

MS Brown Lat.1
1989-069, Item #6
Genealogical Roll of English Kings and Events from Ethelbert to Henry VI
England (Canterbury) s. XV²

Genealogical roll on parchment, written in Latin. 9 membranes attached by glue, each measuring 73 x 44mm (7560 x 432mm total, i.e., about 21 feet). 7 vertical text columns labeled for: the Christian year (597-1472), Popes (from Gregory I), Kings of England (following the Kentish line, from Ethelbert), Archbishops of Canterbury (from Augustine), years from the conversion of England to Christianity, dominical letters, and golden numbers. Significant historical events are also noted throughout. 2.8mm decorative borders adorn each side in multicolor pigments (pink, blue, green, red, yellow, and grey, with gold, silver, and brown detailing), with hair-line stems and heavy bell-like flowers. Vertical columns (including borders) are ruled in ink; pricking for horizontal ruling is visible at outer edges. Genealogical lines are generally drawn in red, with plain red circles around names, but additional green lines begin on membrane 6. These seem to indicate disruptions in lineage (starting around King Stephen). Text is written in black, brown, red, and occasionally green, generally in a fifteenth-century humanistic cursive, though date columns and a few early entries are in a gothic script. Another later hand titles the roll on the dorse edge of membrane 9 (“A Genealogical Account of the **KINGS** of **ENGLAND** from **ELTHELBERT** to **HENRY .VI**. 21 feet in length.”). Text entries end at the year 1435, though date entries and borders continue to 1472. No evidence of wood or other attachments for rolling; item was originally rolled top to bottom, as evidenced by titular label on the dorse of the bottom edge and patterns of damage.

Damage: Significant mold, staining, and use-related damage exists, especially at membranes 6-9. Ink fading and damage to parchment significantly affects legibility from membrane 5 on, though some faded text is recoverable under UV light. Pigments of decorative floral borders are mostly in tact until membranes 7-9, and then show significant cracking, smudging, and flaking. Wrinkling, holes, and small tears occur throughout. Evidence of repairs may be observed, especially between membranes 8-9, where parchment has been used to stabilize significant tearing and deterioration at edges.

Origins & Provenance: Interest in Kentish royal lineage, archbishops of Canterbury, and historical events important to regional concerns indicate the roll was created in Kent, or perhaps in Canterbury specifically. This likelihood is corroborated by similarities to a chronological table at the beginning of Cambridge, Trinity Hall MS 1 (Thomas Elmham’s *Historia Monasterii S. Augustini Cantuariensis*) and a related “chronicle roll” housed at Pepys Library, Cambridge (item 2314 in the 1992 *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge*, vol. 5.i). The Pepys Library roll is closely associated. The last legible event recorded in both is the death of John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford (d. September 1435), which establishes a *terminus a quo*. The roll was donated to the University of Victoria in 1989 by Bruce and Dorothy Brown, who purchased it from Maggs Bros Ltd (London). It is unknown when Maggs acquired the roll. Markings on the top and bottom of the dorse side indicate it was once sold for 4 guineas (a currency discontinued in the UK in 1816) and later for £70.

Works Consulted:

- Cheney, C.R. *A Handbook of Dates for Students of British History*. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.
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- Hardwick, Charles, ed. *Historia Monasterii S. Augustini Cantuariensis*. Thomas Elmham. Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland. London: Longman, 1858. Print.
- James, M.R. *Bibliotheca Pepysiana: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Library of Samuel Pepys*. Vol. 3. 1923. Reprint. London: Forgotten Books, 2013. 84-5. Link: http://www.forgottenbooks.com/readbook_text/Bibliotheca_Pepysiana_v3_1000708949/93
- James, N.J.R. "MS. 1 Thomas of Elmham." *Trinity Hall Cambridge*. University of Cambridge, n.d. Web. 10 April 2015. Link: <http://www.trinhall.cam.ac.uk/about/library/oldlibrary/manuscripts/detail.asp?ItemID=947>
- Gilbert, Gaelan. "Bodies Politic & Non-Codex Genealogy." *Predigital Worlds*. University of Victoria Digital Humanities Summer Institute, June 2012. Blog post. Web. 10 April 2015. Link: <https://predigitalbooks.wordpress.com/2012/06/08/organic-politics-non-codex-genealogy/>
- McKitterick, Rosamond and Richard Beadle. *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge*. Vol. 5.i [Manuscripts, Medieval]. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1992. 62-3. Print. [no. 2314]
- Thompson, Daniel V. *The Materials and Techniques of Medieval Painting*. New York: Dover Publications, 1956. Print.
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Description and transcription of membranes 1-3 by Sophie Boucher, Brynn Fader, Rebekah Prette, and Molly Trepanier, in collaboration with Dr. Adrienne Williams Boyarin (ENGL), as part of coursework for her manuscript studies class, April 2015.