RIPON MINSTER

Collegiate church of St Peter and St Wilfrid

County of Yorkshire : Diocese of York
Founded 7th century

Ripon minster, like Beverley minster, was an ancient minster church held in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the archbishop of York. The archive at York minster has preserved one writ of King Henry (0000, Regesta 1382), ordering that the five churches of York, Beverley, Southwell, Ripon, and Hexham, all held by the archbishop, were exempt from public burdens, but otherwise Ripon is very poorly represented by royal acts of the period. One authentic act of Henry I (1) in favour of St Wilfrid of Ripon and Archbishop T(hurstan) of York has been preserved through antiquarian transcripts. A forgery in the name of King Stephen (Ste/717) refers to holding as well as in the time of King Edward and King William, his grandfather, and in the time of his uncles King William and King Henry, ‘sicut charte predecessorum meorum testificantur’, but, since the wording is taken from a similar act for Beverley minster (Ste/99), it provides no credible evidence in relation to Ripon.1 There are no extant acts for the church of Ripon from Henry II’s

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1 Cronne and Davis show by italics the dependence of Ste/717 on Ste/99 but they based their Ripon text only on Fowler’s edition. There are two closely-related manuscript copies in the sources from which King Henry’s act is printed here, BL MS Harley 6387 (s. xvii), fol. 41v (‘Confirmatio regis Stephani de libertatibus infra lucam’) [B], and
time nor indeed any for the archbishop that make provision for Ripon under him. The survival of an authentic act of Henry I shows that the minster did seek the king’s seal and that something from its archive was retained until the seventeenth century. Acts retained by some individual archbishops at this date might have found their way into the archive at York minster—as discussed in the headnote there—but may not have been selected for inclusion by later cartularists there.

Hugh the Chanter, 52, recording the history of the archbishops from 1066 to 1127, tells us that Archbishop Thomas II (1108–1114) ‘obtained from King Henry the same liberty for the prebends of the canons of St Mary’s, Southwell, as our prebends and those of St John of Beverley and St Wilfrid of Ripon have’ (Hugh the Chanter, 52). The evidence of Domesday Book, discussed in the headnote to York Minster in the charters of King William II, shows that the canons of York and Beverley already enjoyed substantial endowments in 1086, while Hugh records that the canons of York were assigned prebends by Archbishop Thomas I. Since Hugh surely knew his ground, we may take it that there were canons with prebends at Ripon in his time, but Domesday Book provides us with no background for this. The land of St Wilfrid was the property of the archbishop in the early eleventh century, as we see from an account of his estates in the York Gospels, printed and discussed by Woodman, *Northern Houses*, 147–8 (with a map, 142). In 1086 Ripon still appears only in the archbishop’s lands. The survey does not reveal the carucage of the *Leuga S. Wilfridi*, perhaps because, like St John’s Carucate at Beverley, it did not pay geld, but from the number of ploughs it may have been as many as twenty carucates; its berewicks are added up to some 64½ carucates *ad geldam* (*DB*, i. 303d; Yorks § 2.

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Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O. 3. 2 (copied by Sir Thomas Herbert, 1606–1682, of York), fol. 51v (‘Confirmatio regis Stephani de libertatibus infra Leucam’) [C]: its absence from MS Dodsworth 160 may be significant. Another attestation is found in a fabricated record of pleading at Ripon, ostensibly heard before the king’s justices in 1229, when there was no eyre in Yorkshire; this says that the canon who presented the case for the chapter of Ripon, Geoffrey de Lardare, ‘profert cartas regis Attelstani . . . Et similiter ostendit plures alias cartas factas eidem capitulo per Henricum regem filium Conquestoris et per regem Stephanum, ratificantes et confirmantes omnes libertates et consuetudines et terras ecclesie et capituli’ (Fowler, *Memorials of the Church of Ripon*, i. 51–63 (at p. 55). This document is a manuscript from the fifteenth century; it names four justices who did not serve at the same period, though one of them did sit at Ripon in 1231, and, though full of interesting detail, it may signify no more than that the forger had seen Ste/717.
In 1066 the manor of Ripon was worth £32 to Archbishop Ealdred, but in 1086 it was largely waste and its value reduced by more than three quarters (§ 2. W7–9). It was still held by Archbishop Thomas, who, we hear, was lodging there in the summer of 1100, when news reached him that William Rufus was dead (Hugh the Chanter, 16). He was again at Ripon at the time of his own death in November 1100, as we learn from the twelfth-century history of the archbishops (Raine, *Historians of the Church of York*, ii. 364). Later archbishops also used Ripon as a residence. John of Hexham relates that in 1140 Thurstan’s barns at Ripon were raided by Count Alan III of Richmond, who, a few years later, attacked Archbishop William in the church of Ripon close to the shrine of St Wilfrid (*Hexham*, i. 132, 144). Archbishop Henry Murdac, previously abbot of Fountains (which is nearby), withdrew to Ripon in 1148 and remained there for three years, while the citizens of York refused him entry, according to the narrative by Hugh of Kirkstall (*Memorials of Fountains*, i. 102–3). In Henry II’s time, Archbishop Geoffrey, when in England, preferred to lodge at one of his minsters, Ripon, Southwell, or Beverley, rather than at York, where the canons were hostile (Lovatt, *EEA 27 York, 1189–1212*, pp. lxxiii–lxxxvi).

At Ripon Domesday Book mentions that *canonici* held fourteen bovates there. If we presume that these were canons of Ripon rather than those of York, it is a meagre endowment, more fitting to *clerici* in support of canons. The earliest direct evidence for a prebendal fund at Ripon minster comes from an act of Archbishop Thurstan who gave two bovates ‘in perpetuam prebendam eiusdem ecclesie’ (Burton, *EEA 5 York, 1070–1154*, 52–3, no. 61, 1137 × 1140). Again, this is meagre. In

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2 Explicit exemptions from geld are rare in Yorkshire Domesday: besides Beverley (*DB*, i. 304a; § 2. E1), there is a small group of lands near Ripon (*DB*, i. 303d; § 2. W13, see context note on 0000, *Regesta* 1082 for York Minster), Marton (*DB*, i. 307a; § 5. E46), Hamphall Stubbs and Tanshelf (*DB*, i. 316a, 316c; §§ 9. W43, W64).

3 This was printed by Fowler, *Memorials of Ripon*, i. 95, as item 2 in the Darnborough manuscript loaned to him, and from Fowler by Farrer, *Early Yorkshire Charters*, i. 109 (no. 116). Burton does not reprint the text nor trace the source. It may be noted here that the Darnborough manuscript is Leeds UL, Ripon Cathedral MS 55 (formerly XVIII. G. 34), a history of Ripon, tentatively attributed by the catalogue to Robert Waller, written 1775 × 1778, once owned by Thomas Darnborough (19th cent.), with an appendix of forty-six documents, used by Fowler in *Memorials of Ripon*, who cites items from it as Darnborough MS. With roman numerals (misinterpreted as separate manuscripts by Burton); MS 56 is a draft of the history without the transcripts, MS 56a is notes towards the work. Another act of less secure date was item 1 in the Darnborough manuscript, Fowler, *Memorials of Ripon*, i. 95, whence Farrer, i. 115–16 (no. 125), calendared by
the same period an act of Thurstan in favour of the recently established Cistercian abbey at Fountains was witnessed by five dignitaries of York minster together with seven named canons, ‘et omnibus aliis canonici sancti Petri’, and by five named canons of St Wilfrid (Burton, *EEA 5 York, 1070–1154*, 40–41, no. 44, 1135 × 1139).\(^4\) How and when the canons of Ripon came to share, like those of Beverley and later Southwell, in the privileges enjoyed by the canons of York is far from evident. From Hugh the Chanter’s few words, one might guess that it was Archbishop Thomas who organized their chapter, as he did at Beverley and at York, and that it was done, in effect, at his own expense between 1086 and 1100. Any royal charters from his time or the time of his immediate successors might have survived as part of the archive of the archbishops or that of the canons. The source of the one extant writ is stated by Dodsworth to have been an old manuscript in the hands of Christopher Lyndall at Ripon in 1620.\(^5\)

The canons of Ripon would come to claim that the high privileges shared with the minsters of York and Beverley dated in all cases from the time of King Athelstan. Even the nature of those rights is not clearly attested by authentic documents, as discussed under the forgery in Henry I’s name, 0000, *Regesta* 1083 for York minster. At Beverley the sanctuary was well evidenced, and surely long established, in King Stephen’s time, but it is only from that date that the church’s claim to one thrave from every plough in the East Riding was consciously explained as a gift of King Athelstan. From Ripon, however, we have through the records of the Duchy of Lancaster a long verbal process of hearings ostensibly conducted before the king’s justices at Ripon in July and September 1229, which has a bearing on the claims. This was printed by Fowler, *Memorials of Ripon*, i. 51–63, from a

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\(^4\) The number of prebends reached seven when Stanwick was added in 1230 (Lovatt, *EEA 27 York, 1189–1212*, 20n, citing Fowler, *Memorials of Ripon*, ii. 2–3).

\(^5\) Christopher Lyndall (1560–1622), MA (Cambridge), was a prebendary of Ripon from 1604 to his death in 1622 (Fowler, *Memorials of Ripon*, ii. 287). He is named in Cause Papers, 1612, when his age was given as 52 (York, Borthwick Institute, CP.H.732).
fifteenth-century copy, DL 41/270, discussed by Woodman, *Northern Houses*, 258–65. This is the earliest source for a forgery in the name of King Athelstan and a verse-act in Middle English in the name of the same king, closely related to a similar piece from Beverley; it may be doubted whether this verse can be as early as 1229, and it appears that the record of proceedings is itself inauthentic.

Late evidence from Ripon has been discussed alongside earlier evidence from Beverley in relation to the operation of sanctuary at these two minsters by T. B. Lambert, ‘Spiritual protection and secular power: the evolution of sanctuary and legal privilege in Ripon and Beverley, 900–1300’, in *Peace and Protection in the Middle Ages* (Toronto, 2009), 121–140.


See also BEVERLEY MINSTER, HEXHAM PRIORY, SOUTHWELL MINSTER, YORK MINSTER.

0000 Writ instructing the king’s officials in Yorkshire and Northumberland that the church of Ripon shall have the king’s peace during a four-day fair. 1108 × 1127, probably 1121 × 1128

ANTiquarian TRANSCRIPTS: Bodl. MS Dodsworth 160 (Liber M), fol. 250v (copied by Roger Dodsworth, 1585–1654, ‘at Rippon, 6 Sept 1620. Ex MS perantiquo penes Xpoferum Lindall’) (‘feria de Rippon’’) [B]; BL MS Harley 6387 (s. xvii), fol. 41r–v [C]; Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O. 3. 2 (copied by Sir Thomas Herbert, 1606–1682, of York), fol. 51v [D].

H(enricus) rex Angl(orum)\textsuperscript{a} uicecomitibus et ministris et omnibus baronibus francis et anglis de Eboraciscira et de\textsuperscript{b} Northumberlant salutem. Sciatis me concessisse sancto Wilfrido de Ripun et T(\textsuperscript{c}) archiepiscopo Ebor(ensi) habere feriam per IIII dies ad festum sancti Wilfridi de Apri, II diebus ante festum et die festi et in crastino. Et precipio quod omnes illuc euntes et inde redeuntes cum omnibus mercatis suis habeant meam firmam pacem ne eis injuria uel contumelia fiat neque disturbentur super X libras forisfacture\textsuperscript{d}. T(estibus)\textsuperscript{e} Nigel(lo) de Albinni et Gaufr(ido) filio Pagani et Gaufr(ido) de Glintona. Apud Wodestoch\textsuperscript{f}.

\begin{table}[h!]
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\textit{Anglie} & \textit{om.} & \textit{CD} & \textit{T. B T(urstino) Farrer} \textit{Thomae CD} \\
\textit{1716, 1801, Fowler} & \textit{librarum forisfacturam CD} & \textit{T(estibus) B} \textit{]
\textit{Testes CD, with names in nominative} & \textit{Wudestocham CD} \\
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\textit{Henry king of the English to sheriffs and officials and all barons French and English of Yorkshire and Northumberland greeting. Know that I have granted to St Wilfrid of Ripon and to T(\textsuperscript{e}) archbishop of York to have a fair for four days at the feast of St Wilfrid in April, two days before the feast and the feast-day and the morrow. And I command that all going thither or returning thence with all their merchandise shall have my firm peace, so that neither injury nor contumelia shall be done to them nor shall they be disturbed upon £10 of forfeit. Witness Nigel d’Aubigny and Geoffrey fitz Pain and Geoffrey de Clinton. At Woodstock.}

\textbf{DATE:} After the election of Thomas as archbishop of York, 27 May 1108; before Nigel d’Aubigny retired to Le Bec in 1127, before his death in 1129. Farrer supposed that the attestation of Geoffrey de Clinton ruled out Archbishop Thomas II, but this is not so (e.g. 000, \textit{Regesta} 958 for Abingdon); the initial could represent either Thomas or Thurstan. See Witness.

\textbf{ADDRESS:} Grants of fair in Henry I’s time usually have an address to a shire court or a general address, sometimes, though not invariably, with the further inclusion of \textit{ministri}. That for Beverley has a general address (000, \textit{Regesta} 1257), that for Nostell a shire address to Yorkshire (0000, \textit{Regesta} 1207). In this case the intention is probably to address the shires of Yorkshire and Northumberland, including \textit{ministri} as the persons most likely to interfere and therefore most likely to be shown the document, but omitting the archbishop as the beneficiary. Why was Northumberland included? It seems unlikely that the fair was expected to attract much business from north of the Tees. Perhaps the inclusion indicates a particular difficulty with Northumbrian officials interfering with buyers or sellers travelling to Yorkshire.
WITNESS: Nigel d’Aubigny, sometime justice in Yorkshire; Geoffrey fitz Pain; Geoffrey de Clinton. All three appear as witnesses in the 1110s, but in every case they attest more frequently in and after 1121 than before. In particular, Nigel d’Aubigny witnessed a high proportion of northern business during the period 1121–7, when he was the king’s chief adviser on such matters after his recall from serving as justice.

PLACE: Woodstock.

CONTEXT: A standard grant of fair, though it is distinctive in specifying the feast of St Wilfrid in April. The feast was kept on 24 April, the anniversary of Wilfrid’s death, in the north of England, but in the province of Canterbury it was displaced by the feast of St Mellitus, third archbishop of Canterbury. In the southern province Wilfrid was commemorated on 12 October, and even at York the historic date was redesignated as a translatio to avoid apparent contradiction (F. A. Gasquet & E. Bishop, The Bosworth Psalter (London, 1908), 159). The need to specify reflects the southern perspective, but the fair itself kept to the long-standing date of the feast. The fact that this was a four-day fair may be a sign that the grant is later than King Henry’s increasing the fair held at Beverley at the feast of St John the Baptist from two days to five days (000, Regesta 1257, datable January 1121 × January 1123. Ripon was not likely to have done better than Beverley in this respect. Yet the confirmation of privileges in the name of King Stephen (Ste/717, and see below) refers to ‘ferias etiam suas quinque diebus’; this wording was taken from his act for Beverley, and it is not apparent whether it actually extended the fair from four to five days.