

# The Bishop and the Prior: demesne agriculture in medieval Hampshire\*

by John Hare

## *Abstract*

The bishops of Winchester possessed the richest and by far and away best-documented estate in medieval England. This article examines demesne agriculture on part of its estates and that of a related estate in the same area: the Cathedral Priory at Winchester. Together these two estates show some of the characteristics of the great estates of southern England and particularly of the great chalkland manors: mixed farming characterised by large sheep flocks and late leasing of the demesne. But while the two estates show much in common, they also show subtle variations in the chronology of demesne shrinkage and in the emphasis given to different crops and livestock. Some of these variations may be ascribed to the differing nature of the household that the estate supported, while for others the explanations for the variation in managerial policy are less clear.

The medieval estates of the bishopric of Winchester provide us with an extraordinarily rich quantity of documentation, described recently by Richard Britnell as ‘the core of one of the most astonishing archives anywhere in the world to survive from the medieval period’.<sup>1</sup> The enrolled accounts survive for most manors and for most years from 1208–9 until after the end of the fifteenth century. They start earlier than the surviving accounts for most other estates; moreover, the bishops continued demesne agriculture later than on most other estates. It has been calculated that there are about 10,000 individual manorial accounts for the period of demesne agriculture, of which about half would have been from Hampshire. The fullness and importance of this archive has long been recognised.<sup>2</sup> But this

\* This paper is a by-product of earlier work on Wiltshire, to be published as *A prospering society. Wiltshire in the later Middle Ages*. I am grateful for discussions on the bishopric with Mark Page and Jan Titow, and to all those whose published and unpublished work has enabled me to produce this article. Dr Page also kindly commented on a draft of this paper. An earlier version was given at the 2003 Annual Conference of the British Agricultural History Society at Winchester.

<sup>1</sup> R. Britnell, ‘The Winchester pipe rolls and their historians’, in R. Britnell (ed.), *The Winchester pipe rolls and medieval English society* (2003), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Britnell has summarised the use made by scholars of the bishopric records (‘Winchester pipe rolls and their historians’). The work on the priory may be less familiar. The work of J. S. Drew is found in his ‘Manorial accounts of St Swithun’s priory Winchester’, *English Historical Rev.*,

62 (1947), pp. 20–41, repr. in E. M. Carus-Wilson (ed.), *Essays in economic history* (3 vols, 1954–62), II, pp. 12–30 and in the typescript volumes he prepared on individual manors (*Chilbolton, Michelmersh, Houghton, Silkstead*), available in Winchester Cathedral Library and the Institute of Historical Research, London. Joan Greatrex’ work is in her doctoral thesis, ‘The administration of Winchester cathedral priory in the time of Cardinal Beaufort’

extraordinary amount of documentation creates its own problems. How do we cope with this huge mass of data?<sup>3</sup> How typical was this estate or was it, in Bruce Campbell's phrase, a 'unique estate' in both its economy as well as its documentation?<sup>4</sup>

This study seeks to explore the typicality of the episcopal estate by comparing its Hampshire manors with those of a related, also well-documented but less familiar estate, that of the Cathedral Priory of Winchester. The intention of the comparison is both to examine and explain the variations between the two estates and, through their similarities, to establish some of the characteristics of demesne agriculture in central southern England. Both estates had originally belonged to the bishop, their final legal separation occurring as late as 1284, although in practice this division had taken place long before. The cathedral priory's estate has for long been overshadowed by the bishopric. Although its records are patchy in their survival and do not begin until the middle of the thirteenth century, it still constitutes one of the best documented medieval estates in southern England. For present purposes the comparison has been restricted to the core estates in Hampshire, in order that similar manors and lands are being compared. On a large estate like the bishopric, there could be enormous variation between its far-flung manors.<sup>5</sup> Both estates were extremely wealthy. One was the richest bishopric in England (with an annual income of about £4000),<sup>6</sup> the other the richest monastery in Hampshire (with an income of over £1500). Both estates were dominated by Hampshire manors and between them they dominated the county. Many of their manors were large complex possessions, incorporating several settlements, originally acquired in the Anglo-Saxon period.

But there were also major contrasts between the two estates. They possessed very different households, and this could affect agrarian policies. The bishop was an itinerant lord, who moved

*Note 2 continued*

(unpublished PhD thesis, University of Ottawa, 1972), and subsequent articles, e.g. 'St Swithun's priory in the later Middle Ages', in J. Crook (ed.), *Winchester cathedral: nine hundred years, 1093–1993* (1993), pp. 139–166; 'The reconciliation of spiritual and temporal responsibilities: some aspects of St Swithun's as landowners and estate managers (c.1380–c.1450)', *Proc. Hants. Field Club* 51 (1996), pp. 77–87. Barry Harrison has followed up his study of the Wiltshire manors with an unpublished one of a group of north Hampshire ones. The Wiltshire manors are also treated in my *A prospering society*, and 'Agriculture and land use on the manor', in P. J. Fowler (ed.), *Landscape plotted and pieced* (2000), pp. 156–9.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the available material has had to be heavily sampled. Snapshots of the two estates have been provided by the published bishopric accounts for 1211, 1302 and 1410, and by the composite priory manor accounts for 1248, 1283 and 1311, the stockbook for 1389–91 and the figures from manorial accounts about 1400 are given in Greatrex' thesis. Longer sequences have been provided by the typescripts of J. S. Drew, the work of N. S. B. and E. C. Gras on Crawley, and by my work on Bishop's Waltham. In addition, manorial accounts and

pipe rolls have been used to explore specific problems. The priory material is mainly in the Winchester Cathedral Library (WCL) where it is presently being recatalogued. I have therefore used the dates of the accounts. The bishopric accounts are in the Hampshire Record Office (HRO) where they were formerly numbered with an Eccl 2 number, but have now been renumbered with a class reference 11M59B2. The accounts ran from Michaelmas to Michaelmas and have been dated by the close of the account. Readers should note that there were two manors of Overton. That in Hampshire belonged to the bishop and that in Wiltshire to the priory. The context should make it clear which is being referred to.

<sup>4</sup> B. M. S. Campbell, 'A unique estate and a unique source: the Winchester pipe rolls in perspective', in Britnell (ed.), *Winchester pipe rolls*, pp. 21–43.

<sup>5</sup> J. Z. Titow, 'Some differences between manors and their effects on the condition of the peasant in the thirteenth century', *AgHR* 10 (1962), pp. 1–13 and repr. in W. Minchinton (ed.), *Essays in agrarian history* (2 vols, 1968), I, pp. 39–57.

<sup>6</sup> M. Page, 'William Wykeham and the management of the Winchester estate, 1366–1404', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *Fourteenth-century England* 3 (2004), p. 108.

between his many great residences and his movements were, in the long-term, unpredictable. For him the estate was essentially a producer of ready money and it aptly fits Postan's description of such estates as 'federated grain factories producing largely for cash'.<sup>7</sup> The estate could also supply food for the episcopal household, but its demands were inconsistent, depending on a variety of influences on any bishop's itinerary, although in his absence his great houses and parks could also be used by members of his household. By contrast, the main priory household was static and more predictable in its demand for food, with a concentration of demand in Winchester itself. It had less need to feed large numbers of horses. In the opening decade of the fifteenth century, the priory received an annual minimum of about 1,500 quarters of grain from its estates.<sup>8</sup> Barley made up the largest quantity (43 per cent), almost all of which went to the cellarer to be used for making ale. Meanwhile at the beginning of the 1390s, getting on for 500 pigs, 600 sheep, about 50 cattle and in excess of 4,000 cheeses were sent to be consumed by the priory household.<sup>9</sup>

The bishopric estate was also subject to other influences. At the death of a bishop, the livestock belonged to his executors and his successor had either to purchase the demesne herds and flocks from his predecessor's executors or rebuild them over a period of years. Flock sizes were thus affected by human mortality as much as that of the sheep, as may clearly be seen at Crawley.<sup>10</sup> As a further example, at Bishop's Waltham livestock numbers fell in 1404, the year of Bishop Wykeham's death, and fell further after this when most, but not all, of the sheep were bought from his executors. It then took a few years to build numbers up again to something like the earlier levels. The decision was also taken to integrate the flocks of this manor and those of nearby Droxford, with the lambs and hogasters kept at the latter manor (see Table 5).<sup>11</sup> In addition, vacancies, when the estates were in the hands of the crown, could also lead to the demesnes being stripped of grain and livestock.<sup>12</sup>

This study draws both on new work and on the work of others. On the bishopric, the figures for demesne agriculture are largely drawn from the published works of J. Z. Titow and D. L. Farmer underpinned by Titow's unpublished work, the published pipe rolls, other published work on

<sup>7</sup> M. M. Postan, *Essays in medieval agriculture and general problems of the medieval economy* (1973), p. 44; see also Campbell, 'Unique estate', p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> Calculated from figures in Greatrex, 'Administration of Winchester cathedral priory', appendix D1 XXV, based on the nearest account chronologically to 1405. (Figures from individual manors may have fluctuated from year to year and there is no evidence for six manors where continued cultivation is likely.) The totals are an approximation and, because some manors have no surviving documentation, an underestimate. The 1580 qtrs. were made up as follows: wheat 601, barley 672, oats 219, dredge 88.

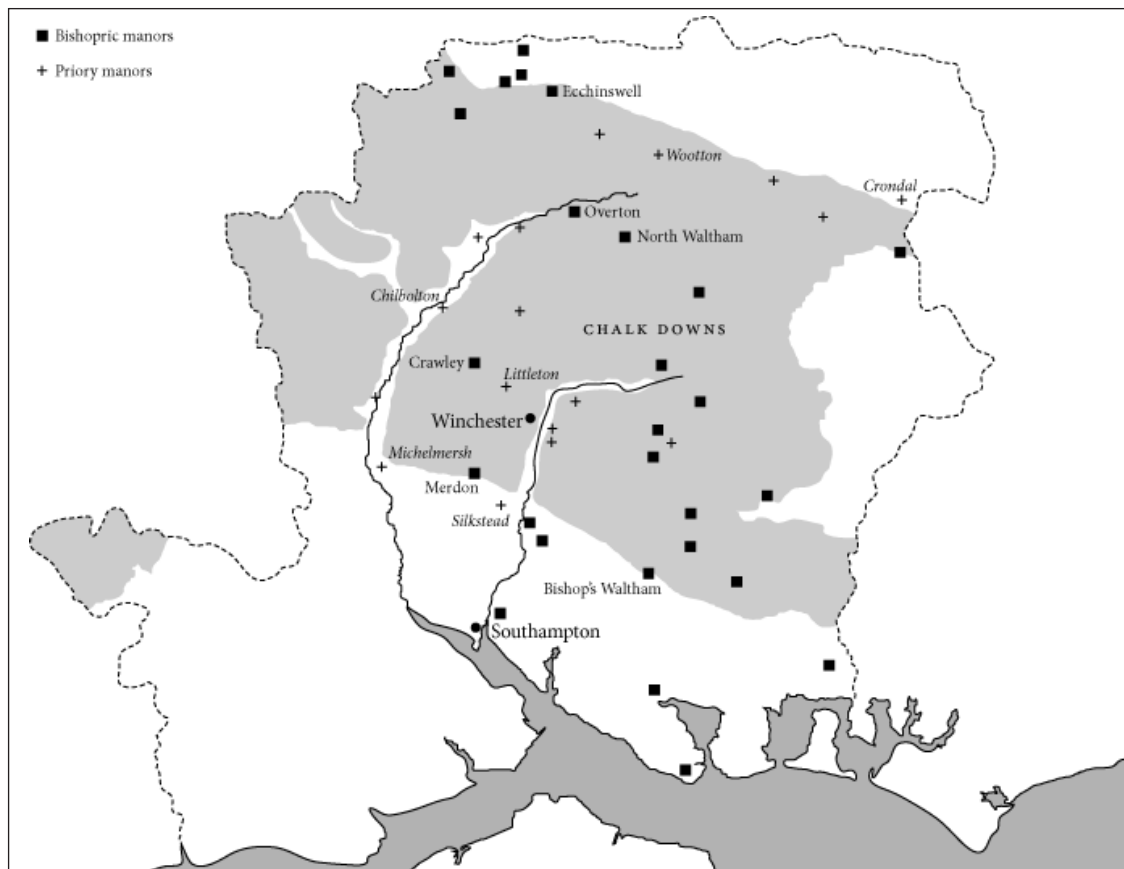
<sup>9</sup> WCL, stockbook. The cheese figures are calculated from the incomplete manorial figures tabulated in Greatrex, 'Administration', App. C.

<sup>10</sup> J. Z. Titow, 'Land and population on the bishop of Winchester's estates' (unpublished Ph.D. diss.,

Cambridge, 1962); for the estate as a whole, p. 44a. For Crawley the material is most easily accessible in M. Page, 'The technology of medieval sheep farming: some evidence from Crawley, Hampshire, 1208-1349', *AgHR* 51 (2003), pp. 141-3; see id., *Winchester's estate, archive and administration* (Hampshire Papers 24, 2002), pp. 14-15. For later examples, as at the death of the predecessors of bishops Edington and Wykeham, see the figures in N. S. B. Gras and E. C. Gras, *The economic and social history of an English village* (1930), pp. 399-419.

<sup>11</sup> M. Page (ed.), *The Pipe Roll of the bishopric of Winchester, 1409-10* (Hampshire Rec. Ser., 16, 1999), p. 191.

<sup>12</sup> K. Biddick (with C. C. J. H. Bijleveld), 'Agrarian productivity on the estates of the bishopric of Winchester in the early thirteenth century: a managerial perspective', in B. M. S. Campbell and M. Overton (eds), *Land, labour and livestock. Historical studies in European agricultural productivity* (1991), pp. 101-4.



MAP 1. Hampshire Estates of Bishop and Prior of Winchester.

the estate and my own work, especially on Bishop's Waltham. The priory material is largely based on my research which builds on that of Joan Greatrex and the extensive typescripts made by J.S.Drew. The huge amount of surviving documentation has necessitated considerable selectivity. Six manors from each estate have been chosen for detailed analysis. While they make no claim to exact comparability, they were selected to cover the main agricultural areas of the county: two overlapping the chalk and the Hampshire basin in the south, two from chalkland valleys, two chalkland manors near to the large town of Winchester, two colonising manors on the clays and former woodland south of Winchester, two manors on the northern downlands, and two overlapping the chalk and clays of the London basin (Map 1). Each of the pairs draws from the bishopric and from the cathedral priory so that there is a rough degree of comparability between the two estates, and too narrow a regional focus is avoided.

## I

In a recent and important study Bruce Campbell has grouped the agricultural activities of demesnes into a series of national arable and pastoral farming types on the basis of a cluster analysis of their agricultural activities. The Hampshire manors within his national sample are

dominated by those of the bishopric of Winchester, the second largest group being the estate of Beaulieu abbey in 1269–70 whose lands lay mainly in the south-west of the county.<sup>13</sup> The priory estates are largely – but not completely – excluded from his sample. I have adopted an earlier and less sophisticated form of analysis, and have looked at the various agricultural elements in turn. Downland farming falls into Campbell's type four (spring course crops predominate) or type five (three-course cropping of wheat and oats), with some manors shifting from five to four as a result of the relative growth of barley. There were also a few manors in the north of Hampshire in type three (with the cultivation of mixed grains, dredge and bere).<sup>14</sup> In terms of pastoral farming, the manors fall into Campbell's types three and four. They possessed large non-working elements in the great sheep flocks, the two types being distinguished by their use of oxen. Type three drew its power from mixed teams of horse and oxen, type four was similar but with a predominance of oxen for the working animals and little cattle rearing.<sup>15</sup>

Both estates shared a common geographical environment in Hampshire (see Map 1). Their manors lay predominantly in and adjacent to the long-settled band of chalk which dominated the agriculture and landscape of the county. Here settlement tended to concentrate along the river valleys that dissected it or along the chalk escarpments. Settlements were nucleated and surrounded by open fields, usually with half the arable being cultivated at any one time. In the river valleys, estates, tithings and parishes tended to be long and thin running back from the valley. This gave each settlement a portion of the available types of land: meadow, well-drained land at the spring line for settlement, heavier more fertile soils, thinner arable soils and the downland pastures. Each part was an integral part of the economy of the settlement. Sheep produced wool and meat, but they also generated and spread manure, which helped to enhance the arable yields, and thus linked downland and arable in an integration of arable and pastoral farming of a sort that is familiar from succeeding centuries.<sup>16</sup> Dung enabled higher yields to be attained, and although agriculture had not reached the eighteenth-century situation (when dung became the most valued product of the sheep), our medieval farmers were clearly well aware of its value, as reflected in the carrying duties for the hurdles as at Chilbolton, or the renting out of the flock.<sup>17</sup> The size of the flocks would suggest that the lords were able to maintain the fertility of the soil.<sup>18</sup> On the downland plateaux there were also some smaller settlements.

A very different situation existed in the clays of the London basin to the north, in the Hampshire basin to the south, or on the clay with flints that overlay large parts of the chalkland. Here settlements and demesnes were often smaller but still with open fields, usually cultivating two-thirds of the arable. There were also more farmsteads, hamlets and enclosed fields. Here extensive colonisation involved the enclosure of substantial amounts of woodland that had probably never been part of an open field system. Such enclosures were either small peasant enclosures

<sup>13</sup> B. M. S. Campbell, *English seignorial agriculture, 1250–1450* (2000), p. 444.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261–7, 255–7, 280–1, 285–9.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112–7, 106–20.

<sup>16</sup> Hare, 'Agriculture and rural settlement', in M. Aston and C. Lewis (eds), *The medieval landscape of Wessex* (1994), p. 160.

<sup>17</sup> Drew, *Chilbolton*, p. 105; for the renting out of flocks in neighbouring Wiltshire, see Hare, *A prospering society*, ch. 4.

<sup>18</sup> E. Newman, 'Medieval sheep-corn farming, how much grain yield could each sheep support?', in *AgHR* 50 (2002), pp. 164–80.

or large-scale seigneurial assarts. These were the areas that came to be dominated by pasture and dairying in later centuries.<sup>19</sup>

## II

Nationally the renewal of demesne farming was underway by about 1200, before the time of the earliest pipe rolls and the first surviving manorial accounts. By 1208, demesne agriculture had resumed on most of the bishopric manors, but was probably at an early stage on the lands of the priory. On the bishopric estate, only Bentley and North Waltham were not included in the 1209 pipe roll, although they were both cultivated by the lord in 1211.<sup>20</sup> For the priory the first extant account is of 1248, so that we need to turn to a tax assessment for its Wiltshire lands in 1210/11 to obtain a sense of how many of its demesnes were in hand at an earlier date. This shows some manors with low and suspiciously round figures for sheep (250, 250, 100, 100, 400), and others with more irregular figures (239, 925).<sup>21</sup> It seems that the former were still leased. This would suggest that the bishopric was ahead of the priory in resuming direct cultivation, but not substantially so.

This resumption of seigneurial agriculture occurred partly within the open fields but it also involved the creation of new enclosed farmsteads or granges that afforded greater flexibility of use and freed seigneurial agriculture from the restrictions of open field communal agriculture. It was not so much a resumption of the old agriculture as the creation of new agricultural activities and fields. Such agricultural expansion occurred on both estates (Table 1). South of Winchester on the wooded claylands, the priory created a new manor at Silkstead, on the fringes of its existing manor of Compton by 1243, with a demesne but no tenantry.<sup>22</sup> Next door to it, the bishopric manor of Merdon saw exceptional growth of the demesne and tenant land in the thirteenth century. It was the only bishopric manor to show substantial growth in the later thirteenth century (a 40 per cent growth), when elsewhere the bishopric demesne was being reduced.<sup>23</sup> At Bishop's Waltham many of the field names used from the thirteenth century onwards – la Worthe, Roverigge, la More, Krikelscroft, Longhegge – were described in a rental of 1461 as 'Newlond' suggesting their origins as enclosure from the waste. Altogether the sown acreage of the bishopric in Hampshire grew by eight per cent between 1209 and 1240, but registered little overall increase thereafter, and much decline.<sup>24</sup>

The priory lands also showed growth and flexibility, both within and outside the open field. At Whitchurch and elsewhere, there were open field furlongs with regular rotations and furlongs sown less frequently. At Chilbolton (after 1309) and Wonston (after 1329) farming seems to have been reorganised with a large part of the demesne consolidated outside the open field.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> On regional farming here in the sixteenth century, see J. Thirsk (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, IV, 1500–1640 (1967), pp. 64–71.

<sup>20</sup> But see also Bishopstone and Fonthill in Wiltshire discussed in *A prospering society*, ch. 2.

<sup>21</sup> P. M. Barnes and R. Powell (eds), *Interdict documents. Two surveys of Wiltshire during the interdict* (Pipe Roll Society, new ser. 34, 1960), pp. 23–5.

<sup>22</sup> Drew, *Silkstead*.

<sup>23</sup> Calculated from J. Z. Titow, *Winchester yields. A study in medieval agricultural productivity* (1972) and see also Titow, 'Land and population'.

<sup>24</sup> For the estate as a whole see Titow, 'Land and population', pp. 21–2.

<sup>25</sup> B. Harrison, pers. com.

TABLE 1. Sown acreage on selected Bishopric and Priory manors, 1208-70 to 1411-70

	1208-70	1271-99	1300-24	1325-49	1350-79	1380-1410	1411-70
Bishop's Waltham	<i>1208-70</i>	<i>1271-99</i>	<i>1300-24</i>	<i>1325-49</i>	<i>1371</i>	<i>1410</i>	<i>1434</i>
acres	532	422	347	189	192	128	117
<i>Michelmersh</i>	<i>1248</i>	<i>1283</i>	<i>1311</i>	<i>1326</i>		<i>1413</i>	<i>1428</i>
acres	375	326	309	315		221	212
Overton	<i>1208-70</i>	<i>1271-99</i>	<i>1300-24</i>	<i>1325-49</i>	<i>1376-9</i>	<i>1410</i>	<i>1432-5</i>
acres	307	296	209	215	174	144	140
<i>Chilbolton</i>	<i>1248</i>	<i>1282</i>	<i>1311</i>	<i>1347</i>	<i>1358</i>	<i>1403</i>	<i>1438</i>
acres	376	410	462	535	576	423	456
Crawley	<i>1208-70</i>	<i>1271-99</i>	<i>1300-24</i>	<i>1325-49</i>	<i>1376-9</i>	<i>1410</i>	<i>1441</i>
acres	358	324	272	213	196	185	157
<i>Littleton</i>	<i>1248</i>	<i>1283</i>	<i>1311</i>	<i>1323</i>		<i>1400</i>	<i>1428</i>
acres	378	271	370	333		229	212
Merdon	<i>1208-70</i>	<i>1271-99</i>	<i>1300-24</i>	<i>1325-49</i>	<i>1376-9</i>	<i>1410</i>	<i>1467</i>
acres	396	561	453	332	272	253	186
<i>Silkstead</i>		<i>1283</i>	<i>1311</i>	<i>1347</i>	<i>1371</i>	<i>1395</i>	
acres		255	307	275	201	171	
North Waltham	<i>1208-70</i>	<i>1271-99</i>	<i>1300-24</i>	<i>1325-49</i>	<i>1361</i>	<i>1410</i>	
acres	221	180	165	133	124	95	
<i>Wootton</i>			1311	1338	1373	1410	1440
sullions <sup>a</sup>			558	768	503	503	382
Ecchinswell	<i>1208-70</i>	<i>1271-99</i>	<i>1300-24</i>	<i>1325-49</i>	<i>1376-9</i>	<i>1410</i>	<i>1467</i>
acres	166	170	141	124	114	93	103
<i>Crondal</i>	<i>1248</i>	<i>1283</i>	<i>1311</i>	<i>1323</i>	<i>1380</i>	<i>1410</i>	<i>1450</i>
acres	364	366	382	333	147	212	197

Notes: this table has been designed to show chronological variation within an individual demesne. Manors given in italics belonged to Winchester Cathedral Priory.

Acres: there is considerable variation in the type of acres used in the earlier part of the period, with customary acres as well as measured, by perch, acres. Titow converted the two types of acres to a common scale. On the priory manors used there seems little difference between the two types of acre.

<sup>a</sup> Units of measurement at Wootton are sullions (half an acre).

Sources: The bishopric: figures are taken from Titow's *Winchester yields*, from Farmer's 'Grain yields', Page (ed.), *Pipe roll, 1409-10*, and HRO, 11M59, B2/11/15, 64; and Gras and Gras, *English village*, HRO 11M59, 132/11/15; B1/199.

For the cathedral priory: WCL, composite accounts for 1248, 1283 and 1311, HRO, 5M50, 2691, 2692; Drew, *Chilbolton*, and *Silkstead*, G.W.Kitchen (ed.), *The manor of Manydown* (Hampshire Record Ser., 10, 1895), pp.150-3; WCL, Wootton 1373; Crondal 1323; Littleton 1400, 1428.

At Chilbolton a new enclosure or purpresture, with a ditch around it, was created in 1307.<sup>26</sup> Enclosures of this sort might give the lord a relatively large amount of more distant or even poorer land, but brought him a number of advantages. Once the demesne land was separated from the tenanted land, the lord secured greater flexibility in the ways he could use it. He could now focus the manuring power of his great sheep flocks on his own lands and thus improve his yields. But other factors might counterbalance this: peasant labour works may have been relatively inefficient compared with that of hired labour or of peasant labour inputs on their own land.<sup>27</sup>

### III

The main crops on the episcopal estates at the start of the thirteenth century were wheat, barley (winter or spring) and oats. Rye was a rarity here, and peas, beans and vetch were only grown on a small scale.<sup>28</sup> But there were contrasts in the relative importance of these crops (Table 2). On the bishopric estates, most manors had two major crops, usually wheat and oats, as at Bishop's Waltham, or one dominant crop, almost always oats on the chalklands, as at Crawley and North Waltham.<sup>29</sup> Oats was generally most extensive, although in the Wiltshire chalklands it was pre-eminently a seigneurial crop.<sup>30</sup> Wheat came a close (or not very close) second. Barley was usually very much the third crop. This pattern probably reflected the poor soils and wide extent of colonisation on the clay with flints that covered much of the northern chalklands. Wheat was more important on the newly colonised claylands as at Merdon, Bishop's Waltham and Ecchinswell. Such patterns were less obvious on the priory estates. Here wheat and oats dominated some of its northern manors, as at Wootton and Crondal, but elsewhere, barley was an important crop: it usually covered about 25–35 per cent of the sown acreage and was generally the second crop, or almost this, at Chilbolton and Easton.<sup>31</sup> These changes may have reflected the agriculturally richer riverine manors of the priory, the impact of different market influences, or of household policies. Hampshire offers a very different pattern from neighbouring Wiltshire where barley seems to have been more important, although here too the bishopric produced some of the largest areas of oats. In addition, the growing Salisbury market and its increased demand for ale may have helped generate very high acreages for barley in its immediate hinterland. Peas, beans and vetches covered a small part of the arable, and mixed crops such as bere (winter barley) were found on some northern manors on both estates, as at Wootton, North Waltham and Ecchinswell.

Mixed farming dominated the agriculture of Hampshire, as of most of England. But here it was characterised by the large sheep flocks both on our two estates and those of other

<sup>26</sup> Drew, *Chilbolton*, p. 251.

<sup>27</sup> On the issue of comparing customary and hired works, D. Stone, 'The productivity of land and customary labour: evidence from Wisbech Barton in the fourteenth century', *ECHR* 50 (1997), pp. 646–54.

<sup>28</sup> See also J. Z. Titow, 'Field crops and their cultivation in Hampshire, 1200–1350, in the light of documentary evidence', unpublished paper, Hampshire RO,

97M97, C1.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> J. N. Hare, 'Lord, tenant and the market: some tithe evidence from later medieval Wessex' (forthcoming).

<sup>31</sup> Titow, 'Field crops'. At Easton, the figures in 1311 were wheat 27%, barley 25%, oats 41%, vetch 4% and peas 3%. Calculated from WCL, composite account, 1311.



TABLE 2. Sown acreage by crop (as a percentage of the total sown area)

		<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Bere</i>	<i>Total winter crop</i>	<i>Barley</i>	<i>Dredge</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Total spring crop</i>	<i>Vetch</i>	<i>Other legumes</i>
<i>Bishop's Waltham</i>	1211	46.7		46.7	9.1		41.7	50.8		2.5
	1302	43.8		43.8	9.5		39.1	48.6	6.7	1.9
	1371	33.9		33.9	18.2		34.4	52.6	5.5	8.1
	1410	41.6		41.6	19.2		25.1	44.3	3.1	11.0
<i>Michelmersh</i>	1248	58.7		58.7	8.8		32.1	40.9	0.4	
	1283	33.2	1.5	34.7	16.3		41.5	57.6	5.1	2.5
	1311	32.0	1.3	33.3	20.4		34.3	54.7	5.8	5.5
	1326	36.6	1.9	37.5	26.0		27.0	53.0	5.4	4.1
	1413	44.3		44.3	33.0		19.0	52.0	0.9	2.7
<i>Overton</i>	1211	7.7		40.7	48.4	16.7	34.9	51.6		
	1302	20.0	16.0	36.0	22.0		39.0	61.0	2.0	1.0
	1410	23.0	3.0	26.0	33.0		31.0	64.0	0.0	10.0
<i>Chilbolton</i>	1248	14.7		14.7	40.5		42.9	83.4	0.9	0.9
	1311	18.4	6.5	24.8	24.2	5.8	35.9	66.0	5.2	3.9
	1358	28.3	6.3	34.5	34.8	6.0	15.5	56.3	3.9	5.3
	1403	30.7	0.0	30.7	33.3	7.3	18.4	59.1	2.8	7.3
<i>Crawley</i>	1211	16.8	21.0	37.8	17.9		44.3	62.2		
	1302	19.7		19.7	25.6		49.2	74.8	2.7	2.9
	1357	30.9		30.9	29.7		26.4	56.1	8.1	4.9
	1410	32.4		32.4	27.0		21.6	48.6	10.8	8.1
<i>Littleton</i>	1248	15.7		15.7	29.2		53.3	82.4	1.3	0.6
	1311	21.6	1.6	23.2	44.3		24.3	68.6	5.4	2.7
	1400	30.3		30.3	44.2		25.5	69.7		
	1428	39.2		39.2	27.2		18.9	46.1	4.7	9.9
<i>Merdon</i>	1211	61.3		61.3	12.1		26.5	38.7		
	1302	43.0		43.0	21.5		21.5	43.0	5.4	8.6
	1410	45.8		45.8	22.1		22.1	44.2	4.7	5.1
	1467	43.0		43.0	21.5		21.5	43.0	5.4	8.6
<i>Silkstead</i>	1311	28.7		28.7	21.5	4.2	37.1	62.8	4.2	4.2
	1358	46.2		46.2	23.4	1.2	23.4	48.0	3.5	2.3
	1395	45.0		45.0	28.1		18.1	46.2	4.1	4.7

*Continued overleaf*

		<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Bere</i>	<i>Total winter crop</i>	<i>Barley</i>	<i>Dredge</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Total spring crop</i>	<i>Vetch</i>	<i>Other legumes</i>
North Waltham	1211	7.7	40.7	48.4	16.7		34.9	51.6		
	1302	23.4	24.8	48.3	7.6		43.4	51.0	0.7	0.0
	1361	17.7	13.7	31.4	16.9		44.4	61.3	4.8	2.4
	1410	30.1	5.4	35.5	17.0		43.3	60.3	0.0	4.2
<i>Wootton</i>	1311	14.9	23.3	38.2	12.9		36.7	49.6	6.5	5.7
	1338	19.3	18.8	38.0	16.7		39.1	55.7	3.1	3.1
	1373	22.7	15.5	38.2	19.5		34.4	53.9	4.4	3.6
	1410	28.8	8.0	36.8	26.0		37.2	63.2		
Ecchinswell	1211	72.2		72.2			27.8	27.8		
	1302	36.9	12.0	48.9	7.9		42.2	51.1		
	1410	44.0	7.5	51.5	17.3		31.1	48.4		
	1467	44.7	8.7	53.4	19.4		27.2	46.6		
<i>Cronchal</i>	1248	70.6		70.6	19.7		6.4	26.1	2.4	1.0
	1283	55.7	5.2	60.9	7.9		28.2	36.1	2.2	0.8
	1311	42.1		42.1	12.0		36.6	48.7	4.7	4.5
	1323	45.6	3.3	48.9	12.6		38.4	51.1		
	1410	44.9	0.0	44.9	25.9		29.3	55.2		
	1450	44.7	0.0	44.7	21.8		33.5	55.3		

*Note:* manors given in italics belonged to Winchester Cathedral Priory.

*Sources:* as for Table 1.

lords (Table 3).<sup>32</sup> The chalklands of southern England were among the greatest wool-producing areas of the country, and possessed some of the largest known flocks in England. The bishopric regularly maintained well over 20,000 sheep before 1280, peaking at about 30,000 between 1258 and 1273. Thereafter it generally possessed well below the 20,000 mark. The cathedral priory also seems to have had a similar-sized flock, of about 20,000, in the early fourteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Both bishopric and priory possessed individual flocks of over 1000 sheep, at Twyford, East Meon, Crawley and Overton, Chilbolton, Barton and Easton and occasionally elsewhere, as at Hambledon and Bishop's Waltham. At their peak, there were some flocks of over 2000 sheep.<sup>34</sup>

Such large flocks represented a considerable investment, and during the winter the sheep were kept and sheltered in permanent sheep houses, or *bercaria*, and fed on hay. *Bercaria* were

<sup>32</sup> Hare, 'Agriculture and rural society', pp.160-1.

<sup>33</sup> E. Power, *The English wool trade* (1941), p.34: the source of the reference is not clear, but the later fourteenth century figure was very similar, and figures for individual manors in Wiltshire and Hampshire suggest

fourteenth-century stability.

<sup>34</sup> See Titow, 'Land and population', Table IV; WCL, composite account, 1311. For similar large scale flocks in Wiltshire, see Hare, *A prospering society*.

surrounded by a fenced or walled enclosure with a ditch, bank and hedge.<sup>35</sup> The sheep shed itself would have been a solid timber-framed building with timber or stone footings, with several bays, and with two or more doors. The priory built a new eight-bay house at Michelmersh in 1280, a new one at Chilbolton in 1307, and at Silkstead a four-bay building was lengthened by an additional three bays, and a new sheephouse was built in 1314.<sup>36</sup> Larger manors often possessed several sheep houses for the different flocks, the wethers, the ewes, and the hogasters: Michelmersh had two, Crawley and Chilbolton had three and Overton four.<sup>37</sup> Minor expenditure on the sheep houses was a regular feature of the accounts.<sup>38</sup>

Both estates also possessed substantial pig herds, particularly in the chalkland (Table 3). The priory had herds of over 50 on at least six Hampshire manors (Chilbolton, Wootton, Whitchurch, Hurstbourne, Easton and Michelmersh).<sup>39</sup> In 1302, the bishopric had eight herds above 50 pigs, with particular concentrations in the south-east at East Meon, Hambledon and Fareham (96, 92 and 73 pigs respectively). Their distribution may have been influenced by proximity to the main episcopal residences as well as woodland foodstuffs, with herds of over 40 at Twyford (for Marwell), Bishop's Waltham and Droxford (for the former), Alresford and Bishop's Sutton (for the latter), and Merton and Crawley (for Winchester). While its chalkland and clayland manors provided large herds, some lacked them, as at Overton and Ecchinswell.<sup>40</sup> The priory had large herds on some of its chalkland manors, as at Chilbolton and Easton, and on the northern manor of Wootton. Pigs could be brought from a considerable distance, as from the priory's Wiltshire manors, and were then fattened up on the nearer manor of Chilbolton, before reaching Winchester.<sup>41</sup>

The location of specialist cattle herds may also have been influenced by the demands of the households as well as geographical factors (Table 3). The priory's cows were mainly found in the chalkland riverine valleys, with their relatively large areas of meadowland, or on the clayland pastures. The bishopric possessed larger herds, particularly near its most important residences. In 1302, the largest herds were at Highclere (50 and 43), Bishop's Waltham (27 and 40), Twyford (2 and 42), and Bishopstoke (38 and 35), with considerable expansion based on purchase of new stock at Bishop's Waltham and Twyford, although in the latter case this was to be shortlived.<sup>42</sup> All of these four manors had parks, which would have provided permanent pasture for cattle as

<sup>35</sup> For a general survey of sheepcotes, see C. Dyer, 'Sheepcotes: evidence for medieval sheepfarming', *Medieval Arch.*, 39 (1995), pp. 136–64, and 138–47 for the Cotswold structures. See also his *Lords and Peasants in a changing society. The estates of the Bishopric of Worcester, 1680–1540* (1980), p. 138. Hare, 'Agriculture and rural settlement', pp. 161–2, discusses the Wiltshire and Hampshire documentation and Hare, 'Agriculture and land use', pp. 157–8 for those at Overton (Wilts.). See also D. McOmish, D. Field and G. Brown, *The field archaeology of the Salisbury Plain training area* (2002), pp. 115–7.

<sup>36</sup> Drew, *Michelmersh*, p. 125; *Silkstead*, p. 218; *Chilbolton*, pp. 143, 159–60.

<sup>37</sup> Hare, 'Agriculture and rural settlement', p. 161; Drew, *Michelmersh*; *Chilbolton*, pp. 40, 81; Page, 'Medieval sheep

farming', pp. 146–7.

<sup>38</sup> e.g. M. Page (ed.), *The Pipe Roll of the bishopric of Winchester, 1301–2* (Hampshire Record ser., 14, 1996), pp. 95, 108, 15, 20, 64, 76, 45, 54, 71, 83, 87, 99, 307–8, 24; Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1409–10*, pp. 184, 96, 215, 234, 41, 67, 324, 43, 65, 74; Gras and Gras, *English village*, pp. 108, 72, 79; Page, 'Medieval sheep farming' pp. 146–8.

<sup>39</sup> WCL, composite account, 1311.

<sup>40</sup> Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1301–2, passim*.

<sup>41</sup> Drew, *Chilbolton*: 1267, 180; 1318, 319 (the pigs came from Overton, Stockton and Enford); 1325, 334.

<sup>42</sup> Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1301–2*, p. 275, at Twyford (for Marwell), 41 out of 42 cows remaining had come from purchase. The herd was low or non-existent between 1296 and 1301, and low from 1306 (Titow, 'Land and population', Table III).

TABLE 3. Livestock on twelve Hampshire manors, selected dates, early thirteenth to mid-fifteenth century.

	Horses	Oxen	Bulls	Cows	Juvenile cattle	Total cattle	Weathers	Ewes	Rams	Lambs	Total sheep	Pigs	Juvenile pigs	Total pigs
Bishop's Waltham	1211	8	102	2	48	176	268	436	0	71	774	72	38	110
	1302	6	54	1	40	121	271	236	8	122	663	36	13	49
	1410	7	24	2	23	70	334	256	6	0	617	25	26	51
<i>Michelmersh</i>	1248	5	46		15	84	2	162	6	12	182			
	1283	6	49	1	10	71		236	11	153	400	23	15	38
	1311	8	51	2	17	84		385	12	177	574	24	40	64
	1390	7	43	2	14	79		303	11	331	645	75	51	101
	1413	7	44	1	14	77		282	8	124	414	49	52	22
Overton	1211	10	34		5	48	374	342		122	838	5	17	22
	1302	12	20	1	26	60	631	401	17	280	1329	0	0	9
	1396	7	19	1	25	74	631	428	14	317	1390	1	8	15
	1410	8	18	1	20	60	515	355	12	323	1205	1	14	64
<i>Chilbolton</i>	1248	10	26		6	38	458	501	2	243	1204	31	33	64
	1311	12	21	1	11	48	511	649	18	314	1492	19	36	55
	1358	12	10	1	14	41	860	614	20	313	1807	46	32	78
	1433	12	18	1	10	43	231	434	12	256	933	45	52	97
		1211	10	37			37	458	474		220	694	31	
Crawley	1302	8	35	1	19	70	433	575	0	268	1276	33	23	56
	1357	9	20	0	0	20	570	505	15	255	1345	45	52	97
	1410	7	20	0	0	20	520	396	16	287	1219	1	0	1
<i>Littleton</i>	1248	17	20		1	23		1110	15		1125	31	37	68
	1311	16	18	0	9	44	385	432	17	208	1042	25	26	51
	1399	3	9	1	5	23	388	452	12	282	1134	70	43	113

	Horses	Oxen	Bulls	Cows	Juvenile cattle	Total cattle	Weathers	Ewes	Rams	Lambs	Total sheep	Pigs	Juvenile pigs	Total pigs
Merdon	1211	29	59	1	21	29	110	143	186	98	427	28	7	35
	1302	16	59	1	26	28	114	171	261	14	571	18	35	53
	1410	6	50	1	24	21	96	701	308	9	1018	46	40	86
	1467	6	30	1	24	18	73	566	359	9	937	0	0	
<i>Silkstead</i>	1283	12	12		7	12	32	43	55	2	129	18	21	39
	1311	10	20	1	5	2	30	208	223	6	560	21	11	32
	1358	4	12			12	12	83	132	5	281	4	13	17
	1395	4	16	1	4	7	28	248	215	8	471	61	39	100
										<sup>a</sup>				
North Waltham	1211	13	40		3	3	46		143	199	507	4	12	16
	1302	17	9			9	9	167		148	315	0	0	
	1361	6	10	0	1	11	11	540		4	544	1	8	9
	1410	6	9			9	9	553			553	1	20	21
<i>Wootton</i>	1311	13	34	1	16	18	69	254	248	11	713	31	35	66
	1338	13	20		11	13	44	227	253	12	722	54	80	134
	1373	10	23	1	15	21	60	259	249	7	666	44	50	94
	1395	11	31		11	23	65	174	236	8	548	80	58	138
<i>Ecchinswell</i>	1211		32			32	32		225		225			
	1303	2	30			30	30	425		249	674			
	1410	4	18			18	18	501		319	820	1	14	15
	1467	2	18			18	18	410		286	696	1	14	15
<i>Cronstal</i>	1248	14	57		11	13	81		357	7	514	24	18	39
	1283	16	51		12	11	74		168	80	248	28	7	35
	1311	14	52	2	20	18	92	23	295	16	476	14	36	50
	1390	15	36	2	24	38	100		254	7	301	62	36	98

Note: manors given in italics are manors of Winchester Cathedral Priory.

<sup>a</sup> 107 lambs sent to Barton

Sources: as Table 1.

well as deer, and would have served the demands of the neighbouring palaces.<sup>43</sup> In 1302, most of the cattle in Twyford were kept specifically in the park at Marwell, and produced milk for cheese.<sup>44</sup> Oxen provided the main tractive force, but horses were more widely used on some of the colonising manors, as at Overton and Chilbolton. Although these two estates were largely restricted to the chalklands and the adjacent claylands, the evidence from Beaulieu Abbey suggests that significant cattle rearing was already developing in the New Forest and its neighbouring areas.<sup>45</sup>

#### IV

Despite demographic growth, demesne acreages shrank before the Black Death. This was particularly noticeable on the bishopric estate where the demesne reached its peak in the 1270s, after which it contracted on almost all the Hampshire manors. As Titow remarked, 'Broadly speaking, and taking all Hampshire manors of the bishopric as a whole, reclamation of land was the dominant feature of the first half of the thirteenth century and contraction the dominant feature of the period after about 1270'.<sup>46</sup> In Hampshire, this was particularly evident at Bishop's Waltham and Overton.<sup>47</sup> Only four manors showed any growth between the periods 1209–69 and 1270–99, and only at the colonising manors of Merdon (41.7 per cent) and Bishopstoke (14.9 per cent) was growth on any significant scale.<sup>48</sup> Merdon had shown considerable tenant colonisation in the early thirteenth century.<sup>49</sup> Eleven manors showed a drop in the area of cultivated arable of more than 10 per cent.

Such leasing could reflect either worsening finances of cultivation and falling yields, or a situation in which land shortage meant that the lord could gain increased rent revenue from a desperate peasantry. But, as Titow has argued, the shrinking demesne was not reflected by a comparable expansion of the tenant land, while on some manors, such as Bishop's Waltham, the leasing of portions of the demesne occurred at the same time as its continued expansion.<sup>50</sup> Although there was no uniform policy of contraction over the whole estate, the policy extended far beyond Hampshire, as at Taunton in Somerset, and in the total figures for the whole estate.<sup>51</sup> But contraction occurred on a substantially larger scale and much earlier than on most other estates in the country.

The contraction in the area of arable continued into the later fourteenth century (Table 1).<sup>52</sup> At Overton, there was also a considerable decay of tenant rents in the latter fourteenth century which continued, albeit on a smaller scale, into the early fifteenth century. There were

<sup>43</sup> E. Roberts, 'The bishop of Winchester's deer parks in Hampshire, 1200–1400', *Proc. Hants Field Club* 44 (1983), pp. 73–7.

<sup>44</sup> Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1301–2*, p. 276.

<sup>45</sup> S. F. Hockey (ed.), *The account book of Beaulieu abbey* (Camden Soc., fourth ser., 16, 1975), pp. 144, 50, 56, 61.

<sup>46</sup> Titow, 'Field crops', pp. 27–8.

<sup>47</sup> Titow, *Winchester yields*.

<sup>48</sup> Calculated from Titow, *Winchester yields*, pp. 140–3. The two showing insignificant growth were Echinswell

(2.4 per cent) and Hambleton (0.4 per cent), pp. 136–8.

<sup>49</sup> Titow, 'Land and population', p. 83.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24–6.

<sup>51</sup> Titow, 'Land and population'; C. Thornton, 'The level of arable productivity', in Britnell (ed.), *The Winchester pipe rolls*, pp. 115–6.

<sup>52</sup> Froyle, belonging to St Mary's abbey, Winchester also showed a decline in the demesne, and an early leasing by 1381, long before the estate had leased its Wiltshire manors.

TABLE 4. Bishop's Waltham, arable farming, 1209–1434 (acres)

	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Barley</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Vetch</i>	<i>Legumes</i>	<i>Total</i>
1209–70						532.0
1271–91						422.0
1300–24						347.0
1325–47						189.0
1366	66	30	77	7	5	185.0
1375	64	34.5	72	8.5	20.5	199.5
1388	65	37	42	10	8	162.0
1395	66	34.4	50	5		155.4
1404	60.4	33	42	6	10	151.4
1405	53	36	36	8	8	141.0
1416	52	29	34		5	120.0
1427	52	27	33	2	2	116.0
1434	52	28	33	2	2	117.0

Sources: average figures 1209–1347 from Titow, *Winchester yields*; the others from manorial accounts, HRO, 11M59, B2/11/2–64.

difficulties in some of the manor's constituent villages including the desertion of the settlement of Northington, where a village of 33 tenants was replaced by a single farm with four hedged fields.<sup>53</sup> At Bishop's Waltham, the dramatic fall in demesne acreage in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century was followed by a period of relative stability after the Black Death (Table 4). This levelling out after the Black Death may be of more general application. Between 1209–69 and the period before the Black Death (1325–49), the acreage of the Hampshire manors shrank by 34.7 per cent. Between the latter period and 1410 it shrank by rather less, 26.6 per cent.<sup>54</sup> The Hampshire material seems to bear out Farmer's comments that in the later 1370s the typical manor on the estate still cultivated about 85 per cent of its pre-plague area, and in 1419–22 about 75 per cent.<sup>55</sup> This demesne contraction has frequently been associated with the peculiar conditions of declining population that came with the Black Death, but on the bishopric, it seems to be even more a feature of the years between 1270 and 1350.

By contrast, the priory estate showed much less evidence of early shrinkage in the area of land cultivated. Its main valley manors (such as Chilbolton and Michelmersh), remained stable in acreage during the fourteenth century. Of our six demesnes, only Michelmersh seems to have peaked before the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>56</sup> Chilbolton possesses a sequence of 31 accounts from 1248 to 1433: these show the area under crops fell slightly between 1273 and 1282 but then recovered. The high levels found in the fourteenth century remained until about 1392, when the acreage was reduced, having peaked in the middle decades of the century. But

<sup>53</sup> Hare, 'Agriculture and rural settlement', pp. 166–7.

<sup>54</sup> Calculated from Titow, *Winchester yields* and Page (ed.), *Pipe roll, 1409–10*. See also the trends under Wykeham charted in Page, 'William of Wykeham', p. 112.

<sup>55</sup> D.L. Farmer, 'Grain yields on the Winchester manors in the later Middle Ages', *EcHR* 30 (1977), pp. 561–2.

<sup>56</sup> Table 1 and Drew, *Michelmersh*.

contraction occurred in the fourteenth century on some of the smaller and poorer demesnes of the north Hampshire manors, for instance Wootton (where most of the decline was before 1361), Sutton (1330–87) and Crondal (between 1323 and 1380, recovering partly in 1390).<sup>57</sup> This and evidence elsewhere suggests that the early contraction of the bishopric may be exceptional.<sup>58</sup>

## V

The fourteenth-century demographic decline had already started before the Black Death, but the devastating appearance of plague left the survivors better off, and subsequently able to benefit from the growing demand of the textile industry in neighbouring Wiltshire and later in north Hampshire. Farming showed both overall shrinkage and continued prosperity and demand. There was an increased emphasis on the more valuable crops, wheat rather than barley for bread, barley rather than oats for ale, and an increase in pastoral farming at the expense of arable, as at the neighbouring manors of Crawley (bishopric) and Littleton (priory). Barley production expanded, although there seems nothing like its exceptional growth in Salisbury's immediate hinterland (where the parsonage demesne at Downton was for a time engaged in a barley monoculture).<sup>59</sup> Demesne shrinkage was limited in scale. Buoyed up by larger flocks and therefore more manure, arable farming remained successful. The bishopric estate showed improved yields, particularly in barley and oats. The years between 1370 and 1409 were particularly successful with almost all grains cropping better than usual.<sup>60</sup>

On both estates, wheat, barley and oats remained dominant (Table 2). Wheat remained the largest crop at Bishop's Waltham, and retained or increased its share of the sown area. Barley retained its traditional importance as at Overton and Chilbolton. It remained the third crop at Bishop's Waltham, but here it expanded in relative terms, while oats fell (Table 4). Oats remained a key crop in the chalklands, but on both estates, it showed the most dramatic decline in acreages, as the poorer land ceased to be cultivated or was cultivated less frequently.<sup>61</sup> But oats continued to be more widely sown on the bishopric manors, where they usually made up the second largest sown acreage, while barley was the second crop on most of the priory manors. Only a few of the northern priory manors showed a significantly larger area of oats than barley. Legumes occupied the smallest areas but showed evidence of limited growth on many manors. The use of bere had been unusual and now became even less common (as at North Waltham and Ecchinswell). In general, the demesnes here show similar patterns to the national trends identified by Campbell, with the greatest changes being the expansion of barley and the contraction of oats.<sup>62</sup> Wheat grew in relative terms on some manors, while nationally it fell slightly.

While the demesne arable shrank in the later fourteenth century, pastoral farming expanded. Livestock numbers rose sharply after the Black Death and generally continued to grow during

<sup>57</sup> J. Hare, 'Regional prosperity in fifteenth-century England: some evidence from Wessex', in M. A. Hicks (ed.), *Revolution and consumption in late medieval England* (2001), p. 111; Drew, *Chilbolton; Michelmersh*, HRO, 5M50, 2691; Sutton showed a 25% fall between the two years (WCL, accounts 1330, 1387).

<sup>58</sup> Campbell, *English seignorial agriculture*, pp. 237, 235.

<sup>59</sup> Hare, *A prospering society*, ch. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Farmer, 'Grain yields', pp. 559–60.

<sup>61</sup> Chilbolton, Wootton and Sutton, and Crondal: Drew, *Chilbolton*, WCL, Wootton 1338, 1398; Sutton (1995 acquisition) 1330, 1387; Crondal, Composite 1248, 1323, Greatrex, 'Administration', App. A.

<sup>62</sup> Campbell, *English seignorial agriculture*, pp. 240–1.



the later fourteenth century.<sup>63</sup> Sheep farming remained resilient. It was practiced on a massive scale in the later fourteenth century, and continued to be closely integrated into the rest of the rural economy. This was particularly marked on the bishopric estate, where the Black Death was followed by a dramatic growth in sheep numbers and then stability at a new level, both on the whole estate, and on individual Hampshire manors. On the estate as a whole, sheep totals had fluctuated around 14,000 in the 1340s, but they rose rapidly from the later 1340s reaching a peak in 1369 of 35,000. There then followed a period of decline and then recovery, flocks averaging 33,000 between 1388 and 1397. The dramatic fall to about 8,000 sheep at the beginning of the fifteenth century probably reflects Wykeham's death, and the sale of stock by his executors. A few flocks were leased as at East Knoyle (Wilts.), and others were run at a slightly reduced scale (as at Bishop's Waltham, Table 5). A new stability was achieved in the early fifteenth century, when Cardinal Beaufort was a notable exporter of wool. Flocks were now at a significantly lower level, but were still greater in size than those of the early fourteenth century.<sup>64</sup> The Hampshire flocks remained high, with East Meon, Twyford, Overton, Merdon and Crawley maintaining flocks of over 1,000 sheep in 1410.<sup>65</sup>

The cathedral priory also expanded its flocks during the fourteenth century, but the change was much more limited, and varied considerably between manors. In Wiltshire, there was an increase of less than 20 per cent between the early part of the century and 1389/91, whilst on the six Hampshire manors, the total flock size was virtually identical between 1311 and 1390 (being 5007 in 1311 and 5029 in 1390). There was significant growth at Chilbolton, Littleton and Hurstbourne, but much less on some other manors. Chilbolton reached a peak in 1339 and Silkstead showed a slight contraction in the mid-fourteenth century. In general, stability rather than exceptional growth seems to have been characteristic of the priory's manors. All this was appreciably less than Campbell's national figures, which show flock sizes increasing as a percentage of total livestock units by 87 per cent.<sup>66</sup> One wonders how far these national calculations been over-influenced by particular regional biases or by the fluctuations on the well-documented manors of the bishopric of Winchester and in Norfolk.

Nonetheless the cathedral priory had a flock second in size in this area only to that of the bishopric. No other estate in southern England would seem to have run them close. Moreover, the survival of the priory's stock book for 1389–92 allows us to see the whole estate at the peak of its sheep farming much more clearly than most other estates.<sup>67</sup> The stock book summarises the priory's livestock on each manor, mainly at mid-yearly inspections in April, as well as providing figures for Michaelmas 1390 and 1391. It incorporates much of the information that would be available in countless manorial stock accounts were these to survive. It is a remarkably valuable and unusual source, and its snapshot of a great estate in southern England may be reinforced

<sup>63</sup> Farmer, 'Grain yields', pp. 562–3.

<sup>64</sup> M. J. Stephenson, 'Wool yields in the medieval economy', *ECHR* 41 (1988), pp. 385–6; with Wykeham's death the flock of East Knoyle was disposed of and not initially resumed, Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1409–10*.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 271, 368, 219, 371, 385.

<sup>66</sup> B. M. S. Campbell, K. C. Bartley and J. P. Power, 'The demesne-farming systems of post-Black Death England:

a classification', *AgHR* 44 (1996), p. 134. The percentage growth of sheep in absolute terms was less. Any decline in the working stock of the demesne would increase the relative importance of the sheep flocks.

<sup>67</sup> For comparative figures for individual manors see Hare, *A prospering society* and the longer runs for a few of the Hampshire manors tabulated in Drew, *Chilbolton and Silkstead*.

TABLE 5. Bishop's Waltham, livestock, 1209-1434

	Horses	Oxen	Bulls	Cows	Juvenile cattle	Total animals	Wethers	Ewes	Rams	Lambs	Total sheep	Adult pigs	Juvenile pigs
1209-70						133					835		
1271-91						123					657		
1300-24						106					645		
1325-47						62					558		
1211	8	102	2	48	24	184	268	435		71	774	72	38
1302	6	54	1	40	26	127	271	236	8	122	637	36	13
1366	5	24	1	21	22	73	319	275	12	170	776	26	26
1375	6	29	2	33	26	96	410	277	8	47	742	57	26
1387	7	28	2	34	29	100	346	324	9	188	867	27	26
1395	6	33	2	30	27	98	349	335	12	168	864	22	26
1404	6	23	2	28	10	69	284	232	8	135	659	18	26
1405	6	24	2	20	20	72	228	153	7	0	388	0	0
1416	6	20	2	15	17	60	340	282	6	0	628	33	26
1428	6	20	2	20	18	66	303	278	8	0	589	1	0
1434	4	19	2	20	12	57	295	278	8	0	581	1	0

Note: The column for total animals includes all those listed except for sheep and pigs. By the end of the accounting year the hoggasters have become reclassified so that they appear as adult sheep.  
Sources: as for Table 4.

by other evidence from individual manors. In 1390, the priory possessed twenty different flocks (most of which lay in Hampshire, but with some outliers in Wiltshire), with a total of 20,357 sheep (Table 6). Like the bishopric, it maintained both a large number of flocks, and particularly large individual manorial flocks. These were exceptionally extensive around and to the north of Winchester. There were smaller flocks on the smaller demesnes of north Hampshire, such as Crondal, which show signs of contraction and this may have reflected a shift to other types of pastoral farming.

In Hampshire, as elsewhere on other chalkland estates, flocks were run on an inter-manorial basis and transfers of sheep were common. In part these were aimed at correcting temporary deficiencies, such as when murrain struck particularly hard on an individual manor, or when a manor had a surplus of one kind of sheep. But in other cases, manors possessed an incomplete flock, lacking either the breeding ewe flock, the young hogasters, or the wethers that were kept for wool, so that regular movements of sheep were necessary. This reflected a growing specialisation of manorial flocks. As Table 6 shows, Michelmersh and Crondal possessed breeding flocks, while the small manors of Hannington and Sutton, and Houghton kept only wethers. These specialisms suggest that the breeding flocks were kept on the more sheltered pastures and the hardier wether flocks on the upper downland pastures. While much movement was short distance, sheep might also be walked much further; for instance from the Wiltshire manors to Winchester or to the manors of east Hampshire. In 1390 Sutton and Hannington, both of which had no breeding flock, received new stock from Crondal, Barton, Wootton, and Enford and Alton, and both received sheep from Littleton in 1391. In 1390, the large manor of Easton, near Winchester, received wethers from Barton and lambs from Silkstead. The following year it sent hogasters to Mapledurham and received lambs from Crondal and Silkstead. Such movements continued to be recorded in the early fifteenth-century accounts.<sup>68</sup> The flock was greater than its individual manors, and policies could change. Thus at Silkstead from 1385 to 1396, lambs were sent to other manors and returned as hogasters before shearing in the following year.<sup>69</sup> Inter-manorial movements of sheep were also found on the bishopric manors, although such movements may have been more local in character, as between manors in the Clere group, the linking of the Bishop's Waltham and Droxford flocks in the fifteenth century, and movements between Marwell, Twyford, Merdon and Crawley.<sup>70</sup> As was usual on many large chalkland estates, the wool was pooled and sold centrally.<sup>71</sup>

Sheep produced wool and meat for the market and the prior's household, as well as manure. Sheep were separated, fattened and sold, most to the market. Even on the priory estate in 1391, only 16 per cent of the 3794 sheep chosen for fattening were sent to the household.<sup>72</sup> At Enford (Wilts.) in 1403, five times as many sheep were sold locally in the markets of Salisbury and west Wiltshire, as were sent to Winchester.<sup>73</sup> Given the large size of the flocks, this is likely to have

<sup>68</sup> WCL, Stockbook, fos. 1r–15r, 23r, Greatrex, 'Administration', App. E1, xxxv–xliv

<sup>69</sup> Drew, *Silkstead*, pp. 81, 622–713.

<sup>70</sup> Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1301–2*; id., *Pipe Roll, 1409–10*; HRO, 11M59, B2/11/ 41, 50, 64; B1/210, 211.

<sup>71</sup> G. W. Kitchen (ed.), *Comptus rolls of the obedientiaries of St Swithun's priory* (Hampshire Record Soc,

1892), pp. 224–7; Hare, *A prospering society*, ch. 5; Drew, *Chilbolton*; Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1301–2*; id., *Pipe Roll, 1409–10*; Gras and Gras, *English village*, pp. 199, 247, 57, 76, 85, 302, 12.

<sup>72</sup> WCL, stockbook, fo. 34v.

<sup>73</sup> British Library, Harl. Roll, I/X/7.

TABLE 6. Livestock on the estates of Winchester Cathedral Priory, Michaelmas 1390

	Cart horses	Plough horses	Total Horses	Oxen	Bull	Cow	Bullock	One year	Calves	Total Cattle	Weth- ers	Rams	Ewes	Lambs	Total sheep	Pigs	Piglets	Total Pigs
Cronald	6	6	15 <sup>a</sup>	36	2	24	8	14	16	100	7	254	40	301	62	36	98	
Sutton	4	1	5	11						11	275			275	48	39	87	
Hannington	6	6	6	2						2	292			292			0	
Wootton	4	6	10	24	1	11	7	8	8	59	301	8	252	176	737	68	58	126
Whitchurch	5	6	11	22	1	15	6	7	8	59	468	17	428	268	1181	78	52	130
Hurstborne	5	17	22	22	1	22	8	11	12	76	767	19	492	286	1564	69	51	120
Wonston	4	1	5	10	1	3	3	3	3	23	414	12	368	231	1025	24	27	51
Chilbolton	2	6	8	12	1	10	4	5	6	38	810	19	533	324	1686	73	39	112
Mapledurham	5	5	18	1	4	3	3	3	2	31	245	7	195	<sup>b</sup> 447	50	40	90	
Easton	5	10	15	22	1	16	8	8	8	63	803	21	611	419	1854	68	52	120
Barton	6	18	24	40	2	20	6	7	12	87	1010	21	901	727	2659	51	86	137
Thurmond	6	6	6							0	318	10	304	632			0	
Silkstead	4	4	4	14	1	5	2	2	3	27	246	8	219	473	40	39	79	
Littleton	6	6	10	1	5	3	3	2	3	24	438	14	506	1287	33	44	77	
Houghton	5	5	10							10	397			397	27	30	57	
Michelmersh	4	3	7	43	2	14	4	8	8	79	11	303	231	545	75	51	126	
Stockton	5	5	14							14	505		111	616	44	39	83	
Enford	4	12	16	20	2	10	7	6	6	51	952	18	556	1882	44	52	96	
Overton	5	3	8	27	1	10	8	8	8	62	975	19	556	1900	76	57	133	
Alton	4	4	8	32	1	8	6	5	6	58	12	454	148	614	45	42	87	
Wroughton	4	4	4	16	12	9				37				0			0	
Total	93	99	195	405	19	189	92	97	109	911	9216	223	6932	3996	20367	975	834	1809

Notes: Stockton, Enford, Overton, Alton and Wroughton are in Wiltshire and have been included to provide a complete picture of the estate. There were some small manors that belonged to individual obedientaries; they were not included in the stockbook and are therefore not in this table.

Nesting swans were recorded as follows: at Whitchurch 4; Hurstbourne 5; Chilbolton 13; Houghton 2; Michelmersh 4; Stockton 12; Enford 6.

<sup>a</sup> including three 'horses' in addition to carthorses and ploughhorses.

<sup>b</sup> 104 were sold as kebbs.

Source: WCL, stockbook, fos 16r-19r.

been a general situation. Finally the sheeps' manure linked the downland pastures to arable farming through the consequent higher yields. Large sheep flocks were an integral part of the rural economy.

The two estates differed in their policy towards pigs. In contrast to the bishopric, the cathedral priory estate considerably increased its swineherds in the course of the fourteenth century. At Chilbolton, the average size of the herd doubled from 50 in 1248–1348 (18 years' accounts) to 105 in 1358–96 (six accounts), with a peak of over a hundred in the 1390s.<sup>74</sup> They rose even more dramatically at Michelmersh, from 52 in 1326 to 126 in 1390.<sup>75</sup> Elsewhere comparison of isolated accounts reinforces this impression. The herd size had increased substantially at Sutton, doubled at Crondal and almost trebled at Easton. There was little growth at Wootton.<sup>76</sup> Pig herds seem to have been particularly large on the chalkland manors of north and central Hampshire (at Wootton, Whitchurch, Hurstborne, Chilbolton and Easton). Much, but not all, of this expansion went to feed the priory household. The estate provided the priory with 499 pigs in 1390 and 469 pigs in 1391.<sup>77</sup> The stockbook shows the pigs were driven to Winchester in October and November, each manor sending about a quarter of its herd to feed the priory.<sup>78</sup> This was a household where pig-meat was consumed on a particularly large scale. By comparison, Canterbury Cathedral Priory consumed 90 pigs, or less than a fifth of this, in 1484–5 and Syon Abbey, an annual average of 67 between 1446 and 1461.<sup>79</sup>

By contrast pig farming shrank on the bishopric estate. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the herds of the two estates had been comparable in scale. But by 1409–10 the bishopric possessed only five substantial herds of over 50, with two of the largest in south-east Hampshire, at East Meon and Hambledon.<sup>80</sup> By contrast the priory had 15 manors with over 50 pigs (Table 6). At Bishop's Waltham, which overlapped the chalk and clay, the number had shrunk compared with 1210–11, but the fall had occurred before the fourteenth century. Elsewhere, demesne pigs were unimportant as in the chalkland manor of Overton, and they had ceased to be kept on the demesne at Crawley by 1329.<sup>81</sup> On both estates the issue of piglets became fixed, and the reeve kept any surplus. At Bishop's Waltham, the return of piglets had become fixed at 30 by 1350, of which three were for tithes and one for the swineherd.<sup>82</sup> On the priory estate, the yield was fixed at 60 at Chilbolton from 1325, and 45 at Silkstead from c.1325.<sup>83</sup> It is perhaps significant that on both these priory manors, the fixed issues were greater than those found under the previous system, and the number of adult pigs continued to fluctuate. The growth of pig production on the priory estate is clearly on a much greater scale than the national figures provided by Campbell would suggest. He found only a three per cent increase in pigs as a percentage of livestock units on his core demesnes and ten per cent on those of the London

<sup>74</sup> Calculated from Drew, *Chilbolton*.

<sup>75</sup> The average herd over the period 1248–1326 was 55 (calculated from Drew, *Michelmersh*). In 1312 the herd was 101, and in 1413 it had dropped to 83.

<sup>76</sup> Sutton 1330, 50: 1386/90, 80: Crondal 1248, 39; 1311, 50; 1390, 98: Easton 1310/1, 53/36 1390 120; Wootton 1337/8, 108/13, 1390, 126; WCL, 1995 acquisition, Composites 1248 and 1311, Stockbook, Wootton account.

<sup>77</sup> WCL, Stockbook, fos 19, 38.

<sup>78</sup> WCL, Stockbook, fo. 19v.

<sup>79</sup> M. Mate, 'Pastoral farming in south-east England in the fifteenth century', *ECHR* 40 (1987), pp. 523–36.

<sup>80</sup> East Meon (99), Hambledon (81); Merdon (86), Bishops Sutton (55), Bishops Waltham (51).

<sup>81</sup> Although there seem subsequently to have been some temporary herds. Gras and Gras, *English village*, pp. 450, 302, 311, 450.

<sup>82</sup> HRO, 11M59, B2/11/2.

<sup>83</sup> Drew, 'Accounts of St Swithuns', p. 23; *Chilbolton*, pp. 89–91; *Silkstead*, pp. 99–102.

area.<sup>84</sup> This may reflect either the priory's own demands as well as a wider and growing regional prosperity with a consequent increased demand for pork, or the peculiarities of the bishopric and other estates, who largely left pig-farming to their tenantry.

Cattle numbers often shrank although there seems to be evidence of a growing regional specialisation away from the chalk. On the Cathedral Priory estate, the largest herds of cattle in Hampshire were at Crondal in the north of the county where it possessed 24 cows in 1391, and in the richer river valleys of the Test and Itchen in central Hampshire, where the herds could draw upon the lush pastures and supply the demands of Winchester and its household, as at Hurstborne, Easton, Michelmersh, Barton and particularly Whitchurch. Such specialism was also reflected in the high figures for cheese production at Hurstbourne, Crondal and Barton.<sup>85</sup> Leland noted the emphasis on cattle farming in the south of the county in 1542, although this was an area where our estates were weak.<sup>86</sup> But when the bishop of Winchester leased Bitterne in c.1380, he enlarged the dairy stock from 24 to 50 cows (rising subsequently to 51 in 1393) and received over £6 for the milk rent of the cows.<sup>87</sup> There were still 45 cows together with younger stock in 1410.<sup>88</sup> The estate of Titchfield abbey, with its concentration of lands in southern Hampshire, also reveals the development of cattle farming.<sup>89</sup> Another possible area of specialisation lay in the north of Hampshire in the London basin. This is not a well-documented area, but we can glimpse a growing pastoral specialisation of agriculture, as at Crondal or the Berkshire manor of Coleshill (Edington Priory), such as was to characterise future agrarian development.<sup>90</sup> We can thus begin to see emerging the farming areas of the early modern period, with distinctive dairying and pastoral areas in north and south Hampshire.

Where the chalkland arable demesne was reduced in size, the poorer soils were opened up for alternative uses. Poor arable could be used for sheep, and poorer pastures could be converted to rabbit warrens. The latter was a general development in the chalklands of southern England, on our estates and on others: as on the duchy of Lancaster's manor of King's Somborne,<sup>91</sup> and Hyde Abbey's Micheldever.<sup>92</sup> The bishopric of Winchester had warrens on the northern and central expanses of downlands at Highclere and Ashmansworth,<sup>93</sup> and two giant warrens at Overton and Longwood Warren. By the end of the fourteenth century, Willesley warren in Overton was producing over a thousand rabbits per year, even 1448 in 1421. It was leased in 1433 with a lodge and 2000 rabbits for £9 per year.<sup>94</sup> Longwood Warren, to the south-east of Winchester, operated on a similar scale in the fifteenth century producing over 1,100 rabbits in

<sup>84</sup> Campbell, Bartley and Power, 'The demesne-farming systems', p.134.

<sup>85</sup> Greatrex, 'The reconciliation of spiritual and temporal responsibilities', pp.77-87.

<sup>86</sup> J.Chandler (ed.), *John Leland's Itinerary* (1993), p.202.

<sup>87</sup> E.Miller, 'Farming practices and techniques, the southern counties', in id. (ed.) *Agrarian history of England and Wales III, 1350-1540* (1991), p.298; HRO, 11M59, B2 12/4, 8, 10.

<sup>88</sup> Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1409-10*, pp.203-7.

<sup>89</sup> VCH, *Hampshire*, II, p.185.

<sup>90</sup> R.Faith, 'Berkshire: fourteenth and fifteenth centuries', in P.D.A.Harvey (ed.), *The peasant land*

*market in medieval England* (1984), p.171.

<sup>91</sup> TNA, DL29/728/11991, VCH, *Hampshire*, III, p.391.

<sup>92</sup> Hare, 'Agriculture and rural settlement', p.164. For rabbit farming in Wiltshire and Hampshire see the same article and for East Anglia, M.Bailey, 'The rabbit and the medieval East Anglian economy', *AgHR* 36 (1988), pp.1-20.

<sup>93</sup> e.g. HRO, 11M59, B1/166; J.Greatrex (ed.), *The register of the common seal of the priory of St Swithun, Winchester, 1345-1497* (Hampshire Record Ser., 2, 1978), p.193.

<sup>94</sup> HRO, 11M59, B1/129, 133, 144, 166, 181; Miller, 'Farming practices and techniques', p.301.

1402 and was leased for an annual rent of £10 from 1441.<sup>95</sup> Such warrens could make a significant contribution to manorial finances. We know much less about the priory's activities. In the early fourteenth century, its huntsman was catching rabbits at Chilbolton and later it had a small warren at Littleton.<sup>96</sup> Moreover its manor of Easton, for which no late accounts survive, overlapped with the great chalkland wilderness which provided one of the two great bishopric warrens (at Longwood Warren). Such conversions of poor downland soils and difficult terrain allowed them to produce a valuable but easily produced crop, with low labour costs. There were risks: death and escapes could have a dramatic effect on a warren's profits, and thus of the manor as a whole. The warrens added to manorial revenues, provided for royal, noble and episcopal households, and helped open up the market for rabbit meat and furs to a much wider market.

At Overton, the warrens were already in operation by the 1360s, but we know little of their development elsewhere.<sup>97</sup> Initially the change of land use was probably expensive. The medieval rabbit would seem to have been less tough than its modern descendants.<sup>98</sup> They needed to be kept in artificial warrens with disturbed and well drained soils and built-in burrows or rabbit holes with roofs of scrub and bushes, as at Merdon on the bishopric.<sup>99</sup> The management of the burrows or *les buryes* is referred to in a lease of Longwood Warren.<sup>100</sup> Such warrens have left their traces on the landscape as pillow mounds, or as groups of banked ridges, but are difficult to date.<sup>101</sup>

## VI

By 1400, the leasing of the demesnes was well underway in much of England. It had already occurred on some of the lay estates in the Hampshire chalklands (as on the Duchy of Lancaster's manor at King's Somborne). But at this date there had been little leasing on our estates or other great ecclesiastical manors in southern England, other than on a few small or outlying manors.<sup>102</sup> Here, as in the chalklands of Wiltshire, the main period of leasing was from the 1420s to the 1440s although exact dating is difficult on the priory estates because of the erratic survival of individual manorial accounts. Early leasing, some of which was only temporary, occurred at Hannington (in 1380s and again in 1394), at Hinton (1406) and Mapledurham (1411–7), while Silkstead was leased permanently from 1399. Subsequently the steady trickle of leasing came to include the large manors: Wonston (leased between 1400 and 1406), Hurstbourne (in 1408), Littleton (between 1428 and 1457), Chilbolton (1433 to 1444), Crondal (1451 to 1465) Mapledurham (1425 to 1430), Thurmonds (after 1428), Whitchurch (1433 to 1436), Wootton (1442 to 1445)

<sup>95</sup> HRO, 11M59, B1/181.

<sup>96</sup> Drew, *Chilbolton*, 1311, 1346, 1347. But this may have belonged to an earlier of phase of rabbit hunting before the introduction of artificial warrens; Greatrex (ed.), *Common Seal*, p. 135.

<sup>97</sup> But not apparently at Overton in 1347: HRO, 11M59, B1/99. E. Roberts, 'The bishop of Winchester's deer parks in Hampshire', *Proc. Hants Field Club* 44 (1988), p. 78; E. Stokes (ed.), *Abstracts of Wiltshire inquisitions post mortem ... 1227–1377* (Index Library, 48, 1914), pp. 181, 299.

<sup>98</sup> O. Rackham, *The history of the countryside* (1987), p. 47.

<sup>99</sup> Greatrex (ed.), *Common Seal*, p. 180.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>101</sup> Hare, 'Agriculture and rural settlement', pp. 164–5.

<sup>102</sup> Hare, *A prospering society*, ch. 6; id., 'The monks as landlords: the leasing of the demesnes in southern England', in C. Barron and C. Harper-Bill (eds), *The church in pre-reformation society: essays in honour of F. R. H. Du Boulay* (1985), pp. 82–94.

and Michelmersh (after 1428).<sup>103</sup> The priory's great home manor of Barton was leased by 1475, but direct cultivation was resumed the following year and continued in 1489.<sup>104</sup> The bishopric showed a similar chronology. Here there had been limited early leasing as at Ashmansworth (1382) and Wield (1392). But it made little progress under Bishop Wykeham except on the smaller, least valuable and most recently acquired estates. There was little leasing in 1410 and even less a few years later. In 1419–22, 18 out of 23 Hampshire manors still maintained direct cultivation and 11 in 1432–3. Bishop's Waltham was leased between 1434 and 1436 and Crawley in 1448–9.<sup>105</sup> Most manors had been leased by 1450, with only three Hampshire manors and two elsewhere remaining under direct cultivation. By 1455, the only manors in hand anywhere on the estate were in Hampshire (Echinswell and Merdon) and these continued direct cultivation until 1472.<sup>106</sup> It is not clear why these two were retained in hand longer than any others, as they were not especially profitable.<sup>107</sup>

The causes of leasing were varied. Economic factors, such as high or rising wages, and falling or stagnant grain prices since the late fourteenth century boom, had put the finances of the demesnes under pressure. On many manors of the bishopric, arable profits declined from the second decade of the fifteenth century.<sup>108</sup> But they still made a profit and it is difficult to find a purely economic explanation for the new preference for leasing. Demesne agriculture, however, involved high administrative costs and produced a relatively small part of the manor's income. Economic trends may not have caused leasing, but they probably destroyed the context which had allowed the development of the exceptional and bureaucratic system of direct cultivation that England had adopted in the thirteenth century. The bishopric records may excite the historian, but they also remind us of the time-consuming and wasteful nature of the whole procedure: how much repetitious and out-date material was copied down year after year. Now recourse was made to an earlier and simpler method of exploiting estates. The land was rented out for an agreed and negotiable sum. It was no longer necessary for a lord to argue with his reeve about each minor detail of cost. A sudden shortening of the records followed. But in the chalklands, lords did not adopt the new policy with any speed or apparent enthusiasm.

Comparison of the process of leasing on the two estates can establish some important characteristics. Here, as in neighbouring Wiltshire, the demesne was leased as a single block to a single tenant, whether to a former peasant farmer or a member of the professional gentry, such as the Kingsmills or Langtons.<sup>109</sup> The large scale chalkland demesne agriculture continued and remained characteristic of this area in subsequent centuries. The new policy could be adopted within the existing pattern of feeding the household. Those priory manors that had previously provided large quantities of foodstuffs, frequently continued to do so, albeit now in the form

<sup>103</sup> Based on appendices in Greatrex, 'Administration', C1, B2 and A2, and HRO, 5M50, 2691, 2.

<sup>104</sup> WCL, Box 9/37 and 41.

<sup>105</sup> Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1409–10*; HRO, 11M59, B2/11/34–6; Gras and Gras, *English village*, pp. 475–89.

<sup>106</sup> J.Z. Titow, 'Arable cultivation on the estates of the bishops of Winchester, 1208–1475' (unpublished paper), HRO, 97M97, C8, p. 5; Page (ed.), *Pipe Roll, 1409–10*, pp. xxi–xxiv; Farmer, 'Grain yields', p. 562; Campbell, 'Unique estate', p. 33; HRO, 11M59, B1/60–1.

<sup>107</sup> Titow, 'Arable cultivation', pp. 10–11.

<sup>108</sup> pers. comm. J.Z. Titow.

<sup>109</sup> No systematic study of the Hampshire lessees has been made, but for neighbouring Wiltshire, see J. N. Hare, 'The demesne lessees of fifteenth century Wiltshire', *AgHR* 29 (1981), pp. 1–15. For the Kingsmills and Langton, see Hare, 'Regional prosperity', p. 119 and E. Roberts, 'Overton Court Farm and the late medieval farmhouses of demesne lessees in Hampshire', *Proc. Hants. Field Club* 51 (1996), p. 93.



of food rents, of grain and poultry, as at Chilbolton (1444, with 50 quarters of grain and some poultry), Michelmersh (1496), Wonston, Whitchurch, Wootton and Crondal.<sup>110</sup> Such food rents are familiar from other monastic estates, as at Canterbury and Wilton.<sup>111</sup>

The last years of direct farming saw a limited reduction in sheep numbers, and there may have been some reduction in investment costs, as in the expenditure on hay at Crawley.<sup>112</sup> But on both estates the leasing of the demesne arable was followed by an extended period, for up to a generation after the arable had been leased and continuing until the 1460s, 1470s or even 1480s, when lords continued to maintain in hand a large flock. This also occurred on many other manors in the chalkland, both ecclesiastical and lay (as with the Duchy of Lancaster).<sup>113</sup> The priory flocks were leased at Silkstead between 1465 and 1468, at Wootton between 1471 and 1475, Whitchurch between 1471 and 1483, Littleton after 1479 and at Houghton, Michelmersh and Barton after 1489.<sup>114</sup> There was a similar situation on the bishopric. By 1465, when arable farming only remained on two manors, there were still fourteen manorial flocks, all of which were in Hampshire. This had fallen to nine by 1477, and there were at least three by 1482. By 1487 only Twyford, with a massive flock of 1250 sheep, continued such direct cultivation, and this was leased by 1489.<sup>115</sup> On both estates the continuation of sheep-farming probably reflected the difficulties in finding someone able to accept the very considerable capital risks involved in taking on such a massive flock. Some chalkland monastic estates continued their flocks for even longer, as on those of Shaftesbury and Wilton in Dorset and south Wiltshire. Ultimately, and by the end of the fifteenth century, leasing had achieved a new stability and permanence on our estates.<sup>116</sup>

The retreat from demesne cultivation did not, however, lead to an end to seigneurial investment. Lords continued to invest in manorial buildings, as elsewhere in the region.<sup>117</sup> The bishop built a new barn at Burghclere in 1451–2, and at Overton, he paid over £47 and provided timber for a new barn in 1496–8, and later spent over £41 on a new farmhouse in 1505–6. Similarly the priory may have built a new farmhouse at Littleton and spent heavily on new buildings at Stockton (Wilts.).<sup>118</sup>

## VII

The comparison of these two estates shows the profound influence of common regional factors. Each estate was shaped by patterns of agriculture of which they were both part, and which they also influenced. They showed the characteristics of the chalklands, particularly of the great ecclesiastical estates in Hampshire and Wiltshire. Their large-scale agriculture was characterised by the great demesne flocks that produced wool and meat and whose manure was crucial to

<sup>110</sup> Greatrex, 'Administration', p.156 and table C1; Greatrex (ed.), *Common Seal*, p.188.

<sup>111</sup> R.A.L.Smith, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory* (1943, 1969 edn), p.193; Hare, 'Monks as landlords', p.89.

<sup>112</sup> D.Stone, 'The productivity and management of sheep in late medieval England', *AgHR* 51 (2003), p.8.

<sup>113</sup> Hare, *A prospering society*, ch.6; id., 'Monks as landlords', pp.82–94; id., 'Regional prosperity', p.117.

<sup>114</sup> WCL, Barton 1479 and 1489.

<sup>115</sup> HRO, 11M59, B1/197, 200, 205, B1/210, 211, 212. Merdon was being leased in 1487. Flocks were kept at Crawley until at least 1465, but had ceased by 1470, so that the sequence of figures in Gras and Gras, *English village*, could be extended.

<sup>116</sup> Hare, 'Monks as landlords', pp.87–8.

<sup>117</sup> Hare, *A prospering society*, ch.6.

<sup>118</sup> Roberts, 'Overton Court Farm', pp.95, 102–4; id., *Hampshire Houses, 1200–1700* (2003), p.230.

maintaining and renewing the fertility of the soil, and thus the profitability of arable agriculture. Here, as on other estates in the area, the lords maintained arable cultivation longer than elsewhere in England, and often kept their large sheep flocks long after they had leased their arable. Such conservatism on both estates may have reflected the practical difficulties of finding men who could undertake the financing of such large-scale agriculture. Beyond the chalklands lay areas where flocks were smaller, and where, in the claylands, pastoral farming became increasingly important in the fifteenth century.

Such regional similarities and the wider differences within the vast bishopric estates should be expected. Medieval agriculture remained close to the soils and to the landscape. At the same time there were subtle variations between the two estates that reflected both individual decisions by estate managers, and the contrasting demands of the two estates for cash or food. The priory's need to feed a static household may have encouraged a more conservative management, as with the later food leases. The itinerant nature of the bishopric, with its absence of a single predictable place where food was needed for consumption, probably encouraged a greater emphasis on cash and the market.

One of the most obvious contrasts between the two estates lay in the much earlier contraction of the demesne arable on the bishopric estate compared with the relative stability of the priory. The emphasis on cash receipts may have encouraged the bishopric to expand more rapidly and then to contract more speedily. Did they expand too rapidly, overburden the soil in the quest for cash and then cut back? Did they shift to the higher rents that could now be levied as a result of increased pressure on the land? Or had the rapid expansion shown up the weaknesses inherent in an over-dependence on labour works? Demesne contraction, moreover, may have been accentuated by the growing cost of restocking on the bishopric estates after episcopal deaths and vacancies. This general situation was made worse by a series of short-lived bishops in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth century.

There were also variations in cropping and livestock provision between the two estates. The bishopric showed a significantly greater prevalence of oats, probably the result of greater colonisation of poor downland soils, and of a greater emphasis on oats throughout this estate. Both were great sheep farmers and they continued in this role well into the fifteenth century, but the priory in the later fourteenth century showed a greater central management of its flocks. The bishopric paid less attention to pigs, and here the priory's need to feed its household may initially have been crucial. Later the demands of the priory for pork and bacon may have been reinforced by the growing demands of the market, and an agricultural and industrial labour force that could now afford more meat and less grain.

The unique documentation of the bishopric of Winchester means that this is an estate to which economic and agricultural historians will endlessly return. Its scale and its documentation allow us to quantify as with no other estate, and it will therefore continue to remain fundamental to our understanding of medieval agriculture. But we also need to compare its agricultural practices with those on other manors in similar topographical areas. Such comparisons allow us to highlight those elements common to a particular region or *pays*, but they also allow us to see how different estates responded to particular circumstances, by making different management decisions. Only through such comparisons can we hope to understand the complexity and variety of medieval agriculture.