

# The rights of men: Medieval charter from King Edward I authenticated

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Credit: University of Lincoln

Medieval scholars at the University of Lincoln, UK, have authenticated a 700-year-old king's charter that put an end to a tax scandal blighting the historic city.

The [document](#), which reaffirmed trading grants and privileges awarded to Lincoln by previous kings has been confirmed as an authentic copy from King Edward I, dating back to 1301.

The rights outlined in the document had been lost in 1290 following claims that the city's authorities were illegally taking money from the poor. Whilst the modern day City of Lincoln Council had known about the document since the early 1900s, its near-perfect condition with the great seal still attached, led to questions about whether it was an original

copy of the 1301 Charter or a later fake.

The [charter](#) was granted to Lincoln in February 1301 when King Edward I held parliament in the Chapter House at Lincoln Cathedral. Professor Philippa Hoskin, Professor of Medieval Studies in the University of Lincoln's School of History & Heritage, examined the document to determine its authenticity.

Studying the letter formations, additional notes in the margin, and even the way it was sealed all helped Professor Hoskin conclude the charter is genuine.

Professor Hoskin said: "At the time it was not unusual to hold Parliament away from Westminster. We don't know for definite, but there are several reasons why Lincoln may have been chosen.

"We know that King Edward I was a great fan of the city, choosing its famous green cloth for his child's nursery, or it may just have been a convenient halfway point between London and his fighting in Scotland.

"The charter was important for the city at the time, and because of its importance it's likely the city paid a high price for the document. We know that Norwich paid £20 for a pair of charters in the mid-13th century, enough to pay a day labourer's wage for twenty years at the time, and I suspect Lincoln paid quite a bit more.

"It's rare to see a manuscript in such good condition, and even rarer to find the great seal still attached, so it's been a delight to be able to examine it and to confirm it's a genuine copy."

The examination of the document offered a unique teaching experience for two MA Medieval Studies students as they had the opportunity to help date the medieval charter. The Charter was uncovered as part of a

revamp of the city's charter collection, which is held at the Guildhall over the Stonebow in Lincoln's High Street.

Kate Fenn, Civic and International Partnerships Manager at the City of Lincoln Council, said: "We are very proud of our historic charters in Lincoln, so it is incredible to find one that dates back this far.

"A find like this shows just how important a part Lincoln played in the country's history, especially when you consider the other major charters that have links with the city such as the Charter of The Forest and Magna Carta."

Provided by University of Lincoln

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