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Ancient Charter relating to Woodchester

by J. Earle
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APPENDIX A.

 Original Documents.

ANCIENT CHARTERS RELATING TO WOODCHESTER.

THE following interesting Charters are those to which the President alluded in his inaugural address (*ante*, p. 15), and which, in accordance with the wish expressed by him, are here printed with translations; that of the Saxon charter having been kindly made by the Rev. J. Earle, Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford. Both these charters have been printed by Kemble in his "Codex Diplomaticus," the first, being the grant of King Æthelbald, No. 89, Vol. I., p. 107, and the latter, No. 1073, Vol. V., p. 140.

Kemble has printed these Charters from the Cottonian MSS.; the latin document from Tiberius A xiiij., fo. 42^b, which is a Cartulary of the Cathedral of Worcester, compiled by one Hemming, a monk, by command of Bishop Wolston. The Saxon charter has been printed by him from Vespasian A.v., fo. 169, which is a volume of transcripts of the 15th century, and the text is in many places corrupt. Why Kemble selected this instead of Hemming's transcript of the 11th century, Tiberius A., xiiij., fo. 43, where it also occurs, we do not know. Thorpe has also printed this charter in his *Diplomatarium*, p. 139, with a translation.

CHARTER OF ÆTHELBALD, 716-743.

✠ In nomine sanctæ Trinitatis! Ait enim Apostolus. Nihil intulimus in hunc mundum, verum nec auferre quid possumus; et beatus Iob dixit: Nudus egressus sum ex utero matris, et nudus renertar in terram. Quapropter ego Æthelbaldus, rex Australium

Anglorum, breuitatem huius uitæ considerans, et quod cum his caducis mercanda esse aeterna polorum regna, rogatus a uenerabili Uuilfrido episcopo, terram trium cassatorum ruris siluatici, in loco qui uetusto uocabulo nuncupatur Uuduceastor, ad ecclesiam beati Petri apostolorum principis in Uuigerna ciuitate, in ius proprium libentissime concedens possidendum donabo. His terminibus institutis [in borea, Roddanbeorg; in oriente, Smiececumb; in austrum, Sengedleag, et Heardanleag, Neglesleag minor, totus Uuidancumb in Carlesleage, in occidente, Hæslburg, Haboccumb; in aquilone, Jemyðleag.] + Ego Aethelbald, rex Merciorum, signum sanctæ crucis Christi inposui, + Ego Uuilfridus Episcopus, + Ego Uuilferth Episcopus, + Ego Cuthredus abbas, + Ego Sigeberht, + Ego Iebe abbas, + Ego Oba, + Ego Aethelualdus abbas, + Ego Heardberht, + Ego Aethelricus presbyter.¹

TRANSLATION.

✠ In the name of the Holy Trinity!—Since the Apostle says: Nothing we brought into this world, nor can we take anything out; and the blessed Job said: Naked I emerged from my mother's womb and naked I shall return to the earth. Wherefore I Æthelbald, King of the southern English, considering the shortness of this life, and that with these perishable things are to be purchased the eternal kingdoms of heaven, and being asked by the Venerable Bishop Wilfred, I will grant in perpetuity, most willingly, the full right of possession to the church of the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, within the city of Worcester, land to the extent of three cassates² of wooded country in the place which is called in the ancient speech Woodchester,³ with these ordained boundaries: on the north, Roddanbeorg⁴; in the east, Smiececumb⁵; in the south,

¹ This charter is re-printed from Kemble's Codex Diplomaticus, Vol. I., pp. 107, 108, and has been collated with the original transcript, Cott. MS. Tiberius A. xij. fo. 42^b, and some amendments made. The passage within the brackets giving the boundaries is re-printed from Kemble's Codex, Vol. III., p. 377.

² A cassatum is a house with land sufficient to maintain one family. According to Ducange "Casata, Cassata, Cassatus (promiscue enim scribitur) Habitaculum cum certa terræ quantitate idonea ad unam familiam alendam: seruis easatis olim attributum, atque adeo ipse familia."

³ Woodchester. ⁴ Rodborough, ⁵ Theescombe.

Sengedbeag,¹ and Hardanleag,² Neglesleag minor,³ the whole of Widancumb in Carlesleage⁴; on the west Hæslburg,⁵ Habocumb⁵; on the *north-east* Jemyðleag,⁵ &c., &c.

+ I, Æthelbald, King of Mercia, apply the sign of the Holy Cross of Christ, + I Uuilfridus, Bishop, + I, Uuilferth, Bishop, + I, Cuthredus, Abbot., I, Sigeberht, + I, Iebe, Abbot, + I, Oba, + I, Ætheluualdus, Abbot, + I, Heardberht, + Cæthelricus, Priest.

Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici, Vol. I., p. 107:

MLXXIII.

ÆDELRED DUKE OF MERCIA, 896.

✠ Rixiendum ussum dryhtene ðæm hælendan Crist!
 Æfter ðon ðe ægan wæs ehta hund wintra and syx and hund nigontig efter his acennednesse and ðy feowerteoðan gebonngere, a ðy gere gebeon Æðelred ealderman ælle Mercna weotan tosomne to Gleaweceastre bisceopas, and aldermen, and alle his duguðe, and ðæt dyde be Ælfredes cyninges gewitnesse and leafe; and heo ða ðær smeadan hu heo rihtlicost heora þeodscip ægðer ge for Gode ge for weorlde gehealdan mehton, and ec monige men ryhtan ge godcundra hada ge weorldeundra, ge on londum ge on ma ðara þinga ðe heo on forhaldne weran. Ða cyððe Werferð bisceop ðam weotum ðæt him wære forneh eall ðæt wudulond on gereafad ðe to Wuduceastre belump ðæt Æðelbald cyning gesealde to Weogornaceastre him to ecre ælnessan Wilferð bisceop to mæstlonde and to wudu londe; and ðet sæde ðæt hit wære sume genumen to Bislege, sum to Æfeningum, sum to Scorranstane, sume to Ðornbyrig ðæs ðe he wende; ða cwædon eall ða weotan ðæt mon uðe ðære cyrcan rihtes swa well swa oðerre, and ða sona wæs Æðelwald ðæs wordes ðæt he no ðes rihtes wiðsacan wold, and sæde ðæt Aldberht and Alh-hun bisceop wæron ær ymb ðæt ylce and cwæð ðæt he ælere circean aa his dæla rihtes uðe; and hit swa swiðe mildlice ageaf ðam bisceop and heht his geneat, Ecglaƿ hatte, ridan mid ceastersetna preoste, Wulfhun hatte, and be hine ða gelædde ealle ða gemæru swa he

¹ Sugley. ² Harley wood or Early wood. ³ Little Nailsworth.

⁴ Not identified. ⁵ Not identified.

him of ðam aldan bocum rædde hu hit ær Æðelbald cyning gemæ-
 rude and gesalde. Ða wilnede Æðelbald swa ðeh to ðam bisceop
 and to ðam higen ðæt heo him mildemode alefdan ðæt he his most
 brucan ða hwile ðe he wære and heo Alhmund his sunu ; and heo
 hit woldon habban on his læne and hina, and he næfre ne heora
 nowðer hine bereafian wolde ðære mæstreddene ðe he him aleafed
 hæfde on Longan hrycge ðam tidum ðe hine God him salde ; ond
 he ða Æðelwald ðæt word gecwæd ðæt hit aa hæfde ofer Godes est
 ðe hit hæfde butan ðare cyrcan hlaforde ðe he hit to ageaf butan
 Alhmunde and ðæt ðonne on ða gearan ðe he heolde ða ylcan freonde-
 reddene ðe he heold wið ðone bisceop ; gif hit ðonne gebirie ðæt
 .Alhmund swa ða freondreddene healdan nold oððe hine mon
 oferricte ðæt he ne most landes wyrð beon oððe þridda wend gif
 him ær his end geselde ðæt ðonne ðær cyrcan hlaford feng to his
 londe swa hit Mærcna weotan on ða gemote gerahton and him ða
 bec wisdomes ðæs londes. And ðis wæs gedon on Æðelredes gewit-
 nesse aldormonnes, and on Æðelflæde and Æðulfes aldormonnes,
 and Æðelferðes aldormonnes, and Alhhelmes aldormonnes, and
 Eadnoðes, and Ælfrædes, and Werferðes and Æðelwaldes mæse-
 preostæs, and his agenra maga Æðelstanes and Æðelhunnes and
 eac Alhmundes his agenes sunu ; and ðus se ceastersetna preost
 hit gerad and se Æðelwaldes geneat mid hine, ærost on Ginneðlæge
 and ðanon on Roddunbeorg sylfne, ðanon on Smececumbe ðanon
 on Sengetlege, ðanon on Heardanlege ðære is oðer noma Dryganleg,
 ðæt swa on ðæ læssan Nægleslege, and swa to Æðelferðes londe.
 Ðus him gewisede se Æðelwaldes mo[n] ða genæru swa him ða
 aldan bec ryhtan and wisdomes.

MS., Cott. Vesp. A. V., f. 169.

TRANSLATION.

✠ Under the government of our Lord and Saviour Christ !
 When there was gone 816 years of his birth, and in the 14th
 Indiction, in that year summoned Alderman Æthelred, all the
 Mercian council-men together to Gloucester ; bishops and alder-
 men, and all his nobility ; and that he did by King Alfred's
 knowledge and leave ; and they then there deliberated how they
 could rightliest order their people as well before God as before the

world, and likewise to right many men both of the spiritual and of the temporal orders in respect of lands and of more things besides, wherein they had been injured. Then did Bishop Werferth declare to the council-men that he had been dispossessed of well nigh all the woodland belonging to Woodchester, which King Æthelbald had given to Worcester for a perpetual alms to his name, and for mastland and woodland to Bishop Wilferth : and that he said had been partly annexed to Bisley, part to Avening, part to Scorransan, part to Thornbury, as he supposed. Then said all the council-men that justice should be accorded to that church as well as to any other ; and immediately upon that, Æthelwald expressed himself as having no wish to dispute the right ; and he said that Bishop Aldberht and Aldhun had been formerly about the same business, and he said that he had always, for his part, been disposed to render full right to every church : and in this very amiable fashion he yielded it up to the bishop, and ordered his yeoman, Eglaf by name, to ride with the citizens' chaplain, who was called Wulfhun, and he shewed him all the bounds as he read to him out of the old books, according as King Æthelbald had originally defined and granted it. Then did Æthelbald, however, make request to the bishop and to the society that they would considerably allow him to enjoy it for his lifetime and that of Alhmund his son ; and they proposed to hold it on loan from him and the society ;—and he would never, nor would either of them, deprive him of the swine-pasture that he had let him have on Long Ridge for such times as God should give it him ; and he then (Æthelwald) spake the word, that whoever held it, except the lord of that church to whom he had restored it, would always hold it under God's displeasure, with the exception of Alhmund ; and that exception made upon the understanding that he was to maintain the same friendship with the bishop as he (Æthelwald) had done. If, however, it should come to pass that Alhmund refused to maintain that friendship, or if he should be convicted of a crime which would make him incapable of holding land, or, a third case, if his end should happen first, that then the lord of that church should take to his land, as the Mercian council-men at that Gemôt had settled it, and as the deeds of the land directed them. And this was done with the

witness of Æthelred alderman, and of Æthelflæd, and of Æthelnulf alderman, and Eadnoth, and Æthelferth alderman, and Aldhelm alderman, Ælfræd, and Werferth and Athelwald priest, and his own kinsmen Æthelstan and Æthelhun, and likewise Allmund his own son; and thus the citizen's priest rode the bounds and Æthelwald's yeomen with him, first at Ginnethleah, and thence on to Rodborough itself, thence to Smeceecumb, thence to Sengetleah, thence to Heardanleah, otherwise called Dryganleah, and so on to the lesser Næglesleah, and so to Æthelferth's land. Thus did Æthelwald's man guide him over the bounds as the old deeds stated and directed.
