

**THE CARTULARY AND CHARTERS OF THE PRIORY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL, IPSWICH, Part II: The Charters** edited by David Allen (Boydell & Brewer Suffolk Charters XXI 2020 211pp ISBN 978-1-78327-494-9) £60

This volume completes a two-volume account of, respectively, the cartulary and charters of this Augustinian priory. Both volumes need to be read together: they are mutually inclusive. For example, *Part I* includes a list of abbreviations and a bibliography; an introduction explaining the Augustinian Order, the Priory and its life, community and possessions; and, crucially, the editorial method adopted. The contents of *Part II* include notes on references; a corrigenda to *Part I*; an index of persons and places, and an index of subjects relative to *Parts I & II*.

It is helpful for researchers and local historians to know the cartulary in *Part I* and its contents are printed in the order in which they were rebound in 1972 and that the 36 original charters have been substituted for their cartulary copies. None of the charters which made up its original content date later than the 1260s and these have been transcribed *in extenso*, with material added later appearing in calendar form. The charters in *Part II* begin with two writs of Henry I and Stephen in favour of the 'canons of Ipswich' with the remainder devoted to private charters which are not duplicated in the cartulary. These are arranged in two parts: firstly, grants in favour of the canons as charters relating to the Priory's land holdings in Ipswich and neighbouring parishes, and grants made by the Priory relating to outlying holdings. Secondly, documents issued by the Priory divided into grants, leases, and exchanges and other agreements. Both parts are presented in alphabetical order by place name. Appendix 1 in *Part II* lists all the original charters including those which have been substituted for their cartulary copies in *Part I*. Entries in the cartulary were unnumbered and a sequential numbering system has been added throughout *Parts I & II* to facilitate cross-referencing with document number orders.

Charters were one of the most important types of document created in the Middle Ages granting property rights from one individual, group or religious order to another, either in perpetuity or for a fixed term, and also include the granting of privileges or honours. There is a formulaic style present in most of the charters such as the introduction in which the parties are named and greeted, followed by the body of the text conveying the purpose of the charter, and a concluding part naming the witnesses and the date or the application of a seal. It is very important for researchers to understand local practice at the time the charter was written in order to accurately interpret the evidence, because local circumstances, though frequently referred to, are rarely explained in any detail – it was assumed those concerned would be aware of the background circumstances. This is one of the great strengths of the transcriptions, translations and explanations of the charters by the editor, David Allen, a former archivist at the Suffolk Record office, who has done an excellent job in providing information necessary to allow historical conclusions to be drawn.

The texts throughout are an invaluable source for students of palaeography, Latin and local history. Understanding the difference between cartularies and charters, the function they perform and interpretation of the evidence they provide allows a proper appreciation of their purpose.

### **Reviewer Profile**

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