

343 + British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius E.xv, fol. 275

Oseney, s. xiii ex., perhaps
1280 x 1284

(now Muniment Room D&C vi.a.1,
formerly Chapter House 24)

Cartulary of Oseney

2^o f^o: Henricus Rex (fol. 10)

Vellum (FSOS, later portions HSOS). Fols i (but assigned i, ii) + 353 (numbered fols 9-362, but 197 repeated; 203 omitted in the numeration and an unnumbered leaf after fol. 218; 289-93 precede the original 286-88, which have been renumbered 294-96 and their original numeration omitted, with the original 294-96 now renumbered 297-99; 355-62 are also renumbered and were the original 1-8, at the head of the volume). A sixteenth-century foliation in upper right corners, which I follow. Most leaves have water damage along the upper middle leading edge, after fol. 315 the full upper half of the leaves, generally without obscuring the text until the final twenty or so folios (fol. 360 in the main decayed and illegible, and fol. 361 now falling apart into fragments). Overall 295 mm x 198 mm (writing area 215-20 mm x 140-45 mm). In long lines, 31-32 lines to the page. No prickings, bounded and ruled in black ink (one scribe reddish brown crayon). Written in several anglicanas, s. xiii^{2/2} or ex., with some blanks filled in by later hands, in the main of s. xiv (but, e.g., fols 34-35 intruded s. xv med.; fol. 71^v filled s. xvi in.). Punctuation by point, punctus elevatus, and virgula.

CONTENTS

Ed. H. E. Salter, Cartulary of Oseney Abbey Volume[s] IV[-VI], OHS 97-98, 101 (1934-36), 4:1-530, 5:1-486, 6:1-128, ending at fol. 361; fol. 362 + Vitellius E.xv, fol. 275, ed. 4:x-xiii. Catalogued as Davis no. 733 (83). The MS is described Salter, 4:vii-ix, with facsimiles of fols 91 and 332 (s. xiii ex., facing and following 4:x). This cartulary is only the first volume of a two-volume set, never completed, and includes only deeds for properties outside Oxford.

BL, MS Cotton Vitellius E.xv, fol. 275, is a mounted burnt fragment, at its most extensive 180 mm x 110 mm. It is now bound with Cotton's second Oseney cartulary, in the main ed. Salter, Volume I, OHS 89 (1929); see esp. ix-x. But in spite of its current location, the leaf was originally fol. 358 of this MS, with the end of the contents table. (The lost original fols 356-57 indexed materials printed Salter, 4:334-5:420). The originally blank verso of Vitellius fol. 275 now has fragments of three letters from bishops of Worcester to abbots of Oseney, in hands of ss. xiv in., xiv/xv, and xv med.

COLLATION 1¹² (-6) 2¹⁴ 3² 4¹²⁺¹ (+leaf in second half) 5-7¹² 8¹² (-7) 9⁴ (perhaps a pair of consecutive bifolia) 10⁴ 11¹²⁺¹ (+7) 12¹² 13¹² (-10 to -12) 14-15¹² 16¹⁴ 17¹² 18⁴ (-4, probably a cancelled blank) 19-20⁴ 21-22² 23⁴ (-4) 24⁴ (-4) 25¹² (-12) 26¹² 27⁴ (-3, a stub, probably cancelled blank) 28⁶ [missing

materials] 29² 30¹² 31^{12+1?} (-12, +9, pasted in) 32¹² (-12, probably blank) 33¹⁰ (-10, probably blank) 34⁴⁺¹ (+5) 35⁶ 36¹⁰ (4 and 6 singles?) 37¹⁴ (-5, a stub) 38⁴ 39-40² 41⁸ 42²⁺⁴ (+2 to +6, two intercalated consecutive bifolia) 43-44² 45⁶ 46⁸ (the outmost bifolium reversed; -the original 2 to the original 4, now stubs with later numbered leaves pasted to them; the original 4th is now Vitellius E.xv, fol. 275).

Quire 34 is in fact the centre of the now separate quire 35 and should follow the current fol. 296. And the current fol. 293 is presumably the conjoint of fol. 296. However, this does not exhaust the problems presented by these leaves. Fol. 294 is explicable as the singleton opening the combined quire, but fols 297-98 can be fitted into this reconstruction only as an inserted bifolium, the ninth and tenth leaves inserted into an original ten, now lacking its final folio.

A few catchwords, in the main fragmentary (e.g. fols 60^v and 72^v). Very indistinct signatures on the first leaves of most quires, identifying to which of the three 'parts' of the volume (fols 9-103, 104-208, 209-end) the quire belongs, and a very few roman or alphabetical leaf signatures elsewhere, in brown crayon. In addition, Sir Robert Cotton's binder has assigned each quire a letter at the foot of the first recto. In this system, quires 1-9 = B-K, 11 = M, 23-42 = 2A-2V, 43 = 2W, 44-45 = 2x-2y, 46 = z.

TEXTUAL PRESENTATION AND DECORATION Headings in red. The decoration has been standardised through the volume (as has page format). At the opening of individual deeds, two-line alternate red and blue lombards. Frequent blue, and less frequently, alternate blue and red paraphs to introduce specific clauses and set off the headings. Red running titles, head and foot, the former for the manor (with the corresponding number in the tabula), the latter for the bailey.

BINDING Brown leather over millboards, s. xvii in. A defaced gold stamped armorial (Robert Cotton's) in the centre of both boards. Brass fittings with fragments of leather straps on the upper board, their clasps at the leading edge of the lower. Sewn on five thongs. At the head of the spine '24' in a paper lozenge; in the upper spine compartment, in gilt on a red leather label, 'Cartularium Osney', gold floral stamps on the spine. Pastedowns old vellum, an s. xvii (dated 1689) continuation of the table of contents (fol. 362^v) on the top (of four leaves pasted here) rear pastedown. At the front, one vellum flyleaf with a pasted-on fragment of a printed book (ii and i, respectively).

PROVENANCE A note explaining the production: 'Librum istum composuit et ordinavit bone Memorie Frater Will~~elm~~us <de> Suttona abbas Osen' cum summa diligencia et Magno studio . . .' (fol. 362). William was abbot 1267-84, and the volume includes charters from as late as 1280.

By the late sixteenth century, in the library of Sir Walter Cope, where it was no. A 200 in his library list; see Andrew G. Watson, 'The Manuscript Collection of Sir Walter Cope (d. 1614)', Bodleian Library Record 12 (1987), 262-97 at 290. As Salter points out (OHS 89 [1929], x-xi), at least three sets of transcripts were made from the MS c. 1586, when Cope owned it: by Robert Glover, now in BodL, MS Tanner 12, fol. 72; by Robert Beale, now in BL, MS Additional 32100; and by James Strangeman, now in BL, MS Sloane 1301.

Form Cope, the MS passed to Robert Cotton, who exchanged it with the College for another monastic volume: 'This 31 May I deliuered to M^r Phillip king Esquier Auditor of the Colledge of Christchurch in Oxford for the perpetuall vse of the sayd Howse and Society and had in a thankfull remembrance from them

a Book called *Annales Burtonensis Robert Cotton'* (fol. i, on a pasted-on fragment from the title-page of a printed book; Cotton's signature also fols 9 and 362, the foot 'Ro: Cotton Bruceus'). Cotton's binding instructions appear at the foot of fol. 339: 'sew this dooble [perhaps more has been cut away]'. See Colin G. C. Tyte, "'Lost or stolen or strayed": a survey of manuscripts formerly in the Cotton library', *Sir Robert Cotton as Collector*, ed. by C. J. Wright (London, 1997), 262-306, at 267-68, 296-97 n39; Tyte argues that the exchange probably occurred toward 1621, and points out that the MS was at Christ Church (and in King's control) when Brian Twyne made transcripts from it in BodL, MS Twyne 22, p. 362 (part dated 1617). For the Burton annals, now part of BL, MS Cotton Vespasian E.iii, see the description below.