

A FIFTEENTH CENTURY LIBRARY LIST

In the church of Emberton is one of the most remarkable brasses in our county; it has not escaped notice¹ for Lipscomb reproduced it with comparatively few errors, and the Rev. J. A. Boodle transcribed it in the *Records* (vol. III, p. 110), whilst an allusion to it may be found in vol. II., p. 194, note †. These do not attempt any detailed comment upon the remarkable inscription it bears, and the Editor begs to submit some notes with which he has been favoured by our President, and by Mr. F. G. Gurney.

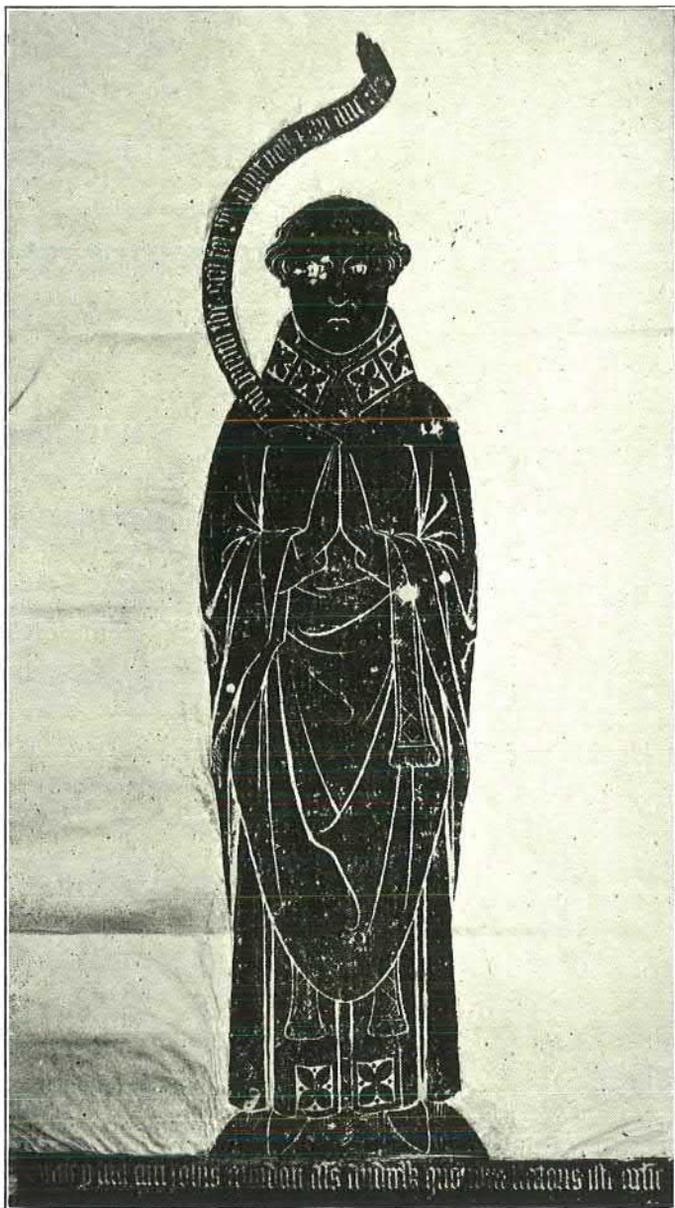
The brass commemorates John Mordon, *alias* Andrew, who was presented to the Rectory on 11 Sep., 1390, and died in 1410. In addition to the gifts mentioned below, he is supposed to have completed the building of the church and presented the tenor bell, which was unfortunately melted down about a century ago.

As the illustration shows, the brass depicts a priest in Mass vestment, with a scroll issuing from his mouth, bearing the (expanded) sentence: "John prayeth thee say for him a pater noster and an ave."

The inscription beneath, when extended, reads as follows:—

Orate pro anima magistri Johannis Mordon,
alias Andrew, quondam Rectoris istius ecclesiae,
qui dedit isti ecclesiae portos, missale, ordinale,
pars oculi, in craticula ferri manuale, processionale,
et ecclesiae de Olney catholicon, legenda aurea,
et portos in craticula ferri, et ecclesiae de
Hullemorton portos in craticula ferri, et alia
ornamenta. Qui obiit die mensis anno

¹ A fairly full account was begun by Henry Gough and is contained in one of his MS note-books preserved in our Library.



THE MORDON BRASS—EMBERTON

1410

domini M^occcc^oX, cuius animae propicietur Deus.
Amen.

The books thus given to Emberton are as follows:—

- 1 *Portos*, a breviary, or book of offices for choral or private use; it *may* have contained the music as well.
- 2 *Missale*, a missal, or mass-book.
- 3 *Ordinale*, a collection of rubrical rules for the direction of public service; it was also called "Pie."
- 4 *Pars Oculi*. This was the usual title of three books by W. de Pagula, vicar of Winkfield, Co. Berks, who died C. 1350. Their separate titles were

Oculus Sacerdotis.

Dextra pars oculi.

Sinistra " "

Cilium " "

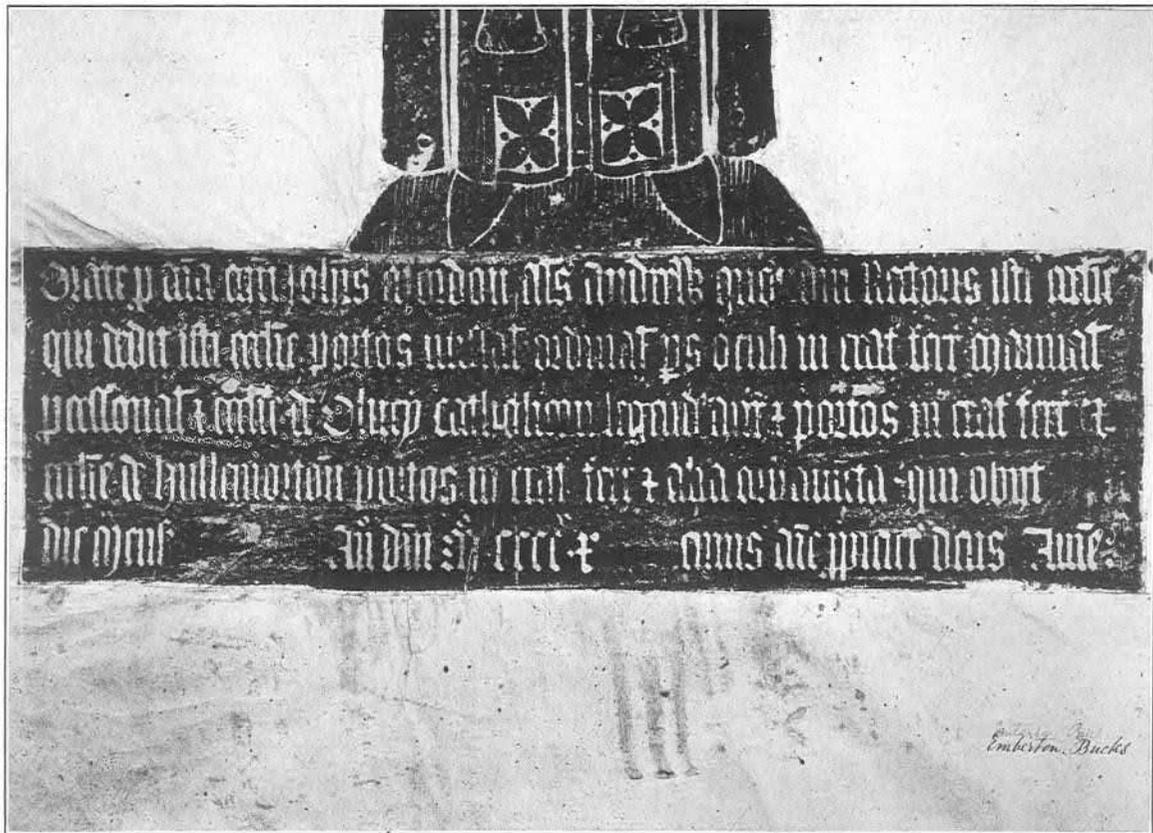
From these Johannes de Burgo adapted a book entitled *Pupilla Oculi*, and John Myrc's *Duties of a Parish Priest*² is some of this book in English rhyme. The book begins with the Seven Sacraments, and is concerned with sins, absolution, penitence, and punishment of an archidiaconal kind.³

It will be noted that "Pars" is nominative, quoted titles were not declined in mediaeval Latin; thus a copy given to Winchester College by William of Wykeham appears as "Item, librum vocatum Pars Oculi."

- 5 *Manuale*. A book of services which are not routine, such as sacraments of all sorts, processions, etc., etc.

² Printed by the Early English Text Society, 1868, ed. by E. Peacock.

³ See Maskell: *Monumenta Ritualia Ecc. Ang.*, 1882, vol. II., p. lxxxix, and Haines: *Manual of Monumental Brasscs*, p. 243.



Orate p[ro] anima can[onic]i Joh[ann]is Mordou[ne] al[ie]s d[omi]n[us] que[re] d[omi]ni Rectoris ist[re] eccl[esi]e
qui dedit ist[re] eccl[esi]e portos u[er]bal[iter] adu[er]s[us] p[er]sonas in eccl[esi]a t[er]m[in]at
p[er]sonat[ur] eccl[esi]e de Ousey catholice legu[m] d[omi]ni & portos in eccl[esi]a t[er]m[in]at
eccl[esi]e de hullemerston portos in eccl[esi]a t[er]m[in]at & alia o[mn]ia iusta que obijt
die regis An[no] d[omi]ni m[ille] cccc[us] & annis die p[ro]p[ri]et[is] deus Ave

Emberton, Buckle

INSCRIPTION UNDER MORDON BRASS: EMBERTON

- 6 *Processionale*, was for use at litanies and processions.

It will be noticed that the last two items are preceded in the original by the words "in crat' ferr'," and the meaning of this phrase is of considerable interest. Dr. James is of opinion that it meant "in or on an iron grille, or crate"; and he pictures it as an iron desk attached to a pillar such as is on the west side of the opening from Hall to the bay window at Eton College, and forms a rest for a Bible. He points out that only the reference books were to be "in crat' ferr'," the others would be kept for use by the clergy.

- The second group of books is given to Olney; beside the breviary Olney was to have
7 *Catholicon*. This was not a service-book, but a Latin grammar and dictionary, compiled by John de Balbis.⁴

- 8 *Legenda Aurea*, also called "Passionale." It consisted of legends of the saints, written by Jacopo de Voragine, who was Archbishop of Genoa, and died in 1298. Caxton's *Golden Legend* was derived from it.

Finally Hillmorton, Co. Warwick, has a breviary "in crat' ferr'," and other "ornamenta," a word with a considerable range of meanings, which might include vestments.

John Mordon's claim to be remembered is not "aere perennius," but the "aes" outlasted the gifts it recorded; the Edwardian Inventory for Emberton has not survived, that for Olney has, but the Commissioners were looking for money's worth, and in 1552 a *Catholicon* and *Legenda Aurea* would not be very marketable assets.

⁴ *Catholicon Anglicanum* was printed by the Early English Text Society in 1881, ed. by S. J. Herbage.