

269. London, British Library, Harley 2110

Ælfric, Homilies; Cartulary of Castle Acre Priory

[Ker 235, Gneuss 428]

HISTORY: Harley 2110 is a cartulary of Castle Acre Priory, Norfolk, dated by Davis (1958: 26) to “c. 1250–60?” with subsequent additions. The manuscript presumably remained at Castle Acre until the priory was dissolved on 22 November 1537. Subsequent use of the collection is traced by Wright (1938: 50–52). The whereabouts of the manuscript immediately after the dissolution is unknown, but it was later in the possession of Sir Simonds D’Ewes (1602–1650), to whom William Dugdale ascribes it in the first edition of his *Monasticon* (1655). From D’Ewes it passed to Randle Holme (?1601–1659), whose pressmark and title (“GGGG | Deeds of seuerall places | and countys”) is written on a parchment paste-down added (wrong way up) to f. 1*v, and part of whose will (turned 90°) occurs on f. 2*v (see Wanley et al. 1808: 417). The table of places referred to in the cartulary on f. 2*rv is by Randle Holme III (1627–1699) (according to Wanley et al. 1808: 501). The manuscript was one of 260 purchased by Francis Gastrell, Bishop of Chester (1662–1725), on behalf of Robert Harley, first earl of Oxford (1661–1724), whose pressmark (‘97 B.2’) occurs on f. 1*v and whose collection passed to the British Museum (Wright 1938: 52).

Two leaves of OE containing homilies by Ælfric served as binding leaves to the cartulary. As Wright (1938: 52–53) observes, “The two Ælfric leaves bear on the verso of f. 4* and recto of f. 5* remains of gum and must have formed part of the binding of the Register; they received their present numbering and mounting when the MS. was rebound in 1879 (14 June–24 July).” Traces of 16c (?) script are apparent running laterally across each of the pages. Wright (1938: 53) reads in the margin of f. 4*r: ‘Mgr. Hospitalis Sce. mariae de pratis inter Northcreic & Brunham[thorp]/ f. 44b’. This is a reference to a charter now on f. 50v and demonstrates that these leaves were present in the manuscript in the 16c. In view of the direction of the writing and the size of the leaves (which are

cut down to approximately the width of the existing manuscript in their length), they were presumably at that stage bound at 90° from their present orientation. Ker (*Cat.*, 308) identifies a name scribbled laterally on f. 5*v as 'Iohannes Wynchelse', i.e., John Wynchelsea, prior of Castle Acre in 1510. This demonstrates that the Ælfric leaves were bound with the cartulary in Castle Acre before the dissolution and so represent the surviving fragments of an Ælfric manuscript sent out to the priory in Norfolk after the Norman Conquest, presumably sometime soon after it was first founded in 1089.

The manuscript was again rebound in 1974, according to a note added to f. [154]v, recording that it was examined after binding on 28 March 1974.

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: The parchment is poorly prepared and leaves vary quite widely in size; they average about 306 x 224 mm. The last quire is somewhat smaller, ca. 296 x 219 mm. Ruled in pencil for 40 lines per leaf, with double bounding lines at either side, giving a typical written space of 250 x 170 mm. Pricking is frequently visible. Leaves arranged FHFH.

There is an early ink foliation, running 1–144, which does not take into account sewn-in leaves; this foliation was used by Dugdale (1825) and Wanley et al. (1808). The current, penciled, foliation incorporates the preliminary matter as ff. 1*–5* and then begins again at 1, incorporating all the leaves. Quire signatures are written in ink in Roman numerals in the lower margin at the end of quires, not taking into account the short Quires II, XI, and XII. Collation is now easily seen as each quire is mounted separately.

The bulk of the cartulary (ff. 1r–130r), excluding numerous added passages, was written in a single campaign in a Gothic-cursive hand of the 13c. Further material has been added, including the sewing in of leaves, written in a variety of different hands. One such leaf, f. 25, is a chirograph, bearing the top half of this word along its lower side, where it has been cut. There is extensive use of red rubrics throughout the manuscript: enlarged initials are in red or green, and other capitals are touched in red.

The Ælfric leaves currently measure 260 x 151 mm., including repair parchment at the top of the leaves; the maximum extent of the surviving parchment is 224 x 151 mm. The present writing grid with 23 lines of text is 188 x 108 mm. Ker calculates that there were formerly 26 lines of text. Text is lost at the top and in the outer lower margin of f. 4*. Ruling is by drypoint with double bounding lines at each margin, drawn from f. 5*v and f. 4*r. The leaves are a conjugate bifolium which must have formed the center of a quire. They are misfolded: f. 5* should precede f. 4*, as is evident from the contents. The

handwriting is a single uncalligraphic hand of the 11c (as noted by Ker, *Cat.*, 308). The rubric and initial letter are in red and capitals are touched with red.

COLLATION: ix + 152 + v leaves, foliated [i–iv], 1*–5*, 1–152, [153–57]. **I**¹² (ff. 1–12), **II**²⁺¹ (ff. 13–15: a bifolium with a cut-down leaf [f. 15, measuring 180 x 162 mm.] sewn onto left side of f. 14v), **III**¹²⁺⁵ (ff. 16–32) (f. 17, measuring 195 x 238 mm., is stitched to right side of f. 16r and folded; f. 21, measuring 199 x 218 mm., is stitched to left side of f. 22r; ff. 23–25, measuring 37 x 156 mm., are stitched to left side of f. 26r), **IV**¹² (ff. 33–44) (ff. 36 and 41 are singletons), **V**¹² (ff. 45–56), **VI**¹²⁺¹ (ff. 57–69) (f. 58 is an added singleton), **VII–VIII**¹² (ff. 70–93), **IX**¹⁴ (ff. 94–107), **X**⁸⁺¹ (ff. 108–16) (f. 112 is a singleton), **XI**¹ (f. 117), **XII**¹ (f. 118), **XIII**¹²⁺¹ (ff. 119–31) (f. 121 is a singleton, measuring 228 x 221 mm.), **XIV**⁸⁺⁴ (ff. 132–43) (f. 132, measuring 145 x 214 mm., is sewn onto the top of f. 133r; f. 137 is a singleton; ff. 139 and 140 are an added bifolium), **XV**⁸⁺¹ (ff. 144–52) (f. 144, measuring 185 x 215 mm., is sewn onto the left side of f. 145r).

[**Note:** First and last four flyleaves are modern paper; ff. 1*–3* and [153] are older paper flyleaves, including 16c marks of ownership. Ff. 4* and 5*, a bifolium, are the Ælfric leaves.]

CONTENTS:

f. 1*v Pressmarks and title.

f. 2*r/1–2*v/6 Table of places in cartulary.

f. 3*r/1–2 Brief table of persons in cartulary.

OE homilies by Ælfric [line numbers are based on the 23 lines now visible; the order of ff. 4* and 5* has been reversed]:

1. ff. 5*r/1–5v/23, 4*r/1 Ælfric, CH I.3, homily on St. Stephen, beginning abruptly: ‘þin broður þe dyde’; ends at f. 4*r/1 ‘... sað a on ecnysse’ (ed. Thorpe 1844: 54/32 to end; Clemoes 1997: 204–5, ll. 169–202; this fragment ed. Wright 1938: 53–55).
2. f. 4*r/2–4*v/23 Ælfric, CHI.4: [ASSUMPTIO] S<(AN)C<(T)I IOHANNIS E[VANG]ELISTE. ‘IOHANNES ‘SE GOD’ SPELLERE CRISTES DYRLING W[:::] | on ðissu(m) dæge’; ends ‘[:]is gesetnessa aidlode wæron. Ða wearð’ (ed. Thorpe 1844: 58/1–60/5; Clemoes 1997: 206–7, ll. 2–33; this fragment ed. Wright 1938: 53–54).
3. Cartulary of Castle Acre Priory, Norfolk. [Contents described in detail by Dugdale 1825: 46–48 and Wanley et al. 1808: 501–2; selected contents ed. Dugdale 1825: 49–54. Major divisions only are itemized below.]

- f. 1r/1 **Hec sunt carte comitum Warrenie que habentur apud castellacrum**
 | 'Notum sit tam presentib(us) q(ua)m futuris q(uo)d ego Will(iel)mus
 comes de suthreia'.
- f. 7v/39 **Hec sunt carte baronu(m). militu(m). & alior(um) b(e)n(e)-
 f(ac)t(o)r(um) n(os)tror(um).**
- f. 112r/1 **Carte regu(m) Angl(ie)** [ff. 113r/22–43 and all 113v blank].
- f. 114r/1 **Cyrog(ra)ph(a) cur(iarum) reg(iarum)** [f. 118v/33–43 blank].
- f. 119r/1 **Hec su(n)t carte archiep(iscop)or(um) cantuariensium. q(ua)s
 ap(u)d nos habemus** [f. 120r/38–42 blank].
- f. 120r/43 **Hec sunt carte ep(iscop)or(um) lundoniensium.**
- f. 121r/1 **ep(iscop)or(um) elyensiu(m).**
- f. 122r/1 **Hec sunt carte ep(iscop)or(um) lincolliensiu(m). & capituli
 lincol(n)** [f. 123r/28–43 blank].
- f. 123v/1 **Hec sunt carte episcopor(um) norwicensium.**
 [The main script ends at f. 130/16, followed by additions in various later hands.
 At f. 143v, occurs a list of names of priors.]
- f. 152v Blank except for scribbles and drawings, including an elegantly-stepping
 goat and a playing-card-like king.

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- Wright, C. E. "Two Ælfric Fragments." *Medium Ævum* 7 (1938): 50–55.