

# ROSE DE VERDUN (d. 1247) AND GRACE DIEU PRIORY: ENDOWMENT CHARTER AND TOMB

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One of only a few houses of Augustinian canonesses, Grace Dieu priory was established at Belton in north-west Leicestershire some time between 1235 and 1241, by an Anglo-Norman heiress, Rose de Verdun.<sup>1</sup> Its original endowment has been known so far from a charter confirmed by Henry III in 1241,<sup>2</sup> but that refers only to the gift of Belton manor with the advowson of the church there, whereas much more detail is given in an original charter which survives in the records of the Augmentation Office in the National Archives (E 315/30, f. 2). In particular, the surviving original refers not only to the grant of Belton manor but also to land, including a mill pool, as well as estates further away next to Sleaford in Lincolnshire, along with their neifs (unfree villeins), and at Great Limber (also in Lincolnshire). Moreover, the charter confirmed by Henry III was sealed by Rose alone, whereas the original was corroborated both by her seal and that of the diocesan Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, who was present when the charter was drawn up.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the wording of a 'narration' clause in the original strongly suggests that Bishop Grosseteste was closely involved in establishing the house, whose dedication to 'the Holy Trinity of the Grace of God' may also have been his idea; however, the important role played by the patron is revealed in the iconography of her tomb, originally in the priory church, but moved to Belton parish church after the Dissolution. The purpose of this article is to give the text and a translation of the original endowment charter, and also to discuss the tomb which, despite modern restoration, retains much of its original scheme.

## ROSE DE VERDUN

Settled in England after the Norman Conquest, the Verdun family acquired lands, probably through royal service, mainly in Leicestershire, but with their *caput* by

<sup>1</sup> For a brief account, see the article by R. A. McKinley in W. G. Hoskins (ed.), *Victoria County History of Leicestershire*, II (1954), 27–8.

<sup>2</sup> *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, 1226–57 (HMSO, 1903), 265. The full text is given in William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655), I, 933; revised edn by J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel (6 vols in 8 parts, 1817–30, reprinted 1846), VI, 567. In the witness list, the 1846 reprint wrongly has 'Merdon' for both Miles de Verdon and Thomas de Verdon.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, as discussed below, although there is a sealing clause, the actual seals were not attached to the charter.

the twelfth century at Alton in the Staffordshire Moorlands.<sup>4</sup> Their chief lordship, however, was in Ulster at Dundalk (Co. Louth), granted to Bertram de Verdun by Prince John as lord of Ireland in the later 1180s. The founder of a Cistercian house at Croxden, near Alton, in the later 1170s,<sup>5</sup> Bertram accompanied Richard I on crusade in 1191 and died in the Holy Land in 1192, being succeeded in turn by his sons Thomas (d. 1199) and Nicholas (d. 1231). Nicholas' heir was his daughter Rose, already twice widowed by the time she founded Grace Dieu.<sup>6</sup> In the original charter the foundress is rendered as 'Roysa', but in the 1241 confirmation as 'Roesia', the version in the legend of a surviving example of her seal: SIGILLVM ROESIE DE VERDVN.<sup>7</sup> These are the Latin forms of an Anglo-Norman name that is probably best represented by the spelling 'Roey's', a variation of the more common 'Rohese', the name of both her paternal grandmother and a grand-daughter. In the address clause of other charters she appears as either 'Roey'sa' or 'Rohes[a]', but when her steward Roger Gernun witnessed a charter relating to Croxden abbey in 1239, she was given as 'Roey's' (*senescallo domine Roey's de Verdon*).<sup>8</sup> In this article, however, she is given as 'Rose', the form used by modern writers.

Being the Verdun heir, Rose emphasised her inheritance, keeping the family name despite her marriages: one of her seals (with the legend: SIGILL : DNE : ROYSIE : DE : VERDUN) depicts her in a tunic decorated with the Verdun arms (a lattice-pattern known as 'fretty') and holding two shields, one also with the Verdun arms (Fig. 1).<sup>9</sup> The arms shown on the other shield has a horizontal bar across the middle (a 'fess'), with the top indented and perhaps also the bottom, and could represent her second husband Theobald Butler (d. 1230).<sup>10</sup> The Verdun arms also appear on Rose's tomb, although on another seal she holds a burning lamp in her right hand.<sup>11</sup> As a widow, Rose was free to dispose of her lands as she wished, and after founding Grace Dieu she later (in 1246) established a Franciscan friary at Dundalk, as well as further endowing the family house and mausoleum at Croxden.<sup>12</sup> When she died in 1247,<sup>13</sup> the entry in the Croxden chronicle gave her as 'the foundress of the abbey

<sup>4</sup> Rest of paragraph is based on M. S. Hagger, *The Fortunes of a Norman Family: the de Verduns in England, Ireland and Wales, 1066–1316* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2001), chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> For the abbey, see M. W. Greenslade (ed.), *Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, III (1970), 226–30.

<sup>6</sup> For her, see Hagger, *Fortunes of a Norman Family*, 72–83 (where named as 'Roesia').

<sup>7</sup> Staffordshire Record Office, D. 593/A/2/23/2 (the grant of a wood to 'her abbey' of Croxden).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. D. 593/A/2/23/1.

<sup>9</sup> For a trick, see J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, III, part II (1804), fig. 1 on plate LXXXVII (facing p. 651). The engraver has added hatching in order to indicate colour (presumably taken from an armorial shield), making the arms *Or fretty gules*. The same arms are shown on a shield on the equestrian seal of Theobald de Verdun (d. 1309): illustrated in Hagger, *Fortunes of a Norman Family*, plate 7 (at p. 101), from British Library, Detached Seals, lxxxi.12; W. de G. Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, II (1892), 363 (no. 6495).

<sup>10</sup> There are many variations on the Butler arms, but the basic design is *Or a chief indented azure*.

<sup>11</sup> This seal survives appended to the charter for Croxden abbey (noted above).

<sup>12</sup> The Rose de Verdun associated with the foundation of Lutterworth hospital, in or shortly before 1219, was most probably her grandmother: *VCH Leics.* II, 42–3.

<sup>13</sup> According to the Croxden chronicle (British Library, Cotton MS Faustina, B VI, which is currently being edited by Philip Morgan for publication by the Staffordshire Record Society), she died on 4 Ides of February (10 Feb.), the entry being placed under the calendar year '1248'. The year, however,



Fig. 1. Trick of Rose de Verdun's seal, displaying family coat of arms.  
[J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, III, part II (1804),  
fig. 1 on plate LXXXVII (facing p. 651).]

of Gracedieu',<sup>14</sup> and it was there that she was buried, her tomb being moved in the later sixteenth century to Belton parish church where it survives.<sup>15</sup> When he drew up a will in 1295, her grandson Theobald de Verdun also desired to be buried in 'the church of the nuns of Holy Trinity of the Grace of God', although in the event when he died at Alton in 1309, he was interred in the abbey church at Croxden.<sup>16</sup>

#### GRACE DIEU PRIORY ENDOWMENT CHARTER

The priory was established at Belton, six miles north-east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, a manor which the Verdun family held by at least 1130: the priory site was towards the

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was questioned by G. E. C[ockayne] and others, *The Complete Peerage*, XII (2), 247 n., which gives 1246/47, citing a mandate dated 22 February 1247 (modern reckoning) to the justiciar of Ireland relating to Rose's lands: *Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III*, 1242–47 (HMSO, 1916), 500. The year 1247 is confirmed by entries dealing with her death and inheritance (4 Feb. x 3 May 1247) in the Fine Roll for 31 Henry III, as calendared on [www.finerollshenry3.org.uk](http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk), nos 177, 192–3, and 287–8 (Paul Dryburgh, of the National Archives, is thanked for his help in locating the entries).

<sup>14</sup> She is wrongly given as foundress of Croxden abbey in the transcription given in Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (revised edn), V, 661.

<sup>15</sup> Nichols, *History*, 638.

<sup>16</sup> British Library, Add. MS 18446, p. 7 (will); Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (revised edn), V, 661.

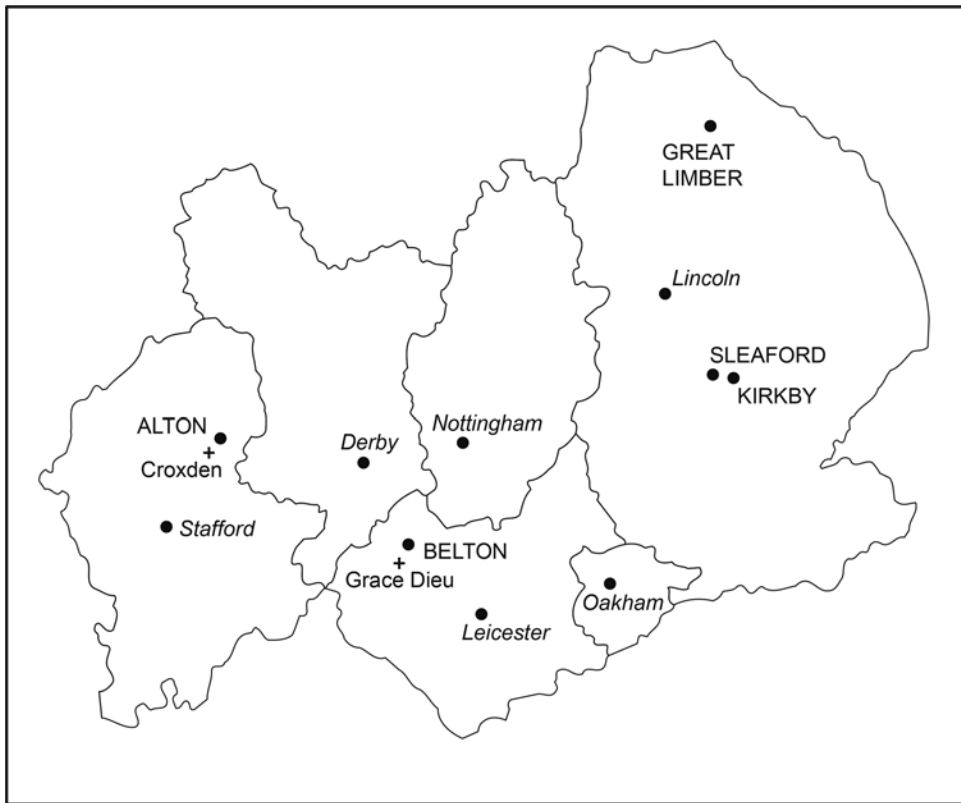


Fig. 2. Grace Dieu priory estates (with county towns in italics).

northern edge of Belton parish, in the bend of a stream (the ‘Wytebroc’ mentioned in the endowment charter) that formed the parish boundary.<sup>17</sup> As recorded in the surviving endowment charter (Fig. 3, and appendix for text and translation), Rose gave the nuns Belton manor and all its rights in free alms, and the advowson of the parish church, along with land she had acquired in exchange from Thomas de Leys, and two ‘lands’ (*landas*), here probably meaning an area of uncultivated land, which Richard and William de Leys had held. This property was probably in Belton itself, as the endowment continues with the grant of land in adjoining manors: four virgates in Thringstone (to the south-west) and land in Osgathorpe (to the north). The Osgathorpe land comprised two virgates which Rose had from William de Wasteneye,<sup>18</sup> with an assart and alder grove, and two lots of fen or marsh land

<sup>17</sup> For a note on the site, see *The Draft Account Book of the Treasures of Grace Dieu Priory, Leicestershire, 1414–1418*, transcribed and translated by D. Johnson, with an introduction by K. Hillier (Grace Dieu Priory Trust, 2013), pp. iv–v. The remains of the monastic church are open to the public.

<sup>18</sup> The toponym refers to the family’s origin in (Le) Gâtinais, a district some distance south of Paris between the rivers Loire and Seine (dépts Loiret and Seine-et-Marne). The name is usually found elsewhere with a final ‘s’ (as ‘Wastineis’ or ‘Wasteneyes’).

(‘car’ from Old Norse *kjarr*), along with two bovates which she had from William of Shardlow. A wood which she had from William of Thringstone and a piece of land from him in exchange was also in Belton: the land had been acquired in order to complete the construction of a mill pool (*stagnum*), which lay to the south of the nuns’ precinct (*cenobium*) between a wood called ‘Osgodeshaue’ and the stream called ‘Wytebroc’ – its precise dimensions are given: 20 perches in length (with 18ft equalling a perch), and in breadth 11 perches at the top of the pool, nine perches in the middle, and three perches at the southern end. Also at Belton was land which Rose had bought from William de Aiou,<sup>19</sup> lying on the west side of the precinct between ‘Wytebroc’ and a way coming down to Belton from a quarry.

In addition, the endowment included estates further away in Lincolnshire, perhaps outliers that could be alienated from the family’s main holdings without too much bother, although the influence of Bishop Robert Grosseteste may well have been a factor. One block was in the Kesteven district, where Rose held two-thirds of a knight’s fee of the honor of Lancaster at Kirkby and ‘elsewhere in the wapentake’ (i.e. Aswardhurn).<sup>20</sup> According to the endowment charter the Kirkby estate included land at Old Sleaford (‘veteris Lafford’), next to the present town of New Sleaford (in the adjoining Flaxwell wapentake), and at Evedon, ‘Leythorpe’ (Laythorpe), ‘Ousthorpe’ (Ewerby Thorpe, in Ewerby), Hale, and ‘ywardebi’ (Ewerby). Although seven places are named, the property seems to have been in only five holdings, as the names of the five tenants are given: Drew the Breton, Robert son of William of Kirkby, John of Hale, Hugh of St Vaast, and Alexander of Sleaford clerk. All these places had made returns for the lay subsidy, imposed in 1225,<sup>21</sup> which has Drew as lord of Ewerby and Alexander of Sleaford having cattle in Old Sleaford.

The charter names (Fig. 3) the neifs, both men and women, on the estates around Sleaford, as well as neifs on another Lincolnshire estate granted by Rose at (Great) Limber in Lindsey, some eight miles west of Grimsby, but 50 miles north of Sleaford and over 80 from Belton itself; the neifs there were named in two lots, the second batch including a man from Kelsey, some eight miles to the south-west of Great Limber. The personal names of the neifs are of particular interest,<sup>22</sup> as in several cases they are derived from Old Norse originals, reflecting the Viking heritage of thirteenth-century East Midlands culture, with female names in particular remaining in the English name stock longer than male ones; and in one particular case, a woman’s father bore one of the continental names that had been introduced by

<sup>19</sup> The place-name is Ajou in Normandy (dépt. Eure).

<sup>20</sup> *The Book of Fees commonly called Testa de Nevill* (HMSO, 1920 and 1923), II, 1032.

<sup>21</sup> F. A. Cazel and A. P. Cazel (eds), *Rolls of the Fifteenth of the Ninth Year of the Reign of Henry III for Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire and Wiltshire, and Rolls of the Fortieth of the Seventeenth Year of the Reign of Henry III for Kent* (Pipe Roll Society, n.s. XLV, 1983), 6–7 (Evedon), 15–17 (Hale), 23–6 (Kirkby), 29–30 (Old Sleaford), 38–9 (Ewerby), 40 (Ewerby Thorpe), and 43 (Laythorpe).

<sup>22</sup> The notes appended to personal names in the translation below have been kindly supplied by Peter McClure. Also see G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire* (Copenhagen, 1968), and now also P. Hanks, R. Coates, and P. McClure (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford University Press, 2016). In the translation of the charter, the preposition ‘de’ has been given as ‘of’ in the case of the names of neifs, but is retained as ‘de’ for the principal Anglo-Norman landholders (being the Anglo-Norman vernacular form of the name, besides the Norman toponymics having usually become hereditary surnames by this date).



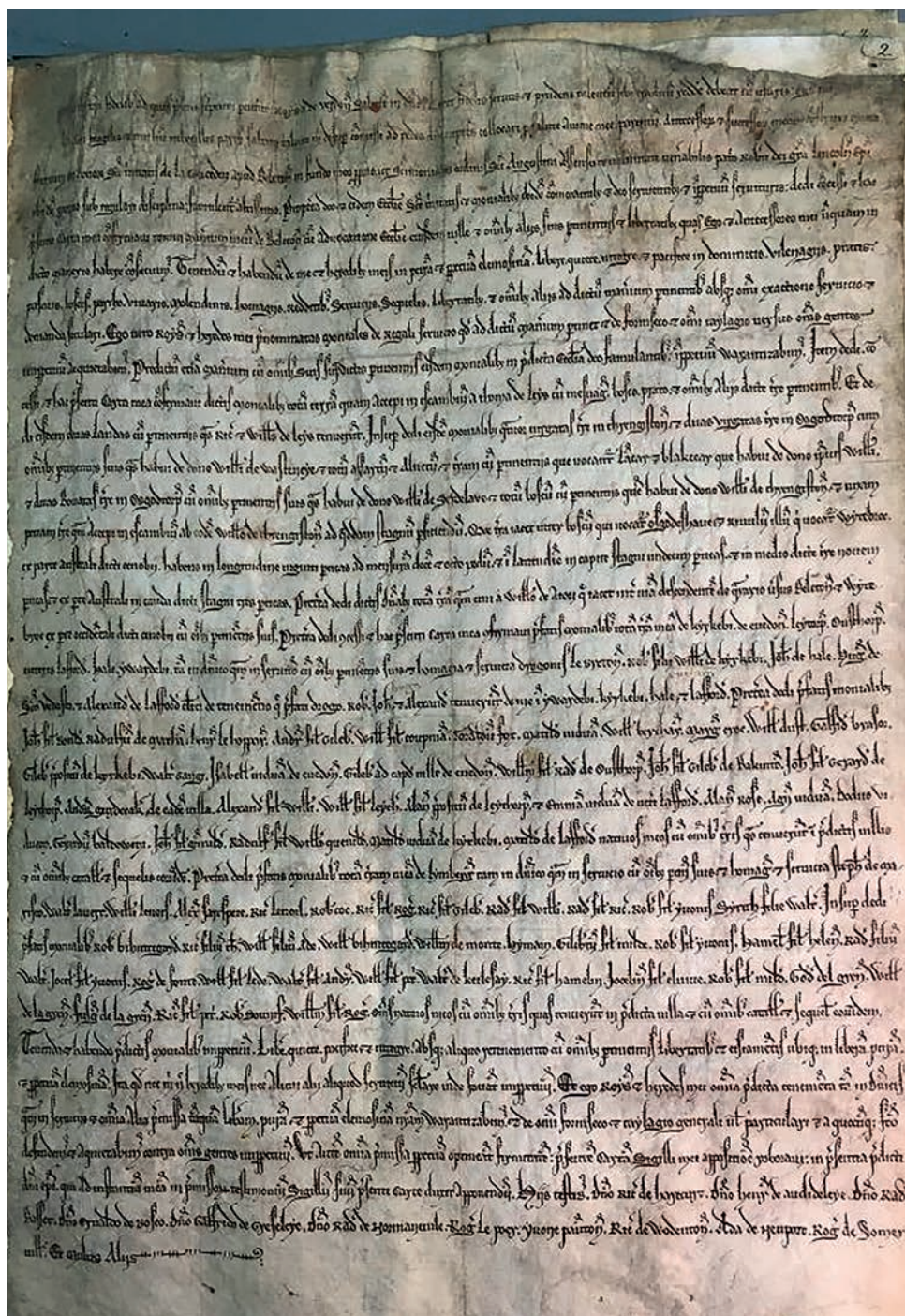


Fig. 3. Grace Dieu priory endowment charter.  
[The National Archives, E 315/30, f. 2. Reproduced with permission.]

the Normans. It should also be noted that a few of the names are spelled in a form that suggests that the scribe was unfamiliar with them, and so either miscopied or misheard them.<sup>23</sup>

It is difficult to be sure which of the two charters issued by Rose was made first – that rehearsed in the 1241 confirmation by Henry III or the one surviving as an original manuscript (and transcribed here). Much briefer, the former refers only to the grant of Belton manor and church advowson, and does not mention the involvement of Bishop Robert Grosseteste, although it invokes St Mary as well as the Holy Trinity in the convent's dedication, perhaps suggesting that the monastic church bore a double dedication. Moreover, according to the confirmation text the endowment was made additionally in respect of the souls of Rose's husbands (*maritorum*). Why the husbands are not mentioned in the surviving original is unclear, but they also do not appear in Rose's charter for 'her abbey' of Croxden, although it notes her widowhood, something else not stated in the Grace Dieu original. Both charters share some witnesses (Richard de Harcourt, Ralph Basset, Ernald de Bois, and Adam de Neuville),<sup>24</sup> although the 1241 confirmation list has Richard de Normanville (rather than 'Ralph' as in the original charter), Adam de Quatremars, Miles de Verdon, Roger Gernun, magister Thomas de Verdon, rector of the church of Ibstock, and Henry de Hartshorn. The leading witnesses were all members of Verdun household.

Even if both charters were made about the same time, the surviving original is more informative, and in particular seems to betray the keen interest of Robert Grosseteste. It is certainly an impressive document, written in a confident hand on a large single sheet of parchment (355mm × 540mm), and was evidently the document that the foundress is shown holding up in the priory's thirteenth-century seal.<sup>25</sup> The document depicted on that seal, however, is shown with its own seal hanging down, whilst the surviving charter, despite having a sealing clause, was not actually sealed. It was indeed prepared for the application of two seals (Rose's and the bishop's), with two sets of six holes being made in the foot of the sheet prior to it being folded over and the insertion of the seal tags, but the present holes are mere indications of where the tags were to be threaded through. Also, the charter's initial letter is missing, being intended for later rubrication. The surviving document, therefore, is an unfinished copy, the reason evidently being the omission of two names ('Hugo' and 'evedon') on line 19; they have been added in another hand above the line. The grant itself, however, was evidently effective, as the property held by tenants at Ewerby and at Great Limber is mentioned in inquisitions of the 1330s,<sup>26</sup> and the priory still administered estates at Kirkby and Great Limber in the fifteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> However, he may also have miscopied the name of one of the Anglo-Norman witnesses.

<sup>24</sup> Although in the original, Adam's toponym is rendered as 'Neuport', presumably in error by the scribe.

<sup>25</sup> British Library, Detached Seal, lxvi.53; W. de G. Birch, *Catalogue of Seals ... in the British Museum*, I (1887), 571 (no. 3217).

<sup>26</sup> *Calendar of Inquisitions post mortem*, VII (HMSO, 1909), 356 (no. 510); VIII (HMSO, 1913), 74 (no. 130).

<sup>27</sup> *Draft Account Book of Treasures of Grace Dieu*, s.n. in index.

### Bishop Robert Grosseteste

Apart from the intention that the charter would be sealed by Bishop Grosseteste, its composition may also betray his influence; notably, the opening *narratio* clause, which refers to the parable of the talent and how in founding a religious house Rose had done more than just let hers accrue interest. Witnessing the (intended) application of Rose's seal to the charter and applying his own, Bishop Grosseteste was evidently closely involved in the priory's foundation. He had become bishop of Lincoln only in 1235, but possibly knew the site at Belton as he had been archdeacon of Leicester between 1229 and 1232,<sup>28</sup> and he may also have influenced the grant of the estate at Kirkby (Lincs.): an episcopal manor centred on Sleaford straddled the wapentake boundary with land in some of the places named in Rose's endowment.<sup>29</sup>

Of humble origins, Grosseteste was an exceptionally gifted scholar as a scientist and theologian, before embarking (relatively late in life) on an administrative career as a bishop.<sup>30</sup> Recent studies of his episcopal career have concentrated on his pastoral activities, especially in respect of priests who served parish churches,<sup>31</sup> but with a sister who was a nun,<sup>32</sup> he also showed concern for monastic houses, dismissing several heads when he undertook a diocese-wide visitation on becoming bishop.<sup>33</sup> In respect of Rose's foundation, he most probably advised on the choice of the Augustinian order for the nuns, and indeed also on the name by which it was known, 'Grace of God'. Most monastic houses were known from their topographical location, the main exception at this date being the Cistercian house established at Leek (Staffs.) in 1214 by Ranulf, earl of Chester: he named it Dieulacres – 'May God grant it increase' – a phrase allegedly uttered by his wife after the earl told her about the vision in which his grandfather had commanded him to found the house.<sup>34</sup> Although not the first house in the country to be so called,<sup>35</sup> the name form

<sup>28</sup> John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066–1300*, III, *Lincoln*, compiled by D. E. Greenway (1977), 3.

<sup>29</sup> For New Sleaford manor, see C. Mahany and D. Roffe (eds), *Sleaford* (South Lincolnshire Archaeology, 3: 1979), 13–16. Also see the Ven. Edward Trollope, *Sleaford* (1872), esp. 182, 236–7, 360, 369, 414–5. (Copies of both sources were kindly supplied by Wendy Atkin.)

<sup>30</sup> Besides critical editions of and commentaries on his scientific and theological writings, the main studies that also cover his career as bishop are D. A. Callus (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1955); R. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste. The Growth of the English Mind in Medieval Europe* (2nd edn, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992), chapter 10. Also, now see A. Silvestri, 'The life, education, and deeds of Robert Grosseteste: perceptions of episcopal power at thirteenth-century Lincoln', in P. Coss, C. Dennis, M. Julian-Jones and A. Silvestri (eds), *Episcopal Power and Local Society in Medieval Europe, 900–1400* (Brepols, Turnhout, 2017), 81–95.

<sup>31</sup> New insights have been provided by Philippa Hoskin as a result of her revised edition of administrative records: P. M. Hoskin (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste as Bishop of Lincoln: the episcopal rolls, 1235–1253* (Lincoln Record Society, 2015); eadem, 'Robert Grosseteste and the simple benefice: a novel solution to the complexities of lay presentation', *Journal of Medieval History*, 40/1 (2014), 24–43.

<sup>32</sup> Named Ivette (*juetta*), she may have been a nun at the Gilbertine priory at Catley (Lincs.): F. A. C. Mantello and J. Goering (trans. and eds), *The Letters of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln* (University of Toronto Press, 2010), no. 8 (pp. 75–77), with note on p. 76.

<sup>33</sup> Southern, *Robert Grosseteste*, 259–60 (with the houses listed in a note). All of them, as it happens, were Augustinian canons.

<sup>34</sup> For the story, see Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs*, III, 230. There was later a Premonstratensian house of the same name in Ireland: *ibid.* 231, note 1.

<sup>35</sup> A Cistercian house for monks of *Gracia Dei* had been established at Monmouth in the later 1220s: [www.monasticwales.org](http://www.monasticwales.org); *Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III, 1231–34* (HMSO, 1905), 445.



‘Gracedeu’ was used by the Lincoln episcopal clerk who wrote the entry recording the institution of one of the canonesses as prioress in 1242–43,<sup>36</sup> albeit that in the 1250s Grosseteste’s correspondent, the Franciscan friar Adam Marsh, referred to the house as Belton.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, Marsh’s letters show that the bishop still took (or was urged to take) an interest in the sisters, who were experiencing some difficulties in their early years: as a ‘new plantation’ the house had a ‘special claim’ on him and was in his ‘special care’. Moreover, Marsh comments that religious life there had been established through the bishop’s ‘skill and wisdom’.

### ROSE DE VERDUN’S TOMB

Whatever the extent of Bishop Grosseteste’s involvement, much of the credit for establishing the priory must go to Rose herself, and her role as patron is further demonstrated by the quality and design of her tomb, originally in the priory church but now surviving in Belton parish church. It comprises an over-life-size (6ft) female effigy between two side shafts with moulded capitals, which in turn support a canopy (or gablette) with heraldic devices in the spandrels (Fig. 4). At first, the impression is of a statue in a façade niche, intended to be seen as vertical, but her feet rest on a beast, which suggests that the figure is recumbent; moreover, at both the head and foot are carved panels depicting religious scenes, which further suggest that the tomb was originally free-standing, perhaps on a low chest which allowed it to be viewed in the round. Much restored in 1912, the present tomb nevertheless preserves features shown on an etching published in 1804 and is almost certainly that of Rose (Fig. 5). As such it is one of only two surviving tombs of women who founded medieval religious houses,<sup>38</sup> but whether it was commissioned by Rose herself or by a descendant or the canonesses some time after her death is difficult to say. A detailed examination of the stonework is still needed for a full understanding, but what follows is offered in the meantime.

### History

The tomb was certainly in the priory church in the later thirteenth century, when its importance is signified by it being the place (*ad tumbam*) at which an annual rent due to the priory was paid.<sup>39</sup> It must have been moved to the parish church at Belton some time after the Dissolution, possibly at the instigation of the locally born lawyer John Beaumont, who acquired the priory site and its estates (including

<sup>36</sup> Hoskin (ed.), *Grosseteste as Bishop of Lincoln*, no. 1453 (p. 280). She may have been the first prioress, as there is no entry for a predecessor, and was perhaps installed by Grosseteste himself if the charter was issued when the house was formally established.

<sup>37</sup> C. H. Lawrence (trans. and ed.), *The Letters of Adam Marsh*, I (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2006), nos 26 (at p. 67), 27 (p. 73), 31 (p. 91), 69 (p. 171), 79 (p. 205) and 80 (p. 207).

<sup>38</sup> Loveday Lewes Gee, *Women, Art and Patronage from Henry III to Edward III, 1216–1377* (Boydell, 2002), 33–5 and plate 1.

<sup>39</sup> Record Office of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (hereafter ROLLR), 26D53/490 (charter of Prioress Agnes de Gresley, d. 1286); transcribed in Nichols, *History*, 652.



Fig. 4. Rose de Verdun's tomb in Belton church in 2019.  
[Photograph taken by Pam Fisher.]



Fig. 5. Rose de Verdun's tomb in the late eighteenth century.  
[Etching reproduced in J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, III, part II (1804), plate LXXXVI (facing p. 647).]



Belton) in 1539.<sup>40</sup> MP for Leicester that year, and in 1550 its recorder and also Master of the Rolls, Beaumont was perhaps sufficiently prominent to organise the removal, even perhaps intending to re-use the tomb to commemorate his first wife, who may already have died. His second wife was a co-heir of Sir William Hastings, the younger brother of George Hastings, 1st earl of Huntingdon (d. 1544), and so a cousin of George's heir Francis, the 2nd earl. Based not far away at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, the Hastings family might otherwise have moved Rose's tomb to Belton church: Francis acquired the Grace Dieu estates in 1553,<sup>41</sup> and after his death in 1560 was himself commemorated (along with his wife) in a highly decorated alabaster tomb still in Ashby church.

When mentioned in William Burton's *Description of Leicestershire* published in 1622, Rose's tomb stood on the north side of Belton church (possibly in the chancel): referred to as 'a very ancient Monument of stone raised', the effigy itself was 'neatly carved and painted'.<sup>42</sup> It was next described in the 1790s by Richard Gough in the second volume of his *Sepulchral Monuments*, when it was 'on the north side of the altar' (and so definitely in the chancel).<sup>43</sup> Gough's description was copied by John Nichols in his history of the county published in 1804, along with an etching of the tomb, clearly in a very worn condition (Fig. 4).<sup>44</sup>

The tomb was still in the chancel in 1839, when inspected by the fervent Catholic convert Ambrose March Phillipps, along with the leading Catholic aristocrat John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury.<sup>45</sup> Only recently in 1835, following his marriage, Phillipps had moved into a new mansion house at Grace Dieu, and the intention seems to have been to recover Rose's bones (if still *in situ*) and presumably inter them in a chapel he was having built next to his house, although in a letter he seems to suggest that the resting-place was to be Mount St Bernard's abbey, a Cistercian monastery that he was in the process of founding nearby.<sup>46</sup> It appears that the bones were indeed found, but having at first given permission for their removal, the Anglican vicar, John Eddowes (d. 1840), withdrew his consent the same day:<sup>47</sup> this account was written up by Eddowes himself, who apparently buried the bones somewhere in Belton churchyard.<sup>48</sup> The tomb was next inspected in February 1866 by the antiquary Sir Stephen Glynne, who noted remaining traces of colour. Not very well preserved with the face 'almost gone', the shafts flanking the effigy supported a trefoil-headed canopy with heraldic shields in the spandrels.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>40</sup> For Beaumont, see Nichols, *History*, 641, 653 and 655; also the entry in the *History of Parliament* (online version).

<sup>41</sup> Nichols, *History*, 641.

<sup>42</sup> W. Burton, *A Description of Leicestershire* (1622 edn), 42.

<sup>43</sup> R. Gough, *Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain*, II (1796), pp. cxxi–cxxii.

<sup>44</sup> Nichols, *History*, 647 and plate LXXXVI (facing p. 647).

<sup>45</sup> For Phillipps (d. 1878), who added 'de Lisle' to his surname in 1862, see Margaret Pawley, *Faith & Family. The life and circle of Ambrose Phillips de Lisle* (The Canterbury Press, Norfolk, 2012), and also her article in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>46</sup> E. S. Purcell, *Life and Letters of Ambrose Phillips de Lisle*, edited and finished by Edwin de Lisle (MacMillan Company, New York, 1900), 61 (letter of 4 Oct. 1839).

<sup>47</sup> T. R. Potter, *The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest* (1842), 173; [John Spanton], *A Companion to Charnwood Forest* ([Loughborough], 1858), 19.

<sup>48</sup> A letter with this information in Eddowes' handwriting was until recently in the parish archive.

<sup>49</sup> Gladstone Library, Hawarden (Flints.), Sir Stephen Glynne's Church Notes, vol. 31, Belton church



When the chancel in Belton church was restored in 1877, the tomb was moved to the west end of the north aisle, and in 1907 it was photographed lying in a corner, close to the wall.<sup>50</sup> This unsatisfactory arrangement was addressed in 1911 when the Cheshire salt manufacturers Sir Joseph Verdin, Bt., of Garnstone Castle (in Weobley, Herefs.), and his brother William Henry Verdin, of Darnhall Hall (Cheshire), claiming to be Rose de Verdun's nearest surviving relatives, agreed to restore the tomb, replacing the missing and damaged stonework, and setting it once more on a table top some 2ft off the ground and moving it away from the wall.<sup>51</sup> The work was carried out early in 1912 by a local stonemason, Charles Coops,<sup>52</sup> using a smoother sandstone for the base, but a remarkably similar (grittier) stone for the replacement carvings. The tomb was still in the north-west corner of the church until, after the installation of a kitchen area in 2011, it was moved yet again a short distance to the east, to its present position opposite the south door.

### Description

In the 1790s, Richard Gough stated that the effigy (at least) was of alabaster, something repeated by Nikolaus Pevsner in his Leicestershire volume in the *Buildings of England* series in 1960.<sup>53</sup> In fact, it is of grey sandstone,<sup>54</sup> and Gough's error is puzzling. The misunderstanding may have been caused by the tomb having a layer of polychrome, giving it an alabaster-like sheen; there were still traces of paint in the nineteenth century, but small patches of a very thin coating that remain in a few places, as on the effigy's right arm just above the elbow, are probably modern. There are no graffiti, or deliberate or accidental cut-marks, anywhere on the present exposed sandstone.

The tomb's damaged state is clearly shown on the 1907 photograph and more particularly on a coloured drawing attached to the 1911 faculty, which indicates what was to be newly carved (Fig. 6). The effigy had lost its face and at least part of the arms, and the columns supporting the canopy and the latter's spandrels were very worn, as were the carved panels at both the top and bottom. In replacing what was damaged or had been lost, however, the 1912 stonemason presumably had at hand the etching published by Nichols in 1804 and so made an attempt to restore the tomb to its original appearance.

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(at pp. 41–2), with a slight sketch of the tomb facing p. 42. Glynne supposed the tomb 'to be of the fourteenth century'.

<sup>50</sup> *Kelly's Directory of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire & Rutland, and Derbyshire* (1881), entry for Belton. The photograph is in the archives of Historic England.

<sup>51</sup> ROLLR, DE 1965/19 (faculty of 19 Oct. 1911).

<sup>52</sup> *Leicester Daily Post*, 7 March 1912, p. 8; *Grantham Journal*, 9 March 1912, p. 2. Born in Rochdale (Lancs.) in 1849, Coops had only since 1901 moved to his mother's home parish of Belton; he died in 1923.

<sup>53</sup> Gough, *Sepulchral Monuments*, II, p. cxxi; N. Pevsner, *Buildings of Leicestershire and Rutland* (1960), 61–2. Pevsner's description otherwise suggests that he did indeed inspect the tomb, but he often made such mistakes.

<sup>54</sup> As correctly stated in the 1984 revision of the 1960 Pevsner volume by Elizabeth Williamson with G. K. Brandwood (reprinted 1992), 95.



Fig. 6. Drawing of Rose de Verdun's tomb in 1911 faculty, showing proposed restoration of the upper parts of effigy and end panels and new table top.

[Record Office of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, DE 1965/19. Reproduced with permission.]

In the etching the female effigy is shown (still with its face, although that might have been sketched in by the draughtsman) with her head covered by a close fitting veil and dressed in a tunic with folds in thirteenth-century style and held in by a girdle; the right arm and hand are raised up across her breast, above the left arm under which is tucked a book. The etching also shows her wearing a necklace with a roundel containing the depiction of what might have been a lighted lamp (as appears on one of Rose's seals), but this feature was not reproduced in 1912. On either side are fluted columns, which support an arch with spandrels (entirely the work of the 1912 carver), that on the right-hand side (or left, as one looks at it) with the Verdun coat of arms and the other with a rose. The feet rest on a beast, almost certainly given its scales a winged dragon, representing the forces of evil being trampled underfoot.

The iconography of the carved panels at the top and foot of the effigy are the most difficult to interpret (Fig. 7), not least because the 1912 stonemason had to provide new heads and upper parts of the original figures (the losses perhaps partly the result of earlier iconoclasm). The scene in the top panel depicts a naked figure symbolising the soul, being raised up into heaven in a sheet held by kneeling angels; the head provided in 1912 was of a bearded man (presumably to represent Christ), but originally it almost certainly would have been female in order to represent Rose herself. The two angels are in turn flanked by kneeling figures, that on the left possibly holding a jar of ointment, but such a feature dates from 1912 (presumably intended as a reference to Christ's body being anointed by Mary Magdalene) and in the 1804 etching the two figures are simply kneeling in prayer. Three kneeling figures are also shown on both sides of the top panel, with female heads presumably intended to represent Grace Dieu nuns, something that may have been original. The panel at the foot of the effigy has two kneeling figures, in female dress and now with female heads, on either side of a central figure which, as in the 1804 etching, has both arms raised in prayer. On each side of this panel is a single kneeling figure.

As already noted, it is difficult to say when the tomb was first made, not least because of problems with deciding to what extent the 1912 restoration preserves original features. Given that priory rents were being paid at the tomb not long after Rose's death, it was evidently a place of veneration that may have been a factor in her grandson Theobald seeking burial in the priory in his will of 1295. It may, in turn, have been thought appropriate to replace (or enhance) what was originally a much simpler tomb, still representing Rose in earlier thirteenth-century attire and wearing a veil, which implies that she took (or was thought to have taken) a religious vow on her death bed, but now adding the end panels with their liturgical scenes. How long Rose continued to be honoured by the canonesses, however, is difficult to say and they may in time have forgotten her: in their report on the house in 1536, besides noting veneration of the supposed girdle of St Francis and part of his tunic, the Dissolution commissioners gave the founder as 'lord Ferys', perhaps a reference to Lord Ferrers of Groby (also Marquess Dorset).<sup>55</sup> Rose, however, was

<sup>55</sup> Nichols, *History*, 652; *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII*, X (HMSO, 1887), 138 (no. 364).





Fig. 7. Rose de Verdun's tomb in Belton church in 2019: (upper) top panel;  
(lower) end panel.  
[Photographs taken by Pam Fisher.]



clearly a powerful and determined woman, able to involve one of the country's leading bishops in a pious scheme that still has a physical legacy today.

## ENDOWMENT CHARTER

The National Archives, Kew, E 315/30, f. 2

### TRANSCRIPTION

[O]mnibus Cristi fidelibus ad quos presens scriptum peruenerit Roysa de Verdon' salutem in domino. Licet fidelis seruus 7 prudens talentum sibi traditum reddere debeat cum usuris ego tamen [? ancil]/la<sup>56</sup> domini fragilis 7 multum inbecillis partem saltim talenti mihi desuper commissi ad pedes domini cupiens collocari pro salute anime mee, parentum, antecessorum et successorum meorum construxi monasterium in honore Sancte trinitatis de la Gracedeu apud Beleton' in fundo meo proprio ut Sanctimonialis ordinis Sancti Augustini assensu 7 uoluntate uenerabilis patris Roberti dei gracia Lincoln' episcopi / ibidem perpetuo sub regulari disciplina famulentur altissimo. Propterea deo 7 eidem Ecclesie Sancte trinitatis 7 monialibus ibidem commorantibus 7 deo seruientibus 7 imperpetuum seruituris, dedi concessi 7 et hac / presenti Carta mea confirmaui totum manerium meum de Beleton' cum aduocatione Ecclesie eiusdem uille 7 omnibus aliis suis pertinentiis 7 libertatibus quas Ego 7 antecessores mei unquam in / dicto manerio habere consueuimus. Tenendum 7 habendum de me 7 heredibus meis in puram 7 perpetuam elemosinam libere quiete integre 7 pacifice in dominicis vilenagiis pratis / pascuis boscis parcho viuario molendinis homagiis redditibus Seruiciis Sequelis libertatibus 7 omnibus aliis ad dictum manerium pertinentibus absque omni exactione seruicio 7 / demanda seculari. Ego uero Roysa 7 heredes mei prenomintas moniales de regali seruicio quod ad dictum manerium pertinet 7 de forinseco 7 omni taylagio uersus omnes gentes / imperpetuum acquietabimus. Predictum etiam manerium cum omnibus suis superdictis pertinentiis eisdem monialibus in predicta Ecclesia deo famulantibus imperpetuum warantizabimus. Item dedi concessi 7 hac presenti carta mea confirmaui dictis monialibus totam terram quam accepi in escambium a thoma de Leys cum mesuagio bosco prato 7 omnibus aliis dicte terre pertinentibus. Et de/di eisdem duas landas cum pertinentiis quas Ricardus 7 Willelmus de Leys tenuerunt. Insuper dedi eisdem monialibus quatuor uirgatas terre in threngiston' 7 duas uirgatas terre in Osgodtorp' cum / omnibus pertinentiis suis quas habui de dono Willelmi de Wasteneye 7 totum assartum et Alnetum 7 terram cum pertinentiis que uocantur La'car 7 blakecar que habui de dono ipsius Willelmi / 7 duas bouatas terre in Osgodtorp' cum omnibus pertinentiis suis quas habui de dono Willelmi de Scrdelave 7 totum boscum cum pertinentiis quem habui de dono Willelmi de threngiston' 7 unam / peciam terre quam accepi in escambium ab eodem Willelmo de threngiston' ad quoddam stagnum perficiendum. Que terra iacet inter boscum qui

<sup>56</sup> The top-right corner of the charter is worn, obscuring the final word on line 1, but which evidently continues onto line 2 and ends in 'la'. Not only does the proposed reading 'ancilla' (referring to Rose) suitably counter-balance the male 'seruus' at the beginning of the sentence, but it fits letters that are just about readable with the use of ultra-violet.

uocatur osgodeshaue 7 riuulum illum qui uocatur Wytebroc / ex parte australi dicti cenobii. habens in longitudine uiginti perticas ad mensuram decem 7 octo pedum 7 in latitudine in capite stagni undecim perticas 7 in medio dicte terre nouem / perticas 7 ex parte australi in cauda dicti stagni tres perticas. Preterea dedi dictis dominabus totam terram quam emi a Willelmo de Aiou que iacet inter uiam descendentem de quarario uersus Beleton' 7 Wyte/broc ex parte occidentali dicti cenobii cum omnibus pertinentiis suis. Preterea dedi concessi 7 hac presenti carta mea confirmaui prefatis monialibus totam terram meam de kyrkebi. de euedon'. leythorp'. Ousthorp'. / ueteris Lafford. Hale. ywardebi. tam in dominico quam in seruitio cum omnibus pertinentiis suis 7 homagia 7 seruicia drogonis le Breton'. Roberti filii Willelmi de kyrkebi. Johannis de hale. Hugonis de / Sancto vedasto 7 Alexandri de Lafford' clerici de tenementis que prefati drogo. Robertus. Johannes. <Hugo> et Alexander tenuerunt de me in ywardebi. kyrkebi. hale. <euedon'> 7 Lafford'. Preterea dedi prefatis monialibus / Johannem filium Botildis. Radulfum de Marham. Henricum le hoppar'. Andream filium Gileberti. Willelmum filium Coupman. Toraldum Fox. Matildam uiduam. Willelmum berchar'. Margeriam croc. Willelmum dust. Galfridum brasor. / Gilebertum prepositum de kyrkebi. Walterum gaugi. Isabellam uiduam de euedon'. Gilebertum ad capud uille de euedon'. Willelmum filium Radulfi de Ousthorp'. Johannem filium Gileberti de Bakinton. Johannem filium Gerardi de / leythorp'. Andream gurdecak' de eadem uilla. Alexandram filium Willelmi. Willelmum filium leych'. Alanum prepositum de leythorp'. 7 Emmam uiduam de ueteri Lafford'. Alanum Rose. Agnetam uiduam. Dodus vi/duam. Gerardum [filium] baldewini. Johannem filium gunnild'. Radulfum filium Willelmi. quenild'. Matildam uiduam de kyrkebi. Matildam de Lafford' natiuos meos cum omnibus terris quas tenuerunt in predictis uillis / et cum omnibus catallis 7 sequelis eorumdem. Preterea dedi prefatis monialibus totam terram meam de Lymberg' tam in dominico quam in seruitio cum omnibus pertinentiis suis 7 homagia 7 seruicia Stephani de ma/risco. Walteri Lauerc. Willelmi Lenois. Alexandri Sarespere. Ricardi Lenoil. [presumably in error for 'Lenois'] Roberti coc. Ricardi filii Rogeri. Ricardi filii Gileberti. Radulfi filii Willelmi. Radulfi filii Ricardi. Roberti filii yuonis. Syrith filie Walteri. Insuper dedi / prefatis monialibus Robertum bihintegard'. Ricardum filium thome. Willelmum filium Ade. Willelmum bihintegard'. Willelmum de monte. Hymain. Gilebertum filium milde. Robertum filium yuonis. Hamelin filium Helene. Radulfum filium / Walteri. Iocelin' filium yuonis. Rogerum de fonte. Willelmum filium Lede. Walterum filium Andree. Willelmum filium Petri. Walterum de keilesay. Ricardum filium Hamelin. Iocelin filium eluiue. Robertum filium milde. Gode del gren'. Willelmum / de la gren'. Fulgerum de la gren'. Ricardum filium Petri. Robertum Sounif. Willelmum filium Rogerii. omnes natiuos meos cum omnibus terris quas tenuerunt in predicta uilla et cum omnibus catallis 7 sequelis eorumdem. / Tenenda 7 habenda predictis monialibus imperpetuum. Libere. quiete. pacifice. 7 integre absque aliquo retenemento cum omnibus pertinentiis libertatibus 7 eisiamentis ubique in liberam. puram. / 7 perpetuam elemosinam. Ita quod nec mihi nec heredibus meis nec alicui alii aliquod seruicium seculare inde faciant imperpetuum. Et ego Roysa 7 heredes mei omnia predicta tenementa tam in dominicis / quam in mei seruiciis 7 omnia alia premissa tamquam liberam. puram. 7 perpetuam elemosinam nostram warrantizabimus 7 de omni forinseco 7 taylagio generali uel particulari 7 a

quocumque facto / defendemus 7 aquietabimus contra omnes gentes imperpetuum. Ut autem omnia premissa perpetuam optineant firmitatem presentem cartam Sigilli mei appositione roboravi in presentia predicti / domini episcopi qui ad instantiam meam in premissorum testimonium Sigillum suum presenti carte duxit apponendum. Hiis testis domino Ricardo de Harecurt. domino Henrico de Audideleye. domino Radulfo / Basset. domino Ernaldo de Bosco. domino Galfrido de Greseleye. domino Radulfo de Normaneuile. Rogero Le poer. Yuone paunton'. Ricardo de Wodenton'. Ada de Neuport. Rogero de Somer/uill'. Et Multis Aliis.

#### TRANSLATION

To all the faithful of Christ to whom the present writing shall come Rose de Verdon [sends] greeting in the Lord. Although the faithful and wise servant ought to render with interest the talent that has been given him, I, however, a weak and very feeble handmaid of the Lord, wishing that at least part of the talent given to me is to be placed at the feet of the Lord, have for the salvation of my soul and [the souls] of my parents, ancestors, and successors built a monastery in honour of the Holy Trinity of the Grace of God on my own estate (*fundum*) at Belton, so that by the agreement and wish of the venerable father Robert by grace of God bishop of Lincoln nuns of the order of St Augustine may serve (*famulentur*) the Most High there continuously following a rule. [To this end] I have given, granted, and by this present charter confirmed to God, the same church of Holy Trinity, and the nuns living there and serving God in perpetuity all my manor of Belton with the advowson of the church of the same vill, and with all its pertinences and liberties which I and my ancestors have been accustomed to have in the said manor; holding and having from me and my heirs in pure and perpetual alms freely, quietly, wholly, and peacefully in [respect of] demesne, villeinage, meadows, pastures, woods, park, fishpond, mills, homage, rents, services, family [of the unfree], liberties, and all other things pertaining to the said manor without any secular exaction, service, or demand. Moreover, I Rose and my heirs have acquitted the said nuns against all men in perpetuity of the royal service which pertains to the said manor and from all 'foreign' tallage. And we have warranted in perpetuity the said manor with all the aforesaid pertinences to the same nuns serving God in the said church. And I have given, granted, and by this present charter confirmed to the said nuns all my land which I took in exchange from Thomas de Leys with messuage, wood, meadows, and all other pertinences of the said land. And I have given to the same [nuns] two lands with pertinences which Richard and William de Leys held. Furthermore, I have given to the same nuns four virgates of land in Thringstone and two virgates of land in Osgathorpe<sup>57</sup> with all their pertinences which I had from the gift of William de Wasteneye, and the whole assart and alder grove and land with pertinences called *La car* and *blakecar* which I had from the gift of the same William, and two bovates of land in Osgathorpe with all their pertinences which I had from the gift of William of Shardlow, and the whole wood with pertinences which I had from William of Thringstone, and one piece of

<sup>57</sup> The first element of the place-name is the personal name *Osgot* (or *Osgod*), an anglicised form of Old Norse (ON) *Ásgautr*, presumably the same man as recorded in *Osgodeshaue* ('Osgod's hedge or enclosure') below.

land which I took in exchange from the same William of Thringstone for completing the construction of a certain mill pool. This land [i.e. for the mill pool] lies between the wood which is called *Osgodeshaue* [the hedge or enclosure of Osgod] and that stream which is called *Wytebroc* [White brook]: [namely], having on the south side of the monastery 20 perches in length (at the measure of 18 feet [for a perch]) and 11 perches in breadth at the head (*in capite*) of the pool and 9 perches in the middle of the land, and on the south side 3 perches at the bottom (*in cauda*) of the pool. Moreover, I have given to the said ladies all the land with all its pertinences which I bought from William de Aiou which lies between the way that comes from the quarry towards Belton and *Wytebroc* on the west side of the monastery. And I have given, granted, and by this present charter confirmed to the said nuns all my land of Kirkby, Evedon, Laythorpe [in Kirkby la Thorpe], 'Ousthorpe' [Thorpe in Ewerby], Old Sleaford ('Lafford'), Hale, [and] Ewerby, both in demesne and in service with all its pertinences, and the homage and service of Drew the Breton, Robert son of William of Kirkby, John of Hale, Hugh of St Vaast, Alexander of Sleaford clerk in respect of the tenements which Drew, Robert, John, <Hugh>, and Alexander held from me in Ewerby, Kirkby, Hale, <Evedon>, and Sleaford. And I have given to the aforesaid nuns my neifs with all the lands which they hold in the said vill and with all their chattels and families: [namely] John son of Botild,<sup>58</sup> Ralph of Marham,<sup>59</sup> Henry the hopper [i.e. dancer], Andrew son of Gilbert, William son of Coupman,<sup>60</sup> Torald Fox,<sup>61</sup> Maud the widow, William the shepherd, Margery *croc*,<sup>62</sup> William *dust*,<sup>63</sup> Geoffrey the brewer, Gilbert the reeve of Kirkby, Walter *gaugi*,<sup>64</sup> Isabel the widow of Evedon, Gilbert at the top of the vill of Evedon, William son of Ralph of 'Ousthorpe', John son of Gilbert of 'Bakinton',<sup>65</sup> John son of Gerard of Laythorpe, Andrew 'cut cake' (or loaf) (*gurdecak*) of the same vill, Alexander son of William, William son of *Leych*,<sup>66</sup> Alan the reeve of Laythorpe, and Emma the widow of Old Sleaford, Alan Rose, Agnes the widow, Dodus the widow,<sup>67</sup> Gerard [son] of Baldwin, John son of Gunnild,<sup>68</sup> Ralph son of William, Quenild,<sup>69</sup> Maud the widow of Kirkby, Maud of Sleaford. Moreover, I have given to the aforesaid nuns all my land of [Great] Limber, both in demesne and in service with all its pertinences, and the homage and service of all my neifs with the land which they hold in the said vill and with all their chattels and family: [namely], Stephen of the

<sup>58</sup> The female personal name *Botild* is from the ON *Bóthildir*.

<sup>59</sup> Probably a lost settlement south of Sleaford, the name surviving as Mareham Lane.

<sup>60</sup> The name *Coupman* is derived from the Old Danish personal name *Kóþman* (ON *Kaupmaðr*).

<sup>61</sup> *Torald* is an Anglo-Norman (AN) form of ON *þóraldr*.

<sup>62</sup> Either a patronymic from a Middle English (ME) form of ON *Krókr* or a nickname for someone with a deformed back, or who was sly or cunning.

<sup>63</sup> A nickname from ME *dust* ('powder', 'dust'), perhaps for a thin or slight person.

<sup>64</sup> Probably a toponymic denoting someone from Caugé in Normandy (dépt. Eure), although unusual as a byname for a neif.

<sup>65</sup> The modern form of the place-name is uncertain.

<sup>66</sup> A ME personal name possibly derived from ON *Leikr*.

<sup>67</sup> An hypocoristic form of an unknown Old English (OE) female personal name, but perhaps in error for the well-attested name 'Godus' (being derived from several OE female names beginning with *God-*).

<sup>68</sup> The female name is derived from ON *Gunnhildr*.

<sup>69</sup> A female personal name derived from OE *Cwenhild*.



marsh, Walter Laverc,<sup>70</sup> William Lenois,<sup>71</sup> Alexander Sarespere,<sup>72</sup> Richard Lenois, Robert *coc*,<sup>73</sup> Richard son of Roger, Richard son of Gilbert, Ralph son of William, Ralph son of Richard, Robert son of Ives, Syrith daughter of Walter.<sup>74</sup> In addition, I have given to the aforesaid nuns Robert behind the garth, Richard son of Thomas, William son of Adam, William behind the garth, William of the hill, Hymain,<sup>75</sup> Gilbert son of Milde,<sup>76</sup> Robert son of Ives, Hamelin son of Helen,<sup>77</sup> Ralph son of Walter, Jocelin son of Ives, Roger of the spring, William son of Lede,<sup>78</sup> Walter son of Andrew, William son of Peter, Walter of Kelsey, Richard son of Hamelin, Jocelin son of Elvive,<sup>79</sup> Robert son of Milde, Gode of the green,<sup>80</sup> William of the green, Fulger of the green, Richard son of Peter, Robert Sounif,<sup>81</sup> William son of Roger. [All these lands] to be held and had by the aforesaid nuns in perpetuity, freely, quietly, peacefully, and wholly without any withholding, with all pertinences, liberties, and easements wherever in free, pure, and perpetual alms, so that no secular service shall be made for it in perpetuity either to me or to my heirs or to anyone else. And I, Rose, and my heirs have warranted the aforesaid tenements both in demesnes and in services and all other premises, as our free, pure, and perpetual alms, and shall defend them against all men in perpetuity from all general or particular ‘foreign’ [charge] and tallage made by anyone. So that all the premises shall have perpetual strength I have corroborated the present charter with the placing of my seal in the presence of the lord bishop, who at my request has placed his seal on the present charter in witness of the premises. With these witness: lord Richard de Harecourt, lord Henry de Audley, lord Ralph Basset, lord Ernald de Bois (*de Bosco*), lord Geoffrey de Gresley, lord Ralph de Normanville, Roger the Picard (*le poer*), Yves Paunton, Richard de ‘Wodenton’,<sup>82</sup> Adam de Neuport,<sup>83</sup> Roger de Somerville, and many others.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank several people whose advice has been sought on various aspects treated in this article: Randle Knight (Verdun family heraldry); Nigel Coulton

<sup>70</sup> The nickname is the Middle English word for a lark (the bird).

<sup>71</sup> Possibly a nickname (although also belonging to the next-but-one neif) perhaps meaning ‘the trouble-maker’, if *Lenois* is a scribal form of ME *the noious* (an English borrowing of the Old French word *ennuiois*, ‘troublesome’).

<sup>72</sup> Possibly an error for *Sakespere* (modern Shakespeare).

<sup>73</sup> Probably the nickname is the ME word for a cock (the bird), rather than for a cook.

<sup>74</sup> The female personal name *Syrith* is derived from ON *Sigríðr*.

<sup>75</sup> The name is an aspirated form of *Imain*, a female name probably of continental origin.

<sup>76</sup> The female personal name *Milde* is OE in origin.

<sup>77</sup> The male personal name *Hamelin* is an Old French pet form of *Hamo*.

<sup>78</sup> The male personal name *Lede* is probably derived from ON *Ljótr* (or \**Ljoti*).

<sup>79</sup> The female personal name *Elvive* is derived from OE *Ælfifu*.

<sup>80</sup> The personal name *Gode* could be either male or female, being a short form of OE names starting with *God-*.

<sup>81</sup> The second name evidently refers to Robert’s mother, a personal name (more usually *Sunnive*) being derived from OE *Sungifu*.

<sup>82</sup> The modern form of the place-name is uncertain.

<sup>83</sup> The toponym may be a scribal error for Neuville, the place-name used with Adam in the witness-list of Henry III’s confirmation charter.

and Jonathan Mackman (endowment charter); Peter McClure (personal names); Wendy Atkin and Simon Pawley (topography of Sleaford); and Brian and Moira Gittos and Nigel Saul (tomb). Pam Fisher, my VCH colleague in Leicestershire, has been extremely helpful in supplying photographs of the tomb, directing me to relevant historical sources and joining me on a site visit, whilst Paula Goodson, secretary to the Friends of Grace Dieu Priory, has also provided useful information. Of course, I remain responsible for any errors in interpretation that there might be.