

Transcription of M.R. James's unpublished description
Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.3.57

Title Chronicle Roll of the Kings of England to Henry IV

Secundo folio

Language French

Material Parchment

Measurements 21 ft. x 14 ins.

Collation

Number of leaves

Columns

Lines to a page

Date XV early

Handwriting Good English

Binding A red leather cover lined with cloth: original

Moore 496

Contents

A wheel of eight spokes, the circle in bands of green, red and blue, green, red and blue. Spokes and discs on the tyre in white. Eight discs on the tyre have the names of the winds. On the left the spokes are inscribed with the names of the four great roads of Britain, Heringestrete (north to south), Fosse (n.e. to s.w.), Hygenildestrete (e. to w.), Watlyngestrete (s.e. to n.w.).

A Wheel of Fortune. Broad border in two shades of green, with red edging, containing eight figures. The centre is treated as a rose window with eight spokes, central rosette, arched 'lights' and ornamented spandrels all in white. Fortune crowned in ermine stands behind the wheel (on red ground) and turns the wheel by the spokes. Two circles outside the centre bear an inscription in French:

Dame ffortune me face nomer
Tout le monde ay a governer
Riches et poveres et toute gent
Touz sont a mon comaundement
Ascunes gent voil enhancier [MS enhancer]
Ascunes a poverte liverer.

Inner circle:

Ascuns serrunt de lunge vie
Ascuns morront par lur folie
Jeo vous di bien saunz resort
Nul ne eschapera la mort
Bon serroit suz toute rien
Lesser le mal et fere le bien

The eight figures in the outer border counting from L are:

1. Child with blank scroll and ball
2. Youth in long robe combs hair and holds mirror
3. Man in tunic with hanging sleeves, hawk on hand
4. (top) Throned king in ermine with sword and sceptre
5. Throned king, with sword, head drooping and crown falling off

6 & 7. Older men in long robes barefoot, falling headlong

8. Nude (dead) man with blank scroll

In the angles of the sheet are four pieces of text.

2) L top:

Vous qui ales certe voye mountant
Richesse e nobleis desiraunt
Amez dieu se freei bien
Pecche haiez souz toute rien
Amez simplesse ostiez orgoil
Vostre proesme amez de bel acoil
Que la dame que la roue giue
De vous revesser ne se haste nue

3) R top:

Sire haut Roy coronne
Qui taunt avez de dignete
Qui tuit le poeple vous est enclinant
Riches et poveres petiz et granz
Regardez a senestre envers val
Cum il sont reversez [MS reverse] de ceo real
Ceux qui erent devant vous
Paz le roy aventerous
Et pur ceo pensez de la mort
Kar ala reverse nad nule sort

1) L bottom:

La roue que dame fortune giue
Graunt afere signefie
Richesse poverte et seignurie
Hautesse pruesse large baillie
Force beaute pecche langour
Et la mort amere a chef de tour
Entendez bien a cest escrit
Pompe du secle vaut petit

4) R bottom:

Seignours pensez de la mort
Ou est ore sampson le fort
Salamon li sage rois
Alexandre qui est courtois
Arthur li prens li roy richart
Ore est chascuns alez sa part
Et nous apres trestouz morroms
Coment et quaunt ne siet nuls homs

A circle red, green and blue, 11 discs in the outer border: North on L, Orient at top, Suth R, Occident bottom.

Proceeding in the same order, the seven kingdoms:

Est sexe Kent Suth sexe West sexe Merchueriche North humber North sexe

Within 7 large discs and a central one all inscribed:

C Engleterre contient de lunge vi(?) cens lues etc.

Of the surrounding circles one is devoted to each kingdom. Text follows:

Par ceste figure de sus poet lem saver les diverses regnes ke furent iadis en engleterre

From Brutus to Ethelbert, ending: e fu tere a Wincestre.

After this begin a series of medallions with red, green and blue grounds and figures in white. The kings are crowned, sceptred and throned, the princes seated. The line begins with Ethelberd. Beside him is Brithrich. It continues with Edelwlf, 4 sons, Ethelwerd etc. Edward I's children set in 12 arches of an arcade of 18, 6 being blank. The text relating to them ends: Emund de Wodestoke fut Counte de Kent. No more text is added. The line is broken after Richard II, and starts again with Henri le quart. The last medallions are of his children.

At bottom is a short note on the descent of Henry IV, in the hand of the rest.

The style is rough and conventional but recalls the xivth rather than the xvth century.