

## BLYTH PRIORY

Benedictine priory of St Mary;  
dependency of La-Trinité-du-Mont, Rouen

County of Nottinghamshire : Diocese of York  
Founded 1086–87

Roger de Busli was already a benefactor of the abbey of La-Trinité-du-Mont near Rouen when, around 1087, he and his wife Muriel chose to transform the church of Blyth into a priory of monks dependent on the Norman abbey. Building work on a substantial scale began swiftly: most of the nave of the original priory church survives in an austere early Norman style. The location chosen for the priory lies on the main road northwards from Nottingham and Newark towards York, and the so-called foundation charter in Roger de Busli's name provides for holding fairs and receiving tolls (*Ctl. Blyth*, 208, no. 325). Although this forgery is dated 1088, its movent clause, 'pro stabilitate regis Anglorum Willelmi successorumque eius nec non et pro anima regine Matildis', points towards a date before William I's death. The clause derives from the authentic deed of Roger and Muriel (*Ctl. Blyth*, 232, no. 361), which has been dated 1086–7 on the grounds that the Domesday survey makes no mention of the priory. Roger's direct holdings in England in 1086 amounted to more than 230 manors in five counties, principally in Nottinghamshire and south Yorkshire.

His honour is referred to as the honour of Blyth in Henry I's time and beyond, and its head was the castle of Blyth, later known as Tickhill, which lies four miles to the north, beyond the former marshland of Whitewater Common and over the county boundary in Yorkshire. David Hey suggests that Roger de Busli built his castle 'directly on the border as a matter of deliberate policy' ('Yorkshire's southern boundary', *Northern History* 37 (2000), 31–47, at 43). Some administrative anomalies suggest some confusion as to whether the head of the honour was in Nottinghamshire or Yorkshire in Henry I's time: writs affecting Laughton-en-le-Morthen here (1) and for York Minster (000, 000, *Regesta* 675, 720) are addressed to the sheriff of Nottingham, though the church was in Yorkshire; others here (2), (3) address both shires; and in 1130 the farm of the honour was accounted for at the Exchequer 'pro

dimidio anno' by William de Lovetot in Nottinghamshire and by Eustace fitz John in Yorkshire (*PR 31 Hen. I*, 9, 36).

Orderic refers to the castle by the name *Blida* 'Blyth', and the same use is found in the Pipe Roll in 1130 (*PR 31 Hen. I*, 33, 36). The name originated as a river name, presumably the river Ryton. In 1086, however, 'Blida' was no more than an adjunct of Roger's manor of Hodsock (*DB*, i. 285r; Notts § 9. 46–9). The early transference of the name from this hamlet to the honour and castle is unexplained. A questionable writ in the name of Henry II concerning the priory's rights still refers to their owing suit only 'ad castrum de Blida' (H2/247; *Ctl. Blyth*, 210, no. 326).

In later times, both honour and castle were named Tickhill. This name is used in acts of Henry I for Nostell, but it does not appear in Domesday Book; it is likely that the castle was built in Roger de Busli's manor of Dadsley, where there was a church and priest in 1086 (*DB*, i. 319r; Yorks § 10W. 3). A new 'church of Tickhill', close to the castle, was confirmed to the prior and canons of Nostell by Henry I in a suspicious document (H1/000, *Regesta* 1319), which refers to its being given by Roger de Busli. Since Roger died long before canons regular were introduced there, the question arises whether a son Roger held land within the honour after 1102. This is really only a supposition to deal with the difficulty in the Nostell document (M. M. Chibnall, 'Robert de Bellême and the castle of Tickhill', in *Droit privé et institutions régionales: Études historiques offertes à Jean Yver* (Paris, 1976), 151–6); the supporting evidence is late and suspect. In another act Henry confirmed that Archbishop Thurstan had given to Nostell 'ecclesiam de castello de Tykehill' (H1/000, *Regesta* 1626), and this is more likely to be authentic. The next source to use the name Tickhill for the castle is John of Worcester in his account of the events of 1102 (ed. McGurk, iii. 100). King Stephen's agreement with Earl Ranulf II of Chester in 1146 uses 'castrum de Tichehilla' alongside 'cum toto honore de Blida' (Ste/178).

The nature of the relationship implied by the use of the name associated with the site of priory to designate the honour remains elusive. Roger de Busli's decision to establish his priory at Blyth, rather than somewhere closer to the castle, may be a pointer towards the earliest organization of the honour.

There are two sources through which royal charters survive from Blyth priory. The cartulary, compiled in the 1280s and elaborated with additions during the following century, was available to the Nottingham-

shire historian Robert Thoroton (1623–1678), who claimed descent from William de Lovetot; he cites documents from the cartulary in his chapter on Blyth (*Thoroton's History of Nottinghamshire*, ed. J. Throsby (London, 1797), iii. 424–8). The manuscript was presented to Edward Harley, 2nd earl of Oxford, in 1726; it is now BL MS Harley 3759, described and published in detail by R. T. Timson, *The Cartulary of Blyth Priory* (London, 1973). The second source, now lost, was a cartulary roll from which Roger Dodsworth (1585–1654) transcribed 102 documents out of a total of 219, now Bodl. MS Dodsworth 152, fols. 129–43, and MS Dodsworth 155, fol. 139; calendared by Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, 500–518.

There are no surviving confirmations by William I or William II, either from the Blyth archive or that of La Trinité du Mont. Eight documents in the name of Henry I are printed here. The surviving acts of King Stephen renew privileges granted by Henry I, dated at Nottingham and at Blyth (Ste/107, 108), or defend rights granted by Roger de Busli (Ste/109). From Henry II's time, there is one questionable writ, dated at Blyth (H2/247; *Ctl. Blyth*, 210–11, no. 326), and a spurious general confirmation, without any specific reference, of the properties of Holy Trinity at Rouen (H2/0000; *Ctl. Blyth*, 276–7, no. 428), forged in time to be inspected by Henry III in 1256, further inspected by Edward I in 1285 (*Ctl. Blyth*, 323–4, no. 497; *CalCh*, ii. 302–3), and much copied.

All eight documents printed here are writs, and all three of Stephen's acts preserved at Blyth are also writs. The monks seem to have been able to rely on their founder's deed to secure their rights to hold a fair, though they acquired writs from both Henry I ({4}) and Stephen to protect their tolls on goods crossing the honour of Blyth. They preserved two unremarkable writs from Henry I ({8}) and Stephen allowing them to move their own goods without toll. The remaining writs are concerned with the collection of tithes from Appleby (Lincs) and elsewhere ({2}, {7}), and in particular with collecting tithes from Laughton-en-le-Morthen in Yorkshire, in the northern part of the honour of Blyth. Their conflict in this case was with the canons of York, to whom the king and queen had granted the church of Laughton apparently very soon after the king had confirmed the tithes to Blyth. This dispute also produced several writs on behalf of the church of York (H1/0000, 0000, 0000, *Regesta* 675, 720, 808). Another dispute with York arose over charges imposed on the monks in respect of synods and chrism, and in this case the monks seem to have had the support of the king in two writs ({5},

{6}) that refer to the monks' holding the king's alms in peace as if he were their benefactor.

The selection of writs for preservation may have omitted more important documents, but that seems unlikely. This makes the archive interesting for a negative reason. The incomes of the monks depended chiefly on two sources, tithes and tolls, in the early twelfth century. The right to impose tolls seems to have existed before King Henry confirmed it ({4}). It was presumably enjoyed by Roger de Busli before he conferred it on his monks. Inland tolls were usually levied by royal officials and are documented mostly through grants of exemption by the king. The private tolls allowed to Blyth, within a defined territory, may have a much earlier origin. The tolls and the fair may have become more important as commercial activity grew. By the 1180s there was certainly an annual fair (*Ctl. Blyth*, 142, 178, nos. 214, 277), and we later learn that it was held over three days at the feast of St Denis, 8-10 October, and that there was a weekly market (Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, civ). There is no evidence that the fair had any royal authorization, though one must wonder whether one held at this feast could really go back to a time before the king expected to exercise control over such commerce. Both tolls and fair depended on custom rather than on royal grant, yet both were recognized and protected.

The supposed foundation deed in Roger de Busli's name granted 'feriam et mercatum in eadem uilla absolute et libere absque ullo retinemento' (*Ctl. Blyth*, 208, no. 325) as well as 'omnes dignitates quas habebam in eadem uilla, scilicet soc et sac, tol et them, et infangethefe, ferrum et fossam, et furcas cum aliis libertatibus uti tunc temporis tenebam de rege'. The reference to judicial privileges as *dignitates* is surely anachronistic for 1088; the notion that Roger was able to transfer them without royal consent and confirmation extremely implausible; and the mention of the apparatus of ordeal and execution at this date quite unparalleled. No one has questioned the authenticity of the deed, though Timson remarked on its 'hybrid form' (*Ctl. Blyth*, xxvii). It must surely be a forgery, not earlier than the late twelfth century when private seignories first use the formula of *ferrum et fossa*. The authentic deed of Roger de Busli and his wife (*Ctl. Blyth*, 232, no. 361) has supplied much of the phrasing; for example, it grants 'ecclesiam sancte dei genitricis Marie de Blida et omnem uillam cum appendiciis suis absolute et libere uti tunc temporis tenebam a rege', but there is no mention of judicial privileges. The cartulary appears to have divided this original deed into two (*Ctl. Blyth*, 230-31, nos. 321, 323), though the second element has

abbreviated the names of the witnesses. They are separated by a tiny deed in the name of Bernardus *fossator*, witnessed by both Roger de Busli and Muriel, and by others whose names appear again as witnesses in the spurious foundation charter. A third very early deed of Payn de Neufmarché (*Ctl. Blyth*, 232, no. 364), ‘pro anima domini sui Rogeri de Bulleo’, links to gifts by members of his family in Henry I’s time (*Ctl. Blyth*, 95–6, nos. 133–4); and elsewhere the cartulary includes other deeds of gift from those who witnessed the foundation (*Ctl. Blyth*, 214–19, nos. 333–4, 336, 338–42; Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, xxxiii–xlvii). These few documents reflect the earliest endowment by Roger and his tenants at the beginning of the century, when the pension of 40s paid to La-Trinité-du-Mont was a significant part of the priory’s income. The gifts came from men whose rank made royal confirmation inappropriate, and they came with no unusual privileges other than, it seems, the customs of toll first mentioned in the king’s writ (4) and very likely a customary market. In such circumstances the few writs obtained from Henry I testify to the monks’ seeking the protection of the law in their difficulties. They did not seek a royal confirmation of privileges. The spurious confirmation charter in the name of Roger de Busli and his wife, put together from early deeds, later expectations, and perhaps some wishful thinking, should not influence our expectations of the archive.

1 Writ instructing that the monks of Blyth shall have the tithes of Laughton-en-le-Morthen (Yorks WR) as they had them in Roger de Busli’s time. September 1102

CARTULARY COPY: BL MS Harley 3759 (s. xiii<sup>ex</sup>), fol. 120r [B].

ANTIQUARIAN TRANSCRIPTS: Bodl. MS Dodsworth 152, fol. 131 (copied for Roger Dodsworth (1585–1654) from the lost *rotulus cartarum* of Blyth) [C]; Bodl. MS Dodsworth 9, fol. 181v [from C].

PRINTED: John Raine, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Blyth in the counties of Nottingham and York* (Westminster, 1860), 36 {COPY IN BL}; Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, 282 (no. 437).

CALENDAR: Farrer 138; *Regesta* 598.

Henricus rex Angl(orum) G.<sup>a</sup> capellano et R(ober)to de Lacy<sup>b</sup> et Ricardo filio Gotse salutem. Sciatis quod concedo et precipio ut monachi de Blyda ita bene et pleniter teneant et habeant decimas de Lactona sicut melius et plenius habuerunt

[tempore]<sup>c</sup> die qua ego recepi <sup>d</sup>ad meum opus<sup>d</sup> castellum de Blyda. Et ita teneant sicut Rogerus de Bully eis concessit et dedit. Et uidete ne aliquid inde perdant. Testibus Roberto filio Ham(onis)<sup>e</sup> et Wald(rico) capellano<sup>e</sup>. Apud Westmonasterium.

<sup>a</sup> Willelmo C <sup>b</sup> Lascy C <sup>c</sup> tempore B  
<sup>d-d</sup> om. C <sup>e-e</sup> om. C

*Henry king of the English to G. the chaplain and Robert de Lacy and Richard fitz Gotse greeting. Know that I grant and command that the monks of Blyth shall hold and have the tithes of Laughton-en-le-Morthen as well and fully as they well and fully had them on the day when I took the castle of Blyth for my own use. And they shall so hold as Roger de Busli granted and gave to them. And see that they do not lose anything in this matter. Witness Robert fitz Haimo and Waldric the chaplain. At Westminster.*

DATE: After the king took control of Blyth castle in July–August 1102, and before Waldric was promoted from chaplain to chancellor at Michaelmas 1102. The king was at Westminster at Michaelmas. Farrer’s later date (1103 × 1106) resulted from his misreading ‘capellano’ as ‘cancellario’.

ADDRESS: The second and third addressees are Robert de Lacy, who held the castle and honour of Pontefract and was the most prominent figure in the district, and Richard fitz Gotse, sheriff of Nottingham.

The first addressee is more difficult. The editors of *Regesta* suggested that this chaplain was standing in for Archbishop Gerard, who visited Rome in the summer of 1102, but this is not at all likely. Precedence suggests a royal chaplain, and the archbishop would not have surrendered his diocese to such a custodian during his temporary absence. A better interpretation would be to suppose that (as usual) a royal chaplain was acting as custodian of property temporarily in the king’s hands, and in this case that points to the forfeited honour of Blyth. The readings ‘G.’ and ‘Willelmo’ are impossible to interpret since B and C are independent witnesses; one may wonder whether Dodsworth has introduced confusion with William the chaplain, who was chaplain of Archbishop Roger in Henry II’s time and prominent in his acts (*Fasti*, vi. 131; M. Lovatt, *EEA xx York 1154–81*, lii–liii). It was usual practice for royal scribes to write W. for Willelmus or for Walterus, and there were royal chaplains of both names in 1102, one of them William Warelwast; a royal chaplain named Gilbert occurs in 1106 (*Regesta* 762 for Norwich) and 1111 (*Regesta* 981 for Abingdon). Another possibility is that the honour was transferred to Queen Matilda, as appears from documents from the York minster archive (H1/0000, 0000, *Regesta* 675, 808); in this case the temporary custodian may have been her chaplain, though few of these are known by name. Godfrey was promoted from queen’s chaplain to bishop of Bath in 1123, and we do not know how long he had served her. Responsibility was soon transferred to Roger de Lovetot, who is addressed in three writs for York (H1/0000, 0000, 0000, *Regesta* 675, 807, 808).

The address would appear therefore to treat the holders of two honours as well as the sheriff of Nottingham (but, strangely, not the sheriff of Yorkshire) as enforcing officers.

WITNESS: Robert fitz Haimo; Waldric, royal chaplain. A clerical witness would usually precede lay witnesses, so that one is forced to wonder whether C might have preserved a better text from the lost *Rotulus cartarum*, though it is hard to see how the cartulary text acquired a second witness in the wrong place.

PLACE: Westminster. The king was at Westminster at Michaelmas 1102.

CONTEXT: The tithes of Laughton-en-le-Morthen, a village some seven miles south-west of Tickhill, were much disputed. Laughton was a substantial manor, the first in Roger's Yorkshire estates (*DB*, i. 319r; § 10W. 1), where before the Conquest the earl of Northumbria had a hall. The remains of a motte and bailey castle lie immediately to the south of the church, suggesting a linkage between the site of the former earl's hall, the subsequent manorial centre, and the church itself (P. F. Ryder, *Saxon Churches in South Yorkshire*, South Yorkshire County Archaeology Monograph 2 (Barnsley, 1982), 71; Morris, *Churches in the Landscape*, 258–9, 461). Roger de Busli was claimed to have granted, in his supposed foundation charter for Blyth, 'two thirds of the tithes of the manor in lands, assarts, and all small tithes', in Laughton and in many other churches (*Ctl. Blyth*, 208, no. 325); the authentic deed makes no mention of Laughton. This writ, therefore, which commands that the monks shall hold their tithes as they were granted by Roger, provides the earliest evidence. Within a few years, the monks obtained a second writ (3 below), which again orders that they shall have their tithes as before and also orders the sheriff of York to do them justice while restraining the canons of York minster from meddling. During the period between, it appears from writs preserved at York, that Queen Matilda had granted the church of Laughton to York minster to provide a prebend, and the king confirmed this grant at Christmas 1102 or 1103 (H1/0000, 0000, *Regesta* 675, 720, for York), and both king and queen also issued writs on behalf of the canons of York before Michaelmas 1105 (H1/0000, *Regesta* 807, 808). All three acts from York must be dated before Michaelmas 1105, when Richard fitz Gotse was succeeded as sheriff of Nottingham by Helgot, who is named in the address of the second writ for Blyth. This sequence was misapprehended by Raine, *History of Blyth*, 36 {MORE}, and by Timson in his discussion, *Ctl. Blyth*, lxxxii–lxxxiii. The fact that in 1105 or soon afterwards the king issued writs for both parties demands an interpretation that allows that both had some entitlement, but the problem remains unresolved.

The tithes were disputed intermittently till an agreement in 1287 (*Ctl. Blyth*, 301–5, no. 467), when the new prebendary Master William Greenfield (later archbishop) agreed to forgo to the monks £40 in arrears and 30 marks in costs, but he secured the tithes of corn and hay, from which he agreed to pay a pension of 40s p.a. to the monks.

- 2 Writ ordering the sheriffs of Suffolk, Yorkshire, and Nottingham, and sheriffs where the monks of Blyth have lands, to enforce payment of tithes and customary dues, in particular from Appleby (Lincs) and Assington (Suff). Summer 1102 × September 1105, perhaps July 1102

CARTULARY COPIES: BL MS Harley 3759 (s. xiii<sup>ex</sup>), fol. 96r.

ANTIQUARIAN TRANSCRIPT: Bodl. MS Dodsworth 152, fol. 131 (copied for Roger Dodsworth (1585–1654) from the lost *rotulus cartarum* of Blyth).

PRINTED: Raine, *History of Blyth*, 184 (no. 2); Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, 189–90 (no. 295).

CALENDAR: Farrer 44; *Regesta* 588.

Henricus rex Angl<orum><sup>a</sup> R(ogero) Bigot et Osberto uic(ecomiti) et Ricardo filio Gotsonis et omnibus uicecomitibus in quorum uicecomitatibus monachi sancte Marie de Blida habent terras salutem. Precipio uobis ut <sup>b</sup>faciatis habere<sup>b</sup> plenarie monachis sancte Marie de Blida omnes decimas et consuetudines sicut melius habuerunt tempore patris et fratris mei et Rogeri de Bulli. Et quicumque aliquid inde retinuerit, uicecomes illius terre faciat eis habere de pecunia <illius> qui dare noluerit<sup>c</sup> et nominatim decimas de Appelbia et de Assintona. Et uidete ne inde amplius clamorem audiam. Teste <sup>d</sup>Simone de Mellent<sup>d</sup>. Apud Blidam.

<sup>a</sup> Anglie B

<sup>b-b</sup> habere faciatis C

<sup>c</sup> uoluerit *Timson*

<sup>d-d</sup> *om.* B

*Henry king of the English to Roger Bigot and Sheriff Osbert and Richard fitz Gotse and all the sheriffs in whose shrieualties the monks of St Mary of Blyth have lands greeting. I command you that you shall cause to have to the monks of Blyth all the tithes and customs as they well had them in my father's time and my brother's and in Roger de Busli's time. And whoever will have withheld anything therefrom, the sheriff of that land shall cause them to have (them) from the money <of him> who will not give, and in particular the tithes of Appleby (Lincs) and Assington (Suffolk). And see that I hear no further complaint in this matter. Witness Simon de Moulins. At Blyth.*

DATE: Formally datable after Blyth castle came into the king's hands in summer 1102 and before Richard fitz Gotse ceased to be sheriff of Nottingham; his successor was in place by October 1105. Dated July–August 1102 by Farrer and *Regesta* from the place-date, Orderic, and an assumed schedule for Henry's movements between Easter and Michaelmas 1102.

ADDRESS: Sheriffs, as enforcing officers, in the shires where the monks of Blyth hold lands.

WITNESS: Simon de Meulan is not otherwise known. He was identified by *Regesta* as Simon de Moulins (de Molendinis), who witnessed once at Norwich for Binham priory in May 1108, *Regesta* 875.

PLACE: Blyth, perhaps meaning the castle of Blyth, later known as Tickhill; the act was presumed by *Regesta* to date from close to the time when the castle surrendered to Henry I, as recounted by Orderic: 'Inde rex ad Blidam castram quod Rogerii de

Buthleio quondam fuerat exercitum promouit. Cui mox gaudentes oppidani obuiam processerunt' (ed. Chibnall, vi. 22); the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle says that the king did not go himself to Blyth but sent Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln. Whatever view is taken on these contradictions (discussed by Hollister, *Henry I*, 158–62), it is dangerous to assume that the king visited Blyth only in 1102. It is possible that the king visited Blyth castle on the tour that took him to Pontefract and further north in October–December 1105 (too late for this writ), while Blyth priory itself is so close to the Great North Road that he may have passed though it whenever he went north from Nottingham.

CONTEXT: The purpose of this writ is to secure the manorial tithes granted by Roger de Busli at the foundation of the priory (*Ctl. Blyth*, 230, no. 361) and subsequently. The occasion was presumably the forfeiture of Robert de Belesme. The tithes came mostly from manors in Nottinghamshire, while Laughton (1) was in Yorkshire; there were also tithes from manors in Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, and Suffolk, which explains the wider address. The authentic deed of Roger de Busli and Muriel his wife included 'in Appelbeia due partes aule, in Asitona due partes aule' (*Ctl. Blyth*, 230, no. 361); tithes in Croxton (Lincs), also part of Roger's gift, were the subject of a writ obtained from King Stephen in 1143 (Ste/109). If Appleby and Assington were the particular problems, one might have expected the sheriff of Lincoln to be named; the tithes of Appleby were the subject of another writ from Henry I (7) below).

### 3 Writ ordering the shire courts of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire to seize the monks of Blyth of the tithes of Laughton-en-le-Morthen as before; and ordering the sheriff of York to do them justice against the canons of York. September 1105 × May 1108

CARTULARY COPY: BL MS Harley 3759 (s. xiii<sup>ex</sup>), fol. 120r [B].

ANTIQUARIAN TRANSCRIPT: Bodl. MS Dodsworth 152, fol. 131v (copied for Roger Dodsworth (1585–1654) from the lost *rotulus cartarum* of Blyth) [C].

PRINTED: Raine, *History of Blyth*, 36 {COPY IN BL}; Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, 281–2 (no. 436).

CALENDAR: *Regesta* 704.

Henricus rex Angl(orum) Gerardo archiepiscopo et Osberto uicecomiti et Helgoto uicecomiti et omnibus baronibus francis et anglis de Euerwiksira et de Notinghamsira salutem. Precipio uobis ut iuste et cito faciatis habere sancte Marie de Blyda et monachis suis decimam suam de Lestona sicut melius habuerunt. Et si aliquis eis iniuriam faciat, tu Osberte fac eis rectum. Et prohibeo ne canonici de Euerwik amplius iniuste

inde se intromittant. Teste Nigello de Oili. Per Carbonellum stabularium. Apud Cornib~~er~~iam.

*Henry king of the English to Archbishop Gerard and Sheriff Osbert and Sheriff Helgot and all his barons French and English of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire greeting. I command you that you shall justly and quickly cause St Mary of Blyth and her monks to have their tith of Laughton as they well held it. And if anyone shall cause them injury, you, Osbert, do them justice. And I forbid that the canons of York shall unjustly interfere further in this matter. Witness Nigel d'Oilli. Through Carbonel the stabler. At Cornbury.*

DATE: After Helgot was appointed sheriff of Nottingham, probably at Michaelmas 1105; before the death of Archbishop Gerard, 21 May 1108.

ADDRESS: The shire courts of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire.

WITNESS: Nigel d'Oilli. Carbonel the stabler, who acts as intermediary for this and the next act, never attests himself.

PLACE: Cornbury, Oxon, in the Evenlode valley, west of Woodstock. Eleven acts of Henry I were dated there, most of them within the first seven years of the reign. With only one witness here, it cannot be certain that this and the next have been correctly associated with a single cluster datable around 18 October 1105 (Farrer 130; *Regesta* 699–706).

CONTEXT: The monks must have petitioned the king in their dispute with the canons of York; see above {1} under Context.

4 Writ instructing the shire courts of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire that the monks of Blyth shall have their tolls as before, except from merchants of the king's court or burgesses of his new borough of Nottingham. September 1105 × May 1108

CARTULARY COPY: BL MS Harley 3759 (s. xiii<sup>ex</sup>), fol. 96r.

PRINTED: Raine, *History of Blyth*, 184 (no. 1); Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, 188 (no. 293).

CALENDAR: Farrer 130; *Regesta* 705.

Henricus rex Angl(orum) Gerardo archiepiscopo et Osberto uicecomiti et Helgoto uicecomiti et baronibus de Euerwicsyria et de Notinghamsyria salutem. Precipio quod sancta Maria de Blida et monachi sui ita iuste et bene habeant tholoneum suum et passagium de Blida sicut hactenus melius habuerunt, preter mercatores curie mee qui breuia mea habent et burgenses mei

de nouo burgo qui affidare poterint quod sunt mei homines.  
 Teste Nigello de Oilli. Per Carbonellum stabularium. Apud  
 Corneb<er>iam.

*Henry king of the English to Archbishop Gerard and Sheriff Osbert and Sheriff Helgot and the barons of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire greeting. I command that St Mary of Blyth and her monks shall have their toll and passage at Blyth as justly and well as they well had it hitherto, except for merchants of my own court who have my writs and my burgesses of my new borough who are able to swear that they are my own men. Witness Nigel de Oilli. Through Carbonel the stabler. At Cornbury.*

DATE: Same occasion as previous document.

ADDRESS: As previous document.

WITNESS: As previous document.

PLACE: As previous document.

CONTEXT: The spurious foundation deed in the name of Roger de Busli granted 'toll and passage from *Radeford* [Radford, part of Worksop, Notts] as far as *Thornewad* [a crossing of the river Torne] and from *Frodestan* [not identified] as far as the river Idle' (*Ctl. Blyth*, 208, no. 325). The bounds are elaborated in greater detail in the record of proceedings *de quo warranto* at Nottingham, 12 November 1329 (*PQW*, 616; and as added to the cartulary, *Ctl. Blyth*, 491–3, no. A125). Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, ciii–civ, traces the area, extending from Worksop in the south to Rossington in the north, and quotes evidence for disputes concerning the levying of the tolls. It would appear that the right was exercised as a custom respected by the crown but never confirmed. The origin of these tolls and their territorial basis is not apparent from the archive of Blyth.

While writs of that relatively common species, exemption from paying tolls, are usually addressed to the sheriffs and officials of all England, this confirmation of the right to collect tolls is addressed to just two shire courts; in other respects the two species share much of their wording. The next oldest surviving writ to confer a right to collect toll and passage is King Stephen's grant to Bury St Edmunds of toll and passage at Normancross (Ste/890) and his renewal of this one to Blyth (Ste/107). The exception for 'merchants of my own court who have my writs' is unique but reflects the arrangements for provisioning the needs of the court. {MORE?} King Stephen's renewal restricts royal exemption to merchants of the king's court ('Et sciatis quod non sum in garant(o) alicui nisi mercatoribus curie mee'). This may deliberately exclude the secondary category exempted from tolls at Blyth, 'the burgesses of my new borough'. The king's *nouus burgus* is likely to refer to the French borough founded at Nottingham before 1086, which occupied the space between the Norman castle and the old Saxon borough; Domesday Book mentions houses built by the sheriff 'in nouo burgo' (*DB*, i. 280r; §B3, with comment by F. M. Stenton, *VCH Notts*, i. 237, and W. H. Stevenson, *ib.* 297).

5 Writ ordering Archbishop Thomas to allow the monks  
 of Blyth to hold the king's alms in peace as in the

Archbishop Thomas's time and Archbishop Gerard's.  
May 1108 × February 1114

CARTULARY COPY: BL MS Harley 3759 (s. xiii<sup>ex</sup>), fol. 96v [B].

ANTIQUARIAN TRANSCRIPTS: Bodl. MS Dodsworth 152, fol. 130v (copied for Roger Dodsworth (1585–1654) from the lost *rotulus cartarum* of Blyth) [C]; Bodl. MS Dodsworth 9, fol. 181r [from C].

PRINTED: Raine, *History of Blyth*, 184 (no. 3); Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, 192 (no. 299).

CALENDAR: *Regesta* 1076.

Henricus rex Angl<orum><sup>a</sup> Thome archiepiscopo salutem.  
Mando tibi ut permetas ita quiete per totum tenere monachos  
de Blida elemosinam meam sicut melius tenuerunt tempore  
Thome archiepiscopi et Gerardi. Et manuteneas uiriliter  
elemosinam illam et non requiras ab illis quicquam pro synodo  
neque pro chrimat' [*sic*] quia elemosina mea est<sup>b</sup>. T(este)  
<Ranulfo cancellario. Apud Westmonasterium.><sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Anglie B

<sup>b</sup> sunt {6} below

<sup>b</sup> from {6} below

*Henry king of the English to Archbishop Thomas greeting. I order you that you shall allow the monks of Blyth fully to hold my alms as quietly as they well held in Archbishop Thomas's time and Gerard's. And you shall manfully maintain that alms and you shall not demand from them anything for the sake of synod or of chrism, since this is my alms. Witness <Ranulf the chancellor. At Westminster.>*

DATE: In the time of Archbishop Thomas II.

ADDRESS: The archbishop of York as the principle enforcing officer in matters ecclesiastical.

WITNESS, PLACE: Introduced from {6}, whose purpose is the same and wording almost identical; the two were presumably obtained on the same occasion. A writ of this type would usually be witnessed by the chancellor alone.

CONTEXT: It is unclear what this act is concerned with. On a strict reading, it would seem to allude to alms given by King Henry between August and November 1100, before the death of Archbishop Thomas I of York. The alms are defined in terms of exemption from synodal dues and payment to the episcopal see for provision of chrism {MORE?}.

6 Writ ordering Archdeacon John to allow the monks of Blyth to hold the king's alms in peace as in the

Archbishop Thomas's time and Archbishop Gerard's.  
May 1108 × February 1114

CARTULARY COPY: BL MS Harley 3759 (s. xiii<sup>ex</sup>), fol. 105v.

PRINTED: Raine, *History of Blyth*, 184 (no. 2); Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, 229 (no. 358) ('another copy of the writ').

CALENDAR: *Regesta* 1076 (treated as the same as {5} above).

Henricus rex Angl(orum) Iohanni archidiacono salutem.  
Mando tibi ut permittas ita quiete per totum tenere monachos  
de Blida elemosinam meam sicut melius tenuerunt tempore  
Thome archiepiscopi et Gerardi. Et manuteneas uiriliter  
elemosinam illam et non requiras ab illis quicquid pro senodo  
neque pro chrimat' [*sic*] quia elemosina mea sunt. Teste  
Ranulfo cancellario. Apud Westmonasterium.

*Henry king of the English to Archdeacon John greeting. I order you that you shall allow the monks of Blyth fully to hold my alms as quietly as they well held in Archbishop Thomas's time and Gerard's. And you shall manfully maintain that alms and you shall not demand from them anything for the sake of synod or of chrism, since this is my alms. Witness <Ranulf the chancellor. At Westminster.>*

DATE: Same occasion as previous document.

ADDRESS: The archdeacon of Nottingham as the local enforcing officer in matters ecclesiastical. Archdeacon John was omitted from *Fasti*.

WITNESS: Ranulf as chancellor.

PLACE: Westminster.

CONTEXT: As previous document.

7 Writ ordering the bishop and sheriff and officials of  
Lincoln to seize the monks of Blyth of the whole tithes  
of Appleby (Lincs) as in Roger de Busli's time.  
September 1115 × January 1123

CARTULARY COPY: BL MS Harley 3759 (s. xiii<sup>ex</sup>), fol. 96r [B]

PRINTED: *Regesta*, ii. 332 (no. xcvi); Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, 187–8 (no. 292).

CALENDAR: *Regesta* 1138.

Henricus rex Angl(orum) Roberto episcopo Linc' et Wig(oto) uicecomiti et ministris suis salutem. Facite habere monachis sancte Marie Blide totam decimam de Appelby iuste sicut melius habuerunt tempore Rogeri de Bullio de omnibus illis terris que fuerunt in dominio eius quicumque eas modo tenet. Et ita ne inde clamorem audiam super hoc. <Teste \* \* \* \*. Apud \* \* \* >.

*Henry king of the English to Robert bishop of Lincoln and Wigod sheriff and his officials greeting. Cause the monks of St Mary of Blyth to have the whole tithe of Appleby (Lincs) justly as they well had it in Roger de Busly's time of all the lands which were in his demesne, whoever holds them now. And so that I shall hear no more complaint in this matter upon this (my writ). <Witness \* \* \* \*. At \* \* \* >.*

DATE: After Wigod succeeded Osbert as sheriff of Lincolnshire, late summer 1115; and before the death of Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln, 10 January 1123. The editors of *Regesta* make the assumption that it was dated before the king sailed for Normandy in April 1116.

ADDRESS: The sheriff and his officials of Lincolnshire, with the bishop included as president of the shire court.

WITNESS: Omitted, but very likely Ranulf as chancellor.

PLACE: Omitted.

CONTEXT: See {2} above.

## 8 Writ addressed to the sheriff of Lincoln and his officials exempting the goods of the monks from toll and passage. c. 1129 × 1133, perhaps May 1130

ANTIQUARIAN TRANSCRIPT: Bodl. MS Dodsworth 152, fol. 131r (copied for Roger Dodsworth (1585–1654) from the lost *rotulus cartarum* of Blyth) [B].

PRINTED: *Regesta*, ii. 368 (no. ccxxxi); Timson, *Ctl. Blyth*, 502 (no. B10).

CALENDAR: *Regesta* 1640.

Henricus rex Angl(orum) Rain(er)o uicecomiti ministris et prepositis de Thorkeseia salutem. Precipio quod totum conredium et omnes res monachorum de Blida quas affidauerunt homines sui suas esse dominio sint ita quiete de theloneo et passagio et omni consuetudine sicut monstrare

poterunt<sup>a</sup> quod semper esse solet et sicut esse debet. Teste H(enrico) de Lam(ara). Apud Roucestr’.

<sup>a</sup> poterunt conj. *Regesta*, following the usual formula ] roberunt B

*Henry king of the English to Rainer sheriff, the officials, and the reeves of Torksey greeting. I command that all the household goods and all the property of the monks of Blyth of which their men shall be able to swear to be for their own use shall be quit of toll and passage and all custom just as they are able to show that it is usual to be always so and just as it is due. Witness Henry de Lamare. At Rochester.*

DATE: While Rainer of Bath was sheriff of Lincoln, addressed only here and in *Regesta* 1652 for Burwell priory; he appears in the Pipe Roll for 1129–30. The editors of *Regesta* infer from the place-date an occasion around 8 May 1130, when the king was at Rochester. Rainer’s successor was in post in 1133.

ADDRESS: The sheriff and his officials of Lincolnshire, including the reeves of Torksey.

WITNESS: Henry de Lamare (*PR 31 Hen. I*, 3, 4, 6, 80; Green, *Government*, 261).

PLACE: Rochester, Kent.

CONTEXT: The purpose of this writ appears to have been simply to avoid paying tolls on the transit of the monks’ goods between their Lincolnshire holdings and the priory itself. The privilege of exemption from paying tolls was extended by King Stephen with a general writ dated at Blyth in the early part of the reign (Ste/108).