

**THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE LINCOLN
RECORD SOCIETY. VOLUME 18:
TRANSCRIPTS OF CHARTERS
RELATING TO THE GILBERTINE HOUSES
OF SIXLE, ORMSBY, CATLEY,
BULLINGTON, AND ALVINGHAM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649749492

The Publications of the Lincoln Record Society. Volume 18: Transcripts of Charters Relating to the Gilbertine Houses of Sixle, Ormsby, Catley, Bullington, and Alvingham by F. M. Stenton

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THE
PUBLICATIONS
OF THE
Lincoln Record Society
(FOR THE ANCIENT DIOCESE AND THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN)

FOUNDED IN THE YEAR

1910



VOLUME 18

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1920

TRANSCRIPTS
OF
CHARTERS

relating to the Gilbertine Houses

OF
SIXLE, ORMSBY, CATLEY, BULLINGTON,
AND ALVINGHAM

Edited, with a translation, from the
King's Remembrancer's Memoranda Rolls
Nos. 183, 185, and 187

BY

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HORNCASTLE :

PRINTED FOR THE LINCOLN RECORD SOCIETY BY
W. K. MORTON & SONS, 27, HIGH STREET

1922

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PREFACE

The charters which follow are printed in full, with the precise spelling and punctuation of the manuscript, but without any attempt to reproduce its employment of capital letters. Forms of words which certainly or probably are mistakes of the exchequer transcriber are indicated by the addition of [*sic*] to such words. Contractions are extended. Where the proper extension is uncertain, it is printed in italic except in the few cases where no plausible extension presents itself, when a mark of compendium is added to the word. The translation is intended to be a literal representation of the Latin. It is sometimes difficult to find appropriate equivalents for the tautological phrases of late thirteenth century charters, but it is hoped that a rendering of the Latin word for word may be useful to those who wish to become acquainted with the formulas of medieval documents. The charters are numbered in the transcript from which they are here printed, and these numbers are followed in this text.

My especial thanks are due to two people who have helped me to prepare this volume. My wife has advised me throughout the writing of the Introduction, much of the translation in the text is her work, and the book could not have assumed its present form without her assistance. Canon Foster has prepared the Index, which means that his unique knowledge of medieval Lincolnshire topography is at the service of those who use this volume. For myself, I would express the hope that this book of charters may be only the first of a series. No county has a more interesting social history than Lincolnshire, and in regard to no county is social history illustrated by a greater number of early, and as yet unpublished, documents.

F. M. STENTON.

University College,
Reading,
2 May, 1922.

ERRATA

- p. xii, last l.—*for* Gilbert son of Robert *read* Robert son of Gilbert.
p. xv, l. 15—*for* Prestwald *read* Prestwold.
p. 28, no. [50], l. 31, Engl.—*for* aganst *read* against.
p. 29, no. [52], l. 3, Engl.—*for* arms *read* alms.
 l. 27, Engl.—*for* Authorpe *read* Ackthorpe.
p. 30, no. [54], l. 8, Engl.—*for* grandson *read* nephew.
p. 31, no. [55], l. 4, Engl.—*for* arms *read* alms.
p. 34, no. [62], l. 18, Engl.—*for* mannerr *read* manner.
p. 42, no. [7], l. 3, Lat.—*for* Gilleberti *read* Gilleberti.
p. 47, no. [18], l. 12, Engl.—*for* sellions *read* selions.
p. 83, no. [15], note 2—*for* depopulated *read* nearly depopulated.
p. 98, no. [19], l. 2, Engl.—*for* Phillip *read* Philip.
p. 100, no. [25], l. 12, Engl.—*for* witesse *read* witness.
p. 107, no. [11], l. 4, Engl.—*after* soul *insert* and that of Ela my countess.
p. 116—*s.v.* Alfred *add* See Glentham.
p. 118—*add* Azo. See Grainthorpe.
p. 123—*add* Conan s. of John s. of Mengi, 55.
p. 124—*s.v.* Crosholm *for* 8 *read* 101.
 add Crostese, Wm. de, witn., 8.
p. 127—*add* Garsa dau. of John s. of Mengi, 55.

INTRODUCTION

I

INCREASING expenses and a falling revenue compelled Henry IV, eight times in his short reign, to obtain extraordinary grants of money from Parliament and Convocation. The charters of which copies are printed in this book were shown to the barons of the Exchequer by the attorney of five Lincolnshire monasteries of the Gilbertine order, the priories of Catley, Ormsby, Alvingham, Sixle, and Bullington, which claimed that their possessions were exempt from such taxation. The Exchequer allowed the claim. The charters which had been submitted as evidence were enrolled upon the Memoranda Roll of the King's Remembrancer with a record of the circumstances which had led to their production.

On 10 May, 1406, the Canterbury Convocation granted to the king a tenth of all ecclesiastical property, with the stipulation that the possessions of poor nuns and of the Hospitallers should be exempt. On the morrow of the Close of Easter, 1407, William Ward, as attorney for the nuns of Catley, appeared at the Exchequer to complain that although the nuns had been certified poor by the bishop of Lincoln, their possessions had nevertheless been taxed. The taxation had proceeded on the ground that in the 'roll of the particulars of the taxation,' that is, in the record now called the *Taxatio Papæ Nicholai*, these possessions were entered under the name of the prior and not under the name of the nuns of Catley. It was therefore for William Ward, the nuns' attorney, to show that these possessions had been expressly granted to the nuns by the charters of their founders and benefactors. With this object he submitted the twenty-nine charters which form the Catley series in the present volume and were transcribed consecutively at this point in the record of the proceedings.

The case for the nuns was then continued by the argument that they and their predecessors had been seised of these possessions from the time of gift. The 'brethren' mentioned in the charters had never formed a *conventus*; they were always removable at the will of the master of Sempringham; and apart from their personal requirements in food and clothing they held nothing of this property except to the use and profit of the nuns. The officials of the Exchequer thereupon examined the roll of the particulars of the taxation and recorded the parts of the roll relating to the priory of Catley. From the Memoranda Roll of Trinity term in the previous year they assured themselves of the exemption of poor nuns, and they referred to the letter of the bishop of Lincoln certifying the

nuns of Catley poor within the meaning of the clause of exemption. It remained to prove that the possessions granted by the charters which had been produced were identical with the possessions assigned to the prior of Catley in the roll of particulars. The bishop of Lincoln was required to give his certificate to this effect, and his letter dated from Liddington, 6 October, 1407, proved the identity. The barons of the Exchequer therefore allowed the nuns' claim to exemption.

At the same time, the nuns of Haverholme were successfully prosecuting a similar claim on identical grounds. The example set by Catley and Haverholme was followed on the next occasion by the nuns of Ormsby, Alvingham, and Sixle. On 14 November, 1407, the Canterbury Convocation granted the king a tenth and a half tenth of all ecclesiastical property. At the following Easter, William Ward appeared at the Exchequer on behalf of these three priories, produced their charters, and secured their exemption. For the next two years the government were able to avoid recourse to fresh taxation. On 17 February, 1410, the Canterbury Convocation voted another tenth and half tenth of ecclesiastical property. A demand for the first instalment of this tax produced another appearance of William Ward at the Exchequer, this time as attorney for the priories of Sempringham and Bullington. The same procedure produced the same result as in former years.

The story of these appeals illustrates the meticulous, deliberate, industry which distinguishes the officials of the fifteenth century Exchequer. This is most clearly shown in their treatment of the charters which were put in as evidence. The Exchequer clerks were not allowed merely to record the passages which were material to the appeals. They transcribed the charters at length, with their full sealing and attestation clauses. They were not, it is true, bound to a literal reproduction of the texts before them. They often represented the names of persons and places in fifteenth century spellings instead of the earlier forms of the original documents. They were sometimes tired and careless. Even an Exchequer clerk was not a copying machine. But their industry, guided by office rules, preserved, upon the whole with singular accuracy, a mass of material which otherwise would have vanished without trace. An Exchequer enrollment is a poor substitute for a series of original charters, but it generally compares very favourably with the copies of documents made within a monastery for its own purposes in its cartulary.

The rolls which have supplied the transcripts printed in this book are the following:—

1. Exchequer Memoranda Roll 183, Easter, m. xi (Catley Series).
2. " " " 185, Easter, m. xii (Ormsby Series).
- " " " " " m. xiii (Alvingham Series).
- " " " " " m. xiiii (Sixle Series).
3. " " " 187, Hilary, m. xi (Bullington Series).