

**EDINBURGH
RECORDS: THE BURGH
ACCOUNTS: VOL. II**

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BURGH ACCOUNTS

Edinburgh - Town council

EDINBURGH RECORDS.

THE BURGH ACCOUNTS: VOLUME TWO.

Dean of Guild's Accounts, 1552-1567.

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With Preface

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TOWN CLERK OF EDINBURGH.



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*Gift of
Alexander Cochrane*

PREFACE TO VOLUME II.

THE present is the second volume of the Old Accounts of the City of Edinburgh, and contains the Dean of Guild Accounts from Michaelmas 1552 to Michaelmas 1567, with the exception of the period from October 1558 to May 1560. As explained in the Preface to the first volume, these have been transcribed and edited by Mr Adam at the request of the Town Council.

The Dean of Guild was the Chairman or Chief Officer of the Guildry, the merchant class of the Burgesses, who till near the end of the sixteenth century had the control of the Town's affairs. The "Gilda Mercatoria," or Merchant Guild of Edinburgh, was in existence at a very early period, but the first reference to it in the existing records is in a Minute of 3rd October 1403, which gives the names of the Officers of the Guild then elected, and among others the Dean, who was also the custodier of the Church fabric (Decanus Gilde et Custoditor operis ecclesiae). In 1518 the Guildry was reorganised by a Charter from the Town Council. The "Merchants Fraternity and Gild * Brethren" were granted an

* *Note.*—*Gild.* The common spelling of the word has for a long time been "Guild," but it is now maintained by many competent authorities that the proper form is "Gild," without the "u." Etymologically, this view has much to be said for it; the ancient usage seems to support it; and in the Accounts here presented the word is invariably spelt "gild" in the text.

aisle in the Church of Sanct Geill, and held extensive mercantile jurisdiction and privileges.

In Edinburgh, as in some Continental cities, there was a long struggle between the merchants and the craftsmen or members of the incorporated trades, who were practically excluded from the administration of the Town's affairs. At length, under a Decreet Arbitral of King James VI. in 1583, the craftsmen were admitted to substantial representation in the Town Council.

The Merchant Guild of Edinburgh must not be identified with the Merchant Company of Edinburgh, established in 1681, and which is so well known at the present day, although each member of the latter requires to be a Burgess and Guild Brother of the City.

The payments in the Accounts relate mainly to the Kirk of Saint Giles, the secular affairs of which were under the special care of the Dean of Guild.

Saint Giles (Saint Egidius)—or, as he was popularly called, "Sanct Geill"—was the patron saint of the City; and the Church named after him was the first parochial one in Edinburgh. The Saint, who had been an Abbot in France, died on 1st September 721, and the anniversary of that date was held as his Festival. According to tradition, he at one period of his life owed his preservation to a hind, the figure of which appears on the City Arms to this day. The religious life of the Town's people was bound up with the City Church. The Merchants' Guild, as already mentioned, had an aisle and altar; and each of the incorporated crafts or trades had its patron saint with an altar in the Church, and contributed to the up-keep of the services. The Church, which had previously been subject to the Abbot of Dunfermline, and at an earlier period to the Bishop of

Lindisfarne, was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a collegiate charge under the patronage and care of the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council. The Accounts now presented show the Deau of Guild's intromissions during the period from 1552 to 1567, with the exception already mentioned.

The Reformation or change of the National Religion took place in the middle of the period embraced in the Accounts. The old faith and system of worship, with which the whole social order and civic organisation seemed to be inseparably bound up, is seen in full operation in the earlier part of the period. Then comes an upheaval and a brief time of confusion, followed in the later years of the period by the firm establishment of the new or reformed religious regime. The prosaic details of these Accounts may throw light on not a few points in the history of the time which must remain of profound interest to all Scotsmen.

The Accounts in the volume begin with the intromissions of James Carmichael, Dean of Guild from 4th October 1552 to 8th October 1553. On the charge side, there are entered the sums collected on the "piece silver" in the Kirk each Sunday; the dues received in respect of the freighting of ships in the port of Leith; the entry money of Burgesses and Guild Brethren; the rents for the shops surrounding the Kirk and in the Kirkyard; charges for burial lairs and tombstones; fees for the use of the Seal; penalties for the attempted evasion of shipping dues; charges for the use of the four great golden candlesticks, when required by individuals at funerals or special services; similar charges for the use of the silver candlesticks; and the sums drawn for the exhibition of Saint Giles' arm on Relie Sunday and Saint Giles' Day.

On the Discharge side, there is given the expenditure relating