

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society.

25 APRIL—23 MAY 1910.

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY

EASTER TERM 1910.

No. LVII.

BEING No. 3 OF THE FOURTEENTH VOLUME.

(EIGHTH VOLUME OF THE NEW SERIES.)



Cambridge:

DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; BOWES & BOWES.

LONDON: G. BELL AND SONS, LTD.

1910

Price 5s. net.

NOTES ON AN ANCIENT SEAL, PRESENTED IN 1910 A.D.
TO THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY BY
EDWARD HAILSTONE, F.R.HIST.S.

This seal was dug up in Bottisham Fen, near Anglesey Priory in 1868 A.D., is oval in form, and possibly originally gilt. On it is portrayed Saint Lawrence with his gridiron surrounded by the inscription, *SAVNTTE LAVRENCII. No other Lawrence note is known in connection with Anglesey Priory save Master



Actual size.

Lawrence de St Nicholas, a great benefactor to the house. In fact, a large proportion of the buildings, of which there are still some remains, were due to his munificence, and so we are tempted to suppose that the seal in question was his: the more so as we shall see from what follows reasons for concluding that he died within the precincts of the Priory¹.

Unfortunately, we have, so far, but scant notices of his life. Such as they are, we append in brief.

In 1190 A.D. he was Prebend of Tockerington or Torkelinton (Throckrington, co. of Northumberland). He is described as a kinsman of the Pope, and subdean and chaplain to the same, so that we may assume that he was one of the various foreign priests of that day foisted into English benefices. Where St Nicholas' birthplace was is uncertain. But there is a

¹ Vide *Hist. Bottisham*, C. A. S. Octavo Publications, No. xiv, passim, and p. 340, quoting ADD. MSS. 15, 352, 359, and 15, 353, 334, 356; Reg. Album iii. 856, quoted by Raine; Reg. Gray pp. 148, 154, 155.

curious entry in the Papal Letters dated 1281 A.D. Id. Mar. Orvieto fol. 26: "Mandate to the Archbps, Bps, &c. of England informing them that Master Geoffrey is sent to collect the cess and other dues, and that there may be no doubt about the items they are here appended¹." (*Inter alia*) "In the diocese of Ely, the hospital of Angleshei—1 *Melachin*" (acc. to the Editor; a Hispano-Saracenic coin). No other place in the diocese is mentioned. This cess was perhaps due owing to a grant of some form of Papal protection. Now from the name is not this *Melachin* a Majorcan coin, the ancient *Malla*²? In the Balearic islands we find no commune of the name of St Nicholas, but in Palma, the capital of Majorca, there is a church dedicated to that saint. On the other hand, there is in France, in the Department of Tarn et Garonne, a "chef-lieu" of St Nicholas de la Grave in the canton of, and close by, Castel-Sarrasin. These indications, however, are perhaps too slight to afford any reliable conclusion. But to resume.

In 1217 A.D. on the nomination of Cardinal Guala, he was appointed Rector of Chesterton, Cambridgeshire³.

In 1218 A.D. at the prayer of Master R., official of Pandulph, Bishop elect of Norwich, he was presented, by the patron, the Bishop of Ely, to the Rectory of Tirindon (Tyrrington or Ter-rington near Lynn in Norfolk), and, on the petition of Guala, Cardinal of St Martin's, instituted and confirmed on 4 Id. February.

In 1226 A.D. we read of various disputes with the Dean and Chapter of York respecting payments due from the prebend of Tockerington, the church of the same, in the Archbp's gift having been added in 1223 A.D., and a dispensation to hold it with his other benefices.

In the same year 10 Cal. Jan. the Pope sends a mandate to the Bishop of Lincoln to cause justice to be done on those who disturb the rights and possessions of Master Lawrence de St Nicholas whether after his leaving England, or who withhold their rents from those to whom he has granted the same to

¹ i, 475.

² Vide Bover, *Noticias de Mallorca*, p. 139.

³ Rot. Pat. June 29, 1217 A.D., Papal Lett. i, 52, C. A. Soc. vol. vii, 210.

farm, or in any way injure him. A concurrent letter is sent to the Abbot of Walden, the Prior of Barnwell, and the Archbishop of York. Hence we may conclude that he held at that time some benefice in the gift of the above mentioned Abbot.

Now as to his connection with the House of Anglesey. Originally, the brethren serving God there formed a "hospital for the poor sick" as the early documents state. The first Prior that we read of is one Richard, whose name occurs in 1222 A.D. It seems therefore probable that Master Lawrence de St Nicholas, moved by charity and the poor condition of the house, determined when Rector of Chesterton to become a second benefactor, remodelling the establishment and providing for Canons under the rule of St Augustine. The details of his gifts are specified in the *Hist. of Bottisham*. The church was built and in 1236 A.D. there were in process of completion, the refectory, chapter house, dormitory, cloister, and the Prior's chamber over it, entered from the outside by a staircase the corbel tables of which are now visible. On the north side he looked over what was, up to our own day, called Paradise Garden. The entrance to the Priory was on the south side—now a garden doorway. Master Lawrence must have taken a particular interest in the house, and almost certainly died there. This we may conclude from what follows: Nicholas Sandwich, Prior of Christchurch, Canterbury, in his time, viz. 1244—1254 A.D., gave a power of attorney to two of his monks to claim a book lent to Master Lawrence de St Nicholas which remained with the canons of Anglesey after the said person's decease and which we know from a subsequent catalogue of the library at Canterbury was returned. Again, on the death of Master Lawrence de St Nicholas a deposit was made in the treasury of Anglesey of 10 marks, three of which were due and paid up in 1267 A.D. to his nephew Theodenus de Thostia (?=Theodwin of the Ostia, the port of Rome). Most likely this was a pension, so that if we may conclude that it was a yearly one of half a mark (a "compte" as the French say), on working it out we should find that it would start in 1247 A.D., presumably the year of his death. This would accord with the above mentioned claim of the book lent. Among the witnesses

to the document regarding the quit-claim occurs the name of Sir Roman de Slaccis, whose seal was appended, as Theodenus de Thostia says specifically that he had not one of his own. It looks as if that one of his own was, in reality, *his uncle's which had got lost*. Sir Roman, presumably a foreigner, is most probably the Romanus, vicar of Foxton, mentioned in the Hundred Rolls¹. That Master Lawrence was dead in 1253 A.D. we know from the Papal Letters², in which year, on 9 Cal. Ap. Perugia, an Indult was given to Henry de Malolacu, Rector of Cordewell, in the diocese of Salisbury, and of Tiringham (Tyrrington) in the diocese of Lincoln, of the value together of 30 marks, to hold an additional benefice.

There is but one other entry in documents mentioning Master Lawrence de St Nicholas. In 1244 A.D. his name occurs as a tenant of 4 acres of the land of Roger Giffard as appears by an inquisition of c. 1244 A.D., the place not being stated³.

If then the subject of these notes died within the Priory, and was so great a benefactor to the House, it would be natural to look for his burial place, in accordance with custom, beneath the walls of the House. An extract, bearing on this point, from the diary of the late Rev. John Hailstone, dated Feb. 12, 1856 A.D. states:

"On this day a discovery was made at Anglesey Priory of a stone coffin and coped lid, lying within 8 or 10 feet inside the South Porch"—the entry to the monastery—"under the floor, partly of the little room and partly under the great room, into which the front door is the entrance. It was about 2 feet under the present surface, and was, I think, in its original place of sepulture. The place is undergoing a complete restoration and being fitted for the residence of a clergyman (the late Rev. S. Charlton), and in digging up the ground for the floor joists in the rooms to the right of the porch I found, about 2 feet below the present floor-line, the surface of the original Priory floor, generally paved with large slabs of thick clunch. What led to the discovery of this stone coffin was the appearance of a large stone, flat on the surface of the floor, with one end to

¹ Vol. ii.

² Vol. i, 284.

³ Lib. Mem. Barnwell, ed. Clark, p. 106.

the westward larger than that of the other end to the eastward. Upon being taken up, it turned out to be the lid of a coffin upside down with a carved floriated cross upon it, about the date of 1300 A.D., and exactly similar to those which cover the coffins on the south side of Bottisham church. It laid upon the coffin which was filled up with mortar and rubbish. The bones of the occupant were however laid apparently as they were when the body was deposited in the coffin, entire and undisturbed. The coffin is...of a different stone and ruder workmanship—slightly notched inside at the shoulder at the sides. The skull and teeth were remarkably large and very fairly preserved.”

That coffin, and a smaller one, presumably for Mary, 1st wife of Sir John de Burgh, chevaler, found near the site of the old dovecot, where was we presume the Priory cemetery, mentioned in documents, are still in the garden. The bones found under the floor of the house, were buried beneath a mutilated coffin-lid, which now lies at the west end of the abbey—the name by which the building is now known.

In conclusion, from what has been aforesaid, we think that there is some reason to assume that we have here the self-same seal once belonging to, and handled by, the Papal pluralist above noted.

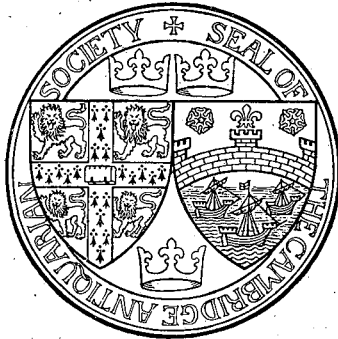
NOTE to Romanus. As his predecessors in Foxton we find Manuel de Bagneria, Rector, who was succeeded by Gregesius¹ de Bagneria, Vicar, whose name occurs in 1275 A.D. If this be Bagnères de Luchon, in the department of the Haute Garonne, it is not far from St Nicholas de la Grave above mentioned. Bagnères de Bigorre is in the Hautes Pyrenées. The name of Gamielis, also presumably a foreigner, occurs in Foxton in 1271 A.D. before Manuel. Of other foreign priests at this time in Cambridgeshire benefices we have—in Carleton, Stephen, nephew of the Bishop of Ostia, in the time of Geoffrey de Burgh, Bishop of Ely (1225—1229 A.D.): and in Caxton, Herbert, Arch-deacon of Evreux, resigned in 1255 or 1256 A.D., when Thomas, nephew of Pope Alexander IV, was appointed.

¹ ? Gregorius.

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PROCEEDINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS

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VOL. XIV.



NEW SERIES.

VOL. VIII.

1909—1910.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED FOR THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

SOLD BY DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.; AND BOWES & BOWES.
LONDON, GEORGE BELL AND SONS.

1910.

Cambridge:

PRINTED BY JOHN CLAY, M.A.
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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