

Durham Priory – Locelli

Introduction

This category of document is of medieval origin, though somewhat modified in modern times. It consists of a variety of papers that are grouped roughly according to subject matter, though with occasional deviations; thus most of the requests for processions are in Loc.XVII, some documents connected with visitations appear under Loc.XXVII, and wills of secular people are in Loc.XXXVII. A brief calendar, available in the Search Room, was searched for any document that might contain anything relating to performance, and all documents that might possibly contain any relevant were then read in detail. As with Pontificalia, these are miscellaneous documents, so the dimensions of each one cited are given in the Textual Notes.

Texts

1237 (exact date unknown)

Durham Priory Locelli VI.20♦

DCL

(Objections of King Henry III to the Election of Prior Thomas Melsonby as Bishop)

...

Item quod tanquam homicida debet repelli eo quod cum quidam Iстриo in cimiterio suo cordam a turri ad turrem extensam ascenderet de uoluntate dicti prioris. Idem corruit & mortuus est. qui prior nec talibus illicitis debuit interesse. nec consentire. Immo debuit expresse talia ne fierent inhibuisse.

...

1372 (11th August)

Durham Priory Locelli I.55♦

DCL

(Letter from King Edward III to the prior and convent, requesting prayers and processions for the success of his proposed campaign against the King of France)

*Edwardus dei gracia Rex Anglie & ffrancie & Dominus Hibernie dilecto sibi in Christo Priori sancti Cuthberti Dunolmensis salutem . . . ergo virtui inclinatio cordis nostri habitaculo humiliter quo possumus obsecramus eam per misericordiam ihesu Christi ob***ius excitantes quatinus predicti regni tocus que ecclesie Anglicane filiorum nostrorum ac aliorum omnium in presenti nostro viagio nobiscum profectorum aut alias cause nostre iusticiam vbicumque prosequencium statu prospero & felici apud altissimum cuius mitu vniuersa subsistunt in missarum celebracionibus verbi dei prolacionibus deuotis que processionibus ieiuniis vigilijs elemosinarum largicionibus & alijs oracionibus & precaminibus publicis & secretis vestris & ipsorum omnium instare velitis frequencius quo possitis / vt ipse deus pro sua misericordia acta & actus nostros in suo beneplacito dirigat & disponat & ad sui nominis honorem & gloriam nobis & ipsis salubrem efficaciam assumpti per nos & ipsos propositi tribuat & impendat ac per vestri subditores que vestrorum exempla commodifera ad idem fieri quamtocius procuretis ab agendis huiusmodi quesumus non cessantes donec nobis processibus que nostris predictis placatum per prosperitatis euidenciam perceperitis ipsum deum. Coram me ipso apud Westmonasterium xj die Augusti Anno regni nostri Anglie Quadragesimo sexto regni vero nostri ffrancie tricesimo tercio.*

Middelton
per ipsum Regem

(1374-91)

Durham Priory Locelli XXVII.35♦

DCL

(Complaints of monks at a Benedictine visitation of the Priory)

f.1^v

...

14. Item obedienciarij non procurant suos fratres infra . . . lacijs sicut nec celerarius adintra vt fieri consueuit Nec amici nec parentes cla . . . in hostolaria quam alij extranej extranej¹ ipsis monachis non propinqui nisi fuerit de sumptibus ***s . . . tunc permittuntur necessarie domum vbi comedunt aliquando ministralli & alij multi in dedecus & no<cim>entum claustralium eorundem. Respondit super isto per deliberacionem bene ordiabitur.²

...

1394 (24th October)

Durham Priory Locelli XVII.5

DCL

(Letter from Walter Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham, to the Prior, giving instructions for religious processions during a time of war)

Walterus permissione diuina dunolmensis Episcopus – dilecto filio Priori ecclesie nostre Dunolmensis. salutem gratiam & benedictionem – Cum serenissimus princeps & dominus noster dominus Ricardus dei gracia Rex Anglie illustris considerans quantis guerrarum incomodis & aduersitatibus subiectus sibi populus iam retroactis temporibus afflictus extiterit nunc ad partes exterarum se diuerterit sub spe miseracionis diuine ad hostium suorum superbiam reprimendam voluntarios labores appetens in rei tam ardue aggressiua vt subiecto sibi populo valeat preparare quietem Ad ipsum igitur deum omnipotentem a quo omnis creatura procedit qui res eciam desperatas potest virtutis sue magnitudine votiuo fine concludere humiliter recurramus ipsius omnipotentiam suppliciter implorantes vt ipse qui verus deus & iustus est iudex prefatum dominum nostrum Regem & exercitum suum / causeque sue veritatem oculo dextro benigne aspiciens effrenem hostium suorum superbiam reprimat & elidat & super eum manum sue benedictionis extendat ad suam laudem & gloriam nostrique meritum & d<an>dam nostri Regis & Regine perpetuam quietem & pacem / et ut facilius augmentum gracie salutaris multiplicatis intercessoribus largiatur. vos in virtute obediencie monemus & in domino exhortamur quatenus singulis diebus dominicis ac .iiiiij.^{tis} & .vj.^{tis} ferijs vsque ad redditum domini nostrj Regis predicti vel donec aliud a nobis habueritis in mandatis per vos & conuentum dicte ecclesie nostre dunolmensis processiones solempnes fieri faciatis / confratresque vestros & populum efficaciter inducatis vt pro felici progressi dicti domini nostri Regis humiles altissimo preces fundant vt deus misericordiarum dominus eum & actus suos in beneplacito suo sic dirigat vt hostibus sibi aduersantibus sub manu potenti dei valeat preualere. Nos etenim sincero cordis affectu cupientes per allectiua indulgenciarum munera fidelium deuocionem ad premissa excitare de dei omnipotentis misericordia & beatissime Marie Virginis matris eius ac beatorum petri & pauli apostolorum necnon sancti confessoris Cuthberti patronj nostri gloriosi omnique sanctorum meritis consili omnibus & singulis parochianis nostris & alijs quorum hanc nostram indulgenciam ratam habuerint & acceptam in salutis eterne via dispositis qui processionibus huiusmodi interint & per felici transitu & passagio prosperisque progressibus ac expedicione salubri domini nostri Regis & exercitus sui predictorum oraciones pias altissimo effuderint siue preces quadraginta dies de iniuncta

¹ This repetition is a careless dittography.

² Error for 'ordinabitur'.

sibi penitencia deo propicio misericorditer relaxamus / vobis firmiter iniungendo mandantes quatenus in dicta ecclesia nostra dunolmense diebus dominicis & festiuis intra missarum solempna huiusmodi nostram indulgenciam & premissa omnia faciatis dilucide publicari In cuius rei testimonium sigillum nostrum fecimus hijs apponi. Data in manerio nostro de Aukeland .xxiiij. die mensis Octobris. Anno dominj Millesimo .CCC.mo nonagesimo quarto. Et nostre translacionis septimo.

1398 (14th October)

Durham Priory Locelli XVII.29

DCL

(Letter from Walter Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham, to the Prior, ordering him to denounce an excommunicated canon in the course of Sunday and festival processions)

Walterus permissione diuina Dunolmensis Episcopus Dilecto filio Priori ecclesie nostre Dunolmensis. salutem graciam & benedictionem. Quia nos fratrem Willelmum Carlell canonicum Hospitalis de Westspitell ordinis sancti augustinj ville Nouicacstri nostre diocesis de nonnullis criminibus & excessibus coram nobis iudicialiter committum. propter varias suas contumacias excommunicacionis iusticia exigente. Vobis in virtute salute obediencie firmiter iniungendo mandamus. quatenus ^{proximo.} die dominico seu alias festiuo post recepcione presencium. aliisque diebus dominicis & festiuis ex tunc sucessiue sequentibus dictum fratrem Willelmum in singulis processionibus in ecclesia nostra predicta fiendis dum maior interfuerit populi multitudo excommunicatum publice denunciatis seu denunciari faciatis A denunciacione huiusmodi non cessantes donec aliud a nobis habueritis in mandatis Inhibentes auctoritate nostra sub pena excommunicacionis maioris quibuscumque subditis nostris. quibus eciam nos tenore presencium inhibemus. ne cum dicto fratre Willelmo quouis modo communicacionem nisi in casibus a nostre permissis. Data apud Manerium nostrum de Aukland xiiij.^{mo} die mensis Octobris Anno domini M^{mo} CCC^{mo} Nonagesimo Octauo Et nostre translacionis Vndecimo.

1426-37 (possibly 1435?)

Durham Priory Locelli XVII.21♦

DCL

(Letter from John Kempe, Archbishop of York, originally to Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham, commanding processions and other penitential acts)

Johannes permissione diuina Eboracensis Archiepiscopus Anglie Primas & apostolice sedis legatus [Venerabili confratri nostro Thome dei gracia Dunelmensi Episcopo Suffraganeo nostro salutem & frateram³ in domino caritatem] °Dilecto in Christo filio curie nostre Eboracensis Officiali salutem graciam & benedictionem° Iustus et misericors Dominus hominem instinctu nature corrupte vicijs multimodis inuolutum sue pietatis & iusticie flagellis reducere volens & in melius reuocare / nunc hostiles incursus necnon contrarias humanis commodis & saluti meris indisposiciones & tempestates aliasque molestias degenerantibus filijs inferi & permittit inferri . . . Dum regna terras dominia populos patrias & loca christianissimo principi domino nostro Regi subiecta. obsident & inuadunt velut ex omni parte proditores rebelles hostes & <in>imici ad hoc inuicem confederati & alligati quorum tanta talis & tam copiosa fertur esse multitudo quod absque diuini muneris auxilio & gracia prerogatiua specialis non videtur eorum exc<ar>itate malicie verisimiliter aut facile posse resisti Viget eciam in nonnullis regni partibus & locis acerima pestis patriam depopulans nulli parcens etati. sed & frugum ac omnis generis fructuum herencium solo perdicioni minatur inundancium aquarum formidabilis excessus & tempies perquamdura . . .

³ Error for 'fraternam'.

Quocirca [fraternitati vestre] °vobis° mandamus & in saluatoris amplexibus exhortamur quatenis *pro* statu salubri & expedicione felici ac pace sancte matris ecclesie qui a nonnullis diebus multipliciter noscitur fluctuasse. ac christianissimi principis Regis nostri memorati regnorumque terrarum dominiorum populorum patriarum & locorum eidem christianissimo principi subiectorum in ecclesia [vestra cathedrali Dunelmensi] °nostra Eboracensi° ac omnibus alijs ecclesijs collegiatis conuentibus parochiis & alijs exemptis & non exemptis per vestras ciuitatem & diocesem constitutis faciatis cum summe deuocionis studio apud Regem pacificum cuius pax exuperat omnem sensum suppliciter exorari. Iniungentes districte in virtute sancte obediencie omnibus & singulis dictarum ecclesiarum presidentibus Rectoribus vicarijs capellanis clericis & ceteris in eisdem ministrantibus quod pro premissis & serenitate mera pro fructibus solo inherentibus ad <nost>ros vsus Diuina clemencia vberi fertilitate redigendis in singulis predictis ecclesijs qualibet ebdomada quarta & sexta ferijs processionem <cum> septem psalmis penitencialibus. & letania ac oracionibus ad hec conuenientibus. prout moris est debite concinendis faciant solempniter. & deuote. [Iniungentes] In ciuitate cum nostra Eboracensi alijsque locis vbi reperitur magna populi multitudo. Volumus quod singulis sextis ferijs continuentur & obseruentur processionibus generales secundum modum & formam in huiusmodi casibus hactenus consuetas . . . ac etiam qui pro eisdem domino nostro Rege suisque exercitibus ac regnis terrarum dominijs populis patrijs & locis sibi subiectis statu salubri & expedicione felici eorundem ac mera serenitate exorauerint necnon qui dictis processionibus causa deuocionis & oracionis huiusmodi interfuerint aliquem veneris diem in ieiunio obseruauerint / Aut terciam partem psalterij beate virginis deuote dixerint / seu de bonis eis a deo collatis elemosinam largiti fuerint. tociens quociens. quadraginta dies de iniuncta sibi penitencia deo propicio misericorditer relaxamus. Data & cetera.

1442 (ca. 17th September)

Durham Priory Locelli XVII.15♦

DCL

(Comperta following an episcopal visitation of the priory)

f.4

...

Item petitur quod nuncij ministralli & histriones dominorum cum venerint procurentur honeste in cibarijs pro se & equis suis, & dimidium quod solebat dari eis pro regardo in pecunijs deinceps ad maximum detur eisdem. quia vt dicitur diuersi domini tam temporales quam spirituales infra regnum magis quam nos in bonis habundantes non conferunt eis aliquas pecunias sed cibaria tamen salua libertate domino priori / vberius dandi °& remunerandi° [cum casus] propter honestatem & bonum monasterij [se obtulerit] °cum casus se obtulerit.°

...

1446 (July and August)

Durham Priory Locelli XIII.22♦

DCL

(Addendum giving liabilities against an inventory of goods vested in the prior)

mb.7

Vnde: ...

Dona et exennia ministrallis nuncijs & alijs

x li.

...

1452 (20th October)

Durham Priory Locelli XX.21♦

DCL

(Letter from the Bishop of Durham to the prior in time of plague, commanding processions and other penitential acts)

Robertus *permissione diuina Dunelmensis Episcopus Dilecto nobis in Christo Priori Ecclesie nostre Cathedralis Dunelmensis salutem gratiam et benedictionem.* Terribile super filios hominum deus cuius nutibus subduntur omnia sue voluntatis imperio quos diligit arguit & castigat variisque flagiciorum generibus temporaliter perimit vt eos eternaliter non condempnet. Et quia in hoc Regno Anglie inter cetera famose langores pestilencias miserias dissenciones et alias tribulacionum angustias propter peccata hominum in presenci exercita & frequentata permittit multipliciter exoriri . . . Vobis in virtute sancte obediencie firmiter iniungendo mandamus quatenus in Ecclesia nostra Cathedrali Dunelmensi omnibus diebus dominicis & festiuis cessante impedimento legitimo singulisque quarta & sexta ferijs quousque aliud a nobis in ea parte habueritis in mandatis. processiones cum letanijs missis & alijs suffragijs debitis et consuetis celebretis seu sic celebrari faciatis solempniter & deuote. Et vt subditorum nostrorum mentes ad huiusmodi oracionum & aliorum pie deuocionis operum sacrificia pro premissorum omnium assecucione felici propensius excitentur de dei omnipotentis immensa misericordia ac gloriosissime virginis marie matris sue sanctorumque Petri & Pauli apostolorum eius necnon gloriosissimi Confessoris sancti Cuthberti patroni nostri omniumque sanctorum meritis et precibus confidentes Vniuersis et singulis subditis nostris qui processionibus huiusmodi faciendis interfuerint et premissis de causis deum deuotis precibus interpellauerint ac missam vel septem psalmos cum letania aut nocturnum psalterij dauidici. vel psalterium vulgariter nuncupatum beate marie virginis dixerint. vel aliquid in opus elemosine ob illam causam errogauerint. aut de peccatis suis vt se ad premissa sacrificia offerenda accepciores deo reddere valeant debite confessi fuerint tociens quociens aliquod premissorum egerint vel exercuerint quadraginta dies Indulencie misericorditer in domino concedimus per presentes sigillo nostro ad causas roboratos Data in Manerio nostro de Aukland vicesimo die Mensis Octobris Anno domini Millesimo CCCC. quinquagesimo secundo. Et nostre translacionis anno quintodecimo.

1464 (?ca. 20th May)

Durham Priory Locelli XXVII.29♦ DCL
(Petitions at an Annual Chapter of the priory)

...

Item petitur quod in diebus dominicis post Capitula & Collaciones fiat processio ordinatus a toto conuentu in dormitorium inferius & exterius sicut antiquitus & infra paucos annos erat vsitatis.

...

Item petitur quod supprior de cetero custodiat Calices & missalia Ludis ordinarijs pertinencia

...

1464-5 (9th December – February)

Durham Priory Locelli XVIII.110♦ DCL
(Addendum giving liabilities against an inventory of goods vested in the prior)

mb4

Vnde: ...

Dona & exennia ministrallis nuncijs & Alijs

vij.li.xvj.s.j.d.

...

1465 (5th February)

Durham Priory Locelli XVII.38♦

DCL

(Letter from the Bishop of Durham to the prior, relaying a papal request for processions in support of a proposed crusade)

Laurencius *permissione diuina Dunelmensis Episcopus Dilectis filijs Priori & Capitulo Ecclesie nostre cathedralis dunelmensis salutem nostram & benedictionem. Litteras venerabilium & circumsectorum virorum Decani & Capituli Eboracensis Ecclesie nuper recepimus in hec verba. Reuerendo in Christo patri & domino Domino Laurencio permissione diuina Dunelmensi Episcopo. Ricardus Decanus & Capitulum Eboracensis Ecclesie Reuerencium tanto patri debitum cum honore Vestro paternitati reuerende significamus per presentes Ad nostras manus peruenisse nuper sacras litteras Sanctissimi in Christo patris & domini nostri domini Pauli sacrosancte Sedis Apostolice Ac vniuersalis ecclesie Summi Pontificis in hec verba. Paulus episcopus seruus seruorum dei Venerabili ffratri Archiepiscopo Eboracensi salutem & Apostolicam benedictionem . . . Cupientes itaque tuis & aliorum fidelium oracionibus adiuuari ffraternitatem tuam hortamur in domino Vt solemnes processiones in tua diocesi & prouincia indicas et Suffraganeos tuos de huiusmodi Assumpcione nostra certiores efficias Vt in Ciuitatibus & diocesibus suis Idem faciant . . . Data Anconie Apud sanctum Petrum Anno Incarnacionis dominice Millesimo .CCCC.^{mo} lxiij.^{to} Tercio Idus Septembris assumpcionis nostre Quocirca Iuxta adhortacionem maiorum nostrorum nobis in ea parte factam. V.P. . . . reuender requirimus & hortamur in domino quatenus pro Mandato Ac desiderio domini nostri sanctissimi. In prefatis suis litteris comprehensis facere Velitis et exequi quod est vestrum. Data in Cancellario nostra Eboracensi quinto die Mensis Ianuarij Anno domini Millesimo CCCC.^{mo} lxiij.^{to} supradicto. VNIVERSALIS nos ad execucionem mandati Apostolici cui obedire tenemur per prefatos Decanum & Capitulum vt permittitur exhortat. Vobis in virtute sancte obediencie firmiter iniungendo mandamus quatenus has litteras nostras Intra missarum solemnias Vel in sermone ad populum Debite publicari. Singulis diebus dominicis quarta eciam & sexta ferijs donec aliud a nobis habueritis in mandatis In Ecclesia nostra Cathedrali predicta per vos & Confratres vestros fieri faciatis processiones solempnes cum Letanijs & Alijs deuotis oracionibus dominum suppliciter exorantes Vt sanctam ecclesiam sponsam suam dictumque sanctissimum dominum nostrum papam modernum totumque ipsius exercitum A Turchorum insultibus protegat & defendat . . . Data in Manerio nostro de Aukland quinto die Mensis ffebruarij Anno domini supradicto.*

1507 (20th September)**Durham Priory Locelli XXXVII.10♦**

DCL

(Durham City, Inventory of a deceased estate)

f2r

...

Debita que defuncto debentur

...

f2v

...

Item craykke ye mynstrell debet

vj d.

...

Textual Notes

1237: Loc.VI.20, parchment roll, 236 x 208 mm.

- 1372: Loc.I.55, parchment letter, 130 x 346 mm.
- 1374-91: Loc.XXVII.35, two paper sheets, each 300 x 225 mm., but badly damaged, and since f. 1 contains complaints nos. 1-17 and f. 2 nos. 38-55, another leaf is obviously lost between them.
- 1394: Loc.XVII.5, a folded parchment letter, 130 x 265 mm., with fragmentary seal.
- 1398: Loc.XVII.29, a folded parchment letter, 101 x 316 mm. The dorse contains a later scribbled note of the dates of the foundation of the regular Benedictine house at Durham and of the death of Aldwine, its first prior.
- 1426-37: Loc.XVII.21, a folded paper letter, 220 x 295 mm., somewhat damaged. Clearly a draft, first written to the Bishop of Durham but later corrected at all relevant points to serve as a draft of the same letter to be sent to the *officialis* of the archiepiscopal curia in York. It is unclear why the draft rather than (or as well as) a fair copy was sent to Durham, or how it came into the possession of the priory. Undated, but possibly from 1435 – see End Note.
- 1442: Loc.XXVII.15, paper roll of four sheets, overall size 1614 x 293 mm. On exact date see End Note. The last clause seems to have been corrected to improve its slightly contorted syntax.
- 1446: Loc.XIII.22, a handsome parchment roll of seven membranes, overall size 5283 x 312 mm. Joins between membranes are authenticated and decorated with the device of John Berehalgh, clerk to the diocese, whose closing statement says that he compiled this inventory during July and August 1446.
- 1452: Loc.XX.21, a folded parchment letter, 156 x 341 mm., with well-preserved seal.
- 1464: Loc.XXVII.29, a paper roll of a single sheet, 402 x 298 mm. The date is probably on or shortly after Pentecost, 20th May, which is the terminal date of the Bursar's accounts at this period and thus the approximate date of the annual chapter meeting.
- 1464-5: Loc. XVIII.10, a handsome parchment roll, incomplete but now containing four membranes, overall 3208 x 320 mm., similar in appearance and function to Loc.XIII.22 (see 1446 above). Joins between membranes are authenticated with the device of Richard Bartram, clerk of the diocese, who says in his closing declaration that he began this inventory on 9th December 1464 and finished on an unspecified date in February.
- 1465: Loc.XVII.38, a folded parchment letter, 202 x 378 mm., with fragmentary seal.
- 1507: Loc.XXXVII.10, two cognate paper leaves, each 284 x 203 mm., with the will of the deceased on a third sheet of the same size.

End Notes

- 1237:** Loc. VI.20. On this dispute, which lasted until 1241, see *Victoria County History of Durham* II, 94. This document is printed in *Tres Scriptorum* (Surtees Soc. 9), Appendix, p. lxxiii; it cannot be exactly dated, but its tone of extreme hostility towards the King of Scots suggests a date before September, when the two kings arrived at a grudging agreement (see Archibald A. Duncan, *Scotland, the Making of the Kingdom*, Edinburgh History of Scotland I, 533). The monks had elected their prior, Thomas Melsonby, as Bishop, while the King was determined to impose a candidate of his own – for a Durham view of the dispute, see *Scriptores Tres* (Surtees Soc. 9), 38-40. Some of the King's

objections are palpably unjust: for example, he cites the fact that Melsonby has done homage for the cell of Coldingham to the King of Scots (as every prior of Durham had to do, since it is in Scotland) as evidence that he is a traitor. The accusation here cannot therefore be accepted uncritically, although there must be a grain of truth in it, or such a distinctive and unusual accusation would not have been made. More modern local tradition has revived the story of the unfortunate tightrope walker, supplying him with the name Hob of Pelaw, for which there is no medieval evidence, and even supposing him to be buried under a stone slab near the north door of the cathedral, which is highly improbable.

- 1372:** Loc.I.55. In the omitted section the King expounds, in extremely self-righteous terms, his quarrel with the King of France, before going on in the section extracted here to ask for prayers, processions etc in support of his planned military campaign. This document is calendared in *Calendar of Close Rolls 1369-74*, p. 460. 'Middelton' is probably the John de Middleton who witnesses a number of royal documents at London and Westminster around this period (see e.g. *Calendar of Close Rolls 1369-74*, p. 547); he was presumably the clerk who wrote the letter on the King's instructions. For similar signatures and closing formulae in letters issued under the Great Seal, see Pierre Chaplais, *English Royal Documents, King John – Henry VI, 1199-1461*, Oxford 1971, pp. 52-53 and plates 9, 10.
- 1374-91:** Loc.XXVII.35. This damaged document can only be dated by the initials of Prior Robert Walworth (Prior 1374-91); article 53 refers to the Northampton Constitutions, the general constitutions of the Black Monks in England, so this seems to be a Benedictine visitation. The damage to the text makes interpretation difficult, but the complaint seems to have two parts. First, it is alleged that the officers of the monastery are not looking after their brethren as they used to do, with particular criticism being levelled at the Cellarer and the Hostillar (the latter because friends and relatives of the monks are not being allowed to stay in the guesthouse except at their own expense). Secondly, the monks complain that minstrels and others (who were presumably performing in the Prior's Hall) are being allowed to use the privies in the building where the monks are eating.
- 1394:** Loc.XVII.5. King Richard II had embarked for Ireland towards the end of September 1394 and did not return to England until May 1395 (see McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, 471-73).
- 1426-37:** Loc.XVII.21. This document cannot be accurately dated, but its reference to 'proditores' ('betrayers') among England's recent troubles may be an allusion to the Burgundians' desertion of their alliance with England in September 1435, when Archbishop Kempe had himself presided over the unsuccessful English negotiating team (Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century*, 260-62). Kempe's disconsolate tone would be understandable if this letter dated from the closing months of 1435.
- 1442:** Loc.XXVII.15. These findings were sent to the prior on 17th September 1442, see Dobson, *Durham Priory* 235. For the other documents relating to

complaints made during this visitation, see 1.9.Pont.3, 1.9.Pont.1c, 1.8.Pont.2 and End Note, and Misc. Charter 2658.

- 1446:** Loc.XIII.22. This inventory gives details of those parts of the priory's assets that were the direct responsibility of the prior, beginning with a list of the monks themselves; it was made for William Ebchester immediately after his election as prior on 30th June 1446 (see Dobson, *Durham Priory* 52), and is printed in *Tres Scriptores* (Surtees Soc. 9), cclxxv-cccvii. The section from which this entry is taken looks like a list of the annual expenses of the prior's chaplain, and the round figure may represent a rough estimate of the expense expected for this item for the year 1446-7 (further see End Note on Pontificalia for 1442). Cf. also Loc. XVIII.110 (1464-5) and End Note.
- 1452:** Loc.XX.21. Bubonic plague was virtually endemic in Western Europe in this period, and local epidemics were fairly frequent; this one may have been brought by international trade, since the early 1450's saw a particularly severe outbreak in the Netherlands and Northern France (see Robert S. Gottfried, *The Black Death*, London, 1983m 132-33).
- 1464:** Loc. XXVII.29. The second item here seems to imply chalices which were only used for liturgical plays or dramatic ceremonies; it is not known what these were, though one such chalice may be the Judas Cup, which was only used during the *Mandatum* service on Maundy Thursday (see *The Rites of Durham*, Surtees Soc. 107, 80 and McKinnell, *The Sequence of the Sacrament at Durham*, 12-13), and the missals used for *ludi ordinarii* may have included the Durham Processional (now MS BL Royal 7.A.vi, item 28, see McKinnell, *The Sequence of the Sacrament at Durham*, 10). However, the number of sacred subjects with surviving medieval plays that require chalices is considerable, including the stories of Daniel, Herod, the Last Supper, the *Peregrinus* and the St. Nicholas play *Filius Getronis*, so it is not possible to be specific about the subject matter of the *ludi ordinarii*; MS DUL Cosin V.III.1 includes a *Peregrini* by Lawrence of Durham, which dates from around 1150, for an edition of which see Udo Kindermann, 'Das Emmausgedicht des Laurentius von Durham', *Mittelateinisches Jahrbuch* 5 (1968), 79-100. There is no direct evidence that this was actually performed either in the twelfth century or the fifteenth, though it would seem surprising that the prior should devote the considerable effort required to compose it if there had been no intention to use it in performance; further, see John McKinnell, 'On Lawrence of Durham's *Peregrini*', *Yearbook of English Studies* 43 (2013), 12-30.
- 1464-5:** Loc.XVIII.110. This inventory was made for Richard Bell immediately after his election as prior on 26th November 1464 (on which see John le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300-1541*, VI (Northern Province), University of London, 1963, 111). It is printed in *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis*, Surtees Soc. 58, 98-211 (for this entry see p. 211) and alluded to in Surtees Soc. 103, p. 639. In this case, unlike the one in 1446 (see Loc.XIII.22 above), the precise sum for payments to minstrels, messengers and others looks like a real expense, probably the sum of what had actually been spent by the Bursar and the Prior's Chaplain under this heading between Pentecost 1464 (the beginning of the financial year) and the completion of the inventory in

February 1465. However, if this is correct, the Bursar's account for 1464-5 must have juggled some of these expenses into other categories, since its figure for payments to minstrels etc. is only 57s. 4d. The reason why the same procedure was not followed in 1446 may be that that inventory was made so soon after Pentecost that a list of sums already spent in the current year would not have been very useful.

- 1465:** Loc. XVII.38. The previous pope, Pius II, had tried to organise a crusading fleet, largely Venetian, but had died on 14th August 1464, shortly after joining it at Ancona, on the Adriatic coast of Italy. He was succeeded by Paul II, the inspirer of this document, who probably had little serious intention of pursuing the idea, which was in any case not practicable. Further see Aston, *The Fifteenth Century*, 114-15.
- 1507:** Loc. XXXVII.10. Inventory of the property of Thomas Robyson of Durham, deceased.

Translations

1237 (exact date unknown)

Durham Priory Locelli VI.20♦

DCL

(Objections of King Henry III to the Election of Prior Thomas Melsonby as Bishop)

...

Item, he ought to be rejected as a murderer, because when a certain performer climbed onto a line in his churchyard stretched from one tower to another according to the wishes of the said prior, the man fell down and was killed. The prior ought not to have got involved in or agreed to such illicit goings on; indeed, he should have expressly forbidden such things from taking place.

...

1372 (11th August)

Durham Priory Locelli I.55♦

DCL

(Letter from King Edward III to the prior and convent, requesting prayers and processions for the success of his proposed campaign against the King of France)

Edward, by the grace of God King of England and France and Lord of Ireland to his beloved in Christ the Prior of St. Cuthbert's in Durham, greeting. . . . Therefore with the dwelling of our heart inclined to virtue we beg as humbly as we can by the mercy of Jesus Christ, <assiduously?> urging that throughout the said realm and as often as possible, in the interests of [?] the English church, of our sons, and of all others who are about to set out with us on our present expedition or on others, everywhere pursuing the justice of our cause in a prosperous and happy way before the Most High, by the mercy of whom all things have their being, that you should by celebrations of masses, devout expositions of the word of God, as well as by fasts, vigils, distribution of alms and your other public and private prayers and petitions, seek to introduce them all as often as you can, / so that God Himself for His mercy may guide and arrange our deeds and actions in his favour and to the honour and glory of His name, and that He may bestow and allot a happy outcome for those things attempted [?] by us and by them, and through your subjects and your beneficial examples we ask you to ensure

that the same shall be universally done by those who perform things of this kind, not ceasing until you realise by the evidence of success that God Himself has been placated by our courses of action and the things done by us that are stated above.

In the presence of me myself at Westminster, the ninth day of August in the forty-sixth year of our reign over England and the thirty-third of our reign over France. Middleton, by the King himself.

(1374-91)

Durham Priory Locelli XXVII.35♦ DCL
(Complaints of monks at a Benedictine visitation of the Priory)

f.1^v

...

14. Item, the obedientiaries do not provide for the brethren in . . . , nor does the cellarer as used to be done. No <noisy? *clamosi*?> friends, relatives or other outsiders unrelated to the monks themselves <should be?> in the guest houses except at the expense of . . . then minstrels and many others are sometimes allowed to use the privy where they [i.e. the monks] are eating, to the shame and annoyance of the monks themselves. He replies that this matter will be properly arranged through consultation.

...

1394 (24th October)

Durham Priory Locelli XVII.5 DCL
(Letter from Walter Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham, to the Prior, giving instructions for religious processions during a time of war)

Walter, by divine permission Bishop of Durham, to his beloved son the prior of our church in Durham, greeting, grace and blessing. Since our most serene lord Richard, by the grace of God the illustrious King of England, considering what great sufferings and adversities of war have afflicted the people subject to him in times now past, will now set out <and> leave for foreign parts in the hope of divine mercy to crush the pride of their enemies, seeking voluntary hardships in such an arduous attacking cause so that he may succeed in bringing peace to the people subject to him, therefore we humbly resort to that same omnipotent God from whom every creature proceeds and who can by the greatness of His power bring even desperate matters to a favourable conclusion, imploringly beseeching His omnipotence that He who is the true God and the righteous judge, looking favourably with His right eye on our aforesaid lord the King and his army and on the justice of his cause, may restrain and nullify the fearsome pride of his enemies and stretch out over him the hand of His blessing, to His own praise and glory and what we deserve, and to give perpetual serenity and peace to our King and Queen. And so that a salutary increase of the multiplicity of grace may more easily be granted to those who pray, we advise you by virtue of your obedience and exhort you in the Lord's name> that on every single Sunday and on the 4th and 6th days of the week⁴ until the return of our aforesaid lord the King, or until you have further instructions from us, you should cause solemn processions to be undertaken by you and the priory of our said church of Durham, and that you lead your brethren and people effectively so that they may pour out humble prayers for the happy progress of our said lord the King, so that God the Lord of mercies may so guide him and his actions in His favour that under the mighty hand of God he may succeed in prevailing over the enemies opposing him. And so with sincere heartfelt love,

⁴ i.e. on Wednesdays and Fridays, the two fast days.

wishing through the attractive gifts of faithful indulgences to stir up devotion to these matters through the mercy of Almighty God and the most blessed Virgin Mary His mother, and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, as well as the holy confessor Cuthbert our glorious patron, and by the merits of each of the saints, for each and every person under our jurisdiction and others stationed on the road to eternal salvation who may receive this our measured and accepted indulgence <and> who are present at processions of this kind and pour out pious prayers or petitions to the Almighty for a happy crossing and passage and for successful outcomes for the expedition of our gracious lord the King and his army, by God's favour we mercifully remit forty days of the penance imposed on them, commanding you firmly by injunction that you cause this our indulgence and everything stated above to be announced clearly in our said church of Durham on Sundays and feast days during the celebration of Mass. In witness of this matter we have caused our seal to be attached to these provisions,

Given in our manor of Auckland, the 24th day of the month of October in the year of our Lord 1394, and the seventh year of our translation.

(Letter from Walter Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham, to the Prior, ordering him to denounce an excommunicated canon in the course of Sunday and festival processions)

Walter, by divine permission Bishop of Durham, to his beloved son the prior of our church in Durham, greeting, grace and blessing. Because we <have legally proceeded against <?> Brother William Carlell, canon of the Augustinian Hospice of West Spital in the town of Newcastle in our diocese for many crimes and excesses in our sight, justly requiring excommunication because of his various obstinate disobediences, we firmly command, urging you by virtue of your proper obedience, that on ^{'on the next'} Sunday or other feast day after receiving these written instructions, and on other Sundays and feast days successively following, you publicly denounce the said Brother William or cause him to be denounced as excommunicated in every single procession in our aforesaid church when a very large multitude of people are present, not ceasing from denunciation of this kind until you have different commands from us, by our authority restraining any of those subject to us on pain of the greater excommunication, and we forbid them by the content of these present instructions to have any kind of communication with the said Brother William except in circumstances permitted by us.

Given at our manor of Auckland on the 14th day of the month of October in the year of our Lord 1398, and in the eleventh year of our translation.

1426-37 (possibly 1435?)

Durham Priory Locelli XVII.21◆ DCL

(Letter from John Kempe, Archbishop of York, originally to Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham, commanding processions and other penitential acts)

John, by divine permission Archbishop of York, Primate of England and Legate of the Apostolic Seat, to our venerable brother Thomas, by the grace of God our Suffragan, Bishop of Durham, health and fraternal love in the Lord, <and> to our beloved son in Christ, the official <governing> our household of York, health, grace and blessing.

The just and merciful Lord, wishing to lead back mankind (who is ensnared with vices of many kinds by the instinct of his corrupt nature) by the whips of his compassion and justice, and to call him back to something better, now imposes various hostile incursions contrary to human well-being and unmixed illnesses and other harmful storms on His degenerate

children, and allows them to be imposed on them, . . . while the realms, lands, dominions, peoples, homelands and places subject to our most Christian prince and lord the King are besieged and invaded by traitors, rebels and enemies, combined and allied together as if from every direction, the multitude of whom is said to be so great, of such a kind and so copious that without the help and special prerogative grace of a divine gift it is not possible to see that their hostile malice can probably or easily be resisted. A very bitter plague is also raging in some regions and places in the kingdom, depopulating our country, sparing no generation, but both the crop and the inheritance of crops of every kind are threatened with mere perdition by the mighty overflowing of flood waters and the remarkably harsh weather . . . For this reason we command you [with your brotherhood] and we exhort you in the embraces of the Saviour that with the greatest attention to devotion you cause special supplicatory prayers to be made in church to the peaceful King whose peace passes all understanding, in [your cathedral of Durham], ours of York, and in all other collegiate churches, religious houses, parishes and other <churches>, exempt and not exempt, established throughout your city and diocese, for the health, happy development and peace of holy mother church, which for some days can be seen to have wavered, and that of our most Christian lord the aforementioned King, and of the realms, lands, dominions, peoples, homelands and places subject to the same most Christian lord, firmly instructing each and all the incumbents, rectors, vicars, chaplains, clerics of the said churches and others who serve in the same, that for the things previously stated and for uninterrupted tranquillity, for crops restored for our use only by Divine mercy to their inherent abundant fertility, they conduct processions solemnly and devotedly every Wednesday and Friday, with the seven penitential psalms, the litany and the prayers appropriate to them as the required custom is, . . . [Instructing] that in our city of York or in other places where a large multitude of people congregate, that we wish that general processions should be continued and observed every Friday according to the manner and form which have been customary in cases of this kind . . . and also for those who earnestly pray for the same lord our King and his armies and for the realms of lands, dominions, peoples, homelands and places subject to him, for their healthy condition and happy enterprise and for unbroken tranquillity, as well as those who are present at the said processions of this kind on any Friday for the purpose of devotion and prayer <and> who observe it fasting, or who devotedly recite a third part of the psalter of the Blessed Virgin, or who grant alms out of the goods collected for them by God, for each and every one of them, God being favourable, we mercifully remit forty days of the penance ordained for them by God.

Given etc.

1442 (ca. 17th September)

Durham Priory Locelli XVII.15♦

DCL

(*Comperta* following an episcopal visitation of the priory)

f.4

. . .

Item, it is requested that when the minstrels and performers of lords come, they should be decently provided for in food for themselves and their horses, and that from now on no more should be given to them as a gift in money than half of what has customarily been given to them. For it is said that various lords, both temporal and spiritual within the realm who have more abundant goods than we have do not give them any money; but <it should be> at the discretion of the lord prior to give and repay them more generously in food for the sake of the reputation and good of the monastery when the case for it arises.

. . .

1446 (July and August)

Durham Priory Locelli XIII.22♦ DCL

(Addendum giving liabilities against an inventory of goods vested in the prior)

mb.7

From which: . . .

Gifts and payments to minstrels, messengers and others £10

. . .

1452 (20th October)

Durham Priory Locelli XX.21♦ DCL

(Letter from the Bishop of Durham to the prior in time of plague, commanding processions and other penitential acts)

Robert, by divine permission Bishop of Durham to our beloved in Christ the Prior of our cathedral church of Durham, health, grace and blessing. God, to whose wishes all things are subject, by the power of His will makes known those he loves and chastises them terribly, and destroys them in this world with various kinds of scourges so that he may not condemn them eternally. And because among other things He allows notorious weaknesses, plagues, miseries, dissensions and other afflictions of tribulations to arise in many ways in this kingdom of England because of men's sins committed and practised in this world . . . we command you with a firm injunction by virtue of your sacred obedience that in our cathedral church of Durham on all Sundays and feast days when there is no legitimate obstacle, and on every Wednesday and Friday until you have commands to the contrary from us in the matter, you should solemnly and devotedly celebrate processions or cause them to be celebrated, with litanies sent forth and other required and accustomed prayers (?). And so that the minds of our subjects may more readily be stirred up to the sacrifices of these and other kinds of prayers and acts of pious devotion, in pursuit of a happy outcome (?) to all the things stated above, by the immense mercy of Almighty God and trusting in the merits and prayers of the most glorious Virgin Mary His mother and of His holy apostles Peter and Paul, as well as the most glorious confessor Saint Cuthbert our patron and of all the saints, in the Lord's (name) we mercifully grant an indulgence of forty days to each and every one of our subjects who are present when processions of this kind are conducted in order to importune God with devoted prayers, or who recite Mass or the seven psalms with the litany, or the night psalter of David, or the psalter commonly called that of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or who distribute any alms for that reason, or who are able to make due confession of their sins in order to render the aforesaid sacrifices more acceptable to God, to each and all who carry out (?) or practise any of the aforesaid things, with the present (instructions) strengthened by our seal. Given at our manor of Auckland on the twentieth day of the month of October, in the year of Our Lord 1452, and in the fifteenth year of our translation.

1464 (?ca. 20th May)

Durham Priory Locelli XXVII.29♦ DCL

(Petitions at an Annual Chapter of the priory)

. . .

Item, it is requested that on Sundays after Chapter and Collations a procession by the whole monastery to (?) below and outside should be drawn up in the dormitory, as was the custom of old and until a few years since.

...
Item, it is requested that the Sub-Prior should also be the keeper of the chalices and missals pertaining to liturgical plays.
...

1464-5 (9th December – February)

Durham Priory Locelli XVIII.110◆ DCL

(Addendum giving liabilities against an inventory of goods vested in the prior)

mb4

From which: ...

Gifts and donations to minstrels, messengers and others £7 16s. 1d.

...

1465 (5th February)

Durham Priory Locelli XVII.38◆ DCL

(Letter from the Bishop of Durham to the prior, relaying a papal request for processions in support of a proposed crusade)

Lawrence, by divine permission Bishop of Durham to his beloved sons the Prior and Chapter of our cathedral church of Durham, greeting and blessing. We have recently received letters from those venerable and perceptive men, the Dean and Chapter of the church in York, in these words: ‘To a reverend father and lord in Christ, Lawrence, by divine permission Lord Bishop of Durham: we, Dean Richard and the Chapter of the Church of York reverently indicate by these present (letters) the reverence due to such a great father with honour for your paternity, signifying that sacred letters have recently reached us from (*lit.* ‘of’) our most saintly father in Christ and lord, Lord Paul, supreme pontiff of the Holy Apostolic Seat and of the universal church, in these words: “Bishop Paul, servant of the servants of God, to our venerable brother the Archbishop of York, greeting and apostolic benediction . . . And so, wishing to be assisted by your prayers and those of other faithful people, we exhort your brotherhood in the Lord that you enjoin solemn processions in your diocese and province and inform your suffragans of our decision to this effect, so that they may do the same in their cities and dioceses. Given at Ancona, at St. Peter’s, in the year of our Lord’s incarnation 1464, the third day before the ides of September, for which reason the exhortation of our predecessors made to us on that subject are joined to this decision of ours. VP⁵” . . . We respectfully require and exhort you in the Lord that according to the command and desire of our most saintly lord set out in his letters above, you will wish to do and carry out your duty. Given in our chancery at York, the fifth day of the month of January, in the year of the Lord 1464 stated above’. Everything (?) urges us towards the carrying out of the Apostolic command conveyed through the aforesaid Dean and Chapter, which we are bound to obey, so that it is permitted. We command, firmly enjoining you by virtue of your holy obedience, that these letters of ours should be made known wherever you ought to do so within the solemnity of masses or in speech to the people each Sunday and also on Wednesdays and Fridays until you have different commands from us. You should cause solemn processions to be held by you and your brethren in our aforesaid cathedral church, with litanies and other devout prayers, in supplication begging the Lord to protect and defend His bride, Holy Church, and our said most saintly lord the present pope and his whole army from the insults of the Turks. . . . Given in our manor of Auckland on the fifth day of the month of February in the year of the Lord stated above.

⁵ Probably = *Vniversalis Pater*, ‘Universal Father’.

1507 (20th September)

Durham Priory Locelli XXXVII.10♦
(Durham City, Inventory of a deceased estate)

DCL

f2r

...

Debts which are owed to the deceased:

...

f2v

...

Item craykke *ye* mynstrell *debet* vj d.

...