Medieval History

This series includes pioneering editions of medieval historical accounts by eye-witnesses and contemporaries, collections of source materials such as charters and letters, and works that applied new historiographical methods to the interpretation of the European middle ages. The nineteenth century saw an upsurge of interest in medieval manuscripts, texts and artefacts, and the enthusiastic efforts of scholars and antiquaries made a large body of material available in print for the first time. Although many of the analyses have been superseded, they provide fascinating evidence of the academic practices of their time, while a considerable number of texts have still not been re-edited and are still widely consulted.

Abstracts of the Chartularies of the Priory of Monkbretton

The priory of St Mary Magdalene, Monkbretton, was founded around 1154 as a daughter house of Pontefract, and became Benedictine in 1281 following disputes with the Cluniac order. The chartulary, abstracted and published in 1924, is unusually late, written after 1529, shortly before the priory’s dissolution. It comprises 352 folios, arranged by location, with a table of contents. Also included are lists made in 1558 of books belonging to the prior and monks, by then dispersed among several owners. An earlier Latin chartulary exists in the British Library and an English abstract of this forms an appendix to the present volume, along with other items that do not appear in the later document. Although the priory was relatively small, the monks were careful stewards of their property. Most of its possessions were in the near vicinity, and it escaped the first round of dissolutions, with fourteen monks receiving pensions.
Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

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Abstracts of the Chartularies of the Priory of Monkbretton

Edited by John William Walker
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.
When this edition was originally prepared, the manuscript of 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 143 and was acquired by the British Library. It now has the reference BL Additional Manuscript 50755. It is number 675 in G.R.C. Davies, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain: A Short Catalogue*, (London, 1958) and 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 J.R. Purvis, ‘New light on the chartularies of Monkbretton Priory’, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 37 (1948), 67–71, and 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. Lot 142 in the same sale, which is now Additional Manuscript 50754 of the British Library, was the cartulary of the Priory of St John of Pontefract, which forms Record Series volumes 25 and 30 (also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection).

J.W. Walker, the editor of this volume, was president of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society from 1938 to 1948, and an obituary and bibliography appear in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 38 (1951–5), 416–18. He edited volume 5 of the Wakefield Court Rolls for the Record Series, and was the author of *An Historical and Architectural Description of the Priory of St Mary Magdalen of Monk Bretton*, published by the Society as volume 5 of the Extra Series in 1926.
ABSTRACTS OF THE

CHARTULARIES

OF THE

PRIORY OF MONKBRETTON
THE YORKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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ABSTRACTS OF THE
CHARTULARIES
OF THE
PRIORY OF MONKBRETTON

EDITED BY
J. W. WALKER, O.B.E., F.S.A.,
Honorary Secretary
Yorkshire Archæological Society Record Series.

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY.
1924.
PREFACE.

A Priory in the wood of Lund, about one-and-three-quarter miles east of the town of Barnsley in the West Riding of the county of York, was founded by Adam Fitz-Swane about the year 1153-4, for monks of the Cluniac order, and was dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen.

The founder died about Midsummer, 1159. This priory was a daughter house of the Cluniac priory of St. John of Pontefract; Adam, the fourth prior of that house, was chosen as the first prior of the new foundation, taking with him certain monks from Pontefract. Within a hundred years of the foundation dissensions arose as to the subjection of Monk Bretton (or, as it was then called, Bretton) priory to the mother house, and the election of a prior. An adjudication of the dispute was made in 1269, whereby the daughter house was to be "free and absolute of all subjection or obedience to Pontefract," and were to have "a free election or creation of the prior of their own will and pleasure whenever a vacancy occurs," but "they shall send to Pontefract for the prior of Pontefract to install him upon his election and creation." This judgment failed to satisfy the conflicting parties, and the monks of Bretton decided that their independence could only be secured by a complete severance of their house from Pontefract and also from the Cluniac order. On 8 September, 1279, a visitation was made by the priors of Montdidier and Lenton in the chapter house at Monk Bretton, by order of Ives de Chassant, abbot of Cluni, when the prior of Montacute passed sentence of excommunication upon William de Rihaile the prior, the subprior and the whole contumacious community; he also revoked the compact between the two priories and declared it null and void.

On 4 January of the following year, 1280–1, William Wickwane, archbishop of York, visited Monk Bretton priory, to whom, in their chapter house, the prior, subprior and the whole community pro-

2 Ibd., p. 319.
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mised canonical obedience, and for the future were to be recognised as a Benedictine house.

The priory was surrendered on 21 November, 1538, by the prior and thirteen monks.

The Chartulary, now at Woolley Hall, must have been written between the years 1529 and 1538, as it contains several grants in the reign of Henry VIII, the latest dated 6 July, 1529, only nine years before the priory was dissolved.

This Woolley copy of the chartulary is a third volume of 352 pages of vellum, the leaves measuring 17 inches long by 8 inches broad, and (inclusive of its covers) 3½ inches thick. Early in the nineteenth century it was bound in brown calf by its then owner, Godfrey Wentworth Wentworth, Esquire, whose bookplate it bears. Unfortunately the leaves were then cut down, and in the process some letters of the inscriptions on the margins were thus removed, and at the same time gilt was applied to the edges of the leaves.

The handwriting is large and clear, the vermilion ink, used in the titles and in the ornamentation of the initial letters, is very bright. The black ink used in the text is still unfaded. The initial letters, of which a few specimens are reproduced, are finely drawn, and in some cases very large: many of them include masks drawn with much humour, red, black and yellow inks being used for illuminating purposes. Towards the middle of the volume the initial letters are larger and more elaborate, but rarely bear faces: those on folios 269d to 278d are of a composite character. Quaint outline drawings of human heads have been made on the lower margins of folios 72 and 136. At folio 207 the handwriting changes, but the titles in vermilion continue to be in the same hand throughout.

The charters are grouped under vills, of which a consecutive list is given at the commencement of the volume. Following, and on the dexter side of the last leaf of this index, there has been inserted a list of books belonging to the priory, or rather to the prior and two of the monks, which was made by them 21 July, 1558 (twenty years after the dissolution of the priory), when they were living at Worsborough, a village near their old house. The inserted catalogue is in quite a different style of writing, and the ink has partially faded. It occupies four pages of double columns, and contains a list of 148 books, 31 of which are stated to be in the house

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Of William Brown, formerly prior of Monkebretton; 28 in the house of Thomas Wylkynson and Richard Hinchclyf at Worsburgh, given to them by Thomas Frobyser formerly subprior of the monastery; 15 belonged to Thomas Wylkynson, alias Bolton, in the same house; 54 were acquired or copied by Richard Hinchclyff, who also possessed 13 books on physic and 7 on grammar.

When the brethren left the priory they must have taken this chartulary with them to Worsborough, and inserted the catalogue of their books in it in 1558.

Worsborough is a village only three miles from Wortley Hall, the next resting-place of this volume, so it is most probable that it was acquired from the deposed monks residing at Worsborough, either in their lifetime or on the death of the survivor, by Sir Richard Wortley, of Wortley Hall, who died 25 July, 1603, or by his son, Sir Francis, in whose possession it was on 30 December, 1629, when Mr. Francis Burdett of Birthwaite, lent to Roger Dodsworth some notes “taken out of a Cowcher belonging to the priory of Monkretton in the custody of Sir Francis Worteley, Knight, baronet.”

In August, 1630, Roger Dodsworth copied a large portion of it, which copy is now in the Bodleian Library, and states that it was then in the possession of Sir Francis Wortley. Extracts were taken from this book in 1648, which was then in the possession of Sir George Wentworth, of Woolley.

How the chartulary passed from the library at Wortley Hall to that at Woolley, between the years 1630 and 1648, is not known. Dr. John Burton took extracts from this book when preparing his Monasticon Eboracense, published in 1758, and records that the owner was Sir Godfrey Wentworth, of Hickleton (and Woolley). Since that date it has remained the property of his descendants at Woolley Hall.

There is an earlier chartulary in the British Museum (Landsdowne MS. 495). It is smaller than the Woolley MS., having only 65 leaves on vellum. This MS. contains 262 charters, many of them not being included in the Woolley copy. Probably the lands to which they referred had been sold or exchanged before the compilation of the later chartulary, thus the deeds had passed out of the possession of, and were of no further use to the priory.

1 Dodsworth MS., vol. 155, fo. 67d.
2 Ibid., fo. 25.
3 Landsdowne MS. 207, fo. 289 (old), 283 (new).
4 Mon. Ebor., p. 92, note a.
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The Lansdowne chartulary once consisted of 10 small pages and 90 greater pages, according to a note made at the end of the book by a former owner, Sir William Armyne, 6 May, 1633, but is now reduced to 65 folios, 55 large and 10 small. The folios are of vellum, and measure the smaller 10 1/2 by 6 1/2 inches, the larger 11 by 7 1/4 inches. It is now bound in brown leather, the binding measuring 11 3/4 by 7 1/2 inches, and it is 3/8 inch thick.

The first two folios are on paper and contain a brief but inaccurate note on the chartulary by Dr. Ducarel, who examined it 18 April, 1763. The manuscript commences in the thirteenth and continues into the fourteenth century, the latter having only three deeds, of which the latest is dated 1336, the remaining 259 belong to the thirteenth century.

On folio 56 is a curious charm or curse in old French against worms, cancers, festering, whitlows, scurvy, etc.

This chartulary came into the possession of William Blitheman when the site of the monastery with its buildings was granted to him in 1540. He died in 1543. His grandson, Jasper Blitheman, sold the site of the monastery and the buildings that had not been pulled down, and presumably the chartulary, in 1580, to George, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, who settled the Monk Bretton property upon his fourth son, Henry Talbot, on his marriage with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir William Rayner, of Overton Longville, co. Huntingdon. Henry Talbot died in 1595, aged 33, leaving a widow and two daughters. The widow married, for her second husband, Thomas Holcroft, of Vale Royal, co. Chester, whom Dodsworth mentions as the custodian of this chartulary in 1614.1 Henry Talbot's second daughter, Mary, married Sir William Armyne, of Osgodby, co. Lincoln, bart., and in the partition of her father's estate Monk Bretton priory fell to her share. Dodsworth took extracts from this chartulary in 1634, which he states was then "in the possession of Sir William Ayrmyn, Knight, of Osgodby."2 In 1704 Peter le Neve saw it in the hands of the heir of Millington, the bookseller, of London.3 Walter Clavell, Esq., had it in 1709, at whose sale it was purchased by James West, Esq., who was the owner on 18 April, 1763, when it was examined by Dr. Ducarel. At some period unknown it passed into the library of William, first Marquess of Lansdowne, who died 7 May, 1805. His manuscripts, including

1 Dodsworth MS. 159, fo. 34.
2 Ibid. 147, fo. 76; 155, fo. 61; 159, fo. 34.
3 Harleian MS. 4757, p. 98.
the chartulary of Monkbretton, were purchased in 1807, by a vote of Parliament, for the sum of £4,925, from his representatives, and now form the Lansdowne collection in the British Museum. This chartulary is numbered 405.

A transcript of the Woolley MS. had been made by our late honorary librarian, Mr. W. T. Lancaster, F.S.A., but I have gone carefully through every deed in the original, making fairly complete abstracts of all the charters in English. For the sake of brevity I have omitted the warranty and sealing clauses. Christian names are usually given in a modern form, but surnames and place-names (except in a few cases of the former denoting a trade or occupation) are printed as they appear in the original. The lists of witnesses, fortunately very complete, are always given, and it is hoped that they may be of use to Yorkshire genealogists, especially for fourteenth and fifteenth century pedigrees.

The Monkbretton Chartulary in the British Museum (Lansdowne MS. 405) was transcribed and abstracts in English made from it by the editor. When the same deed occurs in both the Woolley and Lansdowne chartularies it is printed in the Woolley copy, and its reference number is given in the Lansdowne copy, thus: Fo. 3d. r, No. 6, W. MS. (Woolley MS.). The abstracts from the Lansdowne copy are generally summarised, only the bare facts are given, but all the witnesses’ names are given.

When in 1634 Roger Dodsworth copied the chartulary, now Lansdowne MS. 405, it was complete and contained the ninety pages mentioned by Sir William Arminey in the previous year. Dodsworth’s MS. 8, 147, 155, and 159 supply the deeds now missing in the original. To make this volume complete I have transcribed all those not contained in the Lansdowne copy, and added them as a supplement.

Where the name of the grantee is not mentioned in these transcripts it should be understood that the grant is always made to the prior and convent of Monkbretton.

The seal of the priory was a vesica, showing the patron saint, St. Mary Magdalene, full length, wearing a long open cloak, with the legend, Marie. This seal, 2½ inches long by 2 inches, was attached to a deed of 1420.

My own and the thanks of the Society are specially due to Major Wentworth, of Woolley Hall, for his kindness in entrusting the chartulary and many other early deeds to me for the purposes
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of transcription and publication. I must also express the great obligation which I am under to my friend, Mr. Charles Clay, F.S.A., for his invaluable help in reading the proof sheets and for many suggestions; to Professor Hamilton Thompson, F.S.A., for help with the witnesses to the papal bulls, and to my daughter, Ethel W. Walker, for copying out the transcript of the Woolley chartulary for the printers, for preparing the index, and for copying the quaint drawings.

J. W. WALKER.

EAST HABOURNE,

October, 1924.