

= Regenbald =

Regenbald (sometimes known as Regenbald of Cirencester) was a priest and royal official in Anglo-Saxon England under King Edward the Confessor . His name suggests that he was not a native Englishman , and perhaps was German or Norman . He first appears in history as a witness to a royal document in 1050 , and remained a royal chaplain and clerk throughout the rest of King Edward 's reign . Many royal documents give Regenbald the title of " chancellor " but whether this means that he acted in a manner similar to the later Lord Chancellor is unclear , as some of the documents may be forgeries or have been tampered with . Whatever Regenbald 's actual title , King Edward rewarded him with lands and also granted him the status , but not the actual office , of bishop . Regenbald continued to serve the English kings after the Norman Conquest of England , although whether he served King Harold II of England is unclear . His date of death is unknown , but it was probably during the reign of either King William I or William II . After his death , some of his lands became part of the endowment of Cirencester Abbey in 1133 .

= = Early life = =

His origins are unknown , but he was probably not a native Englishman . He may have been German or Norman . The historian Katharine Keats-Rohan suggests that he was possibly the nephew of Peter , who was the Bishop of Chester and a Norman . His name was a German or French name , which suggests that Regenbald was one of the foreigners that gained favour with King Edward the Confessor .

= = Service to Edward the Confessor = =

Regenbald first appears in the historical record in 1050 , when he witnesses a charter of King Edward . King Edward gave him large estates as a reward for his service to the king as a royal chaplain . The Domesday Book records him owning at least seven churches , but only two of them have any indication that he performed any ecclesiastical services personally . Another royal reward was the grant to Regenbald of the status , without the actual office , of a bishop . He probably was unable to be promoted to a bishopric , either because he was married or because his style of life was known to be unchaste .

In royal charters he is often given the title " royal chancellor " , as he is styled in a 1062 charter in Latin *regis cancellarius* , but this does not necessarily mean that there was an official office known as chancellor similar to the later Lord Chancellor 's office . Regenbald was probably in charge of Edward 's royal clerks and scribes , but his position in the witness lists argues against his holding an actual office , as he is not listed early in the witness lists along with the magnates . He probably performed some of the duties that later were done by the chancellor , but the first chancellor in England is usually held to be Herfast , who held office from around 1069 . Some historians , including David Bates , hold that Regenbald was chancellor , however . Some support for that position is the fact that Domesday Book lists Regenbald as " chancellor " . The entire issue of whether Regenbald was a " true " chancellor or not is bound up in the debate amongst medievalists about whether there was a recognisable chancery in England prior to the Norman Conquest . One school of thought , led by Pierre Chaplais , argues that no such office existed prior to the Conquest . Another group argues that there was , and among this group is the historian Simon Keynes . In Regenbald 's case , a number of the documents that give him the title " chancellor " are either forgeries or have been altered in the copying process . Others , however , are not easily shown to be spurious .

Besides his scribal duties , he also served as a royal judge , as he is recorded as passing judgement in a case late in Edward 's or early in William 's reign , along with Wulfstan , Bishop of Worcester , and Æthelwig , Abbot of Evesham . A thirteenth-century source says that he was dean of the church at Cirencester during William 's reign .

Regenbald remained at the royal court throughout Edward 's reign and into the reign of King William

the Conqueror . His lands and possessions were confirmed by King William after the Norman Conquest . Whether he served King Harold in the period after King Edward 's death is unknown , as no royal charters and only one royal writ survive from Harold 's reign .

Regenbald 's lands are recorded in a charter from the reign of King Henry I of England which dealt with the gift of those lands after Regenbald 's death . This charter lists a number of estates as owned by Regenbald that were also listed in Domesday Book as Regenbald 's , but there are a few other possessions that did not get recorded in Domesday . The lands listed include lands in Gloucestershire , Berkshire , Wiltshire , Somerset , Northamptonshire , Worcestershire , and Dorset . Domesday lists the value of Regenbald 's lands at £ 40 per year . His estates totalled about 90 hides , although some of the estates were given to him after the Norman Conquest .

= = Death and legacy = =

Presumably , he died either during the reign of William I or during the following reign of William II . Possibly , he was buried at Cirencester , where a stone tomb in the crypt of the Saxon @-@ era church still exists and may be his . After his death , a group of his lands became the basis for the foundation of Cirencester Abbey by King Henry I of England in 1133 . Regenbald 's brother held land near him in Cirencester . Regenbald had a son named Edward who also held lands in Gloucester .