

MS. 168

Roger Alban, Genealogical roll chronicle England (London?); s. xv^{3/4} (after 1454, perhaps before 1459)

Text

Roll chronicle of the kings of England, deducing their descent from Adam to the birth of Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1453, in the reign of Henry VI: '[Prologue:] Considerans cronicorum prolixitatem necnon et difficultatem scolariumque circa studium nobilis progenie regum anglie. [\[Image\]](#) ... et ab illo usque ad henricum sextum originaliter finem perduxit. [Text:] Adam in agro damasceno formatus. et in paradysum vnde quatuor flumina oriuntur translatus cum femine de costa dormientis facte. ... de qua genuit edwardum principem. qui natus erat in festo translacionis sancti edwardi regis et confessoris anno domini .m^o.cccc^o.liij^o.' [\[Image\]](#); this text is usually attributed to Roger Alban, OCarm, with the title *Progenies regum Angliae*, and is half in pedigree form, and half short notices of each person; Sharpe, *Handlist*, p.580, lists twelve manuscripts including the present one (though dated s. xvi in., following Coxe); on the various versions of the text see *Lyell cat.*, pp. 80–5, especially category E described on pp. 84–5; and on the scribes and artists of the category E text see Scott, *Later Gothic MSS.*, II, pp. 315–7 no. 116.

Decoration

One fine circular miniature:

(top of membrane 1) Adam and Eve either side of the Tree, the woman-headed serpent offering the fruit to Eve, who holds a fruit with one hand and offers it to Adam, covering her genitalia with a leaf held in her other hand; Adam to the right, about to accept the fruit, his other hand also raised; on a reddish background with 'gold scrolls'; within two concentric gold circular frames enclosing a band of blue foliate pattern. [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#) The miniature is similar to those in other copies of this text (cf. *Lyell cat.*, p. 82 and pl. VI; Watson, *All Souls cat.*, p. 80; Temple & Alexander, figs. 585, 602, 624; but especially Scott, *Later Gothic MSS.*, II, pp. 315–6).

One illuminated foliate six-line initial and foliate border, in gold, deep red-purple with white highlights, green with yellow highlights, and blue with white highlights, while the smallest leaves on the pen-sprays are olive green (top of membrane 1) [\[Image\]](#) [\[Image\]](#).

One four-line initial 'A'(dam) in gold on a red and blue 'quartered' ground with white tracery. The main line of descent with names in a series of circles, framed alternately in red or blue, the whole edged in gold.

One-, two-, and three-line gold initials, and paraphs, with simple red penwork. Each king's name in the main line of descent, from Brutus onward, written in blue or red circles surmounted by a gold crown [\[Image\]](#).

One 'Tau' diagram of the earth, with 'Asia.' in the semicircle at the top, 'Europa.' and 'Affrica.' in the quarters below (membrane 1). [\[Image\]](#)

Physical description

Parchment; c.8650 x c.345 mm., attached at each end to turned wood umbilicus. [\[Image\]](#)
9 membranes, each c.900–1000 mm. long, numbered in modern pencil 1–9.

Ruling in brown ink sometimes visible; prickings frequently survive in the outer margins.

Written in a gothic bookhand; new lines of descent have rubrics, e.g. *‘In hac linea ponuntur imperatores’*.

Provenance

1. Written in England, presumably during or fairly soon after the papacy of Calixtus III (1455–58), the last pope mentioned.
2. Henry Fisher (died 1643), who matriculated from Queen’s College in 1635, got his B.A. in 1639, M.A. in 1642; became College butler, and was elected fellow in the year he died (see *Alumni Oxonienses* and Magrath, *Queen’s*, II, p. 305, cf. p. 270): a post-medieval scroll with a gold inscription on a blue ground is painted at the bottom of the text; the inscription is now barely legible, but ‘Ex Dono Henrici Fishe[... the remainder uncertain: one(?) more word, perhaps beginning with ‘C’]’ can still be made out with some confidence [\[Image\]](#). In Bodleian Library, MS. Gough Oxon. 15 is ‘The devil incarnate etc. a satyre on Joan Fisher sometime wife of Hen. Fisher sometime manciple & butler of Queen’s Coll. said to have been written by Tho. Hyde: ‘she kept an alehouse next to Edmund Hall’.
3. Queen’s College, given by Fisher in 1640, the date given in the list of benefactors to the Library (see Magrath, *Queen’s*, II, p. 270; MS. 556, p. 27: ‘Henricus Fisher hujus Coll. Pincerna donavit 1640 Rotulam insignem continentem Genealogiam Regum Angliæ ab Henrico V^{to} ad Adamum’); the gift is attested by Langbaine, who presumably knew Fisher, and to whom the inscription described above was presumably fully legible; this is the last manuscript included in Langbaine’s mid 17th-century catalogue of Queen’s manuscripts (Bodleian Library, MS. Langbaine 7, p. 422) under the shelfmark Arch. B. 5. 3 (‘B 5 3’ inscribed in ink, indistinct but visible, on the handle of one of the wood rollers); inscribed at the very top, 18th(?) century, ‘Progenies Regum Britanniaë | Authore | Rogero Albano, sive Albon | Carmelitá’ [\[Image\]](#), and at the bottom, on the dorse ‘Archives. M.11.’ [\[Image\]](#); the dorse with a College bookplate inscribed ‘168’ (at the juncture of membranes 5 & 6).

Bibliography

Bernard, *CLM*, p. 30 no. 946 (MS. 22).

Coxe, *Catalogus*, p. 39.

Alexander & Temple, *College libraries*, no. 601.

Alison Allan, ‘Yorkist propaganda: pedigree, prophecy and the ‘British history’ in the reign of Edward IV’, in Charles Ross, ed., *Patronage, pedigree and power in later medieval England* (Gloucester and Totawa, NJ, 1979), pp. 171–92; cited at no. 3.

Status: Draft