AN ANGLO-NORMAN RETURN TO THE INQUEST OF SHERIFFS.

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SINCE I published in this Bulletin 1 a twelfth-century Anglo-Norman deed with a commentary, comparison with the Latin returns to the Inquest of Sheriffs 2 has shown conclusively that it also must be a return to the Inquest. The use of French for this purpose has not hitherto been suspected. The discovery is not only of importance in itself, but it has this further interest that it puts the date of the deed back to 1170, much earlier than any surviving original French document of the kind either on the Continent or in this country.

To save reference to my previous article, it will be convenient to reprint the Anglo-Norman return in full:

Les homes Manser de Dommartin dunerent treies mars a duos oscet, a l’un un marc al autre duas, et a lur seinur en aiue li unt dunet xv mars pur le encumrement de sun fiht que i1 fist chevalyr, pur le castel de Leiland que il out en guarde v marcas, e pur fin de plejes x sl’ et vi d’, et icest li unt dune en bonne volentet cum a lur seinur.

We do not, of course, find any Latin return exactly parallel, for the returns were not framed on a uniform plan. There are several which begin ‘Homines . . . dederunt’, 4 and several which say that gifts were made ‘for armies’, the nearest in phrasing being the return of Robert fitz Morvant, who gave his lord 7s. 9d. ‘ad duos exercitus de Wales’. 5 The gift of fifteen marks by the men of Manasser de Dammartin for the accoutrement of his son when he was knighted is paralleled by the ten marks given by the men of Somerton to Avelina de Ria ‘ad faciendum filium suum militem’, 6 and there are several similar gifts. 7 The payment for the castle of Leyland seems to have

1 Ante, xxiv. 168-172.
2 The Red Book of the Exchequer (ed. Hubert Hall), ii. cclxvii-cclxxxi.
3 i.e. armies.
4 Nos. 1, 4-7, 17, 18, 27, 39, 43, 45, 48, 54, 58.
5 No. 40: cf. nos. 11, 12, 17, 18. My suggestion that the payments to Manasser de Dammartin were connected with scutages recorded in 1162 and 1172 (ante, xxiv. 171) must be withdrawn.
6 No. 35.
7 Nos. 20-22, 24, 27, 29.
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only one counterpart in the Latin returns, and that is a payment by William de Curci’s men of Little Saxham, ‘ad castellum firmandum de Oreford’.

The statement that Manasser’s men have made their payments ‘en bone volentet’ is exactly what many Latin returns say, ‘ex bona voluntate’, which is the reply to the question whether the money was taken ‘per iudicium vel sine iudicio’.

As I have already shown, the return must relate to Suffolk. This is clear from the reference to Leyland castle, which had formerly belonged to Henry of Essex. And the men of Manasser de Dammartin must be of Mendlesham, where he held a knight’s fee. Nearly all the returns printed by Dr. Hall relate to Norfolk and Suffolk, and the Anglo-Norman return doubtless owes its survival to the same accident that resulted in the preservation of so many from those counties. Like most of the Latin returns, this return is a reply to the third article of the Inquest, which was devised to ascertain what had been taken by lords in the years 1166-1170 from hundreds, townships and individual men. Though the point seems not to have been remarked, the enquiries under this head were apparently not made directly by the commissioners—the barones errantes of the introductory paragraph of the Inquest—but by the sheriffs and their bailiffs, to whom the last article of the Inquest appears to assign the duty of making enquiries ‘per terras baronum’.

This may account for the use of French in some returns and for

1 No. 54. 2 Nos. 1-6, 12, 13, 32, 39, 45. 3 Ante, xxiv. 171.
4 No. 59, which relates to castle guard at Rockingham, Northamptonshire, is an exception. A fragment of a different kind, relating to the borough of Worcester, has been printed by Professor Tait (English Historical Review, xxxix. 80-83): but this is the only other exception which has yet come to light.
5 A few relate to other articles. As Dr. J. H. Round pointed out, nos. 55 and 56 are returns to art. 4 (Commune of London, pp. 128-129): they are in a distinctive form. No. 54 seems to reply to art. 3, but also to arts. 1 and 7. Some others also appear anomalous. My numbering of the articles is that of the 9th edition of Stubbs, Select Charters, which differs from that of earlier editions.
6 I may note that Manasser de Dammartin was himself one of the barones errantes, not however in East Anglia, but on the circuit which included Kent, where he also held lands (Cervase of Canterbury, Historical Works (Rolls Series), i. 216). While this fact has no bearing upon the return for Mendlesham, it has to be borne in mind in considering the general arrangements for the Inquest: obviously it would have been improper for local landowners (of whom there
the illiterate Latin of others. The return which tells the commis-

sioners that

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xv\text{dies ante Purificationem Sancte Marie proxima abebit iij anhos quod servientes Comitis de Harundellia ceperunt ccccv oves Mahei de Candos et duxerunt donec at Snetesham. . . .}
\]

and which at one point drops into French, was, however, written by (or for) the complainant, who ends ‘Sicut nil comiti debui’.\(^1\)

No other returns to the third article\(^2\) give such an evident indication that they were rendered by the complainants, and they may well have been the work of the sheriffs’ clerks.

must have been a good proportion on the several commissions) to conduct enquiries among their own tenants, though they were fitted to enquire into the irregularities of the king’s ministers.

\(^1\) No. 8. The complainant is Matthew of Chandos, a tenant of Hanelald of Bidon (cf. no. 21), whose chief lord was the earl of Arundel. Hanelald had failed to perform the service due to the earl, whose bailiffs had thereupon distrained upon Matthew’s sheep. Matthew admits that his complaint is against Hanelald. These circumstances are explained in a note added to the return, which, Dr. Hall remarks, ‘is in another and apparently an official hand’. Matthew says that he paid 2s. to the earl’s bailiffs (presumably the amount due from Hanelald to the earl) to have his sheep, or such as survived, delivered up to him: or, as he expresses it, ‘ij s. illis servientibus de livresium’.

\(^2\) No. 59, the return relating to Rockingham Castle, is expressed in the first person, but it is not clear under which article this falls.