

A CONTEMPORARY LIST OF THE BENE-
FACTIONS OF THOMAS IKHAM, SACRIST,
TO ST. AUSTIN'S ABBEY, CANTERBURY,
circa 1415.

TRANSCRIBED AND TRANSLATED BY
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THOMAS IKHAM, a monk of St. Austin's Abbey, was born at the village of that name on the lesser Stour, near Canterbury, probably about the end of the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Doubtless many recruits for the Monastery were obtained from Ikham and the surrounding villages during early and mediæval times, rendering it difficult or impossible to identify in most cases the particular family to which they belonged, as it was the custom for one taking monastic vows to drop his patronymic for the name of the place of his birth. Exactly who Thomas Ikham was probably never will be known, but Ikham should ever be proud of her son, who by the munificence of his benefactions left his mark on one of the wealthiest and most celebrated religious houses in the kingdom. We can only assume that Thomas must have belonged to a wealthy and important family, as the total sum expended by him on St. Austin's must have been between three and four thousand pounds, a very large sum in the fourteenth century, representing at least about £50,000 of our money.

That the "Ancient House" of which Thomas became a Brother realized its indebtedness is certain, as the document, of which the following is a transcript, opens with the statement that, during the period that he occupied the office of Sacrist to the Monastery, the Lord Abbot and the wisest

Members of the House made annually an allotment and estimate of the Conventual Funds, which were allotted to the Sacristy for the expenses incurred by the Sacrist in carrying out his duties, and that the detailed list subjoined was over and above those funds found by Thomas from his own private sources.

The date of his death and a short account of his benefactions (fairly complete, but not entirely so) are given by Thorne (*Decem Scriptores* Col. 2196): the former is stated to have been in the year 1391, and, besides the fact that he had held the office of Sacrist in the Abbey, it is mentioned that he had paid the debts of the Convent and made certain benefactions, of which a record was regularly kept and a valuation made.

Such a record and valuation is now before us. The original is in the possession of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, and it is with a feeling of great satisfaction and gratitude that one realizes that this fifteenth century manuscript is now in its original home after an exile of more than 350 years.

Efforts to ascertain the history of this document from the time of the dissolution of the Abbey to its return in 1893 by the generosity of the Warden, the Rev. Dr. G. F. Maclear, have proved unavailing.

The MS. is written on paper with no watermark, it measures about $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. by $12\frac{1}{4}$ in., and the writing is in a hand characteristic of the early part of the fifteenth century. Except that the last half of the final paragraph is very corrupt, and a mistake—very common in the addition of Roman figures—is made in the sum total at the foot of the document, the text is well written in the abbreviated Latin of the period.

The transcription of the MS. was a matter of ease, the extension and translation of considerable difficulty. For much help in this I am indebted to the Rev. C. E. Woodruff,

M.A., late Rector of Tunstall, whose scholarship and knowledge of mediævalism is known to all students.

The contents are of great interest to lovers of St. Austin's, as considerable light is thrown on the fabric of the great church, on St. Pancras Chapel, and on the domestic buildings both at Canterbury and at Margate, where was the marine residence of the community, as well as illustrating by the ornaments and vessels mentioned the habits and methods of the administration of the Divine offices in mediæval times.

The description of the art and craft of the goldsmith of the period causes one to deplore more than ever the suppression of a society, and the destruction of such an ancient house, when accompanied by ruthless pillage and robbery as that effected in the sixteenth century.

It only remains to select some of the items in the list for detailed comment. First, with regard to the three basins of silver with chains. These were hanging lamps, and were placed in that part of the church behind the high altar, which was called the Corpora Sanctorum from its being the place where the bodies or relics of certain early Saxon saints were preserved in shrines, viz., in the eastern apse, above the altar of the Holy Trinity, St. Austin's shrine was in the centre, and those of St. Lawrence and St. Mellitus on the north and south respectively. Then, on the north side of this retrochoir, passing from west to east, were the shrines of Saints Lambert, Nothelm, Mildred, Deusdedit, and Justus. St. Mildred's shrine was in the N.E. apsidal chapel, containing the altar of the Holy Innocents. On the south side, also passing from west to east, were the shrines of Saints Talwin, Brithwald, Adrian, Theodore, and Honorius, St. Adrian's shrine being in the S.E. apsidal chapel containing the altar dedicated to Saints Stephen, Lawrence, and Vincent. Although the places where the three basins were are not specified, it is reasonable to suppose that they hung before the three altars above mentioned.*

* Cf. *Rites of Durham*.

The price of the beautiful cope is amazing, something like £1200 of our money.

The fair cushions of silk from India were in all probability to place on the altar (as we now use book-desks) to lay the missal on, a practice which was really necessary in days when the covers of such books were often elaborately wrought with precious metal work, enamelled or jewelled, frequently with a crucifix and attendant figures in high relief.

Thorne states (Col. 2122) that there was a terrible storm in the year 1361, which certainly wrecked the roof of the chapel of St. Pancras and appears to have done other damage, as the chapel was left derelict till the year 1387, when Thomas Ikham rebuilt it with the help of Lora att Les. The eastern part of the present ruins, including the arch of the east window, probably dates from this rebuilding. The double roof of the Chapter House meant that it was vaulted in stone beneath a wooden-framed roof covered with lead.

The new Cemetery Gate is the one which stands at the south end of the west front of the College, and, except for much alteration in post-reformation times, is identical with Ikham's gate. The Hall at Salmeston, near Margate, lies parallel to the chapel there; it had two stories and was 60 feet long by 25 feet broad. The floor of the upper storey can be traced on the walls, and the doors, windows and windowseats, with the remains of the fireplace, can all be seen, together with a kingpost roof—all Thomas Ikham's work. On the south-east of the Hall and contiguous to it was the buttery and pantry with the chamber above, about 39 feet long by 15 feet broad, many years since in ruins.

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BENEFICIA FRATRIS THOME IKHAM A TEMPORE QUO FUIT IN OFFICIO SACRISTIE SUPER DISPOSITIONEM ET ESTIMATIONEM PER DOMINUM ABBATEM ET SAPIENTISSIMOS CONVENTUS FACTAM ANNUATIM.

Inprimis fecit fieri iij basinos argenteos cum cathenis ad corpora Sanctorum pro quibus soluit xxvj fi xiiij s.

Item fecit fieri iiij campanas in turri supra chorum pro quibus soluit xxx fi et amplius.

Item fecit fieri i novum tectum sub ala Sancti Gregorii cum fenestris vitreis novis pro quo soluit xl fi.

Item fecit fieri i novum tectum ex parte australi sub ala Sancti Johannis pro quo soluit xl fi.

Item fecit fieri ij magnas campanas in campanile vocatas Austyn et Marye pro quibus soluit cxvi fi.

Item fecit fieri ii campanas in turri ad ostium ecclesie vocatas Mildrede et Margaryte pro quibus soluit xxiiij fi.

Item fecit fieri j campanam vocatam Gabriel in eodem turri pro qua soluit xxxj fi.

Item fecit fieri de novo i fenestram in navi ecclesie pro qua soluit cx fi.

Item comparavit et fecit unam capam pulcherrimam de auro totaliter brudatam ac in margaritis decenter ornatam pro qua soluit cvi fi xiii s. iiij d.

Item fecit fieri unum turibulum novum pro quo soluit vi fi.

Item fecit fieri ii basinos argenteos cum ij philis deauratis decenter ornatis pro quibus soluit xxvij fi.

Item dedit vj quyschyns pulchros de Ynde sericos pro quibus soluit xl s.

Item reparavit et de novo construxit capellam Sancti Pancrasii que destructa et longo tempore deserta fuit pro qua soluit i vice iiii^{xx} fi ultra xl fi data ad hoc per Loram atte les—

THE BENEFACIONS OF BROTHER THOMAS IKHAM, FROM THE TIME IN WHICH HE HELD THE OFFICE OF SACRISTAN, OVER AND ABOVE THE ALLOTMENT AND ESTIMATE MADE ANNUALLY BY THE LORD ABBOT AND THE WISEST MEMBERS OF THE CONVENT.

In the first place he had made three basins of silver, with chains, for the Corpora Sanctorum for which he paid £26 13s. 0d.

Also he had made four bells in the tower above the choir for which he paid £30 and more.

Also he had made a new roof under the aisle of St. Gregory with new glass windows for which he paid £40.

Also he had made a new roof on the south side under the aisle of St. John for which he paid £40.

Also he had made two great bells in the bell-tower called Austin and Mary for which he paid £116.

Also he had made two bells in the tower at the entrance of the church called Mildred and Margaret for which he paid £24.

Also he had made a bell called Gabriel in the same tower for which he paid £31.

Also he had made a new window in the nave of the church for which he paid £110.

Also he provided and made a very beautiful cope, embroidered throughout in gold and suitably ornamented with pearls, for which he paid £106 13s. 4d.

Also he had made a new censer for which he paid £6.

Also he had made two basins of silver, with two gilded cups, suitably ornamented, for which he paid £27.

Also he gave six fair cushions of silk from India for which he paid forty shillings.

Also he repaired and rebuilt the chapel of St. Pancras, which had been destroyed and long deserted, for which he paid at one time £80 over and above the £40 given for this purpose by Lora atte les—

Item de novo reparari fecit uti nunc cernitur capitulum cum duplici tecto pro quo soluit mille libra et amplius.

Item fecit fieri i novam portam cimiterii versus villam pro quo soluit cccclxvi fi xiii s. iiij d.

Item dedit post vacationem Domini Thome Colewell abbatis ad acquietanciam debitorum ecclesie ij basinos argenteos xii discos argenteos xii parapsides argenteus ii chargeours argenteos xij salsaria ij salaria argentea pro quibus soluit lxxvj fi xiiij s. iiij d.

Item adquisivit et comparavit i librum bonum et necessarium vocatum summa predicantium pro quo soluit iiij fi.

Item fecit fieri ij nova turibula argentea et deaurata et decenter cum ymagine et floribus sculpta pro quibus soluit xliij fi.

Item fecit edificari apud Salmyston i novam aulam cum panterie et boterie (*sic*) et i camera desuper annexa (*sic*) aule pro quibus soluit lxxvi fi xiii s. iiij et amplius.

Item reparari fecit post magnam rabiem ventique contigebat in festo Sancti Maurii grangiam portas stabula et alias domus ad officium Sacristie pertinentes ad summam cc fi provisione tamen thesaurii factam (*sic*) pro tempore nullo modo subtracta et preter liberationem cere abbatis et Conventus quolibet anno fideliter et plene solutam.

Summa totius m^l m^l cccc iiiij^{xx} [viii fi] vj s. viii d.

Also he had the Chapter-house repaired again as it now appears, with a double roof, for which he paid £1,000 and more.

Also he had made a new Cemetery Gate towards the town for which he paid £466 13s. 4d.

Also he gave after the vacancy of the Lord Abbot, Thomas Colwell, towards paying the debts of the Church, two silver basins, twelve silver dishes, twelve silver platters, two silver chargers, twelve saucers and two salt-cellars of silver, for which he paid £66 13s. 4d.

Also he purchased and provided a good and necessary book called Summa Predicantium for which he paid £4.

Also he had made two new censers of silver-gilt and suitably engraved with an image and flowers, for which he paid £42.

Also he had built at Salmyston (Salmeston Grange, near Margate) a new Hall, with pantry and buttery, and a chamber above attached to the hall, for which he paid £66 13s. 4d. and more.

Also he had repaired after the great storm of wind on the feast of St. Maur,* the Grange, gates, stables and other buildings belonging to the office of the Sacristan at a total cost of £200 (which, however, was discharged by the forethought of the treasurer without any temporary deduction), and in addition to the payment for wax for the Abbot and Convent, which was paid faithfully and in full every year.

The Sum total 2,486 shillings 8 pence.

(An error for £2,488 6s. 8d., the figures in the brackets having been omitted.)

* January 15.