there was little consistency or discernible pattern in the manors to

which Glastonbury sent grain. A surviving grange-keepers account for Glastonbury shows that the overall quantities that could be sent to Glastonbury were considerable. In 1362/3, over 1,000 bushels of wheat were received from the reeves of 23 different manors. Unfortunately, the representative nature of this particular account cannot be corroborated, as no other surviving grange accounts for Glastonbury exist. However, it does provide some insight into the volume of the intra-estate exchange and also emphasises the importance of peasant officials to the success of the whole estate. The duties of officials, such as reeves, although often particularly described in relation to local events, certainly had significant influence upon the stability and success of the whole manorial system.

The accounts after 1335 for Ashbury, Damerham, and Nettleton do not survive but, at Glastonbury and Ashcott, it can be observed that there was considerably more movement of livestock following the period of the Black Death. This increased exchange of livestock coincided with a decrease in the movement of grain, which potentially shows a contraction and localisation of the transportation of goods. This was a change that can be linked to both a decrease in output and demand or a shift to commercial pastoral agriculture. Again, officialdom can be observed to be at the core of flexibility and adaptation within the manorial system.

The economic structure of a manor was determined by a number of factors, including topography, the size of the manor and its population, and the administrative practices that were either dictated by the lord themselves or controlled by the manorial officials.[181] Coss has argued that it was necessary for there to be commercial awareness in order for a manor to be managed successfully, however, this did not constitute agrarian capitalism.[182] Wickham argues that commercialisation and

181. P. Coss, *The Foundations of Gentry Life: The Multons of Frampton and their World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 114.
182. *Ibid.*

growth were inherently limited due to the small size of the societal elite, the peasantry's subsistence living, and the impacts of hardship.[183] Despite the centralisation and control of the seigneurial authority, there were constraints upon their action due to the influence of custom and obligations to the peasantry.[184] Although manors sought to generate revenue, they were not businesses operating under a capitalistic market economy, and the maximisation of profit was mediated by the maintenance of custom, tradition, and stability.[185] For this reason, the Glastonbury intra-estate network was utilised to support the whole estate economy. That is not to say that there was not local commercialisation, innovation, or market dynamics, but these were not fundamental to the economic superstructure.[186]

1.11. Conclusions

Upon the manors of Glastonbury, the structure of officialdom varied depending upon the specific location, the size of the manor, the distance to the central authority, and the local topography, all of which necessitated the presence of particular offices. Whilst a regular group of supervisory officers were consistently present, those offices with more specific domains of authority were not ubiquitously extant. As well as variation between manors in terms of offices, the duties of each official were also highly region specific, being impacted or even combined into different roles in order to adapt to the local requirements. There were notable differences in how officers were utilised both across short and long term periods of time, between places, and how their duties were adapted and influenced by the presence of the other officials upon a manor. Whilst this variation must be acknowledged, there were also a no-

183. C. Wickham, "How did the Feudal Economy Work? The Economic Logic of Medieval Societies," *Past & Present*, no. 251 (2021): pp. 3-40, 37.
184. Wickham, "How did the Feudal Economy Work? The Economic Logic of Medieval Societies," p. 37. See also: E. Schneider, "Prices and production: agricultural supply response in fourteenth-century England," *Economic History Review* 67:1 (February 2014): pp. 66-91.
185. R. Lomas, "The Priory of Durham and Its Demesnes in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *The Economic History Review* 31, no. 3 (August 1978): pp. 339-53, 352-3.
186. Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages: the History and Theory of England's Economic Development*, pp. 171-3.

table number of continuities throughout the period.

On smaller manors, where fewer officers were needed, the responsibilities of certain roles were subsumed into the remit of other offices; upon the Glastonbury manors there remained a consistent cadre of supervisory officials. This attests to the strength of the broad structure of the manorial administration in maintaining continuity and stability. Instances of broad policies being implemented on each manor are not common but highlight that there was an interplay between the central and local, evidenced through officialdom. Manorial administration was not a rigid system. Whilst under the umbrella of one lordship, and although there was evidence of some centralised decision-making, local managers and officers were given the freedom to adjust and adapt to the changing socio-economic needs of the manor, so that their output could be maximised. Many of the manors were distant from the central authority and so received less direct oversight and regular scrutiny, with peasant officials being entrusted with a great deal of responsibility.

The size of the manor and the degree of urban character determined both the significance of that particular location to the central authority and also, because of this, determined the level of trust placed upon officials. The manors of Glastonbury formed an economic and administrative network, where the more urbanised manors had the highest number, and most versatile types, of connections. In comparison to the other more rural manors, the overseeing of the intra-estate exchange comprised a larger component of the duties of the reeves of the larger manors, which also gave them greater impact upon other manors. The officials who oversaw these processes allowed for variations within the network, small-scale flexibility, but also ensured that custom, tradition and stability were maintained, upholding well-established links. Again, the size, structure, and local topography were all important factors in understanding not only the movement of grain and livestock but also the high level

of responsibility and skill required by manorial officials to execute these tasks. The success of a peasant official in fulfilling their role could have an impact upon the whole estate of Glastonbury.

Manorial officials had significant influence upon the health of the manorial economy, but by entrusting offices to villeins, lords could ensure they were able to recover any damages caused by their conflicting interests. The authority of officials over the tenantry was maintained through layered and reciprocal culpability and an intricate administrative hierarchy of officialdom. Although officials were responsible for the supervision of the other tenantry, there was also a communal duty to ensure that the seigneurial interests were being protected. Furthermore, the requirement of holding certain sizes and types of land ensured that reparation for wrongdoing could be exacted. Holding size can be considered to have been a proxy measure for investment in the manorial system, the risk of losing larger holdings would have encouraged greater adherence to the requirements of office. As well as means for recovery, the abbey would have also ensured that the highest-ranking, salaried officers maintained a semi-regular presence. These mechanisms allowed for manorial estates to utilise local knowledge and, when combined with the legal enforcement of custom and collective culpability, surety over the executors of the seigneurial will.

The examination of which officials were present and what their responsibilities on the manor were, provides a lens through which the responses of lords and officials to the events and changes of the fourteenth century can be better understood. Officialdom provided flexibility which, in part, contributed to the longevity of the manorial system, allowing adaptation to short-term local requirements as well as more long-term shifts in wider socio-economic conditions. Each individual manor, whilst remaining under the central authority, could develop a system of administration that was tailored for the local environment. The wider socio-economic developments of

the period were evident by the changes in officialdom, the increased prevalence, or disappearance, of certain offices and the rise in arrears that officials owed. Yet, there was also a strong degree of continuity, as shown by roles or particular responsibilities remaining within the remit of an office throughout the period. Officialdom should be understood as both a tool for ensuring stability and continuity and also a vital introduction of flexibility and local adaptation into the manorial system.

Chapter 2

The Remuneration of Manorial Officials

2.1. Introduction

"Likewise, the servants of the lord, forester, reeve, messor, ploughman, shepherd, smith, and pig-keeper ought to have from the *curia* of the lord per year each thrice one loaf of wheat, and it is not known the weight of bread but such will it be that a good man is able to be sustained for one day."[1]

Manorial officials were remunerated for their service to the lord through a number of different forms of compensatory dispensations, which included: monetary stipends, rent and labour service remissions, grain liveries, livestock, rights to certain land, pasturing personal livestock alongside those of the lord, and clothing. The exact forms and amounts were highly variable, being dependent upon office, the duration of service, manor, and year. An examination into the rewards and remunerations given to officials, *famuli*, and other workers of the Glastonbury manors provides valuable insight into officialdom, manorial structure, administrative practices, wider socio-economic change, and the influence of geographic character. This analysis

1. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, p. 141.

can also be utilised to provide insight into the hierarchy of offices and the contemporary perceptions as to the relative value of the various responsibilities and duties carried out by each official.

Whilst serving in office could be appealing to the peasantry, and confer significant benefits to the holder, it also encompassed numerous responsibilities and a large degree of culpability. The extent to which the peasantry sought to hold office, or avoid serving, has been the subject of much debate, as the incentives or drawbacks would have been perceived differently by each individual, for further discussion see Chapter 3.[2] For this reason, how officials were remunerated was integral to incentivisation as, whilst lords had the seigneurial right to fill manorial offices with their unfree tenantry, to do so without providing a sufficient reward would have risked tenants who held these positions unwillingly. Reluctant office-holders who performed poorly could cause an ill-functioning administrative system to result, which would have serious impacts upon the health of the manorial economy.[3] Bennett suggests that one of the reasons officials were rewarded was because whilst serving in office they were unable to tend to their own land like they would normally, and so should not have paid as much.[4] It was necessary for lords to balance their payments to officials, so as to ensure that the remunerations were a sufficient incentive that would entice willing and efficient tenants into holding office.

This chapter will be divided into two parts, the first of which will explore the different forms of remuneration and who the recipients were. This analysis will examine the differences between the theoretical and actual remuneration that each office was

2. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, pp. 1-11. Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348*, pp. 25, 167-77, 261, 267. M. Müller, "Social control and the hue and cry in two fourteenth-century villages," *Journal of Medieval History* 31, no. 1 (March 2005): pp. 29-53. Postles, "Personal Pledging: Medieval "Reciprocity" or "Symbolic Capital"?," pp. 419-35, 420, 422.

3. C. Dyer, "Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective," *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 8 (1994): pp. 154-76, 160.

4. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 176.

given, as well as exploring how the values and forms of payment changed, and to what extent how an official was compensated is indicative of an administrative hierarchy. The second section will analyse the role of custom and the impact of landholding upon the determination of remuneration. This chapter will build upon the comparative analysis of the central-local structure of manorial administration, that was introduced in Chapter 1, by examining broader changes, or lack thereof, and the extent to which these reflected local or widespread socio-economic variation.

Four key categories of compensatory dispensation will be analysed: monetary (rent quittances and stipends), remission of labour services, grain liveries, and livestock and animal products. As well as these primary categories, there were other ways in which officials were remunerated, such as the granting of land and rights to pasture oxen with those of the lord, however these only appeared infrequently in the Glastonbury records and so do not form a significant part of the analysis. These different categories cannot be examined entirely in isolation from each other as, similar to other manors, there was an apparent inverse correlation between some of the forms of remuneration.[5] At Glastonbury, there was an observable interdependent relationship between rent quittances and the number of labour services, and the value of stipends and quantity of grain given.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis has been undertaken into the Glastonbury custumals and accounts. All monetary amounts are the nominal values and have been converted into pence (*d*). The key sources used in this chapter have been the Glastonbury custumals and accounts. The accounts for the manors of Ashcott and Glastonbury exist for the period 1257–1395, whereas there are fewer surviving records for the other three manors, which only intermittently cover the period 1257–1335.

5. Farmer, “The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages,” pp. 207-36. Claridge and Langdon, “The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300,” pp. 187-220.

As part of the elucidation of hierarchy within the manorial administrative structure, the remuneration of all recipients has been examined. The groups most frequently in receipt were manorial officials, the *famuli* and workers of a virgate, half-virgate, and ferdel. Of the manorial officials, the reeve, messor, parker, woodward, and ripreeve received remuneration with the highest frequency and in the greatest quantities, which suggests that they had the most significant roles in ensuring the function of the manorial economy. Although usually receiving less than the most prominent officials, the *famuli* that were given remuneration usually included the ploughmen, drovers, carters, dairyworkers, servants (*garcio*), and various animal custodians. These animal custodians could be referred to highly specifically, such as the keeper of ewes rather than by the broader title of shepherd, and, whilst these variations have been noted, they have been categorised together in order to more clearly convey the interpretation of the data. Whilst occasionally the bailiff and church obedientaries were recorded as receiving stipends, grain, or animals, these have not been examined as they fall outside the scope of this thesis.

2.2. Part One: Remuneration, Recipients, and Rank

2.2.1. Forms of remuneration

The remission or quittance of rents and the payment of stipends were two of the most common ways in which manorial officials and workers were compensated upon all five of the examined manors. Rent quittances included a number of different types of rent, predominantly gabulum, larder, *vinea* (vineyard tax), Peterspence or hearth-penny, and, less frequently, for contributions to the hallmoot and other work-related payments.[6] Quittances from other obligations could also be given, such as that of

6. Peterspence was a tax in which anyone with goods valuing 30*d*, was to contribute a penny, or if unmarried half a penny, to St Peter. The money collected was then sent to Rome. It has been

churchscot, which was the giving of wheat, eggs, and hens at Easter.[7] These quittances were an inverse payment, the recipient was not paid a physical wage but they were remitted from their monetary obligations to the lord. In contrast to quittances, the stipendiary payments were a wage and covered a broad period of time, ranging from two weeks to a year, with the latter having been the most common. In order to enable the examination of stipends, this work has predominantly analysed how much an individual office or group were paid comparatively on a *per annum* basis.[8]

The remission of labour services was one of the most valuable dispensations given to manorial officials and workers. The types of tasks that tenants were required to perform were numerous and wide ranging: ploughing, hoeing, weeding, sowing grain, reaping, lifting hay, threshing, stacking, carrying goods, and more. The exact type and number of services that each tenant owed depended upon custom and the land that they held, those with more land owed a greater variety of services. Although the lord would not necessarily utilise all the labour services, these servile tasks could be very onerous with some tenants at Glastonbury having owed over 180 works each year. However, although labour service remissions were detailed in the custumals for all the manors except Nettleton, they are only recorded in the accounts of Glastonbury and Ashcott.[9] The inclusion of labour service quittances in the manorial accounts only began in the 1330s but the accounts of Ashbury, Damerham, and Nettleton for this period do not survive. The remittance of labour services

frequently noted by scholars that Peterspence and hearthpenny are interchangeable terms for the same payment, however, on some of the Glastonbury manors the two payments appear side-by-side. The two terms appear to be used almost interchangeably, Neilson suggests that hearthpenny may have been a general name applicable to any tax levied on householders which was frequently identified with Peter's Penny. In this study the two terms have been kept distinct rather than subsumed under one category as, in the 1314–5 account from Glastonbury, "peterspence" had been struck-through and "hearthpenny" inserted above. The purpose of this alteration is unclear, however it does support Neilson's reasoning that there was some form of distinction between the two terms rather than variance due to clerical discretion. See: N. Neilson, "Customary Rents," in *Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*, ed. P. Vinogradoff, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), p. 32.

7. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 135. Neilson, "Customary Rents," p. 22.

8. Farmer, "The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages," p. 210.

9. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, pp. 57-8, 108.

was enormously beneficial to the tenant; beyond the physical requirements of performing the tasks, it gave the recipient more time in which they could work their own land or undertake other activities without the need to pay the lord for their work to be commuted, as well as providing more time to focus upon the duties of office.[10]

The giving of animals, animal products, and the quittance of animal-related obligations was another area in which manorial officials and workers benefited. There was a wide variety of livestock reared on the Glastonbury manors and so the nature of the animal-related remuneration at each individual manor could vary. The accounts detail the age and sex of the livestock as well as how many were kept, sold, sent elsewhere, died, and consumed. They also recorded the number of eggs that were to be collected at Easter and how many hens were given at Martinmas for churchscot.[11] The animals and animal products given to officials were predominantly lambs, piglets, skins, cheese, butter, and churchscot quittances. To be given animals whilst serving in office would have provided the recipient with not only the cash value of the animal itself but also the potential for breeding, produce, consumption, and hides. Animal-related forms of remuneration were granted to a smaller number of officials in comparison to the other types of recompense, and was usually limited to higher-ranking officers rather than members of the *famuli*. Upon all of the manors, except for Damerham, officials and workers were frequently given quittances for churchscot; however, Damerham was the only manor which remunerated officials regularly through the giving of livestock and animal products. As discussed in Chapter 1, Damerham was a hub for the intra-estate exchange of livestock and was a semi-urban manor with an active market economy that specialised in sheep. Glastonbury, as the most urban of the manors in this study, did not give animals as a form of payment to officials which, therefore, suggests that this form of remu-

10. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 177. Farmer, "The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages," p. 230.

11. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 135. Neilson, "Customary Rents," p. 22.

neration was not characteristic of urban settlements but was more closely linked to Damerham's role in the intra-estate exchange. The increased frequency and value of animal related perks can be understood to reflect the diversity of Damerham's economy. This diversity of remuneration, alongside the increased number of animals and animal products, may have made it easier for Damerham's officials to be rewarded in a manner in-keeping with the dictates of custom and would have also spread the cost of officials across the manorial economy, reducing the impact of the larger number of officials.

Grain production was an integral part of the manorial economy, and the giving of grain liveries to manorial officials and workers was a key way in which they were compensated. It has been estimated that, in comparison, cash payments were worth only about a quarter of the value of the grain that workers were given.[12] This was, in part, because the value of the grain extended beyond its cash price; it provided the recipient and their family with sustenance and helped to protect them from high food prices.[13] Manorial accounts contain extensive and detailed information on the different types of grain sown, sold, eaten, transported to other manors, and given to manorial officials and workers. On the Glastonbury manors there was a wide variety of grains and legumes cultivated: wheat, curallia (a lower quality wheat), barley, oats, drage, peas, beans, rye, tolcorn, brotcorn, beremcorn (a variety of barley sprouted to produce yeast), and mixtillion (a mixture of rye of barley).[14] As well as grain, officials and workers were granted the right to eat at the lord's table (*ad mensam domini*) for several weeks during key agricultural periods, like the harvest. Within the Glastonbury record this was understood as an alternative to a portion of the grain payment, as when at the lord's table the quantity of grain given was reduced. At all five of the manors studied grain was given to various officials and workers, but on only three

12. Claridge and Langdon, "The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300," p. 190.
13. Hatcher, "England in the Aftermath of the Black Death," pp. 3-35, 30.
14. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 170.

were they allowed to eat at the lord's table.

The amount of grain given was linked to the responsibilities, tasks performed, and the length of time worked, which was usually accounted in weeks.[15] The details of the grain payments listed the total amount of time worked, followed by how many weeks were to be worked before they were to receive one quarter (8 bushels), with 12 weeks per quarter being the most common. The specific types of grain given were highly variable, depending upon the manor, the role, and the year.[16] For example, Keil found notable variation among the Glastonbury manors that was dependent upon the county and its soil type; he estimated that Somerset cultivated less than 5 percent of barley, whereas in Wiltshire over a third of grain production was barley or drage.[17] Farmer and Stone similarly found connections between the types of grain cultivated and which animals were reared.[18] Few of the marshland Glastonbury manors in Somerset had flocks of sheep, except for Glastonbury, Butleigh, and Podimore, and the manors that produced larger quantities of wheat generally had a smaller number of livestock.[19] As the value of grain depended heavily upon its type, it is necessary, when considering remuneration, to examine both this and the quantity of grain that was given to manorial officials and workers. This is exemplified by the work of Rush, who noted that when barley was given it was usually in a larger amount than when wheat or rye.[20] Adverse weather, seed quality, soil fertility, land type, crop rotation, and other agricultural techniques were all factors that could have

15. Searle, *Lordship and community: Battle abbey and its banlieu, 1066–1538*, p. 305.
16. Claridge and Langdon, "The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300," p. 170.
17. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 78.
18. Farmer, "Grain Yields on the Winchester Manors in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 555-566. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 626.
19. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 79; Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 619.
20. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, pp. 108-114. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 79, 90, 95. M. Mate, "Agrarian Economy after the Black Death: The Manors of Canterbury Cathedral Priory," *The Economic History Review* 37, no. 3 (August, 1984): pp. 341-51. Rush, "The Impact of Commercialization in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Some Evidence from the Manors of Glastonbury Abbey," pp. 135.

a significant impact on grain production.[21] Market trends and fluctuations impacted the demand and value of crops and could influence the direction in which the manorial economy ran that year. This chapter will examine the quantities and types of grain that were given on each of the manors at Glastonbury and whether these remained fairly consistent or fluctuated in response to wider socio-economic changes. It will explore which officials were given grain and the extent to which grain can be considered a key component of the compensatory dispensation given to manorial officials.

2.2.2. The contrast between the custumals and accounts

The projected remuneration that was detailed in the custumals could be markedly discrepant with those recorded in the accounts. This is particularly noticeable with certain types of compensation, such as the giving of animals, the rights to certain parcels of land, or pasturing animals with those of the lord. Whilst there were forests and woodland on the Glastonbury manors, references to these rights was uncommon. In contrast, Birrell found, on manors in Staffordshire, frequent references to officials being granted common rights for forests, although she notes that the value of payment was fairly low.[22] In the Damerham custumal, a large variety of officials and workers were to be given animals and animal products as part of their remuneration. Whilst many of these recipients, such as the reeve, smith, messor and berebrit, were present in the accounts, there were a small number who were not, in particular the forester, gardener, and oxherd. The forester was supposed to have one lamb, a skin, and cheese; the gardener was to have fruit from the orchard and two gallons of cider daily when making cider; and the ox-herd one piglet. None of these figures received any forms of payment in the accounts. Conversely, there were officials in the

21. Farmer, “Grain Yields on the Winchester Manors in the Later Middle Ages,” p. 562.
22. J. Birrell, “Common Rights in the Medieval Forest: Disputes and Conflicts in the Thirteenth Century,” *Past & Present*, no. 117 (November 1987): pp. 22-49, 38.

Damerham accounts who were given animals that were not specified in the custumal.

The contrast between these manorial records is also evident on other manors. At Ashbury the reeve was to have two oxen quit from herbage as well as given one acre of meadow and one medham. However, there is only one reference in the Ashbury accounts in which it is stated that nothing had been received for one acre and one medham at Sossewyk because the reeve had it from custom.[23] Similarly, there was no record of the ripreeve in the custumals but, within the accounts, it is shown that they received monetary compensation upon all five manors from as early as 1274. This was likely, in part, because a portion of the stipendiary payment given to the ripreeve was highly variable and depended upon the number of weeks worked each year. Their absence in the manorial custumals may also be because ripreeves were associated with the seasonal requirements of extensive arable agriculture and so the custumals, which were produced in the mid-thirteenth century, may have been too early to reflect the full scale agricultural developments that occurred in the early fourteenth century.[24] The differences between the custumal and the accounts could be indicative of real changes or discrepancies but it is possible that those who compiled the accounts did not consider it necessary to consistently record a form of remuneration that remained unchanging each year, such as the granting of land to the reeve. It is most likely a combination of these factors, rather than a single reason, that accounts for the differences between these documents, which highlights the importance of comparative analysis when examining the remunerations given to officials and the potential information that has been omitted from any single source.

23. *GADL*, MS 11244, Reel 14, Ashbury, 1274/5.
24. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*.

2.2.3. Recipients

Upon all of the Glastonbury manors, there was variability in which officials received remuneration and also the type of recompense they were given. Keil, in his analysis of the Glastonbury estate, noted that the monetary quittances were given predominantly to the reeve, messor, granarer, and, rarely, the *famuli*.[25] Table 2.1 shows the number of different types of offices or roles per compensatory dispensation category and indicates a significantly greater diversity in the recipients of monetary remuneration than was reflected in Keil's study. The urban and semi-urban manors of Glastonbury and Damerham, the two largest and most diverse economies, had the highest number of recipient categories across almost all types of recompense. For example, Glastonbury had three times as many categories of recipient in comparison to Nettleton. Damerham, in particular, had the most diverse range of officials and workers receiving different forms of compensation, including those that were not extant on the other manors, such as the *equitators* and *pedones*, which was likely due to both its diverse agrarian and pastoral economy and the role of the manor in the receiving and sale of produce sent from numerous Glastonbury manors.

Manor	Quittance	Stipend	Labour Services	Grain	Animal: Quittance	Animal: Livestock
Ashbury	14	18	N/A*	19	0	4
Ashcott	13	12	5	15	3	0
Damerham	18	27	N/A*	27	0	13
Glastonbury	24	23	6	17	10	0
Nettleton	11	13	N/A*	13	1	0

Table 2.1: Number of different types of recipient in each category of remuneration within the manorial accounts (* No information recorded in the surviving source material).

25. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 105.

When considering the types of official or worker that were in receipt of monetary remuneration, it is found that a wide variety of officials were given rent quittances, with a much smaller number being compensated by stipendiary wage. In contrast, the *famuli* predominantly received stipends, with a smaller group being granted rent quittances. Whilst the exact makeup of the *famuli* could fluctuate each year, the key recipients of either quittances or stipends on all manors were the ploughmen, carters, drovers, and animal custodians. In comparison, grain liveries were largely given to the *famuli* with officials being only infrequent recipients. Although the custumals did record that officials were to receive grain, this was usually a *sedelip* or amounts of up to an acre of wheat and was rarely recorded in the accounts.[26] Instead, it was more common for officials to be given quittances from the giving of wheat at churchscot. This does not necessarily imply that officials did not receive grain but more that it was rarely evident in the accounts. The grain liveries recorded in the accounts were predominantly given to the messor, drovers, ploughmen, animal custodians, carters, enclosers, woodward, and parker. Money and grain, staple requirements, were the two largest forms of remuneration upon all five manors because the granting of these would have addressed the core needs of any peasant, and thus were likely more of an enticement into holding office and fulfilling the associated obligations and duties to a high standard.

In contrast, animal-related payments or the remission of labour services were given to a much smaller and more select group. Analysis into the differences of labour service remissions at each manor is more complex than examining the dispensations related to animals, grain, or monetary recompense. The lack of surviving source material only allows for the examination of labour quittances upon the manors of Ashcott and Glastonbury, as the inclusion of labour services in the accounts began in the mid-1330s, and the records of the other three manors from this

26. Sedelip defined as “an open box of corn seed carried at the sower’s breast, still so-called.” Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, p. 255.

period do not survive. The key recipient groups were predominantly the ploughmen, reeve, berebrit, beadle, and, occasionally, the messor and collector of rents. There was a notable decrease in the number of recipients of labour service quittances that occurred prior to the Black Death and this trend continued into the second half of the fourteenth century. By the third quarter of the fourteenth century, it was only the reeve and ploughmen on both Ashcott and Glastonbury who frequently received large numbers of labour service quittances. This change can potentially be attributed to the increase at Glastonbury in the number of officers who did not owe labour services to the lord and so could not be quit, which indicates a change in the status of the peasants who filled these roles. This finding is consistent with the work of Bailey, who has recently argued that, with the increase in vacant holdings after the Black Death, there were more frequent wage negotiations and a shift towards cash-based, leasehold tenancies.[27] Bailey adds that there were a number of greater landlords who ordered their officers to try and find tenants willing to accept agreements upon the traditional terms and some even offered more favourable conditions to entice new leaseholders.[28] This reasoning can help to explain the decrease in the number of manorial officials that owed customary services and obligations; this trend was a reflection of the wider developments of this period.

A close association between the responsibilities of an official and the form of remuneration can be seen, particularly with those with more limited spaces of authority. The giving of livestock offspring to animal custodians, such as the shepherds or swineherds, has been found on manors across England.[29] Keil noted that the shepherds on the Glastonbury manors usually had the right to a lamb from the breeding flock each year, although he does not expand further upon this.[30] The custumals are

27. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, pp. 90-101.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
29. Keil, “The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages,” p. 170. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 618.
30. Keil, “The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages,” p. 170.

particularly clear in their demonstration of the close association between domain of authority and form of remuneration; for example, at Ashbury, it states that only the shepherd and the reeve were to be given a lamb and sheepskins.[31] It can also be observed that the woodward was the only person allowed to collect dead wood from the lord's woodland and that the swineherd was to have one piglet. It is recorded in the accounts of Ashbury that only the shepherd was given a sheepskin, although this stopped after 1306. Although the custumal stipulated that the swineherd of Ashbury was to have a piglet, this was not recorded in any of the accounts. Whether these discrepancies are reflective of real societal changes, and divergence from the period when the custumal was produced, or a clerical omission is ambiguous; it is also possible that, as it was customary, the piglet was given but this practice was not considered as necessary to be noted specifically in the account.

Whilst animal custodians were due by custom the offspring of the particular animal for which they were responsible, it is notable that, apart from this domain specific reward, animals were not given in a similar manner to grain liveries or rent and labour service quittances. Apart from those that acted within this domain of responsibility, the giving of animals as a form of remuneration was reserved for those that were particularly integral to maintaining the function of the manorial economy, with the most frequent recipients of livestock being the reeve, messor, and berebrit. The roles with greater supervisory capacity or with a higher level of responsibility, and therefore an increased risk of culpability and a disincentive to hold office, were remunerated in ways that were not as domain-specific. This high value remuneration was likely a deliberate incentive to ensure that there was sufficient perceived dispensation to encourage capable tenants to take on these positions of authority.

The giving of animals happened almost exclusively at Damerham, although it is

31. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, pp. 51-7.

very occasionally recorded at Ashbury, the other three manors only gave a reduction in the hens that were owed at churchscot. The paucity of examples of the giving of animals suggests that this was generally a high value form of remuneration. The different ways in which officials were remunerated at each manor also highlights the adaptability of the Glastonbury manorial economies to the individual requirements of the manor. The estate's system did not function as an intransigent monolith but, to some extent, was adapted to conform to the restrictions imposed by the various local socio-economic environments. The Glastonbury manors, whilst under the control of the central authority, operated individually, responding to their different environments and economies, and remunerating their officials and workers accordingly. Keil noted that the wages at the Wiltshire manors were higher than those at the Somerset manors and suggested that this could perhaps be due to the abbey being less able to exert its influence, in social and economic terms, outside of Somerset.[32] This chapter will expand upon these ideas and investigate the extent to which location, beyond that of whether a manor was rural or urban, had upon the remuneration given to manorial officials.

The remuneration given to each office

An official's remuneration was contingent upon the expectation that the duties of the office would be proficiently fulfilled. Anything less than a complete execution of their responsibilities was considered a loss by the seigneurial authority.[33] Officials were not remunerated more for exceeding these expectations but they were readily penalised and amerced for not meeting them. The risk of failure to fulfil the obligations of office would have affected the perceptions of the value of office-holding to the peasantry. Part of this discussion must also touch upon what was considered the

32. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 170-1.
33. See section 3.7, page 194 for a more in-depth discussion of this topic.

most valuable forms of remuneration, the giving of rent quittances and labour service remissions or grain liveries and stipends. The perceived values of these forms of remuneration would have also been, to some extent, a judgement based upon personal preference and the material circumstances of the individual. The value of labour service remittances would be reduced for those with smaller holdings as they would have received quittance of a smaller number of services in comparison to those with larger holdings. It should also be noted that the potential opportunities and benefits of office may be hidden from the record, there would have been a number of informal or illicit opportunities for personal gain.[34] For these reasons, as well as examining the diversity of categories of recipients, in order to understand the relative importance of different offices to both the manor and the peasantry, it is necessary to analyse the remuneration afforded to the various officials and workers.

2.2.4. The reeve

The reeve had the most diverse range of responsibilities on the Glastonbury manors and were remunerated through a wide range of means. Stone notes that at Wisbech Barton, the reeve received a small stipend, exemption from performing customary services and serving as jurors.[35] He adds that it was likely that reeves were also quit from their rents, although that this was not specified in the record. On the Glastonbury manors, grain liveries formed only a small part of the overall payments that were given to reeve, except at Ashcott in the 1340s where the reeves were granted an acre of wheat. Reeves were occasionally given small quantities of wheat but they were more commonly granted quittances of churchscot (2 bushels of wheat). The receipt of animals was similarly only a small part of the reeve's remuneration, predominantly in the form of quittance of churchscot. Damerham was the exception

34. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 33.
35. *Ibid.*

to this, where the accounts, consistent with the custumal, show that the reeve was regularly given a piglet, lamb, skin, cheese, and butter. The large amount of animal-related compensation not only reflected the diversity of Damerham's economy, as discussed above, but also demonstrates the importance of the reeve to the function of the manor.

On all five of the Glastonbury manors, the reeve received a rent quittance as their main form of monetary dispensation and, except for Glastonbury, each manor also paid the reeve a stipend for work undertaken in autumn. This is concordant with the work of Briggs, who found that reeves usually received rent remissions rather than salaries, although it has also been observed that upon some manors it was more common for the reeve to be given a stipend.[36] It is important to note that Keil found at Longbridge Deverill, a Glastonbury manor, that the reeve was given rent quittances pertaining to a virgate until 1435, after which they were paid a stipend.[37] This change exemplifies the regional diversity and variability of monetary recompense as well as demonstrating the potential for change upon an individual manor.

The exact amount of rent quittance given to the reeves on each of the Glastonbury manors differed (shown in figure 2.1). At Ashbury, the custumal recorded that the reeve was to be quit of rent for a virgate of land, valued at 4*s*, as well as larder rents. The accounts show that, although larder rents were not consistently remitted, the remission of 4*s* for rent continued throughout the duration of the accounts. Damerham and Nettleton also both show a strong level of continuity; the reeves of Damerham received 62*d* rent quittance and 10.5*d* larder rent remissions throughout the period, and the reeve of Nettleton was given a rent quittance of 41*d* every year between 1274 and 1332 with no fluctuations. Glastonbury and Ashcott show

36. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 158. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," p. 180. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 33.

37. Keil, "The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages," p. 56.

more variation because of the longevity of the accounts and, as shall be discussed in more detail, the impact of the types of land held and the inclusion of labour service quittances in the accounts, although the amounts remained in a similar range to the other three manors (shown in figures 2.2 and 2.3). Damerham and Glastonbury both gave the largest rent quittances to the reeve, suggesting that the duties of these officials would have been more onerous and thus merited slightly higher quittances in comparison to the smaller manors.

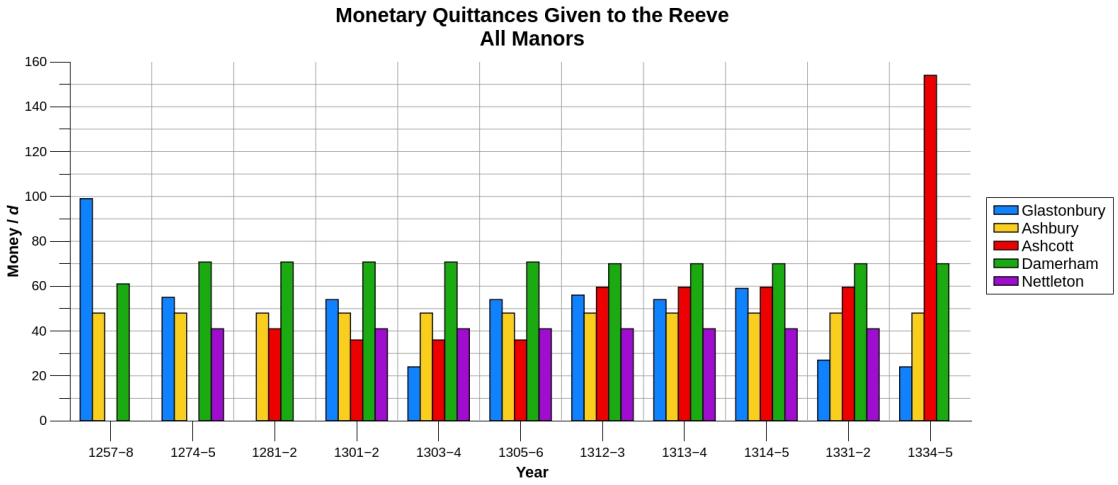


Figure 2.1: Chart showing monetary quittances given to reeves upon all five of the Glastonbury manors.

There was significant variation in the number of works that reeves received in labour service quittances at Glastonbury and Ashcott. Figures 2.4 and 2.5 show the number of works the reeves were quit each year, and figures 2.6 and 2.7 show the number of acres that they were to have been quit. As with the animal-related dispensations discussed above, labour service remittances were given to a very select group of officials and workers because it was a relatively high value reward. Labour service remittances saved an official money, as payments for exemption could be expensive, and afforded the recipient more time to pursue other duties and activities. The reeves of Glastonbury were usually given quittances for larger amounts of land, and with more frequency, than the reeves of Ashcott. This could be under-

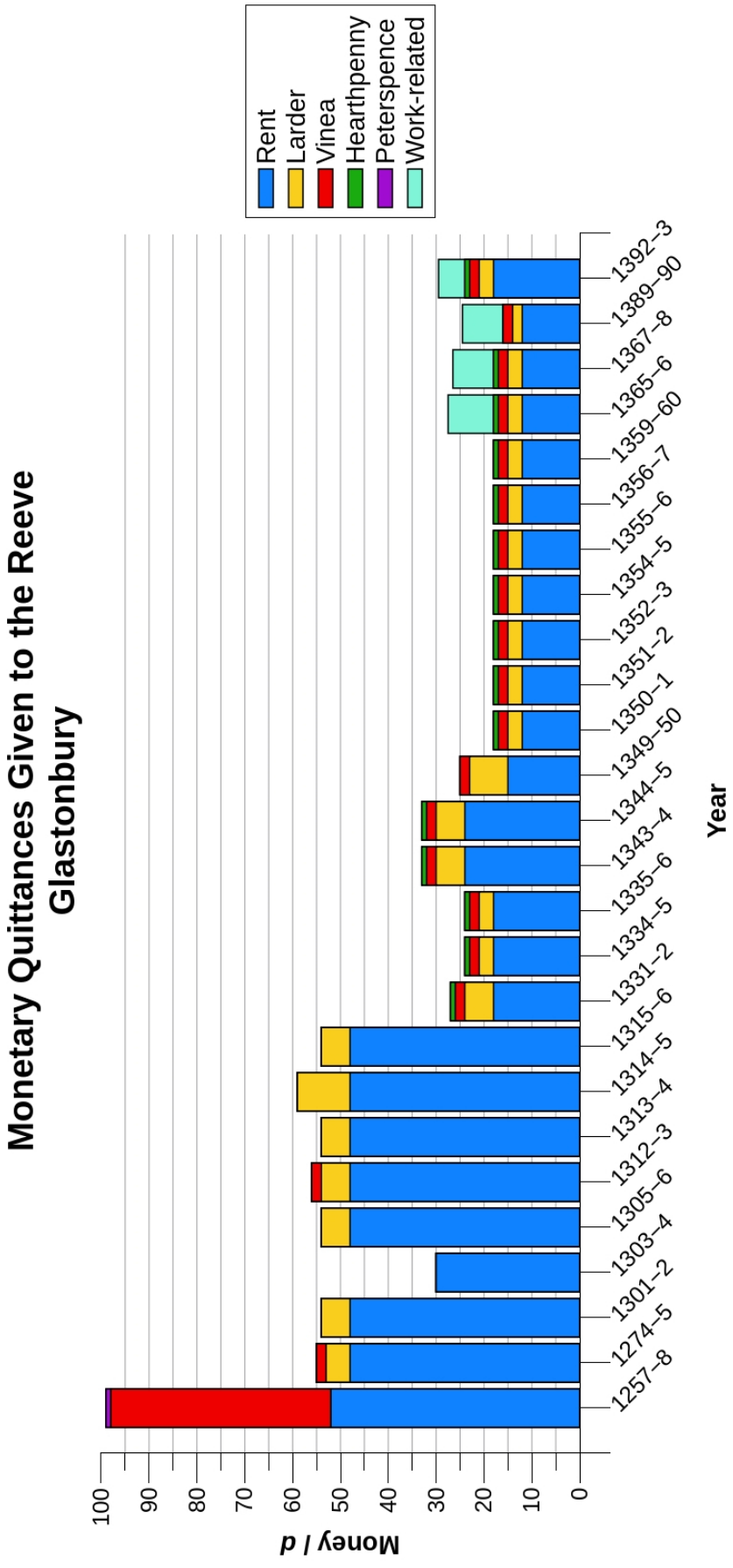


Figure 2.2: Chart showing the monetary quittances given to the reeve of Glastonbury.

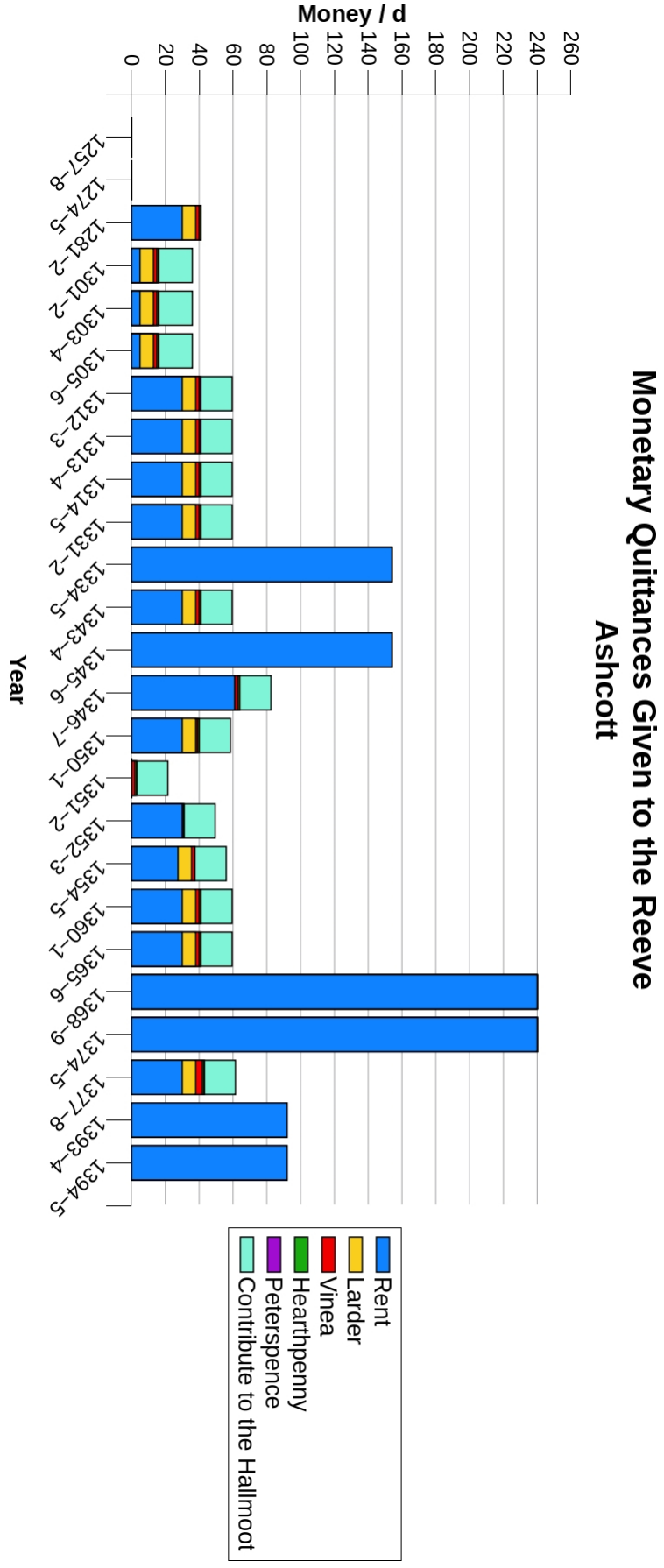


Figure 2.3: Chart showing the monetary quittances given to the reeve of Ashcott.

stood to be indicative of the reeve of Glastonbury having a more labour intensive position than the reeve of Ashcott, which is probable given the relative size and population of the manors. However, it is also plausible that the servile obligations of the Glastonbury tenants, in comparison to those at Ashcott, were more numerous. Some of the discrepancy and variation between the reeves of Ashcott and Glastonbury in how they were remunerated could therefore be explained by the difference between the holdings of the tenants who occupied those offices and the customs of the manor. Remuneration, from the perspective of the seigneurial authority, needed to be sufficient to allow tenants to have the necessary time and reward for fulfilling the obligations of office whilst also minimising the economic burden of office-holding.

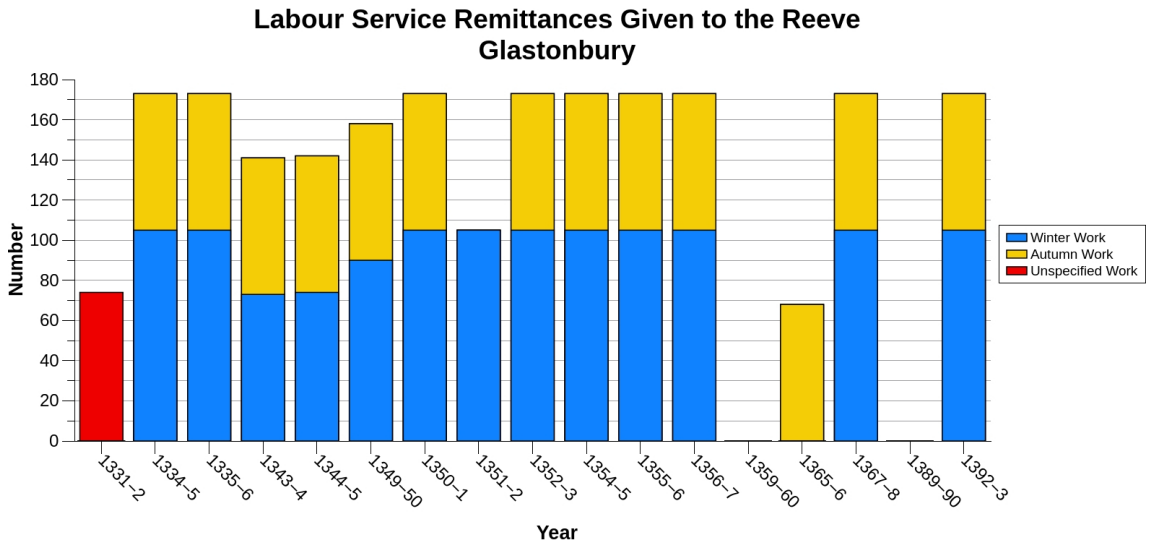


Figure 2.4: Chart showing the labour service remittances granted to the reeve of Glastonbury.

The value of remuneration granted to reeves can be seen in the examples of two reeves of Glastonbury, Philip atte Putte and John Bythe Weye. They also provide a particularly interesting case study, as they sequentially filled identical roles on the same manor. Philip atte Putte was the reeve of Glastonbury in at least six years between 1334 and 1349, dying in 1349 whilst in office. In the 1330s it was recorded that he held two ferdels of land but the account stated specifically that he was only

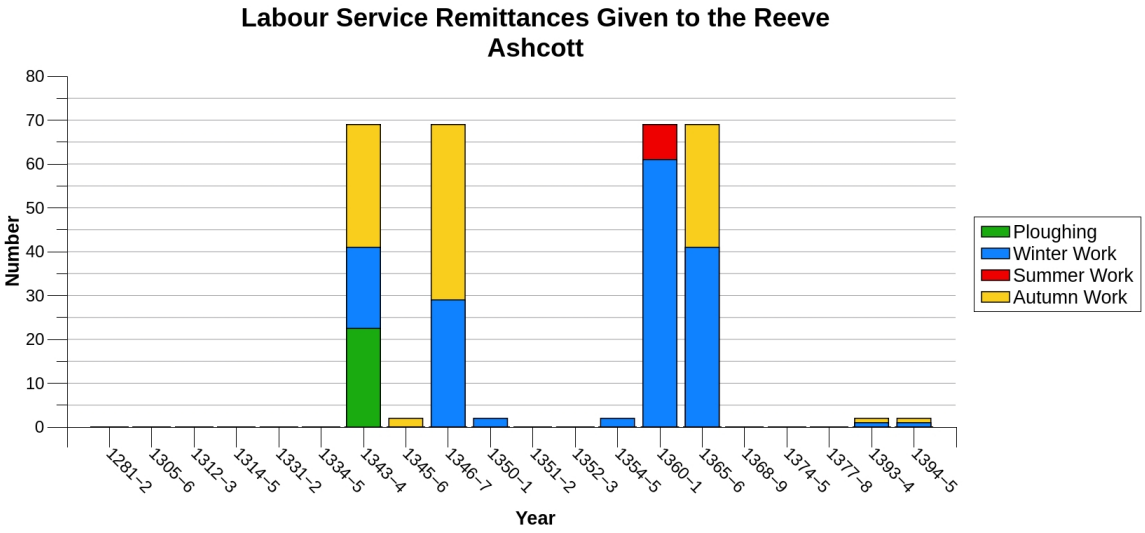


Figure 2.5: Chart showing the labour service remittances granted to the reeve of Ashcott.

given remuneration pertaining to one. However, by the 1340s his rent quittances had increased up to half a virgate. In the 1330s, when Philip atte Putte was remunerated for the ferdel of land that he held, he was given total rent quittances amounting to 24*d* (18*d* rent, 3*d* larder, 2*d* vinea, and 1*d* for hearthpenny) and a total of 173 labour service quittances (68 for autumn services and 105 for winter works). When he was given remunerations for half a virgate it increased to 33*d* (24*d* rent, 6*d* larder, 2 *d* vinea, 1*d* hearthpenny) and given 16.5 acres quit for ploughing, 68 autumn works, and 73 winter works. He also received an increase in the number of hens that he was quit for churchscot, doubling from 2.5 to 5. Like the other reeves of Glastonbury, he was not given any grain or animals. The final year that he served was slightly different because he received remuneration for the short duration that he held office, which was 6 weeks, and he was then succeeded by John Bythe Weye who was the reeve of Glastonbury for at least 9 years, from 1349 until 1367. Like Philip atte Putte, John Bythe Weye was given compensation pertaining to one ferdel and in similar quantities, excluding 1349 where, as stated, the remuneration was divided. John Bythe Weye was given rent quittances and labour service remissions but the rent quittances were higher than his predecessor, rising from 18*d* to 27.5*d* due to the inclusion of work-related services, such as enclosing the park. The number of

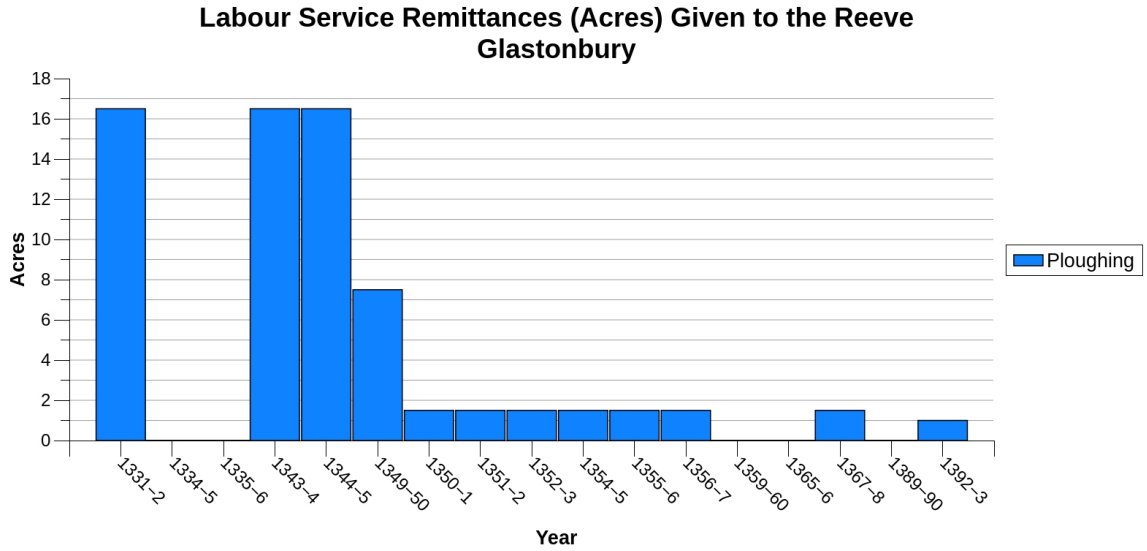


Figure 2.6: Chart showing the labour service remittances granted (in acres) to the reeve of Glastonbury.

labour services that were remitted fluctuated, depending upon whether he was also quit from working certain quantities of land, which was usually between 1.5 and 7.5 acres. In contrast to Philip atte Putte, it was stated that John Bythe Weye would have been quit from churchscot but that he did not to owe this customary obligation to the lord. Despite both men holding the same office, it can be observed that the remunerations and perquisites received were not identical. This suggests that some of the rewards of office-holding were specific to the official themselves, ensuring individuals were remunerated in proportion to their situation.

2.2.5. The messor

The reeve was the highest ranking official in terms of the responsibility and authority over the inhabitants of the manor, although they were not always the most highly remunerated office. The messor received compensation that was similar to that of the reeve: rent remissions, stipends, measure of seed-corn, some meadow, and eating with other manorial officers and workers during the harvest.[38] The high value remu-

38. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 180. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, pp. 64, 243.

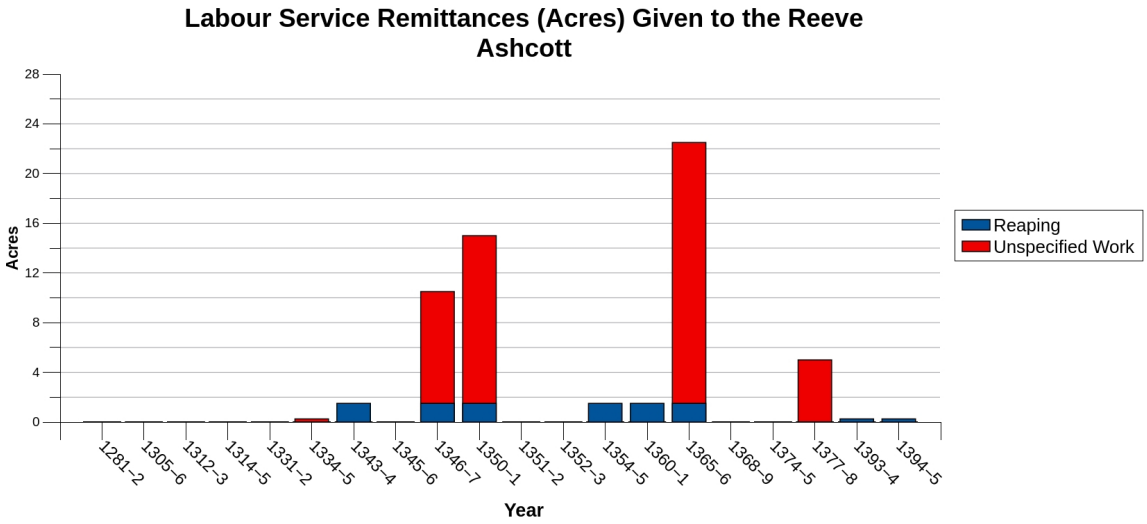


Figure 2.7: Chart showing the labour service remittances granted (in acres) to the reeve of Ashcott.

neration of the offices of reeve and messor, whilst different, attest to their importance on the manor and their place in the upper levels of the administrative hierarchy. The messor usually received similar value payments to the reeve, although they were also compensated more highly in some categories of recompense. For example, at Glastonbury, the messor received higher monetary remuneration than the reeve, by about 20*d*, although, the messor was quit of significantly fewer labour services. However, drawing direct comparisons between the messor and reeve is challenging due to the complex relationships between the different forms of dispensation and the lack of value attributable to service remissions.

The office of messor provides an invaluable opportunity to examine the correlation between types of remuneration, as they appear to have fallen between an elected official, a service *famuli,* and a stipendiary *famuli*, whilst also receiving some of the highest value compensation of all the officers at each respective manor.[39] On the Glastonbury manors, there was very little crossover in the forms of remuneration, officials and workers were usually given either rent and labour service quittances or

39. Claridge and Langdon, "The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300," p. 190. Farmer, "The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 207-236. Postan, "Some Economic Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 221-46.

stipends and grain liveries, excluding the additional payments made during the harvest season. Predominantly, it was the ploughman and the higher ranking officials who received quittances, such as the reeve, beadle, berebrit, and rent-collectors. In contrast, stipends and grain liveries were most commonly given to the messor and the *famuli*. The messor was most frequently given an annual stipend and a grain livery, with rent quittances and labour remissions being only an infrequent component of their remuneration. The messor was given labour service quittances in only four accounts at Glastonbury, three of which were before 1350. Similarly, at Ashcott, the messor only received labour service remissions twice, both in the 1350s, and then on another two occasions they would have been quit but did not owe the obligation. The giving of animals, as with labour service quittances, did not form a significant part of the messor's overall remuneration. Even at Damerham, where the messor was given a similar number of animals to the reeve as part of their remuneration, this animal-based benefit was a customary due that was conditional upon their undertaking additional work, such as assisting with the lambing.

The messor can be seen to have been given both rent quittances and stipends, however, they were almost never granted in the same year. In the custumals for both Ashbury and Damerham it was stated that the messor was to be given a rent quittance, 3*s* and 30*d* respectively, whereas in the accounts of Ashbury, the messor only received rent quittances twice, 36*d* in 1257/8 and 48*d* in 1274/5. At Damerham, whilst the messors were given quittances more frequently, this occurred only until 1306, after which the remuneration was entirely stipendiary. Stipendiary payments were a valuable form of compensation and were often of larger nominal value than the dispensation given as rent quittances. Whilst not in receipt of many labour services, the high stipends paid to the messor suggests that the office was perceived as integral to the efficient management of the manor.

The dichotomous relationship between an officer being given either rent quittances or a stipend is particularly evident in figure 2.8, which shows that, except for when there were two messors in the year 1352/3, the messor never received rent quittances or stipends in the same year. Occasionally the accounts explicitly stated that the messor was not given a rent quittance because they had been compensated through stipends or some other form of payment. For example, in 1303/4, the messor received no stipend because he was instead given clothes.[40] In 1352/3, one messor held office from Michaelmas until Christmas and received a 12*d* stipend but they were replaced, or succeeded by, a messor who was given a rent quittance rather than a stipend. The account stated that the new messor was not to be given grain because they had already been compensated through rent quittances and work remissions.[41] The division of remuneration could become more complex when more than one person held the same office. At Glastonbury, in 1359/60, there were two messors present, one of whom was given a stipend and grain livery, but it was specified that both were to be quit from reaping 4 acres.[42] The reasons for the differing forms of remuneration may have also been connected to the status of that individual or land that the tenant held. For example, at Glastonbury for the years 1365–8, the accounts note that the messor was receiving quittances rather than stipends because they were *custumarius*.[43] This clarification suggests that, when the office of messor was held by a particular type of unfree peasant, the official would receive rent and work quittances and, were the office held by a peasant of a different status, they would then receive stipends and grain.

Upon some of the Glastonbury manors, the amount of stipend and remuneration given to the messor remained fairly consistent throughout the period, although the messors at Ashcott and Ashbury did not follow this trend in stability. At Glastonbury,

40. *GADL*, MS 11274a, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1303/4.
41. *Ibid.*, MS 10637, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1352/3.
42. *Ibid.*, MS 11248, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1359/1360.
43. *Ibid.*, MS 11230, Reel 2, Glastonbury 1365/6 and MS 11231, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1367/8.

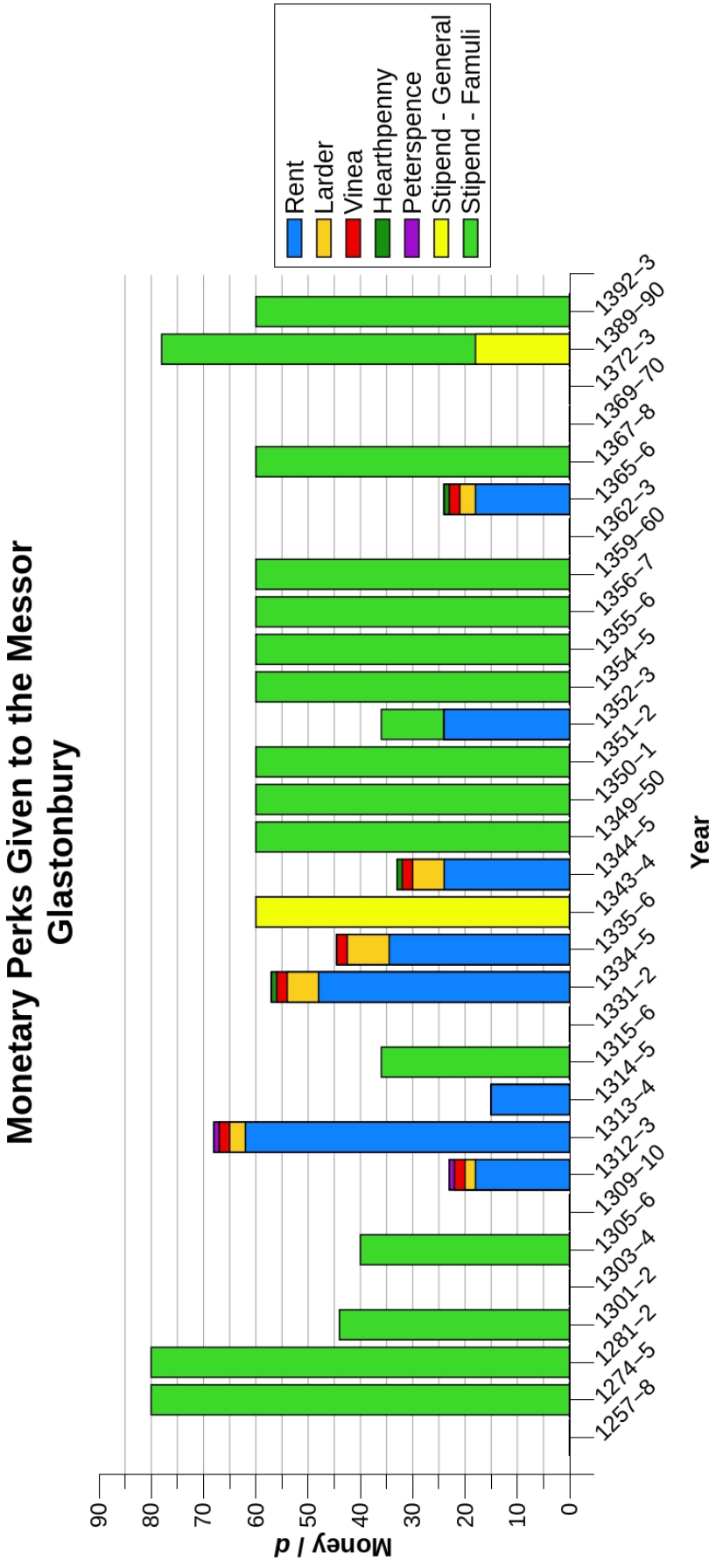


Figure 2.8: Chart showing the monetary compensation given to the messor of Glastonbury.

from 1343 the amount of stipend given remained the same until the end of the period, at 60*d*.[44] Similarly, the messor at Nettleton received a similar value of monetary compensation throughout the period. In comparison to the other manors, the relatively low stipends given to the messors of Nettleton were artificially reduced, as, from 1303 until 1334, they received half of their due stipend and grain liveries from the manor of Gretlyngton. There was more fluctuation at Ashcott, where stipends were given in only four accounts after 1350, and none after 1368.[45] The change in the prominence of the messor suggests a shift in the manor's farming practices, which is consistent with the wider move towards a more pastoral economy, and a resultant decrease in the importance attributed to their duties, which will be discussed in further detail in section two of this chapter.[46] Upon Ashbury, stipends paid to the messor were only recorded for four years, although these were for a significant sum of 65*d*. Two of the years, those with the largest stipendiary values, coincide with a reduction in the quantity of grain liveries that the messor was given, indicating a change in the form of recompense to bring the value of remuneration to a consistent level. It should also be noted that analysis into changes in how the messor was remunerated is further complicated by the close overlap at Ashbury between the roles of messor and woodward, as discussed in Chapter 1.

During the fourteenth century, there was a change at both Ashcott and Glastonbury in the primary form of remuneration given to the messor, from rent quittances to stipendiary pay. At Ashcott, when monetary compensation was granted to the messor, rent quittances were given in 6 of 25 accounts and, at Glastonbury, in 8 of 26 accounts, with the majority of these occurring in the first half of the fourteenth

44. Kilby similarly notes that at Crowland Abbey that rents increased only once in a 70 year period. See: S. Kilby, "Struggle and Enterprise: The Experience of Servile Peasants in Wellingborough, 1258-1322: Midland History Prize Essay 2009," *Midland History* 35:1 (2010): pp. 7-26, 27.

45. Two accounts between 1350 and 1368 contain considerable damage but it is likely that the messor also received a stipend in these two years.

46. Halcrow, "The Decline of Demesne Farming on the Estates of Durham Cathedral Priory," pp. 345-56. Hatcher, "England in the Aftermath of the Black Death," pp. 3-35.

century. From 1350, in the accounts of the Glastonbury manor, there were only two occasions in which the messor received rent quittances, with none after 1366. This move, away from rent quittances and towards stipendiary pay, agrees with the findings of Farmer, who stated that by 1380 almost all the messors at Glastonbury were stipendiary.[47] The change towards stipendiary pay may have been due to officials and workers negotiating better wages and terms after the Black Death. As Claridge, Langdon and Stone have argued, although rent quittances may have been a cheaper means of remunerating officials, the rate and quality of work, particularly before the Black Death, was improved when workers were paid more highly through stipends.[48] Whilst the Glastonbury manors do show a high number of stipendiary *famuli*, they are somewhat unusual, in that a large number of service *famuli* remained throughout the period. This dual form of payment, through both stipends and quittances, may have been an attempt at forming a compromise, a method by which the abbots sought to save money through utilising quittances alongside the increased cost of stipends.

On all five of the manors, the messor was the official that received grain liveries both the most frequently and in the highest quantities. Figure 2.9 shows what grain the messor of Glastonbury received per year, with the gaps corresponding to the years in which the messor was given rent quittances rather than stipends. As can be observed in figure 2.9, the grain livery was predominantly comprised of mixed grains with a small amount of wheat. In 1352/3, when there were two messors holding office, one received rent quittances and the other a stipend, which coincides with a decrease in the amount of grain given in this year, indicating an inversely correlated relationship between rent quittances and grain liveries. The only year in which the messor received both a rent quittance and grain livery was in 1314/5, but they were given a smaller rent quittance and less grain than in other years and it was for

47. Farmer, “The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages,” p. 226. See also: Claridge and Langdon, “The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300,” p. 189.

48. Claridge and Langdon, “The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300,” pp. 189, 218. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, pp. 103-5.

only 42 weeks. The quantity of grain given on all five manors remained fairly similar, between 25 and 35 bushels, with Glastonbury and Ashbury awarding the most and Nettleton the least. The only other official to be given grain in notable quantity with any frequency of receipt was the parker, who, from 1362, received 36 bushels.[49] Whilst the reeve was given a grain livery, this was only for a very small quantity. The wide variation between manors and regions that is observed in the remuneration that was given to the messor suggests that the compensation of office were altered in response to the local environment and structure.

2.2.6. The parker and messor-parker

At Damerham, the office of messor was closely associated with that of the parker, there were a number of instances when one person held both of these positions, as well as another separate parker being present. The messor and the parker, as separate offices, received rent quittances of approximately 30*d* until 1301/2. Subsequently, the value of the messor's quittance then decreased to 15*d* in 1303/4 and, from 1305, both the messor and the parker began to receive an annual stipend. When holding both offices jointly, the remuneration was 80*d*, but if they served only as the parker they were given much less, as shown in table 2.2. This was because they had a less significant role in the Damerham economy in comparison to that of the messor. The office of parker was not recorded being given remuneration on any of the other manors; it may have been the case that the duties of the parker overlapped with those of other officials, and so the role was generally subsumed into a different office. The only exception was at Glastonbury in 1389/90, where it was stated that the parker received no rent quittances in that year because no one had held the office. This phrasing implies that it was a position which would have normally been remunerated and reinforces that the absence of evidence for these offices be-

49. Farmer, "The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages," p. 225.

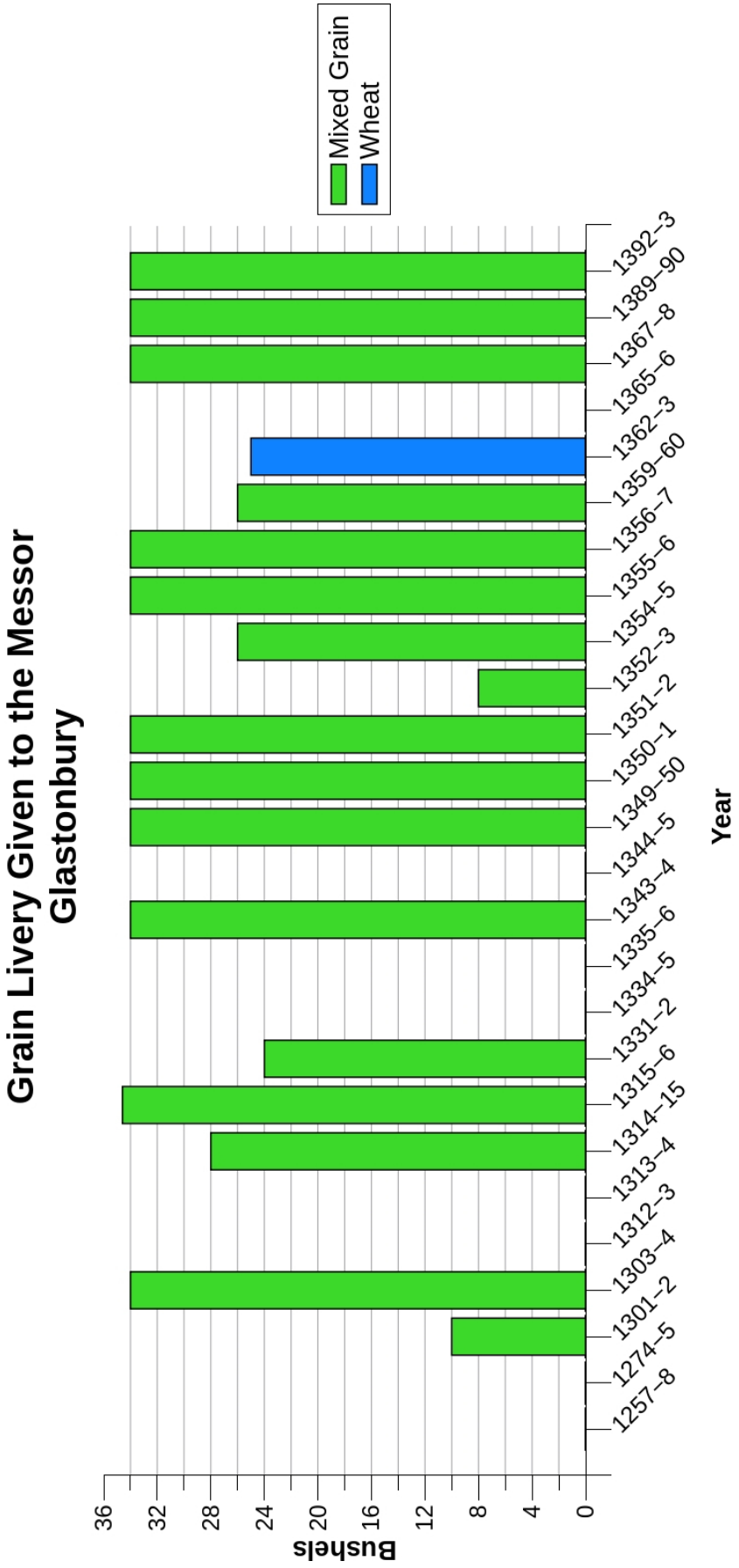


Figure 2.9: Chart showing the grain liveries granted to the messor of Glastonbury.

ing extant does not necessarily mean that they were not occupied or rewarded.

Year	Messor		Parker		Joint office of Messor and Parker
	Rent quittance / *d*	Stipend / *d*	Rent quittance / *d*	Stipend / *d*	Stipend / *d*
1257/8	0	0	35	0	0
1274/5	30	0	0	0	0
1281/2	0	22	30	0	0
1301/2	30	0	30	0	0
1303/4	15	0	30	0	80
1305/6	15	80	30	13	0
1312/3	0	0	0	24	80
1313/4	0	0	0	31	72
1314/5	0	0	0	17	80
1334/5	0	0	0	51	80

Table 2.2: Rent quittances and stipends (in pence) given to the messor, parker, and messor-parker on the manor of Damerham for the period 1257–1335.

The messor or the messor-parker at Damerham received grain fairly consistently through the period.[50] This was, like the messors of the other manors, predominantly a mixed grain and occasionally wheat. Unusually, in 1303/4 there were separate references to a parker, a messor, and a messor-parker, with the parker receiving a rent quittance, the messor-parker a stipend, and the messor being given grain liveries. Whereas for the years 1312–5 there was no separate messor, but a messor-parker who received both stipend and grain liveries. The messor-parker was given

50. The years in which no grain was given was because the messor or parker were given rent quittances instead.

the rewards that were more closely tied to the remuneration that the messor alone received whereas the parker alone received a much smaller quantity of grain. The amount was always between 30 and 32 bushels, except in 1281 where the messor was only paid for 40 weeks. There were also a number of years where the messors and parkers were at the lord's table in autumn, which reduced the amount of grain they were given. Although there was variation in which officials were given which form of compensation, and slight variations in the amount of grain received, a high level of continuity can be seen from 1301 until 1335. Beyond giving insight into the different values of these offices, the presence of the messor, parker, and messor-parker shows there was flexibility in this system and it also attests to the stability and robustness of the Damerham manorial system that enabled it to withstand and adapt to wider changes.

2.2.7. The woodward

The woodward does not appear as a prominent Glastonbury estate officer, it was only upon the manors of Ashbury and Damerham that the woodward was recorded as being in receipt of remuneration. Despite the role not being recorded as present upon the other manors, woodwards were given relatively large value remuneration, with the magnitude of these payments approaching that of the reeve or messor. The level of recompense indicates that this office was understood as important or onerous, whilst the lack of ubiquity highlights the regional adaptation to officialdom. The 1235 custumal at Damerham did not specify what the woodwards were to be given but the office was listed as being in receipt of rent quittances in every account. The value of these quittances were predominantly 30*d*, with the only variations appearing to be due to differences in the size of the peasant officer's land-holdings.[51] The

51. The importance of land-holding as a factor in the determination of rent quittances and remuneration will be discussed in more detail below, in section 2.

woodwards at Ashbury were, similarly, given significant remuneration; the custumal stated that the woodward was to be given a rent quittance of 4*s*, although the accounts record them as most commonly receiving stipendiary payments. In 1281/2 and 1305/6 there were three separate payments to the woodward; in 1281/2 they were given 66*d* for *comitatus*, 51*d* for working in autumn, and an 80*d* stipend for the year. The stipend in this year was of a similar magnitude to that of the messor, however, it should be noted that it was not specified whether these payments were to one woodward or multiple officers fulfilling the duties.[52] At Ashbury, the woodward was given the highest monetary remuneration, followed by the reeve, ripreeve, and messor. An examination of the grain liveries indicates that, whilst the messor received the largest values on the other four manors, the woodward of Ashbury was given the most grain. The high value of the remuneration given to the woodward attests to the perceived utility of their role and the adaptation in order to fit offices to the requirements imposed by the local topography. This adaptability suggests a more limited role of the central administration in influencing the local economy but also highlights how the administrative structure was mapped around the constraints of local geography.

The magnitude of remuneration of the offices of messor and woodward at Ashbury show an inverse correlation; the years in which the woodward was given lower quantities of grain were coincident with an increase in the grain liveries given to the messor. Similarly, the years in which there are peaks in the woodward's payments, 1281/2 and 1305/6, correspond with troughs in the stipends paid to the messor. The remuneration given to either official fluctuated considerably; from 1312–5 there was an increase in the quantity of grain given to the woodward and they were paid a higher stipend, whereas the messor's stipendiary pay decreased. It should be noted that some of the variation in grain liveries can be attributed to the messor and woodward

52. *GADL*, MS 11215, Reel 15, Ashbury, 1305/6.

being granted the rights to eat at the lord's table, however, the inversely correlative relationship between the messor and woodward cannot be solely attributed to this practice. The two offices were distinct, in that they both appeared alongside each other in the accounts, but the inverse correlation in the remuneration suggests that there was a link between the roles of these offices.

2.2.8. The beadle

The office of beadle was present only upon the manors of Damerham and Glastonbury and received significantly different remuneration at each manor. The beadle of Damerham was remunerated only in the thirteenth century; they were given rent quittances in 1274/5 and paid a stipend in 1281/2, after which they were not recorded as receiving any compensation, monetary or otherwise.[53] As Damerham had a plethora of different officials and workers, it is likely that the function of the beadle was fulfilled as part of the duties of other officers. In contrast, at Glastonbury, the beadle received rent quittances throughout the period. As is shown in figure 2.10, the amount of rent quittances granted to the beadle remained fairly consistent until 1349/50; in this year there was an increase in the amount of rent quit because there were two beadles, with one serving Michaelmas–Christmas and then the other Christmas–Michaelmas. Both officers held a ferdel of land, and received 7.5 and 17.5*d* respectively. After this period, there was a marginal increase in rent quittances given to the beadle, raising the value to 24*d*, however, the tenant serving in office continued to hold a ferdel of land. The reason for this change is somewhat unclear but it was likely due to the alterations in the number of labour service remissions that they were given. After the Black Death, it was frequently stated that the beadle would have been remitted of labour services but did not owe them. It is plausible, as shall be discussed in further

53. The consistency with which the beadle was remunerated in the thirteenth century is unclear due to the small number of surviving accounts for this period.

detail below, that the increased rent quittances were a minor form of compensation.

The beadle had a continuous presence at Glastonbury, however, during the final two Glastonbury accounts the office was held conjointly with that of the rent collector. In 1389/90 and 1392/3, William atte Mapole was recorded as both beadle and rent collector, serving alongside John Deor, another rent collector. The partial merging of the beadle and rent-collector as well as the disappearance of the berebrit, as shall be discussed below, was arguably an attempt to save the manor money through a reduction in the number of officials that needed to be remunerated. The office of rent collector only began to receive remuneration, in the form of rent and labour service quittances, from the 1360s at Glastonbury. It may be the case that the responsibility of collecting rents was originally a duty of other officials, such as the reeve, but the increasing importance of rent collection necessitated the formation of a distinct office. Whilst the demesne at Glastonbury remained active, this change suggests that the manor was shifting towards a more rentier dominated system which would have created an increased requirement for rent collectors.

2.2.9. The ripreeve

Upon all of the manors, ripreeves were remunerated with stipends, although at Ashbury and Nettleton they were also granted occasional rent quittances. From 1312, on both of these manors, the ripreeve began to receive small value rent quittances, 12*d* at Ashbury and 8*d* at Nettleton. Whilst the rent quittances given to the ripreeve were not large, particularly in comparison to the remuneration of the beadle or berebrit, at all five manors the ripreeve was in receipt of substantial annual stipends. As shown in figure 2.11, the ripreeves of Ashbury and Ashcott received the largest sums, followed by the ripreeves of Nettleton, Glastonbury, and Damerham. The variation between manors was most likely due to the differing periods of time worked, as well

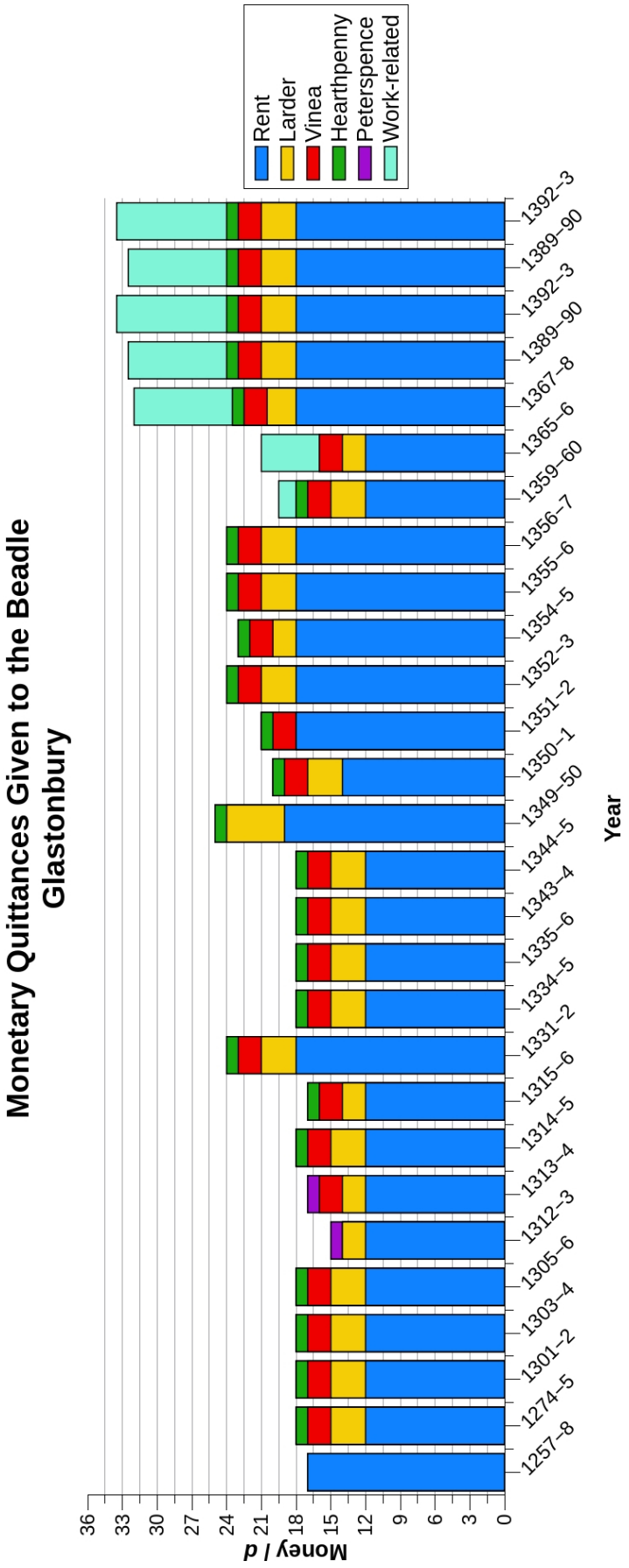


Figure 2.10: Chart showing the monetary quittances given to the beadle of Glastonbury.

as the size of the manor. At Ashcott, whilst the ripreeve occasionally was given a higher stipendiary payment than the reeve, they were not given labour service remissions or grain liveries. It was the reeve of Ashcott who was given the highest value monetary compensation, even when taking into consideration the changes in the accounts with the inclusion of labour service quittances. This is consistent with the understanding of the reeve in a supervisory role over that of the ripreeve, with greater duty and importance attached to their role.

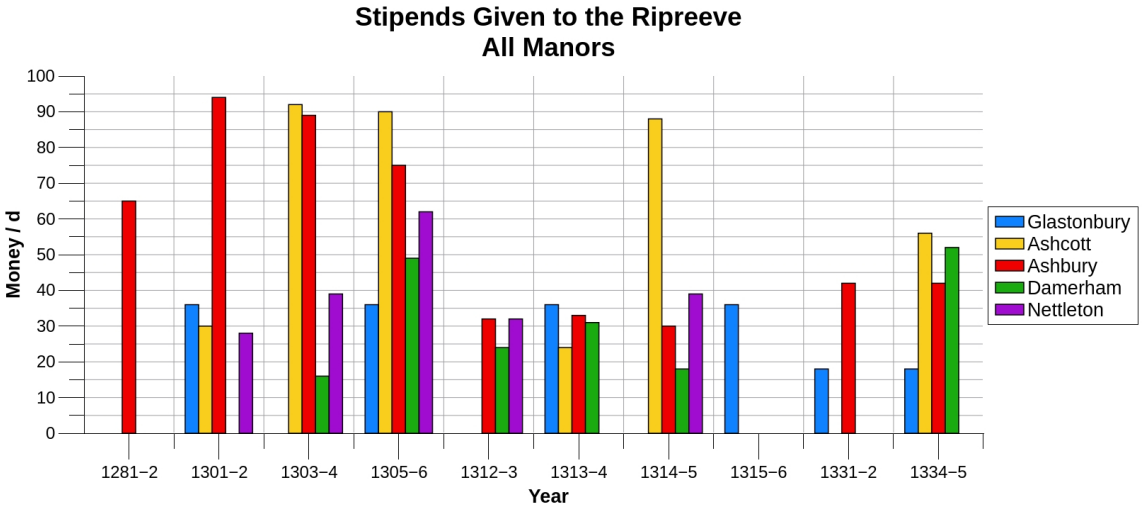


Figure 2.11: Chart showing the stipends given to ripreeves upon all five of the Glastonbury manors.

Across the manors of the Glastonbury estate, the stipendiary officials can be ranked in terms of the value of their remuneration, with the ripreeve generally followed by the messor and berebrit. However, this hierarchy must be caveated by acknowledgement that there were also notable changes in stipendiary remuneration over time, and that this was not the only form of compensation received. At Glastonbury the ripreeve was paid 36*d* at the beginning of the period but there was a notable decrease, down to 18*d*, during the middle of the fourteenth century. After 1354, the ripreeves of Glastonbury were recorded as being paid only twice, these amounts were an increase upon the earlier sums, however, the total stipends paid, 57*d* and 49.5*d*, were lower than those given to the ripreeves of the other manors. For exam-

ple, at Ashcott the amount could be as high as 94*d*, with 54*d* paid for four weeks of work in autumn alone. Similar to Glastonbury, the total amount given to the ripreeve of Ashbury did decrease over time, but when they were paid only a stipend it could be as high as 94*d*, dropping slightly down to 74*d* in 1305. The stipend decreased further still when they began to receive rent quittances, with the total monetary value of their remuneration being between 45–54*d* and without supplementation by any other forms of compensation. However, this was still higher than at Damerham, where the ripreeve received an average stipend of 32*d* and only a maximum of 51*d* once in 1334/5. Both of the more urban manors, Damerham and Glastonbury, can be observed to have consistently paid the ripreeve a lower amount than the other three more rural manors. It is plausible that, due to the number of different officers present upon the more urban manors that the function or importance of the ripreeve was diminished in comparison to the smaller, more rural manors. For example, the messor, parker and messor-parker may have been the officials at Damerham who undertook or shared duties with the ripreeve, and so the remunerations were accordingly affected. Similarly, animal custodians also had a more significant role so the relative difference in remuneration was decreased.

2.2.10. The berebrit

The berebrit was recorded as being in receipt of remuneration upon all five of the manors, although they were generally granted smaller quantities and lower values than the other officials. The exception to this was in the animals that they were granted at Damerham, where it was the reeve and berebrit who were most frequently given the widest variety of animals and animal products, such as a lamb, piglet, cheese, butter, and skins. Few officials or workers were given animals or animal products as remuneration, for example, the only other recipients were the animal custodians, messor, and smith. This exclusivity suggests that animal-based

compensation was considered a high value form of payment, given to select officers rather than the broader contingent of *famuli* and workers.

It is noteworthy that the berebrit may have been an exception to the domain specific remuneration noted above, as, although they were keepers of the grange, grain did not comprise a notable part of their remuneration in the accounts. At Nettleton, like the reeve and ripreeve, the berebrit was quit only of two bushels of grain for churchscot. Similarly, at Damerham, the messor and parker received large amounts of grain but the reeve and berebrit were only ever in receipt of smaller quantities. The *famuli* and other workers were given grain most frequently, whereas manorial officials were predominantly given quittances. As such, grain was not recorded in the accounts as significant or frequent components of officials' remuneration. However, it should be noted that the custumal of Damerham explicitly stated that the berebrit was to have an acre of wheat, as well as a set amount of grain when performing carrying services.[54] It is unclear whether the remuneration of the berebrit had changed across the period, so that they were no longer given an acre of wheat, or if it was such a standard component of their compensation that it was not necessary to state within the account. It seems likely that the discrepancy in the grain remuneration can be attributed to the latter, an artefact of the source type, because the grain liveries that were recorded for the messor and the *famuli* differed each year, dependent upon the duration served and which grains were given as payment. Whereas the allocation of an acre of wheat would have been a constant that did not necessarily require repetitious detailing in the account.

Upon all five manors the berebrit received rent quittances but it was only at Damerham where they were also paid a stipend. The berebrits of Damerham and Ashbury were in receipt of the highest monetary compensation, followed by those

54. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, p. 113.

of Glastonbury, Ashcott, and Nettleton, as is shown in figure 2.12. The remuneration given to the berebrit of Nettleton remained consistent throughout the period, at a value of 16*d*. In contrast to this, there was considerably more fluctuation in the rent quittances granted to the berebrits of Ashbury and Damerham. This was due to the land that the individual officer held and what types of services they owed to the lord. For example, at Damerham, the exceptionally high rent quittance in 1274/5 was because the berebrit did not owe labour services. Labour service remissions were given to the berebrit only intermittently; at Glastonbury they received labour service remissions in just 8 accounts, and in only 4 at Ashcott, although on these few occasions the number of services quit could be considerable. As Keil noted, Ashbury and Damerham both supported large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, the care of which would have required relatively close supervision, as well as organisation to ensure the correct distribution of feedstock.[55] Manors with a large pastoral demesne would have also required the land and grain to support the livestock, which would have likely increased the importance of the berebrit to the local economy, as they had an essential role in securing the safe storage of grain. The differences in the remuneration of officials, such as the berebrit, emphasise how officialdom was a mechanism for adaptation; by structuring offices such that the requirements of a manor were prioritised, manors were able to succeed in accordance with their local environment, their population, and within the context of the national economy.

2.2.11. Conclusions

Examination and speculation into the administrative hierarchy of manorial officials through an exploration of how they were remunerated can provide insight into the structures of officialdom but is rendered complex due to the differences in value between forms of recompense, and the quantity also being dependent upon the tenant

55. Keil, “The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages,” pp. 81, 111.

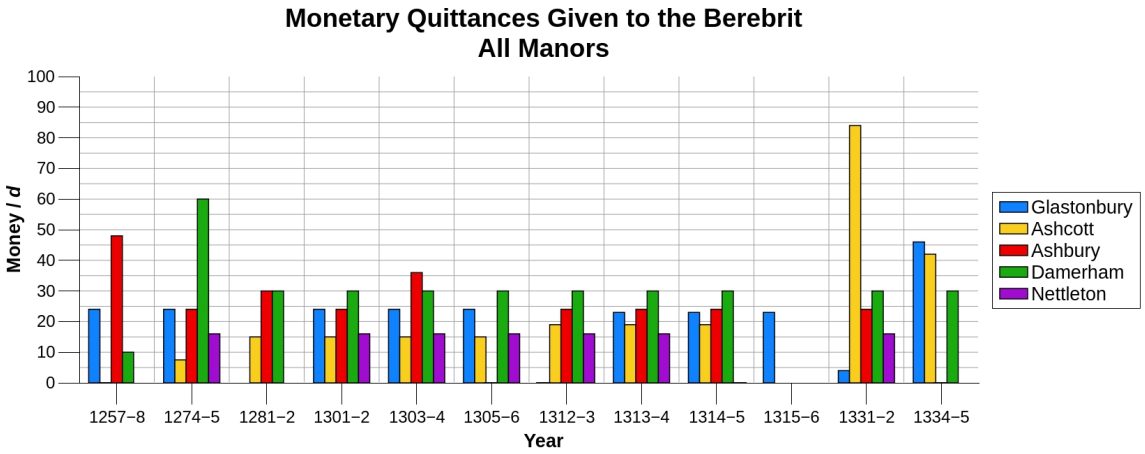


Figure 2.12: Chart showing the stipends given to berebrits upon all five of the Glastonbury manors.

that held office. It can be said that the reeve received the highest value remuneration, predominantly in the form of rent and labour service quittances, and also that the messor and woodward, when present, were also given large payments. This was generally followed by the parker, ripreeve, beadle, and berebrit, however, this ordering was not usually the same at each manor and also exhibited change across the period. The value of remuneration received by an official cannot reflect only the hierarchy of authority but must also have been altered by the socio-economic status of the officer-holder, as shall also be discussed in more detail below. The amount that officials were remunerated was a statement of value from the perspective of both the lord and the peasantry, and, therefore, it was not a direct expositing of hierarchy. The presence of officials and how they were remunerated was a mechanism through which the manorial administration could adapt to the wider socio-economic conditions of the period.[56] The number of large, administrative changes at Glastonbury that occurred in the fifteenth century necessitated a system capable of fluctuation and adaptation to ameliorate the effects of both long-term trends and short-term variation.

56. This shall be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

2.3. Part Two: Custom, Continuity, Change, and Compensation

2.3.1. The impact of custom and land in determining remuneration

The exact responsibilities of each official, as discussed in Chapter 1, were flexible, which affected the quantity and value of their remuneration. The custumals detailed in what form or quantities of compensation each official or worker were to receive, which was dependent upon the task that was performed or the land that they held. For example, at Longbridge Deverill, another Glastonbury manor, it was specified that the messor was to receive certain quantities of wheat depending upon the size of their holding.[57] Similarly, in the court rolls of Glastonbury in 1344, when John Golde paid a fine to vacate the office of messor, it specified his holdings and the works that he had previously been remitted when serving as messor. For example, his week work until August was remised, he could pasture his oxen with those of the lord, he was to mow and carry the lord's hay except for three meadows, and he was excused from *summagium* and carrying corn, as well as receiving quittance of various rents and customary payments.[58] There was a high degree of flexibility in precisely what tasks each tenant or official performed but how and in what quantity these various duties or services were remunerated was constrained, to some extent, by custom.

The amount of rent quit depended upon the type of land held; for example, the entry fines for *gavellond* (rent land) were higher than *werklond* (work land) but the annual rents were lower.[59] The effect of holding type upon quittances is particularly evident at Glastonbury; in 1331/2 and from 1352–7 the beadle of Glastonbury held werklond and so received a higher rent quittance, of 6*d*, during these years. Custumals recorded the variations in rent quittances that were to be given to officials, which

57. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, pp. 113, 140-1.
58. *GADL*, MS 10774, Reel 25, Glastonbury, 1344. See also: MS 11179, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1347.
59. P. Franklin, "Peasant Widows' "Liberation" and Remarriage before the Black Death," *The Economic History Review* 39, no. 2 (May 1986): pp. 186-204, 192-3.

were dependent upon their holdings. At Ashbury, the reeve and the woodward were to be quit from as much rent as pertained to a virgate of land (4*s*), and the messor and shepherd were to be quit of 3*s*.[60] The link between holding size and quittance is also shown in the example of the rent quittances given to Philip atte Putte. When he was the reeve of Glastonbury, the total rents remitted increased from 24*d*, when he held one ferdel, to 33*d* when he held a half virgate; the size and type of holding was a significant determining factor in how officials were remunerated. The high value quittances for those with larger land holdings were likely due to an awareness by the seigneurial authority that these officers would have been less able to work their own land and, therefore, would have suffered greater losses. For the abbot, tenants of smaller holdings would have cost less to remunerate, however, those with larger holdings provided greater surety and potential for the recoupment of any losses incurred.[61] There needed to be a balance between the costs of providing sufficient remuneration and the ability to exact recompense for damages that resulted from dereliction of duty or deception. Landholding and associated custom shaped and limited the form and value of remuneration, and, as a result of this, strongly influenced the administrative structure.

Holding sizes alone were not the sole determinant for the value of remuneration, as can be clearly observed in the case of the berebrit of Glastonbury; they were usually recorded as being in receipt of 24*d* in rent quittance, shown in figure 2.13, however, they received almost double the standard amount in the years 1334–6.[62] This fluctuation does not appear to correspond with changes in the land that the peasants serving as berebrit held, as they possessed a messuage and half a ferdel, which was equal to that of previous years. The other officials who held a ferdel in these years were quit considerably less and there is also no specific mention of

60. Elton, *Rentalia et Custumaria*, pp. 56-7.
61. Campbell, “The Agrarian Problem in the Early Fourteenth Century,” p. 21-4.
62. The account for 1331/2 is very damaged and there is little that is legible in the quittances section.

either gavellond or werklond having changed the amount for which they were quit. The changes in remuneration, rather than being due to differences in landholdings, can be found to be correlated with the introduction of labour service remissions in the accounts, which began in 1331/2. The coincidence of the recording of labour services with the reduction in rent quittances suggests that the introduction of labour services in the accounts was indicative of a change in the practices of remuneration of officials, which also prevents direct comparison between land holding and rent quittances. Remuneration, whilst strongly influenced by landholding, was still flexible and, as shown by the exchange between rent quittances and labour service remissions, could be reflective of wider administrative and economic changes, which shall be discussed further in section 2.3.7.

2.3.2. Receiving remuneration from multiple manors

A number of the Glastonbury manors lay in close proximity to each other, as is shown by the map in figure 1. The interconnected structure of the Glastonbury manors had a notable impact upon the ways in which manorial officers were remunerated, and caution needs to be taken when analysing the comparisons of how highly each office was paid. Multiple officials held land and served in office on more than one manor, for example, from 1303 until 1334, the messors of Nettleton received half of their stipend and grain livery from the manor of Gretlyngton. At Ashcott, in seven accounts before 1315, the reeves and messors from the manors of Greynton, Shapwyk, and Walton were recorded alongside the other manorial tenants as receiving rent quittances. The messor of Ashcott was given 8 bushels of grain every 24 weeks, with the other half of their grain livery coming from either Shapwyk or Walton. In 1350/1, when the messor served the whole year at Ashcott, they were given a much larger payment. This practice was entrenched in the administrative structure; the messor of Ashcott received half of their payment from another manor from 1301 until 1355. Smaller

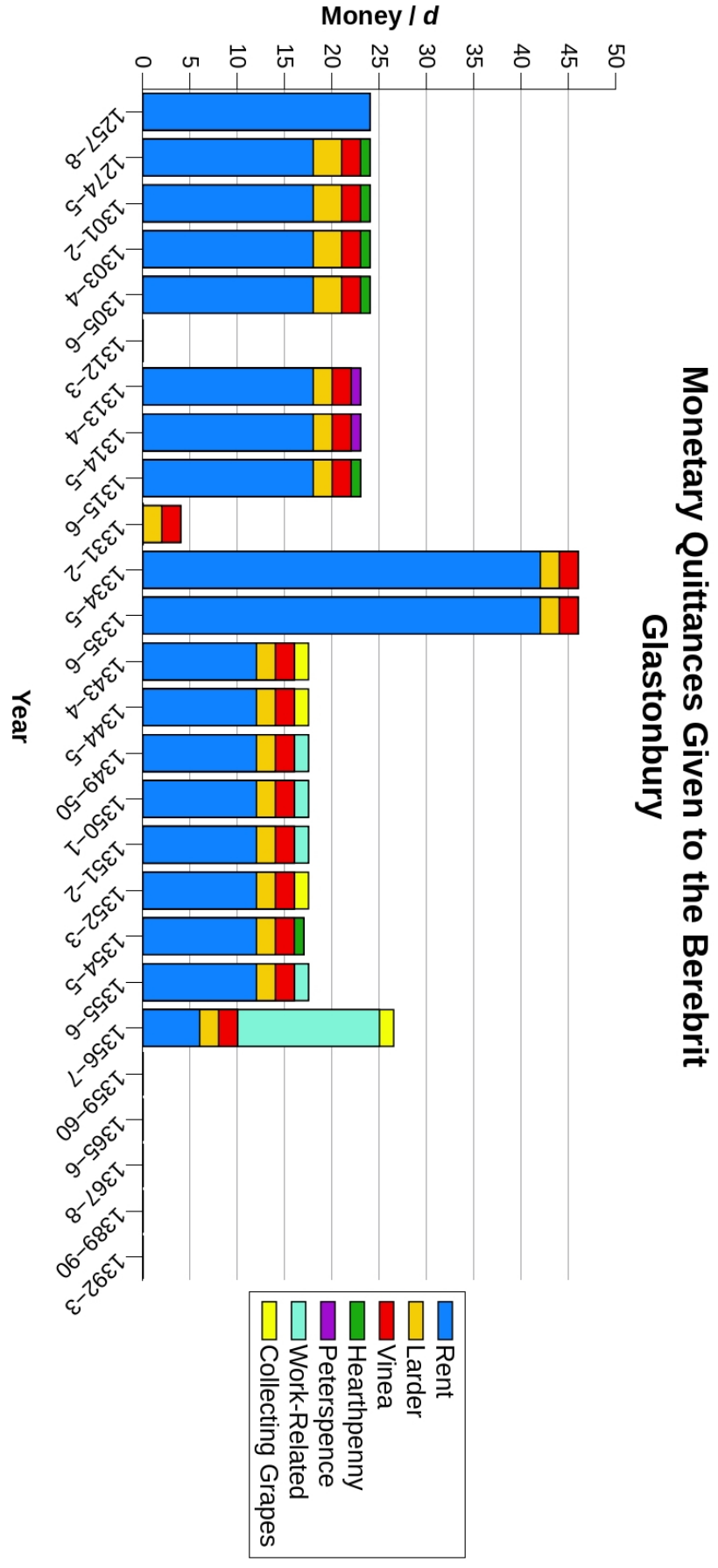


Figure 2.13: Chart showing the monetary quittances given to the berebrit upon all five of the Glastonbury manors.

manors may not have required the continuous presence of each officer throughout the year, by utilising the interconnected estates structure, the seigneurial authority was able to better balance the cost and benefit of officialdom.

The practice of remunerating officers from other manors was evident in the records of Damerham. The custumal stated that the reeve was to be quit the rents for a virgate of land (valued at 60*d*) and larder rent. However, the account for 1257/8 notes that the reeve was not given larder quittance because the reeve of Merton had received in their stead. Unlike at Ashcott, where officials from other manors were given rent quittances alongside the Ashcott officers, at Damerham the external officials received rent quittances instead of the Damerham officers. The holding of office and the receipt of remuneration from multiple manors highlights that officials, although local, were not confined to only one manor. By serving upon multiple manors, officials could have exerted control over a wide area, which would have brought them into contact with a large number of people. These officials would have needed to have held land on multiple manors, which supports the notion that officials were frequently drawn from the wealthier members of the peasantry, as these individuals could afford to have holdings on several manors.[63]

2.3.3. Changes across the period

Officialdom can be used to understand how lords responded and adapted to the requirements of local and national events by exploring which officials were present during various periods of time and examining the changes in responsibilities or remuneration. England during the thirteenth century has been suggested to be primarily characterised as having a large population and high population density, strong

63. Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348*, pp. 25, 168–77, 261, 267. Postles, “Personal Pledging: Medieval “Reciprocity” or “Symbolic Capital”?,” pp. 420, 422.

manorial economies under direct management, economic expansion, and high rates of subsistence living.[64] During the fourteenth century, there was a decrease in the population, an increase in the standard of living, change from the direct management of manors towards leasing, and a slow decline in serfdom. The precise administrative structure and direction of each manor was the result of a variety of local factors, such as harvest failures, individual styles of lordship and custom, as well as the wider-scale impacts of super-regional events, such as the 1315–17 Famine, the Black Death and the successive outbreaks of plague, and the Hundred Years War.[65] The Black Death in particular, the effects of which resulted in a reduction of approximately 40–50 percent of the population, was both the cause and catalyst of a number of local and large-scale societal and economic changes.[66] The impacts of the Black Death can be divided into three overlapping categories: accelerations of existing developments, rapid changes, and causal factors of long-term socio-economic adaptation.[67]

One of the more immediate effects of the Black Death was the significant de-

64. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, p. 16.

65. For further information regarding these changes and events, see: M. Bailey, "Peasant Welfare in England, 1290 1348," *Economic History Review*, no. 51 (1998): pp. 223-51. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*; M. Bailey, "Tallage-at-Will in Later Medieval England," *English Historical Review* CXXXIV, no. 566 (2019): pp. 25-58. M. Bailey, "Villeinage in England: A Regional Case Study, c. 1250 - c. 1349," *The Economic History Review, New Series* 62, no. 2 (May 2009): pp. 430-57. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540*; Dyer, "The English Medieval Village Community and Its Decline," pp. 407-29. Farmer, "The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 207-36. Halcrow, "The Decline of Demesne Farming on the Estates of Durham Cathedral Priory," pp. 345-56. B. F. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 148-51. Hatcher, "England in the Aftermath of the Black Death," pp. 3-35. R. Hilton, *The English peasantry in the later Middle Ages: the Ford lectures for 1973, and related studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Hilton, *The Economic Development of some Leicestershire Estates in the 14th & 15th Centuries*; P. Slavin, "The Great Bovine Pestilence and its economic and environmental consequences in England and Wales, 1318-50," *The Economic History Review* 65, no. 4 (2012): pp. 1239-1266.

66. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, p. 4. B. Campbell and K. Bartley, *England on the Eve of the Black Death: an Atlas of Lay Lordship, Land and Wealth, 1300-49* (Manchester: Manchester Medieval Press, 2006), p. 329. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, pp. 45-6.

67. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, pp. 89-91.

crease in the population. This caused a shift in the ratio of land to labour which, due to tenements being empty, afforded workers greater bargaining power and a stronger position from which to negotiate for better wages and terms of service.[68] The rise in wages enabled the peasantry to improve their standards of living. This improvement occurred despite the issuing of legislation, such as the Statute of Labourers in 1351 and Sumptuary Legislation in 1363, which sought to impede these change. Some of the developments were accelerated, rather than caused by, the plague. For example, Dyer found at Sedgeford, in Norfolk, there was a significant increase during the fourteenth century in the amount of meat given to harvest workers.[69] He argues that this change in diet was not caused by the plague, as the trend was evident in the early fourteenth century, but rather that the rate of change was increased due to the impact of the Black Death.[70] It is, therefore, important to explore the pre- and post-plague periods, and the trends and changes in administrative structure and remuneration, in order to better understand how officialdom was utilised by the seigneurial authority.

As well as the improvements in the socio-economic circumstances of the peasantry, the post-plague period was notable for changes in agricultural practices and the management of manors. There is a general consensus amongst historians that, during the fourteenth century, there was a slow move from arable to pastoral farming. Britnell argued that this change in practice was partially due to the increase in expenditure on wages and the higher cost of arable farming in comparison to that of rearing livestock.[71] Consistent with these findings, Keil observed at Glastonbury

68. Campbell, “The Agrarian Problem in the Early Fourteenth Century,” p. 9. C. Dyer and S. A. C. Penn, “Wages and Earnings in Late Medieval England: Evidence from the Enforcement of the Labour Laws,” in *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, ed. C. Dyer (London: Hambledon / London, 2000), pp. 167-190. Ziegler, *The Black Death*, p.253.

69. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, pp. 77-99.

70. *Ibid.*

71. Britnell, “English agricultural output and prices, 1350-1450: national trends and regional divergences,” pp. 20-39, 30. See also: Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, pp. 77-99. Keil, “The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages,” p. 170. D. Stone, “Medieval Farm Management and Technological Mentalities: Hinderclay before the Black Death,” *The Economic History Review* 54, no. 4 (November 2001): pp. 612-38.

that sheep farming underwent a change that began in the 1330s, which he argued was indicative of an increase in pastoral farming.[72] Alongside this movement towards pastoral farming, there was also an heterogeneous, gradual trend of commutation away from demesne farming and towards a rentier system. This trend occurred, in part, because after the plague there was an increase in the cost of goods and labour, with demesne farming having become less profitable. A move towards the leasing of manors and lands allowed the seigneurial administration to reduce their costs, as well as requiring less direct management and control over the tenantry and manorial officers.[73] The manorial administration needed to not only ensure stability upon the manor and protect seigneurial interests but to also be adaptable in response to change. The following discussion will examine how the remuneration of officials can provide insight into the responses of the Glastonbury estate managers to the aforementioned events and associated socio-economic changes.

2.3.4. Changes in grain liveries

The quantity and types of grain given to manorial officials and workers fluctuated throughout the period as a response to individual office occupants, local practice, and widespread events and change. Through comparative examination between manors or offices, the changes in remuneration through grain liveries can be examined such that more local variation can be distinguished, to some extent, from broader trends. Analysis into the shorter term changes, using clusters of data from the period 1257–1335, indicates that the differences between the amounts of grain given by each manor remained similar throughout; either Glastonbury or Damerham gave the largest quantities, whilst Ashcott or Nettleton gave the least, as is shown in

72. Keil, “The Estates of the Abbey of Glastonbury in the Later Middle Ages,” p. 132.
73. Farmer, “The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages,” pp. 207-36. Halcrow, “The Decline of Demesne Farming on the Estates of Durham Cathedral Priory,” pp. 345-56. Hatcher, “England in the Aftermath of the Black Death,” pp. 3-35.

figure 2.14. There was relatively little change in the total quantities of grain given in these periods, despite these being sampled over a 78 year period. The fluctuations that can be observed were not consistent across all manors, which indicates that the quantities of grain given were not impacted by super-manorial events. The effects of the 1315–17 Famine cannot be observed for the majority of manors due to the lack of surviving source material for the relevant years. A single account from the manor of Glastonbury, for the year 1315/6, shows little change in the total quantities of grain liveries that were given, which may suggest that how officials and workers were remunerated did not decrease despite the wider socio-economic events at this time. However, this data cannot be extrapolated to give insight into the impacts observed during the later years of the Famine. The lack of change in grain liveries across the period is consistent with the findings of Mate who, although examining the later fourteenth century, noted that officials and *famuli* on the Canterbury Cathedral Priory manors expected, due to customary dues, to be given barley to the extent that it had to occasionally be sourced externally at exorbitant prices.[74] Custom and standard forms of remuneration provided manorial officials protection and security in periods of uncertainty, scarcity, and high prices, and would have made the holding of office more appealing. Whilst the agrarian economy had been impacted, the administrative structure was maintained by the manorial lord during periods of hardship, ensuring that order was maintained and that the manor remained functional.

In the second quarter of the fourteenth century there was a significant decrease in the total quantity of grain given at Glastonbury, dropping from over 400 bushels in the earlier period down to 200. These changes can be explained by an examination of the recipients. For example, in 1303/4 there were 411 bushels given to 15 recipients, whereas in 1331/2 there were 191 bushels given to 6 people. From this it is apparent that the drop in the total amount of grain given was due to a decrease in the

74. Mate, “Agrarian Economy after the Black Death: The Manors of Canterbury Cathedral Priory,” pp. 341-51.

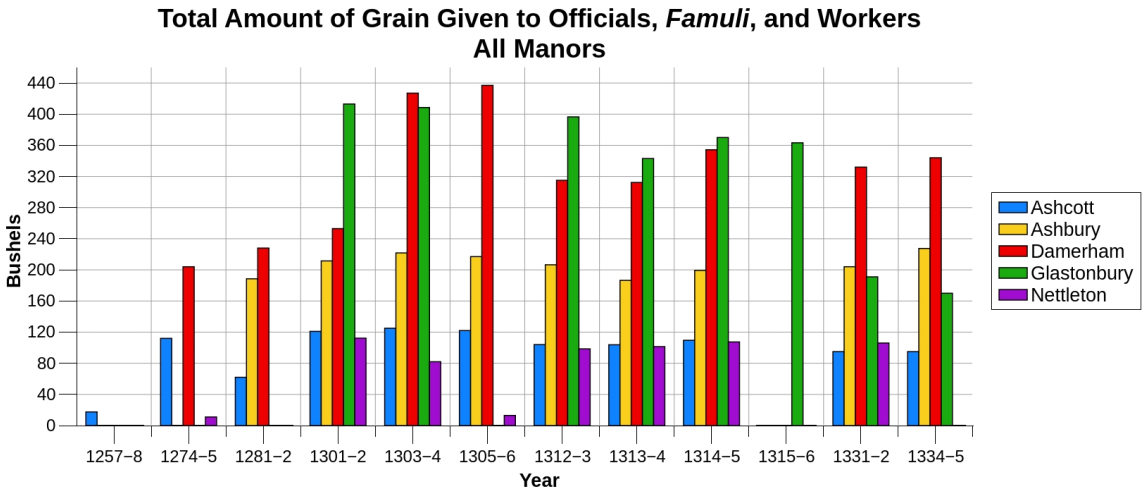


Figure 2.14: Chart showing the total amount of grain given to the officials, *famuli*, and workers upon all five of the Glastonbury manors.

number of recipients, rather than a reduction in the amount of grain given to any one individual. That grain was only infrequently given to the encloser, dairyworker, carpenter, and oxherds from 1331 reflected a decrease in the number of workers, likely a cost-saving for the abbots of Glastonbury. As well as the number of recipients, the types of grains that comprised the grain liveries also impacted the total amount of grain given at each manor. Analysis of the distribution of specific grains to individuals proves challenging, as only the totals of the quantities of grain designated to officials were recorded; the accounts do not specify how these were divided amongst the groups, whether it was equal, or if particular high-value grains were set aside for specified workers.[75] However, the proportions of grains given can be analysed even when they cannot be directly assigned to specific officers or workers. At Ashbury, the three grains most commonly given as liveries were, respectively, barley, beremcorn, and wheat, with oats listed in only a few accounts. In contrast to Ashbury, at Nettleton, *curallia*, a lower quality wheat, comprised the largest part of the grain livery until 1306, after which barley was the main grain until the end of the period. Damerham and Glastonbury, whilst relatively consistent in the main types of grain given, gave

75. Claridge and Langdon, "The Composition of Famuli Labor on English Demesnes c. 1300," p. 190. Rush, "The Impact of Commercialization in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Some Evidence from the Manors of Glastonbury Abbey," p. 130.

a wider variety of types of grain in greater proportions than the other three manors. This suggests that urban manors were more flexible and, therefore, more likely to provide its officers with a variety of grains. Even within this relatively short snapshot a number of changes can be seen, fluctuating in accordance with the wider economic decisions on the manor and the key grains grown in that year. The changes in the types of grain given as liveries highlights the impact that the sensitivity and variability in production had upon the quantity and types of grain that were given to manorial workers and officials.

There were significant changes in the grain liveries given to manorial officials and workers during the fourteenth century. At Glastonbury and Ashcott, in the early 1300s, *curallia* was the grain that composed the most significant proportion of the overall livery, followed by beans and wheat. This composition contrasts with the findings of Rush, who noted that, at many of the Glastonbury manors during the early fourteenth century, barley was the grain most frequently and abundantly given to the *famuli*.[76] From 1354 at Glastonbury and 1350 at Ashcott, the giving of *curallia* almost completely stopped, and instead wheat was given in larger amounts. The change from *curallia* to wheat was most evident at Ashcott, as there were fewer types of grain that formed the overall grain liveries, as is shown in figure 2.15. The grain liveries at Ashcott varied between wheat or beans as the primary constituents, but, by the end of the fourteenth century, this balance had shifted noticeably towards wheat.[77] In 1346/7, *curallia* was the main grain but, by 1350/1, this had been almost entirely replaced by wheat. These changes were significant, wheat was a valuable cash crop, and so the increase in the higher value grain meant that these workers and officials were being given a higher value payment. These findings are consis-

76. Rush, "The Impact of Commercialization in Early Fourteenth-Century England: Some Evidence from the Manors of Glastonbury Abbey," p. 135.

77. For further information on some of the changes in agricultural practises in the later middle ages, see: B. Campbell, "Agricultural Progress in Medieval England: Some Evidence from Eastern Norfolk," *The Economic History Review, New Series* 36, no. 1 (February 1983): pp. 26-46.

tent with those observed in other regions across England during this period, in the post-Black Death era the peasantry were able to negotiate higher value payments and obtain improvements in their standards of living.[78] The quantity of each of the types of grain sown each year differed in response to both agricultural practice and the market fluctuations, which resulted in more variability in the available forms of remuneration; socio-economic changes are evident in the grain liveries.

2.3.5. Changes in monetary remuneration

Despite being both monetary forms of compensation, the total amount of rent quittances and stipends granted to manorial officials and workers contrasted in their relative adaptabilities; this difference can be observed in figures 2.16 and 2.17, which show the total amount of rent quittances and stipends paid at all five manors for the period 1257–1335. The total rent quittances at each manor remained largely consistent throughout the period examined, although Nettleton showed a greater degree of fluctuation. At Nettleton, until 1305/6, half-hyde workers were in receipt of rent quittances, with each worker quit 6*s*; however, by 1312/3, they had been replaced with a smaller number of workers who held one or two virgates and were instead respectively quit 1*s* or 2*s*. Whilst the reason for this change was not specified, it is plausible that it was done to utilise the tenantry who had smaller holdings, and so reduce the total loss incurred through rent quittances. However, the implementation of this scale of change was not common on the other four manors in the early fourteenth century. In contrast to the rent quittances, the total amount given as stipendiary pay, and which officials or workers were in receipt of them, was more flexible and unconstrained by the size or type of land that the tenant held. Remuneration through stipends enabled the seigneurial authority to adapt to the short-term, local require-

78. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, pp. 168-9. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, pp. 77-99.

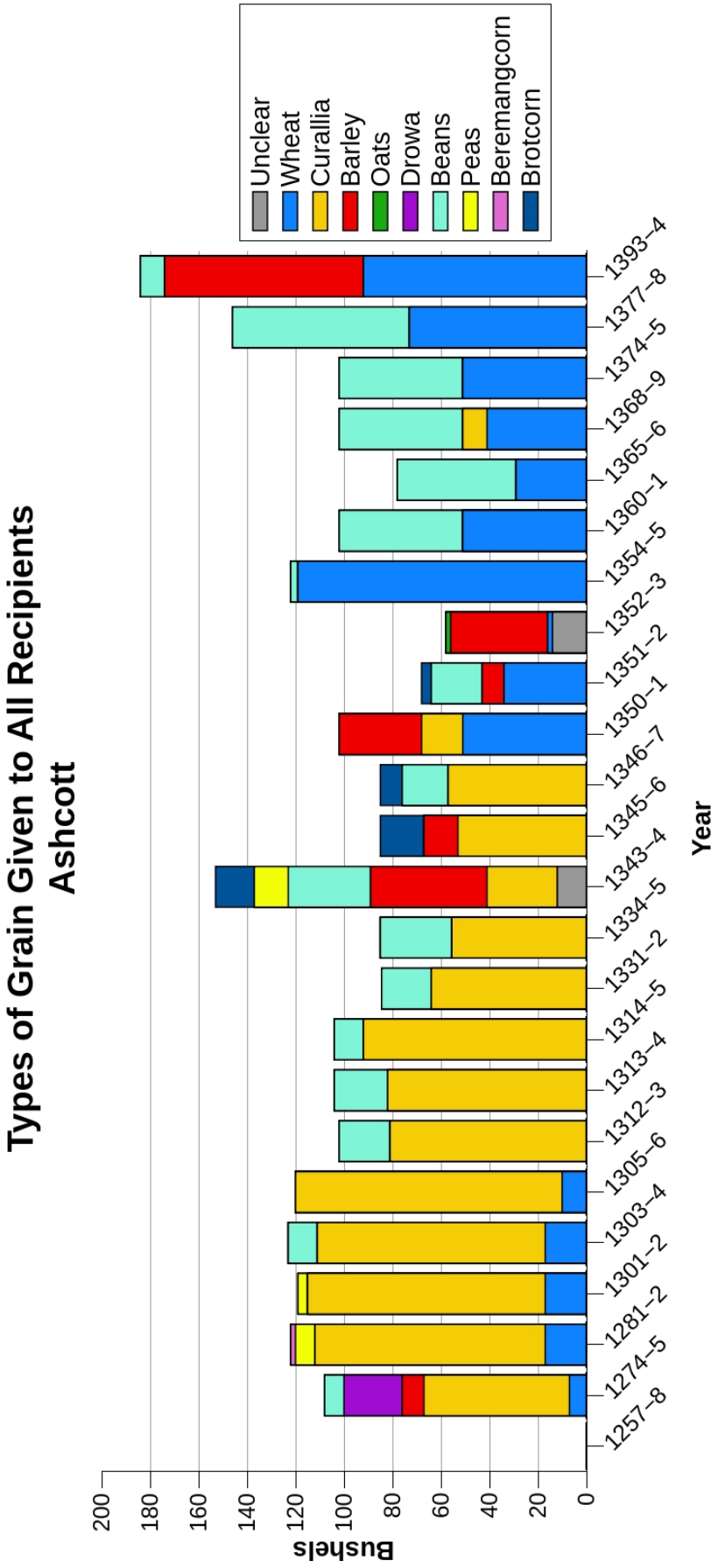


Figure 2.15: Chart showing the different types of grain given to all recipients upon the manor of Ashcott.

ments of the manor. The increases or decreases in the total stipends paid were found to be primarily due to changes in the number or type of recipient, rather than the individual payment values. For example, in the accounts for 1393/4 and 1394/5 at Ashcott, the total value of the stipendiary payments were significantly higher than any of the previous accounts. This increase was due to the inclusion of five *akermen* (ploughmen), each of whom received 60*d* for the year. The flexibility afforded by stipendiary pay enabled each individual manor to adapt to the local environment and geography, and also provides an essential insight into the longevity of the estates administrative system. The remuneration of officials and workers through stipends allowed for flexibility within the constraints of a relatively rigid system of custom.

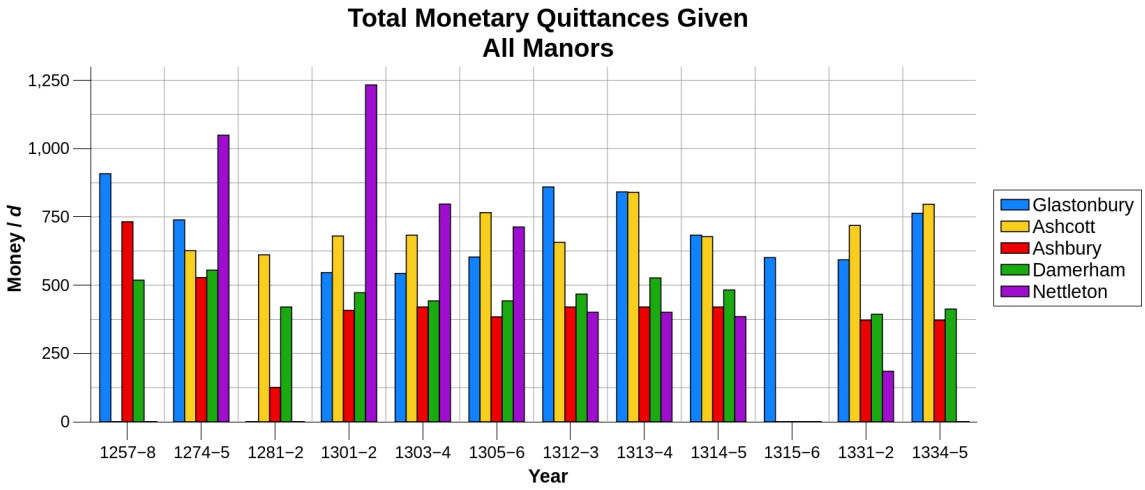


Figure 2.16: Chart showing the total sum of the monetary quittances granted at each manor.

Remuneration did not just reflect the needs of a manor's administrative structure, it also contained information within it about the local environment and the material conditions of the manor's inhabitants. Whilst the datasets of these manors exhibit significant noise due to short-term, localised variation, larger socio-economic changes can still be correlated with trends within the data. The accounts for both Ashcott and Glastonbury for the period 1349–1353 show the initial impact of the

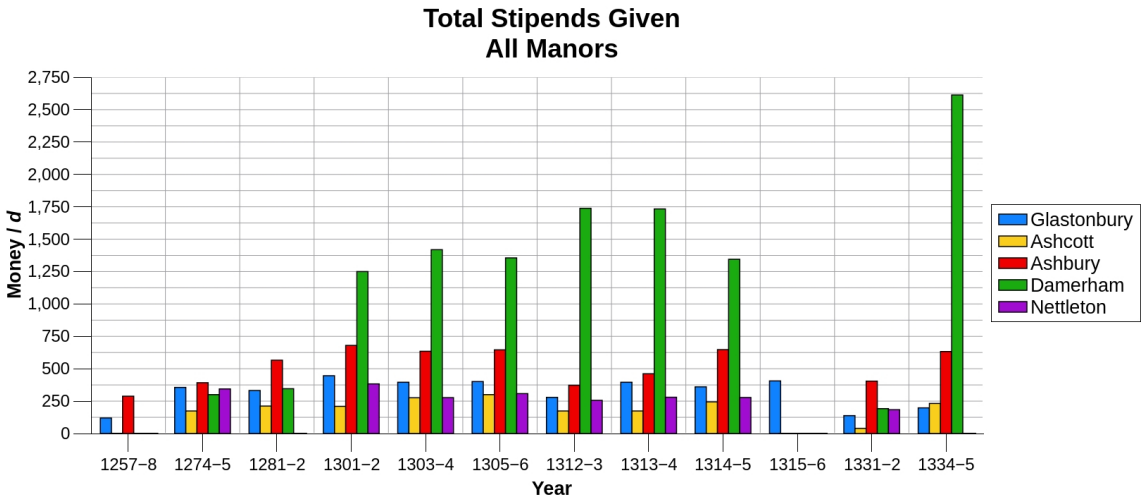


Figure 2.17: Chart showing the total sum of the stipends paid at each manor.

Black Death.[79] The totals for both rent quittances and stipends remained fairly similar to the pre-plague period, with a more noticeable increase occurring in the 1360s. However, this increase was not significantly greater than the total value of rent quittances granted during the pre-plague period and not as large as it had been in the 1310s. Some of the most significant changes in remuneration can be observed in the 1330s, when labour services were first included in the accounts and there had been a decrease in the number of officials being compensated. The changes observed on the Glastonbury manors in the 1330s is consistent with the findings of Stone and other scholars, namely that, whilst the Black Death resulted in significant upheaval, it was also an accelerant of developments that had materialised earlier in the fourteenth century.[80] At Ashcott and Glastonbury, the increase in the remunerations given to officials, in the later fourteenth century, were relatively minor, whereas there had been a significant rise in the value of wages given to labourers.[81] When compared to the value of remuneration at the beginning of the fourteenth century, with the increasing costs of food items and goods during this period, it may be the case that this relative stagnation was actually a real-terms decrease in the overall

79. The accounts for 1351/2 have extensive damage to the rolls. The overall quittances are legible but individual amounts that were remitted are obscured.
80. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, pp. 45-6.
81. Hatcher, “England in the Aftermath of the Black Death,” pp. 3-35.

value of recompense that officials were given.

2.3.6. Changes in labour service remissions

The introduction of labour services into the accounts began in the 1330s, they were a valuable form of compensation and were only given to a select group of officers. As with both the grain liveries, rent quittances, and stipends, the number of recipients of labour service remissions noticeably decreased during the mid-late fourteenth century. The total number of labour services quit on the manor of Glastonbury decreased dramatically from over 1,000 in 1334/5 to as low as 219 in 1365/6 (figure 2.18). However, the standard number of works remitted per individual, 105 in winter and 68 in autumn, remained the same from 1334 until 1393. Similarly, it can be observed that the number of acres of work quit decreased. It is apparent that more remittances were given prior to the Black Death, predominantly due to the quittances that the reeve and messor received, as is shown in figure 2.19. Consistent with the trends observed in remuneration through grain liveries and monetary perks, the decrease in the number of works remitted was a real change in administrative structure; there was a reduction in the number of recipients rather than a devaluation of their compensation. Labour services, when performed to a satisfactory standard, were a significant cost-saving mechanism for the manorial administration. The reduction in the number of officials and workers that were given labour service remittances were a method through which the lord was able to mitigate costs during periods of economic hardship and high labour prices.

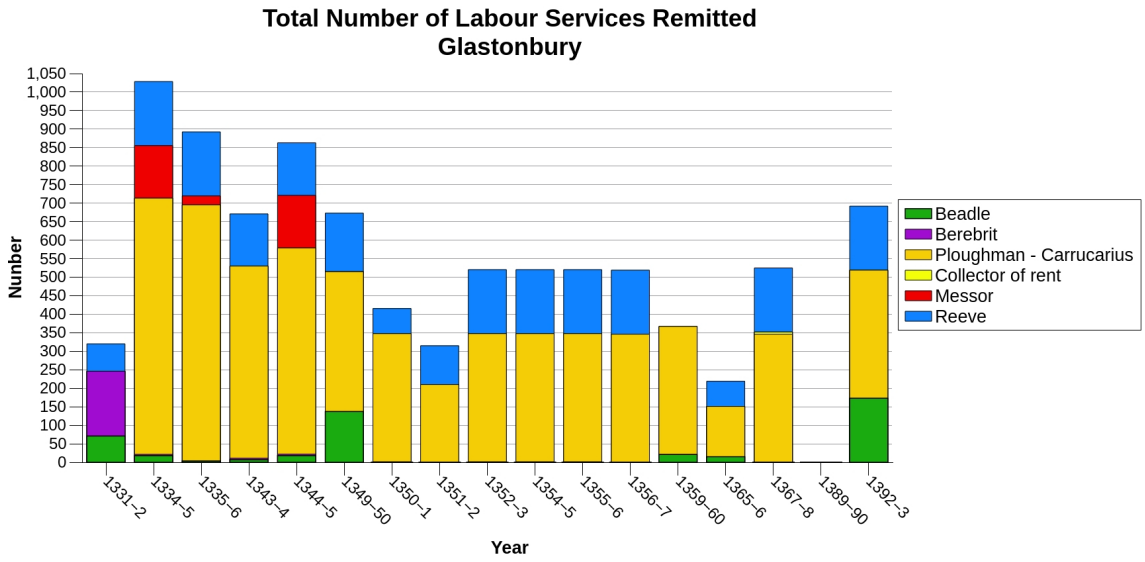


Figure 2.18: Chart showing the total number of labour services remitted, broken down by official, at the manor of Glastonbury.

2.3.7. The correlation between types of remuneration

The form and quantity of remuneration given to an official was, to a large extent, determined by custom, however, when change was incorporated into the system, it was a carefully calculated decision by the manorial administration.[82] When adjustments were made in how an official was to be remunerated in one form of compensation, corresponding changes in the other categories of recompense can also be observed. For example, in 1314/5, the berebrit of Nettleton was not given a rent quittance but, instead, they were granted six bushels of wheat for six weeks of work in November and December. This change in remuneration was likely due to either the status of the individual holding that office or that the tasks performed by the berebrit differed to those in other years. This example highlights that compensatory forms of payment were, to some extent, interchangeable and utilised by the seigneurial authority, if one form of remuneration was not granted then an equivalent payment was made.

The practice of alternative or compensatory remuneration was evident on other

82. For example, agricultural treatises dedicate significant attention to detailing how a manor should be structured. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*.

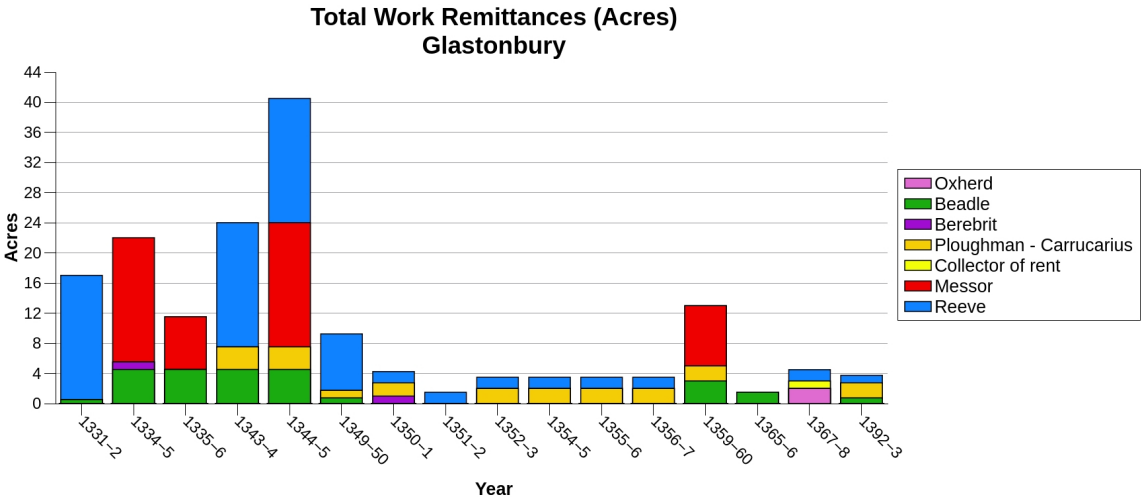


Figure 2.19: Chart showing the total number of acres quit for labour service remissions, broken down by official, at the manor of Glastonbury.

manors across England; on one of the manors belonging to the bishopric of Winchester, the reeve was given an additional 1*s* 6*d* for making a plough for the lord, as they should have been quit this labour service.[83] A similar occurrence can be observed in the rent quittances given to the reeves of Ashcott, shown in figure 2.3, page 106, where there were a number of years in which the reeve was given a substantially larger rent quittance. Peter Olderene, the reeve in 1346/7, was quit the rent of an additional 10.5 acres, priced at 3*s* 6*d*, because he did not owe the lord ploughing services.[84] Walter Dorich, reeve in 1346/7, and William atte Halle, reeve in 1368/9 and 1374/5, were both quit the rent of a virgate of land, and it was specified that they were quit such a large sum because they did not owe labour services. There were only two years where the reeve was quit the rent of a ferdel (1393/4 and 1394/5) but there is too little information to be certain as to whether the amounts that were quit represented a change in the remuneration that was given or if this was due to the holdings of this specific reeve. When the officials of Ashcott did not owe certain services, they were still recompensed for the fulfilment of their duties. The variations in the totals when the reeve was compensated for not owing further labour services

83. M. Page, *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1301-2*, vol. 14 (Winchester, Hampshire County Council, 1996), pp. 73, 226.
84. *GADL*, MS 5270, Reel 1, Ashcott, 1346/7.

was also in proportion to the size of their holding. In 1334/5 and 1345/6 the reeve held half a virgate, in 1368/9 and 1374/5 a virgate, and in 1393–5 they held a ferdel, which provides information on not only the different rents for holdings but also the value of labour services. The amount of rent usually remitted for officials holding half a virgate of land was 30*d*, with an additional 28.5*d* of quittances for larder, vinea, Peterspence and contributions to the hallmoot. The rent quittances that Walter Dorich received, which were greater because he did not owe labour services, were for 154*d*, which was an additional 94.5*d*. The significant increases in rent quittances that the reeves of Ashcott received highlights both the fiscal value of labour services, as well as the importance of ensuring that officials were sufficiently compensated for their service to the lord.

In contrast to the rebalancing of monetary remuneration observed at Ashcott, the officials at Glastonbury do not appear to have received compensation. It may be that the Glastonbury officials were more likely, than at Ashcott, to owe the lord labour services. However, when the Glastonbury officerholders did not owe labour services, they were not given higher rent quittances. It is plausible that these officers received compensation in other forms but these are not observable in the records. It is also interesting to note that, during the later fourteenth century, there was an increase in the number of tenants holding office who did not owe labour services, as is evident in table 2.3. Officials that no longer answered for certain labour services first appear at Ashcott, in 1345, and slightly later, in 1349, at Glastonbury. That there was a decrease across the period in the number of office-holders who owed labour services agrees with the findings of Bailey, who suggested that this trend was due to reluctance to perform servile works, as well as new tenancy agreements that did not include customary dues.[85] The Glastonbury manors continued to utilise the labour services owed by their tenants into the fifteenth century, however, as the decrease in

85. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, pp.89-91.

the number of officials owing servile works indicates, the movement away from this practice has roots within the mid-fourteenth century.

A trend towards the divestment of customary dues by the peasantry can be observed in the increase in the number of officials who were reported to not owe churchscot. At Glastonbury, in 10 out of 12 accounts from the second half of fourteenth century, it was recorded that the reeve was to be quit from given hens for churchscot, but that they either did not owe or their holding did not answer. The customary dispensation, where churchscot would be remitted, was of no benefit to the office-holder; these manorial officers received a *de facto* decrease in reward in comparison to an official that owed these obligations. The Glastonbury officials, despite the accounts stipulating that they would have been in receipt of this recompense, were not compensated via other forms of remuneration. That manorial officials were not always reimbursed by other types of payment has also been observed in the accounts of other manors across England; Bennett found on the manors of Ramsey and Castlecombe that the lord would exact half a mark from officials instead of the other works which they owed or would only allow remissions for certain services.[86] The examples of Ashcott and Glastonbury show a lack of consistency in the value of compensation that officials received, which emphasises how the differences between manorial administrations and economies could cause significant variation in the treatment of the peasant officials. The rewards of holding office could differ based upon the holdings of each individual, and also by the specific manor, even manors that were within close proximity to each other. Whilst the exact remuneration could fluctuate, office-holding was still an attractive position to the peasantry because of its stability and status, particularly during periods of socio-economic hardship, as shown by the consistency in the payment of grain liveries. Furthermore, it is likely, as Dyer has argued, that, whilst auditors examined the manorial account closely,

86. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 177.

Year	Official	Works quit but not owed				
		Ploughing	Winter	Autumn	Reaping	General
1349/50	Berebrit		✓	✓		
1349/50	Beadle		✓			
1349/50	Reeve					✓
1349/50	Wykmann					✓
1349/50	Wykmann					✓
1350/1	Berebrit		✓			
1350/1	Beadle		✓	✓		
1351/2	Beadle	✓	✓			
1351/2	Berebrit		✓			
1352/3	Beadle	✓	✓	✓		
1352/3	Berebrit		✓			
1354/5	Beadle	✓	✓	✓		
1354/5	Messor		✓			
1354/5	Berebrit		✓			
1355/6	Beadle	✓	✓	✓		
1355/6	Berebrit		✓			
1356/7	Beadle	✓	✓	✓		
1356/7	Messor		✓			
1356/7	Berebrit		✓			
1359/60	Messor	✓				
1365/6	Rent Collector			✓		✓
1365/6	Reeve					✓
1367/8	Rent Collector		✓		✓	
1367/8	Beadle	✓	✓	✓		
1367/8	Reeve				✓	
1389/90	Reeve				✓	
1389/90	Rent Collector				✓	
1389/90	Beadle				✓	
1392/3	Rent Collector	✓	✓	✓	✓	
1392/3	Reeve				✓	
1392/3	Beadle				✓	

Table 2.3: Table showing the labour services at Glastonbury that would have been quit but the prospective recipient did not owe the obligation to the lord.

the significant number of reeves who held repeatedly suggests the holding of office was sufficiently rewarding.[87] As well as potentially conferring significant benefits, the payments of the necessary fines to avoid office would have been expensive, as shall be discussed further in Chapter 3. Office-holding cannot be understood as solely a dichotomy between desirability or undesirability, remuneration was complex, and the extent to which new officers would have been aware of the precise payments of their predecessor is unclear.

2.3.8. Change: the appearance and disappearance of various offices

Variation in the types of recipient was evident upon all five manors; as such, an examination of these changes, or the lack thereof, enhances an understanding of the responses of the abbots of Glastonbury to the wider socio-economic events in this period. There was a significantly wider variety of type of recipient of the various forms of remuneration in the earlier fourteenth century in comparison to the later decades. Enclosers and dairyworkers were regularly given stipends at Glastonbury until 1315, after which there is only a single reference to the payment of a dairyworker, in 1392. Similarly, whilst the *cadavatores* first appeared on all five manors in the court rolls in 1365 and 1366, the office was not recorded in the accounts as receiving any remuneration. It is unlikely that there were no dairyworkers during this intervening period or that the *cadavatores* received no payments for their work. It is plausible that this lack of compensation was due to a clerical decision that omitted these details or that the remuneration of certain workers was recorded in other, additional accounts. These examples highlight the fragmented nature of the information recorded within the accounts; the full picture of remuneration is not necessarily available. However, long-term trends can be still be extracted from the accounts despite the short-term

87. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540*, p. 117.

variations and incompleteness that potentially mask the fine detail.

There were a number of particularly notable changes throughout the fourteenth century in how the *famuli* and workers were remunerated on the manors of Ashcott and Glastonbury. The carters of Glastonbury were given grain liveries every year until 1346, after which they did not receive any. The number of ploughmen (*carrucarius*) remunerated also decreased significantly; until 1340 there were between 8 and 10 ploughmen who received quittance of churchscot, in 1343 this number dropped to 3, and, subsequently, in the 1350s the oxherds received these quittances. This does not appear to be a change in terminology as '*carrucarius*' appear in the accounts receiving rent quittances throughout the fourteenth century. There were also changes in the remuneration given to the drivers of the plough (*fugatores*) who received grain consistently until 1351, after which they were intermittently given grain liveries on only a small number of occasions, and then nothing after 1360. The oxherds received no stipends after 1360, although they were given a higher quittance for churchscot, but it is unlikely that this compensatory increase was equivalent to the value of the stipends. In contrast, there was an increase, at both Ashcott and Glastonbury, in the number of shepherds receiving stipends from the 1350s. The changes in this period may be an indication of a shift towards less formal labour service arrangements; by not using officials and *famuli*, where the remuneration was fairly rigid and regulated by custom, the estate could hire workers for task-based pay, similar to piecework. With the decrease in the number of ploughmen receiving churchscot, a decrease in the number of oxherds and drovers receiving monetary perks, and the increase in the shepherds being compensated, it may be that the economy was shifting towards animal-centric farming and production, in particular sheep, at Glastonbury at this time. The reason for these broader changes may be because pastoral farming was less labour-intensive, which enabled lords to save money in a period of high labour costs, as well as an increase in demand for meat in the later fourteenth cen-

tury.[88] The remuneration of officials and workers, and which offices were present on the manor, changed to reflect the needs and requirements of the manor, that which was produced upon the manor, and the abbot's intent on how the manor was to be managed.

Changes in the presence and remuneration of the highest ranking peasant officials shows a similar variability to that of the *famuli* and other workers. The precise changes that occurred differed by manor, again highlighting that, to a notable extent, the administrative direction of a manor was separate from the central authority of the abbot, and officialdom was used to adapt to the local needs of a manor. For example, whilst the messor of Glastonbury continued to receive compensation throughout the period, the messor of Ashcott no longer received grain after 1350 and no remuneration at all after 1369. It is possible that, at Ashcott, the berebrit or another official took on more of these responsibilities in order to reduce the overall expenditure on officials. In contrast, the berebrit of Glastonbury no longer received any remuneration after 1357. This coincides with the increased prevalence of the rent collector, which suggests that the granger became less significant and the duties of the rent collector increased and thus received more remuneration for holding office. This would support the change being caused by a move towards a rentier economy, however, this was not also observed with the berebrit of Ashcott who continued to receive rent quittances throughout the period. After 1352 the Ashcott berebrit was no longer in receipt of labour service remittances, despite the duties that they performed remaining similar. For example, Nicholas atte Wynke served as berebrit in 1393–5, recorded alongside the rent quittances he was given was the amount of money that he had paid for his labour services to be commuted.[89] So, whilst the office itself remained present on the manor, the perceived value of their work or the number of duties associated with it were reduced. The change in the remuneration given to the

88. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, pp. 77-99.
89. *GADL*, MS 5271, Reel 2, Ashcott, 1393/4 and MS 5262, Reel 2, Ashcott, 1394/5.

berebrit may also be indicative of the decreased perceived value of the office to the manor in this period, due to an increase in pastoral agriculture and a shift towards a more rentier economy.

2.3.9. Continuity

Whilst the accounts of the Glastonbury manors do show that there was an aspect of responsiveness and sensitivity to both local and more widespread events, and present an understanding of officialdom as being a mechanism for addressing these forms of change, there was also a high degree of economic and administrative continuity that must also be acknowledged. Flexibility was a component of the manorial system but this can be considered as a necessary support for the relatively rigid core, a stable and inflexible socio-economic structure with adaptive capacity rather than an adaptive system. Examples of the Glastonbury estate's particular rigidity in structure can be found across all of the manors; at both Ashcott and Glastonbury, the manors continued to use their demesne until the 1490s, after which they moved to a rentier economy. As discussed in Chapter 1, this change occurred much later than on manors in other parts of the country, the Glastonbury abbots utilised the services and the demesne land throughout the fourteenth century.[90] Customary practices remained strong at Glastonbury and were subject to little change in comparison to other manors across England. For example, whilst the amount of land held by each official may have varied, the rent quittances associated with each holding did not. Similarly, the number of hens owed, and thus quit, for churchscot was directly correlated to the land held; anyone holding a ferdel was quit 2.5, holders of half a virgate were quit 3, and holders of a virgate were remitted of 5. That this remained the same across the entire 137 year period of this study demonstrates the high degree of continuity

90. Farmer, "Grain Yields on the Winchester Manors in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 562. Halcrow, "The Decline of Demesne Farming on the Estates of Durham Cathedral Priory," p. 346.

at the Glastonbury manors. The abbots of Glastonbury were a monolithic power and likely had little pressure or incentive to make changes that were not favoured by their own interests. This continuity and consistency attests to the control exerted by the abbots of Glastonbury that allowed them to maintain and enforce their feudal dues within the climate of increased socio-economic change that occurred during the fourteenth century.

There was no change in the value of the individual stipends paid to a number of the manorial officials and workers during the period of this study. Langdon has similarly noted that wages paid to labourers remained relatively fixed, and that fluctuations were usually within a 'mutually accepted level set by custom'.[91] At Glastonbury, the ploughmen received 60*d* per year throughout the entire period studied, which is remarkably consistent considering the changes that occurred during this period. This consistency demonstrates the strength of the abbots of Glastonbury in terms of their ability to maintain the favourable status quo. When accounting for inflation and increased living costs, the continuity of these stipends can be understood to be a real-terms decrease in the value of their remuneration. However, it should be noted that it is also possible that the roles of these officials and workers changed or that they worked fewer days. Dyer has noted that there was a decrease in the number of ploughs employed on manors in this period, he argues that this became a point of increased tension in the later fourteenth century as the estate managers still demanded that a similar amount of land be cultivated despite fewer ploughman working the land.[92] These tactics, such as the increase in work-load, help to explain the decreases in the number of officials and workers being remunerated. Despite this decrease, these roles still provided a steady and continuous income for the tenants

91. J. Langdon, "Waged Building Employment in Medieval England: Subsistence Safety Net or Demographic Trampoline?," in *Survival and Discord in Medieval Society, Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer*, ed. R. Goddard, J. Langdon, and M. Müller (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 109-26, 117.

92. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540*, pp. 122-7.

that occupied them.[93] It may also be that the officials and workers were compensated in some other form that was not recorded in the account, as has been found by other scholars when examining the impact of the Statute of Labourers, although this cannot be definitively demonstrated on the manors in this study.[94] Whilst officials and workers may have been remunerated in other forms, that the abbots of Glastonbury were able to maintain authority and minimise the fluctuation in rates of compensation attests to both the strength of custom and the flexibility of the Glastonbury administrative structures whereby officialdom was utilised to adapt to local needs.

2.4. Conclusions

The examination of manorial officialdom through remuneration has provided deeper understanding into the structure of officialdom, perceptions of office and the value of their work, administrative practice, the impact of wider socio-economic change and the role of different topographies in affecting how officers were paid. Rent quittances, stipends, and grain liveries were given to a wide variety of recipients, who can be divided into two distinct categories; the first of which was a core group of officials, those who received remuneration with a very high degree of consistency throughout the period, and the second, a wider group, who only received more intermittently. The majority of officials were granted either rent quittances or stipends for their office-holding with only a select group receiving labour service remissions. That only more senior supervisory officials were given labour service remissions suggests that these were considered one of the most valuable forms of compensation, likely, in part, because it gave the officeholder more time in which to pursue other activities or work.

93. Dyer, “Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective,” p. 159.
94. Carlin, “Cheating the Boss: Robert Carpenter’s Embezzlement Instructions (1261x1268) and Employee Fraud in Medieval England,” pp. 183-97.

The remuneration received by each individual official or person was strongly constrained by custom, dependant upon their office, status, and holdings. Officials were not given greater remuneration for exemplary performance but a standard and predetermined amount of either rent and labour quittances or stipends and grain liveries. For determining the amount of rent quittances, it was the size of the officer's holdings that was the primary factor used to decide the value of remuneration. Officials with larger holdings would have greater amounts of rent quit, likely because they suffered greater losses than small-holders by not having the time to work upon their own land. Providing greater value of remuneration for those with larger holdings meant that the abbey was better able to extract service from those individuals. The tenants with larger holdings had more investment in the effective functioning of the manor and more to lose by failure to fulfil the requirements of office. These tenants effectively provided greater surety, as higher value losses could be recouped more easily from them. From the perspective of the seigneurial authority, the remuneration of office-holders was, therefore, necessarily a balance between costs, ensuring it was not too expensive to run the manor, and incentive, which must be sufficient to encourage suitable peasants to hold office.

Throughout the 137 year period, there was a large degree of continuity which, given the effects of inflation, can be regarded as stagnant. When examining how much officials were paid, that the amounts for many officers or workers remained the same across the period shows a real-terms decrease during the later fourteenth century. As well as continuity, there was also a considerable degree of change in terms of which officials received perks and in what quantity or type. Changes in administrative structure can be observed in the reduction of the number of recipients across several of the remuneration categories, indicating a responsive adaptation to the period's economic hardship and high labour prices. The officials and workers present upon the manor reflected the needs and requirements of the production of

that manor, as well as the seigneurial demands upon the economy. Hence, the perceived value of some offices can be said to have altered due to the wider conditions within society and that this was evidenced by how they were remunerated.

Remuneration, although constrained by custom, was flexible and could be adapted to changing circumstances; the interdependency between the different forms of compensation is clearly demonstrated by the inversion correlation between various types of recompense granted to specific officers. The ability to vary between different types of remuneration allowed excesses of labourers, grain, or animals to be utilised effectively, it was a flexibility for the manorial authority that allowed them to respond to wider socio-economic events using local conditions. Whilst these were not necessarily directly recorded within the manorial documentation, the adaptation through officialdom does reflect their presence. Examining change through the lens of officialdom and remuneration shows the indications of a shift towards a more rentier economy with a slow movement away from direct management and a gradual decline in the importance of particular offices upon the Glastonbury estates. However, the importance of officialdom in supporting the manorial system is clearly evident; the large-scale structure of the Glastonbury manors could remain a constant because officialdom allowed for them to absorb change through local adaptations to administrative structure. That the system allowed for adaptation whilst still maintaining societal structure, adherence with custom and tradition, and the authority of the lord undoubtedly contributed to the longevity of the Glastonbury manorial system. Alongside profit, maintaining the societal structure through the hierarchies of officialdom was a primary purpose of the manorial system. As such the remunerations of officialdom were necessarily intended to disallow significant social advancement by the peasantry but also had to reflect the demands of the wider economy.

Whilst remuneration was intended to incentivise office-holding, it cannot be un-

derstood solely as a simply dichotomy between desirability and cost. It was not the only factor influencing the perceptions of the value of office-holding and, whilst it did not necessarily allow advancement beyond peasant status, it did allow for a degree of self-direction, higher status, and authority upon the manor. The remuneration of office ensured that the officer had food and money during periods of uncertainty or scarcity and it also provided opportunities for economic gain during more stable periods. For this reason, the value of office-holding cannot be understood by examining solely the various types of remuneration in isolation, nor by considering the values as a simple balance in the dichotomy between desirability and undesirability. Remuneration, to the office-holder, was an incentive and form of recompense but, to the seigneurial authority, it also gave another degree of freedom to the manorial system, a mechanism by which certain roles could be prioritised.

Chapter 3

The Roles of Manorial Officials in the Manor Court

3.1. Introduction

Lord-peasant and intra-peasant relationships have been a topic of considerable interest to scholars, these debates and discussions have centred around the examination of ideas of peasant communities and neighbourliness, diverging class interests, social mobility and oppression, and change throughout the later middle ages.[1] This chapter seeks to add to the prior scholarship by analysing the activities and role of officials, and how the holding of office impacted their position and relationships with both their lord and wider society. It will explore attitudes towards office-holding and how these positions of authority were regarded, whether they were considered opportunities for socio-economic advancement or onerous burdens. This chapter will also analyse the activities of manorial officials in the court, the frequency of presentment by officials, and how the peasantry perceived seigneurial authority, as shown through their obstruction to the orders of the lord and his officials. Finally, it will examine the types of cases in which officials appeared in as defendants and how

1. The development of these debates are discussed in fuller detail in: Schofield, *Peasants and Historians, Debating the Medieval English Peasantry*.

frequently they were given pardons or amerced.

The hallmoot court rolls of the Glastonbury Abbey manors recorded the intricate details of land transfers, marriage fines, and heriots, as well as the various transgressions committed by both the peasantry and manorial officials. The types of cases that were prevalent on all five manors were largely similar in form, the only differences being attributable to the specific environment of that manor, for example, digging without license in the moors surrounding Ashcott. This chapter will examine these differences in terms of how often officials or non-officials were charged, the types of cases in which they were involved, and whether officials were treated differently by the court. It will explore the different types of faults and transgressions committed by officials and what this can reveal about attitudes of offices towards seigneurial authority. This will be considered within the wider framework of change across the period, the variation between urban and rural manors, as well as how the depictions and portrayals of officials in images and literature compare to that within the manorial documentation.

As stated in the Introduction, almost all of the surviving court rolls for the manors in this study were for hallmoot courts. Whilst the abbot had the rights to hold other types of court, such as tourns, law-hundreds, and even county courts, few of these records have survived for the manors in this study. There are only two law-hundred court rolls, from the years 1311 and 1364, for the manors of Ashbury, Damerham, and Glastonbury.[2] These courts contained a large number of cases not extant in the hallmoot courts, in particular they detailed intra-peasant disputes, violence, detention of money and grain, brewing and selling against the assize of bread and ale, and, in the later fourteenth century, there were also presentments under the Statute of Labourers. These few surviving court records reveal a highly active peasantry

2. *GADL*, MS 10767, Reel 24, 1311; MS 11183, Reel 26, 1364.

who utilised the courts to help mediate their disputes. In contrast, the dataset for the hallmoot courts contains significantly fewer intra-peasant disputes; there were only 3 at Ashbury, 5 at Nettleton, 11 at Glastonbury, 18 at Ashcott, and 19 at Damerham. The focus of this chapter will therefore be upon how peasant infractions and obstruction to orders in the hallmoot are reflective of their attitude to lordship and officials, as representatives of his authority, rather than peasant-official relationships.

Scholars have extensively examined the impact that servile burdens have had upon the lord-peasant relationship, and the extent to which modern historians can conceive of the peasantry as a distinct 'class'.[3] How manorial officials fit within their peasant communities was complex, dependant upon local societal and administrative structures, individual personalities and actions, as well as being influenced by wider socio-economic events and conditions. Hilton has argued that although there were socio-economic differences among the peasantry, they can be identified by their struggle against the lord's power and control over the productive resources of the manorial economy.[4] More recent scholarship has explored these ideas further, examining the nuances and onerousness of villeinage; Dyer states that although lords did increase rents, this was often done using indirect methods in order to prevent rebellious responses from the tenantry.[5] Hatcher similarly found that serfdom provided protections against wider economic fluctuations and that custom prevented constant increases in rents and services in line with inflation.[6] And in a recent examination of the levying of tallage, Bailey concluded that whilst lords theoretically had the rights to exact these dues at will that in reality it was quite tightly constrained by custom.[7] This

3. See the 'Introduction' for further discussion of this topic.

4. Hilton, *The English peasantry in the later Middle Ages: the Ford lectures for 1973, and related studies*, pp. 13-7. Schofield, *Peasants and Historians, Debating the Medieval English Peasantry*, p. 96.

5. C. Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages, The People of Britain 850-1520* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 179.

6. J. Hatcher, "English Serfdom and Villeinage: Towards a Reassessment," *Past & Present*, no. 90 (1981): pp. 3-39.

7. Bailey, "Tallage-at-Will in Later Medieval England," p. 57. See also: Bonfield, "The Nature of

scholarship has emphasised the imbalance inherent to the power dynamic between the lord and the peasantry, whilst manorial lords may theoretically be perceived as having absolute authority over the tenantry, custom and the implicit consent of the peasantry were important moderating factors that determined the limits of the actual exercise of power. Although the lord-peasant relationship was biased in favour of the lord, it would not have been practical or prudent for the seigneurial authority to entirely ignore the needs of the peasantry. Furthermore, individual styles of lordship played an important part in how these relationships were negotiated; ecclesiastical estates have been noted to have been more strict and onerous than their lay counterparts.[8] The local environment, customs, and manorial structure had a significant role in influencing the interactions and relationship between the peasantry and the lord. At Glastonbury the abbot retained a large degree of control over the tenantry, and as found by Dyer, Hatcher, and Bailey, custom was important in its power over determining obligations, rents, wages, and quittances on each of the manors.

The vast size of the Glastonbury estate, and its intricate administrative system, meant that peasant interaction with the abbot of Glastonbury was indirect and primarily mediated via the manor's officials and court system. Direct interaction between the lord and the peasants was unlikely to be a common occurrence, peasants would have had less room to manoeuvre and negotiate for change in the terms of their tenancies and obligations. The size of the Glastonbury estate would also have likely decreased the bargaining power of these unfree tenants in comparison to those that resided upon smaller manors, as relatively poorer lords, who owned fewer manors, relied more heavily upon each individual manor.[9] Upon the manors of Glastonbury, there were a small number of occasions in which negotiation between the peasants

Customary Law in the Manor Courts of Medieval England," p. 519.

8. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, pp. 7-8.

9. *Ibid.*

and the seigneurial authority can be observed, however, these were uncommon.[10] In 1371, a new agreement was made between the abbot and the tenants of Damerham, this defined the conditions of the office of swineherd which was to be valid for the next twenty years; the swineherd was to be chosen from amongst the tenantry and for each year that they served they would receive both rent and labour service quittances pertaining to a ferdel of land.[11] The exact changes in the conditions and remuneration for the swineherd is not clear as the account rolls for Damerham do not survive after 1335 and the earlier accounts did not include labour services. Prior to 1371, the swineherd received rent quittances for a ferdel of land, amounting to 15*d*, and was given a piglet, which suggests that it may have been the inclusion of the labour services remittances that was the new component of the agreement. By negotiating a new agreement with the abbot, the tenants of Damerham were able to ensure that there was acceptable recompense for holding this position and that it could not be altered or reduced by the lord within the next twenty years. The lord-peasant relationship was one of inequality, with the imbalance heavily favouring the interests of the lord, however, a rigid adherence to custom, which was renegotiable only in a very defined manner, also helped to protect the peasantry.[12] Bailey has commented upon the shift in approach by landlords in the later fourteenth century, that is moved towards more negotiation and conciliation.[13] Birrell also found evidence of negotiation between the lord and tenants over how tenants were to be fed during boon works for the lord.[14] Thus, such examples of negotiation are reflective both of the flexibility within the broader structure and the changes in the relationship between the peasantry and the lord in the later fourteenth century.

The manorial court was one of the key areas in which custom was enforced, and

10. *GADL*, MS 10645, Reel 27, Ashcott, 1369.
11. *Ibid.*, MS 10646, Reel 28, Damerham, 1371.
12. Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages, The People of Britain 850-1520*, p. 179.
13. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, p. 112.
14. Birrell, “Peasants Eating and Drinking,” pp. 1-18.

so peasant perception of the court must have been complex, a combination of a forced, seigneurial obligation and a mechanism that they could use to help mediate conflict and bring important matters to the attention of the lord. That the manor court was seen as capable of the enforcement of laws, expectations, and norms is particularly well-evidenced by the utilisation of the courts by the tenantry in order to help regulate intra-peasant conflict, their reliance indicating that the courts were a societal structure that allowed for the pursuit of their own interests in the resolution of conflict with other peasants.[15] Intra-peasant dispute resolution through the court was less prevalent at Glastonbury, primarily due to the types of cases presented in the hallmoot court. However, the enforcement of court orders by officials is evident throughout the period and the tenants were active in their use of the courts for the acquisition of land, obtaining marriage licenses, and the payment of other customary dues, as is shown in table 3.1. Damerham in particular had a high number of land acquisitions and marriage licenses, which indicates an active land market and large population and shows a willing engagement with the court system by the peasantry, although this is still within the confines of the interests of the seigneurial authority who often directly profited from these transactions and interactions.[16]

The court system can be conceptualised as a seigneurial space that also provided benefit to the peasantry, an institution that reinforced the societal structure by providing necessary utility. Similarly to the derived benefit of the court system, Claridge and Gibbs have argued that certain customary regulations were primarily positive for the peasantry.[17] In particular, they argue that the responsibility of the lord and his officials to account for strays brought little to no financial gain to the lord but,

15. Müller, “A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England,” p. 129. Dyer, “Courts and Urbanisation: Jurisdiction in the Late Medieval Seigneurial Boroughs and Towns,” p. 114.
16. Dyer, “Courts and Urbanisation: Jurisdiction in the Late Medieval Seigneurial Boroughs and Towns,” p. 115.
17. Claridge and Gibbs, “Waifs and Strays: Property Rights in Late Medieval England,” pp. 1-40.

Manor	Land Acquisition	Marriage License	Stray Animal	Miscella-neous	Total
Ashbury	39	7	0	0	46
Ashcott	51	18	4	0	73
Damerham	131	50	1	19	201
Glastonbury	79	11	1	1	92
Nettleton	63	14	2	5	84

Table 3.1: Number of fines paid at each manor by category.

by taking on this responsibility, the lord was able to ensure a more harmonious and well-functioning environment.[18] This line of reasoning suggests that, as Dyer similarly notes in his work, whilst lords sought to exert their authority over their tenants, this was partially because they considered lordship as a positive good and, where the interests of lordship and the peasantry could be aligned, lordship may have had a design of paternalistic authority.[19] Courts were seen as part of the obligation of a lord to the peasantry, an element in the justification of the tripartite system that also could not practically function without some degree of authority implicitly granted by the attendees.[20] It would be erroneous to assume that the court system represented a harmonisation of seigneurial and peasant interests, it must also be remembered that the manorial structure and court served the seigneurial authority and enabled the lord to satisfy the grievances of the peasantry whilst profiting from these cases. The power dynamic was unbalanced, with the unfree peasantry only able to use these courts and, therefore, forced to become reliant upon the seigneurial framework, but this does not mean that the dictates of custom did not also place constraints upon the lord of the manor.

18. Claridge and Gibbs, “Waifs and Strays: Property Rights in Late Medieval England,” pp. 1-40. See also: Larson, *Conflict and Compromise in the Late Medieval Countryside: Lords and Peasants in Durham 1349-1400*, p. 6.

19. Dyer, “Courts and Urbanisation: Jurisdiction in the Late Medieval Seigneurial Boroughs and Towns,” p. 114. Gibbs, “Lords, Tenants and Attitudes to Manorial Office-holding, c. 1300-1600’,” p. 158.

20. Dyer, “Courts and Urbanisation: Jurisdiction in the Late Medieval Seigneurial Boroughs and Towns,” p. 114.

3.2. Officials as plaintiffs and enforcers of seigneurial authority

The supervisory officials were the most frequent enforcers of the orders of the court, more commonly making presentments than officers or workers with more rigid domains of authority, such as animal custodians, who only rarely presented cases. The volume of activity of officers, and perhaps onerousness of office-holding, are partially evident through the number of cases in which officials appeared as plaintiffs. Officers with a greater level of responsibility and authority presented significantly more cases, as is shown in tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4.[21] These tables show that officials appeared in the record significantly more as plaintiffs, rather than defendants, and that, in the majority of instances, officials acted as enforcers of the lord's authority rather than opponents to it. For each official, the types of cases that they presented were closely associated with the duties of their office. For example, the messor was the key official in making presentments for *imparcamentum* and the reeve, who had the largest diversity in terms of duties, shows significant variation in the nature of the cases that they presented to the court, encompassing strays, land, customary dues, detention, elections, and carrying out the orders of the court. Unsurprisingly, given their high ranking position and diverse range of responsibilities on the manor, the reeve and messor have the highest totals as both plaintiffs and defendants; this suggests that they interacted frequently with the manorial community through the court system and that these positions were often in opposition to other members of the peasantry.[22] In contrast, other officials, such as the woodward, parker, moorward, equitators, and ripreeve, appeared less frequently and usually made fewer attachments, reflecting the specificity of their domains of authority and more limited adversarial relationships

21. It is important to note the impact of changes in how cases were recorded upon the statistical analysis as later court rolls only stated the total of amercements for imparcamentum rather than the details of each case. For example, tenants being late or not present for labour services are obscured in the later records.

22. This shall be discussed in further detail below.

with the wider peasantry.

Manor	Plaintiff	Defendant
Ashbury	112	35
Ashcott	113	37
Damerham	493	70
Glastonbury	533	14
Nettleton	205	30

Table 3.2: Total number of cases in which officials, *famuli*, and workers were plaintiffs and defendants.

The volume of work of a particular office shows in the role that officials had in upholding the orders of the court but this also reflects the differences between administrations of the various manors. There is a particularly apparent distinction between the more urban manors of Damerham and Glastonbury in comparison to the three more rural manors. This discrepancy was likely a product of the physical size of these manors, their populousness, their diverse economies, and the large number of officials resultantly required for administration. Upon both of these manors, the vast majority of cases were for those under *imparcamentum*, comprising over half of the cases, followed by animal-related issues such as strays and murrains. That the number of cases on Glastonbury is higher than Damerham, despite there being significantly fewer surviving court rolls, further attests to their populous character.

3.3. Attitudes to office-holding and the desirability of office

The decision whether to employ an external figure to manage a manor, such as the bailiff, or to utilise the seigneurial right of using the tenantry to serve in office could be

Office / Role	Ashb.	Ashc.	Dam.	Glas.	Net.	Total
Messor	23	28	210	297	37	595
Reeve	22	44	62	36	19	183
Tithingman	0	0	0	0	124	124
Cadavatore	21	25	55	7	7	115
Parker	0	0	52	47	0	99
Beadle	0	0	0	81	0	81
Woodward	0	0	67	5	1	73
Juror	36	6	1	3	2	47
Warrener	0	0	0	34	0	34
Bailiff	4	4	12	2	5	27
Equitator	0	0	27	0	0	27
Moorward	0	0	0	20	2	22
Ripreeve	2	0	3	0	5	10
Berebrit	0	2	2	0	0	4
Oxherd	0	0	0	0	3	3
Attorney	0	2	0	0	0	2
Miller	0	0	2	0	0	2
Supervisor of Sowing	2	0	0	0	0	2
Unclear	2	0	0	0	0	2
Head Juror	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pistor	0	0	0	1	0	1
Rent Collector	0	1	0	0	0	1

Table 3.3: Total number of cases in which each category of official or *famuli* were plaintiffs.

Office / Role	Ashb.	Ashc.	Dam.	Glas.	Net.	Total
Reeve	25	19	9	9	10	72
Messor	2	12	9	3	17	43
Shepherd	0	0	21	0	0	21
Tithingman	0	0	8	0	0	8
Oxherd	1	2	2	0	2	7
Unclear	0	0	5	0	0	5
Swineherd	2	0	2	0	0	4
Berebrit	0	0	3	0	0	3
Cadavatore	0	0	3	0	0	3
Woodward	3	0	0	0	0	3
Capitage-	0	2	0	0	0	2
Narrator	1	1	0	0	0	2
Supervisor	0	0	2	0	0	2
Cariator	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ploughman	1	0	0	0	0	1
Encloser	0	0	1	0	0	1
Equitator	0	0	1	0	0	1
Famuli	0	0	1	0	0	1
Moorward	0	0	0	1	0	1
Servant of Messor	0	0	1	0	0	1
Thresher	0	0	1	0	0	1
Tithing (group)	0	0	0	0	1	1
Winnower	0	0	1	0	0	1
Wykmann	0	0	0	1	0	1

Table 3.4: Total number of cases in which each category of official or *famuli* were defendants.

a complex one. As argued by Briggs, officials that were not residents of the manor were less likely to be influenced by local ties or allegiances but could also be less effective due to their lack of knowledge of the land and tenantry.[23] Furthermore, villein officers were subject to the authority of the lord and, as such, the lord could exact reparations for any wrongdoings from them. On the Glastonbury manors the majority of offices and *famuli* roles were held by the tenants, with only the highest-ranking positions of cellarer, steward, and bailiff being held by external men. That the most authoritative positions being held by men who were not residents of the manor was a reflection of their responsibilities being of high import, open to subversion and theft, or being sufficiently removed from the requirements for local knowledge, they were positions that were likely deemed inappropriate for tenant officers.

Where possible, lords would have offices occupied by the peasantry, as this was cheaper than paying an external official, however, the extent to which tenants actually sought to hold office or positions of authority is subject to debate.[24] Some scholars have argued that, as well as payment, holding office offered opportunities for socio-economic advancement within the manorial community through means of influence over the activities of the community and the various remunerations provided.[25] For

23. The anonymous author of *Husbandry* also suggests this, see: Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. 65. This is also discussed by Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," p. 181.

24. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," pp. 179-95. E. Clark, "Social Welfare and Mutual Aid in the Medieval Countryside," *Journal of British Studies*, no. 33 (1984): pp. 381-406, 384. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, p. 10. Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348*, pp. 168-77. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400*, pp. 65-6. Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," p. 130. Postles, "Personal Pledging: Medieval "Reciprocity" or "Symbolic Capital"?," pp. 419-35. Raftis, "The Concentration of Responsibility in Five Villages," pp. 92-118. P. Schofield, *Peasants and Community in Medieval England, 1200-1500* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 166-75. R. Smith, "Dearth and Local Political Responses: 1280-1325 and 1580-1596/97 Compared," in *Peasants and Lords in the Medieval English Economy: Essays in Honour of Bruce Campbell*, ed. M. Kowaleski, J. Langdon, and P. R. Schofield (Turnhout; Brepols, 2015), pp. 377-406, 385-6. J. Whittle and S. Rigby, "England: Popular Politics and Social Conflict," in *A Companion to Britain in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. S. H. Rigby (Oxford: Wiley, 2003), pp. 65-86.

25. Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348*, pp. 25, 168-77, 261. Olson,

example, recent work by Brown has explored how the plague, and its subsequent outbreaks, altered the employer-employee dynamics through increased wages and land:labour ratio, which then provided opportunities for 'upward social mobility'. He also argues that the leasing of the manors of the Bishop of Worcester in the later fourteenth century provided opportunities for officials to acquire more land.[26] However, Goddard, through an examination of borough court records, demonstrated that some individuals retained their focus upon personal endeavours and, due to this, to hold office was actually detrimental to their wealth as office-holding did not provide a sufficient elevation in status and conditions for these individuals to merit their pursuit of it.[27] Dyer suggests that whilst the position of reeve could be more desirable because they had the opportunity to make illicit profits, a number of officials did not; for example, the rent collector had few chances to obtain more money as they were expected to gather a specified amount.[28] As discussed in Chapter 2, the office of reeve was not remunerated significantly higher than that of the messor or woodward, but it was perhaps more desirable because of the additional opportunities for self-enrichment. Thus, caution needs to be taken in determining the desirability of the different offices.

Hanawalt and Postles have also argued that office-holding was a means through which the wealthier tenants could advance their socio-economic status further through retaining power and authority, and then exerting control over the poorer members of the community.[29] However Dyer has instead suggested that, whilst there was a degree of oligarchy within manorial officialdom, due to the number of different offices

"Jurors of the Village Court: Local Leadership before and after the Plague in Elllington, Huntingdonshire," pp. 237-56. Postles, "Personal Pledging: Medieval "Reciprocity" or "Symbolic Capital"?," pp. 420, 422.

26. A. Brown, "The fear of downward social mobility in late medieval England," *Journal of Medieval History* 45:5 (2019): pp. 597-617, 613.

27. R. Goddard, "Medieval business networks: St Mary's guild and the borough court in later medieval Nottingham," *Urban History* 40:1 (2013): pp. 3-27, 16-9.

28. Brown, "The fear of downward social mobility in late medieval England," p. 613. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540*, p. 115.

29. Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348*, pp. 25, 168-77, 261, 267. Postles, "Personal Pledging: Medieval "Reciprocity" or "Symbolic Capital"?," pp. 420, 422.

at each manor, this was fairly broad.[30] Dyer has challenged the notion that wealthier peasants sought more power and to exert their authority over the other members of the community as servants. Other wage labourers could be the relatives of the wealthier tenants and thus less likely to be opposed to each other.[31] However, Brown has suggested that whilst there may have been little distinction between particular roles, it was for this reason that the differences were more important.[32] The position of manorial officials in the local community was complex, they were elected from the peasantry and similarly subject to the seigneurial authority, however, their roles upon the manor also required them to enforce orders that were potentially in opposition to the interests of their fellow tenants. Whilst officials were a distinct sub-group of the peasantry, whether that can be considered as resulting in divergent material interests is unclear. The extent to which holding office was considered desirable and advantageous was a complex and personal decision; offices did confer substantial benefits upon the occupant official, with rent remission, quittance of labour services, the receipt of grain and monetary remuneration through stipendiary payments, as well as the giving of livestock and food. Furthermore, holding office also provided a stable role and income, particularly in periods of economic hardship or high competition for work and the risk of downward mobility was high.[33] Consistent with this understanding, Dyer has recently argued that through their enforcement and association with authority and the manorial system, officials were able to gain in both status and material terms.[34] These benefits could be a powerful incentive, providing the holder with not only tangible physical rewards but also affording them greater temporal opportu-

30. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, p. 7.

31. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, pp. 7-8. See also: C. Dyer, "Taxation and communities in late medieval England," in *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller*, ed. R. Britnell and J. Hatcher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 168-90. A. Harding, "Review: Crime and Conflict in English Communities, 1300-1348 by Barbara A. Hanwalt," *The American Journal of Legal History* 25, no. 1 (January, 1981): pp. 69-70.

32. Brown, "The fear of downward social mobility in late medieval England," p. 599.

33. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, p. 7. Brown, "The fear of downward social mobility in late medieval England," p. 605.

34. Dyer, "Courts and Urbanisation: Jurisdiction in the Late Medieval Seigneurial Boroughs and Towns," p. 114.

nity through which they could tend to other matters. However, whilst manorial office conferred some power and wealth upon the holder, it also came with culpability, the risk of significant amercements, and a complex social role.[35]

Office-holding may not have been the tool for socio-economic advancement that it has been previously considered. Müller has argued that the socio-economic and political changes of the fourteenth century meant that officials, as the representatives of seigneurial authority, could become the focal point of peasant frustration when officers were enforcing orders and thus frequently found themselves in a position of mediation.[36] Whilst conferring a number of benefits, holding office also came with some onerous responsibilities and it is important to also examine how officials were treated in the court and how often tenants sought to avoid these roles and the techniques that they employed to do so in order to fully understand the position of office-holders in manorial society and the impact it could have upon community relationships.

In a very detailed and unusual case at Damerham, in 1340, two officials were charged with a large number of transgressions and subsequently quit. John Sparke, the reeve, and William Belamy, the berebrit, were accused of taking the lord's grain in carts to their own houses; Sparke, the reeve, did not correctly state various sales in his account for a number of years; Belamy, the berebrit, pastured his animals on the lord's land without permission as well as not supervising the works of the husbandry properly; both men were also presented for a number of other minor charges.[37] Both men denied all, the bailiff and a jury of 24 men, much larger than the normal jury of either 6 or 12, concluded that for all charges, except for the reeve and berebrit carting some grain and overburdening the lord's land, that both men were quit. Briggs has

35. Müller, "The Aims and Organisation of a Peasant Revolt in Early Fourteenth-Century Wiltshire," pp. 6-8.
36. Müller, "Social control and the hue and cry in two fourteenth-century villages," pp. 29-53.
37. *GADL*, MS 10773, Reel 24, Damerham, 1340.

suggested that jurors would often help reeves in such situations in order to help curry favour and that 'attacks' upon reeves and other high ranking officials likely only occurred when jurors felt they were able to accuse the officer without fear of reprisal.[38] In this particular case, two competing explanations can be considered where the officials either committed these transgressions and were shielded by the community or they were innocent and had been treated fairly. With either justification of the actions of the peasantry, it can be perceived that they behaved to protect the officials despite having the opportunity to confer damages upon them. This example demonstrates that, although officialdom likely did bring officials into conflict with the peasantry, the role was not necessarily strictly adversarial. Officials may have been seen as fulfilling a necessary function, albeit one that was not popular.

The interpretation of the role of officialdom as one that was in frequent conflict with the wider peasantry is supported by the general trend of the number of cases presented in the hallmoot court increasing across the period at all but one of the Glastonbury manors, as is shown in figure 3.1. This change indicates a probable increase in the onerousness and conflict in peasant-official interactions, as the majority of cases were brought by the peasant officials against members of the wider peasantry. The potential for substantial fiscal amercements for any failures in their duty and the requirement to enforce the lord's orders and authority over the rest of the manorial community provided sufficient disincentive to motivate peasants to pay to avoid the role. The increased difficulty of office-holding, for the reeve, can be observed in the arrears that were owed throughout the fourteenth century; in 1334/5 the reeve of Glastonbury owed 48*s* 5.25*d* but by 1365 it had risen to £185 4*s* 8.25*d*. Similarly, at Ashcott, in 1305/6 the arrears totalled to 63*s* 3.5*d*, by the 1330s and 1340s it had risen to around £8, and from 1350/1 it jumped again significantly to £61 17*s* 1.75*d*. The arrears further increased in the 1360s to the highest amount of £100

38. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," p. 191.

7*s* 4.75*d* and by the 1390s it had lowered back to around £60. Even the decreases at the end of the fourteenth century were significantly higher than in the pre-plague period. The rise in arrears and the inclusion in the accounts of the debts owed by the various manorial officers is indicative of an increase in the potential burden of culpability associated with incorrect fulfilment of the duties of office-holding. Furthermore, this rise in arrears could result in those who held office being increasingly unwilling and reluctant to fulfil their appointed role, even in their becoming negligent in the execution of the seigneurial will. These findings are supported by the work of Stone, who suggests that the shift in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth century at Wishbech Barton, in which there was a more rapid increase in the turnover of reeves, was due to an inability by the lord to retain efficient officers in a period of increased opportunities.[39]

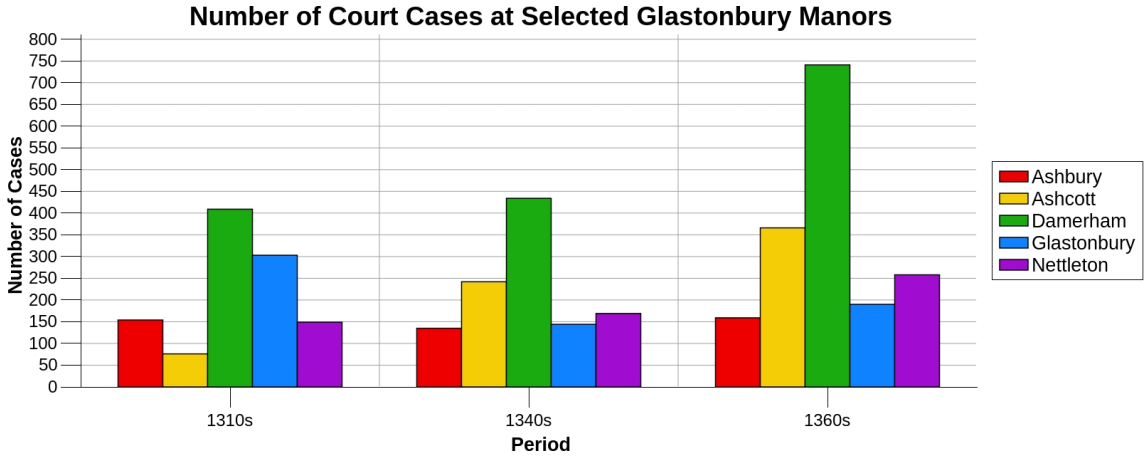


Figure 3.1: Chart showing the number of cases for each of the five manors by period.

The concepts of power and advancement need to be applied carefully in the analysis of officialdom. Some manorial officials held a number of different positions and served in office for multiple terms, however, long-term office-holding does not necessarily indicate that the role was desirable to most peasants. It may be that office-holding was more appealing to those that had already served as an official and,

39. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 105.

rather than socio-economic advancement, long-term holders of office may have already incurred the detrimental social impacts during their previous occupation of a position of conflict with their fellow tenants. Long-term office-holders may have derived greater benefit from the material rewards of office with fewer social impacts beyond their initial harm. This conceptual understanding contrasts directly with notions of socio-economic advancement despite presenting similarly in the historical record. The attraction of the incentives of holding office may have been greater for the subsequent years of service whether that initial service occurred through choice or obligation and damage mitigation.

An examination of the villeins who declined office, usually by means of payment of a fine, served only once or held offices for a number of years, can help to elucidate the more detailed nuances of the peasant conceptualisation of the value of office-holding, as well as give insight into lord-official relationship. The literary depiction of Chaucer's Reeve, Oswold, gives the impression that some reeves certainly sought authority and held their positions for a significant number of years, where it specifically stated: "Of these he'd always rendered an account, Ever since his master reached his twentieth year."[40] Consistent with this representation, a number of scholars have found on manors across England that, whilst the theoretical requirement was to serve in office for a year, it was relatively common for officials to be re-elected and that the lord sought to encourage those who were proficient to remain in office.[41] It has been suggested that the practice of office-holding for a protracted period, often between two and five consecutive years, became more common in the fourteenth century, with a few officers serving for extensive periods of time.[42] At Durham, Larson found that although manorial officials, and in particular reeves, must

40. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, p. 18.

41. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400*, p. 65. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 133.

42. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants in a Changing Society: the Estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 680–1540*, p. 114. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400*, p. 65.

have been in difficult and mediating positions that many reeves served in office for a number of years.[43] Harvey noted that, on the Cuxham manors, reeves would hold office for significant periods.[44] On the Glastonbury manors, although a number of officials held office for multiple terms, it was not to the extent found by Harvey or Larson. The only exception may have been at Ashbury, where Walter de Winterborne served as reeve in both the 1310s and the 1330s but, due to the paucity of material for the 1320s, it is not possible to determine whether he continuously held this role or whether this longevity is a coincidental appearance given by the incompleteness of the extant sources. There are some limitations in accurately ascertaining the number of times an official served in office at Glastonbury, due primarily to the gaps in the record and also the fact that officials were often recorded by their title alone rather than by name. This issue is partially mitigated for Ashcott, as in the later fourteenth century there were additional lists attached to the ends of the account which detailed who had recently held office, such as reeve and rent collector, and how much they owed the lord. At Glastonbury there were a few reeves who held office for a number of years; Thomas Seward was reeve in at least five, non-consecutive years between 1301 and 1315, Philip atte Putte served for six years between 1334 and 1350, and John Bythe Weye also served at least six times in the 1350s and 1360s. In contrast, at Ashcott, Damerham, and Nettleton there was a greater number of different individuals who served as reeve, although it was still common for them to hold office at least twice. Whilst some scholars have argued for the use of office as a means of socio-economic advancement, the holding of office on the manors in this study, as also found by Mullan and Britnell at Witney, were not often used for long-term gain.[45]

43. Larson, *Conflict and Compromise in the Late Medieval Countryside: Lords and Peasants in Durham 1349-1400*, p. 60.

44. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400*, p. 65.

45. Farmer, "The Famuli in the Later Middle Ages," pp. 225, 254. J. Mullan and R. Britnell, *Land and Family: Trends and Local Variations in the Peasant Land Market on the Winchester Bishopric Estates 1263-1415. Studies in Regional and Local History*, vol. 8 (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010), p. 151. K. Workman, "Estate administration in fifteenth century Norfolk: An occupational study" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1990), pp. 204-19.

Whilst remunerations were intended to incentivise office-holding from the perspective of the tenantry, the decision to enter manorial office was undoubtedly a complex one. Office-holding could be impacted by not only the election process but also individual circumstances, all of which must be framed within the context of the tumultuous socio-economic conditions in the fourteenth century. These material conditions determined the ability of peasants to pay the fine to avoid office and whether the benefits of holding office outweighed its drawbacks for an individual. The most common method for avoiding office was the payment of fines in order to be exempt, which could last either for a set number of years or for the remainder of the tenant's life. How individuals went about declining office, and the extent and methods that were taken to avoid it, gives some insight into how the offices were regarded by the community. On all five manors throughout the period of this study, peasants most commonly paid a fine for exemption in advance of their being called upon to serve, rather than once they had been elected.[46] The reason for this advance payment was likely because this provided the tenant the time ahead of the elections to gather the necessary funds for their exemption.

In the manorial accounts of Glastonbury in 1334/5 William de Grensted and Idonia, his wife, paid 7*s* 10.25*d*, and Robert Payn and Mabilla, his wife, paid 12*s* 4.75*d* to be quit from the servile works pertaining to a ferdel as well as the obligation of office.[47] These were an annual payment and the entries are repeated and the same payments listed for a number of years, even in 1344/5 when Idonia was recorded as a widow and made the payments alone. Payments to defer office are also evident in the court rolls; at Nettleton, in 1281, Martin Curteys, upon the acquisition of half a hide of land, paid an additional fine in order to not be reeve, berebrit, hayward or hold

46. Page, *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1301-2*, pp. 185-6. Bailey, "Villeinage in England: A Regional Case Study, c. 1250 - c. 1349," p. 441.

47. *GADL*, MS 11239, Reel 2, Glastonbury, 1334/5; MS 11243, Reel 2, Glastonbury 1335/6; MS 11226, Reel 2, Glastonbury 1343/4; MS 11227, Reel 2, Glastonbury 1344/5.

other offices for his life term.[48] At Ashbury, in 1308, Geoffrey atte Mulle paid 40*s* to be quit from a number of offices, including reeve.[49] At Nettleton, in 1366, John le Noble, who held three virgates and a messuage, paid a large sum of 10 marks in order to be quit from all offices for rest of his life.[50] The payment of such significant amounts in exchange for a lifetime acquittal from these duties indicates that, from the perspective of some of the peasantry, these offices were undesirable and to be avoided where possible. It is plausible that these tenants instead sought social or economic advancement through other means rather than through office-holding. These examples also help to substantiate the sentiments from the didactic text, "How the wise man taught his son", which strongly advised against the holding of office.[51] However, the number of instances in which tenants paid for these exemptions was fairly uncommon throughout the period. Bailey has noted that there was a considerable increase in the number of peasants paying to avoid office in the later fourteenth century on many manors across England, which was reflective of the increased responsibilities and onerousness of office-holding in this period.[52] The relative infrequency of these exemption fines at Glastonbury could be because the tenants did not find offices burdensome but it was also most likely due to the magnitude of the fine. Few peasants were both willing and able to pay the sum required in order to avoid office but the refusal to be sworn in and serve in office could result in the seizure of that tenant's land.

Eligibility to serve was, at least partially, determined by a minimum land requirement and at Glastonbury most of the supervisory officials held medium-large sized

48. *Ibid.*, MS 11250, Reel 23, Nettleton, 1281.
49. *Ibid.*, MS 10678, Reel 24, Ashbury, 1308. In another case, MS 11223, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1351: upon the taking of half a virgate and messuage, Robert, son of Christine wife of Robert Stephen, also paid an additional sum in order not to be ploughman.
50. *Ibid.*, MS 10636, Reel 26, Nettleton, 1366.
51. F. J. Furnivall, *The Babees Book: Aristotle's A B C, Urbanitatis, Stans puer ad Mensam, The Lytille childrenes lytil bo. The bokes of nurture of Hugh Rhodes and John Russell. Wynkyn de Worde's Boke of keruynge. The booke of demeanor. The boke of curtasye. Seager's Schoole of vertue…. With some French and Latin poems on like Subjects and some forewords on education in early England* (London: Early English Text Society by Trübner, 1868), pp. 48-52.
52. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 220.

holdings. These tenants were more heavily materially invested in the manorial system, the threat and risk of losing their land was a more draconian punishment for them than it would have been for smallholders, granting the lord greater control over those tenants. Gibbs, in his examination of the manor of Little Downham in Cambridgeshire, argues that it was difficult to force tenants to serve in office and that the overall smooth running of the manorial system was in part due to the agreement and collaboration of those selected to serve as well as a fear of these punishments.[53] However, the significant pressure of the threat of land-seizure does also seem to have been a substantial disincentive intended to compel individuals to act in accordance with the demand to serve the seigneurial interest, the severity of punishments meted out to those refusing office should not be understated. For example, at Damerham in 1368, Richard atte Aysshe and Godfrey Inthelane had all of their land and chattels seized and taken into the hands of the lord because they refused to hold land that carried with it the obligation to serve as swineherd. The whole hallmoot were then amerced an enormous £10 for aiding them.[54] Refusal of office may have been perceived as direct opposition to seigneurial authority, a rejection of the power of the lord, and, for this reason, the harsh penalties can be understood as part of the reassertion of power and control. It was intended to ensure that, whilst avoiding office-holding through declination was acceptable, challenge to the power structure itself was significantly disincentivised. Few tenants would have been willing or able to afford the loss of land and their repeated service might be more indicative of an inability to avoid office, rather than as a desire for apparently increased status.

The infrequent refusals of office by individuals were not the only occasions where peasants presented a challenge to the seigneurial authority, there were instances where the whole hallmoot did not elect an officer. At Ashbury, in 1379, the hallmoot

53. Gibbs, “Manorial Officeholding in Late Medieval and Early Modern England, 1300–1600,” pp. 166-8.
54. *GADL*, MS 10636, Reel 27, Damerham, 1368.

were amerced 4*d* because they did not have anyone present to be the *narrator*, the speaker for the court.[55] The amounts the hallmoot were amerced could be much larger; at Nettleton, in 1356, the whole hallmoot were amerced 40*d* because they did not elect a berebrit to supervise the grange despite their having been ordered to do so many times by the bailiff.[56] This amount was substantially higher than the mean amercement that the whole hallmoot of Nettleton received (as shown in table 3.5), 11*d*, although less than the maximum it had ever been amerced, 80*d*.[57] The discrepancy in the value of the amercement may have been because of the difference in role of the officials; the *narrator* presented cases at the court, and a number of different individuals filled these positions throughout the year whereas the berebrit's supervisory role and management of the grange was integral to the effective running of the Glastonbury manors. Whilst both cases represent the same sort of issue, the continued refusal of the Nettleton hallmoot to elect a berebrit was a more serious matter. It may have been that there were no willing candidates to serve as berebrit but, alternatively, it could have been a form of protest. The refusal to elect an official may have been a method through which they could cause disruption and damage to lord and represent a greater opposition than just a simple objection to serving in office, a mechanism through which seigneurial authority could be challenged.[58] Whilst to refuse office was an outright rejection of the system, the system of exemption fines were a resolution of the opposing interests. It allowed for both the desires of the lord and the tenantry to be better represented by the system. It was a mechanism by which potentially unwilling candidates were able to avoid election into office and so

55. *Ibid.*, MS 10658, Reel 28, Ashbury, 1379.
56. *Ibid.*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Nettleton, 1356.
57. Variance is the square of the standard deviation, a larger variance indicates a greater range from the mean.
58. Gibbs, "Manorial Officeholding in Late Medieval and Early Modern England, 1300–1600," p. 168. C. Briggs similarly argued that on the manor of Eversden, in Cambridgeshire, that after the Black Death there was a change in the presentments made against officials, cases were more critical and comprehensive. He also suggests that rather than a simple attack on individuals, it may have been that such 'attacks' were an indirect way of undermining and destabilising the regime of demesne management. See: Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," p. 194.

Manor	Count	Mean / *d*	Max / *d*	Min / *d*	Median / *d*	Variance / d^2
Ashbury	13	30.07	169	3	12	2011.24
Ashcott	9	8.11	24	3	6	41.61
Damerham	42	35.02	480	3	12	5578.75
Glaston-bury	5	9.6	24	6	6	64.8
Nettleton	23	11	80	2	6	273.72

Table 3.5: The number of presentments made against the hallmoot and the average amercements given in pence (*d*).

decreased the likelihood that officers would be either inefficient or ineffective.

3.4. Obstruction to seigneurial authority

Relatively speaking there were few instances of outright rebellion against seigneurialism in the later medieval period, the most notable example being the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. There were a greater number of individual revolts against authority, such as the tenants of the Abbey of St Albans contesting the bans against the use of hand mills and the tenants of Abbey of Halesowen disputing rents and customary dues.[59] However, as Scott argues, the most common form of resistance was shown through smaller acts of subversion, such as the poor performance of labour services, foot-dragging, and deception.[60] Bailey also states that there was an increase across the fourteenth century in obstruction to seigneurial authority as shown by the rise in cases of tenants refusing to hold land and manorial officials having little power to

59. R. Faith, "The Class Struggle in Fourteenth Century England," in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. R. Samuel (London; Routledge: Routledge, 1981), pp. 53-5. W. Page, "The City of St Albans: The Borough," in *A History of the County of Hertford*, ed. W. Page, vol. 2 (London: Victoria County History, 1908), pp. 477-83. Razi, "Struggles between the Abbots of Halesowen and their Tenants in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," pp. 151-68.

60. J. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 28-30.

stop this practice.[61] There were numerous infractions and transgressions committed on the Glastonbury manors and examples of contestations of the orders of officials. There was only one case of threatening behaviour recorded in the hallmoot; in 1370 at Ashcott, Walter Smale was amerced 6*d* for threatening behaviour towards the reeve and messor.[62] Instances of violence were almost non-existent because they were not within the jurisdiction of the hallmoot courts, however, numerous cases of intra-peasant disputes are evident in the two surviving law-hundreds (1311 and 1364). Many of the obstructive acts to seigneurial authority were relatively minor but in some instances were repeatedly committed over a number of years, compounding the issues into larger acts of defiance.

Scholars have noted the changes in the lord-peasant relationship in how the peasantry responded to orders and also increased resistance to labour services and demands for higher wages.[63] Officials were in an increasingly complex position as they were expected to enforce the lord's orders and maintain his revenues in a period of increased opportunity for socio-economic advancement for the peasantry. Müller found that in the later fourteenth century there was an increase in the number of instances in which officials were targets for anger and frustration and Larson similarly noted a higher number of assaults on officials, and refusals to serve in office, on the manors of the Bishopric of Durham.[64] In contrast, Gibbs found relatively little increase in the resistance to orders of officials from the early to late fourteenth century on the manors of Worfield and Little Downham. These different observations of peasant-official interactions emphasise the importance in understanding that expla-

61. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, p. 85.

62. *GADL*, MS 11182, Reel 27, Ashcott, 1370.

63. Dyer, "The English Medieval Village Community and Its Decline," pp. 416-7. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, pp. 221-4. Gibbs, "Lords, Tenants and Attitudes to Manorial Office-holding, c. 1300-1600'," p. 163.

64. Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," p. 126. Larson, *Conflict and Compromise in the Late Medieval Countryside: Lords and Peasants in Durham 1349-1400*, pp. 136-8, 217-21.

nations cannot be sought solely in terms of officials as caught in the middle of two opposing positions.[65] Officials should be understood as members of the peasantry whose responsibilities could place them in a position of conflict with other peasants. They were not sufficiently dissimilar to the peasantry as to form a distinct 'class', and their relationship to the means of production was largely unchanged by their office, but their position in the manorial community would have caused them to have some divergent interests and conditions in comparison to the other members of the tenantry. This divergence suggests supervisory officials may have formed a sub-group within the peasantry, where in some examples they exhibit distinct interests but, in the majority of circumstances, remain generally aligned with their fellow peasants.

At Glastonbury, in the mid-late fourteenth century there was a significant increase in both the number and types of cases in which the peasantry can be observed to ignore and disobey the orders of the court. Prior to 1315 the court rolls listed in intricate detail each infraction made under *imparcamentum*, noting the name, fault, and amercement. However, in the later period, the level of detail was reduced and only the sum of these attachments was recorded, resulting in a significant loss of information on the activities of individuals. Due to this change, the following analysis excludes the cases of *imparcamentum* in order to gain a more accurate understanding of the changes in case types through the period. In the first two datasets (1310s and 1340s), the number of total cases for all five manors were similar, 1,091 and 1,124 respectively, with a small drop in cases during the height of the plague. Most notably there was a rise in the number of cases in the 1360s up to 1,714, this was predominantly due to an increase, on all five manors, in the number of presentments for property damage (and failure to repair), non-payment of chevage, and for not being present in court.[66] Conversely, the number of cases for the majority of other case

65. Gibbs, "Lords, Tenants and Attitudes to Manorial Office-holding, c. 1300-1600'," p. 184.

66. Chevage was implemented differently at Glastonbury in comparison to other English manors. Rather than as payments for a license to emigrate or live away from the manor, the Glastonbury

types remained fairly constant throughout the period with only minor fluctuations. The increase in both the number and variety of type of cases is reflective of real change on the Glastonbury manors at this time. It may have been an administrative tightening from the lord and his officials in order to maintain control over the tenantry in a period of increased dissent and socio-economic opportunities for the peasantry. It also shows the attempts of the lord, rather than necessarily the success, at retaining the same level of control that they had had in early fourteenth century. Routt has argued that in order for agrarian capitalism to emerge it was necessary for the manorial system to 'unravel' and that in the immediate period after the plague, lords sought to return to normality.[67] However, as Bailey has recently argued, these attempts highlight how tenuously maintained the control and power of the seigneurial authorities was prior to the Black Death.[68] The changes reflected a cumulative result of prolonged and protracted pressures combined with a large-scale socio-economic catalyst. Although it is debatable whether this change may have been of the form of an administrative tightening from the lord and his officials (in order to maintain control over the tenantry) or was reflective of the peasantry being more willing to disobey the seigneurial authority. That these changes can be observed across all the manors suggests a modification in the relationship between peasants and the seigneurial authority.

Refusals to obey the orders or contravening the authority of manorial officials were not common but they became more frequent in the later fourteenth century. At Ashcott, in 1371, seven men were ordered to be at the next court to answer for the damage they caused reaping the lord's corn in direct contravention of the orders

chevage lists recorded the landless. It was the responsibility of the whole hallmoot to ensure that all those with no land over the age of 12 were assessed for chevage. See: H. S. A. Fox, "Exploitation of the Landless by Lords and Tenants in Early Medieval England," in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, ed. Z. Razi and R. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 518-68, 518-21.

67. D. Routt, "The Late Medieval Countryside: England's Rural Economy and Society, 1275-1500," *History Compass* 11:6 (2013): pp. 474-485, 476.

68. Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England. The Ford Lectures for 2019*, pp. 14, 327.

of the reeve.[69] The increase in not only the number of transgressions committed against the lord but the refusal to comply with the orders of the court would have also significantly increased the work-load of manorial officers in the later fourteenth century. Unjustly detaining money was the most common obstruction to the orders of officials. At Damerham in 1358, Robert Robel, the *narrator* for the court, was amerced 3*d* for unjustly detaining 20*d* against John Elis, recently the reeve, so that the money was unable to be correctly accounted for.[70] John Elis, in the same court, was also amerced 4*d* for false claim of debt.[71] Ashcott had the highest incidences of such cases: in 1340, William Wybard was amerced 2*d* for unjust detention of 18*d* against Peter the messor of Ashcott.[72] In 1356, in four successive entries, four different men were each amerced 2*d* for unjustly detaining money against Richard le Lange who had in the previous year been reeve of Sowy.[73] In 1368, John Gerenter was to answer for 15*s* of damages of unjust detention of money from the dovecote, over a period of three years, against the reeve.[74] At Ashbury, in 1340, Walter Neel was amerced in three consecutive cases for trespass and unjust detention, to the damages of 62*d*, yet in the next session he was the *narrator* presenting cases in the court.[75] Whilst further details are not included, which precludes a fuller understanding, these cases highlight that there was significant overlap between those who held office and acted in contravention to the desires of the seigneurial authority; that officials were required to uphold and assert the seigneurial will over their fellow peasants did not prevent them from acting to the detriment of the lord.[76] For some officials, the holding of office was desirable beyond the status it conferred, it also provided the opportunity for personal gain.

69. *GADL*, MS 10646, Reel 28, Ashcott, 1371.
70. *Ibid.*, MS 10634, Reel 26, Ashcott, 1358.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, MS 10773, Reel 24, Ashcott, 1340.
73. *Ibid.*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Ashcott, 1356.
74. *Ibid.*, MS 10636, Reel 27, Ashcott, 1368.
75. *Ibid.*, MS 10773, Reel 24, Ashbury, 1340.
76. C. Briggs, “Money and Rural Credit in the Later Middle Ages Revisited,” in *Money, Prices and Wages, Essays in Honour of Professor Nicholas Mayhew*, ed. M. Allen and D. Coffman (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 129-42, 134.

3.5. Communal culpability

One of the safeguards utilised by manorial lords to protect their interests was the enforcement of communal culpability. Whilst it was the responsibility of the supervisory officials to monitor the behaviour the other peasants, it was the duty of the whole community to observe the activities of officials. By having officials and workers selected from amongst the tenantry, the peasants were then intricately involved in supporting and running the manorial system. As officials were potentially culpable for any wrongdoings or failings, incoming officers would be keen to ensure that they were not going to become liable for the misdemeanours of their predecessors.[77] However, not only were the elected officials directly answerable to the lord but the wider manorial community themselves were also culpable for the failings of these officials.[78] Kilby also found a number of instances at Walsham-le-Willows where the juries and homage were amerced for concealing actions, such as trespasses on the lord's land, which she argues suggests that officials were not always willing to make presentments.[79] The responsibility for ensuring the manor was efficiently and correctly run extended beyond individual officials into the community. This system was constructed to circumvent large-scale community deception against the lord. At Damerham, in 1373, the hallmoot of Merton, presented a shepherd for not properly keeping the sheep in a fold which resulted in the flock causing 6*s* 7*d* worth of damage.[80] However, the hallmoot were most commonly amerced for either concealing cases or not attaching the defendant in court, suggesting communal solidarity be-

77. Ault, "The Vill in Medieval England," pp. 188-211, 194. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," p. 183. Gibbs, "Lords, Tenants and Attitudes to Manorial Office-holding, c. 1300-1600'," p. 173.

78. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, pp. 11, 67.

79. S. Kilby, "Mapping peasant discontent: trespassing on manorial land in fourteenth-century Walsham-le-Willows," *Landscape History* 36:2 (2015): pp. 69-88, 71.

80. *GADL*, MS 10644, Reel 28, Damerham, 1373.

tween peasants and against the seigneurial interest. There was a notable increase on all five manors, and in particular Ashcott, Damerham, and Nettleton, in the number of cases where the hallmoot were collectively amerced in the 1360s, shown in figure 3.2. This rise in cases demonstrates an increase in local instability and reflects the wider socio-economic changes.

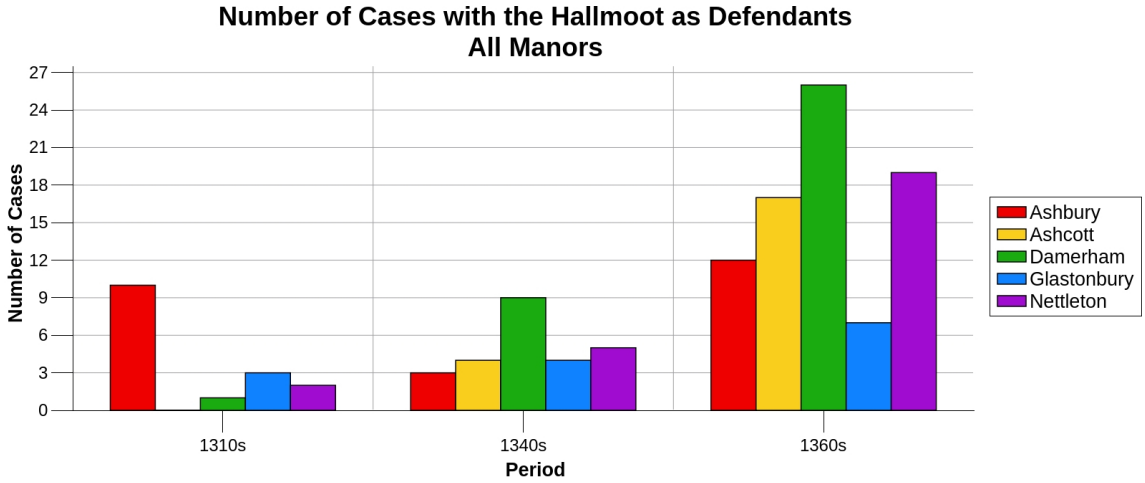


Figure 3.2: Chart showing the number of cases with the 'whole hallmoot' presented as the defendant.

Communal responsibility for the behaviour of manorial officials has also been observed on other manors.[81] Briggs examined the presentments made against officials before and after the Black Death and found that before the plague, jurors and the court were more wary in presenting reeves and bailiffs for misdeeds as they were powerful figures in the local community.[82] So whilst the community were theoretically responsible for presenting officials, they were reluctant to do so. Briggs then argues that after the plague, at Eversden in Cambridgeshire, the nature of presentments against officials became more pointed and specific. Rather than a break down of community relationships, it was instead a way in which to undermine seigneurial demesne management.[83] These findings, the increase in presentments against offi-

81. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, pp. 193-4.
82. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," p. 189.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

cials, correspond with the higher number of cases in the Glastonbury courts for this period. However, it is also important to consider the impact that the more stringent monitoring of behaviour that the abbot of Glastonbury employed had upon in influencing both the behaviour of officials and the wider community in which the collective responsibility would have incentivised communities to act against officials whose behaviour could cause them all to be amerced.

In 1340 on the manor of Ashcott, the whole hallmoot were amerced 12*d* because they did not present John Baret, the berebrit, for taking 7 bushels of beans and one quarter of wheat (valued as 2*s* 11*d* and 6*s* respectively). At the end of the court John Baret agreed to pay the lord a substantial fine of 40*s*, with a mark upfront, for his many transgressions against the lord.[84] In a similar case at Damerham in 1345, the whole hallmoot was amerced half a mark because they had allowed a number of men to incorrectly take grain from the lord's fields, which had then been transported to the wrong location.[85] The officers and the hallmoot were jointly responsible and, therefore, culpable for the actions of the other. The lord's officers and the wider tenantry were responsible in ensuring that manorial officials executed their duties and that the system was upheld, lest they all face penalties. There is little doubt that the tenants understood that it was because of the lord that they were forced into these positions. However, it is also likely that resentment could build up between the officers and tenants, as well as between the officers themselves, due to personal vendettas and self-enrichment through concealments for which the whole vill could be held liable. The system was curated and designed to ensure that seigneurial authority was as unassailable as possible, however, the maintenance of this structure required some balance to be found in the assertion of will and the relationships that were both within the community and between the lord, his officials, and the tenantry.

84. *GADL*, MS 10773, Reel 24, Ashcott, 1340.
85. *Ibid.*, MS 11251, Reel 25, Damerham, 1345.

3.6. Case studies

Richard Fysch and Stephen Dodde both lived on the manor of Ashcott and held a number of different offices in the mid-fourteenth century (tables 3.6 and 3.7).[86] Both men appeared frequently in the court, in their official capacities and for personal suits, which detailed the land they held and activities on the manor. Thus, they allow for an in-depth examination of their activities and the nature of their relationship and attitudes toward seigneurial authority. Upon his death, Richard Fysch, alongside his wife, held half a virgate of ancient tenure, 20 acres of pasture, and another ferdel and messuage, and his heriot was an oxen valued at 16*s* and a cow worth 1 mark.[87] It is more difficult to ascertain the land held by Stephen Dodde as there was another Stephen Dodde earlier in the records.[88] When Dodde served as reeve he received rent quittances for half a virgate of land. It is likely that Dodde held more land but was only quit the rents pertaining to half a virgate due to the customs of the manor. This is also supported by an examination of the rent remittances given to the other reeves of Ashcott, 80 percent of whom received rent quittances for half a virgate. The reeves that were given quittances for larger amounts of land, such as Walter Dorich in 1346/7 and William atte Halle in 1368/9 and 1374/5, were said to be so much because the office-holder did not answer for labour services.

Richard Fysch and Stephen Dodde were amerced in a number of cases for faults

86. At Ashcott, from the 1360s, there was a list attached to the end of the manorial account which recorded the debts owed by the various reeves and rent collectors. This list details who held these offices but they do not include the dates that they served. It is also important to note that the 'supervisor' was an elected role in which they were to supervise the ploughing works as well as other works pertaining to husbandry. The supervisor was also required to make presentments for any defaults committed during these works.

87. *GADL*, MS 10773, Reel 24, Ashcott, 1340; MS 10636, Reel 27, Ashcott, 1368; MS 10644, Reel 27, Ashcott, 1373.

88. The difficulty in identifying names and families has been noted in: J. Bennett, "Spouses, Siblings and Surnames: Reconstructing Families from Medieval Village Court Rolls," *Journal of British Studies*, no. 23:1 (1983): pp. 26-46, 37-9. C. Briggs, *Credit and Village Society in Fourteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 230-1.

Year	Offices held by Stephen Dodde				
	Reeve	Rent Collector	Supervisor	*Narrator*	Attorney
1351		✓			
1356/7		✓	✓	✓	
1360/1	✓				
1365/6	✓				
1369				✓	
1370				✓	✓
1371				✓	
1373				✓	

Table 3.6: The different offices held by Stephen Dodde.

Year	Offices held by Richard Fysch				
	Reeve	Rent Collector	Supervisor of Plough	*Narrator*	Attorney
1347	✓				
1349	✓				
1355/6	✓				
1356/7			✓		

Table 3.7: The different offices held by Richard Fysch.

in their duties as well as general transgressions. As reeve in 1356, Richard was amerced 6*d* for not attaching another tenant at court as he was ordered to and was amerced 3*d* in 1344 for not ensuring that his pledgee was present in court.[89] In a more serious incident, whilst reeve he committed a substantial number of trespasses against the lord, he got another villager to cart a wagon of corn with one of the lord's oxen to his own house. Alongside the messor, they were both presented on a number of different charges, including stabling their stock with the lord's during the winter without license and giving a number of other tenants on the manor small amounts of grain from the vacant land that had belonged to other tenants.[90] They also caused 1.5 acres to be sown badly with wheat and then trampled and depastured by the livestock of Walter le Bole. All of the damages were fairly small, between 6*d* and 14*d*. For these many trespasses, the reeve was amerced 40*d*, and Walter le Bole the messor was amerced 12*d*.[91] This example suggests that even long-serving officials would potentially favour their peers over the serving of the manorial interest and it may also be indicative of why certain officials were repeatedly elected by hallmoot. Stephen Dodde's actions often showed him to have been supporting and upholding the seigneurial authority but, despite him frequently representing the interests of the abbot at court, he can still be observed to have been acting in the interests of the peasant community.[92] In 1371, Stephen Dodde as part of a jury of six men, were to enquire into trespasses made in the lord's corn during the harvest. In the same court, as part of a different jury, he was to enquire into the trespasses made against the lord that prevented the reeve reaping the lord's corn.[93] However, in a later court it was stated that although it had been ordered many times for the jury to investigate these trespasses they had not undertaken the inquiry. The accounts of these officials both

89. *GADL*, MS 10774, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1344.
90. *Ibid.*, MS 11222, Reel 25, Ashcott, 1349.
91. *Ibid.*
92. For example, in *GADL* MS 11181, Reel 27, Ashcott, 1366: Stephen Dodde was amerced and his goods ordered to be distrained, alongside several others, for not digging the moor as they were ordered. In 1370 he was in mercy for not obtaining the consent of the homage before cutting and taking away two trees from the lord's wood. *GADL* MS 11182, Reel 27, Ashcott, 1370.
93. *GADL*, MS 10646, Reel 28, Ashcott, 1371.

appear to be indicative of officialdom being utilised by the peasantry to advance the interests of their community where possible, despite it being in opposition to the interests of the authority. These findings present manorial offices as being the precise intersection of peasant and seigneurial will and suggests that they were required to strike a delicate balance between the interests of the tenantry and their duty in office.

The relationship and status of these two officials with respect to individuals in their community is difficult to ascertain because of the court's limited jurisdiction but, as well as collusion with other tenants, there are also a number of cases showing conflict. In 1371, one of Stephen Dodde's sheep was killed by the dog of another tenant, who was subsequently amerced 2*d* and to answer for the damages.[94] There were more cases of intra-peasant litigation involving Richard Fysch; he successfully litigated against Walter Seywel for false claim but then was immediately amerced 2*d* for trespass made against the same Walter and another 3*d* for unjust detention of 12*s* 6*d* against another tenant and to pay damages.[95] So whilst he was a prominent court member, he does not appear to have been able to have leveraged this authority in influencing the decisions of the court with respect to intra-peasant litigation. In an examination of the activities of the members of St. Mary's guild in Nottingham, Goddard has shown that whilst initial examination may show that the guild members were more successful in their dealings within the court, a more in-depth analysis reveals this to be more complex.[96] Most interestingly for this study, the guild members who were particularly successful in their pleas were often the plaintiffs, rather than defendants, and they were in fact men that were well-respected and held positions of authority outside of the guild, such as mayor and bailiff. Manorial officials do not appear to have had the same level of respect or standing in their communities as the guild members, which, as shall be discussed in Chapter 4, is consistent with

94. *Ibid.*
95. *Ibid.*
96. Goddard, "Medieval business networks: St Mary's guild and the borough court in later medieval Nottingham," pp. 16-8.

the representations of officials in the works of Chaucer and William Langland. Whilst officials may not have been regarded as laudable figures in the community, it is noteworthy that both Stephen Dodde and Richard Fysch received a number of pardons for some of their faults. Harvey has similarly found that the reeves of Cuxham were frequently pardoned in cases for which other tenants would have been amerced.[97] The increased likelihood of receiving a pardon suggests that there was some positive aspects to the relationship between officials and the seigneurial authority, where officers were more likely to experience lenient treatment for misdemeanours. This more favourable treatment could also be suggestive of a source of division between officials and the peasantry because the officers were more likely to be granted clemency for transgressions and unacceptable behaviours.

3.7. Amercements and pardons

The most common outcome in court cases, excluding fines, was amercement, with few individuals receiving a pardon (*perdona*) for their infractions. Damerham, Glastonbury, and Ashbury had the highest number of cases resulting in amercements or pardons of all the five manors studied (see table 3.8). Although there are fewer surviving court rolls for Glastonbury, the extant rolls still show that it had the second highest total for the number of cases. Damerham had a significantly larger number of cases, most likely due to the size of the manor, its population and its diverse agrarian economy. Across all the manors, officials made up approximately 3.4 per cent of defendants in cases for which either a pardon was issued or an amercement was brought against the defendant. In considering the relationship between officials and the court, the proportion of cases provides only a limited understanding of the position of officials in comparison to the wider peasantry; officials may have been under-represented because they committed fewer actions meriting legal re-

97. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400*, p. 65.

Manor	Number of amercements and pardons			Number of pardons	
	Total	Officials	Peasants	Officials	Peasants
Ashbury	742	14	728	0	18
Ashcott	511	24	487	1	27
Damerham	1297	62	1235	3	52
Glastonbury	744	9	737	2	25
Nettleton	634	26	608	4	23

Table 3.8: The number of amercements and pardons for officials and peasants.

sponse, cases may have been brought against them less frequently because they were authority figures held in high regard by the community, or it may be the case that peasants did not wish to bring the ire of a manorial official upon themselves by reporting matters that they would otherwise have presented.[98] For this reason, a more in-depth investigation into the pardons given provides a useful insight into how peasants and peasant officials were treated by the court system that case numbers alone cannot precisely reveal.

Pardons being given as a reward to favourable individuals appears to have happened less frequently at Glastonbury than on other manors across England, however, it did still occur.[99] A particularly clear example of this favourable bias is shown by the cases involving Roger Daunch. Although not an official, in 1369, as he had provided 'good service' to the lord, Daunch was granted the concession of being excused from paying a marriage license.[100] In the following year, of the four men summoned to court but who had not appeared, he was the only one to receive a pardon.[101] Although, despite some examples of pardons being explicitly used as a

98. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," pp. 189-91.
99. W. Baildon, *Court Rolls of the Manor of Wakefield, Volume 1: 1274-1297*, vol. 29, Record (Cambridge: The Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1901), p. 160. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 33.
100. *GADL*, MS 10645, Reel 27, Nettleton, 1369.
101. *Ibid.*, MS 11172, Reel 27, Nettleton, 1370.

reward for peasants and, excluding pleas of poverty, the reasons for which pardons were granted were rarely recorded in the court rolls of the Glastonbury manors. The practicality of payment, whether they were a pauper, was the most common discriminator in determining whether peasants were pardoned but it was not the primary causal factor in the pardoning of officials, who were given pardons due to their position in the community. Cases against officers resulted in a pardon in 6.45 percent of the time, whereas cases against peasants resulted in pardons 3.45 percent of the time, with the vast majority of these being for poverty. This discrepancy suggests that officials were treated significantly more favourably by the court systems, although it was not uniform across all manors. The variation across the manors is likely attributable to three primary factors: the differences between the offices of the defendant, the precise nature of the infractions, and the differences between the courts of the manors. That officials were never granted a pardon due to destitution demonstrates that officials were more likely to be treated more leniently in the court, separating them from the peasantry that they supervised.

That pardons were biased in favour of officials is particularly evident in the court rolls of the manors of Glastonbury and Nettleton, where, respectively, officials were pardoned in 22.2 percent and 15.4 percent of cases that would otherwise have resulted in amercement. When considered in comparison to the 3.4 percent and 3.8 percent of cases at Glastonbury and Nettleton that the peasantry received pardons, a clear example of bias towards the pardoning of officials is obvious. This pattern comports with Harvey's findings at Cuxham, in which he notes that there were a number of entries in which reeves, whilst presented, were not often amerced.[102] At Glastonbury, in 1348, Philip atte Putte received two pardons for causing the lord's land to be badly sown with the wrong grain. Interestingly, William de Bykenham, who had also recently served as reeve, was amerced 5*s* for the same fault. The

102. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham 1240 to 1400*, p. 69.

reason for the pardon is not specified but Philip atte Putte had served as reeve on at least six occasions between 1334 and 1350, dying of the plague during his final year, whereas William de Bykenham is only referenced as being reeve once. It is plausible that it was due to Philip's consistent and generally laudable service to the lord that he was given his pardons.[103] When officials received a pardon it appears to have been either because they were favoured or when they had committed a series of transgressions and one of these was forgiven. For example, two of the pardons received by the manorial officials at Nettleton were all within the same court session in a series of cases in which both the reeve and messor were amerced for a number of different transgressions.[104] Although the officers received a pardon in these instances, being given a pardon was not an outcome officials could expect, as shall be discussed in more detail below.

The low number of cases brought against officials upon the manor of Glastonbury also indicates that officials form a category distinct from the wider peasantry with respect to the court system. Whether this small number of cases was due to the difficulty in bringing cases against them, their being less prone to criminality, or their being more able to hide any criminality is unclear. It is unlikely to be due to the size of the manor as, at Damerham, this trend is somewhat inverted. Here, in comparison to the other manors, there was a significantly greater number of cases being brought against officials than is evident upon other manors and the proportion of pardons that is comparable to the pardons issued to the wider peasantry. Whilst the lack of pardons suggests that officials as a group were not treated particularly favourably at Damerham, that they still frequently received pardons for reasons other than poverty, unlike the wider tenantry, suggests that by holding office a tenant was somewhat more likely to be able to expect a more positive outcome in the court than the average peasant. Merit of office increased the chances of being granted a par-

103. *GADL*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Glastonbury, 1347.
104. *Ibid.*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Nettleton, 1347.

don, as with the examples of Philip atte Putte, Stephen Dodde and Richard Fysch, but only marginally.

Beyond the number of pardons that officials received, it is also instructive to examine the impact that holding office had upon the value of amercements to which peasants were subject. Briggs has argued that, although officials were amerced neither consistently nor frequently prior to the Black Death, when amercements were levied it was for sizeable amounts.[105] He suggests that the frequent failure to punish reeves was likely due to a recognition by both the vill and the lord that it was potentially counterproductive to enforce amercements against an officer who was themselves an enforcer of seigneurial authority. Briggs further argues that the treatment of officials in the court changed significantly after the plague, as evidenced by the increase in the number of presentments and the thorough accounts of the failures and malfeasance of officials.[106] Whilst the dataset in this study for the early fourteenth century at Glastonbury is smaller than the mid-late fourteenth century, a similar trend of increased presentments against manorial officials can be observed. The rise in the number of transgressions committed by officials does not coincide with an increase in the value of amercements but the data does show a stark difference in the average amercements of officials and non-officials (tables 3.9 and 3.10).

On all five manors, across all three periods of time, the mean amercement was higher for officials than it was for the wider peasantry; at Ashcott the mean for officials and non-officials was 46.61*d* and 5.67*d* respectively, and, at Nettleton, it was 38.27*d* and 6.84*d*. Notably, the maximum at Ashbury and Nettleton for officials was 24*d* and 240*d* for officials and 480*d* and 120*d* for non-officials. Whilst officials were

105. Briggs, “Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death,” pp. 189, 194.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

Manor	Mean / *d*	Max / *d*	Min / *d*	Median / *d*	Variance / d^2
Ashbury	5.67	480	0	3	2251.49
Ashcott	3.87	76	1	2	53.74
Damerham	5.65	480	1	3	65.91
Glastonbury	4.26	80	1	3	65.91
Nettleton	6.84	120	0	6	153.41

Table 3.9: Average amercements in pence (*d*) for the peasantry.

Manor	Mean / *d*	Max / *d*	Min / *d*	Median / *d*	Variance / d^2
Ashbury	46.61	240	2	24	4570.06
Ashcott	13.59	40	2	6	187.39
Damerham	30.35	480	2	6	9210.19
Glastonbury	37.57	96	6	36	1633.06
Nettleton	38.27	240	1	24	2755.04

Table 3.10: Average amercements in pence (*d*) for officials.

on average amerced larger amounts for their faults, the case type needs to be taken into consideration when ascertaining as to why these values were so different. For example, non-officials were predominantly presented for failure to appear in court, trespass and grazing their animals upon the lord's land, taking away wood, not repairing property, and unjust detention.

In contrast to the cases of the wider peasantry, the majority of cases in which officials appeared were related to their office, these being primarily defaults in duty. These abdications of duty included not presenting cases, supervising the other tenants, guarding the lord's land, as well as causing damage due to poor decision-making, such as sowing the wrong seed, and not attaching tenants to the court. When excluding these case types, the defaults of duty, the mean amercement dropped by a significant amount, as shown in table 3.11. At Ashbury it dropped from 46.61*d* to 3*d*, and at Nettleton it dropped from 38.27*d* to 16.75*d*. This brings the averages

to a similar range to non-officials which suggests that when officials committed infractions similar to that of the rest of the peasantry, such as *imparcamentum*, they were treated similarly but when it related to their duty they were much more heavily penalised. Stone argues that the cases in which officials were charged with transgression of their duties are not necessarily indicative, or at least not only, of officers of poor quality but attest to their importance to the manorial economy and the expectation of a certain standard of behaviour and performance of responsibilities.[107] He adds that lords monitored their officials closely and removed those who did not perform well.[108] It seems plausible that such lords would reward actions which were deemed valuable or punish harshly those who went against the seigneurial interest. As such, the amercement of officials was a useful mechanism for dissuading unsuitable individuals from holding office, as well as enforcing compliance and recouping losses from officeholders.

These ideas are further supported by an examination of amercements for defaults of duty, which shows a significantly higher average amount being amerced in comparison to the average amercements for faults unrelated to office-holding, as shown in tables 3.11 and 3.12. At Damerham the mean amercement officials received for defaults in duty was 66*d*, 61.58*d* greater than the 4.42*d* mean amercement for the other types of cases that were brought against officials and the 5.65*d* mean amercement for non-officials at Damerham. The significant increase in the median from 3*d* to 18*d*, also indicates that for the majority of cases, the values of amercement given for defaults in duty were greater than or equal to 18*d*. The difference between the amercements for transgressions related to office and general faults highlights both the high degree of culpability office-holding entailed as well as the perceived severity of officials performing their duties poorly. This trend is observed in the data of all the manors, although Ashcott shows it to a lesser extent. Defaults in duty were

107. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 198.
108. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-4, 168-70, 189-203.

Manor	Count	Mean / *d*	Max / *d*	Min / *d*	Median / *d*	Variance / d^2
Ashbury	2	3	4	2	3	2
Ashcott	11	11.27	40	2	6	184.01
Damerham	33	4.42	24	2	3	14.12
Glastonbury	1	3	3	3	3	0
Nettleton	4	16.75	40	3	12	258.25

Table 3.11: Average amercements in pence (*d*) for cases brought against officials that were not for dereliction of duty.

Manor	Count	Mean / *d*	Max / *d*	Min / *d*	Median / *d*	Variance / d^2
Ashbury	11	54.54	240	2	32	4792.87
Ashcott	11	15.90	40	2	12	197.69
Damerham	24	66	480	2	18	12666.78
Glastonbury	6	43.33	96	6	36	1633.06
Nettleton	18	43.05	240	1	32	31

Table 3.12: Average amercements in pence (*d*) for cases of derelection of duty by officials.

treated with some of the largest amercements of any case in the court rolls. The maximum value amerced was significantly greater than other cases which likely reflects the potential for increased economic harm to the seigneurial authority through these types of case. The decisions and actions of manorial officials could have a significant impact upon the health of the manorial economy, by meting out such high amercements to officials for defaulting in their duty the lord was able to both seek reparations as well as deter others from following suit.

The high amercements also helps to explain the relatively low number of cases in which officials appeared in the court rolls (table 3.8) as officials were effectively

disincentivised from committing offences due to the potential for large penalties. The threat of significant amercement would also appear to be a deterrent to the holding of office, however, as discussed above, a number of individuals held office for successive terms and there were relatively few who paid fines to avoid office. It was a complex and nuanced balance determined by each individual as to whether the drawbacks of holding office outweighed the benefits. From the perspective of the seigneurial authority, except in regards to office-related faults, officials were of the peasantry and treated as such. This perception is consistent with works such as Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* and other agricultural treatises, as will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4, which devoted considerable space to detailing the various techniques employed by officials and tenants that sought to defraud the lord, they advised manorial managers on how to best prevent being deceived. These texts reveal not only an expectation that officials would attempt to defraud the lord for both their own gains and that of the rest of the community but it can also be inferred from the court records that the boldness of tenants in exploiting opportunities for their own gain shows a certain disrespect for seigneurial authority.

3.8. Hierarchy within the court

Deception, concealing cases, insufficient numbers of presentments, causing damage, and poor supervision or inadequacies in the guarding of the lord's livestock and property were some of the cases for which officials could be brought before the court. These were primarily cases that threatened the managerial power or economic interests of the lord of the manor. Whilst officials such as the reeve, messor, ripreeve, and berebrit had more supervisory roles on the manor, they only infrequently made presentments against other supervisory officials for defaults in duty. Although these supervisory officials did present other officers or *famuli*; at Damer-

ham, in 1373, three ploughmen were amerced 6*d* each because they were neglectful of their office as shown by the reeve in the court.[109] Similarly, the reeve of Glastonbury was amerced 3*d* in 1340 because he had been ordered many times to attach another tenant who had overburdened the lord's pasture and had chosen not to act upon these demands.[110] The amount that certain officials were amerced was more dependent upon the nature of the transgression and the resulting damage caused, rather than correlating with the specific office of the defendant. A ploughman at Nettleton was amerced 6*d* for poor execution of his job, whereas at Glastonbury, Richard le Deyes was amerced 40*d* for badly keeping the lord's grange as two men had taken away grain.[111]

It was primarily the higher ranking figures of cellarer, steward, and bailiff, or the hallmoot and *narrator* who brought cases against peasant officials. As stated earlier, the most common charge against the hallmoot was for failure to make presentments or attachments as ordered, whereas this infraction was a much smaller component of the faults committed by officials. Cases in which officials were considered to not have made a sufficient number of presentments or attachments predominantly occurred for *imparcamentum*. This perceived paucity in presentments was a commonality that could be observed across the whole period; at Glastonbury, in 1313, the moorward was amerced half a mark (80*d*) for not presenting anyone.[112] Similarly, at Damerham in 1379 and 1388 the woodward was charged by the hallmoot for not making any presentments, and the ripreeve was amerced 12*d* for not making attachments, as well as an additional 4*d* for poor supervision during the harvest.[113] These examples also reveal the seigneurial perspective towards officialdom and the tenantry; that these officials were amerced for not presenting enough cases suggests that the

109. *GADL*, MS 10644, Reel 28, Damerham, 1373.
110. *Ibid.*, MS 10773, Reel 24, Glastonbury, 1340.
111. *Ibid.*, MS 10634, Reel 26, Nettleton, 1358; MS 10773, Reel 24, Glastonbury, 1340.
112. *Ibid.*, MS 10654, Reel 24, Glastonbury, 1313.
113. *Ibid.*, MS 11212, Reel 29, Damerham, 1388.

lord expected his tenants to commit transgressions and the lack thereof was due to poor performance or concealment by an officer rather than a decrease in cases.

At all the manors, apart from Glastonbury, there was an increase in the mid-fourteenth century in the number of cases against officials for defaults in duty, as shown in figure 3.3. The specific infringements remained varied across the period, however, both Damerham and Nettleton had the largest range of case types and faults. Damerham was the most distinct manor and there was both a larger number and wider variety in the types of cases that occurred. Similarly there was not a particular increase of offences committed by certain offices but rather a greater number of cases involving different individuals. This could be due to a combination of supervision being tightened in this period as well as an increase in the number of officials taking liberties in the exercise of their office. The amount that officials were amerced also ranged fairly widely both among the manors and throughout the period. In 1356 the swineherd was amerced 6*d* for badly keeping the lord's pigs, and in 1368 John Clerk, the *equitator* of Merton, was also amerced 6*d* for neglecting his office.[114] In 1356 and 1366, two enclosers of the lord's parks were amerced 3*s* 4*d* and 2*d* respectively for neglecting their office and causing damage.[115] Cases that resulted in higher amercements were usually for larger amounts of damage caused. In 1371 the hallmoot at Damerham presented Simon Calewe, a shepherd, for causing 6*s* 7*d* worth of damage to the lord's land due to his poor guarding of the sheep.[116] More significantly, Robert Nobul and William Hankyn, *cadavatores*, were amerced 20*s* each for the false presentment of the death of 20 lambs.[117] Whilst damage to the lord's property was important, cases of concealment or failure to make presentments carried a higher penalty, as it was in the interests of the seigneurial authority to ensure a strong deterrent was in place to dissuade peasants from defrauding the

114. *GADL*, MS 10636, Reel 27, Damerham, 1368.
115. *Ibid.*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Damerham, 1356; MS 11181, Reel 27, Damerham, 1366.
116. *Ibid.*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Damerham, 1356; MS 10646, Reel 28, Damerham, 1371.
117. *Ibid.*, MS 10636, Reel 27, Damerham, 1368.

lord.

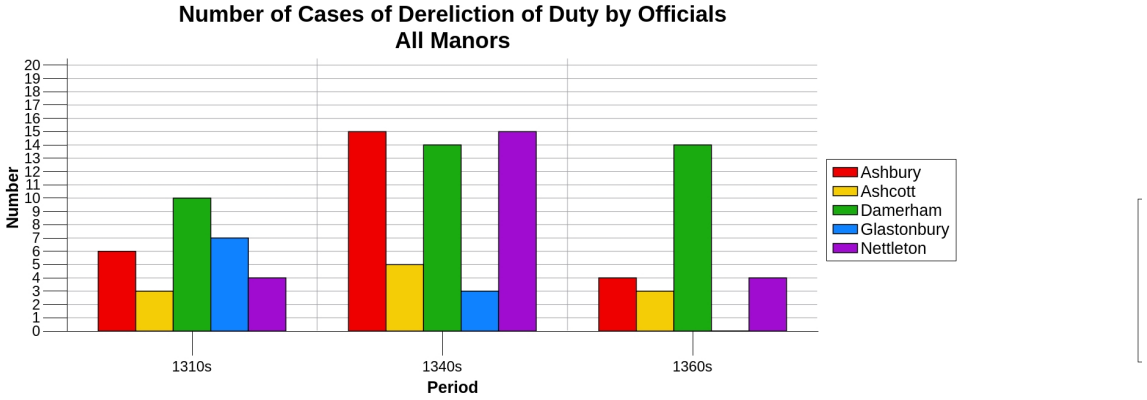


Figure 3.3: Chart showing the number of cases of 'dereliction of duty' commmitted by manorial officials at each manor.

The higher ranking peasant officials received the largest amercements as the impact they had upon the economy was greater than other officials who had fewer responsibilities. Except at Nettleton, across all manors the reeve was the most commonly presented official for defaulting in their duty. At Ashbury, the reeve was presented on twelve occasions whereas the woodward, messor, warrener, *narrator*, and swineherd were only presented either once or twice during the same period. At Ashcott, no other officials except for the reeve and messor were charged with defaults of duty. Only at Nettleton was the messor amerced more frequently than the reeve and, interestingly, whilst both offices were presented for a similar number of defaults, how they transgressed was reflective of their respective jurisdictions. The infringements of the messor predominantly entailed land, damage, supervision, and *imparcamentum*, whereas the reeve's usually involved strays, trespass, collection of money, and management of land. This distinction in case type was present on all of the manors; for example, the reeve of Ashcott was amerced 40*d* for causing the lord's wheat and corn to be badly sown.[118] At Damerham, the reeve was amerced 40*d* because he did not carry the barley to the manor of Deverel.[119] The same reeve, three years later,

118. *Ibid.*, MS 10773, Reel 24, Ashcott, 1340.
119. *Ibid.*, MS 10774, Reel 24, Damerham, 1344.

was then amerced 40*s* for getting the *famuli* to take several carts of hay from the lord and because he took timber to his own house without license.[120] In 1351, another reeve on the same manor was amerced half a mark (80*d*) because he did not enclose the lord's garden and caused damage.[121] The reeve had the most important duties on the manor in regards to supervising and directing. The responsibilities and potential for damage that was contained in the office of the reeve likely meant they were subject to greater scrutiny and closer oversight due to the potential impacts of any failures upon the manor and the lord.

3.9. Exploitation of office

The reeve was also the official who had the greatest opportunity to exploit the lord and garner illicit profit for themselves. This expectation that manorial officials would seek to defraud their lord is also evident in Robert Carpenter's embezzlement instructions, written in the late thirteenth century.[122] The text details how a manorial official could gain illicit profits and goods from their lord through methods such as changing measures, adjusting weights, and taking livestock. Using these illicit tactics, Carlin estimates that a reeve could potentially rob the lord of 12.5 percent of the annual value of a manor's flocks and dairy but the evidence would not be extant in the account if it had been under-reported.[123] The lord, auditors and other high-ranking officers were aware of the various techniques and attempts officials would employ to defraud the lord. The use of such substantial amercements for faults pertaining to office were both a punishment and a deterrent against officials seeking to deceive the lord.

120. *GADL*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Damerham, 1347.
121. *Ibid.*, MS 11223, Reel 25, Damerham, 1351.
122. Carlin, "Cheating the Boss: Robert Carpenter's Embezzlement Instructions (1261x1268) and Employee Fraud in Medieval England," pp. 183-97.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

At Glastonbury there were relatively few recorded instances in which an official was presented for a large number of transgressions. Thomas Aleyn, the reeve of Nettleton in 1347, was charged and amerced for a number of faults: threshing and winnowing without view of the bailiff; damaging the pasture with pigs, for which he was to answer of 8*s* of damages as well as amerced 40*d*; the cutting down of wood of the lord (priced 12*d*) and then carrying it to his own house (amerced 40*d*). He was then charged, but subsequently pardoned, for pasturing six oxen on the lord's land for two years (damages 12*s*), which he was not permitted to do as part of his remuneration for holding office.[124] The duration of these offences is also interesting, in that he clearly was not subject to such close scrutiny that his trespass would immediately be discovered before he could expect to have profited from it and he managed to gain two years worth of pasturing at expense of the lord. In a similar but larger case, John Tryg, the reeve of Ashbury in 1356, was presented for a significant number of transgressions against the lord which totalled to over £78 of damage.[125] The use of attorneys in the Glastonbury courts was very infrequent but each of these infringements was presented by the Abbot's attorney. John Tryg was charged with: the taking the lord's rabbits for a period of three years (£40 damages), cutting and selling wood (£20 damages), taking away carts, wood, and boards (valued at 40*s* and damages of £4). As reeve he also sold oxen (100*s* damages) and other animals (60*s* damages) as well as unjustly detaining money (39*s* 9*d*, 40*s*, and 5*s*).[126] Subsequently, twelve jurors were selected to investigate these charges as well as his selling of various livestock and tables and the transportation of the lord's hay to his own house. John Tryg denied almost every single one of these charges and was ordered to show his law at the following court. Unfortunately the conclusion of this case is unknown as the following sessions have not survived, but the magnitude

124. *GADL*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Nettleton, 1347.
125. *Ibid.*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Ashbury, 1356.
126. There are similar cases of officials carrying goods to their own properties on the other manors. For example: At Glastonbury the hallmoot presented the reeve for carrying carts of hay to his house to value of 8*s* and Walter Piperwhit, the reeve of Ashcott, took six wagons of hay to his house. *ibid.*, MS 10771, Reel 24, Glastonbury, 1315; MS 10771, Reel 24, Ashcott, 1315.

of the damages and costs clearly indicate the potential for losses that could be incurred by a lord should an official choose to enrich themselves to a great extent over a sustained period of time. The nature and number of trespasses that were committed suggests that these were more calculated attempts to defraud the lord rather than singular moments of exploiting an opportunity. To make so many defaults, or at least be suspected of it, over such a long period of time shows a disregard for authority and the various ways in which officials, and in particular reeves, were able to exploit their position for their own gain. The exploitation of positions of authority extended beyond not only defrauding the lord but also the other tenantry as well, as shall be discussed in more detail below. It is plausible that, as discussed by Briggs and Stone, some officials had been presented because they had angered the wider community through their actions or treatment of others.[127] Due to the lack of surviving source material for this case, it is difficult to ascertain whether the presentment of this official was a form of retribution but it seems unlikely that the tenantry would have been oblivious to the actions of John Tryg, which suggests that there had been either some degree of collusion or a concerted effort to implicate the reeve. That the potential opportunity to disadvantage an official was not pursued frequently at Glastonbury by the tenantry suggests that there was not a consistently adversarial relationship.

3.10. Collusion

Whilst there were several cases of self-enrichment by officials, another frequent concern of the seigneurial authority or the higher-ranking managers was the threat posed by officials colluding with their fellow peasants to the detriment of the lord. These

127. Briggs, “Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death,” pp. 185-91. E. Miller and J. Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change, 1086-1348* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2014), pp. 194-6. Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, p. 78.

concerns are evident throughout agricultural treatises, which warned against the collective deception that officials and workers would engage in.[128] In the records of the manors of Glastonbury there were relatively few cases in which officials can be observed 'conspiring' together. At Ashcott, in 1307, the reeve was amerced 2*s* and the messor 1*s* for selling two stray cows without the view of the bailiff.[129] These amercements show a strong response to the potential opportunism that could have resulted in the direct enrichment of peasants to the detriment of the lord. That the responsibility over strays was almost entirely within the remit of the reeve perhaps helps to explain why they were amerced a larger amount than the messor. In another case, at Ashcott in 1313, Walter Messor was amerced 12*d* for not producing attachments from damage that had been made in Pedewelle with the oxen of the reeve, and the reeve was subsequently amerced 3*s* for said trespass.[130] In a more complex case, John Sparke the reeve of Damerham and William Belamy the berebrit, took a substantial amount of wheat, barley, and carts from the lord to their own properties. As well as this, the reeve, for a period of three years, used the lord's pasture without license, and the berebrit kept the profits of two pigs and pastured his animals with those of the lord for seven weeks. The berebrit was then accused of allowing the reeve to take more of the lord's grain and hay than he was owed.[131] Whilst a jury of 24 men subsequently found them not culpable and they were both quit, this case demonstrates that the threat of collusion from officials and workers to defraud the lord was taken seriously. Furthermore, their quittance by jury likely suggests that their fellow peasants were not unduly biased against those that held supervisory office and that the jurors, who themselves could have held various offices, sought to protect one of their own.[132]

128. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. 17.
129. *GADL*, MS 10770, Reel 23, Ashcott, 1307.
130. *Ibid.*, MS 10025, Reel 23, Ashcott, 1313.
131. *Ibid.*, MS 10773, Reel 24, Damerham, 1340.
132. Claridge and Gibbs also suggest that juries may have undervalued stray animals so that the peasantry could purchase them more cheaply. See: Claridge and Gibbs, "Waifs and Strays: Property

One of the most detailed cases of two officials/workers jointly committing trespasses was at Damerham in 1356. Christina the dairyworker, alongside John Elys the reeve, had badly collected the lord's wheat in autumn (valued at 3*s* 4*d*). John Elys was amerced 6*d* for detaining money from another tenant, and another 6*d* because he and four men (two carters and two ploughmen) transported grain to the reeve's house. John Elys was also amerced 6*d* for bringing to his own house the lord's wood on a number of occasions (damages valued at 15*d*). He was then amerced a more significant 20*s* because he had received this grain in order to deceive the lord and was to answer for the damages (8*s* 8*d*). Christina the dairyworker, John Elys, and John le Skot, who was a servant of the lord, also exchanged land without license. The case concludes with the removal of Christina from the *curia* of the lord and the election of a new woman to the position of dairyworker.[133] Although Stone found a small number of reeves at Wisbech Barton who had been dismissed due to their poor performance or inability to formulate more profitable cropping strategies, the removal from office on the Glastonbury manors was very rare and appears to have only happened to those who served in positions of lower authority, such as the dairyworker or *garconis*.[134] Bennett argued that effective and efficient reeves were valuable and it was in the lord's interest to have significant penalties to dissuade those who held office to avoid their duties, as well as to maintain authority over who was sworn into office in order to help retain proficient officers.[135] However, that it was the dairyworker who was demoted, rather than the reeve, perhaps suggests that the reeve was seen as too valuable or useful to have been immediately removed from office or that a replacement mid-way through the year may have led to difficulties in the annual accounting.

Rights in Late Medieval England," pp. 1-40.
133. *GADL*, MS 11224, Reel 26, Damerham, 1356.
134. *GADL*, MS 11179, Reel 25, Nettleton, 1347. See also: Stone, *Decision-Making in Medieval Agriculture*, pp. 134, 169.
135. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor, A Study of Peasant Conditions*, p. 179.

The transgressions committed by some officials were most frequently related to the specific domain of their office. For example, there were a number of occasions in which the parkers and woodwards were presented for taking the lord's wood. At Ashbury, in 1351, John Pyron the woodward was amerced a hefty 40*d* for selling trees that he cut down in the lord's wood without license as well as taking from the lord 18 hurdles (valued at 3*s*). And the whole hallmoot were subsequently amerced 6*d* for failure to present his trespasses, this collective punishment clearly serving a dual purpose of disincentivising both the exploitation of the lord's resources and the collusion between peasants and officials.[136] Similarly, at Damerham, in 1365, the servant of the parker took partridges and other birds without license, and in 1387, the parker was amerced 40*d* for again selling wood without license.[137] The use of positions of authority and power on the manor for self-enrichment or collusion with the other tenants highlights the opportunities for illicitly increasing wealth that office-holding could bring, beyond those that were given as the standard remuneration. And, as shall be discussed in Chapter 4, these acts were frequent enough and well-known that officials were portrayed as deceptive and greedy in the literature of the period.

The cases examined above show that interpreting officials as purely arbitrators of the seigneurial will precludes a fuller understanding of their interactions with their community. Non-performance of duties could be detrimental to the wider community and on occasion lords were sometimes prompted to make further enquiries about an official in response to rumours or complaints from the villagers themselves.[138] Gibbs and Claridge have demonstrated how the mismanagement of strays could

136. *GADL*, MS 11223, Reel 25, Ashbury, 1351.
137. *Ibid.*, MS 11225, Reel 26, Damerham, 1365; MS 11212, Reel 29, Damerham, 1387.
138. Briggs, "Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death," p. 185. Gibbs, "Lords, Tenants and Attitudes to Manorial Office-holding, c. 1300-1600'," p.252.

cause damage to peasant and demesne land. The lord, and by extension his officials, taking responsibility for strays enabled an alignment of interests such that the peasantry could rely upon a central authority to remedy certain issues, which in turn ensured that seigneurial authority maintained centralised power and authority.[139] As well as common interest, custom was important in protecting the interests of the peasantry.[140] Using these forms of authority, the interests of the community could be aligned with that of the lord and through the utility of authority aspects of the manorial system could be mutually beneficial to both parties.[141] Officialdom could, therefore, also be considered as a both a devolved administrative system and a conflict resolution mechanism, a body to which appeals could be made in order to help to mediate issues which could potentially result in conflict between members of the peasantry which would then have led to difficulties and unrest that could impact manorial output and stability. Where conflicts between the interests arose, then officialdom was intended to support the seigneurial authority, as is evident through the cases of faults against the lord and their property.[142] However, to dismiss the utility of the system to the peasantry would prevent an understanding as to why the peasants were willing to play a role in upholding and perpetuating this system and how societal structure was reinforced through peasant culture.[143]

That the manorial system did not result in complete divergence between the requirements of these groups does not indicate that it was without the predominant

139. Claridge and Gibbs, “Waifs and Strays: Property Rights in Late Medieval England,” pp. 1-40.
140. Hatcher and Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages: the History and Theory of England’s Economic Development*, pp. 105-6. Hatcher, “English Serfdom and Villeinage: Towards a Reassessment,” pp. 7-14. J. Hatcher, “Lordship and Villeinage before the Black Death: from Karl Marx to the Marxists and Back Again,” in *Peasants and Lords in the Medieval English Economy: Essays in Honour of Bruce Campbell*, ed. M. Kowaleski, J. Langdon, and P. Schofield (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 113-45, 131-40. J. Kanzaka, “Villein Rents in Thirteenth-Century England: an Analysis of the Hundred Rolls of 1279-80,” *Economic History Review*, no. 55:4 (2002): pp. 593-618.
141. J. Beckerman, “Procedural Innovation and Institutional Change in Medieval English Manorial Courts,” *Law and History Review* 10, no. 2 (Autumn 1992): pp. 197-252.
142. R. Evans, “Whose was the Manorial Court?,” in *Lordship and Learning: Studies in Memory of Trevor Aston*, ed. R. Evans (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2004), pp. 155-68, 168.
143. Gibbs, “Lords, Tenants and Attitudes to Manorial Office-holding, c. 1300-1600’,” p. 249.

character of conflicting interests between seigneurial authority and the peasantry. However, elevated peasants were the primary enforcers of this system and simultaneously would have maintained a role in useful societal functions that were of benefit to their fellow peasants. This presents much of office-holding, and particularly roles with a greater degree of devolved authority, as being in a position of inherent internal contradiction. Their duties and obligations likely made them both valuable and conflicted with the needs of peasants, which were subjugated to the demands of lordship. A further aspect of the peasant enforcement of authority is that it necessitated constraints upon lordship; the lord-peasant relationship was fundamentally one of inequality, with a high degree of compulsion and intrinsic exploitation that was perpetuated not by acquiescence but rather by enforcement and control through both the construction of society and the exercise of specific lordly authority in the various domains of feudal society.

3.11. Conclusions

This chapter has examined the activities and interactions of manorial officials in the manor courts of Glastonbury. It has explored how peasant infractions and obstruction to orders in the hallmoot are reflective of their attitude to lordship and officials, as representatives of his authority, rather than peasant-official relationships. Interaction with seigneurial authority was primarily through the lord's agents, his officials, rather than direct communication with the lord himself. The interpretation of the role of officialdom as one that was in frequent conflict with the wider peasantry is supported by the general trend across all but one of the Glastonbury manors, which show increases in the number of cases in the later period, suggesting that officials became more frequently in opposition to the wider peasantry during the late fourteenth century.

The size and topography of the manor affected the number of cases in each court. In particular, Damerham and Glastonbury, as the largest and most urban of the manors, had a significantly higher number of cases. There was also a significant increase in the number of presentments for cases in which the peasantry did not comply to the order of the court. Officials were placed in more complex positions, balancing their obligations to the lord with their personal agendas or that of their community. The increase in cases may have been due to more vigilance upon the activities of the peasantry or their willingness to contravene and oppose, even if in more minor forms, the court and seigneurial authority. Regardless, this widespread change demonstrates a change in the activities of the peasantry and their interactions with the court and the relationship with their lord.

Holding office conferred significant benefits, as well as remuneration officials also had a stable position for the year, and often longer, and high-ranking status in the community and court. Officials could use their position to garner illicit profits, obtaining wealth that was beyond the amounts they were allocated as their remuneration. However, office-holding also carried with it significant responsibility and culpability for any failings as well as placing them in a position of mediation between the peasantry and the lord. From the perspective of the peasantry, offices could be understood as both desirable positions but also onerous burdens, as is indicated by tenants paying fines to be exempted from holding office. At Glastonbury, the majority of tenants who wished to avoid office paid in advance for long-term exemptions. Refusal to serve was a rejection of, and opposition to, seigneurial authority, fines that allowed for peasants to avoid office were a form of resolution between the interests of the tenantry and the lord. As officers were required to oversee, monitor and make presentments against the other tenants, it was in the interests of the lord to select a willing candidate where possible. However, whilst avoiding office-holding through

declination was acceptable, challenge to the power structure itself was significantly disincentivised. Few tenants would have been willing or able to afford the loss of land and their repeated service might be more indicative of an inability to avoid office, rather than as a desire for apparently increased status. The material conditions determined not only the ability of peasants to pay the fine to avoid office but also whether the benefits of holding office outweighed its drawbacks for an individual.

It was the supervisory officials who had the largest presence in the court rolls, enforcing the orders of the court and presenting the faults and misdeeds of the other tenantry. Those with more narrow domains of authority or limited duties presented significantly fewer cases. However, it was not only the manorial officials who were charged with protecting the seigneurial interest. Throughout the court rolls, it can be observed that the whole hallmoot were expected to monitor the behaviour of their officials, and failure to do so could, and did, result in significant fiscal penalties. The hallmoot and officials both being amerced for concealment and acting against the interests of the lord suggests a wider communal solidarity. Thus, communal culpability was a valuable method through which the lord could ensure that seigneurial authority was upheld. The utilisation of communal culpability was likely understood by the tenantry and the manorial officials but that is not to say that it did not create contention or strife within the community particularly through self-enrichment or concealments for which the whole vill could be culpable. Communal culpability ensured that actions of officials were not only detrimental to the lord but could also impact the wider community and created division with an incentive for peasants to come forward and inform upon self-serving officials. However, despite the potential for community-wide punishment, cases do still occur where officials were found to have colluded with other peasants, where their transgressions were hidden by the community, or where they were found not guilty of crimes tried by a jury of peasants. Although officialdom likely did bring officials into conflict with the peasantry, the role

was not necessarily strictly adversarial. Officials may have been seen as fulfilling a necessary function, albeit one that was not generally popular.

It is found within the court records that officials were more likely to receive pardons than the wider peasantry, although this was still not particularly frequent. For the non-officials, the majority of pardons given were due to poverty, which was not the case for officials. Officials were, relatively speaking, also presented less frequently for cases than other members of the peasantry. This difference shows that, within the court system, officials formed a category distinct from the wider peasantry, although it cannot be determined whether this is due to the difficulty in bringing cases against them, their being less prone to criminality, or their being more able to conceal self-enrichment and other criminal actions.

Officials were presented less often and were given pardons more frequently but when they were amerced it was also for significantly larger amounts. Whilst ideal officials were expected to act as the lord's representatives, officials can be seen throughout the period of study acting in contravention to the seigneurial will. Officers were predominantly presented for cases that involved poor performance of duties and, because of the impact that these acts had upon the economy and community, these resulted in significant penalties. When they were presented for issues not pertaining to office, the amercements given remained of similar value to those of the wider peasantry. The difference in the fiscal penalties given to manorial officials and the other tenants is indicative of the importance of officers to the manorial economy. The penalties acted as a disincentive as well as an effective method of obtaining reparations. The lower number of cases in which officials appeared was likely due to the penalties and scrutiny of their role being effective in preventing them from acting against the interests of the lord. The relative paucity of cases is also highlighted in contrast to the relatively few cases where manorial officials were suspected of com-

mitting a large number of acts with disregard for the seigneurial authority. These demonstrate that there were numerous ways in which officials could have been able to exploit their positions on the manor for their own gain but that they were deterred.

The enforcement of court orders by officials is evident throughout the period and the tenants were active in their use of the courts for the acquisition of land, obtaining marriage licenses, and the payment of other customary dues. There was willing engagement with the court system by the peasantry, although this was still within the confines of the interests of the seigneurial authority, who often directly profited from these transactions and interactions. The manorial court was one of the key areas in which custom was enforced, and so peasant perception of the court must have been complex, a combination of a forced, seigneurial obligation and a mechanism that they could use to help mediate conflict and bring important matters to the attention of the lord. The lord-peasant relationship was one of inequality, with the imbalance heavily favouring the interests of the lord, however a rigid adherence to custom, which was renegotiable only in a very defined manner, also helped to protect the peasantry. Although the lord-peasant relationship was biased in favour of the lord, it would not have been practical to ignore the needs of the peasantry.

Chapter 4

Representations of Manorial Officials and the Peasantry

4.1. Introduction

Manorial documents are an invaluable resource for historians examining the peasantry in the Middle Ages. Whilst covering a wide array of topics, such as landholding and the lord-peasant and intra-community conflicts or relationships, the accounts, custumals, and court records show their information through a seigneurial framework, providing internal perspectives on the peasantry and manorial officialdom. This chapter will explore how the peasantry and manorial officials were portrayed and perceived within contemporary culture through an exploration of sources outside of the manorial record, such as images, literature, poetry, treatises, and chronicles. Culture is defined herein as in the work of Schofield: 'the ways in which society (or parts of society) represent and distinguish themselves through various behaviours, dress, food, drink, speech, manners, as well as religious, political, and social ideas or concepts'.[1] How manorial offices and officeholders were depicted or represented in these medieval texts and images is an essential component of reconstructing an understanding of the contemporary perceptions of these social sub-groupings within

1. Schofield, *Peasants and Historians, Debating the Medieval English Peasantry*, pp. 223-4.

the tenantry as a whole. Whilst a small number of scholars have explored the different representations, there has been little focus upon manorial officials or their distinction with the wider peasantry, as shall be discussed below. By examining how manorial officials and the peasantry were viewed by both lords and wider society, an insight into the most direct intermediation between the various social strata of medieval society can be gained.

There have been few wide-ranging studies that have explored the representations of the peasantry. Specht has explored the interpretations of the iconography of the peasant and Freedman's seminal work, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, examines a broad range of sources from across Europe and details the complexity of the numerous contradictory, but co-existent, representations.[2] Other works touching upon this topic generally approach through one of two over-arching analytical paradigms: an in-depth examination of a particular source or a broader-scope thematic interpretation. For example, Camille has done a comprehensive study of the Luttrell Psalter and Friedman has similarly explored the Rawlinson D.939 manuscript, a late fourteenth century farmer's almanac.[3] This approach provides a detailed examination and a thorough exploratory understanding of a particular text or image, although it necessarily does not extend to encompass an exhaustive contextualisation. Within the thematic analytical approach, scholars have explored particular representations or tropes; Salisbury, within a broad examination of animals in the middle ages, discusses the correlation between the depictions of animals and the peasantry.[4] A number of scholars have approached the works of Chaucer and Langland in a similar fashion, examining individual characters, the subtle tropes, and

2. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*; H. Specht, *Poetry and the Iconography of the Peasant, The Attitude to the Peasant in Late Medieval English Literature and in Contemporary Calendar Illustration*, vol. 19, Anglica et Americana (Copenhagen, 1983).

3. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*; Friedman, "Harry the Haywarde and Talbat his Dog: An Illustrated Girdlebook from Worcestershire," pp. 115-153, 116.

4. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*.

thematic representations. Whilst certain portrayals of manorial officials have been studied, such as Chaucer's Reeve in the *Canterbury Tales*, these representations lack a cohesive, collated investigation which would provide insight into the contemporary perceptions of officialdom. The chapter will analyse how manorial officials were represented in both images and textual sources and how this differed to the wider peasantry. It will examine what this tells scholars about manorial officials and how they were perceived by the nobility and their peers. Furthermore, this allows for an examination of the perceived desirability of office-holding, the types of person who would have been willing to fulfil these roles, the characteristics that were typically associated with officeholders, and the nature of the relationships between the officials, their fellow peasants, and their lord. The utilisation of a variety of source types, in combination with manorial documentation, allows for a more holistic understanding of the representations and perceptions of officialdom in medieval England.

The literary and figurative sources used in this study were usually constructed, disseminated, and engaged with by those of higher social, economic, and educational standing. However, despite their extraneous origin, these sources are still invaluable in highlighting the complexity of contemporary thought on the lower echelons of medieval society, which helps to develop an understanding of how the peasantry were depicted, their physical appearance, their intellectual and moral qualities, and commentaries upon their behaviour.[5] Furthermore, this enables scholars to discern what techniques medieval writers and artists employed, and what this reveals about contemporary attitudes towards the peasantry. Stereotypes and thematic devices within literary or artistic works require that the characteristics linked to peasantry, officials, and officialdom were to an extent representative of the wider views and perceptions of officials within the target audience, although these may have been exaggerated and emphasised or subverted by the author for artistic or literary pur-

5. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," pp. 2, 101.

poses.

Whilst few, if any, extant sources relevant to an examination of the peasantry originate from the peasants themselves, the necessity of reliance upon thematic tropes and stereotypical traits suggests that contemporary discussion and portrayals would be consistent with the lived reality to an extent. The representations of the peasantry and manorial officials were built upon stereotypes as well as A Posteriori knowledge; these factors, combined with the purpose of these sources, ensures that characteristics of fictional figures would have necessarily been rooted in traits that would have been understood by a contemporaneous audience to be appropriate and recognisable facets of those that held office.[6] The precise distinctions between the wider peasantry and manorial officials varies by source; John Gower, in his disparagement of the peasantry during the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, in *Vox Clamantis*, refers to them homogeneously, not seeking to discuss or understand any differences.[7] Whereas, in contrast, William Langland, in *Piers Plowman*, carefully delineates between the deserving and undeserving poor, and Geoffrey Chaucer, in the *Canterbury Tales*, created several detailed and carefully constructed members of the peasantry. That a distinction between the wider peasantry and manorial officials can be observed in the contemporary sources does itself suggest that officials were perceived as a distinct sub-group, separated from the rest of peasant society through their supervisory role as representatives and executors of demands of the seigneurial authority, whilst also being subject to it. The peasantry were not a homogeneous group; legal status, land-holding, wealth, gender, profession, and a diverse plethora of other sociological factors led to a multifaceted intersection of differing interests and subdivisions collectively classified under the label of peasant. This diversity in the peasantry, there

6. J. Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 165-7. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," pp. 97-100.

7. M. Bailey, "The Peasants and the Great Revolt," in *Historians on John Gower*, ed. S. Rigby and Siân Echard (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2019), pp. 167-90, 172.

being not a singular conception of the peasantry as a whole, is frequently implicitly acknowledged within the contemporary portrayals and even directly expressed in the recorded perceptions of the wider society.[8] The nuanced understanding could be both conflicting and co-existing; Freedman notes that within a single sermon some peasants were praised for their hard work and others admonished for their questioning of divinely ordained structure of society. He adds that the contrasting favourable and disparaging depictions of the peasantry did not mean that they were dissonant and irreconcilable.[9]

There are relatively few surviving images or texts that depict manorial officials considering their prominence in the manorial community. Officials were in positions of standing on the manor, they were highly visible and played an integral part in the economy, and so the paucity of their presence in the literature and imagery of the period is surprising. The subjects of texts and images are telling of the perceptions of the creators of the content, not only in how they were portrayed but what was depicted.[10] It is plausible that the paucity of depictions of manorial officials may be because these officers, in the eyes of the nobility, were not considered particularly distinct from the wider peasantry. This suggests that, whilst the manorial lords would have undoubtedly understood the distinction, the categorisation was one of temporary elevation or status within the peasantry and not of significance in comparison to their position as peasants. That it was not considered necessary to portray distinct peasant sub-groupings suggests either these groupings were perceived as insignificant or that they were at least to be treated similarly from the perspective of the nobility, perhaps in order to maintain the societal structure.

The extent to which manorial officials were considered as particularly distinct from

8. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 3. J. Given, “Review: Images of the Medieval Peasant by Paul Freedman,” *Speculum* 75, no. 2 (April 2000): pp. 460-1.
9. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, pp. 5, 136, 289.
10. Schofield, *Peasants and Historians, Debating the Medieval English Peasantry*, p. 224.

the peasantry will be explored throughout the chapter. In order to contextualise the representations of manorial officials and the perceptions of their position in society, it is necessary to also examine how the wider peasantry were portrayed. As such this chapter will address the perceptions of peasant officers through an examination of the portrayals of the peasantry in sources also providing representations of officials. This will allow for the nuances to be examined within their context and for the trends and patterns within the representations to be examined across the available sources.

4.2. Physical appearance and moral character

The characteristics and qualities of peasants, including manorial officials, were thought to be signified by not only their behaviour and activities but their physical appearance, clothing, cleanliness, and diet were also all thought to be indicative of their traits and rightful social standing.[11] There was an expressed association between physical appearance and innate nature, thus examining the physical portrayals of the peasantry and manorial officials is essential in elucidating the contemporaneous perceptions of the lower social strata. Pictorial representations of the peasantry were often intentionally symbolic of their perceived moral character, signalling within them thematic reaffirmations of their position in society through the depictions of clothing and activities. Whilst these images of the peasantry particularly highlighted their base nature, not all were negative; Freedman states that depictions of the peasantry could not be solely negative as not only did they comprise the largest portion of medieval society but they were also Christians and were essential for food production and labour.[12] There are similarities in how groups, such as Muslims and Jews, and the peasantry were portrayed, however, because of their Christian faith the peasantry could not be placed in the same category. The reasoning behind their subjugation had to be

11. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, p. 108.
12. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 15.

carefully considered in order to justify it.[13]

The relationships between religious and moral associations and the imagery of the peasantry can be clearly observed in the Rawlinson D.939 manuscript. This was an almanac, compiled in the late fourteenth century, which contains numerous images of the nobility, religious figures, peasants and manorial officials.[14] There is a notable difference in the ways in which the peasantry were depicted in contrast to the nobility or religious figures. More care was taken in the detailing of the objects that surround them and the finery of their clothing, which were primarily shown as long garments in purple, dark greens, and gold. In contrast to the regalia of the nobility, the peasantry are predominantly in bright colours, such as oranges, reds, browns, blues, and greens. The cut of their clothing was distinctly different, with hoods and often bi-coloured, mismatched jerkins, hose, and shoes. The two manorial officials, Harry the Haywarde and Peter the Pyndare, were also depicted in the same style and colour of clothing as the other peasants in the text, shown in figures 4.1 and 4.2.[15] However, it is interesting to note that the poses and background scenes of these two images are different to that of the other images. Both of these figures are drawn facing forward, they are holding tools (a horn and staff), and Harry the Haywarde is accompanied by his dog, Talbat. The difference between these figures and the other peasants depicted is that they are not performing a task. The other peasants only appear in the context of an agricultural calendar, undertaking work such as sowing seeds, reaping, and slaughtering livestock whereas the two officials are stationary and without any background.

The reason for the different presentation and postures may be due to the provenance of the manuscript. Friedman suggests that, as well as the fact the text contains

13. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, pp. 2, 15, 155.
14. *MS. Rawlinson D. 939.*, Bodleian Library Oxford.
15. *Ibid.*

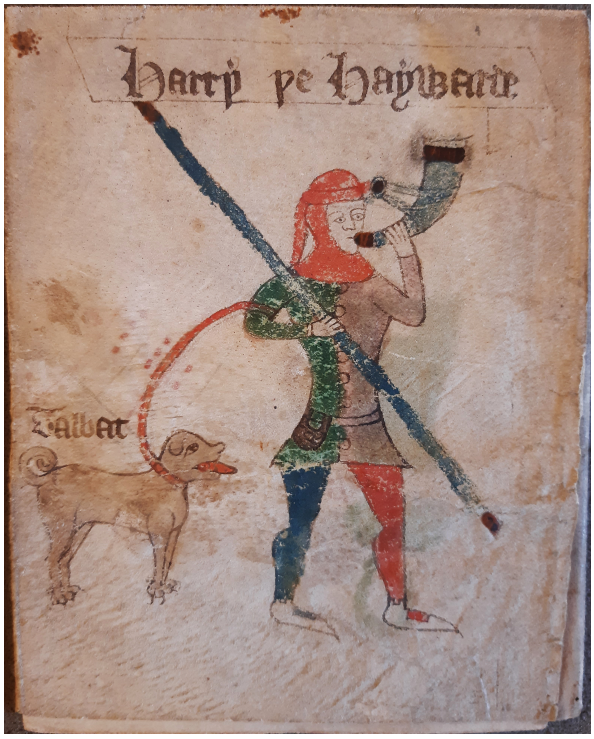


Figure 4.1: “Harry the Haywarde with his dog Talbat” from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford.



Figure 4.2: “Peter the Pyndare” from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

these unusual depictions of manorial officials, that the topics within (prognostication tables, weather, harvest, solar and lunar motions, feasts, and history) would have appealed to a rural worker, such as a hayward.[16] Camille similarly suggests that it would have been a text carried into the fields by a hayward or other minor official.[17] Due to the increased prevalence of farmers' almanacs in this period, the content, the relatively low quality of the images, and the prominence and placement of the image of Harry the Hayward, it is likely that the manuscript belonged to a wealthy peasant. The manorial officials in this text are portrayed distinctly and separately from the other peasantry, not performing labour services. Their postures are similar to that of the other important figures in the manuscript, although they are wearing similar clothing to the peasantry. It can be argued that these figures were shown to be elevated and distinct from the other peasants but still within the confines of accepted social structure.

This manuscript used the images not only to distinguish different social statuses but also moral character. For example, in one set of images, the Fall of Adam and Eve is depicted. During their subsequent transformation into domesticity and toil, Adam is shown digging and Eve is shown with her distaff; the style and colour of the clothing is the same as that of the other nobility and biblical figures in the text, and their implements have gold elements (figures 4.3 and 4.4). The consequences of their sinfulness are presented, in part, through their becoming peasant-like in the depiction of their clothing and action. The portrayal of Adam and Eve in this manner presents an interesting juxtaposition to the famous phrase by John Ball: "When Adam dalf, and Eve span, Wo was thanne a gentilman?".[18] Yet, although their images

16. Friedman, "Harry the Haywarde and Talbat his Dog: An Illustrated Girdlebook from Worcestershire," p. 116.
17. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*, pp. 223-5. P. Robinson, "A "Very Curious Almanack": The Gift of Sir Robert Moray FRS, 1668," *Royal Society of London* 62, no. 3 (September 2008): pp. 301-14, 302.
18. Quoted from: R. Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (London: Macmillan Press, 1970), pp. 373-4.



Figure 4.3: Adam digging (left) and Eve spinning (right), from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

are thematically similar to the peasantry, their position, as the first human creations of the biblical god, is still one of religious significance, and so separation from other images of the peasantry are also emphasised through the embellishments and accents applied to their depiction.

That the association of religious significance with the peasantry was an intentional illustrative device is further supported by the images of the story of Cain and Abel (figure 4.5). Cain, who is said to have been the first murderer due to his killing of Abel, is shown in peasant garb, wearing multiple, bright colours, and his hood, all of which is consistent with the depictions of the wider peasantry. In contrast to the image of Cain, Abel is shown wearing long, flowing, purple garments that are distinct from his brother and the peasantry. Specht has argued that 'sacred images' are limited in their use of determining attitudes towards the peasantry because depictions, like that of Cain, were influenced by religious interpretation.[19] Whilst undoubtedly true, these examples not only depict the peasantry as distinct from the nobility but also commingle the imagery of religious significance and moral good with the gen-

19. Specht, *Poetry and the Iconography of the Peasant, The Attitude to the Peasant in Late Medieval English Literature and in Contemporary Calendar Illustration*, p. 27.



Figure 4.4: The Virgin Mary (left) and John the Evangelist (right), from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

teel images of the nobility. The coarser, less refined depictions, particularly those that suggest links with wilful avarice and sinfulness, were associated with the peasantry. The portrayals of the peasantry and manorial officials, as bestial, uncouth, and morally corrupt, served a multitude of purposes, primarily the affirmation of their low societal positions.[20] Whilst not all images of the peasantry were likely purposefully constructed to fulfil this stylistic symbolism, that these images show this connection between religious figures, morality, and nobility, and the contrasting depiction of the peasantry in association with dirt, sin, and greed, suggests that these values would have been present within contemporaneous conceptions. The extent to which the owner of the manuscript would have had creative control over the construction of these portrayals is unclear. It may have also been that the representation of particular religious figures had stylistic traditions and expectations and that the owner of the text was not particularly concerned or affected by such images.

Another device frequently used to describe and represent the peasantry was that

20. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 2.



Figure 4.5: Cain killing Abel, from MS. Rawlinson D. 939, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

of animal imagery, particularly as beasts of burden. This was used both as an implicit justification of their position and also as a metaphoric description for the role in social structure and economy.[21] Much as the oxen were guided under the plough, these descriptive conceptions served to cement ideas that peasants required the direction of a master.[22] Indeed peasants being almost equivalent to beasts of burden in the conception of the higher social classes is encapsulated in a contemporary riddle, which asked: "what do peasants most earnestly pray for?"; to be answered: "for the lords to have plenty of fine horses, otherwise lords will ride the peasants instead".[23] This riddle indicates that there was a likely awareness of the supposed similarities between peasants and animals, at least from the perspective of the nobility, which were understood in wider society and that these portrayals were not just thematic constructions of the writers and artists.

21. Bailey, "The Peasants and the Great Revolt," p. 183. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, p. 134.
22. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, p. 134.
23. Quoted from: Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 148.

Book 1 of *Vox Clamantis*, a work on the Peasants' Revolt by the late fourteenth century writer John Gower, contains descriptions of the peasantry as a multitude of metaphorical animals. Gower goes into intricate detail on the supposed parallels between the natures of beasts and peasants, likening them to vermin, ill-bred dogs, cats, foxes, poultry, and a number of different insects. He not only calls them dogs, but states that they were poorly-bred and worthless due to a lack of obedience or training.[24] One section states, "Even the shepherd's dog was on hand, and the one which guarded the church by barking at night; these two made trouble again and again."[25] Although not explicitly stated, within the wider context of the work, it is likely that Gower is referring to some form of official, employee or even *famuli*, behaving with their supposedly bestial innate nature and rebelling against their required duties and expected behaviour. Officials, as well as other local elite and even the clergy, have been found to have not only participated in the Revolt but were some of its key leaders.[26] Gower devotes considerable space to disparaging the key leaders of the Revolt, such as Wat Tyler, but there is no attention given to manorial officials themselves. This lack of distinction testifies to Gower's perceptions of the peasantry, either his lack of understanding or disregard for any sub-groupings or hierarchies within peasant communities. Rather, he used the peasantry as a broader group with which he critiqued society and perpetuated social theoretical ideals.[27]

Gower's descriptions of the peasants during the Peasants' Revolt both laments and condemns the peasantry for behaving against their prescribed nature. He writes:

24. E. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and the Tripartite Chronicle*, An Annotated Translation into English With an Introductory Essay on the Author's Non-English Works (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), p. 58.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
26. Bailey, "The Peasants and the Great Revolt," pp. 183-4. H. Eiden, "Joint Action Against 'Bad' Lordship: the Peasants' Revolt in Essex and Norfolk," *History*, no. 83 (1998): pp. 5-30, 26-9. P. Hargreaves, "Seigniorial Reaction and Peasant Responses: Worcester Priory and its Peasants after the Black Death," *Midland History*, no. 24:1 (1999): pp. 53-78, 54. Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History*, p. 175. P. Franklin, "Politics in Manorial Court Rolls: The Tactics, Social Composition, and Aims of a pre-1381 Peasant Movement," in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, ed. Z. Razi and R. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 162-98.
27. Bailey, "The Peasants and the Great Revolt," p. 189.

"I saw rebellious asses carried away by sudden revolt, and no one checked them by the bridle... The asses were violently wild and untamed, and each which had been useful lost its use."[28] The imagery that Gower invokes is powerful, it demonstrates that, even in this tumultuous period, his conceptualisation of the peasantry was firmly rooted in a necessary domestication and breaking of their innate nature. They were likened to animals that not only served a master but needed one in order to be productively guided and protectively civilised: "Once so gentle, these creatures, which suffered anyone to call them and used to watch for the hands which gave out their food, tried to snatch their plunder by force...."[29] The descriptions of the peasantry as almost mindless beasts of burden, feral vermin, and unkept livestock is thrown into stark contrast to the elegance, utility, and regal nature of any of Gower's animalistic metaphors when applied to the nobility, who were associated in his works with powerful animals, such as eagles, lions, warhorses, and panthers. He states:

"This was the day on which the warhorse yielded to the ass and was without honour in defeat. This was the day on which the fierce hearts of lions trembled and were conquered, overwhelmed by the might of the oxen. This was the day on which the dirty swine polluted all the spruce fields with its filth".[30]

Gower's contrasting language serves to emphasise the difference in the behaviour and nature of the peasantry and the nobility. Justice states that he similarly incorporates the vernacular names of the rebels into a poetic register to highlight that they are incompatible with the refined language and discourse of wider society.[31] It is important to note that, despite their being likened to servile beasts, Gower did not portray the peasantry as unreasoning until the Peasants' Revolt itself: "They who

28. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and the Tripartite Chronicle*, p. 54.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
30. *Ibid.*
31. S. Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 212.

had been men of reason before had the look of unreasoning brutes".[32] The use of such language, furthered by the association of the peasantry with terrifying beasts and monsters, also served to weaken any justification of the validity of the behaviours and opinions of the peasantry; they were dirty, primordial, and lacking reason, as evidenced not only by their outrageous behaviour against the rational, genteel nobility but also by the fact their behaviour was to the detriment of themselves and the wider societal order.

Beyond the animalistic representations of the peasantry being reflective of their perceived moral character, the appearance of the peasantry also served to show that they were associated with dirt, manure, and coarseness. Gower's likening of the peasantry to pigs and pigsties not only reinforced animalistic traits but also was a demonstration of the connection between the peasantry and dirt.[33] This close connection between peasants, dirt, and animals was, as noted by Salisbury, further strengthened by the fact that the diet of the poorer members of society who, by necessity, were sometimes forced to eat of the same food as their livestock.[34] Gower, in *Mirour de l'omme*, contrasts the traditional obedience of the peasantry, who were content with their poor and simple diet, with the avarice of the peasantry in his own time who sought to elevate themselves above their station.[35] In *Vox Clamantis*, Gower states, "Great things are fitting for great people, and lowly things for lowly people, but those who were the most lowly wanted to enjoy lofty things."[36] Such representations sought to justify the lowly position of the peasantry in society, their beastly, dirty nature could not match the character of the nobility and these portray-

32. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and the Tripartite Chronicle*, p. 54.
33. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and the Tripartite Chronicle*, p. 57. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 144.
34. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, p. 134.
35. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 149. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and the Tripartite Chronicle*, p. 58.
36. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and the Tripartite Chronicle*, p. 55.

als emphasise that they also should not strive for this refinement, as it was beyond their attributed capability and above the deserved rewards of their station. Freedman states that the nobility ate light, elegant meals of exotic fish and birds, and thence went into battle, whereas the peasantry were considered to have raucous feasts and consume large quantities of alcohol.[37] However, such portrayals must be regarded cautiously; as Birrell notes, in a fourteenth century custumal there was concern expressed by the tenantry who sought to ensure that those who attended the harvest supper do so "in a dignified fashion".[38] Although this suggests that there had been rambunctious behaviour in the past, Birrell adds that this shows a concern amongst the peasantry that a certain degree of propriety be maintained.[39] Again, in these descriptions there was no distinction of manorial officials as a separate group from the wider peasantry. This suggests that, although such differences may be apparent within manorial records, they were not conceived of as significantly different by the nobility. These portrayals also highlight the contrast between the literary perceptions of the peasantry in comparison to their activities and concerns as shown in the manorial documentation.

The bestial portrayal of the peasantry was used as a justification of the social hierarchy, with claims that they could only be put to productive work under the guidance of a shaping hand. It was seigneurial control which made them act to the perceived betterment and enforcement of the appropriate social structure and drove them to labour appropriately in their servile station. Gower's descriptions of the Peasants' Revolt detailed the peasantry choosing an aberrant departure from their rational judgements, despite a capability for reason, but this was not seen as a move away from their innate nature. Their rebellion against the hand that fed them was taken to be indicative of the effects of their bestial nature when combined with an abandonment of judge-

37. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, pp. 15, 157-8.
38. Birrell, "Peasants Eating and Drinking," p. 17.
39. *Ibid.*

ment, further supporting their position beneath the nobility and the evident necessity of that authority. The lack of general distinction between peasants and officials in their animalistic portrayal indicates that these groupings were not perceived, when viewed from the perspective of the upper social classes, as being of significant difference. Officials were of the peasantry and their being described as trained, with an expectation of obedience in the fulfilment of their duties to their lord, suggests that the conception of officials would have been one of metaphorical domestication. That officials were said to be disobedient to that training evidences their position as being almost indistinct from the wider peasantry, save that they were better bent to perform the necessary tasks. They were still lowly and bestial despite their offices.

4.3. Idealised representations

The manorial estate societal structure has been extensively examined by scholars as it is essential in understanding contemporary perceptions of society, the role that different socio-economic groups played, and how and why the peasantry were portrayed in certain ways. The two elevated orders, the nobility and the ecclesiastical, determined that the third order, the peasantry, should provide the labour and resources in return for protection and spiritual guidance.[40] Whether the peasants were being rewarded or punished in this system was a more protracted debate, and the inception of this ideology in reality was much more complex.[41] Although many texts criticise the peasantry for not fulfilling their roles in this prescribed order, a number of authors also wrote about their concern regarding the oppression of the peasantry

40. L. Clopper, “Need Men and Women Labor? Langland’s Wanderer and the Labor Ordinances,” in *Chaucers England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. B. A. Hanawalt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 117.

41. S. Rigby, “Justifying Inequality: Peasants in Medieval Ideology,” in *Peasants and Lords in the Medieval English Economy, Essays in Honour of Bruce M. S. Campbell*, ed. M. Kowaleksi, J. Langdon, and P. R. Schofield (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 173-97, 190-1.

and the unequal structure of medieval society.[42] Rigby has noted how three different authors (John of Salisbury, Giles of Rome, and Christine de Pizan), whilst possessing similar concepts of an idealised societal structure, present a more nuanced discussion of the stratification within the traditional tripartite system, arguing that categorising 95 percent of the population in a singular grouping is an oversimplification.[43] Manorial officials were both subject to and representatives of the seigneurial will, their elevated status in the manorial community necessarily complicates the delimitation of 'peasant' as a social stratification and, therefore, the utility of broad categorisations within the tripartite framework. The roles of officials may have been different to that of their fellow peasants but it was intended by the nobility for their function to maintain the status quo of the system, not elevate them beyond their ordained station. Several authors and artists used the estates ideology, both explicitly and implicitly, in the portrayals and representations of the contemporary literature and imagery in order to justify and maintain the current social order. But, as shall be discussed in further detail, these also served to demonstrate their acknowledgement that the tripartite system was not being upheld and did not work very well in reality.

Images portraying agricultural activities were used to acclaim peasant labour and affirm their roles in society.[44] A number of Psalters, Book of Hours and Calendars commonly show the peasantry performing tasks such as sowing, weeding, reaping, and slaughtering livestock. The prevalence of depicting peasant labour is dated by Backhouse to the eleventh century.[45] Schofield suggests that these idealised portrayals were not designed to encourage sympathy but reveal the widespread concern about the changing socio-economic conditions of the period and the activities and

42. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 51. Given, "Review: Images of the Medieval Peasant by Paul Freedman," pp. 460-1.
43. Rigby, "Justifying Inequality: Peasants in Medieval Ideology," pp. 173-97.
44. J. Alexander, "Labeur and Paresse: Ideological Representations of Medieval Peasant Labor," *The Art Bulltin* 72, no. 3 (September 1990): pp. 436-52.
45. J. Backhouse, *Medieval Rural Life in the Luttrell Psalter* (London: British Library, 2000), p. 18.

behaviour of the peasantry.[46] These scenes also further highlighted their differences to the nobility and clergy, who were predominantly shown in genteel pursuits, such as hunting, and depicted in opulent clothing and in refined colours. The *treatise of Walter de Milemete De Nobilitatibus, Sapientiis, et Prudentiis Regum*, 1326, was a text written with the express purpose of exalting the position of the nobility and prince Edward (later King Edward III), portraying them as both regal and refined.[47] Similar depictions of the nobility are evident in the Luttrell Psalter and Queen Mary Psalter, produced in the early fourteenth century, and the Cambridge B.11.4 Psalterium and the York Psalter MS 54179, both c. 1250-70.[48] One of the most notable ways this was shown was through the contrasting styles and colour of clothing. For example, in the B.11.4 Psalter, the nobility wear bright reds and whites with stylistic patterns whereas the peasantry were shown in browns, blues and greens. However, the extent to which these depictions are realistic are subject to debate. Camille and Backhouse, in their analysis of the Luttrell Psalter, both state that although the technical details in the labour scenes are notably accurate, the appearance of the peasantry is more doubtful.[49] They question the accuracy of the cleanliness and vibrancy of the peasant garb. Camille argues that these depictions were not intended to convey a realistic impression but were designed to present the peasantry in a more pleasing manner to the reader, although he adds that the mismatched colours would have added a comical element.[50] This reasoning is persuasive, as depicting the peasantry in more vibrant and clean outfits whilst remaining comical would have made the im-

46. Schofield, *Peasants and Historians, Debating the Medieval English Peasantry*, p. 225.

47. Walter de Milemete, *The treatise of Walter de Milemete De nobilitatibus, sapientiis, et prudentiis regum*, ed. M. R. James and A. Van de Put, reproduced in facsimile from the unique manuscript preserved at Christ Church, Oxford, together with a selection of pages from the companion manuscript of the treatise De secretis secretorum Aristotelis, preserved in the library of the Early of Leicester at Holkham hall 162 (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1913).

48. *Cambridge B.11.4 Psalterium*, Trinity College: Cambridge, 1250 - 1270; *Luttrell Psalter, Add MS 42130*, British Library Digitised Manuscripts, 1325-1340; *Queen Mary Psalter, BL Royal MS 2 B VII*, British Library Digitised Manuscripts, 1310-1320; *The York Psalter, MS 54179*, British Library, 1260.

49. Backhouse, *Medieval Rural Life in the Luttrell Psalter*, p. 24. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*, pp. 182-5.

50. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*, pp. 182-5.

ages enjoyable even with the acknowledgement that they were not realistic. This portrayal may also have been an attempt to show the peasantry as being content with their station, which justified their subjugation as an act of compassion in agreement with the natural societal order. Positive and idealised portrayals of peasant labour helped to support the theoretical social and economic model in society from the perspective of the religious and societal elites.

Depictions of manorial officials also serve this purpose, most notably in the Queen Mary Psalter. The Queen Mary Psalter, a well-known early fourteenth century manuscript, contains around 800 scenes, predominantly of a religious nature.[51] One of the most notable labour scenes depicts an official, most likely a hayward or reeve, supervising three harvest workers, as is shown in figure 4.6. There is a clear and distinct difference in the roles of the official and the other workers. The three reapers are hunched over, half the height of the official, moving slowly across the ground as they work with their sickles. The official is stood directly above the workers directing their undertakings, these physical positions provide both a figurative and literal sense of oversight and suggest officials were perceived as being above their fellow peasants. The official is also shown with their arm extended, either pointing or directing with a staff. Birrell has similarly shown, in an examination of the Burton Abbey custumals, that it was specified the yardlanders were to carry a rod when supervising the reaping.[52] Müller has noted a number of instances in which tenants were required, when acquiring land, to swear by the rod.[53] At Glastonbury, in 1366, Thomas Whityng, the beadle, was amerced 1*d* because he did not have the rod in his hands.[54] It seems likely such rods or staffs had history as disciplinary tools for recalcitrant behaviour but also that the object also held significant symbolic meaning, more as a traditional

51. A. Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter, A Study of Affect and Audience* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), p. 1.
52. Birrell, “Peasants Eating and Drinking,” p. 16.
53. Müller, *Childhood, Orphans and Underage Heirs in Medieval Rural England; Growing up in the Village*, pp. 79, 136.
54. *GADL*, MS 11225, Reel 26, Glastonbury, 1365.



Figure 4.6: An official supervising the harvest. From the Queen Mary Psalter, c. 1310-1320. British Library digitised manuscripts. BL Royal MS 2 B VII, f. 78v.

object of authority.[55] Their symbolic importance also attested to by their presence and use throughout the period.

The depiction of the peasantry within figure 4.6 portrays them within a scene of idealised labour, in which both the official and the labourers are performing their tasks dutifully; the official is closely observing and supervising the lord's other tenants whilst the three labourers are bent and hard at work. Even with the differentiation in authority in this scene and the fulfilment of different roles, all four figures are still shown as working obediently under the authority of their lord on the manor. Although the distinction between the official and the labourers is evident through their body positioning and tasks, the colour and style of their clothing is very similar, softening the differences in appearance between the two groups and showing them to both be within the same social strata. The official and workers have the same style of hats and cuts of clothing, they are wearing the same colours and shades (blues and yellows) and on all four figures patches of brown dirt can be seen. Furthermore, their

55. Birrell, "Peasants Eating and Drinking," p. 16.

facial expressions are similar, showing their concentration and slight frowns. The image shows the manorial official to be of the peasantry but in a distinct, supervisory role. Although the body positions and tasks undoubtedly highlight their relative positions in roles on the manor, and despite the minor differences in accoutrements, the official is still depicted very much a part of the peasantry and is visibly distinct from the nobility. Unlike in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which shall be discussed in further detail below, where the Reeve was portrayed as pretentious and as seeking to socially elevate himself, the manorial official here was not shown as different through his dress, he was distinguished by the duties he was required to perform.

This image is a positive representation of officialdom from the point of view of the creator, by showing the lord's tenants carrying out their obligations and labour services dutifully, the scene depicts an idealised, diligent manorial tenantry and economy. What it does not convey to the modern observer is to what extent this would have been regarded as an idealised or unrealistic portrayal by a contemporary audience. The nature of the scene potentially obscures the reality, particularly the closeness with which the lord's officials actually observed the work of their other tenants and whether they were they understood to be vigilant or over-zealous in their fulfilment of duty. The image indicates a direct supervision by the official, however, due to the size of many manors, this would have been unlikely to have been the case for the majority of works performed in service of the lord. Officials were likely to have fulfilled this oversight role through more passive methods and indirect supervision.[56] Furthermore, this image does not show how either the officials or the labourers would have regarded one another, whether the workers resented or respected the official for his task or even appreciated that it was a fellow tenant who was legally obligated

56. For example, the Survey of Hartest states that the reeve was to receive wheat and oats for his horse when he rode around to look after the fields. This suggests that more practical methods of supervising and checking on the lord's land were used than is conveyed in some of these images. See: Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200-1500, selected sources translated and annotated by Mark Bailey*, pp. 57-8.

to oversee their work. Idealised representations of labour present only one facet of the perceptions of officialdom, as also evidenced by the number of cases in the Glastonbury manorial court rolls of peasant obstruction to seigneurial authority and a reluctance to adhere to the orders of the court. These idealised depictions reveal nothing of the relationships either between the official and the other workers, or between the peasants and the lord.

Within the examination of contemporary perceptions of officialdom, it is essential to remember the influence that different audiences and genres have upon the various portrayals of officials, nobles, and peasants. The purpose of a source, and the context in which it was produced, determines how the peasantry were portrayed. Psalters were not only a testament to the piety of the commissioner, but also illustrated their wealth and status.[57] Rentz argues that the idealised portrayals of peasant works emphasise the spiritual value of labour, which signifies a desire to project the image of a model, unified, Christian community harmoniously working.[58] In the Luttrell Psalter the peasantry were shown performing numerous agricultural and servile tasks; these scenes, which include images such as an older woman heavily bent over carrying a sack of grain to the mill, emphasise both the servile obligation owed as well as the fact that Geoffrey Luttrell owned a mill. These images show an idealised peasant productivity, attesting to the power of the Luttrells as lords and implying their ability to maintain stability in social order, there is no suggestion of famine or unrest.[59] It is an interesting point of comparison that earlier manuscripts, such as the York Psalter and Luttrell Psalter, portray the peasantry hunched over, whereas later texts, such the Rawlinson D.939 and Harley MS 2985 (an early fifteenth century Book of Hours), depict the peasantry as upright even when performing physical tasks. Whilst

57. Backhouse, *Medieval Rural Life in the Luttrell Psalter*, p. 60. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*, p. 182.

58. E. Rentz, "Representing Devotional Economy: Agricultural and Liturgical Labor in the "Luttrell Psalter"," *Studies in Iconography* 31 (2010): pp. 70-2.

59. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*, p. 210.

potentially demonstrating a change in style, these developments in depiction could be understood, due to their coincidence with the improved socio-economic circumstances of the peasantry and periods of resistance and revolt, to contain within them an implicit symbolism of the shift in perceptions of the ideal peasant.

The idealised depictions of peasant labour did not necessarily mean that such portrayals of the peasantry were entirely unrealistic. For example, even within scenes intended to convey idealised labour, the peasants are not shown as necessarily happy.[60] Similarly, the depictions of the peasantry and manorial officials may show them in bright and clean clothing, but the composition and their posture illustrates an engagement in hard manual labour. In an examination of the reaping scene in the Queen Mary Psalter, Specht argues that the posture of the workers was indicative of the artist sympathising with the peasantry, as well as the artist's limited technical skills.[61] Contrary to the arguments of Specht, Camille reasons that images portraying the peasantry hunched over and frowning were likely stylistic and intentional, as the commissioners of such texts, would not want to see reluctant and unwilling labour.[62] It seems likely that, rather than conveying sympathy or a lack of artistic skills, these images were intended to highlight the position of the peasantry and, by extension, officials in the social order. These depictions were not designed to be unpleasant to look upon, nor were they unrealistic in their representation of society and the activities and toll of manorial life; they helped to reaffirm the social order, albeit in an idealised way.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
61. Specht, *Poetry and the Iconography of the Peasant, The Attitude to the Peasant in Late Medieval English Literature and in Contemporary Calendar Illustration*, p. 53.
62. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*, pp. 199-200.

4.4. Shifts in representation in the later fourteenth century

The images in these manuscripts do not give any indication as to the type of relationship that the commissioner would have had with their tenants, nor the extent to which this positive peasant labour was realistic or utopian.[63] Morris noted a stark difference between the portrayals and representations of the peasantry before and after 1348, in which there was a shift from poetic and passive depictions to polemic moralising in which the idealised peasant was contrasted with the wicked actions of the peasantry.[64] Many of the texts used in this study, such as William Langland's *Piers Plowman* and John Gower's *Vox Clamantis*, were produced during a period of upheaval and tense lord-peasant relations, and so convey a message in support of the traditional societal order. However, even in the works created during periods of relative peace and socio-economic stability, complaints against the eroding order and structure of society are still evident. For example, in the *Song of the Husbandman*, written c. 1340, the eponymous speaker complained and lamented of his ruin, brought about due to a multitude of disasters.[65] Some of these wrongdoings were specifically attributed to manorial officials, in particular the bailiffs, haywards, woodwards, and beadles, who robbed the poor:

Luther is to leosen ther-ase lutel ys,
And haveth monie hynen that hopieth ther-to.
The hayward heteth us harm to habben of his;
The bailif bockneth us bale and weneth wel do;
The wodeward waiteth us wo, that loketh under rys;
Ne mai us ryse no rest, rycheis, ne ro.
Thus me pileth the pore, that is of lute pris.
Nede in swot and in swynk swynde mot swo.[66]

63. Backhouse, *Medieval Rural Life in the Luttrell Psalter*, p. 24.
64. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," p. 103.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-2.
66. Quoted from: J. M. Dean, "Medieval English Political Writings," chap. Song of the Husbandman

Although the poem states that the activities of all three estates damaged both the social and economic orders, it is unusual in its focus upon blaming manorial officials for instigating these problems.[67] This poem was written before the plague but contains similar elements to later works, such as those by Gower and Langland, which suggests that, rather than these anxieties being caused by the changes following the period of the Black Death, the upheaval of the societal order by the actions of the peasantry was an ever-present matter of concern to the nobility. Morris suggests that whilst initially appearing to sympathise with the plight of the peasantry, the peasants were used as an example of the ramifications of poor governance.[68] Within these sources, manorial officials often exacerbated societal discord, rather than upholding law and order, they were, through corruption and deceit, contributing to socio-economic ruin. Officials were used as examples of the insidious decay of society through their greed and poor character.

Texts written during the later fourteenth century tended towards denouncing the actions of the peasantry and the supposedly negative impact that peasant resistance had upon societal order. Bailey suggests that such texts were attempts by the authors to understand the socio-economic changes of the period, as well as seeking to halt them, which highlights their sense of powerlessness in doing so.[69] An example of this is given by Gower's scathing description of peasant opposition to societal order:

"They desire the leisures of great men, but they have nothing to feed themselves with, nor will they be servants. God and Nature have ordained that they shall serve, but neither knows how to keep them within bounds... The peasants of old did not scorn God with impunity or usurp a noble worldly rank. Rather, God imposed servile

(Michigan: Western Michigan University, 1996), lines 13-20.

67. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," pp. 124-5.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
69. Bailey, "The Peasants and the Great Revolt," p. 167.

work upon them, so that the peasantry might subdue its proud feelings; and liberty, which remained secure for freemen, ruled over the serfs and subjected them to its law."[70]

Here, Gower highlights here how the position of the peasantry at the base of the social order was divinely ordained, their attempts at social elevation were morally wrong and sinful.[71] He emphasises the importance of the three estates living in harmony together for the necessary sanctity of society. The enforcement of the peasantry's servile obligations ensured that their "proud feelings" were subdued and under the control and authority of freemen.[72] It became increasingly common in this period for writers to romanticise an earlier era, harkening back to when the Three Orders functioned properly in society, even though that never truly existed.[73] The extent to which the works of those such as Gower would have informed and altered the contemporary perceptions regarding the peasantry is uncertain.[74] Gower himself claimed that his words represented the many, which suggests he expected his readers to be moved by his words and agree with the sentiments he expresses.[75] However, Justice raises an important argument, stating that part of Gower's motivation in writing *Vox Clamantis*, and the inclusion of an additional section on the Peasants' Revolt, was to help rescue his vocation and reputation as a poet.[76] Bailey also argues that, even by standards of the period, Gower was more conservative in his views and hostile towards the peasantry.[77] It can be argued that although Gower's text sensationalises the Revolt with powerful and evocative imagery, the fear that the actions of the peasants induced in the nobility would have resonated with his audi-

70. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and the Tripartite Chronicle*, p. 209.
71. Bailey, "The Peasants and the Great Revolt," p. 168.
72. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and the Tripartite Chronicle*, pp. 114, 205.
73. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 41.
74. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*, p. 134.
75. Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, pp. 209-10.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
77. Bailey, "The Peasants and the Great Revolt," p. 180.

ence.

The concerns expressed within of Gower's writing were also reflected in the legal system of the time, particularly in laws such as the Sumptuary legislation of 1363. The text of the legislation states: "For the outrageous and excessive apparel of many people, contrary to their estate and degree, to the great destruction and impoverishment of the whole land..."[78] The legislation and literary texts produced at this time were responses driven by the fear of the societal changes that were occurring, which often sought to defend and enforce adherence to the *status quo*.[79] Thomas Walsingham, in his account of the Revolt, displays similar sentiments to Gower, he describes the peasants as detestable, full of pride, malicious, insane, and "whores of the devil". He adds: "... the king and his attendant council marvelled greatly at the temerity of the rustics… you who seek equality with lords are not worthy to live".[80] Henry Knighton contrasts the negative attributes of the peasantry with the gentility and bravery of the nobility, only through trickery and cowardly methods were the peasantry able to have any success.[81] These accounts betray the shock of the authors at the audacity of the peasants who sought to change the social order. Justice argues that the Peasants' Revolt confused the nobility because they could not conceive of the possibility of intelligence and purpose amongst the peasantry.[82] An example of this lack of regard for the capabilities of the peasantry is shown through Knighton's reasoning that the letters of Milner, Carter, and Trewman must have been speeches, as the peasants would not have been able to write. These sources present a similar perception of the peasantry, that of them being seen as both stupid and malignant, incapable of self-direction yet dangerous in their subversion of the ordained order of society. The officials depicted by both Chaucer and Langland, as shall be dis-

78. Quoted from: R. Horrox, *The Black Death* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 340-2.
79. Brown, "The fear of downward social mobility in late medieval England," p. 607.
80. Quoted from: Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, pp. 306-13.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 313-4.
82. Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, pp. 142-3.

cussed below, portray officers as cunning and leaders of dissent, distinct from the wider peasantry. Yet, within these commentaries of the revolt in which officials were known to have participated as leaders, the authors are silent upon officials in specific, they do not note any distinctions between manorial officers and the peasantry.[83] Officials, in their positions of authority within the community, had the potential to cause significant damage to the local economy and be leading figures of dissent but, in the eyes of the authors, this was not significant enough that their involvement warranted commentary or recognition in comparison to the other key figures of the Revolt.

A contrasting view of the perceptions of the peasantry can also be found in Walsingham's account where, although scathing in tone, his description of John Ball's actions show that Ball, a priest, had garnered considerable support amongst the commons by espousing the view that all men were created equal and society was unjust.[84] Whilst Walsingham likely exaggerates in regard to the exact number of supporters that Ball had attracted, it is both a reminder of the elite lens through which these texts are created and a demonstration that the nobility and religious orders, as with the peasantry, were not necessarily a unified group.[85] The response to the Peasants' Revolt, when considered in combination with the generally visceral reactions by the social elite to the societal changes that characterised this period, shows that the theoretical, justly ordained societal order was being questioned or even actively opposed. Of the reactions from the nobility to these pressures, one was to view this challenge to the societal order as an indication of the necessity of subjugation, which can be seen as both an assertion of their supremacy, to prevent it being questioned by the peasantry, and also as an answer to the likes of Ball, who spoke of the injustice of such extremes of inequality. From the perspective of those that

83. Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, p. 7. Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History*, p. 175. Müller, "A Divided Class? Peasants and Peasant Communities in Later Medieval England," p. 127.

84. Quoted from: Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, pp. 373-4.

85. Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History*, p. 175.

sought subjugation, the peasantry were become as beasts and spoken of as though they were fundamentally incapable of behaviour beyond that befitting the peasantry; the best that could possibly be expected of them was a fulfilment of the role of the ideal peasant and it was the duty of the nobility to enforce this structure. Peasants were described as being decreased in their humanity and iniquitous by nature, rather than their demands of better treatment portraying their potential and humanity, the challenge to the natural societal structure only served to further show the inequality to be just. By considering this perspective upon the tripartite system, it can also be understood, as a part of their dehumanised portrayal, that any distinction and nuance within the socio-economic group of the peasantry was necessarily abjured and rendered unimportant from the perspective of the nobility. Their status could never be more than peasant in the same sense that no other animal could become more than a beast. It is, therefore, unsurprising that peasant officials are not accorded import within these forms of polemic. That the distinction is considered unimportant may suggest more about perspectives of the peasantry than the actual role of peasant officials within contemporary society. Within local communities distinctions between officials and the peasantry would have been more clearly understood whereas, from a seigneurial perspective, such differences would have likely been less apparent or afforded import.

4.5. William Langland's *Piers Plowman*

An alternate response to those shown by Gower and Walsingham is given in the suggestions of a return to the idealised role of the peasantry, that peasants should conform with the societal structure for the benefit of all, including the peasantry themselves. This can often be observed as present within the tale of *Piers Plowman*, which is one of the most well-known texts of the fourteenth century. It comments

upon, and provides insight into, perceptions of the changing socio-economic conditions of the later fourteenth century. Although framed as a religious poem, the peasantry and problems with labour, wages and social advancement are key themes.[86] In comparison to these texts and the work of Chaucer, William Langland, through the voice of Piers Plowman, sought to proselytise and convince his audience that the tripartite system was beneficial to all members of society.[87] In Langland's work, it was Piers Plowman himself, rather than a higher-ranking authority figure, who was a proponent of the estates theory, asking knights to not abuse their positions of authority and urging his fellow workers to perform their duties.[88] The text was likely intended to be read as a justification of their material conditions being a natural structure that benefited themselves despite any hardships.

Consistent with this being a structural defence of the three orders, the knight is depicted as a kind and noble figure, one who even offers to take upon himself to perform agricultural tasks. It is also noteworthy that it is the voice of Piers who states that it would be best if the ploughing is left to the ploughman, whilst the knight stands above as a figure providing protection.[89] This example highlights that the defence of the social order is meant to be rooted in the words of a figurative member of the peasantry. Langland's text illustrates that the peasants had a role in how the three estates system was negotiated in reality and that to contemporaries there was an understanding that it was considered difficult to implement in practice. Langland's use of the knight's willingness to perform manual labour, and then Piers' own assertion that it would not be right, is an important and interesting literary technique meant to

86. D. Pearsall, "Piers Plowman and the Problem of Labour," in *The Problem of Labour in Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. J. Bothwell, P. J. P. Goldberg, and W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2000), pp. 123-32, 123.

87. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, pp. 226-7. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," p. 104.

88. W. Scase, *Piers Plowman and the New Anticlericalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 105-6. Dyer, "Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective," p. 166.

89. William Langland, *Piers Plowman, A Modern Verse Translation*, ed. P. Sutton (Jefferson NC: McFardland & Company, 2014), p. 79.

be an appeal to the divine will and natural justification of the social order. As Clopper states, no one, and especially not the nobility or clergy, would have thought it right for them to do such menial work.[90] Langland seeks to use this literary motif to frame support for the societal order as necessary when viewed from the perspective of the peasantry and, by using this framing, argues against actions of opposition, sloth, or rebellion whilst suggesting that any resistance to the system was detrimental not only to the wider economy but also to the peasantry themselves.[91] Langland portrays the peasantry as unreasonable and uses their supposed character to justify the claim that it is only through the retribution of hunger that they will be driven to work, which in turn ensures that their small share is a fair allocation of resources:

> The bed-ridden and blind were cured by the cartload,
> And sprawling beggars sprang up quite sound.
> To the hungry, horse-marsh was milk and honey,
> Many beggars were content with the bean-and-bran bread
> And poor men with pease for the pains of their hunger,
> Seizing like sparrowhawks on tasks that Piers set.
> So Piers felt proud as he put them to work
> And provided the food and wages that were fair.[92]

The unreasonable nature and idleness of the peasantry is again emphasised, as even Hunger is unable to persuade them to work for a sustained period. Fortunately for Piers, when the peasantry threaten him, the knight, representing the seigneurial authority and power, is there to protect him as part of his responsibilities of the first estate.[93] Langland uses the voice of Piers Plowman, a sympathetic, rational member of the peasantry, in order to persuade his fellow workers of the justification for, and

90. Clopper, "Need Men and Women Labor? Langland's Wanderer and the Labor Ordinances," p. 116.
91. Scase, *Piers Plowman and the New Anticlericalism*, pp. 77-8. Dyer, "Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective," p. 166.
92. Langland, *Piers Plowman, A Modern Verse Translation*, p. 83.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

necessity of adherence to, the estates system. With the changing power dynamic between the lords and the peasantry in the later fourteenth century, it was especially important that these portrayals of the peasantry helped to maintain and attempt to justify to them that the system of three orders was an invaluable, natural, and necessary structure in society.

It is difficult to examine and understand the impact that texts such as these would have had upon the opinions of its readers, or even how widely disseminated they were. Barron says that the audience of *Piers Plowman* may have been wider than has previously been argued; an examination of wills has shown that although the majority of beneficiaries were the nobility, that a number of middling and poorer lay individuals also possessed copies and passed them on to their descendants.[94] There has also been some debate whether *Piers Plowman* was used as inspiration for the Peasants' Revolt.[95] Although it cannot be known, it is plausible that leaders of the Revolt, such as officials, were aware of this work and considered it sympathetic towards their situation and the conditions of their lives. However, as Dyer argues, any inspiration drawn must have come from imperfect knowledge of the poem or that certain passages were selected by the rebels for their need, as Langland and his contemporaries were alarmed by the actions of the peasantry.[96] Aers similarly argues that despite *Piers Plowman* showing contemporary concerns regarding the demise of the tripartite system, that Langland neither suggested nor supported a permanent change to the system of serfdom, presenting no conception of a peasantry that were not subject to the will of their lord.[97] Further compounding the notion that Langland

94. C. Barron, "William Langland, A London Poet," in *Chaucers England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. B. A. Hanawalt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), pp. 91-109, 99-100. See also: J. Burrow, *Essays on Medieval Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 102-116.

95. For more discussion upon this, see: Dyer, "Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective," pp. 171-2. A. Hudson, "Piers Plowman and the Peasants' Revolt: A Problem Revisited," *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 8 (1994): pp. 85-106. C. Marshall, *William Langland: Piers Plowman* (Devon: Liverpool University Press, 2001), p. xii.

96. Dyer, "Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective," p. 173.

97. D. Aers, "Justice and Wage-Labour After the Black Death: Some Perplexities for William Lang-

was opposed to the Peasants' Revolt, Freedman also suggests that the changes between the B and C versions of the text reflect Langland's impassioned response and opposition to how his work was being used and interpreted by the peasantry.[98] Although Langland did not intend for *Piers Plowman* to be a source of inspiration for the peasantry, and their understanding of the text was imperfect, the peasantry did form part of Langland's audience and interpreted his work for their own purposes.

The context in which these texts were written is an essential factor in any analysis of how they represent the peasantry; both Chaucer and Langland were writing in the post-Black Death era, during a period of increasing tensions between peasants and the seigneurial authority.[99] The worries of the authors pertained to the changes in societal structure and the economic difficulties brought about by labour shortages and high wages, the deliberate use of voices from the peasantry to justify the social structure was to extort from the peasantry conformance to the tripartite system, and to help maintain their own position in society, one of the benefits extracted by hegemonic exploitation. For this reason portrayals of figures like Piers Plowman must be understood as both stereotypical and propagandistic, they attempted to protect and justify the societal structure by using what would have been observed behaviours, representing these as actions against the interests of the wider peasantry. The three orders were important concepts, foundational social constructs of the tripartite society, where each group was to adhere to its prescribed function and not seek to impinge unjustly upon the other two.[100] However, these repeated attempts also highlight that this was a sought-after ideal, rather than this structure being employed successfully in reality.[101] That a number of texts condemned the actions of the peasantry, or

land," in *The Work of Work: Servitude, Slavery and Labour in Medieval England*, ed. A. J. Frantzen and D. Moffat (Glasgow: Cruithne Press, 1994), pp. 169-190, 172.

98. For further discussion upon the differences between these texts, see: Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 226.

99. Dyer, "Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective," p. 160.

100. Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History*, p. 174.

101. Pearsall, "Piers Plowman and the Problem of Labour," p. 124.

pleaded with them, demonstrates that the tripartite system was not as effectively implemented in reality as desired by these authors.

4.6. Officials as leaders of dissent and the embodiment of poor character

William Langland devoted considerable attention to the behaviour of the peasantry, however, his discussion with regards to manorial officials was fairly limited. Yet, this paucity of representation contains significant implications as to the perceptions of the role of officers. Within this form of representation of the tripartite system, officials were executors of the seigneurial will, the independent agency of the peasantry is presented as incompatible with the ideal fulfilment of duty. Although distinct from the dehumanisation that can be seen in the writings of the polemicists, Langland's work similarly suggests that expressions of the possible independence of peasant will or thought were undesirable. The ability to prosper under obedience gives officialdom a place within this narrative form, unlike within the polemics, but it is only the idealised officialdom that is presented as fitting within the tripartite system. Officials as agents of seigneurial authority, rigidly acting without personal motivation or desire for gain and profit, were the ideal. As such, works that presented officials deviating from these standards showed them to be failing in the fulfilment of their societal duties. Essential to upholding the core of the societal order is an understanding that any expressions of officialdom where the peasantry can be understood as exerting their own will or administering themselves are undesirable. By necessity, the understanding of officialdom as primarily an exertion of lordship, as is presented in these works, sees the role of officials minimised; they are purposed as agents but not actors. This description of peasant officialdom favourably portrays the ideal role of the manorial official, from the perspective of the nobility, but cannot be understood as representing the realities of manorial society.

There has been some debate surrounding the more authoritative role that Piers takes on throughout the poem, in the B version of the text, Piers oversees the work 'on his half acre' and then is later appointed as reeve.[102] It states:

"For I make Piers the Plowman my procuratour and my reve,
And register to receive Redde quod debes.
My prowor and my plowman Piers shall be on earthe,
And for to tel trueth a teme shal he have."[103]

Morris suggests that the reason for this promotion was to demonstrate that Piers was the ideal farm manager, he understood his place and role in society and, because he would serve the manor as expected, fulfilled and conformed to the ideal, he lived as a peasant but reaped the rewards of his obedience.[104] The ploughman's depiction is in stark contrast to that of Chaucer's Reeve, who was deceptive and sought to socially elevate himself beyond his station, and the other manorial officials in *Piers Plowman*. In Miss Money's marriage charter, a large number of contemptible and unchristian behaviours are granted: the right to be proud; to deride the poor; to be boastful; bear false witness; to be scornful, lustful, and gluttonous; to swear, drink, and fornicate; to be lazy; to chatter senselessly; to be covetous; to act against the Ten Commandments; and many more besides.[105] The text then states that all kinds of people, the rich, the poor, knights, clerics, and commons, were all in attendance at Miss Money's wedding and had condemned themselves to damnation to be sent to Purgatory or Hell. However, despite the broad scope of the misbehaviour and the diversity of miscreants, there are only a few figures who are specifically named:

102. Dyer, "Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective," p. 163. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," pp. 75, 134.
103. William Langland, *The vision of Pierce Plowman*, ed. R. Owen, newlye imprynted after the authours olde copy, with a brefe summary of the principall matters set before every part called passus. Wherunto is also annexed the Crede of Pierce Plowman, never imprinted with the booke before (1561), Passus B.XIX.260-3.
104. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," p. 73.
105. Langland, *Piers Plowman, A Modern Verse Translation*, pp. 36-8.

The text was extolled and attested by Wrong
By Peter the Pardoner of the Pauline Order,
By Bart the Beadle of Buckinghamshire,
By Ronald the Reeve of the Soke of Rutland,
By Mutch the Miller and many, many more:
“In this year of the devil this deed I endorse
In the sight of Sir Simony, By Civil-Law signed.”[106]

The highly detailed list of terrible or irreligious and blasphemous behaviour was lauded and confirmed specifically by a pardoner, beadle, reeve, and miller. It was the officials who were specified as directly condoning this behaviour, suggesting a role in leadership or sinful temptation. It may be that Langland specifically stated these officials as signatories to the depraved behaviours so as to demonstrate that figures of authority, even though they were peasants, were not only condoning but actively sought to encourage these forms of iniquitous behaviour. These officials were leading figures in their communities, representatives of their lord, who had the voice and opportunity to influence and sway the behaviour of those they supervised; if they encouraged these behaviours, then the other peasants would be left unchecked to do as they pleased. This portrayal, in particular by contrast with Piers the ideal reeve, shows that the other officials in this text were being used to exhibit corruption and unchristian behaviour, rather than being used as exemplary figures due to their position as the lord’s representatives.

That it was not the manorial officials who were the desired leaders or exemplary peasants in either medieval literature or images is further emphasised through the themes of their moral corruption, which is prevalent in a number of the sources used in this study. The immorality associated with the office of reeve can be found relatively early in both manorial records and literary works in the thirteenth century. The

106. Langland, *Piers Plowman, A Modern Verse Translation*, p. 38.

deception of reeves feature briefly in John of Glastonbury's *Chronicle of the Abbey of Glastonbury*. He records that, in the 1250s, Abbot Michael of Amesbury "ejected a certain William, said to be the reeve, from the office of reeve of Glastonbury, which William and his predecessors had for sometime held unjustly, and he restored it to the church's use and disposition".[107] Hilton has found a similar representation in his in-depth examination on a late thirteenth century poem, written in celebration of the defeat of villeins by their lord, the abbot of Leicester, the details of which can also be observed in court records.[108] The villeins disputed the seigneurial rights being exacted by the lord and complained that these were too onerous for them to be able to complete, which was making them destitute; the case ends in defeat for the peasantry and the poet states that social advancement for villeins was impossible.[109] Hilton suggests that it was written for the amusement of the clerics, ridiculing the actions of the peasantry, and a reflection of their attitude towards the third estate.[110] Most interestingly for this study, the poet records the names of the key individuals involved in the dispute. These were many of the most prominent members of the community and the leader in this case for the villeins was the reeve (*Sit maledicus Philippus nos quia fallit*).[111] Whilst the poem mocks the supposedly ridiculous attempts of the peasantry to gain improvements, this case provides a concrete example of the potential power that manorial officials had and the way in which they could use their position of prominence to cause strife and insurrection, even to bring direct challenges against the seigneurial authority. This poem, as well as an understanding of the activities of officials in the manorial courts, as discussed in Chapter 3, suggests that the more frequent representations of manorial officials as proponents

107. Glastonbury, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey, An Edition, Translation and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, p. 213.
108. Schofield, *Peasants and Historians, Debating the Medieval English Peasantry*, p. 224. See also: R. Hilton, "Peasant Movements in England before 1381," *Economic History Review*, no. 2 (1949): pp. 117-36.
109. R. Hilton, "A Thirteenth-Century Poem on Disputed Villein Services," *The English Historical Review* 56, no. 221 (January 1941): pp. 90-7, 90.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

and participants in inordinate behaviours were justified from the perspective of the elites.

4.7. The dichotomy between manorial officers and the idealised peasant

In a number of medieval texts, stereotypes of certain offices and figures were utilised to express key sentiments regarding ideal or undesirable traits. The largely negative portrayals of officials within the literature was most frequently contrasted with that of the ploughman.[112] The use of the exemplar ploughman can be found in many medieval texts and images and, although some commentaries such as Jack Upland were written from a 'peasant perspective', the ploughman was the most frequently used to convey a moralistic message.[113] Hilton noted that Piers Plowman was even portrayed as teaching religious creed better than the friars or monks, groups that Langland devoted significant attention to criticising.[114] Despite being an 'ideal' peasant, the fact that it was a peasant who criticised these orders was a statement in itself about how degraded these religious orders had become. Although the ploughman was portrayed as hard-working, generous, and pious, this was still within the confines of contemporary perceptions of established social structure.[115] Dyer and Freedman have similarly noted that it was the ploughman, rather than shepherds, who had been used in Christian texts and sermons.[116] Dyer states that the ploughman was used for a number of reasons; ploughing required communal co-operation and it was regarded as an admirable task because it provided basic foodstuffs, whereas, in

112. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, pp. 483-5.
113. For more discussion upon this, see: Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History*, pp. 176-7. T. Wright, *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed during the Period from the Accession of Edward III to that of Richard III*, ed. T. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 25-33.
114. Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism, Essays in Medieval Social History*, p. 176.
115. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 34.
116. Dyer, "Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective," p. 157. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, p. 223.

contrast, pastoral husbandry was considered more marginal and commercial.[117] The extent to which audiences would have considered such representations of the peasantry and manorial officials realistic is less clear than the intended message. Bailey comments that the choice of the idealised ploughman was interesting because it was the ploughmen who were the most frequently presented under the Statute of Labourers.[118] Literary stereotypes and distortions were likely designed to entertain whilst also being understood as representative and conforming to normative behaviour, as is exemplified by Chaucer's characters being a combination of stereotypes and exaggeration that is used for both creative and moralistic purposes.

Within the works of Chaucer, a number of his characters were intended to either emphasise admirable traits or show potential failings and moral flaws. The Knight, Parson, and Ploughman were all idealised stereotypes, whose laudable characteristics were in stark contrast to the avariciousness of the Reeve or the crudity of the Miller.[119] Described as large and brawny, with red hair, a wart on his nose, large nostrils, and a big mouth, the Miller was so drunk he could scarcely sit astride his horse, he had poor manners, frequently wrestled, and even broke doors with his head. He had no refinement in either his appearance or personality. Unlike the Knight, who told a noble tale, he shared "vicious" and "scurrilous" stories, and beyond this, he even stole corn and overcharged his fellow peasants for use of the mill.[120] In contrast to the Miller, the Ploughman was intended to represent an archetypical, exemplar peasant, he was described as: "A good and faithful labourer" and "living in peace and perfect charity".[121] The Ploughman was not pretentious, he was pious, helped the poor, paid his tithes, and did not seek excessive wealth or wages, as shown through his

117. Dyer, "Piers Plowman and Plowmen: A Historical Perspective," pp. 157-8.
118. Bailey, "The Peasants and the Great Revolt," p. 180.
119. Hatcher, "England in the Aftermath of the Black Death," pp. 18.9.
120. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, pp. 17, 81.
121. Cited from: D. Robertson, "Some Disputed Chaucerian Terminology," in *Chaucer's Miller's, Reeve's and Cook's Tales: An annotated bibliography, 1900-1992*, ed. T. Burton and R. Greentree (Toronoto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 571-81. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, p. 16.

attire, a smock; his horse, a mare; and his work ethic.[122] He is described as one who did not seek materialistic possessions deemed above his station and also directly expressed an acceptance and understanding of his place in the societal order, qualities that were emphasised as lacking in the Reeve. The characteristics of the Ploughman were in stark contrast to that of the Reeve and Miller, the Ploughman behaved appropriately according to his station and represented community solidarity and Christian values. His was not a negative depiction; although there were also descriptions of his involvement in agriculture and dung that signified his lower social status, these metaphorical associations could be understood as an aspect of his acceptance of his role in the social order, rather than as a criticism of his character. The Knight and Ploughman were intended to be exemplar figures within their own social strata, whilst the Miller and the Reeve were inversions of peasant ideals. As millers were perceived as dishonest, through their theft and over-charging of grain, reeves were also considered particularly deceptive, through the opportunities their status afforded them.[123]

Examination of the moralistic dimension to the portrayal of Chaucer's Reeve has been a topic of considerable discussion among scholars, as it is essential in understanding how the character was regarded by its audience.[124] Chaucer's Reeve provides a unique opportunity to analyse in-depth how a manorial official was portrayed and how this contrasted to the depictions of the idealised Ploughman. Mann states that Chaucer deliberately created the Reeve as an ambiguous character so that the audience could form their own impressions.[125] Some of this debate centres around whether the Reeve was based upon the stereotypes of his office, an older

122. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, p. 16.
123. T. L. Burton and R. Greentree, *Chaucer's Miller's, Reeve's and Cook's Tales: An annotated bibliography, 1900-1992* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 61.
124. For further discussion upon this, see: Stone, "The Reeve," p. 399.
125. Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, pp. 165-7. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," p. 80. Stone, "The Reeve," p. 411.

man, a person hailing from Norfolk, or a real person that Chaucer knew.[126] Curry and Moore both argue that the Miller's Tale humiliates the Reeve through his old age, and that his thin legs are a sign of his lecherous and churlish behaviour.[127] Other scholars have argued that the Reeve's appearance, deceit, and isolation from others are all symbolic of his devilish nature and were intended to instil a rejection of his character.[128] However, despite these negative stereotypes and associations, the General Prologue does describe him as able and highly skilled in execution of the duties of his office:

His granary and bins were ably kept;
There was no auditor could trip him up.
He could foretell, by noting drought and rain,
The likely harvest from his seed and grain.
His master's cattle, dairy, cows, and sheep,
His pigs and horses, poultry and livestock,
Were wholly under this reeve's governance.
And, as was laid down in his covenant
Of these he'd always rendered an account
Ever since his master reached his twentieth year.[129]

The Reeve, having served in office for a prolonged duration, is described as having in his possession a detailed knowledge regarding the weather, livestock, and agriculture; potentially even having too much influence over his young lord due to the knowledge and information imbalance. It is illustrative that the claim that no auditor could catch him in arrears can be read as either a sign of his skills in deceit

126. Stone, "The Reeve," p. 411.
127. B. Moore, "The Reeve's "Rusty Blade"," *Medium Ævum* 58, no. 2 (1989): pp. 304-12. See also: W. Curry, "Chaucer's Reeve and Miller," in *Chaucer's Miller's, Reeve's and Cook's Tales: An annotated bibliography, 1900-1992*, ed. T. L. Burton and R. Greentree (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 189-209.
128. D. S. Ellis, "Chaucer's Devilish Reeve," *The Chaucer Review* 27, no. 2 (1992): pp. 150-61. Vasta, "How Chaucer's Reeve Succeeds," pp. 1-12.
129. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, p. 18.

or a positive assessment of his managerial and administrative capabilities.[130] Vasta suggests that the auditors could not get a point against the Reeve, not because he was so smart, but that because even when detected they were unable to stop him, and that the Reeve was so successful due to his devilish nature.[131] However, this interpretation seems unlikely when taking into consideration manorial records and that reeves were unfree tenants, subject to the authority of their lord. They were unable to utilise free courts, owed a variety of servile rents and labour services, and could not take on land or marry without the permission of the lord. It is improbable that auditors, external persons to the manor, would have been unable to stop him and that, as discussed in Chapter 3, the enforcement of reeves' culpabilities for any debts or failings in the management of the manor can also be seen in many manorial records, which further supports that auditors were capable of holding officials to account. That the Reeve was capable of hiding his deceit in the manorial account is a more consistent reading of the text and, further attesting to this interpretation, descriptions of the Reeve's skill at deception are also presented later within the General Prologue.[132] The Reeve is said to have "got his nest well-feathered, on the side" by lending the lord what was his own and receiving the lord's favour for it.[133] This use of his knowledge of the manor, both its lands and inhabitants, for the Reeve's own personal gain appears to have been intended to make him appear as more useful and of greater worth to the lord, despite him not actually providing anything at his own expense. The Reeve is a character that highlights the possibility of deception, that lords, and in particular young lords, needed to be wary against the deviousness of such peasants.

The physical appearance of the Reeve also reflected his deceptive and immoral

130. Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, pp. 163-6.
131. Vasta, "How Chaucer's Reeve Succeeds," pp. 6-7.
132. S. Waugh, *England in the Reign of Edward III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 104.
133. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, p. 18.

character. The Reeve was described as a thin, choleric man, with a shorn beard and hair cut close to his ears, he was a distinctive figure, different in dress and manner to that of the other pilgrims. In this period there had been a number of criticisms levelled at certain religious orders, such as the friars, which can also be seen in Langland and Gower's works. The Reeve's clerical appearance, Stone suggests, rather than exemplifying his piety instead is intended to show a thinly-veiled pretence associated with moral corruption.[134] As well as a statement regarding his morality and honesty, Oswold the Reeve sought, through his blue garments, horse, and rusty sword, to present himself in a socially elevated manner.[135] The imagery of a priest-like figure riding a horse and garbing himself in an attempt to mimic nobility is itself a suggestion of the office leading to the reeve being distinct and distanced from his fellow peasants.[136] That this was an imitation and pretence of nobility, and one which the audience were meant to understand lacked any substantive basis, is indicated through his expensive clothing being of an unfashionable cut and the disrepair of the rusty sword indicating it to be an affectation, rather than an object of utility. It is also notable that Gower similarly uses the imagery of the rusty sword, as well as objects such as clubs and distaffs, to mock the peasantry during the revolt.[137] These depictions highlight the distinction between the peasantry and the nobility through their mockery of the appearance and tools of the peasants.

The distinction between peasant and nobility is further emphasised by the imagery of the Knight in the Ellesmere manuscript, who is bedecked in armour and has a noble appearance that is reflected by his upstanding moral nature. In the General Prologue he is described as a valiant fighter and protector of Christians, having trav-

134. Stone, "The Reeve," p. 418.
135. B. Carella, "The Social Aspirations and Priestly Pretense of Chaucer's Reeve," *Neophilogus* 94, no. 3 (2010): pp. 523-32. Stone, "The Reeve," p. 417.
136. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," p. 104. See also: L. Hodges, "Dress," in *Geoffrey Chaucer in Context*, ed. I. Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 393-4.
137. Stockton, *The Major Latin Works of John Gower: The Voice of One Crying and the Tripartite Chronicle*, p. 69.

elled far and wide, he was also prudent, sage, mild in bearing and he never spoke foully to anyone.[138] The narrator himself states that he was the “very pattern of a noble knight”, he was an exemplar figure. Even his horse, which is larger than that of the Reeve’s, is shown as significantly more noble and richly adorned. In contrast, rather than appearing sophisticated or regal, the Reeve’s attempts to elevate his position in society were clearly intended to be understood as ludicrous, misplaced, and pretentious.[139] The Ploughman, as an idealised peasant, with appropriate appearance and behaviour, knew his ordained place in society whereas the Reeve did not. The Reeve was suspicious as he was not on the side of the tenantry nor the lord, he was intelligent, wealthy and influential, but he did not fit in well in society. These two characters represented two contrasting options and roles that the peasantry could emulate, they had the potential to be the praiseworthy, idealised Ploughman or the deceitful and ludicrous Reeve.

Chaucer’s use of estates satire and *santica rusticas* in the Canterbury Tales, though less explicit in detail than Langland and less scathing in tone than Gower, demonstrates another way in which medieval authors portrayed the peasant and proselytised the tripartite system.[140] The portrayal of the Reeve was not just a reflection upon the pretence of those holding office, although this theme can also be observed and inferred by his distinction from the other peasants in dress, manner, and action, it also sought to echo the trends towards the social elevation that were occurring in wider society at this time. Despite the differences from the other peasants, to those that recognised the justification of the social order, he was a peasant who was pretending at nobility, striving beyond his accepted position. That these sentiments against expressions of social mobility were present in wider society is also shown in the legislation of this time, particularly the 1363 Sumptuary Legisla-

138. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, pp. 4-5.
139. Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, pp. 158-9.
140. Hatcher, “England in the Aftermath of the Black Death,” pp. 18-9. Stone, “The Reeve,” p. 411.

tion. This sought to prevent those in the lower orders of society from eating food or wearing clothing that was deemed above their social rank. For example:

"Item, that carters, ploughmen, drivers of the plough, oxherds, cowherds, shepherds, swineherds, dairymen and all other keepers of livestock, threshers and all other agricultural workers, and everyone involved in husbandry of the status of a groom, and everyone with goods and chattels worth less than 40*s* shall receive and wear no sort of cloth other than blanket or russet, price 12*d*, and shall wear belts of fabric appropriate to their standing".[141]

The Sumptuary Legislation detailed a number of different workers and roles found upon the manor but did not specifically identify manorial officials. The paucity in the presence of manorial officials suggests that, whilst they were raised above the peasantry in terms of responsibility, their position as peasant was likely more significant in their pictorial, literary, and legislative representation than their office.

Officials were a visible and central part of the manorial economy and society; their various responsibilities would have brought them into contact with a wide array of the manorial tenantry and their families. They were the lord's representative and, although under the authority of a sergeant or bailiff, they exercised the will of the lord, preserving his interests and ensuring the productivity of the labour and land. Although the co-operation of the community with manorial officials was desirable, the depiction of Chaucer's Reeve, as one reaching above his allotted position whilst exerting power over those beneath him, suggests that officials were unpopular within peasant society. As Stone argues, Oswold was depicted as conniving and as having little regard for the rest of his community, evidenced by his poor relationships and isolation from those under his supervision.[142] How Chaucer portrayed his Reeve suggests that such figures were disliked by peasants and seen as potential threats to

141. Quoted from: Horrox, *The Black Death*, pp. 340-2.
142. Stone, "The Reeve," p. 412.

societal order by the nobility, due in part to their relative wealth and desire for status and authority. Rather than exemplary figures whose behaviour should be emulated, portrayals of manorial officials were set in stark contrast to the idealised peasants whose behaviour was intended to model that desired of the wider peasantry, which likely reflected perceptions from the nobility but also would have resonated with the perceptions of the peasantry, as shall be further discussed below.

4.8. Officials as outcasts in the community

As well as examining how officials were viewed by their lords, understanding how office-holding was regarded in the wider community is an essential component of the examination of the roles that officials had in peasant society. Birrell, in a discussion of the manorial officials and *famuli* who ate at the lord's table during the harvest, notes that the reeve was occasionally granted the opportunity to eat with the steward or bailiff. She argues that the purpose of this was not only to save time, as it was easier to exchange information and make decisions, but that this reward of office would have also encouraged the reeve to feel part of the manorial administration, bringing them in with the salaried officials and into closer alignment with those acting directly in the interests of the lord. It would also have been a mechanism for distancing them from their fellow tenants during times of particular scrutiny and oversight.[143] This interpretation is important in its implications, these being that rewards of office would have included deliberate techniques on behalf of the lord to separate the reeve from the rest of their community, and would likely have also been apparent to the tenantry. The othering of officials that derived from such isolation can be seen clearly in the character of Chaucer's Reeve:

"He was up to every fiddle, every dodge,

143. Birrell, "Peasants Eating and Drinking," pp. 15-6.

Of every herdsman, bailiff, or farm-lad.

All of them feared him as they feared the plague."[144]

As stated above, the Reeve's skills at office were emphasised even as he was described as having been deceitful and to have acted in pursuit of self-enrichment. By being capable and knowledgeable in the execution of his duties, he is distinct, an outcast separated from the other peasants. The fear induced in the community by his skill in office had the effect of isolating him from his community. He was said to be not only aware of the tactics others attempted to use in their deceit against the lord, but also wise even to the deceptions employed by the bailiff, a superior official. Although very competent in his office, and said to never be in arrears, the Reeve's actions are not described as being intended to benefit his fellow tenants. The Reeve was suspect, and potentially dangerous, as he was not on the side of the tenantry nor the lord, he was intelligent, wealthy, and influential, a member of the peasantry but also othered by his fellows. Chaucer's Reeve demonstrated the potential for increased wealth and status as a peasant but his clothing, appearance, and relationships within his community all suggest that, within the confines of literary representation, it was neither commendable nor desirable for a peasant to be seen as to exceed one's prescribed status, Oswald was not a character to be emulated.[145]

Chaucer's portrayal of Oswold the Reeve is interesting in its implications for perceptions of officialdom at this time, the extent to which it was a realistic or hyperbolic portrayal, and how his audience might have regarded and responded to the character of the Reeve. The audience can interpret the Reeve's traits and behaviour in numerous ways; Stone suggests that, due to linguistic similarities, technical details and connected themes of fraud, Chaucer may have used agricultural treatises, such as Walter of Henley's *Hosebonderie*, to deepen his knowledge or inspire his portrayal of

144. Wright, *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales*, p. 18/.
145. Morris, "Representing the Countryside in Fourteenth-Century England," p. 97.

the Reeve.[146] Although it also seems likely that Chaucer would have also drawn upon his own knowledge and experiences of officials and manors, as well as possibly supplementing this knowledge with other sources of information. Robertson argues that, in the light of the social conditions and changes in this period, Chaucer's characters would have necessarily invoked recognisable traits and characteristics that would have been both compelling and identifiable to his audience as aspects associated with the stereotypes of his characters.[147] He adds that, rather than a strictly realistic portrayal of what reeves did, it was intended to be hyperbolic, not an attack on reeves in general but to raise awareness that those of weak moral character could become like Oswold.[148] It can be argued that there was a basis built upon lived experience where officials were leaders in subversion, deceit, and rebellion against the lord, as in the cases in the Glastonbury records, the dispute between the Leicestershire villeins and their Abbot, and even the Peasants' Revolt. This prominent role in social unrest may have led to officials being stereotyped, dramatised, and exaggerated in the literature; a reinforcement of the notion that rebellious behaviours derived from the avarice of officials, linking this with perceived characteristics that were objectionable from the perspective of the peasantry could, therefore, have served a dual purpose, allowing for aspersions to be cast both upon the motives of officials as leaders of insurrectionary behaviour and also providing an opportunity for indirect criticism of the wider peasantry. Attempts in acquiring luxury and status by the peasantry could be condemned as immoral behaviour by invoking these ideas. That describing these tropes may not have been the author's intent indicates that they were also prevalent ideas in the contemporary perceptions of the role of officials within these events and how that reflected the character and morality of both the officeholders and the peasantry as a whole.

146. Stone, "The Reeve," pp. 407-10.
147. Robertson, "Some Disputed Chaucerian Terminology," p. 74.
148. *Ibid.*

The depiction of manorial office-holding as potentially leading to undesirable outcomes is not just present in the themes in the works of Chaucer and Langland. The potential undesirability of office-holding from the perspective of the peasantry is detailed in the didactic text “How the wise man taught his son”, which portrays the conflict of balancing obligations to duty whilst maintaining community relationships.[149] The work, written in c. 1430, takes the form of a father teaching or passing on advice to his son and covers a very wide array of topics: be devout (pray often, do not commit sins), do not spread gossip and lies or bear false witness (better to be silent), do not be idle but work hard, do not frequent taverns, gamble or be lecherous, and take care when choosing a bride (do not marry for money, but for a kind and pious woman). Alongside this advice, the father also says:

“And sonne, also y waarne yee,
Desire noon office to beere,
For than it wole noon othir bee,
you must thi neighboris displese and dere”
...
“Or ellis you must thi self forswere,
And do not thin office wolde,
And gete thee mawgre heere & theere
More than thank, an hundrid folde.”[150]

It states that a peasant should not desire to hold office because to do so puts the individual in an untenable position of either aggrieving and aggravating their neighbours or being unable to carry out the sworn duties of the office with little reward or thanks. This text specifically warns of social and legal harms that the holding of office

149. Furnivall, *The Babees Book: Aristotle’s A B C, Urbanitatis, Stans puer ad Mensam, The Lytille childrenes lytil bo. The bokes of nurture of Hugh Rhodes and John Russell. Wynkyn de Worde’s Boke of keruynge. The booke of demeanor. The boke of curtasye. Seager’s Schoole of vertue…. With some French and Latin poems on like Subjects and some forewords on education in early England*, pp. 48-52.
150. *Ibid.*

could inflict upon the occupier. That this advice was given alongside a multitude of other moral teachings implies that, beyond the detriment office-holding would have had on social and community relationships, avoiding the roles were also considered to be important for the development of good, individual character. A peasant could not be an effective officer and fulfil their obligations whilst also maintaining a positive position in society and good relationships with those in the community. The extent to which it was considered desirable to serve in manorial office, as discussed in Chapter 3, was dependent upon styles of lordship, the duties of the specific office, and each individual's desire to serve in office. Müller notes that office-holding also provided great benefits, often in the form of rent remissions and labour service reductions, as well as conferring social prestige and increasing their political standing.[151] However, within this text, the perception is clearly that the benefits were not perceived to outweigh the drawbacks, hence it was thought better to not hold office at all.

4.9. The representations and perceptions of manorial officials in agricultural treatises

The contemporaneous perceptions of manorial officials by other inhabitants of the manor and the seigneurial authority are evident in agricultural treatises on the best practices of manorial estate management. The treatises examined herein are Walter of Henley's *Husbandry*, the *Seneschaucie*, *Hosebonderie* and Grosseteste's *Rules*. All four of these texts devote significant attention to the responsibilities and expectations of manorial officials and workers, what skills were required for each role, and even what characteristics they should possess. There is little known about the authors themselves, except that Walter of Henley had at one time served as a bailiff, which would have given him intimate, first-hand knowledge of the workings

151. Müller, *Childhood, Orphans and Underage Heirs in Medieval Rural England; Growing up in the Village*, p. 176.

of a manor and how to negotiate his relationships with the other officials.[152] It is less clear the level of impact that these texts would have had in informing wider opinion on officialdom. Lamond addresses this to some extent in the background notes to these texts; Walter of Henley appears to have been the most widely circulated of the four treatises, supported by its reissue in the printing press over two centuries after it was written.[153] Its continued value was also shown by the similar information and structure of later agricultural treatises, such as that of John Fitzherbert in the late fifteenth century.[154] This suggests that the content and topics within the text were still relevant and the advice given was still useful to its readers. There is very little known about the background of *Hosebonderie* or *Seneschaucie*, either their authors or circulation, but they were not as widely published or read as Walter of Henley's text.[155] There is more known about Robert Grosseteste, who was the bishop of Lincoln, as he wrote his text specifically for the Countess of Lincoln to provide her advice on managing her lands.[156] However, as Lamond notes, that even though Grosseteste was a well known figure at this time, the text itself does not appear to have had much circulation and soon disappeared.[157] It is thus difficult to assess the precise role these texts had in influencing perceptions and whether they would have highlighted the level of deception by officials or confirmed what would have already been common opinion, however, they do provide valuable insight into the perceptions of manorial officials from the perspective of estate managers.

Similarly to Chaucer's descriptions of the Reeve, all four of the agricultural treatises emphasise the importance of the lord guarding against the deceit of his officials,

152. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. xxi.
153. *Ibid.*, p. xx.
154. D. Mcdonald, *Agricultural Writers, from Sir Walter of Henley to Arthur Young, 1200-1800* (London, 1908), pp. 13-4.
155. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, p. xx, xl-xlii.
156. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
157. *Ibid.*, p. xx.

even directly stating that “because customary servants neglect their work it is necessary to guard against their fraud...”[158] This theme, common throughout each of the treatises, places emphasis upon the importance of having a hierarchy of authority and culpability in order to prevent cheating and damages to the lord. Although the specific hierarchy could be intricate, with the exact structure varying and dependent upon the region and individual style of lordship, the lord was consistently the highest authority on the manor. As Grosseteste emphasised, it was considered important that the lord be knowledgeable about their own lands and property, which would gain them not only respect by their servants but also act as a deterrent to those who would try to deceive him.[159] Walter of Henley devotes considerable attention to the fraud of the reeve and those who compiled the manorial account: “For often it happens that servants and provosts by themselves or by others make merchandise with their lord’s money to their own profit and not to the profit of their lord, and that is not lawful”.[160] Although he advised the lord to scrutinise the activities of the reeve, this was because they were granted a high level of responsibility: “And take care that no servant or bailiff receive the money of the returns, but only the provost and another who shall have the wherewithal to answer”.[161] By having only one officer responsible for the handling of money, the seigneurial authority was able to ensure that reparations for any faults in the account could be more easily exacted. The large amount of attention dedicated to the reeve was likely due to the reeve’s prominent role in compiling the manorial accounts and the opportunities they had to commit fraud and steal from the lord. This expectation of deceit was, as discussed in Chapter 3, also evident in Robert Carpenter’s embezzlement instructions, which was written in the late thirteenth century.[162] The large variety of different tactics utilised by manorial

158. Lamond, *Walter of Henley’s Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste’s Rules*, p. 11.
159. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
160. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 33, 35, 83, 85.
161. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
162. Carlin, “Cheating the Boss: Robert Carpenter’s Embezzlement Instructions (1261x1268) and Employee Fraud in Medieval England,” pp. 183-97.

officials to deceive the lord for their own self-enrichment could decrease the income that a lord would otherwise have received. The warnings issued, and the subsequent advice given, in these agricultural treatises are in agreement with the findings in the manorial court records and the substantial fiscal amercements that were given to officials who had performed their duties poorly and concealed their activities from the lord.

The intricate structure of officialdom, beyond being used to carry out the large number of tasks necessary on a manor, acted as a check upon the deceit of both officials and the wider community. Walter of Henley stated that one should beware of the collaboration of officials to deceive the lord for their own interests: “When the stock of the grange is taken, place there a true man in whom you trust, who can direct the provost rightly, for one often sees that the grange-keeper and barn-keeper join together to do mischief...”.[163] This statement suggests that not only did the barn- and grange-keepers work together against the lord, but that the reeve also allowed this to happen. This warning contrasts with the image of Chaucer’s Reeve who was an isolated individual that terrified his fellow tenants. The court rolls similarly demonstrate that the community had an interest in monitoring the activities of manorial officials because they were also responsible for enforcing seigneurial authority and were culpable for any failings of the officers.

The treatises also show how the reeve could be forced to be separate from the rest of their community: “And if there be anything lost in the court or without, or stolen, whether it be live or dead, small or great, where the lord can have any kind of loss, either by fire or any other way, the lord must take [the value] from the provost and the provost must take it from those of the court who may be to blame”.[164] The re-

163. Lamond, *Walter of Henley’s Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste’s Rules*, p. 17.
164. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

sponsibilities of the reeve could be in opposition to the interests of the wider community, placing the reeve in an intermediary position between the lord and the tenantry. Furthermore, the treatises also advise managers to have officials elected from the tenantry so that they were directly answerable to the lord and in order to exact reparations for any misdoings.[165] Workers and officials who were answerable to the lord not only ensured that the lord's interests were protected but also acted a deterrent against poor performance. The culpability for failings extended beyond the individual into the communal, which was an attempt to reduce large-scale community deception against the lord. It also shows that it was not just officials who were perceived as deceitful but the wider peasant society too, officials were not necessarily perceived as more devious or flawed than other peasants at this time but, due to their positions of authority, they had more opportunities in which they could not only conceal their own fraud or faults but also those of their community.

Consistent with the findings of Chapter 3, the literary and figurative discussions of reeves indicate that checks upon the activities of other officials were also said to be necessary throughout the hierarchy. The *Seneschaucie* and *Hosebonderie* both state that the auditors should hear any complaints against not only the provost, hayward and other peasant officials, but also the seneschal, so as to ensure that the lord's justice was being carried out.[166] The texts also noted that the reeve should not be as responsible as the bailiff, who, as his superior, should be more knowledgeable.[167] The seneschal was to inquire into the behaviour of the bailiff, reeve, messor, oxherd, and all of the other offices. The *Seneschaucie* advised that the seneschal not only investigate the activities of these officials but also examine their attitudes towards the lord and themselves, in order to assess whether they were likely to cause harm. This sentiment was similarly expressed in Grosseteste's *Rules*, which advised

165. Lamond, *Walter of Henley's Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste's Rules*, pp. 11, 67.
166. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
167. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

the lord to seek workers who serve the lord in a good manner, both in his presence and without. The author states that, "... if any of them [in-house servants] speak back or grumble, tell them that you will be lord or lady, and that you will that all serve your will and pleasure, and whoever will not do so send away, and get others who will serve your pleasure - of whom you will find enough".[168] Those who spoke well of their lord or seneschal were said to work harder, be less likely to defraud the lord, and preserve the seigneurial reputation. The reeve and the other supervisory officers were expected to scrutinise and check upon the behaviour of the other officials and workers on the manor. These supervisory officers were to ensure that the lord's lands were being worked efficiently and to a good standard, and they were to answer and explain for any delays or faults.[169] For these reasons, to have officials and servants of appropriate character, and who were thought more likely to work willingly in service of the lord's interest, was not simply considered advantageous to governance but was understood to be an essential necessity in securing manorial rule.

Within these texts, whilst warning against the deceit of manorial officials, they also highlight the skills required and expected. The themes presented as necessary traits for office-holders and workers are consistent throughout these texts, highlighting the link between the importance of the correct moral character, from the perspective of the manorial authority, and the holding of certain offices. Grosseteste, although vague in specifying who, also repeatedly emphasised the need for the lord to have "prudent, faithful, and capable men".[170] Walter of Henley states that, although it was not often the case in reality, the ideal reeve should love and respect their lord and should treat the lord's business as their own.[171] The *Seneschaucie* devoted significant attention to the different skills and responsibilities of a wide variety of officials, *famuli*, and workers (ploughman, waggoners, cowherd, swineherd, shepherd, and

168. *Ibid.*, pp. 137, 141.
169. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 21, 25, 27, 99.
170. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
171. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

dairymaid).[172] Whilst the text focused predominantly upon the necessary knowledge of the land, animals, grain, and implements needed for each task, attention was also paid to the characteristics that they should possess, with these being emphasised more prominently for roles with greater responsibility. For example, the dairymaid, as well as the necessary skills for her job, was to be faithful, of good repute, and to keep herself clean.[173] The emphasis upon cleanliness was likely to ensure that the dairy produce did not get spoiled. Similarly, “The hayward ought to be an active and sharp man, for he must, early and late, look after and go round and keep the woods, corn, and meadows and other things belonging to his office, and he ought to make attachments and approvements faithfully...”.[174] The impression given from agricultural treatises is that there were desirable skills and characteristics necessary to hold office or serve in the *famuli*, such as specific knowledge, intelligence, trustworthiness, faithfulness, and even cleanliness and morality. Although written almost a century later, by comparing these requirements with the description of Chaucer’s Reeve, who exemplifies an official with no scruples and the embodiment of the potential for harm that an official of poor character posed, it is clear that the positions of responsibility held by manorial officials were considered both as necessary and potentially harmful to their lords.

The treatises also describe a similar dichotomy between the prescriptive ideals and perceived reality, they directly acknowledge that the desirable characteristics were not often found in candidates for office and recommend addressing this issue by providing advice upon circumventing and preventing the fraud of the various officials. These texts demonstrate an awareness and perception of an ingrained deception that was thought inherent within the peasantry, and therefore also unavoidably present within manorial officials; that the peasantry could not be trusted to fulfil

172. Lamond, *Walter of Henley’s Husbandry, together with an anonymous Husbandry, Seneschaucie, and Robert Grosseteste’s Rules*, pp. 111-7.
173. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
174. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

their roles but were essential to the manorial function meant that the lords found it necessary to enforce strict adherence lest they suffer losses to their tenants betterment. It was thought to be important that a lord not only attempt to see that those who filled these positions of responsibility had the necessary skills and characteristics, particularly honesty and fidelity, but also that they ensured their seigneurial authority could be sufficiently exerted over the peasants should they choose to rebel against the lord's interests. Even in the selection of shepherds it was said that the lord should determine them to have sufficient pledges who could act as surety, in order to be able to hold them to account for their actions. The advice that these authors gave was largely in reaction to the well-known illicit activities of officials and workers, focusing predominantly upon how best to detect and remedy fraud rather than prevent its occurrence. The emphasis upon the careful selection of officials, combined with hierarchical culpability and the enforcement of surety and threat of penalty, indicates that it was seen as a necessity for lords to take direct actions that ensured an official's tasks were carried out correctly and for them to have intentionally suppressed any potential for deceit or oppositional actions being performed to the detriment of the manor or owner. The extensive detailing on how to circumvent the deceit of manorial officials highlights the discrepancy between the ideal officer and the reality. Agricultural treatises, whilst differentiating between the various tasks of each official and position on the manor, did not highlight particular offices as being exceptionally deceptive or laudable but sought to warn estate managers about the techniques utilised by the peasantry for self-enrichment and the ways in which they might collude together to defraud the lord.

4.10. Conclusions

This chapter has sought to examine how the peasantry and manorial officials have been portrayed in medieval literature and imagery. Whilst still being strongly influenced by the purpose of the text or image, how officials and the peasantry were portrayed changed due to the societal trends of the fourteenth century; earlier images of the peasantry and officials often present an idealised representation, with the figures shown to be upholding the idealised structure of society by their conformity to serving their lord. The changing relationship between the lord and peasants in the later fourteenth century resulted in a number of sources which shifted towards romanticising an earlier era, depicting it as a time where the peasantry accepted the ordained, tripartite society, in order to criticise and condemn those who were arguing against it. Peasants were shown as changing in character, discarding the necessary docile subservience and exhibiting a nature that was unruly and inherently transgressive. The texts and images that convey the multitude of representations of the peasants served a variety of purposes; romanticising the past as a testament to the power of seigneurial authority, reinforcing the societal order and associated structures and behaviours, and also criticising the self-emancipation of the peasantry. The vocal and polemic reassertion of the necessity of the tripartite structure of society indicates this was a sought-after ideal rather than a description of reality.

The physical appearance and attire of the peasantry presented in both the literature and images of the period were intended to be reflective of their moral character. The style, colour, and cleanliness of the nobility was in stark contrast to the peasantry, who were often even depicted as figurative beasts of burden or, in times of upheaval, unthinking and unruly wild animals. The portrayals of the peasantry and manorial officials, as dirty, bestial, uncouth, and morally corrupt, served to affirm their low societal positions. Their appearances and representations were thought indica-

tive of innate traits that justified the social hierarchy, with claims that they could only be put to productive work under the guidance of their lord. It is with this base context that the depictions of manorial officials must be considered, their being peasants and understood as deserving of their stature due to immutable character, which justified their subjugation as an act of compassion in agreement with the natural societal order.

That the visible distinction between the wider peasantry and the manorial officials was apparent in the contemporary sources suggests that officials were perceived as separated from the rest of peasant society through their supervisory role. However, from the perspective of the artist or author, it was not always considered important to portray the peasant sub-groupings. Although there are a few notable portrayals, there is a general paucity of manorial officials in the literature and imagery, a demonstration of the perceptions of the elite that there was little to be distinguished between officers and the wider peasantry. This contrasts directly with works such as the Rawlinson D.939 manuscript, which was likely owned by a wealthy peasant and shows two manorial officers that are unlike the other tenants. This suggests an entrenched understanding of the various hierarchies within peasant societies that was not present in the sources targetted towards high-status audiences. Although, from the perspective of the elites, officials were first and foremost considered as peasants, this distinction between peasants and officials was of significance to the peasantry.

Few extant sources originate from the peasants themselves but the contrast of these with the purposeful reliance upon thematic tropes and stereotypical traits that presented in works from elites suggests that contemporary discussion and portrayals were representative of understanding from above, rather than reflecting the lived reality of the peasantry and their relationships to officialdom. However, whilst the stereotypes and thematic devices were employed with a purpose within literary or

artistic works, these would still require that the characteristics linked to the peasantry, officials, and officialdom were to an extent representative of the wider views and perceptions of officials within the target audience. Although these may have been exaggerated and emphasised or subverted by the author for artistic or literary purposes, there would be a requirement for a consistency with reality. The description of Chaucer's Reeve, who exemplifies an official of poor character, indicates that the positions of responsibility held by manorial officials was considered both as necessary and potentially harmful to the lord and peasants alike. Similarly treatises and didactic texts also describe a dichotomous distinction between the prescriptive ideals and perceived reality, acknowledging that the desirable characteristics were not often found in candidates for office and addressing this issue by providing constant advice on how to circumvent and prevent the fraud of the various officials, or, for the peasants, to avoid holding office.

When specifically described, manorial officials were largely portrayed negatively, although their utility was shown in positive images of labour scenes in which they were depicted alongside the other peasantry and upholding the social order. Officials were shown to be distinct in the activities they performed but not through garb or style, they were of the peasantry, rather than a separate group. Officials that did seek to elevate themselves further, whether through their appearance or wealth, were depicted much more negatively. Their attempts at advancement matched by sinfulness, deception, or ludicrousness, their pretence to elevation of status was often presented as component of the ostracisation of office. As is shown by Chaucer's Reeve and in the *Babees Boke*, office-holding put one in a position of conflict with the community, however, such perceptions are somewhat contradicted by those shown in the agricultural treatises which actually warned manorial managers against the collusion of the tenantry against the seigneurial interest. Manorial officials were integral to the health of the manorial economy and retained a significant degree of delegated

power, however, rather than as exemplary figures to the manorial authority, they were often portrayed as rapacious to the detriment of both their lord and community. Beyond the social expectations, this could also have impact in terms of economic standing and relationships with the seigneurial authority. This is clearly indicated by the dual nature with which they are presented in the contemporary sources, at once deceitfully grasping at power undeservedly whilst also being held in contempt by the peasantry. The fears of the seigneurial authorities as to the potential for damage that officials represented were not unfounded and, as such, the literary portrayals served to emphasise the necessity of curtailment of the scope of their authority. This extended to discouraging the peasantry from emulating the non-ideal behaviours of officials.

One of the most common representations of manorial officials was as an example of poor behaviour and character. This was often in direct contrast to that the stereotypical and idealised figure of the ploughman, as shown by both Chaucer and Langland. Despite being the lord's representatives, officials were not represented as the idealised peasant. Instead, they were often depicted as outcasts who sought to defraud the lord and, despite their supposedly ostracised status, as leaders in dissent and poor behaviour. Officials, rather than upholding order and the seigneurial authority, subverted it. This may have been, in part, because officials were in a complex and conflicted position. They were of the peasantry but also expected to supervise and exert seigneurial power over the other tenants.

Officials were necessarily authority figures but were not expected to use this to gain status beyond the other peasants. Because officials had the opportunity to influence the other tenantry, if they encouraged poor behaviour or allowed it to go unchecked then this could have repercussions for the lord in terms of societal stability. It was in the interests of the manorial lords and those of high status to ensure

that, whilst officials were elevated at a very local level, their role did not translate to more significant authority. It is also likely that, because officials were in a position of power to greatly affect the health of the manorial economy, it was important that they were not shown to be too idealised, lest this allow their poor performance and self-enrichment to go unchecked.

Representations of manorial officials were complex, contradictory and overlapping;they were depicted as idealised, simplistic labourers who accepted their ordained position in society and also as bestial, deceptive, and capricious. Positive and idealised portrayals of peasant labour helped to support the theoretical social and economic model in society from the perspective of the religious and societal elites. Officials when shown as supervisory in such images were part of that ideal, only slightly elevated but not separated from the other peasantry. The nature of such scenes potentially obscures the reality, particularly the closeness with which the lord's officials actually observed the work of their other tenants and whether they were they understood to be vigilant or over-zealous in their fulfilment of duty. Officials were likely to have actually fulfilled this oversight role through more passive methods and indirect supervision and, as demonstrated by cases of collusion, would also have sometime acted to the benefit of the peasantry. For these reasons it is likely that the portrayals of officials, and in particular reeves, as conniving and oppositional figures in the community were exaggerated, so that their role in society remained limited by popular perceptions.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

This study has utilised manorial officialdom to examine the intersection between seigneurial authority and the peasantry on five manors belonging to Glastonbury Abbey in the fourteenth century. It has used officialdom as the lens through which to deepen understanding not only of officials themselves but the local administrative structure, the economy, impact and response to wider socio-economic events of the fourteenth century, and lord-peasant and community relationships. A more holistic view of officialdom has been achieved by using sources beyond the manorial record in order to explore how the activities of manorial officials and how they were perceived compared to the wider literature of the period.

Chapter 1 presented an examination of the officials that were found upon each of the manors, eligibility criteria, and the requisite duties and responsibilities. The variation between manors in offices and their roles demonstrated the relationship between localisation and adherence to the central authority; the fluidity of the structure of each individual manor was incorporated within a more rigid administrative system of the estate and wider Glastonbury network. Officialdom as a mechanism for adaptation, rather than being understood as solely an imposition of authority, allowed for fluidity and accommodation of local requirements. By examining remuneration, the

second chapter expands upon the exploration of the themes of local adaptation and the seigneurial utility derived from officialdom framing change and responsiveness in terms of the quantity and form of compensatory dispensation. This analysis of administrative practice and the structure of officialdom develops an understanding of the perceived value of the work of each officer, the impact and subsequent response to wider socio-economic change, and the extent to which the local environment influenced how officials were remunerated. This approach also allowed for an exploration of the extent to which a hierarchy of manorial officers can be determined by analysis of the remuneration that each office received. The remuneration of officials revealed that, rather than being rigidly hierarchical, even within the same estate the importance of an office was strongly determined by the local geography and structures. However, there was a clear and consistent hierarchical division between officers who had supervisory oversight and those with more narrow domains of responsibility.

In order to develop an understanding of the distinctions between the wider peasantry and peasant officers, Chapter 3 explored the interaction of officials with the manor court. Attitudes towards office-holding and how seigneurial authority was regarded were shown through analysis of the interactions between the officials and the tenantry. Officials were found to be pardoned more frequently but also penalised much more severely, due to both the damage they could cause and the potential harm inflicted by a seigneurial representative undermining the authority of the lord. Manorial officials were not frequently presented for cases of significant self-enrichment but there were numerous instances in which an official was charged with minor acts of disobedience, indicating that whilst officials were agents of the seigneurial will, their individual interests clashed with the requirements of office.

In order to better contextualise officialdom, the contemporary perceptions were explored utilising sources from beyond the manorial record. Within the combination

of these source types, perceptions of officialdom were found to consist of various inter-woven, and sometimes contradictory, narratives and stereotypes. Despite their importance to the manorial economy and their elevated role in peasant society, there are relatively few texts or images of manorial officials. This lack of developed imagery of officialdom was shown to be reflective of the levelling effect of seigneurial perspectives on the manor, where the depiction of a submissive peasantry superseded that of nuanced manorial hierarchies. The representations of manorial officials were reflective of attitudes towards officialdom, idealised portrayals of the manor depicted an acceptance of their position within peasant society, not elevated beyond it. Manorial officials, although the lord's elected representative, were not perceived as the idealised peasant but rather as figures of whom one should be cautious and not attempt to emulate.

A consistent theme throughout this study of officialdom on the fourteenth century manors of the Glastonbury estate was the role of officials in stabilising the manorial system by introducing adaptability in response to both the demands of the central authority and the local manor. Officials were mediators between the central and local, they represented the seigneurial will but also responded to the needs of the peasantry. Their societal position is at the intersection between the conflicting requirements, and so their role was, in part, as a resolution between them, a synthesis of these opposing interests. This has a number of important implications, the first of which is that the structure of officialdom was flexible by necessity. The broad administrative hierarchy upon manors is well understood by scholars but this study has shown that this structure cannot be easily simplified as the presence of officials, and their precise duties, differed both by manor and across time. The variability of which offices were present at each manor and the dynamic domains of responsibility gave the stratification of officialdom a large degree of fluidity. It can be stated that reeves had the most authority and responsibility on the manor, however, this did not

necessarily mean that they were in receipt of the largest remuneration. That is not to say that no hierarchy can be determined, supervisory officers consistently had a larger number of duties and were remunerated more highly than workers or officials who had less supervisory roles. Officials cannot be considered to form a distinct class from the peasantry in a Marxist sense, as their relationship to the means of production would have been of largely similar character, although they had an additional source of income and authority. However, the duties of officials and the social components of office-holding did create a distinct set of incentives and interests than those of the wider peasantry. The presentation of officials as distinct from the peasantry depended upon the origin of the source material, with the nobility and clergy viewing officers as peasants who sought to elevate themselves above their station, and the peasantry considering them to be othered by the requirements of their role. Officials do not fit well within the traditional Marxist paradigm because whilst they were elected from the peasantry, their responsibilities and obligations to uphold the seigneurial will necessarily resulted in conflicting or divergent interests. Officials do not form a separate class but within certain contexts can be considered, alongside other richer peasants, as an emerging bourgeoisie, they had different interests that suggests them to effectively form a 'pseudo-class' within, or overlapping with, the peasantry.

The adaptability of officialdom at Glastonbury has enabled officialdom to be utilised as a lens through which wider socio-economic change can be understood and examined. There were a number of notable changes and developments throughout the fourteenth century; the Black Death caused a significant population decline as well as being an accelerant of pre-existing developments in changes in manorial administrative practice. For example, across the manors of medieval England, the Black Death has been found to be coincident with an increase in wages, changes in agricultural practices towards pastoral farming, and different utilisations of demesne

land and peasant labour, with a slow move away from the direct management of manors towards lease-hold tenures. The structure of the manor and officialdom, their responsibilities, remuneration, the interactions of officials with the community and the court, and how officials were represented in sources outside of the manor have been used to develop an understanding of the impact of the broader changes and events that were occurred across England in this period. The abbots of Glastonbury abbey were, in comparison to many other estates, able to utilise the wide network of manors, the strength of custom, and the fluidity in administrative structure, to adapt to local needs as necessary.

Alongside the flexibility of officialdom, the rigidity of custom was important to the operation of the Glastonbury manors. Recent studies, such as those by Bailey, have highlighted that whilst custom could theoretically onerous that how it was implemented was not consistent.[1] Custom was one of the biggest determinants of what an official was given as their remuneration but there remained a necessary adaptability in how officials were utilised and, therefore, compensated. Whilst not capitalist in economic form, the abbots of Glastonbury sought to minimise their expenditure from each manor whilst maintaining stability. At Glastonbury, as shown throughout this thesis, custom influenced responsibilities and remuneration but contained a degree of flexibility that allowed some adaptation of the system and enabled a number of smaller changes to be made whilst retaining the core structure, even when implemented under a system of monolithic lordship. This degree of flexibility must also be contrasted with the consistency that is also evident, particularly in the form and magnitude of remuneration for officeholders, which demonstrates the power of the lords of Glastonbury abbey as a central authority. There was flexibility in the system but this was not generally to the detriment of the wealth of the estate itself.

1. Bailey, “Tallage-at-Will in Later Medieval England,” pp. 25-8.

Each manor differed in terms of size, topography, geography, population, market, and economy, and these factors influenced the administrative structure and operation of the manor. In order to maintain a over-arching structure that remained stable, the system of officialdom gave the Glastonbury administration a degree of flexibility with which it could avail itself, due to the local structure and variation and this could also serve to ensure stability for the peasantry. These outcomes were achievable due to the flexibility and adaptability of the system to changes in demand and socio-economic conditions. One expression of this flexibility was evident in the record through the changes in presence and responsibility of various offices; some officials were not found on certain manors, and it is likely the responsibilities were subsumed into the remit and work of another officer or officers. There was also significant variation in who could occupy office and how they were remunerated depending upon the size and type of their holding. Lords could work within a system that allowed for adaptation whilst maintaining beneficial structure, tradition, and long-term stability that would not be possible under a more rigidly inflexible system. This structure, similar in character to a central command economy, was shaped by local requirements; estates were not businesses and did not exist within a market economy. Officialdom should be considered as a complexly structured soft hierarchy, supported by a system of privilege. An emphasis, which was both deliberate and systemic in origin, was placed upon maintaining tradition and custom in a way that does not exist under capitalist economic systems. A balance needed to be struck between stability and the change necessitated by socio-economic conditions, officialdom was the mechanism for applying central authority in a form adapted to the local requirements.

This examination into officialdom's utility to the seigneurial authority has provided significant insight into to the place of officialdom within the socio-economic structure of the medieval manor. The over-arching administrative and economic direction of the manor was centrally determined but there remained a multitude of decisions that,

necessarily, relied upon the judgement of the local, peasant officers. How these orders were communicated and the extent to which officials had autonomy in their execution is not always precisely clear but, as the frequent contemporary references to accountability indicate, it was understood by the manorial authority that delegation was a core component of manorial administration. Officials were obligated to act in accordance with the instruction and interests of the lord of the manor but also had local region-specific knowledge and connections. Peasant offices allowed for both the desires of the lord and the tenantry to be better represented by the system. Whilst some changes, as indicated in Chapter 1 with the introduction of the terminology *cadavatores*, suggest a top-down decision and central control, there is also a significant degree of local variation evident within the records of each manor. The presence of different officers, their varying duties, and the quantity and type of remuneration all demonstrate that, despite the manors falling under the same central authority, each had significant individuality in determining how the manor was administered in practice. The responsibilities of officials also extended beyond the manor that they held office on; the Glastonbury Abbey manors were part of a large network, where the size, geography, urban or rural character, and distance of each manor from the central seat of authority influenced both the relationship with other manors and the level of scrutiny and direct management on a particular manor. Although individual manors have been examined in this study, it is evident that there were close connections and exchange of surpluses among the manors of the abbey.

Manorial accounts and court rolls do not detail all the activities and decisions enacted upon the manor. The impact of the surviving source material upon the development of an understanding of the Glastonbury administration and officials should not be understated. As shown in Chapter 2, it is not possible to observe all of the ways in which manorial officials and workers were remunerated; it is likely there were other accounts that have not survived and so judgements on the value of the

position on the manor through how they were rewarded must be done with caution. Similarly, the lack of certain officers or workers on the manor, such as the dairyworker at Glastonbury, or the inclusion of an official in the courts without any remuneration information in the accounts, does not necessarily indicate the full extent of manorial officialdom. Although, it is likely the offices and roles most significant to the administrative structure of the manor had a higher presence in the record.

The actions of manorial officials, their interactions with the wider tenantry, and the desirability of office-holding and its conferred status have been topics of considerable debate amongst historians. How officials behaved and were treated by the court differed significantly by location, style of lordship, individual characteristics, and local community structures. There cannot be a simplistic narrative applied to how officials were regarded by their manorial community and this study has shown that officials can be observed to have served a multitude of interests. Officials can be seen to have colluded with the other tenants, acted in ways that were detrimental to both the lord and the community, and exploited their position to further their own interests. However, that is not to say that an examination of the treatment of officials in the court is not indicative of the position that they had on the manor. The activities of officials and their treatment within the court system highlights their distinction from the wider peasantry. Whilst not receiving pardons often, officers were given pardons with a significantly greater frequency than non-officials. Lords were keen to guard against deception but those that were generally effective or reliable in office could earn some clemency for mistakes or minor indiscretions. It was certainly important, from the perspective of the lord, to ensure that those who did not respect seigneurial authority were duly penalised, and others discouraged from following their example, but it was also understood as an inherent risk of office that peasants would try to reach above their station to some extent.

When officials caused damage or performed their duties poorly, as shown in Chapter 3, they were amerced at significantly higher rates than the other tenants. The observed differences between the amercements for transgressions related to office and other general faults plainly indicates both the high degree of culpability which office-holding entailed, as well as the perceived severity of officials having performed their duties unsatisfactorily. The upholding of central authority was integral to the manorial system and officials, as a direct representation of that power, were therefore a significant threat in any of their transgressions against it. An officer that performed their duties poorly not only caused damage to the economy but also showed that seigneurial authority could be questioned and undermined, which risked instability. As such, by meting out high amercements to officials for defaulting in their duty the lord was able to both seek reparations as well as deter others from following suit. These stiff penalties help to explain the relatively low number of cases in which officials appeared in the court rolls, officials were effectively disincentivised from committing offences due to the potential for large value amercements. There may have also been a threshold at which a certain level of self-enrichment was tolerated but significant, repeated actions were deemed unacceptable. It is also plausible, as Briggs has suggested, that it was difficult to make successful complaints and presentments against officials due to their authority and position on the manor.[2] Contemporary understanding of officialdom was significantly influenced by the notion of them as enforcers of the seigneurial will. This, in combination with the purpose of officials as aspects for local adaptation, suggests an understanding of officials that necessitates nuance. Rather than them being solely a mechanism for the exertion of seigneurial authority, this understanding should be held in concert with a perspective of peasant officials as an integral aspect of the manorial estates system, allowing it to reflect the local environment, including the requirements of the peasantry. Peasant officials were not just the vehicle for the seigneurial will but also

2. Briggs, “Monitoring Demesne Managers Through the Manor Court Before and After the Black Death,” pp. 179-95.

a core aspect of the flexibility of the manorial system.

It was an individual tenant who held office but at Glastonbury, communal responsibility and culpability was an integral method through which the enforcement of officer and peasant duties to the lord were achieved. That the manorial community had a role in presenting officials for failures to fulfil their duties is indicative of the communal obligations to uphold seigneurial authority. The power of communal culpability was in the formation of a localised network of accountability, an inversion of the delegated power given to officials. Whilst manorial officers were the lord's representatives and had supervisory authority over the tenantry, they were themselves subject to scrutiny. Mutual responsibility played a key role in monitoring behaviour and reinforcing the systemic structure in ways that can be considered as functionally similar in effect to popular consent. The conflict between the interests of the community and those of the seigneurial authority were keenest at the intersection points between the two, of which the role of manorial officials was certainly an example. The discrepancy between the interests of officers and tenants, as well as between the officers themselves, inevitably would have led to some disagreements within the peasantry. However, determining whether any specific conflict was a result of this set of conflicting interests is challenging, as it does not necessarily take a form as obvious as self-enrichment through concealments, for which the whole vill could be held liable, but could appear as indistinguishable from other personal vendettas or conflict in domains distinct to those of the original causes. Furthermore, some of the actions of officers could be beneficial to the peasantry. It would be a misunderstanding to claim that the court system represented a complete harmonisation of seigneurial and peasant interests, despite it having been used by the peasantry to settle disputes; the manorial courts served the seigneurial authority and enabled the lord to satisfy the grievances of the peasantry whilst profiting from these cases, it entrenched the lord's authority over the peasantry by providing some utility. The system was curated

and designed to ensure that seigneurial authority was as unassailable as possible, however, the maintenance of this required some balance to be found in the assertion of will and the relationships that were both within the community and between the lord, his officials, and the tenantry.

Developing a fuller understanding of the relationships between officials, seigneurial authority, and the peasantry requires engagement with the contemporaneous perceptions of officialdom. In the wider literature and imagery there were relatively few depictions of manorial officials in comparison to that of the peasantry as a whole. Manorial officials were portrayed in a multitude of potentially contradictory, but not exclusive, ways. A number of scholars, in particular Freedman, Camille and Salisbury, have explored how the ways in which the peasantry and officials were portrayed, such as bestial and morally corrupt, served a number of purposes but was primarily an affirmation of their low societal positions. This study has shown that, whilst the manorial records show more detailed socio-economic differences and activities between the officers and the other tenantry, literary and pictorial sources highlight that such distinctions did not elevate them beyond the peasantry in a meaningful way. There existed a theoretical, idealised peasant that fit neatly within the tripartite hierarchy by accepting their place in society and fulfilling their duty; officials, by their very roles, contravened these boundaries through their elevated status and increased opportunity to deceive the lord and collude with others. The criticisms levelled at manorial officials were likely a reflection of the perceived threat the officers could pose to the local economy. Whilst officials were the lord's representatives, they were not depicted as this ideal peasant but rather as figures to be cautious of and warned against. That these fears were grounded in reality can be observed in the manorial records, where the officials at Glastonbury were presented and penalised throughout the period for transgressing their roles. Officials did not fit neatly into the idealised structure of society because of their elevated position and their opportunity

to exploit their lord, to enrich themselves and defraud the lord.

This thesis has explored a variety of the components of officialdom on the Glastonbury manors and clearly demonstrates the utility in understanding officialdom as a pathway to building a more complete understanding of the medieval manor. Further research into these similar themes on manors belonging to other estates, either lay or ecclesiastical, would provide an interesting comparison to the Glastonbury Abbey manors. Exploration into the relationship between the central authority and the local manors and how each manor functioned as part of a wider network would develop an understanding of how officialdom interacted between estates and show the changes in local relationships. The study of officialdom would also benefit from examination of the social interactions of officials and the peasantry, which were unavailable for Glastonbury manors analysed in this study. This would allow for officialdom to be examined in terms of the families that were associated with office and also present a more detailed perspective upon the community within which these roles were embedded. Through this approach, and building upon the understanding of officialdom that has been presented in this study, a more complete perspective upon the social implications of officialdom can be integrated with other socio-economic analyses. This would allow for questions such as, whether officials did form a peasant elite or if the roles offered only temporary elevation, to be broached.

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Appendices

Manuscript information

The Glastonbury Abbey manorial accounts and court rolls were accessed as micro-film at the University of Birmingham.[3] The dates listed are in accordance with the accompanying Index.

Year	MS Number	Reel
1257/8	10762	14
1274/5	11244	14
1281/2	11273	14
1301/2	11272	14
1303/4	11271	14
1305/6	11215	15
1312/3	11226	16
1313/4	10655	16
1314/5	10656	17
1331/2	10761	18
1334/5	10633	18

Table 1: Manuscript information: Ashbury Accounts.

3. *Glastonbury Abbey Documents at Longleat* (1982).

Year	MS Number	Reel
1262	10682	23
1265	10683	23
1283-4/1299-1300	11250	23
1307	10770	23
1307	11252	24
1308	10678	24
1308	11253	24
1311	10767	24
1313	10654	24
1315	10771	24
1340	10773	24
1344	10774	25
1347-8	11179	25
1349-50	11222	25
1351-2	11223	25
1356-7	11224	26
1358	10634	26
1364	11183	26
1364	11183	26
1364	11183	26
1365-6	11225	26
1366-7	11181	27
1367-8	10636	27
1368-9	10645	27
1369-70	11182	27
1370-1	10646	28
1372-3	10644	28
1379/80	10658	28
1387/88	11212	29

Table 2: Manuscript information: Ashbury Court Rolls.

Year	MS Number	Reel
1257/8	10762	14
1274/5	11244	14
1281/2	11273	14
1301/2	11272	14
1303/4	11246	14
1305/6	11215	15
1312/3	11226	16
1313/4	10655	16
1314/5	10656	17
1331/2	10761	18
1334/5	10632	18
1343/4	5275	1
1345/6	5282	1
1346/7	5270	1
1350/1	5274	1
1351/2	5281	1
1352/3	5273	1
1354/5	5276	1
1360/1	5280	1
1365/6	5252	1
1368/9	5278	1
1374/5	5260	1
1377/8	5255	1
1393/4	5271	1
1394/5	5262	1

Table 3: Manuscript information: Ashcott Accounts.

Year	MS Number	Reel
1265	10683	23
1283-4/1299-1300	11250	23
1304	10778	23
1307	10770	23
1308	10777	24
1313	10025	23
1313	10654	24
1315	10771	24
1340	10773	24
1344	10774	25
1345-6	11251	25
1348	11179	25
1349-50	11222	25
1351-2	11223	25
1356-7	11224	26
1357-8	11180	26
1358	11184	26
1365-6	11225	26
1366-7	11181	27
1368	10636	27
1369-70	11182	27
1370-1	10646	28
1372-3	10644	28
1379/80	10658	28
1387/88	11212	29

Table 4: Manuscript information: Ashcott Court Rolls.

Year	MS Number	Reel
1257/8	10762	14
1274/5	11244	14
1281/2	11273	14
1301/2	11272	14
1303/4	11271	14
1305/6	11215	15
1312/3	11226	16
1313/4	10655	16
1314/5	10656	17
1331/2	10761	18
1334/5	10633	18

Table 5: Manuscript information: Damerham Accounts.

Year	MS Number	Reel
1262	10682	23
1265	10683	23
1283-4/1299-1300	11250	23
1307	10770	23
1307	11252	24
1308	10678	24
1308	11253	24
1311	10767	24
1313	10654	24
1315	10771	24
1339-40	10773	24
1344	10774	25
1345-6	11251	25
1347-8	11179	25
1349-50	11222	25
1351-2	11223	25
1356-7	11224	26
1357	11184	26
1358	10634	26
1364	11183	26
1365-6	11225	26
1366-7	11181	27
1367-8	10636	27
1369	10645	27
1369-70	11182	27
1370-1	10646	28
1372-3	10644	28
1379/80	10658	28
1387/88	11212	29

Table 6: Manuscript information: Damerham Court Rolls.

Year	MS Number	Reel
1257/8	10762	14
1274/5	11241	2
1274/5	11244	14
1281/2	11245	2
1301/2	11274	2
1301/2	11272	14
1303/4	11274a	2
1305/6	10783	2
1309/10	7353	2
1312/3	11249	2
1313/4	9670	2
1314/5	10785	2
1315/6	10766	17
1331/2	11238	2
1334/5	11238	2
1334/5	11239a	2
1335/6	11243	2
1343/4	11226	2
1344/5	11227	2
1349/50	11185	2
1350/1	11186	2
1351/2	11187	2
1352/3	10637	2
1354/5	11229	2
1355/6	11188	2
1356/7	10638	2
1359/60	11248	2
1362/3	10643	2
1365/6	11230	2
1367/8	11231	2
1369/70	11247	2
1372/3	10642	2
1389/90	10667	2
1392/3	9933	2
1392/3	10666	2

Table 7: Manuscript information: Glastonbury Accounts.

Year	MS Number	Reel
1262	10682	23
1265	10683	23
1283-4/1299-1300	11250	23
1304	10778	23
1307	10781	22
1307	10770	23
1308	10775	22
1308	11253	24
1311	10767	24
1313	10780	22
1313	10654	24
1315	10771	24
1340	10773	24
1344	10774	25
1346	11251	25
1347-8	11179	25
1358	11184	26
1364	11183	26
1365-6	11225	26
1367	11181	27
1370	11182	27
1370-1	10646	28
1373	10644	28

Table 8: Manuscript information: Glastonbury Court Rolls.

Year	MS Number	Reel
1274/5	11244	14
1301/2	11272	14
1303/4	11271	15
1305/6	11215	15
1312/3	11226	16
1313/4	10655	16
1314/5	10656	17
1331/2	10761	18

Table 9: Manuscript information: Nettleton Accounts.

Year	MS Number	Reel
1262	10682	23
1265	10683	23
1283-4/1299-1300	11250	23
1307	10770	23
1307	11252	24
1308	10678	24
1308	11253	24
1313	10654	24
1315	10771	24
1340	10773	24
1344	10774	25
1345-6	11251	25
1347-8	11179	25
1349-50	11222	25
1351-2	11223	25
1356-7	11224	26
1358	10634	26
1365-6	11225	26
1366-7	11181	27
1367-8	10636	27
1369	10645	27
1370	11182	27
1370-1	10646	28
1372-3	10644	28
1379/80	10658	28
1387/88	11212	29

Table 10: Manuscript information: Nettleton Court Rolls.