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Four Scottish indulgences at Sens

English interest in the great Cistercian abbey of Pontigny was stimulated by the exiles there of two archbishops of Canterbury, Thomas Becket and Stephen Langton.¹ As archbishops of Canterbury, Langton and Edmund of Abingdon made gifts to Pontigny abbey in consideration of the welcome given to Becket.² Edmund did not die at Pontigny, but was a *confrater* of the community, and the abbot claimed the body, asserting that Edmund had expressed a wish to be buried there. The process of canonisation was rapid.³ After Edmund's canonisation, Henry III sent a chasuble and a chalice for the first celebration of the feast, and granted money to maintain four candles round the saint's shrine.⁴ In 1254, en route from Gascony to meet Louis IX in Chartres and Paris,⁵ Henry visited Pontigny, as his brother Richard of Cornwall, who seems to have pressed for canonisation, had done in 1247.⁶ Archbishop Boniface of Canterbury ordered the celebration of the feast to be observed throughout his province.⁷ Pope Alexander IV granted a dispensation to allow Englishwomen to enter the precinct of Pontigny abbey on the feast of the translation of the relics of St Edmund⁸ (women were normally forbidden to enter a Cistercian monastery). Matthew Paris, the greatest English chronicler of the age, wrote a life of the saint.⁹ English interest continued into the fourteenth century. In 1331 an English priest was given a licence to visit the shrine,¹⁰ but it seems likely that the Hundred Years' War made pilgrimage to Pontigny difficult.¹¹ The indulgences preserved by the abbey reveal an interest in the shrine throughout the Western

¹ F. M. Powicke, *Stephen Langton* (Oxford, 1928), 75.

² *Le Premier Cartulaire de L'Abbaye Cistercienne de Pontigny (xii^e–xiii^e Siècles)*, ed. M. Garrigues (Paris, 1981), nos 243, 241.

³ Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims. Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London, 1977), 138–9.

⁴ C. H. Lawrence, *St Edmund of Abingdon. A Study in Hagiography and History* (Oxford, 1960), 4; the latter gift is recorded in the *Cartulaire*, no.211.

⁵ F. M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward* (Oxford, 1947), i, 240.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 197 n.1.

⁷ Lawrence, *St Edmund*, 22–3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 325.

⁹ Matthew Paris, *The Life of St Edmund*, trans. and ed. C. H. Lawrence (Stroud, 1996).

¹⁰ Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London and New York, 1999), 174.

¹¹ Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, 139.

Church, granted as they were by prelates from Tortosa to Livonia and Estonia, and from Messina to Lübeck.¹²

It is some fifty years since evidence of Scottish interest in St Edmund appeared in print. It was a translation of all but the opening phrase of a letter of Bishop Clement of Dunblane in support of the movement to have Edmund canonised, and contained in a manuscript in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.¹³ It must date between 1241, when Edmund died in France en route for Rome, and late 1246 when he was canonised; Donald Watt dated it summer 1241 x spring 1242, presumably to fit in with similar English documents.¹⁴ In 1960 C. H. Lawrence revealed the existence of four Scottish indulgences for pilgrims visiting the shrine, by printing a list of documents relating to St Edmund in the treasury of the cathedral of Sens.¹⁵ These had been in the archives of the abbey of Pontigny, had passed into the possession of the last abbot and were presented to the cathedral of Sens in the nineteenth century;¹⁶ they are now in the collections of the Musées de Sens. In 1962 Monsignor David McRoberts drew attention to the indulgences, the interest of the Melrose chronicler in St Edmund, and the relic of his hair in Aberdeen cathedral. The chronicler recorded miracles at Edmund's tomb and his canonisation;¹⁷ his interest probably increased because Pontigny, like Melrose, was a Cistercian house.

It is not possible to establish beyond doubt a connection among the four bishops who granted these indulgences. Clement of Dunblane, a Dominican, and the first friar to become a bishop in Scotland, is the only one of the four known to have written in support of the canonisation. When archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund frequently had Dominicans in his household, and it was two Dominicans, Roger Bacon and the prior of the Dominicans at Oxford, who supplied Oxford University with information for the canonisation.¹⁸ It may be that Clement had met Edmund, or been his pupil, at Paris or Oxford.¹⁹ Clement's letter

¹² Lawrence, *St Edmund*, 323–5.

¹³ J. Hutchison Cockburn, 'Friar Clement O. P. (bishop of Dunblane 1233–1258)', *Society of the Friends of Dunblane Cathedral* 7 (1954–6), 86–93.

¹⁴ D. E. R. Watt, *A Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Graduates to A.D. 1410* (Oxford, 1977), 100; Lawrence, *St Edmund*, 16.

¹⁵ Lawrence, *St Edmund*, 320–5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁷ David McRoberts, 'St Edmund in Scotland', *IR* 13 (1962), 219–20; I am grateful to Dr David Ditchburn who drew my attention to this relic and the reference to it in *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis. Ecclesie cathedralis Aberdonensis regesta que extant in unum collecta*, ed. Cosmo Innes, Spalding and Maitland Clubs, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1845), ii, 143–4 before I had read McRoberts' article.

¹⁸ Lawrence, *St Edmund*, 153.

¹⁹ Watt, *Graduates*, 99.

is imprecise on the subject: ‘When I learned from companions, fellow students and brethren ... of his outstanding manner of life and pre-eminent holiness, I studiously cultivated his acquaintance ...’²⁰

Peter Ramsay of Aberdeen may have been Edmund’s pupil, but, as Monsignor McRoberts pointed out, Bishop Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln played a leading part in the canonisation process, and Ramsay had succeeded him as lector in theology to the Franciscan friars at Oxford. It may therefore have been Grosseteste who drew Ramsay’s attention to St Edmund.²¹ Presumably it was Ramsay who acquired the relic of St Edmund’s hair for Aberdeen cathedral. Little is known about the career of Richard de Inverkeithing before his election as bishop of Dunkeld, but he was certainly a *magister*.²² Less is known about the career of Robert [II] bishop of Ross; even his dates of election and death are uncertain.²³ Donald Watt suggested that all four had been pupils of Edmund,²⁴ and as three of them were almost certainly graduates, this is not an unreasonable hypothesis, though beyond proof. Apart from the death there of John abbot of Dunfermline en route to Rome in 1256,²⁵ there is no other evidence of Scottish connections with Pontigny. Scottish interest thus seems to be confined to 1248–56, a very brief period, and one which falls very soon after Edmund’s canonisation.

The earliest known indulgence by a Scottish bishop was granted by Bishop Arnald of St Andrews: an indulgence of ten days on the anniversary of the dedication of the church of Ednam (1161 x 1162).²⁶ It was seen by James Raine when he wrote *The History and Antiquities of North Durham*, but unfortunately he printed only what must have been the endorsement, and the document is now lost. Many Scottish indulgences belong to the thirteenth century and are printed in *Rites of Durham* and *The Priory of Finchale*.²⁷ Those printed in the latter were extant in 1837,

²⁰ Cockburn, ‘Friar Clement’, 87.

²¹ McRoberts, ‘St Edmund’, 219.

²² Watt, *Graduates*, 280.

²³ John Dowden, *The Bishops of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1912), 212 n.1; *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae Medii Aevi Ad Annum 1638*, ed. D. E. R. Watt and A. L. Murray, rev. edn, Scottish Record Society (Edinburgh, 2003), 347.

²⁴ Watt, *Graduates*, 280.

²⁵ Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*, ed. D. E. R. Watt *et al.*, 9 vols (Aberdeen and Edinburgh, 1987–98), v, 319.

²⁶ J. Raine, *The History and Antiquities of North Durham* (London, 1852), Appendix, 83, no.452.

²⁷ *The Rites of Durham; being a description or brief declaration of all the ancient monuments, rites, and customs belonging or being within the monastical church of Durham before the suppression, written 1593*, ed. J. T. Fowler, Surtees Society (London and Edinburgh, 1903), 129–38; *The Charters of Endowment, Inventories and Account Rolls of the Priory of Finchale, in the County of Durham*, ed. James Raine, Surtees Society (London, 1837), 169–91.

but are now lost. Two late surviving examples are indulgences granted by bishops of Glasgow for Lincoln cathedral in 1305 and 1321.²⁸

The four Scottish indulgences at Sens have two interesting features. The first is the use of silk cords to bear the seals on those issued by Richard de Inverkeithing of Dunkeld and Clement of Dunblane. The indulgence issued by Peter Ramsay of Aberdeen has lost its seal, but the survival of two holes rather than a slit (as on the indulgence of Robert of Ross) suggests that it too had a seal hung on cords. In my experience, this is an unusual practice for episcopal *acta* up to the mid-thirteenth century; the only example that I have seen is Durham, Dean and Chapter Archives, MC1308, an act of William Malveisin bishop of St Andrews, bearing his seal and that of the convent of St Andrews. It seems likely, therefore, that these indulgences were sealed by clerks at Pontigny, and possibly written there, since the indulgences of the bishops of Dunkeld and Dunblane are by the same hand. These indulgences do not follow the formula laid down by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215,²⁹ and this common factor may suggest composition at Pontigny. The second feature of interest is the obverse of the seal of the bishop of Dunkeld, which is a unique survival, and which is discussed by Virginia Glenn in the next article.³⁰

Appendix

Scottish indulgences at Sens

1. Collections Musées de Sens. Trésor de la Cathédrale (TC H54)

Omnibus Christi fidelibus ad quos presentes littere peruenerint Petr' miseracione diuina minister ecclesie Abiridonens' salutem in domino sempiternam . Graciam quam a deo gratis accepimus libenter fidelibus populis dispensare uolentes omnibus uere confessis 7 contritis qui ad fabricam feretri beati Edmundi confessoris aliquid de bonis suis pia donacione contulerint vel transmiserint confisi de dei omnipotentis clemencia Quadraginta dies de iniuncta sibi penitencia misericorditer relaxamus dum modo loci diocesanus hanc nostram jndulgenciam duxerit approbandam . Dat' . apud pontiniac' . anno domini . m^o . cc^o . Quadragesimo Nono.

Endorsement: Abir donen' episcopi ad f[abricam] f[eretri] xl d[ies]

Dimensions: length 18 cms; height 7 cms.

²⁸ *The Registrum Antiquissimum of the Cathedral Church of Lincoln*, ed. C. W. Foster and Kathleen Major, Lincoln Record Society, 12 vols (Hereford, 1931–73), ii, nos 423, 427.

²⁹ N. P. Tanner, *The Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols (London and Washington, 1990), i, 263.

³⁰ I should like to thank Mme Sylvie Ballester-Radet, bibliothécaire, Les Musées de Sens for her invaluable help, Drs Marie-Thérèse and Bernard Guillauneuf, who greatly facilitated my visit to Sens, and Mr Iain MacLennan, whose computing skills allowed a close examination of the Dunkeld seal.

Sealing: foot turned up 2 cms to carry the seal; there is no tag, and the seal is missing, but the presence of two holes suggests that the seal was hung on silk cords, as was the case with two of the other indulgences.

Translation:

To all Christ's faithful to whom these present letters shall come, Peter [Ramsay] by divine mercy minister of the church of Aberdeen, eternal greeting in the lord. Wishing to dispense gladly to faithful people the grace which we receive freely from God, we mercifully relax forty days of the penance enjoined on them to all who, truly confessed and penitent, hand over or transmit anything from their goods in a pious donation to the fabric of the shrine of the blessed confessor Edmund, trusting in the clemency of almighty God, provided that the diocesan gives approval to this our indulgence. Given at Pontigny in the year of the lord 1249.

2. Collections Musées de Sens. Trésor de la Cathédrale (TC H71)

Vniuersis Christi fidelibus ad quos presentes Littere peruenerint Frater Clemens dei gracia Dumblen' · Episcopus salutem in domino sempiternam · Graciam quam a deo gracis accepimus libenter fidelibus populis dispensare cupientes omnibus uere confessis 7 contritis qui ad fabricam feretri beati Edmundi Confessoris aliquid de bonis suis pia donacione contulerint confisi de dei omnipotentis clemencia quadraginta dies de iniuncta sibi penitencia misericorditer relaxamus · dum modo Loci diocesanus hanc nostram indulgenciam duxerit approbandam · Dat' · apud Ian³¹ · Anno domini millesimo ducentesimo quinquagesimo primo

Endorsement: ad fa[bricam] fe[retri] · xl d[ies], and, in a different hand, Dumblanen'
Dimensions: length 19 cms; height 6 cms.

Sealing: the foot turned up 1 cm with two holes to take green cords on which the seal is hung.

Seal: in very dark green wax, and much damaged at the top and along the edges, so that there is too little of it to establish the inscription. Its size in its present condition is 6 cms by 3 cms. The bishop's head is missing, but the figure is apparently facing forward, left hand holding a crozier and right hand raised in blessing. There is no counter seal.

Modern label: sewn on to the turned up foot of the indulgence and inscribed Clemens évêque de Dumblain

Translation:

To all Christ's faithful to whom the present letters shall come, Brother Clement, by the grace of God bishop of Dunblane, eternal greeting in the lord. Desiring to dispense gladly to faithful people the grace which we accept freely from God, we mercifully relax forty days of the penance enjoined on them to all who, truly confessed and penitent, hand over anything from their goods in a pious donation to

³¹ I am grateful to Professor A. A. M. Duncan and Dr Dauvit Broun for their opinion on the initial letter of this word. We agree that it is I. It is very badly formed, like a modern J with a thin line joining the tail to the top of the ascender, giving the appearance of a letter O squashed in from the left.

the fabric of the shrine of the blessed confessor Edmund, trusting in the clemency of almighty God, provided that the diocesan gives his approval to this our indulgence. Given at ?³² in the year of the lord 1251.

3. Collections Musées de Sens. Trésor de la Cathédrale (TC H79 [formerly H78])

Omnibus Christi fidelibus ad quos presentes littere peruenerint · R · permissione diuina Duncalden' · Episcopus salutem in domino sempiternam · Graciam quam a deo gracies accepimus libenter fidelibus populis dispensare cupientes omnibus uere confessis 7 contritis qui ad fabricam feretri beati patris Edmundi aliquid de bonis suis pia donacione contulerint confisi de dei omnipotentia XL dies de iniuncta penitencia misericorditer relaxamus · dum modo Loci diocesanus hanc nostram indulgenciam duxerit approbandam · Dat' apud Pontin' · Anno domini m^o. cc^o. L^o. secundo mense Junio.

Endorsement: Dunkelden'; and, in a modern hand (eighteenth-century?), Indulgences 1252, and then RICHARDVS DEI GRA DVNALDEN EPS, followed by what must be the inscription on the reverse of the seal before it was damaged (see below).

Dimensions: length just over 8 cms at the top, 7.5 cms at the bottom; height 4.2 cms on the left, 4 cms on the right.

Sealing: foot turned up 2 cms on the left, 3 cms on the right with two holes to carry the red cords on which the seal is hung.

Seal: very dark green wax, rather damaged. Its size in its present condition is approximately 5 cms by 3.5 cms. The bishop's head is missing, as is a large part of the upper right hand area of the seal. The figure faces forward, crozier in left hand, right hand raised in blessing; there is a *fleur de lys* on each side of the bishop. The reverse of the seal shows a figure kneeling before a seated figure, and is a unique survival. The damaged state of the seal makes it impossible to be sure of the inscription, but the third later endorsement seems to preserve it: DEUS : EXALTA : SCO : MEDIANTE : COLUMBA.

Modern label: sewn on to the turned up foot of the indulgence and inscribed Richard évêque de Dunkeld 1252 (Ecosse).

Translation:

To all Christ's faithful to whom these present letters shall come, R[ichard de Inverkeithing] by divine permission bishop of Dunkeld, eternal greeting in the lord. Desiring to dispense gladly to faithful people the grace which we receive freely from God, we mercifully relax forty days of the penance enjoined on them to all who, truly confessed and contrite, hand over to the fabric of the shrine of the blessed father

³² It has not been possible to identify this place. Possible places in the département of Yonne, in which Pontigny is now situated, are Jandin, Grand et Petit Janvier, all described as hamlets, and Janets, described as farm and castle: *Dictionnaire topographique du département de l'Yonne comprenant les noms anciens et modernes*, ed. M. Quantin (Paris, 1862), 68. None of these names appears in the earliest cartulary of the abbey. I assume, from the other three indulgences, that this place was somewhere in the vicinity of Pontigny, but that need not be the case.

Edmund something from their goods as a pious donation, trusting in the omnipotence of God, provided that the diocesan gives his approval to this our indulgence. Given at Pontigny in the year of the lord 1252, in the month of June.

4. Collections Musées de Sens. Trésor de la Cathédrale (TC H91)

Omnibus Christi fidelibus ad quos presentes littere peruenerint · Robt' · dei gracia Rosensis episcopus salutem in domino sempiternam · Graciam quam a deo gracis accepimus libenter fidelibus populis dispensare volentes ./ omnibus vere confessis 7 contritis qui ad ecclesiam beate marie de pontiniaco in qua reliquie beati Edmundi confessoris Christi atque pontificis requiescunt · causa peregrinacionis cum debita deuocione accesserint ./ uel eidem ecclesie aliquid de bonis suis pia deuocione contulerint ./ confisi de dei omnipotentis misericordia · quadraginta dies de iniuncta sibi penitencia misericorditer relaxamus · Datum apud Br'inonem · quinto decimo kl' Augusti · Anno domini · m^o · cc^o · l^o · quinto ·

Endorsement: Rosensis episcopi xl dies ad f[eretrum].

Dimensions: length 20 cms; height 5.7 cms on the left, 6 cms on the right.

Sealing: foot turned up 2 cms on the left, 2.5 cms on the right (partially obscuring the first word of the last line of text) to take the seal tag. The tag survives, but the seal is missing.

Translation:

To all Christ's faithful to whom the present letters shall come, Robert, by the grace of God bishop of Ross, eternal greetings in the lord. Wishing to dispense gladly to faithful people the grace which we freely receive from God, we mercifully relax forty days of the penance enjoined on them to all who, truly confessed and contrite, come with due devotion for the sake of pilgrimage to the church of the blessed Mary of Pontigny in which the relics of the blessed Edmund, confessor of Christ and pontiff, rest, or hand over to that church something from their goods with pious devotion, trusting in the mercy of almighty God. Given at Brienon-sur-Armaçon on the fifteenth Kalends of August [18 July] in the year of the lord 1255.

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