

The reform of the chapter of Sées (1131) reconsidered: the evidence of the episcopal *acta +**

The regularisation of the cathedral chapter of Sées in 1131 marks a key moment in the ecclesiastical history of medieval France. The replacement by Bishop John de Neuville (1124-44), brother of Arnulf of Lisieux (1141-81), of the secular canons of his cathedral with regular canons brought from the abbey of Saint-Victor of Paris, heralded not only one of the rare instances of such a reform north of the Loire valley,¹ but also a new period of rapid and fruitful expansion of the Augustinian movement in wider Normandy. The singular significance of this event has, of course, not escaped the attention of historians, who have sought to better establish the reform at Sées within its religious and political context.² The difficulties caused by the regularisation, in particular the disputed episcopal elections of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, have also been the subject of recent study, most notably by Jörg Peltzer.³ What has hitherto received comparatively little scholarly attention is the effect that this reform had on the chapter at Sées and on the administrative life of the diocese. This is not to say that such issues do not figure in the discussion of the events of this period. Those interested in the reform of 1131 have long commented on what are assumed to have been its far-reaching consequences, noting, for example, how the requirement to elect archdeacons from among the canons must have affected the administration of the diocese,⁴ or how the chapter, like many other regularised communities, seems, at least in the period after 1200, to have occupied a marginal place in the benefice system that was central to the workings of the medieval Church.⁵ The observations made in this regard, however, are typically limited to general remarks situated within the framework of much broader studies.

The aim of this article, therefore, is to examine these issues in detail for the first time. It will do so by looking primarily, though not exclusively, at the *acta* of the bishops of Sées for the period up to 1220, that is, to the end of the reign of Bishop Silvester, the last bishop of the diocese whose election took place before the loss of Normandy to Philip Augustus in 1204. This corpus of almost 400 texts contains a wealth of information concerning the bishops and their administration of the diocese in the near-century following the events of 1131. Despite its significance, however, such material has featured only infrequently in previous discussion of the reform, due in large part to the fact that the vast majority (almost three-quarters) of it has never been published before.⁶ Although the difficulties associated with charters require a cautious approach to this kind of evidence, it will be shown below that the systematic analysis of these documents, in conjunction with material from elsewhere, can offer fresh insights into the impact of the regularisation upon various aspects of life in the diocese. Extensive use will be made of the *acta* witness lists to trace the evolution of the episcopal household, a key element in the administrative life of any diocese, and to examine the extent to which its composition reflected the changes brought about by the reform. This article will also use the *acta* to shed new light on the activities of the bishops during these years. It will pay particular attention to the relationship between bishop and chapter, and will show that these prelates, whose careers were often overshadowed by the contentious nature of their elections, were, in certain instances, supportive not only of the reform established within their cathedral, but also of the wider Augustinian movement. It will conclude by briefly considering what, if anything, the example of Sées can tell us about the regularisation of cathedral chapters in the Middle Ages.

Situated between the dioceses of Le Mans, Chartres, Bayeux, Lisieux and Évreux, the diocese of Sées occupied a place of strategic significance on the frontiers connecting Normandy with Greater Anjou and the Chartrain. Its earliest bishops, who can only be identified with any certainty from the beginning of the sixth century, were initially styled *episcopus de Uxuma* (Exmes),⁷ only adopting the title of *episcopus Sagiensis* from 541 onwards, a duality that suggests the development of churches at both sites.⁸ Little is known about the Merovingian bishops beyond their names. The same is essentially true for those of the Carolingian era. As elsewhere in the region, the diocese suffered as a result of the Scandinavian incursions of the ninth century. Bishop Hildebrand (850/3-83) was forced into exile at Moussy-le-Neuf,⁹ in the diocese of Meaux, while Adelelme, his successor, was captured and sold into slavery.¹⁰ The latter's death in around 910 signalled the beginning of a vacancy in the see that would last until around 990.¹¹ The first bishop to re-establish an episcopal presence in the city was Azo (c. 990-c. 1015). He is known only for the rebuilding of the cathedral, which he accomplished in part by tearing down the walls of his city.¹² But if Orderic Vitalis is to be believed, the disorganisation of the diocese was such at this time that a part of it was incorporated into that of Lisieux on the grounds that its residents did not know who their bishop was.¹³ The real reason for the reallocation of these lands was, however, probably as much political as ecclesiastical, since it helped to contain the ambitions of the powerful family of Bellême, whose influence in the diocese had been growing since the early eleventh century.¹⁴ The episcopal seat itself was occupied during these years by two men related to the family, namely Sigefrid (c. 1017-c. 1025) and Ivo (c. 1047/8-c. 1071), the latter of whom was also lord of Bellême,¹⁵ and although ducal authority in the diocese was in part restored under

William the Conqueror (1035-87), circumstances rapidly deteriorated during the reign of his son, Robert Curthose (1087-1106).¹⁶

It is in the context of these difficulties, which saw Robert II de Bellême (1077-1112) force Bishop Serlo d'Orgères (1091-1123) into self-imposed exile in England in 1103/4, that the reform of 1131 must be seen. Serlo's successor, John, who was an archdeacon at Sées, belonged to a family long established in the ecclesiastical and secular life of the city (*see* fig. 1 below). His grandfather, Norman, had been dean of the cathedral chapter, while his namesake uncle, whom he had succeeded as archdeacon, had been elected bishop of Lisieux (1107-41), serving as chief justiciar in Normandy under Henry I (1100-35).¹⁷ Such familial connections, it has been suggested, must have appealed greatly to the king-duke, who no doubt saw John's election to the episcopate as a means by which to further reduce the influence of the Bellême in the diocese and to bring greater stability to the duchy's southern frontier.¹⁸ It is likely that similar considerations guided the regularisation of 1131. This is not to suggest, of course, that reforming zeal did not play any role whatsoever. Monarchs throughout Europe, including Henry's neighbours in France and Scotland, played a leading role in promoting the fashion for Augustinian houses,¹⁹ and the conquest of Normandy in 1105-6, where volatility under Curthose had previously hampered the spread of a reform movement,²⁰ presented the king-duke with the opportunity to create a network of regular communities similar to those he had helped establish in England.²¹ Bishop John, on the other hand, was not only an active member of Henry's court, but his election to the episcopate coincided with the rise of a number of reform-minded bishops in the Anglo-Norman realm and beyond,²² among whom were his uncle at Lisieux and his diocesan neighbour, Geoffrey de Lèves, bishop of Chartres

(1115-49), both of whom had unsuccessfully tried to reform their chapters.²³ But neither Henry nor John can have been unaware that the chapter at Sées was in many ways a Bellême institution. It owed its establishment and early endowment to William I de Bellême (c. 1005-c. 1035),²⁴ and while the family's influence over the chapter was not in the twelfth century what it had been in the eleventh, it is likely that the opportunity to do away completely with Bellême interests in the prebendal church, and to place a new group of canons there under episcopal authority was, as has been noted elsewhere, one that appealed both to king-duke and bishop.²⁵ It was certainly a policy familiar to Henry, who, it has been argued, used the implantation of Augustinian canons in the priory (later cathedral chapter) at Carlisle to help stabilise this part of England's volatile northern frontier.²⁶

Figure 1
near here

But the changes wrought at Sées helped create as many difficulties as they resolved. Bishop John was by no means ignorant of this. The idea of a wholesale replacement of the secular canons had clearly been met with some opposition, so the act of reform therefore allowed those who did not wish to take up the habit to retain their status, on condition that their prebends passed to the regular community upon their deaths.²⁷ The pre-1131 chapter was allegedly able to support only thirteen canons,²⁸ and it is possible that Bishop John, who, according to Orderic Vitalis, had ascended to the episcopate in his youth,²⁹ expected the transition to be complete within his lifetime. The secular canons, however, clearly maintained a significant presence right up to his death. Indeed, it was from among their number that the next bishop, Gerard II (1144-57), was chosen. The details of his contested election, which was eventually confirmed by Pope Eugenius III (1145-53) in 1147, are so well known that they do not need to be rehearsed here.³⁰

The internal dynamics of the chapter inherited by the new bishop and his attitude towards it have, by comparison, received relatively little attention. The episcopal *acta* offer crucial—although sometimes conflicting—evidence in this regard. On the one hand, the acts issued by Gerard in favour of the chapter show that he was among its more generous benefactors.³¹ The style of his acts has also been shown to reflect, in certain instances, that of the papal chancery, suggesting engagement with currents of reform on a wider level.³² But the witness lists paint a somewhat different picture. These testify to the exclusion from the bishop's entourage of certain key figures in the reformed chapter and to the elevation of those who not only had close ties to the bishop, but also to what remained of the secular community. It has already been noted elsewhere how the prior Garin, who had been brought to Sées by Bishop John from Saint-Victor,³³ and who had been thwarted in his attempts to canonically elect John's successor,³⁴ is noticeably absent from Gerard's charters following his election.³⁵ Likewise, the chanter, who appears regularly before 1131,³⁶ is to be found among the witnesses of only two of the bishop's acts.³⁷ Garin's fate is in fact unknown, but by around 1148 he had been replaced by Henry,³⁸ who, as archdeacon, had seemingly been among those to sanction Gerard's election.³⁹ Later evidence shows that Henry was allowed to remain as archdeacon while prior,⁴⁰ a unique occurrence in the history of the chapter that perhaps suggests the new bishop was unwilling to trigger the election, as required by the terms of the reform,⁴¹ of a regular canon to what would have otherwise been a vacant archdeaconry.

Henry was not the only archdeacon important to Gerard. William, archdeacon of Eraines/Exmes,⁴² who had been in post since the end of the eleventh century and thus

had longstanding ties to the secular community, seems to have played some role in his election,⁴³ while Roger, archdeacon of Sées, the bishop's brother,⁴⁴ was accused by Arnulf of Lisieux of being a key supporter of Gerard's candidacy.⁴⁵ Whatever his role in these events, the election of a relative to this archdeaconry, which is probably that which had been occupied by various members of Arnulf's family, including the bishop of Lisieux himself,⁴⁶ represented a direct challenge to the influence in Sées of those principally responsible for its reform. Henry, William and Roger, along with their colleague Amaury, archdeacon of Bellême, whose election also took place before 1131,⁴⁷ formed the core of Gerard's entourage. They appear, often all together, in all but one of the bishop's twelve acts to survive with a witness list,⁴⁸ while they also accompanied him to important events, such as the Council of Reims in 1148.⁴⁹ Only Hugh, archdeacon of Corbon, is conspicuously absent from the bishop's acts.⁵⁰ The reason for this is not clear, although it is possible that his election had taken place after the reform but before Gerard's election.⁵¹ His apparent exclusion from the episcopal household therefore stands as perhaps further proof of the bishop's desire to surround himself with men whose loyalties lay with him and the secular community, rather than the reformed chapter.

Of course, the frequent appearance of archdeacons in the bishop's entourage at this point in the twelfth century would, in any other diocese, hardly be worthy of note. But circumstances under Bishop Gerard seem to suggest that the reform had little impact, at least in its first two decades, upon this aspect of the administrative life of the diocese. The archdeacons, moreover, are not the only individuals with ties to the old secular community that appear frequently alongside the bishop. Six canons feature among the witnesses of an act given in around 1154, of whom three are specifically

identified as seculars: William de Pont-Audemer, Hugh, nephew of Bishop Serlo, and Garin Monk (*monachus*).⁵² Their appearance not only testifies to the continued existence of rival parties within the chapter over twenty years after the reform, but evidence from the bishop's *acta* shows that it was these individuals, and not their regular counterparts, two of whom are also identified in the act, who counted among the important members of his entourage. We know, for example, that William served Gerard as chaplain,⁵³ while Garin, who is perhaps to be identified with the canon of that name mentioned in an act of Bishop John,⁵⁴ figures regularly among the witnesses of the bishop's acts.⁵⁵ A canon Hugh also appears in three of Gerard's charters, on one occasion next to Garin Monk,⁵⁶ and although it is impossible to be certain of his identity, the bishop's tendency to surround himself with individuals with links to the old secular community suggests that this individual is most likely the same as that identified as the nephew of Bishop Serlo.⁵⁷

Canons are, with the exception of an act of 1153,⁵⁸ otherwise rare witnesses to Gerard's charters.⁵⁹ This is not to say that their apparent exclusion from his household means the bishop took steps to undermine the regular chapter. We have already noted Gerard's acts in its favour, while according to Arnulf of Lisieux, writing in early 1161, the chapter was able to accommodate almost three times the number of canons it had been before the reform.⁶⁰ Nothing in the diplomatic record allows us to confirm this statement, although the aforementioned act of 1153 is witnessed by ten canons, to whose names can be added a further five active in the same period.⁶¹ Little else is known of these individuals. Their toponymics, however, reflect a body composed almost exclusively of people recruited from within the diocese, a not entirely surprising fact, but one that suggests that of those canons who had been brought from

Saint-Victor in 1131, none remained.⁶² The chapter at Sées may not, therefore, have been impoverished during Gerard's reign, but the picture that emerges from the *acta* of this period is that of an institution isolated from its 'mother house' and governed by a man who, although he had been required to become a regular himself,⁶³ seems to have remained a secular at heart.

It was perhaps in an attempt to re-establish links with Paris, not to mention adhere to their electoral traditions, that the regular canons, following the death of Bishop Gerard in 1157, chose as his successor Achard, abbot of Saint-Victor (1155-61). Their efforts would be frustrated once again, however. This time their opponent was Henry II (1154-89), who wished to elect Froger, his almoner, to the episcopal seat. The two sides remained deadlocked for over two years, with the king eventually emerging victorious.⁶⁴ His candidate, whose election took place on 20 December 1159,⁶⁵ is without doubt the most interesting occupant of the bishopric during the twelfth century. Apparently from the region near Lisieux, he had served as *domesticus* to Bishop Arnulf, who had perhaps endowed him with the prebend of La Pommeraye.⁶⁶ His career then took him to England, where he became archdeacon of Derby, before finally entering into the king's service.⁶⁷ As bishop, what little his contemporaries said of him is overwhelmingly negative. For his former master, Froger was a constant enemy of the reform established by his brother,⁶⁸ while the bishop's involvement in the Becket controversy led one of the archbishop's adherents to brand him 'the butcher of Sées' (*carnifex Sagiensis*).⁶⁹ It was perhaps on account of the persistent attacks of Bishop Arnulf, who claimed that the new bishop was openly supporting the anti-pope Victor IV,⁷⁰ that Froger sought at first to resign his seat, a request that was denied by Alexander III (1159-81).⁷¹

But while the new bishop was in many ways a worldly man who spent much of his time at the royal court,⁷² he was clearly not disinterested in religious affairs, showing a particular interest in the reformed orders. He had been, since his days as archdeacon of Derby, a generous patron of the Cistercian abbey of Mortemer, to which he bequeathed various gifts, including a New Testament in two volumes. As bishop, he gave £800 for the completion of the abbey church and dedicated the chapel of the infirmary.⁷³ He also came to an agreement with Abbot William (1180-1200) concerning their respective possessions at Roule.⁷⁴ Froger seems likewise to have had a particular attachment to the Premonstratensian order. For reasons that are not entirely clear, but which were perhaps linked to the nature of his election as bishop, he seems to have made a canonical profession either at the abbey of Cappenberg or perhaps that of Arnstein.⁷⁵ He is commemorated in the necrology of the abbey of Prémontré as a generous benefactor,⁷⁶ while his name is recorded in the obituaries of numerous Premonstratensian houses, from that of Silly,⁷⁷ in his own diocese, to Saint-Jean de La Castelle in Gascony.⁷⁸

A close analysis of Froger's *acta* also shows that he was, despite the accusations levelled at him by Arnulf of Lisieux, a generous supporter not only of the regular canons of his chapter, but also of the wider Augustinian movement. This is not to say that the new bishop did not take certain steps that sometimes ran contrary to the terms of the reform of 1131. The election of his nephew, John, to the archdeaconry of Eraines/Exmes, which Arnulf claimed the bishop had succeeded in having secularised with the pope's blessing, was clearly intended to strengthen his position in the chapter,⁷⁹ a fact reflected by John's appearance in more than half of his uncle's acts

with a witness list (twenty-five of forty-seven acts).⁸⁰ In decrying John's election, the bishop of Lisieux went on to dismiss Froger's suggestion that he had been forced to take such action because of a lack of qualified clergy.⁸¹ Such claims, however, may not have been as far from the truth as Arnulf suggested. We have already noted the seemingly parochial recruitment of the canons under Bishop Gerard, and it is entirely possible that his successor, himself a former archdeacon conscious of how the reform would impact this aspect of the administrative life of his diocese,⁸² acted as he did not only out of self-interest, but also because he found none among his chapter with the experience necessary to occupy such a demanding position. Even the bishop of Lisieux himself was forced to admit that the duchy's regular communities struggled to attract recruits,⁸³ a statement that, as will be seen below, seems to have held true for the chapter of Sées. Froger's replacement of the prior, moreover, who Arnulf claimed had been ousted because he dared complain about the bishop's conduct, must surely be seen as intended to resolve the irregularity of Henry's dual status as both prior and archdeacon.⁸⁴ His replacement, John, alleged by Arnulf to be a simpleton (*idiot*), not only went on to serve the chapter without issue well beyond Froger's death,⁸⁵ but his intermittent appearances in the bishop's acts suggests that he was not, as the bishop of Lisieux implied, one of Froger's close adherents.⁸⁶ In contrast, Archdeacon Henry continued to regularly witness the bishop's acts.⁸⁷ Any ill feeling that may have arisen between the two as a result of the bishop's actions must, therefore, soon have been forgotten.

Froger also took steps to build a good relationship with his chapter. He granted to the canons the churches of Saint-Sauveur-de-Carrouges and of Ners, as well as a yearly income from the mill of Pussou for the celebration of his anniversary.⁸⁸ It was also

thanks to him that the episcopal residence at Fleuré became part of the cathedral's possessions.⁸⁹ The bishop even worked with his canons to endow other Augustinian institutions within the city. According to a mention of a lost act, it was Froger, who, in 1180, founded the hospital (later priory) of Sainte-Croix de Sées, whose brothers had adopted the Augustinian rule, granting to them, with the consent of the canons of his cathedral, the churches of Belfonds and Vieux-Pont, along with various other possessions.⁹⁰ Elsewhere, such was the bishop's largesse, according to Robert de Torigni, that he not only improved the cathedral church, greatly enlarging its temporal possessions, but also left behind an enormous treasure of gold and silver.⁹¹ It was no doubt thanks to such munificence that the canons of Saint-Victor, to whom Froger gave sixty marks of silver, remembered the bishop as a 'special friend' (*specialis amicus*) in their obituary.⁹²

But if Froger seems to have maintained a good relationship with his chapter, the bishop's *acta* reveal that its members played only a marginal role in his household. We have already noted the infrequent appearances of Prior John in Froger's acts. The chanter, on the other hand, second dignitary of the chapter,⁹³ is completely absent from the witness lists. This stands in stark contrast to neighbouring dioceses, such as Avranches and Coutances, where these figures appear frequently in the acts of their bishops.⁹⁴ Besides the acts attested by Prior John, only four others are known to include the subscription of a member of the chapter.⁹⁵ The core of Froger's household was, like that of his predecessor, initially formed by the archdeacons. The most important of these was his nephew John, archdeacon of Eraines/Exmes, who, we have already noted, appears in over half his uncle's acts with a witness list. Herbert, archdeacon of Corbon, is the next most frequent attester (fourteen acts), followed by

Henry, archdeacon of Houlme (eleven acts), and Roger, archdeacon of Sées (eight acts).⁹⁶ Their attestations, and those of their successors, suggest, however, that it was during Froger's episcopate that the terms of the reform began finally to have an effect on the place of the archdeacons in the machinery of diocesan governance. Only Archdeacon John, whose career continued into the 1190s,⁹⁷ is known to have witnessed his uncle's acts throughout his episcopate. Roger and Henry, on the other hand, both of whom had links to the old secular community, seem to have died towards the end of the 1160s.⁹⁸ Their successors are almost unknown. Henry de *Alneto*, who followed Roger as archdeacon of Sées, appears in only one of Froger's acts,⁹⁹ while the next mention of an archdeacon of Houlme is known thanks only to an act of Walter, archbishop of Rouen (1185-1207).¹⁰⁰ Likewise, the successor of Amaury, archdeacon of Bellême, whose last known mention dates to 25 December 1155,¹⁰¹ is entirely absent from Froger's acts (nor can he be found anywhere else, for that matter). The reason for the apparent exclusion of these archdeacons from the bishop's household is unknown. It seems most likely, however, that Roger, Henry and Amaury had all been succeeded by regular canons, causing a fundamental shift in the relationship between bishop and archdeacon. As for Herbert, archdeacon of Corbon, the frequency of his attestations, which are conspicuously high given the relative unimportance of his archdeaconry,¹⁰² perhaps suggests that, like Archdeacon John, he was related to the bishop in some way.¹⁰³ No precise date can be given for his death, but it was probably shortly after 1170, his last datable appearance.¹⁰⁴ As elsewhere, his immediate successor is also unknown.¹⁰⁵

It was no doubt in response to these changes that Froger began to develop around him a close circle of clerks. Six of these individuals are conspicuous by the frequency of

their attestations: Robert de Jort, Odo d'Orgères, Osbert de Canon, Peter de Coutances, Ralph de *Mesnilgerberto* and Thomas de Saint-Paul.¹⁰⁶ Their careers, which sometimes saw them involved in matters well beyond the confines of the episcopal household, are examined in detail elsewhere.¹⁰⁷ In this respect, the episcopal entourage at Sées began to reflect those of English bishops unfortunate enough to preside over monastic chapters, who, early on in the twelfth century, had to create large clerical households to help them with their administrations.¹⁰⁸ Of the other frequent attesters of Froger's acts, those individuals associated with the Augustinian priory of Sainte-Barbe-en-Auge stand out. Two canons in particular, namely Walter and Herbert, figure often enough among the witnesses of the bishop's acts to suggest that their appearance is more than just coincidental,¹⁰⁹ while Daniel, prior of Sainte-Barbe, is also witness to three charters.¹¹⁰ Froger was a generous patron of the priory, granting it various churches and issuing a general confirmation of its possessions.¹¹¹ Robert of Beckford (*Becchefort*), who appears among the witnesses of six of the bishop's acts, can also be tied to Sainte-Barbe. Of English origin, his toponymic indicates that he was associated with a manor belonging to the priory.¹¹² Never is he referred to with an ecclesiastical title (or a secular one, for that matter), but it seems likely that he is the same as Robert of Beckford (*Becquefort*), later prior of the house of regular canons at Saint-Lô de Bourg-Achard, who is mentioned in an act of Robert de Neubourg, dean of Rouen.¹¹³ His appearance in Froger's acts not only provides further evidence of the bishop's close links with Sainte-Barbe, a regular house that lay outside his diocese, but also suggests that his household was a place where Augustinian careers could be nurtured.

The death of Bishop Froger in 1184/5 brought about yet another vacancy in the episcopal see. Little is known of these years, except that the diocese seems to have been administered by Odo d'Orgères, one of Froger's clerks, who served as its guardian (*custos*).¹¹⁴ The circumstances surrounding the election of the next bishop, Lisiard (1187/8-1201), who had been a secular canon at the cathedral of Le Mans, are obscure.¹¹⁵ His relationship with the regular chapter seems nevertheless to have been a good one, despite the accusations levelled against him after his death.¹¹⁶ His general confirmation of the chapter's possessions,¹¹⁷ which were also confirmed during his episcopate by Innocent III (1198-1216) and taken under the protection of King John (1199-1216),¹¹⁸ shows that it had become, with forty-two churches, by far the largest patron in the diocese.¹¹⁹ Like his predecessor, Lisiard granted to the canons an income for the celebration of his anniversary,¹²⁰ while he also appears to have worked with them to establish regular institutions elsewhere in the diocese, converting, according to tradition, the leper house of Chartrage at Mortagne into an Augustinian priory affiliated with the chapter of Sées.¹²¹ It is also possible that it was thanks to Lisiard's connections in the diocese of Le Mans, which the bishop continued to cultivate following his election,¹²² that the canons came to possess an island in the vicinity of Beaumont-sur-Sarthe.¹²³

It was under Lisiard, however, that both the chapter's complexion and its relationship with the bishop seem to have entered the state in which they would henceforth remain. Members of the chapter appear to have been all but excluded from the bishop's entourage.¹²⁴ Dignitaries such as the archdeacons, who played such an important role in the households of previous bishops, likewise feature only rarely in Lisiard's acts.¹²⁵ Such developments were not, of course, unique to Sées, and in many other dioceses

the changing role of the archdeacon, whose status as the bishop's pre-eminent administrative officer began to be challenged towards the end of the twelfth century, is reflected by their gradual disappearance from the episcopal *acta*.¹²⁶ But with the bishops of Sées becoming increasingly unwilling or unable to install their own candidates, vacant archdeaconries were seemingly filled with men chosen from among the cathedral canons, who, judging from what little information survives, seem themselves to have been recruited from among the lower ranks of local society.¹²⁷ As a result, the archdeacons of this period, when compared to their counterparts elsewhere in the Anglo-Norman realm, cut rather unimpressive figures. In many instances their careers are known thanks only to a solitary reference, while none, with the exception of Archdeacon Silvester, who later became bishop of the diocese, seem to have been promoted to higher office.¹²⁸ The archdeacons of Sées are also unusual, when compared to their colleagues elsewhere in Normandy and England, in that not one of them in the period before 1220 seems to have held the title of *magister*.¹²⁹ It was perhaps on account of a lack of such adequate training, which in itself appears to reflect the inability of the chapter to recruit persons of a certain calibre, that the pope seems only rarely to have appointed the archdeacons of the diocese to act as judge-delegates.¹³⁰ Evidence of their administrative activities is, moreover, extremely sparse,¹³¹ and by the thirteenth century the archdeacons had apparently become such marginal figures that the occupants of certain archdeaconries are unknown for many decades.¹³²

The core of Lisiard's household was, as a result of these developments, composed almost entirely of clerks. These included individuals inherited from his predecessor, such as Odo d'Orgères, and those related to the local nobility, like Peter de Saint-

Loyer, uncle of Hodelina, wife of Ralph de Montgomery. The bishop's entourage also included members of his immediate family, such as his nephews Geoffrey and Raymond.¹³³ But if men like Odo and Peter, both of whom appear in more than half of Lisiard's acts with a witness list, were seemingly of critical importance to the bishop, the evidence suggests that the circumstances created at Sées by the reform meant that it was, by and large, a place where the rewards for such individuals were extremely limited. Indeed, of the bishop's 152 *acta* to survive, only one concerns the presentation of an episcopal clerk to a benefice,¹³⁴ while no such act of patronage is to be found among the charters of his two predecessors. Such circumstances stand in stark contrast to those elsewhere in the Anglo-Norman realm, where members of the episcopal household were not only instituted in various churches, but were sometimes succeeded there by their relatives.¹³⁵ Of course, the regularisation of the chapter presented limitations in this regard, since there was little benefit to be had in elevating clerks to be canons when their possessions were to be held in common,¹³⁶ but those English prelates faced with monastic chapters overcame similar problems by securing prebends or dignities for their clerks at secular cathedrals elsewhere, or by persuading local monastic houses to present these individuals to their rectories or vicarages.¹³⁷ The apparent failure of the bishops of Sées to act similarly is hard to explain, although it is possible that the chapter's position as by far the largest patron in the diocese served to intensify competition for what benefices remained.¹³⁸

If Lisiard's death in late September 1201 brought about yet another disputed election at Sées, the man eventually chosen to replace him was, for the first time since the reform, a member of the chapter.¹³⁹ Bishop Silvester (1202-20), formerly archdeacon of Sées, had been elected by the prior, and confirmed by Innocent III, following the

death of the original candidate, Ralph de *Merula*, during a trip to Rome. Silvester's career had begun under Bishop Froger, whom the editors of the *Gallia Christiana* claimed was his uncle.¹⁴⁰ Evidence from the bishop's own *acta* reveals, however, that his familial connections were, like at least two of the other chapter members nominated for the vacant bishopric, very local indeed.¹⁴¹ But while the new bishop may have been, to borrow the expression of the prior of Sées, 'from the bosom of the church' (*de gremio ecclesie*),¹⁴² the circumstances of his election had caused a bitter rift within the chapter. It seems that tensions were still running high a decade later, since in June 1212 the pope instructed the bishops of Bayeux and Coutances, along with the abbot of Perseigne, to investigate (apparently false) accusations, perhaps made by disgruntled elements within the chapter, that Silvester and the prior, John, were guilty of 'perverse acts' (*perversis actibus*).¹⁴³ Unfortunately, the episcopal *acta* do not allow for much insight into the internal dynamics of the chapter at this time. None of the bishop's eighty-one acts for which we have a complete or partial text contain a witness list, an absence that is noteworthy even for a period when such methods of corroboration were becoming increasingly unusual.¹⁴⁴ It is therefore all but impossible to reconstruct Silvester's household and to see whether certain individuals appear at his side more frequently than others.

The bishop was, nevertheless, a generous patron of the chapter, issuing confirmations of its possessions,¹⁴⁵ and granting to it various benefices that he had acquired at Bursard.¹⁴⁶ He likewise gave to the prior and canons all the fruits and revenues (*fructus et proventus*) of the church of Valframbert, which he had purchased from the monks of Saint-Martin de Sées for the sum of £400.¹⁴⁷ By 1207, he had also instituted Prior John to serve as his official,¹⁴⁸ a move that suggests that the bishop, unlike his

immediate predecessors, perhaps intended to staff his household with people from within the chapter.¹⁴⁹ Notwithstanding the inquiry of 1212, Silvester's reign was, moreover, otherwise uneventful. He proved himself to be a very capable administrator who also took the time to engage with the wider ecclesiastical developments of his era, ensuring that his city played a role in their dissemination.¹⁵⁰ It has been suggested, however, that the choice of his successor, who had a reputation for the restoration of discipline, points towards ongoing internal power struggles within the chapter.¹⁵¹ Whatever the reality, the reign of Bishop Gervase (1220-28), along with that of his successor, Bishop Hugh (1228-40), would finally bring an end to the controversies that had periodically troubled the community at Sées since its regularisation in 1131.

What conclusions, if any, can be drawn from all this? The first point worth noting concerns the near-uniqueness of the circumstances at Sées. What, if anything, can they tell us about the wider canonical movement and, more to the point, about the reform of cathedral chapters in particular? Given the very different circumstances in which regular chapters were created elsewhere in Europe, where the influence of certain papal legates was paramount (southern France),¹⁵² or where the poverty of the diocese often acted as the primary catalyst (Spain and Portugal),¹⁵³ it would seem, at first glance, to be very little indeed. But as was noted at the beginning of this article, the community at Sées was not alone in northern France in its regularisation. In neighbouring Brittany, the bishop of Saint-Malo, John de la Grille (1144-63), had transferred the episcopal seat from Alet to Saint-Malo, establishing a regular chapter there in the process. Comparatively little work has been done on this reform, which took place at an unknown date between 1146 and 1152, but that which has shows that

while there are certain key differences between the two cases, there are also some interesting parallels. Both were established with papal support, both adopted the Victorine *ordo*, and both saw new electoral rules requiring the bishop and the archdeacons to be elected from among the canons.¹⁵⁴ Most interestingly of all, the first person to be established at the head of the newly reformed chapter at Saint-Malo was, like his counterpart then at Sées, both prior and archdeacon.¹⁵⁵ Does this striking coincidence suggest that there was some sort of interaction between the two communities? This seems unlikely, but the fact that John de la Grille, a person of impeccable reform credentials, saw fit to entrust his fledgling community to an archdeacon, who had presumably been originally elected when the secular chapter was still at Alet, is nevertheless worthy of note.¹⁵⁶ As for the *acta* of the bishops of Saint-Malo, so few survive from the reign of John de la Grille that little can be determined about the period immediately following the reform, while the lack of a critical edition for those issued after 1163 means that its long-term consequences cannot at present be properly investigated.¹⁵⁷

If, however, a full comparison of the circumstances at Sées and Saint-Malo is not yet possible, the evidence from Brittany does suggest that the reform there was far less contentious. Bishop John's immediate successors appear to have been elected without issue, despite the fact that at least one came from outside the chapter.¹⁵⁸ The fact that the chapter at Saint-Malo seems to have been created as an entirely new institution, rather than as the result of a reform of the old secular body,¹⁵⁹ probably helped matters in this regard. The complexity of the circumstances at Sées, which was both a much richer and a more strategically significant diocese,¹⁶⁰ may not, by comparison, come as much of a surprise, but this complexity is still a fact worth reemphasising.

Previous discussion of the reform at Sées, in particular with regards to the election of its bishops, very often paints these events as simply the imposition of secular prelates upon a regular community. The evidence of the episcopal *acta* shows, however, that the process of regularisation was gradual rather than abrupt. Bishops such as Gerard and Froger inherited a chapter that still had many links, both financial and familial, to the old secular community, a fact that both men had no hesitation in exploiting for as long as it was possible to do so. In this respect, the circumstances at Sées echo those elsewhere in Europe, where the establishment of certain regular communities, in particular those that involved the replacement of an existing secular body, were characterised by hostility, apprehension and an unwillingness to embrace fully those changes imposed by the reform.¹⁶¹

But the *acta* also show that, despite the dire warnings of those such as Arnulf of Lisieux, the terms of the reform had created a community that could and would endure. Gerard, Froger and Lisiard had, of course, used their positions to advance the careers of their relatives, occasionally undermining aspects of the reform as a result, but nothing indicates that they were able to cultivate multi-generational networks of patronage like those that characterised cathedral chapters elsewhere in Normandy and England (and had characterised Sées before 1131).¹⁶² There was, moreover, no attempt to undermine the authority of the chapter through the establishment of a rival college of secular clerks, as happened in cities with regular chapters (both canonical and monastic) elsewhere in the Anglo-Norman realm,¹⁶³ and although the *acta* show that these prelates did not include the priors, chanters and canons of the chapter among their intimates, they were, in certain instances, supportive not only of the reform at Sées, but also of the wider Augustinian movement. Even men like Bishop Gerard,

whose relationship with the chapter can best be described as ambiguous, perhaps played a more nuanced role in the reform movement than at first appears. After all, what is to be made of a man whom Bernard of Clairvaux decried as ‘the sly fox of Sées’ (*Sagiensis vulpecula fraudulenta*),¹⁶⁴ but who was called ‘blessed’ (*beatus*) by the chronicler of Sainte-Barbe-en-Auge?¹⁶⁵

If the evidence suggests, however, that the reform at Sées was, in its purest sense, largely a success, it is also clear that the chapter, like many Augustinian institutions, quickly became insular and conservative in nature. Again, such developments did not occur overnight. The secularisation of the archdeaconry of Eraines/Exmes meant that its occupants could continue to play a slightly more visible role in the religious and political life of the duchy into the early thirteenth century.¹⁶⁶ But by the reign of Bishop Lisiard, if not even earlier, it must have been clear that Sées was no longer a place where an ecclesiastical career was likely to be advanced, either within the chapter, where vacancies in the hierarchy could only be filled by those already professed as a regular canon, or within the bishop's entourage, where apparently fierce competition for benefices meant slim chance of reward. Such matters were no doubt compounded by the fact that the city itself was never a centre of great economic activity during the Middle Ages.¹⁶⁷ The chapter's intellectual life, on the other hand, which had flourished in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries,¹⁶⁸ was, with links to the abbey of Saint-Victor having become all but defunct, little in evidence by the middle of the thirteenth, despite the existence of a not insignificant capitular library.¹⁶⁹ Whether the almost total absence at this time of professional men (*magistri*) among the chapter's ranks can be linked to such developments is difficult to gauge,¹⁷⁰ but Sées was certainly not alone among the regular chapters of Europe in its apparent

want of men with such training. Graduate members of the cathedral chapters of Carlisle, Dublin, Whithorn and St Andrews appear just as infrequently (if at all) in the historical record,¹⁷¹ despite the fact that, as at Sées, men bearing the title of *magister* can be found regularly among either the bishop's clerical entourage or at secular institutions elsewhere in the city.¹⁷² It would, of course, be hazardous to draw too many firm conclusions based on such a small pool of evidence, especially since patterns of recruitment to the canonical orders have not yet been subjected to the same detailed analysis as those relating to the secular clergy.¹⁷³ After all, it is entirely possible that the apparent absence of such men in the sources does not reflect a deficiency on the part of these institutions, but is rather a by-product of Augustinian diplomatic practices, a subject that has likewise hitherto received relatively little attention,¹⁷⁴ or of some other issue entirely.

This last point serves, finally, to remind us that, while the *acta* are invaluable for the information they contain, they allow only an imperfect glimpse both of the activities of the bishops during these years and of the circumstances in the chapter following the events of 1131. The local archives may have largely escaped the sort of catastrophic destruction that befell those elsewhere in Lower Normandy, but the documents discussed here, which come overwhelmingly from monastic sources, whose varying degrees of richness, not to mention their very survival, are dependent on the vicissitudes of archival conservation, no doubt represent only a small part of the total originally issued. Particularly frustrating is the lack of evidence for the decade or so immediately following the reform. Bishop John may have been an important *curialis* to both Henry I and King Stephen (1135-54), the latter of whom appears to have entrusted him with the vacant diocese of Rochester in 1137,¹⁷⁵ but only a handful of

his *acta* have come down to us, of which only one, a mention, can be dated to the period after 1131.¹⁷⁶ Were more acts to survive from this crucial period it would no doubt be possible not only to shed light on various unknowns (Who besides Prior Garin was brought from Saint-Victor to Sées? How many seculars chose to retain their status?), but also to determine whether the evidence from his successors' *acta* represents a marked shift in attitude and circumstances from those under John. Interestingly, the aforesaid mention lists William, archdeacon of Eraines/Exmes, as the first and only witness of the act, suggesting that the bishop's relationship with the remaining secular elements of the cathedral community was perhaps not as different as we might at first assume.¹⁷⁷ But whatever uncertainties remain, it has hopefully been shown that the *acta* come closer than any other surviving source to shedding new light on what stands as a critical event not only of Norman but of medieval French history. And for that reason alone both they and the men behind their creation deserve our attention.

* ADC = Archives départementales du Calvados; ADO = Archives départementales de l'Orne; ADSM = Archives départementales de la Seine-Maritime; AN = Archives nationales de France; *ANS* = *Anglo-Norman Studies* (formerly *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies*), eds. R. A. Brown (vols. 1-11), M. Chibnall (vols. 12-16), C. Harper-Bill (vols. 17-22), J. Gillingham (vols. 23-27), C. P. Lewis (vols. 28-33) and D. Bates (34-36); *AP* = *Analecta Praemonstratensia*; BES = Bibliothèque de l'évêché de Sées; BN = Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁺ The author is indebted to Cyprien Henry and to Norman Shead, who kindly provided guidance and material regarding the *acta* of the bishops of Saint-Malo and St Andrews, respectively, and to the anonymous reviewer for their comments. Any errors that remain are, of course, his own.

¹ The chapter at Sées was, along with that of Saint-Malo, one of only two regular cathedral chapters in northern France: J. Becquet, 'La Réforme des chapitres cathédraux en France aux XI^e et XII^e siècles', *Bulletin philologique et historique (jusqu'en 1610) du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1977 for 1975), 31-41 at pp. 36-37.

² S. Bidou, 'La Réforme du chapitre cathédral de Sées en 1131', *Bulletin de la Société historique et archéologique de l'Orne* (hereinafter cited as BSHAO) cvi (1987), 21-32; F. Loddé, 'L'Histoire d'un chapitre régulier au Moyen Age: celui du diocèse de Sées', in S. Lemagnen and P. Manneville (eds), *Chapitres et cathédrales en Normandie* (Actes du congrès des Sociétés historiques et archéologiques de Normandie, 1996), Caen 1997, 241-51; M. Arnoux, *Des Clercs au service de la réforme: études et documents sur les chanoines réguliers de la province de Rouen*, Turnhout 2000, 39-55; Idem, 'La régularisation du chapitre cathédral de Sées en

1131: un événement local aux dimensions multiples’, *BSHAO* cxxxiii (2015 for 2014), 133-147.

³ J. Peltzer, ‘The Angevin kings and canon law: episcopal elections and the loss of Normandy’, *ANS* xxvii (2005), 169-184 at pp. 171-4, 179-82; Idem, *Canon law, careers and conquest: episcopal elections in Normandy and Greater Anjou, c. 1140-c. 1230*, Cambridge 2008, 115-35.

⁴ J. Châtillon, *Théologie, spiritualité et métaphysique dans l'œuvre oratoire d'Achard de Saint-Victor*, Paris 1969, 69; P. Montaubin, ‘Les Chanoines réguliers et le service pastoral (XIe-XIIIe siècles)’, in M. Parisse (ed.), *Les Chanoines réguliers: émergence et expansion (XIe-XIIIe siècles)*, Saint-Etienne 2009, 119-58 at p. 133.

⁵ P. Desportes, J.-P. Foucher, F. Loddé and L. Vallière, *Fasti Ecclesiae Gallicanae: répertoire prosopographique des évêques, dignitaires et chanoines de France de 1200 à 1500. Tome IX, Diocèse de Sées, 1200-1547*, Turnhout 2005, p. vii.

⁶ The *acta* will be published as *Les Actes des évêques de Sées, XIe siècle-1220*, ed. R. Allen, in *Corpus des actes épiscopaux normands (XIe-XIIIe siècle)*, dir. G. Combalbert, V. Gazeau and others, édition papier et numérique, Presses universitaires de Caen, forthcoming.

⁷ Exmes, Orne, chef-lieu de cant.

⁸ For discussion see F. Neveux, ‘La Ville de Sées du haut moyen âge à l’époque ducal’, *ANS* xvii (1994), 145-63 at p. 149-50.

⁹ Moussy-le-Neuf, Seine-et-Marne, cant. Dammartin-en-Goële.

¹⁰ The diocese's misfortunes and those of Bishop Adelelme are recounted in his life and miracles of St Opportune: *Acta Sanctorum*, April III, 68-71.

¹¹ Neveux, ‘Ville de Sées’, 151. It is possible, however, that the bishops continued to administer the diocese from their retreat at Moussy-le-Neuf: L. Musset, ‘L’Exode des

reliques du diocèse de Sées au temps des invasions normandes’, *BSHAO* lxxxviii (1970), 3-22.

¹² *The Gesta Normannorum ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, ed. E. M. C. van Houts, Oxford 1992-5, ii. 114.

¹³ Orderic iii.2, in *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall, Oxford, 1969-80, ii. 26.

¹⁴ G. Louise, *La Seigneurie de Bellême, Xe-XIIIe siècles: évolution des pouvoirs territoriaux et construction d'une seigneurie de frontière aux confins de la Normandie et du Maine à la charnière de l'an mil*, Flers 1990-1, i. 130-1. For the complex origins of this family see also G. H. White, ‘The first house of Bellême’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser. xxii (1940), 67-99; J. Boussard, ‘La Seigneurie de Bellême aux Xe et XIe siècles’, in C.-E. Perrin (ed.), *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Âge Louis Halphen*, Paris 1951, 43-54; K. Thompson, ‘Family and influence to the south of Normandy in the eleventh century: the lordship of Bellême’, *Journal of Medieval History* xi (1985), 215-26. On the fluidity of diocesan boundaries at this time, with special mention of the case of Sées, see F. Mazel, ‘*Cujus dominus, ejus episcopatus* ? Pouvoirs seigneuriaux et territoires diocésains (Xe-XIIIe siècle)’, in F. Mazel (ed.), *L'Espace du diocèse. Genèse d'un territoire dans l'Occident médiéval (Ve-XIIIe siècle)*, Rennes 2008, 213-52 at pp. 227-33.

¹⁵ Louise, *Seigneurie de Bellême*, i. 151; J. Decaens, ‘L'Évêque Yves de Sées’, in P. Bouet and F. Neveux (eds), *Les Évêques normands du XIe siècle*, Caen 1995, 117-37.

¹⁶ For discussion see R. Allen, ‘Robert Curthose and the Norman episcopate’, *Haskins Society Journal* xxi (2009), 87-112 at pp. 104-8.

¹⁷ For John's family see Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, 44-5.

¹⁸ Ibid. 46-7; E. U. Crosby, *The king's bishops: the politics of patronage in England and Normandy, 1066-1216*, Basingstoke 2013, 244.

¹⁹ For the reform efforts of Louis VI, king of France (1108-37), see J. Führer, *König Ludwig VI. von Frankreich und die Kanonikerreform*, Frankfurt 2008; for those of Alexander I (1107-24) and David I (1124-53) of Scotland, which included the regularisation of the cathedral chapter of St Andrews, see K. Veitch, "'Replanting paradise': Alexander I and the reform of religious life in Scotland", *Innes Review* lii (2001), 136-66; C. Brooke, 'King David I of Scotland as a connoisseur of the religious orders', in C. E. Viola (ed.), *Mediaevalia Christiana: XIe-XIIIe siècles: hommage à Raymonde Foreville de ses amis, ses collègues et ses anciens élèves*, Paris 1989, 320-34.

²⁰ For discussion see Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, 11-39.

²¹ For the Augustinian institutions founded in England during Henry's reign, of which five were established directly by the king, see M. Brett, *The English Church under Henry I*, Oxford 1975, 138-40; J. Green, *The government of England under Henry I*, Cambridge 1986, 4; J. Burton, *Monastic and religious orders in Britain, 1000-1300*, Cambridge 1994, 45-52; Idem, 'Les Chanoines réguliers en Grande-Bretagne', in Parisse (ed.), *Chanoines réguliers*, 477-98 at pp. 482-6; H. Mayr-Harting, *Religion, politics and society in Britain 1066-1272*, Harlow 2011, 167-79.

²² For a useful survey of the role played by the various bishops of France in the spread of reformed communities see Führer, *König Ludwig VI.*, 269-98; for discussion with regards to bishops in England see Brett, *Henry I*, 138-40; J. Burton, *The monastic order in Yorkshire, 1069-1215*, Cambridge 1999, 69-97; K. Legg, *Bolton Priory: its patrons and benefactors 1120-1293*, York 2004, 3; A. Fizzard, *Plympton Priory: a house of Augustinian Canons in south-western England in the late Middle Ages*,

Leiden 2008, 45-55. John, however, seems to have only ever occupied a marginal role in the network of reforming bishops later centred around Hugh d'Amiens, archbishop of Rouen: G. Combalbert, 'Formation et déclin d'un réseau réformateur. Hugues d'Amiens, archevêque de Rouen, et les évêques normands, entre le pape et le duc (fin des années 1130-1164)', *Annales de Normandie* lxxiii (2013), 3-48 at p. 34.

²³ *Chronique de Robert de Torigni*, ed. L. Delisle, Paris, 1872-3, i. 235-6. Bishop Geoffrey would later employ John's brother, Arnulf, among his household clerks: *The letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, ed. F. Barlow, London 1939, p. xiv. Some have seen the bishop of Chartres' influence as being key to the reform at Sées: L. Grant, 'Arnulf's mentor: Geoffrey of Lèves, bishop of Chartres', in D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton (eds), *Writing medieval biography, 750-1250: essays in honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, Woodbridge 2006, 173-84 at p. 180.

²⁴ *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066*, ed. M. Fauroux, Caen 1961, no. 33.

²⁵ Crosby, *King's bishops*, 245. The donation of land for the purpose of housing the new canons, which was made by Engelrand Oison (Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 5), whose family may well have been a cadet branch of the Talvas (see D. Power, *The Norman frontier in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries*, Cambridge 2004, 273), provides a good example of such ideas in practice.

²⁶ M. Chibnall, *The Normans*, Oxford 2000, 58; Burton, 'Chanoines réguliers', 483-5; Crosby, *King's bishops*, 76-7; J. A. Franklin, 'Augustinian and other canons' churches in Romanesque Europe: the significance of the aisleless cruciform plan', in J. A. Franklin, T. A. Heslop and C. Stevenson (eds), *Architecture and interpretation: essays for Eric Fernie*, Woodbridge 2012, 78-98 at 90-1. For the suggestion that the establishment of Augustinian canons in urban centres was perhaps part of a larger

policy by which Henry I tried to maintain order there see Mayr-Harting, *Religion, politics and society*, 179.

²⁷ Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 1.

²⁸ The claim is made by Arnulf of Lisieux in a letter sent to the pope in around 1161: *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, no. 34.

²⁹ Orderic xii.35 (Chibnall edn at vi. 340).

³⁰ Peltzer, *Canon law*, 115-20.

³¹ It was thanks to his intervention that the possession of the church of Saint-Julien-sur-Sarthe (Orne, cant. Pervençhères) was confirmed, while it was by his gift that the chapter came to enjoy the important revenues of the Crucifix altar: Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, nos 6 (incorrectly dated by the editor to 1154), 8.

³² Combalbert, 'Formation et déclin', 35.

³³ Garin is commemorated in the necrology of Saint-Victor: *Obituaires de la province de Sens*, ed. A. Molinier, Paris 1902-9, i. pt. i. 551.

³⁴ For details see *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. M. Bouquet and others, Paris 1738-1904, xv. 696-7, no. 7. The prior mentioned in this letter is not named, but it is almost certainly Garin, who was still alive on 19 September 1143: *Gallia Christiana*, xi, instr. 162-3, no. 9.

³⁵ Peltzer, *Canon law*, 117.

³⁶ The chanter appears in five of the seven acts between c. 1082 and 1131 to survive with a witness list: *Cartulaire de Marmoutier pour le Perche*, ed. P. Barret, Mortagne 1894, nos 15, 19, 25; BES, MS non coté, fo. 15r-v [9r-v] (Cartulary of Saint-Martin de Sées, known as the Livre Blanc); AN, S 2238, no. 35. He is also known to have accompanied Bishop John to the abbey of Fontevraud in 1129: *Grand cartulaire de Fontevraud*, ed. J.-M. Bienvenu, Poitiers, 2000-5, i, no. 408.

³⁷ Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 6; ADC, 1 J 117, fo. 11v.

³⁸ ADO, 31 J 65/1, fos 334r-5v (act of Bishop Gerard for Saint-Martin de Sées and Lonlay).

³⁹ Peltzer, *Canon law*, 117.

⁴⁰ ADSM, 16 H 29 (act of Bishop Gerard dated 25 December 1155); ADC, 1 J 117, fo. 13v (act of Bishop Gerard dated 1155 x 1157); *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de la Sainte-Trinité de Tiron*, ed. L. Merlet, Chartres 1883, ii. 86, no. cccxiii (act of Bishop Froger dated 1159 x 1161). Henry is not, as suggested by David Spear, the same person as the archdeacon Henry de *Alneto*: D. Spear, *The personnel of the Norman cathedrals during the ducal period, 911-1204*, London 2006, 279.

⁴¹ ‘Decernimus quoque atque constituimus ut archidiaconi Sagiensis ecclesie de vobris fratribus et vostro capitulo vostroque consilio ab episcopo eligantur et beneficia et redditus et quidquid eis de archidiaconatu provenerit in vestros regulares usus atque communes redigantur’: Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, 317, no. 1.

⁴² The diocese of Sées was divided into five archdeaconries. That of Exmes seems to have originally taken its name from the village of Eraines, to the north-east of Falaise, and we have references throughout this period to the archdeacons of this circumscription as being both archdeacon of Eraines and archdeacon of Exmes. For discussion see R. Allen, ‘Mémoire et diplomatique: l'édition des actes des évêques de Sées (911-1220)’, *BSHAO* cxxxiii (2015 for 2014), 91-112 at pp. 106-107.

⁴³ Peltzer, *Canon law*, 117.

⁴⁴ For the identification of Roger as Gerard's brother see Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 9.

⁴⁵ *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, no. 3.

⁴⁶ For discussion see Allen, ‘Mémoire et diplomatique’, 105.

⁴⁷ His first datable appearance is 1128 (n. st.): *Cartulaire pour le Perche*, no. 25.

⁴⁸ The exception is an act for the abbey of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire: *Recueil des chartes de l'Abbaye de Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire*, ed. H. Stein, M. Prou and A. Vidier, Paris 1900-12, i, no. cxlvi.

⁴⁹ According to one of Gerard's acts, a copy of which was once found in the lost cartulary of Saint-Martin de Sées known as the Livre Rouge, the bishop was accompanied to Reims by the archdeacons William and Henry. The latter's name is rendered as *Honorius* in the only known copy of the act (ADO, 31 J 65/1, fos 334r-5v), but another mention confirms that he was in fact present (BN, MS Français 18953, p. 223).

⁵⁰ He appears in only two: Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 6; ADC, 1 J 117, fo. 13v. For the identification of his circumscription as that of Corbon see Allen, 'Mémoire et diplomatique', 109.

⁵¹ On the other hand, the size of the archdeaconry of Corbon, which was the smallest of the diocese, perhaps accounts for Hugh's absence. But as will be shown below, the archdeacons of Corbon did not always play such a minor role in the bishop's entourage.

⁵² Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 9. Pont-Audemer, Eure, chef-lieu de cant.

⁵³ BN, MS Latin 12681, fo. 209r (act of Bishop Gerard for the abbey of Pontlevoy).

⁵⁴ AN, S 2238, no. 35.

⁵⁵ Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 6; ADC, 1 J 117, fo. 13v; ADSM, 16 H 29.

⁵⁶ *Cartulaire pour le Perche*, nos 29, 29bis; ADSM, 16 H 29.

⁵⁷ The suggestion is also made by David Spear, *Personnel*, 290.

⁵⁸ Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 6 (misdated by the editor to 1154).

⁵⁹ The only other canon to figure among the witnesses of Gerard's acts is a certain William (ADC, 2 H 159), who may be the same as William de Pont-Audemer.

⁶⁰ *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, no. 34.

⁶¹ For these five see Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, nos 8, 9.

⁶² The act of 1153 is witnessed by the canons Simon, Engelrand, who was a member of the local Oison family (see Spear, *Personnel*, 286; for the Oison, see above n. 25), Hugh d'Eraines (Calvados, cant. Falaise-Sud), Ralph de la Forêt, Gerard de Moulins (probably Moulins-la-Marche, Orne, chef-lieu de cant.), Gilbert d'Avranches (Manche, chef-lieu de cant.), William de Fontaines, Gilbert de Neauphe (either Neauphe-sur-Dive, Orne, cant. Trun or Neauphe-sous-Essai, Orne, cant. Sées), William de Lonrai (Orne, cant. Alençon-1) and William des Aspres (Orne, cant. Moulins-la-Marche). Of the other five canons of this period, only the toponym of Garin de *Villa Duffusa* suggests an origin from outside Normandy.

⁶³ *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, 57, no. 34.

⁶⁴ For details see Peltzer, *Canon law*, 120-3.

⁶⁵ *Chronique de Robert de Torigni*, ii. 179.

⁶⁶ *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, nos 34-5. Froger's apparent association with the prebend of La Pommeraye (Calvados, cant. Lisieux-3, com. Saint-Désir) is suggested by the fact that his nephew John, archdeacon of Eraines/Exmes, became involved in a dispute over it during the reign of Pope Clement III (1187-91), that is, after the bishop's death. John is referred to as 'archdeacon of Sées' (*archidiaconus Sagiensis*) in the document resolving this dispute (*Corpus iuris canonici*, ed. E. Friedberg, Leipzig 1879-81, i. 212-3), but this is a reference to the diocese rather than the archdeaconry, since Silvester, later bishop of Sées, is known to have occupied the archdeaconry of Sées at this time (Allen, 'Mémoire et diplomatique', 106). David

Spear mistakenly identifies John as an archdeacon of Lisieux (Spear, *Personnel*, 178).

It is unclear why John would have otherwise had an interest in this land, which lay two kilometres to the northwest of Lisieux itself, unless he felt he had some claim to it through his uncle.

⁶⁷ C. Brooke, J. Denton and D. E. Greenway, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1066-1300, 11: Coventry and Lichfield*, London 2012, 38.

⁶⁸ *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, nos 33-5.

⁶⁹ *The correspondence of Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, 1162-1170*, ed. A. Duggan, Oxford 2000, ii. 1247, no. 296.

⁷⁰ *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, 61, no. 35.

⁷¹ *Decretales ineditae saeculi XII*, ed. W. Holtzmann, S. Chodorow and C. Duggan, Vatican City 1982, no. 24.

⁷² Crosby, *King's bishops*, 248-50.

⁷³ P. Gallagher, 'The monastery of Mortemer-en-Lyons in the twelfth century: its history and its cartulary', unpubl. PhD diss. University of Notre Dame 1970, 174, 180.

⁷⁴ Archives départementales de l'Eure, H 639. Roule, Eure, cant. Lyons-la-Forêt, com. Rosay-sur-Lieure.

⁷⁵ For discussion see J.-F. Petit, 'Professions canoniales d'évêques au XIIe siècle', *AP* xxxvii (1961), 232-42 at p. 237; *Die Viten Gottfrieds von Cappenberg*, ed. G. Niemeyer, I. Ehlers-Kisseler and V. Lukas (MGH SS rer. Germ. lxxiv, 2005), 66-7.

⁷⁶ *L'Obituaire de l'abbaye de Prémontré*, ed. R. Van Waefelghem, Louvain 1913, 174.

⁷⁷ E. Brouette, 'Notes extraites de l'obituaire de Silly', *AP* lvi (1980), 229-38 at p. 233.

⁷⁸ A. Degert, 'Le Nécrologe de Saint-Jean de la Castelle', *Bulletin de la Société de Borda* xlix (1925), 34-46 at p. 43. Froger is also commemorated in the necrologies of Arnstein, Bonne-Espérance, Braine, Breuil-Benoît (a Cistercian house), La Chapelle-aux-Planches and Parc: B. Krings, *Das Prämonstratenserstift Arnstein a.d. Lahn im Mittelalter (1139-1527)*, Wiesbaden 1990, 42 n. 17; E. Brouette, 'Obituaire de l'abbaye de Bonne-Espérance de l'ordre de Prémontré', *AP* xl (1964), 90-137 at p. 99; Idem, 'Obituaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Yved de Braine, publié avec une introduction, des notes et une table', *AP* xxxiv (1958), 274-337 at p. 310; *Gallia Christiana*, xi. 690; *Obituaires de Sens*, iv. 346. On learning of Froger's death, the Cistercian General Chapter ordered the celebration of three masses for the bishop's soul: *Twelfth-century statutes from the Cistercian General Chapter*, ed. C. Waddell, Brecht 2002, 719.

⁷⁹ Peltzer, *Canon law*, 123.

⁸⁰ John also appears alongside his uncle in an act of Rotrou, archbishop of Rouen (ADC, H 1842); in a notice concerning the priory of Saint-Vigor de Perrières (Ibid. 1 J 117, fo. 14); in two charters concerning the resolution of a conflict between the abbots of Troarn and Saint-André-en-Gouffern (Ibid. H 6593; Ibid. H 7840); and in act of William d'Abloville for Saint-Étienne de Caen (*Recueil des actes de Henri II, roi d'Angleterre et duc de Normandie*, ed. L. Delisle and E. Berger, Paris 1916-27, i, no. cccv).

⁸¹ *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, 57, no. 34.

⁸² The rules of poverty and common ownership observed by Augustinian canons would have served to greatly reduce the mobility of the archdeacons of Sées, since possessions such as a horse, vital to the carrying out of visitational duties, were to be held in common. Those later attempting to bypass such restrictions were ordered not to do so: *Regestrum visitationum archiepiscopi Rothomagensis. Journal des visites*

pastorales d'Eude Rigaud, archevêque de Rouen, ed. T. Bonnin, Rouen 1852, 80-1.

The career of Archdeacon John, who not only accompanied his uncle on both sides of the Channel, but also served as a royal representative to Rome during the Becket controversy (*Correspondence of Thomas Becket*, ii. 1052, no. 243), provides a good example of the sort of itinerant life an archdeacon was expected to live.

⁸³ 'Preterea provinciam nostram frequentibus monasteriis, ipsisque nobilibus, certum est habundare, canonicas regulares paucas habet, ipsasque pauperrimas, adeo ut ad querendum ordinem illum plerumque nostrates oporteat ad regiones extraneas demigrare': *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, 85, no. 47.

⁸⁴ Henry can still be seen occupying the two posts at the beginning of Froger's reign: *Cartulaire de Tiron*, ii. 86, no. cccxiii.

⁸⁵ Spear, *Personnel*, 276.

⁸⁶ John appears in only nine of Froger's acts, that is, less than 20% of those with a witness list.

⁸⁷ Between 1161, the apparent date of his replacement as prior, and 1169, his last known appearance in the historical record, Henry appears among the witnesses of eleven of Froger's acts. He is also named among the witnesses in a mention of a lost act for the abbey of Saint-Martin de Sées (ADO, 31 J 50, p. 1151) and among those of an act of the abbot of Troarn, which records a donation made in Froger's presence (Ibid. H 1995).

⁸⁸ BES, MS non coté, fos 83v-4r (Cartulary of the cathedral chapter of Sées, known as the Livre Rouge). Saint-Sauveur-de-Carrouges, Orne, cant. Carrouges; Pertheville-Ners, Calvados, cant. Falaise-Sud; Pussou, Orne, cant. Le Mêle-sur-Sarthe, com. Bursard.

⁸⁹ ADC, 2 D 1035 (act of Froger, dated Jan. 1161 and given *apud Floreium in domo a me emptā*). Marie Casset, unaware of this act, attributed the acquisition of the residence to Bishop Ivo de Bellême: M. Casset, *Les Évêques aux champs: châteaux et manoirs des évêques normands au Moyen Âge*, Caen 2007, 294-6.

⁹⁰ 'Froger, du consentement des chanoines, donna l'an 1180 l'église de Notre Dame de Belfond, celle de Saint Hillaire de Vieux Pont, avec les dixmes et ce qui en dependoit, et la terre Bretonne mouvante du fief de Hugues de Canai, et dix sols de rente a prendre sur le moulin d'Escures au prieur de l'hôpital de Sainte Croix de Sées et aux religieux qui y demeuroient: *procuratori hospitalis Sanctae Crucis Sagiensis ejusque fratribus communem vitam professis*. Ex tit. cap. Sag.': ADO, 31 J 18, fo. 253v. Belfonds, Orne, cant. Sées; Vieux-Pont, Orne, cant. Écouché.

⁹¹ *Chronique de Robert de Torigni*, ii. 130. This statement is in part confirmed by an analysis of the chapter's possessions: Bidou, 'Réforme de Sées', 23-6.

⁹² *Obituaires de Sens*, i. pt. i. 584.

⁹³ Desportes, Foucher, Loddé and Vallière, *Diocèse de Sées*, 28.

⁹⁴ The chanter appears thirty-seven times in the acts of the bishops of Coutances during the ducal period, while at Avranches they appear frequently (fifty-three attestations), often at the head of the witness list (twenty-one examples under Bishops Richard l'Évêque and William I Burel): R. Allen, 'Les Actes des évêques d'Avranches, ca. 990-1253: esquisse d'un premier bilan', *Tabularia 'Études'* xii (2012), 63-106 at p. 87.

⁹⁵ BN, MS Latin 11055, fos 123v-4r nos 255-6 (witnessed by the canons William des Aspres and William de la Chapelle); ADC, 2 H 153/1 (witnessed by the canon Herbert de Bérus); BN, MS Latin 12681, fo. 209v (witnessed by the canon William). Froger appears among the witnesses of a notice for the priory of Saint-Vigor de Perrières, the

only known and badly damaged copy of which also includes the attestation of an individual whose name might be reconstituted as *W(i)ll(elmus) de L[onr]eio* (ADC, 1 J 117, fo. 14). This is perhaps the canon William de Lonrai mentioned in the act of 1153 noted above (n. 62).

⁹⁶ Herbert, Henry and Roger are all named among the witnesses of a lost act: ADO, 31 J 50, p. 1151. Henry also appears in one act just as prior (BN, MS Latin 11055, fo. 127v no. 268) and in another as prior and archdeacon (*Cartulaire de Tiron*, ii. 86, no. cccxiii).

⁹⁷ John's last precisely datable mentions are from Aug. 1190: C. Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, Cambridge, MA 1918, app. J, nos 18, 19.

⁹⁸ The last precisely datable mention of Roger is from 1168 (*Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Notre-Dame de la Trappe*, ed. M. le comte de Charency, Alençon 1889, 194-5, no. xv), while that of Henry is from 1169 (*Cartulaire des abbayes de Saint-Pierre de la Couture et de Saint-Pierre de Solesmes*, ed. Bénédictins de Solesmes, Le Mans 1881, 87, no. xcviij).

⁹⁹ ADC, H 6550.

¹⁰⁰ ADO, H 1957.

¹⁰¹ ADSM, 16 H 29.

¹⁰² Corbon was the smallest of the Sées archdeaconries. Only one church in the archdeaconry belonged to the chapter: Bidou, 'Réforme de Sées', 30.

¹⁰³ It would not be unreasonable to suggest that Herbert was the 'little nephew' (*nepotulus*) who Arnulf of Lisieux claimed Froger was trying to appoint to an archdeaconry vacant in 1161: *Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, 62, no. 35.

¹⁰⁴ G. Bry, *Histoire des pays, et comté du Perche et duché d'Alençon*, Paris 1620, 199.

Of Herbert's other appearances, all but five took place alongside the archdeacons Roger and Henry, that is, before their apparent deaths towards the end of the 1160s.

¹⁰⁵ The next mention of an archdeacon of Bellême dates from the reign of Bishop Lisiard: ADC, H 6551 (21).

¹⁰⁶ Of the forty-seven of Froger's acts with a witness list, around 60% (twenty-eight acts) include the attestation of one of these six men.

¹⁰⁷ R. Allen, 'Episcopal *acta* in Normandy, 911-1204: the charters of the bishops of Avranches, Coutances and Sées', *ANS* xxxvii (2015), 25-51.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, the households of the archbishops of Canterbury (A. Saltman, *Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury*, London 1956, 214-16; *English Episcopal Acta 2: Canterbury 1162-1190*, ed. C. R. Cheney and B. Jones, Oxford 1991, pp. xxiii-xxix), or those of the bishops of Norwich (*English Episcopal Acta 6: Norwich 1070-1214*, ed. C. Harper-Bill, Oxford 1990, pp. xliii-xlv) and Durham (*English Episcopal Acta 24: Durham, 1153-1195*, ed. M. G. Snape, Oxford 2002, pp. xxxix-li).

¹⁰⁹ M. Arnoux and C. Maneuvrier, *Deux abbayes de Basse-Normandie: Notre-Dame du Val et Le Val-Richer (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)*, Flers 2001, 27-8, no. 4; ADC, H 4102; Ibid. H 6550; ADO, H 1433; Ibid. 31 J 50, p. 1151; Ibid. 31 J 76/2, pp. 615-16.

¹¹⁰ *Chartes de l'Abbaye de Jumièges (v. 825 à 1204) conservées aux archives de la Seine-Inférieure*, ed. J.-J. Vernier, Rouen 1916, i, no. lxxxii; ADC, H 6550; Archives départementales d'Eure-et-Loir, H 56. Daniel also appears alongside Froger among the witnesses of acts of Gilbert, abbot of Troarn (1149-c. 1178) and Simon, abbot of Saint-André-en-Gouffern (1171-1179): ADC, H 6593; Ibid. H 7840.

¹¹¹ For Froger's acts in favour of Sainte-Barbe see ADC, 2 D 66; Ibid. 2 D 1035; ADO, H 2081.

¹¹² The manor of Beckford (formerly Gloucestershire, now Worcestershire) was given to the priory of Sainte-Barbe by Rable le Chambrier at the moment of its foundation. For its early history see H. B. Clarke, 'Evesham J and Evesham L: two early twelfth-century manorial surveys', *ANS* xxx (2007), 62-84 at pp. 73-8; J. Barrow, 'Waystations on English episcopal itineraries', *English Historical Review* cxxvii (2012), 549-65 at pp. 559, 562.

¹¹³ BN, MS Latin 9212, fo. 4 no. 31.

¹¹⁴ For discussion see Allen, 'Episcopal *acta* in Normandy', 48.

¹¹⁵ Peltzer, *Canon law*, 123. Lisiard was not, as David Spear claims, the provost of the church of Saint-Pierre-Aigle (Spear, *Personnel*, 274). This is Lisiard, bishop of Soissons (d. c. 1126).

¹¹⁶ Peltzer, *Canon law*, 124 n. 246.

¹¹⁷ Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 2.

¹¹⁸ BES, MS non coté, fos 63r-5r, 76r (Cartulary of the cathedral chapter of Sées, known as the Livre Rouge).

¹¹⁹ Bidou, 'Réforme de Sées', 26.

¹²⁰ BES, MS non coté, fo. 78r (Cartulary of the cathedral chapter of Sées, known as the Livre Rouge).

¹²¹ The earliest mentions of this event are found in manuscripts dating to the eighteenth century: 'Liziard, évêque de Séez, revêtit en 1194 les frères qui gouvernaient cette léproserie de l'habit de St Augustin auxquels il donna pour prieur Robert de Linière, tiré apparemment du corps des chanoines de la cathédrale': Th. Calimas, *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire du diocèse de Séez*, Archives diocésaines de Sées, MS non coté, 196; 'L'année suivante [1194] l'évêque de Sées donne l'habit regulier de S. Augustin a *Livicus* prieur et aux religieux de la leproserie de Chatrage

[sic]': ADO, 31 J 43, p. 143. The source of this information, which is repeated as much by antiquarians as modern scholars (L.-J. Fret, *Antiquités et chroniques percheronnes: ou recherches sur l'histoire civile, religieuse, monumentale, politique et littéraire de l'ancienne province du Perche, et pays limitrophes*, Mortagne 1838-40, iii. 36; H. Marais, *Essai historique sur la cathédrale et le chapitre de Sées*, Alençon 1876, 76; Loddé, 'Histoire d'un chapitre', 243; Desportes, Foucher, Loddé and Vallière, *Diocèse de Sées*, 5), is unfortunately unclear.

¹²² Members of the Le Mans chapter occasionally appear among the witnesses of the bishop's acts: ADC, H 6551 (11), (18). Lisiard also established an income for celebrating the anniversary of William de Passavant, bishop of Le Mans (1143-87), in the cathedral of Sées: BES, MS non coté, fo. 78r (Cartulary of the cathedral chapter of Sées, known as the Livre Rouge).

¹²³ The earliest mention of this possession dates from the reign of Lisiard's successor: *Cartulaire du prieuré de saint-Hippolyte de Vivoin et de ses annexes*, ed. L.-J. Denis, Paris 1894, 86, no. lxxii.

¹²⁴ Of the forty-three of Lisiard's acts to survive with a witness list, only four contain the attestation of a member of the chapter: Archives départementales de l'Eure, H 70 (witnessed by Prior John); BN, MS Latin 11055, fos 119r-20r no. 242 (witnessed by Prior William); ADC, H 6510, fos 28v-9r no. 117 (witnessed by the canon William de la Chapelle), 38r-v no. 148 (witnessed by the canon Benedict). The canon Andreas, who David Spear identified as a member of the Sées chapter (Spear, *Personnel*, 286), was most likely a canon of the Premonstratensian abbey of Saint-Jean de Falaise, next to whose abbot he appears in the witness list (ADC, H 6551 [19]).

¹²⁵ The archdeacons appear in only twelve of the forty-three of Lisiard's acts with a witness list (that is, 28%), compared to almost 85% of those of his two predecessors (50 of 59 acts).

¹²⁶ To cite but one example, the episcopal *acta* of Coutances show almost exactly the same pattern as those of Sées for a corresponding period. Here, the archdeacons feature in only 25% of the acts of Bishop William de Tournebu (c. 1183-1200/1), compared to almost 85% of those of his predecessor, Richard de Bohon (c. 1151-79). For further discussion see *Les Actes des évêques de Coutances de 1048 à 1208*, ed. R. Allen, in *Corpus des actes épiscopaux normands (XIe-XIIIe siècle)*, dir. G. Combalbert, V. Gazeau and others, édition papier et numérique, Presses universitaires de Caen, forthcoming.

¹²⁷ The absence of canons from among the witness lists means it is often difficult to identify members of the chapter during this period. When information does survive, however, it invariably points to very local origins. Thus, Martin Blandin, who was one of the canons involved in the disputed election of Bishop Silvester (Peltzer, *Canon law*, 125), was a member of a burgess family of Sées. His relatives Durand and Roger Blandin appear among the witnesses of the episcopal *acta* from 1153 onwards (Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 2, no. 6; ADO, 31 J 50, p. 1151; Ibid. H 963; ADSM, 16 H 373; for Roger, see also Livre Blanc of Saint-Martin, BES, MS non coté, fos 144r-v [124r-v], 147r [127r], 148v [128v]), while another, Nicolas, is described in 1193 as being the mayor (*maior*) of Sévilly (Orne, cant. and com. Sées) (Ibid. fo. 19v [13v]). Another still, Ralph, granted a house he owned in Sées to the abbey of Saint-André-en-Gouffern in 1220 (ADC, H 6683). See also below n. 141.

¹²⁸ For discussion, see Allen, 'Mémoire et diplomatique', 104.

¹²⁹ Sées is the only Norman diocese not to have a *magister* among its archdeacons. As for England, only the chapter at Carlisle, which was also Augustinian, seems not to have had an archdeacon with the title of *magister* before 1220: D. E. Greenway, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1066-1300, II, Monastic Cathedrals (Northern and Southern Provinces)*, London 1971, 23-5.

¹³⁰ The archdeacons of the diocese are known to have been delegated on only six occasions: *Päpstliche Delegationsgerichtsbarkeit in der Normandie: 12. und frühes 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. H. Müller, Bonn 1997, ii. nos 80 (Archdeacon Silvester of Sées), 87 (Archdeacon Silvester of Sées), 224 (the archdeacon of Corbon); *Liber controversiarum sancti Vincentii Cenomannensis, ou Second Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Vincent du Mans*, ed. A. Chedeville, Paris 1968, no. 130 (Archdeacon Silvester of Sées and Archdeacon John); Archives départementales d'Eure-et-Loir, H 4005 (Archdeacon William of Corbon); Livre Blanc of Saint-Martin, BES, MS non coté, fos 148r-v [128r-v] (Archdeacon William of Corbon). This is to be compared with the archdeacons of Coutances, a number of whom bore the title of *magister*, who were frequently delegated: *Päpstliche Delegationsgerichtsbarkeit*, ii. 63, no. 297b; 64, no. 304; 65, no. 305 and nos 83, 86, 126, 135, 150, 156, 217, 243; *Liber controversiarum*, no. 256; *Cartulaire de La Luzerne*, ed. F. Dubosc, Saint-Lô 1878, 46, no. liii.

¹³¹ Not only are archidiaconal *acta* extremely rare for this period (only six examples, plus one act issued by Auvray, abbot of Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives, in conjunction with John, archdeacon of Eraines/Exmes: ADC, 2 D 107), but the archdeacons also seldom appear among the witnesses of acts independently of the bishops. As was noted above (n. 82), the rules of poverty and common ownership observed by the chapter must have greatly hampered the archdeacons' abilities to fulfil their visitational duties.

¹³² The most striking examples come from the two largest archdeaconries of the diocese, namely Sées and Houlme. No archdeacon of the former can be identified between 1202 and 1295, while the occupants of the latter are unknown between 1194/5 and 1278: Desportes, Foucher, Loddé and Vallière, *Diocèse de Sées*, 68-9.

¹³³ For the careers of these individuals see Allen, 'Episcopal *acta* in Normandy', 49. Saint-Loyer-des-Champs, Orne, cant. Mortrée.

¹³⁴ This is Geoffrey, the bishop's nephew, who was instituted in the church of Sarceaux (Orne, cant. Argentan-Ouest), a possession of the abbey of Saint-Wandrille: ADSM, 16 H 373. Some of the bishop's other *acta* do concern the institution to benefices, including those belonging to the cathedral chapter (see, for example, ADO, 31 J 33, p. 180), but none of these individuals can be linked to Lisiard's ecclesiastical household in any way. For the suggestion that M. Geoffrey de Lamnay (Sarthe, cant. Montmirail), whose possession of a prebend was confirmed by the same bishop, was perhaps a member of his household see below n. 172.

¹³⁵ D. Spear, 'Power, patronage, and personality in the Norman cathedral chapters', *ANS* xx (1998), 205-21; J. Barrow, 'Origins and careers of cathedral canons in twelfth-century England', *Medieval Prosopography* xxi (2000), 23-40; Allen, 'Episcopal *acta* in Normandy', 48-50.

¹³⁶ The claim made by Everett Crosby that Bishop Lisiard endowed a canonry for his nephew Geoffrey is not substantiated by the source cited by this author (Crosby, *King's bishops*, 251). It is perhaps based on Spear's *fasti* of personnel, which lists Geoffrey as a probable canon (Spear, *Personnel*, 288). No evidence survives, however, to suggest that he was ever a member of the chapter.

¹³⁷ C. Harper-Bill, 'The struggle for benefices in twelfth-century East Anglia', *ANS* xi (1989), 112-32 at pp. 130-1; Barrow, 'Origins and careers', 39.

¹³⁸ Such circumstances are perhaps illustrated by the attempts of Lisiard's successor to institute Nicholas Berout, his chaplain, in the church of Cerisé (Orne, cant. Alençon-3) against the wishes of the monks of Saint-Martin de Sées, who wanted to insert their own candidate there. Unfortunately, only mentions of this act, a copy of which seems to have once been found in the lost Livre Rouge of Saint-Martin, now remain: ADO, 31 J 18, fo. 339; Ibid. 31 J 47, p. 219.

¹³⁹ The circumstances surrounding the election are meticulously reconstructed and analysed in Peltzer, *Canon law*, 123-33.

¹⁴⁰ Silvester's earliest dated appearance is from 1186: BES, MS non coté, fo. 51v [42bis v] (Cartulary of Saint-Martin de Sées, known as the Livre Blanc). He appears among the witnesses of an act of Bishop Froger concerning the abbeys of Le Val and Saint-Martin de Sées: Arnoux and Maneuvrier, *Deux abbayes*, 27-8, no. 4. The editors of the *Gallia Christiana* claim that Silvester established the anniversary of his uncle in the abbey of Tiron: *Gallia Christiana*, xi. 691-2.

¹⁴¹ An act of the bishop concerning the church of Aunou-sur-Orne (Orne, cant. Sées) reveals that he was the cousin (*consanguineus*) of John de Perron (Le Grand Perron, Orne, cant. Sées, com. Aunou-sur-Orne): BES, MS non coté, fo. 28 [21] (Cartulary of Saint-Martin de Sées, known as the Livre Blanc). The canon Ralph de *Merula* came either from Le Merlerault (Orne, chef-lieu de cant.) or Le Mêle-sur-Sarthe (Orne, chef-lieu de cant.). For Martin Blandin, who was also among those initially nominated to be bishop, see above n. 127. Another canon involved in the dispute, V. des Aspres (Orne, cant. Moulins-la-Marche), also had local roots.

¹⁴² *Die Register Innocenz' III*, ed. O. Hageneder and others, Rome 1964-2004, v. 125, no. 68.

¹⁴³ *PL* ccxvi. 620, no. 110.

¹⁴⁴ The demise of the witness list in Normandy, which had begun before 1200, was probably hastened by the end of Angevin rule there: M. Arnoux, 'Essor et déclin d'un type diplomatique: les actes passés *coram parrochia* en Normandie (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)', *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* cliv (1996), 323-57 at pp. 338-9.

¹⁴⁵ Bibliothèque municipale d'Alençon, MS 177, fo. 448; BES, MS non coté, fo. 77v (Cartulary of the cathedral chapter of Sées, known as the Livre Rouge); ADO, 31 J 15, fo. 6v.

¹⁴⁶ ADO, 31 J 76/5, pp. 64-5. Bursard, Orne, cant. Le Mêle-sur-Sarthe.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 31 J 76/4, pp. 1009-10. Valframbert, Orne, cant. Alençon-3.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. H 6, fos [12v-13r] (the only copy of this act incorrectly renders the name of the prior as *Garinus*).

¹⁴⁹ It is possible, however, that Silvester created a large clerical household to assist him in his administrations. At least seven of his acts concern the institution of individuals referred to by the bishop as 'our clerk' (*clericus noster*), among whom is William Acarin (*Charters and custumals of the Abbey of Holy Trinity Caen*, ed. M. Chibnall and J. Walmsley, Oxford 1982-94, ii. no. 8), later scribe of the Exchequer, although it is impossible to determine to what extent, if at all, these men were ever working members of the episcopal household. It also seems that Prior John had been replaced as official by 1217: BN, MS Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises 21659, p. 176.

¹⁵⁰ He attended the Council of Rouen in February 1214 (*Concilia Rotomagensis Provinciae*, ed. G. Bessin, Rouen 1717, 110) and the Fourth Lateran Council in November 1215 (J. Werner, 'Nachlese aus Zürcher Handschriften I. Die Teilnehmerliste des Laterankonzils v. J. 1215', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* xxxi (1906), 575-94 at p. 587). On 20 April 1208, he

convened a diocesan synod at Sées, where the constitutions of the cardinal Galon were repromulgated (*Concilia Rotomagensis*, pt. ii, 429).

¹⁵¹ Peltzer, *Canon law*, 133.

¹⁵² Becquet, 'Réforme des chapitres', 40.

¹⁵³ U. Vones-Liebenstein, 'L'expansion des chanoines réguliers dans la péninsule ibérique au XIIe siècle', in Parisse (ed.), *Chanoines réguliers*, 429-454 at p. 441.

¹⁵⁴ C. Henry and S. Morin, 'Saint Jean, dit de la Grille, abbé de Sainte-Croix de Guingampet, puis évêque de Saint-Malo (1144-1163)', *Mémoires de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Bretagne* lxxxix (2011), 39-58 at pp. 44-52.

¹⁵⁵ The chapter's foundation charter is addressed to 'Alberto archidiacono et priori': C. Henry, 'Les Actes des évêques bretons (début du XIe siècle-milieu du XIIe siècle). Étude diplomatique et édition critique', unpubl. thesis of the École des chartes, Paris 2010, iii, no. A37. I am extremely grateful to the author for sending me a copy of his thesis.

¹⁵⁶ For Albert's predecessors, whose last appearances date to 1136/7, see Ibid. i. 395. For an alternative, though unlikely, explanation of his origins, see Henry and Morin, 'Saint Jean, dit de la Grille', 48.

¹⁵⁷ Only five of John's acts are known: Henry, 'Actes des évêques bretons', iii, nos A35-A39. Those for the period after 1163, which are currently scattered across the archives of three modern French departments (Côtes-d'Armor, Ille-et-Vilaine and Le Morbihan), are in the process of being collected and edited by Cyprien Henry.

¹⁵⁸ John was succeeded by Albert (1163-84), former archdeacon and prior. His successor, Peter (1184-1213), had previously been a canon at the cathedral of Rennes: *Gallia Christiana*, xiv. 1002-4.

¹⁵⁹ Henry and Morin, 'Saint Jean, dit de la Grille', 47.

¹⁶⁰ By the fourteenth century, the diocese of Sées included 493 parishes, a figure three times that of Saint-Malo (162 parishes). The relative poverty of those southern dioceses with reformed chapters has been seen as an element in their success (Becquet, 'Réforme des chapitres', 40), a factor that may have also contributed to the apparently smooth implementation of the reform at Saint-Malo. For poverty and the reform of cathedral chapters in the Iberian peninsula see above n. 153.

¹⁶¹ For discussion see J. Becquet, 'L'Évolution des chapitres cathédraux: régularisations et sécularisations', *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* xxiv (1989), 19-39; Y. Veyrenche, 'Chanoines et réformes canoniales dans les pays rhodaniens', *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* xlviii (2013), 419-43 at pp. 423-6; B. Meijns, 'Les chanoines réguliers dans l'espace flamand', in Parisse (ed.), *Chanoines réguliers*, 455-76 at pp. 468-71.

¹⁶² Spear, 'Power, patronage', 205-21; Barrow, 'Origins and careers', 35-6. It was not unknown, however, for members of a bishop's family to remain in Sées following the death of the prelate. Thus, Guy, another nephew of Bishop Lisiard, was granted land by the abbot of Saint-Martin de Sées in 1213: BES, MS non coté, fo. 158v [138v] (Cartulary of Saint-Martin de Sées, known as the Livre Blanc).

¹⁶³ For discussion see C. Fonge, 'Patriarchy and patrimony: investing in the medieval college', in P. Hoskin, C. Brooke and B. Dobson (eds), *The foundations of medieval English ecclesiastical history: studies presented to David Smith*, Woodbridge 2005, 77-93.

¹⁶⁴ *Bernhard von Clairvaux: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. G. Winkler and others, Innsbruck 1990-9, iii. 142, no. ccxlviii.

¹⁶⁵ 'Chronique de Sainte-Barbe-en-Auge', in Arnoux, *Clercs de la réforme*, app. 1, 283. For discussion of the conflicting evidence concerning Gerard's relationship with

the reforming prelate Hugh of Amiens, archbishop of Rouen, see Combalbert, 'Formation et déclin', 35-7.

¹⁶⁶ Archdeacon Hubert, for example, whose status as a secular is confirmed by the papal account of the disputed elected of Bishop Silvester (*Die Register Innocenz' III*, v. 130, no. 68), served as royal proctor in Rome in 1216 (D. Spear, 'Additions and corrections to David S. Spear, *The personnel of the Norman cathedrals during the ducal period, 911-1204* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2006)', *Tabularia* forthcoming). He is also one of the few archdeacons for whom the text of one his *acta* survives: BN, MS Latin lat. 11055, fos 181v-2r no. 538.

¹⁶⁷ Neveux, 'Ville de Sées', 145.

¹⁶⁸ M. Dosdat, 'Les Évêques de la province de Rouen et la vie intellectuelle au XI^e siècle', in Bouet and Neveux (eds), *Les Évêques normands*, 223-52 at pp. 231-3.

¹⁶⁹ Desportes, Foucher, Loddé and Vallière, *Diocèse de Sées*, 21.

¹⁷⁰ Eighteen people only are attributed the title of *magister* in the list of Sées personnel compiled by David Spear (*Personnel*, 271-98), of whom only two can be definitively linked to the cathedral, namely M. Aimarius, who is to be identified with Aimarius, clerk of Bishop Lisiard (ADSM, 16 H 373), a connection unknown to Spear, and M. Garin of Coutances. At least two others probably never had any association with Sées (M. Nicholas de l'Aigle and M. Hugh Nereth), while M. Ranulf de Falaise was not a canon of the cathedral, but of the Premonstratensian abbey of Saint-Jean de Falaise (he witnesses in all instances as 'Master Ranulf canon of Falaise': ADC, H 6551 [7], [16]; Ibid. H 6510, fos 39v-40r no. 156). Although the corpus of episcopal *acta* contains the names of a number of *magistri* unknown to Spear, only one, namely M. Jordan, chaplain of Bishop John, can be associated with the cathedral (AN, S 2238, no. 35). This stands in stark contrast to circumstances in

neighbouring dioceses such as Bayeux and Coutances, where the number of *magistri* among the canons alone is, respectively, twenty-two and fourteen.

¹⁷¹ None of the priors of Carlisle identified for the period up to 1300 bear the title of *magsiter* (Greenway, *Fasti, II, Monastic Cathedrals*, 21-3). The same is true for those few canons who can be found in the episcopal *acta* or elsewhere (*English Episcopal Acta 30: Carlisle 1133-1292*, ed. D. Smith, Oxford 2005, nos 31, 169n; *The Lanercost cartulary (Cumbria County Record Office MS DZ/1)*, ed. J. M. Todd, Gateshead 1997, nos 54, 298). Members of the chapter of Holy Trinity, Dublin, are identified by name in a number of the cathedral's calendared deeds, including a document that gives the names of the prior and eleven canons, but none are ever accorded the title *magister* (*Christ Church deeds*, ed. M. J. McEnery and R. Refaüssé, Dublin 2001, nos 8, 9, 15, 24, 64, 90, 96, 103, 105, 113, 137, 164, 468, 480-1, 483, 486, 489), despite the fact that recruitment to the chapter seems to have extended well beyond the confines of Ireland (S. Kinsella, 'From Hiberno-Norse to Anglo-Norman, c. 1030–1300', in K. Milne (ed.), *Christ Church cathedral, Dublin: a history*, Dublin 2000, 25-52 at pp. 47-52). John of Sandford, who was elected archbishop of Dublin in 1284, is known to have acquired a master's degree (probably at Oxford), but he was not chosen from among the canons, ascending to the episcopate instead from the deanery of St Patrick's (*Christ Church deeds*, no. 139). As for Whithorn, very little documentary evidence survives for this diocese, but the names of the prior and twenty canons are recorded in an act of 1235, none of whom bear the title of *magister* (J. Raine, *The historians of the church of York and its archbishops*, London 1879-94, iii, 146-148). Finally, of the more than forty members of the St Andrews chapter catalogued in the *People of medieval Scotland, 1093-1314* (PoMS) database, only the prior Henry of

Norham (*fl.* 1227/8-1236) is known to have been called *magister* (PoMS, no. 3786 [<http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/person/3786/>; accessed 8 July 2014]).

¹⁷² For the *magistri* among the household of the bishops of St Andrews see N. Shead, ‘Compassed about with so great a cloud: the witnesses of Scottish episcopal *acta* before ca 1250’, *Scottish Historical Review* lxxxvi (2007), 159-75 at p. 167. The archdeacons of the diocese, who were seculars, also counted graduates among their ranks, as did the chapter's Culdee community, whose members were later developed into a collegiate body: G. W. S. Barrow, ‘The cathedral chapter of St Andrews and the Culdees in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries’, this JOURNAL iii (1952), 23-39 at pp. 28-9, 34. For masters among the chapter of St Patrick's, Dublin, see *Christ Church deeds*, nos 30, 52, 136, 137, 150, 483. At Sées, the number of *magistri* among the witnesses increases across the period (20% of acts before 1187/8; 53% for the period 1187/8-1201), but only a handful, such as M. Aimarius, who served as Bishop Lisiard's clerk, can be linked to the episcopal entourage. Others, however, such as M. Ernald de Suré (Orne, cant. Pervençères), who appears frequently among the witnesses of Froger's acts (ADC, H 6510, fo. 25, no. 104; ADO, H 2170, no. 37; Ibid. 31 J 50, p. 1151; Ibid. 31 J 76/2, pp. 615-6; Bry, *Histoire du Perche*, 199), or the subdeacon M. Geoffrey de Lamnay, who regularly attests those of Bishop Lisiard (ADC, H 6510, fo. 39v, no. 155; Ibid. H 6551 [10], [14]; Ibid. 2 H 159; BES, MS non coté, fo. 84v), perhaps served the bishops in some way, even if such a relationship is never made explicit. If this was the case, then M. Geoffrey is one of the few members of the episcopal household who can be linked with an act of patronage, since in 1190 Bishop Lisiard confirmed his possession of the prebend of Rouvres (Calvados, cant. Bretteville-sur-Laize), which he had been given by the prior of Sainte-Barbe-en-Auge (ADC, 2 D 1035). Lisiard had contested the initial grant of this prebend to Sainte-

Barbe (*Päpstliche Delegationsgerichtsbarkeit*, ii, no. 82), which had been made by the archbishop of Rouen during the vacancy following Froger's death, and it is possible that he only relented on condition that he could present his own man to the prebend.

¹⁷³ For discussion with regards to the later Middle Ages and with references to work carried out so far for the whole period see J. G. Clark, 'Why men became monks in late medieval England', in P. H. Cullum and K. J. Lewis (eds), *Religious men and masculine identity in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge 2013, 160-83. For discussion of recruitment patterns at a specific Augustinian house see Mayr-Harting, *Religion, politics and society*, 175-6.

¹⁷⁴ B.-M. Tock, 'Quelle diplomatique des chanoines réguliers au XIIe siècle ?', in Parisse (ed.), *Chanoines réguliers*, 345-58.

¹⁷⁵ C. Flight, 'John II, bishop of Rochester, did not exist', *English Historical Review* cvi (1991), 921-31; M. Brett, 'The church at Rochester, 604-1185', in N. Yates (ed.) with P. A. Welsby, *Faith and fabric: a history of Rochester Cathedral, 604-1994*, Woodbridge 1996, 1-28 at p. 24.

¹⁷⁶ Besides the act of reform itself, the texts of only three of John's acts have come down to us: *Cartulaire pour le Perche*, no. 25 (act for Marmoutier, dated 1128, n. st.); G. Babinet de Rencogne and P. de Farcy, 'Chartes saintongeaises de l'abbaye de La Couronne', *Archives historiques de la Saintonge et de l'Aunis* vii (1880), 17-284 at pp. 32-4, no. iv (act for La Couronne, dated 1129); AN, S 2238, no. 35 (act for Saint-Denis, s.d., but probably before 1131). For the mention see the following note.

¹⁷⁷ 'Jean, eveque de Sées, donna et confirma, a la priere de Hugon, archeveque de Rouen et [de] Rotrou, eveque d'Evreux, a Radulphe, abbé de St Leufroy et [à] ses successeurs, l'eglise de [St] Patern de Tournay, avec les dixmes et dependances, a l'exception de la chapelle de Guillaume, seigneur de Tournay, et ses dependances, et

de la portion du dixme appartenante a l'eglise matrice. Temoins Guillaume de Asnes, archidiacre, et autres. Pilatre, t. 3. Ex tit. ejusdem abb.': ADO, 31 J 87/2, fo. 71. The act is dated 2 July 1139 x 1144, that is, by the consecration of Rotrou, bishop of Évreux, and the death of Bishop John. The first precisely datable mention of Ralph, abbot of La Croix-Saint-Leufroy, comes from 1143: V. Gazeau, *Normannia monastica (Xe-XIe siècle)*, Caen 2007, ii. 88.