

NOTE:

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Durham Priory Communar's Accounts

Introduction

1416-1538, but there is no relevant material after 1454. The duties of the Communar were rather limited, including the provision of a number of minor physical comforts for the monks, notably fire and wine, with figs, walnuts and spices during Lent.¹ The account for 1453-4 includes a payment to singers (most likely the cathedral choir?) for a performance in the Infirmary, presumably for aged and infirm monks.

Relevant rolls are one membrane each, length 429-685 mm., width 250-266 mm. Single column, with income and expenses divided into subsections according to subject matter. The account for 1416-7 has a separate line for each item, but thereafter continuous subsections are used. Terminal dates for relevant accounts are usually Pentecost, but the account for 1416-7 runs from St. Romanus (23rd October) to St. Petronilla (31st May, also Whit Monday in that year).

Texts

1416-7 (23rd October – 31st May)

Durham Priory Communar's Account DCD - Com. acs

Dona & exennia: . . .
Item *Episcopo Elemosinarie* - ij s.
. . .
Gifts and presents: . . .
Item, to the Almonry Bishop - 2 s.
. . .

1430-31 (4th June – 20th May)

Durham Priory Communar's Account DCD - Com. acs

. . . Et *episcopo puerili de Elemosinaria* xx d. . . .
. . . And to the Almonry boy bishop 20 d. . . .

1440-41 (?15th May – 4th June)

Durham Priory Communar's Account DCD - Com. acs

. . . Item *episcopo elemosinarie* xx d.
. . . Item, to the almonry bishop 20 d.

1441-2 (4th June – 20th May)

¹ See Fowler, Surtees Soc. 103, Introduction xlv-xlvii; *The Rites of Durham*, Surtees Soc. 107, 101.

Durham Priory Communar's Account DCD - Com. acs

... <e>piscono elemosinarie xx d.
... to the almonry ishop 20 d.

1445-6 (?16th May – ?5th June)

Durham Priory Communar's Account DCD - Com. acs

... <p>uerili e<l>emosinarie <x>x d.
... to the a<l>monry oy ... <20?> d.

1453-4 (20th May – 9th June)

Durham Priory Communar's Account DCD - Com. acs

Dona &: ... Et Episcopo puerili Eleemosinarie – xx d. Et Cantoribus ludentibus in
exennia Infirmania xx d. ...
Gifts and: ... And to the Almonry boy Bishop – 20 d. And to the singers performing in
Presents the Infirmary 20 d. ...

Textual Notes

In some years, these survive in more than one copy; I have used drafts rather than fair copies. Details for Communar's accounts are as follows:

- 1440-41: Heading lost; the debit balance with which this account ends corresponds to the first item under 'Expense' in the account for 1441-2; the closing date is established from the opening date of the following account. The opening date is assumed also to be Pentecost. The paragraph in which this item appears is the only one in the account that has no heading title.
- 1441-2: From B (draft on paper), damaged and paragraph heading lost. A (fair copy on parchment) is also damaged, and of this item only the sum survives.
- 1445-6: Heading lost; year established from Arrears in the account for 1453-4, where John Hoton has been Communar since 1451-2, with Richard Kelloe for seven years before that and William Eden for five years before that. The arrears in this account show that it is Richard Kelloe's second account (i.e. 1445-6). Terminal dates are assumed to be at Pentecost, as with most Communar's accounts of this period.

End Note

- 1453-4: Many Durham payments to singers *ludentes* seem simply to be for holidays, but these are usually at one of the Prior's manors, or else they appear as regular Christmas payments. The singers would be unlikely to be on holiday in the Infirmary, however, so this payment is probably for performance for the enjoyment or comfort of monks who were sick, aged or infirm.