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### The Chartulary of St John of Pontefract

The prosperous Cluniac priory of St John the Evangelist, Pontefract, was founded around 1090 by Robert de Lacy, remaining subject to its mother-house of La Charité-sur-Loire until the fourteenth century. The charters in this two-volume work have been arranged by type: seigniorial charters; episcopal and papal charters; royal charters; and those relating to priory property, arranged geographically according to proximity to Pontefract. The cartulary is particularly valuable for topographical studies and local and family history – in many cases the names of all witnesses have been transcribed. The manuscript was originally compiled in the first half of the thirteenth century, with additions made on blank leaves over the following centuries (not included by the editor). Volume 1, published in 1899, comprises the first 45 folios, containing 233 charters, and an introduction on the history of the priory and the de Lacy family. Each Latin charter is preceded by a brief English summary.

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VOLUME 1

EDITED BY RICHARD HOLMES



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## **The Anniversary Reissue of Volumes from the Record Series of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society**

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the leading society for the study of the archaeology and history of England's largest historic county, Cambridge University Press has reissued a selection of the most notable of the publications in the Record Series of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Founded in 1863, the Society soon established itself as the major publisher in its field, and has remained so ever since. The *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* has been published annually since 1869, and in 1885 the Society launched the Record Series, a succession of volumes containing transcriptions of diverse original records relating to the history of Yorkshire, edited by numerous distinguished scholars. In 1932 a special division of the Record Series was created which, up to 1965, published a considerable number of early medieval charters relating to Yorkshire. The vast majority of these publications have never been superseded, remaining an important primary source for historical scholarship.

Current volumes in the Record Series are published for the Society by Boydell and Brewer. The Society also publishes parish register transcripts; since 1897, over 180 volumes have appeared in print. In 1974, the Society established a programme to publish calendars of over 650 court rolls of the manor of Wakefield, the originals of which, dating from 1274 to 1925, have been in the safekeeping of the Society's archives since 1943; by the end of 2012, fifteen volumes had appeared. In 2011, the importance of the Wakefield court rolls was formally acknowledged by the UK committee of UNESCO, which entered them on its National Register of the Memory of the World.

The Society possesses a library and archives which constitute a major resource for the study of the county; they are housed in its headquarters, a Georgian villa in Leeds. These facilities, initially provided solely for members, are now available to all researchers. Lists of the full range of the Society's scholarly resources and publications can be found on its website, [www.yas.org.uk](http://www.yas.org.uk).

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## The Chartulary of St John of Pontefract

(Record Series volumes 25 and 30)

Volumes 25 and 30 of the Record Series contain the text of the cartulary of the Cluniac Priory of St John at Pontefract. At the time this edition was originally prepared, the cartulary was in the ownership of the Wentworth family of Woolley, who subsequently deposited it with the Yorkshire Archaeological Society. It was sold by the owner at an auction on 11 April 1961 at Sotheby's saleroom, where it formed Lot 142 and was acquired by the British Library. It now has the reference Additional Manuscript 50754. Lot 143 in the same sale was the cartulary of Monk Bretton Priory, now BL Additional Manuscript 50755, which was published as Record Series volume 66, and is also now reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection.

The Pontefract cartulary is number 782 in G.R.C. Davies, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain: A Short Catalogue* (London, 1958) and has the same number in the revised edition, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain and Ireland*, edited by C. Breary, J. Harrison and D.M. Smith (London, 2010). Further information may be found in G.R.C. Davies, 'Two Chartularies from the West Riding', *British Museum Quarterly*, 24, no. 3/4 (December 1961), 67–70 and plates XXI–XXII. Readers should be aware that, according to Davies, the Record Series transcription omits additions to the text which 'occupy about a quarter of the cartulary's total of 96 pages'.

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*Member of the Council of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society.*

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THE  
**Chartulary of St. John.**

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WHEN the shock occasioned by the dissolution of monasteries and of the various monastic foundations of the middle ages had overpassed, and it became possible to estimate at their real value the gains and the losses to the country occasioned by the great convulsion of 1536–1546, there sprang up a class of men anxious to recover the remains of a knowledge which seemed to be in danger of passing away for ever, that they might preserve the remembrance of it to the latest generations.

In the very forefront of these, if the real permanent value of his work is to be estimated, stands pre-eminent the name of Roger Dodsworth—a name to be ever venerated by every lover of mediæval antiquity. He had not the wealth of a Sir Robert Cotton, and made no attempt to collect the volumes of the dispersed monastic libraries: his endeavours were directed, with the most untiring assiduity, to secure information of the character of that which had been contained in the chartularies. For although he was the cadet of an ancient Yorkshire family, he was not a wealthy man—indeed, had he pursued his profession, which seems to have been that of the law, he would probably have been entirely dependent upon it. But in the great Lord Fairfax he had the good fortune to meet with a patron who supplied him with means, not lavish it is true, but amply sufficient to enable him to pursue his investigations to the top of his bent, while the position in society to which his birth entitled him was an open sesame to the most secret depositories of the documents, the contents of which it was his anxious wish to put on record.

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ii.

## INTRODUCTION.

By far the most unwearied, by far the most intelligent of all his compeers in this vein of investigation, he is sometimes said to have left no complete work behind him. But it is now evident that those who make this assertion make it in entire ignorance that to Roger Dodsworth himself the world is indebted for that great monument of learning, the credit for which has been almost thoroughly diverted from him, the *Monasticon Anglicanum*.

Even Mr. Joseph Hunter, the foremost student of cartography of his age, and the best able to appreciate the merit of his great predecessor, at one time fell into that error, but when his investigations enabled,—and in a man of his candid mind that is only another way of saying compelled him to correct himself,—he made noble reparation. Unfortunately, however, his attempted rehabilitation of the truth has never fully overtaken and obliterated his original mistake, which is occasionally quoted even now, nearly two generations afterwards, as a semi-reproach upon the name, and a derogation from the fame of the great antiquary.

The reproach, however, had been cast by Mr. Hunter in complete ignorance that the credit of the *Monasticon*, the merit of its inception, and the satisfaction of its almost entire completion (as far at least as the first volume is concerned) were throughout due to the painstaking of Roger Dodsworth, who, while leaving behind him materials for subsequent volumes, did not see the whole of his first completely through the press. By what strange course of events the credit has been almost universally given to a later name, so that at one time to speak of Dugdale in connection with ecclesiastical literature was equivalent to naming the *Monasticon*, and so that “*Dugdale’s Monasticon*” came to be a substitute at the back of the book itself for “*Monasticon Anglicanum*,” is easily ascertained; in fact the claim was made almost before Roger Dodsworth was cold in his grave. The British Museum copy of the first volume of the *Monasticon* (673*l*) is prefaced with Dugdale’s portrait, dated “1656, æt. 50,” and amongst the incidentals of the engraving (piles of unnamed MSS.) are “The Antiquities of Warwickshire, illustrated,”—a perfectly just ascription; but most prominent of all was “*Monasticon Anglicanum*,”



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ROGER DODSWORTH.

iii.

showing that even in 1656 a claim was being made that that volume was Dugdale's production, that it was to be ascribed to him and associated with his name. And thus it naturally followed, that whenever a topographer has since had occasion to refer to the great treasury of monastic lore, the first volume of which was published in 1655, he implicitly or explicitly in at least five cases out of six has left his readers to believe that it was to the learning, or the investigation, or both, of Sir William Dugdale, that we are indebted for that wonderful volume.

Nothing, however, can be further from the truth; and that truth has been always accessible to those who cared to enquire, for it had been carefully enshrined in the original preface, which, after naming as having given assistance in the work, Sir William Dugdale and William Somner (see *Correspondence of Sir Wm. Dugdale*, p. 282), continues—

*Palma verò hujus incepti tribuenda est viro egregio, Rogero Dodsworthio Eboracensi, nuper quidem defuncto, sed nunquam oblivione sepeliendo.*

So exceedingly strong has, however, proved the force of ancient prepossession, that till Mr. Hunter called attention to the testamentary disposition of Roger Dodsworth, preserved originally in the Prerogative Court, Doctors' Commons, and now at Somerset House, it would have been difficult to persuade even the ordinarily careful investigator that the great antiquary did more than "collect materials for the use of other men." He did that it is true, as his 161 volumes, now in the Bodleian, testify; but he did much more. He provided and arranged the materials for two noble folios, and himself presided over the printing, even if he did not have the pleasure of superintending the complete publication of the one volume known for twenty years as the *Monasticon*, whose clear arrangement and wonderful index, as they were the fruits of his own painstaking, were not continued in the second volume, undertaken after his death by other hands from the materials which he himself had collected.

But however some may be inclined to doubt the accuracy of this statement, the very will of Roger Dodsworth (dated 30th June, 1654, proved P.C.C. 30th Nov., 1654, 301 Alchin) is clear on the point.

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iv.

## INTRODUCTION.

“I, Roger Dodsworth, of Bickerstaffe, in the county of Lancashire, Esquire,”  
 . . . . . “being weak and infirm in body, but of good and perfect memory,”  
 . . . . . “to be buried in the Chappell of Rufford, so nere unto the place  
 where my late lovinge wife, Houlcroft Dodsworth, was buryed as with convenienc  
 may bee.

“Whereas the Right Hon’ble Thomas Lord Fairfax, of Denton, my singular  
 good Lord and Patron, hath of his free love and favour gyven unto me the said  
 Roger Dodsworth, one yearly annuity of fifty pounds of current English money for  
 the term of my life; as also of the like kindness to me hath since promised unto  
 me to confirm the said yearly payment to my executors, administrators and assigns  
 for three years after my death for satisfying of a debt which his honour very well  
 knows I am bound to pay to the Lady Wentworth, which I hope my Hon’ble  
 Lord will p’forme accordingly without any doubt in any wise; whose favour,  
 furtherance and assistance I have likewise found in the printinge of a worke of  
 myne called *Monasticon Anglicanum*, as also in divers other respects. And in order  
 to part [a true Yorkshire phrase!] of my thankfulness to his Hon’r I do hereby  
 give and bequeath unto my said Hon’ble and very good Lorde all and every my  
 manuscripts, abie couchers, and Roles which I have marked with sev’rall markes  
 of distinctions, together with all my parchment Roles and Pap’s which I have in  
 my study in his Lord’pp’s house called Yorke House, in London, and in Lancashire,  
 and in Roger Fitz Randolfe’s house in Yorke; humbly prayinge that the said books  
 may be Dedicated’ to his Hon’r with an ev’lastinge acknowledgment of his goodness,  
 favour and kindness to me in carrying on the aforesaid worke; and alsoe I desire  
 and pray that my ever honored friend John Rushworth, Esqu’r would be pleased  
 att my request amongst many other his courtesies to see the same dedication  
 compassed accordingly, who hath distributed divers summes of moneyes in way of  
 furtherance of the worke aforesaid, which is very well known to my good friend  
 Mr. William Dugdell, whose advice als’ I crave, and desire that he would be  
 pleased to lend his assistance for the framing of the said Epistle, and dedication  
 accordinglye.

“Item, I desire that my ever loving friend Mr. Rushworth would be pleased  
 to see all such sums of money, which he, myself, or any other hath advanced  
 towards the printing of my said book, together with what other sums are or shall  
 be advanced either by myself or any other person or persons for that end and  
 purpose, may be in a particular accounted and set down in writing, as also satisfied  
 and discharged in the first place; and after the same is raised upon and out of  
 the profits of the said book: which done, then it is my will and mind that the  
 remainder and residue thereof shall be paid as hereafter is expressed.”

And he then enters into details of particular bequests, and makes  
 special mention of “my book, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, now in the  
 presse,” in such a way as to show that up to the time of his death  
 the work of the *Monasticon* was wholly and entirely that of Roger  
 Dodsworth; that the property of the volume was his and his alone,  
 while for the heavy expenses of printing it he was solely responsible,  
 though the means had been lent to him mainly by his “ever-loving  
 friend, Mr. John Rushworth.”

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## THE PONTEFRACT CHARTULARY.

v.

## THE PONTEFRACT CHARTULARY.

Among the many chartularies of which Roger Dodsworth made use in the compilation of his great work, one of the richest was that of the Cluniac house at Pontefract, which happened to have been compiled in a style the most fruitful for his special purpose.

Chartularies, valuable for other reasons, had been without the additional value which that of Pontefract possessed. The information useful to the topographer, or to those interested in the devolution of lands and manors, had been preserved in all, but in very few had the lists of witnesses been handed down unutilized; and in most the compiler had been content to conclude his copies of charters with a mere "testis multis," or to append to the documents a few names with the addition "et aliis." But in those of Pontefract, Rievaulx, and some few others which had the good fortune to be written up before about 1240, the names of all the witnesses, eight, ten, or more had been appended, while in those of a later date, Selby, Kirkstall, Nostell, and many others, the cartographer had been content with giving the names of only one, two, or three; five or six was a very unusual number. Thus, those names which happened not to be familiar to the compiler being omitted altogether by him, it not infrequently happens that while the evidence of each chartulary throws a flood of light upon the history of land-owners in its own immediate neighbourhood, those of Pontefract, Rievaulx, and such as belong to the early category, sometimes furnish besides a very copious illustration to places at a distance.

This gives a special and particular interest to the document before us, while the few cases such as Nos. 5, 8, 9, 13, 21, 25, 26, 27, 29, and 30 of the first fasciculus, in which the lists of witnesses in the Pontefract chartulary are abbreviated in the same fashion as those of Selby and Kirkstall, help to show how the later fashion of abbreviation was commencing and spreading.

The chartulary of the Pontefract Priory of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist is thus a very interesting volume, and of much more importance and value than can be attributed to very many other documents of the same class. It was one of the earliest, and the

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vi.

## INTRODUCTION.

greater portion of it was written in the first half of the reign of King Henry III., probably by some monk of the establishment, certainly by some one who has left upon it a few peculiarities due to his French origin. (See *Post*, Nos. lx x. and lx xiii. [*sic*]). The copiousness of its lists of witnesses is as probably due to the circumstance that their names being those of living men, were familiar to the cartographer, who seems to have bestowed upon his task the most loving care, and to have made his work the labour of his life. It must have been his occupation for many years, and a careful examination of the details has shown that it was accomplished with an almost infinite amount of painstaking, while the materials with which the artist worked were chosen with such skilled judgment, that after the lapse of above six centuries and a half hardly a stroke has faded, but every jot and tittle that he placed upon the parchment before him is even now as easily deciphered as it would have been the day it was written.

Not that any but the specialist would find it easy to read the document; for practically it was written in a species of short-hand, which appears to have been purposely elaborated as much as possible, so as to baffle—as it may easily do—the efforts to decipher it of any but an expert. To such, however, on the other hand, the whole would have been very readily legible, though, perhaps, not always at the first glance.

The volume, which measures 12 inches by 8, and is less than an inch in thickness, is in appearance almost the exact counterpart of the *Liber Niger* of the Exchequer; indeed, at a little distance it would be almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other. As was the case with all the original chartularies which I have seen (and I particularly instance that of Kirkstall, in the Public Record Office, and those of Healaugh, Nostell and Rievaulx, in the Cottonian Library), it is composed of several fasciculi of irregular size. Originally most of these were intended to open with one or two blank folios as an introduction to the particular section of which each treats; and thus the third page, the recto of the second folio of the **first fasciculus**, has been folioed as folio 1, though the MS. commenced on the previous folio; and there was at first a leaf unwritten on. The folios thus left

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## THE PONTEFRACT CHARTULARY.

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blank, and some few which precede the whole, were subsequently utilized for a list of the charters (not always accurate), and for documents of a later date. These also were all of parchment, which was of pretty uniform size and quality; but when the volume came into the possession of Roger Dodsworth in 1626, he, in his usual manner, prefixed to the whole a few leaves of paper on which he made an *Index Locorum* to serve his own peculiar requirements.

An examination of the very first page of the volume will show with what carefulness and calculating art the labour of copying was undertaken. Each page is written in double columns, with a wide margin at top and bottom. Each column contains forty-seven lines, and the first two charters exactly fill the first page, without leaving the smallest space vacant or exhibiting the slightest trace of caligraphic irregularity. The writer must thus have calculated the exact length of these two charters, and then so contrived his first column as to absorb exactly one-half of the matter contained in them, the second half exactly filling up the second column; and the third charter (that of Hugh de Laval) commencing on the retro. One consequence of this was that the foundation charters of Robert de Lascy, and nothing else, were presented to the reader on the first page of the volume.

As may be gathered from the table of contents prefixed to the present volume, the **first fasciculus** contained the seigniorial charters, that is to say, those of the lords of the fee. They were originally twenty-six in number, and followed each other in almost strict chronological order. There was, however, a disturbing confusion between the two Roberts—Robert the founder, and Robert the last male of his race,—and this occurs in the Nostell chartulary also,—while one charter which crept in among the lordly documents, was a grant from a Lacey of another family. To these twenty-six the original cartographer, or a disciple who had caught his style, appended other two, though without completing their ornamentation; and still two others were subsequently added, of the new lord, Edmund de Lascy.

One of these last is dated 1258, and the other, which is contemporary with the foundation of the Black Friars at Pontefract, in the Southgate valley, makes a grant of dead wood to the monastery, to compensate

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## INTRODUCTION.

the Cluniac House for the loss of tithes from a plot which Edmund de Lascy had given to the newly-established body, to which tithes the monks were entitled, as holding the rectory of the Parish Church.

These two charters complete four folios and a column, and the succeeding folios to the end of folio 10 were at first left blank. But they were subsequently filled with later documents, among which were a list of the "customs" of the Master of St. Nicholas, and a grant by Henry de Lascy of the chapels of St. Nicholas and St. Ellen. Copies follow of some other documents which concerned St. Nicholas's Hospital, and of some particulars relating to tithes belonging to the monastery. These are numbered, though somewhat irregularly and capriciously, up to 37; for, in fact, there are in all eighteen documents, only seven of which were numbered, the rest being grouped, and the first only of each group obtaining a distinctive number.

**Fasciculus No. 1** was thus composed of five sheets, inset so as to form a quire of ten parchment folios of uniform quality; and this sheaf of seigniorial charters must have been for some time entirely independent of the other fasciculi. Accordingly, but still before the different portions were made into one, and indeed while the copying was proceeding, the first and the last folios of each fasciculus would have been treated as a mere cover by the original cartographer, the charters themselves being commenced on the second folio, which therefore was numbered folio 1 by the later paginator. And such was the method adopted with each fasciculus until the whole was finished. But when the separate portions were collected and bound together, the hitherto blank folios became a part of the volume, the unoccupied leaves at the end of each fasciculus combining with the commencement of the next to form a series of blank pages. These were, in due course, utilised for additional and subsequent matter, though the method and style deteriorated considerably as the years rolled on.

The **second fasciculus** commenced with what was afterwards folio 10, while its contents began on folio 11, folio 10 being as I have said left blank. This fasciculus contained ecclesiastical charters, subdivided into episcopal and papal. The episcopal charters originally numbered seventeen, and extended to No. 54 on folio 13, to which again