

New Light on the Expulsion of the Jewish Community from England in 1290

Paul Brand

All Souls College, University of Oxford

I

Among the many undated petitions contained in the class of Ancient Petitions in The National Archives at Kew is one from the Abbot and convent of the Benedictine house of Reading in Berkshire. It is addressed to an unnamed king (who is evidently Edward I) and to his council, and it is in a fairly ornate Latin, which sometimes makes it difficult to understand.¹ It complains of an 'unheard of deception' (*seduccione inaudita*) which certain persons (*quidam*) have 'brought and shown'. Certain persons have made certain bonds (*quedam instrumenta obligatoria*) under the forged seals of the Abbot and convent. There are three of these bonds. One states that the Abbot and convent owe a 'certain' Jew (*cuidam judeo*) one hundred sacks of wool, each sack worth £10. The second states that the Abbot and convent have acknowledged that they owe a 'certain' Jew (*cuidam judeo*) four hundred quarters of wheat, each quarter worth half a mark. The third acknowledges that the Abbot and convent have taken into their keeping (*in deposito*) £300 in sterling and other gold and silver jewels, but the petition does not say who had deposited them. The Abbot and convent add that some of their men (*quosdam de suis*) had seen these three bonds, and at the end of the main body of the petition we learn that they had been seen and shown (*visa ... et ostensa*) to the abbey's agents by Gilbert Pinzon, who lives in the town of Reading, and Thomas Hykon, who lives in the town of Wallingford. The request is for a remedy to ensure that the Abbot and convent will not be harmed since they may suffer unbearable loss from these or other like bonds (*in hiis vel consimilibus*). The request is made to the King as the promoter of equity and justice and punisher of deception and wrongdoing. The petition offers to provide further details, if required, through some advisers to the Abbot 'who are present'. The endorsements on the petition show that it was referred to a hearing before the king (*coram rege*) and that what was then authorised was a writ from chancery and, more specifically, a writ to bring proceedings in King's Bench and that the writ was to be sued in the King's name and ordered the sheriff to produce the bodies of (unnamed) persons there. Nothing is said in either the petition or the endorsement about parliament but the form of address and the endorsed note suggesting that it was referred to a hearing before the King are both typical of petitions submitted to parliament in Edward's reign.²

1 TNA, SC 8/68, no. 3376: transcribed in full in Appendix, no. I.

2 Paul Brand, 'Petitions and Parliament in the Reign of Edward I', in *Parchment and People: Parliament in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Linda Clark (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the Parliamentary History Yearbook Trust, 2004), pp. 14-38, at pp. 25-7, 36-7.

The sequel to this petition is an entry on the King's Bench plea roll for Easter term 1290, enrolled as belonging to two or three weeks after Easter (16-30 April).³ This begins with a summary version of the writ that had been issued under the authority of the endorsed petition to the sheriff of Berkshire. It starts with a rather different perspective than that given in the petition on the reasons for the King's intervention: that the abbey had been founded by the King's progenitors and so the King wished to ensure its indemnity and the preservation of its property. It went on to spell out that it had been the abbey's chamberlain, brother William of Sutton, to whom Gilbert Pinzon and Thomas Hykon had shown the forged documents under the false seals. It also now specified for the first time that the Jews to whom the Abbot and convent were said to be obliged under the bonds were Jacob of Oxford, the son of master Moses of London, and Saunte of Winchester.⁴ The writ ordered the production of both the bodies of Gilbert and Thomas and the allegedly false bonds before the King on 'this' day (either two weeks or three weeks after Easter). The Abbot had also been given the same day by the King (perhaps the King in person) 'to do and receive' (*ad faciendum et recipiendum*) what the King's court should adjudge. If I am right in supposing that this was the result of an earlier petition submitted to parliament it suggests that the initial petition had been submitted at the first of the three parliaments held in 1290, beginning early in January and running through to late February, since the second Easter parliament itself only opened in the third week after Easter. Gilbert and Thomas duly appeared early in Easter term 1290, as did the Abbot, but only through an attorney.⁵ The Abbot's attorney started off proceedings by saying when and where Gilbert and Thomas had shown the chamberlain the three bonds. This had been on 3 January 1290 in the house of Alice the widow of Alexander de Estans⁶ at Wallingford. The enrolment then gives a full transcript of their content, presumably from transcripts made then or soon after (the sequel shows that they are not transcribed from the forged bonds themselves). They are curious documents and they look quite unlike most, if not all, Jewish bonds of this period. None is dated. The first is in the name of the convent alone; the second in the name of the Abbot but he is said to be acting with the consent of his convent (and the bond is said to be sealed by both); the third is in the name of the Abbot and convent (and is again sealed by both). All use the same initial greeting clause. The first is an obligation to Saunte, described as a

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- 3 TNA, KB 27/123, mm. 6-6d; transcribed in full in Appendix, no. II. The enrolment is calendared from cartulary copies (but with no connexion drawn with the original) in *Reading Abbey Cartularies: British Library Manuscripts, Egerton 3031, Harley 1708, and Cotton Vespasian E XXV*, ed. by B. R. Kemp, 2 vols (London: Camden fourth series 31, 33, 1986-7), i, no. 234, pp. 195-200. Kemp gives a full transcript of the three forged bonds.
 - 4 Jacob of Oxford had died in 1277: Cecil Roth, *The Jews of Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, new series 9, 1951), p. 76. Saunte of Winchester was probably also dead.
 - 5 Perhaps the Peter of Campden who appears at a later stage in the proceedings.
 - 6 alias Alice of Sandwich (see below).

Jew of Winchester but then living at Caversham, across the river from Reading. The second and third are bonds to Jacob of Oxford, the son of master Moses of London. The second purports to be an acknowledgement of the Abbot's receipt into the treasury of his house on deposit of £300 in cash and £30 of Florentine money (florins) plus a gold cup (weighing fourteen lbs), twelve gold spoons (each weighing thirty-two pence), one silver alms dish (weighing twenty lbs) and two *barilla barres de ore de mugat*. It also purports to record a promise on oath by the Abbot to conceal this deposit from both the King and Queen and that the money and valuables would not be handed over to anyone except to Jacob himself or his wife Henna or his messenger bearing the bond. Even more curiously, for a Jewish deed, the abbot is said to concede that if he fails to observe these terms he would incur excommunication, from which he could only be absolved by the Pope. The other two are debt obligations. The first is for the large quantity of four hundred quarters of wheat worth half a mark each, with each quarter consisting of eight bushels; the third for one hundred sacks of good wool without *cot et gard*, with each sack worth ten pounds. In both cases payment was to be made at the house of the Jew concerned: to Saunte in his house at Caversham at Michaelmas 1276 and to Jacob in his house at London, half at Michaelmas 1277 and half at Easter 1278. They both have similar clauses about the transport of the commodities being the responsibility of the debtor but the creditor having the choice of taking a cash payment instead. Both also have similar clauses about the refunding of any expenses incurred by the creditor on a default and his being believed on his word alone and about the sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire having power to compel payment. More strangely, both also have similar penalty clauses under which King Edward (*Edwardus rex*) is to have £10 *pro quolibet restrictu* (apparently for each failure to pay, though this usage is not one otherwise found in England), the sheriff of Oxfordshire to have sixty or one hundred shillings and the Holy Land ten marks. Both also talk of obliging the lands and chattels of the house for payment. Only the first has another curious clause about renouncing all cavillations that might harm the *stadeum* of Saunte and conceding that the debtor can be excommunicated with candles lit and bells ringing. This also seems an unlikely phrase for a bond in favour of a Jewish debtor.

The court then set about examining those involved. The first to be questioned was the Abbey's chamberlain, brother William of Sutton. His testimony shows that it had all begun almost two years before, on St James's day (25 July) 1288, an important feast day for an Abbey with a relic of the hand of St James. Gilbert had come to him and told him that the house was much burdened with Jewish debt (*multum fuit onerata in Iudaismo*). William had told him that if he could help him in freeing his house he would be well rewarded. Gilbert had asked for forty marks for his help. The chamberlain had given at most an equivocal answer: that he might deserve that much for this business. Gilbert had at once, it seems, shown the chamberlain transcripts of two of the writings. Then nothing seems to have happened for a year and a half until William met up with Gilbert and Thomas in Alice's house in Wallingford in January 1290. It was Thomas who then extracted,

apparently from his purse, a box with the two sealed writings. They were checked with the transcripts the chamberlain had originally seen. Thomas was asked if he had any more writings. He said that he had one more which he fetched from his own house and showed William. The chamberlain was not allowed to take any of them away. Eight days later another monk, brother Alan, came to Wallingford with the Abbot's clerk, Peter, with orders from the Abbot and met up with Gilbert. This time the writings were shown to the monk and the clerk in the presence of an unnamed Jew and they were allowed to take one of the writings to show their Abbot after providing assurances for its safe return. They gave it back within the week. Brother Alan and Peter the clerk on examination agreed with the latter part of William's testimony.

Next to be examined were Thomas and Gilbert. Thomas was the first to mention the name of the Jew who had come to the house of Alice⁷ at Wallingford. He was Josce of Newbury. Thomas said that Josce had handed the three bonds over to him in an unsealed box but Thomas had not known their content. He had subsequently handed them over to brother William of Sutton and brother John Gerard, monks of Reading, who had copied the writings and then handed them back to him. He had returned them to Josce. The second encounter had been in the house of William de la Wike in Wallingford and this time Josce had been present at the meeting. He confirmed that Josce had only allowed one of the three writings to be carried away but did not know if it had been returned. When asked if he had received any payment from Josce for his part in the business he denied doing so and cited as the motive for his involvement favour for the Abbot who was his lord and from whom he held. Gilbert differed only in one small detail from this. The court held that what they had said implicated them. Thomas admitted having been in seisin of the writings and had received them from Josce. The court was not certain that they had ever been handed back to Josce. Gilbert was also his partner in the matter. So the court placed on them the responsibility for suing a writ to arrest Josce for appearance on the morrow of St John the Baptist (25 June 1290 or a little later) to 'do and receive' what was adjudged by the court. Gilbert and Thomas were in the meanwhile released on mainprise.

At this point the narrative of the proceedings becomes less clear and is, perhaps, in part defective. In June 1290 when the Abbot's attorney appears he is recorded as requesting that he may prove the writings false by the collation of the seals or otherwise and is adjourned to a month after Michaelmas. So is William of Carleton, who is said to be suing on behalf of the king. The 'said' William (apparently William of Carleton) is told to have the 'writings' there. This is the first evidence to suggest that the forged bonds were by this time in official custody. Presumably this is in turn linked to the arrest of Josce of Newbury. The roll notes laconically that nothing is entered concerning the 'Jews' (now in the plural)

7 He calls her 'Alice of Sandwich' however.

because the king has assigned John of Cobham and William of Carleton as his justices for their trial and they are in the Tower of London. No such commission is enrolled on the Patent Rolls but there are two commissions there for the trial of Josce of Newbury and Isaac of Poulet (of Pawlett) for counterfeiting the seals of the Abbot of Reading and sealing false writings with Jews for large sums of money and other felonies. One was indeed issued to John of Cobham (a baron of the exchequer) but his fellow-justice on this commission was not Carleton but Ralph of Sandwich, the constable of the Tower of London. It seems to have been issued sometime between 21 June and 8 July 1290.⁸ This commission seems later (between 16 and 20 July) to have been superseded by another commission issued to Ralph of Sandwich, Gregory of Rokesley and the (unnamed) justices of the Jews (William of Carleton and Peter of Leicester).⁹ This commission included Carleton but not Cobham.

A composite register associated with Reading abbey now in the University Library in Cambridge gives us what seems to be a copy of the record of the trial of Josce of Newbury before this second group of justices at the Tower and suggests that it did not take place until 23 October, that is shortly before the date set for the Expulsion of the Jewish community from England (1 November 1290).¹⁰ The charge against Josce was of making seals in the name of the Abbot and convent of Reading and of making three false bonds. Josce put himself on a mixed jury of Christians and Jews. If the copy is to be trusted it consisted of only ten jurors, of whom no more than four were Christians. The jury verdict was that Josce had not forged either the writings or the seals but this had been done by Hakethon (Isaac) of Pawlett: all Josce had done was to act as a messenger to take them to show the Abbot. He was therefore acquitted. What follows seems to relate to an earlier stage in the proceedings but it is rather confused and difficult to interpret. The marginal heading suggests that what follows is an acknowledgement made by Josce of Newbury before Sandwich and Cobham (who were the justices first commissioned to try him) of having made forged writings, but that is not quite what the text records. It records some kind of statement (perhaps made by Josce after his capture in the summer of 1290 but not recorded in the King's Bench enrolment) which makes a connection between the whole story of the forged writings and Oxford and brings in various other individuals. John of Cricklade, who was living in Oxford facing or adjoining (*contra*) the house of Belasset of Somerton,

8 *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward I: 2, A.D. 1281-1292* (London: HMSO, 1893), p. 402. The same justices were also commissioned around the same time to try Isaac of Poulet alone on charges of killing an unnamed Christian boy in the Oxford Jewry and two named individuals in the city of London: *CPR 1281/1292*, p. 402.

9 *Plea Rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews Preserved in the National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office). Volume 6, Edward I, 1279-81*, ed. by Paul Brand (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 2005), p. 55.

10 See Appendix, no. III. But note that an entry on the King's Remembrancer's Memoranda Roll suggests that there was a general exodus of the Jews from London on 10 October: TNA, E159/64, m. 28.

Jewess, is said to have known that the seals were forged and to have had 2s. for writing the bonds themselves.¹¹ Hugh Pye is said to have known of the falsity of the writings and to have gone to Devizes to the house of Josce to fetch them and then brought them to 'him' (Josce) at Oxford. The 'said Jew' (apparently Josce) had then handed them over to the custody of Belasset of Somerton in a sealed leather strong box. This statement then led to the issuing of a writ to the sheriff of Oxfordshire to arrest John, Hugh and Belasset and to look for the writings in the house of Belasset. They were found there and handed over by the sheriff to the King's council. This suggests that the whole matter of the involvement of Josce in the forging of the documents and the seals was initially referred back in the summer of 1290 to the King's council, apparently meeting in the context of the continuing Easter parliament of 1290, before justices were commissioned for his trial. It then records (though this part sounds like a report on what had happened rather than a formal record of it) that all the justices (*omnes justiciarii*) held Josce as convicted of the fact of the forgery (*quasi convictum de facto dicte falsitatis*) and that as a result of what he had said Belasset and the others were arrested and are still (*adhuc*), presumably at the time of writing, in the Tower.¹² Also reported is the fact that Josce had been formally accused (*inculpatus*) before Gilbert of Thornton and his colleagues (that is to say, the justices of King's Bench) of the forgery and had said that it had been done with the assistance of Hakethon of Pawlett. Hakethon of Pawlett must also have been produced in court since he is said to have denied his guilt and given various reasons which had convinced all the justices and other members of the King's council of his innocence and of Josce's guilt. All the King's council are also said to have been convinced through the acknowledgment that the writings were indeed forged. Josce of Newbury had, however, at this stage still not been formally tried, let alone formally convicted, and the writer notes that unless he is convicted of the forgery the other Christians (*alii christiani*), namely Gilbert Pinzon and Thomas Hykon, who have put themselves for good and ill on the deed and on assenting to it on the country, would be in danger.

The King's Bench enrolment of Easter term 1290 does indeed record further proceedings against Gilbert and Thomas, apparently in the summer of 1290, when they were asked how they wished to acquit themselves of consenting to the making of the deeds and put themselves on the country. William of Carleton, suing on behalf of the King, said that, whether the writings were found true or false, they had both done wrong since they should have shown the writings to the King and the country (*patria*). Another representative of the King was told to sue a writ to ensure the appearance of a jury of

11 There were three converted Jews in the *Domus Conversorum* in London in 1308 who drew their names from Cricklade, but none are called John: Michael Adler, *Jews of Medieval England* (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1939), p. 351.

12 They seem then to disappear entirely from the record.

twenty-four men a month after Michaelmas but the plea was then respite further with a *nisi prius* provision. The trial jury eventually appeared at Wallingford on 27 November 1290 before Robert Malet (a King's Bench justice) and William of Bereford (a future Common Bench justice with local connexions in the area). This acquitted both men of any involvement in the making of the forged writings or knowing anything of it.

II

There are two other pieces of evidence to suggest that the alleged forging of bonds to Jewish creditors from particular religious houses was a live issue in the summer of 1290. One occurs with little surrounding context or additional detail towards the end of the Reading abbey proceedings just discussed. It notes that two men, named as Peter of Maidford and William of Bardfield,¹³ speaking on behalf of the sick Abbot of St Alban's, had said that there were two writings in a box now in the custody of William of Carleton in the name of the Abbot and convent of St Alban's which were forged and asked that no harm come to the house from them. The context suggests, but does not prove, that these too were for alleged debts to Jewish creditors and that they may have passed into William's hands with the Reading deeds and have also been taken in Belasset's house in Oxford.

The second has long been in print in the modern edition of the Osney Cartulary.¹⁴ The entry appears to be the record of an inquest jury taken at Westminster before the justices of the Jews on 12 June 1290 by six named Christians and six named Jews relating to a writing in the names of the Abbot and convent of Osney abbey in Oxford and Henna the widow of Jacob of Oxford (the son of Master Moses of London) relating to one thousand marks in jewels and gold and silver which, it was said, had been concealed.¹⁵ They said that it had been William of Woodstone (who is known to have been one of the Christian chirographers of the Oxford chirograph chest in 1283)¹⁶ who had brought the writing on behalf of certain Jews of Oxford to the Abbot to ask him if he wished to make fine for it. When the Abbot saw it he knew it was forged and refused to make any agreement with them. Asked how the writing came to William's hands and who had handed it over to him and in whose hands it

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- 13 Peter is described as a monk of the house when appointed at the end of August 1290 to represent the sick Abbot of St Alban's who was too ill to ride: *CPR 1281/1292*, p. 379. William of Bardfield is probably the man of that name who was an attorney in the Westminster Bench between 1279 and 1284 and subsequently became a serjeant in Ireland and later a justice of the Dublin Bench: Paul Brand, *The Making of the Common Law* (London: Hambledon, 1992), pp. 26-7, 35-6, 41.
 - 14 *The Cartulary of Osney Abbey*, ed. by H. E. Salter, 6 vols (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 89-91, 97-8, 101, 1929-36), iii, pp. 89-90.
 - 15 The deed itself is not quoted but it is quite likely it was not dissimilar in terms and purpose to the purported writing between Reading and Henna's late husband, discussed above.
 - 16 TNA, E 9/43, m. 5d.

now was the Christian and Jewish jurors told different stories. The Christians said that one Eleanor Thorald had possessed a writing granting her a corrody in the abbey sealed by the Abbot and convent. This had been pawned by her son Robert to the Jews, Vives of Gloucester and Hagin of Gloucester, for a loan of 2s. and they had counterfeited a seal similar to the seal on the corrody deed. The deed had been written by one Robert now chaplain of the church of St Martin in Oxford and the Jews had then affixed the seal to it. It had been Vives and Hagin who had then handed it over to William of Woodstone to take to the Abbot. The Jews said the writing had been found in a chest belonging to Henna after her death and then handed over to William by Vives son of Vives of Gloucester and Manser of Brackley. All the jurors agreed, however, that the writing itself was forged and sealed with a forged seal. They did not know who had the writing but thought it was in the hands of Hagin of Gloucester. No further proceedings or action is recorded in the cartulary. The loss of all of the original records of the Exchequer of the Jews after Trinity term 1286 means that we can no longer place this particular enquiry into any kind of wider context or see if it led to any further action. What can be seen is that this was not action prompted by Osney abbey itself, although it provided good reason for further investigation and the taking of action against those who might have been involved in the forging of the deed.

III

The decision to expel the Jewish community from England seems to have been taken quite quickly in the summer of 1290. As late as mid-June 1290 orders were still being given for the sealing of the chirograph chests at the end of the month and, although it has been argued that this was by way of preparation for the Expulsion, the better view seems to be that this was in preparation for a tallage, which would have had little purpose if the Expulsion was already then being planned. That tallage was still being planned as late as 9 July. The decision itself had certainly been taken by 18 July when orders were issued in connection with the expulsion.¹⁷ Historians have cited a variety of reasons for the Expulsion. These include the long-term decline in the numbers and wealth of the community and their significance to the Crown and to others and the hardening of Edward's religious views. They have also noted that the year 1290 marked the end of the fifteen year period that the 1275 Statute of Jewry had allowed for the Jewish community to take lands at farm (for periods not exceeding ten years) if they were unable to trade or to labour. It has also been suggested that the Expulsion was part of a bargain made between the King and the commons and related its timing to the belated appearance at the Easter parliament at Westminster of representatives of the counties. The proceedings which revealed the alleged forgery of bonds and seals in the name of three prominent religious

17 Richard Huscroft, *Expulsion: England's Jewish Solution* (Stroud: Tempus, 2006), pp. 150-1.

houses (Reading, St Alban's and Osney) and in favour of various Jewish creditors may also have been part of the immediate background to the decision. As has been seen, the Reading proceedings had been initiated by a petition that was probably submitted to the King and council at the Hilary parliament of 1290 and to have been considered in person by the King. After proceedings and investigations by the court of King's Bench the wider King's council seems again to have become involved with investigating the case and particularly with the alleged Jewish involvement in the forgery of the writings and seals in late June or early July 1290. It was also apparently about the same time that evidence emerged of forged writings in the name of the Abbot and convent of St Alban's. The evidence of a forged bond in the name of the Abbot and convent of Osney and in favour of dead Jewish female creditor with living Jewish intermediaries trying to collect on it emerged only a little earlier on 12 June in proceedings at the Exchequer of the Jews in Westminster and, if there was any follow up to the initial inquisition, it too may have occurred in early July. At the very least the evidence of Jewish wrongdoing that these proceedings seemed to uncover may have helped to confirm and strengthen existing prejudices against members of the community, particularly on the part of the King and his councillors, but also on the part of these particular religious houses and other similar religious institutions. These proceedings certainly did not lead directly to the Expulsion but their timing is such as to suggest that they might well have helped to create the climate of opinion that made the Expulsion possible.

Appendix of Documents

I

TNA, SC 8/68, no. 3376

Abbas et conventus Radyng' conqueruntur domino nostro regi et ejus consilio super seduccione inaudita quam deferunt et exhibent quidam, que talis est.

Quidam construxerunt quedam instrumenta obligatoria sub signis abbatis et conventus Radyng' adhulterinis et omnino falsis et sunt instrumenta tria, quorum unum continet quod dicti abbas et conventus tenentur cuidam judeo in centum saccis lane precii cujuslibet decem librarum. Secundum vero instrumentum ostensum continet quod iidem abbas et conventus se teneri fatentur cuidam judeo in quater centum quarteriis frumenti precium cujuslibet dimidie marce. Tercium vero continet quod iidem abbas et conventus fatentur se habere in deposito trescentas libras sterlingorum et alia jocalia aurea et argentea, prout patere poterit idem instrumentum inspicienti, quod nunquam per abbatem et conventum seu quemcumque de suis fuit cogitatum. Horum trium instrumentorum inspeccionem habuerunt dicti abbas et conventus per quosdam de suis qui prius de ista seduccione audierunt.

Et quia dicti abbas et conventus de fraude et seduccione clandestina sibi et ecclesie damnum inportabile posset provenire in hiis vel consimilibus predicta domino nostro regi, qui equitatis et justicie promotor existit et seduccionis ac malicie equus ultor, ad eorum innocenciam et immunitatem duxerunt explanare, super hoc petentes remedium si contingat dicta instrumenta in medium porrigi vel exhiberi, ita ut ipsi immunes et ... antur cum sint sine culpa. Plenius vero predicta exprimentur per quosdam de dicti abbatis consilio qu ... et malicie expetunt et expectant explanacionem.

Et instrumenta predicta visa fuerunt et ostensa per manus Gileberti Pinzon qui manet in villa de Radyng' et Thome Hykon qui manet in villa de Walyngeford'

Endorsed:

Peticio abbatis de Radyng'

Coram rege

Breve in cancellaria

Adeat cancellariam et habeat breve ad placita coram rege

Habet breve vicecomiti nomine regis quod habeat corpora etc.

II

TNA, KB 27/123, mm. 6-6d

[Anglo-American Legal Tradition (<<http://aalt.law.uh.edu/>>) images 7186-7, 7322-3]

[heading: adhuc de quindena et tribus septimanis Pasche]

Berk'. Preceptum fuit vicecomiti quod, cum abbacia de Redinges de fundacione progenitorum regis regum Anglie existat, per quod indemnitati abbatis et conventus ejusdem domus et salvacione rerum et possessionum suarum prospicere vult ipse rex, ut tenetur, ac Gilbertus Pynzon et Thomas Hikon tria scripta obligatoria fratri Willelmo de Sutton' camerario abbacie predictae quibusdam falsis sigillis ad similitudinem sigillorum predicti abbatis et capituli sui sediciose fabricatis signata ostenderunt, in quibus continetur quod predictus abbas Jacobo judeo Oxon' filio magistri Mossi de London' et A. sancte judeo Wynton' in denariis et aliis bonis et catallis ad valenciam trium milium librarum obligatus est, in perpetue subversionis status predictae abbacie periculum manifestum, ut ex querela ipsius abbatis rex accepit, corpora predictorum Gilberti et Thome cum predictis scriptis obligatoriis haberet hic coram rege ad hunc diem, quem diem prefato abbati ipse rex prefixit ad faciendum et recipiendum quod curia regis consideraverit in premissis. Ad quem diem predicti Gilbertus et Thomas venerunt et similiter predictus abbas. Et predictus abbas per attornatum suum dicit quod die martis proxima ante Epiphaniam Domini anno regni regis nunc decimo octavo in domo Alicie que fuit uxor Alexandri de Estans apud Walingford' predicti Gilbertus et Thomas monstraverunt fratri Willelmo camerario predicto tria scripta obligatoria signata signis adulterinis ad modum sigillorum abbatis et conventus de Redding' sediciose fabricatis, quorum tenor talis est:

'Omnibus Christi fidelibus presentes litteras inspecturis vel auditoris coventus Radding' salutem in domino sempiternam. Noveritis nos teneri fide media A. sancte judeo de Wynton' manenti apud Caversham in quatuor centum quarteriis frumenti quarterii precii dimidie marce, et quodlibet quarterium octo bussellorum, reddendo predictae Sancte in domo sua apud Kaversham ad festum sancti Michaelis anno regni regis E. quarto, faciendo eundem bladum propriis sumptibus nostris ibidem cariari vel denarios prout judeo placuerit, videlicet pro quolibet quarterio dimidiam marcam. Et si predictum Sancte propter nostrum defectum aliquos sumptus contingat facere obligamus nos eidem Sancte sine aliqua contradiccione satisfacere. Volumus eundem Sancte sine aliquo testimonio suo simplici verbo fore credendum. Volumus insuper inconcedimus, si nos quoquo modo in predicta solucione defecerimus aut in toto aut in parte, quod absit, quod vicecomes Oxon' et '<de>' Berk' per omnes terras et catalla possit compescere donec predicto judeo Sancte per plenum satisfecerimus. Et volumus quod Edwardus Rex pro quolibet restrictu x libras habeat et vicecomes Oxon' lx solidos et Terra Sancta x marcas, si nos in predicta solucione ad terminos statutos defecerimus. Et propter dictum debitum quod predicto Judeo Sancte pro denariis pre manibus ab eodem receptis pro magno prodesse domus obligavimus et inpinoravimus

omnes terras et catalla mobilia et immobilia quantascumque habuerimus vel possidere poterimus donec per plenum predicto judeo satisfecerimus. Et resignemus omnimodas alias cavillationes per quas predictum stadeum Sancte poterimus nocere. Et nos de die in diem posset facere excommunicari propter fidis fractionem cum candelis illuminatis et calpanis pulsantibus consedimus. In cuius rei testimonium huic scripto sigillum nostrum commune duximus apponendum.

Item secundum scriptum sub hac forma:

'Omnibus Christi fidelibus presentes litteras inspecturis vel audituris abbas Rading' salutem in domino sempiternam. Noveritis nos per consensum nostri conventus recepimus in Thesauro de Reding' in custodia de Jacobo judeo de Oxenford' filio magistri Mossi de London' .iiij. centum libras sterlingorum bonorum et legalium et .xxx. libras monteflorine, et unum cyphum aureum pays .xiiij.^{or} librarum et .xij. coclearia aurea pays cujuslibet .xxxij. denariorum et .j. discum argenti de Aumone peys .xx. librarum et .ij. barilla barres de ore de mugat. Et quod nos juravimus in verbo Dei quod nos solvemus eidem totum predictum thesaurum et celabimus versus regem et reginam et nos nullo judeo neque per excommunicationem neque pro juramento deliberabimus nisi predicto judeo vel domine Henne femine sue vel certo nuncio istas litteras portante. Et si aliter contingat nos facere quam per sacramentum juravimus concedimus nos excommunicari et nuncquam absolvi nisi per manus domini pape. In cuius rei testimonium sigillum nostrum una cum sigillo conventus nostri presentibus est appensum'.

Item tercium scriptum in hec verba:

'Omnibus Christi fidelibus presentes litteras inspecturis vel audituris abbas Rading' et conventus ejusdem loci salutem in domino sempiternam. Noveritis nos teneri fide media Jacobo judeo Oxon' filio magistri Mossi de London' in centum saccis bone lane et pacabilis sine cot¹ et gard pro certa summa pecunie quam nobis ad negocium et commodum conventus dederunt pre manibus precii cujuslibet x librarum sterlingorum bonorum et legalium, reddendo predicto judeo J. in domo sua apud London' ad festum sancti Michaelis anno regni regis Edwardi v^o dimidium et aliam dimidium² ad festum Pasche proximo sequens, faciendo eandem lanam propriis sumptibus nostris ibidem cariari vel denarios prout judeo placuerit, videlicet pro quolibet sacco .x. libras. Et si predictum judeum propter defectum nostrum aliquos sumptus contingat facere obligamus nos eidem Jacobo sine aliqua contradiccione satisfacere. Volumus eundem judeum sine aliquo testimonio suo simplici verbo fore credendum. Volumus insuper et concedimus si nos quoquo modo in predicta solucione defecerimus aut in toto aut in parte, quod absit, quod vicecomes Oxon' et de Berksir' per

1 Wool matted together in the fleece: <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?size=First+100&type=headword&q1=cot&rgxp=constrained>>

2 MS. reads *aliam dimid'*

omnes terras et catalla possit compellere donec predicto judeo J. per plenum satisfecerimus. Et volumus quod Edwardus Rex pro quolibet restrictu .x. libras habeat et vicecomes Oxon' .c. solidos et Terra Sancta .x. marcas si nos in predicta solucione ad terminos statutos defecerimus. Et propter dictum debitum quod predicto judeo pro denariis ab eodem pre manibus receptis obligavimus et inpignoravimus omnes terras nostras et catalla mobilia et immobilia quantascumque habuerimus et possidere poterimus donec per plenum predicto judeo satisfecerimus. In cujus rei testimonium huic scripto sigillum nostrum una cum sigillo conventus nostri dignum duxi apponendum'.

Postea quia justiciarii locum regis tenentes plene voluerunt cerciorari super facto predicto fecerunt venire predictum Willelmum de Sutton' camerarium coram eis. Qui juratus et diligenter examinatus dicit quod ad festum Sancti Jacoby Apostoli anno regni regis nunc sexto decimo venit predictus Gilbertus Pynzon ad eum, asserendo quod domus sua de Redingges multum fuit onerata in Judaismo. Et idem camerarius [dicit quod]³ per sic quod esset ei intendens et de consilio suo ad predictam domum suam exonerandam bene ei remuneraret. Et idem Gilbertus ab eo peciit quadraginta marcas pro auxilio et servicio suo et idem camerarius ei dixit quod tantam pecuniam deservire potuit pro hujusmodi negocio. Et nichilominus idem Gilbertus monstravit eidem camerario transcripta duorum scriptorum. Dicit eciam predictus Willelmus camerarius quod postea venit apud Walingford' [verte quia in dorso] [m. 6d] [Adhuc de Redingges] videlicet die martis proxima ante festum Epiphanie Domini anno regni regis nunc predicto octavodecimo ad domum cujusdam Alicie que fuit uxor Alexandri de Estans ubi venerunt predicti Gilbertus et Thomas Hikon. Et Thomas extraxit de sinu suo quamdam pixidem in qua erant duo scripta obligatoria signata sigillorum ad similitudinem sigillorum predictorum abbatis et capituli etc, que scripta examinata concordebantur predictis transcriptis que predictus Gilbertus predicto camerario prius monstraverat. Et idem camerarius quesivit si plura haberent scripta. Et super hoc predictus Thomas ad instanciam predicti Gilberti cognovit quod adhuc habuit unum scriptum quod quesivit ad domum suam et monstravit predicto Willelmo in hospicio predictae Alicie nec extunc permiserunt predictum camerarium aliquod scriptum signatum habere seu secum ulterius retinere sed ea penes eos retinuerunt. Et quinto seu sexto vel octavo die sequenti venit quidam frater Alanus et quidam Petrus clericus de precepto abbatis Reding' apud Walingford' ad predictum Gilbertum et ibidem monstrata fuerunt eadem scripta in presencia judei, '<de>' quibus predicti Alanus et Petrus unum scriptum secum tulerunt apud Rading' abbati suo monstraturum, facta tamen judeo securitate de scripto illo restituendo. Qui quidem Alanus illud idem scriptum die dominica sequenti apud Walingford' restituit. Item frater Alanus predictus juratus et examinatus dicit quod ipse et quidam Petrus clericus de precepto abbatis de Reding' octavo die post diem martis predictum venerunt cum predicto Gilberto

3 MS. omits

apud Walingford' et ibidem [eisdem]⁴ monstrata fuerunt eadem scripta in presencia judei. Et ad instanciam ejusdem Gilberti delatum fuit unum scriptum de eisdem scriptis apud Reding', tradita tamen securitate de eodem restituendo, quod die dominica sequenti idem Alanus restituit apud Walingford'. Item Petrus clericus juratus et examinatus de eodem in omnibus concordat cum predicto Alano.

Postea fecerunt venire coram eis predictos Gilbertum et Thomam. Et Thomas ⁱ<juratus et examinatus>ⁱ dicit quod quodam die martis post Circumcisionem Domini ultimo preterito, sed si fuerit proxima ignorat, apud Walingford quidam Joceus de Neubur' judeus ad domum Alicie Saunwiz venit et liberavit ei quamdam pixidem non sigillatam in qua erant tria scripta obligatoria, sed tenorem eorundem nescivit, et ipse eadem scripta liberavit fratri Willelmo de Sutton' et fratri Johanni Gerard monachis de Reding'. Qui quidem receperunt copiam predictorum scriptorum et postea eadem scripta in pixide recepit de predictis monachis et predicto Joceo eandem liberavit. Dicit eciam quod die mercurii sequenti in octabis apud Walingford' in domum Willelmi de la Wike iterato venit predictus judeus et fuit locutus cum domino Alano cappellano abbatis et ei monstravit predicta scripta obligatoria ut super eisdem consulere possit abbatem suum. Et idem Alanus, volens predicta scripta secum deferre, licenciam de judeo habere non potuit; verumptamen idem judeus ei unum scriptum de illis ei tradidit abbati deferendo tali condicione quod illud idem scriptum sibi die dominica sequenti ⁱ<restituerit>ⁱ sed utrum illud remisit necne ignorat. Et requisitus si aliquid cepit de judeo pro negocio illo monstrando dicit quod non, sed dicit quod illud fecit in favorem abbatis, qui est dominus suus et de quo tenet. Requisitus eciam si intelligit predicta scripta fore vera vel falsa dicit quod falsa. Et Gilbertus juratus et examinatus in omnibus concordat cum predicto Thoma in substantia, excepto in hoc quod predictus Thomas prius dixit quod predictus judeus liberavit ei tria scripta ibi dicit Gilbertus quod nisi duo tantum semel et tertium cito postea etc.

Et quia per confessionem predictorum Thome et Gilberti compertum est quod predictus Thomas fuit in seisinā de predictis scriptis et ea de predicto Joceo de Neubur' judeo recepit nec adhuc constat curie quod scripta illa predicto judeo reliberavit, propter quod eadem curia adhuc reputat eum inde seisitum, et eciam quia predictus Gilbertus fuit particeps suus in negocio predicto etc. dictum est eis quod sequantur breve ad capiendum predictum judeum quod sit coram rege in crastino Sancti Johannis Baptiste ubicumque ad faciendum et recipiendum super scriptis predictis quod curia regis consideraverit. Et interim predicti Gilbertus et Thomas sint sub manucapcione que intratur alibi in rotulo de manucapcionibus in isto termino etc. Et dictum est abbati per attornatum suum quod servet diem predictum si sibi viderit expedire etc. Ad quem diem venit quidam Petrus de Caumpedene attornatus predicti abbatis et supplicat diem quod predictus abbas predicta scripta possit probare falsa ⁱ<per collacionem sigillorum vel alio modo.>ⁱ Et datus est ei dies a die Sancti Michaelis in

unum mensem ubicumque etc. Idem dies datus est Willelmo de Carleton' qui sequitur pro rege. Et dictum est predicto Willelmo quod habeat ibi predicta scripta etc. Et predicti Gilbertus et Thomas requisiti quomodo se velint acquietare quod non fuerunt consencientes fabricacioni predictorum scriptorum, qui de bono et malo ponunt se super patriam. Et Willelmus de Carleton', qui sequitur pro rege, dicit quod licet '<convictum fuerit per patriam quod>' predicta scripta vera fuerunt vel alia, predicti Gilbertus et Thomas in hoc deliquerunt quod scripta illa domino regi nec patrie monstraverunt et petit quod hoc allocatur domino regi pro loco [et]⁵ tempore etc. Et idem '<dies>' datus est eis etc. Et dictum est Bartholomeo de Northt', qui sequitur pro rege, quod sequatur pro rege breve ad faciendum venire .xxiiij.^{or} etc., per quos etc., et qui nec etc., ad prefatum terminum etc. ad recognoscendum in forma predicta etc. Et nichil hic intratur de judeis quia dominus rex assignavit justiciarios suos, videlicet Johannem de Cobham et Willelmum de Carleton', ad eorum deliberacionem etc. Et sciendum quod predicti judei sunt infra Turrim Lond'. Et super hoc venit quidam Petrus de Maydenford et Willelmus de Berdefeld et dicunt pro abbate de Sancto Albano, qui languidus est, quod duo scripta inventa in pixide que est in custodia Willelmi de Carleton' confecta sub nomine predicti abbatis et conventus falsa sunt et sediciose fabricata. Et petunt quod prejudicium non generatur domui sue de Sancto Albano per scripta predicta que omnino sunt falsa etc. Et breve de iudicio liberata Bartholomeo le Criur etc.

Postea a die Sancti Michaelis in unum mensem proximo sequenti jurata inter dominum regem querentem per Ricardum de Bretteville et Bartholomeum de Northt', qui secuntur pro rege, et predictos Gilbertum Pinzon et Thomam Hykon de placito predicto ponitur in respectum usque in octabis⁶ Purificacionis Beate Marie ubicumque etc. pro defectu juratorum, quia nullus venit etc. Ideo vicecomes habeat corpora etc. ad prefatum terminum etc., nisi R. Malet et W. de Bereford prius ad partes illas venerunt etc. Postea die lune proxima post festum Sancte Katerine Virginis anno predicto coram predictis Roberto Malet et Willelmo de Bereford justiciariis ad assisas capiendas assignatis apud Wallingford' venerunt Willelmus Inge, qui sequitur pro rege, et predicti Gilbertus et Thomas. Et similiter juratores veniunt, qui dicunt super sacramentum suum quod predicti Thomas et Gilbertus fabricacioni predictorum scriptorum nunquam fuerunt consencientes nec consilium seu auxilium ad fabricacionem illam prebuerunt nec aliquid inde sciverunt nec in aliquo inde sunt culpabiles. Ideo consideratum est quod predicti Thomas et Gilbertus inde quieti etc.

III

Cambridge, University Library, MS. Dd.9.38, fols 86v-87r

Inquisicio capta coram R. de Sandwyco, Gregorio de Rokesle et aliis justiciariis ad custodiam judeorum assignatis apud Turrim London' die lune proxima post festum Sancti

5 MS. omits

6 The remainder of this enrolment is written on a schedule attached to the main membrane.

Luce Ewangeliste anno regni regis Edwardi .xviij. per sacramentum subscriptorum christianorum et judeorum, videlicet Nigelli de Saundervile, Ricardi Oselur, Manseri de Mortorn', Henrici de Basyngg' et Moissi le Blount, Manseri le fiz Aron, Wyves le Prestre, Isac Colemyn, Batheman le Jew, Cresse le Despenser.

Joceus de Neubur' inculpatus de confeccione sigillorum abbatis et conventus de Redyng' et fabricacione falsa trium scriptorum obligatoriorum tria milia libra argenti continencium sub nomine dicti abbatis et conventus factorum. Qui dicit quod sigilla predicta non confecit nec scripta predicta, ut dicitur, fabricavit. Et quod inde culpabilis non sit ponit se de bono et malo super predictos christianos et judeos. Qui veniunt et dicunt super sacramentum suum quod predicta ¹<scripta> falsa sunt et falso fabricata per Hakethonem Polet judeum set bene dicunt quod Joceus predictus predicta scripta non fabricavit nec de fabricacione scivit nisi in tantum quod dictus Hakethon ea sibi tradidit ut ea abbati predicto monstraret et sic ea recepit et ut nuncius ea portavit. Ideo etc. Et consideratum est quod dictus Judeus inde quietus.

Recognicio Jocei judei de Neubur' coram R. de Sandwico et Johanne de Cobeham de falsis scriptis per ipsum factis. [Dicit]' quod Johannes de Cryckelad' qui manet Oxon' contra domum Belasset de Somertone judee scivit de falsitate confeccionis sigillorum et scripta illa scripsit manu sua et habuit pro scriptura eorundem scriptorum duos solidos. Hugo Pye similiter scivit de dicta falsitate et quesivit predicta falsa scripta apud Divisas ad domum ipsius Jocei judei et ad eum portavit ea apud Oxon'. Et dictus judeus illa scripta tradidit in custodia dicte Belasset judee de Somertone in quodam forcero de quyr bully. [fol. 87r] Et per istam recognicionem exivit breve ¹<regis> ad vicecomitem Oxon' ad capiendum corpora Johannis, Hugonis et Belasset et ad querendum predicta scripta in domo predicta Belasset et secundum quod cognovit fuerunt in forcero predicto et liberata postea per vicecomitem consilio domini regis et tunc omnes justiciarii habuerunt dictum Joceum quasi convictum de facto dicte falsitatis et per illam recognicionem capta fuerunt corpora predictorum Belasset et aliorum et adhuc sunt in prisa Turris London'. Preterea dictus Joceus, inculpatus coram Gilberto de Thoryngton' et sociis suis de facto et fabricacione predictorum scriptorum, dicit quod predicta falsitas facta fuit per auxilium Hakethonis Polet judei. Et Hakethon propter hoc inculpatus dedixit omnino et dixit quod nunquam ea vidit et multas et varias evidencias dixit per quas omnes justiciarii et alii de concilio regis qui ibidem fuerunt habuerunt dictum Hakethonem quasi immunem et innocentem et dictum Joceum quasi convictum de dicta falsitate. Preterea propter cognicionem predictam omnes de consilio regis habent ista scripta totaliter falsa unde et, nisi ista falsitas fuerit convicta in personam predicti Jocei judei, alii christiani, scilicet Gilbertus Pynsoun et Thomas Hykoun, qui de bono et malo de facto et assensu se super patriam posuerunt, erunt in periculo.

7 MS. reads *dicunt*.