

Original Documents.

THE WILL OF LUKE DE PONYNGES, LORD ST. JOHN, OF BASYNG, FROM A COPY IN THE REGISTER OF WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM.

COMMUNICATED BY THE REV. WILLIAM H. GUNNER, M.A.

IN the inventories of ornaments and reliques belonging to the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, in Dugdale's History of that Church, is the following entry :—

“Item caput S. Gamalielis, auripictum, cum lapidibus circa humeros insertis.”¹

The donor of this curious relique was Luke de Ponynges, Lord St. John of Basing, as appears by his will, in the register of William of Wykeham, in the registry at Winchester, part III., p. 143, as follows :—

In Dei nomine amen : Ego Lucas de Ponynges dominus de Sancto Joanne, sanæ mentis et bonæ memoriæ, quinto die Junii, Anno Domini, 1376, condo Testamentum meum in hunc modum : In primis, lego animam meam Deo et beatæ Mariæ virgini et omnibus sanctis, et corpus meum ad sepeliendum in ecclesia conventuali Prioratus de Boxgrave Cicestrensis Diocesis ; in sinistra parte ejusdem ecclesiæ ubi sepulchrum Domini die pascensi fieri solet. Item, lego ad fabricam ecclesiæ prædicti Prioratus xli^{li} argenti ad dispositionem executorum meorum. Item, lego summo altari dictæ ecclesiæ unum vestimentum rubeum ; videlicet unum album, amiciam, casulam, cum stola et fanone, et cum duobus pannis sericis viridis coloris. Item, lego Isabellæ, uxori meæ c^{li} argenti sub tali conditione, quod nihil plus petat de omnibus bonis meis mobilibus ratione cujuscunque juris seu consuetudinis ; non impediat, nec impediri procuret, executores meos in executione libera testamenti mei. Item, lego Thomæ filio meo centum marcas sub conditione prædicta, ac etiam omnes armaturas meas. Item, lego Lucæ filio dicti Thomæ xx. marcas. Item, lego Ricardo Olmestede clerico x. marcas. Item, lego Feliciæ Olmestede, x. marcas. Item, lego Aliciæ Bride v. marcas. Item, lego Olmero [*sic*] Eyot v. li. Item, lego Henrico Hatfield v. marc. Item, lego Lucæ filio dicti Henrici xx. s. Item, lego Johanni Salle v^{li}. Item, lego Johanni Dollyng xl^s. Item, lego Willelmo Davy xx^s. Item, lego Petro Holond xx^s. Item, lego Rogero Stolond vi^s viii^d. Item, lego Thomæ Stikelyng vi^s. viii^d. Item, lego Willelmo Bakere vi^s. viii^d. Item, lego Johanni Gladewyne vi^s. viii^d. Item, lego Roberto West vi^s viii^d. Item, lego Willelmo de Coquina vi^s. viii^d. Item, lego Johanni filio uxoris Henrici Hatfield iii^s. iii^d. Item, lego capud Sancti Gamalielis ecclesiæ Cathedrali Sancti Pauli, London. Item, lego ad ornamentum dicti capitis xx^{li} ad dispositionem executorum meorum. Item, lego Johanni Smyth xx^s. Item, lego Thomæ Pycot

¹ Dugdale's Hist. of St. Paul's, orig. edit. p. 236.

xx^s. Item, lego Johanni Brown Carectario x^s. Item, lego Willelmo West v. marcas. Item, lego fratri Thomæ Horton iii^{li}. Item, lego Waltero Clerico ecclesiæ de Warneford vi^s. viii^d. Item, volo quod expensæ funerariæ fiant ad dispositionem executorum meorum. Item, lego executoribus meis cuilibet eorum xx. marcas. Item, volo et humiliter supplico quod dominus meus Reverendus Episcopus Wyntoniensis supervideat et adjuvet executores meos in executione testamenti mei. Hujus autem testamenti mei ordino, facio, et constituo executores meos Magistrum Adam de Wygemere, dominum Petrum de Mundeford, Rectorem Ecclesiæ de Earde, et dominum Robertum Madherst, Vicarium de Bernham, ac etiam Hugonem Hakkere. Residuum vero omnium bonorum meorum lego secundum dispositionem executorum meorum.

The testator, Luke de Ponynges, younger brother of Michael de Ponynges who took a distinguished part in the wars of Edward III., married Isabella, widow of Henry de Burghersh, as stated in Dugdale's *Baronage* (vol. ii. p. 136). But in the "*Historia foundationis Prioratus de Boxgrave, et fundatoris stemma*,"² she is called the widow of Bartholomew de Burghersh. She was younger sister, and ultimately heiress of Edmund de St. John, of Basing, the last descendant in the male line of William, son and heir of Adam de Port, who assumed the name of St. John, from his mother Mabel, granddaughter and heiress of Roger de St. John.³ The testator's purpose with regard to his burial in the Church of Boxgrave Priory, of which he was regarded as patron, and to which the St. Johns had been for several generations such liberal benefactors, would seem not to have been carried out. He subsequently changed his mind as to the disposal of his body; and having expressed a desire to be buried in the Parish Church of Warneford, Hants, and that fact having been established by evidence to the Bishop's satisfaction, the will, with that exception, was proved at Southwark, on 4th July, 1376, as appears by an entry in the Register preceding that of the will. Shortly afterwards, the Prior of Boxgrave, in the name of himself and his convent, by a special instrument entered on the Register immediately after the will, renounced all their right to the sepulture of the body, which entry is as follows :—

" Subsequenterque xxvii. die mensis Julii Anno Domini mcccclxxvi. in castro Reverendi in Christo patris et domini, domini Willelmi Dei gratia Wynton' Episcopi apud Farnham, Indictione xiiii. pontificatus sanctissimi in Christo patris et domini, domini Gregorii, divina providentia Papæ xi^{mi} anno vi^{to}, Constitutus personaliter religiosus vir, frater Johannes de Londa, prior prioratus beatæ Mariæ de Boxgrave prædicti Cicestrensis, quandam renunciationem in scriptis redactam publice perlegit, cujus tenor talis est :—In Dei nomine amen. Ego Johannes de Londa, Prior Prioratus beatæ Mariæ de Boxgrave Cicestrensis diocesis, nomine meo et conventus ejusdem Prioratus, omni juri [*sic*], si quod habui vel habeo, ad sepeliendum corpus domini Lucæ de Ponynges, militis, defuncti, ex legato ipsius in testamento suo relicto sive facto, dum in humanis agebat languens in extremis pure, sponte, et absolute renuncio in hiis scriptis, et omni [*sic*] juris remedio [*sic*] michi et dicto conventui competenti [*sic*] in hac parte : Recognovit insuper idem prior publice et expresse, ex quibusdam informa-

² Dugdale, *Mon. Ang.* vol. iv. p. 646, Calday's edition.

³ See *Archæological Journal*, Vol. IX. p. 259.

tionibus sibi factis, quibus credidit, se ex legato prædicto non habere jus ad sepulturam prætensam prædictam, licet in testamento prædicto expresse contineatur, quod dictus dominus Lucas ad sepeliendum corpus suum in ecclesia prioratus prædicti legaverat. Præsentibus venerabilibus et discretis viris, Magistro Willielmo Loryng Canonico Sarum; Domino Waltero Rectore Ecclesiæ de Chauton Wynton' Diocesis; Fratre Guillelmo Dagenet, monacho dictæ domus de Boxgrave; et aliis in multitudine copiosa."

The testator's gift of his body to be buried in the Priory Church was probably regarded as a beneficial legacy to the Prior and convent, in consequence of the offerings and presents which were made on such occasions; and the subsequent direction, that he should be buried elsewhere, was deemed a revocation of it. The proof of this verbal direction may have been a little difficult, and therefore, probably, the Prior was induced, for the better security of the executors, to make the above renunciation.

Luke de Ponynges was succeeded in the Barony of St. John, by his son Thomas,⁴ at whose death, in 1428, the honour fell into abeyance between his granddaughters, the children of Hugh, commonly supposed to have been the only son of the said Thomas, by his wife, Johanna Strange. In this will, however, mention is made of another son called Luke, who was living, though still under age, in 1381; for in that year his father was authorised to receive the legacy bequeathed to him by the will of his grandfather, and to dispose of the money for his benefit, while under age, and to pay it over to him in due time.⁵ Constance, the eldest daughter of Hugh de Ponynges was married to Sir John Paulet, from whom the present Marquis of Winchester, Baron St. John of Basing, is descended.

In regard to the singular relique bequeathed to St. Paul's by the lord St. John, it may suffice to observe that the remains of St. Gamaliel, the Pharisee and doctor of the law at whose feet St. Paul was brought up, were discovered, according to the legend, in the year 415, at a spot distant from Jerusalem about twenty miles, and called Caphargamala, or "the borough of Gamaliel," supposed to have been his residence. To Lucian, an aged priest of the church at that place, a revelation had been made by Gamaliel in the visions of the night, that his reliques lay there with those of the Protomartyr, preserved by him on the morrow of the martyrdom, and deposited in the sepulchre prepared for himself; as also that the body of Nicodemus, who had taken refuge with Gamaliel when cast out of the synagogue, was there to be found. The vision having been thrice repeated, with menaces in case of neglect and the assurance that the discovery of these reliques would be accompanied by the cessation of a long-continued drought, Lucian at length repaired to the Bishop of Jerusalem, who directed him to search under a heap of stones nigh to his church. The cairn, however, was examined in vain, but at an adjacent spot three cists were brought to light inscribed with the names of Stephen, Gamaliel, and Nicodemus. The reliques of the Protomartyr were quickly dispersed, with great devotion, and were brought by Orosius, as we learn from Bede, to Western Europe. It is

⁴ Thomas de Ponynges, as patron of Boxgrave Priory, in right of his maternal descent, confirmed its endowments by an Instrument dated Aug. 15, 3 Hen. VI. 1425. The deed with his seal attached

is in the British Museum, Harl. Charter, 54, I. 36.

⁵ See Wykeham's Register, Part 1st, sub an. 1381.

probable that those of Gamaliel, from their connexion with so remarkable a legend, were regarded with much veneration. Lucian, as it is stated, wrote the relation of this miraculous discovery, and his narrative was translated into Latin by his contemporary, the Spanish priest, Avitus, then at Jerusalem, the friend of St. Jerome. It may be found in the Edition of the Works of St. Augustine, published by the Benedictines, and it has been given by Baronius.⁶

The "caput auripictum," with jewels around the shoulders, was doubtless one of those singular reliquaries, in form of busts, of life-size, wherein the crania of holy persons are preserved, as seen at Cologne, and in many continental churches.⁷ A curious example, brought from Italy, was placed in the Museum formed during the Meeting of the Institute at Salisbury.

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⁶ Bede records the discovery of these reliques, and cites the narration of Lucian. See Bede, *Chronicon de sex Ætatibus*, under the year 426.

⁷ Three such reliquaries formerly existed at St. Denis, and are represented in Felibien's *History of the Abbey*; the head of St. Loup at Troyes was preserved

in like manner (*Voyage de deux Benedictins*, t. i. p. 92), and a very remarkable example existing in Switzerland is figured in the valuable *History of Sacred Architecture* in the dioceses of Geneva, Lausanne and Sion, by Blavignac, recently published.