

Transcription of M.R. James's unpublished description
Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.2.24

Title	Polychronicon R. Higden
Secundo folio	14f. britannice
Language	Latin
Material	vellum
Measurements	14 x 10 ins.
Collation	Mr. Bradshaw's: * ⁴ (1 gone, 2 pastedown) (aa ⁸) a – m ¹² n ¹⁰ (7 pastedown, 8 – 10 gone)
Number of leaves	163
Columns	double
Lines to a page	55
Date	XIV
Handwriting	Very clear English, ordinary
Binding	Black leather over bevelled wooden boards. Central stamped oval, clasps gone. Chain mark near bottom of 1 st cover.

James 238 Parker 15. D. β. I 4. 2. 1
From St Augustine's, Canterbury. Marks are erased on ff. 4 and 5, but part of an inscription remains on 4: Cronica que dicuntur Chester, and the initial on f. 13 has a picture on gold ground of St Katherine crowned, holding up a wheel, and a black monk kneeling to her on L with scroll: Me thomam mina precor arnoldum kater(ina). In the border of this page are three shields. L az a sword and two keys in saltire arg (hilt of sword or) (resembles Winchester but there the field is gu. Chester Priory is said to have borne 3 mitres (Woodward, Eccl. Heraldry, p. 194)); C sable a cross arg for St Augustine's; R gu 3 busts of kings crowned or.

In the St Augustine's Catalogue, no. 934 (Anc. Lib. p. 297) is: Cronica cestrensis T. Arnold cum tabula. 2^o fo. in libro Britannice (see above).

In the cover and on f. 3 are pasted two Parkerian labels. On f. 4 is a transcript of Higden's acrostic from the initials of chapters of Book I.

Contents

Table. Abraham — Zorobabel	5
Note of the ages of the world	11 ^b
12 blank.	

Lib. I. Post preclaros arcium scriptores

II. 35. III. 50^b IV. 74 V. 91^b VI. 113 VII. 129 VIII. 159

Ending (in 1381): Mense marcii eiusdem anni d^{ns} Thomas Hatfeld ep. dunelmensis moritur senex multorum dierum (Rolls Ed. VIII, 406).

161^b, 162 blank.

At f. 152^a VII 43 (44) coronation of Edward III: mare tranquillitatem et ecclesia libertatem, is Explicit historia but the text continues: Et cito post hoc 3^o nonas april. translatus est rex antiquus de kenelworth (Rolls Ed. VIII, 324).

On f. 153 after the words sub pena carceris et capitis interdixit (l. c. VIII, 338) is a scrawly marginal note of cent. xv – xvi: alius liber scriptus habet hec in margine: Hucusque Randulphus, followed by a

correction in a Parkerian hand. But at the top is a long note of cent. xvi beginning: Hic reuera Ranulphus monachus Cestrensis suas chronicas terminauit. Some similar notes are in CCCC. 117.

This is MS A of the Rolls Series edition. An account of it with further particulars of these notes is given in Vol. I p. xlvii, but the Canterbury provenance is not divined.

The border on f. 13 is the most important piece of ornament in the volume. It is not of any great excellence, but is effective. Each Book has an initial in gold and colour.